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FRAGMENTARINESS AS UNITY: MIXAIL KUZMIN'S AESTHETICS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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ABSTRACT

The Silver Age poet, prose writer, dramatist, composer, literary critic and diary writer Mixail Kuzmin is in the process of being rediscovered. As so many writers of his generation, he did not fit into the framework of Socialist Realist Aesthetics, nor did his personality and life style (he was a homosexual) suit Soviet "morality." As a result, he was made "invisible." This is no longer the case as Slavists in Russia, the United State, Germany and elsewhere are resurrecting Kuzmin and his legacy. The contribution of this dissertation to Kuzmin's rediscovery is to be found in an examination of his aesthetics and poetics that brings out largely unobserved features. Among them, the absolute openness to contemporary and past cultural voices leading to Kuzmin's firm refusal to become identified with any specific literary movement. This plurality of codes is made possible by a variety of devices, such as fragmentation, intertextual linkages and stylization. Fragmentation involves loosening causal and temporal links and creating montage effects by juxtaposing
disconnected "scenes" from a variety of cultural contexts. This principle works with particular effectiveness in Kuzmin's works of the 1920's ("Progulki Gul'ja," "Lesok"). Stylization techniques allow Kuzmin to juxtapose the images of various (disconnected) epochs. An almost infinite range of subtexts increases the projection of cultural images interacting with each other and the poet's own poetic vision to a degree where one may speak of kaleidoscopic effects. It is argued that these techniques all serve the purposes of deautomatization. Kuzmin is the master of making the familiar strange and the strange familiar. Ultimately these aesthetic principles, translated into Kuzmin's flexible and ever-changing poetics, serve a thematic invariant that hovers invisibly between and behind the text fragments. The total is best captured by the fragmentary - this seems to have been Kuzmin's over-riding aesthetic stance. The dissertation includes a close reading analysis of one of Kuzmin's least explored longer poems: "Lazar'." Here the poet's aesthetics are demonstrated in their poetic practice and it is shown that these offer the keys to Kuzmin's vital thematic concerns.
To the memory of my father
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the beginning of the 20th century Mixail Kuzmin was one of the most influential cultural figures in Russia. He was highly esteemed as a poet, prose writer, playwright, critic and composer by many of his contemporaries, including Brjusov, Blok and Vjačeslav Ivanov, Somov, Sudejkin, Mejerxold, Majakovskij, Xlebnikov, Remizov, Cvetaeva, Pasternak, Vaginov and many others. His versatility was matched by his productivity. He has written eleven collections of poetry, nine volumes of prose, five books of drama works and vocal-instrumental cycles, many translations of prose and poetry, as well as numerous essays, articles and reviews on various aspects of
literature, theater and art. His literary legacy also includes an eighteen-volume (unpublished) diary which he kept for over a quarter of a century.\footnote{This information is presented in Bogomolov (1995), 9.} Not being well-researched in regard to his oeuvre, Kuzmin's life and writing career have been examined in detail by modern scholars however.\footnote{Znosko-Borovskij (1917), Malmstad (1977-1978), Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996)} This being the case, I will only briefly present its most important landmarks.

Mixail Alekseevič Kuzmin was born in Jaroslavl' in 1872 - a fact established only in 1975, since the poet frequently falsified the date of his birth. His tastes in music and literature were formed during his childhood. Even then the scope of his aesthetic interests was unusually broad, a fact that in many ways anticipated the mature Kuzmin's aesthetics. As a child, Kuzmin was fascinated by works of Hoffmann, Shakespeare, Molière, Cervantes and Goethe. These writers remained among his favorites for the rest of his life.

When his family moved to Petersburg in 1884, he began to attend a gymnasium there. During this time he met Georgij Vasil'evič Čičerin, who would later become an important and well known Soviet diplomat. Young Čičerin's knowledge of languages, philosophy, literature and art was
superior to that of Kuzmin's at the time, and for many years, while continuing to educate himself, Čičerin also "supervised" his friend's education. From their correspondence available to us, it is clear that Čičerin's guidance further broadened Kuzmin's aesthetic interests and ultimately helped him formulate an aesthetic stance that incorporated components of very diverse, often seemingly incongruent philosophical and artistic systems. "The hights of fusion" ("vysoty sovmestitel' stva") - an expression sometimes used in the correspondence between Kuzmin and Čičerin - may stand as a motto to define the whole of Kuzmin's sensibility and his art.

Before he began his literary career, Kuzmin underwent a series of personal crises. They were mainly caused by his belief at the time that the sphere of creativity and culture and the realm of immediate experience were incompatible, that art and life opposed and excluded each other. Because he was equally drawn to both of these areas of human existence, Kuzmin felt compelled to make a choice. There was also his homosexuality which triggered a sense of "sinfulness" and which deepened his depression. He tried to resolve his crisis with the help of religion, both Russian Orthodoxy - seeking out its early forms - and Catholicism. At the same time, he continued to study philosophy and art, as well as music (in the Petersburg
Conservatory and in a private school). He traveled to Egypt and Italy, and to the Russian provinces, immersing himself for a substantial period of time in Old Believers' byt, and extensively studying Old Russian culture. He even donned a traditional Russian costume.

Thus he looked like a "real Old Believer" when, around 1904, he was introduced into the elite cultural circles of Petersburg. During that time, he met with several young artists of the "World of Art" group, and later with Brjusov and Vjač. Ivanov. The 1906 publication of his poetic cycle "Aleksandrijskie pesni" and his first novel Kryl'ja in Vesy brought him immediate fame. The novel evoked a wide range of opinions: some critics called it a "pornographic novel", while others saw in it "a new word in Russian literature."

In his "Aleksandrijskie pesni," written in the then unusual vers libre, Kuzmin transfers his reader to Alexandria at the time of its cultural acme, making them feel at home in the exotic realm of a distant locale and bygone epoch. Superb mastery in transforming the foreign into the familiar, and making the familiar strange (deautomatization) would be the hallmark of a great deal of Kuzmin's works throughout his life.

In the following years, Kuzmin continued his close contacts with the Symbolist writers. He played an active role in Vjač. Ivanov's famous "Wednesdays," as well as less
formal gatherings of a circle of artists and poets, the "Hafizschenke" ("Kabačok Gafiza"). Kuzmin thought such close artistic circles of friends were more beneficial for creativity and art, than schools and movements based on some particular theory of art. These gatherings provided an atmosphere that encouraged aesthetic discussions with his artists-friends, and allowed him to share creative plans, perform music and read pages from his diary.

Kuzmin's other works of that time include three dramas ("spiritual comedies") which were praised by Blok and Vjač. Ivanov. In 1908 he published his first collection of poetry Seti which assured him of a place among the best Russian Symbolists. These early poems contributed to the reputation of Kuzmin as a "light" and "refined" poet who concentrates on the world of concrete objects. His more careful readers and critics noticed the ambiguity and subtle complexity of the poems of this cycle, however. These readers were also taken with the great variety of intonations and the plurality of "voices" of the poet. Yet, his careful disguising of the mystical aspect of his poetry clearly set Kuzmin apart from the Symbolists, who displayed their complexity and emphasized mysticism to the point of obscurity. In 1912 he published his next book of poetry, Osennie ozera, and in 1914 Glinjanye golubki. However, his main interest at that time was prose.
When the literary journal Apollon was formed in 1909, Kuzmin took an active role in creating its profile. In 1910, he published in it his treatise "O prekrasnoj jasnosti," which was immediately perceived as an anti-Symbolist statement. At the same time, while his personal contacts with the Acmeist poets were close, he resisted enlistment into their school. Kuzmin's firm position of non-alliance - maintained throughout his writing career - eventually led to a certain degree of isolation in the literary establishment. He had to resort to less prestigious "mass" publications, which, at the same time however, corresponded to the "democratic" character of his talent. During this period Kuzmin continued to publish a great deal, mostly prose. Some critics maintain that these writings are lacking in quality, a view which, it may well be argued, is mistaken. Kuzmin also translated and wrote reviews, and he strengthened his contacts with theatrical circles by writing numerous "light" dramas and composing music for various theatrical productions, including operettas. It was also during this period that he met Ju. Jurkun who would become Kuzmin's close friend and partner until his death in 1936.

From the early 1910's onwards Kuzmin increasingly abandons his poetics of concreteness and "lightness" for an ever greater complexity. His most considerable works of
poetry written after the revolution are *Vožatyj* (1913-1917, published in 1918), *Nezdešnie večera* (1914-1920, published in 1921), *Paraboly* (1921-1922, published in 1923) and *Forel' razbivaet led* (1925-1928, published in 1929). Most of these works are characterized by a highly ambivalent imagery. The subtle sense of disharmony, which, in his earlier works, Kuzmin was able to keep "beyond the threshold of his art" — to use Žirmunskij's expression — now permeates his poetry. Kuzmin's later poetry is characterized by the fusion of surface simplicity with extreme inner complexity.

The texture of his poems from that time is remarkably composite. Intricate designs are woven out of the poet's individual emotional experience, his reminiscences of the past and reflections about the future, mythological structures, quotations from very diverse literary works and other artistic texts, as well as his own thoughts on them, as well as a great many elements of other origins. His long associative poem "Progulki Gul'ja" and poems of the book *Forel' razbivaet led* are particularly typical of this "combinatory" tendency.

At the same time, most of Kuzmin's prose remained "clear," following the principle which he declared in 1909. It also tended to be entertaining. Kuzmin's well known novel Čudesnaja žizn' Iosifa Bal'zamo, grafa Kaliostro may
serve as a good example of such prose. During the late 1910's and the 1920's, Kuzmin was receptive toward technical innovations offered by Russian and Western art of the time, specifically by the Futurists and German Expressionists. Several of his poems of that period are clearly Futuristic. In response to the ideas of German Expressionists, Kuzmin created his own group of "emotionalists" and in 1924, he wrote a "Declaration of Emotionalism." In it, he emphasized the symbolic and emotional nature of art, and criticized the old, impotent art of the West.

After the revolution, and especially from the mid 1920's onwards, it became increasingly difficult for Kuzmin to publish. The attacks on "antiquated" (read: prerevolutionary) art increased in the Soviet press. His poetry of this period was by several contemporary critics regarded as incomprehensible. Kuzmin gradually arrived at the realization that there was no place for his writings in the context of Soviet literature. While remaining open to the few new currents in art (such as OBERIU), he continued to maintain an independent position even at the time of increasing artistic conformity. He wrote numerous reviews, mostly on subjects related to theater, publishing them in various newspapers, and eventually made a living.
exclusively by translating, including such authors as Homer, Shakespeare, Goethe, Byron and Brecht.

Despite all the difficulties and adversities of his life at this time, Kuzmin maintained a stoic attitude. He worked a great deal and remained in touch with several young writers, artists, translators and literary scholars who perceived him as one of the "living classics." We know almost nothing about what Kuzmin wrote in the 1930's. After his death in 1936, resulting from an illness, and after Jurkun's arrest in 1938, many of Kuzmin's archives were lost. Kuzmin's name was almost completely forgotten. However, his art was destined to return to the Russian reading public many decades later, and, together with it, the many riddles Kuzmin and his œuvre pose.

To his contemporaries, Kuzmin was a figure who encompassed many seemingly incompatible hypostases. This image of a multi-faceted artistic personality was carefully orchestrated by Kuzmin himself. He believed that only by juxtaposing his various "faces" and by establishing their common denominator, could one approach an understanding of his spirit. The diversity of his œuvre is similarly remarkable. Kuzmin's readers and critics continue to search for the evasive constant of Kuzmin's works and to define the essence of his art.
1.2 THE STATE OF KUZMIN SCHOLARSHIP

During his life, very few scholarly analyses of Kuzmin's works were written. The most substantial among them are two articles by V. Žirmunskij on his poetry, and one article by B. Éjxenbaum on his prose. Two monographs on Kuzmin, one by his first biographer E. Znosko-Borovskij and one by the critic É. Gollerbax contributed considerably to the overall understanding of the "phenomenon Kuzmin," without however elucidating more specific aspects of either his life or work.

By the late thirties, due to a variety of reasons, Kuzmin's vast literary-cultural heritage was almost forgotten both in Russia and in émigré circles in the West. For nearly half a century his works were totally neglected by scholars of Russian literature. Only in the last fifteen years has the scholarly interest in Kuzmin gradually increased, initially generated by J. Malmstad's 1977 publication of a three-volume collection of Kuzmin's poetry which include his superb biography of the poet. This edition also includes V. Markov's general overview of Kuzmin's poetry. Since then, several fundamental

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3For complete information, see Klaus Barer's superb bibliographical overview of Kuzmin's publications and scholarly research, Barer (1993a), 161-176 and Barer (1993b), 254-306.
Publications in the field of comparative studies have appeared: on Kuzmin and Blok (G. Šmakov), Kuzmin and Axmatova (R.D. Timenčik, V.N. Toporov, T.V. Civ'jan), Kuzmin and Mandel'štam (J.A. Barnstead), Kuzmin and Vjač. Ivanov (J.A. Barnstead; N.A. Bogomolov), Kuzmin and Wagner (G. Šmakov), Kuzmin and Majakovskij (I. Seleznev), Kuzmin and Pasternak (E. Tolstaja).

In the 1970's and 1980's several scholarly articles appear that are devoted to more specific aspects of Kuzmin's oeuvre. For example, Markov analyze the Italian theme in Kuzmin's poetry; the role of memory as a structural element in Kuzmin's poetry is discussed in an essay by Malmstad; in two works - one by I. Paperno and another by B. Gasparov - some intertextual aspects of the cycle "Forel' razbivaet led" are examined. Here Paperno analyzes Kuzmin's use of the motif of the "double" and the role of the love triangle in Kuzmin's poems, while Gasparov deals with the issues of his aesthetics of beautiful clarity and the motif of separation (the "barrier") so essential to this aesthetics.

Several scholarly works examine Kuzmin's individual writings. Šmakov and Malmstad for example, analyze the long poem "Forel' razbivaet led;" I.T. Baer examines "Aleksandrijskie pesni," "Lesok," and Čudesnaja žizn' Josefa Bal'zamo', grafa Kaliostro: N. Granoien, D. Gillis
and K. Harer discuss various aspects of Kuzmin's first novel *Kryl'ja*, whereas A. Sinjavskij concentrates on the cycle "Panorama s vynoskami." In recent years two prominent Kuzmin scholars, namely A.G. Timofeev and G.A. Morev have not only contributed numerous publications of Kuzmin archival materials to the field, but also some original discussions of individual works (such as Morev's analysis of the story "Vysokoe iskusstvo") and particular aspects of Kuzmin's aesthetics (for example, Timofeev's analysis of Kuzmin's concept of memory versus "archeology" as developed in his poetry and criticism).

Bogomolov's contribution to the field of Kuzmin studies over the last decade cannot be overestimated. His analysis of various aspects of Kuzmin's work and life reflect his superb knowledge of the poet's archives and the special attention which he pays to the overall literary context of the time. For example, he has examined Kuzmin's early works as autobiographical texts; he has considered the role of the poetic circle "Kabačok Gafiza" in Kuzmin's aesthetics and has established various subtexts of the long poem "Forel' razbivaet led." His monograph on Kuzmin along with several of his articles on specific issues of his writings and various materials were included in his recent book *Mixail Kuzmin: stat'yi materialy*. In addition, Bogomolov has revised the Malmstad biography of Kuzmin.
written fifteen years ago, when most of the Kuzmin archives were not yet available to scholars. Their new book, entitled *Mixail Kuzmin: iskusstvo, žizn', époxa* published in 1996, offers a detailed account of Kuzmin's life and his writing career and is largely based on materials presented in Kuzmin's letters and diary. Together with S.V.Šumixin, Bogomolov has also prepared Kuzmin's diary for publication.

Another valuable book on Kuzmin was published in Germany in 1993, by Klaus Harer, entitled *Michail Kuzmin (Studien zur Poetik der frühen und mittleren Schaffensperiode)*. It offers the reader a detailed and penetrating study of several aspects of Kuzmins' works of his early and middle period. Specifically, Harer examines the motif of the "vozatyj" ("leader") in Kuzmin's early poetry; he also analyzes the long poem "Sv. Georgij," paying much attention to its literary subtexts; finally the structure and some cultural subtexts of Kuzmin's two novels, *Podvigi Velikogo Aleksandra* and *Čudesnaja žizn' Iosifa Bal'zamo, grafa Kaliostro* are carefully analyzed in this book. Harer's detailed and very complete bibliography of Kuzmin's publications and of scholarly works on him, adds a great deal to the value of his monograph.
1.3 CONTRIBUTIONS OFFERED BY THE PRESENT DISSERTATION TO KUZMIN SCHOLARSHIP

Although the amount of scholarly publications and materials on M. Kuzmin is growing each year, and although some questions and "riddles" concerning his life and art are gradually finding valid answers, much work is yet to be done on this for ever intriguing figure. The dissertation deals with defining Kuzmin's aesthetics and poetics; it constitutes a singling out of some of the dominating features of his philosophy of art and a demonstration of how his principles "work" in literary practice. Beneath the multitude of Kuzmin's cultural self-images and the great diversity of genre, subject matter, and subtexts, lies an invariant element offering the key to Kuzmin's enigma. There is a consistent core, always sensed, but difficult to define. One of the main goals of my dissertation will be to investigate what makes it possible for Kuzmin to be both "variegated" and consistent.

A dominant feature of Kuzmin's art is its open, all-inclusive nature. The writer's extreme receptivity towards cultural traditions of the most diverse kind is discussed in chapter two. Works of art that contributed to shaping Kuzmin's aesthetics belong to a wide variety of national cultures, traditions, epochs, media and genres. Musicians,
artists and writers as diverse as St. Francis of Assisi and d'Annunzio, Leskov and Anatole France, Puškin and Tolstoj, Mozart and Wagner, Chodowiecki and Beardsley have left an imprint on his art.

In fact, Western sources are so numerous in Kuzmin's oeuvre, that he is often seen as a product of Western cultural traditions, something he was criticized for by reviewers of a "national" bent. His linkage with Western art is reflected in his untragic sensibility and his preference for "light" and entertaining art of the "Mozartian" type over morally engaged and prophetic literature and art, it has been stated. His "non-Russianness" has also been perceived in the prevalence of narrative, as opposed to "ambiance," both in his prose and poetry and in some other formal particularities of his writings. Yet, the impact of the Russian tradition on Kuzmin was at least equally important, albeit rarely perceived. In fact, the issue of Kuzmin's Russian heritage remains almost completely unresearched in Kuzmin scholarship. The writer's link with 19th-century Russian literature has been especially neglected, partly due to Kuzmin's well known rejection of its moralistic and prophetic tendency, as well as his general disapproval of 19th-century positivism. In my dissertation I modify this picture of a Kuzmin free of the Russian 19th century legacy
by establishing Tolstoj indisputable, yet unperceived impact on his aesthetics. I also examine Kuzmin's response to the classic's legacy. Because of the seeming incompatibility of their visions, the fact of Tolstoj's "influence" on Kuzmin is especially illustrative of the all-inclusive quality of his talent. I intend to demonstrate that Kuzmin's aesthetics was in fact largely formed in dialogue with Tolstoj and will point out the areas of contiguity, as well as the differences in the philosophy and art of these two authors.

Although Kuzmin conducted a dialogue with Tolstoj throughout his life, he ultimately rejected Tolstoj's reductionist stance. Unlike Tolstoj, Kuzmin was able to reconcile art with the realm of immediate experience. For example, he arrived at the conclusion that elitist artistic conventions which, according to Tolstoj, destroy the immediacy of life, were in fact the most effective way of preserving and conveying spontaneous human emotions.

Although he declared "clarity" to be his ideal in art, it was not to be achieved by reducing conventional codes to a bare minimum of devices, as suggested by the later Tolstoj. Kuzmin's model of simplicity was Mozartian (or Puškinian). While accessible to many, amusing, enjoyable and "light," such art could convey layers of additional, complex meaning to those able to read its specific
conventions. Kuzmin's shift of orientation toward the Puškinian type of "universal artist" was reinforced by the fact that some conservative critics (K. Leont'ev, V. Rozanov) declared Tolstoj to be inferior to Puškin. In the cultural circles of his time, Kuzmin came to be seen as a candidate for the role of the "Puškin of the Silver age."

My dissertation illuminates the important issue of Kuzmin's dialogue with Tolstoj and his shift to Puškin, as yet unobserved in Kuzmin scholarship.

Kuzmin's synthesizing, inclusive vision is also reflected in his independent relations vis-a-vis various literary movements of his time. This issue is discussed in chapter three of the present dissertation. As is well known, Kuzmin disapproved of artistic schools based upon a particular and hence limiting aesthetic theory. He often voiced his criticism of the Symbolist, Acmeist, Futurist, Imaginist, Formalist and other literary movements of his time, denouncing either their "prescriptive" tendency, or their orientation toward extra-literary objectives. At the same time, Kuzmin managed to maintain a friendly relationship with most major representatives of different schools. He was also an appreciative reader and critic of their works. His "policy" of non-alliance was thus less based on rejection and more on integration; it reflects his all-unifying aesthetics, which is also recognizable behind
his two "manifestos," "O prekrasnoj jasnosti" of 1909 and "Deklaracija emocionalizma" of 1924. I argue in my dissertation that both statements were meant to contribute to the restoration of a cultural balance by drawing the attention of the literary public to aspects of art, which at that specific time were reduced or neglected because of some predominant school. My interpretation of Kuzmin's role as a "keeper of balance" at the time of numerous literary and artistic battles is new. It allows to account for his two seemingly contradictory artistic statements and explain his cultural "behavior" as a part of his overall philosophy of cultural tolerance.

In his writings, Kuzmin also used the method of "cooperation" with various contemporary discourses. It is a well known fact by now that Kuzmin exercised much influence over the younger poets and writers of his time, particularly the Acmeists, Futurists and the OBERIU writers. At the same time, he himself was constantly attuned to new developments in literature and art and incorporated the achievements of the contemporary poets and writers into his own works. Yet, Kuzmin did not simply borrow elements of "foreign" poetics, but assimilated them into his own vision. This is why those of his works which resemble Symbolist, Acmeist, Futurist or OBERIU writings, may still be identified as Kuzmin's. While acknowledging
the proclivity of Kuzmin's talent for openness and receptivity, it is important to keep in mind that, although it carries within itself the risk of losing one's artistic individuality in an "ocean" of possibilities, in Kuzmin's case it was always counterbalanced by the invariant of his vision. This invariant enables his reader to recognize Kuzmin's writings as specifically his own, notwithstanding their having absorbed infinitely many and varied elements. I argue in my dissertation that the principle of "intersection" between "own" and "foreign" poetics operates in a great many works by Kuzmin.

On the level of poetics, the principle of balancing between a multitude of manifestations and an unvarying "design" is best reflected in Kuzmin's fragmentary structures. They will be discussed in chapter four of my dissertation. Fragmentariness characterizes Kuzmin's works of various genres, including poetic cycles, interrupted biographies, short stories and novels, diaries, associative poems based on the montage principle, as well as collage-like arrangements of short visual fragments. In these fragmentary structures the "meaning" of the text is not immediately discernible, but must instead be recognized behind a patchwork of "intriguing" pictures, through the process of juxtaposing and weighing the fragments. In life, according to Kuzmin, one is also presented with the
task of recognizing its "meaning" and "essence" behind an amalgam of discontinuous daily events. In that regard, Kuzmin's diary which literally transforms the poet's life into a series of discrete texts, acquires a special significance.

I carefully examine Kuzmin's frequent use of catalogues, his most elementary fragmentary structure, and indicate how they are based on the metonymic principle of substitution of a part for the whole. His catalogues and fragmentary structures in general are symptomatic of the universal, all-encompassing tendency of Kuzmin's talent and his proclivity for avoiding hierarchies. These are elements of Kuzmin's poetics that have not attracted the attention of Kuzmin scholars, but which I deem to be essential for the understanding of his works.

To link art and life, as Kuzmin believed one should, the poet with his unique vision is better able than anyone else to recognize the essence of "things," or their invisible graphs. Through his poetic X-ray procedure, establishing its unseen, essential pattern, the poet can even recreate and enliven that which has ceased to exist. According to Kuzmin, the main function of art is no less than to resurrect. Fragmentary art "resurrects" because it makes aware of the fact that the invisible exists "beyond" and "between" the visible "pieces." In his writings, the
poet is often visited by shadows of real and literary personalities to whom he donates his heart and blood, resurrecting them to new life in art. Several poems of the cycle "Stixi ob iskusstve" will be examined in chapter four of this dissertation, these being the works in which Kuzmin conveys the resurrecting role of art with particular emphasis.

Kuzmin's numerous historic stylizations, in which he recreates modes of life characteristic of bygone epochs, can also be seen as a kind of resurrecting projects. According to Kuzmin, each historic period produces a characteristic artistic form that functions to preserve the spirit of the time. By reactivating these forms, which requires poetic imagination, the artist resurrects the spirit of past epochs and beyond that, the "invariant" that united the unique individuals of that epoch.

Another function of art emphasized by Kuzmin, is that of deautomatization, again a function that serves "resurrecting" in a sense. Kuzmin believed that one's life is always an individual variant of the Divine journey. In order to follow the path which one has been "assigned," one needs to be fully cognizant of its contours, its direction and essence. Kuzmin insists that art may create just such awareness. Like any encounter with an "other," art provides one with a new, fresh perspective, which allows
one to recognize that which previously remained unseen. Many of Kuzmin's works convey that it is love and sacrifice that constitute the essence of the "Divine path." In the fourth chapter I will discuss Kuzmin's associative poem "Progulki Gul'ja" in which the deautomatizing notion of art comes to the fore, as well as its thematic function - that of pointing to love and self-sacrifice as a transfiguring force. Again, these aspects of Kuzmin's oeuvre have not been dealt with in previous scholarship, perhaps because Kuzmin has been seen more as an "amoralist" than a "religious" poet. For the all-embracing Kuzmin, being both was naturally no problem.

Because the "meaning" of Kuzmin's texts must be discerned by the reader through juxtaposing the fragments and their constituents, they are never rigid and fixed. To demonstrate how an almost identical fragment, when placed in different contexts, produces altered results, I will examine Kuzmin's use of a specific motif: a Königsberg garden scene. For Kuzmin, this "lyrical fragment" clearly emerges at the intersection of various cultural currents and is highly derivative. The essence of some artistic creations that emotionally deeply affected Kuzmin - those of his favourite German writer (Hoffmann), artist (Chodowiecki), and composer (Mozart) - converged for him in this lyrical fragment. Using this fragment, Kuzmin also
annuls the opposition between the realm of immediate perception and elitist conventions, which, as already mentioned, had been at the core of his creative crisis during his formative years. While examining this fragment in chapter four of my dissertation, I will consider several other specific issues, for example, Kuzmin's special interest in borderline cultures as well as threshold conditions and liminal states; all these are related to his aesthetics of openness.

The analysis of the long poem "Lazar'" which concludes Kuzmin's last book of verse Forel' razbivaet led (1928) is dealt with in chapter five. One of the most significant works of poetry by Kuzmin, this poem, unlike the cycle "Forel' razbivaet led" in the same collection, has not received much attention. As far as I am aware of, my analysis will represent the first interpretation of this highly complex work by Kuzmin. Certainly, linking the interpretation of "Lazar'" to Kuzmin's over-all aesthetics has not yet been attempted.

In my analysis, I will demonstrate how one of the central principles of Kuzmin's poetics - that of establishing an invariant on which a multitude of variants are projected - is reflected in this long poem. In accordance with its detective fiction genre, the story presents the reader with several possible scenarios of the
crime, purportedly committed. However, in spite of the
genre's requirement, the murder case is never completely
resolved, and, instead, all the versions are equalized on
the basis of their emotional truth. This emotional truth,
therefore serves as the invariant, on which various
concrete scenarios are projected. Such a structure
underlines Kuzmin's critique of truth based on material,
tangible evidence, and promotes the notion of spiritual
truth.

Numerous cultural subtexts of the poéma also function
as variants of one "essence" which Kuzmin defines as loving
self-sacrifice and which is rendered through the biblical
story of Lazarus. Establishing cultural subtexts of the
poéma constitutes one of the main objectives of my
analysis. Incorporating the subtext of Dostoevskij's The
Brothers Karamazov, or of the Germany of Hoffmann, Goethe,
Mozart, and Chodowiecki, or German Expressionist
cinematography will allow us to recognize those meanings of
the poema "Lazar'" which otherwise would have remained
concealed. In my analysis of "Lazar'" I also point to the
need for studying the poéma's polystylistics, its composite
metric repertoire and rich prosodic texture, which all
contribute to understanding this work by Kuzmin as
polyphonic in essence.
The methodology applied in my dissertation combines several approaches. The method of intertextual analysis is used in the discussion of Kuzmin's relation vis-a-vis traditional and contemporary discourses. In the study of individual texts this method is an important tool also, particularly in the discussion of the polyphonic nature of the poem "Lazar'." The analysis of individual texts the method of close reading and general hermeneutic principles will be applied. Thus the work relies on contextualization, the notion of "dialogue" (intertext) and the general laws of hermeneutics. This combination of approaches is seen as appropriate for an oeuvre that relies on integration and openness.
CHAPTER 2

KUZMIN AND TRADITION

2.1 KUZMIN'S ALL-INCLUSIVE ATTITUDE TOWARDS CULTURAL TRADITION

In Kuzmin's novel Kryl'ja, the autobiographical character Vanja Smurov on one occasion visits the Italian Catholic canon Mori.¹ The very diverse selection of books in the canon's library attracts his attention:

На полках стояли и лежали итальянские, латинские, французские, испанские, английские и греческие книги Фома Аквинский рядом с Дон-Кихотом, Шекспир - с разрозненными житиями святых, Сенека - с Анаксионтом ²

Kuzmin's own library in his apartment at Vjač. Ivanov's "Tower" is described in very similar terms by Georgij Ivanov in his Peterburgskie zimy:

¹Mori had a real-life prototype with the same name whom Kuzmin met while traveling in Italy. His views influenced Kuzmin's outlook a great deal.

²Proza I, 293
The ability to encompass disparate cultural phenomena, so astonishing to young Vanja in *Kryl'ja*, is the hallmark of Kuzmin's relationship to tradition.

Kuzmin's openness to tradition is indeed remarkable. Western and Russian culture in its ancient and most recent manifestations, central and marginal cultural phenomena, works of high and low genres, literature and non-verbal arts - all greatly interested Kuzmin and, in different degrees, contributed to shaping his aesthetics and artistic practice. Already as a child, Kuzmin demonstrated a wide range of interests in literature, music and theater of different traditions. In one of his autobiographic statements Kuzmin wrote:

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3G. Ivanov (1989), 363. Von Guenther's description of Kuzmin's library is similar: "Seine kleine Bibliothek war für mich eine sonderliche Überraschung: eine Gesamtausgabe von Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann in deutscher Sprache; eine vielbändige Ausgabe von "Tausendundeine Nacht" in französischer Sprache; ein mehrbändiger Lesskow; Melnikow-Petsherskij mit seinen aufregenden Sektiererromanen, die ich damals noch gar nicht kannte; die Bibel in Kirchen-slawisch; Borodin, Mussorgskij, Rimskij-Korsakow. Und die alten Wiener Walzer von Lanner, die er so sehr liebte und mir nahebrachte. Auch zum russischen geistlichen Lied, zum alten russischen Volkslied hatte er eine grosse Liebe, doch er hatte ein aufmerksames Gehör auch für russische Zigeunerlieder, zum Beispiel für das damals gerade aufgekommenne "Gai da, Trojka," eine süsses, verwegene Spielerei, die er mich lieben gelehrt hat." Von Guenther, 225

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As Kuzmin's biographers have noted, G. Čičerin, his close friend and mentor during the formative period of his life, was greatly responsible for his inclusive and seemingly indiscriminate approach to culture. Over the years of their friendship, he acquainted Kuzmin with a great number of works of Western and Russian literature, philosophy, art and music. In order to illustrate the remarkably wide range of Čičerin's cultural interests, Bogomolov, quoting an "advisory letter" of his to Kuzmin, states:

As quoted in Bogomolov (1995), 13

5Tbid, 152
novels, Molière, Schubert's songs, A.France, Leskov, Mozart.

It was only when entering Petersburg literary circles (around 1905, when he was in his early thirties) that Kuzmin familiarized himself with the works of contemporary Russian authors. Although he from then on, paid much attention to contemporary developments in literature and other arts, his main orientation remained classical literature, music and art. Kuzmin's erudition is remarkable and was acknowledged even by Vjač. Ivanov and other highly educated men of the times. It is important to keep in mind, however, that Kuzmin's reading of various authors was selective. He tended to assimilate only that which was congenial to his own views and sensibility, and dismiss that which was not. This selectiveness explains

6 The list of invariably important for Kuzmin cultural figures is presented by E.Znosko-Borovskij (1917). Another list written as a part of his autobiographic statement in the 1920's, is symptomatic of the fact that Kuzmin retained a "core of favorites," as well as his lasting preference for classical literature: "Я не знаю, кто имел на меня влияние, судить об этом предоставляю критикам, но могу преречислить остоявшиеся свои симпатии Две эпохи в литературе производят на меня непередаваемое впечатление: "Елизаветинцы", "Буря и натиск" в Германии Затем отдельные поэты Шекспир, Гете, Гофман, Бальзак и Диккенс, из более современных - А. Франс Русские - Пушкин, Достоевский и Лесков Из современников вездею заинтересован экспрессионистами." As quoted in Malmstad (1977), 261

7 Bogomolov and Malmstad also pointed at the "selectiveness" of Kuzmin's reading. Commenting on his interest in Plotinus, they, for example, write: "Читал Плотина Кузмин очень выборочно; подобно другим писателям, он брал у философа только то, что соответствовало уже сформировавшимся собственным взглядам" Bogomolov and Malmstad (1993), 84

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the constancy of Kuzmin's preferences in the midst of apparently indiscriminate diversity.

Kuzmin's acute awareness of the pluralistic nature of tradition is combined with his understanding that each time has its own perception of the same tradition. In his programmatic article "Uslovnosti," for example, he writes: "Каждый век имеет свое представление о произведениях прошлого искусства."⁸ A similar notion is expressed in his novel Крыл'я, where the characters articulate many of Kuzmin's own aesthetic principles:

Это занято, поскольку мы видим то, что желаем видеть, и понимаем то, что ищется нами. Как в греческих трагиках, римляне и романские народы 17-го века усмотрели только три единства, 18-й век - рассеянные тирады и освободительные идей, романтики - подвиги высокого героизма и наш век - острый оттенок первобытности и Клингеровскую осенность далей.⁹

Kuzmin's open and inclusive approach to tradition, is reflected in many ways in his oeuvre. The ideal of cultural syncretism was first advanced in Kuzmin's novel Крыл'я.¹⁰ In it, the main character, Vanja Smurov, encounters a variety of cultural models, including the petty bourgeois ("мешчanskaja") the Old-Believers' and the

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²⁸⁹Uslovnosti, 16 There Kuzmin also adds: "Но речь свою хочу вести я об искусстве сугубо условном, где традиции еще более случайны, нежели во всяком другом." ³⁰

⁹Proza I, 209

¹⁰On this subject see Barer (1989)
modernist. He also enters the worlds of Dante, Shakespeare, and those presented in the works of Old Russian literature, such as Prolog. Vanja considers each of those models in terms of their attitude to love. He chooses a model, embraced and exemplified by the Englishman Strup, one that not only is tolerant towards different kinds of sexuality, but also is open toward a wide variety of cultures.

Many of Kuzmin's writings, particularly in his later period, are based on the principle of establishing analogies between various cultural phenomena. In chapter 5 of present dissertation, the long poem "Lazar'" will be analyzed as an example of Kuzmin's work of cultural polyphony.

Another way in which Kuzmin's inclusive attitude to the tradition manifested itself, is in his numerous stylizations, which represent "recreations" of styles characteristic of bygone epochs or individual authors. When Kuzmin wrote a variation of a French adventure novel (Prikliučenija Éme Lebefa), or of an English novel-travelogue in the style of Daniel Defoe (Putešestvie sera Džona Firfaksa...), or of Italian commedia dell'arte ( "Venecianskie bezumcy"), or a Leskovian ("Nečajannyj

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11 The issue of Kuzmin's stylizations has been discussed by several authors. See, for example, Zöldhelyi (1978) and Bærer (1993b).
proviant") or Puškinian ("Nabeg na Barsukovku") story, he resorted to highly diverse traditions. One may also view these recreations as a playful challenge to a predominately evolutionary and linear view of tradition.

Kuzmin's stylizations signify not only his refusal to confine himself to one dominant tradition, but also his faith in art's capacity to overcome time and space, due to its universal appeal. By traveling back and forth in time and space, he rediscovers the forgotten treasures of past cultures and, at the same time, instills the old forms with contemporary knowledge and perceptions, thus, altering them. Because of his own "intimate" attitude to and casual handling of tradition, he could bring his reader "face to face" - to use his own expression - with cultures of the past. Fully mastering "deautomatizing" techniques, he knew how to render the strange familiar. The readers of his stylized writings about ancient Rome, or Alexandria, Italy, 

12"Тогда как развитие точных наук, техники и механики, коренные изменения политических и общественных взаимоотношений неуклонно протекают во времени и пространстве, освобождение от этих понятий (вседушная мечта человечества) можно наблюдать только в области искусства, простейших чувств, исходных движений духа и анатомическом строении человеческого тела " Условности, 7

13Kuzmin's fascination with the deautomatizing capacity of art and his mastery of estranging and - "making familiar" techniques, deserves a special investigation. Much of his artistic originality, as it seems, is rooted in these areas. It is also possible that Kuzmin's interest in Tolstoj, which will be discussed later on in this chapter, is connected with Tolstoj's deliberate and consistent employment of these devices - the fact which later on will be noticed by the Formalists.
France or Germany of the 18th century feel like insiders in these distant cultures, rather than foreign and detached observers. This is the main quality that assured the enormous success of Kuzmin's stylizations.

Kuzmin's ability to appropriate almost any tradition and any style with the greatest ease, was frequently noted by his contemporaries. For example, his first biographer E.A. Znosko-Borovskij defined Kuzmin as a citizen of the world, undoubtedly linking Kuzmin to the "universal" Puškin, as Dostoevskij presented him in his 1880 Puškin speech. It was also common for Kuzmin's contemporaries to describe him in terms of reincarnation of poets from the past. Gollerbax, for example wrote:

Я не верю (искренно и упорно) < > что вырос он в Саратове и Петербурге. Это только приснилось ему в "здешней" жизни. Он родился в Египте, между средиземным морем и озером Мероэтис, на родине Эвклида, Оригена и Филона, в солнечной Александрии, во времена Птолемеев. Он родился сыном фараона и египтянки, и только в XVIII веке встал в его

Znosko-Borovskij writes: 'По прихоти своего воображения Кузмин переносит нас то на Восток, в древнюю Элладу, в Рим, в Александрию, 
XVIII век, странствует с героями из одной страны в другую и одинаково хорошо чувствует себя хорошо как в современном городе, так и в какой-
нибудь деревушке вблизи Галикарнаса, в избе старообрядца или во дворце царя-язычника. С такой же легкостью меняет он и формы своих произведений и готов пользоваться как воеми изощрениями современной поэзии, так и сдержанной наивностью стародавних прозаических образов. Для того, чтобы оценить это свойство Кузмина, проявляемое не в грубых подделках, а в тонкой расстановке слов, в едва уловимом изменении слога, которые он передает характер народа, или эпохи, или их литературных форм, достаточно сослаться на пример других русских писателей: много ли среди них таких, которые так свободно чувствовали бы себя везде "Гражданами военной", как Кузмин?" Znosko-Borovskij (1917), 26-27
Kuzmin was not only open to traditions of the most diverse kind - he also favored traditions that in their turn had been open to diverse traditions. He preferred historic periods and geographic areas that were characterized by cultural, philosophical and religious syncretism. In early Christianity, for example, Kuzmin was particularly fascinated by the blend of pagan and Christian elements. Among Kuzmin's works which depict the period of early Christianity are his unfinished novel *Rimskie čudesa* and his play "Komedia o Aleksee čeloveke Bož'jem." Alexandrine culture which was a blend of various Mediterranean cultures, also had an enormous appeal for Kuzmin. In the composite culture of what he called the "Prussian-Polish-Baltic-Russian" locale - the geographic area of the border lands of Germanic and Slavic cultures - he saw a contemporary analogue to Alexandrine culture.

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15Gollerbax (1922), 43 Similarly, M. Vološin in his "Liki tvorčestva" notes: "Не есть ли он одна из Египетских мумий, которой каким-то колдовством возвращена жизнь и память < > Мне хотелось бы восстановить подробности биографии Кузмина, - там, в Александрии, когда он жил своей настоящей жизнью в этой радостной Греции времен упадка, так напоминающей Италию 18 века" Vološin (1988), 471, 473. Balmont, too, depicts Kuzmin as a reincarnated ancient poet: "В Египте преломленная Эллада, / Садов несущих роза и хасмин, / Персидский соловей, садов услада, / Запали в глубь внимательного взгляда - / Так в русских днях возник поэт Кузмин" As quoted in Lavrov and Timenčik (1990), 5
Kuzmin also paid special attention to composite philosophical and artistic systems. For example, throughout his life he was interested in gnosticism, a highly eclectic blend of Christian and Eastern religious-philosophical thought. The appeal of the "World of Art" group of painters to Kuzmin is undoubtedly also found in their synthesizing approach to art. His participation in the aesthetic discussions of the "miriskussniki" helped Kuzmin to formulate his inclusive stance vis-a-vis tradition, as previously did his discussions about literature, philosophy, religion, music and art with his friend Čičerin. The ideal of synthesis, according to Kuzmin, was best exemplified in artists like Shakespeare, Goethe, Mozart and Puškin. His ultimate conscious orientation toward Puškin as universal, or all-inclusive poet, is discussed later on in this chapter.

Kuzmin's perception of himself as a product of multiple and diverse origins is expressed with great emphasis in his quasi-autobiographical poem "Moi predki" (1907), from the book Seti, in which his familial genealogy is merged with his cultural one. I will first quote the poem in full and then point to some specific cultural characteristics which Kuzmin stresses in the portrayal of his spiritual-familial ancestry.

Мои предки
Моряки старинных фамилий,
влюбленные в далекие горизонты,
пьющие вино в темных портах,
обнимая веселых иностранок;
франты тридцатых годов,
подражающие Д’Орсе и Брюммелю,
внося в позу дениди
все наивность молодой рассы;
важные со звездами генералы,
бывшие милями повесами когда-то, сохраняющие
веселые рассказы за ромком,
всегда одни и те же;
милые актеры без большого таланта,
принесшие школу чужой земли,
играющие в России “Магомета”
и умирающие с невинным вольтерьянством;
вы - барышни в бандо,
с чувством играющие вальсы Маршалью,
всивающие бисером кошельки
для женников в далеких походах, гуляющие в домовых
церквах
и гадающие на картах;
экономные, унылые помещицы,
хвастающие своими запасами,
умеющие простить и оборвать
и близко подойти к человеку,
насмешливые и набожные, встающие раньше заря
зимою;
и прелестно-глупые цветы театральных ущелищ,
преданные с детства искусству танцев,
нежно развратные,
чисто порочные, разоряющие мужа на платья
и видающие своих детей полчаса в сутки;
и дальше, вдали - дворяне глухих уездов,
какие-нибудь строгие бояре,
бехавшие от революции французов,
не сумевшие взойти на гильотину -
все вы, все вы -
вы молчали ваш долгий век,
и вот вы кричите сотнями голосов,
погибшие, но живые,
во мне последнем, бедном,
но имеющим язык за вас,
и кажда капля крови
блиска вам, слышит вас,
любит вас;
и вот вы все-
милые, глупые, трогательные, близкие,
благословляетесь мною
за ваше молчающее благословенье
The poem is composed as a catalogue of the poet's ancestral types. One of the functions of catalogues in Kuzmin's works is "equalizing". Here, too, he equalizes seemingly indiscriminate choices: students of theater schools and actors without great talent are remembered and appreciated by their offspring, the poet, as much as important generals and estate owners. The inclusion of Frenchmen among his relatives, who did not master the art of stepping onto the guillotine, instead leaving for Russia, underlines the poet's preference for the "unheroic." This emphasizes Kuzmin's interest in marginal phenomena.

The link of his writings to the "minor" lines of Russian and Western literature, that is, to secondary poets and writers, has been noted. Mandelştam's observation in his "Burja i natisk" seems to be the particularly insightful wherefore I quote it in full:

У российского символизма были свои Виргилии и Свифты, у него же были и свои Катуллы, не столь по возрасту, сколь по типу творчества. Здесь следует упомянуть о Кузмине и Ходасевиче. Это типичные младшие поэты со всей свойственными младшему поэзии чистотой и прелестью звука. Для Кузмина старшей линии мировой литературы как будто вообще не существует. Он весь замешан на пристрастии к ней и на канонизации младшей линии, не выше комедии Гольдони и любовных песенок Сумарокова. В своих стихах он довольно удачно культивировал сознательную небрежность и мешковатость речи, испещренной гальцизмами и полонизмами. Зажигаясь от младшей поэзии Запада, хотя бы Моосе - "Новый Ролла", он дает читателю иллюзию современно искусственной и преждевременной дряхлости.
Kuzmin's reliance on lesser writers, especially of the 18th century, is significant. Among other secondary writers who influenced Kuzmin, but who were not mentioned by Mandel'stam, I would like to mention Bogdanović, Čulkov and Mel'nikov-Pečerskij. Rightly emphasizing Kuzmin's linkage to the "minor line," Mandel'stam, however, is wrong in not perceiving his ties with the "major" line of Russian literature, however. For Kuzmin it was equally important. As my analysis below demonstrates, Kuzmin's connection with Puškin and Tolstoj - two representatives of this "great" line - was crucial for the formation of his aesthetics and the practice of his art.

The poem "Moi predki" also conveys a sense of interconnectedness between Russia and the West: Russian sailors are said to be attracted by foreign lands; Russian young men imitate English and French "dandies" which produces a strange combination of mannerism and naiveté; foreign actors move to Russia, bringing their theatrical repertoire and school of acting, as well as social ideals from their native lands; among the provincial Russian landlords making up his ancestry the poet finds dislocated

16Mandel'stam (1971), II, 224
French royalists and aristocrats who constituted a tremendous cultural force all over Germany, Poland and Russia. In many ways those Frenchmen facilitated cultural link between Russia (East) and West. By reminding the reader, and perhaps a potential opponent, that hospitality and openness are organic properties of Russian culture, Kuzmin "defends" himself against the allegations of being too Western. Here we detect an identification with Puškin's "universality," as defined by Dostoevskij in 1880. The poem "Moi predki" also seems to allude to "Moja rodoslovnaja" by Puškin. Puškin's ancestry was of course extremely varied.

Kuzmin found a particular delight in the fact that he had literary blood in his veins, being, presumably, a remote relative of Th. Gautier.\(^\text{17}\) Yet, genetic links to the past were secondary to him. A critic, familiar with Kuzmin's biography, immediately recognizes his real forbears behind most of the portraits in the poem, but the poet's real concern is his cultural genealogy. Kuzmin had a general mistrust in procreation as a means of assuring continuity and it is a notion frequently expressed in his

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\(^{17}\) Bogomolov and Malmstad note in their Kuzmin biography, referring to his letter to Čičerin: "В письме к Г.В.Чичерину двадцатилетний Кузмин с притягательным удивлением напишет: "Я недавно разговаривал с мамой о старине и нашел, что Th. Gautier - мой родственник; конечно, пустяки, но все-таки приятно" Bogomolov and Malmstad (1993), 68
works. Art, on the other hand, is seen as a way of preserving one's unique identity beyond the borderline of death and of overcoming the limitations of temporality and mortality.

That is why, in the poem "Moi predki" Kuzmin portrays his genealogy in literary, not genetic, terms. For example, Russian dandies are Puškinian types as represented by Evgenij Onegin above all. In his poem, Kuzmin speaks of the 1830's, a decade that, as he frequently stressed, were defined by Puškin, the sun of a star constellation of poets. Old generals who tell their old stories, romantically inclined provincial girls waiting for their fiancés to return from a war, lighthearted actresses and forceful and economic gentry ladies running their estates—all are easily recognizable types of the Russian novel. Therefore, the poet's stated relation to these types may be seen as the affirmation of his link with the Russian novelistic tradition.

The poem's final passage proclaims not only the multiplicity of characters and subject matter, typical of Kuzmin's writings, but also the principle of polyphony cherished by Kuzmin. Because the poet was able to absorb and internalize "hundreds of voices" of his cultural

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18 In his "Češuja v nevode" Kuzmin suggests that Puškin best represented the spirit of 1830's.
ancestors, he can now "sing" with various voices, which
nevertheless all sound like his own.\textsuperscript{19}

By calling himself "last" and "poor" in the poem "Moi
predki," the poet affirms his overall link with the unique
culture of the vanishing class of the Russian nobility,
accepting the perception of himself as a cultural
anachronism.\textsuperscript{20} At the same time, Kuzmin always saw
absorbing the cultural voices of the past as the basis for
innovation. For him, the novelty of such artists as Mozart
and Puškin are based on their unique ability to synthesize
already existing cultural phenomena. Kuzmin, therefore,
locates himself at a transitional phase of Russian
literature, while declaring his link with both Western and

\textsuperscript{19}This unique talent of internalizing the foreign, was often noted by
Kuzmin's contemporaries. In this connection it it appropriate to
quote Čulkov, who comments in his memoirs on Kuzmin's ability to make
all voices his own, excluding those completely opposite to each
other:

В прошлом у него были какие-то искания, какая-то любовь к
старообрядческому быту, какие-то странства по Италии.
Все это смешалось в нём, сочеталось во что-то единое И это
не было механической смесью, а органическим единством Как
это ни странно, но старопечатный "Пролог" и пристрастие к
французскому \textsuperscript{XVIII} веку, романы Достоевского и мемуары
Казановы, любовь к простонародной России и вкус к румяным и
мушкам: всё это было в Кузмине чём-то внутренне
оправданным и гармоничным.

\textit{As quoted in Malmstad (1977), 122}

\textsuperscript{20}Ivanov, for example, points at Kuzmin's "rodovoj anaxronizm"
in his poem of 1906, entitled "Anaxronizm" ("Cor ardens") and
dedicated to Kuzmin:

\begin{verbatim}
За твой единый галлицизм
Я дам своих славизмов десять;
И моде всеё не перевесить
Твой родовой анахронизм.
\end{verbatim}

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Russian traditions, and promising to create a unique blend of past and present, West and East.

While several aspects of Kuzmin's relationship with the Western tradition have been examined by Kuzmin scholars, the important issue of his link with the Russian tradition remains almost completely unresearched. Kuzmin's writings reveal the influence of various periods of Russian literature. The impact of Old Russian literature on Kuzmin's writings was considerable and is reflected in his early plays, in his "Duxovnye stixi" and several short stories. As the 18th century was one of Kuzmin's favorite cultural epochs, he could not exclude the Russian literature of that period from the range of his interests.

The influence of Lomonosov, Deržavin, Sumarokov, Bogdanović, and Čulkov on Kuzmin's writings must be examined in order to demonstrate the full range of his connection with the Russian tradition. For example, establishing parallels between Kuzmin's early poetry on one hand, and Deržavin's "light" verse and Bogdanović's erotic poetry on the other, may contribute to our seeing that the non-tragic, "gay" tonality of many of his works is not so

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21Both šmakov (1972) and Malmstad (1977) point at Kuzmin's link with Plotinus, Hamann and Heine; Bogomolov establishes the connection between Kuzmin's poetry with that of Hafiz. The subject of Kuzmin's "Western" roots also needs to be investigated. In chapters 4 and 5 of present dissertation I will examine the relevance of German culture for Kuzmin's aesthetics.
non-Russian, as is commonly believed. Kuzmin's link with Bogdanovič, whose "line" was in many ways continued by Puškin, is particularly significant. It is indicative of his tastes that, when he died in a Leningrad hospital in 1938, two volumes were said to be at his side - the Bible and Bogdanovič's Dušen'ka. The "democratic" nature of many of Kuzmin's works and his interest in "low" genres are also rooted in literatures of the 18th century, including Russian literature.

Kuzmin's appreciation of Puškin as a universal poet and an artist-synthesizer was enormous. His orientation towards the Puškinian-Mozartian type of artist will be discussed later on in this chapter. Let us now look at Kuzmin's perception of later, post-Puškinian 19th century Russian literature. His general attitude toward the 19th century was, as already mentioned, hostile, mainly because of its predominantly positivist ideological positions. The orientation of Russian literature of that period towards extra-literary goals, its moralistic and prophetic stance, its meta-narrative ambitions, met with little sympathy on Kuzmin's part. He was especially critical of the situation.

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22G. Adamovič wrote on the occasion of Kuzmin's death: "Из Петербурга сообщают, что Кузмин умер после долгой болезни. Писать не перестал до конца, - хотя говорил - пишу, а не знаю, для кого. Печатать негде: Никому я не нужен! В больнице у него на столе остались две книги: Евангелие и "Душенка" Богдановича. Весь Кузмин - в этом выборе" Adamovič (1936), 3
towards the end of the 19th century, when literature's didactic role became hypertrophied and society began to assign to it the responsibility for what happened in Russia. In fact, his objection to the Symbolist movement was that, in an odd way, it continued to serve various extra-literary goals even though it had criticized the didacticism of the realist school.

Nevertheless, Kuzmin was an appreciative reader of various individual 19th century texts and incorporated many elements of their poetics into his works. For example, he was very fond of Leskov whom he considered a great master of style. Turgenev's lyrical novels have, indirectly, effected Kuzmin's poetry, as was the case with Axmatova. Kuzmin's attitude toward Dostoevskij was ambiguous. The tonality of the "nadryv," so characteristic of Dostoevskij's writings, was alien to him, yet he

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23 V. Rozanov's views on this issue most readily come to mind. He wrote: "Конечно, нельзя обвинять ни Пушкина, ни Достоевского за то, что сейчас происходит в русской литературе и русской действительности. Но должна же существовать какая-нибудь связь между последним полвеком нашей литературы и нашей действительности, между величием нашего созерцания и ничтожеством нашего действия. Кажется иногда, что русская литература истощила до конца русскую действительность как исполнитель цветок Victoria Regia, русская действительность дала русскую литературу и ничего уже больше дать не может." Rozanov (1990), 332

24 For example, in his "Заметки Петра Отел'ника" Kuzmin writes: "Вероятно, что воспоминания 60-х годов можно рассматривать и требование неосимволизма от искусства теургических свойств" Kuzmin (1989), 385

acknowledged Dostoevskij's genius and the uniqueness of his artistic vision. He also well aware of the impact Dostoevskij's writings had on his contemporaries. In fact, Dostoevskijan subtexts are quite frequent in Kuzmin's oeuvre; one such example will be examined in chapter five, in the analysis of Kuzmin's long poem "Lazar'." Also, his novel Tixij straz, with its typically Kuzminian blend of stylization and subtle parody, illustrates the author's intimate understanding of the essence and particularities of Dostoevskij's style. Kuzmin's receptiveness even to those writers whose sensibilities were entirely foreign to his own (like Lermontov's, or Čexov's) demonstrates the dialogical nature of his talent.

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26 This attitude is expressed in the following statement from one of Kuzmin's letters:" но я понял мое отвращение от блестящих грязю улиц Петербурга под зажженными фонарями, от Подъяческих и т.п. Это именно достоевщина, психоз, надрыв, Раскольников, полупьяная речь, темнота безумия, самоубийство Это то, от чего я содрогаюсь и чего не хочу и не понимаю; и мокрая грязная панель вечером на узкой с пьяными и рабочими улице Петербурга - это символ Темная вода Невы, какой ужас Представляется булыжный тела, участок, утопленник, все грубое, темное, грязное, и в нём почти трагическое и ненужное и живое Тогда уже Бальзам или Мицке Нет, день - мой вождь, утро и огненные закаты, а ночь - так ясная с луной из окна" As quoted in Malmstad (1977), 92
2.2 DIALOGUE WITH TOLSTOJ

Although skeptical of 19th century literary didacticism, Kuzmin's aesthetics evolved very much under the influence of Tolstoj's thinking and writings - as a response to the great moralist's aesthetics. This attraction (and rejection) of opposites was made possible by Kuzmin's open aesthetics, as well as its all-inclusiveness. In his "total" system the nineteenth century could not be by-passed, but had to be integrated and, naturally, also transformed.

Those who think of Kuzmin as an aesthete with subtle tastes, a Westernizer and Russian Oscar Wilde, an advocate of hedonism, as an author of frivolous erotic poems and of a novel which promotes homosexual love, may find it astonishing that he was influenced by such a profoundly religious and moralistic writer as Tolstoj. Yet, the effect of Tolstoj's thinking on anyone at that time is not surprising, considering the enormous impact it had on intellectuals, as well as "ordinary" people, on foreigners and Russians, on writers and philosophers, church-people and sectarians. Tolstoj was a "mountain" whose shadow no one could completely evade. Generations of artists grew up under the spell of Tolstoj's ideas. They were enthralled by him (Bunin) and they rejected him (Čexov), they
portrayed him (Gor’kij) and painted him (Repin, Gé).

Tolstoj was virtually everywhere.

To my knowledge, Kuzmin never included Tolstoj among his favorite authors, nor listed him under "influences." Yet, his early correspondence reveals that, as a young man he was affected by Tolstoj the "moralist." Also, several of Kuzmin's critical essays, mostly of the twenties, contain numerous brief remarks on Tolstoj, which indicates that the aesthetics of the great Russian realist continued to be a referential point for Kuzmin. Several of his artistic works, too, reveal areas of contiguity with Tolstoj.

The formation of Kuzmin's philosophy and aesthetics was a long and tormenting process. Initially, as his early letters indicate, he was a rather happy young man whose view of the world was clear and untroubled. In his literary and musical tastes he exhibited a preference for works that avoided disharmony and celebrated life. As he studied music and literature and tried himself in these fields, the world of art captivated him more and more.\(^2\) He

\(^{2}\)The intensity of Kuzmin's attraction to art, as well as his emotional perception of it, are reflected, for example, in his letter of January 13, 1897: "Я недавно читал былины, собранные Киреевским, некоторых я совсем не знал; меня особенно поразили некоторые такие трагические и величавые, вроде "Данилы Ловчанина", где двойное самоубийство жены и мужа, или же яркие, роскошные, полуэстрадные, вроде встречи Ильи Муромца с сыном Борисом-Королевичем, [который] едет на белом коне в драгоценных камнях, на одной руке сокол, в другой опахало из перьев, т[ак] ч[то] лица не видно И вообще масса прелести,
did however perceive the world of art as a self-contained and self-sufficient unit.

This led Kuzmin to an increasing fear of isolation. In a letter of this time he writes:

"Как странно! Я все более и более отрываюсь от жизни (в узком и буквальном смысле) и все для меня сосредотачивается в нескольких только лицах, книгах и воевозможных концепциях. И это меня не тяготит, а как-то ощущает, и когда я вижу людей и "мира", мне кажется, что мы говорим разными языками."

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28 From Kuzmin’s letter of 1890’s, as quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 35.
29 From Kuzmin’s letter of September 6, 1895 (as quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 30. Kuzmin’s thought at the time that genuine religiosity and art were not reconcilable. In another letter of this period Kuzmin writes: "Между тем, музыка как творчество, и притом светская, - безусловно запрещена и, мб, тебе не безобразно, до какой степени? И главное в есполнении известных предписаний, а в сознании греха и вреда запрещаемого Уверовать и сознать, что это зло, мерзость и безумие, и тогда посмотрим, полезет ли тебе музыка в голову "Как же бы после Кармен и Фауста будете канон Иисусу читать?" - говорил мне старореж: "> ведь убили человека, - легче молиться, чем такое" И правила убийство выражает тебя из ряда людей, но не из быта, и без громадного лициемория, молодушной покладистости и подленьких
As a man who cultivated a highly sensual attitude towards life, Kuzmin knew that the world of immediate experience was essential for his art. In order to remain true to the notion of immediacy, while yet dedicating himself to art, it was imperative for Kuzmin to redefine art in its relationship to life. In searching for a solution, Kuzmin turned to philosophy and religion (including Catholicism), traveled to Egypt and Italy and finally immersed himself into the life style of the Old Believers. It seems very likely that during this formative period Kuzmin also considered Tolstoj's ideas on art and that this interest in the great classic initiated a lifelong dialogue with Tolstoj.30

As is well known, Tolstoj, during his later years, came to reject what he called, counterfeit art and culture. He arrived at the conclusion that art no longer was serving the purpose it was meant to serve, namely, to be a vehicle of religious ideas and universal positive emotions. Instead, modern art was founded on a false cult of beauty

Kuzmin's interest in Tolstoj's philosophy could have been triggered by G.čišerin's uncle, a famous lawyer, historian and philosopher Boris Nikolaevič čišerin, who personally knew Tolstoj. During Kuzmin's stay at B.N. čišerin's estate near Tambov in the summer of 1891, Tolstoj most likely was a subject of their discussions.
that allowed for the elimination of the distinction between good and evil. Derived from previously created art, rather than life itself, it had become the "imitation of imitation." Furthermore, it had become incomprehensible to broad layers of society and was perpetuating only the perverse tastes of the upper classes. On these grounds Tolstoj rejected modern art, including most of his own writings in favor of such "eternal art forms" as the parable and sermon.

Kuzmin's crisis shares some features with Tolstoj's. He too came to think "life" more important than "art." He too began to doubt the validity of his own work. In a letter to Čičerin of 1901 Kuzmin wrote:

И так жалко то, что я пишу, в сравнении с тем, как воспринимается и как захватывает все это! И совсем излишне. Пока все по-старому, я пишу, сознаю это за зло и ненужность, но пишу.

Art in general is seen by Kuzmin as "insanity" ("bezumie"). In another letter of that time, he describes the performance of a symphony in such an "estranged" way that it seems to have been written by someone who is not aware of the conventional nature of art. Intentionally naive, this description reminds one of Tolstoj's famous discussion of opera productions in his "What is Art," or

31As quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 58
Nataša's perception of the opera performance in *War and Peace*. Kuzmin writes:

During that time Kuzmin rejects all his favorite composers, "even Mozart," as he himself remarks with obvious surprise. In another letter of this period, defending the broader layers of society against the allegation of being old-fashioned, Kuzmin argues that they are no less representative of the 19th century, than modern intellectuals. These think that

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32Ibid, 50

33"И меня не приводит в транет ни Вагнер, ни Палестрина, ни даже Моцарт." *As quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 48*

34*As quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 57*
Kuzmin's critique of the egotism of modern intellectuals and of the elitism of contemporary art clearly resembles Tolstoj's hostile attitude towards artists who serve the needs of the upper classes, developing over-refinement in their art.  

Contrasting the "artificial" art of such artists to the "natural" art of simple people, particularly of the Old Believers, Kuzmin undoubtedly follows in the footsteps of Tolstoj. While Tolstoj praised religious art and that of peasant children, Kuzmin advanced traditional Russian icon painting and book decorations, religious literature, church music and the applied arts of the Old Believers' "byt."  

Opting for asceticism, by joining an Old believers' community, or becoming a hermit, Kuzmin praises the virtues

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35 Compare it with Tolstoj's stance (as it is summarized by F. Silbajoris): "...the Decadents, in Tolstoj's view, deliberately chose to be absurd and incomprehensible so they could only be "appreciated" by a narrow circle of rich, perverted patrons who would reward them generously for having amused them with grotesque, scintillating images of their own boredom with life." Silbajoris (1971), 60

36 Kuzmin writes about this to Cicerin: "Искусство искусственного, удовлетворяющее потребностям особого обособленного мира, самим собой существующего, оторванного от жизни, не в силах удовлетворить естественную простую каждую художественность, проистекающую из глубины сущности человеческого и красующую жизнь, как то другое отнимает от жизни, наполняет чадом [то идеальным (Моцарт), то гашишным (Вагнер)], перенося и жажду, и удовольствие [из] на особую почву, в особый мир; бесплодное, блуждающее и безумное, и вогла разурающее, если не отвечает уже развращенным потребностям Кстати, таинственным и живым делом, о котором я неоднократно упоминал, я считаю торговлю, хозяйство, промысел и ремесла, в редких случаях некоторые необходимые служебные должности и казачество" As quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 65
of the monastic life, juxtaposing its humble, quiet wisdom and joy of communion to the ostentatious fame of an artist (specifically Wagner, whom Tolstoj viewed as the archetypal "artificial" artist). I am quoting from a Kuzmin's letter:

Быть сторожем амбарным там счастливее, мудрее и выше славы Вагнера. Дела у меня никакого нет, делать я ничего не умею (кроме некоторого знания музыки, столь же ценного, как умение ходить по канату, но худшего, так как второе отвечает только глупости толпы и считается поэзрным, первое же развращает и увенчивается), следовательно остается монастырь

The anguish of Tolstoj, a world-famous author, and young Kuzmin at the time only considering a career as a composer or a writer, stemmed from the same root. Artists by their very nature, they both experienced an irresistible attraction to art and felt compelled to create; as sensualists, they were bound to the immediate realities of experience. Both Kuzmin and Tolstoj believed that art needs to reflect the immediacy of life, to convey spontaneity and to communicate "raw" emotions. Elitist narrative conventions, they thought, obstructed art's link with immediate reality, becoming derivative and often based on previous art-texts, i.e. imitations of reality, already created by other artists.

Tolstoj, as is well known, responded to elitism in art by reducing his narratives to a bare minimum of devices,

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Ibid, 67
following his conviction that the art of the future should be comprehensible to all people. Kuzmin, in one of his letters to Čičerin in 1901, expressed the feeling that he sometimes experienced such a primitive thirst for harmony, which no music known to him, could satisfy, but spontaneous singing. Thus, Tolstoj and Kuzmin in their respective crisis, reject artificial art for an art based on the emotions of life and directly conveying these.

The creative crisis of each writer was undoubtedly complicated by the typically Russian phenomenon of "polarized culture." As Tolstoj tried to resolve the tension caused by his perception of life versus art, and

38 Бывают минуты (у меня очень редки - одна, две во всю жизнь) страшной жажды музыки, жадны примитивной и естественной. Чувство, похожее на скорбь, сильную тоску, но ясно и определенно дающее понять, что только музыка может его унять, заткнуть ему пасть. И что же? я ничего не мог припомнить из того, что я знаю или слышал когда-либо (а знаю я хотя не всё фактически, но и возможно ли это? - то очень многое, а в представителях и родах почти все) - что бы меня удовлетворило. При таком богатстве, такой роскоши - такая нежность перед насущно не искусственной потребностью! Если бы я запел полную грудью простую песню, то это, мб, единственно могло бы. Так искусственное искусство, имея корни в совершенно особой области, и отвечает на запросы таковой, а не на требования прирожденной художественности, одной имеющей право на удовлетворение и свойственной всем людям, а не эстетическим только. Музыка отвечает на чувства, возбужденные ею же (таким образом, какое-то рукоблудие и впечатление такое же: разевающее, пассивное, солоделое, разваривающее, сладкое и противное), или на случайные чувства слушателя, подсунутые под изображаемые (отсяда плач нервных дам, переживающих свои собственные романы и вожделения), что уже далеко от чистого искусства. Ibid, 66. Similarly, in Tolstoj's Kreuzer sonata singing peasant women are able to communicate true emotion better than Beethoven. Other thoughts on art, conveyed by Kuzmin in this letter, as well as its language, also evoke Kreuzer sonata.
peasant versus elitist cultures as incompatible opposites by opting for "life," so Kuzmin, following in Tolstoj's footsteps, came to embrace "simplification" ("oproščenie") as a solution to his spiritual and creative crisis.

For a long time, Kuzmin considered either entering a monastery or converting to the Old Believers; he certainly immersed himself into the lifestyle of Old Believers and, as a symbolic gesture, even began to wear traditional Russian clothing. This is how Bogomolov and Malmstad summarize this period in Kuzmin's life:

Кузмин преображается внешне: отпускает бороду, носит поддевку, картуз и сапоги, то есть так называемое "русское платье", постоянно проводит время в лавке Казакова, где не только приобретает знание старой культуры, но и погружается в быт старообрядцев, причем быт не подчеркнуто церковный, а самый что ни на есть повседневный, со ссорами и даже с драками, денежными расчетами, пропей "нисмеенной" действительностью. Именно в таком наряде и с таким кругом бытовых представлений он появился впервые в начале 1906 года на "башне" Вяч Иванова, что должно было составлять чрезвычайно резкий контраст между его новым обществом и собственной внешностью и поведением, в котором причудливо сочетались подчеркнутая "русскость" и манера столь же подчеркнуто элитарного интеллигента. "40

This "Russian" period in Kuzmin's life, with its intense study of Old Russian literature and Old Believers' vocal music, left a lasting imprint on Kuzmin's personal

39As Bogomolov and Malmstad note, "in переписке с Чичериным приблизительно с 1903 года возможность превращения в старообрядческого начетчика обсуждалась вполне регулярно" Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 68

40Ibid.
philosophy and aesthetics. Many of his works of this period, like the three "religious comedies" - "Komedija o Evdokii iz Geliopolja, ili Obraščennaja kurtizanka", "Komedija o Aleksee čeloveke bož'jem, ili Poterjannyj syn" and "Komedija o Martijane," as well as his "spiritual poems," Duxovnye stixi" are either entirely based on the Medieval Russian tradition, or borrowed certain themes, images and artistic forms from Old Russian literature. More important than Kuzmin's pursuit of the ideal of asceticism is, however, the subsequent rejection of this ideal as too restrictive. How exactly this remarkable transformation of Kuzmin's vision took place, we do not know. Since the available sources pertaining to this period of Kuzmin's life are still limited, his novel Kryl'ja, as his spiritual autobiography, can provide at least a partial answer.

In the novel, the young protagonist, Vanja Smurov goes through a process of self-determination. In Petersburg where he arrives from the provinces, he meets different people who symbolize various paths, or possibilities, that he might (or might not) pursue. The Old Believers' way of life, characterized by a highly personal faith and orderly byt is considered a viable option by him. To explore this path, Vanja travels to the Volga region where he joins a family of Old Believers. Although generally content with
their byt, he eventually realizes that this path which totally excludes alternatives, is not suitable for him.\textsuperscript{41} Vanja's Old Believer friend, who sympathize with, but cannot follow Vanja, speaks of it thus:

\begin{quote}
Человек должен быть, как река или зеркало - что в нем отразится, то и принимать... - ко всему ровно должно быть, тогда все и соединишь в себе. А когда одно что-нибудь зацепит, то того и съест, а пуще всего корысть или вот божественное еще... Любить-то все можно, да ничему одному сердца не отдавать, чтобы не быть сведенным.\textsuperscript{42}
\end{quote}

The reason for Vanja's stay in the Old Believers' community was to experience the immediacy of communion with people, nature and God. When Vanja reads Romeo and Juliet in the solitude of his room, he strongly senses wider horizons and different experiences, however. In his "On Shakespeare and Drama," Tolstoj also gives an account of his first encounter with the works of Shakespeare, but it contrasts strongly with that which Kuzmin's character experiences. Tolstoj speaks of repulsion, boredom and perplexity. Vanja, in opposition to Tolstoj, gradually comes to realize that all good art is directly linked to

\textsuperscript{41}The protagonist's initial dilemma of concentrating on "one" or being open to a variety of things, echoes Kuznin's own thoughts when he writes: "Всякая истиная вера нетерпима, всякое углубление суживает, лучи соединенные в фокус, наиболее блестят. Всякая терпимость, широкость, всеобъятность в ширину есть только отсутствие ядра, бесплодность, немощь и скитание." As quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 66

\textsuperscript{42}Proza I, 248 The metaphor of a man as a river, is also typically Tolstojan.
life, because - conveying emotions - it assists the reader in identifying his own feelings. Shakespeare does this as much as the spiritual songs of Old Believers.

Vanja's reading of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet serves as an initial impulse for recognizing the breadth of his emotions and desires. His subsequent trip to Italy, this motherland ("rodina") of arts, further helps Vanja to identify his longings and life goals, including his sexual orientation. Immediacy and simplicity merge with breadth and freedom. Monasticism and (homosexual) sensuality, art and life complement each other. Vanja also comes to realize that the ideal of openness and cultural tolerance can not be found outside of art.

There is another instance of a subtle dialogue with Tolstoj in the novel Kryl'ja, which also pertains to the relationship between life and art. While in Italy, Vanja Smurov meets a talented Russian artist engaged in a relationship with a young Russian woman, Anna Blonskaja. Because of the young woman's first name, Anna, the resemblance of her last name to the name "Vronskij" (or "Vronskaja," as it would be in a feminine form), as well as the couple's sojourn in Italy, it seems very likely that Kuzmin intentionally evokes the relationship between Anna Karenina and Vronskij in Italy and Tolstoj's view on art conveyed in that part of Anna Karenina.
During their stay in Italy, Vronskij attempts to paint Anna's portrait. He realizes how fruitless his efforts are when he observes how Mixajlov, a Russian artist in Italy, captures Anna's unique beauty on canvas without apparent effort. Tolstoj explains the validity of Mixajlov's painting by his gift to penetrate and love the soul of each one of his models. The failure of Vronskij's undertaking, on the other hand, is ascribed to his lacking true emotions towards Anna for which he has substituted physical desire.

In Kryl'ja, the love between the artist and Anna Blonskaja is purely spiritual and therefore what Tolstoj would "approve of." The artist eventually leaves Blonskaja, however, for an Italian woman, who satisfies his need for the physical aspect of love. Tolstoj's Vronskij fails as an artist because his love is focused on the merely physical; Kuzmin's Russian artist is doomed because of his inability to integrate ideal and physical love. The separation of spiritual and sensual experience leads to any artist's creative failure, is Kuzmin's message, whereas Tolstoj's is that the physical aspect of love and life is irrelevant. Although the novel marked Kuzmin's rejection of Tolstoj's stance as that of limitation, his dialogue with the great writer continued.

At the end of his formative period, Kuzmin came to recognize that the writings of Shakespeare, Hoffmann,
Puskin, Goethe, Dostoevskij or any valid artist convey their authors' immediate perception of reality, even when they make use of complex conventions. While Tolstoj and the early Kuzmin believed that artistic conventions stood in the way of telling the "truth," being "elitist," Kuzmin now accepted them as necessary "laws" of art. In his critical essays of the mature period, he repeatedly returns to the subject of conventions, even entitling the collection of his essays Uslovnosti, i.e. Conventions. The aesthetic discussions of some of those articles, particularly those on the most conventional of all arts, opera, seem to be written with Tolstoj (and, perhaps, himself in his early period) in mind. Now Kuzmin "believes" in conventions as a path to creative freedom. His famous stylizations are based on the belief that conventions are tools helping to "preserve" various modes of life or the unique manifestations of universal human emotions. By "reactivating" certain conventions, the artist can resurrect the realities of the past. Thus art does not stifle "life," but expands its realm to include "immortality."

Kuzmin dealt with conventions with freedom and ease - exposing them here, concealing them there, depending on the requirements of the material. This attitude is also, it seems, a response to the late Tolstoj's discomfort with
narrative conventions and his constant attempt to hide them. Kuzmin's stance anticipates that of Andrej Bitov in his Puškinskij dom where the author stresses the "naturalness" of exposing conventions in art. Bitov writes:

Если нам не объявлено условность, то как раз поверить автору представляется затруднительным: откуда он знает? С чего он взял? Сверху может видеть только Бог, если предварительно договориться, что он есть. Но писать с точки зрения Бога позволял себе лишь Лев Толстой, и мы не будем здесь даже обсуждать, насколько правомочны были эти его усилия.

Kuzmin renews his dialogue with Tolstoj in the twenties, now in a less polemical manner, when he repeatedly stresses the need for art to return to its emotional roots. In his essay "What is art?" Tolstoj emphasizes that art must be concerned with human emotion, experienced by the artist and then transmitted to others, who recognize them as their own. He gives a definition of, what he calls, "genuine" art:

Искусство есть деятельность человеческая, состоящая в том, что один человек сознательно, известными внешними знаками передает другим испытываемые им чувства, а другие люди заражаются этими чувствами и переживают их.

With this view of art, Kuzmin had no quarrel, except that he, unlike Tolstoj, would not censor the emotions.

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43Bitov (1987), X, 33
44Tolstoj (1964), XV, 102
Kuzmin's "Tolstojan" belief in the emotional origins of art is particularly vividly expressed in his "Deklaracija emocionalizma." It opens with the following statement on the essence of art:

Сущность искусства - производить единственное, неповторимое эмоциональное действие через передачу в единственной неповторимой форме единственно неповторимого эмоционального восприятия 45

According to Kuzmin, art is therefore created when an original emotion, transmitted in a unique way, effects the reader, or the listener, in a new, previously unknown fashion. This is similar to Tolstoy's stance that links the validity of art to its ability to "infect," which, in turn, depends on three separate conditions: the degree of novelty and the uniqueness of the emotion; the degree of the clarity with which it is communicated; and finally the degree of the artist's sincerity. While Kuzmin's emphasis on the emotional nature of art in the 1920's is often (and correctly) linked with his enormous interest in (German) Expressionism, the Tolstojan roots of this perspective should not be overlooked.

As a mature writer, Kuzmin often emphasized the deautomatizing role of art in human life.46 His characters,

45Kuzmin (1923a)

46This issue will be discussed in chapter 4.
just like himself in his youth, often travel to Italy, or other foreign lands, in order to find out what it is that they should pursue and in order to find themselves. Or else, they often meet a person, sometimes a foreigner, whose external, different perspective aids them in attaining full awareness of their own identity. Most often, "deautomatizing" journeys are taken by Kuzmin's characters to the "land of art."

The concept of the "estranging" function of art is Tolstojan, of course. It is well known that the Formalists' discovery of ostranenie originated from their analysis of Tolstoj's writings. In his 1940 "O Majakovskom" Viktor Šklovskij acknowledges the link between Formalist theory and Tolstoj's art; specifically he refers to the writer's diary. In it, Tolstoj points to the unconscious nature of our habitual actions. If an act, he insists, is unconscious, then it is as though it never took place: "Esli že nikto ne vidal ili vidal, no besoznatel'no, to êta žizn' kak by ne byla."47 Similar thought is highly characteristic of Kuzmin. That is why journeys of recognition brought about by "estrange ment" constitute a central theme of a great deal of Kuzmin'a

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47From Tolstoj's diary of 1897, as quoted in Šklovskij (1940), 82
writings. Thus, in the very process of rejecting Tolstoj, Kuzmin partly remains "Tolstojan."

It is worth noting, that Kuzmin's animosity towards purely technical experiments, not justified by the need to communicate a particular emotion, also reveals a certain affinity with Tolstoj. Kuzmin did not favor "making strange" for the sake of "making strange." Furthermore, his well-known criticism of artistic schools, manifestos and programs can be compared to Tolstoj's, who in his "What is Art?" maintained that artistic schools destroy the uniqueness of an individual talent. Kuzmin's position of non-alliance at a time when literary and artistic schools dominated in Russian literature is indicative of a similar attitude.

There is yet another aspect of Kuzmin's aesthetics that may possibly be traced to Tolstoj. As has already been stated, Tolstoj believed that art should be comprehensible to a broad spectrum of people. Kuzmin would argue that any prescription - including the prescription of accessibility - is detrimental to art and his own writings,

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48 This is what Kuzmin wrote on this issue in his "Эмotional'nost' i faktura:" "Преводоление материала и форм есть условие успешного творчества, а не задача его и не цель... Технические изыскания, открытия и новшества, не обусловливаемые эмоциональной необходимостью, никакого эмоционального действия оказать не могут и интересуют только профессионалов, суждения которых о произведениях искусства вообще не должны иметь никакого серьезного значения" Uslovnoosti, 177

64
particularly the poetry of the later period, can hardly be called accessible to the masses (some of it is hardly comprehensible to the scholars of Russian literature). Nevertheless, Kuzmin's talent is essentially "democratic." He was fond of "lower" genres like comedy, puppet theater, operetta and children's theater and worked extensively in these. In Uslovnost, Kuzmin stated that there is nothing humiliating in writing for seamstresses (i.e. for unsophisticated, non-elite readers). As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, this emphasis on the "democratic" nature of art is founded on Kuzmin's understanding of its regenerating and entertaining functions. All in all, Kuzmin's frequent orientation towards a "mass" viewer, listener or reader, may be related to Tolstoj's demand for art to be comprehensible to the people ("narod"); it may also owe something to the 18th century tradition of "low" genres. It is also comparable to the project of Russian avant-gardists to take art to the streets.

A more detailed examination of the dialogue between the two writers would reveal several other areas of contiguity. For example, Kuzmin's philosophy of history,

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49 In that article Kuzmin compares čajkovskij with French composer Massenet, who, as Kuzmin states, was often called "a composer for seamstresses." *Uslovnost*, 146
characterized by notion that "small" people and "insignificant" events may have a decisive effect on the overall historical process, is undoubtedly Tolstojan. Kuzmin's belief, expressed, for example, in the Introduction to his novel about Cagliostro, that an artistic depiction of a historic event or personality contains more "essence" than historical accounts, is also related to Tolstojan ideas. Even Kuzmin's emphasis on the need for an artist to continuously alter his devices in order to avoid automatization, may be traced to Tolstoj's rule "to eschew routine devices." 

All in all, despite the continuous "attraction" that Kuzmin found in Tolstoj's stance, by the end of his

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50 In his essay "Anatol' Frans" Kuzmin comments on France's similar interpretation of history, and even implicitly compares it to that of Tolstoj. "Умышленное уничтожение больших обобщающих линий и перспектив в изображении исторических эпох и событий ведет к низведению героизма и героизации (хотя бы в потенции) ежедневной современности. Ничтосякость причин, грандиозность последствий и наоборот. Мимоходом вспомним "Войну и мир" Толстого (Наполеона, Кутузова) и заметки Пушкина по поводу "Графа Нулина". Что, если бы Лукреция просто съездила по морде Тарквиния? Для Франса многие Тарквинии не более как графы Нулины, и история приобретает необыкновенно едкий, близкий и современный характер. У мелочей же нашей жизни вдруг появляются проекции во всемирную историю." Kuzmin (1989), 413

51 Tolstoj in his diary entry of 1853 writes: "Часто в сочинении меня останавливает рутинные, не совсем правильные, основательные и поэтические способы выражения; но привычка встречать их часто заставляет писать их. Эти-то необдуманные, обычные приемы в авторе, недостаток которых чувствуется, но прощаю от частого употребления, для потомства будет служить доказательством дурного вкуса. Мириться с этими приемами — значит идти за вятом, исправлять их — значит идти вперед его." Tolstoj (1928–1958), v. 46, 217
formative period, he rejected his aesthetics. Perceiving it as based on intolerance and limitation, he came out in favor of an aesthetics of openness and integration. The type of the "universal" artist, the artist-synthesizer attracted Kuzmin more and more, and thus Puškin moves in to take Tolstoj's place. The national poet was by Kuzmin seen as the perfect incarnation of such an ideal. This change of orientation was not surprising then. For that matter, Kuzmin, already in his earlier years, admired Puškin. He thought of him as belonging to a "Mozartian" paradigm of artists, with Mozart being an absolutely favorite composer of his.52

2.3 ORIENTATION TOWARD PUŠKIN AS A UNIVERSAL ARTIST

The juxtaposition of Puškin and Tolstoj was common in the literary debate in Russia after the Puškin renaissance that followed decades of neglect. For example, K. Leont'ev, a philosopher whose ideas seem to have influenced

52 I would like to illustrate Kuzmin's "identification" of Mozart and Puškin as types of artists by the following quote. In his article "Čekov i Čajkovskij" Kuzmin juxtaposes Čajkovskij's to Puškin's and Mozart's art by saying: "личный вкус Чайковского влечет его к Моцарту и Пушкину, гениям, почти диаметрально противоположным характеру его таланта. Божественная простота, чистота, прозрачность и мужественность Моцарта и Пушкина не имеют ничего общего с элегическими вдохновениями, жестким пафосом, каким то пассивными, почти не доходящими до конца, подъемами Чайковского" Uslovnosti, 146
Kuzmin's thinking, (perhaps through V. Rozanov) viewed Tolstoj as an "inferior Puškin." Although he highly valued Tolstoj's writings, Leont'ev detested his "over-psychologizing" and "vulgar naturalism," his "false, negative outlook on life," his "debasing" of life, but most importantly, the didactic and prophetic aspects of his writings. These, he felt, infringed upon the artistic quality of his fiction.

Juxtaposing Tolstoj and Puškin as artistic types, Leont'ev goes so far as to imagine what War and Peace would have been like, had it been written by Puškin. In this

53Among many possible points of "contact", I would mention only a few. It seems that Kuzmin's correlating spirituality with beauty, aesthetics with aesthetics could be traced to Leont'ev. Their special interest in bygone epochs and antagonism toward the 19th century, are also mutual. The tension, which characterized Kuzmin's earlier years, between "genuine" religiosity and attraction for art and beauty, was also characteristic of Leont'ev. The understanding of social movement of broad masses and spiritual aristocratism as two sides of one process is characteristic of Leont'ev and Kuzmin (and Čičerin).

54For example, in his "On Russian Realism" he points out the imperfections of Tolstoj's style. War and Peace, he maintains, is "spoiled by a multitude of the most unnecessary coarse elements," Anna Karenina, in which "the author evidently consciously strove... to be elegant" also presents a reader with "quite unnecessary and disgusting tricks." Leont'ev (1969), 237-239

55In his "If Puškin had written War and Peace" Leont'ev states: "Puškin's novel would probably not be so original, not so subjective, not so overloaded, and not even so charged with content as War and Peace. But on the other hand, it would not contain any unnecessary perched-on faces or any bumps from prodding in the language; the psychic analyses would not have been so "worm-eaten," carpings in certain cases, not so splendid in others. The fantasy of all those dreams and half dreams, daydreams, deaths, and half deaths would not have been as individual as in Tolstoj, perhaps not as subtle or airy, and not as powerful as in Tolstoj; but on the other hand it would excite fewer doubts... In Puškin the philosophy of war and life
hypothetical novel the "music of the time and place would have been more exact and more faithful," Leont'ev maintains, because a work of art which produces a greater artistic illusion can better convey the sense of history than a work which strives to imitate life.\textsuperscript{56} Further, while Tolstoj's \textit{War and Peace} is dominated "not so much by the spirit of the age as by the personal genius of the author,"\textsuperscript{57} Puškin's hypothetical novel would have represented a perfect balance between individual artistic genius and the essence of the historic epoch. Such a balance would have been achieved because Puškin's personal style, compared to Tolstoj's, is less individual, less "overloaded" and more justified by content.

Similarly, Kuzmin's discussions of style reveal his preference of Puškin's style. Like Leont'ev, Kuzmin believed that individual style alone does not make an author a "stylist." In his treatise "O prekrasnoj jasnosti," he, for example, writes:

\begin{quote}
would be different, and it would not be set within the narrative in whole large lumps as in Tolstoy. The patriotic lyricism would be poured out more evenly everywhere, and it would not be ceaselessly cooled off by the philanthropical provisos; and "With God's martial grace our every step" would be "stamped." Leont'ev (1969), 272
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{56}"...his (Puškin's - E.D.) creation would have instilled greater historical confidence and, at the same time, would have furnished us with a more complete artistic illusion than \textit{War and Peace}." Ibid, 273

\textsuperscript{57}Ibid.
Although Kuzmin does not specifically name Tolstoj among the writers whose individual style disagrees with the logic of language, (his list includes writers such as A. Belyj, Z. Gippius and A. Remizov), he certainly did not consider Tolstoj a perfect stylist. On the other hand, Kuzmin praises those writers who combine the individuality of their style with an acute sense of their native language and artistic form. Puškin is said to be one such writer:

Puškin's ability to modify his personal style in accordance with the given content, was particularly valued by Kuzmin, as by Leont'ev. In his "stylizations" he strove to produce similar effects, evoking the spirit of an epoch through stylistic nuances. Tolstoj, on the other hand, was not able to do this. As Leont'ev maintained, the characters of War and Peace are true to themselves.

58 Kuzmin (1910), 8
59 Ibid.
psychologically, but are not faithful to the spirit of their time.

Kuzmin's perception of Puškin in opposition to Tolstoj may also have been affected by Rozanov's views on the poet. For Rozanov, as for Kuzmin, the absolute openness of Puškin's talent and the heterogeneity of his art, make him a "symbol of life." Rozanov writes in his "Puškin i Gogol':

Розанов сравнивает искусство Пушкина с закрытым и монистическим искусством Гоголя и Лермонтова:

Rozanov contrasts Puškin's inclusive art with the closed and monistic art of Gogol and Lermontov:

60 Kuzmin's and Rozanov's philosophies and even narrative styles, though differed considerably, had several points of contiguity. Some of them will be mentioned later on in this dissertation.

61 Rozanov (1990), 225

62 Ibid, 28. Puškin and Gogol are also opposed, in Rozanov's view, as they initiated two separate "lines" in Russian literature. While Puškinian line, which Rozanov praises, is characterized by life-affirming sensibility, Gogolian line (which overpowered "Puškinian" soon after it originated) is that of ironic, debasing literature.
Kuzmin's similar interpretation of Puškin as a heterogeneous poet, open to a great variety of manifestations of life and culture, and his perception of such an artist as ideal, is best presented in his poem "Puškin", from the cycle "Dni i lica". This poem was written for the 84th anniversary of Puškin's death and was read by Kuzmin at a gathering in "Dom literаторов" on February 1921, where Blok presented his famous speech "O назначении поэта". I will quote the poem in full:

Он жив! у всех душа нетленна,
Но он особенно живет!
Благоговейно и блаженно
Вкушаем вечной жизни мёд
Пленительны и благозвучны,
Текут родимые слова
Как наши выдумки докучны
И новизна как не нова!
Но в совершенства хладный камень
Его черты нельзя замкнуть
Божит, горя, летучий пламень,
Взволнованно вдыхает грудь
Он - жрец, и он веселый малый,
Пророк и страстный человек,
Но в смене чувства небывалой
К одной черте направлен бег
Москва и лиц Петра победный,
Деревня, Моцарт и Жуан,
И мрачный Герман, Всадник Медный
И наше солнце, наш туман!
Романтик, классик, старый, новый?
Он - Пушкин, и бессмертен он!
К чему же школьные сковы
Тому, кто сам себе закон?
Из стран, откуда нет возврата,
Через года он бросил мост,
И если в нём признаем брата,
Он не обидится он - прост
И он живой Живая щутка
Живит аранские уста,
И смех, и звон, и прибаутка
Влечут в бывалье места

72
Several observations pertinent to Kuzmin's aesthetics, may be made about this poem. First of all, like Rozanov, Kuzmin emphasizes the vitality of Puškin's art. "žiznennoe" is one of the most common attributes of art in Kuzmin's critical writings and it is undoubtedly the most positive. Its usage is clearly metaphoric and signifies dynamism, flexibility and receptiveness. In the semantic structure of Kuzmin's poem, words like "life", "lively", "vital", "revitalizing" and "eternal" predominate. There are eight words which contain the root "žizn'-" ("žizn'," "živoj," "živet," "živit," "živim") and several words which belong to a related semantic field, like "netlenna," "večnaja," "bessmerten."

According to Kuzmin, it is the diversity of subjects and themes that the poet covers and the multitude of the cultural-historic epochs he depicts that make his art

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63 The part of the poem which is particularly saturated with the root "živ," even includes a semantically reinforcing acrostic "ž-i-v":

И он живой, живая шутка,
Живет арапские уста,
На смех, и звон, и прибаутка
Едет в бывальне места
"vital" and "living." His openness toward various styles and registers, as well as the multiplicity of roles which the poet assumed, make it impossible to define his art by the standards of a particular artistic school. By refusing to identify Puškin's art with any school or movement ("Romantik, klassik, staryj, novyj?") Kuzmin very likely implies an analogy between himself and the great poet. The many-faceted art of both resists classification. In fact, one of the main characteristics of Kuzmin's own poetics, namely the establishing of a universal equivalent on which a multitude of variants are projected, is attributed to Puškin as well: "No v smene čuvstva nebyvaloj / K odnoj čerte naprovlen beg." Kuzmin's emphasis on Puškin's life-affirming sensibility, which was a hallmark of Kuzmin's own art, is also characteristic. By saying "Kak naši vydumki dokučny / I novizna kak ne nova," Kuzmin directly links

64In stressing the wide range of Puškin's subjects Kuzmin follows not only Rozanov, but Gogol. In his "Выбранное места из переписки с друзьями" he wrote: "Что было предметом его поэзии? Все стало его предметом, и ничто в особенности, Немеет мысль перед бесчисленностью его предметов. Чем он не поразился, и перед чем не остановился? От заснеженного Кавказа и картинного Черкеса, до бедной северной деревушки с балалайкой и трепаком у кабака; везде, всюду, на модном бале, в избе, в степи, в дорожной кибитке - все становится его предметом. На все, что ни есть во внутреннем человеке, начиная от его высокой и великой черты до малейшего вздоха его слабости и неотложной прямь, его сомнцевой, он откликался так же, как отклинулся на все, что ни есть в природе видимой и внешней. Все становится у него отдельно картиной, все предмет его" Gogol' (1847), 220

65This will be discussed in chapter 4.
contemporary literature (including his own) with Puškin who, in his art, anticipated the future of Russian literature. Kuzmin seems to "apologize" for ambitiously comparing himself with the genius Puškin, who, however, would allow such an analogy, as Kuzmin thinks: "I esli v nem priznaem brata, / On ne obiditsja: on - prost."

Kuzmin's understanding of Puškin as a universal and open artist is intensified by the context in which this poem is placed in the cycle "Dni i lica". It is followed by the poem "Gete" and "Lermontovu," both of 1916. While Puškin and Goethe are implicitly compared with each other as universal and "vital" poets, Lermontov's more restricted poetry is presented in contrast to Puškin's. The poem "Lermontovu" conveys that a poet who limits himself to an abstraction, a dream, an illusion which is not rooted in life - notwithstanding beauty and nobility - is doomed.®®

Art based on the sensibility of rejection and limitation,

®®Lermontov's works, says the poet, are centered around one idea, one dream. "С одной мечтой в упрямом взоре" - is how the poem opens. It is also saturated with words like "не шилец", "uxožu", "cužv", "mogila." Lermontov is compared to the heroes of his own works - "Ты сам - и Демон, и Печерин, / И беглый, горестный чернец", who reduced their lives to a dream which brought along their destruction. Such is, for example, Lermontov's long poem "Mcyri." Kuzmin refers to the character of this poem as "беглый, горестный чернец" The self-destructive nature of Mcyri's passion is also recognized by Lermontov himself who wrote in "Mcyri:"

Я знал одной лишь думы власт
Одну, во пламенную страсть;
Она, как червь во мне жила,
Играла душу и согла

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will never achieve eternity and will result in the poet's destruction. Puškin and Lermontov also differ in that Puškin follows his own rules and therefore, is impossible to define, while Lermontov is clearly a Romantic poet, the writer of a specific school.\(^67\)

To return to Rozanov's perception of Puškin, he, like Leont'ev, saw Tolstoj as inferior to Puškin. Opposing the Puškinian and the Gogolian "lines" in Russian literature, Rozanov placed Tolstoj in the Puškin line, as a writer of life-affirming sensibility.\(^68\) Nevertheless, he lacks the

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\(^67\) Kuzmin's criticism of lofty Romanticism of Lermontovian type is expressed in the parodying lowering of Lermontov's poetic myth, by interpreting it in a "common sense" fashion, relating it to life: Ты страсть мечтал необычайной, / Но ах, как прост о ней рассказ! / Пленился ты Кавказ тайной, - / Могилой стал тебе Кавказ // И Божьи радости мельнули, / Как сон, как снежная метель / Ты выбираешь -- что? две пули, / Да пошаловатую дузь. Even more paradistic is the reading of Lermontov's "Demon" in Kuzmin's novel Fyrl'ja. In it, a gymnasium student retells "abruptly" the content of the poem. Stripped of the Romantic code, it turns into a mundane and laughable story, and yet a story which Kuzmin might have found more "lively:" Дьявол летал над землею и увидел девочку -- Как же эту девочку звали? -- "Лиза" -- Положим, Тамара -- "Так точно, Тамара" -- Ну и что же -- "Он захотел на ней жениться, да женях помешал; потом женя убили татары" -- Что же тогда Демон женился на Тамаре? -- "Никак нет, ангел помешал, дорогу перешел; так Дьявол и остался холостым и все возвратил." Proza I, 200. There is yet another note which I would like to make -- on Kuzmin's usage of grammatic cases in the titles of the three poems. Since Kuzmin conducts a dialogue with Puškin and Goethe, their names are used in the nominative (the two participants of a dialogue are equated); in Lermontov's case -- Lermontov does not communicate; it is a monologue of the contemporary poet, who regrets the failure of the great talent and tells him about it, hence the dative case of the title.

\(^68\) В отношении ко всему предыдущему развитию нашей литературы великая эпоха гр Толстого является светлым и высоким торжеством той стороны ее, которая более сказала у Пушкина "Rozanov (1990), . 335

Elsewhere, Rozanov talks of imperfection of Tolstoj in comparison to
full measure of Puškin's diversity: "U nego (Tolstogo -
E.D) net <...> takogo raznoobrazija éxa, kak ves'
Puškin..." 69 The "echo" is a metaphor for the heterogeneous
and dialogical nature of Puškin's talent, or, as
Dostoevskij formulated it, his "universality." Vjač.
Ivanov uses the same metaphor to define Kuzmin's art,
calling him "xudožnik-éxo".

Rozanov also emphasized that Puškin is not an
innovator, and that his contribution to Russian culture
consists in summarizing that which already existed. He
writes:

Уже Белинский заметил, что он как бы совместил в себе по-
tonу, по настроению всех своих предшественников, а позднее
Н.Н. Страхов отметил, что у него в формах нет никаких
нововведений. Таким образом, для всякого, кто стал бы
рассматривать его лишь поверхностно, и притом не
пересмотрел всех его произведений, и особенно самих
поздних, невольно могло бы представиться отсутствие в нем
оригинальности, самобытности и, следовательно, какого-либо

69Ibid. There is also an interesting twist in Rozanov's comparison
of Puškin and Tolstoj. He maintains that Tolstoj's greatness remains
in the sphere of ideas and intentions, and is never transmitted to
life. On the other hand, Puškin's greatness of spirit is "real" and
therefore, it results in the greatness of his art. This perception
of Puškin likely stems from Gogol's views on the poet. Rozanov wrote
in his "Opavšie list'ja": "Как писатель, он (Толстой - Е.Д.) ниже
Пушкина, Лермонтова, Гоголя. Но как человек и благородный человек, он
выше их всех. Он даже не очень пожалуй умный человек, но никто не
напряжен у нас был так в сторону благородных великих идеалов. // В
этом его первенство над всей литературой // При этом как натура он не
был так благороден, как Пушкин. Натура - одно, а намерения, "о чем
греется ночью" - другое "О чем грелось ночью" - у Толстого выше, чем
у кого-нибудь" Rozanov (1992), 57
In that sense, Kuzmin's perception of Puškin was similar to Rozanov's. He thought of the great poet as "synthesis which absorbs and discards the past."  

Further, in his perception of Puškin and his gradual shift in poetic orientation, Kuzmin was influenced by the Symbolists. While it is mostly the generation which "overcame Symbolism" (to use Žirmunskij's expression) that
reactivated the Puškinian tradition in poetic practice, already the Symbolists, with their theoretical discussions, prepared this reintroduction of Puškin.\textsuperscript{72} Vjač. Ivanov's ideas and works in particular had an impact on several poets of the Post-Symbolist generation, including Kuzmin.\textsuperscript{73} At the time of their close friendship which continued for many years, the two erudites conducted long and fruitful discussions on various aesthetic issues. Specifically, Kuzmin's polemics with Vjač. Ivanov and his criticism of Symbolist aesthetics helped Kuzmin to formulate his own aesthetics of (Puškinian) "clarity" and adequacy of style in relation to the material.

Kuzmin's contemporaries, including Vjač. Ivanov, perceived Kuzmin's aesthetic treatise "O prekrasnoj jasnosti" as an expression of the Puškinian ideal. In his "Zavety simvolizma" Ivanov associated Kuzmin with the Puškinian tradition by linking his ideal of "beautiful clarity" with the principle of the adequacy of the word, characteristic of the 18th century, and, as its extension, of Puškin. This principle differed from the Symbolists' attitude towards the word-symbol. Specifically, he wrote:

\textsuperscript{72}On this subject see Cultural Mythologies of Russian Modernism.

\textsuperscript{73}On Kuzmin's relationship with Vjač. Ivanov see a superb article by J. Barnshead (1982)
Thus, while he is perceived in opposition to Symbolists and their lack of clarity, with Puškin Kuzmin is said to share the same ideal of clarity.

The comparison of Kuzmin's talent - his receptivity to various voices, the precision of his style and his "positive" sensibility - with that of Puškin is also implied in Vjač. Ivanov's review of Kuzmin's prose:

Он быстр, отзывчив, отчетлив и объективен; он - не романтик, поющий и не слышащий; он - эхо Тихий, чуткий и светлый, не даром любит он Пушкина, и прозрачный воздух Апоплонова древнего царства. 75

Similar but more subtle parallels between Kuzmin and Puškin are encoded in Ivanov's poem "Sosedstvo," dedicated to Kuzmin. It is written at the time when they were still close friends and when Kuzmin lived in his "Tower." Their aesthetic disagreements had already started, however, as Kuzmin now worked for the newly established journal Apollon. The first part of the poem employs the interplay of Apollon as the journal where Kuzmin wrote his anti-

74 Vjač. Ivanov (1916), 126-27

75 Vjač. Ivanov (1910), 46
symbolist declaration and the artistic principle of (Puškinian-Kuzminian) clarity, of which the god is a symbol. I quote a part of the poem:

Я рад струнам созвучным вторить
И струн созвучья вызывать
Знать, нам судьбы не перепорить
И неразлучным враждовать!

Чужими в жизни быть унылой...
Но, если сердце помнит,
На миг блеснет мне призрак милый,
Вы угадаете меня

As in his review of Kuzmin's prose, so here Vjač. Ivanov stresses his "neighbor's" dialogic talent, already linked by him to Puškin's aesthetics. In this case, he advances himself as a partner for the poetic dialogue. Furthermore, the line where Vjač. Ivanov refers to Kuzmin, "Na mig blesnet mne prizrak milyj" is rendered in a Puškinian form, evoking "Ja pomnju čudnoe mgnoven'ë." The line "Vy ugadaete menja" points to the Symbolist poetics of obscurity, where the meaning is only hinted at and must be intuited.

In his earlier article of 1907 "O veselom remesle i umnom veselii" Vjač. Ivanov clearly relates Kuzmin's writings to the Apollonic (or, Romance) tradition which in Russian literature is represented by Puškin. By calling Kuzmin a "living anachronism" and referring to his "charming Gallicisms" and "inaccuracies" ("nebrežnosti") in his overall classicist style, Vjač. Ivanov again implies
his affinity with Puškin. He, however, adds that even in Kuzmin's art the darker, Dionysian forces play their role:

И даже М. Кузнин, эстет и парнасист, подлинный отпрыск александрийской культуры, живой анахронизм среди нас, стилист, невольно делающий - не думая по-французски - очаровательные галлинизмы и в своих небрежнейших произведениях носивший печать истинного латино-французского классицизма, - и он половиной своей души принадлежит нашей варварской стихии, - и у себя дома в мире старообрядчества и слагает первые опыты простодушных мистерий

Evaluating the course which Russian literature took in the last century, Vjač. Ivanov arrives at the conclusion that its social mission, its "prophetic" and moralistic functions negatively effected its artistic quality. Therefore, he sees the task of the contemporary artist as that of making Russian art a "merry craft" once again. The attribute "merry" also becomes almost a leitmotif of Blok's

76 The revised publication of the article does not include this passage. As quoted in Barnstead (1982), 7

77 Thus, Ivanov writes in his "O veselom remesle i umnom veselii: " писатель (а наш художник главным образом - писатель) оказался в главной роли учителя или проповедника. Это тяготило или раскачивало его душу, искажало чистоту художественной работы, понижало энергию чисто художественных потенций (Некрасов), губило в человеке художника (Лев Толстой), губило самого человека (Гоголь и столько других) // Художество обращалось в художественную миссию - в зерно, вместо того, чтобы быть цветом. И потому, говоря об искусстве в России, необходимо поставить вопрос о соотношении между искусством и общей культурой и прежде всего спросить себя, что такое русская культура и неизбежно ли для художника быть у нас неизбежно миссионером, наставником жизни, вожаком // Будет ли у нас, наконец, искусство веселым ремеслом, каким оно хотелось бы стать, - а не иерархией и сатирой, как она определяет себя едва ли не с начала нашей письменности, - не учителем и даже не пророчеством, но умным весельем? Ибо не вином только весел человек, но всякою игрою своего божественного духа" Vjač. Ivanov (1909), 231
famous speech "O naznačenii poéta." Because of his strong reliance on Western and pre-19th century Russian tradition, Kuzmin was often seen as such a "veselyj remeslennik" of the Puškinian type, whose art would contribute to freeing Russian literature from the burdens of social and other extra-literary tasks. \(^78\)

In fact, the perception of Kuzmin as the Puškin of the Silver age was not uncommon in the cultural circles he belonged to, and was consciously cultivated by Kuzmin himself. Irina Paperno, discussing the tradition of "trying on" Puškin's role among Kuzmin's contemporaries, notes that Kuzmin was a primary candidate for this role. \(^79\)

The analogy with Puškin is a common theme in several reviews of Kuzmin's works. The critic žirmunskij who in his "Preodolevšie simvolizm" called Kuzmin a disciple of Puškin,\(^80\) most readily comes to mind. In several memoirs (G.Ivanov's, M. Cvetaeva's) even Kuzmin's appearance is rendered as reminiscent of Puškin's. Both had a dark

\(^78\)The critic Gollerbax, for example, referred to the "dukhovnoe veselle" of Kuzmin; his large monograph on the poet is entitled "Radostnyj putnik."

\(^79\)I. Paperno writes: "Пушкинианство - сознательная и последовательная ориентация на поэтический стиль и человеческий образ Пушкина - была важной чертой творчества и самосознания Кузмина, которая неоднократно отмечалась в мемуарных источниках и исследовательской литературе" Paperno (1980)

\(^80\)žirmunskij (1977), 108
complexion and were small of stature. It is not surprising
then that in his poem "Puškin," Kuzmin "reminds" us of the
Russian poet's African origins ("Živaja šutka / Živit
arapskie usta"), and that elsewhere he foresees that his own
fate will resemble Puškin's - that it will end with a duel
ending his life: "Ja znaju, ja budu ubit / Vesnoju, na
talom snege..." (the cycle "Majak ljubvi," 1911-1912).

The topic of Kuzmin's relationship with Puškin awaits
its full investigation. Specifically, it is the complexity
of Kuzmin's works, which is not immediately discerned
behind the apparent clarity, which has Puškinian origins
and which needs special attention. In comparing Kuzmin to
Puškin, it is important to keep in mind, that even during
the later years of his writing career, when the principle
of "beautiful clarity" no longer adequately defined his
writings, Kuzmin maintained his conscious orientation
toward a Puškinian type of art seen as both open and
synthesizing.81

To summarize: first, I have established that Kuzmin's
stance vis-a-vis literary, and more broadly, cultural

81I would like to note here, that the opinion, standard nowadays in
Kuzmin criticism, that in his later years he abandoned the principle
of beautiful clarity, is not entirely precise. If we keep in mind
that Kuzmin intended to apply this principle in relation to prose
only, and that he emphasized the difference between poetry and prose
- (he viewed poetry, it seems, as more "raw" media, while in prose
the material was more "transformed") - then Kuzmin's evolution of
aesthetics is not as drastic as it is commonly believed.
tradition, was all-inclusive. He was equally open to influences of ancient and more recent cultures, Western and Russian, pre-19th century and 19th century tradition, to authors congenial and "foreign" to his own talent.

Second, Kuzmin's relation to his "opposite" Tolstoj was examined - a topic previously not dealt with. This relation may be characterized as that of attraction and repulsion. Because Tolstoj represents the 19th century Russian literature tradition par excellence - a tradition of which Kuzmin was largely critical - his continuous dialogue with Tolstoj is particularly indicative of his openness towards various branches of tradition. The rejection of Tolstoj's, as he believed, reductionist stance, at the end of Kuzmin's formative stage and the abandoning of the ascetic ideal of "simplification," coincided with the shift of Kuzmin's orientation towards the Puśkinian type of artist. This shift was reinforced by the then common perception of Tolstoj as an "inferior Puśkin." Popularized by Dostoevskij, the interpretation of Puśkin as a universal poet, as I indicated, was not uncommon among Kuzmin's predecessors and contemporaries, and it helped him to formulate his ideal of the dialogic artist and to identify this type with the archetype of Puśkin.

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CHAPTER 3

KUZMIN IN THE CONTEXT OF CONTEMPORARY LITERARY DISCOURSES

3.1 INTEGRATION OF CONTEMPORARY VOICES

In this chapter I leave Kuzmin's relationship to traditional literary discourses in order to define his attitudes to the literary movements of his time. The early twentieth century was characterized by an extraordinary multiplicity of movements, schools and groups which came to replace the relatively homogeneous 19th-century Russian tradition. Kuzmin witnessed the rise and decline of the (younger) Symbolists, Acmeists, Futurists, Imaginists, Formalists, as well as of several smaller literary groups of the 1920's, like the "Serapion Brotherhood" and OBERIU. Kuzmin once noted with obvious irony, that there were as many poetic schools in Russia "as in any other self-respecting country."¹ Furthermore, this was the time when various visual art movements in Russia were flourishing, such as "Mir Iskusstva," the Primitivists, Cubists,

¹ "Возможные поэтические школы, которых у нас столько же, сколько в любой уважающей себя стране" Ualovnosti, 162
Rayists, Constructivists and other groups. In the theater, numerous new theories were introduced to the stage. Russian cinematography was rapidly integrating the achievements of Western cinema, and producing its own masterpieces.

As already repeatedly noted above, Kuzmin's general attitude toward the concept of artistic schools and movements was critical. He distrusted the usefulness of any prescriptive theory for creativity and stressed that schools only encourage an exclusive attitude toward the achievements of other directions in art. Set programs, according to Kuzmin, inevitably encourage repetition and lead to a mechanization that is detrimental to art. He insisted, that no matter how accepted and popular an artist may be, he must have the courage to move forward and to renew his art.\(^2\) He also pointed out that the essence of most schools is ideological, and therefore, has nothing to do with art.\(^3\) If an artist, who belongs to a school,

\(^2\)Thus Kuzmin wrote in one of his essays: “Или популярность, или дальнейшее творчество. Люди не терпят движения, остановки недопустимы в искусстве. Творчество требует постоянного внутреннего обновления, публика от своих любимцев ждет штампов и перепевов. Человеческая лень влечет к механизации чувств и слов, к напряженному сознанию творческих сил нудят беспокойный дух художника. Никаких привычек, никаких приемов, никакой набитой руки! Как только зародилось подозрение в застое, снова художник должен ударить в самую глубь своего духа и вызвать новый родник - или умолкнуть на безымянных процентах с капитала рассчитывать ничего.” \textit{Uslovnosti}, 167

\(^3\)In “Pis'mo v redakciju” he wrote: ”всякие требования религиозные или нравственные, как бы они правильны не были, не могут относиться к теории искусства, не нуждающегося, чтобы для его возвышения
succeeds in aesthetic terms, he stated, it is not due to, but in spite of, his school.

Being himself open to very diverse branches of literary tradition, Kuzmin was a sympathetic reader and critic of many contemporary authors. He highly esteemed the works of Blok, Brjusov and particularly Vjač. Ivanov; his favorable introduction to Axmatova’s first book of poetry assured her initial success, and he also valued Mandelštam’s poetry. He considered Xlebnikov a genius and appreciated the originality and freshness of Majakovskyj’s poetry. In spite of his frequent hostility towards the Formalists, he thought Žirrmunskij the best candidate to write a book on his own art. He recognized the talents of the young writers of the OBERIU group and especially praised Vaginov. He was even willing to acknowledge some

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4In "Razdum'ja i nedoumen'ja Petra Otiel'nika" Kuzmin notes: "Школа всегда - итог, вывод из произведений одинаково видевшего поколения, но никогда не предполагала к творчеству, потому смею уверить футуристов и особенно акмеистов, что заботы о теоретизации и программческие выступления могут оказать услугу чему угодно, но не усуковству, не творчеству И если многие из этих поэтов идут вперёд, то это, во всём случае, несмотря на школу, а отнюдь не благодаря ей" Kuzmin (1989), 385

5This information is presented in Bogomolov (1995c).
originality in the "proletarian" poets of the twenties.®
Naturally, he prized such "independent" writers of his time as Sologub, Pasternak and Cvetaeva.

At a time when most writers "joined" some group or other, Kuzmin exercised the politics of non-alliance, refusing to participate in literary battles and remaining outside of closed groups and movements. At the same time, he maintained friendly, and at times close, relationships with writers belonging to a wide range of groups and movements. "Obščij baloven' i nasmešnik", - Axmatova later wrote about Kuzmin in her "Poëma bez geroja." But when one of the warring sides tried to "enlist" him, he would firmly assert his independent stance, either by withdrawing, or by writing a "declaration of independence," or else, by refusing to publish in leading literary journals, resorting instead to less prestigious and more "popular" publications. His marked detachment allowed Kuzmin to see the short-lived and local nature of some of the contemporary schools. For example, in his literary review "Razdum'ja i nedoumenija Petra Otšel'nika," Kuzmin, donning the mask of a hermit, wrote an "estranged" account of various literary gatherings in Petersburg, conveying how

®In "Pis'mo v Pekin" he, Kuzmin, for example, writes: "Вы, может быть, удивитесь, что у нас существует название пролетарских поэтов. Но ведь вы же не боитесь слов. Их довольно много, и среди них есть талантливые Бодрость, воля к жизни, к будущему, любовь к природе и людям - их общий пафос." Kuzmin (1998), 396

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illusory and subjective their claims for lasting fame were.

Kuzmin adds a particularly ironic twist to his characterization by including his own persona among the participants of one such gathering in the famous cabaret "Brodjačaja sobaka." Because it is so indicative of his perception of the contemporary literary scene and of his use of deautomatization techniques, I quote his description in full:

Kuzmin's mobility within the cultural realm and his proclivity for shifting perspectives, allowed him to see the contemporary cultural situation in Russia from the "corrective" perspective of the future, which transformed the unsteady present into a more settled past. While it eliminated minor, formal differences between various contemporary schools, it also brought out the features they shared:

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7Kuzmin (1989), 384
Kuzmin seems to have thought of himself as exemplifying the synthesis of the culture of his time. So did some of his critics. Gumilev, for example, once noted of Kuzmin, that he represented the outlook of people, united by a common culture. His cooperation with writers representing diverse contemporary movements - both in terms of influencing them and assimilating elements of their poetics into his own - is a manifestation of Kuzmin's integrative tendency. As is well known, Kuzmin never was a Symbolist, nor an Acmeist or a Futurist. Yet, despite his criticism of these schools, his poetics reveals numerous

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8Valovnosi, 51 Kuzmin arrived at very similar conclusions when examining various "battles" in the history of opera. Thus, he writes: "Может быть, художественные войны подстегивают творчество, но для внуков уже лет через 50 делаться совершенно непонятны и оставляют в наследство (кроме произведений данного творчества) какое-нибудь минимальное техническое завоевание" Valovnosi, 18 Elsewhere Kuzmin argues: "Забудутся споры и полемика, школы и манифесты, помимо Иоанна Элатоуста и Василия Великого, Аристофана и Еврипида, Вагнера и Россини, Глока и Пиччини, но в нём, что осталось от них великого хотя бы благодаря борьбе, останется независимо от неё и не из за неё Мы не хотим этим подорвать доверие и охладить стремление к основанию школ, к сознательной принциональности творчества, - только хотим напомнить, что не это должно считаться первым достоинством при оценке художественных произведений, и что в исторической перспективе реформаторская деятельность художников отходит на очень отдаленный план" Valovnosi, 56

9Gumilev stated: "Как выразитель взглядов и чувств целого круга людей, объединенных общей культурой он - почтенный поэт" As quoted in Kuzmin (1989), 7

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areas of contiguity with the works of the authors who belonged to these movements, as well as with the Formalists, the writers of "Serapion Brotherhood" group and OBERIU.

It is symptomatic that much of Kuzmin scholarship is comparative, examining his relationship with the main literary figures of his time, including Blok, Vjač. Ivanov, Axmatova, Mandel'štam, Majakovskij, and the OBERIU writers. Because he exercised a significant influence on the younger poets of his time, and, what is even more important, because he responded to the innovative practices of these authors, incorporating elements of their poetics into his own, his works "invite" comparative studies.

At this point I would like to mention some of those facts of his professional biography and particularities of his writings, which, for a time, made it possible for his critics and readers to consider Kuzmin a representative of some specific school. Thus Kuzmin was for a while associated with the Symbolists. He was after all "discovered" and championed by Brjusov and Vjač. Ivanov and Blok wrote enthusiastic reviews about the new author. His early works were published by the Symbolist publishing houses "Skorpion" and "Ory", and he contributed many works to the Symbolist journals Vesy, Pereval, Zolotoe runo, as well as literary miscellanies Belye noči, Cvetnik Or and
others. And it is true that even the early Kuzmin, known for his "lightness", clarity and proclivity to depict the world of objects, often intimated the presence of a higher reality behind this world of objects. During the formative years of Acmeism, Kuzmin seemed to lean towards their position. In any case, his treatise "O prekrasnoj jasnosti" was widely accepted as an anti-Symbolist declaration. Criticism of the theurgic stance of the younger Symbolists is indeed conveyed in many of his essays. However, in the later period of his career, Kuzmin reassessed the legacy of that school, evaluating it in much more sympathetic terms than before. His writings of that period, with their increased complexity and obscurity, as well as their ever present concern for a higher reality, reveal a symbolist tendency. In fact, Kuzmin even sometimes defends Symbolism against the Symbolists. This is the case in the poem "Posredine zverinca ograda" from the cycle "Majak ljubvi" (1911-1912), which I see as his polemic response to Blok's "Solov'inyj sad." Whereas Blok's persona yearns for "reality" and wants to abandon the "garden on beauty," Kuzmin's defends the values of the private escapist realm of the garden:

Посредине зверинца - ограда,

10Kuzmin's attitudes to Blok's art were examined by G.Šmakov in his article "Blok i Kuzmin."
 Typically, Žirmunskij saw Kuzmin as one of those who "overcame" Symbolism, but he also called him "the last Symbololist." Kuzmin's proclivity to depict the concrete world of objects, the narrative quality of his poetry and its orientation toward "orality," as well as his anti-Symbolist stance at the time when the Acmeist aesthetics was being formed, are the main reasons why Kuzmin was also linked with the Acmeists. He shares a "cosy" tonality with Axmatova, as well as an attachment to the world of

11žirmunskij (1916). In his 1916 article "Preodolevšie simvolizm" žirmunskij wrote that Kuzmin did not include "unconquered chaos" in his poetry; instead, "Искусство начинается для него с того мгновения, когда хаос побежден. Мир поэзии Кузьмина не искажён этим слишком субъективным, требовательным и страшным подходом." žirmunskij (1928), 280

12On Kuzmin and Axmatova, see R.D. Timenčik, V.N. Toporov, T.V. Civ'jan "Axmatova i Kuzmin." On Kuzmin and Mandel'st'am, see J.A. Barnstead "Mandel'st'am i Kuzmin."
objects; with Mandel'stam he shared the ambiance of fragility, a concern for the specifics of physical sensation and several recurring motifs, including those of patterning, ("uzor") and nets, ("seti"). To illustrate this, I quote a poem by Kuzmin, the affinity of which with Mandel'stam's poetry will be recognized by anyone familiar with his works:

Po черной радуге мушихого крыла  
Бессмертые щедрое душа моя открыла  
Напрасно кружится немолчая пчела, -  
От праздничных молитв меня не отлучила

Медитительно плывут от плавней влажных снов  
Родные пастбища впервые вижу снова,  
И прежний ветерок пленителен и нов  
Сквозь сумрачный узор сине ясит основа

В слезах расплывает залеченный небосклон,  
Выздоравления не вычерпано лоно  
Средь небывалых рощ сияет Геликон  
И нежной розой зорь аврорится икона!

In addition, Kuzmin underwent a period of intense interest in the works of the Futurists, particularly Majakovskij's and Xlebnikov's. At that time Kuzmin wrote several poems characterized by "low," even "rude" vocabulary, numerous neologisms, oratorical intonations, uneven rhythm, syntactic inversions, and other "futuristic" features. These poems, while futuristic in form, however included ideological polemics with Majakovskij and other Futurists over the issue of "old" culture.13 One such
polemical poem, entitled "Vraždebné more," is actually dedicated to Majakovskij. Another "futuristic" poem by Kuzmin, from the "gnostic" cycle "Basilid" (1917-1918) well illustrates Kuzmin's masterful internalizing of the Futurist elements without his adopting their ideology. It begins in a Majakovskijan vein and ends with stylistic features reminiscent of Xlebnikov; yet, overall, it exemplifies a distinctly Kuzminian tonality. I quote fragments from this poem:

Даже лошади стали мне словов схегной!
Черепки ассирийские давят
Всплывших боков ущелья,
Ужасен зубов ошет!
И лилийских солдат веселые,
Что трубой и горлами вождя славят,
Тяжело мне,
Как груз сплющенных скал
Я знаю, что был Гомер,
Елена и павшая Троя
Герои
Жрели и дрались
И по радуге боги спускались.
Муза, музица
Плоской ступней шагала,
Говоря во все горло
Мила Музенька
Пальчиком стерла
Допотопные начала
Солнце, ты не гори
Это ужасно грубо
- Только зари, зари,
- Шепчут пересохшие губы,

his review of Xlebnikov's little play "Ošibka smerti", where he discusses the poet's cultural genealogy. He points out that "however much the Futurists may regret this," there is no escaping tradition. Kuzmin then presents a list of works on which Xlebnikov's play is based. Kuzmin (1917), 263

14 The analysis of this poem see in Seleznev (1989)
And this is how the poem ends:

Что Гомер?
Сильней лошадей, солдат, солнца, смерти и Нила, -
Семинебесных сфер
Кристальная гармония меня оглушила
Тимпан, воркуй!
Труба, играй!
Вой, бей!
Вихрь голубей!
Орлов клекот!
Стон лебедей!
Дух, рей,
вей, вей,
Дверей
Райских рай!
Рай, рай!

В руке у меня полированный камень,
Из него струился кровавый пламень,
И грубо было написано слово: Абраксас.15

Kuzmin was also interested in the experimentation of other avant-garde schools and movements. It has been pointed out, that several of Kuzmin's works of the later period, particularly his "Pečka v bane: kafel'nye pejzaţi" and "P'jat' razgovorov i odin slučaj," anticipate the poetics of OBERIU writers.16 Kuzmin personally knew Vvedenskij, Xarms, Vaginov, and Zabolockij: they often visited him in the late 1920's to discuss literary issues.

15In the original the last word of the poem is spelled in Greek.

16On this see G. Cheron's article "Mixail Kuzmin And The Oberiuty: An Overview" and N. Bogomolov's "Zametki k "Pečke v bane" (in Mixail Kuzmin i russkaja kul'tura XX veka. Tezisy i materialy konferencii 15-17 maja 1990 g.).
and listen to him reading his works. The parodistic nature of the above mentioned works, their playfully primitive style disguising layers of complexity, the proclivity to disclose the absurdity of (Soviet) life— all these characteristics would later become the trademark of the works of OBERIU writers. Specifically, the metapoetic nature of the stories of "Pečka v bane," which parody various literary genres, as well as its very own genre of mini-stories, invite a comparison with some works by Xarms. Even the title of Kuzmin's "Pjat' razgovorov i Odin slučaj," as Bogomolov and Malmstad note, is echoed in the titles of two later works by Russian absurdists— one by Xarms, "Slučaj," another by Vvedenskij, "Nekotoroe količestvo razgovorov."

17This is what Bogomolov and Malmstad write on this subject: "Вероятно, самое главное и самое существенное, что заставляет видеть в исканиях Кузмина предвосхищение опыта обернутов уже тридцатых годов, это его стремление в кажущихся наивными и стоящими на грани юмористики формах гrottескного преломления современной действительности увидеть за показанным ее благополучием внутреннюю несостоятельность всего жизненного строя, претендующего на создание царства блаженной гармонии," Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 273

18George Cheron establishes this parallel. He writes: "Xarms in his stories poked fun at the historical sketch ("Istoričeskiij epizod"), the pretentious cult of Puškin ("Anekdoty iz žizni Puškina"), the theater ("Neudačnyj spektakl'"), drama ("F’esa"), personal notebooks ("Iz zapisnoj knizki"), and the fable ("Bašnja"). Kuzmin was equally as prolific in satirizing established literary forms. In compact, laconic vignettes Kuzmin lampoons the pastoral ("Kupan’e"), the adventure tale ("Naletčik"), the romantic story ("Buket"), the love story ("Nesčastnaja"), the anecdote ("Strašnyj slučaj"), the travelogue ("Putešestvie"), and the historical-ethnographic sketch ("Greki"). "The Stove in the Banja" was one of many works Kuzmin would read to visitors, including Xarms and Vvedenskij, of his apartment in the late 1920's." Cheron (1983), 97
Kuzmin's attitude towards Formalist ideas was not as straightforward, as one may assume on the basis of many negative comments about this movement. In any case, he undoubtedly shared their views on the deautomatizing function of art and probably also perceived Tolstoj's oeuvre as an important source of deautomatizing artistic practice (see above). Some of the more penetrating analyses of Kuzmin's art were written by the Formalist literary scholars Žirmunskij and Œjxenbaum. This fact was acknowledged by Kuzmin who thought Žirmunskij the best candidate for writing a book on him, as already noted.

The presence of surrealist and expressionist elements in Kuzmin's later writings has also been pointed out, particularly in connection with his poema "Forel' razbivaet led." In chapter 4, I will briefly discuss the correlation of Kuzmin's poetics with that of Expressionist cinematography. The areas of contiguity between Kuzmin's poetics and those of Rozanov and Pasternak, will also be discussed there. All these parallels serve to illustrate Kuzmin's proclivity to borrow elements from "foreign" discourses – including those which themselves were impacted

19See Ejiœenbavun's "O proze Kuzmina" and Žirmunskij's "M.A. Kuzmin" and "Poeœija Kuzmina," as well as "Preodolevšie simvolizm." Šklovskij, Tomaœevskij, Ejiœenbaum, Žirmunskij, Tyn'janov were contributors for the daily "žizn' iskusstva" during the time when Kuzmin also worked there. In May of 1920 at the meeting in "Dom literatorov" to celebrate Kuzmin's art, Žirmunskij presented a paper on Kuzmin.
by Kuzmin's writings - and to incorporate them into the fabric of his own texts.

Kuzmin's principle of borrowing and assimilating properties of other poetics into his own are well illustrated by his poem of 1917 "Pskovskoj avgust," from the cycle "Russkij raj" and dedicated to his contemporary, the artist Ju.Annenkov. It represents a "translation" of a visual text (probably several) into a verbal one, and, therefore, it places emphasis on assimilation techniques, rather than borrowing. Annenkov was an artist whom Kuzmin admired a great deal. In 1922 he wrote an essay containing a brilliant analysis of Annenkov's art and revealing an inner kinship between their creativity. Specifically, Kuzmin describes Annenkov as a flexible artist, who, while standing above schools and movements, enriches his art with their technical achievements:

Как существуют фанатики доктрины, там мне кажется Ю. П. Анненков фанатиком < > артистического подхода и "казуальности", то того, что нужно для каждой данной художественной минуты. В это понятие, разумеется, входит и пользование, когда ему нужно, новейшими техническими приемами, овладеть которыми такому гибкому художнику большого труда не составляет и от которых, когда надобность в них минула, он не задумывается отказаться, как человек живой, не педантичный и отнюдь не заматорелый в какой-либо школе.  

20 "Kolebanija žiznennyx tokov," Portrety, 47-48. I would also like to note that in this article, Kuzmin points at Annenkov's frequent use of deautomatization technique, describing it in terms of leading the viewer away from "sensible" reality and then returning him back. (Анненков пользуется приемом оторванных, ядуг всплывающих на поверхность действия предметов для двух различных целей. Для запечатления провала реальности, ее исчезновения, с другой
Let us now turn to the poem "Pskovskoj avgust" and see, to what degree it reflects Kuzmin's poetics, and to what extent that of Annenkov.

Псковский август

Ю. П. Анненкову

Веселушки и плакушки
Мост копытят козами,
А заречные макушки
Леденцуют розами
По пестро-рябым озерцам
Гребеньцы наверчены
Былым, чёрным, серым перцем
Лодочики наперчены
Мельниц мелево у кручи
Сухоруко машется
На березы каплет с тучи
Янтарева кашница
Надорвав, вечерняя, шмёлем,
Взвивается узенько
Белки свердки мелко мелем,
Труси, труси, трусенька
Завинти, ветрило, шпонтик,
Что-нибудь получится!
Всколесила желтый зонт
На балкон поручница!

The first impression of this poem is that it is highly saturated with various images. Kuzmin compresses the space of his poem to the limit, introducing a new image almost at every second line. Numerous parallel constructions (like a verb plus a noun in the instrumental case - "kopyjtat kozami;" "ledencejut rozami;" "naperceny percem;"

стороны - для её утверждения, нового вызова её из бедны." This technique, as will be discussed in the next chapter, is often used by Kuzmin himself.

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"vzvjakivaet šmelem") - not only contribute to the effect of saturation, but also amplify the rhythmical richness of the poem. The abundant usage of instrumental constructions is characteristic of Futurist poetry. In Kuzmin's poem they serve as a device for translating the Futurist overtones of Annenkov's visual works into verbal language. These constructions also seem to convey a sense of playful proximity between the fantastic and the real, an effect which Annenkov often achieves in his drawings through unusual arrangements of common, mundane objects. For example, the first two lines of the poem, "Veseluški i plakuški / Most kopytjat kozami" communicate a strange image. They possibly paint a picture of young women - some merry and laughing, others sad and crying - pulling goats across a bridge. Or there might be no real goats in the picture at all, but only an image of the way the women walk - playfully, or clumsily, or perhaps dancing - reminiscent of goats moving. Annenkov, whether he has a similar picture or not, which I was not able to verify, could easily have drawn figures of women, in comic, goat-like poses, and next to them an outline of a real goat. Or he could have "attached" goat legs to the silhouettes of women. "Legko možet slučitsja, - writes Kuzmin in his essay about this technique in Annenkov's works, - čto rjadom s golovoju, napominajuščej fasonom tykvu, xudožnik

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pomestit i samoe tykvu." Just as the constructions with the instrumental case suggest the presence of another reality, so do impersonal verbs or passive verbal constructions, which do not make it clear, who it is that performs the actions in the poem. This creates an almost Gogolian sense of phantasmagoria, when objects acquire life of their own. The list of such grammatically or semantically impersonal verbs or verbal forms include: "ledencejut," "naperčeny," "naverčeny," "mašetsja." An unusually large number of neologisms in the poem both reinforce the feeling of unreality and impart the Futuristic stylistics to the poem. The humor of the poem, like that in many of Annenkov's works, is that of playfulness, here conveyed mainly through newly coined words like "veselushki," "plakushi," "grebency," "tprusen'ka," "melevo," "snedki," "melem," "suxoruko," "jantareva," "mašetsja," "vzvjakivaet," "kopytjat," "ledencejut," "vskolesila." In a way, they serve as verbal equivalents of Annenkov's playful distortions of familiar objects: the roots and suffixes are familiar, but their combinations are unusual.

Another specific trait of Annenkov's drawings is a seeming absence of hierarchy between the main and the peripheral planes. Zamjatin in his essay on Annenkov,
published in the same book of Annenkov's portraits as Kuzmin's essay on the artist, defines this technique as one of "displacement of temporal and spatial planes serving to portray the fantastic reality of today." In Kuzmin's poem, various planes also merge, and the arrangement of images is deprived of any hierarchy whatsoever. Listed in the manner of the typically Kuzminian "catalogue," these images leave the reader confused, as to what constitutes the fore- and what the background of the picture and where the focus of the poem is to be found. Only the very last image of the poem, that of a yellow, wheel-like umbrella on a balcony placed there by a lieutenant's wife, is given as a "close up" and therefore as somehow marked, compared to the other images.

All in all this stylized poem, which depicts an ordinary landscape, strongly conveys that sense of "vibration" that Kuzmin thought was characteristic of Annenkov's art. It is achieved by the saturation of images, the dynamics conveyed by the abundance of verbs and words communicating action, by the confusion of planes, as

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22 He writes, for example: "смещение временных и пространственных планов для изображения сегодняшней, фантастической действительности" Portrety, 31

23 Kuzmin explains what he means by "vibration:" "Это - необыкновенная жизненность, динамика, сильно развитое поэтическое воображение, частое обилие подробностей, разнообразие, почти неустойчивость приемов, конечно, при постоянном сохранении: индивидуальности, этим самым еще более заостренной" Portrety, 47

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well as the rich sound fabric and inner rhythms. Kuzmin's masterful usage of verbal means creates a sensation comparable to that which the visual works of Annenkov convey.

At the same time, however, the poem is typically "Kuzminian" in its playful and merry tonality, its visual and concrete character, dislocated planes, exceptionally rich sound fabric and choice of a landscape. As was the case with most of his "appropriations" of alien codes, Kuzmin felt a certain kinship with Annenkov's art, which he thought exuded the "vibrations of vital currents." Thus, "Pskovskoj avgust" should be seen as a work created in the intersection of two artistic visions, Kuzmin's own and that of Annenkov. As has been pointed out in chapter 2 and as will again be discussed in more detail in chapter 4, such projections constitute the essence of many of his writings. As he borrows existing cultural models, sometimes generic, sometimes those of a particular author, Kuzmin does not merely imitate them, but subordinates them to his own poetics. This is why his writings are easily recognizable despite their immense stylistic diversity and frequent stylization.
3.2 FROM "ON BEAUTIFUL CLARITY" TO "DECLARATION OF EMOTIONALISM:" RESTORING THE BALANCE.

Summarizing the above discussion, I see Kuzmin's role in the cultural politics of his time as that of a keeper of balance. As Lavrov and Timenčik cleverly put it, his position was that of "programnaja neprogramnost'."24 If this is so however, how should one view Kuzmin's own aesthetic declarations "O prekrasnoj jasnosti" of 1909 and "Deklaracija émocionalizma" of 1924? I believe that they must be interpreted as attempts on Kuzmin's part to maintain the balance between literary schools at times when a particular tendency was threatening to become predominant. He drew attention to the neglected, currently reduced branch of literature. The beginning of the century was marked by the triumph of Symbolism. It had developed into a leading movement with its established ideology and poetics. Its ambition to present itself as the only "true" representative of Russian, and even world, literature became apparent. At the same time, the Symbolists' favoring of "Dionysian chaos" resulted, in Kuzmin's view, in the neglect of the classical, Apollonian principle of clarity and order. In that context, Kuzmin wrote his "warning" "O prekrasnoj jasnosti" in the journal Apollon

24Lavrov and Timenčik (1990), 12
reminding of the fact that art needs a definite, clear form that would confine chaos. He also suggested that a writer should follow the rules of his native language and always remain within its natural limits.

In 1923 Kuzmin collected his essays on aesthetic issues and republished them in a book entitled Uslovnosti. He did not include his treatise "O prekrasnoj jasnosti" in this collection, although he published many other, seemingly less significant articles of that time, there. I believe that the explanation for this circumstance is this: at that time the direction of Russian literature had changed and the message of the need for "beautiful clarity" was no longer relevant. Thus, his treatise of 1909 was never meant to present the declaration of an eternal "principle," but rather served as a warning against the potential danger from an overpowering symbolist tendency in literature.

The literary situation in the early and middle 1910's was relatively balanced. Symbolism was gradually giving up its position of absolute authority, remaining nevertheless a productive discourse. The writers of the next generation were entering the literary arena, forming various schools and working out their theoretical platforms. The "formal" trend in literature and art, which Kuzmin viewed as the very antithesis of the symbolic and emotional tendency, was
undergoing its formative stage. But toward the end of the 1910's and the beginning of the 1920's an art that was excessively form-oriented, overwhelmed the Russian literary scene, according to Kuzmin. It is important to remember, that in Kuzmin's terminology "formal" denotes not only Formalist practice, but any purely "technical" approach to form. Thus, in his view, the Acmeists ultimately came to embrace "prescribed" principles and regulations, as did the Futurists, especially those of lesser talent and the writers of the "Serapion Brotherhood;" even Belyj who, as Kuzmin thought, displayed a mechanistic approach to the creative process - all were responsible for the "formalization" of literature.

25What Kuzmin despised most of all in Formalist "method" itself, was the procedure of dissecting and labeling, as well as their later project of enlightening the masses about how "art is made."

26Kuzmin's attitude to the Acmeists at the time is comparable to Blok's as it is expressed in his famous article "Bez bojestva, bez vdoxnoven'ja."

27About formal dominanta in the writings of these authors Kuzmin writes the following, for example: "Молодые эти бельетристы покуда демонстрируют исключительно способы изобразительности, заняты всевоем развертыванием сюжета, обнажением приема и т. п., так что не только определить их революционность, но заметить даже какую-либо эмоциональную восприимчивость - невозможно. Покуда великолепные перевозочные средства, блестящая тара - но багаж, товару для перевозки что-то не видно." Ibid. 406

28In his essay "Meštatele" Kuzmin writes of Bely's "literariness," as it is reflected in his Epopee "Ja" with much criticism: "Никогда еще не была так обнажена химическая лаборатория творчества, никогда еще формальная изобретательность, метафизическая диалектика, психологические самозанятия не были так обострены, пушенны в ход все силы, какое-то Лейбницкое сражение - и, по-моему, оно проиграно.
At this stage Kuzmin recalled Symbolism with nostalgia and openly praised the school in his 1921 review article entitled "Mečtateli." He calls them "dreamers" who viewed art in old fashioned terms, stressing the need for a Weltanschauung, lyrical pathos, inner content and metaphysics. Now he favorably compares their aesthetic stance to that of the Formalists and the Acmeists. It is in this context that Kuzmin issues his "Declaracija emocionalizma," also signed by a group of close friends of his who shared his concern for the contemporary state of affairs in literature. His "O prekrasnoj jasnosti" had drawn attention to the problem of form; his declaration of the 1920's served to bring into focus the issue of content, which, as he believed, had been reduced to insignificance in favor of formal innovations. In this declaration Kuzmin maintained, in a conspicuously old-fashioned (Tolstojan) manner, that the origins and the very essence of art were 

Духовная раздробленность и мельчание делают почти жутким весь блеск и химическое искусство Белого" Ibid. 389

29 In the same article Kuzmin, for example, wrote: "Если сравнить с формальными барабанами московских школ и упрямым достоинством акмеизма, произвольно и довольно тупо ограничивающего себя со всех сторон, то конечно - мечтатели Во всяком случае, это - люди, считающиеся с такими устаревшими словами, как "мировоззрение", "лирический панос", "внутреннее содержание" и "метафизика искусства." Ibid.

30 The members of the group of "emocionalisty" included, besides Kuzmin: Jurkun, Vaginov, Radlov, Radlova, Dmitriev, Paparigopulo, Adrian Piotrovskij. The "Declaration" was signed by Kuzmin, the Radlovs and Jurkun.
located in the emotional sphere of human existence. Among other things, it emphasized that "form is only a condition of art, not its function or goal."\(^{31}\)

The declaration was clearly meant to set Kuzmin and his friends apart from the "formal" trends in contemporary art as well as the dogmatic views of Marxist critics. Moreover, Kuzmin must have seen it as his modest contribution to changing the course of literature in direction of forgotten metaphysical and emotional roots, a shift which, as he believed and stated with much satisfaction, was already taking place:

\begin{quote}
Могу сообщить только одно, что формальная волна спадает и попытки овладеть сущностью искусства при помощи механического анализа и приемов, оканчиваясь все большей неудачей, делаются все реже. Вера в непогрешимость акмеизма, футуризма, всяких цехов и студий подорвана едва ли поправимо. Искусство возвращается к своим эмоциональным, символическим и метафизическим истокам.\(^{32}\)
\end{quote}

In this anti-Formalist context, the "Deklaracija emocionalizma" acquires a certain irony: the Formalists who frequently used Tolstoj's writings to carry out their formal analysis, completely neglected the great writer's ideal of emotionally contagious art. I would also like to note, that this declaration conveys Kuzmin's ambiguous attitude toward the culture of the past at the time. While

\(^{31}\)Kuzmin (1923), 3

\(^{32}\)Uslovnosti, 162
asserting traditional cultural values in polemics with the Futurists and other "formal" schools, Kuzmin, very typically, at the same time, already following the new call of the Expressionists, rejects such art of the past that has lost its relevance for the present.\(^3\)

If Kuzmin's aesthetic statements were indeed intended as contributions to the restoration of a balance in a given literary situation, one might ask how effective his attempts were. It is important to remember that in the cultural circles of his time Kuzmin was a highly influential figure, whose opinions carried much weight. While his first treatise clearly stirred the minds of many of his contemporaries, the second declaration must have effected at least some younger poets and writers who continued to value Kuzmin's guidance. Thus, I believe that Kuzmin indeed frequently acted as "pacifier" and restorer of balance in the literary life of his time.

It may be of interest to consider how the motif of peace, rest, and repose, common in Kuzmin's works, may have served as a poetic analogue to this "behavioral" and philosophical stance. Peace and rest are often seen in his works as conditions necessary for the inner, most fruitful, labor of emotional and creative forces. Many of the poems

\(^3\)While he rejects the exquisite, rigid art of France, England and Italy, he praises the ability of Russian, German and American art to rediscover the emotional roots and elemental laws.
of the cycle "Plod zreet" are based on the theme of external rest and internal growth. These include some of his, in my view, best poems, for example "My v slepote kak budto ne znaem," "Kakaja-to len' nedeli kroet," "Naxodit strannoe molčanie" and "Kakja belizna i krotkij son." The motif of tranquillity also occurs in the poems of the from a metapoetic point of view important cycle "Stixi ob iskusstve."

Interestingly, in his aesthetic reflections, Kuzmin often links genuine art with historic periods of repose between battles, seeing art itself as a form of rest and regeneration. In his "Skoroxody istorii" he, for example, writes:

"А настоящее искусство мечтает совсем о другом. Я думаю, что в минуты стройки, после битвы, думается о следующем моменте отдыха в устроенном доме."

Such an unusual emphasis on the "peaceful" and tolerant aspect of art underlies Kuzmin's preference for light and entertaining genres, including, of course, his famous songs which he himself frequently performed. He perceived his own time (the beginning of the 20th century) as such a period of repose on the eve of social turmoil, and therefore, he naturally thought of his "peaceful" art as congenial to its spirit. Certainly his contemporaries

\[34\]
appreciated its "restful" quality. In conclusion, I would like to point out, that Kuzmin's notion of the fruitfulness of peace in life and art once again links him with Tolstoj, who in his War and Peace demonstrated that real history is made not in "war" but in "peace."
CHAPTER 4

THE AESTHETICS OF FRAGMENTARINESS AND UNITY

- Раздробленное - один лишь Бог цел!
  Безумное - отъемлет ум Дух!
  Непонятное - летучий Сфинкс - вazor!
  Целительное - зеркальных сфер звук!

  M. Kuzmin

В жизни все монтажно, только нужно найти, по какому принципу

  v. šklovskij

4.1 KUZMIN'S FRAGMENTARY STRUCTURES: ESTABLISHING INVISIBLE PATTERNS

In addition to openness, inclusiveness and synthesis, the use of fragmentary devices is essential to Kuzmin's aesthetics. The dichotomy "fragmentariness-unity" permeates Kuzmin's writings on various levels, supplying thematic material and providing structural and compositional frameworks. Kuzmin's persistence in relying on this dichotomy is explained by the fact that it is deeply rooted in his philosophical beliefs and aesthetics. It has not gone unnoticed in the literature on Kuzmin, but has never been dealt with at any depth. For example,
A. Sinjavskij in his article "'Panorama s vynoskami' Mixaila Kuzmina," links the composition of the book of poems "Forel' razbivaet led" which he terms "razorvannaja ili skladnaja" ("torn to pieces - reassembled"), to Kuzmin's overall existential vision:

In this passage, Sinjavskij brings up several points relevant to the present discussion. First, he notes that the processes of fragmentation and unification are

\[\text{Sinjavskij (1987), 58}\]
complementary, in the sense that they are interconnected and that one always presupposes the other. Second, he stresses that Kuzmin's texts should be seen as peculiar analogues to universal laws, because in their structure they imitate the fragmentation and reassembling of existence. This, in Sinjavskij's view, reveals Kuzmin's metaphysical understanding of art. Third, Sinjavskij points out that the fragments of existence which Kuzmin selects for his texts, always pertain to different spatial and temporal planes emphasizing art's ability to overcome the limitations of space and time. And fourth, the overall thematic effect which Kuzmin achieves through such fragmentary and reassembling compositions is that life triumphs over death.

The thematical representation of the "fragmentation-unity" dichotomy in Kuzmin's art is rich.² The motifs of chaos and cosmos, death and resurrection, of light and refraction permeate Kuzmin's works of all periods. The theme of life's triumph over death, achieved through the act of self-sacrifice, will be discussed in detail later, in connection with Kuzmin's long poem "Lazar'." Here, I will primarily examine "fragmentariness-unity" as a structural principle of Kuzmin's works.

² Some of these examples are discussed in: Satho Tchimichkian-Jennergren, "L'art en tant que résurrection dans la poésie de M.Kuzmin," Studies, p. 47-56.
Kuzmin, whose art is manifestly grounded in cultural tradition, is often perceived as an aesthete; yet, his ultimate concern was life. In Kuzmin's vision, creativity is an aspect of life, and art a catalyst for life. He emphatically rejected the mimetic function of art and frequently voiced his concern that the conception of art as the imitation of life, still prevailed:

Но определение "искусство - подражание природе", скомпрометированное, обанкротившееся, отнюдь не сдалось, и для непрерывных нападок на искусство, иногда из его же недр, принимает на себя разные благородные личины.

Kuzmin insisted, that art, instead of serving a simple mimetic function, and therefore, relying on life's outward manifestations, must communicate its essence. In doing so, it must follow laws entirely different from those of life. What exactly these laws are and how art applies them, is never directly answered in Kuzmin's theoretical writings. In his poetic works, however, he indirectly offers his answers to the questions concerning the "laws of art." The "fragmented-unified" structures of many of his works is one such area which helps clarify Kuzmin's aesthetics and poetics and particularly, his position on the art-life relationship.

The tendency to structure his texts as arrangements of disjointed fragments is recognizable in Kuzmin's writings.

3 максимальности, 12 Here Kuzmin mainly disputes against the 19th-century realistic tradition of "great narratives."
from the outset of his writing career to its end. Equally noticeable is the progression of his earlier fragmented compositions from sequential, but "interrupted" narratives and cycles of poems to those clearly organized as cinematographical montages. The main stages of this progression will be touched upon in the discussion below, although not in strictly chronological order and not with equal degree of attention.

Fragmentariness can be viewed as a tendency characteristic of twentieth century literature and art, although precedents for fragmentary structures can be found in previous cultural traditions, as for example, in Romanticism. In evolutionary terms, fragmentary narratives represent a break with the Realist literary tradition, in which narrative elements are held together by causal-temporal-spatial constraints. In Russian prose, the beginning of a consciously cultivated fragmentariness is usually associated with the works of V. Rozanov, who thought of his fragmentary works as signifying the "end of literature." At the same time in poetry, the genre of the poetic cycle, which can be described in terms of a fragmentary-unifying structure, grew to occupy an ever more prominent position, turning into a dominant poetic form in

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4The fragmentary principle in prose writing can also be described in versification terms, with a fragment as an analogue of a verse line.
Russian poetry of the Silver age. Blok's poetic works, for example, can not be sufficiently understood without an awareness of the cyclization mechanisms involved.

Further, with the popularization of cinematography in Russia and with its increasing influence on other artistic media, which reached its apogee in late 10's - 20's, montage becomes one of the main structural principles underlying the works of various artistic media and genres. One theory explaining the birth of cinematography stresses how in order for cinematography to evolve as an autonomous artistic medium, it had to borrow and comprise elements from other media. It also stresses how it "ripened" within a cultural tradition which had already been developing in the direction of, what one might call, "cinematographization." Yet, when montage principles finally crystalized and cinema evolved as a separate medium, the impact turned out to be mutual: cinematography now, too, exerted its influence over the other arts. While examining Kuzmin's fragmentary structures, it is important to bear in mind that they illustrate both the fragmentary tendency of twentieth century (Russian) literature and the

5 "Монтажное мышление и монтажные принципы широко представлены во всех видах искусства" - commented on the cinematographic impact on other arts Eiženštejn. In addition to being the leading film director of the age, he was also a theoretician of montage techniques. Eiženštejn (1964-1971), II, 188
impact of cinematographic montage principles, the latter being particularly evident in Kuzmin's later works.

Kuzmin tends to relate semantic and formal constituents of his texts to a context, especially a particular literary or cultural tradition, a synchronic discourse or his own previous texts. Such a continual referral to factors outside the text, allows Kuzmin to bestow on his works a sense of openness and "elasticity." It is through the procedure of weighing and juxtaposing - which the author "invites" his reader to carry out - that the complexities of his apparently "simple" works emerge. The reliance on the contexts to establish the meaning of the text is of course not unique to Kuzmin's writings: it characterizes art in general, particularly that of the twentieth century. But in the case of Kuzmin's writings, we witness an extraordinary degree of such dependence on context. The primary meaning of Kuzmin's texts is hidden behind their external, readily perceivable presentation, emerging only at the intersection of invisible currents stretching from one text to another. In fragmentary structures of Kuzmin's texts meaning is generated through juxtaposing and weighing a text's fragments against each other.

Fragmentary structures may be seen in dialectical terms, as the synthesis of two opposite tendencies:
fragmentation and integration. Each of these tendencies is represented by a separate, but superimposed plane. "A disjointed surface structure is built upon a unifying deep structure which is based on the principle of equivalence. Or, seen from an opposite viewpoint, a system of semantic correlations is superimposed upon a sequence of divergent and contrasting motifs, loosely connected by spatial-temporal relations."

These two levels are almost always present in Kuzmin's writings: one is apparent, the other hidden. The first puzzles the reader (what are these unconnected pieces supposed to mean?), or entertains, presenting him with a colorful and delightful series of pictures. The second plane is only implied by the author and it must be reconstructed by a (thoughtful and knowledgeable) reader.

At this point I would like to present a general survey of Kuzmin's fragmentary structures. Among their earliest examples are "interrupted" (not continuous) narratives. These are more or less traditional texts, constructed as a series of episodes. While only vaguely linked on a temporal level, these episodes are held together by some underlying principle which needs to be found for the work's meaning to transpire. In several of Kuzmin's early prose works, like *Prikliučenie Eme Lebefa*, "Iz pisem devicy Klary

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Schreurs, Marc (1986).
Val'mon k Rozalii Tutel' Majer" and others, the presence of two separate textual planes - one visible, one hidden - is already noticeable. Often the fragmented texts are of a "biographical" nature, such as Podvigi Velikogo Aleksandra and Čudesnaja žizn' Iosifa Bal'zamo, grafa Kaliostro. The tendency to render the protagonist's life-text as a string of episodes, "chosen" by the author on the basis of an elusive principle, which the reader is invited to establish by himself, is already noticeable in Kuzmin's first novel, Kryl'ja. In a much later story, "Iz zapisok Tivurtija Penclja," written in the style characteristic of Kuzmin's prose of the 1920's, the fragmentary tendency is fully realized. In it, more so than in previous (semi)-biographical texts, the episodes appear both insignificant - in relation to the presumed significance of the protagonist's life - and arbitrarily selected. Such texts, therefore, require more effort in solving their puzzle. Kuzmin's frequent grouping of his short stories in cycles, with each story functioning as a variant on some inner principle uniting them all, is also symptomatic of this fragmentary tendency. Kuzmin also arranged his poems in cycles and cycles in books. Frequently they are united through some "invisible" principle or theme, which only in rare cases is explicated in the cycle's title. Kuzmin's semi-narrative long poems, "Forel' razbivaet led" and
"Lazar" are also comparable to cycles. Although the causal-temporal connection in them is not completely absent, their constituent elements—situations, motifs, images—are mostly linked by association. Because the cohesion of these elements is lacking on a surface level, the texts appear disjointed, fragmented. Even more disjointed are Kuzmin's works of a mixed genre, which incorporate elements of drama, such as "Progulki Gul'ja" and "Lesok." Their structures are reminiscent of cinematographical montages with fragments ("shots") that are short, visual, and often incorporate a "situation" or mise-en-scène.

Kuzmin's prose of the 1920's is also characterized by a marked fragmentariness. Such short stories as "Podzemnye ruč' i" and "Goluboe ničto" are constructed as patchworks of discrete short fragments. One of Kuzmin's latest prose works available to us is "Pečka v bane. Kafel'nye pejzaži." It offers a mosaic-like arrangement of self-contained amusing anecdotes, each framed in a particular cultural frame. At the end of this collection it is revealed that the stories represent a verbal account of pictures drawn on a tile stove in a bathhouse: here the term collage also seems singularly appropriate. Šejzenbaum appropriately defined Kuzmin's texts in which complex and ambiguous meanings are encoded through a combination of simple visual
pictures, by the term "rebus." Such texts are also exemplified in Kuzmin's poetry, particularly by the cycle "Panorama s vynoskami."

Kuzmin's diary which he kept throughout most years of his writing career, should also be seen as an extensive text based on fragmentation, namely the sequence of countless daily entries. Its massive volume in relation to his overall oeuvre, as well as the significance that Kuzmin assigned to his diary writing emphasize his general proclivity for fragmentary writing. Related to the genre of the diary is his collection of disjointed extracts and notes on the margins of his readings entitled "Češuja v nevode (tol'ko dlja sebja)." This work clearly imitates the genre of "fallen leaves" developed by Rozanov, the author of fragmentary texts par excellence.

Before analyzing the functions of fragmentary structures in greater detail, I would like to discuss a specific category: Kuzmin's "catalogues." The catalogue, or listing of items (objects, attributes, actions) should be seen as the most elementary type of fragmentary structure. Because catalogues are based on the metonymic principle of substituting a part for a whole, they contain a great semantic potential. In addition, the arrangement of the material in catalogues has an equalizing effect on it, because placing items in proximity to one another and
assigning them a common format, frees them from hierarchical subordination.

Kuzmin's catalogues serve to communicate the richness of life. Such, for example, is the function of the long lists that enumerate a large number of objects, attributes, or predicates in the descriptions of Italian life and Italian characters. I would like to quote one such list from his novel Kryl'ja which contains fifteen objects. While communicating the richness and the kaleidoscopic character of the Italian way of life, this long sentence also conveys the open, indiscriminatory nature of Mori, a Catholic priest and the mentor of the novel's autobiographical character Vanja Smurov:

(Он всех и все знал.) Тут были и прогонающие маркизы, и графы, живущие в запущенных дворцах, играющие в карты и сорящиеся из-за них со своими лакеями; тут были инженеры и доктора, купцы, живущие просто, по-старине экономно и замкнуто; начинающие музыканты, стремящиеся к славе Пуччини и подражающие ему безбородыми толстоватыми лицами и галстуками; персидский консул, живший под сан - Миньто с шестью племянницами, толстый, важный и благосклонный, аптекаря, какие-то юноши на посылках; обращенные в католичество английанки и, наконец, м-м-е Монье, эстетка и художница, жившая во фьезоле с целой компанией гостей в вилле, расписанной нежными весенними аллегориями, с видом на Флоренцию и долину Аньо, вечно веселая, маленького роста, щебечущая, рыжая и безобразная 7

The poem "Moi predki" which has been analyzed in chapter 2 in the discussion of the poet's cultural genealogy, offers another example of a catalogue. Here it

7Proza I, 295
is used to draw a collective portrait of the poet's ancestors, representing highly diverse human types. At the same time, each itemized forebear offers a story in a nutshell, waiting to be evolved into a novel of the Kuzminian kind: playful, with an unheroic subject matter, and much attention placed on seemingly insignificant aspects of life.

Kuzmin often used catalogues in his metapoetic writings. For example, in the poem "Serym tjanutsja teniroem," (the cycle "Stixi ob iskusstve") the poet is visited by a swarm of ghostly guests, who are seeking to become incarnated in his works. These guests are presented in the form of a catalogue, which has an equalizing effect. They include "real" and literary characters, from various geographic locales and times, of either gender and any age, the famous and the ordinary (Alexander the Great and an ordinary school boy). All occupy an equally important place in the poet's list. This reflects Kuzmin's rejection of hierarchy and his attention to the marginal, which to him, manifests the entirety in no lesser degree than the central:

Слабое племя, вам дано приблизиться,
Давно истлевшие и не рожденные,
Идите, даже не существовавшие,
Без крови, без века, без названия
Всё страны, все года,
Мужчины, женщины,
Старцы и дети,
Прославленные и неизвестные,
Another poem of the same cycle, "A éto xuliganskaja, skazala" written soon after the revolution (in 1921-1922), is entirely based on the cataloguing technique. The poet presents lists of names and objects associated for his reader with the pre-revolutionary past. The specifics and effects of the technique are also discussed by the poet in the process of applying it. This poem may, in fact, be viewed as Kuzmin's contribution to the subject "kak delajutsja stixi." Here he allows the reader to enter his poetic "laboratory" and to follow the implementation of his poetic practice step by step. At this point I would like to discuss this poem in detail. In the beginning of the poem, the poet hears an old song performed by his (female) friend, presumably, O.Glebova-Sudejkina, to whom the poem is dedicated. Both the content of the song, in which a past love is recalled and the romantically stylized manner of singing, stir up the poet's memory. They also inspire a creative impulse, manifested in his agitation and anguish. He knows that he may rid himself of those feelings only by
transmitting to the reader those emotions that were evoked by the singing, by therefore "infecting" him as it were.

When the author sets out to compose the poem, he takes an old book of Russian geography and with its help lists gubernias, cities and towns, as they are preserved by Russian memory ("Kakimi soxranila ix / Russkaja pamjat'").

Костромская, Ярославская, Нижегородская, Казанская, Владимирская, Московская, Смоленская, Псковская

He does so because, as he maintains, "any sort of listing hypnotizes and takes one's imagination into the boundless." ("Vsjakij perečen' gipnotiziruet / I unosit voobraženie v neobjatnoe"). The list of geographic names is then interrupted by an inserted fragment of the song, presumably in order to renew its inspiring effect on the poet. Then follows the second listing, or "wave," as the poet calls it. It is one that enumerates saints ("ugodniki") and holy places. As previously, this list is preceded by comments in which the poet explains his intentions:

Второй волной
Перечислить
Хотелось мне угодников
И местные святыни,
Каких изображают
На старых образах,
Двумя, тремя и четырьмя рядами
Молебные руки,
Очи горе,-
Китежа звуки
В зимней заре"
Печора, Кремль, леса и Соловки
Once the poet's memory has been stimulated by the catalogues from a reference book, it itself generates associative chains of images. Furthermore, his emotional and sensory memory have now also been invigorated. Thus, he now "remembers" his own past and specifically his past love relationship with his heart and mind, arms and legs, lips and eyes, in other words, with his whole being:

Сердце, ум,
Руки, ноги,
Губы, глаза,
Все существо
Закричит:
"Аще забуду Тебя?"

At the same time the entire ambiance of the past overwhelms the poet. He feels the palpability of the seemingly remote, yet recent prerevolutionary past. In order to communicate its "real-ness" to his reader and to evoke the feeling of nostalgia, he alludes to the reference book "Ves' Peterburg" ("All Petersburg") for 1913, listing indiscriminately the items of its content:8

1913 plays a special role in the Russian cultural conscience. Kuzmin, as many other of his contemporaries, perceived it as the end of one epoch and beginning of new, marked by wars, revolutions and the decline of Russian culture. Axsanova in her "Poéma bez geroja" presents 1913 as a symbolic focus of her and Russia's past, calling this year the "real" beginning of the twentieth century: "А по набережной легендарной / Приближался не календарный - / Настоящий Двадцатый век."
Then follows a listing of shops, enterprises, as well as products and articles which they sold or produced and which now, after the revolution, became either a rarity or things of the past:

Торговые дома,
Оптовые, особенно:
Кожевенные, щорные,
Рыбные, колбасные,
Мануфактурные, писчебумажные,
Кондитерские, хлебопекарни, -
Какое-то библейское изобилие, -
Где это?
Мучная биржа,
Сало, лес, веревки, ворвань.
Еще, еще поддать

Here the catalogue creates a "biblical abundance" which for the poet translates into the richness of sensory stimuli and tactile experience. The opulence of the past is implicitly contrasted to the material and hence sensual destitution of the present. The author is aware of the overwhelming effect of such catalogues of trivial items on the reader, but to overwhelm is precisely the effect he

9D. Segal in his "Literatura kak vtoričnaja modelirujuščaja sistema" points to the semiotic role of food and the sense of taste in post-revolutionary culture in Russia. This poem definitely belongs to the category Segal has in mind.
aims for ("ešče poddat'"," do konca rasterzav.") Therefore, he concludes the poem with yet another catalogue of fragments of Russian life and nature. An impression is created that these fragments are "taken" from some generic text of Russian cultural tradition, one to which Puškin, Leskov, Turgenev, Tolstoj, and others, including Kuzmin himself\textsuperscript{10}, have contributed:

\begin{verbatim}
Кончит вдруг лирически
Обрывками русского быта
И русской природы:
Яблочные сады, шубка, луга,
Пчелиник, серые широкие глаза,
Отенёль, санки, отцовский дом,
Березовые рощи, да покосы кругом
\end{verbatim}

The word "obryvki" used here deserves special attention. A derivative of the verb "obryvat'/oborvat'" - to abruptly and almost forcefully end - it replaces the more neutral word "otryvki," thus placing emphasis on the discontinuous nature of the present in relation to the past. For the poet, the essence of the past is in the limitless variety of manifestations of private life which, in contrast, the post-revolutionary present lacks. However, the past cannot be completely obliterated. As long as the poet lives, he can "collect" the fragments of this past as they are recorded in reference books and in cultural memory of the nation and enliven them with the power of his imagination.

\textsuperscript{10}For example, with his cycle "Russkij raj."

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The poem concludes with the author's comparing the listing technique which "assembling beads on a string" ("Kak busy nanizat' na nit'"). He playfully admits that it had an unexpectedly intoxicating effect of novelty on him:

Но вышло все совсем не так -
И сам попался я вопрос,
И яд мне показался нов
Моих же выдумок и слов

He also remarks that in the process of writing he lost control over the material, and that therefore, he is a bad poet. This statement is a playful self-mockery intended to be self-praise. Therefore it is also an acknowledgement of the effectiveness of the cataloguing technique:

А песенка живет отдельно,
И, верно, плохой поэт,
Коль со стихами сладу нет

All in all, the poem illustrates that Kuzmin's extensive usage of catalogues is connected with the cultural nature of his poetic material. The artist of the Kuzminian type resorts to memory which, like a cultural archive, a library, or museum, indiscriminately stores and preserves cultural data. Textbooks and directories, like those from which the poet reads in this poem, may function as micro-storages of material, which the poet can reactivate and endow with live. It is important to note here that for Kuzmin, dictionaries and encyclopedias had a special appeal, particularly as artistic material. His
fascination with *orbis pictus*, encyclopedias in pictures commonly used in the 18th century, and particularly that by the Prussian artist Chodowiecki (1726-1801) is well known. Presumably, he appreciated the combination of the "all-encompassing" ambition of such encyclopedias with their simple, naive and amusing qualities. In many ways, this was his own ideal of art. Encyclopedias and dictionaries lack hierarchy (they use an indiscriminate alphabetical order) and the interdependence of their elements (each word is defined through a combination of others) resonates with the characteristics of Kuzmin's own aesthetics. A perfect metaphor for a compact storage of data, it underlines the combinatory, manipulative, "re-organizing" aspect of Kuzmin's model of creativity.\(^\text{11}\)

The method of textual duality was formulated by Kuzmin in his Introduction to the novel *Čudesnaja žizn' Iosifa Bal'zamo, grafa Kaliostro* (1919) where he wrote:

Но важно то место, которое занимают избранные герои в общей эволюции, в общем строительстве Божьего мира, а внешняя пестрая смена картин и событий нужна лишь как занимательная оболочка, которую всегда может заменить воображение, младшая сестра ясновидения\(^\text{12}\).

\(^{11}\)In the section of "Gofmanovskij lesok" from the poem "Lesok" there is an episode when Faust reads out loud from an encyclopedical dictionary. Shortly after Mephistopheles appears, which accentuates the hypnotizing, magic effect of such reading of listings.

\(^{12}\)Proza VIII, 9
Thus, the "surface" level of the novel is said to be constructed as a kaleidoscopic sequence of entertaining pictures, while the ultimate purpose of the work is to establish a pattern of overall spiritual evolution.

This novel was conceived by Kuzmin as the first in a series of biographies of historic and cultural personalities, to be entitled Novyj Plutarx. Each of these biographies, therefore, was meant to serve as a variant of one single path of the spirit ("mnogoobraznye puti Duxa, veduščie k odnoj celi"). All in all Kuzmin planned to portray lives of about forty personalities, including, as reported by Bogomolov and Malmstad, the following personalities:

Александр Македонский, Шекспир, Декарт, Вергилий, Седенберг, Моцарт, Гофман, Ходовецкий, Глюк, Суворов, Фридрих (очевидно, Фридрих Великий"), Павел И, Сомов, Дебюси, Андатоль Франс, Судейкин, Мусоргский, Боровиковский, Ван Гог, Бальзак, Верлен, Пушкин, Гете, мадам Гюдон, Якоб Беме, Клингер, Микеланджело, Боттичелли, Марко Поло, Лесков, Палестрина, Калло, Клингер, Вебер, Данте, Кавальканти, актриса Рашель 13

The plan thus involved "celaja verenica žiznej," to use a phrase from Kuzmin's long poem "Lesok," where it, in turn, refers to the title of a novel by Ju. Jurkun. "Listing," as already discussed, is essential to the principle of fragmentariness.

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13As quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1996), 183
Kuzmin's principle of textual duality in his view, was taken from life itself. The essence of one's existence, its meaning, according to Kuzmin, are not immediately revealed, but concealed behind a kaleidoscope of variagated, disjointed events, episodes and faces. The determining of the invariant of life behind fleeting impressions, the establishing of its invisible pattern constitute, according to the writer, the journey of a valid life. The lives of famous personalities in Novyi Plutarx were accordingly planned by Kuzmin as quests of recognition of such patterns. What constitutes the drama of Cagliostro's life in the only completed novel of the series, is that he fails to identify the pattern of his life in its totality as a "variant" of a Divine path. His stepping off the track destined for him, and his ultimate vanishing correspond to his moral decline, as well as his social rejection.

A life, in Kuzmin's view, is a text: a person relates to his/her existence as to a book. As a reader must reconstruct the underlying network of semantic interrelations in a text in order to establish its principle, so does the person reading his/her "life-text" struggles to arrange its "segments" in some coherent

14Kuzmin definitely begun his work on the second novel of the series, but we do not know whether he finished it or not.
sequence in order to discern its essence. Such is, of course, Kuzmin's attitude to his own life: it is "perceptionalist." The poet decodes, like a reader, the scroll unfolding before him. His poem "Snova čist peredo mnoju pervyj list" of the cycle "Radostnyj putnik" is particularly revealing of such a notion and therefore, I will allow myself to quote it in its entirety:

Снова чист передо мною первый лист;
Снова солнца свет лучист и золотист;

Позабыта мной прочтенная глава,
Неизвестная заманчиво-нова

Кто собрался в путь, в гостинице не будь!
Кто проснулся, тот забудь видений муть!

Высоко горит рассветная звезда,
Что прошло, то не вернется никогда

Веселей глази, напрасных слез не лей,
Средь полей, между высоких тополей

Нам дорога наша видится ясна:
После ночи - утро, после зим - весна

A устав, среди зеленых сядем трав,
В книге старой прочитав остаток глав

Ты читатель своей жизни, не плюй,
Неизвестен тебе повести конец

The book of life before the persona is always opened on the "first" page of today. Whatever is written on previous pages has already been read and, therefore, has become the past; that, which lies ahead, the future,

\[15\text{On this see Ronen (1993)}\]
escapes him. Therefore, reading is the same as living, and living is the same as reading. The hero's days, and weeks, and months, and years are continuously being turned over, like pages of a life-long book, which will, however, end. Even a poet who renders his life for others, can only re-write that which he himself reads. This view of the life-text supplies the key for a frequent motif: the poet's losing control over his poetic material. According to Kuzmin's logic, he might intend a particular course for his work, but the book of his life, which he reads and rereads, could unexpectedly open on a different page and confuse his plans.

It is precisely those unexpected turns however that Kuzmin values as the most positive moments in the creative process, even when he mocks the discrepancies between his plans and the "realized" version of the text as his insufficient mastery. This he does in the poem "A éto xuliganskaja, skazala:" where we find the line: "I verno ploxovat poët, / Kol' so stixami sladu net." Or else, they are playfully explained as him not being in love and,

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16 Therefore, no one can really be a writer in the sense of "creator," or demiurge. The role of an author is only secondary: he is a copyist, who re-arranges and combines that which already exists. This notion agrees, on one hand, with Kuzmin's "humble" view of a poet as a "craftsman," and on the other, with his proclivity to use "cultural" material - that which already has been created by someone else.
therefore, lacking inspiration, as in the conclusion of "Forel' razbivaet led:"

А знаете? Ведь я хотел сначала
Двенадцать месяцев изобразить
И каждому придумать назначенье
В кругу занятий легких и влюбленных
А вот что получилось! Видно, я
И не влюблен, да и стиховал
Толпой нахлынули воспоминанья,
Отрывки из прочитанных романов,
Покойники смешались с живыми,
И так все перепуталось, что я
И сам не рад, что все это затеял
Двенадцать месяцев я сохранил
И приблизительную дал погоду.
И то не плохо

In the light of the principle of a universal invariant, the theme of the poet creating a text different from the one intended, in Kuzmin's work acquires an additional dimension. Because each of his texts is only a variant of THE TEXT, it becomes irrelevant what exactly the actualization is: whether it is one or another among the multitude of possibilities. What also agrees with such a conception is that, as Bogomolov notes, Kuzmin tried to publish almost everything he wrote, regardless of quality - at least during the early and mid 1910's.17 G.Ivanov remembers that to his question about whether a particular poem should be included in a book or not, Kuzmin answered: "Počemu že ne vključat'? Začem že togda pisali? Esli

17Bogomolov (1995), 38-40
The "logic" behind such an attitude could have been the following: because all his texts are related to THE TEXT, they are equal in essence. It is also the totality of the artist's creations through which the artist's vision can best be understood.

The notion of the poet's life-text acquires additional meaning when we recall that Kuzmin regularly kept his diary for approximately a quarter of a century. His diary entries amount to eighteen volumes. Arguably, his diary was the main text of Kuzmin's life. As his own life unfolded before the poet, he literally transformed it into a literary text. The routine process of rendering his thoughts, feelings and impressions, major events and minor happenings of his daily life in the form of diary entries, must have been Kuzmin's way of searching for the essence of his existence, of striving to recognize behind the external patchwork some inner design. But if in the process of writing the diary-keeper recognizes a pattern, if he finds the key to the riddle of his own existence, to his reader he conveys not the solution, but only another puzzle in the

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18Ivanov (1994), III, 104-105. It would be wrong to completely disregard personal motivations such as vanity and the desire to make money. Bogomolov is correct in considering them, but given the fact that in some other, even more pressing circumstances, Kuzmin refused to compromise his beliefs, there must have been other reasons of aesthetic nature behind his attitude.
form of a fragmentary text. Here then we could once more discern the laws of life and the laws of art.

Kuzmin must have thought that the readers of his diary would discern both the essence of the poet and the spirit of the epoch which he represented behind the episodes, conversations, impressions and thoughts recorded by him. The conviction that his diaries and private letters some day would become a major document of his epoch, is conveyed in his letter of 1907, where he writes:

В промежутках читали Брюсова и письма Пушкина. Когда-нибудь и наши письма и дневники будут иметь такую же незабываемую свежесть и жизненность, как всё живое.

The diary abstracts which have been published, as well as the testimonies of scholars who have read the diary in its entirety, indicate that it is, indeed, such a powerful document which may overturn many of our traditional conceptions about the culture of the Silver and "post-Silver" Age.

In many ways, Kuzmin's type of diary is comparable with Rozanov's writings in the genre of "fallen leaves," which represent unsystematic, spontaneous recordings of the author's thoughts, emotions and sensations at the moment of their being formed, before retrospective analysis and

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19 As quoted in Bogomolov (1995), 305

20 Kuzmin's diary has been prepared for publication by Bogomolov and Šumixin.
reflection take place. Unpolished and sometimes incomplete, they resemble fragments of manuscripts, rather than finished works prepared for publication. The stylistic resemblance of Kuzmin's writings with those of Rozanov is particularly noticeable in his "Češuja v nevode" which constitutes a serious of quotations from books that Kuzmin read and his thoughts on them.\textsuperscript{21}

The question of similarities between Kuzmin's and Rozanov's writings awaits its full examination. From Kuzmin's essays, we know how highly he valued the controversial writer, whom he knew personally.\textsuperscript{22} They probably met through Gollerbax, a prominent literary critic who appreciated both Rozanov and Kuzmin. In his biography of Rozanov, Gollerbax reports that during the later period of his life, when Rozanov was rejected by most people of his circle, few writers visited him. Kuzmin is said to have been among those visitors. Gollerbax also pointed to some inner similarities between the works of the Emotionalists – of whom Kuzmin was the leader – and

\textsuperscript{21}In the commentaries to his recent publication of this work Bogomolov also noted its kinship with the style of Rozanov's texts. See Bogomolov (1990a)

\textsuperscript{22}Kuzmin wrote, for example in his essay "Razdum'ja i nedoumenija Petra Otael'nika: " Как остаются в тени, а если и оцениваются, то вовсе не за все то, за что достойны, такие крупные писатели, как В Розанов и Алексей Ремизов?" Kuzmin (1989), 389
Rozanov. Rozanov's influence on Kuzmin's writings serves as yet another illustration of the openness of his talent.

Kuzmin used diary techniques in his fiction also. I will briefly touch upon one story where they are used, since it illustrates how much significance Kuzmin assigned to this genre of fragmentary narrative. In "Podzemnye ruč'i," the heroine's diary is stylized in the Rozanovian manner. It is inserted inside a "regular," sequential narrative and serves as a central constituent in the story's composition. The fabula of the story is simple. A man named Strukov accidentally meets a young woman in the street, who impresses him by her extraordinary calmness, apparently emanating from some inner wisdom. A friend of Strukov invites him to look at the books which his acquaintance is selling due to her difficult circumstances: her husband was wrongfully accused and, as she was told, executed. In the owner of the books, Strukov immediately recognizes the woman he recently met in the street. While looking through her books, he finds her diary and secretly reads it.

In that diary the patchwork of thoughts, observations and literary quotations arranged in semantic juxtaposition to each other, projects an underlying dynamic pattern, which corresponds to the heroine's spiritual journey. Because the diary presented in the story is recorded from
Strukov's memory, it bears the imprint of his perception of the woman as well:

In the final dialogue between the man and the woman in the story, she reveals how the process of writing the diary helped her to recognize the principle which makes life meaningful and to accept life in all its manifestations. Thus, it can be said that, in Kuzmin's view, writing a text of your own life, rendering its disconnected remnants in a sequence, helps one to discern its essence.

In order to illustrate the diversity and the disconnected nature of the fragments, I will quote three of them, taken in the actual sequence they have in the story.

\[\text{Proza IX, 306}\]
The themes, the structure and the stylistics of these fragments are so typically Kuzminian, that they could have been taken from his "real" diary. It is interesting to note, how, with subtle humor and irony, Kuzmin includes his own persona in the woman's diary. By switching the name and the patronymic, "such a Russian" man mentioned in the last fragment, turns into "Mixail Alekseevič." Given that Berlin was a common émigré locale in Kuzmin's writings, and that he thought of the possibility of leaving Russia, "Aleksej Mixajlovič" could refer to the Kuzmin of a possible, but not realized scenario of his life. If this supposition is correct, then the fragment reflects Kuzmin's own uncertainty about whether to emigrate or not at the time when this question was vital for the Russian intelligentsia. On one hand, he thought of himself as too Russian to leave, on the other, he considered "rodina" to mean only "language, customs, climate and landscape." Kuzmin, it seems, tangibly sensed the shadows which such conjectural biographies cast over his real one. The feeling that often arises from Kuzmin's works is that even though so many other lives might have been, only the life that we are given, has ontological status. This acute awareness of life's inevitable singularity, results in a
deep sense of appreciation for it and tenderness, which Kuzmin's works emanate.

In Kuzmin's works the notion of *essence* is often expressed through the metaphor of line, as well as related metaphors like pattern, design, scheme. A line is simple and clear. It reflects the dynamics of a process and indicates the way in which the constituents of an object are linked together. It may serve as a symbol of the invariant upon which a whole multitude of entities is projected. The use of a graph to represent the essence of a thing and the invariant of some multitude is not unique for Kuzmin. For example, Ejzenštejn's interpretation of the line in his theoretical writings on montage technique, is very similar. M. Jampolskij in his book on intertextuality in cinematography, entitled "Pamjat' Tiresija" defines it by the term "pangraphism." He writes:

Because Kuzmin was always attuned to new artistic developments and because his interest in cinematography was so acute, it seems plausible that he was familiar with Ejzenštejn's conceptions.

24Jampolskij (1993), 378
Kuzmin's belief that a complex meaning can be represented through a simple line, also explains his particular attraction to graphic art, which is distinguished (from other visual arts) by its intrinsic ability to depict the essence of what it portrays. Jampolskij, who links Ejzenštejn's concept of pangraphism to a Platonic tradition, points to the importance which graphic art had during the Renaissance. Jampolskij illustrates his notion by citing a fragment from the writings of Renaissance artist Vasari (1511-1574). Since it is relevant here, I would also like to quote it; it clarifies Kuzmin's interest in graphic art within the framework of his overall aesthetics:

The notion that graphic art best relates a multitude of manifestations to a singular design was shared by

25 As quoted in Jampolskij (1993), 379
Kuzmin. In fact, his notion of "beautiful clarity," as expressed in his treatise "O prekrasnoj jasnosti," is better understood if considered in the light of such a conception of art. By "beautiful clarity" Kuzmin meant not the exterior form a work of art, neither, of course, its "content," but rather its invisible design, its inner graph. In Kuzmin's view, the artist's vision, his intuitive perception of the inner structure of things, will always leave an imprint on his work, communicating a sense of beautiful clarity, however "dark" or "unclear" the areas of existence it might touch upon.26

It is well known, that one of Kuzmin's favorite artists was an 18th century German graphic artist and engraver by the name of Daniel Nikolaus Chodowiecki who specialized in drawings depicting German life of his time. Kuzmin was also fond of Beardsley's drawings and the pictures of both these artists are frequently found in Kuzmin's writings. There is no doubt that Kuzmin's interest in graphic art was stimulated by the "World of Art" group. In the early years of his writing career, Kuzmin was close to several of the group's artists and frequently participated in their aesthetic discussions. G.Šmakov has suggested that Kuzmin's overall artistic

26This notion explains why the works of authors who dealt with "dark" sides of human existence (like Hoffmann) were considered examples of beautiful clarity by Kuzmin.
vision is rooted in the aesthetics of the "World of Art" movement. Among other things, their aesthetic program emphasized the revival of graphic arts. The drawings and engravings of the group's members, frequently executed as stylizations in the artistic manner of bygone epochs (particularly the 18th century), were well known at the time. The members of the group frequently worked as book illustrators. Several of Kuzmin's publications, too, were accompanied by remarkable drawings by "miriskussniki" or their followers, such as Dobuzinkij, Somov, Sudejkin and Milaševskij. Kuzmin was fond of their notion of synthesis and parallelism in visual, musical and poetic "lines" of art. He also cooperated with several artists in theater productions. Kuzmin himself, as already noted, wrote a many cross-media works.

4.2 THE RESURRECTING FUNCTION OF ART: DEAUTOMATIZATION AS RECOGNITION

Structuring literary material along a linear principle had a particular appeal for Kuzmin who wrote in his poem "Xodoveckij:" "Naverno, nežnyj Xodoveckij / Graviroval moi mečty." The motif of the graph is also common in Kuzmin's writings. Let us, for example, look at some poems from the
cycle "Stixi ob iskusstve" which are saturated with images related to the paradigm "design" and often interwoven with Kuzmin's pivotal theme - that of art as resurrection. Already the first poem of the cycle introduces the themes of oblique analogies, "wild" parables projected on dynamic parabolas (with Russian "parabola" meaning both), as well as the invariable design which emerges on the intersection of dynamic and fluid entities:

Косые соответствия
В пространство бросить
Зеркальных сфер,-
Безумные параболы,
Звёзда, взывают
Побег стеблей

Зодиакальным пламенем
Поля пылают,
Кипит эфир,
Но все пересечения
Чертеж выводят
Недвижных букв

Имени твоего!

In the next poem of the cycle entitled "Kak девушки о ženixax mečtajut," the concept of the inner design is expressed through the image of a flying flock of cranes which, in spite of constant substitutions maintains a consistent wedge-like design: "O, žuravlej tainstvennaja staja! / živyx poletov strojnyj pereboj."27 Worth noting is

27This image refers to the fact, that while flying in the shape of a wedge, cranes regularly exchange places in order to equally distribute the hardship of air friction.
the importance of the dichotomy (and unity of) "vital - orderly" with which Kuzmin often defines the essence of art. Vital is associated with the external diversity, multitude and dynamics, orderly with the consistency and the invariability of the inner design.

The third poem of the cycle, "Nevnjaten smysl tvoix velenij" is constructed around the poet's effort to detect the design (essence) of another artist's work - that of Benozzi Gozzoli's (1420-1497) fresco the "Journey of the Magi to Bethlehem." In "Legče plameni, moloka nežnej," the motif of an essential pattern on which variants are projected is implicitly suggested through the dichotomy of skeleton/flesh, which will be further developed in the poem "Serym tjanutsja teni roem." In that last poem the poet is visited by a swarm of shadows whom he must resurrect to life in art. Because their "design" is preserved in the configuration of their skeletons, the poet can "build" on their bones, donating his own flesh, blood and heart.

28 "Восхождение! Возникает кость, / А кровь все поет глубе и глушье"

29 Similar ideas were expressed by other artists of that time. Ежценштейн's fascination with skeletons which he, too, related to essence of things, is well known. M.Vološin, already in 1904 wrote an article entitled "Skelet živopisi." Jampolskij in his book "Pamjat' Tiresija" links Ежценштейн's conception of skeleton as graphic representation of a principle, with the anthroposophical ideas and R.Stein's teachings which were popular in Russia at that time.

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The answer to these questions is: the poet can and will do that. In the poem "V raskosyj blek zerkal zabrosiv seti" of the same cycle, the poet attempts to distinguish the pattern of something he sees unclearly ("Sležu uzor edva zametnoj zybi"). Once he has grasped it, the outline of a youth begins to appear, and the poet's imagination then completes the "sketch" as it were: "Kak krov' sočitsja pod celebnoj vatoj, / Jasneet otrok na granitnoj glybe... // živi, Nedvižnyj!" His task of recreating requires what one may call a poetic X-ray procedure. The poet resurrects because his vision penetrates into the essence of things.30

In the poem "Iskusstvo," the poet's task is clearly presented as that of revival. There, he must restore the wilted vine (which the poet calls a disintegrated branch of life) using his magic powers. One of the reasons why the poet can fulfill this task is that the branch's "skeleton" has survived destruction.

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30In his "Razdum'ja i nedoumen'ja Petra Otšel'nika" Kuzmin writes about the artist's ability to penetrate the essence: "Ясновидящие видят не телесным взглядом, а внутренним зрением, почему запечатанное письмо, которое должно быть прочитано, кладется им под сердце, а не держится перед глазами "Таково и зрение художника " Kuzmin (1989), 386
In three other poems of the cycle, namely "Muza," "V raskosyj blesk zerkal zabrosiv seti" and "Polja, pololščica, poli," a poetic act is compared with casting a net: "V gluxie vody brosiv nevod," "V raskosyj blesk zerkal zabrosiv seti," "I brodit, i vodit serebrjanym brednem." This image related to the image of the "pattern" and both of them to selecting or differentiating between the essential and the non-essential. The essential and, therefore, the vital will stay in the net, the non-

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31In "Forel' razbivat led" the resurrecting process is depicted in similar terms. When the perished brother reunites with his twin-brother, his sudden reincarnation (the appearance of flesh and the warming up of his blood) is compared with the "condensing" of a fabric that has grown flimsy, but has preserved the woven design:

-Ты дышишь? Ты живешь? Не призрак ты?
-я первенец зеленой пустоты

- я слышу сердца стук, тёплее кровь
- Не умерли, кого зовет любовь

-Румяней щеки, исчезает плен
-Таинственный свершается обмен

-Что первым обновленный взгляд найдет? -
-Форель, я вижу, разбивает лед -

-На руку обопрый Попробуй встань
- Плотнеет выветривающаяся ткань.
essential which is associated with death, will go down the bottom of the well: "Vse, čto ot smerti, ljak na dno..." ("Iskusstvo").

In order to detect the principle of something, the poet (anyone) must sometimes de-compose and analyse. That is exactly what Kuzmin does in his works. In the context of textual reality, this implies dismembering and fragmentation; in a corporeal context - the dismemberment of an autopsy. In the poem "Muza," the Muse with a net searches for Orpheus' head. In the poem "Polja, pololščica, poli" the goddess Isida looks for the parts of the body of her dismembered brother-husband Osiris, so that she can "reassemble" them and therefore, resurrect his beloved. The poet implicitly compares his own poetic task with Isida's procedure:

В раздробленъ умираеет,
Целым тело оживает.
Как Иззда, ночью бродим,
По частям его находим,
Опляем, омываем,
Сердце новое влагаем

In the long poem "Lazar'" which will be discussed in chapter 5, the voluntary death of the protagonist and the subsequent disintegration of his body, may be viewed both as an act of self-sacrifice and self-cognition. Among many of Kuzmin's works incorporating the motif of dismemberment, the short story "Necajannyj proviant" is particularly
interesting. Here a woman's murder of her husband and her subsequent dissection of his body apparently have motives other than the official explanation of insanity caused by jealousy. The woman had committed the act "out of love" ("iz ljubvi") and strove to resolve the question whether such a murder made her a "monster," or not. If it was indeed meant to be an act of love, it could also be an act of cognition, an unfortunate attempt of a confused mind and soul to get to the "essence" and therefore, the skeleton, of the man she loved. In Kuzmin's story a clear answer is not given, but the cognition theory is certainly a possibility.

The ability to differentiate things, to recognize their essence and reconstruct them, is in Kuzmin's poetic universe often attributed to magic powers. Hence, elsewhere, the creative process is depicted in terms of alchemy, as for example, in the poems "Iskusstvo" and "Forel' razbivaet led." Since alchemy centers on overcoming the opposition of the material and the spiritual and seeks to fuse all "appearances" in order to obtain the essence of all things, gold, so art, in Kuzmin's view, needs to look beyond the non-essential, envisioning the core of things. Kuzmin frequently compares poetry with

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32On artistic creation as an act of alchemy in Kuzmin's works see Bogomolov's article "Iz kommentarija k stixam dvadcatykh godov" in Bogomolov (1995)
clairvoyance, particularly at the time when he propagates the return of art to its symbolic and emotional origins: "Poëzija - vskrytie tajny i poslednjaja plenitel'nost', čarovnica i proročica." It is important, however, to keep in mind that Kuzmin's conception of the artist is not teurgic, like that of the Symbolists and Romantics. A person's artistic faculty is, of course, of a divine nature, but so is everything else in a human being, including the emotional and sensual aspects. Clairvoyance, in Kuzmin's view, has more to do with the artist's ability to perceive reality in structural terms, with his unique vision, which inevitably is transformed into his individual style.

It is noteworthy in this context that the word "style" ("stil'") has retained its graphic association. The word "počerk," often used by Kuzmin in his writings, also reveals the relation of an artistic style to a "line." Pasternak expressed such connections in the story "Appelesova čerta," based on a legend about a famous artist who once drew a simple line as a self-signature intended to represent the totality of his art. Given Pasternak's similar predilection for the metonymic principle, such "Kuzminian" imagery in his work is not surprising. The two writers also shared a fondness for the concept of, what may be

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33-uslovnosti, 170

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called, invisible "bridges," which link seemingly unrelated happenings, episodes and people. Pasternak wrote a story about such "bridges" entitled "Vozdušnye puti" which he dedicated to Kuzmin, presumably because he perceived the inner kinship of their aesthetics. Both Kuzmin and Pasternak brought out "essences" in the process of weaving their textual "fabric" by interconnecting its disjointed constituents.

With Kuzmin's fragmentary structures growing more pronounced, the shape of his textual fragments change too: they become shorter, more compact, and saturated. By incorporating more layers of cultural material, they turn into semantically polyvalent units. With this intensified intricacy of fragments, Kuzmin's texts become more and more difficult to decode. In order to make linking of such texts possible, one must reactivate subtexts enfolded in the fragment and then make the proper selection. A symbol,

34In his essay "Govorjašcie," when praising Pasternak, Kuzmin cites a fragment from his "Detstvo Ljuvers." This fragment describes how life's inner forces shape human existence, in a language reminiscent of Kuzmin's: "Мало кто знает и слышит то, что зиждется, льется и шьет его Жизнь посвящает очень немногих в то, что она делает с ними Она слишком любит это дело и за работой разговаривает разве с теми только, кто желает её успеха и любит её верстак Помочь ей не властен никто, помещать может всякий" Another fragment from Pasternak's "Detstvo Ljuvers" which Kuzmin singles out in his review, is characterized by a double-level construction, also typical of Kuzmin's own writings. Such a construction consists of a sequence of pictures and scenes placed in the foreground of the story, and a narrative "fabula" which arises on their background: "фабула развивается естественно, но еле заметно, больше предполагается за рядом острых и мелких (как впечатления близоруких людей) картин и сцен, прерываемых философскими размышлениями автора" Kuzmin (1998), 407
motif, topos, character type, may, for example, point to a particular cultural tradition, furnishing the text with a certain framework. Or, the process of substitution can work in reverse order: the mere mention of an epoch or an artist's name may evoke a concrete work, a situation, a character that contributes to solving the rebus of the text.

Kuzmin's long poem "Progulki Gulja" (1924) may serve as an example of the highly intricate fragmented structures characterized above and so very typical of his later works. It also illustrates Kuzmin's continuing insistence on art's relevance to life, despite his increasing reliance on exclusive and esoteric cultural material. It is a mixed media piece (verbal-musical), with the literary plane consisting of both prose and poetry. At the same time, it is also a play meant for stage performance. Kuzmin characterized it as "semi-lyrics, semi-drama" and he alternately called it a "play," "drama," "associative long poem" ("associativnaja poéma"), and "theatrical-musical suite in fifteen episodes." In his commentaries to this work, Kuzmin called it a musical suite for theater in 15 episodes. The similarity of this work with cinematographic montage also suggests the term "cinematographic drama."35

35 See Malmstad (1977), 273
36 Timofeev in his introduction ("Teatr nezdešnix večerov") to the collection of Kuzmin's plays published in 1994 uses this term.
As already stated, Kuzmin had a marked interest in cinema. It began already in the 1910's and was particularly strong in the 1920's. It was primarily stimulated by the films of German expressionists and the poem "Progulki Gulja" clearly reflects this interest.\(^\text{37}\)

"Progulki Gulja" is structured around the search and the discovery of the "organizing principle" in life which the author here defines thus:

The poetic form ("vnešnee oformlenie") used to carry the theme of discovering the inner structure of life is a succession of lyrical fragments, also referred to as episodes and, as the title states, "strolls." The term "stroll" for Kuzmin has the meaning of a short, casual journey, a leaving behind of accustomed surroundings in order to gain a fresh, deautomatizing perspective. "Strolls" is also associated with a state of relaxation: in

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\(^{37}\)For Kuzmin's interest in cinematography, see Ratgauz (1992)

\(^{38}\)Sobranie stixov, III, 735

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Kuzmin's universe, the most important "discoveries" are casual and unintentional. In the plan for the poem, Kuzmin points out that elemental emotions, especially love, have become so trite in our aging culture that "making them strange" and differentiating is imperative. Specifically, it is love as a social phenomenon, and love as physical passion that should be distinguished from love as an individual, inspirational and organizing principle of life. This kind of love, in Kuzmin's mind, is inevitably linked with the notion of self-sacrifice. Also the distinction between "real" life and art, as well as genealogical continuity and immortality achieved through art have become blurred in our aged culture. This distinction needs to be reinforced once more.

The main character of the poem is called Gul'; his name derives from the English Hull, a character from Fritz Lang's film "Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler" (1922). His role was played by Paul Richter who made a great impression on Kuzmin, mainly because of his resemblance to a young man (Lev Rakov), with whom Kuzmin was infatuated at the time. The name Gul' has various other associations, which are activated in the poem. For example, "guli" is a common way of calling a pigeon and it also evokes associations to the verb "gul'jat" - to stroll.
In the beginning of the poem we find Gul' in the comfortable and "familiar" atmosphere of aestheticism and surrounded by congenial friends. However, his life is unconscious and lacking in an awareness of a meaningful inner structure. Suddenly Gul' hears his inner voice urging him to take a journey, or "stroll." As a result of heeding this voice, Gul' finds himself (and other characters) in a variety of dissimilar and "strange" circumstances. On the textual level, they represent dissimilar and disconnected fragments, most of which are "culturally" framed. By juxtaposing these episodes Gul' separates the essential from the non-essential, differentiates several concepts and finds the overall invisible structure that holds them together.

As is noted in Kuzmin's plan for the poem, these fragments are related to each other associatively and not linked on the causal-temporal level. They are constructed as polyvalent hieroglyphs, which incorporate sensuous, emotional and intellectual elements. Their external disparity and disjointed sequentiality are juxtaposed to a coherent inner pattern which must be established by the reader. To establish it, means to solve the puzzle of the "story," which entails reconstructing the underlying network of semantic interrelationships.
The images within a fragment are often conjoined on the basis of their secondary components, with one image associatively leading to another. I will illustrate such a connection with the first and most transparent fragment, where additional complicating meanings have not yet accumulated:


The associative "logic" here is the following: Psyche flies - hence pigeons; pigeons are blue - hence the sky; the sky is blue - hence spring; Psyche flies up, hence cars and cabmen go faster. Sometimes the transition from one fragment to the next, has a similar associative motivation. For instance: the sky is blue (1) - the scene in a fabric store with two women looking at blue material (2); mentioning of a heroine's son in the dialogue between two ladies (10) - the conversation of a son with his mother (11). This, of course, is the most apparent, outward level of association. As an example of a more hidden link, let us look at fragment 10, which incorporates three segments of separate dialogues, and therefore, duplicates the overall montage composition of the poem. The examination of this one fragment can illustrate how the montage principle works in the poem as a whole without resorting to
a detailed analysis which lies beyond the scope of this dissertation. But even more importantly, this fragment exemplifies the differentiation of the concept of immortality: as that achieved through art as opposed to genealogical continuity. I will quote part 10 of "Progulki Gul'ja."

Путешествие волхвов" Беноццо Гоццоли
Пьльный день Флоренции Прохлада дворца Проходят, останавливаясь по очереди
а) 3 молодых человека
1-ый После каждого фокс-трота я глупею на 10% факт
2-ой Попробуй глупеть в другую сторону Посещая лекции политэкономии
1-ый (указывая на фрески) Нет, ты посмотри, до чего люди были идиотами Выдумывать такие костюмы Хороша была бы современная публика в кафе в таком маскараде Все-таки прогресс и культура - великое дело
в) Два пожилых человека
1-ый Я едва устрою уютный дом, мне уже 65 лет
2-ой Разве к это старость?
1-ый Все-таки Но я забочусь о внучках Дети - залог будущего
2-ой Прелестный мальчик ваш Лазарь И до чого теперь уже на вас похож Не на отца, а на дедушку Так же закладывает руки за спину, морщит нос Уморительно Прямо вы в миниатюре Не ребенок, а обезьянка, право, обезьянка
1-ый И умен, если бы вы знали Намедни говорил мне делушка у меня есть две лиры .. (проходят)
c) Дама и подруга
Дама (торопливо), Вот этот, смотри, второй ряд Третий слева, вылитый он
Подруга Действительно, похож я видела портрет потомка Медечи Оказывается, и теперь еще есть потомки Это обязывает, конечно, носить такую фамилию Приятный молодой человек, но ничего особенного. Без подписи я бы не обратила внимание
Дама Богат?
Подр Какое? Он продает фамильный музей, где одни подставки для факселов. У нас бы это называлось ломом
Дама Для меня Медечи всегда такие, какими их изобразил Ботичели Это бессмертно
Подр Но это обаяние художника Это не проверено
Дама Что до того? Это живет как Беатриче и будет жить, а мы с вами умрем
These dialogues (conversations) take place within groups of people, who stop to observe Benozzo Gozzoli's fresco the "Journey of the Magi to Bethlehem" (1459) in the chapel of Palazzo Ricardi in Florence. Their topics seem to differ greatly, but at the same time there is an underlying idea that unites them all. The first three young men make ridiculing remarks about the old-fashioned costumes of the people on the fresco and praise the progress and culture which, to their mind, manifest themselves in such a convenient commodity as modern suits. In the second dialogue two older men speak of old age and their offsprings as a pledge of the future. They talk affectionately of a little grandson named Lazar', whose resemblance to his grandfather is startling. In the third dialogue two women discuss Medici's living descendant, whom one of them describes as a common young man, his famous name being his only commodity. For the other woman, as she notes, the ancestor of the current Medici will forever remain as portrayed on Boticcelli's immortal paintings. The first woman's argument that her son will ensure her

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39There is certainly an ironic contrast between three wise men of the fresco and three young fools who look at the fresco.
posterity, is not accepted by the second woman. Here the fragment ends.

These three conversations are externally linked by the locale where they take place, as well as the object that acts as catalyst for them: they are directly or indirectly stimulated by the "Journey of the Magi to Bethlehem" by Benozzo Gozzoli. The framework which holds them together then contains a semantic complex that includes Christ's birth, pledge of eternal life, the guiding star of Bethlehem, as well as other elements shaped in a particular configuration by the genius of the artist. Let us try to arrange the segments of conversation in a coherent sequence. The first segment advances the conception that the level of culture and progress can be measured by some tangible, material achievements. The second suggests that one's life can be preserved and continued through one's

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40 This fresco held a special significance for Kuzmin. It is also used in the poem "Nevnjaten smysl tvoix velenij" from the cycle "Stixi o iskusstve." There, in response to Gozzoli's "challenge," Kuzmin recreates some images of the artist's picture, but shifts the focus of his portrayal. Specifically, he depicts a footman (who is a marginal figure on the fresco) at a moment of rest only anticipated on the fresco. Malmstad and Markov note in their commentaries to the poem: "когда Кузмин сокрушается о смерти и обреченности, что на земле, а что смертный, что смертный, что смертный..." (and in his poem "Lesok" Kuzmin once again incorporates Gozzoli's figure of a footman.)
offspring. And, finally, the third illustrates that, while in "real" life the Medici family is gradually degenerating, (with their current heir being an ordinary, plain man), their images in art - as for example, those created by Boticelli - have ensured the immortality of the great family. The conception of art as being able to capture and preserve the essence of phenomena, repudiates the ideas of the young man from the first fragment who reduces the meaning of art to the depiction of material objects. It also invalidates the hope of the old man from the second segment to secure his afterlife through his grandson, who is called Lazarus and who resembles his grandfather a great deal. Because such genealogical resemblance is mechanical, Kuzmin implies, and because reproduction does not recreate one's essence, such hopes are futile. It is only art which assures one's afterlife, constant resurrection and immortality.

Art also aids in recovering the "true" meaning of a concept, because in art, unlike in life, things are named in accordance with their "essence." For example, in "life" the name Lazarus is given to a boy, because of his forbear hopes to become immortal though him, seeing his own "resurrection" in the boy. He does not consider the "sacrificial" essence of this name however, unlike the artist creating the fragment. Kuzmin would later develop
this idea more fully in his poéma "Lazar'." Here a young man becomes a true Lazarus, because of his willingness to sacrifice his life, the prerequisite action for subsequent resurrection.

Another concept which is treated in differential terms in the poem is that of love. Given that both in his works and his life, love played a central role, such a choice in not surprising. As a poet and a homosexual man, Kuzmin was personally deeply concerned with defining love. He often stressed that love must provide the structure for life and serve as the guiding principle. Since the concept of love gradually came to encompass so many meanings however, it has become amorphous. In Kuzmin's view, a person would lose the direction in life, if he, for example, were guided by love understood as a set of social conventions, or purely physical passion, or the cause of reproduction. Karamzin's texts provided Kuzmin with a framework of love as conventionality. When he therefore frames the concept of love within a Karamzinian context, he reveals its conventionality, one which is particularly characteristic of heterosexual love. I quote from the poem:

Маша Если ты, Валерьян, меня бросишь, я утоплюсь
Валерьян Маша! клянусь тебе
Маша Утоплюсь, утоплюсь И не говори Мы так решили
Валер Кто это мы?
Маша Все И Лиза Тезейкина, и Лида, и Дунечка Все решили, что если ты меня бросишь, мне следует кинуться в омут И они так бы сделали
Валер Девичьи глупости!

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The destructive essence of love equated with nothing but physical passion, is illustrated in the parable of Mary of Egypt. Metamorphosed into a monster, she appears before Gul', when, in the desert, he gives a bird the name "Love:"

Other fragments are framed in different literary frames, such as Expressionist cinema, Persian poetry and literary parody. Together they carry out the task of differentiation. Using Formalist ideas, Kuzmin thus suggests that art is a way to deautomatize one's perceptions, to estrange them and present them through a novel perspective. This fresh perspective allows one to recognize life's innermost principle, otherwise buried beneath conventionality and materialism.

One theme that "Progulki Gulja" also conveys is Kuzmin's anxiety of indefiniteness. It has deep roots in Kumin's works and life and was particularly marked at the
time of his deep spiritual crisis in the late 1990's. I quote from Malmstäd's biography of Kuzmin:

The words "definition" or "self-definition" ("opredelennost'") appear repeatedly in the letters of this period. This goal and some belief to which he could devote himself wholeheartedly continued to elude him and thus to torment him: “Меня томит, любящего определенность, мое пребывание в качестве un etre flottant во всех отношениях, в чувстве, в эстетике, во вкусах, даже в положении; везде все темно, неопределенны и границит с пустотою.”41

Considering the terms in which Kuzmin renders the experience of his spiritual crisis, and given the fact that it was the total immersion in art that helped him to recover his enthusiasm for life, "Progulki Gul'ja" may be seen as a recreation of Kuzmin's personal quest for definiteness and beautiful clarity.

Having gained an awareness of what his life means for him, Gul' returns to his everyday existence, which now lacks its usual inertia. "Ja našel vsemu svoe mesto, Ja našel os', centr, slova," - Gul' summarizes the results of his "strolls." The question which arises then is: where exactly did Gul' "go?" Where did he take his metaphorical walks? The answer to the puzzle seems simple: to the "non-existent fatherland" of culture, the world of art and literature, to libraries and archives.42 Each book dealt

41Malmstäd (1977), 50

42Kuzmin uses the phrase "необычайная отчизна" for the "world of art" in the poem "Lesok" ("šekspirovskij lesok")
with in the poem (we only see fragments of them) is a separate walk, a step in a journey. In their entirety, through the procedures of deautomatization and differentiation, they assist a person in crystalizing some essential concepts in life. Art, therefore, is said to serve as a catalyst for life.\footnote{Kuzmin's understanding of the function of verbal art seems to anticipate some contemporary ideas on its differentiating role in relation to other signifying systems. Van der Eng, for example, writes that a literary work "...can only be equated in several respects with other extant signifying systems encompassing the elusive, human reality; it must be confronted with them and hence become a catalyst in their mutual confrontation, that is the consequence of the fragmentary orientation toward several systems simultaneously. An important function of literary code is, indeed, to bring other signifying systems into conflict with each other, so that the different conceptions of existence may be disturbed by those clashes and thus complemented, given new insights." Van der Eng (1983a), 125}

This catalytic role of art becomes particularly transparent when the poem is compared with Kuzmin's earlier short story "Progulki, kotoryx ne bylo" (1917). In it, as in the later poem, there is also an external signifying system, brought into a person's life - here a geographical map of the world. The story's main character, following his theory of "direct" correspondences between large and small worlds, superimposes a world map onto that of Petersburg, which allows him to turn various districts of the city into continents, countries, oceans, and so forth. Therefore, every time he takes a stroll in the city, it becomes a grand journey. Although this game of geographic
correspondances estranges the character's everyday existence, making it more exciting, his literal, mechanic understanding of analogies does not allow for a fruitful exchange between the two systems to take place. Therefore, his "walks" do not become those journeys of discovery that would give his life a structure; hence the title of the story, "Progulki, kotoryx ne bylo." Only the "oblique correspondances" of art, allow one to discern the invisible pattern of life, as is conveyed in "Progulki Gul'ja."44

4.3 INTERSECTIONS OF CULTURAL CURRENTS: KUZMIN'S LYRICAL FRAGMENT.

As Kuzmin's fragments grew more compact and complex, they incorporated ever more cultural material. A type of fragment which is particularly characteristic of Kuzmin's writings of the later period, is what he himself calls a "situation," ("položenie"), or a lyrical fragment ("liričeskij fragment"). The external form of such lyrical fragments is simple: defined by a distinct visual frame and a character's gesture, they remind one of a clear cinematographic shot. Among such "situations" which

44"Kosye sootvetstviya" is a phrase which Kuzmin uses in the first poem of his cycle "Stixi o iskusstve."
consistently reappear throughout Kuzmin's works, I will name only a few: a friend reading a work by Shakespeare; a footman interrupting his trip and taking a rest; a young man drowning in a river, or, in another version, someone discovering a drowned body; (male) friends going to, or meeting in, a theater; two young men getting off their horses. In the totality of Kuzmin's works, these and other "položenija" serve as the standardized topoi, with their mere mention being sufficient to convey a particular message.

Here, I will analyze a lyrical fragment which depicts the scene of a garden in Königsberg after a rain - one of the most meaningful for Kuzmin and most frequently cited in his works. The examination of the usage of this one fragment in various contexts will allow us to observe the meaning-generating mechanisms in Kuzmin's fragmentary texts. In addition, because it has (several) cultural origins, and because, due to its repetitive usage, it also functions as a self-quotiation, the analysis of this lyrical fragment will enable us to examine Kuzmin's principles of citation.

Variations of this scene appear in several works of different genres; one entire poem is centered around it, several short stories incorporate this fragment; on one occasion, its depiction is accompanied by playful
commentaries on both its origins and its repeated usage throughout the writer's oeuvre. On a pictorial level, this lyrical fragment presents a garden with a house in the background, its windows opened into the garden. Piano music is emanating from inside. The moment depicted in the fragment is that immediately after a rain, indicated by the image of a rainbow. From the garden, in some versions, one sees a horseman crossing a bridge. Often a boy observing the scene is included. For him, the garden scene evokes an amalgam of emotions, including those of calm, peace and gratitude. Let us first look at Kuzmin's poem of 1916 entitled "Xodoveckij" in which the garden scene with all its details is first used:

Наверно, нежный Ходовецкий
Гравировал мои мечты
И этот сад полунемецкий,
И сельский дом, немного детский,
И барбарисные кусты

Пролился дождь; воздушны мысли
Из окон рокот ровных гамм
Душа стремится (вдаль ли? явь ли?)
А капли на листах повисли,
И по карнизу птиций гам

Гроза стихает за холмами,
Ей отвечает в роще рог,
И дядя с круглыми очками
Уж наклоняет над цветами
В цветах невиданный шлафрок

И радуга, и мост, и всадник, -
Всё видится мне без конца:
Как блещет мокрый палисадник,
Как ловит на лугу лощадник
Отбившегося жеребенка,
The poem's title establishes the scene's origin, linking it to the drawings of the 18th-century German graphic artist Chodowiecki. The very subject matter of the poem, as well as the particular ambiance of calm and thanksgiving, the sense of the interconnectedness of all things and of a Divine presence in all which the poem communicates, make its connection with Chodowiecki's art very palpable. The theme of a borderline condition, of "bridging" and facilitating "meetings" of disparate entities, central for that poem, is typical of Chodowiecki, as perceived by Kuzmin. This will be discussed more shortly, but let us first see how this theme is conveyed through the poem's imagery.

The time in which the scene unfolds - shortly after the rain - is transitional: the sun has reemerged, but the air is still saturated with water, as the image of a rainbow conveys. (The image of rainbow often serves as a symbol of linkage in Kuzmin's works). The rainbow is not infrequently associated with Mozart's music in Kuzmin's texts. For example, in his essay on "The abduction from the Seraglio," Kuzmin's perception of the tonality at the
end of Mozart's opera, remarkably resembles that of
Kuzmin's own poem:

Мелодия же последнего финала, радуга на очищённом небе,
благодаря, благодарные слезы, может быть не превзойдена в
смысле нежной и непорядственной выразительности самим
Моцартом.45

In the poem "Muzyka" from the cycle "Stixi ob iskusstve,"
where Mozart and the rainbow are also linked, the analogy
between the seven-colored rainbow, (as the synthesis of
refracted light), and the musical score (an intricate
arrangement of seven basic notes), allows for the
projection of color and musical imagery onto each other.
Such structurally and phonetically justified merging of
color and sound in the image of the "sinij Si" agrees with
the poet's synaesthetic aesthetics.46

The semantics of linkage (between two locations, or
conditions) in the poem "Xodoveckij" are reinforced by such
images as the bridge and the threshold. It is also
emphasized by the soul's aspiration to merge both with this
world and with the Divine, indicated by the horizontal

45Ualovnosti, 136

46The synaesthetic perception reflected in the depiction of the
fragment about "Königsberg garden" points to its link with Hoffmann
(which will be discussed shortly). Consider this observation of
Kuzmin in "Češuja v nevode:" "У Гофмана "Крейслериана" У5. Бессвязные
мысли, абзац 3-й. Мысль о соответствии красок, звуков и запаха за 50 лет
dо Бодлера и декадентов. Запах темно-красной гвоздики имеет надо мной
какую-то волнебную власть; я невольно впадаю в мечтательное состояние
и слышу точно будто издалека набегающие волны глубокие звуки
английского рожка." Kuzmin (1990), 116

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"vdal'" and the vertical "vvys'." Someone's arriving or leaving ("Kto priezžaet, kto otbudet?") also points to the existence of another place, with which this location is linked.

Another pair of areas which "meet" in the space of the poem is that of culture and nature. Kuzmin generally favored landscapes in which culture and nature were in a contiguous relationship. He particularly liked gardens and parks, as well as "cultured" forests of the Shakespearean type, as those in the poem "Lesok." In Kuzmin's works, such locations always offer surprises, unexpected meetings and the beginnings of new liaisons. Most importantly however, their configurations represent culture's and nature's dialogue and mutual projections: "Groza stixaet za xolmami, / Ej otvečaet v rošče rog...."

Within the cultural plane, too, there are contiguous areas that merge on borderline territory; there is a specific cultural-geographic locale, in which the poem's "scene" takes place. This locale is defined already by the name of Chodowiecki as an artist from Prussia whose drawings and engravings often depicted the cultural landscapes of his native land and its special ambiance. In several other works where this lyrical fragment is used, its location is specified as Königsberg. Kuzmin thought of

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Chodowiecki was of a Polish origin. He moved to Berlin in 1743.

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this city and the borderline territory around Prussia as a unique space, where German, Slavic and Baltic cultures and sensibilities had blended in perfect harmony; he conceived of it as a locale where the ideal of cultural syncretism of the Alexandrinian type once again came to life. I would like to discuss this issue in more detail, both because it comes up so often in Kuzmin's writings, and because it illustrates his special attention to the "meetings" of cultures, which play such an important deautomatizing role in his aesthetics.

In his essay "Rossija v inostrancax" Kuzmin stresses how difficult it is for an artist to fully comprehend the spirit of another nation. I quote from this essay:

However, Kuzmin believes that Germans more than other nations have the knowledge and the desire to comprehend a foreign spirit and he emphasizes that the Prussian-Polish-Finnish-Russian cultural-geographic locale fascinated

German understanding of the Russian spirit:

Притом близкое соседство, родство дворов, частое посещение смежных губерний создало тот смешанный тип жизни, известный по гравюрам Д. Ходовецкого, прусско-польско-курландско-русский, который делает неудивительным, что

48 Иловноси, 95

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Conversely, this composite German-Baltic-Slavic culture, with which the Russian reader could easily identify, made German culture more readily accessible to Russians. Kuzmin saw this unique locale's merits in its flexibility and openness, in its ability to convey coziness ("domašnost") and the lyricism of an everyday existence that was based on an invisible interconnectedness of all facets of life. As further analysis of the "Königsberg garden" lyrical fragment will demonstrate, Kuzmin linked, (directly or indirectly) Chodowiecki, Hoffmann, and Kant to this locale, and even the Rennish Goethe and Austrian Mozart. On a personal level, Kuzmin also had ties with this German-Baltic-Russian region. His long-time companion, Jurij Jurkun (Jurkunas) was a Lithuanian who in his writings and drawings frequently depicted the social-cultural milieu of that area, specifically Vilno. One of Kuzmin's close friends and devotees of his art, Johannes von Guenther, was a German-Baltic poet whose role as a cultural mediator between Russia and Germany was examplified by his literary translations; to the poetry he translated into German belonged Kuzmin's.

49 Ibid.
Kuzmin, who grew up reading German literature, continued to rely on German culture in his artistic practice. However, his attitude toward German culture was not even throughout his life: during the First World War, Kuzmin emphasized not its openness, but its intolerance which, as he thought, had inevitably led to military aggressiveness. Now he sees Russian culture as tolerant, flexible and even "immoral" - qualities which, as we know, characterize Kuzmin's own art. In more peaceful contexts,

50 In his letters and autobiography, Kuzmin often conveys his fascination with Hoffman and other German authors during his childhood. In the poem below, he conveys, in a playful manner, that a German book is an essential part of his life:

Зевать над книгою немецкой
Где тяжек, как картофель, Witz,
Где даже милый Ходовецкий
Не оживит пустых страниц,
Что делать, уж привык я с детской
Зевать над книгою немецкой

51 In "Razdum'ja i nedoumenija Petra Otšel'nika" Kuzmin wrote: "Мы видим к чему приводит культура, где вместо твердости - упрямство, вместо рациона - солдатчина, вместо силы - бесмысленная жестокость, вместо величия - вагнеровский балagan, вместо культуры - усовершенствованные уборные. А между тем этот мирх держал всех в плену, особенно нас, привыкших смотреть на все искусство через немецкие очки. Может быть, нам яснее теперь будет видно светлое, от Бога радостное искусство, мудрое настоящей мудростью, а не бутафорскими ходулками. Может быть, нам станет яснее и наша собственная психология и устремленность, столь противоречащая германизму, покуда проявляющаяся в мягкости, терпимости, каком-то аморализме, но которая, сострадательная, спущенная, даст неожиданные и замечательные по следствия явления" Kuzmin (1989), 384-385. Similar ideas are expressed in Kuzmin's poem "Tjaželovesnym groznym šorošom" (1914), in which he reevaluates the traditional opposition of "cultured West - uncultured East." The poem seems to reiterate some of Vjač. Ivanov's ideas on "barbarian" Slavs as adherents of the Greek spirit:

Одумается ли Германия
Оставить пагубный маршрут,
Kuzmin attributes these characteristics to the borderline cultural area between Russia and Germany, however.

In his essay "Razdum'ja i nedoumen'ja Petra Otšel'nika," Kuzmin states that German culture was the "glasses" through which Russians were accustomed to look at art. In other words, if Prussian culture is the locale where Russian and German cultures meet, German culture in its turn, is the space where Russian and World culture meet. Therefore, while examining Kuzmin's poem "Xodoveckij" and its contexts, I have pointed out several cases of "intersections:" Russian and German cultures meet in the Prussian-Polish-Baltic-Russian cultural-geographic locale; German culture serves a mediating screen between Russian and the world culture; nature and culture intersect in specific cultural landscapes, like gardens and parks. The poem "Xodoveckij" and, more broadly, the lyrical fragment depicting a Königsberg garden, function as points of convergence at which multiple cultural currents intersect.

On the level of cultural micro-formations, the poem "Xodoveckij" may be seen as an intersection of the currents

Куда ведет смешная мания  
И в каске Вагнеровский шут?! 

Но вот с востока "некультурного"  
Культурным воинам на зло  
Средь мрака кровянисто-бурого  
Свободный мир придет светло!

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radiating from the art of Chodowiecki, Mozart, Hoffman when projected onto Kuzmin's own vision. To consider how these projections work, let us turn to Kuzmin's other usage of the Königsberg garden fragment and observe how, placed in the context of a prose piece, namely, the piece "Iz zapisok Tivurtija Pencija," it generates new meanings.

In that story, the Prussian garden scene is nostalgically recollected by the story's main character. Tivurtij Pencel' is a young German man who lives in Venice and his recollection of his childhood Königsberg in many ways serves to juxtapose the two cultures as they were in the 18th century (the time of the story):

In comparison to the poem "Xodoveckij," this fragment is even more emotionally charged. Because Tivurtij Pencel' is recalling a scene he observed as a child, the narration is rendered in imitation of a child's discourse: its structure is loose and attention is given to seemingly
insignificant details which only a child would normally notice. The emphasis is on the immediacy of perception and the sharpness of fresh senses, as becomes even clearer when the fragment is related to the overall context of the story.

To the images signifying linkage, such as the rainbow, the bridge with a horseman crossing it, the merging of the sky and the earth, already familiar from the poem "Xodoveckij," several more are added. There is, for example, the suddenly enhanced hearing that is compared to that at the moment preceding death. In this fragment, sensations are more blended than ever: it even appears that apple blossoms "try" to smell sweeter and animals to sound louder. This scene is also more "musical" than the other. Simple piano exercises from the the poem evolve into Mozart's quartet heard from the room of the boy's uncle, who also appeared in the early fragment. Thus, while the Chodowiecki subtext is moved onto the background, the Mozart subtext is foregrounded. Kuzmin apparently viewed the art of these two contemporaries and compatriots as congenial, particularly in terms of their "tonality." Like Chodowiecki, Mozart, too, belonged to a "borderline" culture: after all, his origins are Austrian, rather than German, and thus characterized by the proximity to Slavic areas and general heterogeneity of the Habsburg empire.
The main function of the garden fragment in the text under discussion is to facilitate the juxtaposition of 18th-century Italian and German cultures, sensibilities, life styles and humor. Tivurtij Pencel' has presumably come to Italy from Germany; the reader does not learn much about his past. But in Italy, his life is presented as highly festive and colorful. Together with other Venetians, the young German delights in endless carnivals and theatrical shows, as well as literary polemics, like that between Gozzi and Goldoni. His Italian woman lover teaches him to treasure the simple joys of life and to aestheticize everyday experiences. A sensibility that excludes the grandiose and lofty and, instead, focuses on the small, almost miniature, beautifying it — agrees with Tivurtij Pencel': he appears content with his Venetian life to which he apparently escaped from his dreary German background. Yet, because he is a foreigner with an outside perspective, he also senses something convulsive and spasmodic in this atmosphere of festive leisure:

В этой веселой, смеющейся колыбели забываяе, действительно, все, кроме масок, концертов, опер, комедий, аббатов, чичекбееев, комедиантов, гондольеров, маленьких Терцинеточек с их шоколадом, попугаями, собаками и обезьянками, кроме влажного неба и небесной воды Пение, пение, пение! Не то духовный концерт у сироток, не то колыбельная, не то баркаролла - заулокойный карнавал! может быть... я смотрю как-то со стороны Что-то последнее чувится мне в этих вздохах любви

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The fragment about the Königsberg garden follows immediately after this description of Venetian life. Such a quick journey ("walk") into the past, together with several subsequent lyrical digressions on the German theme, help Tivurtij Pencel' to recognize the inertia side of his Italian existence: "ja ubajakan, otuplen i eju, i gorodom, i morem, i večnym peniem." Although Pencel' "semi-German" sensibility is seen as similar to the Italo-Venetian in its attention to the details of byt, Italian culture and life lack the sense of the interconnectedness of all earthly things and their link with the Divine that distinguish Chodowiecki's art and Mozart's music. Pencel'’s remembering the Königsberg garden scene therefore serves as reconnection with a time when the immediacy of his perceptions and the childlike sensation of unity with the world had not yet been lost.

Tivurtij Pencel' probably initially left Germany because he, like Kuzmin himself, did not approve of idealistic German Romanticism, inevitably leading to withdrawal from reality. On the other hand, his stay in Venice allowed him to concentrate on everyday existence.

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52 One is a parable of German twin-brothers and their exceptionally strong love for each other. The death of one of the brothers did not end this love, and eventually lead to the death of the second brother, i.e. their reunion in the beyond. The second inserted story on a German theme is that of Tivurtij Pencel'’s German friend who committed suicide after reading Goethe's "The Sufferings of Young Werther." Both of the inserted "German" stories end with their protagonists' death.
which he felt was restful for his soul. Yet, the imaginary "walks" to his German past awaken in him a spiritual yearning making him aware of the insufficiency of the Italian conception of life and art. In the process of his double journey (first to Italy, and then, in his thoughts, back to Germany), Tivurtij Pencel' arrives at the understanding of the ideal as a balanced cultural model, in which man, still focusing on his earthly existence, nevertheless is aware of its spiritual nature and its consecrated-ness to the Creator. Such a model is offered by that "semi-German" culture which gave birth to Chodowiecki, Hoffmann, Mozart, and, at least partially, Goethe.

In their commentaries to "Lesok," Malmstad and Markov suggest that Hoffman should be seen as the protagonist of this story.53 The scholars also point to the textual link of the fragment with Hoffman's writings, stating:

The Hoffmann subtext of the fragment is clearly explicated in "Gofmanovskij lesok" (a part of "Lesok") which thus

53*Sobranie stixov* III, 700-701

54Ibid.
supports Malmstad's and Markov's supposition. Most importantly, it is the circumstance of Hoffmann's traveling in Italy, which makes this hypothesis likely.

I believe that by depicting Tivurtij Pencel's sojourn in Italy, as well as by emphasizing his German (Prussian) origins, Kuzmin recreates the archetypal constituents in the lives of several of his favorite German writers/artists, namely Goethe, Mozart and, of course, Hoffmann. All of them at some point in their lives, undertook their Italian journeys meant to serve as journeys of cognition, Bildungsreisen. Because Kuzmin associated himself with what he called "semi-German" culture and those artists who represented it, particularly Hoffmann and because, in his youth, he himself undertook an Italian journey which helped him to differentiate many concepts central for his Weltanschauung, he implicitly included his own persona in the list of artists that Tivurtij Pencel's image encompasses.

The technique of mutual "projections" is common for Kuzmin in general. Several of his works are created specifically at the intersections of cultural currents represented by the artists whom Kuzmin associates with the semi-German locale and projects onto his own vision. In his works of the 1920's, Kuzmin frequently adds a "current" of German Expressionist art to the network of such
projections, considering it congenial to Hoffmann's spirit. Because of the emphasis that he placed on the emotional aspect of art, Kuzmin was always interested in establishing those circumstances in the lives of his favorite writers, artists and musicians which effected their vision and sensibility.

Let us now consider Kuzmin's story "Smertel'naja roza" from the cycle of stories "Devstvennyj Viktor" which was written about four years prior to "Iz zapisok Tivurcija Penclja." In it, the lyrical fragment about a "garden in Königsberg after the rain" advances the ideal of "beautiful clarity" in art and love, an ideal Kuzmin specifically links with Mozart. The story deals with the circumstances of a composer's life. He has lived in Florence for the last fifteen years, and he is of mixed, German-Slavic origins: we know that he grew up in Germany (probably, Prussia, since he reminisces about a Königsberg garden) and that his mother was Czech. The composer's name, Kaspar Laska, reflects his composite genealogy. It is made clear in the story that Laska idealizes Mozart's music and that

55Каспар был не чистым итальянцем, хотя и жил более пятнадцати лет во Флоренции; мать его была из Чехии; может быть оттого в его характере, кроме беспечности и некоторой лени, была и мечтательность, и известное упорство" Proza VII, 381 Gluck whose music Kuzmin knew well and whom he admired a great deal, was also of a mixed origin. In one of his essays, Kuzmin wrote about him: "Интересно, что немецкий композитор чешского происхождения реформировал итальянскую оперу, согласно французским принципам" Uklovnost, 18
another German composer, Gluck, also represents a model artist for him. At the same time, some circumstances of his life, including his origins, the fact that a requiem by him is commissioned, as well as the type of the music he composes and his openness to various genres, encourage the comparison between him and the two composers. I quote from the story:

As in "Zapiski Tivurtija Pencija," so here the "garden fragment" is presented as a childhood remembrance by an artist (composer) in Italy and serves the function of differentiation. Laska is commissioned by a representative of a Masonic lodge to write a piece of music which would accompany, as he thinks, the rituals of that fraternity. It is to be set to a poem, which proclaims integration and unity as the purpose of existence. However, overwhelmed by his passion for the commissioner's sister Rozalia, Laska is about to write music which conveys only chaos and

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56 Угліми мірів, соедин'еные
Пошли разьединенным нам!
И неумолчое хваленье
Подай запекшимся устам!

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fragmentation. Then, suddenly, he remembers the intense moment of unity and gratitude, which he experienced observing the scene in the Königsberg garden:

This "flash back," no doubt, comes to Laska as a warning and a reminder of what his art ought to be. It ought to be, as it always was before, an example of "beautiful clarity," with distinctive divisions, and yet, expressing the ideal of oneness with the world and the Creator. Applied to the concept of love, such an ideal both presupposes the merging of two lovers, and the preservation of their separate identities. But Laska ignores the warning and, governed by his destructive passion rather than harmonious love, he betrays his natural talent. His requiem conveys not a longing for wholeness, but chaos. Rozalia, who had inspired the music, feels its fragmenting, separating essence, but she approves:
Two complementary tendencies - division and (re)integration - become separated in this composition by Laska. A requiem, it is devoted to death and disintegration, but it offers no promise of reintegration and resurrection, as an artistic creation must. Because he did not heed his intuition and ignored the warning of the memory of the Königsberg garden, the composer deviated from the path intended for him by the Spirit. His client's death (by murder) which occurred soon after the piece had been composed, proved the destructive nature of his music. Having burnt his score, Laska leaves Florence. It is suggested in the story that he followed Rozalia who had previously disappeared, but there is also the possibility that he returned to his Prussian garden where, as a child, he had absorbed the ideal of harmonious love and art. If so, he may well once again create the Mozartian type of music.

To sum up, the fragment about the Königsberg garden is once again used in a story which examines the purpose of art and cultural connections. In addition to the Mozart subtext, which also played an important role in the previous variants of this fragment, this story incorporates a Gluck subtext, and both of them are linked to a Hoffmannesian layer. Both Mozart and Gluck played a prominent role in Hoffmann's art and life. It is a well
known fact, that Hoffmann was devoted to Mozart's music and that in honor of his favorite composer, he changed his name from Wilhelm to Amadeus. He also publicly performed an aria from "The Abduction from the Seraglio." Hoffmann's interest in Gluck is specifically reflected in his short story "Ritter Gluck." In it, he portrays a mad musician, who may be Gluck reincarnation. Kuzmin's own interest in Mozart's music, as well as his frequent performances of various compositions by Mozart in circles of friends, reinforced the analogy between him and Hoffmann, as did his double role of writer and composer. He shared a deep interest in Gluck's music with Hoffmann, as evidenced in his story "Smertel'naja roza," written with Hoffmann's "Ritter Gluck" in mind. Some of its images and motifs, like that of the woman-doll and the artist's attempt to endow her with life, is typically Hoffmannesque. Rozalia is of course a Hoffmannesque "doll" bringing destruction to the hapless composer. All in all, the story "Smertel'naja roza" once again represents the intersection of various cultural currents, which then are projected on Kuzmin's own poetic vision.

The last variant of the lyrical fragment about the Königsberg garden to be discussed here is incorporated in Kuzmin's work "Lesok" (1922). "Lesok" is a lyrical poēma in three parts for music with explanatory prose. It is a
cross-genre and cross-medium piece composed from literary material, which is indicated already in the titles of its three parts: "Šekspirovskij lesok," "Gofmanovskij lesok" and "Appuleevskij lesok." Each part consists of eleven or twelve fragments (scenes) in verse or prose. These scenes are either "borrowed" from the respective authors and then reshaped, or designed anew in the spirit of their art. Metaphorically speaking, each part of the poem emerges in the intersection of Shakespeare's and Kuzmin's, Hoffmann's and Kuzmin's, and Apuleus' and Kuzmin's artistic vision. But when these three parts, parallel in many respects, are put together and projected onto each other, the Kuzminian vision transpires as the work's common denominator. Thus, the piece which appears as constructed out of entirely "foreign" material, turns out to convey Kuzmin's own vision and style.

The extensive use of literary and cultural "archives," an overwhelming reliance on previously produced works and an emphasis on the combinatory aspects of the creative process are characteristic of post-modern art. Kuzmin's "Lesok" could therefore be viewed as a work in which its aesthetics has been anticipated. Of course, Russian literature of the Silver and "post-Silver" age, and in particular, Acmeist poetry, was also largely based on a citation principle. For example, Axmatova's concept of
poetry as a continuous citation, exemplified in her poetic statement "A možet byt', poéziya sama - / Odna velikolepnaja citata," is best reflected in her "Poéma bez geroja," her most post-modern piece. Curiously, it is also her most "Kuzminian" work, because, in several respects, including its "combinatory" compositional principle, it was modeled on his "Forel's razbivaet led." Citation as a structural principle, should be seen as characteristic of 20th-century literature and culture in general. But, while in the early twentieth century it began to take shape, in post-modern times, it has found its full realization.

At the same time, the genre of "Lesok," the Silvae, has a long tradition of its own. I will refer to Malmstad and Markov's commentaries on this subject:

От Стадия (I в) идет обычай называть книги стихов смешанного содержания (а отсюда и такие разделы в книгах стихов) Silvae (леса), и примеры можно найти даже в русской поэзии XX в (см "Цветы и ладан" С Соловьева) Позже название применялось и к нестихам См, например, Kritische Walder Гердера, который, может быть, первый стал употреблять уменьшительную форму для обозначения книжных глав (Wäldchen) В данном случае не ясно, примыкает ли Кузмин к этой традиции или просто исходит из имеющегося у Шекспира леса Однако Кузмин не мог не знать, что Silvae также означает "сады" (у Гофмана именно садик)58

57 For discussion of this topic see Timenčik, Toporov, Civ'jan (1978). As is well known, Kuzmin as a cultural-historic persona, plays a notable role among the characters of "Poéma bez geroja." One of the metric patterns of Axmatova's poéma is also "borrowed" from Kuzmin's "Forel's razbivaet led."

58 Sobranie stixov III, 699
"Lesok" is one of Kuzmin's emotionally most complex and most manifestly "conventional" works in the sense that it tells about conventions in art. If Kuzmin continued his mental dialogue with Tolstoj and his concept of art throughout his writing career, which I believe he did, then this poem may have been intended as a mocking response to Tolstoj. Here was a work, the conventionality of which was exposed to the utmost, and which yet was emotional and "contagious."

Among the themes and artistic principles of this poem, many anticipate those in "Progulki Gul'ja," written two years later. For example, as in the later work, art is seen as a means of deautomatizing life, as its catalyst. But unlike Gul', who takes "estranging" walks aiding him in acquiring a new perspective on his existence, the lyrical hero of "Lesok" situates himself in places like Shakespeare's forest, Hoffmann's garden or Apuleus' magic kingdom, where remarkable meetings await him at any moment. An encounter is always, in Kuzmin's universe, an act of awakening, of obtaining self-awareness through juxtaposition of the self with the "other," even if it is a literary character, or, perhaps, especially, if it is a literary character.

It is very likely, that Kuzmin, in fact, had the classical Silvae genre in mind. In his "Gofmanovskij
lesok," the garden is transformed into a cultural landscape, analogous to Shakespeare's forest, where various happenings in the spirit of Hoffmann take place. The part opens with the author reading the fragment about the Königsberg garden. He is interrupted several times by a friend. The friend argues that repeated usage of the same fragment is unacceptable, especially if it is not original in the first place. Because the connection of the fragment with Hoffmann's writings is established, it becomes ambiguous, whether the author is Kuzmin or Hoffmann who, as we know, had also used that same fragment. I will quote this variation of the fragment about the Königsberg garden:

1 Садик в Кенигсберге после дождя
- Садик в Кенигсберге после дождя.
- Что это? "Кот Мур", или.
- Гроза ушла Яблони стараются пахнуть как можно сильнее.
- Но мы это слышали уже!
- "на траву упали королевины бриллианты"
- Послушайте, такое повторение делается нестерпимым!
- Есть пейзажи, как звуки, вызывающие воображение
  Коричневый рукав с мелкими золотыми пуговицами
  ставит на стол электрический чайный прибор, теплый белый хлеб и масло
- Это объяснительная проза
- Не запутает ли она еще больше слушателя?
- Скрипки и гобои должны быть достойны Крейслера, - вы услышите!
- Может быть, мы услышим и марш Чернышева, вступающего в Берлин?
- Может быть, для этого придется подождать весеннего дня
  По коридору звонки, служивый топот (вблизи)
  каблуков и американский акцент высокого, по-птичьему
  женского голоса
- И все-таки Прусия, Кенигсберг - родина и Гофмана и
  Ходовецкого!
- И Канта, и Гиппеля и многих других

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Kuzmin here explains his persistent fascination with "Königsberg garden" fragment by its extraordinary power to stimulate his imagination and its representing a symbol of a particular culture which is defined by Hoffmann, Chodowiecki and Mozart. The friend reminds the author that Kant and Hippel\textsuperscript{59} were also born in Prussia and therefore are relevant for the Königsberg scene. But the author disputes this. Because the biographical link between these personalities and the Königsberg locale has not been sanctified by art, it remains transient. Art alone has the power of differentiating the vital from the insignificant and of metamorphosing a transient object or event into an eternal one.

We may note that to the list of previous cultural subtexts of the fragment about the Königsberg garden, an American one is now added. Conversing, the author and his friend hear footsteps and a high pitched voice with an American accent from the corridor of their hotel. In the following fragments of this chapter, there is no apparent continuation of the American theme, except that the Faust

\footnote{Hippel was Hoffmann's friend who helped him a great deal throughout his life, especially financially.}

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puppet is compared with the eccentric Chaplin. Given the
degree of semantic concentration in this poem and the
importance of each detail and image in its overall
composition, even such a passing mention of America should
be assumed to be meaningful. To Kuzmin, America seems to
represent a remote locus and a perfect place for a
"deautomatizing" journey. In fact, one of the "walks" that
Gul' takes, is to "expressionistic" America. Similar are
the functions of America in "Forel' razbivaet led:' when
the lyrical hero's twin-brother returns home after his
disappearance, he is surrounded by the attributes of
American life, which suggests that he has been there. In
"Lesok," America seems to provide a potential reference
point, making the German (or Russian) locale relative,
rather than absolute. It also endows the fragment with a
contemporary frame: America in Kuzmin's writings is often
connected with expressionism, seen as a movement with the
power of rejuvenating "aging" Western art.

The author and his friend presumably spend a night
reading from Hoffmann's works and "fantasizing" in the
spirit of Hoffmann. Hoffmann's images, Kuzmin thought,
were able to multiply and "reproduce" new images and tales.
This idea is conveyed in one of Kuzmin's playful poems:

И сказки сладко снятся
Эрнеста Амедея
Родятся и роятся
Затев из затей
We may only assume, that during the night, the house and the garden were taken over by Hoffmanesque ghosts. At the end of this "polnočnaja Gofmaniana" the author, intoxicated by the spells of Hoffmann's magic, asks Theodor - the writer himself or his character - to finish reading and open a window to the garden. He is overwhelmed by the sensation of beauty, created both by his noctural "meeting" with Hoffmann's art and the approaching morning, and he expresses his gratitude to the Creator:

12 Окно в сад

Откройте окно! Как накурено! Полно читать, Теодор! У меня в голове дым, как в этой комнате. Откройте окно! Уж утро. Как блестит трава, щебечут простые пташки, облака стоят кудрявым стадом. И колокола тихо поют на встречу солнцу. О, Моцарт!

We witness the merging of the fragment which the author reads with the "real-life" setting. In spite of its clearly literary, or "conventional" nature, this and all

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60 I am using Axmatova's phrase. Is it not excluded that using it in her "Poema bez geroja," she referred to Kuzmin's "Lesok."

61 Malmstad and Markov note in their commentaries to the poem "Ko mne skoree, Teodor i Konrad:" "Один из Сергиевских братьев-рассказчиков - Теодор, он же герой некоторых историй (напр., "Фермать"), к нему иногда рассказчик Гофмана обращается (как в Дон Жуане), не говоря уже о том, что сам Гофман - Теодор" Sobranie stixov III, 724
other fragments in the work convey, as Kuzmin insists, the emotional reality of their authors' lives. To a reader willing to identify with the emotional experience rendered in a work of art, this work will facilitate the process of defining his own emotions and attaining an awareness of his life's inner structure.

I have examined Kuzmin's usage of one fragment, the scene depicting the Königsberg garden throughout his works. The main purpose of this analysis has been to illustrate how the meaning-generating mechanisms work in Kuzmin's fragmentary structures. Using the example of a single fragment, in all its variations, I have demonstrated how, through the procedure of juxtaposing, comparing and contrasting fragments and their constituents, the text's invisible meaning emerges behind its visible level. It has been shown, how, when placed in different contexts, one fragment each time has produced different semantic results. Also, because the fragment includes multiple cultural subtexts, and because of its recurring usage throughout Kuzmin's works, Kuzmin's mechanisms of citation and self-citation have been observed. It has been shown how the encoded and enfolded subtexts function as parallels to Kuzmin's text (or its fragments), and how all of them project onto some universal invariant. Several other important aspects of Kuzmin's aesthetics and poetics were
considered in connection with this fragment's usage, namely his concept of deautomatizing, differentiating and the "definitional" role of art and "meetings" in general, including that of a person with a person, a person with art, one type of culture with another, culture with nature, and others. It has also been noted, how, as a result of such an aesthetic position, Kuzmin came to favor liminal conditions, threshold situations and borderline locales, which he viewed as particularly culture productive.
CHAPTER 5

IN SEARCH OF THE UNIVERSAL INARIANT: THE POÉMA "LAZAR'"

Искусство возвращается к своим эмоциональным,
символическим и метафизическим истокам. И
тут я вижу два русла: панического тупика и
эзальтированного принятия жизни. Смещённость
стилей, сдвиг планов, оближение отделнейших
эпох при полном напряжении духовных и
душевых сил

M. Kuzmin

Умирать, так умирать с тобой
И с тобой, как Лазарь, встать из гроба

M. Voloshin

5.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE POÉMA

The long poem "Lazar'" is the last part of Kuzmin's
final and most complex book of poetry Forel' razbivaet led
(1928). Since its individual poems are held together by a
narrative structure, its genre should be defined as poéma.
Yet, in the typically Kuzminian fashion of blurring the
distinctions between genres, in its disjointedness and
discontinuity, "Lazar'" also resembles a cycle. The
complexity of Kuzmin's last book has been noted by several
critics. Bogomolov, for example, points to the dual
impression that Kuzmin's last two books make on their readers - on one hand, they are simple and clear, and on the other highly intricate and complex works. The critic also notes the composite origins of the sources, of Forel' razbivaet led:

A.Lavrov and R.Timenčik termed Kuzmin's later cycles "encyclopedic," because of the richness of the cultural material they contain and the way this material is arranged:

Циклы стихотворений, воссоздававшие ранее один определенный культурно-исторический стиль ("Ракеты", "Венок восточ"), сменяются у позднего Кузмина "энциклопедическими" циклами, формально построенными по типу веера с семью планками-изображениями ("Северный веер"), недельного ("Пальцы днем") и годового (цикл "Форель разбивает лед") календаря, панорамы, структура цикла основывается на "знавании" единой сущности в разнохарактерных символах, традиционных мифов в современных сюжетах; возникают весьма приятные и не всегда постигаемые читателем сближения - подобные

\[1\] Bogomolov (1995), 47. The poetic formulation of this principle of including multiple sources is given in "Forel' razbivaet led:"

Толпой накинули воспоминанья, Отрывки из прочитанных романов, Покойники смеялись с живыми, И все так перепуталось.
While the first cycle-poéma of the book, namely "Forel' razbivaet led," has received much scholarly attention, and has been evaluated as Kuzmin's most successful work, "Lazar'," to my knowledge, has not yet been discussed at any considerable detail. V. Markov, who in his introductory essay to the 3-volume edition of Kuzmin's poetry devotes one paragraph to "Lazar'," suggests that its genre is a novel in verse. He notes that its main topic is resurrection and assuming responsibility for the sin of another person. He also points at the importance of its numerological symbolism. Bogomolov, in his monograph on Kuzmin, emphasized the poéma's message of hope in

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{2}Lavrov and Timenčik (1990), 10} \]

\[ \text{\textsuperscript{3}Markov also notes the poéma's connection with the genre of the pulp novel: "В этом уикле Кузьмин действительно взял материалом жизнь социальных низов, следуя, по-видимому, тематическим пристрастием немецкого экспрессионизма в литературе и кинематографе (в конце 1920-х гг. Кузьмин переводил песни из "Трехгрошевой оперы" Б. Бехта), но семантика "нищей и грубой жизни" у него определяется мотивами не социологическими, а мифологическими, восходящими к образам Платона" Lavrov and Timenčik, 551} \]
Russia's rebirth. A. Lavrov and R. Timenčik, in their commentaries to "Lazar', noted that besides its obvious parallel with the Lazarus story in the Gospel, the poéma is related to Robert Browning's narrative novel "The Ring and the Book" (1869) which is structured around a murder case and its subsequent trial and composed as a series of monologues, framed by two parts narrated by the author.

It seems that one of the reasons that "Lazar'" has not received much attention - which, of course, may be said about a great many other Kuzmin works as well - lies in its deceptive simplicity, connected, on one hand, with its narrative structure, and on the other, with the author's disclosure (in the title) of the key for its more "profound" reading. Critics of Kuzmin's works of the 1920's are accustomed to his highly encoded and therefore, "challenging" compositions, in which, in addition, the conventionalities and the "literariness" are laid bare. Such are, for example, his "Progulki Gul'ja," "Lesok,"

4 Bogomolov writes: "Воскрешение Вилли-Лазаря после максимального падения в бедну отчаяния и позора позволило Кузмину в наиболее откровенной для конца двадцатых годов форме высказать надежду на Божественный промысел как в собственной жизни, так и жизни всей страны, с которой он стал тесно связан. И в этой точке первый и последний циклы смыкаются: связь между ними определяется как надеждой на собственные усилия, так и провиденциализмом. В мире, исполненном зла, насилия, непонимания, все же остается возможность воссоединения ранее разъединенного и тем самым восстановления истины, воскрешения уже умершего и пробившего четырь ше дня во гробе." Bogomolov (1995), 53

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"Forel' razbivaet led" and several other works of this period. But in "Lazar'" Kuzmin carefully conceals the richness of its cultural references behind a seemingly traditional plot, and uses his devices in a less "bared" way. Given Kuzmin's emphasis on the constant need for the artist to change his techniques before they become automatized, such a shift is of course not surprising at all.  

The intricacies of "Lazar'" are revealed gradually. A close analysis of "Lazar'" links it with Kuzmin's overall poetics of the 1920's. Because of its numerous ambiguities and unclarities, my pioneering effort in decoding this work should be viewed as preliminary and subject to corrections and additions.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the structure of Kuzmin's works always gravitated toward the fragmentary principle. In the 1920's this fragmentariness came to resemble montage-like compositions. Several of Kuzmin's works of that period, particularly "Progulki Gulja" and "Forel' razbivaet led," reveal the impact of contemporary

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5 In his essay "Pis'mo v Pekin" Kuzmin writes: "Творчество требует постоянного внутреннего обновления, публика от своих любимцев ждет штампов и перепевов. Человеческая лень влечет к механизации чувств и слов, к напряженному созданию творческих сил нудит беспокойный дух художника. < > Никаких привычек, никаких приемов, никакой набитой руки! Как только зародилось подозрение в застое, снова художник должен ударить в самую глубь своего духа и вызвать новый родник, - или умолкнуть" Uslovnosti, 167
cinema - both the montage principle and its thematic plane. The montage technique, thoroughly developed in Russia by Ejzenštejn, to state this once more, presupposes a dual textual reality. One represents a "narration" by the sequence of discrete shots, the other is the encoded meaning ("sensation," in Ejzenštejn's terminology), which - through the juxtaposing of shots - may be discerned behind the film's visible level.

Considering the meaning-generating mechanism of montage, it is not surprising that cinematographers, already in the early stages of cinema's evolution, turned their attention to the detective genre. In a detective story, the readers, or viewers, are presented with but fragments of "what happened." Applying their reasoning skill and experience and using bits and pieces of evidence (fragments), they must "reconstruct" (or construct) the narrative of the crime. In other words, together with the story's detective, they must figure out the overall picture - who committed the crime, why it was done and how it was executed.

Formally, Kuzmin's poëma "Lazar" greatly resembles a detective story. "...složnyj sjužet, prestuplenie, syščik i sud, popytki ustanovit' istinu - počti detektivnaja istorija", - Bogomolov summarizes in his Kuzmin monograph.®

®Bogomolov (1995), 52

6Bogomolov (1995), 52
While using the detective genre's formal signs and devices, Kuzmin however communicates an overall message, which is much more complex than the genre "requires." In that sense "Lazar'" is comparable to Dostoevskij's works. Kuzmin's dialogue with this writer, particularly with the ideas and images of Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov, points to his conscious orientation towards Dostoevskij's adaption of the detective genre.

As will be demonstrated, the detective genre provided Kuzmin with a framework, suitable for carrying out important poetic tasks. As the principle of "projections" continued to be central for Kuzmin's poetics in the late 1920's, the framework of the detective genre allowed for generating several narratives, or murder scenarios, which corresponded to one "actual" event, and - even more important for Kuzmin - to a singular emotional truth. This multiplicity of narratives, each of which projects onto one invariant, constitutes one aspect of the poem's polyphonic nature. The second aspect is represented by the heterogeneity of its cultural voices, ranging from mythological voices to those of contemporary German Expressionism. And, finally, the poem's composite character is exhibited in its polystylistics, connected with the variegatedness of its cultural voices and revealed
through the richness of its metric repertoire. I examine the first two aspects of the poéma's polyphony in detail and will briefly touch upon its third aspect. First of all, I would like to summarize the poéma's plot. Due to its "openness" and lacunae, such a summary will entail uncertainty of interpretation.

5.2 SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

In part 1, entitled "Lazar', a woman called Micci (Mizzi) recognizes her brother Villi (Willi) in a restaurant or a dancing club where she is, apparently, with a friend. The latter tries to calm Mizzi, who is emotionally distressed, because she knows that Willi is supposed to have been in prison for the last four months. The number of months which he has spent in jail before this miraculous escape (release?) suggests a parallel with the biblical Lazarus to Mizzi. As is well known, Lazarus is resurrected after having been buried in a grave of rocks for four days. Mizzi (or is it someone else?) then recalls the time when the family lived happily in their suburban house, reading Goethe's poetry and listening to Mozart's music. The dance hall setting is clearly contemporary urban. Jazz and negroes are mentioned.
Part 2, "Domik." The fragment is narrated by Willi's (male) friend which, however, becomes clear only in the totality of the poéma, as do many other facts and details. He recalls a moment, when, two years ago, he first came to the house where Willi and his two sisters lived. It was in May, on Whitsunday, there was a "merry" rain and the gardener was picking flowers in the garden. He stepped on the threshold of the house, and, hearing the peaceful laughter inside the house, saw two pairs of happy eyes behind the glass door. These eyes are those of Willi's two sisters, Mizzi and Marta. This moment, imprinted so vividly in the memory of Willi's friend, immediately precedes Willi's entering the room, a violin in his hands. Willi's friend wonders how he could have lived without knowing this family (or Willi) for thirty years and thanks God for having brought him here.

Part 3, "Micci i Marta." The fragment clearly establishes parallels between Mizzi and Marta with the biblical Mary and Martha (German Mizzi is a diminutive of Maria). It is not entirely clear, who is narrating this fragment - Willi, his friend, or the author-narrator. Possibly, their voices alternate. The fragment describes a joyful atmosphere in the house, where the two sisters and their brother live. The elder sister, Marta, is said to be always busy with taking care of the house and entertaining
endless guests. Mizzi is portrayed as moody, capricious, easily carried away, but likable. There are implications that she has some kind of illness. The narrator then remembers Willi, of whom he thinks as a handsome and very kind man. And finally, a conversation between the two sisters is recounted, during which Marta tells Mizzi that she is in love with Willi's friend. Mizzi, who is more insightful than her older sister, reveals to Marta that the man is not interested in her, but in Willi, implying his homosexuality.

Part 4, "Èdit." In this fragment, the author-narrator conveys the news of Edith Joyce's death, which for a short while occupies the attention of the city's inhabitants. Their curiosity, it is said, is transitory, because they cannot identify with someone's death, unable to conceive that one day they, too, will die. The reader is then told how Mizzi is struck by the news of Edith's death. She finds out about it from a newspaper, which she reads in a street-car. Mizzi remembers her friend Edith as timid, but cheerful and open to the everyday joys of life, such as dancing, opera and ski trips. Reminded of something in her thoughts, Mizzi hurriedly gets off the street-car and goes by a taxi to their suburban house. When she asks Marta about Willi, she is told that he has been arrested the day before. The news greatly disturbs Mizzi.
Part 5, "Sud." This fragment, presumably narrated by the author-narrator, conveys the beginning of Willi's trial. The author addresses the audience, wondering what has brought them to the court. The public feels sympathetic both toward the victim and the accused. The latter answers the judge without looking at him, covering his face with his hands, afraid to glance at his sisters. Mizzi and Marta sit on a bench in the company of an older gentleman with a black beard and a wolf fur hat. Holding Mizzi by her hand, the gentleman comforts the sisters. He tells them that they should trust in God's judgment, rather than in the judges' verdict. He also conveys that he clearly envisions Willi's path, which will be difficult but rewarding. Willi, says the older gentleman, will be deprived of his four senses - touch, vision, hearing and smell. His ligaments and joints will disintegrate and he will become like a corpse. But then, the "fifth sister" will appear and offer him golden bread and wine, after which golden blood will enter his vessels, and golden thoughts his mind. His senses will then return into their replenished dwelling and the person (that is Willi) will exit from his tomb, as Lazarus did.

The elderly gentleman's speech is interrupted by the witnesses' oath. There are four of them: a blind beggar; the proprietor of the brothel (?) where Edith lived; a male
prostitute and a detective with his dog. Mizzi links the number of witnesses, four, with the four senses which will be taken away from Willi, and which also symbolize the fullness of a square. Mizzi begs Willi to fulfill his destiny, so that she, too, may find salvation. While the testimonies are heard, the older gentleman continues to comfort Mizzi. In his pocket, the author states, there is a letter with an American stamp addressed to watch-maker Emmanuil Proške or Proška (Proshke or Proshka), in Wilmersdorf, Berlin.

Part 6, "Pervyj svidetel' (Sleporoždennyj)." The first witness, a blind beggar first tells about himself. He then recounts how he once came upon a young man, lying in the snow, and how he was told that he might have committed a murder. But when the beggar touched the young man's face, he discerned that his sins were not yet imprinted on his skin, which he conveyed to the young man. Deeply moved, the young man who, of course, is Willi, gave money to the beggar who then left.

Part 7, "Vtoroj svidetel' (Xozjajka)." The landlady of the place where Edith lived, first talks about her late husband, a policeman, who frequently had to determine people's fate sending them to death, or to the army. After her husband died, the woman rented out furnished rooms. It is not entirely clear whether her house is a "brothel" or
merely a house for "odd" people. Edith Joyce was one of her tenants. She was modest, but she did like to dance and she received many guests, among whom Willi was a frequent visitor. Willi's sister Mizzi and his friend, too, visited Edith. On the day of the murder, the landlady went to bed after midnight, when Willi was still with Edith. In the morning, when she brought her the usual cup of hot chocolate, and Edith did not open her door, the landlady made a forced entry and found the young woman lying on her bed with a dagger in her chest. There were two unfinished glasses with wine on the table, along with bottles, roses and a cake.

Part 8, "Tretij svidetel' (Šket)." In this fragment, a young male prostitute recounts his encounter with Willi on the night of the murder. Having recognized in Willi a potential, well-off client, the hungry prostitute followed him for some time. When Willi suddenly disappeared, the prostitute was determined to wait for him. Around ten o'clock, Willi came out, together with a young woman, presumably Edith. They were agitated, particularly Edith, and they argued. The prostitute, who, as he said, originally understood the meaning of the dialogue because his perceptions were sharpened by hunger, now could not make any sense out of it. In its fragmentary form and highly poetic flavor, the dialogue is indeed difficult to
interpret. Nevertheless, it is clear that Edith talks of the ambivalence of lightness and heaviness, while Willi suggests that (conscious) succumbing to a temptation is purifying and indicates inner strength. Edith is concerned, however, that one's "hand may get stuck," to which Willi responds that there is fire which melts any glue. Edith is curious, who is dearest to him, but he reminds her that he has already answered this question. Edith seems ill, but because of her illness, she says, her senses and thinking are more incisive. Finally, Edith wants to know Willi's opinion on whether it is right to leave (this world?) voluntarily. Willi thinks that all "departures" are predestined and that they happen when one has fulfilled one's role in life. After this strange conversation, Willi leaves and the male prostitute's patience is rewarded: he earns his supper, but feels a bizarre sense of regret for something.

Part 9, "Četveryj svidetel' (Syščik)." The detective whose task it was to trace the murderer after the discovery of the body, recounts how he found Willi, lying on the snow outside the city limits. He tells that he found Willi with the help of his trained dog, thus emphasizing the impartiality of this investigation. We also find out from his testimony that Edith was known to the police and that Willi did not resist his arrest.
Part 10, "Posle suda." The fragment opens with Mizzi's lament over Willi's departure. With it, the world turned into a jail for her, while before, Willi gave meaning to her life. She wonders why, in the court, silent and smiling, Willi did not reveal the truth. The truth has transpired by itself, however. Then we learn of a gathering of Willi's friends at Emmanuil's Proshke's. This gathering takes place behind a partition, where the ticking of clocks is peaceful and the host's voice is soothing, and where the sunset tells of the sunrise. His friends feel that Willi's absence has destroyed their unity: the fullness of a complete circle is impossible to regain. Looking at each other, they repeat: "you," which presumably signifies that they all share in the responsibility for what has happened.

Part 11, "Noč'ju." This fragment conveys Mizzi's meeting with her brother's friend. While walking in the city, she hears that someone is following her. Wanting to stay alone, she sits on a bench in the shadow of a bridge, but Willi's friend sits down next to her. Seeing the man who was loved by her brother, Mizzi experiences a profound antipathy. Then follows a dialogue between them. Willi's friend tells Mizzi that he now must assume her brother's role and take care of her. But Mizzi believes that Willi will come back and that their previous life will be
resumed. When she sees his skepticism, Mizzi begins to suspect that the man knows some secret about the murder. She even implies that he himself could have murdered Edith, seeing in her an obstacle to his relationship with Willi. The man rejects the accusation, and adds that no one is guilty of that murder. They walk together through the city. When its lights are left behind, they see the contours of the old house, where they all used to meet in the past.

Part 12, "Poseščenie." This fragment depicts Willi's stay in prison. In the solitude of a cell, reminiscent of a hospital ward or a monastery cell, time is slow and tangible. It is difficult to tell whether Willi is still alive or in the realm of the dead. Willi is looking at a linden tree from the window of his cell when the door opens and a black-bearded man, in a wolf fur hat, appears before him, carrying a round loaf of bread and a bottle of wine in his hands. He tells Willi that he knows everything about the case. He reveals the full names of the participants of the story - some of which the reader finds out for the first time: Vil'gel'm Štude (Wilhelm Schtude), Ernst fon Xoxendakel' (Ernst von Hohendackel), Marija (Maria) and Marta, Ėdit Džojs (Edith Joyce). He also states that he knows that Edith was not Willi's fiancée. He tells all this in order to prove to Willi that he possesses full
knowledge about the case, including its secrets. Since Willi is still skeptical, the man presents him with facts that have not featured in the newspapers. He tells Willi that he did not murder Edith, but accepted the responsibility, so that no suspicion would be cast on his friend.

Willi says that during the trial several truths clashed and that someone's truth pushed away another truth (or the truth?) and prevented him from speaking. Now his senses have disappeared and his ligaments and joints have disintegrated; thirst and a slight hunger are the only sensations he has retained. He then remarks that he has heard that savages sometimes eat their own god. He also adds that he died already before the trial, and that the trial only substantiated his real state.

With Willi's tasting of the wine and bread, brought by Proschke the miracle takes place: Divine blood is poured into his veins and his thoughts grow light. He also recalls that he knew his visitor, when he was still Willi and before he became Fridrix (Friedrich), Karl, Vol'fgang (Wolfgang) and others. Emmanuil invites Willi to exit the cell and start his life anew. Willi is concerned that Edith will not be resurrected. Emmanuil answers that, like everyone else, she, too, will arise to a new life. He informs Willi of a letter which he owns, written by Edith
before her death, freeing him, Willi, of all guilt. The fragment closes with Willi's exiting the jail.

Part 13, "Dom." The last fragment closes the cycle by depicting the original suburban setting. Willi, who has returned home, thinks with affection of the garden and the house, of life and death (decay), of the threshold across which he first saw his friend, and the balcony where he received the first lessons of love. He is surprised that Mizzi, pale and absorbed in her dreams, does not seem delighted about his return. She imagines that Edith, frail and harmless, is resting inside the house, but will soon come out. She remarks about the capriciousness of their fate and asks Willi whether he turned golden because of the "teacher's offerings;" she suggests that one should listen to him as a child would. She notices a small cypress in the garden which was not there before, and says, that it will grow tall and that the garden will turn into paradise. The sky is blue, the sounds of a bell are heard from far away, echoed by Willi's playing the violin. The picture is suffused with light and golden colors. Mizzi faints; the fragment (and the poëma) end with Willi's friend helping her to return to consciousness, and Willi seeing neither this, nor how the sky is growing yellow.
5.3 SEVERAL CRIME SCENARIOS AND ONE EMOTIONAL TRUTH: "LAZAR" AS A MODIFICATION OF THE DETECTIVE GENRE

Let us now turn to the analysis of the poëma. First, I would like to demonstrate how Kuzmin's principle of projecting multiple variants onto one invariant, is realized on the level of sujet. As I have previously indicated, the poëma's genre is a (mock) detective story. A young woman, Edith Joyce, is murdered and the reader is invited to solve the crime. His/her help is needed since the story lacks a "detective agent," constructing a coherent narrative of the murder out of the disjointed fragments of evidence. I believe that there are at least three feasible scenarios for the crime, which are suggested in the story.

According to the first scenario, Edith Joyce was Willi's mistress and and was murdered by him - either out of jealousy, or in order to get rid of an obstacle for his more recent homosexual relationship. The testimonies of four witnesses strongly support this version of the murder. The male prostitute heard Edith and Willi arguing on the night of the murder. Further, when the victim's landlady left her room at midnight, Willi was there with Edith; the next morning, she discovered Edith's dead body lying in bed, amidst the remainder of an intimate setting - two
glasses with wine in them, bottles and roses on the table. Soon after the murder occurred, the beggar met Willi outside the city, lying on the snow and clearly emotionally disturbed. In their short conversation, he intimated having murdered someone. And finally, the detective's hound, following the murderer's steps, led his master to a place outside the city, where they found and arrested Willi.

Several other details in the poëma support this scenario. For example, Mizzi's initial reaction on having learnt of Edith's murder, indicates that she thought of her brother as a possible suspect, if not the murderer. In the eyes of the judges and public, Willi's refusal to defend himself during the trial equals an admission of guilt. On the basis of this most apparent, most substantiated and most willingly accepted version of the murder, Willi was sentenced to death, or at least a life-long prison sentence (it remains ambiguous, whether the "prison" spoken of in the cycle functions as a metaphor for death, or should be understood literally).

According to the second scenario, also suggested in the poëma, Willi was involved both with Ernst von Hohendackel and Edith Joyce. Ernest, who could have thought of Edith as a barrier to their homosexual relationship, murdered her. By refusing to defend himself
during the trial, Willi accepted the responsibility for the crime, presumably in order to protect his friend and lover. Though there is less tangible evidence to support this version, that which is presented, does not completely invalidate it. The reader is made aware of Willi’s and Ernest’s homosexual love. From the testimony of the landlady, we also know, that both Willi and Ernest frequently visited Edith. The testimony of the male prostitute, which establishes that Willi left Edith when she was alive, could also be seen as supporting this second scenario - though it does not entirely repudiate the first one either. Such ambiguity is characteristic of virtually all the evidence. Moreover, this version is advanced by several characters. In their conversation after the trial, Mizzi openly accuses Ernest of having committed the murder:

-Известно, вижу, что-то вам,
Чего другой не знает,
Быть может, сами были там,
Где дух Эдит витает?

Зачем молчанием томить?
Сознайтесь: были? были?
Она могла помощи быть -
И вы ее убили

Так ясно все! Конечно, вы.
Другой посмел бы кто же?
Но он смолчал - и вы правы,
И все на бред похоже!

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The words of the omniscient Emmanuil Proschke said to Willi during his visit in the prison, may also be interpreted as supporting this version:

Mне все известно Вы ведь Вильгельм Штуде
У вас есть сестры, Марта и Мария,
И друг у вас Эрнест фон Гогендахель...
И Джойс Эдит вам не была невестой -
<..<
Что вы Эдит совсем не убивали,
A взяли на себя вину затем,
Чтоб не коснулась подозренье друга...

If the first version of the crime is based on tangible evidence presented by witnesses, who relied on their sensual perceptions, in the second scenario it is factors of an emotional nature, which serve as evidence. Willi's guilt according to the first version consists of an actual transgression, whereas in the second version, he merely shares moral responsibility for the crime and accepts the guilt in order to protect the friend.

The third version of the crime is presented even more subtly. I believe, that it is intimated that there was no murder at all, and that instead, Edith Joyce committed suicide. This is the least obvious scenario and it requires a more detailed explanation. During the trial, Mizzi and Marta are constantly accompanied by Emmanuil Proschke. In his pocket he is said to have a letter from America. Later, when he comes to release Willi from prison, he informs him of the letter written by Edith
shortly before her death, which presumably invalidates the evidence against Willi. Could this letter be Edith's suicide note? Further, the seemingly surprising fact that it was sent from America, may be explained by a Dostoevskijan subtext, which is evoked already by the subtly drawn parallels between the trial scene in the "Lazar'" and that in The Brothers Karamazov. In Dostoyevskij's novel, Dmitrij Karamazov, after he is convicted, considers an escape to America. Even more clarifying is the subtext of Crime and Punishment. There, Svidrigajlov repeatedly tells of his leaving for America, while contemplating suicide. The letter which is said to have been sent by Edith from "America," is therefore sent from the land of the dead. Considering, that one of Emmanuil Proschke's functions is that of a mediator between two realms of existence, such a "correspondence" between him and Edith is not surprising at all. Furthermore, Willi's concern that Edith will not be resurrected, which he expresses to Proschke, ("A Džojs Edit, bednjažka, ne voskresnet"), may be motivated by his awareness of the Church's position on suicide as a mortal sin.

The puzzling dialogue between Edith and Willi on the eve of her death, as it is related by the male prostitute, points to the young woman's intention to voluntarily end
her life, while Willi's words may be interpreted as encouraging this act. I will quote this dialogue:

Будто она ему Милый, ты видишь?
Легкая поступь тяжелей всех,
Легкий стук - это гроб забивают,
Плод получить - не сливы трясти.
Он ей - Когда тебя что смущает...
Ну, искренне, сделай и брось!
Тут ощущенье, крепость, сила
- "Сделай и брось!" А прилипнет рука?
- Есть огонь, всякий клей растопит
- Да, сгонь, и железо, и смерть!
- Тут умолкла Вдруг очень нежно
- Кто тебе дороже всего?
- Кто дороже всего, ты знаешь
Я говорил, не скрывал ничего
- Преступление - такая честность!
- Что с тобой? Ты сегодня больна?-
Ах, в болезни острее зренье,
Мысль яснеет, тончает слух! -
- Право, какая-то ночь вопросов!
- Что ж? Пускай, но скажи мне одно,
Больше я приставать не буду.
Прав ли тот, кто уходит сам?
Ну, уходит... ты понимаешь?
- Я далеко не фаталист.
Но считаю, что все уходят
Нам предписывает судьба
Тешимся детской свободной волей,
А уходим, окончив роль -
- Это ясно по крайней мере!

The ambiguity of lightness and heaviness, of visible ease and hidden uneasiness characterizes Edith's whole existence. Cheerful as she appears to be - a role perhaps

7Mizzie's personality is also depicted as ambiguous:

"Мицци, за что ни возьмется, мигом все одолеет,
Мигом забросит одно, мигом другое в уме
То ненасытно танцует, хочет, правит мотором,
То помрачнеет как ночь, молча запертся одна,
Час, полчаса просидит, плака, она неподвижно
Губы кривятся, дрожат, своят суставы болезнь.
imposed on her by her name, Joyce, - Edith knows of her
dark side, and of the enticing power of death. Presumably,
Willi, too, thinks of Edith as having an "uneasy"
personality: in the final part of the poëma, the
hallucinating Mizzi objects to such a characterization of
Edith by Willi: "Net, Villi, net. Ty byl ne prav. / U nej
prostoj i neznyj nrav. / Ona myšonka ne obidit..."® Given
Edith's dark sides, her committing the suicide in despair
after having learned of Willi's homosexuality and love for
Ernest, or perhaps out of sacrificial desire to free him of
herself, seems rather plausible.

In the contexts of Kuzmin's other works it also seems
likely that Edith committed suicide. In Kryl'ja, for
example, a young woman, Ida Gol'berg, also commits suicide

8Usually, in Kuzmin's works, such a split of personality is evaluated
as positive. Presumably, it is rooted in the discrepancy between his
own public image (with "legkij" being one of the most common
definition of his art) and his "authentic" emotional life, which was
far from "light." Prolonged periods of emotional distress were
particularly common in Kuzmin's youth, when, at least on two
occasions, he attempted to commit suicide. But in his later years,
too, he frequently had to fight depression. The ambiguity of
lightness and heaviness in his oeuvre certainly evokes Mandel'štam
treatment of this theme.
when she learns of the homosexuality of the man she loves, Štrup. Several other circumstances surrounding the suicides of these "superfluous" women are also analogous. If this third scenario is the "true" one, then Willi's silent acceptance of guilt during the trial is entirely understandable: because of the difficulty of proving Edith's suicide, Ernest could have become a primary suspect. He may also feel morally guilty of her death - because he encouraged it, perhaps even performed the actual deed she was afraid of committing. The ambiguity which allows for various interpretations, is characteristic of a great deal of other details and circumstances surrounding the murder.

For example, the topic of voluntary departure in Edith's and Willi's conversation may pertain both to her intention to commit suicide, or to end the relationship.

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9 For example, compare part 4 in the poem with the scene in Kryl'ia when Van'ja learns of Ida Gol'berg's death: "Что такое?" - остановился Алексей Васильевич, читавший утреннюю газету: "Загадочное самоубийство. Вчера, 21 мая, по Фурштадтской улице, я " в квартире английского подданиего А. Д. Штрупа покончила счеты с жизнью молодая, полная надежд и сил девушка Ида Гольберг. Юная самоубийца просит в своей предсмертной записке никого не винить в этой смерти, но обстановка, в которой произошло это печальное событие, заставляет предполагать романтическую подкладку. "Proza I, 236 Both Ida and Edith leave notes in which they accept the responsibility for their death; in both works protagonists learn of the women's death from a newspaper; in both cases the suicide takes place in May; the act of suicide in both stories is preceded by an argument between the woman and a man. Furthermore, the names Štude and Štrup sound similar and Ida and Edith are both foreign-sounding names. Also curious is the fact, that the national identity of Štrup (he is English) is the same as Edith's.
with Willi. The text's construction also permits for a "qui pro quo" reading: when Edith talks about her fatal departure, Willi refers to ending their relationship. In that case, his encouragement of Edith's suicide - by telling her that departures are not the acts of free will and that giving in to a temptation testifies to honesty and strength - is unintentional. If it is intentional, however - this possibility is also included in the text - then this encouragement constitutes Willi's (moral) guilt, if it is guilty.

I believe that Kuzmin deliberately constructed the text of this detective poéma in such a way, that it would simultaneously contain several narratives of the crime. Willi may have murdered Edith, or he may not have done so; he may have "covered up" for his friend, or he may not; (and his friend may have committed the homicide, or he may not); Edith may have taken her own life, or not, and, if she did, she could have done so with Willi's encouragement, or not. Ultimately, says Kuzmin, it is irrelevant, which

The possibilities do not end here. For example, Mizzi's role in the case remains questionable. Her extraordinary love for her brother has some incestuous overtones. Possibly incest constitutes her and Willi's sin. His voluntary self-sacrifice should then be seen as an attempt to cleanse himself and Mizzi of the sin of incest.

Вилли, слушай! Вилли, брат любимый, Опустишься ниже до предела! Насладись до дна своим позором, Чтоб и я могла с тобою вместе Золотым ручьем протечь из снега!
particular version was the actual one, because on some
deeper level - perhaps it can be called the level of
emotional truth - they can all be equated.

The text-invariant on which all possible scenarios of
the crime are projected, may possibly be presented in the
following schematic way. A group of young people live a
joyous and careless life, indulging in entertainment, arts,
and most importantly, love. Their passions and sins
threaten to destroy their seemingly harmonious existence,
however. There are hints in the poëma of the characters'
involved in infidelities, incestuous relationships,
prostitution. Their close interconnectedness is of highly
emotional, and in some cases of an erotic nature: Ernest
loves Willi; Willi loves Ernest, but he also has a
relationship with Edith (as well as male prostitutes);
Edith loves Willi, but also accepts (as visitors?) Ernest
and Mizzi; Mizzi loves Edith (like a friend?), and - in an
exceptionally strong way - her brother Willi; there is also

Я люблю тебя, как не полюбит
Ни жена, ни мать, ни брат, ни ангел!
< >
Зачем идти домой,
Когда не встречу брата?
Весь мир мне был тюрьмой,
А жизнь цвела когда-то
Привольно и богато
Тобой, одним тобой

Even more questionable is the role of Proschke, who could have
orchestrated the whole incident. This aspect will be discussed later
in this chapter.
Marta, who is in love with Ernest; Ernest wants to replace Willi for Mizzi after he has "departed" and so forth.

Eventually, when their passions rent the veil of a seemingly harmonious existence, Edith decides to sacrifice herself and "leave." Or else, someone decides to arrange this "departure," even if it involves a transgression. Thus, Edith dies. When, as a result of the investigation, Willi is arrested and tried, he silently accepts the guilt and is convicted. Whether his guilt is actual or merely moral, remains unclear; moreover, it is irrelevant. Spiritual transgression, insists Kuzmin, following the ideas, formulated by Dostoevskij in his The Brothers Karamazov, equals actual transgression. It is, however, clearly ascertained in the poëma, that all other characters share in the responsibility for Edith's death. Thus, Willi's acceptance of the communal guilt must be viewed as an act of sacrifice carried out in imitation of Christ, so that those immersed in sin, may be given a chance for redemption. Willi's release from the prison rendered in terms of his resurrection, supports such an understanding of the story's invariant.

I have examined the sujet of Kuzmin's cycle "Lazar'." Using a detective story as its framework, Kuzmin expands the capacities of this genre, following a Dostoevskijan tradition. He provides the reader with such fragments of
evidence, which allow him to construct several different scenarios of the crime. But instead of choosing one scenario, corresponding to the "actuality" of the crime - which the detective genre requires - the author makes these narratives coexist. In other words, instead of resolving the case, he equalizes various versions of the crime, through discerning in all of them a common emotional truth. This is how Kuzmin's principle of establishing universal equivalents, onto which different variants can be projected is realized in the sujet of "Lazar'." Now I would like to turn to the examination of the poéma's cultural voices, the employment of which is also based on the principle of multiple projections.

5.4 THE POLYPHONY OF CULTURAL VOICES

The discussion of the cultural polyphony of the poéma "Lazar'" is best begun by establishing its cultural-geographic locus. As several details in the poéma indicate, its events unfold in Germany of the 1920's, although this is never clearly stated. The location is however suggested in the characters' names. The two main male characters bear German names: Wilhelm Schtude and Ernst von Hohendackel. The names of Willi's other
incarnations revealed in his conversations with Proschke are also German - Friedrich, Karl, or Wolfgang. Marta and Mizzi are common German names, Mizzi being a diminutive of Maria. So are Mina and Fritz (the landlady and her deceased husband). There is also a foreigner (Edith Joyce) and a semi-foreigner (Emmanuil Proschke) whose functions will be discussed below.

The exact location of the events depicted in the poéma seems to be Berlin and its suburb. Berlin is in the address on the letter, which Proschke is said to carry in his pocket during the trial. It reads: Berlin, Wilmersdorf, to the watchmaker Emmanuil Proschke.

Berlin had a special significance for Kuzmin. His poem "Poručenie" and several other works reveal that he viewed this city as a particular cultural focus. He linked several of his favorite artists, Hoffmann, Mozart, Chodowiecki and Goethe, with Berlin. They all lived there for some time:

Если будешь, странник, в Берлине,
у дорогих моему сердцу немцев,
где были Гофман, Моцарт и Ходовецкий
(и Гете, Гете, конечно)
Kuzmin's presentation of Berlin is also very intimate, very personal. This, on one hand, derives from his general proclivity to "domesticate" culture, but on the other, is also due to personal links with the city. On his way to Italy during the memorable trip of 1897, Kuzmin visited some German cities, including Berlin. Later, in 1920's, a large number of Russian émigrés lived in this metropolitan city, many of whom were Kuzmin's personal friends. In the poem "Poručenie," partially quoted above, the author asks a traveler who is going to Berlin, to look up two old friends, his "two Tamaras," Persic and Karsavina, and tell them of his life in Russia. Although Kuzmin, as far as I know, always was determined to stay in Russia, in his works he admitted the possibility of other scenarios for his life, somewhere in Germany, maybe even in Berlin. In the short story of 1922 "Podzemnye ruč'i," mentioned in the previous chapter, a certain Alexej Mixajlović (which is Kuzmin's name in reverse) has emigrated to Berlin and the narrator wonders whether he, a truly Russian person, misses his home or not. The publication of several of his works in 1923 in Berlin may have been seen by Kuzmin as reinforcing his link with that city and making him, at

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11 "Я был в Берлине и в городах Германии, дольше жил в Мюнхене, где тогда жил Чичерин" Mixail Kuzmin i russkaja kul'tura XX veka, 152
least to some degree, a part of its cultural heritage. Using Berlin as a setting may have another reason as well: Berlin was an important locale for E.T.A. Hoffmann: it was a city where he (and many of his characters) lived for a while some hundred years ago.

The impact of Hoffmann's writings on Kuzmin, as discussed above, is considerable and frequently emphasized by the writer himself. In the contexts of the present discussion, it is particularly important to establish that Kuzmin deliberately constructed his image in imitation of Hoffmann. In his childhood and youth, Kuzmin was enchanted by the magic of Hoffmann's tales. As he wrote to his friend Čičerin, he consciously "modelled" himself after both Hoffmann and his characters. In his letters to Čičerin in 1890 Kuzmin wrote:

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12 It is interesting to note that when "Paraboly" came out in Berlin in 1923, Pasternak was staying there. Soon after having returned to Russia, he publishes his story "Vozdušnyje puti," which he dedicated to Kuzmin. In her article "Pasternak i Kuzmin" (to interpretatsii rasskazov "Vozdušnyje puti") E.Tolstaja suggests that the dedication may have been linked with Pasternak's decision to return, stimulated, at least partially, by Kuzmin's stoicism. Tolstaja (1989), 90 In his monograph on Kuzmin's poetry, Markov relates a curious episode, which suggests that some of Kuzmin's manuscripts might have ended up (only to be destroyed) in Berlin. Although this information is probably anecdotal, I would like to quote it nevertheless: "Ироническим эпизодом к творчеству Кузmina может послужить следующий эпизод: Его друзья попали во время войны в Германию. Они взяли с собой рукописи поэта и наконец оставили чемоданы с вещами перед знакомыми под Берлином, в гараже. Там потом прошла линия фронта, гараж был разграблен, вещи растратили. Местные жители видели, как русские солдаты крутили козы ножки из тонкой бумаги, валявшейся в большом количестве на земле. Может быть, это были стихи и проза Кузмина, так самоотверженно спасаемые друзьями поэта?" Markov (1977), 397
While he maintained his interest in Hoffmann throughout his writing career, his works in the 1920's mark a peak of interest in German culture and Hoffmann, one which very likely was triggered by cinematographic works of German Expressionists. In several of Kuzmin's poems of that period the images are borrowed from Expressionist films as well as Hoffmann's writings. It should also be recalled that in his long poem "Lesok" (in the part "Gofmanovskij lesok") Kuzmin simultaneously projects himself and Hoffmann onto the protagonist who reads (composes?) the fragments of this chapter, therefore, at least partially identifying himself with Hoffmann. This

13The first quote is from the letter to Čišerin of July 9, 1890; the second is of July 16, 1890, as quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad (1993), 82. Several of Kuzmin's letters present additional evidence of his extraordinary interests in Hoffmann: "Темные зимние вечера у печки, когда я зачитывался Гофманом! И потом наяву я грезил и вечерними колоколами в Вартбурге и Нюрнберге, и дорогой, бедной и прекрасной, и человеком, который полюбил автомат" (from Kuzmin's letter to Čišerin of July 18, 1893, Ibid, 71). In the same letter Kuzmin also writes: "У меня была в числе других подруг маленький синий чулок, Эина, она писала и убедила меня записывать свои фантазии Она писала длинный моральный роман про детей, я новеллы (3), утрированное подражание Гофману "Впрочем, мне тогда было уже 11 лет"
fact is important for understanding some intricacies of the poéma "Lazar'.'"

Depicting Berlin in "Lazar'," Kuzmin follows Expressionist preferences (particularly those of cinematographers) for a contemporary urban milieu. His Berlin is a cosmopolitan city of the 1920's, full of attractions, but also of social, moral and physical ills. It is in Berlin's restaurants and dance clubs that negroes play jazz music and young people dance "black-bottom" and other fashionable dances; it is near the movie theaters and cafés of Berlin that Willi may meet a male prostitute and it is in one of Berlin's brothels that "actress" Edith Joyce lives and dies. The poéma's location is however divided between Berlin proper and one of its suburbs, half-rural Wilmersdorf where Willi and his sisters live.

The portrayal of the suburban family house and its garden in "Lazar'" is strikingly similar to the setting depicted in the "Königsberg fragment" which Kuzmin had used with such frequency previously and which has been examined in detail in the previous chapter. In the part "Domik," for example, we see the garden during a "merry" rain (reminiscent of the rainbow scene in the Königsberg fragment); the gardener is picking flowers (like the uncle in the poem "Naverno, nežnyj Xodoveckij...") and Ernst is stepping across the threshold of the house (like the boy in
the "Königsberg fragment"). The visual character of the picture with its roots in Chodowiecki's art, is emphasized by an almost cinematographical "freezing" of the story at this particular moment. What happened before this moment, is rendered in the past tense, while, that which takes place after it, is projected into the Future. I will quote this section, marking by italics the images reminiscent of Kuzmin's depiction of the Königsberg garden:

Домик

С тех пор прошло уж года два,  
А помню, как теперь,  
Высоких лип едва-едва  
Коснулся месяц мая.

Веселый дождик духов день  
Садовник свет цветы  
Едва ступил я на ступень, -  
Услышал тихий смех.

А за стеклом две пары глаз  
Смеются, словно май, -  
И Вилли в комнату сейчас  
Со скрипкою вбежит.

Как мог быть с вами незнаком  
Я целых тридцать лет?  
Благословен наш сельский дом,  
Благословен Господь!

In her recollections of their suburban home, Mizzi mentions Mozart and Goethe: "Gde naš ljubimyj zagorodnyj domik, / Sestrica Marta s Mozartom i Gete?" These names, as well as Hoffmann's and Chodowiecki's, are, as we have seen, indelibly associated with the "Königsberg location." This leads us to conclude that Kuzmin moved his "Königsberg
garden" - with all its aesthetic implications - to the Berlin suburb of "Lazar'." Considering that Berlin also belongs to the Prussian historic and cultural ambiance, as well as the fact that Kuzmin linked Königsberg to Berlin (both were for various time periods visited by many of his favourite writers or artists), such a "relocation" is not surprising.

Having established the importance of the poéma's "double" location, Berlin and one of its suburb, I would like to discuss the significance of the names of its characters. Kuzmin always assigned much meaning to the process of naming. In this poéma, too, names are highly revealing. Most of them, as I have mentioned, are German. Willi's last name, étude (Schtude), is clearly linked to "studieren" and the Bildungsroman is for that matter a very German genre. Since Mizzi and Marta are Schtude's sisters, their surname of course is Schtude as well. Their first names, (Marta and Mizzi, or Maria) reinforce the poéma's Christian-mythical layer. Willi is openly identified with the Lazarus of the Scriptures, who, on the fourth day after his death, was resurrected by Christ; his sisters' names correspond to the names of Lazarus' sisters. As in the Gospel of John, the older sister, Marta, is a good
housekeeper and hostess, while Mizzi is more impractical, and yet, more insightful and spiritual.¹⁴

Ernst, the name of Willi's friend, points to the honesty and earnestness of his character. Considering this connotation, his confession to Mizzi should carry much weight. In it, he reveals that neither he, nor anyone else, is responsible for Edith's death. Honest in everything, Ernst is also open about his homosexuality. It is also possible that, when constructing his last name, von Hohendackel, Kuzmin had "Dach" (roof) rather than "Dackel" ("dachshund") in mind. Therefore, it could mean something like "from the high roof." Thus, Ernst von Hohendackel, "the sincere one from (von) the high dwelling," could be a Christ-figure. Such reading is reinforced by the fact that in the Bible, Christ is Lazarus' friend.

¹⁴Когда Иисус и ученики Его были в пути, Он вошел в одно селение. Женщина, по имени Марфа, оказалла Ему радушное гостеприимство. У неё была сестра. Эта её Мария. Она сидела у ног Господа и слушала, что Он говорил. Марфа же была поглощена заботами. Она подошла к Нему и сказала: Господи! Разве Тебя не волнует, что моя сестра оставила меня одну делать всю работу? Скажи, чтобы она помогла мне. // Но Господь ответил ей: "Марфа, Марфа! Ты заботишься и беспокоишься о многом, а нужно только одно. Поэтому Мария избрала для себя благую часть, которая не отнимется у неё." (Luke). Compare this with the text of the poem:

Марта сидела с ног принять, занять разговором, Всех накормить, напоить, розы поставить на стол Мария - Ты не хозяйка только бы ей наряжаться, Только бы книги читать, только бы бегать в саду.

Выйдёт, как после припадка, сядет, глядит виновато Спрашивать вдумает кто, молвит... сидела у ног...
Edith Joyce's name indicates that she is English, and therefore, a foreigner in Germany. The name "Joyce" points to her cheerful and joyous sensuality. The image of a lively, down to earth and likable English girl may have been modeled after Blondie, a young heroine of Kuzmin's favorite opera "The Abduction from the Seraglio" by Mozart. In Kuzmin's works there are a great many foreigners or "naturalized" citizens: those who seem to "belong," but whose foreign names give them away as strangers and holders of a somewhat different outlook. Their function in Kuzmin's works is always differentiating: their knowledge of "another" perspective, or attitude, makes them keenly aware of the particularities of the standpoint and sensibility of this one. Encountering other people, they assist them in deautomatizing their existence and becoming aware of the need for change. To this function Kuzmin always assigned a highly positive value.

The duality of Edith, as well as her awareness of it, emerges most clearly in her conversation with Willi on the eve of her death. In it, she states that lightness and heaviness are but two sides of one thing. During this conversation, the cheerful and easy-going young lady suddenly reveals suicidal tendencies. Her role in the

15Edith could also have been modeled on Lilian Harvey, an English film actress who made a brilliant career in Germany.
poéma vis-a-vis other characters is indeed differentiating— in several ways. For example, Edith aids Willi to fully delineate his sexual preferences and to arrive at a full awareness of his homosexuality; incidentally, such is the function of many of Kuzmin's heroines. It also seems, that Edith taught her more serious German friends a joyful and sensual perception of life. Most importantly, however, with the final act of her life, her death, Edith shook their lives out of their rut, "laid bare" the destructive egotism of their existence and made them aware of their spiritual needs. Willi's sacrificial act of accepting the responsibility for a crime he (probably) did not commit, should be then seen as his response to the challenge of Edith's sacrifice.

The name of another semi-foreigner in the poéma, that of Emmanuil Proške, is ambiguous, as is the role he plays in it. His first name, Emmanuil, is (biblical) Hebrew and means "God is with us," while the last name, Proške (Proschke), could be an ordinary German name, possibly of Slavic origins. Because of its Slavic elements, and because it is presented only in the dative case, it may also be "Proška" (Proschka). As has been pointed out in the previous chapter, names of mixed origin are not

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16 For example, in Russian, Proška is a common diminutive for "Proxor."
uncommon in Kuzmin's works. For example, a German-Czech composer in the story "Smertel'naja roza" is called Kaspar Laska, his first name being Hebrew (like Emmanuil), and his last name - Slavic (Czech). As in the case of a foreigner living abroad (Edith Joyce), a person of a double national and cultural identity has an advantageous deautomatizing perspective on both cultural sensibilities.

The name Emmanuil, "God [is] with us," "fits" the biblical plane of the story: because Proschke possesses Divine powers with which to resurrect Willi-Lazarus, he is associated with Christ, but, most importantly, serves as a mediator between the realms of life and death. Considering the biblical implications of the poéma, Willi's conviction and prison sentence should be understood as his death. As in the biblical story of Lazarus' death and resurrection, the physical disintegration of his body is stressed, so in the poéma the deprivation of Willi's senses is emphasized:

Отнимаются четыре чувства:  
Осязание, зрение, слух - возьмутся,  
Обоняние испарится в воздух,  
Распадутся связки и суставы,  
Сстанет человек плачевной трупа

Willi's symbolic disintegration begins already in court, where each testimony contributes to his conviction

\[17\text{It points to the "reality" of Lazarus' death, and therefore, accentuates the miraculous nature of his rebirth.}\]
and, therefore, death. Every witness testifying against Willi, takes away one of his senses – that particular one, on which he, or she, relied in observing the circumstances of the crime. The blind beggar’s evidence is obtained through the sense of touch, the landlady’s – through vision, the male prostitute’s – through hearing, and the detective’s – through his dog’s sense of smell. As a result of the trial, Willi is sentenced to prison, where his four-month stay is comparable to Lazarus’ remaining in the grave for four days. In his prophecy regarding Willi’s fate, Proschke emphasizes that, while his four senses would disappear, the fifth one, that of taste, would remain, so that when the time came, the fifth sister would appear and offer Willi “golden bread and wine,” which would revitalize him. It is not clear who the fifth sister is and why it is Proschke himself, rather than she, who ultimately resurrects Willi.¹⁸ She may be love, “ljubov’,”¹⁹ and Proschke, in his Christ-hypostasis, embodies it too. It is clear, however, that the fifth sense, that of taste, is

¹⁸It is possible, however, that while “four” represents the fullness, as it is emphasized in the poem, “five” stands for the human spirit, the fifth essence, or quintessence.

¹⁹One of Kuzmin’s early poems, from the cycle “Aleksandrijskie pesni” narrates of four sisters, who loved for four different reasons, had different desires and then stopped loving because of four different reasons. The poem ends as follows: “Нас было четыре сестры, четыре сестры нас было, а, может быть, нас было не четыре, а пять?” The fifth sister is thus love itself.
associated with spiritual yearning (as hunger and thirst) and that the aesthetic taste is the pledge of life.

The ritual of resurrection takes place in the cell of the prison, which is compared to a monastery (a sacral locus): "I serdce slovno perestalo bit'sja, / I steny bely, kak v monastyre." Emmanuil Proschke offers Willi to taste of bread and drink of wine, i.e. of Christ's sacrament. Willi's comment on savages eating their god out of love, underlines the sacramental nature of the ceremony. But it also seems to signify Willi's self-identification with Christ, as well as the suffering god of the Dionysian type, (with the word "savages" used in the poem reactivating the pagan context): 20

Willi's partaking in the Eucharist is depicted in ambiguous terms, as so many other things in the poema. On one hand, it signifies his resurrection, on the other, it is rendered as a stage in Willi's dying (with the help of

20This paragraph underlines Ivanovian layer of the poema. During the early years of his writing career Kuzmin took part in numerous discussion which involved the notion of suffering Dionysius. In the 1920's, when Kuzmin often stressed the need to return to the symbolic and emotional roots of art, such reminiscence of his immersion in Symbolism, is not surprising.
Emmanuil). Such dual readings are possible because Willi's status prior to his meeting with Emmanuil is unclear: was he really dead, or only imprisoned? If he was dead, then his prison cell is a metaphor of the grave and Emmanuil Proschke makes him exit it, as Christ made Lazarus come out of his grave. However, if Willi was literally imprisoned, then Proschke freed him from the prison of existence, of life. This second reading explains Proschke's association with death, suggested, for example, by his sinister appearance. Similarly, in "Forel' razbivaet led", after

21 Several other details make the second reading plausible. For example, the golden color, which Willi sees upon having eaten the bread and drunk the wine, is, in the beginning of the poem, linked with decay and death:

- О, словно золото! А хлеб какой!
Я никогда такой не видел корки!
Вливается божественная кровь!
Крылатыми становятся мысли!
Да это - не вино, не хлеб, а чудо!

(1)
- Ах, Мицу, дорогая - О, позволь,
Мне опуститься вновь в небытие,
Где золотая кровь и золотые
Колосья колются, и запах тленья,
Животворит спасительную боль!

Also compare "Крылатыми становятся все мысли" with the line in the poem "Под вечер выйдя в луга поэмы" describing the scene of the lyrical hero's imagined death:

В таком пленительном горении
Легка и незаметна смерть
Покинет птицу клетку узкую,
Растает тело - все забудь
(>)
Ведь мысли сделались летучими.
having resurrected his double, the lyrical hero is unsure whether the two of them are alive or dead:

Живы мы? и все живы
Мы мертвы? Завидный гроб!

One more cultural association, connected with Proschke's first name needs attention. The name "Emmanuil" prompts the analogy with the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. Already in "Lesok," the link between Kant and the Königsberg locale (for which the suburb of Berlin is now substituted) is suggested by the author's friend, but the author immediately proclaims this connection to be superficial: although Kant was born in Königsberg, he did not embody its spirit, as did Hoffmann or Chodowiecki, he implies. In "Lazar'" Emmanuil Proschke is a watchmaker, as is indicated on the letter sent to him from America. He "deals" with and "makes" time. When Willi's friends come to his place after the trial, they gather, as we are told, behind a partition:

Начало всех начал друзей сознало
К Еммануилу за передгородку
Тут ничего о Вилли не напомнят,
Тут тихие часових успокоит,
Глубокий голос утешает раны.

In Kant's philosophy, time and space are interpreted as categories which restrain our perceptions, and make our
full cognition of the world impossible. It would then seem that Kuzmin reiterates the Symbolists’ criticism of the philosopher as exemplified in Blok’s poem “Immanuil Kant” (1903). In this poem, Kant is depicted as a doll-like, tiny, pitiful figure, comfortably sitting in a dark confined space behind a screen, unwilling to look beyond its limits, rejoicing at the sight of his wrinkled, aged little hands and feet.\textsuperscript{22}

If Kuzmin in fact meant to evoke the German philosopher in the character of the mysterious elderly man, it is possible that, by “assigning” a Slavic-sounding last

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\textsuperscript{22}Иммануил Кант

Сижу за ширмой У меня
Такие крохотные ножки
Такие ручки у меня,
Такое темное окошко
Тепло и темно Я гашу
Свечу, которую приносят,
Но эти ручки. Я влюблен
В мою морщинистую кожу
Могу увидеть сладкий сон,
Но я себя не потревожу:
Не потревожу забытья,
Вот этих бледных на окошке
И ручки скрещиваю я,
И так же скрещиваю ножки
Сижу за ширмой Здесь тепло
Здесь кто-то есть Не надо свечки
Глаза бездонны, как стекло
На ручке сморщенной - колечки"

Even if the word "Kroška" is not used in the poem, it seems to be encoded in it (in the context of the words: "kroxotnyj," "nožki," "okoško"). Kuzmin’s Proschke is probably meant to evoke Blok’s Kant-Kroška then. Among other works of the Symbolists which denounce Kant’s philosophy, A.Bely’s Peterburg most readily comes to mind.
name to him, Kuzmin intended to "dilute" Kant's dry (German) rationalism with a (Slavic) faith in man's ability to reach the transcendental. Given Kuzmin's high appraisal of German-Slavic sensibility and his faith in its fruitfulness, such an assumption seems feasible. The playful manipulation with names, characteristic of Kuzmin's writing in general, is based on his theory of correspondence between a name and the essence in art, as opposed to the arbitrariness of their link in life. The philosopher Kant, Kuzmin seems to imply, although called Immanuil, ("God [is] with us"), does not become God's messenger, as his philosophy testifies, whereas Emmanuil Proschke of the poéma "Lazar" does fulfill the Divine task encoded in his name, thanks to the Slavic "dilution." However, it is not excluded that Kant had a positive meaning for Kuzmin in the first place. Kant emphasized man's cognitive limitations, but also believed that death opened the door to the transcendental.

There are other sides to Emmanuil Proschke, besides those suggested by his affinity with Christ and Death and a "slavicized" version of Kant. These are discussed below. Now, however, I would like to continue examining those cultural subtexts, which are encoded in the characters' names. In chapter 12 of the poéma we are told that Willi's reincarnation was accompanied by a change of name into no
less than Friedrich, Karl, Wolfgang, or something even "more marvellous."23 A well-known case of (self-) renaming in cultural history and, in addition, a renaming by a writer whom Kuzmin admired, may cast light on this "strange" episode in the poëma. Hoffmann, after whom, as I have mentioned, Kuzmin modeled himself, substituted the "Wilhelm" in his name for "Amadeus," in Mozart's honor. The transformation of Willi, which is a diminutive form of "Wilhelm", into "Wolfgang" - Mozart's other name - is undoubtedly linked with this fact of Hoffmann's biography.

I suspect that Friedrich and Karl also have their real prototypes, most likely persons belonging to the circle of Hoffmann's friends. Friedrich, perhaps, refers to Friedrich Ludwig Zacharias Werner (1768-1823), a writer and friend of Hoffmann's, presumably a prototype of the young man in "Lesok" ("Gofmanovskij lesok") who takes the author to the puppet theater to see the performance of "Faust."24 As far as "Karl" is concerned, I am not able to trace its function in the poëma. But the fact, that Willi's friend and "double" von Hohendackel also bears one of Hoffmann's

23 И вас я вспоминаю. Вас видел, еще когда я назывался Вилли.
Теперь я, может быть, уж Фридирих, Карл,
Вольфганг, или как-нибудь еще чуднее.

24 The connection to Emperor Friedrich (also linked with Berlin) is also possible.
names (Ernest / Ernst), reveals that their fellowship and brotherhood are based on shared preferences in art, and not only on sexual attraction.  

The names selected by Kuzmin seem to suggest that Willi, an artistically inclined young homosexual man, living in Berlin of the 1920's, is a reincarnation of Hoffmann. On one hand, this supposition helps discern the whole Hoffmann layer in the poéma, and on the other, establishes Kuzmin's self-identification with Willi. I have already noted, how the idyllic Königsberg setting in Kuzmin's poetics is emblematic of Hoffmann's (and Chodowiecki's) aesthetics, and how it is transformed into a Berlin suburban "paradise" in the poéma about urban Germany of the 1920's. Part of the cycle takes place in the metropolis itself, however, and in some ways it also resembles the Berlin of the early nineteenth century - the time when Hoffmann lived there. For example, the restaurants where Willi goes to dance and where contemporary jazz music is played, may be seen as modern transformations of those cafés and wine cellars in Berlin,

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25 The fact that the two men met on Whitsunday underlined the spirituality of their love. I would also like to note here that the highly concealed, but persistent link of Kuzmin's writings of the 1920's with Hoffmann, were, at least partially, in polemics with the writers of "Serapion Brotherhood." While they openly proclaimed their link with Hoffmann, in reality, as Kuzmin stressed in his "Pis'mo v Pekin," there was nothing in common between them and Hoffmann ("Го́фман, ко́нечно, и в пoмиno нет") Kuzmin (1989), 391
where Hoffmann and his friends — as well as his heroes — spent much time. Incidentally, Hoffmann's short story "Ritter Gluck" (1809), depicting a young narrator's encounter with Gluck's reincarnation in Weber's Café in Berlin some twenty-two years after the composer's death, could have suggested to Kuzmin the very idea of an artist's reincarnation. Considering Kuzmin's personal affinity with Berlin, albeit mostly in his imagination, he could have pictured himself, as a reincarnated Hoffmann, living, like Willi, in the modern Berlin of his day. It is interesting to note that by reincarnating Hoffmann in the homosexual character Willi, Kuzmin "assigns" the writer homosexual inclinations.26 This accentuates Kuzmin's sense of affinity with Hoffmann. In the long poem "Lesok", there is a subtle hint that Hoffmann was a homosexual in the depiction of the author's and his friend's visit to the theater. Given Kuzmin's views on homosexuality as largely a cultural phenomenon, such an "alteration" of Hoffmann's biography is not surprising.27 It also seems that in his "Lazar" Kuzmin

26 Another homosexual man with the name "Villi" in Kuzmin's works also has "literary" origins. In "Lesok" ("Šekspirovskij lesok") there is a certain Willie Hughes. According to Oscar Wilde's story "The Portrait of Mr.W.H." he was a young actor of Shakespeare's theater who played female roles. To him, according to Wilde, Shakespeare dedicated his sonnets (Mr. W.H.).

27 I. Paperno, in her article "Dvojničestvo i ljubovnij treugol'nik: poetičeskij mif Kuzmina i ego puškinskaja proekcija" showed how in his "Forel" razbivaet led" Kuzmin alters the love triangle Puškin-Gončarova-Dantes, assigning homosexual inclinations to Puškin.
begins to perceive homosexuality as the first stage of celestial sexlessness. Such perception could motivate the projection of a homosexual relationship between Willi and Ernest, onto the "friendship" of the biblical characters Lazarus and Christ.

There are several other cultural subtexts in "Lazar'" which, if not considered, limit our understanding of this complex work. Such, for example, is the subtext of German Expressionist cinematography. Kuzmin's interest in Expressionism, (particularly cinema) during the 1920's, was pronounced. As I have pointed out in the beginning of this chapter, the cinematographic montage principle influenced "Lazar'"s structural principle. The preference of the contemporary cinema for depicting urban milieus and the life of the lower classes, effected the poéma's subject matter and genre (detective). The poéma's appeal to "bare" human nature and its acute criticism of positivist sensibility and the protest against the mechanization of life, also reveal the impact of Expressionism. In the "Lazar'", one can particularly discern the influence of two Expressionist movies, which, as is known, affected Kuzmin a

"Согласно логике Кузминского мифа о любовном треугольнике, инстинктивным партнером Пушкина является ветренная "брюлловская красавица", а прекрасный юноша-воин, Дантес. Стреляя в соперника, Пушкин стреляет в "названного брата", или в двойника. В результате, он неизбежно гибнет сам; дуэль Пушкина с Дантесом оказывается самоубийством." *Studies in the life and works of Mihail Kuzmin*, 75

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great deal at that time: "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" by R. Wiene and "Doctor Mabuse" by Fritz Lang.

Let us first look at how the protagonists of these two films have contributed to the complexities of Emmanuil Proschke's character. The sphere of death always fascinated Kuzmin. In his works, images of death include both the horrific decay of death and the sweet hope of paradise, creating a mixture of repulsion and transcendental magic. Therefore, it is understandable why these two films, with their shockingly "estranged" depiction of death, and their seductive dream of resurrection, found such an enthusiastic viewer in Kuzmin. In his diary, he recounts his reactions to "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," the film which remained his absolutely favorite:

Doctor Caligari and Doctor Mabuse, both mesmerists, horrifying magicians and manipulators, have, in some way, effected the character of Proschke. Although he does not

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28 As quoted in Bogomolov (1995), 207
seem as frightening as the two doctors, he possesses, like they do, the power to hypnotize and the ability to manipulate people's destinies. Willi's staying in a small prison cell is reminiscent of Cezare's life in a coffin in "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari." Like the latter, Willi is presumably dead, his four senses vanished, and his joints and ligaments disintegrated. His revival carried out by Proschke, is analogous to Caligari's awakening the somnambula. Willi's unexpected appearance in a public place (dance club) where he is seen by Mizzi, is comparable to the scene at the fair in "Caligari." The poéma's last part "Dom," I believe, is meant to evoke the film's final scene at the asylum for the mentally ill. The parallel helps to explain the sense of confusion and disarray which permeates this last episode of the poéma, and especially Mizzi's clearly psychotic behavior. The word "paradiz," used by Mizzi in that last chapter, echoes Kuzmin's usage of it in the description of the final picture in "Caligari" ("Sumasšedšij dom, kak Afinskaja škola, kak Paradiz...").

Thus, the substitution of "domik" in the beginning of the poéma for "dom" at the end, signifies not only the

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29Без гляня с балкона прямо вниз
Растет малютка кипарис,
Все выше траурная крошка!
Но погоди еще немножко,
И станет сад как Paradiz!
metamorphosis of the idyllic garden scene into paradise, but also reveals how the harmonious life in a peaceful family house may turn into "sumasšedšij dom," if secret passions tear its inhabitants apart. Both "scenarios" are therefore projected onto each other.

Reactivating the subtexts of "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari" and "Doctor Mabuse", reveals Proschke's linkage to the speare of death, also otherwise intimated. All that happens in the "Lazar'," may be seen as ultimately orchestrated by this hypnotist, who knows how to manipulate people's emotions and their lives. Edith committed suicide under the influence of Proschke's destructive hypnosis; Willi, mesmerized by the watchmaker, accepted the responsibility for a murder he did not commit. Meanwhile, Proschke himself withheld the evidence (Edith's letter) which would have allowed for Willi's acquittal. All this is done so that when Willi dies (is executed?), Proschke may exercise his resurrecting powers. As a hypnotist and manipulator, Proschke may also be compared to several of Hoffmann's characters, particularly Coppelius/Coppola and Professor Spalanzini of "The Sandman." And, of course, both Proschke's appearance (his black beard and a wolf fur hat) and his pretender role of swaying people's destinies,

Kuzmin in his "Benifisy" pointed to the link between Caligari and Hoffmann's Coppelius. See Ratgauz (1992), 85

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evokes the figure of Pugačev as he is presented in Puškin's Kapitanskaja dočka. The analogy between Pugačev's revolt and the events of 1917, which was a common place during postrevolutionary times, introduces a contemporary angle into the poéma. Lazarus may therefore also be seen as a symbol of diseased Russia, which must die, before it will be resurrected. In addition, the analogy between Proschke and Pugačev reinforces Proschke's role as a guide, "vožatyj."

The projection of images as diverse as Christ (as symbol of life) on one hand, and Pugačev, Caligari, Mabuse and Coppelius on the other, could seem startling. Yet such superimposition of almost opposite connotations is characteristic of Kuzmin's writings, particularly in the 1920's. As Bogomolov has noted, the travesty of the sacral often coexisted with its direct, "serious" meaning in

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31 Kuzmin's poem "Konec vtorogo toma" helps to reinforce this analogy. In that poem, the lyrical hero, while walking in a park and reading a book (the "second volume" - evoking the new Testament), begins daydreaming. Among many images that he sees in this dream, is that of a black-beard Assyrian tsar, who later metamorphoses into Pugačev:

... Подошёл я близко
К кресту высокому На нем был распят
Чернобродый ассирийский царь
Висел вниз головой он и ругался
По матери, а сам весь посинел
   < >
Халдей, с креста сорвавшись, побежал
И стал точь-вточь похож на Пугачева
   < >
От Пугачева на болоте пятка
Одна осталась грызная.
Kuzmin's works.\textsuperscript{32} In other words, Kuzmin often remained faithful to that which he desacralized. If travesty may be viewed as a way of estrangement, then it serves to deautomatize an object, or an idea, and assists in recovering its essence. Thus, in order to remind us of Christ's essence, Kuzmin had to show his Christ-like character Proschke as a Caligari-like hypnotist. As I have emphasized throughout the dissertation, the deautomatizing functions of art were always stressed by Kuzmin. His interest in Expressionism may be explained by the movement's emphasis on exposing (laying bare) the archetypal structures of an aging civilization. When culture, including its religious myths, ages and grows automatized (instead of deautomatizing life), it, too, needs to be estranged.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32}He writes: "Кузмин в подтексте решительно сохраняет верность тому, что внешне десакрализует " Bogomolov (1995), 158-159 Such fusion of faith in the ideal and its travesty characterizes the sensibility of some Symbolists, particularly A.Bely. Compare, for example, his "Стоял я дураком, / В венке своем тернистом "

\textsuperscript{33}In his writings of the 1920's Kuzmin, echoing the ideas of German Expressionists, stresses that European civilization have become uncreative and sterile. This quote, for, example, points to Kuzmin's perception of Expressionism as based on estrangement: "Как прокричать во все глухие уши: это человек - не машина, не цифра, не дуракка, а человек? Экспрессионисты в подобных случаях прибегают к самым резким, низким, отвратительным доказательствам. Смотрите, у меня дрожит веко, я заикаюсь, я страдаю дурной болезнью, несварением желудка, припадками лихорадки, лице мое перекошено - я человек, поймите, - я человек" Kuzmin (1923), 2
Finally, I would like to discuss the question of the poet's self-identification with at least two of the main characters of the poéma: Willi and Emmanuil Proschke. Most of Kuzmin's works contain, in various degrees, autobiographical projections. This tendency is linked with the typical Silver Age sensibility that incorporates the poet's life into the totality of his art. I. Paperno defines Kuzmin's post-Symbolist aesthetics as based on the understanding of the world as a semantic unity. As she states, Kuzmin shared this aesthetics with Axmatova and Mandelstam. In Kuzmin's art, this aesthetic is exhibited in the superposition of three distinct layers - textual, cultural and biographical.

... происходит взаимная проекция и совмещение трех планов: поэтического текста, биографии и культуры. Таким образом, событие или персонаж поэтического произведения воспринимается как "возвращение" некого прообраза, как реально-биографического, так и "текстового" (уже встречающегося в другом тексте Кузмина) или общекультурного (уже встречающегося в другом культурном тексте) любой смысловой элемент произведения, будь то сюжетный ход, персонажи или словесный комплекс, отождествляется с уже "бывшим" событием, лицом, словом. Этот общий принцип получает конкретную реализацию в целом ряде художественных приемов. Так, сюжет стихотворения или цикла Кузмина часто разворачивается за счет "знавания" во многих происшествиях одного события, при разработке системы персонажей Кузмин прибегает к

34 In Kuzmin scholarship there has been a sufficient interest in establishing the poet's auto-biographical parallels in his texts, particularly in "Forel razbivaet led." Among the works specifically devoted to this issue, Bogomolov's article "Avtobiograficeskoe nacalo v rannem tvorčestve Kuzmina" is of particular interest. Bogomolov (1995)
The autobiographical character may thus be discerned in one of the many twin-brothers of Kuzmin's oeuvre, like in "Prervannaja povest" and "Forel' razbivaet led," while his "real-life" partners are recognizable in the other twin. I have already pointed to Kuzmin's proclivity to model himself after Hoffmann, on one hand, and at a possible interpretation of Willi as a reincarnated Hoffmann, on the other. These two parallels then suggest Kuzmin's identification with Willi. It is strengthened by the writer's personal link to Berlin of the 1920's, which I have also noted, as well as his homosexuality and several other details of his biography. The significance of such an identification is obvious: it reactivates the traditional myth of the poet's messianic, sacrificial calling. But Kuzmin also identifies himself with Emmanuil Proschke. The role of magician and hypnotist was one of his cultural masks. Axmatova, as is well known, depicted Kuzmin in that role in her "Poema bez geroja," where he is named after his own protagonist, the magician Cagliostro. Kuzmin's self-identification with the cinematographic

\[\text{Paperno (1989), 57}\]
hypnotists, Caligari and Mabuse, has also been noted.\textsuperscript{36} The self-projection of the poet onto the character of Emmanuil Proschke becomes clear, if one remembers Kuzmin’s emphasis on art’s “lethal” and resurrecting role. It destroys and regenerates. Thus, on one hand, the artist is a martyr who, in imitation of Christ, sacrifices his life (like Willi),\textsuperscript{37} and on the other, priest who, employing the magic and knowledge, performs the act of resurrection (like Emmanuil Proschke).

Kuzmin’s understanding of the dual nature of the artist’s mission is perhaps best exhibited in the poem “Serym tjanutsja teni roem” (1922) from the cycle “Stixi o iskusstve.” In it, a swarm of shadows visits the poet and he resurrects them to life in his art. To do so, he

\begin{quote}
36Ratgauz notes in this connection: "в начале "Нового Гуля" он "применяет" роль доктора Мабусе, а человека "в больших очках", выполняющего в десятом ударе "фотели" функции Калигара (т.е. показывающего главному герою поэмы его брата-"близнеца" Чезаре), Кузмин наделяет собственной биографией: "Изъездили всю Европу / Я с юных лет, в Египте даже был." Ratgauz (1992), 72. Kuzmin’s self-identification with Caligari and Mabuse is partially made on the basis of his relationship with young men. In "Lazar’" Proschke’s intentions vis-a-vis Willi are questionable and his "seductive" behavior in relation to Mizzi, is obvious, particularly in the trial scene: Мищи крепко за руку он держит / Та к нему лисицю прижилась" < "Стали белями глаза у Вилли, / И на Мищи он взглянул с улыбкой, / А сосед ее тихонько гладит, / Успокаивает и ласкает."

37Similar notion is expressed in one of Kuzmin’s early letters: "Когда я говорил: "Это моя плоть и кровь, чтобы вы усиили ее”. И так сильна была вера и любовь к вещам, которые я тогда писал, что и теперь я люблю их, увидевши их недостаточность" As quoted in Malmstad (1977), 48
\end{quote}
donates his own blood and heart, and therefore, sacrifices his, the poet's, life:

_tickets, нацепьте священной крови!
_Новы́й_ "живоно́сный исто́чник" - сердце
_Живое, не метафорическое_, сердце,
_По всем законам Бого́вой анатомии созданное_, Каждым ударом свой конец приближающее,

_Дающее, _
_Берущее, _
_Пьющее, _
_Наполняющее, _
_Херева и жертвоприноше́ль, _
_Умирающий воскресе́ль, _
_Чуда творец чаящий, _
_Таинственное, божественное, _
_Слабое, родное, простейшее _
_Сердце! _

Closing the discussion of "Lazar's" cultural voices, I would like to reiterate the importance of Dostoevskijan subtexts, already mentioned. Kuzmin frequently resorted to Dostoevskij and his ideas. He thought of The Brothers Karamazov - particularly important for a full understanding of "Lazar" - as a remarkable novel. I quote a fragment from Kuzmin's "Češuja v nevode:"

_В конце "Карамазовых" есть известное психологическое франтовство с речами адвоката и прокурора; беспристрастие, которого в сущности у Достоевского не было и которое не удалось. Или он хотел заставить пережить читателя анонимное публике в суде? Этого тоже не достигнуто. Великолепный роман слегка дегринголе к концу. С мальчиками же - совсем только для будущего и часто совершенно невразумительно. _

_38_Kuzmin, češuja v nevode," 118_
Equating Willi's moral transcendence with a "factual" crime in "Lazar'," Kuzmin affirms his support for Dostoevskij's ideas. Willi, then, may be seen as a parallel to Dmitrij Karamazov: both of these characters, although neither committed the crime they are charged with, accept responsibility for it, since, in their minds, they did wish for the victim's death. This then constitutes their spiritual crime. However, Kuzmin's depiction of the trial scene also reflects his dissatisfaction with Dostoevskij's portrayal of the corresponding scene in his novel. If in The Brothers Karamazov the author aspires to be impartial, but fails to fulfill this aspiration, as Kuzmin thought, the poet's rendering of the scene is as unbiased as it can possibly be. Not only does the author avoid any judgment and comments, he "leaves" the case unresolved, making the readers free to make their own choice. Thus, the ambiguity of "Lazar'" may be seen as Kuzmin's dialogue with Dostoevskij.

Parallels with Dostoevskij's works are also discernible in some other details of the poéma. For example, Edith, who seems to be a (semi-) prostitute,\(^{39}\) may evoke Sonečka Marmeladova, especially given the latter's

\(^{39}\)This is intimated by her landlady and the police officer. Her name, Joice may also be indicative of her "profession," since one of the possible words for a prostitute in German is "freuden mädchen."
special "connection" in Crime and Punishment with the biblical story of Lazarus. Not only do the two heroines' names have a certain congruency (Sonječka Marmeladova is as "sweet", as Edith Joice is "merry"), but their sacrificial role is comparable as well: as Sonečka follows Raskol'nikov to Siberia, Edith leaves the scene, and "goes to America."

Other cultural voices in "Lazar'" are encoded, as it seems, by its verse texture, which is extremely versatile. As I have noted in the beginning of this chapter, "Lazar's" polystylistics constitutes one of the three aspects of its heterogeneity and will be only briefly touched upon in this dissertation. The poéma's prosodic organization is connected with Kuzmin's general openness to various types of verse and his proclivity for experimental versification. The intricacies of "Lazar's" prosodic texture may be understood only when the nature of Kuzmin's verse and its evolution over his writing career will be sufficiently researched.

In "Lazar'" each of the thirteen parts has specific metric characteristics and a specific rhythmical pattern. Iambic meter is the most common and is used in ten parts, although with considerable variations: part 1 - iambic pentameter, aBCDa; part 2 - iambic tetrameter, abac; part 4 - tetrameter, aabbcc; part 6 - tetrameter, aABBccDD; part 7 - pentameter, AbbAcDDc; part 9 - blank verse, part 10 -
trimeter, aBaBBa, with a pentameter inserted in the middle; part 12 - pentameter and blank verse, and part 13 - tetrameter, aaBBa. Meters used in other parts are: hexameter - part 3; troché - part 5 (blank verse with female endings); amphibrachius - part 11 (abaadd; with inserted iamb). The juxtaposition of neighboring or remote verse types in "Lazar'," based on similarity or contrast, may serve to generate surplus semantics. Additional meaning may also be decoded from comparing those verse types with their prior usages in Kuzmin's works, as well as considering their associations with certain genres or concrete works of literature. For example, Kuzmin's usage of hexameter in the third part of the poéma, might suggest the subtext of Goethe's "Herrmann and Dorothea." The employment of unrhymed trochaic pentameter with female endings and its parallel constructions, in part 5, (the scene of the trial), renders the frame of a bylina-like Russian epos.40 This factor reinforces Emmanuil Proschke's link with Pugačev, as well as strengthens the scene's overall Russian flavor, including the parallels with The Brothers Karamazov. The detailed analysis of "Lazar'" from

40 ДАМЫ, ДАМЫ, МОЛОДЫЕ ЛЮДИ, ЧТО ВЫ НЕ ГУЛЯЕТЕ ПО ЛИПКАМ, ЧТО НЕ ЗАБАВЛЯЕТЕСЬ В ЛАВОСЕ, ВЕСЕЛЯ СЕРЦА СВОИМ РУМЯНЦЕМ?

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this point of view may, in the future, prove fruitful in understanding its overall meaning.

In conclusion, I would like to summarize the results of this chapter's discussion. I have shown that Kuzmin's poéma "Lazar'," like most of his later writings, is a composite and difficult work. By employing the montage principle, the author creates the complex overall meaning which the reader must construct through juxtaposing its parts. The framework of the detective genre allows for generating several scenarios, or versions, of the story. However, despite the genre's requirement, the case is never resolved and all of the versions are equated on the basis of the similar emotional truth which they represent. On an ideological level, the poéma should be seen as a critique of positivist common sense, which concerns itself with tangible, "material" reality and disregards the transcendental, or spiritual realm.

"Lazar'"s multiple cultural subtexts, not only serve to support the critique of the rationalist tradition and, what Kuzmin called, the mechanization of life, but greatly expand the poéma's semantics. The projection of the poéma's story onto the sujet of The Brothers Karamazov and, particularly, onto the biblical subtext, shifts its emphasis to the need for a communal existence in God, and places the sacrifice at the center of such an existence.

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Evolving Germany of the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century - the Germany of Hoffmann, Goethe, Mozart, and Chodowiecki - allows Kuzmin to comment on some aesthetic issues. Incorporating the subtext of Expressionist cinematography, reinforces the bridge between the past and the present and intensifies the poem's relevance to the contemporary plane, including that of Russia of the late 1920's.

Kuzmin's multiple cultural projections are always based on semantic invariants, which have long been part of cultural memory and which, through all their varying interpretations, still retained their identity. It is in order to underline the presence in the poêma of such an invariant that Kuzmin entitled it "Lazar'." Finally, I have indicated the need for the future detailed study of the poêma's polystylistics. Its composite metric repertoire and rich verse texture may greatly contribute to a further understanding of this complex work by Kuzmin.

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41 On cultural invariants see Lotman and Uspenski (1971) and Lotman (1985).
CONCLUSION: KUZMIN, A POST-MODERNIST?

In conclusion, I propose that Kuzmin's open and inclusive stance vis-a-vis cultural tradition, his promoting cultural pluralism, his incorporating multiple codes and creating flexible semantics, his propensity for using fragmentary structures, his simultaneous orientation towards "mass" and elite readers, and, finally, his special interest in the peripheral areas of culture and life, testify to the fact
that his aesthetics in many ways anticipated our post-modern culture.

Cultural pluralism combined with the recognition of its beneficial role for each "local" discourse is highly characteristic of post-modernism. Thus Lotman, for example, formulated this view of the matter:

Представление об оптимальности модели с одним предельно совершенным языком заменяется образом структуры с минимально двумя, а фактически с открытым списком разных языков, взаимно необходимых друг другу в силу неспособности каждого в отдельности выражать мир. Языки эти как накладываются друг на друга, по-разному отражая одно и то же, так и располагаются в "одной плоскости", образуя в ней внутренние границы.

In the early 20th century a great variety of literary and artistic schools and movements in Russia coexisted. Yet each individual school had a metanarrative ambition claiming itself to be the only "true" representative of Russian literature. Kuzmin, who thought of power and power-seeking in the cultural sphere as detrimental for art, stood above the literary battles of his time. He believed that, aside from their divisive ideological aspect, these competing discourses had a great deal in common representing one historic epoch, as they did. Kuzmin also thought that the stance of neutrality and openness, as well as the readiness to "yield" in a competition between various discourses, would increase the

\[ \text{Lotman (1992), 9-10} \]
combinatory potential of his own art. Having absorbed elements of various poetics, both traditional and contemporary, Kuzmin's art should be seen as a particular cultural space within which the interplay of various cultural discourses has been realized.

By resorting to various media and literary genres, Kuzmin projected altered images of himself and "reality." Music and literary texts, prose and poetry, fiction and diaries or letters were often used by Kuzmin as complementary means of rendering one and the same notion. Channeled through a variety of media and genres, one aspect of "reality" was thus presented in a kaleidoscopic manner, as a set of reflections. These experimentations with "parallel" narratives reveal Kuzmin's conception of "reality" (and "truth") as never being singular and testify to his caution against fixed meanings, rigid discourses and inflexible definitions. These are also achieved by fragmentary structures. Kuzmin's stress on indeterminacy of meaning, his playful and manipulative

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2For example, one relationship may be rendered as a mystical event in his diary and as an occurrence of a sacred significance in the poems devoted to his lover, but in his letters it may be evoked as an all too mundane love affair. The best known case of Kuzmin's "parallel" narratives are the short story "Kartonnyj domik" and the cycle of poems "Prervannaja povest'". Both represent renderings of the poet's love affair with the artist S. Sudejkin, the circumstances of which were known to a wide circle of people. Kuzmin's diary of 1906 offers the third "version" of the relationship.

3Kuzmin' (post-modern) interest in "virtual realities" may at least partially explain his fascination with E.T.A. Hoffmann.
approach to language and the irony resulting from the awareness that any given code can not adequately describe "reality," are indeed comparable to post-modern perceptions and attitudes.

Kuzmin's notable reliance on cultural material reflects a general tendency of 20th-century literature which finds its utmost realization in our post-modern times. The role of the post-modern author is often seen as reorganizing, rearranging and combining various elements of cultural archives. As Roland Barthes notes in his essay "The Death of the Author," writing in post-modernity becomes a "multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash," while the writer's "only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them." A great deal of Kuzmin's works, such as his "Progulki Gul'ja," "Lesok," the book of poems Forel' razbivaet led, as well as his plays and works of prose written in the spirit of certain cultural epochs and individual authors, can also be seen as products of rearrangements and manipulation of the material of cultural archives. His frequent use of "catalogues" in his writings and his affinity for encyclopedias and dictionaries are emblematic of his reliance on the overall "dictionary" of

4Roland Barthes (1979), 146
Culture. Because they are based on an arbitrary (alphabetic) principle of organization, catalogues, dictionaries or encyclopedias also facilitate the deconstructing of hierarchical orders.

Rejecting structures founded on hierarchies and equalizing peripheries with the center, normally associated with post-modern mentality, is highly characteristic of Kuzmin. Specifically, his preference for fragmentary structures, where an arbitrarily chosen part stands for the whole, can be seen as a reflection of this equalizing tendency on the level of poetics. Kuzmin's link with the marginal areas of culture is seen in his reliance on "minor" authors and his proclivity for working in marginal genres, like operettas, comic operas and children's theater. He also tended to depict the peripheral and "insignificant" areas of life where, as he believed, history was made. Certainly, Kuzmin's homosexuality which he perceived in cultural terms, stands at the root of his sensibility which equalizes the peripheral with the central. In post-modernity, too, marginal sexual practices are foregrounded. Michel Foucault in his Les possesions

\[5\] In that regard, Kuzmin may be viewed as a precursor of Russian (post-modern) poets-conceptualists who, relying on cultural archives, also favor catalogues and dictionaries. Dmitrij Prigov, for example, favors alphabetic poems, while L. Rubinštejn writes his poems on card catalogues. Kuzmin and Prigov may also be compared in the sense that, in their works, they both describe the contemporary cultural process.

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states that "alternative" sexualities "fit" the post-modern sensibility with its emphasis on pluralism. They also underline the ability to recreate one's sexual identity anew, as well as to remove the emphasis from the reproductive objectives of sex; this results in deconstructing the "linear" conception of traditional sexuality. All these arguments well apply to Kuzmin's conception of sexuality.

In the double orientation of many of his works - towards the elite reader and the broader reading public - Kuzmin also anticipated the post-modern belief that culture should work on several levels, like a pyramid. While evoking the elitist tradition of Shakespeare, Mozart and Puškin, the mass appeal of many of his works clearly sets Kuzmin apart from esoteric modernism. His novel Kryl'ja, for example, can be viewed as a physiological sketch meant to unite Petersburg homosexuals, on one hand, and as a complex philosophical novel on the other. Many of his works represent discourses "in square," written on another discourse (or discourses) on this subject, with a metapoetic layer intended for the "initiated" and an entertaining aspect appealing to a broader audience. It

6 A perfect example of such discourse is Kuzmin's collection of short stories Pečka v bane, which are both metalinguistic and anecdotal. Compare this work by Kuzmin with the way Umberto Eco defines a post-modern work of art: "Вероятно коллажи Пикассо, Хуана Гриса и Брока - это модернизм, так как нормальные люди их не воспринимали. А вот коллажи Макса Эрнста, в которых смонтированы куски гравюр XIX в., - это уже постмодернизм, их можно читать,
is partially due to this double orientation that Kuzmin's writings evoked such different responses. While some critics viewed Kuzmin as "a poet for poets," others thought of him as an author writing for popular journals, as an entertainer. Both assessments are valid, for these are different facets of the heterogeneous cultural phenomenon of Kuzmin.

Kuzmin's ultimate insights, like those of post-modernism, stems from the belief that no single philosophy, aesthetics, discourse, code or point of view can adequately convey the world's variegated differences and multiple values. In his already quoted letter of 1901 G. Čičerin wrote to Kuzmin:

Может быть, ты однажды двинешься дальше, к тому, что ты называешь "высотами совместительства" Может быть, тебе откроется такой Standpunkt, где основы целого мира останутся, а пределы содержания расширятся.

A mentor and friend who contributed so much to shaping Kuzmin's sensibility and aesthetics, G. Čičerin was able to envision Kuzmin's path and his cultural "mission" in very precise terms. In his art Kuzmin reached such

кроме всего прочего, и просто как волшебную сказку, как пересказ сна, не подозревая, что это рассказ о гравюрах, о гравировании и даже, по-видимому, об этом самом коллаже" Umberto Eco (1989), 461 In that sense, Puškin's novel about a novel, Evgenij Onegin, must have served Kuzmin as a model.

7Brjusov, for example, wrote: "Стихи М Кузина — поэзия для поэтов. Только зная технику стиха, можно верно оценить всю ее прелесть" Brjusov (1990), 379

8As quoted in Bogomolov and Malmstad, 54

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extraordinary "heights of fusion" which, unmatched for his own time, anticipated the following cultural epoch. In the same letter to Kuzmin, G. čičerin terms a "naturalized" type of artist (like Kuzmin) who freely chooses his Standpunkt while being open toward all other stances, a *homme moderne*. In truth, however, this type resembles an *homme post-moderne*.

Kuzmin himself believed that genuine art often precedes history, reflecting the spirit of the coming era. In his essay "Skoroxody istorii" he wrote:

"Vot vse začešut v zatylkax!" Kuzmin once wrote humorously, referring to the belated recognition that Remizov's writings had been the most "contemporary" of his time. Considering how often Kuzmin revealed himself while writing about others, as well as his gift of "clairvoyance," he must have thought of the irony of his own literary fate that his future readers would find his

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9Uslovnosti, 23

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"anachronistic" art reflecting the spirit of their own time.
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