

**The Bulletin
of the
North American
Chekhov Society**

Vol. XV, No. 1

Fall, 2007

Editor's Note

In addition to two reviews of recent books and a Chekhov bibliography for the last two and a half years, this issue offers two essays. The first takes a new look at the events surrounding Chekhov's death and funeral. It is by Galina S. Rylkova, an Associate Professor of Russian Studies at the University of Florida whose book, *The Archaeology of Anxiety: The Russian Silver Age and Its Legacy*, will be published at the beginning of 2008 by the University of Pittsburgh Press. The second essay explores the depiction of depression in *Ivanov* and the direction provided by Chekhov's narrative approach for therapists treating this illness more than a century later. The writer of this longer essay is Bradley Lewis, an Assistant Professor at New York University's Gallatin School of Individualized Study, with affiliated appointments in the School of Medicine's Department of Psychiatry and the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis. He is the author of *Moving Beyond Prozac, DSM, and the New Psychiatry: The Birth of Postpsychiatry* and associate editor for the *Journal of Medical Humanities*.

As this issue was going to press, I received news of the death of one of Russia's great Chekhov scholars and critics, Èmma Artem'evna Polotskaia. I should like to commemorate her life and work in the next issue.

Finally, I want to ask the subscribers to *The Bulletin* if they would object to receiving future issues online. Printing and mailing expenses climb higher and higher, so that it costs too much to order a full print-run and to send issues to everyone on the mailing list. And to include images and photos is outrageously expensive. To those without computers, if they will reveal themselves, xeroxed copies can be made available, and our readers in Russia, who have never been asked to pay for *The Bulletin*, will continue to receive xeroxed copies. Unless I hear loud screams of protest or more decorous objections, I shall beam future issues to your e-mail addresses. If you have changed your coordinates recently or are planning to alter them in the near future or have never notified me of them, please inform me by email, <ralph.lindheim@utoronto.ca>, or write to me at: Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures / University of Toronto / 121 St. Joseph St. / Toronto, Ontario M5S 1J4.

Galina S. Rylkova

Oyster Fever: Chekhov and Turgenev

Unlike other cultural celebrities who happened to die in desired and desirable cities like Venice (Wagner) or Paris (Oscar Wilde), Anton Chekhov died in a less than spectacular German resort for convalescing tubercular patients. As Chekhov's letters reveal, his last trip

was tedious and painfully meaningless on all accounts. Whatever Chekhov might have thought about the conclusion of his life, his funeral was far from boring. Olga Knipper's immediate reaction was to bury her husband in Germany. But her plans were quickly dashed. At the request of the family, friends, and various cultural figures, Chekhov's body was transported back to Russia and buried in Moscow on July 9 at the cemetery of the New Virgin Convent. Curiously, on July 5, the newspaper *Moskovskie vedomosti* reported the outbreak of a typhoid epidemic that spread from Constantinople and the Marbled Sea to England and France. The French scientists blamed the disease solely on oysters that, according to them, had absorbed contaminated water during the rainy season. Not surprisingly, the English oyster-eaters were the first victims of this epidemic.¹ By a perverse coincidence, the just mentioned article was published side by side with another article, "Chekhov and Moscow," whose author grieved over Chekhov's "sudden death" and informed his readers about the funeral arrangements.² By a further ironic twist, due, most likely, to a declining demand for fresh oysters during the epidemic, Chekhov's body was allotted a refrigerated car to travel across the Russian Empire. At the border crossing in Verzhbolovo, the coffin with Chekhov's body was moved from the German car to a Russian refrigerator car for transporting fresh oysters.³

While it was definitely better for the coffin to travel in a car designed to protect a highly perishable commodity,⁴ Chekhov's contemporaries, who came to meet the train first in St. Petersburg and then in Moscow, were all shocked by the sight of a "dirty green" car bearing the inscription "For Oysters." Even ten years after the event, the famous literary historian Semën Vengerov (1855-1920) could not think without a shudder about his first impressions of meeting the infamous train at Warsaw Station in St. Petersburg:

We all made our way toward the woeful car containing the remains of the beloved writer and were absolutely flabbergasted to see the now famous inscription on the side of the car with A.P. Chekhov's casket - "Car for Oysters."

Yes, one has to die at the right time, too... And what a story the departed great writer could have written, based on this...⁵

From that day onward, the "oyster car" became associated with Chekhov's death and has been traditionally interpreted either as "an apotheosis of vulgarity" (Maxim Gorky and many others)⁶ or as an amusing little twist of fate reminiscent of Antosha Chekhonte's style, a sign of Chekhov's ability to control life even after his own death: "even after [Chekhov] is dead, life goes on as if it were tuned to one of his scripts."⁷ Some commentators, like Dmitrii

¹ "Iz nauchnogo mira," *Moskovskie vedomosti*, July 5, 1904: 4.

² "Chekhov i Moskva," *Moskovskie vedomosti*, July 5, 1904: 4.

³ One can find a detailed account of the events surrounding the transportation of Chekhov's body from Badenweiler to Moscow in M. Dolinskii and S. Chertok, "Poslednii put' Chekhova," *Russkaia literatura*, no. 2 (1962). Unfortunately, both authors are silent about how exactly and why Chekhov's body was placed in the refrigerator car. I am grateful to Michael Finke and Radislav Lapushin for bringing this article to my attention.

⁴ George Pakhomov made this point at the AAASS meeting in Toronto, November 2003.

⁵ S. A. Vengerov, "Vagon dlia ustrits," *Solntse Rossii*, 1914, June, no. 228, 25.

⁶ M. Gorky, "A. P. Chekhov," in *A.P. Chekhov v vospominaniakh sovremennikov* (Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1960), 506.

⁷ See Katherine Tiernan O'Connor's "Chekhov's Death: His Textual Past Recaptured" in *Studies in Poetics, Commemorative Volume: Krystyna Pomorska (1928-1986)* (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica Publishers, 1995), 40.

Merezhkovskii, believed that the oyster car was Chekhov's well-deserved punishment for his lack of faith and for his groping for non-existence and universal destruction and chaos.⁸

I would like to suggest yet another interpretation of the oyster finale of Chekhov's life. According to Knipper's memoirs, the night preceding Chekhov's peaceful death was horrendous on all accounts. Chekhov's heart was failing him. He was gasping for breath and urged Knipper to open the door to the balcony. She reluctantly complied, watching with terror "as a thick, milky fog outside was rising up to our floor and, like some viscous ghosts of the most fantastic shapes, crawled into the room, flowing all over it – and this all night long... [...] In order that Anton Pavlovich wouldn't notice, on regaining consciousness, that I wasn't sleeping and kept a watch over him, I had a book in my hands, pretending to read. At one point, coming to, he asked me, 'What are you reading?' and, since the little volume of Chekhov's stories was open at 'A Strange Story,' I gave him the title. He smiled and said quietly, 'You silly thing, who on earth ever carries around their husband's books with them?' and lost consciousness again."⁹ "There is, needless to say," Katherine O'Connor writes, "no story entitled 'A Strange Story,' although there is his story 'A Boring Story,' ('Skuchnaia istoriia'), which is probably what Olga meant to say but which she failed to name correctly."¹⁰ As O'Connor observes, Knipper had plenty of opportunity to correct her mistake, but even the later editions of her memoirs retain her reference to "A Strange Story." What if Knipper was indeed reading "A Strange Story" and not "A Boring Story" as O'Connor suggests? While "A Boring Story" is a story by Chekhov, "A Strange Story" ("Strannaia istoriia") is a story that Ivan Turgenev wrote in Germany in 1869 and belongs to his so-called fantasy tales.

Turgenev's story tells about a seventeen-year-old girl, Sophie, who after her mother's death leaves her wealthy family to tend to a holy fool, Vasilii. She sees him as her role model because she respects what she calls his "true" spirituality and devoutness. They travel from one place to another, with no possessions and little to eat. During their last encounter, the narrator sees that the body and the feet of the holy fool are covered with ulcers, which Sophie is trying to treat with butter that she was lucky to get from one of Vasilii's admirers. When Sophie is eventually made to return to her family, she stops talking and dies shortly after. The narrator is clearly moved and impressed by Sophie's inner strength and determination. Given the fact that Knipper, according to people who knew her well, was a pleasantly selfish and self-centered woman, it is easier to imagine her reading about Turgenev's female character, whose mission in life – tending to a sick but extraordinary man – would have seemed similar to hers in Badenweiler, than about the old professor Nikolai Stepanovich in "A Boring Story."¹¹ In fact, Knipper's reference to the thick milky fog spilling into their room is almost a direct reference to an episode in Turgenev's story, when the narrator meets Vasilii for the first time during one of his séances and is induced to see the spirit of his old tutor:

Then [Vasilii] disappeared again, as if a fog had enveloped him, appeared... and disappeared again... appeared again, and then I was within the range of his labored, almost wheezing breathing... A fog descended again, and

⁸ D. S. Merezhkovskii, "Chekhov i Gorky" [1906], *A. P. Chekhov. Pro et contra* (St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Russkogo khristianskogo gumanitarnogo universiteta, 2002).

⁹ Knipper's letter to her mother is quoted in A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridsati tomakh* (Moscow: Nauka, 1983), *Pis'ma*, vol. 12, 378-79.

¹⁰ O'Connor, *op. cit.*, 43.

¹¹ See Vasilii Shverubovich, *O starom Khudozhestvennom teatre* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1990) and Sof'ia Piliavskaia, *Grustnaia kniga* (Moscow: Vargius, 2001).

suddenly, out of this fog, beginning with his white hair standing on end, there gradually began to emerge old Descaire's head.¹²

Did Chekhov in his delirium realize that his wife was referring not to his story but to the story by Turgenev? If he did, this may offer another possible reading of his smile in response to Knipper's words. When Chekhov was 26, he also took part in a séance. There he saw the spirit of Turgenev who told him that his life was "drawing to a close." Turgenev always loomed large for Chekhov. Not only critics, but also Chekhov himself never stopped comparing his works to those by Turgenev.¹³ In 1903, on several occasions, he informed Knipper that he was immersed in rereading Turgenev's works, only to conclude that Turgenev was hopelessly outdated.¹⁴ This comment notwithstanding, Chekhov was no doubt intimately familiar with the details of Turgenev's life. Although he parted with many books in the course of his life, Chekhov retained the first 1884 edition of Turgenev's letters. No doubt, he knew them well. He repeatedly made fun of Turgenev's last letter to Tolstoy, in which the younger writer was famously called "the great writer of the Russian land" and was urged to resume writing fiction, by addressing various female actresses as "great actress of the Russian land" ("*velikaia aktrisa zemli russkoi*").

The letters that Turgenev wrote during the last year and a half of his life, when he was suffering from his incurable disease, are strikingly Chekhovian, or, to be more precise, Chekhov's intimate letters from the last 4-5 years of his life are steeped in Turgenev's ordinary humanness, forgiveness and understanding. Turgenev noticed the first symptoms of his disease (spinal cancer) in March 1882 and soon became immobilized. He was particularly upset that he had to postpone indefinitely his plans to go to Russia the following summer. The doctors were telling him that there was nothing seriously wrong with him, although he might have to spend months and even years in bed.¹⁵ At first Turgenev was frustrated and bored ("my personal life has stopped"), but then he found strength to resign himself to his new situation, comparing himself to "an oyster that nobody can eat." He also wrote in his letters, "As it turns out, one can go on living even when one is incapable of standing, walking and riding." "Look at oysters. They live like this. I have even come to the conclusion that it is quite all right [...] being an oyster."¹⁶ But during his last months Turgenev suffered excruciating pain and was seriously contemplating suicide.

Turgenev died on August 22/September 3. Nearly a month later, on September 19/October 1, his coffin was put on a train from Paris to Berlin and to Verzhbolovo. In fact, in Verzhbolovo, much to the surprise of the representative of the funeral commission, Turgenev's body arrived "without any accompanying people [who, as it turned out, had all been detained at the border crossing] and without any documentation, except for the luggage declaration, which stated '[number] 1 – dead body,' no name, no last name!"¹⁷ In Verzhbolovo, Turgenev's coffin had to remain for another 3 days so that it arrived in St.

¹² I. S. Turgenev, "Strannaia istoriia," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh* (Moscow-Leningrad: Nauka, 1965), vol. 8, 147.

¹³ In *The Seagull*, Chekhov even makes his allegedly successful Trigorin suffer from an inferiority complex. He tells Nina: "You know what my friends will say as they file past my grave? 'Here lies Trigorin. A good writer, but no Turgenev.'" Anton Chekhov, *The Essential Plays*, trans. Michael Henry Heim (New York: The Modern Library, 2003), 29.

¹⁴ A. P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh, Pis'ma*, vol. 10, 70, 194; vol. 11, 184.

¹⁵ On Turgenev's death see L. S. Utevkii's pioneering *Smert' Turgeneva. 1883-1923. Trudy Turgenevskogo obshchestva* (Petersburg, Atenei, 1923).

¹⁶ These particular excerpts from Turgenev's letters from the first 1884 edition of his letters are quoted in Utevkii, *op. cit.* 21-25.

¹⁷ M. M. Stasiulevich, "Pokhorony I. S. Turgeneva," *Vestnik Evropy*, November 1883, 439.

Petersburg exactly on Tuesday, September 27/October 8, as had been previously planned by the funeral commission and as had been deemed appropriate by the authorities.¹⁸ As both Stasiulevich's and Utevskaa's reports suggest, the circumstances surrounding Turgenev's death and his funeral became a hotly discussed issue among Russian intellectuals. Turgenev died in the little French town of Bougival, near Paris, surrounded – to the dismay of many Russians, including his friends – “only” by his adopted family, the family of his life-long passion and the famous opera singer, Pauline Viardot. Utevskaa's monograph contains generous praise of the Viardot family, explaining that Turgenev had been given a lot of love and care when he required them most.

In 1874, young Vengerov approached Turgenev with some queries related to his work *Russian Literature through its Contemporary Representatives: Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev* (*Russkaia literatura v ee sovremennykh predstaviteliakh: Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev*, 1875). He was particularly interested in finding out why it had taken Turgenev so long to liberate his serfs. In response, Turgenev wrote what he called a “candid” letter. When he received Vengerov's monograph in 1875, Turgenev was disappointed both with Vengerov's interpretations and his writing style. More important, he was appalled by Vengerov's decision to publish Turgenev's private letter without his permission.¹⁹ His growing annoyance with Vengerov led Turgenev to inform Vengerov in 1875 that their views on literature and art “were completely different.”²⁰ Apparently, in 1904, and later in 1914, Vengerov did not recall the references to oysters in Turgenev's letters. If he had, he might have felt better about the infamous inscription “For Oysters” on the funeral car.²¹

If one subscribes to the idea of Chekhov shaping life even after his death, it is tempting to see the oyster car in the light of Harold Bloom's theory of literary influence. The younger writer, according to Bloom, must “swerve” from the work of his predecessors to prove his superiority.²² Chekhov's allegedly and seemingly meaningless and boring trip to Germany and back may well have been an audacious swerve toward superiority. Did Chekhov think about Turgenev during his last days in Badenweiler? Even if he didn't, the oyster car that carried his body from Verzhbolovo to St. Petersburg and then to Moscow strangely reaffirmed his filial-like bond with Turgenev.

From 1904 onward Chekhov has been seen by the reading public not as someone inferior to Turgenev, but as his equal and even as a more talented writer. “Chekhov's death

¹⁸ Ibid., 436-37.

¹⁹ See Turgenev's letters to Vengerov and commentaries in I. S. Turgenev, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v dvadtsati vos'mi tomakh, Pis'ma*, vol. 10, 256, 620, 621; vol. 11, 85-87, 92, 174, 490-492, 495, 542.

²⁰ Ibid., vol. 11, 174.

²¹ Isadora Duncan (1878-1927) firmly believed that oysters were somehow linked to artistic disposition and creativity. See her recollection of her pre-natal existence: “The character of a child is already plain, even in its mother's womb. Before I was born my mother was in great agony of spirit and in a tragic situation. She could take no food except iced oysters and iced champagne. If people ask me when I began to dance, I reply, “In my mother's womb, probably as a result of the oysters and champagne – the food of Aphrodite. [...] I was born by the sea, and I have noticed that all the great events of my life have taken place by the sea.” Isadora Duncan, *My Life* [1927] (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1955), 9. See also the discussion (with references to the findings of R. D. Timenchik) of the associative series “pearls,” “molluscs” and “oysters” in the texts by Innokentii Annenskii and Turgenev in Aleksandr Kushner's “Sredi liudei, kotorye ne slyshat,” *Apollon v trave* (Moscow: Progress-Pleiada, 2005), 319-320. In the 1960s, Anna Akhmatova admitted to a younger interlocutor of hers, that all her life she found herself in an impossible situation: “One can't even slightly praise me, because I am extremely vulnerable, like an oyster.” G. V. Glekin, “Vstrechi s Akhmatovoi: Iz dnevnikovykh zapisei 1959-1966 godov,” *Voprosy literatury*, no. 2 (1997). Interestingly, the critic Erikh Gollerbakh described Nikolai Gumil'ev's manner of speaking in the early 1910s as also related to oysters: “His voice jumps from bass to almost descant, drawing words out and swallowing them like oysters.” Gollerbakh, *Gorod muz.* (Leningrad, 1930), 132.

²² Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*, 2nd edition (New York/Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997).

has shown that Russian society loves him more than we could ever imagine,” Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko reported to Konstantin Stanislavskii on July 25, 1904. “Never during his life was he put on the same level with Pushkin, Tolstoy and higher than Turgenev, but today this is done almost unanimously.”²³ Interestingly, in 1908, in the commemorative issue of *Teatr i iskusstvo* devoted to Turgenev, the critic Vladimir Botsianovskii compared Turgenev to a lovable and memorable but, nevertheless, secondary character in Chekhov’s *Cherry Orchard*. Turgenev’s last days in Bougival reminded Botsianovskii of the old sick Firs, left behind by his masters in a deserted house:

Fate tore [Turgenev] away from the only thing dear to him [his family estate Spasskoe] and, in return, gave him essentially nothing...

The same way it treated Firs, fate separated Turgenev from his beloved “Cherry Orchard” and trapped him inside walls, which his groans took a long time to penetrate and be heard... They were heard only toward the end of his life or, rather, after his death...²⁴

Turgenev was arguably the first great Russian writer who had been expected to die “at home,” but died away from home. In its turn, Chekhov’s death marked a further development in such “expectations.” From then on few writers – including Tolstoy – were expected to die in their own beds or even to find their resting place in their homeland. Thus it is not surprising that Chekhov’s younger contemporary Boris Zaitsev (1881-1972), who spent the last fifty years of his life in France, described in 1954 the time he and his wife spent from meeting the coffin with Chekhov’s remains at Nikolaevskii Station in Moscow to the actual burial ceremony not as “an apotheosis of vulgarity” (as described by Gorky) or as one of Chekhov’s practical jokes but “as some kind of an ever-lasting pilgrimage” and epiphany. He recalled: “A departing cloud, raindrops falling from trees, the fragment of a rainbow intersecting the cloud like a peacock’s tail, the gold of the church cupolas, the shiny crosses, swallows shooting through the air, the grave, and the crowd of mourners – all of those were Chekhov departing this life for the eternal rest at the New Virgin Convent, where he would come from clinics, when he felt better, and stand modestly close to the wall inside the cathedral listening to the liturgy and the nuns’ singing.”²⁵ A perfect, not a boring day.

²³ Nemirovich-Danchenko is quoted in A.P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh, Pis'ma*, vol. 12, 233.

²⁴ Vl. Botsianovskii, “Pamiati I. S. Turgeneva,” *Teatr i iskusstvo*, 33 (1908): 563.

²⁵ Boris Zaitsev, “Chekhov,” in *Dal'koe* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1991), 387.

Bradley Lewis

**Listening to Chekhov:
Narrative Approaches to Depression**

(Reprinted from *Literature and Medicine* 25:1 (2006) with the permission of The Johns Hopkins Press)

We live in an era of depression. According to the World Health Organization, depression affects 121 million people across the globe; it is the fourth leading contributor to the global burden of disease and, by the year 2020, will be the second.¹ At its worst, depression leads to suicide, killing approximately 850,000 persons every year worldwide.² In the United States alone, the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reports, about 16 percent of the population, roughly 35 million people, suffer from severe depression in their lifetime.³ In any one period, 13 to 14 million Americans are thought to experience the illness.⁴

Numbers tell us the pervasiveness of depression; they do not tell us about the intensity of individual suffering. Andrew Solomon, in his memoir, *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*, compares his experience of depression to that of a strong and dignified oak tree being persistently and maliciously attacked by a parasitic vine. Melancholia wrapped itself around him, ugly and sure, until his life was gradually asphyxiated: "I knew that the sun was rising and setting, but little of its light reached me. I felt myself sagging under what was much stronger than I."⁵ Solomon felt that the tendril of depression "threatened to pulverize my mind and my courage and my stomach, and crack my bones and desiccate my body. It went on glutting itself on me when there seemed nothing left to feed it."⁶ In this state of utter desperation, he believed that the melancholia was so intertwined with his life that any attempt to destroy the malignant vine would destroy his own self in the process. All he could do was helplessly wish that somehow he would die and be relieved of his misery.

Philosopher Julia Kristeva describes the experience of melancholia as an abyss of sorrow, a noncommunicable grief that leaves its victims all but mute.⁷ Melancholia lays claim on its sufferers and sucks out all of their interest in words, actions, and even life itself. The initial despair can be triggered by a setback in love or in life, perhaps a betrayal, an illness, or an accident, that wrests people away from what they know and expect. But when melancholia sinks in, people do not snap back; they are thrown into another life, one that is out of proportion with their setbacks. Kristeva describes this other life of depression as "unlivable, heavy with daily sorrows, tears held back or shed, a total despair, scorching at times then wan and empty. In short, a devitalized existence that, although occasionally fired by the effort I make to prolong it, is ready at any moment for a plunge into death."⁸ Depression is "a living death, my flesh is wounded, bleeding, cadaverized, my rhythm slowed down or interrupted,

¹ See World Health Organization, "Depression."

² Ibid.

³ See Kessler et al., "The Epidemiology of Major Depressive Disorder," 3095

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Solomon, *The Noonday Demon*, 17.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 3.

⁸ See Kristeva, *Black Sun*, 3.

time has been erased or bloated, absorbed into sorrow."⁹ Kristeva likens depression to a "black sun" whose eerie, lethargic rays have the power to pin its victims down to the bed, to the ground, and leave them compelled to silence and renunciation.¹⁰

Despite the seriousness of depression today—both its pervasiveness and the extensive suffering it causes—this is an era that seems naïve and unsophisticated about the multiple dimensions of depression. The vast majority of clinical discourse embraces a biological model that describes depression as a medical disease involving neurological pathology. Using disease logics, like the commonly held notion of a "neurochemical imbalance," the expected solution lies in pharmaceutical interventions.¹¹ Eli Lilly's blockbuster medication Prozac provides a useful benchmark for how pervasive this solution has become. Between 1987 and 2002 (the year Prozac came off patent), new prescriptions for the drug reached over 27 million.¹² Combined with the multiple "me too" drugs it inspired—the class of antidepressants known as "selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors" (SSRI)—that total reached 67.5 million in the United States alone.¹³ These numbers suggest that almost one in four people in the United States began taking a Prozac-type drug between 1987 and 2002.

Simultaneous with this epidemic of prescriptions, there has been a significant public reaction that expresses serious doubts and even ardent criticism of all this brain manipulation. But neither the lingering doubts nor the vocal critics have had much effect on the current disease model of depression. The doubts are too abstract and too much like navel-gazing in the face of the tremendous suffering of depression. And the critics just seem to miss the point. They argue that the biological model is wrong because it is too simple, too reductionistic. But, judging by the number of SSRI prescriptions, people seem more than willing to sacrifice a comprehensive understanding of depression if they can feel better.

Thus, in the face of its doubts and its critics, today's era of depression has cosmopolitan culture charging headlong into increasing brain science and brain interventions. But even as this happens, it is hard to escape the persistent feeling that we, as a culture, are missing something important. It is hard to escape the nagging suspicion that if we primarily study our brains, and primarily intervene by altering our neurotransmitters, we will become increasingly naïve about the meanings of depression at the same time that we are increasingly becoming victim to its incidence.

It is time to move beyond biological models of depression and the usual critiques of reductionism. We cannot embrace the dominant discourse of depression nor can we simply accuse biological models of being too reductionistic. We need a new approach to depression that recognizes the value of reductionistic biological models while at the same time putting these models into a greater perspective. What we need, and what I will argue for later in this paper, is a narrative approach to depression.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid. 3.

¹¹ Many argue that the "chemical imbalance model" of depression is a distortion of contemporary biopsychiatry. For example, see Lacasse and Leo, "Serotonin and Depression," 2, 12. Even if we accept this argument, it does not change the underlying disease logics at the core of biological psychiatry. See Helen Mayberg's discussion of "limbic-cortical dysregulation" for an updated and sophisticated version of the neuropathology of depression (Mayberg, "Depression").

¹² These numbers were calculated using drug sales data from IMS Health by Graham Aldred for the Alliance for Human Research Protection (AHRP). AHRP is a well-known citizens' watchdog organization that brings to public attention—through daily Infomails—human rights issues associated with biotech research and usage. For the details of Aldred's analysis, see Aldred, "An Analysis of the Use of Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft in USA 1988–2002."

¹³ See Aldred, "An Analysis of the Use of Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft in USA 1988–2002," 1.

Turning to Chekhov

Developing an alternate frame for depression requires us to step back from contemporary clinical science and its critics, and there is no better place to start than with the work of Anton Chekhov, which offers the combined wisdom of a writer, a physician, and a man who likely went through the depths of depression himself. As a writer, Chekhov is a deep and rare genius of the ordinary and the everyday. His stories and plays, often of sadness and woe, give European literature a subtle and richly ambiguous world of psychological, moral, and social contemplation. Since Chekhov was also a physician, he approaches these tales not only with the eye of a literary master but also with the experiences of his medical science training and his life of clinical encounters. Chekhov was as devoted to medicine as he was consumed by literature. Shortly after medical school, he traveled a vast distance across Siberia to study the harsh medical conditions of an infamous penal colony. When he returned, he set up and maintained a general medical practice, kept meticulous records, and at one time was appointed district public health officer during a raging cholera epidemic. Chekhov acknowledges in an autobiographical statement that he persistently used his medical training in his creative work: "My knowledge of natural sciences and scientific methods has made me careful and I have always tried, when possible, to take into consideration the scientific data [when I write]."¹⁴

In addition to his extraordinary skills in literature and medicine, Chekhov, biographers suspect, suffered periods of depression: despair, loss of confidence, and loss of pleasure in his life. Chekhov therefore also brings to his work firsthand experiences of depression. His worst suffering came just after his brother, Kolia, died of tuberculosis when Chekhov was a young man. But the echoes and permutations of this sadness run throughout Chekhov's life. Much of it may have revolved around his premonitions of death. Like his brother, Chekhov died young from tuberculosis (at the age of forty-four). His first bout of hemoptysis occurred in 1884, the year he graduated from medical school, and this blood-spitting recurred regularly each year. Although Chekhov did not speak publicly of the disease until near the very end, he must have known fairly early on that he was dying from consumption. In all likelihood, both the sadness and the wisdom that pervade Chekhov's life and work are connected to his awareness of death and his intimations of mortality.¹⁵

Chekhov's writings contain many portrayals of depression and psychic distress. For example, in the short story "The Fit," a law student relapses into depression after witnessing the exploitation and cruelty of brothel life. The play *Uncle Vania* portrays the chronic despair of its protagonist, Vania. In "A Doctor's Visit," a young girl falls into a state of anxiety, weeping, and sobbing related to the desolation of her surroundings. "Ward Number 6" tells the story of a medical superintendent's decline and eventual admission into his own psychiatric asylum. And in "The Black Monk," Chekhov depicts the strange hallucinations and despair of Kovrin, a young philosophy student who is fatally ill with tuberculosis.¹⁶

¹⁴ Coulehan, introduction to *Chekhov's Doctors*, xiii. Additional helpful resources for understanding Chekhov's life and background include *Chekhov, A Life in Letters*; Chekhov, *Anton Chekhov's Life and Thought*; Rayfield, *Anton Chekhov*; Hingley, *A New Life of Anton Chekhov*; Finke, *Seeing Chekhov*; and Coope, *Doctor Chekhov*.

¹⁵ Because of the uniqueness of Chekhov's multiple positions, William Carlos Williams (also a master of literature and medicine) was correct when he told a young medical student looking for advice in understanding the subtleties of medicine to "[r]ead Chekhov, read story after story of his" (Coles, foreword to *Chekhov's Doctors*, xii). Contemporary physician Robert Norman says much the same thing when he tells fellow doctors, "I recommend you dive in [to Chekhov's writings] with abandon, soak up the visions of Chekhov, and you will emerge the better person" (Norman, "Literature and Medicine").

¹⁶ For a review of these portrayals from a medical perspective, see Coope, *Doctor Chekhov*, chap. 2.

But Chekhov's most concentrated study of depression comes from his early play *Ivanov*, in which the lead character, Nikolai Ivanov, suffers from a deep and profound sadness. The play reads very much like a psychiatric case study. Dr. Chekhov presents Ivanov's difficulties with the reflective empathy of a master clinician and the subtlety of a great writer. He does not romanticize Ivanov's troubles (indeed far from it), nor does he force his interpretation into a single pathological frame. Chekhov presents Ivanov with all the simplicity and complexity that realistic fiction requires. This approach to "the case" of Ivanov is exemplary in the study of psychiatry because, all too often, psychiatric case studies come to us in a predetermined explanatory frame. Chekhov resists this temptation, and, as a result, his case study of Ivanov is an extremely useful guide for us today.

Ivanov's situation can be summarized as follows: He is a thirty-five-year-old married Russian landowner who has been in excellent health all his life. But, over the past two years, he has gradually sunk into increasing sorrow and despair. He struggles with unshakable feelings of melancholy and even suicidal preoccupations that are so severe that, by the play's end, he takes his own life.

The question that runs throughout Chekhov's play is perhaps the most obvious one: How should the events leading up to Ivanov's death by self-inflicted gunshot wound be understood? What, in short, is wrong with Ivanov? Although the question may be straightforward, the subtleties of Chekhov's answers are anything but, and these subtleties are particularly difficult for contemporary audiences to apprehend. Thanks to the tremendous hype surrounding today's medical models of mental suffering, modern audiences are likely to interpret Ivanov as biologically/neurologically depressed.

Consider, for example, what happened when psychiatrist Peter Kramer, the author of the 1990s best-seller *Listening to Prozac*, went to a production of the play at the Lincoln Center. From his *New York Times* review, it is clear that Kramer listened to Ivanov's troubles and heard a straightforward case of clinical, or medical model, depression.¹⁷ Kramer finds Ivanov to be a veritable catalog of diagnostic signs and symptoms. He is persistently sad, irritable, and bored with life. He has marked feelings of guilt and worthlessness, inability to sleep, lack of appetite, and lack of sexual desire for his wife. In addition, Ivanov is severely suicidal. For Kramer, Ivanov has all the key symptoms that, according to the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)*, 4th edition, indicate a "Major Depressive Disorder, Single Episode, Severe, Without Psychotic Features—diagnostic code 296.23."¹⁸

Not only does Kramer see Ivanov as clinically, or biologically, depressed, but he also makes the claim that his own clinical ear, his way of listening to Ivanov, has become the current cultural dominant.¹⁹ For the "contemporary ear," Kramer argues, the play has been "sapped of any moral consequence."²⁰ Persistent sadness is a chemical imbalance, and "[s]uicide is part of the disease. . . . Suicide is what the death certificate says when one dies of depression."²¹ End of analysis. Clearly, Kramer feels there is no need for further interpretation—except perhaps to seek out Ivanov's genetic flaws and biological predispositions. There is no need to ask, "What is Ivanov so depressed about?" or "What does

¹⁷ See Kramer, "What Ivanov Needs in the 90's Is an Anti-Depressant."

¹⁸ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 347.

¹⁹ Although Kramer does not mention examples, it is certainly true that others in the medical humanities community interpret Ivanov in a similar way. Both Coope and Callahan also see Ivanov as clinically or biologically depressed. See Coope, 34–8; and Coulehan, "Ivanov."

²⁰ Kramer, "What Ivanov Needs in the 90's Is an Anti-Depressant."

²¹ *Ibid.*

Ivanov's suffering mean in a larger frame?" For Kramer, whatever the reasons for Ivanov's sadness, they are insufficient to account for his clinical depression. As the title of his review makes clear, what Ivanov needs today is an antidepressant.²²

But Kramer's confident biological reading—useful as it may be in some circumstances—misses exactly what is most interesting about *Ivanov*. He gives no historical or political context and disregards entirely the fact that *Ivanov* is set in a time of great upheaval and social malaise in Russia: the generation before the 1917 revolution, a period Donald Rayfield calls "one of the richest and most contradictory periods in Russia's political and cultural history."²³ And, even more importantly, Kramer ignores how the play centers not so much on Ivanov himself but on the whole question of interpreting and categorizing humans. As drama critic Richard Gilman asserts, the central point of the play "isn't Ivanov's behavior in itself but the range of reactions to it and, by extension, the whole question of how much we can know about ourselves and other people."²⁴

What is most fascinating about *Ivanov* is that almost every character has an opinion about Ivanov's problems, and throughout the play they offer diverse, wildly incommensurable interpretations of Ivanov. As Chekhov states in a letter to his brother, the play's originality comes not from its subject matter but from his own refusal to take an authorial position on the meaning of the play: "I have not introduced a single villain or a single angel (though I have not been able to abstain from fools): nor have I accused or vindicated anyone."²⁵

Thus, another understanding of Chekhov's play is that it is not about medical depression at all but, rather, the indeterminacy of interpretation. On this reading, *Ivanov* takes its place alongside Dostoevsky's work as an example of what Mikhail Bakhtin calls polyphonic fiction. For Bakhtin, the many voices and simultaneous points of view contained within Dostoevsky's fiction creates a "polyphonic world" that destroys "the established forms of the . . . monologic (homophonic) European novel."²⁶ In a similar vein, Chekhov's polyphonic portrayal of Ivanov does not present an omniscient point of view, nor does it privilege any particular character's interpretation of Ivanov. Chekhov structures the play to highlight the multiplicity of meaning and the possibility of respecting the interpretive diversity of the characters. Looking more closely at the play's many perspectives on Ivanov, we get a clearer sense of what this might mean.

²² For an extended version of this argument, see Kramer's recent book, *Against Depression*. Here, Kramer follows suit with his *Ivanov* review, using strategic polemic to claim that depression must be seen as a medical disease. He catalogs an array of contemporary scientific research that supposedly shows how depression disrupts brain functioning, damages the heart, and alters personal perspective. Kramer minimizes any complications of this interpretation to make the extreme claim that contemporary medical research demands that there be no alternative perspective on depression beyond a disease model.

²³ Rayfield, *Anton Chekhov*, xvi.

²⁴ Gilman, *Chekhov's Plays*, 67.

²⁵ Hare, Introduction to *Ivanov*, vii. See, also, Friedland, *Letters on the Short Story, the Drama, and Other Literary Topics by Anton Chekhov*, 130.

²⁶ Bakhtin, *The Bakhtin Reader*, 90 (Bakhtin's italics). For an excellent discussion of Bakhtin's concepts of "voice" and "polyphony" as applied to Chekhov and medicine, see Puustinen, "Voices to be Heard"; and Puustinen, "Bakhtin's Philosophy and Medical Practice." See, also, Cathy Popkin's discussion of Chekhov's frequent strategy of staging an incident and then providing two separate perspectives on it, "one that regards the incident as utterly trivial, barely worth mentioning, while the other discerns the maximal degree of catastrophe in the same event" (Popkin, *The Pragmatics of Insignificance*, 38).

First, there is Borkin, the estate steward, who interprets Ivanov not as constitutionally depressed but as a "whining neurotic."²⁷ Borkin believes Ivanov should drop all his melancholy talk, grow up, and start making some money. After all, Borkin exclaims to Ivanov, "you're not a schoolboy" anymore (3.8.29). By contrast, another character, Zinaida, Ivanov's best friend's wife, formulates Ivanov's sadness in a very different way: "Can you wonder darling? [*Sighs*] The poor man made a ghastly mistake—marrying that wretched Jewess and thinking her parents would cough up a whacking great dowry. It didn't come off. When she changed her religion they cut her off and cursed her, not a penny did he get. He's sorry now it's too late" (2.3.29–33). For Zinaida, Ivanov's sadness is the result of profound regret and lost expectation. From her perspective, Ivanov ruthlessly manipulated his wife for a dowry he never received and he organized his life around that cold calculation. As a result, his regret is his just reward: his moral payback for treating his wife so callously.

Sasha, a young woman in the village, is in love with Ivanov and sees his plight very differently again. Sasha understands the problem to be not that Ivanov is callous and manipulative but that he is too kind and generous for his own good: "Ivanov's only fault is being weak and not having enough go in him to chuck out . . . Borkin. . . . He's been robbed and fleeced left, right and center—anyone who liked has made a packet out of Ivanov's idealistic plans" (2.3.78–82). Furthermore, Sasha sees Ivanov as lonely and forlorn. He has fallen out of love with his wife, through no fault of his own, but he hasn't the heart to break off the marriage. Sasha even has a treatment recommendation. "I understand you," she tells Ivanov. "You're unhappy because you're lonely. You need someone near you that you love and who'll appreciate you. Only love can make a new man of you" (2.4.14–16).

Anna, Ivanov's wife, agrees with none of these interpretations. Instead, she has a cathartic theory of Ivanov's troubles. For Anna, the problem is that Ivanov has failed to properly grieve for his many life disappointments. In other words, Ivanov needs to go through the work of mourning and come through to another side. This process, which psychoanalyst George Pollock calls "mourning-liberation," would allow Ivanov to heal through a proverbial welling up with tears.²⁸ As Anna puts it, Ivanov should spend time alone with her in the dark clarity of night: "[Y]ou can tell me all about how depressed you are. Your eyes are so full of suffering. I'll look into them and cry, and we'll both feel better" (1.4.55–7).

But Lebedev, Ivanov's best friend, sees things very differently. Lebedev puts Ivanov's despair in a social-historical context: "I don't know, old man. It did look to me as though your various troubles had got you down, but then I know you are not one to—it's not like you to knuckle under. . . . You know what? It's your environment that has got you down" (3.5. 88–90, 97–8). Lebedev believes that Ivanov's sadness comes from his social surroundings, which represent and are symptomatic of a broader cultural malaise, or what contemporary philosopher Susan Bordo calls a "crystallization of culture."²⁹ Bordo uses this phrase to go beyond the most liberal of clinical biopsychosocial formulations. The issue is not simply that psychiatric conditions have cultural expression and a social context. They do, of course. But, for Bordo, psychopathologies must not only be culturally contextualized, they must also be understood as symptomatic articulations of deep cultural tensions and power imbalances. Psychopathologies, far from being anomalies or aberrations, are "characteristic expressions"

²⁷ Chekhov, *Ivanov*, 1.2.32. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically in the text with act, scene, and line numbers.

²⁸ See Pollock, *The Mourning-Liberation Process*.

²⁹ Bordo, *Unbearable Weight*, 139.

of the cultural fault lines in which they develop.³⁰ They signal and crystallize much of what is wrong with the culture of their formation.

While Ivanov the character quickly rejects an environmental theory, *Ivanov* the play does not. Throughout, as in most of Chekhov's plays, there is a detailed description of the wane of the landed class, the rise of the business class, and the stale paralysis and anomie with which the gentry respond to it all. Indeed, in *Ivanov* it is not just Ivanov who is affected; many of the characters complain of boredom, lack of energy, and loss of pleasure. At a party, for example, we hear characters say, "Lord I'm bored stiff" (2.1.42), or "Don't you ever get tired of sitting around like this? The very air's stiff with boredom" (2.3.88–9). One guest even exclaims, "This is all such a crashing bore, I feel like a running dive into a brick wall. God, what people!" (2.9.5–6). The air of depression and gloom found in so many of the men in the community provokes Sasha to exclaim, "There's something wrong with you all, and no mistake. The sight of you's enough to kill the flies or start the lamps smoking. Yes, there's something wrong—I've told you thousands of times and I'll go on telling you—something wrong with you all, wrong, wrong, wrong!" (2.3.103–7).³¹

But what does Ivanov have to say about his sadness? It turns out that even he feels conflicted about how to understand the depression he suffers. Sometimes Ivanov reduces his troubles to laziness and weakness of the will: "Laziness is laziness," he tells Sasha, "weakness is weakness—I can't find any other name for them" (4.8.68). In a soliloquy, he continues in this vein by calling himself a "nasty, miserable nobody" (3.4.1). But, in talking to his friend Lebedev, he works out an alternate, and very detailed, formulation of what in contemporary United States culture we might call "burnout" or "midlife crisis." Ivanov explains that he was full of energy and enthusiasm in his youth: "I believed in different things from other people, married a different sort of wife, got excited, took risks . . . and was happier and unhappier than anyone else in the country" (3.5.98–100). All that activity has overstrained him. As he explains, "Those things were my sacks, I heaved a load on my back and it cracked. At twenty we're all heroes, tackle anything . . . but by thirty we're tired and useless" (3.5.100–3).

But Ivanov is inconsistent with this explanation as well. At a later point in the play he tells Lebedev, "I won't try to explain myself—whether I'm decent or rotten, sane or mad. You wouldn't understand" (4.10.1–3). In this interpretation, Ivanov's perspective resembles Kramer's medical model, and he presents himself as having something like a medical disease: "I'm quite ill," he tells Evgenii L'vov (the young village doctor). "I'm irritable, bad-tempered and rude . . . I've headaches for days on end, I can't sleep, and my ears buzz . . . I'm so mixed up, I feel paralyzed, half dead or something . . . I don't know myself what's going on inside me" (1.3.55–6, 72, 88). At one point, he even says, "[M]y brain doesn't obey me, nor my arms or legs," and he falls into weeping (3.4.13–14). Here, Ivanov sees his sadness as having no meaning, as being outside any human integrative frame—except of course the interpretive frame of bodies, brains, and medical science. From this biological model, Ivanov's depression

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 141.

³¹ There is some evidence that Chekhov himself was not disposed to an environmental interpretation. Indeed, Chekhov explains in a letter that one of his early motivations for the play was to demolish all talk of Russia's superfluous men—the very Ivanov types that were so common in Russian literature at the time and who were generally understood to be suffering from a kind of social paralysis (see Chekhov, *A Life in Letters*, 175). Gilman argues, however, that Chekhov's motivations may have changed in the course of writing the play. Although he at first wished to dispose of environmental explanations for Russia's "superfluous men," during the process of writing the play "he steadily transformed it into something much richer and far less thematically local" (Gilman, 40). This interpretation would account for Chekhov's inclusion of general anomie in *Ivanov*'s setting, and it would account for including Sasha's outburst that diagnoses all of the men in the area.

comes out of the blue and exists at the status of pathophysiology, much like a heart attack or an idiopathic seizure.

Despite all the ambiguity within the play, there is one character, Dr. L'vov, who stands apart in his adamant certainty of his opinion about Ivanov's melancholia. It is with this character that Chekhov portrays, with full force, his negative authorial judgment: L'vov is the "the fool" Chekhov could not resist including. L'vov imagines himself to be an earnest, high-minded, dedicated physician with an intense social conscience. But the play's other characters do not see him, or his profession, in the same light. As one character says, "Doctors are like lawyers, only lawyers just rob you, while doctors rob you and murder you as well" (1.3.1–3). L'vov comes across to many of the characters as priggish and self-righteous. "Oh, he's virtue incarnate," someone says mockingly of him, "can't ask for a glass of water or light a cigarette without displaying his remarkable integrity" (2.4.85–8).

L'vov's perspective on Ivanov turns out to be the harshest and most pathological of the play. L'vov finds Ivanov's melancholia and his related disinterest in his wife detestable. He labels Ivanov "insensitive, selfish, cold . . . heartless" (1.5.22) and an "unmitigated swine" (4.10.40–1). L'vov tells Ivanov that Anna "who loves you is dying . . . she hasn't long to life, while you—you are so callous . . . I do most thoroughly dislike you" (1.5.23–7). L'vov's scorn is at first met by Ivanov with weary admissions of blame and appreciation for L'vov's seemingly neutral concern. Within the context of the play, however, L'vov's neutrality is much less clear. There is constant tension around whether L'vov is in love with Anna and whether his interpretations of Ivanov are merely self-serving attempts to win Anna's affections.

Whatever L'vov's motivations, the more he presses his perspective, the more Ivanov loses patience with him. In one of the climactic scenes of the play, Ivanov exclaims to L'vov in exasperation:

Think a little, my clever friend. You think I'm an open book, don't you? I married Anna for her fortune, I didn't get it, and having slipped up then, I'm now getting rid of her so I can marry someone else and get *her* money. Right? How simple and straightforward. Man's such a simple, uncomplicated mechanism. No, doctor, we all have too many wheels, screws and valves to judge each other on first impressions or on one or two pointers. I don't understand you, you don't understand me and we don't understand ourselves. A man can be a very good doctor without having any idea what people are really like. So don't be too cocksure, but try and see what I mean. (3.6.72-81, Translator's italics).

From my perspective, Ivanov's advice to L'vov is appropriate for the contemporary psychiatric community as well. The problem with L'vov's interpretation is not that it is wrong in any simple way. Ivanov does not actually dispute the content of L'vov's claims, only his dogmatic certainty. L'vov picks out elements of Ivanov's story and arranges them together into a plausible whole. This is also true for medical model interpretations like Kramer's. The play does contain data that supports medical model perspectives, so the problem is not the perspective but rather the dogmatism. The problem is the cocksure self-confidence of L'vov and Kramer's attitude.³²

Such confidence is blind to the possibility of multiple interpretations and it narrows meaning down to a single option. Dr. Chekhov counters Dr. L'vov's certainty with the

³² For a discussion of "dogmatism" in contemporary psychiatry, see Ghaemi, *The Concepts of Psychiatry*. Ghaemi concludes, based on an analysis of psychiatric practice, that approximately "64% of psychiatrists are dogmatists" (301).

challenge of a polyphonic world and with the multiplicities of consciousness and experience. Dr. Chekhov challenges Dr. L'vov to appreciate the possibilities of interpretative diversity. His message is equally imperative for today's biopsychiatry. If biopsychiatry listened more closely to *Ivanov* the play, rather than narrowly reading Ivanov the character, it would throw its *DSM*-led interpretations (and its drive for antidepressant "cures") into the ring with a myriad of other interpretations. It would not foreclose other, equally vital understandings of melancholia and suffering.³³

Reframing Depression: A Narrative Approach

With Chekhov's work in mind, we can recognize the need for an approach to depression that includes our current biological model (albeit, in a more humble form) but that refines this model. Single-minded biological models of depression are not enough. But what alternate model is Chekhov using? He does not tell us. *Ivanov* is not an expository treatise on depression, or a theory of depression; it is an imaginatively created case history. Chekhov leaves it up to the reader to put this case study into an interpretive frame. I will now argue that Chekhov's model, or frame, for depression can best be understood as a narrative one.

Chekhov's narrative frame for depression likely emerged from his personal experience of combining medicine and literature. Chekhov famously describes the relationship between his two occupations in this way: "Medicine is my lawful wedded wife, and literature my mistress. When one gets on my nerves, I spend the night with the other. This may be somewhat disorganized, but then again it's not as boring, and anyway, neither one loses anything by my duplicity."³⁴ Chekhov uses this unfortunately sexist imagery to evoke his lived experience of moving back and forth between the two positions of medicine and writing. It was through this constant movement, I believe, that Chekhov broke out of the standard frame of most medical writing and research.

Chekhov's dual positions of doctor and writer produced diametrically opposed relationships to the role of narrative frame in representation. In his occupation as a doctor, Chekhov's task was to background narrative frame and to view his patients from a positivist model of objectivity. But this positivist stance (which continues to subtend medicine today) was not Chekhov's only position. As a writer, he worked from an opposite position that foregrounds narrative frame. In other words, he inhabited a practice that highlights the impossibility of telling a story without a point of view.

Contemporary physician-writer Abraham Verghese articulates this dual position in his discussion "The Physician as Storyteller." Speaking to fellow physicians at the American College of Physicians, Verghese explains that "[a]s physicians, most of us become involved in the stories of our patient's lives . . . we become players in these stories. Our actions change the narrative trajectory . . . and our patient's stories come to depend heavily on repetition of what we say."³⁵ Verghese argues that the inescapable thesis for medicine is threefold: "1.) *story* helps us link and make sense of events in our lives; 2.) we as physicians *create* stories as often as we record them . . . ; and 3.) we are characters in [these] various stories, walking on and off the stage in tales that take place in our hospitals and clinics" (1012, Verghese's italics).

Verghese points to examples by which physicians can reach this narrative awareness through years of attentive practice, but he argues that the more direct route is through

³³ For a discussion of *DSM*-led heavy-handedness in psychiatric interpretations, see Wood, "I Found Him!"

³⁴ Chekhov, *Anton Chekhov's Life and Thought*, 107.

³⁵ Verghese, "The Physician as Storyteller," 1012. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically in the text.

combining the practice of medicine with the narrative tools that the writer possesses, or what Verghese calls the "storytelling craft" (1013). He explains that during his own initial immersion in the writing process he read closely and widely about the craft of writing. He found that the pillars of writing invariably involved the author's selection and organization of story, character, and metaphor. For Verghese, making these selections are "fundamental to good writing in the same way that internal medicine skills rest on understanding the mechanisms behind dyspnea, edema, polyuria and other cardinal manifestations of disease" (1014).

Verghese is not alone in these insights. They are, in fact, the core insights of medical humanities and of what Rita Charon rightly calls the "emerging field of narrative medicine."³⁶ A growing number of people in the medical field have come to appreciate that a knowledge base consisting primarily of the sciences is incomplete. As such, medicine is reaching out to the humanities to better understand and cope with illness and suffering. Literature and narrative studies are key in this.³⁷ As Charon puts it, when medicine is practiced with "narrative competence," health-care professionals enter the clinical situation with a nuanced capacity for "attentive listening . . . , adopting alien perspectives, following the narrative thread of the story of another, being curious about other peoples' motives and experiences, and tolerating the uncertainty of stories."³⁸

Narrative medicine advocates argue that clinicians "*need* rigorous and disciplined training" in narrative reading and writing not just for the clinicians' own sake (helping them to navigate the trauma and stress of clinical work) but also "*for the sake of their practice*."³⁹ Without narrative competence, clinicians have little chance of understanding and interpreting their clients' experiences of illness, and they have even less hope of understanding the narrative dimensions of their own disease models. For those in narrative medicine, narrative studies is not a mere flourish or an embellishment to the practitioner's knowledge base; it is indeed a "basic science" of medical practice.⁴⁰

Chekhov's combination of the storytelling craft and medical practice seems to have brought him to a position similar to narrative medicine. For scholars of narrative medicine, physicians are not just transparent recorders of disease. Similarly, when Chekhov includes physicians in his plays and short stories, they are hardly the voice of transparent objectivity. They represent one voice among many, one story among an array of stories. They may well be important to the plot, but they are hardly the positivistic truth.⁴¹ As Verghese puts it, physicians are "storytellers, storymakers, and players in the greatest drama of all: the story of our patients' lives as well as our own" (1016).

Kathryn Montgomery Hunter, in her important book *Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge*, echoes this same sentiment: "[N]arrative of any length and fullness or speculative force inevitably pulls against medicine's commitment to objective scientific study of human illness."⁴² In making the case for a narrative approach to medicine,

³⁶ Charon, "Narrative Medicine: Attention, Representation, Affiliation," 261. See, also, Charon, "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust."

³⁷ For a general discussion of medical humanities, see Campo, "The Medical Humanities"; Dittrich, "The Humanities and Medicine"; and Kirklin and Richardson, *Medical Humanities*. For a more specific discussion of literature and medicine, see Hawkins and McEntyre, *Teaching Literature and Medicine*; and Brody, *Stories of Sickness*.

³⁸ Charon, "Narrative Medicine: Attention, Representation, Affiliation," 262. See, also, Holt, "Narrative Medicine and Negative Capability."

³⁹ *Ibid.* (Charon's italics).

⁴⁰ Charon, "Narrative and Medicine," 863.

⁴¹ For an excellent collection of Chekhov's portrayal of clinicians, see Coulehan, *Chekhov's Doctors*.

⁴² Hunter, *Doctors' Stories*, 166.

Hunter explains that what is needed is a means of moving away from the illusion "of objectivist, scientific reportage" and toward an acknowledgement that medical case histories are "humanly constructed" accounts: "Two things are essential: first, both tellers and listeners must recognize the narrator of the case history as contextually conditioned, and, second, the lived experience of the patient must be acknowledged."⁴³

Narrative medicine's emphasis on the contextually conditioned nature of knowledge, even medical knowledge, inevitably creates some ambiguity of interpretation. Though some might find this ambiguity troubling, Chekhov seems to revel in it.⁴⁴ Indeed, literary critic Karl Kramer refers to the frequent interpretive uncertainty in Chekhov's work as his "stories of ambiguity."⁴⁵ Kramer's reading of Chekhov finds unresolved paradox structured into many of his stories. Through a study of subsequent drafts of Chekhov's work, Kramer argues that Chekhov often deliberately reworks a story so that it cannot be read through a simple monologic lens. The ambiguity comes from the way Chekhov sets up contradictory readings from parallel passages throughout a given story. The result is a story that can be interpreted in several different ways. Although one interpretation may appear more plausible than another, which often happens, no single reading will adequately account for the whole fabric of these stories. As Kramer puts it, that in and of itself "is sufficient to establish [Chekhov's stories of] ambiguity."⁴⁶

This reading of Chekhov's writing fits perfectly with *Ivanov*. Throughout the play, as we saw earlier, each of the characters offers different narrations of Ivanov's sadness. From a perspective of multiple and ambiguous interpretations, the question to ask is not simply, which story is true? but, instead, what are the consequences of each story? and what kind of life will follow from inhabiting these stories? Even if there is no essential or singular essence to Ivanov's sadness, Ivanov arguably needs a story for his sadness. He can only crystallize a provisional subjectivity around his sadness through inhabiting a story and, to borrow a phrase from Freud, "working-through" the implications of that story.⁴⁷

From Antireductionism to Narrative Multiplicity

Although narrative medicine has had only limited applications in contemporary psychiatry, narrative approaches are extremely useful in moving beyond biological models and their critiques.⁴⁸ Recent scholarly work that is critical of today's biopsychiatry rejects its

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ See Greenhalgh, "Narrative Based Medicine in an Evidenced Based World," for an attempt to reconcile the ambiguities of narrative medicine with the dictates of positivist medicine.

⁴⁵ Kramer, "Stories of Ambiguity," 338.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through." Freud uses the phrase "working-through" to articulate the slow and often painful process of applying insight and meaning to the minutia of daily life. Using more contemporary theorists of subjectivity, this may also be seen as a kind of Foucauldian "technology of the self" (Foucault, "Technologies of the Self," 16). The "working-through" of the story is similar to what Michel Foucault means when he says that practices of the self are a kind of askesis, a form of training. It requires work and dedication to inhabit them. Askesis, Foucault summarizes, is "an exercise of self upon the self by which one tries to work out one's self and to attain a certain mode of being" (Foucault, "The Ethics of Care for the Self as a Practice and Freedom," 2). This approach to subjectivity links well to other theoretical work in the humanities, such as Pierre Bourdieu's use of the term "habitus," Deleuze and Guattari's "becoming," and Judith Butler's "performativity." For further references and discussions of these theorists of subjectivity, see Mansfield, *Subjectivity*; Hall and Du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*; and Du Gay et al., *Identity*.

⁴⁸ For discussions of narrative psychiatry, see Martinez, "Narrative Understanding and Methods in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health"; and Roberts and Holmes, *Healing Stories*. For overviews of earlier uses of narrative theory in

simplicity. Critical scholars repeatedly scold reductionist approaches to psychiatry, like the one Peter Kramer performs in his reading of *Ivanov*, for denying the complexity of human life. These critics argue that scientific reductionism applied to psychiatry absurdly idealizes scientific method as a value-free mirror of the truth. This idealization ignores the desires and interests of psychiatric researchers, and, even more, it ignores the social, political, and economic contexts in which the researchers work.

This critique of simplicity and reductionism is an important first step in moving beyond the limitations of biopsychiatry. It is important to say that simplifications reduce complex reality to whatever fits into a simple scheme. It is also important to remember that reductions "forget" about the complex, which means that the complex is often surprising and disturbing when it inevitably reappears. However, it is equally important to be suspicious of the denunciations of simplicity, particularly denunciations that are overly reliant on the polemic trope of violence. Repeatedly, critics of simplicity argue that using single orders to tame complex realities exerts a reductionist "violence" on the real.

Versions of this argumentative style show up in popular critiques of biopsychiatry, such as Peter Breggin's *Toxic Psychiatry: Why Therapy, Empathy, and Love Must Replace the Drugs, Electroshock, and Biochemical Theories of the "New Psychiatry"* (1991), Elliot Valenstein's *Blaming the Brain: The Truth about Drugs and Mental Health* (1998), Paula Caplan's *They Say You Are Crazy: How the World's Most Powerful Psychiatrists Decide Who's Normal* (1995), and Seth Farber's *Madness, Heresy, and the Rumor of Angels: The Revolt against the Mental Health System* (1993). It also appears in the more subtle work of philosopher of psychiatry Edwin Wallace. In Wallace's critique of psychiatry's diagnostic manual, he (like almost everyone who seriously evaluates the *DSM*) chides the manual for its oversimplified "claim to atheoreticism."⁴⁹ Wallace argues that psychiatry's relentless pursuit of atheoretical simplification flies in the face of the twentieth century's "most respected philosophers of science," who have all held that idealized theoretical neutrality is a logical and empirical impossibility (81). As Wallace points out, it is not merely scientific assumptions and theories that we cannot escape, it is also "social, political, and moral philosophical ones as well" (81). Any attempt to avoid these complications, Wallace argues, does "violence to large arcs of the person and ignore[s] or deride[s] theoretical purviews and therapeutic modalities that can be necessary or lifesaving" (85).

When the critique of simplicity is shaped in this way, simplicity is doubly damned. Promoters of complexity argue that simplicity is not only wrong (out of touch with the real) but also inherently bad because violence is inherently bad. Clearly, given the power and pervasiveness of reductionism in the modern world, complexity is surely in need of some defenders. Yet this celebration of complexity is not the lesson we should draw from our reading of Chekhov. Deriding the violence of simplicity has become too easy, too simple, too disturbingly agreeable and self-satisfying. It has become a morally comfortable place to be, and it leaves a great deal to discover and articulate beyond the trope of violence. As science studies scholars Annemarie Mol and John Law assert, "We need other ways of relating to complexity, other ways for complexity to be accepted, produced, or performed."⁵⁰

The difference between Chekhov's narrative approach and that of the standard violence trope is that Chekhov values complexity without denigrating simplicity. In *Ivanov*, Chekhov respects rather than denounces the characters' oversimplifications of *Ivanov*.

psychotherapy, see Freedman and Combs, *Narrative Therapy*; and White and Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*.

⁴⁹ Wallace, "Psychiatry and Its Nosology," 81. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically in the text.

⁵⁰ Law and Mol, *Complexities*, 6.

Chekhov resists, in other words, a normative view of simplicity. He helps us see a world where alternative (and inevitably simple) interpretations are not so much wrong or bad, but different. Chekhov does not denigrate the characters' reduction of Ivanov's sadness into simple formulas. Each character presents seemingly viable interpretive options. L'vov comes under the most criticism, but, as I mentioned earlier, this comes from his dogmatism, not from the potential viability of his interpretations.

How can we scaffold a position that recognizes the limitations of simplicity without simultaneously giving normative preference to complexity? How can we articulate the value of both simplicity and complexity? We can begin by recognizing that simple reductions become less demonic when we multiply them. Moving from a single order to multiple orders, from a necessary order to a variety of orders, undermines the dichotomy between simple and complex. In a narrative medicine frame, this is where the trope of violence gives way to the trope of narrative multiplicity. Multiplicities of metaphors, characters, and styles—not to mention multiplicities of logics, perspectives, paradigms, and discourses—hold in tension both the values of simplicity and those of complexity. Narrative multiplicity recognizes that each simplicity necessarily fails to capture complexity. Each simplicity selects and organizes highly idiosyncratic cuts from the data. Each simplicity, in other words, is necessarily limited. These limited, unavoidably simplistic perspectives, however, are less of a problem when they multiply. When simplicity multiplies, rather than becoming hegemonic, it becomes one of many. Through multiplication, each simplicity loses the violence of totalitarian control.

Moreover, narrative multiplicity sidesteps the usual modernist dichotomy of realism versus relativism. It allows us to develop a flexible ontology of "semiotic realism" and an epistemology of "pluridimensional consequences."⁵¹ By an ontology of semiotic realism, I mean to suggest that there is a real world out there that grounds our ideas and that our ideas are in touch with. However, the specific points of contact are determined by the semiotic relations from which our ideas are structured. These semiotic relations are relative to given narrative communities and traditions of thought. Semiotic realism rejects rigid ontologies of realism and relativism because it contains insights from both. Semiotic realism understands that knowledge articulations are grounded in the real world, but how and why they are grounded remains relative to a diverse multiplicity of narrative communities.

The related epistemology of pluridimensional consequences combines the French post-structural insights with that of the American pragmatists. Roland Barthes uses the term "pluri-dimensional order" to articulate the way that specific languages always remain too limited to capture the world in total.⁵² Despite this limitation, all linguistic communities do evoke, engage, and negotiate the world through some element of grounding or contact. Languages do not fully mirror or correspond to the world in all of the world's complexity, but languages do make real connections with the world. For the American pragmatists, different connections with the world yield different consequences for practice and for lived experience. From this perspective, the best knowledge is that which leads to the best consequences in practice.⁵³

When we apply these philosophic aspects of narrative multiplicity to psychiatry and depression, new forms of freedom and flexibility emerge. Narrative multiplicity hardly

⁵¹ For an extended discussion of these terms, see Lewis, *Moving Beyond Prozac, DSM, and the New Psychiatry*, 18–37.

⁵² Barthes, "Inaugural Lecture, College de France," 465.

⁵³ For an additional discussion of pluralism and psychiatry, see Ghaemi, *The Concepts of Psychiatry*. Ghaemi's and my analyses are similar in that they both rely on the work of American pragmatic philosophy. They differ in that my work combines pragmatism with insights from literary theory and post-structuralism.

embraces an "anything goes" relativity, but it does create a conceptual structure where ontological questions (e.g., What are the core features of psychic life?) and epistemological questions (e.g., What is the best method to study people?) are not fixed in advance. Different answers may emerge, depending on related ethical questions (e.g., What kind of people do we want to be? and What kind of life worlds do we want to create?). Different understandings of the core features of people and different methods of inquiry about people yield very different kinds of people and very different kinds of life experiences. There are, in other words, multiple ways to organize human life. Making judgments between these different ways largely depends on the consequences and desired values. In short, there are multiple paths to wisdom and a meaningful life.

Narrative Psychiatry and Depression: Moving through the Looking Glass

These insights into Chekhov's model of depression bring me to my final point. Understanding Chekhov's narrative approach has real purchase when we move from the "free play" of fiction to the supposedly "hard facts" of psychiatric research. Listening to Chekhov allows us to make sense of perhaps the most important empirical psychiatric finding to date—the finding that alternative approaches to psychotherapy are equally effective. This is known lovingly in the therapeutic research community as the "Dodo effect." The appellation, first coined by Saul Rosenzweig, comes from a line in *Alice in Wonderland*: "At last, Dodo said, 'everyone has won and all must have prizes.'"⁵⁴

Although this finding is controversial and has been minimally integrated into clinical practice, empirical studies confirm with remarkable consistency that the positive effects of therapy (of which there are many) are not due to the specific interventions of the therapist. The benefits of therapy come instead from "common factors" of the therapeutic setting.⁵⁵ That is, these studies suggest that the process of setting up a therapeutic relationship with a quality therapist is much more important than the content of the specific models and theories from which the therapist works.

In the case of depression, this seems to be just as true for biopsychiatric treatments as it is for other approaches. Meta-analysis reviews of SSRIs repeatedly show (1) that these medications do not have a clinically meaningful advantage over placebo, (2) that methodological problems likely account for the small differences that do occur, and (3) that this seems to be as true for severe depression as it is for milder forms.⁵⁶ The few studies that contrast effectiveness of psychotherapy with medications show that cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal therapies all compare favorably with medications in the short term. And when long-term follow-up is considered, psychotherapy seems to be superior.⁵⁷ Although these studies are controversial and have their detractors, they are sufficiently substantial to seriously undermine any heavy-handed or necessary reading of depression as a biological disease. As one team of reviewers writes, "The silver lining in these results for psychiatry is

⁵⁴ Lewis Carroll, *Alice in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), 17, quoted in Rosenzweig, "Some Implicit Common Factors in Diverse Methods of Psychotherapy," 412. For extensive contemporary reviews of the Dodo effect, see Wampold, *The Great Psychotherapy Debate*; and Luborsky et al., "The Dodo Bird Verdict is Alive and Well—Mostly."

⁵⁵ Wampold, *The Great Psychotherapy Debate*, 22.

⁵⁶ See Kirsch et al., "The Emperor's New Drugs"; and Moncrieff and Kirsch, "Efficacy of Antidepressants in Adults."

⁵⁷ See Antonuccio, Burns, and Danton, "Antidepressants."

that the psychiatrist, or at least something about the psychiatric relationship, and not the pill, appears to facilitate improvement in depression."⁵⁸

The Dodo effect applied to depression means that a variety of theoretical models can be used to understand, to cope with, and to ameliorate the painful emotional states of depression. It does not mean that any old interpretation will do. Therapy does not work if the therapist says things completely out of context, such as "Your sadness is because the cow jumped over the moon." On the contrary, for psychiatry to be effective in treating depression, the therapist and the client must have a sense of belief and confidence in the interpretive frame being used. In the words of Rosenzweig: "Whether the therapist talks in terms of psychoanalysis or Christian Science is . . . relatively unimportant as compared with the formal consistency with which the doctrine employed is adhered to, for by virtue of this consistency the patient receives a schema for achieving some sort and degree of personality organization."⁵⁹

Applying these insights to Chekhov's play suggests that an array of narrative approaches—each in its own way a simplification of possible interpretations—might be helpful for Ivanov. Any number of different interpretations of Ivanov could be developed and worked through in a therapeutic relationship with a quality, well-meaning practitioner. If that were to happen, there is a very good chance that an array of different insights and narrative structures could effectively help Ivanov understand his sadness and provide him with tools for feeling better. If the insights and narrative frames were not imposed on Ivanov, but were ones that he participated in creating and whose meaning he felt strongly connected to, the therapy would work through encouraging modifications in Ivanov's assumptive worlds. These modifications would transform the meanings of his sadness to more favorable ones and free him up for alternative forms of coping.

As psychiatrist Jerome Frank states in the preface to *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy*:

My position is not that technique is irrelevant to outcome. Rather, I maintain that . . . the success of all techniques depends on the patient's sense of alliance with an actual or symbolic healer. This position implies that ideally therapists should select for each patient the therapy that accords, or can be brought into accord, with the patient's personal characteristics and view of the problem. Also implied is that therapists should seek to learn as many approaches as they find congenial and convincing. Creating a good therapeutic match may involve both educating the patient about the therapist's conceptual scheme and, if necessary, modifying the scheme to take into account the concepts the patient brings to therapy.⁶⁰

Narrative approaches to depression, in this account, become a care and practice of the self. They become a way of bringing into being a certain kind of subjectivity. Multiple approaches to depression (including the biological model) may be helpful even if each approach necessarily simplifies and reduces the person's situation.

When we adopt Chekhov's narrative approach to depression, we move beyond biopsychiatry and its reductionist critiques. We recognize that simplification and reduction—even when they take the narrative frame of biopsychiatry—are not the problem. The problem

⁵⁸ Antonuccio, Burns, and Danton, "Antidepressants." For an alternate perspective, see Quitkin et al., "Validity of Clinical Trials of Antidepressants."

⁵⁹ Rosenzweig, 413–15.

⁶⁰ Frank and Frank, *Persuasion and Healing*, xv.

is dogmatism and the refusal to appreciate an array of narrative simplifications. Accordingly, the goal is not to denigrate single solutions for their simplicity, nor is it to take single solutions and make them complex. The goal is to increase our appreciation of alternative solutions, be they simple or complex. The goal is openness to a range of options and to the richness and variety of psychiatric experience.

The implications of this narrative approach are many. Psychiatric practitioners will do well to heed the lessons of narrative medicine and develop their own narrative competence. To do this, practitioners must understand the basics of narrative theory, and they must learn to read widely in a range of different contexts. They must come to appreciate the many stories of biopsychiatry, psychoanalysis, cognitive therapy, interpersonal therapy, family therapy, humanistic approaches, cross-cultural approaches, feminist approaches, disability activist approaches, postmodern approaches, spiritual approaches, and ecopsychology, to name a few. Furthermore, they must come to understand the value of biography, autobiography, and literature for developing a narrative repertoire. In the end, narrative competency for depression means a tremendous familiarity with the many possible stories of sadness. The more stories clinicians know, the more likely they are to help their clients find narrative frames that work for them.

For sufferers of sadness, a narrative understanding means that there is a range of possible therapies and healing solutions that might be helpful. An approach that is right for one person may not be right for another. There must be a fit between the person and the approach, and people should feel empowered to take seriously their own intuitions and feelings. If the person getting help does not feel this fit, he or she is likely right; there may well be another approach that would work better with the person's proclivities. Like everything else, however, judgment is critical. Therapeutic experiences of all kinds can be frustrating, slow, and uncertain. How, for example, does one know when an approach misses his or her needs and when it is something that will take time, patience, and perseverance to be helpful? From a narrative perspective, there can be no gold standard or simple answers. Only judgment, wisdom, and trial and error can decide.

Bibliography

- Aldred, Graham. "An Analysis of the Use of Prozac, Paxil, and Zoloft in USA 1988–2002." Alliance for Research Protection. <<http://www.ahrp.org/risks/usSSRIuse0604.pdf>> (accessed January 2, 2006).
- Antonuccio, David, David Burns, and William Danton. "Antidepressants: A Triumph of Marketing over Science?" *Prevention and Treatment* 5 (2002). <<http://www.journals.apa.org/prevention/volume5/toc-jul15-02.html>> (accessed June 2, 2005).
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*. Edited by Pam Morris. London: Edward Arnold, 1994.
- Barthes, Roland. "Inaugural Lecture, College de France." In *A Barthes Reader*, edited by Susan Sontag, 457–78. New York: Hill and Wang, 1982.
- Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.
- Breggin, Peter. *Toxic Psychiatry: Why Therapy, Empathy, and Love Must Replace the Drugs, Electroshock, and Biochemical Theories of the "New Psychiatry"*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991.
- Brody, Howard. *Stories of Sickness*, 2nd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Campo, Raphael. "The Medical Humanities: For Lack of a Better Term." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 294, no. 9 (2005): 1009–11.
- Caplan, Paula. *They Say You Are Crazy: How the World's Most Powerful Psychiatrists Decide Who's Normal*. Reading, MA: Perseus Books, 1995.
- Charon, Rita. "Narrative Medicine: A Model for Empathy, Reflection, Profession, and Trust." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 286, no. 15 (2001): 1897–1902.

- . "Narrative Medicine: Attention, Representation, Affiliation." *Narrative* 13, no. 3 (2005): 261–70.
- . "Narrative and Medicine." *New England Journal of Medicine* 350, no. 9 (2004): 862–4.
- Chekhov, Anton. *Anton Chekhov's Life and Thought: Selected Letters and Commentaries*. Translated by Michael Henry Heim, in collaboration with Simon Karlinsky. Selection, introduction, and commentary by Simon Karlinsky. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997.
- . *Ivanov*. In *The Oxford Chekhov*, vol. 2, translated and edited by Ronald Hingley, 163–228. London: Oxford University Press, 1967.
- . *A Life in Letters*. Edited by Rosamund Bartlett and translated by Rosamund Bartlett and Anthony Phillip. London: Penguin Books, 2004.
- Coles, Robert. Foreword to *Chekhov's Doctors: A Collection of Chekhov's Medical Tales*, edited by Jack Coulehan, ix–xii. Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2002.
- Coope, John. *Doctor Chekhov: A Study in Literature and Medicine*. Chale, Isle of Wight: Cross, 1997.
- Coulehan, Jack, ed. *Chekhov's Doctors: A Collection of Chekhov's Medical Tales*. Kent, OH: Kent State University, 2002.
- . "Ivanov." Literature, Arts, and Medicine Database. <<http://endeavor.med.nyu.edu/lit-med/lit-med-db/webdocs/webdescrips/chekhov1139-des-.html>> (accessed January 7, 2006).
- Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association Press, 1994.
- Dittrich, Lisa, ed. "The Humanities and Medicine: Reports of 41 U.S., Canadian, and International Programs." *Academic Medicine* 78 (2003): 951–1074.
- Du Gay, Paul, Jessica Evans, and Peter Redman, eds. *Identity: A Reader*. London: Sage Publications, 2000.
- Farber, Seth. *Madness, Heresy, and the Rumor of Angels: The Revolt against the Mental Health System*. Chicago: Open Court, 1993.
- Finke, Michael. *Seeing Chekhov: Life and Art*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.
- Foucault, Michel. "The Ethics of Care for the Self as a Practice and Freedom." In *The Final Foucault*, edited by James Bernauer and David Rasmussen, 1–20. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988.
- . "Technologies of the Self." In *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, edited by Luther Martin, Huck Gutman, and Patrick Hutton, 16–49. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988.
- Frank, Jerome and Julia Frank. *Persuasion and Healing: A Comparative Study of Psychotherapy*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.
- Freedman, Jill and Gene Combs. *Narrative Therapy: The Social Construction of Preferred Realities*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through." In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, edited and translated by James Strachey, 12:147–56. London: Hogarth Press, 1958.
- Friedland, Louis, ed. *Letters on the Short Story, the Drama, and Other Literary Topics by Anton Chekhov*. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1964.
- Ghaemi, Nassir. *The Concepts of Psychiatry: A Pluralistic Approach to the Mind and Mental Illness*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003.
- Gilman, Richard. *Chekhov's Plays: An Opening to Eternity*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.
- Greenhalgh, Trisha. "Narrative Based Medicine in an Evidence Based World." *British Medical Journal* 318 (1999): 323–5.
- Hall, Stuart and Paul du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage Publications, 1996.
- Hare, David. Introduction to *Ivanov: A Play in Four Acts*. Adapted by David Hare, vii–xi. London: Methuen Drama, 1997.
- Hawkins, Anne Hunsaker and Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, eds. *Teaching Literature and Medicine*. New York: Modern Language Association, 2000.
- Hingley, Ronald. *A New Life of Anton Chekhov*. New York: A. A. Knopf, 1976.
- Holt, Terrence. "Narrative Medicine and Negative Capability." *Literature and Medicine* 23, no. 2 (2004): 318–33.
- Hunter, Kathryn Montgomery. *Doctors' Stories: The Narrative Structure of Medical Knowledge*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Kataev, Vladimir. *If Only We Could Know!: An Interpretation of Chekhov*. Translated and edited by Harvey Pitcher. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2002.

- Kessler, Ronald C., Patricia Berglund, Olga Demler, Robert Jin, Doreen Koretz, Kathleen R. Merikangas, John Rush, Ellen E. Walters, and Philip S. Wang. "The Epidemiology of Major Depressive Disorder: Results from the National Comorbidity Survey Replication." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 289, no.23 (2003): 3095–105.
- Kirklin, Deborah and Ruth Richardson, eds. *Medical Humanities: A Practical Introduction*. London: Royal College of Physicians, 2001.
- Kirsch, Irving, Thomas Moore, Alan Scoboria, and Sarah Nicholls. "The Emperor's New Drugs: An Analysis of Antidepressant Medication Data Submitted to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration." *Prevention and Treatment* 5 (2002). <<http://www.journals.apa.org/prevention/volume5/toc-jul15-02.html>> (accessed June 2, 2005).
- Kramer, Karl. "Stories of Ambiguity." In *Anton Chekhov's Short Stories: Texts of the Stories, Backgrounds, and Criticism*, edited by Ralph Matlaw, 338–51. New York: W. W. Norton, 1979.
- Kramer, Peter. *Against Depression*. New York: Viking, 2005.
- . "What Ivanov Needs in the 90's Is an Anti-Depressant." *New York Times*, December 21, 1997, sec. 2.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Lacasse, Jeffery R. and Jonathan Leo. "Serotonin and Depression: A Disconnect between the Advertisements and the Scientific Literature." *PLoS Medicine* 2, no. 12 (2005): 1–6.
- Law, John and Annemarie Mol, eds. *Complexities: Social Studies of Knowledge Practices*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2002.
- Lewis, Bradley. *Moving Beyond Prozac, DSM, and the New Psychiatry: The Birth of Postpsychiatry*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2006.
- Luborsky, Lester, Robert Rosenthal, Louis Diguier, Tomasz Andrusyna, Jeffrey S. Berman, Jill T. Levitt, David A. Seligman, and Elizabeth D. Krause. "The Dodo Bird Verdict is Alive and Well—Mostly." *Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice* 9, no.1 (2002): 2–12.
- Mansfield, Nick. *Subjectivity: Theories of the Self from Freud to Haraway*. New York: New York University Press, 2000.
- Martinez, Richard. "Narrative Understanding and Methods in Psychiatry and Behavioral Health." In *Stories Matter: The Role of Narrative in Medical Ethics*, edited by Rita Charon and Martha M. Montello, 126–37. New York: Routledge, 2002.
- Mayberg, Helen. "Depression: A Neuropsychiatric Perspective." In *Textbook of Biological Psychiatry*, edited by Jack Panksepp, 197–229. Wilmington, DE: Wiley-Liss, 2004.
- Moncrieff, Joanna and Irving Kirsch. "Efficacy of Antidepressants in Adults." *British Medical Journal* 331 (2005): 155–7.
- Norman, Robert A. "Literature and Medicine." *Dermanities* 3, no. 2 (2005). <<http://www.dermanities.com/detail.asp?article=171>> (accessed January 2, 2006).
- Pollock, George. *The Mourning-Liberation Process*. Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 1989.
- Popkin, Cathy. *The Pragmatics of Insignificance: Chekhov, Zoshchenko, Gogol*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993.
- Puustinen, Raimo. "Bakhtin's Philosophy and Medical Practice—Toward a Semiotic Theory of Doctor-Patient Interaction." *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* 2 (1999): 275–81.
- . "Voices to be Heard—The Many Positions of a Physician in Anton Chekhov's Short Story, *A Case History*." *Journal of Medical Ethics* 26 (2000): 37–42.
- Quitkin, Frederic M., Judith G. Rabkin, Jessica Gerald, John M. Davis, and Donald F. Klein. "Validity of Clinical Trials of Antidepressants." *American Journal of Psychiatry* 157 (2000): 327–37.
- Rayfield, Donald. *Anton Chekhov: A Life*. London: HarperCollins, 1997.
- Roberts, Glenn and Jeremy Holmes. *Healing Stories: Narrative Psychiatry and Psychotherapy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Rosenzweig, Saul. "Some Implicit Common Factors in Diverse Methods of Psychotherapy: At last the Dodo said, 'Everybody has won and all must have prizes.'" *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry* 6 (1936): 412–15.
- Solomon, Andrew. *The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression*. New York: Scribner, 2001.
- Valenstein, Elliot. *Blaming the Brain: The Truth about Drugs and Mental Health*. New York: Free Press, 1998.
- Verghese, Abraham. "The Physician as Storyteller." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 135, no. 11 (2001): 1012–17.

- Wallace, Edwin. "Psychiatry and Its Nosology: A Historico-philosophical Overview." In *Philosophical Perspectives on Psychiatric Diagnostic Classification*, edited by John Z. Sadler, Osborne P. Wiggins, and Michael A. Schwartz, 16–89. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.
- Wampold, Bruce E. *The Great Psychotherapy Debate*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.
- White, Michael and David Epston. *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1990.
- World Health Organization. "Depression" <http://who.int/mental_health/depression/definition/en> (accessed May 27, 2006).
- Wood, Mary. "'I Found Him!': Diagnostic Narrative in *The DSM-IV Casebook*." *Narrative* 12, no 2 (2004): 195–220.

**Andrei Dmitrievich Stepanov, *Problemy kommunikatsii u Chekhova*.
Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2005. 396 pages, including a list of references, indexes,
and a 6-page summary in English.**

**Reviewed by Olga Levitan (Theatre Studies, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem)
and Harai Golomb (Theatre Studies, Tel-Aviv University)**

Introductory Remarks about Stepanov's Book

This book is an attempt to characterize Chekhov's poetics as a whole through an examination of his treatment of the theme and phenomenon of human communication. In the English summary of his book the author states: "I believe that human communication lies at the centre of Chekhov's writings – one could even say that it becomes a field of study in its own right" (p. 392). Whereas "in the pre-Chekhovian literary tradition [...] Unsuccessful communication is therefore instrumental, never a goal of the text in itself" (*ibid.*), the reverse is true in Chekhov's work, where human communication acquired unprecedented centrality (in Stepanov's words: "Chekhov's events are communicative events" [*ibid.*; italics supplied]); the author defines his task in this context, then, as producing "a model of communication that encompasses" all "variants" of "communicative acts" that make up Chekhov's text, world, and poetics (*ibid.*). To substantiate this claim about the centrality of this theme in Chekhov the author cites and analyses a great amount of Chekhov's writings, including his early comic stories, some of which are rarely discussed in the secondary literature, as well as mature stories and plays.

The author starts with a statement about some special difficulties in analysing Chekhov's texts: they defy generalization and, consequently, an analysis built on general principles is almost doomed to inadequacy; Chekhov's attitude towards his characters seems indeterminate (this is regarded by general consent as a major paradox in Chekhov's world); Chekhov's peculiar blend of realism and absurdity poses another formidable challenge to a systematic analysis of his works and world: communicative structures bordering on the absurd can be found within seemingly realistic situations.

To cope with such challenges the author proposes a system with a multi-disciplinary range of sources and applications. Based primarily on Bakhtin's theory of **speech genres**, checked and modified by theories of **frames** (mainly Minsky's), communicative **functions** (mainly Jakobson's), as well as the most recent developments in pragmatics, speech act theory, and other relevant schools of thought and analysis, Stepanov's new models are designed to elucidate communicative situations in Chekhov. Thus, the author sees his book primarily (and rightly so) as a contribution to Chekhov studies rather than to a general theory of verbal communication. Yet, as we shall claim at the end of this review, this is true only up to a point; at a certain level the hierarchy between ends and means is undermined, possibly without the author's awareness, perhaps even against his conscious will. But let us return to presenting the book's argument first.

The author's focus on developing a typological model to account for basic, unifying principles underlying the variety of Chekhov's communication strategies constitutes a crucial key (though admittedly not the only one) for reading and understanding the entire body of Chekhov's writings. It allows an overall view of the texts, exposing regular **structural** mechanisms characteristic of Chekhov's art.

A central feature of these strategies is **communicative mismatch**, operating on various levels. This often sets a **destructive principle** in motion, resulting in discrediting most or all of the factors participating in an act of communication – the addresser, the addressee, and the

message itself. In extreme cases, not rare in Chekhov, this means a complete collapse of the process of communication. Using his own development of Bakhtin's speech genres, Stepanov offers a classification of "five kinds of discourse: informative, affective, imperative, expressive, and phatic" (*ibid.*); each of these is related to such genres as information, dispute, sermon, request, complaint, confession, etc., which he also characterizes as **goals** of communication. The interaction between the speech-genres and their goals works in ways that usually produce a definite effect of mismatch. Thus, in a large number of Chekhov's plots there is a sermon-like situation, or a speech-act resembling a plea, a command, etc., but the character of the preacher does not conform to the substance of the sermon, the sermon itself is out of place, the plea is ignored or rejected, the dispute has no point and leads nowhere, etc. The mechanisms of broken communication are exposed by Stepanov as a major part of Chekhov's worldview, a semantically significant picture of a universal problem in human existence.

The author takes pains to distinguish his analysis from a recurring view of failing communication, which has become a cliché in Chekhov studies. For him, communication failures in Chekhov's world hardly ever emanate from a personage's inability or unwillingness to communicate; rather, they are determined by some essential ulterior reasons, e.g., what Chekhov (according to Stepanov) regards as an inevitable process of grotesque intersection between incompatible social roles, and as an innate inadequacy of human beings, whose nature renders them incapable of self awareness, or of being agents of knowledge. This line of argument allows Stepanov to postulate the crucial centrality of the phenomenon of communication as a self-sufficient thematic core, not subservient to any other theme or phenomenon in Chekhov's world.

Speech-genre analysis as a method of research

Stepanov proposes a model of correlation between types of communication and speech genres. This model is his basic scheme of investigating Chekhov's poetics as well as a structural design for constructing his own book.

By assigning to speech genres the crucial dual role of a core factor in Chekhov's text as well as in the structure of his own analysis, Stepanov exposes significant and heuristic principles of Chekhov's poetics, functioning particularly through striking a balance between contradictory, or at least seemingly contradictory, meanings. Thus, speech-genre analysis exposes the existence of phenomena of **genre mixture** and their centrality within Chekhov's communicative strategy. The author concedes that the mixture of literary genres is a major characteristic of Russian literature in the 19th century as a whole, but stresses that Chekhov took a step further in this direction by creating a heterogeneous, almost confused reality made of conflicting speech genres. Here we quote again the author's summary in English: "My claim is that Chekhov's texts are generated by transformations of everyday speech genres [...] Thus, the comic effect of the early short stories stems from ironic transformations in which the hero's utterance and ideological position at the beginning of the story stand in complete contrast to his words at the end. Such a structure is also valid for later and more serious works, although the transformations in these texts are smoother and less abrupt" (pp. 392-3).

The book's first chapter defines the main elements and the theoretical principles of the analysis; the following ones are organized around the discussion of the goals of the different communicative situations and their connection to the speech genres as used by Chekhov. Every chapter starts with a general examination of the origin of a specific speech genre; it proceeds with the examination of this speech genre and its manifestations in different periods of Chekhov's literary activity, and it ends with a focus on deviations from the main patterns. The latter point is of special significance: at the end of every chapter the author discusses an entire single Chekhovian text that seems to deviate from the recurring structural pattern that the chapter sets out to expound. However, in the final analysis the 'wayward' text appears to reaffirm the general scheme even more powerfully, since its claim for subversiveness is disproved. Thus, the book itself is an example of a tightly structured discourse based on a detailed psychological, linguistic and literary analysis of Chekhov's texts, carried out within the wide cultural, religious and social context of 19th century Russia, and in comparison with the literary languages of Tolstoy, Turgenyev and Dostoevsky. We would like to add that most of Stepanov's close readings are feats of sensitive and systematic literary-textual analysis, thus adding considerably to his book's merits. That said, it is important to reiterate that the book is concerned with a specific structural overview of Chekhov's oeuvre as a whole, rather than with specific structures of single texts. This order of preference gives the author an opportunity to expose and investigate recurring

structural units, to show their semantic meanings, and to stress that many of Chekhov's fundamental ideas are hidden in his literary technique.

Speech-genre analysis mechanisms: A Focus on Chapter 2

To illustrate the book's structural technique, let us look briefly at its second chapter, "Information and Reference: Informative Speech Genres."

The chapter begins with an exposition of the main speech forms of "Informative Speech Genres" – monologue and/vs. dialogue – and a presentation of their general goals and characteristics. Special stress is laid on the morally positive value assigned to information and education (as means for the expansion and dissemination of knowledge) in the ethical system of civilized Russian society in the 19th century. This positive view was a matter of social and ideological consensus in Chekhov's time, and he himself embraced and expounded it in his letters and other personal communications. However, in his artistic-fictional practice Chekhov undermined the ideology he subscribed to – an internal conflict that is explicitly stressed by Stepanov. It is against this cultural and ideological consensus that Chekhov's subversive presentation of the inherently faulty transmission of information is particularly effective.

The second step in the chapter's argument focuses on the typical communicative situation that generates the **monological** form of the informative speech genre. There are two essential patterns of this situation in Chekhov's texts, both resulting in different ways of discrediting the positively regarded concepts of knowledge and education. The first pattern shows the bearer of information, the 'enlightener', as a person with evident moral and/or intellectual flaws that can amount to ethical or aesthetic deafness. This applies to different kinds of 'enlighteners': those whose social role is to enlighten, especially professional teachers, but also to 'volunteer-enlighteners' such as Doctor Blagovo in "My Life" or von Koren in "The Duel." This presents a fundamental contradiction, whereby the positive significance of knowledge and the flawed characteristics of its bearers undermine each other. Though in these instances the positive essence of information is not discredited, Chekhov's inner distrust of knowledge is still apparent.

The other pattern of monologue informative speech genre exposes the informative message itself as mechanical and inhuman, devoid of emotional meaning. Here the comic, even absurd effect of such knowledge is often stressed. Such comic effects in Chekhov's writings often reside in a mixture or superimposition of different types of speech discourse: official, judicial, traditional, private, etc.

The third step of the discussion deals with **reasons** for the described paradox. Stepanov sees them mainly through the prism of semiotic/semantic problems of cultural signs. According to him, Chekhov's intense attentiveness to the senescence of such signs, to the question of how and how much they lose their significance, is one of his most philosophically significant (though typically implicit) statements. Chekhov reveals a tragic paradox of human civilization: the fixation and the repetition of any cultural sign do not strengthen its meaning, but on the contrary: they turn it into a mechanical dead letter. An additional problem of cultural signs is the creation of illusion as a mismatch between the world of reality and its misinterpretation by Chekhov's personages. In Chekhov's early texts the strength of personages' illusions had been expressed as a comic situation; in his later, more mature writings, analogous situations were developed into a tragic vision of life ruined by a cognitive illusion.

A separate discussion is dedicated to **dialogic** informative speech genres. After presenting the features of the 'ideal' conflictual dialogue/debate, aimed at clarifying or attaining a resolution, a truth, etc., Stepanov shows that Chekhov transforms this genre into affective, self-rather than goal-oriented rhetorical or phatic speech genre. In this context Chekhov's texts contain all possible deviations from the ideal debate. Alongside these subversive presentations (or misrepresentations) of the genre of debate (or controversy) itself, Chekhov shows his characters as reluctant to participate in it: debates are usually strained, and the participants are forced to express their opinions. Thus, instead of a voluntary communicative situation, the debate is indicative of some kind of coercion and/or is reduced to notorious 'Chekhovian idle talk.' Chekhov's lack of faith in rational dialogue distinguishes him from his major predecessors in Russian literature: "Pre-Chekhov literature believed that if 'cursed questions' were answered, everything could change. Chekhov shows that whatever the personages' intellectual attempts might be, they would have no effect and everything would remain as before" (134-5; here and in other quotes from Stepanov's text, the English translation is ours).

Indeed, the general conclusion of the discussion yields a predominantly pessimistic and bitter picture, in which Chekhov appears to negate man's possibility to get to a truth; however, the final part of the chapter discusses the story "My Life," which is important for Stepanov because of the harmony and balance attained by its main hero, Misail, who obviously differs from the described patterns (there is a basic consensus in the literature, which singles out this protagonist as a rare positive element in Chekhov's writings). Thus, as we have argued, Stepanov tends to conclude discussions by turning to texts that appear as exceptions to formulated rules. This rhetorical strategy, however, turns out to be double-edged.

The analysis of "My Life" is concerned with the nature of Chekhovian debates and controversies, and its connection to the opposition between ethics and knowledge. Despite deviating qualities in this story – especially in the character of Misail, the major protagonist – Stepanov shows that in this story, too, the debates express the same truth as in the other texts discussed in this chapter: "ethical choice exists, but it can be exercised only without any connection to an ideology, i.e., to any pre-formulated doctrine" (154). Indeed, in Chekhov nobody can be right in his/her definite ideological or doctrinarian position, and "My Life" is no exception. This analysis reconfirms, then, rather than undermines Stepanov's previous general conclusions.

Another reservation is called for at this point. Of course, when Stepanov speaks about types of communication (dialogic, monologic, etc.) he deals mainly with processes that take place between and among fictional personages, but occasionally, and mainly implicitly, he speaks also about communication between the text (i.e., Chekhov's authorial position) and us, the audience of recipients (readers in stories, spectators in plays). Both of these types of communication are valid objects of discussion, but they are more distinct than Stepanov cares to stress; at any rate, he does not dwell on this distinction as a major dividing line between two categories. Broadening and deepening this distinction may contribute to finer and clearer views of the problems that this book leaves unresolved. A dialogue between two personages, even when it is implicit, is quite different from a dialogue between an authorial statement, explicit or implicit, on the one hand, and a textually implicit statement, or expected/built-in response, by an audience, on the other. These two dimensions of communication can differ also in the nature of specific truths, dogmas, and ways and means of communication employed in each of them. The question of how, and to what extent, these two types of communication are isomorphous in Chekhov is a central question that the book does not, in our view, address explicitly enough.

The Basic Paradox of the Book

All the chapters of the book are constructed according to the scheme described above. This strategy gives a well-ordered beauty to the research discourse, contributing to the presentation of a poetics of paradox in Chekhov's writings, exposing the presence of constant models of communicative situations, whose nature expresses the absurd and tragic features of human life. The book also reflects the modern Russian cultural inclination to see Chekhov as one of the most pitiless, tragic, and complicated writers in Russian literature. At the same time the monotony, or at least repetitiveness, that to some extent exists in Stepanov's schematic account, leads to a disappointing effect of oft-recurring conclusions that in fact misrepresent Chekhov as a strongly schematic and repetitive author, who used to return to the same discrepancy models in all periods and all genres of his writing. Stepanov's Chomsky-like formulation, presenting Chekhov's texts as **generated** from speech genres, however flexibly defined and modified, through processes and operations of **transformation** (see pp. 392-93), is compatible with the book's monotonous streak, which undermines its more sensitive and attentive parts. One can say, with caution, that within this book there is a Chekhov-like mismatch between these conflicting approaches. It is our view, of course, that the former elements distort the nature of Chekhov's uniqueness, whereas the latter do justice to it.

To an extent, this is an inevitable effect of any attempt to unearth a 'deep structure' of general principles governing the entire work of a complex creative artist, an attempt that is exceptionally challenging and potentially rewarding. The uniqueness and internal coherence of every human individual makes any such endeavour promising and worth trying. However, it is our intuitive but strongly held impression, that in this case the temptation of overall schematism got the better of the attentiveness to subtleties of the individuality of every text, situation, and character. Some features of this impressive book defeat its own purpose and can be said to have a destructive effect on the perception of Chekhov's infinitely subtle and anti-dogmatic art, which is

highly individualistic in major aspects of its thematics, characterization, and structural composition alike. Despite these shortcomings, though, the book is a laudable and formidable contribution to our never-ending project of understanding Chekhov. We are looking forward to its publication in English and other western languages.

There are no better words to conclude this review than those which Stepanov himself chose to put at the end of his English summary – words that represent the strong sensitive-attentive component of his book, which betrays a welcome sentiment of humility *vis-à-vis* the Chekhov phenomenon: “If reading Chekhov’s texts is conceived as a process of translation and ‘putting in order’, then it may be the case that they are resistant to this kind of interpretation. They are inherently ambivalent and paradoxical in every atom of their communicative structure, and what happens in them cannot be evaluated unequivocally. In the work of Chekhov we are shown the limits of human language and the complexity of communication: each interpretation of these works must work within the very medium of those dense linguistic structures and therefore remain incomplete” (p. 396).

***Chekhov. Poetics—Hermeneutics—Thematics.* Ed. J. Douglas Clayton. Ottawa: The Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa, 2006. 319 pages.**

Reviewed by Ralph Lindheim

Most of the essays in this volume were papers first read at a 2004 conference at the University of Ottawa, which J. Douglas Clayton, the main convener and organizer, modestly called a workshop. Its purpose was, as Clayton put it, “to create bridges between different scholarly discourses—mainly in English and Russian—focusing on Chekhov” (p. I). Building on the contributions to our understanding of Chekhov by such scholars and critics as Chudakov, Sukhikh, Kataev, Senderovich, Jackson and, a recent newcomer to these ranks, Stepanov, the participants engaged in an intense and rich exchange of ideas, which the following brief comments on the essays, in the order in which they appear in the book, will attempt to reflect.

The volume opens with Valery Tiupa’s fine essay, “The Communicative Strategy of Chekhov’s Poetics,” which sets off the difficulty characters have in communicating with others against the understanding established between the author and his reader, an understanding grounded on a spectrum of reflections generated in the responsive reader by stylistic and structural devices rather than imperiously imposed by the pronouncements of an omniscient author. Tiupa sees the open ending of Chekhov’s stories more complexly as both an affirmation of what the characters have actually achieved by the time their stories end as well as a question if these achievements can be sustained in the future.

Vladimir Zviniatskovsky, in his essay “If You Listened to Me, I Would Not Talk to You: On a Structural Device in Chekhov’s Drama,” emphasizes how Chekhov makes his audience aware of the disintegration of society at the beginning of the twentieth century and the concurrent impossibility of dialogue. So many of the writer’s characters are hard of hearing and, when they speak, direct their remarks either to someone who cannot or does not understand them or to a stand-in for the one they should be addressing. Mutual understanding is not beyond their grasp but is more often than not achieved wordlessly and momentarily or devastatingly too late to do much good.

J. Douglas Clayton’s rich essay, “‘Words, Words, Words’: On the ‘Emptiness’ of Speech and the Fullness of Song,” isolates one extremely rich function of language in Chekhov’s prose and drama, though he might exaggerate its occurrence and prevalence. With true radical, modernistic intent, Chekhov uses words, if I may quote in part a familiar line from Archibald MacLeish, not to “mean but be,” as an abstract expression and affirmation of the speaking self and its existence, be it man or bird or beast or steppe, rather than a pragmatic means to communicate some particular message to another. And even if such communication is the aim, more can be expressed by tone, gesture, and silence than by the actual meanings of the words,

Irina V. Gladilina addresses some of the difficulties facing a lexicographer, attuned to advances in the theory and practice of lexicography, in attempting a long overdue dictionary of Chekhov’s language. In “A.P. Chekhov: A Lexicographical Theme with Variations,” she charts some of the ways, including enantosemia, the exploitation of the potential offered either by a word’s roots or by its basic semantics for antonymic meanings, by which Chekhov explored and exploited the Russian language of his time to create a distinctive creative discourse giving form and shape to his writing and vision of the world,

Robert Louis Jackson offers an elegant and stimulating reading of an apparently minor satirical story in his essay, “Small Fry: A Nice Little Easter Story.” Under his handling of the religious subtext of the tale as well as literary

references, the text reverberates and expands in impact and meaning to tragic-comic dimensions. What could perhaps have been added, if only in a footnote, is the intertextual connection of Chekhov's tale with Katherine Mansfield's "The Fly."

Vladimir Markovich's excellent study, "'Archaic' Constructions in 'Ward Six'," isolates the rather atypical features of the style and structure of this, one of Chekhov's most famous stories. Markovich shows how the work looks backward rather than forward, to the physiological sketches of the 1840s and, even beyond, to the *menippea*. These old-fashioned, and "archaic" features affirm the author's right to buck trends, to move in a direction he considers best, to show the continuing relevance of writing that others may consider out-of-date, and to remind his audience, if they need such a reminder, that they are reading literature rather than life.

In a rambling essay "'Ward Six' - the Protagonist and His Idea," Anatoly Sobennikov builds on the work of others to note the idiosyncratic way in which Chekhov presents and develops what his characters think: how they acquire their ideas—more notions than fully worked out ideas—attempt to communicate them, and test them in and through their experience. His remarks on the similarities rather than differences of the main characters hit the mark, though his toying with the numerological allusions seems unconvincing and the implications of Regin's harrowing end go unnoticed.

Despite her modish title, "Restor(y)ing Health: Case History of 'A Nervous Breakdown,'" Cathy Popkin has provided one of the best essays in Clayton's collection. She demonstrates how Chekhov in his story presents a proper clinical case study that affirms the importance and relevance of narrative, while analyzing not just the unfortunate weakness of the hero of the story but also the inadequacy of medical thought and writing about human suffering at the close of the nineteenth century.

In his essay, "Ionych the Decadent," Yury Domansky first concentrates on the lyric moments when Ionych awaits in vain the arrival of Kitty at the cemetery. He adds to previous discussions by transforming the hero momentarily into a poet whose attitudes toward death have much in common with Baudelaire and the Russian Decadents, especially Bal'mont whose treatment of dying and death echoes that of his French predecessor. But a strange turn is taken when Domansky insists that "Ionych" exposes an evolution in Chekhov's view of decadent art: the sympathy shown to Treplev, the representative of decadent art in *The Seagull*—mistakenly dated 1893—is replaced by a clear antipathy in 1898 to Ionych's aesthetic and ethical views, which though first viewed as poetic must at last be considered degenerate because of the decline and dehumanization of the hero in the course of the story.

Herta Schmid's article, "Variations on the Man in a Case in Chekhov's 'Man in a Case' and 'On the Harmfulness of Tobacco'," explores *ecphrasis* and *ecphrastic* elements, and offer some valuable insights into the two works, especially the gorgeous landscape towards the end of "Chelovek v futliare." Yet the essay contains some odd readings of scenes and characters and assumes that the link between Chekhov's writings and painting has not been treated often. Surely the fact that Chekhov's writing has commonly been called impressionistic has brought to mind the art of French painters and perhaps even of some Russian ones.

Julie W. de Sherbinin, in "Revisiting 'The Lady with the Little Dog,'" focuses on the rich verbal texture, exemplary of so many of Chekhov's texts, to illuminate what is at the heart of this story, the transformation undergone by the hero Gurov. His achievement is not just to discover a true and deep love but also to abandon his constructed, cliché-ridden hierarchy of values for the acquisition of a set that appreciate identity, equality, and complexity.

In "The Poetics of Deceived Expectations" Vladimir Kataev riffs on the unusual endings of Chekhov's plays, which countered the traditional expectations of his audience. The plays *Ivanov* and *The Wood Demon* have an oxymoronic combination of suicide and marriage coloring the sad and happy denouements of the characters' lives on stage. And the major plays offer conclusions, in which all the major characters suffer, as Kataev affirms, "without any ray of consolation or reconciliation." But one could ask if the endings of the last two plays, no matter how sad or bitter, are empty of all rays of hope and life? Are not the endings more complex, more bitter-sweet and thus even more "oxymoronic" than those of the earlier plays?

Yana Meerzon's study, "Three Degrees of Defamiliarization: Rhythm and Action in Anton Chekhov's Drama," hits on the discrepancies between the more or less realistic surface of the world created by Chekhov, the world that Stanislavsky broadened and deepened, and the strange deviations from the realistic illusion that Meyerhold was the first to bring to the footlights. She notes violations of genre expectation, including unanticipated dissonances sounding the author's sarcasm toward what is depicted on stage, the *skaz* or verbal coloration of the characters' speech, the idiosyncrasies of which establish a distance between the author and his characters, and the punctuation, especially *dieresis*, used by Chekhov to communicate with his audience behind the backs of his characters.

Wasilij Szczukin, in his substantial and sensitive essay "On Calculability and Incalculability in *The Three Sisters*," goes beyond the work already done on time expressions in this play to study and reflect on the many numerical markers, references to ordinal and cardinal numbers starting with the very title of the play. The numbers help establish and embody prosaic reality, in which the characters suffocate, and markedly contrast with the lyrical realm, to which the characters soar when liberated momentarily from the prison-house of numbers. Szczukin does not read the play as one of unrelieved gloom. He sees the progressive understanding by the sisters and their friends or, at the very least, their movement toward and appreciation of a realm of thought and being beyond the numerate.

In the first of two short essays on Chekhov's last play, "The Flora and Fauna in *The Cherry Orchard*," Natalia Vesselova catalogues references to the natural world, but the conclusions she draws from the lists seem unproductively moralistic. And as his title, "*The Cherry Orchard* and *Fathers and Sons*," announces, Nicholas Zekulin focuses on the

significant echoes of the Turgenev novel and their function both to clarify the changes that had occurred in the Russian world in the forty years since the emancipation of the serfs and also to enunciate firmly and clearly the universals of psychology and sociology that history failed to alter.

The contribution by Volha Isakava, "Postmodernism Revisited: *The Seagull* by Boris Akunin," deals with the cheeky and subversive play with the classical canon characteristic of so many contemporary writers. The focus is on the theoretical implications of the techniques used by Akunin to refashion Chekhov, especially the introduction of facets of pop culture. But the issue touched upon at the end, whether Akunin also questions such basic postmodern assumptions as the "openness" of texts to plural meanings, is perhaps more interesting.

Elena Siemens concludes the volume with a longish article, "Seagulls over Trubnaya Square," on boulevard culture in Russia; she reflects on how Chekhov responded to the geography and colorful life of the Moscow boulevard and, more recently, was partly responsible, because of three versions of *The Seagull*—Chekhov's play as well as Boris Akunin's adaptation and a version subtitled "A Classical Operetta for Drama Actors"—for the renovation of a culture that had fallen on hard times in the Soviet era.

On the whole, the collection contains many important essays and is consistently stimulating. Whether the attempt to bridge the divide between critical discourses will succeed must be left to the future to decide, but this volume contributes substantially to overcoming what was once a "dialogue of the deaf." And Clayton, who edited the entire collection and translated into English many of the contributions, is to be congratulated and gratefully acknowledged for his labors. The small number of common mistakes—a dropped letter here, a simple replacement of one letter for another there—can be overlooked, and the few major errors—in addition to the wrong date given for *The Seagull*, there is the strange substitution of Natasha for Masha on page 29 in the mention of the third act wordless exchange with Vershinin—are easily shrugged off by the knowledgeable reader.

Select Bibliography of Books and Articles on Chekhov from 2005 – 2007

2005

Books and Collections of Essays

Chekhov 2004: Chekhov Special Issues in Two Volumes, Vol. I: Aspects of Chekhov. Ed. and preface by Joe Andrew and Robert Reid. In *Essays in Poetics: The Journal of the Neo-Formalist Circle* 30 (2005).

This volume contains the following articles:

- Baak, Joost van. "Chekhov's Fictional Mansions: A Narrative Perspective."
 Beumers, Birgit. "The Chopping of *The Cherry Orchard*: Stanislavskii or Chekhov."
 Bjørnager, Kjeld. "The Masculine Triangle in *Uncle Vania*."
 Christa, Boris. "Costume and Communication in *The Cherry Orchard*."
 Dudek, Andrzej. "The Motif of Insanity in Chekhov's Works: Literary Functions and Anthropological Connotations."
 Golomb, Harai. "Heredity, Inheritance, Heritage: Human De- and Re-Generation in Chekhov's Major Plays (with Special Reference to *Three Sisters*)."
 Marsh, Cynthia. "Two-Timing Time in *Three Sisters*."
 Milner-Gulland, Robin; Soboleva, Olga. "Translating and Mistranslating Chekhov."
 Peace, Richard. "From Titles to Endings: 'Rothschild's Violin'."
 Reid, Robert. "'The Death of a Civil Servant': Beyond Parody."
 Schmid, Wolf. "Sobytiinost' i tochka zreniia v narrativnom mire pozdnego Chekhova"
 Senelick, Laurence. "Looking for Chekhov in All the Wrong Places."
 Slooten, Cari Alexander van. "The Functional Role of Sound in Chekhov's Stories and Plays."
 Soboleva, Olga. "Chekhov's Plays on the Russian Screen."

Weststeijn, Willem G. "Character in Chekhov's Stories."
Whitehead, Claire. "Playing at Detectives: Parody in 'The Swedish Match.'"

Chekhoviana: 'Zvuk lopnuvshei struny': K 100-letiiu p'esy 'Vishněvyi sad.' Eds. V. V. Gul'chenko, V. B. Kataev, È. A. Polotskaia, and T. K. Shakh-Azizova. Moscow, Russia: Nauka, 2005.

The volume, in the order of the table of contents, contains the following articles and translations:

I. ISTOKI. KONTEKST

Kataev, V. B. "'Vishněvyi sad' kak èlement natsional'noi mifologii."
Polotskaia, È. A. "P'esa Chekhova (Put' k 'Vishněvomu sadu)."
Kuzicheva, A. P. "Metafora na vse vremena."
Tulintsev, B. V. "'Ich sterbe ...'."
Gul'chenko, V. V. "Kosmizm 'Vishněvogo sada' ('Vishněvyi sad' v svete teorii otноситel'nosti: Chekhov i Einshtein)."
Pitcher, Kharvi. "Kommentarii k fotografiiam Lili Glassbi."
Sosenkova, M. M. "Geografiia prizhiznennykh postanovok p'esy A. P. Chekhova 'Vishněvyi sad' (po materialam Doma-muzeia A. P. Chekhova v Ialte)."

II. CHEKHOV I "VISHNĚVYI SAD" V PROSTRANSTVE I VREMENI XX v.

Èfros, Nikolai. "'Vishněvyi sad' na stsene."
Belyi, Andrei. "'Vishněvyi sad' (Drama Chekhova)."
Meierkol'd, Vsevolod. "O teatre Chekhova, 'Vishněvom sade' i MKhT."
Kugel', A. R. "Chekhov."
Vulf, Virdzhiniia. "'Vishněvyi sad'."
Uolpoul, Kh'iu. "Epikhodov: zametki o russkom kharaktere."
Feikhtvanger, Lion. "'Vishněvyi sad'."
Pristli, Dzhon B. "Korni chekhovskogo Sada."
Moss, Govard. "Prust, Chekhov, Dzheims, Mann: zametki o literature."
Esslin, Martin. "Chekhov i sovremennaia drama."
Outs, Dzhois Kèrol. "Chekhov i teatr absurda."

III. TVORCHESKAIA LABORATORIIA

Barro, Zhan-Lui. "'Vishněvyi sad'."
Streler, Dzhordzho. "'Vishněvyi sad' Chekhova (1974)."
Bruk, Piter. "Mysli o Chekhove i poslednei ego p'ese."
Sudzuki, Tadasi. "'Vishněvyi sad' ili Istoriia po imeni Ranevskaia."
Keicha, Otomar. "Moi Chekhov. Fragmenty moskovskikh lektsii."
Tumanishvili, Mikhail. "Improvizatsii na temu 'Vishněvogo sada'."
Èfros, Anatolii. "O Chekhove i o nashei professii."
Shapiro, Adol'f. "Bylo!"
Tabachnikov, Efim. "'Vishněvyi sad.' Iz zapisnykh knizhek."
Mladenova, Margarita. "Teatral'nyi novator."
Ginkas, Kama. "Pochemu u Chekhova net p'esy 'Nedotėpy'?"

Vil'kin, Aleksandr. "'... No est' pokoi i volia ...'."

IV POËTIKA. LITERATURNYE SVIAZI.

Dimitrov, Liudmil. "VSË—VISHNËVYI SAD."

Ishchuk-Fadeeva, N. I. "Mifologema sada v poslednei komedii Chekhova i postmodernistskoi p'ese N. Iskrenko 'Vishnëvyi sad prodan?'"

Korolev, A. V. "Belaia Afrika."

Lazaresku, O. G. "Liubov' kak kliuchevoi kontsept kul'tury i p'esa 'Vishnëvyi sad'."

Shaliugin, G. A. "Uchitel' i greshnitsa: siuzhet v siuzhete 'Vishnëvogo sada'."

Domanskii, Iu. V. "Ob odnoi chekhovskoi remarke (Tekst, ktorogo net v tekste)."

Goriacheva, M. O. "Fokusy Sharlotty v fokuse dramaturgicheskogo analiza."

Odesskaia, M. M. "Shekspirovskie obrazy v 'Vishnëvom sade'."

Golovacheva, A. G. "'Gofmaniana' 'Vishnëvogo sada'."

Zviniatskovskii, V. Ia. "'... V budushchem razov'ëtsia v nechto gromadnoe ...' ('Vishnëvyi sad' A. P. Chekhova i 'Liubovnik ledi Chatterlei' D. G. Lourensa)."

Klèiton, Dzh. Dzh. "Deux solitudes' ('Dva odinochestva'): Frantsiia i Rossiia v 'Vishnëvom sade'."

Senelik, Lorens. "'Pod sen'iu glitsinii': 'Vishnëvyi sad' na iuge Ameriki."

Sasaki, Tèrukhiro. "Mak i vishnia v 'Vishnëvom sade'."

Maliutina, N. P. "Kharakter poliloga v p'ese 'Vishnëvyi sad' v kontekste poiskov muzykal'noi dramaturgii rubezha XIX-XX stoletii."

Ivanova, N. F. "'Uzhasno poiut èti liudi ...' (Romansy v p'ese Chekhova 'Vishnëvyi sad')."

V. PAMIATI CHEKHOVA

Rabenek, L. L. "Vospominaniia."

Finke, Michael C. *Seeing Chekhov: Life and Art*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 2005.

Stepanov, A. D. *Problemy kommunikatsii u Chekhova*. Moscow: Iazyki slavianskoi kul'tury, 2005. See the review of this book in this issue of *The Bulletin*.

Articles

Bushkanets, L. E. "Mezhdunarodnaia nauchnaia konferentsiia 'Vek posle Chekhova'." *Izvestiia Akademii nauk, Serii literatury i iazyka* 64:1 (January - February 2005), 72-77.

Darnal-Lesnè, Françoise. "L'Image de la femme dans l'oeuvre de Cexov: Un Itinéraire poétique." *Revue des Etudes Slaves* 74:4 (2005), 565-70.

Dvornikova, L. Ia. "Novye psevdonimy A. P. Chekhova? Chekhov i moskovskii zhurnal 'Zritel'.'" *Russkaia literatura* 3 (2005), 131-51.

Engel, Christine. "Djadja Vanja in der Verfilmung von Andrej Michalkov-Koncalovskij." *Kultur, Interpretation, Translation*. Ed. Heidemarie Salevsky. Frankfurt: Peter

- Lang, 2005, 233-50.
- Kim, Yoo. "Trevor Griffiths's Adaptation of *The Cherry Orchard*: A Radical Intervention to the Politics of British Chekhov." *Journal of Modern British and American Drama* 18:1 (Spring 2005), 47-63.
- Khalizev, V. E. "Idillichesкое v 'Vishnevom sade'." *Izvestiia Akademii nauk, Seria literatury i iazyka* 64:4 (July - August 2005), 3-11.
- Lehrman, Alexander. "'On Holy Night': Čechov's Poetic Credo," *Wiener Slawistischer Almanach* 56 (2005), 123-40.
- Linaker, Tanya. "A Witch, a Bitch or a Goddess? Female Voices Transcending Gender as Heard and Recorded by Chekhov, Mansfield, and Nabokov." *Slovo: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Russian, East-Central European and Eurasian Affairs* 17:2 (Fall 2005), 165-78.
- Lis, Kazimiera. "Antoni Czechow na Sachalinie: Katorga i kolonializm." *Slavia Orientalis* 54:3 (2005), 351-68.
- Polotskaia, E. A. "Printsip neopredelennosti v p'esakh Chekhova." *Izvestiia Akademii nauk, Seria literatury i iazyka* 64:2 (March - April 2005), 15-20.
- Reid, John McKellor. "Polemic as Parting Advice: The 'Argument' of *The Cherry Orchard*." *Modern Drama: World Drama from 1850 to the Present* 48:1 (Spring 2005), 30-54.

2006

Books and Collections

Chekhov. Poetics—Hermeneutics—Thematics. Ed. J. Douglas Clayton. Ottawa: The Slavic Research Group at the University of Ottawa, 2006. See the review of the book and its contents in this issue of *The Bulletin*.

Chekhov 2004: Chekhov Special Issues in Two Volumes, Vol. II: Chekhov and Others. Ed. and preface by Joe Andrew and Robert Reid. In *Essays in Poetics: The Journal of the Neo-Formalist Circle* 31 (2006).

This volume contains the following articles:

- Adlam, Carol. "Anton Chekhov and Lillian Hellman: Ethics, Form, and the Problem of Melodrama."
- Alenkina, Tatiana. "From *Chaika* by Chekhov to *The Seagull* by Thomas Kilroy."
- Bartlett, Rosamund. "'Notes in a Musical Score': The Point of Chekhov's Punctuation."
- Dalton-Brown, Sally. "Listening for the Lost Children: Chekhov and Katherine Mansfield."
- Dixon, Ross. "'Don't Throw Me Out!' Anatolii Ėfros' 1967 production of *Three Sisters*."
- Falchikov, Michael. "Chekhov on the Cusp of Two Epochs: Escaping from the Classics."

- Golomb, Harai. "The Whole at the Expense of Its Parts: Chekhov's Plays as Structuralists' Paradise."
- Graffy, Julian. "'Difficult People': Kira Muratova's Cinematic Encounter with Chekhov."
- Haard, Eric de. "Chekhov's Number Games and his Pastiche of Jules Verne: 'The Flying Islands.'"
- Harris, Jane Gary. "Image Criticism Revisited: Chekhov's Reception in the Early 20th Century Russian Women's Periodical Press."
- Mondry, Henrietta. "Peasant Women's Sexualities in the Writings of Gleb Uspenskii and Anton Chekhov."
- O'Connor, Katherine Tiernan. "Chekhov's Letter to Lermontov."
- Pursglove, Michael. "Grigorovich's *The Migrants*: A Source for Chekhov's *The Steppe*."
- Soboleva, Olga. "'It Is Only Chekhov That One Wants to Be Like': Chekhov and Dovlatov – The Art of a Storyteller."
- Tabachnikova, Olga. "'The World Is Ugly and People Are Sad': On Chekhov's Ethics and Aesthetics in the Works of Sergei Dovlatov."
- Windle, Kevin. "Three Irish Sisters: Brian Friel's Version of Chekhov's Play for the Irish Stage. "

Loehlin, James N. *Chekhov: The Cherry Orchard*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge UP, 2006.

Articles

- Flath, Carol Apollonio. "A New Century, a New Chekhov." *Slavic and East European Journal* 50:3 (Fall 2006), 499-504.
- Golovacheva, A. "'Student': Pervyi krymskii rasskaz Chekhova." *Voprosy literatury* 1 (January - February 2006), 276-96.
- Linkov, V. Ia. "Lev Shestov-kritik Chekhova." *Izvestiia Akademii nauk, Seriiia literatury i iazyka* 65:4 (July - August 2006), 44-47.
- Marsh, Cynthia. "The Implications of Quotation in Performance: Masha's Lines from Pushkin in Chekhov's *Three Sisters*." *Slavonic and East European Review* 84:3, (Summer 2006), 446-59.
- McVay, Gordon. "The Centenary of Anton Chekhov: A Survey of Publications." *Slavonic and East European Review* 84:1 (Winter 2006), 83-118.
- Polakiewicz, L. A. "Western critical responses to Chekhov's *The Island of Sakhalin*." *Russian History-Histoire Russe* 33:1 (Spring 2006), 73-82.
- Rabotnov, Nikolai. "Nikeliruem zoloto: O literaturnykh variatsiiaikh na temy literaturnoi klassiki." *Znamia* 2 (February 2006), 185-96.
- Reid, John McKellor. "*Ivanov*: The Perils of Typicality." *Modern Drama* 49:1 (Spring 2006), 76-97.
- Shevtsova, Maria. "Lev Dodin and the Maly Drama Theatre: *Uncle Vanya* to *King Lear*." *New Theatre Quarterly* 22:3 (August 2006), 249-56.

Tamarchenko, N. D. "Puti preobrazovaniia zhanra povesti na rubezhe XIX-XX vekov: 'Kreitserova sonata' L. Tolstogo i 'Duèl' Chekhova." *Izvestiia Akademii nauk, Seriiia literatury i iazyka* 65:5 (September - October 2006), 3-15.

Tammi, Pekka. "Against Narrative ('A Boring Story')." *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas* 4:2 (Winter 2006), 19-40.

Vinitskii, Il'ia. "Dukhovnyi kartser. N. S. Leskov i 'Palata No 6' A. P. Chekhova." *Voprosy literatury* 4 (July - August 2006), 310-22.

Vinogradova, E. "Shekspirovskaia tsitata u Chekhova." *Voprosy literatury* 4 (July - August 2006), 176-97.

2007

Book

Volchkevich, Maya. "The Seagull." *A Comedy of Delusions*. Trans. Svetlana le Fleming. Moscow: Probel-2000, 2007. The book is a translation of "Chaika." *Komediia zabluzhdenii*. Moscow: Muzei cheloveka, 2005.

Articles

Dragunskii, Denis. "'Sosedi.' Konspekt o Chekhove." *Oktiabr'* 1 (2007), 163-77.

Griffin, Bradley W. "The Cherry Orchard." *Theatre Journal* 59:1 (March 2007), 126-9.

Senderovich, S. "'Vishnëvyi sad'—posledniaia shutka Chekhova." *Voprosy literatury* 1 (January - February 2007), 290-317.