Summer 2019

Intertextuality, Aesthetics, and the Digital: Rediscovering Chekhov in Early British Modernism

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. . . Is he trying to help us or just show us

What do we finally get from Chekhov

in this story, do we feel that he makes us see

our lives in the bafflement of—

Well, I just got an image of this current

running under everybody's life . . .

—Mark Halliday, "Chekov," *Tasker Street*

Introduction

Mark Halliday's poem, "Chekhov," published in 1992, raises a simple yet profound question regarding the Russian playwright and author, Anton Chekhov: What do we *get* from Chekhov? Considering the present article's particular focus, Halliday's query may be used to ask how Chekhov influenced early modernist writers (circa 1900-1930) from the British literary context. However, when considering the amount of scholarly work devoted to this question, the initial simplicity of Halliday's inquiry evaporates, giving way to a breadth of complexity, nuance, and ambiguity. Such ambiguity has led scholars attempting to trace the intertextual convergence between Chekhov and the early modernist writers to arrive at a variety of critical conclusions. Ultimately, when we ask Halliday's question anew—whether focusing on Chekhov's own career or the years following the first translations of his work appeared for English readers—the answer remains as simple yet elusive as in the poem.

The intertextual links between Chekhov and early modernist writers such as Virginia Woolf, Katherine Mansfield, James Joyce, and DH Lawrence—all of whom either published criticism of Chekhov, translated his works and letters, or drew on him in their own fiction—have proven difficult to assess. Scholarly work has most commonly focused on these hallmark modernists' imitation and veneration of Chekhov's thematic choices, unblinking realism, and his nonlinear and unresolved plots. Many of these writers, like Katherine Mansfield, James Joyce, and Raymond Carver, have even been awarded monikers directly linking them to the Russian author within their own literary and national contexts as "the English," "Irish," or "American Chekhov" respectively (Butenina 27). Following the modernist era and into the 1970s and 80s, British performances of Chekhov's plays occurred so frequently that these were only outstripped by Shakespeare performances (Miles). Since Constance Garnett's early translations of Chekhov's stories and plays in the early 1920s, translations of Chekhov into English have grown "beyond calculation" (Kilmenko 122). Even today, contemporary poets and writers outside of Russia draw upon Chekov's texts in both overt and nearly undetectable ways. From Ed Sanders' complete poetic biography of Chekhov, published in 1995, to the seemingly absent-minded allusion to Chekhov's "dentist" in Billy Collin's "Tomes," Chekhov continually appears across the wide span of drama, short fiction, and poetry.

The present article renews and extends the exploration of Chekhovian intertextuality within the early British modernist period (1900-1925) beyond the rigid question of influence alone. In what follows, I first synthesize several previous critical examinations of intertextual networks between Chekhov and other early modernist writers. This review of past scholarship informs a short theoretical reexamination of the concept of intertextuality generally, starting first with TS Eliot's landmark essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and moving into current

theory regarding literary aesthetics, postcritical hermeneutics, and the role of the digital humanities in identifying new intertextual networks. These theories lay the groundwork for conceptualizing intertextuality as multidirectional, showing that productive scholarly conversation can occur between texts that may not perfectly align along historical, contextual, or chronological lines. This alters the current order of operations often used in comparative literary analyses, instead using aesthetic, compositional, thematic, and linguistic elements as the foundation of intertextual analysis, with shared historical and contextual periphery of texts supplementing and enriching these primary connections. A lack of complete overlap between textual contexts should not disqualify critical or creative co-production between texts. Ultimately, the purpose of these analytical adjustments is to allow the impact of intertextuality to extend beyond the influence of one author upon another.

This theoretical section forms the foundation for the body of my article, which is broken into three sections. In each section, I conduct comparative readings of a pair of short stories, one published by Chekhov and another by a modernist writer. These pairings bring both hallmark writers of the British modernist period, as well as unknown and unstudied British authors, into conversation with Chekhovian texts. Some pairs, like my reading of a Katherine Mansfield story, challenge former claims of intertextual links while other pairs, like my readings of Arthur Fraser and John Lucas, identify newfound links between little-studied British writers and Chekhov himself. The readings blend traditional close reading with digital textual analysis, which I hope will result in a more nuanced, multifaceted, and kaleidoscopic view of Chekhov within British modernism. This examination of the unique and complex relationship between Chekhov and the modernist writers ultimately opens the door for more flexible and ubiquitous dialog between texts of differing literary, national, and linguistic backgrounds.

Intertextuality, Aesthetics, and the Digital

Due to the breadth of references and allusions to Chekhov in the literature and criticism that has followed in his wake, the doctor-turned-writer's intertextual presence continues to puzzle and fascinate scholars. This persistent yet diverse fascination arises primarily out of the multitude of critical approaches employed by scholars. Some, such as Svetlana Kilmenko, find the diverse scholarly commentary on the "remarkable quantity and quality of reincarnations of Chekhov in English" unproductive (121). She asserts that non-Russian writers, and consequentially the scholars who study them, have identified allusions to a Chekhov work or proclaimed intertextuality between texts based on a sense of misplaced nostalgia.[1] An unfortunate consequence of this argument would be to dismiss much of what scholars have assigned as "Chekhovian" in early 20th century English texts as intertextual invention rather than sincere instances of intentional and identifiable affinity. Other critics, like Claire Davison, have steered critical conversations on this subject towards a focus on the impact that translation holds upon these Anglo-Russian intertextual-networks. Davison approaches these questions not "in terms of [shared] theme, motif or originality" of Chekhovian and British texts, but rather via "the poetics of translating," claiming that the ability and willingness of British authors to engage in Chekhov's texts in the original Russian facilitated these authors' more masterful integration of Russian literary style into their own work, thus enabling them "to think across traditions, styles and genres" (7). However, if carried in the reverse, Davison's argument also (perhaps inadvertently) implies that an author's *inability* to translate between languages ultimately occludes the intertextual and allusive links that could be forged with foreign authors. Still other

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[1] Kilmenko's description of this nostalgic effect is as follows: "The English Chekhov . . . brings emphasis to the universal essence of nostalgia as longing away from the present . . . away from any determination at all of time or space . . . [his texts] demonstrate that people do not miss what is beautiful or glorious, but rather beautify and glorify what is missing" (132).

critics, such as Kerry McSweeny, reject Kilmenko's historic (or what Kilmenko may call nostalgic) lens and instead conducts comparative analyses of Chekhov and other authors synoptically.[2] He claims that critics who point toward Chekhovian influence in non-Chekhov texts via biographical, contextual, or historical modes alone overlook the vibrant aesthetic value of Chekhov's stories. These aesthetic connections, according to McSweeny, provide more fruitful ground for discovering allusive material between texts, material which interpretative or subtextual readings of the stories alone cannot provide. He writes, "The kind of critical attention Chekhov's stories invite is not exclusively or even primarily interpretative, but such attention needs to be informed by a sense of how [aesthetic] literary allusion works in a text" (30). Aesthetics and affect, rather than context, therefore, form the basis of McSweeny's examination of Chekhov's ties to non-Russian writers.

At this point, we have arrived at a critical and methodological crossroad. Scholars exploring intertextual links to Chekhov must, it seems, choose between emphasizing the shared historical context of Chekhov and British writers, focusing on the effects of translation, or comparing the aesthetic and thematic elements of Anglo-Chekhov texts. To aid my own choice at this intersection, I briefly step away from Chekhov and turn towards intertextuality in the broader, theoretical sense. Doing so will, I hope, synthesize the aforementioned scholarship and the methods these scholars have employed and justify the critical and analytical method which I will employ in my own comparative readings between Chekhov and other British writers.

Much of the theoretical complexity and debate surrounding intertextuality lies in finding precise definitions of what constitutes an intertextual allusion or imitation, which texts are suited

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[2] McSweeny defines this method as "an aesthetic critical model for more detailed considerations of the short stories" which "brings distinctive features of the work of each into sharp focus, facilitates making qualitative discriminations among stories, and provides a basis for assessing the profitability of other critical models" (preface, x).

for intertextual examinations, and the effect these links produce on our current understanding of texts. With the present article's particular topic and literary period in mind, I turn first to TS Eliot's landmark essay, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," (1919) in which Eliot delivers his view of the relationship between poets and the literary tradition which preceded them. Eliot's essay fundamentally concerns itself with the question of intertextuality, though not in the historic or contextual sense. He quickly rejects the idea that critics should examine intertextual links to the past literary tradition as if they were "some pleasing archeological reconstruction" of allusions and quotations (3). For Eliot, critical excavation of the historical strata of influence and intertextual indebtedness of one author to another does little to link authors together, but instead isolates them from each other. Because "no poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone," a "contrast and comparison" of the writer "among the dead" writers of the past constitute an essential part of literary criticism (6). However, this critical valuation between past and present writers is not bound by any temporal or time-based criteria for Eliot, but is instead "a principle of aesthetic, not merely historical, criticism" (6). Intertextual time does not progress in a neat or linear fashion; successful poets, for Eliot at least, infuse their texts with both the past and the present, merging the aesthetics of their predecessors together into their own work. Eliot's essay supports the idea of intertextual multidirectionality and timeless literature, where "the past [is] altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (7).

And yet, in the decades that have passed since Eliot's essay, criticism—intertextual or otherwise—has apparently moved on from Eliot, opting instead to plumb the depths of historic intertextuality and dig deeper and deeper into the layers of contextual sediment between authors. There is little point, critics seem to be saying, in comparing texts without any shared authorial or extra-textual justification, shared history, sociological subtext, or some other hidden and obscure

commonality. However, some critics, such as Rita Felski, have recently pushed back against this notion. In her book, *The Limits of Critique* (2015), Felski laments that literary scholars have thus far achieved "little success in halting the tsunami of context-based criticism" (152). Despite the years of analysis devoted to "Tradition and the Individual Talent," critical inquiries into the intertextual nature of texts have, on the whole, adhered to "the prevailing picture of context as a kind of historical container in which individual texts are encased and held fast [in] what we call periods — each of which surrounds, sustains, and subsumes" a text (156). Such an approach has, for Felski, greatly inhibited the possibilities and power behind the discovery and description of intertextuality between seemingly disparate authors. She writes, "historicism serves as the equivalent of cultural relativism, quarantining difference, denying relatedness, and suspending— or less kindly, evading—the question of why past texts matter and how they speak to us now (154, 156). Ultimately, Felski calls for "models of textual mobility and transhistorical attachment" in criticism, granting text the ability to "attract allies, generate attachments, trigger translations, and inspire copies, spin-offs, and clones" beyond what their historic or contextual period may permit, "to swirl, tumble, and collide in everchanging combinations and constellations" (168-169, 158). This timeless nature of literary relationships and links ultimately reverses the commonly-held order of operations in the critical comparison of texts, that historical footing must not only be first established, but is in fact the springboard *into* the texts' relationship and a trigger for producing new meanings and conclusions.

By applying Felski and Eliot's concepts, intertextual criticism can enrich its traditional, linear[3] model with a new focus on aesthetics and affect. However, this mean that context, historic

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[3] I use linear here to imply a general attitude in comparative literary criticism. The word, I feel captures both the instinct of needing to "dig deep" into social or contextual depths and to adhere to a proper chronological horizontality, or order of events (Felski 52).

or biographical, will be thrown out of the window. Rather, Felski and Eliot's intent is to merely widen the view and processes which critics can employ in their valuations of texts. Felski defends aesthetics the preferable starting point for comparative criticism by claiming that aesthetics—formal devices, characters, plot, themes, and diction are the that—are not the result of historic connections between authors, but are "the very reason such [historic] connections are forged and sustained" in the first place (165). So, while a primary focus on shared aesthetic elements between texts does not preclude the examination of the social or historic periphery, this approach affords texts a "transtemporal liveliness" – an ability to create and co-construct with each other "without opposing thought to emotion or divorcing [the] intellectual rigor" of historic and contextual criticism from a scholarly examination of related writers (154).

Within these new and exciting possibilities for intertextual networks, the potential that digital tools and technologies hold to further enhance and enlarge our explorations and comparisons of texts should not be overlooked. Many of the tools and techniques currently in use within the field of digital humanities align with Felski and Eliot. Franco Moretti has recently pointed out the ability of digital quantitative software to quickly and accurate point out potential intertextual links between texts. He terms this concept "distant reading," a way of performing traditional close readings across a wide spread of literary corpora (55). Yet other scholars are using these digital tools in a more intimate way than Moretti suggests, turning instead to individual texts or specific pairings between texts. Julie Van Peteghem has noted how "within the digital framework," tools that search across both "large text corpora" and individual texts "for the precise recurrence of words and phrases" produce accurate and fruitful "observations and interpretations of various aspects of text reuse" (43). Neil Coffee et al. align well with Felski's theory of aesthetics and extra-textual production that extends beyond the texts

themselves. They claim that the use of digital resources in the study of literature not only builds stronger intertextual networks between texts, but also between the texts and readers: "The collective scholarly understanding of intertextuality is thus shifting to include phenomena considerably less salient than the most celebrated examples. Digital detection may also bring to prominence other features that have passed beneath the notice of critics, but which have nevertheless played a role in the poet's production and reader's experience . . . [and] can build a more satisfying profile of the artistry of each poet and richer interpretations of their works" (418).

Why then does a multidirectional, aesthetic-based, digitally-aided model of intertextual analysis fit Chekhov? The aforementioned scholarship on Anglo-Chekhov intertextuality—each utilizing different methods, approaches, and viewpoints—all seem to place Chekhov on a different intertextual or influential point on the literary map. In answering this question, I find one characterization by Donald Rayfield, Chekhov's primary biographer, particularly helpful. Rayfield proclaims Chekhov as "the most approachable and the least alien . . . of all the Russian 'classics' . . . to non-Russians especially," but that "Chekhov's approachability" in the English literary tradition "is inseparable from his elusiveness. It is very hard to say what he 'meant,' when he so rarely judges or expounds" (preface, xv). Efforts, like those of Kilmenko, to steer criticism of Anglo-Chekhov connections toward context and historically motivated analyses may perhaps be due to the elusive and murky nature of Chekhov's authorial presence in his own work. However, the quality of approachability in Chekhov cannot be so easily dismissed, for such a quality relates strongly to his stories' aesthetic and formal attractiveness. McSweeny's approach toward Chekhov is firmly based on this emphasis of Chekhov's aesthetic hospitality: "[Chekhov's] stories . . . are better read in terms of their aesthetic effects than their alleged

subtexts . . . [they] invite a different kind of critical attention—not interpretative problem-solving but correct construal and an articulate aesthetic response" (43, 47). Chekhov's stories, whether for their compositional inventiveness, their poignant themes, lively characters, or simply the words they contain, exude what Wai Chee Dimock calls "resonance" or an ability to initiate newfound connections between literatures in unexpected places (1061). His literature manifests what Felski describes as a "dexterity in soliciting and sustaining attachments" with other authors and texts (166). But ultimately, Chekhov's own description of his literature captures its enduring relatability and foreshadows the timeless and far-flung influence his work would produce on writers during and after his own time: "So I turn out a sort of patchwork quilt rather than literature. What can I do? I simply don't know. I will simply depend on all-healing time" (Karlinsy, 273).

In the sections that follow, I will perform comparative readings, aided by software[4] designed for digital textual analysis, of several sets of Chekhov and British stories. Using these theoretical attitudes and models, I hope to provide interpretations of these stories that do not leave the impact of these intertextual pairs stranded within their own historic or aesthetic compartments; instead, as Felski says, I intend to step into "a coproduction between [textual] actors that brings new things to light," (174). The stories and authors that follow were selected in order to achieve this coproduction. Though I do examine instances of biographical concordance between authors or direct contextual linkage between the texts themselves, I primarily focus on what the texts' aesthetic and thematic qualities produce, question, and propose as they are brought into conversation with each other. These bi-textual productions, I hope, will ultimately

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[4] Unless otherwise specified, I will be using the Voyant software, designed by Stefan Sinclair, McGill University and Geoffrey Rockwell, University of Alberta, which can be accessed for free at voyant-tools.org.

produce newfound appreciation not only for Chekhov's work as they stand alone, but for what they have enabled in the wider world of literature since his career and into today.

The Artifice of Art: Arthur Fraser's "Lambeth Bridge" and Chekhov's "Artists Wives"

This first comparison begins with a recurrent theme in Chekhov's short fiction: the morality and integrity of professional art, or more specifically, the degree to which an artist's full-time pursuit of their craft inhibits the natural benefits and beauty of art itself. Several of Chekhov's stories depict scenarios in which a professional artist causes those closest to him/her to suffer for the sake of their artistry.[5] One of the earliest appearances of this theme in Chekhov's oeuvre occurs in the humorous and satirical story "Artists' Wives" (1880). Throughout this tale, Chekhov explores what Erica Siegel has called "the morally compromised state of . . . professional artist[s]" through the main character, a writer named Alfonso Zinzaga, who, due to his poverty, wanders through various hotel rooms—all occupied by fellow painters, musicians, and sculptors—begging for money or food (77). All the while, however, the flamboyant Zinzaga and his bohemian neighbors neglect and abuse their wives in the name of their own careers and artistic genius. Ultimately, the "ethical and aesthetic dilemmas" put on display in "Artists' Wives" captures Chekhov's prolonged fascination with the "boundaries between art and life" (Seigel 74, 79).

But this fascination with art and its dangers is not unique to Chekhov alone. This first intertextual comparison between Chekhov and an early modernist author explores the aesthetic and structural connections between "Artists' Wives" and a second story, "Lambeth Bridge," written by the English writer Arnold Fraser in 1911.[6] "Lambeth Bridge"—like Chekhov's

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[5] In later stories, Chekhov extended this concern beyond individuals who were pursuing artistic professions, i.e. the medical student in "Anyuta," and the prestigious professor in "A Dreary Story."

[6] Access to my transcription of "Lambeth Bridge," including a short critical introduction and a scan of original facsimile as it appeared in its periodical, can be found at http://mssp.byu.edu/title/lambeth-bridge/.

"Artists' Wives"—sets the protagonist, a young man and "practitioner of eclectics" named Eric, in a similar state of imagination, artistry and non-reality as that of Alphonso Zinzaga (LB 193).[7] The story describes Eric's efforts to woo a young woman named Margery by planning "a particular programme" of artistic and avant-garde activities across London: discussions of art, music, and even dreaming up hypothetical honeymoon destinations (193). However, all of Eric's efforts fail to win over Margery, and the story ends with Eric insisting that he and Margery pretend that "[they] are engaged," while they watch the sunset from Lambeth Bridge (200). Synthesizing these stories' shared aesthetic qualities—supplemented by several parallels between these texts' publication histories and authorial context—fashions a new significance for this literary theme of artistic artifice. These stories display the downfall of the artist, depicting the way in which artists, in overlooking the livelihood of those around them in the pursuit of art, forfeit not only their authentic artistry, but their very humanity. These two stories' collective exploration of an artist's lifestyle, including its dangers and artificialities, challenge aspects of the modernist modus operandi, specifically its bohemian lifestyle and participation in avant-gardism.

Because both stories are relatively obscure, it is necessary to first provide some brief biographical and periodical context for the stories. These texts' contextual backgrounds do not establish intertextuality through historic or biographical parallels rather than concrete intersections. Both stories, which were most likely unread and unknown by either Chekhov or Fraser respectively, share a contextual *aesthetic* rather than firmly documented or historic links. There is no known correspondence between the two authors or public/private statements of

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[7] In places that require clarification as to which story is being quoted, I will mark citations with an abbreviated version of the title. LB will indicate quotations from Fraser's "Lambeth Bridge" and citations marked with AW will indicate Chekhov's "Artists' Wives."

admiration and influence by one towards the other, and the translation of "Artists' Wives" into English postdates Fraser's publication of "Lambeth Bridge." Nevertheless, the texts' backgrounds share several distinctive qualities that lay a foundation for an analysis and evaluation of their shared theme.

The publication history of these two stories, as well as the biographies of their authors, show their mutual concern over a devoted and professional artistic life. Both stories were written early in the authors' careers. Chekhov was building his reputation as a witty and satirical writer, publishing his stories in journals that were sold at train stations and aimed at entertaining "bored urban readers with short attention spans" (Bloshteyn viii). "Artists' Wives" was first published in *Minute (Минута)*, a self-described "political and literary gazette" in 1880 under the satirical pseudonym "Don Antonio Chekhonte" (Bloshteyn 109).[8] However, the English translation of "Artists' Wives" was not available until 1915, four years after Fraser published "Lambeth Bridge" in the journal *The Open Window* in 1911. "Lambeth Bridge" is Fraser's earliest known publication, he was only twenty-three years old at the time. At the time of these publications, both Fraser and Chekhov either worked or studied in other capacities other than literature. Chekhov was being educated as a doctor in Moscow in 1880, and Fraser had just completed his degree at St. Paul's school.[9] Thus, both writers greatly differ from the subjects of their stories. The glaring contrast between Zinzaga and Chekhov, as well as Fraser and Eric, indicate the way in which both authors may be viewing the life of a devotedly bohemian artist as something of an

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[8] Chekhov intended to include "Artists' Wives" in what he hoped would be first collection of short fiction, *The Prank*, which was compiled in 1882 and included illustrations of the stories by his brother, Nikolai. However, when presented to the censor for approval, the censor denied its publication, most likely due to the harsh satire and criticism which "Artists' Wives" and other stories leveled against the Russian intelligentsia and government. Subsequently, the stories in *The Prank* were not published as a collection until 2015 (Bloshteyn).

[9] Fraser enlisted in the army in 1914, serving in both Flanders and France, after which he returned to England and began a successful career in government. For more information on Fraser's political career, see my brief biography on Fraser at http://mssp.byu.edu/author/arthur-ronald-fraser/.

outside observer. This objective distance helps facilitate their candid and critical portrayals of the moral and ethical dangers that accompany a life devoted to artistic, imaginative, or literary expression.

One key non-contextual similarity in both Fraser and Chekhov's portrayals of artistic artifice involves the stories' structural and rhetorical strategy, specifically, their shared employment of allusion and juxtaposition. Both authors reveal the inauthenticity of their characters' lifestyles by referencing real artists and writers, contrasting the reputations of these non-fictional artists with their inauthentic admirers. Chekhov sets Zinzaga, who is attempting to write a beautiful and impressive novel, in contrast with non-fictional writers such as Mikhail Lermontov, Gavrila Derzhavin, and Victor Hugo (14, 19). Lermontov and Derzhavin, as well as Hugo, represent their respective eras of Russian romanticism. Thus, Zinzaga and his compatriots attempt to emulate the romantic aesthetic of independent artistry and poetic self-centeredness of these historic writers. They do so through their total and complete focus on their craft, hoping to one day impress their mutual patron, the foppish "Count and Countess Barabanta-Alimonda" (4). None of the artists, however, seem to accomplish anything, but instead spend their time reciting and rehearsing their songs, paintings, and novels to their wives. Amidst all their talk of impressing their patrons and changing the world through art, the individual worlds of each artist have fallen into ruin. Their blindness, set against the accomplishments of historic artists and writers, demonstrates Chekhov's skepticism towards bohemian, professional artistry.

In "Lambeth Bridge" Eric's imaginative and romantic sensibilities are also contrasted through an allusion to historic artistic figures. In Eric's case, Fraser makes reference, though more covertly, to two Pre-Raphaelite artists, Edward Burne-Jones and Arthur Hughes, and the well-known British landscape painter, J. M. W. Turner (196). These painters also allude to

various instances of artistic romanticism: Turner was known for his expressive use of color, imaginative landscapes and turbulent marine paintings, and Burne-Jones's and Hughes's were participants in the Pre-Raphaelite project of returning art and literature's focus to naturalism, medievalism, and aestheticism. These historic allusions heighten the inauthenticity and shallow nature of Eric's "programme" (192). He cannot convince Margery of his sincere artistic temperament, but instead resigns himself to the fact that "She had failed from his point of view" (195). Ultimately, these shared structural strategies between the stories cement Chekhov's and Fraser's criticism of the romantic or bohemian lifestyle.

Chekhov and Fraser's negative feelings towards bohemianism arise out of their belief that such a lifestyle diminishes the ability to connect and empathize with others. They portray this through their similar aesthetic crafting of the protagonists' relationships with their art and with the human beings around them. This relationship "devolves," or turns inauthentic, artificial, and harmful, due to the artist's tendency to dominate and mistreat those around them. The similarities between the protagonists' faulty relationships emerges when viewed through a digital lens. Figures 1 and 2 chart the relationship between selected keywords (shown in blue) and their collocates (shown in orange), terms that occur in close proximity to the selected keywords. The selected keywords include the protagonist for each story: Zinzaga and Eric, the character with whom they appear and relate most frequently: Zinzaga's wife Amaranta and Margery, and their intended art or craft: a novel for Zinzaga and Eric's "programme."
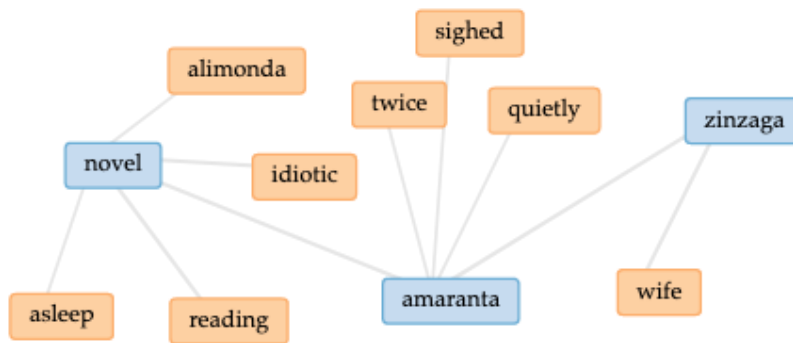
Figure 1: Collocates Graph for "Artists' Wives," *Voyant Tools*
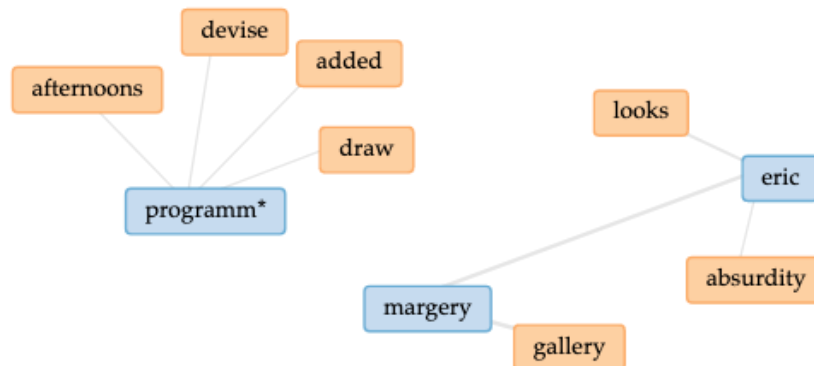
Figure 2: Collocates Graph for "Lambeth Bridge," *Voyant Tools*

These figures display the characters' distance from their artistic foci, demonstrating an

inauthentic and unfruitful relationship between the artist and their art. In regard to "Artists

Wives," Zinzaga never appears in proximity to his own novel, which seems to be mediated to

him through his wife, Amaranta. In "Lambeth Bridge," a related though slightly different path

occurs with Eric, who's focus on Margery seems to isolate him from fulfilling the program he

has dreamed up for himself. These figures also provide descriptors for both the artist and their

art. In "Artists' Wives," the word "idiotic" falls in proximity with Zinzaga's novel in three

different contexts throughout the story, while Eric falls in proximity with the word "absurdity" once during the story. [10]

Though these digital tools put the diction surrounding these characters and their artistry into clear correlation, the correlations themselves require further description and analysis, specifically with regard to how they influence the shared theme of artistic artifice in the two stories. The faint grey lines that either bridge the artist to his art, as in the case of "Artists' Wives," or isolate artist from their art, as is the case for "Lambeth Bridge," represent the result of these men's obsession with artistic achievement: the abuse and objectification of the women in their lives. This occurs in "Arists' Wives" with both Zinzaga and the other artists with whom he lives. While visiting his friend, the painter Francesco Burtronza, Zinzaga insists that Burtronza's wife, Carolina, acquiesce to Burtronza's demand to sit as model for his painting in the nude. Despite Carolina's repeated refusals and discomfort with the request, Zinzaga tells her "For the sake of art, donna… you must forsake not only modesty; you must forsake all your feelings!" (8). This statement encapsulates the hypocrisy of these men's' romantic and artistic identities: their love for art has rendered them incapable of loving others. Seigel comments powerfully on the blow this serves to women in "Artists' Wives," saying, "art supplants [and] takes the place of life itself . . . All of the artists have—at significant cost—privileged their vocational callings above their domestic responsibilities, not only esteeming the artistic life over the mundane one, but also seeing art where they ought to recognize life and its realities" (79).

A similar price is paid in "Lambeth Bridge" as Eric fails to establish an authentic connection with Margery. Though perhaps in a less severe degree than the women in "Artists'

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[10] The values for collocates indicate the word's frequency in the context of the linked keywords, while the values for the keywords indicate the frequency that the word appears throughout the entire text (corpus). The various collocates and their values in each figure can be accessed through the online rendering of these corpuses at the following URLS: "Artists' Wives" and "Lambeth Bridge."

Wives," the success of Eric's imaginative program depends on his restriction of Margery's self-expression and ownership of her choices and actions. Eric's assertion of control over Margery begins from the outset of the story. Eric prefers to call Margery "his Margery" (192). Margery, despite being "ignorant of her possession," puts up a stronger fight against Eric's oppression than the wives are able to muster in Chekhov's tale. When Eric insists that he pick up Margery from her home to begin the day's program, Margery, clearly uncomfortable with Eric, asks whether she might instead "meet . . . at Trafalgar Square" (194). However, Eric insists that his imagination hold sway over Margery, stating that "'You are coming into my dream, and I shall guide you from the very beginning. We will set out together from your door, and together will we return'" (194). Ultimately though, Eric's imaginative control over Margery and their day together fails to produce real results. He therefore persists in his delusion, demanding that he and Margery end their day by pretending to be engaged. Margery's reply indicates both her fear of Eric—replying in a fearful whisper—and her awareness that the program which Eric has conjured for himself has become hypocritical and removed from reality: "'All right,' she whispered, 'let's pretend. But it was not in the programme, surely,'" (200).

Ultimately, both stories exhibit Fraser and Chekhov's shared apprehension and mistrust of a bohemian devotion to art, especially in relation to detriments this lifestyle poses to women. Their interrelated representations of this theme—the balance between an artist's craft and the realities of their circumstances and relationships—develops a unique intertextual bond between the stories. Despite the lack of historic or documented interaction between Fraser and Chekhov, the aesthetic intertextuality shared between their stories both enriches an important literary theme and widens the range of texts in dialog with Chekhov's works.

Reconceptualizing Mansfield-Chekhovian Intertextuality Through "Daughters of the Late Colonel" and "A Dreary Story"

After explicating the connection between Fraser, a fairly obscure modernist writer, and Chekhov, this section centers on a more well-known modernist writer, one who has been heavily associated with Chekhov historically and critically: Katherine Mansfield. Of the many scholarly comparisons of Chekhov and other early modernist writers, Mansfield garners perhaps the most attention and focus. Her open admiration of Chekhov's stories, plays, literary methods, and biography is well-documented and well-researched, and comparative criticism and analyses of their literature and intertextual relationships are just as consistent and thorough.[11] However, despite the frequency and ardency with which these two writers have been brought together in both historical scholarship and literary criticism, more critical attention must be given to Mansfield's simultaneous dependence on and independence from Chekhov through new comparative pairings between each author's stories.

Previous analyses of the intertextual networks between Mansfield and Chekhov tend to split into two general areas. The first category centers on Mansfield's fascination with the biographical aspects of Chekhov's life. These studies often investigate her translation of a volume of Chekhov's correspondence—published in collaboration with Samuel Koteliansky, a Russian-born British translator and well-known literary friend of other writers such as Virginia Woolf and DH Lawrence—as well as her reviews and essays on Chekhov's literature, often published and circulated through her husband, John Middleton Murray (Diment 238-239).

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[11] Some examples of well-known studies on intertextual links between Mansfield and Chekhov (see bibliography for full citations): Schneider, 1935; "The Times Literary Supplement" debate by post in 1951 (published by Tomalin, 1987); Sutherland, 1955; Alpers, 1980; Tomalin, 1987; New, 1999; McDonnell, 2010; Jones, 2011; Lelis, 2011; Glotova, 2014.

The second category of criticism focuses on the aesthetic and literary indebtedness that Mansfield's short stories apparently owe Chekhov. Much of this scholarship tends to bring a particular pair of stories into conversation with each other: Mansfield's early story, "The-Child-who-was-Tired," (1910) and Chekhov's story, "Спать Хочется" ("Sleepy," 1888), with Mansfield's story often being read as an almost-plagiarized version of Chekhov's story. These literary studies tend to be more divisive than the historically based scholarship, either accusing Mansfield of blatantly imitating Chekhov or defending Mansfield's independent aesthetic and literary style from Chekhov's.[12] Such polarized claims stem from the lack of variety in the pairings of different Chekhov and Mansfield stories. The dissonance within the scholarship, therefore, has tended to push these narrow comparisons of Mansfield and Chekhov towards one side or the other.

However, the goal of this section is not to debate from one particular end of this scholarly spectrum, nor is it to comment on previous pairings of Mansfield and Chekhov stories. Rather, the intention of this section is to bring a previously unconnected pair of stories into conversation with each other, which will illustrate the complex network between biography, context, and literary style at work in Chekhov and Mansfield. Despite the seemingly contradictory and disparate scholarly conclusions about these authors' intertextual relationship, my comparison of Mansfield's "Daughters of the Late Colonel" (1921) and Chekhov's "A Dreary Story" (1889) rethinks Mansfield's intertextual "indebtedness" to Chekhov.[13] At first glance, the plot structure and themes of Mansfield's "Daughters" seem to imitate "A Dreary Story," much in the same fashion that has drawn attention to "The-Child-who-was-Tired" and "Sleepy." However, the

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[12] See footnote 11

[13] Access to my full-text transcription of "Daughters of the Late Colonel," including a short critical introduction and a scan of the original facsimile as it appeared in its periodical, can be found at http://mssp.byu.edu/title/daughters-of-the-late-colonel/.

stories contrast strongly in their narrative modes. These contrasts alter the final conclusion and meaning of the theme of death that each story presents to the reader. Despite the initial intertextual linage between the stories, these formal and aesthetic differences demonstrate Mansfield's and Chekhov's individual and independent aesthetic and literary style. Ultimately, this comparison shows that the divided analyses—those which isolate Chekhov and Mansfield from each other and those which establish an intertextual line of credit between the authors—are not mutually exclusive. Rather, this comparison unfolds the multidimensional relationship that exists between Mansfield and Chekhov, a network of co-production that enriches and enlivens our understanding, appreciation, and application of their texts.

Beginning with the cursory similarities between the stories, the plot of Mansfield's "Daughters" can be read as a continuation of the plot and events described in Chekhov's "A Dreary Story." Chekhov's tale follows the physical, intellectual, and emotional downfall of a renowned professor of medicine, Nikolai Stepanovich. After being diagnosed with a degenerative illness, Nikolai becomes increasingly alienated, detached, and embittered towards his colleagues, friends, and family, specifically his wife, Varya, daughter, Liza, and foster daughter, Katya. The decay of these relationships only increases Nikolai's suffering and ultimately "empties his life of meaning" (Flath 272). Mansfield continues "A Dreary Story" where Chekhov left off. "Daughters" begins a little further along the timeline of the plot, shifting focus onto Josephine and Constantia, the two daughters of an equally prestigious and alienated patriarch, and explores their navigation of the traumatic memories and spectral presence of their tyrannical and cantankerous father.

Details from some letters and correspondence provide firmer footing for the claim that Mansfield wrote "Daughters" as a type of continuation of "A Dreary Story." Mansfield's story

was published three years after her own diagnosis with consumption in 1918. Her anxiety

concerning her own death—as well as her journaling of these anxieties alongside meditations on

Chekhov and his literature—parallel the emotions and reflections expressed by Nikolai

Stepanovich in "A Dreary Story," which Chekhov framed as if told from the professor's diary.

This diagnosis also prompted many ardent reflections about Chekhov in her own notebooks and

journals as she struggled to balance her writing with the debilitating illness. In one notebook,

Mansfield writes, "At four 30 today it [illness] did conquer me and I began, like the Tchekov

students, to 'pace from corner to corner', then up and down, up and down and the pain racked me

like a curse and I could hardly breathe...I feel too ill to write" (*Letters,* 141). Such invocations of

Chekhov align Mansfield's own personal and existential anxieties with those of Nikolai

Stepanovich in "A Dreary Story."

It follows that "Daughters" emerges in part out of these biographical alignments. One

particular instance of Mansfield's musings on Chekhov from her many notebooks draws a direct

link between "A Dreary Story" and "Daughters." Mansfield writes: "I must start writing again...

Ach, Tchekhov! Why are you dead! Why can't I talk to you – in a big, darkish room – at late

evening – where the light is green from the waving trees outside . . ." (*Letters*, 141). Mansfield's

descriptive, almost prayerful appeal to Chekhov mirrors the setting and mood of a pertinent

scene in "Daughters" where Constantia and Josephine are briefly freed from their father's

phantom-like presence by the memories of their mother:

> The sunlight pressed through the windows, thieved its way in, flashed its light over the
>
> furniture and the photographs. Josephine watched it. When it came to mother's
>
> photograph, the enlargement over the piano, it lingered . . . The thieving sun touched

Josephine gently. She lifted her face. She was drawn over to the window by gentle beams

(28-29).

In one of the only moments in "Daughters" where natural light appears in the story, the sisters

are able to momentarily break out of their fearful, apprehensive, and timid behaviors and shake

off the influence of their father. Josephine is able to think and act clearly rather than "vaguely"

for the first time in the story, and she recalls specific memories of the happier "other life" when

her mother was living (29). The imagery in this moment of escape and relief from their father's

spectral presence and the responsibilities left to the sisters after his death parallels the setting

described in Mansfield's notebook. Both are described as places of aethereal, earthy light, with

Mansfield freed from her anxiety of death and dying and able to converse with a ghostly

Chekhov, much in the same way that Josephine and Constantia seem to interact with their

deceased mother. Ultimately, "Daughters" likeness to "A Dreary Story" in terms of biographical

context and plot reveal a vibrant intertextual correlation between the two stories. Such a

correlation affirms many scholarly conclusions regarding Mansfield's heavy reliance on

Chekhov's texts to inspire and propel her own stories.

And yet, "Daughters" simultaneously resists intertextual affinity with Chekhov's "A

Dreary Story" when considering the narrative modes of both stories. Their diverse registers not

only differentiate each author's individual and independent literary style, but also provide

grounds for new and distinct interpretations of each story, despite their related plots, context, and

themes. Carol Flath has pointed out that "A Dreary Story" is unique for Chekhov in its usage of

the journal or diary-like mode of narration. This departs from the mode of many of Chekhov's

other texts, which are famously celebrated for their innovative proto-modernist plotlessness. For

Chekhov this often meant beginning *in medias res* and using an omniscient, third-person

narrator. However, "A Dreary Story," as Flath says, is told "in the imperfect aspect, present

tense," exhibiting Chekhov's less known though nonetheless "…skillful use of the first-person

narrative" (272). Telling the story in this alternative register, while increasing the reader's access

to Nikolai Stepanovich's intimate thoughts and feelings about his fading life, forces the reader to

accept Nikolai's version of the story's events, which may or may not be true to the experience of

those he writes about.

However, the narrative mode shifts abruptly at the end of the story as Nikolai

Stepanovich switches into the past tense and perfective aspect rather than in the present

imperfective.[14] The final moment of the story—a scene where Nikolai's foster daughter Katya

visits him, tries asking for help, but then abruptly leaves his hotel room—demonstrates this shift

in the verbal narration. Nikolai writes, "She knows that I am watching her go, and will probably

look back when she reaches the corner. No, she didn't. I caught one last glimpse of her black

dress, her steps faded away…Farewell, my treasure! (217)." In the first sentence, Nikolai

continues his account in the imperfective present, using verbs such as "knows / знает," "am

watching / гляжу," and "look back / повороте оглянется." However, the final two sentences of

the quotation shift abruptly into the perfective past tense, with verbs such as "didn't (look back) /

не оглянулась," "caught / мелькнуло," and "faded / затихли." This shift to the past tense and

perfective aspect metaphorically signal the end of Nikolai's life. Thus, throughout the whole

story, Chekov's narrative mode, including these key shifts in verb tense, models the very process

of dying. Readers are exposed to Nikolai's thoughts and emotions in the present, granting a more

visceral and in-the-moment view of his decline. In these final moments, the reader is forced, like

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[14] It is important to note that the shift in verb tense, especially between the perfective and imperfective aspect, is much more apparent in the original Russian. Verbs set in these different aspects are more quickly and readily identifiable due to the alternative spellings, prefixes, or suffix endings that differentiate perfective or imperfective verb sets.

Nikolai Stepanovich, to acknowledge the end of life. Ultimately, "A Dreary Story" presents a vivid and poignant perspective on the process of dying.

Conversely, "Daughters" focuses on death in conceptual and abstract terms rather than the process dying. The story does this through a different and characteristically Mansfieldian narrative mode. Mansfield captures the isolating and estranging effects of death on the sisters by telling the majority of the story through third-person narration. Though Mansfield occasionally reveals the sister's first-person perspectives and thoughts, she does so far less frequently and overtly than Chekhov. Mansfield grants this access by blurring the narration with the interior thoughts of the sisters, sometimes omitting quotation marks around these thoughts or questions. One example of this occurs as the sisters are attempting to sort through their father's belongings:

> She had the most extraordinary feeling that she had just escaped something simply awful.
>
> But how could she explain to Constantia that father was in the chest of drawers? He was
>
> in the top drawer with his handkerchiefs and neckties, or in the next with his shirts and
>
> pyjamas, or in the lowest of all with his suits. He was watching there, hidden away—just
>
> behind the door-handle—ready to spring (21).

The ambiguity in whether the narrator or Josephine is sensing the old colonel's presence in the wardrobe clouds the sisters' emotional sensibilities, enhancing the reader's awareness of the trauma that these sisters are experience because of their father's passing.

Mansfield enriches the detached and distant mood which her narrative register generates through another of her well-known stylistic techniques: object-oriented interiority or the opening of a character's inner thoughts and emotions based on surrounding objects. This technique achieves a similar estranging effect, channeling the sisters' normal human emotions towards objects rather than other people. This is evident in the passage quoted above where the sisters

apprehend their father more strongly through his old "handkerchiefs . . . neckties . . . shirts . . . and pyjamas" than through any memory or experience with him (21). This object-oriented relationship between the father and his old possessions is shown in Figure 3 below, where the frequency of the term "father" drops into closer correlation and frequency with the objects described during segment five, the moment when both sisters attempt to sort through his effects.
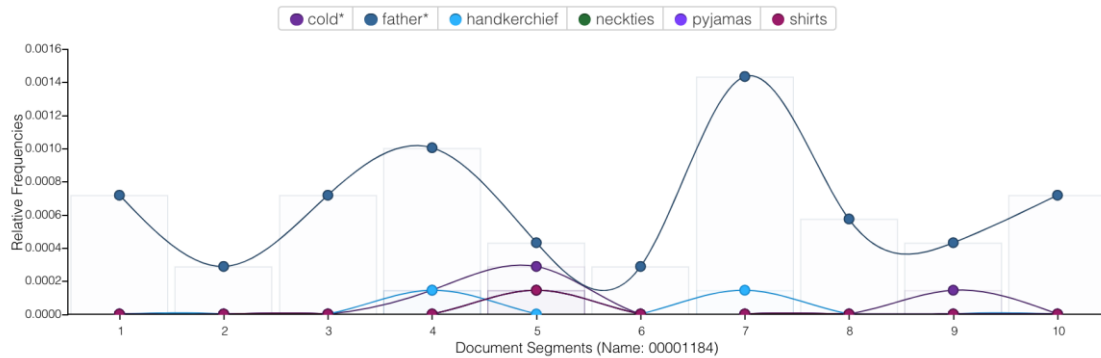

Figure 3: Trends Graph. The x-axis progresses through each consecutive part of the story, while the y-axis gives the frequencies of the selected keywords in each segment.

Mansfield pairs this spectral, even predatorial aura surrounding their father's clothing with a description of the study's cold temperature: "Everything was covered" with a "coldness" and "whiteness" from which the sisters "expected a snowflake to fall" (20). This indicates that the sisters, in the wake of their father's death, have become alienated and distant from their own lives. Mansfield's unique narrative methods ultimately alter the story's approach to the subject of death. Unlike "A Dreary Story," "Daughters" concerns itself less with process or experience of dying and more with the alienating effects of death on those still living.

And yet, though these contrasting narrative modes appear to put more intertextual distance between Chekhov and Mansfield, they do so only in terms of their literary styles. The individual and independent qualities and techniques of each writer do not cancel out the biographical and contextual ways in which these stories directly correlate to each other. Though this may seem paradoxical, this statement from Russian immigrant critic, D.S. Mirskii, puts this

apparent riddle of Mansfield-Chekhovian intertextuality into clear, provocative terms: " . . . if Chekhov has had a genuine heir to the secrets of his art, it is in England, where Katherine Mansfield did what no Russian has done—learned from Chekhov without imitating him" (382-383). Mansfield's admiration and knowledge of Chekhov is undeniably linked to many of the intertextualities between their texts. But each author's literary style and methods are also undeniably their own. Ultimately, this comparison demonstrates the multi-layered nature of intertextuality, showing how texts and writers may align by one definition of intertextuality while simultaneously maintaining independence from each other.

Grotesque Inhumanity: Rethinking Chekhov's "The Princess" Through John Lucas's "Three Grotesques"

This final comparison between a Chekhov story and another little-known story from an early British modernist engages the aforementioned idea of multidirectional intertextuality, the concept that one text can establish intertextual bonds with other texts of dissimilar chronology, authorship, or context. Within these dexterous or flexible networks, one text's meaning, significance, or interpretation can be freely altered, enriched, or challenged by another text. This section's comparison will explore how a later English text—John Lucas's "Three Grotesques" (1910)—rethinks and enriches former interpretations of Chekhov's "The Princess" (1888) and generates newfound meanings and significances for both texts today.[15]

Lucas's story—which is divided into three separate episodes—describes individuals who, as the title suggests, are some way or another grotesque. Since at least the 18th century, the word *grotesque* has been synonymous with words such as *strange*, *mysterious*, *fantastic*, *hideous*, *ugly*, *unpleasant*, or *disgusting*. Historic usage of the grotesque in literature, therefore, has generally

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[15] Access to the full-text transcription of "Three Grotesques," including a short critical introduction and scans of the story as it appeared in its periodical, can be found at http://mssp.byu.edu/title/three-grotesques/.

been linked to the author's attempts induce empathy, shock, or disgust in the audience (Baldick).

Lucas's innovative expression of modernist concerns toward identity, purpose, and humanity

through the time-worn model of the grotesque provides an alternative lens for reading "The

Princess." Within the framework of the grotesque, Chekhov's story takes on the newly

significant and unique purpose of not only revealing the difficulties and dark sides of humanity,

but also exploring the possible methods for avoiding and combatting grotesque inhumanity.

Both stories portray individuals living ontologically and existentially grotesque lives,

meaning that who these characters define themselves as and the purpose they assign to their lives

is pitifully meaningless. The episodes of Lucas's story define grotesqueness as a lack of self-

awareness, causing character to forfeit their inner, more sincere desires and passions in favor of

fitting into society or observing propriety. This more subtle form of the grotesque is revealed by

the narrator of each of the three segments rather than through overtly grotesque imagery or

descriptions. Lucas's first segment—describing the Dante-esque descent of Pogson, a well-to-do

Oxford graduate and churchwarden, into hell—shows the dangerous consequences of this

grotesque form of self-conception.[16] The narrator contradicts the common tone associated with

death or hell, describing Pogson's passing into purgatory as "a really wonderful event" (126).

This odd reversal signals Pogson's grotesqueness, for only a grotesque life and its consequent

damnation could considered a wonderful event.

Unlike the narrator, Pogson is surprised to find himself in hell, insisting to the Devil that

there must be a mistake. However, his primary evidence for feeling unjustly consigned to hell is

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[16] Invoking Dante in the description of this first episode is *a pro pos* when considering Lucas's authorial background. While writing short stories and vignettes for journals such as *Blackwood's Magazine* and *Open Window,* Lucas also developed his reputation through his work in writing anthologies of poetry. He is credited for compiling multiple anthologies of both French and Italian verse, published by Clarendon Press from 1907-1910. More detailed information on John Lucas can be found in my brief biography at http://mssp.byu.edu/author/john-lucas/.

that he "[feels] just as [he] always felt" during his life (128). The Devil retorts to Pogson that this is merely due to the fact that Pogson was "never really alive" during his lifetime (128). As a punishment for leading this deadened form of life, the Devil tells Pogson that the inner soul which Pogson repressed during his life—"the soul of a poet, a dreamer, an adventurer, full of ideals, of mighty schemes, of thrilling fantasies and yearnings, of immense lusts for beauty and freedom"—will occupy his body while living in hell (132). Thus, Pogson begins to recognize the grotesque quality of who he was and how he lived, describing it as full of the "fat reek of domestic altars and the level lines of respectable residences" (132).

Lucas repeats this same process of revealing the underlying grotesqueness of one's life during the story's second episode, "The Reminiscent Bishop," which describes a dying bishop's confession of a youthful love affair to his wife. Again, Lucas creates this sense of grotesque but through the narrator's more subtle and understated observations of the characters rather than through overt or obscene physical descriptions or imagery. The narrator describes the bishop's survival as "the most dreadful part of [the] painful affair," a characterization which bears the same level of contradiction as the narrator's earlier description of Pogson's death and damnation as "a really wonderful event" (138, 126). Thus, the bishop's life appears as grotesquely unaware and self-centered as Pogson's.

Though this episode ends differently than Pogson's tale—for the bishop does not die but miraculously recovers and lives "for very many years" to come—the bishop nevertheless receives a similar punishment as Pogson (138). The bishop's continued life with a wife to whom he had revealed his lack of love brings a sort of living damnation upon him. While Pogson must live eternally with the personality and identity which he repressed in life, the bishop must now live out the rest of his days knowing he was happier with the lover of his youth rather than his

wife. In both of these episodes, Lucas paints a subtle yet startling portrait of grotesquely unfulfilled lives through his narrator, revealing the damning effects of these character's ontological and existential perspectives.

Lucas's concept of the ontological and existential grotesque offers an alternative lens through which to interpret Chekhov's "The Princess," which has previously been interpreted through the context of Chekhov's medical profession and interests. Leonard Polakiewicz, writing in this vein, explains that the story "demonstrated [Chekhov's] unique understanding of the symptoms of a narcissistic personality and his profound insight into the motives of human interaction" (57). However, by reading Chekhov's similar employment of the grotesque, the story's portrait of narcissism and self-absorption becomes more than just an accurate medical description; it transforms into an ethical and moral diagnosis of humanity. The grotesque personality of the princess mirrors that of Pogson and the bishop in "Three Grotesques" in that she also lives a life of grotesquely misaligned priorities and purposes. Despite her opulent and self-indulgent lifestyle, the princess sees her life as undeniably beneficial to others: "The princess fancied she brought from the outside world just such comfort as the ray of light or the bird . . . her whole personality in fact, her little graceful figure always dressed in simple black, *must* arouse in simple, austere people a feeling of tenderness and joy" (110, emphasis mine). Chekhov's usage of the word "must" creates a similar effect as the narrator's phrases in "Three Grotesques" in that it alerts the readers to contradictory and deluded state of being in which the princess lives. Her adamant belief in the infallibility of her character and purpose is betrayed by the narrator's skepticism. Thus, both stories employ an outside voice to illuminate the grotesque lives which these characters unknowingly lead.

Despite the doctor's vehement and brutal attempts to expose the princess's self-obsession, the princess continues to believe in her own faultlessness throughout the story. Chekhov signals this delusion and its grotesque nature by repeating the princess's characterization of herself as a bird at the end of the story: "Trying to look like a bird, the princess fluttered into the carriage . . . she was thinking there was no higher bliss than to bring warmth, light, and joy wherever one went" (120). The image of the princess as a bird aligns more closely with the concept of the grotesque when reading in the original Russian. Where Constance Garnett's English translation reads "bird," the original Russian says, "ptichka / птичка," which can also be translated as the diminutive form of bird, birdie. This descriptor intensifies the contrast between the princess's childish self-image and the real impact that she reaps upon those around her: neglecting the livelihood and well-being of the peasants and servants of her various estates, passing off the sub-standard care of impoverished widows as philanthropic charity, and requiring monks to accommodate her lavish vacations to their monastery (113, 115, 117).

Ultimately, the princess—like Pogson and the bishop—leads a life of misunderstood self and misaligned purpose. Chekhov's usage of the grotesque to characterize such a life, however, extends the story's meaning beyond an artistic rendering of a medical condition: such a grotesque form of life also bears ethical implications. Because of the princess's lack of empathy towards others, she tries to remove her own responsibility for the suffering she brings into the lives of other people. Chekhov describes this ethical avoidance in grotesque terms by calling it an "aversion" (113). However, the English word aversion does not bear the same sort of intensity as the original Russian text. Chekhov uses the word "otvrashcheniye / отвращение" which can also translate to "disgust" as much as aversion (Wheeler, Unbegaun, and Falla 300). Reading the story with this more attentive and nuanced translation reveals the truly grotesque nature of the

princess; for all her apparent kindness and sympathy, the people around her receive nothing but disgust and contempt from her. The contrast between such intense aversion and the princess's self-imposed personification as a gentle "bird" or birdie cements the grotesquely corrupt nature of the princess's ethical conduct.

However, despite the princess's failure to throw off her grotesquely deluded sense of self, Chekhov, unlike Lucas, does not preclude the possibility of rehabilitation. This is primarily evident in the contrasting narrative roles played by the doctor in "The Princess" versus the devil in "Three Grotesques." As with the first comparison, using digital textual analysis software helps to puts this contrast into graphical terms. Figure 4 plots the relationship between selected keywords (shown in blue) and their collocates, terms that occur in close proximity to the selected keywords (shown in orange).
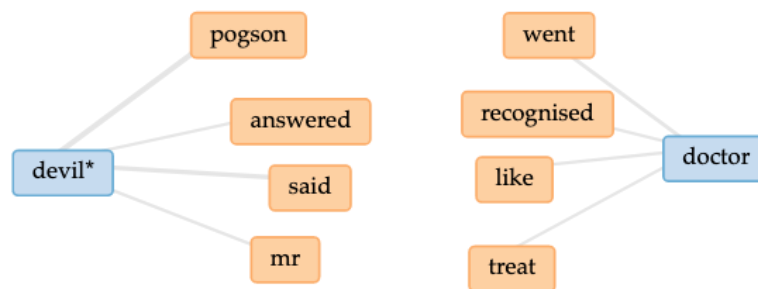

Figure 4: Collocates Graph of "doctor" and "devil"

The verbal collocates associated with the devil "answered" and "said" indicate the obvious distance and unconcernedness with which the devil reveals Pogson's grotesque failure of a life. However, the doctor's verbal collocates, despite his "unpleasant and vindictive" attitude, reveal a much more doctorly approach towards the princess. He appears in proximity with words such as "recognised" and "treat," which belie a doctor's prescriptive and health-promoting habits. Thus, critical characterizations of Chekhov's adherence to medical accuracy and imagery in his short fiction are enriched by the presence of an abstract literary trope such as the grotesque, for they

show that the "medical matters depicted in [his] work should" not only "be in full accord with scientific truth," but also with the moral and ethical dangers that such grotesque illnesses and conditions incur (Polakiewicz 56). Ultimately, "The Princess" provides a potential pathway out of grotesque inhumanity by proposing a moral doctor of sorts, someone who can alert people to the grotesquely misaligned priorities in their lives. However, true to form, Chekhov often either omits the actual healing process or allows the story's patient to deny moral or ethical healing. Though the latter is the case with "The Princess," readers are nonetheless invited to consider this pathway out of the grotesque aspects of their own humanity.

In conclusion, the interpretative framework provided by Lucas's "Three Grotesques" enables a new view of Chekhov's artistic and thematic concerns. Concordance between the role of both stories' narrators enables the reading of the grotesque into "The Princess." Doing so provides new meaning and significance for Chekhov's story, transforming it beyond what the stories in their isolated contextual or historical frameworks can provide.

Conclusion: Revisiting Modernism and Chekhov's Invitations

With the comparative analyses between Chekhov and modernist authors completed, this article will conclude where it began by restating the question posed by the poet Mark Halliday: "What do we finally get from Chekhov?" I wish to draw particular attention to the word "finally" here. The word raises the question of temporality in Chekhov's presence amongst his readers and admirers. Is there a finality to what we extract from Chekhov? Will intertextual links between Chekhov and other writers continue to surface and emerge? This article has presented the case that there is no finality to those links. By introducing and explicating newfound intertextual connections between Chekhov and later writers, Chekhov's presence and influence within the

modernist era has both expanded to include obscure modernist writers and deepened the previously established links with other well-known modernists.

What is now left to consider is how critical conceptions of literary modernism continue to change because of Chekhov. Scholars who have examined this area have often pointed towards the non-traditional narrative mode which Chekhov inspired writers to adopt as the world passed into modernity. Florence Goyet claims that Chekov's short fiction called "into question the very idea of a stable, affirmative self and the superiority of one 'voice' over the others" ultimately subverting the pre-modern narrative tradition (8). Adrian Hunter credits Chekhov for allowing the short story to "distinguish itself as something other than a miniaturized novel" explaining the way in which his texts resist "novelistic strategies of continuity and identification, seeking an 'open', interrogative effect rather than a 'closed', declarative one" (73). Such praise of Chekhov's innovation and genius is widely felt.

However, this critical praise of the "interrogative" and "interior" effect also casts a vague persona around Chekhov. Critics of modernism revere him as a sort of absentee author—one who is always objective, constantly passing into the imperfect and biased minds of his characters, though never offering any subjective view or opinion of his own for the reader to consider. Modernist writers and contemporary critics admire him for his seemingly non-political, non-moral, and non-spiritual perspectives on the world. His evocative descriptions of society and humanity within the minds of his characters are applauded, but his own personal opinions and ideologies either appear murky or absent. Chekhov has been described as a sort of "photographer in words," writing concisely, realistically, and evocatively about the world without "letting anything of himself" into his work (Plante 15). Even Chekhov's descriptions of his own writing seemingly justify this view. In one letter to his brother, Chekov writes, "To describe . . . you

need . . . to free yourself from personal expression. . . . Subjectivity is a terrible thing"
(Koteliansky).

I call this emphasis on Chekhov's narrative objectivity into question, specifically in
regard to the "interrogative" persona cast on him by some critics. Hunter's aforementioned
characterization of Chekhov as the detached interrogator and objective questioner of humanity
separates Chekhov from both his texts and his readers, removing "the obligation to provide any
interpretative content" in his stories (74). While Hunter justifiably attributes this freedom from
interpretative obligations to later modernists, the characterization also discounts Chekhov's deep
interest in steering his readers towards adopting new beliefs and attitudes about themselves and
their worlds. Just because Chekhov's texts do not provide overt or declarative interpretations of
themselves does not mean that Chekhov is merely an uninvested interrogator.

With this in mind, I suggest that Chekhov's stories, despite their interpretative haziness
and Chekov's own admitted avoidance of subjectivity, do not only interrogate and cross-
examine. His stories offer thoughtful "invitations" for readers, directing them towards possible
answers and actions. Justification for my reconceptualization of Chekhov's influence in terms of
an "invitation" instead of an interrogation stems from the linguistic nuances in the Russian word
for invitation, "приглашение." The etymological root of the word is "глас" or "голос," meaning
"voice," and bears the following figurative meaning: "высказываемое мнение / an expressed
opinion" (Тихонов). Furthermore, an invitation does not only suggest or give voice to the
inviter's opinion; it also provides the choice of acceptance or rejection for the recipient. The
great subtlety of Chekhov's works is that they offer opinioned invitations to readers without
sacrificing interpretative complexity and nuance. Thinking of Chekhov as an inviter rather than
interrogator accounts for the wider-than-expected range of writers with whom Chekhov

intersects. And though several of these writers were explored in the previous sections of this article, reconsidering Chekhov's stories as invitations ultimately offer scholars the promise of discovering many more intertextual links between Chekhov and other authors.

This concept of invitation not only adheres to Chekhov's own texts individually, but also links Chekhov to aspects of the modernist literary project, specifically the purpose which modernist writers gave themselves and their literature. Rather than proclaiming a message, their aim was to observe, question, and invite. Katherine Mansfield, in a 1919 letter to Virginia Woolf, confirms this invitational characteristic of modernism and modernist literature. She writes, "what the writer does is not so much solve the question but. . . put the question. There must be the question put. That seems to me a very nice dividing line between the true and the false writer" (*Letters*, 320). Invitation ultimately lies at the heart of what modernist writers intended to change about literature: bridging the divide between writer and reader, leading readers into the interior minds and thoughts of characters and inviting meaning and interpretation rather than declaring it. As scholars continue to investigate Chekhov's intertextual influence, his work will undoubtedly continue to support this mode of invitational literature within modernism.

Redefining the influence of Chekhov's texts on modernism as invitations rather than interrogations also parallels the method and attitude in which I have performed my intertextual analyses. This article has demonstrated the way in which Chekhov's short fiction invites other texts of diverse contextual backgrounds and aesthetic qualities to combine and collide in fruitful ways. From obscure writers like Arthur Fraser and John Lucas to prominent modernists like Katherine Mansfield, the potential for new partnerships between Chekhov and other texts is immense. Examining Chekhovian intertextuality in British modernism through this model invites continued comparison of other Chekhov stories with the vast number of modernists texts

available to scholars. It is hoped that the bi-textual productions explicated in this article have not only generated a newfound appreciation for Chekhov's work alone but have also expanded the critical conversation surrounding British modernism, granting Chekhov a current and active role in shaping how we understand this period of literary history today.

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