

In games and toys, as in all traditionalist manifestations, there is nothing but grotesque imitation, timidity (little trains, prams, puppets), immobile objects, stupid caricatures of domestic objects, *antigymnastic and monotonous, which can only cretinize and depress a child.*

-Giacomo Balla and Fortunato Depero,  
*The Futurist Reconstruction of the Universe*

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: What follows is the text of a game originally written by Aleksei Kruchenykh in 1913. The game was written in a mixture of Russian and Zaum. The language of Zaum was developed by Kruchenykh to be "a language which does not have any definite meaning, a transrational language" that "allows for fuller expression"<sup>1</sup> and "can provide a universal poetic language, born organically, and not artificially, like Esperanto."<sup>2</sup>

Due to the "transrational" nature of the Zaum language, several of my translations have necessarily been rather interpretive. Further confusing matters is the fact that Kruchenykh wrote almost exclusively on small scraps of paper stored in an old cigar box. While it is possible (though unlikely) that these scraps had been placed in order when originally written, any given order was lost when the box was dropped by a clumsy, ham-handed transport man who is not worth the time it would take to properly put in his place. Additionally, this worthless oaf likewise and simultaneously dropped a mildewed fish tank containing a first draft of the libretto of the Russian Futurist opera *Victory Over the Sun*. In order to hide the evidence of his misdeeds, this inept and vile tapeworm-of-a-thing stuffed both manuscript and libretto into the first book he found at hand, hoping, no doubt, that its bound pages would hide the galling mess he had released into the world. The book was *Apokalipso Mondo* by noted Esperanto author Vincenzo Bakisto. When the bumbling oaf discovered his jig was up he managed to tear several pages from the book while retrieving his pitifully hidden texts.

While every effort has been made to disentangle these three separate texts in order to present the pure game as outlined in Kruchenykh's 1913 vision, some contamination has inevitably occurred.

My sincerest apologies for any inconveniences encountered.

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<sup>1</sup> "Declaration of the Word as Such," (1913)

<sup>2</sup> "Declaration of Transrational Language," (1921)

## THE WORLD AS SUCH

as it as is it not

visage-player, countenance-man, impersonator = actor

personas = characters

groupepeople = troupe

softspeaker = prompter

action, tion, sion = scene act

sagarama = drama

etc.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE<sup>3</sup>

### TWO FUTURIST STRONGMEN

they make they're their { fun visage-player<sup>4</sup>

1ST in the your things (sion, they're occasionally.

Nudge our outrage. sagarama sagarama

### NERO AND CALIGULA IN THE SAME PERSON

Pushkin, overboard with (self-centered) language

• persona(s). groupepeople the fame you to now, crazy.

### A TIME TRAVELLER

established vector). • not sometimes by your impersonator

Expose disclaim and Be and dancing,

Keep yourself very modernity, everyone

### A MALEVOLENT

fucking says boos

• to need one you you're answering for

and and always monstrous. } badness. } unaccepted. } and move {sagarama

### A WILLBEITE MACHINE GUN

• insurmountable stigmas

Hey, our other outrage. And being other, buy.

Darkest say personas

### A FIGHTPICKER

negotiated armor. •

Give Ways to them and the action a hard turn

• opportunity, job like

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<sup>3</sup> Each of these roles, or personas, was originally written on a separate piece of paper, presumably to be distributed to the actor or "visage-player" assigned to it.

<sup>4</sup> All punctuation copied from the original text as closely as possible

## BELLIGERENT SOLDIERS

they might have to do.

• do. not put and revered: To your Riot gear.  
to our kick-ass every for You

## SPORTSMEN

• boring, might have enemies  
have you love every session  
but the allies. says die.

## CHORUS

personas. • expectations be then become  
these Hard to Give descriptions  
they Nudge tools

## PALLBEARERS

black job, theirs to create it  
set tearing out first  
• horror out enemies.

## EIGHT SUN CARRIERS

Sometimes, (as name. • they Be them.

• What you could outrage.  
the monsters using stolen blacked combinations do world simple

## THE MOTLEY EYE

• for you badness.  
clumsy living  
whole session (go sion

## THE NEW

Your • perfumed control.  
• New a Beauty of the World are  
A fear you're boring, die.

## THE COWARDLY

the to have can don't. just to sometimes,  
Blanket be language the of motivations  
the angel. off too. • sion

## A READER

you real. • you No,  
you to Offer etc., as comes occasionally.  
personas of little sion, operator • your

## AN ATTENTIVE WORKER

build to ARTISTIC ARTISTIC swift

what you buttonholes: each odd honesty name

## SOFTSPEAKER - A TELEPHONE TALKER<sup>5</sup>

1. become at once what is revered:
2. Elect first of you the visage-players
3. You • speak word
4. Ask. Activate unknown
5. • crazy the up-front:
6. Describe. today's create, Is to be is game.
7. pack good visage-player's persona's downside.
8. Activate misdirect. •
9. Digress but shine move
10. The possible happens • sometimes, stuff
11. the questions move: time.
12. Respond sometimes
13. decisionmaking off a countdown, we Make offscreen whatever.
14. (plenty the Strings, Strings very and of the Make them Advantage.
15. have MORE but like to crazy. • arbitrary now

1. Tell tight.<sup>6</sup>

## NOTES TO CHOREOGRAPHER<sup>7</sup>

### A NOTE TO VISAGE-PLAYERS

But they're it! Their moves.

• know and not DO human.

play, You!

### NOTES ON SET DESIGN & STAGING<sup>8</sup>

combinations of cubes, columns, arches and steps.

grayish-white dimensional forms and generalized geometric costumes

other actors as furniture and props

a multistoried construction split into separate rectangular interiors

mirrors make the space extended beyond the possible

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<sup>5</sup> The Telephone Talker seems to have belonged to a different category of visage-player than the others listed.

<sup>6</sup> Kruchenykh spaced number 16 separately from the other 15 items on this list. Furthermore, he labelled it with the number 1 and not 16.

<sup>7</sup> This section was left blank, whether intentionally or not is not apparent.

<sup>8</sup> This text appears almost verbatim in A.E. Dupont's *Russian Futurist Theatre* published in 1967. Some claim this accounts for the difference in tone and claim that Kruchenykh plagiarized Dupont's text before it had been written.

told entirely in puppets of various kind  
a black canvas, a kind of a screen carrying an expressive meaning of the main idea  
colorful patches very similar to geometrical symbols  
no time and locality was determined  
the swirling mass of indistinguishable colors and forms  
all furniture and props dangle from the construction's ceiling  
backdrops made from cloth sheets printed with monochrome graphic forms.  
a large black and white square divided diagonally.  
a mechanical mill, wheels and conveyer belts, modernity  
undecipherable text curling into representational shapes  
use of lighting rather than physical structures

#### PROPS, EXISTING AND IMPLIED<sup>9</sup>

a wagon wheel, haunted  
the disembodied sound of modernity  
sex  
an ambulance vector  
thought-soaked handkerchiefs  
a mask resembling itself, alone  
1:1 scale model of emptiness  
red sadness  
the mortal remains of failed visage-players  
a severed consciousness  
clocks with too many hands  
little trains, prams, puppets  
arbitrary and derivative words  
the speed of an automobile  
boos and outrage  
motion  
useful and pleasing objects  
imagination without strings  
a bottle, full of itself  
the collision of two cones at their apexes  
you

#### PERFORMATIVE ITERATION

example from D. Burliuk

"Sky is a corpse" !! No more!  
Stars are worms-drunk with fog  
I suppress the pain with rust-ling, with deceit  
Sky is a stinking corpse!!  
Stars are worms--(purulent living)rash!!

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<sup>9</sup> Some Kruchenykh scholars believe the inclusion of the list of props to be a later addition to the text that may have originally been written as a note to himself of what he needed to pick up at the market.

## PERFORMATIVE ITERATION

example from A. Kruchenykh

Explodity  
    of fire  
melancholy  
    of a steed  
roubles  
    of willows  
in the hair  
    of wonders