

Title: Staging Paradise: The Spatial Logic of Puppet Theater and Early Soviet Culture
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As recent scholarship has shown, one of the central projects of Russian modernism involved energetic efforts to liberate theater from its traditional cameral space and transfer it to the realm of everyday life—a project which received new impetus in the Soviet era the form of early Bolshevik street festivals, which continued the modernist impulse in newly redefined political terms (Clark, von Geldern). A very different impetus would seem to motivate the theatrical aspect of Stalinist culture, in particular its show trials, whose ominous and tragic artificiality appear the antithesis of exuberant avant-garde experimentation (Wood, Cassidy). This paper seeks to find a unifying element in a somewhat unexpected place: the spatial logic of the puppet theater, in which both Russian modernism and early Soviet culture found a congenial model for theatricalization. In particular it will explore the puppet theater as an example of how a certain combination of spatial features and archaic thematic content may have imported an apocalyptic and judgmental logic of their own into the Soviet inclination toward theatricalization. Among the literary works to be considered are Blok's *Balaganchik* and *12*, Maiakovskii's *Misteriia-Buff*, and Bulgakov's *Master i Margarita*.

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