Chapter Five
Fathers and Sons

5.1 Introduction

When Bazarov, the hero of Fathers and Sons (Отцы и дети – 1862), is compared to Rudin and Lavreckij, there is at least one major difference between them: Rudin and Lavreckij embody social and cultural types that had already developed into literary cliché-images at the time when Turgenev made them the central characters of his novels. Bazarov, however, represents a group in contemporary society that at the time of the novel’s appearance was still at the formative stage. The depictions of Rudin and Lavreckij could be said to stand at the end of a series of depictions of the romantic-idealistic type (Rudin) and the “men of the forties” (Lavreckij). In congruence with this, the contemporary level of these two novels has a strong retrospective orientation, and the tone tends towards evaluation of the heroes’ positions as phenomena of the past. By contrast, the group of young materialists or nihilists of which Bazarov is a representative had only recently developed, and it was not yet possibly fully to assess its impact. Moreover, the fact that it had as yet hardly been reflected in literature at all was of major importance for the reception of the novel, which, unlike the receptions of Rudin and A Nest of Gentry, was fundamentally affected by the interpretation of the type represented by its hero.

The topicality of the subject matter of Fathers and Sons at least partly accounts for the avalanche of reactions it evoked among literary critics. Many of these reactions, especially from those belonging to the more radical circles, were very negative, accusing Turgenev of hostility towards the younger generation. They considered the depiction of Bazarov as a vicious attack on their ideas. M. A. Antonovič, for example, maintained that Turgenev deliberately tried to make a fool of his hero, for instance in the description of Bazarov’s failed attempts to communicate with the peasants, the remarks about his constant drinking during a visit to the female nihilist Kukšina, and the description of his eating habits (PSS VIII, 591). Černyševskij also found Turgenev’s depiction of the ‘nihilist-type’ a plain caricature (PSS VIII, 593). Turgenev was unnerved by the reception of the novel. His disappointment at what he saw as an entirely unjust interpretation of the work led directly to his retreat to France, and is often mentioned as a breaking point in his career as a novelist.

The controversy surrounding the novel determined its contemporary reception, but later criticism has likewise been focused on its portrayal of radical youth and the conflict between the generation of the fathers and that of the sons. Indeed the novel provides detailed images of these parties and their conflicting opinions. In paragraph 5.2, in which I will discuss the contemporary image of the hero, we will see that Turgenev provided his hero with many features that came to characterize later depictions of nihilists. If only for this reason,
Bazarov’s portrait as contemporary type has an extraordinary appeal. It puts him in sharp contrast to the heroes of the novels preceding and succeeding Fathers and Sons. Insarov and Litvinov are hardly defined in social, cultural or ideological terms. Lev Pumpjanskij has stated that Fathers and Sons, together with Rudin, can be classified as “cultural-heroic novels” (Pumpjanskij 2000: 391), that is, novels in which the portrait of the hero is determined by the specific cultural stratum to which he belongs. In Rudin’s case, this is the romantic-idealistic environment to which he is linked by details such as his reading of the German romantic poets and his attendance at the philosophical meetings at Pokorskij’s house. Bazarov is similarly characterized by his reading preferences: he rejects poetry and aesthetical works in general, preferring to read Büchner instead. His interest in the exact sciences is further emphasised by his study of medicine and by his experiments and fussing with his microscope during his stay at the Kirsanov’s – activities that designate him a representative of the ‘scientific’ generation of ‘the men of the sixties’. I shall provide a detailed description of this group below.

The detailed representation of, and the prominent place afforded to, ideological conflict in the novel have contributed to the lasting predominance of critical studies that focus on different aspects of the novel’s contemporary interests. It is only in (Western) criticism of the past two decades that a number of ‘poetic’ studies have appeared. These have in common a tendency to account for Bazarov’s death in terms of exclusion (from his environment) or destruction due to his nonconformism. I think that such approaches do indeed identify an important current in the novel’s poetic structure. There are a number of allusions to literary transgressor figures, which place the social revolt that characterizes Bazarov’s contemporary image firmly in the light of archetypal forms of transgression that lead to destruction. I will discuss this element in my analysis, but I feel that it is also important both to formulate the relationship of these allusions to the image of the hero on the contemporary level, and to pay attention to this novel’s explicit philosophical theme by comparison to that of the previous one.

In my analysis of Fathers and Sons, I will examine the various forms in which the theme of individuality presents itself in the novel. On the contemporary level, it is part of the display of individualism that characterizes nihilism. In paragraph 5.2, in which the contemporary image of the hero is discussed, I argue that nihilism is characterized primarily by this claim for individuality and not, as is often maintained, by its socio-political programme. Like On the Eve, Fathers and Sons includes a philosophical discussion of the significance of the individual within nature, but a comparison of the two novels reveals a fundamental difference. In On the Eve, we see that the individual is (unconsciously) egoistic and therefore has a false idea of his position in relation to the whole of nature. Šubin lays claim to personal happiness on the basis of what he discerns generally in creation, as demonstrated in his remarks about the insects (see 4.6). His friend Bersenev reminds him of the principle of altruism, but only as a conscious human attitude, which is not the same as the involuntary role of each creature in support of nature as a whole. Unlike the narrator, the characters are unable to distance themselves from their individual perspectives on life. Insarov and Elena do not consider the possibility that their goals may be futile because they have no insight into their own insignificance.

In Fathers and Sons, the philosophical ‘discussion’ (it is really closer to being a monologue) of the individual in relation to nature takes on a new perspective: Bazarov does express the idea that his life and personal goals are meaningless by comparison to the endless time and space of the universe. This apparent insight goes together with an attitude of revolt against the order of nature, and this element of revolt places the conflict between the individual and the whole of nature in another light. In On the Eve, and in Turgenev’s
representation of his world view in general, the conflict is implicit: the individual view of life and the cosmic order are irreconcilable, but the one view is inaccessible to the other. In Fathers and Sons, however, Bazarov expresses both the individual and the cosmic views before choosing to fight for individuality. Thus an explicit conflict arises.

The verbal art structure suggests links between Bazarov’s revolt and the transgressions of certain archetypal figures who have tried to break the boundaries of established order. Such transgressions inevitably lead to the elimination of the transgressor. Furthermore, there are mythical connotations of transgression that link the transgressor with demonism, and the text certainly contains allusions to devilish features in Bazarov. Before exploring these, however, I shall discuss Bazarov’s characterization on the contemporary level and focus specifically on the roles of individuality and revolt. After that I will discuss the associations on the verbal art level according to the outline I have presented above.

5.2 Bazarov the nihilist

Critical surveys of the phenomenon of nihilism generally identify it with the radical movement and its members with the raznočinci, the new intelligentsia that was not descended from the gentry. However, what united the followers of nihilism was not so much their political or ideological convictions, or their descent, as their attitude of revolt against moral confinement. In his illuminating article on nihilism in the eighteen-sixties, Michael Confino (1990) approaches this group primarily as a cultural rather than as a political phenomenon. He argues that there is no ground to identify the nihilists with the revolutionary democrats (especially Černyševskij and Dobroljubov), or groups with socialist or anarchist aspirations (Confino 1990: 498). The core features of nihilism are those of a movement based first and foremost on a certain concept of individualism. This is not to say that politics played no role at all, of course, but the role that it did play was primarily that of catalyst to its development. The period of repression, that began as a Russian conservative reaction to the French revolution and lasted until the death of Nicolas I in 1855, had already left its marks on Russian society, but disillusionment with the politics of reform under Aleksander II was of even more direct influence. Confino argues that all the political developments of the late fifties and early sixties, including expectations of liberalization and the ensuing disappointment when new restrictions were imposed, had the effect of a severe psychological shock and prepared the ground for the appearance of the nihilists (idem 505). The most characteristic features of the movement, however, are, as I have said, of non-political nature. I shall now examine them in detail.

Central to nihilism is the affirmation of individual freedom, with its concomitant aspiration to free the individual from all the constraints of traditional moral standards. This inspired the nihilists’ own ‘code of conduct’, the most eye-catching features of which concerned their appearance and dress, and their deliberate flouting of the rules of etiquette (idem 510). They dressed simply, without the element of richness that the establishment showed in their manner of dressing. They wore no jewellery. Women cut their hair (an action that was generally frowned upon at that time) while the men let theirs grow. Female nihilists also smoked in company, which was socially quite unacceptable. All of this bears witness to an abandonment of the accepted norms and a protest against the ties that these rules (as the nihilists saw it) laid on the individual. On the same basis, formalities were neglected. The nihilists labeled the behavioural norms as ‘hypocritical’, since they prescribed modes of

71 See, for instance, Moser 1964: 16-17, and Freeborn 1970: 69, where “the ‘new man’ of the sixties, the raznochinets intellectual or nihilist” is specifically identified.
speech and behaviour that often went against what was actually being felt. They therefore made it their business to abstain from formalities and to speak what they felt, which often amounted to deliberate rudeness (idem 509-10).

Another aspect of the nihilists’ protest against the moral framework of society was the position of women and the status of marriage. Within the social order of the time, young women were subject to the authority of their fathers until they married, after which they were expected to obey their husbands. Marriages were often arranged for the social and financial benefit of the bride’s parents. To counter all this, the nihilists formed their own program of female emancipation, which included the education of women and the abandonment of parental authority. Some girls entered communes of young women who aspired to earn their own living; others entered into temporary, fake marriages with nihilist friends in order to free themselves from the authority of their parents (idem 516; see also Paperno 1988 for examples of such actions).

These central features of the nihilists’ credo identify its core element as the negation of the norms of the elder generation. Confino therefore sees nihilism mainly as “une révolte contre le passé (soudain discrédité)”, “une révolte contre les pères (...) biologiques et non contre des pères idéologiques des années 40” (idem 519). Ultimately, it means a revolt against all authorities (ibid.). Although I have stated above, following Confino, that nihilism is not primarily a political movement, a revolt against all authorities obviously does carry political consequences since the authority of the church and the government must be included. Moreover, the most prominent nihilists, Černyševskij and Dobroljubov, did indeed proclaim sociological and political views (under the guise of literary criticism), and the fact that they were arrested and imprisoned in the early sixties clearly bears witness to the government’s concern about the threat that these men and their ideas posed to political stability.

The nihilists’ negation of the old values went together with an absolute belief in the achievements of the natural sciences. Historically, the nihilists’ concentration on the exact sciences can be traced to changes in the curriculum of the seminaries after 1848. These changes had been instigated by the government on the grounds that knowledge of classical philosophy and the principles of democracy might incite revolutionary ideas. To replace these, the study of the exact sciences was introduced. The generation that was educated in accordance with this new program came to accept as reliable only what was firmly grounded in science. This generation, according to Confino, is a “group d’âge” which forms the core of the nihilist movement. For him, this term identifies them more accurately than do the social designations. He describes the notion that most of the nihilists belonged to the class of the raznočinci as an old misunderstanding, and asserts that, like the majority of the intelligentsia during the eighteen sixties, most of the nihilists would in fact have been nobles (Confino 1990: 517). A ‘peer group’ thus seems a more accurate basis on which to describe the nihilists than any social classification.

The above survey of the basic traits of nihilism can serve as the starting point for a discussion of the depiction of Bazarov as a contemporary type in Fathers and Sons. In Bazarov’s portrait, we instantly recognize the more eye-catching features of the nihilists: their characteristic outward appearance, their rejection of accepted norms and codes of conduct, and their scientism – the very features that determine nihilism as a cultural code as opposed to a political movement; and these form the basis of his depiction as contemporary type. Turgenev was the first to identify this type by the term ‘nihilist’. However, he did not invent the term itself; neither did he introduce it into the Russian language, as is sometimes
suggested. Several critics had used the term from the eighteen thirties onwards to designate, among other things, ‘negation’, ‘materialism’ and ‘idealism’ (Confino 1990: 493, Venturi 1960: 326). The term ‘nihilist’ was also used to refer to young people who rejected the normal rules of conduct by flouting the authority of their parents, usually by engaging in marriage without parental consent. But Turgenev did choose this word to classify the type represented by Bazarov, and his portrait of Bazarov, it can be argued, played an important role in the formation of the literary image of the nihilist that frequently occurs in both the nihilist and the anti-nihilist novels of the eighteen sixties and seventies.

In the examination of the main ‘nihilist’ features of Bazarov that I now propose to make in the light of the basic nihilist traits already identified, I shall also mention some of these later nihilist and anti-nihilist works in which the same features are found. It is not my intention to suggest that there is intertextuality between Turgenev’s work and these later novels; the coincidence merely illustrates the process by which, as I shall show, writers ‘borrow’ from the images that surround a contemporary type, thereby enabling the development of a literary cliché.

The most eye-catching peculiarities of Bazarov are those of his outward appearance. He has long hair, which was usual for the male nihilist, as we have seen above. When Pavel Kirsanov meets Bazarov and hears from his nephew Arkadij that Bazarov will be staying for a while, he cynically remarks: “That hairy one?” (“Этот волосатый?” – VIII, 209). A second typical feature is Bazarov’s overcoat, known as a balachon, a garment frequently worn by representatives of the raznočincy. This article of clothing becomes the subject of an amusing scene in which, as Valentino has noted, the characters display their differing evaluations of the coat (and its owner) by the way in which they refer to it (Valentino 2001: 18-20). To Bazarov himself, it is a “little piece of clothing” (“одежку” – 208). Nikolaj Kirsanov, who is the host and wants to uphold the rules of courtesy, instructs the servant to “take the gentleman’s overcoat” (“взьми его шинель”). The servant, in the words of the narrator, “took Bazarov’s ‘little piece of clothing’ with both hands, held it high above his head and walked off on tiptoe” (“взял обеими руками базаровскую ‘одежду’, высоко подняв ее над головою, удалился на цыпочках” – ibid.). This behavior, and the narrator’s use of Bazarov’s own diminutive term for the coat in connection with it, reveals the servant’s contempt for the guest. Note also the effect of contrast, based on clothing, that arises when Pavel Kirsanov enters the scene dressed in “a dark, English suit” (“тёмный английский сюит” – ibid.).

Bazarov’s behavior is unconventional and, by the standards of the accepted codes of conduct, rather rude. On the day after his arrival at the estate of Nikolaj Kirsanov, he appears in the middle of breakfast, approaching the house through the garden by walking straight across the flowerbeds. This route through the flowerbeds is a perfect symbol of the core of Bazarov’s behavior: a deliberate rejection of the order of ‘old life’, the traditions of the estate

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72 N. N. Strachov, for instance, in one of a series of essays on nihilism, stated that Turgenev had “invented” the word (“créé et découvert” – 1890: 100, quoted from Confino 1990: 490).
73 Irina Paperno quotes a letter by one Ivan Petrovič Liprandi, who complains about the behavior of his nephew. This nephew ruined his father by choosing a partner without consulting him. The father died of grief. The marriage took place almost simultaneously with the burial, and the couple began visiting the opera together before the customary time for mourning had elapsed. The writer concludes that this could be called nihilism, since “all the customs are broken” (Paperno 1988: 41). Paperno further notes that the wedding of Černyševskij took place under similar circumstances. He also chose his partner without consulting his parents and practically forced them to give their consent, threatening to kill himself if they refused. In this case it was the mother who died of grief. The marriage took place as planned, only one week after the funeral of the mother (idem: 114).
74 Unless indicated otherwise, all references to Turgenev’s work in this chapter concern volume VIII of the Polnoe sobranie sočinenij v dvadcati vos’mi tomax.
and of the gentry. He is covered with dirt, drinks his tea in haste and answers Pavel Petrović’s questions “haltingly and unwillingly” (“отрывисто и неохотно” – 218). Pavel Petrović immediately feels irritated by Bazarov’s manner: the “complete informality” (“совершенная развязность,” – ibid.) of this doctor’s son seems wholly inappropriate to him.

In later nihilist and anti-nihilist works, the radical characters similarly leave members of the gentry dumbfounded by their refusal to observe the conventions of polite society. See, for instance, the example Valentino cites, taken from Fjodorov-Omulevskij’s Step by Step (Шаг за шагом – 1870), in which the hero insults a landlady by ignoring her coquettish behavior and adopting a strictly businesslike attitude (Valentino 2001: 78-9).

Bazarov is deliberately taciturn in the company of the older generation, as we see in chapters VI and X). He speaks only when he is asked direct questions, and even then only grudgingly. Characteristics of speech are among the most important features of nihilist characters. As Valentino has pointed out, reticence, in combination with simplicity of expression, is a persistent feature of many radical heroes, both in nihilist and anti-nihilist novels (Valentino 2001: 79-80). Lopuchov and Rachmetov in Černyševskij’s What is to be done? (Что делать? – 1863), Rjazanov in Slepcov’s Hard Times (Трудное время – 1865) and Svetlov in Fjodorov-Omulevskij’s Step by Step are all reticent by nature. When they do speak, they refrain from ceremonial language, digressions and poetical speech. This can already be seen in Fathers and Sons, where Bazarov’s speech is offset by that of Nikolaj and Pavel Kirsanov. They speak the usual language of the gentry of that time: polite forms of address and careful wording. I will name only two examples of the many that are found. When Nikolaj Kirsanov welcomes Bazarov, he says: “I am delighted […] and grateful for your kindness in visiting us […]. I hope, dear Evgenij Vasil’ič, that you will not become bored with us” (“Душевно рад и благодарен за доброе намерение посетить нас (…) Надеюсь, любезнейший Евгений Васильич, что вы не соскучитесь у нас” – 200). The second example is Pavel Kirsanov’s manner of addressing Bazarov: “Dear sir” (“милоствий государь” – 241) whenever he feels deeply insulted by him. His politeness in words seems to be a way of tempering his actual fury. Thus he conforms to the codes of conduct prevalent among the higher classes, according to which one hid one’s real feelings for the sake of maintaining courtesy. As I have said, the speech of Bazarov is much more down-to-earth and terse, but there are two other aspects of Bazarov’s speech that I also want to highlight: his affiliation to the common people, and his position towards foreign languages.

On the first day of Bazarov’s stay at the Kirsanov estate, he goes out to catch frogs for his experiments, and takes two of the servants’ children to help him. He easily finds a common language with them, explaining to them in simple terms how the frogs will help him to be a good doctor (212). He also has no difficulty in winning the trust of the normally quite timid Fenečka, the unofficial wife of Nikolaj Petrović. The servants become attached to him, we are told, because they regard him as one of themselves (“сввой брат” – 237). However, when Bazarov attempts to ‘enlighten’ the peasants, he meets with no success whatsoever: in spite of his proudly informing Pavel Kirsanov that his grandfather “plowed the land” (“землю пахал” – 244), and that the peasants would sooner consider him their fellow countryman than Pavel Kirsanov, the peasants do not understand what he wants from them and classify him as a landlord; that is, not one of themselves. When a peasant who has been talking to Bazarov is asked by another peasant what the conversation was about, he answers: “He was babbling about something, just wagging his tongue. He is a landlord, of course! What does he know?” (“болтал кое-что; язык пошевелился. Известно, барин: разве он что понимает?” – 384). The narrator adds that Bazarov, without realizing it, was considered “some sort of village idiot” (“был чем-то вроде шута-горохового” – ibid.). Thus, Bazarov easily gains the
confidence of the common people, but proves unable to ‘teach’ them, which implies that his nihilism is alien to the spirit of the people.

Regarding foreign languages, it is notable that Bazarov refuses to use French, which was the typical salon language of the gentry. He only once uses a French expression, and then he is mimicking Pavel Kirsanov, with whom he is engaged in an ideological discussion. Pavel Kirsanov has just stated that without self-esteem there is no basis for the “bien public” (242). Bazarov observes that Pavel Kirsanov is sitting with his arms folded and asks: “What is the use of that for the bien public?” (“какая ж от этого польза для bien public?” – ibid.).

Instead of French, Bazarov busies himself with German and Latin. German, in this context, can be seen as the language of science since the scientists on whose ideas the nihilists based their beliefs were Germans (among others the chemist Bunsen, the physicist Kirchhoff and the materialist philosophers Büchner, Vogt and Moleschott; see Moser 1964: 30). Latin was, of course, the official language of science, and it is logical for Bazarov, as a student of medicine, to be familiar with it. In a similar symbolic play with the use or knowledge of certain languages, Fjodorov-Omulevskij’s nihilist hero Svetlov, in Step by Step, does not know French but does know Polish, which identifies him as a revolutionary: any reference to Poland and the Poles at that time would immediately call to mind the Polish revolutionary aspirations (Valentino 2001: 80).

Another aspect of the radical hero’s speech that marks him out as a nihilist is his aversion to poetical language. Bazarov explicitly voices his dislike of it when, Arkadij having just compared a falling leaf to a butterfly, he replies: “One thing I ask of you, my friend Arkadij Nikolaï: don’t speak prettily” (“О друг мой, Аркадий Николаич! – об одном прошу тебя: не говори красиво” – 326). In later depictions of nihilists, this trait is developed in greater detail. For instance, Svetlov, in Step by Step, always insists upon taking figurative speech literally. This is a serious device, signaling the hero’s ‘real’ attitude to language (‘say what you mean’), as opposed to the artificiality that the use of language in the salons displays. In Dostoevsky’s Demons, however, the same peculiarity is treated ironically: the nihilist Kirillov does not understand what figurative speech is and therefore cannot help taking everything literally (Valentino 2001: 102). It is the idea of the nihilists’ love for simple speech in general that is being ridiculed here. Kirillov is actually unable to communicate normally: he speaks in unfinished sentences of a doubtful grammatical quality. In the depiction of Stavrogin, in the same novel, reticence takes yet another form: he usually holds his silence, and this makes him unfathomable and gives him a sinister touch (Valentino 2001: 88-91).

Bazarov and the later nihilist characters are preoccupied with the natural sciences, and reject everything that is non-scientific, notably religion, philosophy and art. This feature is especially stressed in Bazarov’s portrait. He is a student of medicine who occupies himself, in his own words, “with the natural sciences in general” (“вообще естественными науками” – 218). He bases his entire worldview on a materialist understanding of his environment. As was usual at the time, he draws sociological conclusions from the discoveries made in the natural sciences. He argues that, since all people are physically alike, they must in principle also be alike in soul and morality. He maintains that the evil parts of people (those that might distinguish them from good people) are like diseases: a bad person differs from a good one in the same way that a sick person differs from a healthy one (277-8).

In the course of the novel Bazarov scorns what is non-scientific; as far as he is concerned, it is useless. He laughs at the idea of Nikolaj Petrovič playing the cello, finding it ridiculous that a man of his age still busies himself with art (236-7). He advises Nikolaj Kirsanov to

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75 Their campaign for independence culminated in the unsuccessful uprising against the czar in 1863.
read Büchner instead of Puškin (238), declares that a good chemist is twenty times more useful than a poet (219) and dismisses Raphael as “not worth a penny” (“Рафаэль грош медного не стоит” – 247).

Bazarov’s scientific attitude is illustrated by the image of the frog. As I noted earlier, Bazarov catches frogs for the purpose of experimentation, but by the beginning of the eighteen-sixties the frog had become an important symbol of the idea of progress through science. Pisarev formulates this in his article “Motifs of Russian drama” (“Мотивы русской драмы” – 1862): “[The young people] will be inspired to feel deep respect and ardent love for the spread frog... It is here, in this same frog, that the salvation and renewal of the Russian people lies” (quoted from Paperno 1988: 272, note 27). See also the drawing, reproduced in Paperno’s book, in which the young scientist Ivan Sečenov is seen with three frogs held in a laboratory clamp. Michail Holquist has described this picture as “less the portrait of an individual man than the icon of an era” (Holquist 1984: 373).

Another symbol of progress through science, also found in Fathers and Sons, is the microscope. The dissection of the frogs, and the means of examining otherwise-invisible (or barely visible) organisms, together represent the optimistic expectations of progress through scientific knowledge that characterize the materialist ideas of the period. The invisible could be made visible, and thus understandable. The rapid succession of several discoveries, new techniques for research and the publication of new visions (including Darwin’s The Origin of Species in 1859) fed the idea that everything could be understood on a scientific basis. This idea is central to Bazarov’s world view. In the course of the novel, its problematic, even untenable, implications are revealed when Bazarov is confronted with passion, which does not conform to his rules.

Yet another aspect of the nihilist hero that is of relevance to Fathers and Sons is that of his position as a teacher. In a number of literary works whose heroes are nihilists, the hero has been hired to teach a landowner’s children (a fact that reflects an aspect of contemporary reality for many raznočinci), while in other cases, although he has not been appointed as teacher, he takes an educative role towards someone in the area, usually a young woman, as is the case of Rachmetov in Černyševskij’s What Is To Be Done?, and Rjazanov in Slepcov’s A Difficult Time. In Fathers and Sons, Bazarov has not been appointed as teacher, but he does behave like one in his relationship with Arkadij. The latter is referred to as Bazarov’s “pupil” (243), and Bazarov clearly considers him his protégé (he calls him “chick” – “птенчик” – 370).

A common situation involved the nihilist tutoring the daughter of his employer, or taking an educative role toward his wife, in an attempt to liberate her through education. This often resulted in love affairs. In Fathers and Sons, the possibility of such a course of events comes into play in the arbor scene, where Bazarov kisses Nikolaj Kirsanov’s unofficial wife Fenečka. Bazarov pretends that he wants to educate Fenečka by letting her read from one of his scientific books. However, as he readily admits, his aim is not to enable her to understand anything of what the books says, but simply to look at her while she is reading: “The tip of your nose wiggles so nicely when you read,” he explains (“У вас, когда вы читаете, кончик носика очень мило двигается” – 343). It is then that he kisses her. Any possible further developments are blocked by Pavel Kirsanov, who has been observing the scene and challenges him to a duel. Bazarov now has no choice but to leave the house.

Bazarov’s outward appearance, social and cultural background, and behavior, as described above, combine to determine the image of the hero on the contemporary level of the text. He

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76 This seems to have been sort of a hype in the early sixties, see Paperno 1988: 94-99.
is ‘a hero of his time’, a representative of the radical materialists among the ‘men of the sixties’. The detailed descriptions of his appearance and behavior, as well as the important role of ideological discussions, create an image that is in sharp contrast to that of Insarov. Nevertheless, Fathers and Sons, like On the Eve, does confront the reader with the sudden death of the hero. The elaborate characterization of Bazarov does not account for his death, which lies in complete contrast to any of his features: his physical strength, his strong will and his ideological negation of the inevitability of death. Thus, his contemporary portrait leaves a motivational lacuna when it comes to the final episode of Bazarov’s life. His death can only be understood by the very fact of its contrast to all that Bazarov stands for – as a counterpart for his statement of individuality. This counterpart is found when one considers the philosophical framework of the novel. What Fathers and Sons and On the Eve have in common is that they both feature, in the form of a philosophical discussion, the basic elements of Turgenev’s world view: the irreconcilable conflict between the individual and nature. In the next paragraph, I shall discuss this philosophical framework of Fathers and Sons, and its implications for the interpretation of the image of the hero.

5.3 Individuality claimed

In this paragraph, I shall focus on the philosophical implications of Bazarov’s nihilism: I will discuss his concept of individuality in the light of Turgenev’s world view. I have already argued that nihilism presupposes a claim for individuality. At the same time, however, the nihilists’ interest in materialist philosophy resulted in a habit of reducing phenomena to general rules, and in the conviction that a general rule applies to every individual case. This amounts to a denial of the uniqueness of the individual. In Fathers and Sons, this paradox of an individuality that is claimed and denied at the same time becomes interwoven with the concept of individuality in Turgenev’s world view, in which there is a similar tension between the individual’s personal notion of uniqueness and nature’s refusal to serve the interests of individuals.

Like On the Eve, Fathers and Sons includes an explicit philosophical discussion that hints at the novel’s philosophical theme. In both novels, this discussion takes place between two of the characters, and they use similar settings: Šubin and Bersenev are lying at the river bank, while Bazarov and Arkadij are lying in a haystack, and both conversations take place on hot afternoons. In both cases, one of the speakers draws attention to the insects around them and compares their existence to that of man. Both philosophical discussions address the theme of the place of man in the whole of creation, but they each have their own specific emphases that fits the specific role that the theme of individuality plays in the novel as a whole. A survey of the differences will clarify what I mean.

In On the Eve, the philosophical discussion mirrors the two forces of nature. Šubin displays the attitude of the individual creature; he considers his own interests important, but denies the importance of other individuals’ interests. He cannot understand that the insects he is observing also consider themselves to be of more importance than any other creature. Bersenev draws attention to the other driving force of nature: the sacrificing of individuals in order to maintain the whole.

In Fathers and Sons the situation is different. Bazarov’s display of individualism is not the same as Šubin’s. Šubin’s is ‘natural egoism’; he is unaware of the relativity of its claims, simply demanding happiness (13-14). Bazarov, however, seems well aware of the relativity...
of his entire life, but nevertheless claims the right to individuality. This claim, I contend, must be interpreted in terms of a revolt against the futility of life, which amounts to a conscious display of individuality. The difference between Bazarov’s and Šubin’s individualism is clear from their different interpretations of man’s position in relation to the whole of nature. Šubin draws a line between ‘man’ and ‘the rest of creation’, considering man ‘the czar of creation’, whereas Bazarov boldly declares that man is of no more importance than any other creature. Bazarov looks upon the world from within the framework of his medical profession. When he examines an insect under his microscope, he does so to learn more, not about the individual insect but about its species, of which he considers the individual insect to be a representative. Bazarov applies this same model to man, denying any intrinsic value to the individual person. Thus, when he discusses the human character with Odincova, he takes the position that every man is the same, not only physically but also mentally, and that one human specimen is enough to understand the whole of mankind (“достаточно одного человеческого экземпляра, чтобы судить обо всех других” – 277). He continues by comparing human beings to trees: “people are like trees in a forest; no botanist will go and examine each birch tree separately” (“люди, что деревья в лесу; ни один ботаник не станет заниматься каждою отдельною березою” – ibid.). On another occasion, when Bazarov is going out to catch frogs for his medical experiments, he tells the boys who are helping him that humans are really just like frogs (“мы с тобой те же лягушки” – 212); then, in an inverse image (not comparing humans to frogs, but humanizing the frogs he has captured), he refers to them as his “prisoners of war” (“пленницы” – 217). In yet another instance, when Bazarov sees an ant dragging a half-dead fly, he addresses the ant directly: “Drag it, brother, drag” (“Тащи ее, брат, тащи” – 323), humanizing the insect and even placing it in a position of kinship with man.

These examples bear witness to Bazarov’s denial of the uniqueness of the individual and man’s extraordinary place within the whole of nature. His views seem to come from the perspective of nature, according to which the individual creature is only a representative of its species and every species is of equal interest. Bazarov applies these ideas not only to man in general, but also to himself. As part of the philosophical discussion that takes place in chapter XXI, Bazarov outlines his understanding of his own insignificance in the face of the whole of the universe, using wording that is strongly reminiscent of Pascal:

Here I am lying in a haystack. The small space I occupy is minuscule in comparison to the rest of space, where I am not and where my existence is of no importance; and the measure of time I will be able to live through is of no significance whatsoever when set against the eternity before and after my existence…And in this atom, in this mathematical point, blood is circulating, a brain is active, and it makes plans too… How indecent! What nonsense!” (я вот лежу здесь под стогом…Узенькое местечко, которое я занимаю, до того крохотно в сравнении с остальным пространством, где меня нет и где дела до меня нет; и часть времени, которую мне удается прожить, так ничтожна перед вечностью, где меня не было и не будет… А в этом атоме, в этой математической точке кровь обращается, мозг работает, чего-то хочет тоже… Что за безобразие! Что за пустяки! – 323)

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78 The use of the term ‘prisoners of war’ is very interesting: it implies that Bazarov is at war with nature. Indeed his probing of nature’s secrets, and his activities as a doctor (which imply the attempt to change nature’s laws by prolonging man’s life, if not, ultimately, by getting rid of death altogether), can all be seen as a symbolic battle against the forces of nature.

79 See, in this context, the Poem in Prose “Nature” (“Природа” – 1879), in which nature, personified as a woman, tells man that she cares equally about man and worm (XIII, 189).

80 For a comparison of Bazarov’s words and the corresponding passage of Pascal, see Batjuto 1972: 62-3.
Bazarov’s words convey a notion of the insignificance of the individual that implies a perspective that is broader than that of the individual; that is, a notion of the relativity of the individual’s perspective. In this context, it is interesting to remember what Lotman has said about the role of (change of) perspective in Turgenev’s novels. The term ‘perspective’, in this case, refers not to narrative perspective, but to the differing views of life that are respectively encompassed by the contemporary and cosmic levels of Turgenev’s world view. On the contemporary level, man’s life is viewed ‘from within’; that is, as a human being would normally experience it and assess its significance. The cosmic level presents a view of the same human life ‘from outside’; that is, from the perspective of a being that does not belong to the world that is being observed. As Lotman argues, it is from this change of perspective that the idea of the insignificance of man’s life arises:

The effect of senselessness arises as a consequence of a perspective ‘from another world’, from the perspective of an observer who does not understand the meaning or existence of the motives, aims and logic of the world into which he enters or that he observes. (Эффект бессмысленности возникает при взгляде ’из другого мира’, с точки зрения наблюдателя, не понимающего или не принимающего мотивировок, целей и логики того мира, в который он врывается или который он наблюдает. – Lotman 1992: 105)

Lotman illustrates this idea using the scene from Fathers and Sons in which Pavel Petrovič looks at infusorians through Bazarov’s microscope. He looks at the world under the microscope from the same mental distance that arises through the cosmic level. What I find of particular importance here is that, in this scheme of ‘internal’ and ‘external’ perspectives, it is the rule that the perspective of the one is inaccessible to the other; everyone understands only the perspective of his own world. This rule still applies in the presentation of perspectives in On the Eve. When Šubin denies the insects’ world any significance, he is reasoning from the perspective of his own world, unaware of the possibility that his life would seem equally futile if it were observed from outside. Similarly, the main protagonists of that novel reason only from their own perspectives on life. They consider their goals important. Elena finds the death of Insarov incomprehensible because it does not make sense within her own scheme of what is significant. Only from the perspective of the narrator, who takes the place of an observer from outside, is an alternative view provided of the significance of their lives and goals.

Fathers and Sons breaks the rule. In this novel, Bazarov himself, as main protagonist, acts as an observer from another world who sees his life, not from within the norms of his world, but against the background of the whole universe. As a character in a novel by Turgenev, he is thus given a philosophical perspective that is extraordinary, but his position fits the novel’s overall presentation of individuality. It does not feature a hero who is confined to his own limited perspective in accordance with the norms of his contemporary environment, as On the Eve and the other novels generally do; the hero of Fathers and Sons acknowledges his own cosmic insignificance.

One might envisage the portrait of such a hero as one characterized by humility and the acceptance of man’s fate, but in Bazarov we see a hyperindividualist, someone who declares that individuals are of no interest at all but, at the same time, sets himself apart from everyone else so that this model does not apply to himself. Thus, while Šubin draws a line between man and the rest of creation, Bazarov considers man as no different, fundamentally, from the rest of creation, but still places himself on a different level. During a discussion with Arkadij about Bazarov’s ‘disciple’ Sitnikov, Bazarov says, “I see that you, my brother, are still simple; I need such blockheads [as Sitnikov is – MO]. Surely it is not for the gods to bake
pottery." ("Ты, брат, глуп еще, я вижу. Мне нужны подобные олухи. Не богам же, в самом деле, горшки обжигать!" – 304). Arkadij replies, “So, you and I are gods? Or rather, you are a god and I am the blockhead?” (“Мы, стало быть, с тобой боги? То есть – ты бог, а олух уж не я ли?”), upon which Bazarov’s repeats his earlier charge: “Yes, you are still simple” (“Да, ты еще глуп” – ibid.). At this point, we are told, Arkadij is confronted with the “bottomless pit of Bazarov’s egoism” (“бездонная пропасть базаровского самолюбия” – ibid.).

Bazarov’s individualism is not of the ‘natural’ sort that Šubin displays. It is not an individualism that flows from the lack of ability to see the limitations of one’s own views. On the contrary, it is a rebellious individualism, a conscious display of individuality in revolt against the insignificance of the individual that is dictated by the cosmic laws. This revolt does not place him outside the influence of these laws, however. Through his own words, his death becomes the symbol of the senselessness of his revolt. His individualism has allowed him to deny the applicability of any general law to his life, but as he puts it: “Just try to deny death; it will deny you, and that is the end of it all” (“Попробуй отрицать смерть. Она тебя отрицает и баста” – 391).

It should by now be clear that Bazarov’s individualism not only plays a role within his contemporary portrait as nihilist that gives the clash between him and the ‘world of the fathers’ an extra venomous twist, but also provides the novel’s philosophical theme. This theme is more explicit on the narrative art level of Fathers and Sons than of the previous novels because here the individualist-hero is given an explicit philosophical voice. His meditation on the meaning of his own life makes it an explicit theme in the novel’s narrative. This is a feature that Fathers and Sons to some extent shares with On the Eve, in which the relatively minor characters Šubin and Bersenev discuss the question of man’s place in the whole of creation, but in other cases it is left to the narrator to introduce such explicit philosophical perspectives, which are there read as commentary ‘from outside’ on the events that are being related. This situation is found in Smoke, where the narrator, in several instances, makes generalizing comments on what is happening in the plot. It is also found in On the Eve, but there only at the very end of the novel where we are presented with the image of the fisherman (see 4.4). In Rudin and A Nest of Gentry, there is no explicit philosophical level (in the form of either discussion among characters or narrative commentary). In Virgin Soil, the narrative perspective is for the most part very close to that of the hero, and the narrator does not comment on the events as he does in On the Eve and Smoke. Neždanov does question the usefulness of his life quite extensively, but only in the context of his contemporary situation. He is quite taken over by the question of why he cannot free himself from the confines of his Hamletism, and, although his acknowledgement of the influence of this archetype does give him a certain philosophical perspective, he does not draw any conclusions from it as to the insignificance of man’s life in general.

Bazarov is thus the only one of the characters in Turgenev’s novels to have the perspective of an observer ‘from another world’; in other words, he is the only character who voices an awareness of the confinements or limitations of man’s personal perspective on life. In this light, the core traits of Bazarov’s portrait are far more than a realist sketch of a contemporary group. His refusal to accept the norms of society, including etiquette, valuing art and even morality, now reads as an attempt to show how limited the validity of a society’s framework really is. His materialist approach to nature is an acknowledgement of man’s insignificance, while his posture of unlimited individualism is a revolt against the consequences of such an acknowledgement. The core philosophical question raised in Fathers and Sons can be described as follows: if one acknowledges that man is no more than a speck of dust in an
infinite universe, then what is the sense of living? Bazarov’s reaction is one of revolt against the implications of what he acknowledges to be true. Within this context, his death is both the answer to the question and a response to his revolt: death confirms man’s insignificance, and puts an end to any revolt against the laws of nature.

It should be noted that the philosophical current I have been describing in this paragraph is part of the narrative art structure of the novel. It is by means of Bazarov’s words that his acknowledgement of the insignificance of the individual, and his own reaction of revolt against and self-exclusion from the system, are expressed. Also, it is he, Bazarov himself, who concludes that his revolt has been unsuccessful since death cannot be denied.

In the remainder of this analysis, I shall focus on the verbal art structure of Fathers and Sons. The verbal art associations present us with a number of motifs that convey a single pattern: Bazarov is linked to several archetypes that have rebelled against established norms and transgressed the borders that such norms pose. A number of such associations hint at the demonic implications of such negligence of norms. The places that Bazarov visits (the households of the Kirsanov’s, of his parents and of Odincova) are characterized by consolidation of the status quo, and Bazarov’s arrival has the effect of temporarily disturbing their order.

5.4 Transgression motifs

In this section I shall deal with three motifs, each of which involves an element of moral transgression. These are the associations of Bazarov with a Romantic demonic type, with a picaresque hero and with a transgressor type from classical literature. They all share a common core in that all three types threaten to destroy the norms of their environments. In the cases of the picaresque hero and the classical transgressor type, the plot scheme includes the rejection of the hero by the society he has disturbed, and this plot scheme is also re-enacted in Fathers and Sons.

5.4.1 Associations with demonic traits

At one point in the novel, Pavel Petrovič ascribes to Bazarov a “pride that is almost satanic” (“гордость почти сатанинская” – 247). He does so when he is confronted with Bazarov’s blunt rejection of the value of art and of basic concepts such as the community and the family. In doing so, he connects Bazarov’s habit of placing himself above all generally-accepted norms with the devil’s attempts to undermine the norms of the world. Such demonic qualities are commonly found in the portraits of heroes in Romantic literature. As Lotman has pointed out, the Romantic tradition, not only in Russia but also throughout Europe, had its roots in the mythological idea of the transgression of any sort of border as a magical act. In such a scheme, the transgressor (that is, any outsider entering a new environment) is thought to possess special powers. Within the context of modern literature, this idea is reflected in the Romantic identification of active (as opposed to passive) characters with evil. The activity, the transgression, is in general a figurative one: the active hero is the one who transgresses the norms or questions the status quo. This behaviour is associated with that of the devil, he being the prototype of the one who tries to overthrow the existing order (Lotman 1992: 96).\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{81} Such ‘activity’ is not only associated with evil, though. The point is that the established order does not only represent what is right, but also has an aspect of passivity. In this context activity is associated both with destruction of the order and with the construction of something new: the idea of “beneficent, creative evil”
William Brumfield has rightly noted the affinity of Bazarov to the Romantic genius on the basis of their shared attitude of revolt. He writes: “Turgenev, it would seem, is less interested in Bazarov the nihilist (understood as a product of ideology) than in Bazarov the Romantic rebel” (Brumfield 1977: 497). He goes on to say that the depiction of Bazarov’s radical views has “served to establish a position of isolation from which he can offer his challenge to the order of the universe” (idem: 497-8).

The association of Bazarov with such a type of hero is strengthened by a number of intertextual references to Romantic literary characters. 82 David Lowe has drawn attention to resemblances between the plot and character types of Fathers and Sons and Evgenij Onegin (Lowe 1984: 115-117). To begin with, he notes that Bazarov’s first name, Evgenij, matches that of Evgenij Onegin. He also observes that the two main male and female characters in Fathers and Sons resemble those in Evgenij Onegin. For instance, the relationship of Bazarov to Arkadij is reminiscent of that of Onegin to Lenskij. Bazarov does not kill Arkadij, but he does threaten to hurt him; on the hot afternoon when both young men are lying in the haystack (chapter XXI), Bazarov starts a quarrel and subsequently threatens to strangle Arkadij. Furthermore, both friendships are spoiled by a complication of the love affairs: in Evgenij Onegin the unconventional behaviour of Onegin towards Lenskij’s love Ol’ga forms the reason for the duel; in Fathers and Sons mutual jealousy of Arkadij and Bazarov when they are both interested in Odincova causes the first crack in their friendship.

The similarities that he finds among the main female characters include the fact that Odincova and Katja are sisters, as are Tat’jana and Ol’ga. Also, the elder sister in both cases is the more enigmatic one, and the respective feelings of Tat’jana and Odincova to Onegin and Bazarov include fear and fascination, while the relationships between Arkadij and Katja and between Lenskij and Ol’ga are far more conventional.

Apart from these similarities of character, David Lowe also finds similarities in plot. In both stories the hero is involved in a duel owing to his deliberate negligence of the rules of courtesy. Both Onegin and Bazarov make advances, though jokingly, to women who are not free: Ol’ga and Fenečka respectively. Both Lenskij and Pavel Kirsanov (who is Fenečka’s unofficial husband) consequently call for a duel, the result of which is that they are the losers (Lenskij is killed; Pavel Kirsanov is shot in the leg). For both Onegin and Bazarov, this development determines the necessity for them to leave the circles they have been staying in.

It is worth noting, at this point, that a duel could still provide a serious plot element at the time when Puškin wrote Evgenij Onegin, although the tone of the text already suggests parody. The inclusion of a duel in a realist novel such as Fathers and Sons cannot fail to introduce an element of parody. Batjuto has pointed out that the overtones of comedy in the

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82 At first sight it may seem awkward to associate Bazarov with a Romantic type. He overtly rejects everything Romantic. A closer examination shows that he labels everything that he rejects, everything that lacks a scientific basis, as romantic, which gives him, in his own eyes, an unquestionable right to dismiss it as something worthless. In the first chapters of the novel, he accuses both Nikolaj and Pavel of being “old romantics” (“старенькие романтики” – 210), thereby denying the authority of their opinions. He considers philosophy as something Romantic for its non-scientific approach to the world, and also notes that the idea of love is romantic fantasy: “You just study the anatomy of the eye: where does that enigmatic look that you are talking about come from?” (“Ты прошугдируй-ка анатому глаза: откуда тут взяться, как ты говоришь, загадочному взгляду?” – 226). From this we see that it is primarily the idealistic element of Romanticism, the focus on the heart instead of the head, that Bazarov, as rationalist, abhors. He is not being associated with this, however, but with the image of the hyperindividualist with demonic traits.
duel scene from Fathers and Sons form yet another link with Evgenij Onegin, as well as to The Captain's Daughter (Batjuto 1972: 372-3).

In connection with the devilish aspect of the hero, it is important to note that negation is a prime feature of the devil’s image in Romantic literature. He is the personification of negation. Goethe’s Mephisto qualifies himself as the spirit of negation: «Ich bin der Geist der stets verneint» (Faust I, 1348). We can compare this to Bazarov’s habit of negation: “At this current moment the most useful thing is negation, so we negate” (В теперешнее время полезнее всего отрицание…мы отрицаем – 243). Later he declares: “I like to negate, my brain is built like that” (Мне приятно отрицать, мой мозг так устроен, - 325).

Walter Koschmal has pointed out resemblances between Fathers and Sons and Turgenev’s short story “The story of father Aleksej” (“Рассказ отца Алексея” – 1877). The main character of this story, Jakov, is haunted by visions of the devil that prompt him to transgress religious norms. Koschmal classifies the actual visions that guide Jakov’s behaviour as “phantastische Variante” of the spirit of negation that characterizes Bazarov (Koschmal 1984: 142-3).

In addition to his insistence upon negation, there is another basic trait of Bazarov’s attitude to the world that has devilish implications. A deliberate neglect of norms and limitations, such as his, would generally be associated with an attempt to equal God (who is beyond norms and limitations), thereby resembling the devil, who also wished to be equal with God. Bazarov’s materialism logically denies the existence of God, but nevertheless he does seek to place himself outside the laws of the world by associating himself with the gods of classical mythology. For example, he tells Arkadij that it is not for the gods to do the everyday work, from which Arkadij concludes that he considers himself a god (304, quoted in 5.3). Furthermore, on his deathbed Bazarov says that he considered himself to be a Titan (“ведь я гигант” – 396); that is, both a descendant and an ancestor of gods.83

In later, anti-nihilist literature, the association of the nihilist ideas with demonic aspirations of power becomes highly important. It is most conspicuous in Dostoevskij’s Demons, in which both Stavrogin and Kirillov display demonic features, though the implications of these differ: Stavrogin’s character is primarily cloaked in darkness and evil, whereas in Kirillov’s portrait another core feature of demonism is highlighted – the wish to equal God. He kills himself in the conviction that this deed, demonstrating his power to choose between life and death, will make him equal to God. Thus, the nihilist desire for individuality is identified with the wish to outdo one’s human self and become equal to one’s Creator.

In Fathers and Sons a similar pattern can be discerned, though in less overt terms. Bazarov’s individualism leads him to compare himself to a god (304), but this is not so much a revolt against God (since his nihilist ideas lead him to deny the existence of God) as a struggle to place himself apart from, and possibly above, the average human being. Bazarov’s death is not a deliberate act that forms the last step in a program to become godlike, as in the case of Kirillov; on the contrary, it confirms the futility of his attempts to occupy an exceptional position. It shows that he, too, is subject to the rules of nature (about which I shall have more to say in the next paragraph). This difference, however, does not alter the fact that both Turgenev and Dostoevskij identify the nihilist striving for individualism, at the core of which lies a demonic desire to place oneself above all authority.

The associations of Bazarov with a (Romantic) demonic type signal the likelihood of his elimination. His revolt threatens to overthrow the natural order. Within the Romantic tradition, he would face divine judgement, but in Turgenev’s world view there is no divine

83 In classical mythology titans are children of the god of heaven, Uranus, and the goddess of the earth, Gaja, who rule the world for some time, and are then overthrown by Zeus.
judgement. Instead, there are the inflexible laws of an impersonal universe that render any man’s claim to an exceptional position senseless. In the next paragraph, I shall examine Bazarov’s associations with the literary images of the picaresque hero and the heroes from classical mythology who transgress the codes of conduct. The plot schemes of both these traditions include the elimination of the transgressor from the scene.

5.4.2 The picaresque hero

In his study of the pastoral element in Fathers and Sons, Valentino has described Bazarov’s stay at the Kirsanov estate in terms of the role of the picaresque hero in a pastoral scene. Valentino draws attention to a number of distinctly pastoral elements in the novel (Valentino 2001: 11-14). Time and place provide the requisite setting: summer, in the countryside. The main characters who are to occupy this setting are Nikolaj Petrovič, Fenečka, Arkadij and Katja. The name Arkadij, echoing Arcadia, the pastoral setting par excellence, underlines the pastoral element and at the same time hints at Arkadij’s intrinsic bonds with this environment in spite of his temporarily becoming a follower of Bazarov. At the end of the novel, these four characters are united on the estate in familial bliss, emphasised by the double marriage. The relationship between Nikolaj Petrovič and Fenečka fits in perfectly with a pastoral design: she is beautiful, naïve and simple. The older man marrying a young woman is also readily associated with the pastoral. A possible reverse relationship (between Arkadij and the older Odincova), which would have been taboo according to this genre, is abandoned: Arkadij for some time thinks he is in love with Odincova, but then turns to her sister Katja, who does fit into the pastoral design. Furthermore, Nikolaj’s personality, and to an extent the estate itself, are essentially nostalgic. He is introduced while pondering over the past, and later we again see him overtaken by memories in the nocturnal garden scene of chapter XI. His deceased wife plays a central role in these memories, and it is no surprise that the estate bears her name (Mar’ino), which increases its nostalgic atmosphere.

Bazarov enters this setting as a sort of intruder. Clearly in disharmony with the pastoral scene and its inhabitants, he disturbs the quiet and harmonious atmosphere and causes conflict and suffering. Valentino has observed that Bazarov is specifically anti-pastoral in a number of respects (Valentino 2001: 30-4). To begin with, his profession does not fit in with a pastoral scene, disease being an unknown element in the pastoral realm. It goes without saying that this is also true of his scientific view of the world. Furthermore, his subversion of all accepted patterns and his orientation toward the future are both in conflict with the pastoral’s tendency towards consolidation and nostalgia.

Bazarov’s position in relation to the predominant pastoral setting also resembles that of a picaresque hero in other respects. Such a hero, usually a social upstart, invariably shows a lack of respect for social and moral rules of conduct. He generally shuns theoretical speech, relying instead upon sensory perception for his judgements. We might compare Bazarov’s remark to Arkadij that what one approves or disapproves of depends entirely upon personal taste, just like deciding whether or not one likes apples – 325). Furthermore, Arkadij’s position as Bazarov’s pupil, and their frequent moving from one place to another, are both reminiscent of the picaresque heroes of some early nineteenth century novels (Valentino 2001: 37-40).

Valentino has observed that the picaresque hero poses a threat to the order of the environment he enters, thereby qualifying as an intruder. As the plot of Fathers and Sons advances, the inhabitants of the Kirsanov estate come to experience Bazarov’s influence on their lives as negative. His departure means the restoration of the quiet and orderly life that
they obtained before he appeared. I should like to add that this is equally true of his sojourn at Odincova’s estate. Although that environment is not in any sense pastoral (Odincova herself does not fit in with a pastoral scene), its mistress nevertheless experiences Bazarov’s influence as a potential threat to the orderliness of her life, which is why she decides against him and in favour of the quiet that good order ensures. Order is the very basis of her life, to such an extent that she might even be regarded as the personification of the principle of order. Her choosing to expel Bazarov from her life symbolizes the triumph of order, which is what the development of the novel as a whole communicates. In line with this symbolism, her presence at Bazarov’s deathbed is an indication that his death ensures the continuation of order.

Once Bazarov has left the scene, the initial harmony is restored. This element is particularly stressed in the final scene on the Kirsanov estate where the pastoral characters have gathered. This further underlines his position as intruder.

The pastoral/anti-pastoral associations provide the basis for a division of the characters into two groups. A number of traits that are relevant to this division have already been mentioned above. In addition to these, the pastoral characters are associated with life and fertility, the anti-pastoral ones with death and sterility (Lowe 1983: 46). The pastoral group is depicted as part of the continuous cycle of life, symbolized by the simultaneous marriages of father and son. In the final chapter of the novel they each have a baby son. Arkadij’s son is called after Nikolaj, thereby stressing still further the sense of continuity.

The anti-pastoral characters are always, in some manner, detached from life and associated with the dead. In the case of Bazarov this is literally true as he dies in the novel. His death is foreshadowed in several allusions to dying that are made by Bazarov himself. When he suddenly arrives at the estate of Odincova after his duel, he tells Arkadij that he is on his way home, but the expression he uses – “I am going to the fathers” (“я отправился к отцам” – 370) – reminds us of the words that Bazarov’s father used in one of his medical anecdotes, about a doctor arriving at the home of a patient who has already died: “The patient is already ad patres” (“больной уже ad patres” – 314). Bazarov’s journey home is thus associated with a journey into the realm of the dead, and indeed it is during his subsequent stay at his parents’ house that Bazarov becomes infected and dies. Just before he sets out to go there, when he and Odincova are walking in the garden, she tells him that he is a very good man, to which he replies that such a remark from her is like “putting a wreath of flowers on a dead man’s head” (“Это все равно, что кладь венок из цветов на голову мертвеца” – 377).

Pavel and Odincova can be described as figuratively dead (Lowe 1983: 45). Pavel is described as a dead man when he is recovering from the duel: “In the bright daylight, his handsome, emaciated head on the white pillow was like the head of a corpse… and he was a corpse indeed” (“Овецетенная ярким дневным светом, его красивая, исхудала голова лежала на белой подушке, как голова мертвеца… Да он и был мертвец” – 363). Odincova is associated not so much with the dead as with coldness and impassivity. Her coldness of character is visualized in an image of her sleeping “all pure and cold in her clean and fragrant gown” (“вся чистая и холодная, в чистом и душистом белье” – 284). Furthermore, she is continually referred to as icy. For instance, Arkadij refers to her as “cold” after meeting her for the first time, and Bazarov adds that in her coldness lies her attraction: “You too like ice cream, don’t you?” (“Ведь ты любишь мороженое?” – 268). A little later, Bazarov states that she has “frozen herself” (“она себя заморозила” – 272).

The lives of Bazarov, Pavel Kirsanov and Odincova can all be described as ‘sterile’ by comparison to the ‘fertile’ pastoral characters. Pavel Kirsanov remains solitary after his love

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84 The association of established norms with passivity, which I mentioned while discussing the roots of the ambivalent notion of revolt against norms in 5.4.1, should be remembered here.
for princess R.; Odincova decides on a marriage of convenience, and neither Bazarov’s interest in Odincova, nor his flirtation with Fenečka, leads to a serious relationship.

The idea of sterility has special significance in a nihilist context. Since the radicals advocated freer relationships between men and women, and questioned the status of marriage, they were considered enemies both of the family and of marriage itself. This idea had already been expressed in an anti-nihilist novel by Askóčenskij entitled *An Asmodeus of Our Time (Асмодей нашего времени – 1858)*. The main hero of that novel is Pustovcev, a nihilist avant la lettre. He gains more and more influence over a young girl, Marie, whom he fills with his contemptuous ideas. He shows no respect for her parents, and persuades her that their concern for her only constrains her. Pustovcev is also a man of low morals. He controls and takes advantage of Marie simply for his own pleasure, without any intention of marrying her, while at the same time maintaining an intimate relationship with a married woman. When Marie is pregnant with his child, he decides to marry her after all, but Marie bears a dead child and, shortly afterwards, dies. In the end, Pustovcev kills himself.

Central to the depiction of Pustovcev is his attitude to marriage and the family. The novel’s title underlines this fact. Referring to Lermontov’s novel, Askóčenskij claims that Pustovcev is a modern Asmodeus. The figure of Asmodeus is originally found in the apocryphical book of Tobias. Asmodeus tries to prevent the girl he has set his heart on from marrying by attempting to kill the prospective husband. Thus, he has become the archotypical enemy of marriage.

In a venomous review of *Fathers and Sons*, M. A. Antonovič declares that Bazarov is as close to Pustovcev as a brother. Bazarov indeed denounces the value of marriage, scorning Arkadij for suggesting that Nikolaj Petrovič should marry Fenečka: “You still attach value to marriage?” (“Ты придаешь еще значение браку” – 236). He also has rather loose morals: he is described by the narrator as a skirt-chaser (“великий охотник до женской красоты” – 286), and flirts with Fenečka.

The status of marriage becomes an important theme in the novel through the relationship between Nikolaj Petrovič and Fenečka. Their choosing to marry forms the symbolic victory of traditional family life – a victory that is celebrated in the scene at the end of the novel in which the two couples, Nikolaj Petrovič and Fenečka, and Arkadij and Katja, are happily united. Set against this, Bazarov’s life stands out as fruitless.

Another important opposition of anti-pastoral and pastoral is suggested by Katja’s distinction between Bazarov, as “predator-type”, (“хищный” – 365) and Arkadij and herself as “tame” (“ручные” – ibid.). While tameness, meekness and humility do comply with the pastoral, the threatening and destructive aspects of a predator most certainly do not. Curiously, Bazarov displays his predatory nature most overtly where the novel is at its most pastoral: during the haystack scene. According to the pastoral scheme, such a setting of rural quiet in summertime is ideal for contemplation, and Bazarov does indeed contemplate his life in this scene, but in an anti-pastoral variant, stressing his own insignificance. He completely disturbs the scene by his subsequent threat to strangle Arkadij – who, by his name, qualifies as the personification of the pastoral, so that Bazarov’s assault is also a symbolic attack upon all that ‘the pastoral’ stands for.

I shall now explore the opposition of ‘wild’ and ‘tame’ a little more deeply. Where Lowe mentions only this general opposition, I shall identify a number of concrete associations of characters with animals that reinforce their division into the fierce and the meek, or the predatory and the tame. Bazarov’s behaviour towards the other characters is predator-like.

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85 It should also be noted that Asmodeus is a demon. Bazarov’s negation of the values of marriage (traditional family life in general), which links him to this demonic figure, may therefore be seen as another association with demonism.
Odincova is appalled by the “bestial” expression that she sees on his face (“почти зверское лицо Базарова” – 300) when he wants to kiss her, a moment that also calls forth such descriptions of his ‘wildness’ as “He threw her a devouring look” (“пожирающий взор” – 299) and “He threw himself at her” (“он рванулся к ней” – ibid.). Arkadij also sees himself confronted with the aggressive side of his friend. When Bazarov shows him how he would strangle him if they started to fight, Arkadij feels seriously threatened (327).

The division between Bazarov as predator and Arkadij as meek animal is further sustained by the bird imagery that is coined both by Bazarov’s mother and by Bazarov himself. She calls her son a falcon (“сокол” – 334) while Bazarov calls Arkadij a jackdaw – a bird traditionally associated with homeliness and family life (“в галки попал” – 390). He also refers to him as “a young bird” (“птенчик” – 370, “птенец” – 390). In addition, Bazarov’s ‘predatory’ characteristics contrast with the ‘meekness’ of his parents, who are compared to “little sheep” (“овечки” – 397) by the servant Anfisuška. Nikolaj Kirsanov is also associated with a ‘meek’ creature when Bazarov calls him “a ladybird” (“божья коровка” – 350).

As well as Bazarov, there are two other characters who are associated with predatory animals: the anti-pastoral Pavel Kirsanov and Odincova. Pavel Kirsanov is associated with a cat. Several features of his outward appearance suggest his likeness to this animal: attention is repeatedly drawn to his moustache (his habitual pulling of his moustache is mentioned on several occasions during the course of the novel), which can be said to resemble whiskers, and to his long fingernails (“красивую руку с длинными розовыми ногтями” – 208). After his first meeting with Pavel Kirsanov, Bazarov exclaims: “those nails, those nails of his, you could send them straight to an exhibition!” (“ногти-то, ногти, хоть на выставку посылай” – 210). Later, Pavel tickles the chin of Fenečka’s baby boy “with the long nail of his forefinger” (“концом длинного ногтя на указательном пальце” – 230). Furthermore, he has “elongated eyes” (“продолговатые глаза” – 208). Confronted with the bad state of affairs on the estate of his brother, Pavel Kirsanov is said to “mew” (“мурлыкал” – 337). When he and Bazarov have agreed to fight a duel, Bazarov recalls that Pavel Kirsanov planned to hit him with his cane if he did not agree to do so. In that case, he says, he would have been forced to strangle Pavel Kirsanov “like a kitten” (“задушить его, как котенка” – 349).

Odincova is associated with a snake. After the nocturnal conversation between her and Bazarov, which takes place a day before Bazarov’s declaration of love to her, she is alone in her room, and we are told that her braid unwound, and “fell like a dark snake on her shoulder” (“Коса ей развязалась; и темной змеёй упала к ней на плечо” – 295).

The ‘predatory’ characters inevitably come into conflict with one another. Bazarov and Pavel Kirsanov fight a duel, and Bazarov ruins his relationship with Odincova by his all-too-direct reaction to her interest in his person. In both cases, it can be argued that the core of the conflict lies in transgression: Bazarov transgresses moral boundaries when he kisses Fenečka, thus indirectly provoking the duel, and he transgresses the norms of Odincova’s order when he confronts her with passion, making her realize that her orderly life will be uprooted if she allows emotion to influence it. After these transgressions, Bazarov is forced to leave the estates of the Kirsanovs and Odincova.

The animal associations have rather unexpected implications for the image of Fenečka. On the basis of the information that the narrative art structure conveys, she is an uncomplicated character, mainly timid and unsure in her role as the wife of a landlord. However, as I shall now explain, the animal associations suggest a more complicated image, linking her to both predator and prey.

At the beginning of the novel, when the development of Fenečka’s relationship with Nikolaj Kirsanov is described, one of their meetings displays an interesting pattern of
predator versus prey. He meets her on a narrow path in a cornfield, and she hides in the field to avoid passing him. Nikolaj interprets her behavior as flight, and says: “Hello, Fenečka, I do not bite” (“Здравствуй, Фенечка! Я не кусаюсь” – 233), assuming that she looks upon him as a ‘predator’. However, the imagery that follows suggests otherwise. We are told that Fenečka looks at Nikolaj “like a wild animal” (“зверок” – ibid.), and her hiding from him is referred to as “an ambush” (“не выходя из своей засады” – ibid.). Thus, she is herself depicted as a predator, lying in wait for her prey. This association throws a different light on Fenečka’s acquaintance with Nikolaj Kirsanov, implying that she is the one who is doing the catching.86

The ambivalence concerning Fenečka’s image is reinforced in a later instance. The day before the duel between Bazarov and Pavel Kirsanov, provoked by Bazarov’s having kissed Fenečka, she is described as sitting in her room like “a little mouse in its hole” (“мышонок в норке” – 350). However, in Bazarov’s dream, the substance of which is related immediately after this, she appears as “a little cat with black whiskers” (“кошечка с черными усиками” – ibid.).

In both of these cases (the cornfield scene with Nikolaj, and the dream) an ambiguous image of Fenečka arises in connection with the relations between man and woman. Fenečka is associated with a predator in the context of both her future relationship to Nikolaj Kirsanov and the would-be affair between her and Bazarov. The implication is that she has a predatory attitude in her relationships with men. The association of Odincova with a snake may be interpreted in similar terms. She, too, reveals a predatory trait in the context of her growing influence over Bazarov. Owing to the contexts in which the predatory sides of these female characters are activated, they can be interpreted as reflections of the destructive connotations with which passion is often linked in Turgenev’s work. Although it appears only in the form of the predator motif in Fathers and Sons, it forms the main theme of the ensuing novel, Smoke.

To conclude the discussion of predator and prey symbolism in Fathers and Sons, I wish to note the change that occurs in Bazarov’s associations, from those of predator to those of prey, shortly before his death. Bazarov tells his father about a dream he has had in his delirium: “There were red dogs running around me, and you were acting as pointer, as though I were a black grouse” (“вокруг меня красные собаки бегали, а ты надо мной стойку делал, как над тетеревом” – 390). This association of Bazarov with a hunted animal has several connotations. It may represent the triumph of the other ‘predators’, Pavel Kirsanov and Odincova, over Bazarov, since his confrontations with both of them have forced him to leave their respective estates. It may also be interpreted as a symbol of Bazarov’s position in relation to nature. Although he has ascribed to himself the status of a god, he is nevertheless incorporated in the pattern of nature where every creature is sacrificed for the benefit of the whole. Like the mosquito that first sucks the blood of a victim and then falls prey to a spider, the “predatory” Bazarov (for so he was described by Katja) is also turned into prey.

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86 James Woodward interprets this scene slightly differently. For him, it does not present an ambiguous image of Fenečka, but focuses solely on her “hidden ferocity” (Woodward 1990: 146). He argues that she contrives to eliminate both Pavel Kirsanov and Bazarov from the scene. She does so, according Woodward, by luring Bazarov into kissing her, knowing that Pavel would see them and thus setting them against one another. Woodward does not convincingly explain why Fenečka should try to achieve this. He only notes that both Pavel Kirsanov and Bazarov associate her with “the women who undermined their conceptions of themselves” (ibid.). In my opinion, such a connection is implied only in the case of Pavel Kirsanov, who indeed finds that Fenečka reminds him of his former beloved, princess R., but that still does not make clear why Fenečka should want to expel both Pavel Kirsanov and Bazarov from her life.
The pastoral or anti-pastoral traits with which the characters are associated provide a division into two groups. This division lies at the basis of the novel’s final scene: the characters with pastoral traits have gathered into one large, happy family, while the anti-pastoral characters have disappeared from the scene: Bazarov has died, and Odincova and Pavel Kirsanov have moved to Moscow and Dresden respectively. By contrast, the initial situation of the novel presents a completely different pattern, based on contiguous relationships among the characters. In the initial situation, there are three pairs: the two brothers Kirsanov, the two sisters Odincova and Katja, and the two friends Bazarov and Arkadij. The two brothers represent the older generation, the two friends the younger. These three pairs are linked through contiguous relationships: biological and ideological. Between the older and younger generations there is a ‘relationship’ of (ideological) contrast. During the course of the novel, they are rearranged on the basis of their pastoral or anti-pastoral traits. This division cuts across the ideological and biological relationships. In each of the three initial pairs, one character has pastoral, the other anti-pastoral traits. The final situation presents a pattern of characters who are either ‘included’ or ‘excluded’.

At the beginning of the novel, the characters are presented within the framework of contemporary issues – the generational and ideological conflict between ‘fathers’ and ‘sons’ – whereby they are divisible into two opposing groups on the basis of their biological and ideological features. By the end of the novel, the division is determined by archetypal features that are attached to the characters only through verbal art associations.

5.4.3 The tragic transgressor

A third transgressor type with which Bazarov is associated is one that I refer to as the ‘tragic transgressor’. By this, I mean a hero who perishes as a consequence of his transgression of borders that have been set by a power higher than he. The term ‘tragic’, in this context, refers to classical tragedy, in which the death of the hero becomes inescapable through his own deeds, although he may not be aware of the effects of what he is doing.

As David Lowe has noted, Bazarov’s fate resembles that of a tragic hero in that it excludes him from society (from life in general) because he threatens to subvert its order. After his exclusion, the order is restored (Lowe 1983: 15-27). The tragic element is primarily located in the paradoxical position the hero finds himself in: he is great (and sympathetic) because he stands against the existing order, but because of the threat he poses to the existing order, he has to be eliminated (Lowe 1983: 25).

In addition to his similarity to tragic heroes in general, Bazarov is also associated with a particular tragic hero, Oedipus. Masing-Delic has examined this parallel (Masing-Delic 1985). She argues that the association with this hero is triggered by the image of the sphinx that occurs in the narration of Pavel Petrović’s unhappy love story. In his youth, he meets an enigmatic woman, Princess R., who uses the sphinx as her symbol. Pavel is unable to solve the riddle of his sphinx, and she herself also seems unable to do so as she is tormenting herself in trying to understand herself. She eventually solves her own riddle by returning the ring that Pavel gave her earlier. The ring originally bore the image of a sphinx, but she has crossed it out prior to returning it, telling him in an accompanying note that this is the solution to the riddle (224). Arkadij tells this story to Bazarov at the beginning of the novel. As Masing-Delic argues, it foreshadows Bazarov’s own fate. Like Pavel Petrović, Bazarov becomes attached to an enigmatic woman. He is puzzled by Odincova, and sees in her a sort of goddess. At the same time, he feels challenged to unmask her, to anatomise her, to reduce her to the level of one of his specimens and make her fit in with his neatly-ordered schemes.
Both these aspects, the impression she makes on him and the way in which he wants to see her, are reflected in his words for her. He calls her a "duchess" and a "ruler" ("Герцогиня, владетельная особа" – 272), adding, “all she needs is a train and a crown on her head” (“Ей бы только шляпф сзади носить да корону на голове” – ibid.). At the same time he tries to reduce her to one of his objects for research: “Let us see to which type of mammal this figure belongs” (“Посмотрим к какому разряду млекопитающих принадлежит сия особа” – 269; “What a wonderful body! One could take it to the anatomical theatre straight away” (“Этакое богатое тело! хоть сейчас в анатомический театр” – 272).

However, Bazarov’s attempts to categorise and unveil the enigmatic beauty must remain fruitless, Masing-Delic states, since there is no mystery that Bazarov can solve (Masing-Delic 1985: 79). In being confronted by Odincova, he is confronted by the essence of nature: absolute indifference and impassivity. His attempts to solve the riddle of nature are countered by the personality of the sphinx-like Odincova, which will remain inscrutable to him. Masing-Delic further suggests that Bazarov’s concept of the world changes, as a consequence, from a scientific to an aesthetic view. I do not agree with her on this point. It is my conviction that such a change in the hero’s life would contradict the overriding notion of typicality – the unchangeability of man’s life – that forms a basic element of Turgenev’s world view. Far from introducing the possibility of change, the association of the characters with archetypes stresses the element of typicality. I therefore find it more fruitful to consider the Oedipus associations within the framework of the tragedy’s archetypal element of annihilation following upon an act of transgression.

The relevance of the element of transgression to the understanding of the association with Oedipus is made clear through Bazarov’s dream during the night before the duel with Pavel Petrović. In this dream, he sees Odincova, whom he also recognizes as his mother (“Одинцова кружилась перед ним, она же была его мать” – 350). The lover who turns out to be the mother provides the core of the transgression theme of Oedipus. Bazarov’s dream thus stresses the element of transgression. As we have seen, Bazarov is a transgressor in several respects. He breaks both social and moral conventions. However, as has already been suggested in Masing-Delic’s approach, within the context of the Oedipus association his transgression may also be understood in terms of his attempts to penetrate the secrets of nature (like solving the riddle of the sphinx, with the difference that the riddle cannot be solved. This sphinx cannot be defeated by knowledge). Odincova, who plays a role toward Bazarov that is similar to that of the sphinx-like Princess R. toward Pavel Kirsanov, is associated with nature itself. Such a link is suggested not only by Bazarov’s expressed desire to analyse and ‘dissect’ Odincova, as he tries to dissect nature in general, but also by Odincova’s love of order and impassive attitude towards life.

Odincova’s choosing to expel Bazarov from her life in order to secure its quietness and good order foreshadows the final annihilation of Bazarov that removes his threat to the order of nature. Furthermore, by Bazarov’s deathbed, Odincova collaborates in nature’s death sentence: Bazarov asks her to “blow on the dying lamp and let it go out” (“Дуньте на умирающую лампаду, и пусть она погаснет” – 396). She kisses him on the forehead, to which he reacts: “And now…darkness…” (“Теперь…тёмнота” – ibid.). Thus, symbolically, it is her kiss that kills him.

Bazarov is also associated with yet another mythical hero who perishes through transgression. Jane Costlow has pointed out the resemblances between Bazarov and Actaeon in Ovid’s Metamorphoses (Costlow 1990: 134). The hunter, Actaeon, secretly watches Diana, the goddess of the hunt, while she is bathing in the woods, and for this he is transformed into
a stag and torn up by his own hounds. Although Bazarov claims not to be a hunter (in conversation with Pavel Kirsanov – 218), he does ‘hunt’ after women (as Actaeon did). *Fathers and Sons*, like the myth, also includes a beautiful woman taking a bath: Odincova’s bath ritual is described in chapter XVI. And finally, in the dreams of his deathbed delirium, Bazarov sees himself surrounded by “red dogs” (390). However, Bazarov does not spy on Odincova. In the *Metamorphoses*, it is the violation of Diana’s privacy by spying on her that leads to Actaeon’s death. Costlow argues that Bazarov’s transgression, by contrast, is a political one, the threat of revolution, as opposed to the threat of rape in the case of Actaeon and Diana (Costlow 1990: 135).

However, if that were the case, the link to Odincova would be lost. I would suggest in its place that the act that Bazarov is condemned for is ‘spying on’ nature, trying to discover her secrets using his microscope and scalpel. As I have stated above, Odincova can be considered a representative of nature. In the Actaeon myth, the hunter is punished by being hunted down himself, but in *Fathers and Sons* the transgression lies in his wish to dissect nature, and in accordance with this his annihilation comes through the very act of dissection: he is infected with a deadly disease during an autopsy on a victim of typhoid fever. Thus, the nature of the ‘punishment’ indicates the character of the transgression.

All the associations that I have dealt with here link Bazarov to transgressor-types. Transgressor types pose a threat to the normal order of life, and their elimination is inevitable if the normal order is to be preserved or restored. In the light of these associations, Bazarov’s extreme claims to individuality can be identified as a threat to the established norms. On the contemporary level, his revolt occurs only as a subversion of the social norms, but the verbal art associations link it to a more general breaking of life’s boundaries. On this level, his individualism is an act of revolt against the order of nature, and the threat to nature’s balance that it encompasses results in his annihilation.

5.5 Conclusions

*Fathers and Sons* features the idea of non-conformism on two levels: the contemporary level, where there is the element of social revolt, and on the cosmic level, where the revolt of the individual is against nature. The outcome on both levels is the same: the rebel is excluded from the environment he stands up against. Bazarov is expelled from the households of the Kirsanovs and Odincova, but he is also expelled from life. *Fathers and Sons* presents a complex interweaving of the theme of individuality on the contemporary and cosmic levels. On the contemporary level, this theme is elaborated using many aspects of nihilist thought. It is lifted to a more general, philosophical level through Bazarov’s contemplation of his own position within nature as a whole. His understanding of his own insignificance in comparison to the whole of the universe renders his position among the heroes of Turgenev’s novels an extraordinary one. According to Turgenev’s dual world view, it is normal for the individual to understand the world only from his own, individual perspective. In the light of this difference, I have argued that Bazarov’s conscious display of individuality should not be read in terms of the ‘natural egoism’ of every individual, but rather as a deliberate revolt against the order of nature.

On the cosmic level, this rebellious attitude to life is associated with a number of typical transgression plots that feature heroes who (threaten to) subvert the existing order: the romantic-demonic hero, the picaresque hero and the classical tragic hero. The established order is marked as good (the idyll of the pastoral world) and/or established by divine rules (as
is implied in the contexts of the demonic hero, who seeks to overthrow God’s order, and the tragic hero, who transgresses the borders established by the gods of mythology). The typical plots of these transgression myths demand the exclusion or elimination of the transgressor. In Fathers and Sons, the verbal art associations of Bazarov with typical transgressors suggest a motivation for his death (his exclusion as a defining aspect of the transgression plot scheme) that is lacking in his contemporary portrait. Within the framework of the narrative art structure, Bazarov’s death remains an anomalous element, a strange accident that does not follow logically from the portrayal of his character.