

Fathers and Sons: Transition from Nihilism to Community of Inquiry Model with Bazarov and Arkady

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ABSTRACT

Nihilism, whose conceptual boundaries were drawn by the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, became famous with Ivan S. Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*. Based on nihilism and Bazarov's character, the novel causes great controversy. Within the scope of our study, Western and Russian nihilism is explained with a descriptive and comparative method, followed by the novel *Fathers and Sons* being discussed with an interrogative and critical method. By trying to illuminate Bazarov's contradictory and Arkady's hidden inner worlds, the novel's transition from nihilism to the skepticism and model of a community of inquiry is revealed. In light of the examination, it is discovered that Arkady is the real nihilist character, and that he carries the message of necessity of social reconciliation which the author wants to convey. Turgenev gives nihilism's task of denial to Bazarov; the task of interpreting, taking responsibility, and acting to Arkady; and the call of reconciliation to the Russian people, particularly the youth. As a conclusion, the author advises the public to not believe everything they may have heard concerning nihilism, to approach new information with distance through skepticism, to access organized and accurate information through a structure similar to the model of community of inquiry, and proposes the salvation of Russia through social reconciliation.

KEYWORDS: Nihilism, community of inquiry, Turgenev, *Fathers and Sons*, Bazarov, Arkady

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《父與子》：從虛無主義到探究社群 ——巴札洛夫與阿爾卡狄

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摘 要

虛無主義（nihilism）的哲學概念源出尼采（Friedrich Nietzsche），後隨屠格涅夫（Ivan S. Turgenev）的小說《父與子》（*Fathers and Sons*）廣為流傳。該作亦因虛無色彩與巴札洛夫（Bazarov）一角形象而備受爭議。本文透過批判閱讀《父與子》，對西方與俄國虛無主義進行詳述與比較。正如巴札洛夫的矛盾與阿爾卡狄（Arkady）的內在幽微所示，小說其實旨在呈現由虛無主義朝懷疑論（skepticism）及「探究社群」（community of inquiry）之轉向，而阿爾卡狄才是真正的虛無主義化身，傳遞「和解之必要」此一中心訊息。總言之，巴札洛夫代表虛無主義「否定」的一面，阿爾卡狄則代表其詮釋、承擔與行動的任務，二者共同導向俄國群眾，尤其年輕世代致力推動和解的社會責任。最終，屠格涅夫呼籲莫要輕信虛無主義，而應保持懷疑，循「探究社群」模型以促進社會和解並達成國家的救贖。

關鍵詞：虛無主義、探究社群、屠格涅夫、《父與子》、巴札洛夫、阿爾卡狄

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I. Introduction

Nihilism derives from the Latin word *nihil*, meaning “nothing.” Within the scope of the nihilist view, concepts such as existence, knowledge, reality, truth, value and morality are rejected. Although it became popular in the nineteenth century, the roots of nihilism date back to ancient times. According to the Greek sophist philosophers Gorgias (483-375 BC) and Protagoras (490-420 BC), existence itself does not exist, as it is not accepted by all. Therefore, existence and non-existence are the same. Accurate information must be known to affirm existence, and this itself is impossible to obtain. There is no knowledge because knowledge is not true, and there is no existence because true knowledge cannot be accessed. Since there can be no knowledge of what does not exist, even if existence is known, it cannot be thought or explained (Çüçen 64-65). According to Taoism, another view that partially rejects existence, all beings in the external world are temporary and ever-changing. Everything is part of the continuous cycle of transformation governed by the *Tao*. There is no beginning or end, the main point is to comprehend the essence of this transformation (Danylova 6.2).

The term nihilism was first used critically in a letter written by Friedrich H. Jacobi (1743-1819) to another German philosopher, Johann G. Fichte (1762-1814). In the letter, it was emphasized that nihilism ignored religious values. Additionally, Jacobi stated that idealist philosophy searched for the doors of a world where reality and values did not exist, and thus called for nihilism. He saw nihilism as a dangerous and destructive philosophical movement (Sevim 16). Not all philosophers were so critical against nihilism. Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900) considered nihilism as a necessary stage in the development of Western culture. According to the famous philosopher, the limits of free and creative thought could be removed on account of nihilism.

Nihilism, which owes its theoretical maturation to Nietzsche, began to attract attention all over the world thanks to Ivan S. Turgenev's (1818-83) novel *Fathers and Sons* («Отцы и дети»). This interest in nihilism intensified to such a degree that Turgenev became considered by many to be the creator of the word (Shirinians 39). But the author had in fact borrowed the term from German literature (Frank 63). The first copies of his novel were published in the journal *Russkii vestnik* in 1862. The editor made changes to the work without Turgenev's knowledge, while the author was in Paris. Subsequently, articles that were published in the same journal portrayed the character Bazarov

as being angry and arrogant, and described nihilism as a revolutionary force against the social order. Thus, the work gathered criticism from the moment it was first published (Olcaý 128). According to the Russian literary critic Nikolaï N. Strakhov (1828-96), the novel ultimately led to widespread acceptance of the concept of nihilism by its proponents, as well as by its opponents (203).

Owing to there being no single definition of nihilism, that people who learn about nihilism by reading Turgenev's work develop different perspectives, and that some critics may evaluate the work irrespective of Russia's social and historical conditions at that time, there is a shift away from the main problem of the novel and the author's purpose in writing it. As a result, some interpretations of the work propose that the main figure is Bazarov; that he is the first nihilist hero in Russian literature; that nihilism is encouraged in the work; and that Turgenev supports those who try to destroy the existing order in Russia through nihilism. Within the scope of our study, what nihilism means, how it emerged, and how it gained a theoretical identity will be explained with a descriptive method. Then, the historical and theoretical framework of the study will be drawn by presenting the local and original aspects of Western and Russian nihilism with a comparative method. Through a critical analysis, we will examine questions concerning the central protagonist of the novel, Bazarov and Arkady's relationship with nihilism, Turgenev's choice of nihilism as a theme, and what he aimed to accomplish. The main hypothesis of the research is that Turgenev used nihilism as a tool, and his main purpose was to contribute to the process of building a public that embraces the movement of skepticism and represents the community of inquiry model. Within the scope of the study, the reasons for the emergence of these contradictions will be explored.

II. Russian Nihilism

In the second half of the nineteenth century, Russia put up an existential struggle in an intellectual sense. Important events, such as the loss of the Crimean War in 1853, the weakening of the imperial power that spanned one hundred fifty years, its loss of being a great European power, and the abolition of serfdom in 1861, deeply affected the Russian thought world (Ayđın 117). There was a widening gap between classes in terms of conditions, thought, and lifestyle; and a tense atmosphere prevailed in the country. According to Nietzsche, people needed criminals on whom they could project their

weaknesses and vent their anger. Those born strong and wealthy, on the other hand, seemed to usurp the rights of the others; the poor and weak had to find a scapegoat. According to Nietzsche, this is the reason why many people in nineteenth century Russia were atheists. They wanted someone to blame for the injustice, inequality, and hunger they were experiencing, and chose God as the easiest solution (Nietzsche 478). With the enthronement of Alexander II (1818-81), a hope for unity and reconciliation reblossomed. However, the tsar's reforms, which were limited and insufficient, began to be seen by radicals as practices aimed to escape real change and transformation. Following this development, it was decided to engage in a more effective fight against autocracy. For this, the first step was negation and emerging from the society as a "new people." Considering the socio-political conditions of the period, all conditions were fertile for the topic of nihilism to enter discussion (Gillespie 138-39).

The existential problem of being in philosophy and of thought in Russia are closely related. In ontology there are idealists who see existence as ideas of the mind, realists who argue that it exists independently of the mind, and nihilist philosophers who claim that being does not actually exist. While the struggle between realist and idealist views in the mid-nineteenth century Russian world of thought and literature continued at full speed, nihilism was proposed as a new perspective for that period.

The word nihilism was first used in Russia by the critic and philosopher Nikolaï Ī. Nadezhdin (1804-56). It is used in his article entitled "The Crowd of Nihilists" («Сонмище нигилистов»), published in the 1829 issue of the *Vestnik Evropy* magazine. Nihilism, which is brought together with the words "emptiness" and "ignorance," evoked a negative attitude when it first emerged (Coşkun Karataş 42).¹ In the 1830s and 1840s, the word is used in various contexts by Nikolaï A. Polevoi (1796-1846), Stepan P. Shevyrëv (1806-64), Vissarion G. Belinskiĭ (1811-48), and Mikhail N. Katkov (1818-87). In the 1860s, the word began to be associated with the revolutionary and libertarian movement. In a critical article written in 1861, Mikhail Katkov considers the word in the same sense as Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*. Accordingly, the limits of Russian nihilism are drawn with a strict denial, making propaganda to destroy the existing, criticizing everything traditionally valued by the cultured and educated person, mocking progressive views, and ignoring

¹ All non-English quotes in the article, unless otherwise noted, are translated by the author.

theories produced from empty opinions (Shirinians 41-42). In Turgenev's novel, a nihilist is defined by Nikolai Kirsanov as "a man who declines to accept anything"; by Pavel Kirsanov as "a man who declines to respect anything, a man who declines to bow to authority, or to accept any principle on trust"; and by Arkady as "a man who treats things solely from the critical point of view" (Turgenev, *Fathers* 28-29). Thus, Russian nihilism becomes public.

This new trend of thought caused great debates in Russian social life. Democratization and liberation movements were all described as "nihilistic." The older generation in 1860s Russia was astonished by the enthusiastic embrace among young people of materialist philosophy, which criticized existing conditions harshly. With the novel *Fathers and Sons* gaining fame, this philosophy was evaluated under the title of "nihilism" by anti-nihilists (Moser, "Anti-Nihilism" 155). Bazarov even inspired ridicule from the anti-nihilist camp. The intensity of the debates increased in literature as well as in the social sphere. A group that criticized them appeared against the nihilists. The main publication of this group was the *Russkii vestnik* magazine, which was edited by Mikhail Katkov. Through the 1860s and 1870s, the quantity of anti-nihilist novels increased as a socio-political literary genre. Works such as Ivan A. Goncharov's *The Precipice* («Обрыв»), and Fëdor Dostoevskii's *Demons* («Бесы») and *The Idiot* («Идиот») exemplified the negative approach to nihilism in nineteenth-century Russian literature. Other writers such as Alexei F. Pisemskii (1821-81), Nikolai S. Leskov (1831-95), Viktor P. Kliushnikov (1841-92), Vsevolod V. Krestovskii (1839-95), Vasilii P. Avenarius (1839-1923), Vasilii G. Avsenko (1842-1913), and Konstantin F. Golovin (1843-1913) also produced anti-nihilist works that displayed an oppositional attitude against democratization, emancipation, and the socialist movement. Youth detached from the people, devoid of aesthetic ideals, and with crumbling moral foundations, are criticized from the perspective of nihilism. It is claimed that the minds of young people are clouded by the provocations of names such as Nikolai G. Chernyshevskii (1828-89), Dmitrii I. Pisarev (1840-68), and Varfolomei A. Zaitsev (1842-82), who are described as British and Polish agents and defenders of the West. In Russian literature, the positive aspects of nihilism are emphasized by contrasting the works of anti-nihilist writers with works containing revolutionary-democratic elements. The following studies can be given as examples of nihilistic works in nineteenth-century Russia: *Street Philosophy* («Уличная философия») by Mikhail E. Saltykov-Shchedrin

(1826-89), *Pearls and Adamants of Russian Journalism* («Перлы и адаманты русской журналистики») by Varfolomeĭ Zaitsev, *Importation of Sewage into London* («Ввоз нечистот в Лондон») by Alexandr I. Herzen (1812-70), and *Angry Impotence* («Сердитое бессилие») by Dmitriĭ Pisarev (Tjun'kin 1: 241-42).

Nihilism expresses the emptiness in the world of human feelings, thoughts, and values arising from the innovative and progressive views brought about by modernization in Europe. In Russia, it developed politically and socially in parallel with the conditions of the country (Coşkun Karataş 42). As a rule of the period, the political aspect of Russian nihilism predominated. Activists aiming to oppose and overthrow the tsarist regime and not submit to any authority were called nihilists. Furthermore, this motivation of Russian nihilism takes its place in scientific studies with the definition of political nihilism. Nihilism in Russia was one-dimensional including only denial and rejection. For this reason, when looking at revolutionary organizations, especially *Narodnaia Volia*, it is seen that they did not have a tangible constructive program. The term nihilism took on a derogatory, and negative meaning in the 1870s and then this intensified with the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in March, 1881 (Crosby 9-11).

As a result, Russian nihilism has its roots in the West, but there are also points where it differs on its own terms. The first difference is the cultural gap resulting from the disconnect between the intelligentsia and the public. In this predicament, caused primarily by serfdom, the priority of solution is given to the intelligentsia. The principle of service to the public is emphasized. Another difference is that while certain forms of European nihilism may tend to emphasize the fundamental limitations of reason, Russian nihilism questions rationalism without rejecting scientific methods and knowledge.

The nihilism that Turgenev deals with in *Fathers and Sons* is also one-dimensional, aimed at denial and without a destructive feature. The author's purpose in using nihilism as a term in his work is that he wants to show the rejection of established values (Kelly 105). However, due to the opposite propaganda of the anti-nihilist camp, the novel is depicted as a work advocating nihilism, and Arkady is portrayed as a nihilist hero in every aspect. However, for the author, nihilism is the first of a three-stage road to social consensus. The first step is denial (nihilism), the second is keeping a distance from new knowledge (skepticism), the third is transformation into a "community of inquiry," and it ends at social reconciliation. As a result, Turgenev's nihilism

can be described as a philosophical movement that emerged from the socio-political realities of Russia at the time, with clearly defined boundaries and scope, and reflecting the first phase of the thought system that constituted the purpose of his work.

III. Bazarov's Contradiction of Nihilism and Arkady's Rise as a Real Nihilist

Nihilism is a way of thinking and life based on the concepts of absence, nothingness, and meaninglessness. In its most general definition, it is a movement that rejects the existence of all values. It shows itself not only in philosophy, but also in fields such as ethics, art, religion, and politics. In *Fathers and Sons*, Turgenev constructed the plot and dialogues in a way that reveals the feelings and thoughts of Bazarov and Arkady about the mentioned areas in the context of Russia's dynamics and nihilism. However, he stated that he never intended to create an image or typification. He shared that his starting point was not an opinion or a movement, but a desire to create a character as a living person to whom appropriate elements could be applied over time (Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie* 11: 86). The development of the protagonist is similar to the writing process of the novel. Turgenev decided to write his work during summer vacation in England, continued it during his studies in Paris, and completed it in Russia. Similarly, the protagonist is born with European nihilistic thoughts, but dies with the realities of Russia.

The novel *Fathers and Sons* consists of twenty-eight chapters though all the events take place in just two months. It is set on the farms of the Kirsanovs, Odintsovas, and Bazarovs. According to Dmitrii I. Pisarev, the plot of the novel does not contain elements such as exposition, rising and falling action, or resolution. Rather, there are types, characters, scenes from real life, and facts. These phenomena are so familiar to Russian society that the entire younger generation found their enthusiasm and views in the heroes of the novel (Pisarev 2: 7). The novel is built on antagonism and contradictions. At the beginning of the book, Bazarov is introduced as a self-confident, intelligent, gentle, humble, and omniscient nihilist who will soon become a doctor and whose main field of study is natural sciences. At the same time, Bazarov is smug, rude, lonely, and alienated from society. He lacks many friends and feels like a stranger wherever

he goes. Towards the end of the work, he sees nihilism as a useless approach and will advise young people to pursue more useful paths.

Bazarov dislikes nobles and aristocrats. His thoughts against the aristocrats are as follows: “Am I to fawn upon these rustic aristocrats, even though their attitude is one purely of conceit and subservience to custom?” (Turgenev, *Fathers* 35). Bazarov describes the aristocracy as “absolute meanness” and adds: “The aristocratic idea, forsooth! Liberalism, progress, principles! Why, have you ever considered the vanity of those terms? The Russian of to-day does not need them” (67). Though our hero sees himself as a low-class person, he disregards and looks down on aristocrats.

Bazarov is distant from science and art. He finds Anna Odintsova’s claim that people can be better known through art absurd and shares that art is not necessary to him. Our hero also considers the art of painting as an empty occupation: “I consider Raphael to be worth not a copper groat. And as for the artists themselves,² I appraise them at about a similar sum” (Turgenev, *Fathers* 73). When he learns that Pavel Kirsanov has a special sympathy for Goethe and Schiller, his response is: “A good chemist is worth a score of your poets” (33). When he sees that Nikolai Kirsanov is reading Pushkin, he states that it is not beneficial to read Pushkin; instead, he recommends that he read *Force and Matter* (*Stoff und Kraft*) by the German philosopher Louis Büchner (1824-99), which was popular at that time (63). On the other hand, he finds philosophy romantic and rejects it. He says that he is interested in physics and chemistry, but he does not like nature, considering it an empty and meaningless place. He expresses that the logic of history is unnecessary: “What has that logic to do with us? We can get on quite well without it” (68). Although he will become a doctor a year later, he does not believe in medical science.

Bazarov is also against the institution of marriage. He refuses to live with his parents, because doing so would interfere with his scientific studies. Later, despite not giving importance to the family institution, he returns to his family after the duel he experienced. Close to his death, it appears he realizes their worth. In response to Arkady’s father Nikolai’s request of marriage with Fenechka, Bazarov states his negative view of the subject: “So you still attribute importance to the marriage rite? This I should not have expected of you” (Turgenev, *Fathers* 58). Besides marriage, Bazarov denies love. Our hero despises male-female relations with the words: “Such talk is so much

² Raphael Sanzio da Urbino (1483-1520) is an Italian painter and architect of the Renaissance period.

romanticism and nonsense and unsoundness and artificiality” (44-45). According to him, a man does not have time to deal with such meaningless things. However, despite these words, he falls in love with Anna Odintsova. When he cannot find what he hopes for in Odintsova, he gets close to Fenechka. Before he dies, his last request from his father is to call Anna Odintsova, as he wants to see her one last time.

When the nihilist Bazarov has the opportunity to see Evdeoksia Kukshina and Anna Odintsova, his first question is whether they are beautiful. For a person who does not believe in the concept of beauty, this situation creates a contradiction. Additionally, after seeing Anna Odintsova, Bazarov, who does not speak much, starts to talk at length, rambling about medicine and botany. Bazarov scolds Arkady with his words while refusing to be principled: “No such thing as principle exists. That you seem never to have divined. Instincts only exist, and upon them everything depends” (Turgenev, *Fathers* 174). Anna Odintsova is very strict and disciplined about the order of her home; however, Bazarov, being against such order in principle, endures the situation and stays with her for days, although he is not happy. Bazarov and Arkady hate affectation, but after visiting Odintsova, they start to approach each other with fake, allusive, and derisive speech. Although Bazarov sees the duel as meaningless, he does not hesitate to fight. Additionally, he finds it absurd that his father goes to church for morning prayers and that he is anointed before he dies.

Our hero, a realistic type, leads a simple life, does not like to be artificial, and does not use foreign, pretentious, or inflated words. On the other hand, he always feels the need to hide his feelings, because he sees himself as a nihilist. Though Bazarov is pleased with Arkady’s offer to go to the Odintsova farm, he does not reveal his feelings. Even though he is embarrassed and shy in front of Anna Odintsova, from time to time he gets very annoyed with this situation. The blood in his veins flares up when he thinks about her. He becomes proud and angry because of the romance he feels when he is alone. He runs away to the forest, swears at himself, and tries to sleep, because he is a nihilist. As a matter of fact, his mother Arina laments that Bazarov “is opposed to any manifestations of emotion” (Turgenev, *Fathers* 168). She cannot touch him physically, or express sadness or joy to him. She is resigned to releasing her feelings only when she is alone, because she is afraid of her son’s

anger. Arkady also does not show that he is sad, and holds back tears in front of Bazarov, because he is afraid of ridicule.

According to Derda Küçükalp, nihilism in Bazarov is embodied as a rejection of everything. In the social and historical context, it evolves into a revolutionary idea that rebels against the family, tsarist, and church institutions. Bazarov's denial of any institutional authority exposes his nihilistic side. On the other hand, acceptance of the objectivity of scientific materialism distinguishes Russian nihilism from Nietzsche's. Because Nietzsche does not accept science as absolute truth and reality, he rejects it by seeing it as a system with boundaries drawn by specific people (Küçükalp 18-19).

There is confusion between nihilism and time in the character of Bazarov. Did nihilism emerge as a necessity of the period or was nihilism trying to shape the period? According to Bazarov, denial was a necessity of that time, so he lived only as his age required: "At present the course most useful is denial. Therefore we deny" (Turgenev, *Fathers* 68). However, our hero, who rejected everything throughout his life, is forced to accept defeat in the last stage of life: "Ah, however much you may deny death, it never will deny you" (260-61).

The visit to the Odintsova farm initiates spiritual and intellectual awakening of Arkady and Bazarov. It is no coincidence that the author chose the farm of the Odintsova as the place of transformation for his heroes. The element that will realize the transformation is of course not the place, but the person of Anna Odintsova. In his letter to his friend Konstantin K. Sluchevsky (1837-1904) on April 26, 1862, Turgenev describes Odintsova and her role as follows: "Odintsova falls in love with Arkady just as little as she does with Bazarov, how can you not see it! This is the same representative of our idle, dreaming, curious and cold epicurean ladies,³ our noblewomen" (*Polnoe*

³ Epicureanism is defined as follows in the *Dictionary of Philosophy Terms* prepared by the Turkish Language Association: "1-The teaching of the Greek philosopher Epicurus. 2-The living principle of Epicurus' thoughts (mostly crudely) has been made. Purpose of a life oriented towards pleasures and joys. However, Epicurus seeks not only pleasure, but also happiness and a peace of soul filled with joy and free from pain" (Türk Dil Kurumu 65). The word is given in *The Dictionary of Philosophy* edited by Dagobert D. Runes as follows: "Epicureanism gave expression to the desire for a refined type of happiness which is the reward of the cultured man who can take pleasure in the joys of the mind over which he can have greater control than over those of a material or sensuous nature. The friendship of gifted and noble men, the peace and contentment that comes from fair conduct, good morals and aesthetic enjoyments are the ideals of the Epicurean who refuses to be perturbed by any metaphysical or religious doctrines which impose duties and thus hinder the freedom of pure enjoyment" (93). The reason why Turgenev describes Anna Odintsova as a "cold epicurean" stems from his criticism of the

sobranie 5: 58). After this visit to her, with Arkady's remark: "One ought so to order one's life that every moment in it shall be of significance," and Bazarov's reply: "Of course; but while the significant, and even the pseudo-significant—yes, the absolutely insignificant as well—may be bearable, it is trifles, trifles that matter" (Turgenev, *Fathers* 173), they admit that the processes of transformation have begun. The sharp views of Bazarov, who criticizes everything, are eroded, and he begins to express that peace and tranquility can be achieved with a culture of reconciliation. The conversation with Fenechka on youth indicates that Bazarov has begun to put aside individuality and loneliness: "Well, think of what my youth means to me. I am a lonely man, a man without home or—" (198). Our hero, who is always alone, no longer wants to wander alone. The desire to work is replaced by boredom and sadness; his harsh, and hasty, sharp behavior is replaced by fatigue. He starts helping his father to rid himself of this mood. Bazarov's words in his farewell to Arkady are almost like a confession of awakening:

In my opinion you have acted wisely, for you were not meant to live the hard, bitter, reckless life of nihilism—you lack at once the necessary coolness and the necessary venom. But this is not to say that in you there is not a due measure of youthful spirit. What I mean is that asset alone is not sufficient for the work. (246)

On the way back from the Bazarovs' house, at the crossroads, the two friends find it difficult to answer the question of whether to go to the Odintsovas' or Kirsanovs' farm. Bazarov, who wanted to see Anna but could not confess, finds the question ridiculous; while Arkady says that their first ridiculous behavior is not, in fact, this decision. Rather, this question is also an indication that they are starting to think that many of the things they thought and did before were nonsense. In addition to this, the awakening begins on the other side. Turgenev announces the awakening of Pavel Kirsanov with his speech with his brother Nikolaï:

Russian intellectual character of the period, who pursued pleasure and remained indifferent to what was happening around him. The author tests both Bazarov and Arkady with the beauty of Odintsova. Both heroes fall in love with her, but she doesn't want either of them, her aim is just to have a good time. While Bazarov wants to see Anna even on his deathbed, Arkady turns back from his mistake and chooses Katia. Arkady feels that Katia values him and builds a happy home with her.

In fact, almost I am beginning to think that Bazarov was right when he accused me of only feigning the aristocratic instinct. For it is not enough for you and me to trouble ourselves about worldly matters alone. We are old men past our prime, who ought to lay aside all pettinesses, and to fulfill strictly our obligations. (223)

As a result of their awakening, the point where Pavel Kirsanov and Bazarov come to terms is when Bazarov tries to cure Pavel, who was injured in the duel. They feel that they mutually understand each other. These two irreconcilable poles are brought together by non-negotiable facts including health and death.

After the transformation, even with Pavel, Bazarov, who finds a common point to reconcile, becomes a completely different person. There is no longer the strong, cold, indifferent person at the beginning of the novel in the work. In the context of nihilism, “the collapse of a giant” takes place. Change happens, not only intellectually but also physically; our hero catches typhus and quickly approaches death. Bazarov, who considers himself to have lived an unproductive and useless life, speaks, advising the Russian youth before his death:

For a dead mortal is no companion for a living one. I daresay that my father will tell you what a man is being lost to Russia; but that is all rubbish. . . . Russia needs me, indeed! Evidently she does not need me. Whom, then, does she need? She needs shoemakers, tailors, butchers. . . . What does a butcher sell? He sells meat, does he not? (Turgenev, *Fathers* 267-68)

In the above words, Bazarov advises the Russian people that they should engage in useful work. Bazarov’s former indifference brings about his own demise. During an autopsy, he ignores the cut on his finger and continues the operation. Four hours later, with the insistence of his father, he finally applies the lunar caustic to his wound. According to Mustafa Aydemir, this is not a natural death, but suicide, because Bazarov’s conscious indifference is a choice (135). Gary R. Jahn suggests that Bazarov prepared his own end by allowing himself to be killed, even though his death was not carried out by himself (90). Another researcher, Edward Wasiolek, describes this death as “passive suicide” (40).

As is evident, Bazarov is a contradictory character who describes himself as “useless.” Despite his denial of love, he falls in love with Anna. He accepts Pavel Kirsanov’s duel offer, even though he calls it nonsense. Although he loves his parents, he does not hesitate to upset them. While opposing class, slavery, religion, public authority, family institution, science and art, the positivist believes in science, and empirical knowledge. In addition, he consistently criticizes the order and the system, yet he has no intention of taking action (Olcaý 142). The author criticizes this situation in the words of Pavel Kirsanov: “You say that you deny everything—rather, that you would consign everything to destruction. But also you ought to construct” (Turgenev, *Fathers* 68). Bazarov’s laziness and inaction are actually similar to the “superfluous man” (лишний человек) type, which is one of the main images of nineteenth-century Russian literature. Just as the useless person is of no use to his country, the nihilist Bazarov is of no use to Russia. On the other hand, the fact that he is described as revolutionary by some Russian critics creates a contrast. According to British philosopher Michael Allen Gillespie, Bazarov is one of the most enigmatic characters in Russian literature; a strange combination of opposites that evokes both hatred and admiration (146).

By nihilist writers, especially Pisarev, Bazarov is described as a “realist revolutionary” and a “new man” (Moser, *Anti-Nihilism* 29). However, our hero does not fit Nietzsche’s definition of “overman,” that is, “new man” (*Übermensch*). Although he is similar in that he rejects existing values and what is believed to be real, Bazarov fails to create new values by accepting responsibility or taking action. Bazarov’s thoughts and actions cannot fill the void left by the rejection and destruction of the old. In addition, the person in Nietzsche’s “new man” model sets an unachievable purpose for himself, being out of the question in the character of Bazarov, who sees himself as nothing more than a district doctor in the future. According to Russian philosopher and writer Alexandr Herzen, new people should emerge from different classes, not from the aristocratic class or from among superfluous men; the main criterion is that they are people who give importance to action rather than theory (Venturi 15). Essentially, Turgenev reveals the character closest to the “new man” model in his novel *On the Eve* («Накануне»). The character of Yelena Stahova, with her character as a person of action, made a serious impact in Russian society at that time. Leaving Russia for the ideals she believed in was seen as a sensational move. On the other hand, Yelena’s action is individual; it does not aim to

mobilize or follow the masses. New types of people who aim to mobilize Russian society are based on Nikolai Chernyshevsky's *What is to Be Done?* («Что делать?»). It fully manifests itself in his novel. The characters Vera Pavlovna, Rahmetov, Lopuhov, and Kirsanov are representatives of the “new man” model, representing the ideal society in the future of Russia and advocating new values. In the light of these data, it would not be wrong to say that Bazarov and Arkady are among the characters that contributed to the formation of the new human type in Russian literature. Arkady particularly can be considered to be a more specific and “rural” version of the new people included in Chernyshevsky's novel (Costlow 111). According to Türcan Olcay, who does scientific studies on Russian literature, “Turgenev's greatest feature as an artist is that every character he creates is complete and original” (136). In this context, it would not be wrong to say that the holistic character of Bazarov does not reflect the whole of nihilism. The first stage of nihilism is reflected as a whole within the character of Bazarov, while the remaining half is completed with Arkady. Considering the message the author wants to convey, both characters form integrity within themselves.

The first visit of Bazarov and Arkady to Odintsova is the scene of Bazarov's collapse with contradictions and the beginning of Arkady's rise. Arkady realizes that he is trying to be Bazarov's copy and that he is ignoring his own feelings and thoughts, and he experiences an enlightenment. Together with Katia, we witness the rise of Arkady, as he becomes conscious of real life, responsibilities, and power. Not seeing the attention he expected from Anna Odintsova, Arkady turns to her sister, Katia, and makes his choice: “Whereas Madame cares nothing for me, this good-hearted creature does not give me the cold shoulder” (Turgenev, *Fathers* 124). As a matter of fact, Arkady tastes these good feelings for the first time. Poetry, stories, and music, which were meaningless before, now interest him or perhaps he is newly aware that they do. Arkady, who rejects all kinds of value like his mentor, evaluates whether he sees value after the transformation as a criterion in his relationship.

In terms of nihilism, Arkady is a continuation of Bazarov. Although he was born in a noble, traditionalist family, because of Bazarov he is closer to the view that rejects customs and traditions such as nihilism. After experiencing these ideas, he creates his own world of thought and moves away from nihilism. Like his hero Bazarov, he is in love with Anna Odintsova, though he gives up on her and marries Katia, believing she will make him happier. Although he

attaches great importance to Bazarov's friendship, he becomes alienated from this friendship after his critical and humiliating attitudes. While he has a romantic personality, loving village life and nature, he does not deny the facts of reason and science. At the same time as defending nihilism, he also respects his father, whom he describes as a humanist.

Arkady does not like his ideas to remain in theory; he wants to turn them into practice and application. The news of the abolition of serfdom does not interest Bazarov. He sees the skinny people, the hungry cows, the neglected horses, and the devastated churches in village life, though he does not offer any solution. But Arkady brainstorms with the words: "Yet can it be left as it is? No! Education is what we need. But how is that education to be administered, or, for that matter, to be introduced?" (Turgenev, *Fathers* 14). Actually, these speeches of Arkady are questions at the moment when the author decides to write his work. In August, 1860, while Turgenev was on vacation in the Isle of Wight,⁴ his body was in England though his mind was in Russia. Even though the author was on vacation, he was thinking of ways to be useful to his country, as though this sense of service was in the author's genes (Baskakov 155-56). The question in his mind was: "What is to be done?" (Freeborn 73).

The change in Arkady draws the attention of others. In a conversation with Bazarov about Arkady, Anna Odintsova reflects: "Somehow he seemed too insignificant for you. But now, I know him better, and have convinced myself that in his head there is a brain. Above all things, he is young, young—not like you and myself, Evgenii Vasilitch" (Turgenev, *Fathers* 236). This highlights the rise and growing importance of Arkady's character. Arkady, who was in the shadow of Bazarov until the last pages, now rises to the position of the most important person in the novel. In Bazarov's words, "young cockerel" becomes "jackdaw" (259). Turgenev narrates the transformation and rise of his hero in Arkady's own words:

No longer am I the presumptuous lad who came here a short while ago: not for nothing have I attained my twenty-third year. And though I still wish to be of use in life, though I still wish to

⁴ The Isle of Wight became a popular holiday destination for Westernist Russian artists and philosophers in the nineteenth century. The purpose of the artists and philosophers coming together is not just to have a holiday. They discuss the current situation in Russia and brainstorm for the future. These meetings mean new views for philosophers and new works for artists. That is the reason why Turgenev decided to write *Fathers and Sons* in England. See Freeborn 73.

consecrate the whole of my faculties to the service of Truth, I no longer seek my ideals where I was wont to do—they appear to me to stand much nearer home. Hitherto I have been in ignorance of myself, hitherto I have set myself tasks beyond my powers; but now, through a certain feeling which is within me, my eyes have become opened. (240)

Turgenev sets out with Bazarov as the protagonist and comes to a conclusion with Arkady and the culture of reconciliation. Well, is there a need for a nihilist character like Bazarov in the plot?⁵ According to the Russian critic Pisarev, “Bazarovism” is an absolute result of the conditions of the period in which it is lived, and this “illness” has to be experienced in Russian history: “If Bazarovism is a disease, then it is a disease of our time, and one has to suffer from it, despite all temporary remedies and amputations.⁶ Approach it the way you want to approach the Bazarovism, it’s up to you. But if you want to stop it, you cannot, because it is just like cholera” (2: 11).

Pisarev explains Bazarov’s character in two ways. The first is one-way personality development, and the second is the conditions in which he lives (Olçay 158). According to Nazan Coşkun Karataş, Turgenev did not create the Bazarov type to criticize nihilism. He created his hero in accordance with Russian nihilism, with a conscious character that does not submit to any authority but also cannot take action. In addition, Turgenev does not approach nihilism negatively in his own novel as much as Ivan Goncharov in *The Precipice* and Fëdor Dostoevskiï in *Demons* (Coşkun Karataş 51). Turgenev’s aim is to use nihilism as a tool. It is to create an alternative path for the liberation of Russia, which is going through a difficult period. Therefore, it does not approach nihilism with sympathy or hostility. Turgenev’s motivation for

⁵ Turgenev’s answer to this question is “yes.” Nihilist Bazarov is not an abstract, but a concrete character for Russia. But even the author himself asks himself this question from time to time: “At the base of the main figure, Bazarov, lay one personality of a young provincial doctor that struck me. (He died shortly before 1860). In this remarkable man, as I saw it, that barely arisen, still fermenting principle was embodied, which later received the name of nihilism. The impression this person made on me was very strong and at the same time not entirely clear; At first, I myself could not give myself a good account of it—and listened intently and looked closely at everything that surrounded me, as if wanting to believe the veracity of my own sensations. I was embarrassed by the following fact: in not a single work of our literature did I even meet a hint of what seemed to me everywhere; Involuntarily, a doubt arose: am I chasing a ghost?” (Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie* 11: 86)

⁶ “1-Excision of an organ, 2- (fig.) cutting or tearing off a part from any whole” (Türk Dil Kurumu 102).

writing *Fathers and Sons* is not a movement of nihilism, but a desire to take action hastily and immediately, which is also a characteristic of his surname.

The real theme of the novel is revealed with the death of Bazarov. According to Jahn, Bazarov has two paths before him: the first is the reconciliation of antithesis, the other is death. Since the first solution is not successful, the second is inevitable. His body, in which irresolvable opposites are embodied by the author, is put in the grave (Jahn 90). This important change, which has evolved from being morally and psychologically strong and healthy to spiritual bankruptcy, is considered unjust by some critics. Critics describe it as a hasty action to silence change, to bring it to a tragic stand before historical destiny (Wasiolek 40). Turgenev killed his hero, because Bazarov, who fulfilled the given task, has no reason to live. According to the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin (1909-97), Bazarov did not fail, nor was he defeated by any movement or ideology. His creator wrote his destiny that way; that is, the historical fate brought Bazarov's end (29). Pisarev explains the meaning of the novel with these words:

The young people of our time are interested in living on the fringe and they are immersed themselves in certain thoughts. However, fresh strength and a sound mind appear in the midst of their own excitement. This mind and power, without any outer mediation or influence, will guide the youth to the right path and support them in their lives. (2: 49)

The Russian critic asks the young people to use their own minds and powers, as this is the method that will guide the Russian youth to the right path. As a result, it is understood that both Bazarov and Arkady, as nihilists, are not satisfied with certain situations in the country, especially in the first pages of the novel. Actually, the effect is the same for both heroes, but their reactions are different. According to Paul Katsafanas, who studies nihilism, discontentment or suffering can elicit two different reactions. The first of these reactions is more desire and motivation for struggle; the other is not being able to act as a result of lack of will and power (Katsafanas 414). In the novel, Bazarov is unable to take action in the point of struggle because he lacks motivation. Arkady, on the other hand, takes responsibility and takes action to

be useful for his country by keeping his morale and motivation high, without breaking his own enthusiasm.

Turgenev needs heroes who will take action, helping his country get out of its difficult conditions, and in short, who will “solve the problem,” which is why he kills Bazarov and keeps Arkady alive. It is not a coincidence that the author’s intention and motivation in creating his work resembles the “community of inquiry” model put forward by pragmatic philosophers.⁷ The terms “community” and “inquiry” in the model are used to refer to a group of individuals who increase mutual understanding and knowledge sharing to solve problems and achieve results (Pardales and Girod 301). The basis of the concept of community of inquiry of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), one of the pioneers of the model, is that people come together to serve on the jury of ideas and hypotheses. In an environment where people come together by consensus, knowledge, truth, and reality can be talked about, but these concepts must be based on the community of inquiry, not on individual consciousness (Murphy 12). Although the destructive aspect of nihilism seems to come to the forefront in the work, the author actually wants skepticism to be adopted. When we look at the course of nihilism in history, we see that its roots extend to the movement of skepticism.⁸ In other words, Turgenev also benefits from the pragmatic aspect of nihilism. He wishes for the Russian people, especially youth, to be involved in the conceptual questioning process, to take action, and to contribute to ridding the country of its problems. In the community of the inquiry model, knowledge, truth, and reality are necessarily embedded in a social context and thus require interpersonal agreement among those involved in the inquiry process. It reinforces fundamental values such as democracy, freedom and equality, and strengthens the culture of participatory democracy (Shields 511-12). Thus the social

⁷ In this model, social interaction and collaboration give meaning to, shape, and control information, thus enrich understanding and knowledge sharing (Garrison and Vaughan 14). Since this interaction and cooperation will ensure social consensus, it will contribute to the solution of issues described as “problems.” Although it is mostly used in educational sciences today, the community of inquiry model is used in many fields from psychology to sociology, from public administration to philosophy.

⁸ Skepticism is defined as follows in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*: “in the most common sense, the refusal to grant that there is any knowledge or justification. Skepticism can be either partial or total, either practical or theoretical, and, if theoretical, either moderate or radical, and either of knowledge or of justification” (Audi 988). Turgenev, who approaches nihilism objectively, is more sympathetic to skepticism. He asks Russian youth to question and use their minds. Because the first and fundamental problem of reason and science is to doubt.

reconciliation environment desired in the country, especially by Turgenev, will be automatically achieved.

IV. Conclusion

Nihilism does not start with rejecting what exists but with not believing in it. After personal comment is included, it should be rejected or accepted by Russian youth. Herein lies the fundamental antagonism in Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons*. The author creates Bazarov, who rejects everything, and Arkady, who does not believe in anything. Via the movement of nihilism, he sends the message to Russian youth that they should not unquestioningly accept or reject any ideas from the West or elsewhere. In fact, if it is considered on the basis of the philosophical movement, the author recommends skepticism to the Russian youth, not nihilism. According to the author, only with this method can a culture of reconciliation settle in the country so that Russia can develop and move forward. As a matter of fact, this choice is also the choice of whether they will be useful or useless to their country.

Pisarev uses the phrase "representative of the destructive and redeeming power of our time" for Bazarov (2: 24). The Russian critic's "destructive" characterization can be said for Bazarov, though it is debatable whether he is a "redeemer," as he dies without doing any good to himself, his environment, or society. The hero in the role of savior in the work is Arkady. After questioning and reinterpreting his feelings, thoughts and values, he is the person who benefits himself and everyone else. At the end of the novel, he marries Katia and takes over his farm, welcoming a happy and peaceful life. While Bazarov's life ends grievously, Arkady's has a happy ending. One may approach both heroes within the framework of nihilism. The questioning of values, which is the first stage of nihilism, can be seen in the character of Bazarov; while the second stage, which is the interpretation and re-evaluation of values, taking responsibility and taking action, is Arkady's destiny. As a result, Bazarov cannot be described as a complete nihilist; the hero is only a representative of the first stage of this philosophical movement. The real representative of the nihilism and community of inquiry in the work is Arkady.

As a result of our research, it is shown that Turgenev's purpose in writing the work consisted of two stages. The first is that the author does not desire to destroy order in Russia through nihilism, but the chronicled stereotypes that

reflect the status quo. The second is to contribute to the process of building a public that represents the community of inquiry model on the basis of the skepticism movement. According to Turgenev, only in this way will the Russian people find the right way out. Russians should listen to and respect each other without any prejudice, without directly rejecting new ideas or blindly adopting them. Thus, the culture of reconciliation will become widespread among Russian society. At the end of the novel, the winner is not an ideology, but a culture of consensus. As a matter of fact, in the last sentence, the author shares that the flowers on Bazarov's grave tell about eternal reconciliation and an immortal life. If it were Pavel's views that won, the author would not have driven him away from Russia; if it had been Bazarov's, he would not have killed him off. In the scene where the couples Arkady and Katia, Nikolaï and Fenechka come together at the dinner held for Pavel's farewell, Turgenev says that only Pavel has weakened, describing the appearances of the others as follows: "A change has taken place in our old acquaintances since last we saw them—they have improved, as regards the younger ones, both in appearance and in sedateness of demeanour" (Turgenev, *Fathers* 270-71). The common point of these couples is that they do not have extreme thoughts and they adopt the culture of reconciliation, even though they sometimes stay together with difficulties. As a result, Turgenev wrote *Fathers and Sons* so that the failure he experienced in bringing all the parties together for a consensus on the solution of the serfdom would not be experienced when it came to other issues. He intentionally chose the movement of nihilism to attract attention, giving Bazarov the role of denying everything and giving Arkady the role of taking responsibility by interpreting and taking action. He revealed that Russia should seek solutions to its problems on the basis of social reconciliation. He wished for a transition to the model of a community of inquiry in Russia through the philosophical movement and heroes that he included in his work, because he thought that in this way, social reconciliation could be achieved and more realistic solutions to Russia's problems could be found.

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