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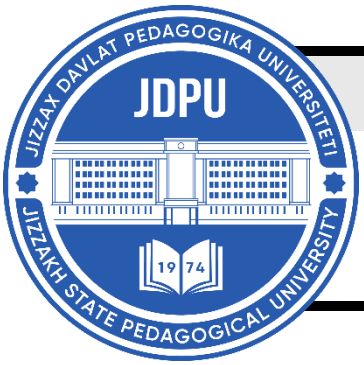

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BAZAROV – A HERO OF "MIXED" SOCIAL ORIGIN

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ABOUT ARTICLE

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Abstract: This article describes the study of Ivan Turgenev's novel Fathers and Sons and the character of Yevgeny Bazarov. Despite extensive research on the novel, some significant issues remain unresolved. In the preparatory materials for the novel, Bazarov's genealogy was outlined even more explicitly: "the son of a doctor, who was himself the son of a priest." Why did Turgenev give his protagonist precisely this social background? This choice is deeply significant: it reflects a typical biographical pattern of many doctors in the 19th century. The medical profession was considered unworthy of a nobleman. As a rule, in the 1850s, children of clergy became doctors. However, the background of Bazarov's father and his son's attitude toward it are not as straightforward as they might seem. Researchers have established that when speaking about himself, Bazarov ironically uses the aristocratic term lekar ("physician"), whereas other characters in the novel refer to this profession as doktor ("doctor"). This provides grounds to suspect Bazarov of a sense of social inferiority, which, as Turgenev subtly hints, compels the character to continuously return to this topic and react

sensitively to it in conversations with the Kirsanov noblemen.

Introduction. Traditionally, in Russian literary studies, Turgenev's Bazarov has often been referred to as a raznochinets (a person of mixed social background). This term had a broad meaning even before the 20th century and still does today: "A raznochinets is a representative of the non-noble environment, a person born into the family of a clergyman, a clerk, a healer, a journalist, a small trader, or, less frequently, an artisan or a peasant. Thus, the poet Vasily Trediakovsky (son of a clergyman), the journalist Polevoy (son of a merchant), and the critic Nikitenko (a freed serf), among others, are called raznochintsy in the history of Russian literature. This term is used in the same sense by Anton Chekhov ('What noble writers received from nature as a gift, raznochintsy obtain at the cost of their youth') and Vorovsky ('Bazarov is a parvenu, Bazarov is a man from the lower "tax-paying" classes, Bazarov is a raznochinets').

As early as 1888, Plekhanov, in his publication on Gleb Uspensky, formulated a generalized archetype of "our raznochinets." He attributed to them rationalism, interest in the life of the common people, indifference to inner beauty, and other traits [2]. That is, in Plekhanov's view, raznochintsy form not so much a social caste as a worldview group. At the same time, as B. Sanninsky emphasizes, "Plekhanov's characterization of the raznochinets is largely modeled on Bazarov, whom, incidentally, Turgenev himself never explicitly called a raznochinets" [3] (although it should be noted that in the drafts of Fathers and Sons, he did use this term). The editor of the publication Who Are the Raznochintsy?* argues that Turgenev was the first to clearly present the moral and psychological type of the raznochinets, though not in Fathers and Sons but rather in the 1874 story Punin and Baburin, which depicts the 1830s–1850s through the character of Baburin, a petty bourgeois [4]. However, in the proper social context, a raznochinets is no longer a petty bourgeois. The latter belonged to the tax-paying class and was primarily engaged in manual labor, whereas, according to Dal, a raznochinets was "a person of a non-taxable class, but without personal nobility and not affiliated with a guild or trade association" [5].

Literature review. In the Brockhaus and Efron Encyclopedic Dictionary, it is stated that raznochintsy, like the nobility and clergy, did not belong to the taxable estate "by virtue of the education they received" [6]. Since a raznochinets did not belong to the taxable estate, he "possessed a degree of personal independence that neither a merchant, nor a townsman, nor,

even less, a peasant had." Unlike them, raznochintsy had "the right to independent settlement, free movement across the country, and a permanent passport. Moreover, belonging, like the nobility, to the 'service' rather than the taxable estate, raznochintsy not only had the right but were also obliged to educate their children, as education in the 18th century was equated with state service" [7]. However, raznochintsy were generally poor and often did not serve in government positions. Their ability to live somewhat independently, which could foster a sense of individual freedom, did not emerge "until the second quarter of the 20th century. Before that, there were no 'free professions' in Russia. An intellectual of 'low' origin, just like a landless nobleman (whose status was essentially indistinguishable from that of a raznochinets), could only earn a living through state service" [8].

From the second quarter of the 19th century, "people of free professions" became necessary: doctors not only for state hospitals, lawyers, reporters, etc. "Belinsky could not have become an intellectual authority in the 1820s or 1810s—he would have had no means of subsistence. A meager paycheck from a newspaper's accounting department alleviated the bitter necessity of government service or patronage" [9]. Bazarov, of course, bears no resemblance to a nobleman. Fenichka "instinctively sensed in Bazarov the absence of everything noble, everything elevated, which both attracts and intimidates" [10] (Ch. XXIII). He himself renounces nobility. Bidding Arkady a final farewell, he says: "Your noble brother can never go beyond noble humility or noble fervor, and that is nonsense" (XXVI, 314). Therefore, A. B. Krinitsyn, in the chapter "I. S. Turgenev" of a literature textbook for applicants to Moscow State University, confidently described Bazarov as a "democrat-raznochinets" [11]. While reviewing the third edition of this book (as a publishing editor), the author of this article replaced Krinitsyn's strict interpretation (which was generally accepted by most critics) with the phrase "a man opposing himself to the nobility," with a footnote stating: "Bazarov is traditionally referred to as a raznochinets, although his father earned hereditary nobility" [12].

After all, Vasily Ivanovich Bazarov was a staff physician and a recipient of the Order of St. Vladimir, which, according to the order's decree (1845), granted hereditary nobility to non-noble officials and clergy [13]. When Vasily Ivanovich decided to tell Yevgeny and Arkady an "interesting story about the plague in Bessarabia," his son interrupted:

"– The one for which you received the Vladimir? – Bazarov interjected.

– We know, we know... By the way, why don't you wear it?

– I told you I have no prejudices, – Vasily Ivanovich mumbled (he had just ordered the red ribbon to be removed from his frock coat the day before) and began recounting the episode of the plague" (XXI, 268–269).

In this case, the order is not only a mark of distinction but also a sign of nobility. Knowing Yevgeny's nature, the elder Bazarov, son of a rural deacon (XVI, 221), who himself "plowed the land" (X, 194), feels uneasy before his son about an award that testifies to his noble status—and Yevgeny's as well—since the latter refuses to acknowledge their belonging to the higher estate.

However, in the textbook Russian Literature of the 19th–20th Centuries, this editorial revision lasted only until the eighth edition. In the ninth, "revised and expanded," at the whim of A. B. Krinitsyn, the Bazarovs were once again classified as raznochintsy. Sytnikov, too, was attributed to this category—despite being the son of a usurer and most likely belonging to the merchant class.

Now, the opposition of "two estates" is excessively emphasized: "Behind the personal conflict between the Kirsanov brothers and Bazarov lies a global conflict between two estates" [14]. Yet no such class conflict exists, and in general, under Alexander II, social groups were not so much in opposition as they were converging. In Crime and Punishment, the raznochinets Raskolnikov and his friend (and later brother-in-law), the "nobleman's son" Razumikhin, are already individuals of the same social circle. The meaning of the title Fathers and Sons lies not so much in the opposition of generations as in the fact that, despite their mutual misunderstanding, "fathers" and "sons" are, in reality, close "relatives."

After his duel with his ideological opponent, the nobleman Pavel Petrovich, having succumbed to his influence, advises his brother to marry his mistress and exclaims: "<...> indeed, what castes au dix-neuvième siècle?" (XXIV, 298). He always, out of noble habit, refers to the 19th century in French, yet he already acknowledges that "castes" (social estates) are a relic of the past.

The events of Fathers and Sons take place in 1859, and in 1858–1859, "1,400 wealthy landowners of the empire, making up 1.4% of all landowners, managed three million peasants, while 79,000 poor landowners, or 78% of all serf owners, controlled only two million souls" [17]. In the 37 central Russian provinces, 1.1% of landowners owned more than a thousand serfs; 2.0% owned between 501 and 1,000; and 18.0% owned between 101 and 500. Together,

the wealthy and noble accounted for 21.1%. Meanwhile, 35.1% of landowners owned between 21 and 100 serfs, while 43.8% owned fewer than 20 [18]. Moreover, "38,173 nobles who had fewer than 20 serfs each owned an average of seven male serfs" [19].

Thus, Bazarov's 22 serfs constituted a relatively decent estate, as nearly 44% of landowners were poorer than he was. Yet even so, not only this 44%, but the majority of nobles, "had such meager incomes that they could not afford to educate their children or attain any elements of the aristocratic lifestyle to which they now aspired" [20]. This is why Vasily Ivanovich, proud of his son, tells Arkady: "Anyone else in his place would have been living off his parents for as long as possible; but with us—believe it or not?—he never took a single extra kopeck, I swear to God!" (XXI, 260). Yevgeny is older than Arkady, yet unlike him, he has not yet obtained his diploma. This means that for several years, he must have been earning money to finance his higher education.

Although Bazarov does not want to be considered a nobleman, he is no less proud than any aristocrat. Before leaving, he bids farewell to the wealthy noblewoman Odintsova. "A bitter smile twitched across his pale face. 'He loved me!' she thought—and she felt sorry for him and extended her hand to him with sympathy. But he understood her gesture as well.

'No!' he said, stepping back. 'I am a poor man, but I have never accepted charity. Farewell, and be well'" (XXVI, 313).

Considering duels a "chivalric absurdity," he nevertheless accepts Pavel Petrovich's challenge, as refusing would have resulted in the gravest humiliation and even worse complications. He exclaims loudly:

"Damn it! How grand and how foolish! What a comedy we've staged! Trained dogs dance on their hind legs like that. But refusing was impossible—he might have struck me, and then… (Bazarov paled at the thought; his pride bristled.) Then I would have had to strangle him like a kitten" (XXIV, 286).

A nobleman like Kirsanov would not have dueled with a non-noble. He knows that Bazarov, a physician, served in his father's division (V, 168) and could at least assume that this doctor had earned hereditary nobility. Only the elderly servant Prokofyich, who was "an aristocrat in his own way, no less than Pavel Petrovich" (X, 188), assesses Bazarov differently, remarking: "In my day, gentlemen fought duels, too, but only noble gentlemen among

themselves. As for these scoundrels, they'd have had them whipped in the stables for their rudeness" (XXIV, 295).

Discussion. To some extent, A. B. Krinitsyn and one of the contributors to the dictionary of literary terms in the same textbook, V. E. Krasovsky, share Prokofyich's perspective. In the entry Conflict, Krasovsky describes a "clash between a raznochinets and an 'aristocrat'" [21]. Here, the quotation marks should be reversed, since Pavel Petrovich is a genuine aristocrat, while Bazarov is an imagined one.

Moreover, how can an opponent of all "principles" like Bazarov have an inseparable "ideology" shared with his devout mother and the pseudo-nihilist Sitnikov—whom A. B. Krinitsyn also classifies as raznochintsy? It is also crucial to recognize that an ideological dispute is not necessarily a social one. So who, then, sets the tone in Turgenev's social world? The most curious fact is that among the characters of Fathers and Sons, there is not a single unquestionable raznochinets.

Another genuine oversight of A. B. Krinitsyn should also be pointed out: in the passage he cites, "If these are the cream, then what must the milk be like?" Turgenev is not at all "pointing to the best representatives of two estates" [23]—again, this beloved concept of "two estates"!—but rather contrasting the best and the ordinary, average representatives of the same noble class.

Bazarov lives in a society that is still predominantly aristocratic. It is within this environment that he is depicted. He has habits inherited from the nobility. Before going to bed, he puts on a dressing gown (IV, 163). His father is dressed the same way in the morning: "Wearing a Bukharan dressing gown, belted with a handkerchief, the old man was diligently working in the garden" (XXI, 258). However, the high-ranking Matvey Ilyich Kolyazin receives visitors while "flicking the tassels of his excellent velour dressing gown" (XII, 203), and Bazarov even finds an evening coat for the governor's ball—albeit "somewhat old" (XIV, 213).

After visiting both Kolyazin and the governor, Sitnikov takes Bazarov and Arkady to a "breakfast" with aristocratic champagne at the estate of Kukshina, a landowner fanatically devoted to "progressive" trends. This late breakfast corresponds to the French déjeuner, when wine, rather than coffee, is consumed. (In Gogol's The Government Inspector, Khlestakov, who had already had a poor-quality meal at the inn earlier, also has such a breakfast at Zemlyanika's charitable institution.)

Bazarov even notes a specific deficiency in the living arrangements of an aristocrat and Anglophile: “There’s an English washstand in my room, but the door doesn’t lock” (IV, 164). However, Turgenev later seems to forget these remarks, as in his parents’ home, his father likely entered his room without knocking from time to time. “At least you can lock your door,” he now tells Arkady. “Here, my father keeps telling me, ‘My study is at your disposal—no one will bother you.’ But he won’t leave me alone for a second. And it feels kind of shameful to lock myself away from him” (XXI, 270). In this moment, he recalls how much his parents adore him—and how deeply he loves them in return. This is no longer connected to any particular class-based moral codes of interaction.

Toward the novel’s conclusion, Turgenev demonstrates that Bazarov, who once reproached Pavel Petrovich for avoiding conversations with peasants (X, 194), could find himself in the same position. When Bazarov asks a coachman about his wife—“Well, does she beat you?”—the man “jerked the reins. ‘What a thing to say, sir! You just like to joke, don’t you…?’ He was clearly offended” (XIX, 249). Here, there is an unmistakable printing error from the 20th century. The word vidimo (translated here as “clearly”) is not a parenthetical expression requiring commas. In 19th-century literature, it functions as an adverb, typically meaning “noticeably” or “quite strongly.” The peasant has his own sense of pride. A “gentleman” should know what is inappropriate to joke about.

Leaving his parents’ home for a rural village, Bazarov engages in conversation with another peasant, making ironic remarks about the Slavophiles’ romanticized view of the Russian common folk. The peasant does not recognize the mockery and responds as he believes one should respond to a nobleman. However, when another peasant asks, “What was he talking about? <…> About unpaid taxes, maybe?”—Bazarov’s reply takes a different tone:

“Taxes? Not at all, my good man! <…> Just chatting about this and that—felt like wagging my tongue. You know how it is with gentry; they don’t really understand anything.”

“Understand? Not a chance!” replied the other peasant, and <…> the two of them resumed discussing their own concerns and hardships.

Alas!—exclaims the author—Bazarov, who once scornfully shrugged and prided himself on his ability to talk to peasants (as he boasted in his argument with Pavel Petrovich), this self-assured Bazarov had no idea that in their eyes, he was nothing more than a kind of court jester…” (XXVII, 317–318).

Conclusion. Thus, the difference between many landowners and those nobles who, whether by necessity or ideology, aligned themselves with the raznochintsy (intellectuals of non-noble origin) was not as great as it might seem. N. A. Verderyevskaya writes:

"A landless nobleman who has turned away from a high-ranking career and has no other means of livelihood is essentially the same as a raznochinets. In the history of Russian civilization and social thought, such raznochintsy—without quotation marks—were Nekrasov (in the 1840s), Sleptsov, Mikhailov, and many members of the Zemlya i Volya and Narodnaya Volya movements. In literature, we find such figures as Nagibin (Contradictions by Saltykov-Shchedrin), Tikhon Trostnikov (The Life and Adventures of Tikhon Trostnikov by Nekrasov), and later, Rakhmetov" [24].

Bazarov's image should be placed in this same lineage. A second-generation nobleman, he is psychologically close to the raznochintsy, though ideologically he rejects all institutions of the class-based state. That is, he considers himself neither a nobleman nor a raznochinets. He was labeled a raznochinets during an era of confrontational ideology. The liberal Turgenev did not endorse such classifications.

In Fathers and Sons, there is no direct social opposition between nobles and raznochintsy. That is why the author never explicitly identifies Bazarov as either a nobleman or a raznochinets in the novel. Scholars analyzing a given writer's work should, above all, consider the author's own language, which reflects their unique worldview.

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