

CHAPTER X

THE "KNAVE OF DIAMONDS" GROUP AND THE "DONKEY'S TAIL"
GROUP

The most important of the exhibitions in which all the small groups of St. Petersburg, Odessa and Kiev united was that held by the "Knave of Diamonds" group in Moscow in December 1910. It established Moscow as a centre of avant-garde art in its own right and distinct from Munich and Paris where Russians had moved in former years. Though the "Knave of Diamonds" group was clear in its purpose of consolidating new Russian tendencies in the arts it nevertheless incorporated important western tendencies like French Cubism and German Expressionism into their own work though Russian folk art became the most important element for them.

The "Knave of Diamonds" group was formed in the autumn of 1910 after fifty students had been expelled from the Moscow Institute in April for their rebelliousness. These included Falk, Kuprin, Mashkov and Rozhdestvensky. The group held seven important exhibitions from 1910 to 1918 and its output was mainly "Primitivist" and Cubo-futurist work. Larionov was the leader and it was he who with Goncharova, Lentulov and Mashkov established a distinct primitivist group and in 1911 formed his own faction. Bernard's publications of Cézanne's writings were familiar to this group, who, like their French contemporaries extended Cézanne's analytical principles. It was the drift towards French art that displeased Larionov by 1911 causing him to intensify his interest in Russian peasant art and the formation of the "Donkey's Tail" group early in 1912.

The "Knave of Diamonds" artists were nevertheless interested by peasant art and unsympathetic to the depiction of light shown by Impressionism. Their first exhibition in Moscow opened in December 1910 and lasted a month. Exhibitors included the Russian artists V.S. Bart (Stepanova), D and V. Burluk, Exter, Falk, Goncharova and Konchalovsky; French artists selected by the critic Alexandre Mercereau such as Delaunay, Larionov, Lentulov, Malevich, Mashkov, Gleizes, Le Fauconnier, Lhôte, Matisse and less well known Cubists while the Munich group was represented by Kandinsky, Werefkina, Javlensky and Münter. Larionov's contributions included "Bread" "Soldiers" and "Street in the Provinces" compared by one critic to sign boards.¹ Goncharova's thirty-three works included the "Wrestlers" and five religious compositions.

At the second exhibition in 1912 western Cubist trends were also evident and the exhibition included improvisations by Kandinsky and primitivist-cubist works by the Russian members.

The 1914 exhibition included works by L.S. Popova and N.A. Udaltsova and that of 1916 held in Moscow included realist works by the leaders of the group as well as work by Altman, Klyun, Malevich, I.A. Puni, Popova, Rozanova, Udaltsova and Chagall. Malevich showed sixty Suprematist pictures and at the seventh exhibition in Moscow in 1918 Suprematism overpowered the trends of the original exhibitors in the exhibition.²

In Moscow in March 1912, the first exhibition of the

1. M. Voloshin, "Bubnovyi Valet", p. 12. Quoted in J. Bowlt, Ibid., p. 358.

2. See J. Bowlt, Ibid., pp. 333-363.

"Donkey's Tail" group was opened. It was organised by M. Larionov and N. Goncharova, who exhibited work there with K. Malevich and V.I. Tatlin. The exhibitors were an offshoot from the "Knave of Diamonds" group and they attempted a conciliation of Cézannism, Cubism, popular and folk art. Near his first Rayonist pictures Larionov showed some canvasses with the theme of soldiers, returning thus to the subject of popular Russian pictures. Goncharova exhibited her first Rayonist water-colours among which "Spring" ("Vesna") was one of the most representative examples of this new style. Goncharova had accused Burliuk in 1912 of being "a decadent Munich follower" probably referring to his collaboration with Kandinsky and though Larionov had been invited to exhibit with the "Blue Rider", Kandinsky was not asked to join the "Donkey's Tail" group.

Larionov, Goncharova and Tatlin exhibited fifty works each and Malevich twenty-three. Chagall sent one work entitled "Death", from Paris.

The exhibition was derided by the public and press, Goncharova's religious works were censored and "The Evangelists" (Figure 276) was confiscated. It was considered blasphemous that religious pictures should be shown at an exhibition with the title "The Donkey's Tail". However Larionov's deliberately blasphemous and indecent primitivist pictures were not noticed.

Though Larionov developed Rayonism from about 1912 to 1914, as well as working as a designer for Diaghilev's ballet later, like Goncharova he continued to paint easel pictures in many styles at the same time. But theory seemed to be in

advance of painting and it was their manifesto that had the importance of being the starting point for the theories of Malevich. Larionov's pictures consisted mostly of light tones differing from Goncharova's dynamic colours and interpretation which bore more relation to Italian Futurism.

The "Blue Rider" exhibition in Munich had much in common with the "Donkey's Tail". A great many artists contributed to both and they shared the common influence of folk-art and child art. Moreover the Munich exhibition included seven Russian peasant wood-cuts. Malevich exhibited lithographs directly imitating the art of the Lubok while some of his other works derived colour from the same source.

Malevich's paintings display Fauve influence, especially Matisse, but also that of Goncharova (see Figures 276-282). Larionov distinguished his work as the leader of the splinter group:

Goncharova and I worked more on the peasant level. Every work of ours had a content which, although expressed in primitive form, revealed a social concern. This was the basic difference between us and the "Knave of Diamonds" group which was working in the time of Cézanne.¹

Tatlin exhibited a number of costume designs for "Emperor Maximilian". As was customary in Russia he had designed the set to submit in its entirety. He also showed drawings and studies of 1909-11 done while visiting the Eastern Mediterranean as a sailor as well as his work as a student. The latter being mostly influenced by Van Gogh, Cézanne and Goncharova's Primitivist period.

1. From Malevich's unpublished biography quoted in Camilla Gray: The Russian Experiment in Art, pp. 134-135.

The first exhibition of the "Donkey's Tail" group included work by Niko Pirozmanashvili (1862-1919) the Georgian self-taught artist and sign-painter, encouraged by Larionov and other Futurists at that time. As an untutored artist, producing authentic popular art he probably came near to their idea of the candid vision of the primitive (see Figures 283-289). He represented pre-revolutionary Georgian subjects, landscapes, people and traditions, animals, village beauties, people of all professions and especially gatherings of drinkers sitting at a table (Figure 283).

Pirozmanashvili was born in 1862 in Kakhetia from a peasant family in the little hamlet of Mirzaani. Becoming orphans early in life, he and his sisters went to Tiflis to look for work as domestic servants. His elder sister soon died and Niko had to return with his remaining sister to their village where he hired himself out as a shepherd while she kept house. While looking after sheep he taught himself to read and avidly absorbed the classics of Georgian literature. His favourite poet was Vazha Pshaveli. Personalities such as Giorgi Saakadze, the wise and powerful King Krakli II, the great poet Rustaveli and the Queen Tamara became his favourite heroes.

He returned to Tiflis and worked on the railways until he had to give up through ill health. His commercial enterprises such as a small dairy also failed. However, he was attracted to the work of sign-painters, restaurant and cabaret decorators and began to teach himself this trade and to receive commissions (see Figures 285 and 286). He and the painter Zasiachvili tried to run a painting studio, but due to

his lack of business sense it closed. After this he became dispirited and led the life of a vagabond going from village to village earning his living by decorating tavern walls and painting shop signs. His luggage consisted almost exclusively of paints and brushes and he used whatever painting support happened to be available: waxed canvas, paper, steel, or a wall surface.

The society of Georgian Painters, founded in 1916, invited the self taught artist to one of their meetings. He was at first encouraged by them and one of their members Lado G idiashvili helped him materially. A favourable article on him appeared in a Georgian newspaper of that year, but it was soon followed by a caricature of him which discouraged the society from giving him further help.

In 1912 however the poet I. Zdanevich, his brother K. Zdanevich and M. Le Dentu, then students at the Academy of Fine Art, ^{had} become interested in his work and began to collect it. Interest gradually increased and D. Chevardnadze, director of the National Gallery of Georgia succeeded in a short time to re-group the main body of the artist's work which forms the basis of the State Museum of Fine Art of the S.S.R. of Georgia. Many of his pictures are still in private collections but recently a large number were presented to the museum.

Although he left Kakhetia very early in life, the themes of his work were mainly scenes from the daily life of peasants: grape harvests, village weddings, and other rural scenes done from memory. However, certain works represent urban life, cabaret and circus personalities and the famous beauties of

Ortatchal for which knife fights took place. Another cycle of pictures includes picturesque and familiar types from old Tiflis such as "the Cook", "Moucha and his Barrel" and "the Hurdy-gurdy Player" some of which are reminiscent of Soutine in their directness and expressionism. A series of animals also includes camels, goats, lions, eagles, a girafe and a bear in the moon-light. Some are reminiscent of earthenware statues with which Georgian peasants decorate their houses while others have been inspired by the Georgian poet Vaja Pchaveli.¹

Among his subjects are also a number of still lifes of "Shashlik", bottles of wine, fish, salad and Georgian food. The artist hardly travelled anywhere except Kakhetia and Tiflis and characteristic Georgian landscapes appear as the background to his figures. Nevertheless his subjects include the exotic "Hunt in India" and "the Tungus river Emont". As a painting support he usually used black waxed canvas on to which he traced the contours of his subject. Then he painted the light parts in white, pinks and pale blues usually finishing the picture in one sitting without making alterations. His work appears considerably less sophisticated than the more famous "naive" painters such as Douanier Rousseau, probably because it is nearer to the unbroken traditions of popular art. His work was also more isolated from avant-garde trends of Western Europe which were sweeping aside Renaissance traditions, traditions that had not properly penetrated Georgia. Various subjects, such as the "Hunt in India" are common to both

1. Exhibition catalogue: Niko Pirozmanishvili, (Musée des Arts Décoratifs, March-April, 1969).

Pirosmanishvili and Rousseau (Figures 288 and 290) resemble Persian and Indian depictions of the same subject (Figure 289).

Rousseau may also have admired native French popular prints. Naïveté had been observed in the work of David and other French artists in the nineteenth-century and Champfleury likened Courbet's painting "The Burial at Ornans" (1850) to folk imagier.¹ Popular imagery had stimulated fine art in earlier periods but perhaps for Courbet imagery of the common man also had a social meaning. Japanese prints may have become popular in Paris in the 1850s partly because a consciousness of their French counterpart already existed.

Gradually primitive and naïve art, which lay outside the great classical traditions of Europe and Asia, released sophisticated experimenters in Primitivism from the imitation of nature. Their personal styles varied as much as did those of folk art, which, as well as being rich in coarse decoration was often very refined. Decorative motifs of folk and primitive art which may have begun by representing real objects had often been gradually conventionalised and disguised into purely abstract shapes over many years. Early in the twentieth-century admirers of the radical simplification in primitive art began a tradition of movements in which a similar economy of form was supreme. With the stimulus of Western art movements adding an incentive, Rayonism was one of the earliest styles in Russia to depart entirely from representation about a year or so after Kandinsky painted his first abstract water-colour in Munich in 1910.

1. See Meyer Schapiro 'Courbet and Popular Imagery - an essay on Realism and Naïveté' in Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, Vol. 4, pp. 164-191.

Figure 276. Natalia Goncharova:
The Evangelists 1910-11,
oil on canvas, $80\frac{1}{4}$ x $22\frac{7}{8}$
private collection, Paris.

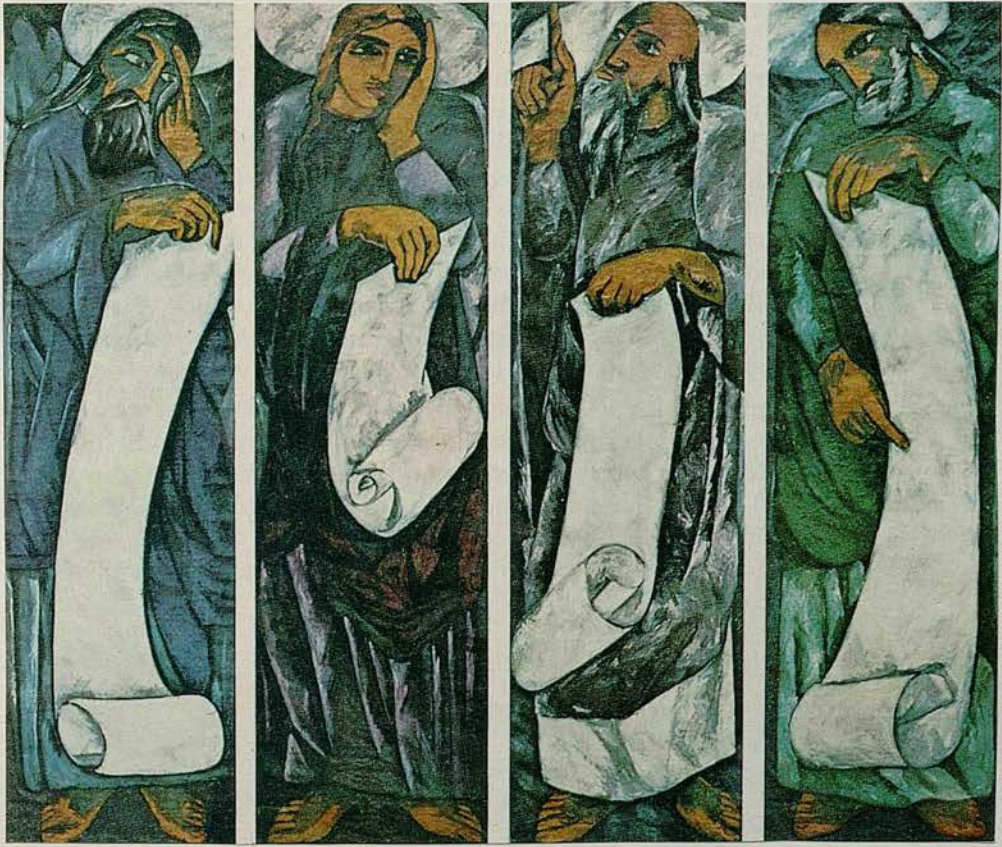


Figure 277. N. Goncharova:

Haycutting 1910,

oil on canvas, $38\frac{5}{8}$ x $46\frac{3}{4}$

private collection, Paris.



Figure 278: N. Goncharova:

Dancing Peasants 1911,

oil on canvas, $36\frac{1}{16}$ x $56\frac{3}{4}$

private collection, Paris.



Figure 279. N. Goncharova:
Peasants Picking Apples 1911,
oil on canvas, 41 x 38 $\frac{1}{8}$, Tretyakov
Gallery, Moscow (exhibited at the
"Knave of Diamonds" exhibition and at
an exhibition of her work held in St.
Petersburg in 1914 of which the catalogue
contains this reproduction and that of
Figure 280)

Figure 280. N. Goncharova: Haymakers, c. 1911.



Крестьяне собирают яблоки.

15



Косари.

Figure 281. N. Goncharova:
Gathering Wood, 1911,
Tretyakov Museum, Moscow.



Figure 282. N. Goncharova:
The Looking-glass, 1912.



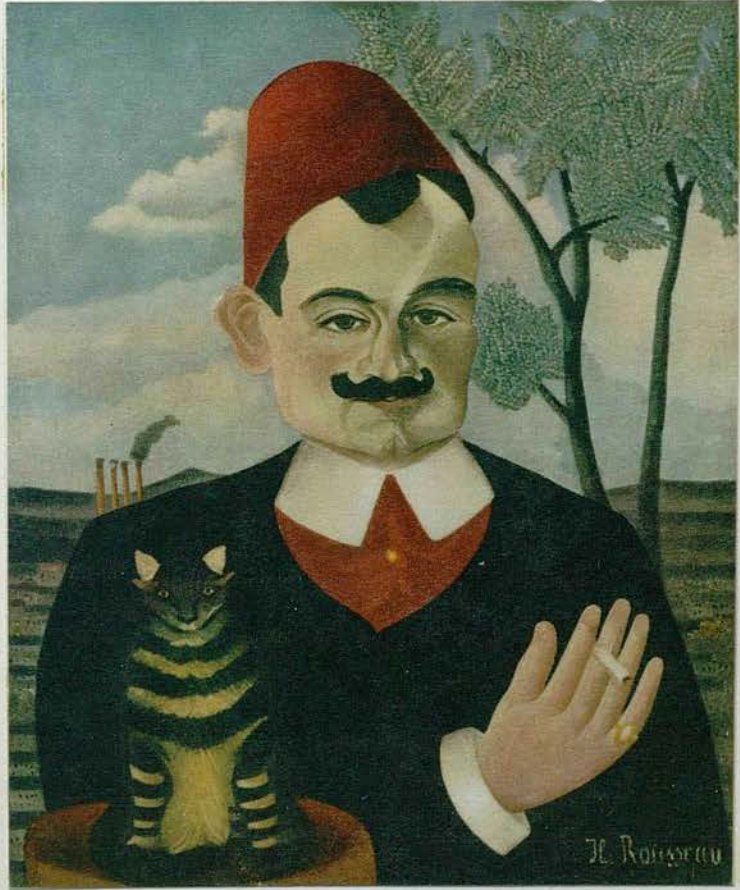


Figure 283. Niko Pirosmanashvili:

A drinking Party of Five Princes,

Oil on waxed canvas, 1906, 195 x 105 cms.

State Art Museum, Georgian S.S.R., Tbilisi.

Figure 284. Henri Rousseau:

Portrait of the Writer Pierre Loti,

1891, Kunsthaus, Zurich.

Figure 285. N. Piroshmanashvili:
Signboard for the "Sunset Alehouse"
("Pivnaya Zakatala")
Oil on waxed canvas, 92 x 120 cms.,
State Art Museum, Georgian S.S.R.,
Tbilisi.



Figure 286. N. Piroshmanashvili:

Tavern Sign advertising Tea, Beer
and Seltser Lemonade etc.



ЧАЙ-ПИВО
И ЛИМОНАДЪ БЕЛТЕРСКАЯ
РАЗКРЕП. НАПИТКОВЪ

Figure 287. N. Pirosmavashvili:
Little Girl with a Balloon,
1913, oil on waxed canvas,
65 x 41cms.



Figure 288. H. Rousseau: Tropical Storm with a Tiger,
1891, National Gallery, London.

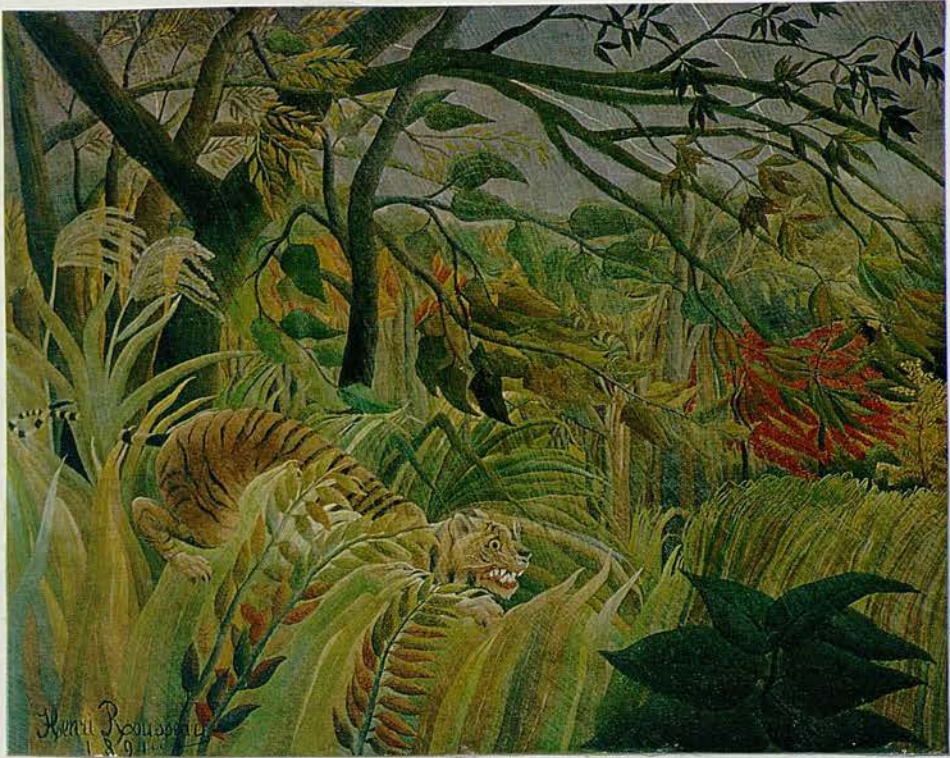


Figure 289. Rājā Umed Singh of Kotah:
Shooting Tigers, Kotah, Rajasthan;
about 1790. 13 x 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ ins.
Victoria and Albert Museum.

Figure 290. H. Rousseau:
The Hungry Lion, c. 1905,
Oil, 203 x 200 cms.
Collection Dr. Franz Meyer, Basle.



CHAPTER XI

RAYONISM

Larionov claimed that in 1906 on a visit to London he saw a large exhibition of Turner which profoundly impressed him and made him reflect on the role of light in painting and that it is this shock received before the pictures by Turner which is at the origin of Rayonism, the first abstract Russian movement.¹ About 1908 Diaghilev invited him to come to Turkey but failed to finance the journey. However Larionov did a series of drawings entitled "Imaginary Turkey". Between 1911 and 1912 followed by Goncharova he painted semi-abstract pictures consisting of radiating movements of lines. In these pictures light was treated as a material which could be isolated from objects and painted in its pure state. At the 1912 exhibition of the "Donkey's Tail" group Larionov issued his Rayonist manifesto entitled "Luchism" ("Rayonism") and dated June 1912 (see Appendix XIX). The version that appeared in 1913 and which is referred to by various writers is probably a revised version and included illustrations by Larionov and Goncharova. Both the original and the 1913 revised version were published as small independent pamphlets but it was later reprinted also with several small revisions as an article entitled Luchistaya Zhivopis ("Rayonist Painting") in the anthology Oslinyi Khvost i Mishen (The "Donkey's Tail" and "The Target") in 1913. Illustrations for this publication were by

1. See Dora Vallier: "L'Art Abstrait en Russie: ses origines, ses premieres manifestations" in Cahiers d'Art, V, pp. 33-35, 1960.

Goncharova and Larionov (see Figure 309).

In Petersburg on the 10th of December 1912, the "Artistic Association of Painters" organised at the Concert Hall of the Petrovsk School a cultural evening during which B.N. Kurdinovsky read a lecture by Kandinsky followed by Projections of works by amateurs and children, works of Bavarian popular art and paintings by Henri Rousseau, Picasso, Matisse, Marc, Muntz and le Fauconnier. Kandinsky's account could be described as an introduction to "abstract" painting (see Appendix XXI). Goncharova attacked the "Knave of Diamonds" for being based on theories, and Larionov accused the group of being conservationists, imitators of French art and proclaimed the truly modern Russian art group to be his "Donkey's Tail" group.

In 1913 the second group exhibition entitled "The Target" was held and Rayonist painting established in it. Larionov's first Rayonist painting "The Glass" (Figures 292 and 293) is said to have been exhibited in the one day exhibition at the "Society of Free Aesthetics" in 1911 and a similar work included in the "Union of Youth" exhibition in December 1911.¹ Though there is no evidence available for this. The illustration on page 14 of the Italian translation of 1917 of "Rayonism" is entitled "Lady in a Café" (see Appendix XX). Dating from 1911, this lithographed drawing in ink by Larionov is made up of sketched lines and curves suggesting light moving from various points on objects and one or two cubes. It is recognisably a figure lounging at

1. See P. Vergo: Ibid., p. 476.

a café table on which she places her right elbow squarely and on which her left arm is extended in the direction of a glass. The earliest phase of Rayonism in which the objects are analysed in this way has affinities with the transitional phase between analytical cubism and the more arbitrary disintegration by Braque and Picasso described by Apollinaire as "Synthetic Cubism." "Lady in a Café" belongs to the same stage stylistically as "The Glass" in which still life objects are gradually recognisable and from which rays in whitish paint emanate from various points on the objects. The cubist device of seeing an object from the side and from the top simultaneously is applied to the glass in a manner most reminiscent of Braque's "Still Life with Pitcher and Violin" (Figure 70). In this a large number of lines and angles form a dynamic background of shapes some of which are identifiable as fragments of objects, others hardly represent any objects and many are completely non representational. In Larionov's "Glass" the level of wine in the glass is slanted giving itself out as a line of force leading to the bottle in the same manner as the Italian Futurist lines of force were used in still life subjects. At the point where this line meets the bottle the neck of the bottle appears to bend over. The corner of the table on which the objects are standing is behind the necks of the bottle and coincides with the force line from the wine in the glass. Another bottle, the base of which runs nearly parallel to the line of force appears to be falling through an open window towards the top left of the picture. The whimsical effects of objects flying around comes from the primitivist trend but is giving way to

new formal concerns. The table cloth on which the bottle stands gives much scope for pleats and folds to be transformed into the angles and rays of the new style. The subject and colours used tend toward those of analytical cubism but the use of rays and even their shape is close to that of Boccioni in "Forces of a Street" (Figure 294). Larionov's "Lights in the Street" (Figure 295) bear an even closer resemblance to Boccioni's picture. The depiction of rays of light in strokes of colour in Delaunay's paintings such as the Eiffel Tower (1909) and the Cardiff Team, 1913 (Figure 84) made a great impression on Marc and other painters of the Blaue Reiter Group. It is this transformation of light rays into brush strokes derived from Cézanne that penetrated into the work of Larionov, both directly and indirectly, and merged with other western European and Russian tendencies. It is also possible to find a similar use of shafts of light in the work of Marc, Feininger, Delaunay and others at this time (see Figures 296 and 297). The splayed out rays of Boccioni's picture appear to have been selected by Larionov in a similar way to the cubists' selection of cones, cylinders and spheres from Cézanne. In other words although Marc, Feininger and Delaunay used rays it was Larionov who self-consciously applied them and deliberately built up a style with a name based on their application. Apart from a natural desire for fame it must certainly have been his wish to go beyond cubism and to emancipate himself from the domination of western European art styles that made him so eager to found a new "ism" of painting in Russia. Larionov, like his Russian contemporaries such as Chagall and Burliuk was capable of synthesising various

styles and of using them as ingredients for a new style without submitting to their influence entirely. But the stimulus for Rayonism did not come entirely from western Europe. The rhythms of straight lines and angles arranged in a dynamic spirit and in the half disguised forms of figures were the characteristics of Vrubel's pictures which impressed the Russian artists of the early twentieth century. These qualities expressed in simplified blocks of Vrubel's paint were an influential background to Larionov's creation of Rayonism.

A few pictures done roughly at the transition from the Primitivist to the Rayonist style or between 1911 and 1913 take up the representation of movement by means of a repetition of the same form in different successive positions in space akin to the technique of multiple exposure photography. Unlike the Russian artists, techniques of analysing and depicting movement had been of primary importance to the Italian Futurists since before 1909. In Russia the technique was mostly used in illustrations especially those of Malevich. But the illustrations were more abstracted in a geometrically drawn style which suggested movement more through the lines and gradations themselves than through successive positions of a moving object. But the few Russian paintings that most clearly employ the method which shows successive positions of the same figure in movement are Malevich's "Knife Grinder" (Figure 400), Burliuk's "Siberian Navy" (Figure 270), Larionov's "Woman on the Boulevard" (Figure 298) and Goncharova's "Cyclist" (Figure 299). Though many of the dates claimed by Larionov and Goncharova are probably too early, no primacy is gained by

doing so in this case because movement had already been represented in this way by the Italian Futurists before 1911 and the method advocated in their "Futurist Painting Manifesto" of April 1910. Larionov appears to have interpreted some of the ideas of this manifesto in his "Glass", and more particularly in his "Woman on the Boulevard" dated 1911 (Figure 298). This picture has fewer cubist tendencies than "The Glass" and more Fauvist colour and Italian Futurist interpretations. It is also similar in style and subject to an illustration by Larionov for Bolshakov's publication "Lefutur" (Autumn 1913, see Figure 324). "Woman on a Boulevard" is mainly in primary colours, bright greens, orange, mauve and ochre. It represents a woman walking down a street. A building is suggested in the distance on the left and lettering in the top left. The figure may represent a prostitute. Certain erotic suggestions appear in the figure: both breasts, corsetry, petticoat and legs clad in decorated stockings and high heels are shown. The general impression is that the clothing is transparent. Bosoms are visible but appear in a position upheld by a brassiere. Similarly the corset is shown though the red over-garment is in place. This recalls the Italian Futurist Painting Manifesto in its penetration of matter:

Who can still believe in the opacity of bodies, since our sharpened and multiplied sensitiveness has already penetrated the obscure manifestations of the medium? Why should we forget in our creations the doubled power of our sight, capable of giving results analogous to those of X-rays?

The picture also appears to interpret the "dynamic sensation" described in the Painting Manifesto:

On account of the persistency of an image upon the retina, moving objects constantly multiply themselves... Thus a running horse has not four legs but twenty...

Six different depictions of legs in the picture are shown to suggest the successive positions of walking; the profile and full face are merged and the umbrella is shown in different positions, as being carried under the left arm as well as being brought down in front of the figure. Classifications such as "Cubo-futurist" invented by the Russians do not altogether specify the whimsical use of new ideas and the ability of the artists to combine any combinations of style.

Goncharova's painting "Velosipedist" ("The Cyclist" Figure 299) is usually dated 1912. This subject was painted by Lyonel Feininger (Figure 61) at about the same time and by Boccioni in "Dynamism of a Cyclist" 1913 (Figure 51). Goncharova and Feininger most probably saw Boccioni's studies done before his painting. Goncharova's painting resembles these more than it does Boccioni's finished picture which may possibly have been done after hers and without any knowledge of it. As the title suggests Boccioni's final painting is more abstract in appearance, concentrating on the movement and juxtaposing lines and rhythms which are intended to isolate those movements. The technique of the painting is in a neo-impressionist or divisionist tradition of breaking up forms into colours of the spectrum and depicting form, not as solid material, but as light divided into colours of the spectrum and arranged in short brush-strokes according to the main rhythms of the picture. The ideals of Seurat, that the picture should be divided up with rhythmic lines and that colours analysed into component colours of the spectrum

aided Boccioni to depict the forms of speeding objects, not as solid masses of matter, but as non-material states. Seurat had shown that concentration on colour could disintegrate form and express movement especially with the effective use of curved lines.

Goncharova's "Cyclist" is not based on an impressionist tradition of immateriality. Primitivist qualities of ponderous outlines, cultivated coarseness of paint and forms depicted in a naïve or simple way appear in the completeness of representational, solid objects. The figure on a cycle riding over a cobbled street past what appears to be shop windows is not disintegrated by the repeated rhythms of the lines of the wheels and the body. This borrowed technique used to depict movement is only incorporated into the picture as an extra element. There is no attempt to abstract or represent "pure" motion, the motion and other elements are secondary to the subject of a cyclist riding on a bumpy surface. Later Goncharova's paintings do appear to have benefitted from abstractions of the noise forms of a motorcycle done by Balla in 1916 (see Figures 45-49) but her depiction of the cyclist is more concrete and realistic at this time. In the "Cyclist" the words of the Italian Futurist Manifesto have been taken literally in that several legs are represented rather than two. The rapidly crossing lines at the extreme right part of the cyclist's posterior and in parts of the legs resemble the technique of crossed lines in Goncharova's "Cats" (Figure 301), and the lines of Rayonist paintings. The colours are similar to the browns, greens and greys used by the cubists to examine the structure of form

undistracted by the complications of spectral colour. The lettering has also been used as a pictorial element in a similar way to Braque and Picasso. But rather than still life words like "journal" used in cubist paintings or "metro", "sortie" and "valse" used by Severini to suggest urban dynamism, Goncharova's choice of letters is more subtle. The words, as if only glimpsed by the passer-by are incomplete or divided like those of a futurist poem and like the forms of cubo-futurist painting. Perhaps the direction taken by the cyclist from the right to the left is deliberately chosen to contrast with the direction of the lettering which reads from left to right to give the idea of sweeping past the rider as it is read or conversely to suggest the leftward movement of the rider. From left to right the letters read: T.402 [Chetyr^estadva]; shelk, nit; shl...ya. These words may have been chosen to suggest a swishing movement by their sounds in a similar method to that used by writers such as Guro. The incorporation of lettering with visual imagery is similar to the use of visual imagery illustrating poetry. The meaning of the words, their pun like ambiguity as well as the sdvig or dislocation in words and images is also common to the poets.

The letters "shelk" appearing at the top centre of the picture resembles the Russian word for "silk".

Below, the letters "nit" alone mean nothing, but *with a soft sign after the "t" they spell the Russian word for "thread".*

Also the word "shelokhnut" means "to stir" or "to move" and the ending is conjugated, for example, in "listók ne shelokhnyotsya" ("not a leaf is stirring"). It may be associated through its sound with words derived from shelest ("rustle") as well

as with the suppleness of silk used in phrases such as "on stal kak shyolkovie" ("he has grown supple").

The top right hand section of the picture shows part of a square resembling a shop window with lettering, in the middle of which a hat is displayed. The letters "shl...ya" are an abbreviation for "shlyapa" ("hat"). Not only is the word dislocated but so also is the representation of the hat in which the crown has been shifted diagonally and to the left to form a neat pattern with the lettering. The top hat was often used as a symbol of bourgeois capitalism and a hat with a broken crown was later used in Eisenstein's film "Strike" to represent the downfall of a capitalist factory owner. The word "shlyakh" meaning "road" can be completed out of the same dislocated letters. Another combination of the sets of letters printed in black "shl...nit...ya" suggests the sounds of "shlyopnut" ("to slap") which is used in various senses such as "shlyopnutsya" ("to tumble").

The publication "The Donkey's Tail" and "The Target" included as well as this adaptation of the Rayonist manifesto two essays on art. S. Khudakov's essay on literature described most of the futurist writers as "renovated decadents" and Kruchenykh was accused of borrowing his ideas from Larionov. The only poet to be highly praised by S. Khudakov was Anton Lotov¹ whose book "Rekord" ("Record") illustrated by Goncharova is described as appearing in only 40 copies. Mention is made of a group of Rayonist poets (unknown). In these poems words are described to be like rays in different directions from the basic horizontal printed sentence; letters of one bigger word form smaller words and Cyrillic and Latin alphabets are mixed. Kruchenykh accused them in the "Three" of plagiarism.

1. Lotov, may have been a pseudonym, for Zdanovich.



The work of the Rayonists is more rationalist, abstract, even geometrical than that of Kruchenykh. The Rayonist poets themselves seem to be an invention of Khudakov (whose identity is also a mystery). Zdanevich also assisted Larionov in creating the new aesthetics of vsechestvo ("everythingism") based on these ideas in 1913. This attempt by a group of artists to claim leadership in avant-garde poetry emphasises the close relationship between avant-garde painting and literature at that time. Khlebnikov's Bitvy 1915-17 gg novoe uchenie o voene ("Battle of 1915-17 A New teaching about War") published in St. Petersburg in 1914 presented his ideas of historical mathematics. The preface was written by Kruchenykh presenting Khlebnikov's calculations as the essence of futurism.

Only we, now futurists, now Arians, venture to take into our hands the handle of historical numbers and to turn it as if they (the numbers) were a coffee grinder.

In Kamensky's "ferro-concrete poems" the visual aspect eliminates all others. One was exhibited with Larionov's group exhibition "No. 4". Kamensky described his work displayed as an exhibition. It was called "A fall from an Aeroplane" and consisted of a 4 lb metal weight with a face painted on it, hanging from a hook about an inch away from a sheet-iron background. Below fragments of an aeroplane were suggested in a pool of blood (minium). The spectator was supposed to pull the corner of the painting then the iron sheet was struck producing a noise like thunder. Mayakovski explained to the spectators that it was not a painting but a "gay game" portraying Kamensky's thunder of joy at having

survived the crash.

Apart from the discovery of the Georgian painter of sign boards Niko Pirozmanashvili, Zdanevich is credited with writing a now unavailable declaration in which an American shoe is proclaimed superior to the Venus de Milo. He also published together with Larionov a manifesto in the Christmas issue of the popular magazine "Argus" in 1913 under the title "Pochemu my raskrashivaemsya" ("Why We paint our Face"). Face painting was introduced by Larionov before the Hylaeans, merging art and life as pure decoration with letters, numbers and hieroglyphs on cheeks. After 1914 Zdanevich emerged again in 1918 to organise the Zaum group in Tiflis.

Another article included in the "Donkey's Tail" published in 1913 signed by Goncharova, K. Zdanevich, Alexandr Shevshenko and others was entitled "Rayonists and Futurists". It was probably written by Larionov since several sentences paraphrase short passages of Luchism.¹ Part of this article reads as follows:

We declare the genius of our days to be: trousers, jackets, shoes, tramways, buses, aeroplanes, railways, magnificent ships - what an enchantment - what a great epoch unrivalled in world history.

We deny that individuality has any value in a work of art. One should only call attention to a work of art and look at it according to the means and laws by which it was created.

Hail to our rayonist style of painting independent of real forms, existing and developing according to the laws of painting (Rayonism is a synthesis of Cubism, Futurism and Orphism).

We declare that copies never existed and recommend painting from works of the past. We declare that painting is not limited by time.

We are against the West, vulgarising our Oriental forms, and rendering everything valueless. We demand

1. P. Vergo: Op.cit.

technical mastery. We are against artistic societies which lead to stagnation. We do not demand attention from the public, but ask it not to demand attention from us.

The style of Rayonist painting promoted by us is concerned with spatial forms which are obtained through the crossing of reflected rays from various objects, and forms which are singled out by the artist.

The ray is conventionally represented on the surface by a line of colour. The essence of painting is indicated in this - combination of colour, its saturation, the relationship of coloured masses, the intensity of surface working. The painting is revealed as a skimmed impression, it is perceived out of time and in space - it gives rise to a sensation of what one may call, the fourth dimension, that is the length, width and thickness of the colour layers. These are the sole symbols of perception which emerge from this painting which is of another order. In this way painting parallels music while remaining itself. Here begins a way of painting which may be pursued only following the specific laws of colour and its application to canvas.

From here begins the creation of new forms, whose meaning and expression depend entirely on the degree of saturation of a colour-tone and the position in which it is placed in relation to other tones. This naturally encompasses all existing styles and forms of the art of the past, as they, like life, are simply points of departure for a Rayonist perception and construction of a picture.

From here begins the true freeing of art; a life which proceeds only according to the laws of painting as an independent entity, painting with its own forms, colour and timbre.

In a letter to A.H. Barr, Larionov explains his ideas of Rayonism. The implications at the opening sentence are that it is not a comprehensive system or technique:

Rayonism is not a theory that would make it possible for an artist who based himself on it to obtain any other results² than those of schools of art that preceded it.

In a manner similar to that of the impressionists he had divorced his physical perception of objects from the real or

-
1. Mikail Larionov "Rayonists and Futurists" The Donkey's Tail from pp.31-100 (C.A.Munster Editions, Moscow 1913, cm.28.5 x 22.5. Extract translated into English in Camilla Gray: The Great Experiment. pp.124-25, and described as a Rayonist manifesto. See P. Vergo: Op.cit.
 2. M. Larionov: "A Propos du Rayonism (copy of a letter addressed to A.H. Barr, Jr., Paris, 1930).

functional identity of objects:

The artist can only obtain new sensations or receive these sensations fully without distracting his attention by the contemplation of an object or any idea whatsoever. The artist should concentrate entirely on the distribution of the colour, on its structure, on the thickness or thinness of its layers of paint. For example he should be able to examine and appreciate in a portrait of Rembrandt, the background, the¹ light, or the shadows, to take them each, separately.

Though the tendency toward non-objective or abstract painting is more obvious than with the impressionists, the same delight in "painterliness" or the expressive use of paint for its own sake persists in the work of Larionov. Malevich was to reject even that sensuousness for a greater economy derived also to some extent from Cubism:

Rayonism tends to find the possibility of explaining not only philosophically but also physically the phenomena of ecstasy and of aesthetic pleasure before a touch (*touche*) of colour, before this or that technical procedure in painting, before luminosity or opacity of tone, before artistic handwriting, etc.... It is the analysis of the utilisation of a certain order of sensations, which does not enter into any type of representation, plastic or otherwise. For example a wall, painted all of the same colour may appear to be of a different tone, according to the manner in which the colour has been placed (usually the problem of colour and of technique are considered to be two different things). To determine the changes of tones only by the changes in technique is one of the problems of Rayonism, taking into consideration not only the difference of the surfaces, but also the radiation proceeding from its thickness, for example the Chinese and Japanese lacquers polished in a special manner, put on in layers at intervals of several years, give a radiation different from lacquers executed in a more rapid way. It is also the explanation of different impressions that one experiences before pictures by Cézanne, and before the pictures of his contemporaries.²

To the purely visual elements which Larionov claims through Rayonism he adds a suggestion that psychology of

1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

colours may be formulated into laws in the hope of arriving at the causes of the spirit of the time.

Establishing the law of the reactions of colour, in that which concerns the phenomena of nature or the phenomena of art, for radiations already exist in reality and also imagined radiations (in other words not yet realised) and agreeing with the radiations of thought is also a problem of Rayonism. It is the study of a law which determines contemporary creation (fashion, elegance, which is transmitted like a contagion).¹

His description expresses similar sentiments to those of the Italian Futurist painters and Delaunay in a Bergsonian view of the world and of matter, also in the transferring of emotions and in rays of all kinds:

Rayonism studies radiance as a principle in itself; it studies all radiation in general: radio, infra-red, ultra-violet rays, etc.... and also the forms which in their innumerable transformations and their reciprocal penetration can justify vis à vis logic and allow to the artist every form having no meaning and no definition. For example a sphere at the centre of which is placed the eye of the spectator. This spherical form, for the spectator would be infinite and can mean nothing neither by its volume nor by its size and, despite everything, it will be a form. If this spherical surface is transparent its colour would be changing. In reality it is the earth in rotation in a translucid atmosphere which seems to us to be blue.

Given the opportunity I would be able to explain to you in a more detailed manner this hypothesis and perhaps certain ideas on Rayonism will seem to you clearer.

The pictorial rhythms used by Marc representing the rhythms he felt in nature were partly derived from Hodler's rhythmic parallelism and the arabesque of Jugendstil. Marc aspired to make these communicating currents that govern nature perceptible in his art. Marc by 1911 had detached colour from nature giving it a radiance of its own. Cubism, Orphism and Italian Futurism aided him in giving form to

1. Ibid.

invisible forces. In this immeasurable interrelationship of artists and movements Larionov's words give a clue to his own position, particularly with regard to Marc:

In all, Rayonism admits the possibility of a definition and of a physical mesuration (mesuration) of love, of ecstasy, of talent, these spiritual qualities of the lyric and epic state. Rayonism has in view the definition of all which is to do with the domain of the sentiments, proper to the human and animal world, in their rapports with world called non-organic. The visible radiation of the light is material and measurable; the invisible radiation (radio-activity, etc....) in many cases is measurable also; the radiation of a human being or animal (that may perhaps be called intuitive or sympathetic) would also be measurable if one could establish the correlation between the radiation already measurable and the radiation not yet measured that is to say the radiation of thought.

Thus if the radiation of thought may be placed in the same category as all other radiation, that is to say the shining or non-shining, a correlation between them has only to be found to be able to define these qualities. It is obvious that these qualities are only measurable with the aid of movements more rapid than the movements of light.

As you see this is not what Leonardo had in view. In any case, I only knew his theories well after the publication of my small treatise on Rayonism. On the other hand I knew before Einstein published it, that light is material and that rays also exist materially. Like many others, I knew that because this hypothesis of material light already existed during Newton's time. He preferred the theory of luminous vibrations.

Rayonism opened the way for the transference of aesthetic problems from the purely philosophical domain to the physical. This transference brings many things to light and gives them a new explanation and above all, it cancels the value of time by this fashion, as well as describing the style of various arts in a new way. This transference gets even closer to the foundation of the arts but disassociates them completely in their subsequent development in increasing so to speak their dis³/₄ similarity. The more important the dissemblance, the more the development we observe is interesting. The study of this process justly constitutes the deployment of the aesthetic, separating the raw wool from its thread and distaff.

I add a few lines of Apollinaire written at the time of my exhibition and that of Goncharova in June 1914. He was a learned man and I am glad to give you his opinions on Rayonism; he does not find any links with Leonardo's theories.

One must recognise that to propagate Rayonist ideas, which as far as I am concerned have been the result of a number of observations, the connection with Leonardo's

ideas could only be advantageous; it would cover certain difficulties which had sprung up during their acceptance in arranging everything in habitual traditionalism which yields an antecedent for every new artistic theory - The Middle Ages for mysticism, Greece for Neoclassicism, the thirteenth century for the Pre-Raphaelites etc... Leonardo would be a marvellous grandfather. But what can one do? Rayonism cannot claim Leonardo because the words: visual rays, force rays and radiance rays are not one and the same thing, and have nothing in common apart from their consonance and no other significance. In the domain of artistic creation, phenomenon cannot exist completely separated. The classification of these phenomena can only be made according to the most characteristic traits and tendencies for one or another of these phenomenon. Thus symbolism existed even before the symbolists, but predominated in their work. Realism existed outside realism, but realist tendencies are predominant in their creation. From this point of view, its quite possible that in Rayonism, which is occupied with resolute and characteristic problems for itself, are found things which are not particular to it alone.

Sir, I beg you to accept my best wishes, and to forgive this boring letter, but it is rather Madame Barr's fault, who had the imprudence to express the wish that I should write on this subject, to certain extent the fault lies with her. Would you be kind enough to send her my very respectful wishes.¹

A.J. Barr's letter to Larionov is not available therefore the context of his question concerning Leonardo can only be conjectured. Discussion on optics, perspective, movement and the nature of rays appear in Leonardo's notes. Concerning the eye he wrote:

These are the miracles-forms already lost mingled together in so short a space,² it can recreate and reconstitute by its dilation.²

Leonardo discussed the functioning of the eye generally and gave an explanation as to why rays of luminous bodies become larger as they are farther removed from their source.

1. Ibid.

2. The notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci, arranged, rendered into English and introduced by Edward MacCurdy, 2 Vols. Jonathan Cape, London, 1938, Vol. I, Chp. IX 'Optics', under the chapter heading on p. 231.

He considered that rays came from an object in the form of a pyramid and reflected in the eye as a convex mirror.¹ But his concern with optics was not only with perception of static objects. After stating that

Nothing can be seen that does not transmit its image through the air²

he proceeded with a chapter entitled "Perspective and Movement" to discuss certain effects which the Italian Futurists, Orphists, Rayonists and others may appear to have introduced into their paintings as effects of rapid movement which leave behind coloured after images:

Every body that moves rapidly seems to colour its path with the impression of its hue. The truth of this proposition is seen from experience; thus when the lightning moves among dark clouds the speed of its sinuous flight makes its whole course resemble a luminous snake....

This is because the organ of perception acts more rapidly than the judgement.³

Later in the text he made a closer analysis of the nature of after images left behind moving bodies. Though his explanation is based on a more harmonious view of the external world than the twentieth century philosophers, the discussion and the title recall preoccupations of the early twentieth century and the ideas referred to in Barr's letter to Larionov were most probably in the following passage entitled:

"Of the Nature of the Rays formed by the Images of Bodies and their Intersection":

The straight line of the rays which transmit through the air the form and colour of the bodies whence they proceed does not itself tinge the air nor can they tinge one another at the contact of their intersection, but they only colour the place where they lose their existence because this place sees and is seen by the

1. Ibid., pp.233-256.

2. Ibid., p.252.

3. Ibid., (A 26), p. 256.

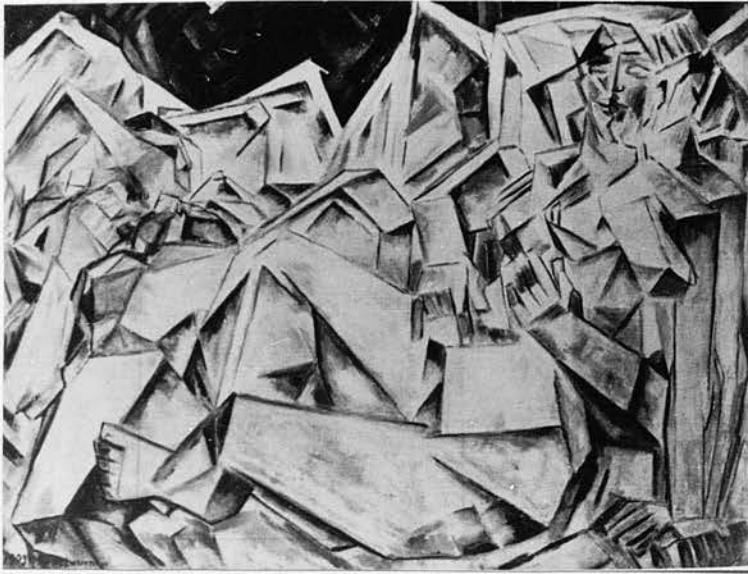
original source of the rays, and no other object that surrounds this original source can be seen from the place where this ray is cut off and destroyed, leaving there the spoil it has carried off. This is proved by the fourth, on the colour of bodies, which says the surface of every opaque body shares in the colour of surrounding objects; so we conclude that the place which by means of the ray that carries the image sees and is seen by the source of this image is tinged by the colour of this object.

The sources of Larionov's Rayonist style were diverse and indicate the vanity of dogmatic attributions of the influence of one artist on another. Larionov could have unwittingly collected ideas from a number of sources and attributed the inspiration for Rayonism to Turner because, as an old master, he seemed sufficiently remote from the rivalry of contemporary artists.

Like Kandinsky, Larionov did not remain fixed in his new style but soon continued with partly primitive and part Rayonist forms of varying emphasis. A similar variety of styles was also current in the work of Russian Futurist poets at this time. Illustrating their poetry gave Larionov and Goncharova the possibility of using images from previous paintings and of trying out new ideas in freer styles. They displayed an ability to accompany the varying styles of a poem with the equivalent pictorial forms. Though many of the literary movements that began around 1910 were short lived some numbers of their limited editions still survive.

1. Windsor MSS R 209 quoted in Ibid., p.274.

Figure 291. M. Larionov: The Beach
1907-12. Oil on canvas 87 x 120 cms.



Figures 292 and 293. M. Larionov:

The Glass, 1909-11, oil on
canvas, 104 x 97 cms.,

New York, Solomon Guggenheim Museum.



Figure 294. U. Boccioni: Forces of a Street,
1911, oil on canvas, $39\frac{3}{8}$ x $31\frac{1}{2}$ ins.
(100 x 80 cms.) Hängi collection,
Basle.

Figure 295. M. Larionov: Lights in the Street,
1912, oil on cardboard, 28 x 40 cms.
Gallery Beyeler, Basle.

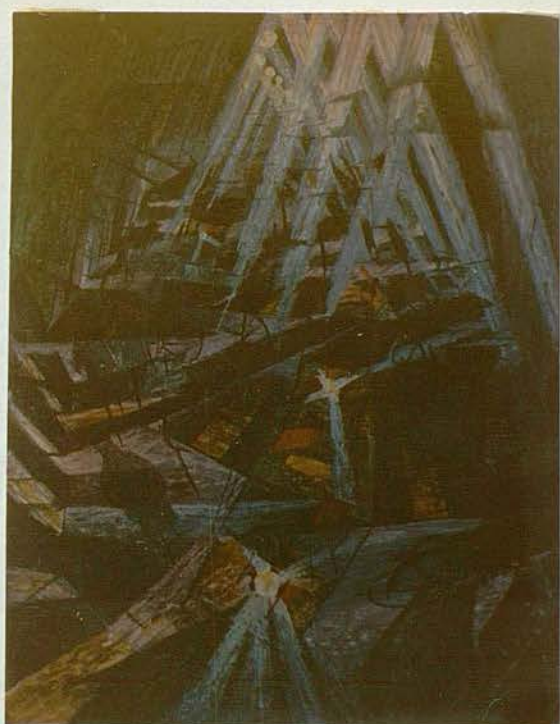


Figure 296. Giacomo Balla: The Street Light - Study of Light (1909) Oil on canvas, $68\frac{3}{4}$ x $45\frac{1}{4}$ ins. The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

To study the forms and colors for this painting, Balla observed the light for hours on end, night after night. He went blind temporarily, and to regain his eyesight was forced to spend several days in a darkened room. The chevrons, radiating from the electric lamp, are painted in the colors of the spectrum. He later uses the same "rainbow" colors for his "Iridescent Interpenetration" studies. Marinetti wrote the Futurist Manifesto "Let's Kill the Moonlight" in 1909; Balla, in his painting, has deliberately included the moon in the light sphere of the electric lamp as if to emphasize the triumph of electricity and progress.

Figure 297. G. Severini: Spherical Expansion of Centrifugal Light, 1914. Oil on canvas, 36 x $28\frac{3}{4}$ ins. (91.5 x 73 cms.). Sidney Janis Gallery, New York.

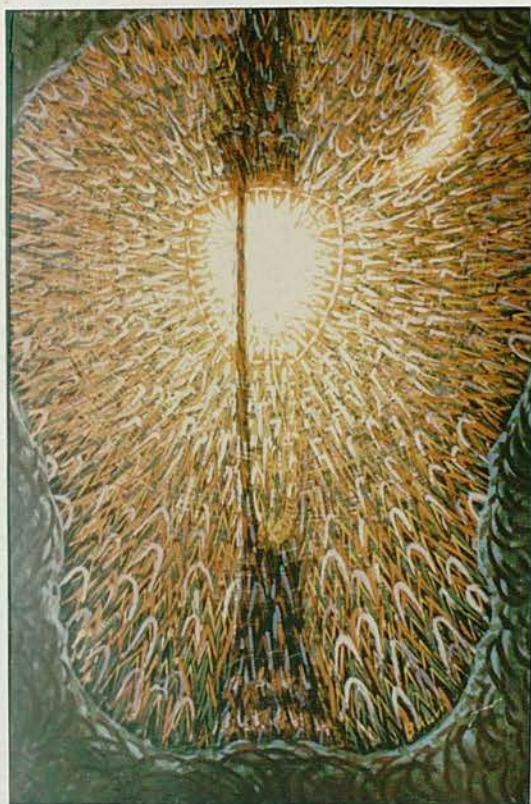


Figure 298. M. Larionov:

Woman on the Boulevard, c. 1911.

Private collection, Paris.

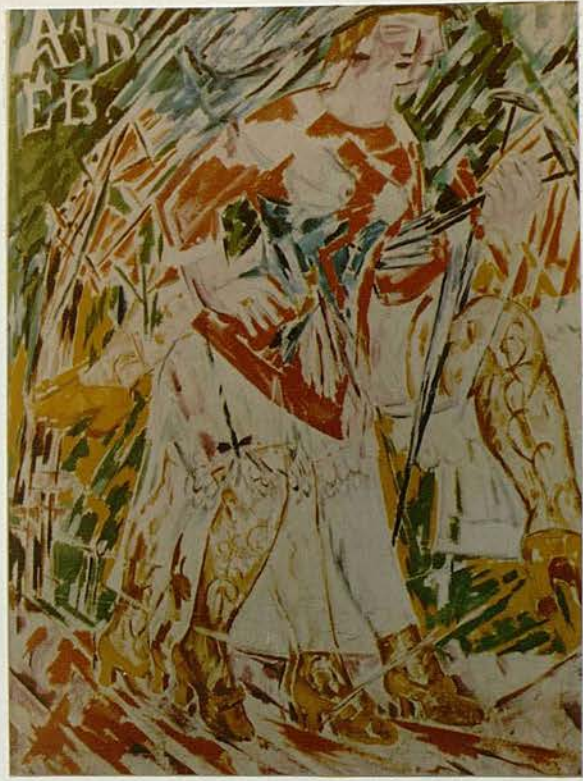


Figure 299. N. Goncharova: The Cyclist, 1912-13.





Figure 300. M. Larionov: Blue Rayonism, oil on canvas, 1912. $27\frac{1}{2}$ x $25\frac{1}{2}$ ins. (70 x 64.8 cms) (Also reproduced in the catalogue to the exhibition "Russian Avant-Garde 1908-1922" at the Leonard Hutton Galleries, New York, October 16 - December 18, 1971, page 23.

It was reproduced so that the artist's initials are at the bottom right of the canvas and entitled Portrait of a Fool.)

Figure 301. N. Goncharova: Cats.

Figure 302. Franz Marc: The Tiger, 1912.

Bernhard Koehler Collection, Berlin.



Figure 303. F. Marc: Young bull, 1912.
Pushkin Museum, Moscow.



Figure 304. F. Marc: Animals, 1913,
water colour,
Pushkin Museum, Moscow.



Figure 305. F. Marc: Tyrol, 1913-1914.
Staatsgemäldesammlung, Munich.

Figure 306. N. Goncharova: The Green and
Yellow Forest, 1912.





Figure 307. F. Marc: Horses, c. 1913.

Figure 308. F. Marc: Stables, 1913-14.
Oil, $29\frac{1}{8}$ x $62\frac{1}{4}$ ins.



Figure 309. M. Larionov: cover of
Oslinyi Khvost i Mishen
("The Donkey's Tail and The Target")
illustrated by Goncharova, Larionov
etc. Moscow, July 1913.

ОСЛИНЫЙ ХВОСТЪ И МИШЕНЬ



МОСКВА
1913

ТЕАТРО-ИМЕНИИ ТЕАТРА ДЕТ-
И МОСКОВСКОЕ РАБОТЪ

CHAPTER XII

EGOFUTURISM

Except for the work of Severianin, the poetry of the Ego Futurists is practically unavailable. Ties with earlier modern Russian movements are clearer than those of Hylaea. They introduced the word "futurism" to Russian literature and later most provincial imitations were of the "Ego Futurists". Igor Vasilyevich Lotarev (1887-1942) was the creator of Ego Futurism and published his poetry under the pen-name of Igor Severianin. He began by writing patriotic verse inspired by the Russo-Japanese War and influenced by Constantine M. Fofanov (1862-1911) and Mirra Lokhvitskaya (1869-1905) neo-romantic writers, often referred to as impressionists. Some of the titles of his poems seem to reflect this impressionist influence: "A sad vesnoi blagoukhayet" ("And the garden is fragrant with Spring"). In 1909 he published "Intuitivnye Kraski" ("Intuitive Colours") and in 1911 a volume with the more modern title of "Elektricheskie stikhi" ("electrical Poems"). This contained the poems "V Limuzine" ("In a Limousine") and "Kvadrat Kvadratov" ("The Square of Squares") in which all stanzas following the first employ the same words in all respective lines but placed in a different order. A musical quality and affinities with modernity were the chief aims. French words were adapted in "Ruchyi v Liliyakh" ("^rBrooks full of Lilies") published in 1911. The group was formed in October the same year and soon after it produced a manifesto followed by Severianin's brochure "Prolog-Ego Futurism".

In a glossary at the end of the same book the word Ego is defined:

Ego (Latin) "I"; the consciousness in man of the "I am I", or the feeling of I-am-ship. Esoteric philosophy teaches the existence of two Egos in man, the mortal or personal, and the higher, the divine or impersonal, calling the former "personality", and the latter "individuality".¹

Grael Arelsky (1889-), an astronomer whose real name was Stepan Stepanovitch Petrov, published his book "Goluboi Azhur" ("Blue Ajouré") privately in 1911. Containing much erotic and Egyptian imagery it was reminiscent of the late nineteenth century decadents. In 1925 he published a book of science fiction "Povesti o Marse" ("Tales from Mars") composed of three separate but interconnected stories, the last of which ends in a successful revolution of Martian working-men against their capitalist oppressors.

This group owed its publicity to the newspaper "Nizhigorodets" with which Ivan Vasilyevich Ignatyev (1882-1914) was associated. He had been a theatre and literary critic and in 1912 published a book of humorous sketches, parodies and stories written before his modernist period. Another member Ivan Lukash also known as Oredezh became an emigré novelist. His work was imitative of Walt Whitman and reminiscent of Mayakovsky. He began by publishing two issues of a newspaper containing essays on art and called "Peterburgskii Glashatai" ("The Petersburg Herald"). The first number appeared on February 12th 1912 and the second in March. Some of the articles displayed an acquaintance with Marinetti but Ignatyev later admitted it was a bit feeble. The Ego

1. Blavatsky: Ibid., p. 328.

publishing enterprise continued its activities bringing out Constantine Olimpov's "Aeroplannye poezy" ("Airplane Poesas") in 1912.¹

Vladimir Markov indicates a certain decadent snobbery about the group's activities. In Ignatyev's survey of Ego Futurist activities and theories "Pervyi God Ego Futurisma" ("The First year of Ego Futurism") he quotes the text of the "Doctrines of Universal Ego Futurism" printed as a leaflet in 1912:

1. Recognition of Ego-God (Union of two contrasts).
2. Finding (obrel) of universal soul (all justification).
3. Extolling Egoism as one's individual essence.
4. Limitlessness of artistic (iskusstvovye) and spiritual searchings (izyskaniya).²

Ignatyev considered that "the aim of every Ego-futurist is self-affirmation in the future" and that the basis of Ego-futurism is intuition. He regretted that Russian "universal ego-futurism" was constantly confused with "Italo-French futurism".

Olympov accused Severianin of plagiarism but as Severianin became famous he broke with the group, sealed the break with a rejection of ego-futurist urbanism and "being attracted by the primitive" he went to the country. Ignatyev continued as leader and in 1913 published six "almanacs" and began polemics with the Hylaeans. Ignatyev established the "intuitive association" which published the following "charter" ("gramota") in January 1913:

- I Ego-Futurism = the incessant striving of every Egoist for the achievement of the possibilities of the Future in the Present.

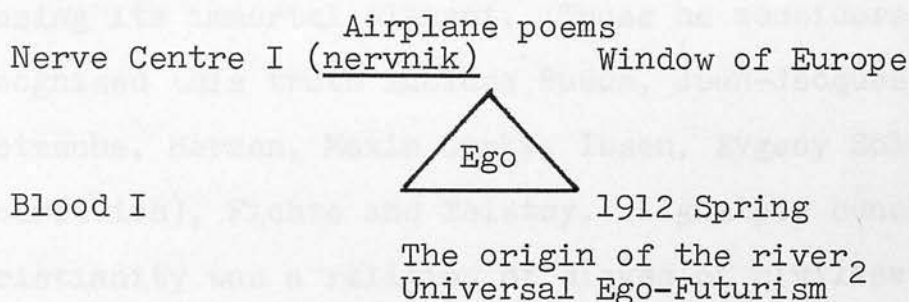
1. see V. Markov: Ibid., p. 69.

2. V. Markov: Ibid., p. 73.

- II Egoism = Individualisation, awareness, worship and praise of the I.
- III Man = Essence
Deity = Shadow of Man in the mirror of the Universe.
God = Nature
Nature = Hypnosis
Egoist = An Intuitionist
Intuitionist = A medium
- IV Creation of Rhythm and Word

Areopagus: Ivan Ignatyev
Pavel Shirokov
Vasilisk Guedov¹
Dmitri Kruchkov¹

Constantine Olimpov (Constantine Constantihovich Fofanov-1880-1940) never broke with the group and published in 1913 "Zhonglery Nervy" ("Nerves the Jugglers") which appeared at almost the same time as the seventh ego-futurist almanac Vsegdai ("The Always"). The first page contains a quasi cabbalistic chart, typical of Olimpov:



Immediately below Olimpov explained the origin of the term "Universal Ego-Futurism":

Immortality in Eternity plus "Alter-Ego" of Fofanov plus Futurism³ and - as a generalisation - Universal Ego-Futurism.

In his poetry Olimpov expresses a desire for madness, proclaims himself a genius, worships Fofanov and Lokhvitskaya,

1. V. Markov: Ibid., p. 75.

2.

3. V. Markov: Ibid., p. 75.

and glorifies aviation in poems such as "Shmeti" ("Bumble Bees"). His diction is characterized, as is that of Severianin and Shirokov, by a wide range of neologisms and foreign words; his metrics include both the old-fashioned anapests of the 1880s and some metric forms made popular by Severianin and he experiments moderately with dissonant rhyme. In "Troika v troike" ("A three in a three") he accumulates words with the root kolokol ("bell") and plays on different meanings of the word troika, the result being remotely similar to Khlebnikov's laughter poem. Other poems such as Interlyudiya ("Interlude") displays his attraction toward the occult.

In his essay "Ego-Futurism" published in "Zasakhare Kry", civilization is declared to be a mortal enemy of the self, erasing its immortal element. Those he considers to have recognised this truth include Buddha, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Nietzsche, Herzen, Maxim Gorky, Ibsen, Evgeny Soloviev (Andreovich), Fichte and Tolstoy. Ignatyev concludes that Christianity was a religion of slaves of civilisation and the city.¹

Vasilisk (Vasily Ivanovich) Gnedov (1890-) wrote some of the most radical work of this group notably "Gostinets sentimentam" ("A Treat for the Sentiments") and in his second book "Smert iskusstvo" ("Death to Art") he prophecies the extinction of the word in the future and its replacement by a highly organised intuition. Of the fifteen poems by Gnedev nine are one line poems, in one poem (No. 6) seemingly

1. V. Markov: Ibid., p. 78.

meaningless syllables have been used, in No. 9 a word is repeated three times, two poems consist of one neologistic word each and two other poems contain only one letter each. Page 8 which is also the back cover had only the title of poem number 15 "Poema kontsa" ("Poem of the End"). According to an eye-witness who attended one of his public recitals this poem "...had no words and consisted only of one gesture, the arm being quickly raised in front of the hair, then sharply dropped, then moved to the right."¹

Ignatev in his preface to "Death in Art" gives a different description:

He read (this poem) with a rhythmic movement. The hand was drawing a line from left to right and vice versa (the second one cancelled the first, as plus and minus result in minus). "Poem of the End" is actually "Poem of Nothing" a zero as it is drawn graphically.

But this was probably the description of a different poem.² He considered that the word however is only needed by people living collectively; but when everyone is transformed into an "individualised ego-self" there will be no need of words and the lost paradise of the past when man spoke only with God will exist once again.

Gnedov's book "Kniga Velikikh" ("Book of the Great") published in 1914 contained only "Poema Nachala" ("Poem of the First") and was technically one of the most traditional pieces by a member of the group. Shirokov's "Da Zdrastvuyet reklama" ("Long live publicity") however is about houses, street lights, crowds, and prostitutes and is written in accentual verse. This and other poems such as "Shopot"

1. Ibid., p. 80.

2. Op.cit.

stalnykh trub" ("the whisper of the steel stacks") and "Boi" ("The Battle") show the strongly urbanist tendencies consistent with western European and Russian plastic arts of this time.

Ignatyev's "Tretii vkhod" ("Third Entrance") was printed as a text interspersed with notes of music and angular symbols and combined word, colour, melody and movement. The futurist prose piece "Sledom za ..." ("Following the ...") used the stream of consciousness technique with fragmentation, sentences merging into one another without punctuation, or punctuated in unexpected places. The publication by Vsevolod Svetlanov "Simvolicheskaya Simfoniya" contains only one essay which discusses the synthesis of light and sound and gives a table of correspondences between musical tones and colours.

The seventh and biggest ego-futurist almanac contained sixteen pages and bore the neologistic title "Vsegdai" ("The Always-er"). In this Ignatyev accused the Moscow futurists of being indistinguishable from the Russian decadents and impressionists. Pavel Korotov from Kharkov contributed an intuitive essay in sixteen lines defending the idea of an ego-theatre, a theatre comprised of one actor within four walls, as opposed to the unnecessarily complicated form of conventional theatre.

The next almanac "Nebokopy" ("The Sky Diggers"), published in 1913, did not receive any contributions from Ignatyev but most of the poetry in it was by Vasilist Gnedev and made use of unpronounceable words, words not separated by spaces, words blended together with meaningless syllables, capital letters where miniscules are normal, absurd dates and typographical incongruities.

The ninth and last almanac "Razvorchennye cherepa" ("Shattered Skulls") 1913, included Ignatyev's "Opus - 45", a tree shaped vertical and horizontal lacing of words and the essay Muzyka slov ("Music of Words") by Vsevolod Svetlanov which dealt with fantastic word etymologies such as chelovek ("a person") - "chelo, ukrashennoe vekami" ("a forehead adorned with eyelids"). Sergei Bobrov, the future leader of the Moscow futurist group Tsentrifuga ("Centrifuge" see Figure 328), wrote the critical essay "Chuzhoi golos" ("Somebody Else's Voice") which contained the main features of futurist criticism. Something akin to the spirit of Italian Metaphysical painters lay in the juxtaposition of incongruities and love of coincidence. Ignatyev's sixteen page treatise Ego Futurism of 1913 may be considered an explanation and outline of the movement. Ego futurism was credited with a number of innovations such as movement of a theme in prose in works such as "Following the ..." as well as with renovating or completely ignoring verse in rhyme. It was also held responsible for "ego-prism" (individualism), "contemporaneity" (urban themes) and "mechanical quality" (illogical sequences like automatic writing).

Annensky does not analyze,¹ he does not evaluate, he gives himself to the work.

In 1918 he published the pamphlet "Sevodnyashnemu dnyu" ("For today") in which the primary futurist task destruction of the cultural past, was declared accomplished. But he condemned Mayakovsky and his friends for placing their talent at the disposal of the new master, Communism, claiming that

1. The Enchanted Wanderer (No.3)

the true task of Futurism was rebellion against all masters.

Khrisanf in "Perchatka Kubofuturisma" said that the Hylaeans were annihilating the old ways of creating poetry without discovering any new ones. The central figure of the Moscow Group the Mezzanine of poetry Vadim Gabriđevich Shershenevich (1893-1942) was known as an "imagist". He was the first and probably the only Russian Futurist who acknowledged Marinetti's futurism as the starting point and tried to create a Russian version along the same lines. Within a year he published a translation of Marinetti's main manifestoes into Russian followed later by Marinetti's poetry. Shernshenevich's book of poetry "Ekstravagantnye Flakony" ("The Extravagant Scent Bottles") appeared in Autumn 1913. He sings of the noise of boulevards, of the roar of automobiles, of street lights and skyscrapers. He invented new forms of rhyme, accentuated verse neologisms and foreign words and as a critic he wrote "Futurism bez maski" ("Futurism without a mask") subtitled "Kompilyativnaya introdutsiya" a book explaining Futurism to the public. In his opinion although Marinetti was the most important innovator his poetry was boring, and that he discovered our "dissolving" in city but not our "recreation". He denied that the Hylaeans were really futurist but places the St. Petersburg Ego Futurists nearer the mark. Mezzanine of Poetry lasted only about half a year.

The other leader of the group was zak (Léon Zack)¹ an artist who wrote poetry under the name of Khrisanf and criticism under the name of Rossiyan sky. He was born in 1892

1. See also Pierre Courthion's Léon Zack (Paris: Le Musée de Poche, 1961).

in Nizhy Novgorod (now Gorky) and studied literature at the University of Moscow. His book "Pirotekhnicheskie improvizatsii" ("Pyrotechnic Improvisations") never appeared.

Another member of the group, Rurik Ivnev (pseudonym of Mikhail Alexandrovich Kovolev) was born in Tiflis in 1893. After the revolution he joined the Imagists. In his only book "Plamya Pyshet" ("The flame is raging") he appears as an impressionist who caught the minute movements of his sick soul or the details of his surroundings but did not display genuine interest in verbal experimentation.

Constantine Aristarkhovich Bolshakov (1895-1940) wrote the book "Mozaika" ("Mosaics") 1911, and was influenced by Balmont. Bolshakov's second book published Autumn 1913 was illustrated by Goncharova and Larionov in a Rayonist manner matching the handwritten text. It was entitled "Le futur" (Figures 310-327) and was futurist though along decadent lines: It contained one long poem, written in a kind of free verse in which the main episode dealt with the appearance of a naked woman in a modern city arousing "the ancient Adam" in the city's crowd of males. Geometric forms were mentioned, such as a sunset at the beginning, to which the woman's body is later likened. The book was confiscated by the police. The publication consists of fifteen unnumbered pages lithographed on one side, being seven pages of neatly handwritten poetry alternate with illustrations, four by Goncharova and four by Larionov. The title, the name of the poet and illustrators appear in bold capitals of Latin lithographed on paper stuck to the top half of the front cover. The first illustration at the beginning corresponds to the description of the

triangular sunset and the lines that form the "golden section". Pointed rays break through curved surfaces suggesting the Pythagorean mysticism of the poem on the eve of geometric abstraction. The "Tables" (p. 376) and the "charter" (pp. 378-379) define the mystical approach in the poem which also suggests a cataclysm both theosophical and revolutionary.

The Mezzanine of Poetry published his third book in 1913: "Serdtsse v perchatke" ("A Heart Wearing a Glove") for which the cover, abstract in design, was by Goncharova. It contained drawing-room and boudoir poetry as well as the theme of aeroplanes and city streets, specifically of Moscow. Its direct connexion with French poetry was emphasised by the epigraph from Laforgue "Et celles dont le coeur gante six et-demi". Characteristic of the imagery were phrases such as "the roses of the eyes" and "I hung my coat on the moon" and the title of another poem "Gorodskaya vesna" ("A City Spring").

Sergei Mikailovich Tretyakov (1892-1939) spent his childhood in Latvia. The Russo-Japanese war inspired him and in 1913 he became a futurist. His first poems appear in Mezzanine publication. His book "Gamma-Luchi" ("Gamma rays") was never published but in 1919 "Zheleznaya pauza" ("the Iron Pause") containing the bulk of his poetry was published in Vladivostok. In 1913 he employed the subjects of urban life, a motor car ride, stall, factories, railways and construction. Though his technique is in general impressionist, his interior poems such as Press Pyuvar ("A Blotter") have an urban flavour:

A rocking chair of a pampered lady.
A sole has stepped on my poetry.
And everything is in reverse.

Ha,Ha! It rocks to the left, to the right
Is it not a drunken pendulum of a sober clock?¹

The style of writing as well as the subject matter also recalls the irrational imagery of the paintings of Burliuk and Chagall in which dislocated images are placed together with objects flying around in interiors. It still remained more lyrical than most Italian Futurist writing but had a similar atmosphere to the Metaphysical paintings of Carlo Carrà that date from 1916 after his rejection of Futurism.

While Italian Futurism was of interest to Russian artists and writers, they defended their own independence strongly and at no time was this more clearly expressed than during Marinetti's visit to Russia.

1. V. Markov: Ibid., p. 112.

Figure 310. Cover of "Lefutur" (Autumn 1913), a publication of poems by K. Bolshakov with illustrations by Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov. The title is lithographed on paper pasted on the cover. Another paper appears to have been removed from below.

Figure 311. The fly-leaf of "Lefutur" with a dedication in handwriting.

LEFUTUR

СТИХИ К. БОЛЬШАКОВА
РИС. НАТ. ГОНЧАРОВОЙ
И
МИХАИЛА ЛАРИОНОВА

Всего 36 с.

*Dessins de Natalie Gontcharoff
et de Michel Larionoff.*

*Амор
Шезами
Маринетти
М. Ларионoff*



Вступление.

Мы живем на грани впрямой...
 Каждый день зеленая земля,
 Утываясь в оконном закате, —
 Тень свободно вселенной корабля.

Слишком, чувствуем, как сеть обусиль,
 Как, под пальто заложив, канаты
 Упружишь, подним в лазурь крылья,
 Харуса, что на новинах солдатам пахнет...

И уже восторгом все объять,
 Дразнит запах страшного пути,
 И искривил пылаю землей заката
 Мужик, сладостно становится идти,

Скоро, скоро не слышно инаго,
 На новинах солдатам возлетит наш путь,
 И камешек знойного истому,
 Умирая, держит земля гробу.



Презрительный заката,
 Прямочувственный,
 У которого малый катет-прозрачный,
 А большой — в зелени и красном,
 Прямочувственный от интенсивной
 Алой и золотой
 Вонюшка в край мира, в край мира.

«А там кто?»
 Спросил дубок.
 Но не наше, не наше:
 Оборвался здох мира, окружился калюшью
 Утрам ало-янтаришью,
 В падень-калущью,
 А вверху-красиль, золотиль и зелениль;
 Ночью калюша петь,
 И петь чужого мира:
 Она растаяла в ночи.
 Мы живем!

Мы живем.
 В этот узкий мир,
 Сжатые радиоупругими пальцами,
 Жалко от нас по ногам,
 День тамшес, как бы пыльные,

Figure 316. The fifth page of 'LEFUTUR' with an illustration by Goncharova.

Figure 317. The sixth page of 'LEFUTUR':

Behind the multicoloured rings
 In this narrow world
 We learnt to love,
 When for the first time
 Having started up the world machine [motor]
 Of history
 Scattered [gushed forth] clear sparks,
 The triangular sunset when
 Squared
 It thrust into the edge of the world,
 And the world was surrounded by a ring.
 In the primeval paradise, Adam
 Moved his chest close to Eve's breasts,
 To the magnificently ripe and resilient fruit.
 Above all windows, on the narrow cornice
 A cat slinks, hardly touching...
 Above all the windows, don't look too close
 Your head will spin,
 We only love at night,
 When our world disappears,
 When all women are equally beautiful,
 When the prostitute is like a queen,
 And the look [gaze] which peers
 From the painted eyes . . .

Figure 318. The seventh page of 'LEFUTUR' with an illustration by Larionov showing a woman's face crossed with rays, a cyclist, the sign for '3 rubles' and the letters bl ya, possibly an abbreviation for 'blyad', a slang word for woman - ('tart', 'crumpet').

Figure 319. The eighth page of 'LEFUTUR':

[a continuation of the last line of page six]

... Like the gaze of that woman

Of whom dreamt

Alexander Alexandrovich Blok,

When the crowd pours out, into the darkness

Scattering dreams along the asphalt,

Towards the lamps

And in the circle of the silver

Of the electricity

Dropping stars from their glances

Of longing -

To live,

To live.

Everything flies away, like the quick bird,

Like an aeroplane over the earth,

And the machine of history having tapped out
[beaten out] page after page

Over the earth...

"It was night, and the tired bodies..." -

Vergil would have said ...

On the boulevards there were grey paths

(It was summer - they put out the lights early),

And the trees seemed green,

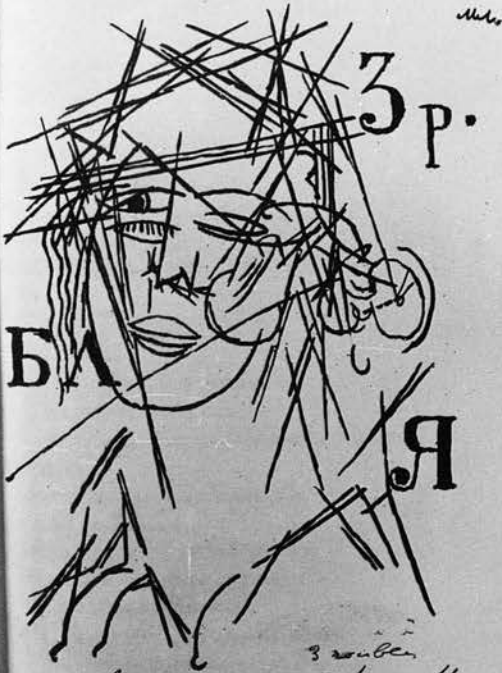
If you look at them from the window, from above.

But they were not green -

They were grey like the paths,



За разноцветными холстами.
 Вь стали зуркала миру
 Мы учились любить,
 Когда впервые моторы
 У станка мирового
 Истории,
 Застукали брызнули искрами,
 Преуспели закаты коды
 Прямоугольный
 Зарыве воздвигся в край мира,
 И мир окрестился холстами.
 Вь рано перевозанная Адам
 Гряде свою кь свинным чудилим приблидил,
 Кь пишмо-судилым, упродил плодами.
 Выше века окна, на зуркам картиниз
 Крадется хитка, камья оуба ...
 Выше века окна смотрит не на блуди -
 Закрывается галова,
 Мы любим только кино,
 Когда шлодет наш мир,
 Когда все жоничны одинаково красивы,
 Когда пражитутка похота на кораблю,
 И ира разрисованных глаз
 Смотрит в зорь,



Так у той женщины,
 О которой цедил
 Александра Александровича Блок,
 Когда летя талава,
 По асфальту разбрызгивать лотты,
 Вь темноту, кь фонарям
 И вь кручи серебра
 Электричества
 Бросить зблуди вь зурови
 Желанья,
 Тоби любить,
 Тоби жать.
 Все пражитает, какь быстрая лница,
 Какь аэроплань надь землей,
 И станокъ истории, выстукавь страници страница,
 Надь землей ...
 „Била ногь, и усталая тала ...“
 Скадаль бь Верилей ...
 На бульвароу били серны даражки
 (Било лето-свете змояла рано),
 А деревья карались зелеными,
 Если смотреть на наш вь окна, своросу.
 По они не били зелеными -
 Они били серны, кили и дорожки,

Figure 320. The ninth page of 'LEFUTUR' with an illustration by Larionov suggesting perhaps 'the world machine of history'

Figure 321. The tenth page of 'LEFUTUR':

Only a little darker.
 The white feather on the lady's hat
 And the red hat of the other
 Looked red and white
 Only because there is memory, and they wanted,
 Always for everything to be as one -
 They were grey -
 Our world had died for a night [at night],
 And the colours died with it.
 And on the boulevards, the squares and the streets
 Were herded together
 Prostitutes and men
 On this grey, like all, this colourless night
 Out onto the square came
 A woman
 Daringly naked in her walk,
 Kindling passion,
 Casting challenging [alluring] glances.
 And the streets were deadly blind
 Without cold and white lights,
 And only out of the windows of bordelloes
 Came sheaves of yellow light rays.
 And with an occasional red spot of light...

Figure 322. The eleventh page of 'LEFUTUR' with an illustration by Larionov.

Figure 323. The twelfth page of 'LEFUTUR':

[a continuation of the last line of page ten]

...That a dandy throws out into the darkness
From the tobacco of his pipe [specks of ash from
his pipe]

Lighting his pipe with a lighter with a clinking
chain

And here in the grey darkness,

Among the fashionable women and foppish strollers
The naked body plunged, like the triangular sunset,
Into the grey world of colourless people.

The dandies stopped in wonder

Lifting up their caps and bowler-hats -

But from somewhere, a far-away noise was heard.

And the movements of a woman were light and graceful...

Women, men, old people and children,

Spilling over [scattering] what had been forgotten
during many years,

As a thousand centuries ago

Adam fell on Eve's breast.

Over the day [light] of the earth, like a statue,
Stood silence,

A naked woman, squeezed by a wide open ring,

An advertising poster, the coming spring...

When the day flared up victoriously

Then on the squares

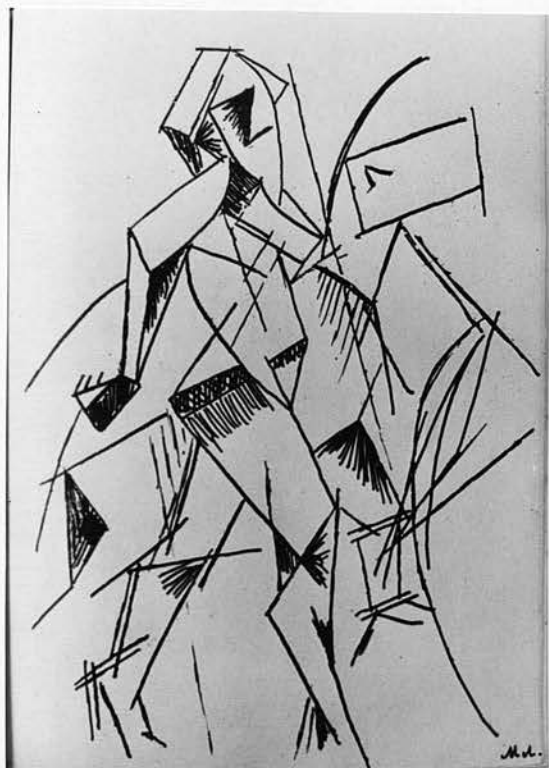
Lay a heap of dead bodies.

Frozen impotently in different positions

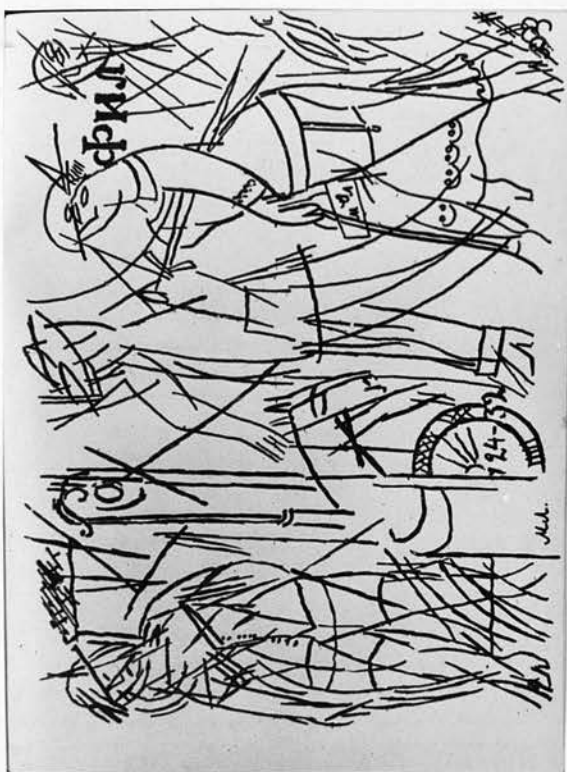
With hazy glances upwards [on high].



Только кешного темные.
 И блого перо на шпальте дали
 И красная шпальта другой
 Ходили красными и белыми
 Только потому, что есть память, и хотыли,
 Всегда твое было одно —
 Они же были сны —
 Умерь на ночь ниль мирь,
 Умерь вильсть сь ними крики.
 А по бульварам, площадям и переулкам
 Стадт стадились
 Проститутоты и муржонки.
 Вь эту студию, какь вьт, безкрасочно ного
 Вишла на площадь
 Женщина
 Дерзко начала
 Походкой,
 Распламяющей страсть,
 Хизда зовущие взоры.
 А чиници — мертвенно-салты
 Богу холодити и бьтлмаш окней,
 И бросают лишь только вертоты
 Изь окна сноты желтмаш мурсей.
 Лишь порой красновототу толкой



Франтъ какой-нибудь бросит вь мракъ,
 Закуривая зажигательницей сь брелкащей цупоткой
 Вь трубку табакъ.
 И вотъ вь этотъ мракъ сьловатий,
 Среди бродящихъ модницъ и хлыщей
 Возникло налов тьмо, какь трупчатий заката,
 Вь снотий миръ безудьветниаш людей.
 Останавивались франты удивленно,
 Приподнимаемая сапотой и котелли —
 Но откуда-то слышалась шумъ отдаленний,
 А движения женщины были плавно-легки ...
 Женщины, мужчины, старшии и днети,
 Расплеснуво забитое, тапившее многими годамъ,
 Какь надаръ таму тысали стальной
 Припала юв свинимъ грудямъ вьдамъ.
 Надъ оцемъ земли, какь отателъ,
 Стала тишина,
 Начла женщина, ханцамо развѣтчимъ статаея,
 Вькламъ плакать, грядущая весна ...
 Тогда побядно день разгорьтлся,
 Но на площади
 Лежала грудя мертвмаш тьла.
 Вь радничъ почасъ безогонно застмилъ
 Сь мутнымъ взоромъ, направленнымъ вь высъ,



Они казались миллионами линий,
 Которые во время направления между собой слагались.
 Казалось: исчезли все краски,
 И разрушилось вихвое кольцо,
 И талки торкали линии переплеты и свядки,
 И не пестрело ни одно
 Цветное пятно.
 Такие шли дни и недели —
 Разрушался дремлющий мир,
 Изъ трепетов рождалась заплата войны дремлющий миром в востан
 Витти — создавался новый мир.

слова писаны в мае тысяча девятисот девятнадцатого по Р.Х. года Константином
 Леонидовичем, рисунок сделан в августе тысяча девятисот тринадцатого по Р.Х. года
 Натальей Игоревной и Михаилом Андреевичем, шрифты обложки и текста исполнены
 в августе тысяча девятисот тринадцатого по Р.Х. года Иваном Федоровичем.



Figure 328. Front cover designed by Goncharova
for the magazine Tsentrifuga
("Centrifuge").

Vtaroj Sbornik Tsentrifugi.

Kniga otpechatana...dla Knigoizdatel
sva... Tsentrifuga,

[Centrifuge, Vol. II. Printed for the
publishing firm of 'Centrifuge'
in an edition of 181 numbered and 19
named copies] Moscow, 1914.

MARINETTI'S VISIT TO RUSSIA

Part I. 36. F.
TSENTRIFUGA



The date of Marinetti's visit to Russia, early in 1918, is well established by the Russian records. It was the only visit of the kind to be regarded to have occurred. The Russians are aware of the fact that the world by means of Marinetti's presence was a new world of significance. The first manifesto was published in 1918.

Marinetti's visit to Russia described an early visit. It was about September 1910, the Russian poet and writer Vladimir Mayakovsky, great friend of the artist, met him in St. Petersburg by Kuznetsov.

Marinetti's visit to Russia was a significant event. It was a visit of a kind that was not to be repeated. The Russian records are clear on this point. The visit was a visit of a kind that was not to be repeated.

CHAPTER XIII

MARINETTI'S VISIT TO RUSSIA

The date of Marinetti's first visit to Russia is disputed.¹ Nikolai Khardzhev claims that Marinetti came once only to Russia, early in 1914 and that he was violently attacked by the Russian Futurist artists and poets. After this visit, the only one established beyond doubt, Marinetti is reported to have said that:

The Russians are false Futurists, who distort the true meaning of the great religion for the renewal of the world by means of Futurism.²

Marinetti's presence between 1909 and 1914 would have only been of significance as an evangelising tour, as his first manifesto was published in the Russian press soon after it appeared in Figaro in 1909.³ An Italian account of his relations with Russia describes an early visit.⁴ It states that in about September 1910, the Russian painter Liubov Popova visited Marinetti, greeted him on behalf of her fellow artist Nikolai Kulbin and a few months later he was received in Petersburg by Kulbin himself; on the 25th of November,

-
1. see Graziella Lehrmann: De Marinetti à Mayakovski, Zurich 1942.
 2. Nikolai Khardzhev. "Mayakovsky i Zhivopis" in Mayakovsky; Materiali i Isseldovania, Moscow, 1940 and Russkoye Slovo No. 84, Moscow, 1914.
 3. Randa, Vecher St. Petersburg, 8th March 1909.
 4. Catalogue of the exhibition Il contributo russo alle avanguardie plastiche.

Marinetti gave his first lecture in the hall of the "Society of Free Aesthetic" with a reading from the manifesto "Foundations of Futurism" and declamations of free word (Le Parole in Libertà) in French. Among those present were the Burliuk brothers, the Cézannist painter T. Shevchenko and the Armenian poet Hrand Nazarianz, who had accompanied Marinetti on his journey to Moscow. The same year Nazarianz published a book on Marinetti in Constantinople¹ (see Figure 329). On the 2nd of December while in Moscow, Marinetti, accompanied by Kulbin is said to have visited the "Knaves of Diamonds" group exhibition and to have met Goncharova and Larionov who made a primitivist drawing of the poet's face, after which he is alleged to have met I. Morosov the collector and A. Purishkievich a member of the Duma who accompanied him to Petersburg to introduce him into the circle of the Tsarist court where he was received by the Grand Duchess Vladimira.

In Petersburg between the 5th and the 8th of December 1910 the same account states that he met Khlebnikov at Kulbin's house and on the 9th at the cabaret club "The Stray Dog" where Vassily Kamensky, the Burliuk brothers and Marinetti recited their free verse. Dora Vallier considers that if Marinetti was in Russia in 1910, it was entirely in a private capacity, without having had the opportunity of contacting the Russian artistic milieu.² Though evidence of his presence in Russia in 1910 is disputed there is little doubt that in Moscow on

1. Hrand NAZARIANTZ F.T. Marinetti and his Futurism, printed by Onnig Parseghian, Constantinople 1910 (in Armenian) referred to in Il contributo...russo...

2. Dora Vallier: "L'Art Abstrait en Russie" in Cahiers d'Art, V, pp. 33-35, 1960.

the 27th of January 1914 Marinetti read a speech in French dedicated to the "Position of Futurism" in the Hall of the Great Auditorium of the Moscow Polytechnic Museum. Marinetti concluded by noting the rise of the Muscovite Futurists and mentioning their "exhibitionism".¹ In reply to Marinetti the daily edition of "Nov" ("New") published an article on the 30th of January in which the dispute between Tasteven and Larionov was mentioned and the intention of throwing a "bad egg" was attributed to the latter. It was as a result of this article that Mayakovsky inspired the group of futurist litterati "Ghilea" (The Hylaeans) with the pronouncement published in Nov on February the 5th 1914. Nov, February 15th 1914 took up the argument again of the non-influence of Italian Futurism on that of Russia, nevertheless admitting a "literary parallel" between the two movements. This "Open letter to Nov" was signed by Mayakovsky and by another two Futurist writers and painter, Vadim Shershenevich and E. Bolshakov as well as A.N. Tolstoy and other friends who had received Marinetti at the station at Moscow.

On the 28th of January 1914 in the "Hall of the Little Auditorium of the Polytechnic Museum", Moscow, Marinetti delivered his second Moscow lecture dedicated to "Futurism and its development" and on the First of February 1914, Marinetti delivered a lecture at St. Petersburg introduced by Kulbin. During the proceedings Khlebnikov tried to distribute pamphlets published in collaboration with Benedikt

1. From a chronological account in "The Voice of Moscow" of the 28th of January, 1914, quoted in Il contributo Russo alle Avanguardie Plastiche.

Livshits, but he was prevented from doing so by Kulbin. The pamphlets accused the Petersburg and Muscovite groups of having fallen passively in admiration at Marinetti's feet.

On the 4th of February Marinetti gave another lecture in the Kalashnikov Exchange. After the final applause Marinetti posed for a historic photograph of the group. Included in the group was Benedikt Livshits, who had countersigned Khlebnikov's pronouncement in the little manifestoes distributed on February the 3rd. An evening of Futurist poetry took place about the 8th of February at the cabaret-club "The Stray Dog". Those who took part besides Marinetti included Marasco, Kulbin, Khlebnikov, Livshits, and Puni. Olga Rosanova and Liubov Popova were also there.

In the concert hall of the Swedish Church of St. Catherine, Benedikt Livshits and Arthur Vincent Lurié organised a "conference debate" entitled "Our reply to Marinetti" on the 11th of February. Marinetti had returned to Moscow from St. Petersburg. Participants included Nikolai and David Burliuk, Kruchenykh, Matyushin, Pyast, Khlebnikov and others. Livshits limited himself to maintaining the arguments of Mayakovsky on the independence of literary Russian Futurism from that of Italian Futurism, radiating from the typically "oriental" components. Lurié was opposed to the art of noises, inaugurated by Luigi Russolo, a "Music of interference, the superior chromatism and chromo-acoustics". The theory of Lurié was to be applied the same year in Paris by the painter Daniel V. Baranov-Rossiné who constructed his "Optophonic Piano", an instrument, for chromo-visual concerts.

Khlebnikov and Livshits firmly resisted Marinetti. Livshits' memoirs present a detailed description of Marinetti's stay in St. Petersburg ("Polutoraglazi strelets"). He was critical of Marinetti, considered him to be passé and his theories to be uninteresting. Livshits declared: "We have never had a Michelangelo". Marinetti said Italian Futurists had, in addition to creating neologisms, destroyed syntax, used verbs in the infinitive only and abolished adjectives and punctuation. Despite all Italian innovations, the connection of the logical subject and predicate remain untouched, to which Livshits replied "You wage war on individual parts of speech and never go beyond etymology" adding that it was not possible to destroy syntax by that method.

During the two lectures delivered on February 11th, "Shared aspects of Italian and Russian Futurism" by Livshits and one on "Italian Futurist music", Livshits stressed Russian superiority, stating that Italian Futurists presented "new canons in all fields of art whereas Russians shunned formulas" and that West and East had two different systems of aesthetic vision, showing parallels with Persian, Chinese and Japanese art. The main ideas of his lecture first came out in a leaflet manifesto which he published in Russian, French and Italian at the beginning of 1914. Signatories included Livshits, Lourié and George Yakulov who had just returned from Paris, where "Simultaneism" was the leading trend at the time, both in poetry and in painting. Livshits was sceptical about Cendrars and Apollinaire's recent experiments and Yakulov considered that Robert Delaunay had stolen his ideas. They

therefore decided to write a manifesto: "We and the West". In this manifesto Europe was declared to be in a state of artistic crisis; interested in oriental art but unable to understand the East. European art was also described as archaic, incapable of developing and was creating aesthetics for a non-existent art. Among Yakulov's demands was one for a "negation of conical construction as trigonometrical perspective".¹ By this he meant the classical western tradition of optics which had developed Alberti's perspective in the Renaissance organising and expressing space by means of a series of lines which enclosed and unified the composition and structure of pictures in a harmonious way. The cubists had attempted to reverse this system but relied on rules which were related to that system. This tradition of conical construction and trigonometric perspective was alien to primitive artists as much as the use of light and shade. It was alien to folk art and native traditions of rural Russia and to the "Primitivist" spirit of reviving these forms into a new art.

Marinetti's visit emphasised the differences between Italian Futurism and Russian Futurism and how they differed among themselves. Russian and pre-war Italian Futurism was disintegrating but Marinetti's visit aroused interest in Italian Futurism among the Russians.

Another lecture by Marinetti was given at the "Society of Free Aesthetic" in Moscow on the 13th February on the subject "Futurism as a Unitary Movement of Artistic Revolution".

1. The French version was sent to Apollinaire and appeared in "Mercure de France" CVIII April 6th 1914, pp.882-883.

David Burliuk and Mayakovsky intervened at the reunion and Marinetti replied to him ironically accusing him of exhibitionism. David Burliuk had painted polychrome signs and carried a wooden spoon in the pocket of his jacket, while Mayakovsky wore a yellow shirt under formal clothes.

In Petersburg, Kruchenykh, who had in 1913 composed the words of "Victory over the Sun" in Zaumist free verse edited his first "Continuous Poem" "Postoyannaya Poema" ("Little Paper Nest - a sequence of word sounds"). It took the form of a small volume with separate polychrome and semantically interchangeable pages; some bearing no texts, others presenting words arranged in various ways as well as lithographs by Olga Rosanova and by Kruchenykh. One of the pages is entitled "F Rays".

A number of Russian publications on Italian Futurism followed (see Appendix XXIII), and a large number of Futurist publications appeared in Russia at the beginning of 1914: "The Milk of Mares" (early 1914) illustrated by the Burliuks and Alexander Exter, edited by David Burliuk, who only knew of Italian typographic experiments by hearsay. Khlebnikov wrote of coast and continent man and praised the eastern direction of art in fairly nationalistic poems.

The next miscellany was "Futuristi Rykayushchi Parnas" ("Futurists Roaring Parnassus") St. Petersburg, January 1914. In addition to works by those who contributed to "The Milk of Mares" one can find two posthumous poems by Guro and the work of Petersburg artists such as Ivan Puni, who also designed the cover (Figure 330), Pavel Filonov (see Appendix XXII) and Olga

Rozanova. The book was published with money supplied by Puni's wife. Oddly enough the book was confiscated by the committee of Press because of the alleged pornography of Filonov's illustrations. Only ten books were saved. A table of Russian letters with their corresponding sounds appears at the end.

Roaring Parnassus was an attack on the rest of contemporary literature. Nearly half of Roaring Parnassus contained more than fifty poems by David Burliuk. A more interesting contribution was made by Nikolai Burliuk in his "Mystery" entitled "Kovcheg vesny" ("The ark of Spring") consisting primarily of graphic accounts of Petersburg cityscapes, which are followed by country landscapes and a few "on the road" poems, with images based on railway travel. Mayakovsky's two poems follow the manifesto. "Nate" ("Take this") starts in a barber's shop. Kamensky uses oriental imagery. One poem is an inverted pyramid formed through dropping one letter from each line.

For "The First Journal of the Russian Futurists" Moscow, March 1914, the list of prospective contributions included Aksenov, Ivnev, Kulbin, Marinetti. Among the artists who took part, or agreed to do so, were the Burliuk brothers, Malevich, Matyushin, Yakulov, Exter also Fernand Léger. In David Burliuk's speciality "Railway poems", he indicated the movement of the train with a snake like curve in the block of the printed text as well as many anti-aesthetic elements.

V. Markov considered the most original poetic contribution to be by Kamensky's six poems, incorporating oriental motifs,

aviation, Gypsy, coarse language and new typographical devices. "Ferro Concrete" poems were especially interesting.

Khlebnikov's "Razgovor Olega y Kazimira" ("Conversation between Oleg and Kasimir") was a short dialogue in which the law of the quintuple repetition of a sound is proclaimed for poetry, and the special nature of the first sound in a word is emphasised. Khlebnikov says that the names of all continents begin with the letter A, which, he considered, made one think that in the proto-language "A" denotes dry land.

Burliuk and Shershenevich's polemics with Marxists and Liberals are interesting. He called his enemies Asians including Belinsky, Pisarev, Chernyshevsky the 19th-century critics among them.

"Gramoty i deklaratsii russikikh futuristov" "Charters and Declarations of Russian Futurists" appeared as a long scroll in the first half of 1914 in St. Petersburg and contained four re-prints of previous futurist documents. The remaining pieces, two manifestoes, were by Kulbin and Gnedev. In the first manifesto written in short note like sentences, Kulbin first stressed the constructive meaning of the Russian avant-garde. His second manifesto "What is the Word" subtitled "The Second Declaration of the word as Such" again stressing the importance of "the letter" calling it "the flesh of the word" and assigning colours to consonants (red = R; yellow = zh; blue = s; green = Z; grey = Kh; and black = G). In it Kulbin says that every vowel has its musical pitch but all these aspects are secondary when compared with the exclusively verbal ones. This use of sound has affinities with many other experiments of that period

especially L. Russolo's "I Rumori del Linguaggio" (*This is a section from "The Art of Noise"*, published in Milan in 1913. See Appendix XXIV).

The twenty page pamphlet by David Burliuk, Galdyashchie "Benua" i Novoe Russkoe Natsionalnoe Isskustvo ("The noisy Benois and the New Russian National Art"), consists of an imaginary dialogue between Benois and himself. In Moscow from May to December 1914, Mayakovsky wrote in the newspaper Nov on the arts describing art as free play. Writing was a nationalistic activity in the opinion of Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh, inspiration was drawn from "the native primeval word and from the anonymous Russian song." He also stated that "The nervous life of the cities requires quick economical abrupt words...It is for life that we need words; we do not recognise useless art". The sentiment is reminiscent of the later group like Lef, utilitarian art against art for arts sake. But while the work of Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh may be compared with that of the Italians in some respects, their inspiration came from more remotely primitive, esoteric and mystical sources. Likewise the visual arts in Russia had diverse sources and though some of Malevich's works resembled the western European innovations of Matisse, Severini and Léger at various times, they only prepared the way for his Suprematist innovations which like the Zaum verse of Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh achieved spiritual and abstract ends.

ՀՐԱՆՆԱԳՐԵԱՆՑ

Գ. Թ. ՄԱՌԻՆԵՒԻԿԻ
ԵՒ
Ա. ՊԱՆՈՍՅԱՆՍՈՒԹԻՒՆԸ

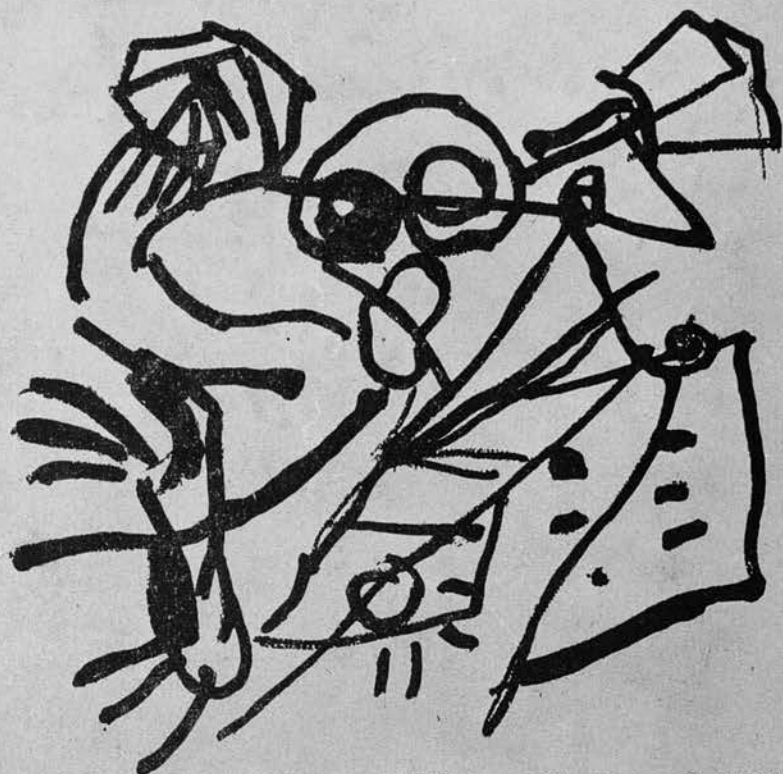
1910

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ
Կ. ՊԵՏԻՍ

Figure 329. Front cover of the publication in
Armenian of Hrand Nazariants:
F.T. Marinetti and His Futurism
(19 x 13 cms, 40 pp.
6 illustrations in black and white,
printed by Onnig Parseghian,
Constantinople, 1910).

Figure 330. Cover designed by Ivan Puni for
Futuristy: Rykayushchi Parnas
("Futurists: Roaring Parnassus")
consisting of poems by Nadezhda and
David Burliuk ("Milker of Exhausted
Toads"), B. Livshitz, Kamensky,
Mayakovsky ("Take That"), Kruchenykh,
Khlebnikov and I. Severyanin;
drawings by the Burliuks, Puni,
Rozanova and Filonov.
Typography on white, grey and brown
paper, St. Petersburg, January, 1914.

ФУТУРИСТЫ
РЫКАЮЩЕЙ ПАРНАСЪ



ДЪЯТЕЛИ КНИГИ: СТИХИ: БУРЛЮКЪ Б. ЛИВШИЦЪ ПГОРЪ Б. ГУРО (Ъ)
Н. БУРЛЮКЪ КАМЕНСКІЙ МАЯКОВСКІЙ А. КРУЧЕНЬХЪ В. ХЛЪБНИКОВЪ СЪВЕРЯНИНЪ
РИСУНКИ: Д. БУРЛЮКЪ ИВАНЪ ПУНИ В. БУРЛЮКЪ ПАВЕЛЪ ФИЛОНОВЪ
Музыкальный ключъ: ЕЛАЧИЧЪ. О. РОЗАНОВА

CHAPTER XIV

CUBO-FUTURISM AND ZAUM

In 1913 members of the Hylaea group became known as "Cubo-futurists" and by the end of 1914 Mayakovsky explained: "Newspapers gave us the name of Futurists". Henceforth in the eyes of the audience any avant-garde art tended to become associated with Futurism.¹ Both the Burliuks were going through a Cubist phase in their painting at that time and the Hylaeans were allies of the "Union of Youth", a largely Cubist group (see Appendix XXV). There was much discussion of Cubism in Russia in 1913. The book "Printsipy Kubisma" ("Principles of Cubism") by Alexander Shevchenko, a member of the "Donkey's Tail" group was published in Moscow in 1913 (see Appendix XXVI). The same year his book "Neo-primitivism" and two translations of Gleizes and Metzinger's "Du Cubisme" were published, one in St. Petersburg by E. Nizen and another in Moscow. "Futuristy, Gileya. Dokhlaya luna" was the first collection in which the group assumed the name "Futurist". The main item in the book was B. Livshits' "Ozvobozhdenie slova" ("Liberation of the Word"). Livshits considered that the poet in his choice of words was influenced by:

... plastic affinity of verbal expressions, by their plastic valence, by verbal texture, by rhythmic problems and musical orchestration and by the general requirements of pictorial and musical structure.

1. It may have been the press that added "cubo" to the name of the Moscow Futurists because of the connection between Cubist painting and Moscow Futurist ideas. See V. Trenin and N. Khardzhev Literaturnoe nasledstvo II. 157. Quoted in Markov, ibid.

Livshits defined a new concept of poetry which was to be dynamic and directed towards a complete autonomy of the word and he realised the idea in poems such as "Teplo" ("Warmth"). Mayakovsky is closer to Italian Futurist painting in his poems Lyubov ("Love"), "Po Ekham Goroda" ("Along the Echoes of the City").¹ The intention is described as a transformation of the poet's soul into a cityscape. The book was illustrated by David and Vladimir Burliuk.

David Burliuk and Leon Zack were writers but are best known as painters. Futurist writers who had been professional artists include Guro, Mayakovsky, Bobrov and Kruchenykh and many of their literary terms were often borrowed from painting. Visual elements were added to poetry, words were included in pictures and Khlebnikov, Mayakovsky and Livshits often combined them to a point which made it difficult to classify a work as poetry or painting.

Vasily Vasilyevich Kamensky (1884-1961) is described in five autobiographies. He visited Turkey in 1902 and 1906 and Iran in 1906 and was impressed by the colour of those countries. Later he joined a travelling actors' company until he was persuaded to give this up by Mayakovsky. In 1905 he took part in the revolution as a member of the Socialist Revolutionary Party in Perm. After being jailed he moved to St. Petersburg to study agronomy. There in 1908 he became editor of "Vesna" ("Spring"), met the best known literary personalities and helped to sponsor new talent

1. The connections with Russolo's manifesto (Appendix XXIV) was traced by N. Khardzev in "Zametki o Mayaovskov" Literaturnoe Nastedstvo LXV (Moscow 1958) 419-420. See Markov. Ibid., p. 122.

including Khlebnikov.

In literature Elena Guro (Eleonora Gernikhova von Notenberg, 1877-1913) poet and painter seems to reflect the French Impressionist tradition in her outlook. She knew French poetry well and was influenced by German and Scandinavian literature. The first part of her book "Pered Vesnoi" ("Before Spring") is an impressionistic description of St. Petersburg through the day and then at dusk, by a person attracted into the open air and back again to her room to sleep. The story contains hardly any action but is made up of descriptions of random events, passers by and memories... "light thoughts which touch everything lightly..." The ephemeral atmosphere here is urban but she also admired nature and associated it with poetry. Elena Guro like Khlebnikov used a fragmented structure, was attracted to primeval freshness and pre-occupied with children's language.

Zaum (trans-rational language) is the most radical creation of Futurism. An early form of Zaum appears in some of Elena Guro's poems such as Finlandia in which she described the trees shuyat instead of shumyat (to rustle). The word was invented by her to imitate the sound of the leaves. She also imitated the sounds of the Finnish language in her poems. Her work was written for "momentary reading" and she illustrated it herself.

David Burliuk and Kamensky considered Russian Futurism to have begun in 1909. Italian Futurism is almost a year older but the origins of the Russian group are quite independent. None of the group had heard of the Italian variety in 1909. Kruchenykh and Mayakovsky dated Futurism

from 1912 and Livshits dated it from 1911. The Russian Futurists called themselves Budetlyane a plural form of Budetlyanin coined by Khlebnikov meaning a "man of the future". In 1912 when everyone else was using the name "Hylaea" for this group he insisted that "Budetlyane" must move towards the East where he considered the future of Russia to lie. He considered Severianin's phase to be a product of Foreign influences especially from Whitman and Verhaeren. The Ego-futurists did not deny connections with symbolism. Its final publication was "Eshafot Ego Futury" ("The Scaffold of Ego-Futura") 1914, and when Ignatyev died on January the 20th the same year the group disintegrated.

The main components of Ego-Futurism are the urbanistic theme, the philosophy of extreme individualism and poetic experiment. Valery Bruysov wrote in 1912 that Ego-Futurists wanted to give expression to the soul of contemporary man who was a big city dweller.¹ In any case Livshits had little patience with ego-futurist philosophy but saw capable poets among them.² Their formation had varied widely, for example Shershevenich had seriously studied Marinetti whereas Kamensky had switched from Rustic impressionism to composing "ferro-concrete poems".

It is possible to speak of a third period in the history of ego-futurism, a period connected with the "Enchanted Wanderer", a magazine first published while Ignatyev was still alive in the autumn of 1913. The last issue (No. 10) appeared at the beginning of 1916. Starting with No. 5 the

1. Russkaya Mysl No. 7, 1912, p. 20. Quoted in Markov, Ibid.
2. Benedikt Livshits. Polutoraglazyi strelets Leningrad 1933. Quoted in Markov, Ibid.

magazine began to designate itself officially on its cover as Ego-futurism. It stressed that Ego-futurism was a continuation of the decadent movement started at the beginning of the century and was crusading for a return to that movement. The editor was Victor Romanovich Khovin.

Khovin's attitude towards the members of Shershevich's futurist group in Moscow which called itself "Mezonin poezii" ("The mezzanine of poetry") was favourable. Khovin considered Marinetti to be a real Futurist and rebel, while the Russian Futurists were too fond of applause and preferred teasing to a real war. Khovin who edited "The Enchanted Wanderer" arranged public discussions and even considered opening his own literary cabaret. Poetic stars were Kruchkov and Severyanin. In his critical essays Kruchkov praised Severianin whose career "...changeable as city noise, is, like a demimondaine's whims...intoxicated by the liqueur of modernity" (No.1).¹ Khovin tried to establish "intuitivist criticism" which was to be irrationalist and the critic Innokenty Annensky was greatly praised in this magazine for having similar qualities.

One of the editors of Sadok Sudei was Guro's husband Mikhail Vasilyevich Matyushin (1861-1934). He was an artist *and* a musician and _____ also wrote articles on the subject of colour, translated Du Cubisme by Gleizes and Metzinger into Russian and was interested in driftwood forms. As a composer he was interested in quarter-notes and the possibility of introducing them into his music. He published the

1. Markov, ibid., p. 99.

second "Sadok Sudei"; "Roaring Parnassus" and "The Three" (see Figures 331-335) as well as some books on individual futurists, including Guro and Khlebnikov. He usually published under the imprint "Zhuravl" ("The Crane") and illustrated some of his work.

The Futurist collection "Troe" ("The Three") was published by Matyushin at the beginning of 1913. The cover (Figure 332) and four lithographed illustrations were by Kasimir Malevich. The "Three" were Khlebnikov, Guro and Kruchenykh and the book was dedicated to the memory of Guro. Matyushin wrote:

The days are not far when the conquered phantoms of three dimensional space, of the illusory, drop-shaped time, and of the cowardly causality...will reveal before everybody that they really have been all the time - the annoying bars of a cage in which the human spirit is imprisoned.

Kruchenykh attempted to prove that the word has been in chains in being subordinated to meaning. Futurists devised free, transrational and universal language - the word is broader than its meaning...As new artists discovered that movement creates convexity and vice versa, or that incorrect perspective creates the fourth dimension, so

Futurists have discovered that incorrect structure of sentences brings about movement and the new perception of the world. For this reason the Futurists destroyed grammar and syntax. Then he undertook a typology of poetic irregularities which he divided into grammatical and semantic, then the importance of dissonance and "primitive coarseness" in art attributed to the influence of African art was discussed.

Towards the end Kruchenykh attacked Italian Futurists whose devices seem to him childish ("endless ra-ta-ta"). He compared them with Maeterlinck, accused them of coarseness, cynicism and impudence. It was here that the word zaumnoe (transrational) was first uttered: one of the most original parts of Futurist creed and gave rise to the group of poets 41⁰, from 1918 to 1919. The cover originally designed partly with lithographic chalk has the simplified forms of a figure drawn in the tubular and primitivist style of Malevich's paintings of that time. The lettering is carefully arranged in a curving formation and around the head of the figure in a semi-circle. The lettering is designed to match the style of the figure and to use a device of sdvig ("shift" or "dislocation") and breakages in the shapes of letters. Page 9 of the "Three" (Figure 331) contains a lithograph bounded by a line, inside which parallel lines, diagonals and curves fill the square format with crowded and dynamic arrangements. The illustration though influenced by the Italian Futurist technique of representing movement is more formal and geometric. The movement of figures is suggested and in the foreground the jolting of a cab or tram is indicated by dividing the wheels into separate conical shapes and dislocating the shapes according to the direction of the movements.

The illustration on page 51 of the "Three" (Figure 333) shows a woman reaping. This also is divided up geometrically to have the effect of the spars of a wheel spaying out from the centre. The particular movement of a woman reaping is expressed by the disposition of the lines and curves as well

as shaded shapes and edges arranged in a slightly checkered formation. The drawing on page 81 of the same publication (Figure 334) is copied from Malevich's own painting "Head of a Peasant Girl" (1912) and the drawing on page 83 (Figure 335) is almost non-representational in appearance, being composed of circles, horn shapes, ray-like lines and shapes resembling a comma or a treble clef similar to the one that appears on the lower part of the cover design. There is a greater range of tone in these shapes than other illustrations in this book and several shapes fade to one side like his yellow suprematist painting 1917-18 (Figure 419). Cyrillic letters, numerals, fine line drawings resembling small wheels and figures are also suggested. In some ways the general effect is a little like that of a landscape by Paul Klee.

The method of depicting objects in motion employed by Malevich comes close to being stylised to the point of abstraction especially in his illustration for "Vzorval" entitled "Simultaneous Death in an Aeroplane and at the Railway" 1913 (Figure 254); the illustration glued on the cover of Slovo Kak Takovoye and entitled "Reaping Woman" (Figure 336); illustrations for Troye, 1913 (Figures 331, 333, 335) but to a lesser extent his painting "The Knife Grinder" (Figure 400). A similar subject to Malevich's "Simultaneous Death..." is shown in Goncharova's painting of about 1913 "Aeroplan nad Poездom" ("Aeroplane over Train"), (Figure 388).

but the spirit of Malevich's work is also very much like that suggested by Gino Severini in his manifesto entitled "The Plastic Analogies of Dynamism - Futurist Manifesto 1913" and published in Rome in September-October 1913. It begins:

We want to enclose the universe in the work of art. Individual objects do not exist any more.

We must forget exterior reality and our knowledge of it in order to create new dimensions, the order of which will be discovered by our artistic sensibility in relation to the world of plastic creation.

We will express in this way artistic emotions which are not only related to a particular emotional background but united to the whole universe; for matter considered in its effects encloses the universe in an enormously vast circle of analogies which start with affinities or resemblances and end with contrasts and specific differences.

Thus the sensation aroused in us by a real object of which we know the square shape and blue colour can be expressed artistically through its formal and chromatic complementaries, i.e. round shapes and yellow colours.

.

The spiralling shapes and the beautiful contrasts of yellow and blue, that are intuitively felt one evening while living the movements of a girl dancing may be found again later, through a process of plastic preferences or aversions, or through a combination of both, in the concentric circling of an aeroplane or in the onrush of an express train.¹

He later quotes from Marinetti's Technical Manifesto of Literature in order to point out analogies with painting:

"In order to give the successive movements of an object, one must give the chain of analogies which it arouses, condensed and gathered into a single quintessential word.

"In order to develop and gather up the most fleeting and intangible aspects of the subject-matter, tight nets of images and analogies must be woven so that we may cast them into the mysterious ocean of phenomena."

.

1. see Futurist Manifestoes, edited by Umbro Apollonio, (Thames & Hudson, Ltd., London 1973), pp. 120-121.

With the interpenetration of planes and the simultaneity of environment, we have been able to render the reciprocal influence of objects and of environmental vitality of the subject (intensity and expansion of the object and environment);¹

The last part of the manifesto discusses the stylisation of different kinds of speed:

Speed has given us a new notion of space and time and consequently of life itself. The plastic art of our time must therefore be characterised by a stylisation of speed which is the most immediate and most expressive manifestation of our modern way of living. Naturally what we have said in regard to motion in general is equally true with regard to speed, in other words the important thing is not to represent the speeding motor car but the speed of the motor car. In the interests of identifying the work of art to the greatest possible extent with modern life I consider it desirable that just as we rejected the nude in our first manifesto of Futurist painting the human body; still life subjects and rural scenes should be rejected as centres of emotive interest. For it is my opinion that a complex of realistic and dynamic elements such as aeroplane in flight + man + landscape, speeding tramcar or motor car + boulevard + traveller or underground railway carriage + station posters' + lights + crowd etc. and all their qualitative prolongations and specific differences constitute infinitely vaster and more interesting source of emotion and plastic lyricism.

It was also in 1913 that the 15 page pamphlet written by Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh "Slovo kak takovoe" ("The word as such") appeared, illustrated by Malevich and Olga Rozanova, being a mixture of manifesto and verse. The book began with a proclamation of two contrasting principles of true futurist poetry:

1. As if it were written and read (smotrelos) in the twinkling of an eye! (Singing, splash, dance, throwing down of clumsy structures, forgetting, un-learning). (This was the approach of Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh and Guro).
2. As if it were written with difficulty (tugo) and read with difficulty, more uncomfortable than

1. Ibid., p. 122.

blackened boots or a truck in a drawing room.
 (D. Burluk, Mayakovski, N. Burluk, Livshits).¹

Poetry from Pushkin to the Symbolists was derided as effeminate. Kruchenkh stated that:

The futurist poets (budetlyanskije rechetvortsy) (like to use) chopped words, half words and their whimsical intricate combinations (transrational language).²

with Declaration of the word as Such the pamphlet of August 1913, private language as well as common language dissonance was permitted:

DECLARATION OF THE WORD AS SUCH

4. Thought and speech cannot catch up with the emotional experience of someone inspired; therefore, the artist is free to express himself not only in a common language (concepts), but also in a private one (creator is individual), as well as in a language that does not have a definite meaning (is not frozen), that is transrational. A common language is binding; a free one allows more complete expression...
5. Words die, the world stays young forever. An artist has seen the world in a new way, and, like Adam, he gives his own names to everything. A lily is beautiful, but the word "lily" is soiled with fingers and raped. For this reason I call a lily "euy" (pronounced in Russian approximately "ehooee"), and the original purity is re-established.
2. Consonants create a national everyday atmosphere; vowels, on the contrary, a universal language...
3. A verse presents, unconsciously, a number of series of vowels and consonants. These series are un-touchable. It is better to substitute for a word one similar in sound, rather than one similar in idea...
1. New verbal form creates a new content, and vice versa.
6. Introducing new words, I bring a new content, where everything begins to slide (shift)...
7. In art there can be unresolved dissonances - "something unpleasant for the ear" - because there is a dissonance in our soul, which resolves the former (i.e., the unresolved dissonances in the art)...

1. Markov: Ibid., p. 129.

2. Markov: Ibid., p. 129.

8. All this does not¹ narrow the art, but rather adds new areas to it.

Malevich's lithograph entitled "zhnitsā" ("Woman reaping") was glued on to the front cover of "the Word as Such" (see Figure 336). Though this "reaping woman" resembles the illustration that appeared in the "Three" during the same year it is a different version of that subject. The lines drawn originally in a thicker litho crayon appear less mechanical and hard-edged. The shape of a sickle is suggested in the reaper's left hand and the heavily shod peasant feet are less solidly drawn.

Viktor Vladimirovich Khlebnikov was born in 1885 in the village of T undutovo (Astrakhan). Of his father he wrote:

My father, admirer of Darwin and A. Tolstoi, is a great connoisseur of the realm of birds which he has studied all his life.

His mother was a historian and in their travels, the family was encouraged to observe old Slavonic and oriental sources of Russian culture. He was always interested in living languages and in drawing. In common with the other Futurist poets his imagery had a plastic quality rather than the musical tendency of the Russian symbolists. He was at the faculty of physics and mathematics at Kazan University but later switched to biology. After a student demonstration he was imprisoned and expelled in 1904. In 1908 the stable life became unbearable for him and he got rid of all his furniture except for a table and a bed living thereafter without many possessions. The same year he met Via cheslav Ivanov and joined him in St. Petersburg. He began to study

1. Quoted in Markov: Ibid., pp.130-131. Shortened version of original text.

Sanskrit and old Slav. In 1909 he met Kamensky then in 1910 Mayakovsky and Burluk. Little of his early writings are preserved but a few fragments in prose dating from 1903 or 4 are imitations of Russian folklore. Works of 1905 already show the influence of Russian Symbolists. In 1908 he was transferred from Kazan to St. Petersburg to take up Slavic studies and it was then that he became acquainted with literary groups. Serge Makovsky, the somewhat conservative editor of Apollon could not accept Khlebnikov's poetry nor even Blok's.

Everything seemed slightly "dislocated". The familiar metres were not destroyed but words were used not quite correctly; in fact the famous motto of "the best words in the best order" was abolished and replaced by the principle of "the wrong word"... clichés looked new and fresh and additional meanings were created by sheer addition, stringing those fragments without any attempt at traditional composition... lines that sounded conventionally poetic were freely mixed with "prosaic" conversational passages. Rhyme was over rich...¹

Khlebnikov had also studied painting and in 1912 made collages and free word "Zaumist" pictures.

At that time the poets were concerned with noting the words of popular and folk songs. Benjamin Goriely described how in Kharkov at the corners of the street, the blind "bandourists" sang popular songs and accompanied themselves on the old stringed instruments. These patriarchal singers were surrounded by intellectuals who noted down every word of their old forgotten poems. Goriely wrote of a strange group that he noticed while passing among them:

...four or five persons with long hair, dressed in yellow and violet blouses, faces painted geometrically in triangles and in blue or red squares.²

1. V. Markov: Ibid., p. 13.

2. Benjamin Goriely: Les poètes dans la révolution Russe Gallimard, Paris 1934, pp. 44-45.

Khlebnikov head of the futurist group in Kharkov edited their first review "7 and 3" with Shengeli published in 1915.

Goriely said that Khlebnikov was of Tartar origin, hairy, always in rags and never remained in the same place. One of his views was that words possessed an autonomous and organic life of their own:

The word has a double life. Now it grows like a plant and produces a mass of sonorous crystals, then the beginning of the sound lives its own life and the part concerning reason lives in the shadow; now the word gives itself up to the service of reason; the word ceases to be "omnipotent" and absolute, the sound becomes "name" and carries out the orders of reason in a docile way. Now reason obeys sound, now pure sound obeys pure reason. It is a struggle of the two universes, struggle of two powers which always follow each other to the heart of the word and which give a double life to language: two circles of shooting stars.¹

Khlebnikov went much further than Byely and Balmont in his interests in irrational language, enquiring into charms and conjurations of languages of magic, words of the sacred languages of paganism such as those Goriely quotes: "chagadam, magadam, vygadam, piz, paz, pazou" rows of syllables where reason does not intervene and which are the transrational language ("zaum") of popular speech.

Khlebnikov's ideas differed from the Futurists'. When the Russian literary avant-garde influenced by Italian Futurism talked of "free words" (parole in libert ) it was thinking mostly of the syntax, of rhythm inspired mainly by the speech of the streets, elliptic phrases, whereas Khlebnikov's free word was freed from concept. The theory of the word with Khlebnikov was influenced by Asiatic especially Chinese poetry, by primitive and pre-historic languages and

1. Khlebnikov quoted in Benjamin Goriely: KA, 1960, p.12.

like the first Pan-Slavist, the Croatian *Yuri Krizhanich*, of the sixteenth century who created the Pan-Slav language. Khlebnikov's words are divided in linguistic layers as follows:

1. Number words.
2. Zaum language.
3. Recording of sound.
4. Creation of the word.
5. Decomposition of the word.
6. Foreign words.
7. The Dahl Dictionary (Dahl's academic dictionary).
8. Cruel words.
9. Gentle and caressing.
10. Oblique unison.
11. Full unison.
12. Twisting of the word.
13. Reversals.
14. Popular words.
15. Pan-Slav words.
16. Stellar language.
17. Rotation of the word.
18. Tempestuous language.
19. Mad words.
20. Secret language.

In "Zangezi" (see Figures 354, 686 and 687) Khlebnikov accounted for seven "levels of word" (1909-1912):

1. Recording of sound language of birds.
2. Language of the gods.
3. Stellar language.
4. Zaum language - level of thought.
5. Decomposition of the word.
6. Phonetic recording.
7. Mad language.

In his work on "The Creation of Velimir Khlebnikov" Nicolas Stepanov, who belonged to the formalist school of criticism considered that the great variety in the division of language into functions and types is so complex that it demands a separate study if one wishes to demonstrate the manner in which Khlebnikov takes from it.

Khlebnikov is one of the first poets who tried to discover the mother language in the vocabulary of the sorcerers, magicians and chamans. Already in 1848 a book by P. Loukachevitch entitled Spell Trouble or the Sacred Language of the Magicians, Chamans and Priests discussed the slavophile theory of the word:

The words which are directed by the reason in our language are found in unlimited quantity in our chronicles, in the three principle Russian dialects and in other Slav languages.¹

The Soviet critic Kornei Tchoukovsky discussed the Zaum language but he considered it to be concerned with inferior forms, with pre-language, pre-culture and pre-history and he attacked the Futurists for choosing as future poetry the most ancient forms of language.²

Khlebnikov's linguistic list implies that the zaum language is for him only one of the forms of verbal expression, besides "the creation of words" of the "stellar language" and of "mad" and "tempestuous emotional" languages. The various aspects of zaum represented by Khlebnikov were partial methods in his work on the word. Kruchenykh and Kamensky followed Khlebnikov but did not improve on his work.

Nicolas Stepanov did not understand Khlebnikov's "language of birds" just as Kamensky had misunderstood it by interpreting it literally. Khlebnikov had been an ornithologist in his youth and had written various scientific works notably: "Songs of Forest Birds", "The Cuckoo in the Kazan Region", "Symbiosis and Metabiosis" and other works on these subjects.

1. Quoted Goriely, Ibid., p. 20.

2. Tchoukovsky: The Futurists, Petersburg, 1922.

His interests extended to alchemical conjurations and charms in the languages of primitive peoples of Asiatic Russia. He and Kruchenykh were interested in the verbal creation and religious sects of Russia, sorcerers of primitive peoples of Siberia where paganism was still alive.

An unlimited power is attributed to the incomprehensible word. ... The "zaum" language is a direct appeal launched in the twilight of the soul where it is the sublime moment of democracy in the life of the word and of the reason.¹

"Stellar language" is an alphabet of concepts translated by Khlebnikov into geometric terms. Tatlin staged Khlebnikov's "Zangezi" in 1923 at the "Museum of artistic culture" in Moscow presenting the alphabet of concepts in graphic and geometric forms:

- V - rotation of one point around another
- H - closed curve
- L - fall of the ray on the hard surface
- M - decomposition of a determinate quantity into an infinitesimal quantity
- N - absence of points, clear field.

Khlebnikov concluded

Thus from our point of view as thinkers, it becomes clear that the pure body of language, sound of the alphabet, is the name of various forms in space, the reenumeration of the cases of its life.

In speaking of the letter "L" he takes various Russian words which begin with "L" to prove that these words correspond in effect to his geometric formula to know that:

"L" - passage from the quantity of height, coinciding with the axe of movement, to the quantity of width, transversal to the trajectory of the movement.

He rejected words borrowed from western European languages and showed a preference for Asiatic borrowings. His rupture

1. Quoted, Goriely, Ibid.

with the west was complete after the 1905 revolution and he affirmed that Russia belonged to Asia. Many of Khlebnikov's experiments have affinities with those which were being carried out in western Europe. When he was first publishing in 1909 James Joyce was using words in a new and freer way and inventing verbs; Italian Futurists declaimed "Parole in Libert "; poets in Paris applied "simultaneism" to their works and Dadaists in various centres later continued to experiment with new combinations of non-representational language. None of them tried to penetrate the material world to reach a spiritual core or to take language to an extreme as did the Russians.

In his poem "Swan" published in 1910 Khlebnikov described the revolt of objects against man: "Man is the prisoner of the objects". In Khlebnikov's view the west was associated with capitalism, mechanisation of man and leveller of the individual. Khlebnikov tended to associate his poetry with plastic qualities rather than with music as did the Russian symbolists, but some of his lines suggest both:

Bo-bay-o-be, lips were singing.
 Vay-ay-o-me, eyes were singing.
 Pee-ay-ay-o, sang the forehead.
 Lee-ay-ay-ay, sang the figure.
 Gsee-gsee-gsay-o, sang the chain.
 So on the canvas of some similitudes.
 Beyond all spatial bounds there lived the FACE.¹

This displays a development from symbolist writing and affinities with the Primitivist and non-representational

1. Quoted in Modern Russian Poetry, an anthology with verse translations edited and with an introduction by Vladimir Markov and Merrill Sparks (MacGibbon & Key Ltd., Scotland, 1966), p. 329. Also quoted in a French translation in Goriely: Ibid., p. 158.

plastic arts which had themselves developed out of symbolist painting. This is specific in his association with Malevich whose work and ideas may also be traced back to similar philosophical sources.

1913 was a fruitful year for Russian Futurism: The first Futurist dramas appeared at the end of that year; public appearances increased; many hoaxes occurred and Kamensky the pilot returned to art once again. The first independent joint appearance of Russian Futurists took place in Moscow on October 13th at the Hall of the Society of Art Lovers. On October the 19th the Futurist Cabaret "Pink Lantern" opened. There Mayakovski read his poem Nate (take this); Kornei Chukovsky lectured and fantastic clothes were worn.

Khlebnikov's first "Futurist" works were written in 1908 before Marinetti's 1909 manifesto. That year Burliuk, Mayakovsky, and Kamensky visited seventeen towns together to spread propaganda for their movement. They visualised the world becoming one vast city with feverish rhythm. Nature poetry was obsolete and the word should no longer describe but express things by itself.

David Burliuk in a lecture entitled "Cubism and Futurism" tried to establish the genalogy of these two movements in the arts and demonstrated with slides of Cézanne, Van Gogh and the French Impressionists. Kamensky insisted on three elements of Futurism: intuition, individual freedom and abstraction. He also emphasised the essentially gay quality of Futurist poetry. He frequently stated that "Poetry is the nuptial of words".¹ After many failed events

1. Goriely: Ibid., p. 136.

his visit to Tiflis on March 27th and Baku on March 29th were more successful. Extraordinary effects were used on the tour, a grand piano usually hung upside down over the heads of the performers and simultaneous readings anticipated Western European Dada readings.

During the summer, the Futurists stayed in a Finnish summer resort called Kuokkala where Matyushin and Kulbin had Dachas. Soon they were joined by the avant-garde painter Ivan Albertovich Puni (1894-1956) and his wife. His apartment became a futurist salon.

Arthur Sergeyevich Lourié (1892-1911) though never describing himself as a Futurist, experimented with musical concepts in a way that might be regarded the musical equivalent in music. He planned to divide musical notes into even smaller sub-divisions than quarter notes.

Viktor Borisovich Shklovsky (1893-) a student of philology gave a lecture at the "Stray Dog Cabaret". He stated that he considered Futurism was doing work based on general laws of evolution of language.¹ His ideas *developed out of* those of Alexander Potebnya who believed that old forms in art were habitual and become dead. Later Shklovsky elaborated on "Making it strange" as the basis of art. He emphasised that the inner form of words was not experienced by those repeating the old dead clichés.

The end of 1913 was marked by Futurism's most ambitious venture in the area of theatre. It had its beginnings in

1. In Voskreshenie Slova (Resurrection of the word; St. Petersburg 1914) he summarises his idea. Quoted in Markov: Ibid., p. 141.

July when a group of futurists held a conference in Usikurko, Finland, which ^{was} called "Vserosiiskii Syezd Bayachei Budushchego" ("The All-National Congress of Futurist **B**ards"). Little is known about the proceedings and the participants in this congress, but soon a declaration appeared in the Petersburg press bearing the signatures of Kruchenykh,¹ Malevich and Matyushin announcing a decision of the congress to organise a Futurist theatre under the name of Budetlyanin. The production of plays by Khlebnikov, Mayakovsky and Kruchenykh was planned and during the same summer a theatrical journal "Maski" ("Masks")² printed an article by a certain B. Shaposhnikov: "Futurism i teatr" which expressed dissatisfaction with the existing theatre and acquainted the reader with Marinetti's ideas on the subject.

Mayakovsky published the first of three articles in a cinema journal,³ on the problems of film and legitimate theatre, a triumph symbolising the progressive victory of the machine over realism. This opinion was also expressed by Eisenstein and certain western film makers.

The Lithuanian, Markov, was an important member of the "Union of Youth". His most significant essay "Principles of the New Art", published in the first and second issues of the "Union of Youth" almanac analysed "constructiveness" and "non-constructiveness" in primitive, classical and modern art.

-
1. Velimir Khlebnikov: "Neizdannyyi Proisvedeniya" (Moscow 1940) pp. 396-97. Quoted in Markov: Ibid., p. 142.
 2. "Maski" Nos. 7-8, 1912-13. Benedikt Livshits "Polutoraglasnyi streles" pp. 29-33, Quoted in Markov: op.cit.
 3. V.V. Mayakovsky "Polnoye Sobranie Sochineniyu" I (Moscow 1955-1961 13 vol) I, pp. 275-285, quoted in Markov: op.cit.

He contrasted the dependence on scientific principles in western European art with the irrational aspects of primitive and Oriental art. His ideas resemble those of Kulbin:

Modern Europe does not understand the beauty of the absurd, of the illogical. Our artistic tastes, nurtured on strict rules, cannot be reconciled with the disintegration of our existing world-view, cannot reject "this world" and yield to the world of feelings, love and dreams, cannot be inspired by the anarchism which mocks our formulated rules and cannot escape to a non-constructed world.¹

Rozanova expressed similar ideas in her essay "Bases of the New Creation and the Reasons Why it is Misunderstood", which appeared in the third almanac. Her idea was that the conclusions of the intuitive principle was an independent and self-sufficient art.

Matyushin considered that the human spirit was imprisoned within the annoying bars of a cage. His rejection of concrete reality and his position as a bridge between symbolism and the art forms of Khlebnikov, Matyushin and Malevich, to whom he was particularly close, emerge in statements such as the following:

Why don't I want to paint objectness (predmetnost) portraits? They are merely part of a whole. How can one depict the whole of mankind by one face?... I inhale a pulverised god, but I cannot hold it... The whole of mankind has become filled² with objectness, has grown tired and over-saturated...

The "Union of Youth" sponsored four performances of futurist works in the Luna Park in St. Petersburg. Two of them on December 2nd and 4th, were performances of Mayakovsky's

1. V. Markov, "Printsipy novogo iskusslva" in Soyuz molodezhi, 1912, No. 1; p. 10. quoted in J. Bowlt, Ibid., p. 339.

2. M. Matyushin, Dnevnikovye zapisi, TsGALI, fund 134, ed. dep. 24, ll. 20-22. Quoted in J. Bowlt, Ibid., p. 341.

tragedy Vladimir Mayakovsky and the other two on December the 3rd and 5th were of Kruchenykh's opera "Pobeda nad Solntsem" ("Victory over the Sun"). In a short monologue Mayakovsky expressed his urbanism, primitivism and anti-aestheticism in themes of hysterical despair. Markov says that Victory over the Sun is disappointing after Mayakovsky. The opera is divided into two acts, each sub-divided into several scenes. Among characters are futurist Strong Men who begin and conclude the opera by proclaiming the endlessness of Futurist progress. The world will perish but there will be no end for us they sing at the end. The four unequal scenes of the first act are a haphazard sequence of arias, monologues, dialogues and choruses depicting the struggle of the forces of future and past. Central to the play is the theme of a fight against the sun. This theme was touched upon by Mayakovsky in his tragedy and the symbol also appears in earlier poetry. In the very first scene the strong-men call the sun "a birth giver to passion" and express the desire to hide it behind a dusty curtain. Later on the sun is first stabbed and then captured. A combination of Nero and Caligula symbolised the old world. A traveller has just returned from the 35th century.

The second act takes place in the "Tenth Lands" of the future, portrays the difficulties of mankind trying to adapt itself to the new way of life. Optimism prevails, however, on the transrational song of the aviator who crashed but survived. Non-professionals, mostly students, acted. Kruchenykh wanted from his performance a special kind of reciting "with a pause after each syllable".

The programme (Figures 344 and 345)

published in St. Petersburg in 1913 had the lithograph of a drawing by Malevich on the front cover. It represented a square within a square. The corners of the two squares were joined by four diagonal lines as in Delaunay's "Simultaneous Windows". The inner square contained the shape of a conventionalised eye inside a sun. Lines and shapes suggesting music also appear with the letters "Kr" with the Cyrillic "U" below them. In the remaining part of the outer square are lines and curves reminiscent of Kandinsky's work at the time.

Three drawings for the back cloth and twelve costume designs were made by Malevich for the play (Figures 347-350). The designs for the backcloth belong to a series of which the cover design of the programme is one. The same device of placing a square within a square and of suggesting a shallow space by joining the corners of the square is observable in all these drawings. In one of the drawings (Figure 347) the central portion suggests part of a wheel while the other shapes combined with it suggest musical notes.

In another (Figure 348) is marked Dom ("House"). In this cubes, cylinders, a spiral stair, a window, a clock and a roof trespass outside their central square emphasising the spatial solidity.

The well known design below which is inscribed Kvadrat ("square") (Figure 349) is the most simplified and most concentrated image. It was from this that Malevich ascribed the birth of Suprematism.

In "Victory over the Sun" Malevich arranged non-representational planes and volumes on the stage in the form of cones,

cylinders and spheres and electric light augmented the effects. Matyushin remarked that while Mayakovsky's drama was still semantic, the opera was a "complete break-up of concepts and words ... old-style décor...and...musical harmony."¹

"Victory over the Sun" and "Vladimir Mayakovsky" were advertised during the summer of 1913 as the "First Futurist Spectacles in the World".

Mayakovsky's play had designs by Filonov and Shkolnik, assisted by Rozanova. Filonov designed the sets for the prologue and epilogue as well as the costumes. Mayakovsky's view of the contemporary city as a demonic force and of the modern industrial city as a place of despair was expressed in Filonov's black backdrop of square cardboard relieved by collage and different coloured spots which were manipulated by the artist to depict the hostility of the town.²

L.I. Zheverzhev (1881-1942) the entrepreneur and businessman who financed "The Union of Youth" described Filonov's décor as consisting of two picturesque backdrops on which two excellent urbanistic landscapes were painted. He stated that the costumes were painted directly on stretched canvasses and pushed by the actors in front of them. He also added that the connection between Filonov's décor and costumes and the play was not close.³ Markov describes the costumes as consisting of two painted shields for each performer, except the poet himself. The actor sandwiched between these shields

1. M. Matyushin in Futuristy. Pervyi Zhurnal russkikh futuristov, M., 1914, No. 1/2, p. 157. Quoted in J. Bowlt, Ibid., p. 345.

2. J. Bowlt, Ibid., p. 342.

3. Woroszyński, The Life of Mayakovsky, New York, 1970, p.77. Quoted in J. Bowlt, Ibid., p. 343.

was only supposed to move in a straight line. Livshits praised highly the sets for the opera designed by Malevich in a pure abstract style, for creating a truly transrational effect, which in Livshits' opinion Kruchenykh failed to realise in his text.

Matyushin described both works.¹ Performances were sold out. Hissing and applause alternated. April 26th, 1914 Shershenevich published "A Declaration about the 'Futurist Theatre'" in the newspaper "Nov".² It expressed the idea that the ideal theatre should be based on movement, "down with the word" is to be replaced by "intuitive improvisation".

After the revolution Mayakovsky worked on films in Russia.³ There had only been one known futurist film "A drama in Futurist Cabaret No. 13" created by Goncharova and Larionov who acted in it. Also participating were Mayakovsky, Burliuk brothers, Shershenevich and Lavrenev.

A strong difference of direction was emerging between

-
1. Futuristi pervei zhurnal russkikh futuristov PZ RF pp. 153-157. Quoted in V. Markov: Ibid., p. 146.
 2. See V. Markov: Ibid., p. 147.
 3. Mayakovsky had always been interested in the cinema. He wrote his first script in 1913. In 1918 he wrote and appeared in three films for the private company "Neptune". After a period of retirement from films he worked briefly with Lunacharsky on plans to recognise the nationalised film industry. In 1927 he wrote nine scripts for the Ukranian State Film Company (VUFKU) and supported experimental and newsreel editors later. One of his last projects "Moscow is Burning" is a kind of tribute to the cinema containing three-dimensional projections. See "Two Mayakovsky Scenarios" in Screen (Journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television) Winter 1971/2, pp. 122-149.

Malevich and former leaders of the avant-garde. In Moscow in 1913 N. Goncharova collaborated for the second time with the theatre creating masks and costumes for "The Fan" by Goldoni. For the first time in the history of art applied to the theatre, costumes did not imitate or reconstruct a period but became fantastic in interpretation. She left Russia in 1914 to join Diaghilev in Paris.

Another innovatory spectacle sponsored by the "Union of Youth" was the folk drama, "Emperor Maximilian and His Disobedient Son Adolf", staged in 1911 with costumes by Tatlin and others. S. Auslender criticised it for its "bad taste in costumes, the absence of footlights, the free passage of actors from stage to audience, the walls decorated with posters and the barrels instead of chairs in the buffet."¹

In addition the "Union of Youth" carried on cultural discussions, readings of poetry by D. Burluk, Kruchenykh, Mayakovsky and others at the bohemian cabarets, the "Stray Dog" in a St. Petersburg cellar and the "Pink Lantern" in Moscow. These were decorated by the Burluks, Malevich and other artists.

After the theatrical enterprise of "A Tragedy" and "Victory over the Sun", the inter-relationship between poets and painters in Russia began to disintegrate and the media developed more independently. After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 Russia became isolated from western Europe and mutual exchange of ideas stopped in 1917. Artists

1. S. Auslender, "Vecher 'Soyuza molodezhi'" in Russkaya khudozhestvennaya letopis, 1911, No. 4, p. 60. Quoted in J. Bowlt, Ibid., p. 346.

who returned to Russia in 1914 (see Appendix XXVII) exhibited work into which western idioms had been absorbed. On the other hand Larionov and Goncharova left Russia in 1914 and failed to return. Malevich then became the leader of the avant-garde and Suprematism and Constructivism emerged as distinct movements among tendencies akin to those of Cubism and Dada.

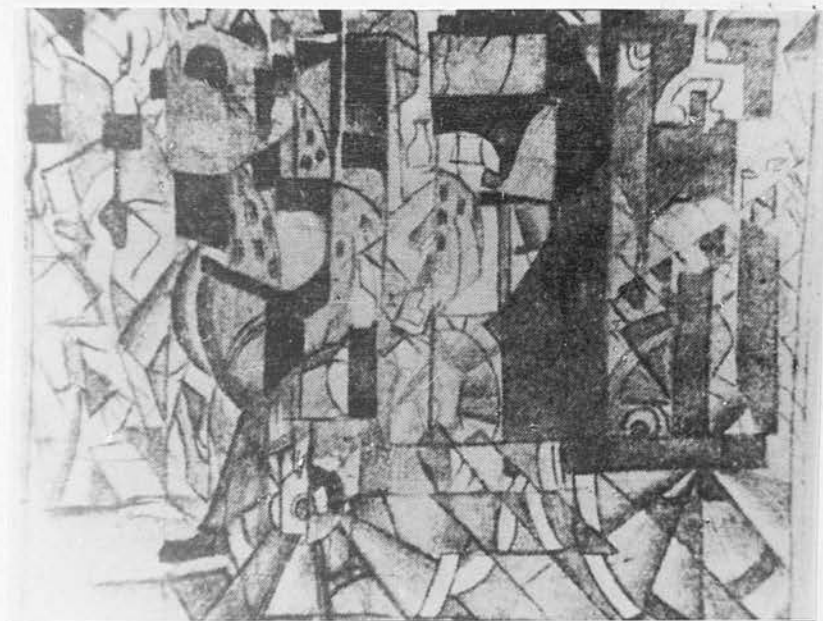


Figure 331. K. Malevich: illustration on page 9
of "Troye", 1913.

Figure 332: K. Malevich: Lithographed front
cover of "Troye" ("The Three")
published in St. Petersburg, 1913,
consisting of poems by E. Guro,
A. Kruchenykh and V. Khlebnikov.

Figure 333. K. Malevich: Woman Reaping,
illustration on page 51 of
"Troye", (1913).

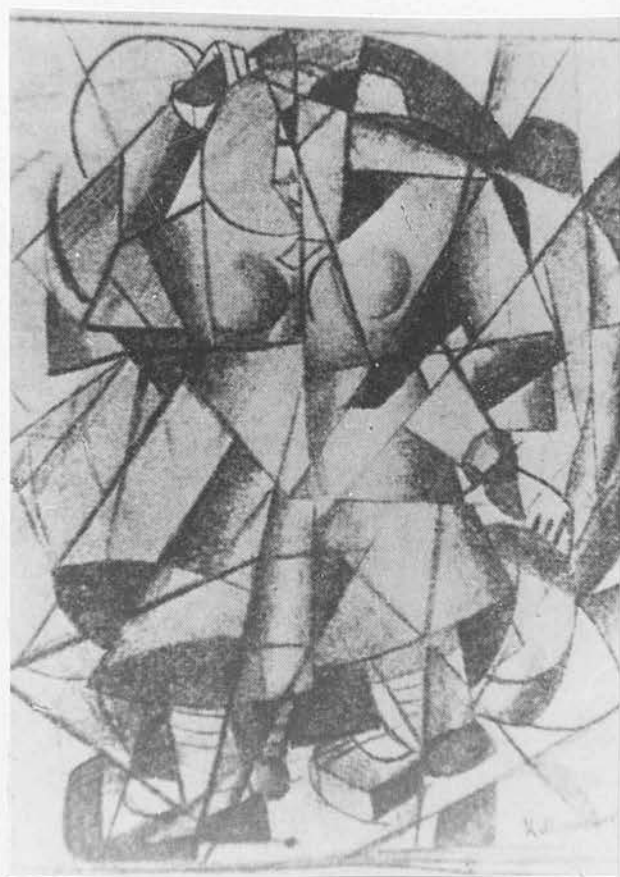


Figure 334. K. Malevich: Head of a Peasant Girl,
illustration on page 81 of "Troye",
(1913).

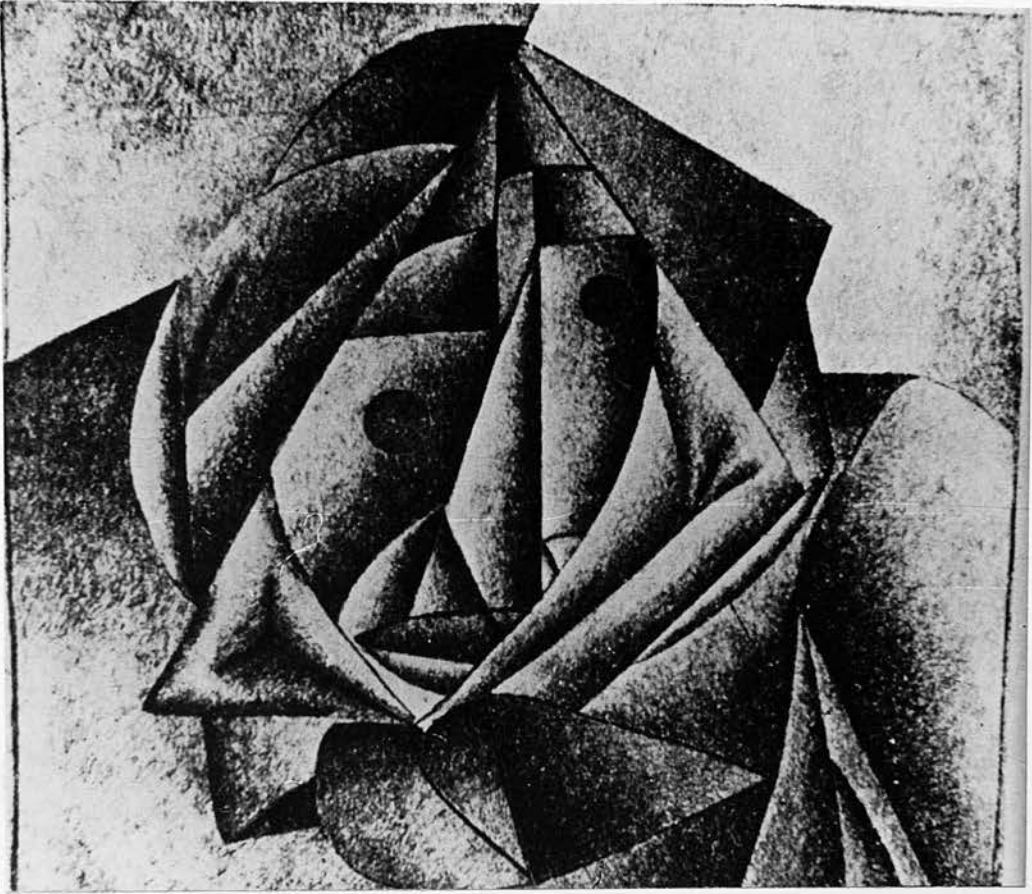


Figure 335. K. Malevich: Illustration on
page 83 of "Troye" (1913).



Figure 336. Cover of Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh's The Word as Such, 1913, with drawing by K. Malevich.

П. Крученик и В. Хлѣбников

СЛОВО
КАКЪ ТАКОВОЕ



Figure 337. The Cover of A. Kruchenykh:
"Vozropshem" ("Let's Grunt",
St. Petersburg, 1913) illustrated
by Rozanova and Malevich.

Figure 338. K. Malevich: Krestyanka idet po vodu
(Peasant woman brings water) Lithograph
12.4 x 16.8 cms. inserted at page 1 of
A. Kruchenykh: "Vozropshem" ("Let's
Grunt", St. Petersburg, 1913).

А. Крученых

рис. Рашидовой и Милославского

ВО

ЗРО

ПЩЄМ

И М В

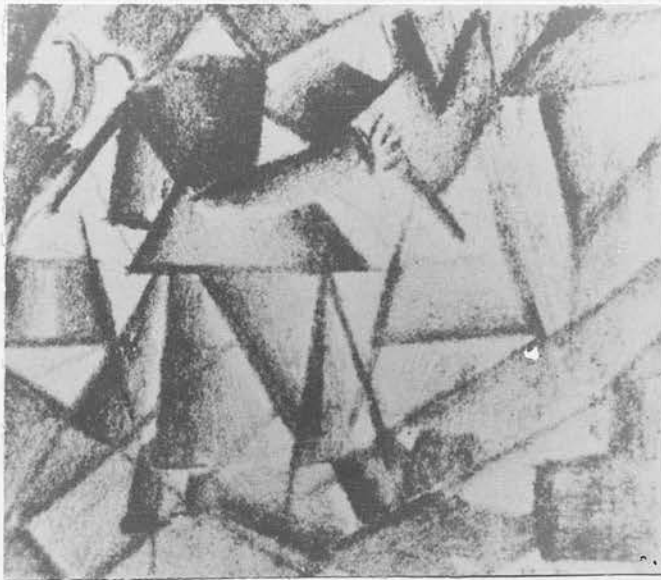


Figure 339. K. Malevich: Arithmetic, Lithograph,
c. 1913, from A. Kruchenykh:
Vozropshem.

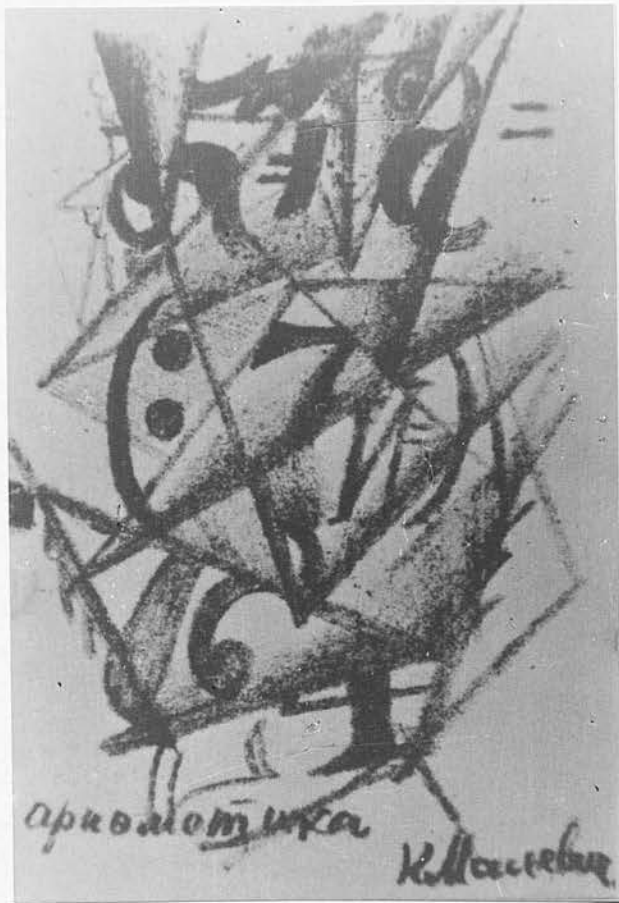


Figure 340. K. Malevich: The lithographed cover of A. Zina and A. Kruchenykh: Porosyata ("Piglets"), St. Petersburg, 1913.

Figure 341. K. Malevich: Portrait of a Builder Completed. Lithographed illustration inserted on page 3 of "Porosyata" (After the painting "Portrait of Ivan Vasilyevich Kluyn" in the Russian Museum, Leningrad, See Figures 397-399).

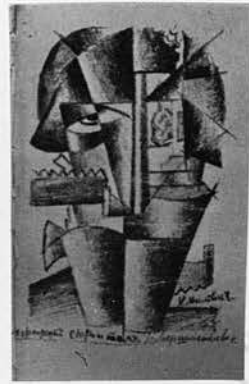
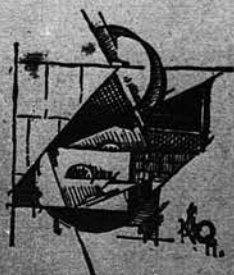


Figure 342. Cover designed by Malevich for "Taynye Poroki Akademikov" ("The Academicians' Secret Vices"), containing contributions from A. Kruchenykh, I. Klyun and Malevich. 1916.

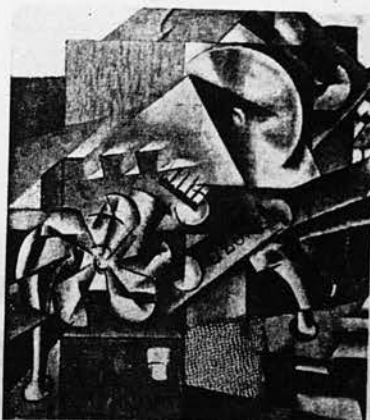
Figure 343. I. Klyun: Ozonator (elektricheski perenosni ventilyator) ("Ozoniser - Portable Electric Ventilator-) a lithographed illustration from "Taynye Poroki Akademikov", ("Secret Vices of Academicians"), 1916.

А. Крученых,
И. Клюн,
К. Малевич.

**ТАЙНЫЕ
ПОРОКИ**
академиков



1916 г.



И. Клюн.

Озонаторь
(электрический переносный вентиляторь).

Figure 344. K. Malevich: Reproduction of a drawing from the cover of Pobeda nad solntsem ("Victory over the Sun") Opera by Matyushin, libretto by Kruchyonykh. St. Petersburg, 1913.

Figure 345. K. Malevich: detail of Figure 343.

ПОВЕДА ПАД СОЛЦЕМ

опера А. Крученых музыка И. Матюшина



Figure 346. K. Malevich: Sketch for
Victory over the Sun, 1913.

Figures 347-349. K. Malevich:

Three backcloth designs for
Matyushin's opera Victory over the Sun.
It was to this production that Malevich
ascribed the birth of Suprematism.
Victory over the Sun was first produced
in the Luna Park Theatre in Petersburg
in December 1913.

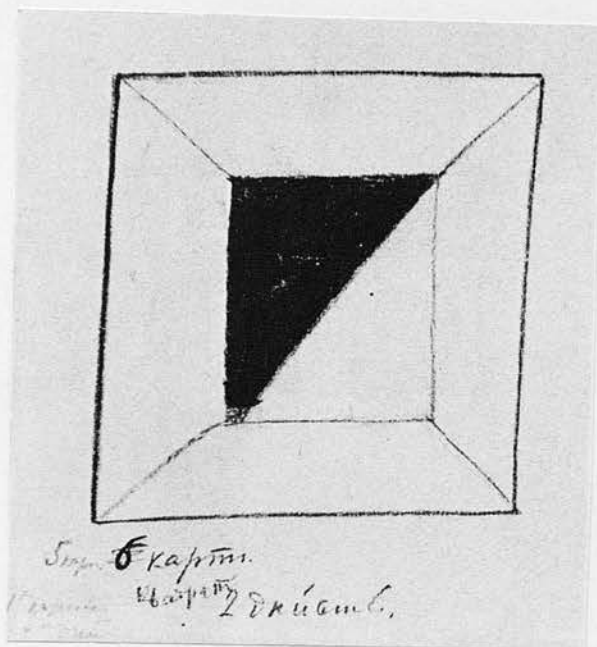
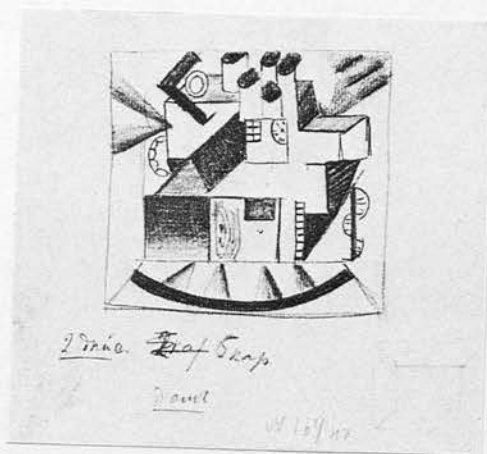
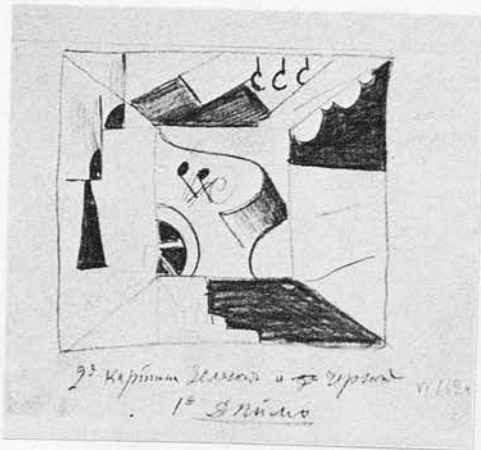


Figure 350. K. Malevich: Twelve costume designs
for "Victory over the Sun", 1913.

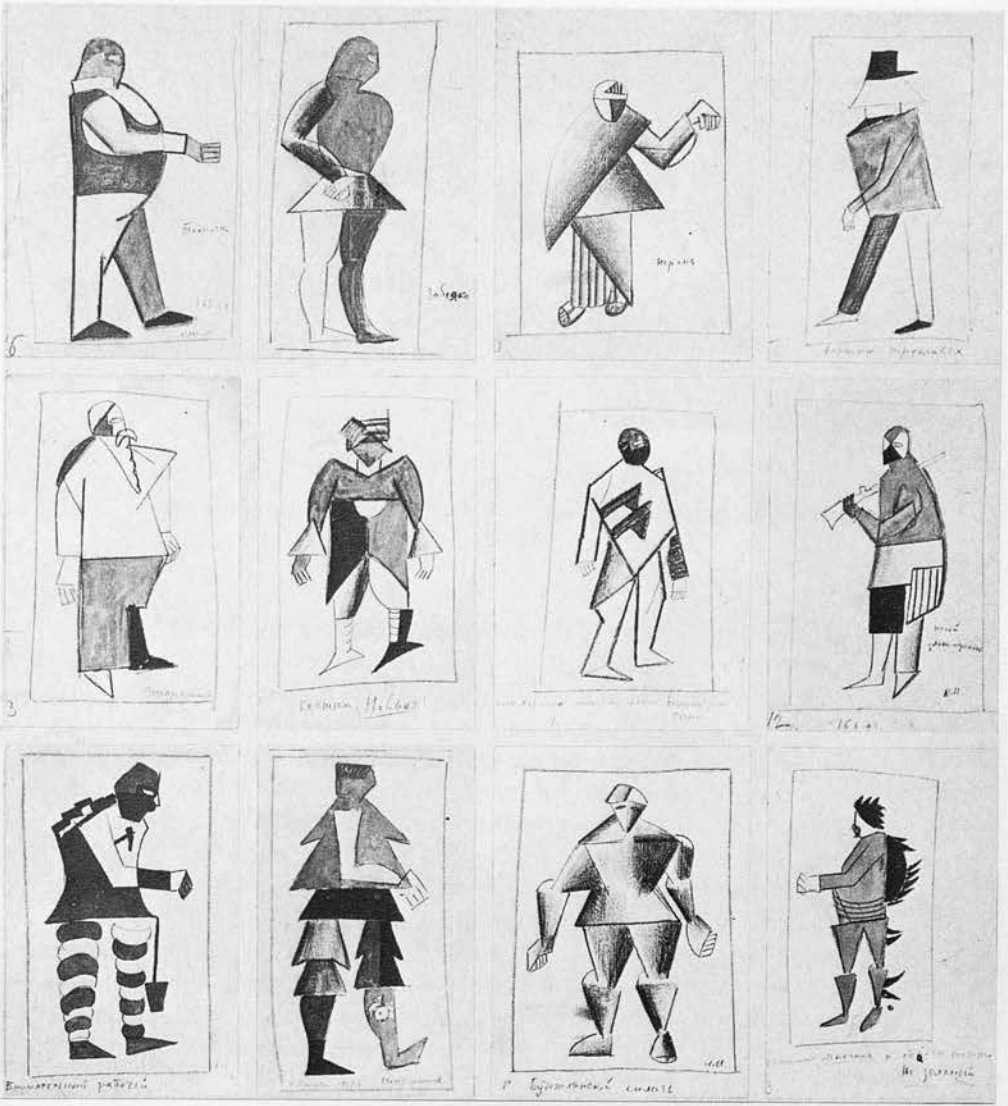


Figure 351. Kamensky's ferroconcrete poem
Constantinople (1914).

Figure 352. Cover of Kamensky's Tango with Cows
illustrated by Vladimir and David
Burliuk (1914).

Figure 353. Rodchenko's lithographed design on the cover of A. Kruchenykh, G. Petnikov and V. Khlebnikov Zaumniki ("trans-rational...") Moscow, 1922.

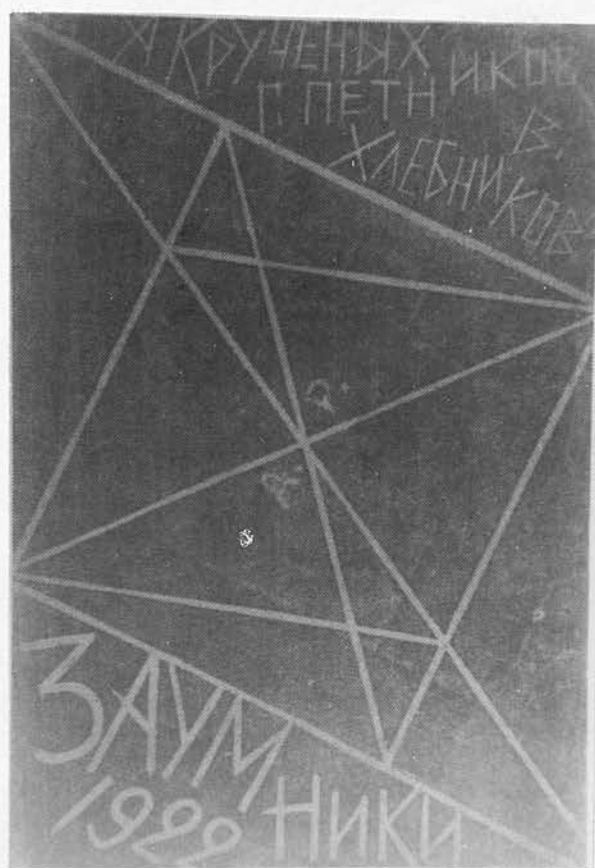


Figure 354. N. Miturich: Design for the cover of Zangezi, poetic action in stellar language, by V.V. Khlebnikov, Moscow, 1922.



велемир

хлебников

Зангези

л.м.

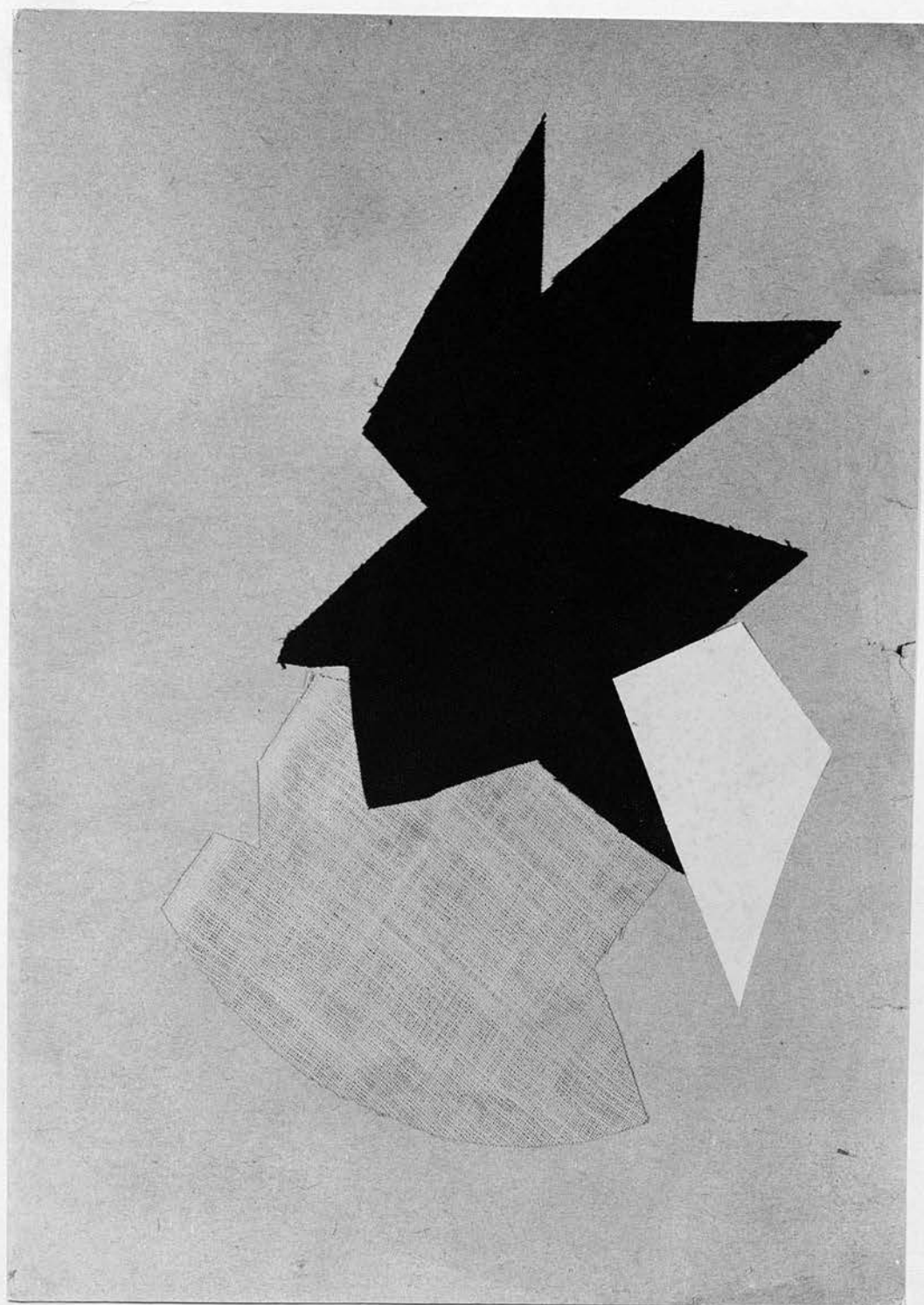
МОСКВА 1999

Figure 355. A page designed and lithographed by Rodchenko from A. Kruchenykh, G. Petnikov and V. Khlebnikov Zaumniki ("trans-rational...") Moscow 1922)



ОБЛОЖКА
И ЗНАК
РОДЧЕНК
АВТО-ЛИН

Figure 356. A Rodchenko: A collage illustration
from "Zaumniki", Moscow, 1922.



CHAPTER XV

THE EXHIBITIONS "TRAMWAY V" AND "0-10" AND THE EMERGENCE OF SUPREMATISM

In February 1915 the "Exhibition of Futurist Pictures, Tramway V" was set up and opened at the "Little Hall of the Imperial Society for the Encouragement of the Fine Arts" in St. Petersburg on the 3rd March.

The title of the exhibition "Tramway V" was derived from the number of the longest Petrograd tram line of that time. The exhibition was organised by Ivan Puni who also financed it. The exhibitors included Kasimir Malevich with twelve Cubist and Futurist pictures; Vladimir I. Tatlin with seven "Polychrome Reliefs"; Nadezhda Udaltzova (see Appendix XXVIII) with eight pictures; Alexandra Exter (see Appendix LVIII) with fourteen canvasses, of which two entitled "Florence" had already been shown at the "Sprovieri Gallery" in Rome and Ivan Puni (see Appendix XXIX) with eleven works, pictures and reliefs. Other exhibitors included Klyun, Morgunov, Madame Xenia Bogouslavskaya Puni (Puni's wife) Alexandra Exter, Liubov Popova (see Appendix XXX) and Olga Rozanova (see Figures 373 and 374). Exhibits by Malevich included "Argentine Polka", 1911, "Woman in a Tram" 1912, "Portrait of V.M. Matyushin", 1913 (Figure 403) and some works done in 1914 which he described as "Alogist" or "Non-Sense realist". None of the works he showed were Suprematist.

Popova's work by this time displayed certain characteristics learnt from French art. Her painting "Two Figures" of 1913 (Figure 362) shows a rigorous division of the canvas into geometric forms. Solid and proportionate

figures in a naturalistic space are retained in a similar way to Le Fauconnier, Gleizes (see Figure 361) and Metzinger (see Figure 74). In common with their work each object retains its completeness of form but is passed through a cubist analysis and unified with other objects by means of a geometrical arrangement of lines, which, though they differ from Italian Futurist lines of force, they suggest a certain dynamism. The unification of the objects into setting by means of these geometric lines is similar to that of Alberti's linear perspective in its method of fitting forms into a unified space, only the vanishing points are not one or two but several and they do not lie on the horizontal eye level but, if it were possible to trace them all they would converge in the space of the spectator. The Italian futurist idea of placing the spectator in the centre of the picture corresponds to this as well as to the notion of dynamic forms moving around him.

Nevertheless some of the main lines of "Two Figures" obey the rules of fifteenth-century Italian perspective or correspond more exactly to the subtle disobedience of those rules by the artists of the quattrocento. In the paintings and reliefs of that time lines of perspective converged at a point a little above the horizon, a method corresponding to a more primitive technique of allowing the spectator a more privileged view of the object from above by flattening it out a little. It serves various functions and is most noticeable in the work of Van Eyck as well as reliefs of Donatello.

In Popova's picture the heads of the figures have an arrangement of lines and rectangles that lead to points a little above the horizon but the method of using these lines has the function of displacing other objects. Thus the lines pass across a building in the distance while others converge among conventionalised trees. The building is tilted in a similar way to those architectural forms of the Section d'Or painters and of Feininger (see Figures 61-64). Throughout the picture forms are carefully refined into facets of homogenous texture. As a result of the influence of the Section d'Or artists the "Two Figures" has absorbed decorative qualities of French art. The picture has combined the classical subjects of still life and nude figures in a landscape which prevailed in France since the eighteenth-century. There is a suggestion of commedia dell'arte atmosphere in the pictorial details of the guitar held by the male figure, the fan held by the female and an attractively colourful still life placed in the immediate foreground. Though these effects appear to have some affinities with Goncharova's theatrical decorations it is perhaps this particular taste that seemed most characteristic of western art or typical of French art to the Russians at that time. It seems to be these qualities which they either strongly opposed or absorbed in a very ardent way.

But the decorativeness hardly persists in Popova's two still lifes of the following year "The Violin" (Figure 363) and "Italian Still Life" (Figure 364). An oval shape encloses the still life "Violin". The lettering, the horizontal divisionist paint round the edge, the imitation collage at the top right and the subjects of violin and playing cards

are inspired by Picasso and Braque. Picasso began painting in an oval format probably finding empty mirror frames from old wardrobes or dressing tables. Some of his pictures are still framed by these. It corresponds to his extension of finding collage elements. The overlapping shapes of Popova's violin against variations of circles and rectangles intersecting one another are more like the carefully planned work of Gris (see Figure 73) at that time but the application is loose and has the deliberate coarseness frequent in Russian art of the time.

Similar elements are incorporated into the "Italian Still Life", 1914, (Figure 364). An attempt to break away from the obtrusive style of the previous year appears in the aggressive use of a number of conflicting devices such as the coarse texture, collage references, primitivistic coarseness of representing the guitar and thick black outlines. A number of abstract rectangles have been flattened out from the cubist shapes of the previous year and give an indication of the direction that Popova's work was to take.

"Seated Figure" (1915, Figure 367) appears to be nearer to the "Two Figures" of 1913 in its processing of the human figure into cones, cylinders, spheres and geometric lines. The tendency to have a perspectival sweep into the distance at the top left corner; the block like analysis of heads which gives the cheek bone prominence as a corner of the block; the curved mechanical treatment of feet; hands simplified into block shapes and the homogeneity of the faceted surface are all characteristic of Popova's personal interpretation of figurative compositions. Differences

however may suggest the later date of the "Seated Figure". The confidence and facility in the method of analysing the figure into geometric shapes is greater in the "Seated Figure" while in the "Two Figures" the method has only recently been learned and developed and the decorative elements abound. In the "Seated Figure" superfluous decoration and decorative colour have been eliminated. The colours consist only of blue and brown as intermediaries between black and white. The figure in which brown is almost exclusively used has been simplified into mechanical segments of circles and straight lines akin to the shapes used by Rodchenko. In the rest of the picture curves and rectangles slightly suggestive of the mechanical utopia of science fiction emanate from the figure. This together with the pose and isolation of the figure suggest the fusion of classicism with cubism in the "tableaux constructifs" of Archipenko of about 1917 (Figures 578 and 579). The forms of the figure and more particularly of the background have in the "Seated Figure" the same conventional gradation from dark to light as the "painting reliefs" of 1916 (Figure 368). There are some formal similarities to Malevich's work such as "Head of a Peasant Girl" (1913) and paintings suggesting reliefs in this way were made by Puni and others (see Figure 376). Her personal style at this time has synthesised elements of Tatlin's reliefs with Malevich's Suprematist shapes.

In the "Painting Relief" of 1916 (Figure 368) tendencies akin to Gris persist. Despite the apparently non-representational aspect of the picture carefully disguised still-life subjects are discernible. The main area resembles a

table against a light background with various views and details of the table superimposed boldly crossing.

In "Architectonic Composition", 1917, (Figure 369) a complete break with representational elements is made. The composition relies entirely on the arrangement of interlocking rectangles which were formerly associated with real objects. Also in "Architectonic Painting" of 1917 (Figure 370) representational elements no longer appear. A number of shapes resemble those of Malevich in their diagonal arrangement and relation to one another. The suggestion of spaces between a number of abstract floating shapes is made in the way they are painted one on top of the other.

Her stage designs for the "Magnanimous Cuccold" and "Worldbackwardness" are constructivist sets on an elaborate scale and recall the spirit of Picabia in his "Amorous Display" (1917) and Duchamp's "Large Glass" (see Figures 528-536).

On their return to Russia, Popova and Udaltsova exhibited work done in Paris. In paintings such as "At the Piano" c. 1914 (Figures 371 and 372) Udaltsova, like Popova, shows the extent to which she has absorbed the characteristics of French painters such as Metzinger, Léger and Delaunay. In its diagonal lines and expressive paint-marks it opposes the more static aspects of cubism. In the way that Russian impressionism and Futurism differed from western counterparts this adaption of cubism became more consistent with former Russian traditions of painting in its earthiness and lack of concern for certain refined qualities of French art. Even the geometrical stylisation is primitivistic and direct in its effect.

In Petrograd on the 20th of December 1915 in the hall of the Dobichin Gallery, the only art gallery in Petrograd in those years, the "Last exhibition of Futurist Painting 0.10" opened. A dispute over organisation and aesthetic questions caused a rift among exhibitors. Exhibitors included among others Kasimir Malevich nearly forty Suprematist pictures; Vladimir Tatlin with thirteen "Corner Counter Reliefs" not previously shown; Olga Rosanova with eleven pictures. Nadezhda Udaltzova exhibited ten pictures similar to those shown for "Tramway V". This exhibition though described as Futurist was open to artists of various orientations. Popova showed Cubist work including the "Violin" (1914, Figure 363). Tatlin exhibited "Mural counter-reliefs" of 1913 (with prices varying from 1500 to 2500 roubles). Malevich in his clash with Tatlin formulated in a public debate, the theoretical principles of Suprematism, quite different from the Futurism of the other exhibitors and from the Constructivism of Tatlin. Tatlin in return edited a polemic tract which Nikolai Punin diffused through the columns of the "New Journal for All".

Tatlin objected to the abstract paintings of Malevich, declaring them to be amateur and impossible to include in an exhibition by professional painters. Just before the exhibition opened Tatlin fought with Malevich who was about *seven* years older.¹ Exter reconciled the situation and Tatlin, Udaltsova and Popova exhibited work in one room and Malevich and the Suprematists in the other. Tatlin put a notice over the door of his room "Exhibition of Professional Artists". Malevich dominated the exhibition by showing so

¹ *Banilla Gray* described this and stated that Malevich was about fifteen years older than Tatlin. See *B. Gray: The Russian Experiment in Art* p. 206

many Suprematist compositions and issuing his manifesto.

Olga Rozanova's paintings at this time were, like her illustrations, a combination of dynamic cubism and a Primitivist style akin to Fauvism. Her colours were nevertheless often restrained by expressively painted black outlines in contrast to bold white impasto. "Analysis of Volumes", c.1914 (Figure 373) suggests urban forms in an arrangement of diagonal lines bounding volumes like those of L ger but less mechanistic and more expressive. "The Port" (Figure 374) probably painted a little earlier is more true to life and recalls the early cubist subject of Braque. But Rozanova has added cog-wheels to echo the shapes of smoke and other curved forms.

Malevich showed Suprematist work for the first time in "0.10".

After the exhibition Malevich and the Suprematists Puni, Annenkov and Kliun organised the famous conference advertised under the title "On the movements represented in the exhibition "0.10" and on Cubism and Futurism" (see Appendix XXXI). At the end of the conference Malevich carried out demonstrations of "The Principles of Cubo-futurism" with the aid of figures and objects in nature. During the end of the meeting Malevich declared that Suprematism would become a new art form, very distinct from Italian Futurism and Tatlin's Constructivism.

Suprematism became popular with the younger generation of artists in the two years that followed and a number of small exhibitions were held.¹

1. Kandinsky remained somewhat isolated at this time in Russia working quietly and only being known to exhibit once when he sent work to the "Exhibition of Leftist Trends" held in Petrograd in 1915. Others exhibiting there included the Burliuks, The "Knave of Diamonds" painters and Nathan Altman.

Figure 357. Poster advertising the Association
of Artists exhibition
December 1912.

**ХУДОЖЕСТВЕННО-
АРТИСТИЧЕСКАЯ
АССОЦИАЦИЯ.**

10 ДЕКАБРЯ 1912 Г.

Figure 358. Poster advertising the "First
Futurist Exhibition of Pictures
Tramway V". February 1915.

Малый залъ Императорскаго Общества Поощренія
Художествъ.

1-я Футуристическая Выставка картинъ

ТРАМВАИ В.

Всѣ картины сооръ поступить

ВЪ ПОЛЬЗУ

Лазарета Дѣтелей Искусства.

Выставка открыта ежедневно отъ 10-го
до 5 часовъ.

Входная плата — 50 коп.

Учащійся — 30 коп.

Л. С. С. С.

Figure 359. Poster advertising the "Last
Futurist Exhibition of Pictures"
December 1915.

**Последняя
футуристическая
выставка картин**

0,10

(НОЛЬ ДЕСЯТЬ)

БАТМОР
1911

Figure 360. Poster advertising the Public lecture on Suprematism, Cubism and Futurism by Malevich and Puni on the movements represented in the "0.10" exhibition at its close on the 12th of January 1916.

Figure 361. A. Gleizes: Landscape at Meudon, 1911.
Oil on canvas, $57\frac{7}{8}$ x $45\frac{1}{4}$ inches (147 x
115 cm.) Musée Nationale d'Art Moderne,
Paris. (Exhibited at Les Indépendants,
Brussels, 1911, and at the Salon de la
Section d'Or, Paris 1912).



Figure 362. Liubov Popova, Two Figures, 1913.

Oil, 63 x 48 $\frac{7}{8}$ ins.



Figure 363. L. Popova. The Violin 1914.
Oil on canvas, $34\frac{5}{8}$ x $27\frac{5}{8}$,
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

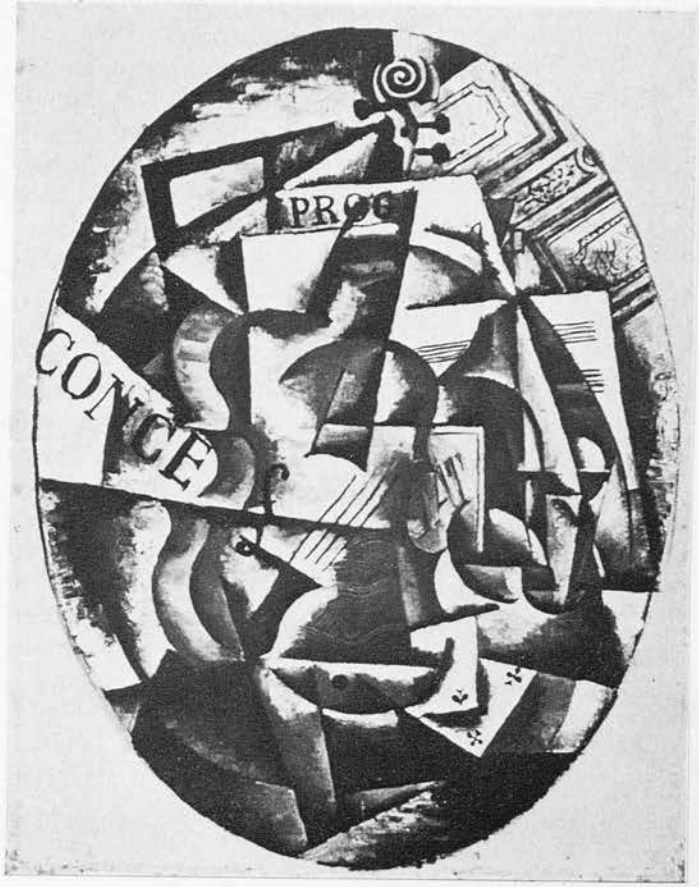
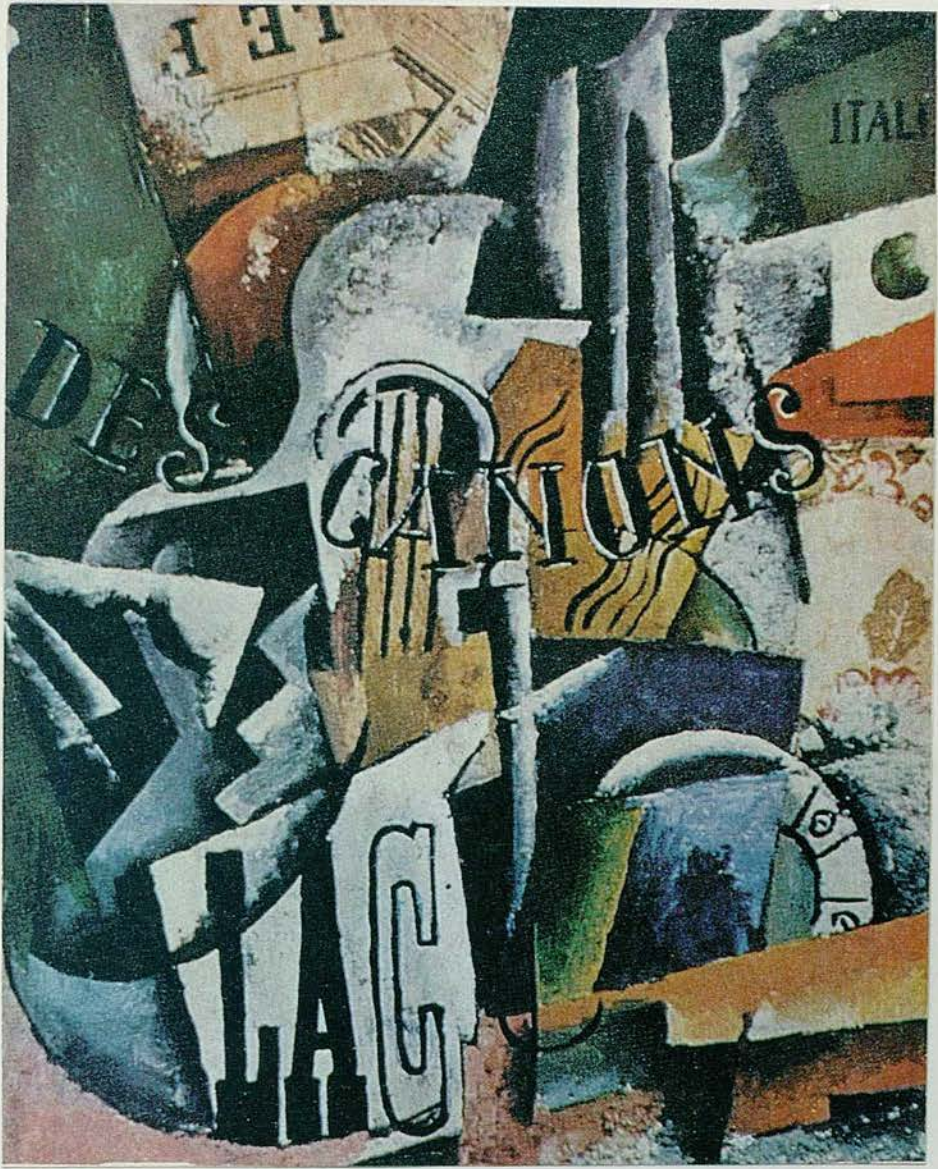


Figure 364. L. Popova: Italian Still-life 1914,
oil on canvas, wax, paper collage,
 $24\frac{3}{8}$ x $19\frac{1}{4}$, Tretyakov Gallery,
Moscow.



Figures 365 and 366.

L. Popova, The Traveller, 1915.

Oil, 56 x 41½ in.



Figure 367. L. Popova: Seated Figure, c.1915.
oil on canvas, $49\frac{1}{4}$ x $42\frac{1}{8}$,
Russian Museum, Leningrad.



Figure 368. L. Popova. Painting Relief, 1916,
oil on canvas.

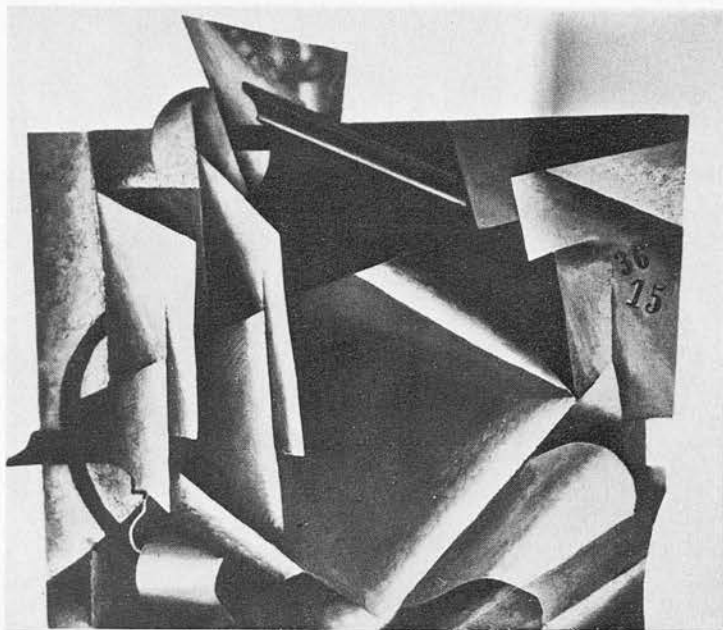


Figure 369. L. Popova; Architectonic Composition
1917, oil on canvas.

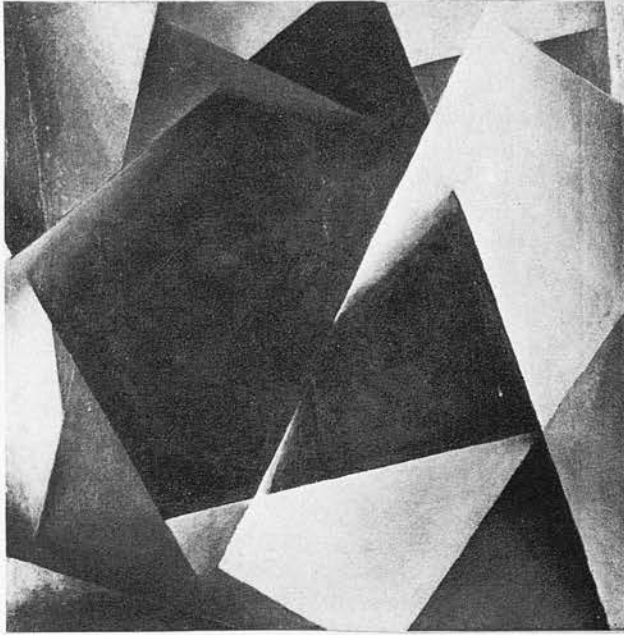
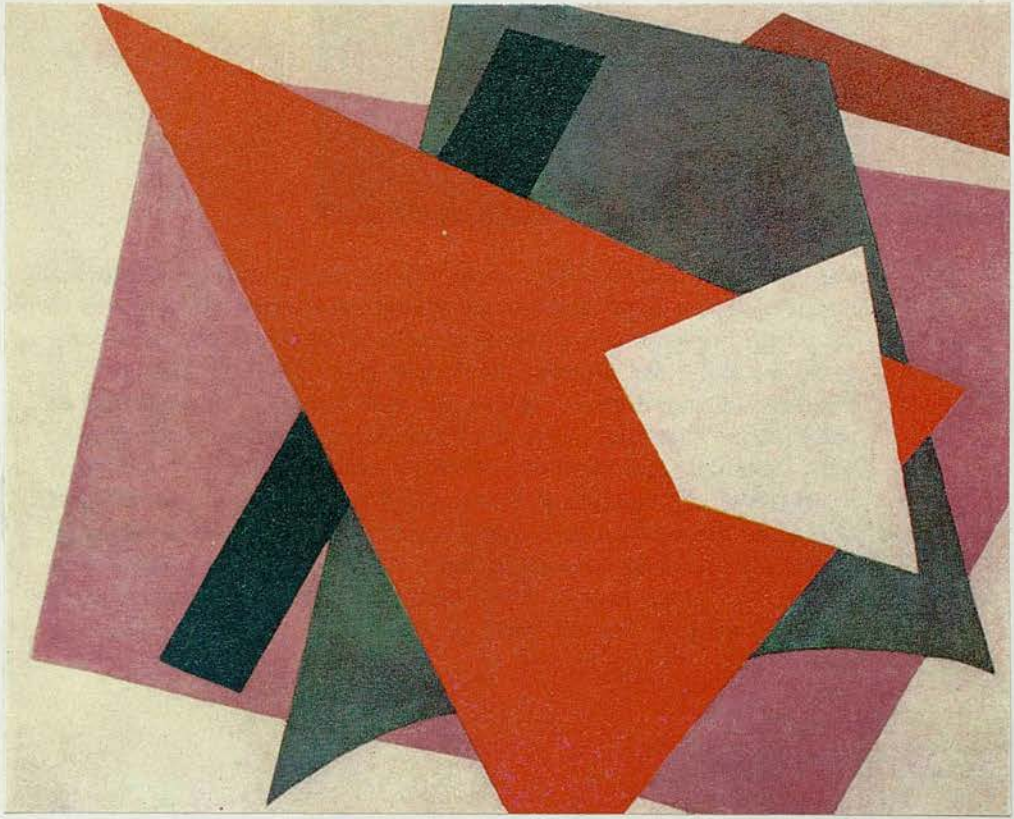


Figure 370. L. Popova. Architectonic Painting
1917, oil on canvas, $31\frac{1}{2}$ x $35\frac{5}{8}$.
The Museum of Modern Art, New York.



Figures 371 and 372.

Nadezhda Udaltsova: At the Piano,
c. 1914, Oil on canvas. 107 x 89 cm.
New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery,
Collection Societ  Anonyme.



Figure 373. Olga Rozanova: Analysis of Volumes
c. 1914, oil on canvas, 82 x 61 cms.
Unknown collection.

Figure 374. O. Rozanova: The Port - Rome,
Private collection.

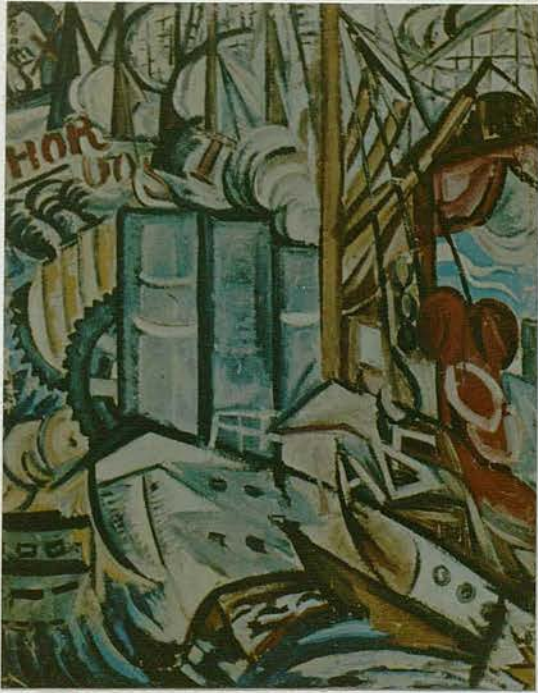


Figure 375. Robert Falk: Portrait of the Tartar
Journalist Midhad Refatov, 1915.
oil on canvas, $48\frac{7}{8}$ x $31\frac{7}{8}$, Tretyakov
Gallery, Moscow.



Figure 376. Ivan Puni: Suprematist Composition,
1915.



Figure 377. I. Puni: Catastrophe, 1921.

Figure 378. I. Puni: exhibition at the Der
Sturm Gallery, Berlin, 1921.



Figure 379. I. Puni: The Musician, 1922.
Oil on canvas. 53 x 62 cms.,
Collection: Hermann Berninger,
Zurich.



Malevich prob
1903 (see Appendix X
is in the George K
"Childbirth". It
showing the small cr
the centre. Behind
tiny babies, colored
pattern of the high
stage design and su
Vienna Secessionist
It is probably about
in a private collect
by Malevich in a pos
impacts of light colours are mostly in the upper third
Leningrad but one small landscape (made in 1914) was done
in the G. Kostroma collection in Moscow. These three are
done in a very naive manner. The landscape is
the colours. The landscape is the same as the other
suggest the subjects of. Another landscape painting
treatment in two colors is especially worthy of the painter
colour and in the way that the landscape is
to persuade and really the painter. The painter is
conscious of various aspects of the landscape
probably observed the same painter. The landscape
work which is really a landscape painting. The painter
painter, for example, in the way that the landscape is
Figures 5 & 6. Malevich's landscape painting.

in about
ings
is entitled
five and
four in
form of
7.8 repeated
ok of a
vertical
painting
1914 was
painting
a white

CHAPTER XVI

MALEVICH

Malevich probably began to paint seriously in about 1903 (see Appendix XXXII). One of his early paintings is in the George Kostakis collection in Moscow and is entitled "Childbirth". It measures about seven inches by five and showing the small crouched figure of a woman in labour in the centre. Behind her is a minutely painted pattern of tiny babies painted in orange almost in the form of a repeated pattern in the background. It gives the impression of a stage design and suggests an atmosphere similar to certain Vienna Secessionist and Western European Symbolist painting. It is probably about the same date as Wedding (c.1903), also in a private collection in the U.S.S.R. Early oil paintings by Malevich in a post-impressionist style painted in a thick impasto of light colours are mostly in the Russian Museum, Leningrad but some small landscapes (about 4" x 5") are also in the G. Kostakis collection in Moscow. These also are done in a very thick coarse technique. The lightness of the colours, the insistence on the flatness of the paint suggest the surfaces of certain late Monets but Malevich's treatment is even coarser in texture, nearer to the Nabis' colour and in the way that one single colour is often used to permeate and unify the picture. Malevich was frequently conscious of various paint surfaces (Figures 446 & 447) and probably observed the great variety of treatment in Monet's work which included coarse impastoes and a thick stippled paint, for example, in the Rouen Cathedral series of 1892-5, (Figures 5 & 6). Malevich's subjects such as Flower Girl of

1903 show impressionist influence but are also closer to a symbolist Nabi interpretation. The same subject had been used by Bonnard and Picasso shortly before and the ephemeral atmosphere of the urban subject was evoked in the writing of novelists such as Guro.

After about 1909 the style of Malevich's painting changed noticeably. A landscape signed and dated 1909¹ shows trees and hillocks near houses and is composed of arcs and verticals in a manner that predicts his work of 1912. The gouache "Province", "Chiropodist, at the Baths" 1910 (Figure 380) are also composed of sections of ellipses in an approach derived from Picasso, Matisse, and Derain but with the conscious primitiveness of his compatriots. The collections of Shchukin, Morosov and Tretyakov had been seen by the public by this time and works by Braque, Picasso, Matisse and the Fauves underlined the primitivist interests of younger artists (see Figures 65-69, 383-385).

Tatlin's work of about 1910 was a personal interpretation of a similar idea. Curved forms appear in their drawings from 1912 to 1913.

As Camilla Gray has pointed out the "Chiropodist" resembles Cézanne's "Card Players"² (Figure 381). But as well as the general composition Malevich appears to have acquired qualities from Cézanne's work which were less emphasised by the French Cubists, the Fauves and the German

1. Troels Andersen catalogue, p. 21.

2. Camilla Gray, Ibid., p. 146.

expressionists. Malevich kept the organic unity of figures, did not disintegrate them into cones, cylinders and spheres at this time but seems to have observed Cézanne's representation of forms as having unequal sides. Such a method of representation was not only Primitivist but belonged to an even older tradition of the "Picturesque" and "Romantic" in their idea that no two elements of the nature are the same from one moment to the next. In 1884 Renoir attacked academic painting, mechanical craftsmanship and geometric principles of modern architecture in a programme expressing an aesthetic of irregularity:

The two eyes of the most beautiful face will always be the least bit dissimilar; even the nose is not found exactly placed over the mouth. The sections of an orange, the leaves of a tree, the petals of a flower are never identical...The great artists... careful to proceed like nature, of whom they are always respectful pupils, are on their guard never to transgress its fundamental laws of irregularity. It is even proved that works based on geometric principles...do not present one line of perfect exactness, and what round, square, or oval figures there are which could easily have been made exact, are never so. Thus one can without fearing error affirm that every really artistic production has been concerned and executed according to the principle of irregularity. In¹a word...it is always the work of an irregularist.

Renoir's principle of irregularity gives an indication of the spirit in which Cézanne cultivated disequilibrium in his still lifes and portraits. Renoir's principles also helped to bring about the new style of Art Nouveau and certain traits in neo-primitivist painting in the twentieth century.

Malevich's "Bather", 1910 (Figure 382) has a similar irregular line to Cézanne's pictures of bathers and is also

1. Articles quoted in Venturi, Les Archives de l'Impressionisme, Vol. I, pp. 127-129.

related to nude figures partly derived from Cézanne by Picasso and Braque and painted in 1908 and 1909. (Figures 65-69).

However Malevich's picture is painted in the bright colours of the Fauves (see Figures 7 and 8) or Die Brücke (see Figure 9), red, yellow and blues with strong black outline. There is also something of the child-like or coarse linear style of Matisse after 1907, notably in the decorations commissioned by Shchukin to decorate his dining room 1909-10 (Figures 384 and 385) and in paintings such as "The Bowlers", 1908 (Figure 383).

In 1911 and 1912 paintings of figures were, in varying degrees, composed of simplified forms, cones, cylinders and spheres. The subjects include "Peasant Woman with Buckets" 1912, (Figure 387), "Woman with Buckets, Dynamic Arrangement" 1912 (Figure 392), and "Morning in the Village after Snowfall" 1912-13 (Figure 389). The subjects and forms are simplified and idealised, remaining more like realistic ideograms than the similar contemporary work in France. A stylised chiaroscuro is employed to clarify and simplify forms and to contrast dark edges with light ones in a consistent pattern. The light and shade is not decided by a source of light. Pure colours of the spectrum were applied to these forms.

"Morning in the Village after Snowfall" (Figure 389) has a similar all-over arrangement of forms to certain works by Gleizes of 1911 (see Figures 361 and 390), though Malevich used primary colours systematically at the edges of forms throughout the picture. Semi-circles, arcs and various angles intersect one another clearly suggesting the forms of houses

in a landscape with trees. In "Landscape at Meudon" by Gleizes (Figure 361) the figure climbing a hill is smaller than those of Malevich whose central preoccupation was never with landscape. "Landscape", 1911 by Gleizes (Figure 390) employs sloping lines of architecture and countryside in contrast to curves of clouds and trees in the upper part of the picture. The same qualities appear in Malevich's "Morning in the Village after Snowfall". Popova and Udaltsova were applying such systems to their pictures at this time and paintings of houses under trees were the subjects used also by Léger.

"Woman with Buckets, Dynamic Arrangement" 1912 (Figure 392) makes use of a system of contrasting forms similar to those of Léger at about the same time in compositions such as "Smoke" 1912 (Figure 393); "Woman in Blue" 1912 (Figure 394); "Contrasted Forms" 1913 (Figure 395); "Figures coming down Stairs" 1913 (Figure 21); "Staircase" 1913 (Figure 22); and "The Staircase" (2nd version) 1914, (Figure 396).

The conventionalised chiaroscuro, simplification of the forms and use of primary colours are also very much alike in the work of Malevich and Léger at this time. Malevich antedated a few important pictures from 1913 to 1911 and he seems to have regarded this "Cubist" phase as transitional.¹ He showed few in the 1927 exhibition and quickly introduced his concept of "Cubo-Futurism" which he described as:

1. Artificial painterly sculpture

1. See Troels Andersen, Ibid.

2. Real sculpture (collage) relief and counter-relief.
3. Words¹.

The first category probably refers to his monumentalised peasant pictures, the second to his sculpture and collage and the third to the crossing of borders between poetry and painting. The shift or displacement of images common to both poetry and painting known as sdvig occurs at this time and is most clearly observable in the "Portrait of Ivan Kliun" 1911, (see Figures 397-399) especially in the left eye. Studies for this incisive and careful design similar to Juan Gris who was also using a shifting or overlapping effect ultimately derived from Cézanne's disequilibrium. ^{The word} "Za-tmenie" ("eclipse") appears in "An Englishman in Moscow". (Figure 405). Puns were also used in the script of "Victory over the Sun" performed in 1913. The representation of a saw, a pair of scissors and other sharp instruments in the pictures of this time such as "The Portrait of Ivan Klyun" 1911 (Figure 399) and "An Englishman in Moscow" may be associated with the device of dislocating objects by moving them from their natural positions, cutting them up and shifting the resulting pieces out of their proper place. John Bowlt has observed the use of these images in Russian Futurist poetry at this time and considers this to be their source in Malevich's paintings:

Whatever their semantic value, such images as the saw, borrowed from the Khlebnikov-Kruchenykh poem Igra v adu Moscow 1913, the sword and scissors are symbols of disembodiment which emphasise the chaos of the world deprived of conventional² logic and reveal the dynamics of the objective world.

-
1. Ot Kubizma K Suprematizmu. Novy zhivopisny Realizm (From Cubism to Suprematism. A New Painterly Realism) Petrograd 1915, p. 14.
 2. John E. Bowlt: "The semaphors of Suprematism, Malevich's Journey into the Non-objective World" in Art News, December 1973, pp. 16-22.

The image of a pair of scissors is also used by Severini in an erotic context in his painting of the Bal Tabarin (Figure 60) and by Duchamp in his Large Glass (Figure 528).

The 1913 pictures are more closely related to the cubism of Picasso and Braque but the affinities with Gleizes, Metzinger and L  ger persisted that year and in 1914. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Puteaux group who carried on the mystical and mathematical interests of the late nineteenth century communities appealed to Malevich and other Russian artists when they were about to develop metaphysical theories which derived from a late nineteenth century Russian background. It was Mercereau, one of the editors of "The World of Art" who had championed the French group in Russia. In the work of 1913 (see Figures 400-404) the semi-cylindrical shapes give way to flat rectangular compositions. "Musical Instrument/Lamp" 1913 (Figure 401) was at the transitional stage in this. "The Guardsman" 1913 (Figure 402) while being related to the work done shortly before by Braque and Picasso has an enlarged rectangle in the right hand part of the picture in which the beginning of a pure simplified form is explored as having a significance for its own sake. A similar shape appears fairly prominently in "Non-stop Station" 1913 (Figure 404). Non-representational rectangles and curved forms amid tubular figurative elements appeared in the works of L  ger between about 1910 and 1914. In "Les Noces" ("The Nuptials") 1910-11, the movements of a wedding couple are depicted among curved forms which suggest that they may represent a female nude in parts as well as non-representational forms. In L  ger's "Woman in Blue" 1912 (Figure 394) the figurative

element is even more overpowered by curved and rectangular shapes in blue, pink, black and white which in this case do not appear to represent any figurative or landscape subjects.

In the works of Malevich such shapes appearing in 1913 in "The Guardsman" hardened into geometrical rectangles of pure colour in "Woman at Poster Column" 1914 (Figure 407) and a square appears in "Warrior of the First Division" 1914, The "Portrait M.V. Matyushin" 1913 (Figure 403) appears to be a transition between the two phases in which the rectangles become firmer. Careful compositions based on geometrically calculated squares and circles fusing abstract and representational forms were painted by Juan Gris between 1911 and 1917 (see Figure 73) and by Jean Metzinger from 1911 on (see Figures 74 and 408). A grid of lines underlies Metzinger's "The Bathers" 1913 (Figure 74) and Malevich's "Portrait of M.V. Matyushin" 1913 (Figure 403). Malevich's method of combining hard-edged abstract rectangles with fairly non-cubist realistic images in 1914 in pictures such as "An Englishman in Moscow" (Figure 405) and "Aviator" (Figure 406) correspond in this matter to the stage reached by Metzinger in "The Port" (1912, Figure 408), but by the systematic reduction of form in Malevich's "Cubo-futurist" period led him inevitably to paint a black square alone on a white ground ("Black Square", oil on canvas $42\frac{7}{8}$ x $42\frac{7}{8}$ ins, Russian Museum Leningrad, reproduced in Camilla Gray Figure 126 dated c. 1913). In this painting he arrived at a basic element and symbol describing it as having been created beyond the pale of comprehension and reason.

He regarded the square as an axiom that would rid painting of all irrelevant elements. Several variations appeared later, (see Figure 421). It was during the "First Evening of the Creators of the Word" on the 13th of October 1913 in Moscow, when Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh, Vladimir Burliuk, Kamensky and Mayakovsky launched their literary proclamation "The Declaration of the Word as Such" which theorised "Zaumism", that Malevich realised his fundamental principles of "Suprematism", though his first Suprematist picture may have been completed a year or two after this (see Appendix XXXIII).

Troels Andersen considers a parallel to exist in the theories of Einstein (see Appendix XXXIV). More popular writings in which the square was used as a symbol of man were those of Madame Blavatsky, certain Theosophists and other mystics:

The phenomenal world receives its culmination and reflex of all in Man. Therefore he is the mystic square - in his metaphysical aspect - the Tetrakys - and becomes the cube on the creative plane.¹

Malevich had undoubtedly heard talk of dimensions,² but was fascinated by the new ideas which the Futurists brought out concerning the new symbols of speed and mechanical flight:

The new life of iron and the machine, the roar of automobiles, the glitter of electric lights, the whirring of propellers, have awoken the soul, which was stifling at the catacombs of ancient reason and has emerged on the roads between earth and sky.

If all artists could see the crossroads of these celestial paths, if they could comprehend these monstrous runways and the weaving of our bodies with the clouds

1. H.P. Blavatsky: The Secret Doctrine, Vol..II, p. 39. Third edition (see also Appendix XXXV).

2. T. Andersen considered that he disagreed with it but refers to C.H. Hinton The Fourth Dimension, 1909; also Susan Compton "Malevich and 'the fourth dimension'" in Studio International, April, 1974, Vol. 187, No. 965, pp.189-195.

in the sky, then₁ they would not paint
chrysanthemums.

.

Sail forth! The white, free chasm, infinity
is before us...I paint in colours according to₂ the
scale that has arisen in my creative centre.

The colour scale has taken on the symbolism of a
sensation of rising to the light tones of a colour as far as
white which is infinite and sinking down to black as the kind
of chromatic scale that Chevreul used. Kandinsky also
experimented with a scale in pictures as if to compare it with
high musical notes at the top and low at the bottom.

Troels Andersen points out that Malevich dissociated
himself from relations between colour and form which
Kandinsky described in "Concerning the Spiritual in Art".

I could also speak of my own works: in one and the
same picture I create the same forms but colour them
with different colours. I said that I colour them
in order to underline that in my own pictures I
draw a strict distinction between colour and form.
And in the case in point I colour the form with
this or that colour not because red or blue corres-
ponds to this or that form but because I paint in
colours according to the scale that has arisen in my
creative centre. To go further, elements of form
and colour are also formed according to scales which,
in their turn are created in the process of various₃
dynamic experiences or an aesthetic-artistic action.

Examining dynamic sensation we see that colour "as
such" has no significance at all. The plane or the line
which determines the sensation of dynamics may be marked in
black or white. And this is only because it is somehow
necessary to show its dynamic intensity. In the case of

-
1. Essays on Art. Vol. I-II. Copenhagen 1968. Translated by
A.B. McMillen, X. Glowaski-Prus, and David Miller. Edited
by Troels Andersen. Preface and commentaries by the
editor. Vol. I, p. 29.
 2. Op.cit.
 3. Malevich Essays on Art, ed. Troels Andersen, Vol. II, p.127.

Suprematist contrast it is the different scales of form, i.e. the sizes (dimensions) of Suprematist elements in their mutual interrelations that have the greatest significance. In this case colour in no way corresponds to form, like form to colour, but is only combined by means of the dimensions and scales of space.

The colour spots here appear as colour contrasts, and therefore, in this case, colour and what we call form have no significance that would give us the right to classify them as colour and form. Accordingly we should not examine Suprematism but merely sense the contrasts that are created in it (dynamics, contrasts, space).

The creations of these sensations may really be an expression of phenomena in the non-objective functions of the universe. This essence of a phenomenon senses non-objectivity, since that is the nature of its reality. This reality will never be consciously realised, since the consciousness of form is contained in the object, in something concrete, and man strives to understand it.¹

Malevich gave his early Suprematist paintings titles such as "Football Match" (Figure 413) or "Portrait of a Peasant Woman". However the titles of pictures done in 1917 and 1918 during the "aerial Suprematist" phase suggest aeroplanes, "planites" and flying. None of these were shown at the 1927 exhibition and later discredited them. He combined his interest in floating elements of Suprematist painting with an admiration for aviation common to Mayakovsky

1. Ibid., Vol. II, p. 138.

and the Italian Futurists, Orphists and Purists. He had criticised the Futurists for producing "imitative art" but at that time his pictures came close to visual representations of space flight.

He reacted to this between 1917 and 1919 with pure non representational forms "Yellow Parallelogram" (Figure 419) "White Square on White" (Figure 421) etc. Of Malevich's two white canvasses devoid of any kind of mark at all were hung right up under the white ceiling and intended to be seen at a distance. N. Punin wrote:

...The significance of these "pure" forms is to describe, to name the language of painting, some state or other in our consciousness, a state which only the tension (stimulus) of the Suprematist conception of the world approaches - as far as I have understood it - that zero of painting concerning which Malevich has talked so much recently. In this way it is not the bare canvas in itself that assumes dominant significance, but a system that transforms the canvas into a pictorial event...¹

This was the third monochrome painting in Russian art exhibited as a work of Unovis. Rodchenko's black picture 1921 and Tatlin's rose-coloured board of 1922 was followed in 1923 by Malevich's paintings and manifests "The Suprematist Mirror".²

In the autumn of 1919 Malevich began work on three-dimensional objects³(see Figures 425-427). The ideas of

-
1. N. Punin: "Komu oni meshayut?" in Zhizn Iskusstva No. 19, 1923, pp. 15-16 (pg.) continued in N. Punin: "Gosudarstvennaya vystavka (prodolzhenie)", ibid., No. 22, 1923, pp. 5-6.
 2. K. Malevich: "Suprematicheskoye Zerkalo" ("The Suprematist Mirror") in Zhizn Iskusstva May 22, 1923, No. 20, pp.15-16 (pg.). English translation A.H. McMillin in Essays on Art Copenhagen 1968.
 3. The models by Malevich and students of the Unovis including documents were mostly destroyed by the Fascists.

writing the arts had included architecture, painting and sculpture in a synthesis since the late nineteenth century in eastern and western Europe. Kandinsky had introduced Gropius and Taut's ideas on this. Tatlin's IIIrd International was a similar attempt and El Lissitzky had begun his Prouns in 1919 (see Figures 493-497) at Vitebsk where he had just been appointed head of architecture. In March 1921 a one-day exhibition was held at Vitebsk showing models of floating electric towns, power stations, railway stations etc. constructed in cardboard on the lines of Lissitzky's prouns.

In 1922 or 23 Malevich began to construct them out of plaster and he exhibited designs at the Venice Bienale of 1924.

Troels Andersen considers the models to fall into two groups: standing and lying, designated Alpha, Beta and Gota, Zeta respectively. Each model consists of a few basic elements. Drawings of some of them are included in a draft of film which it was planned to make about Suprematism. A cube is portrayed in three different sizes and then varied dynamically, i.e. extended, thereby producing an oblong beam, square in section, and two boxes whose length is greater than their height. Malevich saw the dynamic variants as the result of the fall through space of the original cube form. The movement created changes in the form and conversely, the form registered the movement through space.

The large vertical models can be said to have been conceived as a single movement from above downwards, while the horizontal ones thrust outwards into space in one direction. All this was a clear continuation of the ideas he formulated

in his Suprematist pictures.

The individual models consist of many component parts. The structure of American skyscrapers with box-like projections that were necessitated by the zoning regulations in big cities come to mind.

Malevich defined two major aspects of architecture. The first was the satisfaction of functional requirement: there architecture overlapped engineering. The second, which he regarded as unique, was the development of forms that will satisfy aesthetic needs. The architect was trained to deal with the functional aspect of architecture through a course on structure, materials and construction at INKhUK. All these were theoretical courses. To teach architectural aesthetics as a science, the basic rules and norms which throughout history had been considered aesthetically satisfying had to be extracted from their application in architecture.

Malevich believed that beauty as an ideal was absolute, and therefore superseded the usefulness of an architectural edifice. Greek and Egyptian temples, long stripped of their intended functions, continued to be objects of admiration purely on the basis of their aesthetic values. Today, because of the accelerated development of technology, as Malevich asserted, objects would quickly lose their functional usefulness. Accordingly their aesthetic value would become their only enduring aspects. Malevich's architektoniki unlike architectural models which were designed with a function in mind, were conceived as basic models for a new architecture.¹

1. See Milka Bliznakov: "The Rationalist Movement in Soviet Architecture of the 1920s" in Russian Formalism, a collection of articles and texts in translation edited by Stephen Bann and John E. Bowlt, Edinburgh, 1973, p. 149.

Malevich's idea of absolute beauty corresponds to the stage arrived at by the Purists Le Corbusier and Ozenfant (see Chapter XXIII and Figures 561-564), but while they directed their ideas toward the production of real architecture, design and paintings whose subjects were abstracted from still life and other cubist motifs, Malevich's architectons were abstracted from the new sky-scraper architecture of America and intended to be theoretical abstractions expressive of a certain spirit which was quite unrelated to both Cubism and the French equivalents of Constructivism.

Also the ideas and artefacts of Malevich after 1917 disclose similarities to the works which De Stijl artists were producing independently about the same time (see Figures 429-432). Reproductions of Malevich's work appeared in the pages of the magazine "De Stijl" in Holland and De Stijl works were reproduced in "Sovremennaya Arkhitektura" ("Modern Architecture") by 1930. By 1917 after passing through a phase of Cubism, Piet Mondrian, Theo van Doesburg and Bart van der Leek painted in a similar style to one another. They used squares and grids of lines crossing at right angles in an attempt to produce an absolute objective harmony by reducing the formal means to their constitutive elements (see Figure 429). That year, with the architects J.J.P. Oud, Wils, Van Hoff and the sculptor George Vantongerloo, they set up De Stijl ("The style") group. The development of industrial, technological and architectural design toward clarity and "functional purity" was the aim of the architects.

The elementary law of Neo-Plasticism, as Mondrian names this style of painting in 1920, was that harmony is a balance of contrasts. The most elementary contrast, he said, was in the right angle and balance is expressed by straight lines at right angles to one another. Colour was reduced to the primaries, red, blue and yellow and "non-colours", black, white and grey. With these elements arranged according to relations of form and colour, an elementary and hence universal harmony, free from representational and individual associations could be expressed in pure architecture and pure harmonic art. The style, ideology and social implications of this group as well as that of the Russian groups made a decisive impact on the Bauhaus. The machine was important to the modern manifestation of the spiritual discipline of De Stijl if painting, sculpture and architecture were to work collectively to produce integral form.

The first manifesto of De Stijl was entitled "The general consciousness of the Age" and expressed the idea that the old world was being destroyed by the war and a new universal art was to be developed. As well as a consciousness of real events in the modern world, De Stijl theories were inspired by Dr. M.H.J. Schoenmaekers, a philosopher, mystic and mathematician who lived near Mondrian and Van der Leek in Laren. His two books Het Nieuwe Wereldbeeld ("The New Image of the World") and Beginnselen der Beeldende wiskunde ("Principles of Plastic Mathematics") expressed theories derived from Hegel (see Appendix XXXIX) and a method of mystical concentration or meditation that was designed to plot the path to knowledge and understanding of the structure

and meaning of the universe. Mysticism was closely associated with his view of a mathematical structure of the universe and out of this combination artists such as Mondrian formulated ideas with regard to their creative efforts:

The new plastic can be called abstract not only because it is the direct expression of the universal but because its expression excludes the individual (or naturalistic concreteness).

.

After long culture, the consciousness has grown in painting that the abstract - the universal - can be clearly represented. Through the very culture of representation through form, we have come to see that the abstract - like the mathematical - is actually expressed in and through all things; ...

Through painting itself, the artist became conscious that the appearance of the universal-as-the-mathematical is the essence of all feelings of beauty as pure aesthetic expression...

As awareness grew, he [the artist] learned to construct appearance through the precise plastic representation of individual things - precisely by abstracting it more and more. He learned to represent exactly what is merely suggested by nature,...

Neo-plasticism is abstract-real because it stands between the absolute abstract and the natural, or concrete-real.

.

Abstract real painting can create in an aesthetic-mathematic way because it possesses an exact mathematical means of expression: colour carried to determination.

To determine colour involves: first, reducing naturalistic colour to primary colour, second, reducing colour to plane; third, delimiting colour - so that it appears as a unity of rectangular planes.

Reduction to primary colour leads to the visual internationalisation of the material, to a purer manifestation of light...¹

-
1. Piet Mondrian: "Neoplasticism in Painting" Section 3. "The New Plastic as 'Abstract-Real Painting': The Plastic Means and Composition" in De Stijl 1917, Volume I, No. 3, pp. 29-31. (English translation, Hans L.C. Jaffé: De Stijl, Thames and Hudson, London, 1970, pp. 54-55).

In his metaphysical interpretation of individual colours Mondrian relied on a view that appears to have been derived by Schoenmaekers from Goethe's theories of colour (see Appendix XLII):

Reducing natural colour to primary colour changes the most outward manifestation of colour back to the most inward. If, of the three primary colours, yellow and blue are the most inward, if red (the union of blue and yellow - see Dr. Schoenmaekers, The New World Image) is more outward; then a painting in yellow and blue alone would be more inward than one in the three primary colours...The principal thing is for colour to be free of individuality and individual sensations, and to give expression only to the serene emotion of the universal.¹

Mondrian's early interests in Theosophy; philosophical views derived from Hegel and Goethe, and his belief in intuition are, in general, akin to those of Kandinsky and Malevich:

Intuition enlightens and so links up with pure thought. They together become an intelligence which is not simply of the brain, which does not calculate, but which feels and thinks.²

Differing cultural traditions and interpretations of ideas caused the style and emphasis of each of these pioneers of non-representational painting to vary.

In France many of the Cubists became interested in the mathematics of Princet and of Goldberg and based compositions on "golden section" measurements.

Similarly Shoemaker's mystical mathematics probably helped to decide the forms and formal arrangements of Mondrian and De Stijl. These forms tended to a further abstraction

1. Op.cit.

2. Piet Mondrian: "Plastic Art and Pure Plastic Art" ("Figurative Art and Non-figurative Art") 1937, originally published in Martin, Nicholson, and Gabo, Circle (London, Faber & Faber, 1937), pp. 50-63, reprinted in 1971, p. 47.

than those of the French and to be more orderly than those of the Suprematists who expressed no interest in the classical measurements and whose spiritual inspiration lay in a different direction.

Figure 380. K. Malevich: Chiropodist in the Bathroom 1908-9, gouache on paper, $30\frac{1}{4} \times 40\frac{1}{2}$, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

Figure 381. Paul Cézanne: The Card Players 1890-2, oil on canvas, $52\frac{3}{4} \times 71\frac{1}{4}$, Barnes Foundation, Merion, USA.



Figure 382. K. Malevich: The Bather, 1910
105 x 69 cms. Gouache on paper.
Collection: Stedelijk Museum,
Amsterdam.

Figure 383. H. Matisse: Bowlers, 1908. Oil,
113.5 x 145 cms. State Hermitage
Museum, Leningrad.



Figure 384. H. Matisse: The Dance, 1910,
Oil, 260 x 391 cms. State Hermitage
Museum, Leningrad.

Figure 385. H. Matisse: Sketch for The Dance,
1909. Charcoal drawing.
Musée de Grenoble.

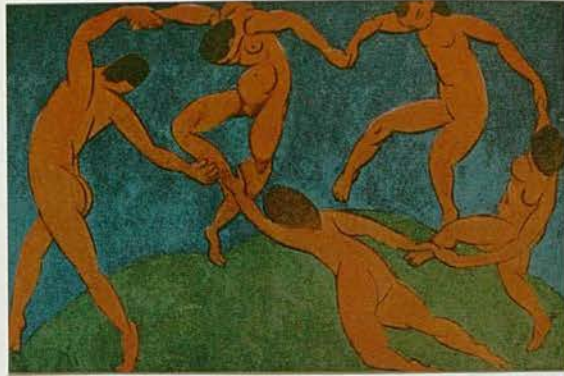


Figure 386. K. Malevich: Haymaking, 1911.

Oil on canvas, $33\frac{7}{8}$ x $26\frac{3}{8}$

Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

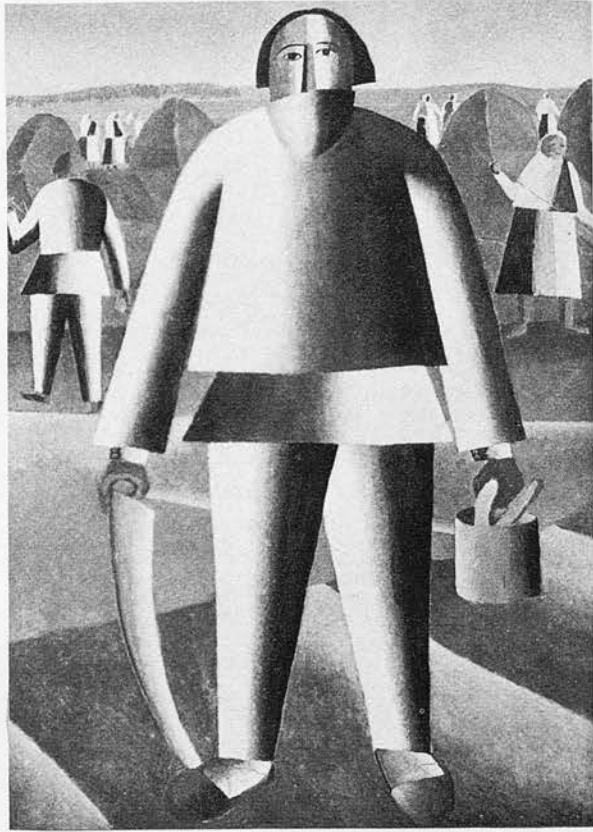


Figure 387. K. Malevich: Peasant Woman with Buckets,
1912. 73 x 73 cms. Stedlijk Museum,
Amsterdam.

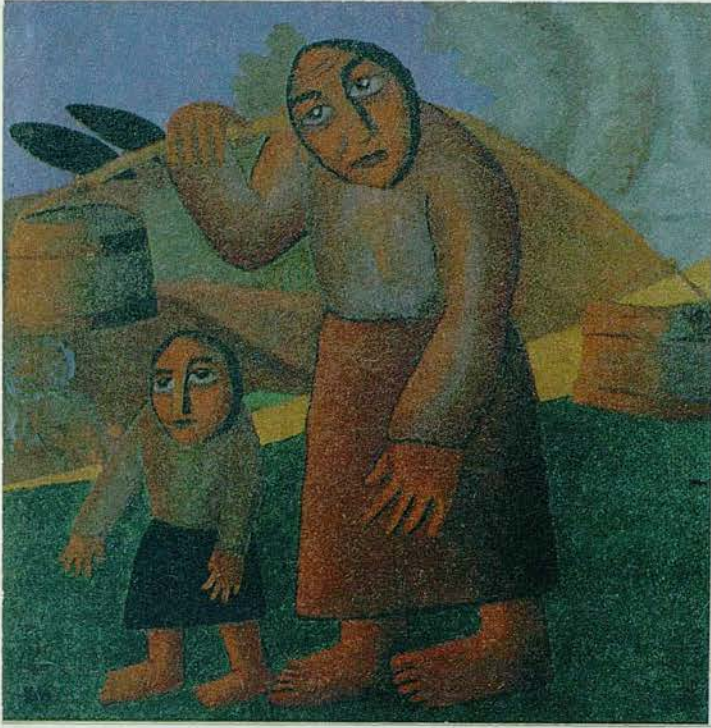
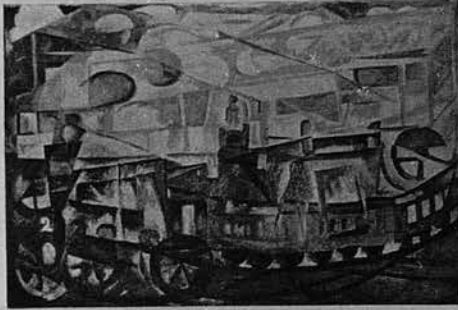


Figure 388. N. Goncharova: Aeroplan nad
Poezdom ("Aeroplane over Train")
catalogued as No. 29 in the
"Exhibition of pictures by Goncharova
1900-1913" (St. Petersburg 1914)
and reproduced from page 27 of the
same catalogue.



Аэропланъ надъ поѣздомъ.

Figure 389. K. Malevich: Morning in the Village
after Snowfall, 1912.

80 x 79.5 cms., oil on canvas.

Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum,
New York.

Figure 390. Albert Gleizes: Landscape, 1911.

Oil on canvas mounted on board
28 x 36 inches (71 x 91.5 cms.).

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Morton
G. Neumann, Chicago.

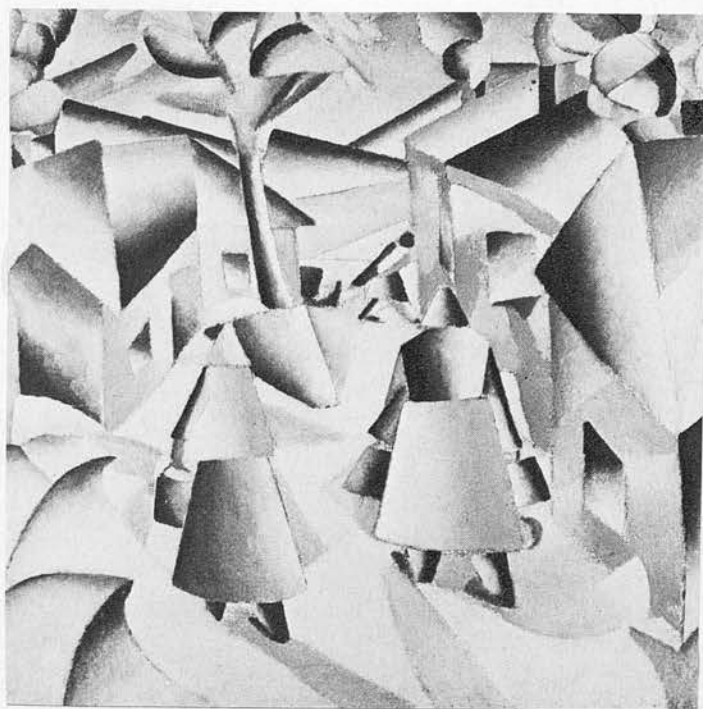


Figure 391. K. Malevich: Head of a Peasant Girl,
1912/13, oil on canvas, $31\frac{1}{2}$ x $37\frac{3}{8}$,
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

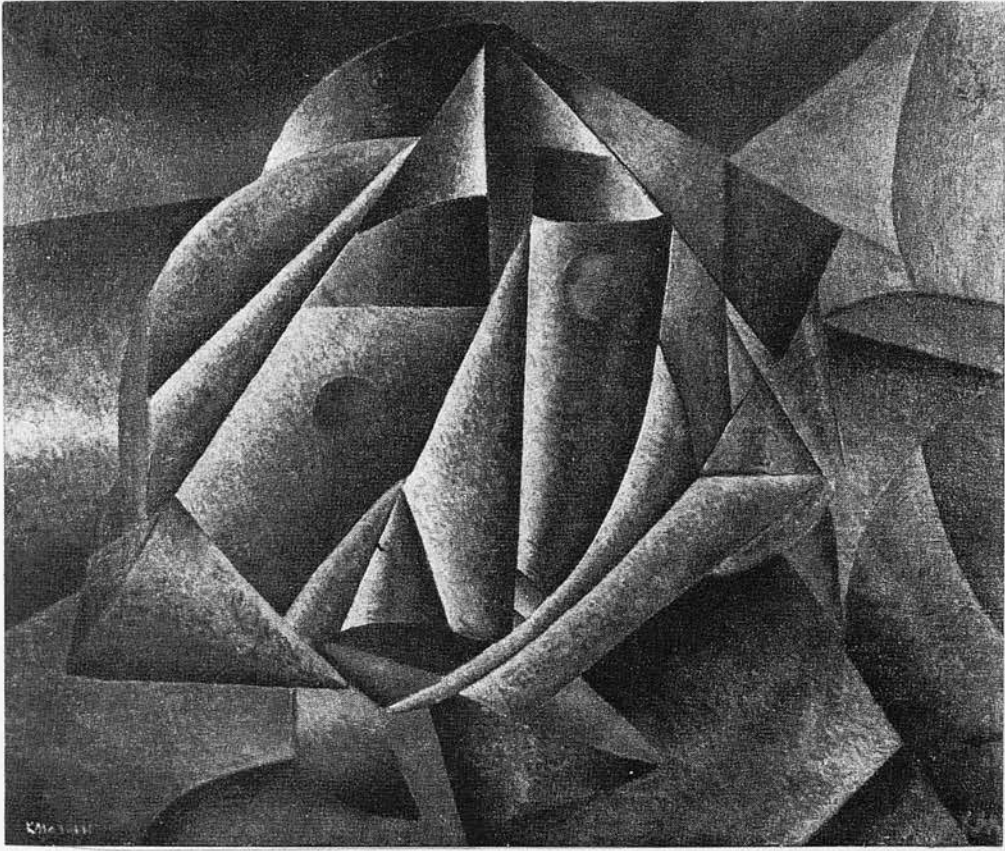


Figure 392. K. Malevich: Woman with Buckets,
Dynamic arrangement, 1912.
Museum of Modern Art, New York.

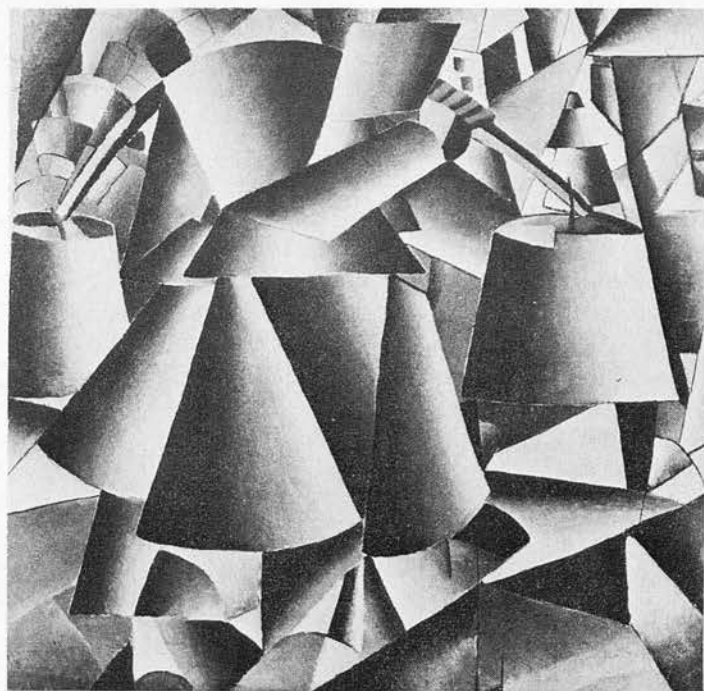


Figure 393. Fernand Léger: La Fumée (Smoke),
1912, oil on canvas, 92 x 73 cms.
($36\frac{1}{4}$ x $28\frac{3}{4}$ inches).
Albright Knox Gallery, Buffalo.

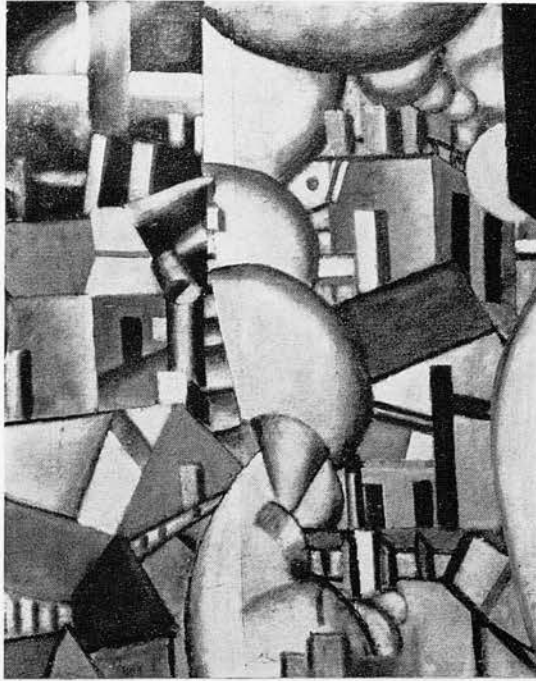


Figure 394. F. Léger: La Femme en Bleu
(Woman in Blue) 1912, oil on canvas
194 x 130 cms. Oeffentliche
Kunstsammlung, Basle.

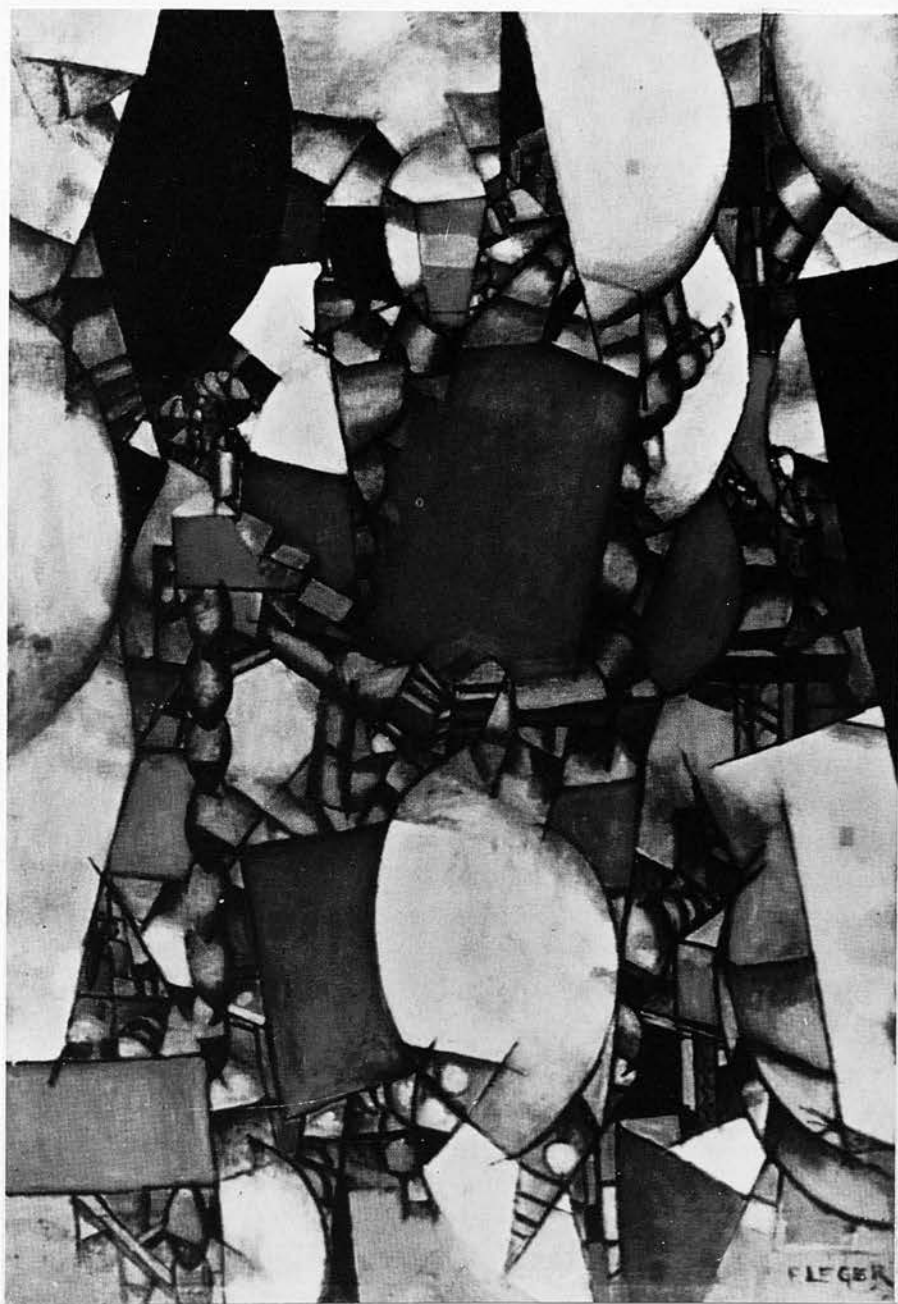


Figure 395. F. Léger: Contrastes de Formes
(Contrasted Forms), 1913, oil on
canvas. 132 x 98 cms. (52 x 38½ inches),
Philadelphia Museum of Art, Arensberg
Collection.

Figure 396. F. Léger: L'Escalier (2 me.État)
The Staircase (2nd version) 1914,
oil on canvas, 89 x 125 cms.
(35 x 49¼ inches).
Harold Diamond collection, New York.

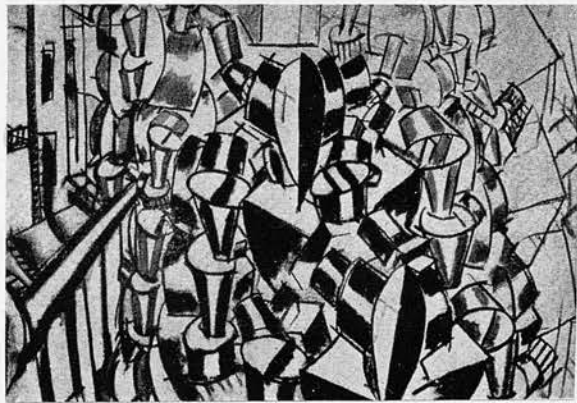
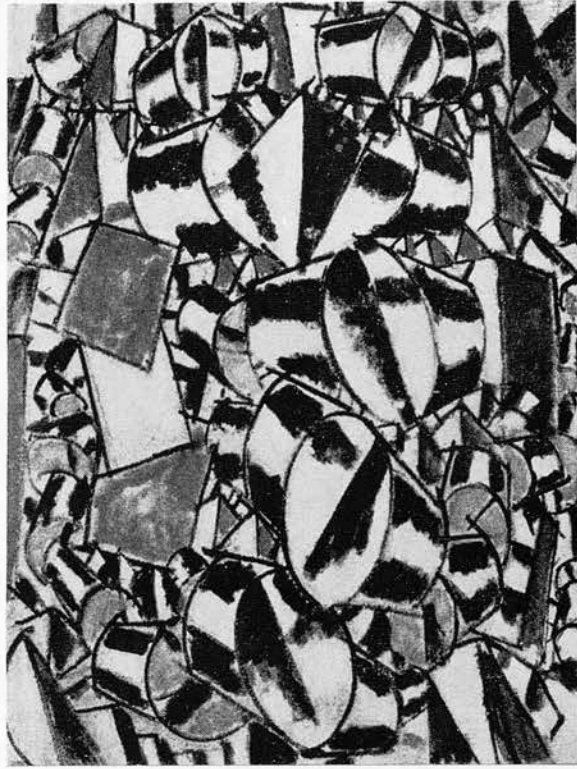


Figure 397. K. Malevich: Drawing for Portrait
of Ivan Klyun (c. 1911)
15.3 x 9.3 pencil/paper
Private collection, Leningrad.

Figure 398. K. Malevich: Drawing for Portrait
of Ivan Klyun (c. 1911)
15.3 x 9.3 pencil/paper.
Private collection, Leningrad.

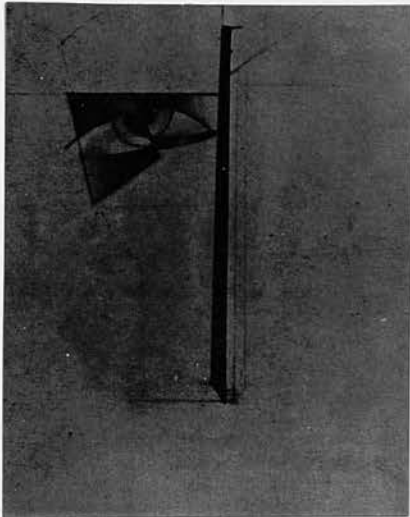
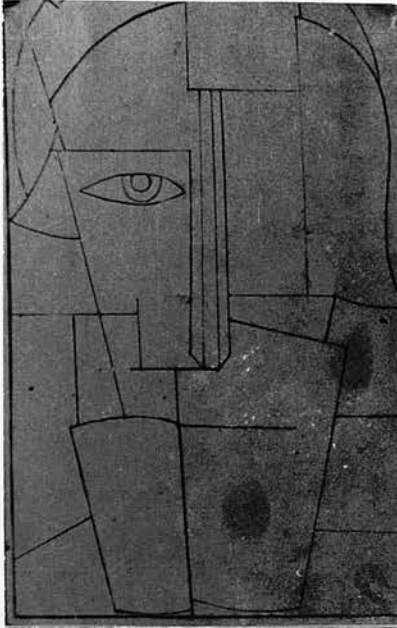


Figure 399. K. Malevich: Portrait of Ivan Klyun
1911. 111.5 x 70.5, oil/canvas.
Russian Museum, Leningrad.

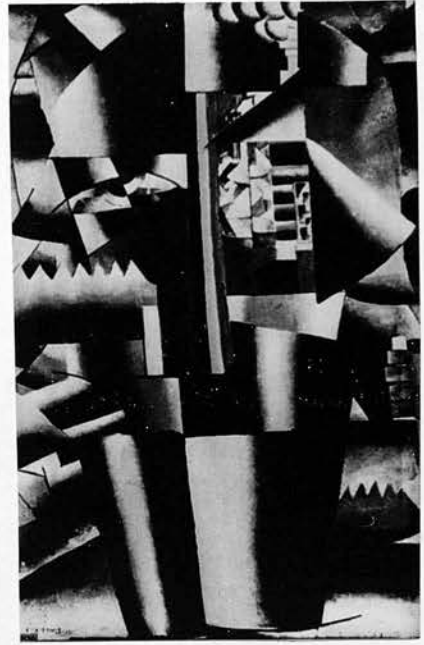


Figure 400. K. Malevich: The Knife-Grinder
1912, oil on canvas,
 $31\frac{1}{2}$ x $31\frac{1}{2}$, Yale Art Gallery,
New Haven.

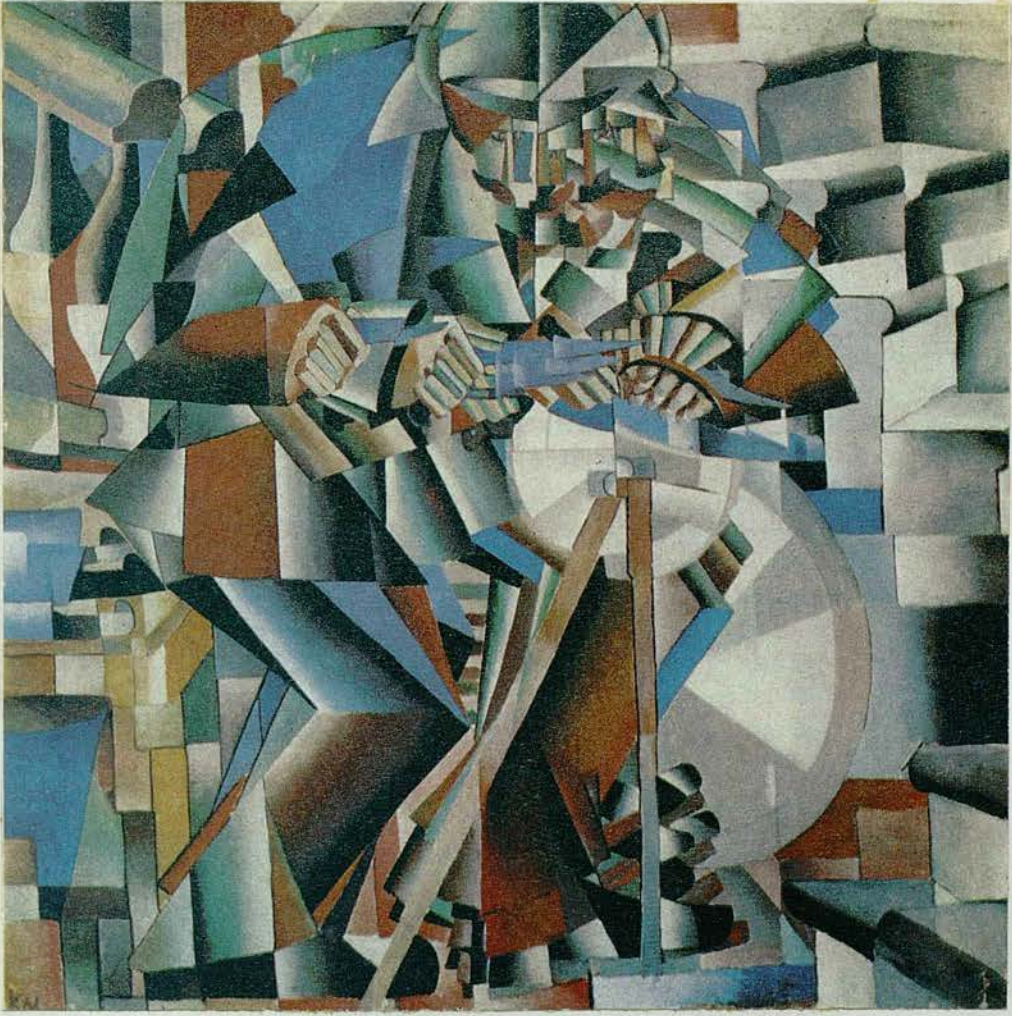


Figure 401. K. Malevich: "Musical Instrument/
Lamp". 1913, 83.5 x 69.5 cms.,
oil on canvas.
Collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 402. K. Malevich: The Guardsman
1913 - oil on canvas,
22½ x 26,
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

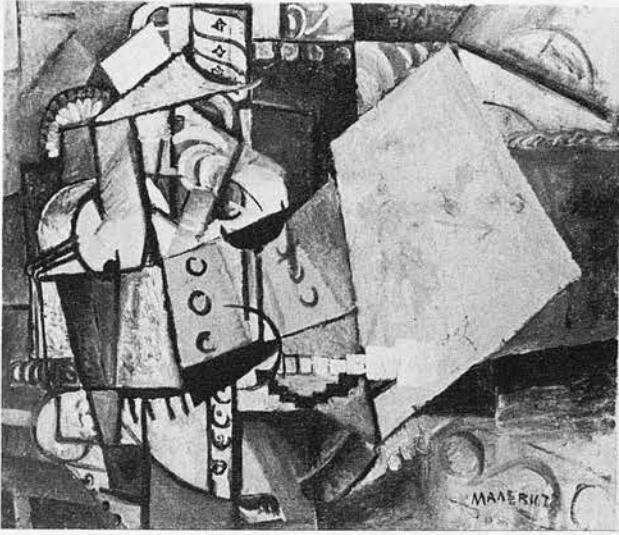


Figure 403. K. Malevich: Portrait of
M.V. Matiushin, 1913, oil on
canvas, $41\frac{3}{4}$ x $40\frac{1}{8}$,
G. Kostakis collection, Moscow.

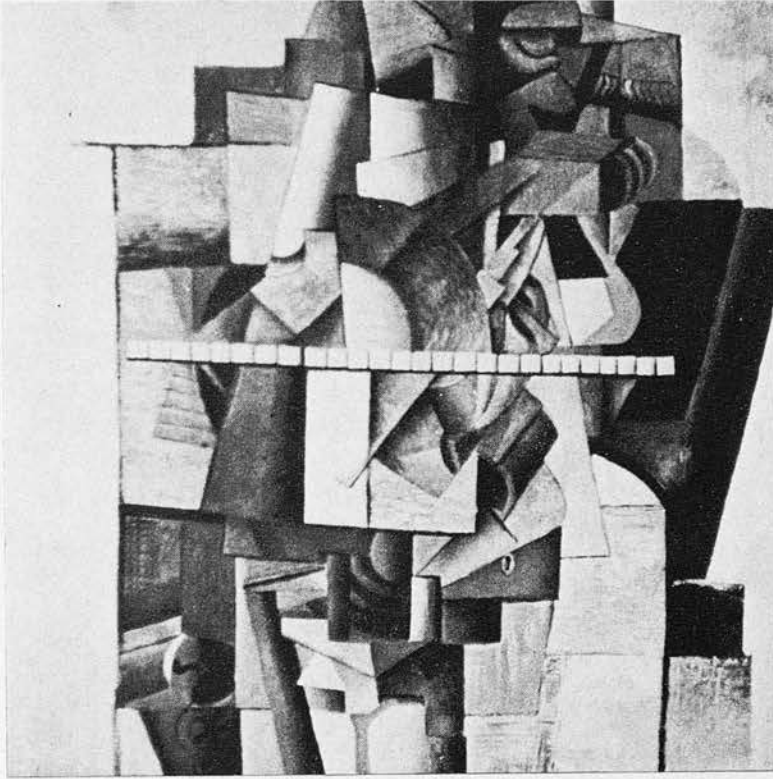


Figure 404. K. Malevich: Non-stop Station,
1911-13. 48.7 x 25.7, oil on wood,
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.

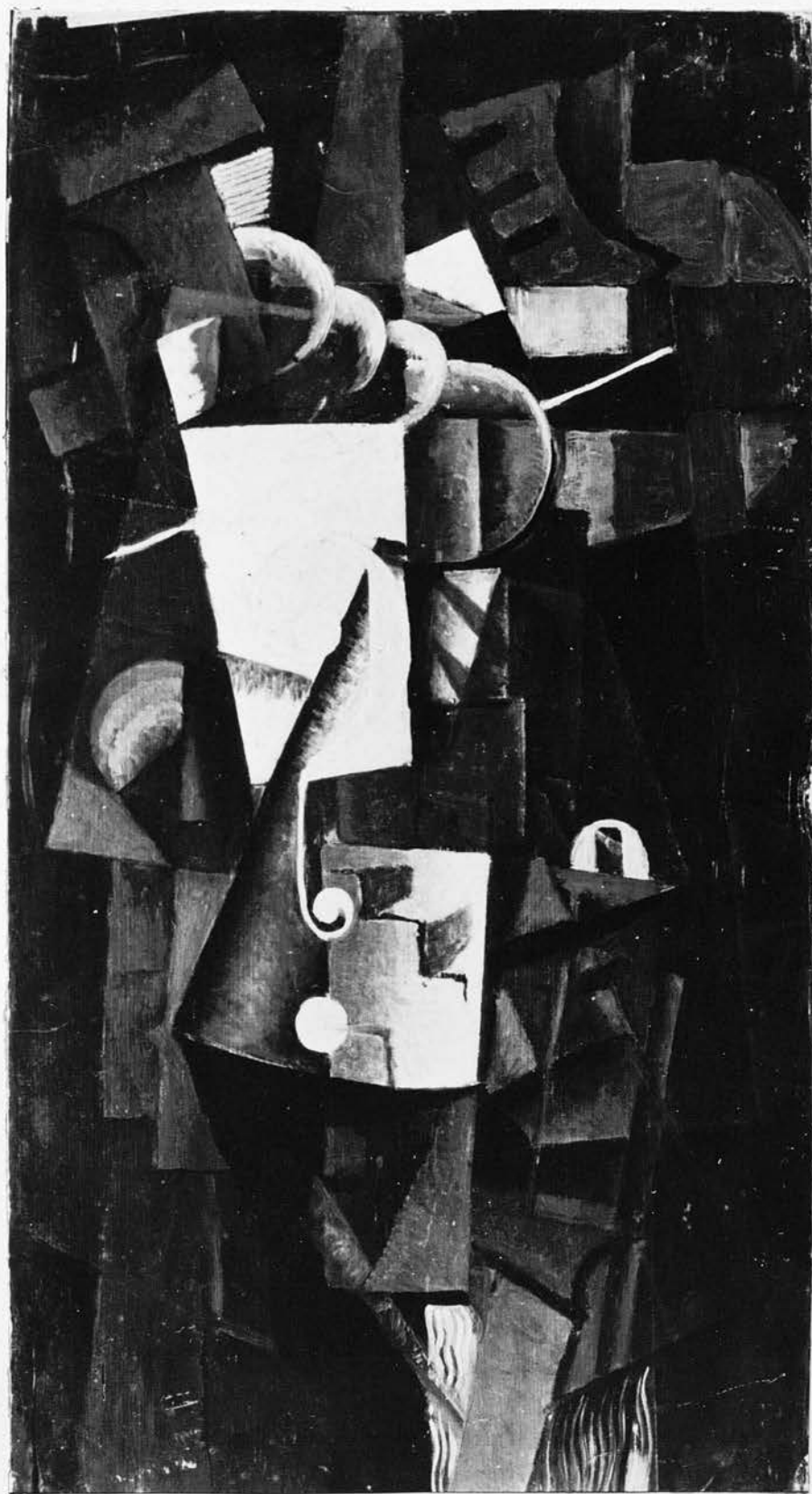


Figure 405. K. Malevich: An Englishman in Moscow
1913-14. Oil on canvas, 34 x 22 $\frac{1}{4}$,
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 406. K. Malevich: Aviator, 1914.

125 x 65, oil/canvas.

Russian Museum, Leningrad.



Figure 407. K. Malevich: Woman at Poster Column
1914, 71 x 64 cms, oil on canvas and
collage.
Collection Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 408. Jean Metzinger: The Port, 1912.
Private Collection, Mr. and Mrs.
Nathan Cummings.
Available as a New York Graphic
Society Print, size 28 x 34 inches.



Figure 409. K. Malevich: Suprematist Composition,
1914-15, Pencil on paper.
 $6\frac{3}{4}$ x $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches (17 x 11.5 cms.)
(Annely Juda cat. 4, The Non-
Objective World).

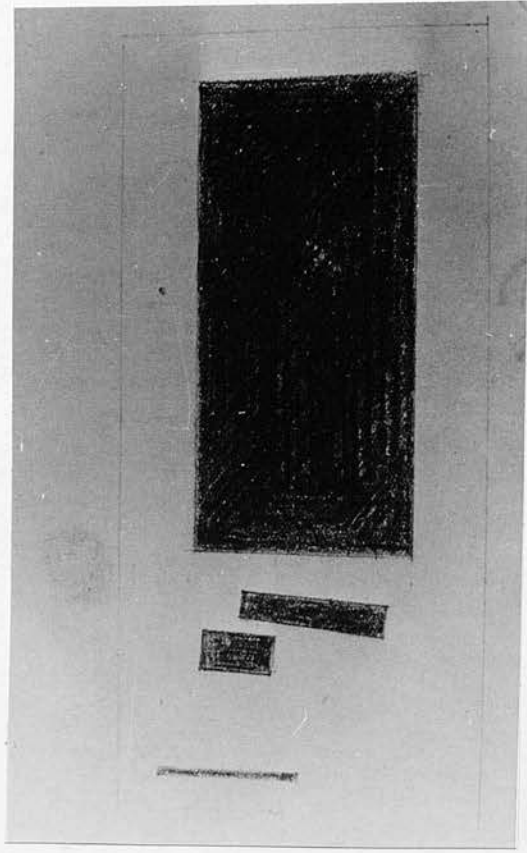


Figure 410. K. Malevich: Suprematist Composition.
1914-15, pencil on paper.
 $6\frac{3}{4}$ x $4\frac{3}{4}$ ins. (17.3 x 12 cms.)
Annely Juda, cat. 5. (Annely Juda Cat. 5,
The Non-Objective World).

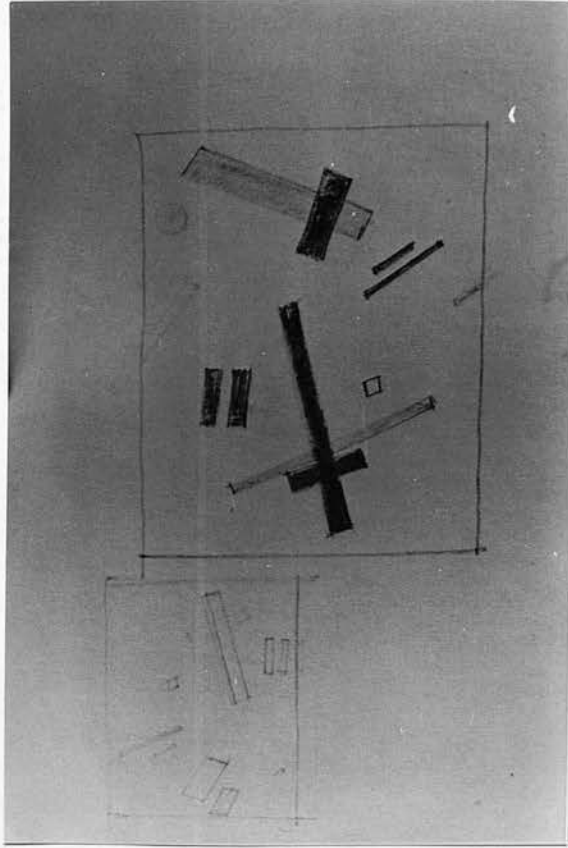


Figure 411. K. Malevich: Suprematist Painting, Eight
Red Rectangles, 1915. 57.5 x 48.5 cms.
oil on canvas.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 412. K. Malevich: Suprematist Painting,
1915, 101.5 x 62 cms.,
Oil on canvas.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 413. K. Malevich: Football Match, 1915.
70 x 44 cms. Oil on canvas.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 414. K. Malevich: Suprematist Painting,
Black Rectangle, Blue Triangle.
1915. 66.5 x 57 cms., oil on canvas.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

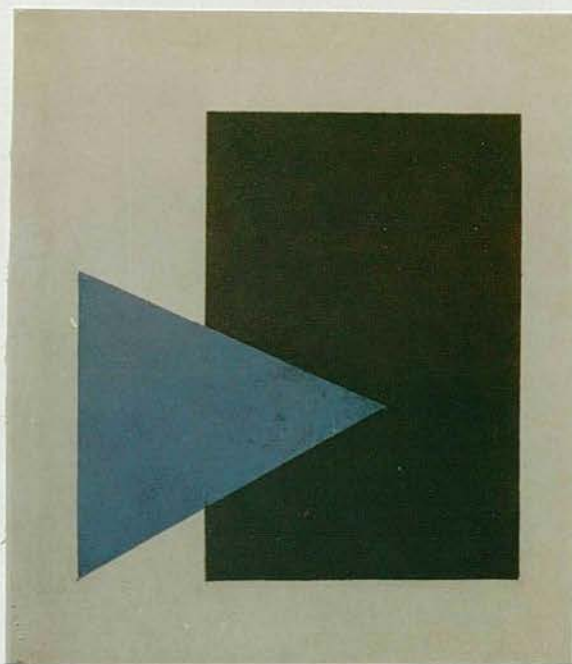


Figure 415. K. Malevich: No. 50, 1915.
97 x 66 cms., oil on canvas.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 416. K. Malevich: Suprematist Painting,
1915-16. 49 x 44.5 cms., oil on canvas.
Wilhelm Halk collection, Cologne.
Formerly Hans von Riesen collection, Bremen.

Figure 417. K. Malevich: Suprematist Painting,
1916, 88 x 70.5 cms., oil on canvas.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.



Figure 418. K. Malevich: Suprematist Painting,
1917, 96.5 x 65.4 cms., oil on canvas.
Museum of Modern Art, New York.

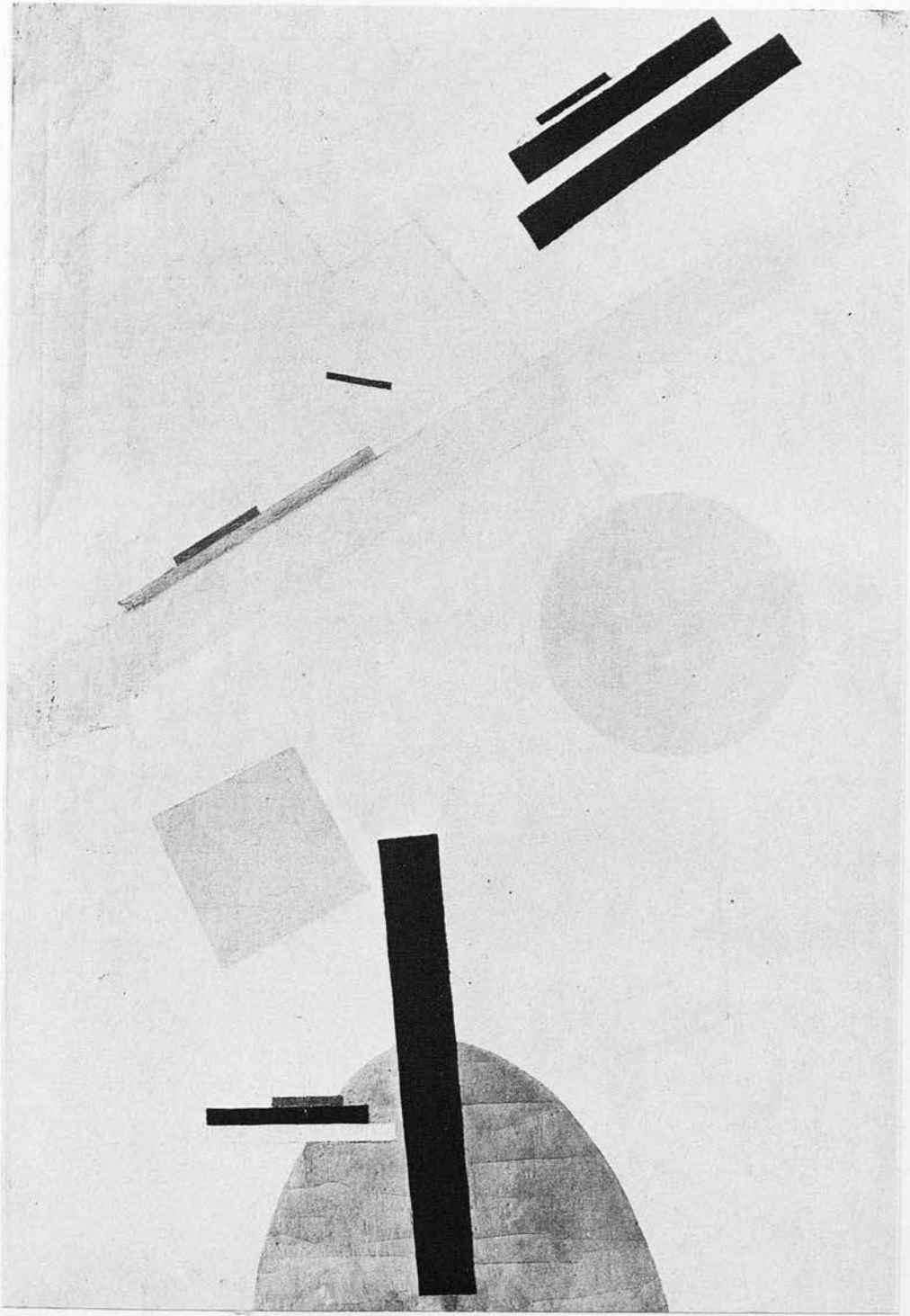


Figure 419. K. Malevich: Suprematist Painting:
Yellow Quadrilateral on White, 1917-18,
oil on canvas, $41\frac{3}{4}$ x $27\frac{3}{4}$.
Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

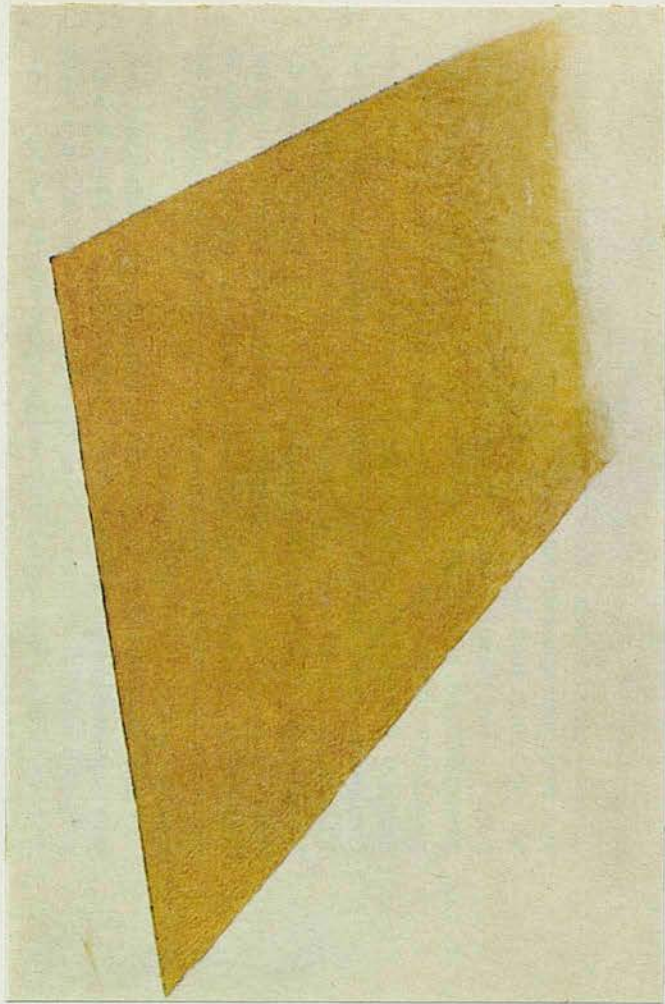


Figure 420. K. Malevich: Cross (after 1920)
110 x 110 cms., oil on canvas.
Russian Museum, Leningrad.

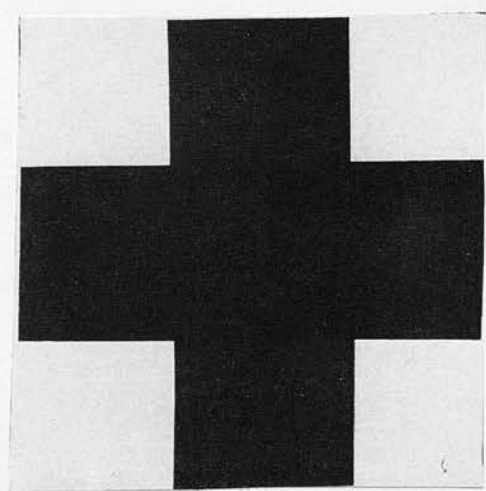


Figure 421. K. Malevich: White Square on White,
1918. 78.7 x 78.7 cms., oil on canvas.
Museum of Modern Art, New York.

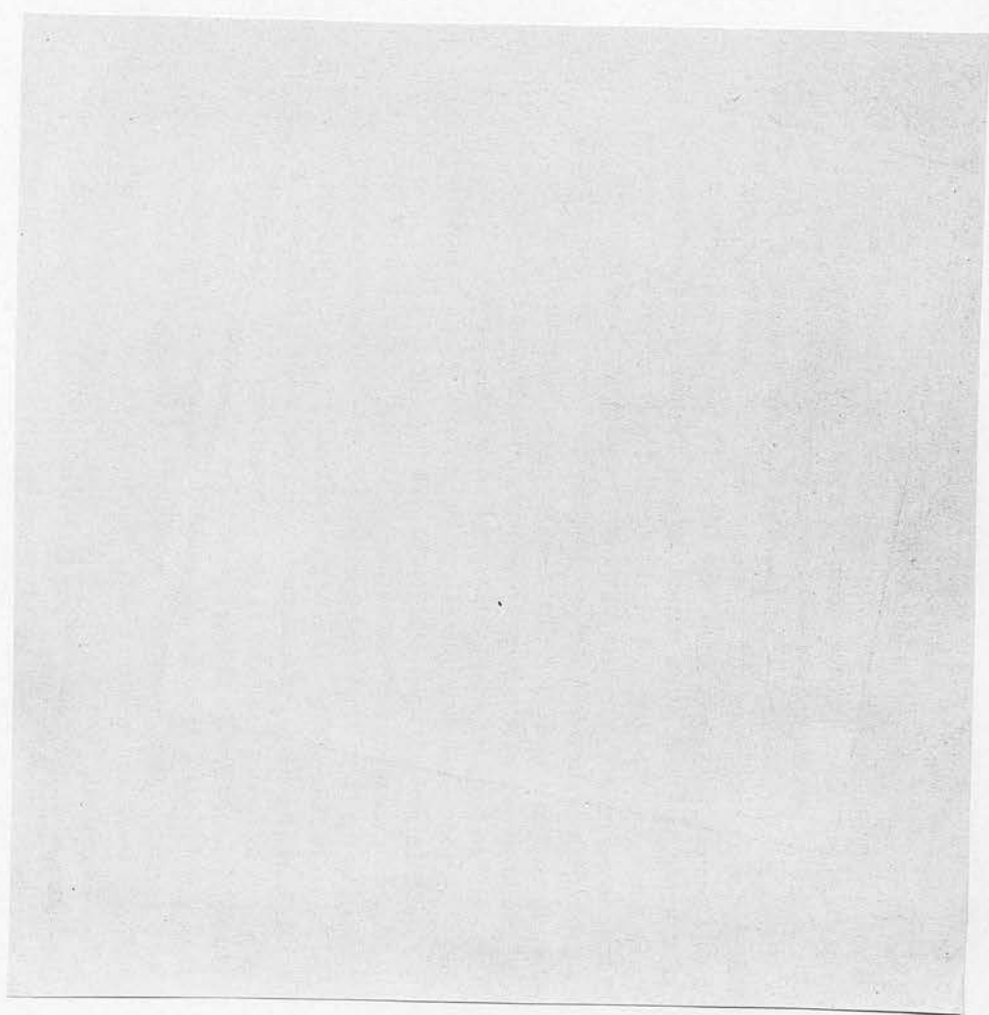


Figure 422. Alexander Rodchenko:

Black on Black, 1918, oil on canvas.

$11\frac{3}{8}$ x $11\frac{3}{8}$ inches. Tretyakov Gallery,
Moscow.

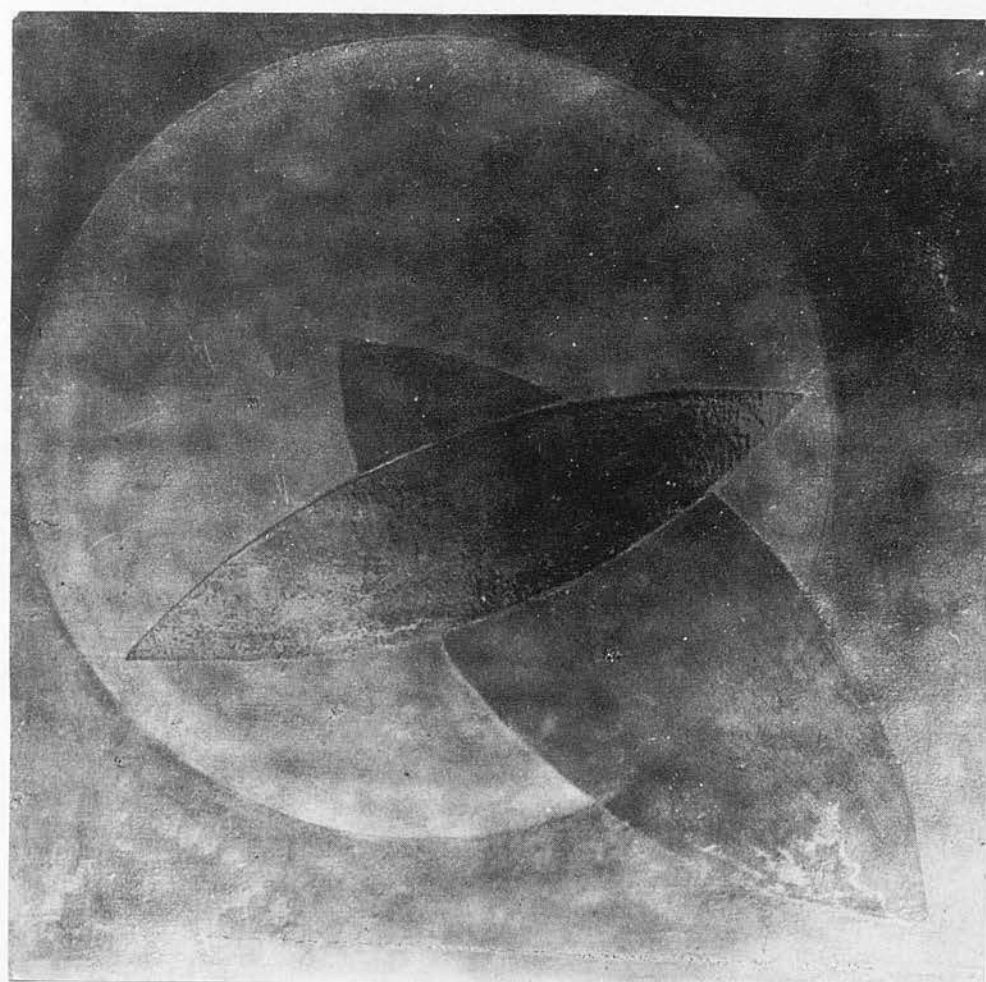


Figure 423. K. Malevich: Cover -
On New Systems in Art, 1919.

Figure 424. K. Malevich: Page 32 -
On New Systems in Art, 1919.

Figure 425. K. Malevich: Architectonic model.
Described as "Gota" (1923?) in
Treols Andersen Catalogue.
Ibid., p. 139.

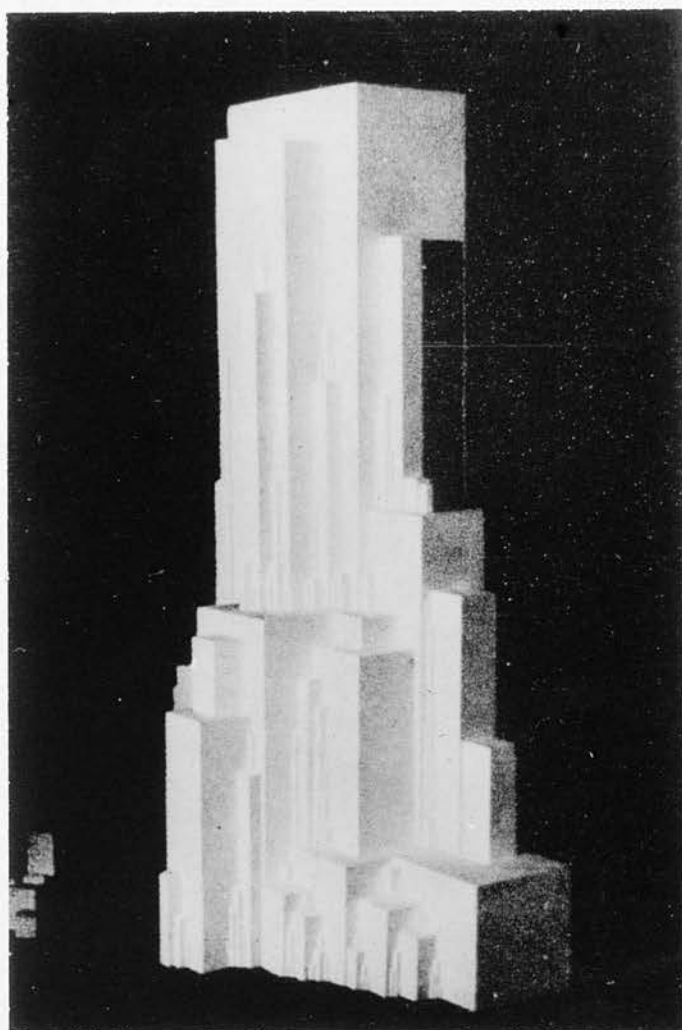


Figure 426. K. Malevich: Architectonic model.
Described as "Alfa (1923)" in Troels
Anderson catalogue: ibid., p. 139.

Figure 427. K. Malevich: Suprematist ornaments,
1927. (See Troels Anderson catalogue:
ibid., pp. 141 and 143.)

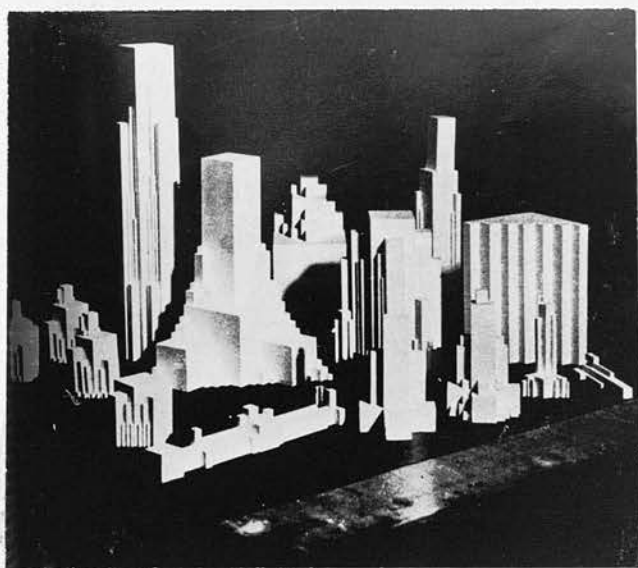
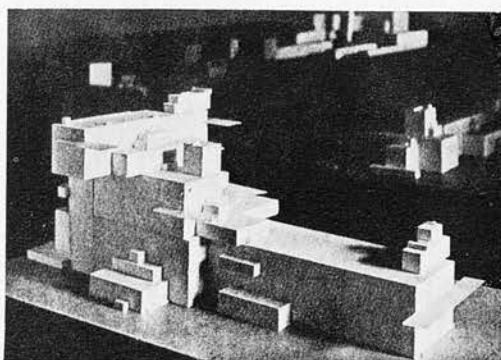
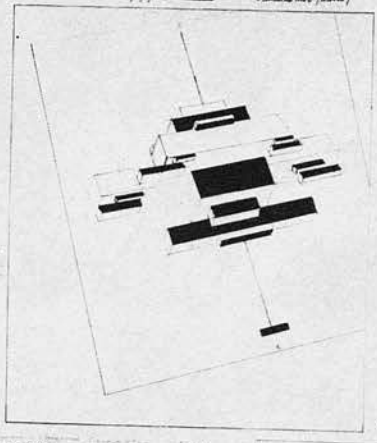


Figure 428. K. Malevich: Future Planits.
Homes for Earth-dwellers; People.
c. 1924. pencil on paper.
 $11\frac{3}{4}$ x $17\frac{3}{4}$. Stedelijk Museum,
Amsterdam.

Доклад
Бюро Административных Записок (с. 10)



1:100

1. Вестибюль
2. Приемная
3. Кабинет
4. Конференц-зал
5. Зал заседаний
6. Библиотека
7. Читальный зал
8. Кухня
9. Санитарный узел
10. Подсобные помещения



1. Вестибюль
2. Приемная
3. Кабинет
4. Конференц-зал
5. Зал заседаний
6. Библиотека
7. Читальный зал
8. Кухня
9. Санитарный узел
10. Подсобные помещения

Figure 429. Piet Mondrian: Composition in Blue B.
1917. Kröller-Müller Museum,
Otterlo.

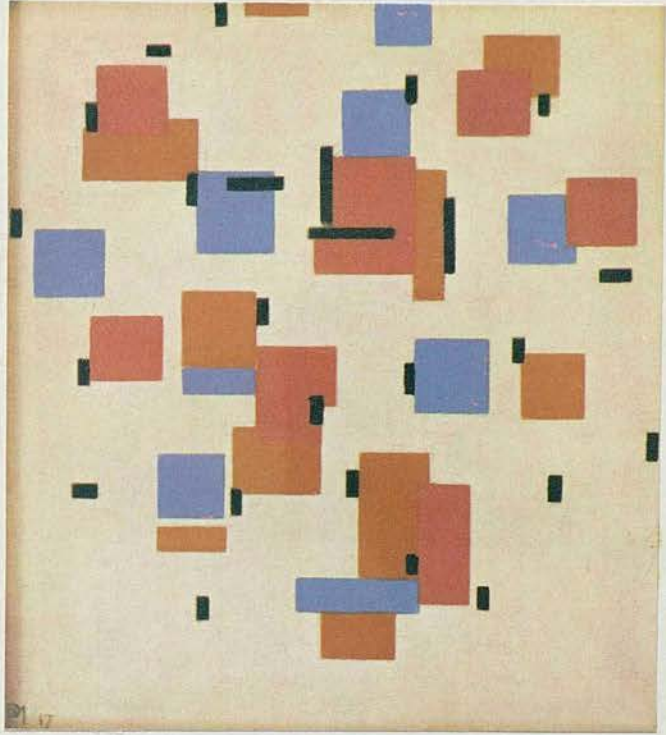
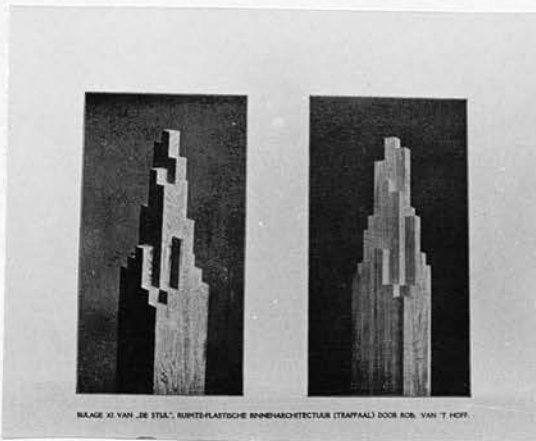


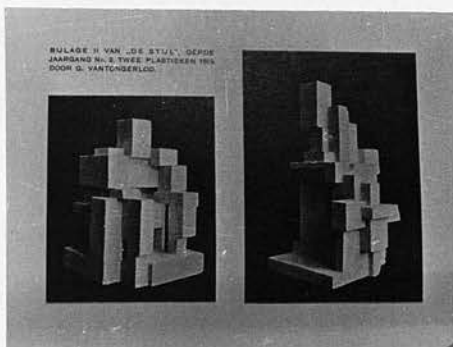
Figure 430. A page from a De Stijl magazine showing two views of a spatial construction by Robert van t'Hoff.

Figure 431. Page from a De Stijl magazine with two models in concrete by George Vantongerloo c. 25 cms. high dated 1919. (The left model in the Peggy Guggenheim collection, Venice)

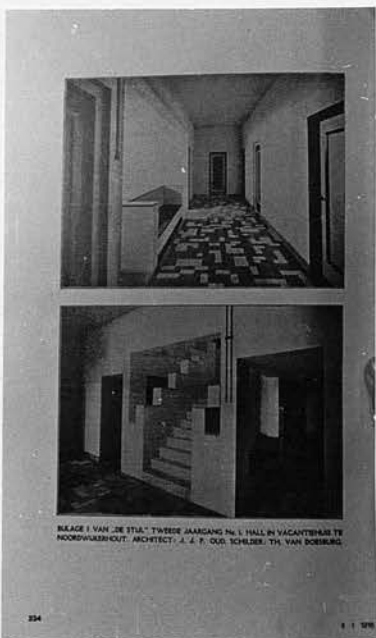
Figure 432. Page from a De Stijl magazine (1918) showing the hall and staircase at a holiday centre designed by J.J.P. Oud and Theo van Doesburg.



BLADE XI VAN 'DE STIJL', NUNTE-PLASTISCHE BINNENARCHITECTUUR (TRAFFAAL) DOOR ROB. VAN 'T HOFF.



BLADE II VAN 'DE STIJL', DEPDE
JAARGANG N. 2, TWEE PLASTISCHEN FIG.
DOOR G. VANTONGERLOO.



BLADE I VAN 'DE STIJL', TWEEDE JAARGANG N. 1, HALL IN VACANTIEBUREAU TE
NOORDVAARNEN. ARCHITECT. J. & P. OUD. SCHEIDER. TH. VAN DOERING.

CHAPTER XVII

MALEVICH'S "NON-OBJECTIVE WORLD"

Malevich gave a number of accounts of the development of suprematism often relating it to a history of art since the Middle Ages and relating it to social changes. This was done in a similar way by Delaunay and other artists developing new ideas about the same time. In an account showing the phases of the development of Suprematism (see Appendix XXXVI) Malevich defined various phases as the "Static", the "Dynamic" and the "Mystical" etc., and showed the purely formal development of his images.

In a separate series of exercises carried out at the Institute of Artistic Culture in Leningrad, members of the FTO (Formal Theoretical Department) assisted Malevich to prepare 22 charts (see Appendix XXXVII) demonstrating methods of development towards Suprematism in art teaching.

Malevich's experiments resemble certain exercises carried out at the Bauhaus. His colour association tests are quite similar to J. Itten's experiments with colour association. Troels Andersen considers it unlikely that he was aware of the coincidence and that his work should rather be seen in conjunction with the Russian School of Formalism in linguistics and the theory of literature. It is certainly likely that the immediate forerunners of this phase of art and art teaching might have been known to both Itten and Malevich separately and that they were both drawn to similar conclusions and to similar methods of teaching.

There are also certain similarities to Itten in the attempts to relate new art to the tradition of European painting by making reference to old master-pieces and finding an underlying abstract composition in them. Johannes Itten described his career as a student of Ado¹f Hölzel in Stuttgart from 1913 to 1916. Besides pictorial composition Hölzel's students studied above all the fundamentals of colour:

In his lectures Hölzel explained the pictorial constructions of the old masters and their use of light and dark. Hölzel's whole effort consisted of exploring and teaching the means of a design. As a teacher he was receptive to anything new. Among his students I met¹ Ida Kerkovius, Oskar Schlemmer and Willy Baumeister.

Itten described his approach to teaching according to the characteristics of the individual student:

In teaching the means of design it seemed important to me to appeal to diverse individual temperaments and talents... People of various talents react quite differently to the elements of design and accordingly develop in different ways. Some are attracted to light-dark, others to form, rhythm, colour, proportions and constructions, texture, spatial directions or volume.²

Itten describes how the terrible events and shattering losses of the war had brought chaos and confusion in all fields. Among the students there were endless discussions and eager searching for a new mental attitude. In connection with this he was drawn to Spengler's book The Decline of the West and became conscious that scientific-technical civilization had come to a critical point. The slogans "Back to Handicraft" or "Unity of Art and Technology"

-
1. Johannes Itten: Design and Form, The Basic Course at the Bauhaus, Thames and Hudson, 1964, p. 8. (Originally published as "Mein Vorkurs am Bauhaus. Gestaltungs- und Formenlehre" 1963).
 2. J. Itten, Ibid., p. 10.

did not seem to him to solve the problems. He continued:

I studied oriental philosophy and concerned myself with Persian Mazdaism and Early Christianity. Thus I realised that our outward-directed scientific research and technology must be balanced¹ by inward-directed thought and forces of the soul.

There is a relationship between the shapes of man and the forms which he designs. The same forces which produce the specific shapes of a man according to his physical, spiritual, and intellectual² constitution are able to influence the man's work.

He illustrated this idea with a number of examples of students' work which resembled their physical appearance in various ways (see Appendix XXXVIII).

The practical method of Malevich's wall charts is closely connected to his essay describing the aims of Suprematism the "Non-Objective World".³ In this Malevich expressed his aim to produce pure art. He insisted that art and the feelings that generate it are more basic and meaningful than religious and political conceptions. Religion and the State, in the past, employed art as a means of propaganda to further their aims ... If humanity is to achieve a real and absolute order this must be founded on eternal values, that is, on art. A Doric temple is not more beautiful today because it once served a religious purpose.

1. J. Itten: Ibid., p. 11.

2. J. Itten: Ibid., p. 177.

3. Kasimir Malevich: The Non-Objective World, Chicago 1959. Translated from the German by Howard Dearstyne. The translation from Russian into German was made by A. Von Riesen and published by Albert Langen, Munich, in 1927 as volume 11 of the series of Bauhaus books under the title Die Gegenstandlose Welt. An English translation of the second part, Suprematism, was made by F. von Loon in 1950, but never printed. The Russian manuscript is unavailable.

I felt only night within me and it was then that I conceived the new art which I called Suprematism... The square of the Suprematists...can be compared to the symbols of primitive men. It was not their intent to produce ornaments but to express the feeling of rhythm.¹

In the first part of "The Non-Objective World" Malevich wrote of art existing on a conscious and a sub-conscious or super-conscious level. The latter was expressed by abstract art. He wanted to make art into a new science:

...no analytic investigation has ever been undertaken which was able to explain what causes the development of an artistic structure, in its relation to the environment affecting it. The basic question why a certain colour system or construction was bound to develop within the 'body' of painting, as such, has never been treated.²

He introduced his new "additional element" into the discussion and explains his use of the word by using the simile of a physician to the unusual condition of the human organism as a phenomenon indicating the presence of an "added element" which has produced a change "He is then able to determine the nature of the 'added element' by an investigation of the blood and urine". This he compared to the actions of an individual depending on the conditions of the environment and the peculiar character of a new visual environment affecting an individual is what he treats as the additional element:

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 9.

2. Malevich: Ibid., p. 12.

The peculiar character of any visual environment, exercising its effect upon us, constitutes that additional element which brings about a change in the normal relationship between the element of consciousness and that of the sub-conscious (see Figures 434 and 435, illustrations 1-8) and which in the case of the "professional response", is expressed in a new, unfamiliar technique, in a certain unusual attitude towards nature - in a novel point of view. We are compelled either to heed the influence of the environment or to resist it by establishing a definite authoritative standard... The types of standardising resistance activity which develop in this way can be divided, on the basis of their compositional relationships into two groups - that of "natural proportion" and that of "unnatural proportion".

Thus a definite normality becomes obligatory; everything which fails to conform to the norm is eliminated as a destructive (the norm-destroying) "living element". Now this eliminated element is the one which I call the additional element; this it is which develops and produces new forms, either by causing the existing norm to evolve or by overthrowing it.¹

He discussed systems in general terms and described them as static forms toward which nature strives, concluding that "the artist endeavours to guide the additional element towards a harmonious norm - a state of order" but as the old norm contains additional elements in a changing environment these in their turn cause a continual evolution of new norms. The example he chooses of a norm in painting is that of Rembrandt compared with which Cubism seems abnormal because it contains an additional element. Therefore the majority of people find Rembrandt normal and cubism abnormal while for a minority the reverse is true.

Next he concluded that the essence of art is inaccessible to the public.

To the painter a picture is composed of pictorial values - to the layman (to the public) on the other hand, it consists of naturalistically proportionate "things" (eyes, nose, etc.).²

1. Malevich: Ibid., pp.12-14.

2. Malevich: Ibid., p. 16.

Like the cubist theorists he expressed doubt concerning the reliability of the senses to record reality, claiming that man's conception of reality is changeable and "subject to one kind of distortion or another in the mirror of our consciousness".

The changing element of our consciousness is feeling, in the last analysis is illusion, which springs from the interplay of distorted reflections of variable, derivative manifestations of reality...¹

His conception of man's contrast with nature and his lifelong battles for his "upright conscious position of activity - for the vertical" is summed up:

The human being observes in nature the unconscious "disorderly" activity of the elements and seeks to arrange this in conformity with the "lawfulness" of his consciousness.²

As a result of this state the fullest consciousness is what man prizes most and he desires to control nature, but Malevich underlined that

Everything which we call nature, in the last analysis, is a figment of the imagination, having no relationship whatever with reality.

and he continued by arguing that the consideration of unconscious influence on our activities is neglected. It is interesting to note Malevich's use of the "non-objective" for the first time in this essay in the statement that follows:

The artistic (pictorial) conception, based upon feeling, of linear, two-dimensional and spatial phenomena is not supported on an intellectual understanding of the utilitarian relationships of these phenomena; it is non-objective and sub-conscious and, viewed from an intellectual standpoint, constitutes, as it were, a "blind, uncontrollable norm".³

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 18.

2. Op.cit.

3. Malevich: Ibid., p. 20.

He went on to apply the phenomenon of "mechanical administration of new normalising ideas" to the attempt of a father to educate his family after his own standards and to the regimentation by the state opposed to the "free occupations". He called the effect of the new creative forms which oppose the old ones - "psychotechnics", and he compared the effect with that of bacteria in the human organism (except that disease bacteria destroy). He finally specified his ideas with references to pictures to show how things can be seen in different ways:

The additional element is the earmark of a culture and it is expressed in painting by a characteristic use of the straight line and the curve (Figure 441, illustrations 37-39).

The action of the additional element in the painting of Cézanne, which can be recognised by its "fibrous" curves, brings about, in the artist, an attitude fundamentally different from the action of the sickle-shaped additional element of Cubism or the straight line of Suprematism.¹

Malevich attempted to explain the reason for the division of attitudes about what is realistic by comparing an engineer and an artist. The work of the first is a practical struggle with nature whereas the artist if he is a mere copier serves the existing and is not creative. He concluded by adding another rider to the first category.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. that of invention (the creation
of the new) |) | progressive |
| 2. that of combination (the
transformation of the existing) |) | activity |
| 3. that of reproduction (the
imitation of the existing) |) | reactionary ₂
activity ₂ |

1. Malevich: Ibid., pp. 26-28.

2. Malevich: Ibid., p. 31.

He exemplified this by suggesting an infinite number of drawings of a violin starting with a naturalistic one and "progressing" to one by Picasso (see illustrations 44-49), nature merely being the starting point for Picasso. The artists of the third category however are not capable of presenting anything new. He considered the artist to be always ahead of the general public and very gradually -

Solutions of the most complex problems - the results of the invaluable creative activity of superior people - became general property and prepare the way for new creative activity.¹

He compared the progress from Realism, Impressionism Divisionism, Cézanneism, Cubism, etc. to the technological developments from "wheelbarrow, carriage, railway, coach - airplane".² The following passage, written in the spirit of a manifesto or a declaration clarifies his architectonic designs of 1923:

We therefore differentiate two categories of creative work: the artistic-aesthetic (the province of the artist) and the productive technical (the field of the engineer - of the scientist).

Out of the artistic-aesthetic creation proceed absolute, enduring values; out of scientific (productive-technical) creation proceed relative transitory values.

The wheelbarrow, the carriage, the railway coach - the airplane...all these are links in the long chain of unsolved problems and errors which calls itself science - technology; and if socialism relies on the infallibility of science, technology, a great disappointment is in store for it because it is not granted to the scientists to foresee the "course of events" and to create enduring values.³

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 34.

2. Malevich: Ibid., p. 36.

3. Op.cit., Affinities with Le Corbusier's "Vers une Nouvelle Architecture" is apparent here.

In this passage is contained not only the main points with which Tatlin and the Constructurists disagreed but a link with Berdyaev in the rejection of Positivism and material values in relation to Socialism.

He hailed the superiority of the unconscious or super-conscious mind as the creator of art above consciousness which he considered to be the determining factor in science.

However, in the following statement he displayed his Futurist affinities only dispensing with objects and machines of their world of speed:

A real work of art, however, can never be disharmonious because the artist's very purpose is to transform the discord of ostensible reality - the cacophonous din of our surroundings - into a true artistic harmony.¹

Malevich described a picture as "the representation of a phenomenon seen through a subjective prism (the prism of the brain)" and from this he sees the possibility of analytical investigation in terms of straight lines and curves and a colour spectrum with the intention of

....assessing the relationship between the creative personality (the subject) and the inducing phenomenon (the object), provided one is content to evaluate a work of art (a painting) in accordance with the trend of the time (the current state of culture, technology and progress),²

Since the characteristic relationship of the straight line and the curve can prove to be quite variable, it will be most efficacious to group more or less similar manifestations of it into categories, to allow for the possibility of pictorial variation in the examples with the individual categories and to represent this by a graphic formula. As soon as this graphic formula begins to affect the particular relationship of the straight line and the curve of another category

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 39.

2. Malevich: Ibid., p. 40.

it assumes the rôle of an additional element and brings about the formation of new characteristic relationships.¹

He illustrated the special states of the "culture of painting" with the additional elements showing definite sets of colour values as well as characterising the structure and texture of a painting to be "spotted, hazy, mat, smooth, transparent or opaque in structure" (see Figures 446 and 447). Next he categorised the general concept of painting as being one of three types: 1. coloured graphic art, 2. painting in colour planes, and 3. true painting, the first being exemplified by Holbein, the second by Matisse and Gauguin and "true painting" by Rembrandt and Cézanne.

Furthermore he proposed a diagram to show the relationship of the picture with one pictorial culture or another, revealing the systematic development of the straight line and the curve; laws of form and colour structures and textures and their relation to the phenomena of social life at various periods in a way comparable to a bacteriological investigation. This is exemplified by showing the influence that Suprematism has on a cubist painting, and the subsequent reorganisation that takes place. He considered this method to be as important in art school teaching as research in bacteriology for the physician. He then discussed the way a new unfamiliar style is suspected to be unhealthy at first and gradually becomes accepted as a familiar norm by the general public as a newer unfamiliar style develops.

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 40.

The next category he devised was of artists who use pure colour, mixed colour, as well as the lowest form, being ecclectics who mix cultures. In investigating Cézanne, Cubism and Suprematism and isolating three separate additional elements, he considered it possible to detect the presence of elements of different cultures in any painting and to appraise the work of a painter about to receive instruction as to the most effective teaching method with a scientific, objective approach instead of by aesthetic rules, the aesthetic element being of a subjective nature. This is similar to a method suggested by Herbert Read in his book "Education through art" but based on Jung's psychological types.

Malevich over a period of years spent experimenting with painters, divided students into two groups. One group scarcely able to overcome Cézanneism and the other, with the help of theoretical understanding, reached the "final (fourth) stage of Cubism". By absorbing the theory consciously, the students found the solutions to compositions, but gradually it was left to subconscious activity. He then prescribed large doses of cubist combination of the straight line and curve to a student who leaned strongly toward Cézanne, the result fluctuated between the two styles, the doses were increased until the painter came to a standstill and failed to arrive at Cubism. Another Cézanneist who resisted for a long time against the additional element of Cubism accepted Cubism consciously but in Malevich's view he rejected it with his subconsciousness. Then he

introduced the Suprematist straight line to the student all of which resulted in "eclectic confusion" out of the conflicting elements in the picture. Malevich knew that the student had to resolve the conflict "with the conscious mind" and not intuitively, therefore he allowed the Cézannist to reach the "ultimate norm" at which point the Cubist curves began to develop and when isolated from Futurism etc. he took this to the limit of its development. Malevich mentioned one case in which the cubist element escaped from isolation and upset a Suprematist system. But by systematically and intuitively developing with one system at a time in the subconsciousness, the student remained free of eclecticism. Malevich classified the students according to their type of development and varying patterns of reaction, comparing such environments as the city with nature in their pictorial activity. Also, he stated, it is by means of the "additional element" that

the masses of the people pass from one level of consciousness to another. Every additional element exercises a strong influence on the attitude of the painter towards life roundabout him (even in respect to economics and politics). It makes him dependent upon certain living conditions, upon a very definite environment without which he cannot create successfully. So the Futurists and Cubists, for example, distinctly belong to the big city...A painter of Cézanne's culture, on the other hand, always gravitates away from the big city...¹

Malevich came to the conclusion that the Cézanneists should have their academy outside the town so that they did not have alien elements with which to contend. He further explained that early Cubism stood at the edge of the culture of Cézanne

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 60.

but Futurism already pointed the way towards abstract art and that it bordered on non-objective Suprematism. At this point Malevich underlined the declaration:

I call the additional element of Suprematism "the suprematist straight line" (dynamic in character). The environment corresponding to this new culture has been produced by the latest achievements of technology, and especially of aviation, so that one could also refer to suprematism as "aeronautical". The culture of Suprematism can manifest itself in two different ways, namely as dynamic Suprematism of the plane (with the additional element of the "Suprematist straight line") or as static Suprematism in space - abstract architecture (with the additional element of the "suprematist square").¹

He emphasised the dependence of his artistic innovation on "the industrial taut environment", and deemed it the responsibility of the state to make suitable environments for artists of varied "cultures" in cities, provinces and in the country. Removed from his suitable environment a different element would appear in an artist's work:

Conventional painters fear the metallic city for they find there no truly pictorial element...
Futurism reigns in the city.
Futurism is not the art of the provinces, but rather that of industrial labour.
The Futurist and the labourer in industry work hand in hand - they create mobile things and mobile forms, both in works of art and machines.²

.

The machine is, so to speak, the "overt" form of utilitarian movement and it produces new form-formulae through multiplication by the creative energy of the Futurist.³

The following statement is underlined a little further in the text:

-
1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 61.
 2. Malevich: Ibid., p. 62.
 3. Malevich: Ibid., p. 63.

Futurism will become the art representative of the environment of the working man, whose job is to build machines (to construct dynamic elements), since his (the worker's) dynamic life forms the substance of this dynamic culture.

He has no taste for conventional painting (easel painting) - this belongs in the provinces.¹

This section goes on to describe three choices open to artists of his time, the first naturalistic, the second Cubism, etc. and the third industrial art. The last of these he stated was a mistaken choice.

Malevich began Part II of his essay by defining Suprematism as the "Supremacy of pure feeling in creative art" and continues to elaborate:

To the Suprematist the visual phenomena of the objective world are, in themselves, meaningless;

.

It reaches a "desert" in which nothing can be perceived but feeling. Everything which determined the objective ideal structure of life and of "art" - ideas, concepts and images - all this the artist has cast aside in order to heed pure feeling.

The art of the past which stood, at least ostensibly, in the service of religion and the state, will take on new life in the pure (unapplied) art of Suprematism.

.

This was no "empty square" [His black square on white] which I had exhibited but rather the feeling of non-objectivity.

I realised that the "thing" and the "concept" were substituted for feeling and I understood the falsity of the world of will and idea.²

Describing the accumulation of "things" that art had built up he said that if it were possible to extract the pure feeling which he equated with artistic value, public, critics

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 64.

2. Malevich: Ibid., pp. 67-8.

and scholars would not miss it. Moreover art has been confused with the representation of "reality". This idea is continued in his discussion by the idea that emotions must find an outlet in an overt form. In his opinion the aeroplane was invented as a result of the desire for speed to take an external form.

His argument shows that he evolved the idea of Suprematism partly out of Futurism while maintaining the strong traditions of Symbolism and Primitivism and affinities with the idea of art for art's sake:

The square = feeling, the white field = the void
beyond this feeling.

.

The suprematist square and the forms proceeding out of it can be likened to the primitive marks (symbols) of aboriginal man which represented, in their combinations, not ornament but a feeling of rhythm.

He described Suprematism as a new method of representation of the world of feeling. He describes the superiority of his pure art over that of applied art by saying that an antique column is no longer regarded from a functional point of view but recognisable in it is the "material expression of a pure feeling". This further serves to clarify what he means by "feeling". He considers that the artistic value of objects designed for practical purposes emerges only after they ceased to be functional. Thus art even when it is obliged to serve technology or religion remains alive when its utility has become defunct and useful things do not remain useful for long but become obsolete while the oldest art still remains valid. In being beyond religion and systems which make use of it, art is fundamental consequently:

Actual utility (in the highest sense of the term) could therefore be achieved only if the subconscious or superconscious were accorded the privilege of direct creation.

Our life is a theatre piece in which non-objective feeling is portrayed by objective imagery.

A bishop is nothing but an actor who seeks with words and gestures, on an appropriately "dressed" stage, to convey a religious feeling, or rather the reflection of feeling in a religious form. The office clerk, the blacksmith, the soldier, the accountant, the general... these are all characters out of one stage play or another, portrayed by various people, who become so carried away that they confuse the play and their parts in it with life itself. We almost never get to see the actual human face and if we ask someone who he is, he answers, "an engineer", "a farmer", etc. or in other words, he gives the title of the role played by him in one or another affective drama ... The Suprematists have nevertheless abandoned the representation of the human face (and of natural objects in general) and have found new symbols with which to render direct feelings (rather than externalised reflections of feelings), for the Suprematist does not observe and does not touch - he feels.¹

He presents his concern with the social order in attacking materialism and deviating from socialism toward a supreme spiritual order:

A true absolute order in human society could only be achieved if mankind were willing to base this order on lasting values.²

.

The new art of Suprematism, which has produced new forms and form relationships by giving external expression to pictorial feeling, will become a new architecture: it will transfer these forms from the surface of canvas to space.

The suprematist element, whether in painting or in architecture, is free of every tendency which is social or otherwise materialistic.

Every social idea, however great or important it may be, stems from the sensation of hunger, every art work, regardless of how small and insignificant it may seem, originates in pictorial or plastic feeling. It is high time we realize that the problems of art lie far apart from those of the stomach or the intellect.³

1. Malevich: Ibid., p. 94. This passage closely resembles the discussion of the absurd in relation to uniforms in Bergson's Le Rire.

2. Malevich: Ibid., p. 98.

3. Malevich: Ibid., p. 100.

Joost Baljeu¹ considers Malevich's mistrust of visual phenomena and his opinion that they are distortions and illusions, to be essentially Platonic. This reference is up to Malevich's discussion of the unreliability of sense data in his general attack on Positivism:

The changing element of our consciousness and feeling, in the last analysis is illusion, which springs from the interplay of distorting reflections of variable, derivative manifestations of reality and which has nothing whatsoever to do with actual matter or even with an alteration of it.²

.

Everything we call nature, in the last analysis, is a figment of the imagination, having no relation whatever to reality.³

Some of the titles of Malevich's works suggest invisible and formless phenomena: "The Feeling of Universal Space", "The Feeling of Wireless Telegraphy". Malevich defined creation as "an expression of the sub-conscious and super-conscious".⁴

J. Baljeu relates the ideas of Malevich to those of Hegel particularly to the philosopher's introduction to "Philosophy of Fine Art" and to the chapter on religion. There appears also to be some similarity in the idea of progression from the "self" toward the notion of God (see Appendix XXXIX).

-
1. Joost Baljeu: "The Problem of Reality with Suprematism, Constructivism, Proun, Neoplasticism and Elementarism". The Lugano Review, Vol. I/I, I/1965 (Ed. James Fitzsimmons, Lugano, Switzerland).
 2. K. Malevich: The Non-objective world; Paul Theobald, Chicago 1959, p. 18.
 3. Ibid., p. 20.
 4. J. Baljeu: Ibid., p. 88.

Hegel considered three types of art to exist: the symbolic, the classical and the romantic, marking a development in art to a higher phase. Hegel's idea that because man realises he is an animal, he ceases to be animal and, as mind, attains to self-knowledge. "Inwardness" or "self conscious inward intelligence" becomes the medium of reflecting upon the unity of human and divine nature. Malevich, in his essay also stressed man's consciousness as the distinction between man and his environment, nature.¹ He continued: "what is the essence and content of our consciousness? - the inability to apprehend reality".²

This is why "the visual phenomena of the objective world are, in themselves meaningless; the significant thing is feeling, as such, quite apart from the environment in which it is called forth".

This is similar to Hegel:

It [romantic art] must address itself to the inward mind, which coalesces with its object and as thought this were itself, to the subjective inwardness, to the heart, the feeling, which, being spiritual, aspires to freedom within itself... the world of inwardness celebrates its triumph over the outer world and actually in the sphere of the outer and in its medium manifests its victory, owing to which sensuous appearance sinks into worthlessness.³

In his specification of the arts Hegel stated that painting, music and poetry are the typical representatives of romantic art. At the basis of this type of art, romantic art, he says, lies negation (aufheben) and

-
1. K. Malevich: The Non-objective World, p. 18. Quoted in J. Baljeu, Ibid., p. 107.
 2. Op.cit.
 3. W.T. Stace: The Philosophy of Hegel, Quoted, J. Baljeu, Ibid., p. 107.

particularly so with music.¹

Here negation has the double meaning of annulment and "idealisation". Non-being is at the same time the Absolute Spirit, God. This is similar also to Goethe's idea in Farbenlehre (see Appendix XLII) in which he associates white with annulment and the ideal, a mystical view which R.D. Gray attributes to alchemist origins.

The manifesto published by Malevich for the "0.10" exhibition in December 1915 in Petrograd expressed the ideas of nullifying the material world of objects and forms:

Only when the habit of one's consciousness to see in paintings bits of nature, madonnas and shameless nudes has disappeared, shall we see a pure-painting composition.

I have transformed myself into the nullity of forms and pulled myself out of the circle of things, out of the circle-horizon in which the artist and forms of nature are locked.

This cursed circle is always discovering something newer and newer and distracts the artist from his aim and leads him towards ruin.

And only cowardly sense and paucity of creative strength in an artist makes him yield to the deception, arresting his art on the forms of nature, fearing to do away with the foundation on which the savages and academies based their art.

To reproduce the hallowed objects and parts of nature is to revivify a shackled thief.

Only stupid and uncreative artists protect their art with sincerity.

In art truth is needed, not sincerity.

Things have disappeared like smoke before the new art culture. Art is moving towards its self-appointed end of creation, to the domination of the forms of nature.

1. Ibid., p. 473. Quoted, Ibid., p. 107.

He referred to the "nullity of forms" and stated that he had pulled himself "out of the circle of things, out of the circle-horizon in which the artist and the forms of nature are locked." Also in "The Non-objective World" he wrote:

The ascent to the heights of non-objective art is arduous and painful...but is nevertheless rewarding. The familiar recedes even further and further into the background...the contours of the objective world fade more and more and so it goes, step by step, until finally the world - 'everything we loved and by which we have lived' - becomes lost to sight. No more 'likeness to reality', no idealistic images, nothing but a desert! But the desert is filled with the spirit of non-objective sensation which pervades everything.¹

J. Baljeu observes that the main difference in outlook between Hegel and Malevich is that Malevich does not attach the same importance to the conscious and to logic. In fact the mysticism revealed in the last quotation and which is to replace logic, points toward other influences. The titles of Malevich's work suggest an interest in mysticism.

'The Feeling of a Mystic Will: Unwelcome' (1915)

'Yellow Quadrilateral on White' (1916/1917)

'The Feeling of a Mystic Wave from Outer Space' (1917)

'The Feeling of Non-Objectivity' (1919)

The use of white or of blue to represent the infinite is discussed by Malevich and is similar to Goethe's belief in the special significance of white. The yellow quadrilateral of 1916/17 disappears into the infinite like the

K. Malevich: The Non-objective World, p. 68.

transcendence of an object in mundane perspective.

The Christian cross is probably intended as a primordial symbol of human form and possibly of suffering. There was much written at that time on the origin of these basic symbols, and of their mystical sources though non-objective art also had enemies already. In some ways the least dangerous of these was the constructivist stream that began with Tatlin's reliefs of 1913-15 and developed "Production art" and "Objectism" in 1921. But more fatal were to be the interpretations of the Marxist-Leninist aesthetic which grew to attack

...bourgeois anarchic and individualist conceptions of the freedom of the artist.¹

The theory implied that the individualism of the avant-garde cut the artist off from society as if he were a hermit between "the divine spirit" and the "sinful mass". It transformed him

...into the notorious "superman" type, standing above "the grey" mass of the rest of the people...²

More specifically, Marx as early as the 1840s had attacked the Young Hegelians' subjective and idealistic disregard for what he considered to be reality and their apparent attempts to rise above society. Marx said that the "Freie"

...do not come out of its objectless solitude³ into the true social relation to any real object.

1. Z. Apresyan: Freedom and the Artist, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1968, p. 175.

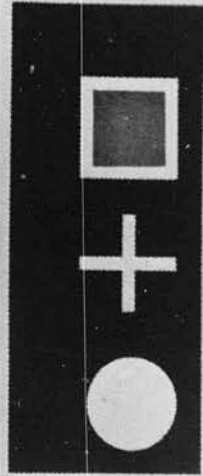
2. Op.cit.

3. K. Marx and F. Engels: The Holy Family, Moscow, 1956, p. 215.

Figure 433. Cover of Kasimir Malevich's
"Non-objective World" designed by
El Lissitzky and published by
The Bauhaus in 1927.

KASIMIR MALEWITSCH
DIE
GEGENSTANDSLOSE
WELT

BAUHAUSBÜCHER



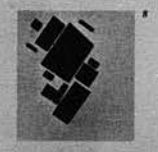
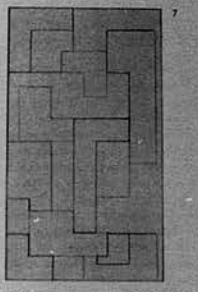
11

Figures 434 and 435.

Illustrations 1 - 8 from Malevich,
Non-objective World: Changes in the
representation of "nature" under
the influence of additional
elements of the pictorial cultures
of Cézanne and Cubism.



1-4 Changes in the representation of "nature" under the influence of additional elements of the pictorial cultures of Greece and Cubism.



5-8 Changes in the representation of "nature" under the influence of additional elements of the pictorial cultures of Cubism and Expressionism.

Figures 436 and 437.

Illustrations 9 - 11 from Malevich:
Non-objective World. Examples of
"undermining" of naturalistic norms
of representation.

9 CÉZANNE



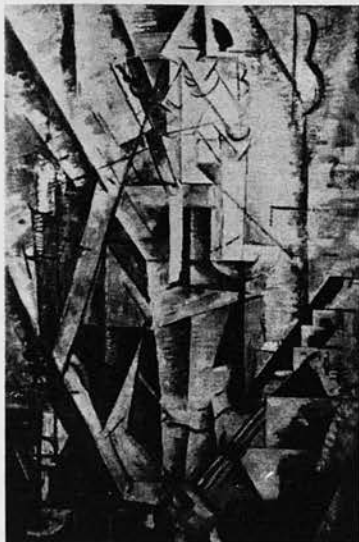
10 MALÉVICH



9, 10 Examples of the "undermining" of naturalistic norms of representation.

17

11 UDALZOWA



11 Example of the "undermining" of naturalistic norms of representation.

19

Figures 438-441. Malevich: Non-objective World

Illustrations 12 - 15: The environment ("reality") which stimulates the Academician.

Illustrations 16 - 27: The environment ("reality") which stimulates the Futurist.

Illustrations 28 - 35: The environment ("reality") which stimulates the Suprematist.

Illustrations 37 - 39: Reproduction of work by Picasso and Malevich.



12



14

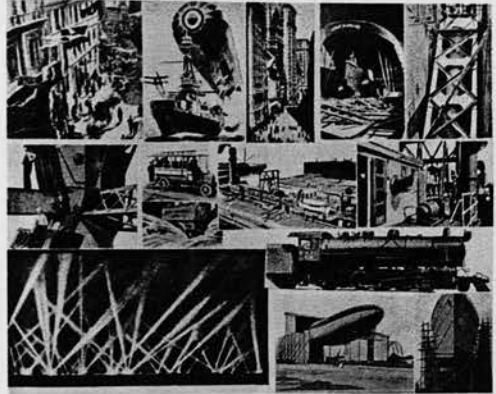


13



15

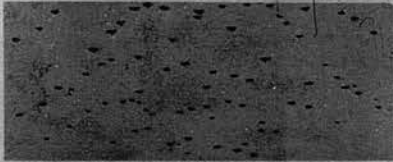
12-15 The environment ("reality") which stimulates the Academician.



16-27 The environment ("reality") which stimulates the Futurist.



31



32



33



34



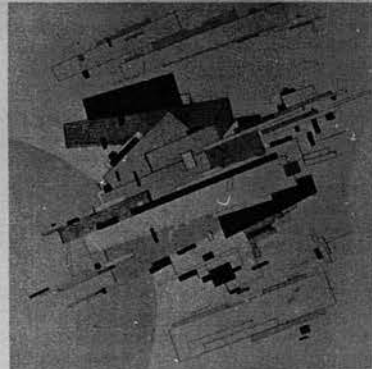
35

28-35 The environment ("reality") which stimulates the Suprematist.

37 PICASSO



38 PICASSO



39 MALREVICH

Figure 442. G. Balla: Airplanes (1915-18).

Tempera on cardboard, $5\frac{1}{4}$ x $5\frac{7}{8}$ inches.
Rome. Two airplanes (Caproni biplanes), flying against a contrasting pale and darker blue sky, produce large diagonal airwaves in the patriotic colors of red, white and green.

Figure 443. A caproni airplane in flight.

Model CA 33,450 Horsepower. Gianni Caproni, an engineer, was a pioneer in designing and constructing airplanes in Italy. This was the first large-scale bomber produced, and it was used in the First World War. It was also manufactured in England, France and in the United States by the Curtis Company. (Photo Credit: Aeronautical Museum of Caproni di Taliedo, Rome).

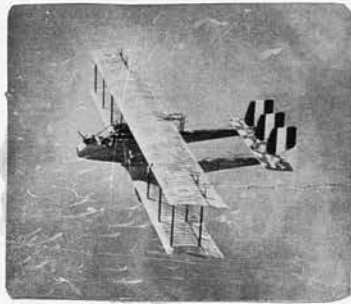
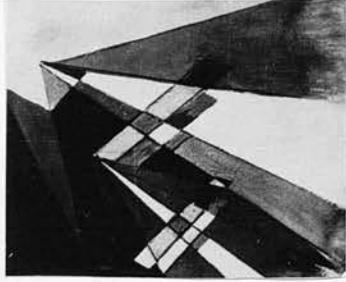


Figure 444. Malevich: Non-objective World,
Illustrations 28 - 30: Aerial
views showing the environment
("reality") which stimulates the
Suprematist.



28



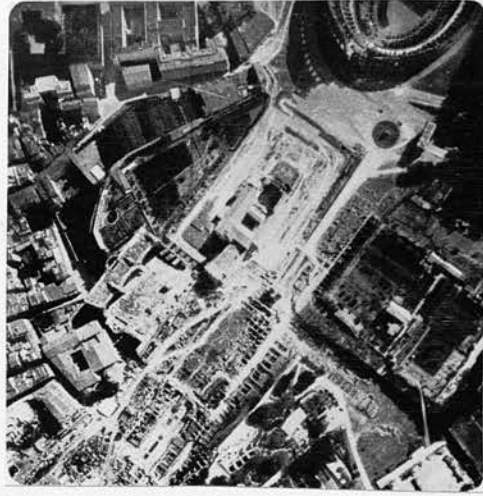
29



30

Figure 445. Aerial view, 1908, showing the Colosseum, the Roman Forum, and the Arch of Constantine. A series of photographs of archaeological sites in Italy were taken from a military balloon, from 1904 to 1908. For the first time the Italian people had a bird's-eye view of their peninsula in a series of photographs taken from Mt. Etna to Trieste. In 1912, Marinetti, the Futurist poet, published in French a lyrical poem in free verse called "The Pope's Monoplane". In his "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" published in Milan in 1912, Marinetti declared:

Profound intuitions of life, linked one to another, word to word, according to their illogical birth will provide us with the general outlines of an intuitive psychology of matter. This flashed through my mind while I was up in an airplane. Looking at things from a new point of view, no longer from in front or from behind but from above - that is in a foreshortened perspective - I was able to break the old shackles of logic and the plumb-lines of traditional comprehension.

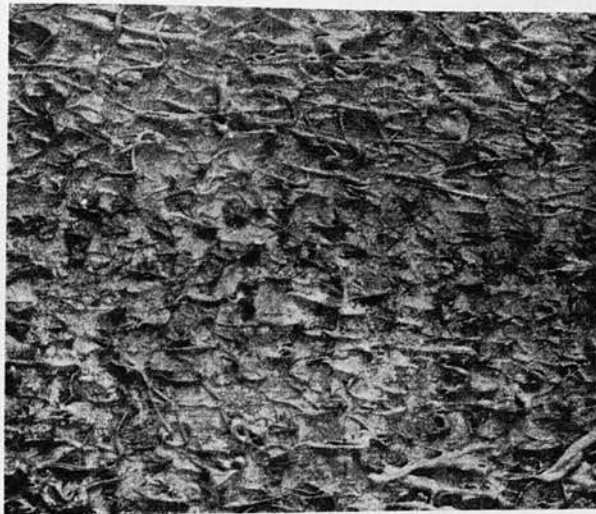


Figures 446 and 447.

Malevich's Non-objective World,
Illustrations 55 and 56, showing
the structure of Cézanne's painting
and of impressionist painting.



55 The structure of Cézanne's painting.



56 The structure of an impressionist painting.

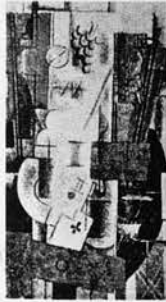
Figure 448. Malevich: Non-objective World,
Illustrations 63 - 66, showing
various phases of Cubism.



63



64



65



66

63-66 Various phases of Cubism.

Figure 449. Work by P.A.Mansurov at INKhUK, 1923.

Figure 450. P.A.Mansurov: Four paintings, 1922,
1923, 1924 and 1923-24.

Figure 451. P.A.Mansurov at INKhUK, 1923.

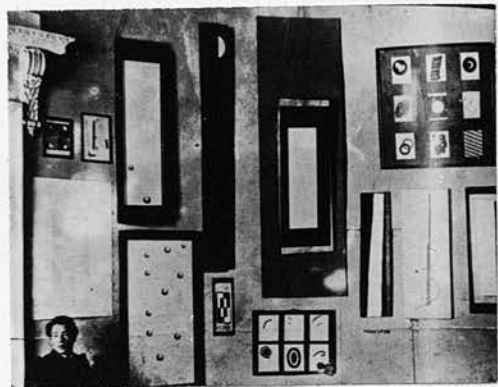
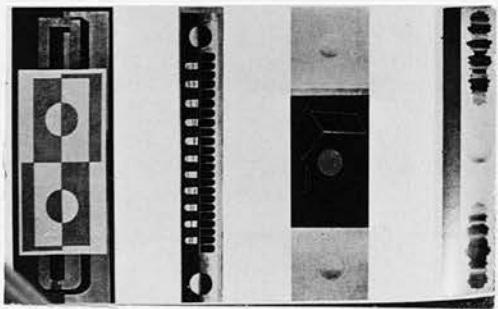
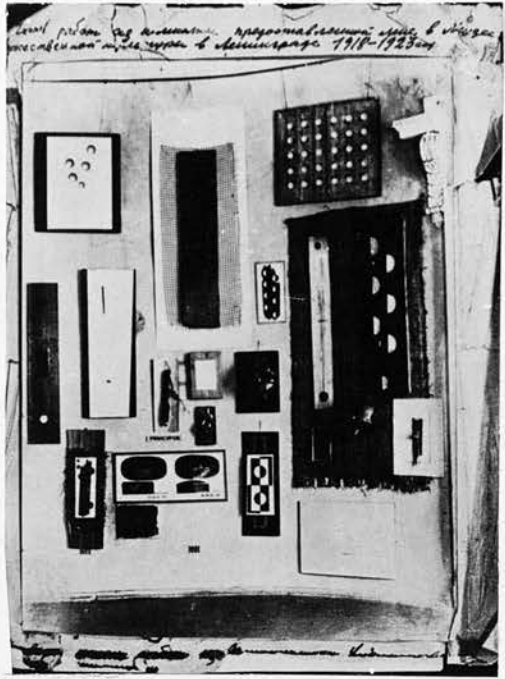
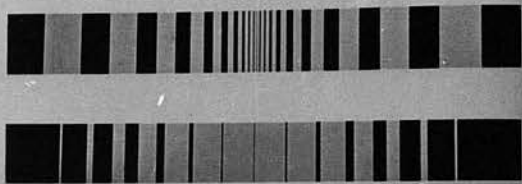
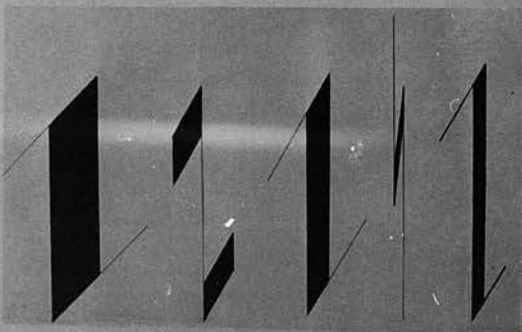


Figure 452. A page from J. Itten: Design and Form, The Basic Course at the Bauhaus, illustrating "scales of proportion from broad to narrow in parallel and oppose directions", and "Lines of vertical and diagonal character composed as broad-narrow proportion contrasts (Berlin, 1928).



92-94 Scales of proportion from broad to narrow in parallel and opposed directions.

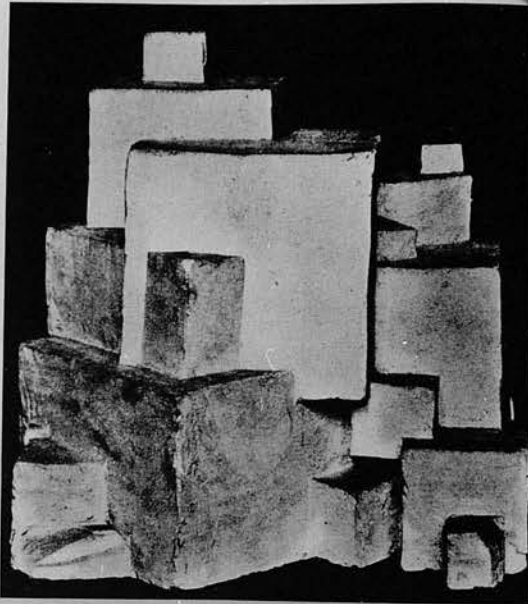


95 Lines in vertical and diagonal character composed as broad-narrow proportions contrasts. Berlin, 1928. M. Debus.

Figures 453 and 454.

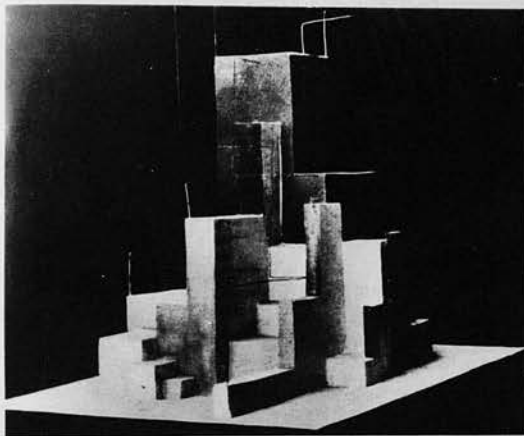
Pages from J. Itten: Design and Form
showing an exercise "to make the
students experience the elementary
geometric forms three dimensionally
(Weimar 1921).

Figure 454, like Malevich's
"architectons" "is not an architectural
model but a study in cubic character".



111 To make the students experience the elementary geometric forms three-dimensionally, I had volumes like sphere, cylinder, cone, and cube modelled in clay. Weimar, 1921. L. Mögelin.

114



112 This is not an architectural model but a study in cubic character. Some planes were painted to study how the colors can diminish or increase the three-dimensional affect. The wires suggest glass walls. Weimar, 1921. G. Schunk.

115

CHAPTER XVIII

BERDYAEV

In an approach generally similar to other contemporary artists such as Delaunay,¹ Malevich traced a development of civilisation from "primitive" to "classical" representation and the modern "necessity for the conscious use of the scientific, geometric methods...".² However Malevich described society, individuals and artists moving away from the earthly material object towards the world of spirit. This may be related to a Russian peasant religious background as well as to Berdyaev's "Christian existentialism" to which he would have been led as a result of this background and in view of their popularity.

As with Malevich, Socialism and mysticism were coordinated by Berdyaev who had been attracted by Marxism. But he was critical of its materialist doctrine, for which he originally wished to substitute an idealism derived from Kant. He lived in Saint Petersburg from 1904 where he was active in the widespread religious and cultural life of that time. He was later Professor at Moscow University and expelled from the USSR in 1922. He saw truth to be attainable not through knowledge mirroring objects but through penetration of our environment by a creative act. It is a "light that breaks through from the transcendental world of

1. In R. Delaunay, Du Cubisme à l'Art abstrait.

2. 'On new systems in Art' Malevich: essays on Art. The view Malevich shows is of the relay action described by Ozenfant in his "Foundations of Modern Art", the tool seen as an extension of the hand, inventions built to function like the human body; surface patterns on tools giving way to functional design. (see Chapter XXV).

spirit into the clouded 'objectified' world."

Just as Bergson and Goethe were popular in western Europe, Berdyaev was widely read in Russia. In a similar way he combined a spiritual approach with an interest in science that went further than that of Madame Blavatsky.

J. Baljeu makes comparisons also with other philosophers notably Spinoza and Kant. Accounts of these philosophers which would have been most easily available to Malevich were included in publications by Nicholas Berdyaev before the First World War. Writing in a prophetic Nietzschean style he synthesised and popularised earlier Russian symbolist philosophers. In the work of V.S. Soloviev, Jacob Böhme and the German philosophers he laid emphasis on their mysticism without having much time for their logic. Though Malevich was an avid reader, he was neither an academic philosopher nor a conventional scholar. He appears to have received many ideas from his contemporary Berdyaev and it is quite likely that he was influenced by the Russian philosopher's interpretation of the German thinkers.

The direct influence of Berdyaev is suggested by J. Baljeu and by Dora Vallier.¹ Berdyaev's attitude to the German philosophers and to the spirit of Russia in the late nineteenth century is summed up in his book "The Divine and the Human" and his personal view is summarised in the early pages:

1. Dora Vallier: L'Art Abstrait, Paris 1967, pp. 160-161.

The critique of revelation which has been going on in recent centuries, has in essence been the final triumph of naturalism and the denial of God, Spirit and religion. What I have in mind is rather a critique of revelation which must lead to the triumph of spirituality, to the liberation of spirit from naturalistic and materialistic distortions. God is not an object. God is not a thing. God is spirit. One cannot enter into communion with the mystery of the Spirit in any sort of objectivisation.¹ The mystery never reveals itself in the object.

.

Revelation is a creative act of the spirit; it has both a theogonic and an anthropogonic character. It is only mysticism, which found another language, and Christian theosophy which have risen above the naïvely realistic interpretation of revelation, above the rational and naturalistic understanding of God.²

His discussion of the spiritual and prophetic tendencies in the literature and philosophy of Germany and in that aspect of it which influenced Russian thought is contrasted to the positivism of French culture:

Men of the prophetic type have appeared in world culture, in literature and philosophy, men such as Dostoyevsky, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Vladimir Soloviev, Leon Bloy and others.³

.

Kroner who wrote a most remarkable history of German idealistic philosophy says with enthusiasm that the metaphysical renaissance in Germany at the beginning of the nineteenth century was of a prophetic, messianic and eschatological character, and this is absolutely true. No such spiritual exaltation is to be found in French or in English philosophy. In France messianic and prophetic ideas were associated chiefly with social thought.⁴

Berdyaev revealed some of the sources of his own ideas in discussing Hegel's reason:

-
1. Nicolas Berdyaev. The Divine and the Human. London Geoffrey Bles 1949, p. 14.
 2. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 15.
 3. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 24.
 4. Kroner: Von Kant bis Hegel, quoted by Berdyaev in Ibid., p. 26.

With Hegel ... the act of knowing, a religious act, is accomplished not by¹ the individual man but by the universal spirit.

Berdyayev related Nietzsche to the Christian world, in his analysis of the "Dialectic of the Divine in the Human in German Thought" and in his analysis he distinguished those aspects of Nietzsche's ideas that were most perceptible to the Russian thinkers:

In Russia Nietzsche was always understood in a different way from the way he was interpreted in the West. To us he was above all a philosopher of culture.

The whole creative work of Nietzsche is occupied by three problems; the relation between the human and the divine, which to him is the super-human; the creative power of man, which ought to create new values; and suffering, the heroic power of holding out against suffering. The aspiration of Nietzsche towards the divine heights was expressed in the will to rise above man.

He preaches the² superman which is for him pseudonym of the divine.

.

The greatest service which Nietzsche rendered was his statement of the problem of creativeness. He sought for ecstasy and for him ecstasy was connected with creativeness. He was convinced that man can create new values. In his view truth is created and not revealed. Truth is not a datum and not received passively by man.³

Though, as has been discussed earlier, certain paintings by French and Italian artists possess elements common to works by Malevich, the difference of their conception is identifiable in Berdyayev's criticism of Bergson.

The work of Malevich especially in the sudden jumps from Cubo-futurism to Suprematism is characterised in

-
1. Berdyayev: Ibid., p. 30.
 2. Berdyayev: Ibid., p. 35.
 3. Berdyayev: Ibid., p. 37.

Berdyaev's views on newness and on his strict anti-naturalistic reproval of Bergson.

French artists were careful not to paint pictures that were too abstract. Delaunay came nearest to abstraction, but like Bergson he admitted his attachment to nature.

Berdyaev criticised the work of Bergson with regard to its attachment to the natural world and distinguished him from the Russian view of the spiritual quality of creation:

The title of Bergson's book Evolution Créatrice, is debatable and is evidence of the naturalistic elements in his metaphysics. Creativeness belongs to the realm of freedom while evolution belongs to the realm of necessity. I have already said that the old evolutionism is obliged to deny the possibility of creative newness. It is shackled in the immanent of the cycle of cosmic forces.

The rise of what is new, of what had not been before, is the greatest mystery in the life of the world.

.

The creative act of freedom is to break through in the natural phenomenal world.

.

It is a mystery which begins to reveal itself through movement into depth, into the fathomless deep, not through movement into the external, as in the evolutionary theory. The fall of the objectivised world, in which necessity and fate reign was determined by the direction of freedom in the depth...¹

He then applied this approach to art which he recognised to be the agent of the possible penetration into the world of spirit:

But what is provided in art is merely tokens which anticipate real transfiguration. The meaning of art lies in the fact that it anticipates the transfiguration

1. Berdyaev: Ibid., pp. 52-53.

of the world. Art is full of symbols of the other world. Every attainment of beauty is a start upon the transfiguration of the world. The transfiguration is not attained within the confines of art. But art can overstep the boundaries which are laid down for it as a separate sphere of culture.¹

The tendency in Malevich's work to become less concerned not only with the shapes of reality but with shapes themselves and to arrive at a concept of painting which aspired to pure experience or sensation had affinities with the point reached in science at the same time. Berdyaev's observations on science bring out those elements which might be applicable to symbolist painting and its non-objective heritage:

The world is passing into a fluid condition, it is losing its form, there are no longer any solid bodies in it. The solid forms and bodies are disappearing in the theories and discoveries of contemporary physics.²

Both the writings of Berdyaev and of Malevich emphasise the rejection of the world of objects in relation to true spiritual creativity. Berdyaev's chief concern was the defence of the human being against the bondage to things, and to fictitious economy and political values. This is another basic ingredient common to Malevich. Both Malevich and Berdyaev were critical of historic materialism. Berdyaev's frequent reference to the 19th century philosopher Soloviev whose idea of the spirituality of all being, the idea of absolute oneness, and the evolution of the God-man displays another source of pre-revolutionary Russian mysticism.

1. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 144.

2. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 146.

It is in particular Berdyaev's idea of the divine present in man and his ability to express this in the form of a work of art that fits Malevich's theory. This does not mean that Malevich did not read the ideas of other writers. He would have found a similar point of view and a similar duality between material and spiritual values in a large number of Berdyaev's contemporaries as well as the writings of the earlier period. It was not only poets and philosophers who came to express the difference between the spiritual and the earthly but also novelists (see Appendix XL).

The publication of "The Meaning of the Creative Act" by Berdyaev in Moscow in 1914 coincided with the beginning of Suprematism. Berdyaev wrote in a mystical style and connected creation by man with a reacting out of this world to God. The book begins:

The human spirit is in prison. Prison is what I call this world, the given world of necessity. "This world" is not the cosmos; it is a non-cosmic condition of diversions and enmity, the atomisation and falling apart of the living monads of the cosmic hierarchy. And the true way is that of spiritual liberation from "the world", the liberation of man's spirit from its bondage to necessity. The true way is not a movement to right or left in the plane of "the world", but rather movement upward and downward on lines of the ultra-worldly, movement in spirit and not "in the world".¹

Though none of Berdyaev's writings make any mention of Malevich and Malevich is not known to have written about Berdyaev, it is probable that they knew of each other's work.

1. Nicolas Berdyaev: The Meaning of the Creative Act. Translated by Donald A. Lowrie (Gollancz, 1955) London. p.11. Author's introduction, Moscow February 1914. First published in Russian, 1914.

In "The Meaning of the Creative Act" Berdyaev writes in utterances that are almost like those of the Koran. They also lead from one sentence to another repeating part of the previous statement in a rhythmic way like Psalms. He may have adopted the style from reading the works of Nietzsche. His general idea that art is always a victory over "the heaviness of 'the world'"¹ and that it is never an adaption to the world is a reflection of the spiritual tendencies current among philosophers and theosophists at the turn of the century and the frequent repetition in his writing of a break-through beyond the objects of the world and their burden of objects in the following passage is like the idea that Malevich expressed soon after:

In the artistic concept man breaks out through the heaviness of the world. In the creative-artistic attitude towards this world we catch a glimpse of another world. To receive the world into oneself in beauty is to break through the deformity of "this world" into another...In every artistic activity a new world is created, the cosmos, a world enlightened and free.²

A little later in the same text this idea is repeated. Though Berdyaev added that art creates the ideal rather than the real: "Symbolic values rather than being". He nevertheless emphasised that the classical ideal of imitation was not the ideal to which he referred:

In the creative ecstasy there was a break-through into another world. But the classically-beautiful canonic art leaves one in this world, giving only hints of another.³

-
1. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 225.
 2. Op.cit.
 3. Berdyaev: Ibid., pp. 226-7.

He contrasted pagan classical art which is capable of becoming dead academic art, with Christian art of the middle ages aspiring to the other world:

In Pagan art there was classical health. Christian art is romantically ailing.¹

He then continued to give an account of the Italian Renaissance in terms of a christian or pagan renaissance arriving at the same conclusions as Malevich. Malevich's teaching charts are an exercise aimed at taking the student beyond the limited zones of classical, religious and realistic art to a point at which art is isolated as the creative element and which is not tied to any of these concepts any more than it is tied to the world of objects. The idea is very similar to that of Berdyaev:

The creative act which gives birth to art cannot be specifically Christian: it is always beyond Christianity. But the realisations of that creative act may be carried out in a Christian milieu. In the strict sense of the word, creativity is neither Christian nor pagan: it rises above and beyond them.²

.

The programme of realist art always means the decline of art, the demeaning of creativeness, submission to creative powerlessness. The creative act of an artist is essentially the non-submission to this world and its distortions. The creative act is a daring upsurge past the limitations of this world₃ into the world of beauty... Realist art is bourgeois.³

.

In art, new being is not₄ created but only signs of new being, its symbols.⁴

1. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 229.

2. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 237.

3. Berdyaev: Ibid., pp. 237-8.

4. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 239.

Berdyayev referred to symbolism in literature and painting and claimed that symbolism is a bridge to the unknown and is therefore tragic in that it can never attain that unknown. Nevertheless the "new symbolism" pushes right away "from all firm coasts; it seeks what has hitherto never been known". Though the Nietzschean idea of a future man overcoming the "old man" and the apocalyptic spirit of Russia around 1900 has been Berdyayev's inspiration he does not remain fixed with the opinions of the symbolist philosophers on a purely speculative level but advances to the point of discussing the new art forms of the twentieth century which appear to be presaging the advent of a completely non-objective and spiritual art:

The cubism of Picasso is something very significant and deeply moving. In Picasso's pictures we feel the real pain of the world's coming apart, layer by layer, the world's dematerialisation, the atomisation of the world's flesh, the rending of all the veils. After Picasso, who in his painting felt the movement of the cosmic wind, there can be no return to the old expression - forms of art. Futurism is the final break with the antique, the crisis of humanism, a shattering of the very image of man.¹

Symbolism is culture's dissatisfaction, an unwillingness to remain in culture: it is a way of being... And there can be no return to the fore-revolutionary period of art.

Goetheism is a conservative slogan.

The future belongs to the creative catastrophism of Dostoevski, Nietzsche and the genuine symbolists. Art has, after all, been an adaption to "this world" and creative catastrophism must come to a sacrificial denial of art, but through art and within art itself.²

1. Berdyayev: Ibid., p. 242.

2. Op.cit.

His repeated reference to an art which he described as "new symbolism", which was not yet created and which was to break its links with this world suggests the idea behind Malevich's work. Here, Berdyaev's reference to a sacrificial denial of art is not exactly the same as that of Pisarev. He criticised anarchic and nihilistic attitudes in art and stated that "theurgy" was the goal:

The beginning of theurgy is the end of literature, the end of all differentiated art, the end of culture, but an end which takes unto itself the world meaning of culture and art, a super-cultural bud...divine-human creativeness.

.

Theurgy is the banner of the art of the last times, the art of the end.¹

.

Theurgic art is synthetic and oecumenic - it is a sort of hitherto-unknown, not-yet-revealed pan-art. Wagner strove for this kind of art but never realised it.²

Scriabin prophesies of the new world-epoch, but in him we feel a sense of foreboding and unconquered chaos.

.

The problem of art as theurgy is primarily a Russian problem, the Russian tragedy of creativeness.³

At the beginning of his chapter "Creativity and the Structure of Society" he stated that "sociology has replaced theology". He criticised Marxism for being "inorganic" and stated that:

Sociologism is only an expression of our slavery, our adaption to natural necessity. This sociologism is neither free nor creative.

.

Sociologism is essentially positivism...the extreme expression of the non-cosmic condition of man...⁴

1. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 248.

2. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 249.

3. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 250.

4. Berdyaev: Ibid., p. 274.

This position with regard to politics corresponded largely with that of Malevich, but Berdyaev did not sympathise with futurist urbanism:

I see the positive meaning of futuristic civilisation with its frightful automatic and mechanical qualities in this, that in it the fate of the material world is being accomplished, that it means the end of the race.

.

The human spirit on the way of its liberation must pass through mechanization, through the crucifixion of everything that is organic in mechanisation.

.

The new city can never be created out of elements of the old social order...all the old social order must burn up...the new social order will not be created from elements of 'this world'; it will be created, in the 'worldly' senses out of nothing...¹

His idea of the utopian city was mystical and not based on material and industrial achievements. The position taken by Malevich in his architectonic compositions was of a similar nature. These compositions inspired by skyscrapers were only intended as abstract forms of the spirit of future architecture, rather than architect's models or "productivist" and "constructivist" attempts to design for real materials and apply their experience of art to the creation of real objects of practical use. Berdyaev observed that his epoch was witnessing not only a genuine renaissance of mysticism but a spurious fashion of mysticism as well and he remarked on the elements of "archaeology, literature and romantic aesthetics" that may be observed even in the best aspects of the new mystical renaissance.

1. Berdyaev: Ibid., pp. 293-4.

His discussion then turned to the mysticism of India, Neo-platonism and to Eckhardt and others on the question of "reincarnation" and "non-being", concluding that "the way of renunciation plunges into ineffable nothing, into super-being."¹

Camilla Gray describes Malevich's theories as "the signs of his unsystematic education in their confused thought and language. His simple background was probably a barrier between Malevich and Kandinsky, etc."

However Dora Vallier considers that his language is deliberately mystical in intention and origin, and makes the connection between the political activities of the Nihilists around the turn of the century and the philosophy of Berdyaev in whose view primitive nihilism is essentially the search for truth. In its deepest sources and in its purest form it is an asceticism without grace. It cannot admit the injustice of the world and its suffering, it seeks the end of the wicked world, its destruction and the advent of a new world.²

Berdyaev was conscious of the influence of mechanised society on the arts and realised that a conflict existed between a longing for the primordial society and the mechanised state:

1. Berdyaev: Ibid., pp. 299-301.

2. La recherche de la vérité. Dans ses sources profondes et dans la forme la plus pure, c'est un ascétisme dans la grâce. Il ne peut admettre l'injustice du monde et sa souffrance, il souhaite la fin de ce monde mauvais, sa destruction et l'avènement d'un monde nouveau. Dora Vallier: L'Art Abstrait. p. 160.

The machine is being placed between man and nature. The entry upon an epoch which is par excellence technical has a metaphysical importance. And in this epoch the human relation to beauty is being revolutionised. Man is losing as it were the remnants of his memory of paradise. He is moving forward into night in which no form is to be seen, but only the shining of stars.¹

The disagreement between Malevich and Tatlin during the preparation of the "0.10" exhibition in Petrograd in December 1915 celebrated the beginning of conflict between Malevich's mystical idealism and the ideas of constructivism described in the Manifesto of the N.E.P. Constructivists published in Lef:

The material formation of the object is to be substituted for its aesthetic combination. The object is to be treated as a whole, and thus will be of no discernible "style" but simply a product of an industrial order like a car, an aeroplane and such like. Constructivism is a purely technical mastery and organisation of materials on three principles:

- a) the tectonic (act of creation)
- b) the factura (manner of creation)
- c) the construction.²

The two approaches lay beneath the debate between those souls who saw the future of art to be "production-art" (Tatlin, Rodehenko and the Constructivists) or "laboratory art" (Malevich and the Suprematists).

Laboratory art was art practised by specialists who experimented purely with the form and ideology of art. It was abstract and ultimately derived from symbolism with its a-political affinities and belief in art for art's sake. The Suprematists had evolved to a point where they saw themselves to be experimenting with pure art that could be

1. Ibid., 146. See also Berdyaev's essay "Man and the Machine".

2. Manifesto in Lef, No. 1, 1923.

applied by others. Production art, an "utilitarian" attitude which evolved into "Objectivism" in 1921 and introduced to Western Europe through the Magazine Object. Veshch. Gegenstand, Berlin, 1922, with Ehrenburg and El Lissitsky its chief representatives was against art for art sake and pure art and wished to place art on a level with every day objects including architecture. In Russia the utilitarian approach was associated with the 1917 revolution.

The events of 1917 in the social field were already brought about in our art in 1914 when 'material, volume and construction' were laid as its basis.¹

Other metaphysical sources of inspiration were at the roots of Kandinsky's earlier abstraction and a similar social expression realised itself in his teaching methods at the Bauhaus. But it was Böcklin's visionary painting and revolutionary ideas of colour and form as well as French painting which formed the background of his early years in Munich.

1. V.E. Tatlin: 'Nasha Predstoyashchaya Rabota', in Vlloi S'ezd Sovetov Ezhednevniy Bulletin S'odzda, No. 13, 1921, p. 11. Quoted in Camilla Gray: The Great Experiment, p..253.

CHAPTER XIX

KANDINSKY

Wassily Kandinsky was born in Moscow in December 1866, educated at Odessa where his family had moved about 1871 and at the University of Moscow, where he studied economics and law and after obtaining his degree became an assistant in the faculty of law.

In 1889 the society for Natural Science, Ethnography and Anthropology sent Kandinsky to the northern province of Vologda to report on the peasant laws and survivals of paganism among the local *Zyryan* people. There he was able to see folk art in its original setting. He remarked that people in their local costumes moved about like pictures come to life. Their houses were decorated with colourful carvings and inside were hung popular prints and icons. Furniture and other household objects were painted with large ornamental designs.¹

He visited Paris in 1889 for the first time and again in 1892 as soon as he had passed his final examinations. He also knew the French Impressionist works exhibited in Moscow in 1895. Monet's "Haystacks" were a revelation to him and helped to form his decision to take up painting. In 1896 he declined an offer of a post in the University of Dorpat and went instead to Munich where in 1897 he became a student of Anton Azb . There he met Alexey Javlensky from whom he first heard about van Gogh and C zanne. In 1900 he joined

1. Will Grohmann: Wassily Kandinsky, Life and Work.
(Harry N. Abrams inc. New York. Library of Congress
Catalogue Card Number: 58-13479), p. 31.

the Munich Academy under Franz von Stuck, a romantic landscape painter of the school of Böcklin. Famous for his teaching he became a profound influence on Kandinsky. In 1901 Kandinsky founded the group "Phalanx" which lasted three years. In 1902 he met Gabriele Münter and after many travels they settled in 1908 in Murnau, near Staffelsee, in Upper Bavaria. Between 1908 and 1910 he painted landscapes of Murnau, mostly influenced by folk art especially Bavarian paintings on glass. In 1910 he made his first abstract water colour (Figure 458) and first three "compositions." The same year he wrote the first version of his essay "Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst"¹

In "Rückblicke" ("Backward Glances") Berlin, Sturm, 1913, Kandinsky described how in 1909 one day he came into his studio at twilight and suddenly saw "an indescribably beautiful painting, permeated by an inner glow". He saw in it nothing but forms, no subject matter at all. The next day he recognised his picture and wrote "Now I knew with certainty that the object harms my paintings".

In 1909 Kandinsky wrote "Yellow Sound", a work synthesising all the arts for the stage similar to the kind that Scriabin, who was his age, had thought of. It was not produced until 1956 however.²

1. W. Kandinsky: Ueber das Geistige in der Kunst (Munich: R. Piper, 1912)(Actually published in December, 1911). It was first translated into English by M.T.H. Sadler as "The Art of Spiritual Harmony" (London, 1914) and later as "On the Spiritual in Art". A more recent English translation is by Francis Golffing, Michael Harrison and Ferdinand Ostertag: "Concerning the Spiritual in Art" (New York, Wittenborn Schultz, 1947).

2. Grohmann: Ibid., p. 56.

The Neue Künstlervereinigung (see Appendix XLI) was founded in 1909 by Kandinsky, Javlensky and others. The first exhibition was held in 1909 and the second in 1910 after which Franz Marc joined.

Kandinsky had met Franz Marc in 1910 and Paul Klee, Hans Arp and August Macke in 1911. With Franz Marc he founded the Blaue Reiter ("Blue Rider") group in 1911 which was joined by Paul Klee and August Macke. In 1911 Kandinsky and Franz Marc organised the first Blaue Reiter exhibition. It consisted of forty works by Albert Block, D. and V. Burljuk, Heinrich Campendonek, E. Kahler, W. Kandinsky, August Macke, Franz Marc, Gabriele Munter, Jean Bloc Niestlé, the composer Arnold Schönberg, Henri Rousseau, Robert Delaunay and Elizabeth Epstein. Kandinsky exhibited "Composition V", "Improvisation 22", and "Impression Moscow" (destroyed c. 1944). Marc's exhibits included "Blue Horses" and "Yellow Cow"; Macke, the abstract "Storm"; Delaunay, "St. Severin" (1909), and one of the Eiffel Towers ("Tower", 1911); V. Burljuk, a cubist head, Schönberg, a self portrait and two "visions" and Rousseau two small landscapes that Kandinsky had bought two years earlier.

The second exhibition held in Munich opened in February 1912 and included only prints, drawings and water colours. Among them were works by H. Arp, G. Braque, R. Delaunay, A. Derain, R. de la Fresnaye, N. Goncharova, Kandinsky, E.L. Kirchner, P. Klee, H. Kubin, M. Larionov, A. Macke, K. Malevich, F. Marc, E. Nolde, P. Picasso,

M. Vlaminck and eight Russian popular engravings newly printed from old woodblocks.¹

In 1912 the Blaue Reiter Almanac appeared, shortly after the second edition of "On the Spiritual in Art". Kandinsky and Marc were the editors, and contributors included August Macke, David Burliuk and A. Schönberg. It included essays on contemporary art, music and theatre; reproductions of primitive and folk art, children's drawings, mediaeval wood cuts and sculpture; oriental and ancient Egyptian art; reproductions of pictures by Cézanne, Rousseau, Delaunay and by the group around Kandinsky, including Marc's "Bull" (Figure 303), Picasso's "Woman with a Mandoline" (Figure 71), Delaunay's "Eiffel Tower", Matisse's "La Musique" and "La Dance" and Rousseau's "Self Portrait". Grohmann claims that Delaunay could not have influenced the Blaue Reiter artists in 1910 as they did not see his paintings until late 1911. Marc, Macke and Klee called on Delaunay in Paris in 1912 and in 1912 Klee translated Delaunay's essay on colour and light for Der Sturm (see Appendix VII) and in 1914 applied the ideas to his Kairouan water-colours.

Kandinsky's "Über das Geistige in der Kunst" is an attack on positivism and materialism, substituting for it an art which depends on translating the sensations of the soul in colours and marks which may set off similar sensations in the soul of the observer. Kandinsky called

1. Grohmann: Ibid., p. 67.

his system abstraktnyi (abstract) being associated with a philosophy of symbolic thought-forms. He used the word "abstraktnyi" from the time of the first public presentation of his essay "Concerning the Spiritual in Art" in Petersburg, 1911, at the first Congress of Painters. Malevich and his circle then wrote of "Bespredmetnoye iskusstvo" (non-objective art) in their theories.

Early in Uber das Geistige in der Kunst Kandinsky equated positivism in philosophy with naturalism in art:

In science these men are positivists, only recognizing those things that can be weighed and measured.

.

In art they are naturalists...¹

He contrasted this attitude of measuring quantities with the feeling for qualities which he associated with a spiritual tendency in art:

That which belongs to the spirit of the future can only be realized in feeling, and to this feeling the talent of the artist is the only road.²

Kandinsky stated that while science advances by contradicting its former findings in a perpetual renewal, "on the other hand, facts are being established which the science of yesterday dubbed swindles".³

Just as art is looking for help from the primitives, so these men are turning to half forgotten times to get help from half forgotten methods.

.

1. Uber das Geistige in der Kunst. First Eng. trans. by M.T.H. Sadler: "The Art of Spiritual Harmony" London, 1914, p. 23.

2. Ibid., p. 25.

3. Ibid., p. 27.

Frau Blavatsky was the first person, after a life of many years in India, to see a connection between these "savages" and our "civilization". From that moment there began a tremendous spiritual movement which today includes a large number of people and has even assumed a material form in the Theosophical Society. This society consists of groups who seek to approach the problem of the spirit by way of the inner knowledge. The theory of Theosophy which serves as the basis to this movement was set up by Blavatsky in the form of a catechism in which the pupil receives definite answers¹ to his questions from the theosophical point of view.

Theosophy according to Blavatsky, is synonymous with eternal truth. "The new torch bearer of truth will find the minds of men prepared for his message, a language ready for him in which to clothe the new truths he brings, an organisation awaiting his arrival, which will remove the merely mechanical, material obstacles and difficulties from the path". And then Blavatsky continues "The earth will be a heaven in the twenty-first century in comparison with what it is now", and with these words ends her book.²

Kandinsky went on to discuss the innovations of Maeterlinck and a performance of one of his plays in St. Petersburg before discussing contemporary musicians and post-impressionist painting. In his fourth chapter he stated that music "which is outwardly unfettered by nature", needing no definite form for its expression, is enviable by the artist seeking to "express his inner life".

Taking the comparison of colour with music further in his fifth chapter "The Psychological Working of Colour" he discussed "their psychic effect":

They produce a corresponding spiritual vibration, and it is only as a step towards this spiritual

1. H.P. Blavatsky, The Key of Theosophy, London, 1889 [footnote in the quoted text].

2. Kandinsky, Ibid., pp. 27-29.

vibration that the elementary physical impression is of importance.

Whether the psychic effect of colour is a direct one, as these last few lines imply, or whether it is the outcome of association is perhaps open to question.

A discussion of colour-hearing and other correspondences between the senses followed and ideas on the association of colours with sounds led him to make connections between colour and form in his sixth chapter:

The essential connection between colour and form brings us to the question of the influences of form on colour. Form alone even though totally abstract and geometrical, has a power of inner suggestion. A triangle (without the accessory consideration of its being acute or obtuse angled or equilateral) has a spiritual value of its own. In connection with other forms, this value may be somewhat modified, but remains in quality the same. The case is similar with a circle, a square, or any conceivable geometrical figure. As above, with the red, we have here a subjective substance in an objective shell.

The mutual influence of form and colour now becomes clear. A yellow triangle, a blue circle, a green square, or a green triangle, a yellow circle, a blue square - all these are different and have different spiritual values.

It is evident that many colours are hampered and even nullified in effect by many forms. On the whole, keen colours are well suited by sharp forms (e.g., a yellow triangle) and deep soft colours by round forms, (e.g. a blue circle). But it must be remembered that an unsuitable combination of form and colour is not necessarily discordant, but may, with manipulation, show the way to fresh possibilities of harmony.

.

...form in the outward expression of this inner meaning
...So it is evident that form-harmony must rest only
on a corresponding vibration of the human soul; and
this is a second guiding principle of the inner need.²

1. Kandinsky: Ibid., p. 49.

2. Ibid., pp. 56-57. The discussion of the different effects of colours on one another and their associations brought Ozenfant to different conclusions. He decided that colours always suggest material reality.

Madame Blavatsky's idea of Harmony is synonymous with the concept of God and of all that is virtuous:

If we have to believe in a divine principle at all, it must be in one which is as absolute harmony, logic, and justice,¹ as it is absolute love, wisdom and impartiality...

.

...we maintain that all pain² and suffering are results of want of Harmony.

Quoting from the "Secret Doctrine" the same writer defines Karma as Harmony:

For the only decree of Karma - an eternal and immutable decree - is absolute harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of spirit.³

Rudolf Steiner in "Outline of Occult Science" (First edition, 1909) presented his ideas in scientific thought-forms - that is in forms of thought akin to those of Natural Science, duly developed and adapted to the description of what is spiritual... But the world of the spirit as revealed to spiritual sight can only partly be described in thought forms of this kind. What is revealed cannot be fully contained in thought forms. He described in the preface to the 1925 edition how these can only be conveyed in picture-form through which inspirations speak proceeding from the spiritual reality of "Being", experienced in Intuition. He went on to say, however, that these discoveries by higher consciousness would be at present unrelated to present forms of knowledge if presented in pictorial forms.

1. Blavatsky: The Key to Theosophy (London 1889) p. 111.

2. Blavatsky: Ibid., p. 207.

3. Blavatsky: Ibid., p. 210.

Quiet thought and contemplation strengthens the power of the Soul...

Nature is seen by the outer senses...

The soul of man becomes attentive when he turns his inner life towards the spirit.

It is occult science against Natural Science.

In the preface to the 1913 edition he writes of how the

Human cognition can be strengthened and enhanced just as the range of the vision of the eye can be.

The means are described in his book as "Meditation", "Concentration" or "Contemplation."

In the 1880s Steiner tells us in the preface to the first Edition, 1909, that as a student he made a thorough study of physics and the so called "Mechanical Theory of Heat". He studied the historical development of all the explanations and lines of thought associated with such names as J.R. Mayer, Helmholtz, Clausius and Joule. He made it his principle only to speak or write from the aspect of spiritual science where he would also be qualified to give an adequate account of the accepted scientific knowledge.

He began studying Kant at the age of 16, as well as Bergson's "As If" and "Critique of Language" in this connection. He wrote critically and historically of these and other trends of thought in his philosophical works:

The theory of knowledge implicit in Goethe's world conception, Truth and Science. The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity, Goethe's conception of the world, Nineteenth century philosophic views of Life and of the World, Riddles of Philosophy.

Probable sources of spiritual ideas, compositions and improvisations by Kandinsky of 1910 to 1920 may lie in

certain compositions of undulating lines and freely curved forms described by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater as "thought forms" and given titles such as "Form built by Music: Gounod".¹

The development from point to cross showing a circle, a circle with a point as centre, a circle with a horizontal central division, a circle containing a cross and other figures are reproduced in H.P. Blavatsky The Secret Doctrine pp. 4-5, and compared with diagrams by Kandinsky from Punkt und Linie zu Fläche (see Figures 471-474). Curved and angular figures are reproduced by Edgar Rubin as "Test figures" in Visuell wahrgenommene Figuren, 1921.

Later in experiments at the Bauhaus Kandinsky tested the predominant associations between these basic geometric shapes and the primary colours (see Figures 475-478).

The particular shapes employed by Malevich in his works of 1913, designs for "Victory over the Sun" and early Suprematist paintings and drawings may have reflected something of Kandinsky's theory of 1911-12. Affinities between painting and music had for some time been of interest to artists and Malevich's designs for Matyushin's opera suggest the idea of musical associations discussed by Kandinsky. Moreover the shapes used musical notation which do not in themselves have anything to do with this theory, and have been used by Malevich as plastic elements in a way that Kandinsky did not do or recommend. It is also possible

1. "Form built by Music: Gounod" is reproduced as plate G in Annie Besant & C.W. Leadbeater, Thought Forms (and reproduced in Ringbom, The Sounding Cosmos (Turku, Finland, 1972), plate 21.

that Malevich began to apply Kandinsky's general ideas with regard to geometric shapes and their expressive powers.

The drawings of a square, circle and other variations in different colours indicate sources in Kandinsky's ideas. These may have prompted Malevich to arrive at his very basic conclusion, and to consider a solitary square a sufficiently powerful image to exhibit after the experience of seeing his simplified back cloth for "Victory over the Sun" and carrying out exercises based on pure geometric shapes.

Madame Blavatsky's ideas were probably quite familiar to Malevich, and Kandinsky's discussion, in which her theosophy is mentioned, may have caused Malevich to read her book where he would have re-discovered references to the square (see Chapter XVI).

Kandinsky's development as an artist was to depend upon the second of two tasks he attributed to form:

- (1) Either form aims at so limiting surfaces as to fashion of them some material object;
- (2) Or form remains abstract, describing only a [?]now material, spiritual entity. Such non-material entities, with life and value as such, are a circle, a triangle, a rhombus, a trapeze, etc., many of them so complicated as to have no mathematical denomination.

Between these two extremes lie the innumerable forms in which both elements exist, with a preponderance either of the abstract or the material.¹

In the exercises carried out by Matyushin in the form of colour charts (see Appendix XXVII), the variations of some of the forms appear as very rigorous abstractions and resemble those of Kandinsky's ideas at this time.

However, Kandinsky goes on to state that he considers that

1. Kandinsky, Ibid., p. 58.

it is too limiting for an artist to devote himself to abstract painting:

Purely abstract forms are beyond the reach of the artist at present; they are too indefinite for him. To limit himself to possibilities, to exclude the human element and therefore to weaken his power of expression.

On the other hand there exists no purely material form.¹

The exercises designed by Malevich in his Non-objective World have the intention of guiding the student through Cézannist, Cubist and Futurist stages to the final Suprematism. Something of this may have been suggested by Kandinsky's discussion of Cézanne's Bather's in terms of its figurative elements serving as "building-material" for a triangular composition with all its spiritual associations.² But with regard to the desirability of eliminating the subject Kandinsky posed the question:

Suppose a rhomboidal composition, made up of a number of human figures. The artist asks himself: Are these human figures an absolute necessity to the composition, or should they be replaced by other forms, and that without affecting the fundamental harmony of the whole? If the answer is "Yes", we have a case in which the material appeal directly weakens the abstract appeal. The human form must either be replaced by another object which, whether by similarity or contrast, will strengthen the abstract₃ appeal, or must remain a purely non-material symbol.

Kandinsky next introduced a point which recalls Matisse's idea of expression and his emphasis on the inevitability of every element in a picture. The two artists differ with regard to the expression of decorativeness, the Frenchman

1. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

2. Ibid., p. 60.

3. Ibid., p. 61.

favouring it and Kandinsky repelling it in order to express some more profound and spiritual force. But with Matisse too, experience was translated into form and colour, the whole composition was charged emotionally and it was not in the subject matter or the choice of imagery that expression lay but in the entity of the picture:

I cannot distinguish between the manner in which I experience life and the kind and manner in which I translate this experience into paint. What I pursue above all is expression...I do not think that it can be conveyed by passions fleeting across a face, or even by violent movements. It is to be found in my entire painting: the area occupied by figures, the empty spaces around them, the proportions, all these play their part. The art of composition consists in being able to arrange the different elements which the painter has at his disposal to express feelings in a decorative manner. In a picture, every section must be visible and play its own role, whether this is a principal or secondary one. Everything that has no function in a painting is therefore detrimental to it. A work of art entails a harmony of the whole; any superfluous detail would thus take the place of an essential detail in the mind of the spectator.¹

Matisse's "Joie de Vivre" (1905-6) was exhibited at the Salon d'Automne in 1906. The composition appears to be related to Cézanne's last picture the "Baignade" discussed by Kandinsky in "On the Spiritual in Art". "Joie de Vivre" and his work, commissioned in 1909 by Shchukin to decorate a dining room, are a direct illustration of his words. Kandinsky too realised that forms in relation to one another produce different effects when a slight alteration or adjustment is made and that every mark should be significant:

Form-composition rests on a relative basis, depending on (1) the alterations in the mutual relations of forms one to another, (2) alterations in each individual

1. Matisse "Notes d'un Peintre" published by La Grande Révue (December, 1908).

form, down to the very smallest. Every form is as sensitive as a puff of smoke, the slightest breath will alter it completely.¹

A comparison with music is suggested a little later:

∴ the concord or discord of the various elements of a picture, the handling of groups, the combination of veiled and openly expressed appeals, the use of rhythmical or unrhythmical, or geometric or non-geometrical forms, their contiguity or separation - all these things are the material for counterpoint in painting.²

In the same chapter Kandinsky stated that differences appear in art of different times when they express the spirit of that time but he describes as the subjective element which is the outward expression of the "objective element" or "inner need". The best method of externalising this "inner need" is through the study of colour and its effects.

All means are sacred which are called for by the inner need.³ All means are sinful which obscure that inner need.

Kandinsky emphasised the intuitive quality of any grammar of painting should it ever be achieved.

The divisions of colour by Kandinsky fall into warm and cold and into light and dark having therefore four shades, warm and light or warm and dark, or cold and light or cold and dark. He considered warmth or cold in a colour to approach respectively to yellow or to blue. He conceived of this as a horizontal movement, the warm colours approaching the spectator, the cold ones retreating from him.

His second antithesis is between black and white, being light and dark and having their peculiar movement to and from

1. Kandinsky, Uber das Geistige...p.64.

2. Ibid., pp. 65-66.

3. Ibid., p. 69.

the spectator but in a more rigid form. Yellow has an expansive quality while blue on the other hand "moves in upon itself, like a snail retreating into its shell, and draws away from the spectator. There can never be a dark yellow and the relationship between white and yellow is close as black and blue which border on one another. This basis is similar to Goethe's Theory of colour but the development is radically different in that Goethe venerated red at the top of his colour arrangement and Kandinsky places yellow at the top in his diagrams.

The intuitive approach is similar to that of Goethe described at the beginning of his "Colour Theory" (see Appendix XXXIX). Kandinsky, in a footnote in reference to the natures of blue and yellow indicated his deliberately subjective approach:

These statements have no scientific basis, but are founded purely on spiritual experience.¹

A mixture of yellow and black results in green, as does a mixture of yellow and blue. Blue being associated with the spiritual and yellow with the bodily are united equally into green which is stationary. Yellow is described as "shrill" "earthy" and never capable of a profound meaning. An intermixture with blue makes it a "sickly" colour. Green is nevertheless restful and motionless as a result of the mixing of opposing elements of colour. White is described as "eternal discord, but with possibilities for the future (birth)"; Black as "absolute discord, devoid of possibilities

1. Ibid., p. 73. Footnote 1.

for the future (death)". Their mixture, grey, is seen as silent and motionless, being composed of two inactive colours. "A similar grey is produced by a mixture of green and red, a spiritual blend of passivity and glowing warmth".¹

"The glow of red is within itself"² But some reds are considered to be akin to yellow in their effect according to Kandinsky. Because of its glow it is popular with primitive and folk artists. The active element is never wholly absent when deepened as it is with green. Orange is described as "red brought nearer to humanity by yellow" and violet is "red withdrawn from humanity by blue".³ Orange and violet are described by Kandinsky as being complementary colours, and shown opposite one another in the colour circle illustrating his essay. Concerning this circle he wrote:

As in a great circle, a serpent biting its own tail (the symbol of eternity, of something without end) the six colours appear that make up the main antithesis. And to the right and left stand the two great possibilities of silence - death and birth.⁴

He was careful to add that his sayings concerning simple colours were very provisional and general:

Shades of colour, like those of sounds are of a much finer texture and awake in the soul emotions too fine to be expressed in words.⁵

In his final chapter entitled "Theory" Kandinsky recommends training the soul with regard to colours. Training

1. Ibid., p. 78.

2. Ibid., p. 80.

3. Ibid., p. 81.

4. Ibid., p. 82.

5. Ibid., p. 82.

the eye alone can result in mere decorativeness. Nevertheless he recognises that "decorativeness has its effect on us".

He criticised cubism with the following statement:

The search for constructive form has produced Cubism, in which natural form is often forcibly subjected to geometrical construction, a process which tends to hamper the abstract by the concrete and spoil the concrete by the abstract.

The harmony of the new art demands a more subtle construction than this, something that appeals less to the eye and more to the soul. This "concealed construction" may arise from an apparently fortuitous selection of forms on the canvas... Their fundamental relationship will finally be able to be expressed in mathematical form, but in terms irregular rather than regular.¹

A criticism of French attitudes in art is also made, and he emphasises the importance of the spiritual value of a picture rather than "form":

Therefore a picture is not necessarily "well painted" if it possesses the "values" of which the French so constantly speak.²

The artist must have something to say, for mastery over form is not his goal but rather the adapting of form to its inner meaning.³

Kandinsky was not greatly interested in wave lengths, optical mixing of colours, or the scientific regulation of tint and hue production. Therefore it would not be expected that he would study Helmholtz, Bezold, Rood, Ostwald, or Chevreul with more than passing interest.⁴

Paul Overy suggests that Kandinsky was probably quite

1. Ibid., p. 103.

2. Ibid., p. 105.

3. Ibid., p. 107.

4. Kenneth Lindsay: an unpublished dissertation - An Examination of the Fundamental Theories of Wassily Kandinsky, (University of Wisconsin, 1951), p. 222. Quoted in Paul Overy: Kandinsky, p. 101.

interested in various colour theories and that it was the Ladd Franklin theory that influenced his choice of making yellow the top colour in his arrangement. He probably knew the Young-Helmholz theory, Ewald Herring's theory as well as the Ladd-Franklin theory (see Appendix XLIII).

Jung, who was interested in mysticism, nevertheless condemned theosophy:

Theosophy and spiritualism are no better than materialism in their outrageous encroachments upon reality. We have in fact to resign ourselves¹ to the sphere of our psychological possibilities.

Theosophical thinking has an air that is not in the least reductive, since it exalts everything to transcendental and world embracing ideas.²

Referring to the influence of the Theosophical ideas of Madame Blavatsky and Rudolf Steiner on Kandinsky, Paul Overy remarks:

It is difficult to see why Kandinsky's early interest should have been a subject for scholarly mockery. Mondrian, Scriabin, Yeats and Stravinsky had a similar interest, yet generally they have escaped this rite. If we accept the fact that the ideas of Madame Blavatsky and her followers and, to a lesser extent, of Rudolf Steiner were second-rate (and they possibly were) it is worth remembering that great artists, writers and composers have drawn on second-rate ideas. (Consider the sources on which Shakespeare drew, for instance.) It is easy enough, at the distance of several decades, to mock, but may not the dependence of writers and artists of the 'thirties and 'forties on the ideas of Freud and Jung, and those of our own period on the ideas of Marshall McLuhan and³ Claude Levi-Strauss seem equally bizarre in time.

-
1. C.G. Jung: Psychological Types (First published in German in 1920 and in English in 1923). Eng. trans. H. Godwin Baynes, London, 1949, p. 210.
 2. Ibid., p. 444.
 3. Paul Overy: Ibid., p. 31.

In 1914 Kandinsky left Munich and returned to Russia through Switzerland. While at Goldbach near Constance he made careful notes concerning formal problems which he later used for his book "Point and Line to Plane". In 1915 Kandinsky did not paint at all; in 1916 he painted eight paintings, five of which have remained in Russia; in 1917 nine, all of which he left behind; in 1918 six, in 1920 ten, and in 1921, the year he returned to Germany, eight.

In July 1918 the Commissariat of Public Instruction made Kandinsky a member and in the autumn appointed him Professor at the Art School, Government Art Workshops. In 1919 Kandinsky founded the Museum for Pictorial Culture; in 1920 he was appointed professor at the University of Moscow, but never taught there, and in 1921 he founded the Academy of Aesthetics, becoming vice-president. Thus from 1918 he was busy with administration and other organizational business, as well as lectures.

During this period certain tendencies to harder edges appear to have developed and this is usually attributed to the influence of constructivism. But Grohmann argues that there were strictly geometric elements in Kandinsky's art even in his Munich period, for instance, in the preliminary drawings for a series called "Small Pleasures", 1913, based on "pure" forms.¹ Moreover, the works of his Russian years down to 1921 (see Figures 455-465) reveal no Constructivist influence whatsoever. Subsequently when he was at the

1. See Grohmann: Ibid., pp. 162-3.

Bauhaus he often observed that Constructivism was alien to him. He felt compelled to say this because Constructivist tendencies markedly asserted themselves at the Bauhaus from 1921 on.

Kandinsky was familiar with many of the artistic events in Russia after 1910 and when the Blaue Reiter was founded he established contacts with Russian artists. He included a cubist head by Burliuk in the first exhibition and in the second exhibition he showed the "Peasant Head" by Malevich (Figure 391). When Kandinsky returned to Russia in 1914 Malevich and Tatlin were prominent leaders of the avant-garde. Kandinsky taught with Russian artists at the Art School but the Constructivists tended to regard him as an opponent and Fanina Halle stated that despite his official activities Kandinsky remained fairly isolated as a painter while in Russia and that during the years of the Revolution was much less prominent than a number of successful Moscow painters.¹

In 1916 during his stay in Stockholm Kandinsky produced 14 water colours, "trifles" which he entitled "Birds", "Horsemen" and "Lady in Crinoline". In 1917 he painted 17 paintings on glass in Moscow. In 1918 he produced one water-colour. As for certain works such as "St George" and "Archers" which remained in Russia, Grohmann is unsure as to whether they were painted in Moscow or in Munich.

With the painting "Variegated Circle" 1921, and "Circles in Black", of the same year the circle is named in

1. Kunstblatt, 1922, mentioned in Grohmann, Ibid., p. 163.

in the title for the second time. These harder edges began to characterise the new tendencies in his work which were to surprise his friends in Germany (see Figures 465-469). The comparatively hard edges he began to give his forms at this time are similar to the slightly less hard edges of the ideal shapes of Suprematist pictures, the dynamic paintings of small elements by Malevich and with Rodchenko's lines drawn with compasses as early as 1913 or 14.

Grohmann remarks on how little importance calculation has in Kandinsky's work and states that this may be seen from the circle pictures of 1923-26 (see Figures 467-469). In a letter to Grohmann Kandinsky said:

The circle is a link with the cosmos. But I use it above all formally. Why does the circle fascinate me? It is (1) the most modest form, but asserts itself unconditionally, (2) a precise but inexhaustible variable, (3) simultaneously stable and unstable, (4) simultaneously loud and soft, (5) a single tension that carries countless tensions within it. The circle is the synthesis of the greatest oppositions... of the three primary forms [triangle, square, circle], it points most clearly to the fourth dimension.¹

Grohmann supplemented this with the following excerpt from another of Kandinsky's letters:

Form is for me only a means to an end...The meaning, the content of art is Romanticism...The circle which I have been using so often as late, is nothing if not Romantic. Actually the coming Romanticism is profound, beautiful...meaningful, joy-giving²- it is a block of ice, with a burning flame inside.

The tendency to make forms firmer and more geometrical represented an ordering and clarifying of his earlier work and not a totally new departure. Geometrical forms had their own vitality and personality and were juxtaposed in

1. Will Grohmann: Kandinsky (Express Art Books, Beaverbrook Newspapers Ltd., London 1960), pp.4-5.

2. Quoted in Grohmann, op.cit.

order to suggest conflict and other relations.

As well as referring to the romanticism of the circle Kandinsky discussed its "inner potentialities" that connect the plastic with the spirit. The circle was an allusion to the "absolute" and "transcendental". He spoke of a play of cosmic energy with regard to the combination of geometric forms and on the level of pure forms where the formal verges on the spiritual:

The circle is the synthesis of the greatest oppositions. It combines the concentric with the eccentric in a single form, and in balance. Of the three primary forms, the triangle, the square and the circle, it points most clearly to the fourth dimension.

.

The circle is¹ a link with the cosmos but I use it above all formally.

Writers such as Churchward were at the same time analysing the significance of these three forms and their origins in ancient Egyptian symbolism. (see Appendix XLIV)

The circle also took on the status of a subject in his paintings as much as the dynamic mythical subjects with a galloping horse of around 1910:

If I make such frequent, vehement use of the circle in recent years, the reason (or cause) for this is not the geometric form of the circle or its geometric properties but my strong feeling for the inner properties of the circle and its countless variations; I love the circle today as I formerly loved the horse, for instance - perhaps even more since I find more inner potentialities in the circle which is why it has taken the horse's place.²

-
1. From a letter to Will Grohmann (October 12, 1930), quoted in Marcel Brion: Kandinsky (Oldbourne Press, London, 1961), p. 72.
 2. From a letter written to Will Grohmann in 1929, and in the text published in "Plant" in 1929, quoted in Marcel Brion: Ibid., p. 70.

Paul Overy affirms that references to basic geometric forms, circle, triangle, square, occur in Kandinsky's theoretical writings as early as 1910 and that probably the writings were influential on the development of Suprematism and Constructivism.¹

At the end of 1921 Kandinsky and his wife arrived in Berlin. His friends were widely scattered: Paul Klee and Lyonel Feininger were teaching at Weimar, Alexey von Javlensky had recently moved to Wiesbaden, Marianne von Werefkin lived in Ascona, A. Sacharov lived in Zurich and Kandinsky had no contact with Die Brücke painters. Berlin was artistically very radical. In 1922, the great Exhibition of Russian Art in the Van Diemen gallery (Unter der Linden) was organized by the Commissariat of Public Instruction and Art in conjunction with the foreign Organisation for Relief of Famine in Russia. Sterenberg's preface (dated October 1922) included the statement "The works by the Leftist group illustrate the laboratory experiments that preceded the transformation of art". This statement suggested that "modern" or "experimental" art was coming to an end, however all the schools were exhibited including "impressionists", painters of "Mir Iskusstva", the Union of Leftist Groups (Cubists, Suprematists, Constructivists) and others.

The unsigned introduction by a Russian critic listed the artists from Right to Left, mentioning also Kandinsky, Chagall, Archipenko, Gabo and Pevsner. These artists had left Russia

1. Paul Overy: Kandinsky, the language of the eye (Elek Books London 1969), footnote 2, p.16.

although it was not yet certain if they had left permanently. Realistic bourgeois paintings hung next to Malevich's "White on White", Chagall's "Street-sweeper" next to Lissitzky's Proun, and Lentulov's "Cubist Women" next to Kandinsky's compositions and water-colours from the Moscow period. As well as paintings and constructions the plates, cups, teapots and other products of the Petersburg porcelain industry were represented (Figures 623-634).

The exhibition aroused a great deal of attention, but opinions varied. Some critics favoured Kandinsky, Gabo, Malevich and Tatlin.

Das Kunstblatt¹ said that the exhibition was a disappointment, and at the same time one of the most interesting artistic manifestations:

There are no works of permanent value, the new ventures are merely radical, and the whole is an exhibition of artistic problems, not of works. The Russians have reached the stage of fundamental grammatical concepts, but they have a long way to go before they achieve a language. In this company Kandinsky sticks out as a singular phenomenon, for he reflects neither the Russian convention nor Russian dialectics: his paintings are non-objective, but contain a human component. His "Pointed Hovering" shows that it is the result of a long development, not a leap into the void. Kandinsky forced to choose between his fellow countrymen and his former German friends, has obviously chosen the latter.²

Kandinsky was invited to teach at the Bauhaus in Weimar in 1922. The Bauhaus was set up in 1919 when Walter Gropius combined the Weimar School of Creative Art with the School of Industrial Arts giving both schools a common curriculum. Gropius first invited Johannes Itten, Lyonel Feininger and

1. Das Kunstblatt, 1922, pp. 493-498 discussed in Grohmann: Kandinsky, pp. 172-173.

2. Quoted, op.cit.

Gerhardt Marcks, then the architect Adolf Meyer and Georg Muche to teach there. In 1920 he invited Paul Klee and Oscar Schlemmer, in 1922 Kandinsky and in 1923 Moholy-Nagy.

1922 was a critical period in the history of the Bauhaus. Johannes Itten, who was in charge of the Basic Course covering six months examination of the qualities of materials, forms and colour had become increasingly mystical and involved with Mazdaism. However his main concerns, basically that students could arrive at their personal language of self expression and that they should learn by doing rather than by being taught academically were of value to the development of teaching methods at the Bauhaus. In 1921 and 1923 left wing students openly revolted against his expressionist methods. In 1922 Theo van Doesburg, the leader of the Dutch De Stijl movement, arrived in Weimar and disappointed with his hopes that the Bauhaus was attempting a synthesis between art and technology, he refused a teaching job there and attacked the school's mediaevalism in the form of open lectures. Itten was dismissed as well as Josef Albers and posts were given to Marcel Breuer and Herbert Bayer. Moholy-Nagy who had strong contacts with the Russian Constructivists through E.L. Lissitzky in Berlin as well as with van Doesburg was also appointed at this time. Kandinsky's invitation to join the staff of the Bauhaus came earlier in 1922 however. After 1925 when the Bauhaus moved to Dessau, several former students, Josef Albers, Herbert Bayer, Marcel Breuer, Hinnerk Scheper, Joost Schmidt and Gunta Stolzl taught there. The new teachers supervised the preliminary courses, typography, the furniture workshop, wall painting,

the plastic workshop, and the weaving workshop. In 1928 Gropius withdrew from the direction of the Bauhaus to do his own work. Moholy-Nagy and Breuer left the school at the same time as Gropius, Schlemmer left in 1929 and Klee in 1930. ^{These changes were} ₁ due to other plans or appointments.

Klee and Kandinsky published parts of their carefully prepared lectures in the series of Bauhaus books which were printed by Müller and Langen in Munich. Kandinsky's "Point and Line to Plane"¹ was published in 1925 and Klee's "Pedagogical Sketchbook", after the Bauhaus moved to Dessau. Kandinsky's book is a short excerpt from a much longer course. For Bauhaus-Buch 1919-1923, Kandinsky wrote two short theoretical essays - "The Basic Elements of Form" and "Course in Colour, and Seminar", and in addition, a paper "On the Abstract Stage Synthesis". In 1922 Kandinsky took part in a symposium, "A New Naturalism"; in 1923 he wrote "Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow" for Wertheim's Künstlerbekenntnisse; in 1925, "Abstract Art" for Cicerone; and in 1926 the essay "The Value of Theoretical Teaching in Painting" for the first issue of the Bauhaus Magazine.²

These writings are mainly concerned with the appreciation and adaptation^{ta} of abstract art to a teaching method. In "Abstract Art" Kandinsky discussed "the transvaluation of values" suggested in "On the Spiritual in Art". He considered that the centre of development would shift from the West to Russia, where "Spiritual values" were predominant even

1. W. Kandinsky: Punkt und Linie zu Fläche Beitrag zu analyse der Malerischen Elemente Bauhausbücher 9 (München, 1926). Eng. trans. by Thomas Dearstyne and Hilla Rebay: Point and Line to Plane: Contribution to the Analysis of the Pictorial Elements (New York, Museum of Non-Objective Painting, 1947).

2. Grohmann: Ibid., p. 177.

in the world of law. He said that the French analyzed the external matter of art (from Impressionism to Cubism), and that they would again recede into the background. Analysis of the pure means of expression in the various arts would lead to insight into their universal content and to a synthesis which would clearly disclose the "purely artistic" in all fields.¹

Kandinsky's ideas in work of the Bauhaus period, both paintings and the illustrations and text of "Point and Line to Plane", appear to have drawn from the Gestalt theory.² This theory is summarised by Arnheim:

It seemed no longer possible to think of vision as proceeding from the particular to the general. On the contrary, it became evident that overall structural features are the primary data of perception, so that triangularity is not a late product of intellectual abstraction but a direct and more elementary experience than the recording of individual detail.³

"Point and Line to Plane" is part of a larger study for a new method of teaching a basic grammar of art. The basic possibilities of the picture plane are discussed in terms of the psychological effect of lines and shapes according to their position. Kandinsky considered horizontal lines to be cold, vertical lines to be warm and the warmth or coldness of the picture format could be measured according to which predominated. With a square plane cold and warm are equally balanced.

-
1. Grohmann: Ibid., p. 179.
 2. See P. Overy, Ibid., L.D. Ettlinger: "Kandinsky's At Rest" (Charlton Lecture on Art) reprinted Oxford 1961.
 3. Rudolf Arnheim, Art and Visual Perception (Faber and Faber, London, 1956), p. 31.

The plane is then divided into four fields of force: above and below, left and right. Small forms in the upper part of a picture appear looser, lighter, freer and less dense according to their proximity to the top of the picture. Conversely heavy forms appear heavier when placed at the top of the picture-plane. The upper part of the picture also suggests slight movement. Small forms in the lower part of the picture appear heavy, condensed and restrained while heavy forms appear less heavy in that area.

Kandinsky suggested that this may be due to an association or transference to the picture-plane in which the horizontal line corresponds to the ground on which we stand. Perhaps as Gibson has suggested it is because land and sky are constant visual stimuli to which the eyes and brain of our primitive ancestors responded.¹ Heavy forms would therefore have to be light and mobile to be in the area of the sky.

The forms found on the left side of the picture-plane give the effect of expansion, emancipation, freedom and the right half condensation, heaviness and restraint. Differences in movement direction in Kandinsky's analysis vary according to whether movement is toward the left or toward the right; movement toward the left suggests movement into the distance giving a sense of adventure, intensity and speech. Movement to the right is movement "towards home", "centred inwardly". "This movement is combined with a certain fatigue, and its goal is rest. The nearer to the right, the more languid

1. Gibson: "Pictures, Perspective and Perception" in The Visual Arts Today, edited by Gyorgy Kepes, (Wesleyan University Press, 1960), pp. 60-61, quoted in P. Overy, Ibid., p. 131.

and slow this movement becomes - so that the tensions of the forms moving to the right become even weaker and the possibility of movement becomes increasingly limited.¹ But though for Kandinsky the literary associations are above - heaven, below - earth, left - distance and right - home, he says they should not be taken too literally nor should they be used as the predetermined basis for composition. P. Overy compares these ideas and those that follow with the ideas of Gestalt psychologists.²

The various relationships which are discussed in the construction of a composition may be used for the effect of destroying or maintaining the picture plane according to the pressures and restraints placed on a shape by the borders of the picture. Kandinsky demonstrated this by means of placing a diagonal straight line in two different positions in the picture (Figures 471-474):

In the first case it lies free. In approaching the border it takes on a pronounced, increased tension, towards the upper right and thereby the tension of the lower end becomes weakened. In the second case, it strikes the edge and thereby immediately loses its tension upwards. As a result the downward tension increases and it acquires a sickly, almost despairing expression. (This increased tension and the adherence of the line to the upper edge makes it appear longer in the second case than in the first case). In other words: on approaching the boundary of the picture-plane, a form increases in tension until, at the moment of contact with the boundary, the tension suddenly ceases. Furthermore: the further a form lies from the edge of the picture-plane, the weaker becomes the attraction of the form to the edge. Or: forms lying near the border of the picture-plane augment the "dramatic" sound of the construction, whereas those forms lying away from the border, which gather more about the centre, lend a "lyrical" sound to the construction.³

-
1. Guggenheim edition, Point and Line to Plane, Chapter on the "Basic Plane" pp. 113-47. Quoted in P. Overy: Ibid., p.132.
 2. Kurt Koffka. Principles of Gestalt Psychology (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935, 1962) Quoted in P. Overy: Ibid., p.132.
 3. Point and Line to Plane, op.cit.

At the beginning of the same book Kandinsky compared the "point" to a zero, a full stop indicating a short silence or pause. In painting:

The point is the result of the initial collision of the tool with the material plane...The point may be defined as the smallest elementary form...The point is a small world cut off more or less equally¹ from all sides and almost torn out of its surroundings.

He stated that the point was static, neither advancing nor receding from the plane until it is moved or related to other points. An accumulation of points gives a texture.

Kandinsky said that when an external force is applied to the point the result is a line:

This force hurls itself upon the point which is digging its way into the surface, tears it out and pushes it about the surface in one direction or another. The concentric tension of the point is thereby immediately destroyed and, as a result, it perishes and a new being arises out of it which leads a new, independent life in accordance with its own laws. This is the line... It is the track made by the moving point; that is, the product. It is created by movement - specifically through the destruction of the intense self-contained repose of the point. Here, the leap out of the static into the dynamic occurs. The line is therefore, the greatest antithesis to the pictorial element - the point.²

Kandinsky went on to discuss the various forces that act on a point and produce straight lines, angular lines, or curved lines. The three basic kinds of straight line are classified as the horizontal, the diagonal and the vertical line.

The tendency of "free" straight, that is, lines that do not touch the edges of the picture format, was to appear to detach themselves from the plane. This is compared with advancing and retreating characteristics of yellow and blue.

1. Op.cit.

2. Op.cit.

Horizontal and vertical lines attached to the picture plane he finds similar to black and white and diagonal lines are identified with red. He then went on to discuss the lines produced when two forces are applied to the point. These become angles, divisible into acute angles, right angles and obtuse angles. The acute angles he described as "warmest", the right angle as "coldest" and the obtuse angle as combining both warmth and cold. The acute angle is "sharp and highly active", the right angle "cold and controlled", the obtuse angle is "clumsy, weak and passive". Kandinsky identified the acute angle with yellow, the right angle with red and the obtuse angle with blue. He then discussed curved lines remarking that the angle is "thoughtlessly youthful" but the curve has "mature energy", The three types of line correspond to birth (straight), youth (angular) and maturity (curved). Another characteristic of the curved line is its "principle of closure":

If the two forces, with the conditions unchanged, roll the point even further, the developing curve will sooner or later arrive again at its starting point. Beginning and end flow into each other and in the same instant disappear without a trace. The most unstable and, at the same time, the most stable of planes is created - the circle.¹

Angles may form a triangle in a similar way. He considered the triangle and the circle to be "primary" and contrasting planes. Kandinsky's three primary contrasting elements are the straight line and the curved line; the triangle and the circle; yellow and blue. In between lie the intermediate elements: the angle, the square, and red.

1. Op.cit.

The association of colours and forms at the Bauhaus is discussed by Hirschfeld-Mack:

A very interesting seminar was held during those early years. It was under the leadership of Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and others. They sought to discover the reaction of individuals to certain proportions, linear and colour compositions. Large charts were prepared and masters and students stood in a circle round the charts which were placed on the floor. They each made independent investigations of colour qualities and most stimulating discussion followed.

In order to find whether there is a universal law of psychological relationship between form and colour, we sent out about a thousand postcards to a cross-section of the community asking them to fill in three elementary shapes, the triangle, square and circle with three primary colours, red, yellow and blue, using one colour only for each shape. The result was an overwhelming majority for yellow in the triangle, red in the square and blue in the circle. This was only one of the many problems which was tackled at the seminar.¹

Paul Overy suggests the primacy of Kandinsky's geometrical experiments and points out that his experiment described above by Hirschfeld-Mack is reminiscent of Kandinsky's comparisons of colour and form in "Concerning the Spiritual in Art". The idea of the three primary forms being associated with the three primary colours occurred to Kandinsky as early as 1911 and was published in a colour illustration in the Works of the All-Russian Congress of Artists in 1911.²

Kandinsky's stages of development may also be associated with those of other artists and theorists, but the absorption of Russian and German culture that helped to form his work was unique.

1. L. Hirschfeld-Mack, The Bauhaus, Longmans (Australia) 1963, pp.5-6. quoted in P. Overy: Ibid., p. 163.
2. Kenneth Lindsay, Ibid., p.113. quoted P. Overy: Ibid., p.164.

Figure 455. Wassily Kandinsky: Poster for
"First 'Phalanx' Exhibition"
Munich, 1901.

PHALANX

1. AUSSTELLUNG

VON WERKEN DER MALEREI - PLASTIK - ARCHITEKTUR - GRAPHIK **TINKENSTRASSE 2**
gegenüber dem NS. Theater

ERÖFFNUNG: 18. AUGUST - SCHLUSS: ENDE NOV.

JAHRESKARTE M. 7.- GEÖFFNET: TÄGLICH VON 9-6 UHR. 10 KARTEN M. 4.-
 DEKARTE M. 3.- TAGESKARTE M. 0.50 KATEGORIEKARTE M. -30.

Figure 456. W. Kandinsky: Woodcut for cover
of the Catalogue of first
Blaue Reiter exhibition, 1911.

Figure 457. W. Kandinsky: Cover of Catalogue
of an exhibition at the
Izdebsky Gallery, Odessa,
Woodcut 1911.



Figure 458. W. Kandinsky: First abstract
water-colour, 1910.

*Untitled. Collection of Mme. Nina
Kandinsky, Paris.*



Figure 459. W. Kandinsky: Battle, 1910,
Oil on Canvas, $37\frac{1}{4}$ x $51\frac{1}{4}$ inches.
Tate Gallery, London.



Figure 460. W. Kandinsky: Improvisation No. 29,
1912.

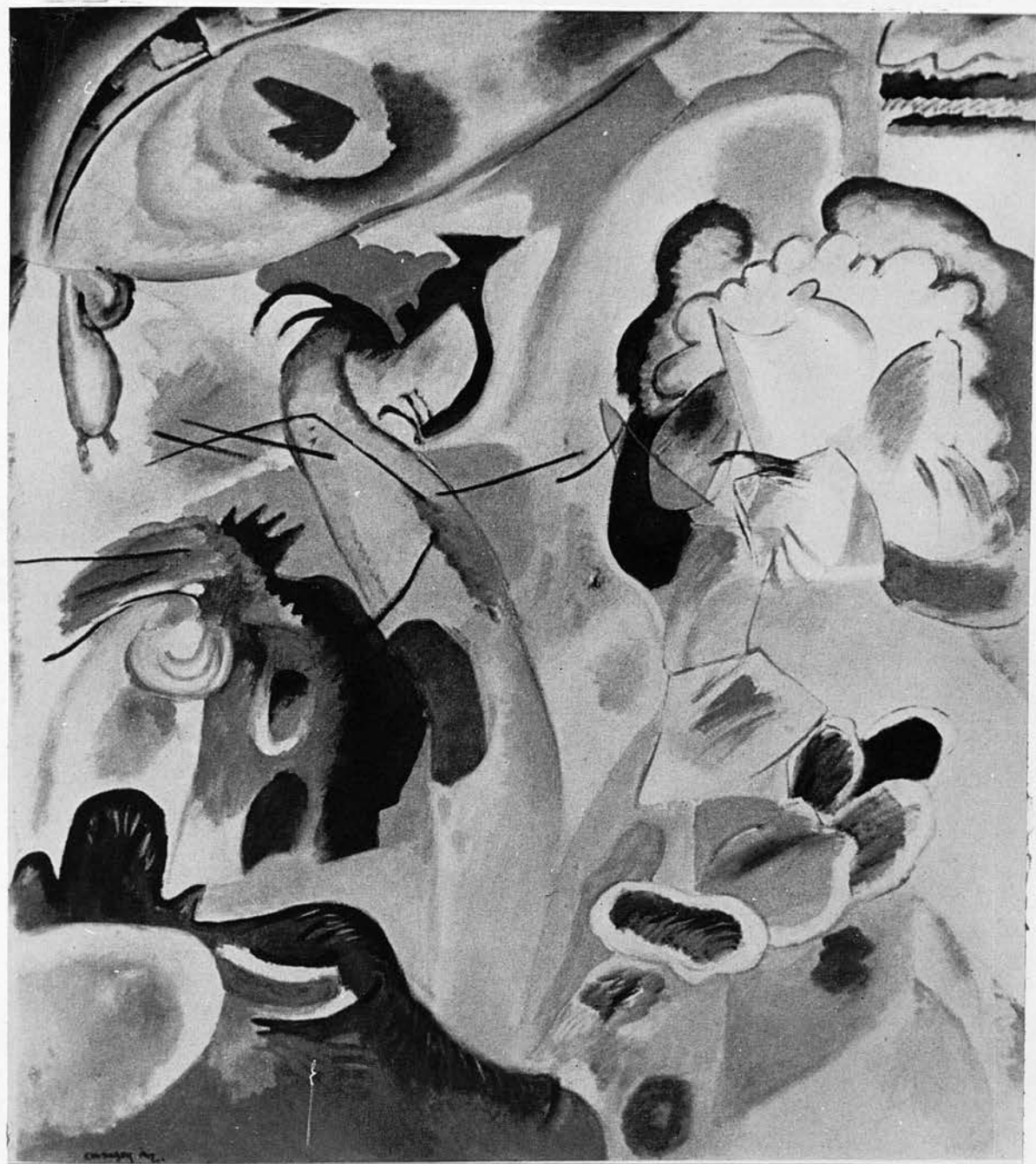


Figure 461. W. Kandinsky: Smutnaya Kartina
("Vague" or "Shadowy Picture")
No. 211, 1917, 134 x 105 cms.
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow,
(No. 11923).



Figure 462. W. Kandinsky: White Oval, Black Border,
1919, Picture No. 220. 80 x 93 cms.
Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow.
(No. 11924).

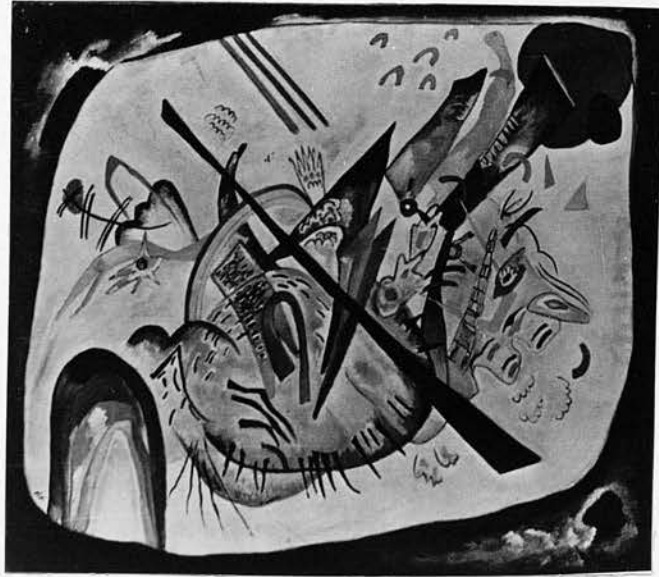


Figure 463. W. Kandinsky: Watercolour, 1917.

Figure 464. W. Kandinsky: Watercolour, 1917.

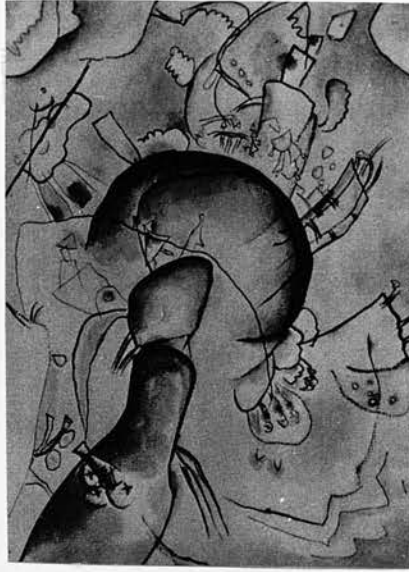


Figure 465. W. Kandinsky: Black Spot, 1921.
Oil on Canvas, 137 x 120 cms.
Kusthaus Zurich.

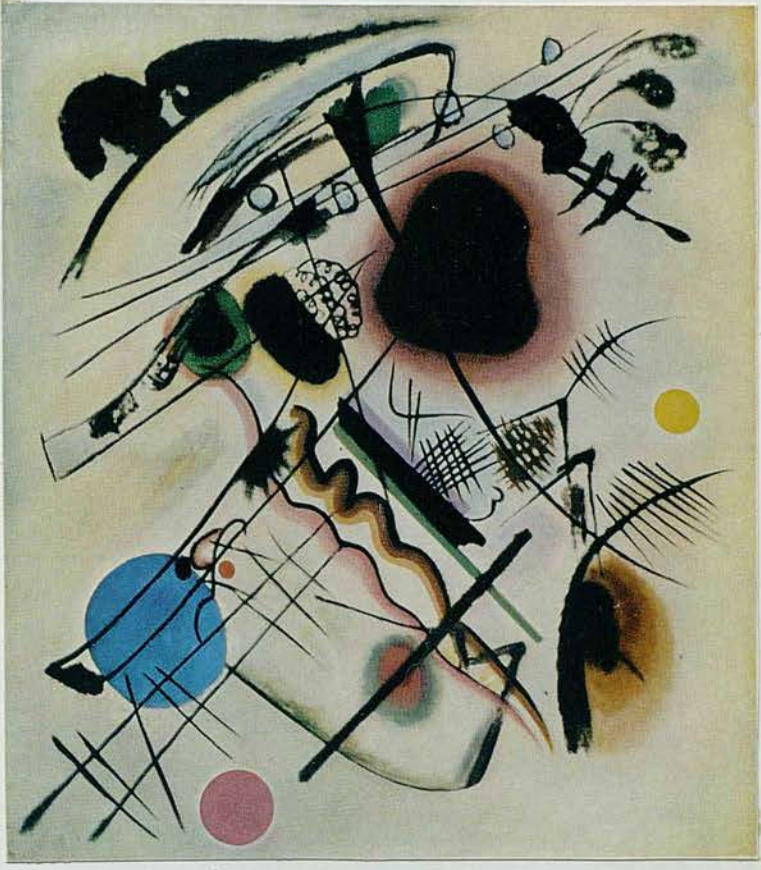


Figure 466. W. Kandinsky: Lithograph, 1922.
(from Klänge).



Figure 467. W. Kandinsky: Lithograph, 1923.

Figure 468. W. Kandinsky: Calm Bend, 1924.

Figure 469. W. Kandinsky: Black Relation, 1924.

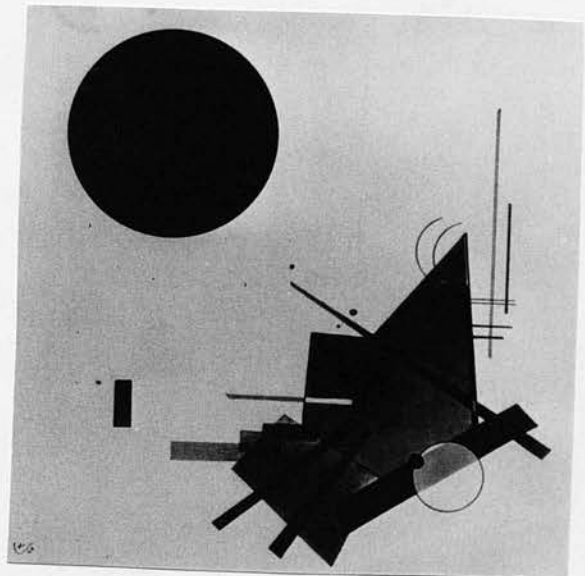
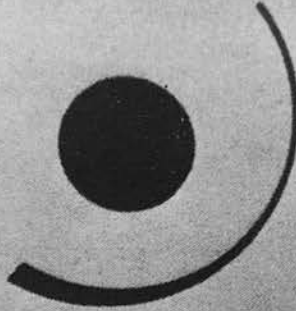


Figure 470. L. Moholy Nagy: Project for the cover for Kandinsky's book "Punkt und Linie zu Fläche" ("Point and Line to Plane") published Munich 1926.



BAUHAUSBÜCHER

KANDINSKY

PUNKT UND LINIE ZU FLÄCHE

2. AUFLAGE

Figures 471-474. Diagrams from Kandinsky,
Point and Line to Plane (1926).

Figure 471

'Silent lyric of the
 four elementary lines
 - expression of rigidity'

Figure 472

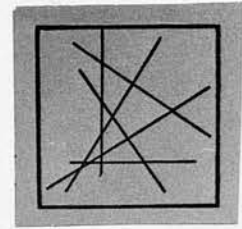
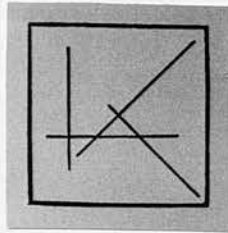
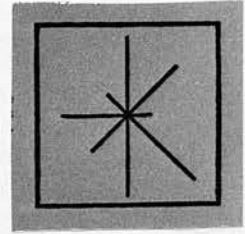
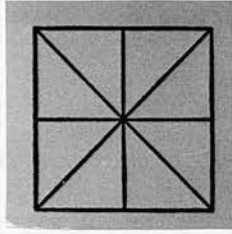
'Dramatization of
 the same elements -
 complex pulsating
 expression'.

Figure 473

'Diagonals centred.
 Horizontal-vertical
 acentric. Diagonal
 in the greatest tension.
 Balanced tensions of the
 horizontal and
 vertical'.

Figure 474

'Everything acentric.
 Diagonals strengthened
 through their repetition.
 Restraint of the
 dramatic sound at the
 point of contact above'.



Figures 475-478. Kandinsky's Colour Seminars.

Figure 475. Affinity of colour and line:

Fritz Tschaschnig, 1931.

Colours with corresponding angles according to Kandinsky:
30° - yellow, 60° - orange, 90° - red, 120° - purple,
150° - blue.

Figure 476. Affinity of colour and line:

Hans Thiemann, 1929.

Figures 477 and 478. Affinity of colour and form.

Three secondary colours as colour and
form mixture.

Orange pentagon, green semi-circle with half a
hexagon, violet semi-circle with half a square.

WILHELM VORRINGER AND EMPATHY

Kandinsky's theory of the spiritual in Art did not appear in isolation as a concept of art. The basic ideas of art and science were fully realized during the first decade of the century in Germany's "Kunst der Form" which has become

has become
Morphology
Vorringer's
Empathy")¹

ideas in art

will

discovery of

against nat

own ideas i

German

late nineteenth

the consciousness of

the development of

decade of the

and Germany were

contributed to the

art during that

primitive art by



1. Wilhelm Worringer, *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, Leipzig, A Contribution to the Psychology of Art, London, George Allen and Unwin, 1908. Reprinted by Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964. Abstraktion und Einfühlung was first published in Germany, run into eleven editions and was first translated into English in 1909. It was written as his doctoral thesis at the Sorbonne for which he received his doctorate in 1908.
2. W. G. Sebald, *Die Kunst der Form*, Munich, Piper Verlag, 1960, p. 4.

CHAPTER XX

WORRINGER: ABSTRACTION AND EMPATHY

Kandinsky's essay *On the Spiritual in Art* did not appear in isolation as a theory of art. The basic ideas of art and science were being revised during the first decade of the century: H. Friedmann's "Welt der Formen" has become a basic book of morphology founded on Goethe's Morphologie. The Blaue Reiter painters often referred to Worringer's "Abstraktion und Einfühlung" ("Abstraction and Empathy")¹ finished in 1907. This book came closest to their ideas on art.

Will Grohmann remarks that Kandinsky hailed the discovery of the atom's complex structure as an argument against materialism, and that he found confirmation of his own ideas in Worringer's book.²

German ideas influenced Russian thought during the late nineteenth century and contributed in various ways to the consciousness of the idea of the spiritual in art and the development of non-objective art during the second decade of the twentieth-century. Contacts between Russia and Germany were made by artists between 1907 and 1914 which contributed to the development of Primitivism and abstract art during that time. The recognition and evaluation of primitive art by the avant-garde took various forms in France,

-
1. Wilhelm Worringer, Abstraktion und Empathy, A Contribution to the Psychology of Style. Eng. Trans. by Michael Bullock Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1963. Abstraktion und Einfühlung has, in Germany, run into eleven editions from its first appearance in 1908. It was written as his doctoral thesis at Aix-la-Chapelle for which he received his degree in 1907.
 2. W. Grohmann: Kandinsky (Express Art Books, 1960), p.4.

Germany and Russia and the appreciation of primitive ornament and design corresponded with the development of abstract art and the supposition that art may be an autonomous organism developing free from any direct representation of nature. Interest in this subject had been evolving in Munich since the 1890s and in 1908 Wilhelm Worringer published "Abstraction and Empathy" intended as a contribution to the aesthetics of the work of art.¹ The book begins by delimiting art from nature and implying opposition to the realism of Courbet's art of representing visible and tangible appearances:

Our investigations proceed from the presupposition that the work of art, as an autonomous organism stands beside nature and, in its deepest and innermost essence, devoid of any connection with it, in so far as by nature² is understood the visible surface of things.

Worringer was one of the first writers to propose that the characteristics of different styles in art are the result of different volition and that the initial step to appreciating a particular style or form of art lies in understanding the volition that gave rise to it. Each art style should therefore be seen in its own terms. He contraposed naturalistic with abstract art and attributed naturalism to a civilisation that was in accord with nature and willing to represent it naturalistically. On the other hand a feeling of anguish and bewilderment in the face of the complex world caused artists to escape into the dependable and regular forms of abstraction. The latter he illustrated in terms of the ornament of primitive peoples:

1. Worringer: Ibid., p. 3.

2. Op.cit.

The style most perfect in its regularity, the style of the highest abstraction, most strict in its exclusion of life, is peculiar to the peoples at their most primitive cultural level.

.

The less mankind has succeeded, by virtue of its spiritual cognition, in entering into a relation of friendly confidence with the appearance of the outer world, the more forceful is the dynamic that leads to¹ the striving after this highest abstract beauty.

Worringer considered that man has "slipped down from his pride of knowledge and is just as helpless as primitive people once he has recognised that":

...this visible world in which we are is the work of "Maya", brought forth by magic, a transitory and in itself unsubstantial semblance comparable to the optical illusion and the dream, of which it is equally false and equally true to say that it is, as that it is not.²

He considered also that the creation is purely instinctive coming out of necessity and without intervention from the intellect. This view was very similar to Kandinsky's and conformed to the mistrust of Positivism which led to the ideas of Bergson, the Russian mystical thinkers and the artists mentioned in connection with them.

Worringer thought that the urge to create a resting point in the apparently chaotic world was bound to find its first satisfaction in:

...pure geometric abstraction, which, set free from all external connections with the world, represents a felicitation whose mysterious transfiguration emanates not from the observers' intellect, but from the deepest roots of his somato-psychic constitution.

.

1. Ibid., p. 17.

2. Schopenhauer: Kritik der Kantischen Philosophie, quoted in Ibid., p. 18.

Worringer's method did not consist of taking the aesthetic as the starting point of the investigation but proceeding from the behaviour of the subject. This culminated in his doctrine of "empathy" a theory which he attributed to Theodor Lipps:

Only in so far as this empathy exists are forms beautiful. Their beauty is the ideal freedom with which I live myself out in them. Conversely, form is ugly when I am unable to do this, when I feel myself inwardly unfree, inhibited, subjected to a constraint in the form, or in its contemplation.¹

Worringer summarised this by stating that: "Aesthetic enjoyment is objectified self-enjoyment".² The aim of his thesis however is to demonstrate that:

...the assumption that this process of empathy has at all times and at all places been the pre-supposition of artistic creation, cannot be upheld.³

Since the florescence of art history took place in the nineteenth century, it was only natural that the theories concerning the genesis of the work of art should have been based on the materialistic way of looking at things.⁴

He blamed Semper for this tradition and credited Alois Riegl with the introduction of the concept of "artistic volition" in art, summarising it as the "latent inner demand that exists per se":⁵

The stylistic peculiarities of past epochs are, therefore, not to be explained by lack of ability, but by a differently directed volition.⁶

1. Lipps: Asthetik, 247, quoted in Ibid., p.7.

2. Worringer: Ibid., p. 7.

3. Op.cit.

4. Worringer: Ibid., p.8.

5. Worringer: Ibid., p.9.

6. Op.cit.

The view of the autonomy of art and its relation to society put forward by Malevich corresponds with the view of Worringer and his suggestion of tracing these relationships which states:

No psychology of the need for art - in terms of our modern standpoint: of the need for style - has yet been written. It would be a history of the feeling about the world and, as such, would stand alongside the history of religion as its equal. By the feeling about the world I mean the psychic state in which, at any given time, mankind found itself in relation with the cosmos, in relation to the phenomena of the external world. The psychic state is disclosed in the quality of psychic needs, i.e. in the constitution of the absolute artistic volition, and bears outward fruit in the work of art, to be exact, in the style of the latter, the specific nature of which is simply the specific nature of the psychic needs. Thus the various gradations of the feeling about the world can be gauged from the stylistic evolution of art, as well as from the theogony of peoples.

.

What appears from our standpoint the greatest distortion must have been at the time, for its creator, the highest beauty and the fulfilment of his artistic volition.¹

Worringer used ornament as an example to illustrate his theory because he considered that

It is of the essence of ornament that in its products the artistic volition of a people finds its purest and most unobscured expression.²

He also considered that it offered a "paradigm" and agreed with the views of Lipps regarding the effects of geometrical ornament:

...geometrically uniform (regelmässig) figures are an object of pleasure because the apprehension of them, as of a whole is natural to the soul, or because it is to a particularly great extent, in conformity with a propensity in the nature or essence of the soul.³

1. Worringer: Ibid., p. 13.

2. Worringer: Ibid., p. 51.

3. Worringer: Ibid., p. 65.

References are also made to geometric and abstract forms developed by the Greeks such as the Vitruvian scroll in contrast to the spiral which has naturalistic sources and later there is a discussion of geometrical forms of Egypt. The conclusion is that classical Greek ornament, compared with Egyptian, shows in place of geometric regularity an organic regularity.

Kandinsky's love of the circle after 1920 may also have owed its inspiration to the development and refinement of that fascination with forms as such and their effects that was so widespread in Munich in the late nineteenth century. This led to the study of Egyptian geometrical forms and their meaning, a subject which was much discussed and published during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see Appendix XLI). Moreover Worringer made a specific reference to this subject in connection with the circle:

The Egyptian, we must infer, saw for example in the circle not the living line that pursues its pre-determined path in a marvellous conflict and balance between centrifugal and centripetal forces and must return to itself, but saw in it only the geometric form which presents itself as the most perfect of all such forms through the fact that it is the only one to fulfil in all directions and in toto the postulate of symmetry.¹

The contents as well as the approach to analysing form in Kandinsky's "Point and line to Plane" possibly owes something to this discussion, especially to certain aspects of Worringer's remarks on the characteristics of the wavy line. Worringer stated that with geometrically constructed wavy

1. Worringer: Ibid., p. 68.

lines it is difficult to follow the course of the line without a certain inhibition. In connection with this he quoted Lipps:

The movement in every semicircle, once it has begun, naturally continues along a uniform path, i.e..the semicircle is completed into a circle. By contrast, such a movement cannot, of its own accord change over into a curve in the opposite direction.¹

The Greek wavy line, on the other hand, cannot be constructed geometrically, it is organic, exhibiting the impulse of motion. Lipps described the first type of wavy line as "mechanical" and the Greek as "organic".

After the publications of Cézanne's letters and the retrospective exhibition of 1906 cones, cylinders and spheres became apparent in avant garde painting and Braque and Picasso used oval shaped canvasses. The synthetic Cubism of Gris (Figure 73) based still life subjects on geometrically designed arrangements of circles and rectangles and the Purists continued to use geometrically idealised shapes. The cone, cylinder and sphere, both in their form and implication by French Cubists as analytical structures of reality seem to correspond to the triangle, square and circle in the solid world of still life, landscape and portraiture. The emphasis of the "Section d'Or" group was less realistic and Delaunay as well as using a checkered arrangement of forms as the basis of "Window on the City" in 1910 was basing abstract discs and circular forms in nature and in machines on Chevreul's colour wheel. Delaunay's circles were never drawn with a compass, however, but correspond to organic forms in nature.

1. Wörringer: Ibid., p. 72.

Worringer was reluctant to discuss the qualities of the spiral "since the conflict concerning the essence of the spiral is still ubiquitous and fierce", but he quoted Riegl as saying "The point of departure for plant ornament in the Orient (Egypt) was the geometric spiral..."

The spiral which interested artists between about 1910 and 1920 seemed to represent the symbol of natural growth as well as a form which was capable of geometric analysis based on the golden section measurement. The most notable examples of the use of spirals and vortexes as motifs in painting is by the Italian Futurists (Figures 27-30, 39-44 and 58). Boccioni based his still life sculpture "Development of a Bottle in Space" of 1912 (Figure 58). The spiral was also popular among the Constructivist architects after the 1917 Revolution and the vortex an English avant-garde emblem.

Worringer concluded his book with the idea that it was an inner disharmony in the face of nature that inspired northern art in contrast to the classical pan-theistic harmony with nature that made it a subject worthy of imitation:

From his état d'âme, it followed that the artistic volition of Northern man, on the one hand, was perforce abstract,¹ [but]

.
abstraction on the one hand and most vigorous expression on the other²

.
Alongside this metaphysic of the beautiful there is a higher metaphysic, which embraces art in the whole of its range and, pointing beyond all materialistic interpretation, finds its documentation in everything created, whether in the wood carvings of the Maori or in any random Assyrian relief.
.

1. Worringer: Ibid., p. 108.

2. Worringer: Ibid., p. 109.

Thus art is simply one more form for the expression of those psychic energies which, anchored in the same process, determine the phenomenon of religion and of changing world views.¹

After the Russian Revolution of 1917 and the First World War in Europe, many former enthusiasts became less concerned with pure abstraction, exciting colour, novelty and experiment in pure art. These qualities were applied to emancipate fashion and design on one level, but ideas which had been purely artistic were also directed towards social and practical reconstruction. In some cases however art often became more "serious" in the guise of realist or classical styles revived even by western European artists who had been the most experimental before the war.

The social direction of art in Russia under Lunacharsky in 1917 placed many of the avant garde in administrative positions. In 1918 Kandinsky, Kliun, Malevich, Popova and others took up teaching appointments at the Moscow Svomas while Tatlin and Rozanova were elected heads of IZO. Chagall, who had returned to Russia in 1914 persisted in his characteristic style based on the lubok, folk art and peasant folk lore. El Lissitzky, whose early style had similar sources, produced a number of well illustrated children's books in 1916 with a group of Jewish artists under Chagall at Vitebsk. In 1918 Chagall was appointed director of his native Vitebsk School of Art and in 1919 invited Malevich to teach there. Malevich accused him of being an old-fashioned folklorist and ousted him from the

1. Worringer: Ibid., pp.127-8.

directorship the same year only to be derided by the Constructivists himself. Lissitzky was an engineer by education and after 1919 he combined linear architectural forms with his previous lubok style in a new synthesis which gradually led to radical typographical and architectural designs. Like Kandinsky, El Lissitzky formed an important link between new ideas in Russia and western Europe.