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## Ambiguity of Home: Identity and Reminiscence in Marianne Werefkin's *Return Home*, c. 1909

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Abstract:

During a rare visit to her Russian homeland in 1909, Marianne Werefkin experienced a poignant personal encounter with the life she had chosen to leave behind. The author examines how issues of outsidership, Werefkin's position as a woman artist, and as an aristocrat, all informed her haunting composition, *Return Home*.

## Ambiguity of Home: Identity and Reminiscence in Marianne Werefkin's *Return Home*, c. 1909

by Adrienne Kochman

Marianne Werefkin's oeuvre has largely been defined by scholars in terms of her associations with Russian literary Symbolism and the Symbolist work of such French artists as Paul Gauguin, Paul Sérusier, and Emile Bernard.[1] Her tendency to use flattened areas of color, highly saturated hues, and outlined forms in her painting, as well as personal documents recording her interest in color, have directed analyses of her art in this manner. Werefkin's artistic concerns however, were also filtered through the lens of her experience in Germany and her native Russian ethnicity. She led a successful artistic career in her Russian homeland in the late 1880s and early 1890s before resettling in Munich in 1896, and was actively engaged in that city's avant-garde community. She was, together with Alexei Jawlensky, Wassily Kandinsky, and Gabriele Münter, one of the founding members, in 1909, of the Neue Künstlervereinigung München (Munich New Artists Association) and later, in 1912, became associated with the exhibition society Der Blaue Reiter, which featured the work of an international array of artists.[2] It is in this context that a clearer understanding of Werefkin's painting *Return Home*, of c. 1909 (fig. 1), emerges. As I intend to demonstrate, the painting responds to issues of outsidership, the role of women artists in Wilhelmine, Germany and the post-1905 Russian Revolution socio-political climate. It is an amalgam of several issues culled from multiple cultural sources, which Werefkin assimilated into her own artistic idiom.



Fig. 1, Marianne Werefkin, *Return Home*, c. 1909. Tempera on Paper. Ascona, Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Dr. med Hans Müller Collection, Lenzburg [\[larger image\]](#)

The painting depicts some fifteen women walking down a city street in an unidentified urban setting. Street lamps provide some illumination in an orange-purple sky, casting irregular shadows on the buildings which line the sidewalk. All of the women wear black, shapeless, often hooded garments. They walk in a loose procession down the street alone and in pairs. Their movements appear heavy and slow-paced as they go laden with a child in arm, baskets full of goods and/or large white bundles. Their return home from marketing or laundering appears to be a regular if not daily ritual. The scene is haunting.

No date appears on the painting and the justification for its currently accepted date of 1909 is unclear.[3] But the word "Heimkehr" (return home) written on the back of the painting in

Werefkin's hand,[4] as well as recently published letters written by Werefkin from Kovno,[5] Lithuania to her partner[6] and colleague Alexei Jawlensky between December 1909 and the spring of 1910 suggest that the painting is likely set, if not painted there; textual descriptions of Kovno and illustrations in at least two of these letters (fig. 2 and fig. 3) show an uncanny resemblance to the town and to figures represented in the painting.[7] What is more, I suggest that *Return Home* also mirrors Werefkin's emotional reactions to her return to Russia after her years in Munich. A reading of these letters suggests that in Kovno, Werefkin experienced a poignant personal encounter with the life in Russia she had chosen to leave behind, and realized the discrepancy that existed between the post-1905 revolutionary Russia with which she was confronted in Kovno, and her nostalgic view of the Russian imperial homeland that she had left behind in 1896. As a result, she must have questioned the attached sense of national identity she had felt while living as a Russian émigrée in Munich.



Fig. 2, Marianne Werefkin to Alexei Jawlensky, Letter from Lithuania, 1910. Vilnius, Lithuanian Martynas-Mazvydas National Library, Vilnius, RS (F19-1458, 1.31) as reprinted in *Verein August Macke Haus, ed. Marianne Werefkin, Die Farbe beisst mich ans Herz* (Bonn Verein August Macke Haus, 1999), p. 108

[\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 3, Marianne Werefkin to Alexei Jawlensky, Letter from Lithuania, 1910. Vilnius, Lithuanian Martynas-Mazvydas National Library, Vilnius, RS (F19-1459, 1.34) as reprinted in *Verein August Macke Haus, ed. Marianne Werefkin, Die Farbe beisst mich ans Herz* (Bonn Verein August Macke Haus, 1999), p. 112

[\[larger image\]](#)

Werefkin was born in 1860 in Tula, south of Moscow.<sup>[8]</sup> An aristocrat and a baroness, she was the daughter of Elizabeth Daragan, an artist, and Vladimir Nikolaevich Verevkin, an infantry commander general who had been decorated by the tsar for his accomplishments during the Crimean War.<sup>[9]</sup> During her childhood, her father's military career transferred the family to several different residences across the Russian Empire, including (chronologically) Vitebsk in Russia, Vilnius in Lithuania, Lublin in Poland, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. She began her formal art training at the age of fourteen and later studied with the prominent Russian Realist Ilya Repin for ten years.

Through Repin, Werefkin met Jawlensky in 1892. The two shared mutual artistic interests and worked together, spending summers at Werefkin's family's landed estate, Blagodati, in

Kovno Province, Lithuania. Werefkin established a reputation in Russia as the "Russian Rembrandt" showing her portraits—her primary subject area—at such exhibitions as the First Women Artists Circle Exhibition in St. Petersburg in 1886, the XX Peredvizhnik Exhibition of 1892, also in St. Petersburg, and in 1896 at the art section of the All-Russian Exhibition in Nizhni-Novgorod.[10]

In 1896, Werefkin's father died and, provided that she stay a single woman, allowed her an inheritance of a government pension and the financial means to live independently. That same year, she and Jawlensky moved to Munich and took up residence in adjoining apartments on Giselastrasse in Schwabing, the home of the city's Eastern European immigrant and artistic populations. There, they became active members of Munich's avant-garde artistic community, and befriended the prominent Slovenian art teacher Anton Azbe, in whose teaching atelier Jawlensky, Igor Grabar, and Dmitrii Kardovskii, Werefkin's friends from the St. Petersburg Art Academy, enrolled as students. Werefkin herself, in 1897, formed the St. Lukas Brotherhood, an informal artists' salon which met at her apartment. Werefkin often led discussions focused on the pursuit of an "emotional" art of the future, recalling the work of Delacroix, Van Gogh, and Gauguin.[11]

Although Werefkin remained active in the avant-garde art community, she took a ten-year hiatus from painting between 1896 and 1906[12]. The break in artistic production has been traditionally attributed to the attention she gave to advancing Jawlensky's career, but it is also apparent that she needed the time to develop a new artistic language, as she moved away from the Realist style which had dominated her work in Russia.[13] Werefkin wrote of her frustration over the situation during this period in her journal "Lettres à un Inconnu," "I am a woman, I lack every [ability for] creation. I can understand everything and cannot create... I don't have the words to express my ideal. I am looking for the person, the man, who can give this ideal form. As a woman, wanting someone who could give the internal world expression, I met Jawlensky..."[14] In attributing to her femininity her inability to articulate her ideas or, as she stated, "be creative," Werefkin appears to have internalized a common prejudice in Germany that women lacked the ability to pursue artistic endeavors because they did not naturally possess the creative spirit or *Geist* that men had.[15] Yet although Jawlensky has been understood as having benefited from her input,[16] one can also interpret Werefkin's line, "I am looking for the person, the man, who can give this ideal form," as an expression of the desire to be able to behave like a man, so that she could visualize her own internal world in her art. *Return Home*, executed some three years after she had resumed painting in 1906,[17] focuses on these concerns through the framework of being an outsider and a woman artist.

### **Outsidership**

Several different levels of outsidership are addressed in the context of *Return Home*. The first is directed towards Werefkin's own position of outsidership in relationship to her homeland. It was caused not merely by the fact that she had been living abroad for thirteen years, it also likely that it resulted from a sense of insecurity as to what and where was home. Was it in Tula, Russia, where she was born, in her family estate in Blagodot, Lithuania, or in her temporary residence at Kovno, where her brother Peter, governor of Kovno Province (Lithuania), resided from 1904 until 1911?[18] Furthermore, when she wrote nostalgically about "Russia" in her letters, did "home" also encompass the larger Russian Empire?[19]

Being in the position of an outsider was something with which she was already familiar. As a Russian émigrée living in Munich; as an avant garde artist in a city where the Academy still wielded great power, and as a woman artist in a male-dominated art world, she was nothing if not an interloper. But if she had expected to feel more at home in Russia, her visit to her homeland did not offer her the level of inclusion with which she could find comfort. Rather, her outsidership was reinforced in Kovno, where she would have been singled out as an unmarried woman,<sup>[20]</sup> a woman artist, a Russian aristocrat and, as indicated in her letters, an imperialist.

At the time, she was staying in Kovno to recuperate from a leg injury at her brother Peter's home. She recorded her impressions of Kovno in her correspondence to Jawlensky, who was then residing in Munich. In a letter written some time between December 1909 and spring 1910, she characterized the city in a way that seems to show striking parallels to the painting:

Convince yourself. Kovno is a treasure-trove for artists.  
It is gloomy, the lamps don't make it lighter and the streets are getting darker. Their violet windows hover threateningly in the darkness. The elusive lines of low houses, on them—the glimmer of green and red flames—illuminating rows of shops. Bright green bright red stripes [all] fall on the violet sidewalk. And all those shadows are full of people who only speak about one thing, about love, in the dialect, Polish or broken Russian. Whispers and loud words touch the silence, like the green and red bands of light—the darkness of the night. Something terrible, terrible lies over everything, I feel a shudder, it seems I am in another world, far away from real life. I save myself in a church. Dark, empty. Lights flickering before icons. One sings everything that one has sung before in the past. Some black figures—and the heart is heavy. The tears take one's breath away and the past rises up again. Home...In Peter's office, my entire soul starts to ache for him, for that battle for everything that is sweet and good, which is called Russian life. Empty, empty in the house, no one. Whoever comes—doesn't get his fill of him. And then such a heated rush of love rips out of the [visitor's] heart, begging one's pardon and forgetting the trouble behind, that the whole house swells. And I go to my room and stretch out my arms to the West—that it is far away [from here], that I will someday return. Outside those painful sensations—it is horrible to be before these people and their lives. Service and family troubles—a hard beginning, pay raise, promotion—sweet dreams, scandal—daily bread,<sup>[21]</sup> and their happiness reminds me sweetly, of those who buy "for the people," and whose food you wouldn't put in your mouth. I think of Munich and of my health. All that is here is suffering and this horror of beauty and this horrible life and this overbearing literature, and the complete superfluosity of art.<sup>[22]</sup>

Werefkin's description of Kovno is comprised of two elements—the city's visual environs as seen through color, light, and shadow, and her observation of its inhabitants. The first component, color and the effects of light and dark on it, draws her excitement as she appears to document to Jawlensky what she sees. Indeed, this is the only feature with which she can personally and artistically connect, in a positive manner. She has discovered a real-world scenario it seems, from which she can extract the kind of color combinations - greens and reds, ranging to violet, for example, used by Jawlensky in his own paintings, as in *Summer Evening in Murnau*, 1908-09 (fig. 4). Jawlensky, along with Werefkin and friends and



colleagues Wassily Kandinsky and Gabriele Münter, had been working with intense color combinations in landscape since the summer of 1908 during excursions to Murnau, south of Munich.[23] The visual emphasis on color Werefkin conveys to Jawlensky is indicative of the kind of issues she knew he would understand, for such descriptions appear in other letters written by her to him from Kovno.



Fig. 4, Alexei Jawlensky, *Summer Evening in Murnau*, 1908-09. Oil on Board. Munich, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus [\[larger image\]](#)

...upon the frightening gray sky one can see a black mountain, completely black even with black houses, and all of a sudden a fire-red house appears, a violet path with snowflakes and on the path a black chain of people like crows.[24]

Her characterization of the landscape by fields of color and her reference to people dressed in black are similar to the descriptions in the letter first quoted, and the figures in her color illustration of the scene in that letter (fig. 2), are shown walking down the path about to pass the red house.

The manner in which Werefkin textually communicates what she sees appears to be a verbal attempt at blocking out the color sketch. While the gray of the sky becomes a wash of violet over pink and the violet path she mentions remains predominantly white, the structural framework outlining the composition of the scene is essentially the same in both the textual and painted versions. A smaller penciled, uncolored sketch of two people approaching the [red] house at the top of the letter also suggests Werefkin was working out her ideas. In the penciled version the scene is drawn in a profile view with what appears to be smoke wafting out of the house's chimneys. In the colored sketch the view has shifted to a slight diagonal, so that the figures come towards the house from behind the mountain. The red house no longer has smoke, rather, columns of smoke have been pushed around to the back of the mountain, presumably to mark houses on the other side.

In both letters, the description of the city's color environment is juxtaposed with a passage or comment about the city's general population which she observes as people dressed in black garments. In the first letter, her comments about them are filled with pity as she witnesses the hardship and suffering associated with those whose social class is beneath her

own. In the second letter, they remind her of black crows, a disdainful metaphor for them feeding off others, unable to provide for themselves.

Werefkin sets up an oppositional framework between nature and its inhabitants—"horror of beauty" as seen in the color of the local environment and, wretched people and the life they lead, represented by the local population.[25] This is the structure of both letters and her accompanying sketches and is also apparent in *Return Home*. The colors of the urban environment in the painting are offset by the blackness of the figures walking within it, recalling a statement made by Baudelaire that "great colourists know how to create colour with a black coat..."[26] Werefkin is extracting colors, it appears, from her natural surroundings and transforming them into a language of their own. Yet the visual language here, in terms of the intensity of Werefkin's colors, and the juxtaposition of reds, greens and violets into disharmonious if not garish tones of pigment and reflected light, carries an emotional subjectivity that is reinforced by the text accompanying her letters. Color here is being used by Werefkin to convey the acuteness of her disillusionment and her perception of the discrepancy between the physical beauty of the environment and her conflicted feelings of the people who inhabit it. Indeed, while she is able to connect with the former on an artistic level, she is quite outside and unable to connect with the lives of the locals. In Lithuania—comprised of the Kovno, Vilna and Suwalki *guberniias*, or provinces,—Russians were in the minority. Of the approximately 2.7 million people living in the area at the turn of the century, about 58.3 percent were recorded as Lithuanian, 13.3 percent as Jewish, 10.3 percent as Polish, and 9.1 percent as Belorussian. Although exact numbers are difficult to ascertain, Russians certainly comprised an even smaller percentage.[27] These Russians were made up of "aristocratic families and high-ranking army officers" with landed properties in Lithuania, (as was Werefkin's family), administrative and military staff, Old Believers (a religious sect seeking refuge from religious persecutions in seventeenth and eighteenth-century Russia), and colonists who had acquired lands confiscated in the nineteenth century.[28] Their government positions, ownership of land, aristocratic status, and Orthodoxy among a Catholic majority, meant that Russians were "alien from the cultural and political aspirations of the local residents." [29]

Werefkin was certainly an outsider in this context—a status which also carried over into her contact with her Russian peers. A third letter written to Jawlensky, from the same period, reveals her inability to relate to anyone at a regiments ball to which her brother Peter took her. Even the finest setting did not work for her: "a sea of champagne, oysters, an exceptional supper, and lots of high-ranking persons, 400 people and not anyone with whom one would want to talk to even a little bit! Deathly boring..."[30] A color sketch of people dressed in black again appears in the letter's header (fig. 3). Here, the procession of people walks across and towards the back of the painting down a city street. The buildings are painted gray with red roofs and the sky is a cobalt blue. The color is less intense than in the previous letter and more lines outline each object—as in the architectural details of the buildings.

The opposition created in this sketch corresponds to *Return Home*—in the privileges and materialism associated with her higher aristocratic class and their lack among the local population. Werefkin is as a viewer looking in, witnessing the social and economic disparities of the upper and lower classes. She identifies with both yet belongs to neither.



The aristocracy represents the class she was born into; a part of her past with which she rarely connected while she was living in Munich and working with her non-aristocratic artist colleagues. The local population in Kovno were those that her brother Peter served and for whom she held sympathy. His assistance to the locals under his jurisdiction, which she related in her letter to Jawlensky in which she described Kovno, was a value in which she believed. It represented help to the needy and humanitarian aid, but also likely reflected her own Russian imperialist views, which supported a prevailing 19th century notion of Slavophilism which held that citizens of the Russian Empire were all culturally unified as Russians. Help to fellow Russians, regardless of class, signified aid to one's own kind, and in turn supported the infrastructure of the Empire.

### **Picturing Women and Women Artists in Wilhelmine Germany**

The urban environment in which Werefkin situates her women casts a tone reminiscent of Freud's concept of the *unheimlich* (uncanny).<sup>[31]</sup> Contrary to the notion of comfort and intimacy associated with home, *unheimlich* here suggests that which is eerie and uncomfortable. The buildings in the painting are unadorned, a single door open in each one revealing a red glow inside. Three small rectangular horizontal windows appear under the roof of each one, which are set in a row down the street. The building themselves are disquieting, their high walls suggesting someone or something is meant to be kept out or protected inside. They are as quiet as the silence Werefkin speaks of in her letter, but a silence which does not suggest peace but something out of place and uncomfortable.

Werefkin's depiction of the women in black has an implication of tragedy in *Return Home* and is not unlike her comment to Jawlensky, on seeing people enter a church dressed in black. "... and the heart is heavy. The tears take one's breath away and the past rises up again."<sup>[32]</sup> Werefkin portrays women in black clothing in other works, such as *The Black Women*, c. 1910 (fig. 5), and *Twins*, c. 1909 (fig. 6), painted around the same time as *Return Home* but the visual context for the latter is unique. In *The Black Women*, Werefkin depicts several women dressed in various combinations of black and dark blue garments, tying and carrying white bundles back to a mountain village. The scene is set in the mountains, a line of chalet-style row houses at their base. The women appear to have finished laundering in a thinly rendered purple-colored river, preparing to return home after a hard day's work. *Return Home* similarly displays women with white bundles, yet their placement within a city creates expectations of a larger urban population being present. Indeed, it is noteworthy that men are absent from this public street—where social interaction between genders would normally be expected. The absence of men is less noticeable in *The Black Women*, as the women are engaged in female labor out in the countryside where the involvement of men is not the norm.

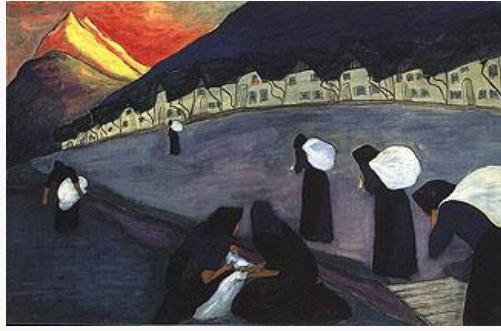


Fig. 5, Marianne Werefkin, *The Black Women*, 1910. Gouache on Cardboard. Hannover, Sprengel Museum  
[\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 6, Marianne Werefkin, *Twins*, ca. 1909. Tempera on Cardboard. Ascona, Fondazione Marianne  
Werefkin [\[larger image\]](#)

The public environment of *Return Home* establishes a scenario in which a viewer within the picture plane is implied but not visually depicted.<sup>[33]</sup> The viewer represents a binary opposite to the pictured women—and, not pictured, men.<sup>[34]</sup> This framework can be understood from the perspective of gendered discourse, which Griselda Pollock has characterized in her discussion of the spaces of femininity as "a lived sense of social locatedness, mobility and visibility, in the social relations of seeing and being seen."<sup>[35]</sup> In *Return Home* the process of seeing and being seen is addressed in the women's garments and in the implied social exchange of the urban, public setting. The women's bodies are covered in black formless garments, concealing their figures and erasing their sexual attraction.<sup>[36]</sup> Unavailable to men's gazes, their bodies are hidden from public scrutiny in a way which suggests they are aware of possibly being seen, but do not want to be understood in terms of their female sexuality. It suggests a kind of visual coding, common in many folk traditions of the world in which an unmarried young woman wears clothing different from the older married women of the village, to show her status in the community.<sup>[37]</sup> The implication here is that these women, because they publicly hide their sexuality, probably have or had a partner. They belong to a male counterpart whose physical presence is not part of the painting, but whose presence is referred to nonetheless as a viewer outside the picture plane looking in. The concealment of their bodies and black-colored dress may also be considered

a mark of widowhood and family honor, a cultural ritual signifying women's appropriate behavior acknowledging immediate familial death and loss.[38] We see a similar depiction of widowhood in *Return Home*. Two women dressed in mourning sit on a bench holding twin babies in their laps. The babies, contently swaddled in white, form a stark contrast to the women, whose strained grimaces suggest the hardship of raising children alone and the pain of losing a spouse. Werefkin suggests the cycle of life, as the babies come to represent the future and continuation of the family, the women situated in the middle as bringing up the children, and the deceased fathers, as part of the past.[39]

The responsibility of the woman to survive and ensure the future of the family is an important theme in traditional societies where men went off to war.[40] In Russia, the 1904 Russo-Japanese War and the 1905 Russian Revolution and its aftermath left millions of people—military and civilians, at home and abroad—dead and victimized.[41] Years of terror ensued, directed at Jews, peasants, political figures and others. Radical political groups such as the Socialist-Revolutionary party killed or maimed an estimated 4,500 government officials between the years 1902 and 1907,[42] and claimed over 9,000 victims domestically when one includes private citizens.[43] Such conditions resulted in a large-scale exodus from Russia, particularly of women and children. Many of these refugees ended up in the big cities of Germany, such as Berlin and Munich.[44] In *Return Home* we see this process of familial survival represented through the women's marketing and laundering. Their maintenance of and provision for the domestic sphere ensures the continuation of daily activity and family life through the very fundamentals of existence: food and a clean home in which to keep children healthy, which again convey the notion of the continuity of the nation. Werefkin's depiction of these women's domestic activities in an urban street pulls them out of hiding, so to speak, from the traditional setting of the riverbank, for example, where such labor as laundering commonly occurred—outside the sphere of public display. This crossover from "behind the scenes" where women typically operated out into the forefront in the city challenges the traditional stereotype of women as passive and men active.[45] Rather, these women take on a role parallel to men's, serving as combatants of the internal domestic arena just as men are engaged in physical combat as soldiers abroad. As widows, the women's role is more masculine, for without men to share the responsibility of providing for the family, they have assumed a dual gender role.[46] To be sure, Werefkin's concealment of their bodies denies their femininity: their cloaked dress becomes a form of protection, to ensure the survival of the species and hence the nation.[47]

If one considers Baudelaire again, one might regard Werefkin's black women as dressed in "the necessary garb of our suffering age, which wears the symbol of a perpetual mourning even upon its thin black shoulders." [48] Indeed, while it is not clear that Werefkin was referring to the author in particular, Baudelaire's portrayal of the modern hero resonates with her painting and is likely a trope with which she would have been familiar through her interest in Russian Symbolism.[49] Baudelaire notes, "that the dress-coat and the frock-coat not only possess their political beauty, which is an expression of universal equality, but also their poetic beauty, which is an expression of the public soul—an immense cortege of undertaker's mutes (mutes in love, political mutes, bourgeois mutes...) We are each of us celebrating some funeral." [50] The silence imparted in *Return Home*; its procession of people dressed in black, and the overtone of mourning resembles Baudelaire's picture of the modern hero. Yet Werefkin's modern hero, rather than being a man, is a woman who takes on the struggle of providing for her family and securing the survival of the nation. On the

city street and in the public sphere of social interaction, the modern woman hero takes on a masculinized form, for it is only in this guise that contemporary society will acknowledge and respect her heroicism. It represents a way of integrating female identity—through labor activities traditionally ascribed to women—and the identification of modernity with masculine behavior.[51]

The masculine posture of the women in *Return Home* is one that Werefkin well understood. Many professional women artists of the Wilhelmine period were given the pejorative label *Mannweib* or "manwoman" to denote their foray into a field traditionally monopolized by men.[52] Being neither man nor woman, but members of a third sex, such women were thought to have gone against nature, shirking their responsibility as wives and mothers.[53] Werefkin fit the profile of the *Mannweib* as an unmarried professional woman artist,[54] someone who had rejected the traditional women's role. She was quite conscious of her position, writing in her journal (1905). "I am more a man than a woman. Only the need to please and compassion turn me into a woman. I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am I." [55]

The fact that Werefkin had to cross traditional gender boundaries to become a professional artist, in other words, to become less of a woman to be more like a man, is also suggested in the compositional framework of *Return Home*. Werefkin's attention to the boundaries between elements located inside the private space of the home and the public space of the street is similar to with this shift in gender roles. One might read the red glow within the interior of each door as a suggestion that the home is the traditional center of love, hearth and passion—the domestic sphere dominated by women. The public space of the street outside the protected space of the interior is occupied by masculinized women. And yet, even the space of the street bears qualities of being a place "in between"—where these women are protected and somewhat enclosed. The high flattened walls flanking the low, red-lit buildings block the street from harsher natural elements, such as wind, suggesting there is an expanse beyond the geographic space of the picture plane which is even more raw. It is in this larger area that the world of men is located; it is the space where war is fought and men's lives are lost.[56] Or, to translate this in the terms of the place and time in which this painting was created, it is where Russia's tsarist regime was asserting its failing power through such actions as the Russo-Japanese War of 1904 and the Russian Revolution a year later.[57]

Kovno itself was among those cities experiencing strikes, protests and terrorist activity during this war period. The city, with a population of 97,000 by World War I,[58] was situated in the Jewish Pale of Settlement, which encompassed lands in the western part of the Russian Empire, from Ukraine in the south up through Lithuania and the Baltic Sea to the north. Jews had been restricted to living within the Pale since 1835 after a series of decrees finalized by tsar Nicholas I.[59] A large proportion of Jews lived in Lithuania by the turn-of-the-nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with prominent numbers in its cities. Kovno's population was 36 percent Jewish, Vilnius's was 41 percent.[60] Both cities, as well as others in Lithuania, became sites for secret social democratic groups, which were both anti-tsarist and anti-Russian. Similar sentiments were felt by other local ethnicities who opposed the imperial regime's russification policies, such as the government's imposition of the Cyrillic alphabet in 1864, which returned to its Latin form only in 1904 under increased

populist pressure. The Bloody Sunday massacre of January 9/22, 1905 in which tsarist troops fired on a peaceful procession of men, women, and children carrying a petition requesting from the tsar political and economic reforms,[61] brought with it mass strikes in Kovno and Vilnius, involving both Lithuanian and Jews. Such strikes, appearing primarily in the cities of the Pale (in Lithuania alone, at least 365 strikes took place between 1905 and 1906) occurred throughout 1905 in support of the Bloody Sunday victims and in protest of the tsarist regime. Pressure from the populus forced the tsar to make some concession in October, followed by a period of governmental counter-measures to suppress potential uprisings. Rising Lithuanian nationalism in the area continued, with relations between Lithuanians and ethnic Russians becoming even more strained, as Russians claimed protesters were "threatening to slaughter the Russians," or that "two thousand armed socialists [were coming] to kill the Muscovites." [62]

The domestic turmoil apparent in the Russian Revolution of 1905 and ongoing instability in the Russian Empire shook her perception of her homeland when she returned in December of 1909. Her attachment to Russia and her identification with it had until that time been largely based on her memory of the country she had left in 1896 and to which she had only returned in 1899 to visit her family, and in 1901–2 for the birth of Jawlensky's son. [63] Werefkin's sense of inclusion in Russian culture drew upon her identification with Russian nationalism and a belief that national identity was tied to individual identity. It is a distinction she made between herself and the Russian locals, who she perceived did not do this. In her comment to Jawlensky, she says, "I love Russia as few people do—I've demonstrated it my whole life, but those who plow here in Russia, are not my brothers. I heed a Russian life with my entire existence, I look into the eyes of all the people around me, nothing...And the main horror is that we long for Russia and here no one loves her, they only mimic those feelings." [64]

Werefkin of course does not factor in ethnic differences among these "Russians" which in Kovno, Lithuania, included Lithuanians, Jews, Poles and Russians nor the possibility that any of them might be upholding a different sense of cultural identity with their ethnicity, rather than with the culture of the imperial government. Her own embodiment of 'nation' was in her view tied to her value system, her morals and code of behavior, characteristics internalized in her individual identity. In this form, she carried with her a sense of Russian national identity regardless of her geographic location within the Russian Empire or Germany, confident that her bond with her homeland was intact.

Werefkin's situation as an émigré in Munich had placed her in the position of serving as a representative, if not embodiment, of Russian nationhood in the German public eye, similar to the role of her women as "keepers of the nation" in *Return Home*. For the émigré, the combination of isolation from one's native culture and distinctiveness within the new host culture drew attention to the émigré, where such factors as dress, language and mannerisms revealed social and cultural difference from the majority. The imprint of native culture within the makeup of the individual could not be immediately erased through assimilation, as Werefkin recognized in herself, and thus placed the émigré in a transitional zone, a place in between, not fully absorbed into the host culture nor part of the contemporary evolution of their culture of origin. Then and now, the émigré's separation from the latter tends to freeze their concept of their homeland as they experienced it when



they left. What shifts for the émigré is a position of inclusion in the homeland to one of outsidership and limited inclusion in the homeland as a result of moving abroad.[65] The recent émigré thus performed two roles—as mediator between both their original culture and their adopted one with a level of inclusion in each, as well as that of an outsider; no longer an active participant in the former yet not fully integrated into the latter.

Werefkin's position as an émigré, outside the emotional and geographical circle of home is replicated in *Return Home* in the space of the masculinized female, on the street. Just as she left home and departed from her native surroundings, Werefkin looks upon life in Russia, as she sees it in Kovno upon her return and realizes she is no longer a participant in it, as someone whose roots were in the culture but whose current life is quite different and outside of it. She described to Jawlensky her feeling of not belonging,

My eyes are magical glass [when looking at] the outside world, and it can transform a lot into bewitching beauty. Paris, Munich...they're all the same. The country is nice, because it is closer to nature and bad because we [Werefkin and Jawlensky] are no longer people from nature. I saw this at Blagodot. The more a person improves himself, the more one is doomed to loneliness. One doesn't need friends, one needs oneself and anybody who loves you like themselves.[66]

Werefkin's *Return Home* operates on three levels. Pictorially, it displays the visual environs of the city and women's place in it. Socially, historically and politically, it corresponds to contemporary issues concerning traditional female gender roles, women artists emergence into the modernist mainstream, and the political landscape of the 1905 Russian Revolutionary war period. But Werefkin's painting also delves into her personal psyche, and offers viewers insight into the subjective vision of her expectations and encounters upon her return home to Kovno during the 1909-1910 winter. The painting is an urban landscape and an emotional landscape. Its oppositional framework and sets of binary relationships—between color and blackness, women and men, aristocracy and populus—communicate Werefkin's own tensions between inclusion and alienation, insidership and outsidership. *Return Home* recalls the Russia she left thirteen years earlier and the home to which she returned, filled with hope, anxiety and loss. It offers a visual reference to the life she chose not to lead, a memorial to traditional gender roles and the expectations of home. She is present in the painting as a fellow woman, a fellow Russian—a member of a national collective she both identified with and supported, even abroad. The collective nature of this interaction however, is one embedded in the past, in her understanding of national solidarity among women before the divisiveness of class and ethnicity became so reified with the Revolution. Werefkin's identification with the collective had become more of a memory, her own embodiment of nation in the present, ever more individualized.

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## Notes

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[1] For a discussion of Werefkin's ties to Russian literary Symbolism, see Jelena Hahl Koch, *Marianne Werefkin und der russische Symbolismus, Studien zur Ästhetik und Kunsttheorie*. Slawische Beiträge, 24 (Munich: Otto Sagner, 1967). See Bernd Fäthke, *Marianne Werefkin - Leben und Werk 1860-1938*. Exh. cat. (Munich: Prestel, 1988) for his analysis of her work in terms of its relationship to French symbolist art.

[2] For a discussion of Werefkin's departure from the Neue Künstlervereinigung München and her subsequent association with Der Blaue Reiter see Bernd Fäthke, *Marianne Werefkin* (Munich: Hirmer Verlag, 2001) 180–84.

[3] The dating of several other paintings has been revised and connected to the Kovno trip. See Laima Lauckaite-Surgailene, "Voyages en Lituanie/Reisen nach Litauen," in Nicole Brögmann, ed., *Marianne Werefkin, Oeuvres peintes 1907-1936*, Exh. cat. (Gingins, Switzerland: Fondation Neumann, 1996), 94 and 101, n.3.

[4] Correspondence between the author and Margherita Albisetti, Curator, Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna Ascona, Ascona, Switzerland, August 21, 2002.

[5] I use Werefkin's Russian reference to the city of Kovno, today Kaunas, to maintain consistency with her letters.

[6] Werefkin and Jawlensky shared a professional and personal relationship which began in Russia in 1892. They emigrated to Munich together in 1896 along with Werefkin's nineteen-year old housemaid Helene Nesnakomoff, and made it their new home. Jawlensky's affair with Helene and the birth of their son Andreas in 1902 seems to have strained Jawlensky and Werefkin's relationship, although they all remained together until 1921 when Jawlensky left Werefkin. See n.46 for further discussion on the consequences of the affair. For recent information on their relationship, through Jawlensky's letters to Werefkin from 1899 to 1920, see Laima Lauckaite, "Pisma Alekseia Iavlenskogo Marianne Verevkinoi" *Baltiiskii arkhiv. Russkaia kultura v Pribaltike, IX* (Vilnius: Vinius University, 2005), 271–316. See also Fäthke, *Marianne Werefkin*, 32–35.

[7] The letters are reprinted in their original Russian in Laima Lauckaite-Surgailene, "Marianna Verevkina. Zhizn' v iskusstve," *Vilnius* no. 3 (1992): 126–37, the second part of a two-part article. The first part, under the same author and title are located in *Vilnius* no. 2 (1992): 92–104. Although the letters had been originally cited in I.A. Brodskii and V.N. Moskvinov, *Novoe o Repine* (Leningrad: Khudozhnik, 1968), 65, (a publication of letters to the Realist painter Ilya Repin, with whom Werefkin had studied from 1886 to 1896), the content of Werefkin's letters was never made public until 1992. It is possible that Werefkin's expression of her love of [imperial] Russia, and her own aristocratic class, made public awareness of them undesirable in the communist political climate of the Soviet period. See also Lauckaite-Surgailene's discussion of the Kovno trip letters and Werefkin's sketches in them of processions in Laima Lauckaite-Surgailene, "Der unbekannte Briefnachlass von Marianne Werefkin," in Barbara Weidle, ed., *Marianne Werefkin, Die Farbe beisst mich ans Herz* (Bonn: Verein August Macke Haus, 1999), 61–65.

[8] An updated biography "Biographische Übersicht," can be found in Brögmann, *Marianne Werefkin*, 167–74. See also Brögmann's article, "Je ne vis que par l'oeil/Ich lebe nur mit dem Auge," regarding obstacles preventing a complete picture of the artist and her work, in Brögmann, *Marianne Werefkin*, 71–72, n. 1.

[9] The Russian spelling "Verevkin" is the original form for the family name. "Werefkin" represents the Germanized version of the Russian original, which the artist herself adopted when she moved to Munich and which has been the accepted convention for her ever since.

- [10] V.I. Baranovskii and I.B. Khlebnikova, *Anton Azhbe i Khudozhniki Rossii*, (Moscow:Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo Universiteta, 2001), 99.
- [11] Fäthke, *Marianne Werefkin*, 43–44.
- [12] The 1906 date as the accepted date for Werefkin's resumption of painting is based on Bernd Fäthke's research, and continues to be supported in current scholarship on the artist. A 1902 date, cited in Jane Turner, ed., *Grove Dictionary of Art* (New York: Grove's Dictionaries, 1996) entry on Werefkin is a misprint, confirmed by its author, Shulamith Behr, in an email to me on Nov. 10, 2005. For a recent reassertion of the 1906 date, see Bernd Fäthke, *Marianne Werefkin*, 73–74.
- [13] Margarethe Jochimsen, "Ich habe aus meinem eigenen Ich den Schönsten und einzigen Gott gemacht..." in Weidle, *Marianne Werefkin, Die Farbe beisst mich ans Herz*, 7–8.
- [14] "Ich bin Frau, bin bar jeder Schöpfung. Ich kann verstehen und kann nichts schaffen...Mir fehlen die Worte, um meine Ideal auszudrücken. Ich suche den Menschen, den Mann, der diesem Ideal Gestalt geben würde. Als Frau, verlangend nach demjenigen, der ihrer inneren Welt Ausdruck geben sollte, traf ich Jawlensky..." Werefkin, "Lettres à un Inconnu" as quoted in Bernd Fäthke, "Marianne Werefkin," in Britta Jürgs, ed., *Wie eine Nilbraut, die man in die Wellen wirft, Porträts expressionistischer Künstlerinnen und Schriftstellerinnen*, (Grambin: Aviva, 1998), 56. A portion of the passage is also found in Jochimsen, "Ich habe aus meinem eigenen Ich," 8. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated.
- [15] Barbara D. Wright, "'New Man,' Eternal Woman: Expressionist Responses to German Feminism," *The German Quarterly*, 60, no. 4, (Autumn 1987): 594.
- [16] A number of exhibition catalogues have focused on their artistic relationship. Of the more recent, from the point of view of Werefkin's situation, useful analyses are offered by Fäthke, "Marianne Werefkin," in *Wie eine Nilbraut*, 54–75, and Fäthke, *Marianne Werefkin-Leben und Werk*.
- [17] This shift in style requires further attention than I am able to give here, although I discussed it in my lecture. "National Identity and the Emigre Experience: Marianne Werefkin's 'De-nationalization' of Her Art in Munich 1896-1914," College Art Association, Los Angeles, CA Feb. 13, 1999. See also Brögmann, "Je ne vis que par l'oeil," 23–27.
- [18] Peter Verevkin assumed position of governor of Vilnius Province from 1911-1916. When Marianne Werefkin returned to the Russian Empire in 1914, she stayed again with her brother Peter, this time in Vilnius. See Laima Lauchkaite-Surgailene, "Voyages en Lituanie," 94 and 99.
- [19] As I discuss later, Werefkin's definition of Russia is essentially equivalent to the Russian Empire, which encompassed what were then understood as the provinces—divided up lands constituting what are today Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, etc. Although she acknowledges these other cultural groups as locals, their identity is secondary to the Russian dominant norm.
- [20] Although Werefkin, because of the high level of professional achievement she attained as an artist, could be grouped with Russian feminists at the end of the nineteenth century, society norms in the Russian Empire still expected all women to marry regardless of class. For a discussion of marriage and feminism in Russia, see Barbara Alpern Engel, *Mothers and Daughters: Women of the Intelligentsia in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), esp. 192.
- [21] This is a figurative reference to Our Lord's Prayer, "give us this day our daily bread..." which Werefkin uses to signify going through the religious ritual of supporting one's family and doing the right thing, but without the spiritual content or sincerity to make it meaningful.
- [22] "Uveriaiu tebia—Kovno-eto klad dlia khudozhnika. Temno, fonari ne osveshchaiut, a temniat ulitsy. Ikh lilovye ogni visiat zloveshche sredi t'my. Ubegaiushchaia liniia nizkikh domov, po nei—klavishi zelenykh i krasnykh ognei—osveshchennye riady lavok. Iarko zelenye, iarko krasnye polosy lozhatsia na fioletovyi trotuar. I vsia eta ten' polna liudei, kotorye vse govoriat tol'ko ob odnom—o ljubvi: na zhargone, po-pol'ski, na lomanom russkom iazyke. Shepot i gromkie slova polosuiut tishinu, kak zelenye i krasnye polosy sveta – mrak nochi. Chto-to strashnoe, strashnoe lezhit vo vsem. Menia beret drozh', mne kazhetsia, ia v drugoi zemle, daleko ot sobstvennoi zhizni. Ia spasaius' v sobore. Temno, pusto, drozhat ogni perez ikonami, poiut vse, chto peli v dalekie dni. Neskol'ko chernykh figur—i serdtshe shchemit, slezy dushat, vstupaet byloe. Domoj...V kabinete Petia, vsia dusha nachinaet bolet' za nego, za etu bor'bu vsego, chto est' v nem milogo i dobrogo s tem, chto nazyvaetsia russskoi zhizniu. Pusto, pusto v dome, nikogo. Kto prikhodit—ne napolniaet ego. I togda iz serdtsa vyryvaetsia takoi goriachii poryv ljubvi, proshchaiushchei i zabyvaushchei, chto im napolniaetsia ves' dom...A ia idu v svoiu komnatu i prtiagivaiu ruki k Zapadu—chto eto daleko, chto vernus' li ia kogda-nibud'. Vne etikh boleznykh oshchushchenii—uzhas perez

liudmi i ikh zhizniu. Sluzhba i goesty sem'i—tverdaia osnova, pribavka, pobyshenie—sladostnye mechty, spletnia—khleb nasushnyi, a radosti ikh napominaiut mne te slasti, kotorye pokupaiut 'dlia naroda' i kotorye v rot ne voz'mesh'. Ia dumaiu o Miunkhene, kak o zdorovyie. Zdes' vse—stradanie, i etot uzhas krasoty, i eta uzhasnaia zhizn', i eta nadsadnaia literatura, i eta polnaia nenuzhnost' iskusstva." Werefkin to Jawlensky, Fond 19-1458, 17-18 and 27-28 as reprinted in Lauchkaite-Surgailene, "Marianna Verevkina. Zhizn' v iskusstve," *Vilnius* no. 3, sec. 9, 128.

[23] Shulamith Behr, *Expressionism, Movements in Modern Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 36, as well as Reinhold Heller, *Gabriele Münter: The Years of Expressionism 1903-1920*, Exh. cat. (Munich & New York: Prestel, 1997), 78ff.

[24] "...auf dem furchteinflössenden grauen Himmel ist ein schwarzer Berg zu sehen, ganz Schwarz mit noch schwärzeren Häusern, und plötzlich taucht unten ein feuerrotes Haus auf, ein violetter Weg mit Schneeflecken und auf dem Weg eine schwarze Menschenkette wie Krähen." Werefkin to Jawlensky, 1910 Lithuanian Martynas-Mazvydas-National Library, Vilnius, RS (F19-1458,1.31) as reprinted in Weidle, *Marianne Werefkin, Die Farbe beisst mich ans Herz*, 108.

[25] As quoted in n. 19. Werefkin to Jawlensky, 1910, Fond 19-1458, 17-18 and 27-28 as reprinted in Lauchkaite-Surgailene, "Marianna Verevkina. Zhizn' v iskusstve," *Vilnius* no. 3, sec. 9, 128.

[26] Charles Baudelaire, "The Salon of 1846: On the Heroism of Modern Life," as reprinted in Francis Frascina and Charles Harrison, eds. *Modern Art and Modernism: A Critical Anthology* (New York: Harper & Row, Icon, 1982), 18.

[27] Leonas Sabaliunas, *Lithuanian Social Democracy in Perspective 1893-1914* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1990), 1-2.

[28] *Ibid.*, 4.

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] " ein Meer von Champagner gab, Austern, ein ausgezeichnetes Nachtmahl, eine Menge hochrangiger Leute, 400 Menschen und kein einziger, mit dem man sich ein wenig unterhalten wollte! Todlangweilig...!" Werefkin to Jawlensky, 1910, Lithuanian Martynas-Mazvydas-National Library, Vilnius, RS (F19-1459,1.34) as reprinted in Weidle, *Marianne Werefkin, Die Farbe beisst mich ans Herz*, 112.

[31] Sigmund Freud, "Das Unheimliche," (1919) in Sigmund Freud *Psychoanalytische Studien an Werken der Dichtung und Kunst*, (Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924), 99-138.

[32] Werefkin to Jawlensky, Fond 19-1458, 17-18 and 27-28 as reprinted in Lauchkaite-Surgailene, "Marianna Verevkina. Zhizn' v iskusstve," *Vilnius* no. 3, sec. 9, 128.

[33] An important discussion on the depiction of women and the implied spectator is Griselda Pollock, "Modernity and the spaces of femininity," in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art* (London & New York: Routledge, 1988), 50-90. For the importance of collectivity in the definition of gendered identity see Nira Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation* (London: Sage, 1997), 45-46.

[34] The notion of binary relationships is discussed in Behr, *Expressionism*, 10.

[35] Pollock, "Modernity and the spaces of femininity," 66.

[36] A useful analysis of women's clothing in the 19th century is Diana Crane, *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender and Identity in Clothing* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago & London, 2000).

[37] In Lithuania, girls covered their heads "with wreaths or gay 'crowns' with ribbons." Once they were married, women "wore white linen kerchiefs called *nuometas*." Samogitian Cultural Association Editorial Board, "Customs," *Postilla 400*, (May 15, 2003). Retrieved on December 2, 2005 from <http://postilla.mch.mii.lt/Paprociai/paproc.en.htm>.

[38] Yuval-Davis, *Gender & Nation*, 46.

[39] Brögmann, "Je ne vis que par l'oeil," 36-37.

[40] For the concept of fighting in battle during World War I as a masculine form of nationalism, see George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 28.

[41] Russian historian Paul Dukes points out "no fewer than one and a half million people were affected by oppressions ranging from investigation to execution during the years 1904-9." Paul Dukes, *A History of Russia, Medieval, Modern, Contemporary*, 2nd ed. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), 193.



[42] Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 165. Pipes points out that the Socialists-Revolutionaries were the most radical of Russia's political parties, advocating violence and terror to achieve their aims. Established in 1902, they were descendants of the People's Will, the group responsible for the assassination of Tsar Alexander II in 1881. Like their predecessors, the S-R's aim was to discredit the government in the view of the people as a means of inciting rebellion. They divided society into two classes, the "exploited and the exploiters"—the first group including peasants and industrial workers; the second landlords, officials, factory owners, clergy and capitalists. Their first political target was D. S. Sipiagin, Minister of the Interior, who was murdered in 1902. See Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 146–49. While it is not clear Werefkin's brother Peter ever received threats on his life as governor of Kovno Province, and landowner of the family estate Blagodats, he certainly falls into the category of those who would have been targeted by the SR.

[43] Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, 165.

[44] Munich began receiving refugees in January 1905 as a result of the Revolution in Russia. Although a total number are difficult to ascertain, between January and August 1905 about 2400 refugees arrived into the city. See "Zur Solidarität der deutschen Arbeiterklasse mit der russischen Revolution 1905-1907," by Karl Drechsler in Leo Stern, ed., *Die Auswirkungen der ersten russischen Revolution von 1905-1907 auf Deutschland*, Archivalische Forschungen zur Geschichte der Deutschen Arbeiterbewegung, vol. 2, bk. 2 (Berlin: Rutten & Loening, 1956), 51.

[45] Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 12. The theme of the city street is common in German Expressionist art and literature, as well as that of the Weimar period. While there are many sources on the subject, two recent starting points are Rita E. Täuber, ed. *Femme Flaneur, Erkundungen zwischen Boulevard und Sperrbezirk*, (Bonn: Verein August Macke Haus, 2005), and Katharina von Ankum, ed. *Women in the Metropolis: Gender and Modernity in Weimar Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[46] Identifying with the women as members of the same gender and as partnerless, she may have been making a dual reference to her past. She experienced her own symbolic widowhood of 1901 when she learned of her housemaid Helene's pregnancy with Jawlensky's illegitimate child. The birth of Jawlensky's son Andreas created a permanent rift in the artists' relationship. Despite the embarrassment and threat to Werefkin's honor and respectability, she took great pains to conceal Jawlensky's paternity. She arranged for the child's birth to occur in Russia, not in Munich where they had been residing, by acquiring lodgings in Ansbacki, Vitebsk Province where Helene, Jawlensky, and she herself stayed for Helene's confinement and recovery from 1901 until 1902. When they returned to Munich, Werefkin and Jawlensky attempted to present their relationship to the public as if it were intact. Privately, however, it was strained as Helene, Andreas, Jawlensky and Werefkin continued to live together for almost twenty years. Werefkin's unwillingness to permit Helene, still under her employ, to marry Jawlensky—thus legitimizing Andreas' birth and releasing Helene from Werefkin's service—ultimately tore the artists' relationship apart. In 1921, Jawlensky and Werefkin separated, the former leaving for Germany with Helene and Andreas, the latter remaining in Ascona, Switzerland where all four had originally settled after World War I. Werefkin's steps to protect her personal honor are similar to Gabriele Münter and Wassily Kandinsky's (who was married) in their attempts to conceal their relationship from the public. Heller discusses this in detail, from the point of view of Münter's situation, in *Gabriele Münter, Years of Expressionism 1903-1920*. For information on Werefkin and Jawlensky's break up and some indication of Werefkin's legal rights over Helene, see Brögmann, "Je ne vis que par l'oeil," 58. Here, Jawlensky points out in a letter to his friend Emmy Scheyer, dated 9 January 1921, that Helene can no longer be a slave to Werefkin, which may be a reference to both her legal standing as well as to her feelings as her housemaid. It is likely a reference to both as Helene traveled with Werefkin in 1896 to Munich under Werefkin's government papers and did the same when both returned to Munich after the birth of Andreas in 1902. Helene, it appears, did not have a legal right to her freedom, which may have been bought by Jawlensky in 1921, through the sale of his personal items, including a Van Gogh.

[47] Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 46.

[48] Baudelaire, "The Salon of 1846" in Frascina and Harrison, *Modern Art and Modernism*, 17.

[49] See Koch, *Marianne Werefkin und der russische Symbolismus*. For a discussion of Baudelaire's influence on Russian Symbolist literature see Adrian Wanner, *Baudelaire in Russia* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996). Wanner points out that Baudelaire was first translated into Russian in 1852 (10). See also Irène Kuhn, et al, *Baudelaire et l'Allemagne, l'Allemagne et Baudelaire*, L'année Baudelaire 8 (Paris: Champion, 2004). Werefkin, who read, wrote, and spoke French, could also have read Baudelaire directly.

[50] Baudelaire, "The Salon of 1846" in Frascina and Harrison, *Modern Art and Modernism*, 17–18.

[51] A useful discussion of the role of women artists and their categorization outside the modernist canon in fin-de-siècle Vienna is found in Julie Marie Johnson, "From Brocades to Silks and Powders: Women's Art Exhibitions and the Formation of a Gendered Aesthetic in Fin-de-Siècle Vienna," *Austrian History Yearbook* 28 (1997), 269–92. For a discussion of modernism as a masculine phenomenon and women's omission from it in France see Pollock, *Vision and Difference*.

[52] Beth Irwin Lewis, *Art for All? The Collision of Modern Art and the Public in Late-Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003) 216. For a discussion in that book of women artists and perceptions of their emerging professionalism, see 207–21, as well as Berlinische Galerie, *Profession ohne Tradition, 125 Jahre Verein der Berliner Künstlerinnen*, Exh. cat. (Berlin: Berlinische Galerie, 1992) and the essay in that volume by Bernd Fäthke, "Die Wiedergeburt der 'Blauen Reiter'—Reiterin" in Berlin, *Von Diskriminierung der Frau in der Kunst am Beispiel Marianne Werefkin*, 237–48. See also David Ehrenpreis, "Cyclists and Amazons: The New Woman in Wilhelmine Germany," *Woman's Art Journal* 20, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1999): 25–31.

[53] Wright, "'New Man,' Eternal Woman," 588.

[54] A discussion of Werefkin's identification with the Mannweib, manwoman or third sex, in her Munich work is found in Shulamith Behr, "Veiling Venus: Gender and Painterly Abstraction in Early German Modernism," in Caroline Arscott and Katie Scott, eds., *Manifestations of Venus: Art and Sexuality* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 126–41.

[55] Marianne Werefkin, *Briefe an einen Unbekannten*, ed. Clemens Weiler (Cologne: Verlag M. DuMont, 1960), 50, as quoted in Susanne Meyer-Büser, "Das Erwachen des weiblichen Egoismus in der Zeit der Jahrhundertwende, Sieben Malerinnen und ihr Aufbruch in die Moderne," in Ulrich Krempel und Suzanne Meyer-Büser, eds., *Garten der Frauen, Wegbereiterinnen der Moderne in Deutschland 1900-1914*, Exh. cat. (Hannover: Sprengel Museum, 1996), 24. The original "Lettres à un Inconnu" was written by Werefkin in French and has never been published in its entirety. Weiler's version in German represents a selection of the artist's writings. See Brögmann, "Je ne vis que par l'oeil," 73, n.3. For a discussion of this passage in terms of contemporary Russian Symbolist thought and its emphasis on individualism see Koch, *Marianne Werefkin und der russische Symbolismus*, 66–74.

[56] I am adopting Billie Melman's concept of 1870–1930 as a war period and its appropriateness for discussions of gender, nation, and war. The assumption that war is only the moment in which a battle is being fought, such as World War I or the Bloody Sunday Massacre in St. Petersburg in 1905, limits the way we think about how war affects women. At home, women are typically preparing for war-like situations in their daily lives—such as dealing with their partner's conscription into the military, taking care of the family long before or after any battle takes place, etc. See Melman, *Borderlines: Genders and Identities in War and Peace, 1870-1930* (New York and London: Routledge, 1998), esp. 3–5. For a discussion of masculinity in World War I in Russia, see Karen Petrone, "Family, Masculinity, and Heroism in Russian War Posters of the First World War," in Melman, *Borderlines*, 95–119.

[57] Pipes, *Russian Revolution*, "1905: The Foreshock," 3–51. For an analysis of the weaknesses of Nicholas II as a ruler, see Andrew M. Verner, *The Crisis of Russian Autocracy: Nicholas II and the 1905 Revolution*, Studies of the Harriman Institute (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[58] Sabaliunas, *Lithuanian Social Democracy in Perspective 1893-1914*, 4.

[59] *Ibid.*, 15.

[60] Christopher Rice, *Russian Workers in the Socialist-Revolutionary Party through the Revolution of 1905-07* (New York: St. Martins Press, 1988), 142.

[61] The date of the massacre was January 9 according to the Julian calendar and January 22 according to the Gregorian calendar. For a detailed account of the events leading up to Bloody Sunday see Sidney Harcave, *First Blood: The Russian Revolution of 1905*, (New York: Macmillan, 1964), Chapter 3, esp. 88–94. See also Abraham Ascher, *The Revolution of 1905: Russia in Disarray* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), Chapter 3 and 87–89 for a reprint of the petition.

[62] Sabaliunas, *Lithuanian Social Democracy in Perspective 1893-1914*, 75.

[63] Laima Lauchkaite-Surgailene, "Voyages en Lituanie/Reisen nach Litauen," in Brögmann, *Marianne Werefkin*, 93 and Fäthke, *Marianne Werefkin*, 55.

[64] "Ia liubliu Rossiю tak, kak malo kto ee liubyt— ia dokazala eto vsei svoei zhizniu, no te, kto orut zdes o Rossi, mne ne brattia. Ia vsem svoem sushchestvom pryslushyvaius k russkoi

zhizni, ia hliazhu v glaza vsem okruzhaiushchym liudiam, net.... A glavnyi uzhas to, chto vot my stradaem no Rossii, a tut nikto ee ne liubyt, nikto no nei ne stradaet, a tol'ko zhongliruet etimi chuvstvami." Werefkin to Jawlensky, 1909-1910, fond 19-1458, pp. 35-36 as reprinted in Lauchkaite-Surgailene, Lauchkaite-Surgailene, "Marianna Verevkina. Zhizn' v iskusstve," *Vilnius*, no. 3, sec. 15, 136.

[65] Yuval-Davis, *Gender and Nation*, 45-46.

[66] "Dlia vneshnogo mira u menia v glazakh volshebnoe steklo, i ono mozhet peredat' mnogoe v zakoldovannoi krasote. Parizh, Miunkhen...vse edino. Derevnia khorosho, potomu, chto blizhche k prirode, no i khudo, potomu, chto my uzhe ne liudi prirody. Ia uvedela eto v Blagodati. Chem vyshe chelovek podnimaet sebia, tem na bolshee odinochestvo on obrechen. I eto dolzhno byt' tak. Ne nado tovareshei, nado sebia I kogo-nibud'. Kto by vas liubil kak sebia." Werefkin to Jawlensky, 1909-1910, fond 19-1460, 38-39 as reprinted in Lauchkaite-Surgailene, *Vilnius* no. 3, sec. 16, 136. Blagodati is the name of the family landed estate in the country where Jawlensky often accompanied Werefkin before their move to Munich.



## Illustrations



Fig. 1, Marianne Werefkin, *Return Home*, c. 1909. Tempera on Paper. Ascona, Museo Comunale d'Arte Moderna, Dr. med Hans Müller Collection, Lenzburg [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 2, Marianne Werefkin to Alexei Jawlensky, Letter from Lithuania, 1910. Vilnius, Lithuanian Martynas-Mazvydas National Library, Vilnius, RS (F19-1458, 1.31) as reprinted in *Verein August Macke Haus*, ed. Marianne Werefkin, *Die Farbe beisst mich ans Herz* (Bonn Verein August Macke Haus, 1999), p. 108 [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 3, Marianne Werefkin to Alexei Jawlensky, Letter from Lithuania, 1910. Vilnius, Lithuanian  
Martynas-Mazvydas National Library, Vilnius, RS (F19-1459, 1.34) as reprinted in *Verein August Macke  
Haus*, ed. Marianne Werefkin, *Die Farbe beißt mich ans Herz* (Bonn Verein August Macke Haus, 1999), p. 112  
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Fig. 4, Alexei Jawlensky, *Summer Evening in Murnau*, 1908-09. Oil on Board. Munich, Städtische Galerie  
im Lenbachhaus [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 5, Marianne Werefkin, *The Black Women*, 1910. Gouache on Cardboard. Hannover, Sprengel Museum [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 6, Marianne Werefkin, *Twins*, ca. 1909. Tempera on Cardboard. Ascona, Fondazione Marianne Werefkin [\[return to text\]](#)