

Chekhov and The Seagull_ The Mirror Between Art and Life

Digite um parágrafo

THIS RESEARCH WAS DONE IN PORTUGUESE AND THEN TRANSLATED

They are foolish, these two actresses, these two writers. They do not know that art cannot replace life. Or perhaps they have spent their own lives—and the lives of others—learning that very lesson. The two writers, Trigorin and Treplev, come to realize that life is greater than anything they can write. They end up understanding it, but without finding a solution. The two actresses, Arkadina and Nina, replace life with theatre—with its imitation. The elder does so to silence her unhappiness; the younger, because life has not gone well for her.

In each of these characters, we can evidently find fragments of what the author himself lived, remembered, or recognized in himself and in others he encountered. Yet the perspective of this theatre is that of someone who merely observes, listens, and does not comment (as in the panoptic system).

The play does not follow the model proposed by Aristotle. The unity of time is broken by the passage of two years between the third and fourth acts. The unity of place is not maintained either, for unlike Ibsen and Strindberg—who concluded that in naturalism the action should unfold in a single setting—Chekhov plays with changes of scenery: the garden, the veranda, the dining room, and the living room or study.

The unity of action is “abolished,” since in traditional dramatic structure, the first act should present to the audience a conflict to be developed and resolved by the final act. In *The Seagull*, Chekhov makes clear the impossibility of resolving the intrigue, for the characters are immersed in a universe defined by disconnection. The playwright isolates them; each assumes that others have lived similar experiences and therefore should understand their pain. What drives the action is the characters’ lack of empathy and an overwhelming narcissism.

The very act of raising the curtain is already a “tragic sign.” The opening dialogue between Masha and Medvedenko mirrors the rest of the characters through the mechanism of *A loves B, who consequently loves C*. The small stage within the play exposes its metatheatricality.

Treplev is a distorted Hamlet. If the Prince of Denmark could not kill Claudius because his uncle had done what Hamlet secretly desired to do, then Treplev too cannot confront Trigorin, for the older man has achieved both the status and the woman that Treplev longed for.

The main differences between them are clear: Hamlet is someone trying to find his place—a man born at the wrong time—who must die so that a just man, Fortinbras, can ascend to power. Treplev, by contrast, kills himself out of his inability to endure heartbreak; he dies, and nothing happens. The prince’s death is poetic; the writer’s death is ridiculous and in vain.

The contrast between the two grows sharper, for Hamlet shows irony, intelligence, and the ability to unsettle others, while Treplev lacks even eloquence: “He creates no living characters.”

Throughout the text, many claim to love, yet no character truly seems capable of loving—not in the romantic sense we still idealize as the purest form of that feeling. Love here has nothing spiritual about it; it is violent, obsessive, carnal, and at the same time the trigger of destruction—the vehicle of youth’s death. The opposite of love is not hatred, but indifference.

In the final scene—the reunion and disunion of Treplev and Nina—it is a mistake to look for a confrontation between masculine and feminine, good and evil, negative and positive. What is present there is much more than that. And it does not need justification. It is simply a fragment of life—two people’s lives—a love scene utterly distant from Strindberg’s world.

Chekhov infused his characters with symbolism. “I am a seagull. No, that’s not it...” says Nina, who is, after all, not a seagull but an actress. The seagull is nothing more than a seagull—a bird that Treplev killed. It is the characters themselves who invent its symbolism, each in their own way, to give order to what is unordered: life itself.

IMAGES FOR PHYSICAL WORK



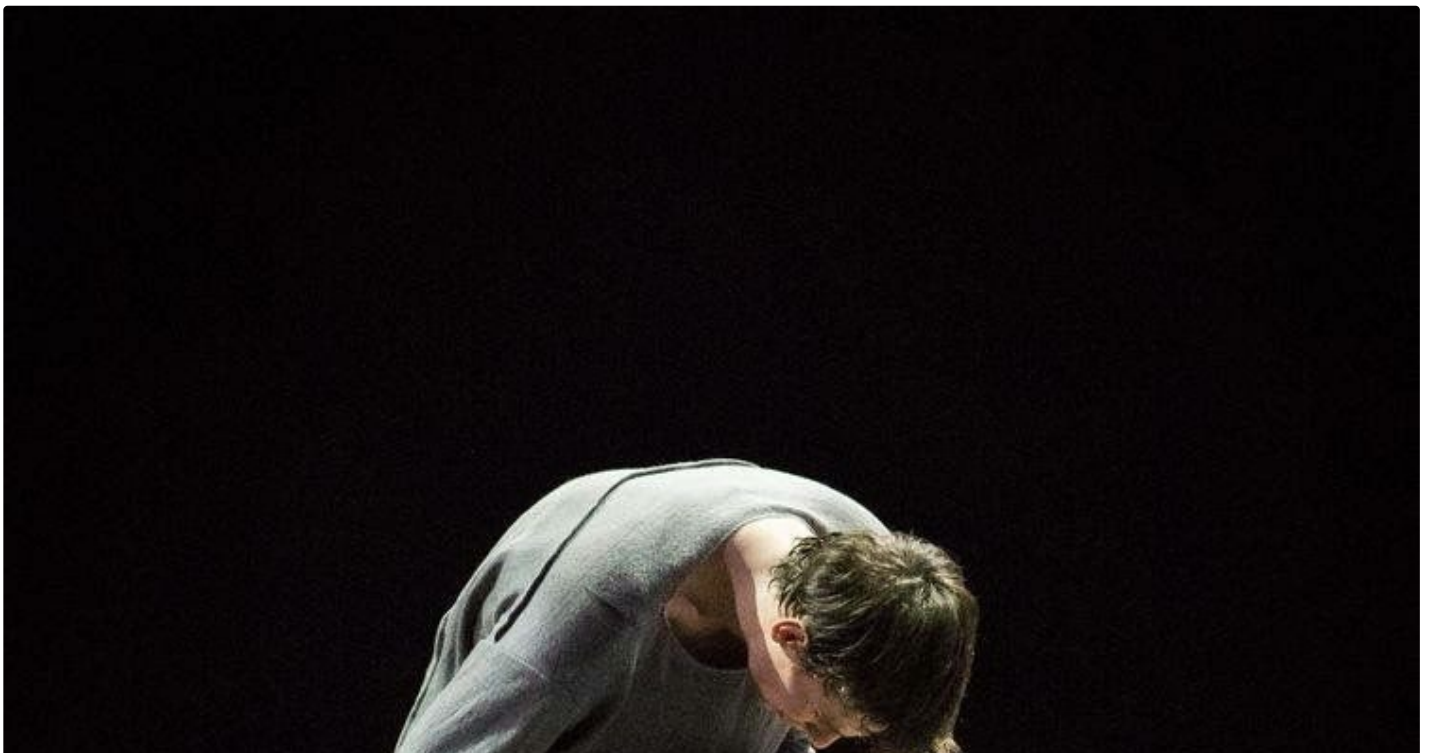
















VIDEOS

https://youtu.be/pbK3pSfpd9I?si=Xf_pxlg2dCipMPMa

<https://youtu.be/uMzuxuA1POU?si=7M8mrA7eSCcmXeQ8>

