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## Two Hamlets: Questioning Romanticism in Turgenev's Bazarov and Sleptsov's Riazanov

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*The article examines the presentation of the protagonist as alienated radical activist in the novels *Отцы и дети* (Fathers and Sons) and *Трудное время* (Hard Times). Both Turgenev and Sleptsov draw on ideological and social questions of the day, yet each also creates a protagonist situated within a literary context. The Romantic hero, particularly as defined by Byron, is the major paradigm for Turgenev, while Sleptsov adopts a more skeptical approach. At the same time both protagonists are also imbued with the 19th-century Russia interpretation of Hamlet as a study in social frustration.*

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In his essay "Bazarov Again" ("Eshche raz Bazarov," 1862), Alexander Herzen writes: "This mutual interaction of people and books is a strange thing. A book takes its shape from the society that spawns it, then generalizes the material, renders it clearer and sharper, and as a consequence reality is transformed."<sup>1</sup> It is generally accepted that in Russia the mutual interaction of people and books has been intense, particularly in the realm of social and political commentary, and there is, no doubt, considerable truth in Herzen's observation that under such conditions "real people take on the character of their literary shadows."

Whether or not young Russians after 1862 were "almost all out of What is to be Done? with the addition of a few of Barazov's traits," such was frequently assumed to be the case, as the statements of critics and political activists attest.<sup>2</sup> Dmitrii Pisarev, for example, in an article entitled "We Shall See" (*Posmotrim*," 1865), raises the specter of hundreds of Bazarovs: "the Bazarov type is growing constantly, not by days, but by the hour, in life as well as in literature."<sup>3</sup> But as Herzen recognized, Pisarev's Bazarov owes more to the critic's own vision of the Russian intelligentsia than to the text of Fathers and Sons: "Whether Pisarev understood Turgenev's Bazarov correctly does not concern me. What is important

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is that he recognized himself and others like him in Bazarov and supplied what was lacking in the book" (337).

Many of the novel's exegetes have continued to supply "what was lacking" in order to portray Bazarov as a representative of radical tendencies in the sixties. And yet Bazarov is defined to a greater degree by a literary archetype deriving from European Romanticism and clearly delineated in certain of Turgenev's earliest writings. In a further turn Turgenev both derives Bazarov from the Romantic archetype and challenges that derivation with a skepticism that ensued in no small measure from his interpretation of Hamlet.

The case for the influence of Romanticism can be made within Turgenev's works, but the extent to which it forms his portrayal of the nihilist is all the more clearly revealed when one compares Fathers and Sons (Ottsy I deti, 1862) with another novel written during the same period and centered around a similar (that is, radical) protagonist. Its author, Vasilii Sleptsov, was well known for his participation in radical causes during the sixties (as the fame of his Petersburg commune attests), and he presumably had a more intimate knowledge of the radical milieu than did Turgenev.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore Sleptsov, who began his career as a writer in the early sixties, lacked the Romantic apprenticeship which was to have such a pervasive influence on Turgenev's later work. Consequently, in his novel Hard Times (Trudnoe Vremia, published in *Sovremennik*, 1864), Sleptsov presents the Russian radical from a different literary perspective.

The similarity between *Fathers and Sons* and *Hard Times* was first noted, appropriately enough, by Pisarev, in an article entitled "Flourishing Humanity" ("Podrastaiushchaia gumannost'," 1865). Pisarev characterizes Sleptsov's protagonist, Riazanov, as "one of the brilliant representatives of my beloved Bazarov

type" (IV,53). Although one might question the accuracy of this statement, the resemblance between the two protagonists provides a sufficient basis for comparison. Both Bazarov and Riazanov are raznochintsy (the latter a priest's son), disaffected intellectuals who intend to destroy so that others may build, although neither is certain as to how the destruction will occur or who will do the building. Both represent the rise of a new class and a new militancy in Russia's educational system. Both are products of the urban intellectual milieu--although their origins link them to the provinces of central Russia ("Riazanov," "Bazarov"). Both are intruders in a rural backwater, which is itself beset with problems of social reform.

On this last point even the details correspond: the principle landowners in both novels--Nikolai Kirsanov and Shchetinin--attempt to introduce agricultural improvements and reforms in their dealings with the peasants, but their efforts are viewed with suspicion by neighboring landowners and with indifference by the peasants (a reaction familiar to Tolstoi's repentant landowners). Kirsanov and Shchetinin are swindled by their laborers and are baffled by their ignorance, superstition, and resistance to the reform. Descriptions of rural poverty are frequent, particularly in Hard Times, while attempts to implement a rational system of agricultural productivity are continually frustrated. (In both works a new threshing machine, purchased at great expense, proves too heavy for local conditions.) The similarity extends to the physical setting as well: the same dilapidated church, the same peasant huts clustered in a village near a manor house with the same arbors and acacias.

Once placed in this setting, both protagonists are led into a situation which pits their urban radicalism against a form of gentry liberalism. As would be expected, each novelist relies heavily on dialogue to develop a conflict which arises from

ideological antagonism, but there is a difference in the function of these confrontations. In *Hard Times* they so dominate the core of the work that plot is relatively unimportant and the narrator's comments are little more than extended stage directions. In *Fathers and Sons*, which has a plot of greater complexity, the narrator's intrusions direct the reader's perception of events, while ideological arguments serve primarily to motivate a course of action which eventually has little to do with ideology. Nevertheless, both works begin with a similar conflict, and they present it in much the same terms

From the moment Pavel Kirsanov first hears the word "nihilist," until Bazarov's interview with Odintsova in chapter sixteen, Turgenev's radical periodically expresses views which cannot be reconciled with the idea of social progress through gradual reform. Bazarov's political rhetoric is too well known to require lengthy quotation, but two passages--both in chapter ten--are particularly close to the views Riazanov will express in *Hard Times*. In the first Bazarov dismisses the vocabulary of liberalism (as expressed by Pavel Kirsanov): "Aristocracy, liberalism, progress, principles... if you think about it, how many foreign and useless words!"<sup>5</sup> In the second, he makes one of the most common accusations against Russian liberalism--its inability to act:

"Then we figured out that talking, always talking about our sores wasn't worth the effort, that it only led to banality and doctrinairism. We saw that even our smart ones, so-called progressive people and exposers of abuses, were fit for nothing; that we were occupied with nonsense, were harping about some sort of art, unconscious creativity, parliamentarianism, the legal profession, and the devil knows what else, while it's a question of daily bread..." (245)

In one passage from *Hard Times* Riazanov develops a similar argument as he explains to Shchetinin's wife the uselessness of progressive articles she has been reading:

"You see, it's all the same. You have these signs, and on them it's written 'Russian Truth' or 'White Swan.' So you go looking for a white swan--but it's a tavern, In order to read these books and understand them, you have to be practiced... If you have a fresh mind and you pick up one of these books, then you really will see white swans: schools, and courts, and constitutions, and prostitutions, and Magna Chartas, and the devil knows what else... But if you look into the matter, you'll see that it's nothing but a carry-out joint."<sup>6</sup>

In the same vein Bazarov states that "at the present time, negation is the most useful action," that before construction "the ground has to be cleared" (243), while Riazanov gives Shchetinina a paraphrase of one of his radical pamphlets: "If you want to build a temple, first take measures so that the enemy cavalry doesn't use it as a stable" (79) When Shchetinina asks, what is to be done, Riazanov answers: "'All that's left is to think up, to create a new life; but until then ...' he waved his hand" (148). Riazanov's manner of expression may be earthier than Bazarov's, yet the ideas are the same. Bazarov's rage against useless talk notwithstanding, neither radical goes beyond the rhetoric of frustration so frequently associated with the image of Hamlet in nineteenth-century Russian critical commentary.

But however similar the rhetoric, the ensuing development reveals a fundamental difference between the novels. Turgenev, it would seem, is less interested in Bazarov the nihilist (understood as a product of ideology) than in Bazarov the Romantic rebel. For by

the middle of Fathers and Sons the ideological element begins to recede and it becomes clear that Bazarov's radical views, rather than determining his actions, have served to establish a position of isolation from which he can offer his challenge to the order of the universe. Turgenev has endowed his hero with a matrix of current political opinions, only to lead him toward a confrontation between his "fathomless" ego and his "intimation of mortality"--a confrontation inherent in Bazarov's aggressive determination to understand the essence of nature through a type of scientific materialism. If in his challenge Bazarov has lost a sense of oneness with nature (the talisman scene), Turgenev effects a final reconciliation which in itself implies a Romantic view of the unity between man and nature--or a longing for that unity:

"However passionate, sinning, and rebellious the heart concealed in the tomb, the flowers growing over it look at us serenely (bezmiatezhno) with their innocent eyes: they tell us not of eternal peace alone, of that great peace of 'indifferent' nature,; they tell us also of eternal reconciliation and of life without end..." (402)

Such lines have a distinctly Wordsworthian ring--if not in diction, then certainly in thought.

The evidence for viewing Bazarov's nihilism as one component of a romantic image is grounded in Turgenev's own statements on the subject, particularly in his preparatory remarks for Virgin Soil (Nov', 1877). He writes that there are "Romantics of Realism," who "long for the real and strive toward it as former Romantics did toward the 'ideal,'" who seek in this reality "something grand and significant (nechto velikoe i znachitel'noe)" (XII, 314). After characterizing the type as a prophet, tormented and anguished, Turgenev adds: "I introduced an element of that

Romanticism into Bazarov as well--a fact that only Pisarev noticed" (XII, 314).

In fact Pisarev was not the only one to notice Romantic traits in Bazarov's character. Maksim Antonovich, in his review, "Asmodei nashego vremeni" (Sovremennik, 1862, No. 3), writes: "Apparently Mr. Turgenev wanted to portray in his hero, so to speak, the demonic or Byronic nature, something like Hamlet; but, on the other hand, he endowed him with traits which make this nature seem most ordinary and even vulgar, at least very far from demonism." In the next sentence Antonovich calls Bazarov a caricature. Obtuse as his description is, it notes one element of the Romantic in Bazarov; but Antonovich is incapable of dealing with the literary implications of his observation and would consider them unimportant. N. N. Strakhov, in his review of Fathers and Sons (Vremia, April, 1862), responded to Antonovich's accusation by quoting the above passage and adding: "Hamlet--a demonic nature! This shows some muddled thinking about Byron and Shakespeare. But actually, Turgenev did produce something of the demonic, that is, a nature rich in strength, although this strength is not pure." Strakhov's article is perceptive as well as sympathetic to Bazarov, but he too fails to develop the significance of the Romantic (or "demonic") aspect of Bazarov's character.<sup>7</sup>

Turgenev's reference to the hero as a Romantic of Realism is the most explicit statement of the relation between Bazarov's faith in materialism and the Romantic spirit which informs his behavior. But that spirit is also clearly defined within the novel itself--defined in part, by Bazarov's use of terms such as "romantic" and "romanticism." In chapter four he says of the elder Kirsanovs: "These elderly romantics! They develop their nervous systems to the point of irritation... and so their equilibrium is destroyed." (210) Commenting on the nature of love he tells Arkadii: "Study the anatomy of the eye a bit;

where does the enigmatic glance you talk about come in? That's all romanticism, nonsense, art (*khudozhestvo*)." During the dispute in chapter ten the narrator remarks: "This last phrase [spoken by Arkadii] apparently displeased Bazarov; there was a flavor of philosophy, that is to say, romanticism about it, for Bazarov called philosophy, too, romanticism..." (243.) In his presentation of Bazarov's thoughts on Odintsova, the narrator comments: "In his conversations with Anna Sergeevna he expressed more strongly than ever his calm contempt for everything romantic; but when he was alone, with indignation he recognized the romantic in himself." (287.) And in chapter nineteen Bazarov tells Arkadii: "In my opinion it's better to break stones on the road than to let a woman gain control over even the end of your little finger. That's all..." Bazarov was on the point of uttering his favorite word, 'romanticism,' but he checked himself and said 'nonsense'" (306.) ...

Pisarev is very much to the point when he says, in an 1862 article entitled "Bazarov": "Pursuing romanticism, Bazarov with incredible suspicion looks for it where it has never even existed. Arming himself against idealism and smashing its castles in the air, he at times becomes an idealist himself..." (II, 27.) Indeed, Bazarov's path to self-knowledge (and spiritual crisis) is associated with the developing awareness of "the romantic within himself," however contemptuously he may react to that element.

Bazarov, of course, does not use words such as "romanticism" in a specifically literary sense. And P. G. Pustovoit has noted that Turgenev's application of the terms "romantic" and "romanticism" in his critical writings often refers to a "romantic" disposition rather than to Romanticism as a literary method.<sup>8</sup> But from a structural point of view the two are inextricably connected: the literature and rhetoric of Romanticism provide the model for this romantic

disposition.<sup>9</sup> In fact the model is delineated in Turgenev's work well before *Fathers and Sons*. In a review of Vronchenko's translation of *Faust* (*Otechestvennyye zapiski*, 1845, No. 2), Turgenev describes the Romantic hero in the following terms:

"He becomes the center of the surrounding world; he... does not submit to anything, he forces everything to submit to himself; he lives by the heart, but by his own, solitary heart--not another's--even in love, about which he dreams so much; he is a romantic, and romanticism is nothing more than the apotheosis of personality (*apofeoz lichnosti*). He is willing to talk about society, about social questions, about science; but society, like science, exists for him--not he for them." (I, 220.)

Much in this description could well be applied to Bazarov: the last sentence is reminiscent of his outburst against concern for the peasants' well-being in the face of his own inevitable death, while the phrase «apotheosis of personality» identifies one of the dominant motifs in Bazarov's character. In chapter ten Pavel Petrovich remarks Bazarov's «almost Satanic pride,» while Arkadii, in chapter nineteen, notices «the fathomless depths of Bazarov's conceit,» and asks him whether he considers himself a god. Whatever the difficulties in establishing a typology for *homo romanticus*, the passage quote above suggests that in his commentary on *Faust*, Turgenev presented an interpretation of the Romantic hero which reached its culmination in the creation of Bazarov.

But one can find the type still earlier--in Turgenev's verse drama *Steno* (1837). Despite differences in plot and circumstance both *Steno* and Bazarov suffer much the same spiritual malaise--an awareness of great strength, coupled

with a sense of isolation and impotence before the totality of nature. In act one Steno muses: "Rome passed... and we too shall disappear, leaving nothing behind use... What does life signify? What death? I inquire of you, the sky, but you are silent in your cold magnificence!" (I, 370.) Similar rhetorical passages occur throughout the play: Steno speaks of the loss of faith, of the insignificance of man, and yet there is a hint of reconciliation in death. In act two Turgenev characterizes his hero through the voice of the monk Antonio: "How much strength he has! How much suffering! In him the Creator has shown us an example of the torments of those with a mighty soul, when they, relying on their strength, go alone to meet the world and embrace it." (I, 391.) (See also Turgenev's description of Bazarov in a letter to Konstantin Sluchevskii, "I conceived of a figure gloomy, wild, enormous, half-grown from the soil, strong, caustic, honest--and all the same condemned to destruction..." [IV, 381].) And since Steno is little more than a paraphrase of Manfred (as Turgenev readily admitted), it would seem that the portrait of Bazarov owes much to the Byronic variant of European romanticism--particularly in its concept of the alienated but defiant hero.

Turgenev would later ridicule his youthful enthusiasm for Manfred, as he would the play which arose from this infatuation. But the evidence of his fiction shows a reworking, an adaptation of certain fundamental concern--and modes of expression--contained within the juvenilia. It might be argued that Turgenev had sufficiently detached himself from his early, derivative Romanticism to judge it in Fathers and Sons. Yet the narrative rhetoric of that novel, especially in the concluding paragraph, leads one to assume that the Romantic element was still very much a part of his vision. As M. O. Gershenzon has noted, much in Turgenev's later work is organically related to Steno,<sup>10</sup> and

Bazarov must be considered evidence of that continuity.

In view of these antecedents it would seem that the conflict between Bazarov and Pavel Kirsanov is an antagonism not so much between the idealistic liberal of the forties and the materialistic radical of the sixties, as between two "generations" of Romantics--both derived from variations of Romanticism prevalent in the thirties and forties.<sup>11</sup> This common element in Turgenev's conception of Bazarov and Kirsanov has not been sufficiently acknowledged, despite the fact that it is developed through an extensive system of parallels in their characterization as well as their fate. Each is passionate in his defense of certain principles, abstractions, ideals (and Bazarov's "materialism" is just as idealistic as Kirsanov's liberalism). But for all of their apparent dedication to an ideological position, each is led to believe that his life is without purpose. To be sure, there is a difference in their expression of this belief: Kirsanov's resignation as opposed to the anger and defiance of Bazarov's metaphysical nihilism.

In each case Turgenev motivates the crisis with a passionate, desperate affair which represents his conception of the incomprehensible power of love--love unattainable, which can end only in death. Pavel Kirsanov, shattered by his attraction to the "mysterious" Princess R. (chapter seven) enters a period of decline in which his former hopes and ambitions are abandoned. Kirsanov is consigned to an existence which has all the appearance of a romantic cliché: "Ladies considered him an enchanting melankholik, but he did not associate with ladies..." (225).

And Bazarov claims to see through the cliché. After the account of Kirsanov's life (ostensibly told by Arkadii (Bazarov responds: "And what about these mysterious relations between a man and a woman? We physiologists know what such relations are. Study the anatomy of the eye..."

(226.) But Kirsanov's affair is merely a prelude to Bazarov's confrontation with Odintsova, during which Turgenev will invest the cliché with a pathos appropriate to his hero's strength. Both Bazarov and Kirsanov die in the course of the novel; but Kirsanov, trapped within his image of fatal passion, is granted only a lingering death in life (see the final lines of chapter twenty-four). Bazarov, however, transcends the motif of destructive love by the strength of a rebellion which reflects the egocentric Romantic anguish so imperfectly realized in *Steno*.

Turgenev, then, has isolated Bazarov and Pavel Kirsanov within an intensely subjective, individual crisis that has little direct relation to an ideological dispute between opposing generations. Indeed, the entire notion of generational conflict in *Fathers and Sons* is open to question. It is often assumed that the title implies sons against fathers, yet the Kirsanovs are reconciled at the end of the novel and the affection between Bazarov and his parents is beyond doubt. Furthermore, Pavel Kirsanov and Bazarov reach a tenuous reconciliation of their own, following the duel which again reveals the Romantic principle in both--Bazarov's rationalizations notwithstanding. Whatever the initial opposition (based on role stereotypes--youth rebelling against its elders), it is affinity between the generations that defines the basic pattern of relations between fathers and sons (Bazarov's father shouting at the end of chapter twenty-seven, "I rebel, I rebel").

Rather, the book's irreconcilable conflict is surely between the two sons, and it is all the deeper--and more subversive--for not being expressed in ideological terms. Arkadii, whose political views are dismissed early in the novel, is representative of the "honest consciousness," one who accepts his role within the family and its process of biological continuity. Bazarov, well aware of his companion's apostasy ("You're not

made for our bitter, rough, lonely existence"), consigns him to his domestic, jackdaw happiness (the banality of the family), thus intensifying the isolation so necessary for his own image.

Indeed, Arkadii has replaced his "radical" opinions with a desire to turn a profit on the family estate--and is so doing illustrates Turgenev's statement in the letter to Sluchevskii: "My entire story is directed against the gentry as a progressive class." (IV, 380.) As Arkadii and Katia enter Arcadia in fulfillment of roles appropriate to pastoral comedy, Bazarov, the Romantic radical, is left to his tragic destiny. Like Rudin, he is remembered by the happy at their feast (discreetly, to be sure). But also like Rudin, he can have no place with the settled and unrebelling.

In comparison with Turgenev's romanticized view of revolt, Sleptsov's approach to radicalism is prosaic. One could point to an element of the Romantic in Riazanov--like Bazarov, a rebel and prey to the *ressentiment* which accompanies his rebellion.. But Sleptsov undercuts the element by his laconic narrative tone as well as by the structure of a plot which can be reduced to the simplest of outlines: Riazanov, a radical intelligent escaping Petersburg in the wake of a new period of repression (1863), arrives at the estate of his university acquaintance, Shchetinin, now married and settled into what he hope will be the morally and financially satisfying role of enlightened landowner. Riazanov and Shchetinin engage in a series of arguments during which the radical attempts to demolish the liberal's belief in gradual social progress through reform. But the focus of the novel eventually shifts to Shchetinin's wife.

Under the sway of Riazanov's nihilistic opinions, Shchetinina can no longer accept what she now sees as her husband's impotent liberalism. She decides to abandon her role as benevolent estate mistress and devote herself to another

cause. Yet, when she turns to Riazanov for the emotional and moral support to sustain her in this decision, she is rebuffed. In an intertwining of sexual and ideological elements characteristic of the relations within this menage à trois, Riazanov rejects her sexual advances as well as her desire to aid him in his vaguely defined radical activity. Shchetinina, however, perseveres in her resolve to leave the estate for Petersburg, where she will attempt to join the ranks of the “new people,” despite Riazanov’s dim view of this fashionable radicalism (an echo, perhaps, of Bazarov’s attitude toward Sitnikov and Kukshina).

The novel ends in a standoff. Shchetinina takes refuge in his reform projects, and a liberated Maria Shchetinina goes to Petersburg in search of her cause. Riazanov, committed to a distant and uncertain revolution, leaves the estate with his one trophy, a deacon’s son, who intends to enroll in a provincial school against his father’s wishes (another raznochinets activist in the making). Sleptsov has clarified relations between the characters only to leave them on the threshold of other ambiguities. In a literary variant of his own nihilism he offers no positive solution to the questions the work raises, nor does he imply that his characters are capable of finding such solutions.

It should be clear then that Sleptsov, in contrast to Turgenev, adheres to the ideological conflict posed at the beginning of the work, while avoiding a romanticized image of the radical which would focus attention of character rather than ideology. Such an approach has implications not only for the significance of the protagonist, but also for the development of the novel. For while Turgenev directs his work to a consideration of Bazarov and his fate, Sleptsov, focusing on the problem of radical response during a period of “hard times,” begins where Turgenev leaves off: in the liberal gentry’s arcadia. In Shchetinina, Riazanov faces not a Pavel Kirsanov but his own

contemporary, a new type of liberal--practical (or so he thinks), optimistic, willing to accept emancipation reforms with the understanding that they should be made to work in his own interests. The question is will they? And at what cost to the peasants who supply the labor?

Turgenev, in a final, brief gesture of concern with social issues indicates that there will be problems in adjusting to the reforms, but couples his remark with references to the Kirsanov’s growing prosperity. Beyond this such problems do not interest him, because they provide no scope for the greater struggle which is his true concern. Bazarov merely dismisses Arkadii’s new role as benevolent landowner, he does not challenge it. The Romantic rebel is not concerned with the details or pretensions of land reform, and he does not return to accuse Arkadii of hypocrisy in his dealings with the peasants--indeed, he cannot return. His isolation must be maintained in the interests of a conclusion beyond specific considerations of politics and ideology.

This analysis has interpreted Fathers and Sons, in particular the relation between radicalism and literary archetype, by offering a contrast with another work which deals with many of the same issues. It would be pointless to claim that Sleptsov, a talented writer, has given a more truthful representation of the nigilist as a social phenomenon. But he has written a novel which reflects and comments on his views as a radical intellectual. In presenting a form of radical ideology peculiar to the sixties, Sleptsov shows little tendency to idealize its proponents, with the result that he is able to offer a radical critique without transforming his characters into advocates of a simplistic, utopian solution in the manner of Chernyshevskii.

Turgenev’s achievement, however, is of a different order--one in which the role of ideology is more tenuous. His political and philosophical views and his ambivalence toward Bazarov

have received much attention;<sup>12</sup> but efforts to interpret *Fathers and Sons* solely in terms of the “liberal predicament” or a specific philosophical system are, finally, inadequate. It has been noted that Turgenev’s correspondence during the latter part of 1860 contains frequent references to a sense of depression. Although this is not an uncommon mood in his writings, one such letter (to Fet) does suggest a link between this despondency and his irritation with the young critics then in control of *Sovremennik* who wished to consign their elders to oblivion (IV, 125). It may well be that Bazarov represents Turgenev’s attempt to come to terms with the radical spirit which both fascinated and repelled him.

But in doing so Turgenev returned to a problem which had occupied him at the earliest stages of his literary career: the challenge and the *ressentiment* projected by the Romantic hero, the apotheosis of self. Turgenev’s examination of selfhood and of the very nature of introspection led beyond the posturing of Romanticism toward the surpassing literary archetype embodied in Hamlet. From his story “Hamlet of the Shchigry District,” published in 1849, to the defining essay “Hamlet and Don Quixote,” based on a speech delivered in 1860, Turgenev’s preoccupation with Hamlet proved one of the most productive elements in his literary creativity. Indeed, the entire series of “superfluous men”--with Bazarov in their midst--emerges from his interpretation of Hamlet.

Sleptsov was also no stranger to the Hamlet archetype, both through his early professional

connection with the theatrical repertoire, and in the drift of his own life. With his dry skepticism (that dismissive, resigned wave of the hand during his talk with Shchetinina), Riazanov seems closer than Bazarov to the Hamlet type described in Turgenev’s notable essay. The existential question “What is to be done” confronts--and confounds--both Bazarov and Riazanov. Each has moments of doubt and indecision in the attempt to resolve personal identity with social and political imperatives.

When Antonovich labels Bazarov a “caricature” trying to imitate a demonic or Byronic nature (“something like Hamlet”), and Turgenev, in a letter to Ludwig Pietsch, writes, “ich den ganzen Kerl viel zu heldenhaft--idealistisch [read “romantisch”] aufgefasst habe” (VIII, 38), both are admitting the same thing from different points of view. Bazarov is not a caricature, but it is equally true that Turgenev attached ideological positions to a Romantic archetype, only to submerge them within other, literary and metaphysical, concerns.

In his death--senseless yet heroic--Bazarov achieves a form of Romantic transcendence over the characters that remain. Riazanov, on the other hand, is drawn back into urban reality and its relentless social struggle. A romantic nihilist suspended between Byron and Hamlet, the character of Bazarov is withdrawn from that struggle. Yet in an irony appropriate to the complexity of relations between literature and society, it is Turgenev’s syncretic vision (idealism and nihilism, romanticism and realism) that created a lasting image of the revolutionary impulse in Russian literature. .

### References

1. A. I. Gertsen, *Sobranie sochinenii* (30 vols.; M.: AN SSSR, 1960), XX (bk. 1), 337f.
2. See P. G. Pustovoit, *Roman I. S. Turgeneva “Ottsy I deti” i ideinaia bor’ba 60-kh godov XIX veka* (M.: MGU, 1964), in particular 179-88.
3. D. I. Pisarev, *Sochineniia* (4 vols.; M.: GIXL, 1956), III, 462.

4. For an assessment of Sleptsov's literary and political activities see my monograph *Sleptsov Redivivus* in *California Slavic Studies*, Vol. 9 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1976), 27-70.

5. I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (28 vols.; M.-L.: AN SSSR), VIII, 242.

6. V. A. Sleptsov, *Sochineniia* (2 vols.; M.: GIXL, 1957), II, 82.

7. In recent years Russian scholars have devoted considerable attention to an examination of Romanticism and the Romantic legacy in Russian literature. See collections such as *Problemy romantizma*, ed. U. R. Fokht *et al.* (M.: Iskusstvo, 1967) and *K istorii russkogo romantizma*, ed. Iu. V. Mann, I. G. Neupokoeva, U. R. Fokht (M.: Nauka, 1973). Occasionally references are made to Romantic elements in Turgenev's later novels (see the article by P. G. Pustovoiit cited below). There seems, however, to have been no substantive treatment of this issue in relation to *Fathers and Sons*.

8. P. G. Pustovoiit, "Romanticheskoe nachalo v tvorchestve I. S. Turgeneva," in *Romantizm v slavianskikh literaturakh*, ed. V. I. Kuleshov *et al.* (M.: MGU, 1973), 259, 272.

9. Iu. V. Mann applies such a structural approach to Romanticism in his recent work *Poetika russkogo romantizma* (M.: Nauka, 1976). Choosing "artistic conflict (Romantic conflict)" as his basic structural category (15), he later writes: "We have said that the Romantic method of dealing with the social theme is to introduce it into a Romantic conflict. To be more precise: the Romantic method of dealing with the social consists in the fact that the latter *becomes a motivating force for alienation.*" (264.)

10. *Mechta I mysl' I. S. Turgeneva*, introd. Thomas G. Winner (Brown Univ. Slavic Reprint, 8; Providence, R. I.: Brown Univ. Press, 1970), 17. [reprint of the 1919 edition]

11. In view of the fact that Turgenev dedicated *Fathers and Sons* to the memory of Vissarion Belinskii, it is interesting to note that Bazarov's faith in scientific materialism echoes the opinions of Belinskii in his article "A View of Russian Literature in 1846" ("Vzgliad na russkuiu literaturu v 1846 godu"). Advising those interested in man's higher faculties (soul, mind) to study their physiological source (heart, brain), Belinskii writes: "Psychology which does not rest on physiology is just as unscientific as physiology which knows nothing of the existence of anatomy. Modern science is not satisfied only with this [analysis of the brain]: by chemical analysis it wishes to penetrate into the secret laboratories of nature, and by observing the embryo to trace the *physical* process of *moral* development..." See *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii* (M.: AN SSSR, 1956), X, 27. The similarity of this statement to Bazarov's pronouncements would lead one to believe that Bazarov belongs to an earlier generation in an intellectual as well as literary sense. The question of Belinskii as a Romantic radical--and a prototype for Bazarov--lies beyond the scope of this article, but Joseph Frank, in his recent book on the young Dostoevskii, points out how clearly the spirit of Romanticism permeated the notion of social change and justice during the forties. See *Dostoevsky: The Seeds of Revolt, 1821-1849* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), 73, 98-112. Belinskii's interest in Romanticism as a literary, intellectual, and spiritual force is demonstrated at considerable length in the second of his "Articles on Pushkin" ("Stat'i o Pushkine").

12. See Pustovoiit, *Roman I. S. Turgeneva "Ottsy I deti"*; A. Batiuto, *Turgenev-romanist* (L.: Nauka, 1972); Henri Granjard, *Ivan Tourguenev et les courants politiques et sociaux de son temps* (Paris: Institut d'etudes slaves, 1966); Isaiah Berlin, *Fathers and Children: Turgenev and the Liberal Predicament* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1973).

**Два Гамлета:  
критика романтизма тургеневского Базарова  
и слепцовского Рязанова**

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*В статье рассматривается представление главного героя в качестве отчужденного радикального активиста в романах “Отцы и дети” и “Трудное время”. Как Тургенев, так и Слепцов ставят перед читателем идеологические и социальные вопросы того времени, но при этом каждый создает главного героя в рамках литературного контекста. Для Тургенева основной парадигмой является романтический герой, в частности, как он был определен Байроном, а для Слепцова характерен более скептический тип. В то же время оба героя пропитаны российской интерпретацией Гамлета XIX века как исследования социальной фрустрации.*

*Ключевые слова: Иван Тургенев, Василий Слепцов, “Отцы и дети”, “Трудное время”, романтизм, Байрон, Гамлет, женский вопрос, радикализм, Дмитрий Писарев, Николай Страхов.*

*Научная специальность: 24.00.00 – культурология.*

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