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From the Introduction
By Anna Lawton

Futurism in Russia, 1912-1916

Futurism developed at almost the same time in Italy and in Russia. It is true that the first Russian Futurist manifesto, "A Slap in the Face of Public Taste," did not appear until 1912; Nonetheless, it represented the crystallization of a literary mood that had been gathering in Moscow and St. Petersburg for approximately two years. While Futurism in Italy was a compact phenomenon under the leadership of one man, Marinetti,[20] in Russia it was heterogeneous, with many groups constantly engaging in

literary warfare. Each group claimed to be the only true representative of Futurism; each launched vitriolic attacks against the "pretenders." Yet at times, temporary alliances of convenience occurred.

Today the general public tends to identify Russian Futurism as a whole with the single group of Cubo-Futurists, who numbered among their members several poets of talent. Nevertheless, the other major groups that emerged before the Revolution, the Ego-Futurists, the Mezzanine of Poetry, and the Centrifuge, played an important role in shaping Russian Futurism into a complex and vital movement. All these groups were short lived. They began to disintegrate as early as 1914 and gradually died out over the next two years. Cubo-Futurism, however, produced two offspring: the transrationalist Company 41° and the productivist Left Front of the Arts (Lef). Although opposite in nature, organization, and goals, these two groups were the ones to take over and carry the banner of Futurism in the 1920s.[21] It is therefore necessary to consider two distinct phases in the history of Russian Futurism, the first bearing an anarchic-revolutionary character with a tinge of romanticism, typical of the historical avant-garde; and the second (where Lef is concerned) marked by an unsuccessful effort to embrace the Revolution and build the culture of the future communist society.

Cubo-Futurism

Before acquiring the name Cubo-Futurism in the second half of 1913, this group was known as Hylaea.[22] In the winter of 1910 the founders (the three brothers David, Nikolay, and Vladimir Burliuk and their friend Benedict Livshits) were vacationing at the Burliuks' estate in the Kherson region. Hylaea was the old Greek name for that region, the ancient land of the Scythians where in mythical times Hercules performed his tasks. It was a name pregnant with poetic suggestion to the initiators of a trend in art and literature who looked back to prehistory in order to build the future. Two other poets, Vasily Kamensky and Velimir Khlebnikov, joined Hylaea at the very beginning. Even before this group came into being, Kamensky and Khlebnikov collaborated with the Burliuk brothers on the publication of the almanac *A Trap for Judges* (1910), which was vaguely Futurist in intention but not in substance. Moreover, Khlebnikov had published what later became his most famous transrational poem, "Incantation by Laughter," in *Studio of the Impressionists* (1910), another almanac with avant-garde claims, which also included some poetry by David and Nikolay Burliuk. In 1911, Vladimir Mayakovsky and Aleksei Kruchenykh joined Hylaea; together with Khlebnikov they brought to the group extraordinary creative input. Hylaea was now ready to embark on a more aggressive program. One year later, its first official publication, the almanac *Slap in the Face of Public Taste,* appeared; it carried the homonymous manifesto.[23]

The tone and imagery of this first declaration recalled the by-then-famous statements by Marinetti about the rejection of the past and the orientation toward urbanism and technology. It also proclaimed for the first time the idea of the "self-sufficient word," which became the cornerstone of Cubo-Futurist theory. In their second almanac, *A Trap for Judges, 2* (1912), the Hylaeans published another important manifesto,[24] more programmatic than the previous one, in which they reaffirmed in more precise terms their

commitment to a new kind of word-oriented poetry. The most radical expression of this orientation is what Kruchenykh named "transreason" *(zaum')* or "transrational language" *(zaumnyi iazyk).* This term appeared for the first time in Kruchenykh's essay "New Ways of the Word" (1913),[25] but Kruchenykh had already published three poems in transrational language a few months earlier, in his book *Pomade.* Among them was the famous "Dyr bul shchyl," which is to this day the most often quoted example of transreason. Kruchenykh, without formal training in poetics, had no aesthetic inhibitions and was able to carry the idea of the self-sufficient word to extravagant lengths, reaching a level of abstractionism that bordered on the absurd.

In general terms, the Cubo-Futurists proposed to treat the poetic word as an object in itself devoid of any referent. The "word as such" was considered a phonetic entity possessing its own ontology. Transrational language, rich in sound but devoid of conventional meaning, was organized by phonetic analogy and rhythm rather than by grammar and syntax. The reader was required to restructure his mental processes, from rational to intuitive, in order to grasp the message.

The main practitioners of transreason were Kruchenykh and Khliebnikov. Although they collaborated on many lithographed booklets and cosigned a number of declarations, their views on transrational language were substantially different. Khlebnikov's poetry aimed at revealing the primeval meaning of existing word roots, expressed through consonantal sounds rather than conventional semantics. He dreamed of a universal language based on similar-sounding roots. Kruchenykh considered transreason the manifestation of a spontaneous, noncodified language. His poetic idiom consisted of raw verbal material, which acquired expressiveness and meaning only through contextual relationships. As an example of transrational poetic expression, Kruchenykh cited the Russian religious sectarians who in moments of ecstasy start speaking in foreign tongues or nonexistent idioms.

The other Cubo-Futurists, although sharing the common concern for verbal experimentation, were not transrationalists. Possible exceptions are Elena Guro, marginally associated with the group, who created a transrational language based on children's speech, and Vasily Kamensky, who consistently used transreason in the first edition of his long poem *Stenka Razin, the Heart of the People* (1918). Mayakovsky, the most popular and charismatic figure in the group, created his own strikingly original poetic language by using conventional words in a nonconventional way. He deformed the meaning of words by foregrounding their component sounds in structuring the verse line and by making odd semantic juxtapositions. The result was a tremendous broadening and enrichment of the verbal base.

All in all, the Cubo-Futurists did accomplish an aesthetic revolution that largely surpassed the literary field. Their contributions to the other arts cannot be the subject of this essay, but their connection with painting must be mentioned, if only because they chose to stress their ties with Cubism in their name. Many of the Cubo-Futurists were artists as well as poets and worked closely with leading art groups such as the Jack of Diamonds and

the Union of Youth. The painters most closely associated with the Cubo-Futurists were Mikhail Larionov, Natalya Goncharova, Olga Rozanova, and others, who illustrated the poets' publications. The Hylaeans shared their predilections for primitivism with Larionov and Goncharova, and some of Larionov's paintings are believed to have had an impact on the poetry of Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh.

But the true connection between literature and painting lies deeper. It is to be found in the Cubo-Futurist understanding of the poetic word as a "living organism." In their essay "Poetic Principles" (1914),[26] David and Nikolay Burliuk used this expression as part of their contention that the poetic word is "sensible," possessing not only aural but visual properties. Other Futurists went even further, pointing out the "palpability" of the word (this notion was also strenuously maintained by the Formalists of Opoiaz) and the word's "smell."[27] This synesthetic understanding of art, which was common to the whole avant-garde, produced among the Cubo-Futurists some remarkable results. While roughing up the texture of the text to make it "palpable" through an unorthodox use of the verbal material, they also performed a typographical revolution. Conventional layouts exploded under the effect of Futurist dynamite, and the debris was picked up and rearranged for visual effect. Kruchenykh, however, mostly did not even bother reassembling the scattered letters and let them lie around the page in colorful disorder. For all its declared spontaneity, the effect of the explosion was obviously calculated to emphasize the shape of words and letters and thereby enhance their visual expressiveness. Notable in this respect are Kruchenykh's previously mentioned lithographed booklets (often produced in collaboration with Khlebnikov), which were written in longhand by the author and illustrated by avant-garde artists. As we shall see, this practice was eventually continued and developed by the members of 41°, Ilya Zdanevich, Igor Terentyev, and others. Another example of visual poetry is Kamensky's "ferroconcrete" poems, very similar to Marinetti's tables of liberated words and Apollinaire's *calligrammes.* In these poems the words are often composed figuratively to form a picture. Mayakovsky's solutions to the visual aspect of poetry were not so spectacular but just as valuable and more durable. His most notable technique is the "stepladder line," where the verse is divided into syntagmatic segments, each one of them arranged on successive "ladder steps" in a descending progression.[28]

The year 1913 was the golden year of Cubo-Futurism, and of Russian Futurism in general, as an avant-garde force. If the Futurists did not succeed in throwing Pushkin and the other venerable masters into the waters of oblivion, they certainly were able to inject a new perspective into the appreciation of art. Their rather rude tactics created considerable resentment within the cultural establishment and among its well-to-do patrons, but what was to be done? A sort of fatal fascination has always surrounded the "barbarian" destroyers of a dying civilization. And so it happened that, never ceasing to heap abuse on the Futurists' hooliganism and charlatanry, the "pharmacists" (as the philistines were called in avant-garde circles) and their wives agreed to get themselves "slapped in the face." Futurist evenings of poetry reading and manifesto declamation became fashionable season events to which the respectable public flocked with a confessed feeling of condescending curiosity—after all, the performance smacked of the circus—and an unacknowledged feeling of

exciting, sinful transgression. An aura of scandal made the Futurist evenings irresistible. The proximity of those social outlaws on stage created the illusion of a daring adventure and impending danger. One never knows what to expect from Genghis Khan!—even if he is armed only with wooden spoons (quite harmful to good taste when worn in the buttonhole a la Burliuk) and dressed in a clownish yellow blouse (the clownishness only conceals the raging belligerence of a Mayakovsky). To tell the truth, the public's fear was not totally unjustified. It was not unheard of for the Futurists to switch from verbal to physical violence, though such occurrences were more frequent in Italy, where Futurist evenings often ended in a fistfight or salvos of rotten eggs and ripe tomatoes. But in Russia, too, the public was occasionally subjected to physical abuse, judging from Kruche-nykh's "spilling of hot tea on the audience."[29] More contemporary avant-garde exponents (in the West, of course) would express their contempt in a more explicitly obscene way. But that was the time of the avant-garde infancy, when *épatage* consisted mainly of nose-thumbing.

And yet the Russian Futurists took their task, if not themselves, seriously and with extraordinary zeal devoted their energy and talents to the cause of a global aesthetic revolution. The name change from Hylaea to Cubo-Futurism undoubtedly served that cause. At the same time it created a great deal of ambiguity in the relationship with the Italians. It may be true, as the Hylaeans firmly maintained, that it was the press that started calling them Futurists. They seem nevertheless to have welcomed the publicity benefits of being associated with the Marinetti cyclone, which had been storming all over Europe for more than four years. To concede any Marinettian influence, though, was another matter altogether. The Cubo-Futurists, rightly or wrongly, never did. Actually, in an excess of concern over a possible misunderstanding of their alleged absolute independence from the "Stranger," they went so far as to falsify some publication dates and never missed an occasion to pile contempt and scorn on their name-giver.[30]

All this was bad news to Marinetti when he set foot in Russia on January 26, 1914. He went there on a cultural mission—so he thought—invited by the association Les Grandes Conferences, with the intention of making new alliances and broadening the Futurist front. Alas! Owing to an unfortunate or planned coincidence there were no Futurists in Moscow at that time. Mayakovsky, David Burliuk, and Kamensky were on a poetry-reading tour of the Southern provinces. Livshits and Khlebnikov were awaiting Marinetti in St. Petersburg, planning a well-publicized boycott of his lectures (fortunately the scandal was avoided at the very last minute). The only confrères who met Marinetti at the railroad station with the welcoming delegation were Vadim Shershenevich and Constantin Bolshakov, members of the Mezzanine of Poetry and therefore "enemies" of the Cubo-Futurists. But not all the news was bad. The mission's failure was more than compensated for by Marinetti's personal, if mundane, success. The public and the critics regaled him with treatment reserved for foreign celebrities. Standing ovations, banquets, rave newspaper reviews, floral showers on stage (adieu, rotten eggs and tomatoes!), and—*mamma mia!*—hundreds of perfumed ladies' notes. This was flattering indeed, even to the *"duce* of Futurism," who as a rule sought the "voluptuousness of being booed." And

so Marinetti found himself in the embarrassing position of wanting to “slap in the face” his Futurist brothers (brothers?!) rather than that amiable public.

The need for fisticuffs became most urgent during an altercation with Livshits at a dinner party. The dispute polarized over their differences regarding the idea of transreason. Marinetti would not budge from his conviction that transrational language was nothing more than the Russian version of his concept of liberated words and wireless imagination while Livshits just as stubbornly claimed that transreason was an altogether different notion, probing deeper into the ontology of the poetic word. In any case, on that evening wild "liberated words" darted back and forth across the table, and soon the literary dispute degenerated into a nationalistic squabble that had little to do with poetry.[31]

Or perhaps it did, because what separated the Cubo-Futurists from the West was not only a different set of poetic devices but the vision of a poetic universe that had its roots in the Slavophile ideology of the preceding century. On that vision the movement developed it’s original and truly national character—which does not mean that the Russians had not heard of and appropriated some of the "shouts, drumbeat, and grenades" coming from beyond the Alps.[32] They had indeed. And no disclaimer will ever change the fact that their declared hatred for the past, their iconoclastic fury, their debasement of Art, their rejection of Beauty, their emphasis on intuitive rather than rational mental processes, their concern for technology and urbanism, and—above all—their use of manifestoes not as mere theoretical supporting statements but as a publicity medium all are features of an avant-garde that bears the trademark "made in Italy." But for centuries the Russians have had a knack for processing Western cultural imports in their intellectual workshops. Often the results were less than satisfying, but occasionally, as with Futurism, they came up with a brilliant product.

The basic trait that distinguished the Cubo-Futurists from the Italians was an underlying archaism, a leaning toward a primitivism of forms and often of themes (water nymphs, bogeymen, and other figures of Slavic folklore are at home in Khlebnikov's poems). Their search for the "word as such" was a voyage backward to a prehistoric age, where words sprouted like fragrant flowers in the virgin human soul ("Euy!" Kruchenykh would shout on observing the delicate beauty of a lily);[33] where the word in its pristine purity created myth; and where the human being, in a prelogical state of mind, through the word discovered the universe.

But what about the "future?" The "future" of course was the ultimate destination, to be reached—yes, on a "winged engine" (Khlebnikov's words)—but after having recovered the original linguistic substance and having annihilated the ages standing in between, which had corrupted that substance with the poison of civilization. What else do Khlebnikov's Martians announce if not a future linguistic Golden Age of interplanetary communication?[34]

The return to the origins of language, therefore, was clearly a point of departure for the Cubo-Futurists' creative imagination. It also accounted for

an ostentatious emphasis on their "Asian soul" and their claim to be the proud descendants of the Scythian warriors or, more simply, for their sense of *narodnost',* their spiritual ties with the Russian land and its people (folk songs and tales, naif paintings, icons, and medieval miniature books are all part of the Cubo-Futurists' cultural baggage). And much could be said about Khlebnikov's panslavism. In fact, his Martians and other inhabitants of the galaxy would have had to acquire at least some rudimentary notions of Russian in order to benefit from the Esperanto he built on Slavic roots. One of the many Slavic neologisms Khlebnikov created was the name *budetliane,* a calque of the Western word *Futurists,* which was used mostly for nationalistic polarization.

On the other hand, technology and urbanism, the most characteristic themes of that same Italian Futurism they opposed, became an integral part of the *budetliane* aesthetics. Like their foreign counterparts, they rejected Symbolist mystical correspondences with the ethereal world. They looked at the skies through the telescope of science fiction and more often directed their attention to earth, to the buzz and bustle of the contemporary metropolis. What they saw there, however, was not indiscriminately exciting to them as it was to Marinetti. In fact, apart from occasional flirtation with the aesthetics of war and violence, the Cubo-Futurists' attitude toward the machine and the big city—no matter what they trumpeted in their manifestoes—betrayed a great uneasiness. Mayakovsky's urban landscapes are often nightmarish settings (the Gogol and Dostoevsky models were not after all "thrown overboard from the Ship of Modernity") in which animated and surrealistically misplaced objects threaten to subvert the hierarchical order based on human supremacy. The "revolt of things" reaches its culmination in Khlebnikov's poem "The Crane,"[35] in which a machinelike bird of colossal dimensions (the creature looks like a patchwork of chimneys, parts of trains, rails, bridges, and other metal scraps) threatens humanity with annihilation.

We should not be surprised, therefore, that Marinetti threw up his hands in despair and went back home convinced that those "pseudo-futurists live in *plusquamperfectum* rather than in *futurum.*"[36] He might have found more likely soul mates among the members of the Mezzanine of Poetry and the Ego-Futurists, but there is no evidence that he ever paid any serious attention to these groups. Ironically, the visit meant to unify and strengthen the Futurist front had the opposite effect. It marked the beginning of the end for the *budetliane.* Many of the internal contradictions that had kept their group alive through dynamic tension now surfaced as irreconcilable differences. Khlebnikov was the first to walk out, slamming the door on what he perceived to be much too great a deference toward the Stranger on the part of some of his colleagues—that "untalented windbag" Nikolav Burliuk, that "madman and scoundrel" Nikolay Kulbin, and so on.[37] He retreated to his native Astrakhan and to his Utopian dream of a Society of Globe Presidents. Livshits followed suit and joined the army. The others were soon to be dispersed by the war and the Revolution, with Kruchenykh taking refuge in Tiflis and David Burliuk moving east to Vladivostok and finally to the United States (how appropriate for a Cubo-Futurist to reach the West by the eastern road!). This prompted the embattled Mayakovsky to write a funeral oration to Futurism, which is at the same time a prophecy of Futurism's Second Coming.[38] Eventually Khlebnikov made up with his

confrères, in 1916, and even mellowed enough to admit Marinetti into the Parliament of the Martians, together with H. G. Wells.[39] But by that time bigger and terrifying events were about to befall the country. As Khlebnikov himself had foreseen in his visionary fantasies, a mechanical crane, "his beak clothed in tatters of human meat," was going to devour an epoch. And with it the Futurists, who of that epoch were the rebellious but true sons.

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20. Marinetti's headquarters were in Milan. A number of avant-garde poets were, however, grouped around the Florentine magazine *Lacerba.* Among them were Giovanni Papini, Ardengo Soffici, and Aldo Palazzeschi, who were originally associated with Marinetti's Futurism but eventually disavowed it, objecting that Futurism was becoming "Marinettism."

21. After 1921, 41° ceased to exist, but its *main* exponent, A. Kruchenykh, kept promoting transrational poetry almost single-Handedly. Another movement worthy of note is the Imaginist group, formed in 1919, which developed from the Mezzanine of Poetry.

22. The term *Futurists* appeared for the first time in connection with the Hylaeans in the title of their almanac *Futurists. "Hylea." Croaked Moon* (1913). The title page read: "The miscellany of the only Futurists in the world, the poets of Hvlaea."

23. See text, in this collection.

24. See text, in this collection.

25. See text, in this collection.

26. See text, in this collection.

27. See "Throwing Down the Gauntlet to the Cubo-Futurists," the selection from "Moment philosophique," and "Open Letter to M. M. Rossiyansky ' in this collection.

28. On the Russian Futurist visual experiments in poetry, see Janecek, *Look of Russian Literature;* Perloff, *Futurist Moment;* and Juliette R. Stapanian, *Mayakovsky's Cubo-Futurist Vision* (Houston, Tex.; Rice University Press, 1986).

29. Benedict Livshits, *The One and a Half-Eyed Archer,* trans. John E. Bowit (Newtonville. Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1977), p. 151. The Futurist evenings were held in theaters, halls, and cabarets. Among the latter, the most famous was the "Stray Dog" in St. Petersburg, where in February 1914, Marinetti presented one *of* his lectures.

30. The Russians referred to Marinetti as the "Stranger" in a polemic leaflet; see "We Are the Futurists" in this collection. On specific relations between Russian and Italian Futurism, see Anna Lawton, "Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestoes," *Slavic and East European Journal* 20 (Winter 1976): 405-20; and idem, *Vadim Shershenevich: From Futurism to Imaginism* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Ardis, 1981).

31. On Marinetti's trip to Russia, see Livshits, *One and a Half-Eyed Archer* and Markov, *Russian Futurism, pp.* 147-55. On that occasion Livshits showed solidarity with his Hylaean fellows, though as a poet he was a well-educated intellectual of European orientation, an exception among the group.

32. V. Shershenevich, *Futurism without a Mask* (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1914), p. 13.

33. See "Declaration of the Word as Such" (1913), in this collection.

34. See "The Trumpet of the Martians" (1916), in this collection.

35. The first part of "The Crane" appeared in *A Trap for Judges, I* (1910). The second part, titled "The Revolt of Things," appeared in *Creations* (1914).

36. Markov, *Russian Futurism,* p. 158.

37. Ibid., p. 157.

36. Markov, *Russian Futurism,* p. 158.

37. Ibid., p. 157.

38. See "A Drop of Tar" (1915), in this collection.

39. See "The Trumpet of the Martians."

From the Afterword
By Herbert Eagle

Cubo-Futurism and Russian Formalism

As a theory and methodology for the study of literature and the arts,

Russian Formalism has had a major impact on the development of criticism in the twentieth century. Its emphasis on the structural features of the text itself, and its insistence that literary study be scientific and autonomous, set the stage for subsequent developments first in Czech and later in French Structuralism, and ultimately in semiotics internationally. Formalist views on the imminent properties of verbal art, on the function of art in renewing perception of reality, and on the mechanisms of literary evolution all bore an unquestionable relationship to the emergence of Futurism in Russia and particularly to the theoretical propositions and poetic practice of the Cubo-Futurists. Certain aspects of this relationship are manifestly clear and have been commented upon by a number of scholars. The predominant view, however, is that the bold experimental thrust of Cubo-Futurism provided an example, a case study, for the linguists and literary scholars who came to be known as the Formalists. Whereas this view is correct in many senses, it downplays the extent to which the manifestoes and programmatic statements of the emerging Cubo-Futurists already comprised or implied the major tenets of Formalism, at least in its early stages.

The Russian "Formalist" movement in its first stage (the name "Formalism" was applied to it only later) consisted of two groups, the Moscow Linguistic Circle (founded in 1915) and the Petrograd-based Society for the Study of Poetic Language (Obshchestvo izucheniia poeticheskogo iazyka), better known by its initials in Russian as the Opoyaz (founded in 1916). Among early Formalism's major figures were the linguist-literary theoretician Roman Jakobson, the linguist Lev Yakubinsky, and the literary scholars Victor Shklovsky, Boris Eichenbaum, Osip Brik, and Yuri Tynianov.[2] Among the Formalists' most important and influential publications in the early years were Shklovsky's essay "The Resurrection of the Word" (published as a separate pamphlet in 1914,[3] before the formation of either of the groups); two collections of studies on the theory of poetic language issued by the Opoyaz in 1916 and 1917 and then republished in one volume titled *Poetics* in 1919[4] (these included seminal studies by Shklovsky, Brik, Eichenbaum, and Yakubinsky, among others); Jakobson's studies *Recent Russian Poetry* (Prague, 1921) and *On Czech Verse, Primarily in Comparison with Russian* (Berlin, 1923); Eichenbaum's *Melodies of Russian Lyrical Verse* (Petrograd, 1922) and *Anna Akhmatova* (Petrograd, 1923); and Tynianov's *The Problem of Verse Language* (1924).

Throughout this period, a number of the Formalists maintained contact with certain of the Cubo-Futurist poets and participated in the life of the avant-garde in general. The circle patronized by Nikolay Kulbin, a wealthy professor who dabbled in impressionism and cubist painting and lectured on the avant-garde, included Shklovsky as well as the Futurists David and Nikolay Burliuk and Velimir Khiebnikov. The latter's famous "Incantation by Laughter" was published in Kulbin's book *The Studio of Impressionists* in 1910. Thus, Shklovsky was personally acquainted with the development of Cubo-Futurism from its earliest years and became its staunchest defender in academic circles. For example, in the winter of 1913-14, Shklovsky, in a lecture at the Stray Dog Cabaret, explained the important work of Futurism in furthering language[5] (this was the basis of the essay "The Resurrection of the Word"). In a second study, "Premises of Futurism" (1915), Shklovsky defended Futurist *zaum* (transrational language), arguing that its difficulty was consistent with the general evolutionary necessity for art forms to

renew perception through a process of deautomatization.[6] A third article on this subject, "Transrational Language and Poetry," appeared in the first of the Formalist *Collections on the Theory of Poetic Language* in 1916. Thus, Shklovsky's earliest theoretical works on art and poetry were directly linked to elements of the Futurist program, elements explicitly indicated and discussed in Cubo-Futurist manifestoes and articles as well.

Jakobson's acquaintance with both Mayakovsky and Khlebnikov also went back to the early years: "Jakobson's friendship with Majakovsky is attested to by numerous affectionate references to 'Roman Jakobson' scattered throughout Majakovsky's writings. . . . In the case of the hermit-like Khlebnikov the relationship was almost equally friendly. As early as 1914 Jakobson discussed with Khlebnikov the possibility of reforming the graphic aspect of traditional poetic language. In a letter . . . the young linguist endorsed Khlebnikov's idea of using in verse mathematical symbols and 'syncretic graphic signs.' "[7] Jakobson attended gatherings of the Cubo-Futurists, whereas Mayakovsky could occasionally be seen at meetings of the Moscow Linguistic Circle. Thus, when Jakobson lectured to the Circle on "Khlebnikov's Poetic Language" (which became the basis of his monograph *Recent Russian Poetry,* in which Mayakovsky's verse is also analyzed), Mayakovsky was in attendance.

Brik's links to the Futurists and to Mayakovsky in particular were considerably closer. Brik met Mayakovsky in Petrograd in 1915, and his apartment became a veritable Futurist salon, frequented by Khlebnikov and Shklovsky as well. During the period 1915 to 1917, Brik was the publisher of the Futurist miscellany *Seized the Futurists' Drum,* of two of Mayakovsky's long lyrical poems *(A Cloud in Trousers* and *The Backbone Flute),* as well as of the two Formalist *Collections on the Theory of Poetic Language. Seized* contained critical reviews of Mayakovsky's poetry by Shklovsky and Brik as well as Mayakovsky's manifesto "A Drop of Tar."[8] During the early 1920s contacts among Shklovsky, Brik Tynianov, and the Futurists continued. After Mayakovsky founded *Left* 1923, Brik published an article on the Forma] method in its very first issue,[9] and Tynianov published a key article, "On the Literary Fact," in its pages in 1924.[10] In 1927 and 1928 Shklovsky and Brik published several Formalist studies in *New Left.*

If one juxtaposes the writings of the Formalists through the mid-1920s with the various manifestoes and statements of the Cubo-Futurist group (and their continuation in the 41° group, *Lef,* and *New Lef),* essential similarities can be seen in three related areas: (1) the nature and function of poetic language, and hence the resultant tasks of literary investigation; (2) the role of art in renewing perception; and (3) the process of literary evolution.

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1. See, for example, Krystyna Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory and Its Poetic Ambience* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), pp. 21-31, 77-118; Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism: History-Doctrine* (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), pp. 41-86, 212-29, 251-71; Vladimir Markov, *Russian Futurism: A History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 29-60, 117-63.
2. See Erlich, *Russian Formalism,* pp. 63-69.
3. Viktor Shklovskii, *The Resurrection of the Word* (St. Petersburg, 1914).
4. *Collections on the Theory of Poetic Language,* vol. 1 (1916), vol. 2 (1917); republished as *Poetics: Collections on the Theory of Poetic Language* (Petrograd, 1919).

5. Markov, *Russian Futurism,* pp. 140-41.
6. Viktor Shklovskii, "Premises of Futurism," *Voice of Life,* no. 18 (1915): 6-8.
7. Erlich, *Russian Formalism, p.* 65.
8. In this collection.
9. Osip Brik, "The So-called Formal Method," *Lef* (1923): 213-15.
10. Iurii Tynianov, "On the Literary Fact," *Lef 2* (1924): 100-116; later reprinted in his Archaists and Innovators (Leningrad, 1928).
11. Osip Brik, "Rhythm and Syntax: Material on the Study of Poetic Speech," *New Lef* 3-6 (1927); Viktor Shklovskii, "In Defense of the Sociological Method," *New Lef 3* (1927); idem, "Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace," New Lef* 1 (1928).