Revolution, Production, Representation: Iurii Rozhkov's Photomontages to Maiakovskii's Poem "To the Workers of Kursk"

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> Revolutions are the locomotives of history.
>
> —Karl Marx

> Every revolution, be it political, economic, social, or aesthetic, is, in the last analysis, a technological revolution.
>
> —Villém Flusser

In 1924 the self-taught artist Iurii Nikolaevich Rozhkov created a series of photomontages inspired by Vladimir Maiakovskii's propagandistic ode to labor, "To the Workers of Kursk," and the geological discovery of the Kursk Magnetic Anomaly (KMA).[1] The series was first shown at the "Twenty Years of Work" exhibition in January 1930, which the poet himself curated. In the exhibition catalogue, Maiakovskii made note of Rozhkov's work as: "A temporary monument. Rozhkov's montages. To be printed."[2] Two months after the exhibition Maiakovskii committed suicide. Rozhkov's photomontages remained unpublished during his lifetime.[3]

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1. One of the biggest iron-ore basins in the world.

2. For more on the exhibition, see the award-winning documentary film *Маяковский – навсегда (Maiakovskii—Forever)* at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1cgae762xc (last accessed February 15, 2017).

3. A half-century later, a limited edition of Rozhkov and Maiakovskii's unreleased book was published in Germany and Czechoslovakia, and—only 90 years after its creation—in Russia. See Wladimir Majakowski und Juri Roschkow, *Den Arbeitern von Kursk, ein vorläufiges Denkmal von Wladimir Majakowski 1923* (Düsseldorf, 1980); Vladimír Majakovský, *Kurským dělníkům, kteří vytěžili první rudu, tento prozatimní pomník vytvořený Vladimírem Majakovským*, trans. Jiří Taufer (Prague, 1982); Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Fotomontazhnyi tsikl Iuriia Rozhkova k poeme Vladimira Maiakovskogo Rabochim Kurska, dobyvshim pervuiu rudu: rekonstruktsiia neizdannoi knigi 1924, stat' i*, kommentarii, ed. Kira Matissen and Andrei Rossomakhin (St. Petersburg, 2014).

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Although a nonprofessional artist, Rozhkov was well informed about modern graphic art and innovations in the burgeoning Soviet visual culture.[4] In the 1920s, he shared the ideology of the "Industrial Art" movement, which sought to merge art that capitalism had separated from crafts, with material production based on highly-developed industrial machinery. He quickly embraced photomontage, the new artistic technique celebrated by the various artists associated with *Lef*, as the most suitable means for communicating the progressive revolutionary message.[5] Due to his distinctive method and approach to montage, however, the quality of Rozhkov's work is unlike that of other graphic artists. His compositions, which often incorporate angular "cubo-futurist" forms, are inventive artistic idioms composed of typographic, photographic, and pictorial-illustrative materials, whose sole target is not only propaganda, but also aesthetically innovative and richly conceived metaphor.

The aim of this article is, first and foremost, to introduce Rozhkov's lesser-known photomontage series as a new model of the avant-garde *photopoetry* book, which offers a sequential reading of Maiakovskii's poem and functions as a cinematic *dispositive* of the early Soviet agitprop *apparatus*.[6] Second, it

4. Iurii Nikolaevich Rozhkov (1898–1940) was not affiliated with any of the usual artistic or educational venues in Moscow at the time, such as INKhUK (Moscow Institute for Artistic Culture, 1920–1922) or VKhUTEMAS (Higher Art and Technical Studios, 1920–1927). He was an ardent Bolshevik—a Red Army soldier, a political instructor on the *Lenin* agit-train, a Party appointed security guard, a Party committee organizer—not to mention a family man, a seasoned geologist and explorer who discovered 33 minefields of golden ore in northern Kazakhstan. For more about his life see the following files at the Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo muzeia V. V. Maiakovskogo (Maiakovskii State Museum and Library): Iurii Rozhkov, *Avtobiografiia* (инв. №: КП 31209); I. Iu. Matissen-Rozhkova, *Dopolnenie k avtobiografii Rozhkova Iuriia Nikolaevicha* (инв. №: КП 31211); I. Iu. Matissen-Rozhkova, *Vospominaniia docheri Rozhkova Iuriia Nikolaevicha Ingy Iur'evny Matissen-Rozhkov* (инв. №: КП 31212); Knoblok i Komissarov: *Справка о революционной, общественно-партийной и служебной работе бывшего начальника геологоразведочного отдела треста «Коззолото» и начальника геологоразведочной партии треста «Золоторазведка» и института «Нигрозолото» товарища Ю. Н. Рожкова* (инв. №: КП 31213); and Kira Matissen, "Eto to nemnogoe chto ostalos'," *Fotomontazhnyi tsikl*, 69–71.

5. The avant-garde journal *Lef* printed photomontages and published theoretical articles on this medium. At the very end of the first issue of *Lef*, for example, the editors—most probably Osip Brik—wrote in the section "Fakty" (Facts) the short rapport on the contemporary activity of constructivists. The rapport notes on Rodchenko's work on intertitles for Dziga Vertov's *Kino-Pravdy* (Cinema-Truths), activities within VKhUTEMAS, and innovative work in graphic production (полиграфическое производство): "Activity in the area of book illustration: A new kind of illustration was introduced by way of montaging print and photography material on a given topic, which in view of the richness of material and its realistic clarity renders the entire 'art-graphic' illustration non-sensical." See: "Konstruktivisty," *Lef*, No. 1 (March 1923), 252.

6. I draw here upon the notion of *photopoetry* introduced by Jindřich Toman, who defines it as the extraordinary junction between poetry and photography and/or photomontage, and an intermedial, hybrid genre that flourished in avant-garde books and journals throughout Europe in the 1920s and 1930s. See Jindřich Toman, *Foto/Montáž tiskem* (Prague, 2009), 284–311. Taking cue from Franóis Albéra and Maria Tortajada's discussion of *dispositif*, I follow Ruggero Eugeni's definition of *dispositive* and *apparatus* as two different and connected concepts to which the French term *dispositif* refers. Thus, an *apparatus* is "a network of discourses, pieces of knowledge, values, etc., reciprocally linked and governed / defined by strategies of management of power," while a *dispositive*

illustrates how Rozhkov's photomontages for Maiakovskii's ode to labor are more than mere examples of the sharp political propaganda of the reconstruction period of the NEP era, dominated by economic and industrial themes.[7] They herald the joyous and genuine expression of the enthusiasm for production and revolutionary faith in a better future, articulated both as the struggle against backwardness and the thirst for technical and industrial modernity. Their main function was seen not as propaganda, but rather the production of reality through its aesthetization. Further, I will examine the visual devices that Rozhkov employs in his photomontages to render—following Maiakovskii's verses—a sharply polemical and satirical response to all those who relentlessly criticized and attacked the *Lef* authors and their progressive ideas. The conclusion proposes that the photopoem itself converts into an idiosyncratic avant-garde de-mountable memorial to the working class. The photopoem acts not only as a document of its own revolutionary era, but also as an example of the alternative cinematic dispositive through which the early agitprop apparatus is realized in lived experience, reproduced, and transformed, thus delineating its shift towards the new *dispositif* of the late 1920s—socialist realism.

The Avant-garde Photopoem as Agitprop Cine-Dispositive

The avant-garde photopoetry book forces both high and low genres into a "scandalous" identity. In the Russian avant-garde, this marriage between *poetry* (recognized as the high art that privileges originality) and *photomontage* (recognized as a reproductive form of mass culture rather than art) was ideologically motivated. As theoretician of Russian constructivism, Boris Arvatov, wrote in his 1922 programmatic article "Agit-cinema": "There is no 'high' or 'low' art for the working class; the proletariat knows only progressive, revolutionary art and the backward, extinct, reactionary art."[8] Arvatov recognized all artistic means based on technological reproduction, including photomontage, as perfect *utilitarian* forms of visual art in the epoch of proletarian dictatorship—the most suitable for propaganda: "Agitation is first and foremost a tool for transforming reality. Representational agitation must present this transformation completely immediate, by itself."[9] For Arvatov,

is "mechanism of a device, instrument or machine" which allows spectators to attend a representation. See Françis Albéra and Maria Tortajada, *Cine-Dispositives* (Amsterdam, 2015), 21; and Ruggero Eugeni, "Dispositif, Apparatus, Dispositive," available online at https://prezi.com/2rn4eww1nhcu/dispositif-apparatus-dispositive/ (accessed on February 15, 2017).

7. Maiakovskii's and Rozhkov's work was closely related to the task of production propaganda in the reconstruction period—after introduction of the NEP (*New Economic Policy*) and the campaign for a "reconstruction of everyday life" (перестройка быта) in March 1921—when the basic themes of agitation became the building of the economy and the increase in labor productivity.

8. Boris Arvatov, "Agit-Kino," *Kino-fot*, No. 2 (1922), 2. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Russian are mine.

9. Arvatov, "Agit-Kino," 2. In the essay "Utopia or science," Arvatov writes: "Decisively rejecting living-room and museum oriented easel art, *Lef* is fighting for the poster, the illustration, the advertisement, the photo- and kino-montage, i.e. for those kinds of

agitation is "a pragmatic activity"; although its principal condition is the "dynamism and hyperbolism of action," it nevertheless should be comprised only of contemporary material, of "real people and things":

> *Realism of materials* and *flamboyancy of action*—that's what is needed.
> Flying trains, running skyscrapers, airplane strikes or things rebelling are suitable themes not only because they are amusing, but also because of the *possibilities they grant: to take the existent and do with it whatever one wants*.
> America was for mere amusement.
> The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) *must impart a purposeful, social meaning to amusement*.[10]

Maiakovskii was also aware of the political importance of agitation. His avant-garde ode "To the Workers of Kursk," written in November 1923 and published in January 1924, represented an attuned response to the task of industrial propaganda in the reconstruction period and emerging practices of commemoration.[11] In his short article titled "Agitation and Advertising" (1923), published in a small Ekaterinburg magazine, Maiakovskii writes: "We know well the power of agitation. Nine-tenth of every military victory, of every economic success, belongs to the ability and the strength of our agitation."[12] If his ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) Windows aided the military success of the Red Army in the Civil War, his ideologically-engaged poetry of didactic propaganda was meant to support the economic revival of the emerging Soviet state. In tune with Arvatov's account on agitation as a "pragmatic activity" and "a tool for transforming reality," Maiakovskii's "To the Workers of Kursk" and Rozhkov's subsequent photomontages both represent expressions of three large agitation projects: monumental, industrial, and political propaganda.

Early Soviet agitation propaganda is an illustrative example of Foucauldian *dispositif*, since it both comprises and is comprised of a network of discourses, institutions, regulatory decisions, administrative measures, pieces of knowledge and values that are reciprocally linked, defined, and governed by strategies of management of power.[13] Moreover, early Soviet agitprop produced various *dispositives*, such as agit-trains, newsreels, ROSTA posters, wall newspapers, advertisements, and photo-books, which in turn transformed the agitprop apparatus into a number of real, concrete, experiential

utilitarian forms of visual art that are made by the means of machine technology and closely connected with the material *byt* of urban industrial workers." Arvatov, "Utopia ili nauka?" *Lef*, No. 4 (1924), 18.

10. Arvatov, "Agit-Kino," 2. My emphasis.

11. Vladimir Maiakovskii, "Рабочим Курска, добывшим первую руду, временный памятник работы Владимира Маяковского," *Lef* No. 4 (1924), 45–57.

12. Vladimir Maiakovskii, "Agitatsiia i reklama," *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 13 t.*, 13 vols. (Moscow, 1955–1961), 13:57. Originally published in the journal "Tovarishch Terentii," No. 14, (1923).

13. Michel Foucault, "The Confession of the Flesh," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York, 1980), 194–228. See also Giorgio Agamben, *What is Apparatus?: And Other Essays* (Stanford, 2009).

forms.[14] Rozhkov's photopoetry book, I argue, was conceived as an agitprop cine-dispositive.

Marked by the proliferation of signifiers, Rozhkov's photomontages for Maiakovskii's "To the Workers of Kursk" are a unique case among the emerging photopoetry experiments of the 1920s, or so-called alternative cinematic dispositives. Following Pavle Levi's concept of "cinema by other means," I suggest that Rozhkov's series can be understood as a cinematic dispositive, or what El Lissitzky envisioned as a "bioscopic book."[15] The materiality of the medium plays a key role in this vision: the bioscopic book transforms a mere object into a concrete piece of "technology" due to its operational body, that is, due to its continuous page-sequence and the dialectics inherent to the montage of the poetic text and photomontages. In other words, such a dispositive is sequential and cinematic, and involves a spatial arrangement (topology) of items and ideological concepts and a narrative sequence (series of defined events).[16]

The pictorial saturation, graphic intensity, and visual—both iconic and indexical—satiation are the most apparent characteristics of Rozhkov's entire series.[17] It is as if the reader/viewer of Rozhkov-Maiakovskii's photopoem is thrown amidst the Kracauerian "blizzard of photographs," trying to orient him/herself vis-à-vis this whirlwind of images, thus attempting to discern what it means to be a social subject through visual reasoning.[18] Here the

14. On different dispositives, see: Peter Kenez, *The Birth of the Propaganda State: Soviet Methods of Mass Mobilization, 1917–1929* (Cambridge: 1985); Victoria Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkley, 1997); Catriona Kelly, "'A Laboratory for the Manufacture of Proletarian Writers': The *Stengazeta* (Wall Newspaper), *Kul'turnost'* and the Language of Politics in the Early Soviet Period," *Europe-Asia Studies* 54, no. 4, 2002: 573–602.

15. In his article and book of the same title, film scholar Pavle Levi argues that the art forms fitting this category are not made "under the influence of, or referring to, the cinema." Rather, they conceptualize the cinema "as itself a type of practice that, since the invention of the film apparatus, has also (simultaneously) had a history of execution through other, 'older' artistic media." Levi, "Cinema by Other Means," *October* 131 (Winter 2010): 53; Levi, *Cinema by Other Means* (Oxford, 2012), 27. El Lissitzky proposed in his 1923 manifesto-like essay "Topography of Typography" the idea of the "bioscopic book," which he defined simply as "the continuous page-sequence." Sophie Lissitzky-Küppers and Herbert Edward Read, eds. *El Lissitzky: Life, Letters, Texts* (London, 1992), 359. Originally published in *Merz*, no. 4 (Summer 1924). It should be emphasized that Lissitzky borrowed this term from the name of a particular type of film projector.

16. To reconstruct knowledge associated with cine-dispositives, according to the media theorists Albera and Tortijada, it is necessary to go into the detail of a) the concrete elements of dispositive (the medium's materiality), b) the abstract notions associated with these concrete elements (series, repetitions, periodicity in relation to its concrete elements), and c) key notions which at a given historical moment come to define a given dispositive (they convey certain *idea* of a medium, be it a poster, book, photography, or cinema). See Albéra and Tortajada, *Cine-Dispositives*, 33.

17. On the definition of iconic and indexical signs, see Charles S. Peirce, *The Writings of Charles S. Peirce: A Chronological Edition*, 6 vols., ed. Max Heralf Fisch and Christian J. W. Kloesel (Bloomington, 1984), 2:53–54.

18. Kracauer wrote in the mid 1920s about the "blizzard of photographs," referring to the proliferation of images in illustrated magazines: "The blizzard of photographs betrays an indifference towards what the things mean." Siegfried Kracauer, "Photography," in Thomas Y. Levin, ed., *The Mass Ornament: Weimer Essays* (Boston, 1995), 58.

words and letters themselves become images: the dynamically arranged and heterogeneous typographic text in Rozhkov's series functions as an active and organic visual insert.[19] One finds a similar synthesis of text and photography in Gustav Klutsis' propaganda posters, Aleksandr Rodchenko's commercial advertisements, and film posters during the 1920s and early 1930s in Soviet Union, but not in most photopoetry books.[20]

Rozhkov pushed the photo-book model proposed by Rodchenko in *About This* (*Про это*, 1923) even further toward an inventive symbiosis of text and photomontage, consequently bringing its page in close proximity to the poster and cinema.[21] Rozhkov was the ideal reader of Maiakovskii and Rodchenko's collaborative work; Rozhkov the consumer of *Lef* editions became Rozhkov the producer, both programmer and designer, an active "influencing machine," an *agitprop prosumer*.[22] Rozhkov's series exemplifies the often-repeated claim by media archeologists that any pair of dispositives—an essential part of which is a prosumer who simultaneously acts as a consumer, producer, "middleman," channel, or medium—can translate, remediate, metamorphose, and incorporate each other, and through this process redefine themselves and one another.

Rozhkov intended the front cover of the unreleased agit-book to be a poster-like illustration of the poem's lengthy title: "To the Workers of Kursk, Who Extracted the First Ore, A Temporary Monument of Work by Vladimir Mayakovsky" (Figure 1).[23] As a successful conflation of visual images and typography reinforced by different shapes and colors, Rozhkov's cover design distinctly conveys the title of Maiakovskii's poem while playfully suggesting meanings beyond it. The color choice for the topographical layout of the words "To the Workers of Kursk" (РабочиМ КурсКА) guides the viewer's perception

19. In his use of the typographic variety Rozhkov followed the experiments of Russian Cubo-futurists and Dadaists ("Association 41°"), such as Vasilyi Kamensky's *Tango With Cows* (Танго с коровамы, 1914), Ilya Zdanevich's *Yanko krUl' albAnskay* (Янко крУль албанскай, 1918), Aleksei Kruchenykh, *Lacquered Tights* (ЛакиРованное Трико, 1919), or Igor Terentiev's *17 Petty Guns* (17 еРУндовых оРУдий, 1919), among others. Unlike his predecessors, Rozhkov used photo materials in his collages, thus following the ideas and practice of Russian constructivism.

20. There are, nevertheless, a few exceptions of the similar merger of the printed text and photo materials outside Soviet Russia. A good example is Vilém Szpyk, a Czech poet who published his "photosyntheses" as separate photopoems in Czech magazines. See Toman, *Photo/Montage in Print*, 297–301.

21. Rozhkov was familiar with *Lef*'s most representative collaborator among graphic designers, Aleksandr Rodchenko, and his seminal work on illustrations for Maiakovskii's long narrative poem *About This* (1923). A fervent reader of Maiakovskii and his true admirer, Rozhkov was also a dedicated reader of *Lef* magazine and an ardent believer in the constructivist ideas about art and culture that *Lef* members and collaborators promoted and fought for.

22. According to Albéra and Tortajada, "viewing and listening dispositives involve three essential terms: the spectator, the representation, and the machinery which . . . also refers to all the means implemented to give to representation to see and to hear . . . the user-spectator is not placed in front of the dispositif; she or he literally belongs to it," in *Cine-Dispositives* (Amsterdam, 2015), 33.

23. "Рабочим Курска, добывшим первую руду, временный памятник работы Владимира Маяковского."

Figure 1. Yuri Rozhkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), front cover photomontage. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

to the letters painted in red (KMA), which stand for the largest magnetic anomaly on Earth—Kursk Magnetic Anomaly (Курская Магнитная Аномалия)—a territory rich in iron ore located near the Russian border with Ukraine, which Lenin had been eager to excavate since 1919.

The acronym is accompanied by the photographic images of engineers and workers, machines and tools. Both hard-working laborers and skilled engineers are represented as "serving" the same cause: by working in the mining industry, they are aiding the country's industrial and economic revival and, eventually, raising the standard of living in the nascent Soviet Union. As historical geographer Grey Brechin reminds us, mining engineers and historians repeatedly claimed that miners were the true vanguard of progress. To the merchant's oft-repeated cliché "commerce follows the flag," the champions of mining added the condition "but the flag follows the

pick."[24] The close association of mining with warfare, according to Brechin, is even more ancient than the idealized relationship between agriculture and morality. Unlike farmers, miners toil in a lightless and timeless realm of extreme danger and hardship. If agriculture is feminine and fecund as symbolized by Demeter and Ceres, then testosterone characterizes mining, whose gods are of the underworld.[25] Rozhkov's first photomontage exposes these observations, taking us to the realm opposite that suggested by Rodchenko's front cover for *About This*. If the image of Lili Brik—at least partially—denotes the feminine realm of petty-bourgeois everyday life (*meshchanskii byt*), Rozhkov's front cover is a composite of images dominantly masculinized and mechanized.[26]

The powerful technical machinery plays a vital topological and tropological role in the photomontage: it occupies the center and introduces the importance of technology within the narrative of the photopoem. Zooming in on the diagonally displayed image of the counterbore, one can easily recognize the following inscription on the mechanical tool: "№ 2 The National Tool Co. Cleveland Pat. Jan. 30. 1912." It is important here to recall Arvatov who emphasized that the new Soviet state had to "impart a purposeful, social meaning" to everything that would come from America, including the technology itself. Technology—tools, machines, and technological knowledge—appears to be liberated from any ideology. Yet according to Arvatov, this is an illusion perpetuating what Karl Marx called "false consciousness"; what is obscured is that this is the technology of private-property production, enabling the capitalist *status quo*:

> This technology, limited by the framework of individual capital or middle-sized shareholding capital (the mode of production in most countries even to this day), manufactures things for individual consumption, i.e., things not connected to each other, separated, Thing-commodities. Production works for the market and therefore cannot take into account the *concrete* particularities of consumption and proceed from them; it is forced, in the construction of things, to proceed from existing patterns of a purely formal order, to imitate them. The result is the complete and utter conservatism and stasis of forms.[27]

Rozhkov's photomontage series proposed a similar idea to Arvatov's program of the reconstruction of everyday life: political agitation and propaganda

24. Gray A. Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco: Urban Power, Earthly Ruin* (Berkeley, 1999), 15.

25. Brechin, *Imperial San Francisco*, 15–17.

26. "Rodchenko's iconic image of Lili Brik from *About This* refers not only to her as Maiakovskii's object of desire and a fetishized love commodity, but also to the commodity world of everyday mass culture (*byt*) which, in both Lev Trotskii's and Maiakovskii's writings, is explicitly gendered as feminine." See Aleksandar Bošković, "Photopoetry and the Bioscopic Book: Russian and Czech Avant-Garde Experiments of the 1920s," (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2013). On the link between the matter and femininity in Lev Trotskii's writings on everyday life see Christina Kiaer, *Imagine No Possessions: The Socialist Objects of Russian Constructivism* (Cambridge, Mass., 2005), 57–67.

27. Boris Arvatov, "Everyday Life and the Culture of the Thing," trans. Christina Kiaer in *October*, 81 (Summer 1997): 124.

would increase ideological consciousness of the socialist subjects, who as a result would grow invulnerable to the lure of capitalism and private ownership. Not coincidentally, the only monochrome photomontage in the series (because it represents miners toiling in the lightless realm of the underground) featuring the dominant diagonal image of the drill, echoes Rozhkov's front cover but with an important difference. While the counterbore on the front cover is inscribed with letters confirming its American origin, the drill on the monochrome photomontage bears the more noticeable acronym KMA. In other words, Rozhkov made an unequivocal ideological statement about the state building program of industrialization, following Arvatov's dictum. Agitprop—agitation propaganda—was Rozhkov's program, which focused on the dissemination of Marxist-Leninist thought and action applied by the Soviet state. The revolutionary potential of technology is rendered both through the rich visual content of the unpublished book and its very material form. The dynamism of the book's conceptual *design* turns Rozhkov's photomontage series into a specific piece of "technology"—cinematic dispositive—that resists the mentioned stasis of forms.

Revolution: Alternating Rhythm and Cinematic Sequencing

Rozhkov's innovative and experimental design attracted Maiakovskii's attention. Maiakovskii persistently urged artists to search for new means of expression. "Novelty. Novelty of material and device!"—he advocated.[28] The exceptionality of Rozhkov's photomontage series lies in his specific technique of merging typography with photography. In this regard, Rozhkov did something quite different from Rodchenko. While his precursor printed his photomontages in *About This* separately from the text of the poem, Rozhkov merged Maiakovskii's verses with the images and pasted them both on the same sheet, thus turning the verses themselves—words and letters—into images. The letters became the active optical elements, occupying the same visual level as the images themselves, resulting in a hierarchical backflip of the image-text relationship. In Rozhkov's photomontages, the image became superior to the text: it is not that images illustrate the poetry, but other way around—the poetry explains the images.

One of the reasons for this somersault in the text-image correlation is that Rozhkov modified Maiakovskii's stepladder (*lesenka*) layout while retaining the consistency of its verse lines. A verse line of Maiakovskii's *lesenka*, as the segment that is on the same horizontal typographical line, is synonymous with a "step" on the staircase.[29] Although Rozhkov sometimes pasted the

28. Quoted in A.P. Efimova "Budushchego priotkritii glaz . . ." (A Half-Open Eye of the Future), *Советское фото* (Soviet Photo), no. 1 (1982), 24.

29. The stepladder, introduced for the first time in *About This* and developed and perfected soon after, represents a new stage in the development of the formation, organization, and visual structure of Maiakovskii's verse. The stepladder form demands the reader's eye to travel differently than while reading conventional verse forms: down and back rather than continuously. Our eyes wander in a similar way as they do while in the process of perceiving a photomontage. The inherently melodic nature of verse that the *intonation* proposes becomes inseparable from the *visual* organization

cutout letters of the poem's text as lines that are not completely horizontal but usually slanted (similar to designs for advertisements and film posters), he consistently retains the same division of verse lines as in the printed version of the poem. Maiakovskii must have appreciated this feature of Rozhkov's photomontages, since the inherently melodic nature of the verse proposed by *intonation* was both maintained and altered by the *visual* organization of the verses. If the intonation was maintained within the specific verse lines, it was modified by the disappearance of *lesenka*. Consequently, Rozhkov's photomontages create a different *tempo* of reading the poem than that of Maiakovskii's *lesenka*. Rozhkov additionally anchored this parallel *rhythm* to the visually discernable segments, which were to organize and structure the apparent blizzard of images.[30]

For Maiakovskii, it was paramount that the rhythmic organization of words in a poem should deliver musical impact. In his 1926 essay "How to Make Verses," he emphasized the precedence of both line length and the "transitional words" that connect one line to the next. Maiakovskii urged his fellow poets to take advantage of all the formal possibilities available to them, or, as he put it, to give "all the rights of citizenship to the new language, to the cry instead of melody, to the beat of drums instead of a lullaby."[31] If the poem was intended to reflect the dynamism of the new technological age, then, Maiakovskii insisted, its style and, even more, its formal structure and layout should be equally "energetic"; otherwise, the poem would merely echo the mawkish and old-fashioned conventions of the symbolist-romantic imagination, only to function on the thematic level.

Undoubtedly, Maiakovskii viewed the *lesenka* layout as the most suitable form for the expression of the new sensibility and dynamism of the modern age. The formal feature of Maiakovskii's verse fully corresponds to the technique of montage: the entire poem *About This*, for example, is constructed from diverse fragments as distinct sense-units. These rhythmically, semantically, as well as spatially and temporally remote fragments, are also visually marked by the *margin titles* printed in a thicker font, which function similarly to those still images with the text from the silent cinema (*intertitles*).[32]

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of the verses: the stepladder layout of the verse clearly directs readers' comprehension of the function that intonation has in the overall structure of meaning. Thus, the text's layout serves as a soundplay score. The explicit stepladder form clearly indicates what are the verses, what are the syntagmatic segments, and what the rhymes are; it introduces a breaking device (less distance is covered by the eye); "its role in rhythm and intonation seems much like that of soundplay . . . what soundplay is to rhyme, the *lesenka* is to meter. Its value is precisely in its freedom and unpredictability." See Gerald Janechek, *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde Visual Experiments, 1900–1930* (Princeton, 1984), 234.

30. The compositional complexity and high concentration of assorted images on Rozhkov's pages create the effect of an intensification of rhythm.

31. "Сразу дать все права гражданства новому языку: выкрику—вместо напева, грохоту барабана—вместо колыбельной песни," in Maiakovskii, "Kak delat' stihi?" (How to make verses), *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v 13 tomakh,* 13 vols. (Moscow, 1959), 12:85.

32. Both 1923 editions of the poem—in the journal *Lef* and separate book edition—present the *lesenka* layout with margin titles. See Maiakovskii, "Pro eto," *Lef*, no. 1 (1923):

Maiakovskii used the same margin title device in the poem "To the Workers of Kursk," dividing it into the three different parts—*it was*, *it is*, and *it will be*—which along with the unmarked prologue address, respectively: the tumultuous and revolutionary *past*, the *present* brimming with the inherited hardships and the vast potential for their defeat, and an optimal vision of the *future*.

Rozhkov was certainly aware of Maiakovskii's device, which Sergei Eisenstein acknowledged and praised much later in his essay "Montage 1938," when he wrote that Maiakovskii "does not work in lines . . . he works in shots, verses . . . cutting his lines just as an experienced film editor would construct a typical film sequence."[33] In order to enable the acoustic reenactment through visual representation, Rozhkov followed Maiakovskii while dividing the poem into specific segments or episodes, or so-called sense-units. Following Brian McHale, I suggest naming this division of the stepladder lines into sense-units *segmentivity* and *sequencing*, which is an important criterion that defines Maiakovskii's poetry as much as poetry in general.[34] It is sequencing that facilitated Rozhkov in creating his photomontage series as a cinematic dispositive, entailing two important components—topical (expressed by a set of subjects, objects, and their arrangements) and dynamic (expressed by a series of narrative programs)—that I will discuss later.

Cinema influenced both Maiakovskii's writing and Rozhkov's reading of poetry.[35] It is as if he read poetry as *segmented writing*—the kind of writing that is articulated in sequenced, gapped lines, whose meanings are created by bounded sense-units, operating in relation to pause or silence. It is the phenomenon of sequencing that enabled Rozhkov to represent Maiakovskii's poem visually: to roll the sense-units from lines of printed verses back into the scenes.[36] Rozhkov did not do this mechanically; instead he rather

65–103; Vladimir Maiakovskii, *Pro eto: Faksimil'noe izdanie, stat'i, kommentarii*, ed. Andrei Rossomakhin (St. Petersburg, 2014).

33. Sergei Eisenstein, "Word and Image," in Jay Leyda, ed. and trans., *The Film Sense* (New York, 1947), 63.

34. "Poetry is defined by the criterion of *segmentivity*; segmentivity is poetry's dominant, as narrativity is narrative's. Segmentivity, 'the ability to articulate and make meaning by selecting, deploying, and combining segments,' is 'the underlying characteristic of poetry as a genre.'" See Brian McHale, "Narrativity and Segmentivity, or, Poetry in the Gutter," in Marie-Laure Ryan and Marina Grishakova, eds., *Intermediality and Storytelling* (New York, 2010), 28.

35. "For you cinema is spectacle. / For me almost a Weltanschauung. / Cinema—purveyor of movement. / Cinema—renewer of literature. / Cinema—destroyer of aesthetic." (Для вас кино—зрелище. / Для меня—почти миросозерцание. / Кино—проводник движения. / Кино—новатор литератур. / Кино—разрушитель эстетики.) See Maiakovskii, "Кино и Кино" (Cinema and Cinema), *Kino-fot*, No. 4 (October 5–12, 1922): 5; in Taylor and Christie, eds., *The Film Factory: Russian and Soviet Cinema in Documents, 1896–1939* (London, 1988), 75.

36. Rozhkov reversed the process described by Vilém Flusser in his essay "The Codified World" (which is his take on the early history of media): "The invention of writing consisted not so very much in the invention of new symbols, but rather in the unrolling of the image into rows ('lines') . . . the line . . . rolls the scene out and transforms it into a story. It 'explains' the scene in that it enumerates each individual symbol clearly and distinctly." See Vilém Flusser, *Writings*, ed. Andreas Ströhl, trans. Erik Eisel (Minneapolis, 2002), 38.

Figure 2. Yuri Rozhkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), photomontage No. 1. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

meticulously divided the poem into segments that naturally follow its progression. Moreover, Rozhkov represented the scenes in a relatively free manner, either framing them in panels with different shapes (triangular wedge-like, trapezoids, speaker-like cones, rectangular) and varied inner dynamics, or leaving them unframed and thus allowing a more animate and symbiotic interaction between the panels.[37] If we look, for example, at the first sheet of Rozhkov's photomontages with Maiakovskii's verses (Figure 2), we see that he visually segmented the opening lines of the poem (the prologue) into the following five sense-units:

37. For the salient example of the latter see Figure 7.

segment I: *Army advances from the left*

Было:
социализм—
восторженное слово!
С флагом,
с песней
становились слева,

Socialism—
was:
an exalted word!
With banner,
and song
we fell in on the left,

segment II: *A face between the muzzles of cannons*

и сама
на головы
спускалась слава.

and glory itself
came down
on our heads.

segment III: *Soldiers march from left to right*

Сквозь огонь прошли,
сквозь пушечные дула.

We went through the muzzles of cannons
through the bullets' hail.

segment IV: *Common people walk from right to left*

Вместо гор восторга—
горе дола.
Стало:
коммунизм—
обычнейшее дело.

Instead of mountains of elation—
The sorrow of the vale.
Then came:
Communism—
The most ordinary thing.

segment V: *A group of shirtless blast furnace workers*

Нынче
Словом
не пофанфароните—
шею крючь
да спину гни.
На вершочном
незаметном фронте
завоевываются дни.
Я о тех,
кто не слыхал
про греков
в драках,
кто
не читал
про Муциев Сцевòл,
кто не знает,
чем замечательны Гракхи,—
кто просто работает—
грядущего вол.

Now
with words so fine
you cannot make fanfaronade—
no matter how you bend your back
and twist your neck.
It's on an unseen
tiny front line
that are won the victories of our days.
I am talking about those,
who have never heard
of the Greeks
in their battles,
who
have not read
about Mucius Sceavolas
who do not know
why the Gracchi brothers are renowned—
who simply work—
The oxen of the future.

In the very first sense-unit, Rozhkov emphasized the subject, "we," by the visual representation of Red Army soldiers, who "fell in on the left" as the forces fighting for the progressive leftist ideas of the socialist Revolution. Rozhkov wittily chose to put the "exalted word"—*socialism*—on the red "banner," thus combining the different denotative layers of Maiakovskii's verses and underlying the significance of the very idea of "socialism."

In the second segment, however, Rozhkov faced a complicated task: to represent visually the abstract concept of "glory." Yet, his choice reveals the hand of an artist. Namely, he switched the number of nouns in Maiakovskii's lines: the singular abstract noun "glory" is transposed into the visual sign of "the muzzles of cannons" in plural, while the plural subject, "[our] heads," which at the same time is bestowed with "glory itself," is represented by a singular red-tinted face. In this way Rozhkov implies that the force of the revolutionary idea is in its cohesiveness, its ability to unite its subjects, thus forging a unified, collective identity. Moreover, the muzzles of cannons stand for the *means* by which revolutionaries gained glory, while simultaneously providing the *shape* of a halo, the saint's nimbus.

The third and fourth segments are closely interrelated in Rozhkov's visual representation. Both trapezoid-shaped panels frame the illustration of movement: a tidy formation of soldiers marching from left to right juxtaposed with an unsteady procession of citizens carrying goods and belongings. Here Rozhkov contrasts not only the directions of these two movements, but also the participants' different appearances and genders, their postures and, consequently, the speed of their respective processions. Rozhkov understood what contemporary graphic novelists know well: the speed of movement appears faster from left to right than from right to left.[38] This visual contrast between the two panels manifests the spread of sorrowful disappointment with NEP measures that was characteristic for the members of left forces gathered around *Lef* and concomitant with the ebbing of spectacular revolutionary heroism: "Instead of mountains of elation—/ the sorrow of the vale."[39]

Rozhkov represents the fifth sense-unit through a single scene, although it is the part of the poem that is significantly longer than the rest. The scene features a group of blast furnace workers in front of the smelting furnace. Two shirtless laborers, joined by two dressed workers, are toiling in the background, bending their backs and twisting their necks. In the foreground we distinguish another bare-chested man in the pose of the victorious warrior

38. The dynamics of the action submits to the imagined movement of the gaze and, as we know, according to the western convention, the gaze moves from left to right as an irremovable beam. See Thierry Groensteen, *The System of Comics*, trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen (Jackson, MS, 2007), 48. In other words, the pace of reshaping the Russian everyday life during the NEP era considerably slowed down in comparison to the rapid pace of systematic and radical changes characteristic for the stormy epoch of the Civil War.

39. The target of *Lef*'s attack was the resurrected social strata of petit bourgeois, with their traditional *meshchanski byt* representing the entire old system of values, set of relationships, and organization of enjoyments and leisure time. As the chief editor of *Lef*, Maiakovskii was at the forefront of the group whose main oppositional claim "was defense of the legacy of October against increasing deviations and retreats." See Paul Wood, "The Politics of the Avant-Garde," in *The Great Utopia: the Russian and Soviet Avant-garde, 1915–1932* (New York, 1992), 8–9.

who wields a long, thin stick resembling a spear.[40] Rozhkov represents the shirtless workers as simultaneously laboring and victorious. Also, the very site—a dark environment with fire, heat, and smoke from the blast furnace, comingling with the men's sweat—alludes to "an unseen tiny front line" where the efforts of the workers stand for human struggle for a better, communist future. Thus, the blast furnace site symbolizes the everyday battlefield on which, as the poet suggests, "the victories of our days" are won.

As we see, the *sequencing/segmentivity* clearly indicate the separate scenes, simultaneously revealing the beginning and end of the syntagmatic segments of verse lines to which a specific visual scene corresponds. Moreover, the sequencing/segmentivity also illuminate relations between assorted representations within the scenes, directing the viewer to recognize various visual rhymes, visual overlappings, or repetitions (analogous to alliteration or assonance in verse). The sequencing/segmentivity point toward how space relations, or the proper dimensionality of the visual (measures of height, width, and depth) and its content (color and shape) correspond to the time relations, the dimensional form of the acoustical (measures of beats in meter, rhythm, and tempo), and its content (tone, timbre, and pitch). Let us look, for example, at one of the three photomontages featuring part of Maiakovskii' s poem marked with the margin title "IT WAS" and providing the imagery of the economic, industrial, and technical backwardness in which post-revolutionary Russia found itself after the end of the Civil War:

segment I: *Dozens of triangles*

Шторы
Пиджаками
на́ плечи надели.

We've put
blinds
on our backs for jackets.

segment II: *A sinewy youngster cornered by bayonets*

Жабой
сжало грудь
блокады иго.

Like angina
the blockade's yoke
has strangled our chest.

segment III: *Ruined machinery*

Изнутри
разрух стоградусовый жар.
Машиньё
сдыхало,
рычажком подрыгав.

Inside,
the hundred-degree heat of ruins.
The (beast-like) machinery
has gone dead
with a twitch of levers.

segment IV: *Threatening fang-like shards and factory buildings*

В склепах-фабриках

In the vaults of factories

40. His posture visually resembles the iconic representations of St. George, the saint deeply embodied in Russian visual culture, and the traditional protector of Moscow.

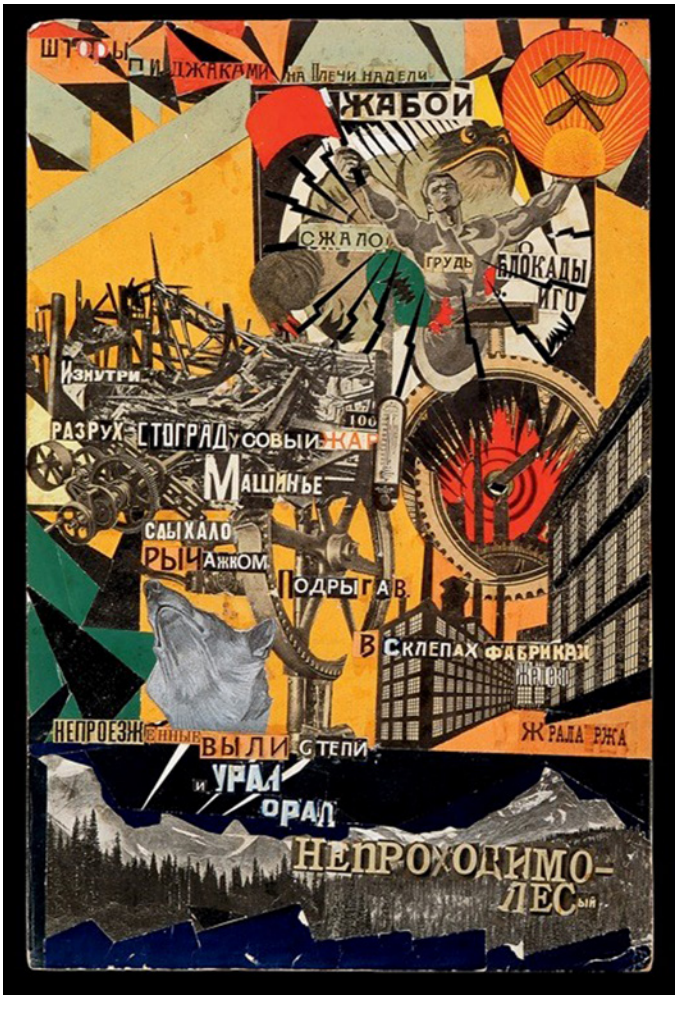

Figure 3. Yuri Rozkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), photomontage No. 3. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

железо	rust
жрала ржа.	gobbled up the iron.

segment V: *Panoramic landscape scene*

Непроезженные	Impassable steppe-lands,
выли степи,	whined,
и Урал	and the impenetrable
орал	Ural forests
непроходимолесый.	howled.

Beside the imagery that clearly suggests the complete ruin of Russian industry and the empty, rusting factories (segments III and IV), Rozhkov employs new symbols of the nascent revolutionary state: the hammer and sickle seal, and the red flag (segment II).[41] The entire photomontage is Rozhkov's illustration of the poet's commentary on the political situation in Russia during the Civil War until its end in 1922. Maiakovskii's verse in the second segment, for example, refers to the period after the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, during which Bolshevik Russia was faced with an international blockade, while simultaneously fighting the White Guards and allied forces. Rozhkov's representation features a sinewy youngster as Bolshevik Russia, who holds the recognizable symbols of the new revolutionary state (flag and blazon) and who is threateningly surrounded by bayonet-like arrows. Since these emblems are absent from Maiakovskii's poem, they represent a clear *political supplement* to its content. Rozhkov's visual interpretation of Maiakovskii's verses—the narrative program of his cinematic dispositive—renders them more accessible and visible as *ideologically unambiguous*. The image of the toad is yet another instance where Rozhkov uses literal representations of Maiakovskii's poetic image of the "blockade's yoke" which "strangled" Russia "like angina."[42]

It is more interesting, however, to see how Rozhkov created a close link between the two different poetic images with apparently distant meanings. The visual representations of segments II and IV, for example, are both framed by circular panels. Also, the pictorial elements of similar shape and color are located inside both circles: the black bayonet-like arrows and the black threatening fang-like shards. The shards are the graphic representation of the "rust" that "gobbled up the iron" in the factories. Maiakovskii's images of the "blockade" and "rust" both brim with alliteration: **ж**абой с**ж**ало г***р***удь and **ж**елезо ***жр***ала ***р***жа. While Maiakovskii created semantic links between the remote poetic images of the "rust" and the "blockade" by employing acoustic repetitions (alliterations of the rolling ***р*** and repetitive **ж** sounds), Rozhkov generated such associations by repeating the same visual shapes (circles and sharp black arrows). The backwardness and the accompanied luck of industrial means for production are in large part—as the acoustically and visually established semantic relations indicate—the consequence of the destruction caused by the Civil War, international military intervention, and blockade.

Finally, the sequencing/segmentivity introduces a breaking device: it determines where *gaps* open up in a poetic text as a provocation to meaning making. It is where spacing interrupts intelligibility, where the text breaks off and a gap (if only an infinitesimal one) opens up. The reader must create the closure: the reader's cognitive apparatus must *gear up* to overcome the

41. For more about the new Soviet state symbols and the strong consciousness of the Bolsheviks leaders of the power of thereof, see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution* (New York, 1989), 85–86.

42. The image of a huge toad behind the youngster's muscular figure may seem puzzling for any non-Russian speaker. The Russian equivalent for "angina pectoris" (*lat.* strangling, *gr.* chest) is the phrase грудная жаба, which literally translates as the "toad on the chests."

resistance, bridge the gap and close the breech.[43] The role of sequencing/segmentivity in comprehension is like that of a direction sign: what the *lesenka* is to meter, *sequencing* is to reading/viewing protocol.

Production: The Industrial Land of the Future

Maiakovskii's ode to the working class and Rozhkov's subsequent visual illustrations both celebrated the cult of the machine, the struggle for time, and allied currents of efficiency. In that regard, they functioned not only as purposeful political propaganda, but also as an artistic statement on the importance of technology, organization, and discipline. Similarly to Alexei Gastev and Platon Kerzhentsev, who were true promoters of the new technological age in the nascent Soviet Russia, Maiakovskii and Rozhkov articulated a vision of the communist future commensurate with the desire for technical and industrial modernity.[44]

Their optimal projection into the future was made upon the American mass production assembly line as giant emblems of modernity. As the precise indicator of the country of origin of the technological machinery from the cover page, Americanization was also a metaphor for fast industrial tempo, high growth, productivity, and efficiency. Such a vision of the future, first and foremost, involved the visual imagery of a time obsessed with modern technology. Rozhkov's first four photomontage sheets addressing the section of Maiakovskii's poem entitled "IT WILL BE" surge with imagery of large cranes, construction sites, spacious wharfs, building yards, heated blast furnaces, iron-constructed bridges, factory halls, high boat masts, and factory chimneys.

More importantly, such a vision of the future entailed new means of transportation and communication, which epitomized the dynamism of modern everyday life and the rapid pace of industrial development. The factory sirens and cone-shaped loudspeakers were, as part of an aural-centered vision, pervasive icons of modern means of communication. We see, for example, the same loudspeakers in many of Gustav Klutsis's graphic designs of the propaganda stands and so-called Radio Orators. Both speakers and sirens were used primarily in organizing and mobilizing the workers in factories, which was reflected through two main artistic forms during the post-revolutionary years:

43. Although Rozhkov's photomontage series opens space for different deconstructivist readings, I will not delve further into these possibilities.

44. Alexei Gastev was known for his poetry that offered the animation of machinery and the mechanization of a man ("the iron demon of the age with the soul of a man, nerves of steel, and rails for muscles," "my iron friends," a man who is growing "out of iron" and becoming a machine, etc.). In addition, Gastev recognized the Ford plant as a model for a cultural transformation, and evoked "iron discipline" and organization in the work place—the same values propagated by Rozhkov's photomontages. Platon Kerzhentsev took Gastevism out of factory and into the realm of everyday life: the world of social management in the early 1920s. He founded the *League of Time* in 1923. See Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 150–9; and Julia Vaingurt, *Wonderlands of the Avant-Garde: Technology and the Arts in Russia of the 1920s* (Evanston, 2013), 25–53.

the symphony of factory sirens and the noise orchestra.[45] Simultaneously, the various means of passenger and industrial cargo transportation—train, car, tractor, boat, airplane—were the most suitable images for the visualization of the bright Soviet future and, as we will see, of a "running memorial" to the working class. An American automobile and the Taylorized worker were the totems of progress in the 1920s.[46]

It is no coincidence that Rozhkov's most visually compelling photomontage is the one representing "cars and engines" as they "pass in streams through the main gates of factories," and "ships for surface and under-water voyages" as they "slip into the water from wharfs a mile long" (Figure 4). Rozhkov's vision portrays the prospective future as inseparable from the factory and its production assembly line. This photomontage sheet notably stands out with its distinct completeness, compositional sternness, and harmony of design, which altogether faithfully reproduce the features of the assembly line: precision, continuity, coordination, speed, automatization, and standardization. Rozhkov artistically soldered segregated elements within the image, thus achieving an organic visual whole. The colorful stripes in the background create a feeling of spatial depth and movement. A spare amount of text is introduced in the montage so that Maiakovskii's verses are sharply defined and easy to read.

Rozhkov skillfully employs a photograph of steel construction in order to represent visually Maiakovskii's poetic personification of the factories whose "main gates / gape open wide." The architecture of the steel construction (represented at the upper part of the photomontage) is reminiscent of the arcades because of its verticality, which concludes in the soothing curve of the arc. Here Rozhkov succeeds in taming the spiky angularity, which is a pervasive characteristic of his constructivist graphic design, and to transform it into the curves of the steel arch and the dotted *Dunlop* tire. Nevertheless, Rozhkov preserves the sharpness and dynamism of such angularity in the graphic representation of the linear perspective, the vanishing point of which is the tiny black square far back in the entrance of one of the "main gates" of the factory (Figure 4). Many yellow, blue, and red stripes radiate out of this tiny black square, thus creating the effect of spatial depth and movement. Even the typographical layout of the verses in the photomontage's upper part enhances linear perspective by suggesting perception of spatial motion.[47]

45. The origins of both the symphony of factory sirens and the noise orchestra can be traced back to Italian futurism. For more on this idea among the Proletkult circles see René Fülöp-Miller, *The Mind And Face of Bolshevism: An Examination of Cultural Life in Soviet Russia* (New York, 1965), 261; Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams*, 159; and Miguel Molina Alarcón, *Baku: Symphony of Sirens* (London, 2008), 19–21.

46. In 1924, four different translations of Henry Ford's autobiography *My Life* were published in the Soviet Union. Also, during the first six years of the 1920s, the Soviet regime imported large number of Ford motorcars and even 24,000 Fordson tractors.

47. The beaming multicolored stripes rhyme visually with the image of the white gleaming rays from the only monochrome photomontage sheet, announcing the bright future yet to come. These flickering flashes, signifying the radiating beams of transformative energy, open into the vision of shared fruits of the communal effort or what Maiakovskii calls "the half-open eye of the future" (будущего приоткрытый глаз). The beams of

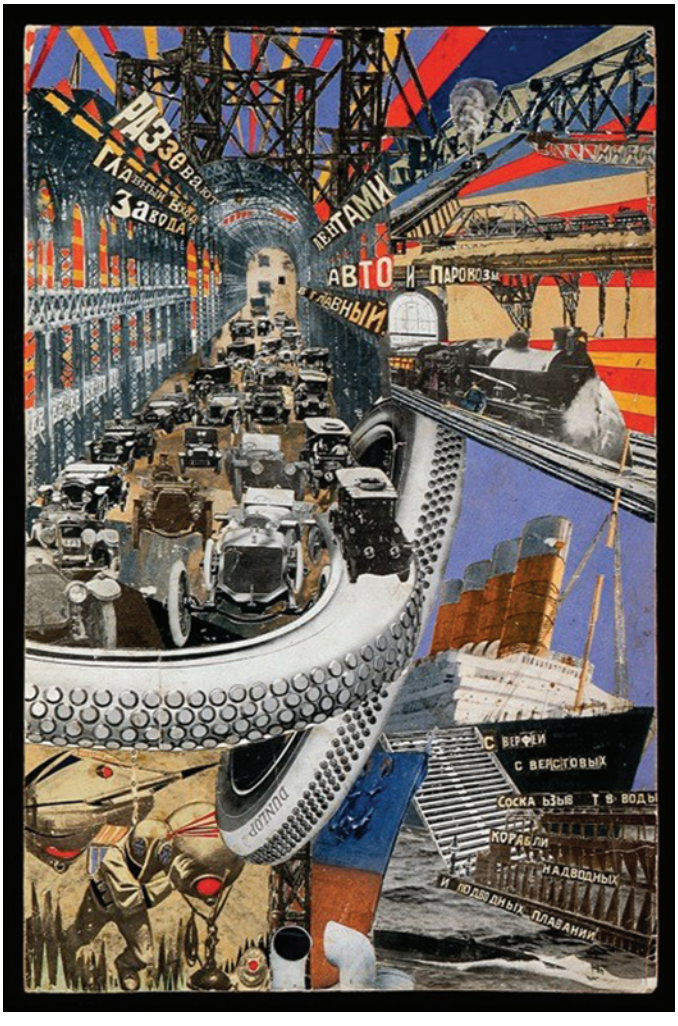

Figure 4. Yuri Rozhkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), photomontage No. 11. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

Rozhkov uses multicolored beaming stripes to graphically emphasize the important concept of *lenta* from Maiakovskii's image of the "cars and locomotive engines" that "pass in *streams*" or, more precisely, that "pass by stretching on *strips*," or "on long *belts*," since the Russian word *lenta* translates into all these meanings (stream, strip, beam, band, belt). The entire photomontage distinguishes itself by this new standard of beauty—the beauty of the industrial and technological world of construction and creativity. The vision of such a technological land of the future is modeled upon Ford's conveyor belt, which functioned as a model both of a factory and of modern society.

light foreshadowing the bright future on the monochrome photomontage transform later into yet another model and metaphor for industrial production.

Another alluring example of the conveyor belt image is the cut-and-paste photograph of men operating a series of machines, each of which has a wheel connected to a single rotating mechanism (Figure 5). This image—surrounded by a larger image of a round pocket watch, an image of a cyclic barometer, and an image of a rotating flywheel with a belt—occupies the left quarter of the ring with the thick white outline, in the center of which appears yet another round gear. Rozhkov uses this image to represent visually the following lines from Maiakovskii: "Precise like gunshot / at the machine / are time and motion men." Yet he pastes the letters of the word "Elvists" over the image that represents skilled workers operating the machines. Through his typographic choice of the more visible, majuscule Cyrillic letters л and в in the word э**Л**ь**В**исты, Rozhkov emphasizes the initials from which the word originates, thus making Maiakovskii's hard-to-read reference visually readable: Э**льв**исты, or "time and motion men," is what the members of the *League of Time* were called, and "ЛВ" (Лига Время) was its abbreviation, created for the propaganda purposes for the Scientific Organization of Labor in the Soviet Union.[48]

Maiakovskii was also familiar with Kerzhentsev's concern to introduce scientific principles into all organized activity of work (the army, education, and all aspects of social life). Kerzhentsev's vision of the revolution in time, or revolution from below, was built in the foundations of his major works, *The Struggle for Time* and *The Scientific Organization of Labor.* Maiakovskii was most likely familiar with Kerzhentsev's theoretical work on the subject and his impassioned article "Time Builds Airplanes," published in *Pravda* around the time he founded *League of Time* (Figure 5).[49]

Representation: Political Commentary and Cultural Critique

The use of the photographic documentary material for cultural critique and satirical commentary puts Rozhkov in close proximity to the tradition of the Dadaists and Rodchenko's early photomontages. But the force of the ideological doctrine and agitation propaganda which one recognizes in Rozhkov's cinematic dispositive is certainly what brings his work closer to the graphic works of Klutsis, Valentina Kulagina, Sergei Sen′kin, Solomon Telingater, and the brothers Stenberg.

The photomontages of Raoul Hausmann, Hannah Höch, Richard Huelsenbeck, George Grosz, John Heartfield and other Berlin Dada monteurs featured the

48. The *League* of *Time* was founded in July 1923 at the initiative of Platon Kerzhentsev. Although it was technically independent of government and the Party, the intimate relationship between the *League of Time* and the movement *NOT* (Научная Организация Труда, Scientific Organization of Labor) led by Alexei Gastev, was clearly reflected in its board members: Kerzhentsev, Gastev, and other Taylorists, including the theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold, with Vladimir Lenin and Leon Trotsky as honorary officers. See Ulf Brunnbauer, "'The League of Time' (Liga Vremia): Problems of Making a Soviet Working Class in the 1920s," *Russian History*, 27, no. 4 (Winter 2000), 461–495.

49. Maiakovskii's verses read: "The roof windows / of the burrow roof / gape open. / At once / on a hundred freight and / passenger lines, / planes / set out / brand new / flashing / their aluminum / in the Sun." (Раззевают / слуховые окна / крыши-норы. / Сразу / в сто / товарно-пассажирских линий / отправляются / с иголочки / планёры, / рассияв / по солнцу / алюминий.)

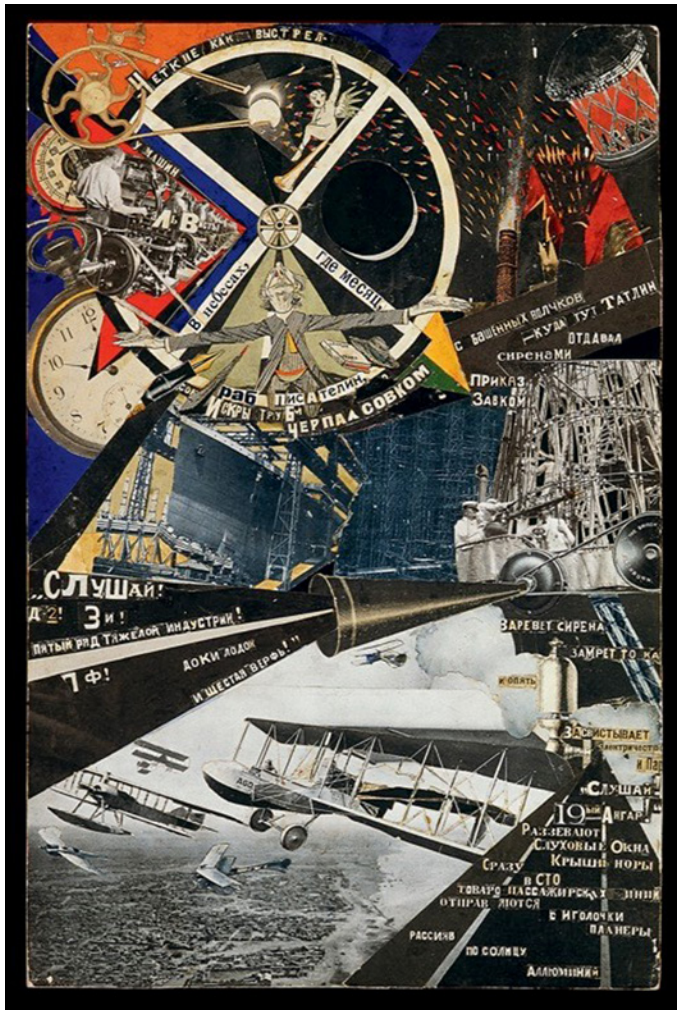

Figure 5. Yuri Rozhkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), photomontage No. 10. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

images of important politicians and other contemporary figures popularized by the illustrated press and mass media. In the 1923 edition of *About This*, Rodchenko was the first to incorporate actual photographs of the people described in that particular work of fiction: poet Vladimir Maiakovskii and his lover Lili Brik.[50] Rozhkov, in turn, treats Rodchenko's photomontage as raw material for his own work and uses the image of Maiakovskii from *About*

50. It was also the first time that "the new technique finally receives its name—*photomontage*." Toman, *Photo/Montage in Print*, 45. See also Adrian Sudhalter, "The Self-Reflectivity of Photomontage: Writing on and Exhibiting the Medium, 1920–1931," in Deborah L. Roldán and Adrian Sudhalter, eds., *Photomontage between the Wars, 1918–1939* (Ottawa, 2012), 11.

Figure 6. Yuri Rozhkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), photomontage No. 5. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

This to represent the following verses from "To the Workers of Kursk": "A word factory / has been given me to run" (Figure 6). Following Sergei Tretʹiakov's proposal, Maiakovskii represents himself as a word factory manager and production organizer.[51] Rozhkov's representation, similar to the Berlin Dadaists, suggests instead the poet-cyborg who is in symbiosis with the machine.[52]

51. "What is necessary is the mode of art which will make people feel that they are not a mass of consumers but *the organizers and managers of the very material of production*. New, productivist literature should have for its application not narratives about people, but living words in living interaction among people. *Art not as a consumer product, but as a production skill*." Sergei Tretʹiakov, "Otkuda i kuda?" (From Where to Where?), *Lef*, no. 1 (March 1923), 198.

52. On the concept of the cyborg and Berlin Dada photomontages, see Matthew Biro, *The Dada Cyborg: Visions of the New Human in Weimar Germany* (Minneapolis, 2009).

Thus, Rozhkov's photomontage renders the *audible* material of production *visible*: the cone-shaped cylinder of a phonograph radiates the words and phrases that are, in fact, the titles of all of Maiakovskii's major works up to "To the Workers of Kursk."[53] Rozhkov may have found the model for this visual rendering in Klutsis' photomontage "Downtrodden Masses of the World: Under the Banner of the Comintern, Overthrow Imperialism," made for the photo-book *Young Guard: For Lenin* (*Molodaia gvardiia*. *Leninu*, 1924).

Following in the footsteps of the Berlin Dadaists and the early Soviet satirical periodical *Krysodav*, Rozhkov incorporated the images of important European and Russian politicians of the time.[54] Thus, for example, for the illustration of the lines, "It fled from the Germans / it feared the French / With their eyes / fixed on / this tasty prize," Rozhkov uses the images of Joseph Joffre, a French general during World War I, and Raymond Poincare, a French statesman who served five times as prime minister and once as president (1913–20). While the images of these Frenchmen symbolize France—along with its most stereotypical symbols such as Paris, the French flag, Eiffel Tower, and a bottle of (supposedly French) wine—they are also here to remind the reader/viewer of the French military engagement against the Bolsheviks in the Polish-Soviet war during 1919–21.

The photomontage on the subsequent sheet shares a similar function that—along with Maiakovskii's lines— "You, / who yelled: / "You've eaten the / sunflower seed bare, / Sunflower / has littered / Russia!"—features images of Tsar Nikolas II and several members of the Russian Provisional Government. These members include, from left to right, Boris Savinkov, the deputy war minister in the Provisional Government; Pavel Milyukov, the founder, leader, and the most prominent member of the Constitutional Democratic Party (Kadets), and Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Provisional Government; Alexander Kerensky, the second prime minister of the Russian Provisional Government; and Alexander Konovalov, one of Russia's biggest textile manufacturers and minister of trade and industry in the Provisional Government.[55]

53. The titles are given in chronological order from left to right as follows: "I," "Vladimir Mayakovsky," "Cloud in Trousers," "Backbone Flute," "War and Peace," "Man," "Our March," "Mystery Buff," "Left March," [missing, but most probably "150,000,000"], "Love," and, at the end, "About This." Both verbal and visual images of Maiakovskii as the organizer and manager of a word factory are also echoed in his poem "Conversation with a Tax Collector about Poetry" (1926). There, Maiakovskii calls the act of writing poetry "creative mining," and writes: "Poetry's / also radium extraction. / Grams of extraction / in years of labor. / For one single word, / I consume in action / thousands of tons / of verbal ore."

54. *Krysodav* (The Rat-Crusher) was a short-lived satirical periodical edited by young Ukrainian writers in Moscow, Leonid Nedolia (later the main editor of *Iugo-Lef* magazine) and Mark Gai. The meeting point of the three important early Soviet art collectives—the *Lef* group, *Krokodil* group and *41 degrees* from Tbilisi, Georgia—*Krysodav* published only three issues in 1923. The issues featured writings and lithographic images including photomontages, which portrayed, ridiculed, and accused the enemies of the Soviet state.

55. A similar representation can be found in Igor Terentiev's photomontage for the cover of *Krysodav*'s second issue (Moscow, 1923). The image shows a bottle morphing into a two-legged monster dressed in military pants, loaded with baggage, and labeled "Contraband." A fan of gentlemen wearing top hats stretch out of the bottle's neck, creating the beast's Hydra-like head.

Below one can see the face of Tsar Nicholas II (executed by the Bolsheviks), under which the words "to Paris" in French suggest that the majority of members of the former Provisional Government ended up in exile in France. Maiakovskii refrains from directly referring to these political figures; he actually calls out some "Alfred from *Izvestia*," which is the pseudonym of the publicist Kapel′ush who published an article against the journal *Lef* (on June 10, 1923) in the daily newspaper *Izvestia*. Rozhkov, however, chooses not to represent "Alfred from *Izvestia*"; instead, he uses the opportunity to accuse the Russian emperor and his political successors as being the main culprits of Russia's pre- and post-revolutionary hardships.

Maiakovskii's anti-monumental attitude becomes one of the main ideological statements providing the poem's polemical perspective.[56] Along with canonical nineteenth-century Russian writers, who were decisively "thrown from the Steamship of Modernity" by the Futurists a decade earlier, Maiakovskii straightforwardly calls out many of his contemporaries. He polemicizes with those who openly wrote against *Lef* and their avant-garde art as alien to the masses, and with those who participated in the contemporary processes of commemoration supporting less progressive, traditional values. In the last three photomontages, Rozhkov demonstrates Maiakovskii's anti-monumental attitude, including images of well-known (both pre- and post-revolutionary) cultural figures.

Rozhkov illustrates the first segment of the sheet with the image of his supervisor from the *Lenin* agit-train—Lev Sosnovskii (Figure 7).[57] We see Sosnovskii writing "Down with Maiakovskiiism" (Долой Маяковщину) in cursive letters—a clear illustration of the former's confrontational cultural politics expressed in the articles and feuilletons, published from 1920 to 1923 in *Pravda*. It is very likely that Rozhkov was familiar with the response to Sosnovskii in the third issue of *Lef* journal's editorial, entitled "LEF to Battle!" There one finds the following statement: "Кто в Леф, кто по дрова."[58]

56. Maiakovskii undoubtedly shared Lenin's views on the importance of Bolshevik propaganda, believing that the publicly spoken word is a more effective tool for the political education of the masses than the static materiality of a monument. Lenin's "monumental plan of propaganda" reflected in the first place his desire for expression: to spread the word about the Revolution. The aim of the plan was not to erect permanent sculptures and monuments, but to create podiums for orators who would spread fresh words of the Revolution. Both Lenin and Lunacharskii believed that these temporary monuments should champion *the living word* of the Revolution among the generations instead of epitomizing the merely ossified and fossilized quality of permanent but static monumentality. In a similar vein, Maiakovskii did not consider public monuments to be fully suitable for commemorating the working class.

57. Rozhkov embarked on the *Lenin* agit-train at the end of 1918, several weeks before the train was sent through the parts of the northwestern territory recently liberated from the Germans on a six-week journey ending in mid-March 1919. It was here on the *Lenin* train that Rozhkov met Lev Semenovich Sosnovskii, who later in 1921 became appointed the chief of Agitprop of CK RKP. The train, headed by Sosnovskii, who was at the time a member of the VTsIK Commission established the previous January, visited Pskov, Riga, Vitebsk, Vilnius, Minsk, Khar′kov and Kursk, thus covering the whole of the former front against the Germans. See Rozhkov, "Avtobiografiia" (note 4).

58. This statement is a pun on the proverb "Кто в лес, кто по дрова," where the word "лес" is replaced by the similarly sounding word "леф." Driving upon the meaning of the

The word дрова (firewood) is footnoted with the following sentence: "Oak, pine, aspen, and other Species." In Russian, these words (oak=дубовые, pine=сосновые, aspen=осиновые, and other Species=и других Родов) create sound associations with the names V. Dubovskoi, L. Sosnovskii, S. Rodov and Others (such as, for example, the aforementioned Alfred from *Izvestia* and V. Lebedev-Polianski from *Pod znamenem Marksizma*), who constantly attacked *Lef* and Maiakovskii in particular. This witty editorial of the third issue of *Lef* (June-July 1923) is followed by the "Program" section, which is entirely devoted to the task of debunking Sosnovskii's accusations as unfounded, counter-factual, and demagogic.[59]

In this photomontage sheet, Rozhkov uses yet another image of Maiakovskii from Rodchenko's photomontage for *About This* (Figure 7). The image of Maiakovskii posed as an old man is juxtaposed with the portraits of Dostoevskii and Leo Tolstoi, and the images of monuments to Pushkin and Gogol′. This segment foreshadows Rozhkov's subsequent illustrations, and visually underlines Maiakovskii's resistance to the processes of ossification, monumentalization, and canonization about which Iurii Tynianov wrote so deftly in his 1924 article "Interval."[60] The photograph of geologist P.P. Lazarev, a leading member of the committee for research and exploration of KMA appointed by Lenin, which shows him holding a rock in his hand, juxtaposed with the image of workers—"thirty thousand or so / Kursk / women and men"—dominates the photomontage (Figure 7).

The top segment of the next photomontage sheet is additionally intriguing, since it represents Rozhkov's supplement to Maiakovskii's verses (Figure 8). While the poet mentions Merkulov (whom he misnames) and three Andreevs, Rozhkov pastes three images of Leonid Andreev.[61] Rozhkov, however, decided to provide his own creative response on another topic: Maiakovskii's poetic image of "the whole academy crowd, / messing about / with writers' moustaches."

Rozhkov made a sidesplitting representation of the nineteenth-century Russian writers' pantheon, assembling the following Frankenstein-like hybrid identities by cutting and pasting the halves of the faces (from left to right): I.S. Turg/oncharov, from Ivan Turgenev and Ivan Goncharov;

proverb—which describes a situation of disharmony, chaos, and disagreement—the statement points to the emerging split between those who support *Lef* and those who do not. See Herbert Eagle and Anna Lawton, eds., *Words in Revolution: Russian Futurist Manifestoes, 1912–1928* (Washington, D.C., 2004), 329.

59. See "LEF to Battle!" *Lef*, (No. 3, June-July, 1923), 3; and Brik, "To Sosnovski," *Lef*, No. 3 (June-July, 1923), 4.

60. Iu. Tynianov, "Promezhutok," *Arkhaisty i Novatory* (Ann Arbor, 1985), 554–56. For an insightful reading of Tynianov's concept of the interval, see Dragan Kujundžić, *The Returns of History: Russian Nietzscheans after Modernity* (Albany, 1997), 73–94.

61. Merkurov was a sculptor-monumentalist who was commissioned to realize Lenin's plan of monumental propaganda and who perfected the art of the death-mask (he took Maiakovskii's death-mask in April 1930). Leonid Andreev was a Russian Silver-age playwright, novelist, short-story writer, and photographer. I assume that another Andreev, whom Maiakovskii probably referred to in his verses, is Nikolai Andreev, a sculptor whose most famous work is the monument of the seated bronze figure of Gogol′ at Prechistenskii boulevard (1909), the image of which Rozhkov used for the preceding photomontage sheet.

Figure 7. Yuri Rozhkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), photomontage No. 13. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

A. Herz/zhkovskii, from Aleksandr Herzen and Dmitrii Merezhkovskii; Tols/trovskii, from Aleksei Tolstoi and Aleksandr Ostrovskii; N.V. Gog/resaev, from Nikolai Gogol′ and Vikentii Veresaev; Tolst/chenko, from Lev Tolstoi and Taras Shevchenko; Maksim Gor′k/ushkin, from Maksim Gor′ki and Aleksandr Pushkin; and Tolst/vratskii, from Lev Tolstoi and Nikolai Zlatovratskii, (Figure 8). Rozhkov may have found the model for his visual joke in Hannah Höch's 1923 photomontage *Hochfinanz*, or in Rodchenko's front cover for the *Mess Mend* ("A Yankee in Petrograd," Vol. 7, Black Hand by Jim Dollar, 1924). Rozhkov's photomontage work on Maiakovskii's 1927 poem "Jew" proves his preference for this stylistic device.[62]

62. See Maiakovskii, *Fotomontazhnyi tsikl*, 59–67.

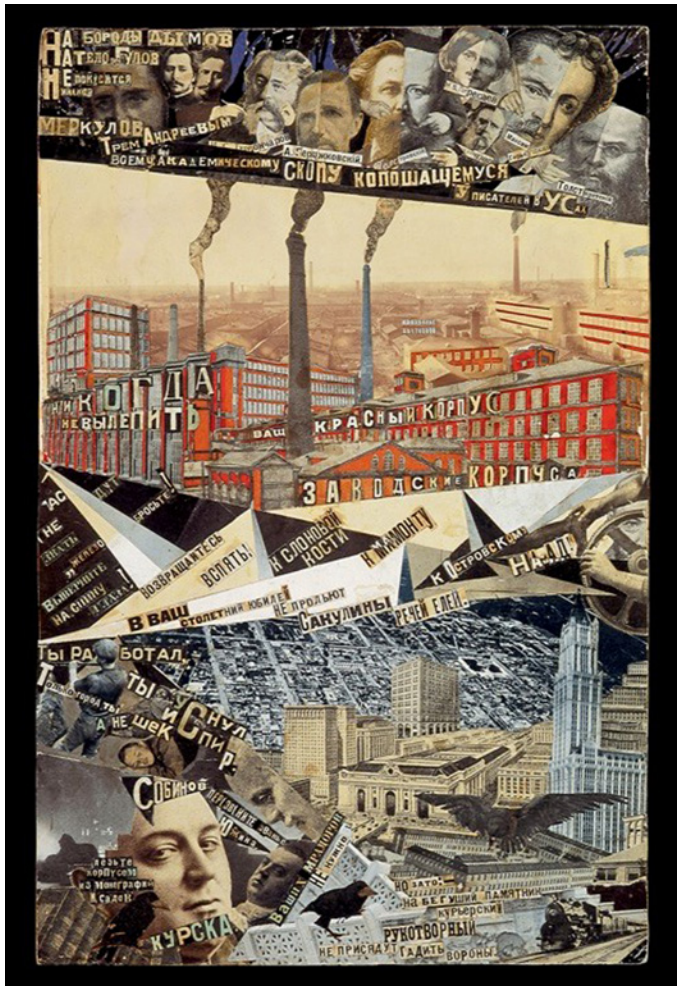

Figure 8. Yuri Rozhkov: *To the Workers of Kursk* (1924), photomontage No. 14. Collection of the State Literary Museum (GLM), Moscow. Courtesy of Kira Mattisen.

Rozhkov's entertaining and mocking supplement to Maiakovskii's poem reflects the existent anti-canonical sentiment that *Lef* members preached, practiced, and disseminated, first and foremost in their manifestoes. For example, in the programmatic text "Whom Does LEF Wrangle With?" from the first issue of *Lef*, one can read the following attack on the classics: "The classics were nationalized. The classics were honored as our only pulp literature. The classics were considered permanent, absolute art. The classics with *the bronze of their monuments* and *the tradition of their schools* suffocated everything new. Now, for 150,000,000 people the classic is an ordinary textbook. . . . we will fight against transferring the working methods of the dead into today's art."[63]

63. *Lef*, no. 1 (March 1923), 8–9. My emphasis. The number *one hundred and fifty million* was intended to remind the reader of Maiakovskii's poem with the same title.

In the text "From Where to Where?" Sergei Tretʹiakov writes in a similar vein: "Never encumber the flight of creativity with *a fossilized stratum* (no matter how highly expected)—this is our second slogan."[64] Rozhkov's photomontage draws upon this very connection between the classics, on the one hand, and the fossilizing forces of tradition and monuments, on the other.

At the same time, the writers' pantheon photomontage casts an additional light on the following verses, in which Maiakovskii assures that no one will call out the factories to "go back / again / to ivory, / to the mammoth, / to Ostrovskii." For the illustration of this part of the poem, Rozhkov employs angular shapes—triangles and pyramid-like spikes—along with an image of hands turning a wheel (probably backwards). Behind these hands is the portrait of the nineteenth-century Russian playwright, Aleksandr Ostrovskii (Figure 8). Triangles and spikes emerge again as the visual symbol of *obstacle*(*s*).[65] In this case, the obstacle is scripted in the quote, "Back to Ostrovskii!" This was a new slogan proclaimed by the Soviet Commissar of Enlightenment, Anatolii Lunacharskii, who in anticipation of the one-hundredth anniversary of the playwright's birth published a two-part article in *Izvestia* (April 11 and 12, 1923), entitled "About Aleksandr Nikolaevich Ostrovskii and Concerning Him." In the article, Lunacharskii called on revolutionary theater artists to revise their negative attitude toward the classics. Moreover, he issued a call for the reevaluation of Russian literary classics within the new sociopolitical context, along with the controversial proclamation that futuristic art—which rejects the old art together with academism—cultivated an erroneous method of reassessment.[66] Lunacharskii's article triggered a sound debate between "monumentalists" and "iconoclasts" and an avalanche of responses, among which Maiakovskii's and Rozhkov's are the most playful and inventive.[67]

Maiakovskii's lines, "At your / hundredth anniversary / the likes of Sakulin / won't pour out / unctuous speeches" are undoubtedly a response to Lunacharskii's article. They are also an expression of resistance to the public recognitions of prerevolutionary artists and cultural workers, however, such as Leonid Sobinov (an acclaimed Imperial Russian operatic tenor) and actor Aleksandr Yuzhin, (the Georgian Prince Sumbatov, who dominated the Maly Theatre in Moscow at the turn of nineteenth and twentieth centuries). Both Yuzhin and Sobinov were made People's Artists of the RSFSR in 1922 and 1923, respectively. Maiakovskii was most likely provoked by such an act, which he understood similarly to Lunacharskii's new slogan "Back to Ostrovskii"—as a relapse toward more traditional and bourgeois art forms. Moreover, on the

64. Tretʹiakov, "Otkuda i kuda?" *Lef*, no.1 (March, 1923), 196. My emphasis.

65. The earlier example is the poem's polemical sting aimed at Nikolai Chuzhak, a member of *Lef*'s editorial board with whom Maiakovskii had frequent disagreements. There, the poet wittily compares Chuzhak's behavior with the "deviant" needles of a compass, while Rozhkov uses the image of arrow-like needles showing opposite directions, along the recurrent image-motif of pyramid-like spikes, as the visual representation for obstacles.

66. A.V. Lunacharskii, *Sobranie sochinenii v vosʹmi tomakh*, 8 vols. (Moscow, 1963–1967), 1:200.

67. Katerina Clark, *Petersburg: Crucible of Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass, 1995), 27.

cover of the second issue of *Lef* (April-May 1923), one can find Rodchenko's photomontage with a crisscross expressing an avant-garde gesture of rejecting and canceling the old, bourgeois art, of which one of the symbols is Prince Sumbatov himself.[68] Following Maiakovskii, Rozhkov's photomontage incorporated images of "monographs" and marble fences, above which are two portraits of Sobinov as well as the image of a stone profile in which one can recognize a monument to Shakespeare (Figure 8).

An Avant-garde Memorial to the Proletariat

The entirety of Maiakovskii's poem deals with the issue of how to pay tribute to the tens of thousands of workers, to the anonymous mass of men and women "who simply work," and whom Maiakovskii baptizes "the oxen of the future." Maiakovskii considered the poem a suitable mode for commemorating the working class and expressing its revolutionary role, especially because the verses could easily be adapted into publically spoken words or innovative photo-books. He knew that his *modern ode* devoted to the workers could be read at public meetings or even recorded and broadcast to tens of millions. In other words, he was aware of how the new technological media were able to bestow impermanence with permanent qualities. At the time, Maiakovskii believed in what he was preaching and kept insisting that men must not lose sight of the grand social design, through which each man alone could hope for what all men desired. He insisted not only that communal effort and faith in one's country must not be relaxed, but also that such endeavors and convictions must be reproduced regularly as a part of the culture of everyday life *by* and *through* the means of technical reproducibility.[69]

Toward the very end of the poem we find an expression of the poet's belief in the promise of technological advancements. Maiakovskii envisages "a temporary monument" to the working class as the "running / high-speed / handmade memorial." Conceptually, the image of "running memorial" still strikes one as a contradictory and puzzling, if not an innovative idea. One can easily find such concepts of the moving monument in the Russian literary tradition, starting with the representation of the living statue in Pushkin's poetic mythology.[70] Yet Maiakovskii's contribution to the image—nestled in

68. It is not surprising that the aforementioned Pavel Sakulin, the Russian and Soviet literary scholar, historian, and academic whom Maiakovskii describes as the orator of "unctuous speeches" (речей елей), published the first edition of his book *Theater of A.I. Sumbatov* in Berlin in 1927.

69. The program of reconstruction of everyday life that he and his comrades-in-arms gathered around *Lef* advocated, involved appropriating new means of technical production, reproduction, and representation. See Arvatov, "Utopiia ili nauka" (Utopia or Science), *Lef*, No. 4 (1924), 16–21.

70. In his landmark study "The Statue in Pushkin's Poetic Mythology," Roman Jakobson found the destructive capacity of statues in Pushkin's *The Bronze Horseman*, *The Stone Guest* and *The Golden Cockerel* to be an expression of the antinomy, inherent in every statue, between its living subject matter and the dead material out of which it is made. See Roman Jakobson, *Language in Literature*, Krystyna Pomorska and Stephen Rudy, eds., (Cambridge, Mass., 1987), 318–67. For more on Maiakovskii's conception of the "mobile"

the cultural tradition of Russian imagery so cozily that it almost became customary—was his ascription of a high-speed quality to it.[71]

Rozhkov's visual representation of the memorial to the working class is consistent with Maiakovskii's poetic image and reflects the constructivist insistence on the use of technology and the importance of functionalism in art. For the visual representation of such a monument, Rozhkov chose the image of a locomotive (Figure 8). Although an invention of the early nineteenth century, the locomotive still summons a set of meanings tightly connected with progress and rapid movement, so significant for the Russian revolutionary imagination in the early 1920s. This connection is, of course, completely literal: the locomotive (*lat*. "causing motion") provides the *motive power* of a train and pulls the train compartments *from the front*. However, its link to classic and avant-garde conceptions of art is implicit: the locomotive has no payload capacity of its own, and its sole purpose is to move the train along the tracks. As an autonomous aesthetic object, the locomotive supports Immanuel Kant's notion of the "purposeless purpose" of an art object. Just as any other machine, the locomotive possesses an expressive visual beauty and "stupendous power."[72] On the other hand, as a highly functional vehicle for the particular means of transport, the locomotive completely embodies the constructivist concept of the artwork as a product of politically effective, socially useful, and mass-produced art. Following Maiakovskii's conception of the "running memorial," Rozhkov's visual representation is on par with the constructivist art governed by the principles of material integrity, functional expediency, and societal purpose.[73]

Ultimately, the image of locomotive operates as a symbol capturing the *dynamic* nature of Rozhkov's cinematic dispositive that itself functions as a "running, hand-made" de-mountable memorial to the working class. The acoustic crescendo from the finale of Maiakovskii's poem resonates in the

monument, see James Rann, "Maiakovskii and the Mobile Monument: Alternatives to Iconoclasm in Russian Culture," *Slavic Review* 71, no. 4 (Winter 2012), 766–91.

71. The poet's view of the importance of *high velocity* fully corresponds with the demand issued by Lenin, who in his letter to the KMA work and defense committee for research and exploration's president of the board on April 5, 1922 wrote: "I draw your attention to the exceptional importance of the work on the research of the Kursk Magnetic Anomaly. Comrade Krzhyzhanovski told me that according to the engineers with whom he talked, it is almost proven that we have an unheard-of reservoir of the pure iron out there. . . . it is necessary to achieve *the fastest pace* of running the work . . . in order to purchase the necessary plant and equipment, instruments, and machinery (diamond, mining and the like) *with maximal speed*." *Ленинский сборник XXXVI*, 466. My emphasis. For more on the concept of speed and its role in Russian avant-garde, see Tim Harte, *Fast Forward: The Aesthetics and Ideology of Speed in Russian Avant-Garde Culture, 1910–1930* (Madison, 2009).

72. Andre Breton's surrealist ideal of the "convulsive beauty" found its visual expression in the image of an abandoned locomotive in the forest. See Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 112.

73. Not coincidentally, one can find the image of the locomotive on the page after the front cover in the third issue of the trilingual international magazine *Veshch/Gegenstand/Objet* (1922), edited by Il′ia Erenburg and El Lissitzky, and published in Berlin with the aim to spread the idea of "construction art." Later, the locomotive became "hero" of many Soviet agit-posters and agitprop films.

visual cadence of Rozhkov's photomontage. Maiakovskii refuses the "sharp-tongued lecturer" who would "heap praises" on the working class during the "anniversary in the interval of the operas or operettas." Instead, Maiakovskii asserts, the "tractor will sound forth" as "the most convincing electro-lecturer," and "a million of chimneys / will inscribe / your last names." Rozhkov employs the images of factory buildings and chimneys, tractors ("engines on wheels"), motors, and dynamos, thus emphasizing the importance of the increase of technologically advanced and organized production. Each of the sense-unit panels of Rozhkov's last photomontage has a similar rectangular shape. This feature of compositional equivalence functions similarly to cadence in versification: it represents visual configuration that creates a sense of repose, finality, and resolution.

The very last image of the large mining tube/pipe and the workers in and around it is reminiscent of the image of Red Army soldiers going through "the muzzles of cannons" from the prologue sheet. Stylistically, this visual rhyme of the imagery from the beginning and the end of Rozhkov's dispositive has a formulaic function: similar to the initial and final formulae from the folk genres, it provides the photopoem with the so-called "ring structure."[74] Pragmatically, Rozhkov's sequential, cinematic rendering of such imagery, similar to temporality in the socialist realist novel, aspires to bridge the gap between the world as it "is" and as it "ought to be" by subordinating historical reality to the preexisting functional patterns of folk literature.[75] Semantically, however, it illustrates the assertion made by historian Sheila Fitzpatrick that the first Five-Year Plan, introduced in 1928 after the end of NEP, mobilized both the visual and discursive rhetoric of War Communism, thus delineating transition towards the new *dispositif* of the late 1920s: socialist realism.[76]

Maiakovskii's utopian vision and Rozhkov's subsequent cinematic rendering of the "half-open eye of the future" are both agitprop apparatus dispositives, whose main function amounted not to propaganda, but to the production of reality through aesthetization. While Arvatov's "agit-cinema" recognized the "possibilities" that the agitational representation grants ("to take the existent and do with it whatever one wants"), Rozhkov's cine-dispositive introduced distinct devices and visual vernacular that played a critical role during the late 1920s in turning the heroic work, amazing feats,

74. Formulae (usually the initial ones) can also contain information about the genre or the type of *sujet* (plot) that follows. In such cases, they can serve as specific "switchers" too (they send information about the change of discourse, i.e., about the transition from vernacular to poetic discourse). See Novica Petković, *Ogledi iz srpske poetike* (Belgrade, 1990).

75. "This subordination of historical reality to the preexisting patterns of legend and history (in the socialist realist novel) bridged the gap between 'is' and 'ought to be.'" Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Chicago, 1985), 41.

76. See Sheila Fitzpatrick, *The Russian Revolution* (Oxford, 1982), 135. One could also claim that Rozhkov's spatial sequencing, along the new ways of reading/viewing (i.e., of *using* a cinematic dispositive), introduced the model of *segmented and goal driven temporality*, a concept that will come to its fruition starting with the introduction of the first Five-Year Plan.

and bold intentions into "facts before they become reality."[77] Rozhkov's cine-dispositive commemorated the workers by celebrating the image of a massive industrialization campaign, which in the late 1920s led to a complete restructuring of the Soviet arts.[78] As such, it signposted the subsequent conversion of avant-garde artists' multiple narrative programs into the singular program with a "homeodynamic state," the official "method" of socialist realism.[79]

77. See Maxim Gor′kii, *Sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh*, 30 vols. (Moscow, 1954), 27: 221. "Our reality is our teacher," Gor′kii affirmed, despite the fact that "reality does not make itself visible. But then we are obliged to know more than just two realities—the past, and the present, the one in which we live and take part to some extent. We must also know a third reality—the reality of the future . . . we must somehow include this reality in our everyday lives, we must depict it. Without it we will not understand what the method of socialist realism is" in Gor′kii, *Sobranie sochinenii v 30 tomakh*, 30 vols., (Moscow, 1954), 25: 455; 27: 419.

78. Maiakovskii's poem and Rozhkov's cine-dispositive introduce the following basic characteristics of socialist realist art: 1) *the figure of a positive hero*, represented both as a collective ("workers") and an idealized concept of an individual with noble goals: "He who's come / to dig down the earth, / who's plotted places / on diagrams, / He / is the knight of today! / He also dreams / he also loves." [Пришедший / в землю врыться, / в чертежах / размечавший точки, / он—/ сегодняшний рыцарь! / Он так же мечтает, / он так же любит]; 2) *the heroic spirit*: the hero (working class) emerges as the builder of a new life, overcoming all obstacles and defeating all enemies; 3) *monumentalism*: big generic forms with heroic spirit, such as the longer narrative poem as the embodiment of synthetic and "epic thought;" 4) *aspirations to high art style* (the genre of *ode*); 5) *emphasis on the positive achievements of socialism* (industrialization and collectivism); 6) *utopian projection into the future*, characterized by 7) *classicism*, as the ideal of harmony, order, and wholeness (the new beauty of the assembly line); 8) *accessibility of the artwork* (clarity of visual language communicates a message to the millions) with its 9) *propagandistic didacticism* (unambiguous ideological message promoting Bolshevik policies); and 10) "*realism*," such as the use of documents (photographs, newspaper clippings, actual historical events, speeches) to augment the impression of reality, the use of recognizable (contemporary and/or historical) settings, events, and personalities. It is not thus surprising that the silent agitprop documentary cinema of the late 1920s, such as Victor Turin's *Turksib* (1929) and Mikhail Kalatozov's *Salt for Svanetia* (1930), resonate with the visual idioms promoted in Rozhkov's photomontage series.

79. Seeing Rozhkov's work as an example that indicated the state-sponsored program of a "dominant dispositif" inclined to achieve a "homeodynamic state" may substitute for Boris Groys's thesis that socialist realism "assimilated the experience of the avant-garde" and emerged from "the internal logic of the avant-garde method itself." Groys, *Total Art of Stalinism: Avant-Garde, Aesthetic Dictatorship, and Beyond* (Princeton, 1992), 9.