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HUGO BALL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND POETRY

by

SUSAN BABILON

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Germanic
Languages and Literatures in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
The City University of New York

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Abstract

HUGO BALL AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOUND POETRY

by

Susan Babilon

Adviser: Professor Martin Anderle

On 23 June 1916 Hugo Ball announced his "invention" of sound poems. The announcement was made one year after he had received a copy of F. T. Marinetti's *parole in libertà* poetry which proposed a linguistic revolution. Following the receipt of this work on 9 July 1915, Ball's journal entries reveal a growing interest in linguistic regeneration. Both Ball and Marinetti displayed a keen dissatisfaction with conventional language which they saw as having become so laden with connotations from centuries of misuse that it had become devoid of meaning. Ball appeared to be heeding Marinetti's call for the development of a new language, freed of conventional grammatical restraints and thereby more capable of immediate and accurate expression.

While Marinetti's stylistic influence was unmistakable, Ball's theoretical development also bears the mark of his earlier associations with the painter-theorist Wassily Kandinsky with whom he maintained contact from

1914 through 1917 when he spoke on Kandinsky as part of a lecture series in which artists and writers discussed their strongest influence.

Ball's artistic theory echoes Kandinsky's in its desire to make articulated thought and language more suited to the expression of the spiritual. Ball saw his mission as one of finding a manner of communicating one's inner, spiritual experiences to the outer, material world in the most immediate, i.e. unmediated, manner possible, thereby battling the innate problem of communicating experiences that defy verbal, conceptual forms.

Kandinsky most likely introduced Ball to the ideas of the two Russian *zaum* practitioners, Alexei Kruchenykh and Velimir Khlebnikov, whose prolific theory and poetry reflect both Ball's call for total abandonment of conventional linguistic restrictions as well as attempts at rediscovery of an adamic language enabling spiritual expression.

Ball's interest in bridging the inner, spiritual world with the outer, material remained fundamental to virtually all his enterprises and resulted in sound experiments quite distinct from those of his contemporaries.

Preface

Inconsistencies in the use of unlauded vowels as opposed to the addition of e after a vowel, and ss as opposed to *ß* are common in Ball's and Hennings' writings. Quotations of statements by Ball and his contemporaries are cited with the precise spelling of the original. Other grammatical or spelling/typographical errors are also transcribed true to the original, but with the addition of [sic].

Transliteration of Russian follows the U.S. Library of Congress system, slightly simplified. When an English common usage has been established, for example, the Russian *-skii* ending has been rendered *-sky*.

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I am grateful to Ernst Teubner and Rosemarie Klaus of the Hugo Ball Archive at the Stadtbücherei of Pirmasens, Germany, as well as Bernhard Echte of the Hugo Ball Nachlaß at the Depositum Robert Walser Archiv in Zurich, Switzerland who generously provided most of the research material that made this project possible. I would like to particularly thank Ernst Teubner for his suggestions, insight and helpful responses to my correspondences. My gratitude also goes out to the staff of Whitman College's Interlibrary Loan Department, especially Sarah Blattler and Laura Boston without whose hard work this project could not have been completed. I would also like to thank the German Academic Exchange Program (DAAD) for the research and study grant I received for the 1986-87 academic year, during which period the idea of this dissertation was born. And thank you to Hedwig Babilon and Jane Daffey for their herculean efforts in reading the handwritten letters and notebooks.

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Hugo Ball and the Development of Sound Poetry
by Susan Babilon

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"Zu sagen ist nichts mehr.
Vielleicht dass etwas noch
gesungen werden kann."

Hugo Ball *Tenderenda der Phantast*

INTRODUCTION

One prominent leitmotif permeates the work of Hugo Ball from 1914 through to his death in 1927. It is marked by his desire to make articulated thought and language more suited to the expression of the spiritual. This quest led Ball to the development of sound poetry in 1916, and continued to inform all his subsequent work.

This study is a historical analysis of the major figures that worked upon Ball's development of sound poetry. It examines his interpretations of Filippo Marinetti's, Wassily Kandinsky's, Velimir Khlebnikov's, and Alexei Kruchenyek's investigations of language. As Ball became engaged with these sources, he continuously focused on those aspects of their work which explored the integration of the spiritual into everyday language and the everyday world.

Despite his singleness of vision, Ball embraced a wide spectrum of endeavors. The diversity of his activities has tended to obscure the monocentrism of his objective. An introduction to Ball's activities and philosophy will illuminate the serious scholarship and single-mindedness of purpose which he incorporated into all his ventures in language, literature, art and politics.

Ball is best known through his presentation in art-historical discussions of Dada. In these publications he

is consistently presented as the founder of Dada at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich in 1916. Very little additional discussion, if any, of Ball's philosophical and spiritual background or of his subsequent activities is provided. Commentary is generally limited to a brief mention of his pacifism, his struggle against the status quo, whether that be in poetry and literature or in politics and society. Occasionally his dabbling in anarchism is mentioned, and typically surprise is expressed at his "final" conversion to Roman Catholicism. While all of this information is true, its cursory presentation has resulted in a very skewed picture of Ball, influenced more by the atmosphere surrounding him at the Cabaret performances, than by his own contributions. The following account of the Cabaret as remembered by Hans Arp is typical of those provided in art history texts. Donald Gordon, who cites it, refers to the tone as a "manic pitch":

The audience are [sic] shouting, laughing and clapping their hands above their heads. To which we reply with sighs of love, belches, poems, with the "moo, moo" and "miaow, miaow" of medieval Bruitists. Tzara is wagging his bottom like an Eastern dancer's belly, Janco is playing on an invisible violin and bowing to the crowd. Frau Hennings with the face of a Madonna is doing the splits. Huelsenbeck is banging the drum nonstop while Ball, as white as a ghost, accompanies him

at the piano. We were given the honorable title of Nihilists.¹

This description is an accurate account of a typical performance. It reflects what scholars now recognize as the Dadaist strategy to engage the audience in laughter in order to transcend the threat of the revolutionary art it was being confronted with. Such descriptions, unfortunately, also provide a misleading introduction to the deliberate artistic agenda of Ball.

While Hunter and Jacobus accurately report on the positive, constructive intentions behind Dada performance activities in their popular *Modern Art* text, they do not refrain from more sensationalist statements such as "by loudly proclaiming the uselessness of social action. . . ."2

In a recent study on Expressionism and Dada, Christopher Butler continues the trend with the comment that, "Dada in Zurich thus mixed irrationalist liberation and anarchist incongruity. . . ." And when he speaks of "the attack on the semantic functions of language by phonetic poetry such as Hugo Ball's 'sound poem'

1. "Dadaland," ed. Paul Raabe, trans. J. M. Ritchie, *Era of German Expressionism* (Woodstock: Overlook Press, 1974) 976. Cited in Donald E. Gordon, *Expressionism. Art and Idea* (New Haven: Yale, 1987) 160.

2. Sam Hunter and John Jacobus, *Modern Art, Painting, Sculpture, Architecture*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall and New York: Abrams, 1992) 167.

Karawane . . . ,"³ he completely overlooks Ball's statements describing his attempts at rediscovering primal relationships between sound and meaning in adamic language or *Ursprache*. His misinterpretation of Ball's statements is evidenced by his description of the poetry as, "avoid[ing] any psychologically plausible interpretation, by . . . subjecting the artistic process 'to the same unforeseeable laws of chance' as he thought affected life in general."⁴

In another popular, general reading on modern art, Alan Bowness fails to even mention Ball in his discussion of Zurich Dadaism, most likely because he has chosen to limit the scope of his discussion to visual artists. Thereby, however, he overlooks the philosophical aspect of Dada that transcends such genre boundaries, as demonstrated

3. *Early Modernism. Literature, Music and Painting in Europe 1900-1916* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994) 266. Butler cites "Karawane" as being written in 1917, when in fact it had been written in the preceding year around 23 June 1916 prior to Ball's announcement that he had invented a new genre of poetry on the date of his first performance of the poem (*Flucht* 23 June 1916).

4. Butler, 266. Butler credits the quotation "to the same unforeseeable laws of chance" to Ball from an entry of 5 March 1917 in his published diaries *Flight Out of Time* (ed. John Elderfeld, trans. Ann Raimés [Berkeley, Los Angeles and London, U of California P, 1996]). This was actually never said by Ball, but by Hans Richter, and not in the context of sound poetry. Butler cites Richter as the source of this *Flight* quote, note 65. *Flight* is an English translation of *Die Flucht aus der Zeit* (ed. Bernhard Echte [Zurich: Limmat, 1992]; first published in 1927 [Munich and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot]). The diaries will be hereinafter referred to as *Flight* and *Flucht*, respectively.

by some of Ball's major influences: Kandinsky and Marinetti who were both involved in the visual arts as well as literature and theory. He also disregards the atmosphere in which Dada was born, i.e. in a climate of constant interchange between visual and linguistic experiments. However, he does accurately differentiate between the "positive activity" of early Dada, and the nihilistic turn it took under Tzara's growing direction, quoting Tzara as saying that "Dada signifies nothing."⁵

Robert Hughes offers an accurate three-page discussion of early Zurich Dadaism and Ball, citing some of Ball's philosophical foundation regarding the belief in a transformation of society through language:

The Dadaists still believed, as many artists at the time did, in the power of art to "save mankind" from political abominations; the central myth of the traditional avant-garde, that by changing the order of language, art could reform the order of experience and so alter the conditions of social life. . . .⁶

In a seminal work on German Expressionism, Donald Gordon also distinguishes Ball from the more nihilistic aspects of other Dada associates, stating that Ball was a

5. *Modern European Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1995) 151.

6. *Shock of the New* (New York: Knopf, 1980) 61.

"true believer, not . . . a nihilist."⁷ H. H. Arnason, as well, accurately states that Ball was "a philosopher and mystic as well as a poet. . . ."⁸

Yet the text *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism* can again provide a totally skewed context for someone seeking information on Ball when it describes Zurich Dada only in the context of the radically nihilistic Tzara, with Ball's name conspicuously absent!⁹ Dawn Ades, as well, overlooks much of Ball's and Zurich Dada's philosophical standpoint by offering only the historical details of the founding of the movement (such as the former name of the bar in which the Cabaret made its home), and presenting it as an introduction to Paris Dada, a movement greatly influenced once again by Tzara's ideas.¹⁰

Ball's serious agenda during his engagement at the Cabaret Voltaire is thus often overlooked. Even his "flight out of time," i.e. his departure from Zurich is

7. *Expressionism. Art and Idea* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987) 161.

8. H. H. Arnason, *History of Modern Art*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall and New York: Abrams, 1986) 224-25.

9. Briony Fer, David Batchelor and Paul Wood, *Realism, Rationalism, Surrealism. Art between the Wars* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993). See pages 30-34 for the discussion of Tzara and Dada.

10. "Dada and Surrealism," ed. Nikos Stangos, *Concepts of Modern Art. From Fauvism to Postmodernism*, 3rd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1994) 111-37.

often misconstrued as representative of an abandonment of all he had espoused earlier, and hence, evidence that Ball had merely been a propagator of a fad. Literary studies, although they allow for a more accurate picture of Ball by offering a thorough analysis of specific aspects of his work, are also often prone to misrepresentation.¹¹

11. Eugen Egger, *Hugo Ball. Ein Weg aus dem Chaos* (Otten: Walter, 1951), the first biography on Ball overemphasizes the Catholic aspect, viewing Ball's life as one that began and ended in Catholicism, and everything in between being a substitute for God.

Theo J. Hermans, *Aspects of the Structure of Modernist Poetry. 1908-1918. A Structural-Comparative Study of the Poetic Writing of Guillaume Apollinaire, Hans Arp, Hugo Ball, Ezra Pound, Pierre Reverdy and Georg Trakl*. diss., Warwick U, 1977. This study reads too much into the outward acts and statements of the Cabaret associates. Hermans carries these outrageous acts and statements over into psychological diagnoses of Ball, such as the overinterpretation of Ball's description of a sense of "fragmentation and entanglement" at the Cabaret as "an awareness of a split personality" (391).

Gerhardt Steinke, *The Life and Work of Hugo Ball* (The Hague and Paris, 1967). Steinke was unable to write an objective study because of what Philip Mann called his "preconceived notions of morality and 'normality'." (For his outline on the state of research see Philip Mann, *Hugo Ball. An Intellectual Biography* [U of London, 1987] 1-13.)

While scholarship in the 1970s begins to contribute to dialog dispelling the myth of Dada as cultural nihilism, and to stress its creative edge, it is the works of the 1980s that comprise the beginning of true contributions to the study of Ball as a writer. Some of the most important literary studies are published in the *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung) and include: Susanne Backa, "Frühe Lyrik Balls" (1989) 1-62; Eckhard Faul, "In irgend einer Art Revolutionär. Hugo Balls 'Henker' in der frühexpressionistischen Zeitschrift 'Revolution'" (1985/86) 1-86; Dietmar Kammler, "Das sprachliche Bestimmen der Welt. Ein Beitrag zur Theorie der Lautdichtung Hugo Balls in der Auseinandersetzung mit Kant, Herder, Humboldt und Hamann" (1985/86) 221-43; Friedrich Wilhelm Kantzenbach, "Eine Alternative zum 'Übermensch'. Zur Standortbestimmung von Hugo Balls 'Byzantinischem

Ball's apparent approval of Roman Catholicism in his later years, as well, is misconstrued as representative of an abrupt turn of ideas.¹² Norbert Lyton hastily sums up his discussion of Ball's activities after Zurich as follows: "Ball . . . left the Dada group and moved to Berne, where he wrote a fierce attack on the now fashionable iconoclasm of German intellectuals. Subsequently he joined the Catholic Church."¹³ This is quite a cursory summary of the journalistic and scholarly activities Ball was engaged in after departing from Dada, which included six books, with the above-mentioned socio-political study, two novels, two hagiographic studies, and a study of Michael Bakunin, as well as poetry and over -----
...Continued...

Christentum' im geistes- und wissenschaftsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang" (1987) 87-137; Kantzenbach, "Hugo Ball und die Dadaismen. Bericht zum Echo auf Hugo Ball" (1988) 67-91; Thomas Kempf and Manfred Kratz, "Die Lautgedichte Hugo Balls als Erkenntnisgegenstand kultursemiotischer Texttheorie" (1985/86) 247-74; Gerhard Rademacher, "Das Franziskus-Motiv bei Hugo Ball oder Vom Simultan-Stil zur Methodik der Vereinfachung" (1987) 92-134; Erdmute Wenzel White, "Hugo Ball und Novalis: Vom Bewußtsein der Sprache" (1985/86) 295-320; and Sibylle Wittemann, "Der Kunstbegriff Hugo Balls. Eine biographietheoretische Konstruktion" (1989) 127-82. See this study's "Bibliography" for comprehensive studies published in the 1990s.

12. Ball actually never "converted." Having been a nonpracticing Catholic most of his adult life, he simply commented in 1920 that many of the answers to his questions could most likely be found in Catholicism (*Flucht* 9 August 1920). This comment was made within six months of marrying Emmy Hennings in the Church (21 February 1920). As discussed below, he remained critical of many aspects of church dogma.

13. *The Story of Modern Art*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1990) 124-25.

fifty articles while on the editorial staff of two political journals.¹⁴ Overlooked is also the fact that within the scope of these activities, Ball continued to integrate his earlier idea of synthesizing the spiritual into all realms of life.

Ball developed serious plans of renewal for politics, society, art and language. This study documents one specific project: Ball's journey toward sound poetry. It presents the history of the influences that led Ball toward the development of sound poetry and linguistic regeneration, examining three major sources: 1) the Italian Futurist Marinetti (the most apparent stylistic influence and the best documented),¹⁵ 2) the Russian painter and theorist Kandinsky (with whom Ball had worked closely in 1914, and whose theoretical and spiritual influence Ball repeatedly returned to),¹⁶ and 3) the two Russian *zaum* sound poets Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh (of whom Ball was most likely made aware through his association with Kandinsky, and whose prolific treatises offer a most comprehensive expression of Ball's intentions).

14. For a complete list of Ball's publication activity, see Ernst Teubner, ed., *Hugo Ball. Eine Bibliographie* (Mainz: v. Hase und Koehler Verlag, 1992). This bibliography also includes publications on Ball.

15. Based on their correspondence and Ball's discussion of Marinetti's *Parole in libertà* poetry.

16. "Kandinsky" lecture of 8 April 1917 and also in *Flucht*.

The ideas that brought Ball to desire a regeneration of language and ultimately the sound poems are ideas that he embraced early in his career. They are ideas which he did not abandon after his brief fling with sound poetry or Dada in 1916, but rather ideas which carried him onto and through his activities immediately after he left Zurich, through the political journalistic activity in Bern and through his religious scholarship.

Ball's interest in bridging the inner, spiritual, prearticulate world with the outer, material world remained fundamental to virtually all his enterprises. This venture resulted in sound experiments quite distinct from those of his contemporaries.¹⁷ While Ball's underlying thought is founded in the thoughts and experiences of the German mystics (Mechthild von Magdeburg, Meister Eckhardt and Heinrich Suso) to the ideas of more recent German philosophers and writers (in particular Novalis, Kant and Nietzsche), they are embraced in a manner equal to Ball's by none other than those four non-Germans on whom this study focuses. And while one could simply regard these four individuals as German thinkers, the ideas they embraced were actually part of a pacifist European Zeitgeist, that begged for forms of connection between warring nations.

17. See this study's Conclusion Chapter for a discussion of the work Ball's contemporaries were developing in the area of sound poetry.

This internationalism was an important factor in the development of sound poetry. The ideas that Ball and his four sources carefully chose and adapted from the German sources were those that looked at communication on a broader scale. It was in the prelingual, spiritual realm, where linguistic boundaries are broken, that they saw the true union of humanity as well as of humanity to nature and the larger universe. Ball's efforts and his perceived social responsibility toward this goal went beyond poetry and continued in the years following his departure from Dada.

CHAPTER 1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A Cabaret

Ball's early plans for the Cabaret Voltaire are expressed in a January 1916 letter to his longtime friend Käthe Brodnitz.¹ At this time Ball stated that he and some associates were going to open a "Künstlerkneipe: im Simplizissimus-Stil, aber künstlerischer und mit mehr Absicht. [Und mit den] heterogensten Menschen."² Shortly before this period he had still been contemplating the completion of his dissertation.³ But sometime between January and March (probably in February) of 1916 in another letter to her, his plans for the Cabaret seem to have become solidified as he wrote, "Studium? Ob ich jetzt dazu

1. Richard Sheppard, ed., "Käthe Brodnitz: 13 bisher unveröffentlichte Briefe und Kurzmitteilungen aus den "Dada"-Jahren," *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schiller-Gesellschaft*, 16 (1972) 37-70. The writer Brodnitz had been the companion of Hans Leybold, Ball's closest friend in 1914. Ball continued to remain friends with her long after Leybold's death.

2. Letter to Brodnitz, 27 January 1916. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 50.

The Café Simplicissimus flourished in Munich between 1903 and the outbreak of World War I, when it continued, but lost its critical edge. It provided a forum for artists to present their politically satirical and risqué performances that would have been censored off the stage elsewhere. It also served as a meeting place for artists' discussions of their newest ideas, many still in the earliest stage of development. In *Performance Art from Futurism to the Present*, RoseLee Goldberg speaks of their "half-written manifestos and partly edited magazines" ([New York: Abrams, 1988] 50).

3. Letter, Ball to Brodnitz, 29 December 1915. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 49.

komme?"⁴ Ball's dissertation was finished to the point of completion of a final draft; but he never defended.

Remaining today is a 65-page treatise on Nietzsche in Basel.⁵ Ball's loss of interest in academia by the middle of 1915 is generally regarded as a byproduct of his deep skepticism toward establishment "industries."⁶ And once Ball made his decision to abandon the university, he continued quite determinedly on his path, "wie ein Besessener seinen Weg [als] treuer Diener am Wort," as written by Hermann Hesse, with whom Ball shared a close friendship from December 1920 until his death.⁷ Ball may have abandoned many of his former attachments, and intensified his criticism of the bourgeois enterprise and status quo, but this break from the past only enabled him to embrace his cause to save society all the more firmly.

4. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 52.

5. "Nietzsche in Basel. Eine Streitschrift," ed. Richard Sheppard *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1980) 1-65.

6. However, Philipp Eckhard feels that considering this short treatise to be Ball's dissertation is ludicrous. Ball most likely was writing a dissertation titled "Nietzsche und die Erneuerung Deutschlands" of which everything but one chapter "Nietzsche in Basel. Eine Streitschrift" is lost. Discussed in Philipp Eckhard, *Dadaismus. Einführung in den literarischen Dadaismus und die Wortkunst des 'Sturm'-Kreises* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1980) 49.

7. Hermann Hesse, introduction, ed. Emmy Hennings, *Hugo Ball. Sein Leben in Briefen und Gedichten* (Berlin: Fischer, 1930) 8. Ball had also published a biography on Hesse, *Hermann Hesse. Sein Leben und sein Werk* (Berlin: Fischer, 1927).

His critique of bourgeois culture was not intended to be mean-spirited, nor just for laughs, propaganda or publicity. It was rather the beginning of a serious attempt to reform the world. Hesse described Ball's commitment as follows: "Er hat seinen 'Dadaismus' mit einer tiefen Gläubigkeit und mit derselben ganzen Hingabe gepredigt und gelebt wie alles, was er tat. [. . .] nie gespielt, er gab sich ganz daran hin."⁸ Ball demanded action, commitment and perseverance from himself, and his activities at the Cabaret. They were an attempt to rebuild, and were indeed constructive. Hesse continued:

Damals in der Schweiz [. . .], inmitten eines längst sinnlos gewordenen, übersteigerten Hochbetriebs - an Spionage, Spitzeltum und politischer Propaganda, an Käuflichkeit und Korruption, war dieser beinahe selbstmörderische, märtyrerhafte Versuch eines tiefmoralischen Verstehens und Entsühnens ein Phänomen, das nur sehr wenige sahen und verstanden. . . .⁹

From this extremely committed stance, Ball criticized the seriousness which many artists attached to their purely aesthetic acts, and in a letter to Brodnitz of 3 June 1916 he asked her to distribute the Cabaret Voltaire's brochure in Berlin "damit man endlich weiss, es gibt nicht nur

8. Hesse 9.

9. Hesse 9.

'Aeternisten'."¹⁰ To his friend August Hofmann, he had written much earlier, "'Taten will ich sehen.' Immer wieder von unten anfangen. Untersuchen, bohren, bohren, bohren. Gedichte? - Dieses verlange nicht, mein Sohn!"¹¹

In Zurich Ball found a group of artists to work with, who were equally disgusted with the artistic, cultural, social and politically militaristic status quo, and equally filled with the vitality to move in new directions. The literary historian Philipp Mann states:

This more radical attitude led Ball to become jaded in Berlin, where, in his view, the literary *bohème* was unreceptive to new ideas, wasting its time instead on internal quarrels. Indeed, the possibility of a more receptive and radical audience in Zurich was a major reason for his decision to emigrate to Switzerland. . . .¹²

Zurich had appealed to Ball for some time. In another letter to Brodnitz written just one month before his

10. Ball was the editor of the brochure "Cabaret Voltaire," 15 May 1916. "Aeternisten" is a reference to Franz Pfemfert's term for artists whom he considered 'eternal'. The term was used in a series of books *Die Aktions-Bücher der Aeternisten*, ed. Franz Pfemfert, the last of which appeared in 1921. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 55.

11. 18 December 1914. Cited in *Hugo Ball. Briefe 1911-1927*, ed. Annemarie Schütt-Hennings (Zurich: Benziger, 1957) 36. Hofmann was a musician and close friend from Ball's hometown of Pirmasens.

12. *An Intellectual Biography* 53. However, Ball's practical and compelling impetus to leave Germany was the police's discovery that he had been living under assumed names.

departure from Germany, he presented his vision of Zurich: "Franzosen arbeiten mit Italiener [sic]. Es ist nur noch im Ausland möglich. Mich zieht es dorthin. Leben, Bewegung, Wille muss es sein. (hier [punctuation of original] ist nichts von alledem.)"¹³

Dada was thus founded at the Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich with Ball, surrounded by his companion (the chanteuse and poet) Emmy Hennings, the writer Richard Huelsenbeck, the Rumanian poet Tristan Tzara, the Rumanian painter Marcel Janco, the Alsatian painter and sculptor Jean (Hans) Arp, and the artist and dancer Sophie Taeuber. One year later they were joined by the painter Hans Richter. Guest performers were constantly in the ranks as well.

The choice of name for the Cabaret Voltaire also supported the idea of a "Politik des Geistigen."¹⁴ The name related to Mallarmé's and other Symbolists' "Cafe Voltaire" in Paris of the late 1880s and 1890s. Although differences are numerous, this is perhaps also an allusion to the French Symbolists' hopes to purify language.¹⁵

13. 9 April 1915. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 41-42.

14. Jindrich Toman, "Im Kriege regt sich das Urgewässer. Hugo Ball und der Kriegsausbruch 1914," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1981) 3.

15. For further discussion, see George Steiner, *After Babel* (New York and London: Oxford UP, 1975) 193. However, Charlotte Douglas also points out how the practices and ideas of Ball "differed in an important way from the old

Once based at the Cabaret, Ball felt himself empowered to instill his plans for regeneration. His intentions remained serious and were intended to do far more than shock an audience. As Ball described them at the beginning of 1916, the Cabaret's purposes were to instruct and help the audience on a path of self-evaluation:

Unser Versuch, das Publikum mit künstlerischen Dingen zu unterhalten, drängt uns in ebenso anregender wie instruktiver Weise zum ununterbrochenen Lebendigen, Neuen, Naiven. Es ist mit den Erwartungen des Publikums ein Wettlauf, der alle Kräfte der Erfindung und der Debatte in Anspruch nimmt. . . . Das eine ist sicher, daß die Kunst nur solange heiter ist, als sie der Fülle und Lebendigkeit nicht entbehrt.

Der Künstler als das Organ des Unerhörten bedroht und beschwichtigt zugleich. Die Bedrohung erregt eine Abwehr. Da sie sich aber als harmlos herausstellt, beginnt der Beschauer sich selber ob seiner Furcht zu verlachen (*Flucht* 2 March 1916).

If anything, Ball's sentiments toward his public were so well-meaning that they could be termed affectionate:

"Solange sich nicht eine Verzückerung der ganzen Stadt bemächtigt, hat das Kabarett seinen Zweck verfehlt" (*Flucht* 14 March 1916). Hennings' recollections also describe a positive relationship with the bourgeoisie:

...Continued...

Symbolism, since the artist now looked within, rather than above, for clues to reality, and he dealt with notions which were the basis of the relatively new sciences of psychology and physiology." Discussed in *Swans of Other Worlds. Kazimir Malevich and the Origins of Abstraction in Russia* (UMI Research Press, 1980) 18.

Daß er [Dadaismus] als "Kulturprotest" ausgegeben wurde, hat mir nicht behagen wollen. Dazu hätte man nackt auf die Bahnhofstraße gehen können und denselben Effekt erreicht mit den einfachen Mitteln, eben mit nichts. Keiner von den Dadaisten hat auch nur eine Bibliothek verbrannt. Niemand hat eine Maschine zertrümmert. [. . .] unsere Soireen waren gut besucht von "Fünf-Uhr-Thee-Leuten".¹⁶

While Hennings' description reinforces the perception of the Cabaret's activities as positive and ambitious, it is easy to misinterpret some of her comments. Her reference to the 5-o'clock-tea group can be misread as implying that an aesthetic agenda existed at the Cabaret, despite Ball's criticisms of the aestheticism practiced by other contemporary artists. Also, her discomfort with the label "Kulturprotest" can be regarded as an implication of the nonexistence of a program against cultural and social norms, when one did indeed exist. What Hennings has emphasized here is the *type* of action that had been taken in order to abandon (and yes, "protest") the cultural and social status quo, and that these were not nihilistic and destructive, but rather creative. When Ball criticized the Berlin contemporaries, he was criticizing their *l'art pour l'art* practices. He reconciled his own practice of art by -----

16. "Aus dem Leben Hugo Balls 1916-1920," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1991) 56-57. This excerpt is from the unpublished chapters 5-7 of the manuscript titled "Rebellen und Bekenner. Aus dem Leben von Hugo Ball."

focusing on its social value, a sort of Social Realism of the spiritual kind, and perceived his art as a path to the future that would change the very patterns of human comprehension. Ball's art in the form of the sound poem was to lead to the development of a new language (or rediscovery of an old, primal language) that would bring humankind to deeper levels of understanding through truer communication.

Ball saw communication as being hampered by the distortion that occurred between the process of a person perceiving a stimulus and his/her attempts to communicate this experience. This process contained several steps, each of which resulted in additional distortion. Initially came one's preverbal perception of a stimulus, then one's attempt to mentally articulate it, (and sometimes rationally perceive it as well), and finally the moment that this perception was verbally articulated for others to perceive. (Not to mention the ensuing distortion that occurred when the next perceiver engaged in the same process.)

Ball's new language was to allow for pure, unadulterated, unmediated communication without any distortion between the original stimulus and the final communicative effort. He saw this development as one that could truly change the world as it prepared the way for better appreciation of inner, prearticulate sensations, and new methods of relaying these spiritual experiences to

others. Once these inner occurrences could be articulated, humankind would communicate on a more meaningful level and, hence, develop more productive and fulfilling relationships.

Despite Ball's dissatisfaction with the status quo, and despite the possibility of a total abandonment thereof, he did not feel that this ground zero should be attained through destruction, nor hostility, nor force, but rather through the teaching of and hence arrival at an understanding of these deeper, mystic realities. In this aspect, Ball thoroughly resembles his friend Kandinsky who perceived the artists' calling to be one of mediator between the people and the spiritual world. Hence, the artist was to be the people's deliverer to spiritual awareness. Ultimately, this would serve for better communication in all aspects of life; and initially it was a pacifistic call out of the war-torn Europe of his time.

Ball regarded his activities of 1916 as best summarized in his novel *Flametti*. On 19 December 1916 he wrote to his sister, "Dieser kleine Roman wird auf 200 Seiten meine ganze Philosophie enthalten. Liebe für die, die am Boden liegen. Für die Ausgestoßenen, die Zertretenen, die Gequälten. Mitleid. Mitleid. Mitleid."¹⁷ Wilhelm Rey states, "Das 'Narrenspiel aus dem Nichts', wie Hugo Ball in seinem Tagebuch es nennt, war -----

17. Letter to Maria Hildebrand-Ball. Cited in *Briefe* 73.

vielmehr nur eine Form des Kampfes um die humanistische Utopie, um das Hochbild des ganzen, vollentwickelten Menschen."¹⁸

Hennings continued to explain that at the time of the birth of Dada, Ball had designed an "ethisches Program" whose complete implementation had been hindered by financial restraints. She stressed that, nonetheless, this vision had remained with him throughout his Cabaret activity, and felt it fair to say that Ball had put into practice as much of it as was possible during that period.¹⁹ She described the sound poems as follows:

Seine Lautgedichte, Verse ohne Worte, kamen aus Gewissenszartheit und Vorsicht.
Er war auf der inbrünstigen Suche nach magischen Urlauten, und was sich ihm enthüllte, konnte er im Trubel der verschiedenen "Ismen" kaum mehr anders verständlich machen.²⁰

Ball's departure from the Cabaret was not the result of an abandonment of his initial convictions, but more so the result of witnessing their abandonment by his colleagues. The departure, however, was ultimately activated by a nervous breakdown which had already begun to

18. Wilhelm Rey, *Poesie der Antipoesie; moderne deutsche Lyrik: Genesis, Theorie, Struktur* (Heidelberg: Stiehm, 1978) 113.

19. *Aus dem Leben* 57.

20. *Aus dem Leben* 58.

progress in June 1916. In a letter to Brodnitz from that time he described his intolerance to the stressful conditions of Cabaret performances, "Das allabendliche Auftreten resorbiert mich nämlich sehr. . . . Das Klavierspielen jeden Abend nimmt mir die beste Kraft. . . ." ²¹ From his retreat in Magadino after fleeing Zurich he wrote to Hennings, "Ich kam an, ganz erschöpft und kraftlos. Meine Stimme, meine Augen, mein Herz - alles ganz müde. . . . daß ich ausgehalten habe, solange ich irgend konnte. . . . Ich habe es oft genug gesagt." ²² She too saw, "daß er das Auftreten und das gesellschaftliche Leben, was das Kabarett eben mit sich brachte, bereits damals nicht gut vertrug. [Dann] kam er von den lauten Soireen in sein stilles Zimmer zurück, als wäre er entflohen." ²³ And to Tzara, Ball wrote, "Und bitte Sie, meine Abreise nicht als eine 'symbolische Handlung' zu betrachten, noch betrachten zu lassen." ²⁴ Reiterating that he was not intending to abandon his convictions, he begged Hennings, as well, not to let such rumors circulate: "Du mußt nur verhindern, daß man Dummheiten erzählt: ich hätte alles im Stich gelassen." ²⁵

21. 3 June 1916. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 56.

22. Pfingstsonntag 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 77.

23. *Aus dem Leben* 60.

24. 28 May 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 78.

25. Letter 28 May 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 79.

Although Ball returned to Zurich in November to assist in the foundation of the Galerie Dada, he found his physical stamina taking him only until May 1917. With his departure, the gallery closed down.²⁶ Hennings stayed in Zurich for several more weeks, wrapping up the loose ends of his engagements created by the hasty departure. She wrote to Ball that she had spoken with Tzara and Grushek in an attempt to assure them that the departure was:

nicht um einen schlechten Willen von Ball, sondern um eine Versagung seiner Kraft, die so entsetzlich am Ende ist, dass ich darüber weinen möchte, und das, liebster Hugo, ist ja die tieftraurige Wahrheit. . . . Man verlangt von Dir, dass du in der Galerie sterben hättest müssen, als abreisen, aber ich habe bedeutet, es giebt eine Grenze für einen Menschen, der nicht mehr kann, der am Ende ist, und doch keine Energie mehr hat etwas wirkliches zu tun, und dass du am Ende bist, werde ich ueberall bestätigen, denn du bist der einzige, der seiner Kraft zuviel zugemutet hat.²⁷

Despite Hennings' desire to keep the peace between Ball and Tzara, philosophical differences in the group's

26. The gallery was initially quite successful. It consisted of four rooms which housed "neueste Kunst . . . Dadaisten, Kubisten, Expressionisten, Futuristen. . . ." Before its closure in May 1917, the Gallery had hosted "sechs Kunstabende, die vom Publikum überlaufen waren und zur Folge hatten, daß man auf der Straße mit den Fingern auf uns zeigte: 'Da kommen die Dadaisten.'" (From a letter, Ball to Hofmann, 26 June 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 81.)

27. Undated letter. Ms, "Briefe an Hugo Ball" in Nachlaß Hugo Ball, Depositum Robert Walser Archiv, Zurich.

intentions, direction and manner of relating to the public contributed in large part to Ball's nervous breakdown. His ability to handle this stressful conflict definitely reached its capacity once he began to see his hopes for the Cabaret unfulfilled. He quit the Cabaret when he realized that "der literarische Klamauk der Dadaisten eher ein Symptom der Zeitkrankheit als ein Heilmittel ist."²⁸ Ball became especially distraught once Tzara began to vie with him for a voice in the management and direction of the group. In his recollection of that period, Hans Richter notes that, "der Neid und die Eitelkeit, etwas womit Ball am allerwenigsten rechnete, weil er sie selbst nicht besaß . . . entmutigten ihn und bereiteten letzten Endes auch seine schließliche Trennung von Dada vor."²⁹ When Ball wrote to Tzara from his retreat, he summed up all that he had seen go wrong with the Cabaret, and made note of a recent critique of the Cabaret in a French journal:

Herr Guilbeux hat sehr recht. Das "Cabaret
Voltaire" ist nichtsnutzig, schlecht, dekadent,
militaristisch. . . . Ich möchte so etwas nicht
mehr machen. . . . will sagen ziere Erfindung,
Bonhommie, Geltenlassen, Schmuck, Schmutz,

28. Rey 116.

29. Hans Richter, *Dada. Kunst und Anti-Kunst. Der Beitrag Dadas zur Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Cologne: DuMont, 1964) 39.

Wohlbehagen, Gaieté, Plaisanterie, kleinmännische Bouffonerie, voilà mein neues Programm. Keine "Blasphemie" mehr, keine "Ironie" (das ist schmutzig, gemein) keine Satire mehr (wer hat Recht dazu?) keine "Intelligenz" mehr. Nur nicht! Genug davon! Ecrasez! . . .

Keine Marinettis mehr, keine Apollinaires mehr (was ist das für eine Perfidie!) Sondern Plausibilitäten. Wirklichkeiten.

Ach das ist viel schwerer. . . .

Nichts mehr gegen die Bourgois [sic]. Bourgois [sic] sein, ist sehr . . . schwer ebenfalls. Nichts mehr gegen die Literaten. . . . heilsame Sachen machen, gegen die große deutsche Pest. Keine Gewalt mehr. . . .³⁰

Just three weeks later, after having had time to contemplate the final breakdown of the Cabaret, Ball wrote to Brodnitz, again stressing the serious productive plans he had had for Dada and the cause of its ultimate demise. He felt Dada had failed because it had failed to create anything positive or concrete.

Die meisten Menschen haben "einen Sitz im Leben", dessen Relevanz nicht auf der Hand liegt, und Dada, trotz des Anscheins eines tölpelhaften Nihilismus, machte eigentlich den ernsthaften Versuch, festzustellen, welche Einstellungen und Werte erforderlich sind. . . .³¹

30. 27 September 1916. Cited in *Briefe*, 63.

31. Letter, Ball to Brodnitz, 20 October 1916. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 67-68.

Ball even witnessed a misinterpretation of his memoirs from this period in a review of *Flucht aus der Zeit*, "Ich sah letztthin eine Besprechung meiner 'Flucht', da war ich als Nietzsches Epigone vorgestellt, obgleich ich durch das ganze Buch hindurch eine konträre Welt aufzustellen suchte."³²

The idea of Nietzschean destruction never fit into Ball's scheme of Dada nor any of his schemes for that matter. His plans more so concerned themselves with deliberate construction and production of positive alternatives.

In his September 1916 letter to Tzara, Ball elaborated on his new plans:

Ich habe ein anderes System jetzt. . . . daß
aller Expressionismus, Dadaismus und andere Mismen
schlimmste Bourgeoisie sind. Alles Bourgeoisie,
alles Bourgeoisie. Übel, übel, übel. Man wird
sagen, sie haben in dieser Zeit mit Holz, Sand,
Papier gemalt, weil sie das Geld nicht mehr
hatten, Oelfarben zu kaufen. Und es geschah ihnen
recht, wird man sagen. Negermusik? KAFFERMUSIK!
O lalalalalalalalalala!

Möglich: Reaktionen. Aber: mir macht es bisher
unbekanntes Vergnügen, zu "arbeiten". Zu
beschreiben. Ich möchte schreiben: Einen
Ameisenroman. Präzis und phantastisch. 5000
Individualitäten auf einem halben Quadratmeter

32. Letter, Ball to Hennings, spring 1927. Cited in *Briefe* 288.

Raum.³³

In a letter to Brodnitz of 6 October 1916 Ball elaborated on these plans, "[I]ch mache keinen Dadaismus und keine Phantastik mehr, sondern versuche mit deskriptiven Methoden mich zu kurieren." He also alluded to an "internationale Idee."³⁴ Ball appears to have been once again redirecting himself to his original course begun in Munich.

One day later, in describing Dada's failings to his friend Hofmann, Ball again discussed his intention of redirecting his efforts back towards his original constructive plans. The critic Guilbeux is mentioned again as Ball noted his defamation of Dada and the statement that:

"[E]in Deutscher hat's gemacht, um Propaganda für sein Volk zu machen. Er ist ein Blasphemiker, und das bedeutet, er ist ein Dekadent, und dieser Dekadenz ist eine Folgererscheinung des drückenden Militarismus." . . . Lieber will ich untersuchen, wie weit sie recht haben. Und Heilmittel suchen gegen besagte Dekadenz.³⁵

Furthermore, he asked Hofmann to help him with a new plan to publish the music ("Negermusik und Dadatänze") that had

33. 15 September 1916. Cited in *Briefe* 62-63. The "Ameisenroman" is a reference to his novel *Flametti oder Vom Dandysmus der Armen* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989). First published (Berlin: Reiss, 1918). Referred to hereinafter as *Flametti*.

34. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 58.

35. Letter, Ball to Hofmann, 7 October 1916. Cited in *Briefe* 66.

been performed at the Cabaret. Hofmann's job was to transcribe this music into the "richtige System" for the novel *Tenderenda der Phantast*.³⁶ Ball felt himself re-approaching Dada's original purpose of returning to an innocence of expression and thought. And again he wanted to bring these ideas to the public, this time perhaps to a wider audience with the publication of the songs:

Auch habe ich über den Dadaismus, den ich selbst gegründet habe, rasch wieder umgelernt. Und so unterließ ich das Ganze. Das kleine Buch [*Tenderenda*] sollte zeichnerisch, musikalisch und plastisch zugleich meine Idee vom Dadaismus umschreiben, die Idee der absoluten Vereinfachung, der absoluten Negerei, angemessen den primitiven Abenteuern unserer Zeit.³⁷

Ball's Plans after the Zurich Departure

The post-Cabaret plans, whose seeds Ball had sown in September 1916, but which were interrupted with his resumed work on the Galerie Dada, were finally taken up in May 1917. Rather than implying a flight from social responsibilities, this move to the mountains afforded him the time for what he felt was true socially-responsible work. It was the next step on his uninterrupted path, this

36. Ts photocopy, Hugo Ball Archiv, Stadtbücherei, Pirmasens. Original with Hans Bollinger, Zurich. Published in Zurich: Die Arche, 1967. Referred to hereinafter as *Tenderenda*.

37. Letter, Ball to Hofmann, 7 October 1916. Cited in *Briefe* 65-66.

time also coupled with an environment amenable to closer communion with the purity of spirit which he sought.

Although he himself named his move a "flight" out of time, it was not to represent a retreat into oblivion. The flight was intended as a sanctuary wherein one could be extremely active and improve oneself and one's understanding of the moral imperative of life, what Ball saw as the reason for living - *despite* the time. It was a flight in opposite direction of the realities of that specific time period, and not one out of reality.³⁸

In *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz*³⁹ he stated, "Gewiß . . . Askese und Weltflucht, wie die Romantik in ihrer Entartung sie zeigt, sind nicht Heiligtümer; sie sind Verzweiflung" (120). Emphasizing the productive activity he planned to maintain, he wrote to his sister, "Ich für mein Teil glaube, daß man sich nur durch unentwegte Arbeit und Heiterkeit gesund erhalten kann. . . ." ⁴⁰

For the winter of 1916 Ball spoke of plans "Cabaretabende zu geben" in Davos with Alfred Klabund.⁴¹

38. For further discussion see *Briefe* 9.

39. (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1989). First published in 1919 (Bern: Der Freie Verlag). Ball later republished the book with revisions under the title *Die Folgen der Reformation* (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1924). Hereinafter referred to as *Kritik* and *Folgen*, respectively.

40. 28 November 1916. Cited in *Briefe* 69.

41. Letter, Ball to Brodnitz, 6 October 1916. Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 60.

However, all that seemed to materialize thereof was the performance tour he and Hennings did in the fall in the area of the Vierwaldstätter See.⁴²

After finally abandoning the Dada group, he began his intense, politically-journalistic activity in Bern. From September 1917 to March 1920 he published for *Die Freie Zeitung*, whose central theme was the "Kriegsschuldfrage Deutschlands."⁴³ Ball described this writing as the "republikanische[] Aktion gegen die protestantische Monarchie. . . ."⁴⁴ His articles covered ideas of democracy and utopianist anarchy in Germany and Soviet Russia; morality and the economy; the uses of propaganda; Marxism, Socialism; as well as more specific articles on

42. For further discussion, see this study, Chapter 5 "The Poems" 298.

43. Exhibition Catalog, Stadt Pirmasens, *Hugo Ball (1886-1986). Leben und Werk*, ed. Ernst Teubner, exhibition from 23 February 1986 through 7 September in Wasgauhalle Pirmasens, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus München, and Kunsthaus Zürich (Berlin: publica Verlagsgesellschaft in Berlin mbH, 1986) 182. Hereinafter referred to as *Katalog*.

The "Freie Zeitung" was founded and published by Hans Schlieber, the former German consul in Belgrad. Other contributors were Ernst Bloch, Adolf Saager, Hermann Rösemaier, Paul von Mathies, Richard Grelling. In 1918 Ball became a member of the general editorial staff.

44. Letter, Ball to Pater Beda Ludwig, 18 March 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 249. Beda was a Benedictine priest who began correspondence with Ball after reading his *Byzantisches Christentum* (Frankfurt a.M.: Insel, 1979). First published (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1923).

Thomas Münzer, Kant, Walter Rathenau, Hindenburg, Romain Rolland and Bismarck. Ball also spent close to one year traveling in Germany during this time, in an attempt to keep abreast of the cultural-political climate. Coming to fruition during this time was "mein erstes größeres Buch 'Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz' (1924 in Bearbeitung unter dem Titel 'Die Folgen der Reformation')."45

His poetry and fiction developed hand in hand with his political work. Hermans notes that for Ball art and literature were always "placed in a social, political and ideological context."46

And as Ball mentioned in another letter, his political goals remained focused on spiritual fulfillment, "Habt keine Sorge um mich. Meine 'Politik' hat es nur mit dem 'Geistigen' zu tun. . . ."47

Ball's religious and mystic studies took root at this time as well. In recollecting his activities during his association with the *Freie Zeitung*, Ball stated that, "Wichtiger aber als die Politik in Bern waren meine damaligen Privatstudien . . . die Neuscholastik. Mit Emmy zusammen las ich die deutschen Mystiker und Katarina

45. Letter, Ball to Beda, 18 March 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 249.

46. 386. In *Flucht*, Ball also stated, "Nicht um die Kunst geht es" (March 1916).

47. Ball to Maria Hildebrand-Ball, 13 March 1915. Cited in *Briefe* 41.

Emmerich."⁴⁸

The Move for Purity/Kindlichkeit

Although Ball's reconversion to Roman Catholicism⁴⁹ is often viewed as his final flight, i.e. the abandonment of his former ideas, it can just as well be regarded as representative of a continuation of his earlier theories on spiritual purity and regeneration. Ball had long expressed his belief in the necessity of a *tabula rasa* to precede any construction.

Already in August 1916 he spoke of:

Die Kindheit als eine neue Welt, und alles
kindlich Phantastische, alles kindlich Direkte,
kindlich Figürliche gegen die Senilitäten, gegen
die Welt der Erwachsenen. . . . Die Kindheit ist
keineswegs so selbstverständlich, wie man
gemeinhin glaubt. Sie ist eine kaum beachtete
Welt mit eigenen Gesetzen, ohne deren Erhebung es
keine Kunst gibt, und ohne deren religiöse und
philosophische Anerkennung keine Kunst bestehen
und aufgenommen werden kann. (*Flucht* August 1916)

And in March 1918 he once again took up this venture. In his *Flucht* entries of the time, he began speaking of finding the child within oneself. In a letter to Hennings, Ball stated, "Der Mensch ist ein Kind: Das stammt von mir

48. Letter, Ball to Beda, 18 March 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 249.

49. Occurring in the summer of 1920.

und von Dir. Erinnere Dich. Von Dir zuerst. Denn Du hast das Kind in mir wieder geweckt." He further discussed how this goal of rediscovery had been one of Dada's original intents. He laid claim for himself and Hennings the titles of initiators, regretting the loss of such a focus by the other Cabaret participants.⁵⁰ He does give his co-workers credit for their initial vision, describing them in *Tenderenda* as "das schwankende Häuflein dadaistischer Wanderpropheten, die die Kindheit auf ihre Weise verkündeten."⁵¹

Ball began his call for a purity and a return to *Kindlichkeit* with particular frequency once Hennings' nine-year-old daughter Annemarie had rejoined her mother in 1916, coming to live with her and Ball. This child appears to have helped open Ball's eyes to the benefits of viewing the world without a *priori* knowledge. It is an idea which he integrated completely in his sound-poem project.⁵²

In 1923 the idea still preoccupied Ball. He responded to Hennings' story of a mute acquaintance, pointing out the

50. Letter, Ball to Hennings, March 1918. Cited in *Briefe* 109.

51. Hennings, "Aus dem Leben" 60. Ball once described *Tenderenda* as completely autobiographical. ("[E]s ist kein Satz darin, der nicht höchst persönlich erlebt ist." [Letter, Ball to Hofmann, 7 October 1916. Cited in *Briefe* 66.])

52. Letter, Ball to Hennings, 17 August 1916, written a few days before Annemarie was to arrive while Hennings was elsewhere. Cited in *Briefe* 60.

human requirement "erst von Sinnen kommen, um wieder hören und sehen zu lernen."⁵³

In February 1917 Ball praised the peacefulness and refuge that Catholicism had to offer. He described Hennings' experience at a cloister in early 1917 as:

ein kleines, heiliges Refugium. Es ist etwas Schönes um die katholische Kirche. . . . [W]ie eine ewige Mutter. . . . Wir sind Streiter und dürfen es uns wohl gönnen, einmal unseren Platz zu verlassen, um auszuruhen. . . . Für mich hatte das Klosterleben immer einen mystischen Reiz. . . .⁵⁴

The allure of the Church may simply have rested in this appeal toward a calmer life, and one that afforded closer contact with the spiritual.

The Beginning of the Mystical Studies: A modern use for the knowledge of the old

Ball's hagiographic scholarship intensified in 1920.⁵⁵

53. Letter, Ball to Hennings, Fall 1923. Cited in *Briefe* 164.

54. Letter, Ball to Hennings, 8 February 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 74.

55. During this year alone, Ball discussed in *Flucht* the gnostic Bardesanes, Meister Eckhart, St. Epiphanius, Eusebius, St. Frances of Rome, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Gregor of Nyssa, the scholar de Gourmont's book on the Latin mystics, the prophetess of Prevorst Friederike Hauffe, St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. John of the Cross, St. Justin, St. Laurence, the fifth-century orator and religious scholar Claudianus Mamertus, Peter the Venerable, the Therapeutist Philo, Plotinus, the Bishop Rabanus

The period coincides with his reaffirmation of the Catholic faith. But in contrast to his previous description of Catholicism as an "Ausruhen" and contrary to critics' interpretation of these interests as representative of his flight from the material world, this period simply represented another time of intense research of a topic that had interested him since at least 1915.⁵⁶

- *Language and the Mystics*

At the heart of his research was the interest in how the spiritual related to language. Hennings stated that Ball initiated his research into the mystics in 1916, during his search for a primal language, coinciding with his writing of *Tenderenda* and the sound poems:

Seine Liebe zur Gnosis klingt hier zum ersten Male an. Nur die Gnostiker werden der tyrranischen Gewalten Herr, weil sie die Bannsprüche und Zauberformeln kennen, so war später seine Ansicht. Doch war er hier schon auf der Suche nach Bannsprüche. Er war als Dadaist ein ziemlich

...Continued...

Maurus, the mystic scholar Hermann Reimarus, the Abbot Serapion, Heinrich Suso, St. Thecla, St. Thomas Aquinas, Pope Urban IV, and of course the saints who are the subjects of his *Byzantisches Christentum*, Simeon Stylites, Dionysius the Areopagite and St. John Climacus.

56. In *Flucht* entries of 1915 he discussed Erasmus, Melanchton. Between 1916 and 1917 he made references to the Madonna of the Rhine and of the Strasbourg Cathedral, St. Augustine, St. Ignatius of Loyola, Mechtild of Magdeburg, St. Thomas More; in 1918, St. Frances of Assisi; St. Thomas Aquinas; and in 1919, Pelagius, and St. Theresa of Avila.

bewußter Formzerstörer und rebellierte gegen
 abgenutzte Worte, Trivialitäten hassend. . . . So
 kam er eben zu Versen ohne Worte,
 Lautgedichte. . . .⁵⁷

The literary scholar Friedrich Kantzenbach also
 pinpoints the onset of Ball's interest in the mystics to
 the beginning or middle of 1916, around the time of the
 sound poems, relating Ball's search for a primal language
 to the word theology of St. John:

Die johanneische Wort-Theologie und die
 substantiellen Worte eines Johannes vom Kreuz sind
 Erfüllung der dadaistischen Suche nach Urworten.
 So kommt es zur Einmündung der dadaistischen
 Klangdichtung in das Latein mystique des Credo,
 das Ball anstimmt unter ausdrücklicher
 Einbeziehung des 3. Artikels.⁵⁸

Ball continued this scholarship throughout the 1920s,
 and it culminated in 1925 with his work on Angelus
 Silesius.⁵⁹ In 1925 he became associated with the
 psychologist Dr. De Sanctis, a professor at the Regia
 University in Rome. De Sanctis was engaged in scholarship
 on language, mysticism, and psychoanalysis, and
 particularly interested in W. James' 1905 publication *Magie
 des Wortes*. Ball began his studies on exorcism and
 psychoanalysis at this time, and had obtained permission

57. "Aus dem Leben" 64.

58. Kantzenbach, "Hugo Ball und die Dadaismen" 86.

59. Letter, Ball to Hesse, July 1925. Cited in *Briefe*
 218.

from De Sanctis to use his laboratories for psychoanalytic studies.⁶⁰

- *Language and Novalis*

Ball's research into the Romantics is strongly colored by an examination of their interest in language. He titled his diary entries from 2 February 1916 through 29 August 1917 as "Romantizismen." Novalis' writings exercised an exceptionally strong influence on him. Wenzel White's thorough comparison of Ball's linguistic theories and Novalis' "Die Sprachlehre ist die Dynamik des Geisterreichs"⁶¹ evidences distinct parallels.⁶² The following statement from Novalis' fragments is later mirrored in Ball's *Flucht*:

Die Zeit ist nicht mehr . . . wo der Geist Gottes verständlich war. Der Sinn der Welt ist verlohren gegangen. Wir sind beym Buchstaben stehn geblieben. Wir haben das Erscheinende über der Erscheinung verlohren. Formularwesen."
(*Schriften II* 594)

In the first three pages of *Flucht* Ball listed areas to

60. Nothing developed in regard to these laboratory studies. Noted in Hugo Ball, *Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit. Ausgewählte Schriften*, ed. Hans Burkhard Schlichting (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp TB, 1984) 340; and *Katalog* 20.

61. *Novalis. Schriften*, ed. Richard Samuel (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1981).

62. 295-319.

which humankind's attention had been drawn away from the truly meaningful and spiritual. Disheartened, he found society offering solutions to human fulfillment in the emptiness of new technology, and spoke of "Der Zwiespalt zwischen Technik und Mythos, zwischen Maschine und Religion" (*Flucht* 11-13). And on 2 March 1916 Ball cited Novalis' treatise specifically (*Flucht*).

Ball readily integrated Novalis' call for a language that would adequately allow discussion of the spiritual world. He regarded such a language as a necessary form of unmediated communication as well; one in which the speaker remained absent, acting only as medium for the expression of higher realities. In Novalis' words, "Der Act des sich selbst Überspringens ist überall der höchste - der Ursprung" (*Schriften II* 556). But contrary to Ball, who always remained skeptically cautious about language's ability to mediate these deeper levels of comprehension, suspecting that they might only be experienced on other levels, Novalis emphasized the existence of realms and relationships that could be mediated only through language. Wenzel White describes the unique quality of Novalis' "Minusbereich":

als ein "Raum" außerhalb wechselseitiger Beziehungen, welcher erst durch Sprache vermittelt wird. Novalis spricht von einem "umgekehrten Gebrauch der Sinne". Es ist ihr Hang zum Wunderbaren, daß die Sprache Korrelationen zu erkennen vermag, die auf gedachter Ebene nicht

erfaßt werden.⁶³

Despite Ball's caution, however, both he and Novalis were aware of the necessity of a renewed language for the expression of these deeper levels.

In Ball's frequent discussion of magical sound qualities Novalis' reference to vowels as "Buchstabenseelen"⁶⁴ rings through. *Flucht* in particular contains many references to such magical quality. On 9 July 1915 Ball spoke of the "Zauber der Vokabeln" (9 July 1915). He discussed how language "vertritt die Seele" (30 March 1916). On 15 June 1916 Ball explained: "zwei Drittel der wunderbar klagenden Worte . . . stammen aus uralten Zaubertexten. Die Verwendung von 'Siegel'n', von magisch erfüllten fliegenden Worten und Klangfiguren" (15 June 1916); three days later he discussed the "evangelischen Begriff des 'Wortes' (logos) als eines magischen Komplexbildes" (18 June 1916), and his intentions to give "der isolierten Vokabel die Fülle einer Beschwörung, die Glut eines Gestirns;" wanting "eine Rückkehr zur innersten Alchemie des Wortes." And "kabbalistische Formeln" were of particular interest to him (15 September 1916).⁶⁵

63. 304.

64. Wenzel White 307.

65. Ball's interest in caballism also extended to the published essay "Ueber Okkultismus, Hieratik und andere seltsam schöne Dinge." This essay recounts Ball's experiences with the "neuen Ausdruckstanz" in Ascona and Zurich, which were performed at the international congress

Christian Scholz published a thorough investigation of the cabalistic-alchemical hidden imagery with which so many Baroque writers were occupied, and how it relates to sound poetry.⁶⁶ Ball carried out studies on several figures interested in such imagery and language such as Jakob Boehme, Johann Lavater and Clemens Brentano. He discussed Boehme's interest in deciphering language down to the hidden meaning at its core, as well as his insistence on using language containing such hidden meaning.⁶⁷ Lavater, who was interested in an ideal language where signifier and signified were identical including non-spoken gestures, also exercised his appeal, as did Brentano's "Deutung der Zeichen."⁶⁸

Many of the hagiographic studies conducted between 1919 and 1923 concentrate on mystics of the Middle Ages such as Dionysus the Areopagite, John Climacus and Simeon

...Continued...

of the "Ordo Templi Orientalis" in August 1917. In 1921 he was engaged in research on the cabala. *Berner Intelligenzblatt* 314 (15 November 1917): 2.

66. Christian Scholz, *Untersuchungen zur Geschichte und Typologie der Lautpoesie* (Obermichelbach: Gertrud Scholz Verlag, 1989).

67. Scholz 24.

68. Eva Fiesel, *Die Sprachphilosophie der deutschen Romantik* (Tübingen: Mohr 1927). Also Alfred Liede, *Dichtung als Spiel. Studien zur Unsinnspoesie an den Grenzen der Sprache*, vol. 2 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1963).

Stylites.⁶⁹ In 1919 Ball became quite intensely involved with medieval Christianity. In June he was reading Karl Sell's *Die Religion unserer Klassiker. Lessing, Herder, Schiller, Goethe*⁷⁰ in which he found medieval Christianity to be the foundation for these writers' beliefs. And later that year Ball mentioned traveling to Ticino with only two books: *Geschichte der christlichen Philosophie des Mittelalters* by Clemens Bäumker, and Léon Bloys' *Quatre ans de Captivité (Flucht: 18 November 1919)*. This scholarship mostly served him to explore his belief in the human need for greater awareness of one's inner, spiritual nature and a better means to express this level of experience. In 1920 he discussed Justin's, Origen's and Augustine's writings on language (*Flucht* 31 July). Yet many of Ball's writings manifest a clearly modern approach and remain critical investigations aimed at furthering his earlier theories.⁷¹

Ball's work on the early Christian Therapeutics, who employed psychoanalysis to understand and achieve redemption from sins (as opposed to "confession" in which the spiritual processes were seen as lacking) incorporates -----

69. Published in *Byzantisches Christentum* 1923, the writing of which Ball had begun in December 1920.

70. (Tübingen, 1910).

71. This similar idea is also expressed by John Elderfeld in his introduction to *Flight* xli: "His interests in primitive Christianity are not very dissimilar from the preoccupations of his dadaist years."

"modern" ideas about the soma, psyche, and pneuma derived from Freud, Jung and Adler.⁷² Like Novalis, Ball is intent on integrating the modern with the traditional. In discussing the Therapeutics, Ball stated, "Die Heiligengeschichte . . . spielt . . . eine große Rolle wie in der Psychologie und der Psychiatrie." He emphasized the need for its application in modern life:

Wir leben im Übergang von einem abstrakten und rationalistischen Zeitalter zu einem konkreten und rationalen. . . . [E]in neuer Wertmaßstab bereitet sich vor, der seine Prinzipien nicht den Tatsachen und ihrer Berechnung, sondern dem Glauben und den symbolschaffenden Kräften entnimmt. . . .

[E]ine Erneuerung und eine Umkehr zur Kirche.

Wir waren eine Zeitlang Protestant. . . . Wir waren Entwicklungsmythologen und Fatalisten. Wir glaubten, daß der Mensch mechanisch . . . funktioniere. . . . Wir suchten alle höheren Erscheinungen auf die Intelligenz, auf den Körper, auf die Chemie zurückzuführen und bewiesen nur immer mehr, daß wir unfähig geworden seien, die höheren Werte hervorzubringen.⁷³

His religious and scientific, psychological studies

72. Discussed in *Byzantisches Christentum*, especially 102-49. Stephen Hegglin offers a thorough analysis of Ball's studies in psychology in "Byzantisches Christentum," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1988) 64.

73. "Die religiöse Konversion," *Hochland* 22.2.9 and 22.2.10 (June and July 1925): 315-30 and 463-76.

continued to exercise reciprocal influence on each other as he carried out research on psychoanalysis between 1924 and 1926.⁷⁴ And even when investigating exorcism, Ball conducted a study of the *psychology behind* exorcism. He constantly integrated this modern perspective into his religious studies, never simply embracing religious dogma or Catholicism at its face value.

And throughout the mystical and religious studies Ball continued to investigate the relationships of these realms to language. He continued to write poetry throughout this period as well.⁷⁵ Ball's studies appear to have progressed cyclically, evidenced by a letter as late as 4 December 1923 to Hesse in which he wrote, "Jetzt bin ich bei der Magie wieder angelangt. Was ist doch die Sprache für ein erstaunliches Ding."⁷⁶

Rademacher also traces this circle back in his comparison of the Cabaret to the Church:

Indem das Religiöse, das durch zur Routine
gewordene Rituale zur Hohlform geworden ist, auf
bisher ungewöhnliche Weise präsentiert und

74. Ball published some of his research findings in two essays titled "Der Künstler und die Zeitkrankheit," *Hochland* 1 (November and December, 1926).

75. Rademacher offers a useful discussion of the poems in "Ansätze zu einer 'neuen' oder Nachträge zu der 'alten' *Legenda Aurea*? Zu Hugo Balls Nachdadaistischer Lyrik," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1986) especially 336-55.

76. Letter, Ball to Hesse, 4 December 1923. Cited in *Briefe* 166.

realisiert wird, spricht es die längst "abgefallenen Christen" wieder an. Überspitzt gesagt: Der Raum des Kabarettts wird zur Kirche. Zwar mag diese religiöse Ergriffenheit bei der Mehrheit des Publikums nicht von langer Dauer sein: immerhin ein zeitweiliges Eingehen auf "mystische Angebote" läßt sich nicht leugnen.⁷⁷

On 13 June 1916 Ball wrote in *Flucht*: "Das Wort und das Bild sind eins. Maler und Dichter gehören zusammen. Christus ist Bild und Wort. Das Wort und das Bild sind gekreuzigt."

It could be said that Ball was religious from the beginning.

The Conversion: A new Catholicism

Notwithstanding his lifelong engagement with the spiritual, the question of what brought Ball to a reconsideration of Catholicism remains intriguing. Critics offer some simple explanations for the decision that, while they do not imply a philosophical continuation, do not suggest an abandonment of earlier ideas either.

However, before any objective study of Ball's conversion can begin, a major hindrance to the research must be discussed. Evidence exists that Hennings altered, as well as destroyed, much of Ball's written work.

77. "Franziskus-Motiv" 101.

Although his last will and testament stipulates that all unpublished material be destroyed, this request was not fulfilled. Huelsenbeck suggested that not only was Hennings selective in what she destroyed, but that it was actually she who altered Ball's will to include this request. And although much unpublished material remains nonetheless, it is a collection selectively chosen by Hennings.⁷⁸ According to Huelsenbeck another large selection of Ball's manuscripts which had been left with a monk⁷⁹ had also been destroyed posthumously by this monk. Huelsenbeck contended that destroyed were those documents which questioned or defied the Roman Catholic church.⁸⁰

Philip Mann suggests that Hennings also felt herself compelled to rewrite the stories of her and Ball's religious paths in *Ruf und Echo. Mein Leben mit Hugo*

78. The majority of Ball's literary remains is housed in the "Nachlaß Hugo Ball at the Depositum Robert Walser Archiv" in Zurich. According to the director of the archive, Bernhard Echte, there are most likely more literary remains in the possession of the family. (The Hugo Ball Archiv, Stadtbücherei Pirmasens, also contains substantial material on Ball, including Ball's published works, much unpublished material and photocopies of much of the material in Zurich, as well as a library collection that endeavors to encompass everything written about Ball.)

79. These manuscripts were most likely left with Pater Beda Ludwig.

80. Reinhard Döhl, *Das literarische Werk Hans Arps, 1903-1930. Zur poetischen Vorstellungswelt des Dadaismus* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1967) 6.

Ball⁸¹ after she realized that her first book, *Hugo Balls Weg zu Gott. Ein Buch der Erinnerung* of 1931,⁸² contained material which could have been seen as anti-Catholic, especially that from the Expressionist and Dada days.⁸³

It is clear that Hennings exercised extreme influence on Ball, and it would not be too uncharacteristic of human nature to imagine that Ball might have converted as an act of love.⁸⁴

Richard Sheppard offers another practical and simple explanation, indicating that the very difficult, impoverished life of Ball and Hennings may very well have played some role in their Catholic conversion, as well as the "Wunsch festen Boden unter den Füßen zu gewinnen."⁸⁵ Ball and Hennings had landed in their ascetic lifestyle through a combination of design and bad luck after

81. Hennings, *Ruf und Echo. Mein Leben mit Hugo Ball* (Einsiedeln, Zurich, Cologne: Benziger, 1953).

82. (Munich: Käsel und Pustet, 1931).

83. *An Intellectual Biography* 3.

84. Ball and Hennings married on 21 February 1920, five months before Ball's conversion, and after nearly six years of living together. On the day of Ball's funeral, Huelsenbeck described the strong influence Hennings had had on Ball. "Der Mann, der sie zur Madonna gemacht, sich ihre Weltanschauung angeeignet, den sie so tief beeinflusst hatte, daß er ihr Leben lebte wie sein eigenes, war soeben in nasser Erde versenkt worden. Das Märchen war zu Ende." (mit witz, licht und grütze. auf den spuren des dadaismus [Wiesbaden: Limes, 1957] 86.)

85. Sheppard, "Käthe Brodnitz" 65.

departing from Zurich. Their choice to be independent scholars and their devotion to their ideas, regardless of any commercial or publisher's interest, frequently left them without any income at all. They chose to devote themselves completely to their work, needing little else besides a bare shelter with some coal, blankets, paper, a typewriter, and the minimum of food. Unfortunately even these minimal needs were often not met as many of their letters from those years attest.⁸⁶

The structure of the church may have been the only firm support available at that time. Rademacher speaks of how this "Neuordnung" helped Ball in locating a concrete direction for his energies that could be regarded as "eine Art von therapeutischem Prozeß."⁸⁷ In "Die religiöse Konversion" Ball wrote, "Die Kirche allein bietet Widerstand . . . bezwingt den erstickenden Relativismus. Ihr Herz ist unberührt geblieben vom Fieber der Verirrung, ihr Dogmengebäude unerschüttert . . ." (337).⁸⁸

86. For example, already in early October of 1916 Emmy had been so ill that she had spent several days in a state of constant sleep. At this time Annemarie had also stopped going to school because she had no whole-soled shoes. On the 20th of that month, Ball telegraphed Brodnitz: "Emmy krank koennen sie helfen." Cited in "Käthe Brodnitz" 65.

87. Rademacher, "Ansätze" 328.

88. Gerd Stein, as well, believes that Ball's life had been too difficult without "the security of church dogma" in *Die Inflation der Sprache. Dadaistische Rebellion und mystische Versenkung bei Hugo Ball* (Frankfurt/M: Athenäum, 1975) 6. Rademacher sees the conversion as appealing "für

The theory of seeking security in structure warrants credibility, but this is the point at which Ball's comfort level ends. His return to Catholicism does not represent an embrace of its dogma, nor an embrace of traditional Catholicism. Kantzenbach and Mann examine these differences in detail as discussed below.⁸⁹

Whatever led him to the conversion, Mann points out that the process was neither a "harmonious reunion" nor "the conclusive resolution of his struggle with the problems of the age."⁹⁰ Ball remained active and critical in his philosophical and literary work dealing with social issues. His desire to experience socially relevant Catholicism is witnessed with his *Flucht* entry of 9 August 1920, the first written account of his desire to return to the Catholic faith:

Es gibt nur eine Macht, die der auflösenden Tradition gewachsen ist: den Katholizismus. Nicht aber der Katholizismus der Vorkriegszeit und der Kriegsjahre, sondern ein neuer, vertiefter, ein integraler Katholizismus, der sich nicht

...Continued...

eine neue, vereinfachte Lebensform," and representative of Ball's reach back to the simplicity of his childhood ("Ansätze" 329).

89. For further discussion see Kantzenbach, "Postdadaism and its Relation to Dada," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1988) especially 85-86, and also Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* especially 136-141.

90. *An Intellectual Biography* 137.

einschüchtern läßt, der die Interessen verachtet;
 der den Satan kennt und die Rechte verteidigt,
 kostet es was es wolle. . . .

Much of the foundation of traditional Catholicism was simply incompatible with his other beliefs. This conflict is well documented in his book *Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz*, written over the course of 1919. Although Ball converted in 1920, the conflict was particularly acute between 1917 and 1920 as he came to realize that changing his ideas was neither spontaneous nor possible. As he stated in *Kritik*: "Faith in the power of divine redemption was politically absurd in the face of the obscenity and carnage of the War" (32). As Mann outlines, Ball embraced only those biblical ideas that were politically relevant and compatible with his other political convictions.⁹¹

His religious views remained strongly colored by his early beliefs. Mann remarks that, "Ball's spontaneist conception of mysticism was hardly orthodox and, as a result, Ball's path from a vitalist mysticism to the spiritual inwardness of Catholicism was by no means a simple process."⁹² Ball's ideas on religion had revealed deep conflicts from early on. And his idea of a God actually shows a progression towards a *less* personal, *less* Catholic one. Ball's *Tenderenda* (written between the fall

91. *An Intellectual Biography* 140, referring to *Kritik* 31.

92. *An Intellectual Biography* 138.

of 1914 and July 1920) expresses a dual position towards God when it presents Nietzsche's proclamation that God is dead as "liberating," and as a "release from the restraints of authority and the ultimate father-figure" on the one hand, and on the other hand as "inhibiting" and leaving "an awful vacuum." Mann traces a careful path of Ball's early hesitancy in giving up the notion of a benevolent god around 1917 to a gradual move towards clear abandonment of the traditional Catholic God figure by the time of *Kritik* in 1919, one year from the conversion.⁹³ And where a 1917 *Flucht* entry still reveals Ball's trepidation at the proclamation of God's death (21 May), the 1919 *Kritik* publication appears to embrace the notion of the death of God: "Das Dogma ist tot; tot der pedantische Gott, der überm Sinai Dogmen erdacht hat. Mensch sein heisst tanzen und jubeln können: alle Geisteskräfte zugleich entströmen dem Körper" (76).

Ball critically outlined numerous problems within the Church, the majority of which he saw as defined by blind acceptance of dogma and, hence, lack of spiritual meaning. The following statement evidences a dislike of the overly

93. In *Tenderenda* "God [still] dances against, rather than in chaos" (70). But later Ball adds Koko the green god as "a capricious, impersonal God," who falls into the same category as those "magical figures of Dada poetry who maintain a dynamic balance within a universe of fluctuating opposites" (*An Intellectual Biography* 138).

rational understanding of spirit: "Es gibt keine Hölle oder Verdammnis und sündigen kann nur, wer den heiligen Geist, das heisst Vernunft hat" (*Kritik* 41-42). And in the following example Ball expressed impatience with the ritual of "Verschlucken von Hostien," which he saw as having become void of spiritual significance (*Kritik* 23).⁹⁴

In 1919 Ball was still blind to the theological unorthodoxy of his *Kritik*. As its many hostile reviews led him into further religious scholarship, he eventually did begin to discover the book's offenses. Deeply hurt by the misunderstandings, and with the earnest desire to show that he had intended no offenses, he began his work on the next publication, *Byzantisches Christentum*, in December of 1920.⁹⁵ However, this book demonstrated no adherence to traditional dogma either. As Mann concludes, "Nevertheless, while it was clearly Ball's intention to purge this heresy from his thought, one can see that post-1920 religious views, including those contained in

94. Discussed in Roland Kupper, "Die Rolle des Ideenguts des Novalis (Friedrich von Hardenberg) in Hugo Balls 'Zur Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz'" (*Facharbeiten, Leibniz*, 1983) 15. Hugo Ball Archive, Stadtbücherei Pirmasens.

112. The new book was ready for publication in 1923. The following letter shows Ball's despair over the constant misunderstandings he discovered in critical reviews: "Dieses Buch wird die Quelle zeigen, das nationale Motiv, woraus meine Ansichten kommen. Was aber hilft alles Bemühen?" (Letter to Hesse 15 March 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 246.) Mann suggests that this same desire to atone for the offences of *Kritik* led his to the conversion (*An Intellectual Biography* 140).

Byzantisches Christentum, were anything but simple and orthodox."⁹⁶ Werner Hülsbusch discusses Ball's newer interest in Dionysus the Areopagite and his concern for the theology of the Hierarchy, noting that Ball welcomed therein "eine geistige Weltordnung," but that he did not discover any driving move toward church order.⁹⁷

Ball's three theological books: *Kritik der deutschen Intelligenz* and *Byzantisches Christentum* which offended Catholics, and his *Die Folgen der Reformation* which offended Catholics as well as German nationalists, attest to the fact that Ball simply was too unorthodox to ever appeal or convert to an established group.

What Ball did see reconfirmed through Catholicism was his belief in supra-rationality, i.e. that one could attain an understanding of the universe through spiritual forces unseen. And these were the ideas that he had carried with him since his Dada years. Philipp Eckhard discusses how Ball's earlier Dada language theory was a fundamental base for his later religious ideas. Eckhard sees how "Ball ausdrücklich sowohl vom BILD- wie vom Wortprinzip des

96. *An Intellectual Biography* 141.

97. "Zu Hugo Ball, *Byzantisches Christentum*. Einführung in eine prophetische Therapeutik," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1992) 79.

Dadaismus her seinen neuen Katholizismus unterbaut."⁹⁸

Sheppard also points out how Ball's poetry "implicitly points forward to the flight out of time and the sterile, Gnostic utopianism of the work of his final years."⁹⁹

Ball himself summarized the continuity of his life's path in a letter from March 1926. Herein are described the two parts of his newly-planned publication *Flucht aus der Zeit*:

Das neue Buch ist fertig. Es stellt den in sich abgeschlossenen I. Band eines Tagebuches dar, dem ich den Titel "Konversionen" geben könnte. Die vorliegenden XII Abschnitte (15 Bogen) umfassen die Zeit von 1913/14-17 (Auseinandersetzungen mit Theater, Kunst, Politik, Philosophie). Ein sehr polyphones Buch, das vielerlei Interessen begegnen wird; abschließend vor Beginn der republikanischen Aktion in Bern. . . . [E]in Ausbruch von Kunst und "Romantik", den materiellen Bindungen gegenüber. Ein Eintreten für die verdrängte "Übernatur" und Aesthetik gegen die Naturdoktrinen. . . . Der zweite Band . . . wird die Studien zum "Byzantischen Christentum" und die eigentliche Konversion enthalten. (An Stelle von Kunst und Romantik tritt jetzt die Kirche).[punctuation of

98. *Dadaismus. Einführung in den literarischen Dadaismus und die Wortkunst des 'Sturm'-Kreises* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1980) 86.

99. Richard Sheppard, "Kandinsky's Early Aesthetic Theory: Some Examples of its Influence and Some Implications for the Theory and Practice of Abstract Poetry," *Journal of European Studies* 5 (1975) 36-37.

original]¹⁰⁰

Ball himself had summarized the completion of his uninterrupted voyage.

Ball and Novalis - A Future Utopia - Spirit on Earth

While many scholars view Ball's conversion as a regression as well as a desire to return to a world of the past, Kupper emphasizes Ball's presentation of a model for a future utopia, evidencing once again strong influence by Novalis.¹⁰¹ Particularly strong parallels exist between Novalis' work *Hymnen an die Nacht. Die Christenheit oder Europa* and Ball's *Kritik* as well as his *Philosophie des produktiven Lebens*.¹⁰² This study of Ball's intricate relationship to Novalis' work sheds a great deal of light on Ball's general mystical stance, which so distinguished him from his contemporaries and other sound poetry experimenters.

Ball shared Novalis' belief that spiritual union during one's lifetime on earth was possible if only one learned how and where to uncover it. And the traditional

100. Ball to Feuchtwanger, 14 March 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 244.

101. 178.

102. Ball cited Novalis' work on 2 August 1917, describing it as "lehrreich." Kupper presents a valuable discussion of a strongly influential source on Ball.

Catholic approach of waiting for spiritual reunion and absolution upon death was scorned.¹⁰³

While Ball felt that the spiritual existed within oneself, and Novalis saw it within nature, both found a *unio mystica* possible and set it as their ultimate goal. In seeking a synthesis of inner, spiritual experience and outer, material awareness, they both were aware of the need for a medium for its expression. It was the medium of poetic language in which both saw the greatest possibilities.¹⁰⁴

And much like Ball's great influence, Kandinsky, Novalis too believed that this language would provide the tools to assist the average person in recognizing the spiritual qualities that lay within the material. For Novalis the material was not dismissed, as it served as a hieroglyph for something higher and manifested the divine.¹⁰⁵ Ball's and Novalis' new language would open a pathway on which all people could decipher these material symbols (i.e. this disguised form of the spiritual), and thereby attain greater spiritual awareness.

Just as Novalis looked back through history in *Die*

103. Kupper's discussion of the similarities between Ball and Novalis outlines further deviations in these writers' religious beliefs from church dogma (see especially 11-15).

104. Kupper 5.

105. Kupper 11.

Christenheit, Ball in *Kritik* looked back at Germany before the Reformation. In *Kritik* Ball refers to the pre-Reformation as "Urchristentum" (*Kritik* 113).¹⁰⁶ His conversion to Catholicism symbolized his disdain of the Reformation's damage. His "neuer, vertiefter, integraler Katholizismus" was an attempt to reshape the spiritual face of Europe, which he had seen destroyed by the Reformation's "Text-Fetischismus" (*Kritik* 42). Here Ball was referring to Luther's dismissal of ideas such as the papacy due to their lack of mention in the Bible, and his converse allowance for ideas such as the Kaiser, authority and war simply because they were biblical references.¹⁰⁷ While Ball accepted Luther's critical approach and his teaching of self determination, and also appreciated Luther's call for changes in church dogma, Ball felt that Luther's attempts had been presented to the public prematurely. These rash attempts at change consequently led to a political manipulation of religion, and ironically to stronger dogma within the church (as he saw exemplified within the Jesuit movement).¹⁰⁸

106. Discussed in Kupper 8.

107. This criticism of what Ball saw as Protestantism's "philology," i.e. its obsessive concern for semantics, should also be viewed in light of his sound poetry and desire for a freer language. It mirrors Ball's disdain for an insistence on the text, which he saw as imprisonment in the material.

108. Kupper 20.

Novalis, too, afforded the Reformation some value in its emphasis of the right to question, examine and choose. However, in objecting to the reformation's literal interpretation of the Bible, Novalis expressed Ball's major objection to the Reformation. Novalis wrote of the literal application as having ruined the "rohe, abstrakte Entwurf der Religion" and consequently resulting in a heightening of religion's rigidity.¹⁰⁹ He also criticized the bringing of God into a human realm, and the ensuing eradication of human striving toward the transcendent (*Die Christenheit* 34-35).¹¹⁰ This is representative of Ball's focal argument in *Kritik*. Ball regarded the Reformation as an attempt to force all understanding into the realm of rationalism, "das ganze Wissen aus dem Bewußtsein'," and accepting, striving for and believing in nothing unseen (*Kritik* 64-65).

Kupper feels Ball and Novalis each presented a period of history in which they found their ideals more closely achieved, and in this manner could provide their visions some concreteness and plausibility, hopefully distancing them from the realm of pure fantasy.¹¹¹ This is an important point as it brings to light that Ball's and Novalis' utopian constructs were not castles in the sky, but were both sculpted as plausible possibilities within

109. Kupper 17.

110. Discussed in Kupper 18.

111. Kupper 9.

the context of their contemporary society. They hence, represent attempts at constructive ideas for the improvement of a concrete world (*Kritik* 120).

Ball and Novalis sought, as Novalis said, "eine Zeit des ewigen Friedens" attainable on earth (*Die Christenheit* 42). Ball's goal for a "neues Europa" included:

eine neue Hierarchie, . . . von Geistern, fähig und stark genug; . . . eine Rangleiter der Leistungen und Vermögen, sowohl zwischen den Völkern wie zwischen den Individuen; eine unsichtbar abgestufte geistige und moralische Gesellschaft. [. . .] Einen Staat wird es nicht mehr geben. . . . Da jeder den Wert der Gemeinschaft einsieht. . . ." (*Kritik* 111)

Ball's vision took concrete direction under the influence of Thomas Münzer, Gustav Landauer and Michael Bakunin and their anarchistic beliefs in the natural goodness of humankind, its eagerness to sacrifice, and the possibility of a peaceful revolution of society.

Rey notes how intrinsically Ball's later scholarship in religion as well as anarchism was tied with his earlier studies:

Aber selbst auf dem Höhepunkt der Dadaistischen Revolte glaubt er an die Möglichkeit eines neuen Aufbaus, die sich gerade aus der Anarchie ergeben werde.

Damit wiederholt er einen Gedanken, den Novalis in *Die Christenheit oder Europa* formuliert hat. Sein Anarchismus erweist sich als die Kehrseite

einer tieferen Frömmigkeit.¹¹²

Ball and Utopian Anarchism

Ball's connection to anarchism remained one of an intrigued outsider, who applied theories of utopian anarchism to his own personal vision of a coming new age. He did research on several prominent utopianists, published on their theories and even became personally acquainted with them; but he never actually "became an anarchist:" i.e. did not add anything to the larger political theoretical discourse. While many of the theories were agreeable to him, he remained skeptical in his *Flucht* entries between 1914 and 1919, having the most trouble reconciling Bakunin's atheism. Instead, Ball chose to combine the general chiliastic beliefs in the goodness of humanity¹¹³ and the possibility of a renewed and bettered society with his own spiritual requisites for the coming age. In his January 1915 article "Der große Bauernkrieg 1525"¹¹⁴ he favorably presented chialistic theory, especially the notion that humans, because they are individually bestowed with the essence of the Holy Spirit,

112. Rey 117.

113. In *Flucht* he states, "Als Lehre von der Einheit und Solidarität der gesamten Menschheit ist der Anarchismus ein Glaube an die allgemeine natürliche Gotteskindschaft" (16 June 1915).

114. *Zeit im Bild* 13.5 (31 January 1915): 105-09.

will tend to act in an intuitively honest and caring manner. Once again the dependency on spiritual connectedness for a bettering of society makes its mark on Ball's philosophy.

While the majority of his political writings demonstrates the intense belief that an artist or writer, i.e. an outside leader, could help bring people to this coming age, Ball tended to see the salvation in a bit more of a personal, individual light. As the spiritually intune and awakened masses became able to communicate on more valid, inner spiritual levels, and consequently communicate more effectively in general, their society would achieve a more balanced, peaceful and equitable state; but for Ball the first step toward this social achievement would still need to be made individually.

He appeared to have applied many of Bakunin's social theories to more individual, personal levels. The intensity of this general slant allowed Ball to [re]interpret Bakunin, drawing conclusions compatible with his own theory. The following discussion of Bakunin in *Flucht* demonstrates how this enabled him to come to the conclusion that the "Theorie einer bedingungslosen Zerstörung der Staatsmetaphysik zu einer Frage des persönlichen Anstandes und eines sensiblen Empfindens für Echtheit und Pose werden [kann]" (16 June 1915). Manfred Steinbrenner notes that, "Anarchismus [bedeutet] für Ball eine eschatologische Denkweise, wobei sich der diesseitig

religiös-moarliche [sic] Standpunkt mit einer
individuellen Vorstellung von Anarchie deckt. . . ."115

Ball's interest in utopian anarchism was already detectable as early as 1910 when, in the midst of bohemian circles, a certain "Rousseauistic world-view" was prevalent, in which proponents were "critical of modern civilization and champion[ed] a view of 'natural man', who is inherently good, genially creative and artistic."¹¹⁶ General ideas of war against the status quo played themselves out more in literature than real life for the early Ball, and contributed to his initiative in starting the journal *Revolution* with Leybold. Although it proclaimed the:

Kampf gegen Seiendes, für Keimendes. Gegen
Kunstportiere, Kulturportiere, Atenariusse,
Scharrelmänner, Obskuranten, Schwärzlinge,
Hertlinge, Hohlwege, Panteutschisten, Stagnaten,
Kastraten. Gegen literaturbehaftete Oberlehrer,
kunstsinnige Kritiker, allgemeine Rundschauer. In
summa: Gegen Zuständliches,¹¹⁷

Ball emphasized that the revolution was "mehr stilistisch

115. *"Flucht aus der Zeit?" Anarchismus und christliche Mystik Hugo Balls 'Konversionen'* (Frankfurt, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1985) 85.

116. Helmut Kreuzer, *Die Boheme. Beiträge zu ihrer Beschreibung* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1968) 45. Discussed in Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* 50-51.

117. Ball, "Totenrede," *Die Weißen Blätter* 2 (1915) 525.

gemeint als politisch" (*Flucht* 9). His desires for change gradually took more concrete shape by November 1914, however, as he began to apply them to society at large and intensified his studies of Bakunin and Kropotkin (*Flucht*). From this point on through 1919 Ball demonstrated a keen interest in Kropotkin's "System der gegenseitigen Hilfe" as a cure for society's ills, and spoke extensively of these and the sixteenth-century chiliast Münzer's utopian writings.¹¹⁸ Ball remained somewhat skeptical, but continued to strengthen his ties with anarchist theorists such as Landauer (whom he met in December 1914) and in June 1915 with Kropotkin's friend, Fritz Brupbacher, who advised him on his newly begun book on Bakunin.¹¹⁹

In June 1915 he also began working as a general editor on the anarcho-syndicalist newspaper "Der Revoluzzer" with Brupbacher. At this point Ball felt he had found his true calling which led to the publication of his article "Die junge Literatur in Deutschland," in which he demanded that literature be more politically committed to serving the

118. In April 1915 Ball invited Brodnitz to coauthor a biography of Münzer, which never materialized.

119. Ball wrote his study *Michael Bakunin. Ein Brevier* with a contract for publication from Reiss Verlag, who later, out of financial difficulties, recinded the contract. (Ts. photocopy, Hugo Ball Archiv, Stadtbücherei, Pirmasens. Original in Nachlaß Hugo Ball, Depositum Robert Walser Archiv, Zurich. Also see: Steinbrenner, "Theoretischer Anarchismus und 'Imitatio Christi'. Zur Bedeutung der Einflußnahme Michael Bakunins auf das Werk Hugo Balls," *Hugo-Ball-Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1983) 57-89.

public.¹²⁰ One month later he published an article in *Die Weißen Blätter*,¹²¹ discussing Brupbacher's idea "of harmonious cooperation between intelligentsia and proletariat."¹²² The plan to educate the proletariat has distinct parallels with Ball's understanding of Kandinsky, and also became fundamental to his founding of the Cabaret.

The Cabaret involvement seems accountable for the one and half year lapse of recorded discussion of anarchism. However, Ball must still have maintained lively contact with its ideas while he and Hennings spent August 1916 through January 1917 living in Ascona, a gathering center for the European counterculture in the early twentieth century, including the anarchists Landauer, Erich Mühsam, Raphael Friedeberg and Martin Buber during the first decade, as well as Bakunin ten years earlier.¹²³ Ball was also continuing work on his *Bakunin Brevier* during these years.

Documented discussion resumes beginning September 1917 and lasting through March 1920 as Ball began work with "Die

120. *Der Revoluzzer* 1.10 (14 August 1915) 3-4. In this article he also proclaimed Russia as the new center for European ideas, finding the Russians direct involvement with the public through manifestos and other propaganda particularly appealing.

121. "Zürich," 2.7 (September 1915) 937-39.

122. Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* 59.

123. Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth. The Counterculture Begins. Ascona, 1900-1920* (Hanover and London: UP of New England, 1986) 125-26.

Freie Zeitung," publishing several articles pertaining to utopian anarchy, the first of which praises and lays out Münzer's utopian philosophy.¹²⁴

In October 1917 he met Ernst Bloch, who was preparing the book *Geist der Utopie*.¹²⁵ Their friendship turned mutually beneficial to their studies as Bloch introduced Ball to studies on the utopianists Morus and Campanella, and Ball introduced him to the study of Bakunin and Münzer. Bloch appeared influenced not only by Ball's suggestions, publishing a study of Thomas Münzer four years later,¹²⁶ but also by Ball the philosopher as he announced his plans to write a book on Ball near the end of 1917.¹²⁷

In 1919 Ball wrote his essay on Landauer, "Die Schuld am Diktatfrieden"¹²⁸ in which he praises "unabhaengige Sozialdemokratie" as well as Landauer, who he felt presented "ein an Geist und Reife gleich bewundernswertes soziales und foederatives System."¹²⁹

124. "Aufgabe für einen deutschen Philologen (Zur Reformationsfeier)" 1.48 (26 September 1917) 200.

125. (Munich and Leipzig: Duncker und Humblot, 1918).

126. *Thomas Münzer als Theologe der Revolution* (Munich: Wolff, 1921).

127. Letter, Ball to Hennings, end of November 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 97. The book was never completed.

128. *Die Freie Zeitung* 3.33 (26 April 1919): 129.

129. *Katalog* 32.

Ball's belief in peaceful and positive change contrasts sharply with the image so often attempted with the intentionally misleading application of the term "anarchist" to connote violence and nihilism. Hubert van den Berg notes the appeal of the defamatory connotation of this "Schimpfwort" to many literary critics and historians.¹³⁰ It is clear that Ball's associations with anarchism were anything but fitting to such an interpretation, and more so tied in with his basic spiritual theory.

Ball and German Philosophic Tradition

In addition to his socio-political and hagiographic studies, Ball also engaged in extensive scholarship of the German philosophers, Kant and Nietzsche in particular. Ball's readings in these philosophers were focal to much of his thought and remained constant points of debate for him throughout his career.

Kant and Moral Law

Ball's utopian theories caused him extensive contemplation of Kant's categorial imperative. *Flucht*

 130. "Hugo Ball und der Anarchismus," ed. Ernst Teubner *Hugo Ball Almanach*, 1989 (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1989) 102. Peter Lösche also discusses the derogatory nature in which this term is often applied in *Anarchismus* (Darmstadt, 1977) 2.

contains numerous entries in which Ball criticizes Kant's ideal as superfluous dilettantism since, in Ball's view, utopianism presupposed moral and social responsibility as a given.

Ball's own devotion to serving society remained intact despite the intense ascetic lifestyle he assumed in his later years, and despite the emphasis on individuality that works like *Byzantisches Christentum* espouse in their ascetic ideal.

Kant and Language

In Kant's discussion of the categorical imperative, Ball found further expression for his own linguistic theories. As Kant explained in *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, some sort of language was needed to mediate universal and a priori experiences to the phenomenal realm where they could be contemplated by humans: "Ohne den Boden der Sprache erreicht sie [ästhetische Erfahrung] die Erfahrung als menschliche Erfahrung nicht."¹³¹ Ball applied this explanation in his discussion of the need for a renewed language to bridge the universal, spiritual with the individual contemplation thereof, and to bridge the

131. *Kant's Werke. Akademische Textausgabe*, vol. V (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968) 298. Discussed in Dietmar Kammler, "Das sprachliche Bestimmen der Welt. Ein Betrag zur Theorie der Lautdichtung Hugo Balls in der Auseinandersetzung mit Kant, Herder, Humboldt und Hamann," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1985/86) 223-24.

individual's reception of this spiritual with another individual.

Ball, too, appreciated an ideal language's powers of such mediation. In *Flucht* he wrote: "mittels der Sprache . . . ist die Schöpfung zu verstehen" (*Flucht* 272). Yet in considering Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* Ball chose to rectify Kant's distinction between a *priori* knowledge and empirical experience. He objected to Kant's strong differentiation between the rational, objective, visible world and the irrational or the *Mysterium*. Ball could not accept Kant's distinction, which banished "Gott zur Idee" and removed the "'Ding an sich' . . . von der sichtbaren Welt" (*Kritik* 85).¹³² The victory Ball anticipated is aptly expressed in his following statement: "Wo das 'Ding an sich' mit der Sprache zusammentrifft, hat der Kantianismus aufgehört" (*Flucht* 67).

Even if Kant allowed for the understanding of the a *priori* through transcendental logic, Ball found this type of logic inadequate because it forced a subordinate position upon the a *priori* or spiritual. He objected to the a *priori* being transferred into the realm of rational and material understanding, and thereby having its entire essence destroyed. In his opinion the spiritual could only be communicated through poetic language.

132. Discussed in Kammler, "Das sprachliche Bestimmen der Welt" 226.

Favorable to Ball was Kant's desire for a truly symbolic language, void of connotations and unintended insights by the speaker. But they parted where Kant rejected poetic language because of its attempts at equating itself with the thing it described. Kant felt that it thereby disregarded the unique quality of the *Ding an sich*. Ball actually disapproved of this type of poetic language as well, and hoped, rather, for a specific type of poetic language that could truly mediate the spiritual without any attempts at creation or replication. He expressed the same objection as Kant in feeling that attempts at precise portrayal of an experience had defeated themselves and resulted in a world that had become "entgöttert, entzaubert, entidealisiert."¹³³ In *Flucht* Ball wrote: "[Es] gibt Worte, die zugleich Bilder sind. Gott, . . . [d]as Wort ist Fleisch, ist Bild geworden: und doch ist es Gott geblieben" (*Flucht* 7 May 1917).¹³⁴

Nietzsche and Language

133. Bruno Liebrucks, *Sprache und Bewußtsein*, vol. 4 (Frankfurt a.M.: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1964-78) 489. See also Kammler 231.

134. Mann sees this linguistic interest as directly bringing Ball to his Catholicism: "While the Dadaists continued in their attempts to mirror the workings of a universe whose chaos occasionally revealed moments of meaning, Ball clutched at the idea of incorrupt language and symbols which would give him permanent security and peace. The theological Realism inherent in his critique of language became more pronounced, and eventually became a fundamental part of his Gnostic Catholicism. . . . It was in Christ, as the Word incarnate, that Ball found this fusion of sign and object" (*An Intellectual Biography* 98).

Nietzsche's linguistic theory is summed up succinctly in *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinn* published in 1903.¹³⁵ In this essay Nietzsche questioned whether language was an adequate means of expression for all of reality. He saw language as having become bankrupt and useful only to those in power and to their corrupt construct of reality, and hence, society (877). Language had lost its ability to express a speaker's inner, irrational sensations. Such pure experience Nietzsche called "Urerlebnis." And he felt keenly aware of the lack of a language that could express this level of experience (879).

Much like Ball, Nietzsche perceived a process of distortion between an individual's experience, the desire to communicate this experience and the final linguistic message with which one attempted to make this communication. Like Ball, Nietzsche perceived objective stimuli getting transferred into *subjective* responses, which in turn became more and more distorted as they were translated into words. Nietzsche's desire for the speaker to more purely present this *Urerlebnis* resonates in Ball's sound poetry as an attempt to avoid presentation of the poet's own interpretation or subjective experience of an

135. "Basler nachgelassene Schriften," *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 1, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: dtv; New York: DeGruyter, 1967-77) 875-90.

external sensation. Rather than allow this, Ball aimed to present the sensation of the external event in a way in which each member of the audience could experience it for him or herself.¹³⁶

He saw his mission as one of finding a language that would serve this need, and again he looked at Nietzsche's idea of "Urformen" of language; i.e. primal, unadulterated "words" (*Über Wahrheit* 879). Nietzsche's desire to find an adequate expression for this "Urerlebnis" parallels Ball's mission in the sound-poem experiments.

Ball's ideas on the role of the artist and the theater, as well, parallel those of Nietzsche's expressed in *Die Geburt der Tragödie* and *Wagner in Bayreuth*.¹³⁷ While working in Munich on the Künstlertheater in 1914, Ball had been preoccupied with such fundamental thoughts. A concept he saw common to all of Nietzsche's work was that of the philosopher-artist as a cultural reformer.¹³⁸ Nietzsche's discussion of aesthetic reformation in *Wagner in Bayreuth* parallels Ball's articles about the role of the

136. Also discussed in Dietmar Kammler, "Nietzsche in Zürich. Ein Versuch zur künstlerisch-philosophischen Begründung des dadaistischen Lautgedichts bei Hugo Ball," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1981) 94-95.

137. *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. I 9-156.

138. Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* 16.

theater and art in developing a new society.¹³⁹

Nietzsche also discussed the advantages of the artist's medium for achieving the desired form of unmediated communication. Ball, too, felt that on the stage one could bring to the surface the "wahrhaft bewegenden Leidenschaften" and the "Unterbewußte." There, a language could exist that symbolically helped bring such elements to the surface: "Man muß nur die Hintergründe, die Farben, Worte und Töne so aus dem Unterbewußten lebendig machen . . ." (*Flucht* 18). And because these would be pure sensations unaffected by human intellect, they would be universal, i.e. uninterpreted, pure *Urformen*. It is not without consequence for the development of sound poetry that Nietzsche saw music as having the very property that could transcend the barriers between speaker and audience, i.e. operate on prelingual levels.¹⁴⁰

The traditional closed framework of the relationships between the artist, the artwork and the audience were to be rewritten, so that the artist served as the invisible, objective medium of a stimulation. This is also expressed

139. Ball's theories on theater are presented in three articles which he wrote for the journal *Phöbus*: "Das Münchener Künstlertheater," 2 (May 1914): 68-74; "Wedekind als Schauspieler," 3 (June 1914): 105-08; and "Das Psychologietheater," 3 (June 1914): 139-40.

140. Ball stated that in *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geist der Musik* Nietzsche presented the "ästhetische Kosmodizee" für die Gegenwart" ("Nietzsche in Basel" 17).

in Nietzsche's *Geburt der Tragödie* (27). Kammler points to Ball's first sound-poem performance as an example of the artist being "als kostümiertes Kunst-Produkt auf die Bühne gestellt, die artifizielles 'Niemandland' ist."¹⁴¹ Since the audience's prior experiences had no defined, fixed point of references, the

Künstler wie Rezipient verlassen die Ebene der statischen Bilder- und Begriffswelt, um, der Intention entsprechend, in den Strom des Er-lebens einzutauchen, was dem Dionysischen analog gedacht werden könnte. Sie haben den "Schein", die "Illusion" des Apollinischen hintergangen.¹⁴²

Ball's recount of the performance expresses an awareness of such a transcendence. He described almost falling into unconsciousness while on stage, feeling transformed, and carrying out actions beyond his control. He was not a self-willed mediator, but a true medium (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). Nietzsche stressed the importance for all involved in the experience of artistic transmission to lose themselves. In *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen II* he spoke of the necessity of leaving all preconceptions behind, stating that the audience/reader "sieht einiges nicht, was das Kind sieht, er hört einiges nicht, was das Kind hört. Dieses Einige ist gerade das Wichtigste" (276).¹⁴³

141. "Nietzsche in Zürich" 86.

142. Kammler, *Nietzsche in Zürich* 88.

143. *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. I 243-334.

Ball's Nietzsche Dissertation

Ball began a dissertation on Nietzsche in 1909. From the text that remains and Ball's comments on the discontinuation of his scholarship, one can assume that he completed the dissertation in the second half of 1910, but decided not to defend because of a loss in faith in academia. The dissertation topic is commonly cited as "Nietzsche in Basel. Eine Streitschrift," since this is the title of the extant text;¹⁴⁴ Philipp, however, proposes that this extant text simply represents a small part, i.e. one chapter, of a longer and more comprehensive dissertation titled "Nietzsche und die Erneuerung Deutschlands."¹⁴⁵ The text that remains is an examination of the friendships between Nietzsche and Richard Wagner as well as Jacob Burckhardt. The dissertation examines Nietzsche's work as a whole in an attempt to show a continuous, underlying theme. In the extant chapter Ball stated his intention to reduce the "ungeheure Vielheit der Probleme" in Nietzsche's philosophy "auf einen Generalnenner" ("Nietzsche in Basel" 2).

144. Sheppard, forward and postscript, reprinted in *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung 1978) 1-64.

145. Philipp 49. Hennings, as well, spoke of Ball having begun the dissertation between 1909 and 1910; and no where does she mention a completion (Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* 15).

Ball's scholarship on Nietzsche passed through many phases.¹⁴⁶ And while he valued Nietzsche's insistence on the questioning of our value system for the evolution of humankind, Ball nonetheless continued to question Nietzsche's ideas, never being an impassioned follower of the time, but always struggling with some feelings of ambiguity. In examining Ball's discussions of Nietzsche carefully a clear critical stance remains evident. Despite the criticism, Ball continuously maintained a desire to embrace Nietzsche's ideas. Mann lists three phases of Ball's stance toward Nietzsche: 1) 1909-15, marked by an interest in "critical" Nietzsche and in his monistic irrationalism and Dionysianism; 2) 1915-17, Ball's move away from the irrational of Nietzsche, concentrating more on the critical side of his thought; and 3) 1917-27, a very selective use of Nietzsche's critical thought.¹⁴⁷ Kammler, however, believes that the reason one no longer finds Nietzsche's name in Ball's later writing is that Ball had completely integrated Nietzschean philosophy into his own thought. Kammler shows how ideas that were still presented in quotations in the dissertation had become "verarbeitet"

146. Ball's interest seems to have initiated during the summer of 1908 while he was enrolled at Heidelberg. The first two lecture courses he took there were: "Schopenhauer und Nietzsche" (given by Dr. Theodor Elsenhans) and "Richard Wagners Werke vom Standpunkte der vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte" (given by Professor Robert Petsch) (Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* 15-16).

147. Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* 15.

into the thought and text of the late (and later-edited) *Flucht* passages.¹⁴⁸

The Dionysian in Nietzsche's Philosophy

The most difficult reconciliation Ball had with Nietzsche's thought was with the idea of the irrational or Dionysian. Ball struggled with this concept throughout his lifetime, as evidenced in his reinterpretation of Kandinsky's call for dissonance as a longing for harmony.¹⁴⁹

Early on he praised Nietzsche as the "handelnden Menschen, der jahrtausende alte Gewohnheiten von sich und Andern abstreift und es besser macht,"¹⁵⁰ and called him a "Kulturreformator."¹⁵¹ Mann points out some misquotes in Ball's dissertation that indicate an early ambivalence. In discussing *Ecce Homo* Ball spoke of the "dionysischen Problem" instead of "dionysischen Phenomen," and in a discussion of *Der Wille zur Macht* Ball wrote "Das Leben selbst, seine ewige Furchtbarkeit" instead of "Fruchtbarkeit."¹⁵² We can also recall that Ball's

148. Kammler, "Nietzsche in Zürich" 60.

149. See this study, Chapter 2, "Kandinsky" 169-70 and 180-82.

150. "Nietzsche in Basel" 41.

151. "Nietzsche in Basel" 40.

152. *An Intellectual Biography* 21.

abandonment of the Cabaret Voltaire was in part due to a fear that too much irrationality had begun to take hold, with not enough positive construction being harmoniously worked on.¹⁵³ Even Ball's sound poetry (composed in the center of this supposed irrational Cabaret) was a representation of his search for the harmonious spirit hidden behind the over-rational sterile state system. The poetry also represented an attempt at finding harmony in a senseless and chaotic world at war. This ambivalent attitude shades Ball's 1916 novel *Flametti* as well.¹⁵⁴

Ball appears to have been aware of the positive potential for an unleashing of the irrational, but remained incapable of accepting it as the solution. This relationship to the irrational reads like a summary of Ball's life, interpreted by some scholars as completely disparate, having begun on a path toward the irrational which culminated in Dada, and then turning sharply on a path toward order and security embodied in the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁵⁵ However, upon a thorough examination, it becomes clear that Ball constantly wavered in the lure

153. Ball in *Flucht*: "Das kleine Kabaret droht aus den Fugen zu gehen" (26 February 1916).

154. Particularly the unpublished forward. See Mann's discussion, *An Intellectual Biography* 62.

155. See "Introduction" pages 1-11 of this study.

of the irrational, now and then yielding in varying degrees, thoughtfully integrating and developing Nietzsche's liberating ideas into his own visions of utopia. But throughout his life Ball neither completely embraced nor abandoned either extreme. A letter to Hennings of 1918 clearly expresses the debate with Nietzsche's thought that his life was to engage in. He praised Nietzsche for having raised an awareness of contemporary problems and aiding in their destruction, but emphasized how different his own solution was to be:

[I]ch lese Nietzsche momentan. Vor zehn Jahren kannte ich ihn halb auswendig und es ist mir ein eigenartiges Vergnügen, ihn jetzt wieder zu lesen. Irrtümer und Vorzüge, an denen er einen Überfluß hat, liegen jetzt klar vor mir. Er hat die falsche Moral vorgearbeitet und ich werde ihn entsprechend verdolmetschen. Er hat die falsche Moral beseitigt, die große Burg gebrochen. Nun können wir stürmen.¹⁵⁶

Ball appreciated how Nietzsche had cleared the way in the destruction of the status quo, but he also saw the need for furthering the development of a solution.

A negative stance towards rationalism was indeed Ball's starting point. He saw in rational thought and society the demise of humankind. This he saw further reflected in a self-serving language of those responsible for the corruption. The social and political conditions

156. *Briefe* 118.

could be changed by empowering the opposite life forces with a mode of expression; i.e. by developing a language which could bring irrational and spiritual experiences to expression. Such a language would enable the spiritual to be brought back into everyday life, enabling deeper levels of communication that could even aid in the development of international peace.

Ball later developed these visions into more concrete political and utopian social themes. These, nonetheless, required the dismantling of the rational thought basis at the heart of the beaurocratic social and political system. In *Flucht* he discussed how the state had become "die Hauptstütze der Vernunft" (15); that "Kunst, Philosophie, Musik, Religion: alle höhere Bestrebungen sind intellektualisiert, vernünftig geworden" (*Flucht* 61); and "Das ganze Diesseits hat man intellektualisiert" (*Flucht* 65).

The Future Society

Nietzsche posed the intuitive person against the intellectual in *Über Wahrheit und Lüge* (887). Ball's desire to liberate language from intellectualization paralleled Nietzsche's wish for Dionysian art in *Wille zur Macht* (533),¹⁵⁷ where he expressed his vision of "art as a

157. *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 13.

means of protest and liberation."¹⁵⁸ He was aware of Nietzsche's statement: "Unsre Religion, Moral und Philosophie sind décadence-Formen des Menschen. Die Gegenbewegung: die Kunst" (533). While citing Nietzsche's discussion of "Kunst als Freiheit von der moralischen Verengung und Winkel-Optik" (554) in his introductory pages of *Flucht*, Ball described the redeeming powers of art. In his "Aphorismen" of 1913 he asserted his belief in art's ability to deliver the world "durch Rausch und Brand."¹⁵⁹ By giving into the rush, i.e. the irrational, intuitive forces one could overcome the rationalisation of thought.

Mann believes Ball extracted from Nietzsche's studies of Greek culture an "aesthetic basis of culture, and . . . the belief that a combination of the ideas of Wagner, Schopenhauer and Ancient Greece might lead to the destruction of over-intellectualized, over-rationalized contemporary society."¹⁶⁰ In his dissertation Ball was most receptive to Nietzsche's call for the destruction of reason and "Wissenschaft" (as represented by Socrates), in favor of the instinct of Dionysius as the basis for a new society.

In the dissertation he furthermore examined the

158. Hermans 392.

159. *Jugend* 13 (17 March 1913): 363.

monistic irrationalism at the base of Nietzsche's future ideal society, claiming, "Das Ideal ist: ein Zeitalter der Kunst, entfaltet aus der Vernichtung alles dessen, was diesem Ideal im Wege steht; die Befreiung der Leidenschaften, des Trieblebens, der Natur, dazu eine entsprechend grossartige Bändigung durch die Kunst" (26).

Ball also elaborated on the need for a new type of control:

Wie wenn Nietzsche . . . jede moralische Weltinterpretation . . . , jeden Gottesbegriff als kosmisches Prinzip, das Gesetze vorschreibt, jede moralische Bändigung abgelehnt, und rücksichtslos einzig die ästhetische Weltauffassung, die es mit der freien Natur und deren Bändigung allein durch die Kunst zu tun hat . . . [aufnimmt]. (86)

Ball continued to value Nietzsche's call for action and social responsibility through his Dada days and into the political and social utopian work of his later years.

Yet Kammler points out that Ball was not an idealist. His commitment to social reform was based on a sober consideration of the social conditions and constant questioning of the disparity between a cultural ideal and the actual practices of society.¹⁶¹ "Ball wird fortan die 'Tat' suchen, und er wird sie in vielfacher Gestalt ausüben: als Regisseur, als Satiriker, als Lyriker, als Zeitkritiker und religiöser 'Konvertit'."¹⁶²

...Continued...

160. *An Intellectual Biography* 16.

161. Kammler, "Das sprachliche Bestimmen" 222-23.

Siegfried Streicher, who had worked with Ball on *Die Freie Zeitung* in Bern in 1917, also saw the continuing Leitmotifs in his work:

Ball kam ganz aus der geistigen Essenz Nietzsches. Und er hat diese Herkunft nie verleugnen können, auch dann nicht, als er den, der *Ecce Homo* schrieb, geistig längst überwunden hatte, zu den Heiligen betete, und den Teufel mit uralten magischen Formeln auszutreiben begann.¹⁶³

This chapter has outlined some of the spiritual philosophy that provided fundamental principles for the time. These were evident throughout Europe, and were particular points of departure for Ball. Chapters 2-4 of this dissertation will shed light on the more contemporary influences on Ball, those most immanent to his production of sound poetry. These were the artists and writers that adapted the desire for immediate communication into the development of radically new forms of expression.

...Continued...

162. Kammler, "Nietzsche in Zürich" 57.

163. Siegfried Streicher, *Begegnungen* (Basel, 1933) 80.

CHAPTER 2. MARINETTI AND BALL

The most evident influence on Ball was the Italian Futurist Filippo Marinetti. Ball received a copy of Marinetti's *Parole in libertà* poetry¹ on 9 July 1915, almost one year before he announced his own "invention" of sound poems on 23 June 1916 (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). During that year Ball made numerous diary entries concerning Marinetti and his new liberation of language. Although Ball spoke of an awareness of Marinetti as early as 29 July 1914,² it was during this year, between the arrival of the

1. This included a manifesto composed 11 May 1913, and first published in *Lacerba* (15 June 1913) which was fully titled *Destruction of Syntax - Imagination without Strings - Words in Freedom* (Umbro Appolonio, ed., *Futurist Manifestos*, trans. Robert Brain, R. W. Flint, J. C. Higgitt and Carol Tisdall [New York: Viking, 1970] 95-106). The *parole in libertà* poetry had actually already been introduced to the public 11 August 1912; however, Marinetti continued to develop the concept and style into the twenties. When Marinetti finally published the *Parole in libertà* manifesto, he considered it an epilogue to the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* (which had already been published in May 1912 in the German Expressionist periodical *Der Sturm*, and was with all probability known by Ball at that time) (R. W. Flint, ed., *Marinetti, Selected Writings*, trans. R. W. Flint and Arthur A. Coppotelli [New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972] 84-93). It is uncertain what poems were included in the packet Ball received, but Ball's discussion of *Parole in libertà* poems suggests that he received several. The *Technical Manifesto's* appendix includes the poem "Battle Weight + Smell" of 1912.

2. In "Die Kulisse", the prologue to *Flucht* 20: "Ganz zuletzt, als schon der Krieg da war, am 29. Juli, traf noch ein Postpaket französischer Lyrik bei mir ein. Es enthielt Gedichte von: Barzun, André Spire, Derème, Marinetti, Florian-Parmentier, Anthologie Lanson, Madin, Veyssié, 3 Bände "Vie des Lettres", 8 Nummern "Soirées de Paris" (Privatanthologie des Übersetzers Hermann Hendric,

parole in libertà on 9 July 1915 and the sound-poem announcement on 23 June 1916, that his enthusiasm for a new, unfettered language steadily increased. The course that was to lead him to his sound poems was thereby clearly established.

In a journal entry five days after receipt of Marinetti's poems, Ball discussed a French history of poetry with which he was occupied at the moment. He quoted directly from the book: "seit Rousseau [suchen] Schriftsteller . . . die Leidenschaften, statt sie zu verbergen" (*Flucht* 14 July 1915). Ball's strong reaction to this reading could have been influenced by his recent contact with Futurist theory and its call for immediate forms of expressions. It appears that he had continued to develop his thoughts on this concept when shortly thereafter he made his own demands with the statement, "Man muß sich die lyrischen Gefühle abgewöhnen" (*Flucht* September 1915). These two references to two specific types of feelings (*Leidenschaften* and *lyrische Gefühle*) provide an important base of comparison for the poetry of Ball and Marinetti. Ball's was a call for the avoidance of conventional, lyrical, sentimental feelings, while still acknowledging the more modern *Leidenschaften*, i.e. passion and coarse Marinetti-ism. However, while he appears to -----
...Continued...

Brüssel)." Marinetti was in Paris from 1893 to 1905, closely associated with Guillaume Apollinaire, and writing in French.

have banished lyricism and show an appreciation for a coarser form of expression, these early considerations of emotional expression foreshadow Ball's wavering toward a more moderate version of vehemence and a predilection for harmony that will define the two distinct parallels on which his and Marinetti's poetry were to develop.

Ball's next entry, quoted in full below, clearly illustrates a concern similar to Marinetti's with the inadequacy of language:

Das Wort ist preisgegeben; es hat unter uns gewohnt.

Das Wort ist zur Ware geworden.

Das Wort sie sollen lassen stahn.

Das Wort hat jede Würde verloren. (*Flucht* 16 July 1915)

The journal entries at this point demonstrate not simply a dissatisfaction with language as it was, but also a growing interest in creating a new language. At the same time as Ball was contemplating the development of this new language, his diary entries over the course of the next few months reveal a concurrent development in the idea of freeing language (as well as the thought process) from conventional rationalism. This is further reflected in a continuously increasing interest in mysticism. The interest in freeing one's thought process and in placing oneself closer to one's inner sensations - to one's pre-articulate perceptions - would seem to require and attain a

freer language as a natural consequence.

Most entries over the next few months concern themselves with freeing one's thoughts from the fetters of intellectualism, as well as freeing one's thinking in general.

In order to effectively evaluate Ball's seduction by the spiritual world, one needs to be aware of the conditions under which he was writing and living at this time. During their first few months in Switzerland, he and Emmy Hennings endured extreme poverty, being forced to sell their few possessions, and literally starve. Ball claimed there to have been a more noble cause for his desperate existence:

Mit aller mir zu Gebote stehenden Leidenschaft bin ich bemüht, mir gewisse Wege und Möglichkeiten (so z.B. Karriere, Erfolg, eine bürgerliche Existenz u. dgl.) völlig und für alle Zeit zu verlegen. Mein gegenwärtiges Leben ist dazu angetan, mich in dieser Absicht kräftig zu unterstützen. Von Zeit zu Zeit, wenn die verdächtige "Harmonie" meiner Natur sich durchringt, wittere ich Unrat und bin instinktiv bemüht, irgendeine Torheit, einen Fehltritt, einen Verstoß zu begehen, um mich vor mir selbst wieder herunterzubringen. Ich darf gewisse Talente und Fähigkeiten nicht aufkommen lassen. Mein höheres Gewissen, meine Einsicht verbieten mir das. (*Flucht* 17 October 1915)

However much he was attempting to explain away his "lifestyle" at that time, his starvation was not, in

honesty, a chosen course.³ At the end of October, after four months of destitution, he attempted to commit suicide at the Zürcher See. Trying to aggrandize and rationalize his condition, he stated, "Ich bemerke, daß ich einer leichten Verrücktheit verfallende, die meiner grenzenlosen Liebe zum Anderssein entspringt" (*Flucht* 20 October 1915).

In October, however, his luck did change as he and Hennings finally acquired some regular means of subsistence, with Ball's employment as a pianist with the Flamingo vaudeville troupe in Basel.

The above examples clearly show how Ball constantly attempted to rationalize a bad situation. He apparently (although at times skeptically and half-heartedly) embraced the notion of regarding himself as an ascetic. This idea may have led to a more fervent rejection of the material in favor of the spiritual, but it may also have just as well actually enabled him to attain a more mystical awareness. And Ball was not ignorant of the practice of fasting to cleanse and prepare the mind for meditation as the following comment suggests: "Man müßte, um etwas Ernsthafte denken und machen zu können, methodisch leben wie die Yoghis" (*Flucht* 20 November 1915).

3. He recalled his arrival in Geneva in *Flucht*: "In Genf war ich ärmer als ein Fisch. Ich konnte mich nicht mehr bewegen. Ich saß am See bei einem Angler und beneidete die Fische um den Köder, den er ihnen zuwarf" (31 August 1915).

This discussion of Ball's difficult circumstances and unstable (mental) health is not meant to detract from the poet's competence and seriousness. Nonetheless, these harsh circumstances must have affected his decisions and influenced the course of their development.

Ball was working on his "Phantastenroman" *Tenderenda der Phantast* at this time.⁴ This linguistically rich novel deals externally and somewhat whimsically with the fictional gnostic priest Laurentius Tenderenda in his search for a language, i.e. a voice, a means of expressing his particular and unique mystical experiences. More relevant to Ball's linguistic theory is its presentation of a fantasy world, which actually "grows out of language itself."⁵ On the unpublished typescript Ball wrote "Entstanden 1914-20"; however, he mentioned it for the first time in *Flucht* on 28 July 1915, stating that he had completed two new chapters. "Kleine Abschnitte von je vier bis fünf Seiten, in denen ich auf meine Weise Sprachzucht treibe. . ." (*Flucht* 28 July 1915). Since this is Ball's first mention of the novel, we can assume that it had been only recently begun, i.e. perhaps only since his receipt of -----

4. Ball often referred to his novel in this way, as well as by the terms "Die Phantasten" and his "Phantastischer Roman."

5. Siegbert Prawer, "Dada Dances. Hugo Balls *Tenderenda der Phantast*," *The Discontinuous Tradition*, ed. P.F. Ganz (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 209.

the Marinetti parole, and perhaps predated.⁶ *Tenderenda* contains two of Ball's sound poems, "Elefanten-Karawane" and "Katzen und Pfauen," in slightly edited format (see atts. 1 and 2, respectively). These were later added to the novel by Ball, who described them as follows:

Schilderung einer Elefanten-Karawane aus dem weltberüchtigten Zyklus "gadji beri bimba". Der Verfasser zelebrierte diesen Zyklus [added by hand: abstracter Laut[bilder?] als Novitat] zum ersten Male 1916 [sic] im Cabaret Voltaire. Das Bischofskostüm aus Glanzpapier, das er damals trug, mit ragendem blau-weiss gestreiften Schamanenhut wird noch heute von den sanften Bewohnern Haways als Fetisch verehrt. (*Tenderenda*, ts 45)

The following is a description of "Katzen und Pfauen," which was titled "baubo sbugi ninga gloffa" in the novel:

Eine Zauberformel aus dem bereits erwähnten Zyklus "gadji beri bimba" sie [punctuation of original] gilt den zwei mystischen Tieren Tenderendas, dem Pfau und der Katze. [. . .] Es empfiehlt sich, den Spruch nur leichthin zu sagen und nicht allzulange dabei zu verweilen. Es ist auch nur

6. It was not uncommon for Ball to edit references to his early work. His journal was published in 1926 after extensive editing by himself during the last years of his life. In November 1925 he wrote, "Ich hatte seit längerer Zeit die Absicht, diese meine Notizen, von 1913 etwa, ins Reine zu bringen und sie im Wesentlichen, in der geistigen Linie, unter Weglassung alles Privaten und Zufälligen, in 1 Bande zu publizieren" (Letter to Karl Muth, 10 November 1925. Cited in *Briefe* 225). To Hennings he wrote that he was involved in much secondary reading and research in order to edit the diaries (7 April 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 252).

als eine Art von Agraffe gedacht, die die zwei letzten Prosatexte verbindet. (*Tenderenda*, ts 53)

By July Ball had completed the chapter "Das Karussellpferd Johann." He cited a passage from this section: "Wir sind Phantasten. Wir glauben nicht mehr an die Intelligenz" (*Flucht* 28 July 1915). Again, he was referring to the abandonment of rationalism - getting in touch with the inner, the spiritual realm.

By the late fall, Ball was further developing his concrete linguistic concerns: "Jedes Wort ist ein Wunsch oder eine Verwünschung. Man muß sich hüten, Worte zu machen, wenn man einmal die Macht des lebendigen Wortes erkannt hat" (*Flucht* 25 November 1915). An increased interest in the autonomy of the word developed steadily to the point of his sound-poem discovery, beginning with the package from Marinetti.

"Zang-tumb-tuum" (written in 1912, but only published in 1914) is probably Marinetti's most successful example of words in freedom (see atts. 12-14). This story of the Bulgarians' siege of Turkish Adrianople during the Balkan War of 1912 was experienced by Marinetti as a war reporter. It provides a perfect avenue for the words-in-freedom style. Onomatopoeia is taken advantage of at its fullest. One senses a large range of volume and speed (also enabled by various typesets). In addition, it contains neologisms

and a structure that can best be described as stream-of-consciousness. *Parole* present a style much closer to direct articulation, without mimesis, without author-intervention, much like what Ball had sought.

Marinetti completed his *Parole in libertà* on 11 May 1913 and had it first published in *Lacerba* on 15 June 1913. Yet judging from Ball's enthusiastic response upon receipt of the *Parole in libertà* in 1915, he seems to have been unaware of the new poetry as well as the corresponding theory until that date.⁷

In Ball's second mention of Marinetti from New Year's Day of 1915, he referred to "die Marinetti-Übersetzerin," Else Hadwiger (*Flucht* 1 January 1915). One can assume he needed the services of this translator, i.e. was not totally fluent in Italian, but can also assume that through their acquaintance, he had become more familiar with Marinetti's work.

Ball again mentioned Marinetti on 12 May 1915, and it is clear that by that point he had become aware of Marinetti's reputation. Ball was citing a review in the *Vossische Zeitung*: "'Expressionistenabend' im Harmoniumsaal; der erste dieser Art in Berlin. [new paragraph] Es war im Grunde ein Protest gegen Deutschland

7. In the fall of 1913 Ball had seen his first Futurist painting exhibition, which he praised highly in "Die Reise nach Dresden," *Revolution* 1.3 (1913). However, he made no mention of Marinetti in this article either.

zugunsten von Marinetti." He then added - "Nein, es war ein Abschiednehmen" (*Flucht* 12 May 1915). Ball's critical comment regarding his stance towards German literature indicates a greater awareness and more strongly developed interest in Marinetti, already two months prior to his receipt of the *parole* package.

Parole in libertà

In the first line of the *Parole in libertà* manifesto, Marinetti clarified it as a type of epilogue to the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* of 11 May 1912.⁸ His new poetic and linguistic theory is most explicitly described in this manifesto. He lists the following as goals and principles - to: a) destroy syntax and scatter nouns, and form a sort of 'compound noun' [my expression] (e.g. man-torpedo-boat); b) abandon verb tenses and instead rely on infinitives; c) omit adjectives (an adjective "[s]upposes a . . . meditation"); d) omit adverbs ("preserves a tedious unity of tone"); e) omit similes, in favor of the most direct label for a signified object or event: the actual word; f) omit punctuation; g) create a "chain of analogies," an "uninterrupted sequence of new images"; h) "render successive motions"; and i) omit the *I*, include no feelings, avoid subjectivity. He further stressed the importance of using sound (for dynamism),

8. Flint 84.

weight (to suggest the ability of flight), and smell (to suggest something "dispersing" itself) (95-106).

Ball's initial reaction was extremely positive. He was impressed by the dissolution of syntax, the abandonment of the old language and the need for discovery of a new. He showed enthusiasm toward the emphasis on pure sound ("Takt, Rhythmus") and the call for poets to give their all to each word or "sentence."

Marinetti schickt mir Parole in libertà von ihm selbst, Canguillo, Buzzi und Govoni. Es sind die reinen Buchstabenplakate; man kann so ein Gedicht aufrollen wie eine Landkarte. Die Syntax ist aus den Fugen gegangen. Die Lettern sind zersprengt und nur notdürftig wieder gesammelt. Es gibt keine Sprache mehr, verkünden die literarischen Sterndeuter und Oberhirten; sie muß erst wieder gefunden werden. Auflösung bis in den innersten Schöpfungsprozeß.

Es gilt unangreifbare Sätze zu schreiben. Sätze, die jeglicher Ironie standhalten. Je besser der Satz, desto höher der Rang. Im Ausschalten der angreifbaren Syntax oder Assoziation bewährt sich die Summe dessen, was als Geschmack, Takt, Rhythmus und Weise den Stil und den Stolz eines Schriftstellers ausmacht. (*Flucht* 9 July 1915)

With the phrase: "Im Ausschalten der angreifbaren Syntax oder Assoziation" Ball was describing his own theory on unmediated language, which was to shut out all connotations a listener derived upon hearing a word, as well as to repress associations, even those associations

that a poet entered upon when receiving a stimulus. Hence, the poet was to actually present the original stimulus.

Man verzichte darauf, aus zweiter Hand zu dichten: nämlich Worte zu übernehmen (von Sätzen ganz zu schweigen), die man nicht funkelneuen für den eigenen Gebrauch erfunden habe. Man wolle den poetischen Effekt nicht länger durch Maßnahmen erzielen, die schließlich nichts weiter seien als reflektierte Eingebungen oder Arrangements verstoßen angebotener Geist-, nein Bildreichigkeiten. (*Flucht* 24 June 1916)

Marinetti was attempting to approach this type of unmediated representation when he spoke of forming compound nouns (point "a" above). By simply listing a series of attributes - in a nominal (not adjectival) form, the poet could avoid describing the signified and, hence, avoid subjectivity. Marinetti refers directly to the omission of adjectives and adverbs in points "c" and "d."

Point "b," avoiding verb tenses, is an attempt at representing a more universal condition as opposed to locking the stimulus into a moment of time in which the poet experienced it. This again was aimed at helping the listener approach the represented situation in a more platonic state, one to which s/he could attach her/his experience at any moment in time.

Point "e" was intended to affect more direct, non-mimetic recording of stimuli.

In omitting punctuation ("f") the poet was allowed freedom from grammatical restrictions. This is the point

at which the Futurists developed freer orthography and typography as well. The omission of punctuation also served as a technical aid in giving the impression of stream-of-consciousness writing or an untemplated documentation of stimuli. Punctuation, orthography and typography all play a minimal role in Ball's sound poems since they are intended for oral performance. Although no recordings of Ball performing the sound poems are available, the varied spacing between words and lines suggests pauses in place of traditional punctuation. It also implies a slower delivery. This practice is compatible with Ball's presentation of untensed verbal movement in the poetry (i.e. verbs not conjugated through conventional grammatical means). It affects a spatial, rather than linear or temporal movement.⁹

Marinetti's item "g" which calls for the creation of a "chain of analogies" or an "uninterrupted sequence of new images" parallels the precise point at which sound poetry takes off. Sound poetry contains suggestive sounds and onomatopoeia, both intended to evoke general stimuli to the listener. By then adding a prefix or suffix, the same stimuli, i.e. ideas and moods are continued, but rendered ever so slightly different. This is precisely how a string

9. Discussed further in this study, Chapter 5. "The Poems."

of analogies can be developed without using new words.¹⁰

For this string-of-analogy effect Marinetti listed successive nouns, often neologistic compound nouns. He used a series of verbs for the similar effect of stringing together successive action. Ball's answer to Marinetti's call for "rendering successive motions" was the addition of prefixes and suffixes to the "sound-verbs," creating the sense of slightly-changed action. It approaches a type of verbal conjugation without the specificity of identifiable time. It thereby also loses the forward-propelling quality achieved through the use of conventional tenses. Instead, the poems contain a continuous, directionless movement - precisely the successive motions Marinetti called for.

Point "i," which calls for omitting the "I," the author's voice, a personal view, in short - all subjectivity, represents an instigating force for both poets to their linguistic projects, and is examined more thoroughly below in the comprehensive discussion of Ball's adaptation of Marinetti's theory.

In the year following Ball's receipt of the *Parole*, Marinetti's work was repeatedly included in the Cabaret Voltaire's repertoire.

10. This method is more thoroughly analyzed in the work of Ball in this study, Chapter 6. "Analysis."

"Cabaret Voltaire" enthält Beiträge von Apollinaire, Arp, Ball, Cangiullo, Cendrars, Hennings, Hoddiss, Heulsenbeck, Janco, Kandinsky, Marinetti, Modigliani, Oppenheimer, Picasso, van Rees, Slodki und Tzara. Es ist auf zwei Bogen die erste Synthese der modernen Kunst- und Literaturrichtungen. Die Gründer des Expressionisme, Futurisme und Kubisme sind mit Beiträgen darin vertreten. (*Flucht* 4 June 1916)

The second program, titled "Sturm-Soirée," again included Marinetti (*Flucht* 14 April 1917),¹¹ and several accounts by Ball's associates at the Cabaret list Marinetti's works among those casually presented on other evenings.

Four days before Ball's first sound poem performance, his documentation of what he clearly perceived as the culmination of a year's contemplation on these theories reveals Marinetti's influence:

Wir haben die Plastizität des Wortes jetzt bis zu einem Punkte getrieben, an dem sie schwerlich mehr überboten werden kann. Wir erreichten dies Resultat auf Kosten des logisch gebauten, verstandesmäßigen Satzes und demnach auch unter Verzicht auf ein dokumentarisches Werk (als welches nur mittels zeitraubender Gruppierung von Sätzen in einer logisch geordneten Syntax möglich ist). Was uns bei unseren Bemühungen zustatten kam, waren zunächst die besonderen Umstände dieser Zeit, die eine Begabung von Rang weder ruhen noch reifen läßt und sie somit auf die Prüfung der

11. "Programm der II. ('Sturm'-) Soirée."

Mittel verweist. Sodann aber war es der emphatische Schwung unseres Zirkels, von dessen Teilnehmern einer den andern stets durch Verschärfung der Forderungen und der Akzente zu überbieten suchte. (*Flucht* 18 June 1916)

Ball continued this journal entry by referring directly to the need for loading the word (giving it its all), which Marinetti had called for in his *Parole in libertà*. Ball explicitly referred to Marinetti and credited him as the initiating force behind this new approach to poetry:

Mit der Preisgabe des Satzes dem Worte zuliebe begann resolut der Kreis um Marinetti mit den "Parole in libertà". Sie nahmen das Wort aus dem gedankenlos und automatisch ihm zuerteilten Satzrahmen (dem Weltbilde) heraus, nährten die ausgezehnte Großstadt vokabel mit Licht und Luft, gaben ihr Wärme, Bewegung und ihre ursprünglich unbekümmerte Freiheit wieder. (*Flucht* continued 18 June 1916)

In this same journal entry, Ball went on to describe the culminating development of this new literary approach for himself and his collaborators in Zurich. He distinguished Marinetti's group and their direction from his own, i.e. the Italian Futurists from the Zurich Dadaists.

Wir andern gingen noch einen Schritt weiter. Wir suchten der isolierten Vokabel die Fülle einer Beschwörung, die Glut eines Gestirns zu verleihen. Und seltsam: die magisch erfüllte Vokabel beschwor und gebar einen neuen Satz, der von keinerlei

konventionellem Sinn bedingt war. An hundert Gedanken zugleich anstreifend, ohne sie namhaft zu machen, ließ dieser Satz das urtümlich spielende, aber versunkene, irrationale Wesen des Hörers erklingen; weckte und bestärkte er die untersten Schichten der Erinnerung. Unsere Versuche streiften Gebiete der Philosophie und des Lebens, von denen sich unsere ach so vernünftige, altkluge Umgebung kaum etwas träumen ließ. (*Flucht* continued 18 June 1916)

It is in this distinction between the Italians and the Germans wherein the most fundamental difference between the poetry of Ball and Marinetti lies. Ball clearly credited Marinetti as the impetus for the realization of a need to destroy old language. The most important historical mark of the Futurists and Dadaists is their perception of a need to totally destroy conventional language. But what further distinguishes Ball from the other Dadaists is his stress on the development of a new language. Ball ended this journal entry by identifying this emerging branch of new poetry: mysticism.

While many of Ball's linguistic innovations clearly resemble Marinetti's, it is this interest in mysticism that ties Ball with Kandinsky and the Russian zaum poets as well and is suggestive of their strong influence even prior to his introduction to Marinetti.

Ball had maintained an interest in mysticism since childhood, which became more evident during his stay in Munich. It was perhaps Ball's friendship with the Russian

native Wassily Kandinsky during their collaborative theater project in Munich that influenced Ball's renewed interest in mysticism. Kandinsky, as well, was most likely the essential link for Ball to the zaum group. (Kandinsky's influence on Ball's sound poetry is discussed in Chapter 3.)

Mysticism / Inner Language

Ball's suspicion of an innate problem in the process of expression of the inner self had long been developing. He saw language as insufficient for communicating inner sensations to the outer world. This is, of course, precisely language's function; and precisely why Ball saw it as a failure. Ball saw as much too great the distortion that occurred between the moment of a stimulus, one's preverbal perception of it, one's attempt to mentally articulate it, (and sometimes rationally perceive it), and the moment that this was verbally articulated for others to perceive. And once he received the impetus from Marinetti for a new poetry - the free poetry which he was to develop into sound poetry - he found an avenue for a clearer, more unmediated form of expression, one that was to allow original stimuli to be transmitted directly to the listener.

Hence, Ball saw the search for an inner language begun. As it led him beyond poetry and through political journalism and religious studies, he continued to value the

early impetus begun in Zurich. And although Ball realized that the language of the sound poetry would be restricted to the poetic medium, he stated that: "[D]ie Sprache wird uns unseren Eifer einmal danken, auch wenn ihm keine direkt sichtbare Folge beschieden sein sollte. Wir haben das Wort mit Kräften und Energien geladen" (*Flucht* 18 June 1916). Marinetti, as well, realized that "the exact sciences, politics, journalism, education, business . . . will still need to use syntax and punctuation" (*Parole* 96), but he hoped the energies the Futurists had instilled in language would be reflected therein.

When I speak of destroying the canals of syntax, I am neither categorical nor systematic. Traces of conventional syntax and even of true logical sentences will be found here and there in the words-in-freedom of my unchained lyricism. This inequality in conciseness and freedom is natural and inevitable. Since poetry is in truth only a superior, more concentrated and intense life than what we live from day to day, like the latter it is composed of hyper-alive elements and moribund elements.

We ought not, therefore, to be too much preoccupied with these elements. But we should at all costs avoid rhetoric and banalities telegraphically expressed. (*Parole* 99)

Ball and Marinetti. A Comparison.

The following is a systematic comparison of the two writers' theory and style. The point of departure, as has

been described above, was similar: a dissatisfaction with language as it was. When in June, Ball discussed his dissatisfaction with conventional language, it was a criticism as well as a hope to avoid it: "Man verzichte . . . auf die durch den Journalismus verdorbene und unmöglich gewordene Sprache" (*Flucht* 24 June 1916). One month later his *Dada Manifesto* had acquired a much harsher tone: "Ein Vers ist die Gelegenheit, moeglichst ohne Worte und ohne die Sprache auszukommen. Diese vermaledeite Sprache, an der Schmutz klebt. . . ."12

In *Parole in libertà* Marinetti criticized "old syntax" and stressed the "need to liberate words." He saw syntax as a type of mediator: "[This] monotonous cicerone. This intermediary must be suppressed, in order that literature may enter directly into the universe and become one body with it" (89).

In a section of *Parole in libertà* called "Death of free verse" he expressed the need for free verse to be replaced by words-in-freedom, feeling that free verse still contained syntax and grammar, limiting it. Marinetti believed that between the poet and audience there should exist:

12. The manifesto was read on 14 July 1916. At this point in the manuscript, however, Ball has added the words: "Ich wollte die Sprache ganz verlassen." *Eröffnungs-Manifest*. 1. *Dada-Abend*, ms, Umzugskarton #9, Nachlaß Hugo Ball, Depositum Robert Walser Archiv, Zurich. Reprinted in *Flight* 220-21.

the same rapport . . . as between two old friends. They can make themselves understood with a word, a gesture, a glance. So the poet's imagination must weave together distant things *with no connecting strings*, by means of essential free words. (Parole 98)

Rhythm and Symmetry vs. Dissonance

While Marinetti's plans parallel Ball's desire for a more unmediated language, Marinetti's language results in much more dissonance. This lies in the difference between his and Ball's perception of the nature of the world. Both Ball and Marinetti were trying to present the world more directly. They were both interested in using sound as a main tool. But they heard quite different "sounds" in their different worlds.

Ball saw a pattern of rhythm and symmetry at the base of the universe, albeit one he felt people had lost sight of, but one to which he hoped his renewed language would return them. More specifically, Ball's language was not one he would create, but an adamic language (an "Ursprache")¹³ which he would *rediscover*. He believed that once humankind had changed its method of communication to the one that more closely corresponded to a harmonious world, it would perhaps become a more harmonious people, or

13. Letter, Ball to Maria Hildebrand-Ball, 1 March 1916. Cited in *Briefe* 52.

at least a more amicable one. Central to the concept of this renewed language was the presumption that by its very essence it would also be an international language, hence further removing boundaries in understanding. Ball and many of his pacifist contemporaries who were searching for a new language perceived this as one quite basic method for achieving an increased understanding between people, and avoiding war.¹⁴

Marinetti and the Futurist circle around him embraced the fast-paced nature of the "machine age" and believed this would lead them into the future - and indeed into all developments of the future - be it war, transportation, industrialization or a new language. One of Marinetti's initiatives for changing language was the perception that it no longer expressed its faster-paced civilization. In -----

14. The developments of Ball's pacifism took the same route of initial, naive idealism towards war, and then a sharp critical turn after seeing the actual horrors that took place on the front. In August 1914, shortly after having volunteered for the First Heavy Artillery, and being declared unfit to serve because of a minor health problem, the civilian Ball simply traveled on an army train to the Belgian front with several well-meaning soldiers who managed to keep him covered til Liege. There he was arrested, but released once military authorities realized they were dealing with an idealist and not a spy (Huelsenbeck *mit witz* 2). But Ball did not leave with the same type of idealism he had arrived with. The reality he had seen there left him a changed man. He explained to his sister, "Ich bin aus Deutschland weggegangen . . . weil der Krieg und der "Patriotismus" meinen Überzeugungen widersprach [sic]. Ich hoffe sehnsüchtig, daß die Menschenschlächterei nächstens ihr Ende hat" (30 August 1915. Cited in *Briefe* 46).

Parole in libertà he stated his dislike for Mallarmé and "his search for the rare word" as well as his "static ideal" (105). The world Marinetti loved was one of speed and simultaneity and noise. The change in language needed to be achieved quickly, as well, in order to keep pace or even catch up with the changed world. Fundamental in the distinction between Ball and Marinetti is that where Ball looked to the past for his new language, Marinetti looked to the future. In *Parole in libertà* Marinetti stated: "Futurism is grounded in the complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries of science" (96). In the section of *Parole in libertà* titled *Death of the literary. I. Molecular life and material*, he expressed his concern that: ". . . we should experience . . . the agitation of atoms . . . and of the domains explored by the high powered microscope" (100). He further praised those scientific discoveries which had brought us:

accelerated pace; hate of the old; love of change and danger [. . . ; D]estruction of a sense of the Beyond and an increased value of the individual whose desire is *vivre sa vie* [. . . ;] unbridling of human desires [. . . ;] awareness of everything inaccessible and unrealizable in every person [and . . .] heroic idealization of the commercial, industrial and artistic solidarity of a people.
(96)

View of the New Age and of Conventional Society

Although Ball's hate of the old world was comparable to Marinetti's, Ball did not see anything positive in the advancing new age. In March of 1916, Ball expressed his disapproval of the modern developments:

Daß das Bild des Menschen in der Malerei dieser Zeit mehr und mehr verschwindet und alle Dinge nur noch in der Zersetzung vorhanden sind, das ist ein Beweis mehr, wie häßlich und abgegriffen das menschliche Antlitz, und wie verabscheuenswert jeder einzelne Gegenstand unserer Umgebung geworden ist. Der Entschluß der Poesie, aus ähnlichen Gründen die Sprache fallen zu lassen, steht nahe bevor. Das sind Dinge, die es vielleicht noch niemals gegeben hat. (*Flucht* 5 March 1916)

And three months later, he elaborated on the wretched state of the world as expressed through the dissent of the Cabaret:

Unser Kabarett ist eine Geste. Jedes Wort, das hier gesprochen und gesungen wird, besagt wenigstens das eine, daß es dieser erniedrigenden Zeit nicht gelungen ist, uns Respekt abzunötigen. Was wäre auch respektabel und imponierend an ihr? Ihre Kanonen? Unsere große Trommel übertönt sie. Ihr Idealismus? Er ist längst zum Gelächter geworden, in seiner populären und seiner akademischen Ausgabe. Die grandiosen Schlachtfeste und kannibalischen Heldentaten? (*Flucht* 14 April 1916)

It is apparent that although Ball's and Marinetti's views of conventional language are parallel, their conception of

the new emerging future was dramatically different. In the following sentence from the summer of 1915 Ball's intent for new language to reflect a quieter, inner world is made clear: "Man ziehe sich in die innerste Alchimie des Wortes zurück. . ." (*Flucht* 24 June 1916).

Marinetti's embrace of change was also spurred by a hatred of the cultural status quo. In the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature*, he expressed his critique of aesthetic norms by declaring: "We must spit on the Altar of Art" (89). Where Marinetti's solution was an anti-aestheticism, and where he saw the solution reflected in dissonance, and posited words-in-freedom against "harmonious swaying back and forth" (89), harmonious and aesthetically-pleasing rhythm was precisely what Ball sought in the new language. He sensed such a harmony to be at the base of the human soul and at the core of existence. It was language's mission to rediscover this core. In composing poetry Ball felt one should incorporate "[s]tatt der Prinzipien Symmetrien und Rhythmen" (*Flucht* 12 March 1916). He judged the Cabaret's performances of simultaneous poetry as quite successful and stated that "Das 'Poème simultan' handelt vom Wert der Stimme. Das menschliche Organ vertritt die Seele" (*Flucht* 30 March 1916). His evaluation of the sound poems, included praise of the "Balancement der Vokale [die] erwogen [werden]" (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). Earlier, in the fall of 1915 Ball

still regarded this desire for harmony as a German trait, but later he perceived it to be the grand scheme behind the universe.

Wir Deutsche sind ein Volk von Musikanten, voll eines unbegrenzten Vertrauens zur Allmacht der Harmonie. Das mag uns denn als ein Freibrief gelten für mancherlei Art von Versuchung und Experiment, für allerlei Kühnheit und Abirrung. Ob wir mit Dur oder Moll beginnen und die gewagtesten Dissonanzen greifen: wir glauben doch, daß sich am Schluß, in der Fuge, die dunkelste, sprödeste Zwietracht ergeben und fügen muß. So kann man denn sagen, die Harmonie sei des Deutschen Messias, der kommen soll, um sein Volk aus der Vielfalt des tönenden Widerspruchs zu erlösen. (*Flucht* 22 October 1915)

Around the time of the conception of the sound poems, Ball had become convinced that this harmony was the essence of the entire universe. He believed it to be at the base of the *Ursprache* that he sought as well. One route which could lead to rediscovery of this language was an examination of mystic texts:

Wenn man genau sein wollte: zwei Drittel der wunderbar klagenden Worte, denen kein Menschengemüt widerstehen mag, stammen aus uralten Zaubertexten. Die Verwendung von "Siegel", von magisch erfüllten fliegenden Worten und Klangfiguren kennzeichnet unsere gemeinsame Art zu dichten. Solcherlei Wortbilder, wenn sie gelungen sind, graben sich unwiderstehlich und mit hypnotischer Macht dem Gedächtnis ein, und ebenso unwiderstehlich und reibungslos tauchen sie aus

dem Gedächtnisse wieder auf. (*Flucht* 15 June 1916)

The Spiritual in Marinetti

The preceding discussion of Marinetti's predilection for industrialization, technology and modernization is not meant to suggest that Marinetti was completely non-mystical. It was he who included among his goals a stronger connection with "free intuition" (*Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* 89). And in discussing the "Zang tumb tuum" poems, he maintained that they were composed "[a]lways with the aim of giving the greatest number of vibrations and a deeper synthesis of life . . ." (*Parole* 104). His view of life and the nature of the universe simply differed greatly from Ball's. In the following critique of free verse it becomes clear how much 'soul' Marinetti had. Free verse was to be abandoned because it still maintained syntactic logic; i.e. "facile sound effects, banal double meanings, monotonous cadences, a foolish chiming, and an inevitable echo-play, internal and external" (*Parole* 99). Words-in-freedom, on the other hand would more directly express the poet's intention.

[O]ur lyric intoxication should freely deform, deflesh the words, cutting them short, stretching them out, reinforcing the centre or the extremities, augmenting or diminishing the number of vowels and consonants. . . . This instinctive deformation of words corresponds to our natural tendency towards onomatopoeia. It matters little if the deformed word became ambiguous. It will

marry itself into the onomatopoetic harmonies, or the noise-summaries and will permit us soon to reach the *onomatopoetic psychic* harmony, the sonorous but abstract expression of an emotion or a pure thought. (Parole 106)

On the other hand, we must be cautious not to misinterpret Marinetti's mystic 'style'. Phrases such as *psychic harmony* can be misleading. Marinetti's "noise-summaries" were very different from Ball's sound poems, representing the world by which he was fascinated - the speed, the machine, and a particular predilection for the battlefield. Naturally, a representation of this world would be significantly different from the representation of Ball's inner, prearticulate rhythmic world.

Marinetti's spirituality lay elsewhere. He was not so much interested in the deep, hidden realm within the universe and humankind, but in the spirit of the age. And he saw the modern person as one with a totally new character or spirituality, exuberant about the new machine age and its rewards. The first chapter in Marinetti's later novel *The Untamables* of 1922 is titled "The Free-Word Style." Herein he described this style as: "Heroic attempts of the spirit projecting itself beyond all its norms of logic and convenience."¹⁵ And he was as wholly enthusiastic about it as Ball. Anna Lawton discusses:

15. "The Untamables. A Novel," ed. R. W. Flint, trans. R. W. Flint and Arthur A. Coppotelli, *Selected Writings* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1972) 164.

the Marinettian idea that the poetry of the past is inadequate to express the spiritual life of the contemporary individual and that technological reality requires a new rhythm in poetry and a new orchestration of sounds.¹⁶

Marinetti saw this contemporary being as one very much in touch with the new age and exuberantly "possessed" by it. His poetry was to represent this condition. In describing words-in-freedom, Marinetti used the following metaphor: "[L]yricism is the exquisite faculty of intoxicating oneself with life . . ." (*Parole* 98). In *Parole in libertà* he described this process:

As we discover new analogies between distant and apparently contrary things, . . . [i]nstead of *humanizing* animals, vegetables and minerals . . . we will be able to *animalize*, *vegetize*, *mineralize*, *electrify* or *liquefy* our style, making it live the life of material. (*Parole* 100)

Marinetti perceived a spiritual union with the times, albeit not very harmonious times. And he was certainly conscious of a spirituality in people, stressing their need to combine the rational world with a humane, "intuitive" one: "I want to introduce the infinite molecular life into poetry not as a scientific document but as an intuitive element" (*Parole* 103). In the *Futurist Manifesto of Art* he demonstrated the same anti-rationalism as Ball:

16. *Russian Futurism through Its Manifestoes, 1912-1918*, (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 21.

I taught you to hate museums and libraries in order to prepare you to hate intelligence, reawakening in you divine intuition. . . . Through intuition we will conquer the seemingly unconquerable hostility that separates out human flesh from the metal of motors.¹⁷

Already in the 1912 *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* he discussed the need to abandon the intellect. As an alternative, he suggested a reliance on reactions of the pure senses, ranking them by importance: 1) sound, 2) weight, and 3) smell. As he elaborated, he stressed that the poet was to use these senses in direct relation to the object [of the poetry]. The poet was, therefore, to present the signified's own sound, weight, smell - as a physical property, and not present these senses in relation to how the poet hears, feels or smells them. In this attempt at removing the "I" from poetry, Marinetti, just like Ball, aimed at making poetry more unmediated.

Marinetti's Onomatopoetic Language

In a letter to Hans Arp from 22 November 1926 Ball described the Futurists' onomatopoeia, what he regarded as their major innovation, as 'naturalistic': "Die Wort-Analyse der Futuristen war naturalistisch, Ihre eigene

17. *Teoria e invenzione Marinetti: futurista*, ed. Luciano De Maria (Milan: n.p., 1968) 47. Cited and translated in John J. White, *Literary Futurism. Aspects of the First Avant Garde* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) 336.

Versuch dagegen, lieber Arp, und die meinen sind magisch."¹⁸

This naturalism in Marinetti's onomatopoeia is often criticized as being merely mimetic. Such a conclusion is easy to arrive at, and is especially seductive when the onomatopoeia is compared with Ball's which relies on more assumed inherent aural-perceptual properties that were aimed at "stirring the soul," i.e. offering sounds that were to cause a specific perceptual, psychological and emotional reaction. Upon close examination of Marinetti's *parole*, however, one can find examples of Marinettian onomatopoeia that is suggestive as well. Because Marinetti's theme usually includes more material stimuli, it appears much more naturalistic. This contrasts sharply to Ball's, which is intended as emotions and sensations themselves (with the material being totally absent in the abstract sound poems).

In his 1990 publication White offers some excellent interpretations of the onomatopoetic poetry of Marinetti. In "Zang tumb tuum" he sees many attempts to simply give the "feel" of the battlefield, for example.¹⁹ The sound *ran ran ran* does not need to be seen as naturalistic or mimetic, but can be seen as what White terms an "acoustic

18. Cited in *Briefe* 278.

19. 31.

correlative"²⁰ to express some sound or tension of battle, even though it is not a sound really heard in war. This is an interesting and valid point, although in White's example I have no trouble hearing *ran ran ran* as true onomatopoeia, i.e. as the actual sound of machine gun fire. More exemplary of non-mimetic onomatopoeia is the instance where Marinetti chooses to spell blue as "azzzzzzurrrrrro" in "Zang tumb tuum" (see att. 13). This orthography no longer corresponds to an acoustic quality, but is intended to aid in the perception of the intensity of the color.²¹

Marinetti's base for linguistic innovations did not contain the organic, mystic roots of Ball's. He did, however, hope for a truer language, one that would be closer to the intention of the signified, i.e. one that would be less mediated, just as Ball did. In the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature* he elaborated on his method of composition:

[I]n *Zang tumb tuum*, the strident onomatopoetic *ssiiiiii* represents the whistle of a tug on the River Meuse and is followed by the muted onomatopoetic *ffiiiiii*, an echo from the opposite bank. The two onomatopoeias save me from

20. *Literary Futurism* 30.

21. White, *Literary Futurism* 37. For a more detailed discussion of this tool see Carlo Carra's manifesto, *The Painting of Sounds, Noises and Smells* of 1913 (Apollonio 111-14).

having to describe the width of the river, which is defined by the contrast between the two consonants *s* and *f*. (87)

To assume that this contrast is an inherent one, as Marinetti does, may seem far-fetched at first; however, if one articulates these sounds, one does indeed get a sense of an echo. This articulation exercise demonstrates that each has a similar length of resonance and intensity. The *ff* thus functions as a quieter "echo" of the *ss*. The echo sound also has not six *i*'s, but five, lending it the shortened quality of an echo. This linguistic method allows the poet to express the essence of a stimulus, without trying to mimic the materiality of it. Thereby Marinetti demonstrated an awareness of the spiritual essence of objects and experiences, although they are at times recorded on a more perceptual level, i.e. without contemplating the deeper mystical level that Ball felt preceded this perceptual level.

While both Ball and Marinetti were interested in the use of onomatopoeia as an aid to most closely represent natural, unmediated sounds and events or images, Marinetti's were indeed more "vital." This parallels once again, Marinetti's choice of topic. His close associate Luigi Russolo used the term "The Art of Noises" in describing Futurist poetry.²²

22. Introduction. *The Untamables* 86.

While Ball believed his most successful unadulterated adamic words were most likely onomatopoetic, he also believed they were most likely not merely naturalistic imitations of the environment, but words which simultaneously expressed the inner sensations ("vibrations") experienced during perception of these external events. It was in a rediscovery of this language, that Ball saw the source of a renewed language.

Of all the Futurists, only Fortunato Depero maintained such utopian hopes for the new language. "It will be possible to talk and efficiently come to an agreement with the elements of the universe, with animals and with machines."²³ Indeed, Depero developed his *onomalingua* of 1916 as an "abstract verbalization,"²⁴ with intentions that much more closely resembled those of Ball's.

In "The Art of Noises" Russolo, as well, spoke of the sacred power of sound - although his discussion is restricted to music:

Amidst this dearth of noises, the first sounds that man drew from a pierced reed or stretched string were regarded with amazement as new and marvelous things. Primitive races attributed sound to the gods; it was considered sacred and reserved for priests, who used it to enrich the

23. *Depero futurista* (Milan-Paris: n.p., 1927); reprinted in White, *Literary Futurism* 257.

24. White, *Literary Futurism* 257.

mystery of their rites.²⁵

Russolo, however, believed that the limitations of musical sound had been realized, and called for a breaking away from music, with a turn toward the incorporation of its properties into language.²⁶

Ball's Onomatopoetic Language Theory

When Ball composed his poem "Seepferdchen und Flugfische," he kept the title in conventional language simply to provide a context from which the audience or reader could depart.²⁷ However, he never intended the poem to precisely reproduce specific movements of fish and seahorses. The intent was for the listener to feel "the kind of feeling" one would from actually observing these types of movements. He intended for the listener to experience this type of mood.

Ball was using a very different approach from Marinetti. Although Marinetti often times tried to present a stimulus without dependency on its natural qualities (as

25. Dated 11 March 1913; first published 1 July 1 1913.

26. Introduction. *The Untamables* 74.

27. Seven of the ten sound poems use conventional language in their titles. In addition to "Seepferdchen und Flugfische," four are purely conventionally titled: "Wolken," "Katzen und Pfauen," "Totenklage" and "Karawane." "Piffalamozza (Der Stier)" and "1 Stern und 7 kaza mogipuffel" have mixed titles. And "Gadji beri bimba," "bfirr bfirr" and "brulba dori daula dalla" use only sound language in their titles.

discussed above), his goal generally was to present a material or representational image more so than a feeling or even a sound. Anna Lawton convincingly argues that it was the Russian "Cubo-Futurists [who] worked more abstractly on the analogy of sounds."²⁸ Ball, conversely, used his sounds without any concrete idea or image attached to them at all. He used sound for its own sake - for its ability to awaken deep, spiritual realms. It is a much more direct exploitation of the varied qualities and abilities of sound.

In regard to his interest in pure sound, Ball furthermore relied much more heavily on traditional assumptions inherent in alliteration and assonance; e.g. a feeling of flow inherent in the rolling of an *r*; a feeling of a sudden sound or movement inherent in the plosive quality of *p*; the soft-hard, quiet-loud contrasts between *f* and *v*, *d* and *t*, *k* and *g*. Although these sounds vary in different languages (and are actually less audible in German than in English), the preceding descriptions would be agreed upon by a majority of German speakers (or even speakers of European languages, in general). It is quite a different case with Marinetti's assumptions for *s* and *f* as evincing an echo.

28. Lawton 3. See this study, Chapter 4. "Zaum."

Subjectivity vs. Objectivity

Marinetti and Ball both relied on onomatopoeia extensively because they saw it as a convenient technical aid for avoiding author intervention, and because they both assumed it allowed the poet to bypass mimesis as well. It was felt to be the most direct linguistic way of emitting a chosen stimulus. Removing the poet's voice was the starting point of unmediated language and poetry. In removing the material representation, both poets were trying to avoid "talking about" things, or incorporating their voice into the poems. While it is obvious that the act of writing a poem implies that the poet uses words, and that these words can only come from the poet, both Marinetti and Ball felt that in presenting only the sounds of the stimuli (for Ball) and only the labels of the stimuli (for Marinetti), they were removing their subjective analysis, or at least omitting an impression of their reactions.

It could, of course, be argued that in removing the material object as a subject of poetry and only relaying the stimuli, the poet is actually being more subjective because, try as s/he might, the words for the stimuli remain those of the writer alone. Ball was evidently aware of this problem, and on the 18 of April 1916 he noted in *Flucht* that his poetry lets one hear the *listener*. He thereby attempted to redirect the focus of the poem away from the speaker, towards the listener. This represents an

additional attempt to stress the universality of the sounds - that they were the listener's as well as the speaker's as well as simply the sounds themselves.

Marinetti also appears to have been aware of the problem of subjectivity when he wrote "Olfactory lyric-words in freedom" and later in 1925 composed the poem "my Alsatian[-dog]'s landscape of smells."²⁹

The performance of poetry was another focus of depersonalization attempts. In 1916 Marinetti published his "Dynamic and Synoptic Declamation" which decreed that:

The Futurist performer must completely dehumanize his voice, systematically doing away with every modulation or nuance. . . . Completely dehumanize his face, avoiding every facial expression or trick of the poet's eyes. . . .³⁰

Ball's costume at the first performance of the sound poems also served as a depersonalizing tool. He described this self-constructed costume the night after the performance:

Meine Beine standen in einem Säulenrund aus blauglänzendem Karton, der mir schlank bis zur Hüfte reichte, so daß ich bis dahin wie ein Obelisk aussah. Darüber trug ich einen riesigen, aus Pappe geschnittenen Mantelkragen, der innen mit Scharlach und außen mit Gold beklebt, am Halse derart zusammengehalten war, daß ich ihn durch

29. Marinetti, *I nuovi poeti futuristi* (1925). Cited in White, *Literary Futurism* 338.

30. Flint 142-47.

Heben und senken [sic] der Ellbogen flügelartig bewegen konnte. Dazu einen zylinderartigen, hohen, weiß und blau gestreiften Schamanenhut.
(*Flucht* 23 June 1916)

He was unrecognizable; the cardboard-tube effect was robotic and hence inhuman; but more importantly and again in stark contrast to Marinetti, it helped evoke a mystic quality. Ball himself felt transformed during the performance, as he recounted immediately thereafter in *Flucht*:

Da bemerkte ich, daß meine Stimme, der kein anderer Weg mehr blieb, die uralte Kadenz der priesterlichen Lamentation annahm, jenen Stil des Meßgesangs, wie er durch die katholischen Kirchen des Morgen- und Abendlandes wehklagt. Ich weiß nicht, was mir diese Musik eingab. Aber ich begann meine Vokalreihen rezitativartig im Kirchenstile zu singen und versuchte es, nicht nur ernst zu bleiben, sondern mir auch den Ernst zu erzwingen. Einen Moment lang schien mir, als tauche in meiner kubistischen Maske ein bleiches, verstörtes Jungensgesicht auf, jenes halb erschrockene, halb neugierige Gesicht eines zehnjährigen Knaben, der in den Totenmessen und Hochämtern seiner Heimatpfarrei zitternd und gierig am Munde der Priester hängt. Da erlosch, wie ich es bestellt hatte, das elektrische Licht, und ich wurde vom Podium herab schweißbedeckt als ein magischer Bischof in die Versenkung getragen.
(*Flucht* 23 June 1916)

In assuming the voice of an outside figure, i.e. priest, his own voice had become depersonalized. Furthermore, this

event suggests words emerging from a deeper source, perhaps even an experience of glossolalia.³¹

Synaesthesia, Multivalence

Synaesthesia was considered an appropriate technical aid for suggesting objective reality, by virtue of its ability to present many things simultaneously. Inherent to our poets' understanding of the human process of perception was the notion of multivalence, that when we receive a stimulus, several prearticulate perceptions are aroused simultaneously. Language was seen as approaching this aspect of reality when it presented this process, as Ball indeed felt sound poetry to have done:

[D]ie magisch erfüllte Vokabel beschwor und gebär einen neuen Satz, der von keinerlei konventionellem Sinn bedingt und gebunden war. An hundert Gedanken zugleich anstreifend, ohne sie namhaft zu machen, ließ dieser Satz das urtümlich spielende, aber versunkene, irrationale Wesen des Hörers erklingen; weckte und bestärkte er die untersten Schichten der Erinnerung. (*Flucht* 18

31. During the early twenties Ball did extensive research in this area.

One must question whether Ball's costume and performance were influenced by a similar Futurist performance almost two years earlier. On 13 April 1914 at the Sprovieri Gallery in Rome during a Futurist happening, a procession took place, led by Giacomo Balla, "disguised as a sacristan," followed by Fortunato Depero and Arturo Radiente, "whose heads were hidden in enormous tubes of black tissue paper with holes punched for eyes and nose" (Michail Kirby and Victoria Nes Kirby, *Futurist Performance* [New York: PAJ Publications, 1986] 29).

June 1916)

Marinetti compared "imagination without strings [to] an orchestral style . . . which simultaneously uses polychromatic, polyphonic and polymorphous analogies" to represent true experiences (*Parole* 99). Synaesthetic perceptions were, furthermore, regarded as true reactions to simultaneous, multivalent stimuli. For Marinetti, simultaneous forms of expression were also necessary for representation of the fast, technological, noisy world and, naturally, for battle as well. In several pages of "Zang tumb tuum" he innovatively used typeset to defy the traditional linear movement of the printed word on a page. Words were scattered across the page in every direction, and at every angle (see att. 14). Each reader can move across the page in an individually determined direction and take in the words in a unique order, as is done when various people react differently and individually to the same stimuli.

In abandoning traditional grammar and syntax, the sound poems lose much of their linear movement as well. Ball affected a type of verb form by adding prefixes and suffixes which slightly alter the previous image and affect a subtly-changed succeeding image, assumed by the reader to be caused by a small movement. With the forward motion of conventionally-conjugated verbs lacking, Ball created a type of spatial movement, which implies motion, but a motion that allows the reader to *while* in the scene,

experiencing one moment of many simultaneous stimuli, with all the respective actions, sounds and effects.

In Ball's sound poems synaesthesia occasionally took the form of words that were one-half color and one-half evocative of a sound. "Violabimini" for example suggests the musical instrument as well as the color violet, and "blaulala" expresses the colors blue and lila[c], and the musical quality of singing through lala.

Marinetti makes use of half-sound and half-color words as well. His typesets and orthography further emphasize acoustic qualities, as in "azzzzzzurrrrrro," discussed above.

Neologisms

The importance of Marinetti's impetus for Ball's development cannot be overstated, but the extent of innovation and the directions in which Ball took this new linguistic freedom went far beyond Marinetti. Although Marinetti's words-in-freedom were innovative, they never really went beyond conventional language. Marinetti's original call was for grand innovations:

By the imagination without strings I mean the absolute freedom of images or analogies, expressed with unhampered words and with no connecting strings of syntax and with no punctuation. (*Parole* 99)

He abandoned elements at the base of conventional linguistic structure, leaving only nouns and infinitive

verbs. But even with this modification, the Italian Futurists were still using conventional words. They formed no true neologisms. At their most innovative, they added two words or syllables of two words together (especially in names or words like *arrivopartenza* [arrivaldeparture] and *da per* [from for]). White cites from Arno Holz's *Die kleinste poetische Einheit* to demonstrate that his neologisms (just combinations as well), invented 25 years prior were far richer than those of the Futurists.³² The desire for a completely new language, possessed by Ball and the *Sturmkreis* before him and Arno Holz even earlier appears to be lacking for the Futurists.

Christa Baumgarth in *Geschichte des Futurismus* provides the Italians with an excuse. She compares the innovations of the Germans and Russians to those of the Italians, noting the Italians' deficiencies, but pointing out that the structure of the German and Russian languages is more suited to word-formation. Italian is simply not as inflected or segmented as German or Russian. German (and Russian even more so) can add an abundance of suffixes and prefixes which Italian (and English as well) cannot. The only recourse in an effort to revitalize the language in Italy would have been through changed syntax and a more streamlined, telegraphic style.³³ White points out that -----

32. *Literary Futurism* 225.

33. 86.

the one linguistic tool that could have aided the Italians' innovations, would have incorporated the concepts of phoneme and morpheme. With this awareness, the Italians might have been able to do what he terms: "segmentalize their poetic language."³⁴ Enzo Mainardi's concept of the "molecule of sound" in his poem "Le molecule del suono" shared much with the idea of the phoneme, and could have:

led to an exploration of a language-generating model based on something equivalent to the phoneme and hence to the postulation of the difference between meaningful and non-meaningful phonemes, and thus to the morpheme. But . . . poets' interest in the minimal units of sound [was] largely restricted to the phenomenon of *sound* as sound, and not to the more technical issue of language as a meaningful set of phonological elements.³⁵

While White brings up an important distinction between the Italians and the more successful German and Russian sound poets, he overlooks a fundamental property of their "sounds." The sound poets were looking for sounds which would contain within themselves prearticulate meaning. A "meaningful set of phonological elements" is what would have led to the precise trouble that they were trying to avoid - the connotationally-laden adulterated language. While it might have provided the Italians with somewhat

34. *Literary Futurism* 249.

35. White, *Literary Futurism* 249.

more linguistic freedom, restricting the intent to providing "meaningful" patterns was contrary to the goals of the poetry.

Conclusion

Even during Ball's farewell phase to Dada, he expressed his indebtedness to Marinetti. On 14 July 1916 when Ball bade a formal farewell to the Cabaret,³⁶ activated ultimately by his nervous breakdown, he immediately followed with the remark: "Die Übertreibungen waren mir heilsam. . . . Grober Naturalismus, Animismus, Marinettismus" (*Flucht* 6 October 1916).

Not only did Ball admit to Marinetti's positive influence here, but three months earlier, when he read his Dada Manifesto at the 6 July 1916 Dada-Abend, he intentionally omitted Marinetti from a list of criticized contemporary Dada poets. "Dada ist die beste Lilienmilchseife der Welt. Dada Herr Rubiner, dada Herr Korrodi, Dada Herr Anastasius Lilienstein." The manuscript of this manifesto had originally included Marinetti. The omission in the final version should be seen as a carefully reconsidered compliment.

36. "Mein Manifest beim ersten "öffentlichen Dada-Abend (im Zunfthaus Waag) war eine kaum verhüllte Absage an die Freunde. Sie haben's auch so empfunden" (*Flucht* 6 August 1916).

CHAPTER 3. KANDINSKY AND BALL

No writer should be regarded as more influential on Ball's theoretical development than Wassily Kandinsky. Ball's personal contact with Kandinsky began in February of 1914 when they collaborated on regenerating the Münchener Künstlertheater, and continued through 1917 when Ball spoke on Kandinsky as part of a lecture series in which artists discussed their strongest influence.¹ The Russian native Kandinsky had been living in Munich since 1896, and by 1908 had become established as the central figure of the Munich avant garde.² He met Ball in February 1914 while Ball was the producer of the Kammerspiele. He and Ball, along with Franz Marc, Paul Klee, Alfred Kubin, Oskar Kokoschka, Thomas von Hartmann, Michel Fokine and Vladimir von Bechtejeff became involved in a major theater project.

Ball, as the initiator, was responsible for the production of an entirely new Künstlertheater. The artists had scheduled a series of six matinees which included a full-scale production of Kandinsky's *Der gelbe Klang* with

1. Ball's talk was held on 8 April 1917 at the first public Dada soirée of the new Galerie Dada, which Tristan Tzara and Hugo Ball took charge of after the close of the Cabaret Voltaire in the fall of 1916. (Original German ms in Depositum Hugo Ball, Robert Walser Archiv, Zurich. Reprinted in full in Andeheinz Mößer, "Hugo Balls Vortrag über Wassily Kandinsky in der Galerie Dada in Zürich am 7.4.1917," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 51.4 [1977]: 676-704. Reprinted in English in *Flight*.)

2. In 1902 he founded the Phalanx group, in 1909 the Neue Künstler Vereinigung, and in 1911 the Blaue Reiter group.

sets mounted by the individual artists, as well as musical compositions by von Hartmann and the solo dancing of Alexander Sacharoff. At the forefront of Ball's intentions was the same vision Kandinsky had for a pure theater incorporating sound, color, and movement, which Kandinsky had described in his essay "Über Bühnenkomposition."³

They had also planned to publish a book in the style of *Der Blaue Reiter*, with contributions by Kandinsky, Marc, Klee, Kokoschka and Kubin, as well as writers on the arts. The book, which was to be titled *Das Neue Theater*, was scheduled to appear 1 October through Piper (who had also published *Der Blaue Reiter*). And although the performances had already been booked, the conversion of the Künstlertheater was only accomplished with threats of resignation to the Kammerspiele management by Ball. Although the management's resistance was finally overcome, Ball and his associates were forced to discontinue the book and the theater plans with the outbreak of the war.⁴

Ball enthusiastically discussed these projects in a letter to his sister, Maria Hildebrand-Ball, elaborating on his plans for the "Internationale Gesellschaft für neue Kunst" which were to embrace this Gesamtkunstwerk concept

3. *Der Blaue Reiter*, ed. Klaus Lankheit (Munich: Piper, 1983) 189-208. The essay was originally intended as a preface to *Der gelbe Klang*.

4. Letter to Maria Hildebrand-Ball, 27 May 1914. Cited in *Briefe* 28-31.

of "nicht nur Theater, sondern auch Neue Malerei, Neue Musik, Neuer Tanz." The group had also intended to draft new architectural plans which included a theater as well as a festival house.

Kandinsky's passionate commitment to the theater project is evidenced in a letter to Ball of 18 April 1914 in which he criticized the newspapers' description of "unser Theaterprojekt." He was unhappy that they seemed to think, "daß wir . . . schöne neue Dekorationen und 'Bühnenbilder' . . . schaffen" and were oblivious to their plans: "die Szene selbst, d.h. also das Schauspiel neu [zu] organisieren und nach unserem künstlerischen Vorstellungserleben [zu] gestalten wollen." Kandinsky emphasized that what he wanted was "wirklich etwas Neues . . . mit eigenem Ensemble und vollkommener Bewegungsfreiheit."⁵

Ball's plans for the theater further shaped themselves through the developments in Russian theater to which Kandinsky had introduced him. In his memoirs, Ball wrote:

Ich kam von Reinhardt und stand unter dem Eindruck seiner Aufführungen im Zirkus und in den Kammerspielen. Aber Kandinsky stellte mir Thomas v. Hartmann vor. Der kam von Moskau und erzählte viel Neues von Stanislawsky: wie man dort unter

5. *Briefe an Hugo Ball*, ms photocopy, transcribed with notes by Ernst Teubner, Hugo Ball Archiv, Stadtbücherei Pirmasens. Original in Nachlaß Hugo Ball, Depositum Robert Walser Archiv, Zurich.

dem Einfluß indischer Studien Andrejew und Tschechow spielte. Das war anders, breiter, tiefer als bei uns, auch neuer, und trug sehr viel dazu bei, meinen Gesichtskreis und meine Forderungen an ein modernes Theater zu erweitern. (*Flucht* 19)

The Role of the Artist

Central to the theoretical framework of Ball's and Kandinsky's work was a sense of commitment to the public. Both Kandinsky and Ball consistently viewed their artistic plans in light of a serious social vision. This commitment to "converting" as well as "educating and enlightening" the public is a quite different stance from that of the Italian Futurists. Kandinsky and Ball took their role as responsible artistic mediators to the public extremely seriously. In a *Flucht* entry of 5 March 1916 Ball discussed "Die Theorien Kandinskys:"

[I]mmer auf den Menschen, auf die Person anwenden, und sich nicht in die Ästhetik abdrängen lassen. Um den Menschen geht es, nicht um die Kunst. Wenigstens nicht in erster Linie um die Kunst.

Both were constantly aware of the delicate position their radical theories and practices put their reputations in. They despised the carelessly-applied label of "artistic nihilist," and frequently felt compelled to clarify their positions as positive and productive cultural reformers. Ball's irritation with these contentions was

similar to Kandinsky's. In "Rückblicke" Kandinsky recalled how, "[Ich] wurde immer durch Behauptungen, daß ich die alte Malerei umstoßen wolle, in Mißstimmung gebracht" ("Rückblicke" 47).⁶ Michael Greenberg supports Kandinsky in the face of such charges:

No modern artist devoted so much time to committing his beliefs and ideas to paper as Kandinsky. He had no intention to "dismay the bourgeois" but rather to convert him to a respectful consideration of his ideas through the moral gravity and high philosophical tone of their exegesis.⁷

Ball's first sound poem performance, so often regarded as just an exercise in shocking the bourgeois audience as well as a mockery of them and their conventional views of art, represented a serious artistic debut for Ball. The *Flucht* entry of that night evidences the earnestness Ball intended for the performance, as well as his fear of ridicule:

Ich merkte sehr bald, daß meine Ausdrucksmittel,
wenn ich ernst bleiben wollte (und das wollte ich

6. *Kandinsky. Die Gesammelten Schriften*, eds. Hans K. Roethel and Jelena Hahl-Koch (Bern: Benteli, 1980) 27-50. Kandinsky also translated and published the slightly revised essay in Russia in 1918. It was the major essay in an album Walden published entitled *Kandinsky 1901-1913* (Berlin: Der Sturm, [1914]). It was first published into English in 1945 by Hilla Rebay for the Guggenheim's memorial Kandinsky exhibition in 1945.

7. 97.

um jeden Preis), dem Pomp meiner Inszenierung nicht würden gewachsen sein. Im Publikum sah ich Brupbacher, Jelmoli, Laban, Frau Wigman. Ich fürchtete eine Blamage und nahm mich zusammen. (23 June 1916)

Ball's and Kandinsky's Continued Contact

When the theater project was temporarily interrupted by personal commitments,⁸ Ball and Kandinsky continued to work out the details, maintaining contact through correspondence. They corresponded regarding the publication of the theater book, with Kandinsky providing Ball with new literary material of his own,⁹ and made several attempts to meet upon their respective trips through and over Munich.¹⁰ In a note of 1935¹¹ Kandinsky maintained that it was only the outbreak of the war that aborted these plans. And despite the war, Kandinsky remained an influential figure in Ball's life. In a letter to his sister of 1 March 1916, Ball referred to poems of Kandinsky which he was reading, and naively stated that

8. As of 30 June 1914 Ball found himself in Dresden and Berlin on Kammerspiele business, and Kandinsky had planned a two to three-month visit to Moscow.

9. Kandinsky suggested a replacement of his play "Der gelbe Klang" (*Der Blaue Reiter* 209-30) with his newer *Der violette Vorhang* (unpublished).

10. *Briefe an Ball*, 6 and 29 July 1914.

11. Klaus Lankheit, ed., introduction, *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, ed. Wassily Kandinsky and Franz Marc (New York: Da Capo, 1974) 35.

"Wir vertragen uns also sehr gut, trotzdem unsere Regierungen Krieg miteinander haben."¹²

Poems by Kandinsky were read as part of the second Cabaret Voltaire performance on 6 February 1916. On 5 March 1916 Ball discussed the theories of Kandinsky in his journal. And on 4 June 1916 he spoke in his journal once again of the Cabaret Voltaire containing contributions by Kandinsky. Also Kandinsky's poem "Sehen" was published in June in the single issue of *Cabaret Voltaire* (which had been intended as a periodical review).

And still in 1917, with the opening of the Galerie Dada on 17 March, the first exhibition contained paintings by Kandinsky. Upon the foundation of the Galerie, Ball had requested Kandinsky to sign a Dada manifesto. On 9 April, at the second exhibition at the Galerie Dada, Kandinsky was again included. Poems by Kandinsky were also read there on 14 April 1917 at the "Second Soirée."

There was actually a "Kandinsky-Saal" at the Galerie which appeared to be the focal gathering point during the apparently lively soirées celebrated at the time.¹³ The atmosphere of these events and the composition of the

12. Briefe 51.

13. Ball described the gallery: "Die Galerie hat drei Gesichter. Tagsüber ist sie eine Art Lehrkörper für Pensionate und höhere Damen. Am Abend ist der Kandinsky-Saal bei Kerzenbeleuchtung ein Klub der entlegensten Philosophien. An den Soiréen aber werden hier Feste gefeiert von einem Glanz und Taumel, wie Zürich sie bis dahin nicht gesehen hat" (*Flucht* 11 May 1917).

audience was no less intense than those of the former Cabaret Voltaire. Frequent callers included Alexander Sacharoff, Mary Wigman, Clotilde von Derp, Marianne von Werefkin, Alexei von Jawlensky, Harry Kessler, and Elisabeth Bergner. As Ball stated, "Die Soiréen haben sich durchgesetzt" (*Flucht* 28 April 1917).

Ball was pleased to see that the early performances at the Galerie fulfilled the Gesamtkunstwerk concept that he had prepared with Kandinsky in Munich.

Gestern mein Vortrag über Kandinsky; ich habe einen alten Lieblingsplan verwirklicht. Die Gesamtkunst: Bilder, Musik, Tänze, Verse - hier haben wir sie nun. (*Flucht* 8 April 1917)

The program from the "Second Soirée" clearly demonstrates to what extent Ball's plans from 1914 were realized (see att. 15). Ball's discussion of that evening's performance of "das Stück" by Kokoschka vividly describes their Gesamtkunstwerk in action. Costumes, color, light and special sound effects were used dramatically.

Das Stück wurde gespielt in zwei hintereinander liegenden Räumen und in tragischen Körpermasken; die meine war so groß, daß ich bequem meine Rolle darin ablesen konnte. Der Kopf der Maske war elektrisch beleuchtet, was im verdunkelten Raume, während das Licht aus den Augen fiel, seltsam genug mag ausgesehen haben. Emmy allein trug keine Maske. Ihre Erscheinung war halb Sylphe, halb Engel, fliederfarben und hellblau. Das Parkett reichte hart bis zu den Darstellern. Tzara im rückwärtigen Raum hatte für "Donner und

Blitz" zu sorgen, sowie als Papagei "Anima, süße Anima!" zu sagen. Aber er kümmerte sich zugleich um die Auf- und Abgänge, blitzte und donnerte an der falschen Stelle und erweckte völlig den Eindruck, als sei das ein besonderer Effekt der Regie, eine beabsichtigte Konfusion der Hintergründe. (*Flucht* 14 April 1917)

The Spiritual

The *Flucht* entries between the time of the Galerie establishment and Ball's departure to the Alps demonstrate an increasing contemplation of magic and the occult, certainly not without earlier influence by Kandinsky.¹⁴

14. In 1925 Ball was still engaged in research on "okkulte Phänomene" and "unbewußte Prozesse." Letter to Hesse, July 1925. Cited in *Briefe* 218. He published "Ueber Okkultismus, Hieratik und andere seltsam schöne Dinge" in 1917 after experiencing the occult gathering of Theodor Reuss's Ordo Templi Orientis in Ascona (15-25 August 1917) during their Anationale Kongress. Sophie Taeuber did a dance interpretation of Ball's "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" there. See this study, Chapter 5. "The Poems" 311 and 317-18. For a discussion on Kandinsky, Ball and the occult see: Edward Kasinec and Boris Kerdimun, "Occult Literature in Russia," *The Spiritual in Art, Abstract Painting 1890-1985* (Los Angeles County Museum of Art and New York: Abbeville Press, 1986) 361-65; Rose-Carol Washton Long, *Kandinsky: The Developments of an Abstract Style* (Oxford Clarendon, 1980) 14-46; Rose-Carol Washton Long, "Occultism, Anarchism and Abstraction: Kandinsky's Art of the Future," *Art Journal* (Spring 1987): 38-45; Sixten Ringbom, "Kandinsky und das Okkulte," *Kandinsky und München: Begegnungen und Wandlungen, 1896-1914*, exh. cat. (Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, 1982) 85-101; Sixten Ringbom, "Die Steiner Annotationen Kandinskys," *Kandinsky und München: Begegnungen und Wandlungen, 1896-1914*, exh. cat. (Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, 1982) 102-05; and Richard Sheppard, "Dada and Mysticism," *Dada Spectrum: The Dialects of Revolt*, eds. Stephen C. Foster and Rudolf Kuenzli (Iowa City: U of Iowa P, 1979) 92-111.

The day following his lecture on Kandinsky he wrote,

Gestern mein Vortrag über Kandinsky. . . .
 Die Maler als Sachwalter der vita contemplativa.
 Als Verkünder der übernatürlichen Zeichensprache.
 Rückwirkung auf die Bildgebung auch der Dichter.
 Die symbolische Ansicht der Dinge ist eine Folge
 der langen Versenkung in Bilder. Ist die
 Zeichensprache die eigentliche Paradiessprache?
 (*Flucht* 8 April 1917)

The *Flucht* entries documenting his spiritual development are numerous during this time. And each one evidences an ever-increasing criticism of Dadaism and modern efforts in general. With growing conviction, Ball furthermore feared demonic forces enveloping all the contemporary developments. A sense of despair that his and his fellow artists' (Kandinsky included) efforts at incorporating the spiritual had been futile was emerging. Ball moved closer to a Christian God as his departure to Magadino approached. However, his faith in the spiritually-unifying sound poems remained vital even this late after their completion. His evaluation of Taueber's "abstract dance" accompanying the sound poem "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" at the opening celebration of the Galerie demonstrates his continual appreciation of their spiritually redemptive quality. Ball praised this "Ausdruckstanz und die Aufführung von Kulttänzen anderer Kulturen" in the essay "Ueber Okkultismus, Hieratik und andere seltsam schöne Dinge" (2).

He required that the dancer "soll nicht nur als Individuum, sondern als Teil im Kosmos und im Gesamtkunstwerke empfinden" (6). In this same article, he called Mary Wigman "die impulsive Erfinderin des 'Tanzes an sich'" (5). With the group's growing friendship with Mary Wigman, one can assume her to have been influential in Taeuber's style of dance. Ball described this performance in his *Flucht* entry of 29 March 1917:

Abstrakte Tänze: ein Gongschlag genügt, um den Körper der Tänzerin zu den phantastischsten Gebilden anzuregen. Der Tanz ist Selbstzweck geworden. Das Nervensystem erschöpft alle Schwingungen des Klages, vielleicht auch alle verborgene Emotion des Gongschlägers und läßt sie Bild werden. Hier im besonderen Falle genügte eine poetische Lautfolge, um jeder der einzelnen Wortpartikel zum sonderbarsten, sichtbaren Leben am hundertfach gegliederten Körper der Tänzerin zu verhelfen. Aus einem "Gesang der Flugfische und Seepferdchen" wurde ein Tanz voller Spitzen und Gräten, voll flirrender Sonne und schneidender Schärfe.

The Kandinsky Lecture

Ball spoke highly of Kandinsky throughout his life: On 1 April 1917, one week before his lecture on Kandinsky, he discussed him in *Flucht*:

Vielleicht gibt es heute keinen zweiten Menschen, der so sehr sich selbst besitzt. Er löst sich kaum von der Inspiration. Von seinem Einfall zum Blatt ist die kürzeste Verbindung eingehalten.

Das weite zerstreuende Ausstrecken der Hand und des Körpers, das Kandinsky nötig hat, um die großen Formate seiner Leinwand mit Farbe auszufüllen, bringt notwendig Vergeudung und Erschöpfung mit sich; es erfordert eine ausgiebige Exposition, eine Erklärung: das Malen wird, wenn es Einheit und Seele behaupten will, zur Predigt oder Musik.

And more than seven years later, in his prologue to *Flucht*, written between 1924 and 1926, Ball still bestowed the highest praise upon him:

München beherbergte damals einen Künstler, der dieser Stadt vor allen andern deutschen Städten durch seine pure Anwesenheit einen Vorrang der Modernität verlieh: Wassilij Kandinsky. Man mag diese Einschätzung übertrieben finden, damals empfand ich es so. Was könnte einer Stadt auch Schöneres und Besseres begegnen, als einen Mann zu beherbergen, dessen Leistungen lebendige Direktiven der edelsten Art sind? . . . Die Vielfalt und Innigkeit seiner Interessen war erstaunlich; mehr noch war es die Höhe und Feinheit seiner ästhetischen Konzeption. Was ihn beschäftigte, war die Wiedergeburt der Gesellschaft aus der Vereinigung aller artistischen Mittel und Mächte. . . . Sein Ziel war in jeder einzelnen Äußerung exemplarisch zu sein, die Konvention zu durchbrechen und zu erweisen, die Welt sei noch immer so jung wie am ersten Tag. Es konnte nicht ausbleiben, daß wir einander begegneten, und ich bedauere noch heute, daß uns der Krieg auseinanderführte, kaum wir uns eben zu einem Projekte besonderer Art

zusammenfanden. (*Flucht* 17)¹⁵

The lasting significance of Kandinsky on Ball is most clearly demonstrated by Ball's choice of speaking on Kandinsky during the lecture series of the Galerie Dada. During this speech intended as a testimonial to one's most significant influence, Ball's draws heavily from Kandinsky's *Über das Geistige in der Kunst*, and also from "Rückblicke" as well as essays in *Der Blaue Reiter*.

"Rückblicke" was published in 1913 through *Der Sturm*. It is a brief autobiography of Kandinsky's life in Russia. The essay represents Kandinsky's reflections on his experiences and developments while living in Russia, and on his Russian cultural heritage, an exercise Kandinsky apparently felt necessary after a total immersion in German cultural developments during the previous six years.

Der Blaue Reiter Almanac, edited by Kandinsky and Franz Marc was published in 1912.¹⁶ It was the first international compilation of work by Expressionist artists, and was a Gesamtkunstwerk of art in itself. Kandinsky wanted to chronicle the year's developments, but also show "eine Kette zur Vergangenheit und ein[en] Strahl in die

15. This praise continued through page 20 of *Flucht* and includes a lengthy discussion of their theater project as well.

16. Reprinted as *Der Blaue Reiter Almanac*, ed. Klaus Lankheit (Munich: Piper, 1983).

Zukunft."¹⁷ The *Almanac* contained music, poetry, reports of exhibitions, theoretical essays, drama, and reprints of paintings and prints, encompassing works by Kandinsky and Marc, David Burliuk, August Macke, Arnold Schönberg, Roger Allard, von Hartmann, Robert Delaunay, Leonid Sabaneiev, and Nikolai Kulbin. Kandinsky's two significant essays "Über Bühnenkomposition" and "Über die Formfrage" were included.

Über das Geistige in der Kunst

Über das Geistige, which was published in 1912, had been completed in 1910 after a ten-year period of development, according to Kandinsky. He considered it his major theoretical treatise at the time. It lays bare Kandinsky's theoretical foundation; i.e. that the essence of the universe lies in a spiritual, inner, intuitive world of experience; that this realm remained inaccessible for many people of the modern world; that art was the most suitable means for representation of this inner world; and that the artist would act as mediator to bring this experience to the public. Abstract painting, i.e. painting devoid of any representational images, would serve as the most effective way of awakening the spiritual in the public. In avoiding rational cognitive images, it forced

17. Letter to Marc, 19 June 1911. Klaus Lankheit, ed., *Briefwechsel, W. Kandinsky und F. Marc* (Munich: Piper, 1983).

the viewer to rely on intuition in order to respond to the painting. Here the training and weaning of the public towards an awareness of the spiritual was to begin.

Über das Geistige sheds the most light of any published material on Ball's theoretical foundation. Ball came across the treatise in 1914, and took extensive notes from it. Judging from a notebook in which he recorded his impressions of books he was then reading, he was extremely impressed.¹⁸

From the time Ball read the treatise in 1914 til his lecture of 1917 its impact on him is clear. In his notes from his original reading in 1914, he repeatedly made his own exclamatory references to the need for a new language and Kandinsky's successful arrival thereupon. "Heute ist der Tag einer Grossheit, die nur zur Zeit einer keimenden grossen Sprache denkbar ist" ("Notebook" 111), and "Es kommt: Die Sprache des grossen Geistigen" ("Notebook" 124).

Ball's and Kandinsky's point of departure was similar: a dissatisfaction with conventional means of expression, as well as a deep interest in mysticism and a need to find a form of expression for this central life essence. The following examination of Ball's interpretation of Kandinsky's theoretical framework illuminates their similarities and subtle differences. Kammler points out

18. Ms, Nachlaß Hugo Ball, Depositum Robert Walser Archiv Zurich, Umzugskarton 9, hereinafter referred to as "Notebook."

that Ball was Kandinsky's "Nachfolger," yet never his "Nachahmer," in that Kandinsky showed him how open the possibilities for language were.¹⁹ Although Ball never mentioned Kandinsky as an influence on the technical characteristics of his sound poems, and Kandinsky's own literary works evidence little similarity with Ball's, Kandinsky's endeavors must at least be regarded as inspirational. As early as 1904 Kandinsky published his *Verses Without Words* in Moscow. The title is unmistakably identical to Ball's designation for his sound poems: "Ich habe eine neue Gattung von Versen erfunden, 'Verse ohne Worte' oder Lautgedichte . . ." (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). Kandinsky's publication, however, is not a compilation of poems, but an album of twelve woodcuts. Ball may also have been interested in Kandinsky's *Klänge* of 1912, an album of 38 prose poems and 56 woodcuts. Kandinsky considered it a "musical" work; however, unlike Ball's sounds, these poems contain no nonlexical language.²⁰ The titles of Kandinsky's dramas must have been suggestive for Ball as well: *Der gelbe Klang*, published 1912, and the unpublished "Der grüne Klang," "Schwarz und Weiss" and "Der violette

19. "Die Auflösung der Wirklichkeit und Vergeistigung der Kunst im 'inneren Klang'. Anmerkungen zum Material - Künstler - und Werkbegriff bei Wassily Kandinsky und Hugo Ball," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1983) 45.

20. For further discussion of the poetry, see Hans Konrad Roethel, *Das graphische Werk* (Cologne: Schauberg, 1970).

Vorhang." While these dramas have scenes containing nonlexical sounds, Kandinsky was not attempting a non-representational language (in a parallel form to his non-representational painting). Kandinsky's use of sound in these dramas was limited to exercises in affirming the value of the voice and the autonomy of sound. Certainly Ball was inspired and intrigued by Kandinsky's use of sound. But Ball went beyond these attempts, and actually combined Kandinsky's general aesthetic theory, as well as his theory on sound with his own interest in sound to create a non-representational poetry.²¹

Also central to much of Ball's reworking of Kandinsky's theory was the idea that harmony lie at the base of the subconscious, while Kandinsky saw chaos and dissonance at the base of everyday existence as well as of the spirit. Although both sought refuge in the spiritual, Kandinsky continually found chaotic elements at work there as well. While Kandinsky's form of spiritualism was extremely influential on Ball and marks the point where Ball differed most emphatically from Marinetti, Ball's insistence on it as a truer form of reality informs most of his interpretations of Kandinsky.

21. For discussion of Kandinsky's dramas, and further discussion regarding his use of sound see, Kammler, "Die Auflösung."

Ball's Interpretation of Kandinsky

Ball divided his speech into the following five segments: "Die Zeit," "Der Stil," "Die Persönlichkeit," "Der Maler" and "Bühnenkomposition und die Künste." His lecture was a comprehensive discussion of Kandinsky, and mirrors Ball's consideration of him.

"Die Zeit," the first part of the speech, examines the contemporary external influences that brought Kandinsky and Ball to regard the conventional means of artistic expression as ineffective. Kandinsky's objection to the "materialism" of painting is parallel to Ball's disdain for the "journalism" of literature. Both artist and writer found the conventional forms to be void of true expression and too concerned with external superficialities.

Ball's discussion begins by noting:

Zwei [Drei] Dinge sind es, die die Kunst
unserer Tage bis ins Tiefste erschütterten. . . .
Die von der kritischen Philosophie vollzogene
Entgötterung der Welt, die Auflösung des Atoms in
der Wissenschaft, und die Massenschichtung der
Bevölkerung im heutigen Europa. ("Lecture" 688)

This statement directly parallels Kandinsky's interpretation of contemporary culture in *Über das Geistige*: "Wenn die Religion, Wissenschaft und Moral (die letzte durch die starke Hand Nietzsches) gerüttelt werden . . ." (*Über das Geistige* 43).

Ball's last-listed influence concerns itself with overpopulation, industrialization and its ensuing

dehumanization ("die Massenkultur der modernen Großstadt") ("Lecture" 690). This was seen to have affected mankind's perception of its relationship with the immediate environment. Humans were displaced from their almost divine position to one where they much more closely resembled "Partikel der Natur" ("Lecture" 689) and where they were also simultaneously distanced from nature. Under the influence of Wilhelm Worringer and his discussion of abstract art in 1908 in *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*,²² many artists of the time regarded the appearance of abstract art as a natural consequence of a distorted world. The modern industrialized world, so foreign, distant and abstract from nature, could only be represented as such. The intention to represent specifically this world was a primary purpose of Kandinsky's use of dissonance.

Even more fundamental to Kandinsky's and Ball's perception of their surroundings is Ball's second-mentioned influence. When in 1902 the scientist Ernest Rutherford showed that "the supposedly indestructible basis of matter consisted of nothing more tangible than a cluster of invisible energy particles swirling around in a state of heraclitean flux," it was clear to many that the world of appearances was not trustworthy, that it was composed of

22. Munich: Piper.

hidden elements.²³

In an effort to: 1) rediscover lost "religion" and find spirituality, 2) escape the overpopulated, industrialized world, and 3) enter that hidden, inner world behind "matter," Ball and Kandinsky began their focus on the spiritual. The confusion created by modern developments led them to focus on the hidden dimension, and to seek a medium which would bring to light the true, sometimes hidden, inner essence of an experience. In the 1917 speech Ball spoke of artists turning away from the representation of "Naturalien, die ihnen von allem Verzerzten das Verzerrteste scheinen" ("Lecture" 692). In the second part of his talk, "Der Stil," Ball made his first direct reference to Kandinsky calling him "der Erste[, der] alles Gegenständliche als unrein ablehnte und auf die wahre Form, den Klang der Dinge, ihre Essenz, ihre Wesenskurve zurückging" ("Lecture" 693). In *Über das Geistige* Kandinsky spoke of his desire to remove the material, outer representations of objects or experiences rendered in painting in order to allow the viewer more direct access to their true inner essence. In "Über die Formfrage" another focal difference between Kandinsky's and Ball's theory is illuminated. Herein he stated that, "*Es gibt keine Frage der Form im Prinzip*" and "daß es also im

23. Michael Greenwood, "Kandinsky's Cosmic Sound," *Artscanada* 29 (Autumn 1972) 97.

Prinzip gar keine Bedeutung hat, ob eine reale oder abstrakte Form vom Künstler gebraucht wird. Da beide Formen innerlich gleich sind" (162). Kandinsky felt that a combination of both inner and outer elements, could provide the viewer with an understanding of *innerem Leben* because both abstract and realistic painting contained at their core the same inner essence (156-62). In abstract painting, however, where the material images with their "praktisch-zweckmäßig vom Menschen geschaffenen Form" (157) had been removed, a viewer was spared any possible distraction from the inner essence. Ball, however, found the outer elements to comprise a much greater problem than simply one of distraction or hindrance. When he stated in "Kandinsky" that "die Darstellung von Naturalien, die . . . von allem Verzerrten das Verzerrteste scheinen . . ." ("Lecture" 692), he was relegating the outer, material state to a position far beneath that of the inner - to a reality less real! Kandinsky, however, rejected the representational only insofar as it detracted from the less spiritual spectators' ability to see through it to the true inner essence. His criticism of the material is based on its problematic nature: one that manifested the inner essence (or *innere Klang* as they both termed it), but also one that, for some people, has stood in the way of the actual perception of the inner essence. For Ball, too, the material ("journalistic" language) stood in the way of perception of this inner essence; but he perceived the

material as the actual source of the dissolution of verbal expression, i.e. communication. He saw conventional words (which were being used to represent the true material object or experience) as totally devoid of an expression of *innere Klang*. For Ball material language was by its very nature noncommunicative of true inner essence, or had at least become so over the course of its development. In "Whither the 'New' Art?" of 1911,²⁴ where Kandinsky elaborated on his disapproval of "documentary reproduction" and "technical accuracy" because "an object . . . is . . . merely an allusion of the real, an allusion or aroma in the composition," one senses a similarly radical orientation. The harshness of Ball's attack, however, is missing. And judging from "Formfrage," Kandinsky seems to have softened his attitude toward the material by 1912.

This difference in degree of aggression toward the material is also mirrored in their desired response to the problem, with Ball's consequently being much more radical than Kandinsky's. While Kandinsky was calling for the artist to intervene by removing the material, and Ball was calling for the writer to strip language of all

24. Kandinsky published this essay only in Russian "Kuda idet 'novoe' isskusstvo." It is printed in English in *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art*, eds. Kenneth C. Lindsay and Peter Vergo (New York: DaCapo Press, 1994) 96-104. For further discussion of this essay see J. E. Bowlt, "The Russian Connection," *The Life of V. Kandinskii in Russian Art. A Study of On the Spiritual in Art*, eds. J. E. Bowlt and Rose-Carol Washton Long (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1980) 97.

artificialities, i.e. all meanings which gradually had become attached to words without regard for their original meaning or *Urwerte*, Ball needed the writer to go one step farther, and act as medium between the inner essence and the audience. For Ball, the audience would not be able to see the inner essence on its own once the material was gone, but needed the writer to more actively bring it to the public. In principle Ball's and Kandinsky's process is the same - a stripping. But for Ball the inner essence had to be found by the artist; s/he was to be the soul-searcher on a mission to retrieve this lost quality. Although both Kandinsky and Ball called on the artist to go inside the self in search of true, pure reactions and intuitive responses (Kandinsky's *innere Notwendigkeit*), for Kandinsky the inner essence was more readily accessible to the public.

Innere Notwendigkeit

Although both Kandinsky and Ball appear to have devised a distinct and precise system for expression of the inner essence, both found their systems subservient to a stronger force - *innere Notwendigkeit*. *Innere Notwendigkeit* was a force which unequivocally caused the *innere Klang* to be manifested. So that as long as an artist was reacting to *innere Notwendigkeit*, *innere Notwendigkeit* would assure that the inner essence manifested itself in some form. (Although it could turn

out in a quite suppressed manner if the material was too overbearing) ("Über die Formfrage" 167). In Ball's discussion of Kandinsky he stated that *innere Notwendigkeit* was "das einzige und letzte Schaffensprinzip, das [Kandinsky] anerkennt," and:

Die "innere Notwendigkeit" allein gibt der freien Intuition Grenzen, die innere Notwendigkeit ist es, auf die alles zuletzt ankommt, sie verteilt die Farben, Formen und Gewichte. ("Lecture" 694)

Ball was drawing from "Über die Formfrage" where Kandinsky stated that, "alles hängt hier von der inneren Notwendigkeit ab, die allein eine Form richtig machen kann" (162). Ball clearly saw *innere Notwendigkeit* as the guide to the intuitive agents upon which Kandinsky elaborated in *Über das Geistige*. Kandinsky further explained that it was the agents: music, (evoked by) words and colors, which assisted the *innere Notwendigkeit* in manifesting itself.

Artistic Subjectivity

Although both believed to be representing the universal inner essence, artistic subjectivity was a problem for both Kandinsky and Ball. Ball, as much as Kandinsky, attempted to seek a totally pure expression, unadulterated by intervention from the artist, i.e. an expression of the universal elements in the object or experience being presented. For Ball the process of the artist presenting the inner essence involved its passage

through the artist. The inherent subjectivity of such a process is apparent, yet Ball never addressed this issue.

Kandinsky's process of simply unveiling is inherently a more objective one in that the artist was merely to uncover the inner essence. In practice, however, Kandinsky's process, too, was subjective, since it was the artist who personally offered a presentation of the stripped object. Although the intent was to ultimately represent the universal experience, it nonetheless needed to pass through the artist's hand.

Despite the fact that Kandinsky's process is in theory less subjective than Ball's, it is Kandinsky who addressed the question of subjectivity in the Russian essay "Whither the 'New' Art." He discussed the potential of his own intervention when stripping objects of their material in painting, with what he termed artistic "imprecision."²⁵

Kandinsky's understanding of the subjective nature of painting is reinforced in *Über das Geistige* when *innere Notwendigkeit* is discussed. Kandinsky pointed to three sources of inner necessity which combined to form a manifestation of the "Ewig-Objektiven im Zeitlichen-Subjektiven" (82). Although the goal was to ultimately produce an artistic creation with a universal nature, Kandinsky realized that this process would be a difficult one, constantly involving "das Bekämpfen des Subjektiven

25. Bowlt, "The Russian Connection" 10.

durch das Objektive" (82).

The Artist and the Public

Kandinsky's understanding of the role of the artist in a larger social context is a vital factor for the understanding of his creative intention. He saw before him a mission in which his intervention in an artwork would actually help bring the deeper, inner, spiritual nature of all external experience more easily to the audience. By removing much of the material which surrounded an inner core of things, (i.e. by abstraction, by causing a disappearance of the clear and obvious outer shell,) he would make the inner more visible. "Im Gegenstand liegt die Geistigkeit verborgen," Kandinsky said in "Rückblicke" (53). He felt that the people of his time were too "blinded" to the spiritual to perceive it. Some people could easily see behind the material, but for many others it was inaccessible even in something as spiritual as religion (53). With his paintings he hoped to slowly take the audience through an evolutionary learning process which would result in the ability to more easily comprehend the spiritual. This would ultimately lead to a changed world, one comprised of people more sensitive to mystical relevance - to a "utopian epoch."²⁶ Kandinsky believed

26. Rose-Carol Washton Long, "Kandinskii's Vision," *The Life of V. Kandinskii in Russia. A Study of On the*

that through this evolutionary process,

[d]adurch aber wird den Menschen im allgemeinen erst das Erleben des Geistigen in den materiellen Dingen und später das Erleben des Geistigen in abstrakten Dingen bedingt. . . . Der Wunsch, diese beglückende Fähigkeit in den Menschen, die sie noch nicht hatten, hervorzurufen, war das Hauptziel der beiden Publikationen. ("Rückblicke" 42)

The "publications" he was speaking of are *Über das Geistige* and *Der Blaue Reiter*, to which Ball made constant reference in his talk. Although Ball did not make direct reference to the goal of the coming utopian epoch in this Kandinsky lecture, his common belief is evident in statements previously cited and discussed in this study, Chapter 1, "Marinetti." He referred to Kandinsky as "der Künstler unserer Zeit," and "einer der ganz großen Erneurer" ("Lecture" 693), i.e. as the visionary leader toward this goal.

Veiling and Stripping vs Total Nonrepresentational Art

The idea of a painting facilitating the viewer's comprehension of the true nature of a rendered object or experience presupposes that the painting is closer to the true nature of the object or experience than the physical

...Continued...

Spiritual in Art, eds. John E. Bowlt and Rose-Carol Washton Long (Newtonville, Mass.: Oriental Research Partners, 1980) 44.

object or experience is. In "Rückblicke" Kandinsky recounted his departure from nature, "So trennte sich für mich das Reich der Kunst vom Reiche der Natur immer mehr . . ."(42). Kandinsky found many "correct" lines drawn from nature to be repulsive (35-36). When discussing Kandinsky and his followers, Ball felt that, "Sie schaffen Bilder, die keine Naturnachahmung mehr sind, sondern eine Vermehrung der Natur um neue, bisher unbekannte Erscheinungsformen und Geheimnisse" ("Lecture" 692).

Both Kandinsky and Ball understood, however, that total nonrepresentational art would be difficult to deliver to the public in its complete form. The term "Geheimnisse," which Ball used in discussing Kandinsky's new abstract symbols ("Lecture" 693), appropriately alludes to Kandinsky's plan of not expecting the audience's immediate comprehension of the spiritual elements in his work. Instead, both artists realized they needed to wean the public to an understanding of their art. While Ball maintained some minor lexical references in his sound-poem titles, Kandinsky developed an elaborate method of "veiling and stripping," i.e. putting an object in his painting where it was not expected, blurring its outlines and creating "versteckte Konstruktionen."²⁷ As the viewer struggled to understand these constructions, it would be involved in what has been termed a "mystic ritual" of -----

27. Long, "Kandinskii's Vision" 50.

deciphering.²⁸ By grasping this inner meaning slowly, Kandinsky felt the viewer would be trained to an appreciation and better perception and comprehension of these mysteries. Art thus could also function "as a vehicle of transcendence," as Bowlit terms it.²⁹

This explains the slow and gradual nature of Kandinsky's shift to a non-representational abstraction. Although already in *Über das Geistige* he appeared convinced that total non-representational abstraction would be the most successful type of painting, he also stated therein that he believed the move to non-representational painting needed to be a slow one.

Another reason for the gradual shift was a fear that his work would be seen as pure ornament, until the audience could understand it (*Über das Geistige* 86). Long also notes Kandinsky's fear that his work would be mistaken for Jugendstil art, particularly in light of Worringer's remarks that Jugendstil and its abstraction was "lifeless."³⁰ Ball, as well, discussed Kandinsky's fear of pure ornament, referring to *Über das Geistige* (72). And in 1917, upon his departure from Zurich, as Ball was losing all faith in modern art and modern times, even he pondered whether Kandinsky's paintings might, perhaps, have been

28. Long, "Kandinskii's Vision" 50.

29. "The Russian Connection" 3.

30. "Kandinskii's Vision" 49.

intended merely as carpet designs.³¹

Nonrepresentation

Certainly back in the time of his sound poem inventions, however, Ball had found naturalistic representation to be an inappropriate form of artistic expression because it missed the entire true essence of the object or experience at hand. And where Kandinsky saw that the material cluttered the way to the inner, Ball saw that words hindered the way as well. Truer to the inner essence for Ball was the unarticulated impression of an experience. Once an experience was articulated, even internally in logical thought, one had moved one step farther from its true essence. The purest way to represent this inner experience was seen to be in words that had no lexical, rational reference. For Ball, sound poetry was the fastest way to reach this inner chord in the listener. It stripped away the lexical and syntactic references which hindered the listener's comprehension of the true nature of the experience. He described his sound phonemes as, "An hundert Gedanken zugleich anstreifend, ohne sie namhaft zu machen" (*Flucht* 18 June 1916). Yet just like Kandinsky, Ball did not create totally abstract work. He retained

31. "Die abstrakte Kunst -: wird sie mehr bringen als eine Wiederbelebung des Ornamentalen und einen neuen Zugang dazu? Kandinskys dekorative Kurven -: sind sie vielleicht nur gemalte Teppiche (auf denen man sitzen sollte, und wir hängen sie an die Wand)?" (*Flucht* 19 May 1917).

some lexical references as well as conventional onomatopoeia, realizing as Kandinsky did, that some frame of reference needed to remain. A common experiential level needed to be maintained at least until the listener was inaugurated into the process of hearing nonrepresentational language.

Kandinsky, too, did not wish to risk losing this referential point, and hence, his audience completely. He cautiously considered that, "To deprive oneself of this possibility of the object causing a vibration would be reducing one's arsenal of means of expression."³²

Long elaborates on Kandinsky's appreciation of the aid of some representation in his work:

Just as the word could be used for its sound in addition to its notational value so did Kandinsky believe that the residual object could be used to reinforce the effect of pure color and pure form.³³

Yet in some ways, Ball considered Kandinsky's method of veiling and stripping as too contrived. In a *Flucht* entry of 1 April 1917 concerning the visual arts he stated that he preferred Klee to Kandinsky because "[v]on seinem [Klees] Einfall zum Blatt ist die kürzeste Verbindung eingehalten." He found Kandinsky's abstractions too

32. Long, "Kandinsky and Abstraction: The Role of the Hidden Image," *Artforum* 10 (June 1972): 47.

33. "Kandinsky and Abstraction" 46.

expository, and demanding of an explanation. Unlike Kandinsky, Ball did indeed want the inner essence of his language to be grasped *immediately*. Ball saw the purity of sound poetry as the fastest way of striking the inner chord. Veiling would have been totally contrary to his interests. Where Kandinsky seemed to "wish to use all the means at his disposal to communicate . . . ,"³⁴ Ball was convinced that only this abstract language was truly effective.

Formal Tools: Synaesthesia, Simultaneity

When Kandinsky discussed the use of sound and synaesthesia, his thoughts more closely paralleled Ball's in that they both asserted that an outer, elemental sound existed, which actually corresponded to the *innere Klang*. In "Sound in Kandinsky's Painting" Ashmore notes that when Kandinsky was asked the question: "How does spirit manifest itself?", he responded simply: "By sound."³⁵ When Ball spoke of Kandinsky's desire to strike this inner chord, he referred directly to *Über das Geistige* stating that Kandinsky "auf die wahre Form, den Klang der Dinge . . . zurückging" ("Lecture" 693). Although they were *inner reverberations*, Kandinsky explained in "Über die

34. Long, *Development of an Abstract Style* 53.

35. Jerome Ashmore, "Sound in Kandinsky's Paintings," *Journal of Aesthetics* 35 (Spring 1977): 329.

Bühnenkunst," that these "delicate vibrations of the human soul" (190) closely resembled the vibrations of neural sound. In *Über das Geistige* he offered an analogy of the effects of two different types of sound, noting "[der] reine Klang . . . übt einen direkten Druck auf die Seele aus" (46). And in "Über die Formfrage" Kandinsky stated that everything had an inner sound which could be evoked by a corresponding outer or elemental sound as long as this outer sound maintained the most minimal form (155).

This corresponding outer sound was precisely what Ball sought to represent lyrically as he pursued words which would directly strike the inner chord, i.e. directly transmit the inner essence. Onomatopoeia, the actual physical sound of things, was frequently used by Ball in this endeavor, pointing to a system of associational references wherever possible. Although Ball abandoned conventional, lexical vocabulary, he did put his faith in the purity and accuracy of an adamic language, believing that the first words spoken (*Urworte*) were most likely sounds with direct parallels to inner sounds or reverberations (which manifested *Urwerte*). And although he relied more on intuition to find these *Urworte*, his search sometimes led him to etymological research in the dictionary.³⁶ The Russian zaum poets Khlebnikov and

36. Letter to Hennings, December 1923. Cited in *Briefe* 167.

Kruchenykh also sought to restore this original meaning of words. Khlebnikov, especially, was involved in research on discovering primary units of meaning which he believed were at the base of all languages.

Kandinsky carried this synaesthetic theory one step farther in that he believed that colors as well as words (and, clearly, musical tones too) could evoke these inner sounds. In *Über das Geistige* he spoke of three agents: "words, musical tones and colors," and elaborated on his use of colors which were to directly correspond to sounds. This stems directly from his belief that one sense stimulus could stimulate another, although he did not want to correspond the different stimuli as much as contrast their effects.³⁷

Theory: Synaesthesia and Simultaneity as a Representation of Harmony vs. Dissonance

It is important to note that where Kandinsky wanted to contrast synaesthetic effects, Ball saw synaesthetic correspondences as evidence of harmonious compatibility within the perceptual world. It must be kept in mind that Ball constantly aimed for a state of harmony within his poems. This was a harmony that he saw as naturally evoked simply by the successful presentation of - or transformation into - the inner world of perception.

37. Long, *Development of an Abstract Style* 54.

Kandinsky's use of contrast and dissonance was an attempt to present the actual disharmonious nature of the world, be it industrialization or even the constant motion of atoms (in their own hidden world). It was for him a presentation of the true nature of even the inner world, where intuition was marked by the irrational. Ball, too, was aware of the strife of the times, but he perceived the artist's chore as one of finding "das Gleichgewicht, die Balance, die Notwendigkeit und Harmonie" therein (691). He felt Kandinsky had found his way out of this problem by creating paintings which represented an exit from the confusions of the age ("Lecture" 691-92). When referring to Kandinsky's paintings, he frequently used words such as "Equilibrierung," "Ruhe" and "Friede" (698-99).

Earlier in his discussion of Kandinsky, Ball shed light on his twist on the interpretation of Worringer when he stated that artists of the day turned away from the external because of their inability to find harmony anywhere in it (225). Where Worringer placed more emphasis on abstract artists representing distorted images as a reflection of the distorted nature of the world, Ball's slant on "turning away" from the extraneous world more clearly defines his own approach. For Ball, the inner spiritual world was a place of refuge, where cosmic harmony was still maintained. While Kandinsky may have awakened

Ball's interests in the spiritual, Ball chose to take his own course thereafter. Here Ball's direction more closely paralleled that of the Russian zaum poet, Khlebnikov, who sought to return to and create in his poetry a totally harmonious inner world. Much like Ball, they felt that through proper presentation of the inner sound, i.e. through adequate striking of the inner chords in the public, the public would be led to an experience of harmony.

Kandinsky's appreciation of the spiritual realm appears to have had a quite different base, where "spiritual" was not necessarily synonymous with "harmony." Kandinsky stated that the manifestation of the *innere Notwendigkeit* "kann auffallend harmonisch sein oder auffallend disharmonisch" ("Über die Formfrage" 172). What he hoped for in bringing the inner to a level of greater appreciation was simply a "Seelenbereicherung."³⁸ Kandinsky's use of sound (through color) thus had quite different goals.

Long notes that Kandinsky was moved away from harmonious forms through Schönberg's influence.³⁹ His series of paintings of "The Revelations of St. John and the -----

38. Kandinsky elaborated, "Und diese Vibrationen und das aus ihnen entsprungene Plus werden eine Seelenbereicherung sein, die durch kein anderes Mittel als durch die Kunst zu erreichen ist" ("Über die Formfrage," *Der Blaue Reiter*, ed. Klaus Lankheit [Munich: Piper, 1983] 181).

39. Long, "Kandinsky and Abstraction" 47.

Apocalypse" are representative of his (as well as many other Expressionists') view that a war or a shattering violent event was needed to cleanse humankind, and transport it into a new realm. This thematic disharmony is also formally paralleled in Kandinsky's use of dissonant forms and colors. He may have drawn this parallel further to the necessity of shocking his audience, be that for the purpose of arousing its mystical awareness or awakening it to a more active role in viewing a painting. Both Shulamith Behr and Christopher Hailey note Schönberg's and Kandinsky's reciprocal influence. Behr cites Schönberg's praise of Kandinsky's theatrical piece *Der gelbe Klang* for its ability to involve the audience, by shifting the responsibility of "coding and decoding" to the viewer.⁴⁰ In "Das Verhältnis zum Text" of 1912 Schönberg further expressed his delight at seeing that Kandinsky had successfully incorporated into visual art the same abstraction that had hitherto been unique to music. The public was now finally to learn how to deal with such art:

And with great joy I read Kandinsky's book *Über*

40. "Deciphering Wassily Kandinsky's *Violet*: activist Expressionism and the Russian Slavonic milieu," *Expressionism Reassessed*, eds. Shulamith Behr, David Fanning and Douglas Jarman (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1993) 174. Behr refers to Schönberg's letter of 19 August 1912 (*Kandinsky and Schoenberg. Letters, Pictures and Documents*). Also see Christopher Hailey, "Musical Expressionism: the search for autonomy," *Expressionism Reassessed*, eds. Shulamith Behr, David Fanning and Douglas Jarman (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1983) 103-29.

das Geistige in der Kunst, in which the road for painting is pointed out and the hope is aroused that those who ask about the text, about the subject matter, will soon ask no more.⁴¹

The mutual theoretical influences are apparent. Yet it was Schönberg's innovations in atonality that helped Kandinsky formally. In discussing Kandinsky's use of sound (through color) Ashmore mentions how sound can also be perceived as deriving from a "collision," hence, "chaos, strife and catastrophe."⁴²

Theory: Synaesthesia and Simultaneity as a Representation of Time and Space

Ball took extensive notes on *Über das Geistige's* color theory,⁴³ and incorporated a considerable amount of color references in his sound poems, as discussed in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study. Judging from the use of referential titles and "half-words" of colors, as well as musical instruments ("violabimini," "blaulala"), and Ball's play with the anticipated emotional responses from the public, his use of some of Kandinsky's correspondences is clear.

In the fourth section of his speech, "Der Maler," Ball spoke enthusiastically of Kandinsky's elaborate color and sound theory. Its synaesthetic base was a result of the

41. Cited in Hailey 108.

42. 33.

43. See "Notebook" 53-57.

new awareness that simultaneous movement was at the base of all matter and existence. Early in Ball's lecture he mentioned the difficulty the public would have initially in understanding the tonalities "einer nur erst ihnen [den neuen Künstlern] bekannten Sprache," and that it would successfully understand only if prepared "mit der Tradition eines Jahrtausends . . . zu brechen" (691-92). The catalyst in the abandonment of conventional artistic traditions of sound and color use was once again the electron theory: "Die Elektronenlehre brachte ein seltsames Vibrieren in alle Flächen, Linien, Formen. Die Gegenstände änderten ihre Gestalt, ihr Gewicht, ihr Gegen- und Übereinander" (224). This idea finds its parallel in Kandinsky's "Rückblicke" (33). Since science had proven everything to be in a state of constant flux, artists needed to have this condition reflected in their work. The traditional linear or temporal form of literature could be avoided. The combination of words needed no longer reflect a forward, linear motion, but could now reflect the more spontaneous to-and-fro movement that had been proven to be present within each atom. The line in visual art could also abandon its traditional quality of direct forward movement, and could instead reflect a continuous, constantly-meandering movement.

Ball's sound poems, as well, abandoned the linear, narrative nature characteristic of conventional literature. Ball presented a theme or scene within their titles, and

left it to the public to experience and contemplate on a scene of that sort. He did not feed the audience or reader a specific plot, story or even idea - but rather left it to meander in this scene.

The rhythm of his poems is also totally free of formal conventional prerequisites. In this respect he has been influenced by the Marinettian idea of "words in freedom," as well as by new developments in music and dance. In *Flucht*, Ball declared that poets must "[s]tatt der Prinzipien Symmetrien und Rhythmen einführen" (12 March 1916). Rhythm is a focal formal aspect of his poetry, but Ball based its development purely on the value of preceding vowel sounds, omitting any forced formal prerequisites. He spoke of "Lautgedichte, in denen das Balancement der Vokale nur nach dem Werte der Ansatzreihe erwogen und ausgeteilt wird" (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). The only forward motion in the sound poems is elicited by a type of "verbal conjugation" of association where slight vowel or consonant changes move a word and its linked image to a new, slightly-altered state. In the poem "Seepferdchen und Flugfische," e.g., this provokes the image of a new position of the fish, a changed wave, etc.⁴⁴ Referring to the "Elefantenkarawane" performance, Ball discussed "die schweren Vokalreihen und [den] schleppende[n] Rhythmus" (*Flucht* 23 June 1916).

44. See this study, Chapter 6. "An Analysis."

It is these new freedoms which enabled the practical manifestation of the inner sound. The inner sound was seen as based on rhythm, rather than melody or tune. It was a pulsating rhythm, one of constant motion, but not of linear direction (as would be necessary in melody or tune). The primitive quality of this rhythm was highly regarded and seen as another link to the primordial and intuitive inner world.⁴⁵ The influence of Schönberg's rhythm was apparent as well. After Kandinsky and Marc had heard their first Schönberg concert in January 1911, Marc noted that, "Schönberg scheint . . . von der unaufhaltsamen Auflösung der europäischen Kunst- und Harmoniegesetze überzeugt. . . ." ⁴⁶ Overy in "Color and Sound" speaks of Kandinsky's paintings as having created by 1908 a "relatively unimportant role" for line, and instead to have affected "a strong, pulsating rhythm." He credits this achievement to the use of "saturated rather than 'rich' colors" and the "utiliz[ation] of optical effects of these saturated colors, placed in close proximity. . . ." ⁴⁷ He states further that this use of color affects a loss of balance and equilibrium which further represents the

45. For further discussion, see Bowlt, "The Russian Connection" 27.

46. Letter 14 January 1911, cited in Jelena Hahl-Koch, ed., *Arnold Schönberg, Wassily Kandinsky: Briefe, Bilder und Dokumente einer außergewöhnlichen Bewegung* (Munich: dtv, 1983) 178.

47. *Apollo* 79 (May 1964): 410.

constant movements of the psyche. In "Rückblicke" Kandinsky described how greatly impressed he was by the colors of the houses and woodcuts upon his trip to the Vologda. These colors led him to do sketches which were painted "so stark . . . , daß der Gegenstand sich in ihnen auflöste" (38). His belief in the power of color to reflect dissolution and movement is apparent. Long notes that:

Kandinskii felt he expressed the "antithesis and contradictions" of his age through the contrasting colors he used in his paintings, the ambiguous and hidden imagery, and the spatial dislocations. He advised using colors which . . . had been considered "dissonant." He warned against the use of flat ornamental forms because they would . . . in no way [be] reflective of the disharmony and anxiety of his age.⁴⁸

From Kandinsky's following explanation of how "dissonance" was achieved in his painting *Composition IV*, one can appreciate the cause of Ball's misinterpretation that Kandinsky sought the representation of harmony.

Kandinsky discussed:

1. Zusammenklang ruhiger Massen miteinander.
2. Ruhige Bewegung der Teile hauptsächlich nach rechts und nach oben [punctuation of original]
3. hauptsächlich [capitalization of original]

48. Long, "Kandinskii's Vision" 53.

spitze Bewegung nach links und nach oben.⁴⁹

Although he described his forms in terms of contrasting emotions, "the basis for the dialectical division he described is far from obvious."⁵⁰ Part of the difficulty lies in the viewer's understanding of Kandinsky's color symbolism, and how one is to have the "correct emotional response." An apt example is Kandinsky's description of the color yellow in *Composition IV*: "das Gelb ist kalt. Dieses Hell-Süß-Kalte zum Spitz-Bewegten (Krieg) ist der Hauptgegensatz im Bilde" ("Notizen" 34).

Ball was greatly impressed by the "technical and formal prerogatives" of Kandinsky's "color psychology,"⁵¹ when he recounted a lengthy passage from *Über das Geistige* (59-61) of "die ersten Farben, die einen starken Eindruck auf mich gemacht haben" ("Lecture" 232). But he also noted the innate problem of the color psychology as one of subjectivity, in that it relied solely on the personal experiences of Kandinsky. Ball found it possible to understand the color correspondences only, "Wenn man weiß, was diese Farben für ihn bedeuten" ("Lecture" 700). Here he referred to Kandinsky's recollection of the references and associations that occurred within him as he experienced

49. "Notizen," *Kandinsky 1901-1913*, ed. Herwarth Walden, *Der Sturm* (Berlin: Paul F. Sanders, 1913) 33.

50. Butler 44.

51. Bowlt, "The Russian Connection" 4.

the colors. Many of these particular correspondences are at the base of Kandinsky's color-sound synaesthetic theory as well. Some other of Kandinsky's examples include: "hell, saftig grün . . . ist . . . was im Menschenreich die sogenannte Bourgeoisie ist;" "karminrot . . . erinnert musikalisch an den Klang der Fanfaren wobei die Tuba klingt;" "weiß . . . Es kommt ein großes Schweigen von dort, welches wie eine unübersteigliche, unzerstörbare, ins Unendliche gehende kalte Mauer uns vorkommt" ("Lecture" 700). Kandinsky sought to represent a universal, spiritual sensation, yet Ball noted that he described the sound of the colors almost purely in terms of associations that were derived from nothing more than personal experience. He noted that Kandinsky's later adult comprehensions of color were based on childhood experiences, and spoke of: "Kandinsky, der in Farben denkt, [und] seine spätere Welt schon in der Kindheit fand" ("Lecture" 701). The following is an analogy for green concerning self-satisfied feelings that emerge from the color: "Grün . . . ist wie eine sehr dicke, sehr gesunde, unbeweglich liegende Kuh" (*Über das Geistige* 94). The source of this green impression could very well be related to the image of the grass within which the cow lies, and which it eats. These purely material associations appear to be at the heart of Kandinsky's very spiritual goal. It is perhaps a credit to Ball's theory that he was aware of this subjective aspect of Kandinsky's theory. Ball's criticism of it underscores his belief in

his own role as a totally subjective mediator.

Yet associations play a central role in Ball's sound poems too. He hoped, however, that these associations were ones which originated individually in each of his readers, and that they were caused by a successful "true" rendition of an experience, left in its pure, unadulterated state. When reading a sound poem where there are very few external references, one finds oneself understanding or creating action in the poem by building on links of associations. The very general points of reference exist to provide a framework. The sounds of the sequemes are to parallel inner sounds and strike actual inner chords, with which a mystical experience, i.e. a truer communication, was to be achieved. Ball hoped that the actual associations which each reader built on the sound sequemes would stem from the inner essences they struck, i.e. they would be experiences that the reader individually associated with these inner essences (within the broader lexical framework the poet had set up) which, in turn, would cause other associations with similar inner sounds. This referential and associational process is vital in experiencing the sound poem, and appears to be more objective than Kandinsky's. However, the problem of artistic subjectivity in choice of "words" is always present - even if Ball considered the poet's role more as one of medium for the inner and prearticulate.

With, e.g., the lexical title of the sound poem "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" Ball provided the reader with

the framework of an underwater scene and two (types of) animals connected with it. Within that framework the reader responds to various onomatopoetic sounds (*zick-zack*), certain sounds reminiscent of colors (*leila* = *lila*, *blau(lala)*, *viola* = violet) and with *viola*, even a sound which has a lexical equivalent as the name of a musical instrument. Ball thereby very closely paralleled Kandinsky's analogies. These are, however, only familiar bases provided for the reader. The remainder is what is innovative about the sound poem and how it functions. The aural values of the sounds are intended to very specifically correspond with emotions or inner sounds. Applied thereto are very distinct grammatical rules, (albeit untraditional ones)⁵² that are, however, not the guiding principle, but totally subservient to the elements which they attempt to express. It is not a grammar which forces these elements into its rules for expression (which is what Ball saw conventional journalistic language as doing). Of course, Kandinsky also aimed at using such an autonomous "grammar" when he stated in "Rückblicke" that, "Alle Formen, die ich je brauchte, kamen 'von selbst'. . . ." (39).

Conclusion

In the last section of Ball's talk, "Bühnenkomposition

52. See this study, Chapter 5.

und die Künste," he praised Kandinsky's drama *Der gelbe Klang*, and once again found its success in the incorporation of "harmonisierten Vokalen und Konsonanten" (703). Towards the end of the lecture, however, Ball finally appears to have obtained the most apt perception of Kandinsky's goals when he mentioned that "Kandinskys Idee einer monumentalen Bühnenkomposition . . . von entgegengesetzten Voraussetzungen aus[geht]," realized through "ein Gegeneinander der einzelnen Künste" (702). Other than at this point in the discussion, Ball's writings evidence a constant misinterpretation of Kandinsky by emphasizing an insistence on a harmony and balance. Although Kandinsky looked to the inner world for harmony in the face of the confusion of his time, he realized that there too lies lawlessness of the instinct. Ball never acknowledged Kandinsky's earnest attempt to create art which was to reflect these opposites, contradictions and conflicts of the time. Sheppard believes that Kandinsky recognized the disharmony of modern life as something disconcerting to the human as well as universal spirit. However, Ball, although aware of these problems, saw the inner spirit as well as the stronger universal spirit as the last sanctuary, and perhaps the stronger guiding force - to pull us through the chaos, the turmoil of the modern world, in particular the First World War. In Ball's handwritten draft for the talk, there are several deletions of yet more "harmonious" descriptions. Perhaps Ball

deleted them, aware of his overemphasis or over interpretation of this aspect of Kandinsky's spirituality.

Ball's insistence on seeking harmony reflects a central part of his character, his goals for communication and his interest in utopianist anarchism. In 1918 he wrote of his desire to improve these situations to Hennings:

Rousseau hat Rußland revoltiert, Rousseau wird auch Deutschland revoltieren. Der Mensch ist keine Maschine: - Rückkehr zur Natur. Der Mensch ist kein Teufel: - Rückkehr zum Christentum. . . . [ellipses in original] Der Mensch ist kein Höhlenbewohner: - Rückkehr zur Heimat.⁵³

Still in 1926, after perhaps getting as close to harmony as he ever would with his life characterized by an immersion into hagiographic studies and an ascetic and hermitic existence, he praised his friend Hermann Hesse's writing for its incorporation of just that which he had been seeking:

Wie schön ist Ihre Geschichte der Blauen Lau. Um ein einziges Wort der ganze Aufwand, die ganze dazugehörige Landschaft: das ist sehr, sehr schön. Die Illusion hat sie alle Abhorrenz überwinden lassen. So ist es eben auch mir gegangen. Und das ist schön, daß diese Magie vorhanden ist, bereits wo Sie zu sprechen beginnen.⁵⁴

53. February. Cited in *Briefe* 106.

54. Letter 30 March 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 251.

CHAPTER 4. ZAUM.

Ball's Connection to Russia

The clearest parallel between both Ball's theory and style is established with the Russian practitioners of zaum poetry. There exists no personal documentation of Ball's awareness of these writers; however, given his vast literary interests, in particular his research of Russian anarchism and his ties with Kandinsky, it is most likely that Ball was aware of contemporaneous artistic and literary theory in Russia, and hence that of the zaum writers.

The beginning of Ball's interest in Russian developments can be documented to November 1914 with the mention of his reading of Dmitri Sergei Merezhkovsky (*Flucht* November 1914).¹ Merezhkovsky, a novelist and critic, had written on the mystic neo-Christian theory of the balance of spirit and matter, with which Ball remained occupied until his death.²

Russian references remain constant in *Flucht*. In November 1914 he began his studies of Bakunin and

1. He also mentions Merezhkovsky in a letter to Hofmann, 18 December 1914. Cited in *Briefe* 35. The Merezhkovsky text he referred to is *Der Zar und die Revolution* (Munich: Piper, 1908).

2. The German, Gustav Fechner had written on this mystic balance already in 1860, five years before Merezhkovsky's birth, in *Elemente der Psychophysik*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Härtel, 1889) 3. In the early twentieth century the Russians entertained an avid interest in the German Fechner.

Kropotkin, which preoccupied him through 1919 when he completed his book on Bakunin.³

On 25 November 1914 he criticized the Russian "Nihilisten." And on 23 March 1915 he lectured on "Rußlands revolutionäre Idee" at a "Politischer Abend" organized along with Huelsenbeck.⁴ In other *Flucht* entries he made references to the Russian Orthodoxy, Peter Chaadayev, Fjodor Dostoevski, Vladimir Soloviev, Basil Rozanov, and the Czar Nicholas II. On 13 December 1915 Ball discussed Russian pre-war theater. During the previous October he wondered, "Was es es wohl bedeuten mag, das russische 'Ins Volk gehen?' Es kann vielerlei bedeuten . . ." (11 October 1915).

Further evidence of Kandinsky's role as Ball's cultural disseminator can be found in the prologue to *Flucht*, where Ball discussed how he met von Hartmann through Kandinsky, and how von Hartmann, who had just returned from Moscow, had introduced him to the theory of Stanislawsky, "und trug sehr viel dazu bei, meinen Gesichtskreis und meine Forderungen an ein modernes Theater zu erweitern" (*Flucht* 19-20).

3. See this study, Introduction Chapter especially 59-66.

4. Mann, *An Intellectual Biography* 55. Nothing more is known about this evening. Announcement for this lecture printed in the *Berliner Börsen-Courier* 23 March 1915 (Morgenausgabe) 3.

Ball's contact with Russian naturals continued throughout his Cabaret Voltaire period. In his description of the Cabaret performances on 6 February 1916, he stated, "Es waren viele Russen da," performing balalaikas. This more traditional performance at first seems atypical of the Cabaret Voltaire forum; it is, however, indicative of the contemporary avant-garde interest in a return to folk art as a source to more basic, primitive, i.e. ur-forms of communication.

On 4 March 1916 there is further contact at the Cabaret with Russian literature:

Herr Dolgaleff, brachte zwei Humoresken von
Tschechow . . .

Eine fremde Dame liest "Jegoruschka" von Turgenjew
und Verse von Nekrassow. . . .

Klaviermusik von Skrjabin und Rachmaninoff.
(*Flucht*)

On 2 June 1916 Ball wrote to August Hofmann about his music interests, and again, the Russians predominated, "Es gibt so interessante Musik . . . Kennst Du Strawinsky, Ravel, Skrjabin? . . . Ich selbst klimpere Ravel, Borodin und Rachmaninoff."⁵

After leaving Zurich, Ball stayed current on Russian events. From Bern he informed Hennings of the political climate in Russia, ending with "Dann verfolgt doch, was

5. Cited in *Briefe* 56-57.

jetzt in Rußland vorgeht. Das ist sehr instruktiv."⁶ And six months later he mentioned to Hennings how "die Russen" had held the same beliefs as he and she in the need for naivety and rediscovering the child within oneself.⁷

The following texts relating to Russia or written by Russians appear on a typed list Ball had made of books in his library around 1922:

Bakunin, *Dieu et l'état*; Leo Trotzky, *Von der Oktoberrevolution bis zum Brester Friedensvertrag* 1918; Solovjeff, *Rechtfertigung des Guten*; Lenin, *Staat und Revolution* 1918; Masaryk, *Die Grundlagen des Marxismus*; Lunatscharsky, *Die Kulturaufgaben der Arbeiterklasse* 1919; Dostojewsky, *Totenhaus*; Gedichte Kandinsky ("Fruehling" und "Fagott"); Bakunin - Kapitel (Wegfall aus der "Kritik" Bern 18) 2 Teil.⁸

This comprises the extent of direct statements by Ball on Russian cultural aspects. While there is no specific mention of the zaum writers, as had been the case with Marinetti and Kandinsky, some of Ball's contemporaries have confidently asserted this connection.

6. September 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 91.

7. Letter March 1 1918. Cited in *Briefe* 109.

8. The last listed title is from December 1921. This six-page list can only represent a minute portion of the texts Ball had owned during his lifetime given his constant changes of residence and the impoverished conditions under which he traveled allowing for the transport of very few belongings (Ms, Nachlaß Hugo Ball, Depositum Robert Walser Archiv, Zurich).

In "Zur Geschichte des Lautgedichts," Hausmann asserted that Kandinsky often spoke of "Gedichte ohne Worte" by Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh and that he was present during a discussion of these in 1912 in Munich.⁹ Asserting his knowledge of Khlebnikov's use of Ural and Tscherkessian dialects, Hausmann also cites the Roumanian Tzara's recitation of poetry at the Cabaret with "einigen geheimen tscherkessischen und uralischen Ausdrücke." He felt certain that Ball was "inspiriert" "durch ein Echo" of these expressions.¹⁰ Hausmann also repeated this claim in the 1967 publication "Note sur le poème phonétique: Kandinsky et Ball."¹¹

Hans Richter, as well, mentioned in a letter to Scholz that Ball must have known about zaum, but could not recall anything from the Dada days to prove this.¹² And in Huelsenbeck's *Memoirs of a Dada Drummer* Hans Kleinschmidt poses it as a well-known fact that Kandinsky mentioned to Ball the Russian phoneticists Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh.¹³

9. *Am Anfang war Dada* (Steinbach: Gießen, 1970) 37-38 and 42.

10. *Zürcher Chronik*. Cited in Scholz 125.

11. *German Life and Letters* 1: 58-59.

12. Scholz 125.

13. Eds. Hans J. Kleinschmidt and Rudolf E. Kuenzli, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (Berkeley: U of California P, 1974) xxxii.

Kandinsky: Moscow and Odessa

Kandinsky clearly remained Ball's strongest link to Russia. Bowlt states with certainty that Kandinsky did much to "disseminate his esthetic views among Russian artists and critics" and to maintain direct contact with Russian cultural life."¹⁴ Not only were Kandinsky's publications constantly circulating within Russia, but he was visiting his homeland continuously, and bringing Russian developments back to Germany.

Although Kandinsky moved to Munich in 1896, he maintained contact with Russia through visits, publications and exhibitions. As he developed into a major figure in Germany, he concurrently exercised a strong influence in Russian art circles. He returned briefly to Odessa and Moscow in 1903, and made trips to Odessa again in 1904 and 1905. From 1902 to 1904 he was contributing to the Russian journal *World of Art*. In 1904 Kandinsky published his "Verse ohne Worte" in Moscow. He traveled extensively between 1903 and 1908, but constantly returned to Munich, settling there definitively in 1908.

Kandinsky made great efforts to exhibit the works of a select group of Russian artists in Germany. In 1910 he invited the Burliuk brothers to contribute to the second exhibition of the Neue Künstlervereinigung in Munich; and in 1911 they were invited to the first exhibition of the -----

14. "The Russian Connection" 1.

Blaue Reiter in Munich as well. For the second Blaue Reiter show Kandinsky invited Natalia Goncharova and Mikhail Larionov as well as the Burliuks.

Although Kandinsky considered Munich his new home, he continued his visits to Russia, traveling there again in 1910, 1911 and 1912. Not only was he clearly disseminating information on artistic movements, theories and activities within Russian artistic circles to his German associates upon his return, but he was reciprocally sharing German developments with Russia. Kandinsky was the central figure in the Munich avant garde, founding the Neue Künstler Vereinigung in 1909 and the Blaue Reiter group in 1911. The reciprocity between Russian and German ideas was clearly extensive. One can confidently put forth the assumption that Kandinsky brought zaum ideas from Russia back to Ball in Germany, and that Ball was influenced by these Russian developments, but worthy of consideration is just how much zaum was, perhaps, influenced by Kandinsky himself, given the continued dissemination of his ideas in Moscow and Odessa and his esteemed influence there.

In continuing his contacts with Russia, Kandinsky played the role of Munich correspondent for the Russian periodical *Apollo* for one full year from 1909 to 1910. He had contributed to the Apollon group's Salon in St. Petersburg in 1909 as well. In 1910 he had a solo show in Odessa and contributed to the Exhibition of Industrial Art

as well as to the Spring Exhibition of Paintings there. Nikolai Kulbin¹⁵ had been propagating Kandinsky's ideas throughout artistic and literary circles since Kandinsky's move to Germany, and it was through Kulbin's influence that Kandinsky was invited to read in Russian from his *Über das Geistige* at the All-Russian Congress of Artists in St. Petersburg in 1911. That year Kandinsky assisted in Izdebsky's Odessa Salon opening, which also exhibited works by him. He was closely associated with Larionov and the Jack of Diamonds group, and in 1912 a formal discussion of him was held at one of the group's gatherings. Many of the Jack of Diamonds' members later migrated to zaum style and philosophy.

Kandinsky had been introduced to Khlebnikov by David Burliuk via letter in 1912, and may have met him when Khlebnikov embarked on a trip to western Europe that year.¹⁶ But it was in December of 1912 that Kandinsky was first officially associated with zaum. Four of Kandinsky's "Klänge" poems were published in the zaum manifesto *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*,¹⁷ albeit without his prior

15. Kandinsky's strongest Russian contact was a professor at the St. Petersburg Military Academy, a doctor to the general staff and a state councilor with close ties to the Russian Cubo-Futurists (Bowlit, "The Russian Connection" 24).

16. Charlotte Douglas, ed., *Collected Works of V. Khlebnikov. Vol. I. Letters and Theoretical Writings*, trans. Paul Schmidt (Harvard UP, 1987) 16.

17. Lawton 51-52.

knowledge or consent.

Bowlit comments on this unauthorized publication, stating that Kandinsky's poems were "scarcely appropriate to the vociferous manifesto that opened the contents and bade the reader 'throw Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoi, et al, overboard from the Ship of Modernity'."¹⁸ Bowlit contrasts the propagandistic aspect of this manifesto and what he feels was a lack of serious literary and spiritual content in general with Kandinsky's included pieces: "Kandinsky's prose poems still retained the moment of inner necessity, requiring the reader to approach the work . . . with the soul and with subjective experience."¹⁹ Looking at only this zaum publication, it is easy for Bowlit to overlook the deeper spiritual element that is an integral aspect of zaum theory. The writers of *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* clearly included Kandinsky because they felt themselves indebted to and influenced by him. And Kandinsky's milder style may simply be a characteristic of "early zaum." This would, of course, suggest a clear influence by Kandinsky on the zaum group. Ball, with his respect for Kandinsky's ideas, began with a very similar point of departure, and -----

18. "The Russian Connection" 17. Kandinsky, as well, was angered by what he felt was the inappropriate inclusion of his poems.

19. The phrase "approach . . . experience" is quoted by Bowlit from Kandinsky's Russian publication, "O ponimanii iskusstva," *vesennaiaia vystavka kartin Katalog* (Odessa, 1914) 9-13. ("On an Understanding of Art," *Spring Painting Exhibition Catalog*). "The Russian Connection" 20-21.

arrived at very similar sound poems as his end result. He could, thus, have come to sound poems via Kandinsky in the same manner as the zaum group; i.e. even if Kandinsky had never used the word "zaum." Given the extent of Kandinsky's reciprocal work, however, it is very unlikely that such an exchange of ideas should not have occurred.

As influential as Kandinsky was on Russian developments,²⁰ Russia's influence on him should not be understated. In 1918 Kandinsky stated, "I regard Moscow . . . as the starting-point of my searches."²¹ One does need to keep in mind that this statement was made during a nationalistic period in Kandinsky's life, and was intended to serve a certain propagandistic purpose as well.²² It does, however, reflect many of the statements

20. Will Grohmann believes that even as early as 1910 Kandinsky was beyond influence by the Russians, and that only he could have exerted influence on *them* (Wassily Kandinsky. *Life and Work* [New York: Abrams, (1955)] 82).

21. *Tekst khudozhnika* (*Texts of an Artist*) (Moscow: IZO NKP [Visual Arts Section of the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment], 1918).

22. From 1914 on, when Kandinsky returned to Russia with the outbreak of the war, and especially after 1916, he was enlisted by Anatole Lunacharsky, the Minister of the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment, to play an important part in the Revolution. He stayed in Russia until 1921 in various roles as official artist, ranging from his membership in the fine arts section of the People's Commissariat of Education to his employment as a teacher at State Art Workshops in Moscow and professor at the Moscow University. He also translated "Rückblicke" into Russian, set up the Museum of Pictorial Culture in Moscow and organized 22 provincial museums.

Kandinsky made earlier, during his residence in Munich.²³ Bowlt, as well, believes that "Rückblicke" and *Über das Geistige* attest to how much Kandinsky was affected by what was going on in Russia: "In many contexts - and *On the Spiritual in Art* is a case in point - Kandinsky adopted and expanded ideas and ideals supported by the Russian intelligentsia of the early twentieth century."²⁴

Kandinsky's 1913 publication of "Rückblicke" clearly attests to his homage to Russia at least as a source of inspiration. He had been looking back to traditional Russian cultural elements since 1889 when he embarked on a study trip with the Society of Natural Sciences, Ethnography and Anthropology in Vologda. During this time his interest in local decorative art was spurred considerably. Elements from 17th-century religious icons (in particular the Russian *lubki* prints) had become important sources for his painting by 1910.²⁵ These icons, folk art and 12th-century Russian Scythian sculpture formed the basis of an important new direction for his Expressionist painting. This orientation toward folk art and primitivism played a major role not only in the work of the German Expressionists, but was also a major interest of -----

23. Bowlt, "The Russian Connection" 1.

24. "The Russian Connection" 1.

25. Rose-Carol Washton Long, "Kandinsky's Abstract Style: The Veiling of Apocalyptic Folk Imagery," *Art Journal* (Spring 1975): 219.

Khlebnikov's, particularly in his effort to trace language back to the roots of early Russian dialects.

Kandinsky's bi-polar influence resumed after the First World War in 1921. After great official success in Russia, but with the official condemnation of easel painting, Kandinsky returned to Germany, and in 1922 assumed one of the teaching positions at the Bauhaus in Weimar as a "master of form." But he did not turn his back on Russia completely, and in the same year contributed to a major exhibition of Russian art in Berlin. His cross-cultural contacts continued to remain strong until his forced exclusion from all things German and Russian with the outbreak of Nazism.²⁶

Zaum. The Concept

The word "zaum" first appeared in print in Kruchenykh's essay "New Ways of the Word" of 1913.²⁷ However, Kruchenykh regarded three poems from his book *Pomade*, published just a few months earlier, as zaum poems. Among these was the notorious: "dyr bul shchyl"²⁸ which has -----

26. He fled to France in 1933 where he remained until his death.

27. This essay, fully titled "New Ways of the Word (the language of the future, death to Symbolism)," was published in 1913 in the collection *The Three*, which also included works by Khlebnikov and Elena Guro. Reprinted in *Russian Futurism Through its Manifestoes, 1912-1928*, eds. Ann Lawton and Herbert Eagle (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988) 69-77.

28. Lawton 13.

since come to be regarded as the quintessential zaum poem (see att. 16). The word "zaum" is generally translated into English as: beyond reason. To achieve a more lexical examination, the word can be broken into two parts of two letters each. The first part *za* in Russian can mean "beyond, the other side of, through."²⁹ It is a somewhat ambivalent term, but that is the very nature of the concept of *zaum*. The morpheme *um* most literally means "pilings," i.e. foundations of manmade structures.³⁰ In a literary context, *zaum* was thus used to signify: going beyond preconceived structures of manmade literary and linguistic norms; or even: going beyond any manmade thought structures; in some cases even: aiming for a total abandonment of all things rational. The morpheme *um* can also mean "wit" or "intellect."³¹ Going beyond *um* can therefore additionally be regarded as an attempt at approaching reason's very opposite; i.e.: magic, or magic words, or "that part of language that contains a power inaccessible to the intellect and is always opposed to it."³²

Because of its multivalent meaning, the term "zaum"

29. Elizabeth Klosty Beaujour, "Zaum," *Dada/Surrealism* 2 (1972): 13.

30. Charlotte Douglas, ed., *The King of Time*. Velimir Khlebnikov, trans. Paul Schmidt (Harvard UP, 1985) 113.

31. Klosty Beaujour, "Zaum" 13.

32. Douglas, *King of Time* 113.

was clearly used in different ways by different poets. It, therefore, allows for the two most-recognized representatives of zaum to be such opposites as Kruchenykh with his non-sense "freed-word" poems achieved through much technical manipulation and Khlebnikov with his more comprehensible poetry arrived upon through mystical paths. Both writers shared a common dissatisfaction with conventional forms of expression and what they saw as the "frozen" language of their times. Just like Ball, both Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh sought a language where the signifier and the signified were to achieve a much closer synonymy. Thus, inherent to the zaum language was a strict relationship between sound and meaning. It was to be a language where the sound of a word struck an inner chord or inner comprehension on the most direct, unmediated path possible - ultimately on a level completely bypassing rational, articulated comprehension. The parallel between this theoretical foundation and Ball's is remarkable.

Both Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh saw the individual letters of the alphabet as laden with meaning. They also sought a new language based on Slavic roots, wherein they found *ur*-meaning attached to basic sounds. The stylistic similarities between these zaum writers and Ball are clearly no less remarkable, and are indicative of either Ball's awareness of their developments - zaum poetry predating his sound poems by three years; or at least a parallel development possibly spurred by the mutual

influence of Kandinsky's theory. The extreme measures with which Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh pursued their new language - with the total abandonment of representational language in order to create a pure sound language - demonstrates an affinity with Ball unparalleled by any other poets.

Zaum and Kandinsky

Khlebnikov may have had early cursory associations with Kandinsky through their work on the *Apollo* journal. In the fall of 1909 the young poet Khlebnikov happily found himself included "on the fringes" of the Russian Symbolists. This group maintained ties with the former World of Art group with which Kandinsky had published from 1902 to 1904. These writers' ties resulted in the *Apollo* journal, which had planned the first publication of Khlebnikov's poetry for late 1909. The editors eventually rejected the piece; however, Kandinsky was the Munich correspondent for *Apollo* at precisely this time, and an awareness of Khlebnikov is likely. By April of 1910 Kandinsky had certainly become acquainted with Khlebnikov's work when *A Trap for Judges* was published as an attack on the establishment "academy" style art of the Russian Symbolists and their aestheticism. *Apollo* certainly was aware of the piece and reacted by "mockingly" quoting from *A Trap for Judges* in its "column reserved for lunatic

fringes."³³ It was not until May 1911 that *Apollo's* members publicly admitted to the genius of the new group, offering high praise for Khlebnikov. Kandinsky was kept informed of Khlebnikov's work through David Burliuk who discussed Khlebnikov's "Teacher and Student" article in a letter to Kandinsky of April 1912, in which he also offered to either send or bring Kandinsky a copy.³⁴

Survey of Russian Literary Developments 1911-1914

Since the Russian developments toward a zaum sound language so clearly predate Ball's, it is essential to present the course of these very early progressions.

The group of Russian Cubo-Futurists³⁵ was brought together in 1911 through the initiative of close associates of Kandinsky's, the three Burliuk brothers David (the painter, poet and leader), Vladimir (the painter) and this time also the poet Nikolai as well as Benedikt Livshits.

33. Douglas, *Collected Works* 15. Original in *Apollo* 5 (1911): 76-78.

34. Douglas, *Collected Works* 16. From a letter of 9 April 1912. "Teacher and Student" of April 1912, "included the first of several published studies of equations governing the fate of nations and principles determining the location of major cities . . . [and] introduced his concept of the 'internal declension' of words."

35. The group actually passed through several names: first in 1910 it was known as the Hylaeans, by 1911 it was referred to as Futurists, although the members preferred the term Futurians to distinguish themselves from the Italians, and by 1913 the label Cubo-Futurists was used, which term will be used hereinafter for simplification.

This group evolved out of a circle of poets involved in the *Jack of Diamonds* exhibition society in Moscow. Jack of Diamonds also included Kazimir Malevich, Mikhail Matiushin, Vladimir Mayakovski and later the main theorists Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov.³⁶ The Burliuks, Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh, Malevich and Matiushin had further associations with the St. Petersburg-based Union of Youth painters organization which included the poet and artist Elena Guro, and artists Alexandra Exter, Vasily Kamensky and Vladimir Tatlin,³⁷ again associates of Kandinsky. Kulbin, a physician and painter, and most importantly, publicizer of new artistic developments was also associated with this group of Cubo-Futurists. Khlebnikov made the group's acquaintance early in 1910 after he dropped his associations with the Russian Symbolists and Apollon group. And Kruchenykh, a friend of the Burliuks since 1907, settled in Moscow in late 1910,³⁸ and thereby made his acquaintance with Khlebnikov.

Between 1910 and the beginning of World War I the Cubo-Futurists set out to popularize their work through

36. Charlotte Douglas, "Beyond Reason: Malevich, Matiushin and Their Circles," *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1900-1985*, ed. M. Tuchman (L. A. County Museum of Art, 1986) 185. Kandinsky was also closely associated with the group, and a formal discussion of him was held at a group meeting in 1912.

37. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 185.

38. Douglas, *Collected Works* 16.

radical public performances, which are often described by literary historians in the same language as the later Zurich Dada performances were: as attempts to "outrage and shock the middle class, bourgeois audience." Central to the Cubo-Futurists' interests was the renovation of language, and they did not shy from "harsh words, hard images and shock"³⁹ to achieve this.

Spiritual Foundations

Ultimately, however, the Cubo-Futurists maintained the entirely serious goal of creating a new language which would be better suited for truer, unmediated communication. While the Russian Symbolists and the Italian Futurists were involved in the renovation of language as well, their linguistic developments were considerably restricted in comparison to the Cubo-Futurists.

Also distinct from the Russian Symbolists and the Italian Futurists was the Cubo-Futurists' intense spiritual foundation, and their efforts to go beyond materialism in search of the spiritual. Their new art therefore provided a language for contemplation and discussion of the spiritual realm, and consequently greater access to it as well. This endeavor is again mirrored by Ball.

The Kandinskian idea that art could serve as a means

 39. Raymond Cooke, *Velimir Khlebnikov. A Critical Study* (Cambridge UP, 1987) 13.

of transcendence had already been accorded theoretical discussion by Andrejev Belyi, Alexandr Blok, Sergei Diaghilev and A. E. Ivanov.⁴⁰ These aspirations were thus already highly developed when the Cubo-Futurists adopted the cause. They, therefore, sought to develop this idea to its fruition, and as Douglas explains, "postulate[d] a revolution in human consciousness, an evolutionary psychic change that would alter the consciousness to a state similar to that achieved through the spiritual discipline of Yoga. . . ."⁴¹ This fundamental transformation would effect all aspects of life and the very nature of our orientation toward the universe. It was to be not only a change in attitude, but as Douglas says above, also in how the universe was perceived and experienced.⁴²

40. Bowlit, "The Russian Connection" 3.

41. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 186.

42. For a discussion of Eastern mysticism's place in their theory, see Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 185-99; Kasinec and Kerdiman, "Occult Life in Russia" 361-65, especially 363-64; Rose-Carol Washton Long, "Expressionism, Abstraction, and the Search for Utopia in Germany," *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, L. A. County Museum of Art (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986) 201-17; and Sheppard, "Dada and Mysticism" 92-111. Ball, too, dabbled in research on Japanese spiritual culture. He was particularly interested in Japanese dance. In 1911 he was reading Bernhard Kellermann's essay *Sassa yo yassa: Japanische Tänze* (Berlin, 1911) (*Flucht* 13-14). He also lectured at the Ostasiatische Gesellschaft on Japanese drama, and was entertaining the idea of staging the Japanese play "Kana-dehon Chushingura" by Takeda Izumo (1688-1765). (Letter 26 February 1914. Cited in *Briefe* 28.)

"Higher Reason" as Order

Their spiritual philosophy, while quite intense, was felt to be a rational, sober attempt at finding principles for a different kind of "reason." The Cubo-Futurist Malevich discussed the newly invented zaum style in literature and painting in two letters to Matiushin of June and July 1913:

We have come as far as the rejection of reason, but we rejected reason because another kind of reason has grown in us, which in comparison to what we have rejected, can be called "beyond reason" [zaumnyi] which also has law, construction [konstruktsiia], and sense, and only by learning it shall we have work based on the law of the truly new "beyond reason."⁴³

In a manner quite reminiscent of Kandinsky, Malevich achieved the complete abandonment of all representational forms in his painting by the spring of 1915. He had aspired toward this goal from the moment he had "decided that the objects of even partially-representational styles tie the mind to limited forms of reason and so prevent the viewer's final step into the state of higher consciousness."⁴⁴ As much as this statement rings of Ball, there is a fundamental difference in final intent. The

43. Undated letters, Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow f.25, no. 9, sheets 11-12. Cited in Charlotte Douglas, *Swans of Other Worlds* 51 and "Beyond Reason" 188.

44. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 188.

Cubo-Futurists Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh, unlike Malevich, resembled Ball more closely in that their ultimate goal was not only to bring the public to a higher state of consciousness, but to achieve this purer state of consciousness for the purposes of clearer and truer communication.

Nonetheless, Malevich's abandonment of the representational world was not merely an effort at meandering in his ideal spiritual land. Douglas refers to certain Cubist paintings of Malevich from 1912-1913 such as *Morning in the Village After the Snowstorm* (1912) or *Carpenter's Scene* (1912), both of which Malevich described as "zaum reason," to demonstrate that "clearly he did not intend them to be irrational but to express a concrete, but higher, order of reality."⁴⁵

Principles of Eastern Yoga

Central to achieving an intuitive or zaum state were principles parallel to those of Yoga in which great effort and concentration are required. Douglas sees it as "far from being a passive and anti-intellectual approach to art [but rather] the result of concentrated intellectual effort."⁴⁶ Many followers of the zaum philosophy were interested in the Vendanta School and Raja Yoga, whose

45. "Beyond Reason" 188.

46. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 190.

theories were popularized by the Russian Theosophist P. D. Uspensky in his two texts: *The Fourth Dimension* of 1909 and *Tertium Organum* of 1911.⁴⁷ These Yoga principles were extremely influential in the development of much of zaum theory and give it its more disciplined flavor.

Other Examples of "Order" and "Non-Anti-Reason"

It is apparent that behind every extreme-sounding form of mysticism there existed this "sober" base. The name alone of Pavel Filonov's "Universal Flowering" suggests a fantastic folly. Matiushin joined this group along with other artists who were awaiting and preparing for a time of cosmic unity.⁴⁸ Matiushin described Filonov's universal flowering as "the new understanding of the word as a self-sufficient sound, the slow rhythm of life beating in the inorganic life of a crystal."⁴⁹ Conversely, however,

47. *The Fourth Dimension: A Study of an Unfathomable World*, and *Tertium Organum: The third canon of thought, a Key to the enigmas of the world*, trans. E. Kadloubovsky (New York: Knopf, 1981). See also Kasinec's and Kerdiman's discussion of Ouspensky's trip to India and the details of his influences (363-64).

48. English translations of Filonov's writings are contained in *Pavel Filonov: A Hero and his Fate*, trans. and ed. Nicoletta Misler and John E. Bowlit (Austin, Texas: Silvergirl, 1983) with essays concerning his relationship to zaum by Misler, Bowlit and Vera Anikieva.

49. Matiushin: "Tvorchestvo Pavla Filonov" (The Work of Pavel Filonov) in *Ezhegodnik rukopisnogo otdela Pushkinskogo doma na 1977g* (1977 Annual manuscript division of the Pushkin House) ed. E.F. Kovtun (Leningrad: Nuaka, 1979), 232-33. Cited in Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 192.

Filonov also spoke of the artist needing to achieve "purity," "exactness" and "control" in his works.⁵⁰ Filonov, who had also been a member of the Union of Youth, developed the theory of "made paintings" in which he hoped the inner laws of the natural world would be represented. An example of this style in literature is Filonov's *Chant of universal flowering*, "two long neologistic poems, litanies of the horrors of war succeeded by mankind's ultimate transcendence in Filonov's vision of light and harmony," published in 1915 by Matiushin.⁵¹

Pacifism

Pacifist ideology commonly distinguished the zaum poets from the Italian Futurists. The Russians viewed this distinction as a more advanced development of their "Futurism," often ridiculing the Italians for their glorification of the military, urban life and modern technology. When Marinetti finally commenced his much-anticipated visit to Russia in 1914, the reception was all but cordial. Khlebnikov so resented Marinetti's claim to Futurism's "paternity" that he disrupted Marinetti's lecture and had to be thrown out of the performance hall.⁵² Kruchenykh posed his group of Futurists against the

50. Filonov, "Made Paintings," 1914, Misler 135.

51. Douglas, "Beyond Reason 186.

52. Douglas, *King of Time* 2.

Italians' in "New Ways of the Word" stating that, "We are serious and solemn, not destructive and coarse . . ." (*New Ways of the Word* 76). A few lines above, however, the manifesto states the need for being "coarse" (*New Ways of the Word* 76). When similarities such as these are considered, the loathing of Marinetti would appear mostly to be the result of a petty dispute over paternity. However, the differences between the two groups are so fundamental, that a Russian resentment of Marinetti's claim to paternity appears totally understandable. Marinetti may have founded Italian Futurism, but this was a very different Futurism from the Russian Cubo-Futurism. The "coarseness" which both groups shared was a necessary point of departure - it acknowledged the need for extremes in order to create a new language, and in order to fulfill the ultimate need to destroy old cultural norms. The styles that emerged from this total abandonment of the status quo were, however, quite distinct.

Markov also discusses the similarities between the Italians and the Russians stating that the Italians influenced the Russians much more than the Russians cared to admit.⁵³ Victor Erlich affirms this same claim in "The Place of Russian Futurism within the Russian Poetic

53. *Russian Futurism: A History* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1968) 382.

Avantgarde: A Reconsideration."⁵⁴ Cooke refutes Markov's and Erlich's claims, stating that the similarities between the Italian and Russian Futurists were more an example of shared attitudes and parallel developments than influences from one upon the other.⁵⁵

Both Markov and Erlich cite Khlebnikov's early nationalism and glorification of the war as a trait common with Marinetti. Such war-glorification, however, had been present in Ball as well, who precisely because of this early conviction, became all the more pacifistic once he discovered the "truth" after his visit to the front.

Khlebnikov's early Neo-Slavic interests between 1908 and 1913 could indeed be interpreted as nationalism, but Douglas explains that his view went beyond the expected response to Balkan hostilities, German militarism and Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to an interest in expanding the concept of "Slavic" by reaching deeper into Slavic cultural history and including viewpoints of Jews, Pomeranians and Bulgars, as well as considering the influences on Slavic culture by Persia and Mongolia.⁵⁶ Khlebnikov's nationalism appears to have been one defined more by cultural pride than militarism.

54. *Russian Literature* 13 (1983): 14-15.

55. 12.

56. *Collected Works* 19.

The apocalyptic vision, as well, may have fascinated him as it did many Germans (including Ball) in a sort of romanticized vision of glorified vitalism. As was common, however, as soon as the reality of the war emerged, Khlebnikov was against it, and his poetry after 1915 exhibits a strong pacifism. After being drafted at the age of 30, he wrote to a friend on 8 April 1916:

The King is out of luck,
The King is under lock and key.
Infantry Regiment Ninetythree
Will be the death of the child in me.⁵⁷

Avoiding active service through medical appeals and reviews, Khlebnikov was still working on the new language by the time the revolution arrived in February of 1917.⁵⁸ For Ball and Khlebnikov the shame of their early shortsightedness only led to a deeper affinity with the inner world of spiritual peace and to an attempt at achieving *unio mystica*.

Khlebnikov's pacifistic idealism of cosmic unity as it later developed was quite intense, and bordered on the realm of the fantastic when he formed his "Society of 317,"

57. Douglas, *Collected Works* 23. Khlebnikov's acquaintances often referred to him as "The King of Time." He felt the repercussions of the war on his poetic language as well, writing in April or May 1916 to Kulbin, "Thanks to the continual, monotonous cursing and swearing, my feeling for language is dying within me" (Douglas, *Collected Works* 24).

58. Douglas, *Collected Works* 24.

whose members referred to themselves as "Martians," or his appeals to "Everyone, Everywhere" and to all the "Presidents of the Planet Earth."⁵⁹

Linguistic Innovations

Kruchenykh, on the other hand, was not prone to such spiritual idealism. Roman Jakobson characterizes his "common sense [as] occasionally resembling madness."⁶⁰ Kruchenykh remained more the linguistic theoretician and the one who traveled to extremes via linguistic innovations as opposed to idealistic theory. The group referred to as "zaumniki" (i.e. the "transrationalists") actually did not include the spiritually-bent Khlebnikov, but restricted their "membership" to those whose primary preoccupation was linguistic theories and experiments in pure sound.

Zaum language had its origins in Russian Cubo-Futurist language where "common, even coarse vocabulary and subject

59. The title "President of Planet Earth" originates from the organization which Khlebnikov and Grigory Petnikov founded in 1916, "Society of 317", whose members Khlebnikov later referred to as Martians and then "Presidents of Planet Earth" (Douglas, *Collected Works* 24). Its members envisioned a world government formed by artists, scientists and other young, creative thinkers who would overcome the evils caused by political states. It also included in its program "a holistic vision of nature" in which Khlebnikov attempted to find humanity's place (Douglas, *King of Time* 5). The title "King of Time" came from his friends: "Khlebnikov, The First King of Time" (Douglas, *King of Time* 9).

60. And Krystyna Pomorska, *Dialogues*, trans. Christian Hubert (Cambridge: MIT, 1983) 8.

matter, a fast paced line, and an emphasis on verbal material for its own sake" was common. It was also laden with "puns, double entendre, logical absurdities, grammatical confusions. . . ." ⁶¹ Zaum was a natural outgrowth of Russian Cubo-Futurism's "concern with the texture of the linguistic symbol, its shape, its sound. . . ." ⁶² However, the zaumniki went further, to the point of abandoning representational language altogether. They may have accomplished this more easily than Ball, or at least one could imagine that it was most likely not as difficult or bizarre a transition for the public by virtue of the extremely inflexive nature of the Russian language. The conventional practice of using prefixes and/or suffixes to create new subtly altered words also facilitated the introduction of zaum. This linguistic tool is precisely what was used to create the word "zaum" as described above.

Zaum's openendedness saw far reaching ramifications in the literary world. Lawton cites other Cubo-Futurists who were revolutionary in their transrational verbal experimentation as a result of zaum's influence: Guro created a transrational zaum language based on speech patterns of children. Kamensky "consistently used transreason in the first edition of his long poem "Stenka Razin, The Heart of the People." Mayakovsky, used

61. Douglas, *King of Time* 1.

62. Klosty Beaujour, "Zaum" 14.

"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."⁶³ Igor Severyanin, a member of the Russian Ego-Futurism group formed in 1911 created "bizarre neologisms; the use of foreign, or foreign-sounding, words of a mundane type; and experimentation with new rhythms and rhymes." Lawton further cites the Cubo-Futurists Vasilisk Gnedov with his "folksy neologisms" as well as Pavel Shirokov.⁶⁴

Psycho-linguistics

These varied mystical and linguistic theories and practices shared a quite similar foundation, and by 1918 they converged to a final sober and scientific union - one to which they seem to have been pointing all along: psycholinguistics. In 1918 while Matiushin was engaged at the Petrograd State Free Art-Teaching Studios, and at the State Institute of Artistic Culture in Leningrad, he and his students studied and "derived their art from laboratory experiments on perception."⁶⁵ This work on what they called "spatial realism" included experiments in space, color, form and sound. The work was extremely significant

63. Lawton 14.

64. 22-23.

65. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 186.

to what had always lain at the base of zaum theory in its investigation of the detection of the subtle connections between stimuli and perception.⁶⁶ Interesting in relation to earlier theories of Kandinsky are the zaumniks' 1929 findings that perceptions of color were influenced by sound, e.g. a low, rough noise would cause a color to darken and redden, and a high, sharp note might make it appear more transparent and bluish. Their findings also drew similar parallels with color and shape.⁶⁷ The Moscow-based artists of the Blue Rose group, as well, had been exploiting color for its psychological value since 1907.⁶⁸

A significant influence in Russia at the time had been the psychophysics of Fechner's 1860 *Elemente der Psychophysik*. This book had been popular in Russia since its publication and by the end of the century the text had become standard for science students.⁶⁹ Fechner used principles of physics to study the correlation between sensory stimulation and their subjective responses. For Fechner there existed no boundaries between correlations of the soul and matter. His studies were to prove this affinity, and from that point, depart to further investigations of sensory correlations.

66. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 197.

67. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 195.

68. Bowlit, "The Russian Connection" 14.

69. Douglas, "Beyond Reason" 199.

Unter *Psychophysik* soll hier eine exacte Lehre von den functionellen oder Abhängigkeitsbeziehungen zwischen Körper und Seele, allgemeiner zwischen körperlicher und geistiger, physischer und psychischer Welt verstanden werden.⁷⁰

The reciprocal influences between the Germans and Russians in this regard are worthy of further examination. Whatever the cross-cultural exchanges, it is not unrealistic to assume that Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh were aware of this very popular work. Fechner's interests mirror Khlebnikov's and Kruchenykh's idea of the soul, i.e. the spiritual aspect within humans as constituting an innate part of all consciousness and experience - as well as matter; that this awareness had been lost and abandoned to a material rationality and reasoning; and that an appreciation of sensory perception needed to be reinstated into the reasoning process. Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh, seeing that the next step in the reasoning process was an articulation into language, drew the parallel conclusion that language (being matter) was innately tied to its sensory counterpart: sound. A pure, sensory sound was thus the truest, purest form of thought or expression. Pure sound was seen as directly parallel to sensory stimulations, to unmediated perception. "Transrational language, rich in sound but devoid of conventional meaning, was organized by phonetic analogy and rhythm. . . . The reader was required -----

70. Fechner 8.

to restructure his mental processes, from rational to intuitive, in order to grasp the message."⁷¹

Shortly after Fechner's publication, the Russian Merezhkovsky, labelled by John Elderfeld as the "initiator of the mystic neo-Christian theory of the balance of spirit and matter"⁷² began his similar studies. Interestingly enough and as another testimony to the German-Russian exchanges, Ball cited being involved in readings of Merezhkovsky in *Flucht* (November 14 and 12 December 1914).

The Collaboration: Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh

This brief survey demonstrates the two very distinct bases of zaum: the spiritual and the linguistic. Remarkable is how Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh, in so many ways emphasizing opposite strains of zaum, developed its theories in collaboration. Zaum with its intentional ambiguity, thus became a union of both aspects.

David Burliuk introduced Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov early in 1912 in Moscow, according to Kruchenykh, at "some debate or exhibition."⁷³ Kruchenykh showed Khlebnikov his poem "Game in Hell," and Khlebnikov immediately began adding lines to it! They discussed and argued the poem,

71. Lawton 13.

72. *Flight* 10.

73. Gerald Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature. Avant-Garde Visual Experiments, 1900-1930* (Princeton UP, 1984) 75.

and in the fall it was published.⁷⁴ This marked the beginning of their co-authorship on a number of books and manifestos through which they worked out their idea of "a suprarational, transcendental language of the future - zaum."⁷⁵ Briefly put, zaum language was to consist of "sounds [that] would convey emotions as well as abstract meanings forcefully and directly, without the mediation of common sense."⁷⁶

Overview of Major Collaborative Publications

Khlebnikov's and Kruchenykh's first theoretical publication *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* of December 1912 is considered the zaum manifesto.⁷⁷ This manifesto included prose and poems by Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh, Nikolai Burliuk, Mayakovsky, and Kandinsky among others. Its contributors proclaimed their, "Insuperable hatred for language as it existed before them," and stated their preference for the "self-sufficient word."⁷⁸

A Trap for Judges was a manifesto published in 1913 by David and Nikolai Burliuk, Guro, Mayakovsky, Nizen,

74. Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 75, and Cooke 8.

75. Douglas, *King of Time* 3.

76. Douglas, *King of Time* 3.

77. Lawton 51-52.

78. Douglas, *Collected Works* 18.

Livshits, Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh; it had, however, been in preparation since 1908 according to Khlebnikov. It lays bare some basic points of departure for the linguistic developments:

- 1) We ceased to regard word formation and word pronunciation according to grammatical rules. . . . We loosened up syntax.
- 2) We . . . endow words with content on the basis of their graphic and *phonic characteristics*.
- 3) [. . .] the role of pre- and suffixes was fully realized.
- 4) [. . .] we reject normal orthography.
- 5) We modify nouns not only with adjectives, [. . .] but also with other parts of speech, as well as with individual letters and numbers [. . .]
- 6) We abolished punctuation marks . . .
- 7) We understand vowels as time and space (a characteristic of thrust), and consonants as color, sound, smell.
- 8) We shattered rhythms . . . of meters in textbooks; every motion generates for the poet a new free rhythm.
- 9) The front rhyme . . . as well as the middle and the inverse. . .

Numbers 10 through 13 can be summarized as a call for new words, new meaning and creativity (*A Trap for Judges* 53-4).

The leaflet *Declaration of the Word as Such*, which was

published in the summer of 1913, summarizes zaum theory.⁷⁹

Its point of departure is that:

THOUGHT AND SPEECH CANNOT KEEP UP WITH THE
EMOTIONS OF SOMEONE IN A STATE OF INSPIRATION,
therefore the artist is free to express himself
not only in a common language (concepts), but also
in a personal one (the creator as an individual),
as well as in a language which does not have any
definite meaning (not frozen), a transrational
language.

It also emphasizes zaum's philosophical stand against "raped," i.e. tainted, adulterated or usurped, words. It discusses zaum's appreciation of equating a desired expression with "a word close in sound [rather] than with one close in meaning," thereby allowing for more flexible and openended understanding. The hope for "NEW WORDS" is expressed, as well as an allowance for "dissonances" in poetry "because there is dissonance in our soul" (*Declaration of the Word as Such* 67-68).

The collaborative pieces which, in addition to theoretical discussion, contain actual poetic attempts at putting zaum into practice include the leaflets *The Word as Such* and *The Letter as Such*.⁸⁰ In these, Khlebnikov and -----

79. Later, in September or October of 1913, the leaflet was included in the booklet, *The Word as Such*, although Kruchenykh claimed to have written it already in 1912. Markov considers this publication, and not *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste*, to be the first "theoretical foundation for zaum" (*Russian Futurism* 64).

80. Douglas, *King of Time* 119-20 and 121-22, respectively.

Kruchenykh reorganized letters of words in the hopes of revealing the "stable units of sound similar . . . beneath . . . the seemingly disorganized surface variety of language."⁸¹ These letters or sounds were considered to be at the base of language and logically connected to perceptual values, but, having become masked and laden with other manipulative and misleading connotations, had evolved to the point of being almost completely alien from the original true "words." *The Word as Such* and *The Letter as Such* expressed attempts to remove these restraints.

The Word as Such also contains an attack on unfavorable critics whom Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh saw as incapable of understanding the need for a new language. These critics were believed to be blind to conventional language's deterioration to an "emasculated" and corrupt state at a point beyond revivability (*New Ways of the Word* 70). (The critics' use of this very language was regarded as a perfect example thereof.) Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh regarded the belittling attacks of these critics as the result of their inability to see meaning beyond its context of "rational meaning;" and their reluctance to perceive the limitations of such writings.

What is surprising is the senselessness of our writers striving so hard for *meaning*.

Wishing to depict the incomprehensible, the

81. Douglas, *King of Time* 3.

alogicality of life and its horror, or to depict the mystery of life, they make recourse time and again to the same . . . common language. (*Word as Such* 72)

The leaflet's theoretical appendix outlines zaum's intent of "unmediated comprehension through a word" (*New Ways of the Word* 70), and the process of achieving such language through "the combination of words according to their inner laws, which reveal themselves to the wordwright, and not according to the rules of logic or grammar . . . " (*New Ways of the Word* 72). It further emphasizes the importance of sound when Kruchenykh explains the difficulties inherent in translating zaum poetry. Although he regarded actual translation as impossible, he offered a tip for the indefatigable to seek approximations in sound rather than in meaning, since sound patterns were the essence of a poem much more than "lexicology."⁸²

The opera *Victory Over the Sun*, produced in December 1913 by Malevich, Matiushin and Kruchenykh (and published December 1913 with a prologue by Khlebnikov), explores zaum's "possibilities and the circumstances in which it was actualized."⁸³ In the preparatory notes to the opera, Kruchenykh described it as an attempt "to destroy the 'clean, clear, resonant Russian language' emasculated and smoothed out by the tongues by the man from 'criticism and -----"

82. *Declaration of the Word as Such* 68 in Lawton 67-68.

83. Douglas, *Swans* 42.

literature'." ⁸⁴ This is the same language Ball sought to avoid when he stated, "Man verzichte mit dieser Art Klanggedichte in Bausch und Bogen auf die durch den Journalismus verdorbene und unmöglich gewordene Sprache" (*Flucht* 24 June 1916).

The Letter as Such, also a collaborative work by Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh, was written in 1913, but only published in 1930 by Kruchenykh. The inclusion of all of Khlebnikov's criticisms and revisions in this posthumous publication demonstrates Kruchenykh's high regard for Khlebnikov. ⁸⁵ And yet comments on the original draft suggest that the entire concept and initiative of the manifesto had been Kruchenykh's. ⁸⁶ Kruchenykh's admiration for Khlebnikov prevailed, as demonstrated in an interview of 10 February 1965, during which he named his favorite poets as Khlebnikov and Mayakovsky. Kruchenykh regarded Khlebnikov's strength to have been "ancient, primordial Russia," and offered high praise for his discovery of root sounds. ⁸⁷ It was this relationship of mutual respect in

84. Douglas, *Swans* 35.

85. Critiques in Khlebnikov's handwriting are evident throughout the draft (Gerald Janacek, "Krucenych and Chlebnikov Co-Authoring a Manifesto," *Russian Literature* VIII [1980]: 487).

86. Janacek, "Krucenych and Chlebnikov" 484.

87. Gordon McVay, "Alexei Kruchenykh: The Bogeyman of Russian Literature," *Russian Literary Triquarterly* 13 (1975): 571.

the fusion of two different sides of the same theory which accompanied Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh in their remarkably productive relationship.

KRUCHENYKH

When compared to Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh ranks as the theorist of the zaum representatives. In numerous collaborative publications it is Kruchenykh who was responsible for the theoretical commentary. While he appreciated the power of the new language to express the state of consciousness of the inner world, the nature of this inner world did not interest him as much per se. He focused his sights instead on the power and possibilities of the pure, disassociated word.

Kruchenykh was considered the leader of the zaumniks as well. He owes his reputation as leader to the reality that it is the proclamation of theories which gains center-stage in such an avant-garde movement, while those practitioners of the theory sit silently in the wings composing. The practitioners, especially Khlebnikov, possessed a more subdued and introverted composure, even when on stage performing their work.

When the term "zaumniks" is applied to those transrational poets who adhered to a theoretical framework, most scholars omit Khlebnikov altogether from the group. While the style of Khlebnikov's poetry appeared to fit the zaum theory, this seems to have occurred only

serendipitously, with Khlebnikov rarely discussing the technical requirements. For Khlebnikov there appeared to have existed an internal proclivity which coincidentally suited Kruchenykh. At times it appears as if Kruchenykh were actually writing the theory to suit Khlebnikov's style, and indeed Kruchenykh did regard Khlebnikov as the genius creator.

Kruchenykh's priority was to analyze the practice, confirm, affirm, and summarize. In part he regarded his mission as one of inspiring others in order to prepare for the future language. His behavior, however, also gained him the unfortunate title of propagandist, publicity-seeker and "loud-mouth" as well as "difficult and a fool."⁸⁸ However, that should not, as it often does, prejudice his work and accomplishments. Most scholarly literature considers Kruchenykh the most representative of the zaum group. Although it acknowledges other accomplishments and perhaps better poetry, Kruchenykh's work is most representative of zaum qualities and aspired goals, and achieved this to the most profound degree. His application of dissonance in art and his integration of the visual into poetry are the qualities most acutely representative of the style.⁸⁹ In a 1965 interview Kruchenykh sought to emphasize his sincerity, asserting that he had never

88. Douglas, *The King of Time* 1.

89. Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 88.

intended to be a provocateur, nor had cynicism ever been a quality which could have been attributed to him or Khlebnikov, unlike many of his contemporaries.⁹⁰

Yet verdicts of insincerity and lack of creative talent have persisted. Klosty Beaujour blames much of the confusion surrounding the meaning of and theory behind zaum on Kruchenykh and his "very ordinary sloppiness and ignorance."⁹¹

In a letter to Matiushin of June 1916, Malevich criticized Kruchenykh severely, stating that "the word 'as such' must be reincarnated 'into something', but this remains vague."⁹² Janacek believes that it was Kruchenykh's lack of mysticism that may have spurred him to linguistic magnitudes, but consequently prevented him from actually "affirm[ing] or creat[ing] anything."⁹³

Pasternak, on the other hand, credits Kruchenykh for having realized the need for a new language, having achieved the goal of destroying the old, and having discovered the roots for creating a new, but having simply

90. McVay 579.

91. "Zaum" 14. "His was a second-rate mind and a third-rate talent. His sovereign contempt for *qualification* was, of course, justified by the theoretical stance of the Futurists, thus making a virtue out of necessity in a way which became all too familiar to followers of certain other mindlessly didactic modernist literary movements."

92. Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 117.

93. *The Look of Russian Literature* 118.

not reached the point of developing this new language to its fruition. While he considered all this to have been a great accomplishment, his introduction to Kruchenykh's *Kalendar'*, judges his work as not yet "art," but something on the "edge" of it, i.e. "in its initial stage."⁹⁴

Pasternak's summation of Kruchenykh's contributions to zaum language appears to be the most accurate. The view of him by some other scholars as not embodying spirituality is a misunderstanding due in large degree to superficial study of him. In *New Ways of the Word* for example Kruchenykh spoke continually of the *fourth dimension* (73). More detailed analyses of his writings below will reveal a central spiritual orientation.

Kruchenykh came to Moscow in 1910 as an artist but by early 1912 he had given up painting for poetry.⁹⁵ In his 1965 interview he stated that he had abandoned painting after having realized its impending death; and that as history had it, he soon was to witness its displacement by the photomontage.⁹⁶

It is interesting that Kruchenykh cited photomontage, which was intended to create a multifaceted image of simultaneity in an effort to more accurately present the

94. For further discussion, see McVay 588.

95. Douglas, *Swans of Other Worlds* 27.

96. Mcvay 574.

actual world of various simultaneous sensations. Zaum attempted a verbal equivalent of this visual form of representation.

In his memoirs of 1933 Kruchenykh stated:

I was more "broad" a nature than was necessary for an artist. To only see the world was not enough for me. I had acute hearing. A silent picture, the tongue-tied medium of the artist deprived me of half the world, made it one-sided. My world had to sound; great mutes had to speak. Of course, music alone would also not be able to satisfy me: it deprived the world of color, like painting deprived it of sound. . . . There is, however, no more natural, perfect and multifaceted means of expressing ourselves in art than the word. One can live without painting and music, but without the word - there is no person! From painting I turned to poetry as the final, integral lever for moving the earth.⁹⁷

Kruchenykh's Poetry

Publications of Kruchenykh's early poetry beginning in 1912 are extremely difficult to locate. These rare works are available neither in the U.S. nor even in Russian libraries.⁹⁸ Three of the first six, however, are

97. Translation in Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 115.

98. Some have recently come up for auction at Sotheby's (Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 69).

reprinted in Markov's *Kruchonykh* 1973.⁹⁹ Kruchenykh's first monograph publication, entitled *Old-Fashioned Love* was published in August 1912. And Kruchenykh's and Khlebnikov's *A Game in Hell* appeared at the same time.¹⁰⁰ The three poems published in early 1913 in *Pomade* are considered the first publications of zaum poetry. The language is wildly innovative. Kruchenykh's later publications contain somewhat more conventional language, but still evidence his characteristic "shifted" syntax.¹⁰¹

It is easy to see how Kruchenykh's theoretical statements as well as the radicality of his poetic language have led to judgments of him being a propagandist, a provocateur and a bit of a stage master. But from an examination of statements like the above from his memoirs, it becomes clear that Kruchenykh felt himself engaged in a deep and sincere effort to change language, to imbue it with deeper meaning and to cause it to be a truer expression of inner prearticulated sensations.

Nowhere is this demonstrated more clearly than in the opera *Victory Over the Sun*.¹⁰² This opera provides lucid examples of speakers' attempts at achieving this truer,

99. The poems, however, have not been translated from the Russian.

100. Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 72.

101. Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 83.

102. Kruchenykh, Kazimir Malevich, and Mikhail Matiushin, 1913 (Washington D. C.: Hirshhorn Museum, 1981).

zaum language. The characters are one step ahead of the general population, in that they have already abandoned the fetters of conventional language. They begin with a language of the absurd, but then undergo respective transformations which lead their speech to shift to zaum. Douglas points out that it is usually an experience triggering fear which causes this transition in the characters' language. She sees this as evidence of Kruchenykh's belief that "fear [was] an emotion strong enough to touch off *zaum*. . . ." ¹⁰³ This suggests the necessity of abandoning one's sensibility and inhibitions, and losing one's shackles to conventional linguistic reactions in order to go *beyond* reason and achieve truer communication. Ball also spoke of the need "der freien und fessellosen Imagination [zu] folgen. Der selbsttätige Phantasieprozeß fördert unfehlbar diejenigen Dinge wieder zutage, die die Bewußtseinsgrenze unzergliedert überschritten haben" (*Flucht* 25 November 1915).

The New Language - Mysticism

Kruchenykh's (and Khlebnikov's) point of departure was identical to Ball's. Ball's critique of poetry incorporates the same criticism not only of mediated language, but also of language that is unresponsive to its contemporary times:

103. *Swans of Other Worlds* 42-43.

Man kann wohl sagen, daß uns die Kunst nicht Selbstzweck ist - dazu bedürfte es einer mehr ungebrochenen Naivität, - aber sie ist uns eine Gelegenheit zur Zeitkritik und zum wahrhaften Zeitempfinden. . . . Was besagt ein schönes harmonisches Gedicht, wenn es niemand liest, weil es im Zeitempfinden gar keine Resonanz finden kann? . . . So sind unsere Debatten ein brennendes, täglich flagranteres Suchen nach dem spezifischen Rhythmus, nach dem vergrabenen Gesicht dieser Zeit." (*Flucht* 5 April 1916)

Ball's sentiment is resonated in *New Ways of the Word* as it elaborates on Khlebnikov's and Kruchenykh's dissatisfaction with conventional language, describing past poetry as unbearable to the:

modern precipitous soul, which perceives the world keenly and directly (intuitively) as though penetrating things and phenomena (the transcendental thought is in me and is mine) and not simply standing aside and listening to descriptions and narratives. (75)

New Ways of the Word discourages the prevailing role of poets serving as "intermediaries" for the public. It emphasizes the lack of necessity for such a role, since in the new language "the symbol" and "the thought" were to be equal (75). Quite basically, Kruchenykh was defying mimesis as had been the trend in modern European art since the beginning of the century. Not only did he see mimesis as an inappropriate form of artistic communication; he also abhorred artists' attempts at manipulating their audience,

and playing with its subliminal perceptions. He hoped that in its purity as an adamic language, zaum language would lead the people to their own pure reactions. It is the same type of language that Ball was seeking when he stated "man verzichte darauf aus zweiter Hand zu dichten" (*Flucht* 24 June 1916).

Just as with Ball's sound language, zaum was seen as a language more suited to expressing the nonmaterial. As Douglas explains, "'beyond reason' or 'beyond the logical mind' is a higher level of consciousness in which one has an expanded sense of logic and reason. [It] is a higher perceptual plane . . . identical in meaning with the samadhi state of Yoga."¹⁰⁴ Zaum could provide a path to that plane where knowledge existed beyond the visual and rational world.

Kruchenykh is quite reminiscent of Kandinsky in his belief that the new language would help humankind approach a more spiritual plane simply by enabling it to "speak the language" of that mystical world.

A new content *becomes manifest only* when new expressive devices are achieved, a new form. Once there is a new form, a new content follows; form thus conditions content. (*New Ways of the Word* 77)¹⁰⁵

104. "Beyond Reason" 186.

105. Kruchenykh is quoting directly from Uspensky's *Tertium Organum*.

Kruchenykh, like Khlebnikov, observed the new language as serving a congruous change in people, i.e. an emerging spirituality that needed help in expressing itself: "Our verbal creativity is generated by a *new deepening of the spirit. . .*" (*New Ways of the Word* 77). He was most likely initiated to much of his spiritual philosophy through Uspensky, whose 1909 and 1911 publications heralded the idea that twentieth-century humankind was approaching new perceptual levels, and that it would require a new language to bring this new consciousness to an outer level.¹⁰⁶ *New Ways of the Word* contains many direct quotations from Uspensky's *Tertium Organum* of 1911. In the following statement Kruchenykh cites Uspensky specifically:

In our art we already have the first experiments of the language of the future. Art marches in the avant-garde of psychic evolution. At present there are three units in our psychic life: sensation, representation, concept (and the idea), and a fourth unit is beginning to take shape - "higher intuition." (P. Uspensky's *Tertium Organum*) (*New Ways of the Word* 70)

In his "Declaration of Transrational Language" Kruchenykh stated that zaum language provided words for "when one does not need language - religious ecstasy, love[, . . .] affectionate names."¹⁰⁷ Zaum was clearly to -----

106. Discussed in both *The Fourth Dimension* and *Tertium Organum*.

107. Cited and translated in White, *Literary Futurism* 253.

be a language suited for more than mere rational communication. It was to be capable of not only expressing this different level of experience, but actually saying much *more* than conventional language. Zaum was to express deeper and richer emotions, but, by the very nature of these inner emotions, would express the multivalence of associations that are experienced by people in a prearticulate mode of thought. The multivalent qualities intended for one pure zaum word is aptly summed up in Kruchenykh's statement: "THE WORD IS BROADER THAN ITS MEANING" (*New Ways of the Word* 77). He explained further: "The word (and the sounds composing it) is not just foreshortened thought, not mere logic, it is above all transrational (it has mystical and aesthetic components)."

While Khlebnikov is generally regarded as the more mystical of the pair, his etymological approach to finding the new, zaum language by searching for root meanings of speech sounds in the Russian language was actually more intellectual than Kruchenykh's seemingly nonspiritual linguistic efforts.

Dissonance as Pre-Articulate Mental State

While it is undeniable that Kruchenykh's language, like Kandinsky's paintings, evidences dissonance, the language was clearly not intended to be shocking for its own sake, nor merely for purposes of provocation. In *Declaration of the Word as Such* Kruchenykh stated that, "In

art, there may be unresolved dissonances - 'unpleasant to the ear' - because there is dissonance in our soul by which the former are resolved. Example: *dyr bul shschyl*" (68). He sought dissonance because he believed it to be a natural, prelogical state of the psyche, and felt that using it in his poetry only aided in achieving the expression of thought in that prelogical area of the mind.¹⁰⁸ Cooke also regards the productive quality of this irrationality, stating that, "Kruchenykh did not, however, by any means have a total disregard for meaning or content in the development of 'transrational language'." In giving voice to the prelogical state of the mind, he was fulfilling a requisite where a "new verbal form creates a new content."¹⁰⁹

The Self-Sufficiency of the Word

It was in this manner that Kruchenykh hoped to go one step further and create the "self-sufficient word." Once the word was freed from grammar as well as logic, it could go so far as to lose its entire symbolic or referential function. It would, thus, not be forced to stand for anything more than itself. It would be larger than any denotative or lexical meaning. Kruchenykh hoped that in this way the word could serve as the representation of

108. For discussion see Douglas, *Swans of Other Worlds* 28.

109. Cooke 208 fn42.

basic psychological or emotional sensations.¹¹⁰ The word itself was thereby "larger than meaning" as stated in Pomorska's *Jakobsonian Poetics and Slavic Narrative*.¹¹¹ And in serving as pure emotional sensation it would naturally lead each listener to his or her individual and autonomous reactions, free from any subjective input by the poet-speaker.

The "Universal Language": Subjectivity vs. Objectivity

This again raises the issue of whether a non-subjective language or non-subjective poetry is even possible, when with all due credit to poets' attempts at being non-subjective, the reality of a particular speaker prevails. One cannot ignore the act of one poet writing down words which, even if they are objective energies of the spiritual world, have gone through the poet, and try as s/he might, have been processed by the poet.

In *Declaration of the Word as Such* Kruchenykh acknowledged artistic autonomy ("the creator is an individual" [67]), giving the impression that he was aware of artists' struggle against input from the subjective self. This, most likely, caused him to allow them some slack: "the artist is free to express himself not only in -----"

110. Ronald Vroon, *V. Xlebnikov's Shorter Poems, A Key to the Coinages* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1983) 6; and Douglas, *Swans of Other Worlds* 28.

111. Ed. Henryk Baran (Durham: Duke UP, 1992) 159.

the common language (concepts), but also in a personal one . . . as well as in a language which does not have any definite meaning . . . , a transrational language" (67). In order to compensate for this persistent personal obstacle, i.e. for the achievement of truer communication and expression, Kruchenykh permitted artists the freedom to use every form of expression at their disposal. He believed that by using all at one's disposal, and with the ultimate goal of immediate, i.e. unmediated expression, the "artist would pass through the word to direct understanding."¹¹²

When he stated in *New Ways of the Word* (75) that, "We do not need intermediaries," he was expressing his ultimate hope for eventual, complete removal of the artist.

The Russians were also quite explicit in their rejection of the artist as prodigy in that they stressed collective authorship and anonymity.¹¹³ Cooke cites the

112. Cooke 208, note 42 on Wolfgang Max Faust, *Bilder werden Worte. Zum Verhältnis von bildender Kunst und Literatur im 20. Jahrhundert oder Vom Anfang der Kunst im Ende der Künste* (Munich: Hanser, 1977) 84.

113. This provides an interesting contrast to Kandinsky's vision of the artist as messiah; but follows much more closely the pattern of the Zurich Dadaists. The latter appear to have put the zaum group's idea of collectivity into practice as witnessed with Ball's diary entry of 15 June 1916: "Huelssenbeck kommt, um auf der Maschine seine neusten Verse abzuschreiben. Bei jeder zweiten Vokabel wendet er den Kopf und sagt: 'Oder ist das etwas von Dir?' Ich schlage scherzhaft vor, jeder solle ein alphabetisches Verzeichnis seiner geprägsten Sternbilder und Satzteile anfertigen . . ." (*Flucht*).

critic Rudolf Duganov stating that "the personal I of the poet can merge with what Duganov calls the 'extra-personal I of mankind'."114

Despite Kruchenykh's acknowledgment of the artist's struggle against subjective input, his ultimate goal remained for the speaker's response to be a universal one, thereby not tinging the language. It was to be, as Douglas describes, "a language which is produced as an automatic reflex and directly communicates internal states; it is communicative by virtue of originating out of a shared humanity."115 In speaking about his infamous "dyr bul shchyl" poem (att. 15), Kruchenykh stated that it:

was written in his "own language" and in words which did not have a "definite meaning." Yet, despite the "private" nature of this language, Kruchenykh still felt it to be "free" and "universal." Its universality [. . .] was related to the language of emotions. . . .116

Emotions as Universal

In "Declaration of Transrational Language" Kruchenykh

114. *Izvestiya Akademii nauk SSSR, Seriya literatury i yazyka*, vol. 35.5 (1976). Cited in Cooke 27.

115. *Swans of Other Worlds* 42.

116. Cooke 83. Cooke also points out that it was universal not in the sense of the "language of the stars" which Khlebnikov attempted; i.e. not the *unio mystica* type of spiritualism, but spiritual in that it spoke to the "inner" world of humanity.

further emphasized that theirs was a "universal poetic language which was born organically, not artificially, like Esperanto."¹¹⁷ This statement is intended to emphasize his conviction that zaum was a *true*, spontaneous, emotional language.

Klosty Beaujour brings up the problem created through the "fact that *zaum* will be primarily a system of privileged emotional *expression* rather than a system of *communication*." She hereby neglects to acknowledge the primary mission of spiritual communication. Emotional expressions were seen as a method of communication *superior* to material communication. She also raises the question, "Can a work written entirely in *zaum* be considered a linguistic object at all?"¹¹⁸ Any artistic expression in a verbal form should be considered a linguistic object. It communicates subtleties that poetry and art, in general, have communicated for centuries, speaking on a more suggestive, subliminal level. *Zaum* language, like Ball's sound poetry, distinguishes itself from this poetic heritage in that it attempts the ultimate in suggestiveness, abandoning all referential symbols, working only on the pure sensations of the reader. In leaving the audience to its own associations, *zaum* is doing what poetry has done for centuries.

117. Cited in White, *Literary Futurism*.

118. "Zaum" 15.

Glossolalia

Perhaps admitting to some form of limitation of zaum language, Kruchenykh cited glossolalia, i.e. "speaking in tongues" as in religious ecstasy, as the ultimate form of "letting emotions pass through the speaker" without any personal tainting. He found glossolalia to be a superior form of expression because of the effortlessness with which it enabled the speaker to achieve a nonsubjective state of communication. It was the total sense of freedom and the total lack of inhibition which an individual in a state of glossolalia experienced, that impressed Kruchenykh so. The poet and the general public attempting zaum language needed to exert much more effort in order to become such an empty vessel through which words would work.

Inspired by this new illumination on objectivity, he included "neologistic chants" in *New Ways of the Word*.¹¹⁹ In *Explodity* (a handwritten theoretical booklet of June 1913 which included poetry) Kruchenykh discussed glossolalia as a source for zaum, and expressed his confidence in it as a true universal language of the inner (*Explodity* 65). Kruchenykh directly quoted from the chant of the schismatic V. Shishkov:

Emotional experience cannot be put into words
(frozen ones, concepts), word tortures,
gnoseological isolation. Therefore, we strive for

119. Cooke 90-91.

a transrational free language . . . that is the means of expression a person resorts to at crucial moments. Here is an example, the speech of the flagellant, V. Shishkov: "nosoktos lesontos futr lis natrufuntru kreserefire kresentre fert cheresantro ulmiri umilisantru" - here we have the genuine expression of an excited soul, religious ecstasy. (*Explodity* 65)

In *Explodity* he also cited a poem of his own which is "in the transrational and universal language (of vowels)" (65) (see att. 17).

He furthermore stated that he had been privileged with two types of experiences of glossolalia: the "nonsense" and "the power granted to the apostles at Pentecost to speak any regularly constituted human language."¹²⁰ His presentation of the poem includes the following personal account: "I wrote that on April 27 at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, I instantaneously mastered to perfection all languages. Such is the poet of the current era" (*Explodity* 66). At this point in "Explodity" it is still uncertain whether Kruchenykh was merely joking. However, once he presents his schismatic poem, the joke becomes obvious. Markov is convinced of this jest and discusses the three poems which Kruchenykh provided as examples of glossolalia, stating that the Japanese lines sound like Japanese to a Russian, the Spanish has nothing to do with Spanish, and "Kruchenykh's Hebrew is simply an exercise in pulling the -----"

120. Translated in Klosty Beaujour, "Zaum" 15.

readers' leg."¹²¹ Kruchenykh attests: "I am here reporting my verses in Japanese, Spanish and Hebrew:"

ike' mina ni
sinu ksi
iamakh alik
zel
GO OSNEG KAID
M R BATUL'BA
VINU AE KSEL
VER TUM DAKH
GIZ
SHISH

Although the jest is now clear, Kruchenykh was nonetheless quite serious about raising the public's awareness of these additional possibilities for expression.

According to Douglas, many other Cubo-Futurists discussed the "ecstatic speech of the Russian religious sects," and frequently noted the *samadhi* of Yoga.¹²²

Lawton uses Kruchenykh's understanding of glossolalia to differentiate between his and Khlebnikov's idea of zaum, noting the spontaneity Kruchenykh believed necessary for the new language. While Khlebnikov tediously-researched word etymologies,

Kruchenykh considered transreason the manifestation of a spontaneous, noncodified

121. Cited in Klosty Beaujour, "Zaum" 16 note 8. However, the explanation of the note regarding this statement by Markov has been omitted in Klosty Beaujour's publication.

122. "Beyond Reason" 187.

language. His poetic idiom consisted of raw verbal material, which acquired expressiveness and meaning only through contextual relationships. In an example of transrational poetic expression, Kruchenykh cited the Russian religious sectarians . . . in moments of ecstasy. . . ."123

When Ball recounted his first sound poem performance, he recalled a certain lack of control, typical of an experience of glossolalia: "Da bemerkte ich, daß meine Stimme . . . die uralte Kadenz der priesterlichen Lamentation annahm. [. . .] Ich wußte nicht, was mir diese Musik eingab" (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). Ball later became involved in extensive research on glossolalia.

The New Language - Innovations/Technique

As spiritual and purposeful in linguistic endeavors as the above discussions demonstrate Kruchenykh to be, numerous of his remarks have opened him to extreme criticism as well as misunderstanding. His following statement concerning the word demonstrates this well: "[W]e noticed that it can be read backward, and that then it acquires a more profound meaning!" (*New Ways of the Word* 76). It is certainly true that Kruchenykh was more appreciative of whimsical neologisms and using the word for its sound and visual qualities than Khlebnikov was. Kruchenykh criticized Khlebnikov's seriousness, especially

123. 13.

the analytical and grammatical qualities of his etymological studies. He felt that by 1919 Khlebnikov had abandoned the entire idea of free language, and was simply fettering language anew.¹²⁴ Kruchenykh's disdain for conventional, fettered, adulterated, and hence meaningless language led him to an appreciation of anything thus unrelated, anything freer. "A random laundry list, he says, is superior in sound organization to Pushkin."¹²⁵

This carefree attitude accounts for more criticism. Vroon poses him against Khlebnikov, accusing Kruchenykh of having advanced the "total dissolution of the word and the reorchestration of sound without regard to meaning." He regards Khlebnikov on the other hand, to have practiced the "free rearrangement of morphemic elements" originally only "to free roots and affixes from the structures imposed by usage . . . ," and that he "reshuffled . . . minimal meaningful units" so that "none of these operations involved the ultimate loss of referents, just as the object is never totally obliterated in cubistic paintings."¹²⁶

Pomorska, as well, differentiates between Kruchenykh's and Khlebnikov's versions of zaum. She defines Kruchenykh's as the better known, but describes his language as one which makes words "out of nothing" with no -----

124. Cited in Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 89.

125. Cited in Klosty Beaujour 15.

126. *V. Xlebnikov's Shorter Poems* 6.

meaning. She sees Khlebnikov's zaum as "one of much greater complexity and refinement [which] did not at all presuppose a meaningless language. . . . [H]e advocates the revival of an automatized language in order to reestablish the lost contact between sound and referent."¹²⁷

Klosty Beaujour has isolated Khlebnikov as the one in the pair with a serious intent for the new language; but she looks only at the surface level of Kruchenykh's poetry. With its nonsense language and sound for sound's sake it represents the first step in the creation of a new language; i.e. the abandonment of the old. Kruchenykh freed language in an attempt to leave it more open to a deeper level of meaning, i.e. inner, prearticulate communication, in order to, as he hoped, connect it to "everything alive, superconscious in the word, everything which connects it to its wellsprings, its sources of existence" (*New Ways of the Word* 71). He was daring and bold in his linguistic innovations, allowing language all kinds of freedoms in order to demonstrate its possibilities; i.e. that a free language could still communicate something - even if just fleeting emotional states. What he did not achieve, and what Khlebnikov perhaps did, or at least invested more effort into, was the

127. Krystyna Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory and Its Poetic Ambiance* (The Hague: Mouton, 1968) 94.

creation of a system for the new language, i.e. not just steps for abandoning the old.

But his point of departure was still (as it was for Khlebnikov) the desire to find a closer "contact between sound and referent."¹²⁸ Kruchenykh's system for achieving this goal was not as developed as Khlebnikov's and was, therefore, perhaps not as successful.

We might also consider the possibility that Kruchenykh did not strive for the same result as is commonly expected in poetry, i.e. for a representation of something specific, and something beyond the prearticulate, inner world or the self. *New Ways of the Word* proclaims that, "We do not need intermediaries - the symbol, the thought - we convey our own new truth, and do not serve as the reflection of some sort of sun (or a wood log?)" (*New Ways of the Word* 75-76). And in announcing "THE WORD IS BROADER THAN THE THOUGHT" (*New Ways of the Word* 70), it offers praise to a form of communication that goes beyond cognitive levels.

More systematically formulated was Kruchenykh's plan for *freeing* language. In *New Ways of the Word* he outlined the first steps necessary for abandoning conventional language and, more specifically, poetry. He called for:

1. grammatical irregularity - unexpected twist

- a. lack of agreement in case, number, tense,

128. Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory* 94.

and gender between subject and predicate,
adjective and noun: [. . .]

b. elimination of the subject or other parts
of speech, elimination of pronouns, prepositions,
etc.

c. arbitrary word-novelty (pure neologism)
[. . .]

d. unexpected phonetic combination [. . .]

e. unexpected word formation [. . .]

2. semantic irregularity:

a. in plot development: [. . .]

b. unexpected simile: [. . .]

These categories do not exhaust all the possible
irregularities and unexpected shifts: [. . .] one
might note as well, for example, unusual meter,
rhyme, typography, color, word order, etc. (*New
Ways of the Word* 73-75)

In *The Word as Such* Kruchenykh posed his poem "dyr bul
shchyl" as a perfect opposite of what he considered a bad
conventional poem. He criticized the conventional poetic
device of alliteration when poorly used, as in the
following poem:

An angel was flying in the midnight sky
softly singing a song . . .

The coloration here is given by an anemic
s . . . s . . . s . . . We are just as
dissatisfied with the pictures painted in jelly
and milk as with verses built on

sa-sa-sa

si-si-si

ti-ti-ti

etc.

We have provided a model for another sort of
sound and word combination:

dyr bul shchyl
ubeshchur
skum
vy so by
r l ez (59-60)

Dissonance as Representation of Modern Life

The poem Kruchenykh regarded as his quintessential zaum poem, "dyr bul shchyl," he also described as composed of "the most dissonant sounds possible." He required the poem to have "'extreme weight' and 'extreme heaviness' in sounds."¹²⁹ In justifying his use of dissonance, Kruchenykh cited the Russian language's overuse of euphony, compelling him toward a counterbalance with the use of cacophony.¹³⁰ In *New Ways of the Word* he stated that a dissonant language would also be needed to express the quality of his times, "to depict our dizzy contemporary life" (*New Ways of the Word* 73). This statement clearly brings to mind Marinetti and his own insistence on capturing the essence of his mechanized age. Marinetti with Kruchenykh, and Ball with Khlebnikov appear to represent the two sides of spiritual ambition; i.e. to represent the enveloping spirit of the time with what they

129. Cited in McVay 577.

130. Klosty Beaujour, "Zaum" 15.

perceived as its vitalist life force, and on the other side to shun this vitality of the outer world in favor of a search into the deeper, inner levels of spirituality emanating from universal forces coupled with a perception of its essence as a harmonious one.

On a very basic level, Kruchenykh was purporting that dissonance was needed simply to express the harsh sounds of the modern world. For example, in a poem where the scene is set in a factory, Kruchenykh used a free hand with the hard Russian consonant combinations: *zl, zx, cm, zz, zzz*, and then proceeded to use these sounds as leitmotifs. It is a very basic and concrete linguistic tool, used in the same manner as the harshly-criticized alliteration and assonance. This strongly resembles Ball's sound poetry, where psycho-linguistic reactions are anticipated through the use of alliteration, assonance, variation and onomatopoeia.

However, in a manner dissimilar to Ball, and more in the mode of Kandinsky, Kruchenykh also used dissonance to evoke the subconscious aspects of the mind, the raw, primitive, prearticulate thoughts in an attempt to speak that language:

Our goal is simply to point out irregularity as a device, to show the necessity and the importance of irregularity in art.

Our goal is to underscore the great significance for art of all strident elements, discordant sounds (dissonances) and purely primitive

roughness. (*New Ways of the Word* 75)

He further explained that this practice most accurately paralleled the natural thought-process.

And again, he asserted the earnestness of his efforts, in an attempt to refute all claims of propagandism or mere provocation:

We select *crafty* ways that confuse novices with their unexpected ups and downs, not to tease the reader with jabbering nonsense and an annoying bark, but to seek out new means for portraying the intertwining paths which throw us (seekers of the future) into a quagmire, and into the void. In art there can be discordant sounds (dissonances), but there cannot be coarseness, cynicism, and impudence (which is what the Italian Futurists preach), because it is impossible to mix war and fighting with creative work.

We are serious and solemn, not destructive and coarse . . . [elipses in original]. (*New Ways of the Word* 76)

Speed

Speed was an equally important new element for poetry. Shortened syntax and altered orthography were tools used to achieve a faster means of expression. Speed was seen as a necessity not only for expressing a faster-paced world, but also assisted the poet in manifesting his or her expressions more quickly, immediately, and thereby logically also in a more unmediated manner. Kruchenykh stated that, "THOUGHT AND SPEECH CANNOT KEEP UP WITH THE

EMOTIONS OF SOMEONE IN A STATE OF INSPIRATION . . ."

(*Declaration of the Word as Such* 67). He, therefore, allows artists all means at their disposal to accomodate these demands.

Kruchenykh discussed the idea of experiencing phenomena in a more direct way in *New Ways of the Word*, as well, by posing it against the experience of earlier literature:

Before us they used to write boring dragging narratives (3000 pages!) sickening to the modern precipitous soul, which perceives the world keenly and directly (intuitively), as though penetrating things and phenomena (the transcendental is in me and is mine) and not simply standing aside and listening to descriptions and narratives. (*New Ways of the Word* 75)

Pure Sound

The desirability of a pure word, or a pure sound, is nowhere more aptly expressed than in the following statement from *New Ways of the Word*: "Previous poets arrived at the word through rational thought, we arrived at unmediated comprehension through the word" (70). True comprehension was to be achieved only via the pure word. These unadulterated words had as little in common with conventional language as Ball's sound poetry words. They were not denotatively representational, but were to cause pure reaction through pure sound, i.e. they were pure sound evoking a parallel emotional response. In *The Word as Such*

Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh provided an example of how this might occur, "In the following poem the line is dominated by the first vividly expressive consonant: it colors the line and produces the effect of rising, slowing down, *finale*" (59) (see att. 18). These are the same effects the reader obtains from the pure sounds in a poem such as Ball's "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" (see att. 3), where motion and varying speed of movement are sensed, and the entire intention of the poem is to experience these sensations.

White describes Kruchenykh's sound-words: "'Dyr bul shchyl' is constructed from small groups of letters, forming sound shapes which have virtually no bearing on pre-existing words or morphemes in the Russian language and also which possess no iconic function."¹³¹

Russian Language Sounds

In creating his universal language, Kruchenykh believed it to be a truly non-Russian one. He stated that the poem "dyr bul shchyl:" "is constructed from small groups of letters, forming sound shapes which have virtually no bearing on pre-existing words or morphemes in the Russian language and also which pose no iconic function." White points out that for the most part Kruchenykh attempted and achieved a non-Russian language;

131. *Literary Futurism* 252.

however, the sounds of the poems still remain specifically Russian, i.e. they are sounds which occur in the Russian language (except for *shch* which has to be followed by *i*, not *y* in Russian).¹³² He does credit Kruchenykh's and Khlebnikov's zaum by comparing it to the language of the transrational poet Ilya Zdanevich, and noting that Zdanevich's was still more tainted by regional language traits.¹³³

Kruchenykh was aware of some of the shortcomings of his language, noting the exclusive Russian quality of the *y* and *shch* sounds.¹³⁴

While the language of Ball's "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" remains predominately within the Germanic and Romance phonetic system, Ball consciously included very un-German sounds in his other sound poems.¹³⁵

"Elefantenkarawane" and the bruitist performances of the Cabaret Voltaire attempted to incorporate what Ball and his associates believed to be very "African" sounds. "Gadji beri bimba" has very similar patterns and allusions:

"zimzalla," "rhinozerossola," "elifantolim" (see att. 4).

The language of "Wolken" contains some Latin patterns (see att. 5). In Ball's attempt to reproduce cat and peacock

132. White, *Literary Futurism* 252.

133. White, *Literary Futurism* 256.

134. McVay 577.

135. See this study, Chapter 6. "An Analysis"

calls in "Katzen und Pfauen," he required several blatant non-German sounds: *mj*, *sb* (see att. 2). "Totenklage" contains isolated *m*, *sz*, *m'blama*, as well as many exaggerated, lengthened vowel sounds suggestive of wails and cries (see att. 6). All the poems conspicuously lack the typical German vowel patterns of -en infinitives and e-based conjugations; the *e*, *er*, *es*, *en* adjective endings or *ig* of adjectives.

The most non-Russian language patterns in Kruchenykh's poetry are contained in poems like "Vysoty (Vselenskiyy yazyk)" ("Heights [Universal Language]") and "Dokhlaya luna" ("Croaked Moon") of 1913 which are composed more of letters than pronouncable morphemes.¹³⁶

Written vs. Oral Poetry

The non-pronouncability factor demands a further consideration of the concept of "sound" poetry, as the great distinction between spoken and written poetry becomes particularly apparent. Although poems like "Heights" and "Croaked Moon" still retain their impact and can be considered expressions of inner states, categorizing them as "sound" poems becomes problematic when their sounds cannot be replicated by the palate. Janacek cites the Polish linguist Jan Baudouin de Courtenay who attacked Kruchenykh for interchanging too loosely the terms *letter*

136. White, *Literary Futurism* 252.

and *sound*, and not acknowledging the difference between written and spoken poetry.¹³⁷

In failing to clearly differentiate for the public between the written and spoken zaum language, Kruchenykh, himself well-aware of the differences, demonstrated his belief that the principles of a new language could be applied to both. His declaration of the self-sufficiency of the word or the letter (one aural, the latter visual), was a call for the acceptance of the emotive value of sound for its own sake. As cited above, Kruchenykh did not strive for a representation of something specific and outside the self.¹³⁸ He saw this principle as applicable to the visual word or letter as well. Like the Cubist painters with their abstract form, Kruchenykh was interested in simply allowing the word or letter its physical presence, and to stand for nothing but itself.

The physical or visual aspect of poetry was of great concern for Kruchenykh, as for many of his contemporaries. This issue is particularly well represented in his smaller pamphlets, where great attention is given to the physical

137. *The Look of Russian Literature* 889.

138. "We do not need intermediaries - the symbol, the thought - we convey our own new truth, and do not serve as the reflection of some sort of sun (or a wood log?)" (*New Ways of the Word* 75-76).

layout and illustrations accompanying the poetry.¹³⁹

The physical and aural values achieved an optimal union in the art of the performance, where Kruchenykh's oral presentation was accompanied by quite elaborate visual aids. For one reading of the poem, "BecHa," "which is supposed to give the feeling of spring," Kruchenykh "moves forward a chair with a rhythmical clatter of all its four legs."¹⁴⁰

This exploitation of the physical qualities afforded by the stage and a clear comfort while performing in the public limelight highlight another fundamental difference in temperament between Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov.

KHLEBNIKOV

Certainly the more conventional of the two zaumniks regarding language was Khlebnikov. His etymological studies of the Russian language alone attest to a more disciplined and orderly approach to the problem of creating a new language. While his poetry is difficult to approach, it becomes much more accessible once one has "learn[ed] to make out some its chief landmarks."¹⁴¹ This is very much

139. See Janacek, *The Look of Russian Literature* 87 for further discussion.

140. Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory* 108. This can be compared to Ball's use of costume, lighting and dance in his readings. See this study, Chapter 5. "The Poems" for a further discussion.

141. Cooke vi.

the case with Ball's poetry as well, where a context is suggested by the linguistically-conventional titles leading to specific continuing leitmotifs and themes.

An intensely strong spiritual base is what distinguishes Khlebnikov most readily from Kruchenykh, yet critics have argued that this mystic aspect is often afforded too much attention.¹⁴² Cooke contends that Khlebnikov was a very "sensible" writer, who had received too much promotion as a zaum guru from his Futurist colleagues.¹⁴³ Labels such as "the King of Time" and "President of the Planet Earth" have indeed solidified this reputation.

It is this contradiction of intense spiritualism on the one hand and a mathematical systematization on the other that most aptly characterizes Khlebnikov. This coupling of deep mysticism with a very rational view of one's role in developing a new language is also what most apparently affiliates Khlebnikov with Ball.

The unconventional mystic orientation aside, Khlebnikov is generally regarded as the more talented of the zaum writers. Marc Slonim sees no one as approaching his talent and success.¹⁴⁴ Klosty Beaujour surmises that,

142. Cooke vi.

143. 14.

144. *From Chekhov to the Revolution. Russian Literature 1900-1917* (New York: Oxford UP, 1962) 226.

"Many major figures of Russian poetry and criticism consider Khlebnikov a genius. He was at the very least a man of great talent and extraordinarily wide if somewhat unorthodox knowledge."¹⁴⁵ The linguist Roman Jakobson who based much of his earlier research on Khlebnikov's language, alternates between the labels "the great Russian poet of our century"¹⁴⁶ and "the greatest Russian poet of our century."¹⁴⁷ In his own time, Khlebnikov was extremely popular among the creative elite, who considered him a genius, as well, and often invited the impoverished poet to their country homes.¹⁴⁸ Although his eccentric beliefs gained him considerable attention, he did not seek it, and was by no means a propagandist. Douglas describes him as "somewhat introverted . . . soft-spoken, shy and awkward."¹⁴⁹ And despite the eccentric mystic foundation, "The seriousness of Khlebnikov's intentions in any case helps to defend him from any charge of frivolity or obscurantism."¹⁵⁰ Cooke, as well, found that adjectives such as "shy and retiring" were frequently used to describe -----

145. 16.

146. *Verbal Art, Verbal Sign, Verbal Time*, eds. Krystyna Pomorska and Sephen Rudy (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 1985) 21 and 60.

147. Jakobson, *Dialogues* 6.

148. Douglas, *Collected Works* 22-23.

149. *King of Time* 3.

150. *King of Time* 8.

him. Khlebnikov took part in very few public discussions and performances, and "seems to have been happy to allow his Futurist colleagues to promote his work."¹⁵¹

His personality displayed similar traits as Ball's, for whom the seriousness of creating a new language went far beyond any interests in extravagant showmanship. And despite Ball's keen vision of revolutionizing and being at the forefront of the creative currents of society, the tumultuous activity of the Cabaret Voltaire was so antithetic to him that it led to his nervous breakdown.

Publications

Many of Khlebnikov's major publications were the product of collaborations with Kruchenykh. They include the initial zaum manifesto *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste* of December 1912,¹⁵² which was written with Kruchenykh; theoretical writings in Kruchenykh's, Guro's and his collection *The Three* of 1913, which first introduced the word "zaum" in print; the detailed program for the new language, *A Trap for Judges* of April 1910 and the later edition in the fall of 1913 of *A Trap for Judges*, 2,¹⁵³ another collaboration with Kruchenykh, David and Nikolai Burliuk, Guro, Mayakovsky, Nizen and Livshits; the -----

151. 14.

152. Lawton 51-2.

153. Lawton, an excerpt, 53-54.

Khlebnikov-Kruchenykh collaborative leaflet *The Word as Such* of 1913; and the collaborative work *The Letter as Such* which was written in 1913,¹⁵⁴ but not published until 1930 by Kruchenykh.

Khlebnikov's first published books of poetry include *Roar! Gauntlets* of 1913 and *Selected Verse and Works*, both of 1914.

In 1913 he first published his theory on the development of language in "The warrior of the kingdom."¹⁵⁵ This publication marked the beginning of his elaborate studies on the etymological development of the Russian language, and his search for primal sounds within Russian and Slavic dialects. Just as Kruchenykh and Ball, Khlebnikov sought to rediscover a primal and, hence, more fully communicative language of prearticulate sounds containing universally emotive qualities.

Khlebnikov individually wrote several other short works of linguistic theory between 1912 and 1920. The most representative of these are: the aforementioned "The warrior of the kingdom" (1913) and also "Let us consider two words" (1912), "To the Artists of the World! (a written language for Planet Earth: a common system of hieroglyphs for the people of our planet" (1919), "Our Fundamentals" (1919), "On Poetry" (1920) and "On Contemporary Poetry"

154. Both translated in Douglas, *King of Time*.

155. Douglas, *Collected Works* 292-95.

(1920).¹⁵⁶

Many of Khlebnikov's most well-known works on beyonsense language predate Ball's sound poems by as much as four years. As discussed above, this was a time during which Kandinsky, although at the center of the Munich avant-garde, maintained extensive contact with the Russian literati. There is no reason to doubt that he discussed Russian developments with Ball when they met just thirteen months later in February of 1914.

Yet a large number of equally important works on linguistic theory were written after his initial zaum language creations - and after Ball's sound poem creations. Despite their late date, however, they do not contain new, later ideas, which would thus have been unavailable to Ball, but serve as continuations of Khlebnikov's earlier work, and help to clarify, elaborate on and summarize the work begun in 1911.

The later works are helpful not so much as overviews of linguistic theory, but as clarification of technical processes employed in developing the renewed language. Examples of the etymological process Khlebnikov used are provided in "Let us consider two words" (1912), "Here is the way the syllable so is a field" (1912-13), "The ear of the philologist detects" (1912-13), *Teacher and Student*

156. Douglas, *Collected Works* 292-95, 266-71, 364-69, 376-91; *King of Time* 152-54, and *Collected Works* 373-75, respectively.

(1912), *Analyzing the Word* (1915-16), *A Second Language* (1916) and "Word Creation" (1916).¹⁵⁷ Particularly intriguing is the complexity of the elaborate tables and charts contained in "The warrior of the kingdom" (1913), *On the Simple Names of Language* (1915), *A Little Introductory Dictionary of Single-Syllable Words* (1915-16), *A Checklist: The Alphabet of the Mind* (1916) and *The Tables of Destiny* (1922)¹⁵⁸ which provide numerous mathematical tables explaining the course of historical events. "To the Artists of the World" also includes complex visual symbols serving as sound correspondences as well as linguistic theory.

*Zangezi. A Supersaga in 20 Planes of 1922*¹⁵⁹ (see att. 20) serves as a summation of Khlebnikov's work and provides a context for numerous sound poems.

Anti-conventional Language

Just as with Ball and Kruchenykh, Khlebnikov's point of departure in his search for a new language was the dissatisfaction with the old. In "To the Artists of the World" Khlebnikov expressed his dismay at the fact that, "Languages have betrayed their glorious beginnings" (346).

157. Douglas, *Collected Works* 266-71, 272-73, 274-76, 16, 307-12, and 318-19, respectively.

158. Douglas, *Collected Works* 292-95, 299-303, 313, 314-17 and *The King of Time* 167-86, respectively.

159. *The King of Time*.

Conventional language was fine for conventional purposes, but it was considered insufficient for deeper levels of communication - those inner experiences. Its ability to only communicate a limited scope of experience had actually resulted in the narrowing of people's thought process to only those linguistically-accessible experiences. Humankind thereby lost access to its intuitive, spiritual world.

"To the Artists of the World" also expresses Khlebnikov's suspicion that, "Nowadays sounds have abandoned their past functions and serve the purposes of hostility; they have become differentiated auditory instruments in the exchange of rational wares . . ." (146). He saw conventional national languages as the cause of even greater rifts between nations and peoples, serving to propagate hostility and war. A language that brought people back in touch with their spiritual side would provide them access to a universal base, and hence serve as a unifying tool. Khlebnikov expressed this desire in "To the Artists of the World:" "Let us hope that one single written language may henceforth accompany the long-term destinies of mankind and prove to be the new vortex which unites us, the new integrator of the human race" (147).

His condemnation of "[l]anguage, borrowed from dusty book depositories, from daily newspapers full of lies,

another's language, not our own . . ." (*On Contemporary Poetry* 374), is quite reminiscent of Ball's statement condemning the use of second-hand language, destroyed by journalism:

Man verzichte mit dieser Art Klanggedichte in Bausch und Bogen auf die durch den Journalismus verdorbene und unmöglich gewordene Sprache.

[. . .] Man verzichte darauf, aus zweiter Hand zu dichten: nämlich Worte zu übernehmen (von Sätzen ganz zu schweigen), die man nicht funkelneue für den eigenen Gebrauch erfunden habe. (*Flucht* 24 June 1916)

The New Language: The Self-Sufficient Word

In the contemporary attempts at recreating language, Khlebnikov saw that "we are witnessing the desire to be free from history - to penetrate to the depths of the word" (*"On Contemporary Poetry"* 374). These depths were to be easily attained through the use of a language of "self-sufficient words." Such a language paralleled (and hence had access to) the inner world in that it harbored the ability to touch upon the multivalent meanings of inner experiences. In *"On Contemporary Poetry"* of 1920 Khlebnikov compared conventional language with a language that suited the expression of the multivalent nature of inner experience. With "inner experience" Khlebnikov was referring to the long, distorting process between the moment an outside stimulus occurs and the moment of our verbal expression or description of it. This process

includes our sensory acknowledgment of the stimulus - often with simultaneous sensations, the stimulation of other related subliminal memories and emotions - still prearticulate, the awakening of our logical, cognitive comprehension - still unarticulated, and finally our mental articulation of the experience - still unspoken. Only once we orally articulate the thought has it become fixed, at least for that moment. A self-sufficient word, however, would not immediately force or limit expression into this final fixed state, but express all those multifaceted processes that occur internally and simultaneously during the initial experience. Khlebnikov described it as "when we obtain words that do not belong to any particular language but that do say something; something elusive but real nevertheless" ("Beyonsense Language" in "Our Fundamentals" 383). Paul Schmidt and Charlotte Douglas point out that for Khlebnikov, "Words refused to be ideas, part of the world of human reason [and that] they open up the unknown, the unnamed. . . ." ¹⁶⁰ He saw this struggle between the pure word and the one tied to sense as one that constantly needed to be contended with. It was the pure, self-sufficient word which poets of the day sought, a word that was not "tied" or limited to one "sense" or meaning. Khlebnikov elaborated:

 The word leads a double life. Sometimes it simply

160. Douglas, *King of Time* 15.

grows like a plant whose fruit is a geode of sonorous stones clustering around it; in this case the sound element lives a self-sufficient life, while the particle of sense named by the word stands in shadow. At other times the word is subservient to sense; then sound ceases to be "all-powerful" and autocratic; sound becomes merely a "name" and humbly carries out the commands of sense. . . . ("On Contemporary Poetry" 373)

This was considered to be the realm where one achieved "zaum," i.e. "beyond-sense." "Beyonsense language means language situated beyond the boundaries of ordinary reason, just as we say 'beyond the river' or 'beyond the sea'" ("Our Fundamentals" 383).

Sound as the Tool (Toward Achieving Inner, Zaum Language)

As a tool, Khlebnikov found sound to be a unique device for stirring inner, prearticulate sensations. In "On Poetry" of 1919-20 he spoke of our subconscious understanding of certain sounds and sound sequences (152-54). While we may not understand all these sounds on a rational level, Khlebnikov felt that they nonetheless expressed something intuitive to us:

[T]he truths contained in separate sounds: *sh, m, v* etc. We do not yet understand these sounds. We confess that honestly. But there is no doubt that these sound sequences constitute a series of universal truths passing before the predawn of our soul. ("On Poetry" 152)

This emphasis on the prerational cognition of sounds is

reiterated in "To Artists of the World." When he stated that "the sounds of the alphabet - are the names of various aspects of space" (367), Khlebnikov was emphasizing the nature of our language as one of abstract concepts. For Khlebnikov "space" represented the unfettered "places" or realms of preverbal, prearticulate consciousness. Although Khlebnikov believed inner, prearticulate thought to be more communicative than spoken words, he found the spoken "sounds of the alphabet" as indeed very powerful. A true, zaum sound had parallel internal registers which it stimulated in a truly emotive, multivalent manner.

In "The Word as Such" of 1913 Khlebnikov described how a single word could set off a multitude of impressions: "Henceforth a work of art could consist of a *single word*, and simply by a skillful alteration of that word the fullness and expressivity of artistic form might be attained" (119).

Ball also spoke of the multivalent power of the pure sound-word:

[D]ie magisch erfüllte Vokabel beschwor und gebär einen *neuen Satz*, der von keinerlei konventionellem Sinn bedingt war. An hundert Gedanken zugleich anstreifend, ohne sie namhaft zu machen. . . . (*Flucht* 18 June 1916)

Once words had discarded their conventional, adulterated, rational meanings, and we had rediscovered the true, primal sounds of root thought, language would once again reclaim its powerful, emotive - and truly more

communicative force.

Not Irrational

In defending the validity of his poetry, often in the face of criticism of frivolity, Khlebnikov made great efforts to point out its traditional aspects, particularly "[t]he essential nature of all poetry as word play."¹⁶¹ He saw his poetry merely going one step farther, taking this word play to its ultimate capability.

Cooke tries to bring Khlebnikov's work closer into the realm of the zaumniks, from whose circle he is generally excluded because of his lack of interest in performance and publication of theory, but also because of the popular conception of him as a dreamy mystic with work much more subtle, intellectual and even conventional than that of Kruchenykh, Guro, Kamensky or Mayakovsky. Cooke attempts to redefine Khlebnikov by calling attention to the "hardness" of his poetry, and thereby also distancing him from the mysticism of the Russian Symbolists. He cites the *Slap in the Face* manifesto's "neologistic short verse and prose" and the "sound painting" of the poem "Bobeobi" as particularly effective precisely because of their shock value and tastelessness, and uses this as proof of Khlebnikov's "belonging" to the mainstream (see att. 19). Although Khlebnikov himself was not a propagandist, Cooke

161. Douglas, *King of Time* 8.

feels "Khlebnikov's fellow Futurists were more than happy to help propagate precisely that aspect of his work which most establishment reviewers and literary figures found to their distaste."¹⁶² However, that should not suggest that it was *Khlebnikov's* favorite aspect of his poetry. Like Ball he hated the old and relished in defying the status-quo culture, but not without a serious commitment to the reconstruction of the new language.

The problem of accessibility and comprehensibility of Khlebnikov's poetry is another factor that has contributed to the conception of irrationality. His poetry is difficult to approach and understand; however, this is due to its complexity. As Cooke states, "the text embodies not disorder and nonsense, but order and sense. [His poems'] complex nature . . . does not mean, however, that they are incomprehensible."¹⁶³

Vroon goes so far as to ask the public to regard Khlebnikov as "a visionary, but not a mystic" because of his rationalistic and scientific nature.¹⁶⁴

Khlebnikov's organized workstyle did indeed offer a sharp contrast to Kruchenykh's. Although the two poets cooperated on numerous projects, working well together and freely editing and altering one another's work, Kruchenykh

162. 13.

163. 20.

164. 9.

shared no interest in certain extra-poetic activities of Khlebnikov's. Kruchenykh himself stated in the 1966 interview that Khlebnikov "was not always of this world."¹⁶⁵ And Kruchenykh regarded as completely absurd Khlebnikov's calculations on future wars, refusing to help with their publication when Khlebnikov approached him.¹⁶⁶

The foundation for these outer-worldly endeavors was once again found in the sciences and mathematics. Kruchenykh recounted that Khlebnikov had constantly sought to substantiate zaum theoretically.¹⁶⁷ He sought to apply the same kind of grand rules that govern mathematics to the mysteries of human behavior. Khlebnikov believed that the poetic process could lead to the same results as various mathematical formulas do, yielding to a deeper understanding of the mysteries of the universe. As Douglas explains, Khlebnikov believed in the existence of "primary oscillating forces whose mathematic properties were the concrete expression of the nature of the universe and everything within it."¹⁶⁸ This unifying force accounted for a bond between "such disparate phenomena as the sounds of words, an individual's changes of mood, luck and personal events, and the rise and fall of great

165. Cited in McVay 577.

166. Cooke 221-22, note 12.

167. McVay 574.

168. *King of Time* 5.

nations,"¹⁶⁹ engaging scientists and artists in a common endeavor.

A frequently-employed principle was the mathematical "five-fold" structure, which aided Khlebnikov in the choice of vowels for his poetry, and at times lent the poetry various forms of mathematical symmetry. While Khlebnikov also used the number 2, 3 or 7 for similar mathematical objectives, he found that five forced its authority in the majority of situations.¹⁷⁰ In "The warrior of the kingdom" of 1913, Khlebnikov discussed the significance of the number five for language, and decreed its future role as a guiding principle in his upcoming linguistic searches. He offered no reason for this significance, only that he had noticed in his own poetry, for example, how certain sounds constantly occurred in a sequence of five (290). Jakobson discussed how Khlebnikov "acknowledged that the complex verbal design may be inherent in [his] work irrespective of [his] volition."¹⁷¹ Khlebnikov also noted the number five as a basic principle in nature, guiding the structure of the hand, snow flakes and star fish ("The Warrior" 296).¹⁷²

169. Douglas, *King of Time* 5.

170. For further discussion, see Cooke 101.

171. *Verbal Art* 60.

172. Such scientific notation was not new for poets. Arno Holz had considered the number three a central rhythmic determinant in his poetry, which principle he attributed to "Zahlenmystik" (*Werke*, vol. X [Berlin: Dietz Nachfolger,

He began employing this "five-rayed structure of self-sufficient language" ("The Warrior" 290) in 1913. In a February 1914 letter to Jakobson he explained that he had found the alphabet insufficient for poetry, and was developing the use of numbers to compensate for this deficiency.¹⁷³ Numbers were for him practical, not aesthetic and could serve as an organizational tool within poetry. Furthermore, he appreciated their ability to provide an "international sort of communication."¹⁷⁴

In "Our Fundamentals" of 1919 Khlebnikov cited one of his reasons for having placed such faith in science and mathematics as their promise to "serve to solve abstract problems" relating to language (379). He found that:

The plenitude of language must be analyzed in terms of fundamental units of "alphabet verities," and then for these sound elements we may be able to construct something resembling Mendelew's law or Moseley's law - the latest achievements of the science of chemistry. (376)

Science and mathematics had arrived at basic universal principles whose discovery in language, poetry and art appeared imminent to him. Khlebnikov simply found these

...Continued...

1925] 663). He, too, believed this numerical principle followed a law that was beyond his influence. "Nicht von mir 'gewollt', denn ich . . . suche mich immer ganz 'den Dingen' zu geben unter möglichster Ausschaltung meines 'Ichs' (Werke, vol. V [n.p.: Luchterhand, n.d.] 96).

173. Cooke 101.

174. Cooke 101.

areas to have been a bit slower in their development, but their time was coming:

The names of Dalton, Planck, Weiss, and others remind us that every field of knowledge passes through an age marked by a law of multiple proportions. Philology has not yet attained this age, but now the light of numbers begins to fall upon it as well. ("On the Simple Names of Language" 299)

The Etymologic Research

Once philology's principles were discovered, Khlebnikov felt the connections *between* all the basic principles of the sciences and the arts would become apparent. He believed a few grand, basic principles functioned as guides to all activity - be it human mood and behavior, great political and historical events, or the forces that perpetuated the universe.

The essay "On the Simple Names of Language" represents Khlebnikov's attempt at tying together language and mathematics, as he examined the semantic meaning of individual letters and phonemes (calling these basic units "simple names"). He arrayed the parallels in meaning and sound value with further parallels to geometric concepts. Khlebnikov believed these concepts to be the guiding principles behind pure word formations. Later he was to employ these correspondences in his rediscovery of the words he regarded as part of the primal language. Douglas

discusses this connection to the principles of the universe: "Beyonsense becomes a poetic language full of meaning, aligned with the natural universe, and not merely emotionally intuitive non-sense syllables."¹⁷⁵ With the statement that the beyonsense language is "full of meaning," Douglas is correct; but to say it is not "*merely* intuitive" slights the fact that the entire base of the primal language was believed to be fixed in a type of emotional, intuitive communication. The intuitive aspect is not *merely* a byproduct, but the very nature and purpose of the language. Indeed the effort and research Khlebnikov invested in attempts at discovering the principle parts of sound and inner, intuitive meaning went beyond that of any other sound poet. And if one makes the painstaking effort of following Khlebnikov's tabulations, one can indeed discover more "meaning" in the poems and find them more accessible. Despite these great "scientific" efforts, the type of language Khlebnikov had sought was still at heart the same intuitive and emotive one Ball and Kruchenykh had sought.

"On Poetry" emphasizes the primal, universal and emotive values of language so similar to Ball's, especially when discussing the "universal truths passing before the predawn of our soul [. . .] of separate sounds [like] *sh, m, v*" ("On Poetry" 152).

175. *Collected Works* 265.

The tabulations Khlebnikov devised in the process are interesting to say the least, and led him to his most substantial discovery. What Khlebnikov surmised from his research was that it was the initial consonant of the root of a word that harbored its meaning. This became his guiding principle as he then attempted to uncover the basic meaning in each Russian consonant.

Such a process was easier for Khlebnikov than one would imagine due to his far-reaching knowledge of the Russian language, knowing a large number of Slavic dialects, as well as Sanskrit. His knowledge of dialects, furthermore, provided him access to more primitive forms of his language. In a letter to Kruchenykh of early 1913 he spoke of looking to "the Slavs, the Montenegrins, and others" for vocabulary for this root language.¹⁷⁶ He also made abundant use of Vladimir Dahl's dictionary as a source, which Douglas describes as "a mine of lore on the Russian language, on dialect forms, on folk speech and customs."¹⁷⁷ "Let us consider two words" and "Here is the way the syllable so is a field" present his etymological task in great detail.

Khlebnikov began by purging the language of all words with Latin and Germanic roots,¹⁷⁸ however, as Vroon points

176. Cited in Douglas, *Collected Works* 73.

177. *King of Time* 8.

178. Cooke 8-9.

out, not out of nationalism as so often has been suggested, but because foreign words made the process of finding proto-roots all the more difficult.¹⁷⁹ And again, it was not nationalism that led him to seek the proto-language in Russian sources, but simply convenience and necessity, Russian being his native language and the one he was most fluent in. It is important to recall that another of Khlebnikov's reasons for wanting a universal language was for better communication for the purposes of world (and universal) peace. In a brief memoir written in 1919 he declared his impetus for discovering an international language to have arisen from pacifistic concerns. He attributes even his Pan-Slavic interests not to nationalism, but because "I wanted to discover the reason for all those deaths."¹⁸⁰

In "Our Fundamentals" he presented his belief that weapons' only reason for existence was the lack of a common language. They filled this void, and were in fact the only currently available international vocabulary (378). In making his plea for the international zaum language, Khlebnikov asked, "What is better, a universal language or universal slaughter?"¹⁸¹ Khlebnikov described the ultimate

179. 11.

180. Cited in Douglas, *King of Time* 167.

181. Cited in White, *Literary Futurism* 259 from Velimir Khlebnikov, *Sobranie prozvedeniy*, ed. Nikolai Stepanov, 5 vols. (Leningrad, 1928-33).

objective of zaum in "To the Artists of the World":

The goal is to create a common written language shared by all the peoples of this third satellite of the Sun, to invent written symbols that can be understood and accepted by our entire star. . . . Painting has always used a language accessible to everyone. (364)

Not only would zaum provide an international language, but a language of deeper communication, i.e. of communication in the realm of things that mattered. In "Our Fundamentals" he stated that, "Beyonsense language is thus the universal language of the future, although it is still in an embryonic state. It alone will be able to unite the people. Rational languages have separated them" (385).

Again, Khlebnikov was not being nationalistic when he stated that, "Kant set out to define the limits of the human intellect, but all he managed to do was define the limits of the German intellect."¹⁸² Neither was he asserting that Russian was a superior language on which to base the protolanguage. He was simply pointing out the need to go beyond "German" or "Russian" or any linguistically bound type of thought. Only a truly universal, intuitive language would lead mankind beyond

182. "Two Individuals." Cited in Douglas, *Collected Works* 288.

reason to true, deeper understanding and knowledge.¹⁸³

Douglas emphasizes that the meticulous nature of Khlebnikov's research reflects the serious nature of his attempt to objectively reconstruct an international language acceptable for all. "[H]is intention is to create an international system of communication, to provide humanity with 'a single, universal, scientifically constructed language'."¹⁸⁴

Despite the numerous tabulations and the scientific appearance of Khlebnikov's work, much of the linguistic foundation rests in folk etymology; i.e. the coincidences that make words sound similar (even if historically their etymology is not). Douglas and Schmidt regard Khlebnikov's discoveries to have been based on a "hidden net of coincidences and poetic correspondences that Baudelaire first wrote of . . . ," and call these "magic patterns."¹⁸⁵

There exists, however, much linguistic research to the contrary. Robert King discusses the strength and prevalence of folk etymology in influencing actual linguistic changes, i.e. linguistic changes that were forced upon language simply by virtue of its speakers' beliefs in affinities between words that did not "actually"

183. Ball also blamed Kant for the preponderance of reason, and for the demise of spiritual awareness in the German people. See Introduction Chapter of this study.

184. *Collected Works* 265.

185. *King of Time* 13.

exist.¹⁸⁶ Jakobson, as well, discusses the role of such assumed affinities in the development of language: "As learned in etymology as Germans may be, in their perception words like *Blitz* (lightning) and *Donner* (thunder) or *spitz* (pointed) and *rund* (round) nevertheless merge their imagery in such a natural way that in none of these pairs would an exchange of meanings be conceivable."¹⁸⁷ In citing the research of 1891 by the German linguist Georg von der Gabelentz, Jakobson states that, "As we gradually acquire our mother tongue, 'our feeling etymologizes, so to speak, without any regard to historical linguistics'."¹⁸⁸ He further cites the studies of Mikolaj Kruszewski and Hugo Schuchardt on

"grammatical analogy" and the so-called popular etymology . . . in these historically "false" but synchronically valid etymologies, which are based

186. *Historical Linguistics and Generative Grammar* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1969) 134-39. King provides a bibliography of supplementary reading on the scientific validity of folk etymology including Leonard Bloomfield, *Language*. (New York: Holdt, Rinehart and Winston, 1933) especially Chapters 20-23; Eduard Hermann, *Lautgesetz und Analogie* (Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1931); Charles F. Hockett, *A Course in Modern Linguistics* (New York: Macmillan, 1958) especially 42-54; Paul Kinpasky, *Phonological Change*, diss., MIT, 1965; Paul M. Postal, *Aspects of Phonological Theory* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968) Chapters 10-15; Eduard Wechsler, *Giebt es Lautgesetze?* (Halle: Niemeyer, 1900).

187. "Sound Symbolism," *On Language*, eds. Linda R. Waugh and Monique Monville-Burston (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1990) 424.

188. "Sound Symbolism" 424.

on mass agreement within a given speech community. Words linked together by both sound and meaning manifest "elective affinities" (*Wahlverwandtschaften*), able to modify the shape and the content of vocables involved.¹⁸⁹

In supporting Khlebnikov's in-depth research, Jakobson believes that, "Most objections to the search for the inner significance of speech sounds arose because the latter were not dissected into their ultimate constituents."¹⁹⁰

"Let us consider two words" provides an example of how Khlebnikov derived meaning for sounds based on an affinity between similar-sounding words, despite the unrelatedness of their conventional semantic meaning. While there is no etymological proof of an historical affinity between many of these similar-sounding words, it is easy to understand how a speaker may nonetheless subliminally regard them as related. Their tonal affinity alone may actually have played a major role in the development of many semantically-related words.

And if one thinks in the spiritual terms of Khlebnikov and Ball, the original derivation of a word (although not verifiable) should indeed have been effected by primal principles; i.e. internal and abstract affinities between sounds and objects or experiences.

189. "Sound Symbolism" 424-25. Jakobson's citations of various linguists supporting this argument are numerous.

190. 427.

Douglas cites a letter of May 1914 in which Khlebnikov offered an example of some invented or "rediscovered" words. She accurately stresses the unscientific quality of these derivations, and the "imaginary" quality of their affinities.¹⁹¹ However, it is not too great a stretch of the imagination to propose that *molnii* (lightning) and *molodets* (congratulations) had a subliminal connection to their speakers during the process of their derivation whereby the *mol* in *molodets* emphasizes the spark, the brightness and excitement of lightning and transfers this excitement to the intent of the speaker of *molodets* when s/he congratulates someone sincerely, wholeheartedly, surprisedly or excitedly. This may be an extreme leap, but it is not all that inconceivable, despite its lack of etymological proof.

Khlebnikov's theory should likewise not be weakened by the fact that his etymological "rules" are not absolute. For example, when Khlebnikov discusses the principles of *v* or *l* in "Let us consider two words" the number of available examples is limited. The fact that these values do not hold fast in *all* words does not disprove his argument. Again, if one thinks like a Ball or a Khlebnikov, this restricted number of words would simply be the result of adulteration of the protolanguage; these provided examples were seen as the only remaining protowords, still

191. *Collected Works* 91.

containing the pure ur-sounds. Such examples represent the handful of words that Khlebnikov had rediscovered and from which he then initiated his project to reconstruct the protolanguage.

In referring to his disciple Grigory Petnikov, Khlebnikov emphasized the early stages of their task of rediscovery:

[R]emember that an overview of the fundamentals of languages has already been accomplished, and a discovery made: that the alphabet is the sound machine of languages, and each of its sounds hides a fully exact and spatial word image. This knowledge is essential in order to transport man to the next state - a single common language - and that we will do next year.¹⁹²

The process of developing this new language is metaphorically described by Vroon, who suggests the analogy of a tree where Khlebnikov tries to find the root, and then uses it in building branches to new words.¹⁹³

In "The Warrior of the Kingdom," however, Khlebnikov discusses an affinity that most likely tires the patience and imagination of any critic:

We remind you that in the land called Germany *G/H* and *SH* are the initial sounds in the names of close to two dozen of the greatest writers and thinkers that nation has produced (Schiller,

192. Letter to Petnikov. Cited in Douglas, *Collected Works* 337.

193. 13-14.

Schlegel, Schopenhauer, Schelling, Goethe, Heine, Hesse, Hegel). . . ." (293)

Zangezi, however, offers poetry that resembles more real, serious attempts at finding proto-sounds. "Planes 15" and "16" (see att. 20) are particularly warranted examples, with "Plane 2" being very akin to Ball sound poetry.

Other Universal Languages

Khlebnikov also discussed the "wisdom" of the extant universal languages:

[W]hat about spells and incantations, what we call magic words, the sacred language of paganism, words like "shagadam, magadam, vigadam, pitz, patz, patzu" - they are rows of mere syllables that the intellect can make no sense of, and they form a kind of beyonsense language in folk speech. Nevertheless an enormous power over mankind is attributed to these incomprehensible words and magic spells, and direct influence upon the fate of man. ("On Poetry" 152)

He explained that:

Beyonsense language is used in charms and incantations, where it dominates and displaces the language of sense, and thus shows that it has a special power over human consciousness, a special right to exist alongside the language of reason. ("Our Fundamentals" 383)

Ball also was interested in the language of magic and incantations. In *Flucht* he discussed these:

Wenn man genau sein wollte: zwei Drittel der wunderbar klagenden Worte, denen kein Menschengemüt widerstehen mag, stammen aus uralten Zaubertexten. Die Verwendung von "Siegel[n]," von magisch erfüllten fliegenden Worten und Klangfiguren kennzeichnet unsere gemeinsame Art zu dichten. Solcherlei Wortbilder, wenn sie gelungen sind, graben sich unwiderstehlich und mit hypnotischer Macht dem Gedächtnis ein, und ebenso unwiderstehlich und reibungslos tauchen sie aus dem Gedächtnisse wieder auf. (15 June 1916)

Khlebnikov included chants in his poetry. The poem "Night in Galicia"¹⁹⁴ for example contains a chant for which Khlebnikov gave his source as a textbook by Sakharov. Cooke identifies it as the *Tales of the Russian People*, compiled by Sakharov in the mid-nineteenth century, and brought to Khlebnikov's attention in 1913 by Roman Jakobson. It contains a number of magical chants, witches' songs and incantations.¹⁹⁵ Cooke believes that the debut of Khlebnikov's poem "Incantation by Laughter" ("smekhachi") acquires a "magical context" due to the infiltration of incantatory elements throughout Khlebnikov's previous work.¹⁹⁶ He cites Khlebnikov's use of palindromes to create formulas for spells and

194. "Noch' v Galitsii", first published in 1914.

195. 88. Sakarov's text can be located in *Sobraniye proizvedeniy*, vol. 11, ed. N. Stepanov (Leningrad, 1928-33).

196. 89-90.

incantations. In these Khlebnikov created a dual flow of sound by concealing words within words, thereby doubling the linguistic power.¹⁹⁷ Kruchenykh, as well, spoke enthusiastically of palindrome use in "Novye puti slova."¹⁹⁸

The New Language - Innovations/Technique

Douglas and Schmidt emphasize the seriousness and success of Khlebnikov's innovative use of palindromes and other linguistic experimentation, contrary to popular criticism which often belittles such experiments as "word play." Douglas is impressed by Khlebnikov's ability "to create an entire poetics" in this area, and ranks him with Mallarmé, Joyce, Pound and Stein, the "great innovators of literary modernism. His experiments broke the hold of traditional verse patterns in Russian poetry."¹⁹⁹

Neologisms - Generative Word Formation and Multivalence

The fact that Khlebnikov was working in Russian certainly enhanced his level of success. The arrival at the concept of the semantic determinant of a word laying in the initial consonant of its root, and Khlebnikov's ensuing internal declensions and mutations were largely facilitated

197. 93.

198. Cooke 211, note 70.

199. *The King of Time* 6.

by the nature of the highly inflected and segmentable Russian language.²⁰⁰

In his "A Little Introductory Dictionary of Single-Syllable Words" Khlebnikov provided a list of single-syllable words that he saw as a basis for root meanings (313). He compiled various other lists of words which begin with the same letter or phoneme, in an attempt to demonstrate their similar semantic field. "Beyonsense Language" for example looks at a group of words which superficially appear semantically-unrelated, but upon further examination reveal an affinity. Initially the affinity appears to rest only in their common initial *ch* sound: *chasa*, *cherep*, *chan*, *chulok* (cup, skull, vat, stocking). Khlebnikov, however, arrives at a semantic relationship by discovering the common meaning of "one body which encases or envelopes another" ("Our Fundamentals" 384). In forming neologisms with these semantically-laden phonemes for his poetry, he was particularly inclined toward binary opposition. He takes the word *vesna* (spring), poses it against *osen* (in the fall), and through the process of an internal declension comes up with the more rhythmically and geometrically parallel pair *vesen* vs. -----

200. White *Literary Futurism* 230-32. Russian, a highly inflected language, with nine cases, is also easily segmentable, i.e. prefixes and suffixes can be readily attached to words. (Interestingly, German also shares these two qualities, which Italian, French and English do not, being uninflected and relatively unsupple in terms of prefixes and suffixes.)

v o s e n.²⁰¹ However, due to the versatility of Russian, he was able to use standard suffixes and prefixes in this process. He thereby affected a constant exchange between the old language and the new, dispelling the assumption of arbitrariness in his neologisms. The use and maintenance of "roots" also enables his language to remain within a recognizable semantic realm. Certain vestiges of conventional language are thereby retained much more than in Ball's sound poems. Associations, as well, are tied to more conventional denotations than those found in Ball's poetry. However, the process of continual and multivalent association remains the same.²⁰²

Khlebnikov, like Ball, was not interested in finding one perfect word with an absolute meaning, but in offering a root for reference - as a communicative tool, and then allowing the listeners to individually wander through the field of multivalent references and, perhaps, inferences.

In discussing the problem of translating poetry, Khlebnikov emphasized the importance of the translator carrying out the act of creating a neologism in the same manner as it was done in the original language. The act of

201. White, *Literary Futurism* 274.

202. In its initial stage, this zaum and sound-poem process does not appear all that different from the work of Expressionists like August Stramm or Franz Behrens. The generative sequences of these Expressionists, however, do not proceed to the extreme mutations and total abstraction that sound and zaum poetry is capable of.

creating a neologism was seen as more important than the eventual semantic outcome. He also stressed the necessity of the audience being aware of this neologistic act. And even if the readers or listeners were not necessarily involved in the speaker's original neologistic act, they should at least be engaged in their own individual process of exploring the word and its origins - with origins implying the original impetus or act that caused the speaker to refer to this root word in the first place.

Multivalence in language remained particularly important for Khlebnikov in that he believed it to represent our ever-shifting perceptions during an experience. Attaining a true parallel to this process was the ultimate purpose of zaum language. In "Our Fundamentals" he reiterated the importance of ever-changing words:

Word creation is hostile to the bookish petrification of language. It takes as its model the fact that in villages, by rivers and forests, language is being created to this very day, every minute sees the birth of words. . . . (382)

Ball, as well, spoke of the inability of language to monumentalize - that it can only be abstract representation, only approximation, since that is all that exists in our ever-shifting perceptions. He saw a representation of the absolute as impossible, because it did not exist. "Wo das 'Ding an sich' mit der Sprache zusammentrifft, hat der Kantianismus aufgehört" (*Flucht* 15

November 1915).

In discussing Khlebnikov's interest in linguistic multivalence, Klosty Beaujour states that:

He frequently uses words of double meaning, often in such a way that the most common one becomes a metaphor which disguises the secondary meaning which is less well-known. Or the two meanings may be perceived at once, creating a double exposure, a semantic field rather than a single meaning.²⁰³

While the following statement by Ball shows that he did not follow as strict a system as Khlebnikov in developing his neologisms, it does once again elucidate the shifting meanings in his words, and the importance of acoustic value in their generation. Ball did not have a rigorous system like the one Khlebnikov believed in as a guiding principle. Rather, he hoped that by achieving a state of *tabula rasa* during composition, he could approach a state of linguistic freshness or innocence much like that adamic person, responding to intuitive sensations when he first uttered a "new" word. In the *Dada Manifesto* of 14 July 1916 Ball described how he believed language came into being: "Das kann man nun so recht sehen, wie die artikulierte Sprache entsteht. Ich lasse die Laute ganz einfach fallen. Worte tauchen auf. . . ."

203. 17. Also see Douglas, *King of Time* 7 for a discussion of this process.

Multivalence and the Non-Linear

Zangezi (see att. 20) provides a stage for Khlebnikov's zaum poetry against the backdrop of a world of multivalence and simultaneity, and one lacking clear causal relationships. In its introduction, Khlebnikov labeled the novel a "supersaga," defining it as "an architecture composed of narratives," of "independent sections."²⁰⁴ The apparent unrelatedness of these independent sections leaves the reader with the task of forming the connectives. Without being fed a deliberate theme or plot dependent on cause and effect, the reader is often left in a world much like that of a child, where relationships are not always clear. And acting as a child - without the ability to form judgments based on *a priori* knowledge - s/he is left to let the story flow its course, to let juxtaposing events coexist. The reader is thus not forced to form judgments, but asked to simply experience the events on a prerational level.

The previously-discussed ideas that developed during the conception of zaum are clearly recognizable. Khlebnikov used *Zangezi* as the stage for the summation, but also for the continued consideration of these zaum ideas. Douglas states that, "The supersaga . . . points to the fact of any artist's work as a continuous on-going whole, a

204. Douglas, *The King of Time* 191.

constant reconsideration of a few basic themes."²⁰⁵

The unrelatedness of the sections is also Khlebnikov's way of calling to our attention that not all events in life follow clear cause-and-effect patterns, that much of our experience takes place precognitively, without these rational connectives, and that these are valid experiences, needing no further "clarification."

This emphasis on simultaneously-occurring events and our ability to "take in these events" in the same simultaneous, disconnected, multifaceted manner reiterates Khlebnikov's high regard for the abilities and validity of the prerational, inner world. His constant search for words that could express this level of experience is represented in *Zangezi* on a larger scale. The lack of a traditional omniscient narrator allows for the additional representation of multivalence in language on a larger scale. Pomorska speaks of "[t]he principle of speed and compression [leading] to the maximal condensation of a sentence and to the dynamization of the whole poetic message."²⁰⁶

Lack of Static Time and Incomplete Works

Perhaps the fact that Khlebnikov saw our perceptions as ever-changing explains the fact that many of his works

205. *The King of Time* 189.

206. *Russian Formalist Theory* 87.

remained unfinished, and were published by him as fragments, many of them even without titles. His project of creating a new language was never actually completed either. Pomorska speaks of Khlebnikov's idea that "today's poetry is only an 'extemporale' for future accomplishments."²⁰⁷ And above he is quoted as saying that the work of building the "single common language [. . .] we will do next year."²⁰⁸ But Khlebnikov was well aware of the fact that this task of building a single common language was one that never could be completed because, as times and human perceptions and attitudes and world views changed, language also needed to. What he regarded as most important to maintain, however, was the root meanings of words in order to continue a relationship with original and universal truths and principles. The task of rediscovering and uncovering them was one he did see as manageable in his lifetime.

Languages as Connecting the Various Levels of the Universe

On a very elementary level *Zangezi* also allows the reader to clearly see the complex neologistic process of zaum language. Plane Nine contains a scene in which Khlebnikov appears to be calling attention to the very process itself and to the entire enterprise of zaum. We

207. *Russian Formalist Theory* 85.

208. Letter to Petnikov. 337.

encounter a series of neologisms generated from the root *um* (as in *zaum*, *um* = sense, reason). Zangezi specifically refers to the process:

Sound the alarm, send the sound through the mind!
Toll the big bell, the great tocsin of
intelligence! All the inflections of the human
brain will pass in review before you, all the
permutations of "-UM"!²⁰⁹

Zangezi also offers a vivid stage for employing the many "languages" of Khlebnikov's interests. The number of possible languages that Khlebnikov had identified exceeded fifty. Included were: the language of the stars (the future universal language), the language of the gods (the purest *zaum* language in the Kruchenykh sense with no glossary, nor identifiable equivalent in conventional language, but with Khlebnikov's mystical "god" aspect), the language of the birds (with proper ornithological identification, but not very innovative), rainbow speech, personal language, various numerical languages and sound painting (exemplified by the poem "Bobeobi" in which Khlebnikov prescribed equivalences between colors and consonantal clusters.²¹⁰

In suggesting the interconnectedness of these various languages in *Zangezi* Khlebnikov was able to demonstrate his

209. Translated in White, *Literary Futurism* 269-71.

210. White, Cooke, and Douglas in *King of Time* discuss these languages in detail (254, 99 and 189, respectively).

theory on how they served to integrate the various facets of the universe. Douglas points out how *Zangezi's* combination of all these languages resulted in "the crystallization of all human endeavor in the struggle of Laughter with Death."²¹¹

Onomatopoeia / Synaesthesia

The use of onomatopoeic parallels, so central to the formation of Ball's sound poetry, is also prevalent in Khlebnikov's poetry. One of his favorite onomatopoeic devices was the "language of the birds," seen in "Wisdom in a Snare"²¹² and quite extensively in *Zangezi*. Khlebnikov was an experienced ornithologist, able to identify and reproduce a multitude of bird sounds. He believed that different bird sounds reflected the varying moods of birds²¹³ and could thus be used to reflect various moods in his poetry.

The onomatopoeic imitation of nature served the underlying principle of primitivism in that it could reflect the pure, unadulterated language of animals, as well as affect absolutely unmediated imitation of naturally-occurring sounds. The character *Zangezi*, who

211. *King of Time* 189.

212. "Mudrost' v silke'" of 1914.

213. Cooke 86, also see Vroon 20-21 and 186-87.

speaks the language of the birds, is also intended to underscore the validity of primitivism, and as Douglas points out is reminiscent of Nietzsche's Zarathustra as well as "those other young forest heros, Hiawatha and Siegfried."²¹⁴ Zangezi also brings to mind the other primitive *Naturmenschen* like Ball's Laurentius Tenderenda and Marinetti's Mazzapà from *The Untamables*.

Vroon raises the issue of aestheticism in Khlebnikov's use of sound, which he believes to represent a "response to the mysticism of the second generation of symbolists."²¹⁵ The results of his sound theory do indeed appear to clearly correspond with the belief in the ultimate harmony of the universe, where *unio mystica* results in a completely harmonious and aesthetically pleasurable realm. What we discover is a quality that once again brings Khlebnikov closer in line with Ball, and poses the two against Kruchenykh and Kandinsky, more oriented towards dissonance.

Khlebnikov's complex theory on the etymology of onomatopoetic words emphasizes this harmoniously-unifying principle of nature. His theory on the etymology of onomatopoetic words is actually based on a unique belief concerning the origin of natural sounds. Khlebnikov felt

214. *King of Time* 189.

215. 16.

that natural sound occurrences (be they by animals, natural phenomena like the wind, or by humans) were all born of an innate sense of color correspondence. That is, each sound possessed an underlying relationship to a specific color.²¹⁶ Khlebnikov devised a form of "sound painting" which provides an avenue for this theory. It is evidenced in poems such as "Storm in the Month of Au" and "Bobeobi," where he employed color correspondences to consonant combinations (att. 21). This onomatopoetic theory emphasizes the ties Khlebnikov saw between human language and nature, underscoring the close relationship between humans and the universe whose reunion he sought to facilitate with the new language.

Rhythm

As Khlebnikov "tried to work out an all-embracing system of correspondences between earthly languages and the 'language of the stars' between human behavior and the movement of the universe," a concern for rhythm in language and poetry became of central concern. He felt himself forced to "look for the rhythms that sounded beneath the conventional ones, to seek meaning in the cyclical patterns of the universe."²¹⁷ In "Subjects for Discussion" Khlebnikov explained how humankind could free itself from

216. Pomorska, *Russian Formalist Theory* 98.

217. Douglas, *King of Time* 167.

the restraints of conventional, rational thought patterns by employing the rhythmic patterns of the universe. He stated that, "We are fated to fight with rhythm and time . . ." ("Subjects for Discussion" 324).²¹⁸

In a letter to Kulbin from the spring of 1916 Khlebnikov described his loathing of military service and that the marching in particular was ruining his sense of rhythm, so central to his pure linguistic practices: "I will be forced to smash my rhythm . . . and fall silent as a poet."²¹⁹

Subjectivity vs. Objectivity. The Role of the Artist

The main difference between Khlebnikov's synaesthetic theory and Kandinsky's use of color correspondences is that, while Kandinsky's synaesthetic correspondences have been criticized for their apparently unmystical, and more scientific, artificial base, Khlebnikov's program freely acknowledges such artificiality. In "To the Artists of the World" Khlebnikov actually called on artists to improve the correspondences between their visual signs and representations of space. He offered suggestions such as the use of improved linear symbols or color to create "a universal dictionary, the shortest in existence" (367-68), which he hoped would serve as more direct, and accurate

218. Cited in Douglas, *Collected Works*.

219. Discussed in Douglas, *Collected Works* 107.

representations of universal phenomena:

But it is your task, you artists, to alter or improve these signs. . . . This proposed experiment to convert beyondsense language from an untamed condition to a domesticated one, to make it bear useful burdens, deserves a certain amount of attention. (368)

This scientific effort to create a system of communication is blatantly self-conscious and artificial. It serves as an interesting contrast to his search for *ur-principles* based on natural, spontaneous and unadulterated human acoustic productions. It also contrasts sharply with Ball's attempt to rediscover - not create - mystic correspondences for communication on a deeper, more primal intuitive plane. Perhaps it is merely an attestation of Khlebnikov's awareness of artists' continuing struggle to remain objective.

The following, however, reminds us that ultimately Khlebnikov was attempting a more objective means of communication, even if he ran a bit astray in his requirements therefor. The entire goal of the new language was to enable humankind to comprehend and communicate on a universal wavelength in sync with the universe:

What astonishes us is to discover that in Khlebnikov the conventional impulse to poetry - the attempt to identify the self through poetic expression - gave way early to an attempt to identify the universe through poetry, to locate it and mark its coordinates in the sounds of language

themselves, and in their vibrations to make resound these "strings" that comprise the universe and hold it together.²²⁰

In this respect Khlebnikov's intentions at least always maintained the goal of objectivity.

Visual Language

The above-cited call to "The Artists of the World" also provides an indication of Khlebnikov's concern for the visual foundation of zaum language. In his search for a written form of this language, he became acutely aware of the limitations of the conventional alphabet and found himself forced to use orthography that ironically cannot be acoustically reproduced. Pomorska calls attention to his use of "e" after vowels or nonpalatalized pairs of consonants in order to suggest articulation of sounds that cannot be pronounced in Russian.²²¹

While new phonetic sequences clearly required new written symbols to enable their pronunciation, some of these visual spellings, however, were not intended to be articulated, but rather to be understood on a prearticulate level.

220. Douglas, *King of Time* 8.

221. *Russian Formalist Theory* 98.

Conventional References

Khlebnikov's concern for the visual word reveals his understanding of the need for this language to find its place in the material world. Even though one of the ultimate goals of the revived spiritual awareness was human transcendence to higher planes, Khlebnikov did not intend for material reality to be rejected altogether, just as he did not want to become completely anti-rational. Since the material world would remain the underlying context in which human endeavors played themselves out, a functional, written medium was needed.

Until the general public came to understand zaum better, Khlebnikov, like his contemporaries, remained aware of the need to maintain some conventional references. He found that contextualization of beyonsense language in *Zangezi* also served this purpose. (See this study, Chapter 3, "Kandinsky" 143, 153-58, 167-68 and Chapter 2, "Marinetti" 118 for a discussion of Ball's and Kandinsky's approach to the problem of weaning the public to an understanding of nonrepresentational language.)

Conclusion

Khlebnikov's awareness of the involvement of these practical aspects in the development of the new language attests to his scientific nature. Douglas goes so far as to say that Khlebnikov, "is by no means a mystic. He saw himself rather as a prophet, a discoverer, in the line of

Aryabhatta, Leibniz, Lomonosov, and Lobachevsky. . . ."222

While this may be stretching the point, Khlebnikov, the mystic, did consistently seek *very rational* means to achieve his goals. His sound poems, as well as theoretical writings on these, attest to his belief in primal sound as the key to the renewed language, and as the key to more spiritual communication. But he did consistently use rational methods to achieve this goal. Ball, on the other hand, sought a sort of mystic transcendence to put himself in a position of deep concentration in order to feel and hear the primal sounds.²²³ This contrasts quite sharply with Khlebnikov's statements in "To the Artists of the World" that suggest a deliberate language of self-conscious creation. This scientism ironically attests to his commitment to the serious endeavor of rediscovering the primal language as the key to and as a means of expression within the inner mystic realm. This dichotomy in Khlebnikov can be misleading. It is clear to see how the coexistence of such seemingly contradictory intentions can lead to the overemphasis of one or the other by anyone attempting to study Khlebnikov. It is important to remember that in this poet the dichotomy is one of coexistence. As forced as Khlebnikov's theoretical

222. *King of Time* 168.

223. Although Khlebnikov does appear to be doing this in "Plane II."

language appears, the basis of his idea and hope lay in the belief that he was recovering primal laws of language. Klosty Beaujour aptly describes his intentions to "find and recreate what has been lost and to do this in accordance with what he feels to be the primal laws of human language and the primal inherent meanings of certain consonantal sounds in particular."²²⁴ The linguist Osip Brik reiterates that, "Khlebnikov's poetic innovations are discoveries, not inventions."²²⁵

This dichotomy, too, is what brings him closer to Ball - the dreamy mysticism coupled with utmost seriousness and deliberateness of process; the wild ideas carried out with the qualities and lifestyle of a monk; the interest in primitive forces, but the pulling together of them to a harmonious unity; and the deep belief in the superiority of such a universe. This dichotomy is also what most clearly distinguishes Ball and Khlebnikov from their contemporaries involved in similar endeavors - Kandinsky and dissonance, Marinetti and his love of the material, Kruchenykh and his purer sound experiments, and the deeper interest in experimentation of many other Dadaists and sound players like Schwitters, Hausmann, Huelsenbeck, Scheerbart and

224. 17.

225. "Sur Khlebnikov" *Change* 4 (1969): 198.

Morgenstern.²²⁶

226. See this study's Conclusion Chapter for a discussion of these poets' experiments in sound.

CHAPTER 5: THE POEMS

Publications

The entire number of extant sound poems is ten (see atts. 1-10). The critical publication of the six poems "Wolken," "Katzen und Pfauen," "Totenklage," "Gadji beri bimba," "Karawane" and "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" is *Hugo Ball Gesammelte Gedichte*,¹ although they appeared individually in numerous publications during Ball's lifetime, and are frequently cited in more recent anthologies and studies.² The three recently discovered poems: "1 Stern und 7 kazamogipuffel," "bfirr bfirr" and "brulba dori daula dalla" are published in *Hugo Ball. Die Nicht Gesammelten Gedichte*.³ And "PIFFALOMOZZA. Das Stier" has never been published. In other publications the first six poems appear under slightly different titles and with slight textual variations, based on various manuscript and typescript versions of Ball's. Ball's novel *Tenderenda der Phantast* contains versions of "Elefantenkarawane" and "Katzen und Pfauen" worthy of consideration given their form in the context of the novel.

1. Annemarie Schütt-Hennings, ed. (Zurich: Arche, 1970).

2. See Ernst Teubner, ed., *Hugo Ball Bibliographie* (Mainz: v. Hase und Koehler Verlag, 1992). Scholz and Hermans also provide detailed information on various publications of the poems during Ball's lifetime.

3. Ed. Franz L. Pelgen (Leipzig: Faber und Faber, 1996).

The first-published poem, "Karawane," appeared in the *Dada Almanach* of 1920.⁴ The four poems "Totenklage," "Gadji beri bimba," "Wolken" and "Katzen und Pfauen" first appeared in 1928 in the Dutch journal *De Stijl*.⁵ The six well-known poems of the 1970 text also appeared together for the first time in the 1957 book *Dada. Die Geburt des Dada. Dichtung und Chronik der Gründer*.⁶

Typography

Although typography varied occasionally, it was not exploited extensively. The 1920 publication of "Karawane" in *Dada Almanach* is the only publication to make extensive use of varied typography (see att. 11). But the *Almanach* was edited by Huelsenbeck, and it is uncertain if Ball had any say in the choice of typeset. Indeed, such a material emphasis of the poem contrasts sharply with the ephemeral nature of orally-delivered poetry. And Ball's disinterest in this medium underscores his primary concern for the poems to be presentations of occurrences intended as unique experiences for all individual listeners or readers. The occasional unconventional typesets, on the other hand may

4. (Berlin: Reiss.) Also reprinted in 1966, New York: Something Else Press Reprint. A facsimile is available in *Katalog* 150.

5. Serie 15, Nr. 85/6, 8.Yr., 100-02. See Scholz 162 for a detailed discussion of publication history.

6. Peter Schifferli (Zurich: Arche).

have been seen as necessary compensation for the written poem's lack of oral and visual enhancements that would have been available during performances.

Oral Presentation

The first occasion for public delivery of the poems was at the Cabaret Voltaire performance of 23 June 1916. Here Ball read⁷ first "Gadji beri bimba," most likely followed by "Labadas Gesang an die Wolken," and then "Elefantenkarawane."⁸ At this point he had already moved to a different music stand - the middle stand, not the one on which "Elefantenkarawane" and "Labadas Gesang an die Wolken" were arranged. We must, therefore, assume the presence of a fourth poem. It is not "Elefantenkarawane," as many scholars have assumed, for it is clear that these had been "absolviert" as Ball stated. From Ball's description of the reading (cited below) it is probable

7. Ball's term for the delivery was "vorgelesen" (*Flucht* 23 June 1916).

8. We can determine the order of the readings by Ball's following comments. He stated that, "Ich hatte jetzt rechts am Notenständer 'Labadas Gesang an die Wolken' und links die 'Elefantenkarawane' absolviert und wandte mich wieder zur mittleren Staffelei. . . . Die schweren Vokalreihen und der schleppende Rhymus der Elefanten hatten mir eben noch eine letzte Steigerung erlaubt. Wie sollte ich's aber zu Ende führen?" (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). These longer titles for "Wolken" and "Karawane," respectively, are the ones used by Ball in his *Flucht* references; in a typescript, however, he uses "Wolken" and "Zug der Elefanten." (The titles vary in publications, as well, and will appear hereinafter in the abbreviated forms of the 1963 edition.)

that the final poem was "Totenklage."⁹

Other readings of the sound poetry have been documented. "Gadji Beri Bimba" stands alone on the program as the only sound poem Ball presented at the "Erste Dada Abend" in Zurich at the Zunfthaus zur Waag on 14 July 1916.¹⁰ The opening activities of the Galerie Dada on 29 March 1917 included a second reading by Ball of "Gesang der Flugfische und Seepferdchen," which was accompanied by a dance by Sophie Taeuber.¹¹ The Galerie Dada's program of 28 April 1917 lists Ball as reading "Eigene Verse," the titles of which remain unknown.¹² This comprises the only documentation for public deliveries of the sound poetry. Hence, there exists no positive documentation of when or if ever "Katzen und Pfauen," "Totenklage," "PIFFALOMOZZA. Das Stier," "1 Stern und 7 kazamogipuffel," "bfirr bfirr" and "brulba dori daula dalla" were delivered publicly by Ball.

9. *Flucht* 23 June 1916; and copies of programs from *Katalog*.

10. Reproduced in *Katalog* 153 ("'Gadji Beri Bimba' [Verse ohne Worte, in eigenem Kostüm]"). In the summer of 1916 Ball and Hennings implemented a duo performance tour in "einigen . . . sehr vornehmen Hotels" in the area of the Vierwaldstättersee, which were very positively received and reviewed. It appears that Ball chose to avoid controversy and not perform any sound poetry. See letter to his sister 28 November 1916. Cited in *Briefe* 70. Facsimiles of reviews can be found in *Katalog* 152.

11. *Flucht* 29 March 1917. *Katalog* 163 contains a photograph of Taeuber during the performance.

12. *Katalog* 169. Although Ball also read from *Tenderenda*, the program suggests it was limited to prose.

We only know that at least one other poem than the two cited in *Flucht* was delivered at at least the first public presentation on 23 June 1916.

The Performance

A study of the details of the performances such as costume, dance, lighting, as well as an awareness of the composition of the audience and the general anticipated atmosphere at the Cabaret Voltaire can contribute to an understanding of how Ball wanted this audience to perceive the poetry. The sound poems were indeed written with an interest in language at the moment of transmission to a listener. It is important, however, to keep in mind that Ball did not write them for this Cabaret-audience situation alone. And it should also not be suggested as Frank Klingler does that our understanding of the poems and Ball's intentions would not be enhanced by a deeper scholarly examination and analysis.¹³

While Ball's main avenue of reaching the public was oral delivery, it is important to note the painstaking written revisions that preceded these performances. These poems were not the product of whimsical improvisations blurted out for the entertainment of an audience. As late as 1923, after the completion of "einen neuen Aufsatz,"

13. *Zu den Lautgedichten Hugo Balls*, seminar paper, U. Bonn, 1980. Hugo Ball Archiv, Stadtbücherei Pirmasens.

Ball still stated, "ich . . . plagte mir die Vokabeln ab," and also wrote of "[m]eine grammatische Platzangst."¹⁴ This letter provides further insight into a laborious manner of word choice and, perhaps, interest in word etymology. "Ich hab mir übrigens vorgenommen, demnächst wieder mehr das Wörterbuch zu lesen. Das ist eine äußerst förderliche Lektüre." In her examination of Novalis' influence on Ball, Erdmute Wenzel White notes that Ball and Novalis, "haben ihre Sammlungen überarbeitet und mit größter Sorgfalt immer neue Ausdrucksmöglichkeiten und Bedeutungsreichtum gesucht."¹⁵ Ball's painstaking revisions are an indication of the importance he placed on the minute variances and properties of each sound. An examination thereof can only lead to a deeper understanding of the poems. However, Ball's attitude towards the oral performance must constantly be kept in mind when attempting such analyses.

- *Oral Performance Theory*

Ball's intense concern for vitality in language has been pointed out extensively, as well as the fact that his disgust with dead, journalistic language was his point of departure. The aural reception of a poem (as opposed to a

14. Letter to Hennings, December 1923. Cited in *Briefe* 166-67.

15. 311.

labored study of the written poem) was thus quite suitable for Ball's concept of linguistic perception. On 2 March 1916 he wrote:

Nirgends so sehr als beim öffentlichen Vortrag ergeben sich die Schwächen einer Dichtung. Das eine ist sicher, daß die Kunst nur solange heiter ist, als sie der Fülle und Lebendigkeit nicht entbehrt. Das laute Rezitieren ist mir zum Prüfstein der Güte eines Gedichtes geworden, und ich habe mich (vom Podium) belehren lassen, in welchem Ausmaße die heutige Literatur problematisch, das heißt am Schreibtische erklügelt und für die Brille des Sammlers, statt für die Ohren lebendiger Menschen gefertigt ist. "Die Sprachlehre ist die Dynamik des Geisterreichs". (Novalis)(*Flucht*)

This statement illustrates the value Ball placed on oral delivery.

- *Costume*

Ball used numerous visual aids to enhance the oral potency of the voice. His costume at the first recitation of the sound poetry has been frequently cited and illustrated in scholarly texts on Dada. Ball's recount of this performance in *Flucht* is quite descriptive:

Ich hatte mir dazu ein eigenes Kostüm konstruiert. Meine Beine standen in einem Säulenrund aus blauglänzendem Karton, der mir schlank bis zur Hüfte reichte, so daß ich bis dahin wie ein Obelisk aussah. Darüber trug ich einen riesigen, aus Pappe geschnittenen

Mantelkragen, der innen mit Scharlach und außen mit Gold beklebt, am Halse derart zusammengehalten war, daß ich ihn durch Heben und senken der Ellbogen flügelartig bewegen konnte. Dazu einen zylinderartigen, hohen, weiß und blau gestreiften Schamanenhut.

Ich hatte an allen drei Seiten des Podiums gegen das Publikum Notenständer errichtet und stellte darauf mein mit Rotstift gemaltes Manuskript, bald am einen, bald am andern Notenständer zelebrierend. . . . Also ließ ich mich, da ich als Säule nicht gehen konnte, in der Verfinsterung auf das Podest tragen und begann langsam und feierlich. . . . (*Flucht* 23 June 1916)

The effect Ball aimed for is clear. He noted that for his fourth poem, the recitation took on "die uralte Kadenz der priesterlichen Lamentation, jenen Stil des Meßgesangs, wie er durch die katholischen Kirchen des Morgen- und Abendlandes wehklagt." Ball noted how he began to sing his "Vokalreihen rezitativartig im Kirchenstile," and recalled childhood memories of church services during the recitation. He further described himself "als ein magischer Bischof" as he was carried from the stage (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). As stated above, this last poem was most likely "Totenklage." Ball's description of his own voice supports this conclusion, as well as his description of the performance conjuring up images from his youth of "Totenmessen und Hochämtern [m]einer Heimatpfarrei" (*Flucht* 22 June 1916). Scholz suggests that Ball's description of his recitation suggests the use of

melismatiks, an Eastern form of melodics, which was based on the vocalization and melodic variation of one syllable or letter. It later carried over into "die frühchristlichen Gesänge aus dem hebräisch-orientalischen Kultgesang in die abendländische Vokalmusik und aus dem mittelalterlichen arabischen Kunstgesang in die weltliche Vokalmusik (Troubadour- und Minnesang) ein."¹⁶

The costume during this first performance, as well, is suggestive of an ecclesiastical wardrobe with its large collar, and use of the frequently-employed ecclesiastical colors scarlet and gold. The glistening blue of the main torso piece further makes use of celestial iconography. Scholz places the symbolism of the color blue in the realm of technology.¹⁷ This analogy is, however, quite inappropriate in light of Ball's interest in Kandinsky's color symbolism, wherein blue represented the spiritual (*Über das Geistige* 92-93).¹⁸ Ball's interests in the suggestive possibilities of color are apparent as early as March 1914, during his involvement in the planning of the

16. 79.

17. 152; what he calls "Technik."

18. "Je tiefer das Blau wird, desto mehr ruft es den Menschen in das Unendliche, weckt in ihm die Sehnsucht nach Reinem und schließlich Übersinnlichem. Es ist die Farbe des Himmels. . . . Sehr tiefgehend entwickelt das Blau das Element der Ruhe. . . . Es wird eine unendliche Vertiefung in die ernsten Zustände, wo es kein Ende gibt. . . ." See this study, Chapter 3. "Kandinsky," for Ball's comments on Kandinsky's color theory.

new experimental theater. He stated that, "Man muß nur die Hintergründe, die Farben, Worte und Töne so aus dem Unbewußten lebendig machen, daß sie den Alltag mitsamt seinem Elend verschlingen" (*Flucht* 18).

Ball described his hat during the performance as a "Schamanenhut," the headdress of primitive cults, suggestive of *Urreligion*. He also referred to it as "meine[] kubistische[] Maske." Ball's interest in using masks as a tool to call up *Urbilder* and stir up the subconscious is noted in his discussion of Janco's contribution to the Cabaret. He recalled how the Cabaret performers' donning of Janco's masks led them subconsciously to specific movements, gestures and dance. Ball found himself compelled to compose "auf der Stelle je ein kurzes Musikstück" (*Flucht* 24 May 1916).

- Dance

He frequently used dance with his performance, most notably during one reading of "Gesang der Seepferdchen und Flugfische" at the opening of the Galerie Dada on 29 March 1917. Taeuber, the accompanying dancer, had studied under Rudolf Laban (along with Mary Wigman) in Ascona during 1916. Ball described it as "ein Tanz voller Spitzen und Gräten, voll flirrender Sonne und von schneidender Schärfe" (*Flucht* 29 March 1917). The dance was apparently influenced by the hypnotic movement of Laban's and Wigman's adaptation of "religious-cultic dances . . . to their own

nonsectarian and sophisticated Dionysianism, a religion of ecstatic self-awareness and awareness of nature."¹⁹ Laban, like Ball, believed "*das Unbegriffliche* . . . can manifest [itself] only through the sounds of men's voices and the movements of their bodies."²⁰ Klein and Blaukopf state that, "Dance as practiced by the dadaists as well as its particular kind of incidental music has probably exerted some influence on Rudolf von Laban and Mary Wigman, who are both mentioned as having been among the visitors of the Cabaret Voltaire."²¹ While it is true that both Laban and Wigman had much contact with the Cabaret, credit for the impetus to that modern form of dance can only be documented with Laban. He and Wigman were in the audience at the first Cabaret performance (*Flucht* 23 June 1916), his dancers performed there on occasion as well,²² and both Ball and Hennings were frequently guests of Laban's and Wigman's friends in Ascona. While there must certainly have been some general exchange of ideas and a flowing *Zeitgeist* that permeated those artists of the counterculture in Switzerland, Laban came to Ascona with a well-formulated theory of dance and his own group of

19. Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth* 90-91.

20. Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth* 91.

21. Rudolf Klein and Kurt Blaukopf, "Dada and Music," *Dada: Monograph of a Movement*, ed. Willy Verkauf (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975) 55.

22. Green 149.

dancers in the summer of 1913,²³ two years before the future Dadaists arrived (with Taeuber beginning her studies under Laban only in 1915, and Ball and Hennings arriving in May of 1915 as well).

- *Music*

Music in general continued to play an important role in the performances at the Cabaret Voltaire, and Ball made use of its properties in various fashion during the deliveries of sound poetry. Musical qualities such as pitch, timbre and even volume and intonation were vital to the reading of the sound poems. This is not surprising given their shared characteristic of operating on suggestive communicative levels.²⁴

Ball used the term "Inszenierung" in reference to his first sound poem performance (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). The term is quite suggestive of the theater as well as of musical performances. His use of music stands during this performance might well imply that he wanted to concretely conjure in the minds of the audience this relationship

23. Martin Green, *Mountain of Truth* 94.

24. In a letter to Hesse of 29 December 1925 Ball stated, "Sie, lieber Herr Hesse, schrieben einmal von meiner polyphonen Satzmusik." Cited in *Briefe* 239.

between his poems and music.²⁵

Religious imagery is once again strengthened by Ball's movement to and from the music stands, suggesting the movement of a priest on the altar between what Klingler calls his "Kultgeräten."²⁶ Hans Richter describes Ball during this performance as "Savonarola, fanatisch und unberührt."²⁷

- *The Performance Hall*

Richter describes the audience at the conclusion of Ball's performance as unperturbed, then breaking into nervous laughter, and finally applause as Ball "wie ein Turm unbeweglich [stand]."²⁸ Whether this audience reaction was the one Ball had anticipated is uncertain. It is clear that Ball was greatly concerned about the reception, and needed to deal with many undirected enhancements to the Cabaret environment. Richter described the atmosphere in the room as one bathed thickly in smoke, with bare light bulbs.²⁹ Ball, too, referred to these

25. For further comparisons between sound poetry and music, see Klein and also Eugen Egger, *Hugo Ball. Ein Weg aus dem Chaos* (Otten: Walter, 1951) who discusses the similarities with later developments in the jazz lyrics of scat or bee bop.

26. 24-25.

27. *Dada Kunst und Anti-Kunst* (Cologne: DuMont, 1973) 42.

28. *Dada. Kunst und Anti-Kunst* 42.

29. *Dada. Kunst und Anti-Kunst* 152.

conditions with some irony in his description of that first, very solemn and holy performance: "Da erlosch, wie ich es bestellt hatte, das elektrische Licht" (*Flucht* 23 June 1916).

The Scholarship

While Klingler rightly points out the importance of the oral performance and that the poems were not intended to be scrutinized through scholarly dissection,³⁰ this holds true for all poetry, and yet it does not mean that an examination will not yield greater understanding. It must also be kept in mind that Ball did not create his sound poems specifically for the oral performance, but in the context of an attempt at recalling an *Ursprache*. His investigation into this primal language required an extensive scrutiny of sounds. An examination of Ball's choice of sounds and his interpretation of how such an *Ursprache* might have functioned can only serve to enhance our comprehension of Ball's understanding of such a language.

The variations on single sound units in the poems make apparent Ball's diligent revisions. They give evidence to morphological patterns, bring to light verbal tense patterns and allow us to assume that in this intentionality of form, there also exists linguistic meaning. Scholarly

30. 9-10.

efforts at actually seeking the syntax and linguistic meaning within the sound poems are infrequent.³¹

Any analysis needs to recognize the manner in which Ball intended the poems to be experienced in order to avoid a specific authoritarian analysis. For Ball, each reader or listener was to experience a poem anew, without any preconceptions of its meaning, with a *tabula rasa* so to speak, allowing its sounds to play on his/her emotional reactions and thereby rouse prearticulate levels of perception. The poem would thereby communicate in a prearticulate realm of sensory-emotional-psychological

31. The most analytic studies include Richard Brinkman, "Dadaism and Expressionism," *Expressionism as an International Literary Phenomenon* (Paris: Didier, 1973); Harald Henzler, "Die Karawane," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1993) 85-115; Theo Hermans, "Aspects of the Structure of Modernist Poetry 1908-1918. A Structural Comparative Study of the Poetic Writing of Guillaume Apollinaire, Hans Arp, Hugo Ball, Ezra Pound, Pierre Reverdy and Georg Trakl," diss. Warwick U, 1977; Hans-Georg Kemper, *Vom Expressionismus zum Dadaismus* (Kronberg: Scriptor) 1974; Frank Klingler, *Zu den Lautgedichten Hugo Balls*, unpublished seminar paper, U Bonn, 1980; Raimund Meyer, Katharina Boulanger, Rolf Kawel, et. al., *Dada in Zürich und Berlin 1916-1920. Literatur zwischen Revolution und Reaktion*, Teil IV (Kronberg: Scriptor, 1973); J. C. Middleton, "The Rise of Primitivism and Its Relevance to the Poetry of Expressionism and Dada," *The Discontinuous Tradition*, ed. P. F. Ganz (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 182-203; Gerhard Rademacher, "Zur Aufnahme und didaktischen Verarbeitung der Lautgedichte Hugo Balls in Schullesebüchern seit 1965," *Hugo Ball Almanach*, ed. Ernst Teubner (Pirmasens: Stadtverwaltung, 1983) 91-140; Christian Scholz, *Untersuchungen zur Gedichte und Typologie der Lautpoesie* (Obermichelbach: Gertrud Scholz Verlag, 1989); and Richard Sheppard, "Kandinsky's Early Aesthetic Theory: some Examples of its Influence and some Implications for the Theory and Practice of Abstract Poetry," *Journal of European Studies* 5 (1975): 19-40.

associations, suggested by the sounds and rhythms. In 1926 Ball recalled to Arp the "Versuch, die Buchstaben-Alchimie mit der emotionalen Zeichnung zusammenzubringen."³² This letter had been written in response to Arp's request for some material, as Ball said, "[a]us jenen meinen dadist [sic] Übungen," for an intended publication. A letter to Hesse from 1921, contains Ball's discussion of "Nervensprache."³³ Sheppard aptly describes the psychoperceptual process of association in the following passage: "Metaphors of abstract movement and dynamic process [allow] words to flow forth freely and thus create a metaphor of primitive rhythms of the psyche."³⁴

The ensuing result is described by Hermans in the following terms: "[T]he abandonment of the priority of 'iconicity' [provides us with] the centrality of the image and relegation of discursiveness to a subordinate level."³⁵ Although there are titles to the sound poems that introduce to the reader/listener elements from the referential, material world, Ball does not engage himself in a

32. In this letter, Ball recalled his intentions with the sound poetry: "Original scheint mir noch heute der Versuch, die Buchstaben-Alchimie mit der emotionalen Zeichnung zusammenzubringen." 22 November 1926. Cited in *Briefe* 278.

33. 9 December. Cited in *Briefe* 142.

34. "Kandinsky's Early Aesthetic Theory" 36.

35. 408.

description of these elements. Rather, he gives us sounds and rhythms that present us with images related to the subject matter.³⁶

And Ball does indeed present us with images, rather than discourse. Yet Hermans feels his poetry is not actually abstract. He points to the fact that while Ball did not aim at communicating a concrete situation, he did not present us with merely a collection of abstract sounds either.³⁷ His sound poems are likened to zaum, in that zaum "speech still functions essentially as a set of signifiers" albeit "without a corresponding set of [readily fixed] signifieds."³⁸ This lack of fixed signifieds is what allows each reader/listener to experience the poetry uniquely, and also unfetters it so that it may play on a subconscious level of associations. The poetry is laden with multivalence. In Rademacher's citation of Novalis, he aptly describes Ball's sound poems' process, noting their common "'Appellstruktur', die vermittelt ihrer 'Leer- und

36. The composer Richard Wagner's use of the Leitmotiv as discussed by Kandinsky appears similiar to Ball's title use. In *Über das Geistige* Kandinsky praised Wagner's "berühmtes Leitmotiv [um] den Helden . . . zu charakterisieren . . . durch ein gewisses, präzises Motiv, also durch rein musikalisches Mittel. Dieses Motiv ist eine Art musikalisch ausgedrückter geistiger Atmosphäre, die dem Helden vorausgeht . . ." (47).

37. 12. Hermans compares various forms of phonetic poetry in an attempt to arrive at a definition of abstract poetry. This is a helpful survey, particularly the section on Ball (33-39).

38. 412.

Unbestimmtheitsstellen' den Leser zum 'erweiterten Autor'
[. . .] macht. . . ."39

39. "Zur Aufnahme" 99.

CHAPTER 6. AN ANALYSIS.

This chapter aims at providing accessibility to Ball's sound poems through the presentation of an analysis. Ball would, of course, readily have objected to critical, scholarly analyses of his poems. First, because such analyses generally fall into the realm of rational, journalistic discourse which he so deeply despised. Sound poems, written in reaction to that discourse, present a language that actually defies discussion in everyday language. They present ephemeral sensations, and spiritual, immaterial perceptions for whose discussion conventional language was seen as acutely incapable. Second, such analyses would tend to highlight the content of the poems, resulting in a shift away from their sensual, temporal nature. But Ball's major objection would have been based in the fact that these poems were never intended to be studied as fixed objects of art. They were to be experienced uniquely and individually at each reading. Their language was to be ever changing so that every individual could react differently each time a poem was encountered, as with life experiences. Hence, there is no one meaning that Ball intended. No critic can claim to have uncovered "what Ball was actually saying" or "what the poems say." The poems were intended to defy such a mono-semantic reading.

Furthermore, the very structure of sound poetry defies conventional forms of analysis. It is difficult, if not

impossible, to include many traditional elements of critical analysis because many of these elements are not intended and not even present. But it is also difficult for the uninitiated reader to even attempt an approach at experiencing the poems, precisely *because* these conventional expectations have not been met. And it is for this reason that I present the following analysis of "Seepferdchen und Flugfische," to aid the reader in getting beyond the knee jerk aversion, the mental block.

In keeping all the preceding points in mind, the following analysis of "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" can only serve as one example of the experiential process of the poems, i.e. *one* reader's experience, my experience. It is meant as an example of *how* one might approach such a poem, not an analyses of "what the poem is about." I would be loath to offering additional such examples for other poems, for fear of "ruining it" for the reader, i.e. for fear of taking away the freshness, the unadulterated, unbiased manner in which s/he was meant to experience them. And I can only hope that readers first spend time feeling and meditating on the poem before reading the following analysis.

OVERVIEW AND OUTLINE OF BALL'S STYLISTIC TOOLS

Title and Framework of Setting

"Seepferdchen und Flugfische" serves as an appropriate initiation into the realm of Ball's sound poem, in that it

provides a small number of easily-recognizable lexical references, which Ball intended to assist the reader in establishing a scene of reference or starting point. These conventional references are invaluable to the uninitiated reader.¹

Provided to the reader at the onset of the poem is the lexically conventional title. The reader begins with the framework of the [little] sea horse[s] and flying fish[es]. And if we recall the title Ball used on the event of his first presentation of the poem, "Gesang der Seepferdchen und Flugfische," we are provided with even more information, namely - the element of song. Since Ball was not aiming at relating *his personal* experience with sea horses and flying fish, we can assume he is merely providing a scene of sea horses and flying fish for the reader to construct individually. It would not be unfounded to assume a scene set in water as well. This much commonality the audience can begin with.

Ball highlighted the important referential role of the titles, pointing to the difference between the lexically-titled sound poems and his one without: "Gadji beri bimba," which he saw "nur aus harmonisierten Vokalen und Konsonanten bestehend, ohne einen anderen Sinn als den

1. "Karawane", Ball's most frequently cited sound poem, is so accessible precisely because of its heavy reliance on lexicology.

einer absoluten Sublimiertheit (könnte man sagen)."² This statement describes the type of experience possible with the reading of a sound poem; an experience which the word "Sublimiertheit" clearly defines as one to be strived for. In distinguishing "Gadji beri bimba" from the others sound poems, however, Ball perhaps also calls attention to the limiting effect the conventional titles can have on this ultimate experiential poetic reading.

Lexical References

Ball provides additional lexical references in offering partial words of color and music. In providing additional visual and auditory assistance, these references further enhance the general setting of the poem. And while Ball sought a language composed of sounds containing primal values, it is interesting to compare how many of the sounds evoke different perceptions in a different context, i.e. while they may indeed contain an inherent prearticulate value, they obtain much of their extended meaning from the context Ball provided. Steiner describes his varied interpretation of the sound *blago* in two different poems of Ball's. In "Karawane" he sees it as "onomatopoetic foolery," but in "Totenklage" he found that it "became enigmatic and strangely suffocating."³ While I agree that -----

2. Letter to Hofmann, 26 June 1917. Cited in *Briefe* 82.

3. 195.

the setting (and primal psychoperceptual quality) provided by the title lend a great deal of the perceptual value to this specific sound, the poem's total sound quality also influences each specific sound's value. Variances in similarly appearing sounds are not to be taken lightly. The sound Steiner refers to is not actually identical in each of the two poems. While it is indeed "blago" in "Karawane," it is "blagaga" in "Totenklage." The sound unit "blag" may have an innate value, but its varied suffix should not be overlooked, in light of the fact that Ball labored intensely with such variations. Within each poem, these variations are responsible for providing movement and temporal quality to the poem.

Variation

The type of variation and development of sound patterns accord each poem a certain sense of movement. It is a movement that remains within a constant thematic or even physical realm. Because the poems contain no recognizable conjugation or tense, the reader is provided with relationships of neither time (expressed linearly as progressed time) nor space (i.e. the knowledge of where things have moved to). We are instead made aware of some general type of nonlinear movement, and thereby actually get a sense of less temporality. We are furthermore made aware of a simultaneity of movement. Through its non-specificity, this movement allows the reader more freedom

to individually interpret. It is also an attempt by Ball to recreate the actual manner in which we take in outside stimuli, i.e. before it is sorted, interpreted and articulated.

Elements to be considered in the Analyses.

Phase I of the analyses begins with a traditional explication of: a) visual properties of the poem, such as: length of poem, stanzas, lines, words, b) aural/oral or sound properties, such as: meter, rhythm, assonance, alliteration, frequency of specific types of sounds, such as vowels vs. consonants, long vs. short, light vs. dark, as well as familiar patterns of sounds such as German vs. non-German, articulatable vs. those articulated with difficulty, c) vocabulary such as German-sounding vs. non-German, Germanic and Romance vs. non-European, i.e. unfamiliar, yet clearly identifiable conventional words and what national language they resemble, and also standard as well as neologistic onomatopoeia. I conclude with d) Phase II, a more in depth analysis of the movements and patterns within the poem, and an identification of some of the psycho-perceptual parallels they could represent or, more accurately, present to me. This approach resembles the methodology of a traditional analysis' conclusion, applied, however, to non-traditional, i.e. non-conventional words. Following this section is also e) a consideration of some background information on certain sounds, words and title

contexts.

THE ANALYSIS. EXPLICATION. PHASE I.

Title

The framework of (little) sea horse(s) and flying fish(es) and, consequently, a scene set in water provided by the title has been discussed above.

Visual properties

At first glance "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" appears to be a simply structured poem. This perception is based on the short overall length, short stanzas, and short lines and words therein.

It contains five stanzas. The first has four lines, the second five, then three, again three, and the final stanza has six lines.

Stanzas

We thus see an increasing development in the amount of information provided in each individual stanza as the poem progresses. The first stanza begins by providing a fairly small view of a scene, an introductory amount; this develops to a slightly more lengthy and informative stanza 2, one with perhaps a broader picture; our view then really zeros in with a close up on some small details for the following two very short middle stanzas; and then the poet concludes by backing out of the close up and panning out

again with the final, longest, and most information-laden stanza. A possible reading could be one of a general scene of water (stanza 1), then a broader picture of that sea (stanza 2), then a close up of a tiny element in the sea (most probably the sea horse or flying fish or other sea entity/ies) (stanza 3), then another close up (stanza 4), and finally a summary, conclusion or ensemble of the entire scene at large - i.e. the general image of the sea (as in stanzas 1 and 2) along with the addition of the information provided in stanzas 3 and 4.

Lines

The lines are short, composed mainly of two or three words, with the *first* line in four of the five stanzas being conspicuously more sophisticated, having four words, that are also longer words. These lines are thus visually as well as aurally longer, literally holding the reader at the scene and providing him/her with more information. The initial lines thus aptly serve as introductions to the scenes of their respective stanzas.

Word Length

The words of the poem are short as well. Most of the 57 words consist of one syllable (17 words) or two (24 words). Fourteen of the words are three syllables long, and in the final stanza there are two six-syllable words. The words get progressively longer as we move into the

poem, i.e. most of the three- (and six-) syllable words are in the later stanzas. Stanzas 1 thru 3 have one or two three-syllable words, but stanza 4 has four and stanza 5 has five. Again this enforces the sense of the poem getting progressively more detailed as it moves along.

The last line of each stanza ends in the same syllabic pattern of 1-2-1-syllable words. This feature appears to be the most consistent element of the poem, and therefore the most identifiably deliberate *pattern*. It is also the simplest pattern. The brevity and predictability of these final lines add finality to each stanza. And the finality is reinforced by the type of sounds in these final lines. They are composed of words with short, sharp vowels - particularly the short *i*. The vowels are almost consistently shortened by sharp double consonants: *tt*, *pp*, *ck*. (There are, however, two other consonants herein which are longer and softer: once *mm*, and twice *sch*.)

Vowel Sounds

The frequency of the vowel *i* is conspicuous. It appears 52 times, with *a* appearing 30 times (and one *au*), and *o* 14. The vowel *e* comes up only 11 times and is generally self contained within a line, (i.e. line 1 has five *es*, line 6 has two and line 16 has four). This sound appears to be reserved for one specific image, (i.e. one that does not appear frequently). The vowel sound *u* appears only eight times (and twice as *ü* and once as *au*).

The overall sound quality of the poem is clearly provided by this abundance of short *is*, and is therefore one that is light and quick.

Meter

The meter is fairly consistent, which is to be expected with a predominance of two-syllable German words. If the poem is read with predictable German stress patterns (as one imagines Ball to have read it), one encounters mostly trochees and dactyls. This would also be expected even if Ball had attempted a more non-German or universal pronunciation. Since most of the non-German words resemble those of either Italian or Spanish (Italian probably being Ball's stronger influence due his domicile in Ticino), a more non-German reading would have been strongly influenced by Italian in which the trochee is common for two-syllable words.

In neologisms that are extremely non-European, the onomatopoeia appears to dictate the stress pattern. Harsh, loud sounds would obviously be highly stressed one-syllable words. For example: a *basch* at the end of a line, interpreted as a hard, whacking or slapping sound (due to *sch* being common water-splash onomatopoeia, and its association with the word *platsch* or *batsch*). The sound *bimm*, as well, would cause a stressed syllable, due to its associations with bell tones (based on the German onomatopoetic phrase "bimm bamm"). Ball used these

expectations to form desired stress patterns in his neologisms.

The alternating high-low rhythmic patterns of the meter provide a simplicity (which is again reinforced by the simplicity of the other visual and oral elements). A trochaic meter frequently creates the impression of simple repetitive movement, which in this setting would most likely be one of waves, or possibly the habitual repetition of an animal's swimming movements, or even repetitive visual patterns of form on the animals' bodies. (This is discussed in further detail below.) All of these elements imbue the scene with great harmony, symmetry and serenity.

Nonetheless, there are frequent interruptions caused by onomatopoetic "splashes" and other percussions. These interruptions force a dynamism onto the poem, and could have been used by a Ball desiring to suggest the dissonance of Kandinsky. The most frequently occurring consonant is the plosive *b* (30 times), the plosive *t[t]* (15 times), *tz* (2) and *z* (7). The contrast between plosive and liquid as well as fricative sounds is fairly even, suggesting a balance between harmonious movement and the dissonant interruptions. The liquid *l[l]* is the second-most frequently occurring consonant (23 times) in the poem. The softer *m* and *sch* also occur 9 times each. All other consonant sounds occur with the infrequency of 2 to 6 times each. Thus, the softer sounds are consistently matched to the plosive ones.

Vocabulary

The sounds in general fall into the category of familiar German sounds by virtue of their phonemic arrangement. Vowels and consonants are distributed in fairly similar numbers as in German. Some of these are even lexically conventional, or are parts of conventional words (*fisch, blaulala, viola, leila, nebogen, grü[n]*). And many are part of standard onomatopoeia (*zick zack, basch*). The *i, o* and *a* vowel endings are at first glance not German; however, upon oral reading one hears the familiar diminutive *i* ending of certain southern dialects and especially Swiss German.⁴ The *o* and *a* endings were also familiar to Ball and his audience as endings of Italian (first person verb form) and Spanish (first person verb form, as well as of masculine nouns and adjectives. (The *i* would also have been reminiscent of the Italian plural.) These were, thus, sounds that certainly were not unfamiliar or "foreign"-sounding to the Swiss and otherwise well-traveled and educated international audience.⁵ One

4. Ball had resided in Switzerland for one year and one month by the time of the composition of his sound poems.

5. Klingler also mentions several other languages that would have been recognizable to most literate Germans: "szaga" in "Totenklage" as Slavic; or "m'pfa" in "Karawane" as Arabic (14). Rademacher further cites as part of African and Arabic dialects: "piau", "mjama", "zangaga gago blagaga", "gadji bi bimba", "wulubu ssubudu" ("Zur Aufnahme" 110).

conspicuous non-German quality of "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" is its lack of common German word endings: *e*, *en* and *t* of verbs, and *e*, *en* of adjectives and noun plurals.⁶ And Middleton notes that the sounds in four of the poems stem from the African, Bantu and Swahili. Ball may have had some awareness of African languages, perhaps from contact with an African woman whom he had befriended in 1915, as he notes in *Flucht* (November 1915). Jan Ephraim, the landlord of the Spiegelgasse building in which the Cabaret was housed and a former sailor who had spent much time along the east African coast, also served as a source.⁷ In his 1971 essay Middleton expresses gratitude to "Dr. Marcel van Spaandonck of the Merelbeke Institute for the information about African words in these poems" and states that he himself was planning to publish separately the details of those findings.⁸ However, when Mann contacted Middleton about these forthcoming publications in November of 1979, Middleton remarked "that he had since decided that these findings were irrelevant: what is

6. Peter Demetz in "Varieties of Phonetic Poetry: An Introduction" tallies the frequency of the occurrence of specific sounds in the German language (*From Kafka and Dada to Brecht and Beyond*, eds. Reinhold Grimm, Peter Spycher and Richard A. Zipser [U of Wisconsin P, 1982] 28).

7. Ephraim who was quite critical of the "Negro poems" composed by Huelsenbeck, offered him "something authentic" to recite. The poem is cited in Huelsenbeck's *mit witz, licht und grütze* 9.

8. 199.

important is that these sounds are translexical African sounds."⁹

This remark brings to light an important aspect of the intentionally foreign-sounding words in Ball's poems. African languages, although recognizable as very foreign, and easily associated with the African continent, were not part of the vocabulary of most of the Cabaret Voltaire's guests or most Europeans for that matter. Unlike those non-German sound patterns that still remain within the familiar sound range for Europeans, traveled and educated in Europe, the "African" ones were chosen specifically for their distinctly foreign sound. The fact that they stem from what Ball and the other Dadaists regarded as more primitive cultures may have led Ball to see them as truer representations of primitive sounds, i.e. *Ursounds*. Aside from examining these languages for their etymological value, Ball would have regarded the respective cultures quite highly for their peoples' ability to remain more closely attuned to their intuitive selves.

Furthermore, the foreign quality of these words aided Ball in distancing the poems from that realm of familiar lexical language, seen as so corrupt and defunct at the time. Ball most likely also regarded their use as representative of progress towards an international language, in that it united various languages. The

9. *An Intellectual Biography* 91.

development of an international language was as important for the pacifist Ball as it was for Khlebnikov. It was seen as the first step in the realization of a pacifistic world through its facilitation of international communication.

Finally and most importantly, what Ball wanted to achieve with this foreign quality was simply the awakening of "urtümlich spielende, . . . versunkene, irrationale Wesen" in the reader and listener.¹⁰ Their association with Africa and, hence, suggestiveness of exotic, primitive, and foreign properties enhances the sense of dark, deep, unknown territories, and was intended to get the reader "in the mood." Through their suggestiveness of primitive cultures they may have been seen as possessing the ability to deliver the reader/listener to a more transcendental state, freer of prefixed thought patterns. Arrival at this state could also have been spurred by the unfamiliarity of the sounds. Because the sounds could not be fixed as specific, predetermined lexical words, the reader would not form concrete, specific value-laden, and logically fixed ideas. S/he would find her/himself compelled to let the sounds play on the subconscious, prerational and prearticulate levels. The fact that the sounds possess a greater degree of unfamiliarity than "European-sounding" words inhibits the reader/listener from -----

10. Scholz 171.

seeking approximations.

Most sounds in "Seepferdchen and Flugfische," however, are pronounceable to a German or other European. The most foreign-sounding word is *grügü*, but it is easily articulated. This is, however, in distinction to the other sound poems which contain many more non-Germanic or Romance sounds. (For example: "Karawane" contains sounds such as: *m'fa*, *ba-umf*, initial *ss*, *eschige*; "Totenklage:" *bschiggi*; "Katzen und Pfauen:" *sbugi*, etc. And "Gadji beri bimba" and "Wolken" contain many words quite reminiscent of Latin.)

THE ANALYSIS. EXPLICATION. PHASE II

Psycho-Perceptual Values of Sounds

The analysis below examines the psycho-perceptual values of the sounds, and especially the effects created by the variations of them. Many of the sounds contain symbolic values that are fairly conventional, such as the association and feeling of water when hearing the fricative sibilant *sh/sch* in English and German. The analysis is intentionally broad and even vague at times in an effort to avoid specifically personal associations. Nonetheless, it should be kept in mind that any analysis is the result of personal interpretation. And in this case, Ball emphatically intended for it upon his poems' reception. But because his intention as a poet was to attain an outgoing transmission that was expressly multivalent, I

analyze with that thought constantly in mind, intent upon not excessively tainting or fixing meanings; so that even after reading my analysis, a reader could still embark on his/her own and personal interpretation as Ball had intended. My intention is to focus on the poem's universal elements, which, once identified, can serve as a point of departure for any reader.

In consideration of the fact that as much as Ball wanted to allow and actually provide for individual perception, he additionally hoped to be using sounds that were equating universal emotions and prearticulate perceptions, I list here some that he may possibly have been in the process of developing. I do not, however, mean to suggest that these are Ball's equations, but only to provide an example of how this process of equating sounds with psycho-perceptual values might work.

In her discussion of the bruitist poem "Krippenspiel," which had been performed by several members of the Cabaret Voltaire, Hennings offers several examples of this process.¹¹ She noted that among the instruments were also human voices "aber nur in Lauten A und O, zum Beispiel der klagend-helle Schrei des Neugeborenen und ein bewunderndes Lallen der Hirten, das wie ein Wiegenlied klang." Examples from Japanese are provided by Scholz when he cites Philippe

11. Referred to as *Das Leben Jesu* by Hennings. "Aus dem Leben" 61.

Vandewalle who sees *M* and *N* "im 'Klingen, Tönen' und 'als Stimmung der Verlängerung'." Furthermore "I symbolisiert zum Beispiel wegen der Verengung des Luftweges das Kleine, Enge; das *A* wegen der Erweiterung dagegen das Große."¹²

Vandewalle speaks of:

A als Stimmung der seelischen Geöffnetheit, des Staunens, der Hingabe; *E* als schmerzliches Berührtsein und als Stimmung der Abwehr; *I* als Selbstbehauptung und freudige Stimmung; als lichthaft; *O* als liebevolles Entgegenkommen; als Bewunderung und Anerkennung; *U* als Stimmung der Furcht, des Zurückschauerns; als dunkel und schwer; *Y* als Stimmung gedämpfter Töne; *F, V, W* als Blasen, Wehen, als Stimmung der Bewegung, der Geschwindigkeit; *G* als Nagen, als Stimmung eines anhaltenden Geräusches; *H, S, Sch, Z* als Zischen, Pfeifen, als Stimmung der Luftbewegung; *L, R* als Rollen, Fließen. . . .¹³

It is notable that speakers of German (or English) would agree with many of these tonal values.

Variations

One can follow a movement and progression at the heart of the vitality of the sound poem "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" which provides further meaning. This perception of movement is caused by various factors. First

12. Cited in Scholz 29. Philippe Vandewalle, *Japanische Lautmalerei in Konkursbuch* (Tübingen, 1986) 107.

13. Cited in Scholz 29-30, from Vandewalle 108.

and quite simply, it is caused by our shared perception of what these animals "do." They move about in water - the flying fish in quite a unique way, that catches our immediate attention. Second, we also expect a poem (i.e. a literary work) to contain some sort of temporal or linear pattern. And finally the movement does indeed appear to have been activated intentionally by Ball.

The poem contains many words that vary slightly with each occurrence, some with a slight ablaut, vowel or consonant change. Extremely effective and thematically unifying is that they continue to otherwise remain reminiscent of a previous word, suggesting that the same image or form is still present, but now slightly changed. This pattern may be seen as similar to verbal tense or conjugation changes. It affects an ever-changing scene of slight movement and permutation.

Klingler aptly notes that the "Lautsequenzen sind nicht willkürlich zusammengefügt, sondern nach bestimmten Merkmalen verbunden."¹⁴ He feels that the prefixes and suffixes presenting the variation are not meant to be, "Nachahmung sprachlicher Strukturen [sondern] formale Verknüpfungsprinzipien der Repetition und der Variation."¹⁵ This informal variation creates subtle, nonspecific changes, which allow the reader further liberty in

14. 13.

15. 15.

interpretation. At the same time, the refined continuation of sounds provides a thematic unity to the poem.

Joachim Kühn in *Gescheiterte Sprachkritik* sees a more formal structure of "'hochkomplizierte' Laut- und Klangfolgen, die 'z.t. differenzierten Bau- und Verknüpfungs"gesetzen"' unterliegen."¹⁶

Rademacher stresses the subtle changes of meaning keenly effected through this simple process of "Lautfolgen." He feels the poems are "keine 'Verse ohne Worte' [. . .], sondern eher wohl Verse in Worten mit Lautfolgen, die Strukturelemente verschiedener Sprachen vermischen und kombinieren."¹⁷

Ball himself discussed how "das Balancement der Vokale nur nach dem Werte der Ansatzreihe erwogen und ausgeteilt wird," thereby emphasizing the importance of the initial sounds or words in determining the scene, and also shedding light on the process of development throughout the poem (*Flucht* 23 June 1916). Hermans also discusses how, "the poem thus builds upon and develops an initial sound sequence. . . ."¹⁸ As much as Ball worked on revisions of the poems, looking for just the right sound, he did emphasize that a certain amount of feel was very much at

16. *Gescheiterte Sprachkritik*. Fritz Mauthners *Leben und Werk* (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1975) 94.

17. "Zur Aufnahme" 106.

18. 412.

the heart of the process of writing sound poetry:

Das kann man nun so recht sehen, wie die
artikulierte Sprache entsteht. Ich lasse die
Laute ganz einfach fallen. Worte tauchen auf,
Schultern von Worten; Beine, Arme, Haende von
Worten. Au, oi, u. ("Dada Manifesto")

But to dispel any notion that the process of finding these sounds was random, Ball continued, highlighting his belief in *Urwörter*: "Jede Sache hat ihr Wort." ("Dada Manifesto")

Movements and Patterns

The movement and progression in "Gesang der Seepferdchen und Flugfische" is best illustrated by a comparison of the "action" in the first and last stanzas.

The first two words *tressli bessli* - through the repetition of the sibilant *ss* - stress the quality of something fluid and smoothly flowing. An association of *tressli* with *Tressen* (English: tresses), in the sense of long flowing hair or plaits is reinforced through this sibilant repetition. *Nebogen* may be suggestive of *Nebel* (fog), or *Bogen*, an arched, smooth curving shape or (particularly within the framework of *Nebel*) as *Regenbogen* (rainbow). These associations further support the water environment. *Leila*, which follows, may be suggestive of the color *lila* (lilac), the soft pastel shade of purple. The last stanza begins identically, with only one changed element, i.e. *leila* to *grügrü*. This change indicates that the situation set up at the beginning of the poem has

remained relatively similar, with only one change. This is most likely to be considered a color change to *grün* (since *grügü* occurs in a color sequence *grü/blau/viola*). Even without the color reference, the idea of a changed element is intensified by the choice to replace liquid, double *ls* with hard, plosive *g[r]*, and also by the replacement of the soft and pure *ei* and *a* sounds with the louder *ü*, requiring more breath for articulation.

In the second line, *flusch kata*, *flusch* is immediately recognizable (in German as in English) as an onomatopoetic sound associated with water. In German it is equally quick to the English, yet more lulling and soothing (void of the connotation of flushing toilets), due to the rounding of the lips required for articulation of *u*, and hence also longer due to the time involved in this articulatory effort. The *sch* sibilant serves to soften and lengthen the resonance of the word. *Kata*, on the contrary, is quite harsh with its plosive *k* and *t*, and the repetition of the sound *ka* through *ta*. This harshness may suggest a break in the water, perhaps created by the flying fish jumping out. This action may be seen as reinforced through the third line *ballubasch*, wherein *basch* is another onomatopoetic sound of water splashing, and in its context could indicate the fish hitting the water surface again.

The last line of the first stanza, *zack hitti zopp*, reflects short, quick movements - perhaps of the seahorse. *Zack* is reminiscent of the common German onomatopoetic

phrase *zick zack* (zig zag), indicating sharp back-and-forth movements. It could, therefore, also suggest the jagged pattern on the seahorse's plated skin as well as the general outline of its body. It could also be suggestive of a rhythm.

The last three lines of the first and last stanzas are almost identical. The slight changes (to be discussed below) are indicative of the action that has been undertaken in the middle three stanzas. Line 2, *flusch kata*, has been repeated in line 19 as *fusch kata*. This creates essentially the same image, except that the lulling, soothing quality of the gentle, rolling *l* is removed. The fricative *f* is equally soft; however, the word is now spoken more quickly, supplying a rushing, quick-moving impression. Line 3 is repeated in the last stanza in line 20, thereby maintaining the overall image presented at the beginning of the poem. The last line of the first stanza is repeated twice within the poem before it reappears as the last line of the last stanza - with one variation. The first word, *zack*, has been changed to *zick*. It creates a finality in that (in a roundabout manner) the onomatopoetic phrase *zick zack* has been completed. This cohesion between the beginning and the end of the poem aids in reinforcing the sense of harmony, as well as supporting a sense of well-rounded structure and narration. The *i* in the final stanza is lighter than the *a* in *zack*, and is thus quicker in this already-fast consonant combination. The

assonance now occurring between *zick* and the following word *hitti*, increases the pace even more. The quickly pronounced word *zopp* completes the image perfectly: a short and quick four-letter word, beginning with a sibilant, one short vowel and ending in a final (double!) plosive. The *o* has a solid sound, rounding off the action and thus ending the poem.

The additional change between the two stanzas is the insertion of two lines in the last stanza. These both intensify the action as they supplement it. The reader senses an accelerating occurrence with other coincidental actions. And yet the two lines are not randomly introduced, but rather introduced with a "conjugation" or pattern of variation similar to the one examined above, in that they are modifications of elements and words previously presented. The second line of this final stanza begins with *blaulala* which is a variation of *ballu* (in *ballubasch* of line 3 in the first stanza) with a simple rearrangement of the same letters. Through this rearrangement *l* is thrice produced, enhancing the feeling of movement, particularly movement of something fluid such as water. The colors of the sea - *blau*, as well as the deeper *lila* tones (*lala*) are also suggested. *Lala* creates a further soothing effect through its reminiscence of childlike singing, and its own construction: a simple repetition of *la*. The final syllable of *ballubasch* is also employed in this line (*bisch*), with the variation of a *to*

i. This is the same type of variation seen earlier of *zack* to *zick*, and also accelerates pronunciation (which is also already fast due to the rushing ending [-sch]). In addition, the two components of *ballubasch* have been separated in their altered form in the last stanza. Between them appears the new word *violabimini*. The *bimini* maintains assonance with *bisch*. It was previously introduced as the last word of stanza 2, *bimm*, thereby suggesting this movement or sound as incorporated into the *viola* image. The *la* also has been previously introduced several times, but most emphatically in the preceding word *blaulala*. This string of *la* sounds creates a sense of continuation and repetition, perhaps also that of rolling waves, particularly in light of the rhythmic song-like quality of the *la* sound. *Viola* may also maintain the color quality introduced through an association with the color *violett*. It may also be associated with the musical instrument. In *Über das Geistige* Kandinsky related violet to "etwas Trauriges" and to the sounds of the English horn, the shawm and the deep tones of wood instruments such as the bassoon (102-03). Kandinsky further noted that blue tended to merge into violet [lila], and wondered where one color ended and the other began (103). It is noteworthy that Kandinsky regarded the cello as the musical instrument closest to the *viola*, and further related this instrument to the deep tones of blue. Kandinsky also spoke of blue as the element that turns red to violet. Deep blues would

certainly be those of the sea (*blaulala*). Whether Ball referred directly to Kandinsky's directive is not certain, particularly in light of his criticism of the subjectivity of Kandinsky's color psychology. If we are to offer Kandinsky's and Ball's methodology any credit at all, the parallels should, in fact, be seen as inherent conditions of the true inner values of the colors and musical sounds (and the artist's and poet's perception thereof).¹⁹

The next line (the third line of the final stanza) is also composed of a newly introduced element for the stanza. However, it picks up entirely from the preceding line's *violabimini*. *Violabimini* is obviously a vital new element since it is repeated first in its entirety, then has the latter part *bimini* repeated twice. Ball appears to have given significant effort to the creation of the impression of speed, first with the triple occurrence of *bimini*. Additionally, not only is this three-syllable word repeated three times, but its vowel sound is the same in each syllable. The individual *is* are also very short and quick.

In the central three stanzas the reader encounters similar variation, affecting a gradual increase of movement and speed to that attained by the end of the poem.

These constant (slightly varied) repetitions neatly provide a thematic unification to the poem, contributing to

19. Also noteworthy are several lines in Marinetti's "Zang-tumb-tuum" of 1912 that employ color associations, especially the instance of "viola viola viola bleu bleu."

its success. Acoustically the repetition also helps present a uniform structure. Our attention is thereby drawn away from the lack of traditional syntax as we concentrate on the formal acoustic harmonies, and are thus freed from irritation caused by frustration from dealing with this unconventional structure. Free from constraints of lexical meaning, the reader/listener can focus almost meditatively on the sounds, letting the clear mind wander within the minimally described environment (the sea, flying fish and seahorses) and attaching the sounds to playful imaginings. The process is very similar to that of listening to music. Ball is thereby communicating (a scene), but communicating without totalitarian, forced images and interpretations - just as he had wanted.

Background Information

Departing completely from Ball's intentions, the following section will highlight background information, not even found in the poem, that can offer additional understanding of the poems. This is clearly contrary to Ball's attempts at providing unadulterated language, free from outside connotations. And it would furthermore be seen as useless by Ball, since his personal relationship with the material references in the poems is supposed to be entirely avoided. Nonetheless, as has been pointed out, authorial subjectivity is unavoidable, and clearly the poet's emotional relationship to these material elements

goes so far as to even initiate his use of these items.

Ball's association with the seahorse went beyond its observation in the ocean, and was actually incorporated into his daily language of endearments. Correspondence between Ball and Hennings attests to Ball's use of the term "Seepferdchen" as an endearment used between himself and Hennings. In a letter referring to himself, Ball wrote: "Mein Gott, was für schlimme Träume hat das Seepferd. Sorgt und grämt sich ganz umasunst."²⁰ Later in the letter, he uses the term to refer to Hennings.²¹ And two months later the term reappears: "Heut predigt Steffgen [another endearment used for Ball] den Seepferdchen wie der Antonius den Fischen."²² The term appears to be used more frequently during their time of hardships, i.e in letters which also speak of hunger and sadness. In one of these Ball requests, "Du wirst mich gütig und immer reiner zu meiner Kindheit führen. . . ."²³ At these times, Emmy appears to embody Ball's salvation and refuge from the harshness of the circumstances through her representation of innocence - perhaps as any animal might. These feelings may be harbored in his overall orientation toward the

20. January 1918. Cited in *Briefe* 101.

21. *Briefe* 102.

22. Letter to Hennings, March 1918. Cited in *Briefe* 109. Term also used on p. 112 several times.

23. Undated letter of late 1918. Cited in *Briefe* 119.

seahorse, but could also be reciprocally heightened by his use of the creature in his poetry.

Ball's earlier references to fish can also provide some insight as to how he viewed these animals. During one of his destitute periods, he spoke of envying the fish their bait (i.e. not the fishermen their fish). And he continued, "Die Fische sind mystische Wesen, man sollte sie nicht töten und essen dürfen" (*Flucht* 31 August 1915). Images of the sea and fish clearly have spiritual resonance for Ball. In a later letter to Hesse of August 1923, Ball reported on his reading from Hesse's *Bilderbuch*, and noted, "Man sieht durch blaues Wasser bis auf den Grund, und da unten lebt es seltsam und geheimnisvoll, Fisch, Palme und Seestern. Man weiß nicht, ist es nur Spiegelung oder ist's Wesen."²⁴ These statements certainly provide insight into the tone he intended to set up in his "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" poem.

Further background information can be obtained from Ball's discussion of Taeuber's dance accompaniment to "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" which is filled with praise. He stated that she "ließ den Tanz einfach geschehen."²⁵ In *Flucht* he described it as "ein Tanz voller Spitzen und Gräten, voll flirrender Sonne und von schneidender Schärfe" (153). Ball's praise and approval of the dance provides us

24. Cited in *Briefe* 223.

25. "Über Okkultismus" 55.

with an idea of his anticipated interpretation. That he appreciated how Taeuber just "let the dance happen," supports his hope that the reader and listener just let the sounds play within a subconscious level, and form free associations on prearticulate levels.

Ball's earlier statements concerning the term "pluplubasch" can also provide insight into his understanding of the word *basch*. His comment, "Warum kann der Baum nicht Pluplusch heissen, und Pluplubasch, wenn es geregnet hat?" ("Dada Manifesto"). The statement also demonstrates how Ball "conjugated" many of his word formations; in this case adding "basch" to the tree renders it changed by the rain. It avoids long explanations of how this action occurred, but nonetheless provides us with changed images, movement and at the same internal cohesion, all with limited authorial intrusion or interpretation.

Conclusion: Examining the success of the poetry

Klingler concludes his analysis of Ball's sound poems by judging them as unsuccessful because he feels that, despite all of Ball's intentions at non-referential communication, they still rely on the lexical reference (in title and other conventional word and word parts) to be meaningful. While the above analysis indicates that this indeed is true, the poems do succeed on perhaps not a total lack of referentiality, but on a limited one, one more limited than that attempted by any other poet before Ball.

And with this limited set of referentiality, Ball succeeded in communicating on the level he intended to. Ball's sound poems show that one can compose a poem of *mostly* nonreferential sounds that is communicative (and sensually aesthetic) and not just because of the referential items, but mostly because of the help provided by other patterns and emotive values of the sounds. And Ball believed they worked precisely because of the omission of so many conventional denotations and connotations.

There have been numerous published accounts of uses of Ball's sound poems in German primary schools, especially in working-class neighborhoods where children have had little or no exposure to poetry, and teachers hope to dispel their students' inhibition or resistance to "high culture." These studies have demonstrated that readers appear to generally experience the poems as Ball had hoped. In one such study with sixth graders, "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" was read without the title, and the students were asked for ideas on the semantics of the poem. Rademacher reports: "Es kam zu einigen Titelvorschlägen, die annäherungsweise die Intention des Gedichtes trafen."²⁶

26. Rademacher, "Sprachliche Kreativität von Arbeiterkindern. Ein Unterrichtsbeispiel aus dem 6. Schuljahr einer Hauptschule," *Das gute Jugendbuch*, 24.1 (1974): 5-10.

CONCLUSION

The history of lyric experiments in sound encompasses a broad range of approaches, resembling and differing from Ball's in varying degrees. Some of the shared characteristics include attempts at resolving difficulties with the communicative process of articulation, ideas of primal sound, and the practice of radical nonreferentiality. Yet other poetry is more representative of purer experimentation in the properties of sound. Following is a survey of sound poetry often compared with Ball's. It includes what are considered the earliest "modern" attempts at sound poetry in "German" literature, work by Ball's peers, and finally newer, more radical experimental poetry by poets who readily acknowledge their indebtedness to Hugo Ball or his contemporaries.

Paul Scheerbart's "Kikakoku" of 1898 is one of the earliest sound experiments (see att. 21). The totally nonreferential choice of sounds often invites comparison to Ball's sound poems. Although the idea of primal sounds did not enter into his poetry, Scheerbart, too, was a mystic interested in the process of communication. His belief in the transcendently communicative power of music shaped this poem, as well as his prose,¹ which break from the

1. *Das graue Tuch und Zehn Prozent Weiß*, 1914 (Munich: Edition Text und Kritik, 1986); *Rakkox der Billionär*, 1900,

linear patterns of narration and cause-and-effect relationships. He attempted a more open form of written communication, where the reader was to meander spatially and ponder in the worlds which the narrator had set up. This format was meant to allow the reader to experience and interpret a literary situation as s/he would an actual life situation, with simultaneous sensations, impressions and ideas - supposedly free of authorial direction, and in this way displays some distinct parallels with Ball's thoughts on the communicative process and articulation.

Scheerbart's poem "Der springende Ton," composed in conventional language, also contemplates the possibility of these mobile qualities of sound.

More in line with pure sound play is "Das große Lalula" composed in 1905 by Christian Morgenstern (see att. 22). Morgenstern has left no written documentation discussing the articulatory process, and does not appear to have incorporated any experimentation with communicative problems or solutions in any of his other writing. Like any poet, contemplations on language and its possibilities appear to have led him to "Das große Lalula" experiment as well as "Fisches Nachtgesang" which is composed of semi-circles and dashes, meditating on the possibilities of sheer rhythm (see att. 23).

...Continued...

Dichterische Hauptwerke (Stuttgart: Goverts, 1962), and *Flora Mohr*, 1912, *Dichterische Hauptwerke* (Stuttgart: Goverts, 1962).

When the Club Dada demanded a Nobel Prize for Arno Holz in the *Berliner Zeitung* in 1918, he became the earliest officially recognized sound experimenter. His best known collection of poems, "Phantasmus," was continually developed and republished between 1898 and 1925, and reflects his interest in primal sound and unmediated poetic representation (see att. 24)². The "Phantasmus" poetry was revolutionary in style, but by no means representative of sound poetry, and it was Holz's extensive publication of poetic theory and the process of articulation and communication (rather than the poetry itself) that became most significant for later sound poetry development. In his 1891 treatise "Die Kunst. Ihr Wesen und ihre Gesetze" Holz first proclaimed his "Wortkunst," asserting that "Die Kunst hat die Tendenz wieder die Natur zu sein."³ He explained his *modus operandi* as one achieved via the calculation "Kunst = Natur - x." The x represented the artistic intervention that his new poetry was to remove. Holz's theoretical essay "Meine neue Lyrik" of 1899 introduced the idea of "notwendiger Rhythmus" which he perceived to be inherent to language with effective communicative properties.⁴ He hoped to let this rhythm

2. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1968).

3. *Werke*, vol. 5, Wilhelm Emrich and Anita Holz, eds. (Berlin-Spandau: Luchterhand, 1962) 3-46.

4. *Das Werk*, vol. 19 (Berlin: Dietz Nachfolger, 1925) 98-113.

ring true in his poetry, thereby asserting a primal property of sound and language, and freeing language from its conventional fetters. Holz was a mystic with the artistic goal of being a medium of the *Urerlebnis*, delivering it unadulterated and in its essential purity just as Ball later hoped.

The Expressionist poetry of August Stramm⁵ also anticipates many of Ball's ideas (see att. 25). Stramm most likely had been acquainted with Holz through his associations with Herwarth Walden, at the center of the Expressionist *Sturm* circle.⁶ While not yet composing nonreferential sound poetry, Stramm carried to new heights the ideas of association in preconceptual sensation, laden with the meaningful properties of rhythm and sound.

The Berlin Dadaist Raoul Hausmann's optophonetic poetry represents the product of some of the most extensive research into the articulatory process (see att. 26). Hausmann was most interested in the simultaneity of human sensation upon reception of an experience. He undertook to represent these preverbal, multi-sensual reactions by creating poetry in which visual properties were to play

5. Stramm only discovered his poetic calling in 1914, just two years before his untimely death.

6. Walden was a close friend of Stramm's as well as the editor for his publications in *Der Sturm* periodical. Walden and Holz had become acquainted in 1903 as mutual members of the Verein für Kunst, and later in 1909 were closely associated through the journal *Der neue Weg* to which Holz contributed, and which Walden also edited.

hand in hand with oral. Words and partial words (many of them onomatopoetic or alluding to sound and color, some using colored print and paper) are scattered across his page in a manner that defies linear reading, and compels a scanning movement to and fro across the page. Hausmann was attempting to thereby force a simultaneous experiencing of the various visual stimuli in a manner that was to parallel the intake of stimuli in an actual experience. Hausmann's theory on optophonetic poetry comes closest to Ball's thoughts on language and the communicative process of preverbal experiences.⁷

Hausmann did compose some nonrepresentational sound poetry in 1918, such as "bbb" and "Solao," but he described these products as arbitrary - merely representations of the pure sensual possibilities of sounds made by the human voice. In comparing his poetry to Ball's, he stated, "My poems are different from Ball's because Ball's create a new language and are musical; in mine it is impossible to believe that there is a language offering sense."⁸ He characterized his best known poem, "fmsbwtö" of 1921, as an autophonetic poem, i.e. one created by chance alone (see att. 27). The poem was intended as a statement on the

7. See Timothy O. Benson, *Raoul Hausmann and Berlin Dada* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research P, 1987) for a comprehensive discussion of Hausmann's theory.

8. Raoul Hausmann, *Courier Dada* (Paris: Le Terrain Vague, n.d.) 60.

randomness of conventional language⁹ and was to incorporate no interference or creative production on the part of the artist, invited no interpretation, and harbored no assumption that the world can be validated through human will, or through invented language and symbols for it.¹⁰

Kurt Schwitters, who worked in Hannover and was an associate of the Berlin Dadaists, composed one of the most famous sound poems, the "Ursonate" of 1921-32, which began as an expansion of Hausmann's "fmsbwtö" poem (see att. 28). In 1921 Schwitters began by adding vowels to Hausmann's consonantal construction, and continued revising this edition so that by 1932 he had composed a one-hour long recitation. Hausmann criticized him for having simply "verdeutscht" the poem, and thereby placed it back into the context of the conventional linguistic system, defying the entire purpose of sound poetry.¹¹ Schwitters defended himself by emphasizing the lack of referentiality in the poem, describing his words simply as "formal parts of the poem; nothing more." He contended to have been playing "sense against nonsense," maintaining that it was impossible to believe that there was a language offering

9. This idea of arbitrariness was similarly stressed in his collages and photomontages, which were composed of previously ready-made materials from the environment.

10. Benson called this "autonomous" language (93).

11. Werner Schmalenbach, *Kurt Schwitters* (New York: Abrams, 1970) 214.

sense.¹² Schwitters also composed "negro poems," demonstrating an interest in the purity of languages which he saw as representative of "primitive" Rousseauian cultures. However, no documentation exists of him seriously contemplating the idea of *primal* language. And it is clear that he did not attempt to create a new language as Ball did, but remained at the stage of alerting others to the problems within the conventional one. Schwitters' enjoyment in language play is demonstrated in "Obervogelsang" or "Kleines Gedicht für große Stotterer." He truly remained a performer and stage player, the kind that gave the Dadaists their reputation as outrageous, anti-bourgeois pranksters.

Ball's close friend Richard Huelsenbeck, who worked with the Zurich and Berlin Dadaists, had a passing interest in primitive language (with a detectable touch of mysticism) and worked closely with Schwitters on "negro" poems. While Huelsenbeck had an appreciation for the problems of language, he summarily claimed, "Ich gestehe also, daß ich auf dem Gebiet der Laute nicht in der ersten Reihe bin, . . ."¹³ and in discussing Ball's poetry stated, "So sehr mir das Lautgedicht einleuchtet, liebe ich andererseits nicht die zerebrale Anstrengung, die dazu nötig

12. Schmalenbach 201.

13. *mit witz* 106.

ist."¹⁴ The "Phantastische Gebete" collection of 1916 contain some phonetic segments, but as he stated, sound clearly was not a priority (see att. 29). Huelsenbeck emphasized that his work at the Cabaret had been inspired more out of an interest in revolutionizing humanity, rather than grammar (whose revolutionary leader he saw in Marinetti).¹⁵

Hans Arp, who worked in Zurich and later Paris, is frequently included in discussions of Ball's sound poetry, but he in fact wrote nothing resembling sound poetry. Arp was, however, interested in accidental poems which he saw as representative of language's arbitrariness, as well as the bruitist poems of the Cabaret, stating that any sounds the voice makes say more than conventional language. Arp and Ball maintained a close friendship based on their similar personal characteristics, i.e. a shyness and earnestness of demeanor (always shying from the showmanship of Dada performance), and an unerring seriousness towards their artistic mission.¹⁶

Tristan Tzara, who came to the Cabaret Voltaire from Romania, clearly clashed with Ball in personality and

14. mit witz 104.

15. mit witz 14.

16. For a discussion of Arp's "very definite idea of the value and meaning of Dada" see Rex W. Last, *German Dadaist Literature: Kurt Schwitters, Hugo Ball, Hans Arp* (New York: Twayne, 1973) especially 16.

artistic approach. Ball saw him as representative of the nihilating process in poetic creation, i.e. the first step before creation of new forms, and lacking the interest in the ensuing step of creation. Tzara, too, criticized conventional language for its lack of meaning, but he chose to reflect this attitude with accidental poems of individually-printed words shaken out of paper bags. He continued his work with Paris Dada, after leaving Zurich in 1920.

Rudolf Blümner claimed to have written the first sound poem in 1921 with "Anglo laina," feeling that it distinguished itself by being *completely* non-referential as well as maintaining the serious interests of linguistic reform based on mystic principles of primal sound and *Urlaute* (see att. 30). His ideas clearly resonate of Ball's.

Franz Behrens stated his indebtedness to those same ideas when he composed "B-C" in 1921, made of telex numbers and messages, and subtitled "für Blümner und Leger" (see att. 31).

And more recent reminiscences of sound poetry in the work of experimental poets such as Eugen Gomringer, Helmut Heißenbüttel, Ernst Jandl, Franz Mon, Otto Nebel, Oskar Pastior and the Wiener Gruppe's H. C. Artmann and Gerhard Rühm cannot be overlooked. These artists use dialect, sound, visual elements, foreign words, exotic words, in short - anything - for expressiveness to compensate for the

shortcomings of conventional language. Most of these poets began their work in the early 1950s, and they do not deny their indebtedness to the forerunners of sound experimentation. The Wiener Gruppe attributes its discovery of Holz, Stramm and the Dadaists Schwitters and Hausmann to the perusal of a book by Soergel. Mon credits Marinetti's "Parole in libertà" and Kandinsky's "Über das Geistige in der Kunst" for inspiring the new poetry.¹⁷ And while Ernst Jandl calls Ball his role model,¹⁸ Oskar Pastior found his inspiration while translating the poetry of Khlebnikov.¹⁹ Their theory cumulatively incorporates all of the basic premises about language discussed by the five artists on whom this study has focused, and tries to solve the same linguistic problems.

Rühm strives to evoke the same type of psycho-perceptual associations in his poetry as Ball. In 1981 he stated, "[D]as phonetische material reizt zur ausdrucksgebung bis hin zur emotionalen identifikation mit

17. "Über konkrete Poesie," *Texte über Texte* (Neuwied und Berlin, 1970) 136-39.

18. *Das Öffnen und Schließen des Mundes* (Darmstadt und Neuwied, 1985) 28.

19. "Vom geknickten Umgang mit Texten wie Personen," *Sprache im technischen Zeitalter* 86 (1983): 179.

dem 'wortlaut'."20 Rühm, a musician as well, takes advantage of musical qualities to enhance his poems' communicative potency (see att. 32). His poems, clearly intended for oral production, were frequently delivered via radio or recorded on sound tapes, and make full use of timbre, pitch, tempo and volume.

Jandl's "autonome Gedichte" which display an interest in the free play of nonreferential sounds are the most direct offspring of Ball's sound poems. He feels Ball's practice of providing a scene for the free play of associations was a particularly effective mode of communicating on a specifically intended topic, while still allowing each reader to individually respond. Jandl believes his poem "im reich der toten" presents a similar stage on which the public's various impressions of the realm of the dead can play (see att. 33). He explains how this process of associations might work for a reader:

nnnnnnntschn verbindet sich für mich mit einem auf
eine ganz bestimmte weise gesprochenen 'mennn-
(t)schn", wenn es auch beim anhören des gedichtes
vielleicht eher an niesen erinnert.

üiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiii bleibt ein
geisterbahnartiger schauerruf; die verbindung von
"blau" und "ruh" in

20. "von der lautdichtung zur radiophonen poesie," ms of Westdeutsche Rundfunk, Cologne, 27 January 1981, 1f. Cited in Nicholas Zurbrugg, "Dada and the Poetry of the Contemporary Avant-Garde," *Dada. Studies of a Movement*, ed. Richard Sheppard (Buckinghamshire, UK: Alpha Academic, 1980) 237.

blaaaauuuuuuurrrruuuuuuurrrruuuuuuurrrruuuuuu lässt
 sich nicht überhören; zwei lautverbindungen haben
 mit der vergehenden zeit zu tun, wenn man
 glc-----h und dnnnnnnnnnn mit "gleich" und
 "dann" in verbindung bringen will, glc-----h
 überdies mit der vorstellung des gleichmachenden
 todes; die lautfolge s---c---hfffffs
 ---c---hfffffs---c---hfffffs---c---hfffffs---c---h
 kann in schlaf versenken oder als "schiff" über
 den acheron allmählich im nichts versinken.

schllllllltnnn will man vielleicht als
 "schlitten", "schlucken" oder "schelten" deuten;
 gllrrrrrrrrrrr, "klirrend", verweist wieder aufs
 glas des fensterhändlers, nimmt aber auch den
 unerbittlichen schluss vorweg, das fünfmalige
 nnnrrrrrrrrrrr - "narr"!

jetzt ist nur noch der vorletzte bestandteil
 des gedichts offen, das auslöschend-verschwebende
 fffffds--c--h- wenn sie wollen: futsch!²¹

While pure sound poems are part of the repertoire of
 newer experimental poetry, concrete poetry, with its
 emphasis on the visual, makes up the core of the creations.
 The most basic impetus for its spatial form was the Dada
 interest in the abandonment of linear order. The spatial
 arrangement combines formal geometric patterning with words
 or letters, laid out in a format in which the reader can
 meander. The process whereby the reader contemplates the

21. "voraussetzungen, beispiele und ziele einer poetischen
 arbeitsweise. ein vortrag," für alle (Darmstadt and
 Neuwied, 1974) 246f. Cited in Scholz 275.

minimal semantic context parallels that of Ball's sound poems which merely provide a general topic for individual experience without attempting discourse on the subject. The subsequent contemplation and interpretation of the topic is seen as going beyond the concerns and responsibilities of the sound poet. And in these concrete poems it is not the sounds' quality that evokes further meaning within each individual, but the physical layout that helps express something non- or prearticulate.

Yet concrete poets acknowledge one poetic quality that Ball did not, in that the very structure of the poems represents an intentional emphasis of their materiality as well as that of language itself. Heißenbüttel discusses this in his introduction to Gomringer's *konstellationen ideogramme stundenbuch*²² in which he stresses that authors emphasize the plasticity of language because they see it as the only remaining area in which it can be functional.

Heißenbüttel states:

Die Möglichkeit oder Unmöglichkeit des Sprechens selbst tritt in den Mittelpunkt. Warum? Weil die verbindlichen Vorprägungen des Sprechens, vom einfachen Satz bis zu den literarischen Gattungen, ihre Verbindlichkeit, das heißt die Fähigkeit,

22. (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1977.) Gomringer also discusses this idea in "From Line to Constellation," *Hispanic Arts* 3/4 (Winter/Spring 1968): 68, and "The Poem as a Functional Object," *Hispanic Arts* 3/4 (Winter/Spring 1968): 69. Discussed in Zurbrugg 132.

stellvertretend zu stehen, verloren haben.²³

At a point where language has lost its ability to communicate, they feel compelled to admit to these limitations by acknowledging what it concretely is, i.e. its material quality.

Heißenbüttel is particularly enchanted with the material ability of the words presented in a concrete poem to just be themselves, to acknowledge their symbolization of the material: "daß die Literatur das Konkrete und Materielle der Welt sinnbildlich nahm. Sinnbildlich redete sie die unwiderlegbare Wahrheit."²⁴

Zurbrugg brings up the extreme form to which this emphasis can develop, especially in the work of Gomringer, where one finds several poems concentrating only on a visual, physical "exactitude" and aesthetic, devoid of semantic value²⁵ (see att. 34).

On the other hand, Mon finds this concern for materiality manifesting itself as an interest in all qualities of language and words, not just their visual, but their phonetic and oral/aural elements as well. He also

23. Cited in Hans Christian Kosler, "Sprachkritik und Spracherotik in der experimentellen Literatur," *Text + Kritik* 60 (1978): 5.

24. Eugen Gomringer, *konstellationen ideogramme stundenbuch*, introduction (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1983) 11.

25. Zurbrugg 134.

emphasizes the interplay of these qualities and the ensuing effect of simultaneity. This interplay affects the natural intake of an experience, but is also indicative of the importance placed on the active role of the reader. Mon asks that the reader be engaged in "konzentrativen Anstrengung [um die] unerhörten Komplexe (des Simultanmusters) in Bewegung zu bringen."²⁶

Neodadaists attribute the great variety of approaches to poetry to the openness that the original Dadaists provided for poetry and the understanding of language. Heir to this liberation, Mon describes experimental poetry: "[Its] new syntactic-semantic dimensions . . . enable the reader to recognize the profusion of hidden relationships [in language]."²⁷

In comparing contemporary sound poets to Ball, Zurbrugg distinguishes Ball by his interest in "magical" words, in "harmony" and "innocence." While the neo-dadaists share Ball's interest in communicating on a totally nonrational realm, it is Ball's emphasis on the magic quality of this realm that Zurbrugg recognizes as the

26. *artikulationen* 111. Pastior also speaks of his interest in the active involvement of the reader/listener in "erweiterte Poesie" of 1954. (Cited in Scholz 279.)

27. "Concrete Poetry," *Stereo Headphones*, 7 (Spring 1976): 48. Cited in Zurbrugg 138.

quality that continues to set him apart from other sound poets.²⁸

And indeed, none of the sound experimenters devoted as much of their lives to the serious contemplation of the task of incorporating the mystical, inner world into everyday language as did Ball, weaving these ideas into every facet of life. The extended interest in, not just more adequate communication, but a communication of the spiritual, distinguishes Ball from these other poets, and more closely connects him with the four artists who have been the focus of this dissertation.

Ball's belief that such a language would eventually provide access to the spiritual realms sets him apart even further. This belief appears to be a central focus of spiritual mentors throughout the world. In "Language and Mystical Awareness" Frederick Streng notes that in both eastern and western mysticism the belief prevails that "a shift in the function of language helps to produce a catharsis in thinking and perceiving [upon which t]he shift from conventional to mystical awareness [is dependent]."²⁹ The message that "[t]hese [mystical] qualities are expressed, interpreted and to some degree developed through a use of language that must be aware of both its potential

28. 129.

29. *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Steven T. Katz (New York: Oxford UP, 1978) 143.

and its limitation"³⁰ resonates in Ball and many of the neo-dadaists. Streng points out that in the *Ashta* of Buddhist literature there exists a distrust in "one-to-one correlation between thoughts and referential entities" in language. And while the work of Ball's contemporaries is marked by this linguistic skepticism, it is Ball's perseverance in finding the purposeful realm for words that distinguishes him from his contemporaries and followers and places him more closely in a context with these mystics. The *Ashta* too stresses that, "One important function of words . . . is to purify the use of language,"³¹ i.e. the correct use of words will cleanse "diese vermaledeite Sprache, an der Schmutz klebt" and yield to higher awareness.³²

An awareness of language's limitations remains focal in various religions' endeavors at bringing mystical awareness into its realm. For the limitations are seen in most cultures as definitive of the differences between the mystical and the material world. Into this realm of higher reality also comes the acknowledgement that, "Mysticism awareness . . . transcend[s] the use of words, language, -----"

30. Frederick Streng, "Language and Mystical Awareness," *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Steven T. Katz (New York: Oxford, 1978) 143.

31. Streng 157.

32. Ball, "Dada Manifesto."

and thought. This has led to various claims about the non-verbal character of some or all mystical experiences."³³ What has further hindered an arrival at this mystical realm as well as an understanding of the work of poets who have attempted to reflect it in their literature is "[t]he assumption that the highest mystical awareness is totally non-conceptual intuition."³⁴ Bennett remarks that mysticism "confers a knowledge that is inarticulate in conceptual terms."³⁵ This obviously creates difficulty not only in expressing the spiritual realm verbally, but in understanding it and particularly in discussing it in rational, hermeneutic, scholarly discourse. If mysticism is based on "non-conceptual intuition," which is "inarticulate in conceptual terms," how do we speak about it? And can the poetry of those deeply embedded in and guided by such spiritual principles be understood or discussed by those more fixed in a rational existence, i.e. by scholars of the late twentieth century?

Perhaps Susan Sontag provides the best answer in her essay "Against Interpretation" where she demands that, "In

33. Streng 141.

34. Streng 144.

35. C. A. Bennett, *A Philosophical Study of Mysticism: An Essay* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1923) 93.

place of a hermeneutics we need an erotics of art."³⁶ She urges that art critics and the public in general learn to appreciate the sensory experience of a work of art, and of life in general. Sontag feels that a work of art's "transparency" and "luminousness" are its most valuable offerings, and that we should enjoy "the thing in itself," avoiding its interpretability and actually appreciating its element of uninterpretability.

Peter Demetz in his 1982 essay on phonetic poetry also criticizes how

[w]e grapple with the potential presence or absence of meaning, and totally neglect, underrate, or forget that the idiom of poetry . . . has a sensual quality that, unlike philosophical assertion . . . directly affects us as human beings who touch and feel. Phonetic poetry undoes balances within a poem but restores balances of a humane kind. We may be hermeneutic animals who cannot live without meaning, but it is the ultimate challenge of sound experiments to remind us that in a particular discourse called poetry there is something that has to strike our senses before making sense.³⁷

Ball's experiments have led us to look at language and communication in an alternative way. Questions, however,

36. *Evergreen Review* 1964. Reprinted in *Art History and Its Methods. A Critical Anthology*, ed. Eric Fernie (London, Phaidon, 1995) 222.

37. "Varieties of Phonetic Poetry" 33.

arise as to whether sound poetry has come to a dead end, if the more contemporary work that began in the fifties will lead to some newer development, or if it has reached its final potential. We ask ourselves if the work of Ball was a failure because he neither stuck with sound poetry, nor concentrated his energies solely on attaining access to the spiritual realm. His return to conventional language and to writing in arenas very much founded in the material world (his political journalism to wit) seem to speak for an abandonment of his earlier efforts.

And the ultimate failure is seen in the fact that sound language did not catch on, i.e. we do not now speak in a new phonetic or a renewed primal sound language in our everyday world. When we make this criticism, however, we ignore the fact that once these new phonetic words would become fixed enough to allow their use in our commodities trade or Microsoft think tanks, matched with a firm reliance that we mean what we say in a very limited and limitable way, then we will have lost the precise quality that sound poetry offered us. Its goal was that we should speak in a more open-ended language, and communicate in a less authoritative manner, not forcing one speaker's limited interpretation of a sensation and ensuing spoken sound on the listener, but keeping it laden with the possible interpretations with which that sensation originally hit the speaker.

Sound language will, therefore, never be a language used to close deals on Wall Street, but will and should happily preserve its respective arena of communication. I recall the day I recited "Seepferdchen und Flugfische" in an art history class after the students had been introduced to Kandinsky, and we all agreed that we were together in this undersea world, perhaps not communicating as is normally expected, but nonetheless *communing* in a very special, bonding way. This was a mystic experience in the New Age of the great Northwest. This spiritual realm will remain the place for sound poetry. When we let ourselves go, free ourselves from the expectations of language, and just let the sounds play on our senses with "the glow of a star . . . letting them touch lightly on a hundred thoughts without naming them"³⁸ - therein will lie sound language's success.

 38. Ball, *Flucht* 18 June 1916: "[Mit der] Glut eines Gestirns. . . . An hundert Gedanken zugleich anstreifend."

APPENDIX

Attachment 1

Karawane

jolifanto bambla o falli bambla
 großgiga m'pfa habla horem
 egiga goramen
 higo bloiko russula huju
 hollaka hollala
 anlogo bung
 blago bung blago bung
 bosso fataka
 ü üü ü
 schampa wulla wussa olobo
 hej tatta gorem
 eschige zunbada
 wulubu ssubudu uluwu ssubudu
 tumba ba-umf
 kusa gauma
 ba - umf

Attachment 2

Katzen und Pfauen

baubo sbugi ninga gloffa

siwi faffa
 sbugi faffa
 olofa fafamo
 faufo halja finj

sirgi ninga banja sbugi
 halja hanja golja biddim

mâ mâ
 piaûpa
 mjâma

pawapa baungo sbugi
 ninga
 gloffalor

Attachment 3

Seepferdchen und Flugfische

tressli bessli nebogen leila
 flusch kata
 ballubasch
 zack hitti zopp

zack hitti zopp
 hitti betzli betzli
 prusch kata
 ballubasch
 fasch kitti bimm

zitti kitillabi billabi billabi
 zikko di zakkobam
 fisch kitti bisch

bumbalo bumbalo bumbalo bambo
 zitti kitillabi
 zack hitti zopp

treßli beßli nebogen grügü
 blaulala violabimini bisch
 violabimini bimini bimini
 fusch kata
 ballubasch
 zick hiti zopp

Attachment 4

Gadji beri bimba

gadji beri bimba glandridi laula lonni cadori
 gadjama gramma berida bimbala glandri galassassa laulitalomini
 gadji beri bin blassa glassala laula lonni cadorsu sassala bim
 gadjama tuffm i zimzalla binban gligla wowolimai bin beri ban
 o katalominai rhinozerossola hopsamen laulitalomini hoooo
 gadjama rhinozerossola hopsamen
 bluku terullala blaulala loooo

zimzim urullala zimzim urullala zimzim zanzibar zimzalla zam
 elifantolim brussala bulomen brussala bulomen tromtata
 velo da bang bang affalo purzamai affalo purzamai lengado tor
 gadjama bimbalo glandridi glassala zingtata pimpalo ögrögööö
 viola laxato viola zimbrabim viola uli paluji malooo

tuffm im zimbrabim negramai bumbalo negramai bumbalo tuffm i zim
 gadjama bimbala oo beri gadjama gaga di gadjama affalo pinx
 gaga di bumbalo bumbalo gadjamen
 gaga di bling blong
 gaga blung

Attachment 5

Wolken

elomen elomen lefitalominal
 wolminuscaio
 baumbala bunga
 acycam glastula feirofim flinsi

elominuscula pluplubasch
 rallalalaio

endremin saxassa flumen flobollala
 feilobasch falljada follidi
 flumbasch

cerobadadrada
 gragluda gligloda glodasch
 gluglumen gloglada gleroda glandridi

elomen elomen lefitalominai
 wolminuscaio
 baumbala bunga
 acycam glastala feirofim blisti
 elominuscula pluplusch
 rallabataio

Attachment 6

Totenklage

ombula
 take
 bitdli
 solunkola
 tabla tokta tokta takabla
 taka tak
 Babula m'balam
 tak tru - ü
 wo - um
 biba bimbel
 o kla o auw
 kla o auwa
 la - auma
 o kla o ü
 la o auma
 klinga - o - e - auwa
 ome o-auwa
 klinga inga M ao - Auwa
 omba dij omuff pomo - auwa
 tru - ü
 tro-u-ü o-a-o-ü
 mo-auwa
 gomum guma zangaga gago blagaga
 szagaglugi m ba-o-auma
 szaga szago
 szaga la m'blama
 bschigi bschigo
 bschigi bschigi
 bschiggo bschiggo
 goggo goggo
 ogoggo
 a - o- auma

Attachment 7

1 Stern und 7 kazamogipuffel
 macht 13 zakopaddogei
 zubtrahiere 5 franschöse Männlin
 macht 1 Libanotterbett
 nehme 3 Quentlin Klotzpulfer
 legs in himmelsdeifelsnamen
 dabei, wirst sehen wohinst
 kommst wnr bällt wnr heult
 wnr pfaucht wnre Daugen dächt

Attachment 8

bfirr bfirr
 ongog
 rorr sss
 dumpa
 feif dirri
 chu gaba
 raur
 ss

Attachment 9

brulba dori daula dalla
 sula lori wauga malla
 lori damma fuzmalu

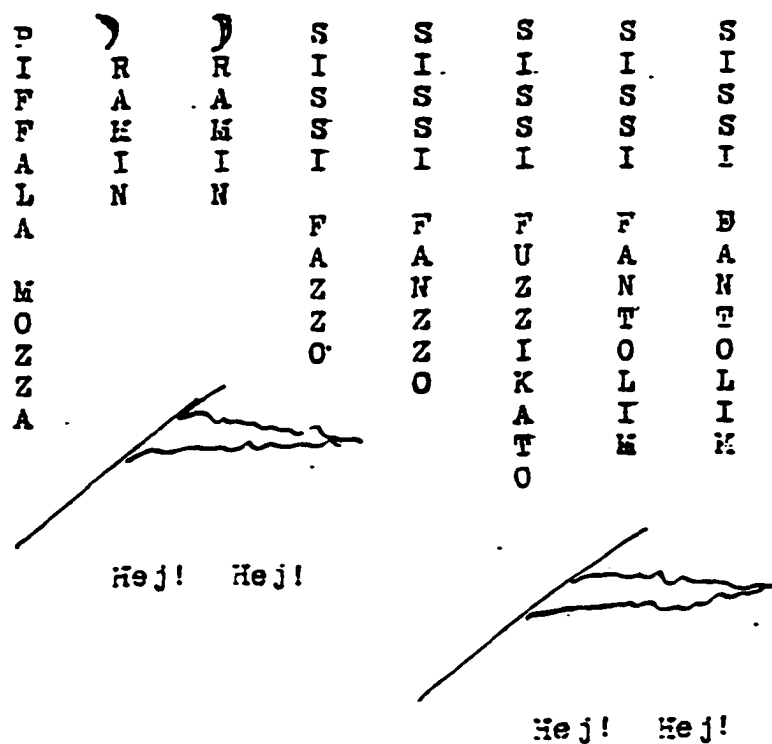
Dasche mame came rilla
 schursche saga moll vasvilla
 suri pauge fuzmalu

Dolli gamba bokamufti
 sabel ize spogagufti
 palazuma polja gei

mula dampe dori villa
 alles virds schavi drestilla
 offi lima dozapau
 pozaudau

Attachment 10

3 PIFFALAMOZZA (Der Stier)



(im Bilde des Stiers:
Zirkel, Kelle, B O, Stern)

Attachment 11

KARAWANE**jolifanto bambla ô falli bambla***grossiga m'pfa habla horem***égiga goramen****higo bloiko russula huju****hollaka hollala*****anlogo bung*****blago bung****blago bung****bosso fataka****u uu u****schampa wulla wussa ólobo*****hej tatta gôrem*****eschige zunbada****~~wulaba ssabuda uluw ssabuda~~****tumba ba- umf*****kusagauma*****ba - umf**

Attachment 12

cadenzato	distanze	
navigante		distanze
merbido		
maneggevole	dune	
minuzioso	stirarsi	
intestinale	ondulazioni	
	angoli	
	angoli	
RAN	modellare sabbia smussarsi levigare	
	levigare sonnolenza del vento	
RAN	paracalli arterie scarlatte gioia di	
	pagare a un ladro il prezzo del pru-	
	rito contabilità delle un-	
	ghie ½ Kg di formaggi	
RAN	26 Kg. di CARNE FEMMI-	
	NILE spirali d'un fumo azzurro	
	odore di vitello arrosto BET-	
	TOLA DI ROTHSCHILD (am-	
sconfinato	piezza 1000 Km ²) 3 corazzate di	
abbagliante	cartavelina 2 capitani di piombo	
ranran	fuso vomitati dal sole friggente	
o	equatore	
quadrato		

Attachment 13

accensione di un ve-
 liero = lampada a petrolio +- 12 para-
 lumi bianchi + tappeto verde + cerchio
 di solitudine serenità famiglia
 metodo d'un secondo veliero prua lavorare
 al tornio il metallo del mare
 trucioli di schiuma abbassarsi della tempera-
 tura = 3 ventagli al disopra dei Monti
 Calabri (**AZZZZZZURRRRRRO LENTO INDUL-
 GENTE SCETTICO**)
 Macerie di Messina nello stretto

imboscata di T. S. F. bulgari
vibbbrrrrrrrarrrrre
arrrrrrruffarrre comunicazioni turche
Sciukri Pascià - Costantinopoli

TURCO RALLONE FRENATO

vibbrrrrrrrare altezza
400 m.

SCOPRIRE CHE

Tsarigraad

assalto contro Seyloglou mascherare assalto

Attachment 15

Programm der II. (»Sturm«-)Soirée.

I.

Tristan Tzara: Introduction.

Hans Heusser: »Prélude«, »Mond über Wasser« (gespielt vom Komponisten)

F. T. Marinetti: »Die futuristische Literatur«.

W. Kandinsky: »Fagott«, »Käfig«, »Blick und Blitz«.

G. Apollinaire: »Rotsoge«, »Le dos du Douanier«.

Blaise Cendrars: »Crépitements«.

Musique et Danse Nègre, exécutées par 5 personnes avec le concours de Mlles. Jeanne Rigaud et Maria Cantarelli.
(Masques par M. Janco)

II.

H. S. Sulzberger: »Cortège et fête«, exécuté par l'auteur.

Jakob van Hoddis: Verse, rezitiert von Emmy Hennings.

Herwarth Walden: August Macke †, Franz Marc †, August Stramm †.

Hans Heusser: »Burlesques turques«, »Festzug auf Capri« (gespielt vom Komponisten).

Albert Ehrenstein: Verse. Über Kokoschka.

III.

»Sphinx und Strohmann«. Kuriosum von Oscar Kokoschka.

Masken und Inszenierung: Marcel Janco.

Herr Firdusi Hugo Ball

Herr Kautschukmann W. Hartmann

Weibliche Seele, Anima Emmy Hennings

Der Tod F. Clauser

Attachment 16

dyr bul shchyl
 ubeshchur
 skum
 vy so by
 r l ez¹¹

Attachment 17

i
 che
 de
 mali
 gr
 iu
 iukh
 d d d
 d d d
 se v
 m'
 m'
 serzhamelepeta
 senial ok
 risum
 meleva
 alik a lev amakh
 li li liub biul

Attachment 18

e u w
 i a o
 o a
 o a e e i e w
 o a
 e u i e i
 i e e
 i i y i e i i y

Attachment 19

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.
 Gzee-gzee-gzay-o, sang the chain.
 So on the canvas of some similitudes.
 Beyond all spatial bounds there lived the FACE.

Attachment 20

PLANE TWO: THE GODS

Eros Mara-róma
 Bécbah-boól
 Oook, kooks, cll!
 Rededcédec dec-dec-dec!
 Péérec, pépéc, pa-pa-péc!
 Chógi, góina, géni-gan

PLANE FIFTEEN

Soundwriting

VÉH-O-VEYA—the green of a tree
NEEZHEÓTY—the dark tree trunk
MAM-E-ÁMEE—that's the sky
POOCHE CHAPI—a blackbird
MAM EE EMO—that's a cloud

The odor of things is numerical.
 Daylight in the garden!
 And here is your holiday, your Labor Day.

LELI-LILI—the snow of locust flowers shielding a rifle
CHÉECHECHÁCHA—the shine of sabers
NEE-EH-ÉNZAI—the scarlet of banners
ZEE-EH-ÉGZOI—the words of an oath
BÓBO-BÉEBA—the stripe of scarlet
MEEPEEÓPEE—the glitter of the gray-eyed troops
CHÚCHU BÉEZA—the glitter of swear words
MEE-VEH-ÁH-A—the heavens
MEEPEEÓPEE—the glitter of eyes
VE-E-ÁH-VA—the green of the troops!
MEEMOMÁYA—the dark blue of hussars
ZEEZOZÉYA—the sun's handwriting, a rye field of sun-cyed
 sabers
LELI-LILI—the snow of locust flowers
SOSESÁO—mountains of buildings

PLANE SIXTEEN: THE FALLING SICKNESS

Halt, you rat! ARRGH!
 grrr . . . grrr . . .
 Rarrh!
 Rarrh . . .
 You'll never get away . . .
 You lie . . . Halt!
 Halt!
 Rarrth . . . Rarrth . . .
 grrr . . .

Attachment 21

Kikakoku!
 Ekorlaps!
 Wiso kollipanda opolôsa.
 Ipassata ih fûo.
 Kikakoku proklinthe petêh.
 Nikifili mopa Léxio intipashi benakaffro - propsa
 pî! propsa pî!
 Jasollu nosaressa flipsei
 Aukarotto passakrussar Kikakoku.
 Nupsa pusch?
 Kikakoku buluru?
 Futupukee - propsa pî!
 Jasollu

Attachment 22

Das große Lalulä

Kroklokwaſzi? Semememi!
 Seiokrontro - praſriplo:
 Bifzi, bafzi; hulalemi:
 quasti bast bo . . .
 Lalu lalu lalu lalu la!

Hontraruru miromente
 zasku zes rü rü?
 Entepente, Leiolente
 klekwapufzi lü?
 Lalu lalu lalu lalu la!

Simarar kos malzipempu
 silzuzankunkrei (;)!
 Marjomar dos: Quempu Lempu
 Siri Suri Sei []
 Lalu lalu lalu lalu la!

Attachment 23

Fisches Nachtgesang

```

      —
    u — u
  — — —
u — u — u
  — — —
u — u — u
  — — —
u — u — u
  — — —
    — — —
      —
  
```

Attachment 24

Unten im Dorf
hinter der Kirchhofsmauer
schläft der Müller.

Die Mühle steht still.

Auf ihrem morschen Gebälk kriechen Marieenkäferchen,
über sie fliegt ein Kuckuk hin.

... Kuckuk ... Kuckuk ...

Den steilen Weg durchs Korn her kommen Kinder.
lachen, schwatzen und stopfen Gras durch die Ritzen.

Eins kuckt durch.

... Kuckuk ...

Jenen:
Sonnenstrahlen und Schmetterlinge!

Attachment 25

Schrei

Tage sargen
Welten gräbern
Nächte ragen
Blute bäumen
Wehe raumen alle Räume
Würgen
Schwingen
Und
Zerschwingen
Schwingen
Würgen
Und
Zerwürgen
Stürmen
Strömen
Wirbeln
Ballen
Knäueln
Wehe Wehe
Wehe
Wehen
Nichtall.

Attachment 26



Attachment 27

fmsbwtözüu
pggiv-?mü

viertes Teil:		
proste <i>(der vierte Teil ist streng taktmäßig, außer den in der durcharbeitung eingeschobenen Variationen)</i>		
Baum ba Baum ba	(P)	11
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Baum blinblinn Baum blinblinn		11
Baum Blinblinn Baum blinblinn		
Baum blinblinn Baum blinblinn		
Baum blinblinn Baum blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		11
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Grimm glimm grimm blinblinn		
Primitivi vocatum		
Primitivi cantum		
Primitivi cantum		
Tata tata tuta tuta		11/12
Tata tata tuta tuta		
Tata tata tuile tuile	(W)	
Tata tata tuile tuile		
Tata tata tuile tuile		
Tata tata tuile tuile		
Lila lila cila lila		12
Lila lila cila lila		
Lila lila cila lila		
Lila lila cila lila		
Tui tui cui cui		14
Tui tui cui cui		
Tee tee toe toe		
Tee tee toe toe		
Tui tui cui cui		
Tui tui cui cui		
Tee tee toe toe		
Tee tee toe toe		

Attachment 29

CHORUS SANCTUS

a a o	a e i	i i l	o i i
u u o	u u e	u i e	a a i
ha dzk	drrr bn	obn br	buss bum
ha haha	hihihi	liili	leiomen

DIE PRIMITIVEN

„indigo indigo
 „Trambahn Schlafsack
 „Wanz und Floh
 „indigo indigai
 „umbaliska
 „bumm DADAI

Attachment 30

"Oiaí laéla oia ssisialu
 Ensúdio tréssa súdio mischnumi
 Ia lon stuéz
 Brorr schjatt
 Oíázo tsuigulu
 Ua sésa masuó tólu
 Ua sésa maschiató toró
 Oí séngu gádse andola
 Oí ándo séngu
 Séngu ándola

Oí séngu
 Gádse
 Ina Leíola
 Kóad
 Sagór
 Kadó

Kadó mai tiúsi
 Suíjo angola

Schu mai sitá ka lío séngu

Ia péndo ála
 Péndu síolo

Toró toró
 Mangádse gádse se

Ullái tiotúlo
 Zíalu nía myó
 Sésa sésa
 Lu snégan íflulei
 To kárta tor
 To lássa sísafan
 To bálan fásan édomir
 To tréssa tréssa tréssa mischnumi

Uiaqó

Ia lon schtazúmatu
 Ia lon laschór
 Lilíte móe sagór

Lilíte móe
 Kja ha hü hía-i

Níólo zágan eira-

Híotoro
 Eo tánja tánja
 Molái hysialo
 Eo zísu ríjo émba ü téviolo

Ua ssívo uá
 Láina uá
 Toliatór sagún
 Ia kárta tor
 Ia lássa sísafan
 Ia bálan fásan édomir
 Ia tréssa tréssa tréssa-

Uíja sagór
 Tailá tailá
 Schí oblaímono
 Gbomoloé oé oé oé
 Ango laína bobandó jo-ó
 Ango laína sjujuló jo-ó
 Ango laína dschastjadschást jo-ó

Attachment 31

Der Roman der Lyrik
 (Für Rudolf Blümaer und Fernand Léger)
 Cable Transfers
 350 . 50
 Blindler Bettler Homer hungert über die Dörfer
 Baltimore and Ohio
 47 . 87
 Hesiod ermordet und ins Meer geschmissen
 Canada Pacific
 127 . 87
 Archilochos erdolcht
 Chic Rock Island
 38 . 00
 Der Bruder erschießt Anacharsis
 Denver and Rio
 2 . 25
 auf der Hochzeit steklettiert Stesichoros
 Erie Common
 19 . 12
 Sklave Aesop vom Felsen geschmettert
 Great North.
 78 . 75
 Weiber zerschneiden Euripides' Leib
 Illinois Central
 94 . 50
 Sophokles' Kinder erklären ihn für schwachsinnig
 Missouri Pacific
 28 . 75
 Aeschylos zum Tode verurteilt
 Norfolk and West
 102 . 00
 Pindar Geldstrafe oder Haft
 Pennsylvania
 43 . 37
 Sein Hund stirbt über Eupolis' Grab an Mangel an Fressen
 Southern
 32 . 22
 Philoxenos kennt nur Kerkerketten
 Southern Pacific
 100 . 50
 Aristipp speit der König ins Gesicht
 Texas Pacific
 127 . 75
 Platon wird geköpft werden

Attachment 34

ping pong
 ping pong ping
 pong ping pong
 ping pong

 w w
 d i
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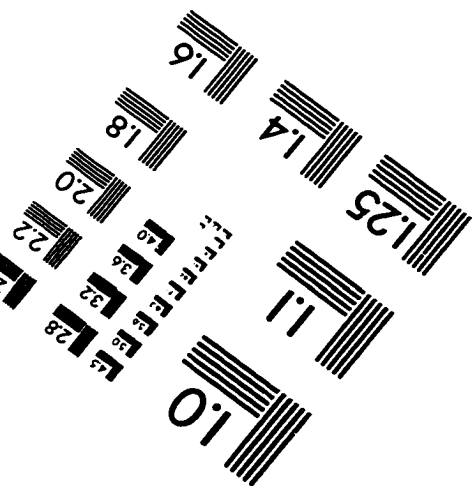
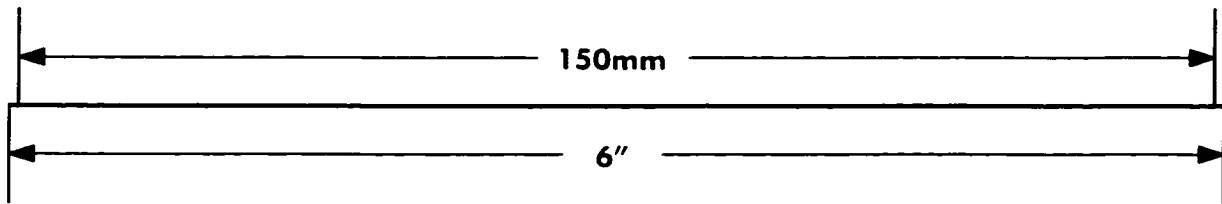
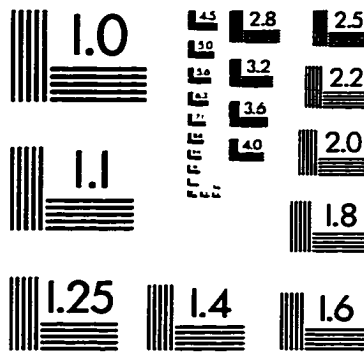
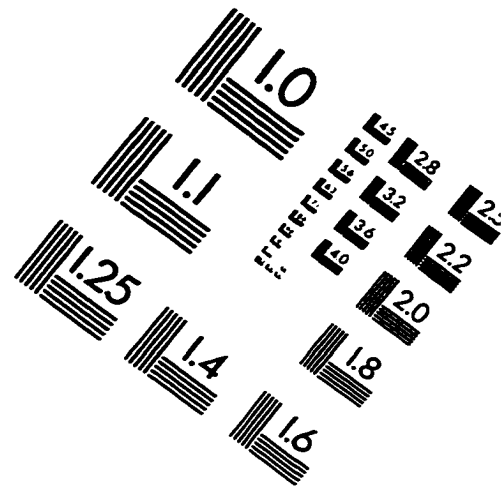
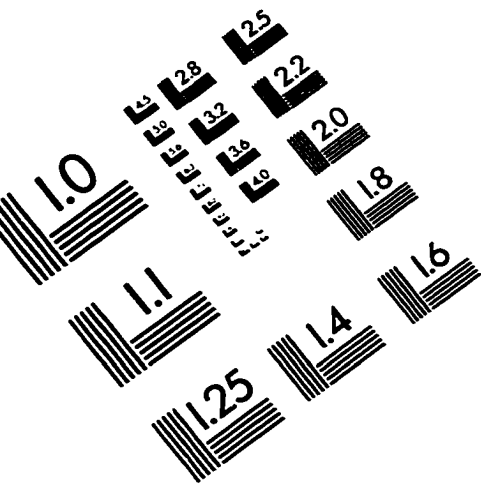
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