

Alexandra Kollontai 1918

“New Woman”

from *The New Morality and the Working Class*

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Part One

What – the new woman? Does she really exist? Is she not the product of the creative fancy of modern writers of fiction, in search of sensational novelties? Look around you, look sharply, reflect, and you will convince yourself: the new woman is certainly there – she exists.

You already know her, you are already accustomed to meeting her in life, and indeed on all rungs of the social ladder, from the woman worker up to the young women adepts of the sciences, from the modest woman clerk to the most famous representative of the liberal arts. What is most amazing about all this is that although you meet the new woman in life with ever increasing frequency, it is only in most recent years that you have had an opportunity to find her facial features more frequently again in the heroines of literary works. Life in the last decades, under the heavy hammer blows of vital necessity, has forged a woman with a new psychological sense, new needs, and a new temper. But literature still portrayed the woman of the past, still created the decrepit, self-sublimating former type. What shining images of the nascent "new woman" was offered by the reality of Russian life in the '70's and '80's! But the poets and novelists passed them by. They neither perceived nor heard them, nor did they comprehend them or distinguish among them. Turgenev almost brought them to life with his delicate brush, but even in his novels the images are dimmer, poorer than the reality. Only in his poetry, in poems in prose that are dedicated to the Russian girl, did Turgenev bare his head reverently before the

deeply affecting images of those who had dared to cross the hallowed threshold.

A long train of "nameless" ones follows the women militants, namely, those who are listed in the annals of history. They were destroyed like bees in the destroyed beehive. The rocky path to the holy, longed for, and awaited future is strewn with their corpses. Their number grew, increased year to year. But the novelists and the poets passed them by, thickly blindfolded. The poet's eye, as though it were absolutely oriented upon the traditional view of woman, was not able to grasp this *novum*, to appropriate it and stamp it upon his memory. Literature, in perfecting itself, developing by seeking utterly new paths, new colors and worlds, stubbornly continued to produce the betrayed, abandoned, suffering creatures, revengeful wives, bewitching predators, will-less "misunderstood natures," pure, colorless, charming girls.

Flaubert wrote *Madame Bovary* at a time when George Sand, so shining a herald of the new woman awakening to life, lived near him in flesh and blood, suffering and asserting her human and feminine "ego" alike.

Tolstoy immersed himself in the feminine psyche, enslaved through the centuries by fate, of an Anna Karenina. He admired a charming, harmless Kitti, toyed with the temperamental "wifie" nature of a Natasha Rostov at a time when a pitiless reality tied the hands of an ever growing, steadily increasing number of female human beings. Even the greatest talents of the nineteenth century did not feel the necessity to replace the glamor of the womanliness of their heroines by characteristics pointing to the new woman. It is only in the last ten to fifteen years that this type, newly awakened to life, has not gone unnoticed – and, of course, only by the most modern writers and especially by women novelists – as a result of which they had no choice but to assert their claim to recognition in their most recent works. Now, this type no longer presents a sensational novelty. You meet it not only in a "pioneering" novel that tries to solve one of the pressing, complicated problems of our times, as an exemplary case, but you run across it also in the modest, unpretentious narrative.

It goes without saying that the type of the "new woman" varies from country to country, that membership in this or that social stratum gives it its particular stamp, that the psychological expression of the heroine, her strivings, her life-goals, can exhibit a significant divergence from each other. But no matter how different these new heroines may be, we perceive in them something that is common to all of them, something "species-like," so to speak, which immediately enables us to distinguish them from the women of the past. The latter viewed the world differently, expressed

themselves differently towards life. It requires no special historical or literary knowledge to discern the countenance of the new woman from the mass of women of the past. We cannot always give an account of what this *novum* consists of, or pinpoint wherein the difference actually lies. One thing, however, is clear: somewhere in the realm of the subconscious a criterion has been formed in us with the aid of which we can classify and determine the feminine types.

Who, then, are these new women? They are not the pure, "nice" girls whose romance culminates in a highly successful marriage, they are not wives who suffer from the infidelities of their husbands, or who themselves have committed adultery. Nor are they old maids who bemoan the unhappy love of their youth, just as little as they are "priestesses of love," the victims of wretched living conditions or of their own depraved natures. No, it is a wholly new "fifth" type of heroine, hitherto unknown, heroines with independent demands on life, heroines who assert their personality, heroines who protest against the universal servitude of woman in the State, the family, society, who fight for their rights as representatives of their sex. Single women are the ones who more and more determine this type. The "single woman": in the most recent past the original type of woman was the "spouse," the wife who was the shadow of the husband, a supplement, an appendage. The single woman has ceased to play this subordinate role and to be no more than the reflex of the man. She has a singular inner world, full of general human interests, she is independent inwardly and self-reliant outwardly. Twenty years ago, a statement of this kind would have said nothing either to the mind or to the heart. The girl, the mother, the "blue stocking" (not viewed in her problematic aspects), the beloved, or the salon-lioness of the stripe of Elena Kurakina (Tolstoy, *War and Peace*), all these personages exemplified an understandable, traditional staple of fiction. But for the single woman there was no place either in literature or life. If women emerged in history with features that recalled contemporary heroines, they were viewed as random deviations from the norm, as psychological phenomena.

But life does not stand still, the wheel of history, which turns at an ever faster tempo, compels even persons of the one and same generation to form new concepts, to enrich their lexicon with new material. The single woman, of which our grandmothers and even our mothers had no idea whatsoever, exists. She is a real, living phenomenon.

Single women. They are the million figures, wrapped in drab clothing, who pour out of the working-class quarters in an endless train on their way to work sites and factories, who set out for the circular railways and the tramcars in that hour before

daybreak in which dawn still battles with the darkness of night. Single women. They are those tens of thousands of young, already fading, women who settle down in the big cities in lonely roomcages and increase the statistic of "independent" households. They are girls and women who ceaselessly wage the grim struggle for existence, who spend their days sitting on the office chair, who bang away at telegraph apparatuses, who stand behind counters. Single women: they are the girls with fresh hearts and minds, full of bold fantasies and plans who pack the temples of science and art, who crowd the sidewalks, searching with vigorous and virile steps for cheap lessons and casual clerical jobs. We see single women seated at a worktable preparing a laboratory experiment, burrowing through archival material, rushing off to hospital patients, drafting a political speech.

How dissimilar are these images to the heroines of the recent past! To the bewitching, touching women of Turgenev, Chekhov, to the heroines of Zola, Maupassant, the impersonal, good-hearted feminine types of German and English literature, even of the '80's and of the beginning of the '90's. Life creates the new women – literature reflects them.

A succession of heroines of the new type pass in review before us in an endless motley train. The woman writer Mathilde^[1] pushes her way forward through the thick, prickly thorny undergrowth of the present reality, clearing a path with a calm, proud, determined gait. The thorns of life tear at her hands and feet till the blood flows, lacerate her breast. But there is no wincing in this face, becoming stonelike and as hard as steel as a result of life's cares and torments, even though the bitter lines around the mouth dig deeper, even though the glance, proud and unbowed, beams with bold brilliance.

A new suffering: a beam of joy – a guest who alights rarely on working-class circles – darts by without affecting her. Mathilde stands on the mountain, proud, unshakeable, wrapped in her gray shawl. A statue of sadness. But her gaze is fixed upon the unknown – she sees "the future," she believes in it. Mathilde, steeled by earlier skirmishes with life, comes to the city. Freshness, youth, health ooze from her. So she knocked on the factory gate and entered the work site. The brick monster has swallowed another victim. But Mathilde is not afraid of life. Confident and proud, she steps over the snares that fate mockingly sets for her, the lonely, meditative girl, the dirt and vulgarities of life do not besmirch her. Mathilde bears her clear, pure human "ego" though life with an unshakable naivete. She is only a lonely, poor factory girl, but she is proud of what she is, she is proud of her inner strength, proud of the fact that she is absolutely self-reliant. Then the first

inclination – tender and radiant as youth itself – the first joys of motherhood. The first sensation of loving dependency, a timid rebellion against the loss of freedom. Then again, the wave of a new, torrid passion. The pangs, torments of love, longing, hurt, disappointment and then again loneliness. But we are not in the presence of a bowed "lost" girl, of a pathetic, depressed creature – no, before us stands a proud, lonely mother – a human being turning in upon herself. Mathilde's personality grows and strengthens itself, and every new suffering, every new page of life merely shows her strong, unshakeable "ego" in bolder relief.

Compared to her the dreamy Tatiana, the girl from Riasan,^[2] treads softly in bare feet, burnt and chapped by sun and storm. She goes around with people as homeless and as shelterless as herself. "A piece of copper on a rubbish heap of old rust-eaten iron." Today she busies herself in Maikopa at the time of the hay harvest, and tomorrow she wanders to the Don with a troop of agreeable comrades. These people go whither they scent the possibility of earning wages.

Tatiana goes along with them. Free as the wind, lonely as the grass on the steppes. She is dear to nobody. No one will protect her. Eye to eye, breast to breast, she wages an unbroken, tireless struggle against fate. And pitiless fate ruffles her, it shows her no tenderness, it has only hardness for single women like Tatiana and Mathilde. But Tatiana does not bow under the blows of life's scourge, for a long time she does not bow and deeply hidden in her soul she bears her earthly dream, the dream that is shown to her by a clear, unruffled summer night – the future. Thus she goes through the world and seeks her happiness. But, as if to mock her, happiness only draws farther and farther away from Tatiana. The dreamy-tender girl from Riasan gleams only the crumbs of a fugitive happiness.

A passerby stirs her soul, she weeps, is inflamed and gives herself to him. Simply and straightforwardly she wrests for life her small earthly joys to which such single women – and understandably so – migrant women workers precisely give themselves. But she does not want to bind her life to the passerby: "That's not for me – no, I don't like that! Yes, if only you were a peasant! But this way, it makes no sense! That might do for an hour, but not for a whole life!"

And she goes forth, gently smiling at him in farewell, she goes forth in search of the happiness of which she dreams, she goes forth lost in her own thoughts, as though she were alone in the world, and as though everything willed to be created anew by her.

Thus Mathilde and Tatiana go thither, they break through the undergrowth of life and with their breasts and hands they clear the path to the longed-for future. But, behind them, the new women of other social strata press forward, full of zeal to reach the newly laid-out path. They, too, are torn and wounded by the branches of the prickly thorn bushes; their feet, unused to walking on sharp stones, are also sore, and their footsteps are also left behind in red streaks of blood. But there is no such thing as standing still: thick, impenetrable undergrowth over and over again closes off the new path, but the path nevertheless widens more and more. Woe to those who succumb to weakness! Woe to the enfeebled! Woe to those who look backward into the ever vanishing past! They will be pushed off the path by the serried ranks of those who are pressing forward.

And, with bowed heads, the weary sink down on the edge of the new path and look back on the gray castle of their former slavery.

In the serried ranks of those who seek a new path, we look for, we discern heroic women – physiognomies of all nations, of all social strata. In front of them all gleam the beauteous features of the actress Magda,^[3] this artist so proud of her maidenly and human dignity with the bold motto of the new woman: "I am I – and what I am, I became only my own ability." Magda has broken with the traditions of a provincial bourgeois family and has challenged bourgeois morality to its face. But, proud, the "sinner" remains under her parents' roof, in the "homeland." Magda knows the worth of her personality and staunchly defends her right to be herself. To rise above her sins is more to her than the pharisaical purity in which the bourgeois world lives.

The bold, clever, passionate Olga^[4] sets out determinedly on the new path. She breaks away from a patriarchal Jewish family, overcomes one obstacle after another, and plunges into the hurly-burly of life in a big European city. She is accepted in an elect circle of intellectuals, "the cream of society," and the life of this center of culture and capitalism gaily unfolds before her. The struggle for existence, the struggle against the unemployment plaguing intellectuals, the struggle for self-assertion as human being and as woman! Olga lives, as do thousands of intellectual young women in the big urban cultural centers – alone in the struggle for existence. Olga does not fear life and boldly demands from fate her quota of personal happiness. The man whom Olga loves is at once near and far. Their life-paths cross from time to time. Building a common life together does not correspond to the interests of either. Love merely grazes her rich store of experience. Passion wanes – thereupon love also dies. They go their separate ways. And again we do not behold a young woman, weak,

suffering, bowed, but a human being who bravely drains the cup in which the wine is mixed with poison. Olga is stronger than the one chosen by her. In the hours of unhappiness, even of love's sorrow, he hastens to Olga as to his only, sincere friend. In the tangled, rich experiences and struggle for existence, love's romance, for Olga, is only an introductory "episode." In the multitude of the new women, the woman doctor Laucorojelo,^[5] the typical single woman, strides with sure step, her beautiful head held high. Science and the practice of medicine constitute the substance of her life. The clinical wards are at once her temple and her home. She fights for recognition and respect among her male colleagues; gently but unyieldingly she rejects all attempts to win her over to marriage. She needs to be free and alone for her beloved activity, without which she cannot live. She is severe in dress, she apportions her time strictly, she struggles to acquire a practice and experiences the triumph of self-love with the victory over her male colleagues as diagnostician. The image of the "emancipated woman" as cold already begins to come across to the reader. Then, as if by accident, we glimpse another scene and, for the first time, we see the woman doctor from a wholly different aspect. It's the holiday season and with her "friend" – likewise a doctor – she is seeking recreation in the country. Here she is woman – here the feminine "ego" gets the upper hand. Her clothes are now light and colorful, her smile gladsome. She makes no secret of her "bond," and when she does not live together with the friend in Paris, this happens only because it is more "convenient" to both of them – the colleagues – this way.

The passionate Theresa,^[6] all fire, all zeal, rushes by the great woman doctor! She is an Austrian socialist, a fiery agitator. She has served time in prison. She plunges into Party work with her whole heart and soul. But when she, too, is overwhelmed by the waves of passion, she does not deny the radiant smile of life, she does not hide hypocritically behind the faded mantle of womanly virtue – no, she reaches out her hands to the chosen one, she remains for several weeks away from the scene of her activity, in order to drink the joys of love from the goblet and to convince herself how deep it is. And when she drains it to the dregs, she casts it away without regret, without bitterness. And she goes back to her work. For Theresa, as for the majority of her male comrades, love is only a stage, only a brief respite on life's path. The aim of her life, its content, is the Party, the idea, agitation and propaganda work.

Another of the new women, Agnes Petrovna,^[7] one of the first Russian heroines of the type of the single woman, chooses her path with calm circumspection. She is a writer, an editorial secretary, but she is "above all a working human being." When Agnes is working, when any thought, any idea, takes hold of her, nothing else and

nobody exists for her. "I cannot separate myself from it, and for this I need freedom and I will not sacrifice my freedom for any kind of love whatsoever." But when Agnes comes home and changes her working clothes for a comfortable house dress, then it gives her joy to acknowledge herself unreservedly as woman and to try her feminine charm on men. She seeks neither the substance nor the goal of life in love, but only chat which most men also seek for in it: "Diversion, poetry, light." But she herself does not recognize any power over herself, over her "ego," on the part of the beloved man.

"To belong to a man like an object, to give him one's whole will, one's whole heart, one's whole understanding, and to gear the employment of all one's energies exclusively to his well-being – and to do this with full consciousness and joyfully – all that can probably make a woman happy. But why all this for only one person? ...If one must forget oneself, then I would rather do it not just for one person alone, by preparing a good noon meal and a restful slumber for him; if such be the case I will grant all that also to such-and-such other unhappy ones..."

And when Miatlev attempts to interfere with her freedom, when he dares to place his love between her and her work, her writing activity, Agnes considers the bond dissolved and they come to a parting of the ways.

Slowly with a tinge of insecurity, Agnes is followed by a less sharply sketched portrait of another single woman: Vera Nikodimovna.^[8] Vera has been raised in the traditions of the old generation with a touch of modernism. She has "a past," and this past, which ended in "an awful, awful, banal way," has left a dark mark on her soul. It is not only the "physiological" that drives the reflective and almost frigid Vera into men's embraces. "Nobody knows how little one's feeling is involved in this, how little it all has to do with wantonness," she confesses to her young lady friend. Something different stands behind it. What was it exactly? The longing for motherhood! Perhaps the search for a kindred, understanding soul, this dangerous angel remains fastened to the soberly reflective single women. Ever since her confession Vera is surrounded by men who adore her. But – instincts inherited from grandmothers ward off the approaches of men whom she lures with hopes. Being a temptress becomes her specialty. But in contrast to the grandmothers, unmoved, she holds onto her freedom and, besides being a drawing-room flirt, Vera Nikodimova is a working, thinking woman-human being.

The sadly smiling image of consumptive Mery^[9] floats by. Behind her comes the

diminutive, courageous fighter Talia,^[10] who looks for work in her clattering, worn-out shoes. Behind them rings the repulsive laughter of the intellectually impoverished, shallow Annette,^[11] who in this novel and in her way is a parody of the single woman. Robust-naive Anna, Sanschar's heroine,^[12] presses forward along the new path. Mira, Lydia, and Nelly^[13] stride forth, arm in arm. Each one has something quite special, holy, not only womanliness. We find this vanity, this ambition, even with the seemingly vapid Lydia. But as soon as love is kindled, as soon as the feminine nature demands its rights, all these young women cross the forbidden threshold without the former sentimental fear of themselves. But later the polytonal symphony of life, in which love is only an introductory melody, again tears them away. The music hall *artiste* glides by, dodging the sharp stones, with her finesse of soul that enchants our eyes, as though she was formed out of soft aquarelle tones. She has left her husband with her illusions shattered, a wounded heart; she has thrown down the gauntlet to the world to which she belonged. Her life now belongs to art, which she practices in mime dances and pantomime that she herself composes. It is a nomadic, wearying, strenuous life. She seeks no adventure – she wards them off: her heart has been too deeply wounded. Freedom, independence, solitude are the substance of her personal desires. But when Rene, after a tiring long day's work, sits at the fireplace in her lovely flat, it is as though the hollow-eyed melancholy of loneliness creeps into her room and sets himself behind her chair.

"I am used to being alone," she writes in her diary, "but today I feel so forsaken. Am I then not independent, not free? And terribly lonely?" Does not this question have the ring of the woman of the past who is used to hearing familiar, beloved voices, to being the object of indispensable words and acts of tenderness?

And when passion suddenly invades Rene on her paths, she allows herself to succumb to the advancing waves and to be borne away by them. But passion does not blind her, it does not becloud her analytical mind.

"Only my senses are attacked," she establishes with melancholy regret. "Only my senses are intoxicated." Rene sobers up. The new love does not give her what she had been seeking. In the embrace of the beloved she is as lonesome as before. And "la Vagabonde" flees, she fades from her love, she flees because this love is so unlike the refined demands she makes on love.

Rene's farewell letter to her abandoned friend is a document of the contemporary woman touching on the soul's new claims and demands on life. Benette's^[14] heroine

steps forth behind her. She is a writer, a single woman. Ecstasy and adoration drive her into the arms of a great musician, but the experience only helps her to find and strengthen her own identity, to prove her writing talent, and to take a more sober, more reflective, and more conscious stance towards life. And when, later, a new love approaches, she does not flee from it, like the heroines of earlier English novels who, beshamed, viewed themselves as dishonored, fallen creatures. Rather, she goes towards the new love, smiling.

The restless, temperamental Maya's impetuously pushes forward. She has an ironical disposition. To her, all experiences are but stages on the way to herself – to the shaping of her personality: struggle with her relatives for independence, separation from the first husband, a brief romance with an Oriental hero, a second marriage, full of refined psychological details. Thereupon, a bitter struggle is waged in Maya's soul between the old and the new femininity; there is another separation, again a new seeking until Maya finally finds the man who exhibits respect for her inner "voice," this symbol of personality, who recognizes her importance and knows how to create an inwardly free love bond about which Maya has dreamt all her life.

Maya's life harbors a profusion of psychological complications and experiences. But all that from which a woman of the old stamp would have broken long ago (the infidelity of the beloved man, the break with two men) serves Maya only as education, allows her to arrive at self-understanding all the more surely. Unconsciously, she follows Goethe's counsel: "to begin one's life anew every day, as though it were just beginning ..." "My stronger, more courageous will, which nothing could break, saved me – my unconscious will to self-preservation. It led me through life like a guardian angel," says Maya of herself.^[15]

Nevertheless there are still enough episodes in Maya's life that recall the old breed. The new, independent, inwardly free woman constantly struggles with the atavistic inclination to be the "shadow of the husband," his echo. How familiar in her is the naive conscientious effort to arrange herself inwardly so as to accord with the taste of her husband whom she loves, to perfect herself fully in keeping with the ideal that her chosen one had formed of her. As though she had no worth of her own, as though her personality was to be appraised only according to the relation men had towards her. This atavistic trait in women is so strong that even so splendid, brilliant, bewitching a personality as George Sand could be tempted to wish to forsake the world for the sake of a rapturous Musset and then, later, to renounce the flight to the stellar world of artistic creation for the sake of sober politics. But the strong personality of George Sand drew a line against such experiments. The moment came

when George Sand sensed that she was about to lose her identity, that by such adjustment the woman in her – Aurore Dudevant – was directing George Sand, the bold, rebellious, passionate dreamer, to destruction and stifling her.

Then George Sand tore the former bonds with no regrets. And when once such a decision was born in her soul, nothing could hold her back, no power, not even her own passion was able to break the will of this great human being with the bewitching, tender-receptive, feminine soul.

When Aurore Dudevant leaves her estate on a gloomy autumn day for a last brief farewell with her lover, even though the decision to break with him is already ripened and formalized – we need have no concern over George Sand – we feel that this encounter cannot have the force to change her decision, it is nothing else but the last gift of a dissolving passion which George Sand flings to the weeping Aurore. The stage is surpassed, the experience is closed, and that is all.

Meisel-Hess's Maya, naturally, is not of the same stature of George Sand, she is much weaker. But in her, too, a limit is set to her adaptation to the beloved. Her atavistic inclination to self-denial, to self-alienation and dissolution in love, collides with her already developed, distinct human personality. Maya also understands how to straighten herself out in a given moment and she goes forth in order to save her "voice."

How difficult it is for today's woman to cast aside this capacity, internalized in the course of centuries, of millenniums, with which she tried to assimilate herself to the man whom fate seemed to have singled out to be her lord and master. How difficult she will find it to convince herself that woman must reckon self-renunciation as a sin, even a renunciation for the sake of the beloved and for the sake of the power of love.

The cold, reflective, ambitious Uta^[16] steps impressively alongside Maya. Uta is an actress, her whole life is a continuous display and adornment of her own "ego" which to her stands far higher than anything else in the world. It is as though art, too, is dear to her only as a further means for the unfoldment and revelation of her strong personality, only more fully and in a many-faceted way. It shows the natural reaction against the centuries – long self-abasement of woman and her submissive renunciation of the right to be a personality with a characteristic value of her own. Strong, passionate ambition, cold reasoning, extraordinary selfishness and a striking talent for the stage get the upper hand in her and drive Uta into a dark corner.

Calmly, she passes up personal happiness, Klodt's boundless devotion. She appreciates his love, because she loves to glimpse her splendor reflected therein, as in a mirror. When Klodt, confused by Uta's glamor, tormented by her cold indifference, betrays her before her eyes, she weeps. But it is not the woman in her that is offended. Rather it is the artist who is exposed to all admiring gazes, whose particular worshipper has dared to go over to her rival, to the hated Fronchini. It is not outraged love that weeps in her, but wounded egotism. Uta remains true to herself up to the end of the novel – she carries her spiritual coldness and her adoration of her own "ego" through life. But, in Uta, is it not the absence of that "holy flame" which makes "great" artists, which makes the frivolous, temperamental "wife" Fronchini carry off the victory over the clever, cultivated Uta, who is much more developed and even "important," in her art, but devoid of temperament?

The artist Tania,^[17] spoiled by life, shines forth in the multitude. Although Tania is a married woman, one cannot but include her in the type of "single woman," as with Maya, even though she was formally married three times. It is in keeping with her inner physiognomy. For instance, does not Tania, although she lives together with her lawful spouse under the same roof, remain free and independent as before and as a human being, "herself"? She frowns when her husband introduces her to his friends without mentioning her own name. Each of them lives in a world of his own, she in the world of art, he in the world of his professorship, of science. They are good friends, comrades, strong bonds unite them, but as good friends they do not curtail one another's freedom.

Tania's blind, physiological passion for the handsome "manikin" Stark invades this pure atmosphere. In Stark, naturally, Tania does not love the intellectual physiognomy, not his soul, but the "eternal masculine" with which he drew her like a magnet at their first meeting. She flits by his soul, just as up to now men have flitted by the souls even of passionately loved women, stretching their arms in defensive helplessness when the "adored" Anna, Manya, or Lisa, amid tears, utter the familiar reproach: "But your soul, your soul, that you don't give ..." Tania's attitude towards Stark altogether bears the stamp of the male. We feel that she, as a personality, is both clearer and stronger, as well as richer than he. Tania is too much a human being, too little "wife" for naked passion to be able to satisfy her. She herself admits that her passion for Stark does not enrich her soul, but impoverishes it, dries it out. It is characteristic that Tania suffers less from the consciousness of her infidelity to her husband than from the tormenting realization that comes to her in moments when she yields to amorous rapture, of the irreconcilability of such love with planful,

enduring work without which she cannot live.

Passion consumes her energies, her time and makes free, creative work impossible. Thus, Tania begins to lose herself and that which to her is the dearest thing in life. Tania goes back to her husband but not because "duty" enjoins it, and even less out of pity, but out of love for herself, in order to save her identity and her personality.^[18]

She can lose herself with Stark. She goes back and is with child by Stark. She goes back, but not because the passion is already extinct. Where is the heroine of the novels of the good old times who would have possessed so much bravery as to act like Tania?

Tania faces the choice which in her time was faced by one of the first heroines of the psychologically new type of woman – Ibsen's Ellida. Since the "man from the sea" demands that she follow him, and her husband accords her full freedom of choice – Ellida remains with her husband. She remains in the consciousness that, thereby, she is saving her inner freedom, whereas she would forfeit it if she were to go off with the "man from the sea." Ellida has understood that she was threatened by the most terrible captivity imaginable for a woman – the captivity of passion, a power that he held over her feminine heart.

The psychically stoic, the spiritually strong Josepha^[19] modestly clears her path and proffers a helping hand to those on the edges of the path beset by the still protruding, prickly branches of the thorny bushes of life. She helps the women of bourgeois society beat a path to economic independence, she shows them the way to the professions. The sensitive, cautious Christa Ruland^[20] gropes hesitantly along the path. We have here a bewitching, portrayal of a grown woman who with big, wide-opened eyes peers questioningly into the world in which she seeks the new rights for woman, and, at the same time, first begins to become conscious of herself. Her motto is: "I – and I and you – are you, we are one only in love."

The heroine of Juschkevitch's novel, Elena,^[21] hiding the tragedy of her soul, the tormenting, strange world-weariness which is not comprehensible even to her, presses forward on the margin of the path to the "new rights." She is not single and not even one of the "new women" in the actual sense of the word. In her psyche, the traits of the new and the old type have entangled and formed a complicated knot. The eternal feminine is clear and strong in her, but her mind, her human "ego," fills the tender feminine soul with grave questions. She is sacrificing, affectionate, full of

feminine contradictions and even of slavish mendacities, but her rebellious, endlessly seeking, questioning mind makes out of Elena a figure of a new kind. Juschkevitch has presented her in soft tones and treated the character so circumspectly, so affectionately as though fearful of breaking with a word this sensitive, fragile feminine soul whose tragic situation finally destroys her.

We distinguish Renate Fuchs^[22] in the multitude of the new women, this "rebellious soul" who succeeds in preserving her spiritual purity while she goes through shame, dishonor, and dirt. A lofty calm is spread over her countenance and in her virginal hands she holds the little child, the "new man" of the future. Alongside her steps Greni Allena's heroine^[23] proudly guiding by the hand her little daughter, the child of her love from a union which demonstratively had avoided the legal form. The chemist Maria^[24] sets foot into her laboratory with officious gestures – her smile is radiant; she has found life's harmony. The prostituted Mylada^[25] with head held high bears her "holy mission" through the filth of life which has robbed her of her eyesight.

The social-revolutionary Anna Siemenovna,^[26] while concealing herself behind the mask of the coquettish "wifie," deliberately strides through her own passion beginning to end. Leaving the world's prejudices far behind, the emancipated student English-woman Fanny^[27] glides along with soaring steps and carries her fragrant clothes unhurried through life's thorny underbrush. Another familiar face beams at us, that of the woman student from the far north – Anna Mahr^[28] ...Thus do the different heroines of Björnson, ronas Lie (The Commandant's Daughters), Jakobsen, Löffler torment themselves on the new path. Jenny,^[29] the heroine of the Norwegian woman novelist Undset, enters upon the new path full of restlessness, and always as though she was harking to voices in her soul reminiscent of the woman of the past. Like Nagrodsкая's Tania, she leaves the father of her still unborn child so that motherhood may not strengthen the love that has begun to be burdensome to her. Now she presses forward on the new path, with increasing boldness, but a voice of the past lives in her, reawakens forgotten feelings, conceptions, and ideas. Jenny pauses in her forward march and looks back – and thereupon she falls to pieces ...

But ever new figures of awakening, "rebellious," seeking women press forward beyond her.

The tender, bewitching silhouette of Francoise Houdon,^[30] with her comradely

love for Christophe and her passion for another, with her flaming temperament, full of insatiable artistic ambition, with an iron will and a fragile, tender soul. On the same line with her steps the unvarnished, living type of the working woman Cecile, [31] holding her soul in balance unconscious of the fact that the new truth stamps itself in her calm "arrival." The suffragette Julia France, [32] Marie Antin, [33] the refugee from Russia, the Jewish girl who clears herself a path to American citizenship, to a secure position [34], and all the heroines of Rikarda Huch, Gabriele Reiner, Sarah Grande, Nemfz Word Krandiewskaia, the symptomatic Baborinin of the salon novelist Marcel Prevost. [35]

There are many of them and they cannot all be listed in this brief sketch. But precisely the fact that there is such a profusion of these new women, who daily appear on the scene in ever new and larger numbers so that their tainted likeness is found even in the boulevard-literature of a Verbitzkaia, proves that life creates and shapes these new types of women without let-up.

This new woman brings with her something alien, that at times repels us because of its newness as a breed, so to speak. We peer at it closely, looking for the familiar, agreeable traits of which our mothers and grandmothers were the bearers. But the type who stands before us has broken with the past and harbors within herself a whole world of new feelings, experiences, and demands. Doubt rises in us, we are almost disappointed. Where is the engaging feminine submissiveness and softness of yore? Where is the customary ability of the woman to adjust herself in marriage, to give herself, even vis-a-vis the insignificant husband and to accord him primacy in life?

Before us stands woman as personality, before us stands a human being possessing a characteristic value, with her own individuality, who asserts herself – in short, the woman who has broken the rusted fetters of her sex.

Part Two

WHAT actually are these characterological peculiarities, these new feelings and traits in the feminine psyche that allow us to assign a woman to the class of "single women," according to her inner physiognomy?

Dominance of feeling was the most typical trait peculiar to the woman of the past, and this predominance of feeling at once signified woman's ornament and defect.

The sharpening of the economic contradictions in the present, which has drawn woman into the active struggle for existence, makes it imperative that she conquer her feelings, requires that she not only learn to take the protean, social obstacles, but that she also strengthen, through the exercise of her will, her eminently passive, easily yielding spirit, inclined to slackness.

Women have to accomplish a much greater educational mission than men in order for them to be granted the newly fought for rights from life. Gloomy thoughts, grievous cares oppress Josefa in Ilse Frapan's novel, *Work*. Her frail shoulders can hardly bear life's heavy burden. She would like, just once, to be allowed to have herself a good cry, to air all her grievances before someone, as women did formerly; she would like to surrender to her suffering. But the work assigned to her in the clinic according to a strictly laid-out schedule will not wait. She dares not let herself be put off or obstructed from this task by housework or by mending the children's clothes. Josefa must so control herself that her personal life remains hidden as if behind a veil and she arrives at the clinic unfailingly at the stroke of the bell.

Mathilde sees her child die, her joy, everything that was left to her from rapturous love. But her trained fingers work and do not tear the threads of life despite its misery.

Present-day conditions demand from every woman who exercises a trade, a profession, a work of any kind outside the home, so much self-discipline, so much will power, in order to combat her feelings, as was to be found only as an exception to the rule with the woman of the past.

Jealousy, mistrust, the senseless "female revenge," are not these the typical peculiarities of the woman of the past? Jealousy, which lay at the bottom of practically all the tragedies of the feminine soul! Obviously, jealousy also emerged as a tragedy of the male soul. But for his Othello, Shakespeare does not choose a disciplined, civilized Englishman, or an intelligent, refined Venetian, but a Moor ruled by passions.

Women's strong dependency on feeling has misled them to expressing their hatred of rivals in the most hideous forms, and has led them to the borders of woman's busiest, most slavish characteristics. If the heroine has not always exactly poured sulphuric acid over her rival, most probably she overwhelmed her with the poison of her slander.

The new women do not want exclusive possession when they love. Since they

demand respect for the freedom of their own feelings, they also learn to accord this respect to others. Characteristic of this is the attitude of the heroine towards the rival as portrayed in a string of contemporary novels. We come upon a tactful, circumspect attitude towards the other woman rather than sulphuric acid and defamatory attacks. Maya and the first wife of her chosen one, in the *Voice*, not only are free from any mutual hatred, but even find a common language and in many things they show more of a closer bond between themselves than with the man to whom the hearts of both belong.

Maya weeps over the offenses that he inflicts on the soul of her rival, when this common "he" treats her as legal property, as an object belonging to him without the heart-warming tendernesses, without the traditional kisses. Maya is offended for "the woman." Maya is able to feel beyond a narrow individualism; in Maya we already have a preview of the feeling of collectivity, of comradeship in love, utterly alien to the old type.

Is not the attitude of the same Maya towards the unnecessary, senseless infidelity of her second husband also characteristic? She catches him red-handed, but Maya doesn't swoon or create a scandal. She leaves the scene forthwith and hastens to the tiny bed of her husband's children by his first wife. These sleeping tots scare away the sadness from her soul. She goes back to her home, grown lonely.

It feels chilly. Maya starts a fire, wraps herself in her shawl and forces herself to read an interesting book. Thus does she swiftly escape herself, thus does she find the necessary balance.

Irina, in the novel by Kredo (*In the Fog of Life*), not only achieves a reconciliation with Victor's former lady friend, but demands a solicitous attitude towards the sensibility of her rival. In return, Victor, when he learns about Irina's past, asks in the tone of the offended "little man": "What number am I on your list? I want to know ...Were they many?" Victor is a progressive-minded person, a writer, but in him, too, the "animal" is stronger than in the nonentity Irina whose personality is interesting only to the extent that she, too, reaches out for the new truth of life.

In the new woman, the human being increasingly conquers the jealous "wife."

The far higher demands made on the man, to which Ellen Kay also refers in her writings, are to be viewed as a second typical trait of the contemporary woman. The woman of the past had been raised by her lord and master to adopt a negligent

attitude towards herself, to accept a petty, wretched existence as a natural fate. But she puts up with men's condescending smile over her feminine frailties and afflictions without demanding attention for that which she thinks, for that which she experiences. Do not men still express astonishment when their attention is drawn to the fact that hardly one of them ever lent an ear to his wife, even during the minutes of the most intimate experiences? This boundless, inconsiderate attitude to the feminine "ego" was also the cause of family tragedies, formerly.

The experienced Don Juans not only understood how to take a woman's body, but they also ruled her soul, in that most of them acted out the comedy "of understanding," exhibiting a tender-solicitous attention to their unimportant "ego," which her own husband inconsiderately and indifferently passed by. But Don Juans came and went, and the lawful spouse remained and in the course of centuries the woman adjusted herself to this life, reduced her claims and demands, and oriented her conception of happiness on the gratification of the external, of what was objectively tangible.

"He" gave her rings and earrings, "he" brought her flowers and candies, ergo he loved her.

But when he became despotic and coarse, when he made demands and laid down prohibitions, this was precisely within his rights, the rights of the master of her heart!

The contemporary woman is demanding, she seeks for and enjoins esteem for her personality, her sensibility. She demands respect for her "ego." She does not endure despotism. When her oriental master forbids Maya to sing at concerts, and when he hears about the transgression of his prohibition and decides "as punishment" not to write to her for two whole weeks, he kills her feeling for him by so doing. He wanted to "punish" her who had, after all, freely given him her heart!

This insistence upon inner freedom recalls an old legend of women of the earliest times. "Thy will has been done, but thou has lost thy wife in me" – Rosamunde hurls these words at her royal consort when he forces her to drink from the skull of her murdered father. And this is no empty threat because she kills the man whom, up to then, she has passionately loved.

The modern woman can forgive much to which the woman of the past would have found very difficult to reconcile herself: the husband's inability to provide for her material maintenance, lack of attention of an external kind, even infidelity, but she

never forgets or forgives the non-esteem of her spiritual "ego," of her sensibility.

When the friend has "no ear" for this, for the new woman, her association with him loses half of its worth.

When Christa Ruland's beloved, in answer to her question of what he thinks about women, at first is evasive and then comes out with banal platitudes, Christa involuntarily feels estranged. How could he, who won her soul with his solicitous attitude, prove so deaf to Christa's intellectual "ego" by not instinctively understanding how important it was to hear his opinion of women's intellectual importance? Christa does not forgive him for this, just as no new woman would forgive this infidelity of men which they believe, or fancy, surely to possess. The same woman whom the husband loves for the sake of her bold flight, because of her psychic independence, he seeks to secure for himself by extinguishing the "holy light" in her with the help of which she has sought her path, by trying to reduce her to an object of his pleasure, of his enjoyment. Christa notices with astonishment how the same Frank, who had vigorously tried to draw her into the sphere of his own intellectual interests, who dreamt of political propaganda tours together, begins to detach himself from her and to close himself off from her in his own intellectual world. There is no more talk, naturally, of taking trips together. And even in the minutes in which Christa eagerly follows his intellectual pursuits the only thing to which he responds is to the woman in her and this all the more captivatingly the more cultivated and thoroughly intellectualized she is. It is as though her intellectuality, with her capacity to rise with him to his non-mundane realm of ideas, only sharpens his sexual appetite for her. Christa leaves him as though she were "stealing away."

The new woman forgives an affront to the "wife" in her, but she never forgets the least inattentiveness vis-a-vis her personality. With Vera Nikodimovna it is a question of the same demands on the intellectual personality of the chosen one. According to Vera the mind, even an "excellent" one, plays a subordinate role in woman: "The main thing with her is the moral foundation. And, in fact, when we educate ourselves and read, this moral foundation remains stationary almost without development. And how unhappy we are, then! Men then, in most cases, do not understand what there is about them that displeases and repels us..."

The demand set forth by women that the man should love and appreciate not so much the impersonal-feminine, but rather that which presents their spiritual substance, their individual "ego," grew naturally on the basis of self-knowledge as

personality. "I curse my female body; because of it you do not notice that there is still something else in me – something more valuable" – that is the cry that is heard through the whole novel of Nadjescha Sanschar (*Anna's Notes*). And heroines of all nationalities repeat this protest in this or that form. Even the simple soul of Gorki's Tatiana protests against an attitude that brands her as a single instrument of pleasure.

"He could have had me ... But I don't want to, I can't, that way, without heart, like a cat ... What kind of people are you ... so coarse..."

The sharper the personality of the woman is stamped, the more consciously does she feel herself as a "human being," the more sharply does she understand the offense that lies in the fact that the man, with a psychology blunted in the course of centuries, was not able to see in the desired woman the awakening human being, the personality.

These increased demands on the men are the warrant for the fact that so many heroines of modern novels hurry from one enjoyment to another, from one love to another in the wearying search for their ideal: harmony between passion and spiritual kinship, the reconciliation of love and freedom, comradeship with mutual independence.

"There's nothing I long for so passionately as to find a man from whom I would no longer desire to leave, from whom I would not want to go away," exclaims Maya the restless seeker. And the "Vagabond" leaves her friend only because there dwells within her the inextinguishable ideal of a still greater, still more perfect community of love. Present-day reality disenchanting all the ingenuous seekers of a harmonious, total love. They tear the bonds of love without regret and resume the search for their ideal. And thereby they forget that what they want to find now, at best, can exist as a life-possibility only in the distant future among people with a new psychic structure, among people who have organically internalized the idea that comradeship and freedom must occupy first place also in love-relationships.

The woman of the old type had been altogether ignorant of how to appreciate personal independence. What would she have done with it anyway? What can be more pathetic, helpless, than an abandoned wife or beloved when she belongs to the old type? With the departure or death of her husband the wife not only lost her material maintenance, but her one and only moral support collapsed. Unaccustomed to an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with life, the woman of the past feared being

alone and was ready to free herself at the first opportunity from that independence which she had found so unpleasant and unnecessary.

The contemporary, new woman not only has no fear of independence, but she learns to appreciate it, increasingly, to the degree that her interests go beyond the narrow circle of the family, of the home, and of love. For Vera Nikodimovna there can be nothing more terrible than material dependency on a man: "Oh, how unhappy I would be if I were dependent on a man, and if I had to hunt for one to become my husband and therefore be under the obligation to keep me! Oh, how wretched I would be!" she says to her friend.

To have a "husband," a proprietor of and ruler of her soul—the thought terrifies Vera no less than the thought of prison must terrify the prisoner who has finally escaped to freedom. "I would never give myself to this slavery ..."

"Are you married?"

"No, I'm not married, but I have had my romance and my passion."

The woman of the present feels in marriage a fetter, even when no outer, formal bond exists. The psyche of the old human being that still lives in us creates fetters of a moral nature incomparably stronger than the outer ones. All the more stubbornly does the new heroine flee all that which could bind her to the ruler of her heart even externally. It was material dependency on men, complete helplessness in life, above all, that drove the woman of the past to structure her relations to the man in such a way as to ensure their indissolubility. Only then did she feel out of danger. The new woman, who is forced independently to bear life's burden, assumes either a rejecting, or even an indifferent, attitude towards the form of a firm bond. She is altogether in no hurry to determine her love-relationships through a form. In reply to a question as to the nature of Rene's relationship to her friend (*La Vagabonde*), whether it has a bourgeois marriage in view or whether it is a transient love affair, Rene merely shrugs her shoulders and blurts out:

"Us? Put simply – we are studying each other."

"And, what about the future?"

"Oh, Margot, I don't like the future!"

Mathilde is in no hurry whatsoever to bind herself to Saljoka, even though she has a child by him, just as she is in no hurry to formalize her union with the clerk

Dominikus. And, if Erneste had not gone away, Mathilde, despite her ardent feelings for him, in all probability would have been satisfied with her free union and not fought for her right of formal possession. Reason suggested to her, the aging woman, marriage to him, just as it suggested marriage to him, the aging bachelor. Gorki's Tatiana shows just as little inclination to hasten to bind her fate to that of another. She looks around in the world for a suitable man, according to her ideal. But she does not grant the right of possession even to those upon whom she voluntarily bestows her charms. "It might be all right for an hour, but for life...?"

Every woman who exercises a profession, who serves any cause, an idea, needs independence and personal freedom. Rosa, in *Vita Somnium Breve*, does not interfere with the freedom of her beloved Michael, she leaves him his lawful wife, his family; for years she contents herself with brief, radiant encounters with her friend and beloved. But for the fact that she has elevated to the status of being the substance of her life not her love, but her art, her paintings, does not that "touching renunciation" also live in her? "I'm alone," thinks Rosa, "and nevertheless not alone with my pictures, my thoughts, my creations."

Up to now, the main content of a woman's life was directed upon the experience of love. Love, even for a life overladen with material superfluity, was still the most beautiful ornament. Conversely, the absence of love made a woman's life colorless, empty, poor. No outer blessing, no honorific distinction could replace the loss of love's happiness in a woman, not even the joys of motherhood!^[36]

When the heart was empty, life also seemed empty. It was thus that the women of the past distinguished themselves from the men. With men, their active life still proceeded side by side with their emotional life, and while the heroine pined away with longing for "him," "he," the husband, waged the struggle with fate somewhere in a world which the woman neither grasped nor understood. How many psychological plays are based on the fact that the woman waited, longingly, for "him," for the moment when he would return from his professional absence, from office or work. But, upon his return, instead of occupying himself exclusively with "her" he hurriedly wolfed down his food in order to rush to a meeting, or took his papers out of his briefcase and eagerly plunged into his reading. His wife observed this with absolute incomprehension, her soul seething with reproaches. After all, she could have gladly set aside the blouse she had begun to knit. She could also, for his sake, have left the dishes piled in the kitchen sink, and even put the children to bed early so that, finally, both could be alone, so that for once he could forget the tiresome things: business, work, politics, the office. Women of all social strata suffered from this

incomprehension of their husband and his interests which lay in an alien world, far beyond the borders of the domestic nest. This incomprehension of the male psyche was met with all women: with the wife of the professor and the wife of the civil servant alike, of the writer, or of the shop assistant.

The wife's offended exclamation, "So, already you're off again to your horrible meetings!" often accompanies the husband today, regardless of whether he is a worker or a stock-broker.

But, to the same degree as the woman is being increasingly drawn into the vortex of social life, as she proves herself as an active tiny wheel in the mechanism of the economy, so her own horizon, the walls of her own home, which separated her from the world, collapse, and unconsciously she internalizes its interests which, formerly, were alien and incomprehensible, and she makes them her own. Love ceases to form the only substance of her life; furthermore, it is allotted the subordinate role it plays with most men. To be sure, for, too, there come periods in her life when love – love, the passion – holds her soul prisoner, when her mind, her heart, and thereby all other interests are eclipsed and thrust into the background. At such times can experience the crassest dramas, she can enjoy and suffer like the woman of the past. But the state of being in love, passion, love are but transient periods in her life. Its true content is the "holy" that serves: the social idea, science, creativity. At her work, her ideal is for her, for, in most cases, more important, more valuable, holier than all the joys of the heart, all the delights of passion.

Her new relation to work, which we do not find among the heroines of the good old days, also stems from this fact. Benette's heroine has just had her first passionate-blissful conversation with the man she loves. But when he tells her he wants to call on her next morning, very early, the beloved, the blissful woman, notwithstanding, interrupts him almost horrifiedly, "But please not before breakfast!"

"Not before breakfast'? Why?"

"He was astonished. But in the course of these five years I had grown accustomed to being my own master. My taste, my habits had crystallized, I had created my own arrangement for my life. I never receive anybody before breakfast and I have so much work staring me in the face precisely in the morning. Should I really favor this man as a conqueror, and ruin my morning. A dull anxiety for my freedom, my independence, burgeoned in me." Are these not wholly new traits in the woman in

love? A woman who voluntarily dismisses the longed-for encounter with the beloved with its promise of joy, only because she is used to doing her writing in the morning, only because she is pained at the thought of these lost hours taken from work. Could the hours of love, that are devoted to the beloved, ever be considered lost for the woman of the old type?

Tania, in Nagodskaja's novel, torments herself during her honeymoon with Stark in the consciousness of her holiday. Self-reproachfully, she looks at the canvas with the unfinished painting.

"I have promised today to myself and I will ask Stark not to come," she resolves. But Stark (in earlier novels this role would fall to the heroine) is irritated by this and protests.

"A whole day without you," he says in a childish-peevish tone. "I won't disturb you in the least, I'll sit quietly. I'm beginning to become jealous of your art," he says further, "it's too formidable a rival." For this once Tania gives in, but the consciousness that she must neglect her work, keep her model waiting, and be unable to go to the professor, gnaws at her. There is no completeness, no peace in her lovemaking when her love must suffer for its sake.

"Today I am working," she writes triumphantly in her diary, "I work greedily! – I work with joy and have been unable to tear myself away from it since early morning." The diary entry of the balance of the day occurs in bright, high-spirited tones. We feel how a human being has broken the spell of gloom-engendering passions and again found herself. At work, 'with the palette in hand! Tania is awakened from her dream and suddenly sees that, beyond her and Stark, beyond her narrow atmosphere, generative only of the ecstasies of passion, there exists a great, variegated world, full of joys, beauty, and suffering. Suddenly she remembers her friend Weber, recognizing his utter loneliness. Such are the feelings of a human being who returns home after long absence. Do you find a woman of the old type who would have breathed such a sigh of relief, with almost a tinge of maleness, when upon leaving behind the haze of passion she returns to her neglected work in order, anew, to feel the worth of her own being, as a personality?

Agnes Petrovna (*One of Them*) travels through Italy with her beloved Miatlev, and is rocked to sleep by the gentle lapping of the waves of the Venetian lagoons. Stars, night, gondola ride, love – and suddenly Agnes asks a surprise question: "Can you live this way for long?"

"For an eternity!" he answers. She shudders. Before her lay a life full of kisses, whispering waves, and starry harmony – and it terrifies her.

"Why live then? I'm a woman like all the others," Agnes meditates further, "I'm young and even beautiful, why can't I adjust myself to the idea that for a woman love is everything? But just the thought of an eternity of giving myself to such a pastime drives me out of my mind."

And the same Agnes – immediately she returns to St. Petersburg – jealously draws a line between her work, her writing, against the tyranny of love. In the evening they are a twosome. Then Agnes is suddenly lively, high spirited, "her eyes beamed as she embraced him with a wholly special tenderness and cuddled up to him with a childlike affection, like a kitten ..." Naturally, Miatlev was about to melt with expectations. But then Agnes bends to his ear and whispers the wholly unexpected confession :

"Beloved, darling! Go home now – I simply must write now, otherwise my thoughts will vanish ..." The beam in her eyes obviously had nothing to do with him but with the thoughts that suddenly sprouted in Agnes Petrovna's little head ...

For the woman of the past, the infidelity or the loss of her beloved was the worst possible disaster, in imagination and in fact. But for the heroine of our day what is truly disastrous is the loss of her identity, the renunciation of her own "ego" for the sake of the beloved, for the protection of love's happiness. not only rejects the outer fetters, she protests "against love's prison itself," she is fearful of the fetters that love, with the stunted psychology peculiar to our time, lays upon lovers. The woman who was habituated to be absolutely consumed in love, even, assumes an anxious stance towards love. She is constantly fearful that the power of feeling might awaken the slumbering atavistic inclination in her to become the shadow of the husband, might tempt her to surrender her identity, and to abandon her work, her profession, her life-tasks.

This is not a struggle for the "right to love," this is a protest against moral imprisonment, even that of the outwardly freest feeling. This is the rebellion of the women of our age of transition who have not yet learned how to harmonize inner freedom and independence with the all-consuming passion of love.

Whereas the woman of the past, relinquishing love, buried herself in her lightless gray world in order to live in it as a joyless creature, who has liberated herself from love's servitude, stretches to her full height, proudly and joyfully. "The mental

servitude is at an end," rejoices Kredo's heroine after she has convinced herself that the intoxication of passion is past. "No more sorrow, no more excitement, no more fear, she is free, her heart no longer suffers, since Victor whom she has loved has disappeared from her soul, somehow as though unnoticed." And how greatly Irina rejoices because "she feels strength and energy again, which had constantly been depleted in her when she made an effort to draw capital out of the fullness of an alien soul. Such a suppression of her own energies constantly debased her inwardly, and the awakening of these energies therefore brought her joy..."

Liberation from the imprisonment of alien thoughts, liberation from pangs and sorrows, these "sharp and mordant offsprings of kisses," to be oneself anew, to find oneself! What a jubilation for a woman who is a personality and what an incomprehensible, utterly unknown feeling for the woman of the past!

A significant transformation had to be effected in the psychic image of woman, her mental life had to develop itself strongly, she had to gather a rich store of intellectual values so that she would not be bankrupt at the moment she ceased to pay her tribute to the man. But precisely for the reason that woman's life is not exhausted in love, for the reason that a great store of ideas and interests is found in her, which make out of her "a human being," we learn to apply a new criterion in the appraisal of woman's moral personality. For centuries, the dignity of the heroine was not measured according to her general human characteristics, not according to her intellectual abilities, nor even according to psychological characteristics, but rather exclusively according to her store of feminine virtues which the property-based bourgeois morality demanded of her. "Sexual purity," sexual virtuousness, were the moral physiognomies of the woman. One who had sinned against the sexual moral code was never forgiven. And the romance writers carefully protected the heroines beloved by them from "falling" and allowed only the non-loved to "sin" as the male heroes sinned, without, of course, having to pay with their moral worth as retribution.

The heroines of contemporary novels in most cases transgress the limits of the usual sexual code of virtues, and regardless of this fact, neither the author nor the reader considers these heroines as "depraved types." We find pleasure in Sudermann's bold Madga, although this young woman has been guilty of a series of "falls." We are touched by the dimension of the humanity of Hauptmann's Mathilde, even though a whole sequence of nonmarital associations has passed by us, and even though she has borne children from the different chosen ones of her heart.^[37]

Even Vinnitschenko's Dara does not lose her human worth as the result of the unnecessary action of purchased love.

Do not most men act thus and do we not, nevertheless, continue to "respect" them?

A forward movement, imperceptible even to ourselves, has been effected in our psychology in respect to the formation of a new morality. What fifty years ago was considered as a permanent blot on a woman's or girl's reputation, we now view as a phenomenon requiring neither justification nor forgiveness. In her time George Sand had to break a lance for the right of a woman to leave her lawful spouse in order to go to the freely chosen beloved. In pharisaic England, and not very long ago, Grant Allan had to take the unwed mother under his wing.

But the old moralistic criterion proves unavailing to the degree that woman stands on her own feet, that she ceases to be dependent on the father or on the husband, that she stands side by side with the husband and participates in the social struggle.

The gradual accumulation of woman's valuable and general human characteristics teaches us to appreciate in her not the representative of sex, but the human being, the personality. And the earlier evaluation of the woman as "wifie," to whom the husband guaranteed a legal maintenance, withers away by itself.

Life first taught us to apply this standard only to "great souls": "free" artists, talents, actresses, women writers were forgiven for their violations of the generally recognized sexual morality.

"But why should only the 'great souls' set forth this demand?" rightly asks Bebel. "Why not also the others, who are not great souls?"

"If Goethe and George Sand – we cite only these two although many have acted similarly – dared to live according to the promptings of the heart, if Goethe's love-experiences fill volumes, which are devoured with worshipful rapture by his readers of both sexes, why condemn others for what in Goethe and George Sand imbue us with enthusiasm and delight?"^[38]

We are pleased to laugh over the hypocrites who refused to shake the hand of a Sarah Bernhardt because of her immorality, or over the indignant citizens who would have so liked to pull a Magda down from the stage. But when it is a question of "not-great souls," we ourselves often waver and temporarily do not know how we

should comport ourselves towards the free, unmarried woman! But if, in fact, we were to think of applying to these heroines the moral standard of former centuries, then we must turn away from the most beautiful, most human-feminine personages that modern literature has created. Whereas, at the time when women of the old type, raised in the adoration of irreproachable Madonnas, made an effort to preserve their purity, to make a secret of their feelings and to hide them, it is one of the characteristic traits of that she does not hide her natural physical drives, which signifies not only an act of self-assertion as a personality, but also as a representative of her sex. The "rebellion" of women against a one-sided, sexual morality is one of the most sharply delineated traits of the new heroine.

This is also natural. In the life of women, the bearers of the future, physiology, in contradiction to the hypocritical views imposed on them, plays an incomparably greater role than with men. Freedom of feeling, freedom in the choice of the beloved, of the possible father of "her" child. The struggle against the fetish of the "double standard" – this is the program that the contemporary heroine tacitly wages in life – from Renate Fuchs up to Hauptmann's Mathilde.

A typical trait of the woman of the past was her renunciation of the power of the flesh, the mask of "immaculateness" which she wore even in marriage. Woman does not deny her "feminine nature," she does not turn aside from life and does not reject earthly joys which reality smilingly grants to each one coveting them.

Contemporary heroines become mothers without being married, they leave the husband or the beloved, their life can be rich in love-experiences and, notwithstanding, they will count themselves among "fallen creatures" as little as will the author or the modern reader. In the free, frank love-experiences of Mathilde, Olga, or Maya lies an ethic which, perhaps, is more perfect than the passive virtue of a Pushkinian Tatiana or the cowardly morality of a Turgenevian Lisa.

Thus does present herself to us: self-discipline instead of emotional rapture, the capacity to value her own freedom and independence rather than impersonal submissiveness, the assertion of her own individuality instead of the naive effort to internalize and reflect the alien image of the "beloved." The display of the right to family happiness instead of the hypocritical mask of virginity, finally the assignation of love-experiences to a subordinate place in life. Before us no longer stands the "wife," the shadow of the husband – before us stands the personality, the woman as human being.

But who are they, these single new women? How has life created them? The single woman – she is a child of the large-scale capitalist economic system. The single woman is not a rare phenomenon. Rather, as a lawfully repeated, everyday phenomenon she was born simultaneously with the infernal dinning of the machines and the factory sirens calling to work.

Every great transformation still within the sphere of our memory in the conditions of production, and under the impact of the ever newer and newer victories of large-scale capitalist development, compels woman also to adapt herself to the environing reality in the struggle for existence. The woman in the process of formation stands in a relation of closest dependency to the historical stage of economic development which mankind is going through. With the change of economic conditions, with the evolution of the production relations, the inner physiognomy of woman also changes. The new woman could emerge as a type only with the growth in the number of women who were earning their own livelihood.

A half-century ago the participation of woman in industrial life was viewed as a deviation from the norm, as a disturbance of the natural order of things. Even radical minds, even socialists sought for ways of bringing back into the home. Today these long outdated and discarded views, at most, are repeated in the prejudices and musty standoffishness of desiccated reactionaries.

A half-century ago, civilized countries counted several tens of thousands, at most one hundred thousand, women in the ranks of the working population. Today the figure of working women already surpasses the male figure. Now civilized nations have available to them not a hundred thousand but millions of women workers. Millions of women, like men, press on the labor market, thousands of women conduct commercial firms, hundreds of thousands have a profession, serve science or art. According to statistics, there are more than sixty million working women in Europe and North America. A more grandiose march of the army of women workers has not yet been seen! And more than 50 per cent of this army are single women, that is to say, such who are totally dependent on their own abilities and who do not follow the old female custom of hanging on the coattails of the "breadwinner."

The production conditions which for many centuries had fettered woman to the home, to the spouse, the breadwinner, unexpectedly have torn away the rusty chains from her and thrust her, the weak, the unprepared sex, onto the newly opened thorny path which draws her into new snares of economic dependency – those woven of capitalism. Under the threat of being shelterless, of suffering hunger and

privations, woman learned to stand alone without the support of the father or of the husband. Woman was forced to adjust herself swiftly to the altered conditions of existence. These shattering experiences put to a cruel test the moral axioms on which she had been raised by the grandmothers of the good old days. With astonishment, she was forced to recognize the uselessness of the whole moralistic baggage with which she had been saddled on life's path. The feminine virtues on which she had been raised for centuries: passivity, devotion, submissiveness, gentleness, poised to be fully superfluous, futile, and harmful. Harsh reality demands other characteristics from independent women: activity, resistance, determination, toughness, that is to say, characteristics which hitherto were viewed as the hallmark and privilege of men.

Robbed of the customary tutelage exercised over her by the family, woman, suddenly catapulted out of the warm nest onto the path of the struggle for existence and the class struggle, was forced to equip and arm herself with the physical characteristics possessed by the man, her comrade who is better fitted for the struggle for existence. In this hasty adjustment to the new conditions of existence, woman, quite indiscriminately, has often seized and appropriated "male rights" that upon closer scrutiny turned out to be "truths" only to the bourgeois class.

Present-day capitalist reality altogether bends its efforts, and in all possible ways, to make out of a type who stands incomparably closer to man than the of the past. This assimilation proves to be a natural and inescapable consequence of the inclusion of in the sphere of the economy and of social life. The capitalist world makes allowance only for women whom it succeeds in stripping of their feminine virtues and in adapting to a philosophy that hitherto belonged only to the fighter for existence, to the man.

There is no place in the ranks of those earning their own livelihood for the "unfit," that is to say, the women of the old type. Here, too, therefore, a "natural selection" among the women of the different social strata is discernible: only the stronger, more resistant disciplined natures arrive in the ranks of those "earning their own livelihood." The weak, inwardly passive, cling to the family hearth, and when the insecurity of existence tears them away from the protection of the family, to catapult them into the stream of life, supinely, they let themselves be driven by the turbid waves of legal or illegal prostitution: they enter into a marriage of convenience or they walk the streets. Those earning their own livelihood constitute a progressive army of women in which we come upon representatives of all the social strata. But the enormous majority in this army is not made up of Vera Nikodimovnas, proud of their independence, but of millions of Mathildes wrapped in grey shawls, millions of

barefoot Tatianas whom poverty has driven along the new thorny path.

Those who still believe that the new "single woman" is a fruit of the heroic expenditure of energy of the strong, who assert themselves as individualities, should disabuse themselves of a gruesome error. It is not individual will, not the example of a bold Magda or a determined Renate, that created. The transformation of the feminine psyche, of its inner psychological and intellectual structure, is accomplished primarily and principally in the lower depths of society where under the scourge of hunger the adjustment of the working to the sharply changed conditions of existence proceeds. They, these Mathildes and Tatianas, solve no problems, they cling with all their might to the past, and only by forcibly bowing to the Lord of history, the forces of production, do they reluctantly set out on the new road. Full of sadness, cursing, or in tender nostalgia, they long to go back to the home, to the familiar warming hearth, to the quiet, modest, family joys. Oh, if only they could again leave the path, if only they could again return to the past! But the ranks of women-comrades close ever more tightly, and the feminine stream is borne ever and ever farther away from the past. Naught else is left to them save to habituate themselves to the oppressive narrowness and to arm themselves for the struggle for their place, for their right to life. A consciousness of an independent personality in the women of the working class arises and is strengthened under the rule of the "dark satanic mills," and their faith in their own power grows accordingly. The process of the accumulation of new moral and spiritual qualities in the working woman, which are indispensable for her as the representative of a definite class, proceeds consistently, inevitably, and irresistibly. But the most essential element in this process of the restructuring of woman's inner countenance affects not only individuals, but masses. The individual will drowns and disappears in the collective effort of millions of women of the working class to adjust to the new conditions of existence. Here, too, capitalism works on the broadest scale: by tearing women away from the home, by wresting them away from the cradle, it transforms the submissive, passive family creatures, the obedient slaves of the husband, into a respect-demanding army of fighters for their own and general rights, for their own and general interests. The personality of the woman steels itself, grows.

But woe to the working woman who believes in the power of individual personality existing apart from others. The armored car of capital will calmly crush her. Only the serried ranks of masses of rebels can push this armored car off the path. The feeling of belongingness, the feeling of comradeship arises and strengthens itself contemporaneously with the consciousness of her personality, of her rights. A feeling

that develops only weakly with the new woman of other social strata. This is that fundamental feeling, that sphere of feelings and thoughts, which draws a sharp line between single women earning their own livelihood and her sexual comrades from the bourgeoisie, those two essentially different social classes. Regardless of any difference from the woman of the past, which is the characteristic common to both, and regardless of the fact that entrance into the ranks of the working population has transformed the inner countenance of the woman in the same direction (by developing independence, strengthening personalities, broadening the mental world), women of the different social strata are driven ever farther and farther apart.

Among those earning their own livelihood the class struggle is experienced incomparably more clearly than among the women of the earlier type who scarcely knew about the inevitability of the class struggle from hearsay. For the wage earner who has crossed the family threshold in order to experience on her own person the force of social conflicts, who is forced into an active participation in the class struggle, a clear, distinct class ideology acquires the importance of a weapon in the struggle for existence. Capitalist reality draws a sharp line of demarcation between Corky's Tatiana and Nagrodskaia's Tatiana, leading, moreover, to the fact that the proprietress of a workshop, ideologically, stands considerably farther from the worker than the "mistress," that is, the master's wife, her "good neighbor" of old. It sharpens the feeling of the social conflict among wage earners. Only one thing remains common to the women of the new type: their unique difference from the woman of the past, those specific characteristics which are the hallmark of independent single women. The latter, like the former, go through a period of rebellion, the latter, like the former, fight for the assertion of their personality, the one consciously "on principle," the other fundamentally, collectively, under the pressure of the inevitable.

But whereas with the women of the working class, the struggle for the assertion of their rights, the strengthening of their personality, coincides with the interests of the class, the women of other social strata run into unexpected obstacles: the ideology of their class is hostile to the transformation of the feminine type. In the bourgeois milieu, woman's "rebellion" bears a far sharper character, its forms are set in bolder relief, and here the psychological dramas are far sharper, more variegated, and more complicated. Such a sharp collision between the psychology of, now in the process of formation, and class ideology does not exist in the working class and is not even possible. The new type of woman, inwardly self-reliant, independent, and free, corresponds with the morality which the working class is elaborating precisely in the

interests of its class. For the working class the accomplishment of its mission does not require that she be a handmaid of the husband, an impersonal domestic creature, endowed with passive, feminine traits. Rather, it requires a personality rising and rebelling against every kind of slavery, an active, conscious, equal member of the community, of the class.

The psychology of the new, independent, single woman, according to type, is reflected in the image of the rest of her contemporaries: the traits of women, who belong to the army of those earning their own livelihood, formed by life itself, by degrees also begin to be the hallmark of the others. It matters not that those who earn their own livelihood are still in the minority, that for each one of them two, even three, women of the old type emerge. Working women set the tone of life, and form the character in respect to the image of the of our time.

With her transvaluation of the moral and sexual standards, the new women shake the unshakeable pillars of the souls of all the women who have not yet embarked upon the new thorny path. The dogmas that keep a prisoner of her own world-view lose their power over their minds. Sienkiewicz's Anelka dissolves before our eyes.

The influence of women earning their own livelihood spreads far beyond their own circle. With their criticism, they "poison" the minds of their contemporaries, they smash old idols, they raise the banner of revolt against those "truths" with which women have lived for generations. By liberating themselves, the new, single women, earning their own livelihood, also liberate the passive-backward spirit, as this has been molded down the centuries, of their contemporary sisters.

Although woman has invaded literature, she has not yet by far supplanted the heroines of the old spiritual order, just as little as the woman-human being type has supplanted the "wifie," the "echo of the husband." Notwithstanding, we note that the characteristics and psychological traits which the new single woman has introduced are found with ever greater frequency, also, in heroines of the old type. Women novelists, who least of all set about to give us the new type, adorn their heroines unwittingly with feelings and characteristics that were not at all peculiar to the heroines of past literary periods.

Present-day literature increasingly abounds in woman-personages of the transitional type, of heroines equipped with the traits of the old and alike. Moreover, a difficult process of transformation is taking place also among the woman-personages of the new type already involved in the change-effecting process: the new

beginning is obstructed by the traditions and feelings of the past. The power of past centuries still weighs heavily even upon the new, free woman. Atavistic feelings interrupt and weaken the new experiences, outlived conceptions still hold the feminine mind thrusting towards freedom in their clutches.

The old and the new struggle in the souls of women, in permanent enmity. Contemporary heroines, therefore, must wage a struggle on two fronts: with the external world and with the inclinations of their grandmothers dwelling in the recesses of their beings.

"The new ideas are already born in us," says Hedwig Dohn, "but the old have not yet died out, the experiences of past generations still sit solidly in us, even though we already possess the intellect of, her will power."

The transformation of the feminine psyche, which is adjusted to the new conditions of its economic and social existence, will not be achieved without a strong, dramatic self-overcoming. Every step in this direction creates collisions which were utterly unknown to the heroines of the past. And these conflicts, which take place in the souls of women, by degrees begin to draw the attention of novelists, begin to serve as sources of artistic inspiration. Woman, by degrees, is being transformed from an object of tragedy of the male soul into the subject of an independent tragedy.

Footnotes

1. From Karl Hauptmann's novel *Mathilde*.
2. From Maxim Gorki's *Notes of a Passerby*.
3. Sudermann, *Heimat*.
4. Greta Meisel-Hess, *Die Intellektuellen*.
5. Collette Ivere, *Princesses of Science*.
6. Schnitzler, *Der Wegins Freie*.
7. T. Stschepkina-Küpernik, *One of Them*.
8. Potapenko, *In the Fog*.
9. Winnitschenko, *On Life's Scale*.
10. Ibid.

11. Ibid.

12. Sanschar, *Anna's Notes*.

13. Collette Villi, *La Vagabonde*.

14. Benette, *Holy Love*.

15. Grete Meisel-Hess, *The Voice*.

16. Heinrich Mann, *On the Hunt for Love*.

17. Nagrodsкая, *The Anger of Dionysius*.

18. Here the author should have written finis to his novel. The whole further romance with Stark is contrived. In the Tania accommodating herself to circumstances, renouncing her art, who has become nothing else but an object of pleasure for Stark, we no longer recognize the earlier, bold, coherent personality of Tania the human being. It is regrettable that the author so slanders his Tania.

19. Ilse Frapan, *Work*.

20. Hedwig Dohn, *Christa Ruland*.

21. Juschkevitsch, *Secession From the Circle*.

22. Jacob Wasserman, *Renate Fuchs*.

23. Greni Allena, *The Who Dared*.

24. Winnitschenko, *On the Path of Life*.

25. Else Jerusalem, *The Holy Scarabus*.

26. O. Runow, *Struggle*.

27. Bernard Shaw, *Early Plays*.

28. Gerhardt Hauptmann, *Lonely People*.

29. Sigrid Undset, *Jenny*.

30. Romain Rolland, *Jean Christophe*.

31. Ibid.

32. G. Aterton, *Julia France and Her Epoch*.

33. Marie Antin, *The Promised Land*.

34. For example, *Rosa, from Vita Sommium Breve*.

35. Most of the authors mentioned are women. Many of their works possess no special artistic worth. Although in and for themselves they are not very talented works, nevertheless they give more with respect to the aim which they have set for themselves

than do the artistically superior works of male authors. Most of the novels and short stories that have been written by women are autobiographical, which has the greatest interest for us. The more inartistic and unadorned the full life truth is given, the more fully and more truthfully is the psychology of presented, its pain, its seeking, its longing, its complications, the richer is the material for the study of. Since women writers no longer blindly follow male models, since they are now bravely baring the secrets of the feminine soul, which up to now were hidden even from artistic insight, and since women writers have begun to speak their own idiom – a wholly feminine idiom – their works, even though at times lacking in artistic beauty, will assume a special value and significance. They help us, finally, to recognize "the woman," the woman of the type newly being formed.

36. It is characteristic that the joy of motherhood was viewed as the surrogate of 's happiness. If she was not happy with marriage, she also had to renounce a free-love relationship outside the marriage bond; if she was widowed, maternal concerns and maternal joys remained as the last refuge. Motherhood was seldom seen as an aim in itself. Only with the aging did feelings for the preservation of the species, of the family, awaken and now become her life-goal, her idol which she adored, despotically demanding this adoration also from the other members of the family.

37. Mathilde's love-adventures do not prevent us from respecting this pure and coherent personality. At the same time, however, we cannot avoid a feeling of pity, mixed with aversion, towards her sister Martha, a worker like herself, who brings money home after her love-adventures. A whole chasm yawns between Mathilde's freedom and Martha's venality.

38. A. Bebel, *Woman and Socialism*.

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