

Oleg Efremov: the heir to Stanislavsky

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Oleg Efremov was an actor's director who always put the actor at the centre of the production. In his view, the director's main objective was to facilitate the actor's art rather than to encumber it with stylized effects and devices. A disciple of the Stanislavsky System, Efremov believed in the superiority of theatrical realism over other styles of directing and subscribed to the Stanislavskian 'school of experiencing' (*shkola perezhivaniia*) according to which the actor creates the role anew for every performance. But like all followers of the System, Efremov interpreted it in his own way, emphasising those elements that most suited his personal creative ethos and developing his own terminology and idiosyncratic practice. He encouraged his actors to reveal familiar emotional states in unexpected ways, evoking empathy in the auditorium and drawing each spectator into the creative process of the performance. Following Stanislavsky's (later) focus on physical action, he stressed the importance of breaking the role down into tasks and actions, and instructed his actors to recall personal experiences from their pasts in order to find the key to a truthful action. In terms of his broader worldview, Efremov believed in the theatre's civic duty and strove to build a sense of unity between the ideals of the actor, director and writer in order to fulfil the social role required of the theatre by the public.

Biography

Oleg Nikolaevich Efremov was born in 1927 into a communal apartment off the famous Arbat Street in Moscow. During the Second World War, he moved with his parents to Vorkuta, inside the Arctic Circle, where his father was assigned to the managerial department of a forced labour camp (GULag). After returning to Moscow towards the end of the War, Efremov auditioned

for the Moscow Art Theatre School Studio and was accepted as part of its 1945 cohort. It was here that Efremov became a devoted follower of the Stanislavsky System, which prioritizes truthful acting and the full incarnation of the role over stylization and cliché. The young Efremov and his classmates even signed an oath to Stanislavsky in their own blood! Efremov quickly made a name for himself as one of the more talented students at the MAT School Studio, however on graduating in 1948, Efremov, to his surprise, was not invited to join the main theatre troupe. Instead, he found work at the Moscow Central Children's Theatre which at that time had a particularly strong group of directors working for it, including Maria Knebel and Anatoly Efros. Efremov's first role at the Children's Theatre was the lead in Viktor Rozov's play *Her Friends* (1948). This was the start of a long and productive collaboration between Efremov and Rozov, who became known as one of the voices of the Thaw¹ generation and a breath of fresh air following the formulaic and didactic plays of the Stalinist era.

While pursuing his acting career at the Children's Theatre, Efremov was invited to return to the MAT School Studio to work as a junior teacher. It was through teaching at the School Studio that Efremov made his first steps as a director. In 1955, he staged Viktor Rozov's play *Good Luck* with a group of students at the School Studio. The success of this production led Efremov to set up a new theatre studio, under the auspices of the Moscow Art Theatre, with other recent graduates of the MAT School Studio. They decided to call the new studio the 'Sovremennik', meaning 'contemporary', signifying their desire to speak to a young, contemporary audience and revitalize the stagnant theatre scene. In April 1956, the Sovremennik Theatre Studio opened with a performance of Rozov's *Alive Forever* on a stage owned by the Moscow Art Theatre. This was a watershed moment in Russian theatre – the Sovremennik was the first new theatre studio to open in Moscow for over twenty years.

Efremov wanted his new theatre studio to return to the true spirit of Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko. He believed that the Moscow Art Theatre had lost its way as a result of its cozy relationship to the Soviet establishment and that artistic innovation and creativity had been traded for political conformity. The Sovremennik Theatre Studio was set up to give a voice to the new post-war generation and to raise contemporary issues that concerned people in everyday life. This approach created problems for Efremov from the start: a number of his productions were banned by the Ministry of Culture for portraying Soviet society in too negative a light and the Sovremennik was threatened with closure. Throughout his career Efremov had a complicated relationship with the establishment. He joined the party immediately after Stalin died in 1953 and loosely identified with the Leninist school of thought which does not question the Revolution itself, only its perceived subversion afterwards under Stalin. In the 1960s and 70s Efremov rose to a position of national prominence, winning many awards and enjoying a decent relationship with certain ministers, in particular Ekaterina Furtseva (Minister of Culture 1960-1974). In 1970 Furtseva invited Efremov to become the Chief Artistic Director of the Moscow Art Theatre.

By this point, the epicentre of the Moscow theatre scene had shifted and the young intelligentsia now flocked to the Sovremennik or the Taganka, rather than the Art Theatre. The famous home of Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko was now a bloated, stagnating enterprise riven by internecine feuds and on the verge of collapse. Efremov was determined to return the Moscow Art Theatre to its former glories and worked hard to change the culture within the troupe over the next fifteen years. However, he struggled to achieve meaningful reform in the face of opposition by the theatre's old guard. Eventually, he gave up trying to change the theatre as a whole and started to create a new troupe from within, inviting all those who shared his artistic vision to join him. In 1985 Mikhail Gorbachev was elected general secretary of the Communist Party and introduced the reforms of *perestroika* (restructuring) and

glasnost (openness). Censorship ceased and theatres were able to stage plays that had been banned for over fifty years. Efremov seized the opportunity to push through his reforms and he split the Moscow Art Theatre into two troupes. Efremov took half the troupe to form the Chekhov Moscow Art Theatre based on Kamergerskii lane, while the other half, led by Tatiana Doronina, retained the name the Gorky Moscow Art Theatre and made its home just up the street on Tverskaia boulevard.

Glasnost opened up new possibilities in terms of repertoire but it also brought its own unique difficulties for Efremov, who for so long had found artistic purpose in exposing the hidden cracks in the regime. Now that everything was out in the open, Efremov and his generation were left feeling slightly redundant and directionless. The collapse of the Soviet Union saw Efremov return to the Russian classics, staging Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* (written in 1904) in 1989, Alexander Griboedov's *Woe from Wit* (1824) in 1992 and Alexander Pushkin's *Boris Godunov* (1825) in 1994. None of these productions was particularly successful and a new generation of critics began to suggest that Efremov was on his way out. However, in 1997 he staged a production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* at the Chekhov Moscow Art Theatre, completing a cycle of Chekhov productions that had begun with *Ivanov* in 1976. Efremov's *Three Sisters* was met with widespread acclaim in the press. The Soviet Union had disappeared but Russia was nevertheless still mired in economic difficulty and political corruption under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin. Efremov's directorial emphasis on the way life becomes trapped in cyclical repetitions resonated with spectators, many of whom saw their savings wiped out when the Russian Rouble defaulted a year later. Throughout his career, Efremov believed that the theatre had a duty to reveal life as it is and it was this sense of duty that concerned him in his final stage production, before he died in 2000 at the age of 72.

[INSERT FIGURE 11.1 HERE]

Efremov's directorial technique

Following the teaching of Stanislavsky, Oleg Efremov saw the primary aim of any theatre production as the organic creation of 'the life of the human spirit of the role' (*zhizn chelovecheskogo dukha roli*).² Efremov believed that this was the very essence of theatre art, the guarantee of its vitality, and the hardest type of art in general, because it cannot be replaced by signs or semblances of truth.³ He claimed that the actor has one task: 'to live the life of a character on stage, to bring oneself to the feeling that "I am" (*Ia*) and that where there is truth, faith and "I am", inevitably there is genuine human **experiencing**' (*podlinnoe chelovecheskoe perezhivanie*).⁴ For the actor this means creating the role afresh during every performance, rather than falling back on rehearsed gestures, actions or stock methods of spoken delivery. The feeling of 'I am' requires the actor to be fully present in the moment of performance, to be open to moments of creative inspiration, and to feel such a sense of kinship with the character that s/he is **transformed** (*perevoploshchennyi*) into it. Efremov believed that the authenticity of an actor's experiencing of the role defined the entire truthfulness of a theatre production. To ensure that a performance is sufficiently authentic, an actor should draw on his/her stock of lived experiences and impressions, psychological understanding, and worldview.⁵ This is often done through the use of what Stanislavsky called '**affective memory**' (*affektivnaia pamiat*), which is the ability to remember previous emotional states by recalling the physical sensations that accompanied them.

Like Stanislavsky, Efremov stressed the importance of being continuously aware of one's environment in order to add to one's supply of affective memories. He insisted that the work of the actor never ends; whether one is at home, on the bus, out with friends, or at a restaurant – the actor should always maintain **awareness** (*vnimanie*) of what is going on around him/her in order to increase the store of memories at his/her disposal. Efremov extended

this principle by encouraging his actors to go out into the world to gain real life experience away from the stage. Often this would be related to a particular role or setting for a play: Efremov believed that one's own 'living impression' of real life material is the stimulus to any creative work.⁶ In preparation for a stage adaptation of Anatoly Kuznetsov's youth novel *Sequel to a Legend* (1958), Efremov took his troupe on a trip to the Siberian region in which the work is set in order to gather impressions and experience that the actors could draw on later. This is something that Stanislavsky also did with his actors at the Moscow Art Theatre, famously sending them to the Khitrov market in Moscow to study down-and-outs before staging Gorky's *The Lower Depths* (1902).

Efremov in Practice

Take your cast on a field trip to gain real life experience that they can use to shape their performances. Arrange for your actors to shadow someone that shares the same profession as their character or to spend time observing a particular location or institution that features in your production to add to their stock of impressions and to increase the verisimilitude of the scene when performed.

Oleg Efremov remained an adherent of the Stanislavsky System throughout his career. Although he accepted the positive contribution made to theatre by those directors that adopted stylized forms and devices, such as Bertolt Brecht, he firmly believed that the 'school of experiencing' was the one true path in the theatre and was ill-disposed towards the so-called 'school of **representation**' (*shkola predstavleniia*) in which the creation of the role happens only at rehearsal stage, after which the actor reproduces learned actions (verbal and physical) during the performance. Efremov appreciated directorial inventiveness and innovation, but he was sceptical of the use of device (*priem*) and cliché (*shtamp*) especially where these began to

interfere with and overshadow the actor's truthful depiction of a character. He felt that stylized theatre lacked a meaningful connection with the audience and believed that it tried to make up for this through the use of dazzling spectacle and shocking devices. Instead, he insisted that a connection with the audience needs to be carefully constructed by the actors through **empathy** (*soperezhivanie*).

For Efremov, empathy meant taking an interest in the emotional reaction of the audience, an address to feeling, to the heart. He summed up this engagement with the audience as 'to the intellect via feeling' (*cherez chuvstvo k razumu*), which he argued was the true acting tradition of the Moscow Art Theatre.⁷ Instead of a Brechtian appeal to the audience's rational thought via defamiliarization (*verfremdungseffekt*), Efremov believed in evoking the empathy of the audience so that the spectators would identify closely with the characters they watch on the stage. In this way, he argued, the spectator would be drawn into the creative process, able to affect the performance through his/her reaction, and establishing an interdependent link between actor and spectator, stage and auditorium, whereby each informs the other. One of Efremov's preferred techniques to steer actors away from cliché was to pronounce important lines in the script without any extra emphasis. He believed that deliberately embellishing significant moments oversimplified the performance and could create a false impression amongst the audience.⁸ Delivering such lines in a prosaic fashion brought the performance closer to the patterns of real speech, he felt.

Efremov in Practice

When rehearsing significant moments in a play, encourage your actors to deliver their lines without any extra emphasis or embellishment. For example, if you were to take Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy (Hamlet Act III, Scene I), the first line 'To be, or not to be, that is the question' should be delivered without heavy stress on any of the ictic syllables

(be, not, be, is, quest-). This can help to avoid clichéd acting and enable the actor to find their own idiosyncratic method of delivery.

This mutual relationship between actor and spectator was rooted in what Efremov (via Stanislavsky) called the ‘**confessional**’ (*ispovedalnyi*) principle. He considered this the most important quality of an actor: to express that which people experience but keep hidden in daily life. Efremov claimed that: ‘only the confessional principle in art enables the establishment of an electric arc between the actor and the auditorium, it is the essence of experiencing (*perezhivanie*), the essence of the Stanislavsky System.’⁹ By tapping into the emotions and feelings that people keep locked away, the actor forms an emotional connection with the spectator that engages them in the performance. Of vital importance here, in Efremov’s view, is the actor’s own personal identity: s/he should know what it is they want to say to the audience when stepping out onto the stage. He observes: ‘for me any actor is interesting to the extent that he can open himself up in confession. What do you want to say via the stage, what is your own personal theme?’¹⁰ This personal theme or world-view is what Stanislavsky described as the ‘**super-supertask**’ (*sverkh-sverkhzadacha*). It is the perspective that conditions not only what the actor wants to convey to the audience but also the overriding goal of a production and indeed a theatre itself. Efremov saw the ‘super-supertask’ as the most important part of the Stanislavsky System because it provides the overall structure for everything else. The ‘super-supertask’ ties into a theatre’s particular civic purpose and should be shared by all members of the collective.

Efremov believed that the director’s role in a production is to provide the fertile space and conditions that facilitate the actors’ creation of a truthful character. The actor is placed at the centre of the whole process, rather than being just one component of many to be manipulated by the director. He argued that ‘the task of theatre is to investigate life through the

actor – only the actor can penetrate the life of the human soul'.¹¹ To this end, he saw his role as training what he called '**actor-thinkers**' (*aktery-mysliteliia*) that are independent, creative focal points rather than elements of the director's grand vision. Undoubtedly, Efremov's long successful career as an actor influenced this outlook. He regularly acted major roles in his own productions and when trying to explain a point to an actor during rehearsal, he would often step into the role himself to show how he thought it should be played. Efremov believed that it was vital to give the actors space to express themselves and to feel in control of the *mise-en-scène* rather than feel subordinated to the director's arrangement of stylistic effects and devices.

Efremov often used Stanislavsky's distinction between a '**director of result**' (*rezhissera rezultata*) and a '**director of root**' (*rezhissera korniia*) to emphasize what he saw as the correct method followed by directors at the Moscow Art Theatre. A 'director of root', in Efremov's view, is one that develops the actor during the staging of a play, helping to reveal his/her individuality and ensuring that they rely on direct experiences of life to create the role. The director should be able to bring the actors with him in the creative process and 'unnoticeably nudge their creative searches onto the true path'.¹² It was very important for Efremov that the director's contribution should not become too forceful. His practice in rehearsal was to provide a general roadmap for the actors but to refrain from imposing strong ideas at the start. Only when the rehearsals had progressed significantly and the actors had been given the space to find their own interpretations of a role would he begin to reveal specific ideas and suggestions that they could adopt and bring into their work.

In Efremov's practice, the primary building block of the theatre is **action** (*deistvie*). Whereas the artist expresses his ideas through colours and lines and the musician through sounds, actors express themselves via action, he argued.¹³ In his methodology, Efremov drew on Stanislavsky's '**method of physical actions**' (*metod fizicheskikh deistvii*) a technique developed towards the end of Stanislavsky's life in which the actor devises a sequence of

physical actions that fit the **given circumstances** (*predlagaemye obstoiatelstva*) of the role. These physical actions are in turn linked to psychological feelings creating a ‘unity of psychology and physiology’.¹⁴ An action is the means by which an actor fulfils a particular **task** (*zadacha*) posed to his/her character by the play. For example, a task could be to obtain permission, to gain trust, or to persuade someone to do something. These actions can then be linked together into what Stanislavsky called the ‘**through-line of action**’ (*skvoznoe deistvie*) which unites all the different actions completed by the actor throughout the play.

Each individual actor has a ‘through-line of action’ that regulates his/her performance and there is also one for the play as a whole. By following the ‘through-line of action’, the actor is able to complete his/her **supertask** (*sverkhzadacha*), the sum of all the tasks they are set in the play, for example, Konstantin Treplev’s supertask in Anton Chekhov’s *The Seagull* could be to feel respected and loved. Efremov often used the term ‘line of outer life’ (*liniia vneshnei zhizni*) interchangeably with the ‘through-line of action’. Explaining his method in conversation with the playwright Viktor Rozov he noted that: ‘The most important thing in the theatre is to appropriately construct the line of outer life, specifically to carry out all the concrete tasks, hiding and preserving one’s true inner emotional experience (*perezhivanie*), which is brought to the surface at any moment, possibly during a pause.’¹⁵ The idea is that by carefully sequencing the outer actions necessary to fulfil the different tasks, the actor creates the mechanism through which inner emotion and feeling can express itself at any moment.

One of the key techniques that Efremov used to help actors work out the correct action for each scene was the **etude**. In the System, etudes are improvised scenes performed by actors without recourse to the script. Etudes enable the actors to practice different variations of a scene, sometimes with dialogue and sometimes without, in order to work out the significant elements of a particular interaction. In Efremov’s method, he conducted what he called ‘**evidence-etudes**’ (*etiudy-dokazatelstva*), that is, etudes to discover evidence or information. These ‘evidence-

études' were used to help the actors work out the important tasks and motivations underlying a particular scene. When explaining how these études work, Efremov used the example of an actor being unable to carry out the relatively simple action of 'a meeting'. In this case, the director and actors would devise a number of different scenarios and circumstances related to the idea of 'a meeting' until the actor can find something in his/her memory that s/he can use as inspiration.¹⁶ By running a number of different 'evidence-études' around the theme, the actor is given time to dig up something useful from his/her store of affective memories. Efremov felt that études should not be the starting point of a rehearsal, nor should the use of them become an end in itself. Rather they should be used in a targeted fashion whenever actors become stuck with a particular scene, in order to clarify the fundamental tasks and actions therein.

Efremov in Practice

When rehearsing a difficult scene, ask each actor to break down their role into basic tasks and the actions required to fulfil them. Then get them to improvise an étude based on these actions without using any dialogue. As they do so, ask the actors to connect the actions they are performing with similar personal memories. For example, if the action is 'refusing a request', ask the actor to recall an occasion when they refused something in order to find the related emotional state. Once they have done this, repeat the étude but this time allow the actors to use their own improvised dialogue. Finally, you should return to rehearsing the scene with the script.

Études are useful ways of discovering the conflicts that underpin a scene, the point where an action meets a counteraction. The question: 'where is the fundamental conflict?' became almost a catchphrase in Efremov's rehearsals. He would insist that a character can only become a living person when s/he embodies a specific conflict – this is the point at which s/he engages the spectator in empathy.¹⁷ In 1976, Efremov staged a production of Chekhov's *Ivanov*

at the Moscow Art Theatre. The role of Ivanov was played by Innokenty Smoktunovsky. Ivanov is a local government official who becomes caught up in a spiral of debt and infidelity until he finally commits suicide. Early on in rehearsals, Smoktunovsky struggled to achieve the right tone in his portrayal of the character. Efremov's advice was to avoid sweeping, broad-brush emotions and to focus instead on the internal conflicts gripping the character, in other words, rather than think of the character in terms of all-encompassing emotions such as 'depression' or 'paralysis', to focus on conflicts such as that between Ivanov's concern for his wife's condition and unwillingness/inability to pay for a trip to the Crimea to treat her illness, due to his debts.¹⁸ This enabled Smoktunovsky to break the part down and find the key to enable a convincing performance. Another technique that Efremov used effectively in the rehearsals for *Ivanov* was to ask each actor to devise biographies for their character, extending before and after the given circumstances of the play text. By thinking up detailed biographies the actors could create a fuller, subtler character that seemed authentic to them, making the process of transformation into the role easier.

The essence of Efremov's directorial practice is to enable the actor to create a living person on the stage that invokes the empathy of the audience because of its truthful and confessional quality – it reveals to the spectator a feeling or emotional state that s/he recognises but usually keeps hidden. Efremov used the term '**familiar surprises**' (*znakomye neozhidannosti*) to define this process. He argued that 'what is new in art is not something invented or unknown – it is that which is known to everyone, but which is found again through art'.¹⁹ In his view, the art of the theatre is to surprise the spectator with that which s/he already knows; to convey this truth to the spectator in an unexpected or novel way. Efremov believed that in order to do this the actor must avoid all clichés, stock gestures and ready-made devices. The actor should also free him/herself from any desire for success on the stage, otherwise they will play for applause and adulation rather than to create the necessary life-like effect.

Efremov encouraged his actors to open themselves up to chance and contingency in rehearsals, to search for new innovative ways of performing the role, asking the question: and what if we do it the other way? What will emerge then? He called this practice ‘**reverse motion**’ (*obratnyi khod*) and saw it as a vital means to combat cliché and to help the actors discover ‘familiar surprises’.²⁰ In 1971 Efremov staged Maxim Gorky’s *The Last Ones* at the Moscow Art Theatre, in one of his first productions as Chief Artistic Director, and he employed the technique of ‘reverse motion’ during rehearsals. He asked the actors to deliberately exaggerate their performance in scenes that were particularly sensitive or emotional, almost to the point of parody.²¹ By getting the actors to explore different levels of emotion and degrees of sincerity, he was able to focus them back onto which feelings were genuine and which were false or clichéd.

Efremov in Practice

When rehearsing a particularly tense or emotional scene, ask the actors to play the scene as it is and then to repeat it, but this time in an overly exaggerated manner to the point of parody. For example, if the scene is ‘saying a tearful goodbye’, the actor might overplay their emotions, become hysterical, use extreme gestures, or become overly physical with the person to whom they are bidding farewell. Returning back to the scene later, the actors should be able to better distinguish authentic emotion from exaggeration and cliché.

When Efremov set up the Sovremennik theatre studio in 1956 it was with the aim of restoring the artistic legacy of Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko. But although the acting methodology followed by Efremov’s collective was realist, in terms of set design the Sovremennik broke with the naturalistic tradition of the Art Theatre. Instead of painted backdrops and three-walled box sets, Efremov took a minimalist approach to design that stripped the stage down to basic items of furniture and stage flats, while creating the sense of

specific locations primarily through lighting (see figure 11.2). Efremov called this approach the ‘**spot-lights method**’ (*metod svetovykh piaten*) because the acting space is delineated by lighting rather than walls, ceilings and doors.²² Although this approach was partly a way of saving money in the early days of the studio, the ‘spot-lights method’ went on to become part of the Sovremennik’s signature aesthetic and remained in use long after it had made the jump from studio to fully-fledged theatre. Efremov argued that this type of design was important because it focused attention on the actors rather than the spaces they inhabited. By removing unnecessary detail on the set, the audience’s attention would remain on the actors and the subtleties of their performance would be better perceived. It was a type of stage design that Efremov continued to use in his work at the Moscow Art Theatre, often in collaboration with the designer David Borovsky. In their 1976 production of *Ivanov*, Borovsky stripped the stage down to a wide-open space which emphasized Ivanov’s isolation and loneliness. That is not to say, however, that Efremov did not also use naturalistic designs on the stage. He was a strong advocate of flexibility in terms of production style: the design and form should fit the demands of the particular play, rather than be applied rigidly in all contexts.

Efremov in Practice

During rehearsals why not experiment with a minimalist stage set up by opening up the stage space and removing partition walls. Try stripping the set down to the minimum number of props and items of furniture necessary for the plot to function and use lighting spots to demarcate specific rooms or interior spaces. Doors can be indicated by self-standing door frames. The aim is to keep the attention focused on the actors rather than the detail around them.

[INSERT FIGURE 11.2 HERE]

As a young director, Efremov wanted to implement Stanislavsky's idea of the '**theatre house**' (*teatralnyi dom*) in which the actors would live and eat together as a collective, making joint decisions on the selection of the repertoire, and sharing responsibility for all the activities of the theatre. Although this proved hard to implement in practice, the idea of a theatre as a company of like-minded people, fully invested in a shared project remained central to Efremov's ethos as a director throughout his life. He saw the ensemble principle as vital to the theatre: actors, directors and artists should speak in the same artistic language and pursue the same creative goals. When working on a production, Efremov believed in the importance of debate and discussion to ensure that the cast was moving together in the same direction. He would ask the actors to discuss the different supertasks of each character, before deciding on the overall supertask of the play. Efremov saw this as a crucial early stage in the rehearsal process to ensure that all the supertasks fitted into an overall scheme. As such, Efremov continuously strove to find a balance between giving actors the space to express their own individual creativity and ensuring that each personality was working in unison for the benefit of the ensemble. Through being united in a shared goal (the super-supertask) a theatre collective could fulfil its social role to educate and inform. Efremov believed strongly that the theatre is a place of learning – not in a crude, didactic sense – but rather as a space that 'nurtures the possibility of self-education in people'.²³

Efremov in Practice

Before starting to rehearse with the script, hold a round table meeting and ask each member of the cast to break down their role into a series of separate tasks and write them down in a list. Discuss these tasks together and agree on an overall supertask for each character. Then join these supertasks together and ask the group to decide on one supertask that defines the play as a whole. The actors should keep both supertasks (individual and general) in mind when rehearsing and performing.

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¹ The period following Stalin's death in 1953, during which censorship was somewhat relaxed and opportunities for open discussion increased, is known as the Thaw, after the eponymous novella by Ilya Ehrenburg written in 1954. The Thaw actually consisted of a series of small thaws and reactionary freezes that lasted until Nikita Khrushchev was deposed from power in 1964.

² Oleg Efremov, 'Moi Stanislavskii', *Sovremennaia dramaturgiia*, 3 (1983), 265-70 (266)

³ *Ibid.*, p. 267.

⁴ Oleg Efremov, 'Maski, my vas uznaem!', *Nedelia*, 1, January (1967), 12.

⁵ Oleg Efremov, 'Kino i teatr – puti vzaimodeistviia', *Iskusstvo kino*, 6 (1982), 344-55.

⁶ Oleg Efremov, 'Kogda mne zadaiut vopros: kak voznik vash teatr, kakova ego programma' (1965), cited in *Oleg Efremov nastoiashchii stroitel' teatra*, ed. Lidiia Bogova, (Moscow: Zerba E, 2011), pp. 162-86.

⁷ Efremov, 'Moi Stanislavskii', p. 270.

⁸ Anatoly Smeliansky, *Oleg Yefremov: Masters of Soviet Art* (Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, 1988), p. 21.

⁹ N. Volianskaia, 'V tvorcheskoi laboratorii rezhissera', *Teatr*, 10 (1973), 32-51 (51)

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

¹¹ Oleg Efremov, 'Vozvrashchenie', *Sovetskaia kul'tura*, 14 June (1988)

¹² Oleg Efremov, 'Uroki velikogo мастера', *Novyi mir*, 1 (1977), 261-66.

¹³ Efremov, 'Kogda mne zadaiut vopros', p. 182.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ 'Teatr "Sovremennika". Stenogramma ot 26 Iiunia 1956, besedy V. S. Rozova i O. N. Efremova o p'ese "Vechno zhivye" i ee postanovke v studii pri MKhATE', RGALI f. 3152, op. 4, d. 1.

¹⁶ Efremov, 'Kogda mne zadaiut vopros', p. 176.

¹⁷ Oleg Efremov, 'Bol'she vsego ustaesh' ot otvetstvennosti', in 'Rezhisserskii teatr'. *Razgovory pod zanaves veka* (Moscow: 1999), pp. 141-54.

¹⁸ Galina Brodskaia, 'Literaturnaia zapis' in Anatoly Smeliansky, *Oleg Efremov o teatre i o sebe*, (Moscow: Moskovskii khudozhestvennyi teatr, 1997), pp. 133-38.

¹⁹ Efremov, 'Kogda mne zadaiut vopros', p. 179.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 180.

²¹ Smeliansky, *Oleg Efremov o teatre i o sebe*, p. 69.

²² 'Teatr "Sovremennika". Stenogramma ot 26 Iiunia 1956, RGALI f. 3152, op. 4, d. 1.

²³ Oleg Efremov, 'Nachnem s sebja', *Sovremennaia dramaturgiia*, 3 (1986), 223-234.