

## The modern 'art' theatre

Martin Puchner, in his book, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama* (see details below), charts modernism's resistance to theatre, drawing a boundary between what he calls avant-garde theatricalism, and modernist anti-theatricalism – pointing out that both offer 'a critique of the actual theater'. This week's seminar will concentrate on the poetics and politics of theatre in modernity, through exploring such modernist anti-theatricality, and how the theatre responded by inviting audiences to become absorbed in apparently autonomous performances (ie performances apparently independent of their audiences). In particular we will be considering how the advent of technological modernity influenced perceptions of representation and the person.

Dramaturgies:

- The fourth wall
- The poetics (and politics) of autonomy in art
- Antitheatricality

## PRIMARY (essential)

Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (1956); *Endgame* (1957)

Gertrude Stein, 'Plays' (1935), in *Writings and Lectures 1911-1945*, ed. Patricia Meyerowitz, with an introduction by Elizabeth Sprigge (London: Peter Owen Ltd, 1967), pp. 50-81

Michael Fried, 'Art and Objecthood', in *Art and Objecthood: Essays and Reviews* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 148-172

Georg Simmel, 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1903) in *Images of Man: the Classic Tradition in Sociological Thinking*, selected and edited by C. Wright Mills (New York: George Braziller, Inc., c1960), pp. 437-48

Pierre Bourdieu, 'The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed' in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity in association with Basil Blackwell, 1993), pp. 29-73.

## FURTHER READING

Roland Barthes, 'Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein' in *Image, Music Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (London: Fontana Press, 1977), pp. 69-78

August Strindberg, 'Preface' to *Miss Julie* (1888), in *Miss Julie and other plays*, trans. by Michael Robinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp. 56-68

Martin Puchner, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002)

Rebellato, Dan, *1956 and All That: The Making of Modern British Drama* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Edward Gordon Craig, 'The Actor and the Übermarionette' in *On the Art of the Theatre*, edited and introduced by Franc Chamberlain (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 27-48

Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, 'Modernism and theatrical performance' [http://www.js-modcult.bham.ac.uk/articles/issue1\\_barr2.pdf](http://www.js-modcult.bham.ac.uk/articles/issue1_barr2.pdf) (overview of the concurrent antitheatricality of modernism and the essential place of theatrical experiment in the history of modernism)

Claire Warden, *Modernist and Avant-Garde Performance: An Introduction* (Edinburgh University Press; 2015)