INTRODUCTION

While proceeding to select the topic of the proposed study, it was necessary to ponder on the vast scope of discussion on a literary genre, fiction, which itself transgresses all borders of discourse on race, community, gender and culture. The role of the author or the creator of such a genre known as the ‘novel’ becomes equally crucial, as the concept of authorial participation in fiction has changed in perspective from traditional interpretation to contemporary criticism.

The authorial role forms a major part of the study, and it attempts to probe into the diverse roles which the author may adopt in fiction and proceed in his narratorial art. As a narrator, the author has a distinct ‘voice’ which may not be actually ‘heard’, but pervades the whole thematic content and texture of his novel. In this connection, the Russian author Boris Pasternak (1890-1960) offers a fascinating scope for study and forms a focal point of research into the extent of authorial intervention in the narrative pattern of Dr. Zhivago, the only novel that he wrote. The name of Boris Pasternak has been associated with the rich tradition of fiction in the Russian language. It is a strange fact that “Dr. Zhivago” is Pasternak’s first novel, written at the age of about 65. As he had been a poet throughout his youthful career, his main formative
influences had been the Russian Symbolist school, which flourished early in the century. Then there was the pre-revolutionary Futurism, and finally, the 'Formalism' of the early 1920s, which enriched the idiom and refined the techniques of Russian poetry, Pasternak wrote his first novel at a later part of his literary career to express what his poetry could not, - the vast, panoramic (although painful) experiences of a whole generation. It is presumed that he has been superbly capable of conveying the political atmosphere of his day. The authorial interest stems from the fact that his chief character is almost a projection of his own 'inner' self; moreover, numerous 'created' characters express their own opinions towards the political incidents, and mainly - the revolution.

Isaac Deutscher, in his essay “Pasternak and the Calendar of the Revolution”, mentions that the narrative pattern has been designed in such a way that it forms a critique of the times, and expressed through the characters who mostly talk of the great harm which the revolution has done to humanity, and the disillusionment which it has brought in its wake. Yet, the author seems to suggest that mans' earthly destiny cannot be transformed and the novel ends on an unexpectedly optimistic note in the acceptance of history and in a mystical sense, the expiation of sin: It is also common knowledge that Dr. Zhivago was first published in
Milan in 1957, with the offer of the Nobel Prize in Literature from Stockholm in the following year. The announcement of the award was followed by Pasternak's glad acceptance of it, to be followed by the renunciation of the Nobel Prize. The world wide, literary stir after its publication has roused biographical as well as personal interest in the author, and a part of this study attempts to find a connection between the author, the protagonist of the novel and the narrative pattern.

Boris Leonidovich Pasternak was born February 10, 1890, in Moscow, Russia. Passionately involved with music from a very early age, a strange conflict may be observed in his mind regarding technical expertise in music and his own mental ideal of it. He rejected such a study of music after six years and became a student under the neo-Kantian philosopher Hermann Cohen at the University of Marburg in Germany. But, after a short while he turned from philosophy to the study of poetry, and obtained his degree from Moscow University in 1913.

Pasternak's first volume of poetry "Blitznetz tuchakh" ("Twin in the Clouds") was published in 1914, when he was 24 years old. This was followed by a second volume, "Poverkh baregov" (Above the Barriers) which was published in 1917. He had been physically disqualified from military service during World War I, due to leg injury.
He spent those years working in a factory in the Ural Mountains. In 1917, when Russia was still under the influence of the Russian Revolution, Pasternak was working on "Sestra moia zhizn" (My Sister, Life) a volume of poetry which was published in 1923. The Revolution also forced Pasternak's parents to move to Germany. Pasternak felt slightly isolated from his parents, as his father's job as a portrait-painter stressed on individual freedom, which was against Communist party ideology, and Pasternak was, as a youth, fired with the new wave of thought.

Pasternak married Yevgenia, a painter in 1922, and they had a son Yevgeny. He established himself as one of the foremost Russian poets of the day; but he was under increasing pressure from the Soviet authorities to conform to party ideals. In domestic life, too, he was confronted with conflict as he and Yevgenia divorced in 1931, and he married a lady named Zinaida in 1934. He wrote sporadically after that, and two autobiographical works are worth mentioning which are landmarks in his career, — "Safe Conduct" and "The Last Summer". According to one of his critics and biographers, Guy de Mallac, Pasternak called the years 1945 and 1946, a period of spiritual turmoil — (His meeting and falling in love with Olga Ivinskaya, an editorial assistant for the Soviet monthly periodical Novy Mir); she is also
thought to be the inspiration for Lara in Dr. Zhivago. While Pasternak began to draft his story of Dr. Zhivago which, he did not publish for fear of government disapproval, Olga was arrested in 1949 for engaging in anti-Soviet declarations and was sent to prison. It is also common knowledge that Feltrinelli, the Italian publisher acquainted Pasternak to the Western world, and published Dr. Zhivago in Italian in 1957. In spite of worldwide appreciation and the Nobel Prize, Pasternak remained an outcaste in his own country, disillusioned and heartbroken. His autobiography “I Remember” was published in England and America in 1959. He died of heart disease and primarily, cancer, at his home in Peredelkino, the writer’s village near Moscow, on May 30, 1960.

“Dr. Zhivago” is specially remembered for its vivid depiction of Russian society during the years of the Revolution and Civil War, as seen through the eyes of his protagonist, Yuri Zhivago. Mired in controversy and negative criticism in his homeland, Pasternak’s novel is a celebration of the authorial viewpoint and narratorial strategies in fiction. As he belonged to the Futurist school of poets, his brilliance as a poet is evident in the creative sensibilities of Yuri, his protagonist in fiction. Taking into account the fact that Yuri Zhivago’s thoughts and utterances, may have been elicited from the author’s own ideals, this study attempts to probe the varied ‘roles’ of the narratorial voice, the
link between the author and ‘narrator’ and formulate an overview of the reader’s perception of Pasternak’s fiction. In this analysis, the emotional ‘connect’ with the reader forms a new perspective of ‘narrative’; any conflict arising between the narratorial self (of the author), that of the protagonist and of the other characters is partially resolved, and the author’s participatory role in narrative considered significant in the view point of traditional as well as modern, narratorial discourse.

A detailed probe into the above may reveal several interesting highlights on the life of an individual who is also a poet and an artist. The novel spans the tumultuous times in Russia against the backdrop of socio-political unrest in the years 1902 – 1953. The relevance of the study may be adjudged from the fact that “Dr. Zhivago” is Pasternak’s attempt to bring both prose and poetry to bear on the problems of the individual artist and his life in history. It is also interesting to note that “Dr. Zhivago” was written at the culmination of his own artistic career and when his ‘voice’ was most vocal in championing the rights of the individual.

At the same time, Ronald Hingley comments on the ‘faceless’ quality of Pasternak, –

“In 1980”, Ronald Hingley says, “he could be described, in a detailed study of his work, as one of the most enigmatic authors of the
twentieth century. Not until 1981 did the first comprehensive biography appear, by Guy de Mallac. The work is a labour of love and the product of many years’ application, but here too, Boris Leonidovich tends to emerge as a man without qualities. What of his loves, his marriages, his living conditions, his temperament? Where is the human interest which some publishers and editors believe to be an obsessive concern of the reading public? Can it be that this figure, so vivid when projected on to the world stage in his seventh decade, was dull and feature less in private life? ....... He is a most elusive man, if only because the material on his life is sparse and tends to be inaccessible much of it still being buried in closed archives in his native country."

The lack of documentation about his life does not deter an interest in his thought processes, and furthermore, the study makes an attempt to point out his role in fictional art. It is also one of those facts that rouses curiosity is that the author Pasternak himself discouraged any attention towards his own ‘persona’. He took pride in destroying evidence about himself, avoiding any correspondence that may pile up and offer proof of his private life. His autobiographical studies in prose “Safe Conduct” (1929-31) and Autobiographical sketch (1959) deny any access to the inner mind of the author, and rely heavily on his superfluous sojourns and experiences as a student*6 and as an artist.
Roman Jakobson, in an essay on the prose of Pasternak, mentions that the auxiliary, subordinate, marginal nature of the third person is often firmly underlined in Pasternak's themes—What is essential in his prose-style in his penetration into the life of the lyric self: Whatever is unrelated to this single hero is only 'vague accumulations without names.' Jakobson, furthermore states the nuances of Pasternak's lyric narrative. He states—

"The hero is either delighted or appalled at being governed by an external impulse; he is now branded by it, now suddenly loses contact with it, whereupon another impulse takes its place. "Safe Conduct" is an inspired account of how the author's enamoured admiration focuses in turn, upon Rilke, Scriabin, Cohen, a dear, beautiful girl and Mayakovsky, and how in this process he comes up against 'the limits of his understanding' (a person's non-understanding is one of the most acute and compelling of Pasternak's lyric themes, just as a person's being misunderstood by others is one of Mayakovsky's). Perplexed misunderstandings develop, and the inevitable passive solution follows— the hero goes off, leaving in the lurch, one after the other, music, philosophy and romantic poetry. The hero's activity is outside Pasternak's sphere."
Nicola Chiaromonte, in another study of Pasternak's basic lyrical self and the novel "Dr. Zhivago", further states that Pasternak strives to move out of the 'fragmentary' and the 'personal' to convey the sense of human experience. It is described by Chiaromonte as "a meditation on history" that allows a man to separate his existence from his surroundings and rediscover the path of truth. The novel narrates the odyssey of one man, thoughtful and sensitive, who travels in his experiences from a boy in Czarist Russia to his last days when he dies of a heart attack on the street in the midst of a crowd in Moscow. But the Epilogue and the Conclusion reaffirms the permanence of the creativity of a human mind, as Zhivago's memories (his prose and poetry written in a note book) are handed down to his two childhood friends and revived in their minds.

"At every point" Chiaromonte concludes – "the novel draws its life from the will to oppose the true story of individuals to History as it is made, by force and chance on the worlds' stage. In fact, the great Russian novelists have never separated the story of the individual from that of his society, from that immense persona which Russia is for them. It is in this way that Pasternak has certainly wished to 'continue' Tolstoy – the Tolstoy whom he venerates by telling the truth about Russian history and proclaiming that, no matter who is entrusted with
the material power, the power over consciences belongs to him who knows how to make himself its instrument and voice.”*9

Ilya Ehrenburg describes Pasternak’s art of narration as of a violent and wild speed, but also traveling in “Romantic hemispheres”*10 which strikes a balance between titanic perceptions and microscopic objects. We can, thereby, observe, a distinct voice emerging out of Pasternak’s treatment of history, tradition and romanticism. The author’s affinity to myth, symbolism and allegory has also been mentioned in the essay on Dr. Zhivago by R.E. Steussy, where an world is indicated in which all things are pre-destined and myth-oriented. Dr. Zhivago and his brother represent “an old, Europeanized, Russian culture of the late Romanov era.”*11 Evgraf and the doctor-protagonist are symbols of Pasternak’s culture, and of the modernist movement in Russia directly preceding 1914.

Strachan Donnelley, in his article “The Philosopher’s Poet : Boris Pasternak, Dr. Zhivago and Whitehead’s Cosmological Vision”, - points out a similarity between Alfred North Whitehead’s fundamental philosophic vision of the universe and the native love for aesthetic experience and for philosophy in art in the works of the poet-novelist Boris Pasternak. The modern philosophical cosmology is apparently
present in Yuri Zhivago’s approach to life as envisaged by Pasternak in his fictional treatment of the novel. Donnelley argues that “Dr. Zhivago is not a mere literary or aesthetic event, but the human document of an artist who himself was a student of philosophy at one time. The cosmological character of his vision is no less apparent in his treatment of themè and characters; his major protagonists in the novel are infused with a cosmological sensibility, as is observed in the culminating meditation of Lara over the dead body of Yuri,"¹² or the predicament of Yuri as he is overcome with the riddle of life and death."¹³

We, at this point resume further to indicate the interest in Pasternak studies and the extent of research on Pasternak which explains the various approaches to Pasternak’s creative works, including his poems. Dr. Neil Cornwell draws up a monograph which categorizes the critical works devoted to Dr. Zhivago. He organizes his survey into such categories as theme, protagonist and ideology in the first part of the study. The survey provides a type of criticism which may be called the ‘belletristic’ approach of the majority of those who have written about the novel, to such ‘post-belletristic’ methods as feminism and intertextuality. Dr. Cornwell not only emphasizes the ‘plurality of readings’ of the novel, but also suggests that the nature of the novel is such that it invites the above problem.
Jacqueline Kharouf, in her article “Novel: Doctor Zhivago”, states that Pasternak creates a world that is both realistic and imaginary; it is a world of political turmoil and social unrest that is constantly undergoing change. Pasternak, according to Kharouf, creates a poetic symbolism of change which runs parallel to the world of social change. For Zhivago, this occurrence, though disturbing, contains the beauty of life and has to be conquered. In terms of style the poetic presentation of life has a “stylistic” and contemporary nature, rather than the solipsistic point of view of Dr. Zhivago. But she turns slightly critical of Pasternak as she states that Pasternak fails to reach a contemporary standard due to his lack of balance between themes of fairytale folklore and actuality.

J.W. Dyck (reviewed by D.L. Plank), in his critical work, “Boris Pasternak” presents an overall account of Pasternak’s life and work and discusses his aesthetics and linguistic creativity. Dyck relates the contents of a letter to Bobrov (1916) by Pasternak, where the author renounces his literary past, and proposes a change in his aesthetics. His aesthetics was based on Pushkin’s realism, which has universal application. But Dyck also says that in “My sister, Life”, Pasternak had
not matured to the level of such concrete realism. However, Dyck also states:

"Pasternak's later poems are mostly written in a classical style: they are approachable because of their almost Biblical simplicity; they are more transparent because the author's heart has become more transparent. Leitmotif and themes turn away from the concreteness and absoluteness of the moment and enter into the world of ideas and faith."

*18 His poems have alliterative images, which have echoes in Dr. Zhivago, which, the critic states, is "a panorama of parabolic expression".*19

According to Per Arne Bodin, in "Nine Poems from Doctor Zhivago: A Study of Christian Motifs in Boris Pasternak Poetry", the links between the Zhivago poems and the visual arts, both Russian and Western, offer a fascinating study on the imagery and thematic issues of both the poems and the novel. The author's scheme of "entrance, hesitation and action"*20 not only illuminates the group of religious poems, it also provides some interesting insights in the episodic pattern of the novel. According to the reviewer of Bodin's work,*21 Joyce S. Toomre, Bodin's assessment of the conflict of Strelnikov and Zhivago, and the apparent passivity of Zhivago may invite negative criticism. Zhivago, in reality, acts in the only meaningful way a poet can act; his
passivity can be seen as a higher type of activity as it is Zhivago’s poetic
instinct which dictates him to send Lara away, thus allowing himself full
poetic freedom. Toomre argues that Bodin neglects the fact that in “Dr.
Zhivago”, the novelist attempts to display one type of activity over
another and not the question of activity versus passivity.

Karen Evans – Romaine addresses Pasternak’s changing attitudes
towards German Romanticism in her doctoral dissertation. Her stated
goal in her thesis, is to show the changing modes of Pasternak’s literary
reception towards German Romanticism over three periods. She traces
his treatment of the subject from early romanticism to the second
generation, and eventually to a rejection of German romanticism. The
review of her work, made by Jennifer J. Ryan, "22 shows the skilful
method by which Evans – Romaine leads the reader through her
arguments in her chapters, each dedicated to masters of German
Romanticism – Novalis, Hoffman and Heine.

In “Boris Pasternak – The Painter’s Eye”, John E. Malmstad
subtly describes the author’s relation to painting and other forms of
visual arts in the stages of his literary career. Pasternak, in this article,
reveals his fascination for Cubism. This suggests that this type of
Cubism which captured his imagination was of the Futurist variety (in
the years before 1917). At various times in his life, he had reservations about the part he had played in the history of the Russian avant-garde. Yet his early verse forms a part of that avant-garde, and at times, offers brilliant instances of the attempts to represent the perfect "pictorial and verbal language of Russian art."*23

The analysis above, of the works of critics and scholars have offered some crucial indicators to Pasternak’s treatment of lyric narrative, artistic affinities and aesthetics. The connection between the novel and his poems has also been discussed. But it has been observed that although there have been works on the biographical interest on Pasternak, there has been no serious study on various perspectives of authorial participation in the novel by Pasternak, “Dr. Zhivago”.

Further more, the above views expressed in the dissertations, articles, reviews and essays establish the relevance of the proposed study – i.e. : “Varied Roles of the Author’s Voice”, which is further analysed in terms of novelistic discourse. It offers new interpretations into the relation between the author and the narrator in Pasternak’s fiction. When reviewed from the perspectives of narrative theory, the topic may be considered crucial in building a communicative contact between the author and the reader. New observations on the ‘Authorial Voice’ may

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be based on the Bakhtinian view of polyphony and the monologic voice in fiction. These may be assessed as deciding factors in the formulation of a point of view, which propagates the problem of the author's presence or non-presence in Pasternak's novel. Kundera's discourse on the author's role in fiction and the much larger perspective in term of history, social norms and ideologies will be discussed and analysed. The point of view may be further stretched to the concept of the "Second Self" of the author, which will be presented in the light of some critical theories regarding the re-shaping or re-interpreting the author and his novel.

**The main objectives of this study are thus enumerated:**

(a) To study the basic distinction between the 'historical' and 'fictional' self of the author, and how the narration is influenced by such factors.

(b) Critically evaluate the authorial participation in the fiction of Pasternak in the light of socio-political influences, and how the voice becomes diversified.

(c) To analyse the "Authorial Voice" and its complexities after the novelistic discourses of Bakhtin.

(d) To attempt an extended reading of the above precepts, focusing on Kundera's discourse on the author's role in fiction-writing.
(e) To study elaborately the “Second-self” of the author and the extent of his control over his characters, and the complex relationship of the so-called author with his official version of himself.

(f) To study the role of “humanism” in Pasternak’s fiction, and how it projects the selfhood of the protagonist.

The above objectives have necessitated a certain methodology which is both textual and based on narratological discourse. Author based criticism have also undergone some transformation from traditional theories to new and innovative discourses. Attempts have been made to trace an analytical path from traditional to more critical perspectives in the treatment of the diversified roles of the author’s voice in Pasternak’s novel. As part of our methodology, we have been extremely facilitated by an enlightening discussion with Natalia Ivanova, an eminent critic and the authoritative biographer*24 of Boris Pasternak (2007) and also the Deputy Editor of journal Znamya, from 1991 – till now. She offered valuable suggestions to the researcher regarding the ‘actual’ and ‘fictitious self’ of Boris Pasternak.

The classification of the chapters as enumerated below has helped in formulating a few ideas on literary authorship with a focus on Boris
Pasternak’s fiction. Keeping in mind the title of the study, the arguments in Chapter-I are based on the actual distinction between the historical self of the author and the ‘voice’ which he lends to his characters. A few observations are made on the man himself, from his early years to adulthood, which have been drawn from the versions of critics and biographers. The chapter has also focused on the ‘fictional’ individual or the authorial narrator who has participated in the narrative by telling the life-story of Yuri Zhivago against the vast backdrop of the revolution. The extent of autobiographical and biographical details in the fictional representation of “Dr. Zhivago” merge to create an aesthetic balance in the novel.

Chapter-II offers a comprehensive account of the social influences of the contemporary world on the narrative structure and how the voice of the author is decidedly absorbed into the various issues which form the episodic pattern of the novel. The author’s voice indicates the numerous links with which the protagonist is drawn into the fictional account, and his individual existence is inevitably connected with socio/political scenario. The diversity of the author’s voice is assessed through the treatment of societal values in the novel, and as expounded by various critics and theorists.
Chapter-III attempts to form an overview of author’s voice from the point of view of narratorial discourse. A distinction is made between the modes of narration of both external experience and the reflection of the inner mind in fiction. Sometimes the author’s narratorial strategy takes the shape of other voices, and specially that of the female voice Lara. The chapter also highlights the concept of the implied personality or second self of the author as explained by a few critics on authorial intervention. The argument develops into more contentious issues on authorship, where recent critics re-establish the inevitable functions of the author.

In Chapter-IV, the role of the author is viewed from the critical theory of authorship by Bakhtin, where the communication between the ‘self and other’ is explained with reference to the novelistic art of “Dr. Zhivago”. The arguments are based on the dialogic relation between the ‘author’ and his characters, maintaining the distinctive positions of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. This further gives the scope of the possibility of polyphony or the monologic voice in the novel. The chapter discusses various narratorial modes in terms of dialogism, polyphony and interior monologue and offers suitable illustrations from other celebrated pieces of fiction by Tolstoy and Dostoevsky.
Milan Kundera’s observations on the authorial voice as represented through novelistic art forms the basis of Chapter-V. His assessment on objectivity, individuality and neutrality as an essential component of authorial intervention is a valuable contribution to the formulation of a point of view. This aspect throws light on new perspectives built up on individual existence of Pasternak and his protagonist, implying a substantial link between the author, the narrator and the readers. Kundera’s reflections also support several opinions on Pasternak’s authorial role in terms of narrative art of the European novel, problems of existence and aesthetic purposes of the author.

As a concluding observation on the author’s voice, the role of ‘humanism’ has been included in the narratorial art of the novelist. “Humanism” as a concept, has been redefined within the changing contexts of history. In Chapter-VI and the concluding one, there has been an attempt to establish a link between the emancipatory role of humanism and the inner life of the protagonist, Yuri Zhivago. The affirmation of faith in humanity is portrayed through Zhivago’s expression of his powerful selfhood against ideological exploitation. We observe the voice of Pasternak rebelling against this violation of ideology, as it emerges in the narratorial process of fiction. The voice also crosses the barriers of literary genres as Pasternak offers ideological
as well as aesthetic expression through the poems of Yuri. As a whole, the above mentioned six chapters aim to discuss in detail, the varied as well as diversified scope of the author – narrator’s voice as perceived by the reader in the light of post as well as contemporary criticism.

Notes & References:


2. Ibid; p-241.


9. Ibid; p-234.


11. Steussy, R.E.: The Myth Behind Dr. Zhivago; Russain Review, Vol. 18. No. 3 (July, 1959); Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of The Editors and Board of Trustees of the Russian Review, p-191.

12. Pasternak Boris: Dr. Zhivago; Translated from the Russian by Max Hayward & Manya Harari: Chapter XV (Conclusion) First Published in Great Britain by Collins & Harvill, 1958, pp-445-446.

13. Ibid; pp-332-334


15. Ibid; pp-460-461.


19. Ibid; p-159.


21. Ibid; p-94.


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