Chapter I
Methodology

In the introductory words to her study of Turgenev’s first four novels, Jane Costlow argues that she intends to offer a reading of the novels that gives insight into “Turgenev’s aesthetics” and the ways in which Turgenev’s “psychological convictions inform his artistic choices” (Costlow 1990: 8). As she makes clear herself, she uses close reading as the source of her observations. I certainly think that Costlow is right to connect Turgenev’s basic convictions about life and humankind with his “artistic choices”. However, her study focuses on the novels’ poetic structure, thus designating that as the medium by means of which Turgenev’s views on man are expressed in the novels. The disadvantages of such an approach have already been noted in the Introduction, but what Costlow’s approach also lacks is a more careful formulation of the connection between “psychological convictions” and “artistic choices” in the form of a model for textual analysis that can be used to explore the expression of Turgenev’s world view in his novels.

I shall present such a model in the following paragraphs. It is based on the assumption that paradigmatic and syntagmatic textual mechanisms are used in Turgenev’s novels to express his dual world view. Before explaining this model, however, I shall outline Turgenev’s world view in more detail.

1.1 Turgenev’s world view and its expression in his work

Within the scope of this study it is not possible to survey in detail the intellectual background from which Turgenev’s philosophical ideas derive. I will give only a very broad outline and further refer to the excellent studies on this subject by, among others, Batjuto (1972), Kagan-Kans (1975) and McLaughlin (1984).

Turgenev’s concept of nature had much in common with the notions of the German Romantic philosophers. They describe nature as a dual force that exists in the equilibrium of the opposite forces of egoism and altruism. Nature constantly creates and destroys individuals in order to maintain the whole. Turgenev focused on the consequences that such a process has for the significance of the life of the individual. In doing so, he was greatly influenced by a wide range of thinkers, among them Pascal and Schopenhauer, whose views have in common with his a concept of the insignificance of man as compared to the infinity of space and the age of the universe.

I have chosen to explore Turgenev’s basic philosophical ideas by means of a discussion of two philosophically-oriented texts from his own hand that reflect the core of his ideas on nature’s dualism and its consequences for man’s fate. These are the review of Aksakov’s Stories of a Rifle Hunter from the Orenburg province (“Записки ружейного охотника Оренбургской губернии. С. Аксакова” - 1853) and the well-known essay “Hamlet and Don Quixote” (“Гамлет и Дон-Кихот” - 1860).

The main subject of the first is Turgenev’s discussion of the depiction of nature in Aksakov’s cycle of stories. At one point Turgenev includes a philosophical excursus about

4 Batjuto 1972 offers a detailed survey of influences. He convincingly shows that Schopenhauer, whose influence is often considered to be very substantive, is only one among many philosophers whose ideas influenced Turgenev. He gives numerous examples from the works of Marcus Aurelius, Pascal, Goethe and others whose ideas are reflected in Turgenev’s views on nature and the fate of man.
what he considers to be the key features of nature. He describes it as a dualistic force striving to hold the balance between two seemingly incompatible forces, one that aims for a maximum of self-containedness in every individual creature and the other unifying all these creatures into the one universal that is nature itself. On the one hand, every single creature is ‘egoistic’, considering itself the centre of the world and using everything around it for its own purposes (V, 415).\(^5\) On the other hand, each part has a fixed role to play in nature as a whole. In order to illustrate these ideas, Turgenev gives the example of a mosquito ‘using’ man when drinking his blood, while a spider in his turn has the mosquito for his lunch (ibid.). Though not formulated explicitly in the review, this idea carries within itself a tragic implication concerning man’s life: while considering himself to be the centre of the world, man is in fact no more than a cog in the machine of nature as a whole. The individual strivings of mankind are as relevant (or irrelevant) as are those of the mosquito in relation to the whole. The insect imagery that Turgenev uses here to show that man is really no more important than any other creature is found throughout his work. I will return to it in the analyses of the novels, especially that of *On the Eve*, in Chapter Four.

In the essay “Hamlet and Don Quixote”,\(^6\) Turgenev once more outlines his ideas concerning nature as consisting of two opposite forces, which he now refers to as the centripetal and centrifugal forces (VIII, 184). The first is the aforementioned egoistic principle, on the basis of which a creature sees itself as the centre of things and judges everything only with reference to itself. The centrifugal force balances the centripetal one with an opposite movement, away from the egoistic centre and towards nature as a whole. Turgenev describes Hamlet and Don Quixote as respective representatives of these two poles of the human character. Hamlet represents the egoistic type, who considers all around him only with reference to himself and is kept from acting by his reflection. Don Quixote represents the altruistic type, whose orientation is always towards those around him and who acts without thinking. Like the centripetal and centrifugal forces of nature itself, these poles of *human* nature cannot exist without each other. However, in the individual human being, one of the poles is always dominant. From Turgenev’s description, it is clear that he considers both the Hamlets and the Don Quixotes to be equally hampered by their psychological make-up. Hamlet’s egoism hinders his desire to act, while Don Quixote’s enthusiastic activity hinders his behaving sensibly. Hamlet’s intelligence, his capacity for reason, is in itself a positive thing, as are Don Quixote’s altruism and enthusiasm. However, both characters lack balance and are therefore incapable of leading a successful life. Since Turgenev presents Hamlet and Don Quixote as the two fundamental human types, the pessimism concerning their fate extends to mankind in general.

In the above-mentioned articles, Turgenev treats the position of man in relation to nature as a whole on a purely philosophical level, but these ideas are also explored, in condensed form, in his fictional work. They are dealt with most directly in his late prose sketches, *Poems in Prose* (*Стихотворения в прозе*), written between 1877 and 1882. In these short scenes, mostly presenting images that have been encountered in the earlier work, the futility of the individual’s life is presented rather harshly. For example, in one of the sketches,

\(^5\) References to Turgenev’s work in this chapter refer to *Polnoe sobranie sočinenij v dvadcati vos’mi tomax*, Moskva, 1960-1968. Roman numerals indicate the volume, and Arabic numerals the page number.

\(^6\) The importance of the essay “Hamlet and Don Quixote” as a source of information regarding Turgenev’s philosophical ideas has long been recognized. Many critics have discussed the essay. See for instance Kagan-Kans 1975, Mann 1986 and Woodward 1989: 59-69. Mann gives an overview of the critical reception of the essay, pointing to the predominance of interpretations of Turgenev’s typification of Hamlet and Don Quixote in terms of contemporary socio-political types. Levin (1965) compares Turgenev’s interpretation of Hamlet and Don Quixote to those of his fellow writers and critics, including Herzen, Tolstoj, Dobroljubov and Pisarev.
entitled “Nature” (“Природа”, 1879), a first-person narrator relates a dream in which he encounters Nature personified as a woman. She tells him that she cares equally for all creatures, and that it is all the same to her whether she gives life to a human being or to a worm.

Though perhaps not as directly as in the Poems in Prose, Turgenev’s other short prose is also concerned with the individual’s confrontation of the cosmic forces that overrule his will. It may be presented in the form of a confrontation with death or with strong passion that outweighs reason and in a number of cases also leads to death, as in the case of “Faust” (“Фауст”, 1856). “Faust” is also an early example of a story with a supernatural element, many more of which followed from the mid-eighteen-sixties onward. The frequent occurrence of supernatural events can be interpreted as another manifestation in Turgenev’s texts of the incomprehensible forces that rule man’s life. I have already noted in the introduction that the importance of such existential themes in the short prose has long been acknowledged.7

The novels, however, have persistently been interpreted as having a principally different, more social orientation. Illustrative of this still common attitude is Kurljandskaja’s most recent work on Turgenev. Although her foreword acknowledges that characteristically, in Turgenev’s work, “a universal and metaphysical level lies behind the concrete historical one” (“За планом конкретно-историческим выступает универсальный и метафизический” – Kurljandskaja 2001: 3), she retains the traditional split between the novels and the short prose. She devotes the first chapter of her book to a survey of Turgenev’s philosophical ideas and world view as the basis for an understanding of his work. However, in the ensuing analyses, it is only those that deal with Poems in Prose and the short stories (interestingly, she analyses those with a more or less overt metaphysical element: “Клаара Милич” and “The Song of Triumphant Love”) that consider the role of the “universal and metaphysical”. She also pays a substantial amount of attention to the novels, but, strikingly, the focus here is on the form and function of the dialogues, and the manner in which the characters communicate their social stances. There is no reference to a possible universal or metaphysical element.

I have already mentioned the existence of a current of more poetically-oriented research of the novels, from which it becomes clear that the ‘metaphysical’ concerns of the short stories are also found in the novels. Important studies in this respect are those of Marković (1982), Koschmal (1984) – who has compiled a large group of images in both the short stories and the novels – Woodward (1990) and Costlow (1990). Furthermore, Thiergen (1978), Börtnes (1984), Masing-Delić (1985, 1987) and others have analyzed imagery in separate novels. These studies show that the characters are not solely presented as having been molded through their socio-ideological background, but also, through association, as being typical characters with typical fates. So, for instance, Masing-Delić has drawn attention to features of Insarov’s personality and course of life that associate him with Tristan (Masing-Delić 1987). I have already touched upon the fact that what is missing in these studies is an account of the place of this imagery among the textual strategies as a whole. Its place should be formulated in terms of its relation to the presentation of the contemporary setting. In other words, the text should be treated as an artistic unity in which not only the poetic devices, but the structure as a whole, contributes to the expression of Turgenev’s world view.

7 Some short stories were also labelled as conveying a social message, however. The Notes of a Hunter, for example, were widely interpreted as a protest against serfdom. Černyševskij’s essay on “Asja”, “Rendez-vous of a Russian Man” (“Русский человек на rendez-vous” - 1858), in which the story serves as an a propos for a discussion of the superfluous man as a social and psychological category, is also well known.
1.2 A different model

The duality of Turgenev’s world view provides the basis for my model of analysis. It is my assumption that the textual make-up of the novels presents the characters, and especially the hero, from two perspectives – the individual and the supra-individual, or typical. The concrete, socio-political framework of the novels presents the characters from the ‘egoistic’ perspective of the individual, stressing their position as unique individuals in a specific socio-political and cultural stratum of Russian history. The main interest is in the question of the extent to which a hero, with his individual character traits, could be the representative of a new, active type to replace the superfluous hero.

The associations of the poetic structure create another perspective on the characters. They are linked to archetypes on the basis of common features and a common fate. Within this context, concrete circumstances are relevant only as manifestations of recurring patterns. Individuality fades away as the concrete person is reduced to a representative of a recurrent archetype.

In this connection Jurij Lotman has drawn attention to the development of the novels’ plot on three different levels (Lotman 1992: 106). According to his model, the first, contemporary level depicts the hero as ‘a hero of his time’, a representative of a (social, ideological) group that received a lot of attention in a specific historical period. The second, archetypal level depicts the hero as representative of a recurring type, for instance Hamlet or Tristan. The third level that Lotman distinguishes is the cosmic. In the plot, this presents itself as death. Lotman states that the intrusion of one level on to another level results in a change of motivation: motivation on one level loses its sense when viewed from another level (ibid.).

I consider that the archetypal and cosmic levels, as Lotman identifies them, together present one view, and that this differs fundamentally in orientation from the view of the first level. Both the archetypal and the cosmic levels present the events as determined, not by the unique circumstances of the moment (as they are on the contemporary level), but by an impersonal, universal order based on an endless repetition of the pattern of life and death. Man’s role in this pattern is a fixed one, leaving no room for real (that is, lasting) change through the hero’s actions.

I thus arrive at a two-level model. The two levels are the contemporary and the cosmic level, and these correspond to the two poles of Turgenev’s world view. It should be noted that, on both the contemporary and the cosmic level, the hero is typical. However, these are two different forms of typicality. On the contemporary level the hero acts as a typical representative of a specific socio-political group. The existence of such a group is linked to a concrete historical period, as are the characteristics of the hero. The way he dresses and speaks, the books he reads – all these features characterise him as the representative of a specific group. This is especially true of the hero, but it also applies to other characters, in particular those who are the hero’s ideological opposites.

On the cosmic level, the typicality of the hero is of a different kind. Here, the hero is connected to types that are not limited to a specific historical period; on the contrary, they invoke historically wide-spread cultural and/or literary images. For instance, the hero may be linked to Hamlet through his behavior or appearance. As a consequence, the hero’s life and fate are also associated with those of Hamlet, whose tragedy he will reenact.

The contemporary and cosmic levels provide different perspectives on the hero. The contemporary level is oriented towards the perspective of the individual, who judges and organizes his life on the basis of human criteria. The cosmic level offers the metaphysical perspective of Nature, in which human considerations are irrelevant. In a given text, in principle, the two perspectives are not explicitly opposed to one another, but there are
moments when they will come into direct conflict. This happens, for instance, in the epilogue to *On the Eve*, where death is compared to a fisherman who catches mankind in a net. Because the fisherman leaves the net in the water for some time, the “fish” does not notice that he is already in the power of the fisherman. He realises this only when he is pulled up. This is life seen from the cosmic perspective; the individual (his circumstances, hopes, fears and wishes) is of little importance. The image suggests that life is merely a short period of time in which death always intervenes.

In other instances, man’s perspective on life is visualized through the action of observation. Lotman gives a beautiful example of such an instance: in *Fathers and Sons*, the aristocratic Pavel Petrovič has a look at infusorians through Bazarov’s microscope:

> [Pavel Petrovič - MO] once even lowered his face, perfumed and cleansed with an excellent herbal balm, to the microscope and watched as a transparent infusorian swallowed a green speck and chewed it carefully with some sort of agile little fists in his throat” (“[Павел Петрович] раз даже приблизил свое раздушенное и вымытое отличным снадобьем лицо к микроскопу, для того чтобы посмотреть, как прозрачная инфузория глотала зеленую пылинку и хлопотливо пережевывала ее какими-то очень проворными кулачками, находившимися у ней в горле” - VIII, 340).

As Lotman argues, the image of the microscope demonstrates the way in which the internal logic of the infusorians’ world seems senseless to the casual observer, Pavel Petrovič. Similarly, the inner logic of man’s life is senseless to nature, which subjects man to its own logic (Lotman 1992: 105). What makes sense and what does not is thus dependent upon the perspective. My analyses focus on the presentation of these viewpoints and the clash between ‘sense’ and ‘senselessness’ that arises as a consequence.

I am not suggesting that either perspective is more “Turgenevan” than the other, or that one presents “how things seem to be” while the other shows “how they really are”. The contemporary and cosmic perspectives represent the *poles* of Turgenev’s world view. The focus is on the tragedy arising from the fact that these two perspectives always co-exist but yet are incompatible. The human type of sense is negated by death, whereas death is part of the pattern of sense in the cosmic whole, and thus remains unintelligible to man. The entire textual make-up of the novels contributes to the expression of this world view.

1.3 The method of textual analysis

I shall now consider the manner in which the two-level model introduced above is expressed in the texts’ material. I will make use of a model for textual analysis developed by Aage Hansen-Löve (1984) and Wolf Schmid (1991, 1992). They base their work on Roman Jakobson’s ideas concerning the poetic function of language. Jakobson formulates the difference between literary and non-literary texts in linguistic terms. He states that at the basis of any text there lie two principles that are active during its construction: the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic principles. The first principle denotes the operation of selection from paradigms, while the second concerns the combination of the selected elements into syntagms. In this case, the text as a whole forms the syntagm. Jakobson argues that the difference between a non-literary and a literary text lies in the different function of equivalence. Instead of being functional only on the level of the paradigm (i.e. in the operation of selection), as in a non-literary text, equivalence in a literary text also plays a role in the syntagm, in the form of equivalential relationships. Jakobson formulated this principle in his famous definition of what he called “the poetic function of language”: “the poetic
function projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection [from paradigms - MO] into the axis of combination [of text elements into a complete text – MO]” (Jakobson 1960: 358). In other words, he believes that equivalence plays a constitutive role in the production of meaning at the level of the text.

Jakobson worked out his ideas by using, almost exclusively, examples from lyrical texts, but he has indicated that the same principle works in prose texts (Jakobson/Pomorska 1988: 106-109). Pomorska has brought theory into practice by testing the applicability of Jakobson’s ideas as models for studying the poetics of prose. She has provided studies of the work of a number of major Russian novelists, including Tolstoj and Pasternak. Her primary focus has been on “parallelistic patterning” (Pomorska 1992: 8), involving the protagonists, elements of the plot and, most of all, systems of symbols.

Apart from Pomorska, the most consistent attempt to apply Jakobson’s approach to prose is the one undertaken by David Lodge (1977). Lodge, however, concentrates on the distinction between metaphor and metonymy, and is thus concerned more with the referential function of literature, distinguishing “types of description” (idem, 93-103). Lodge seems to have been inspired mainly by Jakobson’s investigations into aphasia, and thus focuses on the relationship between word and world. I will not be concerned with this matter; rather, I will concentrate on the field of literature and on the applicability of the pairing “paradigmatic” and “syntagmatic” as terms denoting equivalential and contiguous relations between the elements of a literary text.

A similar approach has already been taken by Hansen-Löve and Schmid, who have elaborated on Jakobson’s ideas and developed them into a model that describes the two meaning-generating principles in literary texts. In the process, Hansen-Löve renamed the paradigmatic and syntagmatic principles, thereby gearing them to the specific context of the literary text, and enabling a clear distinction between these terms and the linguistic context of the terms paradigmatic and syntagmatic. The paradigmatic principle was renamed ‘Wortkunst’ (verbal art), deriving from the Formalist term ‘словоискусство’, and the syntagmatic principle was renamed ‘Erzählkunst’ (narrative art), from the Formalist term “повествовательное искусство”.

This set of terms denotes the two modes in which text elements are linked together. Narrative art relates elements of the text to one another on the basis of their contiguity. These include a wide variety of logical-causal relations, for instance between actions (A leading to B), or between a character’s social background, psychological make-up and appearance, on the one hand, and his ideological standpoint, behavior and fate on the other. These contiguous connections are thus of the type normally used when one tries to explain why something happened, or why person X acted as he did. It presupposes a linear, logical-causal relationship between a cause and its effects. In narrative texts, this type of connection is usually dominant.

Verbal art denotes the mechanism that relates elements to one another on the basis of equivalence. Schmid has formulated its function as follows:

Mit Wortkunst haben wir überall dort zu tun, wo – gemäß Roman Jakobsons berühmter Definition der “poetischen Funktion” (1960) – das Prinzip des Paradigmas, nämlich die Äquivalenz, sich auch im Syntagma geltend macht und dessen kausal-temporale Sukzessivität überlagert (Schmid 1991: 49)

Note that equivalence includes both similarity and opposition. As Schmid has argued, similarity and opposition have in common the fact that they link elements that are similar in
one respect and non-similar in another (Schmid 1992: 36)\(^8\). Equivalential connections are non-contiguous, a-causal. Relations of equivalence can be established on the level of sound, through rhyme and alliteration for instance, but may also encompass thematic and formal\(^9\) equivalence. In a work of art the verbal art structure forms a network of equivalences that connects elements of the text, which may be far apart from each other on the temporal-causal line of the narration, on the basis of relations of similarity and opposition.

Although there is a tendency for narrative art to predominate in prose texts while verbal art is more readily associated with poetry, narrative and verbal art cannot be equated to prose and poetry. What they denote is not genre but the basic principles by which meaning is generated in literary texts. One can encounter poetry with a strong narrative component (Puškin’s Evgenij Onegin, for instance) or prose in which narration is extremely reduced in favor of equivalential relations (as in Belyj’s Symphonies). An increase in the role of verbal art in a given text is usually accompanied by a diminution of motivation through narrative art. There may be a reduction in psychological motivation, for example, or the manipulation of narrative perspective. If the narrator’s perspective is that of a child, or even an animal, this has serious consequences for the information the reader receives. The reader will continually have to remind himself that this information is limited, perhaps even unreliable. Such narrative strategies can cause motivational gaps, and these can be filled through equivalential relations.

A decrease in motivation on the basis of contiguity is a characteristic of modernist prose (cf. Schmid 1992). In realist prose, narrative art remains dominant, but mechanisms of delimitation of (motivation through) contiguous relations are still far more widespread than one might expect. Tolstoj’s War and Peace provides an example of limited logical-causal motivation of the plot. Indeed, several critics have noted that it has no clear plot (see De Haard 1989: 3-4). Muir states that the novel does not develop like “a drama […] building itself up on its own consequences”, but rather like a chronicle, recording everything that happens in a certain period (Muir 1928: 99-100, quoted from De Haard 1989: 3). This means that the logical-causal chain of events is disturbed since the elements of the plot seem not to have been selected on the basis of their relevance, but put together at random.

Dostoevskij’s manipulation of narrative perspective in his novels, which Bachtin has labeled polyphony (Bachtin 1963), to a certain extent also effects a reduction of contiguous motivation. This arises from the presentation of characters who are made to utter strongly divergent views, almost as autonomous voices, without the narrator indicating which are more or less reliable. This does not necessarily result in a diminished logical-causal motivation of the events, whereby it is no longer possible to reconstruct the events. That would more likely be the effect of a more or less persistent identification of the narrative perspective with that of a character whose perspective is somehow limited, as in Raskol’nikov’s confused and feverish perception of things at the time of the murder. What it does result in is a chorus of possible motives for the choices that the characters make.

Schmid states that when one reads a narrative text, it is on first instance always a reading along the narrative art line, i.e. following the logical-causal course of events towards the denouement. Schmid calls such a reading a ‘prose reading” (“prosaisch lesen” – Schmid 1991: 36). Under normal circumstances, it is only when this primary reading leaves the reader with questions, “odds and ends” and holes in the motivation and logical-causal sequence of the

\(^8\) Imagine, for example, that two persons in a story are associated with a dog and a third with a cat. In this case a relation of equivalence is established between all three, the first two being like each other on certain grounds and the third being opposite to them.

\(^9\) Formal equivalences involve the position of elements in the text. For instance, situations may become associated with each other because they occur both at the beginning and at the end of a text.
story, that he or she is forced to activate a ‘poetic reading’ (“poetische Lektüre” – ibid.). This is the kind of reading that is usually applied to poetry. It is carried out at a slow tempo, and is not only linear but also moves back and forth, following a possible motif and searching for non-linear connections.

Thus, a poetic reading requires an active part on the side of the reader to trace the verbal art structure; he or she has to reconstruct the meaning that is present throughout the text. But on what basis can this be done? Schmid warns of a possible pitfall of poetic reading: the attribution of meaning through free association by the reader. In order to avoid this, the reader should follow the associations that are contained within the text instead of falling into free association apropos of the text. As a basis for his poetic reading of Puškin, Schmid has proposed the following guideline. The first step, he says, tracking a possible allusion or motif, is always a case of intuition. After this a process of “tentative extension of the equivalence” (Schmid 1991: 93) and “the search for further contact points” (ibid.) should lead to the confirmation or denial of the validity of the allusion. An important aspect of this process should be “compatibility with the meaning generating impulses of other allusions and other events” in the text (ibid.).

Seeking confirmation of an allusion does not mean that the verbal art structure of a text cannot convey a meaning that is opposed to the one suggested on the narrative level. Confirmation of an allusion rests primarily on consistency with other motifs and allusions. It is not the aim of the confirmation method that it should determine a single ‘correct’ meaning of a text. Its purpose is simply to avoid giving disproportionate meaning or weight to a single (subjective) association.

It is my assumption that, in Turgenev’s novels, verbal art does not so much fill in motivational gaps as offer a different perspective on the events. That is not to say that there are no motivational gaps (and I shall shortly be dealing with two examples of such gaps, namely the partly-inexplicable nature of the heroes’ superfluity, and their inexplicable deaths), but they function primarily as indications of the importance of verbal art for the interpretation of the text. I have already discussed the dualistic nature of Turgenev’s world view, and the presentation of its two poles in terms of a contemporary and a cosmic perspective. I now suggest that the primary structure of the contemporary level is through narrative art, while that of the cosmic perspective is through verbal art. This is in tune with the orientation of narrative art on contiguity and causality, and of verbal art on equivalence.

On the contemporary level the image of the hero is governed by contiguity and relations of causality. His personality, character and behaviour are metonymically connected to his circumstances and background. This means that logical-causal connections are suggested between the personality of the hero and his background, between his character or appearance and his deeds, and so forth. He is presented as a hero of his time, whose social and political background determines his qualities as a possibly-productive new hero. Thus, his coming from a specific place at a specific time arouses expectations as to who he is. This does not mean that there is a metonymical connection between the hero and extra-literary reality. Although there are grounds for arguing that the novels were originally read as a sort of real-life report of Russian society, this is not what the text material offers. The text creates an image of a hero, whereby he is presented as a typical example of a real-life group in society. This created image is part of the artistic, fictional structure of the literary work.

On the cosmic level the hero is presented as the representative of an archetype to which he is connected metaphorically; that is, on the basis of similarities between him and his type, and between their respective fates. To a certain extent, the hero re-enacts the fate of the archetype. Most often the cosmic level concerns a hero from classical or modern literature, such as Oedipus or Faust. (For both, see the analysis of Fathers and Sons in chapter Five.)
The contemporary and cosmic levels involve fundamentally different views regarding the significance of the hero’s life. On the contemporary level, the focus is on the hero’s individual character and background. According to the logical-causal orientation of this level, these features determine his capacities, and his success (or lack of it), as a new active hero. At the basis of this outlook lies a fundamental premise of logical-causal thinking – that of the changeability of situations through time. The idea is that any situation may change through the occurrence of new events, and man is thought to be able to cause substantive change by means of his actions. These ideas largely influenced the presentation of events and human actions during the period of Realism; indeed, Schmid has described this as one of the basic characteristics of that period (Schmid 1992: 16).

Opposed to this orientation is that of the cosmic level. At the basis of the presentation of events on this level lies a mythical orientation – the idea that all events can be reduced to patterns of endless repetition. Changeability is denied. As a consequence, the presentation of the hero on the cosmic level is determined by typicality. Unlike the contemporary level, on which the hero may appear as a new type able to bring real change, the cosmic level does not involve the idea that the hero may change the course of events through his actions. The hero’s significance on the contemporary level depends on the extent to which he has proved able to contribute to the development of Russia. Such criteria are irrelevant on the cosmic level. We really cannot speak of success, or lack of it, on this level.

In this context it is interesting to consider the role of the death of the hero (which occurs as part of the story in four of the novels). Lotman rightly treats the manifestation of death in Turgenev’s novels as part, not of the contemporary, but of the cosmic level (that is, having a non-logical-causal basis). The role of death is now to annihilate the significance of the individual’s life. Lotman stresses that the death of the hero never gives meaning to his life. Where the death of a martyr is motivated by his life and imparts a greater significance to it, death for the heroes in Turgenev’s novels comes unexpectedly and deprives their lives of meaning (Lotman 1992: 104-105). The death of the hero is not the ‘logical’ end of his life as presented on the contemporary level. Death is logical only from the cosmic point of view. It cuts into the hero’s life as a factor from outside. On the level of the text, this is the collision point between the differing views of the contemporary and cosmic levels.

It seems to me that this clash between the concept of meaning on the contemporary level and the totally different notion of meaning on the cosmic level forms the main field of tension in the novels. The sense of the meaningless of the hero’s life arises from the incompatibility of the two notions of meaning that are both at work in the novels. What seems meaningful on the contemporary level (the unique circumstances of the hero’s life, his capacity to bring about substantive change) is meaningless on the cosmic level.

Lotman has noted that, in this respect, Turgenev’s novels clearly oppose the general structure of the Russian 19th century novel, in which the social role of the hero, both as renewer of his environment and as redeemer of his country, is especially important (idem - 98). Where the heroes in the novels of Dostoevskij and Gogol’ go through a process of purification resulting in their ‘rebirth’ (101), those in Turgenev’s novels experience an absolute end in death (104). In this respect Turgenev’s novels play a demythologizing role (idem, 100, 104-6). They deconstruct the ‘rebirth myth’ found in Gogol’s and Dostoevskij’s novels as well as in the works of other contemporaries of Turgenev, and present something.

---

10 In the other two novels, A Nest of Gentry and Smoke, the heroes live on, but nevertheless feel as though their lives had already ended. So, once Lavreckij’s hope to find happiness with Liza has been shattered, he feels that his life is over (VII, 293). Litvinov, having left Irina, feels as if he has died and is “carrying about his own dead body” (IX, 314).
like a personal myth. This specific ‘myth’ colors the function of verbal and narrative art in all of Turgenev’s novels.

The death of the hero is the most dramatic indicator of the importance of the cosmic level in the interpretation of the novels. The death of the heroes does not have a meaningful connection with their lives. It is not a heroic death, which would have given meaning to the life of a person. Had Insarov died in his attempts to free his country, his death would have been meaningful, but he dies of a fatal illness before even reaching Bulgaria. At first sight, Rudin’s death has the features of a heroic one: he dies on the barricades of Paris. But there can be no doubt that, ultimately, his death is senseless: he dies defending a deserted blockade with nothing but a crooked sabre. Moreover, he dies nameless (being mistaken for a Pole), while a heroic death would almost certainly make one famous.

The heroes and the characters around them experience death as something that breaks into their lives and destroys its meaning. On the basis of the information provided on the contemporary level, the death of the heroes is as inexplicable to the reader as it is to the characters themselves. In this case, a motivation for such events can only be found in the notion of death on the cosmic level.

Apart from this, there is a second indication that the meaning given on the contemporary level is not sufficient to provide the reader with a motivation for the heroes’ fate. This is the fact that the heroes in the novels are superfluous. I am not referring to the fact that superfluity is in itself a recurrent topic in the novels: in the literature and literary criticism of the eighteen fifties it was the central theme, and even in the sixties and seventies the discussion continued as to who was to be viewed as the new hero, so it is therefore no surprise that Turgenev also addresses the problem. What I am referring to is the fact that the motive for the superfluity of the heroes in the novels cannot be identified convincingly on the basis of the information provided on the contemporary level. Discussions concerning the phenomenon of the superfluous hero had led to several hypotheses as to its origins. The democrats regarded superfluity as a typical problem of the gentry, and had described its causes in socio-psychological terms. As far as they were concerned, inertia had become an inherent trait of the gentry owing to their social position. Even if the gentry had become aware of the necessity of action, they would still have been unable to organize it. Dobroljubov labeled this attitude ‘oblomovščina’ after the biting portrait of the gentry that Gončarov had painted in his novel Oblomov (Dobroljubov 1987: II, 218-257). Earlier, Belinskij had ascribed the superfluity of the gentry to the fact that, as far as he could see, they had never left their romantic world view. Their romantic idealism had detached them from reality and blinded them to the necessity of change. The liberals – that is, the gentry itself – claimed that their superfluity was a time-bound phenomenon, caused by the repressive reign of Nicolas I. Under his regime it had been impossible to make a stand for change, but once the atmosphere changed the gentry would no longer be superfluous.

When one turns to the heroes of Turgenev’s novels, one finds that such causes, be they temporarily or psychologically motivated, do not offer a sufficient explanation for their fates. Only the first of the heroes, Rudin, may be considered superfluous because of his romantic nature. As such he could be placed among the superfluous heroes in a number of Turgenev’s short stories, such as Čulkaturin in “Diary of a Superfluous Man” (“Дневник лишнего человека”- 1850) and the first-person narrator in “Asja” (“Ася” - 1858),11 both of whom suffer from a lack of vigor, a psychological or mental block hindering them from acting

---

11 Batjuto mentions the psychological closeness of Rudin to the superfluous men in a number of stories, including “Hamlet of the Ščigrij District” (“Гамлет Щигровского уезда” - 1849), “Diary of a Superfluous Man”, “Яков Пасынков” (“Яков Пасынков” - 1855) and “A Correspondence” (“Переписка” - 1856) (Batjuto: 1972: 252).
purposefully. However, the protagonists of the other novels are of different types. They belong to the groups that were expected to build the future of Russia. Lavreckij’s happiness is blocked, not by a lack of vigor, but by ill fate. Insarov and Bazarov are practical and radical, and their failure seems inexplicable. Litvinov is also a practical mind, far from reflection. Neždanov can be said to have a psychological predilection for pessimism, and the tragedy of his life is therefore less inexplicable, but the combination of this with his revolutionary activities again reveals a lack of motivation. Taken together these heroes represent all the promising social groups of the time, from moderate to radical, from raznočinec to gentry and even from Russian to foreigner. The fact that they all fail to give their life meaning can only be explained by seeing their superfluity as something much more deeply-rooted: the ultimate superfluity of every individual. A motivation of this kind is found only from the perspective of the cosmic level, where the individual has no significance because it is every man’s fate to die, and in death all individual human meaning is erased.

In this connection, it is interesting to look further into the idea of tragedy in Turgenev’s work. As was pointed out by V. Markovič, the hero in a classical tragedy is set apart from the masses by the “catastrophic grandeur of his fate” (Markovič 1982: 167). This very fate differentiates his life from that of most people, and this notion of extraordinariness makes him into an acceptable subject for a tragedy. Markovič argues that such a notion of tragedy is central to the understanding of fate in Rudin and A Nest of Gentry (ibid.). As far as Rudin is concerned, I find this idea very plausible. Rudin is depicted as a man of extraordinary stature. This is thrown into relief by the comparatively commonplace characteristics of the other figures in the novel. Rudin’s fate is intrinsically connected to his extraordinary personality. In the case of Lavreckij in A Nest of Gentry, on the other hand, I find the idea of his being a classical tragic hero less convincing. Lavreckij’s personality and fate miss the element of grandeur that characterizes Rudin and the classical tragic hero in general. In fact, his is a rather ordinary personality. He qualifies as a tragic hero only in so far as his fate is inescapable, and he cooperates in its fulfilment (by marrying Varvara Pavlovna) without realising the implications of his deeds. To this extent, he is a tragic hero in the classical sense: we have only to think of Oedipus, who unintentionally married his mother and thus fulfilled the prophecy concerning his fate.

Markovič states that On the Eve displays a different notion of the tragic, one in which the focus is not on the extraordinary fate of exceptional individuals but on the influence of blind fate on mankind itself. In such cases, the hero may be a very ordinary person, who becomes the victim of fate. Such plots were found at times of crisis in the traditional genre of tragedy and in the romantic ‘tragedy of fate’ (трагедия рока - ibid.). Markovič rightly notes that there is one important difference between such tragedies and Turgenev’s concept of the tragic: in such ‘blind fate’ tragedies, the development of the circumstances is characterized by sudden blows of fate. This means that the core of the tragedy is in a specific catastrophe (idem, 168). For Turgenev, by contrast, tragedy is part and parcel of life itself, made manifest in the inevitable approach of death. As Markovič formulates it: “Turgenev saw the tragic in the depths of peaceful, quiet and happily-trivial life” (“в глубине мирного, тихого, благополучно-пошлого существования” - ibid.).

This does not mean – and I need to stress this – that catastrophe does not play a role in Turgenev’s novels. The sudden return of Varvara Pavlovna, which scatters Lavreckij’s and Liza’s hopes for the future, and the influence of Irina on Litvinov, which definitively changes his life, can be called catastrophic. In On the Eve and Fathers and Sons, catastrophe appears in its most devastating form: that of unexpected death. The role of catastrophe in the novels is best explained within the framework of Turgenev’s world view. In terms of my own analytic framework, these moments can be described as those in which the cosmic level intrudes in the
contemporary level. The ‘catastrophe’ does not fit into the logical-causal framework of the contemporary level. At these moments, tragedy – that is, the intrinsic tragedy of life – comes to the surface of life, so to speak. The ‘catastrophe’ can thus be qualified as the point where those forces that determine man’s life become visible.

Turgenev’s work thus features a notion of the tragic in which each person’s life is a tragedy for the simple reason that it will inevitably be destroyed (by death) and that this destruction will include all the human significance and meaning that mankind invests it with. The tragedy of this situation is only deepened by man’s ignorance of his own position.12

For the sake of clarity, I want to stress the fact that narrative and verbal art are general textual mechanisms that function in any literary text. However, these mechanisms are not necessarily linked to the presentation of a world view. The works of different authors, to say nothing of authors from different periods, are likely to display their own specific use of the narrative and verbal art mechanisms. In Puškin’s *The Tales of Belkin*, verbal art offers a possible motivation for the heroes’ behavior where such a motivation is lacking when only the information of the narrative art structure is taken into account (Schmid 1991). Analysis of ornamental short prose reveals a structure in which narrative and verbal art respectively present modern and archaic perspectives on mankind (Schmid 1992). Therefore, my assumption that narrative and verbal art correspond with the two poles of Turgenev’s dual world view is geared specifically to this author and to his novels. An analysis of the specific function of the narrative and verbal art mechanisms in the novels of other Russian authors would no doubt reveal other, equally-interesting patterns.

1.4 Poetic prose

Before turning to a further outline of the narrative and verbal art mechanisms in Turgenev’s novels, a question of a more general nature requires attention. Can we assume that the model for textual analysis that Hansen-Löve and Schmid have developed is applicable to novels at all, and if it is, is it applicable to Realistic novels? To answer this question, it is important to consider the limits within which Schmid and Hansen-Löve have developed their ideas. Schmid’s two studies in poetic reading are both concerned with short prose (Puškin’s *The Tales of Belkin* - 1991 and ornamental prose - 1992). Moreover, in both cases he motivated his poetic reading on the basis of specific features of these texts. In the case of Puškin, this is the mystification principle that leaves the reader with motivational lacunae; in the case of the ornamental prose the interest in the irrational leads to a decrease in logical-causal relations.
and an increase in the role of verbal art. Taking this into account, we have to ask ourselves whether it is justified to suppose that verbal art plays such a substantive role in the novels as I suggest. One might argue that the Realist credo of explicit depiction and psychological motivation makes a substantive role for verbal art incredible. However, the relevance of the use of symbols, parallel structures and the like for the understanding of these works has long been acknowledged. Víctor Šklovskij has investigated the occurrence of parallel plot lines in *Anna Karenina* (Šklovskij 1923), and the use of symbols in *War and Peace* (idem, 1928). Krystyna Pomorska has studied the elaborate rotation symbolism in the latter novel, occurring in the form of objects such as spindles, turning wheels and clocks, as well as cyclic movement and seasonal patterns (Pomorska 1992: 70-79). These are only a few of the many examples of the use of equivalence and symbols in works of Russian Realism. Therefore, the pertinence of verbal art mechanisms to the generation of meaning in these texts is beyond doubt. Moreover, the examples mentioned earlier of Tolstoj’s reduction of traditional plot development and Dostoevskij’s polyphonic principle (paragraph 1.3) bear witness to the possible reduction of contiguous structures within Realist works.

Another question concerning the applicability of the narrative/verbal art dichotomy is that of text length. It is self-evident that, the shorter a text is, the more effective the network of equivalences becomes. Hansen-Löve has argued that longer texts (‘болшая форма’ - Hansen-Löve 1984: 14) can present difficulties in the reception of the verbal art structure. When a prose text is not intended to be read in one session (and a novel text usually does not allow this within reasonable limits), the network of equivalences cannot be appreciated in its entirety (ibid.). Similarly, the length of the text will make it difficult for the reader to keep in mind all its details. For this reason, Hansen-Löve argues, sound phenomena (such as alliteration, assonance and rhythmic patterns) that connect elements “below the level of the sentence” are unlikely to form equivalential relations in longer prose texts.13 What we should expect, in place of these, is longer segments that can be “paradigmatised into motifs” (Hansen-Löve 1984: 14). Such a network is offered by thematic equivalences (such as might occur between plot elements or characters) and formal equivalences (between the beginning and end of the story, for example). In this regard, there seems to be no absolute difference between shorter and longer prose forms: it is equally possible to find poetic structure in either.

As for Turgenev’s novels, it is interesting that, by comparison with other Realist novels, they are relatively short. As a consequence, one can presuppose the functioning of a poetical structure in a fashion similar to that that we find in short prose. In theory, the novels (with the exception of *Virgin Soil*) could be read in one session, and thus the network of equivalences could be seen as a whole. But perhaps more telling is the fact that at least Turgenev’s contemporary readers had the habit of rereading the novels several times.14 This naturally facilitates the capacity of the reader to see the text as a whole. Furthermore, the thematical closeness of a number of novels with particular short stories (mentioned above) can enhance the reader’s awareness of those images that are also encountered in the stories. In short, the length of the texts does not necessarily pose a hindrance for a poetical reading.

But, apart from this, I think it is erroneous to suppose that verbal art plays a constitutive role only in texts of limited length or of a specific genre. Rather, I would argue that it is characteristic of ‘poeticized’ prose in general: the text requires a poetic reading, and the structure of the text indicates the importance of such a reading for its interpretation. In

---

13 In short prose, such effects do occur. Schmid, for instance, in his study of ornamental prose texts, pays considerable attention to repetition of sound, especially in a number of Čechov’s stories (1992: 81-104).

14 For instance, Apollon Grigor’ev remarks in his critical essay on *A Nest of Gentry* that he has read the novel four times and supposes that other readers have also read the novel “more than once” (Grigor’ev 1967: 275).
connection with this, it is of interest to recall Jakobson’s term “poet’s prose”, which he used with reference to the early prose work of Pasternak (Jakobson 1987: 324). Jakobson argued that Pasternak’s basic disposition as a poet determined the shape of his prose. He wrote this in 1935, long before the appearance of Doktor Živago, but I find it equally true for that novel. For our research into the novels of Turgenev, it is useful to consider some features of Pasternak’s novel that illustrate the effects of a poeticized structure on the narrative. We will see that, on the level of plot, character and narrative perspective, motivation through contiguous relations is restricted.

It is well-known that Doktor Živago has been criticized for deficiencies in its narrative structure (see Cornwell 1986: 28-31, 90-1 for a short overview over the gist of critics’ arguments). Among the noted “defects” is the implausibly large role played by coincidence. The characters continually meet in remote parts of Russia under what are, to say the least, unlikely circumstances. As a consequence, the causally-motivated strings of events on which a narrative usually relies are damaged. Motivation can only be found when the characters’ joint presence in the same place at the same time is seen in the light of a common fate; that is, in equivalential relations between the characters. The dependence upon coincidence thus reduces the logical-causal development of the plot. B. M. Gasparov has argued that, in Doktor Živago, the strategy structuring the text (формообразующий принцип –1994: 241) is based on the musical principle of polyphony, rather than on the logical-causal structure of most narrative texts (idem, 243). In music the principle of the contrapunto regulates the simultaneous flow of several, autonomous melodies, each which its own rhythm and timbre, that at times come together. In Doktor Živago this principle can be found, not only in the manipulation of time and the patterns of literal movement, but also the “movement of human fates” (idem, 245). The plot of the novel can thus be interpreted as a pattern of human lives that follow autonomous courses but still, from time to time, so to say, flow together.

In the presentation of character one can also discern a lack of motivation. I. P. Smirnov has noted that the characters are often a mystery to each other (Smirnov 1998: 152). The young Živago sees Lara’s personality as something secret, and Jurij’s brother Evgraf, with his frequent sudden appearances and disappearances, is more literally a secret from everyone (idem, 152-3). Another case is that in which a person’s identity is unclear. In a conversation between two people, the name of a certain chief Galliulin is first corrupted into Galeev, and then Galileev, after which one of the two concludes that the other must mean chief Kurban, as there is no chief Galileev (ibid.). Such muddling of names occurs often in Doktor Živago (see Ščeglov 1998: 181). The effect of this is to break down the identification of the person designated with his or her name, which is a basic feature of poetic language. Another character in the novel, Palych, who is struck by amnesia, no longer knows his own identity (idem, 153), and the critic Ščeglov discusses another phenomenon that relies on the same principle of mystification – the hidden identity of two persons (Ščeglov 1998: 178). The most conspicuous example of this strategy is that of Antipov, who is eventually revealed to be Strel’nikov (idem, 179). Thus, while individual characterization is limited by a lack of (correct) information, an identity between certain characters is suggested, their relationship being established on the basis of equivalence.

As Ščeglov rightly notes, the narrative perspective of Doktor Živago is manipulated so as to facilitate mystification (idem, 182-3). By changing the perspective, it is possible to present well-known facts as if they were new, or simply to impart a sense of mystery, on the basis of the narrator’s lack of information (idem, 186). This is the means whereby the fact that Strel’nikov and Antipov are one and the same person remains veiled for a long time although some of the characters know about it and even the reader has enough information to understand what is going on. The shift in narrative perspective thus allows for the narrator to
take a position in which his knowledge is limited, and this naturally contributes to the limitation of motivation on the narrative level of the text.

The mechanisms discussed above are examples of how plot, presentation of character and narrative perspective, in short the main constituents of the narrative structure, are influenced by the inclusion of poetic qualities. I think this is characteristic of poeticized longer prose texts. Whereas, in a short prose text, the narrative structure, and the motivation on that level, can largely be broken down and replaced with motivation through equivalential connections, this is not possible for longer prose. Longer prose depends upon structuralization through a narrative core in order to secure its reception. Nevertheless, in a poeticized longer prose text this narrative structure is manipulated by poetic mechanisms. This means primarily a reduction in logical-causal connections to the benefit of equivalential relationships. The network of equivalences on which Schmid focuses in his analyses of short prose can similarly play a role in longer prose.

Such mechanisms are also at work in Turgenev’s novels. Since it is only logical that their manifestation here will be different from the way they appear in the example text of Pasternak, I will discuss a number of the important ‘poeticizing’ mechanisms that are at work in Turgenev’s novels.

First, there is the lack of motivation for the fate of the heroes that was observed earlier. The fact that both the failure of the heroes to lead successful lives and their unexpected deaths lack motivation on the basis of their circumstances provides an important indication that it is necessary to read these novels poetically.

Second, the novels show remarkable consistency, both of plot and character. Regarding consistency of plot, Dale Peterson has noted the following scheme. The hero, who has spent time in the West or in Petersburg, enters an already-established milieu and clashes with (some of) the characters there. The heroine is part of the milieu. Upon meeting the hero, she feels attracted to his ideas and starts struggling to escape her own environment, which she has come to experience as more and more confining (Peterson 1975: 76). Other elements that are found repeatedly in the novels involve the strong character of the heroine as opposed to the usually-weaker one of the hero, and the tragic consequences of behavior that deviates from the norms of the environment.

Regarding consistency among the character types that we meet in the novels, Gippius (1989: 144-154) has worked out a scheme of the roles played by the main characters. The hero in each novel is surrounded, in principal, by a group of four other characters: the heroine; a rival, who is usually a representative of a lower social class; an ideological opponent, and a friend who more-or-less shares the ideological position of the hero (idem, 145). Although not all the positions can be filled in for each novel, and some roles seem awkwardly applied by Gippius (who argues, for instance, that Lemm is Lavreckij’s ideological opponent - 147), the overall consistency is beyond dispute. These repetitive patterns, recurring throughout the novels, reinforce the idea that the uniqueness of the situation and characters in each novel (the contemporary setting and the specific social and cultural context)
ideological position of the hero) is only an illusion, behind which lies the recurring plot of human existence.

Third, there is the novelist’s manipulation of space and time. As Allen has pointed out, the hero’s movement is often repetitive or cyclic. In *A Nest of Gentry*, *On the Eve* and *Smoke*, the heroes and heroines travel back-and-forth to meet one another. Similarly, in *Fathers and Sons*, Bazarov restlessly circles between the homes of Arkadij, Odincova and his parents (Allen 1992: 78-9). As to the depiction of time, the idea of linear progression is broken down by elements of stasis. Generally, only a small time span is related in the novels, usually no more than a few months or even (as in *Smoke*) a few days (Allen 1992: 87). It is true that the novels often deal with a specific character’s past in retrospect, but these parts do not really interfere with the main plot. Moreover, there is little description of action: conversation, depiction of thought and description of ‘static’ elements such as landscape make up most of the content in these novels. Their conclusions tend to step outside the limits of the period in which they are set, and move towards a more timeless frame. Such is the nature of the generalizing remarks on man’s fate that conclude *A Nest of Gentry* and *On the Eve* (see the above-mentioned fisherman’s image), and the image of timelessness evoked in the final scene of *Fathers and Sons* where the flowers on Bazarov’s grave are said to speak of eternal reconciliation.

A final aspect of the novels’ make-up to which I would like to draw attention is the narrative perspective. The narrator’s position in Turgenev’s novels seems, at first sight, to be omniscient. However, Marković has argued that the narrator’s position is often closer to that of a close friend, someone who knows the characters very well and is capable of judging their behavior (Marković 1975: 11-14). This entails a limited access to the characters’ thoughts and, as a consequence, a limited understanding of their motivations. As a rule, the narrator behaves like an observer, able to explain what the characters are doing, interpret their behavior, facial expressions and so on, but without access to their thoughts or inner motivations.

One further important feature of the narrator is the fact that he is not a character in the story (Marković 1975: 8). On a number of occasions he clearly reveals his position as ‘outsider’ by addressing the reader directly, interrupting the course of the story, for example, to provide some detail of a character’s biography. As a consequence, his position is somewhat remote. This idea is reinforced by the retrospective position from which the story is related. The narrative “now” of the story does not match that of its general flow. Such a narrator can provide information, usually in an epilogue, as to what happens to the characters after the main plot has ended. This effect is further strengthened by the fact that Turgenev customarily sets his novels in a time some years prior to that of their actual appearance. To some extent, this can be explained by the fact that Turgenev usually conceived the idea for a novel some years before he began the writing of the manuscript. However, this does not fully account for his choice of a specific period. By placing events in the past, he was able to stress their status of ‘completed past’. Such a retrospective position applies to many of Turgenev’s short stories as well. When the narrator is also the main character (as in “Diary of a Superfluous Man”, “First Love” and “The Dog”), he tells about what happened to him in the past. In the case of Čulkaturin in “Diary of a Superfluous Man”, the difference in time increases through the mental distance between the dying man and his life.

As a consequence, the narrator takes an elegiac stance towards his characters and the events in general. Marković has described the position of the narrator as belonging “to fully

---

16 An exception can be made for *A Nest of Gentry*, where the elaborate description of Lavreckiij’s ancestry and younger years takes up nine chapters. Besides this, the life stories of several other characters are given, albeit in a more concise form.
different categories of reality” (“принадлежность (повествователя и персонажей - МО) к совершенно разным категориям реальности” – ibid.). In this context, Marković refers primarily to the narrator’s position outside the narrated world, as was explained above. But it can also be translated into the terms of the cosmic perspective. The narrator has an overview that the characters inevitably lack. He can judge their life as a whole. To a certain extent his position as outsider who judges the hero’s life from a (temporal and emotional) distance resembles the cosmic perspective. This enables the narrator to take a generalizing stance and link the hero’s fate to the fates of others of the same type. This is the case, for instance, in the final chapter of Rudin where the narrator jumps from the situation of Rudin, who has just left Ležnev in a stormy night, to that of “homeless wanderers” in general (“бесприютным скитальцам” - VI, 368). This position makes it possible for the narrator to shift towards one in which he views man from the cosmic perspective as related in the fisherman image.

The features that I have discussed above show how the major narrative components of the novels are influenced by ‘poetisation’: contiguity-based motivation is reduced and patterns of similarity are of increased importance. In the analyses of the novels that are to follow, these mechanisms will be explored further.

So far I have discussed some effects of poetisation on the narrative structure of the text. The main feature of poetic prose, of course, lies in the importance of verbal art structures. I have explained that verbal art encompasses all equivalential relationships between elements of the text. These equivalential relationships form a network throughout the text, and every new association adds to, and possibly modifies, the pattern of meaning already established.

I shall now proceed to outline the main types of equivalential relations that are encountered in Turgenev’s novels. Equivalences can be either intratextual or intertextual. In the first case there is no reference to other texts. Instead of this, a network of equivalences is built among situations or characters within the text. A good example of this is found in A Nest of Gentry, where a number of characters are compared to birds. This bird pattern indicates similarities among the characters associated with a particular type of bird, and opposition between these and characters associated with another type. Furthermore, the comparison of a character with a bird of prey suggests that he has, for example, a killing instinct, while a character who is compared with a partridge might be seen as his potential victim.17

Certain images, including those of birds, the sea and insects, are found frequently throughout Turgenev’s work, not only in the novels but also in the stories and the later short prose. Koschmal refers to this phenomenon – the recurrence of a fixed set of images within his work – as ‘monologische Intertextualität’, which he contrasts to the ‘dialogische Intertextualität’ of Puškin and Dostoevskij (Koschmal 1984: 186). He describes the latter kind of intertextuality as quotes from the work of other authors, which are subsequently commented on in a sort of dialogue between the texts (ibid.).

This does not mean that intertextual links with other authors are not an important part of Turgenev’s work. Within the novels reference is often made to the work of other authors, either by means of direct quotation or by more indirect comparison. For instance, in On the Eve we find a quotation from Puškin’s Songs of the Western Slavs. This quotation, together with a number of other associations, calls to mind the world of folkloric heroes that these songs represent. More common, however, is another kind of intertextuality – the association of the characters with heroes from world literature such as Hamlet, Faust and Oedipus. In these cases reference is not so much to a concrete text as to the image of such a hero that has

---

17 For a detailed survey of these associations, see the analysis of A Nest of Gentry in chapter Three.
developed over time. When one of Turgenev’s heroes is associated with Hamlet, it is not strictly Shakespeare’s Hamlet but a more generalised concept of the Hamlet type as he was perceived in contemporary Russia, or even Turgenev’s own notion of this type as portrayed in his essay “Hamlet and Don Quixote”.

It is possible to distinguish yet a third kind of intertextuality, which I will refer to as intertextual reference to a cultural archetype. An example of this is the image of Venice as the mysterious, dual city that blends beauty with impending death that we find in On the Eve. This image frequently recurs in 19th century West European literature. Its use not only contributes to but reverberates with the whole corpus of works in which it is represented. The word ‘archetype’ in this case refers not to a qualification of human collectives (like the archetypical German or gypsy in Russian literature) but to a concept such as destructive love, as connected to the image of Tristan, or dual beauty as connected to the city of Venice. It is characteristic of these cases that the original content of the image (the actual medieval myth of Tristan, or the topographically concrete Venice) have receded into a vaguer idea that sees them only in terms of fixed characteristics. Tristan becomes the icon of destructive love, and Venice the icon of duality. Their archetypes exist more or less independently of their original, concrete sources.

By means of these different kinds of equivalence, the verbal art structure ‘builds’ an image of the hero based on association. I want to outline three kinds of associations affecting the image of the hero below.

The first is where the hero is associated with characters from world literature. In the analyses of the novels, we will find associations with Hamlet (Virgin Soil), Don Quixote (Rudin), Tristan (On the Eve), Oedipus (Fathers and Sons) and others. Reference may also be made to heroes from Slavic folkloric texts (On the Eve, Smoke) or Russian religious life, especially saints (A Nest of Gentry).

In the second, the hero can be associated with certain animals. Often these are birds or insects. The insect imagery usually runs along the same lines as in Turgenev’s Aksakov review, in which the insect represents the ultimate image of man’s insignificance in comparison with nature as a whole. Associations of characters with insects usually run counter to the ideas they have about themselves. In cases where the hero and other characters are associated with types of animals as opposed to concrete species, there is usually an opposition between predatory (хищный) and tame (ручной) animals, such that one or several characters belong to each category. As part of such a constellation an opposition may occur between predatory animals and their prey, an interesting aspect of which is that the hero may be associated with a predator at first, but later become the victim of a predator (with which one of the other characters is now associated!).

The third kind of association is where a number of characters are associated with one another on the basis of a certain common quality not shared by another group of characters. In A Nest of Gentry, for instance, differences in attitude towards music split the characters into two opposite groups. These groups match the division between the positive and negative characters of that novel. Such groupings often occur in combination with the animal associations of the second type.

---

18 I. Smirnov has defined a somewhat different kind of reference to a ‘cultural text’. He suggests that, as well as the biographical (i.e. concerning the personality of the author) and social or historical context of a text, there is also a “remote context” (“удаленный контекст” - Smirnov 1978: 178). He has in mind particular mythical images that are usually strongly reflected in language (in proverbs, sayings and the like). He worked out his concept using the example of Majakovskij’s poem “How I became a dog”, pointing out the mythical connotations that the dog has throughout the world.

19 For more information on this, see the analysis of Fathers and Sons.

20 For this situation, see the analyses of Rudin and On the Eve.
These three different variants of association have a similar effect. They result in the identification of the hero and other characters with character-types. This perspective provides a counterbalance to that of the contemporary level, and its effects have already been discussed. In the ensuing analyses of the novels the presentation of the hero on both the contemporary and the cosmic level will be examined in detail.

Moving beyond the material of the analyses for the moment, it can be said that in the first novel, *Rudin*, the cosmic view of the hero and his fate is developed to only a very limited extent. For the most part, his character and fate are portrayed in purely contemporary terms. By contrast, the last two novels, *Smoke* and *Virgin Soil*, exemplify the process of ‘revealing the device’ (обнаружение приема), in which the cosmic perspective is very much to the fore as part of the narrative structure. In *Smoke*, the main theme of the novel may be summed up as the influence of irrational forces on man’s life, and this forms a determinative element on the level of plot. In *Virgin Soil*, a similar effect arises but this time on the basis of characterization: the hero formulates his own character in terms of his likeness to the archetype of Hamlet, whereby the idea of archetypicality is made explicit on the narrative art level. In the other three novels, we find the fullest examples of a hero viewed from a double, a contemporary and a cosmic perspective, communicated by the narrative and verbal art levels of the text. In these three novels, a reading of the narrative art level (that is, of the hero’s life from the perspective of his contemporary characterization) leaves a motivational gap. This can be filled, however, by the associations of the verbal art level, which do suggest a motivation in terms of the influence of the cosmic force of fate.