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Abdurauf Fitrat's Modern Bukharan Tragedy

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Edward Said proclaimed the restorative role of literature in the process of native resistance and liberation:

For in the decades-long struggle to achieve decolonization and independence from European control, literature has played a crucial role in the reestablishment of a national cultural heritage, in the reinstatement of native idioms, in the reimagining and refiguring of local histories, geographies, communities.(1)

But how can literature as the repository of authenticity be distinguished from narratives of nativism, the search for an undifferentiated, native self in antiquity and futurity? Benita Parry classifies the project of nativism as one of "ethnic identitarianism"(2) and the "paralogical,"(3) while Said, in similar terms, considers the nativist recourse as a fleeing from the historical world to a quasi-magical land:

The search for authenticity, for a more congenial national origin than that provided by colonial history, for a new pantheon of heroes and (occasionally) heroines, myths and religions these too are made possible by a sense of the land reappropriated by its people.(4)

Narratives of authenticity pursue this land within a discursive territory that can be perilous, archaizing and self-defeating, perhaps more millennial solacement than coherent and realistic social renewal.

Abulfayzkhon, a historical drama written by the Uzbek author Abdurauf Fitrat in 1924, will be examined as a reinvocation of the native past against Soviet colonialism.(5) We will consider this drama as a historical parallel, a genre which Herbert Lindenberger argues is unique in its capacity to engage audiences with a complex sense of their own collective national history.(6) How Abulfayzkhon represents historical reality is not suspended from the process or representing Soviet colonialism in Bukhara, an ancient Central Asian amirate that was transformed into a quasi-Soviet protectorate after the last amir was overthrown by the Bolshevik military in 1920. In this analysis Abulfayzkhon will be claimed neither as a fictionalized counter history nor as an explicitly "decolonizing fiction,"(7) a text that writes against imperial history. The drama negotiates its own cultural, historical and representational origins not as a coherent structure, but as a contestatory process, and insinuates the opportunity for

contemporary reference through a more reflective relationship with the past. Abulfayzkhon enacts a more complex vision of history, subjecting its own implications to criticism and redefinition.

The play opens with the Bukharan court of the last Ashtarkhanid Amir Abulfayzkhon (1711-1749),(8) where three of his highest officials and advisors are involved in a game of chess. When the amir enters and asks who is winning, Ulfat, the rather unctuous mayor of the palace and keeper of the harem, replies that while the other officials play masterfully, he himself is an impartial spectator, wishing only for the good fortune of his amir.(9) That chess is an artificially self-enclosed universe of conflict and conquest, demanding martial strategy, maneuver, deception and sacrifice, where all are followers or enemies, potential defenders or supplanters, designates the first scene according to the convention of a play within a play. The audience understands that just as a game of chess parallels the drama's internal conflict, so will Abulfayzkhon parallel and comment upon greater historical realities and issues. Chess, as an analogy of political hierarchy and domination, simultaneously resonates as a micronarrative of oriental despotism. The inexorable monologic of accumulating and maintaining power regulates the dramatic action of this play. Abulfayzkhon murders Farhod Otaliq, his honorary father, and all other potentially adversarial Bukharan rulers. Abulfayzkhon's most trusted counselor conspires with Nodir Shah, the ruler of Iran to end the khan's reign. Once dethroned and preparing himself for the hajj, Abulfayzkhon is slain by the court guards of his eldest son who is thereafter poisoned. The naturalization of medieval Bukharan history around the brutal acquisition and maintenance of power is echoed as an ancestral credo in this drama. Ulfat reminds Abulfayzkhon that the office of the "padishah is the tree that is watered by blood; when blood does not flow, the tree will inevitably wither."(10) Lamenting the constant treachery of his rivals, Abulfayzkhon comments "before the blood of one of my enemies has had a chance to dry, another enemy appears."(11) Nodir Shah, who imposes on the Bukharan amir the contemptible status of nominal ruler, imparts to his equally ambitious son his Machiavellian precept:

The art of politics is not forcibly seizing each country. The best means of conquering a country is to find true friends with and exploit them. Battle is but the final recourse.(12)

Artful mastery of conflicts and rivals, supple understanding and deployment of strategy and tactics, and patience coupled with sudden ruthlessness are the consummate skills reflected in both chess and this drama.

The main historical figures and contexts represented in *Abulfayzkhon* were familiar to a 1924 Bukharan audience both as past regional history and as allusions to contemporary problems.⁽¹³⁾ *Abulfayzkhon* functions not only at the empirical level of historical drama, but re-historicizes and re-realifies by interacting with the "audience's awareness that it is witnessing the enactment of its own past"⁽¹⁴⁾ and by assimilating that public knowledge of the past and present in the text. The scene of Bukhara, forever, oppressed by competing oriental despots, a land of intrigue, conspiracy, cruelty and corruption, persists in continuous time, always encompassing the present. Similarly, Amir Said Alimkhon, a victim of the domestic conspiracies of native reformers and the Bolshevik invasion, would be dethroned, separated from his family and forcibly exiled in 1920. The newly installed native reformist rulers, once known as the Young Bukharans who advocated liberal modernization, would be devitalized by internecine conflicts, expulsions, purges, defections and by the isolation of being a comprador elite, exercising a transitory and surrogate authority.⁽¹⁵⁾ In metaphorizing the Bukharan revolution through rather distant history, the drama problematizes its own interconnections of ideology, history and biography, appropriating the past not as a stable site of native self-authentication, but as an urgent critique of present society. And if this critique could be successfully transmuted into historical drama, the community who interpreted this historical parallel and accepted the medievalized correspondence between an ancient and Sovietizing Bukhara, was implicated in the drama's self-questioning and self-indictment, and irrevocably changed.

The great military superiority of Nodir Shah's invading army accompanied by a severe internal rebellion induces *Abulfayzkhon* to abdicate to this shah of Iran. But Nodir Shah, preferring indirect rather than the more burdensome physical possession of the realm, declines the Bukharan khan's offer and magnanimously returns *Abulfayzkhon* to his throne with appropriate royal ostentation. "I did not come to Bukhara to seize its throne," the scheming Nodir Shah abjures.⁽¹⁶⁾ "Because your country is also of the Turks you are my relatives," and "I have come here as a guest to a relative's home,"⁽¹⁷⁾ he professes. His deception undetected, Nodir Shah immediately announces Hakim Bey Otaliq, the main domestic opponent of *Abulfayzkhon*, as his appointed ruler of Bukhara and requests Bukhara's pledge of full material and logistical support in his campaign against the neighboring Khivan khanate. Here the drama broaches allegorization of imperialism and colonialism, representing both as crucial historical realities. The drama, however, never postulates an idyllic Bukhara, a fixed nativist scene of primal innocence and pure traditional cultures unsullied by conquests or hegemonies, but criticizes Bukhara's own endemic and depleting

brutality. Abulfayzkhon represents imperialism and colonialism that form their own native discursive scene, and implicitly merge with the sociocultural moment in which this drama is constructed, but recede, allowing Soviet imperial aggression to remain at the margin.

If as Nodir Shah advised, friends are essential to the project of imperial conquest, such friends the disaffected and alienated, the potential conspirators and traitors,-- attain similar importance within the historical milieu in which this drama was originally created. Although Fitrat first eschewed any formal affiliation with native reformist groups, even accepting an honorary title from one of the amir's advisors for his generous donations to Bukhara's war veterans(18), he would become one of the opposition's most ardent and eloquent spokesmen, composing the Young Bukharan Party's political platform in 1917 and expressing modernist ideas despite an increasingly vengeful amir who hastened to still all domestic discord.(19) When he returned to the figure of Amir Said Alimkhon in 1930, Fitrat saw in his former sovereign of Bukhara only vice and depravity, brutality and domination; an indigenous tyrant who, having been so distrustful of social innovation and reform, was despised and whose expulsion by the Bolshevik army was duly unlamented.(20) But the basis for this denunciation of the amir had already been fictionally predicated and employed in Abulfayzkhon; the analogy between past and present, between Amir Abulfayzkhon and Amir Said Alimkhon, was subtly mediated in the performance of the text and in the audience's consciousness of recent history. In writing on seventeenth-century European historical dramas, Lindenberger explains this important interactive process:

The continuity between past and present is a central assertion in history plays of all times and styles. One of the simplest ways a writer can achieve such continuity is to play on the audience's knowledge of what has happened in history since the time of the play.(21)

Furthermore, the willingness to transform the artificially reconstituted past of the historical drama into metaphorical history requires that this performative experience be compatible with what could be articulated by contemporary authors to their own native audience. As Lindenburger argues, the effecting of an illusion of the past, which is historical drama's objective, can be achieved by endowing that past with the present.(22) By manipulating the audience's sense of history and sense of fictiveness, Fitrat seeks to identify Abulfayzkhon with his own historical period in a symptomatic and crucial form of representation.(23) In his 1930 account, for example, a habitually drunken and dissolute Amir Said Alimkhon lies prostrate during crucial national moments;(24) in the drama Abulfayzkhon, the amir's palace is filled with bacchanalian

laughter as insurrectionary armies gather within Bukhara.(25) And the duplicitous friends who conspire with Nodir Shah against Abulfayzkhon parallel those of Amir Said Alimkhon: those prominent court, religious and mercantile elites who would join the Bolsheviks against the last Bukharan amir.(26)

The Uzbek literary critic Izzat Sulton classified Fitrat as an important advocate of Soviet socialism, which indicated the falsity of his alleged treason, and the base injustice of his execution in 1937 as an enemy of the Soviet state. In a more significant essay, however, Ahmad Aliev discussed the ambivalence pervading Fitrat's works, again suggesting Uzbek literature's capacity to repeal past pronouncements on literary production. His analysis, characterized by an enthusiasm most exceptional for this pre-perestroika era, emphasizes the unconventional complexity in Fitrat's dramas that both exceeds and reflects the author's historical circumstances. Reading Fitrat's dramas such as Abulfayzkhon, Hind Ikhtilolochilari (Hindi Insurrectionists) and Chin Sevish (True Love), Aliev states that "Fitrat illuminated past historical events in various forms and styles and through them are revealed his authorial ambiguities."(27) Rather than locate Fitrat within a specifically pro-Soviet discourse, mitigating the author's alleged Pan-Turkic nationalist transgressions, Aliev credits his dramas with a dissimulation that could operate against past and present imperial authority. Thus neither acceptance nor refusal of Soviet dominance are permitted as Fitrat's redeeming virtue, but his drama's ungovernability as historical parallels of Soviet hegemony are a crucial form of resistance. The critic has adroitly emphasized textual richness over simple authorial suppression, whether voluntary or coercive, problematizing the determinations of genuine intellectual compliance and dissension.

During perestroika (1985-1991), a period of greater political and cultural liberalism in the Soviet Union, the demand for complete rehabilitation of formerly condemned nationalist intellectuals intensified within Uzbek publications. To demonstrate public responsiveness, letters of support were published in major Uzbek periodicals with the consequence of censuring some prominent advocates of rehabilitation. According to one author who reviewed these letters, readers expressed criticism for the practice of withholding the names of those who had been actively involved with the state's repressive acts. To allow these surviving executioners and their accomplices a continued anonymity and ultimate avoidance of a belated retribution was incompatible with the demands of a genuine investigation. "Now," one reader declared, "is the moment to struggle for perestroika, openness and rehabilitation."(28) The reader continued indignantly: "I cannot approve of this tiresome phrase 'certain individuals'

which I have been encountering in journals and newspapers."(29) She advocated neither resignation nor restraint, but the satisfaction of a dormant vengeance:

Why are the names of these 'certain individuals' who are still alive not revealed? Why are we postponing perestroika and openness? Why does such oblique language still persist in our literature? Why are the names of these 'certain individuals' not finally exposed? Why! I demand a full explanation.(30)

Cultural restitution, as several readers affirmed, should be the paramount concern and pursued with determination, punishing those responsible for the suppression and marginalization of Uzbek authors. Readers distrusted this pretense of sober editorial caution, accusing these periodicals of a displaying cowardice. Discretion, one reader lamented, was no longer the better part of valor, but represented the regretful travesty of an Uzbek past and an Uzbek future:

How are we to understand this?! For example, such authors as Fitrat and Cholpon had already been officially rehabilitated in 1956. But who is still suppressing their contributions and works? Is it even possible to determine this or not? Or are those who were responsible for the tragedies and death of Qodiriy and Nosir still with us? And if they have died, what are the names of these conspirators? It is essential to account for their behavior. Because they deserve our people's eternal condemnation.(31)

By publicizing these rather intemperate letters, the discourse of cultural rehabilitation could appear potentially less moderate and less conciliatory, animated by a public enthusiasm which surpassed that of reputable cultural experts. Although permeated with a sense of ancestral adulation, these letters demanded a rehabilitation process which was authentic and sustained, unimpeded by Soviet historical discourses denigrating the native's presence and identity. Literary intellectuals, could therefore garner from such letters a more radical engagement of cultural restitution, but retained the right of professional disassociation and immunity, using the public's insolent voice while simultaneously urging courtesy and patience. Both editors and authors seemingly stemmed the tide of public criticism which they themselves, under the pretense of intellectual impartiality, had often facilitated.

In his study of Abulfayzkhon, Ilhom Ghani also examined this historical drama as a sustained parallel between absolutist medieval and Soviet states. His preoccupation with anti-imperial allusions may confess more about the process in which the past is altered by presentist values than about a first audience interpretation of the drama in its original context. While each performance is complex and each audience can only vary in its registering of allusive language as subversive innuendoes upon the state, Ghani

fixes the drama's meaning as a condemnation of an egregious Soviet order, a critical position consistent with perestroika discourse. The primacy of the Soviet context to this interpretation of Abulfayzkhon directs the critic to the speech of Siyovosh, a figure murdered in Ferdosi's *Shahname*, but whose ghost appears in the final scene of this play. With dark, apocalyptic imagery, Siyovosh mourns the world's moral and intellectual degradation, misery and abjection, perversion and violence, which has come inevitably from the throne of all Bukhara's rulers:

You have turned the delicate pearls of the writer's pen into aches. You have made the father slaughter his children with his own knife. You have brought down father with the daggers of their sons. You have strangled friends, betrayed comrades. And you have stripped liberty from the land, peace from the city, bravery from the men, and honor from the women.(32)

Siyovosh reveals that this throne which has been sought and successively captured by Abulfayzkhon, Nodir Shah, Hakim Bey Otaliq and Rahim Bey stands amid an immense dungeon, filled with the tortured corpses of their numerous victims. "Children who bore no sin," the sepulchral voice of the ghost moans, "and millions of young men who were like mountains have been sacrificed for you."(33) With similar ferocity and culturally impoverishing consequences, many leading Uzbek cultural and political intellectuals were executed by the Soviet government under the pretext of eradicating nationalist, Pan-Turkist and Pan-Islamist movements during the 1920's and 1930's(34). Fitrat, as Ghani describes, was among the victims of this maelstrom of public denunciations, disavowals, arrests, imprisonments and secret executions: "The 1930's would transform the 'delicate pearls' of Fitrat's pen into 'ashes' and pulls him into an abyss which would only end with this dramatist's tragic death by 1937."(35) The drama is accorded values both as a representative historicist text, implicating its contemporary history in parallel images of imperial hegemony and pathology, suffering and putrefaction, and as an expression of perestroika disillusionment with Soviet authority and legitimacy. Begali Qosimov, another critic and biographer of Fitrat, detects within the play this kind of emplotment of medieval Bukharan history as tragedy with its intentional allusive effect: "Although seemingly remote from revolutionary events, the author is able to employ the tragedy of Abulfayzkhon as if it were his own time."(36) By embodying and consolidating both periods the drama solicits audience identification of these allusions to the imperial past's "deep spiritual wounds" as its own.(37)

In a post-perestroika study of Uzbek drama's evolution and development, Abulfayzkhon is classified as one of the first Uzbek tragedies. Relying upon complete

individual and collective ruination, the drama presents human regression in its most sorrowful, horrible forms. But while classifying Abulfayzkhon according to this genre's main characteristics, the study suggests that this drama unfortunately retains the ideological frailties of its author, who ignored the historical conflict between the ruling class and the proletariat. "His critical inspired realism is not without fundamental weaknesses,"(38) the authors proclaim against the offending drama. "For example, although fully exposing the intrigues of the ruling class, accurately depicting their character, one cannot find any reflection of the representatives of the working masses who were creating opportunities for social progress and transforming history."(39) In contrast to the previously discussed essays by Aliev, Ghani and Qosimov, which assert Abulfayzhon's metaphorical function as a critique of Soviet reality, these authors have reaffirmed the primacy of class conflict, a statement that again positions Fitrat against an underlying sanctioned discourse and rhetoric. Still extant and still desired, class conflict as a central narrative paradigm would still be inculcated in contemporary Uzbek ideology, its service to imperial domination left unquestioned. Interpretive conventions and standards, even when they have undoubtedly denigrated Uzbek drama, are therefore rendered culturally viable in the post-perestroika era.

At one level the drama relies upon history as an ancestral paradigm that must be reinscribed and relocated in the present; its discourse is recursive, instigating and replicating itself, demanding an unending subordination to ancestral authority. A central concern of this drama, however, is the displacement of this ancestral paradigm, questioning the rationality of subservience to the past and representing history not so much in conformity as in evasion and refutation. Where playwright and protagonist attain deliberate congruence is within the drama's addressing of Bukhara's religious establishment. The authorial voice of Fitrat was often ambivalent toward Islamic institutional controls; a metavoices which fluctuated between blatant or elliptical, partisan or impartial, suppressed or propagandized criticisms, but a voice aware of disjunctures between proclaimed religious cosmology and Bukhara's actual religious practices.(40) We can separate voices from within the historical drama Abulfayzkhon not only as an affirmation of a specific historical reality or as an autobiographical intimation, but also as an important tension within the process of cultural self-perception. Many voices, however, criticize the exaltation of religious and political elites, opposing the compulsive repetition of historic patterns of dominance. For example, the defiant voice of Ibrahim Bey who heroically resists the imperial schemes of both Abulfayzkhon and Nodir Shah resonates with the play's period of composition,

particularly with the Bolshevik destruction of Bukhara's religious monuments in 1920.(41) Shackled and blinded, Ibrahim Bey declares to his captors:

When we were battling Abulfayzkhon together with the late Rajabkhon we had agreed to the following: we would enter Bukhara, collect all of the mullas in one madressa, set in on fire and burn them all to death. They have ruined and spoiled our tribe. They have pushed our world away in order to make their religion seem right.(42)

The complicity of Bukhara's religious elites—their sycophantish utterances, their ignorance and self-obsession, and their fatva sanctioning the machinations of one predatory ruler against another,—arouses Ibrahim Bey's moral fury and regret. He reminds Qazi Nizom, the leader of Bukhara's religious hierarchy, that before approving of Abulfayzkhon's murder, he had inspired this doomed khan with accounts of his miraculous dreams in which the prophet Mohammed asked for Abulfayzkhon. "Only yesterday you were kissing the feet of Abulfayzkhon, the shadow of god," Ibrahim Bey scoffs(43) "Only yesterday that shadow of god honored you with a robe," Ibrahim Bey continues, "but today you give a fatva approving his death."(44)

One of the principle interests of postcolonial literary scholarship is the analysis of varied constitutions of mastery and marginality within narratives. Silencing of female subjects has often been discussed as a sign of patriarchal domination and control rather than a "strategy of resistance"(45) and liberation. In this drama we should remember that the exchange of women precipitates the drama's initial main action in which Abulfayzkhon executes Farhod Otaliq who failed to honor him with the expected additional wife. "If her were truly my friend," the insulted khan declares, "why has he still not sent me his daughter?!"(46) Moreover, through the invocation of a stereotypical figure of silence, a humble and obedient female servant assigned to Abulfayzkhon's bedchamber, the drama questions the condition of marginality as one of absolute subjugation and muteness. From within her constrained domestic space, Qurbongl addresses and preempts this trope of silence, inscribing her position with unique and painful knowledge and disclosing a domesticity that is immersed in the terrifying project of imperial domination:

I have served in the household of the padishah who is called the shadow of god. Let no person see what I have seen here.(47)

Qurbongl is privileged by the drama with the capability of discerning the relationship between the domestic and imperial deprivations of the Bukharan amirs, which results in a basically criminological narrative:

I wept when this khan murdered his elder brother. He ascended his throne. He captured the children of Karmina Begi, brought them here and arrested them. One-by-one they were strangled and tossed into the well. Today Rahim Bey will arrest him. Tomorrow, certainly, he will kill him. But in his place another 'shadow of god' will again appear. After two or three years another will arise who sends him to his grave and seizes this title of 'shadow of god.'(48)

Although she must speak from an imposed position of marginality, Qurbongl's renarration of the cyclical history of the Bukharan amirs represents a momentary unsilencing of the unspeakable acts of conquest which have defined not only the imperial process, but her own female subordination. Her narrative emphasizes the unrelenting presence of an oppressivity in Bukhara's class and gender structures; yet, retreating to the safety of her original silence and subjugation, she reconfines herself to hopeless impotence, negating the very utility of disturbing the dominant order: "Why should I even care about all of these things."(49) The resignation first conveyed by her name (Qurbon-gl may be translated as sacrificial flower) finally remains unbreached by the end of her speech, signifying the drama's conventionality and unyielding masculinist tradition. Alleviation of male hegemony thus recedes beneath that very ideal, never to be subverted by female resistance.

The discourse and structure of imperialism and colonialism are evoked throughout Fitrat's historical drama *Abulfayzkhon*. His audience is compelled to confront its own contemporary reality within the terms of his historical parallel, a dramatized engagement of the playwright's darkening political world. Whether ancestral or modern, indigenous or foreign, hegemony belies these classifications through its own historical continuity and collusion, and prescribes a cultural production that idealizes and reifies its authority and domination. The playwright adumbrates the process by which the throne of *Abulfayzkhon* and the Bukharan amirate are degraded and imperiled, disclosing many of the paradigmatic qualities of hegemonic control and inscribing them with a depressing relevance for the Soviet ascendancy. But was a juxtaposition of these various hegemonies ultimately effective as a deliberate protest against Soviet imperialism? In the drama's final act, Ibrahim Bey cries out against the murdering of Amir *Abulfayzkhon* and his son, suddenly repelled by the termination and desecration of Bukhara's dynastic legacy: "Do you really want to obliterate the laws of Genghis Khan as if they had been nothing?"(50) His question, so replete with accusation and guilt, again expands the drama's discourse, implicating both the playwright and his audiences in the loss and even blatant betrayal of an authentic cultural patrimony, as if silently asking: 'Did you really want to obliterate Amir Said Alimkhon and the native dynastic

culture he was affiliated with in 1920 as if this too were nothing?' Within the history of Soviet colonization of Bukhara and Central Asia, Abulfayzkhon contributed toward the deployment of a criticized imperial reality through a fictional work, illuminating the possibility of what could be beyond hegemony. The process by which Fitrat inscribes a distrust of his own Soviet period through fictional correlation with the past fractures the authority and ideology of history, precisely the important revisionary acts which appeal to those who long to unconceal a history that was being deleted and distorted.

Notes

1. Edward Said, *Figures, Configurations, Transfigurations*, in *New Historical Literary Study*, eds. Jeffrey Cox and Larry Reynolds (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 316.
2. Benita Parry, *Resistance Theory/Theorizing Resistance or Two Cheers For Nativism*, in *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory*, eds. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (New York: ST. Martins Press, 1994), p. 174.
3. Parry, *Resistance Theory*, p. 188.
4. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 226.
5. Abdurauf Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon Bukhara Ölkazining Tarikhidan*. Bish Pardalik Fojia (Moscow: SSSR Khalqlarining Markaz Nashriyoti, 1924). All citations are from Sharq Yulduzi (1989): 84-104.
6. Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama: The Relation of Literature and Reality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).
7. Diana Brydon and Helen Tiffin define decolonizing fictions as texts that write back against imperial fictions and texts that incorporate alternative ways of seeing and living in the world. See their *Decolonizing Fictions* (Sydney: Dagaroo Press, 1993), p. 11.
8. The main eighteenth-century historical sources regarding the reign of Abulfayzkhon are Mir Muhammad Amin-I Bukhara, *Ubaidulla-nama* (Tashkent: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1957) and Abdurrakhman Davlat, *Istoriia Abulfeizkhana* (Tashkent: Izdatelstvo Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, 1959) both translated from Tadjik by A.A. Semenov. Another important source of this period is Muhammad Vafoyi Karminagiys *Tuhfat al-khaniy* described in Böriboy Ahmedovs *Özbekiston Khalqlari Tarikhi Manbalari* (Toshkent: Öqituvchi, 1991), pp. 205-206. Fitrat places Muhammad Vafoyi Karminagi in his dramas the character of Mir Vafo. Mirza Abdulazim Somiys 1838/1839 history is also important. See his *Manghit Sultonlari Tarikhi Yoki Bukhoro Khonligining Inqirozi*, Sharq Yulduzi 3-4 (1993): 129-143. Ilhom Ghani discusses Fitrats adept use of these historical

sources in *Fitratning Tragediya Yaratishi Mahorati* (Toshkent: Ghafur Ghulom Nomidagi Nashriyoti, 1994).

9. Abdurauf Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, *Sharq Yulduzi* 1 (1989) p. 84.
10. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 87.
11. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 87.
12. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 94.
13. A number of studies read *Abulfayzkhon* as a metaphor for the revolutionary events in Bukhara of 1920. See Begali Qosimov, *Maslakdoshlar* (Toshkent: Sharq, 1994); Mamajan Rahmonov, *Fitrat Dramaturgiyasi va Uning Sahna Tarikhi*, *Sanat* 4 (1991): 12-15; Jamol Kamol, *Abulfayzkhon-Tonghich Tarikhiy Drama*, *Özbekiston Adabiyoti va Sanati* 14 April 1989, p. 3. One European scholar tends to agree with this metaphorical analysis of *Abulfayzkhon*. See Sigrid Kleinmichel, *Aufbruch Aus Orientalischen Dichtungstraditionen* (Budapest: Akademiai Kiado 1993), pp. 170-179.
14. Lindenberger, *Historical Drama*, p. 7.
15. Under order of the Russian Communist Party, the Bukhara government was to futher democratize and Sovietize which resulted in the removal of Fitrat and many other senior officials from the Bukharan government in 1923. Fitrats intimations of self-referentiality are examined in Begali Qosimovs *Maslakdoshlar*, pp. 69-156. See also Bahodir Ergashev's *K Voprosy o Mladobukhartsakh*, *Istoriia SSSR* 4 (1990): 67. A less sinister explanation for Fitrats dismissal suggests that he, a reputable academic, was needed at Moscows oriental institute where he began working in 1923. See Hamidulla Boltaboev, *Nomalum Fitrat*, *Yoshlik* 4 (1990): 34-39.
16. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 95.
17. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 95.
18. According to Begali Qosimov, the nature of Fitrats 1914 title was not recorded in later historical documents. See his *Fitrat*, *Sanat* 12 (1991): 10-13.
19. For a précis of this program see Majiid Hasanovs *Fitratning Islohotlar Loyihasi Khususida*, *Iqtisod va Tarikh* 11 (1992): 21-23. Begali Qosimov has consistently presented insightful studies of Fitrat. See his *Fitrat*, *Sharq Yulduzi* 10 (1992): 170-180. Fitrats initial ambivalence toward jadidism is described in Erik Karimov's *Fitrat Hayoti va Ijodi Haqida*, *Özbek Tili va Adabiyoti* 6 (1990): 13-16 and Solijon Ibrahimov, *Fitrat va Jadidchilik*, *Muloqot* 5-6 (1994): 20-24.
20. Fitrats bitter portrait of Bukharas last amir was first published in Tadjik in 1930. See the Uzbek translation, *Amir Alimkhonlik Hukmronlik Davri* (Toshkent: Minkhoj, 1992). Halim Tõraev and Ilhom Ghani have initiated a comparative critique of both Fitrats and Said

- Alimkhons historical writings in *Manghit Amirlari Kechmishi va Talqin*, *Özbekiston Adabiyoti va Sanati* 16 September 1994, p. 5.
21. Lindenberger, *Historial Drama*, p. 6.
 22. Herbert Lindenberger, *The History in Literature: On Value, Genre, Institutions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 1–19.
 23. One reviewer pointedly comments that these eighteenth century characters seem replications of contemporary Bukharan elites. See H?, *Ghanizoda*, Abulfayzkhon, *Qizil Özbekiston* 14 December 1926, p. 4.
 24. He cannot abstain from his sybaritic pursuits with the palace and ignores the Bolshevik assault on Bukhara in 1920. See *Fitrat*, *Amir Alimkhonlik*, p. 47.
 25. The palace is completely involved with various amusements and they are all drunk, reports Mir Wafo to Hakim Bey who plots with Nodir Shah against the amir. See *Fitrat*, *Amir Alimkhonlik*, p. 88.
 26. The protagonist of Komil Yashins historical drama *Inqilob Tongi* (Toshkent: Ghafur Ghulom Nashriyot–Matbaa Birlashmasi, 1972) is Fayzulla Khojaev, who is accurately described as the son of a millionaire and a Young Bukharan. His radicalism provokes the amir and endangers his family, many of whom as intimates of the amir do not wish to fall out of favor with the regime.
 27. Ahmad Aliev, *Adabiy Meros va Zamonaviylik* (Toshkent: Ghafur Ghulom Nomidagi Adabiyoti va Sanat Nashriyoti, 1983), p. 77.
 28. Yashar Qosimov, *Umumiylik Kulfati*, *Özbekiston Adabiyoti va Sanati* 29 July 1988, p. 3.
 29. Yashar Qosimov, *Umumiylik Kulfati*, p. 3.
 30. Yashar Qosimov, *Umumiylik Kulfati*, p. 3.
 31. Yashar Qosimov, *Umumiylik Kulfati*, p. 3.
 32. *Fitrat*, Abulfayzkhon, p. 104.
 33. *Fitrat*, Abulfayzkhon, p. 104.
 34. This acrimonious practice of ascribing Pan-Turkist or nationalist sentiments to *Fitrat's* literary works is examined in Ilhom Ghanis, *Fitratning Tragediya*, pp. 23–33; Bakhtiyor Karimovs, *Pan-Turkizm–Mashum Tamgha*, *Özbekiston Adabiyoti va Sanati* 6 January 1990, p. 3; Sherali Turdievs, *Tanqid Dushman Izlaganda*, *Özbekiston Adabiyoti va Sanati* 12 August 1988, p. 5.
 35. Ghani, *Fitratning Tragediya*, p. 131.
 36. Begali Qosimov, *Inson Fojialari*, *Özbekiston Adabiyoti va Sanati* 6 April 1990, p. 6.
 37. Qosimov, *Inson Fojialari*, p. 6.
 38. Berdiali Imomov, *Qudrat Jöraev, Khatiba Haqimova*, *Özbek Dramaturgiyasi Tarikhi* (Toshkent : Öqituvchi, 1995), p. 62.
 39. Imomov, *Jöraev, Haqimova*, *Özbek Dramaturgiyasi Tarikhi*, p. 62.

40. For specific discussion of Fitrat and Islam see Boybota Döstqoraev, *Fitratning Diniy Mavzudagi Asarlari*, in *Milliy Uyghonish va Özbek Filologiyasi Masalalari*, ed. Iristoy Qöchqortoev (Toshkent: Universitet, 1993), pp. 51-64 and Gulshan Rahimova, *Diniy Tasavvurlar Badiiy Tasvirda*, *Adabiy Meros* 1 (1991): 55-60. While he insists in a 1929 published letter on his areligiosity (The pursuit of religious reform led me to atheism.) Fitrat is depicted by Qosimov as exceptionally religious. See *Fitrats Qizil Özbekiston* letter republished in *Yoshlik* 5 (1990): 67-71 and Qosimovs *Fitrat*, 170-180. A devout Fitrat is recalled by his daughter Sevara Karomatullakhojaeva in Nargis Dovurboevas interview *Yurt Qayghusida Kechgan Umr*, *Saodat* 5 (1994): 18-19.
41. Various accounts of Bolshevik soldiers who participated in the wanton destruction of Bukharas mosques and madressas are incorporated into Rajabboy Ota Turks historical fiction *Adolat Guvohligi*, *Muloqot* 10 (1991): 59-62. Fitrat acknowledges the Bolshevik assault on ancient Islamic structures (religious students defended the city from atop such buildings), but regards this as unfortunate collateral damage. See his *Amir Alimkhonlik*, pp. 47-49 and *Tohir Toirov*, *Bukhoro Bombardimon Qilinganda*, *Yoshlik* 7 (1989): 54-55.
42. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 101.
43. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 101.
44. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 101.
45. For discussion of silence in literary analysis see Benita Perrys, *Speech and Silence in the Fictions of J.M. Coetzee*, in *Critical Perspectives on J.M. Coetzee*, eds Graham Huggan and Stephan Watson (New York: ST. Martins Press, 1996), pp. 37-65.
46. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 96.
47. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 96.
48. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 96.
49. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 96.
50. Fitrat, *Abulfayzkhon*, p. 101. Ibrahim Bey insists that traditional Mongol laws (*yasa*) should be adhered to in this succession process.