

“SMOOTHLY GLIDING IMAGES”:  
LEONID ANDREYEV’S VERBAL AND VISUAL IMAGERY

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## Introduction

It is hard to describe what first attracted me to Leonid Andreyev, but somehow I felt a connection to him from across an ocean and a century. In a class surveying the development of the Russian short story, I read a couple of his more well-known novellas: “The Red Laugh” (1904) and “The Seven Who Were Hanged” (1908), and was struck by this writer’s directness—the fearlessness with which his novellas tackled seemingly ineffable concepts and ideas. I was struck by the depth of his emotional understanding—his ability to transport his reader to an alien, yet somehow familiar state of mind. Perhaps most of all I was struck by his imagery—his vibrant, swirling descriptions that soar beyond the confines of logic, space, and time, passing in and out of mental focus before fading into oblivion or collapsing inwardly upon themselves.

I later discovered that Andreyev was also an accomplished visual artist. His paintings evoke the swirling Expressionistic energy of Edvard Munch (1863-1944), and in Andreyev’s paintings I saw parallels with his writing. I was not alone in this intuition. Andreyev’s granddaughter, Olga Carlisle, writes that she remembered seeing these same paintings as a young girl: “They filled me with a special dread, which I recognized again years later, when I first read some of his stories and plays” (Carlisle 1987, 6). As much as I suspected parallels between Andreyev’s visual creations and literary works, I found that I lacked the vocabulary and theoretical framework to express this beyond the highly academic utterance: “It just *is*.”

What I have found in the course of this project is not only that there is a legitimate academic framework for comparing the verbal and pictorial arts—one that does not have to resort to words such as “feel” or “sense”—but also that Leonid Andreyev, as a gifted painter and writer, is an excellent case study for an exploration of the intersection of literature and the visual arts. The following pages will attempt to show that Leonid Andreyev’s visual and verbal arts are

intimately related, and the common ground between them—the image—acts as a vehicle for Andreyev's message.

Chapter one, "The Free Sunbeams," will introduce Andreyev to those who may not be familiar with his work and biography. The chapter will situate Andreyev within relevant currents of early-twentieth century Russia, in an effort to illustrate his tendency to defy cultural conventions of every kind. In chapter two, entitled A Fruitful Dilettante, I will investigate Andreyev's activity as a visual artist by looking at the various ways his visual art interacts with his writing. This chapter will examine the conflicting portraits of Judas Iscariot found within Andreyev's novella "Judas Iscariot and the Others" (henceforth "Judas Iscariot," 1907); I will argue that Andreyev's paintings of Judas reveal much about the aesthetic and philosophical interests that prompted him to write his controversial novella. Chapter three, "The Walls Crumble," will explore Andreyev's famous story, "The Seven Who Were Hanged," a novella that transmits its meaning through the creation of a verbal image that de-limits space, suspends time, and, ultimately, transcends death. In the conclusion I will suggest new avenues of research for Andreyev scholarship that might place greater emphasis on both the visual component of Andreyev's lifework and the viscosity that is present in his writing.

## 1. “The Free Sunbeams”: Leonid Andreyev and His Time

Leonid Andreyev (1871-1919) challenged and expanded the limits of literature in his time. Virtually unknown in the West today, he was once considered one of Russia’s most celebrated and original writers. He was known across oceans as a provocative and innovative voice that dared readers to think beyond the confines of their reality. The purpose of this chapter is not only to introduce the reader to Andreyev, but also to his place and time, of which he was a product.

Early twentieth century in Russia was an era of dramatic political and artistic upheaval. In his lifetime Andreyev saw the collapse of the Russian Empire, the founding of a democratic Russian republic of 1917, and the Bolshevik military coup that established Soviet autocracy. Prior to these momentous events, widespread societal discontent led to social polarization while, in the artistic world, a new generation of writers challenged and rejected dominant literary convention. These events and processes provided the story of Andreyev’s life with its setting, and they very much influenced his development as an artist.

Who was Leonid Andreyev, and how did he fit into this period of upheaval and experimentation?

### Early Life and Artistic Beginnings<sup>1</sup>

Leonid Nikolayevich Andreyev was born on August 21 (Old Style, August 9), 1871, in the provincial town of Oryol in the central Russian woodlands about 200 miles south of Moscow. His father, Nikolai Andreyev (d. 1888), earned a modest income as a land-tax surveyor.

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<sup>1</sup> This biographical sketch draws from various sources, including Alexander Kaun’s *Leonid Andreyev: A Study* (1924), James B. Woodward’s *Leonid Andreyev: A Critical Study* (1969), Josephine Newcombe’s monograph *Leonid Andreyev* (1973), and Richard Davies’ introduction to Leonid Andreyev from *Photographs by a Russian Writer: An Undiscovered Portrait of Pre-Revolutionary Russia* (1989).

Andreyev's mother, Anastasiya (d. 1920), was a descendent of an impoverished Polish aristocratic family that had relocated to Oryol and became functionally Russianized. Despite financial insecurity, Andreyev and his five siblings lived a happy childhood and received a quality education. Andreyev writes in his autobiography that his "predilection for artistic activity belonged by inheritance to his maternal line" (cited in Kaun 155). Andreyev's mother was a daily source of Russian folklore and mythology; under her guidance, Andreyev learned to read at a young age and soon developed a passion for literature and the theater. Andreyev's mother was also responsible for his introduction to visual art and encouraged him to draw and paint as a child. From a very early age, Andreyev displayed talent as a visual artist, which he fostered throughout his life.

The relative freedom of Andreyev's childhood made his transition into the regimental and regulated environment of formal education difficult.<sup>2</sup> He studied at the Oryol *gimnaziya* from 1882 to 1891, where he had a reputation as an intelligent and talented, but indolent and reckless, student (see Woodward 5). In an interview with American journalist and translator Herman Bernstein, Andreyev recalled that his fondest memories from his time at the *gimnaziya* were "the rare occasions when I was sent out from the classroom.... The sunbeams, the free sunbeams, which penetrated some cleft and which played with the dust in the hallway—all this was so mysterious, so interesting, so full of a peculiar, hidden meaning" (Bernstein 51). Though not an exceptional student, Andreyev was, however, an avid reader whose favorite authors were Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-81) and Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849). He also explored controversial works by the Nihilist critic Dmitri Pisarev (1840-1868) and the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer

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<sup>2</sup> Educational reforms passed in 1866 reorganized the Russian education system and aimed to inhibit students from pursuing the study of "dangerous" subjects. The "harmless" topics of Greek, Latin and Church Slavic were emphasized at the expense of history, natural science and modern languages (see Kaun 24).

(1788-1860), the reading of which was discouraged in the intellectually repressed Russia of the 1880s and 1890s. These adolescent years also revealed a self-destructive tendency in Andreyev that persisted until his death.<sup>3</sup>

Andreyev was seventeen years old when his father's sudden death in 1888 forced him to assume the responsibility of chief financial provider for the entire household. He helped his mother support and educate his siblings, notably by painting and selling portraits. In 1891, Andreyev was admitted to St. Petersburg University where he studied law until he transferred to Moscow a year later to complete his studies. After he attempted to commit suicide twice in 1894, Andreyev's family joined him in Moscow. Andreyev's family brought with it much-needed stability, though their struggle with poverty continued. It was around this time that Andreyev began experimenting with literature—he wrote in his autobiography that his first efforts at writing were “due not so much to an infatuation with literature as to hunger” (cited in Kaun 26). His first attempts were for the most part unsuccessful, but by 1895 a few of his first short stories appeared in provincial publications, having been rejected by the more exclusive literary journals in St. Petersburg and Moscow.

In 1897, Andreyev completed his examinations and graduated from Moscow University with the intention of working as a lawyer, but his autobiography suggests that he was not very successful in this endeavor (see Woodward 14). He soon began working as a court reporter for the Moscow newspaper the *Courier*, where the editorial board noticed Andreyev's raw artistic talent that transformed routine recapitulations of the goings on of the court into vibrant

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<sup>3</sup> In his chapter of *A Book About Leonid Andreyev (BLA)*, Gorky recalls Andreyev's account of a 'game' played during his childhood that involved lying down on a railroad track and letting a train pass over, in an attempt to “test fate” (see *BLA* 13). *BLA* is published as part of Frederick H. White's *Memoirs and Madness: Leonid Andreev Through the Prism of the Literary Portrait*, 2006.



psychological portraits of the defendant. They encouraged him to submit original stories for publication, and Andreyev was soon promoted from court reporter to feuilletonist<sup>4</sup> where he began producing regular columns on a range of topics. In the years that Andreyev spent at *Courier* (1897-1901), the paper published twenty-eight stories, as well as hundreds of satirical articles, court reports, play and literary reviews, and politically charged criticisms. Later, Andreyev would regard his time at *Courier* as a sort of literary apprenticeship, where his skills as a writer really developed (see Newcombe 18). In April of 1898, Andreyev was asked to write an Easter story, which he titled “Bargamot and Garaska.” This moment is considered by most scholars to be the spark that ignited Andreyev’s literary career (see Woodward 18).

### **Development as a Writer**

Alexei Maximovich Peshkov (1868-1936), better known as Maxim Gorky, was at the height of his fame as a political activist and writer when he came across Andreyev’s “Bargamot and Garaska” in *Courier*. Gorky reached out to Andreyev and encouraged his writing, initiating a long and tumultuous friendship that propelled Andreyev to the center of Russian literary activity. Gorky invited Andreyev to participate in a loosely organized group of young liberal realists called the *Sreda* (Wednesday) group.<sup>5</sup> In 1901, Andreyev was able to publish a collection of ten of his best stories with the help of Gorky. The collection—which included some conventionally ‘realist’ stories, such as “The Little Angel” and “Once There Lived,” as well as more

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<sup>4</sup> A writer of short, light topical articles that ranged from artistic, social and political criticism to humorous anecdotes and fictive musings. Andreyev employed an assortment of pseudonyms in his feuilletons, the most common being “James Lynch” (see Kaun 38).

<sup>5</sup> Founded by Nikolai Telezhov (1867-1957) in 1899, *Sreda* was a place for like-minded artists to meet and discuss their works in a critical setting. Meetings were usually devoted to the reading and dissection of new works by names such as Gorky, Ivan Bunin (1870-1953; Nobel Prize for Literature, 1933), and occasionally Anton Chekhov (1860-1904). Sometimes artists of different media such as the painter Isaac Levitan (1860-1900), singer Fyodor Shalyapin (1873-1938) and pianist Sergei Rachmaninov (1873-1943) would join and participate in the weekly gatherings.

philosophically inclined stories such as “Silence” and “The Lie”—was an immediate success, selling over 18,000 copies in under a year and receiving nearly unanimously favorable criticism. Andreyev was suddenly a shining star in Russian literary circles, and his fame was only magnified by the publication of “The Abyss” in 1901 and “In the Fog” in 1902.<sup>6</sup> His literary success had brought with it long awaited financial security and enabled his marriage to Aleksandra Veligorskaya in February 1902. The birth of their son, Vadim, in December of the same year brought unprecedented balance to his life.

Andreyev’s success enabled him to assess his place as a writer with improved clarity. Andreyev had entered into the Russian literary scene while it was in the midst of what could be called an identity crisis.<sup>7</sup> The nineteenth century produced the “Golden Age of Russian literature,”—characterized by what Derek Offord calls “the oneness of Russian thought and imaginative literature” (Offord 134). Due to pressure from a prominent school of social-minded critics, the Russian novelist of the nineteenth century was expected to engage with topical issues of societal, philosophical or broad national significance in their art. The outstanding novelists of the time Ivan Turgenev (1818-1883), Dostoyevsky, and Tolstoy strove for objective representation of their characters as they addressed some of the most pressing social and spiritual issues faced by Russian society. Not able to match the intensity of spiritual searches conducted

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<sup>6</sup> These particular stories dealt explicitly with the psychological implications of rape, a subject that had been largely avoided in Russian literature, and this of course brought scandal and intrigue to Andreyev’s name. Notable criticism came from both Leo Tolstoy and his wife, including Leo Tolstoy’s famous declaration: “He’s trying to scare me, but I’m not,” which propelled Andreyev to the forefront of national conversation and cemented his place among Russia’s most controversial literary celebrities.

<sup>7</sup> As Dostoyevsky and Turgenev died in 1881 in 1883 respectively, and Tolstoy underwent a religious conversion that included a renunciation of his previous writing in the mid-1880s, Russia entered a period of literary stagnation. This was exacerbated by the assassination of Tsar Alexander II by terrorists in 1881, which was followed by his son’s Alexander III’s crackdown on intellectual liberties (see Basker 136).

by these beacons of the nineteenth-century tradition, the writers who followed in their footsteps saw literature as a medium for social criticism and addressed topical issues. The loose scholarly term “critical realism”<sup>8</sup> is traditionally applied to this school. The realist writers of the 1890s and later found themselves navigating narrow terrain, with the pressures of censorship from the government on one side and the expectation of their social-minded critics and readers that their work directly and decisively confront the changes taking place in their country on the other.

### **Blazing His Own Trail**

While his early stories certainly explore topical, social, and political themes, these issues increasingly became a mere framework for Andreyev’s investigation of more profound questions of existence.<sup>9</sup> Richard Davies remarks that “the works Andreyev wrote between 1903 and 1906 reflected his new personal and professional fulfillment in their greater artistic mastery, philosophical range and psychological penetration” (13). Andreyev was still active with *Sreda*, but was increasingly aware of his artistic and intellectual incompatibility with the group of realists.

In the void left at the end of the “Golden Age of Russian Literature,” a novel cultural sensibility emerged as a counterweight to the socially engaged “critical realist” convention. The 1890s saw the development of a loosely organized Symbolist school advocating for a reassessment of the role of literature. These writers of the first wave of Russian Symbolism—including Fyodor Sologub (1863-1927), Dmitry Merezhkovsky (1866-1941), and Valery

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<sup>8</sup> Critical realism is a controversial term that oversimplifies and reduces a rich literary history. Soviet scholars saw the importance of including names like Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, and other beacons of the nineteenth century literary tradition in their ideological background—terms like critical realism were constructed and applied to these writers to do exactly that.

<sup>9</sup> It is telling that his early forays into journalism—a discursive genre with which literary realism allied itself—ended up veering off into speculative, metaphysical directions.

Bryusov (1873-1924)— rejected the idea that the primary goal of literature is to fulfill some social or utilitarian purpose. Inspired by such Western models as Charles Baudelaire (1821-1867) and Arthur Schopenhauer, the new generation of Symbolists attempted to produce literature capable of expressing their mystical worldview. Initially, the Symbolists were branded as “decadents” and endured mockery from the likes of Tolstoy, but by the beginning of the twentieth century the second generation of Symbolists had carved out a place for themselves in Russian intellectual life and several new literary journals were established to give voice to the movement. Russian Symbolism, like its Western counterpart, found its primary expression in poetry,<sup>10</sup> but Symbolist prose and theater also flourished in the pre-revolutionary twentieth century.<sup>11</sup> Considering Andreyev’s increasing attention to the philosophical and psychological, it should come as no surprise that he was attracted to the Symbolist movement.

As Andreyev matured, his stories became more experimental and evocative, with works like “The Life of Father Vasily Fiveisky” (1903) and “The Red Laugh” (1904). These stories employ sophisticated formal techniques<sup>12</sup> and abstract imagery that reflects Gorky’s waning influence on Andreyev’s writing. With a few exceptions, the Symbolist community acknowledged Andreyev’s talent, but dismissed him as a “popularizer” or a “pseudo-decadent” who lacked the sophistication and erudition necessary to understand the themes he was writing about (see Woodward 122). It is true that Andreyev lacked the literary refinement and cultural

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<sup>10</sup> Well-known poets associated with the second generation Symbolist movement include Zinaida Gippius (1869-1945), Georgy Chulkov (1879-1939), Alexander Blok (1880-1921), Andrei Bely (1880-1934), and many others.

<sup>11</sup> Aleksey Remizov (1877-1957) was a well-known Symbolist who wrote mostly prose. Michael Basker also mentions Mikhail Artsybashev (1878-1927) in relation to Andreyev, both of whose prose and plays bridged the gap between Symbolism and realism (See Basker 137).

<sup>12</sup> In Chapter 3 I will discuss these formal elements.

background of the Symbolists, and he was really never comfortable among “decadent” circles, though many prominent Symbolists respected and appreciated his writing.<sup>13</sup>

As political tensions rose, the idea of an apolitical group of writers became impossible, and *Sreda* began to disintegrate under the pressures of the rapidly changing political environment. The closest Andreyev ever came to direct<sup>14</sup> involvement in revolutionary activity came soon after the infamous “Bloody Sunday” massacre in January of 1905.<sup>15</sup> The following month Andreyev was arrested and imprisoned for housing an illegal meeting of the Social Democratic Labor Party. Andreyev’s experience in prison, though brief,<sup>16</sup> affected him deeply. He later told Gorky, “my memories of prison are among my most pleasant ones. I felt really human” (cited in Newcombe 55). Many of the stories written after this experience in 1905 and 1906 reflect his uncertainty towards the revolution. All written in 1905, the stories “The Governor,” “Thus It Was,”<sup>17</sup> and Andreyev’s first play *To the Stars* contain overtly revolutionary themes and confront the idea of revolution with a degree of ambiguity that sympathized with revolutionary activity while questioning mankind’s capacity for collective self-improvement.

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<sup>13</sup> Namely Alexander Blok. Blok and Andreyev shared a mutual appreciation for each other’s work though they only met a few times (see Woodward 127).

<sup>14</sup> In mid-January 1905, Socialist Revolutionary Party member Boris Savinkov (1879-1925) called on Andreyev in order that he might introduce him to a certain “Prince NN,” who was acquainted with the day-to-day activities of the Grand Duke Sergius (the uncle of Tsar Nicholas II). The Grand Duke was assassinated by a Socialist Revolutionary bomb on February 17, 1905—a major event in the 1905 Russian Revolution that resulted in a definitive step towards the creation of the Imperial Duma. In this way, Andreyev indirectly helped establish a democratic legislative body in Russia (see Savinkov 94).

<sup>15</sup> “Bloody Sunday” was the name given to the events of Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> when approximately 500 unarmed demonstrators were killed, with another 3000 wounded, after being fired upon by the Imperial Guard in St. Petersburg (see Thompson, William and Hart 28).

<sup>16</sup> It is unclear how long Andreyev was actually imprisoned at Taganskaya Jail, with reports ranging from five to nineteen days. Most scholars report fourteen days (see Woodward 109).

<sup>17</sup> Also titled in English “When the King Loses His Head.”

Still, these works were enough to earn Andreyev a place on the death list of the Black Hundreds, a violent pro-Tsarist militia, and towards the end of 1905 he fled to Berlin with his family.

Andreyev's affiliation with both the Symbolists and the realists left him exposed to derisive attacks from both sides: the Symbolists for his inclusion of revolutionary themes and his lack of refinement, the realists for his expressed ambiguity towards the revolutionary cause. In Berlin, Andreyev acutely felt his estrangement from both the realist and Symbolist "programs," as he referred to them. In a 1906 letter to Symbolist poet Georgy Chulkov (1879-1939), Andreyev writes: "I have always wished, and especially now, to stand outside all programs. I wish to be free as an artist..." (cited in Woodward 117). For Andreyev, these programs introduced completely unnecessary barriers to his artistic interests. He used strategies of both the Symbolists and the realists to convey his philosophical messages. It was only after Andreyev embraced his position as an outsider to both literary schools and began fully investing his individual literary endeavors that he began producing his most distinctive and original works.

In 1906 Andreyev wrote the first of his major works based on a Biblical subject: "Lazarus." The novella begins where the New Testament episode ends, with Lazarus' return from the grave. Instead of confirming the traditional interpretation of the Biblical story as the triumph of life over death, Andreyev's "Lazarus" shows the opposite—the titular character infects those around him with a cosmic indifference to life. In the same year, Andreyev also wrote *The Life of Man*, his most experimental dramatic work yet. In it Andreyev seeks to create a new dramatic form as he presents an allegorical scheme of human life in five 'Pictures'.<sup>18</sup> These

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<sup>18</sup> Woodward writes that *The Life of Man*, "broke on the Russian literary world with an impact which can be compared only with that of 'The Abyss' and 'In the Fog'" (157), and it earned him a lasting place in the history of Russian theatre through productions at Stanislavsky's Moscow Art Theater and Komissarzhevskaya's theatre in St. Petersburg (see Woodward 157).

works are highly ‘Andreyevan,’ and reflect his recent break from both Symbolist and realist affiliations.

### **The Mature Years**

After the birth of her second son, Daniil, in November of 1906, Aleksandra contracted a postnatal infection and died in December 1906. The six months following her death were among the most prolific periods in Andreyev’s career. He lived in a villa on Capri with Gorky and three-year-old Vadim, recovering from his devastating loss through drinking and writing. During this time he conceived two more allegorical plays, *Tsar Hunger* (1907) and *The Black Maskers* (1908), wrote stories such as “Judas Iscariot” and “Darkness” (1907), and began the tragedy *The Ocean* (1911) and the story “My Notes” (1908).<sup>19</sup>

Upon his return to Russia, Andreyev moved to St. Petersburg and joined the *Shipovnik* publishing house as an editor. In 1908 he married Anya Denisevich and relocated to Vammelsuu, a town inside the Finnish border about 40 miles outside of St. Petersburg that same year. Later this year, Andreyev published his most famous and successful story, “The Seven Who Were Hanged” (1908), which is considered one of the best embodiments of Andreyev’s position between Symbolism and realism.

Most scholars describe the final decade of Andreyev’s life as a descent into poverty and obscurity. While it is true that Andreyev’s production of stories diminished heavily from 1909 to 1919, this view fails to consider Andreyev’s artistic output across media other than his prose. From 1909 onward, Andreyev became preoccupied with the development of what he termed “pan-psychic drama,” which he detailed in his 1911 *Letters on the Theater* and continued to

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<sup>19</sup> A year before his death, Andreyev reflected in his diary that his “best things were written at times of the greatest personal confusion, during periods of the most depressing mental experiences” (cited in Kaun 118).

experiment with form and unconventional themes in his plays (Davies 16). In fact, in addition to completing about two plays a year from 1909 to 1918, Andreyev produced a large body of visual works, from oil paintings and charcoal sketches to thousands of black and white photographs and an astounding 400 plus color photographs. After the outbreak of the World War I, Andreyev's health and fame began to fade, though he was only forty-four.

Although Andreyev welcomed the February Revolution in 1917, he was soon dismayed by the events in spring and summer of 1917.<sup>20</sup> Andreyev was strongly opposed to the Bolsheviks, which he saw as antithetical to the democracy for which he yearned. By 1918 Finland had declared its independence from Russia, and Andreyev and his family found themselves struggling for survival in exile. In 1919 Andreyev published *S. O. S.*, an essay that presented an impassioned plea to the Western democracies to intervene in Russian affairs. Andreyev had also been communicating with Herman Bernstein, the American translator of "The Seven Who Were Hanged," and was organizing a lecture tour in America to inform the American public of the dangers of Bolshevism, but his plans never came to fruition. Andreyev died of heart failure at the age of forty-eight on September 12, 1919.

### **Andreyev in Context**

We have already discussed Andreyev's willingness to sacrifice convention in the name of his aesthetic vision. His resistance to being pigeonholed into any single literary program enabled him to maximize the impact of his work: he could explore metaphysical themes in a realistic setting or topical themes in a philosophically abstract framework. He could employ formal techniques of many movements—be it the structural intricacies of the Symbolists or the *skaz*

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<sup>20</sup> Between March and November of 1917, the Bolshevik party consolidated political power and overthrew the newly established Russian provisional government that had been established to replace the Imperial seat (see McAuley 2).



narratorial style frequently found in realist works—to suit his aesthetic, and ultimately his philosophical ends. Andreyev was a writer who experimented across genres, forms, and media, writing short stories, plays, novellas, epistolary and diary-form stories, and even more avant-garde works with fragmentary structure such as “The Red Laugh” or “Curse of The Beast” (1907). We see that Andreyev possessed a sophisticated and adaptable understanding of the connection between his work’s content and form,<sup>21</sup> and it is this flexible relationship between Andreyev’s philosophical interests and his formal techniques that opens the doors for an investigation into the correlation of Andreyev’s visual and verbal art.

Though Andreyev was not as conversant with the dominant artistic trends sweeping Europe as his Symbolist peers, he was by no means ignorant of foreign and local Modernist developments. The nineteenth century saw a pan-European dissatisfaction with the traditional notions regarding the separation of various artistic media in the Classical and neo-Classical aesthetic theories that led to shifting ideas about the synthesis of the arts. From antiquity, there has been intellectual debate about the nature of visual art and its relationship to literature. Horace’s famous formula, “*ut pictura poesis*,” (“*painting resembles poetry*,” Hardison and Golden 18)<sup>22</sup> ushered in discussions about how visual art is or is not like literature—discussions that still dominate the field of aesthetics. Responding to Horace’s *Ars Poetica* almost 1800 years later, Gotthold Lessing (1729-1781) in his *Laocoön* separates the two media along lines of space and time: “painting employs wholly different signs or means of imitation from poetry—the one using forms and colors in space, the other articulate sounds in time” (Lessing 91). In other

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<sup>21</sup> Woodward comments that the translation of content into form and form into content is the “fundamental principle of Schopenhauer’s aesthetics” (122). He goes on to suggest that the linguistic and structural workmanship necessary to create such a “‘philosophical’ significance of form” was “wholly foreign to Andreyev” (123). I, as well as Andreyev scholar Stephen Hutchings, disagree with this dismissal of Andreyev’s treatment of form.

<sup>22</sup> From line 361 of Horace’s *Ars Poetica* (c. 19 BCE), translated by Hardison and Golden.

words, painting unfolds simultaneously in space and is therefore a spatial art, while literature sequentially unfolds in time as a temporal art.

As attitudes and understandings towards signs, language—and, by extension, literature—developed, artists and aestheticians began losing confidence in the “mimetic assumption” (see Stevanato 9) that underlay all understanding of images and language, namely the idea that art must represent reality. An increased awareness of the arbitrariness of both the verbal and visual semiotics<sup>23</sup> led artists in England and Germany to begin again exploring ways in which art might be de-atomized.<sup>24</sup> A group of young painters, poets and sculptors in the mid-nineteenth century called the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood banded together “to test the power of anti-conventionalism as a working method” (Landow 80) in an attempt to emulate the symbolic visual art that was created before the Renaissance.<sup>25</sup> The Pre-Raphaelites studied the engravings illuminated manuscripts of William Blake (1757-1827), which inspired them to raise their own interartistic and epistemological enquiries in their works. Similarly in Germany, Richard Wagner (1813-1883) experimented with the *Gesamtkunstwerk* in his opera—a blending of disparate artistic media to create a unique, total-artistic form.<sup>26</sup> As a reader of German Idealism, Andreyev was exposed to these ideas, and was certainly stimulated by this transition. Across Europe, these

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<sup>23</sup> The same awareness that led to the development of Saussure’s structural linguistics.

<sup>24</sup> Savina Stevanato, in her exploration of visibility and spatiality in Virginia Woolf’s fiction, writes: “This redefinition [of art] hindered all pictorial competition because it endangered the mimetic assumption. It inaugurated new interart perspectives ... and put the interart relationship in a new light, towards abstraction, subjectivity and self-reflexivity” (9)

<sup>25</sup> Founded in 1848 by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882), William Holman Hunt (1827-1910) and Sir John Everett Millais (1829-1896). David Rogers writes that “their avowed aim was to reject sterile and formulaic academicism, which they perceived to have descended from the Bolognese followers of Raphael, and to return to nature for their inspiration” (see Rogers).

<sup>26</sup> Wendy Steiner writes that “the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a gesture toward semiotic repleteness, combining several kinds of sign types and having them comment on each other.” For more info on Wagner and the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, see Steiner 145.

investigations into the fundamental nature of art continued to the end of the nineteenth century, where they were developed by Aestheticism and Symbolism.

In Russia, Andreyev encountered more local ideas about interartistic synthesis, through his relations with *Sreda* and the Symbolists. As indicated above, *Sreda* brought Andreyev into contact with artists across media and fostered conversation with regards to the limits of each respective art form. Andreyev was acquainted with such turn of the century Symbolists as composer Alexander Scriabin (1871-1915) and poet Alexander Blok, who both controversially sought the synthesis of music, poetry, and visual art in their symphonic compositions and plays, respectively. Painters such as Mikhail Vrubel (1856-1910) and members of the *Mir iskusstva* (*The World of Art*) movement and magazine of the early twentieth century revolutionized the Russian visual art domain while the Symbolists were challenging literary traditions.<sup>27</sup> Inspired by the Pre-Raphaelites, the *World of Art* rejected positivism and convention in art. They experimented with artistic synthesis in many ways, transposing their painterly talents into the realms of architecture and theatrical stage design. Andreyev was close friends with several prominent visual artists of the *World of Art* movement and was undoubtedly interested in—and reacted to—many of their ideas about art.

## Conclusions

This framework makes Andreyev's art a plausible case for a Modernist intermedial investigation. Andreyev's formal and thematic techniques presaged many of the Modernist trends that were properly theorized primarily in the years following Andreyev's death—particularly his exemplification of the concept of the “Image” that was developed by Ezra Pound

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<sup>27</sup> Aleksandr Benois (1870-1960), Leon Bakst (1866-1924), and Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929) founded the Art Nouveau publication in 1898. Other outstanding members included Konstantin Somov (1869-1939), Dmitri Filosofov (1872-1940) and Nicholas Roerich (1874-1947). For more information on *Mir iskusstva*, see Kamensky's *The World of Art Movement*, 1991.

(1885-1972) in the 1910s—and this can in some way explain his estrangement from his Symbolist and realist contemporaries. Not only as a writer and a visual artist, but as a writer and a visual artist that was willing to forgo convention in pursuit of his aesthetic goals, an examination of Andrejev's life through the lens of visual art enables a novel approach to understanding his writing. In my second chapter, I will situate Andrejev within the boundary between the textual and the visual arts in an attempt to show that his images, verbal and visual, provide the key to an understanding of Andrejev's aesthetics.

## 2. A Fruitful Dilettante: Andreyev the Visual Artist

Like any artist, Andreyev sought to impose his imagination upon reality. But unlike most artists, Andreyev had at his disposal a proficiency in both the verbal and visual arts. In a 1909 letter to literary critic Aleksandr Izmailov (1873–1921), Andreyev confessed, “to this day I ask myself at times: Which is my real vocation, that of a writer or that of a painter? At any rate, writing I began in my youth, while I do not recall myself without a drawing pencil in my earliest childhood” (cited in Kaun 33). Indeed, since childhood Andreyev demonstrated a gift for drawing and painting. Andreyev had dreamed of becoming a professional painter long before he could imagine himself as a writer; he blamed the failure of his painterly talents to develop past what he himself called “fruitless dilettantism” on the lack of a suitable teacher in his hometown (cited in Woodward 4). Even without formal training, Andreyev’s later canvases still received praise from such authorities as renowned Russian painters Il’ya Repin (1844-1930), Valentin Serov (1865-1911), and Nicholas Roerich.<sup>28</sup>

All substantial biographical accounts and critical studies of Leonid Andreyev’s career mention Andreyev’s lifelong involvement in visual art, yet most scholars consider this detail to be of little consequence to the investigation of his literary works. Kaun asserts that although Andreyev displayed an “indisputable talent” with his brush, “painting was with him, after all, a side issue, one of his hobbies, a recess from his true work, his literary art, which was his life. That in his letters and in his diary Andreyev gave so much space and attention to his paintings need not be taken seriously” (35). This is an understandable position, especially considering that,

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<sup>28</sup> These were hugely influential visual artists in Andreyev’s day. Valentin Serov and Il’ya Repin were considered masters of the Realist portrait, and both painted Andreyev in the early twentieth century. Nicholas Roerich was a prominent participant in the *World of Art* movement and commented to Kaun that, “although Andreyev’s technique was amateurish, he displayed an indubitable talent, quite ‘Goyaesque’” (see Kaun 34).

as Newcombe notes, description of visual art rarely appears directly in Andreyev's writing (see Newcombe 44). My aim in this chapter is not to suggest that Andreyev's talent as a visual artist merits the same degree of scrutiny as his literary accomplishments, nor that, as Woodward suggests, Andreyev's painting ought to be seen as merely an "extension of his literary work" (202). Instead, I argue that an investigation of Andreyev's visual art and its relationship with his textual works yield new insights into the ways we might understand the aesthetic and philosophical interests underlying his broader artistic vision—one that crosses stylistic, generic and medial barriers.<sup>29</sup> Before we discuss the implications and revelations brought about by this consideration, let us first examine Andreyev's activity and engagement as a visual artist and a visual art enthusiast.

### **Andreyev and his Visual Art**

Much of Andreyev's visual art has been lost, in particular his paintings. As his granddaughter Olga Carlisle explains in her introduction to *Photographs by a Russian Writer* (1989): "unlike his manuscripts and photographs, his paintings (works on paper which proved cumbersome and fragile) did not for the most part survive exile and war" (Carlisle 1989, 8). There is a dearth of information surrounding Andreyev's pictorial works—it is unclear how many have actually vanished, and even how many there were to begin with. Much of what does exist currently hangs in galleries across Russia, including the Andreyev House Museum in Oryol and the Institute of Russian Literature in St. Petersburg.<sup>30</sup> Additional painted works that were not preserved in museums can be seen in Andreyev's personal photographs, some of which were collected and published by Richard Davies at the University of Leeds in the aforementioned

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<sup>29</sup> In support of this idea, one can point to the fact that Andreyev experimented with cross-generic transposition when he reimagined his 1902 story "Thought" as a play in 1914 (see Kaun 263)

<sup>30</sup> Familiarly known as "the Pushkin House."

book, *Photographs by a Russian Writer*.<sup>31</sup> Henceforth in my exploration of Andreyev's art, I will refer to images located in the appendix of this thesis.

Andreyev saw both painting and literature as a means of escape from his reality. In his youth, drawing became for Andreyev a tool for coping with anger and depression. One of his contemporaries at the *gimnaziya* recalls that "when these serious moods descended upon him, he would take to his painting and books... The despondent demon, the spirit of exile with the face of the artist himself was the main theme of his sketches" (cited in Woodward 5). This anecdote also reveals something about Andreyev's painting that proved to be true in his writing, namely that he preferred the imagined to the real. In his autobiography Andreyev writes of his visual art: "Nature I did not like to copy. I always drew 'from the head,' committing at times comic errors" (cited in Kaun 33). While a student at Moscow University Andreyev supported himself in part by selling portraits; however, if the above quotation is any indication, he clearly preferred to illustrate his own fantasies. The same is true in his writing—in a 1914 letter to literary critic Lev Kleinbort (1875-1950), Andreyev remarks that "it is true that I do not worship reality; I like invention" (cited in Woodward 100).<sup>32</sup>

Popular artistic currents as well as day-to-day life inspired Andreyev's literature—and his visual art. Surviving sketches from Andreyev's days as a court reporter demonstrate his gift as a draughtsman and his foundations in the mode of realism. Image 1, a sketch entitled "Self-caricature (in the rain)," shows one of Andreyev's early drawings indicative of these realist

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<sup>31</sup> *Photographs by a Russian Writer* provides an unparalleled glimpse into Andreyev's life in Finland from approximately 1909-1914. Included are dozens of photographs of Andreyev's family, such as the one shown in image 5, as well as some of his famous acquaintances, including Repin and Leo Tolstoy. Andreyev was also a gifted photographer of nature—Chukovsky describes his spring landscapes as "suffused with elegiac musicality, reminding one of Levitan" (BLA 62).

<sup>32</sup> Andreyev was more experimental in both his writing and his painting after attaining financial security. In other words, Andreyev was more fantastic when he could afford to be.

beginnings. By 1904 Andreyev developed a fondness for Francisco Goya (1746-1828) and discussed illustrating his novella “The Red Laugh” with facsimiles of plates from *Los Desastres de la Guerra* (*The Disasters of War*), though this never came to pass. Still, Goya remained an influential figure for Andreyev, with many of his verbal images reminiscent of Goya’s dark visual effects.<sup>33</sup> Woodward writes that “perhaps some indirect influence of the Spanish painter is to be observed in Andreyev’s crowd-scenes, particularly in *Anathema*” (203), while Kaun speculates that “Andreyev was probably attracted by Goya’s keen power for detecting the beast in man” (35). In his home, Andreyev decorated his walls with huge, hand drawn, charcoal reproductions of Goya’s *Los Caprichos* (*The Caprices*), such as the one found in image 2.

Another way that we might understand the link between Andreyev’s literary and painterly work involves the all-consuming nature of his artistic process. When Andreyev got an idea for a story or play, it needed to be incarnated as quickly and vividly as possible. Many of Andreyev’s most influential works, including “In the Fog,” “The Red Laugh,” and *The Ocean*,<sup>34</sup> were written in less than ten days (see Woodward 98, Kaun 118). Similarly, many of Andreyev’s biographers and literary portraitists recall the zealous attitude with which Andreyev embraced his visual artistry. Andreyev’s friend, writer, and literary critic—as well as a contributor to Gorky’s *A Book About Leonid Andreyev*—Kornei Chukovsky (1882-1969), recalls visiting Andreyev at his home in Finland and encountering him in the heat of one of his painting paroxysms:

His study had been transformed into a studio. He was as prolific as Rubens, not putting brushes down all day. You go from room to room, he shows you his golden,

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<sup>33</sup> One of these ‘Goyaesque’ passages can be found below in my analysis of the story “Judas Iscariot” (see *infra* page 30).

<sup>34</sup> It should be mentioned that these are *not* extraordinarily short works.



greenish-yellow pictures. Here is a scene from *The Life of Man*.<sup>35</sup> Here is a portrait of Ivan Belousov. Here is a large Byzantine icon, naively sacrilegious, depicting Judas Iscariot and Christ. They look like twins and share a halo over their heads.<sup>36</sup>

All night long he walks about his enormous study talking about Valesquez, Dürer, Vrubel. You sit on the couch and listen. Suddenly he screws up one eye, steps back, appraises you like an artist, then calls his wife and says, “Anya, just look at that chiaroscuro! (*BLA* 61)

We have seen that Andreyev’s writing addressed a wide variety of topics and themes—his paintings are no less characterized by his heterogeneity of influence and subject matter. Furthermore, it appears that Andreyev achieved some degree of critical success with his paintings. Literary critic Vasily Lvov-Rogachevsky (1874-1930) recalled:

In recent years, Andreyev has come back to painting, and in 1913 his canvases even appeared at the exhibition of the Independents, and were regarded very favorably by the critics. At present on the gray walls of his castle, alongside numerous caricatures out of Goya’s “Capriccios,” hang Leonid Andreyev’s pastels, some of which are harshly realistic things, like the portrait of a Finn with an icicle-covered face and with muddy-blue eyes, others—schematic symbols, like the musicians in *The Life of Man*, or the Black Maskers marching in a crowd toward the castle of Duke Lorenzo, lured by the inviting lights [*The Black Maskers*]<sup>37</sup> (cited in Kaun 33)

In both Chukovsky’s and Lvov-Rogachevsky’s descriptions of Andreyev’s pictorial creations they acknowledge the thematic diversity of Andreyev’s projects. The content of his visual work

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<sup>35</sup> See Appendix 4

<sup>36</sup> See Appendix 8

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix 3

ranges from religious themes to portraits of literary celebrities. Mentioned in both accounts are Andreyev's illustrations of scenes from two of his most innovative plays *The Black Maskers* and *The Life of Man*, which can be seen in images 3 and 4 respectively.

Andreyev also innovated in the visual arts. This manifests clearly in Andreyev's fascination with the newer visual media of his time. Andreyev became interested in photography as early as 1903, when he acquired a monochrome camera. In 1908 Andreyev purchased his first color camera: an Autochrome Lumière. A remarkable piece of his legacy includes hundreds of color photographs he collected throughout his life. In a time when photography was beginning to be considered an art form, Andreyev tested the limits of what his lens could capture. Image 6 shows one of Andreyev's more experimental photographs, wherein he toyed with the camera's exposure to produce a floating head effect. It is significant that even in a medium as bound to reality as photography, Andreyev was interested in imposing the imaginary onto his pictures. Andreyev was also keen on the cinema, which was at the time quite a new form.<sup>38</sup> He was even considering adapting his play *Anathema* into a screenplay before World War I disrupted his plans. Here again we see Andreyev's interest in "translating" his art into various forms. While the interartistic 'distance' between theater and cinema might be relatively slight, Andreyev also attempted to transpose his aesthetic and philosophical interests lucidly across a more formidable intermedial border: the boundary between literature and painting. The specific case of Judas Iscariot—the subject of one of Andreyev's stories and a frequent subject of his paintings—is revealing, as it shows Andreyev's realization of a single idea in different forms across media.

### **“Judas Iscariot”: Two Portraits**

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<sup>38</sup> Cinema entered Russia in 1896 via the brothers Auguste and Louis Lumière (see Beumers 5), who also invented the Autochrome Lumière in 1903.

The 1907 novella “Judas Iscariot and the Others” presents the well-known New Testament episode of Judas’ betrayal of Christ as the setting for Andreyev’s exploration of more complex themes.<sup>39</sup> In the work he focuses on the relationships between Judas Iscariot and the other disciples, as well as the relationship between Judas and Christ—something that is not discussed in the Gospel. Judas is depicted as a wicked, “ugly, foxy-haired Jew,” (Andreyev 1910, 3) who constantly lies, steals, and mocks. This picture of Judas is complicated by the story itself, wherein the motivations of Judas’ betrayal are explored and the reader is led to a startling conclusion: Judas’ betrayal was a sacrifice tantamount to Jesus’ crucifixion. Judas betrayed Christ knowing that he will be anathematized eternally so that Jesus might be glorified.

Andreyev wrote “Judas Iscariot” on Capri in the months following the death of his first wife Aleksandra. Even before his wife’s death, Andreyev had developed a great interest in the figure of Judas, as indicated by a letter to Chulkov dated October 1906 (see Woodward 168). On Capri, Andreyev informed Gorky of his desire to write a story about Judas, and Gorky offered to lend him some works regarding Iscariot from his library. Andreyev refused them, stating, “I do not want them; I have an idea of my own, and they might muddle it. You had better tell me what they say. No—you had better not tell me anything!” (*BLA* 45). According to Gorky, three days later, Andreyev had produced a manuscript (see *BLA* 45).<sup>40</sup>

“Judas Iscariot” begins ominously: “Jesus Christ had often been warned that Judas Iscariot was a man of very evil repute, and that He ought to beware of him” (Andreyev 1910, 1). Judas soon appears and, much to the dismay of the other disciples, he is accepted by Christ and

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<sup>39</sup> In a letter to the writer Vikenty Veresaev (1867-1945), Andreyev refers to the work as “something on the psychology, ethics and practice of betrayal” (cited in Woodward 169).

<sup>40</sup> In *A Book About Leonid Andreyev*, Gorky provides a more elaborate account of this anecdote and mentions that Andreyev was inspired by a poem entitled “To Judas” by Aleksandr Roslavlev (1883-1920), published in 1907. I was unable to procure a translation of Roslavlev’s poem and therefore cannot attest to the similarities between it and Andreyev’s story.

invited to join them in their travels. Judas' appearance is striking. His face is described as having two distinct halves:

His short red locks failed to hide the curious unusual form of his skull. It looked as if it had been split at the nape of the neck by a double sword-cut, and then joined together again so that it was apparently divided into four parts ... The face of Judas was similarly doubled. One side with its sharply scrutinizing black eye, was alive and mobile and readily gathered into a multitude of crooked wrinkles, while on the other side there were no wrinkles and it was deathly smooth, flat and motionless; and although it was the same size as the first side it seemed enormous on account of its wide-open blind eye.  
(Andreyev 1910, 6)

In the story, we see that Judas' duality is an inherent aspect of his characterization—he acts weak but is quite strong, he is blind in one eye but sees clearly through the other, he betrays Christ because he loves Him. Judas' lumpy, split facade is a reflection of his lumpy, split soul.<sup>41</sup> Judas' contradictions of character are reflected on his face, as the physical vessel of this paradox.

After writing his story, the face of Judas Iscariot became one of Andreyev's favorite subjects to paint. Image 7 shows one of Andreyev's portraits of Judas, which was later reproduced in a Russian newspaper accompanied by the verbal portrait from the story cited above (see Andreyev, Davies, and Carlisle 28). About a year after he completed "Judas Iscariot," Andreyev convinced his friend, the writer Ivan Belousov (1863-1930) to allow him to paint his portrait. One morning, when the portrait was, to Belousov's knowledge, still incomplete,

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<sup>41</sup> Woodward argues that "Andreyev represents in the physical image of Judas [his] psychic disharmony... The animated half with its keen eye is symbolic of the probing intellect, while the blind eye is the ... symbol of the atrophied 'subconscious' (171).

Andreyev announced that in his impatience he had completed the picture from memory.

Belousov writes:

Instead of my portrait I saw a strange figure; a head with reddish hair, a face distorted by a wicked smile, one eye half closed, while the other gazed evilly and rapaciously from the canvas; the head was drawn into the shoulders and this gave the whole figure the appearance of a bird of prey... ‘What does this mean?’ I asked in perplexity. ‘Well, it’s like this: last night I had a terrible desire to portray Judas, but there was no canvas ready, so I decided to paint on your portrait. (cited in Woodward 169)

Belousov’s description of his portrait is remarkably similar to the textual portrait Andreyev provides in his novella. The fact that Andreyev would return to the face of Judas in his visual works long after the completion of his story suggests that Judas’ appearance might hold significance beyond being merely a reflection of his misshapen psyche.

Indeed, in his story Andreyev devotes more space than usual to frequent physiognomic description of Judas, and as such the physical image of Judas is suspended perpetually in the reader’s mind (see Woodward 170). The constant presence of Judas’ monstrous countenance reinforces dominant ideas about Judas. Andreyev takes advantage of the stereotypically villainous (and vaguely anti-Semitic) images of Judas that have developed throughout history<sup>42</sup> to ensure that the reader begins his story with a skeptical, if not unsympathetic view of Iscariot. However, as the story progresses Andreyev introduces a different view of Judas, one that

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<sup>42</sup> Kim Paffenroth, in her study of historic representations of Judas, points out that Judas’ “foxy” red hair is generally associated with trickery, but not necessarily anti-Semitism. Still, red hair became one of many “signals used by visual artists to point out Judas in the otherwise indistinguishable crowd of disciples: others of these devices are to portray him in profile, or without a nimbus, or beardless, or in a yellow robe, or with a money purse” (51)

contradicts this dominant image of Judas that has been so readily accepted by Christians since the Gospel was written.<sup>43</sup>

This view is hinted at in part III of “Judas Iscariot,” when Judas first begins machinating his betrayal: “Judas gathered his whole soul into his iron fingers, and in its vast darkness silently began building up some colossal scheme. Slowly in the profound darkness he kept lifting up masses, like mountains, and quite easily heaping them one on another” (Andreyev 1910, 46).<sup>44</sup> Here we see motives that are clearly not reducible to simple avarice. In fact the true motive of Judas’ betrayal is never directly stated in Andreyev’s work, but it appears in this image as an elaborate construction. Judas is a builder in the dark, working towards something, though he himself is not quite sure what that may be.

Just before the betrayal itself, Judas appears again with a fuller awareness of his role in the betrayal. The last supper is over and He and Christ are alone, Judas implores, “Order me to remain! ... Free me! Remove the weight; it is heavier than even mountains of lead. Dost Thou hear how the bosom of Judas Iscariot is cracking under it?” (Andreyev 1910, 95). The “mountains” that Judas began piling in part III are now crushing him. The suffering of Judas is highlighted here, as well as the ambiguity of his motivations in the betrayal. Is Judas following Jesus’ orders? This is unclear. Nonetheless, he and Christ both proceed with the betrayal and, in the subsequent chapter, fulfill their roles as betrayer and Betrayed. When Christ is taken by the soldiers, the sameness of Judas and Jesus is illustrated more explicitly:

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<sup>43</sup> Paffenroth writes that “many traditions have filled in the original silence about Judas with negative portrayals of him. Luke does this by developing Judas into a typical villain, evil and under the power of Satan ... Developments of Luke’s account can be seen in later versions, such as Dante’s elaboration and extension of Judas’ grotesque suffering into all eternity for the sin of betrayal. John also develops Judas as a villain, his addition being the added accusation of thievery and greed against Judas” (xiii).

<sup>44</sup> This imagery is evocative of Goya’s “The Colossus,” and some of his *Black Paintings* (see *infra* page 24).

... only they two, inseparable till death, strangely bound together by a community of suffering. He, who was betrayed to ignominy and torture, and he who betrayed Him. Of one and the same cup of suffering, like brothers, they both were drinking, the Betrayed and the Betrayer, and the fiery liquid burnt equally the clean and the unclean lips. (Andreyev 1910, 110)

This picture of Judas and Christ as brothers in suffering appears in sharp contrast with the portrait of Judas presented at the beginning of the text. But this contrast is not necessarily a conflict. Andreyev did not want the reader to forget that *his* Judas Iscariot is the same Judas Iscariot that is presented in the Gospel. This is a much more potent image of Judas than an idealized, beautiful one that might immediately be dismissed by a prudish reader.

Another pictorial representation of Andreyev's illustrates the idea of Jesus and Judas as brothers in suffering. This painting, shown in image 8, portrays both Judas and Jesus and it is difficult to say who is who.<sup>45</sup> This illustration is entitled "Kings of Judah" and was painted in 1918, as Andreyev was writing his anti-Bolshevik pamphlet *S. O. S.* (1919), versions of which actually included the image. Over a decade after writing his story, Andreyev was still fascinated with the image of Judas Iscariot, and in this image, we see the full significance of Andreyev's story: Jesus and Judas, as the kings of Judah, share a halo and a crown of thorns. Both are necessary actors in each other's stories—the story of Christ needs a Judas, as the story of Judas needs a Christ.

The general consensus among critics is that Andreyev's visual art is merely an ancillary tool used to supplement his literary art. Woodward states that, "his artistic ability helped him to fix images before proceeding to their verbal portraits" (202). Similarly, Kaun writes, "Not fully

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<sup>45</sup> Chukovsky comments that "they look like twins and share a halo over their heads" (*BLA* 61).

satisfied with the verbal presentation of his characters, he apparently sought to complement it through another medium at his command—brush and paint” (34). But Andreyev’s visual art is more than this. His paintings act as a distinct means of materializing the same ideas expressed in his fiction. Instead of viewing Andreyev’s visual art as a means to a textual end (idea → picture → text), as Woodward suggests, or as a clarification of a verbal image (idea → text → picture), as Kaun proposes, I argue that Andreyev’s visual arts act as ends in themselves (picture ← idea → text). Just as Andreyev would utilize different generic or stylistic literary forms when the content demanded that he do so, he could also utilize the immediacy of visual art when he felt the content necessitated it. Hence, Andreyev’s rationale for painting Judas over Belousov’s portrait in the anecdote relayed earlier was *not* to elaborate on the verbal presentation of Judas provided in his story, but to satisfy “a terrible desire to portray” (cited in Woodward 169) him. The image of Judas is the vehicle of Andreyev’s *idea* of Judas, regardless of the medium in which it is presented.

## Conclusions

Andreyev’s visual artistry demonstrates his interest in experimenting with the image as a channel for an idea, but what can this tell us about his literature? Many of Andreyev’s textual works can be reduced to a single main idea, what Woodward calls a “philosophical thesis,” (122), and Andreyev’s literature is essentially a means of effectively representing this idea. The same motives underlay Andreyev’s production of both visual and verbal art—the spontaneous need to realize his imagination—and Andreyev’s flexible relationship between content and form allowed him to represent the idea in the medium of his choosing. In contrast to the views expressed by Kaun and Woodward who see Andreyev’s visual art as merely an “extension of his literary work” (Woodward 202), Andreyev’s pictorial creations show that he was a gifted visual



artist who could produce visual art that holds significance outside of the context of his written works. These pictorial images emerge as vehicles to transmit Andrejev's ideas, and these ideas are conveyed instantaneously and compellingly. In the next chapter we will examine how Andrejev produced textual images that are as effective and affecting as his visual ones. We will see that Andrejev's manipulation of form in the service of content enables his verbal imagery to likewise transcend space, time and death.

### 3. “The Walls Crumble”: Spatial Form in Andrejev’s Fiction

Andrejev confessed to Vasily Brusyanin (1867-1919): “In order to write more freely about the ‘extratemporal’ and the ‘extraspacial,’ I myself must be outside time and space” (cited in Woodward 186). What does Andrejev mean by this, and how might his experience as a visual artist help him accomplish this literary suspension of space and time? Ezra Pound in his essay, “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste” (1918) provides definition of an “image” that will aid our attempt to answer these questions. Pound writes, “an ‘Image’ is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time ... It is the presentation of such a ‘complex’ instantaneously which gives that sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits; that sense of sudden growth, which we experience in the presence of the greatest works of art” (Pound 200). It was this sensation of freedom that Andrejev pursued in his literature, and his familiarity with the visual image no doubt informed his conception of the verbal one. Having already looked at some of the ways Andrejev used the pictorial image as a vehicle for the conveyance of an idea, this chapter will explore ways that Andrejev experimented with images of “the ‘extratemporal’” and “the ‘extraspacial’” in one of his most representative stories—the work that is considered among his finest, “The Seven Who Were Hanged” (1908).<sup>46</sup>

#### Spatial Form

It makes sense to say that literature is a fundamentally temporal art: we read words one at a time; verbal narrative unfolds through a sequence of successive events. Many works of visual arts, on the other hand, could be called simultaneous in that they lend themselves to the

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<sup>46</sup> Of “The Seven Who Were Hanged,” Kaun writes, “In simplicity of style, in keen psychological analysis, in humane sympathy, and in lasting effect, this story is probably Andrejev’s best” (240).

impression that the viewer can apprehend them as “wholes” in a single glance.<sup>47</sup> In “The Novel and the Spatial Arts,” Joseph Kestner (d. 2015) maintains that “Lessing does not consider the extra-medial effects by which spatial arts convey the illusion of succession, the temporal arts the illusion of simultaneity” (103). The Poundian “Image” suggests a way that the temporal arts might become convey this “illusion of simultaneity.” In his essay “Spatial Form in Modern Literature,” Joseph Frank (1918-2013) employs Pound’s definition of the image to argue that Modernist literature subverts Lessing’s space-time division of the verbal and the pictorial arts. Literature of this type disrupts the traditionally linear temporal sequence of a work—“spatializing” time to transcend Lessing’s intermedial barrier. The temporal disruption characteristic of Modernist literature forces the reader to read “reflexively,” i.e. they must suspend juxtaposed images in the mind until “the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity” (Frank 230) at the end of the work. This perception of Modernist literature’s “spatial form” is analogous to Lessing’s interpretation of form in the plastic arts, in which objects are spatially juxtaposed in an instant of time.<sup>48</sup>

Andreyev was no stranger to unconventional conceptions of time in his prose. Stephen Hutchings highlights numerous examples of non-linear temporality in Andreyev’s corpus.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Recall that this reflects G.E. Lessing’s argument in his *Laocoön*. Recent developments in physiological psychology suggest that so rigid a picture of our interaction with the arts may not be altogether accurate. Modern physiological psychology shows that “the eye can in fact only focus on relatively small portions of visible objects and must scan them in order to build a unified image” (Steiner 36). Despite this empirical evidence, Lessing’s theory of aesthetic limitations remains influential to this day.

<sup>48</sup> In his essay, Frank applies his theory to works such as *Ulysses* (1922) by James Joyce (1882-1941), as well as works by Marcel Proust (1871-1922), T. S. Eliot (1888-1965), and Ezra Pound (see Frank 232).

<sup>49</sup> Both essays explore the implications of Andreyev’s tendency to stray from a linear-discrete thought-mode in his literature. The first essay “Mythic Consciousness, Cultural Shifts, and the Prose of Leonid Andreyev” (1990) examines Andreyev’s placement within a larger cultural shift in thought modes away from the linear-discrete towards a continuous-mythic mode. The second

Hutchings highlights the “overt circularity” of time in a number of Andreyev’s stories, including “The Wall” (1901), “The Phantoms” (1904), “Thus It Was” (1905), “Lazarus” (1906) and “My Notes” (1908). Hutchings also investigates the fragmentary structure of “The Red Laugh” (1904) and “The Curse of the Beast” (1907), which disrupts the linear progression of time in their respective narratives. Of these temporally fragmented stories, Hutchings writes that “almost any given moment seems less to be one point in a temporal sequence, a point with a past and a future, and more a separate narrative core that is all significant, regardless of its relation to a narrative past or future” (Hutchings 1992, 89). Hutchings shows that in these stories the order and relationship of time sequences functionally contribute to the impact of the novel’s totality—though conspicuously absent from both of his essays is a thorough analysis of Andreyev’s seminal work, “The Seven Who Were Hanged.”

### **“The Seven Who Were Hanged” and Its Formal Elements**

In May 1908, Andreyev published his most famous story “The Seven Who Were Hanged,” (henceforth “The Seven”) through the St. Petersburg-based publishing house *Shipovnik*. “The Seven” is considered a characteristic example of Andreyev’s unique synthesis of symbolism and realism, in that it explores political themes of critical relevance to the time while also investigating philosophical themes of eternity, life and death. “The Seven” was enormously successful, selling over 100,000 copies in Russia before it was into several languages and

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“Semantic Contagion, Internalisation and Collapse of Difference in the Short Stories of Leonid Andreyev,” (1992) explores ways Andreyev produces meaning in his stories structurally through the ‘internalization,’ or drawing in, of a story’s peripheral elements to a single, central oppositional structure. Both advocate for Andreyev’s recognition as a modernist writer that was very much in tune with the shifting attitudes towards / understanding of language in the early twentieth century.

distributed across Europe and America.<sup>50</sup> Andreyev's sympathetic treatment of revolutionary terrorists earned his story praise among critical realists like Gorky, but also may have inspired the events that precipitated World War I.<sup>51</sup> "The Seven" surveys the psychology of seven men and women awaiting execution.

In "The Seven," five revolutionary terrorists are thwarted in their attempt to assassinate a high-ranking government official. The trial is swift and the judge sentences all to death. Following the trial, the reader is introduced to two common criminals also awaiting execution: an Estonian peasant, Yanson, and Mishka, "the Gypsy." The story follows the seven as they struggle with the knowledge of their impending executions, and each character—including the targeted government official—grapples with the prospect of death differently.

The action of "The Seven" occurs over the course of three days beginning with the botched assassination and ending with the hanging, but the timeline is nonlinear and demands reflexive reading.<sup>52</sup> Each prisoner is alone in his or her cell for most of the story, and each chapter separately presents the pre-execution reflections of the prisoners alone in his or her cell. However, within each of these isolated chapters, time flows linearly from the moment the prisoners enter their cell up to the moment when guards come to take the condemned to the gallows. As the prisoners struggle with the knowledge that they are going to die the next day, they each arrive at their own understanding of the nature of death. These conclusions vary between the individual prisoners (and the government official), ranging from euphoria to

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<sup>50</sup> This was among the first of Andreyev's stories to be brought to the United States. See Herman Bernstein's interview with Andreyev, recorded 1908, in *Celebrities of Our Time* (1924).

<sup>51</sup> Newcombe explains that a conspirator in the 1914 assassination of Franz Ferdinand, Danilo Ilić, wrote an article about "The Seven," and claimed to be, "deeply stimulated, emotionally and intellectually by the book" (cited in Newcombe 71).

<sup>52</sup> Recall that by 'reflexive' reading, I mean that quality of reading discussed by Frank that forces the reader to hold juxtaposed images in the mind until the emergence of a total thematic image (see Frank 231).

complete denial, and each one is significant in its relationship to the conclusions of every other prisoner.

### **The Seven and Their Deaths**

“The Seven” begins with the chapter titled, “At 1:00 P.M., Your Excellency!” thus straightaway introducing the time motif that inundates the entire work.<sup>53</sup> This chapter follows a government official who has been informed that on the following day, precisely “at 1:00 P.M.,” a band of revolutionary terrorists are plotting to assassinate him. At first the official is calm and confident, smiling as the police lead him to a safe place to stay the night, but as the chapter progresses and the official finds himself alone in the unfamiliar home, he becomes terrified at the prospect of his death. His terror builds as he realizes that “no living creature, neither man nor beast, can know the day and hour of its death... [the police] didn’t know what great law they had abused, what yawning chasm they had revealed when they had said with that idiotic amiability of theirs, “At 1:00 P.M., Your Excellency” (Andreyev 1987, 246). The government official’s horror climaxes nightmarishly as he begins to see death everywhere, all around him and inside of him. The “yawning chasm” that appears before him is all-consuming, and the official is unable to see anything beyond it. The chapter ends with the government official suffering a heart attack and desperately ringing for a doctor, who ambiguously calls for the official’s wife. Here Andreyev provides the reader with the first unit of meaning, the first encounter with imminent death that will later be juxtaposed with the encounters of the story’s other characters.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> For the following analysis of “The Seven,” I will be drawing on Nicholas Luker’s translation of Andreyev’s story as reprinted in *Visions* (1987), pp. 239-324.

<sup>54</sup> Woodward sees the government official’s terror as manifesting “in varying degrees of intensity in the figures of the seven who are awaiting execution, and is used as a yardstick to gauge more accurately the character of each in turn” (193).

The next encounters appear in the third and fourth chapters of “The Seven,” through the characters Yanson and Mishka the Gypsy. Yanson is an illiterate peasant who was sentenced to death for the murder of his employer, while Mishka is a bandit-murderer from Oryol. Both have already been incarcerated for several weeks by the time the terrorists join them in prison, but it is only after the arrival of these high-profile radicals that a date is set for everyone’s execution. In the weeks preceding the arrival of the terrorists, both Yanson and the Gypsy refuse to meditate on—or even acknowledge—their forthcoming executions. For Yanson the days pass monotonously, and he eventually “became convinced that there would be no execution at all” (Andreyev 1987, 260). Similarly, in the case of the Gypsy, the “days flew by as quickly for him as one, filled as they were with the single, undying thought of escape, freedom, and life” (Andreyev 1987, 267).

When the “important” revolutionaries arrive at the prison, Yanson and the Gypsy are abruptly brought face to face with their imminent deaths. As if realizing his position for the first time, Yanson is plunged into “a strange state of stupefaction” (Andreyev 1987, 263). His awareness that today he is alive and that tomorrow he will be dead produced a “contradiction that tore his brain in two” (Andreyev 1987, 263). From that point on, Yanson can barely speak, only repeating his mantra: “You mustn’t hang me” (Andreyev 1987, 257).

In contrast to Yanson’s inconceivable horror and the government official’s all-consuming terror, the Gypsy sees clearly his place between life and death and meets this image with unbridled rage. He spits and curses and roars at the guards outside of his cell, and in this foaming fury he senses his mental faculties slipping: “Poised on the extremely fine dividing line between life and death, his mind was crumbling like a lump of dry, weathered clay” (Andreyev 1987,

271). The Gypsy's reaction develops this motif of the fragile boundary between life and death; he sees this "fine dividing line" lucidly, but is incapable of comprehending anything beyond it.

The next two chapters offer a brief respite from the sufferings of the doomed seven. The fifth chapter, "Kiss Him—and Keep Quiet" delivers two emotional interactions between two of the condemned terrorists and their parents. Chapter Six is entitled "The Hours Fly," and it paradoxically presents a temporal suspension of the narrative. The chapter reads as a prose-poem that develops many of the story's major thematic oppositions—night and day, sound and silence, separation and unification, the finite and the infinite, space and time, and, of course, life and death. The chapters subsequent to chapter six explore the mind-spaces of the terrorists and are united by the pervasive ringing of the prison clock: "Every hour, every half hour, every quarter hour rang out with a slow, mournful sound that gradually died away high above, like the distant, plaintive cry of birds of passage" (Andreyev 1987, 279). Here, and throughout the chapter, we see the collision and blending of these themes: limited time ("every quarter hour") transforms into isolated sound ("slow, mournful sound"), which transforms into unlimited space ("distant ... birds of passage"). The transformations and unifications of these binary thematic oppositions are reiterated in the characters' own ruminations in the second half of the story, when we return to the prison in the concluding lines of chapter six as "five people—three men and two women cut off from every living thing—waited for nightfall, dawn, and execution" (Andreyev 1987, 281).

The two female revolutionaries, Tanya Kovalchuk and another called Musya, are given voice in chapter seven, entitled "There Is No Death." Tanya is introduced as the revolutionary mother figure; she is the embodiment of altruism and the dissolution of the individual—indeed, she is not even given her own individual chapter to express her concerns leading up to her death. Tanya is compared to "a still pool at dawn that reflects the clouds flying by above it" (Andreyev



1987, 252) in the way that her “face reflected every swiftly passing feeling, every thought of her four comrades” (Andreyev 1987, 252). As an emotional mirror, Tanya’s concern for her friends eclipse any fear she might experience in confronting her own approaching execution. It is this extraordinary deprioritization of the self that allows Tanya to face her end without fear or regret. As we have noted, Sergei possesses this humanistic impulse as well. However, his empathic compulsion is dwarfed in comparison to Tanya’s love for her people—Tanya, it seems, does not even once think of her own death. This chapter pivots away from Tanya early on to focus on the second female revolutionary, Musya.

Musya is comfortable with the idea of her death. She imagines herself to be a martyr and is able to justify this not by examining what she has done in life, for she is so young and has accomplished very little, but by looking at what she aspires to do. In this way, she is able to prove to herself that there cannot be death, for “she was already dead and immortal at this moment—alive in death, as she had been alive in life” (Andreyev 1987, 284). These thoughts possess her and transport her “like a soaring bird that can see boundless horizons and reach the whole expanse and profundity of the sky, all the joyously caressing, tender immensity of azure” (Andreyev 1987, 286) and as the “smoothly gliding images” drift by she asks herself “Is this really death? My God, how beautiful it is! Or is it life? I don’t know, I don’t know” (Andreyev 1987, 286). In the figures of Musya and Tanya, we see for the first time the superposition of life and death appear not as a horrible state of indeterminacy but as a beatific unification, the seamless transition of the individual from one immortality to the next.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Woodward convincingly argues that Musya’s “inflowing philosophy” is complemented by the “outward-flowing philosophy of Tanya,” hence their combined presence in this chapter (194). According to Woodward, the fusion of these two philosophies on death is the ultimate goal of the work and is accomplished in Werner’s vision a few chapters later.

The chapter that follows is called “There Is Death and There Is Life,” which brings the reader into Sergei’s cell. Sergei is earnest and youthful—he possesses an intentionality of mind and body that allowed him to at first dismiss his fear of death entirely. He spends his first days in prison practicing Müller’s gymnastic exercises<sup>56</sup> and eating heartily, but after a while he begins to doubt his internal strength in the face of death. As the fear of death begins creeping in, Sergei starts questioning his position; he becomes depressed and stops exercising. His borderline position dawns on him clearly as he realizes that “there was no death yet, but there was no longer any life, either” (Andreyev 1987, 292). He feels estranged from his body and his mind and begins to question his sanity when he suddenly experiences a shock:

Time ceased to exist, as if it had been transformed into space, transparent and airless, into an immense expanse that contained all things, earth and life and people. All this could be seen at a glance, all of it to its furthest limits, to the brink of that mysterious abyss—death. The agony lay not in the fact that death was visible, but that both life and death were visible at the same time ... But they had become no more comprehensible than a truth written in an unknown language. (Andreyev 1987, 293-4)

And suddenly Sergei is back to his old self: he laughs at the dread he felt so profoundly moments before and immediately begins exercising once more. Sergei acquires an extratemporal perspective, but is unable to resolve or understand what he has seen and felt. Like the Gypsy before him, Sergei perceives “the brink” separating life and death, but unlike Musya he fails to realize that they are one and the same. Still, Sergei is able to reconcile himself to the fact that he cannot comprehend the mysteries of life and death—he can see that there *is* meaning, and that is enough to renew his vitality and restore his desire to die a noble death.

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<sup>56</sup> Jørgen Peter Müller (1866-1938) was a Danish gymnastics educator and writer who in 1904 published *Mit System* (*My System*): a simple exercise routine that requires no equipment.

If Sergei's ability to sense some semblance of meaning in his death is his victory, then Vasily's inability to do so is his tragedy. Chapter nine is entitled "Terrible Solitude," and it shows Vasily's utter defeat in the face of his coming execution. It has been mentioned already that Vasily stands out among his fellow terrorists; his encounter with the reality of his hanging drains him of his capacity for reflection and his underlying ideals that brought him unto the revolutionary movement in the first place. Vasily's supreme feeling of isolation, his "terrible solitude," prevents him from embracing Tanya's general love of humanity that provides meaning for her. Vasily lacks Musya's faith in eternal life; he tries to reach inward as she does to find meaning, and in fact "something stirred within him. It was as if someone's gentle, sorrowful image had floated by in the distance and softly faded away without illuminating the darkness before death ... He smiled imploringly and waited. But all was emptiness, both in his soul and around him, and the gentle, sorrowful image did not return (Andreyev 1987, 299). His search for eternity reveals nothing, and Vasily feels even more horrified in the face of this oblivion. Like the government official, Vasily is unable to see past the "yawning chasm," the "darkness before death," and he lacks Sergei's willpower that allows him to accept the insolubility of this position. Ultimately, Vasily's chapter with its lack of a satisfying finale presents a powerful contrast to Werner's epiphany in the next chapter.

Finally, Andreyev brings us to chapter ten, entitled "The Walls Crumble." When the reader is introduced to Werner in the second chapter he is marked as a figure apart; we learn that "for some reason, the judges regarded him as the leader and addressed him with a certain respect" (Andreyev 1987, 251). In Werner's chapter we learn that he is highly intelligent, willful, and cultured, but harbors a profound contempt for mankind. Werner's mind is governed by logic and intellect to the point of coldness—his detachment from his fellow man manifests in a total

disinterest in all, including himself and his cause. As “a mathematician rather than a poet by temperament,” Werner is more interested in his mental chess match than his impending execution, but he experiences a jolt when he feels that he made some mistake in his internal game (Andreyev 1987, 301). Upon review, he senses that his error might lie in the fact that he has not yet experienced any “fear of death that was apparently inevitable in the condemned man,” (Andreyev 1987, 302) and in his search for this fear, he suddenly experiences an acute realization:

It was as if tongues of fire were flaring up in his head, as if the fire were trying to break out and illumine with a great light the expanse around that was still shrouded in the darkness of night. And then it did break out, and the illumined expanse of distance shone far and wide ... Werner suddenly saw both life and death and was astounded by the magnificence of this unprecedented spectacle. It was as if he were walking along a very high mountain ridge, narrow as the edge of a knife blade; on one side he could see life, and on the other death, like two deep, beautiful glittering seas that merged on the horizon into a single, infinitely wide expanse. (Andreyev 1987, 303-4)

From his extratemporal perspective, Werner is able to see the essential youth of humanity, and in its youth humankind appears touchingly endearing, like a child. Werner’s epiphany awakens in him a sincere love for his fellow man that causes him to weep. And as suddenly as he left it, Werner finds himself back in his cramped prison of stone, space, and time. Before he is hanged Werner makes use of his newfound compassion to help his fellow condemned in their journey to the gallows.

When the reader joins Werner in his momentary expansion of consciousness, time and space explode into the imagined realm of the extraspatial. Recall that this chapter is entitled “The

Walls Crumble.” The walls of the prison, which for the whole story have appeared as the physical manifestation of limited space and a constant reminder of imminent death, are demolished. In Werner’s epiphany we see that space becomes unlimited, time is suspended, and death is transcended. Andreyev employs the “Image” (in the Poundian sense) in order to create an instantaneous complex of meaning that is suspended in the reader’s mind in a moment that is outside of time. Images—visual or verbal—are by their very nature extratemporal. Andreyev communicates that Werner has conquered death through his newfound perspective, an effect that is reinforced for the reader in this momentary, and yet, undying image.

The reader understands the full significance of Werner’s epiphany only when his encounter with the inevitability of death is mentally contrasted with the encounters of the other condemned men and women. Werner’s epiphany synthesizes and sublimates the same verbal motifs, operative words and key themes that Andreyev has called forth in the preceding chapters; the recurrent ideas expressed in each chapter are juxtaposed and contrasted, having been suspended in the mind of the reader up until this point. In Werner’s epiphany, we encounter echoes of each antecedent revelation—the Gypsy’s “fine dividing line,” Tanya’s compulsive love of humanity, Sergei’s encounter with the unknowable. The result is an instantaneous, emotional network that unites each prisoner: an Image that is both effective and affecting.

## **Conclusions**

Werner’s epiphany reinforces the dissimilarities between the revolutionaries and the common criminals. After we see Werner reach his heights of enlightenment, we are prompted to consider Yanson, the Gypsy—and also Vasily—each of whom are incapable of finding such peace. The story’s spatial narrative structure fixes the reader’s attention on the interplay of each prisoner’s encounter with the inevitable and derives meaning from the relations among these

encounters. The reader senses all of these encounters at once and is made to compare and contrast; similarities and differences become obvious and crucial.

In this way, Andreyev's story expresses its spatial form. In the painting discussed in the previous chapter, "The Kings of Judea," the figures of Judas and Jesus acquire their significance from their relation to the other, i.e. through convergences and conflections. In the specific case of "The Kings of Judea," as well as in the story "Judas Iscariot," the similarities between the actions and appearances of Jesus and Judas that imbue the painting and the story with meaning. The spatial form of "The Seven," allows us to examine the story in a similar fashion. Ultimately, we find that Andreyev provides in his story three approaches to the inevitability of death that enable transcendence: Musya's martyrdom, Tanya's altruism, and Sergei's willpower. Werner's transcendence is a synthesis of these approaches. The significance of the story lies in the dissimilarities between Musya, Tanya, Sergei, and Werner on one hand and the government official, Yanson, the Gypsy, and Vasily on the other. Werner's epiphany, as a simultaneous presentation of each of these encounters with death, forces the reader to acknowledge the fact that the hanging is much more horrible for the latter group (i.e. those who are unable to transcend death), who do not have the intellectual or spiritual strength to rationalize and accept their imminent deaths.

Andreyev himself confirms this in a letter to Bernstein, writing that he sought to "point out the horror and the iniquity of capital punishment under any circumstances. The horror of capital punishment is great when it falls to the lot of courageous and honest people ... But the rope is still more horrible when it forms the noose around the necks of weak and ignorant people" (Bernstein 54). In his story, Andreyev employs the formal techniques discussed above to direct the reader and render his philosophical goals unambiguous.

This work illustrates Andreyev's appreciation of the image as an instantaneous complex of emotion. In "The Seven Who Were Hanged," Andreyev exercises his mastery of the verbal image to great effect. Werner's epiphany encounters and overcomes all of the same walls and boundaries that the other condemned have been unable to conquer, and in doing so illustrates the gross injustice of capital punishment. Andreyev contrasts the victory over death sensed by Werner, Musya, Sergei, and Tanya with the victory of death sensed by the government official, Yanson, the Gypsy, and Vasily. Ivo Vidan, in his essay discussing temporality in the spatial narrative argues that "a novel of this group, if it is to be experienced as spatial, must result in some kind of vision, an insight of universal relevance... a discovery not merely moral... but deeper and more compelling" (Vidan 152). Werner's vision provides this "insight of universal relevance," that is, the spiritual and philosophical conquest of death and individuality— through the attainment of an 'extraspatial' and an 'extratemporal' perspective.

## Conclusion

In contextualizing Andreyev in his times, we see that he was a truly outstanding artist who challenged convention with alacrity. His literary flexibility enabled him to pair content and form in innovative ways, and this fact legitimizes an intermedial study of Andreyev's art. The turn of the century saw a shift away from the long-form morality prose of the nineteenth century towards a more "decadent" aesthetic that manifested coherently in the short fiction of the early twentieth century. This shift, as well as emboldened attempts to analyze and overcome traditional divisions amongst art forms, is characteristic of Andreyev and an understanding of this is instrumental to a full appreciation of his lifework.

As a visual artist, Andreyev possessed a sophisticated relationship with the image. I have shown that Andreyev's visual art is more than a supplement to his literary work, it is a form of expression that acts as part of a unified artistic whole. While most Andreyev scholars stress the insignificance of Andreyev's activity as a visual artist, I have suggested that Andreyev's pictorial representations indicate a desire to produce images that are effective and affecting. The parallels between his visual and textual work are numerous, and it follows that this drive to produce images of this type manifests in both media.

Andreyev's fascination with the figure of Judas Iscariot also manifests in both his writing and his painting. The same philosophical and aesthetic interests underlay both his visual and verbal productions, and as such there is value in a sustained analysis of his visual art. In the particular case of Judas, we see that Andreyev's captivation with the image leads to the image as a vehicle for his ideas about Judas and the betrayal.

I also have explored some of the ways the Andreyevan narrative employs spatial form to express Andreyev's artistic and philosophical interests. "The Story of the Seven Who Were



Hanged” is an exemplary model of spatial form in Andreyev’s writing. By disrupting the linear continuity of time in the narrative, Andreyev builds a network of relationships between various units of meaning that are reiterated throughout the story to produce the effect of what Ezra Pound would call an “Image,” that instantaneously communicates the realization of Andreyev’s philosophical goals and has the formal effect of suspending narrative time and de-limiting space, effectively producing a literary transcendence of death. It is Andreyev’s intimate relation to the image that informs his production of both his verbal and pictorial creations.

There is certainly something to be said of the formal aspects of Andreyev’s paintings, which align with the tones and themes of many of Andreyev’s writings, but more significant are the formal aspects of Andreyev’s literary works that cause them to be interpreted spatially by the reader. For Andreyev, who understood the value of the immediacy and directness of visual art, it is only natural that he would attempt to replicate such an effect in his writing.

Andreyev constructed elaborate imagery in both his visual and verbal works through the repetition and variation of ideas and phrases. This study opens up new avenues of research for Andreyev scholarship that might place greater emphasis on the visual component of Andreyev’s lifework. In the previous pages, I explored just two elements of what might be called Andreyev’s visuality—his use of spatial form, and his visual artistry—but there are many other visual considerations that might add to this concept. Andreyev’s constant use of visual and spatial description, his occasional employment of ekphrasis, his psychological exploration of the ‘mind’s eye,’ and especially his fascination with the physiological human eye all would contribute to an illuminating study of Andreyev’s engagement with the visual in his written works.

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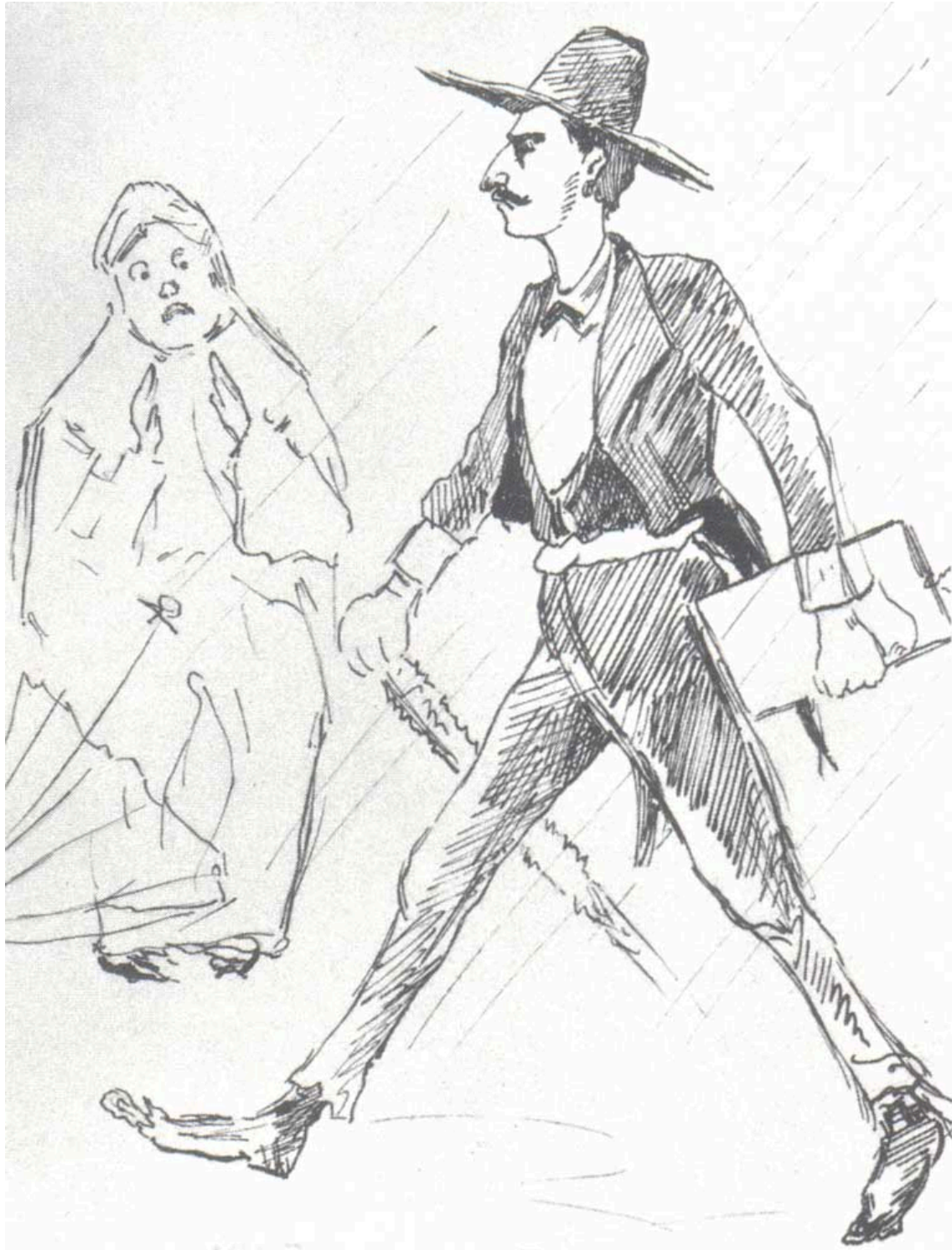
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### **Appendix: Leonid Andreyev's Drawings and Photographs**

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Image 1.



“Self-caricature (in the rain).” 1897.

Ink on paper.

Institute of Russian Literature, St. Petersburg.

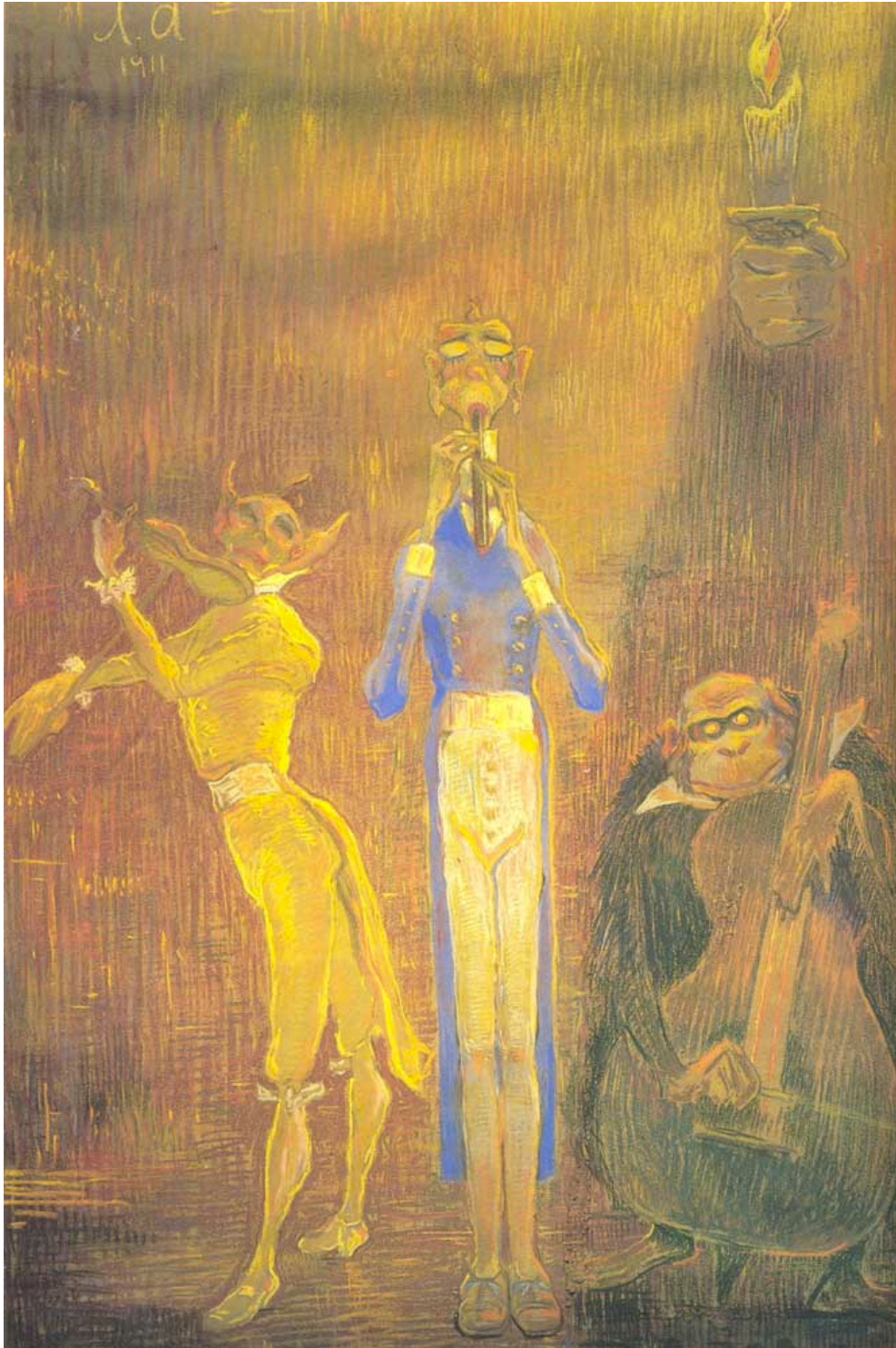
Image 2.



“Portrait of Andreyev with an Imaginative Drawing Made by the Author.” 1910.  
Ink on paper.  
The New York Times (1857-1922).

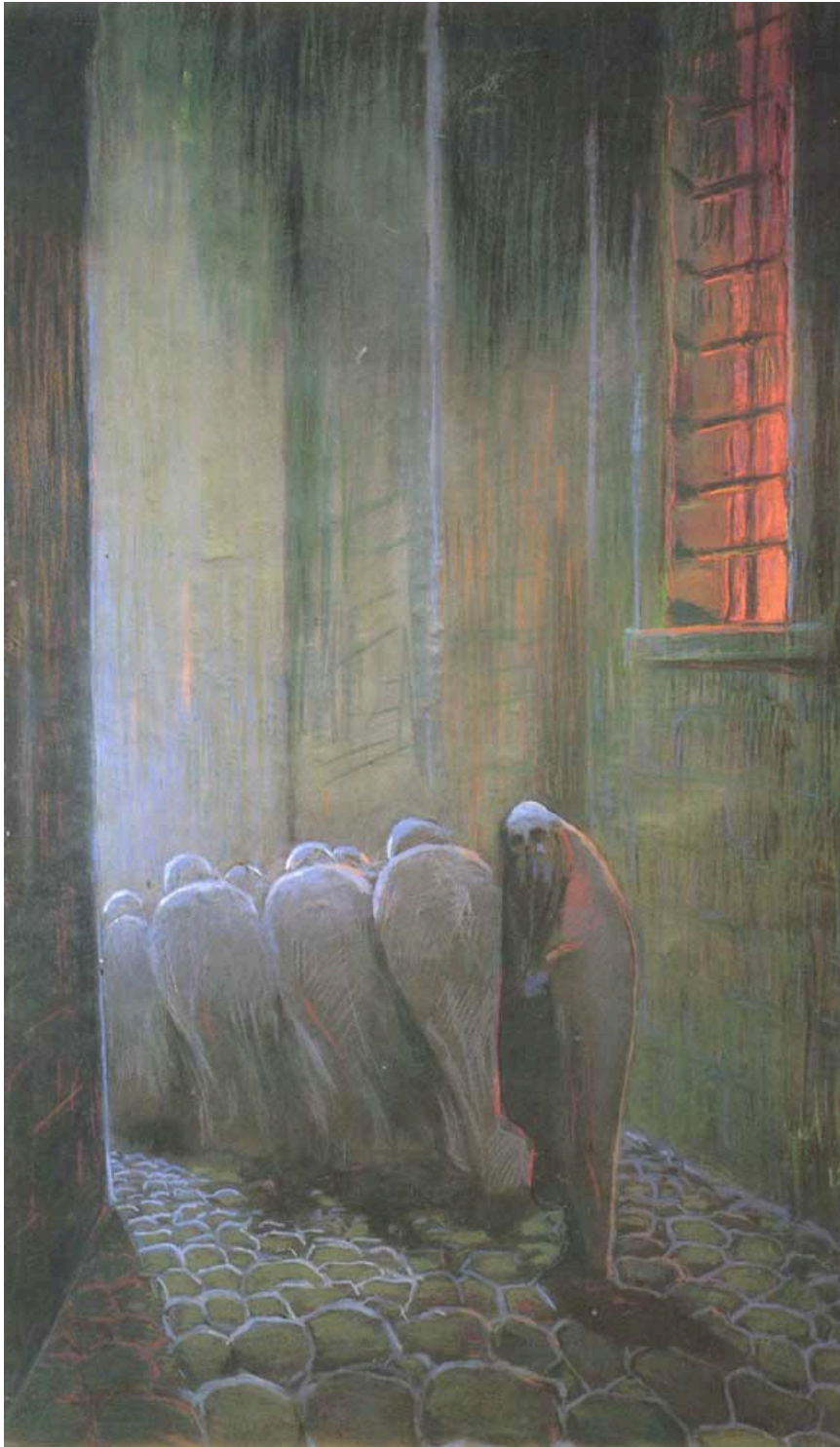


Image 3.



“The Musicians,” «Музыканты». 1911.  
Illustration to the drama “The Life of a Man.”  
Pastel on paper.  
Institute of Russian Literature, St. Petersburg.

**Image 4.**



"One Turns Around," «Один оглянулся». 1911.  
Illustration to the drama "The Black Maskers."  
Pastel on paper.  
Institute of Russian Literature, St. Petersburg.



Image 5.



"Self-Portrait with Anna." c. 1910.  
*Photographs of a Russian Writer*. p. 67.

Image 6.



"The Mysterious Head." c. 1910.  
*Photographs of a Russian Writer*, p. 29.



**Image 7.**



Portrait of Judas Iscariot. c. 1910.  
*Photographs of a Russian Writer*, p. 28.

**Image 8.**



“The Kings of Judah,” «Цари Иудейские ». 1918.  
Leonid Andreyev House Museum, Oryol.