

# Father and sons essay

[Life](#), [Emotions](#)



Father and Sons The novel *Father and Sons* by Ivan Turgenev is about the growing contrast in beliefs and cultures between two generations. This is obvious in the way the relationships between parents and children are portrayed in the story. *Father and Sons* begins with the journey of two Russian students Arkady Kirsanov and his friend Basarov back to Arkady's father's house in the province. Arkady had just graduated from the university. The different principles absorbed by Arkady through his education and his ready acceptance of new principles from the modern world mold his character while his father, Nikolai's beliefs system is a product of his adherence to traditional beliefs and culture. Arkady's father Nikolai had been skeptical about having at him home because he felt that Arkady's advocacy of nihilism may spark disagreements with Pavel, his brother who is not very accepting of people who adhere to nihilistic ideas.

Nikolai is also worried about Arkady's reaction with the fact that he was having an affair with Fenichka, a young peasant girl, and has sired a child with her. The older generation prefers to stick to the principles and beliefs that the forefathers have handed down while the newer generation is fast to embrace new ideas and culture, thinking that the new system will bring about great progress in their lives. This causes people from different generations to think differently. The differences in beliefs and ideas may bring about conflicts in the relationship, sometimes resulting in misunderstandings among generations.

This is shown in the somewhat unwelcoming, passive way Nikolai's brother, Pavel responds to Arkady's stories about nihilism. Pavel also disapproves of Basarov whom he accuses of wanting to destroy everything. To the older

generation, the young ones are fast becoming rebellious by readily embracing new ideals. For the young, they believe that those who come before them should readily welcome new beliefs system as they feel this is the way to an improved society. The Role of Women With the novel set in the mid-nineteenth century, women are expected to play an active role in the running of the household and not society. In the time setting of the novel, the women are expected to stay at home, manage the household, do or supervise chores, prepare the meals, make sure everybody has clean clothes to wear and look after the children.

During that time, it is very rare to see women who would be at the forefront of society. They would rarely be seen taking a stand with regards to important issues in politics, society and the economy and much less their rights. Women who take an active interest in the affairs or society or who seem liberal are not welcomed and are thus frowned upon in their society. One such liberal woman is Madame Odintsov. Madame Odintsov is a young well-traveled, cultured, sophisticated and moneyed woman who very much holds her own. Her character is unlike the usual stereotypical woman of their time, so much so that her presence and activities have raised the eyebrows of many. Madame Odintsov captures the heart of Basarov in the novel.

Basarov The novel Father and Sons revolves around Basarov.

In the first part of the novel, Basarov is seen as a very staunch believer of nihilism which preaches the idea of detaching oneself from everyone and everything. As a result Basarov, strongly believed that one should not let a woman or emotions influence his actions. As the novel progresses, Basarov

is seen to have somewhat changed his views towards relationships. This is made evident when he acts upon his attraction to Fenichka and later starts to fall in love with Madame Odintsov.

The novel does a great job of showing conflicts in Basarov's ideals and his actions. Towards his death, he submits to the lure of his romantic feelings for Madame Odintsov by calling for her on his deathbed.

ReferencesTurgenev, I. (1861, 1948). Fathers and Sons . Retrieved March 21, 2007, from Ibiblio: <http://www. ibiblio. org/eldritch/ist/fas. htm>