The Poetics of Superfluity
Narrative and Verbal Art in the Novels of Ivan Turgenev

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van het doctoraat in de Letteren
aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus, dr. F. Zwarts,
in het openbaar te verdedigen op
donderdag 11 mei 2006
om 16.15 uur

door

Marije Janet Oudshoorn
geboren op 18 juli 1977
te Zwolle
The Poetics of Superfluity

Narrative and Verbal Art in the Novels of Ivan Turgenev

Marije Oudshoorn

Groningen 2006
## Contents

Preface

Introduction 1

Chapter One – Methodology 5  
1.1 Turgenev’s world view and its expression in his work 5  
1.2 A different model 8  
1.3 The method of textual analysis 9  
1.4 Poetic prose 16

Chapter Two – *Rudin* 25  
2.1 Introduction 25  
2.2 The contemporary level 28  
2.3 Ice and fire 32  
2.4 Fruit bearing similes 34  
2.5 Traveling prince or wandering Don Quixote 36  
2.6 Animal associations 38  
2.7 Conclusions 40

Chapter Three – *A Nest of Gentry* 43  
3.1 Introduction 43  
3.2 The laws of history 45  
3.3 The laws of fate 48  
3.4 Character grouping 52  
3.5 Vasil’evskoe as anti-temporal locus 56  
3.6 Conclusions 58

Chapter Four – *On the Eve* 61  
4.1 Introduction 61  
4.2 Allusions to various types of heroes 63  
4.3 The hero as victim 67  
4.4 Tristan 71  
4.5 Death in Venice 80  
4.6 Nature 82  
4.7 Conclusions 88

Chapter Five – *Fathers and Sons* 91  
5.1 Introduction 91  
5.2 Bazarov the nihilist 93  
5.3 Individuality claimed 99  
5.4 Transgression motifs 103  
5.4.1 Associations with demonic traits 103  
5.4.2 The picaresque hero 106  
5.4.3 The tragic transgressor 111  
5.5 Conclusions 113
Chapter Six – *Smoke*

6.1 Introduction 115
6.2 Structural differences between *Smoke* and the other novels 118
6.3 Litvinov ‘the Russian soul’ 123
6.4 The destructive heroine 128
6.5 Negative images of love 132
  6.5.1 Enchantment 132
  6.5.2 Illness 134
6.6 Motionlessness and stone 136
6.7 Conclusions 139

Chapter Seven – *Virgin Soil*

7.1 Introduction 141
7.2 The hero as archetype 146
  7.2.1 Hamlet 147
  7.2.2 The Poet 151
7.3 The motif of acting 153
7.4 Fate 154
7.5 Conclusions 157

Conclusion 159
Samenvatting 163
References 169