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Rassvet (1859–1862) and the Woman Question

The woman question, which produced some of the best polemical writing of the nineteenth century, was an international phenomenon. In the 1850s, in Europe, essays on different sides of the question were written, published, translated, paraphrased, or reacted to, all in short order. Russia soon joined in the debate. The woman question, under different names, had existed previously in Russia, especially during the 1830s when some of the fiction published revealed women as victims of society. But, in the post-Crimean War period, what had been part of a more general preoccupation of Russian liberals, a striving toward general enlightenment, gave rise to a new civic sense of women's role in the general betterment of society and a debate on the education that would be necessary to fulfill that role.

In 1851, Harriet Taylor Mill's essay, "Enfranchisement of Women," was published, addressing itself both to causes and to effects:

> When, however, we ask why the existence of one-half the species should be merely ancillary to that of the other—why each woman should be a mere appendage to a man, allowed to have no interests of her own, that there may be nothing to compete in her mind with his interests and his pleasure; the only reason which can be given is, that men like it.[1]

Mill wrote of women's lack of education—"except accomplishments, . . . nothing is taught to women thoroughly"[2]—and of their underdeveloped civic sense—"public spirit, sense of duty towards the public good, is of all virtues, as women are now educated and situated, the most rarely to be found among them."[3] The Russians were especially keen on taking up questions of education and civic duty in their journals. The civic critics in Russia were quick to answer their countrymen who echoed the European reaction to women's emancipation, whether it was condemning women as weaker or praising what was perceived as their separate virtues. Michelet's *L'Amour,* published in 1858, reveled in woman's otherness:

> Elle ne fait rien comme nous. Elle pense, parle, agit autrement. Ses goûts diffèrent de nos goûts. Son sang n'a pas le cours du nôtre, par moments, il se precipite, comme une averse d'orage. Elle ne respire pas comme nous. . . . Incalculable puissance. A peine elle se fait sentir et le coeur est ému, son sein monte, descend, remonte: elle ne peut pas parler, et nous sommes convaincus d'avance, gagnés à tout ce qu'elle veut. Quelle harangue d'homme agira comme le silence de la femme?[4]

1. John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill, *Essays on Sex Equality,* ed. Alice S. Rossi (Chicago and London; University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 107.
2. Ibid., p. 112.
3. Ibid., p. 115.
4. Jules Michelet, *L'Amour* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, 1923), p. 50.

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Much more subtly, but with an equal sense of woman's "differentness," writers of fiction, like Tolstoy and Turgenev, described what appeared to them as woman's wholeness, the stable and unalterable aspects of her nature. On the other hand, many astute literary critics and essayists, such as Pisarev and Mikhailov, wrote about the change in women's lives, a development they both perceived and desired.

In the late 1850s, when the debate on women was taken up in Russia with renewed intensity, no journal epitomized the woman question more typically and single-mindedly than an obscure and short-lived publication called *Rassvet.* Although the consistency of the journal's policy, the moderation of its tone, and the obscurity of the audience to whom it was addressed softened its impact in its own time, today it sheds much light on the years of its existence and, in its particular concern with women, forms an important episode in the history of Russian socioliterary debate on this subject. Certain women writers, like Anna Bunina and Julia Zhadovskaia, were first discussed in *Rassvet,* and Dmitrii Pisarev and N. K. Mikhailovskii were first published in its pages (although the influence of their early critical writings for *Rassvet* upon their later work has been largely ignored).

On January 26, 1859, a retired Russian artillery officer and pedagogue (he had taught in the Mikhailovskii artillery school), Valerian Aleksandrovich Krempin, received permission to publish a new monthly "thick" journal with a specific audience in mind, a "journal of sciences, arts and literature for young ladies." (A program and advertisements for the journal had been sent out the previous year.) The journal was called *Rassvet* (*Dawn*) and it lasted only three and one-half years: publication stopped with issue number six of 1862.

Although no exactly similar publication preceded *Rassvet,* Russia's first famous journalist-publisher, N. I. Novikov (1744–1818), had founded the first Russian journal for women—"Modnoe ezhemesiachnoe izdanie ili biblioteka dlia damskago tualeta"[5]—in 1779. Like *Rassvet,* it devoted many pages to trends in the West. A central question debated in its pages was that of woman's duty to the family versus her responsibility to society in general. (*Rassvet* resolved this debate by taking woman's duty to the family for granted and by urging the adoption of social responsibility.) In spite of its title, Novikov's journal consisted of literary articles and had only illustrations of fashion. (Until the mid-1850s, all the journals intended for a female audience were fashion magazines.) In 1855, a woman publisher, M. Staniukovich, brought out *Damskii al'bom rukodel'nykh rabot,* which concentrated on sewing and embroidery, and two years later she published *Severnyi tsvetok,* another journal of domestic arts, which added a modest literary section in 1859 (the year *Rassvet* was founded). Finally, from 1858 to 1863, while *Rassvet* was in existence, Sofia Petrovna Burnasheva edited a journal for Russian youth called *Chas dosuga,* which in 1862–63 directed itself specifically to girls ten to sixteen and included readings of a more serious nature. *Rassvet* was, however, the first journal for women in Russia to have a wider scope, to include readings outside the domestic and literary arts, and to encourage young women to broaden their horizons and to assume a citizen's role.

5. See the chapter "Zhenskaia lichnost' v staroi russkoi zhurnalistike," in E. N. Shchepkina, *Iz istorii zhenskoi lichnosti v Rossii* (St. Petersburg, 1914), pp. 151–97.

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Rassvet represents a stage in the civic thought of Russia. Its mission was to raise literate women to the level of the enlightened male population, to make citizens of them without altering in any way what the journal considered women's primary sociobiological duties. In the flowery, allegorical language of the time, an editorial preface to the first issue expressed it thus: "The spirit of reform again hovers over the Russian land; but it is no longer that spirit which stormily and vehemently was borne over Russia at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Now its flight is smooth and unhurried; it doesn't tear like a whirlwind into the crowd and lead it forcibly to a better way. . . ." People now do this for themselves, says the editorial. Activity is possible after receiving inspiration: "Finally, at the dawn of a new day for Russia, the spirit flies down to the sleeping Russian woman and it awakens her, pointing out the path she must travel in order to make herself a citizen and prepare herself for her high duty—to be the educator of the new generation now being born."

The key words of the preface are that *woman must be a citizen*. Her protests to the contrary are swept away in an imaginary dialogue: " 'We are chosen to be mothers, wives, and hostesses in our husband's home,' says Russian womanhood, 'and citizens in your fatherland,' contemporary society repeats:—that is, women must investigate contemporary ideas, sympathize with them and, as much as they can, take part in the general movement forward." The ideas themselves, the argument implies, will originate elsewhere, with men. To woman's duty to educate her children is added another familiar Victorian female obligation—that of being a moderate, civilizing influence on her husband ("she should restrain her husband from what not so long ago was considered ordinary and forgivable, but now is considered indecent and harmful").

Criticism of the theme of women brought up to be "society's ornaments" began in Russian literature in the 1830s with the society tale.[6] The preface to *Rassvet* continued this negative evaluation of women's upbringing into the sixties: "until now all that was required of female upbringing was that the girl prepare herself to be a bride—that is, speedily to get married, make a good match—and indeed we did have brides who sang, played the piano, danced, and embroidered on canvas. . . ." Tolstoy, inheriting this tradition of irony, satire, and protest, carried education as decoration to its logical extreme, that is, education as deceit (the wife deceiving the husband's expectations which he himself has had a share in creating), first in *Family Happiness* (1859) and later and most dramatically in *Kreutzer Sonata* (1889).

Rassvet both combated what it considered to be harmful notions about women and presented a positive program for their improvement. The journal continually showed concern not just for its audience of young ladies from fourteen to sixteen, minds supposedly still unformed, but also for their mothers who were urged, under the pretext of guiding their daughters, to read the journal with them. Ever mindful of its audience, *Rassvet* kept within the confines of moderation in its tone and material; nevertheless, because it was opposing very conservative illusions about women, the journal's stance seemed to be one of embattled progressiveness.

6. The leading writer of society tales was Prince Odoevskii. In his "Princess Mimi" (1834) and "Princess Zizi" (1839), women trained to manipulate others ruin several lives. Odoevskii clearly points the finger at their society education.

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Krempin had organized the journal according to departments of knowledge, and by and large he kept to his original plan. The contents included literature, history and geography, natural sciences, art, pedagogy, and a book section, the latter two directed to parents and educators. The first issue of *Rassvet* proclaimed that, "in general, the department of belles-lettres will occupy the special attention of the editors," and a series of biographies of Russian authors began in that issue with an article on Lomonosov and another on the background of his time. Biographies of other eighteenth-century writers—Kantemir, Fonvizin, Derzhavin (written by Krempin himself), and Zhukovskii—followed in subsequent issues. In the August 1861 issue a new section composed of long excerpts from contemporary journals and newspapers was added.

In the November and December issues of 1861, Krempin published a two-part article by M. D. Khmyrov entitled "Russian Women Writers of the Past: Anna Bunina, Mariia Pospelova and Elisaveta Kul'man." Of the three, who may be considered contemporaries at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it is Anna Bunina (1774–1828) who is the best known today.[7] She spent her small inheritance to educate herself for her calling as a poet and survived a lingering, painful cancer for many years. Her poem, "The Sick Woman's Maytime Walk" (1812), combines personal anguish with classical imagery. The essay from *Rassvet* has been cited in all subsequent references to Bunina, the first Russian woman poet of note. It is clear that both her life and her poetry could be an example to young Russian women, although the article, like others on women writers and historical figures in the journal, was informative first and didactic only by inference.

With the March issue of 1862, N. Firsov joined Krempin as editor and publisher, and in the following issue a new series was begun on French women writers in the time of the Republic, the First Empire, and the Restoration. Articles on Madame de Staël and Madame de Genlis were featured. The June 1862 issue, which was to be the final issue of *Rassvet,* furthered the topic of women writers with an article by E. da Feria, "The Woman's Novel in England." The preface to the article dealt with the question of why these novels existed in such profusion: "there are many learned *spinsters*" in England. It asked the question still naïvely posed today: How could these unmarried "misses" write of "passions about which, it would seem, they must have known only by hearsay?" While not offering an answer to the latter question, the author concluded that the circumstances of English life have something to do with the abundance of women writing. The comfortable English cottage is described, with rugs on the floor to ensure quiet, and he points out that women have access to good home libraries and "ultra fine steel pens."[8] No mention is made, however, of the fact that women had been writing professionally in England since the second half of the seventeenth century.

Rassvet's series on historical women included Joan of Arc, Countess Ekaterina Golovkina (a Decembrist wife), Princess Dashkova, Martha Washington, and Kseniia Borisovna Godunova. The opening article of the series,

7. Two of her poems have been translated into English in *Russian Literature Triquarterly,* no. 9 (Spring 1974), pp. 29–33.

8. *Rassvet,* June 1862, p. 337.

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"Tsaritsa Anastasiia Romanova" (Ivan IV's wife), was by I. Shishkin, who wrote that the author's task is difficult because "little of interest can be said about Russian women in the pre-Petrine period because of their very position in Russia of that time and because of the paucity of facts." Why was nothing said of her other than that she was beautiful and virtuous? Shishkin said it was because she lived in the *terem,* a "pitiful, voiceless, oppressed and suffering wife, servant, cook, and washerwoman."[9]

Although much of the journal was geared to incite its readers' emotions, whether through indignation or inspiration, they could also find practical guides to living in all sections, messages that have appeared in magazines for women and men to our day. The material, more often than not, came from abroad—for example, translated excerpts from Flemish or Swedish novels devoted to questions such as what a young girl on her own should do, and parts of Clara Balfour's *Lives of Working Women of the Last Half Century.* Much of the science section also was translated material. Legal questions, however, had to refer to Russian law. In July 1859, an article by Shishkin entitled "A Few Words on the Necessity of Legal Knowledge for Women" claims that a woman must defend the rights of her children, her serfs, and herself, and that a course in law should be on the program of all female institutions of learning.

One of the few ways a genteel unmarried woman in the nineteenth century could earn a living was by becoming a governess. In the pedagogical section of the July 1859 issue, D. Saranchov calls attention to the deplorable situation of the Russian governess, often a very young woman, who is treated scornfully by her employers and, consequently, also by her charges, while earning three hundred rubles a year, half as much as the "frantsuzhenka," the French governess. (The governess never became a heroine of Russian literature as she did in English literature, although she was the same ambiguous figure in life. Of gentle birth yet subservient status, the governess could change her fate only through marriage.)

Rassvet's book section was in some ways the liveliest section of the journal. Here pedagogical journals of the time were harshly criticized for their conservatism, and articles in the better-known journals, such as *Sovremennik,* which progressively extended the debate on women were praised. The section was first headed by Dmitrii Pisarev (1840–68). Krempin had been looking for young university philologists to write for the new journal and Pisarev was drawn there by "purely material motives."[10] Pisarev's friend and classmate, Nikolai Treskin, suggested a meeting with Krempin. In a letter of October 10, 1858, Pisarev wrote to R. A. Koreneva that when he first met Krempin he read him two articles. Krempin admired them and exclaimed, "Exactly what is needed!"[11]

9. *Rassvet,* January 1859, p. 148.

10. L. A. Plotkin, *Pisarev i literaturno-obshchestvennoe dvizhenie shestidesiatykh godov* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1945), p. 119. Plotkin argues that Pisarev wrote the entire bibliographical section for the first six issues (the only ones that Plotkin seems to have read). He cites inner references from issue to issue and the unity and size of the section as proof. Clearly, Pisarev's style dominates the writing. His rhetorical phrases, well-shaped sentences, and varied lexicon were already present in his early writing. On the other hand, Krempin was proud of the fact that he himself reworked and read page proofs for the entire journal.

11. Ia. Simkin, *Zhizn' Dmitriia Pisareva: Lichnost' i publitsistika* (Rostov, 1969), p. 28.

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Pisarev outlined his opinion "of the direction our book section should take and how it should differ from those of other journals"[12]—the section was to acquaint readers with the subject from the outset and not assume a prior familiarity. Krempin gave Pisarev independence, made him director of the book section, and paid him thirty rubles for each signature (sixteen pages). In 1859, Pisarev published 108 unsigned reviews, of which 19 treated women's education, 11 the natural sciences, and 15 belles-lettres and history. *Rassvet* gave him a chance to read and comment upon a wide range of current books and articles as well as to develop his critical style.

Krempin and Pisarev's philosophy for the book section was stated in the first issue. In addition to treating outstanding books in all fields, it would focus attention on all books which addressed themselves to an audience of young women. "We will not speak only of the best and most remarkable; on the contrary, into our selection we will put absolutely everything pertaining to women's education and everything intended for young women."[13] In conclusion they promised that "female characters in novels and stories, personalities of historical women, and the situation of women in various nations will be singled out for our special attention."[14]

The women writers of Russia received mixed reviews in *Rassvet*'s book section. The poetry of Julia Zhadovskaia (1824–83), for example, was given more space in the first issue than most books. Pisarev's very positive review of her work included three long quotations with commentary. He liked Zhadovskaia best when she was commiserating with peasants and least when she wrote of her own inner world, although he did say that a woman can understand and depict a woman's feelings better than a man. Clearly, self-education through an understanding of the outside world, not self-contemplation, was the battle cry of the Russian progressives and *Rassvet*'s message to its readers. In contrast, in a more subtle work by Karolina Pavlova, a leading poet of the day, Pisarev missed the point, failing to grasp Pavlova's combination of high ideals for women with her own irony toward their lack of fulfillment because of men's prejudice.[15] Pisarev called Pavlova's "At Tea" pointless in a review in the February 1860 *Rassvet,* and decided, erroneously, that the poem advanced the notion that sincerity doesn't pay.

In his nonliterary reviews, Pisarev was extremely critical of other pedagogical journals and of books giving what he considered bad or harmful advice to young girls. Reviewing a work called *Notes of a Good Mother or her Last Admonitions upon her Daughter's entering Society,* he wavered, in his description of the ideal, between a recognition of the desirability of human development for its own sake and a need for an ultimate justification for women's development:

Simkin tells us that, contrary to the ideas he espoused while working for *Rassvet,* Pisarev refused to read books with his sisters when they sought his intellectual aid (p. 41).

12. *Literaturnoe nasledstvo,* vols. 25–26 (1936), p. 648.

13. *Rassvet,* January 1859, p. 12.

14. Ibid., p. 13.

15. See Barbara Heldt Monter, "Introduction to Pavlova's *A Double Life,*" *Russian Literature Triquarterly,* no. 9 (Spring 1974), pp. 337–53.

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> But where is woman's inner independence? Must she develop her mind only for society, her husband, and her children? Must she completely set aside her own personality? No, woman must also study for herself; she must develop her mental capacities in order to elevate and ennoble her character, to cultivate a clear outlook on things, to free herself from prejudice, to make herself morally more perfect. The woman close to this ideal, developed in all respects, will always be both a good wife and an exemplary mother.[16]

On the other hand, in a review of "The Despotism of Maternal Love" (*Rassvet,* July 1859), Pisarev cautioned against even motherhood when taken to extremes. This idea was not new, of course. Fonvizin's Prostakova in *The Minor* (1789) loves her son with a monstrous love. A single virtue blown up to grotesque proportions becomes an evil.

There is no doubt that Pisarev's early start with *Rassvet* influenced the course of his writing career, both by giving an early indication of his absolute faith in science and by letting him use contentious language to express his feelings. His most comprehensive article on women as literary types, "Female Types in the Novels and Stories of Pisemskii, Turgenev and Goncharov," is prefaced by what amounts to a treatise on woman's place in society and women's rights. According to Pisarev, "man oppresses woman and slanders her" both in literature and in life. Women are accused of "a lack of mental development."[17] He called upon women to develop in themselves "the strength to protest and to fight."[18] This article was published in *Russkoe slovo* at the end of 1861 after Pisarev had left *Rassvet,* but it contains even the image of awakening from "childish drowsiness." We are reminded of the etching by P. Ikov that graced the front cover of *Rassvet,* a Grecian scene with a young woman asleep on a couch, an oil lamp beside her, a book on the floor. Behind her, the sun rises and a muse-like figure bids her awaken.

Four years later, in 1865, Pisarev wrote a long review of a lecture series by Rudolph Virkhov, calling it "The Thoughts of Virkhov on the Education of Women." As in his shorter reviews for *Rassvet,* Pisarev paraphrased much of the contents of what he reviewed, interspersing it with comments of his own. The gist of this review article was that Virkhov was so middle-of-the-road in his theories that he could surely offend no one. His thesis stated that a woman should not merely be a wife, mother, and housekeeper but "a *good* wife, a *good* mother, and a *good* housekeeper";[19] hence, she should be educated. Pisarev, as in his "Notes of a Good Mother," did not totally counter the helpmate theory, but he stressed the importance of total education from birth. Thus, even in his

16. D. I. Pisarev, "Zapiski dobroi materi ili poslednie eia nastavleniia pri vykhode docheri v svet," *Sochineniia v shesti tomakh* (St. Petersburg, 1894), 1:2–3. Plotkin, who cites this passage minus the final sentence, makes Pisarev into more of a feminist than he actually was. Because *Rassvet* is available only in Moscow and Leningrad libraries, I have quoted from the complete works of Pisarev when a review is reprinted there. All subsequent quotations of Pisarev refer to this edition.

17. Pisarev, *Sochineniia,* 1:481.

18. Ibid., p. 486.

19. Pisarev, "Mysli Virkhova o vospitanii zhenshchin," *Sochineniia,* 4:447.

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later writings on women, Pisarev was never far from the thoughts and the means of expression which he had formulated in *Rassvet*.

Another critic who was to achieve renown in the 1860s and 1870s, N. K. Mikhailovskii, made his debut in the April 1860 issue of *Rassvet* at the age of seventeen. His article, "Sof'ia Nikolaevna Belovodova," compares Goncharov's heroine to Oblomov. Throughout the sixties, Mikhailovskii continued to write articles on the woman question, including a review of John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) which was published in Russian the same year it appeared in England. Mikhailovskii's early work in *Rassvet* undoubtedly influenced his later view that only through education for work could a woman achieve independence. In an article entitled "Muzhskoi vopros ili zhenskii?," written in 1864, he stated that a change in women's status, to the point where they would earn their own bread, could only be to the advantage of men, who now suffer "not in the whirling of a waltz or in a theater box, but sitting at some deadening dry office work to feed a wife and children."[20]

The young Mikhailovskii and Pisarev of these reviews and articles probably patterned themselves after certain writers for *Sovremennik*, the leading radical journal of the time, but, nevertheless, they were independent voices in what grew to be almost a shouting match during those years. The leading theorist of the woman question in Russia was, of course, M. L. Mikhailov (1829–65), who, upon returning home from western Europe in 1859, became an editor of *Sovremennik* and headed its department of foreign literature. While still in France in 1858, he had written a long piece in defense of women's rights called "Zhenshchiny, ikh vospitanie i znachenie v sem'e i obshchestve." It proceeded from the premise that "the complete rebuilding of society is impossible without altering its basis, the family."[21] Mikhailov cited the *Domostroi* as the low point of Russian tradition, with its recommendation of what to do to a disobedient wife: "soimia rubashku, pletkoiu vezhliven'ko postegat', za ruki derzha." He maintained, in a very modern argument, that man's calumny of woman, his accusations of her physical and moral imperfection, were not just innocent delusions on his part, but "a lie which is deeply mercenary, deeply calculated."[22]

Mikhailov's essay appeared in *Sovremennik* (nos. 4, 5, and 8 of 1860) and it was welcomed in *Rassvet*'s August 1860 issue. Earlier, Pisarev had written a review of Mikhailov's "Fifth Letter from Paris" (*Rassvet,* November 1859) in which he insisted that the other four letters were unsuitable and that even the "Fifth Letter," with certain parts omitted, should be read only by mothers and governesses. The "Fifth Letter" was a polemic with Michelet and Proudhon, and Pisarev paraphrased their arguments (for example, that women were sick, spoiled children) in his review. The paraphrasing was calculated to enrage his audience even more than the deductions about woman's place made from the

20. N. K. Mikhailovskii, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii,* vol. 10 (St. Petersburg, 1913), p. 387.

21. M. L. Mikhailov, *Sochineniia v trekh tomakh* (Moscow, 1958), 3:369. Mikhailov mentions in a footnote his regret that most of his article had already been printed before he read Mill (see p. 425 n.). Soon afterward, he translated Harriet Taylor's "Enfranchisement of Women," published under her husband's name in 1851. The translation appeared in *Sovremennik* in November 1860 and was reviewed in *Rassvet* (January 1861) by V. Stoiunin.

22. Mikhailov, *Sochineniia,* 3:403.

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"Letter." Pisarev called Mikhailov a defender of "the emancipation of women," then hastened to explain to his readers that by emancipation he did not mean full social freedom à la George Sand, but serious education and social reform: "only a woman fit for serious work will occupy a fully independent situation in society and in the family."[23]

The pioneer woman doctor, Elizabeth Blackwell, rather than George Sand, was the heroine of Mikhailov's article and Pisarev's review, for a "judicious freedom" ("razumnaia svoboda") was the fruit of education and useful work. To those who had as their goal the economic independence of women and who felt the need to answer the ridicule and scare tactics of their opponents, the example of George Sand appeared impractical. But, even though advocates of women's rights in Russia felt it necessary to abjure her, it was George Sand more than any single figure who, by her writings and even more by the example of her life, pushed mid-nineteenth-century Russia into an awareness of new possibilities for women. Sand both stood for a way of living and embodied the woman artist, long a figure of controversy. Consequently, in the September 1861 issue of *Rassvet,* K. Skal'kovskii defended Sand the woman artist. He presented a sketch of Sand's life and works, choosing an epigraph from Fourier: "L'homme s'indigne et s'alarme lorsque les femmes démentent le préjugé qui les accuse d'infériorité. La jalousie masculine a surtout eclaté contre les femmes auteurs."[24] He stressed the extremes of reactions to Sand and ended with a quote calling her the best writer of the century.

Rassvet, of course, was not telling its young ladies or their mothers to go out and live like George Sand. It stood, as usual, on the middle ground. Thus, contradictions in an article under review, which painted a bleak picture of the "peredovaia zhenshchina," the progressive (liberated) woman, were pointed out gently:

> The life of such a woman often vanishes without a trace; people ignore her, or try to, no one loves her because they fear her. . . . Woe to her if she heeds the voice of nature, falls in love with someone unworthy and thoughtlessly unites her fate with him or, fearing a struggle with poverty, the wicked censure and caustic scorn of society, hastens to exchange her sacred dream and marries without love . . . even with the consciousness of her future unhappiness. . . .[25]

But what *Rassvet* was not advocating—the breakup of the traditional family—was already happening, as the "new people" of the sixties lived their lives to match their ideals.[26] Chernyshevskii's novel, *What is to be Done?,* is the most famous fictional portrayal of this reality. As unrealistic as its sexual idealism may be, it chronicles a way of life that had actually come into being, in which men and women lived according to their present needs and tried to make a virtue out of impermanence when the needs of others conflicted with their own. In fact, the radical change in personal life among the intelligentsia preceded eco-

23. Pisarev, *Sochineniia,* 1:115.
24. *Rassvet,* September 1861, p. 355.
25. Ibid., p. 89.
26. See T. A. Bogdanovich, *Liubov' liudei shestidesiatykh godov* (Leningrad, 1929).

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nomic and educational independence for women. And well-bred, well-educated young women like Elena Stakenshneider were expressing in private diaries a grave dissatisfaction with the limits put upon them.[27]

Rassvet obviously was riding not the crest of the wave called the woman question, but the gently swirling waters just behind it. In the May 1862 issue of *Sovremennik,* published the same month as the next-to-last issue of *Rassvet,* A. N. Ostrogorskii wrote an article called "Po povodu zhenskikh kharakterov v nekotorykh povestiakh" in which he discussed John Stuart Mill's theories in Millian terms. Then, turning to literature, he described Turgenev's Elena, the heroine of *On the Eve* who was usually regarded as a model of an independent woman (Pisarev called her a new and fine image of Russian womanhood in a review in *Rassvet* [March 1860]). Ostrogorskii wrote that, in effect, Elena "passively follows Insarov and it is not worthwhile to look for social activity in her." In the next section of the article, Ostrogorskii stated, "If it is insulting for a man to be a male animal (*samets*), because he is a human and not a beast, then it is shameful for a woman to be a female animal (*samka*) for the same reason"[28]—did Tolstoy read these words before he turned Natasha into a "strong, handsome, and fertile woman," whose previous "outbursts had been due to her need of children and a husband" (*War and Peace,* Final Epilogue, chapter 3). Ostrogorskii also dealt with the other extreme: "little by little man will break himself of the habit of considering woman a morally elevated being as he would wish to see her."[29] An article like this one goes beyond most of the polemics of *Rassvet,* not only in the acuteness of its literary criticism but also in its skillful application of men's attitudes toward women to men themselves. Ostrogorskii came to terms with the prejudices of his own sex, not in terms of the social structures which men create, but in terms of the mental constructs that lie behind them.

Rassvet usually focused on social structures (perhaps it did not want to confront what it perceived as its gently awakening young readership with visions of harsher realities) even after the larger audience of *Sovremennik* had begun to face the attitudes underlying these structures. *Rassvet* had outlived its usefulness. In the sixties young women were educating their mothers or leaving home. The gentle rallying tone of a journal addressed to the drowsy had been outshouted by the stronger voice of the already awakened. But *Rassvet,* although it was not a major force for advancement in its time, did serve as a bridge for individual readers to cross into major issues of the day, influencing both those who would take up the standard and those who stayed home and read.

27. E. A. Stakenshneider, *Dnevnik i zapiski* (*1854–1886*) (Moscow-Leningrad, 1934).
28. *Sovremennik,* May 1862, p. 10.
29. Ibid., p. 35.

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