

Inhabiting Socialist Realism: Soviet Literature from the Edge of Empire

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my wife Elena and our two wonderful children, Ivan and Shukrona. Thank you for being there for me in both my frustration and joy with scholarship.

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Transliteration Notes

Because it is concerned with the development of Uzbek drama and prose across the twentieth century, this text works not only with Uzbek-language texts, but also with those literatures and languages that have exacted the most influence on Uzbek literature, namely Russian and, in chapter one, Azerbaijani. When quoting from and citing Uzbek texts, I use the 1992 Latin alphabet, regardless of the alphabet in which the original text was written. The Uzbek language has had five different scripts over the time period that concerns this dissertation. It began the century written in the Arabic script. After the Bolshevik revolution, Islamic reformers introduced a modified Arabic script which denoted the placement of all vowels. Towards the end of the 1920s, that modified Arabic script was replaced with a Latin script, which itself was replaced with a Cyrillic script in the late 1930s. A 1992 law accepted a new post-Soviet Latin alphabet, however, that alphabet has never been fully implemented. Most publications in Uzbekistan continue to use the Cyrillic script adopted in the late 1930s. Nevertheless, I employ the 1992 Latin script because it is easy to render—it requires no extra keyboard tools—and it has a one-to-one correspondence with the Cyrillic script. Texts written in scripts prior to Cyrillic do not have an easy one-to-one correspondence. When quoting and citing from them, which I do frequently in chapter two, I update all denotations to 1992 orthographical standards.

The 1992 Uzbek Latin alphabet reads largely like the English alphabet. For example, the affricate “ch” and the fricative “sh” are represented via the same digraphs that they are in English. The differences between Uzbek and English pronunciation of the Latin alphabet are found in the letters o, o‘, g‘, q, x, and ‘. The Uzbek o reads like an open English a, o‘ reads as an

English o, gʹ is a voiced uvular fricative, q is its devoiced pair, x is the voiceless velar fricative (often rendered as kh in transliterations from Russian), and ʻ represents a glottal stop.

When quoting from Russian texts, I do not transliterate. I find that transliterating large blocks of texts annoys those who can read Russian and does little to include those who cannot. I transliterate citations of texts and some singular words in the text of my dissertation via the Library of Congress transliteration system.

For the Azerbaijani names, texts, and citations that appear largely in the first chapter, I employ the 1992 Latin script. Like the 1992 Uzbek script, it has a one-to-one correspondence with the Azerbaijani Cyrillic script, and it should prove easy for most English speakers familiar with other Latin alphabets, such as German, to pronounce.

Abstract

This dissertation examines the development of Uzbek literature across the 20th century, using it as a case study to analyze how Russian Socialist Realist models were imitated and adapted to local contexts in the non-Russian areas of Soviet Union. Throughout this dissertation I argue that Uzbek 20th-century literature contained what I call an “archetypal plot.” That archetypal plot, throughout the duration of the Soviet period, hybridized with, underwrote and undermined, and eventually displaced what Katerina Clark (2000) has called the “master plot” of Socialist Realism. This dissertation highlights the interaction of these two plots—archetypal and master—in an effort to demonstrate how non-Russians of the Soviet Union “inhabited” Socialist Realism. With my use of “inhabit,” I invoke Pierre Bourdieu’s (1990) notion of *habitus*—the totality of structures which govern and generate human practices; a *habitus* limits the diversity of human practices without determining them or their results. Russian litterateurs created Socialist Realism and its master plot on the basis of Russian literary history and culture. The Russian variant of Socialist Realism came to exercise a hegemony over the literary practices of non-Russians throughout the Soviet Union, but Socialist Realism, because it was to be a universalizing, totalizing project, required non-Russian participation. It required non-Russians to inhabit its Russian-born literary rules, prescriptions, and ideological content. In inhabiting Socialist Realism, non-Russians were limited by those rules, but their literary creations were not determined by them. Their inhabitation of Socialist Realism saw them realize their own versions of the literary phenomenon. Reading Russian modular texts through the prism of their own literary traditions, non-Russians arrived at very different results than their Russian counterparts.

An exploration of how non-Russians, in this case Uzbeks, inhabited Socialist Realism sheds new light on the success or lack thereof of Socialist Realism's universalizing, totalizing project.

This dissertation is divided into six parts: an introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. The introduction sketches and theorizes the archetypal plot and the master plot, establishes the two plots' relationships to literary modernity, and outlines how the dissertation reads the relationship of Uzbek litterateurs to the Russian Socialist Realist literary models they received from Moscow. The first chapter examines the birth and development of the archetypal plot in Azerbaijani and Uzbek literature from the 1890s through to the beginning of Stalinism. It includes a look at the birth of irony and parody in the archetypal plot.

Chapters two through four turn to the archetypal plot's sixty-year-long interaction with the Socialist Realist master plot and its constituent elements. Chapter two argues that with his 1934 novel *Mirage*, Uzbek author Abdulla Qahhor sought to hybridize the archetypal and master plots. Chapter three examines Uzbek literature of the 1970s in the broader context of all-Soviet literature of that time. It argues that at this time we see the reemergence of the time of the archetypal plot—a cycle of decline, death, and rebirth—in Uzbek literature. Chapter four argues that the fall of the Soviet Union enabled a return of the archetypal plot, as authors used it to articulate a new post-Soviet national identity.

The epilogue briefly reviews the findings of the dissertation and speculates on the future of the archetypal plot as a new generation of Uzbek intellectuals comes of age to interact with it.

Introduction

Inhabiting Socialist Realism: Soviet Literature from the Edge of Empire

In December of 2017, my Uzbek host, Qo‘chqor Norqobil (b. 1968), a writer and a dramatist, took me to a production of his new musical tragedy, *Dildagi dog‘* (*A Stain in the Heart*). At the time I had worked on Uzbek drama and prose of the 20th century for several years, a niche literature I had chosen because so few scholars have explored in depth the literature of 20th-century Soviet Central Asia, i.e. the five -stans of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kyrgyzstan. Despite my near decade of study, I had never seen a play staged, much less a musical. As I watched, I was immediately struck by the grotesque fearmongering my host thought necessary to employ – the play tells of Uzbek youth who are deceived into joining, as it is a musical, a singing and dancing ISIS. But as I exited the theater that night, I realized how the plot of Norqobil’s tragedy matches in key moments the plots of many post-Soviet, early Soviet, and pre-Soviet Uzbek and other Turkic works of the Romanov Empire and Soviet Union across genres. Norqobil’s work emulates what I will call in this dissertation the “archetypal plot” of Uzbek 20th-century literature.

The archetypal plot is not something that Uzbek literary scholars or ordinary Uzbek readers have commented upon in interpreting their literature. In the study of 20th-century Uzbek literature, scholars have treated repeatable and formulaic tropes within the canon exclusively under the rubric of authorial influence. For that reason, no one in Uzbek letters has yet attempted to identify these tropes and common plotlines via a literary taxonomy similar to the one that this dissertation undertakes.

In outlining this plot, I take into account the major works of the Uzbek canon as defined by Soviet and post-Soviet Uzbek critics and readership. I do not consider diaspora literature, although, as I show later, many diaspora writers employ the same tropes and language as Uzbekistani authors of the canon. I also do not consider Russian-language literature of Soviet or post-Soviet Uzbekistan, though I do discuss it later in my theoretical considerations. Russian-language authors exist within a different set of priorities and have different concerns to address. I do examine the canonical works of other Turkic literatures of the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union, namely Azerbaijani and Kazakh, because these literatures exhibit prominent features of the archetypal plot and contributed to its evolution in Uzbek-language literature. For the purposes of space, I, however, limit my focus to Uzbek literature and do not suggest that the archetypal plot is found with equal frequency in Azerbaijani and Kazakh literature.

The archetypal plot in Uzbek 20th-century literature follows a cosmic metanarrative: a cycle of decline, death, and rebirth. While many literatures around the world could fit such a metanarrative—for example, much of Victorian literature follows a lead character’s decline before his/her metaphorical death and then sudden rebirth via an epiphany—the archetypal plot is unique in that the decline it depicts is necessarily civilizational and therefore allegorical. In works that adhere to the plot, the characters exist in an age in which the community has retreated from a previous cultural peak. This retreat or decline is represented by the characters’ ignorance. That ignorance might be found in their lack of education or morals, or in a general ignorance of their own “true” desires, or in an ignorance of their authentic cultural selves (as the author understands them). Often these notions of ignorance are interlinked: a lack of morals implies a lack of knowledge of the culturally authentic self and vice versa.

This age of decline or ignorance is typically an allegory for the present or the recent past. An author might use this display of ignorance to assail all of current society and call for its reform or to present a limited critique of current society, while expressing confidence in the rest of present society. Alternatively, an author might use the age of ignorance to condemn a benighted past that he/she believes his/her society has since exited.

Eventually the age of ignorance presented in the archetypal plot brings forth a catastrophe. That catastrophe typically results from the protagonists' misdeeds, born of the age of ignorance, but can be a product of a multitude of factors, including fate. The catastrophe is generally a murder of a family member—a parricide, fratricide, uxoricide, filicide—but other egregious acts that represent a character's alienation from his/her cultural origins can serve as the catastrophe. Either the protagonists or a *raisonneur*-like character—a mouthpiece for the author that acts as an inactive commentator of the action—project a sense of powerlessness by lamenting their inability to avoid the catastrophe. Alternatively, they might bemoan their powerlessness to deal with its consequences after the fact. This show of powerlessness is done in an effort to elicit the empathy of the audience. The catastrophe is followed by an extratemporal coda scene that represents the rebirth of the audience. In this scene, a character, usually the author's mouthpiece, addresses the audience's sense of powerlessness generated by the catastrophe and directs them toward a new locus of agency. In essence, this character and the scene explain how the audience can avoid the catastrophe that befalls the play's characters.

Norqobil's musical provides an excellent example of how this archetypal plot is realized in contemporary Uzbekistan. In emulating the archetypal plot, Norqobil highlights his protagonists' ignorance of their cultural heritage and the catastrophic consequences that result from that ignorance. Wayward, technology-obsessed youth are one set of his protagonists. In the

initial scene of the drama, the youth of the musical, including the protagonist Yolgʻiz, reveal their unfamiliarity with their native culture through songs detailing their obsession with the virtual realities of Facebook and Telegram, the cloud-based instant message service. For Norqobil, their technology-driven social lives indicate that they have neglected their moral education, which, the conclusion of the musical later suggests, was in previous generations supplied by readings in the Uzbek national literary canon.



Figure 0.1: Singing and dancing ISIS of *A Stain in the Heart*.
Source: Hotam Mamadaliyev,
<http://www.uza.uz/uz/programs/saylov/dildagi-dog-jaholat-keltirib-chiqaradigan-fojialardan-ogoh-e-18-01-2018/>

Focused on computer screens, they are no longer reading the texts that

Norqobil believes are important. As in the works of many Uzbek and other Turkic authors, the youth’s ignorance of their authentic national culture leads directly to a catastrophe. In this particular instance, Yolgʻiz and his friends are deceived by online scammers and a seductress, Lola, into joining the Islamic State (ISIS).

Islamic radicalization is undoubtedly a hyperbolic result of excessive screen time and has little basis in contemporary Uzbek reality. Though frequent Euromerican news reports have noted the number of Central Asian fighters in Syria and Iraq, very few Uzbeks overall join ISIS and certainly not simply because they engage in social media.¹ Much of the country, in fact,

¹ The people of Central Asian origins fighting alongside ISIS have mostly come by way of Russia, having worked and lived there for several years. As migrant laborers in Russia, they are often exposed to racial discrimination and violence, and, because they do not have the familial and neighborhood networks they had relied on in their home countries, they become viable recruits for religious extremists who offer support. See John Heathershaw and David W. Montgomery, “The ‘Muslim Radicalisation of Central Asia’ Is a Dangerous Myth,” openDemocracy, December 29, 2014, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/john-heathershaw-david-w-montgomery/%E2%80%98muslim-radicalisation-of-central-asia%E2%80%99-is-dangerous-1>.

engages with social media in various forms. Nevertheless, the events of the play resonated with Uzbek audiences' understandings of 21st-century risks to their families and their country.² The audience at the December performance that I attended seemingly little noticed the grotesque and oxymoronic nature of a singing and dancing ISIS [see figure 0.1]. ISIS is well known for banning music with the exception of *nasheed*, Arabic-language battle hymns without instrumentation.³ Instead, the faces of those around me in the Tashkent Muqimiy Theater reflected a grave seriousness. That seriousness was echoed in the published reviews of the play. As the journalist Akramjon Sattorov wrote: “the play *A Stain in the Heart* warns of the dire results of apathy and inattentiveness to children’s upbringing, of the threat of fanaticism to us and our spirituality, and of the tragedies to which ignorance leads.”⁴ Amusing and grotesque as the play might have been to an outsider, for Uzbek viewers, it represented a quite serious set of threats and their consequences.

The other set of Norqobil’s protagonists in the play perform another action essential to the archetypal plot by bemoaning their powerlessness to change events. Rahim and Munisa, the parents of Yolg‘iz, the youth who is seduced by the ISIS recruiter Lola, mourn in song that they did not recognize their child’s attachment to his phone and his detachment from Uzbek cultural life. They realize this only after the fact, adding a sense of powerlessness that increases the

² Uzbekistani state media and the state itself frequently emphasize the threat of terrorism and Islamic extremism. Many Uzbeks, particularly those who are monolingual in Uzbek, have little access to media outside that produced by the state and thus they perceive the state narrative, though it has little basis in reality, as meaningful. As Adeeb Khalid has noted, Uzbekistan exaggerates the threat of terrorism and Islamic radicalism in the country in large part to target political dissidents, whom the state calls terrorists. See Adeeb Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2014), 168–91.

³ Alison Meuse, “As ISIS Gets Squeezed In Syria And Iraq, It’s Using Music As A Weapon,” NPR, June 29, 2017, <https://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2017/06/29/533803886/as-isis-gets-squeezed-in-syria-and-iraq-its-using-music-as-a-weapon>.

⁴ Akramjon Sattorov, “‘Dildagi dog‘ jaholat keltirib chiqaradigan fojialardan ogoh etadi,” O‘zbekiston Milliy axborot agentligi, January 18, 2018, <http://uza.uz/uz/society/dildagi-dog-jaholat-keltirib-chiqaradigan-fojialardan-ogoh-e-18-01-2018>.

affective nature of the remorseful song. This performance, Norqobil must have surmised alongside other authors of the archetypal plot, increases the audience's empathy with the protagonists.

Norqobil probably intended that various members of his audience identify with the protagonists of his musical based on their age, i.e. parents with Rahim and Munisa and children with Yolg'iz. However, the atmosphere around the staging I witnessed and this particular troupe's performances elsewhere suggested that Rahim and Munisa should elicit the most audience sympathy. Apart from myself and my two friends with me, all the other spectators were over the age of forty-five. Reviews of the performances likewise reflect a



Figure 0.2: Rahim and Munisa mourn Yolg'iz.
Source: <http://namangan.uz/uz/yangiliklar-2/678-dildagi-dog-spektakli-tomoshabinlarni-befarq-qoldirmadi>

focus on the agency of parents, not youth, in preventing the tragedy depicted in the play. One review begins: “our homeland's tomorrow is in the hands of the youth. Every parent wishes with all their heart to raise a child into a person who is loyal to the People and the Homeland, who will contribute to the country's splendor.”⁵ The photographs of the performance supplied in reviews likewise largely depict the scenes in which Rahim and Munisa lament their son's decision to join ISIS [see figure 0.2], which again suggests that older audience.

The play culminates, as does the archetypal plot, with a catastrophe demonstrating the youth's ignorance of their cultural origins. *A Stain in the Heart* displays one catastrophe, the loss of a son to ISIS, and lays the ground for a second: Yolg'iz's ISIS cell prepares to invade

⁵ Dilfuza Ergasheva, “Dildagi dog’,” *Inson va Qonun*, May 16, 2017, <http://www.insonvaqonun.uz/?q=runklar/3035>.

Uzbekistan. The performance of *A Stain in the Heart* I saw averts that ultimate catastrophe.⁶ In the penultimate scene, the ISIS seductress Lola reveals herself as an agent-provocateur working on behalf of the Uzbek state and gives evidence against Yolg'iz in his trial. The nation remains safe under the watchful eye of the state, but Yolg'iz's catastrophic fate is held up as an example for parents; they must remain vigilant and ensure their children are faithful to their heritage.

A Stain in the Heart then concludes with a coda scene outside the time of the play. In the manuscript version of the play, Norqobil titles this scene “symbolic scene (*ramziy ko 'rinish*)” to emphasize that it takes place in a realm apart from the rest of the setting. Lola, now in a third role as the play's moralizer and Norqobil's mouthpiece, returns to the stage in this extratemporal scene and announces directly to the audience that such catastrophes can only be averted if the next generation receives a moral education from the classics of the Uzbek literary canon.

Drama theorist Augusto Boal's (1979) “Aristotelian coercive tragedy” offers a compelling frame through which to read Norqobil's play and the archetypal plot at large. For Boal, the form of tragedy prescribed by Aristotle in his *Poetics* acts as a sort of safety valve to divert ordinary citizens' anger at the inequality of society.⁷ Aristotelian tragedy creates “a conflict between the character's ethos and the ethos of the society in which he lives” and then invites the spectator to empathize with that character: “the spectator—feeling as though he himself is acting—enjoys the pleasures and suffers the misfortunes of the character, to the extreme of thinking his thoughts.”⁸ The tragedy's hero suffers from a *hamartia*—a tragic flaw, an error in judgment—which conditions the catastrophe with which the play concludes.⁹ From

⁶ The manuscript version of the play culminates with an ISIS agent murdering Rahim and Munisa as the catastrophe, but the Muqimiy Theater troupe may have considered such a scene too shocking for audiences.

⁷ Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, trans. Emily Fryer (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 19–21.

⁸ Boal, 34.

⁹ There is considerable argument as to the exact meaning of *hamartia* in Aristotle's use, an argument which Boal does not address. Some scholars argue that it refers to a character flaw, others – to an error in judgment, and still others – to a divine plan. For the purposes of my argument, I consider *hamartia* to mean either a character flaw or an

the catastrophe, the spectator “recognizes the error vicariously committed and is purified of the antisocial characteristic,” i.e. the *hamartia*, which led to the catastrophe.¹⁰ In this way, the spectator experiences Aristotle’s *catharsis*. He/she is freed of his/her desire to exercise that *hamartia*, i.e. rebel against unequal social structures and law, because he/she has vicariously experienced and been purged of the desired revolt through his/her temporary identification with the hero.¹¹

The archetypal plot, as we saw in Norqobil’s musical tragedy above, similarly begins with a disjunction between the ethos of the characters, Rahim and Munisa, who represent traditional, authentic Uzbek heritage, and the world of their son, corrupted by technological modernity. The primary intended audience of the play, elderly people, parents themselves, are invited to empathize with the parents and their *hamartia* of passivity. The spectators suffer alongside the parents when they see what the reviewer Dilfuza Ergasheva describes as Rahim and Munisa’s “tragic fate, their burning with shame from being unable to lift their heads in public, their smashed dreams” for their child.¹² Younger viewers might empathize with Yolg‘iz and his *hamartia*, found in his misguided decision to engage the play’s negative characters, ISIS members, on social media. The extratemporal scene of the archetypal plot serves to mark the

error in judgment. Divine plans or simply the movement of history absent god play a role in many of the dramas I examine, but I do not consider them *hamartia* because they are rarely mutually exclusive with character flaws or errors in judgment. In many cases, errors in judgment or accidents that cause the catastrophe proceed directly from the state of decline or ignorance in which the characters are purported to exist.

For more on the definition of *hamartia*, see Isabel Hyde, “The Tragic Flaw: Is It a Tragic Error?,” *Modern Language Review* 58 (1963): 321–25; R. D. Dawe, “Some Reflections on Ate and Hamartia,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 72 (1968): 89–123.

¹⁰ Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, 34.

¹¹ Throughout the dissertation, I am attentive to where I use “his/her” and “he/she” versus simply “he” and “his.” In those places where I use “he” and “his” to speak of a set of protagonists at a given time, I mean specifically that all of them in this category, as far as I know, are male.

¹² Ergasheva, “Dildagi dog‘.” Indeed, many Central Asian parents of children who join ISIS are shamed by their family and neighbors. For more on the shame to which parents are subjected and the deep sense of responsibility society imposes on them for their children’s actions, see “Not In Our Name,” RFE/RL, accessed July 3, 2019, <https://pressroom.rferl.org/not-in-our-name>.

purgation of both parents and son's *hamartia* in a way that Boal's Aristotelian coercive tragedy does not. Lola, now as the author's mouthpiece, returns to reiterate the didactic message of the play: the need for both parents and children to focus on a moral education.

While the archetypal plot largely matches Boal's Aristotelian coercive tragedy, the plot is, as chapter one of this dissertation will demonstrate in detail, ultimately a product of the meeting of European ideas of nationalism and Classicist-style drama with native literary tropes, understandings of history, and the anxiety born of colonialism. Works evincing the archetypal plot were first created by a particular group of Islamic reformer intellectuals found in the colonized urban Turkic populations (those of contemporary Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan) of the late 19th-century Romanov Empire.¹³ In the scholarly literature, these reformers have become known as "Jadids" for their common advocacy of a new method (*usul-i jadid*) of teaching the Arabic alphabet phonetically rather than syllabically.¹⁴ Mirzə Fətəli Axundzadə (1812-1878), an Islamic reformer of the Southern Caucasus, had, a generation previous to the Jadids, begun experimenting with the dramatic form, drawing primarily on the French and Russian Classicist traditions.¹⁵ Jadids of the South Caucasus and Central Asia following him saw drama as an innovative new means to bring to their countrymen their message of the perceived decline of Islamic civilization and the need to reform based on European science and a return to Islamic

¹³ Tatar dramas might also be included within texts of the archetypal plot, but I do not include them in my analysis for lack of space and because Turkic-language theater of the Russian Empire ultimately originated in the South Caucasus with Axundzadə.

¹⁴ The most prolific scholar of the Central Asian Jadids which most concern my study is Adeb Khalid, who has written two seminal monographs on the reformers. See his *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2015).

¹⁵ For a brief outline in English of the influence of French Classicism and Enlightenment thought on early Turkish drama and other literary forms, see Ahmet Evin, *Origins of the Turkish Novel* (Minneapolis: Bibliotheca Islamica, 1983), 9–21. For examinations of the influence of French and Russian thought and the Classicist tradition on Axundzadə, see Maryam Sanjabi, "Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzada and His Voltaire," *Iranian Studies* 28, no. 1/2 (Winter-Spring 1995): 39–60; Mehrdad Kia, "Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzade and the Call for Modernization of the Islamic World," *Middle Eastern Studies* 31, no. 3 (July 1995): 422–48.

texts. In their belief that their community had been corrupted from its authentic traditions, Jadid playwrights, such as Cəlil Məmmədquluzadə (1869-1932), now considered Azerbaijani, and Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy (1875-1919), now considered Uzbek, did not differ greatly from the Islamic reformers that had come before them.¹⁶ Muslim scholars throughout the millennium-long tradition of reform adhered to a sense of time that saw history as a cyclical series of civilizational peaks and troughs.¹⁷ Jadids differ from their predecessors in that they first used drama as a tool and set this cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth as the plot of their dramas. Because of their understanding of the movement of history, the archetypal plot displays a disjunction between the ethos of the positive character/s and that of the community. The archetypal plot manifests this sense of decline by depicting the community as on the precipice of metaphorical death, i.e. its death as a cultural entity distinct from others.

The archetypal plot again differs from Boal’s coercive tragedy in the variety of ways its decline leads to catastrophe. At times, much as Boal describes, the catastrophe is brought on by an avoidable character flaw or misjudgment, i.e. the *hamartia*. A parent may misunderstand modern times, as Norqobil’s Rahim and Munisa, and neglect the education of their child. At other times, a positive hero may simply be too progressive for his/her time and therefore suffers

¹⁶ I here note that Jadids of the pre-Soviet period had not yet embraced the ethnonyms that their successors would extend them, but elsewhere in the dissertation, for ease of diction, I often extend them these anachronistic labels. For more on the history of the toponym Azerbaijan and the ethnonym Azerbaijani in the Soviet context, see Harun Yilmaz, “The Soviet Union and the Construction of Azerbaijani National Identity in the 1930s,” *Iranian Studies* 46, no. 4 (2013): 511–33. For more on urban Central Asians’ embrace of the term Uzbek, see Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, 184–215; Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 257–90.

¹⁷ In this assertion, I side with Devin DeWeese in his recent critique of Adeb Khalid. Khalid frequently argues that Jadids, in their contact with Europe, adopted not only new discourses of science and technology, but also European progressive linear time. DeWeese suggests that this thesis incorrectly ignores the somewhat secular notion of time Jadids, like other Islamic reformers before them, already possessed prior to contact with Europe. That sense of time “regularly advanced a historical vision involving not so much ‘divine intervention’ as cycles of dynastic rise and fall.” See “It Was a Dark and Stagnant Night (‘til the Jadids Brought the Light): Cliches, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of Central Asia,” *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59 (2016): 65. For more on Islamic reform and time, see Samira Haj, *Reconfiguring Islamic Tradition: Reform, Rationality, and Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), 7–9.

as a result of his/her anachronism. Several characters of Jadid works commit suicide because they cannot live in so backward a world. Boal accounts for this variant of the coercive tragedy as that of the conflict between an “anachronistic individual ethos” and a “contemporary social ethos.”¹⁸ In other cases, Jadid authors presented a unique form of the Aristotelian tragedy in which the catastrophe occurs precisely because of characters’ existence in a time of decline and ignorance. The time of ignorance itself may dictate the direct intervention of God: He may punish the characters for abandoning their piety and their native culture. Alternatively, the time of ignorance sometimes exacts a logic of its own. Because of their ignorance, the characters of an archetypal plot work often cannot understand, act on, and/or bring into being their intentions; accident or misunderstanding consistently disrupt the fulfillment of their plans. Such an understanding of the time of ignorance can be found in the works of Azerbaijani playwright Əbdürrəhim bəy Əsəd bəy oğlu Haqverdiyev (1870-1933) and Uzbek playwright and poet Abdulhamid Sulaymon o‘g‘li Cho‘lpon (1897-1938).

Finally, the archetypal plot’s concluding extratemporal scene does more than just cement Boal’s *catharsis* for the audience by instructing them on how to avoid the catastrophe of the play. It too is a product of the Jadid understanding of the arc of history. Jadids believed they would awaken their society from the age of ignorance they depict in the play, and they offer this scene as representative of the audience’s moment of awakening. This scene intentionally imitates local impressions of contact with a saint. According to Central Asian Sufi practices and beliefs, a saint, typically dressed in white, often appears to believers in dreams or at the burial site of the saint, when the believer is in spiritual crisis and overwhelmed by a sense of powerlessness. The saint directs the believer to a new sense of agency, which they experience when returning to the

¹⁸ Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, 39.

waking world.¹⁹ The final extratemporal scene thus offers spectators a specific kind of *catharsis*. By inviting spectators to identify themselves with the characters of the play who affectively bemoan their fates, the audience experiences the same sense of dread and powerlessness that the characters do. In so empathizing with these tragic characters, the audience is prepared for the appearance of a saint that they would expect in such a situation. This permits the author a chance to configure his/her mouthpiece character in the form of a saint—in the post-Soviet period this sainthood can be made quite literal through costume choice as in figure 0.3—who then preaches to the spectators the values the author sees as eternal, inalienable aspects of cultural heritage.²⁰ This coda scene serves to signal the audience’s awakening, its recognition of these eternal values, and its resurrection from its state of ignorance.



Figure 0.3: Cho'lpon, the martyred hero of Usmon Azim's *Night without Day* (2012), returns to the stage for the curtain call, after his implied execution in the play, in the white garb of a saint. Source: <http://fikir.uz/blog/9751.html>

Boal is careful to distinguish between multiple types of tragedy that fit his model of the Aristotelian archetypal plot, and throughout this dissertation, I likewise emphasize that works emulating the archetypal plot and its elements display remarkable variability and versatility over the 20th century. In terms of variability, the author can identify with his/her positive characters to differing degrees. In early, more primitive works of the archetypal plot, there is a mouthpiece character with whom the author entirely identifies. Later works transform that character into a

¹⁹ Maria Elisabeth Louw, *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 133–34.

²⁰ The stage directions of Norqobil's manuscript of *A Stain in the Heart* likewise call for Rahim and Munisa to appear in white in the extratemporal scene.

hero and still later ones ironize that hero. Other works, such as Norqobil's *A Stain in the Heart*, do away with this paragonal character and instead highlight the *hamartia* of their lead figures.

As concerns versatility, the plot has had a number of uses over the last 130 years because, as we saw above, it contains a set of highly salient cultural symbols and tropes that can lend importance to a variety of political creeds. While Norqobil's play is conservative and monologic like Boal's coercive tragedy—it affirms that the current Uzbek state successfully defends authentic Uzbek culture—the earliest plays of the archetypal plot challenged contemporaneous social, political, and religious norms. At the turn of the 20th-century when we first observe works adhering to this archetypal plot, Jadids used their dramas to speak of what they saw as the corruption of their time. Their coercive and monologic tragedies called on spectators to ignore the teachings of the accepted authorities, the Islamic clergy or *'ulama*, and turn to Jadid reformist prescriptions for education, knowledge, religion, and political positioning.

Because Jadids and many contemporary Uzbek authors voice a cyclical view of history, their notion of progress is often equivalent to return. Thus, the archetypal plot's depiction of decline and rebirth can assert either that the current time affirms the authentic past or that society has declined from that authentic past. The plot of a work might demonstrate that a society at its apex must vigilantly defend against decline or that conscientious members of a community in decline must search for their roots in order to renew society. The archetypal plot persisted across the Soviet century because of this versatility. Uzbek authors have used it both to maintain the status quo and to call for its overthrow, to embrace the Bolshevik revolution and to paint it as a catastrophe that led inevitably to Stalin's purges, to assert the decline of the Islamic *'umma* (the community of believers) or the decline of the secular nation, to mourn the ignorant and to viciously mock them. Towards the late 1920s and early 1930s, as we shall see in the first chapter,

many authors emulating the archetypal plot have even undermined its monologism and coerciveness. They parody some elements of the archetypal plot while reduplicating others.

The archetypal plot's versatility is also found in the variety of positions that its authors have held vis-à-vis the state. Jadids, as chapter one will demonstrate, created the first works of the archetypal plot because of their lack of confidence in the Russian imperial state. Islamic reformers of the Russian Empire a generation previous to Jadids saw the Russian state as a force that would enlighten their people, but Jadids abandoned that belief for a variety of reasons. Immediately after the revolution in the 1920s, Uzbek writers held mixed feelings towards the new Soviet state; some celebrated it, while others opposed it. In the 1930s, as the Soviet Union monopolized the literary sphere, litterateurs began writing almost exclusively in service of the state while receiving their pay from the state. Chapters two through four and the epilogue of this dissertation focus on these state writers. In many cases, state writers had grievances against the Soviet or post-Soviet Uzbek state, but they used elements of the archetypal plot to support the state while subtly airing their protests against particular state policies.

Inhabiting Socialist Realism with the Archetypal Plot

This century-long archetypal plot fully manifests itself in the form reviewed above only in the periods that bookend the duration of the Soviet empire, from the 1890s to the early 1930s and from glasnost on. However, this dissertation argues that its elements and its undergirding view of history—the cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth—remained embedded in Uzbek culture and literature even under Stalin and beyond. In ways not yet explored, the archetypal plot contributed to the formation and development of Soviet Uzbek literature throughout the 20th century by way of hybridization and competition with another modular plot,

what Katerina Clark (2000) has called the “master plot” of Socialist Realism.²¹

Socialist Realism was the official literary method of the Soviet Union as of 1932 when the term was first introduced and popularized.²² What Socialist Realism was to be at the time of its coinage was not immediately clear. Even at the First Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, ideologues, writers, and critics could hardly agree on whether Socialist Realism was method, trend, form, tendency, trend, or style.²³ Most scholars, however, concur that by the late 1930s Socialist Realism became a universalizing and totalizing utopian project, though these scholars name and historicize that project in various ways. For Régine Robin, Socialist Realism was an “impossible aesthetic” because it “aims at blocking all indeterminacy, the unspeakable of language; because it tends to designate for all time the historical vector with full certainty, blocking the future since it is already known, as well as the past, which is always reinterpreted in function of the original time of October.”²⁴ For Evgeny Dobrenko, Socialist Realism was “a simulacrum of socialism” that Soviet reality was expected to imitate.²⁵ And for Boris Groys, Socialist Realism is the culmination of a totalizing avant-garde aesthetic that sought to realize the artist as the ultimate creator.²⁶

Socialist Realism’s aesthetic product, what Clark identifies as the master plot, is likewise a part of this utopian project. For her, the master plot is a ritual that affirms the justice of the Soviet state by relating the struggles of the present back to those of the October revolution. The master plot, she argues, had its antecedents in the Russian literary tradition, Christian

²¹ Katerina Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000).

²² Clark, 27.

²³ Régine Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, ed. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1992), 40.

²⁴ Robin, 74.

²⁵ Evgeny Dobrenko, *Political Economy of Socialist Realism* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007), 169.

²⁶ Boris Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

hagiography, and Russian revolutionary culture. It realizes Marxist-Leninist history in allegorical form. The master plot narrates the transformation of the protagonist, the so-called “positive hero,” from a state of “spontaneity”—a historical stage unique to Marxism-Leninism in which the not-yet-conscious masses are rebellious but without focused political ends—to a state of “consciousness” in which the protagonist unites with the socialist masses and successfully achieves socialist revolution or socialist construction.²⁷ The hero’s spontaneity is typically represented by his impetuosity, and a Bolshevik master teaches him how to hone that unbridled energy for the service of the communist masses. This master plot solidified as an object of emulation for writers not in the 1934 congress but rather in the late 1930s during Stalin’s Great Terror.²⁸ From that time it held sway over novelistic and other narrative production through Stalin’s death. In the remaining years of the Soviet Union, Clark argues, the master plot and its elements continued to be a point of reference for writers of Soviet literature who often inverted or responded to its elements.

While the Socialist Realist master plot emerged from conditions specific to Russian Marxist thought and Russian literature, part of the utopian project of Socialist Realism was to universalize Russian literature and literary history, the master plot included, across all of multinational (многонациональная) Soviet literature. As of 1931, Stalin intended Soviet literature, like all of Soviet culture, to be “national in form, socialist in content.”²⁹ In practice, that vague dictate ultimately came to indicate something rather different than its presumed

²⁷ Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 15–24.

²⁸ Régine Robin carefully periodizes the evolution of the Soviet novel in her monograph on Socialist Realism. She argues that a break occurred “around 1936-7, when the positive hero evolves (like fiction in general, with a few exceptions) toward an ideality, an arealism, a greater inscription of the thesis, a stronger and stronger allegorization.” See *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, 255.

²⁹ Stalin first coined the formulation in 1925 as “national in form, proletarian in content,” but in 1931 updated his definition of Soviet nations to the better known “national in form, socialist in content.” See Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 12.

constative meaning. Non-Russian litterateurs would produce a literature socialist in content and Russian in form, and represent their nationalness through an increasingly circumscribed set of markers.

We see this interpretation of Stalin's instruction embedded in the origins of Socialist Realism. At its beginnings at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers, Maxim Gorky (1868-1936), the writer given the title "father of Socialist Realism," announced that the history of Russian literature provided a universal model of development that all the non-Russian literatures of the Soviet Union would follow.³⁰ At that time, non-Russian litterateurs and literary scholars were to establish their national literary canons according to political and Russian cultural dictates. This led to what Naomi Caffee has provocatively called a game of "find your Pushkin," whereby non-Russian litterateurs endeavored to place a historical writer as their literary precursor a la Pushkin's role in the Russian canon.³¹ In terms of socialist content, Soviet non-Russian writers were to demonstrate their ideological loyalty by imitating the master plot. They were expected to create positive heroes who made the transition from spontaneity to consciousness, much like the heroes of Nikolai Ostrovskii (1904-1936) and Dmitrii Furmanov (1891-1926), two Russian Socialist Realist canonized authors. Stalin's "national in form" did not refer to genre. Just as national literatures needed to find their Pushkin, they also needed to develop canonical works in genres prized by Russian culture—genres which their local literary tradition often did not possess, such as the novel and opera.³² Non-Russian litterateurs' permission to write pieces

³⁰ Kathryn Douglas Schild, "Between Moscow and Baku: National Literatures at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010), 86–89.

³¹ Naomi Caffee, "How Tatiana's Voice Rang across the Steppe: Russian Literature in the Life and Legend of Abai," *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2018): 12–19.

³² Chapter two, in part, details Soviet Uzbekistan's first literary contest in the early 1930s, which was intended to produce the literature's socialist novel. For more on opera as a prized genre in Soviet culture, see Marina Frolova-Walker, "'National in Form, Socialist in Content': Musical Nation-Building in the Soviet Republics," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 51, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 331–71.

“national in form” was limited, as Kathryn Schild notes, to “national language, references to the [national] canon, and nationally specified topics.”³³

This interpretation of Socialist Realism came to exercise a hegemony over Uzbek and other non-Russian litterateurs’ understanding of their literature and their role as writers throughout the Soviet century, but this dissertation suggests that that hegemony never became the universality and totality that the Soviet literary establishment desired. Rather than reading Socialist Realism as a successful universalizing and totalizing project, this dissertation argues that we see it as *habitus* in the sense used by Pierre Bourdieu (1990). Its master plot was a set of structures and rules about reading and writing literature, established and enforced through institutions, coercion, and the ubiquity of ideology. Those rules most certainly limited the agency of Soviet subjects, both Russian and non-Russian, but they never fully determined the outcomes of Soviet literary consumption and production.³⁴ The field of Socialist Realism gave writers and readers the vocabulary within which they could navigate Soviet literature. In essence, Socialist Realism is a *habitus* because it required that writers and readers “inhabit” it. Its reproduction necessitated that agents act within its conditional freedom. But their inhabitation of this field, their agency to take up different positions, changed Socialist Realism even as these agents reproduced its structures and rules. Their agency in interpreting Socialist Realism’s rules ensured that the Stalinist literary project’s universalizing and totalizing intentions could never be fully realized.

Both Russians and non-Russians inhabited Socialist Realism. It is with the latter, however, that we can best see the variety of ways in which Socialist Realism failed to become universal. For Russians, Socialist Realism’s tenets and the elements of the master plot were, to

³³ Schild, “Between Moscow and Baku: National Literatures at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers,” 113.

³⁴ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 52–65.

varying extents, familiar because they were born of the Russian literary tradition and Christian hagiography in which Russian writers were steeped. Non-Russians, on the other hand, encountered Socialist Realism's structures by way of mediation. For the duration of the Soviet empire, many non-Russians read Russian-language ideological treatises, speeches, and canonical Socialist Realist texts in translation. But even those who were schooled in Russian, like my Soviet Uzbek writers in this dissertation, understood, read, and wrote Socialist Realism through the prism of their own native literary traditions and culture. Prior to Socialist Realism, they acted within a different literary *habitus*, the unwritten rules and learned expectations of which were not suddenly eliminated with the establishment of Socialist Realism. In inhabiting Socialist Realism, these non-Russian writers brought the rules and expectations of their literature and culture into communication with those of Socialist Realism. In so doing, they created a variety of Socialist Realist *habiti*, distinct from the Russian *habitus*. By turning our attention from the Russian center, which scholars such as Clark, Dobrenko, Groys, and Robin have already explored, to examine these multiple *habiti*, we can gain a better understanding of the amount of diversity that Socialist Realism permitted, even as it sought to contain that diversity. The literature of non-Russians, more readily than that of Russians, demonstrates just how unstable and ambivalent Socialist Realism's discourse was.

In my examination of the inhabitation of Socialist Realism, I am particularly indebted to the work of Kathryn Schild, whose 2010 dissertation likewise uses Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* to explore the role and agency of non-Russian litterateurs in the formation of Socialist Realist discourse in the early 1930s. She shows that the Soviet Union's multinational conception of literature provided space for non-Russian nationals of that period to position themselves as both

Soviet and national writers.³⁵ My study expands on Schild's work not only by looking beyond the early 1930s to the further interaction between Russian Socialist Realist and national literary models, but also by taking a more in-depth look at the national literary antecedents to Uzbek litterateurs' interaction with Russian literature. My exploration of the inhabitation of Socialist Realism implies drawing out the full national and sometimes international (among non-Russians) literary and cultural contexts that influenced non-Russian litterateurs' reception of Russian Socialist Realist discourse and canonized texts.

I depart from Schild in my greater focus on the meeting of novelistic forms that Socialist Realism enabled. Schild looks at how non-Russian authors navigated the discourse of Socialist Realism in their speeches at the 1934 Congress of Writers and in their work with Russian writers' delegations sent to the peripheries from Moscow. She devotes some attention to early 1930s Azerbaijani poetry in a case study of the Azerbaijani national delegation. As a result, she avoids some of the major conflicts that occurred in the meeting of Russian Socialist Realism and local literary and cultural traditions. The novel held more prestige in Soviet literature than did rhetoric and poetry, and for that reason, novels were policed more closely. Novels, more frequently than any other genre, prompted denunciations, Writers' Union meetings, reworkings, and republications. It is through the conflict around novels that we can more readily make out where local literary and cultural traditions came up against Socialist Realism's rules. Clashes over what constituted proper Socialist Realism give direct evidence of both the freedom and limits of a given Socialist Realist *habitus* and how those conditions changed over time.

An examination of the narrative form found in Uzbek novels and drama also permits us to reexamine Soviet subjectivity in the non-Russian peripheries from a new vantage point. The

³⁵ Schild, "Between Moscow and Baku: National Literatures at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers."

school of Soviet subjectivity argues that Marxist-Leninist ideology under Stalinism so permeated and underwrote all forms of public discourse that Soviet subjects used its terms and narratives to understand themselves within Soviet society.³⁶ The Socialist Realist master plot should be thought of as both the product and instrument of this penetrative ideology. Writers created texts that reflected their immersion in Soviet ideology, and those texts, through their ubiquity, facilitated the further reproduction of ideology and the master plot by granting readers the tools to narrate their existence. Schild and other scholars, such as Ali İgmen, have adapted the work of the Soviet subjectivists to explore how non-Russians were made both national as well as Soviet subjects.³⁷ They explore how non-Russians not only used Marxist-Leninist ideology, but also its nation-building discourse to understand and make claims for their national communities. My tracing of the meeting of the archetypal and master plot in Uzbek novels, however, offers a study that İgmen and Schild did not pursue. I look directly at how native narrative structures competed with and affected Uzbek interpretations of Marxist-Leninist and Socialist Realist discourse themselves. Uzbek writers' narrativization of history, as expressed in the archetypal plot, created preferences and affinities for particular Marxist-Leninist language, Socialist Realist tropes, and Russian literary models over other language, tropes, and models found within those discourses. That narrativization likewise influenced how Uzbek writers interpreted those language, tropes,

³⁶ The study of Soviet subjectivity emerged in the 1990s as an attempt to find a middle ground between the top-down view of political historians of the Soviet Union and bottom-up approach of social historians. This school argues that the Soviet ideology propagated from the top down in the Soviet Union came to characterize how Soviet subjects thought of and narrated their decisions and their identities. Not all scholars who have been identified as part of this school have seen themselves as members of it, but prominent names and works include Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Oleg Kharkordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Igal Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1999); Jochen Hellbeck, *Revolution On My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). For a thorough review article on the concept of Soviet subjectivity, see Choi Chatterjee, "Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective," *Slavic Review* 67, no. 4 (2008): 967–86.

³⁷ Ali İgmen, *Speaking Soviet with an Accent: Culture and Power in Kyrgyzstan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012).

and models. A look at narrative prose can thus help us see how Soviet subjects, particularly writers, at the edges of empire combined local understandings of history with Soviet ideology to narrate their lives.

While I fully tease out that archetypal plot only in Uzbek literature, my examination of the plot is demonstrative of how other non-Russians inhabited Socialist Realism. Specifically, the archetypal plot and its interactions with Socialist Realism's master plot often speak directly to the development under socialism of other Turkic literatures of the former Russian Empire and Soviet Union. In several chapters of this dissertation, I draw on Azerbaijani and Kazakh literature to show the mutual exchange between these cultures and literatures. Canonical works of those literatures frequently used the same terms as the archetypal plot, influenced its development in Uzbek literature, and were themselves influenced by the literary and cultural traditions that conditioned the archetypal plot.

The archetypal plot has less bearing for Soviet non-Russians outside the Muslim and Turkic world, but this dissertation's notion of inhabitation can inform how we think about other non-Russian Socialist Realisms. Other non-Russian writers, such as Ukrainians or Latvians, had their own literary *habiti* prior to Socialist Realism. The norms and expectations of those prior *habiti* undoubtedly informed their inhabitation of Socialist Realism. My study of the interaction these two plots together provide a methodology for the examination of other non-Russian literatures' acceptance and interpretation of Russian literary discourse.

Modular Plots and Literary Modernity

The dueling modular plots that this dissertation discusses inevitably raise the question of the modernity of 20th- and 21st-century Uzbek literature. For literary theorists like Mikhail Bakhtin and György Lukács, the existence of a metanarrative to which the time of a given work

is subordinated is characteristic of pre-modern epic. The novel is a modern genre because it grants its characters agency: their futures are not predetermined by a master plot. That agency is expressed through essential qualities of the novel such as irony, parody, psychologism, literary play, and literary self-consciousness. Socialist Realism, as several scholars of the literary trend have argued, lacks these novelistic qualities and is therefore best thought of as a phenomenon outside literary modernity. But Socialist Realism does not simply lack these novelistic qualities by definition. The master plot was sustained and reduplicated because of the Soviet Union's ubiquitous ideology and Socialist Realist disciplinary processes that trained writers and readers to actively suppress elements of literary modernity. Throughout its existence, the archetypal plot, I will argue, has likewise been largely inconsistent with literary modernity, and its reduplication in the Soviet period and afterwards has benefitted from Socialist Realist disciplinary practices. I argue that the archetypal plot was at first maintained by the Persianate literary practices that esteemed reduplication. Uzbek writers steeped in the Persianate tradition began to develop a literary self-consciousness in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and at that time we begin to see increasingly parodic treatment of the archetypal plot. The advent of Stalinism in the 1930s smothered this literary self-consciousness in its crib. The Soviet literary establishment under Socialist Realism disciplined writers to ignore or not acknowledge literary play and irony in their work, and readers to dismiss the possibility of those elements in their interpretations. These disciplinary practices ensured the reproduction of the master plot, but also had the unintended consequence, particularly after Stalin's death, of sustaining the archetypal plot throughout the life of the Soviet Union and beyond.

Most Euromerican theorists of the Soviet literary method agree that Socialist Realism is alien to literary modernity. Both Clark and Régine Robin rely on the literary theorists György

Lukács and Mikhail Bakhtin to argue that Socialist Realism's effacement of the future's infinite potentiality and its occlusion of human agency are qualities not of the modern novel but of pre-modern epic.³⁸ Like the pre-modern epic, the Socialist Realist hero lacks interiority and his motivations, ambitions, and drives are absolutely equal to the Marxist-Leninist dialectic of spontaneity and consciousness that rules the universe of the work. Boris Groys argues that Socialist Realism is, in fact, the achievement of a Russian avant-garde modernist project, an achievement which subsequently eliminated the need for modernism. The avant-garde pursued "a single total project of reorganizing the entire universe, in which God would be replaced by the artist-analyst," and that artist-analyst, perhaps to their dismay, became Stalin.³⁹ Evgeny Dobrenko synthesizes these two theses to further specify Socialist Realism's relationship to modernity: "Socialist Realism, like any aesthetic system, had its own aesthetic program. That program was directed toward the conquest of modernism. Its utopianism was found in its attempt, having created a *pre-modern* aesthetic, to step outside of history and to act as if modernism had never been (in this sense, Socialist Realism really is the 'impossible aesthetic,' if we can use the definition given by Régine Robin). Socialist Realism can be defined as postmodernism minus the modernism – an aesthetic found in 'minus time.'"⁴⁰ While it is still a matter of debate as to where or when in relation to modernity Socialist Realism is located, major theorists of Socialist Realism rarely describe Stalinist literature and culture as modern.

This anti-modernity or pre-modernity of Socialist Realism was maintained and reproduced by the Stalin-era Soviet Union's omnipresent ideology. The Soviet subjectivists, as mentioned above, have shown how Soviet subjects came to internalize that ideology's terms,

³⁸ Robin, *Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic*, 61, 73; Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 39.

³⁹ Groys, *The Total Art of Stalinism*, 16.

⁴⁰ Evgenii Dobrenko, *Formovka Sovetskogo Pisatel'ia: Sotsial'nye i Esteticheskie Istoki Sovetskoi Literaturnoi Kul'tury* (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 1999), 9.

employing them to explain their personal struggles and successes in life and their relationship to the state and society. Writing before the emergence of Soviet subjectivity as a discipline, Clark's monograph on Socialist Realism identifies the master plot as fulfilling a similar role for writers. She suggests that the master plot under Stalin was a "ritual," the performance of which "personalize[d] abstract cultural meanings and turn[ed] them into comprehensible narrative."⁴¹ Soviet writers reproduced the master plot and Marxist-Leninist ideology as a ritual that ordered their lives and affirmed that the current Soviet state accorded with its Leninist past.

Apart from ideology, formal state structures such as the Soviet Writers' Union encouraged the reproduction of the Socialist Realist master plot. The Soviet Writers' Union, founded in 1932 alongside Socialist Realism, upheld canonized texts as models for aspiring writers. In his *Making of the State Writer* (2001), Dobrenko explains how the Soviet Writers' Union and the state structures prior to it disciplined writers to imitate canonical models. He delineates those whom he calls "Master Craftsmen," those to be imitated, from "litcirclists and proletarian writers," those taught in regular study groups to imitate, but he argues that "in fact, there is no boundary separating Konstantin Simonov [a master – CF] from the Kaluga tractor driver. The process of making nonprofessional poets more like 'real poets' occurs not only by virtue of 'training' but also by virtue of assimilation to an established literary canon[...] that one only need duplicate."⁴² The Socialist Realist canon was not a corpus of texts which writers parodied or alluded to—elements of modernity—but rather a discursive corpus which they were supposed to diligently duplicate. The primary product of this disciplined duplication of canonical texts was the Socialist Realist master plot that underlies Stalinist-era works.

⁴¹ Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 9.

⁴² Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Writer: Social and Aesthetic Origins of Soviet Literary Culture*, trans. Jesse Savage (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 279.

The Soviet education system likewise disciplined readers to reproduce the master plot and the anti-modernity of Socialist Realism in their interpretation of texts. Writers of Socialist Realism did not acknowledge the possibility of irony in their works; however, irony is not only a matter of authorial intent, but also of reader interpretation. Dobrenko therefore argues in his companion to his monograph on the Soviet writer, *The Making of the Soviet Reader* (1997), that the Soviet literary and critical establishment educated readers to determine the singular “objective” interpretation of a work by eliminating or drawing attention away from “places of indeterminacy” or “empty places,” those places “from which the new *uncontrolled* interpretative situations might arise—dialogic situations.”⁴³ Disciplined readers, not just writers, held the master plot and Socialist Realism in place by dismissing the possibility of irony and other situations in which authorial intentions might be irreducible to a single interpretation.

Just as the presence of the master plot indicates that Socialist Realism is an anti-modern literature, so the consistency of the archetypal plot suggests that Uzbek 20th and 21st-century literature likewise lies outside the bounds of modernity. Boal and Lukács, both Marxist theorists, explore modernity in drama, the genre in which the archetypal plot first originated. Boal’s thesis presents the development of theater as a teleology in which theatrical form evolves from the coercive monologism of Aristotle through the modern epistemological breaks of Machiavelli, Hegel, and Brecht to his eponymous and, by his own assessment, revolutionary “Theatre of the Oppressed.” In this final form of theater, the audience is no longer told what to think by the actors on stage but rather “becomes the Character: possess him, take his place – not obey him, but guide him, show him the path they think right.”⁴⁴ Theater for Boal thus follows a teleology

⁴³ Evgeny Dobrenko, *The Making of the State Reader: Social and Aesthetic Contexts of the Reception of Russian Literature*, trans. Jesse Savage (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 22.

⁴⁴ Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, xxi.

from collective to individual consciousness, from slavery to freedom, and from the pre-modern to the modern. Boal locates the Aristotelian tragedy, the theatrical form which the archetypal plot most clearly resembles, clearly in the pre-modern era.

However, given the different path to literary modernity that Azerbaijani and Uzbek author's take in the 1920s and 1930s, I find another definition of modernity in drama better suited. Lukács, unlike Boal, concedes that Aristotelian tragedy may be part of modernity. For Lukács, the modern tragic hero is like the questing hero of the modern novel – deeply psychologized, with a complex interiority. This protagonist is self-conscious: he constantly searches for his own guilt and thus his own agency in the tragedy. He is differentiated from the hero of the classical tragedy in that the latter's tragic end results from his flaw, his misreading—his *hamartia*—or from fate, whereas the tragedy of the former arises from the mere exercise of will, good or bad.⁴⁵ The modern tragedy thus continues to have an end already known ahead of time, but it repeatedly questions that end. Does the protagonist need to arrive there? Is it necessarily this end or it could have been another? Whose tragedy is it? The hero's interiorization transforms the tragic conclusion of the drama into something ultimately inconclusive.

Outside of the 1920s and 1930s, the typical protagonist of the archetypal plot has none of this interiority. He does not usually reflect on his actions and his agency in the catastrophe other than to lament his inaction after the fact. The singular source of the protagonist's agency, his *hamartia*, serves not to develop his personality or individuality as in Lukács's modern drama, but rather indicates that he fails to act in the manner demanded by the dramatist. Dramas imitating the archetypal plot typically do not celebrate human agency, they do not revel in their

⁴⁵ George Lukács, "The Sociology of Modern Drama," trans. Lee Baxandall, *The Tulane Drama Review* 9, no. 4 (Summer 1965): 154.

protagonists' exercise of choice, but rather use their tragic fates as counterexamples for the audience to coerce them, as Boal argues of the Aristotelian tragedy, into adopting the view of the dramatist.

When this coercive plot first appeared in the 1890s in Azerbaijani literature and in the 1910s in Uzbek literature, it did not have the benefit of a centralized state to ensure its reproduction. The archetypal plot instead maintained its constancy in this early period thanks to the conservatism of the Persianate poetic tradition in which Jadid reformers learned to write.⁴⁶ That tradition prized consistency and the reduplication of canonical texts.⁴⁷ As J. T. P. Bruijn observes, “the convention of writing “responses” (*javabs*) or “similitudes” (*nazires*), i.e., compositions emulating successful works by preceding authors, helped to provide the tradition with strong coherence and gave classical Persian literature its conservative outlook in which very little seems to have changed for more than a millennium.”⁴⁸ Writers were expected to make themselves “familiar with the tradition by [quoting Nezami-Aruzi – C.F.] ‘memorizing a thousand distichs by the earliest poets and ten thousand distichs from the works of later poets.’ These masters should teach him how to deal with the difficulties and subtleties of composition. In addition he is advised to seek the guidance of a living master (*ostad*) until he will have earned that title himself and he has established a lasting reputation.”⁴⁹ Writers in the Persianate tradition advanced their careers and their writings not through radical innovation, but through the careful

⁴⁶ Most of the Uzbek dramatists and prose writers of the first half of the 20th century were first schooled in poetry before turning to the craft that they have since become best known for. Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy (1889-1929), who figures in the first chapter of this dissertation, produced several *divans* of poetry before his first drama in 1916. Abdulla Qahhor (1907-1968), a student of Jadids whom the second chapter features, likewise tried his hand at poetry before he began his career as a prose writer.

⁴⁷ Ingeborg Baldauf, “Educating the Poets and Fostering Uzbek Poetry of the 1910s to Early 1930s,” *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 24 (2015): 183–84.

⁴⁸ J. T. P. Bruijn, ed., *General Introduction to Persian Literature*, vol. I (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2009), 3.

⁴⁹ Bruijn, I:19.

observance and mastery of rules of prosody and rhetoric.⁵⁰ By the 19th and 20th centuries my writers had come into contact with European literature that did not follow such canonical traditions. Nevertheless, they continued to esteem the creative recombination of long-established metaphors, images, tropes, and plot devices. These practices, though they had earlier been reserved exclusively for poetry, sustained the archetypal plot of early drama and European-style prose fiction in its youth.

The disciplinary practices of the Persianate poetic tradition, unlike those of the Soviet Writers' Union later, never foreclosed upon the development of modern literary features. In the latter half of chapter one, I argue that parody and literary self-consciousness—the understanding that literature can be an autonomous form, not subordinate to didactic goals—grew of their own course in Uzbek prose and drama through an aestheticization of the archetypal plot. Uzbek authors, particularly Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon (1897-1938), identified their art as emerging from their depiction of the civilizational decline found in the archetypal plot. The depiction of decline permitted them to exercise their favorite rhetorical modes of elegy, exhortation, and satire. A civilization in decline was a pretext to elegize the community's lost greatness, to exhort community members to return that greatness, or to satirize those members for their ignorance of their authentic origins. These artists realized that the end of decline would necessarily put a stopper in the aesthetic font. Jadid art therefore came to a unique literary self-consciousness whereby authors began in the 1920s to postpone the rebirth or awakening from decline with which the archetypal plot symbolically concludes. In so doing, they articulated a complex relationship to their heroes: on one level, they identified with the progressive political

⁵⁰ Bruijn, I:19.

ambitions of their protagonists, and on another, they maintained an ironic distance from which they mocked or criticized these characters.

This aestheticization of the archetypal plot might have led to its eventual abandonment were it not for the disciplinary practices of Socialist Realism. The first generation of Uzbek socialist writers, having received training in Marxist ideology and nascent Socialist Realist practices, denounced their literary predecessors' literature without attention to either the irony or the parody it contained. Their interpretations ignored the dramatic irony in many of the more aestheticized works of the archetypal plot, i.e. that the tragedy occurs because of the character's *hamartia*, his passivity. These Soviet critics read 1920s Jadid works as if the authors fully identified with the Jadidist, and therefore anti-Marxist, politics of their protagonists.⁵¹ The ban of Jadid works that ensued from these denunciations in the 1930s might have again spelled the end of the archetypal plot were it not for the later rehabilitation of authors after Stalin's death. When the first Uzbek novelist Abdulla Qodiriy (1897-1938) and the poet and prose writer Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon (1897-1938) were rehabilitated, their novels were incorporated into the Socialist Realist canon upon their republication in 1956 and 1988 respectively. As they reintroduced these works to Soviet Uzbek readers, the next generation of Soviet Uzbek critics assumed and canonized the unironic readings of their Stalinist predecessors. They continued to identify protagonist with author, though now they argued the author was pro-Soviet. The critic and dramatist Izzat Sulton offers an unironic interpretation of Qodiriy's novel *Bygone Days* (1925) typical of Soviet Uzbek literary criticism. In his novel, Qodiriy partially distances himself from his positive hero Otabek by criticizing the character's *hamartia* of passivity, but Sulton

⁵¹ See, for example, the denunciation of Cho'lpon's *Night and Day*, which assumes the author's absolute identification with the hero: A. Sharifiy, O. Sharafiddinov, and F. Sultonov, "'Kecha va kunduz' haqida," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, August 6, 1937.

ignores that dramatic irony and instead identifies author and character entirely with one another: “the reader well knows that when we say Otabek we mean Abdulla Qodiriy, and when we say Abdulla Qodiriy we mean Otabek.”⁵²

If they missed the dramatic irony essential to the plot, then it is no surprise that Soviet Uzbek critics entirely disregarded the parody and literary self-consciousness found in the works of Cho‘lpon and others. In the post-Stalin period, critics ignored aesthetics and read rehabilitated Jadid works as monologically affirming the state. They argued that the decline depicted in Qodiriy’s *Bygone Days* and Cho‘lpon’s *Night and Day* (1934) was meant to end with the 1917 revolution, and the death or defeat of the protagonists at the hands of the ignorant was meant to be redeemed by the men and women of Soviet Uzbekistan. In his introduction to the first republication of Cho‘lpon’s *Night and Day* in 1988, the critic Ozod Sharafiddinov writes of the author’s intent: “he wanted to show young contemporary readers the true face of the past, so that they would bring about socialism in their own time.”⁵³

When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, those readings were inverted—the texts now affirmed the post-Soviet state and condemned the Soviet state—but critics largely continued to dismiss the possibility of irony or the authors’ contradictory goals. Contemporary Uzbek critics, true, commonly decry the politicization of literature under the Soviet Union and call for more attention to aesthetics, but they nevertheless cannot countenance interpretations that suggest that an author’s aesthetics contradicted his politics.⁵⁴ For them, Qodiriy and Cho‘lpon wrote beautiful novels that deserve more attention for that beauty, but they unequivocally did so in order to

⁵² Quoted in No‘mon Rahimjonov, *Qodiriyshunoslik qirralari* (Toshkent: Navro‘z, 2015), 105.

⁵³ Ozod Sharafiddinov, “Cho‘lponning ijodiy yo‘li to‘g‘risida,” *Sharq yulduzi*, no. 2 (1988): 62. For the introduction of Qodiriy into the Socialist Realist canon after his rehabilitation, see Izzat Sulton, “Abdulla Qodiriy Ijodi Haqida,” in *O‘tkan Kunlar: Tarixiy Roman* (Toshkent: O‘zSSR davlat badiiy adabiyoti nashriyoti, 1958), 5–24. For more on how Qodiriy was rehabilitated, see Rahimjonov, *Qodiriyshunoslik qirralari*, 71–86.

⁵⁴ For one of the first calls for the depoliticization of Cho‘lpon’s oeuvre that nevertheless reads the author’s oeuvre as affirming the present state, see Ozod Sharafiddinov, *Cho‘lponni Anglash* (Toshkent: Yozuvchi, 1994).

awaken the Uzbek nation and deliver its independence. Like their Soviet predecessors, these critics read the decline depicted in Qodiriy and Cho‘lpon’s work politically. The novels are allegories for the nation under the Soviet Union, and the time of post-Soviet independence is the liberation from imperial (either Russian or Soviet) subjugation for which the authors and their characters were martyred. Because of Socialist Realist reading practices, elements of literary modernity have been read out of the literary canon in favor of unironic, politicized readings that affirm the state. Those readings, in turn, have sustained the archetypal plot as a phenomenon outside literary modernity.

The archetypal plot in contemporary Uzbekistan continues to be reproduced not only through politicized readings of the pre-Soviet and Soviet-era canon, but also in post-Soviet literature. As Norqobil’s play above demonstrates, the archetypal plot is now a ritual that affirms the legitimacy of the independent Uzbek state. The coercive plot of that play, as the epilogue to this dissertation will show, is rather similar to many other contemporary works.

The plot continues in post-Soviet Uzbek literature largely because it shapes and is shaped by the contemporary state’s near-ubiquitous ideology. The response of writers and ordinary citizens to the state’s ideology is best read under the paradigm of Soviet subjectivity. Like Soviet citizens before them, many Uzbekistani citizens, largely ethnic Uzbeks, have internalized the state’s narrative of Uzbek history and adapt its terms to explain their own lives. Though she does not specifically reference Soviet subjectivity, anthropologist Maria Louw argues that many ordinary Uzbeks narrate their lives with the aid of the state’s ideological tropes. She identifies as a portion of the state ideology what she calls the trope of “lost knowledge,” i.e. that Soviet rule represented a national and spiritual retreat from authenticity from which contemporary

Uzbekistan is still recovering.⁵⁵ That “lost knowledge,” of course, is the same sense of decline from a civilizational peak that animates the archetypal plot in literature.

The state provides its citizens with these narrative structures, but because its citizens must inhabit them, it does not have complete control over their use. Non-state Uzbek nationalists, both diaspora and local, frequently use the same trope of “lost knowledge” to decry the state’s failure to awaken ethnic Uzbeks to their authentic culture. They criticize the state’s refusal to strictly enforce its national language law, to permit particular memorials to Jadids, to reject the Soviet legacy sufficiently, and to change the alphabet to their liking. With these criticisms, these nationalists do not question the state’s terms—that it is the caretaker of the Uzbek nation’s authenticity—but rather assert that it has failed in its task as caretaker.

But the archetypal plot and the national ideology that sustains it do not hold an exclusive monopoly on contemporary literary production and Uzbek subjectivity. The independent Uzbek state grants its citizens more freedom than Stalin did his Soviet subjects. Those Uzbek citizens that speak Russian or English have access to media sources that contest the national ideology and worldview offered by Uzbekistan’s state media. The Uzbek state tightly controls all publications in Uzbek within Uzbekistan, but it allows a greater diversity of literary trends than did Stalinist Socialist Realism.⁵⁶ Many authors continue to reproduce the archetypal plot with their literature,

⁵⁵ Louw, *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, 144–45.

⁵⁶ One of the goals of the contemporary Uzbek state is the monopolization of the Uzbek language. Sarah Kendzior has tracked this phenomenon in regards to how the Uzbek state regulates access to Uzbek-language material online. She notes that “the Uzbek government views the Internet as a virtual extension of its sovereign dominion, and sees Uzbek-language content as subject to its jurisdiction. Under this logic, state intervention is more justified when Uzbeks write encyclopedia entries in Uzbek than it is when Uzbeks read encyclopedia entries in Russian, because those entries do not lie on the state’s ethnically demarcated virtual ‘territory.’” See Sarah Kendzior, “Censorship as Performance Art: Uzbekistan’s Bizarre Wikipedia Ban,” *The Atlantic*, February 23, 2012, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/02/censorship-as-performance-art-uzbekistans-bizarre-wikipedia-ban/253485/>.

The Uzbek state’s interest in monopolizing the language extends beyond just internet censorship, however. As several anthropologists and I myself have witnessed, border guards consistently check the books of entrants into the country, and books published in Uzbek outside of the country are subject to a thorough search and potential confiscation.

but they do so in a greater variety of ways. The contemporary Uzbek Writers' Union is more proscriptive than prescriptive, and as a result, authors have increasingly experimented with modernism and religious discourses. Irony, parody, dialogism, and psychological prose—those attributes of literary modernity—remain rare in state-approved Uzbek-language literature because authors and publishers continue to adhere to the didactic goals of literature established under the Soviet Union. They see themselves as responsible for the education and inculcation of morality in Uzbekistan's youth and are thus loath to confuse readers by suggesting the autonomy of literature from national and spiritual values. In the future, as the epilogue to this dissertation concludes, we are likely to see sustained engagement with the archetypal plot, but authors will continue to arrange meetings between the plot and an ever-greater variety of world literary models to which knowledge of English gives access.

Reading Hybridity in the Soviet Period

The archetypal plot reemerged at the end of the Soviet period as a ritual that affirms the Uzbek state not only because Socialist Realism changed the way Uzbeks read and wrote, but also because, as mentioned above, the plot and its underlying cosmology informed Uzbeks' encounter with Russian Socialist Realism's master plot. To uncover and historicize the various ways that these two plots met in Uzbek 20th-century literature, I depart from previous methodologies applied by literary scholars of Central Asia over the past three decades. Over that time, several scholars have examined Soviet Central Asian and Uzbek literature through Aesopian readings and through the post-colonial theory pioneered by theorists of colonial India and Africa. While these methods, particularly the latter set, have lent remarkable insights, I find that they do not account for the kind of Uzbek literary development that animates this dissertation. Aesopian readings all too often read the present into the past and therefore fail to see the past as just as

dynamic and unpredictable as the present. Post-colonial readings, for their part, productively discuss the hybridity and ambivalence that resulted from Soviet-style colonialism, but these readings are overly concerned with the response of the colony to the metropole at the expense of other audiences. They are likewise interested in how that response disrupts the metropole's sense of self. I, on the other hand, am interested in how the discourses of the metropole are continually transformed and realized anew, i.e. inhabited, in the periphery by way of interaction and dialogue with local discourses, cultures, and intertexts. I am therefore guided by the insights provided by recent modernist, Russian-language writers of post-Soviet Uzbekistan. They see Central Asia as central in that it has been a recipient of cultures and ideas from all over the world. These modernists trace how foreign ideas and discourses enter the region and are not rejected by some Manichean resistance, but rather are redefined through interaction with the deep cultural archive of the region. Those foreign ideas and discourses, through their reinterpretation, become accepted as native and proceed to affect the understanding of future imported ideas. I look at the development of Uzbek literature throughout the 20th century as a result of this process. The archetypal plot emerged because of the meeting of imported European-style nationalism and artistic forms with the tradition of Islamic reform. The archetypal plot, embedded in the literary consciousness of the region, then served to disrupt and transform the Russian Socialist Realist master plot even as Socialist Realism altered it in turn. The result is a literature that cannot be understood as one responding to the metropole alone, but to multiple sets of readers and intertexts.

Aesopian readings of non-Russian Soviet literature have often done an injustice to the material through overly binary readings. Several scholars of non-Russian Soviet literatures have argued that the Soviet-era texts they examine should be read at two levels, the first being a

“false” pro-Soviet reading intended to bypass the censor and the second – a deep reading that reveals the author’s “true” anti-Soviet feelings.⁵⁷ I have no doubt that many of the writers I review in this dissertation held antipathies for particular Soviet policies and express those antipathies in their work; however, I have found that far too often Aesopian readings dismiss the uncertain future inherent in every past by imposing the interpreter’s teleology onto the work. In short, Aesopian readings of non-Russian national literatures are too eager to find the seeds of present national independence in the past. Moreover, such readings emerge from a lack of thoughtful engagement with Stalinism’s legacy in the interpretation of Soviet history. As Katerina Clark and Sheila Fitzpatrick have shown, Stalinist culture established a duality to Soviet identity. The NKVD stripped people’s pro-Soviet masks to uncover their true identities as anti-Soviet wreckers.⁵⁸ Aesopian readings affirm this Stalinist binary even as they invert its moral polarities. In Aesopian readings, the author is precisely what a Stalinist denunciation makes him/her out to be, a secret anti-Soviet personality, but to the interpreter he/she is a hero rather than a villain. Such readings naturally uncomplicate rather complicated realities in which identities and ideologies were in flux and the future unknown.

Avoiding such Aesopian readings, I emphasize that the most interesting aspect of Uzbek 20th-century literature is not found in any secret resistance to Soviet ideology, but rather in authors’ creative exploration of the coincident language, tropes, and elements of the archetypal

⁵⁷ For authors making this argument, see Maliheh Tyrrell, *Aesopian Literary Dimensions of Azerbaijani Literature of the Soviet Period, 1920-1990* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000); Edward Allworth, *Evading Reality: The Devices of 'Abdurauf Fitrat, Modern Central Asian Reformist* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2002). Diana Kudaibergenova’s recent book on Kazakh 20th-century literature might also be included here. In her latter chapters on late Soviet Kazakh writers, she sometimes accepts their post-Soviet analyses of their Soviet-era works too readily. See Diana Kudaibergenova, *Rewriting the Nation in Modern Kazakh Literature: Elites and Narratives* (Lanham, Boulder, New York, London: Lexington Books, 2017).

⁵⁸ See Katerina Clark, *Moscow, the Fourth Rome: Stalinism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Evolution of Soviet Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 224–41; Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Tear Off the Masks! Identity and Imposture in Twentieth-Century Russia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

and master plots. The authors I examine in chapters two and three of this dissertation were not anti-Soviet wreckers, much as they might have been denounced under Stalin or their publications delayed by the KGB. In fact, Abdulla Qahhor, around whom chapter two revolves, was most likely an ardently pro-Stalinist author. These authors are interesting not because they were secret nationalists thirsting for an independent Uzbekistan, but because of the fascinating solutions they offered to the challenge of adapting Russian-born Socialist Realist dictates to their knowledge of Uzbek literature to create Uzbek Socialist Realism. As Schild notes in relation to Aesopian readings, “assigning ‘true’ and ‘masking’ designations to the various levels [of readings – C.F.] ignores the extent to which writers were willing and eager to take pro-Soviet ideological positions, while continuing to assert their national identities. The Soviet and national fields were skewed, but rarely in total opposition to each other.”⁵⁹ A major focus in chapters two through four is therefore how Russian Socialist Realism, its master plot, and Russian literary terms were translated into Uzbek and how those translations speak to Uzbek attempts to localize Socialist Realism and Marxism-Leninism by way of analogies to similar constructs within their own culture, i.e. the archetypal plot and its elements.

Other researchers of nineteenth and twentieth-century Russian and non-Russian literatures have employed Homi Bhabha and others’ understandings of colonial hybridity and ambivalence to situate the political implications of the translation of Russian culture and literature.⁶⁰ For Bhabha, colonial hybridity emerges from just this sort of translation. As he observes, the translation of texts into the language of the colonized necessitates analogy with

⁵⁹ Schild, “Between Moscow and Baku: National Literatures at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers,” 25.

⁶⁰ For readings of Russian literature through the lenses provided by Bhabha, see Harriet Murav, *Identity Theft: The Jew in Imperial Russia and the Case of Avraam Uri Kovner* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Alexander Etkind, *Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011); Naomi Caffee, “Russophonia: Towards a Transnational Conception of Russian-Language Literature” (PhD diss., UCLA, 2013). For readings of non-Russian literature employing Bhabha, see Shawn Lyons, “Uzbek Historical Fiction and Russian Colonialism, 1918-1936” (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 1999).

extant cultural texts. This act inherently undermines the colonial project. The colonizer must translate, for instance, the Bible for the colonized in order to show the colonized the putative superiority of Christianity, but that translation requires analogies to what the colonized already know, analogies which then imply, for the colonizer, a maddening equivalence between the two faiths that challenges the very claim of superiority. That challenge in turn destabilizes the colonizer's own identity because he reads the translation now as a mistranslation that "returns uncannily[...] to mock and mimic, to lose the sense of the masterful self and its social sovereignty."⁶¹

Though the first portion of Bhabha's hybridity—the necessary mistranslation via analogy to extant cultural phenomena—aligns neatly with my interpretation of the reception of Russian Socialist Realism by Uzbek authors, I am less interested in how this translation then boomeranged back to transform Russian Socialist Realism in Moscow. I am concerned instead with how the Uzbek 20th-century literary canon formed and developed from the meeting of multiple literary traditions and modular plots. Bhabha is therefore less useful for my purposes because, throughout the 20th century, the colonizer, Moscow, handed down instructions and models but did very little of the policing of Uzbek socialist writers. It was exceedingly rare that Russian critics cast the final judgment on the success of potential pieces of Uzbek Socialist Realism, particularly under Stalin.⁶² Because of Soviet nationalities policies that empowered native cadres and because of the lack of Europeans who spoke indigenous languages, primarily "Bolshevik-speaking" Uzbek critics decided how best to establish and police Uzbek Socialist

⁶¹ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994), 137.

⁶² Archival documents of the Soviet Uzbek Writers' Union (O'zRMDA f. 2356 o. 1) demonstrate that local Russians and other Europeans took part in the discussions and panels on some Uzbek-language Socialist Realist works, but they rarely chaired these discussions nor did their opinion carry greater weight than those of Uzbek authors.

Realism.⁶³ Without Russian readers to react to the uncanny of translated Socialist Realism, Uzbek literature had little chance of destabilizing Russian Socialist Realism in the metropole.

The theoretical framework that guides my methodology is not Bhabha's take on translation but rather that of local Central Asian modernist writers. Modernists of post-Soviet Uzbekistan have forwarded an anti-teleological vision of Central Asian space that emphasizes the region's heterogeneity, both in its local customs and in its influences from other cultures. In the works of writers such as Hamid Ismailov (b. 1954) and Evgenii Abdullaev (b. 1971), Central Asia figures as a place in which intention never equals result, communication is necessarily miscommunication, translation – mistranslation, and self-consciousness, awakening, and utopia are elusive, ever-retreating horizons. While for Bhabha the translation of ideas from the metropole to the periphery disrupts the colonizer's notion of the centrality of European culture to world history, for these Central Asian modernists the translation of ideas in the Central Asian context is evidence of the area's unique type of centrality. In their view, Central Asia is something of a world central archive, a meeting place of all other cultures, discourses, theories, projects, and ideals, none of which alone can fully account for, encompass, or manage the overwhelming heterogeneity of the region. Foreign ideals and utopian projects, such as Socialist Realism, introduced into the region are understood differently and unrealized as intended because they collide with centuries of accumulated history and culture. In this collision, these ideals are not rejected as alien, but rather embed themselves in the archive of the region. Embedded, their traces, translated through the prism of native culture, come to be interpreted as the region's native history, and those traces then influence future failed realizations of new

⁶³ Uzbek critics wrote denunciations of other Uzbek authors, but it is important to remember that under Stalin, those who acted on the denunciations in Uzbekistan, agents of the OGPU and NKVD, were primarily of European origin. See Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 318.

imported ideals.⁶⁴ In his phantasmagoric *Tashkent Novel* (*Tashkentskii roman*, 2006), Abdullaev forwards an allegory of Central Asian history that suggests precisely this dynamic:

Когда в наши земли пришло учение Пробужденного, возникла некоторая путаница — пробужденные стали строить огромные монастыри, чтобы удалиться от мира, а наши за это стали признавать их князьями и царевичами... Со всеми вытекающими последствиями: котлованами, развенчанием, ослицами, посмертными сказками, — все это огорчало пробужденных, которые совсем не для того брили голову и зубрили санскрит. И тогда был найден выход — монастыри стали не строить, а рыть... Рыть! Под землей, под самой почвой, под корнями деревьев и руслами рек, под миром суеты и иллюзорных Я!

When the teachings of the Enlightened one arrived in our lands, something of a confusion arose: the Enlightened began to construct enormous monasteries in order to withdraw from the world, but our people began to recognize them for that as princes and kings... With all the attendant consequences: foundation pits, denunciations, Balaam's asses, posthumous fairy tales. These results disappointed the Enlightened. They hadn't tonsured themselves and learned Sanskrit for this. And then they found a solution: they began not building their monasteries, but digging them out... Digging them out! Under the earth, under the very soil, under the roots of the trees and the beds of the rivers, under the world of vanities and illusory I's!⁶⁵

In Abdullaev's allegory, followers of a foreign religion enter the region and are disappointed to find their teachings misunderstood. Instead of transcending earthly want and need as their withdrawal from earth implies, they are forced to entrench themselves in the land. Throughout Abdullaev's novel, the underground, be it these tunneled monasteries, secret caves, or simply dreams, serves as a metaphor for individual and collective unconscious, and thus this tunneling is an allegory for the embedding of foreign ideas, peoples, cultures, etc. in the historical archive of the region. The individual and/or collective infinitely return to this underground archive in order to create his/her/its self in the conscious world; however, that self is "illusory" in its

⁶⁴ These modernists arrive at the above conclusion through vastly different intellectual genealogies: Ismailov employs the work of Bakhtin, Marx, and Derrida, while Abdullaev combines German idealism with Freud, Jung, and an interest in Sufism. For more on Ismailov's intellectual roots, see Khamid Ismailov, "Iz'iatia" literatura kak fenomen literaturnogo protsessa," *Voprosy literatury*, no. 1 (1991): 77–100.

⁶⁵ Evgenii Abdullaev, "Tashkentskii roman," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 10 (2005): 37.

temporariness. It gives way to every meeting with a new culture or idea that necessitates a return to the archive.

While I do not agree that Central Asia is more of a central archive of heterogeneous cultural material than any other place, I adapt Abdullaev's model above to read the introduction and establishment of Russian-born Socialist Realism into Central Asia. Uzbek authors did not vehemently resist the imposition of Socialist Realism as Cold War-era scholars of Uzbek literature have asserted.⁶⁶ Rather the Central Asian cultural and historical archive, in this case the archetypal plot, dictated the terms in which Uzbek authors in the 1930s received Socialist Realism and the Marxist-Leninist history that underpinned it. They inhabited Socialist Realism by continually interpreting Socialist Realist tropes and Marxism-Leninism by way of analogy to their own native literature and understandings of history. This process not only determined how they received Socialist Realism but affected how they interpreted their own pre-Soviet literary heritage. As they translated it through the prism of native literary traditions and culture, Russian Socialist Realism nevertheless became entrenched within the archive of Central Asia. Throughout the century, Uzbek authors referenced Socialist Realist discourses, even when they had long since become outdated, alongside elements of the archetypal plot as points of reference and objects of mockery. Each time they recombined this archival material, they articulated a new definition of Uzbekness and Uzbek literature.

Chapter Layout

Chapter one of this dissertation begins the examination of the archetypal plot by outlining its formation in Azerbaijani literature in the 1890s, tracing its introduction to Uzbek literature, and its evolution in both Azerbaijani and Uzbek literature up to the establishment of Socialist

⁶⁶ For an example of Cold War-era scholarship that reads Uzbek authors in this way, see Edward Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics* (London, the Hague, Paris: Mouton & Co., 1964).

Realism. It argues that the archetypal plot emerged in the 1890s as a reaction to changes in Russian imperial policies towards its Muslim periphery at that time. It then examines how several Jadid authors in the 1920s increasingly parodied its elements and disrupted the metanarrative of the archetypal plot. In doing so, the chapter shows how both Azerbaijanis and Uzbeks adapted European-style Classicist theater to their own literature by imposing their own view of history, embodied in the archetypal plot, onto it. The latter half of the chapter looks at how the second generation of Jadids and other nationalists continually looked back at the archive of their predecessors, reduplicating but also ironizing and parodying that which came before.

The remaining chapters examine how the archetypal plot met the Socialist Realist master plot. On their faces, the two plots might seem diametrically opposed to one another. The master plot features an impetuous, powerful positive hero, whose power a Bolshevik master has to tame and direct toward its proper targets. The archetypal plot, on the other hand, follows a passive and weak protagonist who complains of his/her powerlessness to convince his/her fellows of their ignorance. The master plot concludes with the victory of the positive hero: he/she comes to class consciousness and brings others to class consciousness as well. In contrast, the archetypal plot's protagonist is powerless to awaken his/her compatriots, his/her community is destroyed by a tragedy, and he/she then must appeal to the audience to awaken from their ignorance in the face of the failure of the characters of the play. But despite this surface-level opposition, Uzbek authors throughout the Soviet period often found themselves reconciling these plots by various means.

The second chapter turns to 1930s Uzbekistan to examine how one Uzbek author resolved the tensions between the two plots. Asking why Abdulla Qahhor's 1934 *Mirage* failed to be canonized as the first Uzbek Socialist Realist novel despite its initial popularity, the chapter

details how the text facilitates the meeting of the Russian Socialist Realist master plot with the Jadid archetypal plot through the novel's unique adaptation of the Persianate poetic technique of *javob*. *Javob* is normally a response to the work or works of another poet, but Qahhor, writing a novel in a language that had few of them, adapted the technique to the writing of a novel. As an experimental *javob*, Qahhor's *Mirage* emulates the archetypal plot of his Jadid predecessors but also mocks it and them through invective. The novel places a Jadid writer as its protagonist, only the protagonist is not an ideal hero with the exception of his *hamartia*. Qahhor's Jadid writer has the *hamartia* of passivity but that *hamartia* leads him into greater and greater evils that set him against the progress of Soviet socialism. His death makes him not a martyr for the progress of future generations, but rather marks the end of decline and conditions the birth of socialism. Qahhor fit his experimental *javob* to the nascent master plot by drawing on some of the early canonized works of Socialist Realism, which contained a plot opposite the master plot. They illustrated the entropy of a bourgeois anti-hero. While the novel enjoyed success among critics and readers for a short time after its publication, during Stalin's purges, it became the target of denunciations because its plot and content so resembled that of Qahhor's banned literary predecessors. Qahhor's novel was removed from print alongside the literature of Jadids in the 1930s, but it nevertheless influenced the Uzbek Socialist Realist canon. It was reprinted after Stalin's death in the 1950s, again alongside the literature of then rehabilitated Jadids. The result of these republications, the conclusion to the chapter argues, was to ensure the elimination of irony from the interpretations of these works and cement a hybrid variant of the archetypal plot within Uzbek Socialist Realism. The simultaneous canonization of Jadid works alongside Qahhor's invective mockery of them acted to erase the mockery from the interpretation of Qahhor's work. In the Socialist Realist reading and now the post-Soviet Uzbek reading,

Qahhor's disdain for his literary forbearers has been elided. Instead, Uzbek critics read him as simply following in the footsteps of his canonical forbearers.

The third chapter skips ahead two decades from the reintroduction of Qahhor's novel to the canon to examine Uzbek literature in the era of Russian Village Prose in the 1970s. Through two Uzbek novels, the chapter demonstrates that Uzbek litterateurs, like other non-Russian writers of the time, found themselves firmly within the Soviet liberal camp. They outwardly supported the tropes of Socialist Realism and the Soviet ideology of "Friendship of the Peoples"—the transhistorical myth propagated under Stalin that held that all the nations of the Soviet Union had throughout time lived and prospered under the benevolent leadership of the Russian people—against what I call the "cultural insularity" of Russian Village Prose. However, latent elements of the archetypal plot underwrote the literature of Uzbek writers rather than a belief in Soviet ideology. These writers often made use of the same sense of entropy and decline that animates Russian Village Prose, but they never arrive at the pessimism of their Russian counterparts. Instead, they express a confidence in the inevitability of cultural rebirth. They generally show this optimism via familiar Socialist Realist tropes, but the presence of the archetypal plot—its cosmology of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth—is palpable in their subtle manipulations of them. Socialist Realist surrogacy in these Uzbek novels demonstrates the inevitable regeneration of the nation rather than Stalinist-era iconoclasm. Their mimicry of the friendship of the peoples likewise recentered the friendship around the Uzbek nation. In rewriting these tropes, they once again endowed elements of the Socialist Realist plot with new meanings drawn from their own cosmology.

The final chapter analyzes the return of the archetypal plot to the Uzbek canon as the Soviet Union fell apart. The chapter details how O'tkir Hoshimov in his 1992 novel *Lives Passed*

in Dream combines the two modular plots of the dissertation through a parody of Socialist Realism. By way of an analysis of Fedor Gladkov's *Cement* (1925), I show that insomnia is critical to the portrayal of the Socialist Realist hero because his/her insomnia represents the inexorable progressive movement of history, while sleep represents the detestable (for socialists) return of the past. Hoshimov parodies the Socialist Realist plot by transforming the typical insomniac Bolshevik hero into a villain and structuring his novel, as the title suggests, around a dreamer and his dreams. The central role of dream in the novel represents not only a resurrection of the national past in the present, but also a reinvigoration of the archetypal plot that permits encounter with a saint. The novel as a whole, while parodying elements of Socialist Realism, exhibits the elements of the archetypal plot in a new order. Its hero exists in a time of ignorance (Uzbekistan under the Soviet Union), awakens to that ignorance temporarily through dream, but ultimately dies a tragic death, intimating that the post-Soviet reader is to redeem his death in independent Uzbekistan.

Chapter 1: The Formation and Subsequent Aestheticization of the Archetypal Plot

On January 15, 1914, Central Asian Jadid reformer Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy began the local dramatic tradition with a sell-out performance of his play *Padarkush* (*The Parricide*). This play inaugurated the archetypal plot in Uzbek literature, but the plot has antecedents in other Turkic-language literature of the Russian Empire, and it is to that literature that we must turn in order to contextualize and historicize the plot’s formation. European stage theater was not new to Russian Central Asia nor was it unfamiliar to Behbudiy’s milieu of Turkestan Muslims. Russians began theater performances in the Russian quarters of the Turkestan Governor-Generalship soon after their conquest of the area, but these performances drew little interest from locals. Interest in theater truly emerged among local intellectuals and ordinary people alike only when Turkic-speaking troupes of the Tatar lands and the South Caucasus, now known as Azerbaijanis, began touring the region in the latter years of the first decade of the twentieth century.¹ Tatar and Azerbaijani lithographed texts, actors, and directors—Behbudiy’s director of his 1914 staging was an Azerbaijani, Aliasqar Asqarov—were instrumental in the creation of the Uzbek dramatic canon and thus the formation of the archetypal plot in Uzbek literature.² This Turkic-language theater that arrived in Central Asia in the 1910s ultimately has its origins to the Russian South Caucasus, so it is there, rather than the Tatar lands, that I focus. This chapter examines the birth of European-style theater in the Russian South Caucasus and traces the development of that theater through its meeting with Uzbek writers.

¹ Edward Allworth, “The Beginning of the Modern Turkestan Theater,” *Slavic Review* 23, no. 4 (December 1964): 676–87; Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, 129–34.

² Shuhrat Rizaev, *Jadid dramasi* (Toshkent: Sharq, 1997), 24.

In this chapter, I argue that the archetypal plot emerged first in Azerbaijani literature around the 1890s as part of a general shift in attitudes in the Muslim regions of the Russian Empire.³ In both the South Caucasus and Turkestan, Jadids became much more critical of the Russian state than their Islamic reformer predecessors, but both groups primarily directed their ire against what they perceived as their own society's backwardness and the urgent need for reform. The archetypal plot is a result of this change in attitudes. When Azerbaijani troupes brought examples of the archetypal plot to Turkestan in the next decade, Uzbek Jadids were primed to receive it. Though these two distinct Muslim groups' interactions with Russian governance and their understanding of their societies' "backwardness" differed vastly from Azerbaijanis' own, the two groups' general attitudes to Russian imperialism, the historical trajectory of their Muslim nations, and their understanding of the movement of history were relatively similar.⁴ Those similarities facilitated the transfer of the archetypal plot. While that plot was not present in the founding of the Azerbaijani dramatic tradition, it was laid as the foundational brick of Uzbek 20th-century drama and prose.

I begin this chapter with an examination of the dramatic oeuvre of Mirzə Fətəli

³ This shift is noted by Tadeusz Swietochowski in *Azerbaijani Muslims* and by Adeeb Khalid in *Central Asian Muslims*. Both authors, refusing to rely on notions such as consciousness, do not offer substantial explanations for this shift in attitude. See Tadeusz Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 27–28; Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, 89.

⁴ Adeeb Khalid provides a brief outline of the differences among Azerbaijani and Central Asian Jadid movements: "In Transcaucasia, Jadidism arose in a situation of conflict with neighboring non-Muslim communities that threatened to marginalize the Muslim population in an oil-based industrial economy. In Central Asia, in the new social terrain that emerged in the first generation of Russian rule, reform was articulated by a group occupying a different position in society. Although Central Asian reformers appropriated the rhetoric and methods of the Jadids of European Russia, their use of them was defined by imperatives, constraints, and possibilities peculiar to Central Asia." See Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia*, 93. To this we can add that South Caucasian Muslims saw the rural communities of the region as part of their Muslim nation and were concerned with what they saw as the vices that affected rural communities such as blood feuds and bride-napping. Central Asian Jadids, on the other hand, saw their nation as comprised primarily of urban and sedentary communities and had little to say about Central Asia's many nomads. The vices their dramas harangued were exclusively those that concerned urban communities such as profligate spending, arranged marriages, and pederasty.

Axundzadə (1812-1878), the South Caucasian writer whose Turkic-language drama in the mid-19th century represents the first adaptation of European-style stage theater to the region and the language. Across his six dramatic works, all comedies written in the 1850s, we can observe the antecedents of the archetypal plot. The changes in Russian imperial policy and Jadids' reaction to them toward the turn of the century made possible the transformation of Axundzadə's dramatic experimentations into the archetypal plot.

As a reminder from the introduction, the archetypal plot follows a cosmic cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth. The characters that inhabit it live in a time of ignorance in which they have forgotten their authentic national or Islamic selves. In initial works of the plot, a *raisonneur*-like character laments the ignorance of his fellows and bemoans his powerlessness to prevent the catastrophe that will ensue from that ignorance. In later works, that *raisonneur*-like character is made into a protagonist, who participates in the action but nevertheless suffers from that same powerlessness. A catastrophe eventually strikes, typically a murder, after which the *raisonneur*-like figure or the protagonist return to the audience in an extratemporal coda scene to moralize the catastrophe. Their return is intentionally likened to local impressions of contact with an Islamic saint (*avliyo*). The return of this character represents a rebirth because he directs audiences, either by implication or through direct invocation, as to how to awaken from their time of ignorance.

The second half of this chapter then turns to the birth and brief development of literary modernity in Uzbek prose and drama. It argues that literary modernity emerged in early Soviet Central Asia in two distinct forms. In the first, authors gradually ironized their central characters and used them to parody the characters of previous dramas in the canon. The second involves the emergence of a literary consciousness through the aestheticization of the archetypal plot. Early

1920s Uzbek authors realized that their art sprang from the depiction of the very civilizational decline that the staging of the archetypal plot was intended to overcome. While previous authors had intended to “awaken” their audiences from their ignorance, in the 1920s several Uzbek writers declared that their art emerged from the postponement of this “awakening.” I present evidence of this literary consciousness, and I then proceed to demonstrate how it worked in practice.

This chapter reads the development of literature in Uzbekistan as the result of a complex process in which authors built on multiple intertexts, both native and foreign. Axundzade adapted European-style stage theater from French (through Russian) and Russian Classicist sources, and his successors proceeded to fit that Aristotelian tragedy to a native understanding of the movement of history to form the archetypal plot. While the archetypal plot has the functional effect, which Augusto Boal (see the introduction) outlines, of coercing the audience into a particular viewpoint, it also maps specific native understandings of history—that cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth—onto the dramatic structure. The second half of this chapter details how writers continued to redact the tropes and elements of this archetypal plot by continually returning to the work of their predecessors, reexamining it, highlighting new aspects of it for exaggeration and parody. The chapter thus shows that though there is consistency throughout the early 20th century in the formation of the plot, attentive readings can reveal how authors reinterpreted the literary production of their forebearers even as they reduplicated them.

This exploration of the foundation and development of the archetypal plot lays the groundwork for the rest of the dissertation. In this chapter we will see the objects that Abdulla Qahhor, an author of the first generation of Uzbek socialists, featured in chapter two, mocked in his attempt to write an Uzbek Socialist Realist novel. We will also examine the features of the

plot and its underlying view of history that Uzbek authors of the 1970s (reviewed in chapter 3), later reinvigorated by craftily shifting the significations of Socialist Realist tropes. Finally, we will see the elements of the archetypal plot that the Uzbek author of chapter four, O‘tkir Hoshimov, would recover and oppose to elements of the Socialist Realist master plot. The plot, as examined here, animates the rest of this dissertation.

Beginnings in the South Caucasus

After wars between Russia and the Qajar state (1804-1813; 1826-1828) in the early 19th century, a number of Muslim reformers emerged in the South Caucasus and what is modern-day Iran to criticize what they saw as their “backward” societies.⁵ Like these other reformers, Mirzə Fətəli Axundzadə, the founder of Azerbaijani drama, received a traditional Islamic education in the Qur’an and other canonical works before learning Russian and becoming a translator in the Russian chancellery in Tiflis, the imperial capital of the Transcaucasus. From 1834 on, Axundzadə was in the Russian state’s employ, earning the rank of colonel by the time of his death.⁶ As an Islamic reformer, he saw his society as in a state of decline, the proof of which was the Russian conquest of the region and the putative backwardness of his Muslim society vis-à-vis Europe. However, as a civil servant of the Russian Empire, he was confident that the state could be used to return his community to its previous civilizational greatness.⁷

In the early 1850s, Axundzadə began experimenting with the dramatic form. His interest in drama and enlightenment-style thought drew on his engagement with traditional Islamic satire

⁵ Apart from Axundzadə, these include Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani, Sheikh Ahmad Ruhi, and Jamaliddin Afghani. For an overview of Axundzadə and Kermani, see Iraj Parsinejad, *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran (1866-1951): Literary Criticism in the Works of Enlightened Thinkers of Iran: Akhundzade, Kermani, Malkom, Talebof, Maraghe’i, Kasravi and Hedayot* (Bethesda, Maryland: IBEX Publishers, 2003), 39–94. For all four men, see Nikki R. Keddie, “Religion and Irreligion in Early Iranian Nationalism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4, no. 3 (1962): 265–95.

⁶ Kia, “Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzade and the Call for Modernization of the Islamic World,” 423–25.

⁷ Swietochowski refers to Axundzadə as a “tsarist official of impeccable loyalty.” See Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community*, 24.

and his intellectual milieu in Tiflis (modern-day Tbilisi). He was particularly attracted to Voltaire, whom he read in Russian.⁸ His dramatic oeuvre includes six plays, which were written under the influence of Georgian and Russian plays that he saw while in Tiflis.⁹ The influence of Moliere and Gogol' is palpable in these works, which were exclusively satirical comedies. Axundzadə, in a treatise entitled "The Art of Criticism," suggests why his politics of enlightenment took him exclusively to comedy. In that piece, he wrote that social critique was best delivered "as mockery, parody, and reproach" as opposed to dull lecturing because it creates an "avidity to read it."¹⁰

His six comedies, written from 1850 to 1855 but not staged until considerably later, represent precursors to the archetypal plot.¹¹ These comedies are the first to impose the notion of Islamic civilizational decline on Classicist drama. In Axundzadə's comedies, we see the antecedents of the initial archetypal plot's *raisonneur*-like character. While his plays do not possess precisely this figure, several of his characters perform the *raisonneur*'s function. They act as prophets of the decline: they inform the negative characters of their sins, their location in a time of decline and ignorance, and the imminent punishment that will proceed from either God or the state for this ignorance. In this character's prophesizing, he is entirely inactive. He has no power to act on the negative characters, and they invariably ignore him. We see the function of the inactive *raisonneur*-like figure in Axundzadə's comedies in some of his ancillary characters. In Axundzadə's four-act comedy *The Story of Molla İbrahimxəlil the Alchemist*, Hacı Nuru, a

⁸ Sanjabi, "Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzada and His Voltaire."

⁹ Kia, "Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzade and the Call for Modernization of the Islamic World," 428.

¹⁰ Mirza Fath 'Ali Axundzadə, "The Art of Criticism," in *A History of Literary Criticism in Iran (1866-1951): Literary Criticism in the Works of Enlightened Thinkers of Iran: Axundzadə, Kermani, Malkom, Talebof, Maraghe'i, Kasravi and Hedayot*, ed. and trans. Iraj Parsinejad (Bethesda, Maryland: IBEX Publishers, 2003), 316.

¹¹ His comedies were well known to educated elite but were not staged for the public until considerably later. Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community*, 24, 27.

poet, explains to his interlocutors, who are planning to pay an obvious swindler to make silver for them, the origins of their poverty bluntly, and unsuccessfully points them towards a better path.

Ağa Zaman həkim. Xub, mən niyə biövzəm?

Hacı Nuru: Ondan ötrü ki, öz sənətini tərək edib bilmədiyən işə ayaq qoydun; həkimlik sənin sənətin deyil idi. Sənin atan usta Rəhman dəllək, ülgüc-bülöv ilə məqul dövlət qazandı, sən puç etdin. Mərhum zəhmət çəkib sənə pakizə dəlləklik öyrətmişdi, sən ona razı olmayıb, Tiflis dəlləkləri kimi, istədin ki, həkimlikdə dəxi şöhrət edəsən. Odur, bir qəbiristanlıq adam qırdın, xalq işindən başa düşdü, tərkini qıldı. İndi nə dəlləksən, nə həkim... Neçə kərə mən sənə dedim ki, rus həkiminin yanına gedib barı qızdırma davasını ondan öyrən; qarpız suyu ilə qızdırmaya müalicə etməkdən əl çək, sözümə qulaq asmadın...

Ağa Zaman: Well, then why am I poor?

Hacı Nuru: Because you abandoned your craft and started doing something that you don't know. After all, treating sick people is not your profession. Your father, master Rahman, was a barber. He built up a decent fortune with his razor and you spent it all. And the departed did not neglect you, teaching you his craft, but you weren't satisfied by it and decided, like those Tiflis barbers, to become a doctor too. You killed enough people for a whole cemetery; the people found you out and turned away from such a doctor of misfortunes. Now you're neither a barber nor a doctor... How many times did I tell you to go to a Russian doctor and at least find out which medicine is used for fevers, how many times did I tell you to stop treating people suffering from malaria with watermelon juice, but you didn't listen to me...¹²

Hacı Nuru has a limited role in the drama and is not a full *raisonneur*-like mouthpiece, but he performs the function of the *raisonneur*. He reiterates Axundzadə's message of enlightenment by haranguing local superstitions and encouraging listeners to respect Western science. The poet closes by baring the device of his character. He notes that the negative characters have not listened to him before and implies that they will not do so now. Hacı Nuru has no power to change their actions, and they carry them out just as he prophesizes.

Hacı Nuru does not exhibit the affective powerlessness typical of the archetypal plot, however, because the Russian state intercedes via *deus ex machina* before catastrophe can befall

¹² Mirzə Fətəli Axundzadə, "Hekayəti-molla İbrahimxəlil kimyagər," in *Əsərləri: üç cildə*, vol. I (Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2005), 33.

Axundzadə's Caucasian Muslim society. These interventions have a sense of *deus ex machina* because they suggest a certain ambiguity between God and the state. In the *Adventures of the Greedy Man Hacı Qara*, the negative characters affirm their faults before the tsarist captain, while using language suggesting God is also the agent of the intervention.

Heydər bəy. Naçalnik, mən hazıram ki, bu təqsirimi öz qanım ilə Dağıstanda padşahın düşmənlərinin qabağında yuyam.[...]

Əsgər bəy. Naçalnik, biz də düşmən qabağında qılınc çalmağa hazırıq![...]

Hacı Qara. Tövbə olsun, naçalnik! Tövbə, tövbə! Gecə-gündüz sənə dua edəcəyəm ki, məni bu əməldən qaytardın!

Heydər bəy. Captain sir, I am ready to fight the enemies of the Tsar in Dagestan to expiate my sins.[...]

Əsgər bəy. We too are ready to raise our swords against the Tsar's enemies.[...]

Hacı Qara. I repent, captain! I repent! I will pray for you night and day because you turned me away from this evil deed!¹³

Hacı Qara utters “I repent, captain! I repent! (Tövbə olsun, naçalnik! Tövbə, tövbə!)” words that a Muslim normally uses in acknowledgement of a sin before God and in a promise to God not to commit the sin again.¹⁴ Through this language, Axundzadə lends the intervention a sense of divine providence. Because of his faith in the Russian state, Axundzadə has it prevent any catastrophe. Without the tragic element of the catastrophe and the subsequent extratemporal scene representing rebirth, Axundzadə's plays remain only precursors to the archetypal plot.

Most scholars of Axundzadə would consider his above invocation of God to be characteristic of his immature work. In the 1860s, they argue, he increasingly expressed atheistic and materialist views in works such as his fictional correspondences *Three Letters of the Indian Prince Kemal-ud-Doula to the Persian Prince Jalal-ud-Doula* (1864).¹⁵ Indeed, as he became

¹³ Mirzə Fətəli Axundzadə, “Sərgüzəşti-mardi-xəsis (Hacı Qara),” in *Əsərləri*, vol. I (Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, 2005), 156–57.

¹⁴ Peter D. Beaulieu, *Beyond Secularism and Jihad? A Triangular Inquiry Into the Mosque, the Manger, and Modernity* (New York: University Press of America, 2012), 88.

¹⁵ See Kia, “Mirza Fath Ali Akhundzade and the Call for Modernization of the Islamic World”; Sanjabi, “Rereading the Enlightenment: Akhundzade and His Voltaire.”

frustrated with the Islamic clergy, he to some degree secularized his understanding of Islam. He nationalized and racialized the notion of Islamic civilizational decline by relocating the civilizational peak from the time of the caliphates to a pre-Islamic, Arab-free Iran.¹⁶ Leah Feldman, however, convincingly argues that his supposed atheism is best viewed as a “simultaneous critique of religious institutions and engagement with Islamic thought.”¹⁷ He, she suggests, intertwines the discourses of Islam and materialism, using them to support one another without abandoning either.¹⁸

Axundzadē’s marrying of Islamic discourse to secular thought about the nation anticipates the later ambivalence of the archetypal plot in this regard. The cosmological cycle of the plot is neither entirely religious nor entirely secular but a combination of the two. Individual Jadid authors, as we will see, may explicitly invoke God as the agent behind the movement of history from decline to rebirth and behind the catastrophe in their plays. But they may also omit God’s direct presence and present a secular understanding of the play’s catastrophe and cosmological cycle. This ambivalence of the plot allowed it to persist across multiple generations of Jadids, who, like Axundzadē, became increasingly secular.

Axundzadē died in 1878 just as a new generation of Islamic reformers was emerging. As they looked to theater to pursue their goals of reform, this new generation, Jadids, would rethink

¹⁶ Many scholars have seen Axundzadē’s adoption of nationalist and racial theories as a wholesale borrowing of European theories, but the already extant notion of decline from a civilizational peak common to Islamic reformers arguably made attractive nationalist and racialist thought about the purity of the past and the corruption of the present. This common notion of civilizational decline and an authenticity located in the past may explain why so many Islamic reformers followed Axundzadē’s development. For an example of the type of criticism that locates Axundzadē’s transformation entirely in his fascination with these European ideas, see Reza Zia-Ebrahimi, “‘Arab Invasion’ and Decline, or the Import of European Racial Thought by Iranian Nationalists,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 37, no. 6 (2014): 1043–61. For an example of scholarship that finds Islamic antecedents in Akhundzadē’s thought, see Rebecca Gould, “The Critique of Religion as Political Critique: Mirza Fath ’Ali Akhundzadā’s Pre-Islamic Xenology,” *Intellectual History Review* 26, no. 2 (May 2016): 1–14.

¹⁷ Leah Feldman, *On the Threshold of Eurasia: Revolutionary Poetics in the Caucasus* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 97.

¹⁸ Feldman, 99.

Axundzadə's relationship to the state and how drama could be used to realize their goals.

Whereas Axundzadə believed comedy best performed the work of enlightenment, Jadid authors saw the coercive potential of tragedy as key to their new drama.

From Axundzadə to the Archetypal Plot

Sometime near the 1890s, Azerbaijani drama underwent a conspicuous rupture that allowed for the entirety of the archetypal plot cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth to be realized in drama. *Raisonneur* figures proliferate in the drama of this period. Like the characters who fulfilled this function in Axundzadə's work, they are prophets, knowledgeable of history's movement and the current decline, but their functional inaction in Jadid works now becomes a tragic powerlessness. They predict a catastrophe and now affectively bemoan their inability to avert it. Dramatists after Axundzadə no longer saw the Russian state as a progressive actor interested in averting catastrophe. The catastrophe therefore occurs, most commonly in the form of a murder, but any tragedy that prevents social and cultural reproduction, such as bankruptcy, suffices. The catastrophe then leads to the extratemporal coda scene, which Jadid authors configured to be a rebirth of sorts for their audiences and sometimes literally for the fallen of the play.

The rupture that brings about the archetypal plot cannot be pinned down to an exact moment, but there are several changes in the Russian imperial structures of governance of South Caucasian Muslims that contributed to Azerbaijani authors' disillusionment with the Russian state. Axundzadə may have worked for the state, but his successors increasingly had no such opportunity. Azerbaijani Turks were welcomed into the Russian bureaucracy in the 1840s after the end of military rule in the Caucasus. In 1846, Nicholas I (r. 1825-1855) issued the December Rescript, which was intended to bring local Muslim civil authorities into the Russian nobility and

state service. The reforms created a professional class of Muslim bureaucrats of whom Axundzadə was a member.¹⁹ The Great Reforms (1861-1874) under Alexander II (r. 1855-1881), however, resulted in territorial and administrative changes that sharply reduced the number of Muslim civil servants in the Transcaucasus. In another move that disenfranchised local Muslims in the region, Alexander III (r. 1881-1894) later reasserted central control over much of the local Caucasian bureaucracy.²⁰

As a result of these changes, the dramas of, for example, Nəriman Nərimanov (1870-1925), contain no *deus ex machinas* executed by the state. Nərimanov, a successor to Axundzadə, is a figure better known for his political activity in the revolutions of (Iran) 1905 and (Baku) 1917 than his drama. In his *Shamdan bey* (1895), a rich merchant, whom reformers like Nərimanov hoped to woo, provides the play's unanticipated happy conclusion.²¹ The eponymous imposter villain of the play serendipitously kills himself in the home of the rich merchant, Hacı İbrahim. Hacı İbrahim then miraculously realizes his deception at the hands of Shamdan and accepts his previously scorned future son-in-law, Yusif. The merchant restores the dramatic universe to equilibrium instead of the state.

Nərimanov's merchant intervention is an outlier because in most cases, the inaction of the reformer drama's mouthpiece character becomes a tragic impotence to which the playwright draws attention. The *raisonneur*-like figure Məhəmməd ağa of Nərimanov's first play, *Ignorance* (1894), turns to a poetics of despair, lamenting the uselessness of words:

Nadanlıq gözlərini bir mərtəbədə kor edibdir ki, namümkündür, söz, nəsihət ilə bunlara bir şey qandırasan.

Ignorance has so blinded them that you will never convince them with words

¹⁹ Swietochowski, *Russian Azerbaijan, 1905-1920: The Shaping of a National Identity in a Muslim Community*, 13–14.

²⁰ Swietochowski, 15–17.

²¹ For more on Nərimanov, see Teimur Akhmedov, *Nariman Narimanov* (Baku: Iazychi, 1988).

alone.²²

With this, he admits that his efforts to educate his interlocutors are preordained to fail and only the coming catastrophe will have any effect. Fərhad, the *raisonneur*-made hero of another Azerbaijani student of Axundzadə, Əbdürrəhim bəy Əsəd bəy oğlu Haqverdiyev (1870-1933), expresses this sense of powerlessness clearer still.

Hansı elmlə, hansı biliklə işləyəcəyəm? Ac ki, işləmək olmaz! Mən gərək ya Hacı Səməd ağanın əlinə baxam, ya gedib polis qulluğuna daxil olam. Bunların hər ikisi də mənə ölümdür! Mən gərək öz zəhmətimlə çörək qazanıb, camaat üçün işləyəm. Mən Hacı Səməd ağa tək camaat qanı sora bilmərəm. Ölümdən savay mənim əlacım yoxdur. Bimənfəət vücudun ölməy iməsləhətdir.

What science, what knowledge should I be using? There's nothing to be done! With all this knowledge I have now, I either have to live off the kindness of Hacı Səməd ağa [his ignorant father, one of the negative characters – C.F.], or join the police. Both of those would mean the death of me! No, I have to work, to be useful to society. I don't know how to be a blood sucker like Hacı Səməd ağa. There's no recourse but for me to die. That's what happens to all useless things.²³

By the end of the drama, exasperated with his ignorant surroundings, Fərhad becomes despondent. His thoughts of powerlessness drive him to suicide, which is only averted at the last moment when he instead accidentally kills his ignorant father. In the end, he is so powerless that he cannot even take his own life successfully.

The powerlessness of Azerbaijani Jadids' mouthpiece characters is, in part, a manifestation of the weak social position of their authors. Jadids no longer had the state-backing that Axundzadə enjoyed, and this fact is made visible by Jadid dramas' villains. Jadids typically place characters of their society's more powerful classes opposite their *raisonneur*-like figures as the villains of their plays. These villains are depicted as imposters, unworthy of the authority which society has accorded them. Restrictions on Azerbaijanis' participation in the civil service

²² Nəriman Nərimanov, "Nadanlıq," in *Seçilmiş əsərləri* (Bakı: Lider Nəşriyyat, 2004), 28.

²³ Əbdürrəhim bəy Haqverdiyev, *Seçilmiş əsərləri*, vol. 1 (Bakı: Lider nəşriyyat, 2005), 101.

for many resulted in increasing resentment of the Russian imperial aristocracy, a fact reflected in the imposter villain Shamdan bey of Nərimanov's play of the same name. Shamdan bey pretends to be a Western-educated merchant who hobnobs with Georgian princes. As revolutions shook the Turkic and Iranian worlds, we also see imposter villains drawn from the traditional Islamic clergy, another opponent of reformers.²⁴ Cəlil Məmmədquluzadə in *The Dead* (1909) gives viewers an imposter sheikh, who claims to raise the dead but in actual fact preys on the virgin daughters of ignorant villagers. While Azerbaijani reformers may have seen themselves as prophets, they never exercised the authority of a prophet in their societies, and the social position of the mouthpiece characters reflects this fact.

These dramatists' understanding of the decline and the time of ignorance is likewise responsible for the marginalization of their characters. Their marginalization also transformed how they saw their own time. Many Jadid authors demonstrate the civilizational decline as directly limiting the agency of their *raisonneur*-like figures. In his *The Dead* (1909), Məmmədquluzadə makes his *raisonneur*-like hero İskəndər, despite the character's reformist attitudes, a victim of the decline. Məmmədquluzadə's comedy is itself a parody of contemporary Turkic plays, but I introduce the example here because a parody often brings out via exaggeration the main features of a set of works. Məmmədquluzadə's İskəndər has heroic potential but cannot exercise it because the decline has drained him and his society of its power

²⁴ Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Islamic reformers increasingly blamed what they saw as an intransigent conservative Islamic clergy (*ulama*) for their society's backwardness. As these reformers took power in the 1920s in Republican Turkey, Pahlavi Iran, and Soviet Azerbaijan and Central Asia, they lent their support to state modernization campaigns that took on, often violently, the clergy and the issues and institutions they defended. For a comparison of these three states' unveiling campaigns, see Marianne Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006). For a look at secularization campaigns in Soviet Uzbekistan, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 178–256. For the similarities between Republican Turkey and Pahlavi Iran in the secularization of dress, schooling, and other institutions, see Touraj Atabaki and Erik J. Zürcher, eds., *Men of Order: Authoritarian Modernization under Atatürk and Reza Shah* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 2004).

to act. In a soliloquy at the end of act three, he speaks of his desire for power and his distance from it.

Bu qollarda Rüstəm pəhlivan kimi qüvvətim olaydı, yapışaydım sizin ayaqlarınızdan və ataydım göyün üzünə, başaşağı gəlib, kal qarpız kimi paqq eləyib dağılaydınız... (*və özü də paqq eləyib atılır göyə*). Tfu, şarlatanlar!.. (*kefli kimi ufuldayır. Sonra diqqətlə öz-özünə baxıb, gülə-gülə*) Buy! Ədə, vallah, dinmə, deyəsen elə lap pəhlivanam! Xa... xa... xa!.. (*papirosu yandırıb, yavaş-yavaş gəlib durur Şeyx Nəsrullah oturduğu daşın üstündə, ayaq üstə durub, baxır qəbristanlığa. Bir qədər fikirli baxandan sonra heyfəsilənib, əllərini dizlərinə vurub deyir.*) Ax, Allahın altında, Şeyx Nəsrullah kimi mənim də bir elə elmim olaydı ki, burada yatan ölülərnən danışa biləydim!

If I had the strength of Rustam, I'd take both you [the sheikhs] by the legs, throw you up so that you smash against the ground into pieces like an unripe watermelon... (*makes a popping sound like the smashing of the watermelon.*) Fu, charlatans! (*sighs as drunks do. Then looks over himself and laughs.*) Ha! Well, I still have the body of a hero! Hahaha! (*lights up, slowly approaches the stone on which Sheikh Nəsrullah had been sitting, stands on the stone and looks somberly over the graveyard, and hitting himself on the knees, says somberly.*) Oh, if only I knew what Sheikh Nəsrullah knows, then I could talk to the dead!²⁵

İskəndər thirsts for the power of Rustam from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* (The Persian Book of Kings, 977-1010) or the influence of the play's imposter, sheikh Nəsrullah, the "dead" here being a metaphor for İskəndər's ignorant neighbors. He may even have the power of the former as he notes when examining his own body, but he cannot tap it. İskəndər is a corrupted, helpless hero. He possesses a body like Rustam, but the stage directions contrast that fact with his decadence: he starts smoking, a major taboo for Islamic reformers. Smoking directly connects him with the moral depravity and thus the powerlessness of decline.²⁶

The failure of the *raisonneur*-like figure to awaken the negative characters from their sin and ignorance prepares the ground for the drama's catastrophe. The catastrophe consists of any

²⁵ Cəlil Məmmədquluzadə, "Ölülər," in *Əsərləri: Dörd cildə*, vol. I (Bakı: Öndər nəşriyyat, 2004), 415–16.

²⁶ Opium, tobacco, and alcohol use are often the objects of critique in the dramas of prerevolutionary Caucasian and Central Asian Islamic reformers. Examples of substance use being associated with ignorance and stupidity can be found in the plays mentioned in this chapter, Nərimanov's *Ignorance* and Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy's *The Parricide*, as well as in several others, such as *Sleep* (1915) by Central Asian author Abdulla Avloniy (1874-1934).

event that impedes or prevents cultural reproduction. Because many Jadids believed the wealthy of their community wasted their money on frivolities rather than investing it in schools, a typical catastrophe is bankruptcy. The catastrophe, in its most powerful form, however, is a murder of a family member. Such a murder symbolizes the negative characters' ignorance of their native culture. Nərimanov's *Ignorance* ends with a fratricide. Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy's *The Parricide* concludes with an eponymous parricide. Uzbek author Abdulla Qodiriy's *The Rake* (1915) concludes with an uxoricide and a filicide. These types of catastrophes immediately convey the urgency of the reformer mouthpiece characters' message because of the important cultural taboos attached to them. Where the *raisonneur*-like characters' ordinary words fail to convince the negative characters, and presumably the audience, of the folly of their actions, the catastrophe, dramatists hoped, could.

As discussed in the introduction, the catastrophe may result from the *hamartia* of the protagonist, but it can have a number of other causes as well, all of which are by no means mutually exclusive. In many Jadid dramas, the play's ignorant characters fail to heed the directions of the *raisonneur* characters and consequently suffer. This *hamartia* is found, for example, in Behbudiy's *The Parricide*. The chief protagonist obstinately refuses to educate his child despite the *raisonneurs*' protests; as a result, he is robbed and murdered at the behest of his son, Toshmurod, so the latter can pay for a prostitute. In dramas in which the *raisonneur*-made hero is too progressive for his/her time, such characters often take their own lives. This occurs in the plays of the more radical Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy (1889-1929). Progressive characters in his two most famous dramas, *A Poisoned Life* (1916) and *The Rich Man and the Servant* (1918~) commit suicide, a shocking sin in his contemporaneous Muslim society, to escape their backward surroundings. In other plays, these transgressive acts are often meant to be understood as

punishments sent by God for the negative characters' failure to reform themselves. Behbudiy's *The Parricide* presents the most immediate example of God's intercession. While his play is entitled *The Parricide*, the actual murder is executed by the son's friend, Tangriqul, an unusual name meaning "slave of God." Other dramas emphasize the role of the time of ignorance (*jaholat*) itself. For authors of such works, the time of ignorance indicates that intention does not equal result and understanding is necessarily misunderstanding. For example, Haqverdiyev ends his drama *The Unfortunate Youth* (1900) with an attempted suicide that results in an accidental parricide. When the *raisonneur*-made hero of the drama Fərhad despairs that he cannot reach his obtuse and ignorant father, he attempts to end his own life, but his father winds up on the receiving end of the bullet when he startles Fərhad unexpectedly. Fərhad commits parricide instead of suicide because the time of ignorance ensures that his suicide is unsuccessful.

This catastrophe facilitates the play's final coda scene. Through this extratemporal scene, Jadids intentionally imitated local Central Asian impressions of contact with a saint in an effort to present the entirety of their play as a "revelatory experience" for the audience. In her *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia* (2007), Maria Louw notes that believers often look to "revelatory experiences" and interactions with *avliyo* (saints), offered in dreams, to provide them with a means to rework their feelings of powerlessness into a sense of agency.

When people felt the social to be suffocating, leaving no room for agency, what they sought in the phenomenon of *avliyo* was power to act on the world or knowledge to imagine the social in a different way: that is, in a way that symbolically switched the locus of action from a context in which it did not seem to make a difference to a context in which it mattered.²⁷

Dreams often serve as a site for the appearance of the *avliyo*.

In these dreams and revelations, the dreamer or the medium of the revelation sees a figure, as a rule dressed in white or appearing in a ray of light. The figure, which is interpreted as a saint or a prophet, provides the dreamer with more or less explicit

²⁷ Louw, *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, 98.

warnings or predictions about future events, and gives advice or instructions for actions that the dreamer should undertake in order to bring a desirable future about.[...] A dream has the power to transform the dreamer's self-representations by providing new signs in terms of which the self can be articulated.[...] The new signs provided in the dream point toward the future. They may alter They may alter the dreamer's interactions and relationships with others, becoming nodes around which nascent representations of self and others are formed which will affect many of the dreamer's subsequent actions and interactions with others.²⁸

While Louw describes the post-Soviet Uzbekistani present, her observations can speak to how Jadids nationalized local religious beliefs and practices. They speak not only to Central Asian Jadids but Azerbaijanis because the encounter with saints through dream, as Karl Reichl notes, is found in oral epic among many Islamized Turks, including Azerbaijanis.²⁹ The plays we have discussed thus far can therefore be seen as dramatizing the process by which a Central Asian or Azerbaijani Muslim in spiritual throes would expect an interaction with God through a saintly intermediary. Because reformers believed they would “awaken” the nation from its “ignorant slumber” or the time of decline, they liken the ignorance of the negative characters and the audience to a dream-like unconsciousness. The negative characters, in whom the audience is supposed to see themselves, are, in fact, unconscious of their own desires, their oppression, and their relationship with God or the nation. Like the saint of a dream, the dramatists' *raisonneur* figure warns of impending disaster that will proceed from uncorrected ignorance. The *raisonneur* figures attempt to place the locus of action in another context, typically in education, which they argue will free their society from its powerlessness, but the play's characters fail to act on this advice. The *raisonneur* figure appears after the catastrophe, as does the *avliyo* in dream, to address the audience directly in a scene that takes place outside the time of the drama. Here the *raisonneur*-like characters reiterate their advice from the drama, but now they speak with the

²⁸ Louw, 133–34.

²⁹ Karl Reichl, *Turkic Oral Epic Poetry: Traditions, Forms, Poetic Structure* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 61.

authority of God or a national ancestor embodying the nation, having taken on the visage of a saint. By taking the *raisonneur*-like figure's advice, the spectators in turn "awaken" to a new sense of power and agency in their community. The drama, seen in this fashion, becomes its own "revelatory experience" that completes the transformation of the audience. It is intended to generate the feelings of powerlessness that necessitate God's intervention and the appearance of a saint, and through that intervention, forward new social imaginaries.³⁰

Behbudiy's play *The Parricide*, with which this chapter began, should be read as perfect example of how the archetypal plot endeavors to convince the audience that the play's negative characters and they themselves are trapped within a sleep of ignorance and must be awakened. Behbudiy tried his hand at dramaturgy not long after Azerbaijani theater troupes began touring Turkestan in 1911.³¹ He probably modeled his work on Nərimanov's *Ignorance* given the similar use of characters, humor, and conflict, but he does not provide any direct evidence as to what inspired his entry into dramaturgy. He finished work on the play in 1912 and premiered it to a packed house after it passed the censor on January 15, 1914.³² The play features two *raisonneur*-like figures, Domla and Ziyoli, named for their positions in society: *domla* is the typical title for teacher in a traditional school who would be a member of the *'ulama*, the Islamic intellectual opponents of Jadids, while *ziyoli* indicates "intellectual," a member of the nascent Jadid class. Behbudiy, a more cautious intellectual than other fellow Jadids, offers these two characters of

³⁰ Not all reformer plays realize the *raisonneur*-like figure as a saint at the end of the drama—oftentimes the God-sent catastrophe was enough to communicate the message—but many do, including those in the later Soviet period. Both Nərimanov's *Ignorance* and Məmmədquluzadə's *The Dead* conclude their dramas by having their *raisonneur*-like figures address the audience, as does Hamza in his *The Rich Man and the Servant* with his *raisonneur*-made-hero G'ofir. In his 1974 drama, *Dawn of the Revolution*, dramatist Komil Yashin (1909-1997) also employs this device, having his narrators, a boy and a girl without names, return after the action's conclusion to give meaning to the play in a scene outside the drama.

³¹ Allworth, "The Beginning of the Modern Turkestani Theater," 683.

³² Mamadzhan Rakhmanov, *Uzbekskii teatr: s drevneishikh vremen do 1917 goda* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo literatury i iskusstva imeni Gafura Guliyama, 1981), 280.

competing classes to demonstrate the agreement between them on the importance of education. The two characters pursue various arguments to convince Boy, meaning “merchant,” of his imperative to educate his son, Toshmurod, for the benefit of his inheritance and the nation. Boy ignores their entreaties, humorously falling asleep (a comic element borrowed Nərimanov’s *Ignorance*). His audible snoring, indicated by the stage directions, not only breaks up the monotony of the lecturing, but also reminds the viewers of Turkestanis’ slumber of ignorance. Ziyoli recognizes his failure to convince Boy and, like a saint, presages the God-sent catastrophe:

Iloho, xudoyo! Ummati islomiyag‘a, xususan biz, turkistonlilarg‘a rahming kelsun.

Oh God, my God! Have mercy on the people of Islam, particularly us Turkestanis.³³

The next act connects this symbolic sleep of ignorance with powerlessness. Toshmurod and his friends drink alcohol at an Armenian-run tavern, and there they agree to rob Boy for money to pay for a Russian prostitute. The alcohol in the foreigner’s establishment signals a kind of enslavement for Behbudiy, who, in his travelogues, discusses the sale of alcohol in the Muslim world as a European tool of conquest:

Bu do‘konlarni bir-ikkisi yahudiyning baqqol do‘konidurki, Ovrupo tug‘ma va muhrlik sharob to‘la shishlar ham sotilur. Turkiya hukumati tarafidan bino qilingan maktabi rushdiyani “haram” deb bola bermaydurgon arablar bu shishlardan olmoqda va foidasi yahudiy va Ovrupo kissasig‘a kirmoqda. Va arabni axloqi ziyodaroq buzulmoqdadir.

Here there are one or two Jewish grocery stores, which sell wine bottled and stamped in Europe. The local Arabs, who don’t send their children to the government school while calling progress *haram*, drink from those bottles and all the profits go to the Jews and Europe. And Arab morality is ever more destroyed.³⁴

Their intoxication serves as yet another sign of their unconsciousness in that it indicates subordination to another’s will. Their enslavement leads Toshmurod and his friend Tangriqul to

³³ Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy, “Padarkush yoxud O‘qumagan bolaning holi,” in *Jadid dramasi* (Toshkent: Sharq, 1997), 143.

³⁴ Mahmudxo‘ja Behbudiy, *Tanlangan asarlar*, ed. Begali Qosimov (Toshkent: Ma’naviyat, 1999), 120.

rob and, under the influence, murder Boy. Domla and Ziyoli reappear after the murder in Boy's home and after Toshmurod's arrest in the tavern, respectively. These scenes take place outside the time and place of the play as the two *raisonneurs* address the audience directly. They mourn the catastrophe of the play—Domla joins Boy's wife in bemoaning the fate of her son—but they also reiterate the moral of the play, the need for education. They remind, as the saint at the end of the dream might, of the new locus of power to which they had pointed earlier. Boy has the power to educate and fund schools, but he never exercises it, preferring to abide by traditional sources of power such as wealth and connections, which do not help him avoid his fate. The characterization of the time of the play as a dream and the appearance of the *avliyo* in the form of Behbudiy's *raisonneurs* serve, the dramatist hopes, as a moment of revelation that awakens the audience.

Behbudiy's two coda scenes of awakening take place in settings unique to his play—in Boy's home and in the play's tavern—but there are, in fact, two spaces that Jadid playwrights commonly chose to locate their extratemporal scenes. The first common locale is a graveyard. We observe this location for the final scene in Haqverdiyev's *The Impoverished Nest*, Abdulla Qodiriy's *The Rake*, Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy's (pennname Hamza, 1889-1929) *A Poisoned Life*, Abdulla Avloniy's (1874-1934) *Us and Them* (1923), and Qodiriy's novel *Bygone Days* (1925). In graveyard scenes, a character, often the *raisonneur* figure-made hero, encounters the ghost of the victim of the play's catastrophe. The hero's communication with a personage beyond the grave adds to the sense that the scene presents a saint to the audience. As Louw notes, saints often appear to believers at shrines or gravesites that contain their remains.³⁵ The second common locale for the extratemporal scene is a prison, which we observe in

³⁵ Louw, *Everyday Islam in Post-Soviet Central Asia*, 65.

Haqverdiyev's *The Unfortunate Youth*, Hamza's *The Rich Man and the Servant* and in his *Victims of Despotism* (1923).³⁶ Court or arrest scenes, like that found in Behbudiy's *The Parricide*, are common analogues to the prison scene. The prison scene, in some cases, like the graveyard scene, permits the *raisonneur* figure or protagonist the opportunity to speak to the dead, this time in dream, once again suggesting to the audience the appearance of a saint. In other cases, the prison scene is used to suggest that the positive characters' suffering will be redeemed at a later time. For example, the prisoners imprisoned alongside Fərhad, the accidental parricide of Haqverdiyev's *The Unfortunate Youth*, assure the despairing hero that his country, though not in his time, will eventually see enlightenment.

As we have seen, the changed conditions of the 1890s Russian Empire gave birth to the archetypal plot. Axundzadə held beliefs about the movement of history similar to those of his successors but his confidence in the Russian state maintained the optimism of his comedies. As the Russian state changed its policies towards its Muslim populations toward the close of the 19th century, Jadids increasingly began to see their society in the throes of a civilizational decline that left them and their compatriots increasingly powerless. In their dramas, these changes manifested themselves in an archetypal plot that follows a cosmological cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth. The negative characters of the play exist in a state of ignorance of their authentic cultural selves because of a civilizational decline. The *raisonneurs* and protagonists act as tragic prophets, warning the negative characters, to no avail, that they will soon suffer a catastrophe. That catastrophe symbolizes the death of their unique civilization. A coda scene, however, articulates hope for the world outside the play. The coda scene, which imitates the appearance of a saint to a believer in spiritual throes, acts to awaken the audience and also

³⁶ In one case, that of Abdurauf Fitrat's (1887-1938) *True Love* (1920), the prison scene occurs as the penultimate scene rather than the final scene.

symbolizes the audience's awakening. As a moment of rebirth, it intimates that the nation or civilization can never die; members can forget their origins, but they can always awaken to them at another time.

The Archetypal Plot After the Revolution

The Bolshevik revolution and Jadids' own intellectual development in the 1920s changed many of the circumstances that had originally conditioned the archetypal plot in previous decades, but they did not alter the plot's structure significantly. While the Bolsheviks of Central Asia were suspicious of local Muslims' non-proletarian origins and did not allow them to participate in early Soviet structures of rule, toward the 1920s Lenin and Stalin began to compromise with local nationalist elites across the Soviet Union as part of their anti-imperialist program.³⁷ Many Jadids took advantage of Lenin and Stalin's offer and joined the Bolsheviks, gaining access to Soviet state power.³⁸ They were thus no longer in the position of powerlessness that had animated the archetypal plot. Nevertheless, rather than addressing their newfound power in their work, authors continued to write according to the cycle of civilizational decline, death via catastrophe, and rebirth. They acknowledged the revolution largely by describing it as the awakening that many of their prerevolutionary dramas had called for or predicted in the extratemporal coda scenes. Several works of the archetypal plot in the 1920s came to condemn both the tsarist state and local "ignorant" Central Asians of the prerevolutionary era. In so doing, they affirmed the new Soviet state as a deliverance from that time of decline.

³⁷ For more on early Soviet nationalities policy and its goals of anti-imperialism, see Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939*; Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of the Soviet Union* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2005); Yuri Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism," *Slavic Review* 53, no. 2 (Summer 1994): 414–52.

³⁸ For examination of the activity and influence of Jadids on the formation of Soviet Uzbekistan, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*; Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*.

Hamza's *The Rich Man and the Servant*, first performed in 1918 and many times subsequently over the 1920s as the author and others edited it, demonstrates how Jadid authors incorporated the fact of the revolution into the archetypal plot simply by tacking it on as part of the coda scene. According to most researchers, Hamza began writing the play before the revolution and continued working on it after.³⁹ In its first performance on June 20, 1918, less than a year after the revolution, the play, according to playbills, contained three acts.⁴⁰ The undated prompter's copy, which was likely performed October 25, 1919 and represents the largest extant version of the text, contains four acts.⁴¹ We have a so-called prompter's copy, and not Hamza's original, because the actors with whom Hamza worked, as he toured the territory, were amateurs and often illiterate. Casts therefore typically required prompters to remind the members of their lines during performances. The plot of the first three acts of that prompter's copy is rather similar to Hamza and other Jadid dramas before the revolution, and we may assume that these are the three acts that existed during the first 1918 performances. In those acts, Boy, a rich merchant, decides, out of uncontrollable lust, to forcibly marry his servant G'ofir's fiancée, Jamila. He enlists the support of local *'ulama* and colonial officials to slander G'ofir and have him exiled to Siberia. Like the powerless *raisonneur* heroes of previous dramas, G'ofir laments his helplessness, often wailing and crying. Rather than live as Boy's wife, Jamila poisons herself. Parts of the fourth act of *The Rich Man and the Servant* could only have been written after a coming to terms with the revolution. In Siberia, G'ofir meets a Kazakh

³⁹ Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, *To 'la asarlar to 'plami: Besh tomlik*, vol. 3 (Toshkent: Fan, 1988), 278.

⁴⁰ Laziz Qayumov, *Hamza* (Toshkent: Yosh gvardiya, 1973), 40. The following article places the exact date of the performance: "Bilasizmi..." *Toshkent teatrlarida*, no. 11 (1971): 27.

⁴¹ Niyoziy, *To 'la asarlar to 'plami: Besh tomlik*, 3:279. I analyze the prompter's copy of *The Rich Man and the Servant* because the 1939 version, which was "restored" by Uzbek socialist playwright Komil Yashin, was obviously rewritten for a different audience with different political expectations. For some notes on this rewriting, see Suvon Meliev, "'Boy ila xizmatchi' yo tiklangan nusxa muammosi," *Yoshlik*, no. 95 (November 1989): 69–72.

communist, who tells him about the impending revolution and convinces him to embrace it.⁴² G‘ofir’s prayers for a savior are answered as a crowd gathers on the street, singing “La Marsellaise,” indicating that revolution has come. The play ends with exhortatory words often used in Hamza’s post-revolutionary poetry, “Yashasin inqilob! Bizni inqilob qutqardi. (Long live the revolution! The revolution has saved us.)”⁴³ Before the revolution, Hamza’s final scene might have been an ordinary prison or arrest scene that offered hope for an enlightened future, but after the revolution, his coda scene becomes a place to greet the historical revolution as a fulfillment of the promise of awakening and enlightenment. The revolution did not change the plot so much as it served to suggest that the hoped-for awakening had happened.

The 1927 short story “Novvoy qiz” (The Baker Girl) by Abdulhamid Sulaymon o‘g‘li Cho‘lpon (1897-1938), a second-generation Uzbek Jadid and one of the primary targets of Uzbek Stalinist critics in the late 1920s, provides another example of how works imitating the archetypal plot accounted for revolution merely by incorporating it into the coda scene. In this particular piece, much like the powerless *raisonneur* figure suddenly gains authority in returning to the stage as a saint, so Cho‘lpon’s female protagonist here spontaneously becomes powerful thanks to her participation in a Soviet court in the short story’s coda scene. The bulk of the story follows this nameless young woman primarily in the prerevolutionary era of decline and ignorance as she is raped by a local merchant. Throughout this main body of the story, the narrator laments the girl’s powerlessness, her inability to rebel successfully against this cruel man. The narrator likens the girl to a sea and her rapist, O‘lmasboy, to an insurmountable cliff above the sea:

⁴² Niyoziy, *To‘la asarlar to‘plami: Besh tomlik*, 3:179–94.

⁴³ Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, “Variantlar: Boy ila xizmatchi,” in *To‘la asarlar to‘plami*, vol. 3 (Toshkent: Fan, 1988), 194.

Qiz qaltirab turib tokchadan bir piyola oldi va titragan qo'li bilan O'lmasboyga qarab irg'itdi. O'lmasboy salgina bir tomonga qing'ayish bilan piyolani yonidan o'tkardi-da, bu safar baland g'urur bilan bir qahqaha otdi.

Dengiz shu qadar buyukligi bilan hamma vaqt qirg'oqlardan yengiladi. Achchig'i kelganda, g'azabi qaynaganda zo'r-zo'r to'lqinlar, kichik-kichik mavjlarni qirg'oqning tosh-metin gavdasiga qarab otadi. Qirg'oq, yuqorilarga ko'tarilib ketgan marmar qirg'oq, koshki, pinagini buzsa! Bechora to'lqinlar, mavjlar sinib, mayda-mayda bo'lib yana dengizning ko'ksiga tushadi. Dengiz ularni yana silab-siypab boshini bir yerga qovushtirib, to'plab yana qirg'oqqa otadi. Yana bo'linish, yana parchalanish... Tuganmas olishish!

Qiz-dengiz O'lmasboy-qirg'oqning po'lat taniga kichkina bir piyolani yolg'iz bir daf'agina otdi.

The girl, her knees shaking, took a cup from the shelf and with her quivering hand launched the cup at O'lmasboy. O'lmasboy quickly leaned away from the projectile and then guffawed with laughter.

The sea in all its vastness is always defeated by the cliff faces that rise above it. When it rises in anger, when it boils with rage, it directs its powerful waves at the stones and rocks on its borders. If only it could rise to the heights of those marble cliffs and disturb their slumber! But the poor waves break against the cliff base, dissipating and returning to the breast of the sea. The sea soothes them as a mother and gathers them to again hurl them in vain at the cliffs. They are split again... An endless struggle!

The sea-girl threw the little cup at the steel O'lmasboy-cliff only once.⁴⁴

The final chapter or coda scene, which is not anticipated by the preceding chapters, takes place after the revolution and shows the girl's complete transformation. In this conclusion, the girl appears in a Soviet court intended to bring prerevolutionary criminals to justice. She takes the stand to face her rapist, but no longer a helpless victim thanks to the Bolshevik revolution, she is now supernaturally powerful. Instead of testifying and reliving the powerlessness of the past, she releases a powerful scream that knocks the merchant from his feet. Her words, ineffective and feeble before, now effect action in the world. Her role here is again best likened to that of a saint or some other figure connected with the divine because of the way in which her utterances affect reality. The Qur'an cites in evidence of God's power to create with words: "He only says to it:

⁴⁴ Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon, *Asarlar: To'rt jildlik*, ed. Dilmurod Quronov, Naim Karimov, and Sanjar Nazar, vol. II (Toshkent: Akademyashr, 2016), 348.

‘Be,’ and it becomes.”⁴⁵ Her scream, like God’s words, affects reality. Cho‘lpon lends this interpretation of the girl’s scream credence by emphasizing the seemingly impossible and thus miraculous nature of the act:

Dengiz-qiz qullarday jim turib so‘zladi.[...] Qirg‘oq ag‘darildi.

The sea-girl, formerly silent and obedient like a slave, spoke.[...] the cliff crumbled.⁴⁶

As in prerevolutionary dramas, Cho‘lpon’s heroine in the coda scene is suddenly associated with God, but now it is the revolution that grants her that power.

As chapter two will demonstrate, this incorporation of revolution into the coda scene of the archetypal plot did not satisfy Stalinist Socialist Realist critics of the late 1930s. While both the archetypal and Socialist Realist master plots impose similar historical metanarratives onto literature, the latter, by the time of the Great Terror (1936-8), differed from the former in that the path to consciousness was a gradual, progressive process. The Socialist Realist hero grew to consciousness slowly thanks to the tutelage of a Bolshevik teacher. The archetypal plot did not conceive of the acquisition of consciousness in this fashion. For Jadid authors and many of their students, awakening or consciousness had to be depicted via the spontaneous death of a previous era.

Before proceeding to chapter two to explore how Uzbek socialist author Abdulla Qahhor fit this cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth to elements of the Socialist Realist master plot, we should examine first how Uzbek Jadid authors began to ironize and parody the Jadid archetypal plot. These parodies will prove important in chapter two specifically because of the ways in which Qahhor read them without attention to irony.

⁴⁵ See 2:117, 3:47, 3:59, 6:73, 16:40, 19:35, 36:82, and 40:68.

⁴⁶ Abdulhamid Sulaymon o‘g‘li Cho‘lpon, “Novvoy qiz,” in *Asarlar: to‘rt jildlik* (Toshkent: Akademyashr, 2016), 352.

Irony, Parody, and Agency in the Archetypal Plot

As shown already, the early examples of the archetypal plot are notable for their coercive monologism. Azerbaijani dramas of the 1890s and early 1900s and Uzbek dramas of the 1910s are largely didactic. Authors of these works sought to use familiar cultural symbols and play on cultural taboos and fears to convince audiences of the need for their particular version of education and reform. While later works of the archetypal plot did not always lose their didactic thrust, a gradual transformation took place across the forty years from the 1890s to the 1930s in which authors began to distance themselves from their mouthpiece characters and parody the archetypal plot's cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth. The initial dramas of the archetypal plot normally included a *raisonneur* character whose original functional inaction in Axundzade's dramas was realized in the archetypal plot as a tragic impotence. In the first decade of the 20th century in the South Caucasus and in the late 1910s in Turkestan, authors made these *raisonneur* figures into the heroes of their drama. Initially authors maintained complete identification with these heroes. Toward the 1910s in the South Caucasus and the 1920s in Turkestan, writers began to distance themselves from their *raisonneur*-become heroes by ironizing them and by parodying the tragic impotence of the *raisonneur* heroes of past Jadid works. The powerlessness that past *raisonneurs* articulated became a condemnable *hamartia* of passivity.

This ironization of the *raisonneur* hero coincides with the development among several Uzbek writers of a slightly different literary consciousness. In the 1920s, these Uzbek Jadid writers, the most articulate among whom was Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lpon, realized the structure of the archetypal plot and turned it on its head. They discovered that their art stemmed from the depiction of the time of decline contained in the archetypal plot, and they

therefore endeavored to indefinitely postpone the awakening or rebirth that their literary predecessors sought with the extratemporal coda scene of the archetypal plot. This aestheticization of the archetypal plot produced a double-voicedness in the works of Cho‘lpon. On one level, he desired that his characters be freed from their ignorance, and on another, he intentionally withheld salvation from them.

The path towards irony and literary self-consciousness first began when the *raisonneur*-like figures of the archetypal plot became protagonists. In the initial plays of the plot, such as those of Nərimanov in the South Caucasus and Behbudiy in Turkestan, a *raisonneur* figure stands outside the action of the work. He preaches the value of education, warns the negative characters that not following his prescriptions will result in catastrophe, and later explains, in the role of a saint, the reason behind the catastrophe and/or how it could have been prevented. If needed, he reveals the *hamartia* of the negative characters to the audience. As writers further developed their talents as dramatists, this *raisonneur* began to take a greater part in the action. In many cases, this *raisonneur* became the main protagonist, and his/her *hamartia* is entirely absent from the work. The tragedy proceeded without *hamartia* because the young, educated paragon hero takes his/her life, having decided that he/she cannot continue on under the suffocating backwardness of their elders. The tragedy is one of a conflict between an anachronistic individual ethos and contemporary social ethos rather than a result of a tragic flaw or error in judgment created by ignorance. The conclusion of the play then generally calls upon the audience to awaken from their ignorance and redeem the martyrdom of the protagonist that died before his/her time.

This unironized *raisonneur*-made hero is most conspicuous in some of the works of Azerbaijani writer Haqverdiyev and Uzbek writers Hamza and Abdulla Avloniy. In turning to

suicide, these heroes often invoke as justification the traditional trope of the *raisonneur*'s powerlessness to affect his/her surroundings. For example, after his beloved Maryamxon poisons herself, the male hero Mahmudxon of Hamza's *A Poisoned Life* (1916) bewails his powerlessness to affect the ignorance and backwardness of their parents who prevented his and Maryamxon's marriage. He declares that his own death is the only escape from this ignorance.

Tog'lardagi yirtqich hayvonlarda ham sizning kabi farzandga muhabbatsizlik, shafqatsizlik, muruvvatsizlik, (*qichqirib*) zolimlik, xunxo'rlik o'lmas!!! Hech o'lmas! Volloh! O'lmas![...] Bunday zolim xalq orasinda yashamoqdan o'lim lazzat, lazzat! (*To'xtar, bir oz turib.*) Bu xil rahmsiz, shafqatsizlik! Bir vaqtda shariatdan ko'z yumib, (*achchig'ila*) islomiyatni qo'yib, dunyo yo'lga qadam bosuvchi diyonatsiz qora xalq orasinda tiriklikdan, albatta, o'lim yaxshi! O'lim!

Wild mountain animals' hatred for their children, their mercilessness, their inhumanity, (*screaming*) their tyranny, their bloodthirstiness will never die!!! It will never die! Never! It will never die![...] Better to die than to live among this evil people! (*Stops, stands in place for a moment.*) Such mercilessness, such evil! Death is better than life among these blind people who have closed their eyes to sharia, to Islam, who walk the earth without faith or conscience! Death is better, of course! Death!⁴⁷

Here Mahmudxon expresses the *raisonneur*'s traditional powerlessness by declaring his parents and their environment irremediable. He cannot extricate them from their civilizational decline and their state of ignorance, and thus it is better to die. His beloved Maryamxon earlier notes that both their deaths are not in vain because through writing and, by implication, the performance of their tragedy on stage, their deaths can be redeemed by a future generation of post-ignorance Uzbeks. Just before her suicide, she requests that Mahmudxon write the story of her tragic death by suicide for others to learn from it. While they hope that their message will be heard in another time, in the present these characters have no power to affect others, only themselves.

The next generation of Azerbaijani and Uzbek writers caught onto the trope of the *raisonneur*'s powerlessness and began to parody it, the effect of which was to distance

⁴⁷ Niyoziy, Hamza Hakimzoda, "Zaharli hayot," in *To'la asarlar to'plami*, vol. 3 (Toshkent: Fan, 1988), 41–42.

themselves from their characters and their own class. Məmmədquluzadə is the first in the Azerbaijani dramatic canon to perform this act of parody through his *raisonneur* hero İskəndər of *The Dead*. İskəndər often complains of his powerlessness, but the course of the play's events does not necessarily lead the audience to empathize with this sense of helplessness. While making İskəndər into a pitiable figure, Məmmədquluzadə also encourages viewers to laugh at the protagonist. İskəndər, in fact, reveals that he is a parody of previous authors' *raisonneur* characters when he tussles with a dog, complaining that not even the animal will listen to him. When the play's teacher asks the Western-educated İskəndər to encourage his brother Cəlal's studies, İskəndər protests futility:

(İskəndər itin qulaqlarından yapışıb, istəyir çəkə içəri. İt dartınıb gəlmir.) [...] Baş üstə, baş üstə, nəsihət elərəm. Amma bunu de ki, mənim sözümə qulaq asan kimdi? Odu, Allahın iti də mənim sözümə baxmır; nə qədər elədim, içəri girmədi.[...] Məgər Mirzə Cəlal görmür ki, elmi insan bir qəpiyə dəyməz? Xa... xa... xa... Hər kəsin ki, elmi var, onun hörməti yoxdu; hər kəsin ki, hörməti var, onun da elmi yoxdu.

(Pulling a dog into the house by its ears)[...] Of course, I'll happily advise him, but who will listen to me? Not even this damn dog listens to me; no matter what I say, it won't come in[...] Can't Cəlal see that an educated person isn't worth a thing? Hahaha... Educated people no one here respects, and those who they respect have no education.⁴⁸

As do Azerbaijani *raisonneurs* before him, İskəndər highlights his powerlessness, but in this case, he makes a fool of himself in the process. Not only is he drunk, but İskəndər tries to bring a dog, a *haram* animal, into the house. With his İskəndər, Məmmədquluzadə does not present a character with whom he identifies, but rather plays on the previous examples of *raisonneur* heroes found in other Azerbaijani dramas. İskəndər's powerlessness does not inspire empathy as much as it does laughter at his decadence.

Unlike Məmmədquluzadə's straightforwardly ironized protagonist, Abdulla Qodiriy's *Bygone Days* (serialized 1922-5), the first Uzbek novel, observes an ambivalence regarding

⁴⁸ Məmmədquluzadə, "Ölülər," 383–84.

irony. As mentioned in the introduction, the common Uzbek interpretation of this novel, beginning with Stalinist critics and continuing through independence, has been to assume an absolute identity between Qodiriy and his protagonist Otabek.⁴⁹ Uzbek critics tend to read Qodiriy's Otabek as the same *raisonneur*-made heroes found in Hamza and Abdulla Avloniy's work, i.e. a victim of fate, of his anachronistic placement in a time of decline.⁵⁰ Qodiriy certainly empathizes with his lead character, but the novel is ambivalent as to the role of fate and Otabek's agency. At times, the narrator speaks of the inevitability of tragedy for Otabek and his beloved, but at other times, the novel psychologizes the lead character. That psychologism permits a reading of the novel as a modern tragedy in Lukács's definition examined in the introduction. The psychologized Otabek continually questions his own agency in the novel's impending tragic conclusion. The novel concludes with the catastrophe of murder: Otabek's beloved Kumush is poisoned by his second wife Zainab, to whom his parents forcibly marry him. The implication, from the beginning of the novel, is that polygamy inevitably leads to conflict. His *hamartia* is therefore found in his passivity in the face of his elders. He is continually unable to defend his and his beloved's interests against his parents and in-laws. Otabek continually questions whether he should do more:

Ikkinchi bir vaqtda kimningdir quyidag'i gapini eshitar edi:
— Ul o'zining dushmanlarini o'ldirish uchungina Marg'ilong'a qatnab yurg'an ekan, hisobini tugatdi-da, bedarak ketdi, qoldi. Tuzukroq joyi chiqsa berib qolayliq Kumushni... umri ham o'tib boradir.

It was as if he heard another voice:

⁴⁹ Mikhail Sheverdin, one of the earliest to review Qodiriy's novel, writes in the party journal *Za partiiu* 1928 that Qodiriy is "entirely on the side of his [positive] characters." Quoted in Qo'shjonov, Matyoqub, *Qodiriy - erksizlik qurboni* (Toshkent: Fan, 1992), 6. Miyon Buzruk Solihov, another Stalinist-era critic, likewise reads Otabek as an "idealized hero." Quoted in Bahodir Karimov, *Abdulla Qodiriy: Tanqid, tahlil va talqin* (Toshkent: Fan, 2006), 26.

⁵⁰ Bahodir Karimov argues that Otabek's tragedy is entirely due to fate. See Karimov, *Abdulla Qodiriy: Tanqid, tahlil va talqin*, 160–62.

“He went to Marg‘ilon just to kill his enemies [Hamid], and once he finished with them, he left without saying a word to his in-laws. So if some better suitor comes by, they should just give Kumush away to him?”⁵¹

Qodiriy’s psychologization of Otabek demonstrates that the author does not fully identify with his character, and in fact criticizes him, much as Məmmədquluzadə does his İskəndər. In the above, Otabek’s self-doubt reveals his *hamartia*: he is too passive. He submits to the will of his elders—his parents demand that he be at home with them, not in Marg‘ilon with his wife—even as they destroy his future.

That passivity, I suggest, is a parody of the sense of powerlessness found in the previous *raisonneur* heroes of the canon. Those characters felt that they were fated to their tragic end because of the anachronism of their existence. Otabek, Qodiriy shows, likewise believes the loss of his beloved is fated. Earlier in the novel, Otabek identifies his own future with the tragic love story of his friend, *usta*-Alim.

Otabek usta Alimni juda yuqori darajaga qo‘yg‘anidek, uning majlisi bilan ham ancha yengillashar, o‘n yillardin beri usta Alim yuragida saqlang‘an va qabrg‘a ham birga ketishi kutilgan ishq tarixini qayta-qayta eshitkusi kelaberar, usta Alim ham o‘zining xotiralarini takror-takror hikoya qilib, hikoyasi oxirida: “Peshonamga sig‘madi-da, o‘ldi”, deb qo‘yar, bu so‘z Otabekning ham yuragiga sovuq suv sepkan ta‘sirini berib, ul ham ko‘nglidan: “Manim ham peshongamga sig‘madi-da, tiriklayin o‘ldi”, degan so‘zni o‘tquzar edi.

Otabek greatly respected *usta*-Alim, he felt himself at ease in his presence, and he always longed to hear the tragic love story which *usta*-Alim had kept in his heart these past ten years and which would follow him to the grave. *Usta*-Alim, for his part, frequently told that story, always adding in conclusion: “it was my fate that she die before me.” Those words sent a chill down Otabek’s back. He heard them as “it’s my fate too that she will die before me.”⁵²

While many might read this moment—and much of the other talk of fate in the novel—as foreshadowing, given Otabek’s constant doubts about his agency in the tragedy, we can also read

⁵¹ Abdulla Qodiriy, *O‘tkan kunlar* (Toshkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2012), 339.

⁵² Qodiriy, 261.

the protagonist's thoughts here as a product of his own imagination. Otabek contributes to the creation of his own tragedy by believing that his beloved's untimely death is inevitable. He uses his belief in fate to justify his passivity. He is besieged by doubt but does not act on that doubt. By critiquing the passivity of his lead character, Qodiriy both distances himself from his character and parodies the powerlessness of the tragic heroes of previous Uzbek writers.

The ironization of the *raisonneur* hero found in Məmmədquluzadə and Qodiriy's work is evidence of a larger attainment of literary consciousness among this generation of Azerbaijani and Uzbek writers in the 1920s. Not long after the Russian revolutions of 1917, several Uzbek intellectuals and writers began to understand the cosmological structure of the archetypal plot anew. They parodied the archetypal plot differently than Məmmədquluzadə and Qodiriy. They began to hail the civilizational decline and the state of ignorance of national or communal authenticity implied by the decline as the well-spring of their art. The archetypal plot, as shown above, configures the state of ignorance as one of a dream from which the audience must be awakened. In becoming conscious of their art, these Uzbek authors professed, in their poetry and other works, a newfound interest in dream and consequently, in the indefinite postponement of awakening.

Most critics, Uzbek and Western, have read the seeming pessimism of Uzbek Jadids' turn away from awakening and toward dream as the product of a disappointment with Soviet politics—and there was certainly some disappointment there—but the interest in dream is far better understood as an aesthetic statement.⁵³ In 1920, Cho'lon, unquestionably the best poet to

⁵³ See, for example, Allworth, *Evading Reality: The Devices of 'Abdurauf Fitrat, Modern Central Asian Reformist*; Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics*; Edward Allworth, "Bilim Ochag'i 'The Source of Knowledge': A Nationalistic Periodical from the Turkistan Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic," *Central Asiatic Journal* 10, no. 1 (March 1965): 61–70; Halim Kara, "Resisting Narratives: Reading Abdulhamid Suleymon Cholpan from a Post-Colonial Perspective" (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2000); Naim Karimov, *Cho'lon: Ma'rifiy roman* (Toshkent: Sharq, 2003); Naim Karimov, *Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lon* (Toshkent: Fan, 1991); Dilmurod Qur'onov, *Cho'lon hayoti va ijodiy merosi* (Toshkent: O'qituvchi, 1997).

emerge from among Jadids at this time, articulated this new understanding of dream in his lyric. In his poem “(Someone’s) Dream” (Xayoli), Cho‘lpon suggests that there is a creative energy in sleep, in unconsciousness which is maintained by its unfinalizability or unrealized potential. To wake up from such a sleep is to lose the infinite artistic possibilities engendered by that sleep’s dream.

Ko‘ngildagi muhabbatning uchqunin
Xayolimning bir burchiga berkitdim.
Ul uchqunning kuchligidan siyamda
Hech tuzalmas, og‘ir yara bor etdim.

Qulog‘imga: “ol baxt” deb eshitilgan
Azonlarni shaytoniy deb o‘yladim;
Shuning uchun baxt bergan malakka
Turli-tuman afsonalar so‘zladim...

Sochlarini o‘ynab turib eshitdi
Va dedikim: “Afsonalar behuda!”
Bul so‘zlari qulog‘imga yetishdi:
“Oqdim, - dedi, - qonli, zardobli suvda...”

“Oq-oq, - dedi, - afsonalar sultoni, -
Sening taxting, baxting unda kutadir;
Ul zardobli, qonli suvlar ostida
Qora kiygan joning jilva etadir.”

Ket, ey shayton, bosirqadim... qo‘rqaman;
Ket-ket. Qilich singan, qalqon teshilgan.
Ko‘rasanmi? Men ezilgan, yotaman,
Ustimga-da balo tog‘i yiqilgan.

So‘nggi nafas, oxirgi dam, ey malak,
Kel, bir qara, so‘ngra yiqilsun falak.

I hid the spark of love inside my heart
in the depths of my dream.
Tucked away in my breast, the strength of that spark
Never lets my body heal, leaving a grievous wound.

I hear: “take your desire” from
The morning in which I only see the devil
So I create my tales

For the angel that inspired my desire...

Toying with its hair,
It answers: "Your tales are useless!"
Its words arrive at my ear:
"I flow," it says "in blood and golden water..."

"Flow with me," it says, "lord of tales, -
Your throne, your desire await in me;
In that golden and bloody water
Your soul, clothed in black, will be bathed in color."

Leave me, oh devil, torture me with nightmares no more... I am afraid;
Leave. My sword is broken, my shield is pierced.
Do you see? I am crushed, I lie now,
A mountain of misfortune has collapsed upon me.

My last breath, last moment, oh angel,
Come, look, and let the heavens fall.⁵⁴

Art, the poem argues, emerges from the deferment of awakening. A one-time angel, now become a devil, identified by the lyric persona's curses, tempts the persona to awaken from his sleep. I have rendered *azonlar*, the call to prayer, as "morning" to show how the poet continues his metaphor of dream. The devil calls on the lyric persona to achieve the "desire" of his dream in reality. That devil recognizes the lyric persona as an artist – "lord of tales." In declaring that the persona's "tales are useless," the devilish voice invites the artist to stop toying with the artifice and falseness of dream; however, the persona refuses because he finds art, the ability to weave his tales, within dream. Cho'lpon then ends the poem not with the awakening that the devil offers but with crushing defeat, suggesting that the persona chooses to avoid awakening and remain, as long as possible, within dream.

This poem invites a reading opposite that of Cho'lpon's predecessors' dramas, a reading which allows us to interpret the poem as a sort of aesthetic manifesto. The angel that calls on the

⁵⁴ Abdulhamid Cho'lpon, *Asarlar*, vol. 1 (Toshkent: Akademyashr, 2013), 49.

lyric persona to awaken can be read as the *raisonneur*-made saint with which reformer dramas commonly end. But now the lyric persona ignores the angel's calls to awaken and instead labels the angel a devil for its opposition to the lyric persona's dreaming. Consequently, rather than fearing the catastrophic end predicted by the *raisonneur*, Cho'lpon's lyric persona now actively chooses it. We can read this poem as specifically an aesthetic statement because, in realizing the angel of his precursors as a devil, Cho'lpon inverts his own role as well. The devil, many early Jadid dramas show, held sway over the time of decline and ignorance.⁵⁵ Therefore, if the angel of awakening becomes a devil, if his call to prayer becomes evil, then the devil of decline and unconsciousness takes on God's role. Cho'lpon's poem thus declares that the artist's creative act, found in his dreaming and his ability to choose the moment of catastrophe, is on par with the divine act of creation.

Cho'lpon is not alone in proposing this aesthetic. Around the same time, his contemporary Hamza simultaneously expressed interest in postponed awakening as a generator of art. The Europeanized Turk, Ashraf, of Hamza's unfinished *Rauza and Shaydo*, a drama likely written in the beginning of the 1920s, equates endless dream with art.⁵⁶

“Faust” muharriri tirik bo‘lsa edi, jahonda birgina bo‘lgan suykli Margaritasini unutar edi-da, Rauzaga muftalo bo‘lur edi va ham poyonsiz bir xayol emas, yorug‘ bir haqiqat oldida bo‘lgan bo‘lur edi.

If the author of *Faust* were alive today, he would forget his Margarita and become enchanted with Rauza. He would forget his endless dream and stand in front of bright truth.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See, for instance, Qodiriy's *The Rake* and Avloniy's *Us and Them*, which both have Shayton, the devil, appear in the coda scene. In the former, the uxoricide and filicide villain Toshfo'lot swears loyalty to the devil, while in the latter, the devil tempts the hero Kamol.

⁵⁶ There is no date for the manuscript, but the play is set in Germany, where young Turkestanis often studied before the territory's orientation turned towards Moscow alone. That setting suggests the play was written in the late 1910s or early 1920s.

⁵⁷ Hamza Hakimzoda Niyoziy, “Rauza va Shaydo,” in *To‘la asarlari to‘plami*, vol. 3 (Toshkent: Fan, 1988), 159.

Ashraf notably conflates Goethe with his character Faust, but his mention of Goethe's drama implies the deferment of the object of desire. In Goethe's *Faust*, Mephistopheles wagers with Faust that he can sate his striving by finding him a moment which he would like to last forever, but Faust contends that he will continue to strive in life, unsatisfied. By conflating author and character, Ashraf's compliment suggests that Rauza's beauty would sate not only Faust but also his author, such that Goethe would have concluded his fiction writing prematurely to live in reality with her. Hamza thus implies that the act of writing is something of a dream, a sublimation and redirection of desire.

While other Uzbek artists spoke of deferred awakening as an artistic font, Cho'lpon more than any other advanced this aesthetic. In the 1920s and 1930s, his drama and prose deny awakening to the very characters and society for whom his politics would suggest he desires it. His characters' every epiphany or moment of victory is illusory, leading only to more ambiguity and doubt, an indeterminacy in which Cho'lpon the author revels. The mistakes and misunderstandings that the time of ignorance generate allow Cho'lpon's narrator his poetic flourishes, his bewailing of injustice, and his humorous mockery. Cho'lpon as author sympathizes with these characters but he also consciously extends their suffering, denying them the peace and freedom they seek.

Cho'lpon's drama *A Modern Woman (Zamona xotini; 1928)*, which was not published or performed in his lifetime, perfectly evinces the author's literary consciousness because it shows his ambivalence to the fate of his characters and to his own politics. The play follows the principal female character and the eponymous modern woman, Rahima xola, as she takes her abusive husband Rustam's place as the head of a village *ispolkom* (executive committee). As a Jadid reformer, Cho'lpon initially found himself in alliance with Bolshevik efforts toward the

liberation of Central Asian women. The *hujum* or “assault,” a state-sponsored campaign encouraging women to liberate themselves from their society’s oppressive patriarchy by publicly discarding their *paranjis*, full-body coverings worn in public, enjoyed support from nationalist intellectuals like Cho‘lpon and Bolsheviks alike.⁵⁸ Cho‘lpon seemingly supports his protagonist’s efforts at self-actualization—after all, his lyric usually reproaches Central Asian women for their passivity and ignorance—but he gives her the same tragic end as many others in his oeuvre. The drama suggests that women can only achieve liberation if they surrender their womanhood, a fact that demonstrates Cho‘lpon’s essentialization of femininity and his discomfort with the notion of a masculine woman. Cho‘lpon emphasizes throughout the play that the modern woman is actually very man-like. Rahima xola is described in the character descriptions as *erkaknusxa* (literarily: man-copy) and in becoming the head of the *ispolkom*, she takes on a man’s role. In fact, she ousts her husband, Rustam, from that position after he beats and almost kills her with a knife laden with phallic symbolism.⁵⁹ When she becomes head of the *ispolkom* herself, she in turn beats her “backward” patriarchal opponents with an equally symbolic whip. In the play’s conclusion, she announces her decision to marry the emasculated and sexless Jo‘ra, an old man who has never married, but in a short soliloquy, regrets that her husband abandoned her, that Jo‘ra cannot replace him. At that moment, Rustam bursts in and again confronts her with a knife. The stage directions emphasize that with Rustam, her femininity returns as she cries, “fully expressing her womanhood.”⁶⁰ The police interrupt their encounter and arrest Rustam, but as they drag him away, the couple’s son, Adhamjon, chases

⁵⁸ For more on the Jadid and Bolshevik partnership in the *hujum*, see Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*, 32–52; Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 197–208.

⁵⁹ The knife is suggestive of a phallic object not just in a Freudian sense, but also in Uzbek culture in which a knife appearing in a dream or in an act of fortune-telling portends the birth of a son.

⁶⁰ Abdulhamid Sulaymon o‘g‘li Cho‘lpon, “Zamona xotini,” in *Asarlar: To‘rt jildlik*, vol. III (Toshkent: Akademyashr, 2016), 246.

after Rustam, calling “father, father” and ignoring his mother’s cries. The tragic tone with which Cho‘lpon ends his otherwise uplifting play demonstrates the author’s ambivalence towards his own politics. She, the author hints, may be a liberated woman, i.e. a man, but cannot be a father to her son. Try as she might, Rahima xola can never fulfill all the roles her husband can. Following the manifesto in his poem “(Someone’s) Dream,” Cho‘lpon brings his hero to the cusp of awakening, to the achievement of a utopian happiness, only to deprive her of it.

The first novel of his incomplete dilogy *Night and Day* (1934) does much the same, relying on its characters’ unconsciousness and ignorance of their circumstances, a product of the decline, as an aesthetic device that creates ambiguity, misprision, indeterminacy, and thus, for the author, art.⁶¹

The story follows the paths of three characters that intersect at various points in the novel over the course of several years, ending with the 1916 revolt in which Turkestani rebels rose up against Russian settlers and native imperial officials.⁶² *Night and Day* opens with the girl Zebi, who has recently reached marriageable age. The beauty of her voice catches the ear of Miryoqub, the retainer of the Russian-affiliated colonial official Akbarali *mingboshi*. Although Akbarali already has three wives, Miryoqub piques his interest with Zebi and arranges a fourth marriage. During that time, Miryoqub meets a Russian prostitute, Maria, with whom he falls in love and agrees to leave Central Asia. As the new couple leaves for Moscow, Miryoqub becomes acquainted with a Jadid, Sharafuddin Xo‘jaev, and nominally becomes a Jadid. After Miryoqub’s

⁶¹ For more on ambiguity in Cho‘lpon’s novel, see Shawn Lyons, “Resisting Colonialism in the Uzbek Historical Novel *Kecha va Kunduz* (Night and Day), 1936,” *Inner Asia*, no. 3 (2001): 175–92. I largely agree with Lyons’s argument, but I posit that the ambiguity contained in Cho‘lpon’s novel is intentional, not simply a result of the problematic discourse of Soviet anti-colonial liberation.

⁶² There is little comprehensive scholarship on the revolt in English, but Jörn Happel has written an excellent book on the subject in German: *Nomadische Lebenswelten und Zarische Politik: der Aufstand in Zentralasien 1916* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010). Aminat Chokbaeva, Cloé Drieu, and Alexander Morrison plan to release an edited volume on the subject later this year. See *The 1916 Central Asian Revolt: Rethinking the History of a Collapsing Empire in the Age of War and Revolution* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

departure, the action returns to Central Asia, where Zebi's new co-wives intrigue against her and her husband. *Mingboshi*'s second wife plans to poison her, but Zebi unwittingly gives the poison to Akbarali. Zebi is taken to court, convicted of murder, and sentenced to exile in Siberia.

In this time of ignorance, none of Cho'lpon's characters understand their own actions, moving through the novel as if controlled by another. Zebi, the female protagonist who is married off against her will, often cannot account for her movements and thoughts:

Uning oyoqlari, allaqanday yomon bir kuchning afsuniga ilashganlar, o'sha kuchning sudragan tomoniga borardilar. Yosh qiz o'z ko'nglining birinchi marta o'ziga begonalashganini, o'zidan boshqa bir kuchning ko'ngliga egalik qilganini sezardi...

Her legs were under the spell of some evil force, and they went in the direction it dragged her. The young girl felt for the first time that her will was alien to her, as if made slave to another force.⁶³

This unconsciousness, a product of the Jadid-condemned decline, leads to misunderstandings and mistakes, which drive the plot of the novel. The plot develops through epiphanies and self-realizations, but they are always preludes to new epiphanies, and thus Cho'lpon denies his characters the comfort of finality or awakening. Miscommunication and misunderstandings provide most of the turns in the plot. Akbarali's youngest wife, Sultonxon, invites Zebi to her house without realizing the consequences, i.e., that Akbarali will fall in love with Zebi and that Sultonxon will lose her status as favorite wife. Zebi's father warns her not to sing during her trip to the village, but losing herself in the moment, she releases her voice, which leads to her eventual marriage to Akbarali. One of Akbarali's elder wives, Poshshaxon, mistakenly murders him when she intends to poison Zebi, which leads to the novel's climactic trial. Miryoqub and Maria constantly misunderstand one another, unable to speak the same language.

⁶³ Abdulhamid Cho'lpon, "Kecha va kunduz: Roman," *Sharq yulduzi*, no. 2 (1988): 82.

Each mistake draws the characters out of their usual environment and transforms them. Sultonxon, a naïve young girl, realizes the pain of her elder co-wives. Zebi, a poor girl at the beginning of the novel, is forced into a life of luxury with a man who revolts her. Miryoqub and Maria wind up married after a disastrous misunderstanding, which should have separated them forever: Miryoqub gives Maria a check, signifying, to him, his loyalty but, to her, that he sees her only as a prostitute. That such mistakes, even at the novel's conclusion, continue to dictate the action, undermines the sense of closure that the epiphanies gained by characters in the course of the novel may suggest. Ultimately, every realization, every recognition is a misrecognition that postpones awakening and enlightenment to another time.

Cho'lpon's narrator often interrupts the narrative to lament this unconsciousness, this passivity of his characters, but at the same time, he declares it necessary to the Uzbek artistic tradition, thus demonstrating his literary consciousness. Here he ties Zebi's inability to understand and fight for her own desires to literariness:

Topshirmay nima qilsin? Boshqa iloji bormidi? Qani u iloj?[...] Ota-onalari tomonidan qari chollarga sotilgan qizlar ozmidi? Qaysi biri qarshilik qilib eplayolgan? Qaysi biri hiyla bilan qutulib ketgan? Undaylar to'g'risida xalq og'zida bitta-yarimta doston ham yo'q. Xalq taqdiriga tan berganlardan gapiradi. Ko'pchilikka quloq solsangiz: quturganlarning chor-nochor yumsharganlarini, osiylarning bo'yinsunganini, telbalarga es kirganini, olovlarning pasayganini, alangalarning so'nganini, fayodlarning bo'g'ulganini, do-voylarning bo'g'uylardan beriga chiqolmasdan eriganini aytadi; aytarkan, yo ko'zidan bir-ikki tomchi an'anaviy yosh chiqaradi, yo bo'lmasa ma'nilik qilib boshini chayqaydi.

What could she have done otherwise? Was there another way? And what would it be? [...] Are the girls that are sold by their parents to old men few? Has one of them ever been able to resist? Has a single one been able to free themselves by guile or force? There's not one folk tale about that kind of thing. They only tell of girls who submit to their fate. They tell of the wild who are inevitably tamed, of the proud who are humbled, of the insane who are healed, of the fires which are extinguished, and of the screams which are muffled. We regale these tales only to induce a tear or a shake of the head.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Abdulhamid Cho'lpon, "Kecha va kunduz: Roman," *Sharq yulduzi*, no. 3 (1988): 115.

As Cho‘lpon explains Zebi’s behavior, he declares that Uzbek literary history, a good part of which was constituted by folklore, restricts her consciousness. To establish an Uzbek character’s literariness then is to assert the subject’s never-ending ignorance and unconsciousness, even as the narrator mourns it.

Of course, as we have seen, Cho‘lpon’s 1927 story “The Baker Girl” is an exception to this interpretation, but it may be the exception that proves the rule of his aesthetic. In that story, Cho‘lpon offers a coda scene in which the characters that suffered under decline awaken to newfound power. However, that conclusion is much shorter than the rest of the story and its style is entirely different. Cho‘lpon’s prose style is normally surfeit with long sentences in which he searches for the proper description and metaphor, often trying multiple variants. In the chapters prior to the coda scene of “The Baker Girl,” he describes the abused girl as a sea. He gives a detailed description of the likeness between her moving emotions and the movement of the waters:

Dengiz shu qadar buyukligi bilan hamma vaqt qirg‘oqlardan yengiladi. Achchig‘i kelganda, g‘azabi qaynaganda zo‘r-zo‘r to‘lqinlar, kichik-kichik mavjlarni qirg‘oqning tosh-metin gavdasiga qarab otadi. Qirg‘oq, yuqorilarga ko‘tarilib ketgan marmar qirg‘oq, koshki, pinagini buzsa! Bechora to‘lqinlar, mavjlar sinib, mayda-mayda bo‘lib yana dengizning ko‘ksiga tushadi.

The sea, as great as it is, is always conquered by the cliffs. When its anger peaks, when its rage boils, oh so powerful waves and oh so tiny swells take aim and shoot towards the rock-faced cliffs. If only they could rouse from its sleep those cliffs, those high-rising marble cliffs! The poor waves and swells break and shatter against its surface and sink back into the breast of the ocean.⁶⁵

Compare this extravagant prose with the choppy, staccato style of the final chapter.

Yana sud bo‘lganda...
Dengiz – qiz qullarday jim turib so‘zladi.
Qirg‘oq – O‘lmas tog‘larday tinch turib tingladi.
Qirg‘oq ag‘darildi.
Tog‘ yiqildi.

⁶⁵ Cho‘lpon, “Novvoy qiz,” 348.

And in another trial...
The sea, long silent like slave girls, spoke.
The cliff, long a deaf and undying mountain, listened.
The cliff was toppled.
The mountain crumbled.⁶⁶

The incongruity of the utopian conclusion of this short story with the rest of his oeuvre indicates that the depiction of salvation and utopia is not a part of his art to which Cho‘lpon had dedicated much attention. He ends the story with as few words as possible because he was primarily interested in depicting decline. Ultimately, he preferred the inconclusiveness of the state of ignorance for his characters because the indeterminacy of endless decline made possible the long, flowing, seemingly endless metaphors essential to his art.

As the introduction to this dissertation noted, the archetypal plot in early 20th-century Azerbaijani and Uzbek literature was reproduced thanks to Persianate literary practices of reduplication, but those practices never prevented the emergence of irony and parody. In the early 1910s in Azerbaijani literature and the early 1920s in Uzbek literature, we therefore see the development of parody and literary self-consciousness in two major directions. The first pursues an ironization and parody of the *raisonneur* heroes of years past. The other declares the superiority of art over political goals by infinitely postponing the awakening for which Jadids had earlier called.

Conclusions

Drama became an essential tool of Islamic reformers at the southern edges of the Romanov Empire not long after their lands were conquered by Russian troops. Axundzadə began the adaptation of Enlightenment thought and the Classicist tradition to native literary and cultural traditions. As Jadid reformers came onto the scene, they had a far more critical view of the

⁶⁶ Cho‘lpon, 352.

Russian state and their own society. That critical view prompted them to transform the typical comedies of Axundzadə into tragedies and in so doing, establish the archetypal plot with its cycle of decline, death, and rebirth. Nearly all the plays of the forty-year period from the 1890s to the early 1930s in Azerbaijani and Uzbek literature depict a society in the midst of decline or retreat from a previous civilizational peak. In the early years, a *raisonneur* figure often warns the negative characters of the play that they have forgotten the proper form of their Islamic faith or their ethnic and national traditions and, if they continue in their ignorant ways, they will endure a catastrophe. Because the negative characters ignore his cautions, he necessarily expresses a sense of powerlessness through which the dramatist hopes to gain the sympathy of the audience. The subsequent catastrophe is typically the murder of a family member, but in several cases, a *raisonneur*-made hero's suicide serves as the catastrophe. The audience's empathy with the *raisonneur*'s sense of powerlessness, a feeling made all the stronger by the shock of the catastrophe, permits the final extratemporal scene that represents rebirth. In this scene, a character, typically the *raisonneur* but not always, is presented outside the action of the play in a scene intended to "awaken" the audience. Plays of the archetypal plot, importantly, are constructed in such a way so that Central Asian audiences would recognize this scene as the appearance of a saint. The play generates the feelings of powerlessness necessary for the visitation of the saint, and then holds up the *raisonneur* as this saint in order to instruct the pious or the nation in how to regain their previous civilizational greatness.

Azerbaijani and Uzbek artists throughout this forty-year period reproduced this plot in their own works, giving it a near ubiquity in the two canons at this time; however, that reduplication did not preclude the onset of literary modernity. Many of the artists engaged in the reduplication of the archetypal plot eventually began to subtly detract from its didactic message

by ironizing or parodying the main protagonist or by parodying the archetypal plot itself. One set of authors ironized and distanced themselves from the typical *raisonneur* hero of the plot, while others came to a literary consciousness of the plot and intentionally deferred its necessary awakening.

The next chapter turns to an examination of how the Socialist Realist master plot first met the archetypal plot through an analysis of Uzbek socialist author Abdulla Qahhor's *Mirage* (1934). With his *Mirage* Qahhor attempted to write a novel that reconciled elements of the Socialist Realist master plot and the archetypal plot with one another. He introduced the latter to the former through his unique use of the Persianate poetic technique of *javob*, a response to the work of another writer/s. In Qahhor's case, his *javob*-like novel is an invective response to his immediate predecessors, Jadids, and their literature. Qahhor's novel reads Jadids into the role of tragic *raisonneur* hero of their archetypal plot but uses the logic of Socialist Realism to transform that tragic hero into a Socialist Realist villain. Through an examination of this novel, we see not only how the first generation of Uzbek socialists, the students of Jadids, read the early works of Socialist Realism through the literature of their predecessors, but also how Socialist Realist literary practices transformed their reading of the Uzbek literary canon. Qahhor's *Mirage* attempts to retain for Socialist Realist literature the archetypal plot's cycle of civilizational decline, death, and (re)birth. His novel differs from the archetypal plot in that it shows the decline and final death of an old and corrupt society, which clears the way for the birth, not the rebirth, of socialist society. Socialist Realism, for its part, transformed how Uzbeks read Jadid literature. *Mirage* is an invective directed both at the works of the archetypal plot and their parodies because Qahhor and those of his generation, trained as they were in the Komsomol and

other socialist institutions, ignored the irony present in later Jadid works and read them straightforwardly as simple reduplications of the works that preceded them.

Chapter 2 - Writing between a Rock and a Hard Place: Abdulla Qahhor's *Mirage* (1934) and the Creation of Uzbek Socialist Realism

In 1934, Abdulla Qahhor, still a young socialist writer and not yet the leading voice in Uzbek prose that he would be in the 1950s and 1960s, submitted his first novel, entitled *Mirage* (*Sarob*), to a contest for Uzbek-language long-form socialist prose. Socialist Realism had just been established as the official literary trend of the Soviet Union two years prior by Stalin in his April 23rd, 1932, address that announced the formation of the Soviet Writers' Union. As they prepared for the first all-Soviet Writers' Congress, the nascent Uzbek Writers' Union, the Republican level branch of the Soviet Writers' Union, realized that Uzbek literature did not possess any socialist novels that they could present to readers at the all-Soviet level, and they therefore initiated a contest. Participants in the contest were to write Socialist Realism, but, as many of the submissions to the contest show, no one was yet confident of what Socialist Realism, especially Uzbek Socialist Realism, was to be. Uzbeks, and Russians for that matter, had only begun to inhabit the field of Socialist Realism, to test, define, and interpret its rules. Some of them were clear already from the ideologization of literature in the late 1920s, but others had yet to be defined.

Working out the rules of this *habitus* himself, Qahhor proposed one possible variant for the emergent Uzbek Socialist Realism: a hybrid form that combined elements of the developing Socialist Realist master plot with those of the archetypal plot of Jadids reviewed in the previous chapter. He united these two plots in the same way that several of his Uzbek socialist peers in the late 1920s had joined socialist rhetoric with the Uzbek literary tradition in their poetry: through

an innovative use of the Persianate poetic technique of *javob*. *Javob* is a response to another poet that answers or mocks via invective the work of the original poet. Adapting his peers' *javob* to long-form prose to satirize his Jadid predecessors, Qahhor retained but also manipulated and inverted many of the details of the Jadid archetypal plot. He did so according to a logic provided by his knowledge of the emergent Socialist Realist master plot, which he gained from readings in Russian proletarian prose and aesthetics.

This chapter takes a deep dive into how one Uzbek socialist read the Jadid archetypal plot and its constitutive elements into Socialist Realism. In keeping with the approach laid out in the outset of the dissertation, the chapter details how nominally loyal socialists like Qahhor inhabited Socialist Realism by interpreting Russian-born socialist rhetoric through the prism of their own culture. Uzbek socialists, this chapter shows, could not understand Russian socialist theory and aesthetics without resort to native understandings of history, literature, and aesthetics.

By teasing out how young Uzbek socialists understood nascent Socialist Realism, this chapter contributes to the budding study of Soviet subjectivity. The major voices of Soviet subjectivity—Stephen Kotkin (1995), Igal Halfin (1999), Oleg Kharkhordin (1999), and Jochen Hellbeck (2006)—have attempted to overcome the impasse between political historians who look at Stalinism from the top down and social historians who examine the period from the bottom up.¹ They find a middle ground by arguing that Bolshevik ideology, created at the top, provided the material for Soviet subjects' narrativization of their own lives and actions. Hellbeck argues that “much of the logic of revolutionary master narratives of transformation

¹ Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as Civilization*; Kharkhordin, *The Collective and the Individual in Russia: A Study of Practices*; Halfin, *From Darkness to Light: Class, Consciousness, and Salvation in Revolutionary Russia*; Hellbeck, *Revolution On My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin*. For a thorough review article on the concept of Soviet subjectivity, see Chatterjee, “Models of Selfhood and Subjectivity: The Soviet Case in Historical Perspective.”

(transformation of social space and the self), collectivization (collectivization of individualist producers and of the self), and purification (political purge campaigns and acts of personal self-improvement) was provided and reproduced by Soviet citizens who kept rationalizing unfathomable state policies and thus were ideological agents on par with the leaders of party and state.”² While the examination of one Uzbek intellectual’s novel cannot speak to how a number of ordinary Uzbek Soviet subjects took to Soviet ideology in the 1930s in the way that Hellbeck’s study of Soviet citizens’ diaries does, it nevertheless gives us an idea as to how Soviet ideology was received by a milieu for whom its Russian and Christian intellectual genealogies were alien. Qahhor’s novel can demonstrate the recourse of Uzbeks to alternative understandings of the movement of history, transformation, and purification—the Jadid archetypal plot with its cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth—in their encounter with Socialist Realism. The novel shows that non-Russians, in the midst of Stalinist purges and denunciations, formulated their own self-designations and justifications for their actions on the basis of a different intellectual and literary tradition.

The conclusion to this chapter looks at the novel’s conflicted publication history and the author’s subsequent activity under Stalin and Khrushchev. They illustrate how the archetypal plot continued to influence Uzbek Socialist Realism even as the Socialist Realist master plot solidified and the rules of the *habitus* changed. Because it offered a plot opposite the master plot—it follows the decline and death of an anti-Soviet Jadid rather than the victory of the positive hero—Qahhor was denounced and *Mirage* was removed from the shelves in 1939. Yet Qahhor survived and wrote his 1947 *The Lights of Qo‘shchinor (Qo‘shchinor chiroqlari)*, a novel which attempted to apply the lessons of *Mirage*’s denunciation while also retaining

² Hellbeck, *Revolution On My Mind: Writing a Diary Under Stalin*, 13.

elements of the archetypal plot in a different configuration. That novel was also denounced, but Qahhor's willingness to write and ability to publish it demonstrates that the field, even under Stalin, never fully foreclosed upon his interpretations of Uzbek Socialist Realism that included elements of the archetypal plot. With Khrushchev's Thaw, Qahhor was able to republish both novels, and they were incorporated into the Socialist Realist canon. While critics had rejected them under Stalin, Uzbek Socialist Realism grew to incorporate Qahhor's hybrid version of the archetypal plot.

In addition to showing how the archetypal plot affected Uzbek socialists' inhabitation of Socialist Realist master plot, this chapter also demonstrates how Uzbek Socialist Realism and Qahhor's novel are products of the way in which Socialist Realist disciplinary practices transformed Uzbek litterateurs and readers' understanding of their own literary canon. As noted in the introduction, the Soviet educational establishment disciplined Soviet readers to reproduce Socialist Realism in their interpretations by training them to ignore those spots of indeterminacy, possible irony, or literary self-consciousness. Socialist Realism aimed to do away with any kind of literary autonomy; literature under Stalin was intended to be perfectly mimetic in its reproduction of a reality dictated by party decrees and ideology.³ In the 1930s, this often meant that an author was assumed to identify totally with his character. We see this assumption above in the 1939 denunciation of Qahhor's novel by Xabib Musaev:

Millatchi, xalq dushmani Cho'lonning "Kecha va kunduz"ida jadid Miryoqub va xalq dushmani Abdulla Qodiriyning "O'tkan kunlar"ida Otabekka va "Mehrobdan chayon"dagi Mirza Anvarga bergan tipi kabi A. Qahhor o'z qahramoni Saidiyga ham shular tipini beradi. Ular kabi o'z qahramoni Saidiyni maqtaydi. U, butun romanda Saidiyni o'quvchiga yaxshi ko'rsatish, unga nisbatan achinish tuyg'usi tug'dirish va uning chirik mafkurasi yo'lidan ergashtirishga intiladi.

³ For more on the particular type of mimesis enacted by Socialist Realism, see Evgeniy Dobrenko's *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*, in which he maintains that Socialist Realism produced socialism by creating a "simulacrum of socialism" through its work of representation. See *Political Economy of Socialist Realism*, 169.

Abdulla Qahhor in [his hero] Saidiy gives us a type just like those given by the nationalists and enemies of the people [Abdulhamid] Cho'lpon in his *Night and Day* with his Jadid Miryoqub or Abdulla Qodiriy with Otabek in *Bygone Days* and with Mirzo Anvar in *The Scorpion from behind the Altar*. Just like them Qahhor praises his character. Throughout the novel, he strives to show Saidiy in a good light, to evince sympathy for him, and convert the public to his rotten ideology.⁴

Musaev accuses, rather obtusely, Qahhor of total identification with the clear villain of his novel. But importantly, he also lays that accusation at the feet of Qodiriy and Cho'lpon. As the last chapter showed, Qodiriy and Cho'lpon, despite these assertions, clearly did not identify totally with their characters. However, Musaev's flawed readings of Qodiriy and Cho'lpon were ubiquitous in Stalinist Uzbekistan. Such readings, this chapter argues, dictated the experimental *javob* Qahhor performed with his novel. This chapter elucidates how Qahhor's unironic readings of the Uzbek literary canon were essential to the creation of his *Mirage*.

When Qahhor's novel was rehabilitated and reprinted in the 1950s, a slightly different rereading of the Uzbek canon took place again thanks to changing Socialist Realist practices. In granting Qahhor's novel a place in post-Stalin Uzbek Socialist Realism, interpreters no longer assumed Qahhor's identification with his anti-hero. They canonized the novel as Socialist Realist because, while the novel does not show the victory of a positive character, it demonstrates the decline and death of anti-Soviet wreckers and suggests that this clears the ground for the birth of socialism. But, in a twist of history, because the novel was repressed and rehabilitated alongside Qodiriy and Cho'lpon, Uzbek Soviet readers no longer read Qahhor's novel as literary play, i.e. as a mockery of Jadids and their literature. Instead, they began to read *Mirage* and Qodiriy's *Bygone Days*⁵ both as acceptable pieces of an Uzbek Socialist Realism that could now

⁴ Xabib Musaev, "Sarob qanday roman?," *Yosh Leninchi*, January 30, 1939.

⁵ *Bygone Days* is the better example here than Cho'lpon's *Night and Day* because, while the persons of both Qodiriy and Cho'lpon were rehabilitated in 1956, only *Bygone Days* was allowed to be reprinted at the time. Cho'lpon's novel was not reprinted until 1988. Sharof Rashidov, the First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party from 1959-

accommodate a version of the archetypal plot. In this interpretation, the two novels both depict the wickedness of the past and affirm the Soviet present. Meanwhile, the mockery of *Bygone Days* that produced *Mirage* was completely forgotten. The rehabilitation of *Bygone Days* and *Mirage* at the same time thus solidified a new way of reading the archetypal plot that would continue for the rest of the life of the Soviet Union and beyond.

This chapter proceeds first with a look at the historical context behind Qahhor's novel and the literary politics of late 1920s Soviet Uzbekistan. It looks specifically at how the literary play of invective *javob* came to be a popular manifestation of the intergenerational conflict between Jadids and Qahhor's generation. It then turns to an examination of Qahhor's own participation in this conflict as he wrote the novel. The chapter then analyzes how Qahhor's *javob* brings Russian Socialist Realist and Jadid literary models together on four bases: plot, use of natural metaphors and chremamorphism, the trope of dreaming, and the trope of fatherhood. The conclusion discusses the denunciation and rehabilitation of the novel as well as Qahhor's other activity in order to explore how the archetypal plot both survived and was transformed by Stalinism.

***Javob* as a Link between Uzbek Literary Tradition and Socialist Discourse**

Well before the creation of Socialist Realism and the Soviet Writers' Union, Uzbek writers were already hybridizing socialist discourse and Russian proletarian literary models with native literary forms, structures, tropes, and understandings of history. In the mid-1920s, the first socialist generation of Uzbek writers frequently used a unique method, known in Persianate letters as *javob*, to place themselves both in the new Soviet canon and within their Uzbek canon. Through *javob* invectives directed at Jadids and their art, Uzbek socialists inverted but also

1983, himself stepped in to stop the republication of some of Cho'lpon's poetry in 1968. See Ozod Sharafiddinov, "'Tirik satr'larning qiyin qismati,'" in *Sardaftar sahifalari* (Toshkent: Yozuvchi nashriyoti, 1994), 48–58.

retained some of the structures of Jadid art and the archetypal plot while simultaneously mocking their immediate literary predecessors. In so doing, they created a hybrid literary form. They combined the cosmological cycle of the archetypal plot and its concomitant poetic tropes with those of Marxism-Leninism.

To remind the reader of this subsection of Islamic reformers detailed in the introduction and the previous chapter, Jadids were a loosely affiliated group of Islamic reformers active in late imperial Russian Turkestan, so-called for their common advocacy of a new pedagogical method (*usul-i jadid*).⁶ Their efforts at reform expanded far beyond pedagogy and the creation of primary schools, for they also introduced to Central Asia new media, literary forms, methods of political engagement with the state, and European discourses of science and, of particular note, the discourse of the nation. Jadids believed that their local Muslim community, which they increasingly called their nation and ethnicized as Turkic, was in decline and only their leadership could return their civilization to its former glory. After the October revolution, many of them joined the Bolsheviks, but towards the mid-1920s, they were expelled from the party and ostracized as “bourgeois nationalists” by Qahhor’s generation, the first Uzbek socialists.

Qahhor’s generation of Uzbek intellectuals had experience with both Jadid and Marxist thought and believed that their adherence to the latter made them better advocates of their nation than their predecessors. Many of Qahhor’s generation attended Jadid primary schools and, before the mid-1920s, worked with Jadids in cultural organizations as their apprentices and students.

⁶ For more on Jadids, see, in particular, the work of Adeb Khalid in his two monographs: *Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*. Khalid views *jadids* as progressive Islamic reformers, influenced heavily by European thought. For views of Jadids as part of the tradition of Islamic reform, see Devin DeWeese, “It Was a Dark and Stagnant Night (‘til the Jadids Brought the Light): Clichés, Biases, and False Dichotomies in the Intellectual History of Central Asia,” *Journal of the Economic History of the Orient*, no. 59 (2016): 37–92; Paolo Sartori, “Ijtihad in Bukhara: Central Asian Jadidism and Local Genealogies of Cultural Change,” *Journal of the Economic History of the Orient*, no. 59 (2016): 193–236.

Because several of them were orphans and therefore unencumbered by conservative parents, they joined the Komsomol where they gained literacy in socialist thought.⁷ As the decade advanced, Uzbek socialists' knowledge of Russian increased as did the number of politicized literary organizations in the territory. 1926 saw the creation of the proletarian literary group *Qizil qalam* (Red Pen), members of which led the socialist attacks on Jadids.⁸ In 1930 RAPP, the precursor organization to the Soviet Writers' Union, opened an Uzbek division (UzAPP) in Tashkent.⁹ Armed with proletarian literary criticism, Uzbek socialists attacked their precursors because they desired prestige and fame at the expense of Jadids, but also because they believed that Jadids were too complacent to carry out the goals of national modernization that they had themselves preached.¹⁰

In literature, Uzbek socialists' ideological rivalry with Jadids manifested itself in the creation of a number of *javobs*.¹¹ *Javob* is one of several forms of Persianate literary allusion or playful imitation, the frequency of use of which maintained the "strong coherence" of the poetic canon throughout the years.¹² In the pre-Soviet era, a writer typically marked his/her use of *javob* for the reader by alluding to the referent poem in his/her title or the opening lines of the poem

⁷ David C. Montgomery gives an overview of the social background of the first generation of Uzbek Soviet writers. See "Career Patterns of Sixteen Uzbek Writers," *Central Asian Survey* 5, no. 3–4 (1986): 205–20. Adeeb Khalid also discusses the origins of the socialist generation of intellectuals, highlighting their provenance in orphanages. See Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 316–41.

⁸ Baldauf, "Educating the Poets and Fostering Uzbek Poetry of the 1910s to Early 1930s," 191–93.

⁹ Allworth, *Uzbek Literary Politics*, 127–33.

¹⁰ Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 329.

¹¹ Other examinations of this time have called these poems *nazira*, another form of literary allusion from the Persianate canon. *Javob*, *nazira*, and still other forms are not well delineated and often receive their name depending on the observer. I have chosen *javob* over *nazira* because the term better reflects the disagreement between the socialist generation and *jadids*. For an analysis of these poems as *nazira*, see Ingeborg Baldauf, "A Late Piece of Nazira or a Symbol Making Its Way through Early Uzbek Poetry," in *Cultural Change and Continuity in Central Asia*, ed. Shirin Akiner (London, New York: Kegan Paul International, 1991), 29–44.

¹² Bruijn, *General Introduction to Persian Literature*, I:3. I use the term Persianate and bring in observations from Persian literature because Chagatai, the literary language of Russian Turkestan before the emergence of Uzbek, and its literary canon are closely tied to the Persian canon. Writers of Chagatai knew Persian and its literature, transferred its aesthetics into their Chagatai works, and often composed in Persian themselves. For these reasons, Chagatai literature can be considered Persianate.

and by employing the same meter as the referent poem. The purpose of the *javob* was to show artistic prowess: the author of the *javob* would borrow the imagery, tropes, and themes of his/her referent and recombine them, extending them new meanings in the process. In an article on the forms of literary allusion in Persian letters, Paul Losensky describes how *javob*, meaning “reply,” reframes its referent:

In “speaking in reply,” the model poem becomes a question that calls for an answer or a problem that demands solution. The model does not lead to a battle for dominance and priority, but rather challenges understanding.¹³

Losensky’s understanding of *javob* comes from a sanitized history of canonical Persian letters. *Javob*, particularly when written by contemporaries, can be quite antagonistic and even crass.¹⁴ Hasan Javadi suggests that *javob* “often means an answer to a poem criticizing the poet,” and can range from bawdy invective to light-hearted parody.¹⁵

The *javobs* of Uzbek socialist writers diverge from the above description in several important ways. By the mid-1920s when they began writing *javob* poems, the ‘*aruz* meters (based on the interchange of long and short vowels) of Turkic poetics had fallen by the wayside. This new generation often employed *barmaq* meter, a syllabic meter pioneered by Jadids, free verse (*sochma nazm*), and later the ladder construction of Mayakovsky, who in the late 1920s was one of the more popular socialist poets. They therefore did not signal their *javobs* by matching the meter of their referents. Instead, a title produced by the inversion of the title of a well-known referent poem often prepared the reader for a *javob*, while the rest of the poem then inverted the symbols, images, and themes used by the *jadid* author. Those symbols could be

¹³ Paul E. Losensky, “‘The Allusive Field of Drunkenness’: Three Safavid-Moghul Responses to a Lyric by Bābā Fighānī,” in *Reorientations/Arabic and Persian Poetry*, ed. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), 231–32.

¹⁴ Paul Sprachman notes that modern histories of Persian letters often ignore the ribald and indecent examples of poetry. His reader includes a number of these such *javobs*. See *Suppressed Persian* (Costa Mesa, California: Mazda, 1995).

¹⁵ Hasan Javadi, *Satire in Persian Literature* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1988), 49.

inverted using a repository of either traditional symbols (e.g. “dawn” for “dusk,” “spring” for “autumn”) or new ones adapted from socialist rhetoric (e.g. “gigantic construction sites” for “mountains,” “water pumps” [because the water flows up] for “down-flowing streams”).

Alternatively, the *javob* could retain the symbols of the referent but invert their polarity (good to bad; pure to corrupt) or change their signifieds (“coethnics” to “fellow proletarians”).

Oftentimes, both these techniques were at work in a *javob*. Contrary to Losensky’s explanation, this inversion is a product precisely of the socialist generation’s desire to claim “dominance” over their Jadid predecessors. Uzbek socialist *javobs* approach invective rather than parody, but because they were also intended to establish the truth of Soviet ideology, they never revolve entirely around personal attack.

The *javobs* of G‘ayraty (1902-1976), a member of *Qizil qalam*, demonstrate how authors of this time employed this literary technique to show themselves as both Soviet and Uzbek writers. In so doing, G‘ayraty sought to find coincidences between his own understanding of the cyclical movement of history and the Marxist-Leninist eschatology of revolution. In 1926, G‘ayraty penned “Tuzalgan o‘lkaga” (To a Restored Land), a *javob* response to Cho‘lpon’s famous elegy “Buzilgan o‘lkaga” (To a Devastated Land, 1921).

Buzilgan o‘lkaga

Ey tog‘lari ko‘klarga salom bergan zo‘r o‘lka,
Nega sening boshingda quyuk bulut ko‘lanka?
[...]

Ot minganda, qushlar kabi uchguvchi,
Erkin-erkin havolarni quchg‘uvchi,
Ot chopganda, uchar qushni tutquvchi,
Uchar qushday yosh yigitlar qayerda?
Tog‘ egasi–sor burgutlar qayerda?

To a Devastated Land

Hey, great land whose mountains greet the sky,
Why has a thick storm cloud covered your head?
[...]

Those who fly like birds, having mounted their horses,
Those who chase free winds and air,
Those who, urging their horses, seize the fleet bird,
Where have those young men gone, those like the fleet bird?
Where are those lords of the mountains—those brave eagles?¹⁶

Tuzalgan o'lkaga

“Ey tog'lari ko'klarga salom bergan zo'r o'lka,”
Endi solmas boshing uzra qora bulut ko'lanka.
[...]

“Tog' egasi sor burgutdek yigitlar”
Mana bugun haqqin olib bus-butun
Ishlar tinmay keng vodiya tunu kun.

Sening go'zal og'ushingda ko'p yillardir kezganlar,
Senda bo'lgan go'zallikning nash'asini sezganlar,
Yuzsizlarcha pok ko'siga tahqir toshin otarlar;
Tabiiykim ular seni yashnashingni ko'rolmas,
Olamshumul o'sishingga qarashlarin burolmas.
Tog'da gigant qurilishlar nafaslarin siqajak,
Shubha yo'qkim kollektiv kuch g'oyalarini yiqajak,
Tabiiykim, bir hovuch kuch qaramoqqa ko'zi yo'q,
Nechun sening pok siynangga otliq istar og'u-o'q!

To a Restored Land

“Hey, great land whose mountains greet the sky,”
Now a black cloud has covered your unconquered head
[...]

“Young men, lords of the mountains, like eagles,”
Now today take all of what is yours by right,
Working in the wide valley tirelessly day and night.

Many have spent years in your beautiful embrace,
Many have felt the pleasure of your beauty,
Many have shamelessly hurled curses at your pure breast;
Naturally they couldn't see your blossoming,
They turned their eyes from your growth.

¹⁶ Cho'lpon, *Asarlar*, 1:88–89.

They would suffocate the giant constructions rising from you like mountains,
They would, without a doubt, destroy the ideas of collective strength,
Naturally they cannot see our strength,
Why do they want to shoot a poison arrow into your pure breast!¹⁷

G‘ayraty signals his *javob* with an inverted title of Cho‘lpon’s original poem. We can observe how his *javob* operates by his use of Cho‘lpon’s image of “eagles.” G‘ayraty retains the image, but he changes the signification of “eagles” to establish his Soviet credentials. Cho‘lpon’s “eagles” represent young Central Asian men who have lost their lives in battle, a sign of the Uzbek nation’s decline, while for G‘ayraty they come to represent the disenfranchised Uzbek poor prepared to take power. G‘ayraty’s *javob* also inverts the setting of Cho‘lpon’s poem. Both poems work in accordance with the archetypal plot’s sense of time; however, Cho‘lpon shows the Uzbek nation to be in an autumnal decline, while G‘ayraty declares it to be, thanks to the revolution, reborn and blossoming as in spring. In mocking Cho‘lpon, G‘ayraty does not assail Cho‘lpon’s cyclical history with Marxist-Leninist linear history but rather attacks Cho‘lpon’s placement of current Uzbek society within that cyclical history. In the early years of Soviet Uzbek letters, G‘ayraty successfully fit the archetypal plot’s cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth to Marxist-Leninist messianism.

While G‘ayraty’s hybridization of Jadid literature with Soviet discourse was initially successful, his *javob* poems would soon come under attack by Uzbek Stalinist critics for a supposed fealty to Cho‘lpon and Jadidism. They accused G‘ayraty of “imitating” his Jadid predecessor through his *javobs*.¹⁸ The combination of both Soviet and Uzbek literary traditions

¹⁷ G‘ayraty, *Tanlangan asarlar* (Toshkent: O‘zSSR davlat badiiy adabiyoti nashriyoti, 1958), 14–15. G‘ayraty updated his *javob* several times subsequently; the excerpt from his poem here was edited around 1928 and possibly later to keep up with the changing demands of Socialist Realism. Ingeborg Baldauf notes that she has been unable to trace the earliest versions of the poem, but the vocabulary of the present version suggests the influence of the first five-year plan. See “A Late Piece of Nazira or a Symbol Making Its Way through Early Uzbek Poetry,” 32.

¹⁸ G‘ayraty’s *javobs* were labelled as “derivative imitations of Jadids” because they used Cho‘lpon’s symbolic vocabulary. See Salohiddin Mamajonov, *G‘ayraty: Adabiy portret* (Toshkent: G‘afur G‘ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san‘at nashriyoti, 1973), 29–32.

inevitably resulted in conflict between them, a conflict that, as the purges expanded, invited accusations of disloyalty. As Kathryn Schild writes, “if the Russian production novel can be summarized as ‘boy meets tractor,’ the Tajik kolkhoz lyric thus becomes ‘tractor meets nightingale.’ Like many socialist realist attempts, the collision frequently destroyed one or the other (and when in doubt, bet on the tractor).”¹⁹ The NKVD always bet on the tractor. Whereas they accused Russian writers of various anti-Soviet activities, they invariably charged non-Russian writers with “nationalist” conspiracies, the proof of which was often their invocation of their nationality in their literature.

The fate of G‘ayratiy’s poems anticipates that of Qahhor’s novel. He too would attempt, via an experimental invective *javob*, to fit various elements of the archetypal plot to the Russian Socialist Realist master plot. As a new form, a novel, and as experimental form of *javob*, Qahhor’s *Mirage* lends us insight into the variety of ways that Uzbek litterateurs adapted their literary traditions and the archetypal plot to Socialist Realist literary models.

Qahhor and his *Mirage*

Qahhor’s life in the late 1920s and early 1930s in Soviet Uzbekistan uniquely prepared him to write *Mirage* as an experimental *javob* in prose that would draw on both Russian and Jadid textual models. Before beginning work on his novel, Qahhor had already gained a broad familiarity with Russian proletarian and early canonized Socialist Realist texts as a short-story writer and translator. As a newspaper editor, he worked with Jadids and even witnessed Uzbek socialist attacks on Jadids in print and even in his work life. These experiences fed directly into the creation of his *Mirage*. For anyone familiar with the history in which Qahhor was embedded,

¹⁹ Schild, “Between Moscow and Baku: National Literatures at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers,” 94.

his literary play within the novel and the title of the novel itself reveal Qahhor's intent to adapt the *javobs* of writers like G'ayraty to prose.

Still a young writer with only a few works behind him in the early 1930s, Qahhor began to make a name for himself in Soviet Uzbek letters by demonstrating his knowledge of Russian proletarian and socialist textual models. Like many in his cohort, Qahhor became a dedicated socialist thanks to his time in the Komsomol, and he later learned Russian while studying at the Central Asian State University in Samarqand in the late 1920s.²⁰ He began his writing career in the mid-1920s, authoring a few short stories, some of which dripped with ideological didacticism. In his 1932 short story "Olam yosharadir" (The World is Becoming Younger), a passionate kolkhoz member answers the ideological questions of a Komsomol activist in a dialogue that mirrors Stalin's own favorite rhetoric of question and answer explications.²¹ With the creation of Socialist Realism in 1932, Qahhor answered the call of the Uzbek Writers' Union to bring newly canonized Russian texts to Uzbek audiences. By 1934 ten Russian and other all-Union Socialist Realist novels had been translated into Uzbek.²² Qahhor was responsible for four of them.²³

As for his engagement with Jadids and *javob*, Qahhor did not contribute any *javob* poems to the late 1920s assault on Jadids, but his work in the editorial staffs of the larger newspapers of

²⁰ Qahhor worked as the director (*upravdelami*) of the Kokand city Komsomol committee in 1924-5. O'zbekiston respublikasi Markaziy davlat arxivi (Central State Archive of the Republic of Uzbekistan; O'zRMDA) f. 2356 o. 1 d. 1069 l. 115. D. 1069 contains materials related to the preparation for Abdulla Qahhor's 60th birthday celebration in 1967.

²¹ Abdulla Qahhor, "Olam yosharadir," *O'zbekiston sho'ro adabiyoti*, no. 4-5 (1932): 57-68.

²² These included Gorky's *Mother* (1907), *Childhood* (1914), *My Universities* (1923), Fedor Gladkov's *Cement* (1925), Fedor Panferov's *Whetstones* (1928), Mikhail Sholokhov's *Virgin Soil Upturned* (1932), Marietta Shaginian's *Hydrocentral* (1931), Ivan Le's *The Valley* (1929), and Aleksandr Serafimovich's *Iron Flood* (1924). See Qurbon Beregin, "Birinch qadamlar va endigi vazifalar to'g'risida," *Qizil O'zbekiston*, March 6, 1934.

²³ These are Aleksandr Serafimovich, *Temir oqim*, trans. Abdulla Qahhor (Toshkent-Boku: O'zdavdash, 1933); Ivan Le, *Tog' oraliqlari*, trans. Abdulla Qahhor (Toshkent-Samarqand: O'zdavdash, 1932); Maksim Gor'kii, *Mening dorilfununlarim*, trans. Abdulla Qahhor (Toshkent: O'zdavdash, 1933); Marietta Shaginian, *Gidrotsentral'*, trans. Abdulla Qahhor (Toshkent-Boku: O'zdavdash, 1933).

the time makes his familiarity with these attacks beyond doubt. From 1925 to 1927, he worked for the Uzbek central newspaper, *Qizil O'zbekiston (Red Uzbekistan)*, and after a hiatus taken for his university studies, he moved to Kokand where he worked for the newspaper *Yangi Farg'ona* from 1929 to 1930.²⁴ Both newspapers, particularly the former, published young socialists' poetry and critiques of Jadids.

According to Qahhor, it was his time at *Yangi Farg'ona* that gave him the inspiration for *Mirage*. On the origins of the novel, Qahhor explained that “fate once threw him into a nest of nationalists[...] and as a result of that short meeting the desire to write a work exposing the evils of nationalist intellectuals was born.”²⁵ By “nationalists” Qahhor meant Jadids and their allies, and his comments refer to events at *Yangi Farg'ona* during his tenure there. In 1929 most of the staff of the newspaper, with the exception of our author, were arrested and convicted for their membership in an allegedly anti-Soviet discussion group, *Botir gapchilar* (Brave talkers), by the NKVD's predecessor, the OGPU.²⁶ It is unclear why Qahhor was not convicted. Several contemporary Uzbek scholars, whom I will not name here because they are not allowed to publish anything on the matter, believe that Qahhor was released because he was the OGPU informant that organized the group, encouraged members to complain about the Soviet government, and then reported on their complaints.²⁷ They base this conclusion in part on Naim Karimov's account of the OGPU documents on the matter. Held in closed archives in Uzbekistan accessible to only a few scholars such as Karimov, those documents refer to the informant in the

²⁴ O'zRMDA f. 2356 o. 1 d. 1069 l. 115. D. 1069 contains materials related to the preparation for Abdulla Qahhor's 60th birthday celebration in 1967.

²⁵ Ozod Sharafiddinov, *Abdulla Qahhor* (Toshkent: Yosh gvardiya, 1988), 46.

²⁶ Khalid examines this particular OGPU set of arrests in his monograph, noting that the group did indeed contain members identified as Jadids. See *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 374.

²⁷ Qahhor is a member of the Uzbek literary pantheon, and the state does not allow anything in print that would defame him.

matter as Q-ov.²⁸ The above Uzbek critics believe Q-ov stood for Qahhor, which is not implausible. The official OGPU report on *Botir gapchilar*, held in the Russian State Archive of Social-Political History (RGASPI), does not name Qahhor as an agent or informant. On the contrary, it contains anti-Soviet statements attributed to him and asserts that another member of the group, Nosir Erkin (Nasyr Irkin), was a GPU agent that failed to inform the OGPU of the organization's existence.²⁹ Whether Qahhor informed on the group or not, his time at the newspaper and his participation in this group clearly inspired him to write his *javob* novel attacking Jadids because the novel revolves around a similar anti-Soviet conspiracy among a group of writers.

He completed *Mirage*, which he had been working on since the events of *Yangi Farg'ona*, in time to submit it to the abovementioned contest for socialist long-prose works in 1934. *Mirage* follows the rise and fall of the unenthusiastic student Rahimjon Saidiy. Saidiy abandons his studies at the university with the hope of becoming a successful writer only to fall into a “nationalist”—read “Jadid” because they are writers—circle that exploits him. An orphan after his father's suicide, the novel's protagonist is characterized by larger than life ambitions: apart from becoming a world-famous writer, he also desires to win the heart of his beloved, Munisxon, provide a life of wealth and luxury for her, and even build a capitalist and Islamic state in Central Asia. These ambitions are the eponymous mirage. By pursuing those dreams, Saidiy loses sight of reality, and his desires are realized only in corrupted form. The “nationalists” manipulate him into marrying an unattractive replacement for Munisxon, Soraxon, and instead of improving his writing as they promise, they enslave him doing menial work until he eventually gives up on life.

²⁸ See Naim Karimov, “Botir gapchilar,” in *Adabiyot va tarixiy jarayon* (Toshkent: Mumtoz so‘z, 2013), 347–54.

²⁹ See RGASPI f. 62 o. 2 d. 2199 l. 2-14. Thank you to Claire Roosien for providing me with this document.

As the summary illustrates, *Mirage* satirizes Jadids, but that satire emerges from Qahhor's literary play of *javob*, which the author reveals through his construction of the novel. As Saidiy advances in literary society, the leader of the novel's Jadid circle, Abbosxon, gives him a story to publish. In that story, a widow and her three children starve through winter and are eventually forced to go outside where they die from the cold. The miserable deaths of the characters in the Abbosxon's story foreshadow Saidiy's own end: in total anguish with his life, Saidiy leaves home in a blizzard and dies in the cold. Saidiy dies the very death that Qahhor's Jadids give to their characters, a fact which reveals Qahhor's literary play. Qahhor outlines the Jadid interest in decline and death via his Abbosxon's story and then reads that decline and death into the overall structure of the novel. Saidiy is the typical tragic hero of Jadid literature, only in Qahhor's novel he becomes an anti-hero.

Qahhor additionally signals his adaptation of *javob* to prose much as his poet predecessors marked their *javobs*. G'ayratiy, we have seen, inverted the title of Cho'lpon's elegy to create his *javob*, so *Mirage (Sarob)* inverts the titles and main themes of a series of Cho'lpon's poems written in the early 1920s on dream (*xayol*).³⁰ In those poems, Cho'lpon elegizes dream as an artistic tool, as demonstrated in the previous chapter, and therefore Qahhor satirizes his Saidiy and parodies Cho'lpon's poetics by asserting that such dreams are an illusory mirage. Qahhor's title was readily recognizable to the Uzbek literary intelligentsia, both socialist and Jadid, as a response to Cho'lpon because it mirrors another G'ayratiy *javob* poem to Cho'lpon in which the former contends the elder poet's dream (*xayol*) is a mirage (*sarob*).³¹

³⁰ Cho'lpon has several poems praising dream and sleep so it is unlikely that Qahhor had a single target in mind but rather a series of titles and the general aesthetic of the poems. These poems include "Xayoli (Someone's dream, 1920)," "Uyqu (Sleep, 1920)," "Xayol, xayol... Yolg'iz xayol go'zaldir... (Dream, dream... Only dream is beautiful, 1921)," and "Kleupatra uyqusi (Kleopatra's sleep, 1921)."

³¹ I have been unable to locate the original of G'ayratiy's poem "Ey qalam (Cho'lpon talvasasiga) (Hey pen (to Cho'lpon's agony)," but Naim Karimov quotes the lines in which he labels Cho'lpon's dreams mirages. *Cho'lpon: Ma'rifiy roman*, 355–56.

Javob has not normally been invoked outside poetry, but in early 20th-century Uzbekistan, the novel was a relatively new genre. The contest for socialist prose works, to which Qahhor submitted *Mirage*, was created, according to the contest announcement, because “prose was the most undeveloped genre in Uzbek letters.”³² The Uzbek canon had only two novels prior to 1934: Abdulla Qodiriy’s *Bygone Days* (*O‘tkan kunlar*, 1922-5) and *The Scorpion from Behind the Altar* (*Mehrobdan chayon*, 1929). As Christopher Murphy shows, Qodiriy constructs his novels based on tropes from other established Uzbek genres and media.³³ Qahhor, for whom the novel was still new, likewise turned to literary genres and techniques, such as *javob*, familiar to him from the Uzbek canon and the literary atmosphere of the time.

Because his *javob* was such an innovation, Qahhor realized it in multiple ways. He, of course, marked his work as a type of *javob* with his title *Mirage*, but, because it was a novel, he had to target not one author or work, but several, which is precisely what we see in the novel. In the following sections, I lay out how Qahhor adapted *javob* invective to prose through his construction of his plot, his use of chremamorphism, and his play with the tropes of dream and fatherhood. I examine these four areas largely in comparison to the works of Qodiriy and Cho‘lpon, which Qahhor read without attention to the irony or literary play they contain. In my examination of them, I show how Qahhor’s familiarity with the modular texts of proletarian prose and nascent Socialist Realism directed his experimental *javob*, i.e. how he made his mockery of Jadids and their literature consistent with the tenants of nascent Socialist Realism.

A Socialist *Javob* to the Jadid Plot

³² O‘zRMDA f. 2356 o. 1 d. 9 l. 1.

³³ Christopher Murphy, “The Relationship of Abdulla Qodiriy’s Novels to the Earlier Uzbek Literary Traditions (A Comparison of Literary Structures)” (PhD diss., University of Washington, 1980).

With his experimental *javob*, Qahhor ensured first of all a meeting of the archetypal plot with an early form of the master plot of Socialist Realism. The product of this hybridization realizes the archetypal plot anew. In *Mirage*, the archetypal plot's typical structure of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth came to affirm socialism by replacing rebirth with birth. Qahhor uses Socialist Realist models to configure the typical Jadid protagonist, the *raisonneur*-made tragic hero discussed in the last chapter, as a Socialist Realist anti-hero. The novel then follows this character's decline and eventual death, but, unlike with the archetypal plot, the *raisonneur* hero's tragic death or martyrdom will not be redeemed by future generations. Instead, the death of the anti-hero, a representative of the past, makes the utopian future of socialism possible.

Given the similar details between their plotlines, Qahhor most likely constructed the plot of his *javob* based on an interpretation of Qodiriy's *Bygone Days* that does not account for the author's ironic distance from his hero. As a reminder from the last chapter, Otabek, the central character of *Bygone Days*, is a progressive positive hero like the *raisonneur* figures of previous works of the archetypal plot, but Qodiriy's novel expresses an ambivalence towards Otabek. The novel allows for a criticism of the character by suggesting that Otabek's passivity and indecisiveness lead to the novel's tragedy. Because of that passivity, Otabek cannot live happily with his beloved, Kumush. Otabek's main failing is his inability to rebel against the "backwardness" of his parents and parents-in-law. To force Otabek, who has been living with his in-laws, to return home, his parents marry him to a second wife, Zaynab. Out of jealousy, Zaynab kills Kumush, and in his sorrow, the progressive Otabek throws his life away fighting the Russians. Otabek's inability to buck his parents and their customs—particularly polygamy—is his undoing. Despite Qodiriy's implicit critique of his hero, like the rest of his Soviet cohort,

Qahhor read *Bygone Days* without the irony of Otabek's *hamartia*. He instead read Otabek in line with previous heroes of the archetypal plot with whom authors identified totally. In many of those works, the *raisonneur* hero's death is seemingly preordained by his incompatibility with the ignorant present. The ignorance and backwardness of the civilizational decline snuff out the progressive protagonist's life, and he/she can only hope to be redeemed by future generations of post-ignorance Uzbeks.

We can assert that Qahhor read *Bygone Days* without attention to the ironic distance between Qodiriy and his hero because *Mirage*, in pursuing its *javob*, outright asserts the identity of Jadid authors with their characters. Qahhor identifies his Saidiy, a Jadid writer, with the characteristics with which Qodiriy endows his Otabek: he is indecisive and passive. Like Qodiriy's Otabek, throughout the novel Saidiy pursues his beloved, Munisxon, the highly-educated daughter of a deceased nationalist leader, but his indecisiveness prevents him from declaring his love. Saidiy's friends and compatriots exploit his passivity. The "nationalist" circle into which Saidiy falls moves him farther and farther from Munisxon. Again like Otabek, this circle commands Saidiy's obedience by arranging his marriage to the shallow Soraxon, which puts him under the thumb of his wicked "nationalist" father-in-law, Murodxo'ja. Saidiy takes his own life because he is emasculated by his marital situation and distraught with his powerlessness.

But Qahhor does not simply mock Qodiriy and other Jadids by figuring them as the tragic heroes of the archetypal plot; he also draws on Russian Socialist Realist models that emulate the master plot to color the typical Jadid tragic hero as an anti-hero. From his work in translation in the early 1930s, Qahhor was undoubtedly familiar with Socialist Realism's master plot, but for his *Mirage*, he most likely borrowed from Gorky's *The Life of Klim Samgin* (1927-1937), a

novel with a plot opposite the master plot.³⁴ According to Socialist Realism's master plot, a positive socialist hero overcomes natural disasters, the illusions of old romanticism, and class enemies to arrive at class consciousness and the victory of socialism.³⁵ Gorky's novel shows the inverse: it follows the misadventures of a representative of the past, the eponymous right-wing intellectual Klim Samgin, who is stamped out of history by socialism.³⁶ Samgin suffers from a bourgeois entropy: the class he represents is slowly dying, and he, as its representative, illustrates this heat death by drawing further and further into himself. This centripetal motion manifests itself in Samgin's ever greater desire for a personal glory that separates him from the masses. His failure to attain that glory evinces the falseness of his ideology. Throughout the novel, he ignores the teachings of his Marxist interlocuters and is instead drawn to various anti-revolutionary thinkers and groups: decadents, *vekhovtsy* (critics of Lenin who propounded a Christian religious philosophy), and Black Hundreds. Samgin's inward-looking sex life encapsulates his inability to connect with the masses:

Он понимал, что Лидия некрасива, даже часто неприятна, но он чувствовал к ней непобедимое влечение. Его ночные думы о девицах принимали осязаемый характер, возбуждая в теле тревожное, почти болезненное напряжение, оно заставило Клима вспомнить устршающую книгу профессора Тарновского о пагубном влиянии онанизма.

He understood that Lidiia was not pretty, even unpleasant, but he felt some unconquerable attraction to her. His nighttime thoughts took on a palpable character, arousing in him a vexing, almost morbid tension, which reminded Klim of professor Tarnovskii's terrifying book on the pernicious effects of onanism.³⁷

³⁴ Clark notes that the initial Socialist Realist canon contained this opposite plot, represented by Gorky's novel, Aleksey Tolstoy's *The Road to Calvary* (1921-1941), and others. In later years, this opposite plot became productive largely of subplots to the master plot. Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 44-45.

³⁵ Clark, 15-24.

³⁶ Qahhor does not specifically mention familiarity with this novel in the 1930s, but, like all Uzbek socialist authors in the 1930s, he advertised himself as a student of Gorky. See Abdulla Kakhar, "Pevets stradanii i pobedy," *Pravda Vostoka*, June 21, 1936.

³⁷ Maksim Gor'kii, *Zhizn' Klimy Samgina (Sorok let); Chast' pervaya*, vol. 11 (Moskva: Pravda, 1979), 120.

His return to his own body echoes his individualism and his estrangement from the proletarian masses, qualities which Qahhor would lend his Saidiy.

Qahhor's *javob* in prose uses Gorky's model to transform his Saidiy from Jadid tragic hero into Socialist Realist anti-hero. Like Samgin, Saidiy is too interested in his individuation to realize a bond with the poor masses. In *Mirage*, we see a nearly identical passage to the one above in which Samgin is moved to onanism.

Saidiy shiftga qarab uzoq o'ylanib yotdi. Uning ko'z oldidan bu kungacha ko'rgani va xunukligidan kulgani son-sanoqsiz qizlar o'ta boshladi. Bularning ichida Saraxon o'zining qolidag'i choynagi bilan ajralib turar edi. Saidiy shuncha vaqtdan beri birinchi martaba uning aft-boshiga tuzukrak qarashg'a qaror berdi.

Saidiy stared at the ceiling and sunk into thought. In front of his mind's eye countless girls, whom he had seen and whose ugliness he had laughed at, began to pass. Among them Soraxon with a teapot in her hand separated herself from the others. For the first time in a long time Saidiy began to look at Soraxon's physiognomy positively.³⁸

While Qahhor does not as vividly describe Saidiy's arousal as does Gorky his Samgin's, the Uzbek author draws Saidiy in approximately the same light. Like Samgin in the above moment, Saidiy is here alone with his thoughts and, through those thoughts, begins to stimulate himself with images of a woman who is not particularly attractive. Samgin never consummates his minimal attraction to Lidiia, and Saidiy, though he eventually marries Soraxon, does not either. Saidiy's likeness to Samgin in this respect demonstrates that he is not the Jadid tragic hero, but a Socialist Realist anti-hero out of step with the masses and with history.

In modelling his Saidiy on Samgin, Qahhor realizes the civilizational decline of the archetypal plot as Gorky's bourgeois entropy, but the Uzbek author relies on still other Socialist Realist models to depict Saidiy's death as bringing about the victory of socialism. By the time Qahhor finished his novel, Gorky had not finished his *Life of Klim Samgin* and the fate of his

³⁸ Abdulla Qahhor, *Sarob* (Toshkent-Samarqand: O'zdamnashr, 1937), 204.

anti-hero was unknown.³⁹ Qahhor thus turned to another canonized Socialist Realist novel, Aleksandr Serafimovich's *Iron Flood*, to depict Saidiy's death as bringing about the end of the bourgeois class and the birth of socialism. Several times Qahhor notes Saidiy's immersion in the "flow" of history or an opposite "flow" of his nationalist ideology. The Komsomol cell "butun fakultetni tashkil etgan harbir unsur o'ziga yarasha kuch bilan uni ichkariga, umumiy oqimga qarab tortardi (pulled him into the flow of the masses); "oqim o'zini qayoqqa olib ketayotganligi to'g'risida o'ziga hisob berishni ham xohlamaydi (he did not want to deal with where the flow [of his courting the daughter of nationalist] was taking him)."⁴⁰ This is language almost certainly borrowed from *Iron Flood*, translated in Uzbek by Qahhor in 1932, which contains a similar ambiguity between types of flows. The flood or flow (Qahhor translates Serafimovich's *potok* using the Uzbek word for flow, *oqim*) features prominently throughout Serafimovich's novel as a representation of Marxist history's inevitable and merciless movement, but also as a force posed against communism. Serafimovich's communist flood overcomes natural floods and floods of enemies to eventually arrive at victory. In Qahhor's novel, however, Saidiy, because of his passivity, eventually moves against the flow of socialist history and is crushed, which paves the way for the victory of socialism.

Saidiy's death at the end of the novel is not one to be mourned and redeemed by future generations of Uzbeks as with the archetypal plot. Instead, Qahhor intended for readers to intimate the victory of socialism from Saidiy's death. In figuring Saidiy as the anti-hero, Qahhor inaugurated a new reading of the archetypal plot and of Socialist Realism. Civilizational decline and death lead not to the promise of rebirth but rather to the birth of something entirely absent in

³⁹ Gorky died in 1936, not having finished the novel.

⁴⁰ Qahhor, *Sarob*, 31, 54. The novel was published serially in 1934 and 1935, but it remains difficult to find a complete run of the journals in which it was released.

the past, i.e. socialism.

Natural Imagery and Socialist *Javob*

Apart from plot, the depiction of nature and natural chremamorphisms—the likening of people to animals—were one of the prime sites where an Uzbek socialist like Qahhor could interstitch proletarian and early Socialist Realist aesthetics with his *javob* to Jadid writers. Jadids employed natural imagery to develop a link between their nation and its native environs. Socialist Realist depictions of nature, on the other hand, asserted that socialism would harness nature and improve upon it. They likewise implied that under feudalism and capitalism, the idea of the immutability of nature had been used as a tool to exploit the toiling masses. Qahhor used his experimental *javob* to target Jadid depictions of nature and their chremamorphisms, exchanging the majestic images used by his predecessors for banal ones. He used a Socialist Realist reasoning to suggest that Jadids, because of their attachment to nature, enslave themselves and others to nature.

A look at the rest of Cho‘lpon’s “To a Devastated Land,” examined in part above, demonstrates how the Jadid poet created a nexus between femininity, nature, and the nation, a nexus that Qahhor would mock in his novel.

Buzilgan o‘lkaga

Ey tog‘lari ko‘klarga salom bergan zo‘r o‘lka,
Nega sening boshingda quyuk bulut ko‘lanka?
[...]

Ot minganda, qushlar kabi uchguvchi,
Erkin-erkin havolarni quchg‘uvchi,
Ot chopganda, uchar qushni tutquvchi,
Uchar qushday yosh yigitlar qayerda?
Tog‘ egasi–sor burgutlar qayerda?

Sening qattiq sir-bag‘ringni ko‘p yillardir ezganlar,
Sen bezsang-da, qarg‘asang-da, ko‘kragingda kezganlar.

Sening erkin tuprog'ingda hech haqqi yo'q xo'jalar
Nega seni bir qul kabi qizg'anmasdan yanchalar?
Nega sening qalin tovshing "ket!" demaydi ularga?
Nega sening erkli ko'ngling erk bermaydi qo'llarga?
Nega tag'in tanlaringda qamchilarning kulishi?
Nega sening turmushingda umidlarning o'lishi?
Nega yolg'iz qon bo'lmishdir ulushing?
Nega buncha umidsizdir turishing?
Nima uchun ko'zlaringda tutashguvchi olov yo'q?
Nima uchun tunlaringda bo'rilarning qorni to'q?
Nima uchun g'azabingni uyg'otmaydi og'u-o'q?
Nima uhcun borlig'ingda bu daraja buzg'inliq?
Nima uchun o'ch buluti sellarini yog'dirmas?
Nima uchun kuch tangrisi bor kuch-la soldirmas?

Kel, men senga qisqagina doston o'qiy,
Qulog'ingga o'tganlardan ertak to'qiy.
Kel, ko'zingning yoshlarini so'rib olay,
Kel, Yarali tanlaringni ko'rib olay, to'yib olay...
Nima uchun ag'darilgan, yiqilgan
Og'ir tojning zahar o'qi ko'ksingda?
Nima uchun yovlaringni bir zamon
Yo'q qilgunday temirli o'ch yo'q senda?

Ey har turli qulliq'larni sig'dirmagan hur o'lka,
Nega sening bo'g'izingni bo'g'ib turar ko'lanka?

Those who fly like birds, having mounted their horses,
Those who chase free winds and air,
Those who, urging their horses, seize the fleet bird,
Where have those young men gone, those like the fleet bird?
Where are those lords of the mountains—those brave eagles?

They have trod over your breast for many years,
You curse and moan, but they crush you nonetheless,
These haughty men with no rights to your free soil,
Why do you let them trample you without a murmur as if a slave?
Why do you not command them to leave?
Why does your freedom-loving heart not unleash your voice?
Why do the whips laugh as they meet your body?
Why do hopes die in your springs?
Why is your lot in life only blood?
Why are you so despondent?
Why do you no longer have that smoldering fire in your eyes?
Why are the wolves running through your nights so sated?
Why do those flying bullets not raise your ire?

Why is there such destruction across your plains?
Why do you not rain storms of vengeance?
Why has God forsaken you, sapped you of His strength?

Come, I will read you a little story,
I'll whisper a tale of years past in your ear,
Come, I'll wipe the tears from your eyes,
Come, let me look on your wounded body until I can't look anymore...
Why is that poison arrow in your breast?
That poison arrow of an overthrown kingdom.
Why do you not desire vengeance?
Why do you not want the death of those enemies?

Hey, free land that has never known slavery,
Why is that shadowy cloud lodged in your throat?⁴¹

This section of the poem illustrates the aesthetic and philosophy that Uzbek socialists would attack in the latter half of the 1920s. Cho'lon alludes to the lost civilizational zenith, from which he believes his nation has declined, through his use of majestic symbols connecting nation and nature, i.e. young men with the territory they inhabit. Identifying the zenith by its absence, Cho'lon uses the chremamorphic images typical of the Persianate canon to ask where are these "eagle"-like men who possess the "mountains." Because of the devastation of war, this connection between nation and land, nation and authenticity has been broken. Cho'lon ties femininity to nature and nation by identifying the destroyed national homeland with a victimized woman. That identification recalls other Cho'lon poems in which he bemoans the oppression of Central Asian women at the hands of an inauthentic patriarchy. Just as national loss brought on by war has resulted in the destruction of territory, so the decline from the civilizational apex has led to an oppressive and allegedly anti-Uzbek patriarchy. The poet bemoans that the land, much like his captive women, does not recognize and rebel against its suffering. This poem thus

⁴¹ Abdulhamid Sulaymon o'g'li Cho'lon, *Asarlar: To'rt jildlik*, vol. I (Toshkent: Akademyashr, 2016), 88–89.

illustrates a longing for an idyllic, uncorrupted nature, which Cho‘lpon identifies with authentic femininity and the authentic nation.

For Russian socialist writers, heroes and socialist construction were described with nature-based metaphors to demonstrate how they were perfected forms of nature. Through struggle, communism would best nature, remake it, and perfect it so as to be in harmony with it.⁴² One can find poetic treatments of nature in Gorky’s *Mother* (1907) and particularly in Serafimovich’s *Iron Flood*, which the Uzbek Writers’ Union used as an instructional text for teaching new writers how to write about nature.⁴³ Fedor Gladkov’s *Cement* (1925), one of the ten canonical works translated into Uzbek by 1934, produces a number of trying (for the reader) metaphors that show this relationship to nature.⁴⁴

Вот оно, самое главное – массы... труд... крылатый полет колес... Ночью завод открыл глаза электрическими лунами, и потухшие льдистые лампочки в квартирах рабочих зажгли свои путаные нити. Вон там, из трубных жерл, закрубятся черные облака и воздушные черепахи залетают на пирсы и сюда, на высоты, пожирать сланец в каменоломнях.

This is the most important thing – the masses... labor... the winged flight of wheels... at night the factory opened its eyes like electric moons, and the dimmed icy lamps in workers’ apartments illuminated as crossed threads. Over there, from exhaust pipes black

⁴² Clark addresses this theme as “The Struggle with Nature,” employing the language of the first Five-year plan. See *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 100–106. Boris Groys emphasizes the God-like powers attributed to socialism and the Socialist Realist hero to remake the world and best nature. See “The Earthly Incarnation of the Demiurge,” in *The Total Art of Stalinism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 56–74.

⁴³ The 1934 instructions given to literary circles sponsored by the Uzbek Writers’ Union dictated that teachers prepare special lessons on the proper socialist presentation of nature, and *Iron Flood* served as one of the primary texts from which to draw examples. The following takes the form of lecture notes or a lesson plan. “The Artistic Depiction of Nature. The aesthetic depiction of nature, which hides social conflict in the lives of people in bourgeois literature. The depiction of the working class’s relationship to nature, nature’s subordination to man in proletarian literature. The description of nature as a background, which brings out the emotions and thoughts of people depicted in a given work. The living depiction of nature. The comparison of aesthetic description of nature in Turgenev, in the verse of Fet with nature in Gor’kii’s “The Birth of a Man” or Serafimovich’s *Iron Flood*.” O‘zRMDA f. 2356 o. 1 d. 7 l. 25.

⁴⁴ Socialist Realist works translated into Uzbek by 1934 include Gorky’s *Mother* (1907), *Childhood* (1914), *My Universities* (1923), Fedor Gladkov’s *Cement* (1925), Mikhail Sholokhov’s *Virgin Soil Uplifted* (1932), Marietta Shaginian’s *Hydrocentral* (1931), Ivan Le’s *The Valley* (1929), Aleksandr Serafimovich’s *Iron Flood* (1924). The latter three were translated by Qahhor himself. For an expanded list, see Beregin, “Birinch qadamlar va endigi vazifalar to‘g‘risida.”

clouds puffed up and those airy turtles wafted over to the pier to eat away at the schist in the quarry.⁴⁵

Here the factory takes on natural qualities as the wheels fly like birds, exhaust clouds swim like turtles, and its lights appear like moons. Though communism promised to overcome nature, particularly its uncontrollable “elementalness” (стихийность), Gladkov’s language suggests that overcoming nature also means achieving accord with it. After all, the unique Marxist-Leninist dialectic of history proposed that the underclasses would come to consciousness by honing and controlling their innate spontaneity or “elementalness” which was often represented by natural phenomena. That “elementalness,” when controlled, would be used to overthrow the old and clear the ground for the new. Thus, socialism would not only harness nature, but also convert it into something better and more complete than it would be on its own.

Writing an experimental *javob* to Jadid literature, Qahhor had goals different from those of Russian socialists. Qahhor reasoned that if socialism harnesses nature and releases its untapped potential, then past stages of economic development, like those supposedly supported by Jadids, enslave people to nature and sap them of their strength. Other Uzbek socialists, such as G‘ayratii in his “To a Restored Land” seen above, successfully coopted Cho‘lpon’s natural images as the images of socialism’s overcoming of nature. Qahhor, on the other hand, replaces Cho‘lpon’s images with their opposites to demonstrate how Jadids and their thought subjugate humanity. As a Jadid, Saidiy supposedly desires to retrieve a lost link with nature as does Cho‘lpon, i.e. to once again be identified with “eagles,” but instead, Qahhor shows how this longing leads to Saidiy’s identification with the weak and abhorrent image of the fly.

⁴⁵ Fedor Vasil’evich Gladkov, “Tsement,” in *Sochineniia v piati tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel’stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1950), 235.

The first pages of the novel demonstrate that Qahhor saw Saidiy's fall as something of a transformation of his "nature." When Saidiy first meets his beloved, Munisxon, he reveals, by way of comparison, what he desires in a woman:

U gaplashgan yoki gaplashishga jazm qilib muvaffaq bo'lmagani qizlar oddiy, ba'zilar tabiatning haykaltaroshlikka no'noqliq vaqtida yaratilgan.

Those women with whom he had spoken or had not got up the courage to speak to were ordinary; some had been born at a time incapable of sculpting nature.⁴⁶

Saidiy, a weak person, seeks a woman, i.e. the overtly feminine Munisxon, to "sculpt" him into something greater. Qahhor identifies Munisxon as Saidiy's future sculptor later in the novel by having the narrator repeatedly refer to Saidiy as a "statue" (*haykal*) as he stares at her.⁴⁷ What concerns us is Qahhor's use of the word *tabiat*, or nature, for character. *Tabiat* is often used to indicate a person's character or personality as well as nature. The reference here, however, serves as a telling play on words, connecting the feminine Munisxon to nature.

Throughout the novel, in fact, Saidiy envisions Munisxon much like Cho'ipon sees women in his oeuvre: as a link to a natural, idyllic, but lost world. The narrator demonstrates that Saidiy's dreams about a future life with Munisxon conflate femininity and nature:

Saidiy ba'zan kechalari ko'rpada uyg'oq yotib tush ko'radi. U olamshumul yozuvchi. Amriqoli moharrir Ertur Brizyan singari, har kuni bir bag'onaliq narsa yozib, yiliga o'n ikki ming oltin vazifa oladi. Yana turli mamlakatlardan frank, dollar, rupiyalar kelib turadi. Shundan so'ng u bu serg'avg'a, seraziyat shahardan ketib, o'n to'qqizinchi asrda o'tgan Shimoliy Amriqo adibi-To'ro singari tabiat quchog'ig'a kiradi. Vodiyning eng borhavo, eng go'zal yeriga slogan arkida o'lturib, xotini Aryodno'ning royalda qilgan mashqiga quloq berar ekan, butun vodiy va undagi o'tlab yurgan qo'y qo'zilar, yilqilar tog' yonbag'rilarida o'gan pista, archa, ko'mko'k o'lanlar va ularning orasidan ilan izi bo'lib oqib quyoshning nurida kumush tosmaday yarqirab turagan ariq va ariqchalar ko'runib turadi.

Some nights Saidiy lay on his mat and dreamt. He would be a world-famous writer. Like the American editor Arthur Brisbane, he would write one column every day and take in twelve thousand gold coins every year. He would gather from various countries franks,

⁴⁶ Qahhor, *Sarob*, 7.

⁴⁷ Qahhor, 12, 50.

dollars, rupees. After that he would leave the noisy, destructive city and enter nature's embrace like [Henry David] Thoreau in 19th-century North America. He would sit in his citadel in the cleanest, most beautiful place in the Ferghana valley and listen to his wife [Munisxon in this fantasy – CF] play Ariadna Skriabina's exercises on the piano, while looking over the valley with the sheep and horses grazing in it, the pistachios, the juniper and green grasses growing at the foot of the mountain, and the streams and creeks shimmering like silver stripes in the light of the sun, which leaves a snake-like trail as it descends to earth.⁴⁸

The language of this passage shows how Saidiy's idyllic vision is inextricable from his relationship to Munisxon. Earlier in the novel, Munisxon's piano-playing begins his dreaming of a life with her. Here piano-playing reminds again of his love for Munisxon, and Qahhor connects her femininity, like Cho'lpon throughout his oeuvre, to untouched, uncorrupted nature.

Having established Saidiy as a hero similar to Cho'lpon the poet, Qahhor proceeds to mock his character by exchanging Cho'lpon's images of unspoiled nature for images of corrupted nature. The more Saidiy dreams of reaching a pristine natural world, the more he loses himself and his "nature" becomes corrupted.

In characterizing his various negative bourgeois figures, Qahhor employs chremamorphism by giving them "natural" or animal-like features, exploiting a set of symbols opposite those of Cho'lpon. Uzbek satire had a decades-long tradition,



Figure 2.1: Qishloqdag'i eng yomon hasharot (The worst insect in the village). *Qizil O'zbekiston*, October 4, 1929.

encompassing Jadids and their reformist predecessors, of employing grotesque chremamorphisms to satirize rhetorical enemies [see figures 2.1, 2.2].⁴⁹ In this vein, one of

⁴⁸ Qahhor, 222.

⁴⁹ Progressive satirical journals associated with Jadids such as *Mushtum* pictured mullas and other Islamic holy men as various animals in order to poke fun at their social standing. Qahhor's generation uses this technique against such figures as well but also conflated old-generation progressive intellectuals and Jadids with the previous targets. See Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 228–29.

and destroy their subordinates. In a scene that ties together the entire novel, she decapitates flies, which the reader should understand as a metaphor for her debasing of Saidiy. Qahhor shows throughout that Soraxon's family endlessly exploits Saidiy—they take his monthly paycheck and berate him for not earning more—but the author later subtly hints that his hero's new family preys on their servants and Saidiy alike, crushing them like insects. One day Saidiy finds his wife in her room, toying with a fly. She brings it to him, asking, “shu tirikmi, o'likmi? (is it alive or dead?)”⁵³ They agree to a bet over the life of the fly: “Mana hozir ko'rasiz... Yo'q, to'xtang... Avval ayting-chi, joni bor narsaning boshini uzib tashlansa o'ladimi, yo'qmi (Now look... No, wait... First tell me, if you rip the head off a living thing does it die or not?)”⁵⁴ Saidiy bets that the fly will walk around some, while Soraxon says it will fly around the room. Qahhor meticulously describes how Soraxon “kaftiga qamagan pashshani sekin olib qanotidan ushladi va kichkina qaychicha bilan boshini kesib qo'yib, yubordi (slowly took the fly by the wings, cut its head off with small scissors, and released it).”⁵⁵ Soraxon wins the bet when the fly takes off and flies around for half an hour before expiring. Only Soraxon cheats; she knows the result in advance. “Domla gilamning bir chetni ko'tarib, polga qaramoqchi bo'lgan edi, gilam ustida o'lib yotgan son-sanoqsiz pashshalarni ko'rib nafratlandi (The *domla* [honorific for Soraxon's father – CF] lifted up one side of the rug and to his horror saw countless dead flies).”⁵⁶ Saidiy can do nothing but explain this disgusting fact as his wife's “*ermak* (hobby).”⁵⁷ The scene is not only intended to enflame the reader against Soraxon, but also her entire class, for Qahhor hints that her twisted games with these insects are similar to her relationship with Saidiy. The stakes of the

⁵³ Qahhor, 312.

⁵⁴ Qahhor, 313.

⁵⁵ Qahhor, 313.

⁵⁶ Qahhor, 314.

⁵⁷ Qahhor, 314.

bet reiterate the exploitative relationship between Soraxon and her husband: “Siz yutquzsangizmi, xonatlas ko‘ylaklik olib berasiz. Men yutquzsam nima desangiz mayli... (If you lose, you’ll bring me a silk shirt. And if I lose, whatever you say is fine...)”⁵⁸ For Soraxon, the bet is just another way to keep her husband working. She has already taken his income, and he will have to take on yet another job to fulfill the terms of the bet. The ellipses for his stake in the bet connote Saidiy’s emasculation: Soraxon is offering sex.⁵⁹ She withholds sex from him throughout the novel and successfully does so here again by cheating in their bet. The scene thus identifies Saidiy with the weak and disgusting fly: Soraxon severs its head just as she castrates him.

Qahhor continues this metaphor in the following scene. Moments after he loses the bet and steps out to talk with his father-in-law, Soraxon’s screaming forces him to return. Soraxon’s shirt is covered in blood,

qonning sababini darrov aniqlandi: Soraxon yiqilganda, pashshaning boshini kesib o‘ynayturgan qaychisi ko‘kragiga biroz qadalgan.[...] Saidiy to ko‘kragiga qulog‘ini qo‘yib ko‘rmaguncha o‘likmi, tirikmi ekanini bilmadi.

and the source of that blood quickly became clear. She had fallen down and the scissors with which she had been dismembering the flies were thrust into the breast of To‘pa [a servant][...] Until he put his ear to To‘pa’s breast, Saidiy did not know whether she was dead or alive.⁶⁰

Not only does Soraxon stab To‘pa with the same scissors with which she dismembers the fly, but also Saidiy has the same reaction to the violent event as earlier.⁶¹ Just like with the fly, he repeats Soraxon’s question to himself—“dead or alive?”—and checks her victim. Thus, according to

⁵⁸ Qahhor, 313.

⁵⁹ Qahhor strongly hints that Soraxon’s “hobby” of beheading flies is a metaphor for sex by using the same word, “ermak” or hobby, that the narration earlier employs to describe sex with Soraxon. “Albatta ermak. Naxot uni o‘pushi boshqa haqiqiy o‘pishlarday muhabbat havrini bir oz pasaytirish bo‘lsa! (Of course, it was just a way to put himself at ease). Wouldn’t kissing her [Soraxon] like any real kissing stave off the desire for love?” Qahhor, 209.

⁶⁰ Qahhor, 317–18.

⁶¹ Qahhor ensures the exploitation of To‘pa is clear near the novel’s conclusion. It turns out that the family has not paid To‘pa a salary for seven years. Qahhor, 378.

Qahhor, Jadids do not intend to realize the bond with nature they idealize: they long for a lost era of men like “eagles,” and yet in seeking this era, they can only transform their victims and themselves into flies.

During the discussion of the novel in the Uzbek Writers’ Union in 1939, the “fly” episode in particular drew the ire of Qahhor’s critics. Rasulov, a member of the novel’s review committee, pointed to Soraxon’s characterization as detracting from *Mirage*’s quality:

Millatchilarning bazmi, aysh-ishrati, sarguzashti[...] Soraxonning pashsha tutishi haqidagi zeriktirarli tasvirlar o‘rniga mamlakat hayotida katta hodisa bo‘lgan yer islohoti, koxozlashirish va undagi ijodiy qahramonlarning hayoti, kurashi, G‘alabasi haqida go‘zal tasvirlar berilsa, juda yaxshi bo‘lar edi.

The nationalists’ feasts, their revelry, adventures [...] Soraxon’s fly-catching bore the reader. Instead of these, Qahhor should have shown the land reforms, collectivization, and the lives, struggles, and victories of the positive heroes that participated in those events.⁶²

One of the oddest and most grotesque sexual metaphors of the early Uzbek socialist texts should hardly be considered boring, particularly because it is pivotal to Saidiy’s transformation. Without the fly scene, Qahhor could not have executed an important part of his adapted *javob*. Qahhor likens his Saidiy to Cho‘lpon by giving his protagonist the same set of aesthetic beliefs regarding the nexus of nature, nation, and femininity. Like Cho‘lpon, Saidiy longs for an idyllic purity, uncorrupted by history and foreign invaders. Qahhor then mocks Saidiy by exchanging, according to a socialist logic, Jadids’ grand images of nature for base ones. Because Qahhor viewed Jadids as “bourgeois nationalists,” he shows how Saidiy’s Jadid mentors enslave him to themselves and to their false idealization of nature. He does not come to a new accord with nature like a socialist, but is rather transformed into its weakest creature, subject to all the whims of nature.

⁶² O‘zRDMA f. 2356 o. 1 d. 56 l. 73.

Dream and Mirage

Early Stalinism in Uzbekistan bore witness to a myriad of attacks on Cho‘lpon and his fellow *jadids* by socialist literary critics. In 1927, the critic Olim Sharafiddinov attacked Cho‘lpon for being a “dreamer” (*xayolparast*), an accusation that inspired Qahhor’s novel.⁶³ As mentioned above, the title *Mirage* is an inversion of dream (*xayol*), a frequent subject of Cho‘lpon’s lyric, but the mockery of dream is more than just a title. Qahhor models his Saidiy not only on the passivity of Qodiriy’s Otabek but also on the dreamers of Cho‘lpon’s lyric. He then ridicules his dreamer Saidiy according to a proletarian and socialist critique of romanticism.

The critique of romanticism that animated Qahhor’s *javob* entered Uzbekistan in the late 1920s alongside other Russian literary discourse. In a 1929 speech entitled *Down with Schiller*, RAPP leader Aleksandr Fadeev provides an excellent description of what writers like Qahhor saw themselves as attacking in Jadids.

Мы различаем методы реализма и романтики как методы более или менее последовательных материализма и идеализма в художественном творчестве, как, с одной стороны, метод более или менее последовательного «срывания всех и всяческих масок» (Ленин о Толстом), а с другой стороны, метод искажения и мистификации действительности, «нас возвышающего обмана».

We differentiate the methods of realism and romanticism as methods more or less consistent with materialism and idealism in artistic works. On the one hand, [realism] more or less follows the “stripping of any and all masks” (Lenin on Tolstoy’s method), and on the other hand, [romanticism] is a method that distorts and mystifies reality, “an illusion that exalts us.”⁶⁴

As socialist critics, Qahhor and his generation believed they were “stripping off the masks” of Jadids by accusing them of a romantic falsification of reality.

⁶³ Olim Sharafiddinov, “O‘zbek Shoirlari: Cho‘lpon,” *Qizil O‘zbekiston*, February 14, 1927.

⁶⁴ A. A. Fadeev, “Doloi Shillera,” in *Literaturnoe dvizhenie sovetskoi epokhi: Materialy i dokumenty* (Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1986), 143–44. “An illusion that exalts us” is taken from Pushkin’s 1830 poem “Hero.”

Qahhor and many other Uzbek socialists conflated this proletarian critique of romanticism with Cho‘lpon’s use of *xayol*. The Russian socialist terms “idealism,” “romanticism,” and “utopia” were commonly translated as some morphological form of *xayol* in Uzbek socialists’ translations of Russian speeches. Endowed with these new possibilities of meaning, Cho‘lpon’s *xayol* was ripe for a socialist *javob*.

In the early 1920s, Cho‘lpon’s lyric persona in several poems begot the dreaming character type that Qahhor would mock with his novel. We have already examined Cho‘lpon’s address of dream in his poem “(Someone’s) Dream (*Xayoli*)” in the previous chapter. With that poem, Cho‘lpon offers something of an aesthetic manifesto. Through a lyric persona that declares his love for dream and his refusal to awaken, Cho‘lpon suggests that his art proceeds from the prolongation of the state of decline and ignorance, i.e. dream.

Just as Qahhor read Qodiriy’s *Bygone Days* without the attendant irony, so *Mirage* demonstrates that he read Cho‘lpon’s aesthetic endorsement of dream quite literally as a pessimistic withdrawal from the material world. Qahhor’s *javob* thus draws Saidiy according to the RAPP critique of romanticism. Fadeev criticizes the romantics for masking the truth of material reality, and Qahhor’s dreamer Saidiy withdraws into sleep to do precisely that. He consistently sleeps and dreams in order to avoid material reality.

We first see Saidiy as a procrastinating dreamer when he avoids a well-intentioned Komsomol member’s attempts to help him enter the university by pretending to be asleep.⁶⁵ When he later falls into poverty, he sleeps to avoid hunger, dreaming of his salvation.

Oltinchi kuni esa och qolib kechqurung‘acha yotib uxladi.[...] Qiyomg‘acha karavotda cho‘zulib yotib boshqa joydan pul topish fikrini qildi, hechbir qarorg‘a kelolmadi. O‘ylagan sayin bu o‘yning oxiri xayolga aylanib ketar edi. Xayol esa o‘zini yupatsa ham qornini yupatolmadi.

⁶⁵ Qahhor, *Sarob*, 16, 151.

On the sixth day he lay sleeping and hungry until evening.[...]He lay in his bed until noon, thinking of a way to get the money, but could not come to a decision. As he continued to think, his thoughts turned into dream. The dream may have comforted him, but it did not comfort his stomach.⁶⁶

Saidiy might find his dream mentally satisfying, but it slowly kills his body. While Cho‘lpon treasures dream as something greater than that which can be achieved in reality, Qahhor suggests dream is only a distraction from the more important material world.

Qahhor’s *javob* goes further: dream or *xayol* not only distracts from reality but also perverts it. When Saidiy falls into his Jadid circle, he moves farther and farther from the objects of his dreams, achieving in the real world only depraved and base reflections of them. Soraxon, Saidiy’s eventual wife, is a twisted, revolting version of his beloved Munisxon. When Saidiy first meets Munisxon, he, as is his wont, again falls into *xayol*: “U, bir damda shu yoshigacha ko‘rgani butun qizlarni xayolidan o‘tkazdi, ammo ularning ichida bu qiz yo‘q edi. (In his imagination, he ran through all the girls he had seen in his life, but this girl [Munisxon] was not among them).”⁶⁷ A better translation for *xayol* in this context is imagination, but the word is nevertheless the same here. Qahhor later repeats this imagining of girls in the passage I earlier quoted in reference to Gorky’s *Life of Klim Samgin*. Saidiy here enters into the same dream state when he finds himself first attracted to Soraxon.

Saidiy shiftga qarab uzoq o‘ylanib yotdi. Uning ko‘z oldidan bu kungacha ko‘rgani va xunukligidan kulgani son-sanoqsiz qizlar o‘ta boshladi. Bularning ichida Saraxon o‘zining qolidag‘i choynagi bilan ajralib turar edi. Saidiy shuncha vaqtdan beri birinchi martaba uning aft-boshiga tuzukrak qarashg‘a qaror berdi.

Saidiy stared at the ceiling and sunk into thought. In front of his mind’s eye countless girls, whom he had seen and whose ugliness he had laughed at, began to pass. Among them Soraxon with a teapot in her hand separated herself from the others. For the first time in a long time Saidiy began to look at Soraxon’s physiognomy positively.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Qahhor, 64.

⁶⁷ Qahhor, 7.

⁶⁸ Qahhor, 204.

While the lovely Munisxon cannot be found in his previous *xayol* and therefore becomes an aspiration, Saidiy finds Soraxon among the hideous girls of his *xayol* easily. The banal and prosaic vocabulary Qahhor uses here to describe Soraxon reflects her status as the corruption of an ideal. In Chagatai love poetry, the face of the beloved is named with words implying adoration such as “chehra” or “oraz.” The narration describes Soraxon with “aft-boshi,” which I have rendered as “physiognomy.” “Bosh,” meaning head, is rather mundane and certainly not used to describe a beloved, while “aft,” means face but in a negative sense: it is used, for example, to tell someone to “get lost,” (*afting qursin*). After their first night together, reality dawns on Saidiy, and Soraxon no longer arouses him in any way. Saidiy turns from Munisxon to Soraxon by continuing to engage with his *xayol*, but the beauty he idealizes becomes a revolting reality.

Dreaming, Qahhor shows in the novel’s denouement, leads not only to the perversion of the object of the dream, but even to the dreamer’s destruction. In the novel’s conclusion, realizing that his dreams of an ideal future have come to nothing, Saidiy decides to end it all, exiting his home into a blizzard.

Saidiy iki-uch quloch yergacha sudralib borganidan keyin, qo‘llari ham ikki oyog‘iday shal bo‘ldi. U ortiq qimirlayolmas edi.[...] Munisxon, alashumul adiblik martabasi, vodiya solinajak ark va oqibat hayot va‘da qilib, halokat chohiga itargan ko‘k bayroq singari uzoqda qoldi. Saidiy o‘zini qor ko‘mganini, oyog‘idan boshlangan karaxtlik sekin-sekin yuqorilab boshigacha yetayotganini aniq bildi va hushdan ketdi...

After pulling himself along the ground with his hands, they became numb like his legs. He could no longer move.[...] Munisxon, the status of worldly writer, the palace that he would build in the valley, the green banner [of Islam] that hung over a deathly abyss to which he had dedicated his life remained far off. Saidiy felt himself being buried in snow, the climbing of the numbness from his legs to his head, and he lost consciousness...⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Qahhor, 383.

Saidiy loses consciousness as he often did while dreaming, only this time he does not dream, but dies. Neglecting reality, in Qahhor's mind, leads not only to the caricature of one's aspirations, but also to the end of aspirations themselves.

In adapting *javob* to prose to create a meeting between the Jadid archetypal plot and the nascent Socialist Realist master plot, Qahhor's *Mirage* combined a socialist critique of romanticism with Jadids' aesthetic interest in dream. Qahhor creates from Cho'lpon's dreams, which suggest deferment of awakening as an aesthetic, his Saidiy who foregoes his reality for dream. Qahhor then inverts the value of dream, chastising Saidiy for indulging fantasy. Qahhor's *javob* in prose surpasses other Uzbek socialists' critiques of Cho'lpon in its ingenuity. While G'ayraty in his *javob* and Sharafiddinov in his denunciation contended Cho'lpon's poems were merely illusion, Qahhor's understanding of mirage goes beyond the socialist critique of romanticism's falsehood. By living in dream, Saidiy becomes a victim of its corrupted incarnation.

Family as Metaphor

Both Jadids and Russian socialist writers addressed the futures they imagined for their societies through metaphors of the family, particularly the father. They saw the father as leader, as cultural link to the past, and as foundation for the future, but in profoundly different ways. Qahhor executed his experimental *javob* by realizing a synthesis of these two family discourses. As a Jadid, Saidiy idealizes his father, who committed suicide before the revolution, as a link to the great past and a model for his future. Saidiy attempts to restore the great past of his father through surrogate relationships like those we see commonly in Socialist Realism, but these relationships reveal only the unsustainability of his father's world.

Socialist Realism offers, as Katerina Clark has outlined, a metaphor of surrogacy that places the party or Stalin as father.⁷⁰ Positive characters symbolically revoke their past often by swearing off their biological and cultural parentage, but they also declare their allegiance to the socialist future by accepting Bolshevik figures as surrogate fathers. This metaphor pervaded not only Soviet literature but also all of Soviet culture. In 1932, a thirteen-year-old boy, Pavlik Morozov, entered Soviet popular culture when he denounced his father to the political police for corruption and was then killed by his family. The Soviet state celebrated Morozov as a martyr and model Pioneer, who placed loyalty to the state above biological bonds.⁷¹ Serafimovich's *Iron Flood* demonstrates this common trope well. After braving the elements and the Whites, the Red army members, their wards, and their commander Kozhukh begin to speak in familial terms:

Закричали:

- Урр-а-а нашему батькови!.. Нэхай живе!.. Пидемо за им на край свита... Будемо биться за совитску власть. Будемо биться с панами, с генералами, с ахвицерьем... А он ласково смотрел на них голубыми глазами, а в сердце выжигалось огненным клеймом:

“Нэма у меня ни отца, ни матери, ни жены, ни братьев, ни близких, ни родни, тильки одни эти, которых вывел я из смерти... Я, я вывел... А таких миллионы, и округ их шеи петля, и буду биться за их. Тут мой отец, дом, мать, жена, дети... Я, я, я спас от смерти тысячи, десятки тысяч людей... Я спас от смерти в страшном положении...”

They yelled:

“Hurray for our father [Kozhukh]! Let him live long! We'll follow him to the end of the earth! We'll fight for Soviet power. We'll fight the Poles, the generals, the officers...” He lovingly looked on them with his blue eyes, and a fiery brand was seared onto his heart:

“I have no father, no mother, no wife, no brothers, no kin, no relations, only these people which I have led from certain death... I, I led them... And there are millions like them with ropes around their necks, and I will fight for them. Here is my father, home, mother, wife, children... I, I, I saved thousands from death, tens of thousands... I saved them from a horrifying death...”⁷²

⁷⁰ Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 114–35.

⁷¹ Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia* (London, New York: Penguin, 2007), 122–25.

⁷² Aleksandr Serafimovich, “Zheleznyi potok,” in *Sobranie sochinenii v chetyrekh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moskva: Pravda, 1980), 168.

Serafimovich highlights that this new family, born of the trial of war and struggle, is vastly stronger than any previous one. While one might expect civil war survivors to want to return to a peaceful life, the acknowledgement of these new kinship bonds only steels them for more fighting. Along with exchanging kinship terms, both Kozhukh and his wards declare their readiness to keep moving and destroy all of socialism's enemies. Russian socialist writers understood surrogacy not just as a means of uprooting people from their past to make them more amenable to the Soviet order, but also as preparing them for a future that would constantly renew itself. If one surrogate family is acceptable, then any number of surrogates is acceptable: a new family can always replace the fallen. Throughout the 1930s, the surrogate father served to remind both that the past had been revoked and that the future was imminent.

The Jadids similarly imagined parentage as a link to a cultural past, and socialists, like Qahhor, would criticize them for attempting to realize an anachronistic past in the socialist present. Jadids, however, were far more equivocal in the relationship to the past than socialist interpretations let on. Parents in Jadid literature are often representative of the civilizational or national decline. They have been corrupted from ideal parents of the past, a fact which puts an undue burden on the progressive children, the Jadid *raisonneur* heroes. In order to be true to their authentic Islamic or national selves, the children must obey their parents and yet, because they are not ideal parents, the parents make demands of their children that make them stray from the path to enlightenment. The Jadid version of the archetypal plot thus often put a difficult question before its protagonists and all of society: how do we maintain our culture and traditions when their maintenance means, in part, their abandonment? Metaphorically the question was put: how can we honor our fathers while simultaneously rejecting many of their values? Most Jadid characters fail to resolve this conundrum and the task is ultimately left to audience and readers.

They are to redeem Jadid characters in a perfected present in which parents and childrens' wills coincide. Abdulla Qodiriy's Otabek and Kumush once again fit this model. They both submit to their parents' will because they understand that disobeying them would be inauthentic and ill-suited to their cultural traditions. However, their parents are products of the civilizational decline in which Uzbek society is enveloped. They make demands of their children that ideal parents would not. The novel, in addition to its critique of the passive Otabek, calls for a time in which the tragedy would not have occurred. It longs for the return of a mythical past in which the wills of parents and children happily coincide.

Qahhor truncates the Jadid metaphor of parentage considerably in his mockery of it. Omitting that many Jadids saw their parents in the present as corrupted versions of authentic ancestors, Qahhor has his Jadid characters in the novel seek simply to realize the world of an idealized lost father in the present. Qahhor then combines this parental metaphor with the Socialist Realist one to author a new narrative in relation to the father. Unlike in Socialist Realism, Qahhor's characters do not find a surrogate parent who is superior to his/her biological parent. The author, however, sees nothing valuable in maintaining biological bonds either. In opposition to Jadid works, Qahhor's novel makes all parents, either surrogate or biological, the objects of ridicule. They are vestiges of the past, an impediment to joining the socialist future.

Before examining parents in Qahhor's novel, a look at the biographies of many of Qahhor's generation offers insight into the role that parentage plays in literature of this era. Qahhor himself was never orphaned, but his life experiences were similar to the many writers of his generation who were. Many of the Uzbek intellectuals who emerged in the late 1920s and 1930s lost one or both parents early in their lives. Among prominent writers this includes names introduced already, such as G'ayratiy, but also the poet Hamid Olimjon (1909-1944), poet and

satirist G‘afur G‘ulom (1903-1966), poetess and activist Oydin (1906-1953), dramatist Komil Yashin (1909-1997), prose writer Parda Tursun (1909-1957), and poet Mirzakalon Ismoiliiy (1908-1986).⁷³ This kind of background made them especially susceptible to Soviet ideology as several were raised in state-sponsored orphanages or, for lack of parental supervision and local cultural ties, embraced the Komsomol or other Soviet institutions.⁷⁴ Qahhor too joined the Komsomol because of his father’s absence while off soldiering in the Central Asian theater of the Russian Civil War, though his father reportedly encouraged communist associations even after he returned.⁷⁵ Though Qahhor himself was not affected in the same way as many in his cohort, these prosopographical details set up Qahhor’s literary play with metaphors of parentage.

The novel, in fact, sets up Saidiy as a potential communist; he too is an orphan like much of Qahhor’s cohort. His orphanhood, the novel initially leads us to believe, prepares Saidiy for a Socialist Realist-style surrogate fatherhood. Saidiy and his Komsomol friend, Ehson, maintain the friendship that their fathers once held with one another precisely because they were both orphaned early. Saidiy’s father hanged himself because the outbreak of World War I bankrupted him. As a result, Ehson, the elder of the two and a communist, becomes a temporary surrogate parent. Under his influence, Saidiy attempts to enter the university and join the Komsomol, but when Ehson leaves for Moscow early in the novel, Saidiy loses his way.

Without Ehson, Qahhor’s experimental *javob* has Saidiy embrace a caricatured Jadid understanding of fatherhood. Saidiy joins the novel’s “bourgeois nationalists” in an overt attempt to restore the lost world of his father. Throughout the novel, Saidiy idolizes his father’s times:

⁷³ Montgomery, “Career Patterns of Sixteen Uzbek Writers,” 207.

⁷⁴ For more on the role of orphans and disaffected individuals as the bulwark of the new intelligentsia in Central Asia, see Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 156–77.

⁷⁵ I surmise this from Qahhor’s pseudo-biographical tale “Tales from the Past” (1966). Abdulla Qahhor, “O‘tmishdan ertaklar,” in *Tanlangan asarlar* (Toshkent: Yangi asr avlodi, 2015), 207–14.

To‘g‘ri, Saidiyning otasi epchil, iqtidorli kishi edi. Mashin-bosqon, mashin-dam bilan ishlayturgan korxonada tashkil silib sindi. Siyosat shunday sindiruvchi siyosat edi.

True, Saidiy’s father was a deft and powerful person. His father had built bellows only to see them destroyed. Politics had been disastrous.⁷⁶

His nostalgia for his father gradually becomes a full political statement:

Tashkilotning muddaosi qizil bayroq o‘rniga ko‘k bayroq tikish. Bu shunday bayroq bo‘ladiki, uning himyoasi ostida mashina-dam, mashina-bosqon bilan ishlaytugan xususiy korxonada ochgan kishi Saidiyning otasiday o‘zini osmaydi.

The organization’s goal was to replace the red flag with a green one. It would be such a flag that any person who opened a bellows under it would not hang themselves like Saidiy’s father.⁷⁷

Saidiy’s father, as in the socialist interpretation of Jadid literature, serves for him as a metaphor for the return of an ideal past to the future.

The attempt to reach the father’s past has Qahhor’s protagonists take on surrogate parents in Jadids, but they are nothing like the surrogates of Socialist Realism. The surrogates of Qahhor’s “bourgeois nationalists” are all exploitative. Munixon, Saidiy’s beloved, is also an orphan and her brother, Salimxon, acts as a father figure to her detriment. As she protests her brother’s decision to give her away in marriage, he reveals the manipulative nature of their surrogate familial relationship:

Men sening akangman. Men senga eng yaqin kishi. Bundan tashqari otamiz otalik muhabbatini va mas’uliyatini menga tashlab ketgan. Sen ixtiyor qilasanmi, qilmaysanmi, bundan qat’iy nazar, men seni baxtiyor qilmasdan turolmayman.

I am your brother. I am the closest person you have. On top of that, our father passed his fatherly love and responsibility to me. It doesn’t matter what you desire, I cannot rest until I have secured your happiness.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Qahhor, *Sarob*, 224.

⁷⁷ Qahhor, 249.

⁷⁸ Qahhor, 195.

Salimxon takes on the fatherly role to deprive his sister of a choice in marriage. He uses the wedding to benefit himself by marrying her to his friend. The role of surrogate father, contrary to its presentation in Socialist Realism, becomes a means of enslavement in *Mirage*.

Similar to Qahhor's treatment of Jadid dreaming, Saidiy and his compatriots' Jadid-inspired attempts to restore the father and his past through surrogacy relationships results in the perversion and eventual disintegration of the family. Muxtorxon, the man Munisxon's brother forces on her in lieu of Saidiy, can hardly create a family. Every description of him focuses on his femininity and hints at impotence. "Nimjon, qizlar singari muloyim bu odamni Munisxon bir necha martaba ko'rgan (this person, feeble and soft like a girl, Munisxon had seen a few times)." ⁷⁹ "Muxtorxon erkakka o'xshamaydi (Muxtorxon did not look like a man)." ⁸⁰ Qahhor effeminizes Munisxon's future husband to highlight the unsustainability of the new family produced under the influence of a "nationalist" surrogate. Indeed, she is unable to have children and takes her own life.

As he tries to reconstruct a family of the old order, Saidiy's Jadid ideals likewise result in family entropy. Saidiy, as we have seen, is emasculated by his wife and exploited by the surrogate family he finds in his in-laws. But Qahhor, in fact, marks Saidiy's marriage as doomed from the beginning. As an orphan in Central Asia, Saidiy's prospects for marriage would be limited and would almost guarantee his emasculation. Urban Central Asians commonly practice ultimogeniture along the male line. When elder sons wed, they leave the household, with the financial support of their parents when possible, to establish their own household, while the youngest son is expected to marry and remain in the house to take care of his parents as they age. The reverse situation, whereby the husband lives with his in-laws, is socially stigmatized. Such a

⁷⁹ Qahhor, 194.

⁸⁰ Qahhor, 195.

husband is called *ichkuyov*. The etymology of that word suggests the emasculation implied. *Ich*, meaning inside, likely indicates *ichkari*, or the inside of the house where only women are allowed. For the husband to live with his in-laws, as Saidiy does, implies sexual inadequacy and emasculation. Saidiy intends to build a future by restoring the family he has lost with his new surrogate family, but in attempting to do so, he loses all possibility of creating a family and a future.

Qahhor's novel therefore enacts its experimental *javob* via the incorporation of the many surrogacies common to the Russian Socialist Realist master plot, but the author transforms these surrogacies into exploitative ones. For socialists, surrogate parents guide their children to a new and bright future, but for Qahhor's Jadid "nationalists," these surrogates are poor approximations of the desired past. They lead not to the rebirth of the father's mythic past in the present, but to the corruption, entropy and death of the family.

Mirage and the Shifting Uzbek Socialist Realist Habitus

Qahhor produced his *Mirage* just as Uzbeks were beginning to inhabit the new Socialist Realist *habitus* and its rules. In 1934, the meaning of Socialist Realism was ambivalent, and though texts of its future master plot had been canonized, it was not yet clear which aspects of those texts were to be imitated. Through an experimental use of the Persianate technique of *javob*, Qahhor attempted to write a Socialist Realist novel that made Jadids the villains of their own literature. Qahhor's hero Saidiy, the novel shows, encounters the same trials and catastrophes as those of Jadid tragic heroes, but Qahhor paints these trials and catastrophes not as a consequence of the typical Jadid-understood decline but of the bourgeois entropy outlined by Gorky. His novel substitutes grand Jadid images of nature for grotesque ones to unmask Jadid philosophy as exploitation and subjugation. The author also put a materialist spin on Jadid

dreams to harangue them and their characters. And finally, Qahhor's rejection of all family bonds in the novel signals his Jadid protagonist's incompatibility with the socialist present.

Qahhor inhabited this early form of Socialist Realism by interpreting its rules through the lens of the archetypal plot and the Jadid literature with which he was familiar. Qahhor chose specifically to draw on Gorky's *Life of Klim Samgin* because it was the most easily adaptable to his understanding of how literature should illustrate the movement of history. The other early canonized texts of Socialist Realism he read and translated all followed the typical path of the Socialist Realist positive hero who creates socialism through his own activity. Qahhor instead draws the birth of socialism as occurring from the entropic decline and death of the bourgeoisie. Qahhor likewise understood the RAPP and later Socialist Realist critique of romanticism via the term "dream" (*xayol*) as employed in his own native canon.

But the novel also evinces the extent to which the Socialist Realist *habitus* reshaped Qahhor and his generation's interpretations of Uzbek literature. Qahhor's literary play, as we have seen, was conditioned by unironic readings of his literary predecessors. Qahhor misunderstood how Qodiriy distances himself from his character, and instead, through his Saidiy, suggests an absolute identity between Jadid authors and their heroes. Qahhor likewise literalizes Cho'lpon's aesthetic statement about the prolongation of dream. In *Mirage*, the desire for prolonged dreams comes to describe Saidiy's procrastination and withdrawal from the world. Qahhor's unironic readings of Qodiriy and Cho'lpon's works, his identification of them with their characters, came to reinforce the archetypal plot that Qodiriy and Cho'lpon had begun to dismantle with their entry into literary modernity.

The conflict around Qahhor's novel and his career under Stalin and Khrushchev exemplify the extent to which the conditional freedom of Uzbekistan's Socialist Realist *habitus*

expanded and contracted over the next thirty years. Qahhor's novel was at first accepted by the Uzbek Soviet Writers' Union when it was awarded a second prize in the literary contest. The anonymous judge of his novel was laudatory, though he or she offered a critique that foreboded the denunciations to come.

“Sarob”da, asosan, sovet ziyolilarini yaratish uchun kurash tasvirlanadi.[...] Asar qahramoni Saidiy atrofida millatchi burjuaziya unsurlarining va adabiyot, matbuot sohasidagi aksil-inqilobiy harakatlari, madaniy frontdagi kadr uchun kurashning asl maqsadi bu, harakatning “Milliy istiqolol” partiyasi rahbarligi ostida olib borilganligi ko'rsatiladi. Ana shunday kurashlarni yengib sovet ziyolilari yaratiladi. 29-30 yillarga kelib sovet kadrlari tamom g'alaba qozonadi. Romanning katta kamchiliklari shundaki, to'la ishlangan ijobiy qahramoni yo'q. Uning qahramoni Saidiy bo'lsa-da, millatchilar, “Milliy istiqolol” partiyasining tuzog'iga ilinib, halokatga uchragan bir kishi. Hozir Qahhor ijobiy qahramonlarning rolini ko'rsatish va ularni to'laroq ravishda ishlamoqda. Asar til, uslub jihatidan juda chiroylik, ishotirarlik yozilgan. Asar nihoyat samimiy, sovet kishilarini tarbiya qilish tilagida yozilgan.

In *Mirage*, the campaign to create Soviet intellectuals is shown.[...] Nationalist bourgeois elements, their counterrevolutionary movements in literary and press organizations, and their battle for influence over cultural front workers is developed around the hero of the novel, Saidiy. The activities of the anti-Soviet organization *Milliy istiqolol* (National Independence) are also shown. Soviet intellectuals are created by overcoming these challenges. Soviet cadres achieved total victory over these challenges by 1929-30. The novel's main weakness is the absence of fully illustrated positive heroes. The hero Saidiy falls into the trap of the nationalists and “National Independence” and meets with disaster. Now Qahhor is working on enlarging the role of the positive characters. The work's language and style is attractive and convincing. It was written with the sincere intention of educating Soviet people.⁸¹

The judge's reproach that the novel lacked positive characters evidences that the master plot had become to come into focus. That reproach, however, turned into an accusation of anti-Soviet animus on November 17, 1937, when literary critic Yusuf Sultonov took the novel to task for allegedly praising its Jadid hero.⁸² Sultonov absolved Qahhor of this sin, blaming instead the novel's editor, Anqaboy. But by January 1939 when Xabib Musaev denounced the novel for the same reason, there was no Anqaboy left to attack—he had been executed in Stalin's purges.

⁸¹ O'zRMDA f. 2356 o. 1 d. 9 l. 12.

⁸² Yusuf Sultonov, “Sarob,” *Qizil O'zbekiston*, November 17, 1937.

Qahhor was no longer in mortal danger—Stalin’s Great Terror had ended—but Musaev’s denunciation prompted a multi-day meeting at the Writers’ Union between June 14th and 19th. In the deliberations, the men assembled decided that Qahhor had not intentionally subverted Soviet ideology; nevertheless, his novel “did not produce hatred for bourgeois nationalists and perhaps even led [readers] astray (Saidiyga achinish tug’dirish burjua millatchilariga nisbatan nafrat tug’dirmaydi, balki hushyorlikdan toydirishga olib boradi).” Qahhor had “made a mistake (bu yozuvchining xatosidir).”⁸³ They issued Qahhor a number of instructions that, if completed, would ostensibly permit the novel’s republication. They told Qahhor to strengthen the role of his positive characters, to better illustrate the successes of collectivization (the novel possesses a small collectivization scene), and to show the victory of socialism. In essence, Qahhor was to edit the novel such that it better fit the now stringently enforced master plot.

Instead of pursuing the republication of *Mirage*, Qahhor applied the Writers’ Union panel’s instructions to the creation of a new novel. Ozod Sharafiddinov, a student of Qahhor’s and his later biographer, states that the author began his 1947 novel *The Lights of Qo’shchinor* in 1939, the year of the Writers’ Union discussion of *Mirage*.⁸⁴ The new novel reads as an almost direct response to his critics. Siddiqjon, the hero, begins the novel in the same situation because of which Saidiy ended his life in *Mirage*. An orphan, he lives with his manipulative in-laws as an *ichkuyov*. His rich landowner father-in-law exploits him as a daylaborer. But instead of committing suicide like Saidiy, he begins the novel with an outburst of the spontaneity of the Socialist Realist positive hero: he suddenly decides to abandon his wife and child to join the local kolkhoz. The plot of the novel follows his journey to gain entrance to the kolkhoz as well as the kolkhoz’s battle with wreckers and nature. Qahhor retains elements of the archetypal plot

⁸³ O’zRMDA f. 2356 o. 1 d. 56 l. 13

⁸⁴ Sharafiddinov, *Abdulla Qahhor*, 161.

and Jadid literature as sideplots to the main narrative. More than once, characters relay how they suffered under the ignorance of the prerevolutionary era, lived through a catastrophic tragedy, and then were saved from this time of ignorance by the revolution or good Soviet actors.

Towards the conclusion of the novel, Qahhor's straightforwardly named Kanizak (meaning "slave girl") tells the Russian teacher Maria Fedorovna how she was forcibly married to an old man at the age of eleven and then accused of murdering him at age thirteen after he is seemingly poisoned. That subplot is notably Jadid in origin. It matches quite well the conclusion to Cho'lpon's *Night and Day* in which a teenager, Zebi, is married to an old man, mistakenly poisons him with poison her co-wife intended for her, and is tried and convicted of murder by a Russian court. Zebi is not compensated for her suffering by revolution, but Soviet officials take mercy on Kanizak and send her to a boarding school rather than trying her for murder.

Qahhor managed to print this kolkhoz novel with Jadid subplots, and at first, it was well received. But as the post-war purges ramped up, critics took him to task for his failure to adhere to the master plot. According to Sharafiddinov, Qahhor was denounced privately at first, which eventually precipitated a Writers' Union discussion of his work on July 28, 1948.⁸⁵ One of the main conclusions of that meeting held:

[Siddiqjon] kolxozlashtirish harakatining birinchi yillaridagi shiddatli kurashlar paytida bir chekkada tinchgina tirikchiligini qilib yurgan, irodasi bo'sh, anchagina noshud, har narsadan hadiksiraydigan, o'taketgan tortinchoq, tasodiflar girdobida oqib yuradigan bir odam.

[Siddiqjon] is a character that just calmly earns his living, sitting off to the side of the intense class conflict during the first years of collectivization. He has no will, he's inept, fearful, shy, a person who just flows with the accidents of history without asserting himself.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ Sharafiddinov, 161–62.

⁸⁶ Sharafiddinov, 163.

Siddiqjon has an initial moment of spontaneity, finds a Bolshevik mentor to raise his class consciousness, and eventually enters the kolkhoz, but the assessment of the Writers' Union is nevertheless correct. Throughout the novel, he is largely a passive observer of events or often simply absent from them. Qahhor's consistent inability to create anything other than a passive protagonist—his most famous work, his later 1966 collection of stories *Tales from the Past*, likewise features his childhood self as a passive observer—arguably demonstrates how the Uzbek literary canon with its archetypal plot continued to weigh on him. After the meeting, denunciations of the novel continued in the press for the next two years. Qahhor was forced to publicly admit his mistakes.⁸⁷ Once again, his novel was erased from the Uzbek Soviet canon after some initial success.

But Khrushchev's Thaw once again expanded the conditional freedom of the Uzbek Socialist Realist field. As of 1956, Uzbek Socialist Realism came to accommodate, if sometimes uneasily, a specific reading of the archetypal plot. That year saw the rehabilitation of several Jadid writers, including Abdulla Qodiriy and Cho'lpon. Qodiriy's *Bygone Days* returned to print by 1958.⁸⁸ Qahhor used this fact to justify the rerelease of *Mirage* when he again met with opposition from the Writers' Union. When a Writers' Union leader, Sarvar Azimov, contended it would be a "political mistake" to reprint *Mirage*, Qahhor responded irately:

Agar mening asarimni bosish siyosiy xato bo'lsa, Moskva nega bosayapti? Nega o'ttiz yettinchi yili janob Stalin qamagan, hatto otishga hukm qilingan yozuvchilarning asarlarini ham bosayapti?

⁸⁷ Sharafiddinov, 168.

⁸⁸ The Russian translation by L. Bat' and V. Smirnova appeared in 1958. Abdulla Kadyri, *Minuvshie dni: roman*, trans. L. Bat' and V. Smirnova (Tashkent: Gos. izd-vo khudozh. lit-ry, 1958). The novel also reportedly appeared in Uzbek the same year under the editorship of Izzat Sulton and Sarvar Azimov. See Rahimjonov, *Qodiriyshunoslik qirralari*, 83.

If it is a political mistake to print my work then why is Moscow printing it?⁸⁹ Why are the works of writers whom Stalin imprisoned and even ordered shot being printed?⁹⁰

Azimov's appointment as Minister of Culture the following day removed him as an obstacle, and *Mirage* appeared in Qahhor's collected works in 1957.⁹¹ Both Qodiriy's cycle of decline, death, and rebirth and Qahhor's cycle of the decline and death of bourgeois nationalists followed by the birth of socialism came to hold a place in post-Stalin Socialist Realism. Because of their original condemnation, however, this was always a subject of debate. Uzbek critics throughout the late Soviet period continually argued as to whether Qodiriy's *Bygone Days* was an example of romanticism, critical realism, or Socialist Realism.⁹² To justify its inclusion in Socialist Realism, critics expanded the definition to include those texts which denounce the ignorance of the past and imply the coming of the utopian socialist future. Uzbek critic Umarali Normatov included *Bygone Days* in Socialist Realism by noting: "in the novel one can sense that the author's view is that of a Soviet writer, the people, and the party; the novel's main pathos is the condemnation of the past feudal order and its moral norms. This is done with the intention of serving the construction of a new world and socialism."⁹³ Qahhor's defenders argued for the Socialist Realist status of his novel in the same way. Ozod Sharafiddinov felt he had to defend his teacher's *Mirage* as late as 1988 when he criticized the novel's 1939 detractors for misunderstanding that the vilification of the corrupt past had always had a place in Socialist Realism.⁹⁴

The simultaneous return of Jadid literature and Qahhor's novel to the Socialist Realist canon had the added effect of whitewashing the intergenerational conflict of Jadids and Uzbek

⁸⁹ Qahhor was likely referring to his short stories and plays, which were reprinted in Russian throughout the fifties. *Mirage* was translated and released in Russian for the first time only in 1959. Abdulla Qahhor, *Mirazh* (Tashkent: Goslitizdat UzSSR, 1959).

⁹⁰ Odil Yoqubov, *Osiy banda* (Toshkent: O'zbekiston, 2012), 64.

⁹¹ Yoqubov, 64.

⁹² For a review of the relevant literature, see Karimov, *Abdulla Qodiriy: Tanqid, tahlil va talqin*, 115–35.

⁹³ Quoted in Karimov, 131.

⁹⁴ Sharafiddinov, *Abdulla Qahhor*, 111–12.

socialists in the 1930s. Because Qahhor was denounced as a Jadid sympathizer and advocated for the republication of his novel alongside theirs, the conflict between Qahhor's generation and Jadids has been largely forgotten in Uzbek literary historiography. In a post-Soviet analysis of *Mirage*, another of Qahhor's students, Matyoqub Qo'shjonov, addresses the anti-hero and his "bourgeois nationalist" circle of the novel not as the Jadid writers of the canon but as historical personages who had long been forgotten.⁹⁵

That historical erasure has aided the reproduction of the archetypal plot because it omits the literary play inherent in Qahhor's text. If *Mirage* does not feature a Jadid writer mocked as the anti-hero of Jadids' own typical tragedies, then for Uzbeks, it is simply a reduplication of a typical plot in Uzbek literature, i.e. what I call the archetypal plot. It becomes an ordinary example of an Aristotelian tragedy in which the protagonist suffers a catastrophe because of his *hamartia*, the audience is purged of their anti-social desire, and the state is affirmed.⁹⁶

While a form of the archetypal plot returned to the canon in the aftermath of Stalinism thanks to rehabilitations, republications, and the increased freedom of the Uzbek Socialist Realist *habitus*, the next generation of Soviet Uzbek writers, those who began writing in the 1950s, had far more training in Socialist Realism than their forebearers like Qahhor. They grew up on Socialist Realism's positive hero and his/her successful struggle to build socialism. But by the 1970s, many of these writers, much like their counterparts in Russia, had grown disillusioned with Marxist-Leninist ideology and Socialist Realism. Russian literature at this time took a decidedly pessimistic turn as it rejected the ideology and Socialist Realism for a mourning of the depopulating Russian village, which to them represented the death of their national culture.

⁹⁵ Matyoqub Qo'shjonov, "Sarob'ning o'tishi va Buguni," *O'zbekiston Adabiyoti va San'ati*, March 17, 1995.

⁹⁶ For an example of this reading of *Mirage*, see Xurshida Hamraqulova, "Sotsrealizm aqidalariga zid shaxs fojiasi va xudkushlik," in *Adabiyotida hayot-mamot muammosi* (Toshkent: Alisher Navoiy nomidagi O'zbekiston milliy kutubxonasi nashriyoti, 2009), 44–73.

Uzbek litterateurs, on the other hand, never turned to this same kind of pessimism even as they lost faith in Marxism at approximately the same time. Instead, I argue in the next chapter that they returned elements of the archetypal plot under the guise of continuing to support Marxist-Leninist ideology, the optimism of Socialist Realism, and the Stalinist myth of the Friendship of the Peoples.

Chapter 3: The Death of the Village and the Rebirth of the Nation: The Partial Return of the Archetypal Plot in Late Uzbek Socialist Realism

The 1970s bore witness to the rise of what Western critics viewed as the most exciting development in Russian and Soviet letters in some time: Russian Village Prose. Village Prose had its origins in the 1950s with the writings of essayist Valentin Ovechkin (1906-1968), but under Brezhnev (1964-1982), the literary tendency grew into a force of its own. Village Prose so excited Western critics because it was a conspicuous turn away from the incongruous optimism of Socialist Realism in which reality and ideal were made to coincide. Village Prose loudly discarded the Marxist-Leninist teleology, the progressive positive hero, and the Stalinist transhistorical myth of the Friendship of the Peoples. The friendship myth held that all the peoples of the Soviet Union had developed and progressed amicably under the benevolent leadership of the elder brother Russian people. Dispensing of the optimism of Socialist Realism and the friendship, Village Prose instead eulogized the death of Russian village life. It criticized Soviet modernity and elegized Russian rural denizens as the last bastions of Russian morality and national character.¹

Much has been written about Russian Village Prose, its literary tendencies and aesthetics, and also about the debate over Village Prose among Russian intellectuals.² Few scholars,

¹ Most have looked on Village Prose as a relief from tried Socialist Realist themes and settings and a turn towards national and moral values. See, for example, Geoffrey Hosking, "The Russian Peasant Rediscovered: 'Village Prose' of the 1960s," *Slavic Review* 32, no. 4 (1973): 706; Deming Brown, *Soviet Russian Literature under Stalin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 226; Kathleen Parthe, *Russian Village Prose* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), ix-x.

² The best analyses of Village Prose are Katerina Clark's address of the tendency in her monograph on the Soviet novel and Kathleen Parthe's monograph on Village Prose. See Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*; Parthe, *Russian Village Prose*. For the conflict over Village Prose between Russian nationalists and liberals, see Yitzhak

however, have addressed where non-Russian intellectuals stood in relation to Village Prose and Russian nationalism? Did they support Russian nationalism with the implicit hope that their own nationalist expressions would be permitted? Or did they oppose the approach of Village Prose writers because the latter unfairly made Russian culture central to the multinational Soviet Union? Did they, like conservative Village Prose writers, reject Soviet modernity or instead support a compromise between it and their national culture?

In this chapter, I show that Central Asian intellectuals indeed participated in an all-Union debate on the merits of Village Prose and the form of nationalism it espoused through both their critical and literary production. In their literature, conservative Village Prose writers, such as Vasilii Belov (1932-2012), Viktor Astaf'ev (1924-2001), and Valentin Rasputin (1937-2015), articulated a form of nationalism which I dub "cultural insularity." Cultural insularity asserts the right and necessity of a given culture's isolation from others so that it can survive the dangerous forces of modernity and cultural miscegenation.³ Russian liberal reformers and the liberal wing of Village Prose writers, which included Fedor Abramov (1920-1983), Sergei Zalygin (1913-2000), and Boris Mozhaev (1923-1996), had a far more ambivalent relationship to modernity, which they often saw as a trade-off: modernity could compensate loss (cultural and economic) with new gains (increases in living standards and access to high culture).⁴

Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Simon Cosgrove, *Russian Nationalism and the Politics of Soviet Literature: The Case of Nash Sovremennik 1981-91* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

³ Conservative Russian nationalists, the ideology of whom conservative Village Prose writers often shared, used the term *obosoblenie* to discuss a kind of insularity I intend to capture with my term "cultural insularity." In their parlance, however, *obosoblenie* was more or less racial, and for that reason, Mark Bassin translates it as "biological insulation." These nationalist thinkers argued that endogamy was necessary to "overcome 'random hybridization' and maintain ethnic health." See Mark Bassin, *The Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism, and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2016), 183. I use "cultural insularity" to capture a broader meaning. The term signals Russian Village Prose writers' rejection of modernity and their embrace of primitivism alongside their biological insulation.

⁴ I employ the delineation of the post-Stalin Russian intelligentsia used by Yitzhak Brudny in his monograph on Russian nationalism in the late Soviet Union. He distinguishes between conservative nationalists, liberal nationalists, and liberal reformists. For him, Russian Village Prose was comprised of conservative and liberal nationalists, both

Non-Russian writers of Central Asia, Uzbeks in particular, took the side of liberal reformists and liberal nationalists against the politics of conservative Village Prose writers, but they did so, I argue, with a view of the nation unique from that of both Russian conservative and liberal nationalists. Like Russian nationalists, Uzbek writers were animated by an anxiety of cultural loss. Much as Russian Village Prose writers framed the death of the village as gradual entropic decline, so too did Uzbek writers see the faceless aspects of Soviet modernity—its standardized apartment buildings, its destruction of the natural environment for the sake of urban development, its importation of foreign solutions and practices to replace domestic ones—as contributing factors to the decline of the Uzbek nation. However, like the Russian liberals and unlike Russian Village Prose nationalists, Uzbek writers were optimistic about the future. Russian liberals, possessed of a linear sense of progress, believed in the power of modernity and technology to make up for the losses they inflicted on the Russian nation or Soviet society. Uzbek writers, on the other hand, showed less interest in the technological aspects of modernity in their literature, and more often than not, condemned them. Instead, they specifically valued the contact with other cultures and access to world high culture that Soviet modernity promised. Contact with other peoples promised a rebirth of the nation—through the cyclical sense of time that animates the archetypal plot—that could heal the loss inflicted by technological modernity.

These different relationships to time and Soviet modernity led to very different literary manifestations. The cultural insularity of Russian nationalist thinkers saw Village Prose writers invert many of the tropes of Socialist Realism. They fetishized the isolation of the Russian

of whom saw the village as the authentic source of Russian cultural life, but who differed on their relationship to modernity. Conservatives saw modernity and reform as a corrupting influence on village and Russian morality, while liberals believed modernity could be brought to the village through technological progress and socio-economic reform. Liberal reformists likewise believed in the benefits of socio-economic reform but did not see any inherent moral value in the Russian village and did not bear the same level of skepticism towards the West that liberal nationalists did. See Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991*, 8–11.

nation, defended its ethnic and cultural purity against the hybridity of the Soviet present, and expressed a profound pessimism in opposition to the eternal optimism of Socialist Realism. In Uzbek literature at this time, authors equally lamented the destruction that Soviet technological modernity wreaked on their nation. They depicted their community as in a decline. Nevertheless, these same Uzbek authors never let pessimism overtake them. They repeatedly invoked the very Socialist Realist tropes that Village Prose rejected—the surrogate father, the friendship of the peoples—in maintaining their optimism. Whereas Village Prose suggested the death of the village and its protagonists represented the loss of unique culture, Uzbek literature of this time declared that the Uzbek nation could never die. It could be forgotten, but it could always be remembered at a later time.

True, this optimism and its concomitant Socialist Realist tropes such as the friendship of the peoples were carefully policed by the conservative Soviet Uzbek Writers' Union and the larger Soviet Union itself. Brezhnev and Mikhail Suslov (1902-1982), Yitzhak Brudny notes, expanded the freedom of the all-Soviet Socialist Realist *habitus* to include a particular set of views. Russian conservative nationalists and Village Prose writers were granted unprecedented freedom to buck official Soviet ideology and celebrate their nation, so long as they did not criticize Soviet policy directly. Brezhnev and Suslov, his ideological secretary, allowed this freedom in an effort to drive a wedge between the conservative and liberal intelligentsia and stem support for reform.⁵ Non-Russian Socialist Realist *habiti* did not benefit from this same relaxation of the rules, especially in regards to the friendship myth.⁶ In fact, the beginning of the Brezhnev period in Uzbekistan saw a concerted attack on what were perceived as nationalist

⁵ See Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991*.

⁶ For an overview of how non-Russian litterateurs in the late Soviet Union often had more freedom in their Russian-language writing, see Anthony Olcott, "Non-Russian Writers of Russian Literature," Final Report to National Council for Soviet and East European Research (Washington D.C.: The Council, 1989).

excesses that contradicted the friendship. Sharof Rashidov (1917-1983) himself, the First Party Secretary of the Communist Party of Uzbekistan, put a stop to a 1968 attempt to republish the poetry of Cho‘lpon, who was condemned for his alleged chauvinism. Rumors even circulated that the editor of the anthology that was to contain Cho‘lpon’s work killed himself.⁷ Likewise, based on accusations that his 1968 poem “My Uzbek” (O‘zbekim) placed the Uzbek nation above others, Uzbek poet Erkin Vohidov (1936-2016) was in 1969 blacklisted from official publications and even fired from all his editorial posts.⁸

Despite the coercion exacted upon Uzbek writers, we should not read their consistent optimism and use of Socialist Realist tropes as products of fear alone. Throughout this chapter, I demonstrate that, though Uzbek writers did not enjoy the same freedoms as conservative Russian nationalists to abandon Soviet ideology, a deeper reading of their literature evinces the subtle ways in which they manipulated Socialist Realist tropes to conform to an extant set of beliefs about their nation outside of official Marxism-Leninist discourse. Uzbek writers’ literature in the 1970s is underwritten by a partial return of the archetypal plot, the tropes of Jadid literature, and the understanding of the nation earlier advocated by Jadids and other Islamic reformists of the Turkic and Iranian worlds. Uzbek authors often invoked tropes employed by Village Prose—those of entropy, alienation, and a suffocating modernity—in order to revive the notion of civilizational decline inherent in the archetypal plot. They then subverted this entropy with the trope of parental surrogacy, familiar from Socialist Realism, but they did so not to support the Stalinist iconoclasm, but rather to, like the archetypal plot, suggest that the national past can always be reborn in the present. They likewise reiterate the friendship myth not to support the

⁷ See Sharafiddinov, “‘‘Tirik satr’larning qiyin qismati.’’

⁸ Rahmatilla Inog‘omov, “‘‘O‘zbekim’ning dunyoga kelishi va iztiroblari,’’ in *Shoirlik qismati* (Toshkent: Universitet, 1999), 46–61.

idea that Uzbeks owed their cultural development to Russians, but to subtly recenter the role of their nation in the transhistorical mythology.

This latter goal emerges from an intellectual genealogy that I have not yet discussed in this dissertation in relation to the archetypal plot. Throughout the 1920s, Turkic and Iranian Islamic reformers in the Soviet Union, Pahlavi Iran, and Republican Turkey pursued the revival of the mythic past of their nation via the purification of their languages and cultures from what they saw as foreign influences. In terms of languages, this purification entailed the excise of Arabisms and Persianisms (from Turkic languages) and the construction of a supposedly authentically Persian or Turkic vocabulary and grammatical system.⁹ As for cultural practices, the violent displacement of the Islamic clergy from their positions of power and the unveiling of women were directed at the restoration of what was seen as the authentic nation.¹⁰ As Deniz Kandiyoti notes, “a pervasive feature of such ‘feminism’” and attacks on the Islamic clergy “was that rather than presenting itself as a radical break with the past, which it did in fact represent, it often harkened back to more distant and presumably more authentic origins. Islamic reformists could claim that early Islam had been corrupted by foreign accretions and bad government, and

⁹ For analyses of language reform in the Turkic areas of the Soviet Union, see William Fierman, *Language Planning and National Development: The Uzbek Experience* (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 1991). For more on language reform in the Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey, see Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Nergis Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). For language reform and purification in Iran, see Mehrdad Kia, “Persian Nationalism and the Campaign for Language Purification,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 2 (1998): 9–36; Farzin Vejdani, *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

¹⁰ For more on these cultural reforms in Soviet Uzbekistan, see Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan*; Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*. For a look at these reforms in Republican Turkey, see Zeynep Kezer, *Building Modern Turkey: State, Space, and Ideology in the Early Republic* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015); Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey*; Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). And for examinations of these reforms in Pahlavi Iran, see Kamran Scot Aghaie and Afshin Marashi, eds., *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014); Stephanie Cronin, ed., *The Making of Modern Iran: State and Society Under Reza Shah, 1921-1941* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

that early Islam was, in fact, totally compatible with progressivist ideals.”¹¹ Toward the 1930s, these campaigns at purification gave way to a different project of restoration. In that decade, Turkish and Iranian intellectuals, projecting their utopian visions of national modernity onto the deep past, began to argue that their nations were central to the growth of world civilization. In Republican Turkey, following the Turkish Historical Thesis, history books began to claim that Turks were instrumental to the cultural flowering of the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, and Persians, even suggesting that those civilizations were culturally and linguistically Turkic.¹² In Iran, intellectuals largely rejected their Islamic heritage and instead glorified a pre-Islamic “Aryan” past as the golden age of their nation and the progenitor of all human civilization.¹³ In linguistics, the Sun-Language Theory in Republican Turkey posited Turkish as the key to the reconstruction of the universal primordial language of all humanity.¹⁴ Under this intellectual paradigm, all other cultures and languages were no longer foreign, but rather parts of the Turkish and Iranian self that had undergone further corruption from their origins than had Turkish or Persian. This meant that the adoption foreign customs and borrowing of foreign words now drew the culture and language closer to its singular origins because the foreign was simply a forgotten part of the self.

¹¹ Deniz Kandiyoti, “Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation,” in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 379.

¹² Clive Foss, “When Turks Civilized the World,” *History Today* 55, no. 8 (August 2005): 10–16. For more on the Turkish Historical Thesis, see Faith J. Childress, “Republican Lessons: Education and the Making of Modern Turkey” (PhD diss., University of Utah, 2001).

¹³ Afshin Matin-Asgari, “The Berlin Circle: Iranian Nationalism Meets German Countermodernity,” in *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 49–65; Kia, “Persian Nationalism and the Campaign for Language Purification”; Talinn Grigor, “Recultivating ‘Good Taste’: The Early Pahlavi Modernists and Their Society for National Heritage,” *Iranian Studies* 37, no. 1 (2004): 17–45. The aversion to Islam in early Pahlavi Iran should not be overstated. Secular nationalist intellectuals resented the power of the clergy and sought to combat it, but they also nationalized Islamic history, particularly Shi’ism, for their own purposes. See Kamran Scott Aghaie, “Islamic-Iranian Nationalism and Its Implications for the Study of Political Islam and Religious Nationalism,” in *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity*, ed. Kamran Scot Aghaie and Afshin Marashi (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 181–204; Farzin Vejdani, “The Place of Islam in Interwar Iranian Nationalist Historiography,” in *Rethinking Iranian Nationalism and Modernity* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), 205–18.

¹⁴ On the Sun-Language Theory, see Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, 57–74; Ertürk, *Grammatology and Literary Modernity in Turkey*, 97–103.

Importantly, the development of similar theses took place in the Soviet Union in the 1930s without the aid of Islamic reformers. The early Stalinist period saw the elaboration of Soviet linguist Nikolai Marr's Japhetic theory, which centered Caucasian languages as the primordial languages of all humanity.¹⁵ Likewise, the transhistorical myth of the Friendship of the Peoples, which placed Russian culture as the origin of other Eurasian cultures, emerged in the 1930s and came to dominate Soviet culture by the early 1940s.¹⁶

The presence of these theories within Soviet discourse—particularly the friendship, because Stalin abandoned Marr's theories about the origin and development of languages in 1950—enabled their manipulation by Turkic writers in the 1970s. No longer adherents of Marxist-Leninist and Soviet ideology, Turkic writers in the 1970s pursued the restoration of their native culture not through the purification campaigns of the 1920s but through recognition of the self in the other. The Kazakh writer Olzhas Suleimenov provides the best-known example of how Turkic intellectuals manipulated the friendship myth to accord it with their own understanding of the central place of their nation in history. Suleimenov (b. 1936) caused an all-Union scandal with the publication of his book *Az i ia* (1975), a text which argued, through a clever combination of creative etymologies and pseudohistory, that Turks were primarily responsible for the first attested work in the Russian language, *The Lay of Igor's Campaign*.¹⁷

¹⁵ For a brief look at the theories of Nikolai Marr, see Yuri Slezkine, "N. Ia. Marr and the National Origins of Soviet Ethnogenetics," *Slavic Review* 55, no. 4 (1996): 826–62; Harsha Ram, "The Poetics and Ideology of Olzhas Suleimenov's *Az i ia*," *Slavic Review* 60, no. 2 (Summer 2001): 305–8. For the relationship between Marr's theories and the Sun-Language Theory, see Wendy M. K. Shaw, "Whose Hittites, and Why? Language, Archaeology, and the Quest for the Original Turks," in *Archaeology under Dictatorship*, ed. Michael L. Galaty and Charles Watkinson (New York: Springer, 2004), 131–54.

¹⁶ Lowell Tillet's 1969 study of the myth remains the best source on the matter. See *The Great Friendship* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

¹⁷ According to Suleimenov's account, Suslov was preparing to repress him, but Brezhnev personally intervened and Suleimenov was not punished. See "Posleslovie k opal'noi knige," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, July 19, 1989. For a look at the official discussion of the text in the Academy of Sciences that the scandal around it prompted, see "Obsuzdenie knigi Olzhasa Suleimenova," *Voprosy istorii*, no. 9 (1976): 147–54; S. Zaika, "Literaturnyi pamiatnik i ego prochtenie: Obsuzhdenie knigi Olzhasa Suleimenova," *Izvestiia Akademii nauk SSSR: Seriiia literatury i iazyka* 35, no. 4 (1976): 376–83. For additional criticism of the pseudo-scientific nature of Suleimenov's work, see A.

Uzbek litterateurs, as we shall see, were never as loud as Suleimenov in their reworking of the friendship myth, yet they often employed the same creative methodology that Suleimenov did. In making arguments similar to those of Suleimenov, they declared a sincere belief that knowledge of other cultures could lead to the revival of the authentic cultural past, a goal of the archetypal plot.

This chapter thus outlines how the somewhat liberalized all-Union and Uzbek Socialist Realist *habiti* shaped the goals of writers even as they shaped them through their interpretations of the Socialist Realist tropes that party critics required of them. I first proceed with a short examination of the cultural insularity of Village Prose. I illustrate the literary manifestations of this insularity through an analysis of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's "Matrena's Place" (1959) and Rasputin's "Farewell to Matera" (1975), showing how the two artists conspicuously discarded the Socialist Realist tropes of surrogacy and the friendship. I then turn to two of the more popular Uzbek novels of the Brezhnev period: Asqad Muxtor's *The Plane Tree* (1969) and Pirimqul Qodirov's *Diamond Belt* (1977). Through these novels of various genres, I demonstrate how Uzbek intellectuals manifested not the archetypal plot itself but the plot's cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth through the creative combination of elements from Village Prose and the Socialist Realist tropes abandoned by Village Prose. I examine in these novels the role of the civilizational decline, the place of rebirth, and the role of surrogacy. In each, I look at how the novels subtly manipulated the friendship myth to recenter their nations, and I show how they believed that connection with Russian culture helped them restore their nation to its lost cultural heights.

Kuz'min, "'Tochka v krug'e', iz kotoroi vyrastaet repei," *Molodaia gvardiia*, no. 12 (December 1975): 270–80; L. A. Dmitriev and O. A. Tvorogov, "'Slovo o polku Igoreve' v interpretatsii O. Suleimenov," *Russkaia literatura*, no. 1 (1976): 251–58.

Russian Village Prose and Cultural Insularity

Russian Village Prose appeared not long after Stalin's death and was a product of the relaxed control over literary production and the encouragement of reform that characterized the early period of Khrushchev's administration. Khrushchev permitted the criticism of village life because he believed it would build support for his agricultural reforms.¹⁸ However, Village Prose had its heyday under Brezhnev, whose rule from 1964 to 1982 was noted for its conservatism and economic stagnation. As noted above, Brezhnev and Suslov permitted the socialist heresy of Village Prose's pessimism and elegiac style because they sought, through what Yitzhak Brudny has called "the politics of inclusion," to drive a wedge between Soviet liberal reformist intellectuals, who desired the continuation of Khrushchev's reforms, and Russian nationalists, who were either ambivalent to reform or adamantly against it.¹⁹ The conservative line of Russian Village Prose came to dominate the Soviet literary sphere in the 1970s precisely because, helpful to Brezhnev's anti-reform agenda, it increasingly emphasized the moral failings of the Russian nation rather than the socio-economic problems which could be addressed by reform.²⁰ As a result of Brezhnev's political patronage, Russian Village Prose became the most celebrated literary movement of the 1970s.²¹ Nearly every major Village Prose writer in the eleven-year period of "mature Brezhnevism" (1971-1982) became a laureate and sometimes a multiple laureate of the four top literary prizes awarded at that time.²² *Nash sovremennik* (*Our contemporary*) and *Molodaia gvardiia* (*Young guard*), the main journals for Russian Village Prose and Russian nationalist thought, saw increases in circulation of 236 and 176 percent

¹⁸ Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991*, 46–47.

¹⁹ Brudny, 60.

²⁰ Brudny, 152.

²¹ Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 74; Cosgrove, *Russian Nationalism and the Politics of Soviet Literature: The Case of Nash Sovremennik 1981-91*, 15–16.

²² See Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991*, 105–6.

respectively.²³

The cultural insularity advocated in the literature of conservative Village Prose writers manifests itself in the writers' claims that the given village and its inhabitants represent a unique culture that is only maintained by isolation from the pernicious effects of modernity and mixing with other peoples.²⁴ Conservative writers therefore presented audiences with characters and settings that are complete in their isolation. The life-world of the village requires no communication with others to further its existence, and in many cases, understanding of it cannot be relayed to outsiders at all. The presence of others, a sign of encroaching modernity, in fact, leads to the destruction of the village and its life-world because isolation is necessary to maintain its survival. In many ways, cultural insularity is a response to and an inversion of the Socialist Realist master plot. Village Prose changes the focus of literature from the progress made by socialism to what is lost as a result of that progress. In Socialist Realism, a hero comes to consciousness and joins the collective and the friendship of peoples, but in Village Prose, the village and its culture can only survive if isolated from broader movements of history and peoples. Village Prose consequently configures itself as a view of what is lost due to Stalinism and Socialist Realism's focus on the surrogate family. Many Socialist Realist heroes are orphans, metaphorically or literally, who find new father figures in Bolshevik leaders, and thus their orphanhood is celebrated as a freedom. Familial generations in Village Prose are orphans, again both metaphorically and literally, but this orphanhood is displayed as a spiritual emptiness. Family members are cut off from one another, unable to communicate because the younger

²³ Brudny, 107.

²⁴ I use the parameters and definition of Village Prose put forward by Kathleen Parthe in her 1992 study of the writing, while showing the more conservative examples of the literature. See Parthe, *Russian Village Prose*, 3–5. She limits Russian Village Prose to those pieces and writers that clearly stand outside the Socialist Realist canon and outside what she terms “kolhoz literature.” See Parthe, 3–5.

generation resides in a spiritually deficient world. Overall, both Socialist Realist and Village Prose characters experience loss but Village Prose writing bemoans that loss rather than turning our attention away to the new relationships that are born of loss.

Both “Matrena’s Place” and “Farewell to Matera” provide excellent examples of how Village Prose celebrates and eulogizes the cultural insularity of the village. The former text was written in 1959 during the beginnings of village prose under Khrushchev’s Thaw. While the story is Solzhenitsyn’s (1918-2008) only contribution to Village Prose, it proved to be one of the foundational texts of the movement. The story’s narrator, who has taken up residence with the eponymous hero Matrena, catalogues her life in old age and recounts the story of her tragic death at the hands of modernity (she is run over by a train, the ultimate Russian literary symbol of modernity). The latter text was written in 1975 at the height of village prose’s popularity. “Farewell to Matera” tells of the indigenous Russian inhabitants of a Siberian island, Matera, just as the population is set to be relocated and the island – flooded because of the construction of a nearby dam. The consistency of themes and style between these two texts should attest to both the durability and relative uniformity of the understanding of culture advanced by the more conservative nationalist authors of Village Prose.

Cultural insularity is first of all relayed via the protagonists, who, thanks to their isolation, have a unique culture that outsiders cannot and often do not want to understand. This unique culture is an inner or private realm that does not permit access to those external to it. Solzhenitsyn’s “Matrena’s Place” touches on the theme of sight early and often to relate to the reader both the titular character Matrena’s opacity before the eyes of this world and her access to other unseen worlds. When the narrator, referred to as Ignatich, first encounters the old woman lying on the Russian stove—sleeping on the stove is a sign of Matrena’s Russianness; Russians

traditionally slept on the stove in village homes to keep warm—he describes the interior of her home as obstructing sight:

Просторная изба и особенно лучшая приоконная ее часть была уставлена по табуреткам и лавкам -- горшками и кадками с фикусами. Они заполнили одиночество хозяйки безмолвной, но живой толпой. Они разрослись привольно, забирая небогатый свет северной стороны. В остатке света и к тому же за трубой кругловатое лицо хозяйки показалось мне желтым, больным. И по глазам ее замутненным можно было видеть, что болезнь измотала ее.

“The spacious *izba* [Russian country house] and particularly its side with the windows was covered with stools and benches on top of which were pots and tubs containing ficuses. They filled the loneliness of the house’s owner with a silent but living crowd. They grew all over freely, taking the scant light on the north side of the house for themselves. In the remainder of the light behind the chimney the roundish face of the house’s owner seemed to me yellow and ill. And through her turbid eyes one could see that illness had exhausted her.”²⁵

Matrena’s home clearly is not amenable to seeing individuals: “the scant light” that enters into the home only allows the narrator to suppose—“it seemed to me”—that Matrena has some kind of illness. Her “turbid eyes” demonstrate that she too has trouble seeing interlocutors. The narrator at the end of the cited passage posits that “one could see,” but he later casts doubt on the traditional meaning of the word “видеть.” “But I already saw that my fate was to settle in this darkish izba with its tarnished mirror in which it was completely impossible to see one’s self (Но я уже видел, что жребий мой был – поселиться в этой темноватой избе с тусклым зеркалом, в которое совсем нельзя было смотреться).”²⁶ Solzhenitsyn uses “видеть” in this sentence ironically, as if to say, “I saw that I could not see.” He cannot gain complete access to Matrena’s world because his narrative sight cannot penetrate it.

Lack of sight limits both the narrator and Matrena, but in the latter’s case, it demonstrates that she belongs to another world entirely. Her “turbid eyes,” a synecdoche for her unseeing

²⁵ Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, “Matrenin Dvor,” in *Ne Stoit Selo Bez Pravednika*, ed. V. Ia. Chernievskii (Moskva: Knizhnaia palata, 1990), 444.

²⁶ Solzhenitsyn, 445.

character that occurs in various forms (her eyes are also described as faded and pale), suggest her connection with another plane invisible to the narrator. At times, she even communicates with or participates in this unseen world: “Matrena became angry with someone invisible (сердилась Матрена на кого-то невидимого),”²⁷ and after her death, “it was as if Matrena invisibly (невидимо) dashed about, saying farewell to her *izba* (как будто Матрена невидимо металась и прощалась тут, с избой своей).”²⁸ The limited sight in both characters brings forward the idea of separation: neither side has complete access to the other’s world.

With his final comments after Matrena’s death, Solzhenitsyn’s narrator affirms the cultural insularity the titular character represents by suggesting that neither he nor her relatives in the village can comprehend her. As in the previous passage, the narrator claims some sort of understanding, but the text quickly ironizes his epiphanies. Here what the narrator suggests as insight into her character is minimal at best.

Я переселился к одной из ее золовок, неподалеку. Эта золовка потом по разным поводам вспоминала что-нибудь о Матрене и как-то с новой стороны осветила мне умершую.[...]

Все отзывы ее о Матрене были неодобрительны: и нечистоплотная она была; и за обзаводом не гналась; и не бережная; и даже поросенка не держала, выкармливать почему-то не любила; и, глупая, помогала чужим людям бесплатно[...]

И только тут -- из этих неодобрительных отзывов золовки – выплыл передо мною образ Матрены, какой я не понимал ее, даже живя с нею бок о бок.

В самом деле! -- ведь поросенок-то в каждой избе! А у нее не было. Что может быть легче -- выкармливать жадного поросенка, ничего в мире не признающего, кроме еды! Трижды в день варить ему, жить для него -- и потом резать и иметь сало.

А она не имела...

Не гналась за обзаводом... Не выбивалась, чтобы купить вещи и потом беречь их больше своей жизни.

Не гналась за нарядами. За одеждой, приукрашивающей уродов и злодеев.

Не понятая и брошенная даже мужем своим, схоронившая шесть детей, но не нрав свой общительный, чужая сестрам, золовкам, смешная, по-глупому

²⁷ Solzhenitsyn, 448.

²⁸ Solzhenitsyn, 462.

работающая на других бесплатно, -- она не скопила имущества к смерти. Грязно-белая коза, колченогая кошка, фикусы...

Все мы жили рядом с ней и не поняли, что есть она тот самый праведник, без которого, по пословице, не стоит село.

Ни город.

Ни вся земля наша.

I resettled [after Matrena's death and the dismantling of her home] in the home of one of her sister-in-laws, not far. The sister-in-law then for various reasons reminisced about Matrena and illuminated the deceased for me from a new side[...]

All her comments about Matrena were disapproving: she was untidy; she did not seek to settle down; she did not know how to save money; and she did not even keep a piglet because for some reason she did not like feeding it; and she was stupid because she helped strangers for free[...]

And only here – from these disapproving comments of her sister-in-law – a new image of Matrena appeared before me, one which I did not understand even living next to her side by side.

That really was it! – after all every *izba* had a piglet! But she didn't have one. What could have been easier – feeding a greedy piglet that knows nothing in the world except food! To boil food for it three times a day, live for it – and later slaughter it and have *salo* [cured and salted pork].

But she didn't have one...

She didn't try to settle down... she did not struggle to buy things and then treasure them over her own life.

She didn't seek fine clothes. Clothes that decorated freaks and miscreants.

A woman not understood and abandoned by her husband, a woman who buried six children, but did not bury her sociable disposition, a stranger to her sisters, ridiculous to her sister-in-laws, a woman who stupidly worked for others for free – she did not amass property for her death. Only an off-white goat, a lame cat, and ficuses...

We all lived next to her and did not understand that she was that very righteous person without whom, according to the saying, a village does not stand.

Nor does a town.

Nor does all our earth.²⁹

Solzhenitsyn and his narrator come to understand mostly what Matrena is not. She does not do any of the things that her sister-in-laws and the community expect of her. In the Russian, the narrator's negative understanding is made even clearer: five of the six final paragraphs begin with a negating particle (не or ни), and “не” appears twelve times in negated descriptions of Matrena. Solzhenitsyn labels Matrena “a righteous person” (праведник), intimating that she is a

²⁹ Solzhenitsyn, 467.

person of God. The villagers and the narrator, corrupted by modernity and Soviet secularism, thus cannot understand this truly Russian and Orthodox person. They can speculate her essence by describing how she is not like them, but they cannot truly get at it. The Russian national culture she represents thus cannot be transferred or communicated to others; it is only an anachronism in modernity, soon to die off.

Just as Matrena is a culturally insular being, so Matera, the Siberian island setting of Rasputin's "Farewell to Matera," embodies a culture that requires no contact with others to maintain itself. Matera serves as the name for both a village and the island on which it is located. The village-island will soon be flooded to make way for a hydroelectric power plant supplying electricity to a new settlement on the bank of the Angara river. Matera, as the narrative reminds, is its own life-world, which is complete in and of itself: "But from edge to edge, from shore to shore there was enough expanse (раздолья), plenty, beauty, wilderness, and it had every creature in a pair—having been split from the continent, it still had everything in abundance—is it not for that reason that it was called Matera? (Но от края до края, от берега до берега хватало в ней и раздолья, и богатства, и красоты, и дикости, и всякой твари по паре - всего, отделившись от материка, держала она в достатке - не потому ли и назвалась громким именем Матера?)"³⁰ Rasputin's rhetorical question hints at the fact that the name Matera is derived, ironically enough, from the word for continent (материк). The island, the etymology suggests, is a continent unto itself. The place and its people do not need the input of other lands and cultures to live their lives. They are already whole in their isolation.

The dialogue of *Farewell to Matera* again hints at the villagers' impenetrability to outsiders. Rasputin's tale emphasizes the impossibility of constructive dialogue via its total

³⁰ Valentin Rasputin, *Proshchanie s Materoi* (Moskva: Eksmo, 2014), 179–80.

absence. Characters' interactions are most often described by silence. Using some form of the word for silence 81 times, Rasputin cycles through nearly all its morphological variants and hits on all parts of speech: verbs (умолкать, примолкать, замолкать, молчать, помолчать, замолчать, отмолчаться, промолчать), adverbs (втихомолку, молча, молчаливо, молчком), nouns (молчание), adjectives (молчаливый). What dialogue exists in Rasputin's tale only shows the distance between speakers and their inability to speak one another's language or empathize with another position. In the story's one extended philosophical debate between the old and young generations, the narrator describes the impossibility of understanding at its outset: "And if Pavel continued to speak, then he did so not to convince his son, but only to know his answers (И если Павел продолжал говорить, так не для того, чтобы убедить сына, а чтобы знать его ответы)." ³¹ Rasputin's narrator precludes an exchange of minds in the literal sense: ideas are aired, but no one actually changes or exchanges through dialogue.

For Rasputin, the intimate connection between locals and their environment also plays a role in emphasizing the incommunicability of village culture to the outside world. The environment "speaks" to locals, but it cannot speak to outsiders. The villagers of Matera treat one particular tree, the Great Larch (царский лиственень) as a member of the family. They grow up with it, and it is included in their daily experiences. The narrator explains the highly personalized relationship with this tree by noting "to say 'she' of this tree no one, even those five times over literate, did not dare; no, this was a he, the 'Great Larch' – it stood on the hill about half a mile from the village so eternally, mightily and powerfully, noticeable from everywhere and known by all (Но говорить "она" об этом дереве никто, пускай пять раз грамотный, не решался; нет, это был он, "царский лиственень" - так вечно, могуче и властно стоял он на

³¹ Rasputin, 231.

бугре в полверсте от деревни, заметный почти отовсюду и знаемый всеми).”³² The natural expectation for a larch, лиственница in Russian, is that it is feminine, but the villagers who have intimate knowledge of the tree, regard it as masculine, a “he.” The tree, though silent like the rest of the villagers, becomes a personified member of their collective with whom they have an unspoken understanding.

The larch and the villagers’ impermeability to the outside world is reinforced when peasant-workers from the new settlement attempt to cut it down and burn it so that it will not disrupt the view of the new lake to be created by the dam. “‘Oho!’ the peasant exclaimed, ‘What a beast! We’ll show you, beast... for us (у нас) two times two is four. We haven’t seen your type (Ого! - изумился мужик. - Зверь какой! Мы тебе, зверю... У нас дважды два - четыре. Не таких видывали).”³³ The invading peasants repeat the appellation “beast” and increase the multiples with each attempt to clear the larch: “for us five times five is twenty five (У нас пятью пять - двадцать пять),”³⁴ “for us six times six is thirty six (У нас шестью шесть - тридцать шесть).”³⁵ The peasants demonstrate immediately that they do not care to understand Matera, but only to destroy it. They depersonify the tree by referring to it as a “beast” rather than through the intimate language the Materans used. Their oddly affected repetition of the multiplication tables echoes the narrator’s earlier delineation “those five times over literate:” while the narrator does not totally preclude educated Materans from participating in their traditions, he attests it as already an extreme case. The educated have come to belong, at least in part, to another world. These lumberjack peasants, though probably not all that educated, are that alien world’s inhabitants. The world of reason those multiples imply are not a part of Matera, confirmed by the

³² Rasputin, 281.

³³ Rasputin, 288.

³⁴ Rasputin, 288.

³⁵ Rasputin, 289.

peasants' use of "у нас" ("in our land"). By repeating "two times two is four" as they hack at the tree, they assert that they will not share in Matera's culture, but rather assimilate or destroy it as it does not fit the logic of their modern world.

Rasputin repeats "two times two is four" not only to reject "literate" modernity but also to tie himself to the Russian Orthodox version of Dostoevsky, whom many Russian nationalists in the 1970s considered their most significant ideological antecedent.³⁶ Dostoevsky's underground man of *Notes from the Underground* (1864) famously resists "two times two is four," answering that "two times two is five is sometimes a very interesting little thing (дважды два пять - премилая иногда вещь)." ³⁷ With this resistance, Dostoevsky intended a critique of the mid-19th-century positivist attempt to scientifically determine proper human behavior. He intended for his underground man's struggle with reason to be a general human resistance to what he saw as inhuman utopian aspirations. Human conduct, he argued, cannot be prescribed, and any attempt to transform humanity with the goal of reaching utopian perfection only results in defiance. Only later did Dostoevsky apply these all-human qualities to the Russian nation and Russian Orthodoxy in particular, and it is this Dostoevsky to which Rasputin and other 1970s nationalists were attracted. Late Dostoevsky placed Russian Orthodoxy and its followers as the messianic alternative to Western reason. The Materans and their environment's resistance to "two times two equals four" thus hints at their practice of Russian Orthodoxy, about which Rasputin could not speak directly because of Soviet proscriptions on religious thought.

The cultural insularity asserted by village prose is yet further reflected in its rejection of Socialist Realist surrogacy. Stalinist Socialist Realist novels often introduced readers to heroes

³⁶ Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991*, 117.

³⁷ Fedor Dostoevskii, "Zapiski iz podpol'ia," in *Sobranie sochinenii*, vol. IV (Moskva: Gos. izd-vo khudozh. lit-ry, 1956), 161.

who emerged from broken families. They overcome their shattered family relationships or their orphanhood through surrogacy: Vasilii Chapaev, of Dmitry Furmanov's 1925 novel *Chapaev*, one of the first novels to enter the Socialist Realist canon, finds a surrogate father in his commissar Klychkov, Furmanov's autobiographical character. Village prose continues the trend of heroes with severed family relations, only their losses are irreparable. Broken families in Village Prose suggest characters' isolation from one another and the inaccessibility of the culture of their ancestors. Presumably families prior to modernity were once whole, possessing links to their heritage through their parents, but those have since been lost, due to various parts of the Soviet experience – war, collectivization, urbanization, and other aspects of modernity. Without these links, individuals become more and more insular, while authentic culture is concomitantly more difficult to access.

Solzhenitsyn's "Matrena's Place" offers a prime example of how the familial loss brought on by modernity and the isolation that proceeds from it are self-perpetuating and irreparable. In the story's only event, after Matrena agrees to separate part of her home in order to give it to her adopted daughter, Kira, she is torn to pieces on route by an oncoming train, a clichéd yet powerful Russian symbol of modernity. Instead of mourning or solemnly remembering her, Matrena's remaining family cannot feel any personal, human connection to her. "Matrena's three sisters flocked together, seized the izba for themselves, the goat, and the stove, locked the chest, and pocketed from the lining of her coat two hundred seventy rubles (слетелись три сестры Матрены, захватили избу, козу и печь, заперли сундук ее на замок, из подкладки пальто выпотрошили двести похоронных рублей)."³⁸ Solzhenitsyn's choice of words not only suggests the sisters' material greed, but also transforms them into animals,

³⁸ Solzhenitsyn, "Matrenin Dvor," 463.

hinting that they have long since forgotten their authentic culture. The use of the word “выпотрошить” suggests more than just pickpocketing, though that is the typical translation. The verb is derived from потроха, guts, and translated as “to disembowel” (usually a bird or a fish). The above verb for the gathering of the sisters, “слететься,” meaning come together while flying, likens them to vultures tearing apart carrion. Like birds, her sisters mutilate and devour all remaining traces of Matrena’s time on earth. Even as Matrena tries to save her family via Socialist Realist-style surrogacy—she offers part of her home to her adopted daughter—modernity and its alienating effects ensure that the bonds that create family are permanently destroyed.

Village Prose revels in its dying subject, perhaps its greatest departure from the literature of Socialist Realism and the largest sign of its cultural insularity. It constructs the culture of the village such that its death is inevitable once modernity has begun. Either the villagers will leave their homes for the city and forget their culture, or their village culture will be destroyed by the state or by villagers yearning for modernity. In Socialist Realism, the death of a protagonist always represented a heroic sacrifice, an inspiration that spurred on others. As such, death meant the end of individual consciousness, but in a victorious sense: those who survive the hero, though different in social origin, through their inspiration suddenly become identical to the hero. In her study of the Soviet war hero, Angela Brintlinger notes that the reader’s attention is consistently drawn away from the protagonist’s death: “death[...] has to be intuited” by the reader.³⁹ By avoiding description of individual death, Socialist Realist authors imply that, though the

³⁹ Angela Brintlinger, *Chapaev and His Comrades: War and the Russian Literary Hero Across the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 100. This is true of the layout of Soviet newspapers as well. When informing the public of Andropov and Chernenko’s deaths, the lead pages of newspapers never contain the word “death” in the titles of articles nor do they feature photographs of the deceased. The new leader, Chernenko and Gorbachev respectively, is pictured on the lead page to emphasize continuity rather than loss. Only the interior of the newspaper contains news about the funeral.

individual may die, the collective cannot. Village Prose focuses on the individual death at the expense of the collective. It places emphasis on the individual and the culture that separates him/her from common humanity and the proletariat. In the Soviet tradition, to lament death is then a form of cultural insularity. Mourning indicates a longing for something private and isolated from the rest of modern socialist existence.

Russian Village Prose's turns many of the common features and tropes of Socialist Realism on their head in advocating its cultural insularity. Its authors created protagonists and settings that, for them, represented authentic Russian culture. Through these characters and settings, they emphasize the opaqueness and incommunicability of Russian culture to modern audiences. According to Solzhenitsyn and Rasputin, Russians outside the village, displaced from their origins by urbanity, technology, and contact with the West, no longer know their national culture and cannot regain access to it.

In the 1970s, Uzbek and other Turkic writers were often close friends with even the conservative nationalist writers of Village Prose.⁴⁰ They frequently agreed with Village Prose criticisms of a “grey” or “faceless” Soviet modernity that negatively impacted their native cultures. Yet Uzbek authors maintained an optimism about the future of their nation that conservative Village Prose writers did not. They outwardly supported surrogacy and the friendship of the peoples as well as other Socialist Realist tropes, but as they did so, they reconfigured those tropes to match native understandings of the cyclical time of the nation.

Decline and Rebirth in an Uzbek Mythopoetic Novel

⁴⁰ Azerbaijani author Akram Aylisli (b. 1937), active in the 1970s, speaks of his close relationship with conservative nationalist writer Vasilii Belov in a 2013 interview. See Shura Burtin, “Toporom i perom,” *Vesti-ukr*, November 18, 2013, <https://vesti-ukr.com/import/vesti-reporter/25224-toporom-i-perom>. Similarly, in a 1986 article, Uzbek writer O‘tkir Hoshimov, the primary subject of my next chapter, speaks of his close relationship with Valentin Rasputin. See O‘tkir Hoshimov, “Yozuvchi - xalq farzandi,” *O‘zbekiston adabiyoti va san’ati*, July 18, 1986.

Uzbek writer Asqad Muxtor's 1969 novel *The Plane Tree (Chinor)* represents a major turning point in late Soviet Uzbek letters. Since the establishment of the Uzbek Soviet Writers' Union in 1932, Uzbek prose had been strictly and dogmatically realist. Muxtor (1920-1997) had contributed to that realist tradition prior to 1969 as both a poet and prose writer. By the end of the 1960s, he was well known in Uzbekistan for his Socialist Realist epic poem *The Steel Maker (Po'lat quyuvchi, 1947)* and his novel *Sisters (Opa-singillar, 1954)*, which follows the trials and victories of Uzbek women in the Stalin period. *The Plane Tree*, as a magical realist novel, broke with that tradition in its structure, animism, and myth-making. The frame narrative, which features Ochil buva (grandfather Ochil) and his grandson Azimjon, an Uzbek "born in an alien land," strings the legends, myths, histories, and personal narratives of this episodic novel together.⁴¹ Muxtor imposes the archetypal plot's cycle of civilizational decline, death, and rebirth onto his novel through a combination of tropes found in Village Prose and Socialist Realism. In several of the episodes of the novel, Muxtor, often borrowing tropes directly and somewhat daftly from Village Prose writers, traces an entropic decline of Central Asian village life at the hands of modernity. But where Village Prose fetishizes the corruption and death of the nation as a result of miscegenation, *The Plane Tree* prizes inevitable rebirth and renewal through miscegenation. The families and, by implication, the Uzbek nation of Muxtor's novel renews itself through an often, following the friendship myth, transnational surrogacy. That surrogacy, I demonstrate, is far from the typical surrogacy of Stalinist Socialist Realism because the latter is iconoclastic while the former promises a form of resurrection or return of that which has been lost. Muxtor's novel, I also show, addresses the friendship myth through myth-making of its own. Just as Suleimenov questioned the centrality of Russians to the cultural progress of the

⁴¹ Asqad Muxtor, *Chinor* (Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1969), 8.

Soviet Union by avowing Turkic participation in the composition of *The Lay of Igor's Campaign*, Muxtor questions the Russianness of Tolstoy's oeuvre by adding an Uzbek voice to the Russian author's last literary act: his 1910 flight from his estate *Iasnaia Poliana* and death at the Astapovo train station.

While Muxtor's Uzbek contemporaries, such as Erkin Vohidov, were getting reprimands for their allegedly excessive displays of nationalism, Asqad Muxtor's path-breaking novel was well-received in both Uzbek and all-Union circles. The novel was published in Russian that same year by a Tashkent press, and would receive several different Russian-language publications, including two in Moscow, in the following years.⁴² It regularly received positive mention from Russian liberal reformists in the pages of the major liberal journal *Friendship of the Peoples (Druzhba narodov)*.⁴³ Muxtor may have been unafraid to shed literary conventions that had just two decades ago been closely policed by Uzbek Stalinist critics because he was close with those in power in the republic. Then First Secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party Sharof Rashidov was a school friend of Muxtor. They studied together in the Samarqand Uzbek State University philology faculty, and, because Rashidov was himself a man of letters, regularly collaborated.⁴⁴

The literary experimentation that Muxtor's friendship with Rashidov enabled is visible in the opening pages. Here Muxtor introduces the eponymous plane tree, which facilitates the episodic novel's frame narrative. Much as Rasputin above would do in his *Farewell to Matera*,

⁴² Askad Mukhtar, *Chinara* (Tashkent: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1969); Askad Mukhtar, *Chinara: roman v legendakh, rasskazakh i povestiakh* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel', 1977); Askad Mukhtar, *Chinara: Roman v Legendakh, Rasskazakh i Povestiakh* (Tashkent: Izdatel'stvo literatury i iskusstva imeni Gafura Guliyama, 1983); Askad Mukhtar, *Izbrannoe: roman i povesti* (Moskva: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1990).

⁴³ Both L. Iakimenko and M. Parkhomenko speak highly of Muxtor's novel in a *Druzhba narodov* series on Uzbek prose in 1971. See M. Parkhomenko, "K prostoram realisticheskogo eposa," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 1 (1971): 252–55; L. Iakimenko, "Masterstvo romanista. Svoeobrazie zhanra i stilia romana," *Druzhba narodov*, no. 1 (1971): 237–42.

⁴⁴ Muxtor speaks about their close relationship here: Asqad Muxtor, "Ma'rifiy kurash maydoni," in *She'r - shoir vjdoni* (Toshkent: Mumtoz so'z, 2011), 86.

Muxtor endows his plane tree with living qualities. He suggests that it links human generations to one another and to nature.

Tog‘ bag‘ridagi huv o‘sha bulut bulut emas, chinor. Darvoqe, tog‘ning o‘zi ham, qishloq ham uning nomi bilan: Chinortog‘, Chinorqishloq deb ataladi. Bizning Ochil buva shu yerda tug‘ilgan. Men gapni to‘g‘ri shu kishidan boshlamoqchi edimu, lekin bu joylarda chinorsiz hech narsani tushuntirib bo‘lmaydi. Hatto guzar, undagi katta, gavjum choyxona haqida gap ketganda ham, “Chinorda chachaqlashib keldik”, “Chinorga borib bir osh qilaylik”, deyishadi. Butun qishloq shu chinorning soyasiga joylashgan.

Ochil buva bugun chinor bilan xayrlashmoqda. Butunlay emas, albatta. Vaqtincha. U safar oldidan, har gal shunday qiladi, tirik odam bilan xayrlashganday uzoq tikilib, pichirlashib xayrlashadi.[...]

Ha, chinorga tikilib Ochil buva butun umrini eslaydi. Unga qarab tursa ko‘z oldida dengizday bir cektsizlik, yam-yashil cheksizlik ko‘rinadi. Umri cheksizday tuyuladi. Go‘yo o‘zi ham ming yillardan beri yashayotgandegu yana ming yillar umr ko‘radigandek. Shunda u chor atrofga, butun tabiatga xuddi xo‘jayinday nazar tashlaydi, tog‘lar orqasidagi qora bulutlar, uzoqda yilt-yilt etgan chaqmoqlar bilan senlab gaplashadi:

- Qo‘y endi, tongni qiynama, tong otib olsin!

Uzoq tikiladi buva chinorga. Uzoq suhbat qiladi, xayrlashadi.[...]

Bu chinorni Ochil buvaning uzoq ajdodlaridan biri vabo yili o‘tqazgan deyishadi, o‘shandan beri bu yerlarga bironta ofat yo‘lamagan ekan.

The cloud over the mountain over there is no cloud at all, but a plane tree. Actually the mountain and the village themselves are named for it: *Chinortog‘* and *Chinorqishloq*. Our Ochil buva was born here. I was going to start the story with his words, but nothing can be explained here without the plane tree. Even if one were talking about the market or that big, crowded teahouse in it, people would say “we were horsing around at the plane tree,” or “let’s go to plane tree and make plov.” The whole village lived in the shadow of the plane tree.

Ochil buva was saying goodbye to the plane tree. Not forever, of course. Just temporarily. Before every journey he did that; as if he was parting with living, breathing human being, he stared at the tree and whispered words of goodbye.[...]

Yes, Ochil buva looked at the plane tree and remembered his entire life. When he stood, tree against his head, an endlessness, a green endlessness ran before his eyes like a sea. His own life seemed endless. As if he had lived a thousand years and would still see another thousand years of life. With that he would look all around, observing nature as if its master, and he would say to the dark clouds from which lightning flashed:

“Enough already, don’t torment the dawn, let dawn come!

He looked at the plane tree for a long time. He engaged in a long conversation before his final goodbye.[...]

The tree, they say, had helped one of Ochil buva’s ancestors survive a bout with cholera and since then no disaster had struck the land.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ Muxtor, *Chinor*, 3–4.

The tree here becomes a personified entity with which locals have an intimate animistic relationship. Ochil buva communicates with it, and the tree shares in local human history and myth. The tree acts as a conduit for the local “imagined community” because it retains memory and legends of generations past and imparts this to humans such that they feel themselves connected to those they have never seen or met. The narrative structure of the novel takes on the role of the memory-bearing plane tree by revealing to Ochil buva’s grandson, Azimjon and the reader the connectedness of ancestors and the similarities of their lives and culture. The main narrative acts as a trunk that leads the reader either to the branches, the descendants of Ochil buva, or the roots, his ancestors.

The Plane Tree early on establishes the entropic civilizational decline familiar to us from the archetypal plot. In so doing, it reveals how little this decline reflects actual Central Asian reality. It instead reflects the author’s metanarrative of decline for his Uzbek nation. The subnarrative featuring Orif, Ochil buva’s son, speaks of the alienation that accompanies the detachment of local communities from their ancestral homes. Upon returning to his native village as the newly appointed *raikom* secretary, Orif inquires of an elderly man what has happened to the village:

- Ha, ixtiyoriy, ixtiyoriy ko‘chib ketishdi. Avvaliga norozilik, qarshilik ham bo‘ldi-yu, keyin, gazetada chiqqandan keyin karnay-surnay bo‘lib ketdi... Xizmat qayerda, o‘g‘lim?

- Shu rayonda...

- Ha, hukumatning o‘zi biladi ishqilib. Sovxozda tunganmas xazina bor, deyishadi. U yerlar hukumatga juda foydali ekan.

- Hozir qishloqda hech kim yo‘qmi?

- Bor. Besh-o‘nta qari-qartang qolganmiz. Bizlarga foyda ham, xazina ham shu yerda, ota-bobomizning xoki poki...

- U yerlar ham begona emas, ota, - dedi Orif aka.

- To‘g‘ri aytasan, begona emas. Ammo bu yerlar-chi, begona ekanmi? Kimga begona ekan? Cho‘ldan kelganlar taxta urilgan eshiklarni, o‘zi bekilgan buloqlarni, kul bosgan uzumlarni ko‘rib yig‘lab qaytib ketyapti. Ming xazina topsa ham, odam ko‘ngilchan bo‘ladi, bolam. Faqat xazina boylik emas, mehr ham boylik. Odam ko‘zining

quvongani ham boylik.

- Yig‘lab qaytib ketishar ekan, shu yerda qolaverishsa bo‘lmaydimi? – deb so‘radi Orif aka.

Chol yer tagidan qarab qo‘ydi.

- Meni sinab nima qilasan, o‘g‘lim. O‘zing rayonda ishlar ekansan... - “Rayon” degan so‘zga endi e‘tibor berib qoldi shekilli, chol mehmonga xavotir bilan razm solib o‘rnidan turdi. – Bizni rayonda hamma biladi, bizga ruxsat berilgan. Yangi ekansiz, ishonmasangiz borganda nachaylikdan so‘rang...

“Yes, yes, they all willingly picked up and left. At first there was resistance, but then after the newspaper made the announcement, they left with the *karnay-surnay* [local instruments] trumpeting... What can I do for you, my son?”

“Here...”

“Yes, the government must know best. The coffers of the sovkhos are endless, they say. Those lands are very profitable for the government.”

“So there’s no one in the village now?”

“There are a few. Five to ten of us old-timers are left. Everything of ours is here. Our ancestors’ ashes...”

“Those lands there are hardly foreign,” said Orif.

“You’re right, they aren’t. But what makes land foreign? To whom is it foreign? When people returned here from the sovkhos, they saw these boarded-up doors, exhausted springs, and rotten grapes and ran back weeping. They can find as much wealth as they want there, but people always need something else, my child. Money is not our only wealth, love and happiness are as well.”

“If people are really running away crying, then why don’t they just stay here?”

The old man looked up from the ground.

“Why are you testing me, my son. You work in the sovkhos...” With that last word the old man seemed to snap to attention. He got up and gave Orif a look up and down. “Everyone knows us in the sovkhos, they gave us permission to stay. You’re new. If you don’t believe me, go ask the boss...”⁴⁶

As we generally see in Russian Village Prose, the elders of Shivilg‘on are left behind in their native village to die, unable to pass on their memories and connection to the land, while modernity and wealth lure younger villagers away from their ancestral homes. This scene is less a mimetic representation of rural conditions in Central Asia than it is an adaptation of the metanarrative of decline found in Russian Village Prose. Village Prose emerged as a popular genre in response to the rapid depopulation of the Russian countryside in the 1950s and 1960s.

⁴⁶ Muxtor, 43.

Russian Village Prose writers were first generation urbanites who waxed nostalgic for their village homes.⁴⁷ Central Asian republics, by contrast, had a labor surplus in rural areas and both Moscow and republican leadership encountered considerable difficulty in moving these rural populations to labor-starved lands. This occurred not only because people were reluctant to leave their ancestral homes, but also because of the abysmal conditions in new settlements. Many who moved often returned to escape poor living conditions. Moreover, agricultural managers in Central Asia tended to hoard labor and did not permit inhabitants to move. Central Asian kolkhozes received machinery from Moscow intended to lessen labor needs, but they rarely had the technical skills to operate and maintain the machinery. Additionally, Moscow-made machinery was often not suited for Central Asian lands. Managers therefore stockpiled as much labor as they could to bring in the annual cotton harvest.⁴⁸ While the scene presented in Muxtor's novel is plausible, it was atypical of Central Asian life. Muxtor's elegiac vision of Shivilg'on was more likely inspired by his readings in Russian Village Prose. He adopted elements of their narrative of village life because they matched his own understanding of the decline of his nation as a result of Soviet modernity.

Following the archetypal plot's cycle of decline to rebirth, Muxtor does not only elegize this dying way of life, but also through the use of Socialist Realist tropes, expresses a belief that all that degenerates can again become whole. Muxtor reconciles Soviet modernity and authentic Uzbek culture through the allegorical roles of his two protagonists. While Muxtor's protagonist Orif presses the sovkhoz to recognize and remunerate villagers for their lost homes, Maria Vasil'evna, the Russian head of the local *obkom*, dismisses his concerns as sentimental nonsense

⁴⁷ Brudny, *Reinventing Russia: Russian Nationalism and the Soviet State, 1953-1991*, 41.

⁴⁸ Artemy M. Kalinovsky, *Laboratory of Socialist Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2018), 186–91.

to be washed away by the tides of progress that the state intends to bring. The author, however, suggests that this conflict will end amicably not only because of a budding romance between the two opponents, but also because of Orif's own beliefs, which the story later justifies through its *deus ex machina* conclusion. On a hike in which the two alternately argue and flirt, Orif philosophizes that

– Ba'zi olimlarning faraz qilishicha, har bir narsa, mana shu barg ham, odam ham elektronlarning maxsus birikmasidan iborat ekan. Qachondir, million yillardan keyin shu birikma tasodifan yana bir takrorlanib qolsa, odam ikkinchi marta hayotga qaytib kelishi mumkin ekan. Agar qonuniyat, Temir aytganday, tasodiflardan tug'ilsa...

– Yaxshi yupanch.

– Lekin menga yoqmadi. Elektron, birikma, qonun... Undan ko'ra jannat-do'zax, u dunyo haqidagi afsona chiroyliroq...

“Some scientists now conjecture that everything, this leaf, even people are made up of some combination of electrons. At some point, in millions of years, when those bonds accidentally occur again, they say that a person will return to life a second time. That is, if laws, as Temir said, are born of accidents...”

“That's comforting.”

“But I don't like it. Electrons, bonds, laws... tales of heaven and hell, of that world are far more beautiful...”⁴⁹

In meetings with Maria, Orif derides the sovkhos's destruction of native ways of life, but here he, relying on the cyclical time reproduced in the archetypal plot, declares his sincere faith that all authenticity lost to modernity can be restored in a form identical to its previous state.

Muxtor justifies Orif's belief in rebirth through his use of the Socialist Realist trope of surrogacy; however, for the author, the trope no longer indicates the invincibility of the socialist masses or the destruction of the presocialist past, but rather the unbreakable continuity of the family. Orif, we learn, has an adoptive daughter, Onabibi. He made the decision to take in the orphaned girl because his wife, Saragul had died just previously to his adoption of her. He tells himself at that time: “Ikki ayolning, qadrdon Saragulinning o'limi evaziga kelgan, qimmatga

⁴⁹ Muxtor, *Chinor*, 93.

tushgan bola bu. (She has come to me in place of two women, in place of my dear Saragul).”⁵⁰

The second woman Onabibi replaces is her own biological mother, Orif’s neighbor, and Orif’s comfort with this substitution reflects that quantity and quality are not the same. While in Socialist Realism, the ersatz parent or child indicates the indefatigable iconoclasm of the proletariat, for Muxtor, the surrogate child here is a form of divine compensation, a return of what has been lost. The name “Onabibi” conveys the child’s role as a dual replacement. “Onabibi,” because it contains the word “ona,” meaning mother, is typically given to children who resemble their mother, in this case Onabibi’s biological mother. But for Orif the name also suggests that she is given in compensation for his deceased wife Saragul. In most Uzbek families, new parents no longer refer to one another by name but by reference to their children: a father would call his wife “his/her mother” (onasi). The ability to call her “ona” means, at some level, she replaces his wife. Surrogacy thus no longer ties young heroes to Bolshevik masters; instead, it acts as a compensatory device for familial and, by extension, national loss.

Muxtor continues this theme of surrogacy as a form of divine compensation by suggesting the future marriage of his protagonist Orif to his Russian antagonist Mariia Vasil’evna. Orif and Maria’s conflict over the the sovkhos reaches a climax when, at a *raikom* meeting, Orif calls her a “bureaucrat,” a scurrilous insult among Soviet functionaries. At the same time, Isroilov, the biological father of Orif’s adopted daughter, Onabibi, suddenly returns and begins court proceedings against Orif to obtain custody over the girl. On the day of the custody trial, Orif is called before the *obkom* to account for his scandalous behavior before Mariia, but all discussion of the matter is preempted by her absence. When he returns home, Mariia informs him of her discovery: Isroilov is a con man who filed forged documents to obtain

⁵⁰ Muxtor, 101.

custody over Onabibi and has previously served time for his long history of cheating the state. Rather than attending the *obkom* meeting, she had spent the day at court saving Orif's family. The *deus ex machina* of the conclusion is made apparent by Muxtor's many omissions: he neglects to explain why a hardened criminal would suddenly want his daughter back or whether Isroilov is even her father, and if not, why would this stranger want her. For the author, asserting the justice and legitimacy of surrogacy is far more important than answering these questions. Mariia Vasil'evna's sudden decision to forget Orif's insult at the *raikom* and save his daughter suggest that the flirtation between the two will end with marriage. Muxtor concludes the story without fully stating this, but earlier during their flirtation, Orif ties the idea of marriage with her to a restoration of the village and local environment.

– Onabibiga singilchani maslahatlashamizmi?

– Maslahatlashamiz!..

– Tog' rayonini qayta tiklaymizmi?

– A?..

Orif aka qo'lini karnay qilib qichqirib takrorladi. Tog'lardan aksi sado keldi.

“So we'll talk about a sister for Onabibi?”

“We'll talk!”

“We'll restore the mountain region?”

“A?..”

Orif put his hands over his mouth like a *karnay* to call to her. His voice echoed over the mountains.⁵¹

Immediately after he half-jokingly proposes marriage and a family to Maria, Orif asks her about the environmental conservation of the region. The connection between family and local environment implied by the proximity of Orif's questions intimates that the reconciliation between the two at the end of the story will also result in a rebirth of the environment and, by way of allegory, Uzbek national culture.

Curiously, Muxtor sees the potential union between a Russian woman and his Uzbek

⁵¹ Muxtor, 95.

protagonist as a means of maintaining the authenticity of the nation, but the use of this allegory is in line with the philosophy of *The Plane Tree*. Muxtor's novel arrives at the same conclusion as his Turkic contemporaries, such as Suleimenov. Russian culture is not alien to Uzbek but, in fact, an essential part of it, and one knows oneself better as an Uzbek through knowledge of Russian. *The Plane Tree*, in fact, goes on to show how Russian history is Uzbek history.

The penultimate episode of *The Plane Tree* engages in historical mythmaking, placing an Uzbek actor as a key player in a major event of Russian literary history. In that chapter, Muxtor inserts his fictional mullah Abdulahad into Tolstoy's unexplained November 1910 flight from his estate and his subsequent death at the Astapovo train station. Muxtor's intervention in Russian cultural history and manipulation of the friendship myth is far more innocuous than Olzhas Suleimenov's only on its surface. Unlike Suleimenov, Muxtor does not claim with this episode that his Abdulahad coauthored Tolstoy's canonical texts, but in placing Abdulahad as one of the last people Tolstoy sees before his fateful decision to run away from home, Muxtor forwards his Uzbek character as an essential partner in Tolstoy's final literary act.

Muxtor's decision to place his character at precisely this moment in Tolstoy's life is to make Uzbeks coauthors of a narrative that had previously been thought of as Russian alone. In his 2010 monograph on Tolstoy's flight and subsequent death at Astapovo station, William Nickell argues that the intrigue around the venerable author, by this time in his life referred to as a prophet and the "second tsar," produced a mass-media spectacle that is best thought of as a "modern epic."

Late in life Tolstoy wrote that his favorite books were those without authors: the Bible, epics, collections of proverbs, and folklore. His last days would become such a story—one that insisted on being told and retold and would be created and recreated collectively. The unfinished quality of the narrative—an enigmatic departure for an unknown destination, a portentous journey cut short by death—invited all to imagine how it might have ended and to expand on the possibilities of what it *could* mean. Unanswered

questions and narrative gaps allowed readers to tell their part of the story, suggesting how they felt it should progress and what they wanted it to mean. In this sense Tolstoy's journey to an obscure railway station in the remote town of Astapovo is a modern epic, conveyed to us by that heir to oral tradition, the modern media.⁵²

The flight and death of Tolstoy, Nickell further argues, gave the contemporaneous Russian public an opportunity to cultivate "a collective identity in the sense that it built on this potential of Tolstoy to encompass, signify, and engender what it was to be Russian in 1910."⁵³ In the late 1960s, Muxtor sought to upend the exclusively Russian character of this narrative by demonstrating, through mythmaking, the influence of Uzbek culture on this important event of Russian history.

At first glance, Abdulahad's interaction with Tolstoy is a story of how the latter transforms the former from proto-socialist democrat to revolutionary socialist. Exiled from Turkestan for having, as a Duma member, signed a petition demanding that the rich share their wealth, Abdulahad happens upon an aging Tolstoy, who engages him in a discussion of politics and spirituality. Tolstoy, impressed by his interlocutor, offers him the use of a friend's library. Abdulahad spends a few weeks there, reading Tolstoy's oeuvre from which he discovers a curious quality about the author:

Ha ayyor, mug'ambir chol, - deb jilmaydi mulla Abdulahad ko'nglida, - itoatkorlik, mehr-muhabbatdan gapirasizu, o'zingiz bir umr isyon ko'tarasiz, qahr-g'azab sohasiz!

"Tricky old man," thought Abdulahad smiling, "you talk of humility and kindness, but all your life you have called to revolt and spread indignation."⁵⁴

Muxtor's Tolstoy is little like the Tolstoy described by Lenin. Lenin famously dubbed Tolstoy a "mirror of the Russian revolution," full of the many class contradictions present in the fin-de-

⁵² William Nickell, *The Death of Tolstoy: Russian on the Eve, Astapovo Station, 1910(1)* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 2010), 2.

⁵³ Nickell, 10.

⁵⁴ Muxtor, *Chinor*, 323.

siècle country. For Lenin, Tolstoy understood the exploitative nature of capitalism and the despotism of the Tsar, but offered apolitical, useless teachings of Christian anarchy and non-resistance to evil (непротивление злу) as the cure.⁵⁵ Muxtor's Abdulahad discovers instead that all the Christian teachings of Tolstoy are merely a mask for the old man's revolutionary, insurrectionary nature. Abdulahad returns to Tolstoy's estate *Iasnaia Poliana* twice, but Tolstoy refuses to see anyone both times. Word of Tolstoy's escape and death breaks out as Abdulahad boards a train in Tula after his second visit. Like the leftists of the day, Abdulahad connects Tolstoy's death to the revolutionary cause:

Xabarning butun dahshatini Tulada poyezdga chiqib o'tirganidagina idrok etdi: "Tolstoy o'lgan! Lev Nikolayevich yo'q..." Ko'z o'ngi qorong'ilashdi. Vagonlarda ham, perronlarda ham odam triband, lekin shov-shuv yo'q, ibodat paytidagidek. Mulla Abdulahad buni endi payqadi. Nahotki hahmma Astapovoga ketayotgan bo'lsa? U yerga hamma sig'adimi, Peterburg bor, Moskva bor, hammasi Astapovoga sig'adimi? Tolstoy o'zi qanday sig'di ekan? Uni olib ketishmasmikan? Mamlakat bo'ylab, jahon bo'ylab yelkalarida ko'tarib olib ketishmasmikan?

Mullah Abdulahad understood the horror of the message only having boarded the train in Tula: 'Tolstoy has died! Lev Nikolaevich is no more...' Everything went black before his eyes. The wagons and the platforms were full of people, but there was no sound, as if during the call to prayer. Mullah Abdulahad sensed the silence only then. Could everyone really be headed to Astapovo? Could Astapovo fit all of Petersburg, all of Moscow, everyone? How had Tolstoy contained them all? Would they take him with them? Would they carry him on their shoulders over the whole country, over the whole world?⁵⁶

Abdulahad begins to see Tolstoy as a revolutionary figure, the energy of whom, released in death, can move people world over. He exits the train and is swept into a mob of students and workers calling for revolution.⁵⁷ The gendarmes quickly crush the demonstration, arresting Abdulahad and prolonging his exile. Abdulahad's meeting with Tolstoy had already forced him

⁵⁵ Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, "Lev Tolstoi kak zerkalo russkoi revoliutsii," in *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, Fifth edition, vol. 17 (Moskva: Izd-vo politicheskoi lit-ry, 1967), 207–13.

⁵⁶ Muxtor, *Chinor*, 328–29.

⁵⁷ William Nickell notes that the days after Tolstoy's death saw "the most significant demonstrations since the 1905 Revolution[...] take place in the name of Tolstoy." See *The Death of Tolstoy: Russian on the Eve, Astapovo Station, 1910(1)*, 132–33.

to question whether he would return to Turkestan after his exile, but the events after Tolstoy's death decide the matter for him, and the reader is left to believe that he remains in Russia until 1917. Perhaps following the tradition of the 19th-century Russian novel, Muxtor never outright speaks of Abdulahad's acceptance of revolutionary ideals, but his arrest as part of a mob calling for revolution is a sufficiently strong suggestion.

A closer reading of the text shows that Muxtor meant for Abdulahad to exact an effect on Tolstoy as well. Abdulahad, the author subtly suggests, prompted the Tolstoy's abandonment of his estate and the subsequent calls for revolution in his name. In their brief meeting, Tolstoy requests that Abdulahad recite for him poetry from his own "Eastern" tradition. Abdulahad reads, without translating, some quatrains from the *divan* of the 12th-century Turkic Sufi mystic Ahmad Yassaviy (Yasawi), the content of which adds another interpretation to Tolstoy's death and the demonstrations it inspires.⁵⁸

Oqil bo'lsang, g'ariblarning ko'nglin ovla,
Elni kezib yetimlarga mehr bog'la,
Nafsi yomon najislardan bo'yni tovla,
Ko'ngli butun xaloyiqdan qochdim mano.

Boshim tuproq, o'zim tuproq, jismim tuproq,
Haq vaslig'a yetarman, deb ruhim mushtoq,
Kuydim, yondim, bo'lolmadim hargiz oppoq,
Shabnam bo'lib yer ostig'a kirdim mano.

Qulni ko'rsam quli bo'lib xizmat qilsam,
Tuproqsifat yo'l ustida yo'li bo'lsam,
Oshiq'larning kuyib uchgan kuli bo'lsam,—
Deya zor-zor yer ostig'a kirdim mano.

Zolimlarni shikva qilma, zolim o'zing.

⁵⁸ Critics in Uzbekistan long found Ahmad Yassaviy (?-1166) ill-suited for Soviet readers because of his Sufi and mystic affiliations; however, Jadid reformers of the early 20th-century had tried to incorporate him into the Uzbek canon. See, for instance, Fitrat, Abdurauf, "Ahmad Yassaviy," in *Tanlangan asarlar*, vol. II, 5 vols. (Toshkent: Ma'naviyat, 2000), 17–30. Muxtor's mention of Yassaviy was problematic because not long after the novel was published in 1968, the newspaper *Toshkent oqshomi* (*Evening Tashkent*) attacked Ergash Rustamov for his praise of Yassaviy. Muxtor, "Ma'rifiy kurash maydoni," 88.

Ul yuzingga agar urasa, tut bu yuzing.
Dunyo molin to‘la berdim, to‘ymas ko‘zing,
Bu nafs uchun xoru hayron bo‘ldim mano.

Zolim agar zulm qilsa, mango yig‘la,
Yoshing sohib, mango sig‘inib, diling tig‘la,
Harom shubha tark etibon, yurak dog‘la,
Zolimlarga o‘zim rivoj berdim mano.

The wise seek out those vagrant souls,
They steel themselves against venality,
They offer orphans of their kindness,
While I have run from all humanity.

My head is soil, my body too,
My spirit yearns for union with God,
My ashes leave foul residue;
As morning dew, I enter the sod.

“If only I could be a servant to the slave,
If I could only be the dirt upon the road,
The ash of ardent lovers, burning as it craves,”
My body sobs inside its underground abode.

Do not resist the tyrant, lest you might become him.
Hold forth your other cheek to every blow he gives your face.
I have renounced all earthly things. For covetous eyes,
For greed and lust, my sins of want, my person I’ve erased.

And if your tyrant spreads his evil, cry to me.
Release your endless tears, let loose your torment, and before me kneel.
Then rid yourself of all these doubts and mend your wounds,
For I have given tyrants power, and I can bring them to heel.⁵⁹

Muxtor’s Tolstoy expresses surprise that he has not heard of Yassaviy, immediately comparing him to historical thinkers of whom the historical Tolstoy was fond: Confucious, Gandhi, Krishna, Buddha, Laozi, Socrates, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Rousseau, Kant, Emerson, and William

⁵⁹ Muxtor, *Chinor*, 320. This poem, which Muxtor draws from Yassaviy’s *Divan-i hikmat*, is, like all other poems of that divan, most likely not from Yassaviy’s pen, but rather that of his followers. However, the *Encyclopedia of Islam* confidently asserts that followers of a mystical leader often faithfully imitated the teachings of their master. See Fahir İz, “Aḥmad Yasawī,” *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, April 24, 2012, http://referenceworks.brillonline.com.proxy.lib.umich.edu/entries/encyclopaedia-of-islam-2/ahmad-yasawi-SIM_0427.

Ellery Channing. Despite the parliamentarian Abdulahad's protests that Tolstoy has misunderstood the poem he has just read, Muxtor's Tolstoy asserts that all these thinkers, Yassaviy included, teach of the love humans must have for one another, but that the Tsar has ignored these teachings and made revolution inevitable. "The Tsarist government is vile and immoral. It has pushed the people to the threshold of revolution, and it will be a terrible, bloody revolution (Podshoh hokimiyati buzuq, yaramas hokimiyat. U xalqni inqilob jariga itarmoqda. Dahshatli, qonli inqilob bo'ladi)." ⁶⁰ To lead the reader to believe that Yassaviy stimulates Tolstoy's flight and death, Muxtor chooses specifically a poem of Yassaviy's that is reminiscent of Tolstoy's own philosophy of non-resistance to evil. ⁶¹ Yassaviy calls for precisely this non-resistance—invoking the biblical "turn the other cheek" of Matthew 5:38-42—and claims that those who practice it will share in God's power over the tyrannical in death. ⁶² As an early Sufi, Yassaviy looks specifically to death as a return to God, which enables him, having surrendered his individuality, to share in divine power. ⁶³ We are thus meant to think that Tolstoy, upon hearing this poem, decides to sacrifice himself with the hope of bringing about the end of the Tsarist state. In Muxtor's myth, the Russian author's flight becomes an intentional martyrdom inspired by his meeting with an Uzbek and the recitation of 12th-century Turkic poem.

The similarities between Yassaviy and Tolstoy's philosophies that Muxtor locates is

⁶⁰ Muxtor, *Chinor*, 321.

⁶¹ Tolstoy best outlines his philosophy of non-resistance to evil in his later years with *The Kingdom of God is Within You* (1893). See *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. 28, 90 vols. (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1957).

⁶² It was not uncommon for Sufi mystics to exercise syncretism by borrowing from the Christian mystic tradition and Christian theology. Many early Sufi ascetics were well-versed in Judaeo-Christian scripture, cited the teachings of Jesus and the Torah, and imitated the ascetic practices and dress of Christian monks. See Alexander Knysh, *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 14–16; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 145, 318.

⁶³ Yassaviy's philosophy of death and the unity with God to which it leads is part of a classical Sufi doctrine that was later deemphasized. Alexander Knysh writes "in early Sufism, especially in the classical period of al-Junayd, the goal of the mystical quest was often described as the passing away, or annihilation, of the mystic's self (*fana*'), which is followed by the survival, or subsistence, in God (*baqa*')." See *Islamic Mysticism: A Short History*, 309.

another sign of the author's effort to recenter the historical narrative away from Russians (in this case, Christianity). Muxtor's Tolstoy, in fact, voices a universalist message that the real Tolstoy never would have.

Nima uchun bu ta'limotni hamma zamonlarning buyuk donishmandlari bu qadar zo'r berib targ'ib qilishadi?[...] Chunki bu Isoning ta'limotigina emas, bu umumbashariy qoidalar. Axloqiy haqiqat bilan diniy haqiqat—ikkisi bir haqiqat. O'zaro mehru muhabbat—insonning birdan-bir oqilona faoliyati. Inson davlat qonunlari bilan emas, muhabbat qonunlari bilan yashab, o'z axloqiy kamolotini tinmay o'ylashi kerak.

Why have all the great thinkers of all times endeavored to spread these teachings?[...] Because these are not Jesus's teachings, but universal rules. Moral truth and religious truth are one. Kindness and love are the one single human wisdom. Humanity was meant to live not by the laws of the state but by the laws of love, thinking endlessly about moral perfection.⁶⁴

The historical Tolstoy's correspondence with Gandhi indeed emphasizes the universality of love in all human philosophies, but the Russian writer proclaims that Christ best expressed this philosophy.

Любовь, т.е. стремление душ человеческих к единению, и вытекающая из этого стремления деятельность есть высший и единственный закон жизни человеческой, это в глубине души чувствует и знает каждый человек (как это мы яснее всего видим на детях), знает пока он не запутан ложными учениями мира. Закон этот был провозглашен всеми, как индийскими, так и китайскими и еврейскими, греческими, римскими мудрецами мира. Думаю, что он яснее всего был высказан Христом, который даже прямо сказал, что в этом одном весь закон и пророки.

Love, that is the striving of human souls toward unity, and the activity that flows from this striving are the single highest law of human life. Every person feels and knows this in the depths of his/her soul (as we know from its clear manifestation in children), he/she knows this up until being enveloped in the false teachings of the world. This law has been proclaimed by all the wise men of the world, by Indian and Chinese, Jewish, Greek, and Roman alike. I think that Christ voiced this law clearest of all because he said that all law and prophets were based in this law alone.⁶⁵

Unsurprisingly, in those same correspondences, he connects to this love additional Christian

⁶⁴ Muxtor, *Chinor*, 321.

⁶⁵ Lev Tolstoy, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. 82 (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1956), 137–38.

tenets at the expense of other faiths. He rebuffs Gandhi's request to himself omit his condemnation of reincarnation from the missive he has sent the Indian activist for publication and distribution: "belief in reincarnation can never be as firm as belief in the soul's immortality and in God's justice and love."⁶⁶ By displacing Tolstoy's Christianity from its central role in his anarchism, Muxtor opens the fictionalized Tolstoy to genuine inspiration from an Islamic text. No reading of Yassaviy would have stirred the historical Tolstoy to take such a drastic move as his flight because that Tolstoy believed he had already heard the superior teachings of Christ voice a better-expressed message. Muxtor's fictional Tolstoy, however, is moved by the teachings of 12th-century Sufi mystic whose words are somehow radically new and yet oddly familiar to him.

Throughout his novel, Muxtor manifests his adherence to the archetypal plot's cyclical sense of time. Muxtor turns to some of the tropes of village entropy employed by writers of Russian Village Prose to manifest a sense of civilizational decline. But Muxtor stops short of the absolute death and pessimism that conclude Russian Village Prose works by turning to the optimism of Socialist Realist tropes. His manipulation of the trope of surrogacy and the friendship myth demonstrate his belief in the inevitable future rebirth of his culture. Muxtor may have been the first Uzbek author of the Brezhnev period to combine new Village Prose tropes and cliched Socialist Realist tropes to recapitulate the cyclical time of the archetypal plot, but he was far from the only one. The next section turns another such author, who forwards this sense of time in an entirely different genre of novel.

Archetypal Elements in an "Urban" Novel

⁶⁶ This translation, by Elmer Mood, is included in Tolstoy's *Complete Collected Works* because it is signed by Tolstoy. Lev Tolstoy, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenii*, vol. 80 (Moskva: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1956), 110–12.

In his “urban” novel *The Diamond Belt*, Pirimkul Qodirov, like Muxtor before him, subtly revived elements of the archetypal plot through the combination of Village Prose-like themes and staid Socialist Realist tropes. The “urban” novel was a nascent genre in the 1970s that hybridized the concerns of Russian Village Prose with a more positive view of some elements of Soviet modernity. The genre was born in the 1970s Soviet Union in part because conservative nationalists increasingly claimed the representation of the village for themselves, forcing liberals to turn to the city.⁶⁷ Qodirov (1928-2010) first published his Uzbek urban novel in 1977 but after reworking the novel substantially in 1983, he received a prize from the All-Union Writers’ Union as a result.⁶⁸ The book was translated into Russian upon receipt of the prize and even published separately in Russian in a 1988 volume of Uzbek novels.⁶⁹ Like Russian Village Prose, *The Diamond Belt* critiques aspects of Soviet modernity as faceless and alien because it imposes ecological destruction and foreign customs on Uzbek locales. However, Qodirov tempers this evaluation of Soviet modernity. Throughout the novel he demands the autonomy of Uzbek language and culture from alien influences, much as Village Prose writers do, but he ultimately celebrates the hybridization of cultures that the Soviet Union enabled. He does so not to merely mimic the socialist ideology of the friendship of the peoples, but rather to

⁶⁷ Mark Lipovetsky and Mikhail Berg, “Literary Criticism of the Late 1970s and the Fate of Soviet Liberalism,” in *A History of Russian Literary Theory and Criticism: The Soviet Age and Beyond* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 215.

⁶⁸ I have chosen to quote from the 1983 edition because in general it is much more purposively written, and, as then Soviet critics noted, the conflicts are better defined and characters’ values are more clearly outlined. Most of the episodes are included in both versions but with varying lengths, and where they differ, I will inform the reader. For criticism of the original 1977 novel and its alleged aimlessness, see Jovli Xo’shboqov, “Yangi dovon,” *O‘zbekiston madaniyati*, August 5, 1977; N. Khudaiberganov, “Koordinaty epicheskogo poznanii: Geroi i suzhety sovremennogo uzbekskogo romana,” *Druzhba narodov*, no. 4 (1979): 238. For comments on how Qodirov changed the novel and how he addressed critics of the 1977 version, see Umarali Normatov, “Turmushning teran tahlili,” *Sharq yulduzi*, no. 8 (1984): 172–75; Marg‘uba Mirqosimova, “Epik tasvir va hayotni badiiy idrok etish,” *Sharq yulduzi*, no. 9 (1985): 163–68. For the announcement of the prize, see “Mukofot muborak,” *O‘zbekiston adabiyoti va san‘ati*, March 23, 1984. The translation first appeared in *Druzhba narodov*. 9-10 (Sep-Oct 1983).

⁶⁹ See Muso Toshmuhammad o‘g‘li Oybek and Pirimkul Kadyrov, *Sviashchennaia krov’. Almaznyi poias* (Moskva: Sovetskii pisatel’, 1988).

assert that knowledge of Russian enables knowledge of the Uzbek self. *The Diamond Belt* concludes with the lead characters' celebration of their enmeshment in two cultures, Russian and Uzbek, because their bilingualism, according to Qodirov, helps them realize their authentic national character. Qodirov's understanding of how knowledge of other cultures leads to self-knowledge is, as with Muxtor, grounded in the cyclical time of the nation inherent in the archetypal plot.

The Diamond Belt is a somewhat unique work in Uzbek literature because it is the first Soviet Uzbek work to center around city life rather than village or university life. Indeed Qodirov's two previous novels, *Qora ko'zlar* (*Black Eyes*, 1965) and *Uch ildiz* (*Three Roots*, 1958), had these two popular Uzbek novelistic settings respectively. In the present novel, Qodirov focuses not only on how the city transforms urban denizens, but also on how they transform it. His heroes, like in other such urban novels of that time, are architects, who attempt to make urban life less alienating and more amenable to Uzbek culture.⁷⁰ This is where the commonalities with Village Prose are most evident in Qodirov's work: his protagonist, Abror A'zamov, feels that Soviet urban modernity, its lifeless cement and identical apartment buildings, severs the connection between Tashkenters and their natural environment and culture.⁷¹ Abror's work as architect therefore attempts to find those features of modernity most adaptable to Uzbek authentic culture and environment.

In line with the defense of native culture advocated by Village Prose, Qodirov warns

⁷⁰ Belarusian author, Ivan Shamiakin's *Atlanty i kariatidy* (1974) also features architects struggling to adapt modernity to their native culture and environment.

⁷¹ In his post-independence memoirs Qodirov identifies the political direction of this text as particularly challenging to the Soviet "despotic system," but that claim should, of course, be treated skeptically. Indeed he, like many other intellectuals, was deeply dissatisfied with Soviet politics, but Qodirov's criticism here is not a systemic one. After independence, Qodirov and other authors had a tendency to inflate the role that their writings and actions played in creating independent Uzbekistan. *The Diamond Belt* hardly received any attention from the KGB, unlike some of his other works, and that attention does not always speak to how threatening his works actually were. See Pirmqul Qodirov, *Qadrim* (Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi Nashriyot-matbaa birlashmasi, 2007), 166.

about an impersonal modernity bearing down on traditional Uzbek ways of life, recalling the decline of the archetypal plot. Qodirov's novel, set in Uzbekistan's capital city of Tashkent, takes the 1966 earthquake that destroyed the center of the city as a major disjuncture that signals the beginning of a decline. As Paul Stronski observes, the earthquake destroyed much of the city center and left as many as 300,000 homeless.⁷² For Qodirov, however, the earthquake was not the sole cause of Tashkent's destruction because it was used by Soviet planners as a pretext to further disrupt and transform the authentic Uzbek life of the city. In repeated expositions of the ever-expanding city, the narrator emphasizes the replacement of the old with the new:

“everywhere was construction and old *mahallas* [traditional neighborhoods] were destroyed to make way for new buildings (hamma joyda qurilish ketayotganligi, yangi uylar bino qilish uchun eski mahallalarni buzishga to'g'ri kelayotganligi).”⁷³ The effect of the modern city is obviously alienation, brought to the reader's attention when Abror's son, Zafar is bitten by a stray dog.

Abror goes looking for the dog to determine whether it has rabies, and a neighbor, Sohiba ona, gives a less than veiled hint that the changes to the city are behind the stray dog's provenance:

– Ha, ko'rdim, laychadan sal kattaroq, – dedi-da, gapga tushib ketdi: - Otini aytib chaqiray desam, oti o'lgurni hech kim bilmaydi. Birov: “Qishloqdan kelgan”, deydi. Birov: “Narigi mahalladan o'tgan”, deydi. Egasining hovlisi buzilganimishmi-ey. Domdan kvartira olib ko'chib ketgan bo'lsa, iti qolgandir-da. Uchinchi-to'rtinchi qavatlarida it asrab bo'ladimi? Biz ham domga ko'chganimizda itimiz ko'chada qolgan.

“Yes, I saw it, it was a little bigger than a domesticated dog,” she said, having suddenly become talkative, “I would have called its name, but nobody knows the damn thing's name. One person says it came from the village, another – from the *mahalla* [traditional neighborhood] over there. Its owner's *hovli* [courtyard in a traditional home] was probably destroyed. When the owner moved from his home into an apartment, the dog was left behind, I guess. Can you really keep a dog on the third or fourth floor? When we moved to an apartment building, our dog was left on the street too.”⁷⁴

⁷² Paul Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 252–53.

⁷³ Pirmqul Qodirov, *Olmos kamar* (Toshkent: G'afur G'ulom nomidagi Adabiyot va san'at nashriyoti, 1983), 101.

⁷⁴ Qodirov, 87.

The mystery that the dog presents is a product of the constant rebuilding of the city and apartment dwellers' alienation from one another. In any village, the villagers who had lived there for generations would instantly know the name and owner of a dog, but the ever-growing modern city produces estrangement. Qodirov further emphasizes that urban alienation is specifically a result of modernity by contrasting Russian-marked modern dwellings with Uzbek traditional homes. Sohiba ona speaks of the dog's former homes as either village (*qishloq*), *mahalla*, or *hovli*, but when discussing the home to which the dog's owner moved, she uses the Russian words "квартира" (apartment) and "дом" (house) respectively. The alienation from allegedly authentic Uzbekness that Qodirov's Tashkent effects on its inhabitants demonstrates the author's ambivalence to Soviet modernity.

Qodirov offers as his solution to this alienation a compromise between authentic culture and technological modernity that is consistent with the general optimistic conclusions of Socialist Realism. However, the conclusion of the 1983 version of the novel is so forced that it intimates that Qodirov did not fully agree with the compromise. In the novel's saccharine ending, Abror and his wife, Vazira, who have quarreled throughout the story because of their opposing views on family and professional life, resolve their conflict through the author's contrived intervention.⁷⁵ Both Abror and Vazira have entered their architectural designs into the city-planning competition. Abror wants to design a metro that leaves room for Tashkent's natural life, the life "that has succeeded there for thousands of years," while Vazira, under the villain Bahromov's influence, plans to construct a sleek metro in the style of all the advanced cities of

⁷⁵ Soviet critics found this ending unconvincing as well. "The familial-industrial compromise" seemed a "little too easy," according to Z. Osmanova, "Voda i liudi," *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 30, 1984. Recent critics have attributed the failed conclusion to the Socialist Realist method. Zamira Jalmatova says of the novel: "true, it would be unfair to place all the blame for the failed ending on the writer because Socialist Realist literature strongly demanded these kinds of resolutions from writers." See "Urbanistik asarlardagi mushtaraklik va o'ziga xoslik" (PhD diss., Alisher Navoiy nomidagi Til va adabiyot instituti, 1994), 114.

Europe. Abror originally wins because Bahromov cuts corners in his and Vazira's plan, but thanks to Qodirov's *deus ex machina* intervention, both Abror and Vazira's plans miraculously prove feasible:

– Haqiqatan, Vazira Badalovna uchun bu – ajoyib xushxabar! – dedi. So'ng jim xayol surib turgan Abrorga qarab davom etdi: – Bilaman, Abror A'zamovich hozir ish to'g'risida o'ylaydigan ahvolda emaslar. Lekin Anhorning tarixiy o'zani saqlab qolinadigan bo'lsa, bu juda yaxshi-ku! Abror A'zamovichning aytgani ham bo'lar ekan, Vazira Badalovnaning aytgani ham bo'lar ekan! Bu juda dono yechim!

“This truly is wonderful news for Vazira Badalovna!” said Sadriev. He looked at Abror who was lost in silent thought and continued: “I know that Abror A'zamovich is not in a place to think about work right now. But if the historical bed of the irrigation canal will be saved that's good news! Abror's plan will be used and Vazira's plan will also be used! What a wonderful outcome!”⁷⁶

This conclusion feels forced most likely because Qodirov may have felt obliged to add it to be able eligible for a prize. The 1977 variant of the novel contains no such *deus ex machina*. The same local party boss berates Bahromov for his unworkable plan and reproaches Vazira specifically for failing to inform him earlier about Abror's, which presents a better alternative. The uneasy ending in the 1983 edition demonstrates Qodirov's continuing discomfort with Soviet technological modernity and his inability to fully reconcile with it.

Qodirov's compromise with Soviet modernity feels much more sincere—it is actually one of the more poetic moments of this otherwise sterile novel—when he speaks of the Soviet friendship of the peoples. After their *deus ex machina* reconciliation in the 1983 edition, Abror and Vazira boast of their bilingualism in Russian and Uzbek, contending “these two languages allow us to work like our two eyes or two hands. A person sees a thing with the help of second eye much better than he sees with just one (bu ikki til bizga ikki ko'zday, ikki qo'lday ish beradi. Odam bir ko'z bilan aniq ko'rmagan narsasini ikkinchi ko'z yordamida albatta ko'radi), to which

⁷⁶ Qodirov, *Olmos kamar*, 338.

Pavel Danilovich, their Muscovite supervisor, answers enthusiastically: “each language is a key that opens the spiritual richness of the people that created it (har bir til – uni yaratgan xalqning dil boyligini ochadigan kalit).”⁷⁷ Just as other non-Russian authors in the 1970s and 1980s did, Qodirov praises the multilingualism and knowledge of Russian necessitated by the USSR’s political structure as culturally valuable. Soviet subjects, he suggests, are made more complete or whole by their knowledge of more than one culture.

This is no ordinary embrace of the Soviet friendship, however. Importantly, Qodirov omits the original claim of the Stalinist friendship that Russian was the most developed culture and language of the Union. Throughout the novel, his hero Abror supports an Uzbek cultural autonomy: he argues that Uzbekistan possesses a unique environment and culture which must be respected when importing foreign technologies and cultural traditions. Qodirov’s abrogation of the Russian superiority of the friendship suggests that his use of this Socialist Realist trope to resolve his novel emerges from a different conception of the relationship between the Uzbek and Russian languages.

His 1973 monograph on the development of the Uzbek literary language reveals that his understanding of cultural and linguistic autonomy, when taken to its logical conclusion, in fact asserts a glottogenetic theory of language that makes Uzbek into a primordial language much like that of Turkish in the 1930s Sun-Language theory. As was ideologically required, Qodirov’s monograph, *Folk Language and Realistic Prose*, devotes considerable attention to the influence of Russian language and literature on the growth of Uzbek. Qodirov’s response to this ideological requirement is an odd mix of both resentment and genuine admiration for the achievements of Russian literature. Unlike in the West, where precisely in the 1970s critics

⁷⁷ Qodirov, 326.

began to pinpoint the Western literary canon's complicity in colonialism, writers of the Russian East never attacked the Russian literary canon for its part in the devaluation of local modes of being, reading, and writing. The response was more often to appropriate that high culture for one's own nation.⁷⁸ Qodirov does not usurp Russian high culture for Turks/Uzbeks as directly as Suleimenov does. His monograph suggests that without Russian literature, particularly Pushkin, Uzbek literature would not have reached the expressive powers that it now possesses.⁷⁹ But this is not an admission of inferiority. In his monograph, Qodirov imagines literary-linguistic development as the process of the Uzbek language coming into contact with others and subsequently feeding on its own historical resources to progress.⁸⁰ To drive this point home Qodirov offers several examples of poor translations into Uzbek from Russian in the early years of their contact.⁸¹ These translations calque Russian directly into Uzbek or simply borrow words that an ordinary Uzbek cannot understand. This demonstrates, he argues, that the translator understood neither Russian nor Uzbek. Qodirov maintains that in order for the Uzbek language and culture to reach its full development, it has to correctly assimilate and rework intercultural contact via the language's own resources, dialects, archaisms, etc. Qodirov's understanding of the Uzbek language's development is, quite consciously, the same as that of his Jadid predecessors. The 1970s Uzbek author, in fact, daringly quotes his Jadid predecessor Abdurauf

⁷⁸ Naomi Caffee's work on Kazakh literature is illustrative in this respect. She demonstrates how Suleimenov and Muxtar Auevov each appropriate Pushkin to make claims for their nation's own literary achievements. See Caffee, "How Tatiana's Voice Rang across the Steppe: Russian Literature in the Life and Legend of Abai"; Caffee, "Russophonia: Towards a Transnational Conception of Russian-Language Literature," 96–159.

⁷⁹ Pirimqul Qodirov, *Xalq tili va realistik proza* (Toshkent: Fan, 1973), 138.

⁸⁰ Qodirov, 69–70.

⁸¹ These examples include "bir hovuch aristokratlar" from "горстка аристократов" (a needless borrowing in Qodirov's opinion) and "yirik shoxli mollar" from "крупный рогатый скот" (a calque that sounds nonsensical). Qodirov, 139.

Fitrat (1887-1938) in support of his views.⁸² For both Qodirov and Fitrat, the Uzbek language's progress is actually a return to previously known, yet forgotten forms. Contact with other cultures and languages does not facilitate borrowing and hybridization but rather remembrance of a mode of being long lost. This linguistic philosophy, like the Sun-Language Theory, thus negates all difference among cultures, between Russian and Uzbek specifically, because, according to Qodirov, the expressions of any foreign language already have their antecedents in the Uzbek language. Taken to its logical conclusion, Qodirov's theorizing asserts that the Russian and Uzbek languages are the same in their origins; the differences between them are the result of estrangement and distortion over time but their self-sameness can be identified in the deep past.

The text of *The Diamond Belt* is thus best interpreted as a manifestation of this annulment of historical difference between Russian and Uzbek: the novel reads as if it were a word-for-word translation from Russian! It contains no lacunae, no untranslatable utterances, between the two languages as if to assert, by its very being, the identity of Russian and Uzbek. Soviet Uzbek critics of Qodirov often complained that his language was dry and boring or that it was translated directly from Russian.⁸³ I argue that it was, in part, Qodirov's understanding of language and culture that generates that impression. All speech of *The Diamond Belt*'s Russian speakers is rendered in Uzbek, but one can easily sense the Russian underneath it. Pavel Danilovich's discussion with Abror at the end of the novel contains the following Uzbek sentence: "Xuddi

⁸² Qodirov hedges by noting the difference between himself and Fitrat, pointing out that the latter was a "chauvinist" and arguing that "Fitrat wanted to mix all the Turkic languages with one another, arguing that Turkic is the world's richest language[...] Such an idea is alien to our internationalist ideology." Qodirov, 60.

⁸³ This appears to be something that many authors thought about Qodirov and for which he was roundly criticized at the Writers' Union. A discussion of his first novel "Three Roots" (1957) sees other Uzbek authors criticize Qodirov for his Russian-sounding Uzbek. Given his monograph and this later novel, it was not something he desired to correct. See O'zRMDA f. 2356 o. 1 d. 453 l. 8, 21-2, 27-8, 32. The critic Ibrohim G'afurov notes the plain prose of *The Diamond Belt* in a 1984 review. See "Insoniylik yaxlit tuyg'u," *O'zbekiston adabiyoti va san'ati*, February 17, 1984.

shunday, Abror A'zamovich! Odam qancha ko'p til bilsa, ichki dunyosi shuncha boy bo'ladi.”⁸⁴

It can be translated nearly word for word, and it will sound like a perfectly normal Russian sentence: Именно так, Аброр А'замович! Сколько знает человек языков, настолько же богат будет его внутренний мир. One can do this, however, even with the dialogue that is by all accounts in Uzbek. A conversation between Bahromov and Vazira: “Bunaqa ariqlar Toshkentda saksondan ortiq. Shuning ko'pchiligini betonlashtirib chiqmasak yangi qurilgan massivlarga suv bormaydi”⁸⁵ becomes word for word in Russian: Таких арыков в Ташкенте больше восьмидесяти. Если мы не забетонируем большинство из них, во вновь построенные массивы вода не пойдет. In Qodirov's mind, the translation between Russian and Uzbek requires no extra interpretation, no bartering in the exchange of meaning due to cultural difference, because Uzbek already contains in its deep history every expressible notion. For Qodirov, nothing is foreign because all difference is a repressed part of the self.

Unlike Suleimenov's *Az i ia* or even Qodirov's historical epic about the life of the Mughal ruler Babur, *Starry Nights* (1978), *The Diamond Belt* did not produce political controversy of any kind.⁸⁶ Soviet critics easily slotted the novel into the contemporaneous Uzbek

⁸⁴ Qodirov, *Olmos kamar*, 326.

⁸⁵ Qodirov, 29.

⁸⁶ Qodirov submitted *Starry Nights* for publication in 1972, but it was retained, likely by the KGB (the Tashkent KGB checked all submitted manuscripts for ideological consistency and sent reports to Moscow), for six years. In 1978 its publication was suddenly permitted without explanation to a warm reception by critics. Later in 1985 as he prepared to publish a new historical novel about the successors of Babur (*Akbar and Humoyun*), *Starry Nights* was attacked by prominent members of the Uzbek Writers' Union during the IX Congress for his previous novel in which he “idealized” Babur and did not follow a Marxist methodology. The attacks continued at the III plenum of the Uzbek Communist Party Congress in 1986, and his new novel was not permitted to be published until the beginning of glasnost'. For accounts of the initial attempts at publication, see Pirimqul Qodirov, *Qalb ko'zlari: Badialar, o'ylar, esdaliklar* (Toshkent: Ma'naviyat, 2001), 111–12; Umarali Normatov, “Tarix haqiqatiga sadoqat,” *Guliston*, no. 2 (1996): 27–30. For the reprimand at the IX Uzbek Writers' Union Congress, see “Adibning grazhdanlik burchi,” *O'zbekiston adabiyoti va san'ati*, November 1, 1985; “Adabiyot va hayot: O'zbekiston SSR yozuvchilari soyuzi pravleniesining O'zbekiston yozuvchilari IX s'ezdiga hisobot dokladi,” *O'zbekiston adabiyoti va san'ati*, November 1, 1985. A report of the 1986 plenum reprimands can be found here: “G'ayrat-shijoatimizni partiya va xalq ishiga bag'ishlaymiz: O'zbekiston SSR yozuvchilar soyuzi pravleniesining II plenumi,” *O'zbekiston adabiyoti va san'ati*, November 7, 1985.

and all-Union Socialist Realist canons because of its apparent support for modernity and the friendship of the peoples. Yet Qodirov wrote the novel from a set of convictions about his nation had much in common with those of his more outspoken contemporary Suleimenov and even those of his Jadid predecessors. *The Diamond Belt* demonstrates Qodirov's adherence to the archetypal plot's cyclical sense of time. For Qodirov, the progress of Uzbek culture and language is synonymous with a return to an earlier time. That progress likewise closed the seemingly unbridgeable distance between self and other such that the other, Russian language and culture, became merely a differing stage in a universal evolution of language from a single origin.

Subtle Rebellion

Euromerican observers of Russian Village Prose, as mentioned above, saw the literature as a major break from Socialist Realism norms. Similar scholars in the West likewise looked on the Uzbek novels I have reviewed here, namely Muxtor's *The Plane Tree*, as a similar break with the literary standard. Daniel Matuszewski notably included *The Plane Tree* in a list of Central Asian novels that he believed demonstrated Central Asians' new interest in their deep past and a lack of interest in Marxist ideology.⁸⁷ Not two years after the publication of Matuszewski's article, Muxtor himself affirmed his commitment to Socialist Realism and castigated the American scholar's interpretation of his novel as a provocation against the Soviet Union.⁸⁸

This chapter has shown that the true story of Uzbek literature in the 1970s was considerably more complicated than either Matuszewski or Muxtor's representation of it in print. Uzbek litterateurs of the Brezhnev period, as Matuszewski correctly asserts, lost faith in Marxist-Leninist ideology and instead turned toward the national past in search of a map for the future. But in so doing, they revived an understanding, held by their Islamic reformer predecessors, of

⁸⁷ Daniel Matuszewski, "The Turkic Past in the Soviet Future," *Problems of Communism* 31 (August 1982): 76–82.

⁸⁸ Asqad Muxtor, "Antikommunizm to'lqinida," *O'zbekiston adabiyoti va san'ati*, February 17, 1984.

the time of the nation. That time of the nation—the archetypal plot’s cycle of decline, death, and rebirth—happened to coincide with popular literary tropes of the time, employed in both Russian Village Prose and Socialist Realism. Uzbek writers represented a civilizational decline through tropes often used in Russian literature. In the case of Muxtor, those tropes, such as the depopulated village, little conformed to Central Asian reality; however, they conformed to the broader narrative of decline. They then capped this decline with the typical optimism of late Socialist Realism. Muxtor turned to both the Socialist Realist trope of surrogacy and the Friendship of the Peoples, while Qodirov turned to only the latter. However, both authors subtly manipulated these tropes such that they no longer possessed their Stalinist meanings. Muxtor transformed surrogacy such that it did not indicate the iconoclasm it once had, but instead represented both a sort of divine compensation for loss and the continuity of the national community. Muxtor and Qodirov each subtly reconfigured the Friendship of the Peoples such that their nation, not the Russian nation, featured as the central historical agent of the myth. This new understanding of the friendship conformed to their belief that contact and knowledge of other cultures became the key to knowing and reviving the authentic self.

The underlying time of the archetypal plot returned to Uzbek literature in the 1970s thanks to the new freedom granted by the all-Union and Uzbek Socialist Realist *habiti*. Village Prose allowed Soviet subjects, Russians most of all and non-Russians to a much lesser degree, to address the sense of loss they felt as a result of Soviet policies and modernity. Non-Russians consistently had to qualify their any elegiac sentiment by showing optimism. Yet this chapter has shown that that optimism was hardly a mask that authors put on for the Soviet public. They genuinely believed in the Socialist Realist tropes that they put on paper because they had given them meanings that conformed to their own set of beliefs. The cycle of the archetypal plot

returned to Uzbek literature in the 1970s, but it did not return in the tragic form we have observed in the first two chapters of this dissertation.

That would not happen until the 1980s and early 1990s as the Soviet Union fell apart. In the next chapter, we look at how the Uzbek literary *habitus* changed as Uzbekistan gained its independence. By the 1990s, Socialist Realism was no longer policed and enforced by literary and political institutions, but its rules, expectations, and its master plot remained points of address throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. With his 1992 novel *Lives Passed in Dream* (*Tushda kechgan umrlar*), Uzbek author O‘tkir Hoshimov reintroduced the tragic form of the archetypal plot to Uzbek literature and set the archetypal plot against the master plot. As one of the first statements on post-Soviet Uzbek independence, Hoshimov fully rejects the quest for consciousness of the master plot and instead celebrates his dreaming hero. Rustam, the novel’s protagonist, is the unironized tragic hero of the archetypal plot. Though it contains all the elements of the archetypal plot, Hoshimov’s novel manifests them in a new order. Rustam awakens to his authentic national heritage through a dream in which he sees an ancestor instructor, much like the saint of dreams found in the archetypal plot, but he never fully comes to consciousness. He languishes in “unconscious” Soviet Uzbekistan, the ignorance and decline of which drive him to suicide. Though he dies, Hoshimov implies that the post-Soviet Uzbek reader, now free from the Soviet yoke, can redeem and resurrect this tragic hero. The effect of this novel, as with manifestations of the archetypal plot in the 1920s, is to condemn the recent past and affirm the present state as the protector of the nation.

Chapter 4: The Insomniac Bolshevik and the Sleeping National: The Archetypal Plot

Against the Socialist Realist Master Plot

As the Soviet Union fell apart as a result of Mikhail Gorbachev's various reforms beginning in the mid-1980s, non-Russians across the vast empire contemplated how to articulate an ideology and type of literature for their new post-Soviet reality and national independence. Adeb Khalid correctly observes of independent Uzbekistan that few Uzbek intellectuals seem to have questioned or abandoned Soviet categories in the creation of a new ideology.¹ Instead, they have rather simplistically inverted them. In the state's new national ideology, the Jadids, formerly enemies of the people under the Soviet Union, have become national heroes, and Soviet-era heroes have become villains. While the result of the codification of this new ideology may have been a simplistic inversion, the process of its creation was hardly so straightforward. How did intellectuals decide what was authentically Uzbek and what was Soviet? In terms of literature, how did authors perform their rejection of the Soviet literary legacy? How did they decide which aspects of the archetypal plot to highlight as they revived it and how and where did they oppose those aspects to Soviet literature? What expectations and rules of Socialist Realism and its master plot did they feel were most important to address?

In this chapter, I argue that Uzbek writers began to articulate an ideology for post-Soviet independence through a return to the tragic form of the archetypal plot. In his 1992 novel *Lives Passed in Dream* (*Tushda kechgan umrlar*), the primary case study of this chapter, Uzbek author O'tkir Hoshimov (1941-2013) once again, as we have seen in other chapters, brought the

¹ Khalid, *Making Uzbekistan: Nation, Empire, and Revolution in the Early USSR*, 4–5.

Socialist Realist master plot and the archetypal plot together, only Hoshimov, unlike his predecessors, turned the two plots against one another.

Hoshimov opposes the archetypal and master plots because he and his generation of Uzbek and other Turkic writers realized a central opposition between the two. As I argued in chapter one of this dissertation, Azerbaijani and Uzbek writers first configured their dramas and prose at the beginning of the 20th century such that their audience would understand them as a dream from which a *raisonneur* figure would awaken them much as a Sufi saint (*avliyo*) appears to Muslim believers and awakens them to a new sense of agency. The transition from a state of unconsciousness and ignorance to one of (national) consciousness is not depicted in the piece, only implied by the visitation of the saint. The literature of Socialist Realism, on the other hand, followed a hero's transition from a state of spontaneity to (class) consciousness, but, unlike in Jadid works, spontaneity never implied the absence of consciousness, only that consciousness was nascent and needed to be nurtured. Importantly, that consciousness, nascent or otherwise, was consistently displayed metaphorically in ways that did not accommodate the unconsciousness or ignorance of the archetypal plot. As I will show in this chapter, the heroes of canonical Socialist Realism rarely lose physical consciousness: they almost never sleep and, for that matter, never dream. While the Socialist Realist master plot had long since fallen to wayside after the death of Stalin, in the 1980s it became representative of the Soviet identity that Hoshimov wished to cast aside. The Socialist Realist trope of the insomniac Bolshevik thus prompted the juxtaposition with the archetypal plot that Hoshimov and others in the late 1980s and 1990s would create with their literature.

The archetypal plot's dream proved an ideal opposition to the consciousness of the Socialist Realist master plot because dream threatened Soviet Marxist teleology. Dream, Freud

contends, returns moments of the repressed past stored in the unconscious to the individual's mind in the present. The return of the repressed past he describes is precisely what Socialist Realist authors feared in dream. The progress of the Marxist-Leninist teleology, represented by the unrelenting insomnia of the Socialist Realist hero, could be set back by sleep and dream. In the Socialist Realist novel, the Soviet hero cannot sleep because dream is consistently associated with the return of the oppressor classes of the past(s) that communism was supposed to have overcome. As the Soviet Union collapsed then, Uzbek authors returned to the archetypal plot and the dream found in it not only because they believed they were restoring lost literary forms, i.e. the archetypal plot itself, but also precisely because dream itself permitted the entry into the Soviet present of histories lost or repressed by Soviet teleology.

Throughout this chapter, I employ Freud's work on dream to examine the many dreams which my authors utilize. Stalin, of course, banned Freud's works as bourgeois ideology in the 1930s, and after his death, it was largely Soviet psychologists and psychiatrists that engaged with them, not literary intellectuals. However, Freud's understanding of the time of dream and its relationship to consciousness well illustrates what non-Russian intellectuals saw in dream at this time.² Hoshimov and others saw dream as a means to return not only the repressed past, but a repressed chronology, i.e. the cyclical time of the archetypal plot. In his *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud argues precisely that dreams inhabit a different chronology:

dreams vary in their treatment of the *chronological* sequence of the dream-thoughts, if such a sequence has been established in the unconscious[...] dreams take into account in a general way the connection which undeniably exists between all the portions of the dream-thoughts by combining the whole material into a single situation or event. They reproduce *logical connection* by *simultaneity in time*. Here they are acting like the painter who, in a picture of the School of Athens or of Parnassus, represents in one group all the philosophers or all the poets. It is true that they were never in fact assembled in a single

² See Martin A. Miller, *Freud and the Bolsheviks: Psychoanalysis in Imperial Russia and the Soviet Union* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

hall or on a single mountain-top; but they certainly form a group in the conceptual sense [italics in the original].³

The sense of time Freud describes here can be likened to a cyclical history like that of the archetypal plot. Reinhart Koselleck explains what he calls “cyclical history” through an analysis of *Die Alexanderschlacht*, a sixteenth-century Albrecht Altdorfer painting, by bringing out the same qualities in the painting as does Freud in his above analysis.

For Altdorfer had in this image delineated a history in the way that *Historie* at that time could mean both image and narrative (*Geschichte*)[...] Altdorfer made conscious use of anachronism so that he could faithfully represent the course of the completed battle.[...] In other words, the event that Altdorfer captured was for him at once historical and contemporary. Alexander and Maximilian, for whom Altdorfer had prepared drawings, merge in an exemplary manner; the space of historical experience enjoys the profundity of generational unity.[...] The present and the past were enclosed with a common historical plane.⁴

The dreams my authors employ often create this sense of achronology in which the past is undifferentiated from the present and the future. Hoshimov specifically constructs his novel in the achronological sequence of dream, suggesting that events repeat themselves without advancing. He uses this cyclical time of dream to create an opposition to the progressive time of the master plot in which the positive hero advances along the Marxist-Leninist dialectic.

In consciously exploiting the opposition of Socialist Realism to dream, Hoshimov lionizes the sleep, dream, and unconsciousness of the archetypal plot as signs of an anti-Soviet Uzbekness. In so doing, Hoshimov poses yet another way to look at the archetypal plot that we have not yet seen in this dissertation. Chapter one explored how the initial authors of works emulating the archetypal plot depicted their society in a civilizational decline, which they likened to a sleep of ignorance. These authors sought to “awaken” their audience from the ignorance

³ Sigmund Freud, “The Interpretation of Dreams (First Part),” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. IV (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953), 313.

⁴ Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past*, trans. Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 9–10.

displayed onstage. The latter half of that chapter demonstrated how the next generation of Azerbaijani and Uzbek authors ironized and parodied the plot. This group highlighted decline as an aesthetic resource and sought to postpone awakening in order to fully exploit the artistic possibilities of sleep and dream. Hoshimov belongs to neither of these groups. To Hoshimov, awakening or coming to consciousness had become property of Soviet literary discourse, and thus the depiction of decline, the continuation of the sleep or dream of ignorance without awakening, became a way to highlight not necessarily literariness but rather the anti-Soviet Uzbekness of a new post-independence literature.

This chapter proceeds first with a brief look at how the canonical texts of Socialist Realism, particularly Fedor Gladkov's *Cement* (1925), depicted sleep and dream vis á vis the consciousness of the socialist hero. I then move to a genealogy of the Sufi saint or national ancestor dream in late Soviet literature to examine how it transformed under the conditions of glasnost' and Gorbachev's other reforms. I look specifically at the work of Kazakh poet Bakhytjan Kanap'ianov because of how influential his rendition of the ancestor dream proved. Though my focus is largely on Uzbek literature, Kazakh literature, in both Russian and Kazakh, exhibits elements of the archetypal plot and contributed to its development in Uzbek literature. Finally, I turn to Hoshimov's novel itself in order to explore how the author constructs a novel in which the Socialist Realist master plot and the archetypal plot are juxtaposed to one another. I show how Hoshimov employs the same Sufi saint dream of other late Soviet Turkic litterateurs, but I also demonstrate how the novel delays its protagonists' awakening.

Dream in Socialist Realism

Fedor Gladkov's Socialist Realist classic *Cement* provides perhaps the most complete articulation of the perils of dream to the progressive teleology of Marxism-Leninism. Gladkov

published his first major post-revolutionary novel in 1925, and when Socialist Realism was established as the official Soviet trend in 1932, the novel was quickly canonized.⁵ *Cement* was printed in nearly every publishing house across the Soviet Union and was required reading in secondary schools under Stalin.⁶ Even if not all late-Soviet writers had read *Cement*, the character types it illustrates are part of a larger schema of the sleepless Bolshevik and the danger of dream embedded in Soviet culture. Gladkov's novel employs the motif of dream quite frequently, and an intricate understanding of the relationship between dream and history underwrites multiple episodes of the book.

Cement, in fact, is a foundational text to the myth of the sleepless Bolshevik, which would proliferate in Soviet culture throughout the life of the Union. Lenin and Stalin, in artists' depictions, written accounts, and even anecdotes, never slept. According to the myth, they were continually at work, even through the night, ever trying to better understand the course of history and how to best apply its lessons to politics.⁷ This myth received ample reiterations in art [see figure 4.1] and even in popular television: the 1979 crime serial, which features the well-known poet Vladimir Vysotskii (1938-1980) as the experienced gumshoe Gleb Zheglov, shows his young protégé, the naïve communist idealist Vladimir Sharapov (Vladimir Konkin) sleeplessly reading deep into the night.⁸

This manifestation of this myth in *Cement* is immediately visible in Gladkov's heroes. Two of the principal protagonists, Sergei Ivagin and Dasha Chumalova spend their nights

⁵ Clark, *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual*, 72.

⁶ N. A. Groznova, "Gladkov Fedor Vasil'evich," in *Russkie pisateli. XX vek: Biobibliograficheskii slovar'* (Moskva: Prosveshchenie, 1998), 364.

⁷ For an in-depth look at several examples of what the authors dub the "cult of insomnia" under Stalin, see A. I. Kuliapin and O. A. Skubach, "V strane sovetskoi zhit': mifologiya povsednevnoi zhizni 1920-1950 g.," *Kritika i semiotika*, no. 11 (2007): 322–31. An anecdote also jokes with this idea: Lenin lied to his mistress that he was spending the night with his wife and lied to his wife that he was spending the night with his mistress all in order to spend the night secretly in the attic, writing.

⁸ Gladkov, "Tsement," 341.

reading. Gladkov even deliberately ties his Sergei, the novel's intellectual character, to the image of the sleepless Lenin. Never sleeping at night, he, of course, reads Lenin's *Materialism and Empirocriticism* (1909).

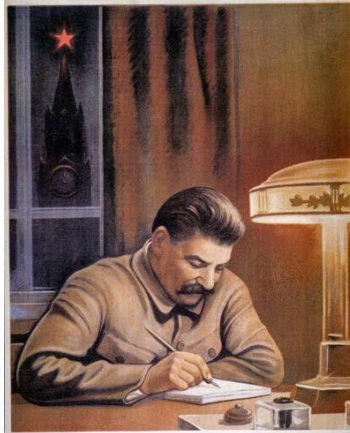


Figure 4.1. Govorkov, V. "Stalin is looking after all of us from the Kremlin." 1940

But Gladkov's novel goes further by delving into the reason for this myth of sleeplessness. Why does the communist not sleep? Gladkov's answer is hardly simple. To sleep and particularly to dream allows the past to sneak into the communist present. The communist never sleeps because he is constantly moving forward, constantly seeking the future and never retreating. Sleep and dream suggest a halt to this forward momentum and even threaten the repetition of the past: sleep, of course, brings up memories from the past, but the problem lies in the fact that the unconscious dreamer sees them as being coexistent with the present. As A. I. Kuliapin and O. A. Skubach put it, "the dreams of the dreamer [in Soviet literature][...] give rise to the [Soviet] unconscious, vestiges of the past, the pre-Soviet, and strange thoughts."⁹ Gladkov shows this very clearly through his illustration of the dreams of Polina Mekhova, another principal character and a devoted communist. Her dreams, or nightmares, however, do not bring out her individual past, but rather a stage of class rule that has, in the communist Soviet Union, supposedly already been superseded.

По ночам Поля спала в кошмарах, часами мучилась бессонницей и в эти часы слышала то, что слышала днем, - ясно, назойливо, мучительно: играл струнный

⁹ Kuliapin and Skubach do not explore this Marxist reading of the "cult of sleeplessness" as a way of maintaining progressive teleology as I do. They are more interested in other genealogies of the cult, such as the rejection of the individualism and the secretiveness represented by sleep, insomnia as a continuation of hagiographic myths about the righteous and as a reiteration of the paternal myth of the Bolshevik in that he watches over sleeping Soviet citizens who are depicted as children. See Kuliapin and Skubach, "V strane sovetskoi zhit': mifologiya povsednevnoi zhizni 1920-1950 g.," 322-31.

оркестр, далекий и манящий, чакали игральные кости, и под окном, на улице, жалобно плакали тусклые голоса:
- Помогите!.. Братцы!.. Бя-ада!..

At night Polia [nickname for Polina – CF] was plagued by nightmares, for hours suffered from insomnia and in those hours heard what she heard during the day – clear, importunate, and agonizing: a string orchestra was playing, far away and alluring, the click of gambling dice sounded and under her window, on the street, she heard the plaintive cry of dreary voices: “Help!.. Brothers!.. Woe are we!..”¹⁰

Polina’s previous experience with life on the street indicates why these sounds are so distressing and qualify as nightmares. They are the sounds of renewed bourgeois life under NEP, of both the excess and the poverty that accompany capitalism. She confirms that fact to Sergei when he saves her from the dream:

Ты видел эти лица, эти голоса?.. Братцы, помогите... Бя-ада! И кости, и скрипки в кафе... и витрины... Революция, превращение в торгашество...

Did you see their faces, hear their voices?... Brothers, help... Woe are we! And the dice and the violins in the café... and the shop windows... Our revolution has been transformed into mercantilism...¹¹

Gladkov continually reminds the reader that dream encourages this return of the past by emphasizing the repetition it invokes. Throughout the chapter, he repeatedly describes the sights and sounds of bourgeois life as eternally recurring.

Опять заструились запахи духов, и голоса зазвенели громко и радостно.

The perfumes of the bourgeois women *again* filled the air.¹²

Прислушивалась и опять возвращались в постельную духоту. Засыпала. Опять просыпалась от странных, потрясающих толчков. И опять – далекие скрипки, щелканье костей, смех.

Polina listened [to the sounds of NEP] and *again* returned to the stuffiness of her bed. She fell asleep. *Again*, she woke up from the strange, jarring stimuli. And *again* – the faraway fiddles, the clicking of dice, laughter [emphasis is mine].¹³

¹⁰ Gladkov, “Tsement,” 315.

¹¹ Gladkov, 317.

¹² Gladkov, 314.

¹³ Gladkov, 315.

In the latter quote, that repetition receives even more emphasis in Russian as all the verbs are in the imperfective past, indicating that Polina did not fall asleep and wake up just one additional time, but several. In dream, the past repeats itself and threatens the progress that the communist promises.

Each dream in Gladkov's novel is an existential threat. When Polina falls asleep and experiences her "nightmare," she is raped by the disguised "backward" element, the chairman of the town soviet's executive committee Bad'in. In the two scenes where Dasha Chumalova undergoes what Gladkov repeatedly refers to as "dream" despite the events being real, other "members of the past," White Guard Cossacks beat her and kill her friends.

How are Bolsheviks supposed to resist the dream's interference with the achievement of progress? How does he/she struggle against the past's attempt to enter the present and rob history of its forward movement? Gladkov provides two answers, one of which has already been presented but merits further examination. Bolshevik insomnia (бессонница) becomes a weapon to retain both physical and class consciousness in the face of dream. During Dasha's second "nightmare," the White Guardsmen, after badly beating her friend, Fimka, prepare the latter for execution. Fimka protests not the execution, but the blindfold:

Не хочу, не завязывайте!.. Своими глазами хочу взглянуть на мою молодую смерть... [...] Хочу... своими глазами хочу!..

"I don't want it, don't tie it! I want to look on my young death with my own eyes... [...] I want... I want to see with my own eyes!"¹⁴

While she has little power to stop the firing squad and prevent her own death, she does not submit to it unconsciously either. Her eyes remain open in a final act of resistance. Fimka keeping her eyes open reiterates the motif of insomnia; she remains conscious even in death.

¹⁴ Gladkov, 250.

Gladkov's second means of avoiding the deleterious effects of dream on history is counterintuitive, but logical nonetheless. Falling asleep is necessary to the human body just as the appearance of bourgeois elements in a not-yet-communist society is unavoidable. To keep moving forward and creating progress, the communist must close him/herself off from dream. He/she must dull his/her senses towards dream while at the same time making more acute his/her perceptions of the conscious world. Fimka screams that she needs to see her own death, but just prior to her execution Dasha repeats to Fimka:

Молчи и молчи... молчи и молчи... слепая, немая... молчи..

Keep silent, silent... keep silent and keep silent... blind, mute... keep silent.¹⁵

Why does Fimka demand her sight if Dasha is telling her to be blind? Another example from Polina's dream sequence explains the matter. As Polina walks the streets and hears the frightful sounds of NEP's revived bourgeoisie, the narrator emphasizes a need for blindness:

Она не могла поднять головы, чтобы твердо и спокойно взглянуть на витрины, на открытые двери, на людей, у которых был другой облик, чем раньше[...] как недавно, весной.

She could not lift her head to firmly and calmly look at the shop windows, at the open doors, and the people whose appearance was different than it had been[...] just last spring.¹⁶

While the dedicated communist must be conscious in the waking world, he/she must not allow any interaction with dream. To acknowledge dream, i.e. the past, as a phenomenon coterminous with the present, by interacting with it, by not remaining "mute" or by "looking" at it is to give it power. Both Dasha and Polina shut themselves off from dream in order to maintain the boundary between sleep and waking, and in so doing they preserve themselves as consistently conscious individuals.

¹⁵ Gladkov, 250.

¹⁶ Gladkov, 314.

Gladkov confirms this idea through Dasha's transformation into a conscious individual after her nightmare. She experiences Fimka's death and her own near death as a sort of dream, but when she is pardoned by the White Guardsmen thanks to a specialist's vouching for her, she gains the consciousness that Gladkov requires. She avoids interaction with the dream world by remaining conscious in the waking world.

Раньше они спали по ночам, а днем смотрели на горы. Теперь по ночам они страдали бессонницей, а днем притворялись слепыми.

Now they [Dasha and her communist compatriots] suffered at night from insomnia, and in the day they pretended to be blind.¹⁷

The description Gladkov gives Dasha's actions should be understood not only in a practical sense—she must remain silent and blind to the injustices committed while her town is under White Guard rule and work only at night—but also in a metaphorical one. She is blind to the phantom, dream-like world created by those representatives of the past while also maintaining her consciousness.

Gladkov is hardly the only author of a canonical Socialist Realist text to pursue the metaphor of the necessarily sleepless Bolshevik. One can also find examples of how dream and sleep forestall consciousness by inviting past stages of economic life into the present in the works of other writers of the Socialist Realist canon, such as Dmitrii Furmanov with *Chapaev* (1925) and Nikolai Ostrovskii with his *How the Steel Was Tempered* (1934).

Early Socialist Realist authors made dream such a potent sign that post-Stalin writers continued to employ it to various effect. The villages of Russian Village Prose are necessarily marked as soporific to emphasize that they are home to those people and histories forgotten by Soviet progress and modernity. Uzbek and other Turkic writers, on the other hand, took the same

¹⁷ Gladkov, 251.

sign of dream, the alternative histories that it represented, in a direction with different emphasis. They used a specific type of dream, one in which an elder figure visits the dreamer to introduce histories alternative to Soviet modernity to the present.

Turkic Dreams Under Late Socialism

As Turkic writers under late socialism turned increasingly toward their national culture and heritage—a subject examined in the previous chapter—many of them used the trope of dream to reconcile their national heritage with the Soviet present. In such literature, an ancestor figure comes to the dreamer to inform him/her of the national past. The dreamer then comfortably and unproblematically takes this knowledge with him/herself into the Soviet waking world. Central Asian Muslim believers expect saints to be encountered in dream, and that saint typically gives instruction about how the dreamer should conduct their life. Thanks to the increased nationalization of culture in the Soviet Union, by the 1970s this elder figure in dream was encountered as a national ancestor. The use of this type of dream laid the ground for the glasnost'-era rebellion to come. While in the 1970s and early 1980s, the ancestor and the dreamer are in perfect accord, by the mid-1980s, the ancestor begins to incriminate the dreamer for failing to represent his/her authentic national character. At that time, the dream presented an ethnic reality that was more authentic than the Soviet waking world. It was this turn in the dream's elder and the relationship to dream itself that gave Hoshimov the impetus to turn dream against Stalinist-era Socialist Realism's consciousness.

To explore how this metaphor began in the Brezhnev period and transformed in the late 1980s, I turn to the Kazakh poet Bakhytzhan Kanap'ianov (b. 1951). A student of the venerated Kazakh writer Olzhas Suleimenov (b. 1936), Kanap'ianov presents himself as an ideal example

of the innocuous trope of dream that was prominent under Brezhnev and how that trope changed under the conditions of Gorbachev's rule.

Kanap'ianov's 1982 collection *A Sense of Peace (Chuvstvo mira)* contains several dream-laden poems, but the poem "In a faraway home cries my mother" exemplifies well the easy transfer of historical memory between ancestor and dreamer typical of the 1970s and early 1980s:

В далеком доме плачет мать моя,
И вижу слезы сквозь пространство

Не объяснимый в сердце моем страх,
не просыхают слезы на щеках,

- Мама, мама, что за стук и тень в окне?
- Это ветер, это ветер в тишине.

А время мчится, время мчится вспять,
Склонились надо мной отец и мать.

И в детстве том, покуда не подрос,
был у меня всегда один вопрос:

- Мама, папа, кто стучит, чья тень в окне?
- Это ветер, это ветер в тишине.

Как на себя взглянуть со стороны –
Черты отца во мне отражены.

За гробом шел, не понимал в тот миг,
что я отца ушедшего двойник.

- Мама, мама, это папа там в окне?
- Спи, сынок мой, это ветер в тишине.

И снова плачет, плачет мать моя,
И сквозь пространство вижу слезы я.

Умираю и рождаюсь в этом сне,
вновь пуповину перекусили мне.

- Бабушка, я слышу чей-то стук.

- Это ветер, это ветер, внук.

In a faraway home cries my mother,
And I see her tears through space.

The unexplained fear in my heart,
her tears do not dry on her cheeks,

“Mama, mama, what is that rapping and shadow in the window?”
“It’s only wind, only wind in the silence.”

And time flies, time flies backwards,
Bent over me are my father and mother.

And in that childhood, before I grew up,
I always had one question:

“Mama, papa, who is rapping at the window, whose shadow is that?”
“It’s only wind, only wind in the silence.”

As I look at myself in that past—
The traits of my father are reflected in me.

I walked in his funeral procession, and I did not understand at that moment
that I am a double of my departed father.

“Mama, mama, is that papa in the window?”
“Sleep, my son, it’s only wind in the silence.”

And she cries again, my mother cries again.
And through space I see her tears.

I die and am born again in this dream,
once again my umbilical cord is bit off.

“Grandmother, I hear someone’s rapping.”
“It’s only wind, only wind, grandson.”¹⁸

Kanap’ianov, whose poetry frequently features a lyric hero seeking communion with his ancestors, suggests a relatively smooth process for finding connections with the past. Looking back on his personal history, his lyric persona, through dream, identifies continuity with the past

¹⁸ Bakhytzhan Kanap’ianov, *Chuvstvo mira: Kniga stikhov* (Alma-ata: Zhazushy, 1982), 11–12.

where one might otherwise see rupture. In this poem, the image of the crying mother, a widow after the death of the lyric persona's father, at first suggests a childhood of lost familial and consequently cultural connections, but the lyric persona finds comfort in the opportunities that nighttime, i.e. dream, affords him. The meaning of "rapping and shadow in the window" transforms each time the phrase is repeated: first it receives personification ("who?") and then later it is familiarized as the patrilineal line ("papa?") thanks to the persona's realization that he contains his father within him. He is his father's "double." The connection is repeated once again as the persona imagines himself in the place of his own son who asks the same question, and the reader must assume that the son will come to the same conclusion and view himself as his grandfather's "double." The dream here then realizes the past of the ancestor in the present of the descendant – they repeat one another. While the persona only invokes dream to imagine his potential descendants, Kanap'ianov suggests that we should see this exchange between ancestor and dreamer as a consequence of dream. The line "I die and am born again in this dream" refers not only to the lyric persona's vision of his future offspring, but also to the process he sees all ancestors undergoing as they communicate with their descendants. The "rapping and shadow in the window" thus has a dream-like quality that enables deceased ancestor to return to descendant. As a result, despite the denials of his mother, the lyric persona does not fret the loss of connection to the past but finds comfort in what turns out to be a populated "silence."

The events of the late 1980s "weaponized" this motif of dream and turned it against the Soviet state and its progressive teleology. In 1986, for the first time ever Gorbachev appointed an ethnic Russian as the head of the Kazakh Communist Party. Until that time all leaders of the non-Russian republics had been titular nationals of the given republic, though the second secretary

had typically been a Russian.¹⁹ In answer to Gorbachev's action, Kazakhs rose up in protest in Alma-ata and other cities in what is now referred to as the Zheltoqsan (December) uprising. The protests were eventually quelled, but Gorbachev conceded ground later. In 1989, he appointed as First Secretary of the Kazakhstan Communist Party Nursultan Nazarbaev, who subsequently became post-Soviet Kazakhstan's president after the Soviet Union's collapse.

During these protests the same Kanap'ianov produced an explosive dream-laden poem "The language forgotten since childhood" (Позабытый мной с детства язык) in which the formerly friendly ancestor is now hostile to the dreamer. The poem was to be published in the December 1986 issue of the Kazakh journal *Prostor* but was postponed when the Zheltoqsan uprising spread to other cities. Kazakhstanis eventually heard the poem on a Voice of America broadcast.²⁰ Like in the poem above, an ancestor appears before Kanap'ianov's lyric persona, but this time both ancestor and dreamer doubt the ability of the dreamer to achieve a proper connection with the past.

Позабытый мной с детства язык,
Пресловутое двуязычие,
При котором теряю свой лик
И приобретаю двуличие.
Я пойму неизвестного мне
Уходящего аборигена,
Но когда среди ночи во сне
Перед предком склоняю колено,
Сознаю, что не верит он мне,
Как пришельцу из тяжкого плена.
Усмехнется он в той тишине:
«Ты меня недостойная смена».

The language I have forgotten since childhood,
That notorious two-tonguedness,
From which I lose my face

¹⁹ Olivier Roy, *The New Central Asia: The Creation of Nations* (London, New York: I. B. Tauris, 2000), 105. Though the second secretary was generally a Russian, the first secretary generally had the power to select him from among local, not Moscow-sent, Russians.

²⁰ Caffee, "Russophonia: Towards a Transnational Conception of Russian-Language Literature," 41.

And gain two-facedness.
I understand that fleeting aboriginal,
Who is a stranger to me,
But when in the night in a dream
I genuflect before my ancestor,
I recognize that he does not trust me,
As if I have returned from terrible captivity.
He grins slyly in that silence:
“You are an unworthy replacement.”

Kanap’ianov attacks the legitimacy of the multiethnic state by contending that “two-tonguedness”—the fact that he is forced by Soviet societal and economic life to speak Russian as well as his native language—has actually made him incapable of communicating in his own language. This is a stark change in attitudes from the Kanap’ianov of four years prior. Kanap’ianov’s 1982 collection of poetry, from which “in a far away home cries my mother” above was drawn, contains several explorations of the lyric persona’s connection to the multilingual, multinational Soviet Union as well as his native Kazakh heritage. The lyric persona, in one such nighttime elegy, identifies closely with cosmopolitan Moscow: “the passing crowd, my own/ the multilingual crowd.”²¹ The ancestor in his 1986 dream poem, however, hostilely condemns his descendant for carrying memories and ethnic traditions into a Soviet present: Kazakh national identity can no longer serve as supplement to the multinational Soviet identity, but must rather replace it.

Kanap’ianov again attacks the the multiethnic and multilingual status of the Soviet Union when he notes that he can understand “the fleeting aboriginal, who is a stranger to [him].” This is a clear reference to the Soviet ideology of internationalism, which made non-Russian intellectuals in particular responsible for promoting the culture of other non-Russian nations. By the 1980s, intellectuals like Kanap’ianov had come to believe that this burden of internationalism

²¹ Kanap’ianov, *Chuvstvo mira: Kniga stikhov*, 23–25.

came at the expense of the promotion of their own national culture.

The consequence of internationalism and two-tonguedness is an inability to speak authentic Kazakh. The silence that characterizes the meeting between the lyric persona and his ancestor in the dream furthers this point. While the quotation marks around “You are an unworthy replacement” seem at first to suggest that the ancestor is speaking, nothing in the line previous indicates that he produces speech. The Russian word “усмехнуться” (grin slyly) denotes a silent expression rather than any sound. No speech actually occurs between the two nor can it because the dreamer has so forgotten his native language and heritage. The comfortable, populated silence that we saw in the 1982 poem is a terrible, alienating silence in 1986.

That silence, terrible as it may be, is best read as necessary to the wholeness of the subject. The ancestor condemns the dreamer for forgetting his native culture, but unlike the saint of the archetypal plot, he provides no path to realizing that lost identity. We might still read him as the saint instructor, however, if we read the poem as a Freudian “wish-fulfillment.”²² The silence is, in fact, an unacknowledged desire of the lyric persona. A subject that is one, as even Kanap’ianov’s 1982 poem suggests with the refrain of “silence” and the invocation of the persona as a replication of his ancestor, does not need to speak with itself. “The language forgotten since childhood” supports this reading in that it actually discards dialogue more than trying to retrieve it. The second and fourth lines of the poem rhyme words indicating a binary: two-tonguedness and two-facedness, the latter of which contains a negative connotation in Russian and implies duplicity or falseness. The proceeding rhymes, after this rejection of

²² Freud makes the argument that all dreams are “wish-fulfillments” early in his career. When speaking of the dream as “wish-fulfilment,” Freud intends that it fulfills only an unconscious wish, which is often not well-received by the conscious mind. See Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud: The Interpretation of Dreams (Second Part) and On Dreams*, trans. James Strachey, vol. V (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1953), 550–73.

bilingualism and dual identity, serve to embrace a singular identity. “Me” (мне) is rhymed twice. Kanap’ianov first rhymes it with “silence” (тишине), implying that the focus on the individual ends the dialogue created by two-tonguedness. He next rhymes it with “dream” (сне): dream itself is the property of an individual’s mind and is an intimate space that again speaks of isolation from interlocutors. Kanap’ianov’s poem thus searches for lost “identity” in the etymological sense of being identical or “one.” The final line of the poem, suggesting the desire to become a “replacement,” hints at just that. As much as this silence is terrifying in that it represents an unbridgeable gulf between the ancestral past and the Soviet present, it is, on another level, desirable. To be precisely identical with the ancestral mythic past implies a self-sameness that allows for no speech and no dialogue.

For Kanap’ianov then, dream becomes the answer to his dilemma of alienation from the authentic national or ethnic past on multiple levels. Dream recovers histories lost to the onslaught of Soviet modernity, internationalism, and ideology, but it also provides isolation from the hybridity of the Soviet present. It is through dream that Kanap’ianov’s dreamer arrives at a self-same identity with his mythic past. Just after the fall of the Soviet Union, Hoshimov would make use of this same trope of dream, made popular in part by Kanap’ianov, to articulate a post-Soviet Uzbek identity of self-sameness with the mythic past. In so doing, he returned the tragic form of the archetypal plot to Uzbek literature.

Lives Passed in Dream and the Archetypal Plot

Hoshimov began writing his novel not long before the collapse of the Union, drawing material from major all-Soviet and local Uzbek events of the time. His primary goal with his *Lives Passed in Dream* was to articulate an anti-Soviet Uzbek national identity and a new form of literature that would express that identity. With the novel, Hoshimov declares the archetypal

plot and its depiction of the unconsciousness or the dream-like state of decline to be integral to the representation of Uzbek identity. He consequently opposes those elements to major themes and tropes of the Socialist Realist master plot, which were now, in his mind, necessarily anti-Uzbek.

Lives Passed in Dream thus rearranges and enhances elements of the archetypal plot to highlight their opposition to the Socialist Realist master plot. Early in the novel, Hoshimov depicts a dream-like sequence that suggests the dream of the archetypal plot—the ancestor/Sufi saint dream—as a disruption of Soviet identity through which the dreamer gains access to the authentic ethnic past. Unlike with past works of the archetypal plot, this ancestor/Sufi-saint dream does not conclude the novel, but rather begins the tragic hero’s further envelopment in the world of dream and unconsciousness. Hoshimov further juxtaposes the two plots via the principal characters of his novel. The protagonist of his novel is a dreamer whose rebellion against the Soviet Union is an unconscious one, while the novel’s main villain is, in fact, the typical Socialist Realist insomniac hero. Finally, Hoshimov opposes the two plots via the cyclical structure of his novel. The cyclical structure of the novel intentionally imitates the time of dream and unconsciousness as the author understands them, and Hoshimov juxtaposes that structure to the typical linearity of the Socialist Realist novel.

Lives Passed in Dream revolves around the mysterious death of the protagonist, Rustam, whose suicide takes place in the opening pages of the novel. The book reads as an investigation of Rustam’s death: its chapters are composed of Rustam’s three diaries, witness statements, and witness dossiers, which are organized by a nameless investigator. It also contains memories from witnesses that are given to the reader outside the investigator’s review of documents. Over the course of the novel, we discover that Rustam was not murdered but rather took his own life. Like

the unironized tragic *raisonneur* heroes of Hamza and Avloniy in 1910s Uzbekistan, Rustam commits suicide because of his acute sense of helplessness. He finds himself unable to continue living in a Soviet Union that represses Uzbeks.

The repression of Uzbeks in the novel is reflected in its incorporation of two historical events in particular, the “Cotton Scandal” and the Soviet Afghan war, the combination of which give rise to the ancestor/Sufi saint dream of the novel. Unlike Kazakhstan’s Zheltoqsan uprising, the Uzbek Cotton Scandal of the 1980s did not prompt Uzbeks to revolt against the Soviet state. However, the scandal and its aftermath in the Soviet press made Uzbeks feel as if they were not Soviet citizens but something apart from the rest. After Brezhnev’s death, his successors Andropov and Gorbachev launched campaigns to root out corruption in Soviet society, and one of their larger targets was the Uzbek Republic’s agricultural and political bureaucracy, which had been artificially inflating cotton harvest numbers for decades. The two anti-corruption campaigners likely could have picked other targets—Uzbek corruption was no worse than others at this time—but the ensuing prosecutions and scandals caused the Soviet press to see Uzbeks as an eternally benighted people, unchanged by Soviet rule.²³ The scandal takes a central place in the novel. The father of Rustam, the protagonist, is arrested as part of the Cotton Scandal prosecutions, and he laments the injustice of his prosecution to his son.

Unlike the Cotton Scandal, the Soviet-Afghan War did not contribute directly to Soviet Uzbeks’ ire with the Union. But the circumstances of the war, the Soviet Union’s use of Uzbek troops because of their similarities to Afghans, weighed on the minds of Uzbek intellectuals like

²³ See Kalinovsky, *Laboratory of Socialist Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan*, 221; Ronald Wixman, “Ethnic Attitudes and Relations in Modern Uzbek Cities,” in *Soviet Central Asia. The Failed Transformation*, ed. William Fierman (Boulder: Westview Press, 1991), 161–63. Uzbek and other Central Asian intellectuals became increasingly defensive in opposition to the negative coverage, which they felt was an attack on their culture. See, for example, O‘tkir Hoshimov, “Do‘stlik hurmatdan boshlanadi,” in *Fitna san’ati* (Toshkent: Fan, 1993); Chingiz Aitmatov, “Perestroika, glasnost’ - drevo vyzhvaniia,” *Pravda*, February 12, 1988.

Hoshimov. The Soviet-Afghan war began in 1979 when the Soviet Union decided that the nascent socialist regime in Kabul would fail without military intervention. The early years of the war involved a proportionally greater number of Central Asians vis-à-vis the rest of the Soviet Union. The two so-called Muslim battalions, because they were composed entirely of Soviet Muslims, did much of the fighting in the early days of the war. Additionally, until 1983 the 40th army, the 80,000-soldier body deployed to Afghanistan, was disproportionately Central Asian.²⁴ Soviet intelligence initially hoped they could win Afghanistan with, to turn the American phrase, brown boots on the ground because Afghanistan contained many of the ethnic groups—Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Turkmens—found in Soviet Central Asia, and Dari, the primary language of Afghanistan, was similar to Tajik.²⁵ After 1983, the Soviet Union changed course because its initial hopes morphed into fear: Soviet coethnics might identify with their Afghan counterparts and rebel against the Soviet Union.²⁶ Those fears were largely unfounded. Relatively few Soviet Central Asians saw much to identify with in their Afghan counterparts. Testimonials also show that Soviet Central Asian soldiers did not feel alienated from the Soviet army on the basis of ethnicity. Though many of these Central Asian soldiers experienced discrimination in the army, few viewed that discrimination through a national lens.²⁷ The possibility of identifying with Afghan coethnics occurred more to Uzbek intellectuals than it did to Uzbek soldiers. Reacting to all-Union condemnation of Uzbek “backwardness,” Hoshimov lived in a different reality than his

²⁴ Exact statistics remain elusive. See Jiayi Zhou, “The Muslim Battalions: Soviet Central Asians in the Soviet-Afghan War,” *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012): 316.

²⁵ Zhou, 315–17.

²⁶ These fears are largely reported by American sources. See, for example, Alexander Alexiev, *Inside the Soviet Army in Afghanistan* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1988), 44. Zhou provides several other possible explanations such as Central Asian soldiers rotating out because their service limit had expired, Pashtun fears that Central Asian soldiers were more likely to negotiate with their coethnics than Slavs, and a rumored protest against the war in Tashkent in 1981. See Zhou, “The Muslim Battalions: Soviet Central Asians in the Soviet-Afghan War,” 323.

²⁷ Zhou, “The Muslim Battalions: Soviet Central Asians in the Soviet-Afghan War,” 303; Kalinovsky, *Laboratory of Socialist Development: Cold War Politics and Decolonization in Soviet Tajikistan*, 217.

Uzbek soldiers. He therefore saw some commonalities between the experiences of Afghan Uzbeks and Soviet Uzbeks. For him, they were united in their victimhood at the hands of the Soviet Union.

Hoshimov started connecting the Cotton Scandal and the Soviet-Afghan War prior to writing his novel. As one of the more visible Uzbek cultural figures of the time, Hoshimov spoke at a multitude of forums and, after the Cotton Scandal, frequently published articles in defense of Uzbeks and other Soviet Central Asians. In 1990 at the XXVIII Party Congress in Moscow, he spelled out the connection he had made between the Cotton Scandal and the war when he asked delegates, “why are you not ashamed when you call Uzbekistan a ‘second Afghanistan?’”²⁸ The Cotton Scandal and other recent events such as the 1989 ethnic violence in the Ferghana valley—Uzbeks conducted pogroms against Meskhetian Turks in and around the city of Kokand—inspired non-Uzbek critics to label Uzbeks as uncultured and unadaptable to Soviet modernity.²⁹ The failure to create a socialist state in the ethnically similar Afghanistan consequently, for Hoshimov, suggested an affinity between Uzbekistan and Afghanistan. Both of them now were seemingly failed Soviet transformations. The differences between the two, however, most contributed to the novel. Afghanistan did not undergo Stalinist purges and collectivization. The new equation of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan therefore allowed Hoshimov to imagine Uzbekistan’s southern neighbor as a place identical to his home minus the history of Soviet rule. Uzbeks in Afghanistan could be the uncorrupted coethnics in which Soviet Uzbeks could find their authenticity.

²⁸ O‘tkir Hoshimov, “Xalqning aybi yo‘q,” in *Tanlangan asarlar*, vol. IV (Toshkent: Sharq, 2011), 460.

²⁹ Hundreds of letters to the editor of the weekly literary newspaper of Uzbekistan, *O‘zbekiston adabiyoti va san’ati* (*Literature and Art of Uzbekistan*) attest to the accusations lobbed at Uzbeks for the pogroms against Meskhetian Turks in Kokand. See O‘zRMDA f. R-2806 o. 1 d. 83 l. 56.

In fact, it is an uncorrupted Afghan Uzbek who serves as the ancestor/Sufi saint in the the protagonist Rustam's pivotal dream. Rustam's first diary entries presented in the novel detail the tragic hero's time as a Soviet soldier in Afghanistan. Suffering from the trauma of the war, they demonstrate that in Afghanistan, he is unable to distinguish between dream and reality. His narration of events acts to transform Afghanistan into a phantasmagoric locale. Rustam, we are led to believe, does not actually dream his encounter with an Afghan Uzbek. But the dream-like atmosphere that his narration lends Afghanistan suggests that we read this meeting as an ancestor dream.

Hoshimov prepares readers to see Rustam's encounter with an Afghan Uzbek as a kind of ancestor dream by exploiting the associations with the fantastic produced by the military jargon of the time. Throughout the war, Soviet troops referred to their Mujahedeen enemies via the local designation "*dushman*," meaning enemy in Uzbek, Tajik, and Dari. In Russian, however, "*dushman*" sounds like the word for soul, "*dusha*." Soldiers began to use the etymologically connected Russian word "*dukh*," or spirit, to refer to the enemy.³⁰ Hoshimov puns on the literal meaning of *dukh* in order to make Rustam's Afghan combatant appear as an uncanny, dream-like apparition.

Their fight on the battlefield then is best read as the ancestor/Sufi saint dream of the archetypal plot. The ancestor here, an Afghan Uzbek uncorrupted by Soviet history, admonishes Rustam for having forgotten his national heritage.

“Dux” yerga engashgandek bo‘ldi. Qo‘lida pichoq yaraqladi.
– Oting, Xayriddin! Ot! – dedim nafasim bo‘g‘zimga tiqilib. Shunda kutilmagan ish bo‘ldi. “Dux” bir hamla bilan Xayriddinning avtomatini qo‘lidan uchirib yubordi.

³⁰ A 1999 dictionary of the lexicon of Soviet veterans of the Afghan war reportedly compiled by B. Boiko and A. Borisov in 1999 identifies *dukh* as emerging from the word for enemy combatants in Afghanistan, *dushman*. See “Book: Военный Жаргон Ветеранов Афганской Войны 1979-1989,” accessed June 1, 2018, https://www.e-reading.club/bookreader.php/143802/Boiiko%2C_Borisov_A_-_Voennyii_zhargon_veteranov_afganskoi_voiiiny_1979-1989.html.

Yetib borganimda Xayriddin chalqanchasiga ag‘darila boshlagan edi. “Dux” uning avtomatiga engashganida jag‘iga tepdim. Sallsi uchib ketib, taqir boshi yalang‘ochlanib qoldi. Qaddini rostlamoqchi edi, yana tepdim. Tomog‘idan g‘ippa olib, qancha bo‘g‘ib turganim yodimda yo‘q. Xirillab og‘zidan ko‘pik keldi. Tipirchilamay qo‘ydi. Shundagina hushim joyiga keldi. Yo‘q, xirillayotgan “dux” emas, Xayriddin ekan. U shundoq yonimda yotar, qontalash ufqqa tikilib qolgan, ko‘zlari o‘ychan va sokin edi.[...]

Qandaydir ichki sezgi bilan “dux” g‘imirlay boshlganini his etdim. Ilkis qarasam, cho‘kkalab Xayriddinning yerda yotgan avtomatiga qo‘l cho‘zayapti. Yoqasidan bo‘g‘ib silkita boshladim.

– Nima qilding, maraz! Nima qilding! – dedim yig‘lab.

– Qo‘yib yubor! – U ojiz tipirchilab bilagimga osildi. – Qo‘yib yubor!

Shundagina bir narsa shuurimga yetdi: “dux” o‘zbekcha gapirayotgan edi.

– Sen... - dedim g‘azabdan qaltirab. – Sen... o‘zbekmisan? Buyam o‘zbek-ku! –

Basharasiga kuchim boricha musht tushirdim. – Buyam musulmon bolasiku, it! Nima yomonlik qildi, senga!

– Senlar o‘zbekmi! – “Dux” yorilgan lablari orasidan qon tupurib, tishlarini g‘ijirlatdi. – Yo‘q! Senlar o‘zbekmas! Senlar musulmonmas! – U sedan og‘gandek xoxolab kuldi. – Senlar “sho‘raviy!” Kim chaqirdi seni bu yerga! O‘z yurtिंगni sotib bo‘lib, endi Afg‘onni ham harom qilmoqchimisani! To‘ng‘iz! [...]

Qorasoqolning ko‘kragini mo‘ljallab tepkini bosdim. U yotgan joyida bir sapchidi. Tepkini bosib turaverdim. Bosh chanog‘i yorilib miyasining qatig‘i sachrab ketganini, go‘shlari, suyaklari parcha-parcha bo‘lib atrofga otilayotganini ko‘rib turardim. “magazine”dagi o‘qlar tugadi shekilli, avtomatning tarillashi eshitilmay qoldi. Faqat “A-a-a-a! A-a-a-a!” degan vahshiy hayqiriq hamon havoni titratar edi. Keyin balsam... baqirayotgan o‘zim ekanman.[...]

...Xayriddinning o‘rniga boshqa o‘qlovchi yuborishdi; latish bola ekan. Qiziq... Yaxshi yigit edi-ku, negadir hammamiz begonasirab turardik.

The *dukh* bent over. In his hand shone a knife.

“Shoot, Xayriddin! Shoot!” I said as my breath became lodged in my throat. Then something completely unexpected happened. The *dukh* lunged at Xayriddin, tearing the Kalashnikov from his hands. When I reached them Xayriddin was already on his back. Just as the *dukh* stretched for the Kalashnikov I kicked him in the jaw. His turban flew off revealing his bald head. He quickly attempted to get on his feet, but I kicked him again. I grabbed him tightly by the throat and cannot recall for how long I strangled him. He wheezed as saliva released from his mouth. He stopped moving. I came to at that moment. No, it wasn’t the *dukh* who was wheezing, it was Xayriddin. He was lying at my side, eyes fixed on the blood-like reddish sunset; his eyes were thoughtful and calm.[...]

With some kind of inner sense, I felt that the *dukh* had started moving again. When I turned sharply, I saw that he was again reaching for the Kalashnikov that was at the kneeling Xayriddin’s feet. I grabbed him by the throat and shook him.

“What did you do, you rot! What did you do?!” I said crying.

“Let me go!” he said, squirming and grabbing me by the wrist. “Let me go!” Suddenly it hit me: the *dukh* was speaking Uzbek.

“You...” I said shaking with rage. “You’re... an Uzbek? He is an Uzbek too!” I let my fist go across his face with all the strength I had. “He is a Muslim too, you dog! What did he ever do to you!”

“You’re Uzbeks?!” The *dukh* said gritting his teeth between his lips red with blood. “No! You can’t be Uzbeks! You can’t be Muslims!” He laughed as if he were out of his mind. “You’re Soviet!” Who invited you here?! You sold out your own land and now you’ve come to spoil the Afghan! Swine!”[...]

I aimed at the blackbearded *dukh*’s chest and pulled the trigger. His body leapt up for a moment. I held the trigger. I watched as the top of his head cracked open and his brains sprayed out in a slop, as his innards and his bones were shot apart. The magazine emptied of bullets and the clicking of the Kalashnikov fell silent. Only a wild scream of “A-a-a-a!” still shook the air. Later I found out... the wailing was from me.[...]

Another gunner was sent in place of Xayriddin; a Latvian. Interesting... He was a good person, but for some reason we all felt as if we were strangers.³¹

Like the ancestor of Kanap’ianov’s poem, the Afghan Uzbek tells the dreamer that the latter’s Soviet allegiance is incompatible with his authentic ethnic identity. The Afghan Uzbek accuses Rustam of being neither Uzbek nor Muslim, because he is part of a force occupying Uzbek lands. But the Afghan Uzbek’s accusation goes further: he suggests that Soviet Uzbeks have betrayed their own cultural heritage. Before Rustam kills him, the Afghan Uzbek calls him “swine,” a reference perhaps to the fact that Soviet army rations consisted largely of pork, despite the many Muslim soldiers in the army.³²

Along with the *dukh*’s admonitions, the dream itself destabilizes Rustam’s Soviet identity. During combat he cannot tell self from other such that he begins to doubt the authenticity of his ethnic self-perception and his Soviet allegiance. Rustam, we see, loses and regains consciousness as he strangles the *dukh*. The result of his loss of consciousness—he cannot determine who is wheezing—implies equivalence between the *dukh* and Xayriddin even before he discovers that the *dukh* is Uzbek. Later as he destroys the *dukh*, he loses his own sense

³¹ O’tkir Hoshimov, “Tushda kechgan umrlar,” in *Tanlangan asarlar*, vol. IV (Toshkent: Sharq, 2011), 100–102. A partial translation of the novel into English can be found here: Utkir Hashimov, “Life in a Dream,” *Icarus 16: End of Empire: 15 New Works from the 15 Republics of the Former Soviet Union*, no. Winter (1995): 37–50.

³² Many accounts of the Soviet-Afghan war note the fact that rations were primarily pork-based.

of self in the same manner: now he cannot determine that he is the one screaming. The language of the passage in Uzbek makes the loss of self even clearer by omitting “I” from every sentence. Uzbek, because it has varied conjugations, does not require a pronoun for each verb. But in this case, the lack of “I” reinforces the estrangement of Rustam from his body and will. The disruption of Soviet identity made possible by this ancestor dream then manifests itself in Rustam’s nascent rejection of the Soviet multinational state. Xayriddin’s replacement, a Latvian instead of an Uzbek, cannot evince the same kind of camaraderie that Xayriddin once did. As in Kanap’ianov’s 1986 poem above, the ancestor dream forces the dreamer to doubt his Soviet identity.

Previous scholars of Uzbek literature have oversimplified Hoshimov’s novel by reading this ancestor dream above as if it leads to Rustam’s awakening. In so doing, they have missed how Hoshimov opposes his dreaming protagonists and the depiction of the time of ignorance and decline in his novel to the Socialist Realist master plot. Asror Samad, the author of a recent study of Hoshimov, argues that the author shows all of Soviet life as a terrible, oppressive nightmare from which the characters awaken to a now national consciousness.³³ Ozod Sharafiddinov likewise suggests that the characters of the novel come to consciousness from their dream-like existences under Soviet tyranny.³⁴ As a result of his experience in Afghanistan, particularly the identification with Afghans outlined above, Rustam, as do other characters, indeed begins to see Soviet power in Tashkent as a Russian imperial force depriving Uzbeks of their land. While demanding a house for himself from the housing authority, Rustam accuses newcomers to

³³ Asror Samad, *O‘tkir qalam* (Toshkent: Meriyus, 2013), 269.

³⁴ Ozod Sharafiddinov, “O‘tkir Hoshimov,” in *Sardaftar sahifalari: Maqolalar, xotiralar* (Toshkent: Yozuvchi nashriyoti, 1999), 176.

Tashkent of taking all the living space from its native inhabitants.³⁵ However, this explanation omits that Rustam never comes to consciousness: he spends the rest of his life after Afghanistan in a fugue state, reliving his wartime trauma but in Tashkent.

These critics have missed that Rustam's anticolonial rebellion in the novel is a markedly unconscious one. Like the other Soviet Uzbeks of the novel, he is still very much embedded in the dream or unconsciousness characteristic of the decline of the archetypal plot. The dream, once begun in Afghanistan, follows him back to Tashkent. Before his eventual suicide, Rustam commits a somnambulant act of violence similar to his in Afghanistan that again alienates him from the Soviet Union and from Russians in particular, but no one could possibly claim that he is performing an agentive, conscious act. When his bigoted Russian neighbor decides to cut short a local wedding by dumping water on the noisy guests, Rustam, according to his diary, loses control and consciousness:

Devor tagidagi stolda qiy-chuv ko'tarilganini, besh-olti xotin-xalaj orasida Shahnoza ham sapchib o'rnidan turib ketganini, jiqqa ho'l bo'lib, badaniga yopishib qolgan ko'ylagining yoqasini g'ijimlayotganini ko'rib, tepaga qaradim. Barzangi derazani lang ochgancha qo'lida yashil plastmassa paqir ushlab turibdi.

To'rtinchi qavatga qanday chiqqanim esimda yo'q. Xudo haqqi, men unga qo'l ko'tarmoqchi emasdim. Qo'lidagi vino shishasini boshim ustida ko'targanidan keyin... u yog'i nima bo'lgani yodimda yo'q. Shahnozaning "o'ldirib qo'yasiz!" degan chinqirig'idan o'zimga keldim... Kim nima dedi, nima qildi, bunisiniyam eslolmayman. Faqat go'rdan chiqqandek guldiragan sado qulog'imga aniq-ravshan kirdi:

– G'irt millatchi ekansan, bola! Umring turmada chirib ketadi!

From the table beneath the [apartment building] wall I saw how the screaming began, how Shahnoza [Rustam's wife] along with five or six other women hopped up, soaking wet, her dress wrinkled and sticking to her body and I looked up. A green plastic bucket was gripped by a hand that had opened the rusty window above.

How I got up to the fourth floor I don't remember. God's truth I don't remember that I lifted my hand at him. After he lifted the wine bottle above my head... here I don't remember what happened. I came to when I heard Shahnoza's cry: "you'll kill him!..." Who said what, did what, I can't remember any of it. Only a voice [Soat G'aneiv's]

³⁵ For more on this "housing question" as evidence of the novel's anti-colonial bent, see Ahmet Agir, "From Colonial Past to Post-Colonial Future: Three Uzbek Novels (Qodiriy, Oybek, Hoshimov)" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin, 2003), 145–49.

rumbling as if from the grave clearly entered my ear: “You are a complete nationalist! You’ll rot away in prison for the rest of your life!”³⁶

In the course of the novel, other characters fill in some of the blanks of Rustam’s memory with their own accounts of the above scene, though, because the novel relies on the ambiguity that results from multiple narrators, it is difficult to say exactly what occurs here. According to his racist Russian neighbor, Grigorii Vasil’ev, Rustam beat him and injured his leg and neck,³⁷ Rustam’s wife, Shahnoza’s account is the most lucid and confirms that Rustam subdued Grigorii and continued to kick him on the ground as he tried to get up—similar to Rustam’s treatment of the Afghan *dukh* above.³⁸ The scene as described by Rustam in his diary is from the outset reminiscent of the dreamscape of Afghanistan and for that reason suggests Rustam’s loss of consciousness and identity in this scene. As in Afghanistan, we see that Rustam has no memory of what happened during this moment of violence, but the constant repetition of the phrase “I don’t remember” (*esimda yo‘q*) hints at a lack of consciousness. The Uzbek word *es* has a secondary meaning of consciousness: one can come to their senses after being unconscious (*hush-esiga keldi*). Rustam’s description of events adds another dream-like quality that further suggests lack of agentive action. His narrative is conspicuously deprived of actors. The subjects of his sentences are disembodied. It is not a person that dumps water on the women but “a hand;” he wakes up not from Shahnoza screaming but from “Shahnoza’s scream;” the one thing that he remembers clearly is not a person speaking but a disembodied “voice.” Rustam’s narrative cannot attribute agency or consciousness to anyone, much less himself. The ancestor/Sufi saint dream Rustam experiences in Afghanistan grants him an epiphany but not an awakening; after

³⁶ Hoshimov, “Tushda kechgan umrlar,” 227–28.

³⁷ Hoshimov, 46.

³⁸ Hoshimov, 23–24.

the dream, he remains in a state of unconsciousness or dream like the rest of his oppressed Soviet Uzbek compatriots.

Hoshimov marks this dream state, or the deferment of awakening, as a trait of an anti-Soviet Uzbek literature by opposing it to the consciousness found in the Socialist Realist master plot. We see this, first and foremost, in the villain of the novel, Soat G'aniev. A sleepless KGB agent, in a Socialist Realist novel, G'aniev would be the positive hero of the novel, but in his novel glorifying dream, Hoshimov makes him the villain. G'aniev is the only character of the novel who could be termed conscious. Unlike the novel's other characters, who are often lost in dream, G'aniev does not allow himself to sleep because he fears dreams. Like the heroes of Gladkov's *Cement*, G'aniev avoids dream in order to keep the past from entering the present. Again like those characters, he never admits to dreaming. Instead, he refers to potential dreams as conscious recollections, thus suppressing the potential confusions of past and present that plague the novel's other characters. In one such "dream," he meets a former victim of his NKVD purge work only to disavow the dream as a consciously recalled memory.

Tun – yolg'izlarni sinash uchun yuborilgan jazo elchisi. Avval ko'zingni ko'r qiladi. Keyin qulog'ingni shang'illatadi. Undan keyin yuragingni g'ijimlay boshlaydi. Shoshilmasdan... Aloq-chaloq tushlar ko'rasan...

Yana boshlandimi?.. Anavi kim? Basharasi tanish ko'rinadi? Iye, Husanxo'ja-ku! "O'lmaganmiding?"[...] "Yo'qol deyman". Kulishini qarang! Kulishi muncha xunuk! Iye, skelet-ku, bu! Husanxo'janing skeleti! Tishlari irjayib turibdi. Og'zini kappa-kappa ochib "aka-a-a". Yo'qol! Iflos, unsur! Pistoletim qani, pistoletim! Kim bor? Yordam beringlar!..

Uff... Nima bo'ldi? Nega titraydi? Tush ko'rdi-ku, tush. Tushdan ham qo'rqadimi, odam? Yo'q, uxlagani yo'q edi, shekilli. Aniq ko'rdi-ya! Devor orasidan sirg'alib chiqsa bo'ladimi? Validol qayoqda edi. Uf-f-f...

Night is the emissary of punishment sent to test the lonesome. First it makes you blind. Then it deafens your ears. And after that it muffles your heart. Slowly... you begin to see string after string of disconnected nightmares...

Has it started again?.. Who is that? Is it a familiar face appearing? Oh, Husanxo'ja! "You didn't die?"[...] "Get lost, I told you." Look at him laugh! What an ugly laugh! Oh, now you're a skeleton! Husanxo'ja's skeleton! He's sneering through his

teeth. He's opening his mouth wide, screaming "brother." Get lost! Unclean, enemy! Where's my pistol, my pistol! Who's there? Help!..

Uff... What happened? Why is he shaking? It was a dream, it must have been. Is the man scared of dreams? No, he must not have been sleeping. He saw it clearly! Could it have gone through the wall? Where is the validol? Uf-f-f...³⁹

Husanxo'ja, a childhood playmate of G'aniev's whom he executes as an enemy of the people during World War II, returns to haunt the Commissar at night, but G'aniev denies him a place in his unconscious. The narrative's assertion that G'aniev was awake is not an attempt to increase the fantastic qualities of the occurrence, but rather G'aniev's attempt to rationalize the experience as memory, not dream. Several times G'aniev maintains that "nothing leaves his memory" and "nothing leaves his consciousness." Unlike the other characters, who misremember and thus mix past and present, G'aniev asserts that he never sleeps and never dreams precisely because he is afraid of losing consciousness, his ability to reside fully in the present.

Hoshimov furthers the impression that Socialist Realism and its heroes are antithetical to Uzbekness by denying his G'aniev a nationality. All other indications in the novel suggest that G'aniev is an Uzbek: he speaks Uzbek, grows up with other Uzbeks, and has both an Uzbek first name and last name. Nevertheless, when he is first introduced via a short biographical description prior to his testimony as a witness of Rustam's alleged murder, the dossier notably attests that he has no nationality. Realistically, no citizen of the Soviet Union could afford to forego recording a nationality in their passport, particularly if one had the opportunity to record membership in the titular nationality of a republic. This entailed special privileges within the republic to which non-titular nationals did not have access.⁴⁰ G'aniev's lack of nationality is thus

³⁹ Hoshimov, 158.

⁴⁰ For more on the role of passport nationality in obtaining privileges in the Soviet Union, see Slezkine, "The USSR as a Communal Apartment, or How a Socialist State Promoted Ethnic Particularism."

highly marked. It suggests that his avoidance of dream has deprived him of any connection to the authentic past and thus his national identity.

The author sets the archetypal plot against the Socialist Realist master plot by juxtaposing his villain G'aniev to the dreamer Rustam, but he also does so through the structure and sense of time conveyed by the novel. The novel is constructed in a circular manner – it begins and ends with the very same episodes. Canonical Socialist Realist novels allegorized the Marxist-Leninist historical teleology through a novel constructed linearly. The progress of the sleepless positive hero was shown via a narrative that chronologically ordered events and displayed an empirically discernible relationship of cause and effect between past, present, and future, i.e. event A leads to event B. After the death of Stalin, authors began to play with temporality in their narrative structures. Hoshimov's novel previous to this one, *Between Two Doors* (*Ikki eshik orasi*, 1986) is a novel constructed in episodes across time from the perspectives of multiple characters, a structure with which Russian Village Prose writers also experimented. *Lives Passed in Dream* advances beyond this experimentation, often obscuring the boundaries between past and present. Hoshimov structures his novel such that time moves in the cyclical manner characteristic of the archetypal plot.

Hoshimov places his positive characters in this circular structure arguably to imitate the cyclical time of dream. As we have seen already, a “cyclical history” in which past and present are undifferentiated from one another is similar to what Freud describes as the time of dream. This is precisely the sense that *Lives Passed in Dream* suggests with its circular structure. The novel begins and concludes with an identical excerpt from Rustam's journal. In that excerpt, Rustam's final journal entry before his suicide, the dreamer demonstrates that he has fully submitted to what for Hoshimov is the time of dream. In this entry, Rustam likens his experience

of time to the cyclical time of nature. The protagonist here analogizes his imminent death with nature's death in autumn, identifying the time of his life with the cyclical movement of the seasons.

Kuz o'lim to'shagida yotgan bemorga o'xshaydi. Oyoq ostida kasalmand xazonlar ingraydi... Erta bahordan bo'tana bo'lib, shosha-pisha, qirg'og'iga sig'may oqqan ariqlar tiniqlashadi. Shuncha urinishlari zoe ketganini tushunib, olamga ma'yus boqadi... Endi suv tubida shodon chayqalgan maysalar emas, xazon ko'milib yotadi... Yeru ko'kni kafandek oppoq tuman chulg'aydi. Oq zulmat orasidan qarg'alarning xosiyatsiz fig'oni eshitiladi.

...Erta-indin osmonga motam libosini kiygan bulutlar chiqadi. Yer ustida uzoq charx uradi-da, achchiq-achchiq ko'z Yoshi to'kadi. Sim-sim yomg'ir yog'adi: to'rt kunli umrida dunyoga sig'magan, oxir-oqibat jon taslim etgan tabiatga aza ochib, unsiz yig'laydi...

Men necha yoshga chiqdim o'zi? Yigirma ikkiga?! Yo'g'-e, axir men yetmish ikkidaman-ku! Balki sakson ikkidadir? Nima farqi bor?! "Donolar hayotni kuzaturlar jim..."

Autumn is like an invalid on his deathbed. At their feet moan sickly leaves... The murky water of spring quickly overflows the banks of the canals, becoming transparent and clear. The dying invalid comes to understand that all his efforts have been in vain as he desperately gazes at existence... The gleefully swaying green vegetation at the bottom of the canals disappears. Dead leaves cover it in clumps... A white fog envelops the earth and sky like a death shroud. The indistinct cry of crows sounds out through the white haze.

Tomorrow or the next day the clouds, dressed in mourning attire, take their places in the sky. Having circumnavigated the earth, they release bitter tears. Rain falls in whole streams: the clouds silently bemoan that in the four days nature granted them they were unable to truly live, to experience the universe...

How old am I now? Twenty two? No, I must be seventy two! Maybe eighty two? What's the difference?! "The wise observe the world in silence..."⁴¹

The connection that Rustam draws between his own dying state and nature is hard to miss.

Autumn, during which the earth "dies" as it turns to winter, is personified as a dying person at his/her funeral. Fog covers the earth like a funeral shroud covers a corpse; clouds bemoan their short lives; the river becomes clear just as life becomes clear for the dying, etc. The original Uzbek text makes this identity of natural life with human life even clearer by depriving most of

⁴¹ Hoshimov, "Tushda kechgan umrlar," 5, 250.

the above sentences of a subject. To take the second sentence for example—“At their feet moan sickly leaves...”—I have rendered the personal possessive pronoun as “their” to represent the ambiguity contained in the original sentence. The original is intentionally unclear as to whose legs are described because the sentence reads simply “at foot sickly leaves moan.” One can assume it refers to the invalid’s feet based on the previous sentence but the context of the sentence itself suggests the foot of a tree. The reference is unclear and thus nature’s death and human death are conflated again. The use of this seasonal metaphor indicates to the Uzbek reader, accustomed to such metaphors, that rebirth in some form will necessarily follow the autumnal decline.

Hoshimov opposes Rustam’s cyclical dream time to the progressive time of consciousness. In concluding the above passage, Rustam relates his inability to conceive of any notion of progress whatsoever. While the internal structure of the year is indeed cyclical—the same four seasons and twelve months pass within it—age requires a progressive notion of time as it represents a cumulative total of those yearly cycles. Rustam cannot define his age because he has surrendered to the cyclical time of dream.

We see the work of this cyclical time not only in the identical passages that bookend the novel. Hoshimov also places two similar passages as the novel’s second and penultimate chapters to demonstrate that the events of the novel have not changed the behavior of the positive characters – the events have not brought them to consciousness, and they remain within the endlessly cyclical time of dream. Despite the time that has passed between the two narrations, the two narratives of Qurbonoy, the elderly woman who first finds Rustam’s body, are enticingly similar. The first, however, is more expansive and detailed than the second because it contains the added tension of an anticipated dramatic change that will frame the novel. In the first of the

narratives, Qurbonoy discovers Rustam's corpse, which prompts the murder investigation around which the remainder of the novel revolves. The second narrative, which is placed in the novel immediately after the reader learns that Rustam has committed suicide, is deprived of that tension and thereby hints at the lack of a Socialist Realist linear, progressive narrative whereby characters come to consciousness. A seemingly transformative event—a murder—turns out to be uneventful—a suicide—and therefore Qurbonoy's days repeat themselves with minimal change. I will introduce text from both passages before submitting it to analysis.

Beginning of the novel:

Biqini achishib uyg'ondi. "Xudoyim, o'zingni rahming kelsin," dedi pichirlab.[...] Qurbonoy xola bo'ynidan achom qilib yotgan nevarasini uyg'otib yubormaslik uchun sekin qaddini rosladi. Uy ichi sham hidiga to'lgan edi. Kecha chiroq o'chib qolgani, yangi qo'shni – Shahnozadan sham olib chiqqani esiga tushdi. Nim qorong'ida paypaslab, bolaning butiga qo'l yubordi: qup-quruq.[...]

– Choy qo'yib keting, oyi! – Shunday dediyu, boshiga ko'rpa tortdi.

Qurbonoy xola indamay oshxonaga chiqdi. O'lsin! Chiroq haliyam kelmabdi. Vanaxonaga o'tib shoshilmay tahorat oldi. Gazga choy qo'yib, uyga qaytib kirdi. Bomdodni o'qidi. O'tganlarga Ollohning rahmatini, qolganlarga imon tiladi. O't balosi, suv balosi, tuhmat balosidan asrashni so'rab, yuziga fotiha tortdi.[...] Shig'illatib supurishga tushdi. Biqinida og'riq kuchayganiga parvo qilmadi. Bibiblab non mashina keldi. Ichkaridan ko'konchi chiqdi. Mashinaning orqa kajavasini ochishdi. Tuman tarqamadi-yu, kun bir qadar yorishgandek bo'ldi.

Bir mahal orqa tomondan yo'g'on ovoz keldi.

– Supurayapsanmi?

Qurbonoy xola ovoz egasini tanidi: komissar.

"O'ynayapman!" – deb o'yladi ensasi qotib. Har kuni "supurayapsanmi?" deb so'raydi.[...]

Komissar besh-olti qadam narida turar, boshida qora shlyapa, egnida qora plash, qo'lida sut bidon bor edi.

– Nevaralaring omonmi? – dedi komissar yoshiga yarashmagan o'ktam tovushda.

– Xudoga shukur, yurishibdi. Yumalab-sumalab.

– O'zing ahmoqsan! – dedi komissar zarda bilan – Necha marta aytdim:

kuyovingni sudga ber! Moyagini bir burasa, qizingga dom olib beradi. Yo uchastkasining yarmini kesib beradi.[...]

– Mayli, – dedi sekin. – Xudoga soldim.[...]

– Xudoning sendan boshqa ishi yo'q! Falonchi bandamning arzi-holini eshitaman, deb ko'zi uchib turibdi.

"E-e! Tezroq daf bo'lsang-chi! Sen bilan gaplashib yurakni qon qilgandan ko'ra..."

Qurbonoy xola atay gapni boshqa yoqqa burdi.

– Sutga ketyapsizmi?

– Borib keldim. Bugun sut kelmas ekan. Do‘kon kecha bayramda ishlagani uchun bugun oddix qipti.

Qurbonoy xola supurgisini changallab, ishni davom ettirmoqchi edi, komissar ma’noli yo‘talib qo‘ydi. Chamasi yana gaplashgisi bor edi.

– Ertalab kasha pishirib yemasam, me‘dam og‘riydi.

– Keksalik-da! – dedi Qurbonoy xola.

– Meni qari deyapsanmi, xex!

She awoke from a terrible pain in her side. “Oh God, please have mercy on me,” she whispered.[...] To avoid waking her granddaughter, who lay next to her clinging to her neck, she stood up slowly. The house was filled with the smell of burnt candle wax. Yesterday the electricity went out and Qurbonoy had to borrow a candle from their new neighbor, Shahnoza. Groping around in the dark, she checked the child’s diaper: dry.[...] “Put on the tea, mom!” said her daughter as she pulled the blanket over her head.

Qurbonoy silently stepped out of the house into the kitchen. Dammit! The power hadn’t come back. She went into the bathroom and slowly did her morning ablutions. She put the tea on the gas stove and went back inside the house. She read her morning prayers. She asked God to grant the deceased peace, their survivors – faith.[...] She set to sweeping, paying no heed to the increasing pain in her side. The bread truck honked as it arrived. The store owner came out. He and the truck driver opened the back. Though the fog hadn’t yet lifted, the sky looked as though it had started to light up.

Suddenly a think voice sounded from behind.

“Are you sweeping?”

Qurbonoy recognized the owner of the voice: the Commissar.

“No, I’m playing!” she thought, concealing her irritation. Every day he asks “are you sweeping?”[...]

The Commissar was standing five-six steps away, on his head was a black hat and on his back – a black cape. His hand held an empty bottle of milk.

“Are your grandchildren well?” asked the Commissar in a booming voice not fitting his years.

“Thank God, they are. Everything is well.”

“Well, you’re an idiot!” said the Commissar with malice, “how many times have I told you: bring your son-in-law up on charges! Give his nuts a twist, and they’ll give your daughter a house. Or at least half a plot.”[...]

“Fine,” she said slowly, “I’ll put it to God.”[...]

“As if God has nothing else to do but deal with your problems! As if his eyes are only searching for the complaints of such-and-such believer.”

“Just leave already! Getting my bleeding running with you is such...” thought Qurbonoy, but instead turned the conversation elsewhere.

“Are you buying milk?”

“I already went. Today the milk didn’t come. The store isn’t working today because they worked yesterday during the holiday.”

Qurbonoy gripped the broom tighter and continued working, but the Commissar coughed as if he wanted to say something.

“If I don’t eat cereal in the morning, my stomach hurts.”
“Old age!” said Qurbonoy.
“You’re calling me old, heh!”⁴²

End of the novel:

Biqini achishib uyg‘ondi.

– Xudoyim, o‘zingni rahming kelsin... – dedi pichirlab.[...]

Bo‘ynidan “achom” qilib yotgan nevarasining do‘mboq qo‘lchasini avaylab olib, ustiga ko‘rpa tortdi. O‘rnidan sirg‘alib turdi-da, yo‘lakka chiqib, chiroq yoqdi. Shoshilmay tahorat qildi. Gazga choy qo‘yib, nim qorong‘i xonaga qaytib kirdi. Bomdodni o‘qib o‘tganlarga Ollohning rahmatini tiladi. Jumlamo‘minga imon, salomatlik, yurtga tinchlik so‘radi...

Oshxonaga kirib, choy ichdi. Bir qo‘liga paqir, bir qo‘liga uzun bandli supurgi olib, yana yotoqqa mo‘raladi.[...]

Qurbonoy xola paqir bandini daranglatib yubormaslik uchun zinalardan ehtiyotkor qadam bosib, pastga tushdi. Kunlar uzayib qolgan edi. Qish bo‘yi qoq suyakdek so‘ppayib turgan baqateraklar ko‘klam yaqinlashayotganini sezgandek jonlanib qolgan, yalang‘och shoxlarini tong shamolida silkitib, o‘zini o‘zi uyg‘otayotganga o‘xshar edi. Qirg‘og‘i betonlangan ariqlar chetida maysalar unib chiqibdi... Munis, ojiz maysalar...

Qurbonoy xola paqirni terak ostiga qo‘yib, shig‘illatib supurib ketdi. Anchadan keyin non do‘koniga mashina keldi. Boshiga eski do‘ppi kiygan haydovchi mashina kajavasini ochdi.

– Supurayapsanmi?

Qurbonoy xola komissarning g‘o‘ldiragan ovozini eshitib, ishini to‘xtatdi.

“Yo‘q, o‘ynayapman!” deb o‘yladi ensasi qotib.

Salom berdi. Komissar changdan qochib, o‘n qadamcha narida turardi. Boshida qora shlyapa, egnida qora plash. Qo‘lida sut bidon...

– Kuyovingni sudga berdingmi? – dedi komissar.

– Xudoga soldim!

– To‘g‘ri qilasan! – Komissar istehzoli iljaydi. – Xudoning sendan boshqa dardikasali yo‘q.

She awoke from a terrible pain in her side. “Oh God, please have mercy on me...” she whispered.[...] She cautiously lifted the round hand of her granddaughter, who lay next to her, clinging to her neck, and pulled the blanket over her. She stood up, slipped a bit, walked into the corridor, and turned on the light. She did her ablutions slowly. She put the tea on the gas stove and returned to the dark room. She read her morning prayers and asked God to give mercy to the deceased and faith to the faithful. She asked for health and peace in her home.

She went into the kitchen and drank tea. In one hand she took her bucket and in the other her broom.[...]

Qurbonoy carefully went down the stairs, taking care to avoid hitting the bucket against the steps. The days had become shorter. The black poplars, looking like dry bones stripped in the winter, had come to life as if they sensed the approach of spring. They

⁴² Hoshimov, 5–9.

wave their naked branches, as if they were waking themselves. At the edge of the creeks with concrete embankments the green grass seemed to be growing... the dear, weak grass.

Qurbonoy put her bucket under the poplar and began sweeping. The truck had arrived at the bread store a good while back. The driver, wearing an old skull-cap, opened the back of the truck.

“Are you sweeping?”

Qurbonoy heard the Commissar’s booming voice and stopped her work.

“No, I’m playing!” she thought, concealing her irritation.

They greeted one another. The Commissar, avoiding the dust, stood ten steps away. On his head was a black hat, on his back – a black cape. In his hand – a milk bottle...

“Did you bring your son-in-law up on charges?” said the Commissar.

“I left it to God!”

“Good!” The Commissar smiled venomously. “As if God doesn’t have other worries.”⁴³

The similarities between these two passages hint that the events of the novel exact little change in Qurbonoy’s life. As we see from the final conversation in Qurbonoy’s concluding story, she knows of Rustam’s suicide and is probably aware of the psychological trauma and political grievances that led to it, but her routine remains unchanged. Both mornings she wakes up, carefully frees herself from her granddaughter, does ablutions, says prayers, drinks tea, talks with the villain Soat G’aniev, etc. The first story, however, contains elements that show conspicuous breaks in the routine. For instance, the electricity is out, and she cannot easily turn on the light like she does at the end of the novel. Additionally, there is no milk; the Commissar cannot fill his milk bottle as he does throughout the book and in Qurbonoy’s second story. These two details not only suggest the attempt to highlight an extraordinary event and begin a narrative, but also mislead the reader into suspecting murder. Shahnoza originally lies to the investigator about her whereabouts on the night of Rustam’s suicide: she says she was at home with him all night and went out to get milk in the morning but there was none. Indeed, Qurbonoy’s comment that Shahnoza gave her a candle the previous night and the Commissar’s complaint that no milk was

⁴³ Hoshimov, 251–52.

delivered support her claim. When the investigator uncovers that she was not home with him that night, the reader begins to suspect Shahnnoza had some role in the murder, only to have those expectations dashed later. The second narrative, which contains none of these details, rejects all the potential narrative-making eventfulness of the first.

Hoshimov connects the cyclical, repetitive nature of the above narratives with Qurbonoy's authentic Muslim character, and in so doing, further highlights that this observance of the cyclical time of the archetypal plot is authentically Uzbek. While Hoshimov specifically highlights the character's Muslim beliefs, by this time, Uzbeks' understanding of Islam had been ethnicized, and thus Hoshimov's interest in her Muslim character speaks to her Uzbekness as well.⁴⁴ Qurbonoy's spiritual practice is directly connected to her observance of repetitive ritual. Her daily religious practices—ablutions and prayers—are part of the repetitive routine she creates for herself, but more importantly they act to prevent disruption of that routine. For example, her answer to G'aniev's question about her son-in-law, "I left it to God," suggests that her routine and authenticity are maintained by her religious devotion and its concomitant ritual. She has multiple moments in the conversations with G'aniev where her immediate thoughts suggest an out-of-the-ordinary response—she considers telling G'aniev off sarcastically or wittingly responding to his stupid questions—but she adheres to her ritual and never changes a thing.

Tellingly, the novel's progressive villain Soat G'aniev, often called the Commissar as in the two passages above, is the character that brings or attempts to bring change into Qurbonoy's narratives. In both narratives, G'aniev interrupts her routine: in the first, he finds Rustam's body

⁴⁴ For more on the ethnicization of Islam in Central Asia, see Khalid, *Islam after Communism: Religion and Politics in Central Asia*, 84–115.

and reports it, thus starting the investigation around which the novel develops. In the second, he continues to ask questions of the case, refusing to accept the conclusion of suicide.

Beginning of the novel:

Qurbonoy xola javob bermadi. Shaxt bilan supurishni davom ettirayotgan edi, qulog‘iga yana komissarning ovozi kirdi:

– Anavi kim?

Qurbonoy xola komissar qo‘lini bigiz qilib ko‘rsatgan tomonga qaradi. Uy yerto‘lasining zinasida bir odam g‘ujanak bo‘lib yotardi.

– Qayoqdan bilay! – dedi Qurbonoy xola beparvolik bilan. – Anaviyodan kelganlardan bittasidir-da. Bilasiz-ku, qish kelsa qalang‘i-qasang‘ilar ko‘payadi. Kecha bayram qilib bukib ichgan bo‘lsa...

– Yo‘q, unaqaga o‘xshamaydi. – Komissar shahdam qadamlar bilan o‘sha tomon yurdi. – Yotishi bejo-ku!

Qurbonoy xolaning ko‘ngliga mubham xavotir tushdi. Supurgisini sudrab komissarga ergashdi.

– Hoy, kimsan? – Komissar engashib, yelkasiga turtgan edi, gavda qimirlamadi.

Qurbonoy xola yaqin borib gavda ustiga egildi-yu, dahshat ichida o‘zini orqaga tashladi.

– Voy! Voy o‘lmsam! – dedi oyoq-qo‘lidan mador ketib. – Rustamjon-ku! Kuyov-ku! Kechagina o‘ynab-kulib o‘tiruvdi-ya!

Qurbonoy said nothing and continued working. The Commissar’s voice entered her ear once again:

“Who’s that?”[...]

“How should I know?” said Qurbonoy with indifference. One of those that came from you know where. You know, winter comes and the riff-raff come in. He probably drank himself stupid yesterday celebrating...”

“No, he doesn’t look like one of those.” The Commissar said as he steadily walked towards him. “A drunk wouldn’t be lying here!”

A vague worry fell over Qurbonoy. She dragged her broom as she followed the Commissar.

“Hey, who are you?” The Commissar bent over and poked him in the shoulder. The body didn’t move.

Qurbonoy came closer and bent over the man’s torso. Suddenly she fell backwards in terror.

“Oh! Oh no!” she said as she lost feeling in her legs. “Rustamjon! Son-in-law! Just yesterday you were happy!”⁴⁵

End of the novel:

Qurbonoy xola supurgini ko‘tarib, ishini davom ettirmoqchi edi, komissar so‘rab qoldi.

⁴⁵ Hoshimov, “Tushda kechgan umrlar,” 9–10.

– Xabaring bo‘lmadimi, anavi Bolani o‘ldirganlar topildimikan?
 – Topilganda nima? – dedi Qurbonoy xola. – O‘lganning yosh joni ketdi... Xudo rahmat qilsin...
 – Kelin-chi, kelin? Qadami qiyshaymayaptimi?
 Qurbonoy xola norozi alpozda qarab qo‘ydi.
 – O‘zingiz tuzukmisiz? – dedi boshqa gap topolmay.
 – Menmi? – Komissar kuldi. – Xex-xex-xex! Qachon o‘lasiz, demoqchimisan?
 Ovora bo‘lasan! Men o‘lmayman! Xex!

Qurbonoy went to pick up her broom and continue working, but the Commissar suddenly asked.
 “Have you heard whether they caught the murderers of that boy?”
 “Who is there to find?” Qurbonoy asked. “He died young... God have mercy on him...”
 “And his wife? She’s not cheating on him?”
 Qurbonoy looked at him in disagreement.
 “Are you ok?” she said, unable to find other words.
 “Me?” the Commissar laughed. “Heh-heh-heh! You wanted to ask when I will die? As if you’re worried! I will never die! Heh!”⁴⁶

G‘aniev appears in all the novel’s various episodes across the life of the Soviet Union as a ubiquitous Chekist. Hoshimov shows readers his villain’s role as an investigator in the Stalinist purges and his endless drive to rid the Soviet Union of hidden enemies, even in the post-Stalin years. In the late 1980s in which Rustam’s suicide takes place, we see him as a retired officer who badgers the unnamed investigator of Rustam’s case. In an interview about the novel, Hoshimov calls G‘aniev a “dark force,” giving the character a supernatural quality, but the role that the criminal investigation of Rustam’s case plays in creating and pushing forward the novel suggests G‘aniev has another function.⁴⁷ As the two passages above show, G‘aniev’s status as an investigator make him a potential creator of linear narrative. By finding Rustam’s body, he provides the pretext for the introduction of the documents—diaries, witness testimonies, interrogations—that make up the novel. Even after the investigation has concluded, G‘aniev the

⁴⁶ Hoshimov, 251–52.

⁴⁷ Toir Yunus, “Asaringni o‘qigan kitobxon uxlolmay chiqsa...: O‘tkir Hoshimov bilan Toir Yunus suhbatlari,” *Sharq yulduzi*, no. 7 (1993): 149–56.

investigator is unsatisfied. He continues to introduce consciousness into the novel, to find a murderer, i.e. a conscious agent of Rustam's death, other than the unconscious Rustam. Yet the novel denies him this chance and ends the way it started, with barely anything having changed, and no one having come to consciousness.

Like his Jadid literary predecessors that parodied the archetypal plot in the 1920s by deliberately postponing the plot's awakening and rebirth, Hoshimov similarly denied his characters' any moment of awakening but for a very different reason. Cho'lpon and the other artists in the first chapter of this dissertation deferred awakening to accomplish aesthetic goals that were opposed to their politics. Hoshimov, on the other hand, deferred awakening in an effort to suggest a new literary *habitus* for Uzbekistan on the ruins of the old one. His novel responds to the rules and expectations of the Socialist Realist master plot, arguing that they are alien to the Uzbek literary tradition. He therefore authored a novel in which only the villain is conscious (and constantly so). Only the villain attempts to create the linear narrative required of Socialist Realism in the 1930s. By making the Socialist Realist hero into his villain, Hoshimov forwards a version of the archetypal plot as authentically Uzbek. His tragic hero discovers his national heritage, his Uzbekness, through dream but is subsequently unable to exit that dream. He finds himself lost in its cyclical time, and, like the unironized *raisonneur* heroes of past Uzbek works, of literature, Rustam takes his own life. The novel's structure echoes its protagonist's entrapment in the cyclical time of dream. Its circular form denies the characters any advancement, any moment of consciousness. The display of a lack of consciousness and its tragic results, Hoshimov asserts, is authentic to the Uzbek literary tradition.

While Hoshimov was not the only Uzbek or Uzbekistani intellectual to propose a new type of literature for post-Soviet Uzbekistan—many Russian-language writers did as well—

Hoshimov's model has ultimately enjoyed the most success.⁴⁸ With the death of the Soviet Union, the archetypal plot has returned to Uzbek literature and is employed by a variety of Uzbek-language authors. It has come to underwrite a new literary *habitus*. Though its contours are not as well-defined as those of Socialist Realism, it provides rules and expectations for the representation of Uzbekistan's past, present, and future. Post-Soviet Uzbek authors now inhabit these rules, interpreting them to conform with their interests and understanding of history. The epilogue briefly looks at how these authors continue to reproduce the archetypal plot and use it to affirm the state.

Hoshimov's novel begins this new tradition of affirming the post-Soviet Uzbek state. Though he does not call on his audience to awaken directly nor does he imply, through an extratemporal scene, that his audience should awaken, he wrote his novel after the collapse of the Soviet Union and therefore implied a specific reader reaction. Uzbek readers, he hoped, would interpret *Lives Passed in Dream* much as they interpret other works of the archetypal plot: as a condemnation of a tyrannical past under a previous state that affirms the justice of the current state. They would read the tragic hero of the novel as a martyr of that time of ignorance whom they could redeem in their just present.

And many readers of *Lives Passed in Dream* did exactly that. In her 2001 poem "Live" ("Yashagin"), published as a reader response to Hoshimov's novel, Gulruh Yormatova recognizes Rustam as a martyr for independent Uzbekistan and, by invoking his memory, offers him resurrection.

Sen yashagin
("Tushda kechgan umrlar" romanini o'qib)

Bu dunyo aslida bir bozor ekan.

⁴⁸ For more on Russian-language authors' proposals for post-Soviet Uzbekistani literature and aesthetics, see Kirill Korchagin, "When We Replace Our World..." *Russian Studies in Literature* 53, no. 3–4 (2017): 205–32.

Kimga tikan, kimga lolazor ekan.
Yaxshiga kun yo‘g‘u, doim xor ekan.
Rustam, sen dunyoga qul siltab ketding!

Muhabbat aslida bir ro‘yo erur,
Bu bog‘da qarg‘alar bulbulgo‘yodir.
G‘uborsiz baxt esa noyob giyohdir,
Rustam, sen shu baxtni qidirib ketding!

Rustam, sen yashagin, Shahnozang bo‘lay,
Bu g‘amli dunyoda g‘ambodang bo‘lay.
Paymonang bo‘lay men, parvonag bo‘lay.
Rustam, sne yashagin, yashagin faqat!

This world is a bazaar.
To some a thorn, and to others – a rose.
But for the righteous there is no peace, only abasement and shame.
Rustam, you waved goodbye and left this world!

Love is but a dream,
In its garden, crows sing like nightingales,
And eternal happiness is a scarce flower.
Rustam, you left this world without finding that happiness!

Rustam, come live again, and I’ll be your Shahnoza,
I’ll share your sorrow in this world.
I’ll be the goblet that fills your tears and the moth that worships at your flame.
Rustam, come live, just live again!⁴⁹

Yormatova reads Rustam as Hoshimov intended him, as a martyr of Soviet tyranny. For Uzbek readers, Rustam knows the truth of the Soviet Union’s injustice and is therefore unable to continue his life in that time. He is therefore, like the unironized tragic *raisonneur* heroes of Hamza and Avloniy, an anachronism, a being whose moral constitution makes him fit for a better time. Like a martyr, his death serves to inspire others, namely readers, to bring about a time in which he would not be victimized. The readers of independent Uzbekistan are reminded by his death to ensure that post-Soviet Uzbekistan is not the tyranny of the past. But also like a

⁴⁹ Gulruh Yormatova, “Sen yashagin,” *Saodat*, no. 3 (2001): 9.

martyr, his sacrifice should be redeemed. Yormatova does just that with her reading that recognizes his sacrifice and resurrects his memory for a brief moment in the body of the poem.

Epilogue

At least since 2016, the Tashkent State Satire Theater has toured all over contemporary



Figure 5.1: Toshmurod and Tangriqul murder Boy. A March 21, 2019, staging of Behbudiy's *The Parricide*.

Source: <http://mcs.uz/2619-21-mart-ozbekiston-davlat-satira-teatrida-padarkush-spektaklining-namoyishi-hamda-rassomlar-korgazmasi-bolib-otdi-spektakldan-oldin-esa-teatrning-ustoz-sanatkorlari-teatr-haftaligini-ochib-b.html>

Uzbekistan with a new production of Mahmudxo'ja Behbudiy's *The Parricide*, the first Uzbek drama. This new production was hardly the result of popular demand. The theater's director, Jo'rabek Rusmetov, said as much in a 2016 interview when he noted that the production could not have been supported by ticket sales alone and has required state funds.¹ Instead, both theater professionals and the Uzbek intelligentsia have

considered the new production of the play essential to maintaining the morality and cultural authenticity of the country's citizens. The State Satire Theater's production has therefore been staged in special locations and for various events across the country. In October of 2018, the theater put on *The Parricide* in the Culture Palace of the Tashkent State Orientological Institute where the audience, according to the institute's summary of the event, "received spiritual, educational, and cultural nourishment."² In honor of the country's Youth Day on June 30, 2019,

¹ "Dramaturgam vernut den'gi, 'zamorozhennye' po delu Gul'nary Karimovoi," Radio Ozodlik, March 29, 2016, <https://rus.ozodlik.org/a/27642528.html>.

² "'Padarkush yoxud o'qimag'on bolaning xoli' spektakli namoyish etildi," Toshkent davlat sharqshunoslik instituti, October 26, 2018, <http://tashgiv.uz/padarkush-yoxud-oqimag'on-bolaning-xoli-spektakli-namoyish-etildi/>.

the theater provided free admission to its June 29th production of the “national consciousness-building (milliy vatanparvarlik ruhdagi)” play.³

In maintaining what they see as Uzbek morality and cultural authenticity, the creators of the new production have little altered the coercive archetypal plot emulated by Behbudiy’s 1914 original. A review of the State Satire Theater’s January 22, 2018, staging of the play in Bukhara reiterates the coercion that the modern tragedy continues to enact.

Spektakl orqali ilm va tarbiyasiz ulg‘ayotgan bolalarning qilmishlari oqibatidan, otionalarning beparvoligi tufayli qarovsiz qolayotgan yosh avlodning fojeasi kulgi orqali keskin tanqid ostiga olinadi. Zero, dunyoga tarannum etadigan ilm, ma‘naviyat vositasi orqali taraqqiy etadi.

In the drama we see the actions of children who grow up in ignorance and without education. The show sharply criticizes (and satirizes) the tragedy of a young generation left without supervision due to the carelessness of parents. But the knowledge and morality that light the world will continue to provide progress.⁴

Writers of the State Satire theater undoubtedly updated the play to serve more modern tastes – the review references laughter, of which the original had little. The flow of the plot, however, remains the same. A society in cultural decline leads eventually to the play’s tragic murder, but not all hope is lost. An authorial mouthpiece figure returns at the end of the play, dressed [see figure 5.2] in the typical garb of a saint, to mark the audience’s rebirth, i.e. that “the knowledge and morality that light the world will continue to provide progress.”

³ “O‘zbekiston Davlat Satira Teatri,” Telegram, June 29, 2019, /s/uzsatira_teatr?before=1786.

⁴ “Padarkush yohud o‘qimagan bolaning holi,” *PROTODAY.UZ* (blog), January 26, 2018, <http://protoday.uz/uz/archives/102621>.

Despite the one hundred five years that have passed since Behbudiy first staged his play, the archetypal plot remains a literary force in contemporary independent Uzbekistan. Unlike the master plot of Socialist Realism, it does not hold a monopoly on the state and ordinary Uzbekistani citizens' narration of their lives and justification of their positions, but it does contain a substantial number of the rules and expectations that constitute the Uzbek-language literary *habitus*. It is one of the tools that authors are expected to use in demonstrating their support for the state. The state, in turn, continues to support not only reproductions of Jadid iterations of the archetypal plot, like that seen above, but also plays like Norqobil's *A Stain in the Heart*.



Figure 5.2: Domla, bearded and dressed in white like a saint (*avliyo*), delivers one of the play's monologues in a June 29, 2019, production
Source: <http://mcs.uz/3274-30-iyun-uzbekiston-respublikasi-eshlari-kuni-munosabati-bilan-padarkush-eud-imoonbolaning-oli-nomli-spektakl-namoyishi-blib-tdi.html>

The archetypal plot that we now see in contemporary Uzbekistan would not have been possible without the meeting of Uzbek literature and Socialist Realism in the 1930s. The disciplinary practices of Socialist Realism transformed the reading and writing practices of Uzbeks, such that they endeavored to reduplicate the Socialist Realist master plot, as they understood it, and later the archetypal plot without irony, parody, or ambiguity. Political and didactic goals have reigned supreme in Uzbek literature since the 1930s. Even today, as many Uzbek litterateurs in Uzbekistan claim to have dispensed of the politicized literature of the past, they have not abandoned the didacticism, the inculcation of morality, and the requirement to represent and maintain the Uzbek nation they believe is required of literature.

This approach to literature, as we have seen, has resulted in copious misreadings that have, throughout the century, stabilized and maintained the archetypal plot. Because of Socialist

Realist disciplinary practices, Uzbek readers have ignored the possibility of irony or *hamartia* in their readings of the works of second-generation Jadid authors Abdulla Qodiriy and Abdulhamid Sulaymon o‘g‘li Cho‘lpon. They have ignored the literary play found in Abdulla Qahhor’s novel *Mirage*, in which the author transforms Jadids into the anti-hero protagonists of the very tragedies they wrote. And they have also ignored the literary play of O‘tkir Hoshimov, who deferred awakening in his novel to demonstrate his rebellion against the Socialist Realist master plot narrative of coming to consciousness. As a result of these misreadings, the archetypal plot is still very much alive today.

The archetypal plot, for its part, determined the interpretation and realization of the Socialist Realist master plot and other Russian-born literary forms in Uzbek literature. Because of the archetypal plot, Uzbek Socialist Realism was not simply “national in form, socialist in content,” nor a mere reduplication of the Russian Socialist Realist master plot cloaked in national themes and language. Uzbek writers and intellectuals understood Soviet ideology and Socialist Realist literature in terms of the history of their own culture and literary tradition. We therefore see, in chapter two, how Abdulla Qahhor adapted to the archetypal plot elements of the master plot that he gleaned from his reading and translation of canonized Socialist Realist novels. He arrives at a Socialist Realist novel that reiterates the archetypal plot’s coercive tragedy, but in his novel, decline and death lead not to rebirth but to the birth of socialism. Uzbek writers of the 1970s and 1980s combined both the pessimism of Russian Village Prose and the optimism of Socialist Realist tropes of the master plot to reproduce in their literature the archetypal plot’s trajectory of decline, death, and rebirth. As the Soviet Union fell apart, our final author, O‘tkir Hoshimov, turned to the Socialist Realist master plot and its tropes once again, but now he opposed the archetypal plot to them. The typical insomniac hero of the Socialist Realist novel,

who uses his sleeplessness to ensure that the past cannot enter the present, becomes a villain in Hoshimov's *Lives Passed in Dream*, while Hoshimov makes a dreamer, who cannot differentiate past from present, into his hero. In each of these instances, Uzbek writers did not interpret Socialist Realist tropes in the manner that Russian authors had intended them. They consistently read them in terms of their own literary history and via elements of the archetypal plot.

In contemporary Uzbekistan, the archetypal plot no longer competes with the Socialist Realist master plot, but that hardly means that it will remain the same. As noted in the introduction, the plot is versatile and continues to be. A revival of religious thought in literature has, for some authors, transformed how they realize the archetypal plot. In his 2011 spiritual novella *The Eternal Wander (Boqiy darbadar)*, the contemporary author Isajon Sulton (b. 1967), for example, reproduces the cosmic cycle of the archetypal plot—civilizational decline, death, and rebirth—on an epic scale.⁵ With his novella, he affirms the role of the Uzbek state as the guarantor of Uzbek cultural continuity, but he gives God a far greater role in human life. The religious son of the novella's principal character, the secular Dr. Ziyoyev, affirms the independent nation-state of Uzbekistan by echoing the nationalist language that the state uses to justify itself.⁶

Ana shu kunda men o'z jonajon tuprog'imda, o'z jonajon millatim bilan birga bo'lishni orzu qilaman.

Menga yurt shu imonimni himoya qilishim, uni yot ta'sirlardan saqlay olishim, shoyadki Tangrim farzand ato etsa, uni aynan shu ruhda, aynan shu haqiqatlar bilan tarbiyalashim uchun kerak. Shu joyda Imon bilan Vatan degan narsalarning birlashganini ko'raman. Zotan, ruh tanasiz bu dunyoda mavjud bo'la olmaganiday, imon ham Vatansiz mavjud bo'la olmasligini ko'raman.

Vatanim deya jon taslim qilganlar, "Ey Vatan" deya dengizday to'lqinlangan xalqlar, dushman tajovuzi ostida "Vatan" deya qirilib ketgan minglab insonlar taqdirida shularni ko'raman: ular bir parcha tuproq uchun emas, bu tuproqlarda ungan dov-daraxtlaru

⁵ See Isajon Sulton, *The Eternal Wanderer*, trans. Christopher Fort (Costa Mesa, California: Blind Owl Press, 2019).

⁶ I omitted this passage from my forthcoming translation precisely because it too closely echoes the Uzbek state's ideological pronouncements about itself. I did not think that a world literature audience would appreciate that ideology.

bag‘ridagi ma‘danlar uchun emas – aynan shu – imonining va millat ruhining qo‘rg‘oni bo‘lgani uchun ham jon taslim qilganlar, deb o‘y layman...

On that day [the end of days – CF], I wish to be on my native soil, with my nation.

I need to be there in order to defend my faith, to maintain its purity from alien influences, and if God should grant me a child, to raise him in this way, to observe those truths. I see Faith and Homeland as one. Just as soul can't be without a body, so I see no possibility for there to be Faith without a Homeland.

When I say this, I see before my eyes those who have died for the idea of a Homeland, those peoples who have been moved like the sea by the words "My Homeland," those thousands of people who have screamed "Homeland" as they were torn apart by an enemy. I believe that they did not die for a piece of soil, or for the trees or minerals of that land, but that they gave their lives to build a fortress for their faith and nation.⁷

Uzbek intellectuals often affirm the state as the defender of the Uzbek nation, its homeland, and its faith from "alien influences." In *A Stain in the Heart* with which this dissertation began, those alien influences that threatened country and faith were ISIS and Islamic radicalism. In Sulton's novella, the son refers to those alien influences only in the abstract, but in so doing, he echoes the state's language about itself and implicitly affirms it. Despite this approval of the state, the plot of the novella reveals the ephemerality of the Uzbek state. In this epic manifestation of the archetypal plot, humanity at large is shown to be in a decline. Humanity demonstrates its hubris by attempting to secure for itself God's eternity, in the form of biological experiments to create eternal life. For that, God visits an apocalypse on the earth, but the author implies at the novella's conclusion that humanity will be reborn to worship God and then exercise that hubris yet again. Sulton's novella affirms the Uzbek state, but in transforming the archetypal plot into transhistorical epic, the author gives God, not the state, the final say over the status of the Uzbek nation.

⁷ I quote from the manuscript which I used for my translation. I have not been in Uzbekistan recently to procure a printed copy of Sulton's work, so he sent me his manuscript.

New manifestations of the archetypal plot's content undoubtedly await it in the coming years. On September 2, 2016, Uzbekistan's first and only president Islam Karimov died.⁸ His regime of censorship and isolation ensured, among other things, the state's continued use of the archetypal plot as a tool and consequently the reproduction of the plot. Under his rule, Uzbek writers and readers encountered little new material in the Uzbek language outside of that officially approved by the state. That situation may change now. Under new president Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the censorship regime has eased somewhat, and Uzbekistan is beginning to open to the world.⁹ It is still early to say how far Mirziyoyev's reforms will extend and to what degree the state is willing to relinquish control over literary production. Nevertheless, a new generation of Uzbek readers and writers will soon come of age and replace their Soviet-trained forebearers. This new generation's educational horizons have arguably been more limited than those who grew up under late socialism.¹⁰ Strong Russian-language education had previously given Uzbek students access to literature beyond national boundaries, but current German and English-language classes do not provide the same level of proficiency.¹¹ Nevertheless, their post-Soviet upbringing and their new orientation toward Western Europe instead of Russia will undoubtedly affect how they read and manifest the archetypal plot in the future. They may, like their Soviet predecessors, continue to reproduce it without a full acknowledgement of the literary innovation and play in which they themselves engage. They may begin to parody it as their Jadid

⁸ Karimov suffered a stroke on August 28, 2016, and was likely brain-dead soon after. The Uzbek state waited until September 2 to announce his death probably because they had only then confirmed who would succeed Karimov afterwards. Fergana.ru reported that he had died as early as August 29. See "Srochno: Prezident Uzbekistan Islam Abduganievich Karimov skonchalsia na 79 godu zhizni ot krovoizliiania v mozg, sluchivshegosia dva dnia nazad," Fergana - mezhdunarodnoe agentstvo novostei, August 29, 2016, <http://www.fergananews.com/news/25235>.

⁹ Navbahor Imamova, "Long-Closed Uzbekistan Opens Up to the World," Voice of America - English, November 25, 2018, <https://www.voanews.com/south-central-asia/long-closed-uzbekistan-opens-world>.

¹⁰ See Adeeb Khalid, "Uzbekistan--Education System," in *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, ed. Karen Christensen and David Levinson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 2002).

¹¹ Nicholas Megoran, "Problems and Possibilities for Higher Education in Uzbekistan: The English Department of Fergana State University," *Central Asian Survey* 16, no. 3 (1997): 353–62.

predecessors did in their development of a literary consciousness in the 1920s. Or they may discard it in its entirety as they begin to articulate their Uzbekness through different aspects of their cultural and literary heritage.

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