

**from Zaum:
The Transrational Poetry of Russian
Futurism
by Gerald Janecek**

**from Chapter Nine
Zaum in Tiflis,
1917-1921:**

KRUCHONYKH

Upon his arrival in Tiflis, Kruchonykh found ready allies in a group of avant-gardists centered around Ilya Zdanevich. While earning a living working on the Erzerum railroad, he engaged in literary disputes, gave lectures, and produced a long series of zaum works. The first of these, 1918, came out in late January or early February, 1917, in Tiflis. Along with Kamensky's ferroconcrete poems (Janecek 1984a:139-43) and Ilya's artist brother, Kirill Zdanevich's semi-abstract lithographs and calligraphy, Kruchonykh provided three poems and collages in the style of *Universal War*.

In the new environment of Tiflis, surrounded by Georgians and Armenians speaking their native languages, Kruchonykh's zaum poetry takes on a fresh dimension and presents a new challenge for the analyst. Which words are coinages, and which are borrowed from other languages that Kruchonykh heard on the street? In the first poem [Figure 1], among the few recognizable complete Russian words is *gruzina* ['a Georgian man,' gen. or acc. sg.], suggesting a possible orientation here toward the Georgian language (which Kruchonykh probably did not know very well, if at all). There are several other Russian words, such as *luza* [billiard pocket, coin purse] and his now familiar coinage *zaum'*. There are the standard onomatopoeic evocation of gunfire *ta- ta- ta* and several monosyllables that could be taken as fragments of Russian words: *miz* [-gat=weep/-er=poor, weak], *zip* [-un=homespun coat], *liz* [-at'=lick], *shka* [-f=cupboard, wardrobe], and *muf* [-ta=muff/-ti=Islamic leader]. *Oniy* is possibly the ending for a number of nouns and adjectives (e.g., *ammoniy*=ammonium, *voroniy*=crow's), but because it is capitalized, thus emphasizing that it is a beginning rather than an ending it also suggests the demonstrative pronoun/adjective *oniy* [that one]. The remaining words, *zma*, *mze*, and *zakma*, sound foreign and may be intended to be Georgian (e.g., *mze* Georg.=sun), though they might be seen as sound variations of the word *zaum'*. The totality of the poem does not suggest any clear theme or subject, though most of the fragmentary images seem to be negative. The accompanying illustration seems also on the brink of interpretability without achieving definiteness.

The second poem [Figure 2], on the other hand, seems almost entirely opaque, except for its title, 'Of Armenians.' The incidence of the vowel y is exceptionally high (7 of 19 vowels, though statistically it is the least frequent Russian vowel), and it predominates toward the end of the poem. Nevertheless Kruchonykh considers it a vowel particularly characteristic of Russian. The poem as a whole is structured on paired sound repetitions with variations, hence *nuly-pul-pul, arlyou - zhamavor, chila - chiga, nyl - tyk - nyk, drenzyk - zymn - zy* and these interlock: *nuly - nyl - nyk - drenzyk*. Thus we have virtually a pure sound poem. When pressed, an Armenian might be able in *zhamavor* and *chiga* to identify possibly Armenian words (*zham* = hour, *avor* = good (child), *chiga* = there isn't anything), but there is no supporting grammar. Kruchonykh at best picked up a few Armenian sound patterns he heard on the street without knowing any Armenian. The accompanying illustration appears to be a cubist two-story house with a peaked roof.

By contrast with the first two poems, the third [Figure 3] is in suprasyntactic zaum and in translation reads:

A [building] crane [or faucet] of gray velvet in my heart was placed

And they squeeze tenderness out as from an intestine
into a scroll of banknotes rustling like a woman

A-choo!

Hey, better again to be a HERD whistled-at
(like a buffalo looking at my automobile)
or a lout again tossed out to fall

behind the carriage

So I should be quiet....
not squeeze out any honey....

I don't want to! ...

I'd rather
me- lan- cho- lically
pick the nose

of

a cow with a spoon

A - a - choo! -

The rhythm is irregular, but there are rhymes (*kreditoklsvitok, khochu/nosu*) and near-rhymes (*svitok/kalitku, myodu/budu, lozhkoy/melankholichno*) which are visually highlighted. Despite the surrealistic, outrageously anti-esthetic imagery, the poem would seem to be about love with a strongly sexual suggestiveness. Perhaps it expresses the anger and frustration of a spurned lover. In the illustration one can make out the head of an animal that looks more like a horse than the cow mentioned in the poem. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether Kirill Zdanevich's drawings are actually intended as illustrations for the neighboring poems.

The relative heterogeneity of the preceding works is replaced in the next work of 1917, *Uchites'khudogi [Learn Arters!]*, by a homogeneity similar to that in some of Kruchonykh's earlier works. Both texts and illustrations are done in handwritten lithography in crayon or pen, and the boundaries between text and illustrations

are blurred by the introduction of pictorial elements into some of Kruchonykh's texts and verbiage or graphemes into some of Kirill Zdanevich's illustrations. In several of the latter, it is difficult to decide what is an abstract shape and what is a letter (e.g., 1973:213, 215, 217; :213 is discussed in Janecek 1984a:105-06).

The title's *khudogi*, a derogatory variant of the word *khudozhnik* [artist] highlights an association with another word, *khudoy* [thin, weak, poor], and first appears in Khlebnikov's Prologue to *Victory Over the Sun* (:2): '*Smotrany napisannyye khudogom, sozdadut pereodeyu prirody*' [Seems written by an arter will create a redressing of nature].

Kruchonykh's first poem in the collection, 'The Whistle of a Locomotive Going Uphill' [Figure 4], is surprisingly onomatopoeic. Given the clue of the title, the first words, *borolchoro*, can be interpreted as chugging sounds instead of true zaum. The next two, "two / one," might be the countdown to the whistle [*svistok*] en-Litted graphically at an angle to the right amid lines pictorially suggesting the sound. The next few words evoke sounds and effort [*gam*=racket, *sham* [-kat']=mumbling, *ga*= ha!, *gish*!= sound of steam being released?]. The last line echoes the first two and might suggest a return to normal progress after reaching a summit. The three words below *svistok*, because they are parallel to it, suggest that they are perhaps the actual sounds of the whistle or echoes of them, though this may be stretching a point. To the extent that one is convinced of the onomatopoeic intent of the poem, then it cannot be considered zaum; but in some instances (e.g., *sorko*, *syayn*) a reasonable doubt remains.

Kruchonykh's next poem [Figure5] represents a new stage both in the development of his visual devices and in zaum. Since I have already discussed the visual aspects elsewhere (1984a:104- 05), here I will concentrate on its verbal features. These are very sparse, consisting of seven, or perhaps eight, Cyrillic letters, three of which appear to form a syllable in a column at the left. The shape inside the lines at the upper right may or may not be the eighth letter, an *l*. The K inside the triangle suggests an association with the Russian word *klin* (wedge), upon which Kamensky based a poem in 1918 (discussed in Janecek 1984a:142). The i-yu may evoke the falling shift in the oral cavity connected with the successive articulation of those two sounds, and the shape in which they are contained seems to go along with that sensation. The letter C in a circle suggests copyright sign to a modern reader, but this would be an anachronism, since the symbol would have been unfamiliar to Kruchonykh at the time. The series of letters in a column at the left may also be taken merely as a list of letters, but one is inclined to see them as a syllable bash, which could in turn be taken as a word fragment like many other zaum monosyllables, beginning with "Dyr bul shchyl" This syllable begins a few common Russian words, such as *bashka* [head (colloq.)], *bashmak* [peasant shoe], *bashnya* [tower]. Of these, *bashka* (pl. *bashki*) seems most likely because of the k and i in the vicinity (moreover, Dal gives bash as a variant of *bashka*). This might go along with the interpretation of the i-yu shape as a throat. The first two of these three choices and a few other less common words beginning in bash- are, by the way, of Tatar origin, thus giving the poem a somewhat exotic flavor, possibly derived from exposure to life in the cosmopolitan Caucasus. The Suprematist figure in the center and the other shapes are quite abstract and do not offer any further clues. If in the instance of the previous poem we might feel uncertain

whether it qualifies as zaum, in the present case there is little room for doubt. This approach -- using letters as graphic shapes in an abstract visual composition -- will soon become the basis for a whole series of hectographic works.

Kruchonykh's next poem, 'Immortality,' seems designed to evoke the Georgian language:

Bezsmert'e
Mtsekh
Khitsi
Mukh
TS l
Lam
Ma
Tske

Such initial consonant clusters as *Mts* [Mtskhetal and *Tsk* are Georgian, though there are Russian words here as well (*Mukh*= of flies, *Ma* = ma). *Tske* could also be linked to *tska* [Russ.=back of an icon]. "Tsa" is a real Georgian word [sky, heaven]. The same is true in the following poem:

Shokretyts
Mekhytso
Lamoshka
Shksad
Tsa
Tyal

However, by sharp contrast with the foregoing poems, the next poem, "A Belch," is in normal if anti-esthetic Russian (see discussion Janecek 1984a:105-07). In diametrical opposition to this poem, the next one [[Figure 6](#)] is a list of two-letter words ending in either *o* or *a*, all but the second of which are monosyllables. Here the element of abstract sound patterning for its own sake is uppermost. The words are grouped in threes, the last member of which is either *ro* or *ra*, and when in the third group the vowel switches to *a*, the group is set off by a three-sided enclosure. The consonants in the first two members of the second and third groups are reversed. Thus, within a well-ordered structure we have a certain amount of asymmetry.

The next poem is also very sound-oriented:

upacha Chume
muzha Lazhila
zhila na Zhilu
uzhilok Gumb
Razhe

But this time it comes across as a Russian tongue-twister focused on *zh*. As with many tongue-twisters, while recognizable words are used, they are chosen for their sound content, and the resulting sentence or thought is often absurd or obscure (i.e., suprasyntactic zaum). The sense of the poem is something like: "pleasing the Plague / of her husband Lazhila / lived on the Zhil / crops of banter / Great." But

the sound is marvelously rich and sibilant. The style is definitely the folk language of Central Russia, and this may be an actual folk tongue-twister.

The final poem presents us with yet another variation of zaum, again of a somewhat suprasyntactic variety:

Iskarioty Vy
 nikudy
Ya sam sebya predal
 ot bol'shogo smekha
 boltayu nogami
puskay iz ukha techot dryan'
 sud'i -- koryto
 noch' i den'
 grom i svist
 dlya menya -
 odno.....
polotentse pokazyvaet kulak

Iscariots you [are going]
 nowhere
I have betrayed myself
 from big laughter
 I swing my legs
let junk flow from the ear
 judges are a trough
 night and day
 thunder and whistling
 for me it's --
 all the same
a towel shows a fist.

This is obviously a protest against some authority (the legal system? the bosses on the railroad? the military?), but some of the leaps of thought are perplexing. Why should the persona have betrayed himself "from big laughter"? Possibly because of his appreciation of the great absurdity of it all (the war?). Why would 'junk flow from the ear' rather than, say, the mouth (i.e., as propaganda or lies)? Judges as a trough suggests the corruption of the legal system. But the final image of a towel showing a fist? Perhaps a towel is an image equivalent to a doormat, and the passive, abused people are now ready to revolt.

Despite its homogeneous visual appearance, *Learn Arters!* turns out to be quite a varied and rich catalogue of approaches to zaum and near-zaum and can fairly be numbered among Kruchonykh's masterpieces. Sukhoparov rightly considers it a landmark in Kruchonykh's career, "a kind of anthology of his previous experiments and the beginning of a new period in his creative work" (1992:87-88). It caps a series of works that demonstrates the range of zaum and its progress from the baroque profusion and complexity of works from 1913 to a state of clean classical mastery.

The next series of works is set off in Kruchonykh's autobiibliography (1973:497-99) as a special group, described as "Autographical Books (Hectograph)," which

extends from 1917 well into 1919. It consists of 36 items, a number of which have not come to light so far. Those that have make it clear that this series of works constitutes an interesting episode not only in Kruchonykh's creative history, but also in avant-garde book production. The specific works upon which any generalizations have been based will be mentioned or discussed below, but such generalizations must inevitably be provisional and subject to amendment when and if additional works in the series rise to the surface. Nevertheless, because Kruchonykh has set them off as a group, we can feel fairly confident that they are to some degree similar.

Kruchonykh's designation for the series, "autographical," is a good working characterization, since indeed most of the books are handwritten in their entirety, while some include pages produced by rubber stamp or typewriter. "Hectograph" is less adequate, since not many pages are duplicated by this method akin to the more recent ditto machine; often simple carbon paper was used, in addition to the other methods just mentioned. In any case, the books are generally handmade, without the use of typesetting equipment or lithography. The physical features and method of production of this series are perhaps its most striking and unique aspect, but since these have been described elsewhere (Janecek 1984a:107-11), let us proceed to the verbal contents of those known to us.

The first item in the group, *Golubye yaytsa* [*Sky-Blue Eggs*] (1917b) is homogeneous in both its means of production (black or blue carbon copy) and its contents, nine pages of text in recto consisting of seven poems, at least two of which are probably parts of a single poem, plus a list of Khlebnikov's neologisms with their interpretations, and finally a list of recent publications by Kruchonykh et al. The poems are in Kruchonykh's anti-esthetic, absurdist style and are fairly conservative and accessible to comprehension. Thus:

The End of Victory

Sticks were poking out
Iron was wetting
 over the dug-up field
 eyes rolled
 we all were lying down
 and nearby of soot
 and my wife has
 stiff hair
 out of the quiet
crawl reptiles

The next page and possibly the two following appear to be continuations of this poem. (Is there an element of zaum in a situation in which one is uncertain where one poem begins and another ends?)

Perhaps the most intriguing item in the book is one that at first appears to be a zaum sound poem [Figure 7] because of its columnar arrangement, sound repetitions, and sprung rhythm. But on further examination it suggests amorous liaisons with a touch of humor ('Minnie / Innie / Points / Olgie / all night / I expatiate / Quietly').

Another item from the 1917c, *Tunshap*, is more avant-garde, consisting of eight pages almost exclusively of words in phonetic zaurn, the title included. The only non-phonetic zaum is in the opening lines to the first poem: *kak bezkonechnolunylaya verchalkolesa v balomol'e* ("as endlessly / she is limp turning / wheels in a molemill [?]"). A majority of the others are monosyllables in columns, such as *mo / ro / cho / mo / kho / ro / do / sho / bo* and *sha ma cha mak / shak / gak / shak / ma / del'*. What appears to be the title poem is more complex: *tunshap / mkher / ameslev / skap / fev / lunsuk / sale / kchy*. This has an echo on a later page: *gunshap / khar / amechlev / chkap / fev l lunchuk / chu / nu*. Abstract sound composition would seem to be the main feature here, rather than root-play or other forms of semantic suggestiveness. However, Kruchonykh's correspondence with Shemshurin reveals an actual morphological basis for some of the zaum: "I'm sending two copies. Tunshap *tundra shaman sharapnel'* [sic]" [July 17, 1917]. In other words, 'tunshap' is a compound of syllables from three standard words. In other letters he says, "Kho bo ro is the gloom of the tundra isn't it?" [July 11, 1917]. Such economy of expression he considered to be "the highest, ultimate poetry" [April 2, 1919]. He had in mind also the expressive capacity of sounds: "What does the letter *u* mean? I think (a secret) it is flight, depths. The remaining vowels are calmer, *u* is the motion of agitation." And he requests a copy of Konovalov's book to refer to [March 12, 1916] (Ziegler 1982:237). Nevertheless, while individual syllables might fall within the range of morphemes and sound combinations possible in Russian, the overall impression is of non-Russian speech, and therefore one is not much tempted to interpret its sonic expressiveness.

The copy of *Tunshap* in the Russian State Library is handwritten in pencil on graph paper. However, the one at Pushkinsky Dom is of mixed hecto and blue and purple carbon copies, all of which are compositions of letters and lines (not true of the Russian State Library copy at all). A copy of *Iz vsekh knig* [*From all books*] (1918c) in the same series is to be found in the Manuscript Division of the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library, St. Petersburg (fond 1000 op. 2 ed. 682), and it contains the *Tunshap* poem, the "*Minka*" poem, and another one from *Tunshap* (*chen / men / ben / rap / map / pap*), but these are composed with lines and words at angles and are done by hectograph. Such evidence supports my earlier suspicion (Janecek 1984a:109-10) that the contents and design of these booklets and the poems in them differ among copies bearing the same title, thus creating a new level of zaum activity on the book level in which a sdvig of pages produces indefiniteness or indeterminacy in the contents of the given work. Thus, individual poems turn up at random in various books with various means of production and layout. This being the case, my bibliography indicates the location of the copy of a given work used in my analysis, since other copies may differ.

The archival copy of *Iz vsekh knig* is accompanied by a scrawled note by Kruchonykh dated 24 Feb. 1947 in which one can make out that the item was produced in 1917 while he was working on the railroad, that the pages were in the majority hectographed and "written by me -for sure!" and 'printed in approximately 20-50 copies, mainly my zaum things' (:2). If this note is correct, then this item belongs in the 1917 group rather than the 1918 group where it is listed; however, such precision is clearly unimportant, since all these works appear to be similar and virtually interchangeable chronologically. We might add that

Kruchonykh's constant moves during this period must have contributed to the haphazard production of these works.

Of the works listed under 1918, I am in a position to discuss five: *Fo-ly-fa*, *Tsots*, *Iz vsekh knig*, *F-nagt*, and *Kachildaz*. Since *F-nagt* has already been reproduced in full and discussed elsewhere (Janecek 1984a:108-10; Marzaduri 1984:86), here I will comment more on the others.

The contents of *Fo-ly-fa* are more varied than the other works in the group. The first poem reads approximately: *rechelom / chyay'gzh / d'yyan / chr / lrsl / ch9444*. I say "approximately" because some of the graphemes cannot be established with absolutely certainty, particularly in the last word. The first word -- which may be a title, since it is underlined -- translates as "speech fragment/fragmentation" and gives a clue that what follows is disrupted speech. The remainder is indeed very garbled, since it contains nonrecognizable morphemes, and the letter combinations often violate norms for letter combinations in Russian. The poem ends on a series of graphemes that may be either the Cyrillic letters *ch* or *n* or the number 4, followed by a few squiggles that may or may not be graphemic in nature (not given above). This poem depicts rapid disintegration into incoherence.

The next two poems are rubber-stamped and are familiar: *kho / bo ro // mo / cho / ro* and *chitat' v zdravom / ume / vozbranyaetsya* (to read with a healthy mind is prohibited). The following four poems are manuscripted compositions of lines and letters or zaum words (e.g., *b / y / r / yn / d / y / r*). These are interesting visually, but alas a reproduction is not available. The next poem is, by contrast, in recognizable Russian, though its meaning is perhaps indeterminate (a winter sketch?):

bledny vse	pale are all
zemli	the lands
i krasny	and red
nosy	the noses
odin ya sur-	i alone am sev-
ovy	ere
i chemy	and black
kak	like
plastyr'	a plaster

Then comes another rubber-stamped poem:

nyod	
Pe	tsy
yuklya	syu

And finally a return to the theme of the opening:

veshchelom	thing fragment
umolom	mindfragment
rech	speech-
elom	fragment
Bu -	Let -
kvolo	terfragmen

Kruchonykh spells out in neologisms four levels of fragmentation characteristic of zaum and graphically illustrates this here and in other works. Ry Nikonova (1983:237) suggests a relevant notion that zaum can be seen as fragments or pieces of a large unknown whole, rather like, we might add, P. D. Uspensky's notion of the fourth dimension intersecting our three-dimensional world and giving the impression, as in his example of a cross-section of a treetop (1970:30), of disparate, unconnected items that are in reality closely linked in the higher dimension. Alternately, this manifestation can be taken to express the total disintegration of the known world.

Tsots (1918b) is similar, but it goes one step further by having several pages that consist exclusively of lines or lines and a letter or two. These pages are randomly positioned throughout the work so as not to form a logical step-by-step progression from pure text to pure abstraction, as would later be the case with Chicherin (see Janecek 1989). Kruchonykh avoids such obvious systematization. But for the sake of analysis, let us present a sequence of examples not in the order in which they appear in given works but in a logical progression.

[Figure 8](#), from *Iz vsekh knig* (also *Zaum'* 1921b) is well filled with words combined with dynamic diagonal lines. The first word, and a rare instance when Kruchonykh provides a stress mark (which limits the interpretive possibilities), is the Russian word for "soybean" in the accusative case. The others hover between phonetic and morphological zaum in that, with the exception of *lav* (*lavka*= shop, bench, *lava*= lava), they seem to be on the point of becoming Russian morphemes or words (e.g., *dlyldyk* is very close to *dyl'da*= tall person (derog., colloq.)). In any case, here the verbal elements are the focus of attention.

[Figure 9](#), from the *Iz vsekh knig* portion of *Zaum'*, is simpler, consisting of three straight lines and six monosyllables (*me-zi-na-la-shi-sak*). These are all quite Russian, and it would be easy to identify many real words that they could be part of. Here in particular we have a case of an Uspenskian treetop, but where the number of possible wholes would be virtually endless. One is also inclined to explore the possibility that, if shuffled properly, these syllables could be assembled into something definite, but nothing in that direction seems to succeed.

In [Figure 10](#), one version of which is in *Tsots* (this one is from *Zaum'*), the visual links between the letters and the lines are more developed, the curved lines and positioning of the letters being echoed by the other curved lines. Even the verbal articulations (*ogal-mly-kly-obun*) contribute to the sensation of rounded liquidity, creating a harmonious sight-sound composition in phonetic zaum.

[Figure 11](#), also from *Zaum'* with an equivalent version in *Tsots*, represents another small step in the direction of leveling the distinction between letter and line. The text is simpler (*byz-byr-bun-gun*) and the lines more elaborate, with the curves of the letters clearly made to echo the other curves and the curve over the Cyrillic letter *g* leading directly to the letter as if the letter had emerged from a series of curves. The syllables suggest the plosiveness and spraying conveyed by the whole

composition. In [Figure 12](#), from *F-nagt*, we have a similar example, but one in which angularity is the key. The three monosyllables (*pe-ri-zat*) are on the point of becoming a Russian word. *Pere* (phonetically: *piri*) and *za* could be taken as two prefixes to some verb root beginning in it, so we might have a half-word here cut off at the first letter of the root.

In [Figure 13](#), from *Iz vsekh knig and Zaum*. the verbal elements are down to four letters, the first three of which form a word [mom!] and at the same time contribute to the graphic composition. Figures [14](#) and [15](#), both from *Kachildaz*, are down to three and two letters, respectively, which, in the first instance, form a zaum syllable, and in the second do not even do that, since there is no vowel. And finally in [Figure 16](#), from *F-nagt and Zaum'*. there are lines and no letters. Such purely abstract, letterless pages appear sporadically in a number of these works. It is important to remember that this set of examples has been artificially assembled here, and that Kruchonykh does not present us with a sequence of progressively disappearing verbal elements, but with a full range of possibilities in an unpredictable order. In other words, Kruchonykh seems not to be predicting or advocating the death of language, but rather he is demonstrating various relationships among language, its graphemes, and visual art.

At this point, one might raise the not-too-facetious question of the existence of a category of subphonetic zaum on the lowest end of the zaum spectrum, that is, a level of zaum in which letters or graphemes no longer even stand for sounds, but are virtually silent forms, such as in [Figure 21](#). But here we have reached the limits of zaum as language, because the tongue (Russ. *yazyk*, Fr. *langue*) is no longer involved, therefore the minimal requirements for language are absent, even *in potentio*, and we pass over into the visual arts, which have a 'language' of expression tangential to and overlapping to a certain extent with literature, but which abides in silence, not in oral articulation.

Kruchonykh's goal at this stage in his career is perhaps best indicated by this passage from a letter to Shemshurin of July 12, 1917:

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-- A riddle ... The reader is curious first of all and convinced
that
  zaum means something, i.e. has some logical meaning. Hence one
  can sort of catch the reader by a worm-riddle, by mystery. Women
  and art have to have mystery; to say "I love" is to make a very
  definite commitment, and person never wants to do that. He is
covert,
  he is greedy, he is a mystifer. And he seeks, instead of I - e [I
love],
  something equal and perhaps special - and this will be: lefanta
chiol
  or raz faz gaz . . . kho - bo - ro mo cho - ro and darkness and zero
and new art! Does an artist intentionally hide in the treehole of
zaum? - I don't know ... (Ziegler 1978:306)
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Having reached a minimalist limit, Kruchonykh could go no further as a poet. But while the autographic series continues well into 1919, with 15 more booklets, it is intersected by an opposing trend. Under the influence of Ilya Zdanevich, the print medium returns with great richness and enthusiasm, ushering in a new expansive trend toward larger, more complex works and a return from the limits of zaum to something eventually closer to the mainstream.

In November 1917 in the center of Tiflis, the avant-garde cabaret which came to be called The Fantastic Little Inn [*Fantastichesky kabachok*] began operation. At the same time, Kruchonykh formed an association with Ilya Zdanevich and Igor Terentev called "41°." In a manifesto in the only issue of its newspaper 411, Uly 1919] the group declared:

Company 41°, unifies left-wing Futurism, and affirms transreason as the mandatory form for the embodiment of art.
The task of 41°, is to make use of all the great discoveries of its collaborators, and to place the world on a new axis.

(Lawton/Eagle:177)

And in the same place, Zdanevich declared:

Metalogical Futurism [*zaumny futurizm*] sets itself the task of realizing in words the facets of experience which could not in any way be realized by our predecessors, so long as poetry was dealing with words that tried to make sense. For this purpose, Futurism creates metalogical words. (Nikolskaya 1980:305)

This close association with Zdanevich, who was particularly interested in the typographical innovations of the Italian Futurists, resulted in the rise of a new element in the look of Kruchonykh's work, which had hitherto been published either in some handwritten form or in crude typescript without much adventurousness. The manuscript format would continue until 1930, but now alongside it appeared elaborately laid out typographic works (typeset mostly by Zdanevich himself, it seems). At the same time, while Zdanevich's works in zaum of these years became gradually more extreme, culminating in *Le Dantiu as a Beacon* (1923), Kruchonykh's were tapering off in their inventiveness, perhaps because he had already reached the practical limits of zaum. Kruchonykh, Zdanevich, and Terentev used The Fantastic Little Inn as a base for their so-called Futuriversity [*Futurvseuchbishche*] and, beginning in February 1918 initiated a series of lectures on various avant-garde themes, including zaum, Futurism, Futurist theater, and avant-garde poetry (see Nikolskaya 1980 for details). By their titles, one can surmise that a number of later published works had their foundations in these presentations. 1918 was evidently a particularly stimulating year for Kruchonykh, to judge by the close of his article commemorating the first anniversary of cabaret:

For me (and I think also for the other participants in the 'Little Inn') the past year was unforgettable. I have never worked so completely and productively, mainly on themes percolating in "The Fantastic Little Inn." Much was written during that year, more than in the five previous years combined. And that's not the end of it! (1919a:21)

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