

Title: Meierkhol'd's Association of New Drama: Przybyszewski and Early Attempts to 'Break the Shell' of Naturalism

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In September 1903 Meierkhol'd gave an interview to the Odessa newspaper *Iuzhnoe Obozrenie*, in which he outlined the goals of his company, newly renamed the *Tovarishchestvo Novoi dramy* (Association of New Drama). Describing the new literary trends which had influenced his company, Meierkhol'd explained that these currents were "breaking with naturalism, and splitting the shell of life" to reveal its core, the soul. A character's social position, disposition, nationality, among other things, all were elements that formed this shell.

In his explanation, Meierkhol'd provided several examples of the types of plays the Association would include in their repertoire: the symbolic plays of Ibsen, the plays of Maeterlinck's "first period," and D'Annunzio's "drama of the spirit." Curiously, Meierkhol'd did not mention the popular Norwegian playwright first, but the Polish dramatist, Przybyszewski. The company intended to stage Przybyszewski's "synthetic dramas," which, Meierkhol'd explained, examined the essence of life through "synthesizing" and "symbolizing" (Fel'dman 2006: 46-47).

This paper hypothesizes that Przybyszewski and his works were influential in molding Meierkhol'd's thoughts about the new drama, as articulated in this interview. This paper will examine Meierkhol'd's comments in light of his 1901 admission that he had fallen under Przybyszewski's hypnosis (Fel'dman 1998: 430). An examination of the metaphoric language and the concept of "synthesis" in Przybyszewski's essay, "On the Paths of the Soul," as well as the concept of "symbol" in early critical essays about Przybyszewski's dramas will support this hypothesis.

Works Cited

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