

Title: *The Kreutzer Sonata's* Interwar Echoes: International Variations on Personal Themes
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Abstract:

This paper draws inspiration from Michael Katz's *The Kreutzer Sonata Variations* to seek new readings of *The Kreutzer Sonata* in the writings of Tolstoy's younger contemporaries. Specifically, as Zinaida Gippius and Virginia Woolf searched for new expressions of gender and sexuality, they reacted directly to the sexual morality of Tolstoy's novella. Their reactions included two short stories by Gippius whose close parallels to *The Kreutzer Sonata* have not been examined previously. I will analyze how those stories and Woolf's letters to Vita Sackville-West undermine Tolstoy's moral system not so much by contradicting its prescriptions as by undermining its assumptions about what a marriage or a sexual relationship must be. This analysis illuminates a broader cultural dialogue that connected Russia and Britain in the early twentieth century and has affected Anglophone-Russophone relationships ever since.