

“An Urge To Take Off From The Earth”: How Malevich Embodies The Role of “Shamanic Artist” In His Early Career

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“ My new painting does not belong to the Earth exclusively. The Earth has been abandoned like a house infested with termites. And in fact, in man, his consciousness, there is a striving toward space. An urge to take off from the Earth.”¹ Thus Kazimir Malevich defined Suprematism, his ground-breaking movement of modernist art, a movement whose nihilistic geometricism shattered art historical conventions and established an innovative pictorial language founded on mathematical proportionality. Thus far, Suprematism, and indeed most of Malevich’s artistic oeuvre has largely been understood within a modernist frame of reference. But underneath this lay a mysticism whose roots can be found in the primitive spirituality of shamanism. This article will illustrate how Malevich assumed the role of “shamanic artist” and how he experienced and used shamanic principles and ideology as he established his artistic language. By analysing excerpts of his writings and by looking at his painting *Black Square* (1915), and comparing them with fundamental aspects of shamanic doctrine and practise, the primitive spirituality of Malevich’s oeuvre will be established. There are limitations to the evidence for such a conception, which relies largely on a mystical interpretation of underlying conceptual paradigms prominent in Malevich’s oeuvre. However, there are some convincing shamanic elements present in his work that cannot be ignored.

Shamanism is defined as an anthropological and ethnic spiritualism centred on the fundamental mystical and healing powers of the shaman.² It is an ideology which employs altered-states-of-consciousness and the “soul journey” in order to traverse the realms which constitute the cosmos, with the overall holistic aim of ensuring health and equilibrium to the individual, the community, and by extension, to the cosmos itself.³ The shaman himself is a mystical omniscient figure who acts as an intermediary between humanity and the deities.⁴ It would thus be reasonable to question how the paradigmatic modernity of Malevich’s work can have any connection to the primitive rituals and ideologies of the shamanic phenomenon. It is important to remember that Malevich’s artistic evolution did not occur in a cultural vacuum.⁵ Indeed, Malevich’s oeuvre frames a period when European society in general began to lose faith in its so-called “enlightened” modernity. Consequently there occurred an elevation of all things “primitive”. Shamanism, with its apparently primitive ideologies and ritualistic practises coupled with its ultimate telos of cosmic equilibrium, seemed to offer a solution to the problems of modernity.⁶ Moreover, Malevich was an important member of both the Donkey’s Tail and the Union of Youth artistic movements, with whom he frequently exhibited. Both of these groups promoted the importance of social and cultural primitivism and are thus of profound significance when considering the origins of Malevich’s shamanic interests and inspiration.⁷

The key proponents of the Donkey's Tail, Mikhail Larionov and Natalia Goncharova, used a variety of primitive sources including tribal cultural artefacts, ancient texts and folk *lubok* prints to inspire their work, and Malevich's membership enabled him to gain access to these shamanic sources. The primary aim of the Union of Youth was that of cultural syncretism for societal salvation, and consequently they advocated a great variety of artistic styles, provided access to cultural research, archives and foreign periodicals, and interspersed art with free-thinking literature, thus providing a rich contemplative context for Malevich's growing shamanic aspirations.⁸ For example, the Union of Youth promoted its aim of cultural syncretism in a theatrical evening entitled *Khoromnyya Deistva*, which took place on 27 January 1911 in the Suvorin Theatrical School.⁹ The significance of the event lay in its overall mystic atmosphere of "unity, of sincere-communal creativity" signified by colourful peasant activities including shamanic round dances.¹⁰

Another important artistic allegiance occurred in 1913 when Malevich became allied with the poets Aleksei Kruchenykh and Velimir Khlebnikov.¹¹ This union was perhaps manifested most prominently in Malevich's collaboration with Kruchenykh, Khlebnikov and Mikhail Matyushin in the First Futurist Congress, (18th – 20th July 1913) which culminated in the production of the Cubo-Futurist opera *Victory Over the Sun* (1913). This allegiance was especially significant for Malevich's evolution because it united artists and poets through a concern for the philosophical and mystical aspects of art. The most fundamental idea propounded by Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov was the theory of transrationalism, defined by the notion of zaum, a state of being that was "beyond the mind," where vision and language are perceived to be outside humanity's conscious realm. The concept of zaum postulated a higher reality, a cosmic realm outside of the visible world, only accessible to people, usually artists, who possessed a distinctively evolved perceptual ability.¹² As such, in the visual arts zaum equates the artist with the role of seer, providing him with the advanced clairvoyance of a preceptor of the new space. The sources for such theories of language are many and various, including Helena Blavatsky's mystical theosophy, Richard Maurice Bucke's notion of the cosmic consciousness, Peter Uspensky's understanding of the fourth dimension and the glossolalia practised by mystical and shamanic sects.¹³ Thus, the notions of transrationalism and zaum appear highly shamanic as they parallel shamanic ideologies, including the conception of higher cosmological realms and the need for a significant other (i.e. the shaman) in order to access them. In this way, the ultimate ethnographic and shamanic context in which Malevich found himself becomes evident, and it was indeed due to this context that shamanism became an inspiration to Malevich's artistic oeuvre.

As Malevich affirmed his Suprematist vision, he also redefined the role of the artist. He began to adopt the mantle of shamanic reverence, assuming the character of a clairvoyant, a prophet, a pedagogical leader, a social and cultural healer and, ultimately, a shaman. As his contemporary, Matyushin, declared in 1913: "Artists have always been knights, poets and prophets of space, in all times. Sacrificing to everyone, dying, they were opening eyes and teaching the crowd to see the great beauty of the world concealed from it."¹⁴ As he developed his conception of Suprematism, Malevich began not only to acquire those qualities which Matyushin identifies,

but also to fulfil this apparently shamanic conception of the artist's role, which is expressed in both his art and writings.

One of the fundamental aspects of the shamanic ideology is the necessity to initiate the individual in order that he might undertake his new role. This process is twofold: first the neophyte must undergo an ecstatic initiation, whereby he is tempted and tormented by the spirits in order that he might accept and understand his position; subsequently, a didactic initiation occurs where the individual is educated by elderly shamans in the requirements of his shamanic responsibilities.¹⁵ It appears that Malevich underwent such an initiatory experience: as he came to the Suprematist vision, he felt "a kind of timidity bordering on fear when I was called upon to leave 'the world of will and idea' in which I had lived and worked and in the reality of which I had believed. But the blissful feeling of liberating non-objectivity drew me into the 'desert' where nothing is real but feeling and feeling became the content of my life."¹⁶ This account parallels the ecstatic experiences documented by shamanic initiates, which frequently reference an initial feeling of profound fear at the prospect of leaving the security of one's familiar environment and adopting such a powerful role. This fear is subsequently overcome by the idyllic sensation of manifest liberty as the individual accepts his newfound role.¹⁷ For example, in the following account of a contemporaneous Yakut-Tungus shamanic initiate, the comparisons with Malevich's experience are evident: "Nine years I struggled with myself, and I did not tell anyone what was happening to me, as I was very afraid ... but when I started to shamanise I grew better."¹⁸ In their imprecision and sheer complexity, Malevich's artistic writings during this period parallel the accounts of shamanic initiates, suggesting the ecstatic nature of his new position.¹⁹

Malevich also references the sense of struggle, an essential paradigm of the shamanic condition, and the ultimate victorious freedom that prevailed as he adopted the precepts of Suprematism. In 1916 he declared:

I have transformed myself in the *zero of form* and dragged myself out of the *rubbish-filled pool of Academic art*. I have destroyed the ring of the horizon and escaped from the circle of things, from the horizon-ring which confines the artist and forms of nature... An artist is given talent in order that he may give to life his share of creation and increase the flow of life.²⁰

It is significant that Malevich references the "ring of the horizon," for a fundamental part of shamanic doctrine is the notion of the soul-journey, an ecstatic experience whereby the shaman must traverse the cosmological realms.²¹ By "destroying" the "ring of the horizon" Malevich suggests a spiritual flight which breaks the boundaries of conventional reality and enters higher dimensions.²² He assigns this journey to the artist for it is through his talent that such realms must be traversed and revealed.

Having undergone his ecstatic initiation and indeed having accepted his new shamanic position, Malevich subsequently took on the role of a mystical pedagogic leader, paralleling the process of shamanic didactic initiation.²³ Malevich's teaching career began in 1919 when

he moved to Vitebsk and began to teach at the art school. This created an opportunity for Malevich to embark upon a pedagogic educational project to inspire and teach students the important premises of his Suprematist vision. Malevich quickly gained a devoted following of students and began to convert the school's curriculum to conform to his didactic ideals, and under his leadership, his students named themselves UNOVIS (Advocates of the New Art). Their primary aim was the transformation of the world through the ideology of Suprematism, which encompassed an ultimately shamanic telos: cultural salvation through doctrinal ideals. Malevich's moral mission was to educate and guide his pupils in the Suprematist ways, just as the sage shaman might guide his initiates. He adopted a medical metaphor to describe his approach, believing he could "treat" his students through shamanistic methods.²⁴ Indeed, through "isolation of the individual" – an experience of supreme isolation characterised by the shamanic ecstatic initiation process – and penetrating "inquiries," he believed he could liberate his students' latent talents.²⁵

Malevich expressed the shamanic role of the artist through his teaching in various ways. For example, he imbued painting with a philosophical element, arguing that the artwork was no longer a two-dimensional representational canvas, but instead that it signified a series of events which could be defined by the artist's psychic behaviour. The painting thus became a conceptual realm determined by what Malevich called "the forming element," a condition to be achieved by the artist once he had mastered the vast edifice of changing sensory perceptions and channelled them into a uniform vision.²⁶ Such sense impressions would attempt to overwhelm the artist, but would yield through persistence and mastery.²⁷ Such a conception is ultimately shamanic, for in the artist's epic struggle against the challenges of his position to the ultimate telos of a vision of equality, he mirrors the shamanic ecstatic soul journey, whereby the shaman battles spirits in order to achieve cosmic equilibrium.²⁸ Furthermore, Malevich advocated cultural renovation through his art, as can be seen by his transformation of the provincial Vitebsk town into a spectacle of colour in 1920, covering the entire town with Suprematist symbols.²⁹ As Sergei Eisenstein stated, "This is Vitebsk 1920. Kasimir Malevich's brush has passed over its walls. 'The squares of the town are our palette' is the message that these walls convey."³⁰ But Malevich did not wish to be alone in the height of his vision; instead, he proclaimed, "Follow me, comrade aviators! Swim into the abyss. I have set up the semaphores of Suprematism... Infinity is before you."³¹ This quotation demonstrates Malevich's aspiration that Suprematism would enable everyone to journey into the realm of cosmic equilibrium.

Malevich was not alone in his assignment of a privileged mystical status to the artist. Indeed, it is likely that Malevich encountered the work of Peter Uspensky, whose primary works, *The Fourth Dimension* (1909) and *Tertium Organum* (1912), would have provided him with an esoteric context, based on heightened intuition, with which to ascertain and verify his conception of the pre-eminent artist.³² Uspensky believed that art was the means by which to penetrate the hidden noumenal realm that lay behind all phenomena.³³ "Wishing to understand the noumenal world," he stated, "we must seek a hidden meaning in everything."³⁴ Uspensky believed that it was "the soul of the artist" which could reveal this meaning, stating:

The phenomenal world is merely a means for the artist – just as colours are for the painter, and sounds for the musician – a means for the understanding of the noumenal and the expression of that understanding. At the present stage of our development we possess nothing so powerful, as an instrument of knowledge of the world of causes, as art... The artist must be a clairvoyant: he must see that which others do not see. And he must be a magician, must possess the gift of making others see what they do not see by themselves, but what he sees.³⁵

This quote reveals the shamanic characteristics that Uspensky believed the essential obligation of the artist. In reverencing the artist's "clairvoyance" and "magical" qualities, Uspensky parallels those characteristics embodied by the shamanic figure. Moreover, the journey from the phenomenal realm to the noumenal one equates to the fundamental traversing of cosmological realms in the shamanic soul journey. Malevich himself confirmed the supremacy of the artist's status, when he declared, "This is how I reason about myself and elevate myself into a Deity saying that I am all and that besides me there is nothing," and "I am the beginning of everything, for in my consciousness worlds are created."³⁶ These statements parallel the deific status of the shaman and the notion of the cosmological realms created in the ecstatic soul-journey. Uspensky further heightened the fundamental significance of art in his statement: "Cosmic consciousness is also possible of attainment [sic.] through the emotion attendant upon creation – in painters, musicians and poets. Art in its highest manifestations is a path to cosmic consciousness."³⁷ The idea that the development of the intuitive creation became a vehicle for attaining consciousness of an ultimate reality deeply inspired Malevich's Suprematist vision.³⁸

The blatant geometric iconography of Malevich's *Black Square* (1915) may have referenced the fourth dimension, which can be equated to Uspensky's noumenal realm. In his work *Man the Square* (1912), Claude Bragdon attempted to explain how one might enter the fourth dimension, and consequently created an analogy whereby the phenomenal visible world of man is parallel to a plane that is one section of a cube that represents the noumenal realm.³⁹ This cube could be defined as God or the "Great Self" and was composed of an infinite number of smaller cubes that were the higher intuitive selves of men. In Bragdon's analogy, most people, being confined to a consciousness of only the visible two-dimensional phenomenal world, have no knowledge of their potential cubic selves, nor are they aware that a higher spatial dimension exists. However, among the "plane-beings" were those who would seek an explanation of the phenomena of their two-dimensional realm. They would notice how certain plane-beings, such as Christ, did not alter their shape throughout their phenomenal existence, but instead appeared as "serene squares."⁴⁰ Indeed, the fourth dimension was supposed to exude, in Uspensky's words, "A feeling of communality with everyone. The unity of everything. The sensation of world harmony," an expression of the ultimate shamanic equilibrium.⁴¹ Desiring this equilibrium, the inquisitive plane-being would attempt to alter his shape to a square, but, as Bragdon states, "Failing in every effort to modify his perimeter, he might conceive the idea that a change of contour could be brought about only by a change of consciousness."⁴² Hence, the iconic square that dominates Malevich's canvas has a vast significance, for it can be interpreted

as representing the transition between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds, asserting a self-image that can be equated with the vast realm of the fourth dimension.⁴³ As Malevich wrote: "A hung plane of pictorial colour on a sheet of white canvas immediately gives a strong sensation of space to our consciousness. It transfers me into a bottomless waste where you sense the creative points of the universe about yourself."⁴⁴ In short, Bragdon's inquisitive plane-being, who recognises the limitations of his phenomenal existence, equates to Malevich's shamanic conception of an artist who breaks the boundaries of natural representation to reveal higher cosmological dimensions.

Malevich's text *God is not Cast Down* (1922) reveals that his vision of God is not an allusion to any conventional conception of a religious deity but a trans-valuation of such structured beliefs, which produces an embodiment of a Nietzschean "superman" in the form of a "super-artist." As such, he implies that man himself, in undertaking the role of the artist, can reach a divine perfection, for the concept of God is an ultimate reality intuitively revealed within oneself, consequently enabling man to act as "God."⁴⁵ Moreover, man in the form of demi-god becomes the victor over nature. As Malevich proclaimed: "Nature created her own landscape... in contrast to the form of man. The canvas of a creator-painter is a place where he builds a world of his own intuition."⁴⁶ Here, Malevich demonstrates that, in his pre-eminent position, the artist has broken the boundaries of the conventional natural realm, and traversed into a higher noumenal realm governed by his intuition. He further advocates this journey by stating: "First of all [the artist] freed his legs and then raised them – this was the first wrench from earth; and then, gradually, through the speed of wheels and the wings of aeroplane, he sailed further and further to the limit of the atmosphere, and then further still to his orbits, joining the rings of movement to the absolute."⁴⁷ Here Malevich signifies the ultimate hegemony of the artist and the fundamental significance of his revelation of the true cosmic reality. In his escapist imagery, Malevich once again parallels the shamanic flight of the soul. Such an attribution to the artist of an underlying sense of divinity further bolsters Malevich's mystical supremacy of the artist. By equating the artist to God, but redefining the Christian conception of the deity, and expressing the spiritual escapism of this new super-artist's journey, one is left with a mystical authoritative figure, that can arguably be identified as the shaman.

Malevich further reinforced the importance of creative intuition by relating his ultimate reality with the human skull.⁴⁸ As he declared:

Man's skull represents the same infinity for the movement of conceptions. It is equal to the universe, in it is contained all that it sees in it... Is not the whole universe that strange skull in which meteors, suns, comets and planets rush endlessly? And are they not simply concepts of cosmic thoughts, and are not their entire movement and space and they themselves non-objective? Man is also a Cosmos or Hercules around which rotate suns and their systems; similarly there revolve around him in a whirlwind all the objects he has created, and, like the sun, he guides them and draws them after him into the unknown path of the infinite... Man, finding himself in the nucleus of universal stimulus...⁴⁹

By equating the human skull to the universe and proclaiming that man is at its “nucleus” Malevich reflected upon the fundamental importance of the artist and his creative intuition. It is through the artist that true perfection can be reached, just as the shaman is a significant mystical figure in society who strives to bring about cosmic equilibrium. As such, Malevich assigned a cosmic dimension to his new art: art is no longer a representational object but rather the means by which “perfection” can be achieved. In Suprematism, wrote Malevich, “we form our own time...with our time and forms, and place the stamp of our face, leaving it in the flow of centuries where it will be recognised,” thus, pronouncing the significance of such art and, by implication, the role of the artist.⁵⁰

In conclusion, Malevich assumed the role of shamanic artist and used shamanic principles and ideology as he established his artistic language of Suprematism. Working in a profoundly shamanic context based in the Neo-Primitive ideology and the innovative zaum language of Kruchenykh and Khlebnikov, Malevich underwent a series of experiences that paralleled those of the shaman. Beginning with his ecstatic initiation, which was marked by his sense fear in what he encountered, and in the sense of the spiritual journey he must undertake, Malevich went on to embody the role of a mystical pedagogic leader through the shamanic pedagogic methods employed on his students and through the ultimate telos of his Suprematist vision. Finally, through the allegorical implications of Uspensky’s “fourth dimension,” and indeed in the heightened status of art and his embodiment of the Nietzschean “super-artist,” Malevich redefined the role of art and the artist to align with a more mystical ideology, embarking on his spiritual flight and expressing such ideals in both his writings and his art. Malevich thus imbued his art with an underlying shamanic vision and underlined the severity of his artistic mission, emphatically declaring: “If all artists could see the crossroads of these celestial paths, if they could comprehend these monstrous runways and the weaving of our bodies with the clouds in the sky, then they would not paint chrysanthemums.”⁵¹

- 1 Quoted in C. Douglas, *Kazimir Malevich* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1994) 26.
- 2 M. Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor* (New York: SUNY Press, 1993) 105.
- 3 M. Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964) 1-5; N. Drury, *The Elements of Shamanism* (Dorset: Element Books Limited, 1989) 1.
- 4 Drury, *Shamanism*, 1, 6; M. Winkelman, *Shamanism: The Neural Ecology of Consciousness and Healing* (US: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000) 57.
- 5 P. Stupples, 'Malevich and the Liberation of Art,' *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 2001, 12
- 6 Eliade, *Shamanism*, 7-8.
- 7 Douglas, Malevich, 14; C. Douglas, *Swans of Other Worlds: Kazimir Malevich and the Origins of Abstraction in Russia* (Studies in the Fine Arts: The Avant-Garde) (Texas: UMI Dissertation Services, 2004) 30.
- 8 At the time there was also a growth in the accessibility of shamanic research in Russia provided by the Eastern Siberian Association. Writers such as Czaplicka, Khangelov, Banzarov, Potanin and Mikhailovski produced numerous articles, which were collected by the Union of Youth and were accessible to Malevich.
- 9 J. Howard, *The Union of Youth: An Artist's Society of the Russian Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), 73.
- 10 L. Kamyshnikov, 'Khoromnyya deistva. Spektakl' Soyuz molodezhi,' *Obozrenie teatrov*, January 29, 1911; Howard, *The Union of Youth*, 84-6. The production was so popular that it was repeated on 2 February 1912.
- 11 R. Crone, 'Malevich and Khlebnikov: Suprematism Reinterpreted,' *Artforum*, Vol. 17, 1978, 38-48.
- 12 C. Gray, *The Russian Experiment in Art: 1863-1922* (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1962) 134-137; C. Humphreys, 'Khlebnikov and Puni: Discovering the Language of the Stars' in *Cubo-Futurism in Russia, 1912-1922: The Transformation of a Painterly Style*, (PhD diss., University of St. Andrews, 1989) 144-5; G. Janacek, *Zaum: The Transrational Poetry of Russian Futurism* (San Diego: San Diego State University Press, 1996). For examples of Khlebnikov's works including his *Shaman and Venus* (1910), which provides an indication of his interest in the Shamanic phenomenon, see V. Khlebnikov, *Collected Works* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- 13 Douglas, *Malevich*, 15. By this time, Konovalov had compiled and analysed extensive ethnographical and anthropological field reports on multiple Russian mystical and shamanic sects in D. Konovalov, *Religious Ecstasy in Russian Mystical Sectarism* (Moscow: Moscow Theological Academy, 1908). This book was readily available to the avant-garde artists and poets and was frequently cited in journals such as *Troe*. See C. Douglas, *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985* (Los Angeles: County Museum of Art, 1986), exhibition catalogue, 187.
- 14 Quoted in Douglas, *Malevich*, 15-16.
- 15 For examples and further details of this, see Winkelman, *Shamanism*, 77, 82; Eliade, *Shamanism*, 13-14, 34, 35, 38; Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism*, 85-6; and P. Vitebsky, *The Shaman: Voyages of the Soul, Trance, Ecstasy and Healing from Siberia to the Amazon* (Britain: Duncan Baird Publishers, 1995) 34, 46, 52, 59.
- 16 L. Hilbersheimer, 'Malevich and the Non-Objective World,' *Art Journal*, Vol. 20, 1960-1961, 83; T. Andersen, *Moderne russisk kunst 1910-1925* (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1967), 64.
- 17 Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism*, 79.
- 18 M. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia: A Study in Social Anthropology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1914), 7.

- Malevich was likely to have come into contact with this text as it was referenced by several members of the Union of Youth, of which he was also a member, and it was among the collections of his contemporaries Larionov and Khlebnikov. Other texts in the libraries of the avant-garde circle include the vast six-volume tome on Russian antiquities by Kondakov: N. Kondakov, and Count I. Tolstoy, *Russkiya drevnosti v pamyatnikakh i iskusstva* (St Petersburg: Russian Antiquities 1889-1899), and the Siberian shamanic expedition records published by the Imperial Society of the Friends of Natural Science, Anthropology and Ethnography.
- 19 R. Lipsey, *The Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art* (Boston: Shambhala, 1988), 146. See also K. Malevich, *The Artist, Infinity, Suprematism, (Unpublished Writings 1913-33)*, ed. T. Andersen (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1978).
 - 20 K. Malevich, "'From Cubism and Futurism to Suprematism': The New Realism in Painting," (1916), in T. Andersen, ed., *Malevich* (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1970) 51. Italics in original.
 - 21 Eliade, *Shamanism*, 34. Malevich would certainly have come across contemporary accounts of the shamanic soul-journey, most notably in V. Mikhailovskii, 'Shamanism in Siberia and European Russia, Being the Second Part of Shamanstvo,' *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, Vol. 24, 1895, 62-100, 126-58; W. Borgoras, 'The Chukchee-Religion,' *The Jesup North Pacific Expedition: Memoirs of the American Museum of Natural History*, Vol. 11, 1907; S. Shashkov, *Shamanstvo v Sibiri* (St Petersburg: ZIRGO, 1864); and Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia*.
 - 22 John Bowlt refers to the cosmological significance of Malevich's suprematist vision in his exhibition catalogue: J. Bowlt, N. Mislser, and E. Petrova, eds., *The Russian Avant-Garde Siberia and the East* (Italy: Skira Editore, 2013) 277, 303.
 - 23 Eliade, *Shamanism*, 13-14.
 - 24 Andersen, *Malevich*, 32; Douglas, *Malevich*, 29-31.
 - 25 Vitebsky, *The Shaman*, 57.
 - 26 Andersen, *Malevich*, 34-5.
 - 27 Ibid.
 - 28 Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism*, 85-6.
 - 29 J. Golding, *Paths to the Absolute* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000) 78-9
 - 30 Quoted in R. Hunt, 'The Constructivist ethos: Russia 1913-32,' *Art Forum*, 6 1967.
 - 31 J. Milner, *Kazimir Malevich And The Art Of Geometry* (Yale: Yale University Press, 1996) 171.
 - 32 It is likely that Malevich encountered Uspensky's writings, for not only are there numerous parallels between Uspensky's ideas and the development of Malevich's Suprematist vision, but also Uspensky's work *Tertium Organum: The Third Canon of Thought: A Key to the Enigmas of the World* was published in Russian in 1912 and was circulated amongst the members of the Russian avant-garde; see Milner, *Kazimir Malevich*, 221. Moreover, Malevich's contemporary and friend, Matiushin, also published writings by Uspensky in the contemporary journal *Soiuz Molodezhi* in 1913, a journal to which Malevich also contributed; see 'O Knige Metsanzhe-Gleza "Du Cubisme,"' *Soiuz Molodezhi*, Vol. 3, 1913, 25, 28 which references *Tertium Organum* specifically.
 - 33 Lipsey, *The Spiritual*, 143; M. King, 'Concerning the Spiritual in Twentieth-Century Art and Science,' *Leonardo*, Vol. 31, 1998, 23; and L. Henderson, *The Fourth Dimension and Non-Euclidean Geometry in Modern Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).
 - 34 P. Uspensky, *Tertium Organum: The Third Canon of Thought: A Key to the Enigmas of the World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1959) 131.
 - 35 Uspensky, *Tertium Organum*, 133, 145.

- 36 Malevich, *The Artist*, 29.
- 37 Uspensky, *Tertium Organum*, 301; see also S. Compton, 'Malevich's Suprematism –The Higher Intuition,' *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 118, 1976, 585.
- 38 W. Sherwin Simons, 'Kasimir Malevich's "Black Square": The Transformed Self: Part Three: The Icon Unmasked,' *Arts Magazine*, No. 2, 1978, 129.
- 39 C. Bragdon, *Man the Square* (Rochester, New York: The Manas Press, 1912). Reprinted in C. Bragdon, *A Primer of Higher Space, The Fourth Dimension, to which is added Man the Square, A Higher Space Parable* (Rochester, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1913), 14.
- 40 Sherwin Simons, 'The Icon Unmasked,' 132-4. Such a concept was initially established in Edwin Abbott's novel *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions* (Tennessee: Perseus Publishing, 1884), which influenced the writings of Uspensky, Bragdon, Hinton and many other thinkers and artists concerned with the concept of the 4th dimension in the early twentieth century.
- 41 Uspensky, *Tertium Organum*, 260.
- 42 Bragdon, *Man the Square*, 21; Sherwin Simons, 'The Icon Unmasked,' 132-4.
- 43 Sherwin Simons, 'The Icon Unmasked,' 132-4.
- 44 Quoted in S. Bojko, 'Malevich's Letters' in K. Kraus, ed., *From Surface to Space: Russia 1916 – 1924* (Cologne: Galerie Gmurzynska, 1974) 192.
- 45 Golding, *Paths*, 76; Sherwin Simons, 'The Icon Unmasked,' 129.
- 46 Quoted in Gray, *The Russian Experiment*, 199-200.
- 47 K. Malevich, 'God is not Cast Down,' (1920), in T. Andersen, ed., *K.S. Malevich: Essays on Art 1915-1933* (Copenhagen: Borgen, 1968) 197.
- 48 Golding, *Paths*, 76.
- 49 Malevich, 'God is not Cast Down,' 193-7.
- 50 K. Malevich, 'To the New Limit,' (1916), in Andersen, *K.S. Malevich*, 51; Sherwin Simons, 'The Icon Unmasked,' 129.
- 51 K. Malevich, 'The Art of the Savage and its Principle,' (1915), in Andersen, *K.S. Malevich*, 29.