

## THE IMPLIED SPACE

Unlike the space of action (such as Verona in *Romeo and Juliet*, or Sorin's estate in *The Seagull*) which is determined by the artist, the implied space is created by the interpreter through various metaphors. Using different styles and methods, the interpreter establishes efficient and semi-efficient linkages between artistic and non-artistic structures; as a result, new objects appear to form an implied space. Both the implied space and the space of action have a degree of abstraction; for the space of action, it would be a more general view of its particular mechanisms of development, while for the implied space, it would be an abstract representation of its concrete structures and their interactions.<sup>13</sup>

The implied space is generated by images that are not explicitly present in the space of action; they are "products" of the interpreter's associative thinking.

The same characters and objects form both the space of action and the implied space; for instance, the lake is not only a part of the landscape of Sorin's estate (space of action), but it also contributes to the creation of the implied space through its link to mythology. During his explanation to Nina, Treplev uses a metaphor of water streaming into the ground, a metaphor that relates to the mytholiterary continuum of the play. He says: "You're cold to me, and it's so terrible, so incredible, it's as if I woke up and saw that the lake had suddenly dried up, or drained into the earth" (58). In this monologue near the lake, the monologue about the oblivion of feelings, the mention of water streaming underground evokes an association with the mythic rivers of the underworld, namely, the river Lethe. But before developing this allusion, let us discuss first the methodology of establishing semiefficient linkages among the parts of compared systems.

As has been explained in part one, the interpreter (including the artist) uses different styles and methods in analyzing a predisposition. However, this fact is not very well understood in contemporary literary criticism. That is, most intertextual analysis is based on the reactive style and a programming method; in other words, only associations that generate immediate and efficient links between the analyzed structures are accepted by editors and reviewers. No established scholarly journal of literary criticism publishes intertextual analyses based on semi-efficient linkages and a selective style because the method of using subjectivity and predispositioning has not yet become a paradigm in literary criticism.

The need to understand that different stages of a system's development require different methods of approaching it becomes a primary task for contemporary literary criticism. A work of art (whether it is a painting, music, or literature) comprises all stages of development and cannot be approached through a single, unified method of programming of all its parts, as most scholars believe. Even a completed artistic work consists of different degrees of coherence of its artistic elements at its different stages, some of which are occupied with complete and consistent linkages, while others create semi-efficient or inefficient linkages. To the former belongs the formation of focal points, which are intended to create a direct allusion through a reactive style and programming. In *Uncle Vanya*, the names Elena and Sonya immediately allude to the cosmogonic opposition between Helen and Sophia, which on a more abstract level refers to the paradigm of chaos and cosmos. The allusions appear reactively, since Elena's name, her

beauty, and the scandal that it causes, are all linked in a complete and consistent way to the myth of the Trojan War. However, such linkages would be sufficient only if the artist is concerned with the creation of an analogy to mythology or to any other structure that he or she has in mind; but since the artist's goal is not to imitate but to imply a relation to other texts (either artistic or non-artistic), and since such an implication is only the first step towards creating his or her own, original artistic structure, one must refer to the predispositioning as a method.

In returning to the symbol of the lake, one can see indirect allusions to Lethe, a river of oblivion at which the souls of the dead come to drink and forget all earthly burdens connecting them to the past. Here, we are dealing with a selective style in choosing this allusion among many others, concerning the lake in the play. In selecting an allusion (or a group of allusions), the interpreter is guided by his or her ability to successfully develop it into a concept, that is, to discover the way that the chosen associations are linked to each other and to the whole. At this point, the allusion to the river of oblivion seems effective to me because it pertains to the leitmotif of oblivion that encompasses all of the main characters in the play.

In addition to the allusion to the Lethe, the lake evokes another association with the river Styx that seems very significant to me in the understanding of *The Seagull's* implied space. When approaching the lake from the point of view of its relation to the major characters, one notices a very interesting correlation between the utterances expressed in front of the lake and their realization in the future. Indeed, all of the statements made in front of the waters come true: Treplev threatens to kill himself as he had killed the seagull, and he eventually does so; Trigorin tells a story of a man who abandons a young girl, which becomes his reality; and Nina states that for the honor of becoming an actress she would give up her happiness and joy, which she eventually realizes:

Treplev places the seagull at her feet.

Nina: What does it mean?

Treplev: Today I have done something despicable—I have killed this seagull . . . Soon, in the same way, I shall kill myself. (Chekhov: Four Plays 59)

Trigorin: An idea for a short story: Once upon a time there lived a young girl, on the shore of a lake, a young girl like you; she loved the lake, like a seagull, and she was happy and free, like a seagull. But one day, by chance, there came a man, who saw her, and, for lack of anything better to do, destroyed her, just like this seagull. (63)

Nina: For the happiness of being a writer or an actress, I would endure rejection of my loved ones, poverty and disillusionment, I'd live in a garret, and eat only black bread, I'd suffer discontent and disappointment in myself, but in return for all this, I shall have fame . . . real, resounding fame . . . (62)

Though Nina has not had yet attained the fame she craves, she receives everything else in full. But what is the link between all those words and their realization later on? The answer can only be given from the point of view of the mytholiterary continuum of the play. In Greek myth, the river Styx is connected to the Underworld and is the sacred river of the dead by which the gods seal their oaths. The allusion to gods appears with

regard to Trigorin and Arkadina in Treplev's monologue, in which he ironically calls the members of the establishment the "high priests of our sacred art" (42). Nina also evokes an association to a priestess of the mob when she talks about a chariot and her glorification. Finally, Treplev himself acts like a rebellious demiurge who strives to change the laws established by the "high priests" of art. So, with regard to the lake, the "Olympian" atmosphere predisposes a humorous allusion to the gods, who seal their oaths by the river Styx.

According to myth, the Styx flows in the territory of mythic Arcadia: a fact that is significant in my interpretation of the basic mythological paradigm forming the mytholiterary continuum of this play.

### **A holistic approach to intertextual analysis: combining various methods and styles**

To establish a whole, one must first define a focal point suggesting a certain paradigm to which structures in the text can be compared. The process of evaluation will result in a variety of opinions concerning the notion of the whole, and the interpreter should support his or her hypothesis in each case by using different methods of approaching the whole. In my interpretation, the focal point that suggests a relation to myth is Arkadina's last name, whose meaning immediately evokes an allusion to Arcadia, the mythical land. Arcadia is the "bear country," which was named after its king, Arcas, the son of Jupiter and a female bear. This reactive method of establishing a connection between the space of action and myth becomes the initial step in creating a network of associations (through all the styles and methods inherent in systems analysis).

The mention of bears in the myth generates another reactive association linked to the Chekhovian couple, Masha and Medvedenko.<sup>4</sup> As I show in my book on the mythopoetics of this play, owing to direct and indirect associations, Sorin's estate is gradually transformed into a Chekhovian "bear country"—a Chekhovian Arcadia.

The most effective evaluation is achieved when each protagonist is approached from a multidimensional perspective; including the character's structure, function, genesis, and the way he or she operates. This provides a broader vision of a character and his or her relationship with the space of action and the implied space and serves to highlight the character's genuine weight. One of the most challenging tasks for me was to interpret Shamraev within the mythological paradigm of the Arcadian space.

From a structural point of view, this character appears to be a "centauric" figure; Shamraev cannot be separated from his horses and should therefore be considered to be in structural unity with them. From a functional point of view, Shamraev is the manager of the estate. From the point of view of processing, he takes greater care of the horses than of people, including his own relatives. Not only does he refuse to give horses to his son-in-law, Medvedenko (who must therefore walk home at night in stormy weather), but he also refuses Arkadina's request for them, thus running the risk of being fired from the estate for such behavior. Such an exaggerated *modus operandi* requires an explanation. My first question was, why horses? And my next question was, what is the connection between these animals and the Arca-dian space?

In order to approach these questions, I attempted to inquire into the meaning of Shamraev's last name (the genetic aspect), of which there are no previous explanations in

criticism. Initially, I was very disappointed because no dictionary could give me any hints, and I wondered if the last name had any meaning at all until I referred to a Russian encyclopedia of the nineteenth century. I discovered that Shamrayevka was a Russian village famous for its stud farm, Shamrayevskaya stadnitsa. This information completely reinforced my speculation that horses are a significant part of this character. The search for the mythological structure linked to both notions began.

I started with the myth of Peloponnesus, since Arcadia was a district of mid-Peloponnesus. The mythic founder of Peloponnesus was Pelops, who was Poseidon's favorite pupil and who was taught how to ride and train horses by the sea god (whose gift to humanity was the horse). Shamraev's function as manager of the estate and his mysterious love for horses allows the establishment of a semiefficient linkage between him and his mythological counterpart, Pelops. The first name of Shamraev, Il'ya, alludes to the family of gods linked to both Poseidon and to horses: Holy Eleyah is a counterpart of Perun, the god of rain and storms, who appears in Slavic myth in a miraculous chariot with wild horses, and is the early version of the Greek Poseidon. Il'ya's patronymic name, Afanas'evich, which in Greek means "the blossoming," is in accordance with Poseidon's other role as a god of fertility.

Shamraev's relationship with his wife and daughter can also be interpreted within this mythological frame. In the myth, Pelops's seed is cursed because of his indecent behavior, and some myths tell of the Pelopponeds' inability to recognize each other as relatives, thus causing their deadly feuds. The motif of Pelops's "cursed seed" is represented in such a way that Masha constantly calls herself Mar'ya of forgotten origin, and Shamraev's wife behaves as if she had no husband at all.

### **Disjointed and holistic vision**

As one can see, only a combination of evaluative methods proves effective in approaching the literary work that is an in-deterministic system. In general, a system can be approached from the point of view of the variety of its structures and from the point of view of its holistic design. Both methods, though equally important, represent different stages of analysis.

Disjointed incrementalism is a prerogative of the initial stage of approaching the diversity structuring a system. If the interpreter's goal is to show the richness of a system that generates many allusions, then he or she will limit analysis to the initial stage. On the other hand, if the interpreter's focus is on an integration of the many, then he or she will switch to the next level, which is linked to the establishment of a whole.<sup>5</sup> It is important to understand, however, that neither method is better; the best method is that which is appropriate to the interpreter's goal. Furthermore, both methods have advantages and disadvantages: a disjointed vision "cuts" the global meaning; a holistic approach reduces the diversity discovered by a disjointed analysis. In order to reduce the "damage," I always admit that my interpretation is only one of many possible approaches to the whole. Moreover, I attempt to find more than one global paradigm in my analysis and establish two or more equivalent systems in order to see how they interact and enrich each other. This is the basic concept of my book on Chekhov's plays (1997), and the current research introduces some elaborations to clarify my previous statements.

At the same time, one must understand that a disjointed analysis cannot exhaust all the possible allusions; this is simply because some of them appear only as a result of a holistic approach. For example, without regard to Arcadian myth in its various representations, I would never have answered the question of Nina's name and her role in the implied space. Nina is not a common name among the Chekhovian heroines; there are only a few heroines in his works who possess this name, and the meaning of Nina remains a puzzle in criticism. To me, therefore, only when approached from the point of view of the whole can the meaning of this name come to light.

Thus, structurally, the holistic vision requires a consideration of Nina in the context of Arkadina, since both create an opposition that can be conventionally defined as the innocent and the bohemian. Nina initially appears as an innocent provincial girl who secretly comes to the estate in spite of her father's ban from entering the bohemian society gathering in Sorin's estate. The chief of this bohemia is Arkadina, who is described ironically by her son, Treplev, as a priestess of art. With regard to the myth of Ages, the opposition between the "innocent" and the "bohemian" is associated with the mythological opposition between the universes of Jupiter and Kronos (all the more so because energetic and warlike Arkadina is also called "Jupiter" in the play). As previously mentioned, the end of the Golden Era came with Jupiter, whose activity destroyed the peace and stillness of Kronos's times.

From the point of view of genesis, Nina's name could be interpreted as derived from Ninus, one of Kronos's sons. King Ninus, together with his brave, sharp-witted wife, Semiramis, the queen of Assyria for forty-two years, founded Nineveh. In the myth, Ninus and his wife are often interchanged, and one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Gardens of Semiramis, is also known as the Gardens of Nineveh. With regard to Nina, she spends her entire life trying to establish her "Nineveh," which she finally does in Elets, a provincial city of Russia in which, as she claims, she finds acceptance and success.

But greater insight into the connection between Nina and the myth of Semiramis is provided when it is approached from the point of view of processing. From this perspective, Nina compares herself to the seagull, which becomes first and foremost symbolic of her. A striking parallel to the myth of Semiramis is that after her death, Semiramis was transformed into a dove and then worshipped as this bird. From a functional point of view, Nina functions as a seeker of praise and worship.

Thus, an indirect allusion to Kronos's times resulting from the myth of Ages generates a network of associations that allows one to interpret Nina's name within the framework of the mythological paradigm, enriching the field of associations with new aspects. Needless to say, none of these allusions would have appeared in disjointed analysis; the establishment of semiefficient linkages requires the presence of a basic structure that can direct intermediate steps towards the creation of a predisposition to certain allusions. In modern criticism, unfortunately, such an approach is often called "a stretch" because there is a general underestimation of the indeterministic nature of a literary work and a lack of theory in dealing with indeterministic systems.

#### Myth as a Scale of Measuring Protagonists' Potential

Myth as a scale of unconditional valuations. The next question to be considered with regard to the implied space concerns the degree of its importance in the analysis of a literary work's potential. Does the implied space provide us with a new understanding of

the degree of strength of the universe represented by the artist, or does it only serve to add new features to it?

My answer to this question is linked to my own definition of myth as an abstract representation of mechanisms that rule the universe. In my book on Chekhov's four major plays, I state that (unlike legends or fairy tales) myths "[are] concerned with the general mechanisms that rule the universe rather than with particular principles that organized human relationships and daily life" (Zubarev, *Systems Approach* 23). In other words, by myth I refer to an abstract model of universal development that is measured in unconditional, global values; therefore, gods in classical myths are, first and foremost, incarnations of elemental forces that rule the universe.

Conversely, in legends and fairy tales, a character that is an embodiment of a human characteristic (e.g., vice or virtue) often appears as an element (for instance, a dragon—an incarnation of greed and violence—often appears as fire). At the same time, one may interpret a character in a legend as a mythological figure, thereby elevating its notion to the level of a more abstract notion. This suggests that myth, in addition to legends and fairy tales, is a way of representing a system that is linked to a more abstract vision of its process, structure, and the like. The abstract representation of the development process is revealed through the typology of myths, which is divided into large groups (such as cosmogonic and calendar) that in turn generate various types and branches. In general, therefore, myths tell us about the process of universal development and what the unconditional weights of events and entities are. At this point, myth is a structure that operates with an unconditional representation of the universe.

At the same time, mythology is a collection of stories that illustrate general principles through specific examples. In this sense, myth combines unconditional values with conditional ones, revealing the weights of mythological figures in certain conditions (which may not always be in agreement with their unconditional valuations). Jupiter, for example, is considered to be a supreme god with a high unconditional value, though he does not appear as an almighty figure in every episode; as a matter of fact, he cannot prevent the death of his beloved Semela of which he himself is the cause. Such an integration of conditional and unconditional valuations of mythological figures corresponds to the evaluation of pieces in and out of a chess game, as I discussed in previous chapters. The semiunconditional values of gods in myths are their representations as elements from the point of view of their interaction with the universe (rules of interaction).

A direct allusion to myth in a literary work serves to build a scale of unconditionality upon which the characters and their actions can be weighed. The original structure of the myth informs the interpreter of the way everything should operate, and deviations from this structure reveal the true state of affairs. References to mythology in Chekhov's works highlight the local importance of his characters, who sometimes consider themselves to be stars of the first magnitude. The primary mythological pattern appears as an ideal to which the mytholiterary structure can be compared.

It is important to note that the shifts in mythological paradigms that can be observed in Chekhov's works are directed towards revealing the limited nature of Chekhovian, not mythological, characters. In other words, Chekhov's plays do not so much parody myths as they exploit mythological paradigms in order to establish the

unconditional weight of the characters. Even in his early works, Chekhov refers to myth as a scale of measurement of the potential strength of his contemporaries and his characters. Chekhov's early uses of myths are as funny combinations of names belonging to Greek history and mythology and to Russian culture; this serves to underscore the triviality of Russian daily life and the insignificance of its "heroes" when compared to the legendary ancient Greeks. This early principle finds further elaboration in Chekhov's late works (such as in his short story "Ariadne") and achieves perfection in Chekhov's four major plays, so that despite further changes and development of technique, Chekhov's main device remains recognizable.

### **The integration of the space of action and the implied space in the mytholiterary continuum**

In my book on the mythopoetics of Chekhov's plays, I introduce the notion of a mytholiterary continuum in order to outline the interaction between mythological and literary structures, and their development into a new wholeness:

The mythological pattern attains its new concretization in a particular literary structure that, in turn, is enriched by universal mythological values rather than subjugated to a mythological narrative. Hence the mytholiterary continuum is the continuous, uninterrupted unity of the interactive mythological and literary patterns that can be taken apart only through analysis. (Zubarev, *Systems Approach* 25–26)

Since the original structure is affected by outer influences that change the weight, sign, and even outer appearance of the associated patterns, one should investigate all direct and indirect correspondences arising within the text, give them weights, and consider them from the point of view of the whole. There is no other way to do so but to apply a systems methodology of measuring the predisposition of an artistic structure; the analysis would otherwise be limited to the initial stage and the picture of the whole would fade. Therefore, a combination of efficient, semi-efficient, and inefficient linkages is needed in order to receive a holistic effect. This is the way the artist creates the predisposition of his or her work, and this is the way the predisposition of the artistic work must be approached.

In terms of the present analysis, the mytholiterary continuum appears as a result of the integration of the space of action and the implied space. The integration is such that it changes the sign and vector of the mythological or any structure that is considered to be mythological in the analysis. Outlining the similarities between the structures is therefore the first step in establishing a basic paradigm to which the mytholiterary structure can be compared. The next step is to find deviations between the paradigm and the continuum, which would assist in the integration of both spaces.

In comparing the bird symbol in *The Seagull* to that in the myth of Semiramis, one should first point out the differences between the two types of bird. If the dove is a symbol of peace, the seagull belongs to the class of scavengers; in the space of action, Nina, who is associated with the seagull, is herself such a scavenger (a fact that has been widely discussed in criticism). In the myth, Semiramis is resurrected as a bird, while in

The Seagull the bird is stuffed and the “deity” is forgotten.<sup>9</sup> This changes the sign of the mythological paradigm from positive to negative and allows one to talk about a new mytholiterary structure that appears as a result of integrating the classic paradigm appearing in the implied space with the literary structure forming the space of action.

When making a parallel between Nina’s and Kronos’s times of innocence, one should take into account Chekhov’s irony concerning Nina’s “innocence” in order to see the change in the sign of the mythological allusion. From the very beginning, Nina appears to be an aggressive young girl whose intentions are not clear only to such simpletons as Sorin. Her provincial “Nineveh,” Elets, in the mytholiterary continuum appears to be Chekhov’s biggest irony; the name of the city is the Russian name of a fish of the carp family. Thus, in the mytholiterary continuum, Nina-seagull lands a “catch,” which she nevertheless “eats” with disgust.

#### Summary

The quasi-strong potential in the CNT can also be approached through symbolism and mythological allusions, which form the semi-implied and the implied spaces. The network of various intertextual correspondences is established through a combination of styles and methods, including the formation of efficient, semiefficient, and inefficient linkages.

The diversity of associations can be approached from a holistic point of view. To this end, a focal point referring directly to a certain paradigm must be established. The establishment of the focal point facilitates the creation of a general paradigm, through which all isolated structures can be integrated into a whole.

Myth becomes a scale of measurement of protagonists’ potential. Allusions to mythological figures facilitate the discovery of the unconditional value of protagonists in particular and their universe in general. The same can be said of any literary or nonliterary structure that appears as a result of intertextual associations. In establishing intertextual parallels, one must also outline deviations, since they are important in approaching the mytho-literary continuum of the play.

The integration of the paradigms forming the space of action and the implied space results in the creation of the mytholiterary continuum, in which characters and their universe attain a new structural and semantic quality. The mytholiterary continuum may consist of more than one basic paradigm whose integration further highlights the potential and predisposition of the characters’ universe when approached from the global point of view.