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# IMAGERY IN THE PROSE OF BORIS PASTERNAK'S DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

by

Robert Magidoff

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in the
University of Michigan
1963

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# PREFACE

Figurative language, an important component of the verbal texture in all of Pasternak's works, occupies a place of particular prominence in Doctor Zhivago. It is the purpose of this study to inquire into the scope, nature and functions of the poetic image in the novel, and to take measure of the insight it affords into Pasternak's evolution as a writer. It, therefore, seemed imperative to begin with a brief review of his works against the background of his times and of the main literary currents of the period.

The review is followed by a discussion of the nature of imagery, its distinctive categories, and the various formal devices for creating figures of speech. Then, chapter by chapter, an inquiry is made into the types and functions of the images most prevalent in the novel and the reasons for the prevalence. On the basis of the findings, certain conclusions are made regarding the author and his art. The terms "imagery," "figures of speech" and "figurative language," as used throughout the study, are synonymous.

A note on the manner in which quotations are presented in this dissertation. Excerpts from poems are given in an English version, followed by the original. The prose passages are, as a rule, cited in English only. On these occasions when the Russian text has to be supplied, the original version is quoted, followed by a translation.

All Russian texts appearing in this study are presented in the standard transliteration system used by scholarly publications such as The Slavic and East European Journal. No effort has been made, as in transcription, to render the sounds of Russian words. The generally accepted spelling of well-known names, such as Tolstoy or Chekhov, has been retained.

I wish to thank the members of my Doctoral Committee for their untiring interest in the progress of this study, and to acknowledge my indebtedness for their perceptive criticism and suggestions.

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CHAPTER ONE

# THE LIFE, TIMES AND ART OF BORIS PASTERNAK

## 1. The Beginnings

Boris Leonidovich Pasternak was born in Moscow on January 29, 1890, his father a distinguished painter, his mother a brilliant concert pianist. Pasternak's earliest recollection goes back to a night in November, 1894, when he woke crying at the sound of string instruments. He had long been accustomed to the piano, but the strange "timbres of string instruments... alarmed me like real cries for help and tidings of disaster coming from the outside through the small ventilation window."[1]

That event, wrote Pasternak, "stood like a landmark,"[2] delineating the sudden boundary between his infancy and childhood. From that time "my memory became active and my consciousness was set in motion, henceforth without any great gaps and interruptions, as with grown-up people."[3] This association of music with the awakening of consciousness left an imprint that was to last a lifetime, and was to be reflected

in his creative writing.*

The boy was taken crying from his crib into the music room, where:

> ...the white hair of two or three old men blended with the rings of tobacco smoke. Afterwards I got to know one of them very well, and saw him often. It was the artist N.N. Ge. The image of the other passed through my whole life, as through the life of most people, particularly because my father illustrated his books, went to see him, revered him, and because our whole house was imbued with his spirit. It was Lev Nikolaevich [Tolstoy].[4]

The surroundings in which Pasternak grew up gave him frequent occasion to see and hear not only Tolstoy, but also the composers Anton Rubinstein and Scriabin, the artists Serov, Vrubel' and Levitan, and the poets Rainer Maria Rilke and Emile Verhaeren, among others. This exposure during childhood and adolescence to the world of art and artists, to heated discussions on literature, painting, philosophy and music contributed greatly to the development and shaping of his Weltanschauung and of artistic conceptions which changed but little throughout his life.[5] The ideas which he heard germinated in his mind, and the various arts blended in his imagination, leaving a lasting imprint on his writings, and particularly on the element of synaesthesia in his imagery.**

* See Chapter VI on sound associations in Doctor Zhivago.

** For a detailed discussion of Synaethesia in Doctor Zhivago see Chapter VII.

A typical brief example may be cited from his first autobiography, Safe Conduct, where he described how, as he listened to music, "above the fence of the symphony burned Van Gogh's sun."[6]

The symphony was by Scriabin, "my idol," wrote Pasternak. "I loved music more than anything else, and I loved Scriabin more than anyone else in music."[7] This adulation and young Boris' unusual musical gifts awakened in him the ambition to become a composer. He wrote some promising pieces under Scriabin's guidance, but eventually, after a six year apprenticesphip in music, "the beloved world of my labors, hopes and anxieties," the twenty-year old Pasternak abandoned it for philosophy, a subject in which he had become interested while pursuing his general education at the Moscow University.[8]

In 1912 he enrolled at the University of Marburg in Germany, where he studied under the famous neo-Kantian, Hermann Cohen. It did not take him long to realize that he was not cut out for scholarly pursuits because of emotional involvements with them, as he himself wrote: "I experienced the study of science more intensely than the subject matter required." (II, 239)* His interest in philosophy waned, soon to be completely shattered by an unhappy love, and he turned

* Unless otherwise indicated, all quotations from Pasternak are from the three-volume edition in Russian of his collected works published by the University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1961. See footnote on p. 9 regarding quotations from Doctor Zhivago.

to poetry where he at last found his life work.[9]

Pasternak first appeared in print in 1912. Two years later his first collection of verse, A Twin in a Cloud (Bliznec v oblake), was published, but attracted no attention. Subsequently Pasternak concurred with this indirect indication of public disapproval,[10] and published nothing for fully four years. Although Above the Barriers (Poverx bar'erov), his second volume of verse, showed unmistakable signs of mastery and of an original vision of the world, it, too, failed to evoke interest. During that same summer of 1917 Pasternak wrote his third book of lyrics My Sister Life (Sestra moja žizn'), which ultimately gained him fame, as well as the most flattering kind of recognition available to a poet -- imitation. The chaos brought about by the revolution and the civil war prevented the volume's publication until 1922, but it passed in manuscript from hand to poet's hand, and was studied and imitated.[11] When Themes and Variations (Temy i variacii) was brought out the following year, revealing undiminishing power and originality, Pasternak became generally recognized as one of the three leading Russian poets of the day, the other two being Sergei Esenin and Vladimir Mayakovsky.

Pasternak's influence and the imitation of his style by an ever growing number of poets were readily acknowledged by Soviet literary critics, but the uniqueness of his genius and the policies of the ruling Communist Party which frowned upon all manifestations of intellectual independence

precluded the emergence of anything resembling a "Pasternak school." Even the admiring article by a leading Soviet critic of the period A. Selivanovskij, contained a harsh political note: "Pasternak has no school or followers.... Many poets imitate Pasternak, but there can be no question of continuing his political line."[12]

The first Soviet writer publicly to acknowledge Pasternak's influence was the Formalist critic (and author of remarkable historical fiction), Yurij Tynjanov, who wrote in 1924:

> Pasternak is in ferment, and his fermentation infects others. This is why no poet is so frequently echoed in the works of other present-day poets as is Pasternak. It is not only that he himself is in ferment--he is also the yeast itself.[13]

Several years later, in 1931, Anatolij Tarasenkov prefaced his penetrating study of the poet with the following words:

> Boris Pasternak is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable poets of our times. He has exerted an enormous influence on the whole of contemporary poetry.[14]

Literary critics writing outside the Soviet Union fully concurred with this judgment, and were, moreover, much more explicit. D.S. Mirsky, for instance, declared that

> ...few poets escaped his influence. Not only Futurists like Asejev, but poets of very different schools, like Mandel'štam and Cvetaeva, were affected by it, and even Brjusov's last verse is a conscientiously studious imitation of Pasternak.[15]

In his history of Soviet Russian literature, Gleb Struve added yet further names to the list of poets influenced by Pasternak "at this or that stage of their career": Nikolaj

Tixonov, Vissarion Sajanov, Eduard Bagritskij, Ilja Sel'vinskij, and Pavel Antokol'skij.[16] A pioneering study of Pasternak's influence on contemporary Soviet poets, from the middle-aged Konstantin Simonov to the young Dudin and Nikolaj Gribačëv, was written by Mixail Korjakov.[17]

Until the publication of Doctor Zhivago, Pasternak's fame rested primarily on his verse, although his prose was no less striking and original, and although he had continued to publish prose almost as consistently as poetry.[18]

There are two major reasons for this paradox. The first is that Pasternak emerged on the literary scene during a period marked, as had been also the Golden Age of Russian literature, by the domination of poetry over prose--a domination in terms both of output and of reader interest. This period was similar to the Golden Age in yet another respect: most of its distinguished prose was produced by the poets themselves.[19]

The second, and by far the more important, reason for the paradox is rooted in the fact that Pasternak remained the poet even in his prose. In the words of Roman Jakobson: "Pasternak's prose is the characteristic prose of a poet of a great poetic period."[20] Wladimir Weidle wrote in a similar vein, finding even greater excellence in Pasternak's prose than in his poetry:

> His admirers of that time [the reference is to the period between 1915 and 1931] ought to have gone into greater raptures over that prose than over Pasternak's verses, for he was the poet also

> in his prose; his highly poetic language, saturated to the limit with imagery, is even more novel, unusual and expressive in prose than in combination with rhymes and with a comparatively standard meter.[21]

Before undertaking an analysis of the characteristic features of Pasternak's pre-Doctor Zhivago prose and poetry, it is imperative to survey, however briefly, that "great poetic period" to which he belonged. Such a survey is imperative because Pasternak, as he himself said of Mayakovsky, "had neighbors; he was not a solitary figure in poetry, he was not in a desert."[22] Despite the uniqueness and originality of his gifts, Pasternak was bound by a thousand threads to the major poetic movements of his age.

## 2. Pasternak's Literary Antecedents

Boris Pasternak, it will be recalled, was born in 1890, and began publishing his works in 1912. The dates coincided, practically to the year, with the emergence and the disintegration of the great literary school known as Symbolism, the very core of the Silver Age in Russian literature.[23]

Out of and around the ruins of Symbolism arose a number of poetic groups and schools that kept battering away at the heritage of the collapsed giant, each vigorously claiming preeminence for its program and poetics, and for the writings of its adherents. The number of these groups was legion, but only three of them, the three which made the most significant

contribution to Russian poetry, bore any relationship to Pasternak's development as a poet. The groups were the Acmeists, the Futurists, and the Imagists. All three agreed on the need for a critical approach to the past, and on the necessity to cut away dead wood, but there was strong, even violent, disagreement among them on the extent of this repudiation and on the ways and means of creating new poetry, a disagreement punctuated by extreme and often contradictory claims.

"What was needed," says C.M. Bowra in his essay on Pasternak,

> was a poet who could pick the different trends and combine them, correct the excesses of the various creeds and turn the modern movements to meet modern needs without giving too much emphasis to this or that claim of the competing antagonists. The man appeared in Boris Pasternak, who may be said to have seen from the very start what truth there was in the several theories and what contribution each had really to make to the general problem of poetical composition.[24]

Although this statement exaggerates the deliberateness of Pasternak's effort, its essential validity seems beyond question.

Another aspect of Pasternak's poetic achievement is presented by the fact that, while playing a major role in the task of turning "modern movements to meet modern needs," he remained well within the tradition of Russian literature, thus serving as a link between the poetical past and a poetical present that was recklessly trying to blast its

way into the future. All his life Pasternak had profound awareness of the artist's debt to the past, an awareness to which he gave eloquent expression late in his career--in Doctor Zhivago:

> Every man is born a Faust, with a longing to grasp and experience and express everything in the world. Faust became a scientist thanks to the mistakes of his predecessors and contemporaries. Progress in science is governed by the laws of repulsion, every step forward is made by refutation of prevalent errors and false theories. Faust was an artist thanks to the inspiring example of his teachers. Forward steps in art are governed by the law of attraction, are the result of the imitation of and admiration for beloved predecessors. (284)*

Soviet literary critics took note of Pasternak's link with his predecessors. He "combines in his art," wrote N. Stapanov, "the principles of versification of both Futurism and Symbolism," and "is closer to Symbolism and its traditions."[25] This conception was echoed in Selivanovskij's assertion that Pasternak's

> sources are derived from the Symbolist environment or, to phrase it more correctly, from the sphere of its ideas, interests, quests. This is precisely why Pasternak has become--personally, biographically and creatively--the bridge between Symbolism and Futurism.[26]

* Quotations from Doctor Zhivago are as a rule in my own translation of the Russian original as published by the University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1959. The page number, placed in parenthesis, immediately follows each such citation. The capital E preceding the page reference signifies a borrowing from the English translation by Max Hayward and Manya Harari, New York, 1958. The transliteration of the characters in the novel follows the transliteration in this translation.

The same conclusion was reached also by Roman Jakobson, who elaborated the idea still further:

> Pasternak's creative work constitutes the link between Symbolism and the school that followed it....While continuing a tradition in one respect, the poet rejects tradition in another all the more emphatically. But the rejection of tradition is never total: rejection reveals persistence of traditional elements. Therefore, Pasternak, who conceives of his literary task as being the continuator of Symbolism, produces a new art out of his intentions to repeat and perpetuate the old art.[27]

It is in this paradoxical "perpetuation through rejection" that the paths of Pasternak and Acmeism crossed. Unlike Pasternak, the Acmeists had started out as avowed pupils and followers of the Symbolists; like Pasternak, they rebelled against Symbolism without rejecting its achievements and traditions. The major tenet in the Acmeist program which Pasternak implemented in his writings (although he did not explicitly subscribe to it) with even greater precision than had any of the Acmeists, was the introduction into modern Russian poetry of the various colors, shapes and smells of the real world, of objects in their concreteness. It is as though he had sought to express in his verse a solidarity with the criticisms of Symbolism by the Acmeists, and to illustrate their creed.

"Russian Symbolism," wrote the leading Acmeist poet and theoretician, Nikolaj Gumilëv,

> had directed its best energies toward the sphere of the unknown. It had alternately joined hands

> with mysticism, theosophy, occultism....Acmeism can point out that, by its very nature, the unfathomable cannot be fathomed....Always to be aware of the unfathomable, but never to offend that awareness by likely or unlikely guesses--this is Acmeism's tenet.[28]

The other leading Acmeist theoretician, Sergej Gorodeckij, was even more precise:

> The contention between Symbolism and Acmeism...is first of all a struggle for this world, this resounding, colorful world which has shape, weight and time--for this our planet Earth. After all those 'refusals' to accept it, the world is now irretrievably accepted by Acmeism in the complete sum total of its beauty and ugliness.[29]

One more quotation, this time from a Soviet literary critic:

> Characteristic of Acmeism was the reality of things, of objects. Acmeism's attachment to things was as passionate and limitless as was Symbolism's love of 'correspondences,' of mysticism and mystery.[30]

To a degree unequalled by any Acmeist, Pasternak filled his lines with sights, smells, sounds and objects. More effectively than any Acmeist he shielded his verse from the mysticism and vagueness which ultimately degenerated into abstract declarations in the works of Symbolist poets.[31] Doctor Zhivago contains a scene which shows vividly a poet's evocation of life's concreteness. The scene describes young Zhivago working on a poem, but the autobiographical element is nowhere more apparent than in this passage:

> Air, light, the noise of life, reality burst into his poetry from the street as through an open window. The outside world, everyday

> things, nouns, crowded in and took possession of his lines, driving out the vaguer parts of speech. Things, things and more things lined up rhymed columns on the page. (284)

"Things, things and more things" from everyday life filled Pasternak's early poetry and prose, leading virtually all critics and reviewers to resort to the word <u>veščnost'</u> ("thingness" or "thingishness" would be a suitable English equivalent) when writing about Pasternak, a word standing for everything that was anathema to the Symbolists: humbleness of details, their prosaic, everyday aspect. The following examples are taken practically at random from <u>My Sister Life</u>, as translated by George Reavey:

> [The rain] crumbles a branch like lace at the window.
> ...rolls
> From roof to gutter and spills over.
> (p. 105)

> Mnët vetku v okne, kak kruževce.
> .....
> .....skatyvaetsja
> Po krovle, za žolob i čerez.
> ("Plačuščij sad," I, 6)

> But I fear, my friend, my gloom
> Will whiter somehow
> Gleam than lampshade, fever's bloom
> Or white-bandaged brow.
> (p. 106)

> I mgla moja, moj drug, božus',
> On stanet kak-nibud'
> Belej, čem bred, čem abažur,
> Čem belyj bint na lbu!
> ("Ne trogat'," I, 13)

> The breeze tries hard to raise
> A rose at the request
> Of lips and hair and shoes,
> Of hems and nicknames too.
> (p. 109)

Veter rozu probuet
Pripodnjat' po pros'be
Gub, volos i obuvi,
Podolov i prozvišč.
("Zvëzdy letom," I, 20)

The heat hangs heavy on seven hills,
And doves strut in the mildewed hay.
From the sun the turban slips:
It's time to pull out a fresh towel
(In the bucket it's already dipped)
And wind it round the cupola.
(p. 113)

Žar na semi xolmax,
Golubi v tlelom sence,
S solnca spadaet čalma:
Vremja menjat' polotence
(Moknet na dnišče vedra)
I namotat' na kupol.
(U sebja doma," I, 42)

And afterwards there was a hayloft,
Exhaling the smell of vinous cork
Since days when August had passed by
And paths were left unheeded.
(p. 117)

Zasim, imelsja senoval
I paxnul vinnoj probkoj
S tex dnej, čto avgust minoval
I ne pololi tropki.
("Imelos'," I, 50)

Unfortunately, the translation has robbed the lines of much of their poetry and has, therefore, tended to increase the impression of "thingness," and to draw one's attention more insistently than does the original to Pasternak's preoccupation with objects, to his quick, faithful eye, and to his avoidance of the other-worldliness and the poetic dreaminess which were so characteristic of Symbolism. In this, Pasternak goes further than Gumilëv, whose themes and concrete details were drawn from romantic lands and exotic nature.[32]

In his evocation of the world of things, Pasternak also goes much further than the Acmeist Osip Mandel'štam, whose monumental, albeit ponderous, contribution to the world of poetry has as yet to receive from literary scholars the attention it deserves. Pasternak's works reveal as great an erudition and as strong a link with the cultural heritage of the past as do Mandel'štam's. However, Pasternak escaped creating the impression of bookishness, while Mandel'štam's poetry had been justifiably characterized by Selivanovskij as "not a direct reflection of life, but a reflection of its reflection in art."[33]

The only important Acmeist poet who, like Pasternak, did not shrink from prosaic objects and words was Anna Axmatova, but her poetic world was otherwise too far removed from his to justify comparison.

## 3. Pasternak and the Futurists

Despite his manifest closeness to the Acmeists, Pasternak was never one of them, nor was his name ever linked with the group. The only literary movement which may have some claim on him was Futurism. Sometime during the summer of 1914, he joined a small and short-lived Futurist group, the so-called Centrifuga, whose membership consisted primarily of its founder, Sergej Bobrov, and Nikolaj Aseev.[34] Pasternak

later also contributed to LEF ("Left Front"), a periodical started by the leading Futurist, Vladimir Mayakovsky. The latter belonged to the Cubo-Futurists who had launched the entire Futurist movement, and who were responsible for whatever contribution it has made to poetic theory and practice. A brief consideration of that contribution, relating it to Pasternak's art, is in order at this point.[35]

The Futurists were seekers after new forms, daring, often reckless, adventurers in the field of Russian prosody and, above all, in the hitherto unexplored byways of the WORD and word-formation. Pasternak never participated in the Futurists' experimentation with neologisms, and never shared the totality of their rejection of past literary experience.[36] But he could not fail to respond to the challenge and the stimulus of their quests, and could not avoid being influenced by them, however indirectly. In this he shared the experience of the overwhelming majority of Russian poets writing on the eve of the Revolution, and during the immediate post-revolutionary period.[37] Whatever else Futurism was, it was predominantly a violent continuation of Symbolism's revolution against the blind alley in which late nineteenth century Russian prosody had found itself. It was also a continuation of the Acmeist rebellion against Symbolism itself. Since, in his own way, Pasternak was heir both to the Symbolist revolution and to the Acmeist rebellion, it was inevitable that he become, however, tenuously, a "fellow traveller"

of the Futurists.

In addition, Pasternak was irresistibly drawn to Mayakovsky's towering personality, and to the power and agony of his poetic world. A complicated personal relationship resulted, movingly described by Pasternak in his two autobiographies.[38] As a poet, however, he was not influenced by Mayakovsky. On the contrary, Pasternak himself testified to his determined effort to "suppress" whatever accidental similarities he was able to discover in his own and in Mayakovsky's lines.[39] Actually, he need not have worried: no two poets could have been further apart. It was Mayakovsky who, in a conversation with Pasternak, jokingly and yet aptly characterized that apartness: "We really are different. You love lightning in the sky, and I--in an electric iron."[40]

Having little else in common with the Futurists, Pasternak shared with them an overpowering tendency toward novatorstvo, a revolt against frozen poetic canons, and a quest for a freer poetic diction. With respect to novatorstvo, the Futurists were merely a part--the noisiest and most irreverent part--of all post Symbolist Russian poetry. Their major contribution lies in the world of words, in placing the word at the center of the creative effort, in inventing new words and word-formations. Ultimately, in the work of its most extreme representatives, Futurism "liberated" the word altogether by the invention of a "trans-sense"

language (*zaum'*) based on sound relationships and deprived of meaning.

The basic contribution here was made by another leading Futurist, Velemir Xlebnikov, whose strange genius has left an indelible imprint on poetic diction in twentieth-century Russia. Especially relevant to Pasternak's word texture is Xlebnikov's preoccupation with Church-Slavicisms and with archaisms dating back to the eighteenth century. Possessing, in Mirsky's words, "a deep, primary feeling for the Russian language,"[41] and following the principle of analogy to which all languages adhere in their development, Xlebnikov rejuvenated and enriched the language of Russian poetry in a manner that makes his work reflect "on an enormously magnified scale the creative processes of the life history of the language."[42] Much of his work belongs to the poet's laboratory rather than to literary history. Xlebnikov experimented with words in which sound and meaning combined to reveal hidden or forgotten etymological origins, and he also experimented with words for words' sake, with words dissociated from meaning, with what he called the self-sufficient word (*samovitoe slovo*).[43]

As already pointed out, Pasternak did not accompany the Futurists on their intoxicating excursions into the world of neologisms.[44] As for *zaum'*, its euphonic temptations simply did not exist for him even during that headiest period of

which he later wrote with a breast-beating unusual for Pasternak:

> My ear was at that time perverted by the pretentious extravagances and the break from everything natural that were in vogue in those days. Everything spoken in a normal way rebounded from me. I forgot that words by themselves can mean and contain something apart from the cheap toys with which they are strung.[45]

This is an exaggeration (to which I shall return), and one in which Pasternak is unfair to himself. In fact, he had always avoided meaningless "cheap toys." There is a revealing passage in The Last Summer (Povest'), written during the period we have just seen Pasternak condemn, in which he describes a situation that compels a writer to invent words. Characteristically, these words turn out to be only a temporary expedient, only raw material ultimately to be rewritten into meaningful words of the living language.[46] No published work by Pasternak shows that he ever swerved from his conviction that "the music of the word is not an acoustic phenomenon and does not consist of the euphony of vowels and consonants, taken by themselves, but of the relationship between the meaning and the sound of the words.[47] Again, using Zhivago as his mouthpiece, Pasternak stated: "I have never seen art as a form but rather as a hidden, secret part of content." (281)[48]

It is therefore impossible to agree with Poggioli's assertion that "what ties his [Pasternak's] poetry to the Futuristic experiment, and especially to the manner

of Xlebnikov, is his conception and treatment of the word."[49] On the contrary, Pasternak was always profoundly aware of an inalienable relationship between the sound and meaning of words whereas Xlebnikov often placed them at odds with each other,[50] and at times insisted on the self-sufficient existence of each separate letter.[51]

What ties Pasternak to Xlebnikov is not the latter's "manner," but his awakening in the young poet (as in most of the poets of the period) of an awareness of the word's potentialities for renascence, and an awakening of a need to exploit those potentialities. Xlebnikov's concentration on Church Slavic vocabulary for the derivation of new words[52] is of special significance in relation to Pasternak. Church Slavicisms and archaisms abound in the latter's poetry, adding majesty to his complex verbal texture.

Although there was nothing of the linguistic exhibitionist about Pasternak in his choice of words, he actually paid even less homage to poetic conventions than did Vladimir Mayakovsky himself. Pasternak's task was the more difficult because, unlike Mayakovsky, who so often resorted to neologisms for adequate expression, he insisted on finding among the words already in existence the one that would serve imaginatively in a given context. This he did in the belief that

> the most extraordinary discoveries were made when the content filled the artist to overflowing, affording him no time, and in his urgency he spoke his new word in the old language, without thinking whether it was old or new.[53]

In order to find the one inevitable word, Pasternak would abandon himself to the "winds blown by the gods of words,"[54] gathering gifts from all of them, blending into his verbal texture half-forgotten Church-Slavicisms and archaisms (such as prjadat', nakorot', rodovspomogatel'nost') immensely foreign-sounding borrowings from West European languages (vizioner, homo sapiens, divinacija, fatamorgana), humble prostonarodny words and colloquialisms (naxrapom, za panibrata, šabaš, trudit'), and, finally, numerous sensitive and poetic words denoting the subtlest shadings of mood, sound, or color.

Unlike Mayakovsky, Pasternak shrank from vulgarisms despite his insistence that, if need be, "I would not be too squeamish to use an unprintable word." ("Elene," I, 44).

Pasternak creates the impression that words and images came to him unbidden in a wild onrush, and retained their original impetuousness even after he had willed them into an orderly design dominated by a regular meter. Or, as Poggioli expressed it, Pasternak's diction is "a highly complex linguistic mosaic...employing a diction ruled at once by mental balance and emotional stress."[55] This "complex linguistic mosaic" would no doubt have been less rich were it not for Xlebnikov's remarkable experiments with words, and Mayakovsky's magnificent violence with them. Nor would Pasternak's diction have matured as rapidly as is manifested in Above the Barriers, written between 1914 and

1916, when its author was only in his mid-twenties.

Jurij Tynjanov's Arxaisty i novatory contains a passage which aptly sums up Pasternak's relation to the Futurist movement, simultaneously bringing into focus three major aspects of Pasternak's early poetry and prose: language, "thingness," and the cultural heritage of the past.

> Mayakovsky's and Xlebnikov's rebellion uprooted bookish language, discovering in it potentialities for new coloring.
>
> But along with that discovery, the rebellion had moved the word far away into the distance....The rebellious word broke away, removed itself from objects. The word became free, but it became too free, it was no longer attachable. Hence, the striving of the former nucleus of Futurism toward things, towards the bare objects of everyday life [byt]....Hence also another striving: to aim words at an object, somehow to turn around both words and things in such a way that the word no longer hangs loose in the air, and the object is no longer bare, to make peace between them to interweave them in a brotherly fashion. This striving is at one and the same time a natural pulling away from 'hyperbole', a seeking to make use of the nineteenth century as poetic material while standing firm on the foundations of a new prosody: not to depend on the nineteenth century as a model, and yet not to be ashamed of being related to one's begetter.
>
> Herein lies Pasternak's mission.[56]

Futurism started him on this mission, and thereby refuted Ilja Ehrenburg's splendidly quotable but inaccurate and unfair assertion that Pasternak's connection with Futurism was nothing more than "a child's disease, the measles, which happened to bear the label of 'Centrifuga.'"[57]

## 4. Pasternak and the Imagists

The basic reason for Pasternak's disinclination to indulge in neologisms and to embrace the doctrine of the "self-sufficient" word was rooted in the commanding significance which content had for him. Art as a form was to him nothing more than "a hidden, secret part of content." He saw the word not as an entity in itself, but as a vehicle for conveying meaning, merely a component of the language process in which words invariably affect, color, modify, and enrich each other, acquiring shadings that go beyond the fixed meaning normally attached to them.

One of the most striking and most prolific creators of images in the history of Russian poetry, Pasternak nevertheless did not join the Imagist movement, nor was he attracted by any of its members as he was by the personality and creative work of Vladimir Mayakovsky. Pasternak fully appreciated the sublimely genuine talent of Sergei Esenin, the greatest of the Imagists, describing him as "a present to our times,...a living, palpitating particle of that spirit of pure art which, after Pushkin, we call the highest Mozartean principle, the Mozartean element."[58] But there was no point of contact between the two contemporaries; they existed side by side as do parallel lines. The one thing they had in common, which, indeed, they shared with many

modern poets everywhere, was an overriding awareness of the poetic image: that is, of figures of speech and of many uses in making poetry out of one's own existence and vision of life.

The first Manifesto of the Russian Imagists was published on January 30, 1919, signed by Esenin, Vadim Šeršenevič ( originally a Futurist), Rjurik Ivnev and Anatolij Mariengof, who published their verses in a review appropriately called Hostelry for Travelers in the Beautiful. In their conception of the nature of imagery, they were, like Pasternak, close to the founder and theoretician of the Anglo-American Imagist school, Ezra Pound, to whom the image "was that which presents the intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time."[59] This idea is echoed by Šeršenevič: "What is an image? The shortest distance with the greatest speed,"[60] and is illuminatingly elaborated by Pasternak in his "Translating Shakespeare":

> Metaphorical language is the result of the disproportion between man's short life and the immense and long-term tasks he set himself. Because of this, he needs to look at things as sharply as an eagle and to convey his vision in flashes which can be immediately apprehended. This is just what poetry is. Outsize personalities use metaphor as a shorthand of the spirit.[61]

Šeršenevič, Pound, and Pasternak agreed on yet another important aspect of the image, namely, its central position in a work of art. Ezra Pound's famous dictum that "it is better to present one Image in a lifetime than to produce

voluminous works"[62] was echoed in Pasternak's assertion that "in art man is silent and the image speaks. And it becomes apparent that only the image can keep pace with the successes of nature."[63] Similarly, there was Šeršenevič's insistence: "The image, and the image only!...Say whatever you please, but only by means of present-day rhythmics of images."[64]

For Šeršenevič this was only a starting point. Having placed the image at the very core of creativity, he proceeded to proclaim "the victory of the image over sense, and the liberation of the word from content."[65] Since "all content in a work of art is just as stupid and meaningless as newspaper clippings pasted on to paintings,...Imagist poems can be read with equal success backward."[66] In other words, the Futurist <u>zaum'</u> of the word was being replaced by the <u>zaum'</u> of imagery. Most Russian Imagist poetry ultimately degenerated into nothing more than what is suggested by the title of Šeršenevič's poem:" A Catalogue of Imagery."[67]

Neither Pasternak nor Ezra Pound (nor any Anglo-American Imagist) ever went to the extremes of a Šeršenevič. Nor did they ever deny their literary heritage, as the Russian Imagists did with unsavory gusto.[68]

There is a touch of irony in the fact that the only poet who, in Bowra's words, had "picked up their [the Russian Imagists'] doctrine and shown how it should be used,"[69] was one who had so little in common with them--

Boris Pasternak.*

## 5. "A Downpour of Light"

Like the Acmeists, Pasternak was a superb craftsman who retained deep ties with the Russian literary tradition; like the Futurists, he was immersed in novatorstvo and was creatively aware of the power of sound in words; like the Imagists, he strove to capture in his poetry and prose the miracles wrought by figurative speech. At the same time the uniqueness and originality of his genius were too striking to be neatly tucked away within the framework of a literary school, or even of three schools. This, of course, is equally true of any major poet.

Pasternak's uniqueness lay in a vision of the world that was all his own, in a blending of content with form which needs no signature to be recognized.

Not a single poem of his could have been written before him," wrote Ehrenburg as early as 1922, adding:

> There is the rapture of surprise in him, the conglomeration of new emotions, the force of "firstness," in one word, the word after the deluge or after a week spent in a cellar protected from cannonshot....One of Pasternak's poems is titled "The Urals for the First Time." All of his books deserve the title "The World for the First Time."70

* For a detailed discussion of Pasternak's use of imagery during this period, see Chapter III.

In his enthusiasm for "the most cherished among my brothers, the poets,"[71] Ehrenburg urged Marina Cvetaeva, herself an original and significant poet, to read Pasternak. This she stubbornly refused to do until one day in 1922, when she began to leaf through My Sister Life--and "I found myself under it as under a downpour....A downpour of light."[72] That same year Cvetaeva published her essay, "A Downpour of Light," a magical blending of penetrating literary criticism and of a love song to a fellow-poet. Pasternak, she wrote, "is the only contemporary who leaves me gasping for breath."[73]

Like Ehrenburg, Cvetaeva recognized and responded to the "firstness" in Pasternak. In his poetry, she wrote,

> there is something of an undiscovered island, of an infant, of the first paradise, incoherent--and dumbfounding. This is nothing unusual in someone aged three, in a baby; but in someone aged twenty-three it is unusual, and it is called: a poet....No, it is not Pasternak who is the infant...it is the world inside him that is the infant. As for Pasternak himself, I'd sooner place him in the very first days of creation: the first rivers, the first dawns, the first thundershowers. He was created before Adam.[74]

Following the lead of Ehrenburg and Cvetaeva, most critics inside and outside the Soviet Union have reiterated the theme of "firstness" in Pasternak's writing. Mirsky's observation is typical:

> Pasternak's landscapes and still lifes are perhaps his most remarkable achievements. They give the impression of seeing the world for the first time; at first they seem ludicrously farfetched, but the oftener one rereads them the more one realizes the almost mathematical precision and exactness of his imagery.[75]

An intriguing variation on the theme of Pasternak's "firstness" is provided by Poggioli:

> Many critics have remarked that Pasternak looks at the world with the eyes of one newly born. It would be better to say that he looks at it with reborn eyes. As suggested by the title of one of his books, poetry is for him a 'second birth' through which man sees again the familiar as strange, and the strange as familiar. Yet, whether strange or familiar, every object is unique. To give the effect of this uniqueness, the poet paints every single thing as if it were a monad, unwilling or unable to escape from the rigid frame of its own contours.[76]

For all their eloquence, the critics described, rather than explained, this impression of "firstness." It was Pasternak himself who pointed to its sources. He did this, apparently unintentionally, in a brief passage on Tolstoy, attempting to find the one feature most characteristic of the man who was "a mountain like Elbrus."[77] The feature Pasternak chose was that quality which literary critics cherish most in his own works:

> All his life, [Pasternak wrote of Tolstoy], he possessed the quality of seeing things in the detached finality of each separate moment, in sharp relief as we see things only on rare occasions, in childhood, or on the crest of an all-embracing happiness, or in the triumph of a great spiritual victory.
>
> To see things like that it is necessary that one's eyes should be directed by passion...the passion of creative contemplation [which] Tolstoy constantly carried about within himself. Indeed, it was in its light that he saw everything in its pristine freshness, in a new way, as though for the first time.[78]

There are two other aspects which must be considered in a discussion of Pasternak's works. The first is his

instinctive faith in life, the never-ending wonder at the miracles of existence revealing themselves to him at every turn--a faith and a wonder running through such early lines (1917) as "Whatever should I do with my joy?"(I, 24), down to Zhivago's very name which in Church Slavic means "alive" or "living." Pasternak's was not an easy optimism, for he was profoundly aware of the inherent tragedy of existence:

> One must be in a delirium, to say the least,
> In order to consent to being earth.
> (Nado byt' v bredu, po menšej mere,
> Ctoby dat' soglasje byt' zemlēj.)
> ("Bolezni zemli," I, 23)

He was also aware that

> In our time death's in the very air:
> To open a window is to open one's veins.
>
> (A v naši dni i vozdux paxnet smertju:
> Otkryt' okno, čto žily otvorit'.)
> ("Razryv," IX, I, 82)

And for Pasternak "there is no love without scars and sacrifices."[79] Yet his vision of reality and of man was free of morbidity or despair. There is grief and sorrow in his poetry, but they unfailingly acquire a manliness, a sun-flooded serenity which captured almost immediate attention. Marina Cvetaeva, for instance, subtitled her essay on Pasternak "The Poetry of Eternal Manliness." "He is," she wrote,

> a poet of luminosities, just as there are poets of darknesses [to achieve the desired contrast, she coined the Russian plurals <u>svetloty</u> and <u>temnoty</u>]....Light! Eternal manliness! He is

> swept and drenched by light. Not only by the light of the sun, but by the light of all things that issue forth light--and, for Pasternak, everything does.[80]

Everything, indeed--to the very end. Shortly before his death in 1960, Pasternak wrote:

> World, Nature, Universe,
> With secret trembling, to the end,
> I will thy long and moving service
> In tears of happiness attend.[81]

Many a passage of Doctor Zhivago is pervaded by a similar "joyful sense of the triumphant purity of being" (E 437), as, for example:

> Lord! Lord!, he whispered, and all this is for me? Why hast Thou given me so much? Why has Thou admitted me to Thy presence, allowed me to stray into Thy world, among Thy treasures, under Thy stars, and to the feet of my luckless, irrational, uncomplaining love, who fills my eyes with perpetual delight?"(E 437)

One cannot but believe that without this eternal wonder at life, wise and at the same time childlike ("He is endowed with an eternal childhood," Anna Axmatova once wrote in a lyric dedicated to Pasternak),[82] he would have fallen victim to the "death in the air," as did his two great contemporaries, Esenin and Mayakovsky who died by their own hand.[83]

Pasternak escaped suicide for yet another reason. Analyzing the mental agony that precedes the act of self-destruction, he wrote that the fatal decision comes at the moment when:

> one abandons all hope, one turns away from one's past, one declares oneself a bankrupt and one's memories as nonexistent...The continuity of one's inner existence is destroyed, the personality has ceased to exist.[84]

Pasternak remained faithful to his memories and to the continuity of his inner existence, fulfilling Zhivago's toast to his friends during the early days of the revolution:

> Unprecedented, extraordinary events are approaching. Before they burst upon us, here is what I wish you: May God grant us not to lose each other and not to lose our souls. (E 181-82)

Like Zhivago, and like untold millions of Russians, Pasternak lost many loved ones in the turmoil of events, but he did not lose his soul. Despite massive pressures and temptations from the Soviet government and the ruling Communist Party, Pasternak retained an unassailable integrity and an almost legendary tenacity. Many of the leading Soviet men of letters succumbed to fear, or to rewards, or to both; others perished; still others destroyed themselves. Inexplicably, Pasternak retained both his life and his integrity, thereby fulfilling his own precept:

> And never for a single moment
> Betray your credo or pretend,
> But be alive--this only matters--,
> Alive and burning to the end.[85]
>
> ( I dolžen ni jedinoj dolʹkoj
> Ne otstupatsja ot lica,
> No byt' živym, živym i tolʹko,
> Živym i tol'ko do konca.)
> ("Byt' znamenitym--nekrasivo," III,63)

True, Pasternak made several attempts to move in step with the times, to retreat from his individualism and to immerse himself in the spirit of the social upheaval brought about by the revolution. In a poem written at the end of 1918, he proclaimed his "surrender" to the revolution, pro-

phesying that the new year "will take my shattered self and begin to reeducate me all over again":

> Predvižu, kak menja, razbitogo
> Nenastupivšij étot god
> Voz'mëtsja syznova vospityvat'.
> ("Kreml' v buran konca 1918 goda," I, 75)

In 1923 he wrote "High Malady," (Vysokaja bolezn'), a long philosophical poem in which he pursued the social theme--and ended by giving his own, highly individual, account of the October Revolution. The same is true of the two long narrative poems on the 1905 Revolution: "The Year Nineteen Hundred and Five" (Devjat'sot pjatyj god) and "Lieutenant Schmidt" (Lejtenant Šmidt). The closest Pasternak ever came to embracing the revolution was to affirm in Second Birth (Vtoroe roždenie), a volume of lyrics published in 1932, that "the remoteness of socialism is here, now," and to wish that only socialism would "send us forth into the future" (I, 326).

However genuine, all his attempts to surrender to the revolution and to the Soviet way of life invariably ended with a Galileo-like return to the original premise. Pasternak's premise was the primacy of the human being, each with his own individuality, unique and cherished in all its weakness, pettiness and questioning. As he expressed it in a poem which had started out by extolling the Five-Year Plan: "But what about my inner self?"[86]

For years, Soviet critics were rather mild in their

treatment of Pasternak, voicing their disapproval of his ideological nonconformity in gentle admonitions that he resolve "the contradiction within himself between individualism and socialism."[87] In the middle thirties, however, their criticism of Pasternak became sharper, albeit less frequent, and Soviet journals and publishing houses gradually closed their doors to him, except as a translator. Save for two brief prose fragments,[88] not a single original work written by him between 1930 and 1934 was published in the Soviet Union, although reprints of his earlier works continued to appear until 1937. "Things are hard on his wife," wrote the playwright Aleksandr Afinogenov in a diary entry for September 21, 1937, "for money must be found and life lived somehow, but he is unaware of anything, except that at times, when money matters become too difficult, he would do some translating."[89]

## 6. Doctor Zhivago

The publication in 1943 of a slender column of new verse by Boris Pasternak, On Early Trains (Rannie poezda), seemed to herald his re-emergence on the Soviet literary scene. In the meantime, however, changes had been taking place in Pasternak which precluded such an eventuality, and inexorably led him ever further away from the official conception of the writer's function in Communist society. Even more important

from the point of view of this study, those changes led Pasternak to a reassessment of values, altering his attitude toward his already published writings, and strongly influencing the style and content of his subsequent works, most notably Doctor Zhivago.

In I Remember, Pasternak spoke of his past achievements in the bluntest terms: "I would never lift a finger to bring back from oblivion three-fourths of what I have written."[90] The very opening paragraph of I Remember is a sharp condemnation of his earlier autobiography, Safe Conduct, as a book "spoilt by unnecessary mannerisms, the common fault of those years."[91] Equally harsh was his judgment of much of the poetry written during "those years": "I do not like my style up to 1940, I reject half of Mayakovsky, and I do not like everything of Esenin. The general disintegration of form in those days, the impoverishment of thought, the uneven and impure style are foreign to me."[92] Whether one agrees with this statement or not,[93] the fact remains that Pasternak continued to insist that the only work that "I am not ashamed of and for which I can answer with the utmost confidence, [is] a novel in prose with a supplement in verse, Doctor Zhivago."[94] And again, with a childlike defenselessness that went hand-in-hand with an unyielding refusal to compromise: "What am I without the novel, and what have you to write about me without drawing upon that work, its terms and revelations?"[95]

The "terms and revelations" in Doctor Zhivago do, indeed, point to the causes and nature of the changes in Pasternak which had matured by 1940, the date he had himself specified.

The years which immediately preceded it, had magnified to monstrous proportions Pasternak's vision of the Soviet State as looming "by the very wall" outside the room where, in 1930, the suicide Mayakovsky lay in his coffin.[96] By the mid-thirties, as though in fulfillment of Zhivago's prophecy made shortly after the revolution, the State "was on all sides," there was "nothing else." (p. 182) No longer content to stand "by the very wall," the State had broken into the building that housed the Union of Soviet Writers and had decimated the writers' ranks through purge, arrest, torture, exile and death. Although Pasternak courageously refused to compromise with his conscience, he somehow escaped direct harm during that period.[97] But he paid a heavy price as a writer: he became a literary "non-person."

The shattering moral and intellectual crisis brought by the purge seems to have resulted in the emergence of Christianity as a major theme in Pasternak's prose and poetry. While it now seems indisputable that he was baptized by his nurse when still an infant,[98] and while it is true that he had never publicly connected his interest in Christianity with the crisis precipitated by the purge, the fact remains that religious themes emerged into prominence in his writings only after that tragic period. A

statement by Edmund Wilson reinforces my conviction that the two are somehow linked: "Pasternak's interest in Christianity is said to date from 1936, when the great purges were getting under way."[99] Although Wilson does not indicate the reasons for the statement, his treatment of it leaves no doubt that he accepts it without qualifications.

It is not surprising that Pasternak's was an extremely individual and unorthodox brand of Christianity, although his frame of reference, his religious citations, and the rituals he described all conform to those of the Greek Orthodox Church. As Wilson expressed it, Pasternak seems to have

> reinvented Christianity which, to this non-religious reviewer, is made here to seem a good deal more impressive than in the works of the literary converts: a force of regeneration that has given Pasternak faith to survive and the moral courage to write this book [Doctor Zhivago].[100]

The priest and Trappist, Thomas Merton, also found a genuine spiritual force in Pasternak's Christianity, however unorthodox. It is, Merton wrote,

> Something very simple, very rudimentary, deeply sincere, utterly personal and yet for all its questionable expressions, obviously impregnated with the true spirit of the Gospels and the liturgy.[101]

While asserting in the very next sentence that "Pasternak has no Christian message," Merton added:

> Those who have been struck by the religious content of his work have been responding, consciously or otherwise, not so much to a

> formal Christian witness as to a deep and uncompromising spirituality.[102]

Whatever the exact nature of Pasternak's religious experience, it would have remained outside the sphere of this study had it not caused profound changes in Pasternak the writer, in his style and in his use of imagery. His conception of Christ stands in the very center of the experience. According to this conception, as presented in Doctor Zhivago, the history of modern man began with Christ who gave man his "spiritual equipment": "love of one's neighbor," "the idea of free personality" and "the idea of life as sacrifice." (E 10) Christ was at the same time "the be-all in my destiny" to Pasternak. (E 549) Above all, Christ was "emphatically human," and at the moment of His coming

> gods and nations ceased to be and man came into being--man the carpenter, man the plowman, man the shepherd with his flock of sheep at sunset, man who does not sound in the least proud. (E 43)

Christ's essential humanness and simplicity is a major aspect of Pasternak's conception of Him:

> But for me the most important thing is that Christ speaks in parables taken from life, that He explains the truth in terms of everyday reality.(E 42)

In the novel--in its prose as well as its poetry--Pasternak ceased to be the purely lyric poet for the first time in his long creative life. He was drawn out of his own self and was "drawn to people" (mne k ljudjam xočetsja),

as Zhivago was "after having read Your Testament all night." (557):

> I feel for them all of them,
> As though I'd been inside their hides,
> I melt the way the snow melts,
> I glower the way the morning glowers.
>
> (Ja čuvstvuja za nix za vsex,
> Kak budto pobyval v ix škure.
> Ja taju sam, kak taet sneg,
> Ja sam, kak utro, brovi xmurju.)[103]
> ("Rassvet," 557)

And further:

> The nameless ones are part of me.
> Children also, the trees, and stay-at-homes.
> All these are victors over me--
> And therein lies my sole victory.
> (E 550)
>
> (So mnoju ljudi bez imën,
> Derev'ja, deti, domosedy.
> Ja vsemi imi pobeždën,
> I tol'ko v tom moja pobeda.)
> (Rassvet, 558)

The same idea is expressed also in the poem "Wedding":

> For life, too, is only an instant,
> Only a dissolving of ourselves
> In the selves of all others
> As if bestowing a gift.
> (E 535)
>
> (Žizn' ved' tože tol'ko mig,
> Tol'ko rastvoren'e
> Nos samix vo vsex drugix
> Kak by im v daren'e)
> ("Svad'ba," 543)

The idea is expressed in the novel itself, although approached from a different angle:

> And so it turned out that only a life similar to the life of those around us, merging with it without a ripple, is genuine life, and that an unshared happiness is not happiness.[104]

The idea is again reiterated in I Remember, merging with Pasternak's conception of life as a sacrifice: "In life it is more necessary to lose than to gain. A seed will only germinate if it dies."[105]

This idea of life as meaningful and purposeful sacrifice was publicly voiced by Pasternak for the first time in 1936, a few months before the great purges started. Addressing his colleagues at a gathering of Soviet writers in Minsk, he exhorted them: "We must not expect to be saved by greater diligence, as has been said here. Art without risks and without self-sacrificing of the soul is unthinkable."[106] This idea forms the major theme of the first of the poems attributed to Zhivago,"Hamlet," based on Pasternak's conception of Shakespeare's tragedy as being "not a drama of weakness, but of duty and self-denial."[107] Self-sacrifice for the sake of self-sacrifice is a conception completely alien to Pasternak: the seed dies in order to germinate, that is, to create life, to further life, to share in immortality:

> The traces of self-sacrificing love
> Are not intended for obliteration.
> .....
> To live and burn is a universal custom,
> Your life becomes immortal only then
> When a path to life and greatness
> You blaze for it by your self-sacrificing deed.
>
> (Sledy ljubvi samootveržennoj
> Ne poležat uničtoženju.
> .....

Žit' i sgorat u vsex v obyčae,
No žizn' togda liš' obessmertiš',
Kogda ej k svetu i veličiju
Svoeju žertvoj put' pročertiš'.)
(Smert' sapëra,III, 47-48)

The simplicity of Christ, the truth which He explains "in terms of everyday reality," the feeling that he, Pasternak, had become "part of the nameless ones," as though he were "inside their hides," the stern, noble idea of life as a sacrifice--all combined to help Pasternak achieve the restraint and simplicity which distinguish the style of his novel and of his later verses as compared with his earlier writings.

It is this achievement of naturalness and simplicity which represents the second major change in Pasternak since 1940. It helps us to understand his condemnation of past "mannerisms." He had for years striven for simplicity, equating it with greatness and immortality, an idea expressed in a poem written as early as 1931:

In the experience of great poets
There are aspects of a naturalness
Which, as one tastes of it,
Cannot but leave one completely stunned.

Related to all that exists, rooted in certainty,
And daily rubbing elbows with the future,
One cannot help falling, as into heresy,
Into unheard of simplicity.

(Jest' v opyte bol'šix poètov
Čerty estestvennosti toj,
Čto nevozmožno, ix izvedav,
Ne končit' polnoj nemotoj.

V rodstve so vsem, čto jest', uverjas',
I znajas's buduščim v bytu,

Nel'zia ne vpast' k koncu, kak v eres',
V neslyxannuju prostotu.)
(Zdes' budet vsë: perežitoe, I, 327)

As with so many other aspects of Pasternak's spiritual and intellectual life, Zhivago shares with him also this unquenchable yearning for simplicity:

> It had been the dream of his life to write with an originality so discreet, so well concealed, as to be unnoticeable in its disguise of current and customary forms: all this life he had struggled for a style so restrained, so unpretentious that the reader or the hearer would fully understand the meaning without realizing how he assimilated it. He had striven constantly for an unostentatious style, and he was dismayed to find how far he still remained from his ideal." (440)

Pasternak never did attain the ideal of simplicity that haunted him, but in Doctor Zhivago he had at last achieved what was for him an "unheard of" naturalness and an "unheard of" simplicity. Pasternak was as rashly convinced of this as he had been of the idea that his earlier works were "spoilt by unnecessary mannerisms." His German biographer, Gerd Ruge, writes that Pasternak considered Doctor Zhivago "a simple document, understandable to all. Pasternak compared it to Grimmelhausen's Simplizissimus, even to Uncle Tom's Cabin." [108] If correctly quoted, Pasternak was here as guilty of exaggeration as he was in his condemnation of the work he had produced before 1940. Yet one cannot deny Doctor Zhivago a comparatively high degree of naturalness and simplicity, which, as will be shown, exerted a decisive influence on the novel's imagery.

## 8. Conclusion

Boris Pasternak had outlived and overcome those "unnecessary mannerisms" which he subsequently condemned; he had achieved a large measure of the simplicity he craved; he had met with dignity and integrity the challenge of the long years of persuasion and coercion by the Soviet regime; he had attained a religious faith, faith in Christ, and thus he had "returned to life as though after a deep faint" (557). Above all, he remained inwardly free and retained his essence as a poet. He was ready for Doctor Zhivago, the only work which, to recall Pasternak's already cited assertion, "I am not ashamed of and for which I can answer with the utmost confidence." The book was more than a novel to him--it was his credo, a summation of his views on art, love, religion, revolution, on existence itself. It was, as he told Nils Ake Nilsson, "the consummation of his whole life and of his writings."[109] A definitive critical analysis of Doctor Zhivago still remains to be written, but some of its major aspects have already been explored in a number of essays and book reviews.[110]

In a sense, all of Pasternak's early prose was a proving ground and a preparation for the writing of the novel. "He spoke of his earlier pieces like The Childhood of Luvers," reports Reavey, "as trial pieces 'on the way to something bigger'. In retrospect, it is clear that, in the domain

of prose, Pasternak had been working all his life towards a greater novel like Doctor Zhivago."[111] It was indeed, his life work or, as the Russians would phrase it, his žiznennyj podvig--a lifetime's heroic deed--, testing his mastery as a writer, his depth and integrity as a thinker, his courage as a man.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER ONE

1. Boris Pasternak, I Remember, New York, 1959, p. 25. The music, Pasternak wrote, must have been Tschaikovsky's famous Trio, commemorating the death of Nikolaj Rubinstein.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

5. Pasternak's consistency gave rise to a couplet which I often heard cited in Moscow during my sojourn in the Soviet Union between 1935 and 1948:

> Vsë menjaetsja pod znakom Zodiaka,
> Ne menjaetsja liš', muza Pasternaka.
>
> (Everything changes under the sign of the Zodiac;
> Except for the muse of Pasternak.)

6. The Collected Prose Works, London, 1945, p. 49.

7. Ibid., p. 50.

Pasternak recreated his adolescent adoration of Scriabin in the autobiographical narrative poem, The Year 1905.

> One day,
> When the noise behind the wall
> Kept up, like the tide unabated,
> And the depth of rooms was unstirred,
> And the street was alive with gaslight,
> The doorbell rang
> And voices drew near--
> It was Scriabin!
> Oh, where could I run
> From the footsteps of my deity!
>
> (Kak-to raz,
> Kogda šum za stenoj,
> Kak priboj, neoslaben,
> Omut komnat nedvižen
> I ulica gazom živa,--
> Razdaëtsja zvonok,
> Golosa približajutsja:-
> Scriabin.

O, kuda mne bežat'
Ot šagov moego božestva!)
(Devjatsot pjatyj god, I, 115)

8. The quotation is from I Remember, op. cit., p. 41.

For an illuminating discussion by Pasternak of his abandonment of music, see The Collected Prose Works, op. cit., pp. 48-53.

A detailed account of the poet's formal education is given by George Reavey in his Introductory Essay, The Poetry of Boris Pasternak, New York, 1959, pp. 26-27.

9. In Safe Conduct Pasternak described his life in Marburg and the crisis that ended his philosophical studies (The Collected Prose Works, pp. 61-89). On the surface, the crisis was precipitated by a rejected proposal of marriage (an event which is reflected in his poem "Marburg"). He indicated that by this time he had already developed certain reservations about devoting his life to philosophy, reservations which, years later, found an echo in the following exchange between Zhivago and Lara. She says: "I don't like purely philosophical works. I think a little philosophy should be added to life and art by way of seasoning, but to make it one's specialty seems to me as strange as eating nothing but horseradish."
"No actually it's very much what I think myself."(407)

10. In I Remember, p. 79, Pasternak wrote:

> Maria Ivanovna Baltrušajtis, the wife of the poet used to say: "One day you will be sorry to have published an immature book." She was right. I was often sorry to have done so.

11. Cf. D.S. Mirsky, A History of Russian Literature, New York, 1949, p. 501.

12. "Boris Pasternak," Krasnaja Nov', 1933, vol I, p. 210. In the original, the concluding phrase has the ring of a strict order: "Prodolžat' ego poličeskuju liniju nel'zja." It might be mentioned here that, for all his efforts to adhere to the Party line, Selivanovskij perished in 1937, a victim of the purge.

13. Tynjanov, Arxaisty i novatory, Leningrad, 1929, p. 568. The essay containing the passage cited was originally written in 1924 (see Tynjanov's footnote on p. 541), but was first published in Arxaisty i novatory.

14. "Boris Pasternak," Zvezda, 1931, p. 228.

15. Op. cit., p. 501.

16. Soviet Russian Literature, Norman, Oklahoma, 1951, p. 174.

17. Novoje russkoe slovo, November 2, 1958.

The most unexpected name in the lists of poets influenced by Pasternak at some stage of their development is that of the venerable Symbolist, Valerij Brjusov, whom Pasternak himself publicly acknowledged as his teacher and master in the poem dedicated to him:

> What am I to say?...That I shall,
> perhaps, become immortal
> Because...
> ...There was a time when, of a morning,
> Ruler in hand, you taught us not to die!
>
> (Čto mne skazat'? ...
> Čto ja zatem, byt' možet, ne umru,
> Čto...
> Vy sami, bylo vremja, poutru
> Linejkoj nas ne umirat' učili?)
> ("Brjusovu," I, 236.

Yet, in reading Brjusov's poems written after My Sister Life, one comes across such characteristically Pasternakian lines as:

> From the circle of life, from the world of prose
> We have been hurled into improbability.
> Or:
> And the present shimmers before us
> With new faces--an animated whimsy.
>
> (Iz kruga žizni, iz mira prozy
> My brošeny v neverojatnost'.)
>
> (I v novyx likax živoj pričudoj
> Pred nami reet sovremennost'.)
> ("Invektiva," pp. 419 and 420 respectively in the one-volume selection of Brjusov's verse, Leningrad, 1959.)

18. For a complete bibliography of Pasternak's poetry and prose, cf. George Reavey, op. cit., pp. 249-55.

19. On the basis of this fact Roman Jakobson made what proved to be a prophetic assumption:

> "Brjusov's Belyj's, Xlebnikov's, Mayakovsky's, Pasternak's prose--the prose of these highly original representatives of new poetry--reopens a road to a new revival of Russian prose. In their time, the prose of Pushkin and Lermontov similarly opened the approach of the magnificent prose festival begun by Gogol." ("Randbemerkungen zur Prosa des Dichters Pasternak," Slavische Rundschau, 1935, vol. VIII, Prague, p. 359.)

It might be added that Russian poets generally wrote good prose. "Already years ago, when I studied the history of literature," stated Chekhov in a letter to the poet Jakov Polonskij, "I had become aware of a certain phenomenon which to me was practically a law: all outstanding Russian writers of verse [stixotvorcy] handle prose exceedingly well....Maybe I am wrong, but Lermontov's Taman' and Pushkin's The Captain's Daughter are a direct proof of the close kinship of the rich [sočnyj] Russian verse with belles lettres." (A.P. Čexov, Polnoe sobranije sočinenij i pisem, vol. XIV, Moscow, Goslitizdat., 1949, p. 18.)

On the other hand, very few Russian poets ever reached the heights of great prose as had Pushkin and Lermontov in the nineteenth century, and Andrej Belyj and Pasternak in the twentieth. I do not include Ivan Bunin, for he is, in my opinion, a great prose writer who wrote excellent verse.

20. Op. cit., p. 359.

21. Weidle, Introduction to Vol. II of The Complete Works of Boris Pasternak, in Russian, Ann Arbor, 1961, p. VII.

22. I Remember, op. cit., p. 96.

23. The respective dates are 1890 and 1910, as given by D. S. Mirsky (op. cit., pp. 431 and 485), and by Alexander Kaun (Soviet Poets and Poetry, University of California Press, 1943, pp. 5 and 7.)

24. The Creative Experiment, New York, 1948, p. 129.

25. Zvezda, 1927, p. 166.

26. Očerki po istorii russkoj sovetskoj poèzii, Moscow, 1936, p. 185.

27. Jakobson, op. cit., p. 359.

28. Apollon, St. Petersburg, 1913, vol. I, p.44.

In the same article entitled "Symbolism's Legacy and Acmeism," Gumilëv formulated his group's credo as follows:

> A new group now comes to replace Symbolism, whether its name is Acmeism (from the Greek word meaning the acme of what a thing may attain, its bloom or its blossoming period)...or Adamism (a manly, firm and clear vision of life)--but which at any rate demands a greater balance of power and a greater awareness of the relationship between subject and object than there was in Symbolism. (p.42)

29. Ibid., p. 48.

30. Introductory essay by E.I. Šamurin, in Russkaja poèzija XX veka, an anthology compiled by I.S. Ežov and E.I Šamurin, Moscow, 1925, p. xxv.

31. The limits of this study permit but a brief justification of the harsh statement regarding the final stage in the history of Russian Symbolism. This might best be achieved by using as an illustration a typical utterance by Vjačeslav Ivanov, one of the leading theoreticians and practitioners of the Symbolist school:

> Symbolism in new poetry seems to be the first and vague reminiscence of the ancient priests and Magi who, ages ago, had endowed words of common speech with a distinctive, mysterious meaning open to them alone by virtue of the knowledge which was theirs alone, of the correspondence between the world of the sacred and the limits of every man's experience.
>
> Furrows and Meadows (Borozdy i meži), Moscow, 1916, p. 127.

It was on the basis of such statements, made by Andrej Belyj, as well as by Ivanov, that Sakulin formulated his definition of Symbolism:

> Poetry as tidings from other worlds, as prophetic symbols, as sacred sorcery, as mysterious theurgy--this is Symbolism.
>
> (Valeriju Brjusovu, a collection dedicated to the poet's fiftieth birthday, Moscow, 1924, p. 21).

32. The titles of Gumilëv's poems read like a veritable geography of Africa and the Near East ("Suez Canal,"

"Nigeria," "Persian Miniature," etc.), or like a catalogue of African animals ("The Little Elephant," "The Giraffe," etc.)

33. V literaturnyx bojax, op. cit., pp. 278-9. The italics are Selivanovskij's. His view is substantiated also by Renato Poggioli in The Poets of Russia, Cambridge, Mass., 1960, p. 311, and by Vladimir Markov in his introduction to the anthology of Russian poetry, Priglušënnyje golosa, New York, 1952, pp. 14-15.

34. Centrifuga was but a minor episode in Pasternak's creative biography, as is clear from his fleeting reference to it in his first autobiography (The Collected Prose Works, op. cit., p. 104). The group was short-lived: Pasternak drifted away, and Aseev "deserted" to the Cubo-Futurists. As for Bobrov, his poetic contribution was too negligible to breathe life into the corpse of Centrifuga.

35. To complete the story of the early days of the Futurist movement, we might add here that its third offshoot, Ego-Futurism, could boast only of Igor' Severjanin, a poet of limited but genuine originality. However, like Pasternak's, his connection with Futurism was most tenuous. (Cf. Mirsky, op. cit., p. 491, and I. Postupal'skij, Novyj mir, 1928, vol. II, p. 229).

A selected list of works on Futurism and the Futurists:

Filippo Tomasso Marinetti, Futurism, Moscow, 1914.
Poščečina obščestvennomu vkusu (The Futurist Manifesto), Moscow, 1912.
Kornej Čukovskij, Futuristy, Petrograd, 1922.
Vladimir Markov, "Mysli o russkom futurizme," Novyj žurnal, vol.XXXVIII, 1954, pp. 169-181.
Poggioli, op. cit., pp. 238-68.

36. The following is a sample of Futurist rejection of the literature of the past:

> We alone are the face of our time....The past is stifling. The Academy and Pushkin are more incomprehensible than hieroglyphs. Overboard from the steamship of modernity with Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and others and others!
>
> (From the Futurist Manifesto of 1912, A Slap in the Face of Public Taste, as translated by Alexander Kaun in Soviet Poets and Poetry, op. cit., p. 16).

37. As Vladimir Markov has stated the matter:

> Russian poetry, beginning at least with the Revolution of 1917 (and actually even prior to that) and ending in the early thirties, breathed a Futuristic air. Not a single major poet (with the possible exception of Anna Axmatova) escaped being influenced by Futurism in one way or another, or paying tribute to it in some measure.
>
> ("Mysli o russkom futurizme," Novyj žurnal, 1954, vol. XXXVIII, p. 179).

38. The Collected Prose Works, op. cit., pp. 103-126, and I Remember, op. cit., pp. 86-101.

39. Pasternak's illuminating testimony follows:

> When I got to know Mayakovsky more intimately, we discovered that there were unforeseen, technical coincidences in our poems, a similar contruction of images, a similarity of rhyme structure. I liked the beauty and felicity of his movements. I did not want anything better. Not to repeat him and not to seem to be his imitator, I began to suppress in myself everything I had in common with him, the heroic tone, which would have been false in my case, and the desire for effects. This narrowed down my style and purified it.
>
> (I Remember, op. cit., pp. 95-96).

40. Ibid., p. 98.

41. Mirsky, op. cit., p. 497.

42. Ibid.

43. For a standard Soviet evaluation of Xlebnikov, see Selivanovskij's V literaturnyx bojax, op. cit., pp. 289-304. Two penetrating studies of Xlebnikov appeared abroad: Roman Jakobson's Novejšaja russkaja poèzija, Prague, 1921, and Vladimir Markov's "The Literary Importance of Xlebnikov's Longer Poems," The Russian Review, vol. 19, No. 4, Oct., 1960, pp. 338-370.

44. I am aware that this statement stands in direct

contradiction to Bowra's assertion that Pasternak "does not shrink...from neologisms" (op. cit., p. 133). This error in an otherwise exceedingly knowledgeable and penetrating study might quite possibly be accounted for by the fact that Bowra does not possess a native's feeling for the Russian language. No Russian-born critic mentions neologisms in connection with him. One of them, Gleb Struve, states unequivocally that Pasternak "indulges in no neologisms." (op. cit., p. 60). A word such as Bezljub'e ("Lovelessness"), the title of a prose fragment Pasternak published in 1918, or nočebrodiš' ("you wander in the night," on p. 384 in Doctor Zhivago), is but a rare exception which only serves to prove the rule.

45. I Remember, op. cit., p. 105.

46. The Last Summer, op. cit., p. 97.

47. I Remember, op. cit., p. 63.

48. Doctor Zhivago, op. cit., p. 281.

In the course of an interview which took place sometime in January, 1959, Pasternak reiterated in almost identical words the idea expressed in this and in the preceding quotation from I Remember, except that he emphasized the preeminence of content even more strongly:

> In speaking as in writing, the music of the word is never just a matter of sound. It does not result from the harmony of vowels and consonants. It results from the relation between the speech and its meaning. And meaning--content--must always lead. (As cited by Olga Carlisle in "Three Visits with Boris Pasternak," The Paris Review, No. 24, Summer-Fall, 1960, p. 51.

49. Poggioli, op. cit., p. 324.

50. "The word leads a double life," wrote Xlebnikov,"... Now thought says 'I obey' to the sound, now pure sound says the same to pure thought. It is this struggle of universe, the struggle of two forces, which endows language with a double life" (Sobranie sočinenij, Leningrad, 1933, vol. V, p. 222).

Here, for example, is what Xlebnikov has to say about the Russian letter for P--: "...signifies a growth along a straight line of the emptiness between two points, a movement along the straight path of one

point away from another, and as the sum total of multitudes of points, a tempestuous growth of the space occupied by a certain number of points."

The Russian original, I fear, is no more enlightening:

"...označaet rost po prjamoj pustoty meždu dvumja točkami, dviženie po prjamomu puti odnoj točki proč' ot drugoj, i kak itog, dlja točečnogo množestva, burnyj rost ob'ëma, zanimaemogo nekotorym čislom toček (Ibid., p. 217).

The following statements by Pasternak seem appropriate here, since they throw additional light on his approach to poetry and on the gulf separating him from Xlebnikov: "We were looking for different things in art as in life" (Collected Prose Works, p. 108). "To this day part of his / Xlebnikov's/ merit is still inaccessible to me, because poetry as I understand it flows through history and in collaboration with real life" (ibid., p.111).

52. "To find, without breaking the circle of word roots, the magic stone for the conversion of Slavic words one into another--freely to smelt Slavic words--herein lies my basic attitude toward the word. It is the autonomous word, uninvolved with life and life's utilitarianism" (Xlebnikov, as cited by V. Perzov, Majakovskij, Moscow-Leningrad, 1950, vol. I, p. 174).

53. Pasternak, op. cit., II, p. 13.

In an interview with Olga Carlisle, he expressed the same idea in almost identical words:

> The most extraordinary discoveries are made when the artist is overwhelmed by what he has to say. Then he uses the old language in his urgency and the old language is transformed from within.
>
> (Olga Carlisle, op. cit., p. 59).

54. A phrase from Xlebnikov, cited without reference by Roman Jakobson, op. cit., p. 4.

55. Poggioli, op. cit., p. 325.

56. Tynjanov, op. cit., pp. 562-63.

57. Portrety russkix pisatelej, Berlin 1922, p. 130.

58. I Remember, pp. 96 and 97.

59. Cited by Glenn Hughes in Imagism and the Imagists, New York, 1960, p. 28.

60. Šamurin, op. cit., p. xxxii.

61. I Remember, op. cit., p. 126.

62. Hughes, op. cit., p. 29.

63. Collected Prose Works, op. cit., p. 74.

64. As quoted by Šamurin, op. cit., p. xxxii.

65. As cited by Kaun, op. cit., p. 68.

66. The text of such a poem will be found in Šamurin, op. cit., p. xxxii.

67. Ibid., pp. 211-12.

68. Nihilistic to the extreme, and masters of the bawdy invective, the Russian Imagists repudiated all art of the past, branding even Futurism as "academic" and "dogmatic," and proclaiming that the movement had "croaked" (cf. Kaun, p. 65).

Compare this with the Preface to the 1916 Anglo-American anthology, Some Imagist Poets, who zealously tried to prevent their statements from being

> misconstrued into the desire to belittle our forerunners. On the contrary, the Imagists have the greatest admiration for the past, and humility towards it (p. vii).

It must have been this attitude, as well as the poetic practice of the Anglo-American Imagists, which prompted Mirsky to make the startling and yet penetrating observation that they have more in common with the Acmeists than with their Russian namesakes (op. cit., footnote, p. 494).

For additional material on the Russian Imagists, see Imažinisty, V. L'vov-Rogačevskij, Moscow, 1921. Detailed accounts of the Anglo-American Imagists may be found in Imagism by Stanley K. Coffman, Jr., University of Oklahoma Press, 1951, and in Imagism and the Imagists by Glenn Hughes, New York, 1960.

69. Bowra, op. cit., p. 132.

70. Ehrenburg, op. cit., p. 128.

71. Ibid., p. 127.

72. Proza, New York, 1953, p. 355.

73. Ibid., p. 371.

74. Ibid., p. 356.

75. Mirsky, op. cit., p. 502.

76. Poggioli, op. cit., p. 327.

77. I Remember, op. cit., p. 66.

78. Ibid., p. 69.

79. Ibid., p. 115.

80. Cvetaeva, op. cit., p. 365.

81. Boris Pasternak: Poems, translated by L. Slater (the poet's sister), Fairwarp Sussex, 1959, p. 33. The original is not available.

82. Novoe russkoe slovo, November 2, 1958.

83. For a discussion of Mayakovsky's and Esenin's suicides, see Roman Jakobson's O pokolenii, rastrativšem svoix poètov and D.S. Mirsky's Dve smerti, published as one volume, Berlin, 1931. Pasternak's autobiographies contain deeply moving passages on Mayakovsky's death. In addition, the general phenomenon of suicide and the manner in which five writers, his contemporaries, had ended their own lives are discussed by Pasternak in Safe Conduct (pp. 123-26) and in I Remember (pp.88-90 and 118).

84. I Remember, op. cit., p. 89.

85. Translation by L. Slater, op. cit., p. 28.

86. The line is from one of Pasternak's rare programmatic poems, Drugu, which is essential to the understanding of his conception of the poet's place in a controlled society. The original is in Vol. I, p. 223. There are three translations, each inadequte in its own way: Yarmolinsky, p. 221; Kayden, p. 85; Cohen, p. 36.

87. Selivanovskij, Očerki po istorii russkoj sovetskoj poèzii, op. cit., p. 195.

88. "Uezd v tylu" in Literaturnaja Gazeta, Moscow, December 15, 1938.

89. A.N. Afinogenov, Stat'i dnevniki, pisma, vospominanija, Moscow, 1957, p. 152.

90. I Remember, op. cit., p. 121.

91. Ibid., p. 19.

92. Ibid., p. 81

93. For all the sincerity of Pasternak's repeated rejections of his works written prior to 1940, one must not hastily agree with him. Any writer, especially one of Pasternak's intense subjectivity, is given to moods of severe re-appraisal of past efforts. As a matter of fact, his rejection proved to be much less irrevocable than it sounded. For example, upon receiving Kayden's English translation of three poems (two of which Pasternak wrote in 1918, and one in 1922), Pasternak wrote to the translator:

> "Summer of 1917," "Poetry," "Improvization" moved me and overcame my inveterate resistance against myself of those times. Owing to you I felt for a moment anew the freshness and thrill of that past.
>
> ( A facsimile of this passage from Pasternak's letter appears on the jacket of Kayden's volume of translations.)

Even without the stimulus of recognition from the outside, and indeed, in the very passage where Pasternak condemned his pre-1940 writings, he admitted:

> there are often grains of truth, aptness and acute observation in the mass of what is deplorable and annoying about these things of mine.
> (I Remember, p. 121.)

Two generatinns of Soviet readers have proved that Pasternak's judgment of his own work is not binding on his audience. Pasternak himself has provided eloquent testimony to his popularity with readers in the Soviet Union:

> I went to the front, I was persuaded or induced to appear publicly during the next post-war years in the concert halls of the rear; and by those recitals I have been surprised to be prompted on every line I forgot or pronounced with a pause or delay. (Encounter, August 1960, p. 6.)

In 1946 I was witness to such a prompting. Several thousand persons, most of them young men and women, had assembled in Moscow's Hall of Columns to hear a group of Soviet poets recite their verses. When Pasternak was introduced, he was greeted by a standing ovation that was nothing short of amazing, considering the obscurity to which he had been condemned since 1936. While Pasternak was reading one of his earlier poems, the sheet suddenly dropped to the floor. As he bent for the page, voices from various corners of the huge hall finished the poem for him.

94. I Remember, op. cit., pp. 121-22.

95. From a letter written to his translator, Eugene M. Kayden, as cited in the introduction to Poems by Boris Pasternak, op. cit., p. vii.

96. The Collected Prose Works, op. cit., p. 126. The full quotation follows:

> Suddenly, outside, underneath the window I imagined I saw his life, which now already belonged entirely to the past. I saw it move away obliquely from the window like a quiet tree-bordered street resembling the Povarskaja / where the Union of Soviet Writers is located /. And the first to take its stand in this street, by the very wall, was our state.

97. The Swedish literary scholar, Nils Ake Nilsson, has written that Pasternak told him in 1958:

> On one occasion they came to me with something they wanted me to sign. It was to the effect that I approved of the party's executing the generals....My wife was pregnant. She cried and begged me to sign, but I couldn't. That day I examined the pros and cons of my own survival. I was convinced that I would be arrested--my turn had come. I was prepared for it. I abhorred all this blood and I couldn't stand it any longer. But nothing happened. I

> was told later that my colleagues saved me--at least indirectly. Quite simply, no one dared to report to the hierarchy that I hadn't signed.
>
> (The Reporter, Nov. 27, 1958, p. 34).

A major section of "Termometr Rossii," an article by M. Korjakov in Novyj žurnal (vol. IV 1958, pp. 130-41) is devoted to a report on Pasternak's courageous behavior during the purge. Fact and legend are cited in an attempt to fathom the reasons which prevented Pasternak from sharing the tragic fate of many of his colleagues.

98. The American journalist, Priscilla Johnson, has stated that the poet's brother, Alexander, told her on May 31, 1960, that Boris "had become a member of the Christian church many years before. Shaking his head, he said he didn't know the date" (Harper's, May 1961, p. 141). In her Introduction to the three-volume edition of Pasternak's works, Jacqueline de Provart cites a letter written to her by him in French on May 2, 1959, confirming his baptism. I quote the pertinent passage:

> J'ai été baptisé par ma bonne de prime enfance, mais a des restriction contre les juifs et surtout dans une famille qui en était exempte et jouissait d'une certaine distinction acquise par les merites artistiques du père, le fait s'était un peu complique et restait toujours mi-secret et intime, objet d'une aspiration rare et exceptionelle plutot que d'une calme habitude. Mais je pense que c'est la source de mon originalité. Je vivais le plus de ma vie dans la pensee chretienne dans les annees 1910-1912, où se formait les racines, les bases principales de cette originalite, la vision des choses, du monde, de la vie...
>
> (Vol. I, p. XI).

Despite this testimony by Pasternak himself, I have been able to find only two references to a religious theme in Pasternak's early writings. One occurs in Safe Conduct, where he speaks of the Bible as "not so much a book with a hard and fast text, as the notebook of humanity" (The Collected Prose Works, p. 98), a remark, contained in a passage dealing with aesthetic and cultural, rather than religious values. The other reference in the concluding lines of Ballada, is more in tune with Pasternak's subsequent preoccupation with Christ:

For He is the youngest of the adults,
He is of the same age as is my heart.

(Kogda On liš' men'šoj iz vzroslyx,
sverstnik serdca moego).

(I, 214)

99. Wilson, "Legend and Symbol in Doctor Zhivago,'" The Nation, April 25, 1959, p. 363.

100. "Doctor Life and his Guardian Angel" (a review of Doctor Zhivago by Edmund Wilson), The New Yorker, Nov. 15, 1958, p. 218.

101. "The Pasternak Affair in Perspective," Thought, Winter, 1959-60, vol. XXXIV, p. 489.

102. Ibid., p. 490.

Pasternak's Christianity is also discussed in "Notes on Boris Pasternak's Doctor Zhivago" by Mirian Taylor Sajkovic, Slavic and East European Journal, Winter, 1960, pp. 319-30.

103. These lines help to understand the grievance voiced by Pasternak in a letter to his translator, Eugene M. Kayden:

> You say I am "first and last a poet, a lyric poet." Is it really so? And should I feel proud of being no more than that, whereas it hurts me to feel that I have not had the ability to express in greater fullness the whole of poetry and life in their complete unity? But what am I without the novel?
> (Op. cit., p. vii).

104. Although he himself began to give expression to the idea of life as sharing only after 1940, those who know him were aware that the capacity for sharing was always an integral part of Pasternak as man and poet. Anna Axmatova stated with eloquent simplicity (in a poem to Pasternak written in 1936):

> The entire world was given him in heritage,
> And he shared it with us all.
>
> (I vsja zemlja byla ego nasledstvom,
> A on eë so vsemi razdelil).
> (Cited from Novoe russkoe slovo, Nov. 2, 1958).

105. I Remember, op. cit., p. 81.

106. As reported in the Literary Gazette, Moscow, Feb. 16, 1936.

107. I Remember, op. cit., 130-31.

108. Gerd Rude, Pasternak--A Pictorial Biography, New York, 1959, p. 101.

109. Nils Ake Nilsson, "Pasternak: 'We Are the Guests of Existence,'" The Reporter, November 27, 1958, p. 34.

110. See Bibliography for the complete list. Special attention is called to the essays by Edmund Wilson, Irving Howe, Roman Gul', and to the entire Sbornik statej, posvjaščënnyj tvorčestvu B.L. Pasternaka, Munich, 1962.

111. Reavey, op. cit., p. 49. He recalls Pasternak as speaking of his early stories as trial pieces "on the way to something bigger." (ibid)

While this is true in a general way, some of Pasternak's early prose works seem to have a direct link with Doctor Zhivago. One of them goes back to 1918, a fragment titled Bezlub'e, first published in the short-lived daily "Volja Truda" and included in Volume II of Pasternak's Collected Works. There is every reason to believe that the fragment was part of the novel to which Pasternak referred in a poem written the year before:

> I shall bid good-bye to verse, my mania,
> I've made a rendez-vous with you in a novel.
>
> (Ja skažu do svidanja stixam, moja mania,
> Ja naznačil vam vstreču so mnoju v romane.
> "No i im suždeno bylo vycvest'"
> I, 104)

For the link between Bezlub'e and Doctor Zhivago cf. comment on the former by Georgij Katkov in Novyj žurnal, December, 1960, pp.10-11.

During the thirties, Pasternak published four prose pieces which contain evidence that they are fragments from a larger work, doubtlessly an early variant of Doctor Zhivago. The fragments will be found in Vol.II, under the following titles: "Nadmennyj niščij," "Tëtja

Olja," "Is novogo romana o 1905 gode," "Uezd v tylu." For a discussion of the evidence which links them with Doctor Zhivago, cf. Annotations, Vol. II, pp. 358-60, and Reavey's Introduction to "A District Behind the Front" in The Last Summer, op. cit., pp. 130-35.

CHAPTER TWO

# THE WORLD OF IMAGERY

## 1. On the Nature of Imagery

The word "image" is used throughout this study in only one of the various meanings that may be attributed to it, namely, in the sense of a metaphoric or metonymic figure of speech. In resorting to figurative language, the writer applies a word or phrase to objects or ideas not normally denoted by it, thereby establishing a hitherto unsuspected relationship between the denoting and the denoted, and giving emphasis to the relationship. It is clearly discernible in the examples which follow. (The more complex cases will be discussed in the next chapter, particularly in the section titled "Associative Links.") The birch saplings felled by Pamphil lie on the ground, swaying on their branches, and "it seemed as though they were fighting him off with outstretched arms, their quivering foliage barring his way to the tent." (358) Or,

> Above the town clouds raced dementedly as if pursued, so low that their tatters almost caught the tops of the trees, which bent in the same direction so that they looked like brooms sweeping the sky. (150)

> A sleepy, oily sun blinking in the forest, sleepy pines blinking their needles like eyelashes, oily puddles glistening at noon. The countryside yawns, stretches, turns over, and goes back to sleep. (E 285)

When the figure of speech is striking and original, it presents ideas and objects in a new light, as though perceived for the first time. To create an evocative image, the writer must exploit to the maximum his powers of observation, memory, imagination, selectivity and verbal skill. These are formidable demands, and the men who meet them fully deserve Aristotle's eloquent tribute:

> But the greatest thing by far is to have a command of the metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another: it is the mark of genius, for to make good metaphors implies an eye for resemblances.[1]

Aristotle's insistence that command of imagery is "the greatest thing" and a mark of genius is more than a tribute to the creator of figures of speech -- it is a recognition of the importance of figurative language in creative writing, and of the process of association out of which the image grows. The process of association is, in fact, a creative process, for, as Eric Kahler has pointed out,

> A subtle interaction takes place between the flaring image and the experience that kindled it, whereby the image is capable of driving the experience farther, that is of creating new experience.[2]

Furthermore, in bringing about that "subtle interaction" which results in the new experience, the writer gives us a key to his creative personality, with its limitations, as well as with its riches, for he is confined within the potentialities inherent in his imagination, experience, intellectual and linguistic equipment. Hence, the writer's intuitions concerning life and man, his very vision of reality and of himself, tend to be reflected in his imagery.

## 2. Metaphore and Simile

In creating a poetic image, the writer speaks of one thing in terms of another, and relies on the process of association to establish the relationship between the two, This relationship is normally based either on similarity or on contiguity, and the difference between them is what divides figures of speech into their two main categories: the metaphoric and the metonymic. I shall be discussing only those figures of speech within each category which are most relevant to this study by virtue of their domination of the imagery in Doctor Zhivago.

The overwhelming majority of the figures of speech based on similarity are either similes or metaphors, involving or at least implying, a comparison. Thus, by definition, the simile "is a figure of speech comparing two essentially unlike things and often introduced by like

or as (as in cheeks like roses, a heart as hard as flint."[3]

To cite examples from Doctor Zhivago:

"Flowers were few, and the notched stalks of horsetail looked like the staffs with Egyptian ornaments in his illustrated Bible." (E11)

"The winding bed of a stream . . . was tucked up in the snow like a child in its cot with its head under the eiderdown." (E229)

"Beyond the open side doors of the ballroom the supper table gleamed white and long as a winter road." (E55)

"Her slip was stretched over her breast as firmly and simply as linen on an embroidery frame." (E46)

The metaphor by definition (from the Greek verb "to transfer") is

> a figure of speech denoting by a word or phrase usu. one kind of object or idea in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them (as in the ship plows the sea or in a volley of oaths). [4]

To cite examples from Doctor Zhivago:

"The street frowned with a forbidding surliness." (E44)

"Streaks of light probed from room to room and dived under the chairs and tables." (E92)

And, to select a sentence containing a whole series of metaphors (the last of which is elucidated by a simile):

> Rome was a flea market of borrowed gods and conquered peoples, a bargain basement on two floors, earth and heaven, a mass of filth convulted in a triple knot like an intestinal obstruction. (E43)

As can be seen from the examples, simile and metaphor are closely related in that both reveal comparisons or analogies. That is, they both lie in the metaphoric sphere. At the same time there are marked differences between the two figures of speech, and these merit attention.

There is, to begin with, the difference in form: whereas the simile depends on introductory words or phrases which state or imply a comparison, or on some grammatical device performing the same function*, the metaphor does not. Where the simile would tell us that Rome was <u>like</u> a flea market, or that images are <u>like</u> miracles in words, thereby implying or, in context, pointing out certain similarities between the two, the metaphor suggests the <u>identity</u> of Rome and the flea market, or of images and miracles in words.

It can, therefore, be stated that the difference between simile and metaphor is the difference between the analytical and the synthetic. The divergence in the effect of each, and their distinctive demands upon the writer and the reader will be discussed in Chapter VI.

### 3. <u>Metonymy</u>

Like simile and metaphor, metonymic figures of speech speak of one thing in terms of another, but there is one

* Such devices are discussed in Chapter V.

essential difference: instead of being based on comparison or analogy, the association in metonymy is based on a contiguous relationship between the two things involved, on an inherent connection or habitual interdependence between them, which permits a substitution of one for the other. Thus, when Pasternak wrote that "Blok reflected the Christmas spirit in all domains of Russian life" (E80), he substituted the poet for his works. Pasternak likewise resorted to metonymy when he stated that art (rather than the men who create art) "has two constant, two unending concerns: it always meditates on death and thus always creates life." (E90)

Another way of creating a metonymic figure of speech is to substitute a property of an object for the object itself, or the quality of a person for that person, as when Zhivago says of Lara: "Krasota moja pisanaja" ("My painting-like beauty," 385), and again, "Proščaj, krasa moja" ("Farewell, my beauty," 462).

A variant of metonymy, synecdoche, likewise involves a connection between its two terms, but one restricted to a quantitative, rather than a qualitative, relationship, such as the naming of a part to stand for the whole, or the whole for a part. A good example is provided in a description of the first signs of spring in Zhivago's notebook:

> The air smells of buttered pancakes and vodka, as at Shrovetide, when the calendar itself seems to be sparkling with merriment. (295)

The quoted sentence vividly illustrates how complex a most uncomplicated-looking figure of speech can be. The word "calendar" is used in the sentence both as metonymy and as synecdoche. As metonymy, because it stands for the twelve-month cycle, the year; as synecdoche, because the whole of the calendar is made to represent that part of the year which is "sparkling with merriment," the early spring.

The differences between metonymy and synecdoche are so tenuous that they both are normally referred to as metonymy,[5] a practice to which I shall adhere throughout the study. On the other hand, the differences between metaphor and metonymy are basic, so basic, indeed, that Jakobson distinguishes them as "the two polar figures of speech."[6]

In considering imaginative speech, we must bear in mind that, just as the dividing line between figurative and literal usage is sometimes obscured, so are the boundaries between the figures of speech themselves occasionally subject to doubt. The point is that figures of speech may tend to cross each other's lines, or to shade one into the other. A phrase such as "the rhythms of Russia speaking" (293), for instance, may be interpreted either as metonymic metaphor or metaphoric metonymy: it is a metaphor because "the rhythms of Russia" are "speaking"; metonymy -- because the people who inhabit the country are substituted by the country itself.[7]

A salutory aspect of the imagery in Doctor Zhivago,

as well as in all of Pasternak's works, is that the novel is magnificently innocent of figures of speech worn threadbare by usage. Whenever they appear, they do so according to the author's design, normally in dialogue, in order to characterize a person. Thus, the dead metaphors in Komarovsky's speech emphasize his pošlost' ("vulgarity" is the closest one-word English equivalent): prosnuvšajasja sovest' ("awakened conscience" 46), "the Soviet power shuts its eye to it" (432), "the cradle of Russia's future greatness, the guarantee of our progress toward democratization" (434), and the like.

## 4. The Poetic Epithet

The epithet is a word or phrase used adjectively to describe, characterize or qualify a person, object, idea or an action. By their very definition, all adjectives and adverbs are epithets, as are also the qualifying nouns in such phrases as "lixači-izvoščiki" ("dare-devil drivers," 221, "boj-devka" ("a battering ram of a girl," 272), "čudo-rabotnica" ("worker-wonder," 272), or in the sentence where Russia is described as "roditel'nica, mučenica, uprjamica, sumasbrodka" ("parent, martyr, stubborn one, mad one,") 401.

An epithet may function as a straightforward, objective qualitifation of a noun with which it forms a unit requiring no intervention by the metaphoric process in order to be understood. The very same epithet may also be used

subjectively, modifying the noun in a unique and unexpected manner. In such cases acceptance takes place only with the aid of the metaphoric process. In other words, the unit is perceived as a figure of speech. Thus, when we say "angry man," "kind-hearted woman," "mad dog," the adjectives and nouns blend into logical semantic combinations wherein the epithets function simply as qualifying words. But when Pasternak writes in Doctor Zhivago of "the snow's angry screech" (381), "the kind-hearted evening" (389) or "the mad charms of the earth" (76), he forms semantic combinations in which adjectives transfer their respective nouns, in the words of Tomaševskij, "from the category of plain prosaic language into the category of poetic language."[8] Therein lies the major difference between the simple and the poetic epithet: whereas the former merely qualifies a noun, the latter effects a radical transformation in it. Thus, an abstraction is personified, as in "the all-devouring power of genius" (180); a thing is converted into a person, as in "demented clouds" (152); one kind of thing becomes another, as in "juicy, glassy, watery light" (188).

The above examples all lie in the metaphoric sphere, but the poetic epithet can be metonymic, as well. When Pasternak, for instance, talks of the weeping Lara and refers to her "moist words" (514), he shifts from cause to effect, thereby creating a so-called metonymic transferred adjective. The same thing happens when the epithet is

shifted from possessor to the thing possessed in the "grateful joy" (392) which Zhivago experiences.

An intriguing aspect of the metonymic transferred adjective is that, depending on the context, or on the kind of reading one wishes to give to this variant of the poetic epithet, it may be placed also in the metaphoric sphere; all one has to do is to treat it as personification. Generally sparing in his use of the poetic epithet throughout the novel, Pasternak affords but few examples of the metonymic transferred adjective, among them "inconsolable rain" (103), "grateful bewilderment," (110), "generous hands"(385), "the insolent noise of rats" (402-03), and Lara's sharp, untranslatable remark concerning "petušaščeesja usatoe mužskoe samodovol'stvo" (408).[9]

Pasternak is equally reserved in his use of <u>compound adjectives</u> and <u>adjectives-participles</u>, although in Russian as in Greek, it presents the writer with enormous opportunities for creating figurative language, as Russia's eighteenth century writers, Tjutčev and the Symbolists have amply demonstrated. Following is a list of the compound adjectives I found in the novel, which may be classified as poetic epithets. Translation difficulties compel me to cite them only in the original.

"Nravstvenno čistaja tišina" (15); "sila. . .doskonal'no-veščestvennaja" (62); "bezbrežno-obaldelaja tišina" (75); "putanno-paxučij vozdux" (76); "detski-naivnyj zapax byl

zaduševno razumen" (85); "inoplanetnye suščestvovanija" (186);"zemlisto-goroxovye tuči" (186); "vsë fatal'no-tipičeskoe" (406); "lebedino-belaja prelest'" (415); "utrobno-skuljaščee zavyvanie" (449); "udivlënno-rassejannyj, ustalo-otsutstvujuščij vzor" (464); "zlovešče buraja rož'" (479); and, finally, "celodnevnyj plesk tvoj" (514).

The fixed epithet which the Russian literary language has inherited from folklore, is practically nonexistent in the novel, appearing as it does in two passages only, pas - sages replete with emotional overtones, which read like lines from a folk song. In the first, Zhivago bemoans his loss of Lara: "Ja uvižu tebja, krasota moja pisanaja, knjaginja moja rjabinuška, rodnaja krovinuška" (385). In the second, Lara laments over the death of Zhivago, speaking of him as "bystraja, glubokaja rečen'ka" (514).

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER TWO

1. The Poetics of Aristotle, edited with critical notes and a translation by S.H. Butcher, fourth edition, London, 1929, p. 87.

2. Eric Kahler, "The Nature of the Symbol," an essay in Symbolism in Religion and Literature, Rollo May, ed., New York, 1960, p. 87.

3. Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language, A Merriam-Webster, Springfield, Mass., 1961, p. 2120.

4. Ibid., p. 1420.

5. Cf. Babette Deutsch, Poetry Handbook, New York, 1957, p. 78; L.I. Timofeev, Osnovy teorii literatury, Moskva, 1959, p. 205; B.V. Tomaševskij, Stilistika i stixosloženie, Leningrad, 1959, p. 238.

6. Roman Jakobson and Morris Halle, Fundamentals of Speech, 'S-Gravenhage, 1959, p. 69.

7. The shading of various figures of speech into each other is a comparatively recent discovery by literary scholars. See, for example, Kenneth Burke's discussion of the phenomenon in A Grammar of Motives, New York, 1945, pp. 503 and 506, or Roman Jakobson's observation: "In poetry where similarity is superinduced upon contiguity, any metonymy is slightly metaphorical and any metaphor has a metonymical tint." (Style in Language, Thomas E. Sebeck, ed., Boston, 1960, p. 370)

   This discovery, like many another insight into the subtleties of figurative language, was foreshadowed by Andrej Belyj in Simvolism, Moskva, 1910, pp. 424-27 and 442-46.

8. Tomaševskij, op. cit., p. 203.

9. For more on the metonymic transferred adjective see Wellek and Warren, Theory of Literature, New York 1956, pp. 184-85.

   Andrej Belyj seems to have originated the conception that the metonymic transferred adjective may be placed in the metaphoric sphere. Cf. Simvolism, op. cit., pp. 424-25.

CHAPTER THREE

# IMAGERY IN PASTERNAK'S PRE-DOCTOR ZHIVAGO WORKS

## 1. "Unaccidental Accidentalism"

One of the first impressions to strike the reader of Pasternak's pre-Doctor Zhivago writings is the lack of discrimination in the associations which he crowds into his imagery. It is as though he feels that every aspect of the universe, each single atom of reality has an equal claim on him as a writer, to be apprehended, absorbed and recreated in his art. Witness the lines in the poem bearing the title Definition of Creative Art:

> Gardens, ponds and palings, the creation
> Foam-flecked with the whiteness of our weeping
> Are nothing but categories of passion
> That the human heart has in keeping.[1]
>
> (I sady, i prudy, i ogrady,
> I kipjaščee belymi vopljami
> Mirozdan'e--liš' strasti razrjady
> Čelovečeskim serdcem nakoplennoj).
> ("Opredelenie tvorčestva," I, 24).

To Pasternak poetry is an insatiable "sponge with a suction pad" which "swells with ruffles, gullies, clouds," and which he keeps "squeezing out at night onto thirsty paper."[2]

Life is to him as close as a sister, enabling him to feel a kinship with all men and all things:

> My sister--life, in its flood, today again
> Burst upon everyone with rain drops of spring.
>
> (Sestra moja--žizn' i segodnja v razlive
> Rassiblas' vesennim doždëm obo vsex).
> ("Sestra moja--žizn'," I, 5).

The substance which Pasternak is "squeezing out of the sponge of poetry" abounds in imagery of swift insights, surprise and spontaneity, marked at the same time by a signal concreteness. There is, for instance, the astonishing description of a Russian country road at midnight. So many cart wheels had passed over it that its polished surface reflects the stars on a clear night:

> And one cannot get across the road
> Without tramping the universe.
>
> (I čerez dorogu za tyn perejti
> Nel'zja, ne topča mirozdanija).
> ("Step'," I, 32).

To convey the effect of love, Pasternak writes that his beloved

> Came into the room with a chair,
> Took my life as though from a shelf,
> And blew the dust off it.
>
> (Vošla so stulom
> Kak s polki žizn' moju dostala
> I pyl' obdula).
> ("Iz sueverija," I, 12).

To give expression to the festive excitement which accompanies nature's renewal at springtime, he says:

> The air suddenly breathed the discharging
> of patients
> Out of a thousand hospitals.

(I vdrug paxnulo vypiskoj
Iz tysjači bol'nic).
("Dožd'" I, 10).

These brief quotations are aglow with freshness and vitality. Unfortunately, isolated from their contexts, they fall short of conveying that intense pluralism of associations in Pasternak's early lyrics which was the joy of Ehrenburg and Cvetaeva, and the despair of such earth-bound critics as Weidle, Alexandrov or Lelevič.[3] A striking, though by no means untypical, example may be found in "Definition of Poetry," as translated by Kayden:

It's a summons sternly swelling,
The crackling of shattered icefields,
The night that blasts young leaves,
The contest of two nightingales,

The stifled sweet pea on the vine,
The cry of the world at birth,
Figaro from flutes and the platform
In a crashing fall among rose beds.

It's all that night will reveal
In the depths of bathing places--
To carry a star to the garden
Alone in its trembling wet arms.

Like dank wood, the stifled mind,
When the sky is choked by elders;
Gay stars could rock with laughter
At blockheads sunk flat in mud.[4]

(Èto--kruto nalivšijsja svist,
Èto--ščëlkan'e sdavlennyx l'dinok,
Èto--noč', ledenjaščaja list,
Èto--dvux solovjëv poedinok.

Èto--sladkij zagloxšij gorox.
Èto--slëzy vselennoj u lopatkax,
Èto--s pul'tov i s flejt--Figaro
Nizvergaetsja gradom na grjadku.

Vsë, čto noči tak važno syskat'
No glubokix kupalennyx don'jax,
I zvezdu donesti do sadka
Na trepeščuščix mokryx ladonjax,

Płošče dosok v vode-duxota.
Nebosvod zavalilsja ol'xoju,
Ètim zvezdam k licu b xoxotat',
An vselennaja--mesto gluxoe).
("Opredelenie poèzii," I, 22).

While each definition is a figure of speech demanding of the reader a search for the associative links between its two terms, it is at the same time part of an organic whole which identifies poetry with early spring. The first impression of an untamed onrush of associations, and of an apparent disinterestedness on the part of the poet to exercize selectivity in the imagery, is dissipated upon close scrutiny. What cements the figures of speech into the oneness of a poem is the metonymic principle based on the not easily discernible, yet undeniable concrete relationship between them. Contiguity is further reinforced by sound associations. Thus, in the opening stanza, nalivšijsja and svist of the first definition are linked with l'dinok and ščëlkan'e of the second; l'dinok is, of course, the bridge to the third with its ledenjaščaja while noč' in the third line establishes a connection with the last definition in the stanza by its link with nightingales--birds which sing only after dark, and are identified in Russian poetry with the night.

The first Russian critic to discern this "unaccidental

accidentalism" in Pasternak's early poetry was Jurij Tynjanov, from whose illuminating study I have already cited. Pasternak's images, wrote Tynjanov,

> are selected on the principle of the accidental; the objects in them are not closely connected; merely neighbors, they are linked only by contiguity. . . and the accidental element turns out to be a stronger link than the closest logical link.
> . . .There is a phenomenon called "false memory." Someone is talking to you, and it seems to you that the conversation had already taken place before, that you had already sat exactly that way, and that precisely the same person had been saying to you what you were now hearing, and that you know in advance exactly what he is about to say. (In reality, of course, it is the other way around: he speaks, and at that precise moment it seems to you that he had already said those same things).
> Something like this takes place with Pasternak's images. You lack the connection between objects, the connection is accidental, but the moment he establishes it, you somehow recall it, it had already existed somewhere--and the object becomes binding.[5]

## 2. "The Interlinking Force"

Along with Tynjanov, the critic Tarasenkov accepted "accidentalism" as a characteristic organic aspect of Pasternak's poetics, but what interested Tarasenkov most was what he called "the pluralism of imaginative comparisons."[6]

Pasternak himself was keenly aware of the pluralism of his associations. It stemmed, he wrote, from an intuitive awareness of a force called sceplenie, the interlinking force which he believed holds together all of life's manifestations, obliterating the borderline between man

and the reality surrounding him, as well as between all the components of reality.

> Like Salagan swallows, we built the world--a vast nest put together of earth and sky, life and death, and two time elements, the present and the absent. I understood that the world was prevented from disintegrating by the power of cohesion which consists of the interpenetrating figurativeness of all its parts.
>
> (II, 263)

That awareness of sceplenie must be intuitive is clear from Pasternak's definition of intuition in Doctor Zhivago as "the immediate grasp of a situation as a whole" (E407) That he preferred to rely on intuition rather than on the intellect is no less clear from his admonition:

> Do not seek under clear skies
> Among a crowd of arid colleagues--
> I'm drenched to the bone with intuition.
>
> (Pod jasnym nebom ne iščite
> menja v tolpe suxix kolleg--
> Ja smok do nitki ot naitij).
>
> ("Vstav is groxočuščego romba," vol. I, p. 184).

"Drenched to the bone with intuition" throughout his life, Pasternak could not but endow with it also his spiritual brother, Yurii Zhivago, who heatedly defends it against his "arid colleagues":

> One of my sins is a belief in intuition. And yet see how ridiculous: they all shout that I am a marvelous diagnostician, and as a matter of fact it's true that I don't often make mistakes in diagnosing a disease. Well, what is this immediate grasp of a situation as a whole supposed to be if not the intuition they find so detestable? (E 407)

Pasternak refers to his awareness of the immense power

of the interlinking force, of sceplenie, as an experience of early childhood:

> Already at the age of six
> The force of such cohesion was revealed to me
> That it was possible to ascend and carry the
> earth away
>
> (Uže let v šest'
> Otkrylas' mne sila takogo sceplenja,
> Čto možno podnjastsja i zemlju unest').

Relying on sceplenie, and on his ever-present awareness of it through intuition which, it will be recalled, he defined as "the immediate grasp of a situation as a whole," Pasternak constructed many of his poems on the principle of simultaneous presentation of the parts of that whole. In other words, he tended to introduce in quick succession a number of themes, instead of following tradition by sounding a theme and then developing it step by step to a climax.

A good example is provided by a poem which describes the creation of Pushkin's masterpiece, "The Prophet." Pasternak's poem consists of a series of diverse, abrupt themes and images. Each of them, instead of joining the others and rising together in intensity toward a climax, leads its own turbulent existence simultaneously and on the same plane with the rest. Like the world which Pasternak likened to a nest built by Salagan swallows, the poem is prevented from falling apart by its "interpenetrating figurativeness" which here, as in much of Pasternak's early poetry, is based on metonymic affinity, powerfully reinforced by sound associations.

The stars rushed headlong by. Sea washed the
headlands
The salt spray blinded and the tears were dried.
Bedrooms were dark and thoughts rushed headlong by.
The sphinx gave patient ear to the Sahara.

The candles guttered. And it seemed the blood
of the colossus froze. And lips split over
with the waste's azure smile; at that same hour
the ebb set in and night began to fade.

A small wind from the Morocco stirred the sea.
The simoon blew. In snows Archangel snored.
The candles guttered. Rough draft of "The Prophet"
dried and the morning dawned above the Ganges.[7]

(Mčalis' zvëzdy. V more mylis' mysy.
Slepla sol'. I slëzy vysyxali.
Byli temny spal'ni. Mčalis' mysli,
I prislušivalsja sfinks k Saxare.

Plyli sveči. I kazalos' stynet
Krov' kolossa. Zaplyvali guby
Goluboj ulybkoju pustyni.
V čas otliva noč' pošla na ubyl'.

More tronul veterok s Marokko.
Šël samum. Xrapel v snegax Arxangel'sk
Plyli sveči. Černovik "Proroka"
Prosyxal, i brezžil den' na Gange).
(Mčalis' zvëzdy, I, 67).

## 3. "Associative Links"

In his first autobiography, Safe Conduct, Pasternak stated:

Focused on a reality which feeling has displaced, art is a record of this displacement.
...When the features of this state are transferred to paper, the characteristics of life become the characteristics of creation. The latter strike one more sharply than the former. They have been studied better. They have their terminology. They are called techniques.[8]

As we have seen, most characteristic for Pasternak's technique during the period under consideration is the saturation of his works with images born of a seemingly free play of association. What makes these figures of speech baffling or obscure is the frequent omission of the pertinent associative links, resulting in an impression of disconnectedness, so that the reader finds himself at times in the position of Mr. Y in The Last Summer: "It was as if someone kept showing him the earth and then hiding it in his sleeve."[9] Or, in the words of Stefan Schimianski:

> Like a horse jumping a fence [Pasternak] will pass over in silence those intercommunicative links that have no direct bearing on his feelings, and will merely present the graceful curve of the jumping horse, that is the outline, the finished product.[10]

The early Pasternak did not feel called upon to enlighten the reader on the nature of the "intercommunicative links," but he did on one occasion in Doctor Zhivago, aglow with insights into the mysteries of remembrance and of association. There is a beautiful, image-studded entry in Zhivago's notebook, in which he describes the arrival of spring (p. 295). No sooner is the description completed than two lines from Pushkin's Jevgenij Onegin emerge from the recesses of Zhivago's memory:

> The nightingale, spring's lover,
> Sings all night. The wild rose blooms.
>
> (I solovej, vesny ljubovnik,
> Poët vsju noč'. Cvetët šipovnik).

Zhivago enters them in his notebook and poses the question: "Why 'lover'?" Whereupon he proceeds to give the answer, a poet's answer, which points to the multiplicity of factors involved in the making of associations:

> The fact is, the epithet is natural, apt: the nightingale is spring's lover. Moreover, he /Pushkin/ needed it for the rhyme /ljubovnik--šipovnik/. I wonder whether the nickname Nightingale /Solovej-Razbojnik/ for the brigand son of Odikhmantij, in the well-known Russian folk epic, is not a metaphor based on a similarity of sound. (E 286)

When explained, these factors seem simple, almost obvious and rooted in reality, as well as in imagination. They are also rooted in the exigencies of versification, such as the dictates of rhyme and the promptings of sound associations which, besides enriching the word-music, often serve as the point at which a figure of speech begins to take shape.*

The technique of Pasternak's early prose is not far removed from that of his poetry: that same "power called feeling" displaces reality, and the flow of language and of associations takes over. Witness the opening paragraphs of Il Tratto di Apelle, the translation of which and of the two quotations that follow, is preceded by the original because it alone fully conveys the role of sound associations in Pasternak's early prose:

> V odin iz sentjabrskix večerov, kogda pizanskaja bašnja vedët celoe vojsko kosyx zarev i kosyx tenej pristupom na Pizu, kogda ot vsej večernim vetrom razzuženno j Toskany paxnet, kak ot potërtogo mež pal'cev lavrovogo lista. . .

* A detailed discussion of sound associations will be found in Chapter VII.

> ...Pizanskaja kosaja bašnja prorvalas' skvoz' cep' srednevekovyx ukreplenij. Na ulice čislo ljudej, vidavšix eë s mosta ežeminutno vozrastalo. Zareva, kak partizany, polzli po ploščadjam. Ulicy zapružalis' oprokinutymi tenjami, inye ešče rubilis' v tesnyx proxodax. Pizanskaja bašnja kosila naotmaš', bez razbory, poka odna šal'naja ispolinskaja ten' ne prošlas' po solncu...(II, 53 and 54)
>
> (On one of the September evenings when the sloping tower of Pisa led a whole army of oblique colors and sidelong shadows against Pisa, when all Tuscany, irritated by the night wind, smelt like a frayed laurel between the fingers. . .
> The leaning tower of Pisa had pushed its way through a chain of medieval fortifications. The number of people who could see it from the bridge were increasing every minute. The red glow of the sky, like a poursuivant, crawled along the square. The streets were blocked with tiptilted shadows, some of which were still fighting in the narrow alleyways. The tower of Pisa continued its march, mowing everything down, until at last one insane, gigantic shadow covered the sun.[11])

The story abounds in passages such as this, particularly the second chapter with its description of nighttime in Pisa and of a train ride.

All of Pasternak's early prose works contain pages similarly replete with sound associations and complex images held together by difficult-to-trace intercommunicative links. Following is a characteristic passage from the novella Povest', which, incidentally, contains one of Pasternak's rare, penetrating comments on the nature of imagery. The main character of the story is looking for his beloved:

> Nutro Sereži bylo vsë v krovopodtëkax, on zadyxalsja ot bogatstva, kotoroe dolžen byl i ele byl v silax vmestit'.
> Šiloj, rasširjavšej do bespredel'nosti ego oščuščen'e, byla soveršennaja bukval'nost' strasti,

> to est' to eë kačestvo, blagodarja kotoromu jazyk kišët obrazami, metaforami i ešče bolee togo -- zagadočnymi obrazovanjami, ne podajuščimisja razjasneniju. Razumeetsja, ves' pereulok v ego splošnoj sumračnosti byl krugom i celikom Annoju. . . On videl, kak bol'no i trudno Anne byt' gorodskim utrom, to est' vo čto obxoditsja ej sverxčelovečeskoe dostoinstvo prirody. Ona molča krasovalas' v ego prisutstvii i ne zvala ego na pomošč'. I, pomiraja s toski po nastojaščej Aril'd to est' po vsemu ètomu velikolep'u v ego kratčajšem i dragocennejšem izvlečen'i, on smotrel, kak, obložennyj topoljami, točno ledjanymi polotencami, ona zasasyvaetsja oblakami i medlenno zakidyvaet nazad svoi kirpičnye gotičeskie bašni. (II, 195-96)
>
> (Serezha felt all bruised inside; he was breathless for the wealth which he should have absorbed, but was hardly able to do.
>
> The force which had infinitely expanded his sensation, was the absolutely literal nature of his passion, namely, that quality of it, thanks to which the tongue seethes in images, metaphors and, even more, in enigmatic forms that escape analysis. Needless to say, the whole street with its unbroken gloom had become wholly and roundly identical with Anna. . . He saw how painful and difficult it was for Anna to be the city morning, how much the superhuman worth of nature cost her. She gloried silently in his presence and did not appeal for his aid. Dying with longing for the real Arild, for all this splendor in its briefest and most precious abstraction he watched how, swathed in poplars as in ice-packed towels, she was sucked into the clouds and slowly threw back her brick Gothic towers.12)

Or one can turn to the description of the sensation of weakness experienced by the heroine of "Detstvo Luvers," Ženja, after her illness:

> Čuvstvo slabosti, naprimer, predavalos', na svoj risk i strax, kakoj-to strannoj, svoej geometrii. Ot nee slëgka kružilo i potašnivalo.
>
> Načav, naprimer, s kakogo-nibud' episoda na odejale, čuvstvo slabosti prinimalos' naslaivat' na nego rjady postepenno rosšix pustot, skoro stanovivšixsja neimovernymi v stremlenii sumerok prinjat' formu ploščadi, ložaščejsja v osnovan'e ètogo pomešatel'stva. Ili, otdeljajas' ot uzora na obojax, ono,

polosa k polose, progonjalo pered devočkoj široty plavno, kak na masle, smenjavšie drug druga, i tože, kak vse èti oščuščenija, istomljavšie pravil'nym, postepennym prirostom v razmerax. Ili ono mučilo bol'nuju glubinami, kotorye spuskalis' bez konca, vydav s samogo že načala, s pervoj štuki v parkete svoju bezdonnost', i puskalo krovat' ko dnu tixo-tixo; i s krovat'ju -- devočku. Eë golova popadala v položenie kuska saxara, brošennogo v pučinu presnogo, potrjasajušče pustogo xaosa, i rastvorjalas' i rasstruivalas' v nëm. (II, 117-118)

This feeling of weakness gave way, at its own risk and peril, to a strange geometry of its own, provoking a slight giddiness and a sensation of nausea.

Having begun, for example, with some episode on the counterpane, this feeling of weakness began to construct upon its rows of gradually increasing blank spaces, which quickly became an immense void, as the twilight tended to assume the shape of the square which lay at the basis of this maniac play with space. Or else, separating from the pattern of the wallpaper, stripe by stripe, it drove the widths before the girl as smoothly as oil, substituting one for another and also, as in all these sensations, harassing her with a regular and gradual growth in the dimensions. Or else it tormented the sick child with depths which went on without end, betraying from the very beginning, from its first trick on the parquet floor, its own fathomlessness, allowing the bed to fall silently into the depths, silently; and with the bed went the girl. Her head was like a lump of sugar thrown into the abyss of an insipid and menacingly empty chaos, and it dissolved and disappeared in it.[13]

It may have been noted that the associative links in the passages from Doctor Zhivago cited in the preceding chapters are much more readily perceived than the links in the above examples from Pasternak's early prose. This is a significant fact which shall be discussed in detail later, but one which must in no way be interpreted as a sign of a weakening of Pasternak's faith in the power of sceplenie, which, he believed, as we will recall, "consists of the

interpenetrating figurativeness of all its [the world's] parts." As a matter of fact, his intense conviction that this power is responsible for the oneness of time, place, person and object, remains with Pasternak to the end of his life, and nowhere does he speak of it with greater eloquence than in Doctor Zhivago, his last major work:

> Never, never, even in their moments of supreme and reckless happiness were they unaware of something that was most exciting and sublime -- rapture in the total mould of the universe, a sense of being a part of that whole, a certainty of belonging to the splendor of the complete pageant, of the entire cosmos.
>
> Their life was sustained only by this unity with the whole. (513)

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER THREE

1. As translated by C. M. Bowra in The Creative Experiment, op cit., p. 134.

2. Following is the original of Pasternak's lines containing the image of poetry as a sponge:

> Poèzija! Grečeskoj prisoskax
> Bud' ty, i mež zeleni klejkoj
> Tebja b položil ja na mokruju dosku
> Zelënoj sadovoj skamejki.
>
> Rasti sebe pyšnye bryži i fižmy,
> Vbiraj oblaka i ovragi,
> A nočju, poèz͡ija, ja tebja vyžmu
> Vo zdravie žadnoj bumagi.
> ("Vesna," I, 202).

A translation of this poem will be found in Kayden, op. cit., p. 81.

The image of art as a sponge appears in Neskol'ko položenij, an essay Pasternak published in 1922: "Some contemporary groups have taken it into their heads that art is a fountain, whereas it is a sponge. They have determined that art is to gush forth, whereas it is to suck in and swell." (III, 152)

3. See Wladimir Weidle, "Stixi i proza Pasternaka," "Sovremennyje zapiski," Paris, 1928, pp. 463-468; V Alexandrov, "Častnaja žizn', "Literaturnyj kritik," Moskva, 1937, Number 3, pp. 59-61; G. Lelevič, "Gippokratovo lico," "Krasnaja Nov'," 1925, Number 1, p. 301.

4. Kayden, op. cit., p. 13.

5. Tynjanov, op. cit., pp. 566-567.

6. Tarasenkov, op. cit., p. 229.

7. Literal translation by J.M. Cohen in Boris Pasternak. Selected Poems, London, 1946, p. 24. See also the translations of the same poem by Kayden, p. 36 and Reavey, p. 125.

8. The Collected Prose Works, p. 81.

9. The Last Summer, op. cit., p. 101.

10. The Collected Prose Works, p. 31.

The horse metaphor has frequently been used in reference to Pasternak ever since 1922 when Cvetaeva described him as follows in her essay from which I have quoted: "There is something in his face both of the Arab and of his horse: an alertness, a vigilance,. . . an instant readiness to gallop away. A huge and steed-like wild and shy slant of the eyes" (op. cit., p. 354). Over the years, Russian writers and cartoonists have depicted him as someone suggesting a stallion. A visitor from abroad who interviewed Pasternak in January, 1959, similarly observed: "He seemed to withdraw for an instant, half closing his slanted brown eyes, turning his head away, vaguely reminiscent of a horse balking" (Olga Carlisle, "Three Visits With Boris Pasternak," in The Paris Review, Summer Fall, 1960, p. 52).

11. Ibid., pp.127-28.

12. The Last Summer, op. cit., pp. 107-08.

13. The Collected Prose Works, op. cit., p. 197.

CHAPTER FOUR

# DOCTOR ZHIVAGO -- A REALM OF IMAGERY

## 1. The Profusion and Functions of Imagery in Doctor Zhivago

In the writing of his novel, Pasternak skilfully exploited many of the devices open to the lyric poet, as well as those which properly belong to the sphere of prose. The one poetic device to which he resorted with particular readiness and spontaneity is metaphoric language. As can be gleaned from the examples already cited, and as shall be further demonstrated in forthcoming quotations, Pasternak's figures of speech pulsate with the concentrated power and suggestiveness of poetry, retaining at the same time the realistic detail and evaluating quality so vital to the functioning of imagery in prose.

From beginning to end, Doctor Zhivago is a realm of imagery. Figures of speech fill the novel from the first sentence in which feet, horses and gusts of wind "seemed to sing," down to the concluding passage in which the dead Zhivago's volume of verse "seemed to have known" of the

"silent music of happiness" that enveloped the still-living protagonists of the story, and "seemed to confirm and encourage their feeling." Metonymies, image-making sound associations, metaphors, and, above all, similes are interwoven throughout the text so abundantly that, with the exception of the passages devoted to dialogue*, there is hardly a page in the entire novel devoid of figures of speech. There is no discernible pattern as to their occurrence: they may be found at the beginning, in the middle or the end of a chapter, in a cluster of imagery, or as one or two figures of speech standing in isolation. As might have been expected, they are most numerous in lyrical digressions, particularly in the passages devoted to nature descriptions.

Such dependence on figures of speech, on the one hand, and freedom in their distribution, on the other, is more characteristic for poetry than it is for prose, as is also Pasternak's undisguised indifference to maintaining plot continuity, and the deliberate fragmentation of the novel, which becomes apparent from the way Doctor Zhivago is constructed: divided into 2 volumes, the book is further broken up into 16 parts which are, in turn, subdivided into 232 chapters. This is not counting the appendix which consists of 25 poems. Each chapter is, on the average, about 90 lines long, or slightly over two pages. The longest chapter contains only 388 lines (Part VI, Chapter 4), and the

* On imagery in dialogue, see Section 2 of this chapter.

shortest is merely 12 lines long (Part XV, Chapter 17). It is with the help of such fragmentation, characteristic of the lyrical poet, that Pasternak made what he termed

> an effort in the novel to represent the whole sequence of facts and beings and happenings like some moving entireness, like a developing, passing by, rolling and rushing inspiration, as if reality itself had freedom and choice and was composing itself out of numberless variants and versions.[1]

The countless images in Doctor Zhivago help Pasternak to add up these "numberless variants and versions" into "a moving entireness," and this they do by sustaining the atmosphere of the book, by sounding or elaborating themes, coloring events, and intensifying or subduing the emotional effect of the action in the novel. Particularly important is the function of the imagery in subduing the emotional impact of the action. The cruelties described in Doctor Zhivago, the violence of man to man (murder, involuntary suicide, lynching, starvation, terror) would have inevitably made it a morbid, even sadistic, novel were it not for the soothing quality of the imagery, most of which is derived from associations with the comfortingly familiar details of everyday life, and with the compassionate aspects of nature. Thus, when, as a very young boy, Zhivago was grieving over his mother's death,

> this inaccessibly high star-studded sky once came all the way down to his nursery, as far as his nurse's skirt when she was talking to him about God: it was close and within reach like the tops

> of hazel trees in the gullies when you pulled down their branches and picked the nuts. It was as if it dipped into the gilt nursery washbasin and, having bathed in fire and gold, re-emerged at the morning service or mass at the tiny church where he went with his nurse. (E 87)

Or, the sky again:

> In his recent delirium he had reproached Heaven that it had forsaken him, but now the whole breadth of heaven leaned low over his head, holding out two strong, large woman's arms to him. (405)

Even a description of an artillery duel contains an image which evokes associations with the soothing, longed for day-to-day reality:

> The sun had risen in a drift of fog, and was peering dully through openings in the floating mist, like a naked body appearing and disappearing in a bathhouse clouds of steam. (249)

Nature shares with Zhivago the hour of his most piercing grief, the loss of Lara:

> The winter evening was alive with unheard-of sympathy, like a compassionate witness. It was as though there had never been such a dusk before, as though the evening had come now for the first time, in order to console a lonely, orphaned man, as though the belt of wooded hills had not always stood there, with their backs to the horizon, but had this very moment taken their place, rising out of the ground to express their sympathy. (463)

It might be mentioned in passing that such an actively compassionate participation of nature in human affairs is not characteristic for Russian prose, and is normally not found in the works of authors celebrated for their nature scenes, of Tolstoy, for instance, or Sholokhov, and not even of Turgenev, in whose novels and short stories nature moods

so often correspond to the moods of his characters.

The foreshadowing of events through the introduction of imagery that tends to evoke joyful or unhappy expectations in the reader constitutes another of the major functions of figures of speech in Pasternak's novel. When in search of peace and security, Zhivago and his family approach Varykino, "the open space . . . seemed to toss its cap into the air out of sheer exuberance." (276) Or, to cite another example, at the precise moment when Zhivago learns of the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution which was to deal him crushing blows, that winter's first snowfall suddenly thickens and turns into a violent blizzard,

> the kind of blizzard which shrieks in the open field as it blankets it with snow, but which in town tosses about as though it had lost its way and was blocked by a dead end. (196)

## 2. Imagery in Dialogue

As was stated earlier, figures of speech do not appear as frequently in the dialogue as in the expository and descriptive passages in Doctor Zhivago. Nevertheless, these figures of speech do have a place of their own in the language of the characters appearing in the book. In his scholarly study of the language and style of Pasternak's

novel,[2] L. Rževskij divides the speech of its many personages into three main categories. The first is comprised of what he terms the avtogennyj krug personažej ("author-oriented personages");[3] that is, those men and women who speak the cultivated language of educated Russians, and indeed of the author himself. They are, in the first place, Yurii Zhivago and Lara, and then those who are close to them: Tonia and her father, Zhivago's uncle, Gordon, Dudorov, Sima Tuntseva.

To the second category belong people of the geterogennyj krug ("author-removed personages"), according to Rževskij, who are important to the plot, but who are intellectually and psychologically inadmissible to the avtogennyj krug. To this category belong the partisan leader Liberius, Komarovsky, the janitor Markel, the lawyer and manipulator Samdeviatov. Antipov-Strelnikov is of this group, but his speech is so influenced by his education and book reading that Rževskij places him somewhere between the first and second categories.[4]

Finally, to the third category belong the men and women of the "remote circle." They are city dwellers, train passengers, guerrillas, adolescents and other episodic personages who keep criss-crossing each other's lives, and the lives of the leading characters.

The main characteristic of the persons belonging to the avtogennyj krug, writes Rževskij, is that from the point of

view of "the choice of words, and of stylistic and structural-semantic aspects"[5] they are very close to Pasternak himself. There is "a merging of the speech area of the author's 'self' and the 'selves' of the author-orientated personages."[6] Witness, for example, the similarity of imagery and unanimity of sentiment with which the latter follow Pasternak's lead when he brands the "deadly winglessness" (406) of mediocrity:

Zhivago (addressing the fig tree which does not bear fruit): "Oh how thou dost offend, how void of any gift!" (E5551)

Lara: "Monster of mediocrity." (511)

Gordon: "The curse of mediocrity." (125)

Vedeniapin: "Gregariousness -- the refuge of mediocrity." (9)

Particularly close to Pasternak's language, stresses Rževskij, is the speech of the two main protagonists of the novel: "much of the author-Zhivago-Lara speech spectrum is identical."[7] The same applies to figures of speech, as can be easily gleaned from the following examples:

Pasternak: "The commissar was . . . burning like a little candle." (139)

Lara: "You are still burning, my bright little candle." (450)

Pasternak: "He willed with every ounce of his flesh and blood." (17)

Lara: "I know with my heart's blood, with every little vein in me." (509)

Pasternak: "Big stars hung in the woods between branches like blue lanterns." (292-93)

Zhivago: "The sun hung in the forest like a crimson ball." (381)

Pasternak: "Something greater than himself wept and sobbed in him with bright, tender words, shining like phosphorescence." (404)

Zhivago: I was overflowing with tears, I wept and glowed inwardly." (437)

Characteristic for the images in the speech of the author-orientated personages, is that they perform no specific functions, except to add to the other semantic indications that these personages belong to the avtogennyj krug. In sharp contrast, whenever figures of speech make their sporadic appearanee in the utterances of the men and women belonging to the second and third categories, they do so in order to serve the author's purposes of individualization.

We have seen earlier how figures of speech bring to light and underscore Komarovsky's pošlost'. In a similar fashion, Antipov-Strelnikov is shown to be essentially a bookish man who thinks or speaks in such metonymies as "the brute insolence of money" (472), "[Lara's] daring grace" (472). Or, to cite metaphoric figures of speech,

he paints a word picture of Russia "burning like a candle of redemption for all the misfortunes and misery of mankind" (473), and, in addressing Zhivago:

> These are apocalyptic times, my dear sir, this is the Last Judgment. This is a time for angels with flaming swords and winged beasts from the abyss, not for sympathizers and loyal doctors. (E 252)

Pasternak's use of imagery in dialogue is particularly effective in helping him to recreate the political-oratorical style of the civil-war period in Russia, marked by the clichés that inundated the incessant speech-making of the time. Typical is the following sentence from a harrangue by the Bolshevik commissar Gints:

> At a time when the fatherland is being bled white and is making a last-ditch effort to free itself from the encircling hydra of the enemy, . . you have become a gang of hooligans who have stuffed themselves with freedom to the point of bursting. (140-41)

Or, to cite the exhortation of the anarchist Vdovichenko in front of the firing squad:

> Posterity will pillory the Bourbons of the commissarocracy together with their dirty deeds. We die as martyrs for our ideals at the dawn of the world revolution. (E355)

Even the anti-Bolshevik merchant Galuzin resorts to the stereotyped imagery of the revolutionary period when he speechifies to the "white" conscripts:

> The long road to calvary in front of you is the road of defense of our motherland against the ravishers who flood her fields with fratricidal blood. The people cherished the thought of the conquests of the revolution, but the party of the

> Bolsheviks, those servants of foreign capital, dispersed the Constituent Assembly, the people's loftiest hope, by the brute force of bayonets, and now blood flows in a defenseless river. (332)

There are remarkable aspects of the language of certain episodic personages in Doctor Zhivago, such as the adolescents with a slang all their own; the old driver Bacchus in whose speech "archaic Russian forms, Tartar idioms, and local oddities of diction were punctuated with obscurities of his own invention" (E267); the cattle-healer Kubarikha, whose song and incantation emerged straight out of Russian folklore; and, finally, the laundry girl Tania, whose tale belongs to the tradition of the skaz. However fascinating to the philologist and the linguist, their language contains very few figures of speech, and may thus be safely bypassed by the student of imagery.

### 3. Imagery of Animate Vs. Inanimate Nature

The swift, revelatory light which metaphoric language casts on a person, place, scene or event constitutes one of its most significant functions. A figure of speech in a description or a statement endows it, as though by magic, with hitherto unexpected or not clearly perceived ramifications and depth. Thus, the freedom brought to Russia by the February revolution in 1917, its unheard-of totality,

emerges into sharp relief in the novel only after Zhivago gives a metaphorical description of the event:

> The roof has been torn off the whole of Russia. . . . It isn't as if only people were talking. Stars and trees have gathered and hold discussions, night flowers talk philosophy, stone houses callmeetings. (147 and 148)

The revelatory light of the image illuminates also the writer himself, his attitudes, his vision of reality, and his philosophic and aesthetic concepts. The spheres from which he selects the material for his figures of speech serve the same purpose, the omissions being no less enlightening than the inclusions. The truth of this may be illustrated by comparing one aspect of the imagery in Shakespeare and in Pasternak. Whereas the former depicts evil, fear corruption, ugliness, illness or decay in countless figures of speech,[8] Pasternak reserves his almost exclusively for what he cherishes as beautiful, wholesome, life-giving. It is as though he refuses to dignify evil and ugliness with the aura of imagery. That this is no accident but, on the contrary, the consequence of a deliberate effort, is implied in a general statement on art Pasternak made in the course of an interview with Ralph Matlaw, in June of 1959:

> Pasternak went on to say that for him the inchoate or the ugly can never matter for art, that art is reserved for the beautiful. Only, perhaps, the ugly can be used for contrast, as in the figure of the lawyer Komarovsky.[9]

Such an approach could not but considerably restrict

the scope of Pasternak's imagery, if only because cruelty, ugliness and death are inalienable from so many aspects of man's existence, and from the struggle for survival in all animal life. And indeed, the imagery in Doctor Zhivago concerns itself primarily with inanimate nature and with details of everyday life, in the very humbleness of which Pasternak found solace and inspiration. Leaving this type of imagery for later discussion, I shall consider the figures of speech in the novel, associated with animal life and with human beings.

As stated, Pasternak's imagery tends to ignore animal life. The few exceptions appear sporadically, as though by accident. The novel actually does contain some striking passages dealing with animal life, but their fascination lies in aspects other than figures of speech. Wolves, for instance, appear seven times in Doctor Zhivago, rats are mentioned or described on nine different occasions, and field mice enter the narrative twice. The effect of these animals on the reader is great, but this is due primarily to their symbolic import. As for figures of speech, only two are contained in all of these seventeen places where the animals are spoken of, and neither belongs to Pasternak's more felicitous images. One does no more than refer to the "insolent noise" of rats, and the other to their "squealing in their whining contralto voices." (405)

As a rule, whenever a figure of speech appears in a description of an animal, it is pallid, as though Pasternak had set it down in a moment of forgetfulness. Thus, a horse is described as "sadly watching" men pack a cart (340), and the dog belonging to the villain of the book is "jealous of Lara as if afraid that she would infect his master with something human." (47) On the rare occasion when an animal image radiates poetry, careful scrutiny will show that its source lies in the inanimate nature which Pasternak introduces at some point. One of the most appealing images in the whole book, for instance, starts out with a newly-bought cow's "homesickness for her herd," which causes her to refuse food from her new mistress, and the cow

> now crossly shook her head from one side to another, now craned her neck and mourned plaintively, mournfully, and above the black barns of Meliuzeievo stars twinkled, and invisible threads of sympathy were reaching out from them to the cow as if from cattle sheds in other worlds where she was pitied. (143)

Figures of speech associated with birds occur in the novel somewhat more frequently than those dealing with animal life on the ground, which is true of Pasternak's early work, as well. Characteristic for both is that he is preoccupied with the singing of the birds, rather than with their movement. This singing, furthermore, is made to participate in the general nature scene and to become an integral part of it, as the singing of the nightingale, for instance with its

> greedily repetitive, voluptuous "tjox-tjox-tjox," at times in three notes, and at others forgetful of the count, in response to which the vegetation, all in dew, shook drops off and preened itself, quivering as though it were being tickled. (296)[10]

The integration is even more complete in the passage where the clear three-note call of the orioles "stops each minute long enough to allow the countryside to absorb the moist fluting sounds to the last vibration." (11)

In one bird image motion is intimated, but the reference is obviously accidental: "You were given wings to soar above the clouds, but I, a woman, have been given them to stay close to the ground and to shelter my young with my wings." (446) And in the only place in the entire novel where birds are actually described on the wing, there are no figures of speech whatsoever, although birds in motion have since time immemorial invited comparison and analogy.

> Two magpies flew into the courtyard from the street and fluttered around in search of a place to settle, their feathers slightly ruffled by the wind. The magpies perched on the cover of a trash box, changed over to the fence, flew down to the ground, and began walking around the yard. (425)

The sole excuse for this rather colorless description seems to have been the invocation, which immediately followed it, of the ancient Russian superstition that magpies portend a snowfall, visitors or letters. True enough, a letter is brought in, and snow begins to fall. Predictably, Pasternak follows up both events -- one, involving a detail from everyday life, and the other a phenomenon of inanimate

nature -- with an evocative, metaphor-pierced description:

> The wind swept the snow sideways, ever faster and thicker, as though striving to catch up with something, and Yurii Andreievich stared ahead of him out of the window as though looking out not on the snow but still continuing to read Tonia's letter, and as though it were not dry, star-like snowflakes that flickered past him but the small spaces of white paper between small black letters, white, white, endless, endless. (428)

This brief paragraph contains personification (the wind striving to catch up with something), houses two negative similes characteristic for Russian folklore, but rare in modern literature ("as though looking not at the snow" and "as though it were not dry, star-like snowflakes"), exploits repetition for emotional coloring ("white, white, endless, endless"), and is permeated with sound associations. The nature and functions of the latter will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

As with bird and animal life, Pasternak also tends to ignore opportunities of employing figurative language in connection with the novel's numerous characters. Not an impressionistic stroke, nor flight of metaphoric fancy invade the straightforward prose of Pasternak's depictions of men and women, which are well within the tradition of Russian realism. Descriptions such as the following could have been written by almost any Russian Nineteenth century prose writer after Gogol:

> She was a tall thin woman with regular features and a rather masculine face which recalled the

> Emperor's, especially when she wore a gray astrakhan hat set at an angle; she kept it on in the house only slightly raising the veil pinned to it. (E54)
>
> Prutiliev came from Malmyzh. His hair was cropped and he was pockmarked, squat and hideous. His gray sweater, black with sweat under the arms, fitted him snugly like a flashy woman's blouse. He would sit for hours as silent as a statue, lost in thought, scratching the warts on his freckled hands until they bled and suppurated. (E220)[11]

"Silent as a statue" in the second quotation is, of course, a simile, but one worn so threadbare that it is no longer perceived as a figure of speech. Those rare occasions when we do come across a genuine simile ("the three layers of her double chin, grand bosom and silk-swathed stomach quivered like kisel'" 206) or epithet ("spiteful little beard," 9) only serve to underscore the consistency with which Pasternak avoids figures of speech in association with human beings. He makes no exception even for the mysterious, almost mythical Evgraf, or the tragic Strelnikov-Antipov, or Zhivago himself. The one exception is Lara, and the imagery connected with her is so remarkable and so extraordinary for Pasternak that it merits a separate chapter.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER FOUR

1. Boris Pasternak, "Three Letters," Encounter, August, 1960, p. 5.

   All of Letter II is, in a sense, Pasternak's explanation of the fragmentation of the novel, and of his lack of interest in maintaining plot continuity.

2. L. Rževskij, "Jazyk i stil' romana B.L. Pasternaka, 'Doktor Zivago'" ("The Language and Style of B.L. Pasternak's novel, Doctor Zhivago"), in Sbornik statej, posvjaščënnyx tvorčestvu B.L. Pasternaka, Munich, 1962, pp. 115-89.

3. Ibid., p. 136.

4. Ibid., p. 143.

5. Ibid., p. 136.

6. Ibid., p. 133.

7. Ibid., p. 139.

8. Shakespeare's preoccupation in his imagery with evil, fear, corruption, etc. is abundantly illustrated by Caroline Spurgeon in her "Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us, Cambridge, England, 1958, pp. 154-67.

9. Pasternak, as cited by Ralph Matlaw in "A Visit With Pasternak," The Nation, September 12, 1959, p. 134.

10. Other nightingale passages will be found on pp. 313-14 and in two of the Zhivago poems, "Spring Road" and "White Night."

11. Additional descriptions of persons in a similar realistic vein will be found on pp. 23, 206, 227, 326 and 327.

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CHAPTER FIVE:

# THE LARA IMAGERY

## 1. The Recurrent Image

The imagery associated with Lara is second only to the novel's nature imagery in quantity, and second to none in variety and evocativeness. Pasternak lavishes on his beloved heroine all his gifts for imaginative speech, as though in an effort to demonstrate his adherence to the theory that "art is reserved for the beautiful." And, indeed, as he depicts Lara from the moment she appears early in the novel, to her final exit, she is the very epitome of radiance, purity and beauty. Thus:

> She moved with a silent grace. (25)
> Her soul, her inner being fitted harmoniously into her contours and strained with a responsive eagerness toward the future. (25)
> She was incomparable in her spiritual radiance. Her arms were astonishing the way sublime thought astonishes. Her shadow on the wallpaper of the hotel room was like the outline of her innocence. (46)
> She was lovely in that incomparably simple and swift line the Creator had drawn around her at a single stroke, and in this divine form had handed her over to his soul, like a child tightly wrapped in a sheet after having been bathed. (377)

Lara remains pure even after her seduction by Komarovsky, so pure that the boy Antipov, who was in love with her, suspected nothing and rejoiced at the sight of her "as if she were a grove of birch trees, untrodden green grass and clouds." (50)

Toward the end of the book, when Lara had already gone through the purgatory of life in a country ravaged by revolutionary upheavals, Pasternak still finds it possible to describe her as "effortlessly beautiful." (506)

In the imagery which he uses to describe Lara, she is associated with all that he prizes as noble, radiant and life-giving. She is compared and identified with the rowan tree which feeds hungry birds in the dead of winter; with light and air; with water and the sea; with Russia and the Russian countryside; with the miracle of life itself.* In some instances, the association is established explicitly, but is in most cases achieved through the suggestive power of metaphors, similes, metonymies and even epithets which Pasternak otherwise uses most sparingly. In one place, for example, the epithets come rushing wildly, seething with emotion as Zhivago thanks the Lord for having let him worship at the feet of Lara, the bezrassudnaja, bezropotnaja, nezadačlivaja, nenagljadnaja ("the irrational, uncomplaining, luckless and perpetually delightful one," 449). Note,

* These figures of speech are cited later in the chapter, each within its proper category.

incidentally, how the effectiveness of the adjectives is enhanced by sound repetition (bez, ne and particularly a and ja). A comparable strengthening of effect is likewise produced by reiteration of sounds in the passage, where Pasternak describes Lara in terms of Russia, his epithets consisting this time of both adjectives and nouns:*

> I èta dal' -- Rossija, ego nesravnennaja, za morjami našumevšaja, znamenitaja roditel'nica, mučenica, uprjamica, sumasbrodka, šalaja, bogotvorimaja, s večno veličestvennymi i gibel'nymi vyxodkami, kotoryx nikogda nel'zja predvidèt'! . . . Vot èto-to i est' Lara. (402)
>
> (And this vast expanse was Russia, his incomparable, renowned mother, the talk of the world, the martyr, the obstinate one, the self-willed, mad and adored one, with her unpredictable, forever majestic and disastrous escapades! . . . This, then, is Lara.)

A unique and paramount aspect of the figures of speech connected with Lara is that they are dominated by recurrent imagery, that is, by the repetition in them of the same ideas, elements or objects.

The one-time image appears lightning-like in a literary work, illuminating a character trait, setting a nature scene in relief, or stressing the mood of the moment. The cumulative force of the recurrent image sustains and strengthens the imaginative process, as the writer weaves the image in and out of the text, realizing its metaphoric potentialities a little further with each step.

* for more on Pasternak's use of sound orchestration see Chapter VII.

In Doctor Zhivago, recurrent imagery is reserved exclusively for Lara, associating her particularly frequently with the water element, with the various forms and shapes it takes. Her "moist voice" is mentioned three times (292, 405, 450); her room after a violent rain is "a sea, a real sea, a whole ocean" (152); Zhivago and Mademoiselle Fleury who look into the room imagine her standing outside the house "in the form of a watery wraith." (152) Years later, Zhivago again sees an apparition resembling Lara, and this time, too, she is associated with rain:

> Like a huge banner stretching across a city street, there hung before him in the air, from one side of the forest glade to the other, a blurred, greatly magnified image of a single, astonishing, idolized head. The apparition wept, and the rain, now more intense, kissed and watered it. (E368)

Zhivago thinks of Lara's nearness as of "the first wave of the sea which rolls up to meet you as you run toward it over the sandy beach in the dark." (314) When he and Lara are alone in the darkness of night, they exchange "secret words, great and quiet like the name of the Asian ocean" (437), which in the original suggests the Pacific because the Russian name for it is Velikij ili tixij okean (The Great or Quiet Ocean). When the two lovers are separated, never to see each other again, Zhivago writes down his remembrance of Lara in a series of images associating her with the sea:

> This is how I will portray you, I'll trace your features on paper as the sea, after a fearful storm

> has churned it up, traces the form of the greatest, farthest-reaching wave on the sand. Seaweed, shells, cork, pebbles, the lightest, most impomderable things that it could lift from its bed, are cast up in a broken, sinuous line on the sand. This line endlessly stretching into the distance is the frontier of the highest tide. That was how life's storm cast you up on my shore, O my pride, that is how I'll portray you. (E452)

This promise, born of "aching tenderness and sorrow," (452) is fulfilled in six stanzas of the poem "Parting," where the novels recurrent sea imagery associated with Lara is echoed and brought to a consummation:

> Ever since morning his ears have been ringing.
> Is he awake or having a bad dream?
> And why do thoughts about the sea
> Persist in coming to his mind?
>
> When one no longer sees the day
> Because of hoarfrost on the panes
> The hopelessness of grief redoubles
> Its likeness to the sea's vast desert.
>
> He drew her every trait to him
> Even as the sea draws near it
> Each of the many littorals
> Throughout the stretch of its incoming tide.
>
> Even as reeds go down beneath
> The rough seas following a storm
> So every line of her had gone
> To the bottom of his soul.
>
> In years of hardships, in the days
> Of an unthinkable existence
> She had been cast up from the depths
> By a high wave of destiny,
>
> Amid innumerable perils,
> Avoiding every reef and shoal
> The wave had borne her on and on
> And brought her close.
>
> ( E 543-544)

(V ušax s utra kakoj-to šum.
On v pamjati il' grezit?
I počemu jemu na um
Vsë mysl' o more lezet?

Kogda skvoz' inej na okne
Ne vidno sveta božja,
Bezvyxodnost' toski vdvojne
S pustynej morja sxoža.

Ona byla tak doroga
Emu čertoj ljuboju,
Kak morju blizki berega
Vsej liniej priboja.

Kak zatopljaet kamyši
Volnen'e posle štorma,
Ušli na dno ego duši
Eë čerty i formy.

V goda mytarstv, vo vremena
Nemyslimogo byta
Ona volnoj sud'by so dna
Byla k nemu pribita.

Sredi prepjatstvij bez čisla,
Opasnosti minuja,
Volna nesla eë, nesla
I prignala vpotnuju.)
(Razluka, 551-52)

Given Pasternak's worshipful attitude toward Lara, his concentration on water imagery in connection with her is no surprise to anyone acquainted with his early work, the imagery of which is to a large extent dominated by this life-giving element.[1] There, however, each such figure of speech appears in isolation, existing, so to say, an sich, whereas in Doctor Zhivago most of the water imagery is associated with one person, thereby gradually acquiring the cumulative force inherent in the recurrent image.

## 2. More Recurrent Imagery and Lara

The other iterated images connected with Lara do not occur nearly as frequently as those associating her with water and the sea, nor are their potentialities as fully exploited. There are, for instance, three passages depicting the rowan tree. Lara is not mentioned in the first of them, but she comes to mind as one reads the image in which Pasternak evokes the rowan's unfading beauty and motherliness:

> Just at the edge of the camp and of the autumnally naked forest through which one could see as though a gate were open into its bareness, a solitary, beautiful, rusty-leaved rowan grew, which alone among all the trees had kept its foliage. . . . Something of a living intimacy had grown between the birds and the tree. It was as though the rowan had been watching them, and had resisted stubbornly and for a long time, but then gave in, took pity on the birds, and, like a nurse giving breast to a baby, unbuttoned her blouse. (363)

The passage in which Pasternak describes the rowan for the second time contains an explicit reference to Lara. Zhivago is making his escape from the partisans in order to find her, and he comes upon the tree which stands half-covered with snow,

> and it held out two snow-covered branches toward him. He remembered Lara's long white arms, round and generous, took hold of the branches and pulled the tree toward him. As if responding, the rowan shook snow all over Zhivago. Distraught and oblivious of what he was saying, he kept muttering to himself: "I'll find you, my radiant beauty, my cherished little rowan, my life's blood." (385)

The identification of Lara with the rowan in the concluding sentence is doubly poignant by virtue of the stylistic devices easily recognizable by the reader of the original: Krasota moja pisanaja, knjaginja moja rjabinuška, rodnaja krovinuška. The choice of words and their reiteration, the diminutives, the internal rhyme, the rhythmic pattern are all deeply rooted in the Russian lyrical folk song where the rowan tree is the traditional symbol of "the suffering of the married woman . . . the image of the grieving woman."[2] Lara, we will recall, is a loving and devoted mother whose duty, as she sees it, is "to stay close to the ground and to shelter my young with my wings." (446) In her own way, and in the complex and tortured way of those times, she is also the loving and devoted wife to a husband who abandoned her in order to fight for the revolution "which will one day show no mercy toward him." (412) When that day comes, he commits suicide. Pasternak's brief description of the dead body of Lara's husband contains only one figure of speech, and in it the rowan is alluded to for the third time:

> The small drops of blood that had spurted on to the snow had mixed with it to form red beads resembling rowanberries. (476)

As has been mentioned, Pasternak's recurrent imagery associates Lara with Russia and the Russian countryside, with light and air, and with the miracle of life. These images are so intermixed with each other, and with Lara,

that I shall make no attempt to disentangle them in my discussion, except to point out at the very outset that light appears more frequently than the other components, so frequently, indeed, that it seems to accompany Lara and Zhivago like a trusted old friend. Thus "a soothingly rosy light followed them across the field, calming them and filling them with hope." (276) Or:

> The light in the room was exactly as outside, the fresh, un-aged evening light of early spring . . . The transparency of spring's all-pervading evening light seemed to him a pledge of distant hopes. (393)

In its transparency, light unveils Russia's immeasurable expanse, unveils the vistas of life itself "for many years to come" (1888) -- light and Russia and life merging into a vision of Lara. The vision is particularly luminous in two passages, into which Pasternak has crowded the elements that dominate the recurrent imagery under discussion:

> Ever since childhood, Zhivago loved the evening forest pierced with the fire of the sunset. At such moments it was as though shafts of light were passing also through him, as though the gift of the living spirit flooded his breast, cut through his whole being, emerging from under his shoulder in the form of wings. The archtype which is formed in every person at a tender age, and remains with him forever after, seeming to be his inward being, his personality, now came to life in Zhivago in all its primeordial strength, compelling nature, the forest, the glow of the sunset and every single thing he could see to be transfigured into a similarly primeordial and all-embracing likeness of a girl. "Lara," he half-whispered, closing his eyes, invoking in his mind his whole life, all of God's earth, the entire sunlit expanse stretched out before him. (353)

Later in the book, when Zhivago returns to Lara's apartment after a long parting, and does not find her at home, he is full of sadness and uncertainty, and asks himself "a question he can always answer," the question of what Lara meant to him. Here is his ready answer, given in the original, in order to prevent loss of imagery, particularly the previously cited untranslatable noun-epithets, those rarest of all the figures of speech found in the novel:

> Vot vesennij večer vo dvore. Vozdux ves' razemečen zvukami. Golosa igrajuščix detej razbrosany v mestax raznoj dal'nosti, kak by v znak togo, čto prostranstvo naskvoz' vsë živoe. I èta dal' -- Rossija, ego nesravnennaja, za morjami našumevšaja znamenitaja roditel'nica, mučenica, uprjamica, sumasbrodka, šalaja, bogotvorimaja, s večno veličestvennymi i gibel'nymi vyxodkami, kotoryx nikogda nel'zja predvidet'! O, kak sladko suščestvovat'! Kak sladko žit na svete i ljubit' žizn'! O, kak vsegda tjanet skazat' spasibo samoj žizni, samomu suščestvovaniju, skazat' èto im samim v lico!
>
> Vot èto-to i est' Lara. S nimi nel'zja razgovarivat', a ona ix predstavitel'nica, ix vyraženie, dar sluxa i slova, darovannyj bezglasnym načalam suščestvovanija. (401-02)

> (An evening in the spring. The air punctuated with sounds from one end to the other. Voices of children at play scattered at various distances as if to show that the whole expanse was permeated with life. And this vast expanse was Russia -- his incomparable, renowned mother, the talk of the world, the martyr, the obstinate one, the self-willed, mad and adored one, with her unpredictable, forever majestic and disastrous escapades. Oh, how sweet it is to be alive! How sweet it is to exist on earth and to love life! Oh, how one always longs to say "Thank you!" to life itself, to existence itself, addressing them directly!

> This, then, is Lara. One cannot speak to life and existence, but she is their representative, their expression, the bestowal of speech and hearing, bestowed upon the inarticulate elements of being.)

### 3. Pasternak's Recurrent Imagery and Shakespeare

Wind, rain, snow, light and other nature phenomena dominate the imagery in Pasternak's early writing, as they do in Doctor Zhivago, but in the former all images appear in isolation -- swift, striking and rarely developed.[3] They do not, therefore, gather the cumulative force of the recurrent image, nor do they ever culminate into what might be termed a master metaphor, such as in the passages identifying Lara with water, light or existence. It might be argued that Doctor Zhivago is Pasternak's only novel, and that recurrent imagery can thrive more readily in a long work than in a shorter one. While this is undeniably true, the fact remains that Pasternak had ample opportunities to create recurrent imagery in his series of verses devoted to one theme, in his long narrative poems and in his short stories, and that he did not avail himself of these opportunities, whereas in Doctor Zhivago he did so. This seems most unusual in a writer whose stylistic devices underwent very little change in the course of many years of creative activity. A search for an explanation uncovered but one clue: the years

Pasternak spent on the writing of his novel had roughly coincided with the period of his most intense preoccupation with Shakespeare, that incomparable master of the recurrent image.[4]

As mentioned earlier in the study, official Soviet hostility had compelled Pasternak to earn his living by doing translations. Among the men whose works he rendered into Russian were Goethe, Schiller, Verlaine, Byron, Keats and Shelley, but it was Shakespeare who attracted him most, as is apparent from the list of published translations by Pasternak.[5] And Shakespeare alone moved him to write a commentary which leaves little doubt that Pasternak was aware of the impact which a great writer makes on his translator:

> Then, with a tangible certainty which is not given to the biographer or the scholar, the translator becomes aware of the personality of Shakespeare and of his genius.[6]

In daily progressing through the text, Pasternak writes,

> the translator finds himself reliving the circumstances of the author. Day by day he reproduces his actions and he is drawn into some of his secrets, not in theory but practically, by experience.[7]

The result is thus not merely imitation, whether conscious or subconscious, but the more complex and profound process of absorbing the author's "secrets"; the very nature of a translator's work makes such an absorption an imperceptable and organic process, capable of enriching his own creative potentiality.

It is my thesis that recurrent imagery in Doctor Zhivago is a "secret" Pasternak learned and made his own as a result of his translations from Shakespeare, in whose works recurrent images play a most vital role. That role was aptly summed up by Spurgeon:

> There is no question but that the most striking function of the imagery as background and undertone in Shakespeare's art is the part played by recurrent images in raising and sustaining emotion, in providing atmosphere or in emphasizing a theme.[8]

One finds arresting similarities between reiterated figures of speech in Shakespeare and Pasternak, but, before discussing them, I should like to point out one significant difference. Like all of Shakespeare's images, his recurrent ones may be found in association with men, objects or abstract conceptions of all kinds, whether good or evil, whereas Pasternak reserves his use of recurrent imagery exclusively for the heroine of his novel. This is in keeping with his general tendency to avoid figures of speech when writing about human beings except Lara.

The similarities are especially pronounced in the recurrent images in Doctor Zhivago and those in Romeo and Juliet and Antony and Cleopatra -- plays which, like Pasternak's novel, are centered around star-crossed lovers. The associations which are made most frequently and consistently in all three works are those which link the leading characters with light. I have already shown how light permeates many of the figures of speech connected

with Lara. In Romeo and Juliet, to cite Spurgeon, "the dominating image is light, every form and manifestation of it."[9] Compare, for instance, Shakespeare's

> her beauty makes
> This vault a feasting presence full of light.
> (V-3-85)

with Pasternak's

> whenever she entered a room, it was as though a window were flung open and the room filled with light and air. (473)

Imagery connected with light, sun, stars and light-emitting objects (torch, lamp) also dominates Antony and Cleopatra. Clemen observes:

> Just as Anthony himself is conceived of as partaking in the nature of light, so does his death appear as the quenching of this light.[10]

Similarly with Cleopatra. Antony sees her as "day o' the world" (IV-8-13), and exclaims when thinking that she had died: "the torch is out." (IV-14-46). Also Zhivago compares his loss of Lara with a light extinguished: "My bright sun has set." (463)

Less abundant than light images, and yet frequently reiterated in both Shakespearean tragedies and in Pasternak's novel, are figures of speech based on associations with sea, rain "and waters sighs and tears" (Antony and Cleopatra, I-2-153). Since we are already acquainted with this kind of imagery in Doctor Zhivago, I shall limit myself to pointing out by way of example that, like Lara, Antony is compared with the "grand sea" (III-12-10), and that

the water imagery which crowns Capulet's speech to Juliet calls to mind the already cited passage crowning Pasternak's water imagery associated with Lara:

> How not a conduit, girl? what, still in tears?
> Evermore showering? In one little body
> Thou counterfeit'st a bark, a sea, a wind;
> For still thy eyes, which I may call the sea,
> Do ebb and flow with tears; the bark thy body is,
> Sailing in this salt flood; the winds, thy sighs;
> Who, raging with thy tears, and they with them,
> Without a sudden calm will overset
> Thy tempest-tossed body.
>
> (III-5-130-138)

The device of recurrent imagery in the above works is the same; some of the dominating associations are analogous; the very wording bears resemblance on occasion, and yet, the supreme degree in which Pasternak's recurrent images are integrated with the context precludes an interpretation of these similarities as merely imitation or a borrowing on his part. They point, rather, to a meeting of kindred minds, in which the lesser unhesitatingly and openly adopts for his own purposes an effective device acquired in the course of day-to-day contact with the master's works.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER FIVE

1. For a detailed discussion of the water element in Pasternak's works, see "Vodjanoj znak" by V.S. Frank in Sbornik statej, posvjaščënnyx tvorčestvu B.L. Pasternaka, op. cit., pp. 240-252.

2. V.M. Sidel'nikov, Poètika russkoj narodnoj liriki, Moscow, 1959, p. 63.

3. Following is an example of the rare developed images in Pasternak early lyrics:

> Iz tifoznoj toski tjufjakov
> Von na vozdux širot obrazcovyj!
> On mne brat i ruka. On takov,
> Čto tebe, kak pis'mo, adresovan.
>
> Nadorvi z ego šir', kak pis'mo,
> S gorizontom vstupi v perepisku,
> Pobedi iznurenja izmor.
> Zavedi razgovor po-al'pijski.
> ("Ne volnujsja, ne plač', ne trudi," I, 336)

4. Cf. George Reavey, op. cit., pp. 252-53.

5. Ibid.

6. I Remember, op. cit., p. 142.

7. Ibid.

8. Caroline Spurgeon, Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells Us, Cambridge, England, 1958, p. 213.

9. Ibid., p. 310.

10. Wolfgang H. Clemen, The Development of Shakespeare's Imagery, London, 1953, p. 162.

CHAPTER SIX

# THE PREVALENCE OF SIMILE

## 1. In Quest of Simplicity

The most striking single feature of the imagery in Doctor Zhivago is the abundance of simile. The abundance is so great that even the most casual reader cannot but become aware of it, as he proceeds from page to page of Pasternak's novel. In their prevalence, similes outnumber all the other figures of speech by almost two to one, judging by a count of seven pages selected from different parts of the book for the sole reason that they are replete with imagery. The pages contain forty-one similes, twenty-two metaphors, one metonymy and one hyperbole.[1] That this relationship reflects more or less correctly the ratio maintained throughout the book can be seen from a scrutiny of the examples scattered throughout this study.

The reasons for Pasternak's heavy reliance on the simile in Doctor Zhivago are not far to seek. There is,

to begin with, a predilection toward this figure of speech in all of his works pre-dating the novel.[2] The clarity and directness of the explicit form of comparison served to reinforce this predilection when Pasternak launched the writing of a book which was to him the culmination of a life-long quest for simplicity and naturaleness. This quest was discussed in detail in Chapter I, so here I shall limit myself to an underscoring of the major factors in Pasternak's evolution that had led him to curb the tendencies of his early period toward stylistic complexity and subtlety, and to employ in Doctor Zhivago the simplest means of expression available to him.

First, there is the obviously autobiographical reference to the quest itself in the description of Zhivago's acute dissatisfaction with the ostentatiousness and strain he had detected in his own writings. Note the emotion-charged, thrice-repeated "all his life":

> All his life he dreamt of achieving an originality smooth and discreet, unapparent and concealed in the disguise of widely used and customary forms; all his life he strove to attain a style so restrained, unpretentious that the reader or the hearer would master the content without realizing how he had assimilated it. All his life he struggled for an unostentatious style, and was horrified at the realization of how far he still lagged behind his ideal. (451-52)

Of possibly greater significance is the enormous meaning which Christ had assumed for Pasternak ("the be-all in my destiny," E549), and the latter's conception that Christ is "emphatically human" (E43), that He speaks

"in parables taken from life, that He explains the truth in terms of everyday reality." (E42)

Furthermore, Pasternak's quest for simplicity happened to correspond to the literary canon imposed by the Communist Party upon Soviet writers. While jealously protective of his artistic integrity, and while courageously unresponsive to the dictates from above, he did not seek to remove himself from literature, even a literature committed to Socialist Realism. In fact, Pasternak had tried, as he told Reavey in 1945,

> to adapt himself in an atmosphere of some misunderstanding to the general principles of Soviet realism without sacrificing his art. But that was difficult because of the superficial level of literary criticism and little understanding for the problem in depth.[3]

The gap proved unbridgeable, after all, and Pasternak's attempts at adaptation failed. In their own way, however, they contributed to his departure from what he considered an ostentatious style, for here was the one sphere in which he was encouraged by Soviet critics and by the Party Line itself, preoccupied as it always is with efforts to reach the widest masses. Hence, in Reavey's words, Pasternak "was now striving for greater naturalness and simplicity."[4]

This striving inevitably involved a sacrifice in the sublety and splendor of language and imagery that was so characteristic for Pasternak's pre-Doctor Zhivago poetry and prose. The extent of the sacrifice manifests itself

with particular clarity when passages from earlier works are placed alongside comparable passages in the novel. Here, for instance, is a sentence from Bezljub'e, a prose fragment written in 1918 and considered by literary scholars to be the first sketch of what was later to become Doctor Zhivago:[5]

> The sun entered the study with them, where it ran headlong over the little rug, rolled over flower pots and threw a smile to the cages and birds near the window, to the pines behind it, to the stove and to all the forty-four leather-bound volumes of the Encyclopaedia. (II, 326)

A similar picture is drawn by Pasternak in the novel, but how much more simple and direct:

> With the sun turning toward spring, the windows were filled to overflowing with the luminous light-blue sky as wide as a river in flood. (94)

That the lack of embellishment is no accident can be seen from yet another sentence in book, describing the appearance of the sun, where we again find a homely simile instead of an extravagant metaphor:

> The sun had risen in a drift of fog and was peering dully through openings in the floating mist, like a naked body appearing and disappearing in clouds of steam at the bathhouse. (249)

The comparative simplicity Pasternak achieved is to a large degree due to a more austerely controlled play of imagination in the conception of his figures of speech, as is apparent from the examples cited. The reader's search for the intercommunicating links is thereby eased. It is further alleviated by Pasternak's frequent use of

the simile, the very form of which affords greater accessibility by saying that one thing is like another.

## 2. The Two Major Sources of Simile

The two major sources of simile, as well as of all imagery in Doctor Zhivago, are nature and natural phenomena, on the one hand, and the area of everyday life, the humble details of man's day-to-day existence, on the other.

Nature pervades practically every page of the long novel -- as background, as witness, as participant. Like Pasternak himself, Zhivago constantly observes it, reacts to it, describes it, returning to it time and again in his notebook, and devoting to it twelve of the twenty-five poems ascribed to him. In addition, there are many nature images in the remaining thirteen. Lara is likewise close to nature, possibly closer than Zhivago. Instead of reflecting on it and philosophizing about it, she reacts to it with breathtaking intensity:

> Lara walked along the tracks following a path worn by pilgrims and then turned into the fields. Here she stopped and, closing her eyes, took a deep breath of the flower-scented air of the broad expanse around her. It was dearer to her than her kin, better than a lover, wiser than a book. (E75)

Pasternak's numerous personifications in the novel show that he draws no distinction between nature and man, and he merges the two in his imagery as though this were

the most natural thing to do. When the Mikulitsins display annoyance at the unexpected arrival of the Zhivago family, to the latter's misery and confusion,

> their painful embarrassment seemed to communicate itself even to the mare, the foal, the golden rays of the setting sun, and the gnats that swarmed around Elena Proklovna and settle on her face and neck. (E270-71)

Following Lara's fateful departure with Komarovsky, all nature participates in Zhivago's grief:

> The winter evening was alive with sympathy, like a friendly witness. It was as if there had never been such a dusk before and night were falling now for the first time in order to console him in his loneliness and bereavement; as if the valley were not always girded by a panorama of wooded hills on the horizon but the trees had only taken up their places now, rising out of the ground in order to comfort him with their presence.
>
> He almost waved away the tangible beauty of the hour, like a crowd of persistent friends, almost saying to the lingering afterglow: "Thank you, thank you, I'll be all right." (E451)

The lack of barrier between man and nature is even more pronounced in the scene of childbirth, when Zhivago's wife "lay in the vapors of her spent pain, as though she were steaming with exhaustion." (106) There is something all-animal in that description: a cow or a mare could thus lie "steaming with exhaustion."[6]

As already mentioned, there is only one other source that feeds the imagery in Doctor Zhivago on a scale comparable to nature's. It is the area of man's everyday life, the world of food, clothes, books, tools, kitchen utensils and other household objects. In fact, nature phenomena and

things from the man-made world are found in most of the novel's figures of speech, and in practically all of its similes. In many cases both are found, one illuminated by the other. The universality of these two spheres, it might be mentioned in passing, has contributed significantly to the realism and simplicity of Doctor Zhivago, endowing its imagery with an authenticity and a naturalness that help the writer and the reader establish and maintain a contact with each other throughout the long novel.

The interrelationship between the two spheres which nourish the overwhelming majority of the similes in Doctor Zhivago shows clearly that, for all of Pasternak's preoccupation with nature, his areas of associations lie predominantly in the man-made world, in the details of day-to-day life. Consequently, his similes normally start with some aspect of inanimate nature, which is then compared with and illuminated by some object or detail from man's everyday existence. Whereas a peasant poet like Esenin, for instance, would liken the taste and smell of fresh bread with a spring breeze, Pasternak reverses the process:

> The spring breeze came in through the partly open window, tasting faintly of newly cut white bread. (E212)

Similarly, wind-swept trees resemble "brooms sweeping the sky" (E150); sunbeams break through a dark purple cloud, "spreading like wheel spokes" (E165); a hot morning sun on a river's surface "was chasing glassy patches of light as

smooth and oily as melted butter that a cook brushes with a feather on a pie crust." (E237)

Although this study is not directly concerned with the poems in Doctor Zhivago, it might be proper to mention at this point that their imagery, like that of the novel's prose, is dominated by simile, and that within these similes Pasternak manifests the same tendency to compare natural phenomena with things pertaining to man, rather than the other way around. Thus,

> The sun is hotter than the top ledge
> in a steam bath. (E523)
>
> The trunks of pines stand in a throng
> Like worshippers aligned in prayer. (E525)
>
> Night, like a barefoot pilgrim woman,
> Is creeping close to the fences. (E527)
>
> The grove, like a cavorting clown, casts
> this hubbub
> As far as that field. . . (E533)[7]

A long list of examples containing associations of natural phenomena with details of everyday life will be found in the Appendix to this chapter, which also includes proportionately shorter lists of instances exemplifying the three other main categories of similes in Doctor Zhivago. They are:

Objects from man's world and daily life compared with natural phenomena, as in the sentence where the skin of people in a library seems "earthy and greenish like pickled cucumbers or gray mold." (E289)

Natural phenomena compared with same, as in "the slanting streaks of rain buffeted by the autumn wind like a cornfield in a storm." (E101)

And, third, details of everyday life compared with same, as in "the small suburban houses flash by like the pages of a book." (E304)

In addition, I have found two examples wherein a simile belonging to one category is elaborated upon in the very next sentence by a simile from another category:

> Big stars hang in the woods between branches like blue lanterns. Small ones are strewn all over the sky like daisies in a summer field. (E283)

> Now and then there was a quiet, pale gray, dark rose evening, with birches, black and fine as script against the afterglow. . . Such, in an hour or two, would be the evening in Yuratin: frosty, gray, transparent, and as soft as pussy willows. (E379)

### 3. "Like," "As" and Their Equivalents

Pasternak's reliance on simile in Doctor Zhivago exposed him to the two dangers inherent in the formality of this most formal means of making an analogy -- the danger of monotony, rising out of the need to resort time and again to words denoting comparison, and the danger of creating an impression of artifice which these words tend to produce. And because the peril grows in proportion to the number of similes used, Pasternak's task in overcoming it in his novel is of truly Herculean proportions. He is

aided in his task by his original, one might say "Pasternakian" vision of the world, and by his natural distaste for the obvious and the hackneyed. The examples cited bear witness to the large measure of his success in creating analogy after analogy which is as perceptive and illuminating as it is fresh and unexpected. There are the exceptions one might expect in a work of unusual length, but these are few and far between, as though Pasternak had put them down in moments of carelessness or fatigue. I have in mind such worn comparisons (worn at least in Russian) as "newly created offices sprang up like mushrooms" (E131), or "they came in [to the library reading room] timidly as though they were entering a church." (E288)

To prevent monotony and artificiality from clipping the wings of his similes, Pasternak indefatigably varies the ways of presenting a comparison. He seeks out and exploits what seems to be every word or phrase existing in the Russian language, which may be called upon to serve as synonyms for "like" and "as." In addition, he sets to work the various grammar forms which are used in Russian to indicate a comparison or analogy. As some of these forms, particularly the instrumental case, to which Pasternak resorts most frequently, cannot be employed in English for the same purpose, compelling the translators to rely on "like" and "as," the English rendition of Doctor Zhivago fails to reflect in full measure Pasternak's triumph over

the monotony and artificiality inherent in the use of simile on a large scale.

The standard, most widely used term of comparison in the Russian language is the word kak ("like," "as"), and Pasternak calls upon it much more often than on any of its equivalents*. In doing this, he is consistent with his intention to write Doctor Zhivago as simply and naturally as is possible for him. The equivalents of kak are somewhat less direct and explicit, and may be rendered in English by "as though" or "as if." Among these equivalents are the words slovno, točno, vrode, podobno, kak by, kak-budto, rovno, and the archaic jako.

To vary the use of one-word equivalents, Pasternak often introduces connective phrases of comparison, possessing varying degrees of directness, from the most explicit toč' v toč' kak ("exactly like") and takim kak ("such as") to the somewhat vaguer poxože na ("similar to," or "resembling"), bolee vsego sravnimo s ("best compared with"), kazalos' čto ("seemed that"), pridavat' sxodstvo s ("giving a resemblance to"), proizvodit' vpečatlenie ("create the impression"), and napominat' čto-to ("call to mind something").

A more sophisticated way of drawing a comparison is found in the following use of otzyvatsja:

* Some statistical data on the comparative frequency of the use of kak and its equivalents will be found in the concluding part of this section.

> V rastvorennuju fortočku tjanulo vesennim vozduxom, otzyvavšimsja sveže nadkušennoj francuzskoj bulkoj. (216)

The translators of Doctor Zhivago almost, but not quite, lost the aspect of comparison conveyed in the original:

> The spring breeze came in through the partly open window, tasting faintly of newly cut white bread. (E212)

In several places Pasternak makes use of po to create a comparison or analogy, as in po večernemu (15) ("like in the evening" or "evening-like"), po maskaradnomu (176) ("masquarade-like"), po-byč'i (374) ("in the manner of an ox"), po-bannomu (381) ("as in a bathhouse").

On still rarer occasions (I found only three) one comes across the negative simile, a borrowing from folklore, wherein it is stated, in one way or another, that something is not like something else, but like still another something. The following sentence contains a classical example of the use of the negative simile:

> Veter nës ego [sneg] po vozduxu vbok, vsë bystree i vsë gušče, kak by ètim vsë vremja čto-to navërstyvaja, i Jurij Andreevič tak smotrel pered soboj v okno, kak budto èto ne sneg šël, a prodolžalos' čtenie pis'ma Toni i pronosilis' i mel'kali ne suxie zvëzdočki snega, a malenkie promežutki beloj bumagi meždu malen'kimi čërnymi bukovkami, belye, belye, bez konca, bez konca. (428)
>
> (The wind swept the snow aside, ever faster and thicker, as it were trying to catch up with something, and Yurii Andreievich stared ahead of him out of the window, as if he were not looking at the snow but was still reading Tonia's letter and as if what flickered past him were not small dry snow crystals but the spaces between the small black letters, white, white, endless, endless.) (E418)

Another instance of the negative simile is found in

> Točno ne prosto pojasnoju panoramoju stojali,
> spinami k gorizontu, okružnye lesa po bugram,
> no kak by tol'ko čto razmestilis' v nix. (463)
>
> (As if the valley were not always girded by a
> panorama of wooded hills on the horizon but the
> trees had only taken up their places now.) (E451)

In the third, and final, example the negative simile is fashioned with the aid of a somewhat less direct device:

> Kluby plotnogo, vjazkogo para oblakami vyry-
> valis' iz ix rtov i po gromadnosti byli nesoiz-
> merimy so skupymi, kak by otmorožennymi, slovami
> ix nemnogosložnoj reči. (381)
>
> (Masses of dense, viscous steam tore them-
> selves away from their mouths in clouds, the
> hugeness of which was not comparable with the
> few as though frost-bitten words of their clipped
> speech.)

This example, like the preceding one, provides a good illustration of Pasternak's use of more than one term of comparison in the same sentence. There is, to begin with, a negative simile (expressed through nesoizmerimy), a straight simile (expressed through kak by), and still another stated by the use of the instrumental case (oblakami) which is discussed in the section immediately following.

Such sentences containing two or more similes are not uncommon in Doctor Zhivago. In most cases, Pasternak makes skilful use of the many terms of comparison at his disposal, varying them as in the above example. At times, however, he repeats the same term, without any apparent stylistic aim to justify the reiteration. Witness the following:

> Ot nego [solnca] tugo i medlenno, kak vo sne ili v skazke, rastekalis' luči gustogo, kak měd jantarno-žëltogo cveta, i po doroge zastyvali v vozduxe i primerzali k derev'jam. (381)
>
> [The sun's] crimson ball hung in the forest and from it, stiffly and slowly as in a dream or in a fairy tale, amber-yellow rays of light as thick as honey spread and, catching in the trees, froze to them in midair.) (E371)

A similar awkwardness will be noted also in this example:

> Solnce. . .zastenčivo osveščalo scenu u rel'sov, kak by bojazlivo približivšis' k nej, kak podošla by i stala by smotret' na ljudej korova. (15)
>
> (The sun. . . timidly illuminated the scene at the rails, as though it had drawn near it, as though a cow had come and taken a look at the people.)

There is one extreme case where kak, ne tak, kak and kak are piled on top of each other within the brief space of a short sentence:

> Domiški prigoroda mel'kajut, pronosjatsja mimo, kak stranicy bystro perelistyvaemoj knigi, ne tak, kak kogda ix perevoračivaeš' ukazatel'nym pal'cem, a kak kogda progonjaeš' ix vse. (314)
>
> (The small suburban houses flash by like the pages of a book, not as when you turn them over one by one with your forefinger but as when you hold your thumb on the edge of the book and let them all swish back at once.) (E304)

As stated, Pasternak follows standard usage in calling upon kak much more often than on any of its equivalents or the other forms of making a comparison. An analysis of the Russian text of the seventy similes contained in the Appendix to this chapter shows the relative frequency of the devices Pasternak uses for creating a simile:

Kak appears 28 times.

Slovno, budto, točno and other equivalents -- 20 times.

Connective phrases of comparison, such as kazalos' čto, poxože čto, and the like -- 8 times.

The instrumental case (counted only when used to make a comparison) -- 14 times.

## 4. Syntactic Means of Creating a Simile

The instrumental case in a comparative construction is by far Pasternak's favorite among the several syntactic devices for creating simile in Russian. The other devices merit but brief mention here.

There is the adverbial comparison, of which I found only four examples: podslepovato pobliëskivali stekla, 143 ("window-glass glimmered blindly"); mučeničeski prjamilis' berëzy, 145("birches stretched themselves martyr-like"); šëlkovisto šuršavšja listva 355 ("silkily rustling leaves," E345) and solnce zastenčivo osveščalo,15 ("the sun timidly illuminated").

The genitive of comparison is represented even more scantily -- with only two examples: koža. . .cveta solënogo ogurca i seroj pleseni, 298 ("skin, earthy and greenish like pickled cucumbers or gray mold," E289) and a phrase describing rye cveta starogo potemnevšego zolota, 479 ("the color of old dimmed gold").

Pasternak resorts to the comparative degree with equal reticence: "There were more tenants than sparrows in the street," (213) and "It [the broad expanse] was dearer to her than her kin, better than a lover, wiser than a book." (E75)

On the other hand, the instrumental case in a comparative construction is Pasternak's favorite device for creating the equivalent of a simile. I have noted close to one hundred instances (ninety-seven, to be exact), scattered more or less evenly throughout the novel. As with kak, slovno and the other terms of comparison, Pasternak occasionally crowds into one sentence two or more figures of speech formed by the instrumental case.

The appeal to an image-maker of the instrumental case in a comparative construction is enhanced by the opportunities the case affords him to create metaphors at the same time as he forms the equivalent of a simile. The opportunities lie in making metaphorical use of the verb. When Pasternak, for instance, tells us that ljudi goroxom skatyvalis' s prigorkov ("people rolled down the hills pea-like," 158), he presents us merely with an equivalent of a simile. The verb is not used in a metaphorical sense, and therefore, no metaphor accompanies the comparison. The same thing happens in the first of the two figures of speech formed by the instrumental case in the following sentence:

> Svet lampy spokojnoj žeľtiznoju padal na belye listy bumagi i zolotistymi blikami plaval na poverxnosti černil vnutri černil'nicy. (447)
>
> (The lamplight fell softly yellow on the white sheets of paper and gilded the surface of the ink in the inkwell. E436)

Since the instrumental case in a comparative construction is unrenderable into English, the translators of Doctor Zhivago omitted it altogether from their version. I have cited it for the convenience of the reader, but will reach out for a more precise, if awkward, approximation of the original in my discussion of this example.

As stated, the first figure of speech in the above sentence is only an equivalent of a simile: "lamplight fell as calm yellowishness on the white sheets of paper." But the second figure of speech actually contains two images: one, comparing lamplight with golden spots (svet lampy . . .zolotistymi blikami), and the other, a metaphor making the golden spots swim (zolotistymi blikami plaval). Here, as in all instances of metaphor brought into being by the instrumental case, the key word is the verb.

To cite another, more complicated, example:

> Točno dar živogo duxa potokom vxodil v ego grud', peresekal vsë ego suščestvo, i paroj kryl'ev vyxodil iz-pod lopatok naružu. (353)
>
> (It was as though the gift of the living spirit were streaming into his breast, piercing his being and coming out at his shoulders like a pair of wings. E343)

For the same reasons as in the discussion of the preceding example, I shall again rely on my own translation of

the pertinent phrases. The simile, introduced by the word točno ("as though"), is followed by a comparison in the instrumental case, potokom ("torrent-like"), which is then turned into a metaphor by the lightning-like verb peresekat' (which may be correctly translated here as "to pierce"). Thus, the first figure of speech reads in its entirety as follows: "It was as though the gift of the living spirit torrent-like entered his breast, piercing his whole being."

The second part of the sentence is similarly introduced by a comparison in the instrumental case, likening the gift of the human spirit to a pair of wings (paroj kryl'jev). A metaphor is then created by the verb vyxodil ("came out"). The verb itself is pedestrian but, introduced into a semantic environment unusual for it, it acquires metaphoric force: "the gift of the living spirit came out at his shoulders as a pair of wings."

In conclusion, an example which, in addition to illustrating Pasternak's use of the instrumental case in a comparative construction, captures the very spirit of the novel so purposefully titled Doctor Zhivago:

> Vosxiščenie žizn'ju, kak tixij veter širokoj volnoj šlo, ne razbiraja kuda, po zemle i gorodu, čerez steny i zabor, čerez drevesinu i telo, oxvatyvaja trepetom vsë po doroge. (143)
>
> The joy of living, like a gentle wind, swept in a broad surge indiscriminately through fields

> and towns, through walls and fences, through wood and flesh. (El41)

The simile proper, kak tixij veter ("like a gentle wind"), is followed by a comparison born of the instrumental case, širokoj volnoj ("as in a broad surge"), which is simultaneously a metaphor created by the verb proclaiming that the joy of living "swept in a broad surge."

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER SIX

1. The figures of speech will be found on pp. 142-44, 238, 363, 370 and 463-64.

2. Examples of simile can be so easily spotted in Pasternak's early works that there seems to be no reason for citing any here. Particular attention, however, is drawn to "Margarita" (I, 59) and "Kreml'v buran konca 1918 goda" (I, 74-5), poems which are essentially series of complex and extravagant similes.

3. Reavey, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

4. Ibid., p. 69.

5. Cf. commentary on Bezljub'e in Pasternak, I, 359.

6. Compare for contrast Tolstoy's treatment of childbirth as an inalienably human experience:

> The scream had ceased and he heard a subdued stir and bustle, and hurried breathing, and her voice, gasping, alive, tender, and blissful, uttered softly, "It's over!"
>
> He lifted his head. With her hands hanging exhausted on the quilt, looking extraordinarily lovely and serene, she looked at him in silence and tried to smile and could not. (Anna Karenina, tr. by Constance Garnet, N.Y., 1950, p. 834)

7. Pasternak's preoccupation in imagery with nature and with objects and details from the man-made world bring Shakespeare to mind, once more. Spurgeon's following statement, based on a statistical arrangement of Shakespeare's imagery, is equally applicable to Pasternak:

> "The main body of his images falls, as I have said, practically into two groups, those from nature, and those from indoor life and customs." (Op. cit., p. 44)

8. Sentences, each of which contains two or more similes, will be found on pp. 15, 90, 94, 118, 141, 150, 152, 160, 243, 314, 318, 359, 360, 363, 371, 381, 418, 428, 463, 492.

## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER SIX

### Examples of the Four Most Prevalent Categories of Simile in Doctor Zhivago

The number of examples selected for each category is roughly proportional to the frequency with which the similes belonging to a given category appear in the novel.

Category A: Natural phenomena are compared with objects from the area of everyday life.

> Flowers were few, and the notched stalks of horse-tail looked like the staffs with Egyptian ornaments in his illustrated Bible. (E11)
>
> He looked up at an aspen shaking from top to bottom, its wet leaves like bits of tinfoil. (E17)
>
> The afternoon was dry like a charcoal sketch. (E37)
>
> The streets were covered with a thick, black, glassy layer of ice, like the bottom of beer bottles. (E77)
>
> The dirty sun looked as if it shone through crepe, and the firs behind the churchyard railings, wet and dark like tarnished silver, seemed to be in deep mourning. (E89)
>
> Streaks of light probed from room to room and dived under the chairs and tables like thieves or appraisers. (E92)
>
> Gusts of wind shook the creeper on one of the houses as if intending to tear it up by the roots, swung it up into the air, and dropped it in disgust like a discarded rag. (E101-02)
>
> The sky, shining with stars, threw a pale blue flicker like the flame of burning alcohol over the black earth with its clumps of frozen mud. (E107)

Its [the moon's] light covered everything as with a thick layer of white paint. The broad shadows thrown by the pillared government buildings that surrounded the square in a semicircle spread on the ground like black rugs. (E141)

Pale thin hollyhocks looked out over the fences, like women in night clothes whom the heat had driven out of their stuffy houses for a breath of air. (E142)

Clouds raced dementedly as if pursued, so low that their tatters almost caught the tops of the trees, which bent in the same direction so that they looked like brooms sweeping the sky. (E150)

Then, like a telegram delivered on the train, or like greetings from Meliuzeievo addressed to Yurii Andreievich, there drifted in through the windows a familiar fragrance. (E157)

Sunbeams were breaking through it, spreading like wheel spokes. (E165)

The drops fell hurriedly and their drumming matched the clatter of the speeding train, as though the train were afraid of being left behind and were trying to catch up. (E165)

There was a roll of thunder, as if a plow had been dragged right across the sky. (E183)

The falling snow . . . looked almost still, sinking to the ground slowly as bread crumbs thrown to fishes sink through water. (E216)

Over all the rest of its [the river's] surface the hot morning sun was chasing glassy patches of light as smooth and oily as melted butter that a cook brushes with a feather on a pie crust. (E237)

The wood smelled of damp and was heaped with last year's leaves like an unswept room where people have been tearing up letters, bills, and receipts for years. (E241)

Goats and sheep grazed there, and their long wooly coats swept the ground like long skirts. (E295)

Between the gloomy, bristling walls of almost black pines the leafy thickets shone flame- and

wine-colored like medieval towns with painted and gold-roofed palaces built of timber. (E341)

The afternoon sun setting behind the forest, piercing it with its rays, and the leaves, letting them through, glowed green like transparent bottle glass. (E343)

A sharp, scudding wind swept torn, low clouds as black as flying soot before it. (359)

The vapors skidded like smoke over the pine woods; their resinous needles were as waterproof as oilcloth. Raindrops were strung on the telegraph wires like beads. (E360)

Its [the sun's] crimson ball hung in the forest and from it, stiffly and slowly as in a dream or in a fairy tale, amber-yellow rays of light as thick as honey spread and, catching in the trees, froze to them in midair. (E371)

The snowy windows had filled with a pink light, glowing like red wine in crystal glasses. (E394)

The light of the full moon on the snow-covered clearing was as viscid as white of egg or thick white paint. (E436)

Never in his life had he seen such dark-looking rye, rusty, brown, the color of old gold. (E467)

They [the flowers] poured forth their scent as in a choir. (E493)

Category B: Objects from the area of everyday life are compared natural phenomena.

Beyond the open side doors of the ballroom the supper table gleamed, white and long as a winter road. (E55)

Through the open classroom windows came the distant droning of the town, as monotonous as a beehive. (E72)

Nadia had come straight from the train, fresh and enchanting, as though the whole of her were giving out the smell of the Dupljanka lilies-of-the-valley. (100-01)

Her clumsy, pearshaped figure gave her the look of a brood hen. (E135)

The smoke [of burning buildings] drifted across the sky looking like a gigantic horse's mane blowing in the wind. (E257)

The staff had the same long, puffy, flabby faces as most of the readers, and the same loose skin, earthy and greenish like pickled cucumbers or gray mold. (E289)

A dark muffled figure will open the door, and the promise of her nearness, unowned by anyone in the world and guarded and cool as a white northern light, will reach him like the first wave of the sea. (E304)

Drops of spurting blood that had mixed with the snow formed red beads that looked like rowanberries. (E464)

His head was raised on a mound of pillows, and his body lay in the coffin as on a hillside. (E492)

It was these tears that seemed to hold her words together in a tender, quick whispering like the rustling of silky leaves in a warm, windy day. (E502)

Category C: Nature-to-nature similes.

The sun. . . timidly illuminated the scene at the rails, as though it had drawn near it, as though a cow had come and taken a look at the people. (15)

And there he was, wasting precious time, staring out of the window at the slanting streaks of rain buffeted by the autumn wind like a cornfield in a storm. (E101)

Black dust hung over its roof like a cloud of locusts. (E131)

The sun shimmered through the transparent flames of the campfire as through the foliage in the woods. (353)

And as if they too were hemmed in by the tight circle of treetops in the winter sky above the

glade, the black and white clouds reared and piled and toppled as chaotically as the cows. (E363)

And the snow hung over the edge of the roof almost down to the doctor's head, like the rim of a gigantic mushroom. (E444)

Category D: Objects from everyday life compared with same.

A voice as flat and commonplace as the window and the street. (E49)

These periodic quarrels had a tranquilizing effect on both, like the application of leeches for high blood pressure. (E55)

His bulging coat made him look like a twisted bun on a baker's sign. (E58)

Squirming on the palm of the nurse's hand lay a tender, squealing, tiny human creature, stretching and contracting like a dark red piece of rubber. (E104)

Even the engine steam rose in the sky warbling like milk boiling up on a nursery alcohol stove. (E241)

She reads. . .as if she were carrying water from a well, or peeling potatoes. (291)

The small suburban houses flash by like the pages of a book. (E304)

CHAPTER SEVEN

## SOUND ASSOCIATIONS IN THE IMAGERY OF DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

In his classical study of Coleridge, The Road to XANADU, John L. Lowes expressed an idea equally applicable to Pasternak:

> The words are inseparable from the images, and the images from the words, and both, in their indissoluble union, form the design.[1]

We know from earlier pages that to Pasternak the word is never an end in itself. It is, rather, a vehicle for conveying meaning, the raw material for the complex language process which causes words to color, modify and enrich each other, and to acquire ever new shadings and a suggestiveness beyond those normally attached to them. Pasternak's diction has so strong a tendency to reach out for the potentialities latent in words that he often causes the latter to break out of the bounds of their generally accepted meanings. The result is a rebirth of words which, in turn, causes a recreation of the imagery for the making of which these words are used. Writing on a similar tendency in Shakespeare, T. S. Eliot remarked:

> Again and again, in his use of a word, he will give a new meaning or extract a latent one; again and again, the right image saturated while it lay in the depths of Shakespeare's memory, will rise like Anadyomene from the sea. In Shakespeare's poetry this reborn image or word will have its rational use and justification: in much good poetry the organization will not reach to so rational a level.[2]

In Pasternak it often reaches such a level because of his well trained analytical mind and because of his mastery in handling words. There is an unmistakably autobiographical passage in the novel, describing how, after the first onrush of inspiration, when Zhivago totally surrenders to the flow of language, to the creativity inherent in the language process, he calls upon his power of analysis and verbal skill to check and rectify whatever excesses and other deficiencies arose out of the surrender.

> After two or three stanzas and several images by which he himself was struck, his work took possession of him and he felt the approach of what is called inspiration. At such moments the relation of the forces that determine artistic creation is, as it were, reversed. The dominant thing is no longer the state of mind the artist seeks to express but the language in which he wants to express it. Language, the home and receptacle of beauty and meaning, itself begins to think and speak for man and turns wholly into music, not in terms of sonority but in terms of the impetuousness and power of its inward flow. Then, like the current of a mighty river polishing stones and turning wheels by its very movement, the flow of speech creates in passing, by virtue of its own laws, meter and rhythm and countless other relationships, which are even more important, but which are as yet unexplored, insufficiently recognized, and unnamed. (E437)

The next day he reads over the lines written under the spell of inspiration and begins to improve on them:

> He crossed out what he had written and began to write down the legend of St. George and the dragon in the same lyrical manner. At first he used a broad, spacious pentameter. The regularity of the rhythm, independent of the meaning and inherent in the meter itself, annoyed him by its doggerel artificiality. He gave up the pompous meter and the caesura and cut down the lines to four beats, as you cut out useless words in prose. The task was now more difficult but more engaging. The result was livelier but still too verbose. He forced himself to even shorter lines. Now the words were crammed in their trimeters, and Yurii Andreievich felt wide awake, roused, excited; the right words to fill the short lines came, prompted by the measure. Things scarcely named in the lines evoked concrete images. (E441)

In creating sound association, the writer often arranges words into phrases, sentences and entire paragraphs in a way which produces figures of speech, as well as word-music. This is not necessarily a wholly conscious contrivance. The writer or poet might begin with a search for verbal orchestration, only to discover at some point that the words drawn to each other by similarity in sound are simultaneously combining into a figure of speech. On other occasions, no image crystallizes and word-music is the sole result.

Exceedingly sensitive to sound, Pasternak provides numerous examples of both in Doctor Zhivago, but he is at his most resourceful and imaginative when using sound associations that combine word instrumentations with image making.

The closer one studies the verbal texture of the novel's imagery, the more pronounced grows one's awareness of the

author as a master instrumentalist who puts to use sound combinations in all their variety -- from the subtlest rustlings of vowel correspondences to the more insistent intonations of alliteration, and all the way to full-throated rhythms, internal rhymes and reiterated words and phrases. At the same time, it is no exaggeration to state that words brought together by the flow of this music almost always combine in Doctor Zhivago into figures of speech. The very opening sentence of the book, which sets the tone for the entire novel, provides a good example:

> Šli i šli i peli "Večnuju pamjat'", i kogda ostanavlivalis', kazalos', čto ee po zalažennomu prodolžajut pet' nogi, lošadi, dunovenija vetra.
>
> (On they went, singing "Rest Eternal," and whenever they stopped, their feet, the horses, and the gusts of wind seemed to carry on their singing.)

The English version does not, unfortunately, reproduce all the aspects of sound instrumentation in this brief passage: alliteration (po zalažennomu prodolžajut pet'); grammatical rhyme and reiteration (šli i šli i peli "Večnuju pamjat'," i); a rhythmical pattern launched by a trochaic alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, and a symmetrical distribution of pauses in the beginning and at the end of the sentence (after each of the two šli and after nogi and lošadi).

The image is Pasternak's favorite personification:

"their feet, the horses, and the gusts of wind seemed to carry on their singing."

From here on, and until the end, the novel resounds with word orchestration. At times, as though striving to achieve the maximum possible unity of form and content, Pasternak raises his pitch, as it were, creating verbal music of intense resonance. Such passages are veritable poems in prose, as, for instance, the description of Zhivago's wife, Tonia, immediately after she had given birth to their child, a description replete with imagery and sound associations:

> Podnjataja k potolku vyše, čem èto byvaet s obyknovennymi smertnymi, Tonia tonula v parax vystradannogo, ona kak by dymilas' ot iznemoženia. Tonia vozvyšalas' posredi palaty, kak vysilas' by sredi buxty tol'ko čto pričalennaja i razgružënnaja barka, soveršajuščaja perexody čerez more smerti k materiku žizni s novymi dušami, pereseljajuščimisja sjuda nevedomo otkuda. Ona tol'ko čto proizvela vysadku odnoj takoj duši i teper' ležala na jakore, otdyxala vsej pustotoj svoix oblegčënnyx bokov. Vmeste s nej otdyxali eë nadlomlennye i natružennye snasti i obšivka, i eë zabvenie, eë ugašaja pamjat' o tom gde ona nedavno byla, čto pereplyla i kak pričalila. (106)

> Raised higher, closer to the ceiling than ordinary mortals usually are, Tonia lay exhausted in the cloud of her spent pain. To Yurii Andreievich she seemed like a barque lying at rest in the middle of a harbor after putting in and being unloaded, a barque that plied between an unknown country and the continent of life across the waters of death with a cargo of immigrant new souls. One such soul had just been landed, and the ship now lay at anchor, relaxed, its flanks unburdened and empty. The whole of her was resting, her strained masts and hull, and her memory washed clean of the image of the other shore, the crossing and the landing. (E104)

Particularly outstanding in the sound orchestration of the original of this passage are, first, reiteration (of po, by, ton, kak by, tol'ko čto, otdyxala and especially, the eë in the concluding sentence) and, second, the frequency of words dominated by the letter "n" (Tonia tonula, iznemoženia, nadlomlennye i natružennye snasti), the cumulative effect of which is to intensify the impression of pain conveyed by the meaning of most of these words.

In another "prose poem" -- the unforgettable description of the coming of spring --, words and individual sounds similarly echo and re-echo within a line, or from line to line, creating similes and metaphors simultaneously with parallelisms, alliteration and vowel groupings.

> Vode bylo gde razguljatsja. Ona letela vniz s otvesov, prudila prudy, razlivalas' všir'. Skoro čašča napolnilas' eë gulom dymom i čadom. Po lesu zmejami raspolzalis' potoki, uvjazali i kružli v snegu, tesnivšem ix dviženie, s sipeniem tekli po rovnym mestam i, obryvajas' vniz, rassypalis' vodjanoju pul'ju. Zemlja vlagi uže bol'še ne prinimala. Eë s golovokružitel'nyx vysot, počti s oblakov, pili svoimi kornjami vekovye eli, u podošv kotoryx sbivalas' v kluby obsyxajuščaja beloburaja pena, kak pivnaja pena na gubax u p'juščix.
>
> Vesna udarjala xmelem v golovu neba, i ono mutilos' ot ugara i pokryvalos' oblakami. Nad lesom plyli nizkie vojločnye tuči s otvisajuščimi krajami, čerez kotorye skačkami nizvergalis' tëplye, zemlej i potom paxnuvšie livni, smyvavšie s zemli poslednie kuski probitoj čërnoj ledjanoj broni. (238)

> (There was plenty of room for the water to play. It flung itself down the rocks, filled every pool to overflowing, and spread. It roared and smoked and steamed in the forest. It streaked through the woods, bogging down in the snow that tried to hinder its movement, it ran hissing on level ground or hurtled down and scattered into a fine spray. The earth was

> saturated. Ancient pine trees perched on dizzy heights drank the moisture almost from the clouds, and it foamed and dried a rusty white at their roots like beer foam on a mustache.
>
> The sky, drunk with spring and giddy with its fumes, thickened with clouds. Low clouds, drooping at the edges like felt, sailed over the woods and rain leapt from them, smelling of soil and sweat, and washing the last of the black armor-plating of ice from the earth.) (E233)

It is, of course, impossible to say which came first, the sound or the image in sbivalas' v kluby obsyxajuščaja beloburaja pena, kak pivnaja pena na gubax u p'juščix, but the explosive b and p which have the sound of bursting foam, seem to have been made for a figure of speech describing foaming moisture as it is being rejected by the saturated earth. The English rendition failed to render the interplay between sound and meaning in this sentence, and succeeded only partially in reproducing the evocativeness which reiterated vowels (e, u, a and o) added to the metaphor and simile in vesna udarjala xmelem v golovu neba, i ono mutilos' ot ugara i pokryvalos' oblakami. The partial success in English is due to the reiteration of i: "The sky, drunk with spring and giddy with its fumes, thickened with clouds."

On a rare occasion Pasternak gets so carried away by sound that he allows its insistence to distract from the image which this very sound is to underscore. In the following sentence, for instance, z and ž are called upon to accentuate the grimness of zlovešče ("ominous") the

key word in a passage full of foreboding; Ego luči tëmnoj bronzoju bryznuli vo dvor, zlovešče zolotja luži židkogo navoza (341). ("Hemmed in by the clouds, the setting sun peered out and splashed the yard with dark bronze rays, casting a sinister glow on the puddles of liquid manure." E331) The oversaturation of the original of this sentence with the sound of back vowels, the repetition of b, and particularly of z and ž creates a jingle-like effect which tends to distract from the imagery: the instrumental simile and metaphor (luči tëmnoj bronzoju bryznuli and the personification effected by the word zlovešče.)

The most moving passage in the entire novel -- Lara's lament for the dead Zhivago -- is introduced by a sentence which is music itself. Note particularly the remarkably euphonious repetition of palatalized s and l, and of i, e, ë and the soft sign. Likewise note the simile which emerges along with the word-music:

> Kazalos' imenno èti mokrye ot slëz slova sami slipalis' v eë laskovyj i bystryj lepet, kak šelestit veter šëlkovistoj i vlažnoj listvoj sputannoj tëplym doždëm. (514)
>
> (It was these tears that seemed to hold her words together in a tender, quick whispering like the rustling of silky leaves in a warm, windy rain. E502)

The lament itself contains a sentence which reads as though it had emerged out of the depths of Russian lyrical folk poetry with its diminutives, parallelisms, syntactic inversions and fixed epithets:

Proščaj, bol'šoj i rodnoj moj, proščaj moja gordost', proščaj moja bystraja glubokaja rečen'ka, kak ja ljubila celodnevnyj blesk tvoj, kak ja ljubila brosatsja v tvoi xolodnye volny. 3 (514)

(Farewell, my great one, my kin, farewell, my pride, farewell, my swift, deep little river, how I loved your day-long splashing, how I loved to plunge into your cold waves. E502)

## 2. Sound Associations and the Unyielding Idea

The saturation of Doctor Zhivago with word-music indicates that in putting together the verbal texture of the novel Pasternak tended to utilize devices which normally belong to the sphere of poetry rather than/that of prose. And it is characteristic for all poetic language that, in it, words possessing similar sounds are attracted to each other. Many a fixed epithet in the Russian language, for instance, has come into being chiefly because of this attraction: zlaja zima ("bitter winter"), gul gluxoj ("dull din"), žestokij moroz ("fierce frost"), zvëzdy zolotye ("golden stars").

It was Pasternak himself, we will recall, who drew our attention to the interplay between image and sound association when he wondered whether Pushkin had relied on it when he named the nightingale vesny ljubovnik ("spring's lover").

In another passage in Doctor Zhivago Pasternak came as close, one imagines, as is possible to recreating the turmoil

and the entanglement of word-music and word meaning, out of which a work of poetry is born. Ideas, events, images and sound associations are all intertwined in this passage, turbulent and insistent, retreating and then surging up again until the act of creation asserts harmony. The description centers around Zhivago's attempt to write a poem about those three fateful days between the entombment and the resurrection of Christ. Zhivago's aim is to relate

> kak v tečenie trëx dnej burja čërnoj červivoj zemli osaždaet, šturmuet bessmertnoe voploščenie ljubvi, brosajas' na nego svoimi glybami i kom'jami, toč' v toč' kak naletajut s razbega i xoronjat pod soboju bereg volny morskogo priboja. Kak tri dnja bušuet, nastupaet i otstupaet čërnaja zemnaja burja.
>
> I dve rifmovannue stročki presledovali ego:
>
> Rady kosnutsja
>
> i
>
> Nado prosnutsja
>
> Rady kosnutsja i ad, i raspad, i razloženie, i smert', i odnako, vmeste s nimi rada kosnutsja i vesna, i Magdalina, i žizn'. Nado prosnutsja i vstat'. Nado voskresnut'. (211)

> (how for three days the black, raging, worm-filled earth had assailed the deathless incarnation of love, storming it with rocks and rubble -- as waves fly and leap at a seacoast, cover and submerge it -- how for three days the black hurricane of earth raged, advancing and retreating.
>
> Two lines kept coming into his head:
>
> "We are glad to be near you," and "Time to wake up."
>
> Near him, touching him, were hell, dissolution, corruption, death, and equally near him were the spring and Mary Magdalene and life. And it was time to awake. Time to wake up and to get up. Time to arise, time for the resurrection. E207)

The concluding paragraph of the passage reads in the original as though it had been written in a delirium, conveying the very quintessence of that creative chaos wherein

the unyielding idea struggles with, and triumphs over, the onrush of words drawn to each other by similarity of sound, reverberating with those sounds, repeating themselves, rhyming (rady-nado, ad raspad, kosnutsja-prosnutsja), and forming figures of speech (personification of hell, of dissolution, corruption, death and spring). The third reiteration of nado signals the completion of the taming of the word-music by the idea: nado voskresnut' -- time for the resurrection.

Pasternak's instrumentation of sound in Doctor Zhivago is a continuation on a comparatively modest scale and with greater subtlety of the practice of his early period when some critics went so far as to accuse him of subordinating semantics to musical effects. Typical is V. Alexandrov's remark that Pasternak was guilty of "articulative gymnastics" (artikuljacionnaja gimnastika) at the expense of meaning and of the convincingness of his imagery.[4] Even as late as a year before Pasternak's death, his own sister, Mrs. Lydia Slater, insisted that music always dominated his writing, that he always remained a musician first. She also made the statement that Pasternak "really never abandoned music, he merely changed his instrument," and that music "is this [Pasternak's] poetry itself."[5]

All one needs to do in order to show the fallacy of such assertions is to turn to Pasternak's own views on the subject and, above all, to the prose and poetry of Doctor Zhivago.

In his second autobiography Pasternak recalls the year 1910 when, as a twenty-year old youth, he was enrolled in the Musaget* literary studio and refused to attend the course conducted by Andrey Bely because the latter

> gave lectures on the practical study of the Russian classical iambic verse and by the method of statistical calculation analyzed, together with his students, its rhythmic figures and variations. I did not go to his lectures because I have been, and am now too, of the opinion that the music of the word is not an acoustic phenomenon and does not consist of the euphony of vowels and consonants, taken themselves, but of the relationship between the meaning and the sound of the words.[6]

This conviction grew stronger with the passage of years. Writing in a Soviet magazine thirty-four years later, Pasternak states with even greater emphasis:

> The music of the word does not consist of its sound but of a deeper coherence between its sound and its essential meaning.[7]

Most of the sound associations in Doctor Zhivago combine in a manner which gives rise to figures of speech, as well as to word-music, but whenever they do not naturally so combine, Pasternak avoids straining for the image, and is content with sound associations alone. Thus, he paints a raw morning in April as syroe, seroe ("gray, raw," 122) and speaks of the seryj predrassvetnyj sneg mostovyx ("the gray pre-dawn snow on the roads," 403).

* Musaget -- the name of a publishing house established in 1910 in Moscow, by the so-called second generation of Symbolists, headed by Andrey Bely.

Here and there, one also finds parallelisms devoid of figures of speech, as in the following sentence: A mesjac vsë stojal nad saraem i gorel i ne gorel, svetilsja i ne osveščal ("And the new moon stood over the barn blazing without warmth and shining without giving light," E444). Or, to take a more extended example, following is a description of an Easter feast, with Easter eggs piled high on dishes:

> V ix okraske preobladali rozovye i golubye, Nakolupannoj jaičnoj skorlupoj, goluboj, rozovoj i s iznanki -- beloj, bylo namusoreno na trave okolo stolov. Golubogo i rozovogo cveta byli vysovavšiesja iz-pod pidžakov rubaški na parnjax. Golubogo i rozovogo cveta -- platja devušek. (331)
>
> (. . .most of them were colored pink or light blue.
> Broken eggshells pink and light blue with white insides littered the new grass around the tables. Pink and light blue were the shirts of the young men and the dresses of the girls. E 322)

At this point, as though the image maker in Pasternak could contain himself no longer, the writer completed the paragraph with a metaphor and a simile:

> Golubogo cveta bylo nebo. Rozovogo -- oblaka, plyvšie po nebu tak medlenno i strojno, slovno nebo plylo vmeste s nimi (331)
>
> (And pink clouds sailed in the blue sky, slowly and gracefully, and it seemed as if the sky were sailing with them. E322)

As a rule, figures of speech emerge along with or immediately following sound analogies, each enhancing the effectiveness of the other, as in the following example where we find metonymy, metaphor and poetic epithets:

> Proščaj Lara, do svidanija na tom svete, proščaj krasa moja, proščaj radost' moja, bezdonnaja, neisčerapemmaja, večnaja. (462-63)
>
> (Farewell, Lara, until we meet in the next world, farewell, my love, my inexhaustible, everlasting joy. E451)

A particularly complex fusion of word orchestration and imagery is found in a brief paragraph which possesses the density of poetry:

> Èti cvetom plameni bez ognaja gorevšie, èti krikom o pomošči bez zvuka vopijavšie polja, xolodnym spokojstviem okajmljalo s kraja bol'šoe, uže k zime povernuvšeesja nebo, po kotoromu, kak teni po licu bezostanovočno plyli dlinnye, sloistye snegovye oblaka s čërnoj seredkoj i i belymi bokami. (479)
>
> (These flame-colored fields blazing without fire, these fields silently proclaiming their distress, were coldly bordered by the vast, quiet sky, its face already wintry and shadowed by ceaselessly moving, long, flaky snow-clouds with blank centers and white flanks. E467)

These few lines contain word repetition, rhymes, parallelisms, syntactic inversions, alliteration, vowel clusters, on the one hand, and on the other, they contain one simile, two instrumental comparisons and two instrumental metaphors, as well as two metaphors derived from the personification of the sky.

Although the examples cited in this chapter contain many a verb and noun rich in sound associations, it is indisputably the adjective that lends itself most readily and rewardingly to the creation of figures of speech wherein meaning is reinforced and intensified by sound.

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In other words, as they enrich the verbal music of the novel, many adjectives simultaneously extend or delimit the meaning of the nouns to which they are attached, or uncover in them certain facets hitherto unknown or unsuspected. The mercilessness of the Siberian winter, for example, is underscored by the blending of similar sounds in the epithet and nouns of svirepyj skrežet snega ("the snow's fierce screech," 381). The sound associations in bol'šie, kak duša ("large as the soul," 512) tend to lend greater persuasiveness to Pasternak's evocation of the caressing quality of Lara's hands and of the immensity of their meaning for Zhivago. A similar function is performed by the alliterations and vowel clusters in the epithets of the passage describing Lara's loveliness and compassion as she nurses Zhivago back to health svoej lebedino-beloj prelestju, vlažno-dyšaščim gorlovym sopotom svoix voprosov i otvetov ("with her white, swan-like beauty, with the warm, throaty whisper of her questions and answers," 405). A good illustration is likewise provided in večer, moroznyj, prozračno seryj, serdobol'nyj ("the evening, frosty, transparently gray, kindhearted,"389), with the r rolling from word to word, and with the particularly effective repetition of ser in seryj and serdobol'nyj. Incidentally, the published English version of the novel omits serdobol'nyj ("kindhearted") altogether, thereby impoverishing the music of the phrase, and weakening its metaphoric force. If the translators were perplexed

by the conceit in the juxtaposition "frosty" and "kindhearted," they need only have recalled Shakespeare's "lusty winter,/ Frosty, but kind." (As You Like It, II-3-52)

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER SEVEN

1. John Livingston Lowes, Road to XANADU, New York, 1959, p. 311.

2. T.S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, Cambridge, Mass., 1933, pp. 139-40.

3. Lara's lament seems to have been inspired by the lamentation of Mayakovsky's sister over his dead body, described by Pasternak in Safe Conduct. The lamentation so moved Pasternak, he wrote, that "at last, as I had so long desired, I burst into tears." (The Collected Prose Works, op. cit., p. 125.)

4. Alexandrov, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

5. "Translator's Note" in Poems by Boris Pasternak, tr. by L. Slater, Sussex, England, 1959, p. 8.

6. I Remember, op. cit., p. 62.

7. "Znamja," January-February, 1944, p. 166.

CHAPTER EIGHT

# THE SYNAESTHETIC IMAGE IN DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

## 1. Transposition of Sensations

One of the most important and distinguishing aspects of the imagery in Doctor Zhivago is the frequency and effectiveness with which Pasternak resorts to the use of synaesthesia, the image-making device based on transposition of sensations. The device may be described as the perception and fusion in one figure of speech of impressions drawn from two or more sense channels. Ordinary speech abounds in synaesthetic imagery, and nothing extravagant or bizzare is seen in the intermingling of sensory properties that takes place in such phrases as "warm voice," "sweet music," "bitter smile," "loud colors."

Psychologists and physiologists generally tend to view synaesthesia as a phenomenon akin to color blindness, as "a survival of early man's undifferentiated sensorium."[1] Literary scholars, however, have a more commendatory conception, perhaps most aptly phrased by W. Beddell Sanford:

> synaesthesia in words is a survival of the physical synaesthesia of primitive man when sense perceptions were far keener and far more efficiently coordinated than in more domesticated times.[2]

Hence, poets have made of synaesthesia an exquisite device for creating figurative language. To quote Sanford again:

> Poets alone preserve the primeval vitality of language, and so it was they who preserved the primitive beauties of synaesthesia. . . Synaesthesia and its symptom, the intersensal metaphor, are only part of the poet's great function -- to preserve the synthetic, the unified and unifying, the oneness and interdependence of words and things against the sterilizing analyses of the scientists. Synaesthesia is on the sensuous plane what metaphor is in the sphere of words, and both are methods of corroborating by unanimity of diversities the essential oneness of beauty and truth.[3]

Recalling how the ancient Greeks "revelled in the subtle and delicate sense-blendings contained in synaesthetic imagery,"[4] Sanford cites numerous examples, including, of course, Homer's "lily-voiced," Aeschylus' "The trumpet set all the shores ablaze with its sound," and Euripides' "When the trumpet-call flashed out like a beacon."[5]

The first famous synaesthetic image in Russian poetry is virtually an echo of the last two figures of speech. I am referring to Lomonosov's Molčite, plamennye zvuki. ("Be silent, flaming sounds.")[6] The literal-minded Sumarokov took him to task for it by insisting that "there are no flaming sounds -- there are only sounds that come with flames."[7] The synaesthetic image, nevertheless, remained a permanent feature in Russian literature, particularly in the poetry of Žukovskij, Fet and the Symbolists, and

in the prose of Gogol, Bely and Pasternak.

The synaesthetic image is particularly well suited to Pasternak's genius. Suffice it to recall the truly "primeval" vitality of his language, his preoccupation with things that are seen, heard, touched, smelled and tasted, and, above all, his belief in the unity underlying all phenomena, in the power of the cohesive force he called sceplenie -- suffice it to recall all this to become convinced that the fusion of sensory impressions inherent in synaesthetic imagery was organic to Pasternak, and that this imagery was to him an expression of genuine experience. It might be said of Pasternak, as Sanford had said of Homer, that he "feels the inner concord of the seemingly divergent meanings in a way that the average man cannot."[8]

Synaesthetic imagery may be either metaphoric or metonymic. In other words, two or more sensory impressions may be brought into an association in one figure of speech by making a comparison or drawing an analogy, or by exploiting some tangible connection between the sensations, prompted by the context.

Context is all-important in the creation of a metonymic intersensal image. Two sense impressions which are otherwise completely independent of each other are set into a relationship in such an image when time, place or other factors fuse them into the same mental process. Recalling, by way of

example, the previously cited "fragrant silence," we find that in selecting the epithet Pasternak imaginatively exploited the fact that the silence pervades a huge country estate filled with the scent of field-flowers, evergreens and freshly mown hay. On occasion, Pasternak actually spells out the metonymic connection:

> One could tell the smell of birches by just looking at it. The birches smelled of the same thing that gave them their shimmer. They smelled of resin used for making varnish. (245)

Metaphoric intersensal images occur more frequently in the novel tham do metonymic ones, and have a tendency to appear in clusters. Even a sentence as brief as the following contains one synaesthetic metaphor, one epithet and two similes:

> Lara was also deafened by the screaming window displays and lights, as if they, too, emitted sounds of their own, like the bells and the wheels. (94)

We find the metaphor in Lara being deafened by window displays and lights; the epithet in the screaming window displays and lights; the similes are easily traceable through as if and like.

The following paragraph is saturated with synaesthetic imagery even more densely. Only intersensal images are pointed out in the text inserted between brackets:

> Každuju minutu slyšalsja čistyj trextonnyj vysvist [epithet, blending visual and sound impressions] ivolog, s promežutkami vyžidanija, čtoby vlažnyj, kak iz dudki izvlečennyj zvuk [epithet, touch and sound] do konca propital

> okresnost'. Stojačij, zabludivšijsja v vozduxe zapax cvetov prigvozden byl znoem nepodvižno k klumbam [metaphor, fragrance and touch]. . .Nad luzajkoj sluxovoj galljucinaciej visel prizrak maminogo golosa [instrumental comparison and instrumental metaphor, sound and visual]. (11)
>
> Orioles kept making their clear three-note calls, stopping each time just long enough to let the countryside suck in the moist fluting sounds down to the last vibration. A heavy fragrance, motionless, as though having lost its way in the air, was fixed by the heat above the flower beds. ...The ghost of his mother's voice was hallucinatingly present in the meadows. (11)

Numerous additional examples of metaphoric and metonymic synaesthetic images will be found in the section immediately following, which is devoted to a discussion of individual sensory perceptions.

## 2. Synaesthesia in Doctor Zhivago

An analysis of the intersensal images in Doctor Zhivago reveals that visual impressions, and those of sound and smell, dominate them, and that not a single such image has its origin either in touch or in taste. There is one place where a figure of speech arises out of a taste sensation, in the description of how the convalescing Zhivago "enjoyed the taste of good food as poetry or as a fairy tale." (212) However, the correspondence here is not with another sense impression but with an abstract conception. Such cases, and there is a considerable number of them, will be dealt with in the concluding section of this chapter.

It comes as a surprise that impressions of smell should play the large role they do in the synaesthetic imagery of the novel. The eleven figures of speech emerging out of such impressions are, roughly, equal in number to those stemming from sound and visual sensations which normally lend themselves more readily than the others to synaesthetic treatment. More astonishing, the impressions derived from smell have inspired the most original, the most consistently beautiful and evocative synaesthetic imagery in the entire novel. What is no less strange, this imagery is associated with Zhivago alone. Just as Lara is enveloped in an aura of light and radiance, so is Zhivago accompanied everywhere by aromas, scents and fragrance. But with one essential difference, and here we come upon another peculiarity of the imagery born out of smell impressions. Whereas Lara, as we have seen, is the core and center of the figures of speech that are permeated with light, those in which smell sensations are fused with other sensory perceptions are introduced in some connection with Zhivago, but the image itself is never focused on him. We can now turn to some examples that would illustrate the points made in this paragraph.

At the outset of the book, when the just-orphaned Yurii wanders in uncle's garden, he observes that "the fragrance of flowers, motionless as though having lost its way in the air, was nailed down by the heat to the flower bed." (11)

During Zhivago's courtship of Tonia, he presses her handkerchief to his lips and finds that "its childishly naive smell was intimate and meaningful as some word whispered in the dark." (85) In a memorable passage centered around Zhivago there is a description of a night in late spring, a night dominated by fragrance:

> It smelled of all the flowers in the world at once, as if the earth had lain unconscious all day long, and were now brought back to life with their fragrance. And from the Countess' centuries-old orchard, made impenetrable by fallen branches, the dusty scent of an old linden tree coming into bloom drifted toward tree tops in a huge wave as tall as a house. . .And from below, just under the window, blending with the smell of belladonna, came the fragrance of new-mown hay, as perfumed as jasmine tea. (142)

Later, when Zhivago is on his way home from the front, and is kept from the train window by the crowd, suddenly,

> like a telegram delivered on the train, or like greetings from Meliuzeievo, there drifted in through the windows a familiar fragrance. It came from somewhere to one side and higher than the level of either garden or wild flowers, and it quietly asserted its excellence over everything else. (E157)

Those were linden trees in bloom.

> This ubiquitous fragrance seemed to be preceding the train on its journey north as if it were some sort of rumor that had reached the smallest, local stations, and which the passengers always found waiting for them on arrival, heard and confirmed by everyone. (E158)

The analogies in the above examples are those of smell sensations brought into association with visual and sound impressions. Elsewhere, there are also analogies with touch sensations as in the "warm, greasy smell of putty,"

(193), or as in "the smell of sticky dampness struck him [Zhivago] in the face as if he had walked into a cobweb in a cellar." (247)

The last image in the novel, inspired by smell sensations, is likewise associated with Zhivago who is lying in state immediately following his death. There is no official ceremony, no speechmaking or music.

> In these hours when the silence, unaccompanied by any ceremony, became oppressive as if it were an almost tangible privation, only the flowers compensated for the absence of the ritual and the chant.
>
> They did more than blossom and smell sweet. Perhaps hastening to return to dust, they poured forth their scent as in a choir and, steeping everything in their exhalation, seemed to take over the function of the Office of the Dead. (E493)

We saw in the chapter on the Lara imagery how purposefully he concentrates everything around her, but nowhere in the novel does Pasternak offer the slightest hint concerning the significance of associating with Zhivago alone the synaesthetic figures of speech born of smell sensations. There may be some symbolic import to this, or some suggestion toward a deeper insight into the man named Zhivago. On the other hand, this may be a mere accident, an interpretation I am inclined to accept because no selectivity or direction is discernible in the choice or arrangement of the imagery under discussion, other than its domination by smell impressions which exist independently of Zhivago, and which are evoked in some remote association with him.

One's knowledge of Pasternak's life-long interest in music and of the commanding place sound associations occupy in the verbal texture of his works, naturally leads to an assumption that sound associations would play an equally dominant part in the novel's synaesthetic imagery. The discovery that this is not so comes as a surprise, as does the realization that sound, in general, and music, in particular, have inspired very few figures of speech in Doctor Zhivago. There is, for example, only one comparison drawn from the sphere of instrumental music:

> The incessant rumbling by day and night in the street outside our walls is as inseparable from the modern soul as the opening bars of an overture are inseparable from the curtain, as yet secret and dark, but already beginning to crimson in the glow of the footlights. (E489)

There are, of course, in Doctor Zhivago synaesthetic images based on sound impressions. Fourteen, to be exact, or three more than those which originate in sensations of smell, but they are less original and striking, lacking in the sustained quality of the latter. Whether by design or coincidence, smell alone is absent from the intersensal figures of speech Pasternak based on sound impressions. The sphere of taste fares here better. Thus, he hears silence "sweetly breathe with life" (447), and listens to the "sweet humming" of a church bell in a two-sentence image complex which involves touch and visual impressions, as well:

> . . .a wave of a low, dark and sweet humming drifted from the deepest, gently stirring church bell, mixing with the drizzle in the air. The

> wave detached itself from the bell the way a clump of earth breaks away from the river bank, and sinks and dissolves in the waters of spring floods. (318)

Touch sensations are connected somewhat more frequently than those of taste with the impressions derived from sound, but there is a most uncharacteristic sluggishness in the analogies. Besides the already cited, thrice-repeated "moist voice" and the moist sounds of the orioles, there are the unremarkable suxie zalpy ("dry salvoes," 313) and the hackneyed (at least, in Russian) treskučie morozy ("crackling frosts," 380). Šëlkovisto šuršavšaja listva ("the silkily rustling leaves," 355) is a figure of speech that is rescued from mediocrity by its verbal music alone.

The visual associations derived from sound impressions possess greater originality, but are thinly scattered throughout the book. Extremely sensitive to voices, Pasternak reacts to one that displeases him, by branding it "as flat and commonplace as the window and the street." (50) The most felicitous analogies in this category are "words tender and bright, shining in the darkness like phosphorescence," (404) "noises round and smooth, as though turned out by a lathe," (53) and a characterization of the Russian lyrical folk song:

> An old Russian folk song is like water held back by a dam. It looks as if it were still and were no longer flowing, but in its depths it is ceaselessly rushing through the sluice gates and the stillness of its surface is deceptive. By every possible means, by

> repetitions and similes*, the song slows down the gradual unfolding of its theme. Then at some point it suddenly reveals itself and astounds us. That is how the song's sorrowful spirit comes to expression. The song is an insane attempt to stop time by means of sords. (E362)

Pasternak's synaesthetic responses are so immediate and instinctive, and are so fused by a unity of perception that one is justified in thinking of him in the terms of Sanford's conception of the primitive man, namely, that he possesses "a constant and immediate coordination of several senses in several sensations; eye did not see without ear hearing and nose smelling."[9] We know, of course, from the examples cited that such coordination of several senses is absent from a considerable number of figures of speech based on sensory impressions, but it does exist in so many of them that the phenomenon merits attention.

The previously quoted paragraph describing the "dark and sweet humming" of the church bell, for instance, contains impressions of sound, touch, smell and vision. We might also recall the passage wherein the fragrance of linden trees in blossom bring forth analogies with a telegram with greetings and with a rumor. In the following example sensations of smell inspire associations with visual, touch and taste impressions:

* The idea expressed in this passage demands that parallelizmami ("by parallelisms") should have been used here, not "similes."

> It [the air] had a breath of something new in it, something that had not been there earlier -- something magical, springlike, white blackish, thin and unsubstantial, like a snow flurry in May when the wet melting flakes falling on the earth make it seem black rather than white. It was something transparent, blackish-white, sweet-smelling -- "Wild cherry," Yurii Andreievich decided in his sleep. (E236)

A similar intermingling of sensations takes place in the description of the many smells of autumn:

> Yurii Andreievich greedily breathed in the mixed spicy smell of ice-cold pickled apples, of the bitter dryness in the woods, of the earth's sweetish dampness, and of the blue September haze resembling the burned vapors of a campfire doused with water, and of a just extinguished fire. (350)

Additional examples of multiple sensations coordinated into imagery will be found in the section immediately following, devoted to an element far removed from sensory impressions, and yet one which is freely intermingled with them in many a figure of speech in Doctor Zhivago -- abstract conceptions and states of mind.

### 3. Imagery Associating Sensory Impressions with Abstract Conceptions and States of Mind

In a class all by itself is the imagery in which Pasternak describes sensory impressions in abstract or emotional terms, or associates abstract conceptions and states of mind with effects normally connected with the

sensory organs. Instances of this occur so frequently, and are distributed with such regularity throughout the novel (I counted fifty-four such instances, as compared with sixty-two figures of speech based on sensory impressions alone) that Pasternak, it seems, touches, tastes, smells, sees and hears abstract conceptions as a matter of course, and blends them with sensory impressions as though this were the most natural thing in the world to do. There is no awareness of oddity nor the slightest trace of self-consciousness when he says: v nravstvenno čistoj tišine ("in the morally pure silence," 15), umnye ruki ("intelligent hands," 26), or neprikryto čistye, kak nevedenie, polnye zvuki razdavalis' na ves' les i pronizyvali ego ("sounds reverberating in the woods and permeating it, bare and pure as innocence," 274). He likens consciousness to the headlights on a locomotive (68), assures us that the soul "exists in space, lodged inside us like teeth in our mouth (495), and believes that the private matters in the lives of Pushkin and Chekhov

> have now become of concern to us all and, like apples picked while they are green, have ripened in transition, increasingly mellowed with sweetness and meaning. (294-95)

Marina's voice is more than a magnificent vocal instrument to Pasternak: "that voice was her protection, her guardian angel." (490) Similarly, when Zhivago contemplates the enchantment of a moonlit night, he finds it "stunning like

compassion or like the gift of clairvoyance, a radiant, shimmering fairy tale." (144)

The imagery in this category, bringing into association elements from such disparate areas as abstractions and emotions, on the one hand, and sensory impressions, on the other, lends itself to the creation of unique and striking figures of speech. It is, therefore, not surprising that many of them are reserved by Pasternak for his cherished heroine, Lara. Her hands are "as astonishing as sublime thought" (46), her arms are "as large as the soul" (512), and her shadow on the wallpaper of the hotel room where she was meeting her seducer "was like the outline of her innocence" (46). When Zhivago rushes to the house where he expects to find Lara, he rejoices that

> there he will again receive this God-made white rapture from the hands of its Creator. . .And the promise of her nearness, reserved and cool as the white northern night, unowned by anyone in the world, will reach him like the first wave of the sea. (314)

The intercommunicating links in the figures of speech belonging to this category tend to be rather elusive, with the result that on occasion Pasternak resorts to a device that helps the reader to establish the links. The device may work in either of two different ways. In one, Pasternak first sets down an image intermingling two or more sensory impressions, then follows it up with a parallel image in which he fuses these impressions with those derived from abstract conceptions. For example:

> The velvety midnight darkness of the waning winter in the orchard was being warmed by the dark purple heat of the coming spring bursting out of the ground. A similar blending of two like elements was taking place in the room where the dusty airlessness of the curtains was softened and adorned by the dark violet heat of the coming holiday. (323)

Or, using the device in a still simpler way, Pasternak would introduce a sentence containing no figure of speech whatsoever, but invoking a sensory impression, and then, in the very next sentence, he would create an image in which this impression is associated with an idea or an emotional state, as in the following:

> Her favorite color was a violet mauve, the color of church vestments on certain solemn days, the color of lilac in bud, the color of her best velvet dress and of her set of crystal wine glasses. It was the color of happiness and of her memories, and Russia too, in her prerevolutionary virginity, seemed to her to have been the color of lilac. (E311)

Out of the fusion of sensory impressions and an abstract conception grew what is to me the most trenchant and noble image in the entire novel, remarkable in its simplicity, in the universality of the thought contained in it, and in its relevance to the main theme in Pasternak's major work, which may be expressed by the single word, <u>life</u>. The image occurs in a passage where life makes its unheralded appearance on an early spring day in a young forest still almost as bare as in winter:

> Only in the buds that spotted it all over as with wax, something superfluous began to show, something discordant like dirt or a swelling, and this excess, this discordance

> and dirt was life which had covered the first budding trees with its green leafy flame. (244)

In Doctor Zhivago, Pasternak created synaesthetic imagery on a scale greater than in the works of any other Russian writer or poet. Among the authors of other nations only Marcel Proust resorted to intersensal figures of speech with comparable readiness.[10] Despite their profusion, variety and originality, Pasternak's synaesthetic images are well integrated into the general metaphorical texture of the novel. Like the rest of the imagery in Doctor Zhivago, they manifest no straining for effect. On the contrary, they give every indication of being the natural expression of one to whom synaesthetic vision is organic, revealing an extreme sensitivity to all perceptions and an ability to capture their inner concord and translate it into words.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER EIGHT

1. Wellek and Warren, op. cit., pp. 71-72 amd 273-74.
2. Sanford, op. cit., p. 56.
3. Ibid., pp. 58-59.
4. Ibid., p. 51.
5. Ibid., pp. 53-58.
6. M.V. Lomonosv, Sočinenija, Moscow, 1957, p. 44.
7. As cited in Istorija russkoj kritiki, Moscow-Leningrad, 1958, Vol. I, p. 75.
8. Sanford, op. cit., p. 56.
9. Ibid., p. 58.
10. See "Transposition of Sensations in Proust's Imagery," and chapter in S. Ullman's Style in the French Novel, Cambridge, England, 1957, pp. 189-209.

# CONCLUSION

Russian poets and critics alike gave, as we have seen, almost immediate recognition to the originality and effectiveness of Pasternak's images. Their profusion in Doctor Zhivago, along with their undiminished qualities of uniqueness and dynamism, establish him beyond doubt as one of the most prolific, as well as original, creators of imagery in Russian literature. His definition of images as "miracles in words"[1] show that Pasternak perceived them as a thing of potency and glory, while the following passage discloses his incontestable need to create figures of speech, and his profound understanding of the roots of that need:

> Metaphorical language is the result of the disproportion between man's short life and the immense and long-term tasks he sets himself. Because of this, he needs to look at things as sharply as an eagle and to convey his vision in flashes which can be immediately apprehended. This is just what poetry is. Outsize personalities use metaphor as a shorthand of the spirit.[2]

Of the several ideas Pasternak advances here, the one most relevant to this study is concerned with metaphorical language "which can be immediately apprehended." And, indeed, the conclusion is inescapable that Pasternak's

concern for ease and immediacy of apprehension led him in Doctor Zhivago to a heavy reliance on simile, and that the prevalence of this explicit, direct figure of speech largely accounts for the comparative simplicity one finds in the novel.

Contributing toward the same end is the fact that the vast majority of Pasternak's associations in all the categories of imagery in Doctor Zhivago is derived from two universally familiar areas, thus facilitating apprehension. The areas are nature and everyday life. Characteristic of Pasternak's treatment of nature is that he is most concerned with the sphere of inanimate, rather than animate, nature: while, on the whole, ignoring birds, animals, even human beings, he is mostly preoccupied in his images with light, air, winds, sky, fields, woods and the water element in the various shapes it takes. At the same time, for all of Pasternak's absorption with nature, the order in which he places the things which are being compared, and those they are compared with, reveal him as psychologically belonging to the urban civilization in which he was reared and educated. Thus, most of his figures of speech have their origin in Pasternak's observation of some aspect of nature which, in the very next step, is compared with and illuminated by an object or detail from the man-made world.

The imagery in Doctor Zhivago is significantly enriched by Pasternak's ready use of two image-making devices, one

of which he had employed very sparingly in his early works, and the other, practically not at all. The first is synaesthesia, or the perception and fusion in one figure of speech of impressions drawn from two or more sense channels. While such intermingling of sensory properties is occasionally found in the imagery of Pasternak's early works, it assumed such proportions in Doctor Zhivago as to justify a conviction that no other Russian writer gives expression to a synaesthetic vision so organic and on so large a scale. The significance of this fact lies -- and this bears repetition -- in the disclosure of an extreme sensitivity to all perceptions and an ability to capture their inner concord and translate it into words.

The second device hitherto almost completely non-existent in Pasternak's works, is recurrent imagery, that is, the reappearance of a figure of speech in more than one place in the novel, with variations in wording, but containing the same essential elements. Consistent with his reluctance to employ figures of speech in association with personages other than his heroine, Pasternak reserves recurrent imagery exclusively for Lara, thus giving additional evidence of a peculiarity in Pasternak the writer.

Unlike Tolstoy or Pushkin, writers in the epic mold, whose natural tendency it is to depict the world through the eyes of the various personages in their works, Pasternak tends to present men and events through his own vision of

the world. He remains the lyric poet even in a novel. Hence, the disinterestedness in plot continuity, the structural fragmentation of the book, the sound associations, rhythmic patterns and the prose poems. Hence also the nature and distribution of the imagery in Doctor Zhivago. Occurring without any discernible system, figures of speech spring up here, there and everywhere, permeating the novel with a sustained warm glow. While not interfering with the progress of what is essentially a tale of tragic human destiny and of the disintegration of a whole world, Pasternak's images admit of no despair. On the contrary, centered around nature, comfortingly familiar details of daily living, and a radiant human being named Lara, they add up to a hymn in praise of life and of man's anguished, creative existence on God's earth.

## NOTES FOR CONCLUSION

1. The Last Summer, op. cit., p. 101.
2. I Remember, op. cit., p. 126.

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