

Of course, the duality of man's nature makes absolute perfection unattainable. The good will always be accompanied by the bad. However, it does not mean that evil must go unchallenged and unpunished. Dostoevsky's best protagonists are actively involved in this never ending struggle. In doing so, they strive for a close spiritual relationship not only with God but also with all other people. Their true calling in life lies in lending a man in need their trust and a helping hand, thus giving tangible meaning to the Christian concepts of brotherly love and forgiveness.

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World War II in the Poetic Works of Aleksandr Tvardovskii

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The Soviet government was especially active and successful in using the arts as an adjunct weapon during World War II. Even after the end of hostilities, the arts continued to be enlisted to foster the image of the war as a noble defense against evil invaders. This policy nurtured xenophobia among the Soviet people and made it possible to reduce foreign contacts during the cold war, while cooperative Soviet artists produced countless war movies, war novels, war monuments, and the like until the end of the era.

One of the most important Soviet wartime literary works is the narrative poem "Vasilii Terkin," written by the well-known poet Aleksandr Tvardovskii (1910-1971). Tvardovskii was a farm boy from the Smolensk area who with tremendous effort had made a name for himself in literature and moved to Moscow. Until the beginning of the war, his major literary theme had been the events surrounding the collectivization of the countryside. At the beginning of the hostilities, preceding World War II, he was drafted, along with many other writers, as a correspondent. He spent the greater part of six years near the front, first in Poland and Finland, and on the Western front.

During those years Tvardovskii was very productive. In addition to producing patriotic works for the newspapers, he wrote two major verse narratives. He often returned to the theme of the war also in his later writing, but gradually his point of view changed as he came to understand the real nature of his society. Tvardovskii's changing attitude to World War II can be discerned by examining six of his most famous works: the three long verse narratives "Vasilii Terkin" ["Vasilii Terkin"] (1942-45), "Terkin na tom svete" ["Terkin in the Beyond"] (1954-63), and "Po pravu pamiati" ["By Right of Memory"] (1969), and three shorter lyrics, "Dve strochki" ["Two Lines"] "Ia ubit' podo Rzhevom" ["I Was Killed at Rzhev"] (1946) and "Ia znaiu" ["I Know"] (1960).

"Vasilii Terkin" has an unusual origin. At the beginning of the Finnish Winter War in November, 1939, Tvardovskii joined the staff of the newspaper *Na strazhe rodinu* [Guardina the Fatherland] published for the soldiers on the Karelian front. The staff of writers and artists, led by Nikolai Tik-

honov, collectively created a regular comic strip with rhymed text, featuring Vasia Terkin, a soldier who was amazingly strong and always victorious. As a character, Vasia was related to the *bogatyr*, an enormously strong mythical hero of the Russian *bylinas*, but on the whole, he was merely a typical twentieth century superhero. It fell to Tvardovskii's lot to introduce him to the readers,

Vasia Terkin, who is he?
Let me tell you frankly:
He's a soldier, self-assured,
Really quite outstanding. (*Sochineniia* 5: 105)¹

Judging from his diary, written during the Karelian campaign and published in 1969, Tvardovskii at first saw the fighting as glorious and heroic, but this impression changed as he witnessed suffering and death among the soldiers. His poem "Dve strochki" ["Two Lines"] was written in 1943 about a dead soldier he had encountered in Karelia.

I feel so sad about his fate,
So far away. It could be me,
Dead and alone; I'm lying there,
So small, and frozen to the ground.
In that unknown campaign I was
Forgotten, dead, so small and frozen. (*Sochineniia* 2:121)

Tvardovskii wrote to a friend about his new attitude towards war and battle, "All that I have seen almost changed me into a new man. . . . I believe that the army will be my second theme for the rest of my life." (*Sochineniia* 6: 339) During the period between the end of the Finnish War and the German invasion of Russia in 1941, Tvardovskii decided to use the name of the comic strip hero, Vasia Terkin, for a serious verse narrative about the Finnish war, but to modify his character. Tvardovskii wrote in his diary in April, 1940,

Now I see that he is the one I need, Vasilii Terkin. . . . I need his gaiety, luck, energy, and untiringly good spirits to handle the austere material of this war. (*Sochineniia* 4: 161)

By March, 1941, Tvardovskii had already completed sections of this new narrative, but on June 22 the German army invaded Russia. Tvardovskii was sent to the front again and had to put off the completion of this project. He remarked later,

I was not long troubled by doubts about the vagueness of the genre, the absence of a basic outline. . . . It was not a poetic narrative—well, so be it, I decided; there was no unified plot, so be it, it's not necessary; there was no real beginning—I had no time to think of one, nor was there a specific climax or ending. (*Sochineniia* 5: 123)

Near the beginning of the poem he explained the reason for the absence of plan,

In a word, a soldier's book,
No beginning and no end.
Why like that, without beginning?
Well, I haven't got the time,
Can't rewrite it now, you know.
Why without an ending then?
Seems a shame, such a nice chap. (*Sochineniia* 2: 160)

During September, 1942 (September 4-October 1) Tvardovskii published a third of the entire poem in the newspaper *Krasnoarmeiskaia pravda* [*The Red Army Pravda*]. Further sections appeared in December, 1942, and between February and June, 1943; then there was a year's break before the last installments appeared in May, 1944, and in 1945. The longest interruption occurred when Tvardovskii's army unit liberated his devastated hometown, Smolensk. He found his native village destroyed and his relatives and friends killed or homeless. These unhappy impressions inspired him to start writing another verse narrative, the somber "Dom u dorogi" ["The House By the Roadside"] Also the later, more solemn chapters of "Vasilii Terkin" were influenced by his experiences in Smolensk.

The hero, no longer called Vasia Terkin but known more formally as Vasilii Terkin, retained a cheerful personality but was no longer a superhero; just the opposite, he was just like anyone else. Tvardovskii introduces him thus,

Terkin, well, who is he then?
Let us be quite honest:
He is just a common guy,
Simply ordinary.
He's a good guy, by the way.
Just this type of guy,
Can be found in each platoon,
Squad, detachment, unit. (*Sochineniia* 2: 166)

Hasek's *The Good Soldier Schweik*, but their similarities are only superficial. Tvardovskii rejected such a comparison, saying that while Terkin does his best to defend his Soviet socialist motherland, Schweik sabotages the war, not wishing to fight for Franz Josef and Wilhelm (*Pis'ma* 263). It is more rewarding to look upon Terkin as akin to a picaresque hero; for example, Tvardovskii emphasizes the lack of beginning or end to his narrative, and such a lack of structure is typical for the picaresque genre. Also, Terkin remains unchanged in spite of his terrible experiences, another trait of a picaresque hero, but he has a more serious attitude to life than such a character as Lazarillo de Tormes. One interesting interpretation of Terkin's personality is that he represents Everyman. This approach was used in the second play on this theme shown in Moscow, 1972, where Terkin was played by seven different actors, all of whom were present on stage at the same time.² Despite Terkin's basic good humor the narrative as a whole is not uniformly cheerful. The hardships of war are far from overlooked; Terkin almost drowns, and he is wounded and nearly dies.

Tvardovskii had from the beginning decided to make Terkin his own countryman, that is, a native of the Smolensk area, but avoided giving Terkin specific personal characteristics so as to make it easier for the average Soviet soldier to relate to him (*Sochineniia* 5: 128). As time passed, however, Tvardovskii began to include subjective passages in the narrative. For example, in the chapter "*Na Dnepr*" ["On the Dnepr"] Terkin advances with the army through his and the author's ravaged home district and gives voice to Tvardovskii's feelings,

Motherland, my dear, my own,
People in Smolensk,
Please forgive me—don't know what,
Only please forgive! (*Sochineniia* 2: 306)

The chapter "*Pro soldata-sirotu*" ["The Orphaned Soldier"] contains actual autobiographic details. One scene describes Terkin's return to his ruined village,

Standing by the broken signpost
Terkin bared his head,
Stood a while, as by a grave,
Then he had to leave. (*Sochineniia* 2: 310)

These lines almost exactly describe a famous photograph, made by Vasilii Arkashev, showing Tvardovskii contemplating the charred remains of his own house in the village of Zagor'e; the photo could be an illustration

to this chapter.³ Changing his original intention to keep Terkin generalized, Tvardovskii in the end gave him both a home and a family, making him an individualized person.

"Vasilii Terkin" was both a critical and popular success, and in 1946 Tvardovskii was awarded the Stalin Prize for this work. It was popular because the soldiers recognized themselves in the hero, and also because the suffering and hardships of war were described realistically, yet with a touch of humor. In contrast to Tvardovskii's earliest writings about the Finnish campaign, this narrative contains no attempts at glorifying the war, but he obviously felt that theirs was a just cause—the defense not only of their homeland, but of peace on earth. A recurring couplet expresses this idea,

Deadly battle not for glory,
But for life on earth instead. (*Sochineniia* 2: 221)

Testifying to the genuine popularity of "Vasilii Terkin" is the fact that he received countless requests from readers to write sequels about Terkin's life in peace-time, on a collective farm, at a construction site, or elsewhere. Until 1954 Tvardovskii refused to write a sequel, but others did, and "Terkin" imitations and adaptations proliferated for decades.⁴

It was only after the end of the war, in 1946, that Tvardovskii wrote one of his best known war poems, entitled "*Ia ubit podo Rzhevom*" ["I was Killed near Rzhev"]. A few stanzas suggest the tone and contents:

I was killed near Rzhev,
In a nameless swamp,
By the falling shells;
The left flank of Squad Five.

Didn't hear the explosion,
Didn't see the flames,
I just fell to the ground;
There's no up or down.

In the whole wide world
To the end of time,
Not a button or a thread
From my clothes survived.

...
We, the silent and dead,
We have only one joy:

That we fell for our land,
And could save it for you.

...

Forty two, in the summer,
I was killed; there's no grave.
And to see what came next
Was denied me by Death.

You, my brothers, protect her,
Our dear land, our home,
You must honor the soldier,
Your own brother who died. (*Sochineniia* 3: II-IS)

The reader probably experiences conflicting feelings. On the one hand, one is saddened by the fate of the soldier who was lost without a trace and whose death went unnoticed. On the other hand, the reader may be heartened by the fact that the unknown soldier died a hero's death, defending his country. Tvardovskii's emphasis on patriotism may strike the reader of today as overblown. During Stalin's regime, however, Tvardovskii naturally could not mention the needlessly high cost in Soviet lives, often caused by the inadequate military equipment and the sometimes incompetent leadership. He could, however, safely mourn the death of a hero. Given these limits to the freedom of expression, "*Ia ubit podo Rzhevom*" is a powerful and tragic work.

After rejecting many suggestions for writing a sequel to "Vasilii Terkin," Tvardovskii finally did so in 1954. The resulting work, entitled "*Terkin na tom svete*" ["Terkin in the Beyond"] was not the entertaining peace-time saga that the readers had hoped for, but was instead a pointed social satire with a bizarre plot, written in a wonderfully inventive and comical style. The dying Terkin is dispatched to the nether world moments before death. After having a good look at the underworld, a grotesque but recognizable version of the Soviet reality, he decides that even the front line is preferable. He escapes and awakens in a field hospital, surprising the doctors who thought he was dead. Similar plots have been used many times for various purposes in world literature, some of the earliest examples stemming from Greek mythology, with Orpheus and Persephone descending to the underworld. In the officially atheistic Soviet world, it was necessary to describe the nether world, as well as the world of the living, without hints about a higher purpose of life, retribution, or salvation. The lack of justice is evident above all in the passage describing the misery of the dead labor camp inmates, and in spite of Tvardovskii's humorous language, or perhaps thanks to it, the effect is chilling.

Tvardovskii vigorously denied that this new work of his was a continuation of the war-time narrative (*Sochineniia* 5: 143-47). By examining the text, it can be shown, however, that the poem is actually an extension of the chapter "*Smert' i vojn*" ["Death and the Soldier"] in "Vasilii Terkin." Further, the hero of the new narrative uses the older book to identify himself as he enters the gates of Hell. The author probably attempted to make a distinction between his new satire and the heroic war epic in order to deflect hostile critics.

A few passages will suggest the tone of the work. Terkin is told to check into Hell, where he encounters a former writer and observes groups of people marching by in formation,

Through the silence came the sound
Of a grave-like voice:
"Answer all the questions here
In detail; be brief!"

...

Sweating over manuscripts
Poking here and there:
Change a word or cross it out,
Add some phrases to replace
What the author wrote.

...

Then he signs his name below:
Cen and Sor and Ship.

...

Stuck forever, while alive
On the *Pravda* staff,
He enjoyed life, but when dead
He must labor on.

...

Marching, organized by year,
Inmates who had died
At Kolyma and Magadan, and
Other well-known camps.
Moved from those camps here to this one,
Just like those on earth,
They've been sent to permafrost
For eternity! (*Sochineniia* 3: 332, 341, 342, 360)

In view of the obvious social and political criticism expressed in this

work, it is not surprising that Tvardovskii could only publish it with great difficulty and in a revised form nine years after it was written, in 1963.

During the twenty five years between the end of the war and his death in 1971, Tvardovskii wrote over 150 lyrics, including many about the war and the deep marks it had left on life in the Soviet Union. His point of view changed from the optimism of "Vasilii Terkin" and the patriotism of "*Ia ubit podo Rzhevom*" to one of regret and sorrow. Among his war poems is a short lyric, first published in 1966,

I know it's not my fault at all
That some did not return from war,
That they, some old and some quite young,
Were lost, but that was not my fault.
What could I do, how could I help?
It's not my fault, and yet, and yet. . . (*Sochineniia* 3: 177)

The reader may be surprised to hear the prominent editor express a feeling of guilt for remaining alive while so many soldiers had died. But Tvardovskii's guilt is not only about surviving the war that had, after all, ended twenty years earlier. By 1966 Tvardovskii had learned the truth about the other, more numerous innocent victims of the war and of Stalin's terror—the crippled veterans, the widows and orphans, and the thousands of repatriated prisoners of war who were immediately sent to labor camps to perish. Among such victims were Tvardovskii's own relatives and friends, but in contrast to them he had prospered. It is known that, unlike certain other prominent literary figures, Tvardovskii had not made denunciations but on the contrary had helped numerous victims of oppression, so he had no actual reason to feel guilty. Nevertheless, he felt that he had enjoyed undeserved fortune. "It's not my fault, and yet, and yet..."

Looking at Tvardovskii's attitude to the war as shown in the representative works examined above, it is clear that almost from the beginning he had recognized the horrors of war while also admiring the heroic deeds of individual soldiers, many of whom were not given their due recognition, including Terkin and the man killed at Rzhev. After the war, Tvardovskii's attention came to focus more on the contrast between the illusory ideals for which they had died and the disappointing Soviet reality, and he highlighted this contrast in his satire about the dying Terkin's visit to Hell.

As time went by, Tvardovskii started more often to compare his own good fortune with the crippled lives of the many victims of the war and oppressions. Feeling guilty, he accepted as a writer the responsibility of speaking the truth as openly as he could rather than joining the many opportunistic writers who continued to produce heroic works about the war,

works intended to distract the Soviet citizens from the lack of economic and social progress. During the years 1966-69, Tvardovskii worked intently on yet another narrative poem, "*Po pravu pamiati*" ["By Right of Memory"]. In this confessional work he described the sufferings endured by members of his own family and countless others, needlessly victimized by the war and the Soviet policy of terror. Predictably, this work could never be published in the Soviet Union and Tvardovskii ultimately failed to communicate to his Russian readers his repentance for supporting such an oppressive society. He wrote,

Untruth we always have in excess,
But only truth is suitable for us.

But I'm no longer just a little boy,
I don't have that excuse, I can't delay.
That heavy load that has oppressed my soul—
I can remove it now, there is still time.

That pain which secretly in times of old
Would press upon our hearts,
We used to drown it with the noise
Of wild applause to Stalin, our father. (*Negative Capability* 88-89)

In 1987, sixteen years after his death, this powerful poem was finally published in Russia. Its publication was a notable event, but of course Tvardovskii's revelations were no longer sensational, already being well-known by most readers. Nevertheless, the poem is a very important document for completing the portrait of Tvardovskii, who was in many ways a true representative of his times in the best sense. Its publication also helped foster a public re-evaluation of the Soviet role in the war.

Well ahead of most of his contemporaries, the sensitive and well-informed Tvardovskii became aware of the deceptions in the official version of history, and his struggle to replace this deception with truth, a struggle that he ultimately lost, can be traced in his poetry about World War II.

• NOTES

¹ All translations are by the author of this paper.

² G. Mdivani, "Doroga molodosti," *Literaturnaia Rossiia* 7 April 1972: 13, and numerous other reviews.

³ The charred remnants on the photo may, actually, be those of a neighboring house. Tvardovskii himself could not be sure of the exact site of his former home since it had been destroyed in 1931 and most other landmarks were obliterated in the war (Arkashev *Dorogami* 26).

⁴ A collection of such imitations was published in New York, 1953 (S. Iurasov, *Vasilii Terkin posle voiny po A. Tvardovskomu*. N'iu Iork: Izd-vo im. Chekhova, 1953). Tvardovskii professed great annoyance when learning in 1957 of this unauthorized publication (*Sochineniia* 5: 140; 6: 58). In 1958 Tvardovskii selected 108 Terkin imitations, received by him in the mail, and made them available to Petr Vykhodtsev for research (*Sochineniia* 6: 64). A selection of 48 Terkin imitations was published in Moscow in 1966, edited by Iurii Burt in (*Literaturnoe nasledstvo*. *Sovetskie pisateli na frontakh velikoi otechestvennoi voiny*. Moskva: Nauka, 1966. v. 78 No. 1: 563-601). Hundreds of attempts were made to create plays, movies, ballets, and musicals from "Vasilii Terkin." In the sixties and seventies, two plays and one musical based on "Vasilii Terkin" and one play based on "Terkin na tom svete" ran in Moscow and other cities.

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Beethoven y La catedral de Blasco Ibáñez

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En mi exploración de las relaciones entre la música, la literatura y la arquitectura, trato de establecer una semejanza entre las tres disciplinas tomando en consideración la función similar de sus unidades básicas. Es decir, considero las notas musicales, las palabras del lenguaje verbal y las líneas arquitectónicas como los signos por medio de los cuales los compositores, los escritores y los arquitectos crean sus obras. Partiendo desde este punto de vista estructural puede encontrarse una interrelación entre las artes y la literatura al considerarlas como sistemas que trabajan por medio de signos, haciendo posible establecer una conceptualización de un signo intertextual que combina las diferentes disciplinas.¹ Para lograr esto es necesario basarse en la distinción establecida por Roman Jakobson entre los dos ejes por medio de los cuales opera el signo lingüístico (Jakobson 27): el eje vertical o metafórico de selección y el eje horizontal o metonímico de combinación.

Para poder conseguir un acercamiento crítico hacia obras literarias que incluyan interrelaciones con la música o la arquitectura, es necesario establecer conceptos estructurales que definan las actitudes de esas interrelaciones. De acuerdo con Ulrich Weisstein y Steven P. Scher, las técnicas de comparación usadas anteriormente se han basado casi siempre en un análisis histórico de las influencias que las artes han producido unas en otras. Sin embargo, uno de los enfoques de los estudios modernos es explorar la relación entre la música, la literatura y la arquitectura desde una perspectiva estructuralista basada en los signos del lenguaje.²

En *La catedral* (1903), una de las novelas sociales de Blasco Ibáñez, el escritor utiliza una combinación de arquitectura, de música y de literatura. La estructura interna de la novela está íntimamente ligada a la música de Beethoven y a la arquitectura de la catedral de Toledo. Es una experiencia rítmica de la música y la arquitectura en la que el novelista usa las sinfonías de Beethoven en su capacidad expresiva junto con las leyes conectantes de efecto y diseño de la construcción física y espiritual del templo.

La novela es una obra antirreligiosa y antimonárquica. Su protesta reli-