

Thesis in 6 Methods

Method 1.

My contemporary voice versus her voice from the past.

XIX century Russia. Time of constant oppression. Hierarchy dictates. A man belongs to a man. Peasants are fixed to the land. The landlord holds the right for forced labor, property and the identity of the peasants belonging to him. Dependancy. As if a man has to constantly deserve his right to live.

A woman is fixed to a man as a peasant is fixed to a land. A woman is immature. Dependant. A trade object. The right of possession is arranged by the power holders, family, relatives, husband.

In education, which makes her incapable and worthless, except for parquet,¹ in the prejudices of society, which is ready to show her with mud and alienate a woman for any of her free actions, censuring her for evading some kind of so called natural duties and chasing away any desire of her to work, and consequently, to independence, here is the beginning of slavery.²

Inadequate on the market, she is the one who has to constantly linger on a man in order to get some stability. A woman. A victim. Blind to her dependancy, keeps the system to stay alive. Woman means chastity. Chastity determines a proper woman or not. Chastity means control, obedience, to subordinate. Control over body — control over mind.

¹ Parquet.outdated use in the bourgeois-noble speech: belonging to high class, well-bred. Parquet tone. in the language of "living rooms", spaces, where the bourgeois-noble class meets.

² Appolinaria Suslova, first published novel "For the time being" in the 5th edition of brothers Dostoevskys' magazine "Time"

A woman marries to have the right means to live, or rather she wants to break free; but she is bitterly mistaken, because slavery, tirelessly pursuing her, is here, but in other forms. The same happened to Zinaida.³ The same happened to Apollinaria Suslova.

1860. The year of "New people"⁴. New social class. To not have slavery. To not belong.

I saw how the greatest of the evils — slavery was falling, but my heart was not happy: I knew how deeply rooted in our soil the roots of this fatal evil and how much effort one needs to find and tear them away. They made their way to all layers of our society and entangled it in a thin, strong network: they would not be pulled out without pain to the whole body. I believed that the young generation with noble self-sacrifice will join forces to eradicate everything that is unfit and harmful to us, and the proud thought of my participation in the matter of social transformation was my moral drive: all my desires and hopes were concentrated on it.⁵

1860. "New people" are men. "Female question"⁶. Female emancipation.

Ideas are there. Is the society ready? No.

The same happened to Apollinaria Suslova.

- entering the specific time period
- Structure: my voice, her writings, me -her and end with my words. Should elaborate on female question from her writings?
- Dialogue between her and me Method: Me and her. Today and past

³ Apollinaria Suslova, "For the time being" 1861

⁴ New people - is a ...

⁵ First novel of Apollinaria Suslova "For the time being", 1861 was published among Dostoevsky Polonsky Ostrovsky Maikov Grigorovich - all male surnames- The novel by female writer was left without notice and comments. Later it was called immature /-female? -/and using borrowed language of the writers elite of that time -man-writers -

⁶ Female question is...

Method 2. A fictional note written by me.

My story is called "Чужая и свой", "Chuzhaya i svoi",

Russian language, the same as the country, is not gender neutral. Gender is deliberately emphasised in the ending of each word in a sentence: nouns, verbs, adjectives are all used to indicate a man or a woman. You cannot miss out what was said by a woman or about a woman.

"Чужая"⁷ (Chuzhaya) means "Other", talking about a woman. I am talking about 7 myself. I was the Other to Him, I was the Other to the idea of a woman of my time. I was the one to stand behind his back and I was the one to bring him to the foreground. It was me, who gave him the sufferings he was longing for, who activated his fantasies and who gave him success. I was his lover. I was the prototype for most of his female characters.

"Свой" (svoi)⁸ means "known", "the one who belongs here" or "ours", *talking about a man*. I talk about Dostoevsky. I wish I was "своя" (svoya), but I might have forever remained as the one to be looked at and to be judged and never be accepted as the one who belongs here.

But now, when I am in charge, I am going to take back the control. I will tell you my story. You wonder if a protagonist can imitate a writer? And I will respond: what if a protagonist is a writer?

⁷ Чужая - female version of the word Чужой - male version of the word

⁸ свой (svoi) - male version of the word

- The specific of the language, gender roles.
- I speak for her. I make her explain her story. First time Dostoevsky is mentioned.
- Method: I speak for her. I write from her name.

Method 3.

Autobiographical novel. Her diary versus her novel.

In 1863 Apollinaria and Dostoevsky went on a trip to Italy. It was last three months of them being together. During the trip Apollinaria was making notes in her diary. The notes were later transformed in the novel "Чужая и свой", "Chuzhaya i svoi".

I call myself Anna. I call him Losnitsky. It is also a surname, but surname that doesn't hold any power, any significance.

Diary:

Suddenly he got up and started to leave, but then stumbled over my shoe which was laying by the bed, and just as quickly turned around and sat down again.

"You wanted to go somewhere, didn't you?" I asked.

"I wanted to shut the window."

"Shut it then, if you want to."

"No, it isn't necessary. You don't know what just happened to me!" he said, with a strange expression.

"What do you mean?" I looked at his face; it showed great agitation.

"I was just going to kiss your foot."

"Ah, why that?" I said, greatly embarrassed, almost frightened and tucked my legs under me.

"I just got the urge, and decided that I'd kiss it"

"No, it isn't necessary. You don't know what just happened to me!" he said, with a strange expression.

Novel:

"You know how to say a kind word, Anna," he said finally. Anna said nothing and fell back into her earlier pensive mood, while he was thinking of her alone. He was interpreting her very silence, her pensiveness, in his own favor, as an expression of something which she had failed to say in words. She made a move with her head, turning it toward the light. He jumped from his chair and lurched forward, but then suddenly stopped, embarrassed and undecided.

"What is the matter with you?" She asked calmly, looking at the ceiling.

"I wanted to move the table, it isn't in the right place," he muttered.

"So go ahead and move it."

"No, it isn't necessary," he said a moment later, returning to his former place.

She said nothing.

"You do not know what just happened to me," he cried a minute later and in an agitated voice. "What?" she asked anxiously, raising her head and fixing him with frightened eyes. "You won't be angry?"

"What is it?"

"I just wanted to come and kiss your foot, but I stumbled over this rug, and thought better of it."

A blush of modesty appeared on Anna's noble, chaste brow giving her face a purely maidenly expression.

"Why that?" she uttered in a leading voice and instinctively covered the end of her narrow shoe with the hem of her grey-coloured frock.

"You must forgive me, Anna," said the embarrassed Losnitsky.

"Oh, yes! Just don't speak about it anymore."

- 4 different voices are present:

Me as a narrator + her created voice (I speak for her) + her diary + her writings

Method 4. My analytic response to her writing.

"You know how to say a kind word, Anna," he said finally. I saw a saviour in him. He took my apologies as an invitation.

Anna said nothing and fell back into her earlier pensive mood, while he was thinking of her alone. Anna is distant. She says nothing and stay in her pensive mood. Does she feel her actions can make a change? Probably not. He is fully involved. He thinks only of her, while she doesn't think of him. I made him think only of her.

He was interpreting her very silence, her pensiveness, in his own favor, as an expression of something which she had failed to say in words. Losnitsky takes the power to explain the silence of her. That power was not given to him. He took it himself in an act of oppression.

"Some day I am going to tell you something". I began pressing him to tell me what. "You can't forgive me that you gave yourself to me, and so you are avenging yourself; what a female trait". This upset me very much. While A.Osip was present, he asked me to come to the theatre with them. I said: "I'm not going to the theatre with you, since I've never been there with you before; you can ascribe this whim to the reason which you pointed out to me earlier. "Are you agreeing?" he said. "What do I care? I am neither agreeing nor disagreeing with anything, but you with your subtle reasoning will of course find it necessary to think so." ⁹

⁹ Apollinaria's Diary from November 2, St. Petersburg

I take the control over the situation by changing the outcome of what had happened. Now when I am telling the story, I make Losnitsky speak for Dostoevsky and say what I wanted to hear. I make him apologise. There is certainly empowerment in the act of sharing such an intimate story.

- Now she talks and acts for Anna and Losnitsky. I mix her writings (her real voice) with her created voice (I speak for her).

Method 5.

Fictional note from her written by me. New character (Dolin).

My Novell is called "Чужие и свои", "Chuzhie I svoi"¹⁰, which means those who are strangers to each other and close to each other. This is how I wrote it in my drafts for the novel that was not supposed to come out during my time. You should have noticed my epigraphs, Mr. Dolin¹¹ before publishing my novel under the name of "Chuzhaya i Svoi":

Что с возу упало, то пропало. поговорка
What has fallen from the load is lost — proverb

Чувство овладевает всем человеком, оно ревниво делится частью даже жизни. цитата из неназванного частного письма

The feeling takes possession of the whole person, it is jealously shares even a part of ones life" — quotation from an unnamed private letter

I cannot well repeat how there I entered,

¹⁰ "She is the other and he, who is ours"

¹¹ Dollin for the first time published the novel in his research "Годы близости с Достоевским" "Gody blizosti s Dostoevskim" (Years of being close with Dostoevsky), 1928. Apollinaria died in 1918.

*So full was I of slumber at that moment
In which I had abandoned the true way.¹²*

Is it not clear to you that I am not a judge of his genius? Can't you see. I talk about my tragedy, about my relationships?

Not a femme fatale, not a seductress and not a torment I was to him. But a sufferer on who's face a deep impression of the faithful fanaticism, *which distinguishes the faces of madonnas and Christian martyrs lay upon*. A woman quoting Dante is not an oppressor, she is the victim.

Mr Dolin, you take for a riot, for an extraordinary personality, a woman who fights for her freedom. A woman who doesn't give away the right for herself with her body.

- I speak for her, I make her talk to the man, who published her novel after her death and used a wrong name.
- Revealing how she was interpreted by him.
- Method: I speak for her with Dolin. New character.

Method 6. Victim - Oppressor - Saviour.

There was a clear group of society that was of interest to him. The ones who had no power. The ones who were overlooked by the society. Humiliated and Insulted¹³.

Being able to penetrate in all the slight movements of their wounded souls to revile true and often hidden nature of their actions Dostoevsky was the father (do-gooder) of dispossessed.

¹² Dante Alighieri The Divine Comedy

¹³ reference to the novel by Dostoevsky "Humiliated and insulted"

The question why could he see their tragedies was never asked.

There is a circle. Oppression and humiliation turn an individual into a victim. The oppressed one gets to behave as a victim. Believing in his own misserability, accepting the fate of being the one to be tormented, attracting more oppressors by his weakness and dependancy. The victim can stay in this role in the circle for quite a while or can jump out for the next option. Then the victim requires vengeance. The victim transforms into the oppressor, chasing his own oppressor to take the control back or looking for a weaker prey. The oppressor is self-indulgent in gaining his power.

The circle rotates, shifting the roles. As soon as the oppressor repents, he finds his executioner. And the new loop of oppressor-victim relationships are coming to play. The circle is a trap, where breaking free is an illusion. The circle keeps moving, propelled by the will to hold power and control. There is also a place for the saviour in the circle, as the last option to transform to.

The saviour is searching for a victim to fulfil his need for do-good. It is basically the other form to be empowered. The victim still remains weak and dependent, but now he is under control of the saviour. It seemed as a positive power. But it is not.

Why am I fantasising on all these diverse scenarios? I was also dragged in such a circle by Dostoevsky.

Attracted by a man who once *appeared to me as a paragon of perfection*, I had to experience this circle. A man who was talking about victimhood of a woman of his time, A man, who was responsive to the injustice of the rules put on a woman, had made his lover such a victim.

Dostoevsky claimed there is no equality in love. He once said: *Marriage for a woman is always a slavery. At the very moment she "gives herself to a man" she becomes his slave forever.*

Apparently, he felt this way with me. He tried to act like my lord and then came across a sharp resistance, because I myself was from the breed of lords, and not slaves.

- starts from the narrator speech. Ends with my and her voices merging together. We become one, both victims of Dostoevsky.
- No division where she speaks and where I speak. The woman is talking.
- Method: the narrator becomes one with her. She is me and I am her.

Me and Apollinaria. What is between us is time.

"Чужие и свои" was the last novel of Apollinaria Suslova. It was not published during her lifetime. With the end of the relationships there came an end to her writings. Only the diary she kept. Putting it in a brighter cover, she started to collect her new lovers in it.

Apollinaria is the woman we know the most from reading Dostoevsky's novels: Polina from *The Gambler*, Nastasia Philipovna from *The Idiot*, Katerina and Grushenka from *The Brothers Karamazov*, Liza from *The Possessed*, Dunia from *The Crime and Punishment*. But did we really know her?

When I recognised myself in this fighting woman, proud and humiliated, interpreted by others, interpreted by man. Do I see all the women of my country?

Searching for freedom and being trapped and interpreted by others? How can I use the power that is in my hand when I have a slavery mind (slavish mentality)?

(Is it a coincidence that in Russian language both "victim" and "sacrifice" are called the same: "жертва" (zhertva)? A victim of the system surrenders and sacrifice herself to it.)

Let me speak for her, and her to say out loud my questions and concerns. I am talking back to a woman who was spoken for.

A woman who was desperately looking for space for herself, had ended up as a one behind the back of two big men: Dostoevsky and Rozanov. The lover she had declined, and another "great interpreter of Russian women", Rozanov, who took her as a trophy of his hero Dostoevsky.

Is there space for a woman to stand by herself? Why do we read at school Dostoevsky and never Suslova? Will we one day read at school Suslova, and not Dostoevsky?

- I look at her from the distance, between us time. Explaining what it was all about.

- Method: me, my position.