

Fathers and Sons: Ivan Turgenev



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Paper X (i): Nineteenth-Century European Realism(i)

Lesson:Fathers and Sons: Ivan Turgenev

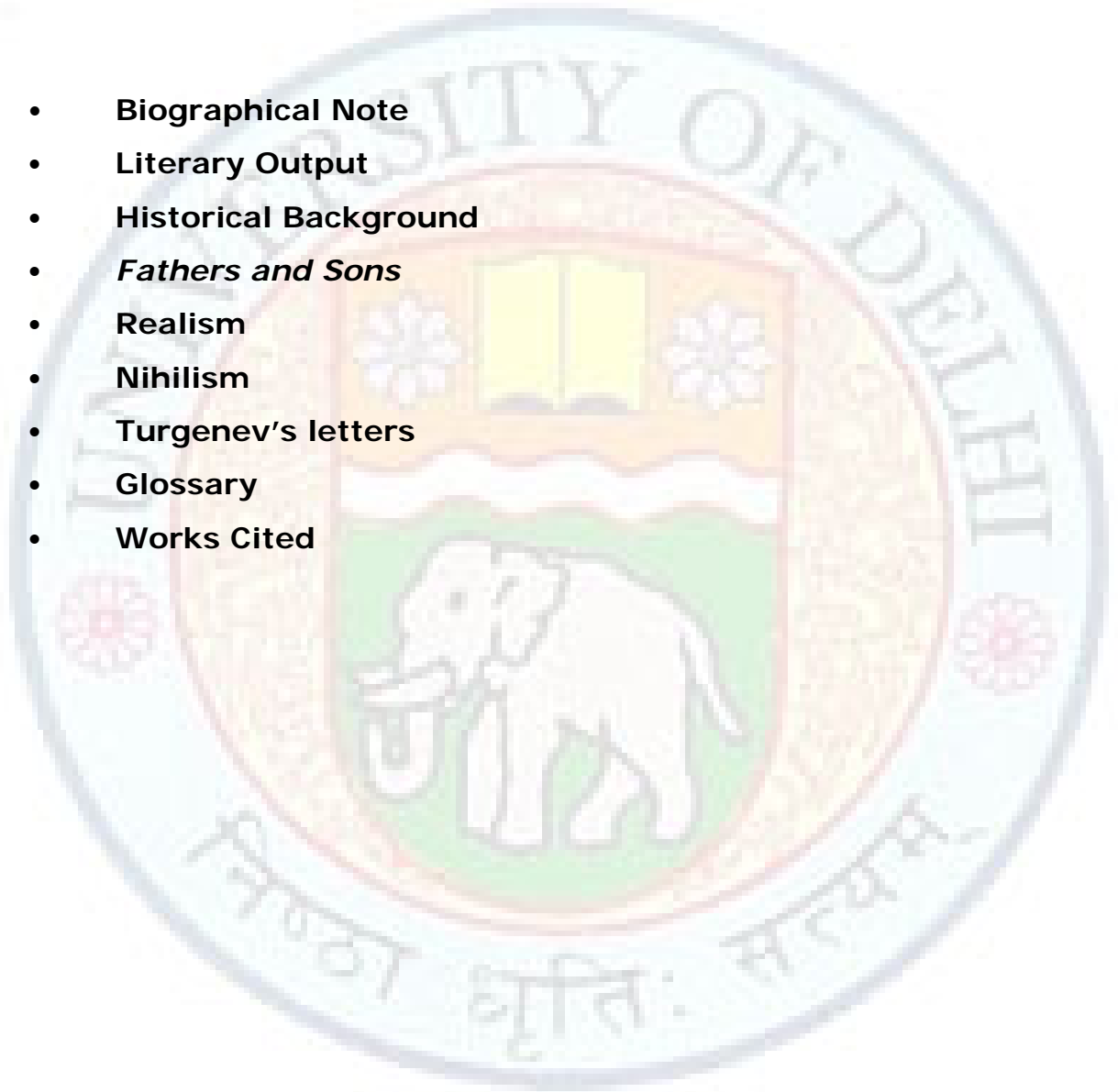
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Ivan Turgenev (October 28, 1818 – September 3, 1883), Painting by Ilya Repin

(Image from www.belygorod.ru),

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turgenev_by_Repin.jpg

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Biography

Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev was the second son of a retired cavalry officer, Sergey Turgenev and Varvara Petrovna. Turgenev's mother, Varvara Petrovna was her uncle's only heir and ruled over her vast estates and five thousand serfs with an iron hand. A Lutovin, an obscure family to have recently acquired enormous wealth, three years after coming into her inheritance she married Sergey Nikolayevich Turgenev, a retired colonel.

Though the roots of the Turgenev family ran back to a Tartar prince of the 15th century, Turgenev's father married for securing financial stability for his family. It was a far from happy marriage with the handsome colonel having many mistresses and Petrovna running her family in as strict a manner as she did her estate. For Turgenev the Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, his mother's estate provided a glimpse into the isolated group of gentry civilization in rural Russia and the injustice inherent in the servile state of the peasantry.

Till he was nine years old Turgenev's education at Spasskoye-Lutovinovo was taken care of by private tutors. Turgenev was fluent in French as it was the language spoken at home. He picked up Russian mainly from family servants. After attending various preparatory schools in Moscow, he entered the university in 1833 and transferred to the University of St. Petersburg when the family moved to the capital.

Later, in Berlin, he would study Latin, Greek, and philosophy, immersing himself in the works of the German Philosopher, G. W. F. Hegel (1770-1831). It is at the University of Berlin that he got convinced of the need for Russia to follow a course of Westernization. In 1841 Turgenev returned to Russia. The following year was a crucial one as Turgenev had physical relations with one of his mother's seamstresses resulting in the birth of a daughter, known in later life as Paulinette.

For various reasons he abandoned his plans for an academic career and entered the Ministry of Interior Affairs where he worked for mere eighteen months. Infuriated his mother cut off his funds forcing him to lead a difficult life.

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Spasskoye-Lutovinovo, Turgenev's estate near Oryol, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spasskoye-Lutovinovo

His love for the renowned singer Pauline Viardot, whom he first met in 1843, was to dominate his entire life and to her he later entrusted the upbringing of his illegitimate child. The potential of the author was quickly appreciated by the critic Vissarion Belinsky, who became Turgenev's close friend and mentor.

Always touchy about his literary reputation, Turgenev reacted to the almost unanimously hostile reception given to *Fathers and Sons* (1862) by leaving Russia. He took up residence in Baden-Baden in southern Germany, to which resort Viardot had retired. The Franco-German War of 1870–71 forced the Viardots to leave Baden-Baden, and Turgenev followed them, first to London and then to Paris.



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Photo of Ivan Turgenev and friends at the Malyutins' country house in Baden-Baden.

Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Turgenev_1867_by_Wertzinger.jpg

From 1845 to 1847 Turgenev spent most of his time in Russia, plunging now into his nation's literary life, coming into contact with all its leading literary figures. In 1847 he left Russia to return in 1850 as his mother lay dying. She bequeathed him 11 estates, including Spasskoye, some 30, 000 acres, with thousands of serfs. True to his philosophy he did his best to lighten the load of the peasants freeing the household workers among them. He died on September 3, 1883 at Bougival, near Paris.

Sources: Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev / Russian author
Britannica.com, www.britannica.com/biography/Ivan-Sergeyevich-Turgenev and "Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev." Encyclopedia of World Biography. 2004. Encyclopedia.com. 16 Aug. 2015 <<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

Literary Output

Turgenev composed many poems in the 1840s including "A Conversation", "Andrey", and "The Landowner". The first of these to attract attention was the long poem, 'Parasha', published in 1843. In 1847, before leaving Russia for a trip abroad, he left in the editorial offices of the literary journal *Sovremennik* ("The Contemporary") "Khor and Kalinych," a short study of two peasants whom he had met on a hunting trip. The manuscript was published with the subtitle "From a Hunter's Sketches," and received instantaneous success. From this was to grow the short-story cycle "A Sportsman's Sketches," first published in 1852, bringing him lasting fame.

This was a time when literature was closely monitored by governmental agencies to discourage any moral laxity or political unorthodoxy. Those editors or library owners who failed to convince authors to revise passages questioned by the censors had little choice but to cut authors off from their reading public and income. Consequently, many writers grudgingly agreed to make temporary changes only to be revoked later with the publication of the deluxe editions.

The shift from Romanticism to realism marked in fiction a shift from epic matters to those of the immediate society and contemporaneous issues. The realist novel, then, became a collective expression of society that was not merely a result of social change rather its cause. True to type, many of Turgenev's works portrayed various types of landowners or

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episodes, drawn from his experience of the life of the manorial, serf-owning Russian gentry. Of these, the most popular are "Two Landowners," a study of two types of despotic serf-owners, and "Hamlet of Shchigrovsky Province".

In the 'Hunter's Sketches' he portrayed both master and serf stunted by the institution of serfdom incurring disapproval by the government. Later his article on Nikolai Gogol, Ukrainian-born Russian writer (1809-1852) would land him in the prison. While detained in St. Petersburg he wrote the short story "Mumu," on the cruelties of serfdom. His stay in the prison was followed by a house arrest at Spasskoye for almost two years qualifying Malcolm V. Jones's comment, "The Turgenevan tradition, as represented by his best known novels, *Rudin*, *On the Eve* and *Fathers and Children*, in many ways foreshadows the revolutionary novel, but lacks its conviction of the saving power of the Revolution" (1998:13).

In 1850 Turgenev wrote "The Diary of a Superfluous Man" representative of the weak-willed intellectuals of his generation. His writings influenced by the socio-economic and political changes reflected these. In the two novels that he published during the 1850s—*Rudin* (1856) and *Home of the Gentry* (1859) can be discerned a spirit of ironic nostalgia for the weaknesses and futilities so manifest in the generation of a decade earlier, of the forties, apparent especially after the defeat of Russia in the Crimean war (1854–56) as they became a part of the past. Turgenev also wrote plays as "A Poor Gentleman" (1848) "The Bachelor" (1849) "One May Spin a Thread Too Finely" (1848).

Of his novels *Rudin*, set in the Russian country house world, is about an eloquent individual Dmitry Rudin who fails his love interest when challenged to rise up to his words. Turgenev's second novel, *Home of the Gentry*, is about unrequited love with an oblique suggestion that Turgenev's generation must leave the future of Russia to those younger and more radical than themselves. The novel *On the Eve* (1860) etches graphically the problem facing the younger intelligentsia of Russia on the eve of the Crimean War and refers also to the changes awaiting the nation on the eve of the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. His *Fathers and Sons* (1862), also addresses this sense of involvement and illustrates the issues that divided the generations.

Turgenev's works of the final phase include *A Lear of the Steppes* (1870), *Torrents of Spring* (1872), *Punin and Baburin* (1874) *The Song of Triumphant Love* (1881) and *Klara Milich* (1883). His final novel, *Virgin Soil* (1877) portrayed the dedication and self-sacrifice of young populists who hoped to sow the seeds of revolution in the virgin soil of the Russian peasantry. Andrew Wachtel observes about Turgenev that in the course of writing his series of novels Turgenev perfected his own psychological method of writing, one that was "fully in accord with the Russian expectation that individual characters should reflect more general truths about the nation" and that any problem of personal identity in a Turgenev novel can

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be read as a problem of national self- definition lending an epic quality to the Russian psychological novel (1998:136).

Source: "Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev." Encyclopedia of World Biography. 2004. Encyclopedia.com. 16 Aug. 201 <<http://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

Nineteenth Century Russia

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Russian culture experienced two irresistible imperatives of grasping and representing in imaginative literature the full range of contemporary reality, exemplified in such concepts as the narod (the Russian people), the rodina "motherland", the vast, primitive, anarchic Russian Countryside, the history and the symbolism of her capital; and to understand their place in history. (Jones 1998:3) The late nineteenth century, not only for Russia but the whole world, was a period of tremendous change and upheaval with political empires disintegrating, rise of nationalism, the power of the middle class replacing that of the aristocracy, and colonialism flourishing.

The Industrial Revolution greatly altered the social and economic structure and conflicting tendencies came to mark the age with growing middle-class values, and industrial progress against the old set of values. The importance of religion declined to be replaced by personal beliefs. By the late nineteenth century 67 percent of the world came under European rule. At this time literature came to express the social, economic, and philosophical concerns of the day as against the issues and styles associated with Romanticism earlier in the century.

The Crimean War (1853-1856) often seen as a pugnacious interlude in an uncharacteristically long period of peace and prosperity was the Russian effort at expansion southwards. It brought Russia into conflict with England and France, the two great European powers for protecting the Ottoman Empire. The war saw the British and French joining forces with the Italians and Austrians who locked horns with the Russians for a period of four years, resulting in the death of countless civilians and nearly a million soldiers.

The greatest impact of the war was on Russia as it had a largely feudal society and economy. In order to generate finance for the wars increased taxes were levied aggravating hardship for the already exploited Russian serfs leading to serf uprisings everywhere. It was not surprising, therefore, that the newly crowned Tsar Alexander II resorted to economic and social reforms to compete with modern industrialized European nations, the most notable of these reforms being the emancipation of the serfs in 1861.

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Crimean War, Part of Ottoman wars in Europe and the Russo-Turkish wars, Attack on the Malakoff by William Simpson (1855) Crimean War, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_war

Russia, in the nineteenth century, was not a stranger to rebellions. During the reign of Nicholas I, in December 1825, a group of officers commanding about three thousand men assembled in Senate Square refusing to swear allegiance to the new tsar, Nicholas I and proclaimed their loyalty to the idea of a Russian constitution. The rebellion could be quelled as the rebels were disappointed for the rest of the troops stationed in St. Petersburg did not join them.

From the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the Russian nobility were increasingly exposed to European intellectual trends such as liberalism. During the period of rapprochement between Napoleon and Alexander, liberalism was encouraged on an official level, creating high expectations. The officer corps of the Russian army, to have vanquished Napoleon in 1812 were young men of the aristocratic class. While occupying Western Europe, they were able to see Western society first hand as they attended classes at the liberal universities.

They noted the prosperity of nations where serfdom had been abolished and monarchical power was limited and returned to Russia with revolutionary ideas regarding human rights, representative government, and mass democracy including opposition to autocracy, demands for representative government, calls for the abolition of serfdom, and, in some instances, advocacy of a revolutionary overthrow of the government. Officers were particularly disgruntled that Alexander had granted Poland a constitution while Russia remained without one. Several secret organizations created projects towards the end.

Amongst emancipation of 20 million privately held serfs in 1861 Tsar Alexander II initiated reforms in education, the government, the judiciary, and the military. Local commissions,

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which were dominated by landlords, gave land and limited freedom to the serfs. Though the former serfs usually remained in the village commune they were required to make redemption payments to the government over a period of almost fifty years. The government compensated former owners of serfs by issuing bonds. In a glaring instance of bad planning it was envisioned that the 50,000 landlords who possessed estates of more than 110 hectares could survive without serfs and would continue to provide loyal political and administrative leadership in the countryside while the peasants would produce sufficient crops for their own consumption and for export sales, thereby boosting the country's faltering economy.



Decembrist Revolt, a painting by Vasily Timm

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Timm_decembrists.jpg source and rights]

Both former serfs and their former owners were left dissatisfied with the government's unrealistic expectations. The new peasants soon fell behind in their payments to the government due to the poor quality of the land and primitive agricultural methods. The former owners often had to sell their lands to remain solvent as without their former serfs managing or farming estates become impossible. The value of the government bonds fell with the peasants failing to make their redemption payments.

Reforms of local government closely followed when in 1864 most local government in the European part of Russia was organized into provincial and district zemstva (elective council responsible for the local administration), constituted of representatives cutting across all classes responsible for local schools, public health, roads, prisons, food supply, and other concerns. In 1870 elected city councils, *dumy* were formed. Dominated by property owners both raised taxes and levied labor to support their activities. Although Alexander II's reform

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of lifting the state censorship fostered the expression of political and social thought he was assassinated in 1881.



Alexander II of Russia (Nikolay Lavrov 01).jpg, wikipedia.org

Source: U.S. Library of Congress countrystudies.us/russia/6.htm Cached, war and social upheaval: the Crimean War, histclo.com/essay/war/war-crimea.html, Decembrist Revolt - New World Encyclopedia www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/...title=Decembrist_Revolt, The Nineteenth Century: Realism and Symbolism - WW Norton. www.wwnorton.com/.../newest/content/overview/realism.htm

Nineteenth Century Russian Literature

"By 1800 Russian literature had an established tradition of representing real-life problems, and its eighteenth-century practitioners had enriched its language with new elements. On this basis, a brilliant century of literary endeavor followed. Russian literature of the nineteenth century provided a congenial medium for the discussion of political and social issues whose direct presentation was censored. The prose writers of this period shared important qualities: attention to realistic, detailed descriptions of everyday Russian life; the lifting of the taboo on describing the vulgar, unsightly side of life; and a satirical attitude toward mediocrity and routine. All of those elements were articulated primarily in the novel and short story forms borrowed from Western Europe, but the poets of the nineteenth century also produced works of lasting value.

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The Age of Realism, generally considered the culmination of the literary synthesis of earlier generations, began around 1850 ...By mid-century a heated debate was under way on the appropriateness of social questions in literature...

The best prose writers of the Age of Realism were Ivan Turgenev, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Leo Tolstoy. Because of the enduring quality of their combination of pure literature with eternal philosophical questions, the last two are accepted as Russia's premier prose artists; Dostoevsky's novels *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, like Tolstoy's novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, are classics of world literature..."

For more see: Russia - Literature - Country Studies, countrystudies.us/russia/43.htm



"The Bargain" by Nikolai Nevrev (Sale of a serf girl),

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Russian_serfdom

Fathers and Sons

Set in the year 1859, just two years before the emancipation of serfs in Russia, *Fathers and Sons* revolves around the Kirsanov family and a guest to the same by the name of Bazarov. Nikolay Kirsanov is seen as managing his estate, Marino in the Russian Countryside. His brother, Pavel, who has retired from the army, is at the moment, staying with him. Nikolai is a widower who has had a very satisfying married life. He is seen as sharing a very good rapport with his son, Arkady. However, in his absence he has found companionship with the daughter of his erstwhile housekeeper, Fenichka, and has fathered a son. When the novel

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begins he is seen a little worried regarding the reaction of his son about his newfound relationship, a feeling that is soon overcome.

Pavel Petrovich is a bachelor who in his youth was considered quite handsome and has genteel ways, a combination of Westernization and Eastern ideas. He uses a lot of French in his conversations and comes across as a sophisticated gentleman in his appearance and conversation. However, he is seen lacking in patience with Bazarov, who has an unsettling effect on the Kirsanov brothers. Pavel's lack of patience with Bazarov and Bazarov's nihilist ideas often lead to disagreements between the two and characterize the conflicting ideas marking the two generations, justifying the title of the novel. Pavel Petrovich has been a victim of an unrequited love affair and has not married thereafter. Both the brothers are seen as "romantics" by the irreverent, scientific-minded Bazarov.

The younger generation is represented by Arkady Kirsanov and his friend Bazarov, young nihilists, to have come to Marino after having completed their graduation from St. Petersburg University. Whereas Arkady is seen as a loving youngster, respectful of the seniors in his family, under the influence of Bazarov he also finds his father's and uncle's ideas as old and outdated. The difference between Arkady and Bazarov is as between Nikolay and Pavel. Where Arkady is willing to put up with the ideas of the older generation, displays patience, love and caring, as his father, both Bazarov and Pavel come across as impatient and aggressive leading to both verbal and physical duels as to be seen in the course of the novel. It is Bazarov's "disruptive force" that makes Nikolai and Pavel feel "parasitic" and "outmoded" (McClean 1998: 47).

A nihilist, Bazarov believes in denouncing all existing institutions and "clearing the ground" for new. His philosophy is seen as one that only destructs and is incapable of constructing. He continues to bewilder the older generation with his ideas, who cannot come to terms with the epithets used for them as "pensioners", "aristocratic trash" among others. Jostein Bortnes observes that towards the end of the eighteenth and at the beginning of the nineteenth century the validity of Orthodox anthropology was increasingly questioned as Russian intellectuals came under the spell of the Enlightenment and were deeply stirred by Rousseau's idea of the inborn goodness of the "natural man," his idea of uncorrupted natural self hidden by layers of repression caused by socialization and acculturation" (105). Bazarov symbolizes this breed of intellectuals to have come up in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Nihilism

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The Merriam Webster dictionary defines Nihilism as 'the belief that traditional morals, ideas, beliefs, etc., have no worth or value: the belief that a society's political and social institutions are so bad that they should be destroyed', as a viewpoint that traditional values and beliefs are unfounded and that existence is senseless and useless, a doctrine that denies any objective ground of truth and especially of moral truths, a doctrine or belief that conditions in the social organization are so bad as to make destruction desirable for its own sake independent of any constructive program or possibility, the program of a 19th century Russian party advocating revolutionary reform and using terrorism and assassination.'

The term 'Nihilism' originates from the Latin "nihil" meaning "nothing" signifying a philosophy of moral and epistemological skepticism that arose in 19th-century Russia during the early years of the reign of Tsar Alexander II. Turgenev in *Fathers and Sons* (1862) popularized the concept of Nihilism through the figure of Bazarov. Eventually, the nihilists of the 1860s and '70s came to be regarded as unruly, ragged men, rebels against tradition and social order.

Fundamentally, 19th-century nihilism represented a philosophy of negation of all forms of aestheticism advocating utilitarianism and scientific rationalism. Entirely rejecting the Classical philosophical systems Nihilism represented a crude form of positivism and materialism, a revolt against the established social order; it negated all authority exercised by the state, by the church and by the family. It based its belief on nothing else but scientific truth; science would be the solution of all social problems. Nihilists believed that all evils took root in ignorance—which science alone would overcome.

The philosophers, scientists, and historians profoundly influencing the thinking of 19th-century nihilists were Ludwig Feuerbach, German philosopher and moralist, Charles Darwin, English naturalist and geologist, Henry Buckle, and Herbert Spencer, British philosopher and sociologist. It is interesting to note that since nihilists denied the duality of human beings as a combination of body and soul, of spiritual and material substance, they came into violent conflict with ecclesiastical authorities. They also came into conflict with secular authorities for questioning the doctrine of the divine right of kings. As they scorned all social bonds and family authority, the conflict between parents and children was immanent, and it is this theme that is best reflected in Turgenev's novel.

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), German philosopher, essayist, and cultural critic used 'Nihilism' to describe the disintegration of traditional morality in Western society. The varied philosophical and aesthetic stances that Nihilism came to encompass in the 20th century nullified the existence of genuine moral truths or values. It rejected the possibility of knowledge or communication, along with asserting the ultimate meaninglessness or purposelessness of life /the universe.

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Source: nihilism | philosophy | Britannica.com, www.britannica.com/topic/nihilism

Ironically, Bazarov who does not believe in any emotion, institution or religion finds himself in love with Madam Odintsova, a widow with liberal ideas and a worldly wise woman, who values her independence and a peaceful life above all. Here, it is important to note that Turgenev felt that his novels were more of "novellas" close to the French roman *a these*, a fictionalized discourse on a topical issue. *Fathers and Sons* was dedicated to the memory of Belinskii, father of the movement that gave rise to Bazarov. (Terras 1998:201)

As evident in the title of the novel *Fathers and Sons* centers around and problematizes the two modes of life as followed by the two generations of fathers and sons, the liberals of the 1940s and the radicals of the 1960s, as seen in the lines below:

Pavel Petrovich raised his hands.

'After that remark I don't understand you. You insult the Russian people. I do not understand how one can fail to acknowledge principles and rules! What guides you, then?

'Uncle, I've already told you we don't recognize any authority,' Arkady intervened.

'We are guided by what we recognize as useful,' said Bazarov. 'The most useful course of action at present is to reject- and we reject.'

'You reject everything?'

'Everything.'

'What? Not just art, poetry...but also...I hardly dare say it...'

'Everything,' Bazarov repeated with an air of ineffable calm.

Pavel Petrovich stared at him. He hadn't expected that answer, and Arkady even went red from pleasure.

'Come now,' said Nikolay Petrovich. 'You reject everything, or more precisely, you destroy everything... But one must also build.'

'That's not our concern...First one must clear the ground.'

'The present condition of the people demands it,' Arkady said seriously. (2009: 49)

What Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975), [Russian literary critic, linguist, philosopher and writer of *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1929, 1963), *Rabelais and His World* (1965), and *The Dialogic Imagination* (1975)]refers to the novel as the multi-voiced (polyphonic) art with its special artistic province as "dialogized heteroglossia" , the different points of view embodied in "voice zones" and intentional hybridizations testing one another and simultaneously questioning each other's boundaries and authority (Emerson 1998: 287) *Fathers and Sons* does.

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There is a sudden rush of events in the novel as both Bazarov and Pavel find themselves attracted to Fenichka leading to the duel that has Pavel injured, the duel being the result of a fleeting kiss stolen by Bazarov from Fenichka, noticed by Pavel Petrovich. The novel winds up with the death of Bazarov through typhus, Pavel's choosing to live in Dresden, Germany and both Arkady and Nikolay opting for the pleasures of marital bliss with the women they love. *Fathers and Sons* thus conforms to what Victor Terras calls the typical Russian realist novel that was an integral part of public life reflecting the social history of the times with the writers not content merely to describe the world but aspiring to understand and interpret it laying claim to "moral value for promoting progress" (1998:191).

Susanne Fusso extends the idea by theorising that within the Russian context the general idea of Romanticism has given variants as "Romantic Realism" and "Revolutionary Romanticism" where they are inspired by the concept of the "Byronic" persona who is the talented, and sensitive, nevertheless bitter and disillusioned man whose best hopes and aspirations have been thwarted by the unfeeling world. Fusso finds Bazarov confirming to the type as he begins as a "hard headed nihilist rejecting all forms of Romantic idealism but ends by committing what amounts to suicide (dissecting a typhus victim without gloves) in grief over unrequited love." (1998: 172)

Realism

Realism is seen as a recurrent mode in various periods of history and literary forms representing human life and experience in literature. In the nineteenth century this movement was clearly visible in the literary genre of novels. Realistic fiction is opposed to romantic fiction which rather than representing life ordinarily, as it is, presents it ideally. Realistic fiction intends to give the effect of representing life and the social world as it appears to the common reader, giving minute details, rendering material in ways that they can be identified with the day to day, lived reality (Abrams and Harpham : 2009).

In the context of Russia Realism came to mean a concern with concrete Russian life as opposed to Romanticism's pursuit of the exotic and sentimentalism and engagement with humanity as an abstract notion. Realism denoted "an interest in the concerns of ordinary men and women, in social problems and in the life of the lower classes. Also, Realism meant a faith in literature's calling to be involved in the affairs of real life" (Terras 1998:190).

The shift to realism in the mid-nineteenth century was a response from writers and intellectuals tired of the subjective excesses of the Romantics who dominated the literary scene for some forty years. It was practiced by authors such as Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Maupassant, and Ibsen. The Russian realist novel like its counterpart in the West

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was a product of the existing genres of literature as epistolary novel, satire, political pamphlet and the physiological sketch. The most important writer of the realist school in mid-nineteenth century was Charles Baudelaire, whose writings initiated the movement in poetry that would become known as "symbolism."

In France, the country where many of the innovative theories regarding realism first originated, the emerging middle class broke away from the ideals of the French Revolution supporting liberal European governments to have initiated political reforms confirming with the liberal and democratic values.

In 1848 due to a series of national and social revolutions the civil community came to include the lower middle class and even some workers, only to meet with conservative reaction that had set in against the liberal segments of society. The collapse of these revolutions divided the privileged or upper middle class upholding traditional values and materialist forces as foundation of its success, from that of the unprivileged middle class along with the underprivileged and exploited working class and peasantry.

The middle class had aspirations and beliefs in contrast with those of the dying upper class. The rigid aristocracy wished to maintain status quo by its continued support to the monarchy, conservative politics, orthodox religion, and outmoded institutions of the former against democratic reforms. The consequence of this rupture was seen in the feeling of despise harbored by the bourgeoisie against the materialism, crassness, and vulgarity that came to characterize the nouveaux riches.

In little sympathy for the aristocracy the realist novelists aimed at reproducing almost camera-like objectivity and exactitude of all aspects of society. The realist novels provided a democratic inventory of the epoch, a photograph of normal life with "ordinary people" true to life. It was Stendhal to have best articulated the need for photographic fidelity in *The Red and the Black* (1830), where his narrator observed that "a novel is a mirror riding along a highway."

Source: '19th Century Prose Narrative: Realism and the 19th Century Novel', www.baruch.cuny.edu/.../c_08_19th_cent_prose/realism.htm

Bortnes *vis a vis* Victor and Edith Turner's article "Religious celebrations," based on Nikolai Gogol's unfinished part II of *Dead Souls*, finds a parallel in *Fathers and Sons* as the outlined pattern of events may be divided into the three phases of a transitional rite: "First a phase of transgression, culminating in the separation of the hero as a criminal from the rest of the society and his spiritual "death." This phase of separation followed by the liminal phase (from limen meaning "threshold" in Latin), a kind of social limbo that goes through the three step of communication of sacra, i.e of symbolic things and actions representing society's

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religious mysteries, the free and playful rearrangement of traditional cultural factors in new and unexpected configurations and the fostering of *communitas* i.e. a "a bond uniting people over and above any formal social bonds." The third phase of reaggregation /reincorporation marking the triumph over death, and resurrection to a new life.

The above discussed reversal of events and hero's spiritual metamorphosis is clearly seen in the changes that Bazarov's character undergoes in *Fathers and Sons*. Bortnes points out that the alienation of Bazarov from the world of his parents and traditional values of the Russian society is replaced by the Western Materialism in the first phase. The second, liminal, phase is the journey back from his university to his parents in which the sacra of the "fathers" is ridiculed and distorted in the eyes of the children accompanied by his criticism of the older generations inability to live up to their ideals. Ironically, Bazarov is seen embracing every position that he has denounced so far by defending his honour through fighting an uncalled for duel, falling in love and realizing the importance of the emotion.

The final phase of his reintegration into the fabric of daily life occurs in his sharing of his father's practice as a country doctor responding to its prosaic needs. The image of the sacred appears in the fresco of the resurrection of Christ that Bazarov drives past on his way to Anna Sergeyevna distorted as the dark complexioned warrior "lying stretched in the foreground." The motif of the angel is seen in Anna Sergeyevna's ("angel from heaven") appearance at his death bed raising his father's hope for his survival. Anna Sergeyevna becomes "an ironic recombination of the sacred and the profane transformed into a symbol of love as the cosmic force by which Bazarov is reborn into a new life beyond death (107-9).

Excerpts from Turgenev's letters

To M. N Katkov

Paris, October 30 (November 11), 1861

Dear Mikhail Nikoforovich:

I recently wrote you, but after your letter which I received yesterday I consider it necessary to write a couple of words in reply. I agree with your comments, with almost all of them, particularly about Pavel Petrovich and Bazarov. So far as Odintsov is concerned, the unclear impression produced by that character indicates to me that here, too, I have to take more pains. (Incidentally, the argument between Pavel Petrovich and Bazarov has been completely revised and shortened.)

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*** I cannot agree with one thing: Odintsov ought not to be ironic with Bazarov, nor should the peasant stand higher than he, though Bazarov himself is empty and barren. Perhaps my view of Russia is more misanthropic than you suppose: in my mind he is the real hero of our time. A fine hero and a fine time you'll say. But that's how it is.

I repeat my request to keep my product hidden. ***

Note: M.N Katkov (18-187) was the publisher of the journal *The Russian Herald*, where *Fathers and Sons* appeared.

To A.A. Fet

Paris, April 6 (18),

1862

First of all, dear Afanas'evich, thank you for your letter—and my thanks would be greater if you didn't consider it necessary to put on kid gloves. Believe me, I have borne and am able to bear the harshest truth from my friends. And so, despite your euphemisms, you don't like *Fathers and Sons*. I bow my head, since there is nothing to be done about it, but I want to say a few words in my defense, though I know how unseemly and pointless it is. You ascribe the whole trouble to tendentiousness reflection, in short, to reason. But, in reality, you had only to say that the craft was inadequate. It seems that I am more naïve than you assume. Tendentiousness! But let me ask you, what kind of Fathers and Sons in *Fathers and Sons*? Did I want to abuse Bazarov or extol him? I do not know that myself, since I don't know whether I love him or hate him! There you have tendentiousness! Katkov took me to task for making Bazarov into an apotheosis. You also mention parallelism. But where is it, permit me to ask you, and where are these pairs, believers and nonbelievers? Does Pavel Petrovich believe or not? I wouldn't know since I simply wanted to portray in him the type of the Stolypins, the Rossets, and other Russian ex-lions. It is a strange thing: you blame me for parallelism, but others write me "Why isn't Anna Sergeyevna a lofty person, to contrast her more fully with Bazarov? Why aren't Bazarov's old people completely patriarchal? Why is Arkady banal, and wouldn't it be better to portray him as an upright young man who is carried away for a moment? What purpose did Fenichka serve, and what conclusions can be drawn from her?" I'll tell you one thing, I drew all those characters as I would draw mushrooms, leaves, and trees. They were an eyesore to me and so I started to sketch them. But it would be strange and amusing to dismiss my own impressions simply because they resemble tendentiousness. I don't want you to draw the conclusion from that that I am a courageous fellow. On the contrary: what can be concluded from my words is

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even more injurious to me: it's not that I've been too shrewd, but that I was not capable enough. But truth above all. But actually- Omnia vanitas. ***

Note: A.A Fet was one of Russia's most sensitive and delicate lyric poets, who was also a hard-fisted, reactionary landowner.¹

Glossary

Apotheosis: The highest or most perfect development of something.

Euphemisms: An indirect word or phrase that people often use to refer to something embarrassing or unpleasant, sometimes to make it seem more acceptable than it really is.

Instantaneous: Happening immediately

Materialism: The belief that money, possessions and physical comforts are more important than spiritual values; the belief that only material things exist.

Omnia vanitas: (Latin) All is vanity

Positivism: A system of philosophy based on things that can be seen or proved, rather than on ideas.

Pugnacious: Having a strong desire to argue or fight with other people.

Quelled: To stop something such as violent behaviour or protests.

Rapprochement: A situation in which the relationship between two countries or groups of people become friendly after a period during which they were enemies.

Rationalism: The belief that all behavior, opinions etc. should be based on reason rather than on emotions or religious beliefs.

Tendentiousness: Expressing a strong opinion that people are likely to disagree with.

Utilitarianism: The belief that the right course of action is the one that will produce the greatest happiness of the greatest number of people.

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Notes:

1. Source of Turgenev's letters is Ivan Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*: A Norton Critical Edition. New York, London: W.W Norton & Co., 1996. 171, 174-5.

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