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Editor's Note

This issue, coming on the heels of the enthusiasm generated by the past jubilee year, will not be as large as the previous issue. But it will nonetheless, it is hoped, satisfy and stimulate our subscribers. It opens with an essay by Erica Siegel on one of the amazing late stories of Chekhov. Cole Crittenden offers another of his insightful theater reviews of a recent production of *Three Sisters* in New York, and Douglas Clayton reviews Harvey Pitcher's recent book on Chekhov. For the benefit of NASC members who could not attend the *Chekhov on Stage and Page* conference at OSU, Angela Brintlinger, with her associates, summarizes the events and through a list of the papers presented gives us a sense of the depth and variety of the conference's program. And the issue concludes with a new set of Web links that might be of some interest and a bibliography of recent books and articles on Chekhov, including two significant books that were not listed in the last bibliography.

Narrative Autopsy in Chekhov's "On Official Business"

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In 1891 Anton Chekhov wrote a letter to Elena Shavrova, a young friend and aspiring writer, in response to a story she had asked him to critique. His sharpest comments concern the teenager's depiction of doctors, who apparently evinced a "love for corpses." Chekhov's reprimand is plain: «Вы не видели трупов» ("You've never so

much as seen a corpse”).¹ Chekhov, a country doctor, was no stranger to corpses, or to narrative depictions of them. In an 1884 letter he recorded a clinical and vivid account of an autopsy he was called to perform in a remote village. This experience served as source material for Chekhov’s “On Official Business” (*Po delam sluzhby*, 1899), in which a country doctor and young inspector travel to a small town in order to perform an autopsy on an apparent suicide.² This short story relies to a great extent on the question of seeing – or not seeing – dead bodies, the problem identified in Chekhov’s letter to Shavrova.

An autopsy is perhaps the most graphic and invasive means of viewing dead bodies, and it is the autopsy that serves as the story’s central motif, unifying the text structurally and thematically. But while he uses the autopsy as the text’s organizing principle, Chekhov demonstrates little reverence for the autopsy as an irrefutable, decisive authority on the cause of things. In the multiple incarnations of the autopsy that appear throughout “On Official Business,” its capacity to explain is scrutinized, and the

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Ralph Lindheim for his editorial contributions.

Citations from Chekhov’s prose and letters are from A.P. Chekhov, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii i pisem v tridtsati tomakh* (Moskva: Nauka, 1974-83). Volume and page numbers follow each citation parenthetically in the body of the text. All translations are mine.

¹ *Pis'ma*, vol. 4, p. 273. At this point in their relationship, Shavrova was something of a protégé to Chekhov. She would later take a turn as his lover.

² Donald Rayfield quotes the 1884 letter in connection with “On Official Business,” arguing that this story “was to condense fifteen years of such autopsies.” See *Anton Chekhov: A Life* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1997), p. 108. A few earlier stories appear to owe an inspirational debt to this experience as well. Two of them, “Perpetuum mobile” (1884) and “The Examining Magistrate” (*Sledovatel'*, 1887), open with a doctor and investigator on their way to an autopsy. Two peasants guard a corpse that is shrouded in a sheet in “The Dead Body” (*Mërtvoe telo*, 1885), and in “In the Shed” (*V sarae*, 1887) servants discuss their master’s recent suicide as they wait for the authorities to carry out an inquest.

autopsy itself is anatomized. The word for autopsy, вскрытие, translates literally as the act of uncovering or disclosing, a process of explanation as excavation. The dynamics of covering and uncovering dominate the narrative, in both foreground and background. As the story progresses, the landscape is steadily covered up with snow, and the actual physical autopsy promises little in the way of disclosure.

Chekhov establishes both the significance and the problematic nature of the autopsy in the earliest lines of this story. The word вскрытие appears twice in the first paragraph, first in the story's first sentence, in which an as yet unnamed inspector and country doctor are "on their way to perform the autopsy in the village of Syrnia" («ехали на вскрытие в село Сырню»). Here the autopsy serves as a destination, an administrative task requiring completion. The paragraph ends with the phrase «понадобилось вскрытие» ("an autopsy was in order"),³ suggesting circularity and inconclusiveness. Thus, the autopsy frames this first paragraph, serving as its beginning and end, and is notably absent in the central lines of the paragraph. Other than one comment from the inspector – that he and the doctor will perform the autopsy the next day⁴ – the word disappears from the text. It functions similarly in the story as a whole. It is the autopsy that brings the doctor and the investigator to the town, and by the close of the work, they are once again on their way to Syrnia, to perform the autopsy. Enhancing the ring structure of the story is the fact that the inspector and doctor – whose names are finally divulged as Lyzhin and Starchenko several paragraphs into the narration – are once again referred to in the story's final line only by their official titles:

³ "Po delam sluzhby," *Sochineniia*, vol 10, p.86.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

«Доктор и следователь ничего не сказали, сели в сани и поехали в Сырню» (“The doctor and inspector said nothing, got into their sleigh and set off for Syrnia”).⁵

Two of our main characters begin and end this tale, then, as anonymous bureaucrats. The murder victim’s name, however, is divulged in this first paragraph, even as Lyzhin’s and Starchenko’s are omitted in favor of their offices: «Тут же, в земской избе, по случайности, находился и труп, труп земского страхового агента Лесницкого» (“It was there, in the village headquarters, as it happened, lay the corpse, the corpse of the Zemstvo insurance agent Lesnitskii”).⁶ By naming him, the narrator ascribes greater humanity to the dead man than to the living ones who have come to examine him.

One final look at this introductory paragraph reveals a further complication, even an indictment, of the potential of the autopsy to explain the cause of death. In the center of this paragraph, the word corpse, труп, appears twice. As a result, the paragraph creates the chiasmus вскрытие - труп - труп - вскрытие. The syntax in effect parodies the function of an autopsy: the dead body is enclosed within the autopsy. Furthermore, the autopsy, which denotes an act of penetration to the center, appears ironically on the peripheries of this paragraph.

Despite its emphatic presence in the introductory paragraph, the autopsy never occurs within the bounds of the story’s narration. Established from the outset as a circular endeavor that is at once a beginning and an end, with no middle and no

⁵ Ibid., p. 101.

⁶ Ibid., p. 86. I follow Yarmolinsky’s translation of земская изба as “village headquarters,” which, he explains in a note, is “A cottage in which community meetings and sessions of the village elders were held and which was sometimes used as a hostelry.” See *The Portable Chekhov* (New York: Penguin, 1977), p. 440.

explication, the autopsy – and its authority to explain – is compromised from the very beginning of the story. As the story continues, the irony established in this first paragraph develops from the level of syntax to the level of plot.

Just as the word “autopsy” enclosed the resounding repetition of the word “corpse” in the first paragraph, the requirement of an autopsy in “On Official Business” to some degree obscures the ostensible cause of death. The first paragraph states plainly that the dead man, Lesnitskii, shot himself; the locals, incredulous that a man would kill himself after having gone to the trouble to arrange for food and drink, suspect murder and demand an autopsy. On one hand, the cause of death, a self-inflicted gunshot wound, is laid bare in this first paragraph. On the other hand, embedded in the story’s exposition is the larger question of trying to make sense of a suicide, and the question posed in this story is, essentially, what role can a medical inquest play in attempting to understand why a man took his own life? There will be a number of answers to this question, as each of the story’s three major characters “sees the dead body” in different ways. These characters are the doctor Starchenko, his young companion, the investigator Lyzhin, and the old policeman Loshadin, a former serf and the policeman assigned the task of watching over the dead body until its autopsy. As these perspectives play off one another, the story examines the very endeavor of pathological inquiry.

The scene in which Starchenko and Lyzhin survey the room where the body lies is a detailed depiction of two characters *not* seeing a dead body. The account is narrated from the perspective of someone entering the room for the first time, and the reader is introduced to the dead body along with the visitors Starchenko and Lyzhin. Like Chekhov’s young friend Shavrova, the readers and main characters of “On Official

Business” “never so much as see a corpse.” The body is covered by a sheet, from under which all that is visible are a pair of rubber boots. It remains unexposed, as neither Starchenko nor Lyzhin peers under the covering. Further reluctance to see the dead body, it might be added, is exhibited by the local townswomen, who, as the old policeman Loshadin informs the visitors, won’t go into the cow houses for fear that the “dead man will materialize before them in the darkness” («Как бы в потемках барин не примерещился.»).⁷

Even as the body at the crime scene goes conspicuously uncovered, a drive to expose pervades the scene, and the act of investigation by excavation is mimicked and parodied. Whereas the body goes more or less ignored, the objects in the room are probed with considerable attention. The samovar remains on the table, “long since cold” («давно уже холодный»),⁸ a stand-in for Lesnitskii, whose blood has turned cold in his veins, and who has also been left, like the samovar, for the past three days. Similarly, the packages that lie around the samovar, the narrator ventures, “probably contained food” («свертки, должно быть, с закусками»)⁹. The contents of the stomach were frequently revelatory in autopsy findings, and in the autopsy recounted in Chekhov’s 1884 letter, the stomach was opened to reveal a strong smell of alcohol, determining the dead man had been drunk. But here, in this scene in “On Official Business,” the method of examining the dead is displaced from the once-animate body to inanimate objects.

In 1889, Chekhov wrote a letter to his friend and publisher Suvorin, assailing an anti-materialist novel, contending that “Beings of a higher order, thinking people, are also

⁷ Ibid., p. 87.

⁸ Ibid., p. 86-87.

⁹ Ibid., p. 87.

necessarily materialists. They search for truth in matter because there is nowhere else for them to search – all they can see, hear and feel is matter. They can necessarily search for truth only where their microscopes, probes and knives are effective” («Существа высшего порядка, мыслящие люди – материалисты тоже по необходимости. Они ищут истину в материи, ибо искать ее больше негде, так как видят, слышат и ощущают они одну только материю. По необходимости они могут искать истину только там, где пригодны их микроскопы, зонды, ножи.»).¹⁰ This initial examination of material evidence at the potential crime scene certainly represents the search for truth in matter. The detailed description of the objects in the room constitutes a fine police report – it provides a detailed account of what lies where, and of the room’s furniture and lighting scheme. But the attempted uncovering (or вскрытие) of objects is, to a large degree, displaced at the expense of attention to the body. Furthermore, the description of the things in the room is also painfully superficial, speculating on what lies under the sheet, inside the samovar, within the packages, but never actually penetrating the surface. The autopsy as an investigation of physical evidence is reenacted in this scene, but to little effect. The corpse, the packages, the samovar, remain intact and covered up. The body goes unseen, and attention is diverted to the possible contents of things.

And yet the corpse is not ignored completely; not seeing it is simply another way of seeing it. Although the scene is described with the meticulous detail of a crime report, it is hardly a dispassionate, scientific account: «всё тут было нехорошо, жутко: и темные стены, и тишина, и эти калоши, и неподвижность мертвого тела» (“Everything there was bad and eerie: the dark walls, the silence, those galoshes, and the

¹⁰ Pis'ma, vol. 3, p. 208.

motionlessness of the dead body.”).¹¹ The unsettling features of the room are negative – it is the absence of light, sound and motion that so upsets the observer. The stillness of the corpse is particularly significant, not only because it represents a distraction from a depiction of the dead body itself, but also because in this story people’s occupations and daily lives are described predominantly by verbs of motion. Loshadin’s refrain, for example, is, “I’m always on the go” («я всё хожу»)¹² – this is the nature of his official business, and even though it might be pointless and iterative, it is still life, and motionlessness is its morbid alternative. Going on, therefore, is cast simultaneously in spiritual and physical terms. In this light, the “still new” rubber boots on the corpse speak volumes. If life is depicted as “going,” the boots are a poignant indication of a desire to *go on* that the suicidal man could not sustain. Loshadin gives a pathological account of his daily travails, which echoes this motif: “When I don’t walk, my feet hurt” («Когда не ходишь, так даже ноги болят.»).¹³ Keeping moving staves off not only physical pain, but also the psychological pain that might lead one to contemplate suicide, and “stop” for good.

The scene at the village headquarters of Syrnia, therefore, is a graphic depiction, not of a dead body, but of another way of seeing it – as loss. The darkness, stillness and lack of movement dominate the room in which the body lies. The space has an echo in Chekhov’s depiction of the widower and former town prosecutor Von Taunitz. Having

¹¹ *Sochineniia*, vol. 10, p. 86.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 90. There is an ambiguity in the Russian here over whether walking alleviates pain for Loshadin. I read Loshadin’s remark in agreement with Yarmolinsky, who renders it as “Matter of fact, when I’m not on the go, my feet hurt” (p. 446), implying that movement relieves his discomfort. Pevear and Volokhonsky, on the other hand, translate the line as “My feet hurt even when I don’t walk,” and thus suggest that the pain still exists, regardless of movement or stasis. See *Stories* (New York: Bantam, 2000), p. 348.

lost his wife, he can speak of nothing else – he constantly alludes to loss, and, as a result, becomes lost himself. His voice is described as orphaned («сиротский»), and he himself is described as absent of life and livelihood – “there was no longer anything left of a prosecutor in him” («в нем уже не осталось ничего прокурорского»)¹⁴

If the investigation of the scene at the village headquarters is a study in the pathos of negative detail, the letter in which Chekhov describes the autopsy he had been called to perform is dispassionate and positivist. He renders the crime scene and the bystanders, which include the distraught wife of the dead man. He relays the position of the corpse, which, he notes, is covered by a sheet that does not fully obscure a red shirt and new trousers. He details the findings of the autopsy, listing the internal first: broken ribs, a swollen lung, and the stomach that smelled of alcohol. Immediately after enumerating these injuries he surmises that it was a violent death by strangulation, the man’s windpipe crushed, probably by a peasant’s knee. Superficial abrasions, he adds, were likely inflicted by peasants who believed they could resuscitate the man by rocking him vigorously. So Chekhov starts from the inside and proceeds out, looking to the innermost organs and bones for clues as to the cause of death.

In each of these pathological accounts, one real and one fictional, the human body is the source of important information. The actual invasive medical inquest yields the cause of one man’s death, but the scene with Lesnitskii’s body is a portrait of what the body cannot tell. It presents death as loss and muteness. The fictional dead body provides no new information as to how Lesnitskii died, but instead raises the question of

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 98.

why he killed himself. This question is of utmost importance in “On Official Business,” and it is unassailable by a physical, medical inquest.

Still, the drive to uncover and to anatomize supplies the narrative with its motor as the story continues, and the structure and format of the autopsy is detectable as Chekhov’s characters examine not only dead bodies and death, but life and livelihood as well. One of the aims of “On Official Business” certainly appears to be a dissection of life and its “official duties,” or служба, as the text exposes the fruitlessness of the tasks of bureaucrats, be they the city-dwelling investigators or Loshadin, recently freed from serfdom to become a servant of the state. As is clear from the text, the task the doctor and Lyzhin have been called to perform is fully unnecessary. It is “official business,” in the sense that it is a pure formality. It appears more or less clear that Lesnitskii shot himself (at least the first paragraph tells us so), and the doctor and investigator accept the suicide as fact. The doctor is shocked that the man would fire a bullet into his brain at the village office. It would have been far more appropriate, he opines, to do so in the privacy of his own home. Thus the exact cause of death is laid bare in this utterance, although it is buried in his editorializing. On the other hand, the futility of the autopsy is tacitly acknowledged, but unexpressed – it is covered up by the doctor.

Loshadin, by contrast, lays bare the uselessness of the task after Starchenko abandons Lyzhin in the village for more comfortable lodging. Chatting with the investigator, Loshadin describes the responsibilities of his office. His duties, like the autopsy Lyzhin has come to perform, are strictly ceremonial:

Ношу пакеты, повестки, окладные листы, письма, бланки разные, ведомости, и значит, господин хороший, ваше высокоблагородие, нынче такие бланки пошли, чтобы цифри записывать, - желтые, белые, красные, - и всякий барин, или батька, или богатый мужик

беспрерывно записать должен раз десять в год, сколько у него посеяно и убрано, сколько у него четвертей или пудов ржи, сколько овса, сена и какая, значит, погода и разные там насекомые. Конечно, пиши что хочешь, тут одна форма, а ты ходи, раздавай листки, а потом опять ходи и собирай. Вот, к примеру сказать, барина потрошить не к чему, сам знаешь, пустое дело, только руки поганить...¹⁵

[I bring packages, notices, tax papers, letters, various forms, gazettes, and then, kind sir, your Honor, there are forms for writing down the numbers – yellow ones, white ones, red ones – and every gentleman or priest or rich muzhik must write down about a dozen times a year how much he’s sowed and reaped, how many quarters or *poods* he has of rye, of oats, of hay and then about the weather and the various insects. You can write what you want, of course, it’s just a regulation, but you’ve got to go, hand out the notices and then go back and collect them. Here, for instance, there’s no need to cut up the gentleman, you know yourself it’s a senseless task and you’d only be dirtying your hands...]

Loshadin states here unequivocally that the autopsy, as an examination of the body, will provide no insight into the cause of death. The autopsy is not required to find answers, but rather because it is official business. He describes the deed itself literally as empty (пустое) – an appropriate modifier as it renders the autopsy as a pursuit that is both abstract and physical: the task is futile, the body devoid of answers.

Loshadin’s punctilious description of his job is also rendered in the format of the autopsy. Like a pathological investigation, his work is a detailed and ponderous inquest. The tools of his trade – his letters, reports and multicolored forms – are variegated and designed for specific purposes, as might be those of a forensic pathologist. The items Loshadin reports on – the weather, insects, grain outputs – are natural, organic phenomena, and they are meticulously sorted, counted and recorded. The natural world is turned into text. And yet the process Loshadin describes is an inquest that simply fails, due to its focus on organization at the expense of interpretation. There is no meaningful

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 89.

analysis of the data Loshadin has collected, and for all his efforts, no real point to the endeavor.

Loshadin's job description amounts to an unsuccessful вскрытие, but what he says about the dead man is, on the contrary, poignantly revelatory. Потрошить, the word Loshadin uses to refer to cutting open the corpse, literally means to disembowel or eviscerate. The autopsy, in this instance unique to the entire story, is cast as violence to the body. Consequently here, after the insensitive and dismissive remarks from Lyzhin and Starchenko on the demise of Lesnitskii, is a note of sympathy for the deceased (to whom Loshadin refers as a gentleman, or барин). Another way of seeing the dead body, here enacted by Loshadin, is recognizing that it was once a living one: he remarks to Lyzhin that he knew Lesnitskii as a child, referring to him by his given name Serēzha as well as with the endearing diminutive эжанький, recalling a smaller body and an earlier time: "I am from the village of Nedoshchotova," Loshadin informs us, "and the Lesnitskii family lived less than a *verst* from us" («Я из деревни Недошотовой, а они, господа Лесницкие, от нас не больше, как в версте»)¹⁶ The dead body, for Loshadin, is part of much larger, human picture. It opens up narrative that extends into time and space, an account that is starkly in contrast to the static information afforded by the investigations of grain outputs in the countryside.

It could be argued that Loshadin presents some form of etiology for the suicide: we learn from him that Lesnitskii's father had illegally obtained his own sister's inheritance, and had died, bequeathing Lesnitskii massive debt. Lesnitskii, with no other prospects, accepted a job as a Zemstvo insurance agent, a position he evidently hated.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 90.

But Loshadin does not strain for causality, and his manner of seeing the death falls short of explaining it: the corpse is humanized, but the death itself remains inexplicable. His final word on the subject is, “It makes no sense, your Honor, it’s wrong, you won’t understand what’s happening in this world” («Нескладно, ваше высокоблагородие, неправильно это самое и не поймешь, что оно такое на свете»¹⁷).

Peter Brooks, building on Erich Auerbach’s “Odysseus’s Scar,” comments that the scar, which serves as a device for spawning the consistently externalized narration in the *Odyssey*, is, after all, a mark on the human body. In parallel, then,

...the body is made a signifier, or the place on which messages are written. This is perhaps most of all true in narrative literature, where the body’s story, through the trials of desire and over time, often is very much part of the story of a character. The result is what we might call a narrative aesthetics of embodiment, where meaning and truth are made carnal.¹⁸

I would add that the narrative that springs from Odysseus’s scar is a pathological account, a record of violence done to the body. Bodies are similarly readable in both of Chekhov’s professional realms: in the letter that recounts his experience as a medical examiner, the body serves as a text that readily provides answers to pathological queries. In the fictional world of “On Official Business,” each reading of the body is different, and the narrative accounts provoked by the dead body vary as the corpse is viewed from

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 91. In “The Investigating Magistrate,” the doctor and the investigator debate whether or not there is such a thing as an unexplained death. The investigator avers that some are unexplainable, and proffers an illustrative tale of a woman who foretold her own death in order to make his case. The doctor insists that “where there’s a death there’s a reason,” and argues that the demise must have been a premeditated suicide. “The Investigating Magistrate” is a far more positivistic text than “On Official Business”: The doctor’s explanation convinces and dismays the investigator, who, it turns out, was the husband of the dead woman, and may bear some responsibility for her suicide.

¹⁸ *Body Work: Objects of Desire in Modern Narrative* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 21.

different perspectives. Even though Chekhov's fictional investigators (unlike Eurykleia) do not push aside the covers that shield the damaged body, the swathed, silent corpse still speaks volumes about death. If the death is perceived as a void by Lyzhin and Starchenko, Loshadin sees the body as a narrative text that records experience, which necessarily takes place, as Brooks writes, "over time." Loshadin's "reading" of the dead body, his own narrative that springs from the death of Lesnitskii, is marked by its expansiveness in time. In beholding the dead body, Loshadin tells of Lesnitskii's life.

Chekhov propounded a monism of body and soul that accords well with the conflation of the abstract and the physical, the depiction of the autopsy as violence, and the viewing of the body as biography in this story. In the same 1889 letter to Suvorin, he writes:

Я думаю, что, когда вскрываешь труп, даже у самого заядлого спиритуалиста *необходимо* явится вопрос: где тут душа? А если знаешь, как велико сходство между телесными и душевными болезнями, и когда знаешь, что те и другие болезни лечатся одними и теми же лекарствами, поневоле захочешь не отделять душу от тела.¹⁹

[It seems to me that, when you dissect a corpse, even the most inveterate spiritualist must *necessarily* ask where the soul is. And if you know how great the similarity is between physical and mental illnesses, and when you know that these illnesses are treated with the very same remedies, you can't help but refuse to separate the soul from the body.]

If mental illness and physical illnesses are treated with the same remedies, by analogy, the cause of death is intelligible both by the experience which leads up to the demise as well as the marks on the body. In "On Official Business," since the cause of death was suicide, the pathological investigation relies more on the mental state of the dead man before he killed himself than on an anatomical inquest.

¹⁹ *Pis'ma*, vol. 3, p. 208.

In this light, Dr. Starchenko's view of the dead man is the least complex, the most reductive in the work. Ironically, this is because he ignores the physical and focuses on the mental illness. Because he is a doctor, we can assume he has seen dead bodies before, but here he sees only the corpse, not the man. Actually, he barely apprehends even the corpse: Starchenko refers to the deceased solely by a medical term, neurasthenic. His use of the word "neurasthenic" (неврастеник) is repetitive, appearing three times, in two utterances about Lesnitskii.²⁰ The disease itself goes largely undescribed, and the primary symptom of neurasthenics, according to Starchenko, appears to be that they are nuisances. The neurasthenic was a nuisance in life, and, he appears to be a nuisance in death, too, having dragged the doctor from his comfortable home to the rougher suburbs. The symptoms of the disease are not elucidated, and the patient is equated with his disorder, in effect, obscured by it. To quote Cathy Popkin, the doctor is "focused on the syndrome, not the sufferer."²¹

Thus is the individual suicide effaced by the general condition of neurasthenia. The doctor can only talk about Lesnitskii in general, as a representative of a group of people who have this disease and behave this way. The troubling fact that Lesnitskii left behind a wife and child is disclosed by Starchenko – but even this particular detail is immediately enlisted in support of a general solution, draconian in its logic: as a prophylactic measure, expounds the doctor, neurasthenics should be deprived of the right and ability to have children. Additionally, the doctor speaks about neurasthenics in the present tense – they rustle their papers, fight with their wives and shoot themselves in public. His words are in marked contrast to Loshadin's, which described Lesnitskii's

²⁰ *Sochineniia*, vol. 10, p. 87, 98.

²¹ "Humpty Dumpty had a Great Fall," Unpublished paper.

particular past. Loshadin's view of the dead body is all narrative and no explanation; Starchenko's is all explanation and no narrative.

In seeing the body only as a victim of neurological disease, Starchenko overlooks the fact that the suicide was, in fact, a choice. Von Taunitz's response to Starchenko's proposal to keep neurasthenics from reproducing is thus more correction than agreement: "How much thinking, how much suffering does someone have to go through before deciding to take his own life... a young life" («Сколько надо прежде передумать, выстрадать, чтобы наконец решиться отнять у себя жизнь... молодую жизнь.»).²² When the bereft widower Von Taunitz sighs and observes that such a tragedy could befall any family, he identifies another deficiency in the way Starchenko views the body: looking at the dead necessitates also looking inward. Those who understand the dead body are those who are forced to examine the constitution (and vulnerability) of their own lives.

When propounding the peaceful co-existence of the different branches of knowledge of "anatomy and belles-lettres" («анатомия и изящная словесность») in his next letter to Suvorin on May 15, Chekhov wrote, «когда человек не понимает, то чувствует в себе разлад; причин этого разлада он ищет не в себе самом, как бы нужно было, а вне себя» ("When a person doesn't understand something, he feels discord within himself. But he does not look for the causes of this discord within himself, as he should, but searches outside himself.").²³ Starchenko, for whom the thought of traveling from Moscow to commit suicide in a remote town is incomprehensible, "looks outside" in all respects. In keeping with this propensity, by the

²² *Sochineniia*, vol. 10, p. 98.

²³ *Pis'ma*, vol. 3, p. 216.

end of the story he faults the cold climate for impeding the free movement and the intellectual development of Russians.

The most extensive, revelatory *вскрытие* is enacted by Lyzhin, who “sees” the dead body, not once, but twice – and in a number of capacities. The first viewing occurs in memory:

И он вдруг вспомнил, как однажды в земской управе, когда он разговаривал с бухгалтером, к конторке подошел какой-то господин с темными глазами, черноволосый, худой, бледный; у него было неприятное выражение глаз, какое бывает у людей, которые долго спали после обеда, и оно портило его тонкий, умный профиль; и высокие сапоги, в которых он был, не шли к нему, казались грубыми. ... Он вспомнил тихий голос Лесницкого, вообразил его походку, и ему показалось, что возле него ходит теперь кто-то, ходит точно так же, как Лесницкий.²⁴

[And he suddenly recalled how, when one day he was talking with the book-keeper in the village office, a certain thin, pale man with dark eyes and black hair came up to the desk. He had the kind of unpleasant expression that people who have slept too long after dinner have, and it spoiled his delicate, intelligent profile. The tall boots he wore also did not suit him, and seemed clumsy...[Lyzhin] remembered Lesnitskii's quiet voice, imagined his gait, and it seemed that someone was now walking just like Lesnitskii beside him.]

To recollect (*вспомнить*) serves here to uncover (*вскрыть*), and in this instance the *вскрытие* reveals Lesnitskii himself. The shrouded, dead body is uncovered, and the victim resurrected. Ironically this *вскрытие*, rather than dissecting the man, here recreates him, piece by piece. Lyzhin’s recollection is not only significant because he sees Lesnitskii, but also for how he sees him. His vision of the dead man is closely detailed, and strikingly so when it comes to physical characteristics.

The doctor and Lyzhin, by contrast, are described in far more laconic terms. Their ranks and ages are listed as if they were of primary importance, and the doctor is

²⁴ *Sochineniia*, vol. 10, p. 93.

defined physically by the glasses and beard that obscure his face rather than reveal it. Lesnitskii's appearance is not only described in detail, but his features are ascribed with non-physical characteristics – he looks intelligent, although also troubled by something. He stands out vividly among the cast of characters in the story. He speaks and walks in his own characteristic way, his movement emphasized in response to the emphatic motionlessness ascribed to his dead body. At the initial viewing of the body, the black boots were the one detail, aside from the white sheet, that could be ascribed to the corpse. Now, the boots appear as an incongruent attribute of this slight, delicate man, and have further concealed any understanding of who this dead man was.

The second time Lyzhin sees Lesnitskii is in a dream, and the vision of the dead body moves from memory to the subconscious. In this dream, he replays meeting Lesnitskii at the village office, taking note once again of his face and boots. It is after this dream that Lyzhin has his final revelation, which is described with the vocabulary of an anatomical investigation. It is, moreover, prefaced with an episode in which he sits up in bed, his heart pounding and clasping his head in his hands, a physical overture to a moment of complete comprehension.

В этой жизни, ... всё имеет одну душу, одну цель, и чтобы понимать это, мало думать, мало рассуждать, надо еще, вероятно, иметь дар проникновения в жизнь, дар, который дается, очевидно, не всем. И несчастный, надорвавшийся, убивший себя "неврастеник", как называл его доктор, и старик мужик, который всю свою жизнь каждый день ходит от человека к человеку, - это случайности, отрывки жизни для того, кто и свое существование считает случайным, и это части одного организма, чудесного и разумного для того, кто и свою жизнь считает частью этого общего и понимает это...²⁵

²⁵ Ibid., p. 99.

[In this life,... everything has only one soul, one aim, and in order to understand it, it wasn't enough to think or reason – you also needed to have the gift of insight (проникновения) into life, a gift that, apparently, is not given to everyone, or does not come easily to everyone. And the unhappy, tormented man who had killed himself, the “neurasthenic,” as the doctor called him, and the old muzhik, who went from person to person every day of his whole life, were accidents, fragments of life, for someone who thought of his own life as accidental, but were parts of one organism, both miraculous and rational, to someone who considered his life part of this whole and appreciated this.]

The revelation, the notion of penetrating life and discovering that we are all part of one organism, seems to be the consummate вскрытие in this work. It is a profound realization; it is also rife with paradox. The organism is at once miraculous (or irrational) and rational, and Lyzhin muses on penetrating *life*, not a dead body. Furthermore, what unites this organism, Lyzhin realizes, is not evident in the material world – all are bound by an “invisible tie” and “everything has one soul” («какая-то связь, невидимая,» «все имеет одну душу»²⁶). And the ultimate discovery is that everything is whole – when an autopsy is, in essence, a dissection or disassembling.

As many have observed, Chekhov was not a staunch materialist who eschewed any search for truth that might occur in the non-physical world. Cathy Popkin locates his attitude toward the human body somewhere between untouchably sacred and material for the dissecting table.²⁷ The paradoxical nature of Lyzhin's final discovery stems, perhaps, from Chekhov's reluctance to subscribe to either of these two schools. The autopsy, which serves in “On Official Business” as both a literary tool and a physical investigation, for Chekhov is a means of investigation in both the material and spiritual

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Popkin, Cathy, “*Historia morbi* and the ‘Holy of Holies’”, *Scientific and Religious Discourse and Chekhov's Epistemology* (Munich, Verlag Otto Wagner, 1997), p. 373.

realms. The autopsy is revisited again and again as the means for examinations of the dead, as well as of the living and their livelihoods.

Such examinations ultimately explain because they are penetrative: although the corpse is never cut up in this story, many boundaries that are established as impermeable at the beginning of the story are effaced by its end. The division between urban and provincial life dissolves for Lyzhin, who, by the conclusion of the narrative, abandons his notion of Moscow as a haven from the harshness of the countryside. The notion that all of humanity is connected by one soul would seem to suggest a transcendence of the boundaries of each individual, physical body. Lyzhin's empathy for Lesnitskii, in a sense, bridges that which divides one self from another – or one self from another's pain. Seeing dead bodies seems to require penetration, but penetration – although it can be cast in material terms – need not take place in the material world. This means, of course, that in Chekhov's fictional world, as opposed to Homer's, meaning and truth are not always "made carnal," as Brooks puts it. Odysseus's scar testifies to his identity; his wound assists in forging his character. We will never know if Lyzhin's realization in Syrnia is a similarly formative event, whether it will leave a lasting imprint on him.²⁸ When Chekhov restores Lyzhin's anonymity at the conclusion of the story, referring to him as

²⁸ I agree here with Jerome H. Katsell, who, discussing the possibility of character change in Chekhov suggests the following: "Whether Lyzin is allowing himself temporary respite from the tension of spiritual discovery or is sinking once again into indifference, we do not know. But he has demonstrated the potential to learn from disruption, which in Chekhov is a sign of vitality (other examples are Gurov in "The Lady with the Pet Dog" and Nikitin in "The Teacher of Literature"); the majority, people like the peasants or Dr. Starchenko, are simply confused and upset by disruption, and they learn nothing." "Character Change in Chekhov's Short Stories," *The Slavic and East European Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (Winter, 1974), pp. 377-383, p. 380.

in the introduction merely as “the inspector,” he seems rather to conceal an elemental component of his protagonist’s individuality.

Nor will we ever fully understand why a man would put a revolver to his head just before sitting down to a hot meal on a cold winter’s night. But this does not mean that we should stop searching for truth, as Chekhov proposes, with our microscopes, probes, knives, and—I would add—pens. Even though the story ends with the inspector once again on his way to the inquest, Lyzhin is also off to complete his official business, to see the body, once again and finally. And in a story in which living has been equated with going, he opts to move.

The Comedy of Classic Stage Company’s *Three Sisters*
Reviewed by
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New York City’s Classic Stage Company (CSC) continued its commitment to Chekhov by staging *Three Sisters* this past season. The production received good press and great attendance. Obtaining a ticket was no easy thing; this reviewer secured one only because the company added an extra performance in March at the end of its sold-out run. Like the company’s 2009 production of *Uncle Vania*, this *Three Sisters* was also directed by Austin Pendleton and also starred Maggie Gyllenhall (as Masha) and Peter Sarsgaard (as Vershinin). Some of the same missteps from the company’s *Vania* from two years ago reappeared here, including the occasional display of unnecessarily frenetic acting and age-inappropriate casting. Overall, however, this *Three Sisters*, which was unexpectedly funny in places, was stronger than the company’s *Uncle Vania* from 2009. The Gyllenhall-Sarsgaard combination acting under Pendleton’s direction was genuinely thrilling in moments, and it was set against some notable supporting performances.

Because CSC’s space is a curtain-less theater in the round, it was clear even before the production began that one major misstep from 2009’s *Vania* would not be repeated here. Whereas the set for *Vania* was crowded with props and dominated by an unnecessary staircase that obstructed the view of every audience member at one point or another, this set was open and cleverly simple. Four large, tarnished mirrors were hung at the back of the stage space, perhaps symbolizing and regularly reflecting the three

Prozorov sisters and their feckless brother. A humongous table functioned as the organizing architectural element throughout the first three acts, and smaller pieces of elegantly worn furniture were appendages to this element. The table was an obvious fit for Irina's name-day gathering in the first act, when it was festively set for the large group that eventually sat around it. In the second act various characters climbed on the table during celebratory moments or heated discussion. Particularly noteworthy was the table's use as the setting for the upstairs bedroom of the third act, when there appeared steps on one end of the table and bedroom furniture on top of it. The table was then hoisted on its side and placed up against the back wall for the fourth act, covering one mirror (if the mirrors were meant to symbolize the family members, perhaps the covered one suggests Andrei's isolation and separation from the inner circle of his family?). The partial removal of the table opened up significant "outdoor" space, yet allowed the table to serve as a towering and constant reminder of the loss of an architecturally organizing element. This final arrangement created ideal theatrical space for Chekhov's central characters, whose home and brother have become alien and lost to them.

This cleverly simple and adaptive set dovetailed with Austin Pendleton's direction of the play. Rather than weighing his audience down by placing the heavy accent on the play's philosophical and wistful ruminations on time and loss, Pendleton adapted the play to contemporary sensibilities by staging it as an intensely physical drama with surprisingly light comedic elements. Chekhov himself does not confound us by calling *Three Sisters* a comedy; he simply calls it a "drama in four acts" (and given the connotations that "drama" has taken on in English, it may be better to translate Chekhov's genre notation more neutrally as "a play in four acts"). Comedy, of course, is a much-debated generic distinction Chekhov gives only to two of his four major plays: *The Seagull* and *The Cherry Orchard*. Although *Uncle Vania* is technically not designated as a comedy by Chekhov (he calls it "scenes from country life"), most productions of that play – including CSC's 2009 offering – also attempt to find elements of comedy in its contours. *Three Sisters*, on the other hand, is a play in which directors do not normally attempt to find comedy.

Some scholarly readings of the play have identified the work as an Absurdist prototype with an underlying authorial ethos of resigned laughter. Martin Esslin was the first to do this in his canonical *Theatre of the Absurd*. More recently Richard Gilman, in his book *Chekhov's Plays: An Opening into Eternity*, draws on Esslin's influential reading of *Three Sisters* as a seminal Absurdist text by identifying disjointed and darkly funny segments of dialogue in the play where conversation seems to accumulate rather than develop. Characters do at times say bizarre things in the play. Solënyi and Chebutykin in particular are characters who excel at absurd or disturbing insertions of dialogue, but nearly all of the characters at times seem to say things that are apropos of nothing that has come before in conversation. Perhaps inspired by these readings, directors occasionally present the play with an Absurdist inflection. The Polish director Krystian Lupa's production of *Three Sisters*, which played at American Repertory Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 2005, was a notable (and heavy) example of this type of Absurdist staging. Such stagings may be comic in philosophical stance, but they don't tend to elicit much laughter.

CSC's production, on the other hand, was outright funny in moments. The first act of this production was heavily played as a comedy, and Chekhov's pauses (there are

more in this play than in any of his others) were largely played as pauses in the service of comedic timing – and were largely received as such by the eager audience of which this reviewer was a part. Indeed, the first act was presented in parts as a sort of sexual comedy. Maggie Gyllenhall and Peter Sarsgaard, a real-life couple, have intense stage chemistry, and this was especially true in their characters' first meeting (and final goodbye – but more on that later). Gyllenhall's Masha was questioned and disparaged and ultimately seduced by Sarsgaard's Vershinin. After the intense initial exchange with Vershinin, where Masha pauses and then announces, "I'm staying for lunch," there was knowing, adult laughter in the audience. Gyllenhall's line was spoken with a knowing, sensual delivery, and it got a laugh in no small part because of the well-played pause.

Similarly, Fedotik and Rode's act of taking a picture in act one (and again in act four) became a long slapstick of a pause that was humorously used to comment on how long the taking of a photograph used to require. In other words, the pauses were at times used to create a historical distance from the very acts they paused. This was a clever and unexpected way to use the abundance of pauses in the play, and in doing so Pendleton relied on his audience's cultural and historical frames of reference and imbued the Chekhov pause – and the play overall – with that most contemporary of feelings: irony.

Kulygin is a character who can naturally and easily lend himself to an ironic reception by a primed audience, and that was certainly true here. Played by Paul Lazar, this character was a comic inspiration. There is plenty of potential humor in the part of Kulygin, both bathos and pathos, and Lazar mined the comic depths of the role. His ruminations on Latin and on the respectability of his headmaster were as ironically funny as his impassioned defense of Masha's commitment to him was ironically sad. Mr. Lazar is a wonderfully expressive actor, and even in his most pathetic moments there was something both genuinely humorous but also touchingly human about him.

Unexpectedly, Irina, played by Juliet Rylance, was also a character that at times elicited ironic laughter in the audience, especially as the play progressed. The youngest of the sisters, Irina is a naïve girl when the play begins, talking with her similarly naïve suitor Tuzenbach about the drive to work and the joys it will bring. By the end of the play she is of course working – and weary. In this production, however, she was also wizened by the end. Before Tuzenbach's death in the final act, when she says that she and Tuzenbach will go off, and he'll find work in a brick factory, she followed this up with a wry, winking, "God, I hope it works out." The audience laughed heartily in the pause after the line, which was, like other pauses, used for purposes of comedic timing. Kulygin's line immediately after, in which he expresses doubt about it working out but wishes them every happiness, was also played for – and received – laughter. Irina has of course already come to the realization (in Act III) that she hates working and isn't especially good at it, but what was interesting about the portrayal of Irina here was that she herself seemed aware of the contradiction between her earlier sentiments about work and the reality she subsequently faces. Both are true: she wanted to work then; she hates working now. Time is passing. Most directors refuse to allow Irina or the other sisters the realization that all of their prior talk about wanting to work is a little silly. Here, Pendleton, did allow Irina this realization, and in doing so he encouraged the audience to laugh, sympathetically but fully, at her predicament. One can't help thinking of the formulation that says that comedy is tragedy plus time. In this age of irony, if that is the

age we are in, Pendleton allowed both his audience and the characters the audience watches to have comedic perspective.

There was also physical humor in this production. Indeed, this was a physically active *Three Sisters* all around, with a lot of big acting, and nowhere was its physicality more on display than in the third act. Set in the upstairs bedroom of Irina and Olga (a room they share by that act, since Natasha continually squeezes the Prozorov sisters into less and less space), the room was creatively staged by putting a small set of steps up to the exceedingly large dining table that dominated the living space in the first act. The entire bedroom set was on the table, which meant that the room was truly tight quarters, and there was ample intimacy – both in terms of the confessions that the characters make to one another in this act, but also in the very physical ways they ended up together in this tight space.

In this act Kulygin says to Olga (played by Jessica Hecht) that he would have married her if he hadn't married Masha, and in this production he did so with his head in her lap. Kulygin looked like a large cat, and the scene was funny. But Olga, dirty from fighting the fire and in a partial state of undress, suddenly reciprocated the physical touch, then came to her senses and jumped away. Under Pendleton's direction, this exchange started out humorously but became more a confessional moment than a casual, awkward observation between platonic in-laws. Kulygin had a depth in this portrayal, and a need for intimacy, as did Olga. It was effective theater, but whether it was effective Chekhov is less clear.

Overall the intense physicality in which characters indulged in this act was a misstep in the production, and it felt at times as though there would be a dog pile on the tiny bed with so many characters in the room and so many tears and cries. It is in this act that Masha confesses her love for Vershinin to her sisters, and in this production the confession was accompanied by much hugging and touching. Also here is the fight between Natasha (a tightly wound and very effective portrayal by Marin Ireland) and Olga over Anfisa (played by Roberta Maxwell) and whether Anfisa should be allowed to rest (as Olga would have it) or, if she cannot work without pause, then dismissed (as Natasha would have it). In this production Olga tried to restrain herself while Natasha physically seethed. Later in the act, Irina, arriving home from work, literally screamed and cried about her fatigue, her hate for the work she is doing, and her unhappiness. Andrei (played by Josh Hamilton) was inexplicably portrayed to have a psychic break during his lines about how his sisters don't respect his wife. He shook his head quickly, convulsed, and assumed the fetal position. Here, too, Tuzenbach (played endearingly by Ebon Moss-Bachrach) declares his love for Irina, and the intimacy of the space made their relationship seem more physically charged than Irina's assertion that she does not love Tuzenbach allows for. On the other hand, Solënyi's appearance in this act, when he expresses his jealous anger at seeing Tuzenbach there, sleeping on the floor, felt frighteningly dangerous and sexually aggressive. It was easy to believe that Solënyi (Anson Mount) would kill Tuzenbach, and one wondered whether he might rape Irina, as well. Time and again, this act boiled over with scenes of tears, screams, and rage. It was exciting to behold, but Chekhov's criticisms of the Moscow Art Theater's occasional lapses into big acting did come to mind.

There was also big acting in the final act, particularly in the goodbye scene between Masha and Vershinin. Masha groveled at the feet of Vershinin, overcome with

passion and despair at his leaving, and Olga literally got on top of Masha to pull her away. This resulted in a strange group embrace of all three. The physical chemistry between Gyllenhall and Sarsgaard made the scene passionately beautiful and painful to watch. But Chekhov, who so often told Stanislavsky to kill the hysterics, would surely have had a problem with the staging of this scene (as might scholars of Chekhov). One wonders whether Pendleton, in Stanislavsky's place, would have insisted on keeping and even expanding the scene after the duel where Tuzenbach's body is brought across the stage while Irina and her sisters take it in. Chekhov cut it from the play, but it would undoubtedly have provided Pendleton yet another opportunity for tears and shrieks and intimate group embraces.

If big, physically dramatic acting in this production was a recurring problem that unfortunately came to a full boil in Act III, the problems with inappropriate casting and accents simmered throughout. Sarsgaard is a fine actor, but he is simply too young to play Vershinin. Olga looked older than this Vershinin, probably because the actor playing her, Jessica Hecht, is indeed older than Sarsgaard. In a larger theater, where the audience is more removed from the actors, this may not have been a problem. But in CSC's intimate space, it was all too obvious, particularly when Vershinin remembers that the late Prozorov father did, indeed, have three young daughters when Vershinin met him in Moscow. Age-inappropriate casting of Sarsgaard was similarly a problem in CSC's *Uncle Vania*, where Sarsgaard offered up a young and portly Astrov who was simply not world-weary enough to deliver the lines that character must. Pendleton seemed in both instances to believe that what Sarsgaard brought to his roles more than made up for his chronological deficiencies.

Similarly, Josh Hamilton's Andrei not only appeared too crazed, but also too young and too thin. The fat his sisters comment on was obviously stuffing down his shirt. Mr. Hamilton, although spectacular to watch in his rages and shakes, was too physically intense and nimble to match the bland Andrei, who, at least as Chekhov wrote him, shrinks in spirit and influence even as he grows in years and girth. Here Andrei was as wiry and unpredictable as his wife, Natasha. This had the effect of benefiting the character Natasha, who by comparison came across as almost sympathetic in moments, since she at least directed her intensity and energy towards a goal. Overall this Natasha, played by Ms. Ireland, was openly meaner but also notably funnier than the character is often portrayed to be.

In terms of accent, the recurring problem was that this Irina spoke with a mid-Atlantic accent and a (mostly) restrained emotion that would have fit well with the 1970 British film version that Laurence Olivier directed, but seemed out of place here. Juliet Rylance, who played Irina, is English, and her roots showed through. Her delivery was lovely, but except for the moments of ironic wit it was not quite of a piece with the rest of the production, which was simply more earth-bound and physical than Olivier ever could have imagined.

But this was Pendleton's show for a 21st-century New York audience, and what he produced was an interesting amalgam of sexual chemistry (primarily between Vershinin and Masha, but also momentarily between Olga and Kulygin and between Irina and Solënyi), urbane irony, physical intensity, and the requisite elegiac sadness. Chekhov can be many things, and Pendleton found Chekhov to be a highly adaptable playwright to the ambivalent tastes of a contemporary American audience. Indeed, Pendleton's

achievement here was that he saw that not only does Chekhov's play allow for multiple interpretations, but that it can allow for them within the same production. Each character was granted moments of sadness and humor, passive acceptance and willful intensity. In Stanislavsky's formulation, there are no small roles (only small actors), and the director and cast of this *Three Sisters* took that maxim to heart. It is unusual to see a production of this play that elicits laughter, and the comedy that Pendleton encouraged his audience to see but also allowed Chekhov's characters to sense was never unkind. More than the big acting that occasionally surrounded it in this production, this striving for comic understanding was the main event and the real artistic success.

**Harvey Pitcher, *Responding to Chekhov: The Journey of a Lifetime*
(Cromer: Swallow House Books, 2010).
Reviewed by
Douglas Clayton, University of Ottawa**

One can learn a great deal from simply reading the titles of Chekhov's stories; they form, as it were, a compendium of themes and motifs that comprise the material of the works taken as a whole. In the case of Harvey Pitcher's latest book, two titles come to mind: "The Chameleon," and "A Daughter of Albion." Who is the chameleon? Why, Chekhov himself, who, having been in John Tulloch's reading an anti-Thatcherite British lefty, now appears before us in the guise of a "devout humanist," a quality he has the honour of sharing with the author of the study in question. Pitcher himself, our devout humanist, is, not a daughter, of course, but a son of Albion, whose task is, apparently, to show that really, underneath all this Russian nonsense, Chekhov is a blunt, straightforward Englishman, to quote Eliot, and a rather nice chap. Here I disagree wholeheartedly: as foreign specialists writing about Russian literature, we should surely seek not to make the strange familiar, but rather the reverse.

Pitcher is a representative of a particular tendency in British literary studies, the inspired amateur. He evidently has a distaste for professional literary scholarship, or, as the Russians call it (horror of horrors!), philology, preferring to see himself as a critic. What this means is that he seeks to give his personal, subjective response to the works he chooses to write about. Opinions are asserted, not demonstrated. Readers should not, however, be misled by the chatty, at times anecdotal tone: the stance is highly disingenuous. It is, in fact, impossible to write about literature without some kind of method, however hostile one may be to methodology and scholarly rigour. Pitcher

chooses mostly character analysis as his approach, with occasional sallies into narratology (point of view), and even, on occasion, a cursory glance at motifs. Sources quoted are the usual suspects: Kramer, Hahn, Rayfield, and so on. Of the Russians Kataev and Chudakov are mentioned. Senderovich and Sherbinin are the object of some harsh criticism because they dare to think that characters' names in Chekhov's works are not necessarily selected at random, and that a careful study of them might tell us something interesting and even crucial about the given story or play. Finke is indicted for "digging" too deeply, and, with no names mentioned, the "close reading" approach evokes particular opprobrium. This is too much: we should, presumably, not even pay close attention to the words that Chekhov so carefully chose to put on the page!

What, then, does one need to "respond to Chekhov"? In Pitcher's opinion, "a Western critic has to try and imagine the kind of reasonably perceptive, reasonably educated and well-read (but not erudite) late 19th century Russian reader of liberal outlook for whom the older Chekhov was writing" (24). This is a truism banal in its obviousness, but also somewhat off the mark in assuming that authorial intentionality is everything. It ignores the nature of the creative process involved in any art-work. Moreover, the history of Chekhov's reception has been strewn with misunderstandings from the very beginning, which suggests that the author-reader relationship is much more complex than Pitcher makes out. The same misreadings and misinterpretations are repeated again and again. Like literature itself, criticism tends to imitate previous criticism; Pitcher's is no exception. Experience tells this reviewer, at least, that Chekhov's language and the complex matrix of motifs embedded in that language are highly individual, and we need to pay careful attention to the specificity of Chekhov's "idiolect" and the carefully structured, startlingly different image of the world that it reflects. When we do that, we may find, without any "digging," that we, and generations before us, have not been listening, or rather reading, at all. Discoveries may not require excavation to uncover, but lie on the surface, as Aleksandr Minkin showed in a recent article on *Vishnevyyi sad* in the *Komsomolka*.

At an early point in the work, Pitcher lays his cards on the table: "Finally, I am interested in Chekhov the man" (Foreword, unpaginated). It is, indeed, characteristic of Pitcher that in his writing the boundary between Chekhov the writer and Chekhov the

man tends to be erased. The book is strewn with biographical observations and unfounded speculations, along the lines of the Soviet “zhizn’ i tvorchestvo” genre. As an interpreter of Chekhov’s works Pitcher has decided to reconcile Chekhov’s two pursuits of doctor and writer into “two Chekhovs.” At this the reader’s ears prick up: does he mean the two Chekhovs that Mayakovsky described, in one of the most brilliant statements on his predecessor? Unfortunately not: Pitcher’s Chekhov is resolutely the first, run of the mill, melancholic Chekhov as described by Mayakovsky. Pitcher simply means that Chekhov enters into the perspective of certain characters. These are the characters that he views from the inside. On the other side there are the characters viewed externally with whom the author does not empathize and who “get his dander up.” This is all true, of course, but does not get us very far. The mixed biographical and literary strains in Pitcher’s approach are particularly evident in the final sequence of short chapters, which examine first “Gusev” and “The Student,” then “The Bishop” (“Arkhierei”), and then describe Chekhov’s death, quoting at length from Leo Rabeneck’s account. This part of the book is well-written, and the reader is seduced into accepting what seems to be the “pafos” of Pitcher’s stance: here is how a devout humanist should die.

The choice of material for study is highly predictable: it is the canonical short stories and four-acters. Most interestingly, the splendid and remarkable “Steppe,” one of the most haunting and mysterious of his works, is rejected on the grounds that it is too “ethnic” (45), that is to say, that it is too Russian. Its absence is telling. Pitcher is most at home with works that fit into a post-Tolstoyan realist interpretation, which most closely corresponds to the proclivities of the English-speaking audience. “Steppe” is too far beyond the generic limits and too challenging to be easily interpreted. The book is divided into a series of short chapters or essays on groups of stories chosen around a common theme. There is a great deal of repetition of sources in the secondary literature, the occasional interesting insight, for example the observation that the four-act plays really serve as substitute novels in Chekhov, and the odd bizarre statement, such as comparing Chekhov’s journey to Sakhalin to Trigorin’s seduction of Nina in *Chaika* (71). Surprisingly often Pitcher quotes his earlier work on Chekhov, especially in the chapters

on the plays, which are very cursory indeed. Footnotes are minimal, and are placed at the end of each chapter; there is no bibliography.

Pitcher's book falls between two stools: it is neither a scholarly study, nor a personal essay on Chekhov such as the splendid book by Janet Malcolm. This reviewer really learned nothing new from Pitcher. But perhaps offering new interpretations was not the real intent of the book, after all. The title says it all: reading Chekhov has been the "journey of a lifetime" for Pitcher (the subtitle echoing closely that of Malcolm's work). In other words, the book is really not about Chekhov, but about Pitcher and the Chekhov that he has fashioned for himself. That the image is incomplete and tells us more about the author of the book than about his subject is symptomatic. Chekhov is a chameleon that critics have shaped, and will continue to shape, in his or her own way. It is an interesting process, but perhaps a less worthy undertaking than simply reading attentively the wonderful works that Chekhov bequeathed us and which still have so much left to tell.

Chekhov on Stage and Page

Angela Brintlinger, project director

Maria Ignatieva & Michelle Herman, conference co-organizers

History:

In Spring of 2009 Angela Brintlinger, Associate Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures, The Ohio State University, along with her colleagues Maria Ignatieva in Theatre and Michelle Herman in English/Creative Writing, set about planning an interdisciplinary conference to celebrate the sesquicentennial of the birth year of Anton Pavlovich Chekhov, Russian playwright and fiction writer. With grants from the OSU College of Arts and Humanities, Departments of Slavic, Theatre, and English/Creative Writing, Center for Slavic and East European Studies, North American Chekhov Society, Kalbous Fund for Russian Culture, and the OSU Film Studies Program, we invited a group of distinguished guests from the U.S. and abroad engaged in the scholarship and practice of literary, film, and performance studies, theater and drama, and creative writing. The resulting conference, *Chekhov on Stage and Page*, took place from December 2nd through 4th, 2010, on the Ohio State University campus.

Events and Speakers:

The conference opened Thursday afternoon with a plenary lecture by director and actor **Alexandre Marine of Montreal, Canada**. Marine learned his craft at the Russian

Academy of Theatre Arts under Oleg Tabakov and at the Moscow Arts School-Studio and was a founding member and leading actor of the famous Tabakov Studio Theatre in Moscow. Marine's plenary talk was entitled "Chekhov in Russian Theatre in the Last Quarter of the 20th Century: From Stagnation to Diamonds in the Sky" and was simultaneously interpreted by **OSU professor Maria Ignatieva**.

Following a "Teaching Chekhov" roundtable, our keynote speaker, **Vladimir Kataev of Moscow State University**, the unofficial "dean" of Russian Chekhov studies, spoke on the topic of "Circuses and Cemeteries: Chekhovian Topoi." He spoke in Russian and was simultaneously interpreted by **OSU professor Angela Brintlinger**.

After the keynote conference guests headed over to the Thompson Library for the opening of a special exhibit curated by **Nena Couch, Ohio State University** (curator of the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute of the OSU Libraries Special Collections), with Graduate Research Assistant **Chelsea Phillips**, especially for *Chekhov on Stage and Page*. The exhibit included set and costume designs for the plays of Anton Chekhov from productions in the U.S., Canada, the former Czechoslovakia, and the U.K., featuring in particular designs representing several stages of the career of British designer Daphne Dare (1929-2000).

The conference reception, sponsored by the **Kalbouss Fund for Russian Culture**, made good use of the University Museum space in University Hall for conversation among conference participants over beverages and a beautiful whole salmon, among other delicacies.

Friday and Saturday mornings **Alexandre Marine** lead master classes at the Drake Union Roy Bower Theater space, attended by actors and interested scholars (25 on Friday and 30 on Saturday). As a director who since 1995 has had his own theater company in Montreal, Théâtre Deuxième Réalité, he stands out as an iconoclast with a vivid imagination and a sense of experimentation. His accolades include a Masques Award for his 1997 production of *A Winter's Tale* for Centaur Theatre in Montreal and a Quebec Critics' Circle award for his 1999 adaptation of *Hamlet*, as well as the honorary title of Distinguished Artist of Russia. The master classes were highly successful in bringing together actors from undergraduate and graduate students to professionals to work on scenes from Chekhov's plays.

Friday morning the academic portion of the conference began with a second plenary talk by **Olga Galakhova of Moscow**. One of Moscow's leading theater critics, Galakhova is a specialist on stage interpretations of Chekhov and an editor of the theater journal *Stanislavsky* and the Russian newspaper *Actor's Forum*. Galakhova has taught at the Moscow Art Theater School and the Shchepkin Drama School, and is also head of the seminar for young theater critics of Cheliabinsk. Galakhova's plenary talk was entitled "Geography in the Plays of A.P. Chekhov" and was translated into English by Angela Brintlinger and Maria Ignatieva. Ignatieva did the simultaneous interpreting of both the talk and the questions and answer session.

Academic sessions continued throughout Friday and Saturday with parallel panels (see program for details at <http://slaviccenter.osu.edu/chekhov2010.html>).

On Friday evening, **Sasha Waters Freyer**, documentary filmmaker and associate professor of film and video at the University of Iowa, showed her film at the Knowlton School of Architecture Auditorium and answered questions about the project and the film. Her documentary, entitled "Chekhov for Children," is based on the essay of that name by writer Philip Lopate. The film tells the story of Lopate's staging of "Uncle Vanya" with New York City public school 5th & 6th graders on Broadway in 1979 (of whom Waters was one). The trailer for the film continues to be available on the CSEES Chekhov website at <http://slaviccenter.osu.edu/chekhov2010.html>.

Saturday morning began with a **Creative Writing Roundtable** featuring current and former MFA students in the OSU Creative Writing Program. Writers spoke about the Chekhovian vein in American short story writing and in their own work, including such topics as the "Chekhovian pause," the use of present tense, compressed action, activating the setting, and the mundane versus the lofty in such Chekhov stories as "The Lady with a Dog," "Misery," "The Huntsman," "Enemies," "The Teacher of Literature," "Vanka," and "Sleepy." The roundtable culminated in an inspiring reading by **OSU professor Michelle Herman** from her new novel-in-progress *Delirious*.

Saturday evening the conference closed with an event featuring **Valerie Martin**, the acclaimed author of nine novels, a biography of St. Francis of Assisi and three collections of short stories. Her newest novel, *The Confessions of Edward Day: A Novel* (New York, Nan A. Talese / Random House, 2009) follows its eponymous hero, an actor, through the stages of New York's theaters in the 1970s and 80s. Structured like a play, the novel takes its cues from the world of theater, drawing on Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* as an intertext. Martin read from *The Confessions of Edward Day* at the OSU Faculty Club and answered questions from students, writers, and the general public about her craft.

Participants and Attendance:

There were 36 conference participants, from Ohio (OSU, College of Wooster, Youngstown State), other places in the U.S. (Brown, UC Berkeley, Colby College, Columbia U, Duke, U of Illinois, U of Iowa, U of Florida, UNC, Northwestern, U of Pennsylvania, Rutgers, Willamette, San Diego, Washington DC), as well as abroad, from Great Britain, Israel and Russia (Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Moscow State University, Nizhny Novgorod Linguistics University, U of Nottingham, Russian State Humanities University, St. Petersburg University). In addition, there were approximately 50 other attendees, including undergraduate and graduate students, interested scholars and the general public.

Results of Conference:

Russian visitors Vladimir Kataev and Olga Galakhova, along with conference organizer Angela Brintlinger, were invited to film an episode of **Writers Talk with Doug Dangler**,

a 22 minute interview, the first ever simultaneously translated interview on this program produced by OSU's Center for the Study of Teaching and Writing, which aired on the Ohio Channel (see <http://www.ohiochannel.org/MediaLibrary/Media.aspx?fileId=128790>).

In addition, co-editors Carol Apollonio (Duke University) and Angela Brintlinger (OSU) have invited scholars from the conference to submit articles based on their presentations for a book to be entitled *Chekhov For the Twenty-First Century*, currently under consideration for publication in 2012. (See attached table of contents.)

Funding:

Chekhov on Stage and Page had a conference budget of \$23,650, raised from sources enumerated above. With this money, we were able to run the conference in the beautiful but expensive facilities of the OSU Blackwell Inn and Conference Center; offer honoraria and travel money to selected participants, including some of those from abroad who could not fund their own travel; offer travel and housing funding to five underfunded U.S. scholars; print and advertise the conference with beautifully designed posters, postcards, and programs; and put on the opening reception (sponsored by the Kalbouss Fund for Russian Culture) and the coffee and break food to keep the scholars focused and on task (sponsored by the North American Chekhov Society).

Chekhov for the Twenty-First Century
edited by Carol Apollonio and Angela Brintlinger

Introduction, Carol Apollonio and Angela Brintlinger: "Chekhov for the 21st Century"

I. performers, performances and performativity

Being and Doing: Chekhov in Russia

- +Galina Rylkova, "Reading Chekhov through Meyerhold's Eyes"
- +Svetlana Evdokimova, "The Event of Being in Chekhov's Plays"
- +Margarita Odesskaya, "*Uncle Vanya*: Life in Time," translated by Angela Brintlinger

Staging and Engaging: English-language Chekhov

- +Ronald Meyer, "Columbus, Donaghy, Stoppard: *The Cherry Orchard* in English in the 21st Century"
- +Cynthia Marsh, "Making Foreign Theatre or Making Theatre Foreign? Russian Theatre in English: *Three Sisters*, a Case Study"
- +Nena Couch, "Chekhov in the Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee Theatre Research Institute"
- +Sasha Waters Freyer, "Chekhov for Children: a 'wildly creative undertaking' with Kids"

II. affinities and analytical approaches

The Mapping of Artistic Space

- +Edyta Bojanowska, "Chekhov's *The Duel*, or How to Colonize Responsibly".
- +Cathy Popkin, "The Spaces between the Places: Chekhov's 'Without a Title' and the Art of Being (out) There"
- + Vera Zubarev, "Chekhov's Style in Light of the Game of Chess: Regarding General Systems Thinking"

What's It All About, Anton? Chekhovian Poetics

- +Michael Finke, "From Poetics to Metapoetics in Chekhov's 'The Kiss'"
- +Andrei Stepanov, "Chekhov's Diagrams," translated by Carol Apollonio
- +Radislav Lapushin, "The Poetics of Reconciliation in Chekhov, or Medium as the Message"
- +Nina Wieda, "Cultural Kenosis in Chekhov's 'The Wife'"

Translation and Transmutation: Affinities

- +Anna Muza, "The Marriage of Figaro, the Marriage of Lopakhin: The Hero's Revolt"
- +Carol Apollonio, "Translating Chekhov's 'Lady'"
- +Jerome Katsell, "Nabokov's Debt to Chekhov's Art of Memory"

Conclusion: Vladimir Kataev, "Circuses and Cemeteries: Chekhovian Topoi," translated by Angela Brintlinger

New Web Links

<http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100129/157716970.html>

Russia Marks Chekhov's 150th Birthday

<http://www.oscholars.com/Upstage/call.htm>

A call for papers by the editors of *UpStage: A Journal of Turn-of-the-Century Theatre* (a peer-reviewed, open source scholarly journal published by Rivendale Press, UK).

<http://www.carolineadderson.com/adults-books/the-sky-is-falling/>

A novel that may interest readers of Chekhov.

http://www.themoscowtimes.com/arts_n_ideas/article/butusov-looks-at-art-in-extraordinary-quotseagullquot/436320.html

Freedman's review of *Chajka*

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/culture/chekhov>

latest news, reviews and comments on Chekhov from *The Guardian*. See Phillip Pullman's comments on "Krasavitsy" ("The Beauties")

http://topics.nytimes.com/topics/reference/timestopics/people/c/anton_chekhov/index.html

NYTimes Chekhov Collection

<http://sonyasstoryopera.webs.com/>

Opera based on *Uncle Vania* told from the perspective of Sonia

<http://www.yaltachekhov.org/>

Website of Yalta Chekhov Campaign

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12088314>

BBC coverage of Sri Lankan tribute to Chekhov

<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/theatre/article-23796994-the-chekhov-i-love.do>

Chekhov page of the *London Evening Standard*

<http://www.cannabisculture.com/v2/content/2010/01/29/Hempy-150th-Anton-Chekhov>

Cannabis Culture's tribute to 150th anniversary of Chekhov's birth

http://artsalive.ca/pdf/eth/activities/chekhov_guide.pdf

Study Guide for the "Vaudevilles" of Chekhov

<http://www.chekhovfest.ru/en/program/>

Program of 2011 Chekhov international Theatre Festival

<http://rt.com/news/prime-time/chekhov-moscow-walking-distance/>
A walk around Chekhov's Moscow (with questionable commentary)

<http://www.ayoungertheatre.com/review-chekhov-in-hell-dan-rebellato-soho-theatre/>
Website address explains it all

<http://www.donkashow.com/donka.html#/show/>
A theatrical creation based on select features of Chekhov's life and works

<http://www.johnstarkproductions.com/chekhovmaria.htm>
Information about the play *Chekhov & Maria* by Jovanka Bach and a film, including trailer, based on play

http://www.pajiba.com/film_reviews/henrys-crime-review-neo-vs-chekhov-bullshtastic.php
Another descriptive website address, whose content and "racy"—*pace* Mirsky—language some may find objectionable.

Select Bibliography 2010-2011

(with two earlier books that should have been listed before)

2008

Miles, Patrick. *Brief Lives: Anton Chekhov*. London: Hesperus Press, 2008.

2009

Dialog s Chekhovym: Sbornik nauchnykh trudov v chest' 70-letia V. B. Kataeva. Edited by P. N. Dolzhenkov. Moscow: Izd-vo Mosk. un-ta, 2009.

The festschrift contains the following articles:

I. Chekhov. Chekhovskaia èpokha

T. K. Shakh-Azizova. "Nashi pervye knigi."

Jerome Katsell, "Vladimir Borisovich Kataev: podrazhanie sviatomu Antoniiu?"

Mel Gossow. "V mire Chekhova, gde 'slozhnost' – sinonim pravdy."

V. G. Shukin. "Reka vremeni, ili nikto ne znaet nastoiashchei pravdy."

Radislav Lapushin. "'Chudesnaia bukhta' ('resonantnoe' prostranstvo v proze Chekhova.)"

A. D. Stepanov. "Chekhovskie diagrammy (predvaritel'nye zamechaniia)."

V. V. Bashkeeva. "'Vneshnii vid naruzhnosti': portret v proze zrelogo Chekhova."

R. B. Akhmetshin. "K voprosu o prirode izobrazheniia v dramaticheskikh ètiudakh A. P. Chekhova."

M. S. Swift. "'Dushechka': rasskaz o liubvi neustoichevoi lichnosti."

L. A. Polakiewicz. "'Kniaginia' A. P. Chekhova: diagnoz – nartsisticheskoe rasstroistvo lichnosti."

Harai Golomb. "'Delo neshutochnoe'. Grèzy, vymysel i realnost' v 'Shutochke' A. P. Chekhova (1886/1889).

- Liudmil Dimitrov. "Gamlet, nazvannyi Tartiuфом, ili nevozmozhnoe soslovie v p'ese Chekhova 'Ivanov'."
- Harvey Pitcher. "Iz vospominanii literaturnogo detektiva: nereshënnii vopros."
- A. S. Sobennikov. "Mif o poëte v khudozhestvennom soznanii A. P. Chekhova."
- N. F. Ivanova. "Evreiskaia muzyka u Chekhova."
- V. Ia. Zviniatskovskii i A. O. Panich. "Chekhovskaia professura, ili 'Ne delai sebe kumira...'"
- Iu. V. Domanskii. "Pensne v mire Chekhova."
- N. V. Kapustin. "O kontseptsii proshlogo u Chekhova i Nitsshe: tochki soprikosnoveniia."
- L. E. Bushkanets. "A. P. Chekhov i sotsial'no-psikhologicheskie osobennosti raznochinnoi intelligentsii kontsa XIX – nachala XX vv."
- V. A. Koshelev. "'Opernyi kostium': Chekhov ob A. K. Tolstom."
- P. N. Dolzhenkov. "Obraz tsaria Solomona v povesti Chekhova 'Ogni'."
- E. A. Takho-Godi. "'Ia Sigme ne tovarishch.' A. P. Chekhov i S. N. Syromiatnikov: k istorii odnoi antipatii."
- È. D. Orlov. "Literaturnye i literaturno-bytovye sviazi 'maloi pressy' i 'bol'shoi' literatury 1880-1890-kh godov (k postanovke problemy)."
- A. P. Avramenko. "Nitsshianstvo mladosimvolistov (na materiale memuarov Andreia Belogo)."
- M. V. Mikhailova. "Stepnaia siuita Sergeia Bondarchuka (ob èkranizatsii povesti A. P. Chekhova 'Step')."

II. Literaturnye sviazi

- M. M. Odesskaia. "Gogol' i Chekhov: sviatoe i profannoë?"
- I. N. Sukhikh. "Dva skandala: Dostoevskii i Chekhov."
- A. G. Golovacheva. "'Stoliar Semënov' i 'Sapozhnik Ivanov.' K probleme A. P. Chekhov i Ch. Dikkens'."
- Douglas Clayton. "Lunnyi svet na vode: k probleme Chekhov i Mopossan."
- E. Iu. Zubareva. "'Vinovaty . . . vse my'; k voprosu o transformatsii chekhovskikh motivov v proze russkogo zarubezh'ia 'tret'ei volny'."
- E. N. Petukhova. "Dialog s Chekhovym: 'Russkoe varen'e' L. Ulitskoi."
- A. A. Pautkin. "Gorizonty prochteniia ('Na kraiu sveta' N. S. Leskova: vzgliad medievista)."
- A. A. Smirnov. "Vzaimosviaz' obshchego i sravnitel'no-istoricheskogo literaturovedeniia."

BOOKS 2010

- Anton Chekhov. *The Cherry Orchard*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Sharon Marie Carnicke. Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010.
- Anton Chekhov, *Five Plays*. Translated by Marina Brodskaya with an Introduction by Tobias Wolff. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford UP, 2010.
- Anton Chekhov Through the Eyes of Russian Thinkers: Vasilii Rozanov, Dmitrii Merezhkovskii and Lev Shestov*. Edited by Olga Tabachnikova. London: Anthem Press, 2010.
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- Vysokov, M. S. *Kommentarii k knige A. P. Chekhova Ostrov Sakhalin*. Vladivostok – Iuzhno-Sakhalinsk: Isd-vo "Rubezh", 2010. This commentary, marking the sesquicentennial of Chekhov's birth and the 125th anniversary of his trip to Sakhalin, accompanies a reprint of Chekhov's *Ostrov Sakhalin*. (*Iz putevykh zapisok*)

ARTICLES 2010

Izvestiia Akademii Nauk, Seriia Literatury i Iazyka 69:4 (July-August 2010), pp. 12-39. A special section celebrating the sesquicentennial of Chekhov's birth contains the following articles;

- Barsht, K. A. "O formakh sobytiinosti v proizvedeniiakh Chekhova."
Khalizev, V. E. "Chekhov v XX veke: Contra et pro."
Syzranov, S. V. "Apokalipticheskoe i gimnologicheskie v chekhovskoi kartine mira."
Tiupa, V. I. "Chekhovskoe povestvovanie i sovremennaia narratologiia.

Russkaia Literatura 3 (2010) marked the sesquicentennial of Chekhov's Birth with the following articles:

- Griakalova, N. Iu. «Alliuziia i parafraz v strukture chekhovskogo povestvovaniia (k interpretatsii povest', «Duèl'»)»
Kataev, V. B. «K ponimaniuu Chekhova: «blizhnii» i «dal'nii» konteksty»
Kibal'nik, S.A. «Khudozhestvennaia fenomenologiia Chekhova»
Tiupa, V. I. «Funktsiia chitatelia v chekhovskom narrative»

Voprosy Literatury 2 (2010) celebrated the Chekhov Year with the following articles:

- Fokin, P. "Chekhoviana" A. Zhukova
Mikhailova, E. "Gosudarstvennyi Literaturnyi muzei, Moskva"
Voložhaninova, S. "Muzei odnoi knigi A.P. Chekhova"

- Aliev, B. "Desacralizing the Idyll: Chekhov's Transformation of the Pastoral." *Russian Review* 69:3 (2010), 463-476.
Bidney, M. "Bright Blur, Blinding Light, Blank Page: The Epistemically Skeptical Epiphanies of Chekhov." *Slavic and East European Journal* 54:2 (2010), 272-296.
Brooks, Jeffrey. "Chekhov, Tolstoy and the Illustrated Press in the 1890s." *Cultural and Social History* 7:2 (June 2010), 213-232.
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Griakalova, N. Iu. "Vizual'nyi obraz i smysl: Zametki o chekhovskikh èkfrasisakh (k iubileiu A. P. Chekhova)." *Russkaia Literatura* 2 (2010).
Kapustin, Dmitrii. "Krugosvetka' Antona Chekhova." *Novyj Mir: Literaturno-Khudozhestvennyi i Obshchestvenno-Politicheskii Zhurnal* 7 (July 2010), 151-162.
Parts, Lyudmila. "'In the Ravine': Chekhov's Conscience vs. Dostoevskii's Faith." *Russian, Croatian and Serbian, Czech and Slovak, Polish Literature* 68: 3-4 Oct.-Nov.(2010), 369-387.
Polakiewicz, Leonard A. "Dr. Astrov: Chekhov's Notable Idealist." *Proceedings of 8th Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanities* January 13-16 (2010), 3096-3122.
http://www.hichumanities.org/proceedings_hum.htm
"Syncretism and Personification in Anton Chekhov's 'The Steppe'." *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 44:3 (2010), 316-341.
Shcherbenok, A. "'Killing Realism': Insight and Meaning in Anton Chekhov." *Slavic and East European Journal* 54:2 (2010), 297-316.

ARTICLES 2011

Russian Studies in Literature [Armonk] 47: 1 (Winter 2010/2011) devoted the entire issue to the sesquicentennial and contained the following articles:

- Givens, J. "Editor's Introduction."
Kuraev, M. "Closing in on Chekhov."
Evseev, D. "'To Write Playfully and with a Light Touch': The Anonymous Chekhov-Short Pieces Forgotten and Rediscovered."
Minaev, B. "The Other Chekhov."
Vorob'ëva, M. "The Whole Earth Will Become a Flowering Garden Chekhov is 150."
Gazeta, L. "Chekhov at 150."
Baldin, Andrei. "The Four Chekhovs."
Bykov, Dmitri. "The Two Chekhovs."
Melikhov, Aleksandr. "A Change of Traveling Companions."
Turkov, Andrei. "Letters from the 'Floating Platform'."
"Chekhov at 150" – 7 Russian cultural figures, including Andrei Bitov and Viktor Erofeev, reflect on the continuing popularity of Chekhov.

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