

For a nation in the process of revolutionary redefinition, such as Russia following the 1917 revolution, culture becomes a critical player in the formation and propagation of nationalist narratives. More than the recipient of the stories or ideologies which the state seeks to communicate, the creators of visual culture devise strategies which embody, as process and product, the new myths, even as they infuse these myths with variations and anticipations of myths that have yet to be created. If culture is the manifestation of a new national identity, and this national identity itself is one of the transformation of reality, then culture, in its varied manifestations, becomes, as E. Said has observed, a “potential battleground or theater where various political and ideological causes engage one another.” This battle may be staged within an individual work of art, as the artwork communicates, or infiltrates, an exterior conflict between changing social paradigms, or the battle may exist in terms of the reception of art. To the extent that constructivist stage design reflected the non-resolution of social debates, or communicated the liminality which is characteristic of a transitional society and which characterized postrevolutionary Russia, constructivist stage design was perceived as a chaotic, unstable, and threatening art, one which would promote further chaos in Russian life. And the centralization of flux, or the process of transformation, in both the language and the narratives of constructivist stage design, did precisely this – it foregrounded and exacerbated an awareness of the presence of instability and chaos, in real life.

Although chaos is often opposed to order and taken as the equivalent of disorder, more recent interpretations of chaos have conceptualized it as “extremely complex information rather than an absence of order”¹ or the absence of meaning and information. As Katherine Hayles has observed, the recognition of chaos in the world does not de-

MAGICAL MILLS AND HUMAN TURBINES: CONSTRUCTIVIST STAGE DESIGN IN A WORLD OF CHAOTICS

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rive from a change in the world so much as from a change in how the world is seen. In this respect, the disorder of chaos can perhaps more accurately be understood as both the presence and the recognition of the presence of multiple and competing visions of order, with the lack of a dominating vision or a coherent decision-making structure for choosing a dominant vision. Consequently the chaotic world comes to be experienced as a world of unpredictability and variance, a non-linear world of turbulence, rather than a rational world of unidirectional linearity – which is the way the new communist regime wanted to view the world. What I am arguing, then, is that the chaos of constructivist stage design unacceptably reflects or identifies the chaos of Russian life in the postrevolutionary period. This is the chaos of liminality or the existence of contradictory simultaneities, existing in the absence of a ruling or ordering schema for choosing one over the other. Although the visual language of constructivist stage design may contribute to the presence of this chaos, this is not inherently nor exclusively a chaos of perception – it is a chaos of reception; as the meanings of

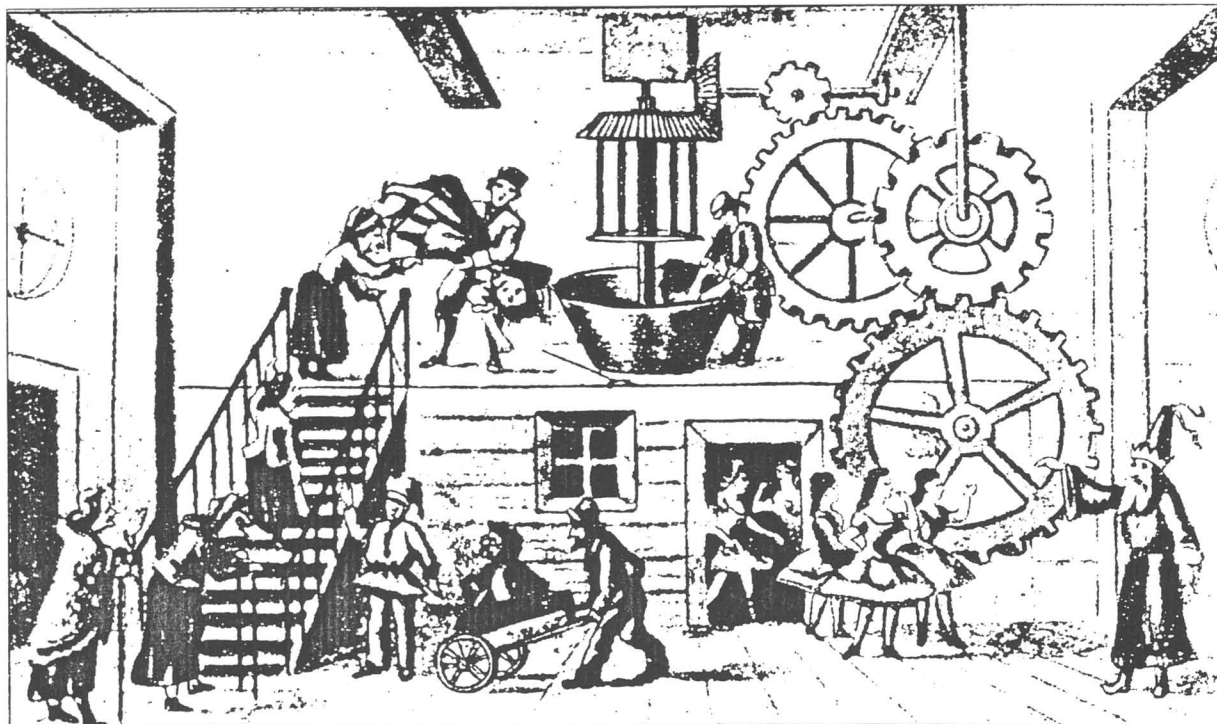


Fig. 1 – Balagan poster, *The Magic Mill which Turns Old Women into Young* (reproduced from Alekseev-Iakovlev, *Russkie Narodnye Gulian'ia*. Leningrad/Moscow, 1948).

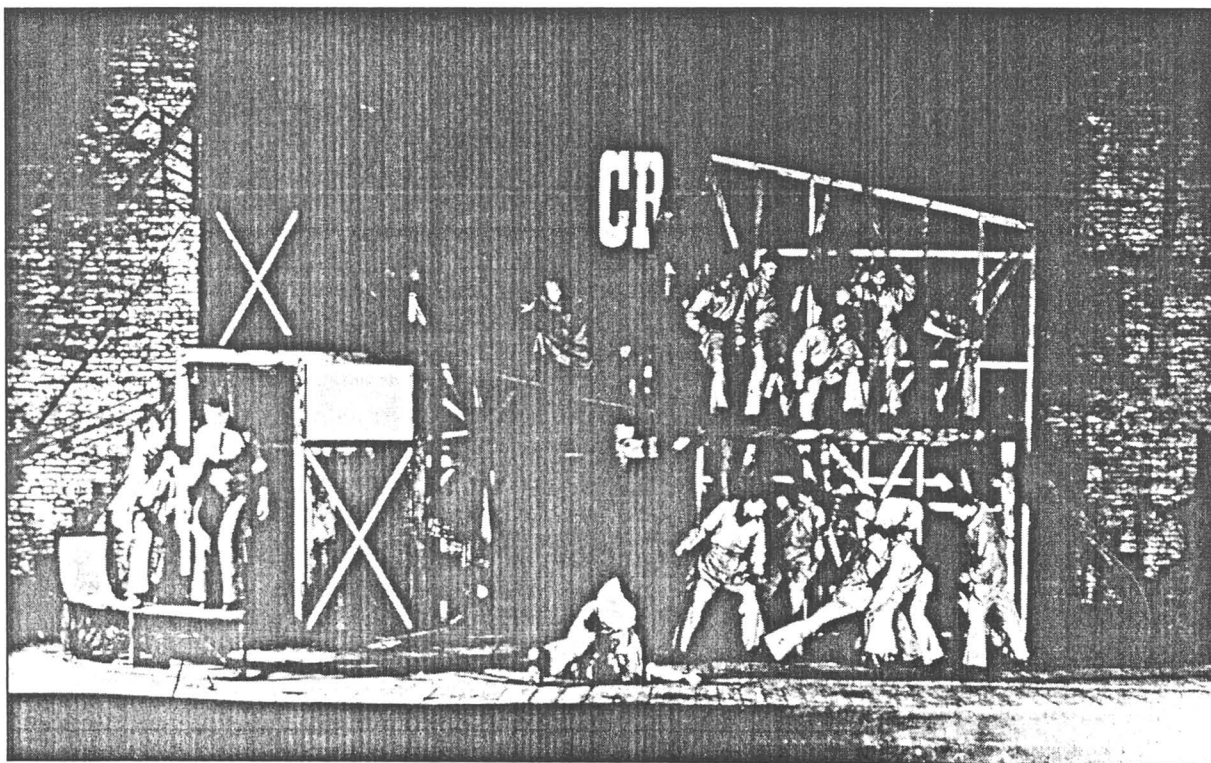


Fig. 2 – Photograph of performance of *Velikodushnyi Rogonosets (The Magnanimous Cuckold)*, showing completed set in use (Bakhrushin Museum, Meierkhol'd fond).

these stage sets call attention in often oppositional ways to unresolved social issues, and cast doubt on the attainability of socialist goals, chaos is either found or construed in the meanings of these productions.

Models for social and artistic life in the 1920s were pervaded by Russian ambivalence about the value of Western industrial models for life and art, as opposed to rural models, the latter considered to be more reflective of the national heritage. Constructivism perhaps uncannily responded to these joint concerns, in its grotesque fusion of industrial metaphors and imagery with folk and national myths and imagery. The narrative of constructivist architecture and stage design – ostensibly the narrative of the turbine or dynamo, or a perpetual motion transforming machine – is also the narrative of the carnival as an enchanted mill which turns the old into the new. At this point, I propose an examination of the paradigmatic constructivist stage set, *Velikodushnyi Rogonosets* (*The Magnanimous Cuckold*; designer Liubov' Popova, producer and director Vsevolod Meierkhol'd, 1922), which can be recognized as the first true visual statement of the narrative of the magical machine, in all its complexity. Further, it not only modeled the standard for subsequent definitions of constructivist stage design; it also models the forms of chaos inherent to constructivism – the chaos of language and the chaos of meaning.

Despite the playwright Crommelink's elaborate descriptions of the locale of the play and the accoutrements of the mill in which most of the play's action occurs, contemporary observers faced a set which was a skeletal, abstract design – with covert references to rural and folk architecture and theater – containing only those elements directly needed for the action – window frames, stairs, doors, and turning wheels which punctuated the dialogue and gestures of the actors. In contrast to the painted backdrops of the past, this was not a passive object of contemplation. Instead, it came to

life – but as a machine, reaching its fullest potential in the process of the action², and the reading of this set as a machine was the prevalent response (both contemporary and current) to Popova and Meierkhol'd's work^{3,4}. Although a few writers eventually did refer to the fairground theater (the *balagan*) or the fair-like characteristics of the production, the prevailing interpretation of the set as a machine and an embodiment of ideas about the role of the machine and industry in society did not demonstrate awareness of the set's relationship to rural and primitive architectural forms, or of a more overt allusion to a poster for a play performed at a popular pantomime theater in the 1870s⁵. Where Popova's construction consists of a ramp and stairs leading up to a multilevel horizontal platform representing a barn-like structure embraced by three wheels of varying sizes, the poster for the pantomime similarly has a staircase leading to a higher horizontal surface with three interlocking wheels and pistons on the opposite side. The pistons lead to a central structure that consists primarily of a large basin into which old ladies are being submerged. They then walk out, now as young girls, through a doorway on the bottom floor. In fact, the title of the pantomime was *The enchanted mill which turns old women into young*.

Although Popova is the undisputed designer of the set, given Meierkhol'd's extensive interest in carnival and fairground theaters and his personal collection of newspaper clippings for an intended but never written history of the Russian carnival theater, it is likely that the resemblance of Popova's design to this poster is not fortuitous⁶. But if Popova's set is indeed connected to this image, and to folk theater, then meaning must be read in light of a different narrative. It is not merely a machine, representing the new technology and the goal of coordinating action between humans and machines, but a folk or primitive machine in which native sources and images are wedded to higher technology and myths; the social condenser

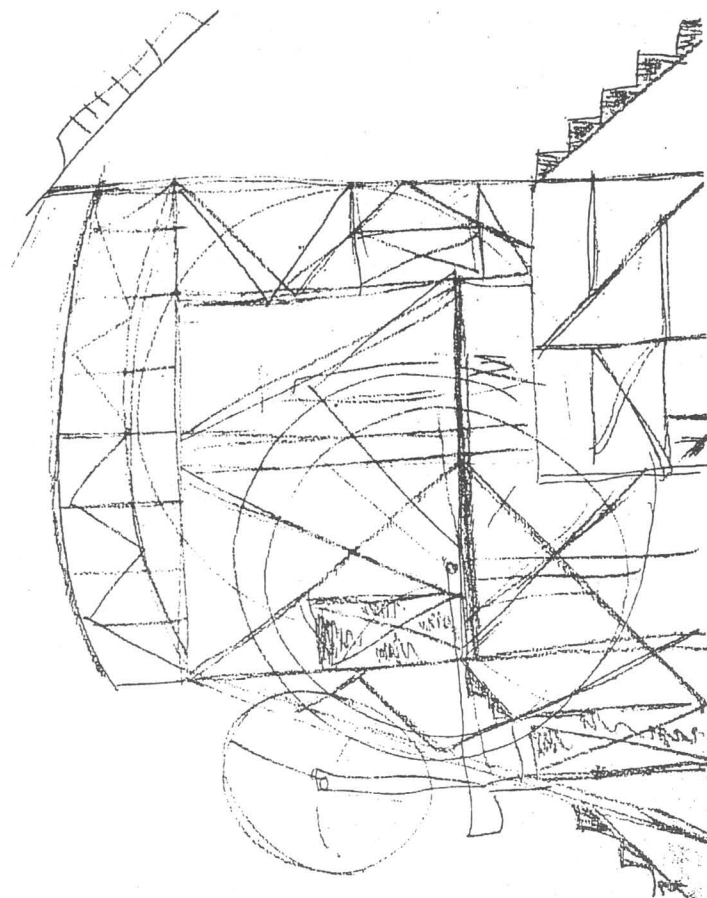
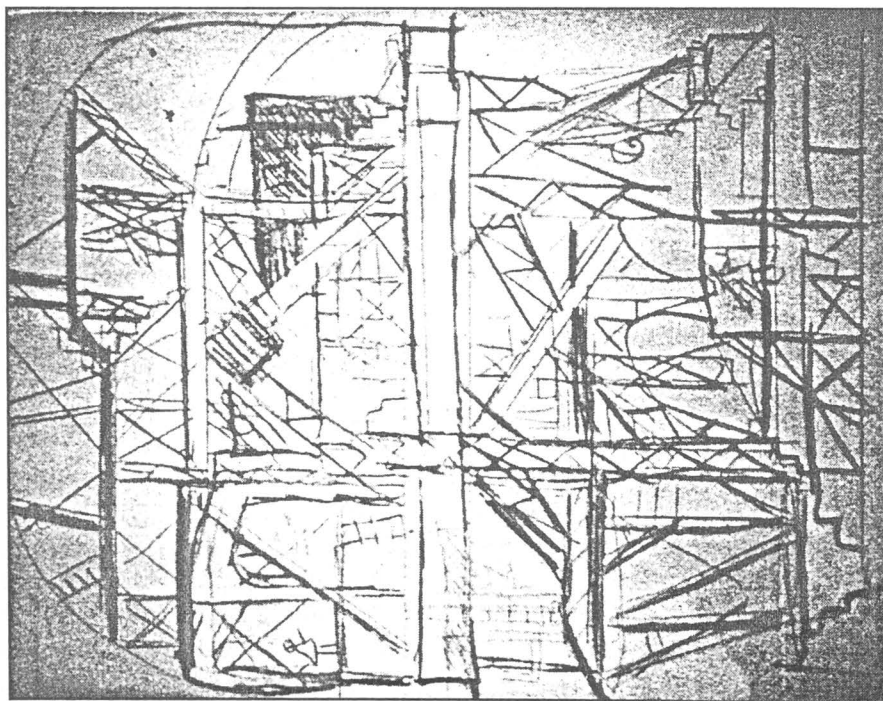


Fig. 3-4 – Popova's working drawings for the set of *Velikodushnyi Rogonosets*, 1921-22 (Tretiakov drawing fond).

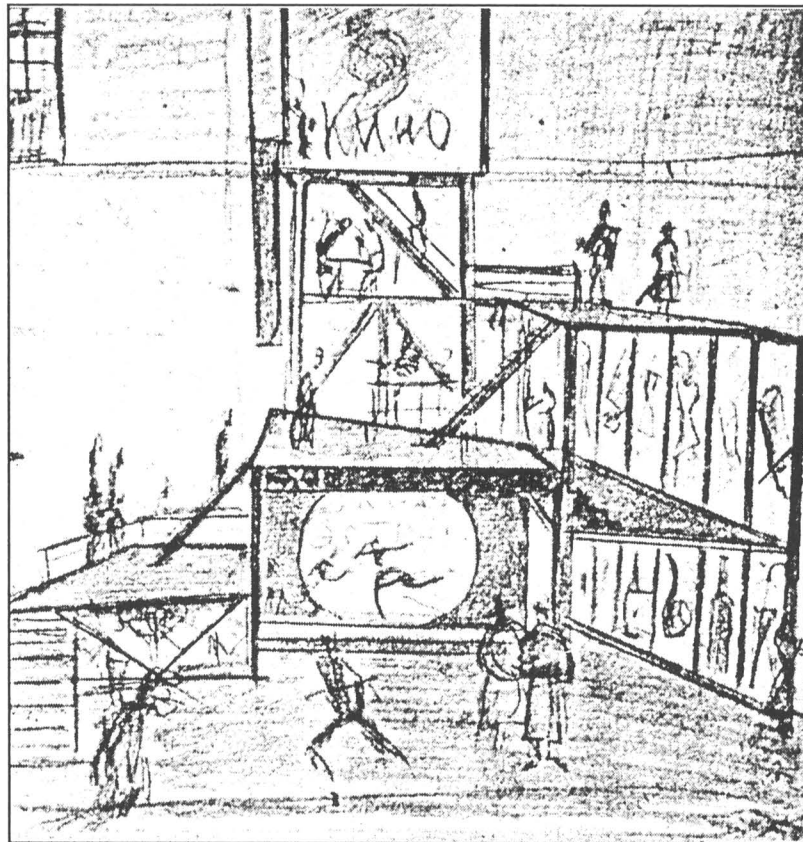
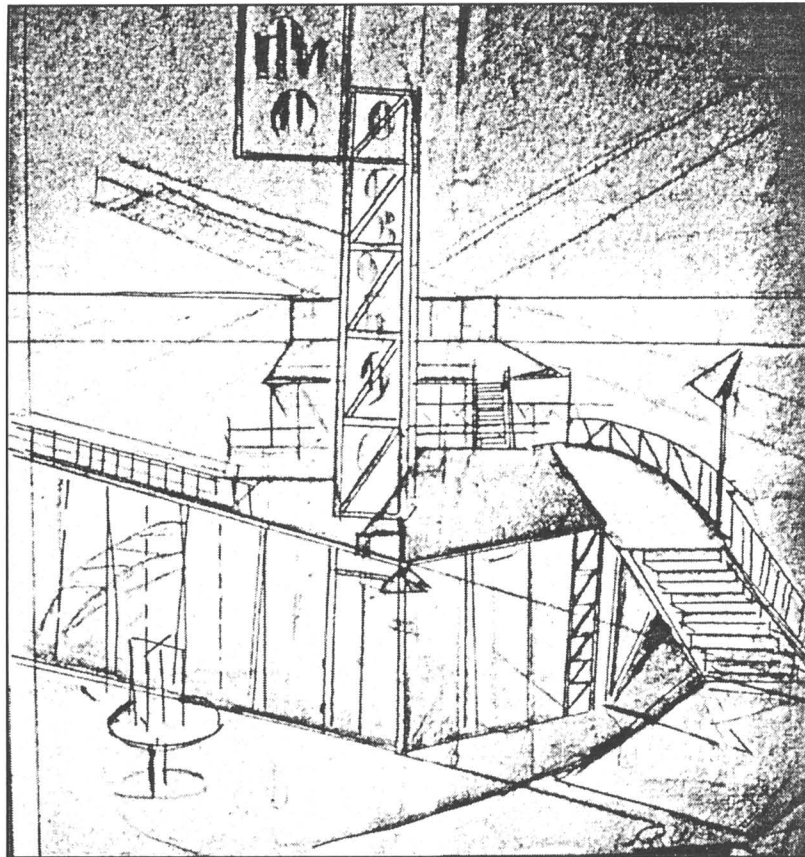


Fig. 5-6 – Shestakov's early and final sketches for *Ozero Liul'* [Russian State Archives of Literature and Art (RGALI), Shestakov fond].

that was to be the paradigm of constructivist buildings here is actually a transformer that changes outdated individuals into younger and presumably more flexible ones. Popova's set, rather than solely serving the needs of the play for which it was designed, or simply illustrating the text, illustrates instead a new idea about society: the set itself thus becomes a parable for the transformation not merely of old people (women) but also of an old society. In fact, the union of a bourgeois farce with a revolutionary staging was in itself another parable for the transformation of culture⁷, a parable which some believed could not have been possible with a more realist art but required instead a folkloric fantasy version of life deliberately derived from the fairground theater, the balagan⁸. The industrial world of high technology, interwoven with this fantasy, thereby became an enchanting fairy tale itself, one about the creation of a new theatrical reality, itself with the metaphorical significance of the creation of a new world and a world order. But the union of a fairy tale world with the world of industry and machines challenges the belief that machines and electricity will successfully transform the communist world. Chaos in this case derives from this challenge to a vision of how the world should be seen, a challenge to the linear order that socialism was seeking to impose. This was not, however, the sole source of chaos in this production. A stage set of dissembled parts, a set which moved in response to and independently of the actors, communicated an unknown, incomprehensible, and unresolved vision of the future. Unknown and incomprehensible because the chaos of this set derives from the language of design as well as from the meaning.

The language of design refers to the sources of that design, and these sources may be inherently chaotic, such as the carnival as a source, and the particular devices selected from those sources may additionally contribute to chaos – the montage, for example, taken from cinema, or the asymmetric composition of avant-garde archi-

tecture. All were strategies which can suggest or allude to processes of transformation occurring in the visual forms one perceives, and these strategies were used in constructivist stage design. The chaos of language is therefore a chaos of technique, of composition, and of allusion. A language may appear to be unstable or chaotic when the connections between words or images and the objects or ideas represented by them are challenged, weakened or dissolved⁹. This type of instability is likely to be enhanced by certain developments in art, such as abstraction and nonobjectivity. Further, as an unstable, ambiguous, or chaotic language participates in the construction of meaning and becomes a component of the resultant meaning, the chaos of the language extends to the phenomena being described and communicated. Thus, by creating or representing instability through its language, art can contribute to social and cultural chaos by calling attention to social instability or liminal, unresolved issues. And, in fact, the chaos of the art work may arise from a deliberate decision to depict liminality, either through the liminality of the language or through the narratives deliberately inscribed by the artist in the artwork. Finally, to the extent that the meaning of the design is equal to its sources – the idea of the carnival, the cinema, of industry – or to the selected devices – the device of transformation, for example – the chaos of meaning comes from the chaos of language. But the imagery and unity of the set communicate in a fuller way – like words do, conjoined in a sentence – and this is another source of chaos. Language communicates, but a work of art does more – it evokes an attitude toward reality.

How did the chaos of language characterize the set for the *The Magnanimous Cuckold*? An examination of the evolution of its design reveals a process of movement from a more realistic and architecturally complex set to a more schematic conceptualization in which the individual parts seem almost to have been reoriented from a

vertical and architectural structure into a horizontally attenuated disposition – a strategy which can be found in the work of other constructivist designers, as, for example, the development of the set for *Lake Liul'* by the designer Shestakov, as well as in Meierkhol'd's treatment of a play's text (*Les*, or *The Forest*, for example, where Meierkhol'd splices the original Russian text and reassembles it in the literary equivalent of a dissembled and horizontally attenuated structure¹⁰). The final construction for *Mag-*

persion of demountable architectural attractions, as well. The collaged effect of the parts of the set and the constant motion of the actors resulted in a production perceived as a machine at best, and a circus or fairground production at worst. The set united typically opposed elements: high and low art, rural and urban spaces, inanimate structure and dynamic machine, and this aggregation was perceived as chaotic, crude, and disdainful of socialist ideology, a world of the balagan and carnival, rather than a world of industrial

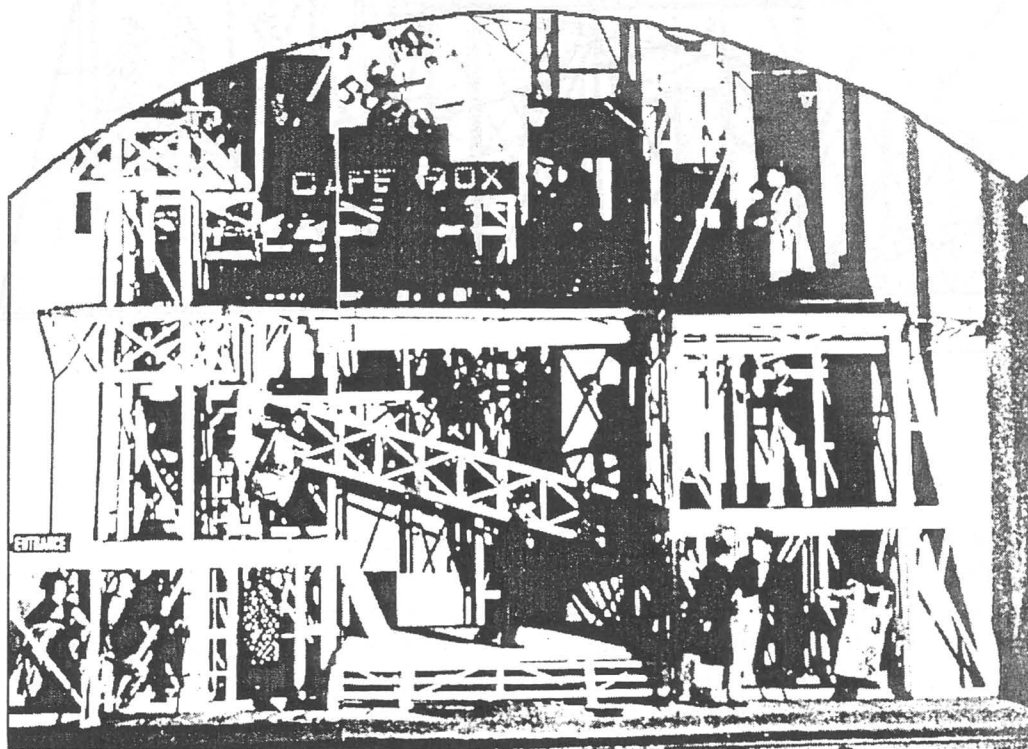


Fig. 7 – Vesnin, final set for *Chelovek* (photo reproduced from S.O. Khan-Magomedov, *Alexandr Vesnin and Russian Constructivism*, NY: 1986).

nanimous Cuckold consequently suggests not a coherent architectural structure but an assemblage or montage of posts, beams, ramps and wheels dominated by a strong diagonal and the movement of the wheels. In addition to subverting architectural structure, the set combines allusions to rural wooden windmills and farms of the Russian north, to the poster for the 19th century balagan play, and to the actual fairground with its dis-

production. Further, the presentation of a structure as dissembled and aggregated forced the viewer to complete it in his/her mind – a conceptual process desired by the constructivists but for which the spectators may have been unprepared.

And yet another source of chaos exists in this production. If the stage set is a metaphor for the creation of new ideas and behaviors from the old, it stands in direct opposition to

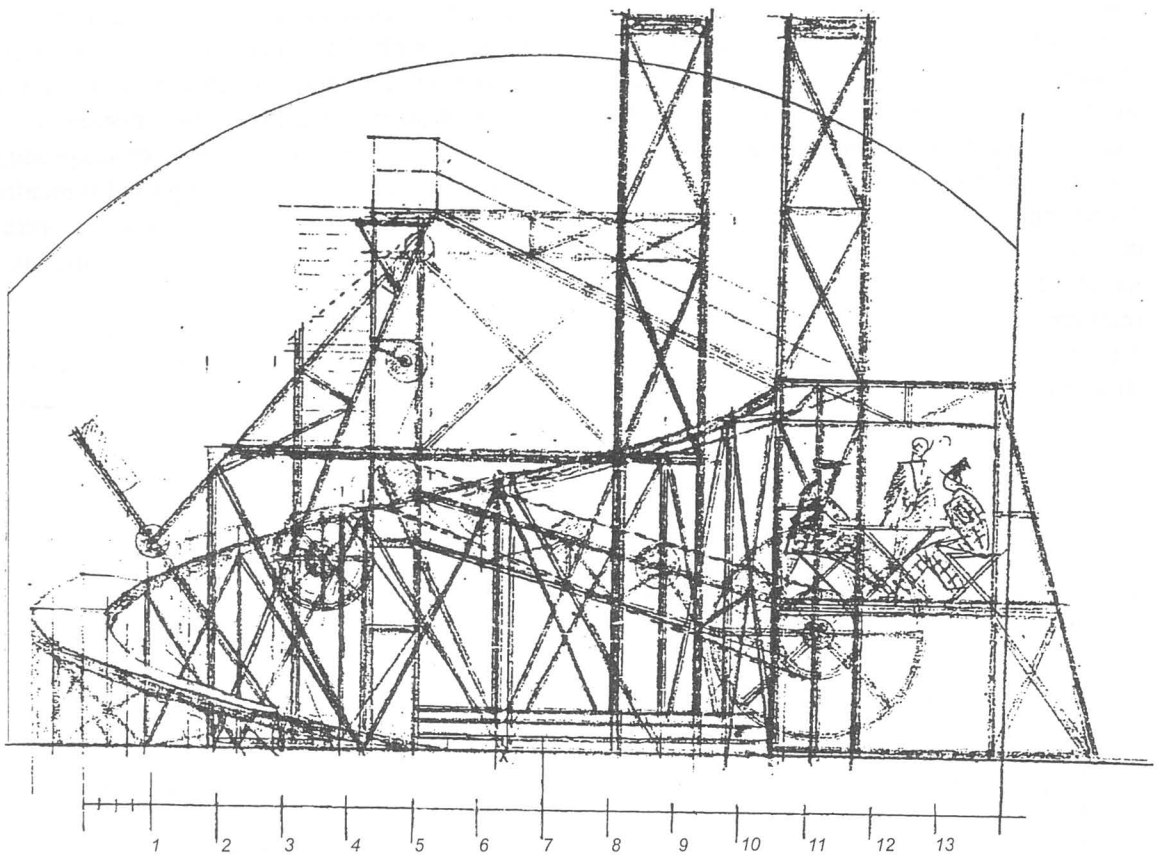


Fig. 8 – Working drawing for *Chelovek* (reproduced from *Architectural Drawings of the Russian Avant-Garde*, NY: 1990).

the textual developments of the play. This is a play about mistrust and suspicions of infidelity and the use of masks and deceptive behavior in order to determine the truth¹¹. Bruno, a miller and scribe, doubts the fidelity of his wife Stella. Returning from a night away, he wonders if Stella cheated on him while he was gone. Upon finding her, he begins arguing and accusing her of continual transgressions. At first she swears her innocence, but then begins to say yes to all his accusations. The escalating fight is accompanied throughout by the starting and stopping of the red and white wheels and the windmill. Finally, Bruno proclaims that the doubt will kill him, but it is not possible to possess absolute proof of her constancy. Since he can't have such proof, he opts for proof of her inconstancy and arranges to have all the village's men pass through her room.

Bruno himself comes, wearing a mask, and Stella seems to fall in love with him. But because of the mask, he doesn't know if Stella really betrayed him or secretly knew the truth. Eventually, Stella leaves with another man, and Bruno, left alone on the stage, sits down and says, "One more joke", and is left never to know or be able to believe in her faithfulness. The characters in the play, then, do not learn the truth; nor do they learn new behaviors; they do not change. Ending up alone, having lost whatever trust in one another they might originally have possessed, if change can be said to have occurred, it is for the worse. But the polarization of the narratives of the play and of the stage set is, in itself, yet another narrative – this one a meta-narrative about the ability of visual art creations to function independently as thought-inducing dynamos. And it may be that only

art is capable of such complete transformation – and that in this respect, designer and producer were challenging the state (as Bruno and Stella) to match the transformative process of which their art was so capable. This is the chaos of meaning, because the meaning of the stage set, indeed, of the production as a whole, subverts or undermines the meaning of the text.

The familiar production of *The Man who was Thursday*, producer Aleksandr Tairov and designer, Aleksandr Vesnin, 1923, provides an example of a production in which chaos derived from an amalgamation of urban, cinematic, and carnivalistic allusions. Staged by Tairov using a moderately idiosyncratic translation, rewritten as a play (*Chelovek Kotoryi Byl Chetvergom*)¹², it is a complex story in which a band of anarchists, named for the days of the week, is infiltrated by police, themselves disguised as anarchists. In the Russian version, “Thursday”, the character most definitively known to be an anarchist, is the one to bring order following an uprising staged by the masquerading detectives.

Although the text does not change the original English location, given the timing of this production shortly after the end of the civil war, it does not seem entirely unlikely to imagine an intended parallel between this play and the Russian revolution as a prelude to a new order to be achieved by a complete rejection of the past and after years of civil, political, and military anarchy. Metaphorically, the message of the play seems to be that disorder is either the prelude to order or even a new form of order in itself; and this message is paralleled in unexpected ways in the stage set.

Tairov stated that his goal for the production was to portray the form of the capitalist city which turns the person into a machine¹³. Certainly the set was dominated by machinism, and even as Vesnin moved from his initial sketches of mechanical parts toward the final, more architectural form, the set retained many of the automatic move-

ments which left an indelible impression on the actors’ playing and provided a commentary on the play’s action (moving lifts), much as the turning wheels in *Velikodushnyi Rogonosets* commented on that play. Vesnin himself noted that his goal was to maximize the use of space with the effect of quickening the pace of action. Further, he added, because several scene changes were going to occur before the audience, a mechanized construction seemed necessary¹⁴. Thus, there were three elevator lifts in the construction, electrically illuminated and moving advertisements, and finally a ramped sidewalk on which people were continually moving and changing places. The structure consisted of multiple playing surfaces at different heights, and a tricameral arrangement creates the suggestion of different, isolated spaces for performing. With the exception of one surface, there are no infilled areas in the structure. The arrangement of the structure, in addition to its connotation of a machine, evokes the Vesnin brothers’ designs of the interior structure of the Palace of Labor and anticipates later communal housing apartment designs. There is also a model predating the final version, on which there is a large wheel mounted to a pyramidal tower. The effect created is one of an electrified windmill. In the back of the model there are two slender towers, giving this version a more complete urban atmosphere than the final version possesses. In the final model, the wheels and pulley are gone. The towers remain but are partially hidden by the curved top of the stage. The diagonal ramp through the center is still present. The earlier model, as did the early sketches, also evokes a relationship to the Palace of Labor in the conglomeration of forms, towers, and cubes, and the overall tautness of the structure.

In its fusion of references to the Vesnin brothers’ design for a Palace of Labor, to mechanized fairground entertainment, in the static and moving ramps, the cinematic ethos

of an American detective movie, and finally, in its evocation of both a multi-storied dwelling house and a city in which action occurred on several planes, and all of this exacerbated or enhanced by the masquerading inherent to its plot of anarchy and infiltration, the production ultimately evoked an organic architectural machine, or the synthesis of the city and carnival. This urban carnival of perpetual motion with its dual allusions to native rural sources as well as western and

chaos and liminality of the urban carnival would have been exacerbated).

This set, making the stage almost redundant as it becomes a mechanical container which seems to obviate the need for a theater, creates an initial illusion of inherent dynamism. The multilevel structure and compartmentalized areas for acting, the ramp and moving lifts, and the cinematically-influenced staging all compound the initial expectation of a dynamic disorder. But, as

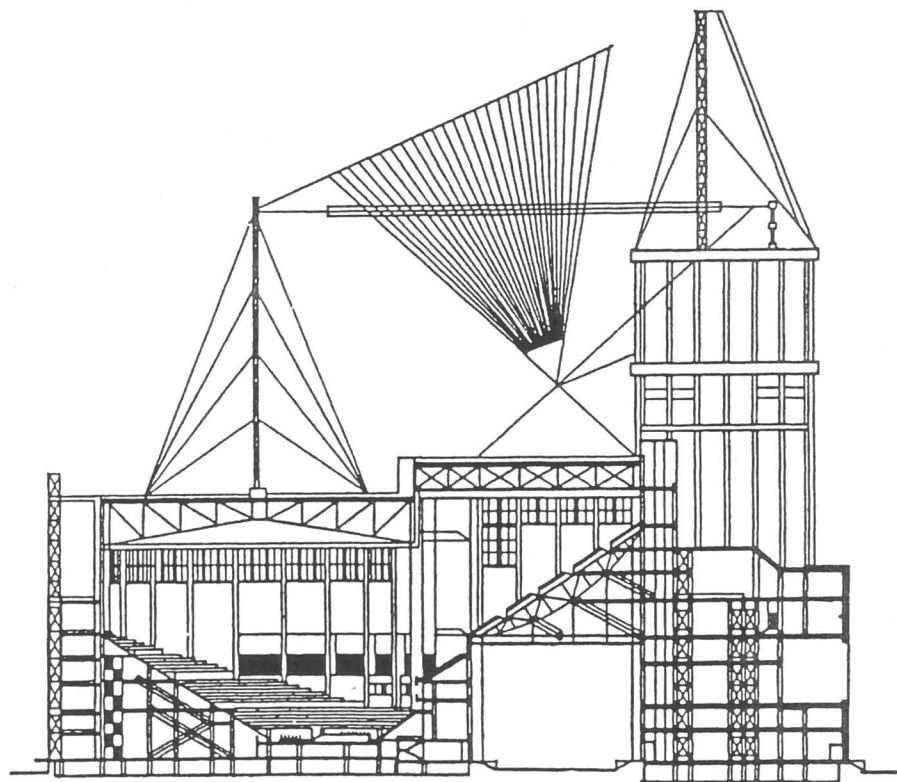


Fig. 9 – Vesnin brothers, section for the Palace of Labor, 1923 (*Architectural Drawings*).

industrial sources was a chaotic and liminal fusion for viewers because of its union of capitalist urbanism with emerging ideas about soviet urbanism. (Or, if not an urban carnival, then the “automated utopia” envisioned by Timothy Walker in 1831. But this was an American utopia of the machine and country. While it is unlikely that the Russians would have been familiar with this idea, to the extent that any evocations of the American urbanized countryside were perceived, the

more than one writer observed, the movement of actors and set seemed to follow a mathematical plan which restricted and almost mechanized the movement¹⁵. Thus, the revolutionary set functioned as an order-inducing machine, and in this way, would seem to have paralleled and intensified the theme of the play, and to have imposed a non-chaotic solution. But given initial expectations of disorder, this solution may have been chaotic. And in fact, it was not

uniformly perceived as order-inducing, for critics complained that viewers could not follow or understand the action; it moved too fast – a criticism likewise made of the previously noted set and production of *Lake Liul*, one which shared not only the dynamism of *Thursday*, but also a semi-architectural set which evoked urbanism and fairground conjoined once again. Shestakov's set somewhat more explicitly alluded to the forms of an outdoor theater and the balcony theaters attached to the outside of fairground buildings. But ultimately, what both the Vesnin set and the Shestakov set share is a chaos of dynamism: an enhanced pace of action which does not allow the spectator adequate time to absorb and unravel the anarchy of the plots and stage sets, or, in terms of chaos theory, a world of unpredictability and turbulence with the presence of multiple frameworks for finding meaning.

In an interesting juxtaposition, the relatively unknown production of *The Sorceress* (*Koldun'ia*, set and costumes by

Isaac Rabinovich for the state Hebrew Theater in 1922) is visually a perhaps more chaotic design with its clutter of staggered vertical and horizontal forms – some skewed, some precariously supported by posts that do not appear sturdy enough to be weight-bearing, and stairs and ladders, some of which seem to be extending into the stratosphere. The rickety conglomeration, with its look of instability and temporariness, was perceived as embodying “the ecstasy of a free creation of the folk masses”¹⁶ – a perception which in this case may have been acceptable, rather than chaotic, since the locus of production was an ethnic rather than a strictly socialist theater, and the play was not pretending to offer a vision of the future of soviet cities.

Another constructivist production worth re-examining in the light of chaos is Meierkhol'd's 1923 production of *Smert' Tarelkina* (*Death of Tarelkin*), with Varvara Stepanova as designer. In its conjunction of the carnival/balagan, the circus, and constructivism, the stage set manifested a carnivalesque and grotesque unity of the old

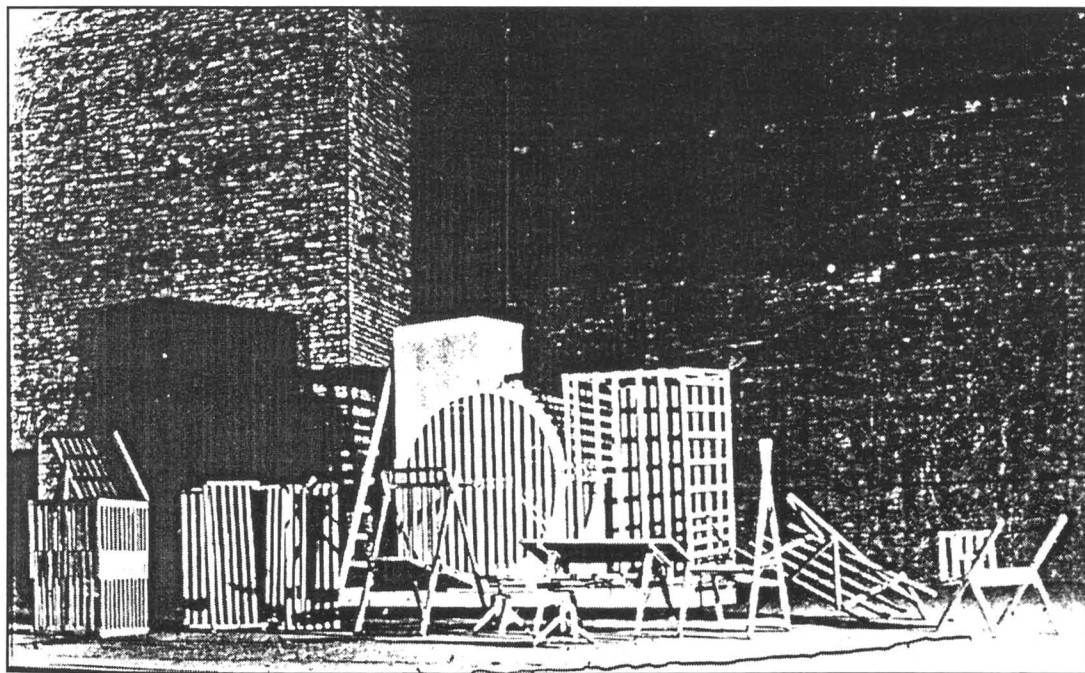


Fig. 10 – Photo of stage furniture and costumes for performance of Meierkhol'd Theater's production of *Smert' Tarelkina*, 1922, designer: V. Stepanova (Bakh. Mus., Meierkhol'd archives).

and the new, or folk, primitive, and popular forms of art and rational technology. The ambiguous nature of the stage “furniture” (circus apparatus or utilitarian furniture, and its cage and prison-like evocations), while alluding to the potential trial and possible imprisonment of Tarelkin (a civil servant who faked his death in order to outwit two bureaucrats who, he believed, were trying to swindle him), framed these possibilities as eccentric and nearly unbelievable, rather than as logical outcomes of Tarelkin’s criminal

defiance of traditional morality and of experimentation with new behaviors in a setting free of repercussions. And finally, the evocation of the circus potentially called to mind the athletic prowess and skill of circus performers, a level of skill necessary to dodge dangerous outcomes and entrapment. The chaos of this play therefore resident not only in the viewers’ experience of turmoil but in the inability to provide a singular and familiar interpretive strategy to a well-known Russian play.

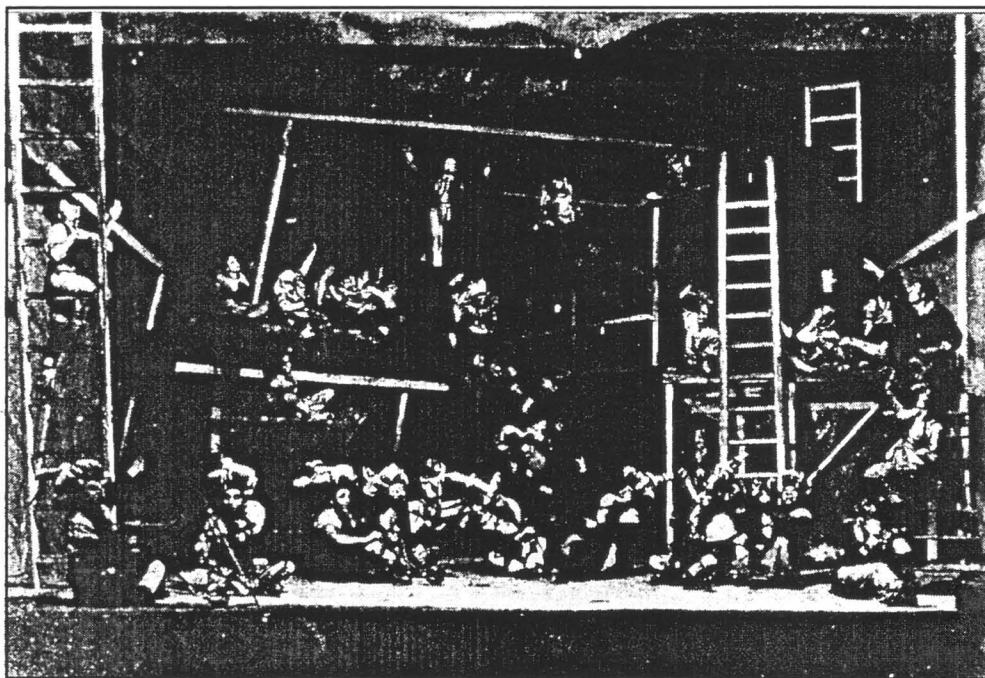


Fig. 11 – Photo of performance of *Koldun'ia* (Bakh. Mus., photo archives).

behavior. This framing actually serves as a reframing of the textual ideology, along with its social overtones, into a contradictory communication, which either obscures or overrides any pre-existing schema the viewer may have associated with this familiar play. Thus, the combination of striped, loose-fitting costumes and barred stage furniture which trapped the unwitting user could be seen to connote the loss of freedom associated with imprisonment. Yet, as eccentric trickery evoking the carnival, the same objects brought to mind the carnivalistic world of

Perhaps most damaging of all to the reception of constructivist productions was the perception of viewers that productions and stage sets such as *The Man who was Thursday*, *The Death of Tarelkin*, *The Magnanimous Cuckold*, or others of similar structure, were mechanizing the human being. To the extent that the stage set moved and that players interacted with this motion, boundaries between humans and the set, or humans and machine, were obliterated, resulting in a spectator perception of human machines. This did not have the effect of humanizing the

machine but of turning the person into a machine, an image from which the audience recoiled as it seemed to suggest a non-psychological person, a person who would be devoid of revolutionary pathos. To use a description which would not have been available in the 1920s, this was a person who could be programmed to be unresponsive to the goals of the new socialist state. The machine human evoked a negative reception because of this subversion of the idea of the human being as the monumental hero of socialism, and because the human being, united with the machine, challenged the myth of unilateral success promoted by the new state.

Dominated by complexity and multiplicity in their themes and language, the works of constructivist stage design defy monism and present the viewer with ambiguous, multiple, and competing schemas. They embody chaos. Add to this the chaos of the carnival, the chaos resulting from the absence of traditional scenic clues and the new forms of interaction between animate and inanimate forms, and the action of the play can no longer be interpreted or understood. The spectators are left in turmoil, as one reviewer complained, who went on to add that the chaos of the carnival overcame the meaning of the play; the play becomes unknowable while the human being becomes alien, a machine-human who would be incapable of revolutionary pathos.

The response to constructivist stage sets overall reveals an interesting failure of the

artist's intention, along with a marked discrepancy between visual and ideological perceptions. In the first case, the artists who turned to constructivist stage sets did so with the goal of constructing and communicating visions of an ordered new world, a world in which art served the person and instigated new ways of perceiving and analyzing life. They eliminated what to them was the visual chaos and deceit of the naturalistic theater with its painted backdrops and attempts to recreate naturalistic, three-dimensional, and immobile scenery. What critics perceived, however, were either dry and schematic forms which deprived the theater of its full armament of expressive modalities, and thus threatened its ability to communicate the ideology and psychology of the new socialist society, or overtly dynamic constructions which competed with the ideology of the text. Thus, an attempt to control visual chaos resulted in a predominantly ideological chaos. This chaos derived from a perception of incongruity between form and content, or of the complete absence of content and meaning, a perception indicative of an incomprehensible artistic language and of a chaotic relationship of the set to the play. Yet, this chaotic obfuscation of meaning may in itself have served as an unstated allegory of the relationship of design to society at a time when designers no longer saw the promotion of social goals as tenable or achievable.

¹ N. Katherine Hayles, "Introduction: Complex Dynamics in Literature and Science", in Hayles (ed.), *Chaos and Order* (Chicago, 1991), p. 1.

² Elena Rakitina, "Liubov' Popova: Iskustvo i Manifesty", *Khudozhnik, Stsena, Ekran* (Moscow, 1975), p. 155, and her dissertation, *Novye Printsippy Stsenicheskogo Oformleniia v Sovetskoi Teatral'noi Dekoratsii 20kh godov* (Moscow: Institut Istorii Iskustva), 1970, p. 85.

³ Ark. Pozdnev, "Material'noe Oformlenie Spektaklia", *Zrelishche*, No. 9, 1922, p. 9.

⁴ B. Alpers, *Teatr revoliutsii* (Moscow, 1928), p. 36.

⁵ The poster is shown as an unpaginated illustration in Alekseev-Iakovlev, *Russkie Narodnye Gulian'ia* (Len./Mos., 1948).

⁶ Meierkhol'd 998-1-844/855: materials for and on the history of the balagan.

⁷ This is implied in an article by A. A. Gvozdev, "Etika novogo teatra", *Teatral'naia Kritika* (Len., 1987), pp. 30-32. The parable idea in general arose in conversation with A. Senkevich in Moscow, 1992.

⁸ A. Zvonak in 1934 proposed this explanation of Meierkhol'd's use of folk theater devices (in Zograf fond, 2723-1-482, pp. 10-14).

⁹ Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York, 1973), pp. 42-43.

¹⁰ A rearranged copy of the text of *Les* is in the Meierkhol's fond in the Bakhrushin museum, fond 1880171-305776/1026.

¹¹ A director's copy of the script is in the GOSTim fond, 963-1-298.

Notes

¹² S. Krzhizhanovskii, in his fond, 2280–1–19. There is also a poorly zeroxed copy in the STD (Union of Theater Workers) library – the original was apparently in a fire and some of the pages have charred edges or corners.

¹³ Alisa Koonen, *Stranitsy Zhizni*, (Moscow, 1975), p. 296.

¹⁴ A. Vesnin, notes for autobiography, in fond in the Shchusev museum, Kn. 1573/543, f. 5, op. 1, d.1.

¹⁵ K. Feldman, “Chelovek, Kotoryi byl Chetvergom”, *7 Dnei*, Dec. 18, 1923, in the Kamernyi Theater fond 2030–2–54. The sense of metronomic order in the set is also felt by Derzhavin, *Kniga o Kamernom Teatre* (Leningrad, 1934).

¹⁶ Reviews of the play in the GOSET (Gos. Evreiskii Teatr) fond, 2307–2–363.