

Words and Emotions: Shakespeare, Chekhov, and the Structuring of Relationships*

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All things are ready if our minds be so.
William Shakespeare, *Henry V*, 4, 3, 71

*When I write I count upon my reader fully assuming
that he himself will add the subjective elements that are
lacking in the story.*
Anton Chekhov

Perspectives and metaphors for emotions

Verbal and non-verbal behavior have traditionally been distinguished, and thought of as separate channels of communication (see for instance, McNeill in this conference). Insofar as one of the channels carries an emotional message, questions can be asked as to how far it may be consonant with the verbal message, or contradict it. Such questions include how far the sender is at one with him- or her-self, or is in some state of inner conflict. The emotional messages of non-verbal channel (tone of voice, gestures, facial expressions) are thought of as more primitive and therefore, in the proper fashion of Rousseau, as less easy to contrive. Whereas words can be chosen at will—so the argument goes—the emotional messages of the non verbal channel are less voluntary, and therefore less liable to be used deceptively. Although every speaker consciously understands his or her native verbal language, the emotional messages, although potent, are thought to operate unconsciously not just for the sender but for the receiver. Therefore those who wish to understand what others are up to must study them, to make them conscious, to know whether a person likes or dislikes you, or whether that person is lying or not.

I would like to offer a different perspective, in which I ask you to put aside, for a while, two points of view. The first is the idea of two parallel channels. The second is about the way in which psychology and the social sciences have excluded literary art from consideration because it does not fulfil minimal methodological requirements. I ask you to put aside these

points of view, not because they are wrong, or lacking in usefulness. I imply no such thing. I ask you, instead, to move to a different viewpoint because I hope you might find the view from there illuminating.

Here is the different viewpoint. Emotions are indeed modes of communication, but they do not just constitute a second channel, parallel to the verbal one. Emotions have several properties. Perhaps the most important is that they are the fundamental means by which relationships are established and maintained. They are modes within which communications with others can occur at all. Within, for instance, the emotion mode of happiness, relationships of cooperation occur. Within the mode of anger, conflict occurs.

Also, from this viewpoint, I ask you to consider the theatre as a means of understanding. In psychology, novels, plays, and movies, may sometimes be referred to for illustrative purposes. Here is a quotation from a recent textbook, *The Psychology of Emotions*, in which the authors use fauvist paintings and quotations from literary works set off from the main text. They say they use these, "artistic and literary reference points (which, [they] hope, add liveliness and a human aspect to the scientific presentation)" (Carlson & Hatfield, 1992, p. x).

I have argued that for psychology, novels and plays are not to be treated as defective empirical description that are nonetheless useful as sources of illustrations. Instead, they have the same kind of function in understanding human social interaction as computer simulations have had for the cognitive scientific understanding of perception, reasoning, and memory. I argue, plays and novels are simulations (Oatley, 1999). They are simulations that run on minds rather than on computers. They are simulations of the individual in the social world. Rather than treating literature to illustrate what has been established from more reliable sources, I propose that we can make discoveries from such simulations. I take it, also, as with studies of computer simulation, that if a simulation runs properly on minds, it is because it has established a certain coherence among its elements. It is how properties can emerge from the interaction of these elements. Moreover, because the simulation does run, it points to some truths about our cultural understanding of the kinds of interaction that it embodies. Some discoveries and truths found in this way are ones that the one-to-one correspondences of empirical studies do not reach.

This condition of successful-simulation-as-cultural-truth is one of three properties that justifies, I think, the use of literature in exploring how emotions work in social interaction. A second justification is comparable to that used in the study of perception. There, researchers offer perceptual demonstrations so that we can experience them as we strive to understand them. So, for instance, both Kennedy and Bai, in their talks, demonstrated in this conference the success of lines to depict in drawings significant edges in the 3-D world, for both sighted and blind people, and the failure of lines to represent the boundaries of shadows in shape-from-shadow pictures. (This sentence will be hard to understand without having seen the

demonstrations, but easy if you have seen them, or felt them by touch.) Comparably, I propose, in literature we can experience the emotions we are studying. I am going to discuss two plays. I can't offer you the full experience of them here. I will offer you fragments. But the issue, I think, will be clear. I will come to a third kind of justification later in the paper.

I have searched for some time for an apt metaphor for the function of emotions in setting modes of social interaction. I have not quite succeeded. The following tend in the right direction. If you have a suggestion, I would be delighted to hear it.

An emotion is a frame within which some kinds of interaction are enabled and others are disabled. An emotion is a type of clothing. To wear a suit sets up a somewhat formal relationship with the other, for business or ceremonial. To wear a T-shirt and shorts sets up an informal relationship. To wear a bathing costume is an invitation to oneself and others to sunbathe or go swimming, or sit in the hot-tub. Comparably, an emotion, as Frijda (1986) has argued, is a readiness for action of a certain kind, but his meaning needs to be extended. Most emotions are not just kinds of readiness for action, as fear is a readiness to escape. Emotions prepare the mind, as the epigraph from Shakespeare states: "All things are ready if our minds be so." What is important for us human beings is to be ready for particular kinds of *interaction*. The provenance of this quotation is the play *Henry V*. The situation was the eve of the Battle of Agincourt. What King Henry and his troops had to be ready for was combat, the possibility of defeating their enemies, or of being killed by them.

The main metaphors I want to pursue are from the theatre. An emotion is a script that a social actor performs. But rather than supplying the words, as a printed script of a play does, an emotion script supplies almost everything but the words. For instance, being in love doesn't tell you what to say, but it prompts you towards many of the other things necessary for a lover. A second theatrical metaphor is that an emotion is a role, but not, as is usual in the theatre, a role for a whole character. It is what Averill (1982) has called a temporary role, adopted for a particular incident or a coherent set of interactions. As Averill has shown, when you are angry, you want your own way, or you want your own back, to right some wrong, in opposition to the other person. Within the emotion mode of unalloyed anger, only communications of interpersonal conflict will occur.

In this paper, I extend the theatrical analogy. I contrast some of the effects of Shakespearian theatre with those of Chekhovian theatre.

Shakespeare's theatre

One of the distinctive features of Shakespeare's theatre is that it is primarily verbal. So the relation to emotion is that the words tend to induce emotions in the audience. When, for instance, after the sword fight in Act 5 of *Hamlet*, as Hamlet lies dying, his friend Horatio

says:

Good night, sweet prince,

And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

(*Hamlet*,
5,
2,
364-
365)

... we members of the audience feel sad, grief-stricken. Following the accumulated meanings of the play up to this point, these words prompt an emotion: a profound sadness. I find it hard even to write the second of these two lines on my keyboard, without my eyes tearing up.

How does this effect work? As Hogan (2003) has pointed out, the words "Good night," prime an attachment theme, and remind us of a loving parent wishing a child good night. Here occurs not just a good-night before a parting of eight or ten hours, but a farewell, before death severs the attachment relationship for ever. It connects with the last word of the next line "rest," a metaphor for death.

Let me analyze all the figures in the two lines in which this sentence occurs. I follow Jakobson's (1988) assignment of the principal figures of language to two axes. One is the axis of metaphor, in which words are selected because they can map from a domain of greater familiarity onto one of lesser familiarity: for instance, from the familiarity of the vehicle, "rest," to the stark unknown of the tenor (or target of the metaphor), "death." The second is the axis of metonymy, which Jakobson called the axis of combination, because it works by orderings, by juxtapositions, and shifts of meaning, including shifts between parts and wholes. In this sentence, good night is a metonymic figure for good bye.

So here are the two lines with tropes numbered, followed by an analysis of them, and with keys to these two types of figure.

Now cracks¹ a noble² heart³. Good night⁴, sweet⁵ prince,

And flights⁶ of angels⁷ sing⁸ thee to thy rest⁹.

1. Cracks: means breaks irreparably; metaphor from some hard substance like porcelain or bone

2. Noble: means good and worthy; metonym; as Nietzsche pointed out, there has been a snobbish sliding in European languages since medieval times from noble as meaning aristocratic to noble as meaning good; in this case there is a literal undertone, since Hamlet was an aristocrat

3. Heart: means core of identity; one of Shakespeare's favourite metaphors for the inmost emotional substance of a person, as compared with the person's outer behaviour and appearance, or shadow

4. Good night: means good bye; metonymic understatement, a shift from parting for a while to parting for ever

5. Sweet: means beloved; metaphor from the taste of sweetness.

6. Flights: means companies; a metaphorical collective noun with an ethereal connotation

7. Angels: means protective spirits; prosopopoeia, a metonym in which the idea of being cared for is personified

8. Sing: means solemn and concerted ceremonial; metonym for the ceremonial of funeral

9. Rest: means death; metaphor of lying quietly, another Shakespearean commonplace

It is as if such figures in the two lines spoken by Horatio, although they are just shadow lines on white paper, find some deep access to the mind, where they can bring into being what is most personal.

Jakobson pointed out that different brain lesions can differentially affect selection and combination functions of language. One might say that, broadly speaking, the axis of selection points to semantics, and the axis of combination to syntax. Following this train of thought, emotions as frames for social interaction, then, provide the bases for pragmatics.

Shakespeare's plays take verbal language and language's effects to levels that almost no one else has achieved. Many of Shakespeare's lines, including, I think, the two discussed above, could not have been invented by anyone else. If Shakespeare had not lived, they would not exist.

I am going to take them as examples of how language can evoke emotions, and then—in a play or a novel—these emotions set up the relationships between and among the characters, and between a character and a member of the audience or reader. So, in this death scene of *Hamlet*, the words set up a sense of deep love of Horatio for Hamlet. At the same time, drawing on the relationship of identification of each audience member for Hamlet, that has been established during the play, there comes a metonymic generalization. It spreads from Hamlet the individual to an empathetic understanding of the plight of all humankind, caught up as we are in the results of "accidental judgements, casual slaughters ... purposes mistook."

Chekhov's theatre

Chekhov's plays are of a quite different kind from those of Shakespeare. I don't speak Russian, but my sense is that there is not a sentence in any of his plays that could not have been invented and said by a thousand people. Chekhov intended this. As he famously said:

Let things that happen on the stage be as complex and yet just as simple as they are in life. For instance, people are having a meal, just having a meal, but at the same time their happiness is being created, or their lives are being smashed up.

Chekhov deeply admired Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and his play *The Sea Gull* was written as a transformation of some of *Hamlet's* themes from the intellectual culture of the late Northern Renaissance to the culture of bourgeois Russia on the edge of dissolution. In *The Sea Gull* a young man, Treplev, (who corresponds to Hamlet) has an unhappy relationship with his sensual mother, Arkadina (Gertrude), who is an actress. Treplev is in love with a young woman who also aspires to be an actress, Nina (Ophelia). Treplev's father is dead (of course) and his mother has taken a lover, a famous writer Trigorin (Claudius). There is (of course) a play within the play: Treplev has written a drama. It is performed by Nina. The performance begins after a discussion of art in which Treplev says "We need new forms. New forms are needed, and if we can't have them, then we had better have nothing at all."

The stage direction for the opening scene of the play within the play is: "*[The curtain rises, revealing a view of the lake; the moon above the horizon is reflected in the water; NINA, all in white, is seated on a large rock.]*" Following the productions of the Moscow Art Theatre (which I shall discuss in a little while) the members of audience of the play within the play sit with their backs to the audience in the theatre and they fidget. After Nina has spoken 16 lines, Arkadina whispers to her consort Trigorin: "There's something decadent about this." Treplev, with the stage direction "*[Reproachfully imploring her.]*" says "Mother!" and after a few more lines, and more mocking by Arkadina, and whispering by others, Treplev interrupts: "*[Flaring up loudly.]* The play is over. That's enough! Curtain!"

The Sea Gull is set not in a castle, but in a country house. It revolves around Trigorin's seduction of Nina, which occurs in Act 2. If you were to approach this play unawares, the words of the scene of Nina's seduction could be read from the page without knowing that it was a seduction scene. It is only the emotions of the scene, as performed by the actors or as realized by the reader who knows, or infers, what is going on that make it so.

Here is the scene in which the seduction motif begins.

NINA: Your life is beautiful.

TRIGORIN: What's so good about it. [*Looks at his watch.*] I must get to my writing directly. Excuse me, I haven't time to ... [*Laughs.*] You've stepped on my pet corn¹, as they say, and here I am getting excited and rather cross². Well, then, let's talk. We'll talk about my beautiful, brilliant³ life ... Where shall we begin? [*After a moment's thought.*] There are such things as fixed ideas⁴, when a man keeps thinking day and night⁵, about the moon⁶, for instance. I have just such a moon⁷. Day and night⁸ I am haunted⁹ by one thought: I must write, I must write, I must ... I have scarcely finished¹⁰ one novel when, for some reason, I have to write another, then a third, and after that a fourth ... I write incessantly, at a furious¹¹ rate. I can't work any other way. What is brilliant¹² and beautiful about that, I ask you?

The Sea Gull, pp. 133-134

(The superscripted numbers indicate tropes, as in the passage from Act 5 of *Hamlet*, I discuss them not immediately but below.)

Trigorin does not wait for an answer to this question, but continues this self-involved monologue for (in my copy of the play) a whole page more.

Let us go back to *Hamlet* for a few moments. In terms of the families of emotions that pervade our lives, *Hamlet* is about the emotions of assertion and dominance, of angry revenge, of alliances, of conflict, of confrontation. Its central moment occurs when Hamlet confronts his mother in her bedchamber. It occurs just after he has killed Polonius, in mistake for Claudius whom he believed to have been spying on him. Thereby he sets off a second revenge motif, parallel to his own, in which Polonius's son Laertes plans to kill him. As Hamlet will later say:

For by the image of my cause I see

The portraiture of his (*Hamlet*, 5, 2, 77-78)

Now Hamlet is perpetrator as well as victim in this all-too-human theme of revenge.

But after the slaying of Polonius, comes the central moment of the play, and it is yet more poignant. Hamlet abandons his punning, his tropes, and his evasiveness. He even almost abandons his cleverness. He speaks—for the first time in the play—directly. He speaks to his mother. He asks her to displace from her affections the imprint of his usurping uncle.

GERTRUDE: O Hamlet, thou has cleft my heart in twain!

HAMLET: O, throw away the worser part of it,

And live the purer with the other half!

Good night—but go not to my uncle's bed.

Assume a virtue if you have it not.

Refrain tonight,

And that shall lend a kind of easiness

To the next abstinence. Once more, good night;

And when you are desirous to be blest,

I'll blessing beg of you. (*Hamlet*, 3, 3, 158, ff.)

As an apology for his gross impertinence in asking his mother no longer to have sex with his uncle, he says he will ask for her blessing. Nothing could be more verbally delicate. In emotional terms, he wins Gertrude back to his side. He reasserts his primary claim of attachment with her; and he asserts himself, with her as his ally now, against the intruding, usurping, incestuous, Claudius.

Although *The Sea Gull* is built upon *Hamlet* and is, like *Hamlet*, a tragedy, it is not a play about revenge. It is based on the family of emotions that includes love and affection. It explores the tragedy of thoughtless and self-interested eroticism. Its central moment is not

verbal at all. It occurs at the pause signaled by the ellipsis mark "... " in Tregorin's speech, followed by the stage direction "{Laughs.}"

In the play, Tregorin is being immoderately idolized as a famous writer by an attractive young woman, the beloved of his companion's son. He realizes that with no effort beyond his own self admiration, he can convert her state of being star-struck to what young people today call a star fuck. He talks to her as if he is a writer being interviewed by Elinor Wachtel, or George Plimpton. "So you think the artist's life is beautiful ... ?" he says.

No actor playing this scene, I am sure, would at this moment wipe the sweat from his brow with the back of his right wrist; it is now too hackneyed a non-verbal gesture. But I suppose there was a time when an actor first used this action, perhaps in a satire.

The effect of Tregorin's speech on Nina is the opposite of what Tregorin's words seem to say, or what one might think they might say if one were just to read the scene without much thought or feeling. What is necessary is the emotional frame that builds the eroticized relationship between Tregorin and Nina. Within this frame, although Tregorin's words are about the banality of the artist's life, this disclaimer, this complaint, make the life more attractive. His addition of the romantic element of suffering makes him yet more appealing to Nina. When this scene has been accomplished the young woman's relationship with him has moved from a non specific admiration for art and the role of the writer, to a readiness to take her clothes off and embrace this specific writer, Tregorin.

"For the happiness of being a writer or an actress," says Nina as this conversation continues, "I would endure poverty, disillusionment, the hatred of my family." Because Chekhov is a great playwright, we can re-read these words after the play—we may scarcely have noticed more than their immediate meaning when we first heard or read them—and realize Nina is foretelling her fate. Act 3 stages the departure of Arkadina and Tregorin for Moscow, and Act 4 occurs after a two-year interval, during which Nina has also gone to Moscow, and had an affair with Tregorin. He has encouraged her to become an actress, has made her pregnant, and has abandoned her.

Chekhov's theatre works by the suggestion of emotions. In the seduction scene in Act 2 the emotion is an erotic one. The best explanation of how this works comes from some literary theorists who worked in the royal court in the area that is now Kashmir, about 1000 years ago. They argued that there are nine emotions in ordinary life. Corresponding to these is an equivalent set of nine literary emotions called *rasas* which I give in parentheses:

delight (the amorous),

laughter (the comic),
sorrow (the pitiable or tragic),
anger (the furious),
heroism (the heroic),
fear (the terrible),
disgust (the odious),
wonder (the marvelous), and
serenity (the peaceful).

It is no doubt coincidence that Oatley and Johnson-Laird (1996) postulated nine basic emotion modes that include, love, happiness, sadness, anger, ..., fear, disgust. Oatley & Johnson-Laird postulated three kinds of love (erotic, attachment, parental) as well as contempt. But did not include heroism, wonder, or serenity.

Each work of literary art, the Indian theorists argued, should focus on one *rasa*, though the plot typically passes through other emotional states as well. We have something of the same idea in the West, when we think of different genres, love stories, comedies, tragedies, and so forth.

The Indian literary theorists argued that the heart of literary stories is their suggestive quality, (*dhvani*), that can prompt particular *rasas*. An example offered by one of these theorists, Abhinavagupta, although from nearly a millenium earlier, is close to the idea underlying the scene between Nina and Tregorin. A young woman speaks the following verse to a traveler who has come to stay while her husband is away:

Mother-in-law sleeps here, I there:

Look, traveller, while it is light.

For at night when you cannot see

You must not fall into my bed (Ingalls, et al. 1990, p. 98).

With the exception of the suppressed pun on sleep with its metonymic meaning of sexual intercourse, this poem does not work by means of tropes. It seems rather literal. It works, instead, by what the Indian theorists would call the literary *rasa* of the erotic, for which the emotion of love is its everyday equivalent. Abhinavagupta argues that in this little poem, by means of a prohibition, the young woman offers the traveler an invitation. Should he not be quick witted enough to pick it up, then he is, and will be, no lover. In a comparable way, by being derogatory about the artistic life, Tregorin invites Nina to join him in it.

Notice the contrast. Shakespearian drama works at least partly by figures such as metaphor and metonym, which have a kind of privileged verbal access to the mind. The words articulate in their hearers or readers thoughts and emotions that were inchoate. They make them conscious in a way which seems perfect, and can be profoundly moving. By contrast the words of the young woman to the traveler in Abhinavagupta's example, or the words by Tregorin to Nina about being a writer, are not figurative. They sound ordinary.

In Horatio's farewell to Hamlet, quoted above, there are nine tropes in 17 words. By contrast, in the passage spoken by Tregorin, that I have quoted from *The Sea Gull*, there is far lower different density of tropes. I found 12 in 144 words (excluding stage directions) that I numbered (above):

Tropes in the cited beginning of Tregorin's speech to Nina (The Sea Gull, pp. 133-134).

1. Stepped on my pet corn: metaphor for touched on a matter of peculiar interest
2. Cross: metaphor for angry
- 3 & 12. Brilliant (twice): metaphor for distinguished, famous
4. Fixed ideas: metaphor for compulsive ideas
- 5 & 8. Day and night (twice): metonym for all the time
- 6 & 7. Moon (twice): metaphor for object of concentrated interest
9. Haunted: metaphor for persecuted by

10. Scarcely finished: metonym for only just finished

11. Furious: metaphor for quick

Although these phrases are from a translation, I take it that their conventionality was part of Chekhov's purpose. There is a question, both serious and ironic within the play about whether Tregorin is a great writer. The reader or audience member reads or hears these phrases, that balance on the edge of cliché, but perhaps without quite recognizing them as figures of speech.

The passage works in a completely different way from the passages cited from Shakespeare. It works as explained by Abhinavagupta. By contradicting Nina's admiration for the life of the writer or actor, Tregorin gives her further grounds for admiration, as well as admitting her, apparently, to the intimacy of his inner life.

I can now offer the third justification for studying literature in order to understand emotions in everyday life. I offered two others previously: simulation as a means of understanding emergent properties of social interaction, and the possibility of experiencing the emotions we study by way of literature. The third justification was proposed by the Indian theorists. The literary emotions, *rasas*, are like everyday emotions, but different in that they allow us deeper insights into them. This is because, as these theorists put it, our perceptions and understandings of emotions are often obscure to us, because our eyes (outer and inner) are covered with a thick crust of egoism.

When it was first performed in St Petersburg on 17 October 1896, *The Sea Gull* was such a flop that Chekhov said to his publisher Suvorin: "Even if I live for another 700 years, I'll still not offer another play to the theatre ... I'm a failure in that sphere."

By the autumn of 1898, however, the reluctant Chekhov had been persuaded by Nemirovich-Danchenko to allow the Moscow Art Theatre (founded earlier in the year by him and Stanislavski) to produce *The Sea Gull*, with Nemirovich-Danchenko and Stanislavski jointly directing, and Stanislavski acting the role of Tregorin. The methods of the Moscow Art Theatre—deep study of the plays by all the actors, ensemble playing, the primacy of mood—became the way to play Chekhov. This production of *The Sea Gull* was a success.

Chekhov relented in his vow to write no more plays: he wrote *The Three Sisters* (premiered 31 January 1901), and *The Cherry Orchard* (premiered 17 January 1904) specially for the Moscow Art Theatre, and his four major plays—these two, plus *The Sea Gull* (which premiered with the Moscow Art Theatre on 17 December 1898) and *Uncle Vanya* (which was published in 1897 though Chekhov refused to allow performance until 26 October 1899)—became the centrepieces of the repertoire. (Dates in this and the preceding paragraph use the old-style

Julian calendar, Gottlieb & Allain, 2000. From this source, also, the above information about the Moscow Art Theatre has been gathered).

The methods of this theatre company, particularly as promulgated by Stanislavski (1936) who became the twentieth century's most famous theatre director, crossed to America. Under the leadership of Lee Strasberg, they became "method acting" at the Actor's Studio in New York. It's a method that works for Chekhov but, interestingly, not for Shakespeare.

How words evoke emotions—how emotions affect words

Let me restate my argument: to understand some of the complexities of social interaction we study literature. If the simulations that are theatrical dramas work by allowing us to run them on our minds, they do so because they embody truths about how social interaction works in terms of our collective cultural understanding. In the terms of this conference on multi-modality, I agree with Kinsbourne (in this conference) that the brain is not an organ that works by one to one correspondences, things to nerve cells. It works in terms of biases, contexts, multiplexes. My assertion, moreover, is that there are particular relationships between emotions and words that can be thought of as contextual, and are not well glossed in terms of two parallel channels of communication.

My argument is that an emotion has a primary function in social interaction, in setting up a frame, a script, a role structure, for a certain kind of interaction. There are several families of emotions (see Oatley, 2001). The most important for social life are the following. First, is assertion, based on the dominance hierarchies of our primate evolution. It includes anger, and the vengeful feelings on which *Hamlet* is focused. Second is attachment. It is based on mammalian attachment systems, and in individual development on infant attachment to a caregiver. It revolves around security on one hand and social anxiety on the other. Third is affection. It is a more recently evolved system than the other two. It includes happy cooperation and erotic love. The emotions of just one of these three families can predominate, as the emotions of assertion predominate in *Hamlet*, and the centre of *The Sea Gull* is erotic. But these three emotion families coexist in our lives. They can be thought of as three orthogonal dimensions of socio-emotional life.

An emotion in any of these families can be evoked in at least two distinct ways. It can be evoked by words, as with the figurative language of Shakespeare. It can also be evoked non-verbally. The frame of the emotion then gives sense to everyday language in which one might say in anger, "I wish you hadn't done that," or in affection, "I'm really glad to see you."

The poetic words of Shakespeare work despite the theatre not being the everyday world, despite his characters not being those by whom we are irritated or those whom we love in real life. Figurative language helps the simulation run. It crosses the footlights, or rises from the

page, to penetrate to some deep place within the receptive mind, and thereby allows us to resonate with it by means of our own emotions. The effect works partly, as Hogan (2003) has argued for Horatio's "good night," by priming. But there is a deeper sense, a kind of hyper-priming, accomplished by certain poetic effects which Keats wrote about He said in his letter of 27 February 1818 to John Taylor, that poetry can "strike the Reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a Remembrance" (p. 267). For this effect, the aesthetic distance of the emotion (Scheff, 1979) must be right. The literary emotion may then, as the Indian literary theorists say, be better understood than those of everyday life, and the reader or listener can gain insight by being closely at one with the writer (Miall & Kuiken, 2001). Perhaps, if Jakobson (1988) was right that metaphor and metonymy are not just figures, but fundamental modes by which the mind works, such effects as Shakespeare achieved work because they come close to the core of such mindworkings. In the end, however, we do not know how this effect works psychologically. We only know that it does work.

The theatre of Chekhov and Stanislavsky works the other way round. The simulation is made to run by means such as the actor's art, including moods and emotions. What Chekhov said of his short stories applied to his plays: he counted on his reader and audience members, "fully assuming that [they themselves] will add the subjective elements that are lacking in the story." The ways in which Chekhov's plays worked in the Moscow Art Theatre, and in theatre companies and the movie tradition that were influenced by the directorial methods developed there, are among the best ways in which we can understand how emotions work to set up emotion scripts that affect the meaning of words.

Whereas Shakespeare's words induce emotions, the emotions of a Chekhov play induce the meanings of words. We have come to know that once an erotic emotion has been set up, almost anything one might say can add to it. "Can you pass the salt please," can be a come-on. So when Chekhov said "... people are having a meal, just having a meal, but at the same time their happiness is being created, or their lives are being smashed up," he was right. In Act 2 of *The Sea Gull*, Tregorin and Nina seem to be chatting about the life of the artist. At the same time his happiness was being created since he would receive the sexual adoration of an appealing young woman. Hers was being smashed up as she entered a life of "poverty, disillusionment, and the hatred of [her] family," by falling in love with him. From drama, novels, and short stories, we understand that it is the frame of the emotion that creates such effects.

Chekhov did not get along with Stanislavski, whom he regarded as sentimental. He also thought him unable to understand *The Sea Gull*. But from the pen of the one and the directorial methods of the other, the idea was developed in the West the idea of how to depict and explore on the stage the idea of emotional primacy, without the help of poetry. This is the new form to which Treplev referred when he said of the theatre, "We need new forms. New forms are needed, and if we can't have them, then we had better have nothing at all."

Chekhov and Stanislavski showed that a particular emotional frame, a *rasa*, could be established without figures of speech, by actors who (according to Stanislavski) would, in the course of each performance, themselves inhabit the emotional states they were portraying. (Recent empirical work by Konijn, 2000, suggests that Stanislavski's idea of actors creating emotions by reliving them belong more properly to the phase of preparation by the actors than to the performance itself, but this does not affect the point I am making here.) The spoken words are given meaning by the emotional states that are portrayed. By means of them, the role relationships among the characters, and between the characters and the audience, are set up.

Works of narrative literary art—plays, novels, short stories—offer us worlds for the understanding of emotions, simulated worlds, where (as in computer simulations) we can look beneath the surface of things to see how our minds work, how emotions work, how society works. From the plays of Shakespeare, we can see, I believe, how an emotional understanding can be primed, and evoked by words. From the plays of Chekhov, we can see how an emotion or a mood can set up and maintain a relationship, and how a change of emotion can be the pivot for a change in a life.

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