

**VASILISK GNEDOV'S
FUTURISM**

Crispin Brooks

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master of
Philosophy in the University of London

School of Slavonic and East European Studies

May 1998



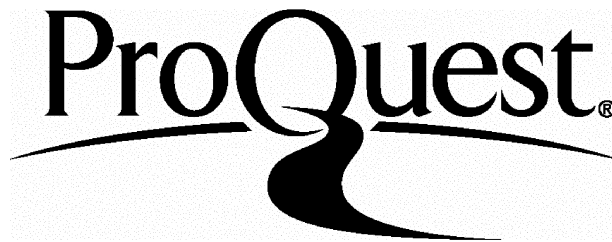
ProQuest Number: U642013

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest U642013

Published by ProQuest LLC(2015). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

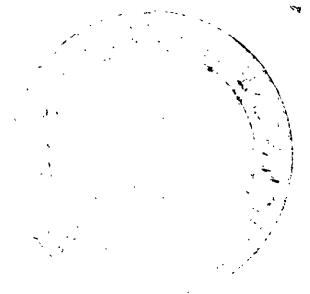
All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

Abstract

This dissertation is an attempt to provide the first extended analysis of the Futurist work of Vasilisk Gnedov (1890-1978), one of the most interesting and original poets of the early Russian Avant-Garde. Interest in this hitherto neglected figure has grown in recent years, most importantly with the publication of his *Sobranie stikhotvoreni* (Trento, 1992), which has an introduction and commentaries by the scholar and Avant-Garde poet Sergei Sigei. The present study follows a pattern of increasing focus in its three main chapters: 'World', 'Works', and 'Words'. The first, 'World', aims to locate Gnedov in three contexts: 1) the literary movement of which he was part, through a general survey of Russian Futurism and its less well known subset, Egofuturism; 2) the circumstances of the poet's life, reconstructed from existing articles on Gnedov and previously unused archive materials; 3) and his bibliography and historiography, charting Gnedov's publishing output and the increasing interest in him in the last 10 years. The second chapter, 'Works', is a chronologically arranged analysis of all Gnedov's poetry and prose of the period 1913-19 (with a brief section detailing his later works), which seeks to highlight the central themes and show the development of Gnedov's poetics. The chapter also publishes for the first time four previously unknown poems. The third chapter, 'Words', divides into two parts: 1) 'Features of Gnedov's Poetic Language: Dialectisms, Neologisms, *Zaum*' describes the salient features of the poet's innovative use of language; 2) the 'Glossary' provides definitions of the numerous rare words encountered in Gnedov's writing and the most likely components of the neologisms. The dissertation is completed by a short 'Conclusion' and an 'Annotated Bibliography'.



In response to a Russian acquaintance who,
after reading a poem by Gnedov, sighed:

“это не Пушкин...”.

Table of Contents

	Page
Preface	7
Chapter 1. World	
i) Futurism	9
ii) The Poet's Life	17
iii) Publication History	24
Chapter 2. Works	
i) Works of 1913	37
ii) Works of 1914	93
iii) Poems of 1917-1919	100
iv) Later Poetry	109
Chapter 3. Words	
i) Features of Gnedov's Poetic Language: Dialectisms, Neologisms, <i>Zaum'</i>	115
ii) Glossary	134
Conclusion	
	168
Annotated Bibliography	
	170

List of Abbreviations

- Dal'* *Tolkovyi slovar' zhivogo velikoruskogo iazyka Vladimira Dalia*, ed. and rev. I. Boduen-de-Kurtene, I-IV, St Petersburg, 1905 [Reprint: Paris, Librairie des Cinq Continents, 1954].
- Els.* *Elsevier's Russian-English Dictionary*, comp. P. Macura, 1-4, Amsterdam, 1990.
- Ozhegov* S. Ozhegov, *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Moscow, 1960.
- RF* V. Markov, *Russian Futurism. A History*, London, 1969.
- Sobr. stikh.* V. Gnedov, *Sobranie stikhotvorenii*, eds. N. Khardzhiev and M. Marzaduri, intro., text prep., and commentaries S. Sigei, Trento, Dipartimento di Storia della Civiltà Europea, Università di Trento, 1992.
- SRDG* *Slovar' russkikh donskikh govorov*, comp. Z. Valiusinskaia et al., I-III, Rostov-on-Don, 1975-76.
- SRNG* *Slovar' russkikh narodnykh govorov*, ed. F. Filin (from 1990, F. Sorokoletov) et al., 1-28, Leningrad, 1965-94.
- SSRLIa* *Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo iazyka*, ed. V. Chernyshev et al., 1-17, Moscow, 1948-64.
- UED* *Ukrainian-English Dictionary*, comp. C. Andrusyshen and J. Krett, Toronto, 1990.
- URS* *Ukrains'kii-Rossiis'kii slovník*, ed. I. Kirichenko et al., I-VI, Kiev, 1958-63.
- Zabytyi avangard 1* *Zabytyi avangard. Rossiia. Pervaia tret' XX stoletiiia. Sbornik spravochnykh i teoreticheskikh materialov*, eds. K. Kuz'minskii, G. Janecek, and A. Ocheretianskii, Vienna, 1991.
- Zabytyi avangard 2* *Zabytyi avangard. Rossiia. Pervaia tret' XX stoletiiia. Kniga 2. Novyi sbornik spravochnykh i teoreticheskikh materialov*, eds. A. Ocheretianskii, G. Janecek, and V. Kreid, New York, 1993.

Note on Quotation, Transliteration, and the Order of the Works

Larger quotations from Russian sources are indented in the text and given in Cyrillic. Quotations from Gnedov's poetry will retain the orthography of the published original; where it has not been possible to consult the original source ('Triolet', 'a La tyr'), the orthography will correspond to that of the subsequently published editions. Other quotations within the text are generally translated or, for poetry, transliterated, unless any specific feature of the original wording needs to be retained. The Library of Congress system is used for all transliteration. Where numbers in brackets follow a quotation from a work by Gnedov, this corresponds to the number given to each work in the Glossary.

Because the exact date of writing is known in only one case, the order in which Gnedov's works are analysed corresponds to the date of publication and follows that chosen by Sigei in *Sobranie stikhotvorenii*, with certain exceptions. In this analysis, 'a La tyr' (written at some point in 1913; first published 1991) has been moved so that it follows 'Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—' (published September 1913) rather than following 'Poema Kontsa' (published April 1913). The theoretical article 'Glas o soglase i zloglase' is moved to correspond with its 1914 (unspecified month) publication date. Three poems (dated end November 1917) published here for the first time are placed before 'Roiut vam mogilu bogi' (written end October 1917; published 1918). The fourth previously unpublished poem, 'Eksprompt', is in the section on Gnedov's later works.

Preface

Like other Avant-Garde art, Futurist poetry is equally capable of provoking hostility, misconception, and wonder. Poets on the cutting edge of literary innovation have been treated as hooligans, dilettantes, and geniuses; their work is prized by some for its intractability, whilst many more avoid it for the same reason. The name of Vasilisk Gnedov came to my attention as a figure whose experiments in poetry appeared to be groundbreaking but at the same time barely studied. The more I was able to find out about the poet, the more his innovatory works intrigued. This sense of fascination has remained with me, and has perhaps grown with time. Furthermore, the way in which Gnedov faced up to the extreme burdens and misfortunes that he experienced in his lifetime is in itself a source of inspiration. This thesis attempts to provide a balanced understanding of Gnedov's contribution to Futurism as well as to help resuscitate the poet's reputation.

In some senses, I have been lucky in terms of history. I have been able to spend two years in Russia since I finished my undergraduate degree in 1993, and in that time previously inaccessible Futurist works and archive materials have become available. In addition, the increased openness in Russia has led to a boom in the study of and publications on the Avant-Garde. Part of this has been Sergei Sigei's pioneering work on Gnedov, which includes several articles and two editions of Gnedov's poetry, and the present thesis is greatly indebted to it.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the many who have helped and supported me in this research. Professors John Elsworth and David Shepherd, and Dr. Peter Doyle at Manchester University inspired me to pursue the project in the first place. Sergei Sigei, with whom I have corresponded several times, has been a source of much information and encouragement. I am also fortunate to have benefited from valuable discussions with Aleksandr Parnis, Sergei Kudriavtsev, and Jeremy Hicks. The staff of SSEES library, Birmingham University Library, the Russian State Library (Moscow), the Russian State Archive for Literature and Art (Moscow), and the Maiakovskii State Museum (Moscow) have always been extremely helpful and efficient. I would especially like to thank my family, friends, and partner, Yelena Furman, for their support. Finally, my greatest obligation is to my supervisors Robin Aizlewood and

Julian Graffy who have assisted with all matters relating to the thesis's structure, content, and style; without the enormous amount of time and patience they have devoted to it, this thesis would have been an impossible undertaking. Any inadequacies in its scholarship are mine alone.

CHAPTER 1. WORLD

i) FUTURISM

A) General

Painted faces and garish suits with carrots in the button hole; poets shouting, spitting, and throwing tea at their audiences; poetry recitals turning into drunken brawls; anti-aesthetic or incomprehensible poems that amused, astonished, and shocked the spectating students and intellectuals—such were the images of Futurism ingrained into Russian popular consciousness in 1913-14. Behind the screen of shock and scandal, however, the movement represented a serious and consistent attempt to renovate a culture that was perceived to be dead.

Central to the Futurist rebellion was a rejection of the classics of Russian literature and of Symbolism. The Cubofuturists' manifesto *Poshchecina obshchestvennomu vkusu* (1912) declared that “the Academy and Pushkin are less comprehensible than hieroglyphs” and vowed to “throw Pushkin, Dostoevskii, Tolstoi etc. etc. from the Ship of Modernity”¹. In terms of the Futurists' outrageous public displays, the deliberate attempt to shock bourgeois society also served as an excellent means of self-promotion.

The history of Futurism in Russia has tended to focus upon the Moscow-based Cubofuturists², the longest-lived and most recognisably Futurist group, which included most of the movement's best known participants (Maiakovskii, Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh, David Burliuk, Guro). Formed in 1911 and known originally as Gileia, the group's first significant publications came at the end of 1912. The tag ‘Cubofuturist’, applied by critics in 1913 and subsequently adopted, is indicative of the

¹ *Manifesty i programmy russkikh futuristov*, foreword V. Markov, Munich, 1967, pp. 5-51 (p. 50). Note that the Russians' ire tended to focus on literature rather than culture as a whole. Compare Marinetti's vow: “We will destroy the museums, libraries, academies of every kind, will fight moralism, feminism, every opportunistic or utilitarian cowardice”; F. Marinetti, ‘The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism’, in *Futurist Manifestos*, ed. and intro. U. Apollonio, London, 1973, pp. 19-24 (p. 22).

² There is some variety in how the names of the two main Futurist groups can be spelled. The standard adopted here throughout is to capitalise both and remove any hyphen in the middle, i.e. ‘Cubofuturism’/‘Cubofuturist’ and ‘Egofuturism’/‘Egofuturist’.

group's close connection with modern painting³; contemporary artists such as Kandinskii, Malevich, Goncharova, Larionov, and Filonov contributed to or illustrated their books. Many of the poets were also trained artists themselves and their enhanced visual perception led to experiments in typography, hand-written poems, and book design⁴.

For the Futurists, new form created new content⁵. Neologistic language was common to many Futurists seeking to reawaken the reader to the vitality of the language. An extension of this was *zaumnyi iazyk* (or *zaum'*), developed by Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov in two separate streams. For Kruchenykh, this meant a language of free expression, made up of arbitrary sounds and 'words' that could be comprehended 'intuitively', exemplified by his poem 'Dyr bul shchyl'⁶; he claimed his poem made entirely of vowels was written in a "universal language". Khlebnikov, on the other hand, attempted to distil universal linguistic truths from his analysis of Slavic languages and approached *zaumnyi iazyk* as a potentially rational system that could be interpreted using his "alphabet of the mind". The principle was that the first letter of a word determines its overall meaning with the remaining letters serving as coloration and for differentiation; to each consonant Khlebnikov assigned a spatial and/or temporal movement⁷. The approaches of the Symbolists and Futurists to the poetic word strongly contrast: for the Symbolists the word was synonymous with *logos*, a means of accessing the divine, whereas the Futurists emphasised 'the word as such'—a value in itself, with no religious or metaphysical trappings⁸. ~~As Shklovskii later wrote,~~

³ For the influence of visual art on Cubofuturist poetry, see N. Khardzhiev, 'Poeziia i zhivopis', in his *Stat'i ob avangarde*, 1, Moscow, 1997, pp. 18-97; G. Janecek, *The Look of Russian Literature. Avant-Garde Visual Experiments 1900-1930*, Princeton, 1984.

⁴ On the Cubofuturist group, see RF; V. Barooshian, *Russian Cubo-Futurism 1910-1930. A Study in Avant-gardism*, The Hague, 1974; K. Chukovskii, 'Ego-futuristy i kubo-futuristy' and 'Obraztsy futuristicheskikh proizvedenii', *Literaturno-khudozhestvennye al'manakhi izdatel'stva "Shipovnik"*, 22, St Petersburg, 1914, pp. 95-135, 137-54 [republication: 'Futuristy' and 'Obraztsy futurliteratury', in K. Chukovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, ed. S. Krasnova, 6, Moscow, 1969, pp. 202-39, 240-58].

⁵ A. Kruchenykh, 'Novye puti slova' (1913), in *Manifesty i programmy*, pp. 64-73 (p. 72).

⁶ Kruchenykh claimed that 'Dyr bul shchyl' alone was more Russian than all of Pushkin's poetry; A. Kruchenykh and V. Khlebnikov, 'Slovo kak takovoe' (1913), *Manifesty i programmy*, pp. 53-58 (p. 55).

⁷ On *zaumnyi iazyk* (or *zaum'*), see D. Mickiewicz, 'Semantic Functions in Zaum', *Russian Literature*, XV (1984), pp. 363-464; G. Janecek, 'A Zaum' Classification', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 20 (1986), pp. 37-54; and G. Janecek, *Zaum. The Transrational Poetry of Russian Futurism*, San Diego, 1996.

⁸ Concerning the influence of Symbolism on Russian Futurists, see W. Weststeijn, *Velimir Chlebnikov and the Development of Poetical Language in Symbolism and Futurism*, Amsterdam, 1983; G.

~~“[the Futurists] sought new means of transferring information [...] by creating new languages or even by rejecting language (Gnedov). But even this was a search for a new language”⁹.~~

In many ways, Russian Futurism before 1917 was more of a Neoprimitivist than a Futurist movement. For poets such as Kamenskii, Gnedov, Guro, and others, nature was a predominant theme; Kruchenykh printed the poems by an eight-year-old girl alongside his own work in *Porosiata*; Kamenskii wrote *Sten'ka Razin*, a novel in verse about the Russian peasant hero; and Khlebnikov used themes from Slavic mythology in his work. In the Futurists' language, there were dialectisms, archaisms, vulgarisms, and slang. Goncharova and Larionov's illustrations of Futurist books were influenced by traditional peasant woodcuts (*lubki*). Nilsson analyses how, in the Futurists' talk of purity in poetic language and the lost faculty of intuition, by implication they were harking back to a mythologised past rather than a dazzling future¹⁰; this trait was also displayed (although in different ways) by the Symbolists and the Acmeists, as well as being typical of Modernism as a whole.

Futurism was not indigenous to Russia. The Italian Filippo Marinetti published 'The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism' in *Le Figaro* on 20 February 1909 and his group of Futurists achieved notoriety throughout Europe; it seems undeniable that it had an influence on events in Russia. Though the Cubofuturists might choose to designate themselves *budetliane*, this is nevertheless a direct calque of the word 'Futurists'. There are strong similarities in the use and content of their manifestos. Lawton shows strong similarities between the pronouncements of Marinetti on poetic language (*parole in libertà*) and those of Kruchenykh (*zaumnyi iazyk*)¹¹. Like the Italians, the Cubofuturists asserted the community and independence of their group to show that they were the most capable of creating the new art, and like the Italians they claimed to shun popular acclaim¹². The calls to destroy syntax, to prize disorder and

Janecek, 'Belyi and Maiakovskii', in *Russian Literature and American Critics*, ed. K. Brostrom, Ann Arbor, 1984, pp. 129-37.

⁹ V. Shklovskii, 'O zaumnom iazyke. 70 let spustia', in *Russkii literaturnyi avangard. Materialy i issledovaniia*, eds. M. Marzaduri, D. Rizzi, and M. Evzlin, Trento, 1990, pp. 253-59 (p. 259).

¹⁰ N. Nilsson, 'Futurism, Primitivism, and the Russian Avant-garde', *Russian Literature*, VIII (1980), pp. 469-82.

¹¹ Concerning the influence Marinetti's manifestos had on the Russians, see A. Lawton, 'Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestos', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 20 (1976), pp. 405-20.

¹² For example, their pledge "to stand on the block of the word 'we' amidst a sea of whistling and indignation"; 'Poshchchina obshchestvennomu vkusu', *Manifesty i programmy*, p. 51.

mystification, ugliness, and bad taste in literature, and to despise common sense all had analogies in Italian Futurist manifestos. Futurists in both countries were strongly nationalistic. The fact that several Russian Futurists shunned Marinetti during his visit to Russia is perhaps indicative of their sensitivity to charges of copying the Italians.

Yet at the same time there were very significant differences between the Italian and Russian versions of Futurism. The pre-Revolutionary stage of Russian Futurism is much less clearly defined as a movement than its Italian counterpart. Italian Futurism was perhaps more homogeneous and more focussed on painting than literature. In Russia there was next to no Futurist painting¹³; *zaum'* and primitivism were emphasised rather as much as the glorification of war, technology, speed, youth, and the city. At the same time, in 1913, there were at least four Futurist groupings (rather than one in Italy) each quite different and each believing itself to be the most true representative of Futurism.

Perhaps the Futurist rebellion can be set in its social context. Unlike the Symbolists, who had tended to come from the St Petersburg or Moscow intelligentsia, the Futurists were often from a new class—the educated petit-bourgeoisie, the children of serfs emancipated in 1861—and were in the main from the provinces. Futurism came at the end of the Tsarist regime in Russia, at a time of state censorship and repression, stagnation, as well as increasing urban hooliganism and revolutionary political activity¹⁴. The formation of independent anti-establishment groups, issuing manifestos and other literature that was often at odds with the censor may be held to mirror the growth of various left wing groups post 1905. Interesting too is the use of the word *levyi* (*levizna*), meaning both ‘left-field’ and ‘left-wing’, in respect of the Futurists¹⁵. Furthermore, many Russian Futurists, including Gnedov, became associated with left-wing politics and the Revolution in 1917 and thereafter.

In 1914, many poets were drafted and some saw action in the War. The 1917 Revolution was welcomed by most of the Futurists who believed that their revolution in art was part of the revolution in society. Between 1918 and 1921, Kruchenykh

¹³ N. Khardzhiev, ‘Poeziia i zhivopis’, p. 31.

¹⁴ On this, see J. Neuberger, ‘Hooliganism and Futurism’ and H. Jahn, ‘For Tsar and Fatherland? Russian Popular Culture and the First World War’, in *Cultures in Flux. Lower-Class Values, Practices, and Resistance in Late Imperial Russia*, eds. S. Frank and M. Steinberg, Princeton, 1994, pp. 185-203, 131-46.

¹⁵ *Levyi front iskusstv* (Lef) was the name of an Avant-Garde grouping in the 1920s.

created the 41° group in Tiflis, with Zdanevich and Terent'ev, to pursue *zaum'*. Kruchenykh later joined his former Cubofuturist colleagues Maiakovskii and Kamenskii, who were involved in Lef, which aimed to combine revolutionary Futurist aesthetics with revolutionary communist politics; Maiakovskii later claimed that “futurism as a united, well-defined movement did not exist in Russia before the October Revolution”. Shershenevich, who had been an Egofuturist, part of the Mezonin poezii group, and the main translator of Marinetti's writings into Russian, now began Imagism with Ivnev, Esenin, and Mariengof. A fourth movement having its roots in pre-Revolutionary Futurism was the OBERIU (from ‘Ob"edinenie real'nogo iskusstva’).

In describing Futurism in Russia, one is faced with the task of reconciling a number of contradictions. Russian Futurism was in many ways connected to its precursor in Italy, although many of the Russians rejected the name. Within its framework is a wide variety of styles and individual philosophies, accommodating writers of hugely different temperaments. In the Cubofuturist group there were writers as different as Khlebnikov, Maiakovskii, David Burliuk, Guro, and Kruchenykh; and among the Egofuturists the gulf between the styles of Severianin and Gnedov, for example, is immense. The ‘futuristic’ aspiration to make “a utopian leap into a future totally discontinuous with ‘anything experienced hitherto’”¹⁶ is set against an idealisation of the primitive and the traditionally Russian. While urban themes occurred in Maiakovskii and Guro, for example, there were many more for whom modern themes like technology and speed held little interest. As Markov writes,

this complex conglomeration, in which there was not only poetry and prose, but ideology, aesthetics, literary theory, and polemics, contained elements of impressionism, expressionism, neoprimitivism, constructivism, abstractionism, dandyism, theosophy, and so forth¹⁷.

In addition, there were traces of ‘low-brow’ literature, Slavic mythology and folklore. Russian Futurism reacted^{to} and incorporated elements of the Italian blueprint into an already existing climate of experimentation (Decadents, Symbolism) and primitivism.

¹⁶ V. Erlich, ‘The Place of Russian Futurism Within the Russian Poetic Avantgarde: a Reconsideration’, *Russian Literature*, XIII (1983), pp. 1-18 (p. 10).

¹⁷ *RF*, p. 384.

As such, it fits into the wider classification of the Avant-garde (1910-30) in Russia, itself a subset of Russian Modernism (1890-1930).

B) Egofuturism

The poetical and historical significance of Egofuturism in terms of the Russian Avant-garde is typically ignored or sidelined, so some clarification is required of this strand of Russian Futurism with which Vasilisk Gnedov was involved¹⁸. During its relatively short existence (1911-14), the Egofuturist group produced nine collections of poetry, prose, and criticism. Each of its members produced their own publications, and poetry and theoretical articles appeared in the newspapers *Peterburgskii glashatai*, *Dachnitsa*, and *Nizhegorodets*, all of which were associated with Ivan Ignat'ev, the group's latterday leader.

Egofuturism was the brainchild of Igor' Severianin, who was the first to use the word 'Futurism'¹⁹ in Russia. Subsequently described as a "camp genius"²⁰, Severianin wrote "poezy" concerned with mysterious high-society ladies, dancing, flowers, and exotic drinks. There is no destructiveness or radical experimentation in his poetry and it may be that Severianin knew nothing of Marinetti's ideas; nevertheless Futurist elements can be found in his use of urban themes, neologisms, references to technology, and in his desire for a new literature ("Dlia nas Derzhavinyim stal Pushkin,—/ Nam nado novykh golosov!"²¹). In late 1911, Severianin founded the 'Ego' poetry circle out of a mutual appreciation for the Decadent poets Konstantin Fofanov and Mirra Lokhvitskaia; the circle consisted of himself, Konstantin Olimpov (Fofanov's son), Georgii Ivanov, and Graal' Arel'skii. Initially, Egofuturism was far more closely linked with the Decadent stage of Symbolism that had existed in the 1890s than with Italian Futurism or Cubofuturism. The Decadent Symbolists Briusov and Sologub contributed poetry to the Egofuturists' first almanacs, and in their early manifestos and poetic practice the values they proclaimed—intuition, theosophy,

¹⁸ Information on Egofuturism can be found in *RF*, pp. 61-100; and A. Krusanov, *Russkii avangard: 1907-1932. (Istoricheskii obzor)*, 1, St Petersburg, 1996, pp. 63-70, 111-17, 158-63.

¹⁹ Severianin coined the word 'Ego-Futurizm' as a subtitle of his poem 'Riadovye liudi' (1911), and wrote a collection entitled *Egofuturizm* (1912); see *RF*, p. 63.

²⁰ V. Markov, 'Mozhno li poluchat' udovol'stvie ot plokhikh stikhov, ili O russkom 'Chuchele sovy'', in his *O svobode v poezii. Stat'i, esse, raznoe*, St Petersburg, 1994, pp. 278-291 (p. 280).

²¹ I. Severianin, 'Prolog. I', *Ego-futurizm* (1912), in his *Sochineniia v piati tomakh. Tom pervyi*, St Petersburg, 1995, p. 172.

madness, individuality—were the same as those of the Symbolism of the 1890s. Nevertheless, Severianin was acknowledged to have an original style and became one of the most popular poets of the Silver Age, let alone Futurism. For the most part, the ‘Ego’ group was made up of his imitators. However, on 1 July 1912, Olimpov published an article ‘Futurizm’, in which he called for poets to respond to new ideas, concepts, and impressions of modern life with “bold word-formations” and this has been regarded as the actual “origin of Futurism in Russia”²².

A dispute between Severianin and Olimpov over the leadership of Egofuturism led to a schism; Severianin left the movement and a new group (the ‘Assotsiatsiia Ego-Futuristov’ or ‘Intuitivnaia Assotsiatsiia’) came together in late 1912–early 1913. The presiding members of the group’s Areopagus were Ignat’ev, Shirokov, Kriuchkov (all of whom had contributed to previous Egofuturist publications) and Gnedov. The arrival of the latter was significant. Most of the provisions of the “Gramata Intuitivnaia Assotsiatsiia” (published in January 1913) were written by Gnedov²³. The group became much more Futurist, attuning its poetics and public antics to those of the Cubofuturists whilst at the same time entering into polemics with them. Ignat’ev also acknowledged the influence of Italian Futurism²⁴. The group discarded much of the theosophy and kitsch it had been associated with, now emphasising experimentation and extreme individualism; Ignat’ev and Gnedov sought to innovate and made significant contributions to Avant-Garde poetics. Unlike their Moscow counterparts, the Egofuturists were more respectful of their heritage, which they traced back through the Romantic and Decadent poets, and further to Buddha, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Herzen, Gor’kii, Ibsen, Evgenii Solov’ev, and Fichte²⁵. It is interesting that one of Gnedov’s tirades is indicative of the new Egofuturist group’s dichotomous approach:

Шекспир — ерунда, Пушкин не стоит нашего внимания, что касается Брюсова, то это — несчастный пигмей. Я был на-днях у Сологуба, и сам Федор Кузьмич восторгался моими поэмами²⁶.

²² S. Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, *Russian Literature*, XXI, p. 115-23 (p. 115).

²³ Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 118

²⁴ Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 115.

²⁵ I. Ignat’ev, ‘Ego-futurizm’, *Zasakhare kry. Ego-Futuristy V*, St Petersburg, 1913, pp. 1-9 (p. 3).

²⁶ Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 159.

Respect for one Symbolist is combined with hostility towards other writers of the past. Egofuturism's solipsism was, of course, not unique, but they developed it into arrogant posturing for the sake of self-promotion and shock value²⁷. At the same time, the Egofuturists were in the peculiar position of vigorously asserting their individual potential in a group context, "Universal Egofuturism" as exemplified in Gnedov's phrase "Everything is in Me and My I is in Everything"²⁸. All this directly contravened a tenet of Italian Futurism, which had proclaimed an end to the self and to "psychologism" in literature.

The Egofuturist group unexpectedly disintegrated after its leader Ignat'ev committed suicide in January 1914. The remaining members drifted into two new groupings that had formed, *Tsentrifuga*²⁹ and *Mezonin poezii*³⁰. Viktor Khovin continued the values of early Egofuturism and published a journal entitled *Ocharovannyi strannik* (1913-16). In many ways the quintessential Egofuturist, Olimpov wrote poetry in which he portrayed himself as God and later tried to reconcile this stance with Bolshevism in *Tret'e Rozhdestvo Velikogo Mirovogo Poeta Titanizma Sotsial'noi Revoliutsii Konstantina Olimpova Roditelia Mirozdaniia*³¹. Having proclaimed madness as his aim in the poem 'Ia khochu byt' dushevno-bol'nym' (1912), by the 1920s, according to contemporaries, he had apparently achieved it³². Severianin and Egofuturism also exerted an influence on the St Petersburg *zaumnik* Aleksandr Tufanov.

The Egofuturist group was small and not as diverse as its main rival in Moscow. For the Egofuturists, the connection between literature and the visual arts (much less Avant-Garde painting) was weaker; the rather conservative sketches of Il'ia Repin and Lev Zak adorned the covers of their collections. Egofuturist music was not

²⁷ Such egoistic assertion was also a trait of Maiakovskii's Futurist poetry.

²⁸ V. Gnedov, 'Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi. Sebe', in *Dary Adonisu. Editsiia Assotsiatsii Ego-Futuristov IV*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai I.V. Ignat'eva, 1913, pp. 1-5 (p. 3).

²⁹ See *RF*, pp. 228-75; S. Kazakova, 'Tvorcheskaiia istoriia ob"edineniia "Tsentrifuga" (Zametki o rannikh poeticheskikh vzaimosvaziakh B. Pasternaka, N. Aseeva i S. Bobrova)', *Russian Literature*, XXVII (1990), pp. 459-82; S. Malakhov, 'Russkii futurizm posle revoliutsii', *Molodaia gvardiia*, 10 (1926), pp. 172-83 (pp. 172-74).

³⁰ See *RF*, pp. 101-16.

³¹ K. Olimpov, *Tret'e Rozhdestvo Velikogo Mirovogo Poeta Titanizma Sotsial'noi Revoliutsii Konstantina Olimpova Roditelia Mirozdaniia*, Petrograd, 1922.

³² G. Ivanov, *Peterburgskie zimy. Vospominaniia*, New York, 1952, p. 46; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 21.

developed to any great extent and Ignat'ev's attempts to involve the theatre director Meierkhol'd in some capacity came to nothing³³. Nevertheless, despite its short lifespan, Egofuturism represents the engagement of Symbolism with the Avant-garde, a bridge between poetic movements of the end of the 19th and the start of the 20th centuries.

ii) THE POET'S LIFE³⁴

Vasilii Ivanovich Gnedov was born on 3 (18) March 1890, son of a petit bourgeois and a peasant woman, in the Man'kovo-Berezovo settlement of what is today the Rostov region³⁵. The young Gnedov was brought up in the region's Cossack culture, finishing a secondary school in the Kamenskaia *stanitsa* in 1906. That year he studied to be a technician-mechanic (*tekhnik-mekhanik*) in the regional capital Rostov-on-Don, at the city's Secondary Technical Academy, but was expelled in 1911 for being a "bad influence" on the other students. During his last year at the school he also attended a music-listening class at a local music college.

It is not clear when Gnedov acquired the nickname Vasilisk, but the name clearly had symbolic significance. The word *vasilisk* is a medieval beast whose breath turns its enemies into stone (basilisk) and at the same time is closely related to the word for cornflower³⁶, thus combining an imposing, fearsome stance with nature³⁷. Nor is there any information on Gnedov's early literary influences. Nevertheless, Gnedov claimed that the reason he moved to St Petersburg in 1912 was to "invert, renew literature, to show new paths"³⁸. He met Severianin and they read each other their

³³ See the letters from Ignat'ev to Meierkhol'd in RGALI, fond 998, op. 1, ed. khr. 1636.

³⁴ Unless otherwise indicated, this biography is drawn from Sigei's introduction and commentaries in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 7-27, 137-205; and A. Parnis, 'Gnedov, Vasilisk', in *Russkie pisateli 1800-1917*, 1, ed. P. Nikolaev et al., Moscow, 1989, pp. 589-90.

³⁵ Some additional details of Gnedov's early life and of his parents and relatives are recounted in later poems; see *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 188-89.

³⁶ *Vasil'ek* (cornflower; forget-me-not). *Vasilisk* is the name of a day, 22 May, when there is no ploughing or sowing, otherwise only the cornflowers (*vasil'ki*) will flourish, *Dal'*, I, p. 410. It may also be noted that the surname Gnedov is one of a group of Cossack surnames derived from colours of horses, in this case *gnedoi* (bay).

³⁷ The Greek derivation of basilisk/vasilisk—*basileus* (king), *basiliskos* (kinglet)—may carry a hidden allusion to egoism.

³⁸ *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 130-31; Parnis (*Russkie pisateli*, 1, p. 589) lists the original manuscript of this as being located in Vengerov's archive (IRLI, fond 377).

poetry. Severianin recommended that Gnedov get in touch with Ivan Ignat'ev³⁹. The contact was to prove fruitful: in January 1913 Gnedov had his first poem published in Ignat'ev's column of the newspaper *Nizhegorodets* and Ignat'ev's Peterburgskii glashatai publishing venture put out almost all of Gnedov's works over the next year. According to Sigei, Ignat'ev also played a vital role in the development of Gnedov's cultural education, introducing Gnedov to all the "orangeries' of poetic ideas known to him and it only remained for Vasilisk to absorb and reinterpret the quintessence of culture in its most refined variant"⁴⁰. At this time, Gnedov was reading a lot of Nietzsche, a fact that apparently astounded the literary historian Fidler⁴¹.

The period 1913-14 was when Gnedov established his reputation as one of the most extreme Futurists in terms of both his literary output and his public behaviour. Reports of the poet's recitals and public outbursts in national newspapers such as *Rech'* and *Den'* were common, and, according to Sigei, in 1913 Gnedov "was far better known than Maiakovskii"⁴². Unlike other Egofuturists, Gnedov evidently courted and even provoked scandal to self-publicistic ends. One such occasion was a lecture given by Nikolai Kul'bin on 19 January 1913, when the speaker was detailing David Burliuk's theory of letters carrying associations of colour, in this case 3 and green: Gnedov interrupted "And chewing-gum (*zhvachka*) is also green, but it begins with the letter ж"⁴³, ending the lecture in uproar and laughter. Gnedov took to the stage to publicise Egofuturism, to the point of declaring Peter the Great "the most authentic Egofuturist"⁴⁴, and read a poem of his own, "which nevertheless needed to be translated into Russian"⁴⁵. In March, after a performance by the leading Cubofuturists, Gnedov had appeared on stage shouting "Don't believe the Muscovites. In Petersburg, there's the poet Vasilisk Gnedov, and Shirokov and Ignat'ev too"⁴⁶. On another occasion, at a rowdy debate on theatre involving Sologub and Ignat'ev,

³⁹ Letter 1 by Gnedov dated 1961, RGALI, fond 2823, Smirenskii, op. 1, ed. khr. 35.

⁴⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 19.

⁴¹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 200.

⁴² V. Gnedov, *Egofuturnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka. Stikhotvoreniia i risunki*, foreword, text prep., and notes S. Sigei, Eisk, Meotida, 1991, p. 3.

⁴³ *Den'*, 21 January 1913, p. 2; reprinted in Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, pp. 97-98. Also *Peterburgskii listok*, 20 January 1913, p. 5. This is also recorded by Matiushin in his memoirs (*K istorii russkogo avangarda*, p. 140).

⁴⁴ *Den'*, 21 January 1913, p. 2; reprinted in Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, pp. 97-98.

⁴⁵ A. Rostislavov, 'Chudo i chudishcha v iskusstve', *Rech'*, 25 January 1913; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 198.

⁴⁶ V. Tan, 'Kubisty i kruglisty', *Rech'*, 26 March 1913, p. 2.

Gnedov was removed from the hall after he had shouted at the audience that they were “Idiots!” for booing Ignat'ev's denunciation of Tolstoi⁴⁷. The critic Dmitrii Filosofov used Gnedov's name to symbolise Futurism as a whole. His article ‘Vasilisk i Villi’ began “Vasilisk Gnedov, in a dirty canvas shirt, spits (in the literal sense of the word) at the public, and shouts from the stage that it consists of idiots”⁴⁸; Filosofov took the view that the Futurists were merely supplying St Petersburg society's demand for scandal, shock value, and bad taste. Along with the other Futurists, Gnedov enjoyed a high profile among the capital's student population: “Young people sporting monocles and jackets tailored according to an impeccable English design go into their departments and propagandize study of Vasilisk Gnedov and Igor' Severianin instead of Pushkin”⁴⁹.

Gnedov was the most experimental poet in the St Petersburg-based Assotsiatsiia Ego-Futuristov (or Intuitivnaia Assotsiatsiia) and his work was given pride of place in the group's collections. Despite the rivalry between the St Petersburg and Moscow Futurist groups, Gnedov was well acquainted with almost all the latter's members. There are records of meetings with Maiakovskii and Nikolai Burluk⁵⁰ and it is likely that he got to know Khlebnikov and David Burluk at around the same time as well. In July 1913 he stayed with Kruchenykh in Ligovo⁵¹. Gnedov performed on stage

⁴⁷ ‘Intsidenty na dispute o teatre’, *Rech'*, 22 December 1913, p. 4. In her memoirs, V. Verigina describes an incident where “All of a sudden Vasilisk Gnedov appeared on the stage. With his head raised proudly, he shouted (*brosil*) at the public: ‘Idiots!’. To our amazement, they simultaneously started to applaud him and to laugh”, V. Verigina, *Vospominaniia*, Leningrad, 1974, p. 203; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 191.

⁴⁸ D. Filosofov, ‘Vasilisk i Villi’, *Rech'*, 10 November 1913, pp. 2-3 (p. 2); this article is also quoted in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 191-92.

⁴⁹ V. Bersenev, ‘Predtechy’, *Khmel': ezheimesiachnyi literaturno-obshchestvennyi i kriticheskii zhurnal molodezhi*, 4-6, 1913, p. 33; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 201.

⁵⁰ A note written by Gnedov in one of Kruchenykh's ‘albums’ (RGALI, fond 1334, Kruchenykh, op. 1, ed. khr. 288, l. 51) states that he got to know Maiakovskii at Nikolai Burluk's flat in St Petersburg in 1913.

⁵¹ This is mentioned by Chukovskii in the 22 July 1913 entry of his diary; K. Chukovskii, *Dnevnik 1901-1929*, text prep. and commentary E. Chukovskaia, Moscow, 1997, p. 59.

in confrontation with his Moscow counterparts⁵² but would later appear alongside them in print⁵³.

The poet was present when the Italian Futurist leader Marinetti attended St Petersburg's Kalashnikovskaia birzha on 1 February 1914⁵⁴. Sigei suggests⁵⁵ that Gnedov may have performed 'Poema kontsa' before Marinetti at the Brodiachaia sobaka (Stray Dog) nightclub in St Petersburg, a place that was central to the pre-war Russian cultural scene. This was the place where Gnedov had saved Maiakovskii's life by wresting away a bottle from the hand of someone who was just about to smash it over Maiakovskii's head⁵⁶. On 23 February 1914, the club arranged an 'Evening of Lenten Magic' to raise money for Gnedov who was allegedly suffering from tuberculosis⁵⁷. Later, the poet claimed the reason for the fund-raising on his behalf was actually because he had no money and nowhere to live⁵⁸. Shklovskii would later recall that Gnedov's poverty was such that he wore borrowed boots⁵⁹. Gnedov left St Petersburg for Yalta in the Crimea the day after the fund-raising evening, on 24 February⁶⁰. Pavel Shirokov and Sergei Bobrov corresponded with Gnedov, urging him to submit poems to the collection 'Rukonog' of the Futurist collective known as

⁵² Gnedov recalls participating in the two debates on theatre with Nikolai Kul'bin on 19 January and 9 November 1913; *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 131. The newspaper *Den'* (12 November 1913, p. 6) announces a futurist evening to be held at the Higher Women's Courses. In one section Kruchenykh, Maiakovskii, Burluk, Khlebnikov would perform; and the second section would play host to the Egofuturists Igor'-Severianin, Vasilisk Gnedov, Riurik Ivanov (sic), and M. (sic) Kriuchkov. Gnedov later remembered reading his poetry here alongside Severianin; RGALI, fond 2823, Smirenskii, op. 1, ed. khr. 35, letter 1.

⁵³ Gnedov's article on new approaches to rhyme 'Glas o soglase i zloglase' was published on the scroll *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov* (St Petersburg, Svirel'ga, 1914) alongside theoretical pieces by Kruchenykh and Kul'bin. In 1918, Gnedov published 'Roiut vam mogilu bogi' in *Vremennik 4-i: Gnedov, Petnikov, Seleginskii, Petrovskii, Khlebnikov, 'Vasilisk i Ol'ga'*, Moscow, 1918, p. 1, and 'Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno' in *Gazeta futuristov*, 15 March 1918, p. 2 (together with poems by Maiakovskii, Kamenskii, David Burluk, and others).

⁵⁴ As attested by the photo recording the event, which is reproduced in B. Livshits, *Polutoraglazi strelets*, Leningrad, 1989, the section between pp. 544-45.

⁵⁵ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 22.

⁵⁶ See N. Khardzhiev, 'Pamiati Vasiliska Gnedova' in 'Iz materialov o Maiakovskom', *Ricerche Slavistiche*, 27-28 (1981), pp. 274-76.

⁵⁷ See Livshits, *Polutoraglazi strelets*, pp. 518-20; and A. Parnis and R. Timenchik, 'Programmy "Brodiachei sobaki"', in *Pamiatniki kul'tury. Noveye otkrytiia. Pis'mennost'. Iskusstvo. Arkheologiya. Ezhegodnik 1983*, eds. I. Andronikov et al., Leningrad, 1985, (pp. 160-257) p. 219, pp. 226-27. Among those who performed at the evening were Akhmatova, Mandel'shtam, Nikolai Burluk, Ivnev, Georgii Ivanov, Livshits, as well as Gnedov.

⁵⁸ See Livshits, *Polutoraglazi strelets*, p. 697, note 39.

⁵⁹ V. Shklovskii, *Poiski optimizma*, Moscow, 1931, pp. 94-95.

⁶⁰ Gnedov's fellow Egofuturist Pavel Shirokov puts the date at 1 March 1914; see Shirokov's letter to Bobrov dated 5 March 1914, RGALI, fond 2554, Bobrov, op. 1, ed. khr. 73.

Tsentrifuga⁶¹. In Yalta, Gnedov stayed with the composer Nikolai Roslavets, who earlier in 1914 had set Gnedov's poem 'Kuk' to music. During this time, the two reputedly began work on an opera called 'Semigorbyi verbliud', which was never finished and seems not to have survived. Together they gave an evening of Futurism and new music in Taganrog on 6 May. Gnedov recited "Sredmir'e" ('Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi'), 'Kolovorot', 'Pridorogaia dum' and other works; Roslavets lectured on new music and performed the music to 'Kuk'; and they were joined by Viktor Shklovskii who read a version of his article 'Voskreshenie slova'. The attention of the local press was also caught by the strange garb the three wore on a stroll around the town on 9 May⁶².

On 7 August 1914, three days after war was declared, Gnedov was conscripted and left for the front⁶³. Serving as an irregular in the 420th Poltava detachment, he spent two years in an advanced unit fighting in General Brusilov's campaign first in Bukovina and then in Galicia, and won the George Medal for bravery. In 1916, Gnedov was sent to the Chuguevskoe Military College. Upon graduating in February 1917 as an ensign, he was sent to Moscow to join the 192nd regiment stationed at the Spasskie barracks in the Sukharev Tower. His presence there coincided with the February Revolution and Gnedov gravitated towards the revolutionary elements in his regiment. Two days after Tsar Nicholas II and the Royal family were deposed, he was appointed chief officer of the Kremlin arsenal guard⁶⁴. In Moscow, Gnedov began to reestablish some of his Futurist connections. On 26 March 1917, he performed alongside Maiakovskii, Kamenskii, and Tatlin in the 'Pervyi respublikanskii vecher iskusstv' at the Ermitazh Theatre. Later that year, he corresponded with Kruchenykh⁶⁵.

Gnedov was perhaps more actively involved than any other Futurist in the October Revolution. We know about his participation through his association with the

⁶¹ RGALI, fond 2554, Bobrov, op. 1, ed. khr. 27; and fond 2554, Bobrov, op. 1, ed. khr. 73.

⁶² See *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 23-24; and Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, pp. 248-49

⁶³ Khlebnikov noted this in a letter to an acquaintance dated 11.10.1914; see V. Khlebnikov, *Neizdannye proizvedeniia*, eds. N. Khardzhiev and T. Grits, Moscow, 1940 [Reprint: V. Khlebnikov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4, Munich, 1970], p. 371.

⁶⁴ See *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 24-25, which is based on a letter dated 5 August 1977 from Gnedov to Sigei.

⁶⁵ One letter (dated 15 September 1917) is slightly mysterious in that it is laid out in verse form: "Kogda poluchish' otvechai/ Budu vremia ot vremeni tebia/ kak teper' vyrazhaiutsia informirovat'/ o chem budu osvedomlen sam"; RGALI, fond 1334, Kruchenykh, op. 1, ed. khr. 1085.

Bolshevik activist Ol'ga Vladimirovna Pilatskaia, whom Gnedov married in 1918, as well as through later unpublished poems⁶⁶. The Bolshevik conquest of Moscow came within a few days of the takeover of Petrograd. In late 1917, with the Bolsheviks having been turned out of the Kremlin by the *junkers* (students from the military academies who defended the Constitutional Government) and with the breakdown of negotiations between the two sides, fierce house-to-house fighting began⁶⁷. On 29 October 1917, located at Romanov's Tavern in the Sukharevskii district, Gnedov liaised between the 192nd, 56th, and 251st regiments, and was heavily involved in engagements with the *junkers* around the Nikitskie vorota area. This was the backdrop to one of Gnedov's last published poems, 'Roiut vam mogilu bogi'⁶⁸.

After the 1917 Revolution, Gnedov resumed his literary activities but in a much less active way. He attended a performance by Severianin at the Polytechnical Institute in Moscow, and they spoke alone before the start and during the break at great length⁶⁹. An appearance at a Futurist nightclub with Maiakovskii, Kamenskii, David Burliuik, and Gol'shchmit⁷⁰ was followed by his appearance in *Gazeta futuristov* in March 1918⁷¹. Also in 1918, Gnedov published *Vremennik 4-i* under the name 'Vasilisk i Ol'ga', and his poem 'Roiut vam mogilu bogi' appeared alongside pieces by Khlebnikov, Aseev, Petnikov, and Petrovskii. Khlebnikov made Gnedov a member of his society 'Predsedateli zemnogo shara'.

From this point on information about Gnedov's life and whereabouts becomes more and more sporadic, the poet Dmitrii Petrovskii providing seemingly the only source. Gnedov lived with Ol'ga Pilatskaia in the Sokol'niki district of Moscow and

⁶⁶ See 'Ia srazhalsia v Moskve v te oktiabr'skie dni' (undated) and 'U Nikitskikh vorot' (27.1.59), from Gnedov's archive in the Maiakovskii Museum in Moscow; also 'U Nikitskikh vorot: epizod vo vremia boev v Oktiabrskie dni 1917 goda' (dated 27.11.59) published in the commentaries of *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 163-64.

⁶⁷ R. Pipes, *The Russian Revolution 1899-1919*, London, 1990, pp. 501-04.

⁶⁸ N. Astakhova and E. Tselarius, *Tovarishch Ol'ga*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 70-76. This book is a biography of Pilatskaia.

⁶⁹ RGALI, fond 2823, Smirenskii, op. 1, ed. khr. 35.

⁷⁰ *RF*, p. 394, note 37. This performance was probably at the Kafe Poetov (founded by Maiakovskii, Kamenskii, and David Burliuik), where David Burliuik hailed Gnedov as "*Generalissimus* russkogo futurizma"; see *Zabytyi avangard 1*, p. 18. Gnedov used this 'title' once again in 'Eksprompt', an unpublished poem written in 1960, which is preserved in a scrapbook of poems kept by Smirenskii; RGALI, fond 2823, Smirenskii, op. 1, ed. khr. 88. On Kafe Poetov, see B. Jangfeldt, 'Russian Futurism 1917-1919', in *Art, Society, Revolution. Russia 1917-1921*, ed. N. Nilsson, Stockholm, 1979, pp. 106-37 (pp. 106-09).

⁷¹ On *Gazeta futuristov*, see B. Jangfeldt, *Majakovskij and Futurism 1917-1921*, Stockholm, 1977, pp. 16-29.

was a people's judge for the district. Petrovskii and Kamenskii often visited them. Gnedov owes his last appearance in print to Petrovskii, who took his poem 'To skachushchii lebed'" against Gnedov's will and sent it for publication in the journal *Puti tvorchestva*. There may have been more poems from this period, but, according to Petrovskii, Gnedov burnt a book of poems that he had written. Gnedov had sustained shell-shock in the fighting in Moscow, and Shklovskii suggests that this was why he wrote less and less and was soon to disappear from literary circles⁷². Gnedov left Moscow with Pilatskaia in 1921 to convalesce, first moving to the Lukianovskii district in the Nizhnii Novgorod province where they spent two years, and then to Dnepropetrovsk in the Ukraine.

Gnedov remained committed to the cause that had compelled him to fight as a Red Guard in the October Revolution, and in 1925 he joined the ranks of the Communist Party. In 1930 he graduated from the Technological Institute in Khar'kov and worked as an engineer. The revolutionary credentials of Gnedov and Pilatskaia did not spare them from the Stalinist purges. In 1936, upon her return from a Comintern trip to London, Pilatskaia was arrested and later shot for "counter-revolutionary" activity. Gnedov was also arrested for his association with her and spent the next 18 years in a labour camp (1936–1954). After his release, Gnedov received a personal pension. He was able to retire, and lived first in Kiev and latterly in Kherson in southern Ukraine. He married a second time, to Mariia Nikolaevna Sobolevskaia. In 1958, he recalled giving an impromptu lecture on Futurism at a tourist resort[?] in Nal'chik⁷³. In the 1960s and 1970s, Gnedov reestablished contact and corresponded with his former Futurist colleagues. There exist several letters to Bobrov, Petnikov, Kruchenykh, and Shklovskii from this time. Gennadii Aigi recalls a performance by Gnedov in 1965 at an evening for the 100th anniversary of Khlebnikov's birth⁷⁴.

For the remainder of his life, Gnedov wrote poetry on a daily basis, creating a sizeable body of work in a variety of styles. Gnedov's favourite poet was Rimbaud⁷⁵.

⁷² "Vasilisk Gnedov fought at Nikitskie vorota when a building was blown up in the fighting. He grew numb to poems (*onemel na stikhi*)"; V. Shklovskii, *Tret'ia fabrika*, Moscow, 1926, p. 50.

⁷³ See RGALI, fond 2823, Smirenskii, op. 1, ed. khr. 35, letter 1.

⁷⁴ G. Aigi, 'Russkii poeticheskii avangard. Bozhidar. Vasilisk Gnedov', *V mire knig*, 2 (1989), pp. 28-31 (p. 31).

⁷⁵ In 1976, Gnedov wrote a poem 'Rembo liubil i budu liubit' (1976), *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 120. Sigei notes a similarity in the short burst of poetic activity of both poets. In 1965, Gnedov listed his "reading

In this period, he befriended and corresponded in poetry with the scholar Nikolai Khardzhiev. Khardzhiev recalled that “[Gnedov] firmly believed in the medicinal power of the sun, the Black Sea waves, herbal and other brews. [...] He wanted to live a very long time, to live anew and in his own way the decades taken from him”⁷⁶. Gnedov died at the age of 88 on 20 November 1978, within weeks of the death of his second wife. A few years previously, he commented ironically on his obscurity: “Incidentally in New York they interred me long ago, in an article devoted to the anniversary of D.D. Burluk, confusing me with Ignat'ev. It was probably [...] Burluk who thought that up”⁷⁷. Gnedov lived longer than any other Russian Futurist.

iii) PUBLICATION HISTORY

A) Publication of Gnedov's Work

In his lifetime, Gnedov was published in Russia only between the years 1913 and 1919. He stopped publishing or was unable to publish, and it is only recently that there have been efforts to reprint his work on any scale. Gnedov's bibliography can be divided into three periods. The first is the year 1913, Gnedov's most prolific period and a time inextricably linked to the poet and publisher Ivan Ignat'ev. The second period covers the years 1914–19, after Ignat'ev's death, when Gnedov published a number of poems in a variety of places before withdrawing from the literary world. Third, renewed interest in Gnedov has been promoted by Sergei Sigei, who has republished Gnedov's Futurist works and much previously unknown later poetry (from the late 1950s-1978).

Gnedov's literary debut was rather low-key. On the back page of the provincial newspaper *Nizhegorodets* (Tuesday, 15 (28) January 1913) was ‘Trioleť’⁷⁸, a short and rather conservative poem. However, a spate of works published by Peterburgskii glashatai in 1913 established Gnedov's reputation as one of the most extreme experimenters in Futurist poetry. At the end of January of that year came *Gostinets*

interests” as Kafka, Camus, Celine, Joyce, Henry James, Aldington, and Dostoevskii; *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 27.

⁷⁶*Sobr. stikh.*, p. 205.

⁷⁷Letter to S. Bobrov dated 17 December 1970; RGALI, fond 2554, Bobrov, op. 2, ed. khr. 481.

⁷⁸V. Gnedov, ‘Trioleť’, in *Nizhegorodets*, 15 (28) January 1913.

*sentimentam*⁷⁹, featuring four poems ('Letana', 'Kozii slashch', 'Pridorogaia dum', and 'Muravaia') using neologistic language, and the prose poem 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy'. Gnedov's self-glorifying 'Zigzag priamoi sred'mirnyi' opened the fourth Egofuturist collection *Dary Adonisu*⁸⁰, which was published in late February—early March; the closing poem, 'Gurebka proklenushkov', subtitled a 'pauznaia poeza', was also written by Gnedov but under the pseudonym Zhozefina Gant D'Orsail. Gnedov continued to write in a *zaum'*-like style in his next works. In the second week of March, two poems ('Na vozle bal'⁸¹ and 'Kuk') and two prose works ('Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne' and 'Svirel'ga') rich in unusual coinages were carried in *Zasakhare Kry*⁸², the fifth Egofuturist collection. Gnedov's best known work *Smert' iskusstvu*⁸³, which contained 15 short 'poems' ending with the infamous text-less poem 'Poema Kontsa', was published in the first week of April 1913. Just when Gnedov seemed to be at the peak of his Futurist experimentation, he contributed the stylistically and thematically traditional poem 'Pechal'naia skazka' to *Immorteli*⁸⁴, a non-Futurist collection which appeared towards the end of June 1913. Gnedov returned to a radical and neologistic style later that summer. In the eighth Egofuturist collection *Nebokopy*⁸⁵ published in August 1913, there were eight works by Gnedov—six poems made up of neologistic word-lines ('Pti'okmon', 'Zubatyi'volk', 'Vchera. Segodnia. Zavtra', 'Khitraia Moral', 'Pervovelikodrama', and 'Azbuka vstupaiushchim'), one piece of experimental prose ('Kolovorot'), and a final poem written in imitation Ukrainian ('Ognianna svita'). The ninth and final Egofuturist

⁷⁹ V. Gnedov, *Gostinets sentimentam*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913.

⁸⁰ V. Gnedov, 'Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi' (pp. 1-5) and [Zhozefina Gant d'Orsail] 'Gurebka proklenushkov' (p. 15), in *Dary Adonisu*.

⁸¹ A variant of 'Na vozle bal' laid out as prose is cited in I. Ignat'ev, *Egofuturizm*, St Petersburg, 1913, p. 9.

⁸² V. Gnedov, 'Na vozle bal', 'Kuk', 'Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne', and 'Svirel'ga', in *Zasakhare Kry. Ego-Futuristy V*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913, pp. 10-12.

⁸³ V. Gnedov, *Smert' iskusstvu. Piatnadsat' (15) poem*, 'Preslovie' I. Ignat'eva, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913.

⁸⁴ V. Gnedov, 'Pechal'naia skazka', in *Immorteli. Sbornik stikhov i prozy*, Moscow, Zhizn', 1913, p. 63.

⁸⁵ V. Gnedov, 'Pti'okmon', 'Zubatyi'volk', 'Vchera. Segodnia. Zavtra', 'Khitraia Moral', 'Kolovorot', 'Pervovelikodrama', 'Azbuka vstupaiushchim', and 'Ognianna svita', in *Nebokopy. Ego-Futuristy VIII*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913, pp. 1-5, 16.

almanac, *Razvorocheny cherepa*, carried one heavily neologistic poem by Gnedov, ‘Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—’⁸⁶.

Ignat'ev had the habit of filling the back covers of Peterburgskii glashatai editions with fascinating ‘hoaxes’ as well as actual publication information. For example, no one has ever managed to locate Gnedov’s books *Kozyi slashch* and *Futurnaliia* (as advertised on the back cover of *Dary Adonisu*), *Ego-Futurnaliia* (from *Zasakhare Kry*), *Gory v cheptsakh* (from *Razvorocheny cherepa* and Ignat'ev’s *Eshafot*), *Vertikal'niia guby* (from the Mezonin poezii’s first collection *Vernissazh*), and *Ektsessniia dei* (from the Mezonin poezii collection *Pir vo vremia chumy*)⁸⁷. Both the Egofuturists and Cubofuturists would also on occasion use deliberately unreliable dates and information for their publications.

Evidently, in the final months of 1913, Peterburgskii glashatai got into financial difficulties and publishing activity ground to a halt. On 14 January 1914, the day after his wedding, Ignat'ev committed suicide. The collapse of the publishing house precipitated the disintegration of the Egofuturist group and Gnedov was forced to look for new connections and new outlets for his work. In early 1914, Gnedov and Shirokov’s book *Kniga velikikh*⁸⁸ was published by B'eta and featured one poem by Gnedov, ‘Poema nachala’. In March that year, three more new poems (‘Eroshino’, ‘Sumerki na Donu’, ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’) were printed in the Futurist group Tsentrifuga’s collection *Rukonog*⁸⁹. At around this time, the Avant-Garde composer Nikolai Roslavets set Gnedov’s poem ‘Kuk’ to music along with works by Severianin, Bol'shakov, and David Burliuk, in *Chetyre sochineniia dlia peniia i fortepiano*⁹⁰. Also, the scroll *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov* appeared, with Gnedov’s theoretical piece ‘Glas o soglase i zloglase’⁹¹ placed next to

⁸⁶ V. Gnedov, ‘Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—’, in *Razvorocheny cherepa. Ego Futuristy IX*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913, p. 9.

⁸⁷ On the back cover of *Dary Adonisu*, it was announced that Marinetti would participate in the fifth Egofuturist collection “Zasakharennaia Krysa”. *Kniga velikikh* (published by B'eta) by Gnedov and Shirokov gives notice of a second edition of *Smert' iskusstvu* illustrated by Nikolai Kul'bin and with two forewords by Ignat'ev and Shirokov, but this never materialised.

⁸⁸ V. Gnedov and P. Shirokov, *Kniga velikikh*, St Petersburg, B'eta, 1914.

⁸⁹ V. Gnedov, ‘Eroshino’, ‘Sumerki na Donu’, ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’, in *Rukonog*, Moscow, Tsentrifuga, 1914, pp. 7-9.

⁹⁰ V. Gnedov, ‘Kuk’, in N. Roslavets, *Chetyre sochineniia dlia peniia i fortepiano. No. 4. Vasilisk Gnedov “Kuk”*, Moscow, ‘Sobstvennost' avtora’, 1914.

⁹¹ V. Gnedov, ‘Glas o soglase i zloglase’, in *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov* [published in the form of a scroll].

essays by Kruchenykh, Kul'bin, and Artur Lur'e. The scroll was published by 'Svirel'ga', the name of two of Gnedov's poems, indicating that the poet had a hand in the publishing process. Gnedov's literary activity was brought to an abrupt halt in August, when he was drafted and left St Petersburg for the front.

In 1917, after the War and after finishing military college, Gnedov was stationed in Moscow and by the following year was publishing once again in Futurist publications: 'Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno' appeared in the first edition of *Gazeta futuristov*⁹² and 'Roiut vam mogilu bogi' in *Vremennik 4-i*⁹³. The last poem Gnedov published in his lifetime was 'To skachushchii lebed', which appeared in the journal *Puti tvorchestva* in 1919⁹⁴.

Subsequently, Gnedov was to suffer complete obscurity as a poet. He would not see any more of his work published in Russia in his lifetime, and over 40 years passed before anything by him was published anywhere. In the West, it was only through the research of Vladimir Markov that Gnedov's name began to surface once again, although none of Markov's articles nor those by other Western critics were devoted exclusively to Gnedov's poems or analysis of them. Markov's article 'Odnostroki' (1963) included Gnedov's 'Grokhlit'⁹⁵, and this seemingly was the first time anything by Gnedov had been published in any format outside Russia. In 1966, an anthology of twentieth century Russian poetry edited by Markov and Sparks contained both an English and Russian version of 'Poema Kontsa'⁹⁶. The following year the theoretical article 'Glas o soglase i zloglase' resurfaced in *Manifesty i programmy russkikh futuristov*, compiled by Markov⁹⁷. *Russian Futurism* (1968) by Markov featured a transliteration of 'Segodnia' and a facsimile of 'Ognianna svita'⁹⁸. In 1973, Robin Milner-Gulland translated 'Poema Kontsa' in a catalogue for an exhibition of Tatlin's works⁹⁹. In 1981, Nikolai Khardzhiev published a later poem by Gnedov,

⁹² V. Gnedov, 'Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno', *Gazeta futuristov*, p. 2.

⁹³ V. Gnedov, 'Roiut vam mogilu bogi', *Vremennik 4-i* [single sheet publication].

⁹⁴ V. Gnedov, 'To skachushchii lebed', in *Puti tvorchestva*, 5 (1919), p. 42.

⁹⁵ V. Gnedov, 'Grokhlit', in V. Markov, 'Odnostroki', *Vozdushnye puti*, 3 (1963), pp. 242-58 (p. 258).

⁹⁶ V. Gnedov, 'Poema kontsa' and 'Poem of the End', in *Modern Russian Poetry: an Anthology with Verse Translations*, eds. V. Markov and M. Sparks, London, 1966, pp. 362-63.

⁹⁷ V. Gnedov, 'Glas o soglase i zloglase', in *Manifesty i programmy*, pp. 137-38.

⁹⁸ V. Gnedov, 'Segodnia', in *RF*, p. 85; 'Ognianna svita', in *RF*, in the illustrations section between pp. 176-77.

⁹⁹ V. Gnedov, 'Endpoem', in *Tatlin's Dream. Russian Suprematist and Constructivist Art 1910-1923*, commentary and transl. R. Milner-Gulland, London, 1973, p. 56.

‘Apollonom Bel’vedirskim Maiakovskii ne byl’, in an article on Maiakovskii¹⁰⁰. The poet Gennadii Aigi republished ‘Letana’, ‘Pridorogaia dum’’, and the poems of the collection *Smert’ iskusstvu* to accompany a 1989 article on Gnedov in *V mire knig*¹⁰¹.

Sergei Sigei is almost singlehandedly responsible for the revival of interest in Gnedov. He first published sections of a number of Gnedov poems in his article ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’¹⁰² in 1987. He used a later poem by Gnedov, ‘zheltyi/ krasnyi/ goluboi/ krasnykh’, in a 1991 article in *Severnaia gileia*, a supplement to the newspaper *Bumazhnik*¹⁰³. Sigei then organised the booklet *Ego-futurnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka*¹⁰⁴ (1991), a selection of 15 of Gnedov’s poems and the first collection of the poet. In this edition, ‘Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno’ was republished, ‘BA’ (an embryonic version of Poem 9 of *Smert’ isskustvu*) and ‘a La tyr’ were Futurist-era poems published for the first time, ‘Vse chto my vidim tol’ko son’ was from 1938, and the remaining previously unpublished poems dated from the 1950–70s. Sigei was also involved in the only major edition of Gnedov’s work to date: *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* (1992), published by the University of Trento and edited by Nikolai Khardzhiev and M. Marzaduri. Sigei initiated the project and wrote an introduction and commentaries for it in 1989. All the poems in *Ego-futurnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka* are published again here, and it contained numerous unpublished later works that are either undated or from the period 1959–78. The edition also published for the first time a version of ‘Poema nachala’ corrected according to Gnedov’s instructions. However, the texts of *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* cannot be relied upon. At some point during the volume’s publication, alterations were made to normalise the ‘incorrect’ spelling, and, despite the efforts of the editors, there remain textual errors in almost all of the Futurist works¹⁰⁵.

Also in 1992, the second volume of the *Zabytyi avangard* series included a reprint of ‘Glas o soglase i zoglase’¹⁰⁶. The anthology *Russkaia poeziia serebrianogo*

¹⁰⁰ Khardzhiev, ‘Iz materialov o Maiakovskom’, pp. 274-76 (p. 275).

¹⁰¹ Aigi, ‘Russkii poeticheskii avangard’, pp. 30-31.

¹⁰² Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, pp. 115-23.

¹⁰³ V. Gnedov, ‘zheltyi/ krasnyi/goluboi/ krasnykh’, in S. Sigei, “‘Tsy” Vasiliska Gnedova’, *Severnaia gileia*, 5 (1991), p. 14.

¹⁰⁴ V. Gnedov, *Egofuturnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka. Stikhotvorenii i risunki*, foreword, text prep., and notes S. Sigei, Eisk, Meotida, 1991, 23 pp.

¹⁰⁵ Noted by Janecek in his review of *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* (*Slavic and East European Journal*, 37 (1993), pp. 580-81).

¹⁰⁶ *Zabytyi avangard* 2, p. 63.

veka 1890–1917 contained Gnedov's 'Azбука vstupaiushchim' and the poems of *Smert' iskusstvu*¹⁰⁷. Two of Gnedov's poems from *Rukonog*, 'Eroshino' and 'Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e', were published in a book on the "41^o" group (1995)¹⁰⁸. In 1994, the *Smert' iskusstvu* poems and 'Letana' were published in an analysis and collection of Russian experimental poetry and *zaum'* by the poet Sergei Biriukov¹⁰⁹. In 1996, *Smert' iskusstvu* was reprinted as a booklet, published by Agro-Risk and with a commentary by D. Kuz'min¹¹⁰. Most recently, a previously unpublished later poem in memory of Khlebnikov, 'Ot Leningrada do Pamira', was published in the 27 May 1997 edition of the newspaper *Knizhnoe obozrenie*¹¹¹.

There are several more poems that await publication. In addition to the above, the present study publishes the texts and provides analysis of three previously unpublished poems dating from 1917, found in the Maiakovskii Museum in Moscow¹¹². Gnedov's archive there is small, but contains another 36 later poems dating from 1956-73¹¹³, the majority of which have never been published. There are two unpublished poems held in RGALI¹¹⁴, one of which is published in the present study. Finally, Sergei Sigei has written to me that, in compiling the *Sobranie stikhotvoreni*, he used only two thirds of Gnedov's manuscripts in Nikolai Khardzhiev's collection¹¹⁵.

¹⁰⁷ *Russkaia poeziia "serebriianogo veka", 1890–1917: Antologija*, eds. M. Gasparov et al., Moscow, 1993, pp. 514-15.

¹⁰⁸ V. Gnedov, 'Eroshino' and 'Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e', in I. Vasil'ev, *Russkii literaturnyi avangard nachala XX veka (gruppa "41^o")*. *Uchebnoe posobie*, Ekaterinburg, 1995, pp. 71-72.

¹⁰⁹ *S. Biriukov, *Zevgma. Russkaia poeziia ot modernizma do postmodernizma*, Moscow, 1994, unknown page number.

¹¹⁰ V. Gnedov, *Smert' iskusstvu. Piatnadsat' (15) poem*, text prep. and commentary D. Kuz'min, Moscow, Agro-Risk, 1996, 24 pp.

¹¹¹ V. Gnedov, 'Ot Leningrada do Pamira', *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, 27 May 1997, p. 13.

¹¹² Archive of S. Bobrov, items 29963, 29964, and 29965.

¹¹³ Items 28930-28965.

¹¹⁴ The poem 'Zoilu' (1970), RGALI, fond 2554, Bobrov, op. 1, ed. khr. 481; and 'Eksprompt' (1960), fond 2823, Smirenskii, op. 1, ed. khr. 88.

¹¹⁵ Sigei refers to unpublished "memoir notes" dating from the 1960s and 1970s that subsequently belonged to Khardzhiev. L.F. D'iakonitsin in Moscow has the originals of two Gnedov poems: 'Pomniu v 1913 godu v Peterburge' and 'Ia i Marinetti', the second of which was apparently published in the *samizdat* journal *Transponans* in the early 1980s. Sigei also believes there to be owners of further unpublished manuscripts in Kherson, where Gnedov spent the last years of his life (undated letter, 1995). There is considerable mystery surrounding Khardzhiev's archive so it seems unlikely that any further materials will appear in the near future from that source.

B) Critical Reaction to Gnedov¹¹⁶

The reaction of contemporary critics to Gnedov's work was for the most part hostile. Gnedov's first book, *Gostinets sentimentam*, received a negative review from the poet and critic Sergei Gorodetskii who suggested that such work would adversely affect the Decadent Symbolists involved with the Egofuturist group¹¹⁷. However, in their time, the Decadents had been considered quite experimental themselves and they seemed to find some affinity with the Egofuturists. Sologub contributed poetry to the third Egofuturist collection *Orly nad propast'iu* in 1912 and participated in public discussions on the arts alongside Ignat'ev and Gnedov in early 1913. Before Gorodetskii's negative reaction appeared, Sologub had felt moved to write an impassioned defence of Gnedov against philistine critics, borrowing many motifs from 'Zigzag priamoi sred'mirnyi' (from the Egofuturist collection *Dary Adonisu*)¹¹⁸. Briusov, whose work had appeared in the Egofuturist collections *Oranzhevaia urna* and *Orly nad propast'iu*, wrote about Gnedov in an article in *Russkaia mysl'*¹¹⁹. He compared the forcefully individualistic ideas behind 'Zigzag priamoi sred'mirnyi' to themes explored earlier by Maksim Gor'kii, Leonid Andreev, and the Decadents¹²⁰. Briusov considered the Futurists' main achievements to be in renewing the language through word creation and *zaumnyi iazyk*. The "meaningless sound combinations" in the poem 'Gurebka proklenushkov' were compared to Khlebnikov's poem 'Bobebipelis' guby' and 'Dyr bul shchyl' by Kruchenykh¹²¹. An article by D. Levin¹²² and Shemshurin's book *Futurizm v stikhakh V. Briusova*¹²³ related Gnedov's single-line poems in *Smert' iskusstvu* to earlier monostichs by Briusov.

¹¹⁶ While indebted, in its location of sources, to research carried out by Aleksandr Parnis (see *Russkie pisateli*, I, p. 590) and by Sergei Sigei (particularly *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 198-205), this section represents the first chronological historiography of Gnedov and his work.

¹¹⁷ S. Gorodetskii, 'Puchina stihovaia', *Rech'*, 48, 18 February 1913, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ F. Sologub, 'Prizemistye sudiat', *Teatr i iskusstvo*, 7, 17 February 1913. Quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 19.

¹¹⁹ V. Briusov, 'Novye techeniia v russkoi poezii. Futuristy' (originally in *Russkaia mysl'*, 3, 1913), in his *Sredi stikhov 1895-1924. Manifesty. Stat'i. Retsenzii*, comp. N. Bogomolov and N. Kotrelev, Moscow, 1990, pp. 382-413 (pp. 382-492).

¹²⁰ Briusov, 'Novye techeniia', p. 387.

¹²¹ Briusov, 'Novye techeniia', p. 388.

¹²² The title of Gnedov's book also reminded this critic of an advertising campaign slogan "smert' mukham, tarakanam i proch."; D. Levin, *Rech'*, 11 April 1913. Quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 201.

¹²³ A. Shemshurin, *Futurizm v stikhakh V. Briusova*, Moscow, 1913, p. 21.

'Poema Kontsa' attracted a great deal of critical attention. Aleksandr Benua¹²⁴ and L'vov-Rogachevskii¹²⁵, for example, found it unacceptable; newspapers, and later memoirists, provided a number of descriptions of the poem's on-stage performance¹²⁶. On the other hand, opinion was divided on 'Poema nachala', Gnedov's contribution to *Kniga velikikh*. The arts journal *Zlatotsvet* had dismissed Shirokov's poems but commented that this was "a shame for Vasilisk Gnedov – he is undoubtedly talented"¹²⁷. But the reviewer of the newspaper *Utro Rossii* found the book overall highly amusing, and, unable to make sense of Gnedov's 'Poema nachala', commented that "[Gnedov], with all his completely unconnected mutterings 'made in liberty' (*vyvedennymi na svobode*), is the most absolute zero"¹²⁸.

The overviews of Futurism that were published in 1913–1914 treated Gnedov variously. In some he was marginalised: a survey by Briusov, for example, expended only a footnote describing the performance of 'Poema Kontsa' as a "rhythmic movement"¹²⁹. In others, Gnedov's poetics was treated as having the hallmarks of insanity. E. Radin in his *Futurizm i bezumie* connected Gnedov's forward dating of his poems in *Nebokopy* to Bergson's notion of the fourth dimension¹³⁰. Because of his emphasis on experimentation and neologisms, Gnedov was connected with the Egofuturists' rivals in Moscow. In *Futurizm bez maski*, Shershenevich wrote that Gnedov was "in fact closer to the Cubofuturists"¹³¹ and would later recall with some disdain in his memoirs that Gnedov was an even more radical extremist than

¹²⁴ A. Benua, *Rech'*, 12 April 1913; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 201.

¹²⁵ V. L'vov-Rogachevskii, 'Simvolisty i nasledniki ikh', *Sovremennik*, 6 (1913), p. 276; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 64.

¹²⁶ Newspaper articles include A. Nevskii, 'Nadezhdy futuristov na... leshego', *Peterburgskaia gazeta*, 18 April 1913 [sections of which are quoted from Parnis and Timenchik, 'Programmy "Brodiachei sobaki"', p. 227]; and [unknown author], *Den'*, 4 November 1913, p. 3; quoted from Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 145. Recollections of the poem can be found in V. Briusov, 'God russkoi poezii', p. 435, note 1; V. Piast, *Vstrechi*, Moscow, 1929, p. 263; Shklovskii, *Poiski optimizma*, pp. 94–95 [also quoted in *Zabytyi avangard 1*, p. 18]; G. Adamovich, 'Nevozmozhnost' poezii' (1958), *Zabytyi avangard 1*, p. 18; V. Shalamov, 'Oskolki 20-kh godov', *A-Ia*, 1, 1985, p. 142 [quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 67]; S. Volkov, *St Petersburg. A Cultural History*, trans. A. Bouis, London, 1996, p. 187.

¹²⁷ *Zlatotsvet*, 3 (1914), p. 16; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 203.

¹²⁸ S. Krechetov, 'Sredi knig', *Utro Rossii*, 22 February 1914, p. 2.

¹²⁹ V. Briusov, 'God russkoi poezii. Aprel' 1913–aprel' 1914 g.', in his *Sredi stikhov*, pp. 430–52 (p. 435, note 1).

¹³⁰ E. Radin, *Futurizm i bezumie*, Moscow, 1913, p. 36; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 203.

¹³¹ V. Shershenevich, *Futurizm bez maski*, Moscow, 1914, p. 87, note 2.

Kruchenykh¹³². Similarly, Kornei Chukovskii believed that Gnedov's arrival heralded the end of a recognisable Egofuturism. Gnedov is called "a Kruchenykh in disguise, a secret Cubofuturist, Burliukist, in no way connected with the traditions of Egofuturist poetry". For Chukovskii, total nihilism defined Gnedov's poems 'Ognianna svita' and 'Poema Kontsa'¹³³. The critic Renskii could see only the destruction of the Russian language and "the whimsical, agrammatical construction of phrases" in the Egofuturists' methods¹³⁴. Tasteven's book on Futurism treated Kruchenykh and Gnedov together¹³⁵. *Rytsari bezumiia* (1914) by Zakrzhevskii devoted considerable space to Gnedov, and the author viewed Gnedov, Ignat'ev, and Kruchenykh as the real 'knights of madness', and Gnedov as the most extreme of all. The book highlights the importance of Nietzsche and Dostoevskii to the Egofuturists' philosophy¹³⁶. Both Tasteven and Zakrzhevskii also noted Mallarmé as an important forerunner to the poetics of the more experimental Futurists. In 1915, Gnedov was listed in Vengerov's *Kritiko-biograficheskii slovar' russkikh pisatelei i uchenykh*¹³⁷.

After the Revolution, Gnedov no longer published new material and he quickly fell from prominence; mentions of his name cropped up rarely, in memoirs and works on recent literature. L'vov-Rogachevskii listed Gnedov in his 1919 *Noveishaia russkaia literatura*¹³⁸, and Doroshkevich located Gnedov's 'Ognianna svita' in the context of Ukrainian Futurism¹³⁹. One-time Egofuturist Georgii Ivanov gave a brief description of Gnedov—"then there was Vasilisk Gnedov... broad shouldered, once killed a wolf with his fist"¹⁴⁰, and in *Vstrechi* (1929) Vladimir Piast recalled a performance of 'Poema Kontsa' at his Brodiachaia sobaka nightclub¹⁴¹.

¹³² V. Shershenevich, 'Velikolepnyi ochevidets. Poeticheskie vospominaniia 1910–1925', in *Moi vek, moi druz'ia i podrugi. Vospominaniia Mariengofa, Shershenevicha, Gruzinova*, comp. K. Iur'ev and S. Shumikhin, Moscow, 1990, pp. 417–646 (p. 495).

¹³³ Chukovskii, 'Ego-futuristy i kubofuturisty', pp. 120, 130; also Chukovskii, 'Obraztsy', pp. 141, 142.

¹³⁴ Renskii, 'Skrizhali Ego-Poezii', *Khmel': ezhemesiachnyi literaturno-obshchestvennyi i kriticheskii zhurnal molodezhi*, 4–6, 1913, p. 31; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 200.

¹³⁵ G. Tasteven, *Futurizm (Na puti k novomu simbolizmu)*, Moscow, 1914, p. 23.

¹³⁶ A. Zakrzhevskii, *Rytsari bezumiia. Futuristy*, Kiev, 1914, pp. 79, 95, 98–101, 103, 109, 117.

¹³⁷ S. Vengerov, *Kritiko-biograficheskii slovar' russkikh pisatelei i uchenykh*, 1, Petrograd, 1915, p. 184.

¹³⁸ *V. L'vov-Rogachevskii, *Noveishaia russkaia literatura*, Moscow, 1919, p. 134.

¹³⁹ Ol. Doroshkevich, *Pidruchnik istorii ukrains'koï literaturi*, Kiev, 1927, p. 272.

¹⁴⁰ G. Ivanov, 'Kitaïskie teni', *Zveno*, 218, 1927; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 67.

¹⁴¹ Piast, *Vstrechi*, p. 263.

From 1930 for at least the next thirty years, the poet's name all but disappears from view. A footnote in *Neizdannyi Khlebnikov* (1940), edited by Khardzhiev and Grits, repeated the view that Gnedov's "word-creation tendencies and *epatazh* make Gnedov closer to the Cubofuturists"¹⁴². Even after Gnedov's release from prison in 1954 and the onset of the Thaw, however, the poet still commanded only very occasional references in print. In *Stilistika i stikhoslozhenie* (1959), Boris Tomashevskii located the single-letter poem 'Iu' (Poem 14 of *Smert' iskusstvu*) in the context of Futurist experiments in *zaumnyi iazyk*, but erroneously called the poem 'Poeza kontsa'¹⁴³.

In the West, efforts to provoke interest in Russian Futurism were centred around Vladimir Markov. Markov and Sparks's 1966 anthology briefly described 'Poema Kontsa' as well as republishing it. In 1968 Markov's *Russian Futurism* provided the first lengthy description of Gnedov's writing to appear outside the Soviet Union, as well as listing reliable bibliographical details. Gnedov's Futurist publications are dealt with individually. Introducing the poet as "a new futurist genius discovered by Ignat'ev"¹⁴⁴, Markov assesses Gnedov as a "Khlebnikov of ego-futurism" and compares him to Kamenskii and Kruchenykh as well¹⁴⁵.

In the period before *perestroika*, little information was available concerning Gnedov's life or poetics. In 1970, in *Poeticheskaia kul'tura Maiakovskogo*, Khardzhiev and Trenin reiterated that neither Ignat'ev nor Gnedov were connected with Egofuturism in the Severianin-mould and that both were closer to the Cubofuturists in poetic temperament¹⁴⁶. The linguist Panov placed Gnedov's word-line neologisms in *Nebokopy* in the context of archaisms¹⁴⁷. In the ninth volume of *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia* (1978)¹⁴⁸, which listed writers that had previously been deemed unacceptable, Aleksandr Parnis related Gnedov's experiments to the later 'absurdist' work of the Oberiu. Aleksei Gan was shown to have repeated

¹⁴² V. Khlebnikov, *Neizdannye proizvedeniia*, Moscow, 1940, p. 478.

¹⁴³ V. Tomashevskii, *Stilistika i stikhoslozhenie*, Leningrad, 1959, p. 182.

¹⁴⁴ *RF*, p. 78.

¹⁴⁵ *RF*, p. 79.

¹⁴⁶ N. Khardzhiev and V. Trenin, 'Zametki o Maiakovskom', in their *Poeticheskaia kul'tura Maiakovskogo*, Moscow, 1970, p. 220.

¹⁴⁷ M. Panov, 'O chlenimosti slov na morfemy', *Pamiaty akademika V. V. Vinogradova*, Moscow, 1971, p. 178; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 155.

¹⁴⁸ A. Parnis, 'Gnedov Vasilisk', *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, ed. Kh. Abdusamatov et al., 9, Moscow, 1978, p. 233.

the slogan “Smert' iskusstvu”; ‘Poema Kontsa’ was connected with Malevich’s ‘Chernyi kvadrat’ and the American composer John Cage’s silent works 4’33” and 0’00” . The entry also gave detailed secondary sources for research on Gnedov¹⁴⁹.

Khardzhiev’s 1981 article on Maiakovskii described the incident from 1913 when Gnedov saved Maiakovskii’s life in the Brodiachaia sobaka nightclub¹⁵⁰. Parnis and Timenchik (1985) mentioned Gnedov in passing, in terms of his involvement in Brodiachaia sobaka¹⁵¹. Gerald Janecek’s article ‘A *Zaum*’ Classification’ (1986)¹⁵² viewed Gnedov as a writer of *zaum*’, as demonstrated in the analysis of ‘Kobel’ Gor’ (Poem 4 of *Smert’ iskusstvu*). In 1989, Parnis’s updated article on the poet in the first volume of *Russkie pisateli 1800–1917*¹⁵³ added some new information to his 1978 encyclopaedia entry from his private correspondence with Gnedov, and provided references to pre-Revolutionary newspaper reviews. In an article from 1989, the poet Gennadii Aigi provided an introduction^{to} and some interpretations of Gnedov’s work¹⁵⁴. Both volumes of *Zabytyi avangard*¹⁵⁵ (1991, 1993), which collect hard-to-find materials relating to the Russian Avant-Garde, have extensive sections on Gnedov. In general, over the last 10 years, the number of articles and books on the Avant-Garde in both Russia and the West has grown substantially as archive materials have become more available and the subject as a whole has become more respectable.

Sergei Sigei, who is himself an experimental poet as well as a scholar, is the leading expert on Gnedov and without his work Gnedov would have remained obscure. Drawing from a wealth of previously unknown information as well as his own insight as a poet, he has almost singlehandedly made Gnedov into a serious subject of

¹⁴⁹ Parnis developed these ideas into the lecture ‘K interpretatsii poniatiia “nul’ form” u Malevicha’ given in Leningrad in December 1988. According to the note in D. Sarab’ianov and A. Shatskikh’s *Kazimir Malevich. Zhivopis’ i teoriia* (Moscow, 1993, p. 189, note 36), Parnis gave written evidence of Malevich’s interest in ‘Poema Kontsa’. Chronologically, ‘Chernyi kvadrat’ seems to postdate ‘Poema Kontsa’ by two years (i.e. it was painted in 1915), and Malevich’s blank canvasses were not exhibited until December 1919.

¹⁵⁰ Khardzhiev, ‘Iz materialov o Maiakovskom’, pp. 274-76 (p. 275).

¹⁵¹ Parnis and Timenchik, ‘Programmy’, pp. 219, 226-27.

¹⁵² Janecek, ‘*Zaum*’ Classification’, pp. 37-54.

¹⁵³ *Russkie pisateli*, 1, pp. 589-90. Although listed by Sigei in V. Gnedov, *Egofuturnaliia bez smernogo kolpaka*, I have been unable to locate the article “‘Ego’ Vasiliska Gnedova’ by a V. Palii in the Kherson newspaper *Leninskii prapor* (37, 16 September 1989).

¹⁵⁴ Aigi, ‘Russkii poeticheskii avangard’, pp. 30-31.

¹⁵⁵ *Zabytyi avangard 1*, pp. 17-20; and *Zabytyi avangard 2*, pp. 63-71.

study. Sigei's 1987 article 'Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova' in *Russian Literature*¹⁵⁶ analyses several of Gnedov's poems and cites contemporary critical reaction to them. Gnedov's innovations in neologistic language, in particular his 'word-alterations' (*slovoizmeneniia*) and word-line experiments, are highlighted; but for Sigei, Gnedov's 'Poema Kontsa' is of crucial significance because it marked the cross-over point between poetry and performance art¹⁵⁷. The collection *Ego-futurnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka* (1991) contained an introduction, footnotes, and a short bibliography of sources on Gnedov, by Sigei. Also that year Sigei published the article "'Tsy" Vasiliska Gnedova', where he compared a poem by Gnedov to (a translation of) one by Mao Tse-Tsung¹⁵⁸. The most important study yet of Gnedov is Sigei's introduction and commentaries in *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* (1992). Sigei managed to correspond with Gnedov, and his introduction provides the most detailed account of Gnedov's life as well as locating his Futurist poetry in the context of Egofuturism. The commentary to the edition gives useful information on almost all of the poems and interpretations of some of them; the poems of *Smert' iskusstvu* and *Nebokopy* receive particularly detailed analysis. The volume also contains copies of Gnedov's drawings and photographs of the poet. More recently, Sigei has continued to make observations about Gnedov's poetry and its importance to him¹⁵⁹.

Other recent works have tended to focus exclusively on 'Poema Kontsa', rather than Gnedov's other pieces. Janecek's article on Minimalism in contemporary Russian poetry (1992) cites 'Poema Kontsa' as an early if unintentional example, and shows how the poem disrupts and re-focusses the reading process¹⁶⁰. D. Kuz'min's detailed commentary to the 1996 reprint of *Smert' iskusstvu* examines the book's history and mistakes made in previous publications¹⁶¹. The poet Ry Nikonova has recently written on 'Poema Kontsa' as part of her concept of "literary vacuum"¹⁶². Two recent

¹⁵⁶ Sigov (Sigei), 'Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova', pp. 115-23.

¹⁵⁷ In the same year, the book resulting from a conference on Severianin contained Sigei's paper 'Igor' Severianin i Vasilisk Gnedov' (*Ob Igore Severianine: nauchnaia konferentsiia k stoletiiu poeta*, Cherepovets, 1987, pp. 36-38) but unfortunately I have not been able to see it.

¹⁵⁸ Sigei, "'Tsy" Vasiliska Gnedova', p. 14.

¹⁵⁹ S. Sigei, 'besedy v blizine mirgoroda', *Poetika russkogo avangarda. Kredo: Nauchno-populiarnyi i literaturno-khudozhestvennyi zhurnal*, 3-4 (1993), pp. 43-46 (p. 44).

¹⁶⁰ G. Janecek, 'Minimalism in Contemporary Russian Poetry: Vsevolod Nekrasov and Others', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 70 (1992), pp. 401-19.

¹⁶¹ D. Kuz'min, 'Kommentarii', in Gnedov, *Smert' iskusstvu* (1996), pp. 18-24.

¹⁶² R. Nikonova-Tarshis, 'Ekologii pauzy', *Urbi. Literaturnyi al'manakh*, 6 (1996), pp. 36-42. Another article by Nikonova, 'Slovo – lishnee kak takovoe', was found at the Internet address:

publications have also provided significant new information on and analysis of Gnedov. A. Krusanov's historical study of the Russian Avant-Garde has unearthed a wealth of contemporary newspaper sources, and there are several that concern Gnedov directly¹⁶³; and Janecek's important study of *zaum'* has a section on Gnedov¹⁶⁴.

As a poet, a general picture has formed of Gnedov as a Futurist in the Kruchenykh mould, some of whose experiments still seem radical today. His use of neologistic language has been related to Cubofuturist experiments and *zaum'*; and other aspects of his poetics are connected to Decadent Symbolism. Sigei's analyses are by far the most advanced and the present study is much indebted to them and seeks to expand upon them. Having established the general outlines of Gnedov's literary environment, his biography, bibliography, and historiography, the analysis proceeds to focus in detail upon the poet's works.

<http://www.inforis.nnov.su/n-nov/culture/art/urbi/nikonova.html>

¹⁶³ Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, pp. 115-16, 145, 152, 156, 159-62, 248-49.

¹⁶⁴ Janecek, *Zaum*, pp. 101-104.

CHAPTER 2. WORKS¹

i) WORKS OF 1913

Nizhegorodets

For Gnedov and for Futurism as a whole, 1913 was the year of flowering and dramatic experimentation. However, Gnedov's first published poem, 'Triolet'², had little in common with his subsequent Futurist practice:

Для вас, неги южного неба,
 Слагаю я гимны при вьюге...
 —«Там ярко пылали колеса у Феба
 Для вас—неги южного неба,
 Как были вы небом на юге...
 —«Там ярко пылали колеса у Феба
 Для вас—неги южного неба...»

Gnedov arrived in St Petersburg from Rostov-on-Don in 1912 and it is noteworthy that 'Triolet' is a paean to the southern sky, hence to some extent a poem of exile. In the cold of the north, the lyric subject sings praise as he recalls the warming circles of the southern sun ("там iarko pylali koleasa u Feba"). The recurrent phrases are enclosed in quotation marks as they form part of the 'hymn'—a poem within the poem. The southern sky is hallowed, and in comparison the northern sky pales—it is only an 'echo', a reminder to the poet of his home.

The poem has no neologisms or Futurist devices but words such as *v'iuga* and the reference to Phoebus³ (another name for Apollo the sungod, i.e. a poetic word for

¹ Given the difficulty of Gnedov's work and the limited amount of research done on it, the approach taken here is a relatively straightforward one. Whilst Sigei's work has laid the foundations for this study, the focus here is on a consideration of each of the works in turn. The at times tentative nature of the analysis will be understood to be necessary with poetry of such intractability and because the study of Gnedov is still at an embryonic stage. Brief descriptions of how neologisms are formed and what they mean will be provided if appropriate; otherwise, full details of both can be found in the third chapter, 'Words'.

² V. Gnedov, 'Triolet', *Nizhegorodets*, 15 (28) January 1913. The poem is reprinted in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 140.

the sun) suggest a Symbolist influence, as does the triolet verse form, which was employed by Symbolists like Sologub as well as by the Egofuturist Severianin. The connection of the Egofuturists to the Decadent Symbolists and the influence of the latter on Gnedov is suggested by the poem. Although unexceptional in terms of form and language and a stark contrast with what was to come, 'Triolet' is significant in the development of Gnedov's poetry. Sigei's refusal to let the poem start Gnedov's *Sobranie stikhotvoreniĭ*⁴ gives an artificial picture of the poet's entry into literature. In between his radical Futurist experiments, Gnedov intermittently wrote poems that seem almost antithetical to Futurism ('Triolet', 'Pechal'naia skazka', 'Poema nachala'), and this creates a minor parallel track in his early work.

Gostinets sentimentam

In the analysis of Gnedov's first booklet of poetry *Gostinets sentimentam*, the poems are considered according to theme rather than in the strict order in which they appear⁵; where it is unclear, numbers in brackets corresponding to the numbering in the Glossary will indicate which poem is being cited.

The booklet contained five works ('Letana', 'Kozii slashch', 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy', 'Pridorogaia dum', and 'Muravaia') and what makes them more Futurist than 'Triolet' is primarily Gnedov's idiosyncratic use of language. First of all, the title of the booklet has the unusual combination the slightly archaic word "Gostinets" and the French borrowing "sentimentam" in the title. Elsewhere, Markov found the language to be "a [...] display of rustic neologisms and primitivistic shouts"⁶. For some readers, the consistent use of unusual coinages was confusing and was subject to parody:

³ References to Apollo can also be found in the poem 'Prosnuvshis' ia gotov borot'sia s kem ugodno...' (1972), and those to other figures from classical mythology in the undated later poem 'Khotia b ko mne iavilas' feia...', *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 103, 75.

⁴ See *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 140.

⁵ V. Gnedov, 'Letana' and 'Kozii slashch' (p.1), 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy' (pp. 2-3), 'Pridorogaia dum' and 'Muravaia' (p. 4), in *Gostinets sentimentam*. The works are republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 31-35.

⁶ *RF*, p. 79.

Футуристов печальный зверинец
 Преподнес «сентиментам гостинец»,
 Где – лишился рассудка оков
 И – рассорился с логикой слов
 ВАСИЛИСК (поэзитор) ГНЕДОВ, –⁷

In his humorous review of *Gostinets sentimentam*, Sergei Gorodetskii recounts his impression:

Как отдыхает ум и сердце на этой безпритязательной чепухе! Кажется, что погружаешься в сфере чистого идиотизма, что особенно приятно после умных стихов Вадима Гарднера. Итак отдохнем вместе...⁸

The evaluation is clearly a negative one, but it is interesting that Gorodetskii, a leading early exponent of Primitivism in literature who had been very much in favour of the creation of neologisms⁹, was able to derive some kind of absurd enjoyment from the book.

Two works in *Gostinets sentimentam* are concerned with flight, interest in flight at the start of the century was reflected in Futurism and Avant-Garde poetry; furthermore, one of the Cubofuturists, Vasilii Kamenskii, had left the literary world between 1911 ^{and 1912} / to become one of Russia's first aviators. However, Gnedov's work here is not the kind of glorification of technology that was prominent in Marinetti's writing. In 'Letana', flight is portrayed against the backdrop of nature, and the poem's protagonist is in fact able to fly; in 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy' the protagonist makes a metaphorical flight to the top of a mountain on top of a mythical flying horse. In both cases, flight is associated with the poetic 'I'. Given the association of flight with freedom, Gnedov's identification with flight is in keeping with his concern for renovating the language.

⁷ N. Tselykovskii, 'Iz vpechatlenii chitatelia', *Na beregakh Nevy. Zhurnal nachinaiushchikh pisatelei i molodogo teatra*, 4 (1913), p. 9; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 199. Two other sections of this poem can be found in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 200, and Sigov (Sigei), 'Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova', pp. 117-18.

⁸ S. Gorodetskii, 'Puchina stikhovaia', *Rech'*, 18 February 1913, p. 3. Vadim Gardner (1880-1956) was a poet of Acmeist orientation (and therefore closer to Gorodetskii in poetic temperament); see *Russkie pisateli*, I, p. 523.

⁹ Nilsson, 'Primitivism', pp. 469-82.

In his first booklet, Gnedov shows himself to be a nature poet, and the source for his depictions may well be his native Don region¹⁰. ‘Letana’ depicts a creature flying in a grassy environment. The first two lines of the poem describe taking off and flying at grass level and the movement of wings through the grass:

Уверхаю лёто на муравой
Крыло уверхаю по зеленкѣ.

A possible interpretation is that the “Letana” is in fact a bee, with “Lëto-dom” (line 5) referring to the insect’s body. Gnedov’s neologism resembles the Don region dialect word *lëtnaia* meaning “a bee collecting honey”¹¹, and the word “Letka” (line 8) may be connected with beehives¹². At the same time, a later poem ‘Ia uletaiu v Letu’ (1972)¹³ may echo the title and first line of ‘Letana’. The second poem, ‘Kozii slashch’, apparently describes the joy in the production of goat’s milk. In the first stanza, the meadows have given the grass which has become goat’s milk:

Козой вымной молочки
Даровили хозяямь луга!
Луга-га!
Луга-га!

The races mentioned in the second stanza may well be a reference to a ritual to celebrate or encourage fertility, and the last stanza seems to depict someone’s cry during which the sweet goat’s milk foams around the person’s mouth. The subject of ‘Pridorogaia dum’ is the oak tree, “the most widely worshipped of all trees”¹⁴; the title words may allude to names of plants, for example, *pridorozhnaia igla* (wild geranium). The poem can be viewed as a meditation on an oak tree viewed from the wayside; or the ‘pridorogaia dum’ may be the tree itself, personified (“Vlastnik”, “Listnik”) and

¹⁰ In a similar way, Kamenskii wrote about his native region (the environs of the river Kama), and the Cubofuturist group Gileia was named after a region where the Burliuk family had an estate.

¹¹ *SRDG*, 2, p. 113.

¹² Note *letka* (“shelf in front of an entrance to a beehive”, *SRDG*, 2, p. 113) and *lëtka* (“entrance (in beehive)”, *Els.*, 1, p. 467). At the same time, *letka* is listed as a Latvian Russian dialect word meaning “spring wheat and rye” (*SRNG*, 17, p. 17).

¹³ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 102.

¹⁴ *Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, ed. M. Leach, 2, New York, 1950, p. 806.

capable of thought, movement, and sound. The tree's appearance ("Kust") is connected with thought and music, and the movement of its branches is described as a dance.

Кустъ передумки-свирѣли—
Звонъ залихваткой пляши...

The panpipes (*svirel'*) are a visual metaphor representing the tree's branches; the instrument is also associated with poetry and was of some significance to Gnedov, as evinced by his later coinage "Svirel'ga". In 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy', the description of nature is very different from the three poems described above. The work apparently concerns the transformation from one emotional state, "Toska", to another, "Schast'e". "Toska" and the complex emotions experienced by the poem's subject are given an almost geophysical reality: the subject floats about "na vysi skal" and "na dno", and there are further evocations of steep slopes and cliffs, poor weather conditions ("Nenast'e"), whirlwinds, dramatic skies, and a mountain.

In addition, the song-like format and the description of a celebration of nature in 'Kozii slashch' exemplify an interest in rural folklore. 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy' introduces various mythical, religious, and philosophical elements. Gnedov was apparently influenced by the fairytales of M. Chulkov and V. Levshin, from where conventional folkloric figures like the flying horse "Zlatokopytok" and the Sorcerer are drawn¹⁵. The various capitalised 'characters' ("Begun-Toska", "Maliutka Ogne-Lavy"), places ("Zlatokoniushnia", "Krug Schast'ia"), and events ("Beg sviatoi") create a confusing picture. The movement from emotional confusion to a state of being fully in control is described in terms of a leap from the abyss ("Bezdna") to the top of the Holy Mountain ("Sviataia Gora"). At the same time, the scene depicted at the end of 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy' carries strong overtones of Nietzsche, and the piece may be a description of a kind of personal 'overcoming':

Вверху Зигзагъ—Маякъ въ Рукѣ...
Стою... стою вверху... Царю!

¹⁵ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 142. The personification of grief (here "Toska", "Begun-Toska") is also a typical feature of folk songs; *Handbook of Russian Literature*, ed. V. Terras, New Haven, 1985, p. 147.

On the other hand, according to Sigei, “the ‘Poet – Pegasus – Parnassus’ is perceived as the core of the plot (*siuzhetnyi sterzhen*), and around it breathes the ‘life-after-death’ story (*fabula*)”¹⁶. In this connection, Cirlot provides an interesting passage concerning the idea of inversion:

According to Schneider, the continuity of life is assured by the mutual sacrifice which is consummated on the peak of the mystic mountain: death permits birth; all opposites are for an instant fused together and then inverted. What is constructive turns to destruction; love turns to hate; evil to good; unhappiness to happiness; martyrdom to ecstasy¹⁷.

The theme of inversion is present in other works by Gnedov, particularly ‘Poema Kontsa’, and also in his disruptive poetics as a whole.

In ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’, the boundary between poetry and prose is blurred. The dashes that separate the words and phrases of the poem may be perceived as a substitute for line breaks or may indicate pauses. In any event, the work seems indebted to Andrei Belyi’s four *Simfonii* (1902-1908)¹⁸. The mixture of melodramatic and symbolic language and themes led Markov to describe Gnedov as “a half-baked Nietzschean, indulging in symbolism of the worst kind”¹⁹.

‘Muravaia’ is the last poem in the collection and the least penetrable. Sigei suggests that it develops the murder-mystery motifs of Igor’ Severianin’s poem ‘Piatitsvet II’, except that “there is far more of the abstract, far more economy”²⁰ in Gnedov’s piece. ‘Muravaia’ is only nine words long, limiting itself to mentioning the most salient elements of what could be a crime:

¹⁶ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 140.

¹⁷ J. Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. J. Sage, London, 1971, p. 158.

¹⁸ The word “Golubiashchii”, apparently referring to the sky in the work, may also carry the suggestion of doves (*golubi*), and hence Belyi’s novel *Serebrianyi golub’* (1910). Furthermore, it is part of Slavic folk belief that “at death, the soul turns into a dove”, Cirlot, *Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 85.

¹⁹ *RF*, p. 79.

²⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 143. Severianin’s poem, written in 1911, reads: “V dvadtsat’ let on tak nashustril:/ Prostitutok vsekh osēstril,/ Astry zvezdil, zvezdy astril,/ Pogreba perereestril./ Ostavalos’ tol’ko – vystrel”, I. Severianin, *Sobranie sochinenii v piati tomakh*, 1, comp. V. Koshelev and V. Sapogov, St Petersburg, 1995, p. 395.

Крикъ..
 Бликъ..
 Да двадцать уликъ..
 Травой отравой—
 Зеленко-муравой..

Line 4 gives a medium for the crime (“Travoi otravoi”). The references to green and grass in the last two lines are similar to those in ‘Letana’. The brevity of the poem makes it rather intractable, and in this it is similar to the poems in *Smert' iskusstvu* (1913) and to ‘V boku klok sena’ (1917).

Dary Adonisu

Gnedov’s ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’ and ‘Gurebka Proklenushkov’ were published in the fourth Egofuturist almanac *Dary Adonisu*²¹, and the two pieces opened and closed the book. The first five pages of the almanac were occupied by ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’, a polemical work full of self-affirmation and written in a very direct prose style achieved by frequent exclamations and very infrequent use of adjectives, with the exception of the central notions “Prizemisty” and “Sred'mirnyi”. There is also a great deal of confusing imagery that seems at times rather intractable, so this analysis will not attempt a plot synopsis but will try to explain the central concepts.

The title, ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’, is both oxymoronic (a zigzag cannot be straight) and neologistic: the adjective “sred'mirnyi” is formed from *seredina mira* or *sredi mira*. According to Sigei, the “Sred'mir” can be understood as the equivalent of the ‘the middle way’²². Gnedov dedicates the work to himself and it is about himself. Here, the ‘I’ is an anomaly in the world constructed in the text and the zigzag is its effect on an uncomprehending world; hence it is capable of a seemingly paradoxical type of movement:

Вѣдь Зигзагъ скользя змѣе Кругомъ, Вездѣ..

²¹ V. Gnedov, ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’ (pp. 1-5) [Zhofefina Gant d’Orsail], ‘Gurebka proklenushkov’ (p. 15), in *Dary Adonisu*. The works are republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 36-39.

²² Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 118.

It is tempting to assume that the “Zigzag” refers to Gnedov or to his poetry. At the same time, the zigzag is also lightning, and hence there are suggestions of a scene in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*: “Behold, I am an herald of the lightning and an heavy raindrop from the clouds: but that lightning is named *Superman*”²³. Gnedov’s perception of Egofuturism is encapsulated in the following statement:

Все во Мнѣ и Я Мое во ВСЕМЪ²⁴

The individual is both a microcosm of the universe and is the universe at one and the same time. Equally, this can be viewed as an arrogant statement of the writer’s ability to express truths. The tone of ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’ is characterised by the lyric subject gloating over his own superiority and taunting the inadequacy of the “Prizemisty”. The “Prizemisty” is defined in opposition to the ‘I’ of the text; the word means a ‘stout’ or ‘squat’ person, but also one who is *pri zemle*—associated with the earth’s surface—rather than one who experiences extremes of height and depth, i.e. shallow. The “Prizemisty” is one who cannot see, feel, or understand as keenly as the ‘I’²⁵. In contrast to the “Prizemisty”, the lyric subject is ‘in the happiness of height’ (“v Schast’i Vysoty—Gde Ia tsarit”). On page 3, the lyric subject declares haughtily:

Царю! Царю и рѣю надо всѣм

These words are echoed in the last lines too:

Орлы! Орлю! Вся синь!
Средьмірная:
Я!
Царю! Царю!

²³ F. Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, transl. A. Tille, London, 1958, p. 8.

²⁴ Gnedov later claimed that he wrote most of the Egofuturists’ *Gramata intuitivnoi assotsiatsii* (January 1913); *Sobr. stikh*, p. 197, and Sigov (Sigei), ‘Egofuturnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 118.

²⁵ In an article in the journal *Teatr i iskusstvo*, Fedor Sologub developed the concept of the “Prizemisty” to describe critics unable to appreciate great works of art but nevertheless form judgements on them; F. Sologub, ‘Prizemisty sudiat’, *Teatr i iskusstvo*, 7 (17 February 1913); quoted from *Sobr. stikh*, p. 19. However, Sologub would later speak of the Futurists (Severianin excluded) as untalented and false and did not believe that Futurism was the art of the future; Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 291.

The entire final scene that Gnedov creates is very similar to the ending of ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’. The ecstatic language and depictions of heavens, mountains, eagles, and so on, has very strong resonances of Symbolism²⁶. In turn, such imagery can be found in Nietzsche (the eagle and the serpent are the symbols of the ‘Superman’ in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*²⁷) and is also common to Romanticism in general.

Gnedov’s second contribution to *Dary Adonisu* was the poem ‘Gurebka Proklenushkov’, which he wrote under the pseudonym Zhozefina Gant d’Orsail’. According to the poet, this “mystification” was intended to reflect the Egofuturists’ connections with high society²⁸ with the hoax French-sounding name based on a well-publicised brand of French perfume²⁹. However, the pseudonym’s implication of urban sophistication is quite at odds with the rustic setting of the poem.

‘Gurebka Proklenushkov’ is subtitled a “pauznaia poeza”³⁰; the reason for this is not at all clear, although it may be a way of describing the effect of the exclamations that punctuate the poem:

А-а! А-а! Зеленяя вѣткія вѣтки
Хлестайте, играйте въ бока.
А-а! А-а! А-а! У-у-у!!!

These exclamations are cries of pain, but it can be noted that the sound “au” is a call so as not to lose one another in a wood, and there are further sounds in the second line of

²⁶ Also Severianin’s poem ‘Prolog III’ (1912), which contains the line “Ia v nebesakh nadmenno reiu”; Severianin, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 1, p. 174.

²⁷ It is not clear whether ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’ was really written in Rostov-on-Don in 1911 as claimed at the end of the piece. For Sigei, this is deliberate mystification: the phrase “orlenie nad bezdnoi” comes from *Orly nad propast'iu*, the name of the third Egofuturist almanac published in November 1912, that is, before Gnedov joined or was known to the Egofuturists (*Sobr. stikh.*, p. 143). This may be disputed: as we have seen, mention of eagles and abysses is hardly unique to the Egofuturists.

²⁸ *Sobr. stikh.* p. 144.

²⁹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 144; and *RF*, p. 78. The pseudonym may also have been indebted to another recent literary hoax: the poet E.I. Vasil'eva used the *nom de plume* Cherubina de Gabriac for a series of poems in the journal *Apollon* (1909-10). See A. Parnis, ‘Gnedov Vasilisk’, and V. Glotser, ‘Vasil'eva Elizaveta Ivanovna’, in *Russkie pisateli*, I, pp. 589, 394.

³⁰ As is Vadim Shershenevich’s poem ‘Liubovnost’ on the opposite page, but there the similarities end.

stanza 3 (“Gua-gua-a-ga-oi!”³¹) as well as at the end of the fourth and fifth stanzas. The exclamations caught the attention of Briusov, who compared them to the *zaum*’ of Kruchenykh’s ‘Dyr bul shchyl’ poem and ‘Bobeobi pelis’ guby’ by Khlebnikov³².

The first word of the title, ‘Gurebka’, seems to be a form of *gur’ba*. The second word is more problematic, but seems to involve the verb *proklinat’/prokliast*³³ and perhaps *klen* (maple tree). For losing the “igolochku-slezku”, the protagonist (“Proklenushek”) is cursed and beaten by his mother, and he cries out in pain and in anguish. He is cast out and wanders in the forest:

Прокленушекъ свѣтлый,
Прокленушекъ въ зелени,
На матерный кличь неотвѣтный,
Братьямъ останешься вѣрен-ли?...
А—гу—а!

At the end, the protagonist and his brothers (who presumably together make up the “gurebka proklenushkov”) have sown their “tear-needles” through the forest:

Поразѣяли мы, бѣдные,
По лесу иголочки-слезки
А—гу—а!

Because the exact nature of the “Proklenushki” and the “igolochki-slezki”³⁴ is difficult to ascertain, interpretation of the poem remains somewhat fluid. In a letter to Khardzhiev, Gnedov stated that he wrote the poem “on the basis of a folk superstition held in Ukrainian (non-Cossack) villages in the Don region”³⁵. Unfortunately Gnedov did not indicate which particular belief he was basing his poem on. It may be that the family described in the poem is not a human one. Given the forest setting, the “Proklenushek” and its brothers might be trees, whose branches whip their own sides

³¹ Note also the sounds made by dogs in the forest (“Gau, gau! Ga-ga! Ga-ga!”) in the tenth section of Khlebnikov’s ‘Tiran bez Te’ (1922); V. Khlebnikov, ‘Tiran bez Te’, *Tvoreniia*, ed. M. Poliakov, comp. V. Grigor’ev and A. Parnis, Moscow, 1986, p. 353.

³² V. Briusov, ‘Novye techeniia’, p. 388.

³³ With the ‘ia’ changed to ‘e’ in line with a possible dialect pronunciation.

³⁴ The idea of “losing tear-needles” might refer to crying; a tear running down a cheek might be imagined as resembling a needle, and the eye of the needle a tear.

³⁵ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 144.

(in stanza 1). In the earlier 'Pridorogaia dum', there was a suggestion of the personification of an oak tree.

Gnedov's two poems in *Dary Adonisu* are both about outcasts but in very different situations. In 'Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi', the outcast is an individual who claims such genius that he is beyond the comprehension of all those around him. The work is a forceful expression of romantic solipsism; the individual is viewed in relation to the entire universe. In 'Gurebka Proklenushkov', the outcast and his brothers are pitiable creatures who inhabit the smaller environment of a forest and who are punished. The poem also contains further evidence of Gnedov's interest in nature and folklore, both of which were apparent in *Gostinets sentimentam*.

The impact of Gnedov's entry into the Egofuturist group was felt in Ivan Ignat'ev's poetry in *Dary Adonisu*. His second poem was entitled 'Vasilisku Gnedovu', and it borrowed the words "sred'mirnaia" and "sred'mir'e" from 'Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi'³⁶. In a subsequent article reviewing the progress of Egofuturism, Ignat'ev reiterated Gnedov's importance for the entire movement:

Эго-Футуризму суждено было пройти «Пути василисковые»³⁷.

Zasakhare kry

The fifth Egofuturist collection *Zasakhare kry*³⁸, which derived its name from a cycle that Gnedov apparently wrote but never published³⁹, contained four works by the poet: 'Na vozle bal', 'Kuk', 'Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne', and 'Svirel'ga'. Markov notes that Gnedov's works are "the most radical" in *Zasakhare kry*, and he compares Gnedov to three Futurists (Khlebnikov, Kamenskii, and Kruchenykh) of the rival group Gileia in the same paragraph⁴⁰.

According to Ignat'ev, in 'Na vozle bal' Gnedov showed himself to be a "great master in the area of Egofuturist prose" and was attempting to ignore theme⁴¹. To

³⁶ I. Ignat'ev, 'Vasilisku Gnedovu', *Dary Adonisu*, p. 9.

³⁷ I. Ignat'ev, 'Ego-futurizm', *Zasakhare kry*, p. 9. This statement was originally made in Ignat'ev's poem 'Vsegdai' ("khodim put'mi vasiliskovymi/ I On, i Ia!"), *Dary Adonisu*, p. 8.

³⁸ V. Gnedov, 'Na vozle bal' and 'Kuk' (p. 10), 'Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne' (p. 11), and 'Svirel'ga' (p. 12), in *Zasakhare Kry*. The works are republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 40-42.

³⁹ Sigov (Sigei), 'Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova', p. 119

⁴⁰ *RF*, p. 79.

⁴¹ Ignat'ev (*Egofuturizm*, St Petersburg, 1913, p. 9) quoted from a prose version of 'Na vozle bal' with certain textual alterations ("neveselii" - "neveselei", "snotekivoi" - "na Tekivoi", "bereziam

achieve this, Gnedov resorted to breaking down standard syntax, as in the two prepositions of the title, and made the work more consistently neologistic than any of the pieces he had published thus far:

Слезетеки невеселей заллакучились на Текивой,
Борзо гагали веселямъ—березячьямъ охотѣи—

Веселочьемъ сыпало перебродое Грохло
Голоса двоенились на двадцать кричаковъ—

Засолнкло на развигой листьяѣи—
Обхвачена цѣловами бѣтая ненасыта,—

A rough synopsis of the poem can be attempted. On the “Tekivaia” (perhaps a river), unhappy people have burst into tears. In line 2, people shout happily and perhaps abruptly; birch-tree flesh is hunted. Line 3 describes a crashing or banging sound that is capable of liquid-like movement, which is being carried out with happiness. Line 4 seems to describe voices echoing. In line 5, sunlight starts to appear through moving leaves, and in line 6, something rather unclear (“b'etaia nenasyta”) is covered in kisses. The neologisms are difficult to decipher, but an impressionistic picture seems to emerge of a noisy and boisterous occasion, perhaps at the edge of a wood, where there are both sad and happy revellers.

In contrast with the rest of the poem, the final couplet is fully comprehensible, consisting of two phrases in standard Russian. Gnedov’s recurrent stress on the verb *ponimat’/poniat’* indicates that he was well aware of the difficulty readers face in comprehending his works and, in the penultimate line, he seems almost to taunt them⁴²:

И Вы понимаете-ли въ этомъ что-нибудь
Слезетеки эта—плакуха—извольте—Крыса...

veseliach’i okhotei” - “veseliam—bereziach’iam okhotei”, “Veselodchem” - “Veseloch’em”, and “grokhlo” - “Grokhlo”); here, the potential for blurring the boundary between prose and poetry is emphasised.

⁴² The direct address of the reader is also a trait common throughout Maiakovskii’s poetry (e.g. ‘A Vy mogli by?’).

By revealing in the last word of the poem that the rat is the real meaning of the poem's first word "slezeteki", Gnedov changes the tone of the entire piece. The result of this incomprehensible collection of neologisms is something unpleasant and unwanted, a rat. Sigei contends that for the Futurists the rat was a substitute for a muse and develops a thesis that, in 'Na vozle bal', Gnedov is ridiculing art:

С первой до последней строки происходит «осмеяние» Творчества, самого Искусства [...] В стихе создается особый—новый словарь, язык, соответствующий новым правилам Поэзии, и вся гора великолепия рождает же его—мышь, то есть ноль. Вот приговор поэзии, так четко выраженный затем *Поэмой конца*⁴³.

In addition, the depiction of a ball in 'Na vozle bal' may allude to the kind of Egofuturism typified by Severianin, and as such the piece may be a parody.

In 'Kuk', Gnedov once again shows himself to be a nature poet, depicting birdlife in a forest. Although it involves four species of bird (cuckoo, little bustard, quail, and jackdaw), the poem is primarily concerned with the cuckoo.

Кукъ!
Я.
А стрепеть гдб?
Гнбзда перепельи разбухли,
Птенцы желторотили лбсь..
Кукъ!
Я.
Стрепетили стрепетки
Лбсь желтбвбль бблоколь..
Кукала кука:
Кукъ!
Галоче станываль Букъ—
Кукъ его—Гукъ!
А гдб-жь стрепета?

For Gnedov, the sound "Kuk!" was that of the female cuckoo calling the male, who answers "Ia!"; as Sigei notes, "the poem is in fact a dramatic scene: a dialogue

⁴³ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 145.

accompanied by stage direction”⁴⁴. Along with the dialogue between the male and female cuckoos, there is also the monologue of the expectant little bustard nestlings (“strepetki”). Their unanswered cry, which recalls ‘Gurebka proklenushkov’, ends this poem on an uncertain and worrying note—a nothing where the response of the absent parent should be.

The neologisms in the poem are more restrained than those in ‘Na vozle bal’, but the use of abbreviated forms and dialect words here is typical of Gnedov’s use of language as a whole. The sound “Kuk” is a shortening of the standard *kuku*; the interjection “Guk” seems to come from the Don region dialect verb *gukat’* (“to call”⁴⁵) and represents the different sound made by the jackdaws encamped in a beech tree⁴⁶. Representation of birdsong was quite common amongst other Futurists: Kamenskii mimics the sounds of doves (“Ag-gurl”) in ‘Razvesnilas’ vesna’ (1910), nightingales (“Chok-i-chok./ Chtrrrrr”) in ‘Solovei’ (1916), and woodland birds in ‘Tsia-tsint’ (1917)⁴⁷. Khlebnikov would later develop ‘ptichii iazyk’ in *Zangezi* (1921), and, in his 1922 poem ‘Sinie okovy’, Khlebnikov alluded directly to Gnedov’s poem:

Кук! Кук!

Об этом прежде знал Гнедов⁴⁸.

In 1914, the composer Nikolai Roslavets set ‘Kuk’ to music, alongside three other poems by Severianin, David Burluk, and Konstantin Bol’shakov. Roslavets was then developing ‘*sintetakkordy*’ (synthetic chords), a non-diatonic harmonic ordering⁴⁹, and was at the forefront of the Avant-Garde in music.

‘Marshegrobaia pen’ka moia na mne’ is a prose work related to ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’ and ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred’mirnyi’. These pieces are different from the poems in their general ‘metaphysical’ concerns, and they share an

⁴⁴ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 146.

⁴⁵ *SRDG*, I, p. 117.

⁴⁶ It should also be noted that the dictionary of Don dialects lists *kuka* as a “water-tiger” (*SRDG*, II, p. 97), and the verbs *kukat’* (*SRDG*, II, p. 97) and *bukat’* (*SRDG*, I, p. 46) refer to the sounds made by a water beetle; so there may be a curious secondary level of animal behaviour and sound being described in the poem.

⁴⁷ ‘Tsia-tsint’ is a neo-primitivist poem in some ways very close to ‘Kuk’.

⁴⁸ V. Khlebnikov, ‘Sinie okovy’, in his *Tvoreniia*, p. 375. In *Zangezi*, the god Unkulunkulu exclaims, “Zhrab, gab, bakv – kuk!”; *Tvoreniia*, p. 475.

⁴⁹ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. S. Sadie, 16, London, 1980, pp. 208-09.

assertive lyric subject, short exclamatory phrases, and other preoccupations. In the title, “marshegrobaia” combines marching and coffins, and, according to Sigei, “pen'ka” combines *pesnia* and *pen'kovaia verevka*, creating a concept similar to Morgenstern’s *Galgenlieder* (Songs of the Gallows)⁵⁰. The impression from the title may be of the piece’s protagonist carrying or dragging his/her coffin on a long journey. In one section, there may be an identification of the lyric subject and Christ:

я Стезя—Я свой гробъ—Я и марши маршу—на плечахъ Я свой Гробъ и себя
уюношу,—Я свой Гробъ и Себя осклеплю въ травѣ

This reinforces the title’s suggestion of the image of a pallbearer and is reminiscent of Christ carrying his cross up Calvary. The image of the lyric subject being a coffin, being inside the coffin, and carrying the coffin at one and the same time relates to the idea of the multiple existence of the ‘I’ expressed in the phrase “Vse vo Mne i Ia Moe vo Vsem” (“Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi”). The portrayal of the ‘I’ as a Christ-like figure is also similar to Maiakovskii’s *Vladimir Maiakovskii. Tragediia*. The sometimes agrammatical sentences describe writing on white cliffs (“Zapishu na skalakh belykh napisei Rok”) and there follows a grave inscription (“Zdes' lezhit”) and the commands (“Ne khodite k Mechu”, “Polozhaite Serdtsa na Dolanakh!”). The contrast of the lyric subject who writes on cliffs and the rest of the world in the valleys below is close to scenes in ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’ (“Prizemisty” as opposed to “Sred'mirnyi”). Similarly, in the final four lines, the clash of emotions causes one to run to the grave while the other “sobs in the heights”⁵¹:

Два полгоря и счастья расшиблись на клѣтки, клѣть одья побѣжала въ могилу,
другая на выши рыдачить.

The associations of grief–depth and happiness–height are similar to those in ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’.

The title-word of Gnedov’s last poem in *Zasakhare Kry*, ‘Svirel'ga’, was one of his most used coinages: it is the title of the third poem in *Smert' iskusstvu* as well as the

⁵⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 157.

⁵¹ Based on the verb *rydat'*, “rydachit” is a verbal neologism meaning ‘to do the actions of a ‘rydak’ (a neologism, but ‘someone who sobs’), or formed by analogy with *rybachit'*, *rybak*.

name of the venture which published the scroll *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov* in 1914. Pan-pipes (*svirel'*) are traditionally connected with poetry (Pan was the god of poetry)⁵². The grafting-on of the *-ga* might be perceived as giving the word a folksy quality or perhaps creating an association with *pustel'ga* (kestrel).

'Svirel'ga' is at least partially a nature poem, although rather an unusual one. First of all, Gnedov continues to experiment with language, particularly the techniques of non-agreement and the juxtaposition of nouns in the nominative case, for example:

Ги! Поэтъ бѣлоснѣгій—раскрыленка неяроча сна,
 Распоясаны Лебедь—беззадорка задорка Крашень..
 Колеса разцвѣтеная спица,—вертовертанный дно небоклонь..

The listing-type effect of the juxtapositions leads to a partial breakdown of the syntax and bears some similarity to Marinetti's 'parole in liberta' (where verbs were given only in the infinitive, and there were no adjectives or adverbs). Secondly, the content of the poem is rather unclear, and this lack of clarity is intensified by the neologisms. After the first three lines given above, the poem appears to describe a journey to a winter dacha at the edge of a forest; there seems to be an almost sensual relationship between poet and forest:

Назовляль я тебя дрога-дрога—рукой еловито любляль.
 Передольчу къ тебѣ-ли на Дачу,—буду ласками лгать..

However, the neologistic descriptions of the circular motion of cartwheels on the journey through a forest and the surrounding wildlife (burdock, rushes, a squirrel, etc.) are suddenly interrupted. As in 'Na vozle bal', there is a direct address to the reader ("Eva! Milostivye Gosudari — skazhite — v kotorom ukhe u menia zvenit kamerton") written in completely standard language after a passage of neologisms; this is followed by an unexpected and seemingly unmotivated shift from the wintry forest environment to a backdrop of desert and groaning camels⁵³ in lines 13-16. Furthermore, the exact

⁵² This is also present in Russian literature, for example, in Pushkin's poem "I v shume sveta liubi, Adel', moi svirel'".

⁵³ A line in 'Vchera' (*Nebokopy*, 1913) also contains an allusion to camels ("staneteverbliudymi"), as does Gnedov's later poem 'Maiakovskii i Esenin' (1976), *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 116. Elena Guro's "nebesnye verbliuzhata" were a metaphor for clouds.

nature of the poem's addressee ("Ty Poet belosnezhii") is rather unclear; whether the poet himself, the snow-covered forest, or perhaps the mountain at the end of the poem:

Уверхи златопляшу полуую—диванъ подь Горою стональ.
 Ты Поэть бѣлоснѣжій,
 Раскрывое жало у Пѣжи..
 Стономно тебя цѣловчалъ..

The theme of whiteness is significant for subsequent poems by Gnedov. Here the white of the snow is connected to the poet, who is compared to a swan in line 2. The identification of swan and poet will later be central to the poem 'To skachushchii lebed' (1919). 'Svirel'ga' continually forms images and metaphors involving various creative acts: music ("Svirel'ga", "kamerton"), graphic art ("Guasho", "karton", reinforced by mention of various colours), and dance ("Krugopliash", "zlatopliashu"). References to plants, dancing, sleep, horizons (and the word "dno"), and splashing all occur elsewhere in Gnedov's poetry.

Gnedov's contributions in *Zasakhare kry* reinforces the impressions created by his first works. Nevertheless, the use of language continues to be a radical departure from literary norms, in that it is consistently neologistic and exclamatory throughout, and Gnedov has begun to experiment with syntax ('Na vozle bal', 'Svirel'ga'). The subject matter of the poems often contrasts with the extreme experiments of the language, as for example in the placid nature scenes depicted in 'Kuk' and 'Svirel'ga'. At the same time, in 'Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne' the poet continues the strident lyric subject and the more 'metaphysical' concerns seen in two previous works.

Smert' iskusstvu

Gnedov's best known and most studied work is *Smert' iskusstvu*, published in the first week of April 1913⁵⁴. The booklet contains fifteen *poemy*, an ironic designation intending both to amuse or shock the reader and draw attention to the

⁵⁴ V. Gnedov, *Smert' iskusstvu*. Ignat'ev's foreword was called a "preslovie", seemingly a combination of *predislovie* and *preslovutyi* as if to attract further attention. The cycle has been republished several times: in Aigi, 'Russkii poeticheskii avangard', p. 31; *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 43-48; *Russkaia poeziia "serebriianogo veka"*, pp. 514-15; S. Biriukov, *Zevgma*, p. 61 (unfortunately, I have not been able to see this version); and V. Gnedov, *Smert' iskusstvu* (1996), pp. 3-17.

significant abbreviation in poetic language and form in the cycle. None of the poems is longer than a single line, two poems consist of a single word, two more poems consist of a single letter, and the last poem is made up of just the title ‘Poema Kontsa’⁵⁵ and a blank page. According to Markov, this final piece “made Gnedov a celebrity”⁵⁶.

Previous analyses have tended to focus on individual *Smert' iskusstvu* poems out of context, so here an attempt has been made to consider the poems together as a cycle as well as in terms of their individual significance. The length of the poems facilitates a deepening of the analysis, and each poem will be quoted in full. Before proceeding to the analysis, it should be noted that, in contrast to the radical content, the layout is traditional and there is no typographical experimentation. However, the format of the poems is interesting; it has been organised so as both to differentiate the poems from each other and to differentiate the different elements within each poem from each other. Hence, apart from the final three, each poem consists of a poem number, the title in capital letters followed by a full stop, and the text (mostly) in lower case letters.

Поэма 1.

СТОИГА.

Польнчается—Пепелье Душу.

The first poem introduces the idea of destruction that is important for the whole cycle. Janecek considers the title-word “Stonga” to be made up of *ston* and *shtanga* (bar-bell weight), meaning “a heap or weight of groans”⁵⁷. The first word of the poem is the neologism “Polynchaetsia”, formed from *polyn'* (wormwood) or *polynka* (“wormwood fumes”⁵⁸), the ‘k’ in the latter accounting for the ‘ch’ in the coinage⁵⁹. The evocation of powder or smoke connects with the following word ‘Pepel'e’, formed from *pepel*, and meaning something like “a state of being or becoming ash”⁶⁰. Kuz'min has

⁵⁵ Note that, in the original version, the first letters of both words are upper case (‘Poema Kontsa’); subsequent reprints have been incorrect in standardising the title by making the ‘k’ lower case.

⁵⁶ *RF*, p. 80.

⁵⁷ Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 103. The neologism of the title can also be compared with Gnedov’s earlier coinage “stonoem”.

⁵⁸ *Dal'*, III, p. 160.

⁵⁹ Janecek’s suggestion (*Zaum*, p. 103) that, apart from *polyn'*, the word consists of *polynat'*, *poliniat'*, and *lynchevat'* seems less likely.

⁶⁰ Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 103.

paraphrased the poem as the “groan of an incinerated soul”⁶¹. Wormwood has well-known ominous connotations, and in the poem it may be that wormwood poisons the soul. Alternatively, it could be the wormwood itself which is being burnt and its soul that groans, an idea developed later in this analysis. In either case, there is plausibly a connection between the dying cry of the soul in this poem and the death of art proclaimed in the booklet’s title.

Поэма 2.

КОЗЛО.

Бубчиги Козлевая—Сиреня. Скрымь Солнца.

Like Poems 4 and 6, ‘Kozlo’ is a particularly intractable poem. The title-word seems to be a neologism from *kozel*, but it is unclear what part of speech it is: a noun (along the lines of *gryzlo*, for example), an adverb or neuter short-form adjective, a neuter past-tense verb, or a shortened form of the adjective *kozlovyi*. According to Dal', there is in fact a type of ball game called *kozlo*⁶², but this seems inappropriate here. ‘Kozlo’ recalls the earlier ‘Kozii slashch’, a poem which appeared to have ritualistic resonances.

There are two sentences in the poem, and they contain some unusual neologisms. In the first, “bubchigi” seems to be made up of *buba* (which Gnedov defined as “any grain, wheat, bean, etc., in general anything round”⁶³) and *ichig*, “a type of heel-less light shoe on a soft sole”⁶⁴; “kozlevaia” is a misspelling of *kozlovaia*; and “sirenia” is not an existing form of either *siren'* or *sirena*. The non-agreement of the neologisms further complicates the picture; Sigei’s view that “bubchigi” refers to the “*lapti* of the Buba, that is Baba Yaga” (who might be described as a siren?) is unclear⁶⁵. In the second sentence, “Skrym” is probably a mixture of *skryt'* and *Krym*⁶⁶,

⁶¹ Kuz'min, ‘Kommentarii’, p. 18. Since there is another reference to the soul in Poem 5, “Dushu” is unlikely to be the dative singular of *dush* or the first person singular present tense of *dushit'*, as Janecek suggests; Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 103.

⁶² See *Dal'*, II, p. 236.

⁶³ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 20.

⁶⁴ *SSRLIa*, 5, p. 600.

⁶⁵ Letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97.

⁶⁶ A formal analogy can be made with the word *skryn'* (“area of a pond that touches a dam and is separated by a frame”, *SRDG*, III, p. 126).

perhaps suggesting a place where the sun is hidden or the absence of sun from a place where it should be; but it is not obvious how this relates to the first sentence.

Поэма 3.

СВИРЬЛЬГА.

Разломчено—ПросторБчевье... Мхи-Звукопась.

As has already been noted for the eponymous poem in *Zasakhare kry*, the coinage “svirel'ga” is closely connected to the idea of poetic creation and the poet. Furthermore, the words “Razlomcheno—Prostorechev'e...” (i.e. *prostorechie razlomano*) are almost a programmatic statement of the poet's attitude towards poetic language⁶⁷: Gnedov incorporates colloquial and dialect forms of Russian and deliberately disrupts them. The imagery of the words “Mkhi-Zvukopas” connects the poet to nature. The notion of a ‘herder of sounds’ is formed by analogy with *konepas*, *svinopas*, and so on, and herdsmen are also often depicted with a pipe (*svirel'*). The hyphenation “Mkhi-Zvukopas”⁶⁸ is less clear, but Gnedov may be implying the personification of nature or a direct association of the natural world and the process of creating poetry.

Поэма 4.

КОБЕЛЬ ГОРЬ.

Затумло-Свирьльжитъ. Распростите.

The title of the fourth poem contains a male dog (*kobel'*) and a curious form of *gora*⁶⁹, looking forward to the title of Poem 9. The connection with the previous poem is felt

⁶⁷ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 146.

⁶⁸ There is some irregularity in the punctuation of “Mkhi-Zvukopas” and “Zatumlo-Svirel'zhit”. Both halves of Gnedov's previous compounds have comprised nouns equivalent in number and case (e.g. “peredumki-svireli”, “duby-beliaki”, “rzhavlenki-dubtsy”, and “veti-gudtsy” in ‘Pridorogaia dum’). Kuz'min claims that these hyphens are actually hand-written and should have been dashes (Kuz'min, ‘Kommentarii’, p. 21), and his edition makes the resulting changes. The change does not significantly alter the meaning, but it brings the two phrases into line with similar syntactic structures in poems 1, 2, 5, 7, and 12. Nevertheless, “Zatumlo-Svirel'zhit” may be hyphenated along the lines of “zelenko-muravoi” (line 5 of ‘Muravaia’), where the first element is an adverb modifying the second.

⁶⁹ There may be a pun on *gora*, genitive plural *gor*. Gnedov plays on the homonymic possibilities of *gora*, *gora*, and *goret'*, e.g. “goravyi” (‘Letana’), “K Gore! K Gore! Goriu na Nei s Konem svoim Letuchim...” (‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’).

in the similarity between the titles ‘Svirel'ga’ and ‘Kobel' gor’), and reinforced by the verb “svirel'zhit” (where the noun “svirel'ga” has softened to give the stem “svirel'zh-”⁷⁰), another veiled reference to poetry. Here, the musical or poetic creation is rather gloomy: “zatumlo” seems to be a neuter past tense verb formed by shortening *zatumaniť*⁷¹ or an adverbial neologism. The third word “rasprostite” is a variant of *rasprostít'sia* made transitive, as if to describe a situation where the addressees are leaving or have been ordered to leave. Together, there seems to be some connection between the grief, the gloomy pipe-playing, and departure; but it is difficult to say more than that Gnedov’s poetry may be involved in the death or departure of the soul (and therefore, perhaps, the destruction of art).

Поэма 5.

БЕЗВѢСТЯ.

Пойму—поиму—возьмите Душу.

The title ‘Bezvestia’⁷² is ironic: it predicts a lack of information in the poem when the words, with one exception, are straightforward. After four difficult-to-understand poems, the lyric subject professes understanding but the poem is in some ways just as difficult as those preceding it: here and in Poem 12, Gnedov highlights “the relativity of opposing ‘meaningful’ and ‘meaningless’ sound complexes, ‘real’ and ‘artificial’ words”⁷³. In the text of the poem, there is a kind of homonymic punning: the first word is the first person singular of *poniat*⁷⁴ but alteration in the spelling of the second word (й to и) deliberately causes some indeterminacy, to create a neologism that combines the ideas of understanding and catching/capturing (e.g. поимка). Thus, “voz'mite” may be an order to prevent the soul, which was in the process of being reduced to ash in Poem 1, from leaving or transmigrating.

The increasing alliteration of the sound ‘u’ in the cycle as a whole should be noted: in the title *Smert' iskusstvu*, in important positions in Poems 1-4 (symmetrically

⁷⁰ Note the verb *svirelit'* (“to play the pan-pipes”; *Dal'*, IV, p. 65).

⁷¹ There is no morpheme ‘tum’ and there is no noun (or verb) ending ‘-tumlo’.

⁷² “Bezvestia” appears to be a misspelling of the plural of *bezvestie* (“the absence of news”, *Dal'*, I, p. 149).

⁷³ Kuz'min, ‘Kommentarii’, p. 19.

⁷⁴ Or the accusative singular of *poima* (flood-lands).

patterned as the last word of Poem 1, the first of 2, the last of 3, and the first of 4), and four times in 'Bezvestia'. The alliteration continues in Poems 9 and 10, and culminates in the single-letter Poem 11.

Поэма 6.

РОБКОТЬ.

Сомь!—а—ви—ка. Сомка!—а—вилъ—до.

'Robkot' is perhaps the most obscure poem of *Smert' iskusstvu*. There are two possible ways of interpreting the title-word. Either it combines the clashing concepts of *robost'* and *rokot*, where the allusion to sound continues the theme exemplified in the title-words 'Stonga', 'Svirel'ga', and 'Grokhlit' (Poem 8); or it is a fusion of *robkii* and *kot*, the cat of this title matching the dog of Poem 4. In the poem, "Som" and "Somka" (probably a diminutive; or a female, by analogy with *samka*) refer to the sheat-fish, a large, predatory, fresh-water fish, upon which, according to one superstition, water spirits ride⁷⁵. The phrases "a—vi—ka" (*a vykhodi-ka?*) and "a—vil'—do" (*a viliai do?*), however, are very unclear. It is not obvious whether this is intended as the cat in the title-word trying to entice the fish out of the water, whether water spirits are involved, etc. While the poem carries references to nature, 'Robkot', like 'Kozlo', does not obviously fit in with the themes of the dying soul, art, and the creation of poetry, that have been present in the cycle thus far.

Поэма 7.

СМОЛЬГА.

Кудрени—Вышлая Мораль.

The word "smol'ga" is based on *smola* (or *smol'*), so the hair mentioned in the poem may be black; it might also contain the suggestion of falling silent (*smolkat'*), the gradual enacting of which is central to the cycle. The '-l'g-' sound of the title-word picks up that of the earlier titles 'Svirel'ga' and 'Kobel' gor'. That which was leaving

⁷⁵ "This fish is the devil's steed, the water spirit rides on it; therefore in certain localities it is not recommended to be used as food. However, one must not scold the caught sheat-fish, lest the water spirit hears and decides to avenge it", E. Grushko and Iu. Medvedev, *Slovar' russkikh sueverii, zaklinanii, primet i poverii*, Nizhnii Novgorod, 1996, p. 444.

for good (“rasprostite”) in Poem 4 may have finally left here (“vyshlaia”). The rather mysterious aphorism that curls (“kudreni” rather than *kudri*) are a ‘moral that has gone’⁷⁶ is on one level an allusion to baldness, and on another, the words “vyshlaia moral” seem to express Gnedov’s attitude towards old or *passé* art.

Поэма 8.

ГРОХЛИТЬ.

Сереброй Нить—Коромысля. Брови.⁷⁷

‘Grokhlit’ continues the portrait of a head alluded to in ‘Smol’ga’⁷⁸. The neologism ‘serebroi’ seems to be either a masculine adjective modifying the feminine noun *nit’*, or the instrumental singular of a feminine noun-neologism “serebra” (i.e. “as silver, a thread...”) ⁷⁹. The poem is almost in the form of a riddle, with the last word supplying the ‘answer’: the silver-coloured thread that yokes the eyes is the eyebrows. The idea of a riddle would connect with the ‘moral’ in ‘Smol’ga’⁸⁰. The way in which two apparently separate impressions are connected by the last word is also reminiscent of *haiku*. It is not known whether this Japanese verse-form bore any direct influence on Gnedov, as it did in the West at around this time on poets such as Ezra Pound. Nevertheless, Ignat’ev seemed to allude to *haiku* in relation to this poem, finding in it an “electrified, extended impressionism, especially characteristic of Japanese poetry”⁸¹. Although none of the *Smert’ iskusstvu* poems fit the 5-7-5 syllable definition of a *haiku* poem, the fact that they are short, unrhymed, enclosed depictions of a scene makes the comparison tenable; and furthermore *haiku* were originally written on a single line.

The noise evoked by the title-word, however, seems in complete contrast to the silent depiction of the poem. “Grokhlit” may be derived from the feminine or neuter past tense of *grokhnit’* and is similar to the word “Grokhlo” in ‘Na vozle bal’⁸²; it is

⁷⁶ The adjective *vyshlyi* is a synonym of *vyshedshii*, *Dal’*, I, p. 796.

⁷⁷ ‘Grokhlit’ has been republished in V. Markov, ‘Odnostroki’, *Vozdushnye puti*, 3 (1963), p. 258.

⁷⁸ Sigei draws a comparison with Khlebnikov’s portrait-poem ‘Bobeobi pelis’ guby’; *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 146.

⁷⁹ Alternatively, if *robkii* and *kot* combine to form “robkot”, the coinage might be a noun consisting of *serebriannyi/serebristy* and *roi*.

⁸⁰ Nilsson has regarded riddles, incantations, and so on, as features of Primitivism; Nilsson, ‘Primitivism’, p. 478.

⁸¹ Ignat’ev, *Egofuturizm*, p. 13.

⁸² “Veseloch'em sypalo perebrodoe Grokhlo”, *Zasakhare kry*, p. 10.

not clear whether the neologism is a third person singular verb or a noun⁸³, and it could be an abbreviated form of *grokh literary*⁸⁴. The crashing or banging noise might well produce a concerned expression, where the eyebrows form the shape of a yoke. ‘Grokhlit’ marks a turning point: whereas Poems 1-8 have been of similar length, there is a dramatic reduction in Poems 9-15; furthermore, the initial ‘b’ of “brovi” heralds the alliteration of that sound in the next two poems.

Поэма 9.

БУБАЯ ГОРЯ.

Буба. Буба. Буба.

The word “bubaia” is a neologistic adjective from *buba*, as was the earlier coinage “bubchigi”. For Gnedov, *buba* meant a grain or in general something circular⁸⁵. Like that of Poem 5 (‘Kobel' gor’), the title of Poem 9 involves a noun combining *gora* and *gora*: “goria” is the standard genitive singular or nominative/accusative plural form, but *gora* would agree with the feminine adjective. The poem itself consists only of the word “Buba” repeated three times, each time followed by a full stop. The triple repetition of the single word “Buba” hints at an incantation or the casting of a spell. There is a record of an earlier version of the poem, drawn from a performance Gnedov gave a month prior to the publication of *Smert' iskusstvu*:

Ба,
ба-ба,
ба-ба,
годен буба,
буба,
ба!⁸⁶

⁸³ Nouns ending ‘-lit’ are all of foreign origin: (people) *mitropolit*, *kosmopolit*, (objects) *megalit*, *monolit*, (minerals) *paleolit*, etc.

⁸⁴ Ironically, the 17-volume Academy dictionary suggests *glavlit* (head administration for the affairs of literature and publishing houses), the main body for literary censorship in the Soviet Union, as a later model for this type of abbreviation (*SSRLIa*, 6, p. 259).

⁸⁵ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 20. Dictionaries list *buba* as a “*prianik*, *publik*”, “berry; pea” (*SRDG*, 3, p. 232), and also a “tumour, bruise, swelling, sore” (*Dal'*, I, p. 329).

⁸⁶ *Den'*, 24 March 1913. Subsequently republished in (and cited here from) V. Gnedov, *Egofuturnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka*, p. 5; and *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 198.

The interchange of ‘buba’ with *baba* creates a number of possible mythological associations: the latter refers to a woman, Baba Yaga, and ‘baba’ the cloud woman⁸⁷. Connections might be made between grain (or circles in general) with fertility and women. Baba and Boba are both words used in Eastern Europe for the last sheaf of the harvest, often made into an effigy of a woman⁸⁸. The folklorist Felix Oinas also notes that *baba* is “a taboo term [which] has certain connections with the realm of the dead, and has also the meaning ‘cake’ [... such cakes are] sacrificial offerings [...] to the spirits of the dead”⁸⁹. Eighteen years after it was published, Shklovskii remembered ‘Bubaia goria’:

Был еще в полотняной куртке Василиск Гнедов, написавший собрание сочинений
страницы в четыре.
Там была поэма «Буба-буба».
На этом она и кончалась⁹⁰.

Another possibility is that the poem is made up of the most basic, repetitive, and desemanticised sounds a baby might make⁹¹. The reduction of poetry to such sounds comes in preparation for further deconstruction into even smaller sound units also emphasising ‘u’, and ‘Bubaia goria’ marks the start of the reduction that culminates in ‘Поэма Kontsa’.

Поэма Ю.

ВОТЬ.

Убезкраю.

The title ‘Vot’ almost commands the reader to look at the poem. At the same time, because it is followed by a full stop, the title functions as a self-enclosed unit; in 1987,

⁸⁷ Note also that *babá* is a dialect word meaning a ‘pelican’ (*SRDG*, I, p. 8).

⁸⁸ J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion* [Third Edition], Part V: *Spirits of the Corn and of the World*, Vol. 1, London, 1925, pp. 144-46.

⁸⁹ F. Oinas, ‘Golubec and Some Notions of the Soul’, *Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology*, Columbus, Ohio, 1985, pp. 77-86 (pp. 83-84).

⁹⁰ Shklovskii, *Poiski optimizma*, pp. 94-95; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 1*, p. 18.

⁹¹ The infantile aspect to the poem is reinforced by another similar, dialect word *boba* (“a child’s toy”; *Dal'*, I, p. 247).

Vsevolod Nekrasov echoed Gnedov's work by publishing a poem consisting only of the word 'Vot' with a dot in the middle of the letter 'o'⁹².

The poem comprises the single neologism "ubezkraiu", which can be separated into prepositions *u* and *bez* and the noun *krai*. The word may function in a variety of ways—as a first person singular verb indicating unconstrained movement⁹³, or a formation of two prepositions and a noun (similar to 'Na vozle bal') indicating the poet's location at the edge of a place that has no edges. However, the most appropriate explanation may be that "ubezkraiu" describes the creation of endless 'u' sounds, the alliteration of which is a central feature of the cycle; at the same time "'u' without an edge" might describe the next poem in the booklet. In the cycle, the poem looks both backwards and forwards—backwards there is also an inverted echo of the "bu" of *buba* in the previous poem, and forwards because the first and last letters ('u' and 'iu') are those of Poems 11 and 14, respectively. The 'iu' of "ubezkraiu" is also repeated in the title of Poem 11, 'Poiui'. In addition, the reduction continues as the poem (title and number aside) now consists of only one word.

Поэма II.

ПОЮЮ.

у—

The title of poem 11 seems to be a combination of the first person singular *poiu* and the second person singular imperative *poi*. So, the lyric subject simultaneously describes what he/she is doing while compelling him/herself to carry on doing it. Alternatively, *poiu* might also have been combined with the singular imperative *voiui*, making the act of singing much more confrontational.

This is the shortest poem in the booklet so far, and, if read in order, the shortest poem thus far in Russian literature (until Poem 14!). The presence of this letter in a poem on its own underscores the idea that *Smert' iskusstvu* is dominated by this sound. In standard Russian, *u* is a preposition governing the genitive case. As a

⁹² V. Nekrasov, 'Vot', *100 stikhotvorenii*, Lexington, Kentucky, 1987, unnumbered page. See Janecek, 'Minimalism', p. 409.

⁹³ In Ukrainian, 'ubez-' is equivalent to the Russian prefix 'obes-'. Note Konstantin Olimpov's neologism "obezkrainil": "Elektricheskii plamen' mirazha/ Obezkrainil kudriavye spazmy"; K. Olimpov, 'Interliudiia', in his *Zhonglery-nervy*, St Petersburg, 1913, p. 3.

verbal or substantival prefix, ‘u-’ carries a number of interesting associations: removal/movement away (*ubegat’*, *uekhat’*, *unosit’*); removal of part/reduction in quantity (*udelit’*, *urezat’*); completion of an action (*upast’*), completion despite adverse circumstances (*uberech’*, *uderzhat’*, *usidet’*); containment (*ulozhit’*, *umestit’*, *upisat’*); and others⁹⁴. It is interesting that the meaning of the preposition and prefix seem to contrast (‘near’ and ‘movement away from’). It is also a verbal suffix, denoting the first person singular of the verb. The letter is used on its own in exclamations of fear, reproach, shame, and (as a synonym of *ukh!*) surprise or tiredness⁹⁵. The sound ‘u’ evoked various semantic impressions for Viacheslav Ivanov (“gloominess”), Andrei Belyi (“unearthliness”), Khlebnikov (“submissiveness”), and David Burluk (“‘u’ is empty (*utvar’*, *utroba*)”)⁹⁶. For Taranovskii, the narrow vowel ‘u’ represents “incompleteness, loss of inner balance, weakness, even distress, – the emotions which may be summed up by the common term *instability*”⁹⁷. Such gloominess, emptiness, and instability is appropriate in the cycle; the letter ‘u’ was originally associated with the soul (“Dushu”), and so this poem may represent the final departure and disintegration of the soul that was felt in Poems 1-5.

The long dash that follows the ‘U’ is significant, suggesting that the punctuation mark is the start of something, that the poem is part of something larger. The lack of finality is emphasised by the absence of a full stop after the dash. As Tomashevskii⁹⁸ and Nilsson have shown, the single letter of Poem 11 is the start of a verb that is ended in Poem 14, i.e. the two poems form the first and last letters of numerous first person singular present tense verbs. Thus, according to Nilsson, the reader is left to make a free and intuitive choice of verb, making the two single-letter poems “a programmatic statement of Ego-Futurism”⁹⁹. The space between Poems 11 and 14 can be filled by various possible verbs: *u-leta-iu*, *u-bega-iu*, *u-polza-iu*, *u-vleka-iu*, *u-tochnia-iu*, *u-nichtozha-iu*, *u-mira-iu*, *u-prazdnia-iu*, *u-tverzhda-iu*, *u-*

⁹⁴ *Grammatika russkogo iazyka*, eds. V. Vinogradov et al., 1, Moscow, 1960, pp. 922-23.

⁹⁵ *Dal’*, IV, pp. 907, 1115.

⁹⁶ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 148.

⁹⁷ K. Taranovski, ‘The Sound Texture of Russian Verse in the Light of Phonemic Distinctive Features’, *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*, 9 (1965), pp. 114-24 (p. 119).

⁹⁸ Tomashevskii, *Stilistika*, p. 182.

⁹⁹ N. Nilsson, ‘Vasilisk Gnedov’s One-Letter Poems’, *Gorski Vijenats: a Garland of Essays for E.M. Hill*, Publications of the Modern Humanities Research Association. Volume 2, eds. R. Auty, L. Lewitter, and A. Vlasto, Cambridge, 1970, pp. 220-23 (p. 223).

*molka-iu*¹⁰⁰, and, of course, the word “ubezkraiu” from Poem 10 could be included here too.

Finally, Poem 11 is also illustrative of the process of reduction: from the repetition of the word “buba” (Poem 9), to the repetition of the ‘u’ (*u-bez-kraiu*; Poem 10), to the single letter. Furthermore, this reduction is reinforced visually. On page 6, leaving aside the right-aligned poem number indicator and centre-aligned title, Poems 9, 10, and 11 together form a triangular shape, e.g.:

Буба. Буба. Буба.
Убезкраю.
у—

With the exception of the one in *Sobranie stikhotvoreniĭ*, all subsequent republications of *Smert' iskusstvu* have ignored this typographical feature.

Поэма 12.

ВЧЕРАЕТЬ.

Моему Братцу 8 лѣтъ.—Петруша.

After the single-letter Poem 11, this poem has expanded to a single line, before the contraction once again to a single letter in Poem 14. “Vcheraet” conflates *vchera* and *vechet'*, to create a present tense verb for the state of being yesterday or the drawing to a close of yesterday. The poem is written in standard Russian. It is interesting that the words ‘Moemu Brattsu 8 let.—Petrusha’ of the last discursive poem in the cycle seem to be an inconsequential statement. ‘Petrusha’ is a diminutive of the name Petr, presumably referring to the brother or the writer whose brother is eight; it is also close to *Petrushka*, a character from Russian puppet theatre. *Petrusha* is, of course, also the word for parsley. The poem repeats the sound ‘u’ three times, once again highlighting its importance.

¹⁰⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 148.

Поэма 13.

Издѣватъ.

Poem 13 has no title: the process of reduction is accelerating. It is the second poem to have only one word as its text and it lies opposite the other one—‘Vot’ (Poem 10) on page 6. The message of this word, however, is quite different. Gnedov may be foregrounding the booklet’s scandalous intention: “izdevat” may be a contracted, non-reflexive form of *izdevat'sia*, or an abbreviation of *izdevatel'stvo*. Another interpretation might be a combination of *iz* and the verb *devat'*, implying a ‘doing away’ type of action: from Poem 9, elements of poetry have been discarded and this poem has lost its title. Poems 14 and 15 complete the process¹⁰¹.

Поэма 14.

Ю.

Like Poem 13, this poem has no title (just a number) and consists only of the capital letter and a full stop. It was the shortest poem ever written until Vsevolod Nekrasov’s full-stop poem¹⁰². A certain M. Mogilianskii, mistakenly believing the poem to be by Kruchenykh, described a stage performance at the same club: “[Gnedov] paused and then threw both arms upwards, [...] a hole of about two *vershoks* in width formed between the end [of his waistcoat] and the start of his trousers, and he inspirationally cried out: – Iu!”¹⁰³. The letter ‘iu’ alone carries a wealth of associations. The critic Boris Tomashevskii believed the poem should be considered as a first person singular verb ending¹⁰⁴. Janecek lists further possibilities:

In addition to its being a verb ending, *yu* serves as a noun ending... including both genders.
In terms of articulation, the extremes of front glide (*y*) and back vowel (*u*) are combined.
And it is the only letter that has this diphthong nature reflected in its graphic shape, which combines the opposites of the line and the circle or, in numbers, the 1 and the 0¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰¹ A final possibility is that “izdevat” might even be perceived as *iz deviaty*, i.e. that this poem is ‘made out of’ Poem 9 (the repeated ‘u’ sounds that end in ‘iu’).

¹⁰² See Janecek, ‘Minimalism’, p. 405.

¹⁰³ M. Mogilianskii, ‘Kabare “Brodiachei sobaki”’: tipazhi i nruvy kabare’, RO GPB im. Saltykova-Shchedrina, fond 1080, ed. khr. 4, l. 4; quoted from Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 120.

¹⁰⁴ Tomashevskii, *Stilistika*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁵ Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 103.

The numbers ‘1’ and ‘0’ could represent something and nothing, so within the letter itself is an indication of the relation of Poem 14 to Poem 15¹⁰⁶. Jensen has noted that it is also the second last letter of the Russian alphabet before ‘ia’, which, by association, adds a new dimension—that of egoism—to ‘Poema Kontsa’¹⁰⁷. However, in pre-1917 orthography the letter Я was succeeded by the letters Ѡ and Ѣ, so unfortunately Jensen’s theory loses some of its weight.

In the Futurist Vasilii Kamenskii’s poem ‘Solovei’ (1916), the letter ‘iu’ is highlighted throughout—it is derived from the sound of the nightingale’s song and becomes an entity in itself. At times, Kamenskii’s poem seems very close to Gnedov’s work (“I ia poiu Iu/ Liubliu/ Iu”) and it ends:

Ю—для меня—только песня поэта.

Ю—невеста—мечта—бирюзовь.

Ю—легендами счастья одета.

Ю—извечная зовь¹⁰⁸.

Poem 14 lies opposite its counterpart one-letter poem (‘Poiui’, Poem 11), although there is even less of this poem—here there is not even a title. With the letter ‘iu’ and a full stop, all potential first person singular verbs that started with the ‘U—’ in Poem 11 have come to an end. The triangular pattern of the poems on page 6 is duplicated by the poems on page 7, increasing the visual expression of the process of reduction in *Smert’ iskusstvu*:

Моему Братцу 8 лѣтъ.—Петруша.

Издѣвать.

Ю.

¹⁰⁶ In addition, *iu* was the Old Russian for the accusative/genitive female personal pronoun *eĭ*. Perhaps “Iu.” could even be an abbreviation of *iug*, instructing the reader to look down to the next page (?!).

¹⁰⁷ K. Jensen, ‘La poetica del lettore (La poetica ‘zaum’ dei futuristi russi)’, *il verri*, 29-30, 1983, pp. 7-14 (pp. 11-13); referred to from Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 103.

¹⁰⁸ V. Kamenskii, ‘Solovei’, in his *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, intro., text prep., and notes N. Stepanov, Moscow, 1966, p. 75. Also quoted in this context in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 149.

The letter ‘iu’ is the last repetition of the sound from “ubezkraiu” and ‘Poiui’. In repeating the ‘iu’ of “ubezkraiu”, the complete end of that word is emphasised. The desire to go beyond the limits of poetry is acted on in the last poem in the cycle.

Поэма Конца (15).

In the centre of page 8 of *Smert' iskusstvu* are the words ‘Poema Kontsa’, the poem number in brackets, and a full stop. Elsewhere on the page there is the logotype of “Typo-litografiia T-va Svet” (featuring an emblem with its name, address, and the year 1913) and the page number in the top right-hand corner. The reader looks for more text but there is nothing else; the opposite page is the inside back cover of the book, blank and crimson-coloured. Attention is drawn to the way this *dénouement* has been set up. In the previous poems, the poem titles are written in capital letters, whereas the actual poem and the poem-number designation (e.g. “Poema 12”) are lower case; the title cannot be considered to be a verse in the poem and the numbering ensures each poem remains independent. The way ‘Poema Kontsa’ is written (lower case letters, centre alignment, use of the word “Poema”) is a combination of title, designation, and poem.

A common view of ‘Poema Kontsa’ was expressed by Kornei Chukovskii, that the poem is “simply a blank sheet of paper”¹⁰⁹. Other critics have noted that the poem consists of its title¹¹⁰. Clearly, there are things written on page 8 of *Smert' iskusstvu*, but the question is which elements are essential to the poem and which are not. The title is necessary for the reader to anticipate a text, and perhaps the full stop too, to emphasise the poem’s finality; the context-providing elements—the poem number, page number, and printer’s stamp—are not¹¹¹. In the original publication, however, all these elements (whether accidentally or not) became part of the text. As Janecek points

¹⁰⁹ K. Chukovskii, ‘Russkie futuristy’, *Russkoe slovo*, 19 November 1913; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 64. The same view is expressed in Aigi, ‘Russkii poeticheskii avangard’, pp. 28-31 (p. 30).

¹¹⁰ V. L'vov-Rogachevskii, ‘Simvolisty i nasledniki ikh’; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 64. S. Compton, *The World Backwards: Russian Futurist Books, 1912-16*, London, 1978, pp. 111-112. D. Kuz'min, ‘Kommentarii’, p. 19.

¹¹¹ For example, the poem number is correct only if ‘Poema Kontsa’ is printed after the other 14 poems of *Smert' iskusstvu*, and obviously the page number is not always going to be 8.

out, the expectation set up in the title creates a frame which focuses on every element on the page¹¹².

The confusion as to the substance of the poem is reflected in its subsequent republications. The version of 'Poema Kontsa' discussed above is the first one, published in the original edition of *Smert' iskusstvu* by Peterburgskii glashatai in the first week of April 1913. Two recent editions—one accompanying the article by Gennadii Aigi in *V mire knig*¹¹³ and another found in the anthology *Russkaia poeziia "serebrianogo veka"*¹¹⁴—attempt to put all 15 poems together on a single page. Here, 'Poema Kontsa' is no longer highlighted as an independent entity with its own page and it loses its impact. In *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, Orlickii holds that M. Shapir, by including the name of the publisher and translator in his publication of 'Poema Kontsa' in the journal *Daugava*¹¹⁵, has created a new text that "is saturated with more than three times the verbal information of the [original] poem"¹¹⁶. In fact, the poem changes with each republication. Kuz'min has looked at mistakes in the various publications, and considers his own edition of the cycle the most authentic, more so than the original in fact, but this claim is not borne out¹¹⁷. The poem has twice been translated into English¹¹⁸.

What is the significance of 'Poema Kontsa'? First of all, the poem needs to be looked at in the context of the cycle. On one level, 'Poema Kontsa' is a perfectly logical name for the last poem on the last page in the book, the poetic equivalent of putting 'Konets' (The End) at the end of a novel. In terms of *Smert' iskusstvu*, the poem represents the logical outcome of the process of reduction, where one-line poems have been broken down into single words, letters, and finally, a poem where there is actually no poem at all. The gradual abbreviation and deconstruction of the

¹¹² See Janecek, 'Minimalism', pp. 402, 403, 407. Following this logic, we should note that the original page number is also an intrinsic part of the original poem.

¹¹³ Aigi, 'Russkii poeticheskii avangard', p. 31.

¹¹⁴ *Russkaia poeziia "serebrianogo veka"*, p. 515.

¹¹⁵ V. Gnedov, 'Poema kontsa', text prep. and publication M. Shapir and L. Katsis, *Daugava*, 10 (1990), p. 105.

¹¹⁶ Iu. Orlickii, 'Vizual'nyi komponent v sovremennoi russkoi poezii', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 16, 1995, p. 189.

¹¹⁷ Kuz'min, 'Kommentarii', p. 21. By putting all the poems on their own page, Kuz'min's republication ignores the triangle shapes formed by Poems 9-11 and 12-14; furthermore, unnecessary decorative diamonds are added on each page (apart from 'Poema Kontsa').

¹¹⁸ V. Gnedov, 'Poem of the End' (transl. V. Markov), in *Modern Russian Poetry*, p. 363; V. Gnedov, 'Endpoem' (transl. R. Milner-Gulland), in *Tatlin's Dream*, p. 56.

poems (the ‘killing of art’) culminates in ‘Poema Kontsa’ (its ‘death’). In his foreword to *Smert' iskusstvu*, Ivan Ignat'ev pictures art in crisis: “Surely the agony of the Present, of the vulgar past, was clear for each Art? The Art of the Day has died...”¹¹⁹.

‘Poema Kontsa’, and *Smert' iskusstvu* as a whole, has been viewed as devoid of any real significance, as existing for shock value alone. Those for whom Futurism was offensive found ‘Poema Kontsa’ to be an attention-grabbing gimmick—something that was done because it could be done and because it had not been done before—and nothing more. Even for fellow Egofuturist Vadim Shershenevich, the poem was only a short-lived stunt¹²⁰. Pavel Florenskii examined ‘Poema Kontsa’ in a survey of Futurist experiments of ever-smaller size (from *zaum'* words to letters and punctuation marks) and questioned Gnedov's motivation: “no-one dares [...] speak of his subjective insincerity or of his propensity for mystification”¹²¹. Given the socio-political context of the time, it is perhaps not surprising that Chukovskii viewed ‘Poema Kontsa’ as an unremittingly negative statement, playing on nihilistic and destructive tendencies in the Russian psyche:

Вот воистину последнее освобождение, последнее оголение души. Это бунт против всего без изъятия, вечный, исконный, коренной российский нигилистический бунт, вечная наша нечаевщина, и это совершенная случайность, что теперь прикрылась футуризмом¹²².

Had ‘Poema Kontsa’ been written in 1917, of course, it would have acquired quite different political connotations. A variety of other religious, mystical, and philosophical associations can be related to the concept of nothingness exemplified in the poem¹²³.

¹¹⁹ Ignat'ev, ‘Preslovie’, *Smert' iskusstvu*, p. 1.

¹²⁰ Shershenevich, ‘Velikolepnyi ochevidets’, p. 495. Shershenevich never approved of Gnedov's poetry. In his 1914 book on Futurism, he refused to consider Gnedov a significant contributor to Egofuturism (Shershenevich, *Futurizm bez maski*, p. 87, footnote 2).

¹²¹ P. Florenskii, ‘Antonomiia iazyka’, *Studia Slavica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 32, 1–4, 1986, p. 153; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 71. Note that Florenskii incorrectly states that ‘Poema Kontsa’ consists only of the word ‘shish’; that was in fact the poem by Kruchenykh in imitation-Hebrew lettering on the last page of his booklet *Vzorval'* (1913).

¹²² Chukovskii, ‘Ego-futuristy i kubofuturisty’, p. 130.

¹²³ These range from the nothingness of Nirvana in Zen Buddhism; a Cabbalistic anagram in Jewish mystical thought serving to corroborate the idea that “in each transformation of reality [...] the abyss of Nothingness is spanned [...] by demonstrating that ‘nothing’ in Hebrew is *Ain*, and that the same letters form the word for ‘I’—*Ani*” (Cirlot, *Dictionary of Symbols*, p. 230); to the theme of nothingness in Sartre and Existentialism.

For Ignat'ev, the word was losing its power to signify, and he viewed intuitive wordless communication as an ultimate ideal, a re-establishment of the communication Man had once had with God in Paradise¹²⁴. 'Poema Kontsa' may also be connected with the theme of whiteness, in the sense of a blank page (in Russian, *belaia stranitsa*). The fear of the empty whiteness of a page before writing is a concern for Mallarmé¹²⁵, but, for Gnedov, the blank page is an end in itself rather than a point of departure. This is significant in Gnedov's subsequent poems, particularly 'Poema nachala', which has the subtitle "(Beloe)" and whose central theme is whiteness. Ironically, the poem with the least verbal information can be seen to have huge signifying potential.

It is often the case that ambiguities in a poem find a possible resolution through its public recital: the intonational patterns or auxiliary gestures chosen give strong indications of a poem's meaning. However, in this case, the poem if anything only becomes more ambiguous. There are several accounts of Gnedov performing 'Poema Kontsa' on stage, and evidently it differed considerably from occasion to occasion. In the foreword to *Smert' iskusstvu*, Ignat'ev gives the following description: "[Gnedov's] hand drew a line: from left to right and vice-versa (the second cancelled out the first, as a plus and minus equals a minus). 'Poema Kontsa' is indeed a 'Poem of Nothing', a zero as it is depicted graphically"¹²⁶. Similarly, Shklovskii recalled a criss-cross movement¹²⁷. However, a performance witnessed by poet and memoirist Vladimir Piast at St Petersburg's Brodiachaia sobaka nightclub consisted of a hook-like gesture, where a hand was "raised quickly in front of his hair and sharply downwards, and then sideways to the right"¹²⁸. Another performance was more elaborate. Gnedov started by adopting a defiant pose, hands on hips; "then, standing on his left leg and folding his left arm behind, with his right hand he silently made some kind of upwards gesture and left the stage"¹²⁹. As Janecek has noted, the recited performance of zero in literature

¹²⁴ Ignat'ev, 'Preslovie', *Smert' iskusstvu*, p. 1.

¹²⁵ For example, in 'Brise Marine', nothing will stop the poet from departing to sea (i.e. creating poetry): "Rien [...] ni la clarté déserte de ma lampe/ Sur le vide papier que la blancheur défend"; S. Mallarmé, *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. M. Caws, New York, 1982, p. 16.

¹²⁶ Ignat'ev, 'Preslovie', *Smert' iskusstvu*, p. 2.

¹²⁷ Shklovskii, *Poiski optimizma*, pp. 94-95; also quoted in *Zabytyi avangard 1*, p. 18.

¹²⁸ Piast, *Vstrechi*, p. 263.

¹²⁹ A. Nevskii, 'Nadezhdy futuristov na... leshego', *Peterburgskaia gazeta*, 18 April 1913; quoted from Parnis and Timenchik, 'Programmy "Brodiachei sobaki"', p. 227. The Constructivist poet Chicherin apparently recited 'Poema Kontsa' by "silently crossing his arms and making a tragic face" (V. Shalamov, 'Oskolki 20-kh godov', *A-Ia*, 1, 1985, p. 142; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 67). Chicherin did perform works of other Futurists in the 1920s and it is conceivable that 'Poema Kontsa'



would logically be complete silence¹³⁰. Indeed, all the performances of ‘Poema Kontsa’ were silent, except for one witnessed by the literary critic Georgii Adamovich:

На литературных вечерах ему кричали: «Гнедов, поэма конца!»... «Василиск, Василиск!» Он выходил мрачный, с каменным лицом, именно «под Хлебникова», долго молчал, потом медленно поднимал тяжелый кулак—и вполголоса говорил: «всё!»¹³¹.

Thus, a gesture of finality followed by its verbal equivalent. Other accounts are less specific¹³². Sigei is interested in which hand Gnedov used to perform the gesture, noting that in Mayan writing the hand was symbolic of zero, and in primitive drawings it was apparently a representation of God without a face¹³³. The on-stage version of ‘Poema Kontsa’ was the first gesture poem¹³⁴; in combining poetry with performance art¹³⁵ or dance¹³⁶, Gnedov achieved a form of the synthetic art to which the Egofuturists aspired¹³⁷. Krusanov suggests that at this meeting-point, we are dealing not with “the death of art, but its very sources”¹³⁸.

The use of or concern with blank pages in literature does not originate with Gnedov. Sigei has pointed out that, in prose, there are blank pages in Lawrence Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* (written 1759-67). One interrupts Chapter 38 of Volume VI

was one. There is some confusion in Shalamov’s account, however: the name “Aleksei Ivanovich Chicherin” seems to combine Aleksei Nikolaevich Chicherin and Vasilii Ivanovich Gnedov, and neither Chicherin nor Gnedov could be described as a “nichevok” as Shalamov did later in his account.

¹³⁰ Janecek, ‘Minimalism’, p. 407. The complete absence of any text might have been represented by Gnedov not performing the poem at all!

¹³¹ G. Adamovich, ‘Nevozmozhnost’ poezii’ (1958), in his *Kriticheskaia proza*, ed. V. Smirnov, Moscow, 1996, pp. 320-36 (p. 335). The same passage can be found in *Zabytyi avangard 1*, p. 18.

¹³² Another account, from a recital at the Zhenskii meditsinskii institut (2 November 1913), describes an unspecified “mimetic declamation”; *Den’*, 4 November 1913, p. 3; quoted from Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 145. Briusov’s description was equally vague: “a movement of the hand, without any words” (Briusov, ‘God russkoi poezii’, pp. 430-52 (p. 435, note 1)). Solomon Volkov also describes a recited version of the poem (S. Volkov, *St Petersburg*, p. 187).

¹³³ *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 149-50.

¹³⁴ R. Nikonova-Tarshis, ‘Kaaba Abstraktsii’, *Zaum’ i abstraktsii*, Eisk, 1991, pp. 20-29; quoted from *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 68.

¹³⁵ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 7.

¹³⁶ The Egofuturists were interested in the connection between poetry and dance. The announcement entitled ‘Ego-Futurnyi pliaset’ on the back cover of the ninth Egofuturist collection *Razvorocheny cherepa* stated that, in October 1913, Isadora Duncan would “‘rhythmify’ (“ritmovat’”) the poetry of the Gnedov and Ignat’ev on the stage of the “St Petersburg branch of the Universal Ego-Theatre”. Of course, the event never took place.

¹³⁷ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 150.

¹³⁸ Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 309, note 403.

and is completely blank, whereas the other two in Volume IX carry the words “Chapter Eighteen” and “Chapter Nineteen” and thus, in a formal sense, are closer to ‘Poema Kontsa’. In poetry, Parnis has noted two possible predecessors¹³⁹, if not exact equivalents. Mallarmé’s ‘Un Coup de Dés...’ (first published only in 1914) has a page consisting only of the words “N’ABOLIRA”. In the book *Natura Naturans. Natura Naturata* (1895) by the Decadent Symbolist poet Aleksandr Dobroliubov, the title page of one poem consists only of the letter “Я”¹⁴⁰. Subsequently, Marina Tsvetaeva’s *Poema kontsa* (1924), on the other hand, was a full-length *poema* about a more concrete kind of end, that of a relationship. Two recent poems that, like Gnedov’s, consist of only a title exploit the visual side of the blank page: Gennadii Aigi’s ‘Stikhotvorenii-nazvanie: Belaia babochka, pereletaiushchaia cherez szhatoe pole’ (1982)¹⁴¹, and ‘Camouflage Poem’ (1998) by John Barlow¹⁴².

‘Poema Kontsa’ was an important predecessor of the concept of the ‘literary vacuum’, as discussed by the poet Ry Nikonova. The substance of this idea seems to be that a text can exist in many environments and many forms, not just in terms of words on a page in a book. The vacuum is a “text of the absence of a text”¹⁴³. The page and the title of ‘Poema Kontsa’ are the last contacts with book-oriented literature, as this act precedes a move into space. Literature has started to leave the page, creating a ‘text-shaped hole’.

The idea of the reduction of the essential elements to nothingness expressed in ‘Poema Kontsa’ and *Smert’ iskusstvu* has a resonance outside poetry. Most prominently there is Malevich’s painting *Chernyi kvadrat* (a black square surrounded by white) and his Suprematist paintings from 1915 onwards, although Compton insists that Malevich “was not imitating” Gnedov¹⁴⁴. In a strict sense, an equivalent of ‘Poema Kontsa’ in painting would be a titled blank canvas. However, Nikonova argues that *Chernyi kvadrat* can be viewed “as a literary collapse, containing in itself every word

¹³⁹ A. Parnis, ‘Gnedov Vasilisk’, *Russkie pisateli*, 1, p. 590.

¹⁴⁰ A. Dobroliubov, *Sochineniia. Natura Naturans, Natura Naturata. Sbranie stikhov. Iz al'manakha 'Severnye tsvety' na 1901, 1902 i 1903*, intro. J. Grossman, Berkeley, 1981, p. 93 (p. 73 of the reproduced *Natura Naturans*).

¹⁴¹ G. Aigi, ‘Stikhotvorenii-nazvanie: Belaia babochka, pereletaiushchaia cherez szhatoe pole’, in his *Teper' vseгда snega. Stikhi raznykh let*, Moscow, 1992, p. 230.

¹⁴² J. Barlow, ‘Camouflage Poem’, *Still. A Journal of Short Verse*, 1 (1998), p. 71.

¹⁴³ R. Nikonova-Tarshis, ‘Ekologiya pauzy’, p. 36.

¹⁴⁴ Compton, *World Backwards*, pp. 111-12.

of every language of every time and people”¹⁴⁵; the inference of a myriad of infinite possibilities is equally possible for ‘Poema Kontsa’. In reflecting associations connected with whiteness, the poem can be related to the numerous white canvasses, blank except for minimal amounts of contouring, that have been painted between the 1950s and the present day¹⁴⁶. In a lecture given in Leningrad in 1988, Aleksandr Parnis put forward the idea that ‘Poema Kontsa’ was the first in a line of ‘nothings’ in art: others were Malevich and Rodchenko’s paintings and, in music, John Cage’s *4:33*” and *0’00*”¹⁴⁷.

The brevity of the *Smert’ iskusstvu* poems is striking¹⁴⁸ and may have shocked contemporary readers. Before the twentieth century, single-line texts had existed in Western literature in forms such as epigrams, aphorisms, and so on, but were not generally considered to be poetry; even today it may be difficult to accept ‘U—’, ‘Iu’, and ‘Poema Kontsa’ as such. It is possible, as has been suggested here, that Gnedov may have been influenced by Japanese short verse-forms (*haiku*), or even riddles. Not that Gnedov was the first to write monostichs—Briusov’s scandalous poem ‘O, zakroi svoi blednye nogi’ (1895)¹⁴⁹ is one predecessor; and Markov’s 1963 article ‘Odnostroki’ shows that Bal’mont and some Futurists wrote them too¹⁵⁰; but *Smert’ iskusstvu* was a more consistent display than had previously been seen in Russian literature. As we have seen, until recently, Poems 11 and 14 were the shortest poems ever written in any language.

While audiences responded to ‘Poema Kontsa’ and the other *Smert’ iskusstvu* poems with a mixture of astonished laughter and bewilderment, critical reaction was

¹⁴⁵ R. Nikonova-Tarshis, ‘Slovo - lishnee kak takovoe’, *Urbi*; quoted from page 2 of the internet site: <http://www.inforis.nnov.su/n-nov/culture/art/urbi/nikonova.html>

¹⁴⁶ For example, ‘Monochrome blanc’ (1958) by Yves Klein, ‘Sans titre’ (1958) by James Bishop, ‘Opalka 1965’ (1965-82) by Roman Opalka, ‘Rhythme du millimètre’ (1977) by Aurelie Nemours, ‘Blanc de Blanc’ (1987) by Olivier Morset.

¹⁴⁷ Parnis gave written evidence of Malevich’s interest in ‘Poema Kontsa’. Chronologically, *Chernyi kvadrat* was painted in 1915, two years after Gnedov’s poem was published, and Malevich’s white canvasses were not exhibited until December 1919 (Sarab’ianov and Shatskikh, *Kazimir Malevich*, p. 189, note 36; see also Parnis, *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, p. 233; and Parnis, *Russkie pisateli*, 1, pp. 589-90).

¹⁴⁸ Ignat’ev (*Egofuturizm*, p. 13) referred to Gnedov’s technique as “stenography”.

¹⁴⁹ Shemshurin, *Futurizm v stikhakh V. Briusova*, p. 21; and *Rech’*, 11 April 1913; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 201.

¹⁵⁰ Vladimir Markov reprinted ‘Grokhlit’ in the context of the history of the one-line poem: in Markov, ‘Odnostroki’, p. 258. D. Kuz’mín is preparing an “Antologija russkogo monostikha” (Kuz’mín, ‘Kommentarii’, p. 20).

hostile. The booklet incensed L'vov-Rogachevskii, for whom this was “the masterpiece of an ‘insolent cretin (*obnaglevshei bezdari*)”¹⁵¹, and the newspaper *Birzhevye vedomosti* described its contents as the “ravings of a frontliner (*bred peredunchika*)”¹⁵². The title alone provoked scorn. Aleksandr Benua believed that the emphasis on death was causing the lack of creativity in culture at the time:

Какой может быть разговор о жизни, когда в основе всей современной культуры лежит смерть не только искусства, как об этом лаконически вещает книжка г. Гнедова, но просто смерть «всякого духа»?¹⁵³

More mundane associations were made by another critic, D. Levin, who found himself reminded of an advertising campaign slogan: “death to flies, cockroaches, etc”¹⁵⁴.

The title and the theme of *Smert' iskusstvu* seemed to capture the *zeitgeist*. The idea of the death of poetry was implicit in the condensing of language and in the attacks on beauty and art made by the Italian Futurists. As the painter and critic Soffici wrote in *Primi Principii di Una Estetica Futurista* (1920): “Art’s final masterpiece will be its own destruction”¹⁵⁵. In the 1860s, Russian Nihilist writings such as Pisarev’s *Razrushenie estetiki* had contemplated the end of art because of its subjectivity and absence of utilitarian purpose. Eight years after the publication of Gnedov’s booklet, in 1921, Aleksei Gan recycled its title as a Constructivist slogan. Art should be killed off because it was “a product of extreme individualism”, a product of bourgeois culture inappropriate to the times:

¹⁵¹ L'vov-Rogachevskii, ‘Simvolisty i nasledniki ikh’; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 201; and *Zabytyi avangard 2*, p. 65.

¹⁵² Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 116.

¹⁵³ A. Benua, *Rech'*, 12 April 1913; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 201. During his visit to Russia, Marinetti gave his opinions on the difference between Italian and Russian Futurism in a newspaper article from 2 February 1914. While the Italians “are tightly forged together with life, and will not spurn it for anything”, the Russian Futurists “have their heads in the skies, do not love ‘the earth’, deny life” (*Den'*, 2 February 1914, p. 4; quoted from Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 172). Might Marinetti have been influenced by having seen Gnedov perform ‘Poema Kontsa’ the night before at St Petersburg’s Kalashnikovskaia birzha?

¹⁵⁴ D. Levin, *Rech'*, 11 April 1913; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 201.

¹⁵⁵ Quoted from R. Trillo Clough, *Futurism. The Story of a Modern Art Movement. A New Appraisal*, New York, 1961, p. 58.

Смерть искусству!
 Оно естественно возникло
 естественно развивалось
 естественно пришло к своему исчезновению¹⁵⁶.

At around the same time, Dada artists in Berlin and Paris were practising ‘Anti-Art’: “Art has been ‘thought through to a conclusion’; in other words it is eliminated. Nothing, *nihil*, is all that is left”¹⁵⁷. Hence, the intention of Marcel Duchamp’s infamous Mona Lisa with a moustache was “to administer a strong purgative to an age riddled with lies”¹⁵⁸. Another later echo was the situationist slogan daubed on the walls of the Sorbonne during the student demonstrations of the 1960s, “Art is dead, let us create everyday life”.

However, *Smert' iskusstvu* is much more than just a piece of Avant-Garde provocation. In a general sense, it shares its central theme with Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring*, that something has to die for there to be new life. To some extent, the cycle is based on South Russian folk rituals involving the last sheaf of the harvest. Sigei writes:

тот, кто оказывался последним в игровой гонке жнецов по полю, переступил черту Конца и приносился в жертву Бубе. В древности это были именно человеческие жертвоприношения, в конце века—шутовские обряды, сохранившие тем не менее ноту ужаса и смертного Конца. Именно об этом—личном опыте поэта, выросшего в деревне—«Поэма Конца»¹⁵⁹.

Such a reading seems justified. A precedent for Gnedov applying his interest in folklore and ritual can be found in ‘Gurebka proklenushkov’, and there may well be some connection between the race described above and that in the second stanza of ‘Kozii slashch’. Sigei’s theory can be developed with particular regard to Poem 1. As we have seen, among the Slavs this sheaf is often made into an effigy of a woman that was held to carry the spirit of the field (the “buba” of Poem 9). It was either revered or

¹⁵⁶ A. Gan, *Konstruktivizm*, Moscow, 1922 [reprint: Milan, Edizioni Dello Scorpione, 1977], pp. 18-19. A translation of extracts of Gan’s article can be found in *Russian Art of the Avant-Garde. Theory and Criticism 1902-1934*, ed. and revised J. Bowlt, New York, 1988, p. 221.

¹⁵⁷ H. Richter, *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, transl. D. Britt, London, 1965 (1997), p. 91.

¹⁵⁸ Richter, *Dada*, p. 91.

¹⁵⁹ Letter from Sigei, dated 5.10.97. Also see Sigei, ‘besedy v blizine mirgoroda’, p. 44; and *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 20.

beaten to get rid of the spirit; in Bulgaria, for example, the Corn-mother was “burned and the ashes strewn on the fields, doubtless to fertilise them”¹⁶⁰. Wormwood is held to be the cause of a poor harvest¹⁶¹, so it may be that the poem is an impression of just such a ritual, where the soul of the burning wormwood emits a groan (“Stonga”). In Poem 9, the repeated single word “Buba” might be seen as a chant or incantation as part of such a ritual¹⁶².

Clearly, there is still much work that can be done on *Smert' iskusstvu*. Interpretations of the cycle as a whole remain tentative because of the obscure and elliptical nature of some of the poems. The lack of clarity and/or ambiguities in the language can result in an almost endless variety of interpretations: ‘death to art’ might also be understood as the handing-over of the texts entirely to the reader, to the context in which a given poem is read. The complexities of Gnedov’s neologistic writing brought the poet back to the first and most simple stage of writing, the blank page. As Shklovskii wrote: “[the Futurists] sought new means of transferring information [...] by creating new languages or even by rejecting language (Gnedov). But even this was a search for a new language”¹⁶³.

Immorteli

Whether viewed as a faltering of his conviction to experiment or as a determination to diversify, Gnedov’s reaction to implications of *Smert' isskustvu* was to vary his writing considerably. Vasilisk Gnedov was the only representative of Futurism in the miscellany *Immorteli* (end of June 1913)¹⁶⁴ and his ‘Pechal'naia skazka’ itself is strikingly un-Futurist. The poem contains no neologisms and no lexical peculiarities. The metre is an entirely regular trochaic tetrameter maintained throughout the poem’s four stanzas, but broken up by a refrain after each one. All the

¹⁶⁰ See Frazer, *Golden Bough. Part V*, 1, p. 146.

¹⁶¹ See Grushko and Medvedev, *Slovar' russkikh sueverii*, p. 371.

¹⁶² Sigei has also compared *Smert' iskusstvu* to Karesansui, the garden of stones in the Ryoanji Buddhist temple in Kyoto. The garden has 15 rocks, which are placed so that only 14 are visible at one time; the last becomes visible to the mind’s eye as a result of spiritual enlightenment gained from deep meditation. The connection is perhaps no more than coincidental, although clearly both Zen Buddhism and ‘Poema Kontsa’ share a concern with non-verbal communication. *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 147-48.

¹⁶³ V. Shklovskii, ‘O zaumnom iazyke. 70 let spustia’, in *Russkii literaturnyi avangard. Materialy i issledovaniia*, eds. M. Marzaduri, D. Rizzi, and M. Evzlin, Trento, 1990, p. 259.

¹⁶⁴ V. Gnedov, ‘Pechal'naia skazka’, in *Immorteli*, p. 63. The poem is republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 50.

rhymes are masculine, and the final-syllable stress gives the poem a repetitive quality. Nevertheless, 'Pechal'naia skazka' concerns the death of a poet and the refrain after each stanza may well carry an allusion to *Smert' iskusstvu*:

Возлѣ рѣчки теремъ-домъ,
 В терему томъ золотомъ
 Блѣдный юноша лежитъ
 Вѣчнымъ сномъ заснулъ,—и спитъ

Умеръ блѣдный поэтъ!
 Умеръ блѣдный поэтъ!

There may well be some identification between Gnedov and the poem's protagonist; the suggestion of romantic and tragic solipsism in the poem conforms with the vision of the poet put forward by the Egofuturists, and the emphasis on the experience of extreme melancholy is reminiscent of 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy'. Interestingly, there is a reversal of roles in the poem: it is the poet rather than the maiden who is imprisoned in the tower, the maiden who comes from outside to rescue him (from his loneliness), and the poet that dies a tragic death. That apart, the poem is characterised by conventional, generalised features common to the Western European, rather than the specifically Russian, tradition.

Nebokopy

After a brief excursion into extremely traditional poetry, Gnedov produced some of his most radical and unusual works. It is possible that his stay with Kruchenykh in Ligovo outside St Petersburg in July 1913¹⁶⁵ had provided an appropriately experimental climate. Gnedov published ten pieces which dominated the eighth Egofuturist almanac *Nebokopy*¹⁶⁶ (published at the end of August 1913): 'Pti'okmon', 'Zubatyi'volk', 'Vchera', 'Segodnia', 'Zavtra', 'Khitraia Moral', 'Kolovorot', 'Pervovelikodrama', 'Azбука vstupaiushchim', and 'Ognianna svita'. Gnedov's is the only poetry and prose in the collection, the remainder of which is made

¹⁶⁵ Chukovskii, *Dnevnik 1901-1929*, p. 59.

¹⁶⁶ V. Gnedov, 'Pti'okmon', 'Zubatyi'volk', 'Vchera', 'Segodnia', 'Zavtra' (p. 1); 'Khitraia Moral' (p. 2); 'Kolovorot' (p. 3); 'Pervovelikodrama' (p. 4); 'Azбука vstupaiushchim' (p. 5); and 'Ognianna svita' (p. 16); in *Nebokopy*. The works are republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 51-58.

up of a letter to the editor by Shershenevich, and articles by Anastasiia Chebotarevskaja and Viktor Khovin. Because of the difficulty and frequent intractability of the works in *Nebokopy*, a line-by-line analysis of each work in turn is not especially fruitful here; instead, the poems are considered thematically, and in so far as they illuminate aspects of Gnedov's poetics. The Glossary should be consulted for a comprehensive break-down of the poems into their likely constituent parts.

Gnedov's most conspicuous innovation in *Nebokopy* is the creation of a new unit of poetry. By eliminating the spaces between words, and eliding words, he formed a verse-line that was at the same time a word. These 'word-lines' (*slovostroki*) feature in eight of his ten contributions to the collection. Close reading shows the following (often overlapping) stages in this process:

1) an entirely comprehensible phrase of syntactically correct standard words, which has been run together:

Толпуобрядилъзабой (30);

2) as 1), except with irregular syntax:

одназамотыноодноичепраком (36);

3) the elision or compression of words:

Овотгдѣрослобймореплавосива (36);

4) the elision of words, within which there may be a variety of possible additional words can be perceived:

бабушкакуликазелен (32);

5) where the word boundaries are completely blurred, creating a variety of possible but unclear constituents in the line:

лечгаграчичеленыхъкоромысль (30).

Furthermore, on occasion, the word-lines form (or are modelled on) parts of speech in themselves. For example, all the word-lines in 'Pti'okmon' seem to function as adverbs, either ending in '-kom' (like *tselikom*, *bosikom*, etc.):

удалекойпрашиком (29);

or '-o':

спадощнослашо (29).

The intended process is that the constituent parts of the word-lines are to be perceived and read as a whole, thereby fusing the complex associations or metaphors already existing in a verse-line into a single word. The situation is further complicated because the word-lines do not just contain standard words, but also various compressed formations, neologisms, dialectisms, Ukrainianisms, and so on. But on no occasion do the word-lines become the kind of entirely abstract *zaumnyi iazyk* of Kruchenykh's 'Dyr bul shchyl' or 'xenoglossia': Gnedov remains within a potentially recognisable lexical framework.

Three other techniques are apparent in Gnedov's *Nebokopy* works. First, the poet plays with the placement of hard and soft signs. In the pre-1917 orthography, the rule was for hard signs to be placed after every word ending in a hard consonant. To experiment with this rule is a logical consequence of the challenge to standard word divisions posed by the word-lines. Gnedov often omits the hard sign from the end of such words or puts a soft sign there instead; he also places hard signs randomly in the middle of words. Soft signs are deliberately misplaced, often after vowels, as in the following example (which should correctly read *porvalas' uzda*):

Порваьласузда (33).

In one instance, line 2 of 'Pervovelikodrama', there is a soft sign immediately after a hard sign. And on occasion, hard and soft signs are placed correctly! Second, the placing of the letter й is also interesting: it is used in conjunction with both soft and

hard signs, and also appears to be a substitute for и. Third, by putting absurd future dates after his works in *Nebokopy* (e.g. “2-i god posle Smerti”, 2549, 1999, 1980, 38687), Gnedov seems to be implying that these are poems of the future that are inaccessible to present-day comprehension¹⁶⁷. The correct dating of ‘Azbuka vstupaiushchim’ (“1913 g. po R. Kh.”) suggests that this poem is the beginning of the path towards comprehension.

The primary concern of Gnedov’s work in *Nebokopy* is the expression of newness through Futurism. This is the implication of the title ‘Pervovelikodrama’¹⁶⁸. The epigraph seems to state at the outset that the number of acts and characters and the duration of the drama is zero (“deistvoil/ litsOil/ vremiadlen’iaOil”¹⁶⁹), and it is significant that the first word line of ‘Pervovelikodrama’ starts with a reference to whiteness (“bel’ia’ta”), as if to represent the blank page before the onset of words¹⁷⁰:

белятавилючиймохаиодроби

Certain repeated themes can be made out in the work¹⁷¹, but the highly complex fusion of compressed words, neologisms, agrammaticisms and so on, hinders any narrative or plot and may be an attempt to show a kind of agglomerated language out of which potential dramas might be created.

The three four-line poems ‘Vchera’, ‘Segodnia’, and ‘Zavtra’, together form a short cycle on the changing state of writing. For example, in accordance with the title, ‘Vchera’ may be construed as a statement on the literature of yesterday. The first line alludes to the reader’s lack of comprehension and to an inane activity (using a stake to scratch one’s head):

чешитеколомголову

¹⁶⁷ Radin connected the forward dating to Bergson’s notion of the fourth dimension; Radin, *Futurizm i bezumie*, p. 36; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 203.

¹⁶⁸ Ironically, Gnedov’s first venture into drama is to all intents and purposes a poem.

¹⁶⁹ In the original publication, after each of these three initial lines is an ‘S’-shaped figure on its side, the effect of which is unclear.

¹⁷⁰ For Sigei, “*Pervovelikodrama* is imprinted with the idea of Time, which not so much moves as spreads. It does not divide into identical sections, but appears as a space capable of expanding (infinity) and contracting (zero)”; *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 156.

¹⁷¹ Particularly a twisting or winding movement (“viliuchi”, “zamoty”, “izvilo”, and “zavivaiZavivai”) and an evocation of lips (“usty”, “ustyeusty”).

In line 3, it is stated that the reader will become a camel; in contrast, in line 4 the lyric subject is a higher being, a lion who is in pursuit (“ia-vyshe-lev-pogon'ga”), or he has left in order to pursue (“ia-vyshel-(e)v-pogon'ga”):

Явьшелевпогоньга

‘Segodnia’ represents the current state of literature. The first line contains the title of the collection *Nebokopy* in connection with freedom (*privol'e*) and is a reference to the Egofuturists, who are by implication the representatives of modern literature:

Небокопытапривольяь

‘Zavtra’ sets the scene for the literature of the future.

Порваьласузда
 послѣнасмerti
 Всѣпрыгнутвышелба
 Огоньпримчатспасетьейь

The first line describes the tearing of a bridle, the removal of something oppressive. In line 2, either there are two prepositions next to a noun (as in ‘Na vozle bal’) or a preposition juxtaposed with the adverb *nasmert'*. Either way, the sense is of life beyond the grave, or perhaps after *Smert' iskusstvu*. In line 3, after death people will be able to ‘jump higher than the forehead’, will be able to reach new heights beyond reason. The last line is less clear but seems to refer to a fire that saves, possibly viewing Futurist literature as just such a cleansing force.

In ‘Pti'okmon’, the fourth line (possibly made up of *futurizm*, *svarit'*, *svarivat'*, and *svaia*) may be construed as a self-referential statement concerning Gnedov’s method of constructing the word-lines of *Nebokopy*:

футурошноьсвайрено.

In addition, the Cubofuturist principle of inversion can be seen to be at work. The defiant stance in the last two lines of ‘Azбука vstupaishchim’ implies that the

Futurists' 'nonsense' is better than the 'cleverness' of the traditional approach to meaning:

Насчитаютъ дураками
амыдуракилучшеумныхъ

The defence of Futurism is combined with deliberately offensive attacks on the reader's sensibilities and representatives of aesthetic schools deemed to be *passé*. The title word of the first poem, 'Pti'okmon', may well be more than just the sum of the potential constituents (*ptitsa*, *oko*, *okno*, etc.; an allusion to the expression *ptich'e moloko*¹⁷²). According to Sigei, such interpretations hide the actual essence of Gnedov's neologism, a vulgar expression of astonishment:

То есть «птибокмонь» - это восклицание (в произношении «птьёкмань», что очень близко к «ё ко ло манэ», удивленному возгласу типа «вот ёб твою мать»)¹⁷³.

Furthermore, the third line—"ui"mano"—Sigei considers to be “from an area of abusive expressions that are today unknown to ninety nine of every hundred Russians; in some places, there exists the parallel 'khuinane'”¹⁷⁴. At the same time, “ui"mano” might be held to contain the rather different association of calmness (*uimat'* or *uniat'*)¹⁷⁵. The first and last lines of the poem seem to allude to another slang word, *molokosos*, meaning an inexperienced youth or 'suckler'¹⁷⁶. In the following line in 'Pervovelikodrama', the mention of defiling and backsides sitting too long is probably a scathing reference to the theatre:

Стобъйиспогънетзалежутънасваяьхдупи

Furthermore, the *epatazh* is even more explicit in the last two lines, where the famous theatre director Stanislavskii, a representative of the Naturalist school, is defamed:

¹⁷² The saying *tol'ko ptich'ego moloka net* is a colloquial way of expressing the abundance of or complete satisfaction with something.

¹⁷³ Letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97. Sigei continues, “had Gnedov not wanted an astonished cry, he would have written: *ptitsa oko okno...*”.

¹⁷⁴ Letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97.

¹⁷⁵ The line might also contain *uima*.

¹⁷⁶ The references to milk and sweetness in the first line are repeated in the last two lines and create a circular structure. Milk and sweetness also bring to mind the poem 'Kozii slashch'.

происходить без помощи бездарей
Станиславских прочи

‘Khitraia Moral’, on the other hand, has no reference to Futurism and no *epatazh*. At its heart seems to be Krylov’s poem ‘Vorona i lisitsa’, based on the well-known fable of Aesop. The first two-thirds of the poem describe a natural scene, where overcast weather turns into a stormy night. The allusion to the fable only becomes apparent with the appearance of crows and vixens in the lines:

иВоронънеперекаркаетъГромъЗавтра...
ПрибѣгнутьЛисицы—умилѣются—поклоны

Perhaps the next words “khlopni po lysine” refer to an object (the cheese) falling on the vixens’ heads. The ‘cunning moral’ of the title is that one’s conscience can be stretched without it breaking:

[...] совѣстне
рвется—можете съудобою растягивать

The words “zakuska priiataia” refer to the moral and possibly also to the cheese that has been won from the use (abuse) of conscience; “mediakopozoloty”, a copper coin that has been gilded, describes the benefit derived from using the moral. The last line describes the foxes once again on the trail, the implication being that they are looking for someone new to cheat:

УгрядайЛисицыпочуютьдобытьзаслѣдятъ

Janecek notes that, at 36 letters long, this is the longest uninterrupted verse line in the collection¹⁷⁷.

The other word-line poems are less clear, and at this stage their interpretations are entirely dependent on the title. For example, the title of Gnedov’s second poem in the collection, ‘Zubatyi’volk’ (i.e. *zubastyi volk*), indicates that the poem concerns a

¹⁷⁷ Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 104.

sharp-toothed wolf. However, it is not clear what the wolf indicated by the title does in the poem; the complexities of the word-lines often make a poem intractable, and a vague narrative can be perceived but no more. Similarly, ‘Azbuka vstupaishchim’ leads one to expect some kind of instruction or lesson¹⁷⁸ for the ‘initiates’, but, barring the last two lines, the poem appears to depict nature (i.e. the allusions to the sun, an alder tree (“-olesh'-”), a quail (“perepel-”), and a toad (“-zhaba”)).

The form of the word-lines in *Nebokopy* is not entirely new, it seems to be based on medieval Slavic texts. This is not a chance resemblance, although the exploitation of ancient or traditional Russian literary forms is more associated with members of the Cubofuturist group (for instance, *Igra v adu* (1912), a hand-written manuscript book by Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov with *lubok*-style illustrations by Goncharova). Genrikh Tasteven described Gnedov’s word-lines as “rhythmic complexes”, considering the precedent for them to be Mallarmé: “in ‘Divagations’, Mallarmé calls the verse-line the ideal mystical word, which smelts individual words, turns them into a new, completely collective word not existing in the language”¹⁷⁹. The word-lines might be held to produce a new approach to reading poetry: the implication of compressing the component words of the line into a single unit is that the word-line is to be comprehended as a whole in itself rather than the sum of its parts. Sigei relates the word-lines to concepts of “continual experience (*nepreryvnoe perezhivanie*)” expressed by V. Nalimov’s *Dialektika nepreryvnosti i diskretnosti v myshlenii i iazyke*¹⁸⁰.

There is a number of other Futurist experiments similar to Gnedov’s word-lines. David Burluk’s “kompaktslova” consisted of words run together (e.g. “Utonchenapetitalant”, “Korsetebutshampanoskripki”¹⁸¹), and two poems by Vasilii Kamenskii each consisted of a single word-line with elided constituents (“Zolotorossyp’iuvimoch’”, “Rekachkachaika”¹⁸²); the cited examples are more or less equivalent to word-line types 1 (Burluk) and 4 (Kamenskii) seen above. Gnedov’s poetry would later be read at evenings of the Tiflis Futurist group in 1918, and traces

¹⁷⁸ The idea of a lesson would also also fit with the ‘Khitraia Moral’.

¹⁷⁹ Tasteven, *Futurizm*, p. 23.

¹⁸⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 158-59.

¹⁸¹ Quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 159.

¹⁸² Quoted from V. Markov, *O svobode v poezii*, p. 356. Aleksei Kruchenykh’s single-line poem, “beliamatokiiiai” (A. Kruchenykh, *Vzorval’*, Moscow, 1913, unnumbered page), is also similar.

of the *Nebokopy* poems can be found in the works of two of its members. Igor Terent'ev's 'Beskonechnyi tost v chest' Sofii Georgievny' involves a complex fusion of component words which border on the unrecognisable¹⁸³, and, according to Sigei, the "two-storey line (*dvukhetazhnaia stroka*)" developed by Il'ia Zdanevich has its roots in Gnedov's earlier experiments¹⁸⁴.

The two remaining works in *Nebokopy* do not feature word-lines. In the first, 'Kolovorot', Gnedov attempts to break new ground in experimental prose. It is the last and most neologistic of four thematically connected longer works (the other three being 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy', 'Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi', and 'Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne'): the allusions to 'toska' and 'schast'e'/'gore' are common to 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy'; the second person singular form of address and the development of the "sred'mir'" recall 'Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi'; references to hearts and souls, daggers, cliffs, graves and coffins are also found in 'Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne'. However, the style in which 'Kolovorot' is written makes it extremely difficult to work out what is happening.

Neologisms and experiments with orthography and punctuation aside¹⁸⁵, Gnedov employs a number of verbal devices to defamiliarise the work. The juxtaposition of nouns at the start of the first sentence is similar in style to Marinetti's 'parole in liberta'¹⁸⁶:

Благодаър средміръе средміръе сердцы міра ягодня душіткі

The concept of the 'whirlpool' ('Kolovorot') is suggestive. The almost exact repetition of the first two words of the first sentence at the start of the last sentence ("Blagodar"i sred'mire") forms a circle of sorts. Certain verbal devices in the text may well be an attempt to represent a whirlpool's turbulent, spinning movement. In this respect, the

¹⁸³ I. Terent'ev, 'Beskonechnyi tost v chest' Sofii Georgievny' (1919), *Sobranie sochinenii*, comp. M. Marzaduri and T. Nikol'skaia, Bologna, 1988, p. 133.

¹⁸⁴ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 157.

¹⁸⁵ The removal of soft signs from the end of the second person singular indicative verbs (e.g. "napoish", "razgonish", "rasplalesh", etc.) is in imitation of Ukrainian or colloquial spelling. Furthermore, according to Sigei, the technique of placing soft signs in the middle of words (e.g. "ягодня") is derived from old, dialect tales in which spellings such as "dots'ka" and "ot'tsa" could be found; *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 158. Note also the curious backwards apostrophe that replaces the hard sign in the word "kriuchek".

¹⁸⁶ Taking into account the misplaced soft sign, "blagoda'r" might be a noun along the lines of *gosudar'* or an imperative of the verb *blagodarit'*.

gradual mutation of the word “sred'mir'e” throughout the text (“средмірьє средмірьє”, “средьмірьо”, “Средьмірьо”, “средмірьєъ”, “средьмірьо”, “средьмірьє”, and “средьмір”¹⁸⁷), the repetition and echoing of certain words or phrases (“serdtsy mira [...] serdtse" mira”, “skvozi [...] zaskvozi”, “sbros' [...] vybros'”, “desiatka [...] desiatka”, “Shirina ne shiri”, “uspeshka [...] usmeshka”, “schast'ei [...] schast'ei' [...] schast'o”, “kinzhal [...] kinzhalo”), and the puns and sound-play are interesting, e.g.:

засквози средьмірьо подкукуйь кукуле бога разорви Голубъ крыле пѣжо глуб

and:

тоску скуешь Вы тоску не куйтеъ куйте

Such passages, which resemble the Surrealist practice of ‘automatic writing’, are occasionally interrupted by a relatively coherent section of text. The passage starting “eleka plekatka serdtse”¹⁸⁸, for example, seems to describe bats attacking and sucking blood from the heart of the poem’s protagonist; a bat flaps around but the lyric subject cannot get rid of it, starts to choke and call out (“ne b'et szadi ezheli udarnit skalo zadokhneshsia zazvenish”). But overall, the experimental prose technique and obscure imagery break down any semblance of a narrative. A comparable piece of Egofuturist prose is Ivan Ignat'ev’s ‘Assiod’¹⁸⁹, and similarly “jerky (*otryvisty*) syntax”¹⁹⁰ can be found in poems by the Futurist Fedor Platov¹⁹¹.

‘Ognianna svita’, the last of Gnedov’s contributions to *Nebokopy*, is accompanied by an oval-shaped photograph of a bare-chested Gnedov, apparently modelled on similar portrait of Rimbaud¹⁹². The poem is unusual in that the first two stanzas are written in imitation-Ukrainian. As stated in the first line of the second

¹⁸⁷ Note the differentiation between мірь (world) and миръ (peace).

¹⁸⁸ *Elek* is a word from the Vologda region meaning “bat” or “nightjar”; *SRNG*, 8, p. 339. The verb *plekat'* means “to breastfeed”; *Dal'*, III, p. 310.

¹⁸⁹ For example: “sobstvenno sob dom sobstvenno govoria sobolii govor”; I. Ignat'ev, ‘Assiod’, in *Vsegdai. Ego-futuristy VII*, St Petersburg, p. 7.

¹⁹⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 157.

¹⁹¹ For example, “Plesk uiut striustva stut/ Iurok iur merila”; F. Platov, ‘Dolce’, in *Vtoroi sbornik Tsentrifugy*, Moscow, 1916, p. 25. In ‘Poème N 1’, Platov borrows Gnedov’s motifs heavily, e.g. “Pliasy sêla kruzhi/ Zeleniia v zeleni/ Vecheria skachi”; *Vtoroi sbornik Tsentrifugy*, p. 26.

¹⁹² *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 192.

stanza, the poem was indeed the first Futurist ‘song’ in the Ukrainian language, predating the appearance of Ukrainian Futurism by a year¹⁹³:

Перша эго—футурня пісня
на української мові.
Усім набридли Тарас Шевченко.
Та голашникъ Кропівницькій.

Here both the national poet of Ukraine and a leading actor and theatre director are defamed¹⁹⁴. The negative tone of the poem is typical. In the second two stanzas, the language switches to standard Russian. The poem’s protagonist and author are identified as one (“Sizotelyi vovoda Vasilisk”), and he writes his name in lightning across the sky. Gnedov ends ‘Ognianna svita’ with a typical over-the-top flourish of self affirmation:

Шекспиръ и Байрон владѣли совместно
80 тысячами словъ—
Геніальнѣйшій Поэть Будущаго
Василиск Гнѣдов ежеминутно
владѣеть 80000000001 квадратныхъ словъ.

For Chukovskii, the poem was an “attempt [...] to convey by transrational language the melody of Ukrainian speech”¹⁹⁵. As such, it can be seen in the context of a number of similar such experiments in mimetic *zaum’* by Russian Futurists: for example, Kruchenykh’s xenoglossic experiments in Spanish, Japanese, and Hebrew in *Porosiata* (1913); Kamenskii’s poem ‘Persidskaia’ (1916); as well as poems imitating Arabic (1919-1921) by Iurii Marr¹⁹⁶. However, unlike these examples, Gnedov actually knew Ukrainian and his use of the language in ‘Ognianna svita’ is characterised by a similar usage of dialect words, spelling alterations, and neologisms that are part of his

¹⁹³ Ol. Doroshkevich, *Pidruchnik istorii ukrains'koi literaturi*, Kiev, 1927, p. 19.

¹⁹⁴ See *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 158. “Nabridlii” probably derives from *nabridlii* (“who [...] causes boredom”, *UED*, p. 522); and “gopashnik” presumably means one who dances a *gopak* (*hopak*, a kind of dance).

¹⁹⁵ Chukovskii, ‘Obraztsy’, p. 142. This article quotes two sections of ‘Ognianna svita’ on p. 142 and quotes Poems 6, 7, and 8 from *Smert’ iskusstvu* on p. 141.

¹⁹⁶ Iurii Marr (1893-1935), son of the linguist Nikolai Marr, wrote *zaum’* poems and was involved with the 41° group in Tiflis. See Iu. Marr, *Izbrannoe. Kniga 1. Proza, stikhi, dramaturgiia*, text prep., comp., foreword, and notes by T. Nikol'skaia, Moscow, 1995, pp. 31, 32, 34.

language experiments in Russian. Markov's comment that Gnedov was imitating Ukrainian "without much consistency or knowledge"¹⁹⁷ is not justified.

After *Smert' iskusstvu*, Gnedov had clearly decided that his Futurist experiments were far from over; having proclaimed the end of poetry and the death of art, he was perhaps forced to attempt something new. Each of Gnedov's contributions is innovative. As well as writing in a 'new form' (the word-lines), Gnedov also borrows from an existing language, Ukrainian, to provide a Slavic source for renovating Russian literary language. At the same time, Gnedov's word-lines and other works in *Nebokopy* make use of the themes (Futurism, *epatazh*, nature), vocabulary, and types of neologisms Gnedov has been using hitherto. The works are often extremely difficult or even at times intractable and this analysis has only outlined certain central features; as Zakrzhevskii noted: "perhaps all their charm is in the fact that no Vengerov will ever be able to decipher them"¹⁹⁸. The same critic related Gnedov's experiments to the language of "primitive peoples and madmen", a language that cannot be understood rationally but that can be best appreciated if sung:

тогда получается впечатление, будто нет ни двадцати веков культуры, ни человеческих понятий и тяжелой логичности, с ними связанной, будто мы вернулись снова к темному звериному раю, и язык наш звериный, и еще царит в слабом сознании бредовое очарование хаоса...¹⁹⁹

Razvorochenyie cherepa

Gnedov did not develop his word-lines further. In 'Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—', his single contribution to the last Egofuturist miscellany *Razvorochenyie cherepa* (published late September 1913)²⁰⁰, the poet returned to standard poetic lines. The poem is dedicated "to those who are deaf and blind"; as in 'Na vozle bal', Gnedov seems to taunt or chide the reader for being unable to understand his poetry. Nevertheless, there is considerable difficulty in the coinages and disrupted syntax:

¹⁹⁷ RF, p. 85.

¹⁹⁸ Zakrzhevskii, *Rytsari bezumiia*, p. 99.

¹⁹⁹ Zakrzhevskii, *Rytsari bezumiia*, p. 99. The idea of singing the poems may have derived from another Egofuturist, Severianin, who apparently sang his poetry during recitals.

²⁰⁰ V. Gnedov, 'Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—...', in *Razvorochenyie cherepa*, p. 9. The poem is republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 59.

Слезжит рябидіи труныга сно—
 Коневама усмѣшки подтишок,
 Да замолчите ж нечисти ругты—
 Глазами выкрасил подол мозга,
 Звѣрями ястребло пьяны гага—
 Сквозь солнце плешется моя нога²⁰¹.

It appears as if Gnedov is considerably varying themes within the stanza. To some extent, this stanza is about the self-affirmation, the poet, and Futurism. Line 3, for example, might be addressed to an audience unsympathetic to a Futurist performance; by contrast, in line 4, the poet has ‘decorated the edge of his brain with eyes’, i.e. is able to comprehend more than such an audience. In line 6, the poet asserts his authority in a similar way to the lines “Raspisalsia molniei po nebe/ Sizotelyi vovoda Vasilisk” in ‘Ognianna svita’. On the other hand, lines 1, 2, and 5 are not obviously self-referential; whilst the neologism “iastreblo” (a combination *iastreb* and *istrebit*) seems appropriate for a bird of prey, the motivation for the sudden change of focus is unclear.

In the second and third stanzas, the poem picks up on the allusion to horses (“Konevama”) in stanza 1. For example, in stanza 2:

Кобыльѣ просѣдь стучит виски

The final line of stanza 3 shows that the horse-ride is in a mountainous place:

Бду на черствых буграх.

Furthermore, in the last line of stanza 2, the mountains appear as if hands are lifting them up (“gory ruki podniali prodn”). In first two lines of stanza 2, the vocabulary of cliffs, leaps, and whirlwinds in connection with horses recalls ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’:

Съѣзжает съ кручи костыль средины
 Нечаят желтый скачков вихры

²⁰¹ It might be noted that, in this poem, Gnedov deviates from pre-1917 orthographical rules in that he does not place hard signs after final consonants.

Hence, in ‘Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—’, the poet may again be depicted on top of a flying horse (as in ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’), especially if the poet’s leg is capable of splashing through the sun. There are further references to wings and the sky in the first lines of stanza 3:

Крылышко батюшка камешек горя—
 Ябеда радугу глаза,
 Вынырник пальца стального
 По морю вскочит в рукавь

The description of sky in terms of a liquid (seen in the line “Skvoz' solntse pleshchetsia moia noga”) may also be present in lines 3 and 4: the ‘steel finger’ jumping through the ‘sea’ could refer to a shaft of sunlight. Clearly, this interpretation is tentative, and further analysis is hindered by the application of the Futurist tenet of the destruction of standard syntax. The effect of the juxtaposition of nine nouns in the first three lines of stanza 3 above is similar to that at the start of ‘Kolovorot’; and in lines such as “Zveriami iastreblo p'iany gaga”, “Nechaiat zheltyi skachkov vikhry”, and “Iagoda strazhi ne bol'no”, the indicators of number, gender, and case appear to function in a contradictory fashion.

Other Poems of 1913

Although Gnedov had experimented with almost every aspect of poetic convention, he had not touched upon the way in which the words are distributed on the page. ‘a La tyr’, published first in 1991²⁰² but written in 1913, was one of three poems (along with Ivan Ignat'ev’s ‘Y/ Kh/ ' chen, Kru’ and ‘Tseluiu tseluiavno’ by Pavel Shirokov) that were experimental in this respect. Originally sent by Ignat'ev to Kruchenykh, they survive copied out in a letter from Kruchenykh to A.G. Ostrovskij²⁰³.

²⁰² V. Gnedov, ‘a La tyr’, in his *Egofuturnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka*, p. 6. The poem is republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 49.

²⁰³ PO GPB, fond 552, ed. khr. 90. For republication of all three and notes, see *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 152-54.

The *alatyř* is a magical stone of Russian folklore and legend held to have “sacral and healing properties”; it is also known as the “bel-goriuch kamen”²⁰⁴, so the blank, white space in the middle of the poem could well be a representation of the stone. The displacement of the words and word-segments on the page has the effect of bringing out new aspects of the words²⁰⁵:

а	Ла	тырь
Вели	Миро	мѢ
	Мир	о м

The segment “тыр””, which is repeated later in the poem, seems to be either a second person singular imperative or a noun from the verb *tyrit* (“to steal”²⁰⁶). The second line features an allusion to Velimir Khlebnikov, and the name is echoed in the third: the splitting-up of the pseudonym Velimir foregrounds its derivation (*velit’ mir*). The effect of the divisions “Miro me” and “Mir o m” are unclear, but the alliteration of ‘m’ is perhaps a way of merging Velimir with “Moiu” in line 4. The word “Piatu” (in agreement with “Moiu”) is written diagonally and upside down²⁰⁷, almost resembling an actual heel-print on the page. Lines 5-8 are written as follows:

кк	уны
	рѣ
не	
тырь	

Together with line 4, they produce a brief phrase reading “moiu piatu kak upyr’ ne tyr”²⁰⁸, apparently a warning issued to Khlebnikov. In the final three lines, there is a switch of focus towards the lyric subject:

²⁰⁴ *Mifologicheskii slovar*’, ed. E. Meletinskii et al., Moscow, 1990, p. 33.

²⁰⁵ A later example of a poem where individual words have been broken down into word-segments can be found in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 84.

²⁰⁶ *SSRLLIa*, 15, p. 1198. Might the first two parts “a La” may be regarded as the French *à la* (like), to produce a secondary meaning ‘like a thief’?!

²⁰⁷ There has been an earlier reference to a heel (belonging to the Titan) in ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred’mirnyi’.

²⁰⁸ Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 121.

В	глазУ	ползУ
	У	дУ
		дУ

“V glazu polzu” might be understood as Gnedov becoming an irritant in someone else’s (Khlebnikov’s?) eye, or in other words making himself noticeable. In the final two lines, the space between ‘u’ and ‘du’ repeats the technique of Poems 11 and 14 of *Smert' iskusstvu* (‘U—’ and ‘Iu’), although here the number of potential verbs is more restricted (e.g. *uidu, uedu, ukradu, upadu*). The capitalisation of the letter ‘u’ (which picks up on “moiu piatu” and “upyr”) emphasises its importance in this poem, as in *Smert' isskustvu*. The poem appears to be a double-edged homage to Khlebnikov, who is on the one hand associated with the magical stone and on other called a thief and a vampire²⁰⁹.

‘a La tyr’ is significant as it represents one of only a few typographical experiments in poetry carried out by the Egofuturists²¹⁰. In contrast, the Cubofuturists were active in this regard. For example, Kruchenykh’s booklet *Vzorval'* (1913) contained handwritten poems written diagonally and with various illustrations/graphic marks, and in 1914 Kamenskii deconstructed the idea of verses and stanzas with the scattered segments of his *zhelezobetonnye poemy*²¹¹. As Sigei has noted, Gnedov’s poem to some extent predates concepts present in ‘concrete poetry’ and suggests analogies in the work of the poets Mon and Gomringer²¹². In a concrete poem, its

²⁰⁹ Ignat'ev’s poem about Kruchenykh, ‘Y/ Kh/ ' chen, Kru’ (*Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 153), is similarly double-edged: in it, Kruchenykh is associated with “onan”, “nana”, and “kobel”.

²¹⁰ Only Ignat'ev innovated in this regard. The prose piece ‘Sledom za...’ (dated 1911) uses Old Russian, Latin, and Gothic German-style lettering (*Bei!...no vyslushai!...*, St Petersburg, 1913, p. 1). In ‘Opus-45’, words are written to the right and left of a central column-word; underneath, the reader learns that “due to technical impotence, I.V. Ignat'ev’s opus ‘Lazorevyi Logaritm’ cannot be performed by typo-lithographical means” (*Razvorocheny cherepa*, p. 12). Finally, there is the poem ‘Y/ Kh/ ' chen, Kru’.

²¹¹ V. Kamenskii, ‘Zhelezobetonnaia poema’, in his *Iz literaturnogo nasledii. Tango s korovami. Stepan Razin. Zvuchal' vesneiarki. Put' entuziasta*, Moscow, 1990 (p. 26 of reprinted section of *Tango s korovami*). Also see Janecek, *Look of Russian Literature*, pp. 123-47.

²¹² *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 152. For example, a poem from 1960 by Gomringer displays a more structured verbal bordering of a space:

```

silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio
silencio      silencio
silencio silencio silencio
silencio silencio silencio

```

‘visual element [...] tended to be structural, a consequence of the poem, a ‘picture’ of the lines of force of the work itself, and not merely textural’²¹³. However, if the shape of the poem on the page has a representational purpose (the blank space denoting the *alatyra*), ‘a La tyr’ is as much a pattern poem as a concrete poem.

ii) WORKS OF 1914

Kniga velikikh

The year 1914 marked a major change in Gnedov’s poetics, characterised by a reduction of the extreme Avant-Gardism of 1913. Gnedov’s single contribution to the booklet *Kniga velikikh*, ‘Poema nachala’²¹⁴, would have come as a shock to those anticipating further experimental poetry²¹⁵. However, like ‘Pechal’naia skazka’, the poem may be regarded as a folktale, as Polozov suggests in his afterword²¹⁶. In addition to a number of references to *skazki*, this impression is reinforced by moon references (*mesiats* rather than *luna*), the personification of plants and mountains, and the floating or flying lovers in the poem’s third stanza. In the repetitions (like that in the first three lines of stanza 2), there are stylistic similarities to folktales, and the two questions and the repetitive four lines of answers resemble a passage in the folk-poem ‘Golubinaia kniga’²¹⁷. Gnedov once again seems to draw on traditional sources, but ‘Poema nachala’ is very much more symbolic than ‘Pechal’naia skazka’.

The title can be translated as ‘Poem of the Beginning’, or perhaps ‘Poem of the Origin’; the poem both seems to herald a new beginning and concerns origins. The

An Anthology of Concrete Poetry, ed. E. Williams, New York, 1967, p. 125.

²¹³ *Anthology of Concrete Poetry*, p. vi.

²¹⁴ V. Gnedov, ‘Poema nachala’, in V. Gnedov and P. Shirokov, *Kniga velikikh*, pp. 7-8. Also, see *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 60-61. Note that the version of ‘Poema nachala’ in *Sobranie stikhotvorenii* has been modified in accordance with corrections Gnedov later made on a copy of the poem held in the Maiakovskii Museum. This analysis uses the 1914 version, because it was the version to be received by the critics and public. Where appropriate, the later variations will be noted. There is some dispute as to when *Kniga velikikh* was published. Sigei indicates 1913 (*Sobr. stikh.*, p. 160); Markov (*RF*, p. 432) and Tarasenkova (*Russkie pisateli XX veka. 1900-1955*, Moscow, 1966, p. 102) specify 1914. The date of one review of the booklet suggests that it was published in February 1914 (S. Krechetov, ‘Sredi knig’, *Utro Rossii*, 22 February 1914, p. 2).

²¹⁵ For Markov, this “technically most traditional [poem is] perhaps his best one”; *RF*, p. 81.

²¹⁶ *Kniga velikikh*, p. 9.

²¹⁷ For example: “ot chego zachalsia nash beloi svet?! [...] ot chego zachalsia svetel mesiats?! [...] ot chego zachalsia temnaia noch’?! ot chego zachalsia chasty zvezdy?!”; *Golubinaia kniga. Russkie narodnye dukhovnye stikhi XI-XIX vekov*, Moscow, 1991, p. 45.

poem functions on various shifting planes—the philosophical (the origins of and relations between things), the natural (the description of nature, its relation to whiteness and love), the artistic (the creation of a *skazka*), and the emotional (the love poem). As indicated by the poem’s subtitle “(Beloe)”, whiteness is the universal that connects the various associations.

Темнота родить звѣзды,
Звѣзды родят тишину.
Мѣсяць рождается въ сказкѣ,
Сказки—томи любви.

Darkness precedes light (as in Genesis), and the repeated allusions to birth underscore the idea of origins. In the second couplet of stanza 1, the moon (another white light in a black sky) is viewed as a part of a folktale: the cosmic is equated with the literary. In turn, folktales are “*tomi liubvi*”²¹⁸, equating the artistic/mythic aspect of ‘Poema nachala’ to the internal emotions (of the poem’s protagonist). The increase and reduction in the focus is typical of the whole piece. Clearly, on a symbolic level whiteness has general associations of purity, life, peace, and so on. In stanzas 2-4 of the poem, whiteness is evoked through concrete images: snow, skin, silver birches (*belaia berezka*), and the polar bear (*belyi medved*). But ‘Poema nachala’ is also a poem of love, expressed through various representations of whiteness:

Твое бѣлое тѣло, а я—покрывало;
Приникнемъ, и бѣлое будетъ для насъ покрывало—
Не саванъ, а бѣлый покровъ..

Here, whiteness is connected with a woman’s body, the lovers’ embrace, and a covering to keep them warm rather than one associated with death.

In its title, ‘Poema nachala’ is clearly linked to ‘Poema Kontsa’. Both have been termed *poemy* rather than *stikhotvoreniia*; although longer, ‘Poema nachala’ is nevertheless far from the length of a standard *poema*. ‘Poema Kontsa’ was a *belaia stranitsa*, and, as we have seen, the symbolism of its whiteness/blankness is

²¹⁸ The word “*tomi*” is curious. The second person singular imperative of *tomit*’ would not seem appropriate, so this might be a misspelling of *tomy* (tomes); however, Sigei treats it as the neologism “*tomn*” (presumably meaning ‘langour’), *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 161.

interpretable in a variety of ways; ‘Poema nachala’ details certain aspects of that theme. In his commentary on page 9, Ivan Polozov writes that “Gnedov has made the journey from ‘beginning’ to ‘end’”²¹⁹. Of course, the situation is the exact opposite, and the inversion of the expected order is very much a Futurist technique. If the point of *Smert' iskusstvu* was that there had to be an end for there to be a new beginning to art, Gnedov’s reaction was again to resort to something traditional rather than innovative and to write a poem that is perhaps closer to Symbolism than Futurism.

Rukonog

Three poems by Gnedov (‘Eroshino’, ‘Sumerki na Donu’, and ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’) were published in *Rukonog*²²⁰ in April 1914. The collection was extremely significant, marking one of the more successful gatherings of Futurists in opposition to those associated with the Moscow Cubofuturist group. The group of Bobrov, Aseev, and Pasternak formed the core of Tsentrifuga; and they were joined by the remnants of the Assotsiatsiia Ego-Futuristov, which had disbanded following Ivan Ignat'ev’s suicide on 20 January 1914. Thus the poems in *Rukonog* range a great deal in style, with Gnedov representing the more radical edge. Nevertheless, his contributions are experimental in a rather different way from his previous works.

As in ‘Poema nachala’, Gnedov to some extent draws upon traditional forms of literature in the style of narration. The tautology of the line “V lokhmotakh loskutakh” in ‘Sumerki na Donu’ is a feature common to folk-songs or folk-poetry. There is further evidence of this in ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’, where inanimate objects or abstract concepts are capable of movement (“v gorst' pribegaiut umory”, “Karacheno oseni skachut”); the unclear seventh stanza of the same poem is

²¹⁹ *Kniga velikikh*, p. 9.

²²⁰ V. Gnedov, ‘Eroshino’ (p. 7), ‘Sumerki na Donu’ (p. 8), ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’ (p.9), in *Rukonog*. The poems are republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 62-64. The orthography employed in Gnedov’s poems in *Rukonog* (and only in Gnedov’s poems) is the same as in ‘Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—’: i.e. it conforms to pre-1917 norms, except that the hard signs are omitted from words ending in consonants. There are two exceptions in ‘Eroshino’: вь and черезъ. Archive correspondence between Gnedov and Bobrov from March 1914 indicate that the poems were written at the same time as ‘Poema nachala’: “[...] независимо от характера издания мои произведения останутся какими были [...] разве могу дать что-либо из очень ранних произ. (кк. в „Книге Великих”); RGALI, fond 2554, Bobrov, op. 1, ed. khr. 27. Correspondence between Gnedov and Bobrov highlights the existence of a poem called ‘Kazn’ that Gnedov sent for inclusion in *Rukonog* but had asked subsequently for it not be printed. Unfortunately, this poem has not not been found.

resolved with the phrase “Iz belago siniago moria”, a manipulation of the formulae *iz belogo belogo moria* or *iz sinego sinego moria*.

In general, the emphasis of Gnedov’s ‘new’ poetry was away from morphological, syntactic, and lexical complications. It is noticeable that in his *Rukonog* poems the use of non-standard language is relatively restricted in comparison to earlier works. In ‘Eroshino’, for example, there are two colloquialisms: “ptakha”, which is just a colloquial form of *ptitsa* (*ptashka*), and the exclamation “Shvakh!” means ‘bad’, ‘weak’, or ‘poor’. In ‘Sumerki na Donu’, there are two rare words, *pecheritsa* (mushroom)²²¹ and *skuda* (an alternate form of *skudost’*), a Ukrainian word *abo* (‘as’, ‘for’), and the neologism “surepa”, a syncope of *surepitsa* (rape seed). Finally, ‘Bros’te mne lapu skoree kogot’ i vshei uviadan’e’ contains dialect words (“umory”, “Dy”) and spelling alterations (“Drekolom”, “pastvo”). However, although the language may be clearer, other difficulties in Gnedov’s poetry are highlighted.

The technique of juxtaposing lines containing obscure and apparently unrelated images was apparent in ‘Slezzhit riabidii trun’ga sno—’, and it occurs once again in ‘Eroshino’ and ‘Bros’te mne lapu skoree kogot’ i vshei uviadan’e’. In terms of the former, Sigei has referred to the “semantic isolation (*smyslovaia obosoblennost’*) of the lines” as being related to later works by the Oberiuty²²². As shall be seen, the technique is also a feature of Gnedov’s poems of 1918. Finally, the extremely minimal punctuation of the *Rukonog* poems became a characteristic of Gnedov’s Futurist works from 1914 on.

The title-word of the first poem, ‘Eroshino’, is a neologism which can be interpreted as meaning a ‘tangled place’²²³. This is perhaps an accurate description of the poem, where lines 5-11 of the first stanza seem to have been haphazardly placed and function almost independently of each other:

²²¹ *Pecheritsa* means the “edible mushroom *Agraricus campestris*” (*Dal’*, III, p. 270).

²²² *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 162.

²²³ *Eroshit’* (“to beat, shake up [...] tangle, dishevel”; *Dal’*, II, p. 1300). The ending ‘-ino’ is common in place names (Mitino, Strogino, Liublino, etc).

Не зная устали
 Лишь зная стали
 Грибы рогатины в зубах взростали
 Ржавбли палубы
 Гора коты въ ногах
 И бор развѣсисто
 Упрямо в поле
 На нашем просвистѣ
 Туманов драхма
 Ялик зазвякал
 Упала птаха

A natural backdrop of hills, a copse, and a field can be made out; the allusion to a dinghy may suggest a body of water. However, the possible allusion to a hunting scene (the bear-spear, a falling bird, shot; the tasting of death and a heart in line 13) is undermined by obscure references to mushrooms, decks, cats, a drachma (or dram), and so on. In stanza 3, attention is directed towards the hills, but this is interrupted by an unpleasant image:

Вот и гора вот и пригорок
 На слюнѣ черезъ рты
 Протащился опорок

Perhaps the shoe (*oporok*) can be understood as a cloud moving over a snow-topped peak. The final line, where clouds are pictured hitting themselves or the sky, may continue a possible general theme of the violence of nature:

Швах! швах! ударились о небо тучи

‘Sumerki na Donu’ is another nature poem, about Gnedov’s native Don region. As in previous nature poems like ‘Kuk’, Gnedov alludes to the little bustard (*strepet*), as well as evoking geographical features, flora and fauna directly: valleys, fields, spurge, rape seed. The first stanza sets the scene:

Глаза печерицы
 Полевой падчерицы
 Скуда

The tone of the description is negative (“skuda”). Stanza 2 describes an unspecified but ragged and fat character who rides on top of a bitch (“na suke pod"ekhal”) as if this person were a demon or devil of some sort. The poem becomes increasingly aggressive in tone: this unspecified third person character is threatened with poisoning in stanza 3 (“Vyzhmu spelyi molochai”) and with a beating in stanza 4:

Приготовлю же завтра полѣно
 Пусть садится тогда на колѣни.

The poem seems to be a description of some kind of agricultural dispute; an unusual aspect of the poem, however, is the reference to camels (“Verbliuzh'i komy sobiraet”) which seems out of place in southern Russia²²⁴.

‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’ is the last and longest of Gnedov’s three poems in *Rukonog*. The metre is a regular dactylic trimeter, though it is not fully maintained (at the end of stanza 4, and the first two lines of stanza 5)²²⁵. The layout appears to highlight a dialogue concerning fortune-telling (*gadan'e*) between the two protagonists, one of whom occupies the left-aligned stanzas and the other the centre-aligned stanzas:

Бросьте мнѣ лапу скорѣе коготь и вшей увяданье
 Ткнушь как на поле
 Возлѣ на посох долины

Кромѣ не выжевать сказок
 Ты покровитель подвязок
 Сломишь бедро поцѣлуем
 Брови подгадишь и всуе

²²⁴ Gnedov also referred to camels in ‘Svirel'ga’ (*Zasakhare kry*) and ‘Vchera’.

²²⁵ Although the stanzas vary in length from one to four lines long, stanzas 1 and 3 could be written as four-line stanzas.

By stanza 6, however, it is not clear that the dialogue of the first five stanzas is continuing. The poem is full of unclear imagery: the hanging of felt on someone's neck (stanza 3), and of *lapti* (bast shoes) on eyelids (stanza 4), and the anointing of the skull with chalk (stanza 5). The two-line stanza 6 creates a paradoxical situation whereby the external world is grafted onto a person's physical internal experiences:

Выбѣжалъ лѣсъ изъ затылка
Дреколомъ махалъ и горбился

This “motif [...] of the world appearing out of the person and in the person” is characteristic of the early Russian Avant-Garde²²⁶. Overall, the poem may amount to the description of various ritualistic acts connected with fortune-telling, but it is difficult to determine any more than that.

Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov

In general, rhyme has not been a prominent or consistent feature of Gnedov's poetry. For example, as in earlier poems, the rhyme in ‘Eroshino’ and ‘Sumerki na Donu’ is sporadic and irregular. The inexact rhymes Gnedov employs in ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’ (“potseluem” - “vsue”, “vyshe Noia” - “vyshinoiii”, “umory” - “moria”), for example, are non-traditional but are typical for the Futurists.

‘Glas o soglase o zloglase’, which was published together with articles by other Futurists in the form of a scroll entitled *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov*²²⁷, was Gnedov's one explicit venture into theoretical writing²²⁸ and suggested a new approach to rhyme. Instead of a repetition of similar sounds, Gnedov posits the idea of rhyme as a repetition of similar (or conflicting) ideas, a kind of semantic association termed the “rhyme of concepts” (*rifma poniatii*). The poet illustrates this with an example not from any of Gnedov's published writing:

²²⁶ J. Döring-Smirnova and I. Smirnov, “‘Istoricheskii avangard’ s tochki zreniia evoliutsii khudozhestvennykh sistem”, *Russian Literature*, VIII (1980), pp. 403-68 (p. 418).

²²⁷ V. Gnedov, ‘Glas o soglase i zloglase’, in *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov*. The use of Gnedov's neologism ‘Svirel'ga’ suggests the poet was involved in this publishing venture. The piece has been republished three times: *Manifesty i programmy*, pp. 137-38; *Zabytyi avangard 1*, p. 63; *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 129.

²²⁸ However, Sigei believes that the provisions of ‘Gramata intuitivnoi assotsiatsii’ were mostly written by Gnedov; Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 118.

Примѣр: 1) Арабское *коромысло* Над озером *дугой...* (В. Гнѣдов). Коромысло — дуга: рѣзма понятій (кривизна); сюда же — небо, радуга и т. д.

The article continues by outlining further subdivisions: rhymes of taste (horseradish–mustard: “bitter rhymes”), smell (arsenic–garlic), touch (steel–glass), sight (water–mirror–pearl), and colour (the sibilants ‘s’ and ‘z’ are held to have yellow coloration). The poet prefaces his invention in typical Futurist fashion, saying that it provides material for the next thousand years. Whilst Ignat'ev had suggested a new system whereby all vowels and similar consonants (gutturals, labials, dentals) were considered rhyming²²⁹, Gnedov's approach is far more radical and he characteristically seeks to push definitions to their limit. The article trumpets the destruction of traditional “musical” rhyme, which is deemed to be worn out, and its replacement by a kind of conceptual associative play. Far from renouncing radical innovation, the poet can be seen to be continuing to implement the destructive tenets of Futurism. At the same time, the implication of ‘Glas o soglase o zloglase’ was that Gnedov was now more focused on semantic rather than verbal experimentation.

iii) POEMS OF 1917-1919

Previously unpublished poems

There is a gap of three years in which Gnedov published nothing and is not known to have written anything. In August 1914, Gnedov was drafted and spent two years on the Austrian Front. In 1916, he was posted to Moscow and there became involved with revolutionary politics, participating in both the February and October Revolutions of the following year. The next three poems under consideration (‘Khromonogo pustynia po glazu’, ‘Natal'ia Goncharova’, ‘V boku klok sena’) have not been published before; the original manuscripts are located in the Maiakovskii Museum²³⁰. Gnedov had sent the poems to Bobrov's publishing venture to be printed in a planned third collection of the Tsentrifuga group, which never materialised. A

²²⁹ *Vsegdai*, p. 33. Also, Ignat'ev, *Egofuturizm*, pp. 10-11; and Ignat'ev, *Eshafot*, pp. 14-15.

²³⁰ Maiakovskii Museum, archive of S. Bobrov, items 29963, 29964, and 29965. Sergei Bobrov (1899-1971) was a poet, critic, and head of the Tsentrifuga publishing enterprise.

cover sheet that must originally have accompanied the poems is held in RGALI: together with Gnedov's signature in the centre of the sheet is the stamp of "I-vo Tsentrifuga" and the date "27.11.[1]917"²³¹.

The poems adhere to the new orthography promulgated in February 1917, except for the retention of the letter 'i'. In other respects, the language of the poems is a continuation of that seen in the *Rukonog* poems, in that verbal experimentation plays a less significant role than before, but on the whole the three poems are much more comprehensible than their predecessors.

Gnedov's experiences of war and revolution were clearly the inspiration for the first of the three poems, 'Khromonogo pustynia po glazu':

Хромоно́го пу́стыня по глазу
 ковыля́л бы се́рыми нога́ми
 в голо́ве по́выдолбле́ны па́зы
 приго́ревший язы́к с крю́ка
 пазу́шка пазу́шка
 сме́лая зе́вунья
 Ра́дугой ра́ка корми́.

The poem seems to concern a wounded or mutilated body of an unidentified person or animal, described with hitherto uncharacteristic directness. A glazed expression covers an eye; gouged out of the head are "pazy" (grooves), a technical term implying the inanimacy of the body, and they may represent bullet-holes; a burnt tongue lolls out of the head in the shape of a hook.

There is a change of tone in the second stanza. The narrative shifts from third person description to a second person singular imperative; this is accompanied by a change in the rhythmic patterning of the poem—from the third syllable stress in lines 1-4 to first syllable stress in lines 5-7. In addition, the language moves from direct description to a less clear, metaphorical style. The references to holes or spaces in lines 3 and 4 are picked up in the second stanza. The word "pazushka", a dialect variant of *pazukha*²³² (referring to the space between the clothing and one's chest), links to

²³¹ RGALI, fond 2554, Bobrov, op. 1, ed. khr. 27.

²³² Dal' lists *pazushka* only in the phrase: "ne to denezhki, chto u diadiushki, a to denezhki, chto za pazushkoi (v zapazushke)", *Dal'*, III, p. 12.

“pazy” in line 3. The reference to yawning and feeding in lines 6 and 7 connects with the allusion to a mouth in line 4. Finally, the unpleasant image of the final line, an order to feed with a “rainbow of cancer”, incorporates a typically Futurist opposition of light/life and illness/death.

The second poem is ‘Natal’ia Goncharova’:

Наталья Гончарова
 переkrась пожалуста росію
 я тебе дам печерицы
 красной
 метлищей сухаревой башни
 вышморгни бельмо
 желтый
 пахнет корицей
 корица плакала китаем

The poem contains certain lexical peculiarities. In line 2, “pozhalusta” is a colloquial misspelling; “rosiiu” is the Ukrainian word for Russia, or it could be treated as a misspelling²³³. The dialectism *pecheritsa* in line 3 has been used before in ‘Sumerki na Donu’. In line 5, “metlishchei” is the instrumental singular of a feminine noun “metlishcha”, rather than the standard *metlishche* (broomstick). Finally, the neologism “vyshmorgni” in line 6 combines *morgnut’* and *vyshmarginat’* (to beat out).

The poem is the only example in Gnedov’s Futurist work of the poet addressing a specific person. The reference to Goncharova is extremely interesting: whilst the Moscow-based Cubofuturist group had close ties with leading Avant-Garde painters (including Goncharova²³⁴), the Egofuturists had been much more conservative in this regard²³⁵. Hence, Gnedov’s address to a Cubofuturist associate is indicative of Gnedov’s movement towards his former rivals after the dissolution of the Egofuturist group.

²³³ Or perhaps as a conflation of *Rossiiia* and *rosa*.

²³⁴ Goncharova illustrated the following Cubofuturists books: *Igra v adu* (1912) and *Mirskontsa* (1912-13), both coauthored by Khlebnikov and Kruchenykh, as well as Kruchenykh’s booklets *Vzorval’* (1913) and *Pustynniki* (1913).

²³⁵ Il’ia Repin illustrated the cover of *Razvorocheny cherepa*, the ninth Egofuturist collection; the cover of the fifth collection *Zasakhare kry* and the Peterburgskii glashatai publishing house logo were drawn by Lev Zak.

In the poem, Goncharova is requested to repaint Russia, which can be understood both as reflection of the changing political and artistic climate in the country in 1917; alternatively, “perekras” might be a call for the artist to return from abroad²³⁶. In lines 3-6, the poet offers her the accoutrements for the painting—in this case, peculiarly, mushrooms. It is not clear why they would be of any help; perhaps the mushroom might provide dye to paint with²³⁷.

The layout of the poem is arranged to highlight two colours, red and yellow, both of which suggest Goncharova’s brash use of colour in her Neoprimitivist painting²³⁸. The colour red is necessarily associated with Russian revolutionary politics, with which Gnedov was linked; furthermore, while fighting for the Bolsheviks in the October Revolution, the poet stayed near the Sukharev Tower²³⁹. The exact nature of the cataract is not clear. The “bel-” in “bel'mo” might carry a reference to the Whites, or perhaps it connects with the colour yellow in line 7 in that a cataract can give the eye a yellowish appearance. At the same time, the adjective “zheltyi” cannot be said to modify any of the nouns in the poem. The colour yellow sparks off a chain of associations, connecting visual sensation, smell (cinnamon, which is also a yellowish-brown colour), and China (a source of spices); in the last line, cinnamon “cries” China, i.e. it shows its provenance²⁴⁰. The East was a source of artistic inspiration for Goncharova; in theoretical articles from 1914 she declared “my path is toward the source of all arts, the East”²⁴¹. Finally, of course, the connection can also be made between the colour yellow, the East, and the identification of the Asiatic with the Revolution (symbolised by red in the poem). The poem seems to call upon Goncharova to paint a symbolic expression of the Revolution as the union of Russia and the East²⁴².

²³⁶ Goncharova had left Russia in 1914 to join Diaghilev’s ballet in the West; by 1917 she was permanently established as an artist in Paris.

²³⁷ There is such a thing as a *krasiashchii grib* (*Echinodontium*; literally a ‘dyeing mushroom’); P. Macura, *Russian-English Botanical Dictionary*, Reno, 1982, p. 128.

²³⁸ Note Gnedov’s later poem: “zheltyi/ krasnyi/ sinii/ goluboi/ krasnykh/ dva zelenykh/ piat'/ desiati'/ zheltyi/ tochka/ sinikh sto po sto”, *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 83.

²³⁹ See *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 24-25, which is based on a letter (dated 5.8.77) from Gnedov to Sigei. The poet had also been stationed at the Spasskii barracks in the Tower in February 1917

²⁴⁰ The lower case of “kitaem” balances that of “rosiiu”.

²⁴¹ N. Goncharova, ‘Preface to Catalogue of One-Man Exhibition, 1913’, in *Russian Art of the Avant Garde*, p. 55.

²⁴² The shape of the poem may be of some consequence. “Natal'ia Goncharova” occupies the first line, but, if treated as the title separate from the other lines, the poem forms a near-symmetrical ‘E’ shape. Lines 5 and 6, which carry the metaphor involving the Sukharev Tower, protrude in the shape of a

‘Natal’ia Goncharova’ betrays some indebtedness to Maiakovskii²⁴³. The layout of ‘Natal’ia Goncharova’ resembles and may have been influenced by the column form Maiakovskii was employing 1916-22²⁴⁴. Gnedov’s poem may well carry direct textual references to Maiakovskii, for example, in the similarity of the line “Vykolot’ bel’ma pustyn” of Maikovskii’s poem ‘My’ (1913)²⁴⁵ and Gnedov’s “vyshmorgni bel’mo” (note also “pustynia po glazu” in ‘Khromonogo pustynia po glazu’). Another Maiakovskii poem that is similar in content to ‘Natal’ia Goncharova’ is ‘A Vy mogli by’ (1913): both poems are concerned with the symbiotic relationship between poet and painter and apparently propose that the world be painted in a new way. In ‘A Vy mogli by’ Maiakovskii assumes both roles (he was trained and active as a painter), whereas in ‘Natal’ia Goncharova’ Gnedov has the idea and the accoutrements but calls upon a recognised painter to perform the task. Another telling contrast is that, while both poets propose the use of unusual but everyday items for poetic creation, Maiakovskii will employ a feature of the city (drainpipes - “A vy/ noktium sygrat/ mogli by/ na fleite vodostochnykh trub?”²⁴⁶), whereas Gnedov offers Goncharova mushrooms, a feature of the country. Gnedov remained a nature poet; urban themes are almost non-existent in his work.

The third poem is ‘V boku klok sena’:

В боку клок сена
 выпори
 метель салазы на гайтане
 прочим существам
 по заднему месту
 Почтение

tower between the single-word lines 4 and 7. The associations of Russia–red and yellow–China are underscored by the fact lines 2-4 and 7-9 form two triangles.

²⁴³ Gnedov first met Maiakovskii at Nikolai Burliuk’s flat in St Petersburg in 1913 (see RGALI, fond 1334, Kruchenykh, op. 1, ed. khr. 288, l. 51). According to Piast, Gnedov had once said of Maiakovskii’s poetry “I don’t like Benedictines (*benediktinov*)”; Piast, *Vstrechi*, p. 263. Khardzhiev later explained that this was “a normal piece of *épatage*”; *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 22). In an article from 1981, Khardzhiev noted that “Maiakovskii’s verse system influenced Gnedov’s later poems”; Khardzhiev, ‘Iz materialov o Maiakovskom’, p. 276.

²⁴⁴ Janecek, *Look of Russian Literature*, p. 219.

²⁴⁵ V. Maiakovskii, ‘My’, in his *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. F. Kuznetsov et al., 1, Moscow, 1978, p. 81.

²⁴⁶ Maiakovskii, ‘A Vy mogli by’, in his *Sobranie sochinenii*, 1, p. 75.

As in ‘Natal’ia Goncharova’ and the second stanza of ‘Khromonogo pustynia po glazu’, this poem is structured around a second person singular imperative. There are two non-standard words in line 3: the neologism “salazy”, derived from *salazit’* (to slide) or an abbreviation of *salazki* (sledge), and the dialect word *gaitan* (string). In addition, there are two slightly odd syntactic features: it is curious that the command is to whip the wisp of hay *in* the side, and in line 3 it is not clear how one should understand ‘on string’. Nevertheless, ‘V boku klok sena’ appears to be a depiction of a horse-drawn sledge being driven through a snowstorm. Although laid out as a *5ix*-line poem, it can be divided into three parts (lines 1 and 2, line 3, and lines 4-6) to highlight three separate impressions. The shift of focus in each part and the way in which the attitude of the person whipping is revealed only in the last line is reminiscent of the form of *haiku*.

Vremennik 4-yi

There are three more poems dating from the end of Gnedov’s Futurist period. The first, ‘Roit vam mogilu bogi’, published in 1918²⁴⁷, was actually written in 1917 amidst the October Revolution (probably at around the same time as the last three poems). Gnedov recalled how with one finger he managed to type out “a poem influenced by the events”²⁴⁸ during a brief lull in the fighting. The poem does not display revolutionary fervour; Sigei treats its absurdity as “directly proportional to the actual events”²⁴⁹. Rather than leading on one to the next, the opening four lines seem to function in parallel, in a similar way to sections of ‘Eroshino’, ‘Bros’te mne lapu skoree kogot’ i vshei uviadan’e’, and other earlier poems.

Роят вам могилу боги
 Поломали волку ноги
 Хвост повесили в углу
 Потерял портной иглу

²⁴⁷ V. Gnedov, ‘Roit vam mogilu bogi’, in *Vremennik 4-yi*. The poem is republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 65. A reproduction of *Vremennik 4-yi* can be found in Khlebnikov, *Tvoreniia*, p. 111.

²⁴⁸ Astakhova and Tselarius, *Tovarishch Ol’ga*, p. 75. Velimir Khlebnikov visited Gnedov and helped organise publication of the poem in the fourth edition of *Vremennik* by a venture entitled ‘Vasilisk i Ol’ga’. Khlebnikov also named Gnedov as a member of his utopian society, “Predsedateli zemnogo shara”. See T. Prokopova, ‘K portretu Khlebnikova’, *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, 27 May 1997, p. 13.

²⁴⁹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 163.

Lines 1 and 2 carry images of death and breakage, and line 3 of hunting. The agents of destruction are a third person plural ‘they’, the gods. In line 4, the reference to a tailor losing his needle is somewhat obscure but may be understood as a metaphor that describes the breakdown of normal events. The line apparently confused other members of Gnedov’s revolutionary committee:

Встречая меня, портные Монахов, Морозов, Матюшин и другие, добродушно
посмеиваясь, задавали вопрос «Так как же, товариш Гнедов, выходит, «потеряли мы
иглу» в связи с событиями?»²⁵⁰.

In lines 5 and 6, the sudden shift to an elephant and its trunk is unexpected, motivated by the sound-play *sazha-s(k)azhe-sazhe*:

Сажка скажет нос саженный
Верно счастье ли слону
В луже свиной
Поклоняемся вину

The worshipping of wine (line 8) may be a reflection of the intoxication of the events or an explanation of what is happening as being guided by a ‘drunken’ logic; furthermore, during the Revolution, wine-cellars were looted²⁵¹. In contrast to the difficult content, the poem’s metre is a regular trochaic tetrameter (but note line 7: ‘в луже свиной’), like the earlier ‘Letana’, and there may be an echo of the *chastushka*, which are often trochaic and were widespread at this time.

Gazeta futuristov

Published in *Gazeta futuristov*²⁵², a poster that was pasted on walls all over Moscow in 1918, ‘Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno’ is another poem that is characterised by obscure imagery, drastic shifts of focus, and trochaic metre (although it is not maintained throughout); Sigei has described it as an “absurdist poem”²⁵³:

²⁵⁰ *Tovarishch Ol’ga*, pp. 75-76.

²⁵¹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 163.

²⁵² V. Gnedov, ‘Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno’, in *Gazeta futuristov*, p. 2. The poem is republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 66.

²⁵³ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 165. Gnedov’s poem strongly contrasts with the openly ideological contributions to *Gazeta futuristov* of Maiakovskii, Kamenskii, and Burluuk.

Выступают жаворонки ладно
 Обратив коготья пухирядна
 Преподав урок чужих законов
 Ковылятся лоном кони
 Когтем сжимая сонце
 Положив язык на грани.
 Может был проездом на Уране
 А теперь петля кобыле
 Были ноги было сердце
 Были.

At first, this appears to be a nature poem, albeit a highly unusual one. Line 1 starts the poem in a straightforward way, depicting singing larks, which are typically associated with the arrival of spring. However, the switch of focus in line 2 towards the birds' talons ("kogot'ia") is unexpected, as if trying to portray larks as birds of prey. The tone of the poem continues to change with the series of unclear impressions that follow in lines 3 to 6. The allusion to the sun²⁵⁴ in line 5 presages a shift from natural depiction (larks, horses, etc.) to description of cosmic travel calling in at Uranus. The expansion of the poem's focus may be an attempt to represent the freedom that the poet is capable of, but then the poem falls away in the last three lines, which seem to be governed by sound-play (the *byl* of "kobylye" seems to motivate the "Byli", "bylo", and "Byli" in lines 9 and 10). As in the preceding poem, Gnedov, in contrast to his earlier practice, uses an almost regular rhyme scheme, here with constant feminine, mainly inexact, rhymes (-*adno*, -*iadno*, -*ono*(v), -*oni*, -*ontse*, -*rani*, -*rane*).

Puti tvorchestva, 5

'To skachushchii lebed' (1919)²⁵⁵ is a more traditional, contemplative poem, closer to 'Poema nachala' and later non-Futurist works than to previous 'absurdist' verses. In the poem, Gnedov makes the identification between his poetic voice and a

²⁵⁴ The word "sontse" used by Gnedov is not a misprint but the Ukrainian word for 'sun'.

²⁵⁵ V. Gnedov, 'To skachushchii lebed', in *Puti tvorchestva*, p. 42. The poem is republished in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 67. An analysis of this issue of *Puti tvorchestva* can be found in R. Vroon, 'Puti tvorchestva: Journal as Metapoetic Statement', in *Russian Literature and American Critics*, pp. 219-39. Vroon describes Gnedov's poem as "themaically marginal" (p. 223).

swan. A similar association was made in the long poem ‘Svirel’ga’ (“raspoiasany lebed”), and the bird occurred in Gnedov’s drawings of the 1960s²⁵⁶.

То скачущий лебедь
 Не я ли?...
 Мы с лебедем в поле гуляли
 Забыта ли лебедем доля,
 Надета ли к клюву уздечку,
 Повешен ли верно висящий,
 Написана ль белая цаца,
 Поют ли всегда молчаливо,
 Поют и будут петь дети,
 А мир перестанет ли петь?
 И лебедю сказано петь

Sigei recodes the first three words of line 3 as the *sdvig* “myslebed”²⁵⁷ to show the connection of poet and swan. Interestingly, the swan is combined with certain attributes of a horse: it is depicted galloping and a bridle has been put in its beak. It is not surprising that Gnedov might associate himself with horses: they were part of his Cossack heritage and encoded in his surname, and a critic had once entitled him “Donskoi Zherebets Vasilisk Gnedov”²⁵⁸. Here, the combination of swan and horse creates the image of a Pegasus, which was the way the poet envisaged himself in ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’. The bridle is symbolic of a constraint placed upon the swan (poet), and this may be an allusion to the fact that, when Gnedov wrote the poem, he was recovering from shellshock sustained in the October Revolution.

Also noticeable is that the poem is primarily made up of rhetorical, existential questions as if brought on by recollections of an idealised past, when the poet was perhaps freer in his expression. The poet worries about being forgotten, constrained, or whether his poetic voice is in fact dying. Line 7 seems to question whether anything has been written at all²⁵⁹. In lines 7 and 8, there may be certain allusions to *Smert’*

²⁵⁶ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 165. Sigei notes that the theme of the swan also arises in Petrovskii’s poems dedicated to Gnedov.

²⁵⁷ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 165.

²⁵⁸ *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 188-89. A poetic model for the positive association of poet with horse may have been in Maiakovskii’s ‘Khoroshee otnoshenie k lo-s h’adiam’ (1918).

²⁵⁹ *Tsatsa* is a childish or colloquial word with a variety of meanings (“child’s toy, plaything; good child; big head” (*Els.*, 4, p. 3052)), but here, in the context of “Napisana l’”, it might well be

iskusstvu. The “*belaiia tsatsa*” recalls the theme of whiteness in Gnedov’s writing in general (‘*Poema Kontsa*’ and ‘*Poema nachala*’, in particular), singing in silence may suggest both ‘*Poiui*’ and the silent recital of ‘*Poema Kontsa*’. The final line provides a defiant answer to the questions in the first stanza: come what may, the swan is told, or is fated, to sing. Of course, there is an irony here, given that this was Gnedov’s last published poem. Nevertheless, ‘*To skachushchii lebed*’ was not quite the poet’s ‘swan song’: he continued to write, if not to publish.

iv) LATER POETRY

Little is known about Gnedov’s writing in the years immediately after 1919. According to Petrovskii, Gnedov burned a book of poetry he had been working on at around the time of ‘*To skachushchii lebed*’. The next known poem comes from 1938:

Все что видим только сон
 Что случилось с нами!
 Я Великий Эдисон
 Со своими снами!²⁶⁰

Given that the poem was written in the Lukianovskaia prison in Kiev, its whimsical humour seems rather pointed.

After his release from labour camp, Gnedov devoted his remaining years to poetry. He wrote on a daily basis and a considerable volume of poetry written 1958-78 remains unpublished. Sigei explains that its stylistic variety (and varying quality) was because “the process of creation attracted the poet far more than the finality of the result”²⁶¹. Later works expressed the poet’s enjoyment and sense of wonder at the world (e.g. ‘*Kakoi schastlivyi den' segodnia*’²⁶²), his sense of time and its passage²⁶³, as well as recollections of his imprisonment²⁶⁴. It should be noted that the great majority

connected with writing. It may be noted that the word also occurs in an onomatopoeic usage in Maiakovskii’s *Oblako v shtanakh*.

²⁶⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 87.

²⁶¹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 26.

²⁶² *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 74.

²⁶³ For example, see the poems numbered 82, 83, 88, and 123 in *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 88, 89, 91, 110.

²⁶⁴ See poems 65, 66, 67; *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 79-79.

of these works had little or nothing in common with his Futurist origins. However, some connections can be discerned. Gnedov was proud of his achievements as a Futurist and often incorporated reminiscences of early contemporaries, as the following previously unpublished poem called ‘Eksprompt’ shows:

Юбилейный Ваш бальзам
Мне открыл стихов Сезам
Янтарем зашвёл Сезан
И любим и не сказан!

Я еще пройдуся по солнцу,
Полетаю над луной и
Любому чудотворцу
Млечной стану пленой!

Там где Игорь не скитался
Не был даже Велимир,
Я хожу, смотрю сквозь пальцы
струн, звенящих с детства лир²⁶⁵.

Gnedov signed the poem “Generalissimus russkogo futurizma”, a title also used by David Burliuk. In the final four lines of another poem, the poet recalled ‘Poema Kontsa’:

Сильнее огня и слова только молчание
Превращенное мною в *Поэму Конца*
Склонится перед ним *Коровое мычание*
И заиграет солнце новорожденного птенца

According to Sigei, this poem was a late response to Maiakovskii’s *Prostoe kak mychanie* (1916), whose title apparently referred to Gnedov²⁶⁶. In addition to direct references, Gnedov employed certain general themes in his later poetry that were shared with earlier works. The first line of a poem from 1974, for example, echoes the third line of ‘To skachushchii lebed’:

²⁶⁵ RGALI, fond 2823 Smirenskii, op. 1, ed. khr. 88, p. 89.

²⁶⁶ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 185.

Я пробежал по снегу зайцем²⁶⁷

Furthermore, there are a number of later poems in which the poet compares himself with animals, particularly birds²⁶⁸ (as in ‘To skachushchii lebed’, ‘Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno’, and others). Many more concern nature in some form, in one case the transformation of the poet into other natural states:

Я превращаюсь в растение
 Могу лишь лучи поглощать
 Ветрам давать свиристения
 И по-змеиному пищать²⁶⁹

Traces of the self-aggrandisement evident in Egofuturist works like ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’ can be found, among others, in the 1974 poem ‘Mne budut pokloniat'sia’:

Великий я великий
 Величием кошмарным
 Неизмерим я лыком
 И пением комарным²⁷⁰

Here, however, the arrogance is tempered by irony.

As can be seen from the cited examples, Gnedov’s use of rhyme, metre, and in particular language, is very much more standard than in his earlier works. Nevertheless, neologisms do occur rarely, in this instance combined with a certain absurdity:

Нет ничего зеленее солнца
 Нет ничего голубее луны
 Скажите какого цвета спросонца
 И какого цвета у швейцара галуны²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 119.

²⁶⁸ The analogy is drawn between poet and dog (81), cat (83), bear (120), sparrow (55, 57), “immature nestling” (84), and falcon (91); *Sobr. stikh.*, pp. 88, 89, 108, 74, 75, 89, 93..

²⁶⁹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 82.

²⁷⁰ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 113.

²⁷¹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 94.

The coinage “sprosontsa” combines the colloquial adverb *sproson'ia* (being only half awake) and the Ukrainian word *sonse* (sun), which was used in ‘Zhavoronki vystypaiut ladno’. One or two later works involve the kind of intractable content and formal experimentation familiar from his Futurist days. The extensive use of neologisms and lack of punctuation in the extended prose piece ‘Sugubennonauchnovastistaia argumentnost' svoim ostrim kontsom...’²⁷² recall Egofuturist prose works like ‘Kolovorot’; and in an earlier version of the following poem, Sigei has shown that the third line read “kuka”, and he connects this work with the 1913 poem ‘Kuk’²⁷³:

в с о
с т
к а
я
н е в е р о в а я
ж у
и т²⁷⁴

Although written for the most part in a more straightforward and traditional style, there are elements in Gnedov’s later works that show his continuing interest in Futurism and that seem to form a “bridge to his *Zasakhare kry* and *Nebokopy*”²⁷⁵.

Throughout Gnedov’s Futurist period, the search for new forms was a constant feature, but equally characteristic is the variety of both his experimental and more traditional pieces. The chronological analysis of the works shows the uneven course of the poet’s development. Gnedov’s first poem, ‘Triolet’, was more Symbolist than Futurist, but his next works in *Gostinets sentimentam*, *Dary Adonisu*, and *Zasakhare kry* displayed the kind of sustained neologistic language that typified his Futurism. *Smert' iskusstvu* was also innovatory in its language, but was especially significant for the reduction of poetic form to consecutively smaller units. ‘Poema Kontsa’, where

²⁷² *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 82.

²⁷³ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 175.

²⁷⁴ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 84.

²⁷⁵ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 27.

language was rejected altogether, was a logical consequence of the abbreviation and the tenet of destruction implicit in Futurism; Gnedov's best known and perhaps best poem makes a striking statement, one which clearly carried a resonance for other Avant-Garde artists later in the same century. The poet continued to innovate, inventing 'word-lines' as a new unit in poetry and writing a piece whose layout was similar to those developed by 'Concrete' poets some 40 years later. After 1913, however, the poet began to tone down his experimentation and move away from deliberately shocking and offensive statements. The works of 1914-19 tended either towards obscurity and absurdity or, conversely, towards the increasing semantic and linguistic clarity and contemplative character of later works. Overall, there is a sense in which Gnedov's poetics develops the 'wrong' way around, as if, as Sigei hints, according to the principle of inversion proclaimed in the title of the Cubofuturist collection *Mirskontsa*²⁷⁶. Gnedov brought poetry to a symbolic end in *Smert' iskusstvu* at the very start of his career, producing 'Poema Kontsa' several months before 'Poema nachala'; and in general, there is a movement from highly complex early experiments to more straightforward later poetry. At the same time, Gnedov's development also comes full circle; poems such as his first, 'Triolet', as well as 'Pechal'naia skazka', 'Poema nachala', and 'To skachushchii lebed'" indicate that the poet had from the start been interested in styles of writing that contrasted those of his main Futurist output.

Alongside Gnedov's apparent eclecticism, certain themes run through the whole of his Futurist period: the concern for the state of poetry; whiteness and silence; the influence of folklore, mythology, and mysticism. Probably the most recognisably Egofuturist feature of the poet's work was his usage of a strident lyric subject, but other elements include the Nietzschean-inspired prose ('Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi'), the several references to whirlwinds, eagles, doves, abysses, the 'metaphysical' concern with death, happiness, grief, and melancholy. Above all, Gnedov is a nature poet, and the interaction of poet and nature is central. References to plants and birds abound, and an identification with horses and birds as symbols of freedom can also be felt. As has been seen, Gnedov never renounced his Futurist origins, and his later poems show him to have been committed to his achievements.

²⁷⁶ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 8.

The analysis now proceeds to its final stage, increasing in focus from consideration of Gnedov's works to hone in upon his use of words.

CHAPTER 3. WORDS

i) FEATURES OF GNEDOV'S POETIC LANGUAGE: DIALECTISMS, NEOLOGISMS, *ZAUM'*

More than anything else, Russian Futurism was an art of the word, and Futurist poets sought to enrich and revitalise poetic language through linguistic innovation. For the Egofuturists, the use of French and English borrowings (e.g. “Effekten byl vash temnyi tualet”¹, “ogimniv ekstsess v virele!”²) to humorous or kitsch effect exploited the snob-value and supposed modernity of West European languages. Neologisms such as desubstantial verbs (“Menia otronit Marsel'eziiia”³; “molebniat”, “zarnichit”⁴), coinages from prepositional phrases (“Ia povseserdno oekranen”⁵), and other ‘speeded-up’ word creations like “ozerzamok”, “zheno-klub”, and “zlatopolden” were considered by Chukovskii to be potential additions to the language and symptomatic of an “Americanisation” of Russian⁶. The Cubofuturists employed neologisms to an even greater extent than the Egofuturists. Kruchenykh, Khlebnikov, Maiakovskii, Kamenskii, Guro, and others all made use of neologisms in various ways. They found inspiration in the language of the street and countryside, in bird song, and the outlandish or unusual (to a Russian ear) sounds of foreign languages. Kruchenykh is primarily known for his abstract *zaumnyi iazyk* experiments, such as ‘Dyr bul shchyl’ and ‘go osneg kaid’ (1913). While neologisms make up only a small part of Khlebnikov’s total poetics, they were extremely varied in structure and derivation: experiments with morphology (using the root *smekh*, ‘Zakliatie smekhom’), sound-painting (*zvukopis'*; ‘Bobeobi pelis' guby’), as well as abstract *zaum'* (‘Noch' v Galitsii’, *Zangezi*)⁷. Khlebnikov drew upon many Slavic languages and dialects, and wrote several articles describing his derivational processes and word-formations.

¹ I. Severianin, ‘Intima’, in his *Sobranie sochinenii*, 1, p. 201.

² I. Severianin, ‘Morozhenoe iz sireni’, *Orly nad propast'iu*, St. Petersburg, 1912, p. 1.

³ I. Severianin, ‘Samogimn’, *Zlatolira* (1912), in his *Sobranie sochinenii*, 1, p. 186.

⁴ K. Olimpov, ‘Evan, Evoe!’, *Zhonglery-nervy*, St. Petersburg, 1913, p. 4.

⁵ I. Severianin, ‘Epilog’, *Ego-futurizm* (1912), in his *Sobranie sochinenii*, 1, p. 179.

⁶ Chukovskii, ‘Ego-futuristy i kubofuturisty’, p. 112.

⁷ Khlebnikov himself noted up to 53 different neologistic areas; see V. Grigor'ev, *Grammatika idiosilia. V. Khlebnikov*, Moscow, 1983, pp. 93-94.

Although an Egofuturist, Gnedov was closer to other Cubofuturists in his verbal experimentation and use of language. Unlike Khlebnikov, however, Gnedov left few clues as to his neologistic rationale, making the explanation of his coinages a complex task. This chapter is a first attempt to account for the distinctive features of Gnedov's experiments in poetic language and to describe their implications⁸.

Dialectisms and Colloquialisms

This section is concerned primarily with stylistic registers. For the most part, the words considered do exist, except where neologisms have been closely modelled on such words. The first group below consists of non-standard words or dialectisms that are listed in Dal's dictionary or in dialect dictionaries but that nevertheless remain outside the scope of standard Russian. The words are given in the morphological form in which they appear:

kalenki (2); *vymnoi, zeli* (3); *unest'* (4); *peredumki* (5); *gagali, plakukha* (9); *strepetili* (10); *pravdit', rasposhu, zakoniu, lomchu, polgoria* (11); *lokal* (12); *bezvestia* (17); *vyshlaia* (19); *razsevi, mokhnatka, eleka, vertliv, poval, viazla, zakostilo* (35); *pecheritsy, gorlaia* (43); *umory* (44); *pazushka* (45); *pecheritsy* (46); *gaitane* (47); *tsatsa* (50).

In addition, a number of words can be identified as coming from dialects of Gnedov's native Don region:

zelenke (2); *pelenit* (2); *vershi* (4, 5); *veti* (5); *guk!* (10; from *gukat'*); *gi!* (12); *buba* (21); *gormai* (39; from *gorma*); *dy* (44).

Given that the dialects of the Don region contain a great deal of Ukrainian words, it is of little surprise that there appears to be a number of Ukrainianisms in Gnedov's work (in the case of neologisms, the existing Ukrainian word is put in parentheses):

⁸ However, there will be little additional analysis of Gnedov's word-lines from *Nebokopy*. This chapter is to be read in conjunction with the Glossary, from where the numbering of all the words and quotations comes.

Krugovid (2); *dvoenilis'* [*dvoinitisia*] (9); *kukala* [*kukati*] (10); *bleskaiu* [*bliskati*] (11); *soniachko* [*soniachnii*] (11); *viazianki* [*viazanka*] (35); *abo* (43); *rosiiu* (46); *sontse* (49);

As well as these words, the first two stanzas of 'Ognianna svita' are written entirely in a kind of imitation Ukrainian. Gnedov used existing diminutives extensively and created neologistic diminutives:

molochki, *steblochki*, *medik* (3); *dykhankoi*, *glazkom* (4); *rzhavlenki-dubtsy*, *rzhavki* (5); *proklemushkov*, *proklemushek*, *proklenukhi*, *igolochku-slezku*, *igolochki-slezki* (8); *strepetki* (10); *kumirka*, *krovka* (11); *sinenki*, *verbliudkoi* (12); *somka* (18); *rechki* (28); *nizanku*, *viazianki*, *mogilke*, *myshatki*, *polosok* (35); *podtishok*, *krylyshko* (39); *pazushka* (45).

In general, diminutives are a feature of colloquial and dialect language as well as of folk-songs and poetry. In addition, Gnedov also made use of colloquialisms (for neologisms, the standard form is in parentheses):

storozhkii (2); *zalikhatkoi* [*zalikhvatskoi*] (5); *maternii* [*maternyi*] (8); *obglodki* (7); *eva!* (12); *batiushka* (39); *ptakha*, *shvakh!* (42); *kovyliat* (46); *kovyliat* [*kovyliatsia*] (49).

On occasion, as in 'Svirel'ga' (*Zasakhare Kry*), Gnedov mixes registers:

Эва! Милостивые государи

The address to the reader combines a colloquialism with an extremely formal construction.

The use of dialectisms, diminutives, and colloquialisms fits a pattern of Primitivism that was present in Russian literature from the middle of the first decade of this century (Remizov) and in the work of certain Russian Futurists (Khlebnikov, Kruchenykh, Kamenskii). Nilsson has charted the movement of Primitivism in Russian literature from 1906 onwards, defining it as "a search for new aesthetic effects outside

the limits of the established concepts of art, in objects or categories officially considered to be ‘simple’, ‘primitive’, ‘non-art’⁹. In a lecture entitled ‘Blizhaishaia zadacha russkoi literatury’, which was published in 1909 but delivered first in 1906, Sergei Gorodetskii envisaged the use of archaisms, “folklore traditions and popular language”, and neologisms to renew poetic language¹⁰. Ironically, in 1913, Gorodetskii gave Gnedov’s experiments in exactly this area a hostile reaction¹¹.

The application of dialect forms and colloquialisms can be felt throughout Gnedov’s work, and it is in this area that Gnedov found a great deal of room to experiment, creating a language that Sigei has described as “‘fluidized’ variation of folk speech”¹². In a recent letter, Sigei writes:

разговорный язык и по сей день творится на ходу: каждый говорящий создаёт новые слова в русле общего... Именно так вёл себя Василиск Гнедов в футур-период (только что оторвавшись от других носителей творительного языкового зудежа).¹³

However, Sigei’s statement that “folk speech knows no laws” is an exaggeration¹⁴. Dialects of the Don region, for example, are typical of all South Russian dialects and “virtually absent are such features that would represent a transformation of linguistic phenomena known in a slightly different form in other areas”¹⁵. At the same time, it is possible that some words listed as ‘neologisms’ or ‘word-alterations’ below may in fact be rare, unrecorded, but (once) existing dialect words; as Khlebnikov wrote in 1908, “whoever knows the Russian countryside, knows of words created for an hour and surviving the lifetime of a butterfly”¹⁶. Furthermore, standard Russian words can have different shades of meaning in their dialect usage¹⁷; linguistic differences between villages in the Don region two to three kilometres apart can be extremely significant¹⁸.

⁹ Nilsson, ‘Primitivism’, p. 472.

¹⁰ Nilsson, ‘Primitivism’, p. 473.

¹¹ In a review of *Gostinets sentimentam*: Gorodetskii, ‘Puchina stikhovaia’, p. 3.

¹² Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 117 [the translation of the phrase is taken from Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 102].

¹³ Letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97.

¹⁴ Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 117.

¹⁵ *SRDG*, p. VIII.

¹⁶ V. Khlebnikov, ‘Kurgan Sviatogora’, in his *Tvorenii*, p. 580. Also, Grigor’ev, *Grammatika*, p. 100.

¹⁷ For example, according to *SRDG*, *belka* can be “a type of wheat” (I, p. 23), *zvuk* may mean “hearing” (*slukh*) (II, p. 27), and *risk* can mean a “desire” (III, p. 93).

¹⁸ *SRDG*, p. VIII.

Evidently, this introduces a level of relativity into the language: without the relevant specialist dictionary at hand, many of the dialect words Gnedov uses might be perceived as neologisms, and in any case the reader cannot be sure the given dictionary meaning was the one envisaged by the poet. Thus, Gnedov seems to exploit the strangeness of such words from the perspective of standard Russian.

Neologisms

The majority of the neologisms occur in works written in 1913 (40 of the 50 poems under study). From 1914 on, neologisms assumed a much less important role. For the purpose of this study, the word ‘neologism’ is to be understood in its broadest possible sense: a new formation, and one not found in any dictionary. Thus it would include both such obvious contrivances as “krylobrat” as well as the minutest variation from the standard spelling of a word, e.g. “zastonila” (rather than *zastonala*). Both examples are viewed as deliberate coinages or deviations from standard language. This analysis is an attempt to highlight the main trends in Gnedov’s neologisms, with examples. The following list categorises the neologisms into the relevant parts of speech. As in the previous section, the words are given in the morphological form in which they appear:

Nouns

Letana, Lëto-dom (2); *khoziaiam* (3); *zlatokoniushni, svetiakami* (4); *rapsoda, dum', vlastnik, listnik, rzhavlenki-dubtsy, rzhavki* (5); *eskizev* (6); *plamen'e* (7); *sred'mir, samosila* (7); *gurebka, proklenushkov, proklenushek, proklenukhi* (8); *slezeteki, neveselei, tekivoi, veseliam, bereziach'iam, okhotei, veseloch'em, krichakov, listiage, tselovami* (9); *belokol* (10); *krylobrat, kust'iam, napisei, dolanakh, mechak, krovka, smeiankoi* (11); *svirel'ga, raskrylenka, bezzadorka, zadorka, krashen', sinenki, krugopliash, verbliudkoi, stonoem, lebedovik, pezhi* (12); *stonga, pepel'e* (13); *svirel'ga, prostorechev'e, zvukopas* (15); *robkot* (18); *smol'ga* (19); *sredmir'e, dushitki, nizanku, viazianki, plekatka, sladoshi, myshatki*, (35); *riabidii, trun'ga, podtishok, vynyarnik* (39); *tyr'* (40); *eroshino* (42).

Verbs

Uverkhaiu, storozhuiu, snoi (2); *vypenil* (3); *begit* (4); *vpolosmuto* (5); *zaplakuchilis'*, *zasolnko* (9); *zheltorotili, strepetili, zheltevel, kukala, stanyval* (10); *bleskaiu, razrydavliu, krokodilit', proglotat', osklepliai, vpalachu, polozhaite, kishinet', mechaet, vykloniaiutsia, stoloknilos', rydachit, derzachai, zatvorchu* (11); *pereezhil, perekanchival, podvodovil, nazovliat, liublial, peredol'chu, podzhalal, razvintiali, zastonila* (12); *polynchaetsia* (13); *razlomcheno* (15); *svirel'zhit, rasprostite* (16); *poiui* (23); *vcheraet* (24); *podkukui, vyroslit, rasplalesh, vpolosmulo* (35); *slezzhit, iastreblo, nechaiat* (39); *vzrostali* (42); *vyzhevat', karacheno* (44); *vyshmorgni* (46); *kovyliatsia* (49).

Adjectives

muravoi, goravyi, chasyi (2); *vymnoi, sladyi* (3); *pridorogaia, gigantyi, zalikhvatkoi, krapkiia, dubkiia* (5); *muravaia* (6); *vetkiia, kletnyi, neotvetnyi* (8); *razvigoj, b'etaia* (9); *marshegrobaia, groboe, dolistykh* (11); *belosnegii, raztsvetenaia, vertovertanyi, raskryvoe, belosnezhii* (12); *serebroi* (20); *bubaia* (21); *neotsveten* (35).

Adverbs

zakhvato, kruzho (3); *ognelavo, bubno, zlatokopytko* (4); *zmeiko, tsepo, zigzago, pado* (7); *unyvo* (10); *planetko, mecho* (11); *guasho, elovito, dolinato, stonoemno* (12); *gormai* (39).

Before turning to the types of neologism that Sigei believes typical in Gnedov's work, we look at a variety of word-formation techniques used by Gnedov that are standard.

Compounds

The procedure of combining two words (or roots of words) to create a new formation is known as compounding. The formation of compound neologisms is common in standard language as well as being a technique exploited by poets that is akin to metaphor. For example, Gnedov seems to have condensed the words *ston* and *vodoëm* in the following line:

Стоноемъ заводилъ Караванъ (12)

The associations groan–pain–tears–water unite the two components, or the ‘repository of groans’ may refer to camels. Other unusual poetic images can be found in the creations “krylobrat” (11) and “zvukopas” (15). The addition of *zlato-* to other roots is common: Gnedov’s “Zlatokopytko”, “Zlatokoniushni” (4), and “zlatopliashu” (12) can be compared to Severianin’s coinages “zlatolira” and “zlatopolden” and Khlebnikov’s “zlatovolnach”. One of Gnedov’s most important concepts was a compound: *Sred’mir* (7), from which he forms the adjective *Sred’mirnyi*. As has been seen in the analysis of ‘Kolovorot’, these coinages are developed (e.g. “средьмірье средьмірье”, “средьміро”, etc.), where Gnedov plays on the homonyms meaning ‘world’ and ‘peace’, written in pre-1917 orthography мірь and миръ. Similarly, *lëto-dom* (2) involves a pun on *letnii dom* (summer house). Other compounds formed in a less standard way are “slezeteki” (9); “marshegrobaia” (11); and “Bubchigi” (14).

Prefixation

A number of words are formed in a standard way by adding prefixes to existing roots in order to create new shades of meaning. The adjectives “neotvetnyi” (8) and “neotsveten” (35) and the verbs “vpolosnuto” (5), “vykloniaiutsia” (11); “perekanchival” (12); “vpolosnulo” (39); “vyzhevat” (44) all conform to word-formation rules. In terms of the word “vyroslit” (35), the stem ‘rosl’ occurs in the verb *vzroslet’* but in no formations with the prefix *vy-*. A less standard example of prefixation should be noted: the verb “vpalachu” (11) is a prefixed verb formed from the root *palach* (executioner) without the additional derivational suffixes that occur, for example, in *palachestvovat’*.

Suffixation

Some noun neologisms are formed by adding to the root commonly found endings such as ‘-nik’ (*vlastnik*, *listnik*, 5; *vynyrnik*, 39) and ‘-ak’/‘-iak’ (*svetiakami*, 4; *krichakov*, 9; *Mechaku*, *Mechak*, 11). Here, the ending indicates that the word signifies an animate or inanimate agent of the action or state designated by the root. When Gnedov employs the unusual dialect or colloquial ending ‘-ga’, as in *Svirel’ga* (12, 15),

Stonga (13), *Smol'ga* (19), *trun'ga* (39), it can be assumed that the neologism functions in the same way or one can try to find analogies (e.g. *pustel'ga*, *shtanga*, etc.), making the coinage closer to the 'portmanteau' words described below.

Portmanteau words

'Portmanteau' words or blends occur when the formation and meaning of two words are combined into one¹⁹. This is a productive process giving words such as 'smog' (smoke, fog) in English. In a poetic context, as with compound neologisms, this juxtaposition and merging is closely connected with metaphor and pun; they differ from compounds in that the roots of the two components are merged (unlike, for example, "krylobrat"). The process is also paralleled in the word lines of *Nebokopy*, some of which are extended portmanteau words.

In the following line, the verbal coinage involves both kissing (*tselovat'*) and hunting or ensnaring (*lovchii*):

Стономно тебя цѣловчалъ... (12)

Some portmanteau words are achieved through only very slight alterations to the formation of the original word. The coinage "raztsvetenaia" (12), a form of *raznotsvetnyi* or from *raztsveten'e*, subtly incorporates both colour (*tsvet*) with shade (*ten'*); the middle 'i' in "materinyia" (8) may create an oxymoronic fusion of both motherliness (*materinskii*) and abusiveness (*maternii*). Alternatively, the word "zaplakuchilis" (9) is made up of two components that are derived from the same root, *zaplakat'* (to start crying) and *plakuchii* (weeping); similarly, "Razlomcheno" [*razlomat'*, dial. *lomtit'*] (15). Sometimes, more than two words can be involved in the composition of a portmanteau word, for example:

Мечаетъ Мечакъ (11)

¹⁹ In *Through the Looking Glass*, Humpty Dumpty explains to Alice that the word "slithy" (from the poem 'Jabberwocky') is a mixture of 'lithe' and 'slimy': "You see it is like a portmanteau—there are two meanings packed up into one word"; L. Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There*, London, 1873, pp. 126-27.

The verbal coinage “mechaet” resembles the verbs *mechtat'* (to dream; *mechtaiu*, *mechtaesh'*) and *metat'* (to throw; *mechu*, *mechesh'*) but may also be derived from *mech* (sword). Similarly, the neologism “robkot” is composed of *robkost'*, *kot*, and *rokot*. Further examples of portmanteau words are: “snoi” [*son*, *snit'sia*; *snovat'*] (2); “razrydavliu” [(*raz-*) *rydat'*, *davit'*], “osklepliai” [*sklepat'*, *oslepliat'*], “rydachit” [*rydat'*, *rybachit'*], “stoloknilos” [*stoloch'*, *stol'knut'sia*] (11); “sladoshi” [*sladkii*, *sladit'*; *ladosh'*] (35); “vyshmorgni” [*vyshmygnut'*, *morgnut'*; *vyshmargivat'*; Ukr. *vyshmorgnuti*] (46). Less clear examples are “pevshno” [*pet'*, *pevuchii*; *pyshnyi*, *psheno?*] (35) and “pukhiriadna” [*pukh*, *riadno?*] (49).

Non-standard derivational procedures

Unlike Khlebnikov, Gnedov’s approach to making new words did not usually conform to standard methods of word-formation, however. A variety of procedures is listed in this section. Gnedov once explained to Nikolai Khardzhiev how the first two lines of ‘Letana’ (“Uverkhaiu lëto na muravoi”) were formed:

«Уверхаю» обозначает «улетаю вверх», а «крыло» — «крылато». Нельзя так сказать? А я утверждаю, что можно. И сказал²⁰.

This device is a kind of transposition of word sections, but there appears to be no other examples of it in Gnedov’s work.

Some verbal neologisms seem to have been formed by a highly irregular process of ‘internal derivation’. The word *liublial* (12) can be seen to be a past tense of a verb created from the first person singular present tense *liubliu*. For the verb coinage *nazovliat* (12), the stem *nazov-* from the first person future tense of *nazvat'* appears to have been used to make the new verb “nazovit”, which might have the imperfective pair “nazovliat”.

In ‘Na vozle bal’, certain of Gnedov’s neologisms seem to be created by ‘false’ analogies. For example, the following line contains three neologisms:

Обхвачена цѣловами бѣтая ненасыта (9)

²⁰ Quoted in Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova’, p. 117; the same quote appears in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 140.

The word “b'etaia”, from *bit'*, seems to combine the past passive participle (*bityi*) and the third person singular present tense (*b'et*); “nenasyta” is a noun created from *nenasytnyi* and by a possible analogy with the adverb *dosyta*. On the other hand, to form the noun neologism “tselovami” (9), Gnedov uses the productive stem *tselov-* (*tselovat'*, *tselovanie*) to create a noun “tselova”, which may be modelled on *osnova*.

This ‘incorrect’ method of making new words was also used by Kruchenykh: his neologism “vzorval” is derived from the past tense of the verb *vzorvat'* and by analogy with the noun *pechal'*, with which the coinage rhymes in the poem.

‘Word alterations’

Sigei uses the term *slovoizmenenie*²¹ to characterise Gnedov’s coinages. In strict linguistic terms, the word means ‘inflection’ but in this context might be better understood in the literal sense of ‘word-alteration’; Sigei contrasts this with the word *slovoobrazovanie* (word-formation), which would be more aptly used to describe Khlebnikov’s neologisms. Here, ‘word-alteration’ will be used to refer to a variety of neologisms that can be seen to result from small modifications in the formation of existing words. As seen in the first section of this chapter, such neologisms may be close to or modelled on dialect words.

One aspect of word-alteration is incorrectly spelled words. It is here that the boundaries between existing word and neologism become very difficult to distinguish. It might well be felt that these words are immediately recognisable as standard words, and the ‘mistake’ may not be discerned. Nevertheless, there is a number of words that have been tampered with to produce a calculated effect. According to Sigei, a phrase like “Begun begit” (4) (rather than *bezhit* or *begaet*) “would have pained the ear of Khlebnikov, who always checked his neologisms by the ‘laws of the Russian language’”²². The deliberately sloppy spelling employed by Gnedov is an attempt to imitate colloquial forms, e.g.

Звонъ залихваткой пляши (5)

²¹ Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia’, p. 117.

²² Sigov (Sigei), ‘Ego-futurnaliia’, p. 117.

and, in a later poem,

Наталья Гончарова

перекрась пожалуйста росю (48).

In both cases the intended effect is a small disruption to the norms of literary language but not to the word's basic meaning. Other examples are: "darovili" [*darovali*], "kozyi" [*kozii*] (3); "begit" [*begaet, bezhit*], "zabavo" [*zabava*] (4); "maternii" [*maternyi*] (8); "strepetili" [*strepetali*] (10); "stoloku" [*stolku*] (11); "perezzhil" [*perezhal*], "sinenki" [*sinen'ki(i)*], "podzhalal" [*podzhalil*], "krugopliash" [*krugoplias*], "razvintiali" [*razvintili*], "zastonila" [*zastonala*] (12); "kozlovaia" [*kozlovaia*] (14); "povesiai" [*povesi*] (35); "vzrostali" [*vzrastit*²³] (42); "lokhmotakh" [*lokhmot'iakh*] (43); "drekolom" [*drekol'em*], "Dol'sh" [*dol'she*] (44)²⁴.

The changing of the final letter of certain nouns results in a change of gender: *zabava* and *pastva* become the neuter nouns *zabavo* (4) and *pastvo* (44); *metlishche* (an augmentative of *metla*) is given in the feminine instrumental singular form *metlishchei* (46). Here, the result is a disruption, but one that does not blur the word's meaning. Other alterations to the formation of words, however, do create some semantic confusion. The verb "rasprostite" (15) is simply the reflexive verb *rasprostitsia* with the reflexive ending removed, apparently making it a transitive verb. At the same time, the boundary between the incorrect spelling of a word and other categories of neologism is very fine. For example, the word "zverianya", a misspelling of *zverinyi*, might have been formed by analogy with an adjective such as *dereviannyi*.

Three words that Gnedov uses to denote his poems are interesting 'word-alterations'. The first, "poeza" (the subtitle of 'Gurebka proklenushkov'), was the word that all Egofuturists used for their poems and derives from Severianin and seems to be a mixture of *poeziia* and *poema*, or based on the French *poésie*. Unlike the other Egofuturists, however, Gnedov avoided using French or English words to form neologisms in his poetry, so his use of this word is very untypical. It is interesting that

²³ Dal' (I, p. 490) lists *vzrastat'*, *vozrastat'*, *vozrosti*, *vzrasti*, and *vzrost'* but not "vzrostat".

²⁴ Amongst other Futurists, Kruchenykh noted that slips in orthography could unintentionally create new shades of meaning that might be more poetically appropriate. In the line "Khvoi shuiat, shuiat" from Elena Guro's poem 'Finliandiia', Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov viewed the verb to be quite justified in that form: "imenno shuiat! listvennye derev'ia shumiat, a khvoinye shuiat"; A. Kruchenykh and V. Khlebnikov, 'Slovo kak takovoe', *Manifesty i programmy*, p. 54.

on the two other occasions when Gnedov does use foreign borrowings, he tampers with the endings: “rapsoda” (the subtitle of ‘Pridorogaia dum’) and “eskizev” (the subtitle of ‘Muravaia’), rather than *rapsodiia* and *eskiz*.

In his work in *Gostinets sentimentam*, *Dary Adonisu*, and *Zasakhare Kry*, Gnedov employs a kind of truncated, reconstituted neologism. Some examples consist of a root and ending without a derivational suffix (formant) and an ending: “chasyi” [*chasovoi*] (2); “zakhvato”, “sladyi” [*sladkii*] (3); “dum” [*duma*], “gigantyi” [*gigantnyi*] (5); “tsepo”, “pado” (7); “marshegrobaia”, “groboe” [*grobovoi*] (11); “belosnegii” [*belosnezhnyi*], “Pezhi” [*pezhina*] (12). The process of simplification also has the effect of ‘laying bare’ the root of each word. The word “pridorogaia”, which has been slightly abbreviated from *pridorozhnaia*, foregrounds both the root *doroga* and a ‘new’ element, *dorogaia*. Similar in intention are “Kruzho” [*kruzho*] (3) and “belosnezhii” [*belosnezhnyi*] (12), where the dropping of the formant ‘n’ suggests that the formation of both might be borrowed from another model, e.g. *vrag-vrazhii*. Other simplified coinages have been recombined with a formant: the adjectives “Krapkiia”, “Dubkiia” (5), “vetkiia” (8), and “iadko” (35) can be compared to the existing *kraplenyi*, *dubovyi*, *vetochnyi*, and *iadovityi*; and the noun “khoziaiam” (2) to *khoziaevam*.

Abbreviation

The technique of abbreviation is extremely significant and can be felt at various levels of Gnedov’s work. Many of the incorrect spellings and word-alterations given above show a degree of abbreviation in comparison with standard pre-existing words. Of course, in a wider sense, the creation of neologisms often involves abbreviation, the combination of two or more concepts into a smaller number of words (e.g. ‘portmanteau’ words). For example, the following phrase encapsulates a number of ideas in just two words:

Затумло-СвирБльжитъ (16),

Although “-tum-” in “zatumlo” is not even a morpheme (but is probably a shortened form of *tuman*), a rough translation might be ‘he/she/it will play the pan pipes/be a *Svirel'ga* in a starting-to-cloud-over way’.

One means Gnedov uses to abbreviate words is close to acronym. In the following line, the word “prodn” is in context clearly nothing to do with *prodan*:

И горы руки подняли продн (39)

Sigei suggests that the line is about “mountains which look as if hands have lifted them from the depths (*gor[y], kotorye slovno by podniali ruki so dna*)”; thus, the word is formed from the most significant letters selected from the line (*gory ruki podniali*)²⁵.

The concept of abbreviation also seems to be at work at the level of the poetic line. The following lines from ‘Kuk’ are a reduced or syncopated variant of *kukovala kukushka kuku*:

Кукала кука:
Кукъ! (10)

Gnedov develops the concept of abbreviation in the second line of his poem ‘Letana’:

Крыло уверхаю по зеленкѢ (2)

Here, as already noted, he intended “Krylo”, a standard neuter noun in the nominative case, to function as the adverb *krylato*²⁶. Such an ‘unnatural’ syncope indicates Gnedov’s intent to compress larger forms into smaller, in this case playing on the idea that the ending ‘-o’ could be adverbial as well as substantival. The process of abbreviation through elision can be seen as early as January 1913, from a journalist’s description of a recited version of the above line:

Так, вместо «поднимаюсь вверх на крыльях», он пишет: «Крыловерхаюсь!»²⁷.

²⁵ Letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97.

²⁶ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 140.

²⁷ *Den'*, 19, 21 January 1913, p. 2; quoted from Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 98.

This elision of words, which is present in other coinages like “nechaiat” (12) and “ubezkraiu” (22), is the blueprint for another kind of compressed neologism. In March 1913, Gnedov declared “we are striving towards economising speech. With a single word, we want to express a whole phrase!”²⁸; his contributions to *Nebokopy*, published in late August of that year, involved the fusion of words into a single word-line. Some consist merely of an entirely normal phrase run together:

Такихуспѣлувидѣтьидавно (30).

The compression also results in a fluidity in the boundaries between the original word components, e.g.

бабушкакуликазелен (32)

where *babushka*, *kulik* (sandpiper; stint), and “zelen” (*zelen'*, *zelenyi*) seem to be the primary components, but the middle could consist of *ushka*, *kak*, *akuli*, *kulikat'* (*dial.* to be lonely and depressed), *ulika*, and *lik*. An even more complex fusion can again be seen in the following line:

лечгаграчичеленыхъкоромысль (30)

Janecek identifies an unclear mixture of *lech'*, *gaga*, *gagara*, *grach*, *chicherone*, *chicher*, *zelenykh*, and *koromyslo*²⁹. Such a process, where different words can be produced by focusing on different areas of the line, has something in common with Kruchenykh’s concept of *sdvig*³⁰. Furthermore, the word-lines in *Nebokopy*, which are neologisms in themselves, are in turn composed of the same kinds of neologisms and irregularities seen above: abbreviated word-alterations (“mokhaia-”, “zelkii-”, “negodyi-”, “-priiataia” 34), incorrect spellings (“zubatyi”, “rostet-” 30; “uletילו-”, 37), dialectisms (“-begliaki-”, 34), and so on.

²⁸ *Den'*, 24 March 1913; quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 198.

²⁹ Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 104.

³⁰ See A. Kruchenykh, *Sdvigologiiia russkogo stikha*, Moscow, 1922 [reprinted in his *Kukish proshliakam. Faktura slova. Sdvigologiiia russkogo stikha. Apokalipsis v russkoi literaturoi*, comp. S. Kudriavtsev, Moscow, 1992, pp. 35-80].

Finally, abbreviation operates as a principle at the level of the poem, and this is particularly evident in *Smert' iskusstvu*. According to Sigei, a favourite technique of Gnedov is the “collapse of ‘massive’ form”: hence, he views ‘Kozlo’ as a synecdoche of ‘Kozii slashch’ and ‘Svirel'ga’ as a compressed version of its longer namesake in *Zasakhare kry*³¹. The process culminates in the reduction of poetic form to one-line, one-word, and one-letter poems; finally, with ‘Poema Kontsa’, the poem as such no longer existed.

The Russian Futurists sought to increase their capacity to express by accelerating the process of linguistic change and by compressing information into smaller units. The Russians shared the concern with speeded-up communication with the Italian Futurists³², but the application produced rather different results. Gnedov consistently implemented a variety of techniques to abbreviate language: at the level of the word (neologism), the line of verse, and the poem itself. Abbreviation is central to his original use of language, and, in this respect, he went further than any other Russian Futurist.

Ambiguity

One aspect of the difficulty of assigning a primary meaning to many of Gnedov’s words is to open up the notion of ambiguity. Ambiguity is present in the arbitrariness and mutability of dialectisms and colloquial words; it is inherent in neologisms, especially portmanteau words; in the uncertainties that can be caused by slight changes to the formation of words (‘word-alterations’); and where abbreviated words appear to be packed with multiple meanings.

As we have seen above, a small alteration can effect a word’s meaning. For example, “gor” (16) is in context a combination of the genitive plurals of *gora* and *gore*; in ‘Kolovorot’, the placement of the soft sign in the first word “blagoda'r” helps render the word’s function (second person singular imperative? noun?) unclear. In the words “neiarocha”, “Sinevoche” (12), and “Konevama” (39), the roots of the words are clear but their grammatical function is not. There is a number of words (especially in ‘Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne’ and ‘Kolovorot’) ending in ‘-o’ that might be

³¹ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 146.

³² See, for example, Lawton, ‘Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestos’, pp. 405-20.

neuter nouns, adverbs, or even short form neuter adjectives. The grammatical function of single neologisms cannot always be resolved, e.g.:

Законоу на Скалой полосато Мечо: „Не ходите къ Мечу” (11),

where “Mecho” is perhaps an adverb, but it is not entirely clear how “polosato Mecho” can be understood. On other occasions, there may be more than one possible function for a word with an ‘-o’ ending:

Сонячко Сердце на гробѣ (11).

The neologism “soniachko” (close to the Ukrainian word *soniachnii*) may be either an adverb or an adjective modifying “serdtse”. Other examples of this are “kozlo” (14); “vorenko”, “pezho”, “umilo”, “gado”, “gryzliako”, “pevshno”, “obertko”, “kinzhalo”, “molno”, “upado” (35); and “sno” (39). A similar blurring of grammatical function can also be seen in certain nouns that are adjectival or that the ending is instrumental where the prepositional is expected (“na muravoi”, 2; “na Skaloï”, 11). The following lines from ‘Letana’ show a combination of ambiguous formations:

Пеленить пеленко газой,
Цвѣтой соной Летка насъ... (2)

“Gazoi”, “Tsvetoi”, “sonoi” resemble both the kind of truncated adjectives seen above as well ^{as} feminine nouns in the instrumental singular case; and “pelenko” may function as an adverb rather than a noun whose gender has been changed to neuter. Although the word *letka* or *lĕtka* does already exist with various meanings³³, in this context it might be felt to derive from *letat*³⁴, *leto*, or even *Leta* (Lethe). Gnedov seems to enjoy such ambiguities. In ‘Kozii slashch’, the word “medik” must be taken as a diminutive of *mĕd*, the usual diminutive of which is *medok*, rather than a reference to a *medik*. In the title ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’, “skachek” is probably an alternate spelling

³³ *Letka* means “a shelf in front of an entrance to a beehive” (*SRDG*, 2, p. 113), or “spring wheat and rye” (*SRNG*, 17, p. 17). *Lĕtka* is a dialect word meaning an “entrance (in beehive)” or “buckshot”; *Els.*, 1, p. 467.

³⁴ As noted in *SRNG*, 17, p. 17.

of *skachok* rather than the genitive plural of *skachka*. In a final example, the complex multiple meanings of the neologisms impede the syntax:

Слезжит рябидии труньга сно (39)

The verb “slezzhit” may be a combination of *slezt'*, *s'ezzhat'*, and *sleza*; “riabidii” is presumably a noun in the genitive singular (or nominative/accusative plural) that may derive from *riabina* (rowan tree), *riaboi*, and/or *riab'*; similarly, the noun “trun'ga” has a number of possible sources of meaning (see the Glossary); finally, it is not at all clear what part of speech “sno”, presumably derived from *son*, might be: a noun by analogy with *dno*? An adverb? It seems unlikely that a definitive answer could be given to all the questions and contradictions provoked by this line. In his dialectisms, neologisms, and experimental practices, Gnedov makes a virtue of verbal, syntactic, and semantic ambiguity.

Zaum'

As an early Avant-Garde poet who made consistent use of verbal experiments, one might have thought that Gnedov would have considered himself a practitioner of *zaum*³⁵. However, Gnedov both rejected the idea and strongly objected to being compared to Kruchenykh in this regard³⁶. Amongst subsequent critics, the matter remains unresolved. While both Khardzhiev and Krusanov have used the word *zaumnyi* to describe Gnedov's verbal experiments³⁷, Aigi believes they are characterised by word-creation (*slovotvorchestvo*) rather than transrational language³⁸. Central to this is the controversial question of the definition of the term. The original definition of *zaumnyi iazyk* derived from Kruchenykh, who used it to describe his abstract verbal experiments written in a ‘free’ language highlighting the “irrational, mystical, and aesthetic aspects”³⁹ of the word. His ‘Dyr bul shchyl’ poem was written

³⁵ Kruchenykh coined the word *zaum'* only in 1921; in 1913, he was using the term *zaumnyi iazyk*. In this section, however, I will not make the chronological distinction and will refer only to *zaum'*.

³⁶ *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 191. Gnedov's claim that “there are no made-up words in *Smert' iskusstvu!*” (from a letter to Khardzhiev, quoted in *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 20) may well be an attempt to differentiate his work from the *zaum'* in works such as Kruchenykh's *Pomada* (also 1913).

³⁷ Krusanov, *Russkii avangard*, p. 104; Khardzhiev, *Stat'i ob avangarde*, 1, p. 79.

³⁸ Aigi, ‘Russkii poeticheskii avangard’, p. 30.

³⁹ A. Kruchenykh, ‘Novye puti slova’, *Manifesty i programmy*, p. 66.

“in its own language [whose] words have no definite meaning”⁴⁰, an abstract collection of apparently arbitrarily selected sounds:

Дыр бул шыл
 убльшщур
 скум
 вы со бу
 р л ээ⁴¹

With the possible exception of “a—vi—ka!” and “a—vil’—do!” in *Smert’ iskusstvu*, there is nothing in Gnedov’s work that resembles Kruchenykh’s experiments.

However, while a definition along the above lines is commonly held, it is far from the only one. A formula Sigei has used is that *zaum’* is a product of the combination of “two [...] methods of writing: the phonetic and the allogical”⁴²; ‘Dyr bul shchyl’, then, is not *zaum’* but a “simple phonetic poem (an abstraction)”⁴³. In terms of Gnedov’s work, the situation is complicated. For Sigei, individual neologisms cannot be *zaum’* on their own, but the “combination of them into a single verse construction may turn out to be *zaum’* [if a] logically unknowable new and unexpected meaning” is produced in the poem⁴⁴. However, Sigei does not specify any examples from Gnedov. Mickiewicz has described *zaum’* as a polysemantic linguistic phenomenon, one with the potential to “create multilinear tracks of communication”⁴⁵; his definition is in fact a more sophisticated way of expressing Khlebnikov’s assertion of 1921 that *zaum’* “is language beyond the bounds of reason”⁴⁶. Mickiewicz concentrated on Khlebnikov’s neologisms in his consideration but entirely ignored Gnedov.

⁴⁰ A. Kruchenykh, *Pomada*, Moscow, 1913 (unmarked page number).

⁴¹ A. Kruchenykh, *Pomada*, (unmarked page number). The poem is reproduced in Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 54.

⁴² S. Sigov (Sigei), ‘Istoki poetiki OBERIU’, *Russian Literature*, XX, 1986, p. 87.

⁴³ Sigov (Sigei), ‘Istoki’, pp. 87-88.

⁴⁴ Letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97.

⁴⁵ Mickiewicz, ‘Semantic Functions’, p. 386.

⁴⁶ V. Khlebnikov, ‘Nasha osnova’, in his *Tvoreniia*, p. 628. Vroon notes, “Khlebnikov is not always consistent in his use of the term [...] Sometimes it refers only to the ‘language of the stars’, but at other times it is used in a more general sense, referring to any form of speech which ‘lies beyond the bounds of reason’”; R. Vroon, *Velimir Khlebnikov’s Shorter Poems: a Key to the Coinages*, Ann Arbor, 1983, p. 24, n. 42. In the case of “zvezdnyi iazyk”, Khlebnikov provides so many interpretations that it becomes a rational system, quite opposite to what Kruchenykh had in mind.

Finally, Gerald Janecek, probably the leading expert on the subject, returns to Kruchenykh's concept of words with "no definite meaning" to provide the most recent formula. He views *zaum'* as the state of indeterminacy that the reader experiences from a text that has undergone certain dislocations (*sdvigi*), be they phonemic, morphological, syntactic, or 'suprasyntactic'; where definite meaning can be perceived, *zaum'* is not present⁴⁷. By this reckoning, the complex interaction of neologism and syntactic experimentation seen in much of Gnedov's Futurist work is *zaum'*. Indeed, in the poem 'Kobel' gor', Janecek found a complex mixture of 'morphological *zaum'*' and 'syntactic *zaum'*'⁴⁸, and Gnedov is classified as a "competing early *zaumnik*"⁴⁹.

Clearly, the question as to Gnedov's involvement with *zaum'* will remain open in so far as the definition of *zaum'* remains fluid. To some extent, Gnedov's objection to the term *zaum'* is a reflection of his rivalry with Kruchenykh. Whether or not the poet wished to be associated with the phenomenon, he is considered very much part of its birth. In 1914 the theatre director Meierkhol'd referred to Gnedov as the "piterskii *zaumnik*"⁵⁰, and the contemporary *zaum'* poet Sergei Biriukov places Gnedov alongside Khlebnikov, Guro, Kruchenykh, and Bol'shakov, as one of the pioneers of early *zaum'*⁵¹. Such company is appropriate. In terms of his verbal experimentation, Gnedov is very much closer to what would be considered typical of the Cubofuturists rather than the Egofuturists. But although the concept of employing colloquial and dialect forms and neologisms built on Slavic roots was not unique to Gnedov, his idiosyncratic combination of them was. Furthermore, there is considerable variety in the poet's neologistic practice, and he employed both standard and non-standard word-creation techniques. While his 'word-alterations' and portmanteau words are notable, it is Gnedov's application of abbreviation, which is unprecedented among the Russians and very different from that of Marinetti, that makes his language particularly distinctive.

⁴⁷ As a result Khlebnikov, who provides explanations for his 'zaum', is not considered a *zaumnik*; see Janecek, *Zaum*, pp. 135-52. Also Janecek, 'Zaum' Classification', pp. 165-86.

⁴⁸ Janecek, 'Zaum' Classification', p. 49. Recently, Sigei acknowledged the increased scope of transrational language: "a *zaum'* poem is one to whose comprehension logic bears no special relation". At the same time, he believes that *zaum'* may arise over the course of a poem, rather than at the level of individual neologisms; letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97.

⁴⁹ Janecek, *Zaum*, p. 97.

⁵⁰ Quoted from Parnis, *Russkie pisateli*, 1, p. 589.

⁵¹ S. Biriukov, *Muza zaumi*, Tambov, 1991 (inside front cover).

ii) GLOSSARY

The glossary is an attempt to provide an account of all the neologisms and other non-standard word-usages in the 50 of Gnedov's Futurist poems. The motivation behind it is to make Gnedov to some extent 'readable'. In terms of the neologisms, an attempt has been made to cover the probable derivations given the context in which the word appears. The word 'from' after the given word indicates a neologism, and its possible constituents are listed in order of probability. The following abbreviations are used: 'coll.' - colloquialism; 'dial.' - dialectism; 'pej.' - pejorative; 'Ukr.' - Ukrainian or Ukrainianism.

NIZHEGORODETS

1. Triolet

No neologisms or irregularities.

GOSTINETS SENTIMENTAM

2. Letana

Летана - from *letat'*, *lēt*, *letun*, *letun'ia*, the Smolensk region word *letan'* (the meaning is unclear, but the word is found in the song line: "A da vo gornitsy, vo svetlitsy, Dva golubia na shkafi; oni p'iut i l'iut, Po letani b'iut, V tsymbaly igraiu", *SRNG*, 17, p. 15). *Lētnaia* ("a bee collecting honey", *SRDG*, 2, p. 113). Also, perhaps connected with *leto* or *Leta* (the river Lethe). The ending '-ana' is found in women's first names, e.g. Svetlana, Oksana, etc.

уверхаю лёто - a reconstituted wording of *uletaiu vverkh*, *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 140. Ukr. *ivershitisia* ("to end, come to an end", *UED*, p. 1059).

муравой - from *muravá* (grass, sward). Note the adjectival form and Gnedov's indicated stress "murávoi".

зеленкѢ - *zelěnka* ("pasture", *SRNG*, 11, p. 248; "any young fodder grass", *SRDG*, 2, p. 29). Ukr. *zelenka* ("melon", *UED*, p. 334).

сторожую - from *storozhit'* (to guard); also *storazhivat'*, *sterëzhit'*, *Dal'*, IV, p. 553; from a non-existent verb “storozhevat” or adjective “storozhii”.

Лѐто-домъ - from *lët, dom, letnii dom* (summer house).

горавый - from *gora, gornyi; gore, gorevoi; goret', garevo* (“a wood that has burnt down”, *Dal'*, I, p. 948).

дерзо - from *derzkii, derzost'*.

каленки - *kalenka* (“barren heifer”, *Dal'*, II, p. 189); *kalënka* (“bathhouse stove”, “kiln constructed in a field for drying pears”, “child’s arrow for a bow; it is wooden, but its tip is tempered by burning”, *Dal'*, II, p. 192); *kalit'* (to heat, incandesce, roast), *kalenie*.

сторожкїй - (coll.) watchful.

часый - from *chas, chasovoi*.

круговидъ - Ukr. *krugovid* (“horizon, landscape”, *UED*, p. 433); *krugozor* (horizon); *krugovoi, vid*.

не сной глазъ - unclear. Perhaps from *son, snovat'* (to scurry, dash about), and *znoi?* “Snoi” may be imperative, after *ne*. Another possibility is that the phrase should read *nebesnoi glaz* with the ‘-be-’ omitted.

пеленить пеленко - *pelenat'* (to swaddle); *pelenit'*, *SRDG*, II, p. 222. *Pelënka* (nappy, swaddling cloth).

газой - from *gaz, gazovyi*.

цвѣтой - from *tsvet, tsvetnoi*.

соной - from *son, sonnyi*.

Летка - “shelf in front of an entrance to a beehive” (*SRDG*, 2, p. 113); a Latvian Russian dialect word meaning “spring wheat and rye” (*SRNG*, 17, p. 17). *Lëtka* ((dial.) “entrance (in beehive)”; (dial.) “buckshot”; *Els.*, 1, p. 467); Ukr. *letkii* (-ka, -ke; “volatile, evaporative”, *UED*, p. 453); *letat'*, *lët, leto* (diminutives *letochka* and *letechko*, *SRDG*, 2, pp. 114, 116); *Leta*.

3. Kozii slashch

слащъ - from *sladkii*, comparative *slashche*; along the lines of ‘Zasakhare kry’ (*zasakharennaia krysa*). Also *slashcha* (“turnip”, *Dal'*, IV, p. 245).

ВЫМНОЙ - from *vymia* (udder); *vymnet'*, *vymnut'* ("to be close to giving birth to a calf"), *Dal'*, I, p. 742. The adjective *vymnyi* is found in *vymnaia trava*, an unidentified herb, *SRNG*, 5, p. 312.

МОЛОЧКИ - from *moloko*, *molochko*.

ДАРОВИЛИ - from *darovat'*.

ХОЗЯЯМЪ - from *khoziain*, *khoziaika*.

ЗЕЛИ - *zel'* ("a young winter crop, in autumn or spring, before ears have formed", *Dal'*, II, p. 1687).

СТЕБЛОЧКИ - diminutive of *stebel'* (stem, stalk).

КОРЕНИЛИ - from *koren'*, *korenit'sia* (to be rooted in). *Korenit'* ("destroy, kill"; "to curse, reproach, revile", *Dal'*, II, p. 416).

ЗАХВАТО - from *zakhvat*.

КОЗЫЙ - from *kozii* (the adjective from *koza*), but with spelling change 'i' to 'y'.

СЛАДЫЙ - from *sladkii*, *sladit'*.

МѢДИКЪ - more likely to be diminutive of *mēd*, although the usual diminutive is *medók*, than *medik*.

КРУЖО - from *kruzhnyi*.

ВЫПѢНИЛЬ - from *penit'* (to froth), plus prefix *vy-*.

4. Skachek Toski - Pobeda Ogne-Lavy

СКАЧЕКЪ - *skachok* (jump, leap; "grasshopper" or "dragonfly", *Dal'*, IV, p. 178; "a Cossack who is separated from his parents", *SRDG*, III, p. 121). "Skachek" could also be the genitive plural of the feminine noun *skachka*.

ВЫСИ - *vys'* is a variant of *vysota*, *Dal'*, I, p. 770.

ВЕРШИ - *vershi* ("on horseback", *Dal'*, I, p. 450), or from *vershina*. Also in 'Pridorogaia dum'.

БѢГУНЪ БѢГИТЬ - *begun* (runner) can also refer to "one of the most evil, perverted concepts of the schismatics [...]: *beguny* obey no civil order, recognise no authorities; for them the kingdom of the Antichrist has begun; they roam the whole world and must die in oblivion, in a foreign land, and be buried in secret, lest they are recorded in any inventories. For this, they divide into wanderers (*stranniki*) and almsgivers

(*strannopriimnye*) in turn”, *Dal'*, I, p. 371. The word “begit” is irregular: *Bezhat'* – *bezhit*, *begat'* – *begaet*.

Огнелаво - from the proper noun “Ogne-lava” in the text.

бей бубно - from *bubna*, found in the phrase *vybit' bubny* (to beat), *SRDG*, I, p. 43; and see *SRNG*, 3, p. 234.

Забаво - from *zabava*.

Голубящий, Голубящим - present active participle of *golubit'* (to caress, fondle); *golub'*; *goluboi*.

Златокопыток, Златокопытко - from *zlato-* and *kopyto*.

унестъ - *unest'* is a variant of *unesti*, *Dal'*, IV, p. 1031.

въ горахъ-долахъ - note the phrase *za gorami*, *za dolami* (far and wide).

Златоконюшни - from *zlato-* and *koniushnia*.

свѣтяками - from *svet*, *svetoch* ((obs.) torch, lamp; (fig.) light, luminary).

5. Pridorogaia dum'

Придорогая - from *pridorozhnyi* (road/wayside). The unsoftened ‘g’ serves to highlight the root *doroga* and perhaps foregrounds *dorogoi*.

думь - from *duma* ((folk., poet.) thought, meditation; ‘duma’ (Ukrainian folk ballad)).

рапсода - from *rapsodiia*.

властникъ - from *vlast'*, *vlastnyi* (“powerful”, *Dal'*, I, p. 522).

гигантый - from *gigant*, *gigantnyi*, *gigantskii*.

Верши - see entry under ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’.

передумки - *peredumka*, *Dal'*, III, p. 120; *peredumyat'* (to think better of).

за лихваткой - from *zalkhvat'skii* ((coll.) devil-may-care, carefree).

пляши - from *pliasat'* (to dance), *pliaska*.

листникъ - from *list*, *listnyi*, *Dal'*, II, p. 658.

вполоснуто - from *polosnut'* ((coll.) to slash), plus the prefix *v-*.

бѣляки - all the standard definitions are unhelpful in this context: *beliak* (white hare; shoal of fish; foam of waves); *belka*.

ржавленки-дубцы - from *rzhavyi*; *dub*; *dubets* (“the medicinal plant *Glucarchira*”, *SRDG*, I, p. 141).

крапкія - from *krap*.

ржавки - from *rzhavyi*.

дубкія - from *dub*.

вѣти-гудцы - *vet'* is a Don region dialect variant of *vetka* or *vetv'*, *SRDG*, I, p. 141.

Gudets is someone who plays the *gudka* (“rebeck”, *Dal'*, I, p. 1003); *gud*.

6. Muravaia

муравая - see ‘Letana’ above.

эскизевъ - from *eskiz*.

травой-отравой - *Dal'* lists the phrases: “trava travoi” and similarly “travka muravka”, *Dal'*, IV, p. 817.

зеленко-муравой - from *zelënyi*; *murava*.

DARY ADONISU

7. Zigzag priamoi sred'mirnyi: sebe

Средьмірная, Средьмірь - from *sredi*; мірь (world). These coinages are developed in ‘Kolovorot’.

издерганьи - *izdërgat'*, *izdërgan'e*, *Dal'*, II, p. 40.

Оглохшій - from *oglokhnut'* (to lose one’s hearing, to have bad hearing), *Dal'*, II, p. 1652.

Пламеньє - from *plamen'* (obs.), *plamia*.

Сіянной - from *siiat'*, *siianie*.

змѣико - from *zmeika*, a diminutive of *zmeia*.

Самосила - from *samosil'no* (“forcibly”), *Dal'*, IV, p. 24.

притронеть - *pritrnut'* (“to touch slightly”, *Dal'*, III, pp. 1186-87).

Голубящій - see entry under ‘Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy’.

измечеть - *izmetat'* (“to throw out”, *Dal'*, II, p. 53).

цѣпо - from *tsep'*; the ‘o’ can be found as a ligature, e.g. *tsepochka*.

падай падо - from *padat'*.

8. Gurebka proklenushkov

Гурѣбка - apparently, a diminutive of *gur'ba* (crowd, gang).

проклѣнушковѣ, проклѣнушекѣ, проклѣнухѣ - probably from *prokliast'*; *prokliatyi*. Also, *klen* (maple tree).

поѣза - the typical word used by the Egofuturists to denote a poem. A combination of *poeta* and *poeziia*, and an imitation of the French 'poésie' or English 'poesy'.

вѣткѣя - from *vetka*.

А-а! А-а! А-а! У-у-у!!! - the sound *au* is "an exclamation shouted in a wood so as not to lose one another", *Ozhegov*, p. 30.

Клѣтнѣй - from *klet'*, *kletka* (cage, coop, hutch).

ленухи - colloquial word meaning 'lazy people'.

Гау-гау-а-га-ой! - note the similarity with the sounds made by dogs in the forest ("Gau, gau! Ga-ga! Ga-ga!") in the 10th section of Khlebnikov's 'Tiran bez Te' (1922).

матѣринныя, матѣрнѣй - combinations of *maternyi* ((coll.) obscene) and *materinskii* (maternal).

неотвѣтнѣй - from *ne-*, *otvetnyi*.

поразсѣяли - from *po-*, *rasseiat'*.

ZASAKHARE KRY

9. Na vozle bal

слѣзѣтеки - from *sleza*; *tech'*, *tekuchii*; *slezotechnie*.

невеселѣй - from *ne-*; *veselyi*, *vesel'e*; possibly a noun or comparative adjective.

заплакучились - from *zaplakat'*, *plakuchii*.

на Текивой - from *tekuchii*, *tĕkovyi*; also note *tekavyi* ("curious", *Dal'*, IV, p. 739).

борзо - *bórzyi* ((obs., poet.) swift).

гагали - *gagat'* is a variant of *gagakat'* ("to make a honking sound, like a goose", *Dal'*, I, p. 831).

веселямѣ - from *veselyi*, *vesel'e*.

березячьямъ - from *berēza*. By analogy *telenok–teliachii*, “bereziach'iam” might be formed from the notional words “berezenok” (‘birch offspring’) – “bereziata” – “bereziachii”.

охотѣи - from *okhota*, *okhotnik*; perhaps by analogy with the colloquial nouns *gramotei* (‘a literate person’, *SSRLIa*, 3, p. 363) or *bogatei* (‘a rich person’, *SSRLIa*, 1, p. 532).

веселочъемъ - from *vesēlyi*, *vesel'e*. Also *vesēlka* (a Volga region word for the fish “*Clupea caspialichus*”, *SRNG*, 4, p. 180), *vesēlochka* (a Kazan dialect word meaning “spoon”, *SRNG*, 4, p. 180).

перебродое - from *perebrodit'* (to ford (a river); to wander, roam; to have fermented, risen), *perebroda* (“(dial.) a wandering, nomadic person”), *perebrodnoe naselenie*; and *perebrody* (‘hall, corridor’), *Dal'*, III, p. 84.

Грохло - from *grokhnut'*; also note ‘Grokhlit’, Poem 8 of *Smert' iskusstvu*.

двоенились - from *dvoit'*; Ukr. *dvoinitisia* (‘to become doubled, to divide in two’, *UED*, p. 171).

кричаковъ - from *krichat'*.

засолнкло - from *solntse*. The ‘k’ is strange (perhaps ‘-klo’ suggests the root ‘-klon-’, e.g. *klonit'sia*, *nebosklon*, etc., although it may be related to ‘ts’ (*litso*, *lik*). Alternatively, “zasolnkle” could be misprint of “zasolnilo”.

на развигой листягѣ - *razvigoj* is unclear. Sigei suggests: “listva rezvaia, razdvizhnaia, sheveliashchajasia” (letter dated 5.11.97). *Listiagovyj* is a variant of *listvennyj*, *SRNG*, 17, p. 70.

цѣловами - from *potselui*, *tselovat'*.

бъетая - from *bit'*, third person singular present tense *b'et*, past participle passive *bityi*. A publishing house venture called B'eta published Gnedov and Shirokov’s *Kniga velikikh* in 1914.

ненасыта - from *nenasytnyi*; note the colloquial adverb *dosyta*.

плакуха - from *plakusha* (*Dal'*, III, p. 289), *plakat'*.

10. Kuk

Кукъ!, Кукала кука:/ Кукъ! - “According to Gnedov, ‘Kuk!’ is the sound of the female cuckoo calling the male, who in the poem answers ‘Ia’”, *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 146.

Kukushka; *kukú*; *kukovat'*; also *kukat'* (“to emit a voice”, *Dal'*, II, p. 546); Ukr. *kukati* - *kukaiu*, *kukaesh* (“to cuckoo; to complain, whimper”, *UED*, p. 436). Also, note *kuka* ((zool.) “water-tiger”) and *kukat'* (“to emit a sound (of a water beetle)”, *SRDG*, II, p. 97).

стрепегъ - little bustard.

перепелъи - from *perepel* (quail).

желторотили - from *zheltoroty* (yellow-beaked; (fig.) inexperienced, green).

стрепетили стрепетки - from the rare verb *strepetat'* (“to squeal, whistle”, *Dal'*, IV, p. 579); a diminutive of *strepet*.

уныво - from *unyvat'* (to be depressed, dejected), *unyvnyi*, *unylyi*, *Dal'*, IV, 1033.

желтѣвѣль - from *zhelit'*, *zheltet'*, *zheltovat'sia*.

бѣлоколь - from *belyi*, *kol*.

галоче - from *galka* (jackdaw), *galochii*; *galoch'e* is a collective noun meaning “jackdaws or carrion crows”, *Dal'*, I, p. 840.

станываль - from *stanovit'*; *stanovat'* (“to set up an encampment; to make a stop en route”), *stanyi* (“able to occur”), *Dal'*, IV, p. 503.

Букъ - beech tree; note also *bukat'* (“to emit a sound (of water beetles)”, *SRDG*, I, p. 46).

Гукъ - from *gukat'*, *guknut'* (“to call”, *SRDG*, I, p. 117).

11. Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne

маршегробая - from *marsh*, *marshevyi*; *grob*, *grobovoi*; *grobnoi* (*Dal'*, I, p. 979).

пѣнька - “i pesnia i pen'kovaia verevka”, *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 157; *pen'ka* (hemp).

крылобратъ - from *krylo* and *brat*.

разгули - from *razgul* (revelry, debauch; raging), *razguliat'*.

раскинжалъ - from *kinzhal* (dagger), *kinzhal'nyi*; *raskinut'*; *zhal'*.

Сонячко - from *solnechnyi*; Ukr. *soniach-* = *soniash-*, and *soniashnii* (“of the sun, sunny, solar”, *UED*, p. 988); *soniashnik* (“sunflower”, *SRDG*, II, p. 134).

блескаю - from *blesk*, *blesnut'*; *blesknut'*; Ukr. *bliskati* (“to flash; [...] sparkle, twinkle; beam, ray”, *UED*, p. 35).

столоку - from *stoloch'*, first person singular *stolku*.

разрыдавлю - from *rydat'*, *davit'*.

кумірка - from *kumir*.

планетко - from *planeta*.

полосять - *polosit'* ("to cut into strips", *Dal'*, II, p. 670).

гробое - from *grob*, *grobovoi*; *grobnoi*, *Dal'*, I, p. 979.

правдить - *pravdit'* ("to do something correctly", *Dal'*, III, p. 987).

залетнуть - from *zaletat'*, *zalëtyvat'*, *zaletet'*, *Dal'*, I, p. 1488.

крокодилить - from *krokodil*.

Я и марши маршу - from *marsh*, *marshirovat'*.

осклепляю - from *sklepat'* (to rivet), *sklepaiu*; and *oslepliat'* (to dazzle, blind).

распошу - unclear. *Raspakhat'* (to plough up), first person singular *raspashu*; *rasposhit'* ("to sew"), *Dal'*, III, p. 1629.

по кустьямъ - from *kust*.

обглодки - *obglodok* ((coll.) bare bone).

написей - from *nadpis'*, *napisat'*.

божу - *bozhit'* ("to worship, deify", *Dal'*, I, p. 263).

впалачу - from *v-*, *palach* (executioner).

законю - *zakonit'* ("to execute the law, admonish, reprove, to teach good (*uchit' dobru*)", *Dal'*, I, p. 1470).

Мечо - from *mech*.

положайте - from *polozhit'* and *polagat'*.

Доланахъ - from *dol* or *dolina*; perhaps also a combination with *dlan'*, a variant of *ladon'* (hand); for example, the connection of mountains and hands is made in the line "Gory ruki podniali prodn" ("Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—").

Долистыхъ - from *dol*, *dolina*, *dolinnyi*; Ukr. *dolinistii*. Analogous adjectives (root + 'isty') might include *duplistyi*, *kamenisty*, and *penisty*.

кишинѣтъ - unclear. *Kishet'*, *kishet'* *kishma* (to swarm).

Мечаку; Мечаетъ Мечак - from *mech*, *metat'* (to throw), *metat'* (to aim), and *mechtat'*. Compare Kruchenykh's neologism "mechar", a russified 'gladiator'.

кровка - from *krov* ("roof; building, house, hut", *Dal'*, II, p. 502); *krovnyi* ("one's own (*rodnoi*), dear", *SRDG*, II, p. 89); *krov'*.

выклоняются - from *klonit'sia* plus verbal prefix *vy-*.

надь СМБЯнкой - from *smeiat'sia*, *smekh*; '-ianka' ending perhaps indicates a female subject as in *krest'ianka*, *rossiianka*, or a diminutive as in *polianka*. Compare with Khlebnikov's neologisms in 'Zakliatie smekhom'.

ломчу - *lomtit'* ("to break or cut into pieces (*lomti*)", *Dal'*, II, p. 287).

звБряныя - from *zverinyi*, by possible analogy with *dereviannyi*.

висуть - from *viset'*, the third person plural present tense of which is *visiat*.

столокнилось ба - from *stolknut'sia* and *stoloch'*. In context, "ba" may actually be *бу*.

полгоря - *polgoria* is found in the phrases "Poluradost' i polugó'ie vmeste. Po polúgoriu ne skuchaiut.//[...] s dobroj zhenoi i gore polgória, a radost' vdvoe", *Dal'*, III, pp. 677-78.

одья - unclear. In context, this is perhaps *одна*.

выши - *vysh'* is a variant of *vys'* or *vysota*, *Dal'*, I, p. 770.

рыдачить - from *rydat'*, and formed by analogy with *rybachit'*.

дерзачай - from *derzat'*; formed as "rydachit" above.

затворчу - from *tvorit'*, *tvorchestvo*; *zatvoriat'*, *zatvorit'* (to shut, close), *zavorchivyi*, *Dal'*, I, p. 1613.

12. Svirel'ga

СвирБльга - from *svirel'* (reed-pipe). 'Svirel'ga' is also the title of poem 14 and the name of the enterprise that published *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov*. Similar to *pustel'ga* (kestrel; (coll.) good-for-nothing). Compare "Stonga", the title of Poem 1 of *Smert' iskusstvu* ("Smol'ga", Poem 7).

Ги! - *Gi* is a Cossack war-cry or the shout of beaters during a hunt (*Dal'*, I, p. 860); *gikat'*, *giknut'* ((coll.) to whoop).

бБлоснБгій - from *belosnezhnyi*. The unsoftened 'g' to highlight root *sneg* and echo the first word "Gi!".

раскрыленка - from *raskryliat'*, *raskrylit'* (to stretch out like wings); *raskryt'*.

неяроча - from *ne-* and *iarkii*, which has the comparative *iarche*.

беззадорка - from *bezzadornyi*, *Dal'*, I, p. 156; *zador*.

Крашень - from *krashenie* (colouring, dyeing); *krasen'* is a variant of *krasavets* (*Dal'*, II, p. 476).

разцвѣтеная - from *raznotsvetnyi*; *Dal'* (III, p. 1649) lists *raztsvetat'*, *raztsveten'e*, etc. Note *tsvet* and *ten'*.

вертовертанный - from *vertet'*. Ukr. *vertati* ("to return, restore"), *vertannia* ("return, restitution"), *UED*, p. 60.

небоклонъ - from *nebosklon* (horizon (sky immediately over horizon)); dropped letter 's' highlights the root '-klon-'.

перебѣжилъ - from *pereezhat'*.

переканчиваль - from *pere-* and *konchit'*, by analogy with *zakanchivat'*, *zakonchit'*.

еляки - from *el'*, *ĕlka*, *ĕlochka*; also note Vologda region dialect word *elek* ("bat", *SRNG*, 8, p. 339) found in 'Kolovorot'.

подводиць - from *podvodit'*; *vdovyi*; *podvodnyi* (also *vodevil'*?).

Гуашо - from *guash* plus 'o'.

синенки - from *sinii*, which has the diminutive *sinen'kii* (*Dal'*, IV, p. 160). Also, the Don dialect word *sinen'kie* means "aubergines" (*SRDG*, III, p. 120).

встрѣти - from *vsretit'*; *vstrecha*; also *vsret'* (= *vsretit'*), *SRDG*, I, p. 82.

локаль - *lokat'* ("to drink like a dog, sipping with one's tongue", *Dal'*, II, p. 682); *lokal'nyi*.

назовляль - from *nazvat'*.

дрога-дрога - from *drognut'*, *drozhat'*; *dorogoi drug*, *droga* (centre pole of cart).

еловито - from *el'*, *ĕlochka*, *elevyi*, *elovyi*, *ĕlochnyi*; '-ovityi' adjectives include *darovityi*, *plodovityi*, *iadovityi*.

любляль - from *liubit'*, *liubliu*; *vliubliat'*.

томнялся - from *tomit'*, *tomnyi*. The 1955 edition of *Dal'* (IV, p. 414) lists *tomnet'*.

Синевоче - from *sinii*, *sineva*; *siniavka* (the plant *Knautia*; *russula* mushroom), *Dal'*, IV, p. 160. Compare the endings in the previous neologisms "Veseloch'em" ('Na vozle bal') and the word "Galoche" ('Kuk').

передольчу - unclear. According to Sigei, this is from "*pereedy* or from *peredam*" (letter dated 5.10.97).

загорѣлся сырѣ-борѣ - an allusion to the phrase *ia vizhu otkuda syr bor zagorelsia* (I see how it all started); *zagoret'sia, syroi, bor*.

долинато - from *dolina, dolinnyi*; along the lines of *krylatyi, volosatyi*, etc.

поджалалѣ - from *podzhalit'* ("to sting from below, on one side", *Dal'*, III, p. 441).

кругопляшѣ - from *krugoplias* ("round-dance", *Dal'*, II, p. 515), where the 's' has been softened to 'sh', as in *pliasat' - pliaшу*.

развинтяли - from *razvintit'*.

Эва! - *eva* ((coll./dial.) there/here is; what's that?!; nonsense!).

верблюдкой - *verbliudka* ((bot.) tickseed (*Corispermum*)); the word is also pun on *verbliud*.

застонала - from *zastonat'* ("to start groaning", *Dal'*, I, p. 1599).

стоноемѣ - a combination of *ston* and *ëm*, by analogy with *vodoëm*.

лебедовикѣ - from *lebeda* ((bot.) goose-foot (*Chenopodium*)), *lebedovyi*; the neologism probably involves a pun on *lebed'*.

уверхи - from *u, vverkh, verkhí* ("on top", *Dal'*, I, p. 450). Compare "Uverkhau" ('Letana').

златопляшу - from *zlato-* and *pliaska*.

бѣлоснѣжій - *belosnezhnyi*; the ending of the neologism rhymes with "Pezhi" in the next line.

раскрывое - from *raskryvat', raskryv, Dal'*, IV, p. 1604; formed similarly to "unyvo" ('Kuk').

Пѣжи - from *pegii* (skewbald), *pezhina*.

стоноемно - see "Stonoem" above.

цѣловчаль - from *tselovat'; lovchii*.

SMERT' ISKUSSTVU

13. Поема 1. Stonga

Стонга - from *ston, shtanga* (bar-bell weight); *sten'ga* (foremast). Note the variants of *polyn'*: "polynga, polon'ga, polonga", *SRNG*, 29, p. 178.

Полыпчається - from *polyn'* (wormwood), *polynka* (“wormwood fumes”, *Dal'*, III, p. 160).

Пепелье - from *pepel* (or *pepelen'e*, *Dal'*, III, p. 71).

14. Поема 2. Kozlo

Козло - from *kozel*, *kozlovyi*; ‘kozlo-’ is a stem. Might “kozlo” be formed by analogy with *gryzlo*? *Kozlo* is also a variant of *kaslo*, a type of ball-game, *Dal'*, II, p. 236.

Бубчиги - “Bubchigi – ni v koem sluchae nikakikh bubentsov! Vse gorazdo ser'eznee: chigi – eto chto-to vrode obuvi, lapti Buby, to est', Baby Iagi” (letter from Sigei dated 5.10.97). For *buba*, see the later entry for ‘Bubaia goria’; *ichig* (“type of light footwear without heels on a soft sole”, *SSRLIa*, 5, p. 600).

Козлевая - from *kozlovyi*.

Сиреня - from *siren'* (lilac) or *sirena* (siren).

Скрымь - unclear. *Skryt'*; *Krym* (the Crimea); *skryn'* (“area of a pond that touches a dam and is separated by a frame”, *SRDG*, III, p. 126). Ukr. *skrimtsiuvati* (“to bind (fasten) strongly”, *UED*, p. 975).

15. Поема 3. Svirel'ga

Свирѣльга - see entry for this word in ‘Svirel'ga’, *Zasakhare kry*.

Разломчено - from *razlomat'*; *lomtit'*, *Dal'*, II, p. 287.

Просторѣчевье - from *prostorechie*.

Звукопась - from *zvuk*, *konepas* and *svinopas*; *zvukopis'*.

16. Поема 4. Kobel' gor''

Затумло - unclear. *Zatumanit'* (to befog, cloud, obscure).

Свирѣльжить - see ‘Svirel'ga’ above. *Svirelit'* (to play the pan-pipes); *zhit'*.

Распростите - from *rasprostitsia*.

17. Поема 5. Bezvestia

Безвѣстя - *bezvestit'* (to leave without news; hide news), *bezvestie*, *Dal'*, I, p. 149.

Пойму—пойму - *poniat'*; *poimka*; *poima* (flood-lands).

18. Поема 6. Robkot

Робкотъ - from *robost'*, *robkii*; *kot*, *rokot*.

Сомъ; Сомка - *som* (sheat fish); *samets*, *samka*; *somkmut'*.

—а—вѣ—ка - unclear.

—а—вѣль—до - unclear.

19. Поема 7. Smol'ga

Смольга - from *smola*, *smol'*; Ukr. *smol'ka* (“smoking-pipe”, *UED*, p. 984); and possibly *fol'ga* (foil, (gold) leaf).

Кудрени - from *kudri*, *kudriavyi*, *kudrevatyi*.

Вышлая - *vyshlyi* = *vyshedshii*, *Dal'*, I, p. 796.

20. Поема 8. Grokhlit

Грохлитъ - from *grokh*, *grokhnut'*. Note “Grokhlo” (“Na vozle bal’”). An abbreviation of *grokh literature*?

Сереброй - from *srebro*, *serebriannyi*, *serebristy*; also *serebrit'* (*Dal'*, IV, p. 131).

Коромысля - *koromyslo* (yoke; dragonfly), *koromyslit'*, *Dal'*, II, p. 429.

21. Поема 9. Bubaia goria

Бубая; Буба - Gnedov stated “the word ‘buba’ is any grain, wheat, bean, etc., in general anything round”, *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 20; “*prianik*, *bublik*”, and “berry; pea”, *SRDG*, 3, p. 232. In Southern Russia, *buba* also means “tumour, bruise, swelling, sore”, *Dal'*, I, p. 329. Ukr. *buba* (“little sore, wound pain”), *bubka* (“kernel”), *UED*, p. 45.

22. Поема 10. Vot

Убезкраю - *u*; *bez*; *krai*, genitive, dative, and prepositional singular *kraiu*. Ukr. ‘ubez’ is equivalent to Russian ‘obes-’; Ukr. *ubezvikhid* (“into a blind alley”), *UED*, p. 1056. Also, *krait'* (“to winnow grain”, *SRDG*, II, p. 87).

23. Poema 11. Poiui

Поюй - from *pet'* - *poiui, poi*; *voevat'* - *voiui*.

24. Poema 12. Vcheraet

Вчераеть - from *vchera*; *vecheret'*.

Петруша - a diminutive of *Petr*; *Petrushka*.

25. Poema 13.

Издѣвать - from *izadevat'sia*, *izadevatel'stvo*; *iz-*, *devat'*.

26. Poema 14.

No neologisms.

27. Poema 15. Poema Kontsa

No neologisms!

IMMORTELI**28. Pechal'naia skazka**

No neologisms or irregularities.

NEBOKOPY

The fusion of words in the word-lines of the collection *Nebokopy* problematises word boundaries. As noted in the analysis, it is important to view each word-line as a new entity in itself; at the same time, the meaning of each is determined by its components. The focus here is on determining the most likely, distinguishable divisions of the word lines, and these will be given as they appear in each word-line. Any definitions Sigei provides for the lines will also be noted. Where it appears impossible to make out separate parts of the word-lines, and when noting rare words, neologisms, and other verbal irregularities, the components will be given in their standard forms (infinitive mood, nominative case, etc).

29. Pti'okmon'

ПТИЬОКМОНЬ

According to Sigei, "'pti'okmon' is an exclamation (in the pronunciation 'pt'ëkman', which is very close to *ë ko lo mane*, a cry of astonishment of the type *vot ëb tvoiu mat'*"), letter dated 5.10.97; *ptitsa*; *oko*; *okno*; "(tol'ko) ptich'ego moloka net" (coll. to express abundance or complete satisfaction).

МОЛОКОСЛАЩИЬКОМЪ

moloko slashchikom. "-slashchikom" may consist of *slashche* and the ending *-ikom* (by analogy with *bosikom*). Other possible constituents: *molokosos* (colloq. "inexperienced youth; sucker; sissy; whippersnapper", *Els.*, 2, p. 1239); *slashcha* ("turnip", *Dal'*, IV, p. 245); *kom*.

УДАЛЕКОЙПРАЩИЬКОМ

u dalekoi prashchikom [*prashchi kom*].

УЙЬМАНО

uimano [*uima no*]. *Uimat'* (*Dal'*, IV, p. 977), *uniat'*; *uima* ((coll.) lots, masses, heaps). According to Sigei, the rare vulgarism *khuinane* can be felt (letter 5.11.97).

ФУТУРОШНОЬСВАЙРЕНО

Unclear. *Futuristicheskii*; *roshcha* (small wood); *no*; *nos*; *vaiia* (a church slavonic word for "branch"; *Dal'*, I, p. 394); *svaia* (pile); *varit'*, *svarit'*, *svarivat'*, *svarit'*.

ПОМАЗАЛИСЕРДЫЗОЬ

potazali serdyzo. The section "-serdyzo" may consist of *serdityi*, *serdit'*, *serdtse*.

СЛАДОШНОСЛАЦО

sladosh -no- slashcho. *Sladost'*; *ladosha* (hand); *slashche*.

МОЛОКОСО

moloko; molokosos; koso (slanting).

30. Zubatyi'volk**Зубатыйволк**

Zubaty volk. Note misspelling (*zubastyi*).

лечгаграчичеленыхъкоромысль

Unclear. *Lech'*; *lechit'*; *gaga* (eiderduck; also a dialect word meaning a “lazy-bones”, “a large woman with little intelligence” (*Dal'*, I, p. 831), and a cry “to express astonishment or fear” (*Dal'*, I, p. 833)); *gagara* ((orn.) loon; Ukr. “ember-goose”, *UED*, p. 134); *gagarka* ((orn.) razorbill); *gagarit'* (“to give a full-throated laugh”, *Dal'*, I, p. 831); *grach* ((orn.) rook; Ukr. “diver; player, gambler, musician”, *UED*, p. 156); *rachii*; *rachit'* ((obs., dial.) to take care, be assiduous); *chicher* (“cold autumn wind mixed with rain, sometimes snow”, *Dal'*, IV, p. 1353; “a boggy place”, *SRDG*, II, p. 195); *chicherone* (cicerone); *chelo* (forehead, brow); “-lenykh”- is a genitive plural adjectival ending (e.g. *zelenykh*) in agreement with “koromysl’”; *koromyslo* (yoke; dragonfly).

Втойльпѣзабытымъчисль

V to[-i-]lpe zabytym chisl. Other possible constituents: *v toi l'* or *v to il'*; *peza* (“lilac”, *SRNG*, 25, p. 314); *mchat'*.

Одниряднокакомуиневидѣль

Odni l' riadno [riad no] kakomu i ne videl. *Riadno* (“crude, rustic canvas”, *Dal'*, III, p. 1763; Ukr. *riadno* (“(dressed): smartly, nicely”), *riadnii* (“ordinary; orderly; accurate; precise; economical”), *UED*, p. 947).

Такихуспѣлувидѣтьдавно

Takikh uspel uvidet' i davno.

ростетгорамзаобидулихоманья

rostet goram za obidu likhoman'ia. Rasti - rastet, likhomanit' (“to do a lot of harm, to do wrong continuously, to swindle or cheat”, *Dal'*, II, p. 666); *likhomanka* can be a synonym of *likhoradka* (fever), *SRDG*, II, p. 117, and *Dal'*, II, pp. 665-66.

забытьворкозаслезойь

Zabyt' vorko za slezoi [vor koza slezoi]. The section “-vorko-” may derive from *vorkagan* (“thief”, “hooligan”, *SRDG*, I, p. 76); *vorkovat'* (to coo), *vorkovan'e*; *vorkotnia* ((coll.) grumbling).

Сиппонесзакраемвышель

Sip pones za kraem vyshel. Sip (vulture; hoarseness).

Толпуобрядилъзабой

Tolpu obriadil zaboï [za boï].

31. Vchera.

чешитеколомголову

cheshite kolom golovu. Also possible: *kolo* (“(obs. and now S.W. Russia) circle, circumference; wheel; [...] a round dance (*khorovod*)”, *Dal'*, II, p. 348), *lomat' sebe golovu.*

верстуноситеблюдами

verst unosite [verstu nosite] bliudami.

Станетеверблюдьми

Stanete verbliudymi. Note the misspelling (*verbliudami*).

Явышелевпогоньга

Ia vyshe lev pogon'ga or *ia vyshel [-e-] v pogon'ga.* *Pogonia* (pursuit, chase), *pogon'*, *pogon*, *pogonka*, *Dal'*, III, p. 399.

32. Segodnia.

Небокопыта приволья

Nebo kopyta privol'ia; “Nebokopy” is the title of the collection.

лужа при ветях моряках

Luzha privet moriakakh.

бабушка кулика зелен

Babushka kulika zelen. Other possible constituents: *ushko* ((tech.) eye, lug; tab, tag of boot; eye of needle; (in pl.) noodles); *kak*; *akula*; *kulik* (sandpiper; stint); *kulikat'* = *kuliukat'* (“to be lonely and depressed”, *SRDG*, II, p. 99); *ulika*; *lik*.

наши горохи шутах

Nashi gorokh i shutakh.

33. Zavtra.

Порваьлас узда

Porvalas' uzda.

послѣна смерти

Posle na smert' or posle nasmerti. *Nasmert'* (“unto death”, “very, exceedingly”, *Dal'*, II, p. 1226).

Всѣ прыгнут выше лба

Vse prygnut vyshe lba.

Огонь примчат спасетъ ей

Ogon' primchat spaset ei.

34. Khitraia Moral'

Ну—такънапасмурено—напайсмурено—

Nu tak napasmureno paraismureno. Napasmuret' (“to become overcast”; *Dal'*, II, p. 1165); *paiait'* (to solder), *paraiait'*, *paraivat'* (*Dal'*, II, p. 1167).

доПчелойНевозможни

Do pcheloĭ nevozmozhni. “-Nevozmozni” may be a noun neologism.

ВыросъзелкѣйЯвронагранитойпроходи..

Vyros zelkii Iavro na granitoi prokhodi. The section “-zelkii-” may come from *zelko* (“drug, medicine”, *Dal'*, I, p. 1687), *zel'ka* (“anything that is clothed in leaves, the leaf clothing (*listvennaia odezhda*) of the entire plant kingdom”), *Dal'*, I, p. 1687), *zelok* (“young bright-green grass”; *SRNG*, 11, p. 253), *zelenyi*; “-Iavro-” may derive from *iavor* (sycamore).

ЦвѣтыпострекоталиплеснулиЗонты

Tsvety postrekotali plesnuli Zonty. (*Po*)*strekotat'* (to chirr; rattle, chatter).

кудряво—звончалъвечерѣйсвистунѣй..

Kudriavo zvonchal vecherii svistuni. The section “zvonchal-” may derive from *zvon*, *zvonkii*, *zvonchatyi* (*Dal'*, I, p. 1677); “-vecherii-” from *vecher*, *vechernyi*; *vecheria* (supper), *vecheriat'* and *vecherit'* (“to eat supper”; *SRDG*, I, p. 63).

воротилосьполержи—заперепелила

vorotilos' pole rzhi zaperepel. The section “zaperepelila” derives from *perepel*, the verb perhaps formed by analogy with *zaperet'* or *zapepelit'* (“to litter with ash, cinders”, *Dal'*, I, p. 1531).

моха я постельплита свалиласьна

mokhaia postel' plita svalilas' na. Note the neologism “mokhaia-” (*mokh*, *mokhovoi*)

прошло...Звѣздонеумирало...

Proshlo zvezdo ne umiralo. Note the ligature or changed gender of “zvezdo-”.

ОдномалоеПискалоещебѣгала—ноги

Odnoe maloe piskalo eshche begala nogi. *Piskat'* (“to let out a squeak”, *Dal'*, III, p. 286).

скороподрѣзюяь

skoro podreziauia. The section “-iauia-” is unclear.

УненастояшныЛицорастаеть—

U nenastoiashny litso rastaet. Note the spelling “-nenastoiashny-” (*nenastoiashchii*).

мокрыебѣглякиуворокнутъгладь...

mokrye begliaki uvoroknut glad'. *Begliak* (“person without a definite occupation, who moves from place to place”; “one of the names for spirits”, *SRNG*, 2, p. 170); “-uvoroknut-” may derive from *uvorovat'*, *vorkagan*.

Причинаизвѣстна—Ненастоящее...

Prichina izvestna nenastoiashchee.

Негодыйрепейнецарапитъ—ЕстьиглаГрома

Negodyi repeine [repei ne] tsarapit est' igla groma. Note the the abbreviation “negodyi” (*negodnyi*; *negodiai*); “-repeine-” is probably from *repeinik* (burdock).

иВоронънеперекаркаетъГромъЗавтра...

i voron ne perekarkaet grom zavtra.

ПрибѣгутъЛисицы—умилѣются—поклоны

Pribegut lisitsy umileiutsia poklony. Note the misspelling “umileiutsia” (*umiliat'sia* - to be moved, be affected, stirred; (obs.) to become kind, *Els.*, IV, p. 2909).

Вашимъ—Нашимъзасуетятъ—хлопни

Vashim nashim zasuetiat khlopni. Zasuetit' (“to muddle and fuss”, *Dal'*, I, p. 160).

польсинѣ—заблагодарятъ—совѣстне

po lysine zablagodariat sovest' ne. Note the neologism “zablagodariat” (*blagodarit'*; compare *zblagovestit'* or *zblagorassudit'*).

рвется—можетесьудобоюрастягивать—

Rvetsia mozhete s udoboiu rastiagivat'. Note the spelling of “udoboiu” (*udob'*, *SRDG*, III, p. 169; *udobstvo*).

закускапріятая—мѣдякъопозолотый

Zakuska priiataia mediak -o- pozoloty. Note the abbreviation “priiataia” (*priiatnaia*); *mediak* (copper (coin)); *pozolotit'* (to gild).

УкроваСмертиотъЛисицьнесшить—

U krova smerti ot lisits ne sshit'. *Krov* (roof).

ОстанешьсъЗолотойНаплевѣ...иголовыми

Ostanesh' s zolotoi naplève [na plevé] i golovymi. *Naplév* (*Dal'*, II, p. 1174), *naplevat'*; the section “igolovymi” might derive from *golova*, *golovnyi* (and *igla*, *igolochka*, *iglovaty*, etc).

ПольмиСнѣга...

Pol'mi snega. “Pol'mi-” may derive from *polymia* and *polomia* ((dial.) flame; = *plamia*), *polma* and *polmia* (“in half, in two”, *Dal'*, III, p. 659).

УгрядайЛисищыпочуютьдобытъзаслѣдятъ

Ugradai lisitsy pochuiut dobyt' zaslediat'. *Griasti'* ((obs.) to approach); *zasledit'* (leave dirty foot-prints on; Ukr. *zasliditi*, *UED*, p. 296).

35. Kolovorot

Коловоротъ - “whirlpool; maelstrom; fig. obs. vortex”, *Els.*, II, p. 983.

благодаръ; благодаръй - either from the verb *blagodarit'*, or a noun by analogy with *gosudar'*.

средьміръе средьмиръе; средьміро, etc. - compare “sred'mirnaia” and “sred'mir” in ‘Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi’. Note *міръ* (world) and *миръ* (peace).

душїткі - unclear. From *dushit'*, *dushisty*, *dushitsa* (“rastenie *Origanum vulgare*”), *Dal'*, I, p. 1257.

споткнеть - *spotknut'sia* (to stumble, get stuck); note “spotkat', spotknut' kogo, iuzh. i zap. vstretit'”, *Dal'*, IV, p. 462.

ядкоъ - from *iad*, *iadovityi*.

сквози - from *skvozit'* ((obs.) to be transparent, show light through; to show through, be seen through), *svkoz'*.

воренко - from *vor*, *vorishka*, *vorkovat'*.

свирельюъ - from *svirel'* or *svirelit'*.

засквози - from *zaskvozit'* (to begin to show light), *svkoz'*.

подкукуйъ - from *kukovat'*.

пѣжо - from *pegii*, *pezhina*.

глубъ - from *glubokii*, *glub'*, *golub'*.

бѣзнежи - from *bez-*, *nezhit'* (to pamper, coddle; caress).

загуди - *zagudit'* (*Dal'*, I, p. 1427), *gudit'* (“to play the rebeck or other stringed instrument”, *Els.*, 1, p. 503); *gudet'* (to buzz, drone, hum).

ликоватко - from *likovat'* (to rejoice), *likovanie*.

разсеви - the deverbal noun from *rasseiat'*.

мохнаѣтка - “shaggy person or animal”, *Dal'*, II, p. 921.

вырослитъ - from *vyrasti*, past tense *vyros*.

крючекъ - *kriuchĕk* (*Dal'*, II, p. 533), *kriuk*, *kriuchok*.

развиши - related to *viset'*, *vishu*, *razvesit'*, *razveshu*.

низанку - from *niz*, *nizina*, *nizkii*.

вѣзѣнки - from *viazanka* (“knitted garment”, “knitted glove”; “bundle; truss; bunch; sheaf”, *Els.*, 1, p. 406), *viazěnka* (“mitten”, “knitted slippers”, “knitted scarf”, *SRDG*, I, p. 93), *viazat'*.

повѣсяйть - from *povesit'*.

Вѣкормишй - from *vykormysh*, a synonym of *vykormok* (fosterling; (pej.) creature).

пѣвшно - from *pet'*, *pevuchii*; *pevchii* (*Dal'*, III, p. 1442). Adjectives having the combination of letters ‘-shn-’ include *pyshnyi*, *strashnyi*. Note also the noun *psheno* (millet).

расплалеш - unclear. *Rasplavit'* (to melt, fuse), *rasplavliu*, *rasplavish'*.

березнякъ - birch grove.

елека - *elek* is a dialect word from the Vologda region meaning “nightjar” or “bat”, *SRNG*, 8, p. 339; *ëlka*, *elevyi*.

плекатка - from *plekat'* (“to breastfeed”, *Dal'*, III, p. 310).

сладко сладоши - from *sladkii*, *sladost'*; *ladosha* (hand). Note “sladoshnoslashcho” (‘Рѣі'окмон’).

ежели - (obs., coll.) if.

ударнит - from *udarit'*, *udarnyi*.

умилоь - from *umil'nyi* (touching, affecting; ingratiating, smarmy), *umyt'*, *umylit'*.

скало - from *skala*; *skalo-* is found, for example, in *skalolaz*, *skalochka*, *skalochnyi*.

тоску скуешь Вы тоску не куйтеъ куйте - this is a *sdvig* involving *toska*, *toskovat'*, and *skovat'* (to forge, hammer out), *kovat'*.

вертливь - *vertlivyi* (“unreliable”, *Dal'*, I, p. 448), *vertliavyi* (nimble, mobile).

шири - *shirit'* (to extend, expand), *shir'* (wide expanse).

обертко - from *obërtka*.

гадо - from *gad* ((obs.) amphibian, reptile; repulsive person; vermin), *gadost*, *gadit'*, *gadkii*.

повалъ - the deverbal noun from *povalit'*; also “a large timber wood brought down by a storm”, *Dal'*, III, p. 356.

неоцвѣтен - *ne-*; *-o-*; *tsvetnoi*, *tsvetenie*; Ukr. *neosvitlenii* (“obscure, unlighted, dark [...] unenlightened”, *UED*, p. 587).

без вязла - from *viazla*, a dialect word from the Tver' and Novgorod regions meaning “an amulet with grass/herbs (*s travami*) which is fastened to the necks of domestic animals to protect them from the evil eye, wolves, and illness” and “a straw braid with which a sheaf is tied”, *SRNG*, 6, p. 75; *viazat'*, *viazki*.

счастье - from *schast'e*.

грызляко - from *gryzlo*.

мышатки - from *mysh'*, *myshastyi*.

закостило - *zakostit'* (“to soil with excrement”, *Dal'*, I, p. 1474).

вполоснуло - from *v-*, *polosnut'* (to slash).

притворы - from *prtvorit'* (to set ajar, leave not quite shut), *prtvorit'sia* (to pretend, feign); compare *zatvor*.

кинжало - from *kinzhal*, *zhalo*.

скажеш молно - from *molniia* or perhaps *molitva*.

трепетеп - unclear. *Trepet*, *trepetat'*, *trepetnyi*. *Vertep*.

упадо - from *upadat'*, *do upadu*.

36. Pervovelikodrama

Первовеликодрама

Perv -o- velik -o- drama.

действОиль/ лицОиль/ времядленьяОиль

deistv -o- il' litso il' vremia dlen'ia O il'. The section “deistv-” = *deistvie*; *il'* = *ili*;

“-dlen'ia” = *dlina*? Is the “O” in fact a zero?

белятавилючигмохаиодроби

beliata viliuchi mokha i o drobi [odrobi]. The section “beliata-” might derive from a neologism *belënok* (‘small white creatures’); *viliuchii* (‘winding’, *SRDG*, I, p. 66); *odrobit'* (= *orobet'*: “to be timid”; *Dal'*, II, p. 1686).

сычякаьяпульсмиляетгыгадай

sychiaka [sych iaka] *ia puls miliaet* [pul smiliaet] *gadai*. *Sych* (little owl), *sycha* (“fledgling little owl”, *Dal'*, IV, p. 686); note the neologism “-(s)miliaet-” ((s)milovat’).

оснахъповеликайбустынизъосами

o snakh [osnakh] *po velikai* [povelikai] *usty iz osami*. *Osn* ((obs.) “needle, sting, point, sharp spike”, *Dal'*, II, p. 1824); Ukr. *povelikii* (“somewhat too large”, *UED*, p. 728).

одназмотыноодноичепраком

odna zamoty no odnoi [odno i] *cheprakom*. *Zamotat'*, *zamot* (*Dal'*, II, p. 1510); *cheprak* (saddle-cloth).

устыеустыпомешасидит

ustye usty pomesha sidit.

извилонизъдомкипооянетяликъ

iz vilo [izvilo] *iz dom kipo o ia net ialik*. Note *izvilina* (“curvature, meander [...] bend, twist, crook”, *Els.*, 2, p. 831), *izviliat'*; *dom*; *kipovyi* (*Dal'*, II, p. 270), *kipa*.

ивотънасукуположостукайькосмато

i vot na suku polozh -o- stukai kosmato.

завивайЗавивьвайпроносоияуайинемойь

zavivai zavivai pronos o i ia u ai ai nemoi. The segment “-oiauaiaia-” is reminiscent of the sounds in ‘Gurebka proklenushkov’ (“A-a! A-a! A-a! U-u-u!!!”, “Gua-gua-a-ga-oi!”).

стойиспогнетзалежутьнасваяьхдупи

stoi ispognet zalezhut na svaiakh dupi. *Ispoganit'* ((coll.) defile); *svaia* (pile); Ukr. *dupa* (“backside, hind parts, bottom, anus”, *UED*, p. 216; also *SRNG*, 8, p. 258).

О в о т г д ъ р о с л о ъ м о р е п л а в о с и в а

O vot gde roslo i more plavo siva.

п р о и с х о д и т ъ б е з п о м о щ и б е з д а р е й / С т а н и с л а в с к и х п р о ч и

Proiskhodit bez pomoshchi bezdarei Stanislavskikh prochi.

37. Azbuka vstupaiushchim

П о с о л н ц е з е л е н у о л ъ ш ь т о с к л о

Po solntse zelenu olesh' tosklo. The section “-olesh'” may derive from *oleshka* (“alder-tree”, *SRNG*, 23, p. 187).

п е р е п е л у с а т о ш е р ш а в и т

perepel usat -o- shershavit'.

О с и я н н о е о с и п о н о с и т ь

Osiannoe osi ponosit [osipo nosit].

к р а с н о с е р п о п р о т к н у в ш е м у ж а б а

krasn -o- serp -o- protknuvshemu zhaba. Note *krasil'noe serpukha* (dyer's sawwort; *Els.*, 4, p. 2537).

К у д р о л е щ е б е р е з е в е н ь с п о и ъ

Kudr -o- leshch -e- berezeven' spoi. *Leshch* (bream); the section “-berezeven” may derive from *berēza*, *berēzovyi*, or *berēzovnia* (“a clearing overgrown with forest underbrush”, *Dal'*, I, p. 203).

п е р е с п о и у л е т и л о с о л н ц е м ъ

perespoi uletilo solntsem. Note the pun: “perespoi” is formed by analogy with *perepel* (line 2; i.e. *pere-pel* - ‘sang again’ or ‘out-sang’) and *spoi* (the previous line).

Н а с с ч и т а ю т ь д у р а к а м и

Nas schitaiut durakami.

амыдуракилучшеумныхъ

a my duraki luchshe umnykh.

38. Ognianna svita

Stanzas 1 and 2 are in written in imitation Ukrainian:

Огнянна свита - *ogniannyi* (“fiery”, *URS*, II, p. 86). *Svita* (*sermyaga* (a kaftan-like coat), *URS*, V, p. 269).

гриба - *grib* (mushroom, fungus).

будик - unclear. *Budiak* (thistle); *buditi* (to wake, awake); *buda* (booth, shed), *budka* (dim. of *buda*; sentry box); *UED*, p. 45.

цири - unclear.

чіпiг - unclear. In the dialects of the Don region, *chipiga* is a variant on *chepiga* (“handle of a plough”, “stick with a hook on the end”, “Great Bear constellation”), *SRDG*, III, pp. 189-90. *Chip* (“pivot, hinge; stem, stalk”), *chipati* (“to hang [...], touch”), *UED*, p. 1131.

здвіна - unclear. *Zdvinuti* (“to shift, move”, *URS*, II, p. 206)?

хам - (coll.) boor, lout.

дяки - *diaka* (gratitude, thankfulness, *UED*, p. 218)?

коли - when.

гичь - unclear. *Gich* (vegetable leaves); *ni gich* (nothing at all), *UED*, p. 141.

будин - from *budinok* (buildings, edifice, structure), *budennii* (work-a-day, weekday, ordinary), *UED*, p. 45.

цікавче - *tsikavii* (“interesting”, *URS*, p. 386).

будяче - from *budiak* (thistle), *budiachii* (covered with thistles, *UED*, p. 45).

скавче - unclear. *Skavchati* (to whine, howl, yell).

гуля - unclear. *Guliaty* = *guliat'*, *UED*, p. 160; *gulia* (lump, bump; boil, tumour).

ласкавъ - from *laskavii* (“polite”, *URS*, II, p. 431).

стогма - unclear. *Stognati* (to groan).

регота - from *regit,-gotu* (“chuckle”), *regotati*, *URS*, V, p. 28.

цірка - from *tsvirkati* (“to chirr, chirp”, *URS*, VI, p. 372).

свѣтина - *svitina* (“sermyaga”, *URS*, V, p. 270).

ззіла - unclear.

сон кэ - unclear. *Son* (sleep, dream).

байдры - unclear. *Baida* (idler, drone, good-for-nothing); *baidur* (fop, dandy); *baidara* (boat covered with seal skins); *UED*, p. 14.

шлига - unclear. *Shliaga* (“dial. = *devbniа*, club”, *UED*, p. 1146).

шкапік - unclear. *Shkapa* ((pej.) “a jade”), *shkapiika*, *URS*, VI, p. 498. Russian *shkapik* (little cupboard, shelf, box).

льготі - unclear. *D'ogot'* (tar).

хмара - cloud.

з зірок - unclear. *Zirka* (star).

поїв - *poiti* (“to give to drink”, *URS*, IV, p. 54).

опару - *opar*, *-ru*, (“evaporation”, *URS*, III, p. 127).

перша - *persyii* (first).

эго—футурня - abbreviation of (*ego-*)*futurists'kii* (Futurist).

пісня - *pisnia* (song).

на української мові - *ukrains'kii* (Ukrainian), but not “ukrain'skoi”; *mova* (language).

усім - all of us.

набридли - from *nabridati* (to tire, weary, annoy), *nabridlii*.

гопашникъ - from *gopak* (“*hopak* (dance)”, *UED*, p. 151)?

Кропівницькій - “M.L. Kropivnitskii (1840-1910) was a Ukrainian dramatist, director, and actor (probably untalented)”, *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 158.

ніхто ни = *nikto ne*.

збреше - unclear.

свідачій - unclear. *Svidok* (witness), *svidchii*.

забувь - from *zabuvati* (to forget).

україців - from *ukrainets* (Ukrainian).

по небе - the standard dative singular of *nebo* is *nebu*.

RAZVOROCHENYE CHEREPA

39. Slezhit riabidii trun'ga sno—

слезжит - from *slezt'*, *slezu*, *slezesh'*; *s'ezzhat'*; *sleza*.

рябиди - from *riabina* ((coll.) pit, pock), *riaboi*; *riabina* (rowan tree); *riab'* (ripple, dazzle), *riabit'*. Endings in '-idiia' are of foreign origin, e.g. *subsidiia*; also *midiia* (mussel).

труньга - unclear. *Trúna* ("south. west. [...] coffin", *Dal'*, IV, p. 854), Ukr. *truná* ("coffin, casket", *UED*, p. 1050). *Trunit'* (to joke), *trunka*, *Dal'*, IV, p. 854. *Trun*, *trun'e* ("rags", *Dal'*, IV, p. 854). Compare "Stonga".

сно - from *son*. By analogy with *dno*? Compare "snoi", 'Letana'.

коневама - perhaps a mixture of an old Russian dual form (e.g. *rukama*, *nogama*) and the adjective *konevyi* ((dial.) "= konskii", *Els.*, 2, p. 999).

подтишок - from *podtikhat'*, *podtikhnut'* ("to become quiet temporarily", *Dal'*, III, p. 539).

ругты - from *rugat'*, *rugnut'*. Note Ignat'ev's word "postigty", from *postigat'*: "Chelovekom postigty Zemlia, Voda, Tvert', no ne vpolne", I. Ignat'ev, 'Preslovie', *Smert' iskusstvu*, p. 1. Another possible analogy is *nogty*.

ястребло - from *iastreb* and *istrebit'*.

гага - eiderduck; also a dialect word meaning a "lazy-bones", "a large woman with little intelligence" (*Dal'*, I, p. 831), and a cry "to express astonishment or fear" (*Dal'*, I, p. 833).

средины - a variant of *seredina*, *Dal'*, IV, p. 134.

нечаят - made up of *ne-* and *chaiat'*, by analogy with the existing adjective *netchaiannyi*.

скачков вихры - both key words occurring in 'Skachek Toski—Pobeda Ogne-Lavy'.

гормай - probably from the adverb *gormiia* or *gorma* ("ardently, fervently, furiously", *Dal'*, I, p. 949); *goret' gorma*, *SRDG*, I, p. 108.

продн - Sigei explains that the relevant line concerns "mountains, which look as if hands have lifted them from from the ground [...], have raised their own heights... Gnedov quite often 'collects (*stiagivaet*)' several words into one, combining the significant consonants" (letter dated 5.10.97).

вынырник - from *вынырnut'*.

стражи - *strazh* ((obs., rhet.) guard, custodian); *strazha*.

OTHER POEMS OF 1913

40. A La tyr'

а Ла тырь - the *alatyry'* is a "mythical stone, miracle-working stone", *Els.*, I, p. 29.

Вели Мир - Velimir (Khlebnikov).

упы рь - *упыр'* (vampire; also "an obstinate, gloomy person", *SRDG*, III, p. 172).

тырь - from *alatyry'* and *tyrit'* ("to steal", *SSRLIa*, 15, p. 1198).

KNIGA VELIKIKH

41. Поема nachala

томи - *tom, tomy*; according to Sigei (*Sobr. stikh.*, p. 161), the word should be read as "tomn" presumably from *tomnet'*, *tomit'*, etc.

аксамитомь - *aksamit* ((obs.) figured (silk) velvet).

RUKONOG

42. Eroshino

Ерошино - from *eroshit'* ("to beat/shake up [...] tangle, dishevel", *Dal'*, II, p. 1300).

The ending '-ino' is commonly found in place names, e.g. Mitino, Strogino, Liublino, etc.

устилаи - *ustat'*. Also *ústal'* is the noun from *ustat'* and can mean a "horse worn out by racing", *Dal'*, IV, p. 1078.

взростали - a variant related to the following verbs: *vzrastat'*, *vozrastat'*, *vozrosti*, *vzrasti*, *vzrost'* (*Dal'*, I, p. 490).

просвистѣ - *prosvist* (*Dal'*, III, p. 1327), *prosvistet'*.

птаха - a diminutive of *ptitsa*, similar to *ptashka*.

швах! - "weak in some respect, powerless [...] bad, nasty", *SSRLIa*, 17, pp. 1315-16.

43. Sumerki na Donu

печерицы - “the edible mushroom *Agaricus campestris*” (*Dal'*, III, p. 270) and various other types of mushroom (*SRNG*, 26, pp. 349-50). *Pecheritsa* could come from *pechor'e* (“turf, sward [...] or [...] from the verb. *pech*”, *Dal'*, III, p. 270) and is also an Old Russian word for “cave” (*peschera*). The word occurs in ‘Natal'ia Goncharova’ too.

в лохмотах лоскутах - *lokhmot'ia; loskut*.

горлая - *gorlat'* (“to shout”, *Dal'*, I, p. 936). Ukr. *gorlati* (“to clamor, bellow, bawl, vociferate; to scold, chide”, *UED*, p. 152).

або - a Don dialect and Ukrainian word meaning “or” (*SRDG*, I, p. 1; *UED*, p. 1).

44. ‘Bros'te mne lapy skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’

ткнушь - *tknut'sia* ((coll.) to knock into/against; rush/fuss about).

выжевать - from *zhevat'* plus verbal prefix ‘vy-’.

всуче - (obs.) in vain.

паство - from *pastva*.

дреколом - from *drekol'e*, instrumental singular *drekol'em*.

уморы - *umora* ((dial.) exhaustion; “destruction, death”, *Dal'*, IV, p. 1017), *umorit'*.

карачено - from *karachit'* (“to move, sit back”, *Dal'*, II, p. 225); *karachit'sia* (“to climb, clamber”, *SRDG*, II, p. 51); *na karachkakh* (on all fours), *karachen'ki*, *Dal'*, II, p. 225.

ды - as an alternative to “yet, still” (*Dal'*, I, p. 1019) and the expression “Dy-ka” is a Don dialect equivalent to “da chto ty” (*SRNG*, 8, p. 288).

дольш - a contraction of *dol'she*.

GRAMOTY I DEKLARATSII RUSSKIKH FUTURISTOV

45. Glas o soglase i zloglase

Глас - (obs.) voice.

согласѣ - *soglas* ((dial.) concord, harmony); *soglasie*.

злогласѣ - from *glas*; *zlo-*, e.g. *zlodei*, *zloupotreblenie*, etc..

PREVIOUSLY UNPUBLISHED

46. ‘Khromonogo pustynia po glazu’

повыдолблены - from *vydolbit'* (to hollow, gouge out).

пазушка - *pazushka* = *pazukha*, e.g. the phrase “Ne to denezhki, chto u diadiushki, a to denezhki, chto za pazushkoi (v zapazushke)”, *Dal'*, III, p. 12. Echoes *pazy*.

зевунья - “a woman prone to yawning”, *Dal'*, I, p. 1740.

47. Natal'ia Goncharova

пожалуста - a misspelling of *pozhaluista*.

росію - Ukr. *Rosіia* (Russia).

печерицы - see entry under ‘Sumerki na Donu’.

метлицей - augmentative of *metla*, *metlishche*, *Dal'*, II, p. 839. Ukr. *mitlishche* (“broomstick”, *UED*, p. 502).

вышморгни - from *morgnut'*; *vyshmargivat'* (to knock/beat out), *SRDG*, I, p. 92.

Note the intransitive verb *vyshmygnut'* ((coll.) to slip out), Ukr. *vishmorgnuti*.

китаем - note the lower case ‘k’.

48. ‘V boku klok sena’

салазы - from *salazit'* (to slide), *Dal'*, IV, p. 11; *salazki* (toboggan, sledge; (tech.) slide, slide rails. Also ‘lower jaw’, *SRDG*, III, p. 102).

гайтане - *gaitan* is a dialect word meaning “string”, *Els.*, I, p. 413.

VREMENNİK 4-yi

49. ‘Roiut vam mogilu bogi’

No neologisms or irregularities.

GAZETA FUTURISTOV

50. 'Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno'

КОГОТЪЯ - from *kogot'*.

ПУХИРЯДНА - unclear. *Pukh*; for *riadno*, see line 3 of 'Zubatyi'volk'.

КОВЫЛЯТСЯ - less common non-reflexive form, meaning "to bend, stoop", *Dal'*, II, p. 324.

сонце - Ukr. (sun).

PUTI TVORCHESTVA

51. 'To skachushchii lebed''

паца - unclear. In the context of this poem, the word seems to have little in common with its standard meanings: "child's toy, plaything; good child; big head", *Els.*, 4, p. 3052.

CONCLUSION

The Futurism of Vasilisk Gnedov is complex and sometimes intractable, but always interesting. As an Egofuturist, the poet was part of a transitional movement, one which fused Decadent Symbolism with Futurism. This sense of transition was exemplified by the occurrence of 'metaphysical' themes, egoistic posturing, and nihilism in certain of his works. However, Gnedov's entrance into Egofuturism brought a major shift of emphasis, and in many respects his poetics are those of Cubofuturism: Russian-based linguistic experimentation, Primitivism, *epatazh*, nationalism, outrageous public performances, and so on. Gnedov's Futurism reflects the emphasis of the Italian Futurists on destruction, newness, intuition, and abbreviation; but at the same time Gnedov was basically a nature poet, and the glorification of speed, technology, and war was alien to him. In his unique combination of these various strands, Gnedov represents a certain point of convergence in early Russian Futurism. As Khardzhiev pointed out:

«Кубо» и «эго» крыли друг друга и не с такой историко-литературной изысканности¹.

In this sense, Gnedov is primarily of interest in terms of Futurist literary history, but his work arguably carries a wider significance.

The increase in knowledge of Gnedov's work necessitates an assessment of the poet's significance in the broader context of the Avant-Garde. A useful framework for this is the following definition provided by Richard Kostelanetz:

Used precisely, the term avant-garde should refer to work that satisfies three criteria: it transcends current artistic conventions in crucial respects, establishing a discernible distance between itself and the mass of current practices; second, avant-garde work will necessarily take considerable time to find its maximum audience; and, third, it will probably inspire future, comparably advanced endeavors².

¹ Letter to Sigei dated 20.11.83, quoted from *Sobr. stikh.*, p. 22.

² R. Kostelanetz, 'Introduction: What is Avant-Garde?', *The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature*, ed. R. Kostelanetz, Buffalo, 1982, p. 3.

In terms of the first condition, many of the works could be considered successful. For example, one product of Gnedov's abbreviation of language, the 'word-line' innovations, have tended to have been overlooked but are highly interesting in this regard. However, Gnedov will typically be remembered for 'Poema Kontsa', a poem that was sensational in its time and continues to capture the imagination. The booklet which it concluded, *Smert' iskusstvu*, should be better known than it is and can be considered a central work of Russian Futurism, and perhaps the European Avant-Garde as a whole. In terms of the second condition, there are several reasons why Gnedov is not better known. He wrote comparatively little and his period of publishing activity in his lifetime was short. For a long time, the study of the Russian Avant-Garde in the Soviet Union was deemed unacceptable. For many, Gnedov's more radical brand of Futurism (like that of Kruchenykh) was not treated seriously. Furthermore, Gnedov was an Egofuturist and might have enjoyed a much greater reputation had he joined the rival Cubofuturist group. However, in recent years, there has been a revival of interest in him, part of the increased access to and focus upon the Russian Avant-Garde. Finally, there is some evidence of Gnedov's influence in the work of certain contemporary poets who have written on him; in the 1970s, Sigei, Nikonova-Tarshis, and others sought to proceed beyond the limits implied by 'Poema Kontsa' with their concept of the 'vacuum' in literature; Sigei's poem 'Tombo na smert' futurista Vasiliska Gnedova'³ incorporates quotations and Gnedov-like neologisms; and the hallmarks of Gnedov can be felt in Gennadii Aigi's single-letter poem and title poem.

While Gnedov might be described as a minor writer with one major work, it should be noted that the poet was until recently almost entirely forgotten, so further analysis of his highly intriguing works may yet increase his reputation. There is clearly much more to write about the poet, and the analysis of his works and the first attempt to describe his use of language presented here are far from definitive. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this thesis has made a positive contribution to the understanding of Gnedov's poetics and towards increasing recognition of this underrated Avant-Gardist.

³ S. Sigei, 'Tombo na smert' futurista Vasiliska Gnedova', *Credo*, 3-4, pp. 52-53.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the bibliography, details of the publisher will only be given 1) where reprints are listed in parentheses in addition to the original edition, and 2) for original Futurist editions by Gnedov. Asterisks indicate that I have not been able to consult the source.

1. PRIMARY SOURCES

A. Archive Materials Relating to Gnedov

i) State Maiakovskii Museum (*Gosudarstvennyi muzei Maiakovskogo*) (GMM)

Archive of V. Gnedov:

Items 28865-28870. Correspondence between G. Petnikov and Gnedov.

Items 28853-28855 and 28875-28891. Correspondence between V. Smirenskii and Gnedov.

Items 28930-28965. Thirty six unpublished poems 1956-73.

The archive also includes materials relating to Gnedov's work qualifications, rehabilitation, and other documents.

Archive of S. Bobrov:

Items 29963-29965. Three unpublished poems by Gnedov dating from the 1910s.

ii) Russian State Archive for Literature and Art (*Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literaturny i iskusstva*) (RGALI)

Fond 2554, Bobrov:

op. 1, ed. khr. 481. Unpublished poem 'Zoilu', dated 5.8.70, originally sent together with the letter below dated 17.12.70.

op. 2, ed. khr. 481. Two letters from Gnedov to Bobrov, dated 25.12.64 and 17.12.70.

op. 1, ed. khr. 27. Two letters from Gnedov to Bobrov, dated 2.3.14 and 25.3.14, and one separate page. Letter 1: Gnedov writes from Yalta requesting details of the 'Rukonog' project. Letter 2: Gnedov asks Bobrov not to publish a poem called 'Kazn'. Separate page: Gnedov's initials and the stamp of the Tsentrifuga publishing enterprise. The page is marked "polucheno" and dated 27.11.17.

op. 1, ed. khr. 73. Group photograph of Gnedov, Ignat'ev, Shirokov, and Kriuchkov. The same photograph was published in *Dary Adonisu* (p. 16).

op. 1, ed. khr. 73. Eleven letters from Shirokov to Bobrov (dated 27.2.1914; 5.3.1914; 14.3.1914; 27.3.1914; 31.3.1914; 7.4.1914; 1.5.1914; 5.5.1914; 16.6.1914; 1.7.1914; and 5.11.1914). Letter 1: Shirokov tells Gnedov of Bobrov's proposition to contribute to *Rukonog*. Letter 2: Gnedov has left St Petersburg four days previously (i.e. 1.3.14) for Yalta, where he is to be found at the address "Dut'skaia ul., d. Kuntsevoi, No. 26, N.A. Roslavtsu dlia V. I. Gnedova". Letter 3: Gnedov was late replying to Bobrov, which does not surprise Shirokov ("on leniv na pis'ma, [tak] chto ego molchanie menia ne udivliaet"). Letter 9: Shirokov notes that Gnedov's address has changed. Letter 11: Shirokov writes that he himself will be leaving for the war on 4.11.1914.

Fond 1334, Kruchenykh, op. 1:

ed. khr. 288, l. 51. Inscription by Gnedov in an album of Kruchenykh (“ia poznamilsia s V. Maiakovskim v 1913 v Peterburge na kvartire u Nikolaia Burliuca”) dated 8.10.58.

ed. khr. 288, l. 52. Photograph of Gnedov with Ignat'ev (1913).

ed. khr. 1085. Note by Gnedov, laid out as if a poem and dated 15.9.17, in an album of Kruchenykh (“Kogda poluchish' otvechai/ Budu vremia ot vremeni tebia/ kak teper' vyrazhaiutsia informirovat'/ o chem budu osvedomlen sam”). The note is addressed “Moscow, Bol'shaia Spasskaia 22, kv. 5”.

ed. khr. 318. Inscription in the form of a poem beneath a portrait of Kruchenykh by A.S. Nikonov (“Aleksi Kruchenykh/ Iz pervykh narechennykh/ K novomu priobshchennykh!”) and signed: “Vasilisk Gnedov/1913–1964, S. Peterburg-/Moskva”.

ed. khr. 319. Inscription beneath a portrait of Kruchenykh by A. I. Paukov.

ed. khr. 1081. Letter from Gnedov to Kruchenykh dated 23.5.64, in which Gnedov requests Kruchenykh to give Parnis help with research.

Fond 2823, Smirenskii, op. 1:

ed. khr. 88. Unpublished poem ‘Ekspromt’ (1960) in a scrapbook of poems by various writers collected by Smirenskii.

ed. khr. 35. Four items (1961–1966) from Gnedov to Smirenskii. 1) Letter in which Gnedov details his acquaintance with Severianin. Gnedov writes that he has nothing by Severianin nor anything of his own (“tak kak u menia net bol'she pechatnogo/na mashinke/ekzempliara, posylaiu napisannoe ot ruki [i.e. item 2:

the *spravka*]. Pravda koe-cto v spravke upushcheno, no v osnovnom pohti vse za tot period imeetsia”); 2) *Spravka* copied-out from the notes of Khlebnikov’s *Neizdannye proizvedeniia*; 3) Letter enclosing an article in Ukrainian for Smirenskii. Gnedov indicates that he knows Ukrainian and can translate the piece; and 4) Letter mentioning that Gnedov will be in Kherson, not Kiev, from 21.8. (year indecipherable).

Fond 125, Grinevskaia, op.1:

ed. khr. 149. Calling card to the writer Izabella Grinevskaia from Ignat'ev and Gnedov, written by Ignat'ev (1913).

***Fond 562, Shklovskii:**

The following items are kept separately (not in RGALI) by Shklovskii’s daughter:

op. 1, ed. khr. 552. Letter dated 28.1.63 from Gnedov to Shklovskii.

op. 2, ed. khr. 394. Four letters dated 22.1.64–22.1.73 from Gnedov to Shklovskii.

iii) Other archive materials

IRLI, fond 377, S. Vengerov. Autobiographical details of Gnedov.

Saltykov-Shchedrin State Public Library, St Petersburg, fond 1047.
Correspondence between Gnedov and V. Smirenskii.

B. Futurist Editions of Gnedov's Work

i) Books written or co-authored by Gnedov

Gostinets sentimentam, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai I.V. Ignat'eva, 1913, 4 pp.

Smert' iskusstvu. Piatnadsat' (15) poem, 'Preslovie' I. Ignat'eva, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913, 8 pp.

[with P. Shirokov] *Kniga velikikh*, St Petersburg, B'eta, 1914, 9 pp.

ii) Individual poems and works

*'Triolet', *Nizhegorodets*, 15 (28) January 1913 [unknown page number].

'Zigzag Priamoi Sred'mirnyi' and 'Gurebka proklenushkov' [under the pseudonym Zhozefina Gant d'Orsail'], in *Dary Adonisu. Editsiia Assotsiatsii Ego-Futuristov IV*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai I.V. Ignat'eva, 1913, pp. 1-5, 15.

'Na vozle bal', 'Kuk', 'Marshegrobaia pen'ka moia na mne', and 'Svirel'ga', in *Zasakhare Kry. Ego-Futuristy V*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913, pp. 10-12.

*'Pechal'naia skazka', in *Immorteli. Sbornik stikhov i prozy*, Moscow, Zhizn', 1913, p. 63.

'Pti'okmon', 'Zubatyi'volk', 'Vchera. Segodnia. Zavtra', 'Khitraia Moral', 'Kolovorot', 'Pervovelikodrama', 'Azbuca vstupaiushchim', and 'Ognianna svita', in *Nebokopy. Ego-Futuristy VIII*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913, pp. 1-5, 16.

‘Slezzhit riabidii trun'ga sno—’, in *Razvorocheny cherepa. Ego Futuristy IX*, St Petersburg, Peterburgskii glashatai, 1913, p. 9.

‘Eroshino’, ‘Sumerki na Donu’, and ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’, in *Rukonog*, Moscow, Tsentrifuga, 1914, pp. 7-9.

‘Glas o soglase i zloglase’, in *Gramoty i deklaratsii russkikh futuristov*, St Petersburg, Svirel'ga, 1914 [published in the form of a scroll].

‘Roiut vam mogilu bogi’, in *Vremennik 4-yi: Aseev, Gnedov, Petnikov, Seleginskii, Khlebnikov*, Moscow, ‘Vasilisk i Ol'ga’, 1918 [single page publication].

‘Vystupaiut zhavoronki ladno’, *Gazeta futuristov*, 15 March 1918, p. 2.

‘To skachushchii lebed’’, in *Puti tvorchestva*, 5 (1919), p. 42.

iii) Settings of Gnedov’s Work to Music

Roslavets, N., *Chetyre sochineniia dlia peniia i fortepiano. No. 4. Vasilisk Gnedov “Kuk”*, Moscow, ‘Sobstvennost' avtora’, 1914, p. 2.

C. Recent Editions of Gnedov’s Work

i) First publication of individual later poems

‘Apollonom Bel'vederskim Maiakovskii ne byl’, in N. Khardzhiev, ‘Iz materialov o Maiakovskom’, *Ricerche Slavistiche*, 27-28 (1981), pp. 274-76 (p. 275).

‘zheltyi/ krasnyi/ goluboi/ krasnykh’, in S. Sigei, “‘Tsy’ Vasiliska Gnedova’, *Severnaia gileia*, 5 (1991), p. 14.

‘Ot Leningrada do Pamira’, *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, 27 May 1997, p. 13.

ii) Collections

Egofuturnaliia bez smertnogo kolpaka. Stikhotvoreniia i risunki, foreword, text prep., and notes S. Sigei, Eisk, Meotida, 1991, 23 pp.

Sobranie stikhotvoreniia, eds. N. Khardzhiev and M. Marzaduri, intro., text prep., and commentaries S. Sigei, Trento, Dipartimento di Storia della Civiltà Europea, Università di Trento, 1992, 214 pp.

Smert' iskusstvu. Piatnadsat' (15) poem, text prep. and commentary D. Kuz'min, Moscow, Agro-Risk, 1996, 24 pp.

iii) Republications of individual works

‘Robkot’, ‘Smol'ga’, ‘Grokhlit’, and ‘Ognianna svita’ (stanzas 1 and 4), in K. Chukovskii, ‘Obraztsy futuristicheskikh proizvedenii’, *Literaturno-khudozhestvennye al'manakhi izdatel'stva “Shipovnik”*, 22, St Petersburg, 1914, pp. 141-42.

‘Grokhlit’, in V. Markov, ‘Odnostroki’, *Vozdushnye puti*, 3 (1963), pp. 242-58 (p. 258).

‘Poema kontsa’, in *Modern Russian Poetry: an Anthology with Verse Translations*, eds. V. Markov and M. Sparks, London, 1966, p. 362.

‘Glas o soglase i zloglase’, in *Manifesty i programmy russkikh futuristov*, foreword V. Markov, Munich, 1967, pp. 137-38.

‘Segodnia’ (in transliteration), in V. Markov, *Russian Futurism. A History*, London, 1969, p. 85.

‘Ognianna svita’ (reprint), in Markov, *Russian Futurism*, in the illustrations between pp. 176-77.

‘Roiut vam mogilu bogi’ (part of facsimile of the single-page *Vremennik 4-yi*), in V. Khlebnikov, *Tvoreniia*, ed. M. Poliakov, Moscow, 1986, p. 111.

‘Letana’, ‘Pridorogaia dum’ and ‘Smert' iskusstvu’, in G. Aigi, ‘Russkii poeticheskii avangard. Bozhidar. Vasilisk Gnedov’, *V mire knig*, 2 (1989), p. 31.

‘Poema kontsa’, text prep. and publication M. Shapir and L. Katsis, *Daugava*, 10 (1990), p. 105.

‘Poema Kontsa’, in G. Janecek, ‘Minimalism in Contemporary Russian Poetry: Vsevolod Nekrasov and Others’, *Slavonic and East European Review*, 70 (1992), p. 404.

‘Azbuca vstupaiushchim’ and ‘Smert' iskusstvu’, in *Russkaia poeziia “serebriianogo veka” 1890–1917. Antologiiia*, ed. M. Gasparov et al., Moscow, 1993, pp. 514-15.

‘Glas o soglase i zloglase’, in *Zabytyi avangard. Rossiia. Pervaia tret' XX stoletiiia. Kniga 2. Novyi sbornik spravochnykh i teoreticheskikh materialov*, ed. A. Ocheretianskii, G. Janecek, and V. Kreid, New York, 1993, p. 63.

*‘Letana’ and ‘Smert' iskusstvu’, in S. Biriukov, *Zevgma. Russkaia poeziia ot modernizma do postmodernizma*, Moscow, 1994, pp. 61 [unknown page number].

‘Eroshino’ and ‘Bros'te mne lapu skoree kogot' i vshei uviadan'e’, in I. Vasil'ev, *Russkii literaturnyi avangard nachala XX veka (gruppa “41°”)*. *Uchebnoe posobie*, Ekaterinburg, 1995, pp. 71-72.

iv) Translations

‘Poem of the End’, in *Modern Russian Poetry: an Anthology with Verse Translations*, eds. and transl. V. Markov and M. Sparks, London, 1966, p. 363.

‘Endpoem’, in *Tatlin's Dream. Russian Suprematist and Constructivist Art 1910-1923*, commentary and transl. R. Milner-Gulland, London, 1973, p. 56.

‘At Beside the Ball’, ‘Rumblit’, and ‘Sinng’ (partial translations of ‘Na vozle bal’, ‘Grokhlit’, and ‘Poiui’), in *Russian Futurism Through its Manifestos*, eds. and transl. A. Lawton and H. Eagle, Ithaca, 1988, pp. 124, 128.

D. Other Primary Sources

i) Contemporary Egofuturist and Cubofuturist writings

Bei!..–no vylushai!.. VI al'manakh Ego-Futuristov, St Petersburg, 1913.

Dary Adonisu. Editsiia Assotsiatsii Ego-Futuristov IV, St Petersburg, 1913.

Ignat'ev, I., ‘Ego-futurizm’, in *Zasakhare kry*, pp. 1-9.

—, *Egofuturizm*, St Petersburg, 1913.

—, *Eshafot. Ego-Futury*, St Petersburg, 1914.

Kriuchkov, D., *Padun nemolchnyi*, St Petersburg, 1913.

Kruchenykh, A., *Poluzhivoi*, Moscow, 1913 [Reprint: Paris, La Hune, 1993].

—, *Vzorval'*, Moscow, 1913 [Reprint: Paris, La Hune, 1993].

Kruchenykh, A., and Khlebnikov, V., *Igra v adu*, Moscow, 1912 [Reprint: Paris, La Hune, 1993].

—, *Mirskontsa*, Moscow, 1912 [Reprint: Paris, La Hune, 1993].

Nebokopy. Ego-Futuristy VIII, St Petersburg, 1913.

Olimpov, K., *Zhonglery-nervy*, St Petersburg, 1913.

—, *Fenomenal'naia Genial'naia Poema Teoman Velikago Mirovogo Poeta Konstantina Olimpova, Roditel ia Mirozdaniia*, Petrograd, 1915.

—, *Tret'e Rozhdestvo Velikogo Mirovogo Poeta Titanizma Sotsial'noi Revoliutsii Konstantina Olimpova*, Petrograd, 1922.

Oranzhevaia urna. Al'manakh pamiati Fofanova, St Petersburg, 1912.

Orly nad propast'iu. Predzimnii al'manakh, St Petersburg, 1912.

Poshchchina obshchestvennomu vkusu, Moscow, 1912.

Razvorocheniye cherepa. Ego Futuristy IX, St Petersburg, 1913.

Rukonog. Sbornik stikhov i kritiki, Moscow, 1914.

Shirokov, P., *V i Vne. Poezy*, St Petersburg, 1913.

Steklianyia tsepi. Al'manakh ego-futuristov, St Petersburg, 1912.

Vsegdai. Ego-futuristy VII, St Petersburg, 1913.

Vtoroi sbornik Tsentrifugy, Moscow, 1916.

Zasakhare Kry. Ego-Futuristy V, St Petersburg, 1913.

ii) Collections, editions of Futurist and other poets

Aigi, G., *Teper' vseгда snega. Stikhi raznykh let*, Moscow, 1992.

An Anthology of Concrete Poetry, ed. E. Williams, New York, 1967.

Dobroliubov, A., *Sochineniia. Natura Naturans, Natura Naturata. Sobranie stikhov. Iz al'manakha 'Severnye tsvety' na 1901, 1902 i 1903*, intro. J. Grossman, Berkeley, 1981.

Futurist Manifestos, ed. and intro. U. Apollonio, London, 1973.

Kamenskii, V., *Iz literaturnogo naslediiia. Tango s korovami. Stepan Razin. Zvuchal' vesneiianki. Put' entuziasta*, Moscow, 1990.
—, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, intro., text prep., and notes N. Stepanov, Moscow, 1966.

Khlebnikov, V., *Neizdannye proizvedeniia*, eds. N. Khardzhiev and T. Grits, Moscow, 1940, pp. 371, 478 [Reprint: V. Khlebnikov, *Sobranie sochinenii*, 4, Munich, 1970].
—, *Tvoreniia*, ed. M. Poliakov, comp. V. Grigor'ev and A. Parnis, Moscow, 1986.

Kruchenykh, A., *Izbrannoe*, ed. and intro. V. Markov, Munich, 1973, pp. 53-72.

Maiakovskii, V., *Sobranie sochinenii*, ed. F. Kuznetsov *et al.*, 12 vols., Moscow, 1978.

Mallarmé, S., *Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. M. Caws, New York, 1982.

Manifesty i programmy russkikh futuristov, foreword V. Markov, Munich, 1967.

Marinetti: Selected Writings, ed. and intro. R. Flint, London, 1972.

Marr, Iu., *Izbrannoe. Kniga 1. Proza, stikhi, dramaturgiia*, comp. T. Nikol'skaia, Moscow, 1995.

Severianin, I., *Sochineniia v piati tomakh*, comp. V. Koshelev and V. Sapogov, St Petersburg, 1995.

Still. A Journal of Short Verse, 1 (1998).

Terent'ev, I., *Sobranie sochinenii*, comp. M. Marzaduri and T. Nikol'skaia, Bologna, 1988.

2. SECONDARY SOURCES

Adamovich, G., 'Nevozmozhnost' poezii', in his *Kriticheskaiia proza*, ed. V. Smirnov, Moscow, 1996, pp. 320-36.

Aigi, G., 'Russkii poeticheskii avangard. Bozhidar. Vasilisk Gnedov', *V mire knig*, 2 (1989), pp. 28-31.

Astakhova, N., and E. Tselarius, *Tovarishch Ol'ga*, Moscow, 1969.

Barooshian, V., *Russian Cubo-Futurism 1910-1930. A Study in Avant-gardism*, The Hague, 1974.

Beaujour, E., 'Zaum', *Dada/Surrealism*, 2 (1972), pp. 13-18.

*Benua, A., [unknown title], *Rech'*, 12 April 1913.

Biriukov, S., *Muza zaumi*, Tambov, 1991.

Brandford, R., *Roman Jakobson: Life, Language, Art*, London, 1994.

Briusov, V., 'Novye techeniia v russkoi poezii. Futuristy' and 'God russkoi poezii. April' 1913 - april' 1914 g.', in his *Sredi stikhov 1895-1924. Manifesty. Stat'i. Retsenzii*, comp. N. Bogomolov and N. Kotrelev, Moscow, 1990, pp. 382-92, 430-52.

Carroll, L., *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There*, London, 1873.

Chukovskii, K., 'Ego-futuristy i kubo-futuristy' and 'Obraztsy futuristicheskikh proizvedenii', *Literaturno-khudozhestvennye al'manakhi izdatel'stva "Shipovnik"*, 22, St Petersburg, 1914, pp. 95-135, 137-54 [Republication: 'Futuristy' and 'Obraztsy futurliteratury', in K. Chukovskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v shesti tomakh*, ed. S. Krasnova, 6, Moscow, 1969, pp. 202-39, 240-58].
—, *Dnevnik 1901-1929*, text prep. and commentary E. Chukovskaia, Moscow, 1997.

Cirlot, J., *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans. J. Sage, London, 1971.

Clough, R. Trillo, *Futurism. The Study of a Modern Art Movement. A New Appraisal*, New York, 1961.

Compton, S., *The World Backwards. Russian Futurist Books, 1912-16*, London, 1978.

Conio, G., *Le Formalisme et le Futurisme Russe Devant le Marxisme*, Lausanne, 1975.

Cooke, R., *Velimir Khlebnikov: a critical study*, Cambridge, 1987.

- Döring-Smirnova, J., and I. Smirnov, “‘Istoricheskii avangard’ s tochki zreniia evoliutsii khudozhestvennykh sistem’, *Russian Literature*, VIII (1980), pp. 403-68.
- Doroshkevich, Ol., *Pidruchnik istorii ukrains'koi literaturi*, Kiev, 1927.
- Elsevier's Russian-English Dictionary*, comp. P. Macura, 1-4, Amsterdam, 1990.
- Erlich, V., *Russian Formalism. History – Doctrine*, The Hague, 1955.
—, ‘The Place of Russian Futurism Within the Russian Poetic Avantgarde: a Reconsideration’, *Russian Literature*, XIII (1983), pp. 1-18.
- Etimologicheskii slovar' russkago iazyka*, comp. A. Preobrazhenskii, Moscow, 1910-14 [Reprint: New York, Columbia University Press, 1951].
- Filosofov, D., ‘Vasilisk i Villi’, *Rech'*, 10 November (23 November) 1913, pp. 2-3.
- Frazer, J., *The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion, Part V: Spirits of the Corn and of the World*, 1, London, 1925.
- Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend*, ed. M. Leach, 2 vols., New York, 1950.
- Gan, A., *Konstruktivizm*, Moscow, 1922 [Reprint: Milan, Edizioni Dello Scorpione, 1977].
- Golubinaia kniga. Russkie narodnye dukhovnye stikhi XI-XIX vekov*, comp., intro., and notes L. Soloshchenko and Iu. Prokoshin, Moscow, 1991.
- Gorodetskii, S., ‘Puchina stikhovaia’, *Rech'*, 18 February (3 March) 1913, p. 3.

- Grammatika russkogo iazyka*, ed. V. Vinogradov et al., 3 vols., Moscow, 1960.
- Gray, C., *The Russian Experiment in Art: 1863-1922*, rev. M. Burleigh-Motley, London, 1993.
- Grigor'ev, V., *Grammatika idiosilia: V. Khlebnikov*, Moscow, 1983.
- Grushko, E and Medvedev, Iu., *Slovar' russkikh sueverii, zaklinanii, primet i poverii*, Nizhnii Novgorod, 1996.
- Haythornthwaite, P., *The World War One Source Book*, London, 1992.
- Ivask, G., 'Russian Modernist Poets and the Mystic Sectarians', in *Russian Modernism: Culture and the Avant-garde 1900-1930*, eds. G. Gibian and H. Tjalsma, Ithaca, 1976, pp. 85-106.
- Jaccard, J.-P., *Daniil Harms et la fin de l'avant garde russe*, Bern, 1991.
- Jakobson, R., 'Noveishaia russkaia poezii. Nabrosok pervyi: podstupy k Khlebnikovu', in his *Selected Writings, 5, On Verse, Its Masters and Explorers*, text. prep. S. Rudy and M. Taylor, The Hague, 1979, pp. 299-354.
- Jakobson, R. and L. Waugh, *The Sound-Shape of Language*, Bloomington, 1979.
- Janecek, G., 'Belyi and Maiakovskii', in *Russian Literature and American Critics*, ed. K. Bromstrom, Ann Arbor, 1984, pp. 219-39.
- , *The Look of Russian Literature 1900-1930*, Princeton, 1984.
- , 'A Zaum' Classification', *Canadian-American Slavic Studies*, 20 (1986), 1-2, pp. 37-54.
- , 'Minimalism in Contemporary Russian Poetry: Vsevolod Nekrasov and Others', *Slavonic and East European Review*, 70 (1992), pp. 401-19.

—, review of 'Vasilisk Gnedov, Sobranie stikhotvorenii', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 37 (1993), pp. 580-81.

—, *Zaum: The Transrational Poetry of Russian Futurism*, San Diego, 1996.

Jangfeldt, B., *Majakovskij and Futurism 1917-1921*, Stockholm, 1977.

—, 'Russian Futurism 1917-1919', in *Art, Society, Revolution. Russia 1917-1921*, ed. N. Nilsson, Stockholm, 1979, pp. 106-37.

Kazakova, S., 'Tvorcheskaia istoriia ob"edineniia "Tsentrifuga" (Zametki o rannikh poeticheskikh vzaimosviasiakh B. Pasternaka, N. Aseeva i S. Bobrova)', *Russian Literature*, XXVII (1990), pp. 459-82.

Khardzhiev, N., 'Pamiat Vasiliska Gnedova', in his 'Iz materialov o Maiakovskom', *Ricerche Slavistiche*, 27-28 (1981), pp. 274-76.

—, *Stat'i ob avangarde*, comp. R. Duganov et al., 2 vols., Moscow, 1997.

Khardzhiev, N. and V. Trenin, *Poeticheskaiia kul'tura Maiakovskogo*, Moscow, 1970.

Krechetov, S., 'Sredi knig', *Utro Rossii*, 22 February 1914, p. 2.

Krusanov, A., *Russkii avangard: 1907-1932 (Istoricheskii obzor)*, 1, St Petersburg, 1996.

Kruchenykh, A., *Sdvigologiia russkogo stikha*, Moscow, 1922 [reprinted in his *Kukish proshliakam. Faktura slova. Sdvigologiia russkogo stikha. Apokalipsis v russkoi literaturoi*, comp. S. Kudriavtsev, Moscow, 1992, pp. 35-80].

Kuznetsova, A. and T. Efremova, *Slovar' morfem russkogo iazyka*, Moscow 1986.

L' avanguardia a Tiflis, eds. L. Magarotto, M. Marzaduri, and G. Cesa, Venice, 1982.

- Lawton, A., 'Russian and Italian Futurist Manifestos', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 20 (1976), pp. 405-20.
- *Levin, D., [unknown title], *Rech'*, 11 April 1913.
- Livshits, B., *Polutoraglazi strel'ski*, Leningrad, 1933 [Republication: Moscow, 1989].
- Macura, P., *Russian-English Botanical Dictionary*, Reno, 1982.
- Malakhov, S., 'Russkii futurizm posle revoliutsii', *Molodaia gvardiia*, 10 (1926), pp. 172-83.
- Markov, V., 'Odnostroki', *Vozdushnye puti*, 3 (1963), pp. 242-58 [Republication: V. Markov, 'Traktat ob odnostroke', in his *O svobode v poezii: Stat'i, esse, raznoe*, comp. E. Belodubrovskii, St Petersburg, 1994, pp. 341-56].
- , *Russian Futurism. A History*, London, 1969.
- , 'Mozhno li poluchat' udovol'stvie ot plokhikh stikhov, ili O russkom 'Chuchele sovy'', in his *O svobode v poezii*, pp. 278-291.
- Mifologicheskii slovar'*, ed. E. Meletinskii et al., Moscow, 1990.
- Mickiewicz, D., 'Semantic Functions in *Zaum*', *Russian Literature*, XV (1984), pp. 363-464.
- Modern Russian Poetry: an Anthology with Verse Translations*, eds. V. Markov and M. Sparks, London, 1966.
- Neuberger, J., 'Hooliganism and Futurism', in *Cultures in Flux. Lower-Class Values, Practices, and Resistance in Late Imperial Russia*, eds. S. Frank and M. Steinberg, Princeton, 1994, pp. 185-203.
- Nietzsche, F., *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, transl. A. Tille, London, 1958.

Nikonova-Tarshis, R., 'Ekologii pauzy', *Urbi*, 6 (1996), pp. 36-42.

—, 'Slovo - lishnee kak takovoe', *Urbi*, internet site:

<http://www.inforis.mnov.su/n-nov/culture/art/urbi/nikonova.html>

Nilsson, N., 'Vasilisk Gnedov's One-Letter Poems', *Gorski Vijenats: a Garland of Essays for E.M. Hill*, Cambridge, Publications of the Modern Humanities Research Association, 2, 1970, pp. 220-23.

—, 'Kruchenykh's Poem "Dyr bul ščyl"', *Scando-Slavica*, 24 (1978), pp. 139-48.

—, 'Futurism, Primitivism and the Russian Avant-garde', *Russian Literature*, VIII (1980), pp. 469-82.

—, 'The Sound Poem: Russian Zaum' and German Dada', *Russian Literature*, X (1981), pp. 307-18.

Ozhegov, S., *Slovar' russkogo iazyka*, Moscow, 1960.

Oinas, F., 'Golubec and Some Notions of the Soul', *Essays on Russian Folklore and Mythology*, Columbus, Ohio, 1985, pp. 77-86.

Orlitskii, Iu., 'Vizual'nyi komponent v sovremennoi russkoi poezii', *Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie*, 16 (1995), pp. 181-92.

*Palii, V., "'Ego" Vasiliska Gnedova', *Leninskii prapor*, 16 September 1989.

Parnis, A., 'Gnedov Vasilisk', in *Kratkaia literaturnaia entsiklopediia*, ed. Kh. Abdusamatov et al., 9, Moscow, 1978, p. 233.

—, 'Gnedov Vasilisk', in *Russkie pisateli 1800-1917*, 1, ed. P. Nikolaev et al., Moscow, 1989, pp. 589-90.

- Parnis, A. and R. Timenchik, 'Programmy "Brodiachei sobaki"', in *Pamiatniki kul'tury. Nove otkrytiia. Pis'mennost'. Iskusstvo. Arkheologiia. Ezhegodnik 1983*, eds. I. Andronikov et al., Leningrad, 1985, pp. 160-257.
- Pertsova, N., *Slovar' neologizmov Velimira Khlebnikova*, Vienna, 1995.
- Piast, V., *Vstrechi*, Moscow, 1929.
- Pipes, R., *The Russian Revolution 1899–1919*, London, 1990.
- Pisarev, D., 'Razrushenie estetiki', in his *Izbrannye proizvedeniia*, comp. Iu. Sorokin, Leningrad, 1968, pp. 367-85.
- Pomorska, K., *Russian Formalist Theory and Its Poetic Ambiance*, The Hague, 1968.
- Prokopova, T., 'K portretu Khlebnikova', *Knizhnoe obozrenie*, 27 May 1997, p. 13.
- Radin, E., *Futurizm i bezumie*, Moscow, 1913.
- *Renskii, 'Skrizhali Ego-Poezii', *Khmel': ezhemesiachnyi literaturno-obshchestvennyi i kriticheskii zhurnal molodezhi*, 4-6 (1913), p. 31.
- Richter, H., *Dada: Art and Anti-Art*, transl. D. Britt, London, 1997.
- Rogozhin, N., *Literaturnye-khudozhestvennye al'manaki i sborniki. 1912–17 gody*, Moscow, 1958.
- Rostislavov, A., 'Chudo i chudishcha v iskusstve', *Rech'*, 25 January 1913, p. 5.
- Russian Art of the Avant Garde. Theory and Criticism*, ed. and rev. J. Bowlt, New York, 1988.

Russian Literature and American Critics, ed. K. Brostrom, Ann Arbor, 1984.

Russkaia poeziia 'serebrianogo veka', 1890-1917: Antologiiia, ed. M. Gasparov et al., Moscow, 1993.

Russkii literaturnyi avangard. Materialy i issledovaniia, eds. M. Marzaduri, D. Rizzi, and M. Evzlin, Trento, 1990.

Sarab'ianov, D. and A. Shatskikh, *Kazimir Malevich. Zhivopis' i teoriia*, Moscow, 1993.

Sheppard, R., 'Modernism, Language, and Experimental Poetry', *Modern Language Review*, 92 (1997), pp. 98-123.

Shershenevich, V., *Futurizm bez maski*, Moscow, 1914.

Shershenevich, V., 'Velikolepnyi ochevidets. Poeticheskie vospominaniia 1910–1925', in *Moi vek, moi druz'ia i podrugii. Vospominaniia Mariengofa, Shershenevicha, Gruzinova*, comp. K. Iur'ev and K. Shumikhin, Moscow, 1990, pp. 417-646.

Shklovskii, V., 'Voskreshenie slova', in *Texte der Russischen Formalisten*, eds. H. von Jurij Striedler and W.-D. Stempel, 2, Munich, 1972, pp. 2-17.

—, 'O poezii i zaumnom iazyke', in *Poetika. Sbornik po teorii poeticheskogo iazyka*, Petrograd, 1919, pp. 13-26 [Translation: V. Shklovskii, 'On Poetry and Trans-Sense Language', transl. G. Janecek and P. Meyer, *October*, 34 (1985), pp. 3-24].

—, *Tret'ia fabrika*, Moscow, 1926.

—, *Poiski optimizma*, Moscow, 1931.

—, 'O zaumnom iazyke. 70 let spustia', in *Russkii literaturnyi avangard*, pp. 253-59.

Sigei, S., 'Istoki poetiki OBERIU', *Russian Literature*, XX (1986), pp. 87-96.

—, 'besedy v blizine mirgoroda', *Poetika russkogo avangarda. Kredo: Nauchno-populiarnyi i literaturno-khudozhestvennyi zhurnal*, 3-4 (1993), pp. 43-46.

Sigov (Sigei), S., 'Ego-futurnaliia Vasiliska Gnedova', *Russian Literature*, XXI (1987), pp. 115-23.

*—, 'Igor' Severianin i Vasilisk Gnedov', in *Ob Igore Severianine: nauchnaia konferentsiia k stoletiiu poeta*, Cherepovets, 1987, pp. 36-38.

—, "'Orden zaumnikov'", *Russian Literature*, XXII (1987), pp. 85-95.

Slovar' russkikh donskikh govorov, comp. Z. Valiusinskaia et al., I-III, Rostov-on-Don, 1975-76.

Slovar' russkikh narodnykh govorov, ed. F. Filin (from 1990, F. Sorokoletov) et al., 1-28, Leningrad, 1965-94.

Slovar' sovremennogo russkogo literaturnogo iazyka, ed. V. Chernyshev et al., 1-17, Moscow, 1948-64.

Sokolov, Y., *Russian Folklore*, transl. C. Smith, Detroit, 1971.

Sokrovishcha drevnerusskoi literatury. Drevnerusskaia pritcha, comp. N. Prokof'ev and L. Alekhinaia, Moscow, 1991.

*Sologub, F., 'Prizemistye sudiat', *Teatr i iskusstvo*, 7 (1913), p. 163.

Stapanian, J., 'Universal War "b" and the Development of *Zaum'*: Abstraction Toward a New Pictorial and Literary Realism', *Slavic and East European Journal*, 29 (1985), pp. 18-38.

Steiner, P., *Russian Formalism: A Metapoetics*, Ithaca, 1984.

Tan, V., 'Kubisty i kruglisty', *Rech'*, 26 March (8 April) 1913, p. 2.

Taranovski, K., 'The Sound Texture of Russian Verse in the Light of Phonemic Distinctive Features', *International Journal of Slavic Linguistics and Poetics*, 9 (1965), pp. 114-24.

Tarasenkov, A., *Russkie poety XX veka. 1905-1965*, Moscow, 1966.

Tasteven, G., *Futurizm. Na puti k novomu simvolizmu*, Moscow, 1914.

The Avant-Garde Tradition in Literature, ed. R. Kostelanetz, Buffalo, 1982.

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. S. Sadie, London, 1980.

The Oxford Russian Dictionary, ed. P. Falla, Oxford, 1995.

Tolkovyj slovar' russkogo iazyka, ed. D. Ushakov, Moscow, 1935.

Tolkovyj slovar' zhivogo velikoruskogo iazyka Vladimira Dalija, ed. and rev. I. Boduen-de-Kurtene, I-IV, St Petersburg, 1905 [Reprint: Paris, Librairie des Cinq Continents, 1954].

Tomashevskii, V., *Stilistika i stikhoslozhenie*, Leningrad, 1959.

Townsend, C., *Russian Word-Formation*, Columbus, 1980.

*Tselykovskii, N., 'Iz vpechatlenii chitatelia', *Na beregakh Nevy. Zhurnal nachinaiushchikh pisatelei i molodogo teatra*, 4 (1913), p. 9.

Ukrainian-English Dictionary, comp. C. Andrusyshen and J. Krett, Toronto, 1990.

Ukrains'kii-Rosiis'kii slovník, ed. I. Kirichenko et al., I-VI, Kiev, 1958-63.

[unknown author], 'Vecher futuristov', *Den'*, 12 November 1913, p. 6.

[unknown author], 'Intsidenty na dispute o teatre', *Rech'*, 22 December 1913, p. 4.

Vengerov, S., *Kritiko-biograficheskii slovar' russkikh pisatelei i uchenykh*, 1, Petrograd, 1915.

*Verigina, V., *Vospominaniia*, Leningrad, 1974.

Volkov, S., *St Petersburg. A Cultural History*, trans. A. Bouis, London, 1996.

Vroon, R., *Velimir Xlebnikov's Shorter Poems: A Key to the Coinages*, Ann Arbor, 1983.

—, 'Puti tvorchestva: The Journal as a Metapoetic Statement', in *Russian Literature and American Critics*, ed. K. Bromstrom, Ann Arbor, 1984, pp. 219-39.

Weststeijn, W., *Velimir Chlebnikov and the Development of Poetical Language in Russian Symbolism and Futurism*, Amsterdam, 1983.

Zabytyi avangard. Rossiia. Pervaia tret' XX stoletiiia. Sbornik spravochnykh i teoreticheskikh materialov, eds. K. Kuz'minskii, G. Janecek, and A. Ocheretianskii, Vienna, 1991.

Zabytyi avangard. Rossiia. Pervaia tret' XX stoletiiia. Kniga 2. Novyi sbornik spravochnykh i teoreticheskikh materialov, eds. A. Ocheretianskii, G. Janecek, and V. Kreid, New York, 1993.

Zakrzhevskii, A., *Rytsari bezumiia. Futuristy*, Kiev, 1914.

Zaumnyi futurizm i dadaizm v russkoi kul'ture, eds. L. Magarotto, M. Marzaduri, and D. Rizzi, Bern, 1991.

Ziegler, R., 'Poetika A.E. Kruchenykh pory "41°". Uroven' zvuka', in *L' avanguardia a Tiflis*, eds. L. Magarotto, M. Marzaduri, and G. Cesa, Venice, 1982, pp. 231-258.

—, 'Gruppa "41°"', *Russian Literature*, XVII (1985), pp. 71-86.

—, 'Aleksei E. Kruchenykh', *Russian Literature*, XIX-XX (1986), pp. 79-103.