

# Re-approaching Russian Futurism: The Inter-Revolutionary Years, 1908-1915

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The avant-garde artistic movement of Russian Futurism can be said to span a period of roughly twenty years (1908-28), which, I would argue, can be divided into three distinct sub-periods: (1) from the emergence of a Russian avant-garde in 1908 until 1914/15, an era that had its roots in Russian Impressionism, the Arts-and-Crafts movement (colonies such as Talashkino and Abramtsevo in particular), and other contemporary art groups such as *Mir iskusstva*; (2) the pre-Revolutionary war years, 1914-1917<sup>1</sup>; and (3) the post-Revolutionary period until 1928, which also coincides with the termination of the leftist publication *Novyi lef*. This temporal division clearly corresponds to the transitory socio-economic, political, ideological, and diplomatic climate in Russia during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In this paper, I concentrate on the initial stage of Russian Futurism. The majority of research on this period to date has emphasized empirical data in the fields of art, sculpture, music, poetry, linguistics, drama, and theater design. In many respects, the depth of research, which has focused on individual aspects of Russian Futurism, has contributed to the current perception of this avant-garde artistic movement as *multi-disciplinary*, rather than intrinsically *inter-disciplinary*. However, it is specifically its inter-disciplinary and dynamic character that defines the movement. It is also in the inter-disciplinary and dynamic nature of Russian Futurism that one finds many parallels with Bakhtinian literary theories of the socio-ideological function of the novel.

Although Bakhtinian theory generally focuses on literature, its socio-ideologically grounded theories of communication, broad interpretation of the word “text,” and intermittent references to art and other forms of artistic culture suggest an application in the fields of art and the act of performance, two major elements of early Russian Futurism. Taking the different forms of Russian Futurist theater as my point of departure, I wish to illustrate how a reassessment of this inter-disciplinary artistic movement, with the support of the theoretical framework of Bakhtinian theories of communication and dialogic

heteroglossia, will help to clarify the relationship between Futurist artistic creativity and the socio-political function that Futurism fulfilled within its contemporary dynamic ideological environment. Bakhtinian literary theory clearly distinguishes the socio-ideological function of the novel from that of other forms of literature. This theory, which emphasizes the author's artistic reworking of the prevailing ideological hegemony at one particular time and place, offers a particularly useful model with which to specify the unique position Russian Futurist theater held during this period of Russian history. In addition, the application of the theory can be an effective tool in identifying the emerging socio-political subtext, which, I would argue, undermined the Futurist artistic agenda.

In his discussion of the Russian avant-garde, Peter Bürger asserts that what distinguished the avant-garde of the early twentieth century from earlier modernist groups was its ability to revitalize art and bring it back from the social abstraction, autonomy and elitism of the academies into the social sphere with a dialogic progression or development with the public. As Jane Sharp also observed, this early period of Russian Futurism coincided with the “unprecedented [public] political debate” that preceded the “election of the fourth and last Duma in 1912” (93). In fact, with an increasing number of advertised public lectures across a wide range of subject areas—from Russia's participation in international commerce, training in the use of new x-ray technology, modern ethics and feminism, the harmful effects of alcohol, to ethnic and civic nationalism, and attitudes towards Jews and the Baltic States—one could say that this period of Russian history heralded a revival of engagement with the public and the use of the public square as a platform for debate.<sup>2</sup> The success of the growing number of new journals, newspapers, advertisements, and other print media at this time also bears testament to the increased demand for information across the breadth of social classes.<sup>3</sup> Early Russian avant-garde artistic experimentation also coincided with new theories of reality and perception, the arrival of cinema, and the creation of the first Russian film (1908).<sup>4</sup>

In 1908-9 the emerging Russian Futurist movement (generally speaking, those associated with Mikhail Larionov's group “The Donkey's Tail” [*Oslinyi khvost*] and David Burliuk's group “The Jack of Diamonds” [*Bubnovyi valeť*]) was apparently motivated by an evolving artistic agenda alone.<sup>5</sup> However, with the increased use of the public square and the Futurist introduction of artistic public debate, a dis-

cernable shift in rhetoric took place, so that by 1912 it was the Futurist method of provocation, with the support of their art, that began to grab the public's attention.<sup>6</sup> As Sharp notes, it is this "probing engagement with the conditions of rhetorical and representational empowerment" and not painterly concerns that provide the continuity between "pre- and post-revolutionary practice in the Russian avant-garde" (94). I would reinterpret this statement to argue that a re-analysis of Russian Futurism, in particular the various forms of Futurist theater and the artist-audience relationship, will show how an empowerment of the marginal voices of society constituted the socio-political subtext of the pre-1914 artistic Futurist agenda, which then emerged with growing nationalism in the 1914-1917 era and became explicit in the post-1917 era.

Futurist theater has often been interpreted as a staging-post in the development of the mass spectacle, educational theater or Revolutionary theater in its most traditionally accepted form in the Russian context.<sup>7</sup> More recent research has turned towards questions of the artist-audience relationship, popular culture, anti-social behaviour, and material questions of socio-economics and the role of the patron.<sup>8</sup> This research tends to be focused on the Russian Futurist artistic debates and impromptu "street happenings." The question of costume and stage design is generally applied to the more formal Futurist theater settings, such as *Victory Over the Sun* [*Pobeda nad solntsem*]. However, I believe that it is possible to identify four distinct categories of theater during this early stage of Russian Futurism and that it is the collective analysis of all four categories that will accentuate the subtle changes in the artist-audience/artist-critic relationship and make explicit the socio-political subtext of the collective forms of theater, be this subtext conscious or otherwise. Such conclusions can be drawn from aspects of performance, stage and costume design, physical and aesthetic public access to art, and the socio-economic status of the artists themselves. This analysis, in turn, should not only emphasize those elements of Russian Futurist theater that influenced the development of many strands of twentieth-century theater and performing arts, but also help to bring some definition to the concept of Russian Futurist theater during this period.

I have summarized these four categories of theater as follows: advertised public lectures and public debates concerning the new forms of art, poetry, and music; impromptu "street happenings" that attracted the attention of the public; impromptu performances in

cabarets; and, finally, the more formal theater which took place in a traditional *estrada* or theatrical setting. What is most interesting to the collective analysis of these categories of theater is the way in which each category targeted a different audience and was performed for different purposes, according to different accepted rules of performance. It is this diverse spectrum of performance and accessibility to the public that is unique to the early period of Russian Futurism. Even more so, when one remembers the Futurist contribution to cinema in 1914.<sup>9</sup>

The advertised public debates, lectures, and poetry recitals were events that had to be organized with the permission of the City Governor's office. A program had to be submitted to his office and also cleared by a separate censorship office. If rejected, the applicants could then edit their texts according to the remarks of the City Governor's office and reapply. A condition of this type of public gathering was the presence of the police, who at times would also be armed with a copy of the approved program so they could later report back to the City Governor any deviation from this program.<sup>10</sup> The purpose of these lectures and debates was twofold: they were a cheap marketing ploy to drum up trade for a current art exhibition or publication; but they also offered artists, poets, and musicians the opportunity to explain their artistic ideas and to engage in direct dialogue with the public, so that the public was also afforded the opportunity to express its own opinions.<sup>11</sup> The Futurists soon gained notoriety for their explosive interaction with the audience. Although certain lectures attracted a more serious audience, the provocative rhetoric and outlandish clothes of the likes of Larionov, Vladimir Maiakovskii, and David Burliuk soon earned the Futurists a reputation for scandalous, outrageous behaviour. It was not long before the crowds gathered to enjoy the carnival-type spectacle and heckle the Futurists, rather than listen to their artistic declarations.<sup>12</sup> The audience at such events was made up of the much-maligned bourgeoisie, journalists and art critics, students, and the new generation of educated women, many of whom were genuinely interested in the new theories of art.<sup>13</sup> The atmosphere at some debates became so inflamed as provocateur clashed with heckler that on occasion they even ended in a brawl as the audience swarmed the stage and attacked the performers until police intervened. Much research has focused on the declamatory style of the manifestoes and the importance of sound to the Futurist poetry recited at such events. Due to the often incomprehensible nature of *zuum'*, or "transrational" language, the success of a Futurist poetry re-

cital was generally reliant on the charisma of the performer. There are many references in media, memoirs, and personal correspondence that attest to the charisma of Futurists such as Maiakovskii and Burliuk, and their ability to whip up a crowd by the performative aspect of their recital alone. Indeed, many commentators believe the performative aspect to be crucial to the definition of Russian Futurism during this period.<sup>14</sup>

The second category of Futurist theater, which I have called “street happenings,” is the singular most poignant and subversive form of Futurist theater in the context of an emerging socio-political subtext. It echoes the sentiment of the Futurist Il’ia Zdanevich that “art has to be taken to the street.”<sup>15</sup> Street happenings often took the form of seemingly improvised spectacles as a small number of Futurists would walk down the streets of St. Petersburg or Moscow with, for example, wooden spoons in their buttonholes. The seemingly impromptu happening, together with the small number of Futurists involved (usually only two or three), avoided problems of censorship and conflicts with the police. Outlandish clothes or other inappropriate dress were eventually accompanied by a style of tattoo-like face-painting, reported as scandalous at the time. As the futurists enjoyed a certain cult following, members of the audience of debates were later to turn up with their faces painted in the same manner. Natal’ia Goncharova, who came from an upper-class background, is even said to have walked down the street bare-chested. The audience of such theatrical events was both the general public and the readers of the following day’s newspapers. In addition to these more gregarious events, some Futurists would frequent cafés or bars that were customary meeting places for prostitutes and other marginal figures of society. Unlike the French bohemian tradition of artist gatherings in such venues, the Russian Futurist visits tended not to entail any overt artistic interaction; instead, the Futurists would simply conduct themselves as any other frequenter and eat or drink coffee. It must be said that such events were sometimes engineered specifically as publicity stunts (“Publika” 4).<sup>16</sup> The alignment of leftist artists with the marginal classes of society was not a new phenomenon. Tom Crow’s discussion of the topic, for example, clearly describes the essential relationship between the French “advanced artist” and “the lower classes in their struggle for political recognition” (7).<sup>17</sup> It would appear that, in the Russian case, what shocked many critics was not the act in itself—after all, there were many more vulgar forms of entertainment on of-

fer, including a degree of licensed pornography—but rather the process of smashing perceived class boundaries.<sup>18</sup>

I have categorized “cabaret” as the third type of Futurist theater. The cabarets in Russia, such as the notorious Stray Dog [*Brodiachaia sobaka*], Crooked Mirror [*Krivoie zerkalo*], and Bat [*Letuchaia mysh'*] were places where the bourgeoisie could rub shoulders with the city’s bohemia. Such places were products of the new concept of leisure, which now encouraged, as Crow observes, transgressions of class and culture boundaries (21). There was nothing subversive about the artists’ occupation of such places; quite the opposite. Any perceived “grotesque” or satirical element of a performance was more in keeping with the catharsis that accompanies the carnival, or here, what Richard Stites terms “controlled chaos for businessmen” (22). There is also a wealth of theory that argues the socio-economic link between the emergence of a so-called “independent” avant-garde and the maintenance of such a group by the buying public.<sup>19</sup> The cabaret, then, enhanced the Futurists’ personas as celebrities and maintained a degree of exposure to the buying middle classes. Futurist theatrical activity in cabarets was rarely premeditated. My research to date suggests that such activity either took the form of an impromptu poetry recital, which would be given at someone’s request, or was the result of clashes of artistic celebrities which were motivated by internal wrangling within artistic circles.

The final and most easily recognizable form of Futurist theater is a fully advertised performance with fixed libretto, music, and set designs that took place at a regular theater venue. The Futurist operas *Victory Over the Sun* and *Maiakovskii: A Tragedy* were the first offerings in this category. The music was written by Mikhail Matiushin, the librettos by Alexei Kruchenykh and Vladimir Maiakovskii, respectively, and Kazimir Malevich designed the suprematist-style set designs. The actors, however, were not professionals but local students. Both shows had two performances, which took place on alternate nights in December 1913 to full houses and mixed audiences at the Luna Park Theater, a popular *estrada* venue.

A brief look at the four different categories of Futurist theater demonstrates the extent to which the Futurists, in a sense, liberated the contemporary concept of public access to art, reaching a diverse audience that transcended both class and cultural boundaries. Their personal conduct and availability to newspapers for interviews increased their engagement with the public even further.<sup>20</sup>

Returning to Bakhtinian literary writings on the novel and theories of communication, the final part of my paper will give a brief outline of the way in which such theories can effectively interpret the implications of these different forms of theater and their function in society.

In their critique of the Formalist School, Pavel Medvedev and Mikhail Bakhtin emphasize the essential “processes of social intercourse” during the formation of ideology (7-8). In words that echo the Futurist criticism of the symbolists, they state that one is “inclined to imagine ideological creation as some inner process of understanding, comprehension, and perception, and do not notice that it in fact unfolds externally, for the eye, the ear, the hand. *It is not within us, but between us*” (7-8; emphasis added). The authors distinguish between the ideological environment, through which man’s consciousness is mediated and “which is constantly in the active dialectical process of generation,” and the artistic representation of this environment in works of literature (14). Literature (for our purposes read “theatrical and visual text”) is described as an independent microcosmic representation of that reality which, “like every ideological structure, refracts the generating socio-economic reality” (14). At the same time, in its “content,” the artistic text is said to interpret the “reflections and refractions of other ideological spheres. . .” (16). In this context, any piece of literature, art, or traditional theater (e.g., the classical productions of the Russian Imperial theatres, which were predominantly interpreted as literary texts) is presented to the public as a completed product. It dialogizes with its ideological surroundings in its content, and post-factum in the public reception. However, the product itself remains constant.

A similar interpretation of all four categories of Futurist theater illustrates how the Futurists maintained the unique position of bridging this distinction between direct dialectical engagement with one’s ideological environment (where ideology evolves), and the representation of the ideology of that environment in a completed, independent text. Historically, until the turn of the nineteenth century, artistic discussions had only taken place between the intelligentsia and emerging avant-garde. These discussions typically occurred behind closed doors, in clubs and at venues such as Ivanov’s Tower and the Wednesday evening gatherings. Interaction between artist and public was generally controlled through the hierarchical medium of newspapers and art journals. The Futurists, by affording the public direct ac-

cess to art and the opportunity to express their reactions to it, were to a certain extent democratizing the closed sanctity of artistic creation and art criticism. To put it in Bakhtinian terms, Futurist theatre, as an entity, to a greater extent than the Medvedev/Bakhtinian model allows, simultaneously dialogized with and represented ideological change in contemporary society.

Bakhtin's identification of the disruptive function of the novel, in contrast to the epic or tragedy, rings true in the anarchic, disruptive function characteristic of Russian Futurism. The novel is distinguished from the epic in its concept of time and language. Bakhtin characterizes the language of the epic as "a unitary language" that "gives expression to forces working toward concrete verbal and ideological unification and centralization, which develop in vital connection with the process of sociopolitical and cultural centralization" ("Discourse" 271). All genres of certain periods of "high" literature, "(that is, the literature of ruling social groups)" are described as "harmoniously reinforc[ing] each other to a significant extent; the whole of literature, conceived as a totality of genres, becomes an organic unity of the highest order..." ("Epic" 4). The novel, by contrast, does not enter this totality of genres. Bakhtin asserts its "unofficial existence, outside 'high' literature" ("Epic" 4). It "parodies other genres (precisely in their role as genres); it exposes the conventionality of their forms and their language; it squeezes out some genres and incorporates others into its own peculiar structure, reformulating and reaccentuating them" ("Epic" 5). The novel, therefore, has the capacity to fulfill a role similar to the anarchic, disruptive function of Russian Futurism. Both maintain a centrifugal, diversifying nature that continually challenges the status quo and unifying forces of "high" literature and contemporary ideological hegemony.

Bakhtin's literary concepts of epic time and the chronotope, even at their most simplistic level, can be an effective tool if we compare the function of the "high" arts and the Imperial theaters with Futurist art and theater. The Bakhtinian interpretation of epic time refers to a restricting and fixed concept of time, to an absolute past "whose constitutive feature is the transferral of the world it describes to an absolute past of national beginnings and peak times" and which constitutes a "specific evaluating (hierarchical) category" ("Epic" 15). It is the "memory of the past, not knowledge," which "serves as the source and power for the creative impulse," and also reinforces the seemingly inflexible ideological values which are maintained by the ruling power

(“Epic” 15).<sup>21</sup> Genres such as the epic and tragedy are described as completed. They each have their respective canon that “operates in literature as an authentic historical force” (“Epic” 3). Contrary to the participating audience of Futurist artistic debates, recitals, and “street happenings,” the reader of the epic or tragedy (or the spectator at an Imperial theater, for that matter) is merely a passive observer of events as they unfold and are completed. In addition, Bakhtin asserts that due to its historical specificity, the novel represents a genre-in-the-making, which exists in the zone of maximal contact with the present (“Epic” 10). In this sense, the novel is not concerned with a valorized past or independent future, but takes the present as its point of departure with a view to anticipating the future. This sentiment is explicit in the Futurist Manifesto “A Slap in the Face of Public Taste” (1912).<sup>22</sup> Although, in truth, its meaning was symbolic, the manifesto declared: “Throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy et al. from the Ship of modernity” (Terekhina and Zimenkov 41). In a process that prioritizes the diversity of the present over the centripetal hegemonic forces whose authority is maintained on the basis of a valorized past and future, the novelist, as Brandist states, becomes “heir to an anti-authoritarian popular cultural strategy” that seeks to “deflate the pretensions of the official language and ideology and institute a popular-collective learning process” (12-13).

Dialogic heteroglossia provides another tool for analyzing the social function that Russian Futurism fulfilled during this period. The dialogic nature of the heteroglot, the relative position of one voice, one element of society, to another, reveals different qualities in that voice and the hierarchical position it holds in society relative to the prevailing ideological hegemony. Bakhtin argues that the artistic organization of the heteroglot in a text, therefore, “expresses the differentiated socio-ideological position of the author amid the heteroglossia of his epoch” (“Discourse in the Novel” 300). As Vice observes, if all language is organized hierarchically, then “dialogic interaction will occur within textualized heteroglossia, with potentially position-altering effects” (18). We have already identified the simultaneous categories of direct dialogic and represented ideological forms of Futurist theater. Here lies the key to one of the most fundamental contributions of Russian Futurism; as an inter-disciplinary artistic movement, it had the capacity not only to represent potential shifts in the heteroglossial model in its “completed” works (i.e. art, “formal” theater) but also, through its theater of “street happenings,” it raised the

profile of those marginal voices in society, which were usually drowned out within the ideologically hegemonic heteroglossial whole. This representation of the marginal voices echoes Franz Fanon's description of how the *identity* of a national culture echoes the very existence of its people (188). Could it be that through their theater and with the support of their visual texts, art, and graphic work, the Futurists, consciously or otherwise, were working towards the creation of a renewed national culture that gave greater voice to the marginal figures of society? Like the novel and elements of carnival, the Futurists operated in a zone of maximal contact, dialogizing, with the present, suggesting new values and new concepts of reality, temporarily inverting the power of social hierarchy and theater etiquette, with a healthy disregard for the values of the past, but with a positive, good-humoured view to anticipation of the future.

A brief look at the multiplicity of contemporary Futurist art forms reveals how the artists frequently portrayed the bourgeoisie in a negative manner (of course, a certain degree of *épater les bourgeois* is expected of avant-garde art). What is more noticeable, however, is how the marginal classes are always shown in a positive light, in full control



Figure 1

of their painterly perspective. In a socio-ideological transitory period of Russian history that witnessed the migration of the lower classes to the cities and privileged the upwardly mobile middle classes, the Futurists, consciously or otherwise, were drawing attention to the positive representation of the lower, marginal classes. This portrayal of calm control is readily acceptable when applied to provincial Futurist scenes of domestic life and harvesting rituals, such as *Grape Picking, Peasants Carrying Grapes* [Fig. 1], or *Dancing Peasants* (1911), from Goncharova's village/peasant series. In the epic past of the "high arts" the urban lower-classes and peasants were either shown in a negative light or were rarified as the romanticized "Other." However, if one looks at typical Futurist urban scenes which depict card games, prostitutes (particularly Larionov's *Venus* series: *Boulevard Venus* [1913] [Fig. 2]), café scenes (see Olga Rozanova's *In a Café* [1912-13] [Fig. 3]), or pictures that in-

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Figure 2

Futurist theatrical activities afforded, together with Futurist artistic scenes, contributed to the empowerment of the lower classes and reflects the success of the lower classes in adapting to the urban environment and an assertion of their true, rather than perceived, role in society. It is precisely this argument that identifies the change of direction in Russian Futurist theater and the early Russian Futurist movement, from its carnival beginnings to its truly revolutionary subtext, made explicit in its symbolic portrayal of a new order in *Victory Over the Sun*.



Figure 3



Figure 4

questionable reliability of documentary evidence, the degree of tentativeness within the Russian Futurist arts remains a grey area.<sup>23</sup> However, I believe that a reanalysis of Futurist performance and visual texts, together with an adaptation of Bakhtin's concepts of addressivity and the utterance, will help to answer this question. I hope that further research into the subtle changes in the artist-audience and artist-critic relationships, and the identification of perceived shifts in

volve low-class urban workers with modern machines (e.g. Goncharova's urban classic, *Cyclist* [1913] [Fig. 4]), in all cases the lower-class or marginal figures are in control. This runs contrary to the general traditional imperialist opinion that the lower classes are incapable of self-determination and that if they are left to their own devices almost any situation would end in chaos. I would suggest that the combination of the direct physical exposure of the lower classes that

Although I have only touched upon the fringes of Bakhtinian theory, I believe that a re-analysis of Russian Futurist theater, with the support of a more detailed application of that theory, can help to decipher the somewhat disparate and contradictory perception of this avant-garde artistic movement. Due to the turns of Russian history and the

modes of communication and performance, in the context of political, artistic and ideological instability, censorship reform, and issues of consumerism, will reveal how, in the space of a few intense years, Futurist theater evolved from its carnivalesque beginnings to assume a more revolutionary perspective, and will present, thereby, a more cohesive picture of Russian Futurism as an influential artistic movement of the twentieth century.

### Notes

1. The year 1914 also witnessed the departure from Russia of some of the most influential Futurist artists, including Mikhail Larionov and Natal'ia Goncharova.
2. See The Central State Historical Archives, St. Petersburg. Fond: 569, Opis':13, Delo: 1032, Documents concerning permission for meetings and lectures of various societies (23 March 1913 – 30 April 1913), inc. pp. 18, 38, 130.
3. For further information on literacy and the influence of the media in contemporary Russia, see Brooks, McReynolds, Krusanov, and Stites.
4. Although the first film was shown in Russia in 1896, the first Russian film, *Stenka Razin*, was actually made in 1908 (Stites 18, 27-34).
5. From the time of the Futurist movement's inception to the present day, there has been great confusion and debate over the identity of those who constitute its *bona fide* members. There are many reasons for this confusion, some more complex than others. At the simple end of the scale, there was a desire to see Russian Futurism as independent from other European Futurist groups, principally the Italian Futurists led by Filippo Tomaso Marinetti. Similarly, the sub-sects of those associated with Russian Futurism were continually changing artistic alliances; since many contemporary artistic commentators were unable to clearly distinguish them clearly, they reported artistic events incorrectly. Economic and marketing factors in a new consumer age, which hailed the arrival of the art dealer, the breakdown of the governmental Academies of Art, and competition in the market place, all put pressure on the artists to remain cutting-edge, avant-garde, Futurist. Finally, the nomination "Futurist" itself causes problems. Apart from the fact that it was often erroneously applied, or assumed, there were also subtle differences between the Western term "Futurist" and the term "Budetliane" preferred by Slavophiles, such as the poet Velimir Khlebnikov. These terms, moreover, were subject to fashion, to an evolving artistic style, and were open to interpretation, so that their respective meanings were frequently changing. Finally, the pre-Revolutionary era of the Russian avant-garde arts remains under-researched in comparison to other stages of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, new publications are increasingly identifying new references to personalities and works of art. This said, if one reads newspapers from the period 1911-1914, it becomes obvious that the two artistic groups "The Donkey's Tail" and "The Jack of Diamonds" remain the dominant identity and represent the core of this artistic movement.
6. There were other public lectures on the topic of modern art that preceded those of the Futurists, including one by the St. Petersburg-based artistic group, The Union of Youth [*Soiuz molodezhi*]. However, it was the Futurists who altered the rhetorical structure of such debates and who made this form of interaction with the public both notorious and fashionable. See Krusanov for a detailed documentation of the

occurrence of artistic debates.

7. For further information on this topic see Von Geldern, Leach, and Russell and Barrett.
8. See Sharp, Basner, Stites, Neuberger, and Krusanov.
9. Natal'ia Goncharova and Larionov participated in the film *Drama in Cabaret No. 13*, in St. Petersburg.
10. However, as few full texts of the proposed lectures were submitted to the City Governor's office, it would be curious to know exactly how the police identified a "deviation" from the subject of a typical Futurist gathering.
11. One must remember that many of the people associated with the Futurists were often struggling to make ends meet and would therefore have been happy to participate in any event which did not require vast sums of money to publicize their art. This is certainly true in the case of Velimir Khlebnikov, Il'ia Zdanevich and Benedikt Livshits, among others. This pecuniary aspect of art is not a new issue and undermines the very concept of an independent avant-garde artist.
12. This is clear from the research on audience reception (cf. Krusanov and Basner, for example) and personal accounts by Futurists, including many of the unpublished draft letters by Il'ia Zdanevich.
13. The makeup of the audience at such debates can be gathered from a number of published sources including Krusanov, Sharp, the printed contemporary newspaper caricatures and cartoons which are reproduced in Petrova, and the personal memoirs of many individual Futurists.
14. In addition to many commentators of the Russian Formalist School, see also Schmidt, Lawton ("Futurist Manifestoes as an Element of Performance"), and Misler. Misler writes:
 

Burluik operated in a group, ready to heed and assimilate all points of view. Indeed, Burluik's idea of Futurism extended to life itself, or to use Nikolai Evreinov's term, he believed in the so-called theatricalization of life. In other words, Burluik's crazy clothes, his constant endeavors to shock the bourgeoisie, his declamation of Futurist poetry to provincial audiences, his impetuous creation of artifacts through the dynamic application of many ideas simultaneously—all these circumstances emphasized the improvisational or gestural nature of Burluik's creativity. What interested Burluik, in other words, was not necessarily the syntagmatic structure of things, but rather their external brilliance, their social effect, their collaboration with the surrounding world. (67)
15. Draft letter from Zdanevich to his father, Mikhail Andreevich, dated 25 February 1913 (*Chernoye pis'ma raznyim litsam 2*).
16. This article gives an account of a Futurist walk which took place in the fashionable Kuznetskii Most area of Moscow. Goncharova painted the face of the Futurist poet Balshakov, Larionov painted his own face. The two men were joined by another member, Iatsenko. Before leaving for their "walk," they invited the waiting photographers to take their picture. Having walked from Kuznetskii Most to the Lubianka and back, but not created a huge scandal, they took a taxi to the café Filippov, accompanied by two photographers. Once at the café they are reported to have sat in the window where their painted faces would be most visible.
17. Crow's comments here are directed toward the poet Mallarmé and "the anarchist-socialist" artist Signac.

18. See Krusanov for a Russian commentary. See Crow for a more theoretical, general commentary.
19. For example, see Shapiro, Crow, Greenberg, Benjamin and many other Marxist commentators. In his memoir, the Futurist poet Alexei Kruchenykh dismisses the presence of the new middle-classes as he describes the atmosphere in the cabarets where artists gathered; the latter, according to his account, had nothing to do with the pariahs of society, the bourgeoisie (*Our Arrival*).
20. Mikhail Larionov, for example, gave many interviews to journalists, where he was quoted "directly." See, for example, Mukhortov, B., and the anonymous interview "Oni Ne Khoteli Skandali..."
21. Although this article is not the place to deal with the question of nationalism, suffice is to say that a comprehensive analysis of Bakhtin's interpretation of epic time is central to the exploration of the relationship between Russian Futurism and the nationalism that increasingly dominated the Russian press during this inter-Revolutionary period.
22. The manifesto can be found in English in Lawton, *Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes* (51-52) and in Russian in Terekhina and Zimenkov (41).
23. One cannot discount the fact that many Futurists published their personal memoirs under Stalin and were therefore zealous in their justification of their Revolutionary roots, stretching back to 1905, and the Revolutionary purpose of their work. This is quite clear, for example, in Alexei Kruchenykh's autobiographical writings, *Our Arrival*.

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