

## Working a German Soil. The Nationalization of German Expressionism before World War I

Magdalena Bushart  
Technische Universität Berlin

In June 1914, August Macke invited Franz Marc to share his latest thoughts on painting with him in the sort of "art letter" that the two artists had exchanged in the past: « So, dear Franz, write some more to me along the lines of what I am writing to you here »<sup>1</sup>. This offhand request placed Marc in an awkward situation; the gap between his own views on art and those of Macke had been widening for some time, putting an increasing strain on their friendship. The most recent clash had occurred just six months earlier. In November 1913, the Berlin journal *Der Sturm* had carried a eulogy to Wassily Kandinsky penned by Marc<sup>2</sup>. Macke had responded with a devastating attack on the colleague that he, too, had once highly admired. For Macke, Kandinsky had had his day as a model for other artists; his place had now been taken by Robert Delaunay. A comparison between the two painters revealed « what living colour is, in contrast to an incredibly complicated but absolutely vapid composition of daubs of paint »<sup>3</sup>. On that occasion Marc had passed over Macke's criticism – which was also directed at him, as author of the offending article – with just a casual remark<sup>4</sup>. This time, too, he shied away from a direct confrontation, but drew his friend's attention to the differences between them, differences that now seemed to him unbridgeable:

« I don't think [...] that we are following the same path: I think more or less like Klee, whose opinion you will be acquainted with. I am German and can only work my own soil; what does the painting of the Orphists have to do with me? We can't paint as beautifully as the French, or better, the Latins. We Germans are and remain born draughtsmen, illustrators even as painters. »

And by way of a literary reference, he added in brackets: « Worringer puts it very nicely in his introduction to *Altdeutsche Buchillustration* »<sup>5</sup>. The letter marks the end of the once so warm and stimulating exchange of ideas between the two men. For Macke was unable or unwilling to write to Marc again. Six weeks later the First World War broke out and on 26 September 1914 Macke was killed in France. Marc had already given him up as a 'comrade-in-spirit' even before he received the news of his death: recapitulating his hopes for the post-war epoch, Marc wrote to his wife Maria: « How few friends will stand by my side. [...] August?? You know, I no longer believe so, however dear I hold him »<sup>6</sup>.

The disagreement between Marc and Macke documents more than the alienation of two friends; it also characterizes the dilemma in which the German Expressionists found themselves in the years leading up to the First World War. On the one hand, they saw themselves and their art in an international context; their works, writings and exhibitions testified to their fervent engagement with the pictures of the French and Italian avant-garde. This was true for Franz Marc just as much as for the other

members of the *Neue Künstlervereinigung München* – the New Artists' Association of Munich – and for the painters of *Die Brücke*. On the other hand, the artists represented a concept in which the sense of a collective identity, of possessing a peculiar and proper nature – be it defined in national or "racial" terms – played a central role. This "own individuality" (in German, *das Eigene*) was at once authentic and original, contemporary and yet valid for all time; it allowed Expressionism to appear as an expression of the present day while lending it the aura of something that had always been there.

In this ambivalence, the artists showed themselves influenced by models proffered by contemporary art history for the association of form and expression. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, under the impact of the aesthetic of empathy and the physiological psychology of Wilhelm Wundt, a far-reaching paradigm shift had taken place, away from history and towards psychology<sup>7</sup>. The consideration of art in its cultural-historical context had given way to the search for the laws of artistic design. These laws were to be extrapolated purely from form, or from the expressive qualities inherent in form, and thus independently of factors supposedly foreign to art, such as historical context, function and iconography. The work of art became a psychogram illustrating not only individual physical sensations and feelings but collective emotions and even world views. It was the expression of a specific point in time and yet remained indebted to an ethnically defined sense of "nation" or "people" that, unlike the sense of time, underwent no change. The definition of such ethnic constants nevertheless remained very general; they were restricted on the whole to the dualism between North and South, between "Germans" and "Latins". The "Latins" were thereby certified as having a need for calm, corporeality and harmony, and their art as having a worldliness and a delight in the senses. The tendency seen in the North, by contrast, lay towards the dissolving of physical forms into abstract systems and towards exaggerated movement, categories that were associated with popular clichés of the non-sensual Teuton, the German soul and the German leaning towards intellectual activity. The most exhaustive discussion of this antagonism is found in the writings of Wilhelm Worringer. Starting from the conviction that art, having « arisen out of psychic needs, satisfies psychic needs »<sup>8</sup>, Worringer establishes that the longing for expression takes two different forms: the urge for « abstraction » fuelled by a need for redemption, and the urge for « empathy » with the Nature surrounding humankind. These two forms of appropriating the world exist diachronically, as a development from « primitive » man, plagued by fears and not yet fully sure of the perceptions of his senses, to increasingly self-confident « classical » man, and at the same time synchronously in the respective « racial-psychological » dispositions of the "Nordic" type and the "Latin" type. In the art of the North, therefore, needs specifically related to time and race must necessarily collide. The result of this collision is the Gothic cathedral, in which the "Nordic" will to form forges its path one last time: all feeling of corporeality is suppressed, all memory of organic elements of comparison erased, so that the whole becomes an abstract and dynamic discharge of « free [...] unobstructed forces »<sup>9</sup>. Worringer judged the art of the modern era as an attempt to find a compromise between the observation of nature and



the urge for expression:

«The naive sensuality of the eye is not given to the German; he can only ever acquire it for himself. He is too interested in the factual to absorb things as they are with an impartial vision. And if he is an artist, he tends to express what things are rather than to represent them. He does not have the Roman gaze that dwells on things in a calm and collected manner and out of which there grows a purely sensual, representational art; rather, he approaches things with an intellectual interest that can spark only a vehement, unsensual urge for expression. [...] With his unsensual, intellectual will to expression, with his urge to express things instead of to represent them, with this literary tenor of his art, so to speak, he is, in short, the born illustrator. There is also an intellectual power of illusion, and it is to this that he calls with his unsensual art of expression.<sup>10</sup>»

The psychological interpretation of art history held a wide appeal; not only did it allow the national appropriation of all non-classical styles, but for the present day, too, offered evaluation criteria which defined the quality of a contemporary work not in terms of history and formal traditions but in terms of its "inner" values. To the Expressionists, not only the relativization of form and the embrace of expression must have seemed attractive, but also the idea that true art is always in harmony with the "soul" of the people and the nation. And so they developed a dual strategy that, on the one hand, emphasized the connection to the present day and thus the contemporary nature of their own work by referencing the international avant-garde, and on the other hand tried to link the German avant-garde back to an age-old need for expression.

Even if this model aimed ostensibly at a transnational system, the fact that it offered the option of being coded in national terms is patently obvious. Form that was specific to its epoch, and expression that endured beyond time, were namely the very qualities being demanded by those authors arguing for a contemporary art that reflected upon the intrinsic characteristics of the nation, the people and the race. By way of example, we may cite here Julius Langbehn, who insisted in his book *Rembrandt als Erzieher (Rembrandt as Educator)* that « A modern time has modern needs and needs a modern art », only to add in the next breath: « A modern art can only flourish, however, when it carries within it the counter-weight of the Enduring Solid Necessary Innate Eternal »<sup>11</sup>.

Nowhere is this expressionistic dual strategy seen more clearly than in the *Blaue Reiter Almanac*. The *Almanac* was conceived as a documentation of the latest developments in Germany, Russia and France, which were understood as a common "movement". The outward reason for the publication was the *Protest by German Artists* issued by the Worpsweder landscape painter Carl Vinnen, in which several authors questioned the artistic seriousness of the Munich Expressionists (i.e. the members of the New Artists' Association) and denigrated their art as idle nonsense copying the French in the desire to be fashionable<sup>12</sup>. The international system of reference established by the *Almanac* was to prove that expressionistic art was not oriented towards French forerunners, was « no Parisian event, but a European

movement » that would make itself felt even in countries « that have never seen a Picasso or a Cézanne »<sup>13</sup>. In his essay on *The 'Savages' of Germany*, Marc acknowledged the liberating effect exerted by the works of Russian and French colleagues upon the "Savages" of Germany, while immediately rejecting the idea of any formal influence. The exchange between them showed that « art was concerned with the most profound matters, that renewal must not be merely formal but in fact a rebirth of thinking »<sup>14</sup>. According to Marc, the pictures of the "Savages" could no longer be interpreted as the results of internal artistic processes whose starting-points lay in Postimpressionism, Symbolism or Art Nouveau; even the artistic exchange between contemporary currents appeared to hold no significance. Instead they became the expression of a new trend away from materialism towards a new metaphysics that was being felt all over Europe at the same time. To quote Marc once more:

The first works of a new era are tremendously difficult to define [...]. But just the fact that they do exist and appear in many places today, sometimes independently of each other, and that they possess inner truth, makes us certain that they are the first signs of the coming new epoch – they are the signal fires for the pathfinders.<sup>15</sup> »

The same independence from French forerunners of the recent and immediate past was also demonstrated by a selection of works of earlier epochs, children's art and folk art that were juxtaposed with illustrations of contemporary art within the pages of the *Almanac*. Such works embodied a tradition that lay beyond modernism and which was equally valid for all representatives of the avant-garde. Through this invocation of design principles that were available to all, concepts of artistic epochs and groups were placed on a level footing; their common roots lay not in Paris (to whose innovatory potential not only the German but also the Italian and Russian modernists were de facto indebted) but in the original works of the "primitives". Marc and Kandinsky thereby presented an alternative viewpoint to Julius Meier-Graefe's highly influential and much-cited *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst*, or *Developmental History of Modern Art* (first published in 1904)<sup>16</sup>. Where Meier-Graefe had pointed to a historical unfolding, they saw a break with tradition. They countered Meier-Graefe's construction of the "painterly", which for him reached its high point in Impressionism, with the principle of the "spiritual" that led back to the origins of art, and Meier-Graefe's fixation upon France with the universalism of all genuine art.

If we interpret the *Blaue Reiter Almanac* today as a ground-breaking plea for a lifting of the barriers between genres and styles, this does not therefore correspond altogether to the intentions of its editors. Kandinsky and Marc's declaration that « The whole work, called art, knows no borders or nations, only humanity »<sup>17</sup> was intended not least to upgrade the role of the Blaue Reiter and downgrade that of the French artists. Within a "movement" founded in the spiritual, the trend-setters of the avant-garde were no longer the Fauves or the Cubists with their formal experiments, but the theoreticians who were alone able to comprehend the renewal in all its breadth. This view of things corresponded not only to the pronounced conviction of his own mission that infuses all of Kandinsky's writings, but also to his conception of



the Russian and German character, against which he regularly contrasted the superficiality of the French. « No, the French are truly light weight, all of them superficial and in love with themselves »<sup>18</sup>, he had written to Gabriele Münter in 1907 after a trip to Paris, comparing these negative properties with the depth of soul of his fellow Russians. Such anti-French sentiments were coupled with massive reservations regarding the perceived domination of the German art market by French art, reservations that in essence were little different to the argument voiced by Carl Vinnen in his *Protest*. The fact that Gabriele Münter was not invited to take part in the International Sonderbund exhibition was, for Kandinsky, a clear indication of the organizers' focus upon France: « Today one 'understands' a French stroke. A German one may ring out however it will, as loudly as it pleases, but will fall only on deaf ears. [...] Or is hearing precisely such a German sound perhaps too 'unrefined' for the French argot-speaking German heart? »<sup>19</sup>. And when he felt passed over on the occasion of a museum acquisition, he commented that it was « now high time to stop the bowing and scraping towards the French »<sup>20</sup>.

The claim to leadership is not so evident in the case of Marc, although he shared a similar conception of the different national characters of the French, Russians and Germans. Something else lay close to his heart, however: the restitution of a generally binding national culture. While it is true that Kandinsky recognized the "people", or more specifically the "national", as a shaping factor in art, he did not wish to grant it all too great a role. Marc, on the other hand, saw in folk art the « solid and organic basis for the development of a new painting »<sup>21</sup>. The fact that the pictures of the Expressionists, although no less "genuine", "true" and indebted to an "inner life" than French pictorial broadsheets, Russian *lubki* or Bavarian paintings on glass, were greeted with no general recognition, was for him not a failure of modernism, but a symptom of cultural decay. « It cannot be otherwise – so Marc was convinced – because the artist can no longer create out of the now-lost artistic instinct of his people »<sup>22</sup>. When it comes to precisely what factors determine the "artistic instinct" of a people, Marc remains silent. Nevertheless, his original plan to illustrate the *Blaue Reiter Almanac* solely with examples of folk art from France, Germany and Russia<sup>23</sup> – the countries, in other words, from which the contemporary artists represented in the *Almanac* originated – implies that he was already thinking of national constants, or at least of a longing for expression that endured beyond the bounds of time and which manifested itself most clearly in folk art.

The idea of inviduality and ancient origins within the common and the new was one that other avant-garde groups facing the charge of "Frenchness" willingly embraced. In his 1913 *Chronik der KG Brücke*, in which Ernst Ludwig Kirchner chronicled the development of the Dresden artists' association of Die Brücke, formal independence indeed became a dominant motif. Kirchner acknowledges the inspiration he has received from medieval German woodcuts, speaks of "parallels" between his own œuvre and works from the South Seas and Africa, and describes Lucas Cranach and Bartel Beham as his « art-historical points of support ». Of the Fauves, van Gogh, Gauguin and other representatives of Postimpressionist painting, on the other hand, he makes no mention, even though it is here that Die Brücke's true

roots are to be sought. Indeed, Kirchner expressly distances himself from « current trends, Cubism, Futurism etc. »<sup>24</sup> We are thus given the impression that Die Brücke art came out of nowhere, so to speak, and with just one goal: cultural renewal and the « fight for a human culture that is the soil of a true art »<sup>25</sup>. The illustration of the *Chronik* with woodcuts by the individual Brücke artists makes it clear under whose banner this future culture should arise. The crudeness of the woodcut technique and the renunciation of colour supposedly corresponded to the German essence to a particular degree<sup>26</sup>. Kirchner continued to elaborate the fiction of artistic autonomy even after the First World War, in articles about his own work published under the pseudonym of Louis de Marsalle. He deliberately chose to conceal his identity behind a French-sounding name. « With the help of this Frenchman », so he told his patron Gustav Schiefler in 1923, he hoped « to be able to show that my work arose and developed truly independently and pure of contemporary French art »<sup>27</sup>. Writing in his diary that same year, he described the artistic premises of Die Brücke thus: « Germanic like no other artists, we built upon our ancestors. We went back to before the tenth century and started from there »<sup>28</sup>.

From this insistence upon autarchy and this rhetorical distancing from developmental models of history, it was but a short step to a nationalist interpretation of art. It took simply a narrowing of the framework of reference and the adoption of the Gothic style, rather than the universe of art, as a point of reference. According to Wilhelm Worringer's definition, at least, the genuine and the German coincided in Gothic art. Initially, it was not the artists who stressed this connection but exhibition organizers, catalogue authors and art critics, who presented the new art as a thoroughly German affair. For the art historian Paul Ferdinand Schmidt, for example, the commonalities between German Expressionism and the German Late Gothic lay first and foremost in the sphere of design – the use of local colour and a rigid simplification of form<sup>29</sup>. The philosopher Hermann Nohl spoke of similar emotions linking « our old painters Eyck and Grünewald, and Schwind with his fairytales », with the works of the Expressionists<sup>30</sup>. The art critic Paul Fechter, lastly, in his book on Expressionism published just before war broke out, emphasized the creative principle of modernism. In the subordination of appearance to the expressive will, in the appeal to inner, spiritual values, he saw the « old Gothic soul » that had dominated the art of the « Germanic world » since times gone by, awakened to new life<sup>31</sup>. And thus Fechter noted with satisfaction that, in view of the concordance of this racial disposition with the spirit of the age, the leadership in matters of art had « gradually passed more and more over to the Germanic side »<sup>32</sup>.

How quickly the impact of such explanatory models was felt by the artists themselves can be seen in the example of Franz Marc. Despite anti-French sentiments, he had always championed artistic exchange between the avant-gardes. In a letter to his wife composed in 1911, for example, in which he confessed to reservations regarding a certain superficiality that he felt was exhibited by French artists, Marc was quick to declare his thoughts highly confidential, qualifying his criticism thus: « Today one is not allowed to say such things aloud! It also sounds so churlish, whereas in truth we owe them almost everything; and the latter is certainly



most true [...]»<sup>33</sup>. » In the letter to Macke mentioned above, however, the receptiveness of earlier years seemed forgotten. Instead, invoking Worringer's categories of the sensual Latin and the German oriented towards non-sensual, spiritual values, Marc distanced himself from all foreign influences. He rejected the *peinture*, or « painting simply to please the eye »<sup>34</sup>, that Delaunay had made his maxim in favour of an innate leaning towards the illustrative, « the urge to express things instead of to represent them »<sup>35</sup>, as Worringer put it. Marc wanted his artistic inspiration to be sourced from his own nature, his own « blood rhythm ». « I mine my own self, only ever my own self, and seek to portray what lives inside me, my blood rhythm [...]»<sup>36</sup>. » In Marc's case, it is probable that this change of attitude was prompted not just by the public debate surrounding art but also by new friendships. In 1914 Marc namely made the acquaintance of Karl Wolfskehl, who would have encouraged the artist in his desire for specifically German forms of expression. Wolfskehl was a supporter of Stefan George and in 1910 had already invoked the ideal image of a poet who, untroubled by everyday concerns, was able to give form to the true "life" of the Germans (by which Wolfskehl meant a collective state of mind). Writing on behalf of the authors of the *Blätter für die Kunst*, he declared: « We, however, are artists and our efforts are directed thus: towards lending the German nature the innate expression that has been denied to it up till now. [...] For thus the deep dark vital consciousness, the German pathos, shall finally and definitively become form »<sup>37</sup>. For Wolfskehl, too, the search for Germanness led automatically to a rejection of the foreign. Thus Impressionism, in his opinion, was appropriate for the sensually disposed French, but for Germans striving for spiritual depth it represented « a battle-cry of foreign origin that was only able to rally idiots, the deaf and the cunning »<sup>38</sup>.

With the outbreak of war, the desire to draw clear boundaries took on a new dimension. The international dialogue was indeed silenced, and the invocation of a distinctly 'own' individuality became a cultural-political reality and, worse still, a patriotic duty, one that remarkably few artists shirked. The sense of fresh beginnings that had filled the pre-war years, the search for a national identity in the new art, seemed to find fulfilment, or at least belated confirmation, in war, which now became modernism's central point of reference. Not everyone equated artistic with military goals in the same way as Oskar Kokoschka, who congratulated Franz Marc on his call-up with the words: « When the envoys of our young German art become lions, the notion of a world that we are creating will also erupt with a natural force »<sup>39</sup>. And not all shared the opinion of art historian Max Sauerlandt that the war would replace « quietistic Impressionism » with the « energy of Expressionism »<sup>40</sup>, or joined Paul Fechter in celebrating the military conflict as a metaphysical event that confirmed Germany's position of cultural leadership<sup>41</sup>. Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, for example, saw the parallels between war and art less in the categories of victory and defeat than in the act of self-renunciation that united soldiers and artists. Ultimately, however, he too harboured the hope that the experience of war might signify the breakthrough of Expressionism:

« I, too, believe that many of these people who have been in the field have reached a new sense of what it is to be human and as a result will appreciate the expression of

humankind's feelings in art. The path of such men – placing themselves outside their own self to fulfil the supreme task – parallels that of the creative artist.<sup>42</sup> »

The ambivalence between a 'national' and an international conception of the self continued to preoccupy Franz Marc even during the war. Unlike Kirchner, Marc was unconditional in his approval of the world war, although he perceived it not as a military conflict between individual nations but as a process of purification that transcended race and nation, a process that « destroys what is rotten, expels what is putrid and makes the future into the present »<sup>43</sup>, and which would pave the way for the folk art for which Marc had long hoped. The process of events confirmed Marc in his belief in the elemental force of the national soul and in the need to concentrate upon « working a German soil », to make those abilities innate within the "essence" of the people the basis of the new art. In an essay of October 1914 entitled *Im Fegefeuer des Krieges* (*In the Purgatory of War*, which, significantly, was first printed not in the *Sturm* journal at the heart of the art scene, but in the widely-read *Vossische Zeitung* newspaper), Marc wrote of a new beginning after the war, when the 'people' would at last have rediscovered itself. Then art, too, would once again be able to become a collective expression of the people:

« For when the great sigh of relief comes, the German, too, will once again ask after his art, which in no mature age has he been without [...] Since the Gothic era, we Germans have become unspeakably poor in our ability to shape form; having given the world other things, today we give it the last: this hideous war. Those who experience it outside in the field and sense the new life that we are conquering for ourselves with it, are right to think that the new wine is not being stored in old barrels. We will imbue the new century with our will to create form.<sup>44</sup> »

The dream of purification, however, was also one cherished by modernism's opponents, who wished to rid German art of all foreign and harmful influences, and in particular from « the effluent of false Paris modernity »<sup>45</sup>. The anathema was pronounced above all against the most recent art. The *Blaue Reiter* and the Berlin *Sturm* gallery were perceived to lie in the camp of the French enemy, were denounced as « incendiary devices that echo the cultural standpoint of a war conducted against us and that stand in causal relationship to it »<sup>46</sup>. Marc countered such demands for total separation with a call for complete openness; rather than a narrowing of German horizons, he wanted to see them expand to incorporate the foreign – albeit always under the premise that the leading role in Europe would in future belong to the Germans.

« Germanity will spill across every border after this war. If we want to stay healthy and strong and retain the fruits of our victory, we need an enormous capacity for absorption and a life-force that penetrates all, without fear or hesitation before the foreign, the new, that will bring us our position of power in Europe. Just as France was formerly the heart of Europe, from now on it will be Germany, if it does not rob itself of the fruits of its victory through national narrow-mindedness. »

And turning to address those chauvinistic fanatics who wished to prohibit all future study of non-German art, he added: « No foreign wealth should be alien to us



if we wish to remain rich »<sup>47</sup>.

The vision of a German-dominated internationalism evidently failed to meet with broader acceptance. Both the *Vossische Zeitung* and, later, *Der Sturm* stopped short of printing this passage; the only journal to carry it was the *Kunstgewerbeblatt* in the spring of 1915. Marc's vision nevertheless found support, the most famous example being Fritz Burger's *Einführung in die moderne Kunst*, or *Introduction to Modern Art*, posthumously published in 1917. What had been a hope held by Paul Fechter before the start of the war was, for Burger, already a certainty: « Recent art is an affair of the Nordic peoples ». It is true that he describes the development, « from the point of view of world history », as a European one. But in his book, too, modernism is not made up of equal partners. It was Burger's conviction, namely, that it was granted to the Germans to lead the way in cultural matters in the future: « with its inherited, ennobling symbols, the German spirit itself will weave the threads of reconciliation over the fresh graves and [...] call out more strongly, more firmly, more proudly to the peoples, as the rallying cry of a new age: the community of humankind<sup>48</sup>. »

The image of what was "peculiar" and "proper" to German art, of that "own individuality" that belonged to no other, modified itself one last time in the years that followed the First World War. The dreams of hegemony had ceased, but international exchange had not yet resumed. The sense of "own individuality" became a place of refuge that promised memories of former greatness and with it the last vestiges of national identity. However different the plans for the future now looked – whether artists placed their work at the service of the revolution or at least dedicated it to the restructuring of society, or whether they withdrew entirely into themselves –, the connection between exchange and self-expression had failed. What had been discredited, it is true, was not own individuality but modernity, which was now dismissed as "shallow" and "fashionable". The expression of the current epoch was rejected in favour of those "inner" qualities that supposedly endure beyond all time: the people, the spirit and the soul.

Translated by Karen Williams

## Notes

1. «Also Lieber Franz, schreibe mir mal was mehr wie ich Dir hier schreibe». A. Macke, letter to F. Marc, 7.6.1914, in W. Macke (ed.), *August Macke-Franz Marc, Briefwechsel*, Köln, 1964, p.183.

2. F. Marc, «Kandinsky», *Der Sturm*, 4, 1913-14, p. 130.

3. «Mein malerischer Zustand ist der, dass Kandinsky für mich sanft entschlafen ist, indem die Bude von Delaunay daneben aufgeschlagen war, und indem man darin so recht sehen konnte, was lebendige Farbe ist im Gegensatz zu einer unglaublich komplizierten, aber absolut seichten Farbflecken-Komposition». A. Macke, letter to F. Marc, 11.11.1913, in *August Macke...*, op. cit., p. 174.

4. F. Marc, letter to A. Macke, 26.12.1913, in *August Macke...*, op. cit., p. 176.

5. «[...] ich glaube [...] nicht, daß wir beide den gleichen Weg schreiten: Ich denke ziemlich wie Klee, dessen Meinung Du ja kennen gelernt haben wirst. Ich bin Deutscher und kann nur auf meinem Acker graben; was geht mich die peinture der Orphisten an? So schön wie die Franzosen, sagen wir: Romanen können wir's doch nicht. Wir Deutsche sind und bleiben die geborenen Graphiker, Illustratoren auch als Maler. (Worringer sagt das sehr hübsch in seiner Einleitung zur *Alteutschen Buchillustration*)». F. Marc, letter to A. Macke, 12.6.1914, in *August Macke...*, op. cit., p. 184. See W. Worringer, *Die Alteutsche Buchillustration* (Klassische Illustratoren IX), Muenchen, 1912.

6. «Wie wenig Freunde werden mir zur Seite stehen. [...] August?? Du weißt, ich glaub nicht mehr daran, so lieb ich ihn habe». F. Marc, letter to Maria Marc, 13.10. 1914, in K. Lankheit, U. Steffen (eds.), *Franz Marc. Briefe aus dem Feld*, Muenchen-Zürich, 1982, p. 18-19.

7. Cf. M. Bushart, « "Form" und "Gestalt". Zur Psychologisierung der Kunstgeschichte um 1900», in O. G. Oexle (ed.), *Krise des Historismus – Krise der Wirklichkeit. Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur 1888-1932*, Göttingen, 2007, p. 147-179.

8. W. Worringer, *Abstraktion und*

*Einführung*, Muenchen, 31910, p. 15

9. W. Worringer, *Formprobleme der Gotik*, Muenchen, 1911, p. 69.

10. W. Worringer, *Die alteutsche...*, op. cit., p. 5-6.

11. «Eine moderne Zeit hat moderne Bedürfnisse und braucht eine moderne Kunst. Eine moderne Kunst kann aber nur gedeihen, wenn sie zugleich in sich das Gegengewicht des Bleibenden Festen Notwendigen Angeborenen Ewigen trägt». J. Langbehn, *Rembrandt als Erzieher. Von einem Deutschen*, Leipzig, 1890, p.19.

12. A. Hoberg, «"Neue Künstlervereinigung München" und "Blauer Reiter"», in A. Hoberg, H. Friedel (eds.), *Der Blaue Reiter und das neue Bild*, Muenchen, 1999, p. 13-26.

13. «Die neue Bewegung taucht heute an allen Enden mit elementarer Gewalt und Einmütigkeit auf; es ist kein Pariser Ereignis, sondern eine europäische Bewegung». F. Marc, «Die Neue Malerei» (1912), in K. Lankheit (ed.), *Franz Marc: Schriften*, Köln, DuMont, 1978, p. 102.

14. Franz Marc, «Die "Wilden" Deutschlands», in K. Lankheit (ed.), *Der Blaue Reiter*, 3rd edition, Muenchen-Zürich, 1979, p. 30; cited here from K. Lankheit (ed.), *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, H. Flakenstein (trans.), Boston, 2005, p. 64

15. «Die ersten Werke der neuen Zeit sind unendlich schwer zu definieren [...]. Aber die Tatsache allein, daß sie existieren, und heute an vielen, oftmals voneinander ganz unabhängigen Punkten entstehen und von innerlichster Wahrheit sind, läßt es uns zur Gewißheit werden, daß sie die ersten Anzeichen der kommenden neuen Epoche sind, Feuerzeichen von Wegsuchenden». F. Marc, «Zwei Bilder», in K. Lankheit (ed.), *Der Blaue Reiter*, op.cit., p. 38; cited here from K. Lankheit (ed.), *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, op.cit, p. 69.

16. J. Meier-Graefe, *Entwicklungsgeschichte der modernen Kunst*, Stuttgart, 1904.

17. «Das ganze Werk, Kunst genannt, kennt keine Grenzen und Völker, sondern nur die Menschheit». Typescript preface by the 'Editors' of the *Blaue Reiter* in K. Lankheit (ed.), *Der Blaue Reiter*, op.cit., p. 317; cited here from K. Lankheit (ed.), *The Blaue Reiter*



*Almanac*, op.cit, p. 251.

18. «Nein, die Franzosen sind doch wirklich von leichtem Gewicht, alles oberflächlich und selbstverliebt». Letter to G. Münter, 26.6.1907, quoted in G. Kleine, *Gabriele Münter und Wassily Kandinsky. Biographie eines Paares*, Frankfurt/Main, 1990, p. 275.

19. «Heute "versteht" man einen französischen Strich. Der deutsche kann klingen wie er will, so stark es ihm beliebt, er trifft nur taube Ohren. [...] Oder ist es vielleicht dem französisch-jargonisierenden deutschen Herzen zu 'unfein', gerade den deutschen Klang zu hören?». W. Kandinsky, letter to F. Marc, 18.3.1912, in Klaus Lankheit (ed.), *Wassily Kandinsky/Franz Marc. Briefwechsel*, Muenchen, 1983, p. 144.

20. See G. W. Költch, «Schtschukin und Morosow. Was man in Deutschland wußte. 1906–1926» in *Morosow und Schtschukin. Die russischen Sammler*, Essen, 1993, p. 144.

21. F. Marc, letter to H. von Tschudi, 21.10.1911, in H.C. von Tavel (ed.) *Der Blaue Reiter*, cat. expo. (Bern, Kunstmuseum 1986), p. 196.

22. «Es kann nicht anders sein, weil der künstlerisch Begabte nicht mehr wie früher aus dem künstlerischen Instinkte seines Volkes heraus, der verloren ist, schaffen kann». F. Marc, «Zwei Bilder», in K. Lankheit (ed.), *Der Blaue Reiter*, op.cit., p. 38; cited here from K. Lankheit (ed.), *The Blaue Reiter Almanac*, op.cit, p. 68.

23. See K. Lankheit (ed.), *Der Blaue Reiter*, op.cit., p. 310.

24. E. L. Kirchner, *Chronik KG Die Brücke*, Berlin, 1913.

25. *Ibid.*

26. R. Reisenfeld, «Cultural Nationalism, Brücke and the German Woodcut: The Formation of a Collective Identity», *Art History* 20, 1997, p. 289–312.

27. E. L. Kirchner, letter to G. Schiefler, 9.1.1923, in W. Henze (ed.), *Ernst Ludwig Kirchner-Gustav Schiefler. Briefwechsel 1910-1936*, Stuttgart/Zürich, 1990, p. 214.

28. «Wir haben auf die Alten aufgebaut, germanisch wie kein anderer Künstler. Wir sind hinter das X. Jahrhundert zurückgegangen und von da los». E. L. Kirchner, diary, 1.3.1929, in L. Grisebach (ed.), *E.L. Kirchners Davoser Tagebuch*,

Köln, 1968, p. 73.

29. P. F. Schmidt, «Die Expressionisten», *Der Sturm*, 2, 1911-12, pp. 734–736.

30. See K. Lankheit, *Franz Marc im Urteil seiner Zeit*, Köln, 1960, p. 18.

31. P. Fechter, *Der Expressionismus*, Muenchen, 1914, pp 28–29.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

33. «Laut darf man das heute nicht sagen! Es klingt auch so bärbäßig, während wir ihnen doch fast alles verdanken; und das Letzte ist gewiß am wahrsten [...]». F. Marc, letter to M. Marc, 20.2.1911, in R. Gollek (ed.), *Franz Marc 1880-1916*, cat. expo. (Muenchen, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus 1980), p. 119.

34. R. Delaunay, letter to F. Marc, 4.5.1913, in F. Marc, *Écrits et correspondances*, Paris, 2006, p. 485

35. W. Worringer, *Die altdeutsche...*, op. cit., p. 5-6.

36. « Ich schürfe an mir, immer nur an mir, und suche das, was in mir lebt, meinen Blutrhythmus, darzustellen [...]». F. Marc, letter to A. Macke, 12.6.1914, in *August Macke...*, op. cit., p. 184.

37. «Wir aber sind Künstler und unser Streben geht dahin: dem deutschen Wesen den eingeborenen Ausdruck zu verleihen, der ihm bis jetzt versagt geblieben ist. [...] Denn damit wäre das tiefe dunkle Lebensgefühl, das deutsche Pathos endlich und endgültig Form geworden». K. Wolfskehl, «Die Blätter für die Kunst und die neueste Literatur», in M. Ruben, Victor Bock (eds.), *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2, Hamburg, 1960, p. 234.

38. *Ibid.* p. 222.

39. «Wenn die Sendboten unserer jungen deutschen Kunst zu Löwen werden, wird auch einmal die Vorstellung von einer Welt, die wir schaffen mit einer natürlichen Gewalt ausbrechen». O. Kokoschka, letter to F. Marc, 3.9.1914, in *Franz Marc 1880-1916*, op.cit., p. 44.

40. M. Sauerlandt, letter to Alice Sauerlandt, 5.9.1914, in K. Dingelstedt (ed.), *Max Sauerlandt. Im Kampf um die moderne Kunst. Briefe 1902-1922*, Muenchen, 1957, p. 63.

41. P. Fechter, «Bestätigung des Krieges», *Zeitecho*, 1, 1914-15, p. 261–264.

42. « Ich glaube das auch, daß viele dieser Menschen, die im Felde gestanden haben,

zum Menschlichen gekommen sind und dadurch den Ausdruck der Empfindungen der Menschheit in der Kunst schätzen werde. Der Werdegang dieser Männer mit dem der Schaffenden ist parallel, sich außer des eigenen Ich stellend zur Erfüllung der hohen Aufgabe». E. L. Kirchner, letter to G. Schiefler, 27.1.1915, in Henze 1990, p. 71.

43. F. Marc, « Im Fegefeuer des Krieges» (1914), in K. Lankheit (ed.), *Franz Marc...*, op. cit., p. 159.

44. « Denn wenn das große Aufatmen kommt, wird der Deutsche auch wieder nach seiner Kunst fragen, ohne die er in keiner reifen Zeit war.[...] Wir Deutsche sind seit der Gotik formbildnerisch unsagbar arm geworden; wir besorgten anderes für die Welt; heute besorgen wir das Letzte: diesen entsetzlichen Krieg. Wer ihn draußen miterlebt und das neue Leben ahnt, das wir uns mit ihm erobern, der denkt wohl, daß man den neuen Wein nicht in alte Schläuche faßt. Wir werden das neue Jahrhundert mit unserm formbildnerischen Willen durchsetzen ». F. Marc, « Im Fegefeuer des Krieges», op. cit., p. 160.

45. B. Momme-Nisse, *Der Krieg und die*

*deutsche Kunst*, Freiburg/Breisgau, 1914, p. 4.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

47. «Das Deutschtum wird nach diesem Kriege über alle Grenzen schwillen. Wenn wir gesund und stark bleiben und die Frucht unseres Sieges nicht verlieren wollen, brauchen wir eine ungeheure Saugkraft und einen Lebensstrom, der alles durchdringt, ohne Angst und Bedenken vor dem Fremden. Neuen, das uns unsre Machtstellung in Europa bringen wird. Wie früher einmal Frankreich das Herz Europas war, wird es von nun an Deutschland sein, wenn es sich nicht durch nationale Engherzigkeit um die Frucht seiner Siege bringt. [...] Kein fremder Reichtum darf uns fremd sein, wenn wir reich bleiben wollen». F. Marc, «Im Fegefeuer des Krieges», op. cit. p. 161–162.

48. «Über den frischen Gräbern hinweg wird der deutsche Geist die versöhnenden Fäden selber ziehen mit seinen ererbten adelnden Symbolen und [...] stärker, fester, stolzer den Völkern zufenen als Parole einer neuen Zeit: Menschheitsgemeinschaft». F. Burger, *Einführung in die moderne Kunst*, Berlin-Neubabelsberg, 1917, p. VIII.