

# DIE WELT DER SLAVEN

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der Übersetzung angehören sollen, wohl kaum. Hier muss die russische Philologie sich nun wirklich auf die Grundlagen ihrer Tätigkeit besinnen.

4. Das Dringlichste ist, Abschriften nicht wie Urschriften zu behandeln, sondern mit der kritischen Distanz, die Zeugnissen nichtester Hand gebührt. Wo unabhängige Abschriften vorliegen, sollte ernsthafte Textkritik geübt werden, nicht nur um die Lesungen der verschollenen Vorlage(n) festzustellen, sondern auch um die Indizien zu sammeln, die verraten, welche Probleme den Schreibern ihre Vorlagen aufgaben. Solche Einstellung gegenüber den Zeugen ruft von selbst die Frage nach der Überlieferungsgeschichte der Texte auf. Und die unvoreurteilte Untersuchung eben dieser Geschichte führt dazu, dass auch die 'Russischheit' zur Frage wird, die allseitiger gründlicher Prüfung offensteht und die wahrscheinlich nicht für alle Stadien der Textentwicklung gleichlautend beantwortet werden wird.

Voraussetzung für ein solches Umschlagen in der Einstellung gegenüber den Zeugen ist die christliche Tugend der *humilitas* (von St. Methodius politisch wirkungsvoll übersetzt als *сѣмьреная мудрость*) anstelle der eingeschliffenen *superbia*. Wenn es auch russischen Philologen gelingt, sie zu aktivieren, werden sie einsehen können, dass das Schrifttum der Kiever Rus' nicht *ex nihilo* entstanden ist, sondern in einem langwierigen Prozess der Aneignung, Vervielfältigung, Verbreitung und Bearbeitung von Büchern aus Bulgarien, die - den Mutmaßungen von Grigorij A. Il'inskij (*Byzantinoslavica* 3) zum Trotz - größtenteils in glagolitischer Schrift geschrieben waren. Und endlich werden sie entdecken können, dass eben die gewissenhafte Kyrillisierung dieser Bücher und die Schaffung neuer kyrillischer Archetypen der Texte die Grundlage bildet für die Ausstrahlung des Schrifttums der Kiever Rus' über die gesamte Slavia.

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Маргарета Тильберг: *Цветная Вселенная: Михаил Матюшин об искусстве и зрении*. Москва: Новое литературное обозрение 2008. 528 p.

The Russian edition of Margareta Tillberg's book (*Coloured Universe and the Russian Avant-Garde. Matjušin on Colour Vision in Stalin's Russia, 1932*. Stockholm 2003) is intended to open the door to interdisciplinary research into the visual representation of the world, a field that today is becoming increasingly important. This work by a Swedish art historian and Slavist is one such study. It constitutes a thorough going description and analysis of the theoretical views of Mikhail Vasilevič Matjušin (1861-1934) on the nature of vision and the human perception of colours. Matjušin was an early-twentieth century painter and a prominent representative of the historical avant-garde. The monograph also explores the practical application of his research, and presents the results of the scientific experiments which Matjušin conducted under the inspiration of the

poet and artist Elena Guro, together with his students Maria and Boris Ender, V. Delacroix-Nesmelova and E. Xmelevskaja during the 1920s and which formed the basis of their "Colour Handbook".

The *Colour Handbook* is the unique fruit of a sustained process of intellectual labour, scientific experimentation and artistic intuition, which in condensed form (four folding booklets by the author survive) describes with the aid of tables the basic dynamic laws of colour combinations. In addition to its scientific importance, the *Colour Handbook* also had practical applications. It was published only once, two years before the death of its author, and the text (an appendix in the present book contains a facsimile reproduction of the work) is of great interest both for those working in the humanities and for all professionals engaged in the study of chromatics. Tillberg treats the *Colour Handbook's* theory of the laws of form and colour combinations in the context of the scientific views of the era and considers them in the light of broader cultural and historical developments in Russian and European thought, particularly the art and spiritual quests of the first decades of the last century. The author gives a thorough account of the genesis of Matjušin's ideas, showing the ways in which they both followed and diverged from those of his predecessors and contemporaries. With profound and persuasive clarity she outlines the distinctiveness and originality of Matjušin's approach to the phenomenon of colour and its perception. With a high degree of meticulous craftsmanship the book carefully dissects Matjušin's ideas. It covers more ground than the *Colour Handbook* alone, revealing the wide and far-flung horizons that lay beyond Matjušin's abstract discovery of the laws of vision and his practical prescriptions for artists and interior designers. Matjušin is assigned an organic place among the ranks of the great dreamers and intellectual locomotives of his paradoxical era – an era of dark thresholds and unlimited daring, of ascetic labour and heroic creative achievement.

The present monograph can also be characterized as a heroic achievement of its own. It is the first and up to now only study to reconstruct Matjušin's theoretical thought from the fragmentary and not always consistent information contained in the master's writings. In addition, it provides a uniquely complete and profound examination of Matjušin's ideas, and an exhaustive description of the scientific and ideological background of his life and work.

Tillberg's book is based on the study of an enormous amount of archive materials, a familiarity with museum collections, and also with the Russians among whom the author was fortunate enough to find rare living witnesses of the era. Not only does it rediscover Matjušin – it also alters many preconceptions, especially about the results of the work of the "actors" in the drama of the "Russian avant-garde". For example, in light of Matjušin's theory the concept of the fourth dimension is redefined. In the study of art history this concept is frequently confused with the temporal dimension, although it is more correct to speak of a specifically spiritual substratum of man's relations with the world, partly dating from the heritage of Symbolism, but connected even more closely with Russian cosmism and the utopian anthropology of early socialism. Another important redefinition involves the distribution and relationships of individuals in the force field of the era. Thanks to Tillberg's book, Malevich, who previously dominated the horizon of avant-garde studies with his Suprematist manifestos and famous Black Square, is pushed back if not into second place then at least into one where he gives way to Matjušin's laws of the complementary nature of

colour and form, his ideas about expanded vision and his projects for enhancing the visual capacity of the brain. Also of importance is Tillberg's comparative analysis of Matjušin's ideas and other theories about colour and vision, the most valuable of which is her critique of the theses of Wilhelm Ostwald, a German scientist who exercised an enormous influence on the development of artistic thought and practice in Russia during the first third of the twentieth century.

What strikes the reader most about Tillberg's study is its congenial relation to the object of its inquiry. This is particularly evident in the crystal-clear arrangement of the material: from a thorough analysis of the Colour Handbook, the author gradually expands the field of her inquiry, moving on to discuss Matjušin's theory within an ever-widening context that embraces the scientific and ideological implications of his work. This includes his attempts to improve human nature and his more general theses about the artist's view of the world, manifested through the prism of his ideas about the perception of colour. The book's rigorously logical composition resembles that of a fugue, whose subject is repeated at different levels and in different contexts. Among other merits of the book are its comprehensive description of the historical and cultural background against which the theory emerged and of the milieu in which Matjušin lived and worked. It is unlikely that Russia has produced a study with the thorough details and historical authenticity of Tillberg's book, with its descriptions of the legendary Leningrad GINKhUK (State Institute of Artistic Culture) where Matjušin had his Department of Organic Culture, or the story of the development of this scientific and artistic institution and its forced decline, and of the master's persecution. Of special value is the introduction of the ideas of Matjušin and his disciples to the context of the scientific understanding of vision and the nature of colour that was current in their time. In this respect the monograph can be called revolutionary. In contrast to the Russian tradition, which places most of the emphasis on the artistic aspects of Matjušin's research, the Swedish scholar's book reveals the theory's significance in proper scientific terms. Names that may have escaped the Russian reader's attention or even remained inaccessible to him are mentioned in the text. They include some of the figures who acted as catalysts for Matjušin's scientific work (Goethe, Chevreul, Hering, Rood and the Russian "founding fathers" of knowledge about the physiology of vision – Lazarev, Bexterev, etc. ). We are introduced to little-known contemporaries of Matjušin's who wrote about colour in different contexts – from the multi-talented mathematician N.D. Nyberg to the vulgar sociologist-art historians and dogmatic Marxists. In this way the monograph recreates the polyphony of this controversial era. The value of Matjušin's ideas for science is made clear, as well as the extra-scientific nature of his knowledge, which drew upon the traditions of Eastern philosophy and Bergsonianism that were so popular among the Russian mystics. Of interest, too, are Tillberg's reflections on the quest for scientific truth that characterized the abstract art of the Russian avant-garde.

As the author points out in her introduction, colour is often seen by those working in the humanities as a category of culture, in semantic terms and in isolation from the scientific underpinning of the problem. One of the book's major merits is that it manages to find a reasonable balance between these two sides of the coin. A goal of enormous importance is thereby achieved – the tracing of the fragile boundaries between nature and culture which in some eras are exposed and in others blurred, these phases representing important milestones in the development of man's relation to the world.

Another global issue that inevitably arises while reading Tillberg's monograph concerns the boundaries of subjective perception. The author uses Matjušin's eliminative approach on the problem of colour to demonstrate it from the standpoint of phenomenology: colour appears in the unity of its physical properties, as a state of matter, and at the same time as an object of perception, from the point of view of the subject, that is, from the standpoint of extra-material substance.

The book provokes the interested reader to further reflections lying well beyond the limits of the book itself. Thus, the all-embracing nature of the half-virtual, half-real world in Matjušin's organic approach to colour makes his theory relevant to the generation of the Internet and other electronic communication technologies. Tillberg's monograph can be viewed more broadly, as a contribution to current knowledge in the humanities in general. By this I am referring to the problem of vision as a fundamental problem of modern culture. This feature of the avant-garde discourse was known earlier, defined as the principle of self-referentiality (by Igor Smirnov), but in Tillberg's book it has received a number of deeper contextualizations. The principle of displacing the point of view towards the subject is of particular importance in the light of contemporary visual narratology, with its concept of the inner spectator. This is similar to the internal narrator in literature, but within the framework of a system of visual discourse that aims at an analysis of the communication structure of the message in fine art.

Margareta Tillberg's book also prompts reflections of a different kind, in particular, about the history of Soviet scholarship in the field of language and literature. After all, the principle of complementarity, which according to Matjušin is found in the dynamic perception of colour and form, should be in the early twentieth century after the discovery of the binomial structure of the atom, with its negative and positive charge of electrons. The revolutionary discoveries in physics also in many ways determined the innovative steps in linguistics which took place at around the same time – in particular the concept of the binary structure of the phoneme that was developed in the Prague Linguistic Circle during the 1920s by Roman Jakobson and others. Thus although Matjušin's theory was an organic part of the scientific and scholarly milieu of his age, it forms a bridge to the structuralism of the 1960s and 1970s, which led thinking in the humanities along entirely new lines of development, and from there to the study of the text as a whole. Tillberg's detailed study of Matjušin's work shows that in departing from the determination of the nature of colour in terms of the symbols and semantics supplied by traditional culture he does not isolate the problem of colour from the cultural context.

As the Swedish scholar's book makes clear, another problem of the scientific context of Matjušin's theory, especially with regard to expanded vision and the possibility of developing a 360-degree coverage of visual space, is centred in the phenomenology of corporeality. Although it was part of the Soviet utopia par excellence (the author correctly identifies its Enlightenment roots) the idea of forming a new type of human being with enhanced qualities – in particular, physical abilities – also fell in line with the experiments on the human body (organ transplants, the preservation of dead bodies, the cultivation of embryos in test tubes, etc.) that were sweeping across the whole of Russian and European science. Mixail Bulgakov's sarcastic dystopia in his novella "Heart of a Dog" not only became a metaphor for socialist construction, but also reflected the general

trends being followed by scientists all over the world at this time. Those trends included studying the limits of the human body and the chances of improving it, and even went so far as to consider the possibility of artificially creating a whole organism. During those years, the organic aspects of reality were studied in close connection with the spiritual ones, which were viewed as a continuation of matter in a world that was normally closed to human perception. Thus, in his research Matjušin reflected the general evolution of the ideas of Russian Symbolism, whose transformed spirituality was manifested during the 1920s in the form of the “dominant” of a physical code of culture.

The book's importance lies in its clarification of the artistic context of Matjušin's ideas. Tillberg says that compared to Kandinskij, whose writings are to a large extent based on the semantics of symbolism, Matjušin's originality in the study of colour lies in its independence from cultural convention. Matjušin, she suggests, focused his research mainly on the laws of psycho-physiological perception. As for Malevič, the author points to his metaphorical treatment of colour and says that his approach to the problem of form is characterized by a discourse that derives from the practices of literary criticism. This claim is debatable. It is well known that the main result of Malevič's discovery as a painter was that he managed to go beyond the logocentrism of European art: Suprematism marked the limits of the power of the word. This does not entirely correspond to the writings of this artist. Eclectic in style (they are mostly manifestoes, commentaries and theoretical postulates), they differ strongly from Matjušin's in their strategy. After all, as Tillberg herself shows, the subject of the arguments presented by the creator of the Black Square is not the laws of optics and their perception, but the nature of formal change in the history of art. It would be possible to broaden the field of comparison to include the relation between the texts of Pavel Filonov and his painting as an example of homogeneity, as well as the ideas and theories of the projectionists and the electroorganism theory of Kliment Redko as an example of the lack of homogeneity between theory and creative practice. A problem requiring further exploration, in my opinion, is the heterogeneity of the relation between the artistic work of avant-garde artists and their verbal texts, a relation which in each individual case displays a different algorithm. The uninitiated reader of Tillberg's book may find the discussion of the relationship between Matjušin the scientist and Matjušin the artist (and composer) a little insufficient, but, as the author clearly states, the treatment of this problem lies beyond the scope of a monograph such as this one, and therefore a complaint of that kind would be unjustified.

The prospects for further research on this topic are a different matter. Tillberg's book contains elements of the Colour Handbook analysis from the point of view of a frequency dictionary, but a more detailed study of Matjušin's work as a text, of its linguistic structure in the unity of semantic-syntactic organization could, we believe, help to fulfil the important task of identifying the implicit picture of the master's world, which is less present in his explicit declarations than in his patterns of thought and language processes.

The author suggests a comparison of Matjušin's theory of expanded vision and the “third eye” with the ideas of the OBERIU group and the philosophy of the “Činari”, which actively incorporated into their outlook both the views of P.D. Uspenskij on the fourth dimension and the occult tradition as a whole. However, this emphasis on the ideologies of the members of the association would divert attention from their literary works, which were based on a refined

type of philology and are not reducible to a system of intellectual postulates. For example, as we know, the poetry of Daniil Xarms in many ways rejected the Xlebnikov tradition, which was founded on word-creation and a special kind of mythopoeia which took root in European culture during the twentieth century largely thanks to the unique experience of the Russian avant-garde. This is particularly interesting in the light of Margareta Tillberg's book, with its perspective on the importance of the implicit level and of mythological thought.

The author does not mention the problem of myth directly. However, in addition to containing extremely valuable information which has not been accessible previously, and also presenting a convincing analysis of the material from an unprecedented viewpoint, the book is interesting in that it stimulates the mind and encourages the reader to make further reflections. Among these may be the possibility of reading Matjušin's theory through the prism of the mythopoetic component of the early twentieth century of Russian culture. It is well known that at the beginning of the last century a particularly close relationship emerged between myth and scientific knowledge. The practice of the avant-garde as well as the theoretical views espoused by its members in many ways (sometimes consciously, but often unconsciously) derived their inspiration from archaic cultural patterns that run deep in civilization (it is enough to mention in this context the works of V.N. Toporov and A. Hansen-Löve). Scholars have shown that these patterns determine both the structure of matter and the laws that govern the matching of the macro- and micro-worlds in the sphere of nature and the cosmos, and also lie at the basis of man's cerebral activity (Vjačeslav Vsevolodovič Ivanov). One of the most gifted artists of the avant-garde who recognized this connection and reflected it in his work and in his essays on the nature of art was the great film director, artist and thinker Sergej Ėjzenštejn. Of special interest, in the light of the perspective created by Tillberg's book, are his reflections on the eye that is, as it were, spread all over the body: Ėjzenštejn's theory combines ancient mythological tradition with scientific knowledge about the human organism. The consideration of this material would be an interesting supplement to Tillberg's analysis of the cultural and historical context of Matjušin's research.

Matjušin's unconscious archaism and his affiliation with the mythopoeia of the era manifests itself in the hidden idea of involution, which is brought to light in the reduction of the world's colour diversity and which permeated the whole atmosphere of the first decades of the last century. Following Xlebnikov, the descent to the basic elements of the language of colour and form found expression in such varied phenomena as the painting of Pavel Filonov and the poetry of Osip Mandel'stam: one unwittingly recalls the poet's lines addressed to those who are in the low-lying realms of primordial civilization: "who have a green grave/red breath, supple laughter". According to Mandel'stam, colour, which is found on the very first rung of biological evolution, refers to basic archetypal semantics. For Mandel'stam, the complementarity of red and green belongs to a series of fundamental oppositions like life/death and top/bottom. One cannot help hearing an echo of Matjušin, whose views on the basic elements of the image, and the idea of synesthesia, widely discussed in those years and resolved in various forms of art (we recall Skrjabin, to whom the book devotes what is perhaps an undeservedly short fragment), preserve within themselves a faithfulness to prototypical models.

During one's reading it is also hard to resist making other analogies with the mythical elements involved not only in the subject matter of Matjušin's theory, but also in his ways of reasoning. For example, if we ignore the purely scientific content, another theme which can be considered in the context of myth and which proceeds from the deeper layers of culture is that of light. This theme appears natural when applied to the nature of colour and vision, but it should not be forgotten that the motif of sunlight, which was an attribute both of Symbolism and of archaic Slavdom, permeated the entire historical avant-garde – from Larionov's Rayism and the militant godlessness of Suprematism (with whose birth Matjušin, as composer of the music for the opera "Victory over the Sun", was directly involved), to the theory of the electroorganism in the later avant-garde (Kliment Redko). In the context of myth we may also consider the theme of the new man – the mythologeme of novelty puts Matjušin at the very forefront of the avant-garde. Another concept that is mythological is Matjušin's idea of an intermediate colour that connects two opposing colours and gives them more intensity. The latter could be perceived in the spirit of Vladimir Propp's magical mediator, the problem posed by Matjušin and his team in their papers of the possibility of a connection between the visible and invisible worlds, based on the universal opposition life/death. And this 360-degree circumvolution returns us to the idea of cyclical reality that is so typical of the perception of space and time in archaic myths.

It would be possible to indulge in some minor nit-picking about the book's editorial preparation, and mention the lack of consistency in the form of some of the names in the text (the name of Rudolf Steiner [Штейнер] is often written as Shtainer [Штайнер], in accordance with the rules of German pronunciation, but ignoring the Russian tradition, and sometimes both forms are found on the same page). Similar discrepancies exist in relation to philosophical terms (theosophic/theosophical [теософский/теософический]), and there is some missing data (five volumes of works by Malevič have so far been published, not three as stated on pp. 370f.). One can hardly agree with the thesis expressed on page 383 that by the 1920s almost all the major avant-garde artists had left Russia (what about Malevič, Tatlin, Filonov?); the Russian reader will wince at the description of Vassilij Kandinskij as an expressionist (397), and the concept of futurism needs historical clarification when applied to the Russian avant-garde. However, even if these deficiencies were more numerous, they would have no impact on the high quality of the work as a whole.

My critical comments on the book in no way detract from its merits, and indeed add to the view that Tillberg's monograph itself possesses creativogenic energy. The reader is not forced to accept conclusions, but is invited to join in discussion with the author. And in her book, which is well-argued and characterized by strict logic of fact and thought, the author does not hide behind a guise of impersonal objectivism, as often happens in serious scholarly works. On the contrary, here we find a fresh, engaged, emotional tone and a clearly delineated and unique personality, that of the researcher and narrator herself. The reader cannot help being infected with the author's enthusiasm, devotion and love for her "main character" and the "text" of the place he inhabits – St. Petersburg, where traces of the great utopia still survive, not completely transformed into reality. For this reason, not only Russian humanities scholars but also the whole of the European Slavist community may consider themselves to have



been enriched by the publication of this talented book by Margareta Tillberg, which is a model of scholarly conscientiousness and human understanding.

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*Slavica v české řeči III. Část 1. Překlady ze západo- a jihoslovanských jazyků v letech 1891–1918.* Pod vedením Jiřího Bečky a Siegfrieda Ulbrechta a kol. (Zdena Koutenská a Jitka Taušová). Praha: Slovanský ústav AV ČR, Euroslavica 2008. 554 S.

Dieser Band bildet die Fortsetzung der großen Bibliographie aller Übersetzungen aus slavischen Sprachen in das Tschechische, deren erste beide Bände ich in dieser Zeitschrift im Jahr 2005 besprochen habe (Die Welt der Slaven 50, 2005, 186-188). Der erste Band war erstmals 1955 erschienen, wurde aber für die zweite Auflage von 2002 überarbeitet und ergänzt, der zweite Band erschien ebenfalls 2002.

Der nun vorliegende erste Halbband des dritten Bandes, bei dem als Herausgeber neben Josef Bečka Siegfried Ulbrecht hinzugetreten ist, umfasst nur die Übersetzungen aus west- und südslavischen Sprachen, während die beiden ersten Bände noch alle slavischen Sprachen einbezogen hatten. Dass diesmal die Übersetzungen aus den ostslavischen Sprachen einen eigenen Halbband erhalten sollen, liegt natürlich daran, dass im Untersuchungszeitraum aus dem Russischen deutlich mehr übersetzt wurde als aus allen anderen slavischen Sprachen.

Die Bibliographie stützt sich in ihrem Kern wie die vorhergehenden Bände auf die seit den frühen fünfziger Jahren des 20. Jh. durchgeführten bibliographischen Vorarbeiten der ursprünglich von Josef Bečka, dem Vater von Jiří Bečka, gegründeten Arbeitsgruppe. Diese Vorarbeiten reichten aber bei weitem nicht aus, u.a. mussten die mährischen Zeitschriften neu exzerpiert werden (sie waren damals ausgeklammert worden), und auch die Angaben zu den böhmischen Zeitschriften wurden von den jetzigen Herausgebern und ihren Mitarbeiterinnen noch einmal alle überprüft (vgl. hierzu die Ausführungen in der Einleitung auf S. 9f.). Dies galt auch für die Angaben zu Buchpublikationen, die ursprünglich aus dem seit 1901 erscheinenden „Urbáňkúv věstník bibliografický“ übernommen wurden, der sich aber bei Überprüfung als eher unvollständig erwies.

Die Bibliographie gliedert sich wie in den früheren Bänden nach den Zielsprachen, in alphabetischer Reihenfolge werden also erst Übersetzungen aus dem Bulgarischen, dann aus den beiden sorbischen Sprachen (zusammengefasst als „lužickosrbská literatura“), dem Polnischen, dem Slovenischen und dem Serbischen und Kroatischen, die wieder in einem Kapitel zusammengefasst sind. Innerhalb dieser Kapitel werden dann zunächst Anthologien und Textsammlungen, dann einzelne Autoren und schließlich anonyme Veröffentlichungen behandelt. Bei den Autoren werden Bücher und Veröffentlichungen in Zeitschriften getrennt aufgeführt, jeweils in alphabetischer Reihenfolge nach dem