

Summarizing remarks on Komissarzhevskaya and the Russian Avant-Garde. Modernist pragmatics of Performativity, Meyerhold and beyond

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In what follows I will recapture the most important aspects of the ambivalent collaboration between Komissarzhevskaya and Meyerhold and summarize the available facts of their life-creation narratives. Stemming from a conference presentation. This essay is supplied with a bibliographic annotation and might theoretically serve as a concise introduction to the discussed topic.

As is widely known, in 1906 Komissarzhevskaya made an important decision to relocate her highly respected and financially viable theatre to a new locale¹ and invited none other but a young acting “experimental” director from the provincial town of Penza, Vsevolod Meyerhold, to become her new, provocatively challenging stage director². The overall aesthetics of Symbolist theatre was quite appealing to her at that time. We know that Meyerhold was employed as a managing director of Komissarzhevskaya’s *Theatre* for less than two years. We also know that their historic, though troubled collaboration started with *Hedda Gabler* in 1906 and terminated with Sologub’s *The Triumph of Death* at the end of 1907. The creative relationship between Komissarzhevskaya and Meyerhold was always extremely strained and eventually disintegrated for good. Meyerhold’s point of departure in his early years meant seeking more radical alternatives to the traditional realist system of art, the one that will eventually come to bear the name Konstantin Stanislavsky³.

According to Titova, for Meyerhold, the grotesque is the essence of theatre. In 1922 he

defined theatre as an *intended extravagance* and distortion of “nature”, something that absorbs objects which are not normally adoptable from the perspective of our everyday experience⁴. Meyerhold’s cognition of the grotesque relates directly to his peculiar way of comprehending the grotesque, especially concerning the concept of style. In the same text from 1922 the director defined theatre as a certain combination of natural, temporal, numerical and spatial phenomena which contradict our daily experience. Theatre, according to Meyerhold, is a peculiar genus of the grotesque, so to speak. Theatre emerges out of the grotesque of the ritual masquerade and will disappear with any attempt to withdraw the grotesque component from its existence. The grotesque, as Meyerhold firmly believes, constitutes one of theatre’s major characteristic features which adjusts and changes many of its core elements and goes as far as to develop new qualities within a human being, creating a true performer out of a bourgeois philistine⁵. The Modernist Avant-Garde life-creation was extremely relevant for Meyerhold. Alexander Gladkov emphasizes the “almost incessant” playacting in the director’s real life, supplying this assertion with many examples of various pranks and practical jokes played by Meyerhold. Gladkov refers to Meyerhold’s frantic creative personality with its intense imagination and excessiveness of his spirits. For Meyerhold, constant playing served as the very means of persistent exercise focused on self-perfection⁶.

However, whereas Meyerhold’s future “biomechanics” proceeded from the inner ambition of emancipating theatre from its intrinsic historic dependence on literature, his leading/moving actors were not entirely relieved of verbal speech per se, even though more emphasis was put to their body language. Essentially, Meyerhold’s early theatre still belonged to the pure literary universe, even if staged & interpreted in a radical way by the means of a supposedly new language of representation⁷. This reliance on the “verbal” formed the unique common ground that proved to be quite fertile in Meyerhold’s short-lived collaboration with Komissarzhevskaya. As one critic has observed in his turn:

Komissarzhevskaya did not need the external contrivances of new acting techniques, but the possibility of expressing her own soul – what drew her to Symbolism was the movement’s mystical and transcendental aspect; Meyerhold, on the other hand, was more of a scholar and an analytical technician, fascinated by the stylization of past theatrical epochs and ‘theatre for theatre’s sake’⁸.

One can observe post factum that their eventual split testified for the essential problem embedded within the movement of Russian Symbolism with which both of them had to struggle metaphysically (and ambiguously at that). We might notice that the early phase of international Modernism known by the name of Symbolism⁹ served in its own way as a common ground for Komissarzhevskaya and her new collaborative director.

Nikandr Turkin was able to preserve Komissarzhevskaya’s early expression about Meyerhold: «Just look, this is a completely new amazing person!»¹⁰. Many years later Meyerhold, when talking to his younger colleague and friend Aleksandr Gladkov observed that in his view «Komissarzhevskaya was a most brilliant actress, but nearly everyone wanted her to become a new Jeanne of Arc at the same time»¹¹. Meyerhold also remarked that «Komissarzhevskaya was the greatest dramatic actress of the entire century»¹².

In the future, it would be interesting to discuss Komissarzhevskaya’s brief relationship with the nascent Avant-Garde performativity, drawing on her perplexed collaboration with Vsevolod Meyerhold. As one of the pioneering scholars who introduced Meyerhold’s work to the English-speaking audiences, Edward Braun notes that in his early theoretical essay *On the History and Technique of the Theatre* (conceived in 1906-1907), Vsevolod Meyerhold defines the contextual origins of the new Modernist stylised theatre. He stresses again and again the active role that should be conceptually (p)reserved for the spectator:

In the theatre the spectator’s imagination is able to supply that which is left unsaid. It is this mystery and the desire to solve it that draw so many people to the theatre [...] Briusov indicates the active role of the spectator in the theatre: «[...] The stage must supply as much as is necessary to help the spectator picture as easily as possible in his imagination the setting demanded by the plot of the play». Ultimately, the stylistic method presupposes the existence of a fourth creator in addition to the author, the director and the actor – namely the spectator. The stylised theatre produces a play in such a way that the spectator is compelled to employ his imagination creatively in order to fill in the details intimated by the action on the stage¹³.

This principle serves as the very foundation of the director’s approach to stylisation, and was embodied in nearly all Meyerhold’s productions for Komissarzhevskaya. As

Braun is keen to highlight, by the autumn of 1907 Meyerhold’s evolving polemical clashes with Komissarzhevskaya were openly discussed in the mass media of the time. Meyerhold, for one characteristic instance, was openly against the decision that Komissarzhevskaya’s group should disembark on a special summer tour with a number of their older “approved” productions in an effort to revamp and improve the group’s perilous finances. On her part, Komissarzhevskaya was deeply wounded by all the latest events, being especially frustrated because of the colder reception of her performances in Moscow by the great majority of the influential city critics¹⁴. Her brother and a close personal assistant Fiodor was not on good terms with Meyerhold and always tried to discredit him in his sister’s eyes. At that time Meyerhold was still not finished with the Symbolist aesthetic agenda and considered continuing his staging experiments with Alexander Blok and Leonid Andreev; he was keen to explore ever further the suggestive ambiguity and “flexibility” of the Symbolist theatrical environment. When adapting Fiodor Sologub’s stylized antique drama *The Gift of the Wise Bees*, Meyerhold intended to erect a special platform in the centre of the space of the auditorium where the audience might seat themselves within the confines of the permanent stage¹⁵. Komissarzhevskaya reluctantly tolerated this revolutionary concept but her sceptical and antagonistic brother Fiodor was fiercely against it, one of his arguments being the aversion to radical breaking with the prescriptive rules of the traditional theatre. It was very difficult for the group to come to terms concerning that issue.

Then, later that year, as Braun observes in his study, as a part of his work Meyerhold travelled to Berlin in order to pay a visit to Max Reinhardt’s famous performative stage at the *Berliner Kammerspiele*¹⁶. One of the scenic productions they attended was the first installation of Frank Wedekind’s (1864-1918) «tragi-grotesque play of adolescent sexuality» called *Spring Awakening* (Frühlings Erwachen). The play has a meaningful subtitle *A Children’s Tragedy*. It brutally criticises the sexually-abusive culture of nineteenth centu-

ry *Fin de siècle* Germany and provides grave dramatization of the deadly erotic fantasies that culture fed and conceived. Because of the controversial subject matter such as puberty, sexuality, rape, child abuse, homosexuality, suicide, and abortion, the text of the play has often been significantly censored or prohibited.

Probably due to all these peculiar aspects, Meyerhold decided to present it in Russia, in St. Petersburg. It was naturally a very provocative and even offensive choice, deliberately calculated to incite public exacerbation and further controversy. As Edward Braun along with Konstantin Rudnitsky point out, it echoed loudly the publication of Mikhail Artsybashev's none the less sensational and irreverent novel *Sanin*, which dealt with sexual emancipation in most brutal and naturalistic detail, nurturing the appetite for the pornographic delights, «the psychosexual and the obscene»¹⁷.

Using some obscure connections Meyerhold somehow managed to have *Spring Awakening* approved by the Russian official Imperial State censor, albeit in a reduced, softened form, and in September 1907 it was finally premiered at the group's second season in *Ofiterskaya Street* theatre. Meyerhold later cared to describe his interpretation by providing the following insightful note: «We have looked for a soft, unemphatic tone. The aim is to tone down the realism of certain scenes, to tone down the physiological aspect of puberty in the children. Sunlight and joyousness in the settings to counteract the chaos and gloom in the souls of children»¹⁸.

Various critics and even former sympathetic friends of Komissarzhevskaya theatre did not really praise the Wedekind's drama, ridiculing both its unnatural style and the insane artificiality of the developed theme. Alexander Blok, for one, simply sincerely doubted that Russian parents ever had any comparable sexual problems with their children, whereas the more bitterly ironic Georgy Chulkov remarked that Wedekind «will please nobody, with the possible exception of Moscow decadents and those German bourgeois who take pride in posing as satiated snobbish aesthetes»¹⁹.

Shortly after the dramatic opening evening,

the following brutal letter addressed solely to Vera Komissarzhevskaya appeared in the *Petersburg Theatre Review*:

We advise you to remove from your repertoire the masonic wicked play *Spring Awakening*. You may put on whatever you like in your fleapit, but we are not going to let you publicly corrupt Russian children and adolescents. If you persist in staging this filthy abomination, then fifty of us will come along to shout and boo it off the stage and actively pelt you with rotten apples, for yours is not a normal theatre but rather a pornographic trash. Signed – 'Outraged parents and theatre-lovers'²⁰.

As Edward Braun meticulously depicts the ensuing array of events, on 10 October 1907 Meyerhold decided to stage Maurice Maeterlinck's *Pelleas and Melisande* in a «specially commissioned translation by Valery Bryusov, with Komissarzhevskaya playing Melisande and Meyerhold playing the old King Arkel»²¹. In spite of all the efforts, this production was considered a failure as well and this fact contributed to the final disintegration of Meyerhold's collaboration with Komissarzhevskaya. According to Edward Braun, the key problem had to do with the setting which consisted of a small elevated platform in the centre of the stage whereas the normal floor was actually removed. One critic (Nikolai Volkov) suggested that this was Meyerhold's attempt to accomplish within available limits his long-awaited project for a theatre *in the round*. Then, however, the whole point was lost by enclosing the platform from behind with walls painted, according to Blok, in the rather vulgar style of «old-fashioned 'cartes postales'»²².

One may agree with Braun's observation that by this time Meyerhold had grown openly dissatisfied with a large number of his actors as well as with Maeterlinck's *Pelleas and Melisande* represented in the style of a static classic theatre that was already too boring for him. The director was frustrated by the derogation of his production of *Spring Awakening* and, as Braun notes, did not effectively use the available three weeks «allotted to the rehearsals of *Pelleas*»²³. In a bad constellation of matters, as it seems post factum, it was a production on which Komissarzhevskaya had somehow betted her own reputation and even, as Braun puts it, «the very future of her company». By that moment, she was already forty-three years of age and was also carelessly involved in a perverted (and hopeless) erotic (carnal & spiritual) relationship with the Symbolist *Grand Demon* Valery Briusov while simultaneously developing a quite ambiguous attitude towards the movement of Symbolism in general. Braun is keen to emphasize the obvious fact that she had just impersonated a «child-like character of Melisande», having only recently shown the «fourteen-year old Wendla» in *Spring Awakening*. It was especially painful for her that «even the friendliest and

most loyal critics» were brutally unanimous in pronouncing her Melisande «a personal disaster»²⁴. The critic of *Theatre and Art* wrote:

In common with the rest of the cast, Miss Komissarzhevskaya, in an attempt to create a primitive, universal character, deliberately moved and gesticulated like a doll; her wonderful voice with its rare tonal range and musical timbre was replaced by something between a bird-like twittering and a childish squeak... It was neither really moving in any way, nor dramatic²⁵.

It is important to observe, as does Braun, that a rare critical and public success that Komissarzhevskaya enjoyed with Meyerhold was Maeterlinck's *Soeur Béatrice* (Sister Beatrice), staged a year earlier, and her comparative failure as Melisande appeared to be «more than she could really bear»²⁶. The essay that was published around that time titled *Theatre of Symbolism*, authored by her lover's literary and personal rival²⁷, a fervent Symbolist Andrei Bely further inflamed her anger. Bely remarked that Meyerhold proposes a puppet theatre of marionette-dolls, and Komissarzhevskaya as a great actress was actually completely lost there and would better opt to go out. So it happened that immediately after this performance Komissarzhevskaya desperately summoned her two administrative directors, Kasimir Bravich and her brother Fyodor, and allegedly addressed them with the following: «[...] the theatre must openly admit that its entire course was a mistake, and the leading artistic director must either abandon his method of production or instantly leave the theatre»²⁸. Accordingly, the actor must have become more an autonomous creature rather than being a mindless soft puppet in the hands of the almighty Director Meyerhold.

Following the records of the next meetings, two days later Meyerhold was graciously offered a chance to try and defend his personal coordinating policy at a special meeting of the group's supreme "artistic council". The known minutes of that meeting demonstrate indeed that Meyerhold endeavoured to do his very best in order to explain that the *Pelleas and Melisande* affair was far from "truly foreshadowing" the future course of his entire work. He said that in the future he would pursue the more "sculptural style" of production already initiated in Alexander Blok's *The Fairground Booth* (Balaganchik) and Andreev's *The Life of a Man* (Zhizn cheloveka). Komissarzhevskaya in her turn was understandably quite sceptical and doubted that all this signified any degree of bigger freedom for the actors. In his response Meyerhold, as one attendee later recollected, «[...] declared categorically that whatever the method of production in the future, he would continue to exert pressure on any actors who failed to grasp his conception in order to realise that conception. Everything he

had heard horrified him and he even thought to leave the theatre and go abroad»²⁹.

Eventually, an uneasy compromise was somehow achieved and Meyerhold continued to function as a leading artistic figure in the theatre against all odds. That created an atmosphere of anxiety and general confusion, whereas some of the previously planned performances were forcefully skipped but despite that, as Braun stresses, Meyerhold tried to work on Fiodor Sologub's new Symbolist tragedy, *Death's Victory*, and it was eventually presented onstage on November 6 1907. The critical reception of this performance was quite appreciative and enthusiastic, and looked like a turning point to many unbiased viewers.

However, Komissarzhevskaya was for some reason left without a real dramatic part in this meaningful production and therefore inevitably attacked and criticised it sharply in her letter to her lover Briusov³⁰. Three days after the *premiere*, and a year since the opening of the theatre, Komissarzhevskaya «called a company meeting with Meyerhold present and read out the text of a letter that had been handed to him that same morning»:

In recent days, Vsevolod Emilievich, after much thought I have arrived at the firm conviction that you and I do not share the same views on the theatre, and that what you are seeking is not what I am seeking. The path we have been following the whole time is the path that leads to the puppet theatre – if one excepts those productions in which we combined the principles of the 'old' theatre with those of the puppet theatre, for example *Love's Comedy* and *Death's Victory*[...] Vsevolod Emilievich, in answer to your question at the last meeting of our artistic council 'perhaps I should leave?' I definitely must say: yes, there is no choice for you but to leave immediately³¹.

Meyerhold tried to actively protest, asserting that that his brutal dismissal in mid-season will be a pure violation of all possible professional and even lawful ethics and then demanded that the entire affair should be submitted to a disputation at a formal court of law. Komissarzhevskaya's decision was then supported by the court and Meyerhold's position of artistic director was then immediately powerfully grabbed by Vera's broth-

er Fiodor and partly, by a famous Symbolist director and drama-theoretician Nikolai Evreinov. As Braun further observes, only two subsequent productions were officially staged, a new version of Henrik Ibsen's *The Master Builder* (Bygmester Solness) and Remizov's folk-modernist drama, *The Devil's Play* (Besovskoe deistvo) before the theatrical season terminated sooner than planned on 7th of January 1908. The group somehow continued its virtual existence till February 1909 in its headquarters of Ofiterskaya Street, showing a number of Meyerhold's original performances but not attempting to create anything scandalous of really new. Then, as the history unfolded, in February 1910 «while she was on tour with her company in Tashkent, Vera Komissarzhevskaya contracted smallpox and died at the age of forty-five»³².

Leaving aside the issue of Komissarzhevskaya's personal endless artistic frustration, it might be worthwhile to note that the main reason of Meyerhold's breakup with her lies in their conceptually different attitude towards the fundamental principles of performance and to the ascending Modernism in general. For Meyerhold, it was expressive grotesque that he always valued above all³³, and Komissarzhevskaya could not effectively fit into his theatrical universe, being more involved with the mimetic tradition and having more reserved attitude towards expressionism, grotesque, and experimentation. Even more importantly, on a personal level, Meyerhold's entire mentality and personality along with his methods of director's total control posed a huge issue to Komissarzhevskaya and her self-esteem.

To conclude, one might recall Eleonora Duse's words that she allegedly addressed to Arthur Symons and would eventually share with Edward Gordon Craig (later, a good acquaintance of Meyerhold's):

In order to save theatre, theatre must be destroyed, the actors and actresses must all die of the plague. They poison the air, they make art impossible. It is not drama that they play, but pieces for the theatre. We should return to the Greek, play in the open air; the drama dies of stalls and boxes and evening dress, and people who come to digest dinner³⁴.

It seems that Meyerhold in his turn would probably have at least partially subscribed to such a brave and radical notion.

Notes

- 1 Cfr. V. Verigina, *Teatr na Oficerskoj ulice*, in V.F. Komissarzhevskaja, *Pisma aktrisy. Vospominanija o nej. Materialy*, edited by A. Al'tšuller, Iskusstvo, Leningrad Moscow 1964, pp. 258-273.
- 2 On this see a rich variety of personal testimonies and scholarly studies, starting with Ju. Rybakova, *Komissarzhevskaja*, Iskusstvo, Leningrad 1971; G.V. Titova, *Mejerchol'd i Komissarzhevskaja: modern na puti k Uslovnomu teatru*, SPbGATI, Sankt-Peterburg 2006. Cfr. also: *Alkonost: Sbornik pamjati V. F. Komissarzhevskoj*, Izdatel'stvo Peredvižnoj teatr P. P. Gajdeburova i N. F. Skarskoj, Sankt-Peterburg 1911.
- 3 Cfr. for example G. Kristi, *Stanislavskij i Mejerchol'd*, «Oktjabr'», № 3, 1963, pp. 178-186.
- 4 «Умышленная утрировка и перестройка (искажение) природы и соединение предметов, несоединимых ею или привычкой нашего повседневного опыта, при настойчивом подчеркивании материально обыденной чувственности формы, создаваемой этим путем». Quoted via G.V. Titova, *Mejerchol'd i Komissarzhevskaja: modern na puti k Uslovnomu teatru*, cit., p.
- 5 «Театр, являясь внеприродной комбинацией естественных, временных, пространственных и числовых явлений, неизменно противоречащих повседневности нашего опыта, по самому своему существу есть пример гротеска. Возникнув из гротеска обрядового маскарада, он неизбежно разрушается при какой угодно попытке удаления из него гротеска в качестве основания его бытия. Будучи основным свойством театра, гротеск для своего осуществления требует неизбежной перестройки всех элементов, извне вводимых в сферу театра, в том числе и необходимого ему человека, переделывая [его] из обывателя личности в лицедея». *Ibidem*.
- 6 «... игра в жизни была для Мейерхольда полубессознательной тренировкой, постоянным упражнением, привычной ежечасной работой над собой.», *Ibidem*.
- 7 On this Cfr. M. Klebanov, *The Culture of Experiment in Russian Theatrical Modernism: The OBERIU Theatre and the Biomechanics of Vsevolod Meyerhold*, in «Russian Literature», vol. 69, nn. 2-4, 2011, pp. 309-328,; also Cfr. S. Jestrovic, *Theatricality as Estrangement of Art and Life In the Russian Avant-garde*, in «SubStance», 01/2002, 31(2), pp. 42-56.
- 8 Cfr. the source and the related contextual details in *The Russian Symbolist Theatre: An Anthology of Plays and Critical Texts*, edited by M. Green, Ardis Publishers, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1986.
- 9 On Russian Modernist periodization Cfr. D. Ioffe, F. White, *An introduction to the Russian Avant-Garde and Radical Modernism*, in *The Russian Avant-Garde and Radical Modernism. Cultural Syllabus*, edited by D. Ioffe, F. White, Academic Studies Press, Boston 2012, pp. 8-21.
- 10 N. Turkin, *Komissarzhevskaja v žizni i na scene: biografija otdel'nogo lica*, Zlatocvet, Moskva 1910.
- 11 A.K. Gladkov, *Mejerchol'd*, sost. V.V. Zabrodin, vstup. st. C. Kin, STD RSFSR, Moskva 1990.
- 12 *Ibidem*. Also Cfr.: *Vstreči s Mejerchol'dom: Sbornik vospominanij*, red. kol. M.A. Valentejn, P.A. Markov, B. I. Rostockij, red. sost. L.D.

- Vendrovskaja, VTO, Moskva 1967.
- 13 E. Braun, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, University of Iowa Press, Iowa City 1995, p. 71.
- 14 Cfr. V. Borovsky, *A Triptych from the Russian Theatre: an Artistic Biography of the Komissarzhevskys*, Hurst & Company, London 2001.
- 15 Cfr. E. Braun, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, cit., p. 72.
- 16 Ivi, p. 73.
- 17 *Ibidem*.
- 18 *Ibidem*.
- 19 *Ibidem*.
- 20 *Ibidem*. Cfr. also: D. Tal'nikov, *Komissarzhevskaja*, Iskusstvo, Moskva-Leningrad 1939; O *Komissarzhevskoj. Zabytoe i novoe. Vospominanija, stat'i, pis'ma*, VTO, Moskva 1965; Cfr. Vera Fedorovna *Komissarzhevskaja: Pis'ma aktrisy, vospominanija o nej. Materialy*, cit.
- 21 E. Braun, *Meyerhold : A Revolution in Theatre*, cit., p. 74.
- 22 *Ibidem*.; Cfr. also N. Volkov, *Mejerchol'd*, Academia, Moskva-Leningrad 1929. Cfr. also P. Gromov, *Teatr Bloka*, in *Geroj i vremena. Stat'i o literature i teatre*, Sovetskij pisatel', Leningrad 1961.
- 23 E. Braun, *Meyerhold : A Revolution in Theatre*, cit., p. 75.
- 24 *Ibidem*.
- 25 E. Braun, *Meyerhold : A Revolution in Theatre*, cit., p. 75.
- 26 *Ibidem*.
- 27 Bely and Briusov shared a very complicated history of rivalry that culminated in the *Balder vs Loki* improvised poetic duel, which also has some notable traces in the novel *Fiery Angel*.
- 28 Quoted in E. Braun, *Meyerhold: A Revolution in Theatre*, cit., p. 75.
- 29 Ivi, pp. 75-76.
- 30 Ivi, p. 76. The Russian source is rendered in K.L. Rudnitsky, *Režisser Mejerchol'd*, Nauka, Moskva 1969. Cfr. also *Mejerchol'd v ruskoj teatral'noj kritike: 1898 – 1918, sost. i komment. N.V. Pесоčinskij, E.A. Kuchta, N.A. Tarshis, Artist. Režisser. Teatr*, Moskva 1997.
- 31 Quoted in E. Braun, *Meyerhold : A Revolution in Theatre*, cit., pp. 76-77.
- 32 Ivi, p. 77.
- 33 Cfr. M. Klebanov, *The Culture of Experiment in Russian Theatrical Modernism: The OBERIU Theatre and the Biomechanics of Vsevolod Meyerhold*, cit.; Cfr. also P. Zazzali, *Did Meyerhol'd Influence Brecht? A Comparison of Their Antirealistic Theatrical Aesthetics*, in «The European Legacy: Toward New Paradigms», vol. 13, n. 3, 2008, pp. 293-305.
- 34 I. Eynat-Confino, *Beyond the Mask: Gordon Craig, Movement, and the Actor*, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale 1987, p. 72; Cfr. also B. Haas, *Staging Colours: Edward Gordon Craig and Wassily Kandinsky*, in *Textual Intersections: Literature, History and the Arts in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, edited by R. Langford, Rodopi, Amsterdam-New York 2009; Cfr. also E.G. Craig, *On the Art of Theatre*, Heinemann, London 1969; Cfr. also P. Zazzali Peter, *Did Meyerhol'd Influence Brecht? A Comparison of Their Antirealistic Theatrical Aesthetics*, cit.