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Searching for the Self at the Crossroads of Central Asian, Russian  
and Soviet Cultures: the Question of Identity in the Works of  
Timur Pulatov and Chingiz Aitmatov

by

Anthony J. Qualin

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of

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Celyn Diment  
Chairperson of Supervisory Committee

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Abstract

Searching for the Self at the Crossroads of Central Asian, Russian  
and Soviet Cultures: the Question of Identity in the Works of  
Timur Pulatov and Chingiz Aitmatov

by Anthony J. Qualin

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The primary focus of this study is on manifestations of multilingualism and multiculturalism in the prose fiction of Timur Pulatov and Chingiz Aitmatov. The dissertation discusses the works of both authors, not only treating direct and allegorical reflections of the tensions inherent in a post-colonial situation but exploring the stylistic ramifications of having access to multiple cultural traditions along with the alienation caused by the colonizer's educational system.

Part One of the dissertation is primarily concerned with each author's development as a writer and in the evolution of their attitude toward the various cultural and value systems that surrounded them. The second part of the study focuses on the topics of alienation, identity, and the fate of the individual who finds himself at the nexus of two or more cultures.

In approaching Aitmatov's and Pulatov's works as post-colonial literature this dissertation offers new insights into both authors' writing. Moreover, the similarities and differences that are revealed to exist between the two writers allow us to attain a better understanding of the role played by the different colonial relationships that Soviet Russia had with primarily nomadic Kyrgyzstan and the sedentary cultures of the Central Asian oases. That not all of the differences in the two authors' outlooks can be attributed to the divergence in their experience with Soviet power helps to reveal

the extent to which the response to a post-colonial situation can vary among individuals.

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## **DEDICATION**

**For Sara, the best daughter anyone could ever wish to have.**

## **Introduction: Not All Literature in Russian is Russian Literature**

Many Western scholars take the term "Soviet literature" to mean Russian literature of the Soviet period. The few non-Russian Soviet writers who gained broad recognition in the West did so through the medium of the Russian language. Literature written in the other languages of the Soviet empire was largely ignored by translators and scholars alike. Indeed the common perception was that the literatures of the non-Russian peoples of the Soviet Union faced even harsher ideological and stylistic control than Russian literature and therefore offered little interest from an artistic, political, or social standpoint. Those non-Russian authors who, either by choice or necessity, wrote in Russian were often perceived to have sacrificed their native national identity to become Soviet or Russian writers. While few would ever dream of calling the works of a francophone writer from Cameroon French literature, there were many who referred to the Russian language works of non-Russian writers as Russian literature. Under these conditions it is hardly surprising that so few scholars have focused upon national elements in the works of non-Russian authors who write in Russian. Those who have done so have dealt primarily with the non-Russian writers who have enjoyed the greatest popularity in Russia. After Chingiz Aitmatov, Vasil' Bykau, and Fazil' Iskander there is an enormous drop off in the amount of attention received by the non-Russian writers of the former Soviet Union. Indeed even such writers as Timur Pulatov, Ion Drutse, Vladimir Sangi, Olzhas Suleimenov and Grant Matevosian who have enjoyed success throughout the former Soviet Union have received little attention in the West. When writers from both of the above mentioned groups are studied in the West they are all too often treated simply as Soviet literature. Those scholars who do focus on national elements in their work can be overly concerned with superficial manifestations of national culture, failing to take the

complexities of the post-colonial situation into account. In focusing on the outward manifestations of culture, they, more often than not, neglect the writer's inner struggle to reconcile the contradictions inherent in the post-colonial situation. The current study is an attempt to examine the literary careers of the Kyrgyz author, Chingiz Aitmatov, and the Bukharan author, Timur Pulatov, in a way that accounts not only for their national traditions but for the interplay between this heritage and the forces of Soviet modernity.

Aitmatov's inclusion as the object of study in Robert Porter's *Four Contemporary Russian [sic] Writers* is testimony to the extent to which Aitmatov scholarship has been viewed as a branch of Russian literary studies. That the section on Aitmatov includes a significant amount of material on the author's Kyrgyz heritage somewhat compensates for the title's inaccuracy. The Moscow publisher of Aitmatov's most recent novel, *Tavro Kassandry (The Mark of Cassandra)*, apparently shares the opinion that Aitmatov belongs to Russian literature as the book was released as part of the series *Russkii bestseller (Russian Bestseller)*.

Some scholars, such as Joseph Mozur, Georgii Gachev, and Pariza Mirza-Akhmedova, have examined the interplay of Kyrgyz and Russian cultural and stylistic elements in Aitmatov's works. While each of the above scholars has made an enormous contribution to the study of Aitmatov's writings, they have all, to a greater or lesser extent, neglected the contradictions and conflicts that biculturalism has wrought on Aitmatov's works.

Mozur primarily focuses on surface meaning or on relating the symbolism of what he calls Aitmatov's "folklore sub-plots" to the "central realistic plot line" (Mozur 1995, 8) He at times seems to be overcautious in avoiding "narrow nationalistic readings" (Mozur 1995, 153). Moreover, he overlooks many subtle changes in the development of Aitmatov's world view and artistic vision, focusing on the author's

loudly proclaimed political and philosophical positions and neglecting his more subdued exploration of the individual Central Asian's inner conflict as he searches for identity and tries to overcome his cultural exile.

Gachev, on the other hand, does explore the way in which the inner conflicts brought on by what he sees as the "transition from a patriarchal system to civilization" (Gachev 1982, 112). Indeed, despite his use of terminology that many would argue privileges the modern over the traditional, Gachev makes many insightful observations about the manifestations of cultural hybridity in Aitmatov's works. Unfortunately, whether it is that result of Soviet ideological constraints or Gachev's own cultural vision, these observations are not always developed as fully as they might have been. Moreover, Gachev's writing style is not entirely academic and it has been said that "this scholarly-artistic [*nauchno-khudozhestvennyi*] approach gives birth to subjectivity in the establishment of parallels on the cultural plane" (Ozmitel', 5). Of course, all statements about something as ill-defined as culture are to some extent subjective. Gachev, however, occasionally makes tenuous connections which he fails to support.

Mirza-Akhmedova's *National'naia epicheskaia traditsiia v tvorchestve Chingiza Aitmatova* (*The National Epic Tradition in the Works of Chingiz Aitmatov*) is essential reading for anyone who would attempt to gain a better grasp of the role of the Kyrgyz Epic tradition on Aitmatov's artistic vision. The focus of Mirza-Akhmedova's book, however, is primarily stylistic, therefore questions of identity and national conflict remain essentially outside of its scope of interest.

Before I continue, I feel it is essential to delineate if not define some of the terminology that I shall use throughout this study. I shall use the term "post-colonialism," as it is employed by the authors of the book *The Empire Strikes Back*,

"to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (Ashcroft, 2).

While "culture" is a much more difficult term to define, I, like James Clifford, find that "culture is a deeply compromised idea that I cannot yet live without" (Clifford, 10). As I discuss the works of Aitmatov and Pulatov, I shall often refer to reflections of the authors' "own national culture" or "their traditional culture." More often than not I shall juxtapose images and symbols of "traditional Central Asian culture" to those of Russian, Soviet, or European "culture." In using these terms I am by no means implying that Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Tajik, Russian, Soviet, and European culture are all clearly defined concepts that are easily differentiated from one another. Nor do I mean to assert that the above concepts are mutually exclusive. As Trinh Minh-ha asserts: "Despite our desperate eternal attempt to separate, contain, and mend, categories always leak" (Trinh, 94). Yet, Pulatov and Aitmatov employ these categories leaks and all. Both writers differentiate between customs, behaviors, and even modes of thought that they consider to be Central Asian or European. Thus when I use the term culture, I am referring to the authors' perception of culture at the time the work in question was written. At times I may attribute certain positions on culture to the authors based upon attitudes that have been observed to be prevalent in the region. I shall make such attributions rarely and always in good faith.

I shall often use the term "Central Asian" in conjunction with words such as culture, history, or society. This does not stem from any believe in the pan-Turkic ideal of the region's unity, but rather reflects several situations that make the use of narrower national terms impossible. Writing, as I am, about authors of different national backgrounds, I shall occasionally employ the term "Central Asian" instead of saying "Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Tajik." Moreover, Pulatov's mixed Uzbek/Tajik heritage makes the choice of the term "Central Asian" more elegant than constructions such as

"Uzbeko-Tajik" as alternatives to the term "Bukharan" which will be the term I use most often to describe Pulatov's ethnic background. I have chosen the term "Bukharan" because it was the adjective that Pulatov himself most frequently used to characterize his native culture during our 1995 interview. Another factor that will lead to the use of the word "Central Asian," is Aitmatov's choice of Kazakstan as the setting for his novel *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* (*The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*).

"Identity," a difficult concept under any circumstances, is an extremely elusive term in Central Asia. William Fierman discusses the multitude of identities that Central Asians may either assume or have foisted upon them:

"Central Asians" have what might be best understood as a layered identity. The importance of a particular element or layer of that identity depends very much on context. At one level, most Soviet Central Asians identify themselves as "Soviets." But they also have a Turkestani identity, a nationality identity (based on national republic), and local and clan identities. An Uzbek serving in the Soviet Army in Germany is undoubtedly often reminded that he is "Soviet." But in other circumstances the bonds he shares with Uygurs in China are more important than those he shares with Russians from Leningrad. In still other circumstances, nationality (e.g., Uzbek, Tajik, etc.) or local identities manifest themselves. Regardless of their artificiality at the time of "national delimitation" in Central Asia, these categories are important markers today, and they are reinforced by print and electronic media outputs in standardized languages. At the same time, however, the more local identities are clearly salient when higher educational

students of the same "nationality" form groups which clash with each other in the capital cities of their republics. (Fierman, 4)

Thus the Central Asian intellectual is faced with a number of labels. He is forced to adjust his conduct as well as his language depending on the situation in which he finds himself. Such a situation leaves him open to rejection in every sphere in which he participates, as he can be accused of being too Russian among Uzbeks, too Uzbek among Russians, too Soviet among the Kyrgyz, or too Kyrgyz among the Soviets. Under such conditions it is little wonder that identity is a major concern in the writing of Central Asian authors.

Much as Central Asians are faced with a number of ways in which it is possible to define the self, the image of the "other" is equally multifarious. The colonizers could be viewed as Russians, Soviets, infidels, or Europeans. This situation allowed Central Asian intellectuals a large number of possible anti-colonial positions. One could be anti-Soviet, while viewing the Russians, Europeans, atheism or even Christianity in a positive light. On the other hand, it was possible to distrust all things Soviet and Russian, while clinging to the "European" values of one's education. It was also possible to accept the Soviet system while despising all things Russian, European, and non-Muslim. Thus, like the self, the "other" could take many forms.

The current study is divided into two parts. Part One is dedicated to tracing the development of Aitmatov's and Pulatov's literary careers with an emphasis on their treatment of the relationship between Central Asia and Soviet Russian power. In Part One, I focus primarily on the themes of social, political, and cultural interaction and on the authors' changing views on the positive and negative effects that the Russian and Soviet presence has had in their native lands. Because questions of identity are often inextricable from the themes of social, political, and cultural interaction, there will be

7  
times that the topic of identity will appear in Part One, as well. Indeed, we shall find that as both writers mature, their center of focus moves and that the topic of the Central Asian intellectual's identity as an individual between cultures pushes other themes into the background.

Part Two of the study is entirely concerned with the questions of identity and alienation. The first section of Part Two discusses a "European" education and the use of the Russian language as alienating forces for the Central Asian intellectual. I then explore the ways in which alienation and feelings of cultural exile are manifested in the literary devices used by the two authors. Finally, I return to the topic of identity focusing on both authors' eventual disillusionment with the search for identity within an idealized concept of pure culture, whether it be the culture of one's own people or that of the "other."

## Part One

### I. Introduction to Part One

It would be unrealistic to expect to find a single constant unwavering attitude toward Central Asia, Russia, and Soviet power in the works of two writers whose careers have spanned several decades. Indeed, in many ways, both Aitmatov and Pulatov follow patterns similar to those that Isaac Yetiv and Frantz Fanon say are typical of post-colonial writers. Fanon divides the development of the "native intellectual" into three stages. In the first of these stages, the writer "gives proof that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power." Having reached the second stage the post-colonial author "decides to remember what he is." As a part of this process, "[P]ast happenings of the bygone days of his childhood (sic) will be brought up out of the depths of his memory; old legends will be reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and a conception of the world that was discovered under other skies" (Fanon 1968, 222). The third stage, according to Fanon is when writers either become revolutionaries and freedom fighters or attempt to "gather together all the historical determining factors which have conditioned them and take up a fundamentally 'universal standpoint'" (Fanon 1968, 218). Although Yetiv offers more stages, he differs from Fanon substantially only when it comes to the final stage. Where Fanon sees the writer becoming a revolutionary, Yetiv sees him falling into despair as the result of his inability to overcome his alienation from either his own culture or that of the colonizer (Yetiv, 88). While it seems excessively schematic to contend that all or even most post-colonial intellectuals and writers go through a set number of simply defined and easily recognizable stages, it is natural that writers who live and work under similar conditions should resemble one another in their

development. We should, however, expect the differences among authors to grow more pronounced as they mature and develop their own individual style and personality. Thus, as we trace the course of Aitmatov's and Pulatov's literary careers we will find much to support Fanon's and Yetiv's assumptions about the first two stages of a post-colonial writer's development. Then, in examining Pulatov's and Aitmatov's later works, we will find elements of Yetiv's despair and Fanon's "universalism." Moreover, while neither writer ever becomes a revolutionary in the sense that Fanon has in mind, both will come to exhibit attitudes that are hostile to the Soviet government.

## II. Beginnings: Assimilation to Soviet Models.

Both Aitmatov and Pulatov began their literary careers with works that privileged Soviet culture over their own native cultures. In the book, *Parables from the Past*, Joseph Mozur discusses the early Aitmatov's adherence to the ideological and stylistic norms of socialist realism, the officially mandated literary style in the Soviet Union. He mentions the struggle between the old and the new in such stories as "Belyi dozhd" ("White Rain") and "Sypaichi" ("The *Sypaichi*")<sup>1</sup> saying, "it was ideologically appropriate to affirm the new and progressive in socialist Kirghizstan." Mozur concludes that in Aitmatov's early works, "Literary models had a much greater influence--however short-lived--on the young writer than the folklore of his 'backward' *ail*" (Mozur 1995, 27). This reference to the "backward *ail*" clearly implies that Mozur believes the young Aitmatov rejected the culture of his native *ail* for a model handed down from Moscow. This attitude toward Kyrgyz culture is evident in *Pervyi uchitel'* (*The First Teacher*) where Aitmatov seems to accept the Soviet view of pre-revolutionary Kyrgyzstan completely and without question. The Kyrgyz common people are seen to have been poor and oppressed, and Soviet power is portrayed as the bringer of freedom and enlightenment:

Мы бедняки -- уже тихо проговорил Дуйшен. --Нас всю жизнь топтали и унижали. Мы жили в темноте. А теперь Советская власть хочет, чтобы мы увидели свет, чтобы мы научились читать и писать. (Aitmatov 1982a, 250)<sup>2</sup>

The young Aitmatov was even more effusive in his praise of the Russian presence and Soviet power in his publicistic writing. On the one hundredth anniversary of the Russian annexation of Kyrgyzstan, Aitmatov wrote:

Трудно оценить всю важность этого замечательного прогрессивного события в истории киргизов. И теперь, оглядываясь на столетний путь своего народа, пройденный вместе с Россией, я от души восклицаю: пусть будет благословен тот день, породнивший нас навечно с великим русским народом! Русский народ дал нам Ленина, дал Октябрьскую революцию, повел на борьбу за Советскую власть, приобщил нас к культуре и знаниям. Мы живем с русскими на одной земле, вместе строим коммунистическое общество. Это самое большое счастье, которое можно только пожелать своему народу. (Daniyarov, 9)<sup>3</sup>

While some would argue that for political reasons Aitmatov could not have said otherwise, it seems that there is more than a grain of sincerity in his words. If he were less convinced he could have remained silent or, at least, tempered his ebullience.

In the book *The Surrogate Proletariat* Gregory Massell demonstrates that the Soviet government used the liberation of women from the misery they suffered in traditional Central Asian societies as one of the primary justifications for its presence in the region. Early in his career Aitmatov frequently focused on a young Kyrgyz woman's search for independence. In "Dzhamilia," the heroine has to choose between her love for Daniyar and her duty to her husband from an arranged marriage. By allowing Dzhamilia to place her own personal happiness above the demands of her society, Aitmatov clearly gives preference to Western conceptions of what relationships between the sexes should be. In the story "Topolek moi v krasnoi kosynke" ("My Little Poplar in a Red Scarf"), Aitmatov is even more overt in his condemnation of the treatment of women in traditional Kyrgyz society. The story's most sympathetic character tells of a woman who, "[C]ame from the *ail* to the construction site: in those times that was no easy task for a Kyrgyz girl. Even now a

girls path is not so easy. You know yourself--the traditions still hold her down" (Aitmatov 1982a, 195).

Nowhere in his fiction does Aitmatov voice his condemnation of the "feudal-patriarchal" oppression of women in Kyrgyz society as strongly as in "Pervyi uchitel'."<sup>4</sup> The heroine of the story, Altynai, is treated as property by her aunt, who sells her into a loveless marriage. Finding herself in the unenviable position of *tokol* or second wife, Altynai laments not only her own fate, but the fate of all the oppressed women who have come before her. She curses not only her own captor, but the dark era that gave birth to his way of thinking:

Токол -- вторая жена. О, как ненавижу я это слово! Кто, в какие гиблые времена выдумал его! Что может быть унизительнее положения подневольной второй жены, рабыни телом и душой? Встаньте, несчастные, из могил, встаньте, призраки загубленных, поруганных, лишенных человеческого достоинства женщин! Встаньте, мученицы, пусть содрогнется черный мрак тех времен! (Aitmatov 1982a, 275)<sup>5</sup>

By opening the above paragraph with the Kyrgyz word *tokol* Aitmatov underlines how entirely Kyrgyz Altynai's situation is. He is intentionally pointing out that Altynai's situation may be abhorrent in the West, but in Kyrgyzstan it is so common they even have a separate word that denotes a second wife. The Kyrgyz nature of Altynai's plight is further emphasized by her place of captivity, a yurt. At one point, when the nomads have stripped the yurt from its frame in order to prepare to move to another pasture, Altynai is shown sitting inside the frame "as if in a cage" (Aitmatov 1982a, 275). This image of a woman imprisoned in one of the most readily recognizable symbols of traditional Kyrgyz culture could hardly be more striking. Although the story takes place in a Kyrgyz village, the image of the yurt is mentioned

only in connection with Altynai's captor and his band of 'backward' mountain folk. Not all is lost for Altynai and her fellow Kyrgyz women, however. "Those wretched times" have been replaced by a new era, the Soviet era. The teacher, Duishen, tells Altynai's husband, "Your time has passed," (Aitmatov 1982a, 276) and Altynai confidently tells her fellow *tokols* "I am the last of you" (Aitmatov 1982a, 275).

It stands to mention that in the Kyrgyz version of the story, Altynai does not utter the words "I am the last of you." Indeed the entire monologue about being a *tokol* is quite different in the original. Rather than exhorting the spirits of past *tokol's* to arise, Altynai merely bemoans her own fate saying, "Who am I? A *tokol*, a downtrodden *tokol*, a no good *tokol*, a slave-*tokol*, an eternally ignorant miserable *tokol* ..." (Aitmatov 1982c, 437).<sup>6</sup> In another serious deviation from the Kyrgyz version, Duishen tells Altynai's captor/husband, "Your time has passed, it is her time now" (Aitmatov 1982a, 276), whereas the Kyrgyz version reads, "It is our time now" (Aitmatov 1982c, 438). Perhaps these changes were made in order to cull favor with Moscow by following the party line on the liberation of women in Central Asia. It is possible, however, the Russian version reflects Aitmatov's true vision of how the scene should read and the Kyrgyz version was toned down so as not to cause any problems in what was still a quite conservative society. Whatever the case, both versions of the work retain a strong feminist nature.

As a result of her victory over the forces of reaction, Altynai is free to continue her education. Eventually she is able to go to Moscow to study at an institute. Having received a doctoral degree, she becomes a well known academician. In spite of her success, however, Altynai is not entirely happy. She realizes that she has left her people behind, saying: "That I have cut my ties to my people is bad, unforgivable" (Aitmatov 1982a, 284). Yet, though these feelings of shame and unhappiness may diminish Altynai's triumph they do not negate it.

The struggle of those Kyrgyz, such as Altynai and Duishen, who wholeheartedly accept Soviet power against the backward looking elements in Kyrgyz society is the primary focus of "Pervyi uchitel'." Most of the villagers in the story, however, belong to neither group. Aitmatov shows these villagers to be good hearted despite their inability to grasp the necessity of education and progress. Such villagers are typified by Altynai's distant relative's Saikal and Kartanbai. They give Duishen a place to live and are always kind to Altynai. Yet in spite of his faith in Soviet power and respect for Lenin, Kartanbai does not understand why an intelligent young man such as Duishen should waste his time teaching, when he would be much better off financially if he were to work as a shepherd. Duishen's attitude toward the kindly old couple's religious feelings ranges from silent acceptance to active opposition. He drives off the shaman whom they summon to calm Altynai's nerves, yet he seems to approve of Kartanbai's statement that he prays for Lenin five times a day.

Examining only the general thematics and the primary conflicts in *Pervyi uchitel'*, one could argue quite convincingly that the young Aitmatov was going through what Yetiv and Fanon describe as the first stage of a post-colonial writer's development. Yet while it is clear that Aitmatov was accepting of Soviet power early in his career, there is evidence in *Pervyi uchitel'* that this acceptance is less than complete. Although Aitmatov harshly criticizes some of the traditional elements of Kyrgyz society, he could be seen by some convinced Soviets to be soft on religion. By introducing the characters of Kartanbai and Saikal he makes it clear that not all traditional Kyrgyz are wicked. Finally, in showing that Altynai's education has torn her from her roots, Aitmatov demonstrates, however subtly, that the progress offered by the Soviets comes at a price.

Pulatov also exhibited a tendency to contrast the old ways with the new in his early writings. Much as Aitmatov scorns the traditional Kyrgyz dwelling, the yurt, by

turning it into a cage for Altynai, Pulatov, in his story "Oklikni menia v lesu" ("Call to me in the Woods"), shows the traditional Uzbek/Tajik home to be inferior to Western houses, portraying it as a source of isolation:

Одно только плохо -- все окна у нас выходят во двор и нельзя поглядеть, что творится на улице. Наш двор вроде замка из сказки «Али-баба и сорок разбойников» -- все наглухо отгорожено от посторонних глаз четырьмя высокими стенами, попробуй сунься, нос сломаешь! И не только у нас -- у всех соседей наших такие слепые и глухие дома. И сколько бы ты ни бегал и ни искал дом с глазами в нашем городе, могу поспорить -- не найдешь. (Pulatov 1966, 139)<sup>7</sup>

His rejection of the surroundings in which he grew up is not limited to the houses. His child narrator asks, "Is it all right if I don't tell you about my street? I never talk about things I don't like" (Pulatov 1966, 139).

In many ways Pulatov's rejection of his own culture is far more pronounced than Aitmatov's. For example, in "Oklikni menia v lesu," Pulatov's narrator is especially harsh in his criticism of the religious elements in his society. He compares the sound of Muslims praying to what is a notably Western image, the howl of the hound of the Baskervilles. His description of a service in the mosque is insulting and, some would say, blasphemous:

Мечеть похожа на громадный каменный ящик фокусника, на который посадили сову, вернее ее голову с десятью глазами-проемами. И внутри этого ящика старики. Изгибаются, как куклы, то встанут все разом, то разом падают на колени и начинают целовать землю, будто там рассыпан сахар. Вкусно! (Pulatov 1966, 145)<sup>8</sup>

Those who represent the muslim population are referred to as "half-witted" and "unintelligent" (Pulatov 1966, 161) and the ishan is portrayed as a petty and simple-minded charlatan:

**И командует всем этим совсем молодой ишан Калантар, сын того ишана, который умер, проглотив во время сна шмеля. И теперь ишан Калантар, если он злой, обзывает всех неверующих шмелями и в знак пожизненного траура отказался брать в рот мед, думая, что мед дают людям не пчелы, а шмели. (Pulatov 1966, 145)<sup>9</sup>**

Islamic ritual is lambasted and those who follow it are seen as dogmatic and insincere:

**Какие же они дикие, бессмысленные и ханжеские, эти наши родные мусульманские обряды, Марат! Да что объяснять, ты ведь сам и мог узнать о них, когда умер твой отец. Помнишь толпу ревущих старух? И хоть бы одну слезинку выдавили из своих беззастенчивых глаз ради приличия! Нет, они просто режут, час, два, целый день и следующий день, как марионетки, которых кто-то сзади тянет за резинку. А в перерывах жрут плов, аккуратно, со вкусом, облизывая жир с пальцев. И снова режут, поглядывая одним глазом на дверь, чтобы не прозевать очередное блюдо. (Pulatov 1966, 142)<sup>10</sup>**

This unsympathetic image of Bukharan women greedily devouring *plov* with their fingers, plays to Russian prejudices about "uncivilized" Central Asian eating habits and indicates that perhaps Pulatov shares in the Russians' disdain.

Despite his attacks on organized religion, however, Pulatov never condemns spirituality or the concept of God. In "Oklikni menia v lesu" the narrator's grandfather contrasts spirituality to religion:

Бог живет внутри каждого -- говорил старик -- о боге надо говорить тихо или вообще не говорить, носить его с собой, в своем теле, как дух. Ишаны и муллы не могут вместить в себя этот дух, потому что зарабатывают на боге. (Pulatov 1966, 146)<sup>11</sup>

Recalling Aitmatov's tacit approval of Kartanbai's spirituality one detects an interesting pattern in the two writers' works. Their Soviet education has told them that religion is bad. Accepting this, the young writers ridicule mullahs, ishans, shamans and other representatives of organized religion. On the other hand both writers certainly have family members who, like Pulatov's own mother, are "deeply religious."<sup>12</sup> Thus, out of a sense of fairness and loyalty, the young writers feel compelled to show that not all believers are bad. While the fury of the young Pulatov's attacks on religion can be seen as a sign of his immaturity as a writer, such a sharp clash in value systems is not easily resolved and we will find the same combination of inner spirituality and suspicion toward organized religion in some of Pulatov's later works.

The young Pulatov is no less interested in the fate of Central Asian women than the early Aitmatov. Indeed in Pulatov's "Oklikni menia v lesu" Magdi's mother, Nora, has much in common with Aitmatov's Dzhamilia. Both are young women whose husbands are away at the war. Neither woman plays the traditional role of the stay-at-home wife. The lack of men in her *ail* has forced Dzhamilia to work transporting sacks of corn from the *ail* to the station. Nora takes a job as a doctor. Having gone to work outside of the home, both Nora and Dzhamilia fall in love. In each case the flowering of this love is witnessed by a young boy, who, as a result, experiences feelings of mixed loyalty, confusion and betrayal. Despite these similarities, however, there are substantial differences between the two stories. The most striking of these is that while Dzhamilia decides to run away with Daniyar, Nora chooses to stay with her husband.

Of course, in the case of Central Asian women, the connection between leaving home and becoming distanced from the traditional culture is more than merely metaphoric. When it is suggested that Dzhamilya should work transporting corn, her mother's initial response is a horrified "God forbid! Where have you ever seen a woman hauling sacks on a cart?" The brigade leader himself realizes that he is asking her to violate cultural norms, but he explains that there is no alternative saying, "I know it isn't woman's work, but where am I going to find any men?" (Aitmatov 1982a, 83). When Pulatov's Nora announces her decision to go to work at the hospital, Magdi's grandfather's reaction makes it clear that her duty lies at home: "You will work for a while, get your mind off of your problems, then you will be able to get back to raising your son" (Pulatov 1966, 145). Nora's reply reveals that she is ready to break with tradition and assume a new role:

Нет уж, милый отец! Хватит ходить наивненькой, чистенькой, красивенькой женой. Все думала, пусть бы Анвар уехал куда-нибудь на несколько месяцев, чтобы самостоятельно пожить. Все самой делать. Думать самой, падать и вставать самой... (Pulatov 1966, 145)<sup>13</sup>

Such programmatic exclamations give "Oklikni menia v lesu" a didactic quality that is absent in "Dzhamilya." Whereas "Dzhamilya" is a love story that deals with the treatment of women tangentially, Nora's search for independence is the main focus of "Oklikni menia v lesu." In comparison to the vivid picture of Daniyar, the portrayal of Nora's love, Erkin, is flat and colorless. Indeed Erkin is little more than a symbol for Nora's independence as his name, which has the Uzbek word for freedom, *erk*, as its root, would indicate. While Aitmatov primarily explores the development of Dzhamilya's love for Daniyar, Pulatov concentrates on the conflict between Nora and her disapproving neighbors. Thus the struggle between old and new is much more

acute in "Oklikni menia v lesu." Perhaps, this should be expected, as the Pulatov who wrote "Oklikni menia v lesu" was at an earlier stage in his career, than the Aitmatov who wrote "Dzhamilia."

It is possible that Pulatov wrote "Oklikni menia v lesu" as a response, one might even say a corrective, to Aitmatov's more morally ambiguous "Dzhamilia." Mozur calls Dzhamilia's abandonment of her soldier husband a "twist to the stereotyped depiction of Soviet women--unflinching in their faithfulness to their men at the front" that was "quite provocative at the time" (Mozur 1995, 32). From a doctrinaire Soviet point of view her escape from the limitations of her culture is tainted by her disloyalty to a Soviet fighting man. Perhaps, alarmed by this image, Pulatov decided to create a woman character who would gain independence while remaining faithful to her soldier husband.

Maybe the young Pulatov was also disappointed in Aitmatov's failure to expose the backward elements of his society. As Mozur points out, "Aitmatov refrains from depicting Dzhamilia's milieu as unduly oppressive. He chooses not to resort to the stereotypical approach toward the tenacious *perezhitki* (remnants, cultural survivals) of prerevolutionary Kirghizstan" (Mozur 1995, 32). Dzhamilia's family does appoint the boy, Seit, to keep an eye on her so that she does not commit any infidelities. She is not, however, subjected to the scrutiny and suspicion that hound Pulatov's Nora. Although the reader cannot know for certain, the neighbors' accusations against Nora are most likely false. Pulatov's portrayal of fanatical religious zealots who unjustly accuse an innocent woman of adultery is much closer to the Soviet stereotype of Central Asian society than Aitmatov's "objective picture of the patriarchal way of life in the *ail*" (Mozur 1995, 32). Of course, it could be argued that women are treated worse in Pulatov's story because women were treated worse in Pulatov's society. As Massell writes, "[E]lements of ritualized female inferiority

tended to be more pronounced in sedentary communities than in nomadic-pastoral ones" (Massell, 6). The fact remains, however, that there are strong negative reactions to both Dzhamilya's and Nora's behavior. Pulatov's decision to focus on women's rights in such great detail in the story indicates a desire to distance himself from his roots and to demonstrate the extent to which he has assimilated to the Soviet/Russian/Western world view.

Pulatov's story would seem to be a perfect Soviet propaganda piece for Central Asian society. Nora's work changes her for the better, improving the quality of life for the entire family. The superiority of the new is all the more striking when contrasted to the petty ignorance of the old. Aitmatov's story, on the other hand, would seem to confirm the worst fears of conservative elements in Kyrgyz society. The conclusion of "Dzhamilya" could not have been a comfort to conservative Kyrgyz men who feared that if their wives were to go off to work it would cause the breakdown of the family.<sup>14</sup> Thus although in his portrayal of the religion and the local specifics of Bukharan society the young Pulatov rejects his roots, he proves more conservative than Aitmatov on the question of women's independence. Aitmatov allows Dzhamilya to follow her heart, whereas Nora must find happiness through increased independence within the confines of her family.

Perhaps the most significant difference between "Oklikni menia v lesu" and "Dzhamilya," however, is in the role played by their respective narrators. Whereas Aitmatov's narrator is an adult who recalls what he has experienced as a child, Pulatov shows the events directly through the eyes of a child. Furthermore, Pulatov's narrator, Magdi, is younger than Aitmatov's Seit at the time the primary action takes place. Whereas Aitmatov would have us believe that Seit was able to see the beauty of Dzhamilya's love because his youth left him unfettered by the prejudices of his society, Pulatov uses Magdi's youthful innocence to exaggerate the confusion caused by the

story's conflict. Pulatov further increases the tension in the narrative by placing Magdi in the role of Nora's son. Out of appreciation for the depths of Dzhamilia's love for Daniyar, Seit can forgive her for betraying his step-brother. Magdi, on the other hand, cannot be expected to accept his mother's love for Erkin. Moreover, as Nora's son, Magdi is more closely affected by the heroine's actions and thus plays a far more active role in the narrative than Seit plays in "Dzhamilia."

In focusing on Magdi's inner confusion in the face of competing value systems, Pulatov more fully exploits the potential of the child narrator than Aitmatov. Although Seit's approval of Dzhamilia's actions is meant to demonstrate that the beauty and depth of the young couple's love were irresistible to the boy's pure spirit, his exaltation of their love comes off as somewhat hackneyed and trite. Magdi tries to understand his mother's love for Erkin in terms of romantic commonplaces similar to, if more childish than, those applied by Seit:

Все говорили гадости, и ругались, и злились, но никто не сказал: любовь. Никто не сказал, что это любовь, и я не понимал. Если бы мне немного раньше сказали об этом, если бы мне объяснили, что это то же самое, что и Фархад и Ширин, Буратино и Мальвина, что это то, из-за чего люди радуются, страдают, и плачут, и становятся другими, и могут делать только добро, как Фархад, и искать золотой ключик счастья, как Буратино и драться, и побеждать страшного Карабаса-Барабаса. (Pulatov 1966, 176-7)<sup>15</sup>

His attempt to understand his mother's feelings in terms of poetic and fairy tale models only adds to Magdi's confusion. If his mother loves another man, where does that leave his father?

Он же тоже любит тебя, мама, он ведь тоже как Буратино, как Фархад, как добрый принц. Как же он? Ты любишь и папу, и дядю Эркина, тебя любят и папа, и дядя Эркин. Опять все непонятно... (Pulatov 1966, 176-7)<sup>16</sup>

While Seit knows in his heart that Dzhamilia is better off with Daniyar, Magdi must struggle to come to terms with the changes in his mother's character. This inner conflict adds a dimension to "Oklikni menia v lesu" that is absent in "Dzhamilia." Indeed, in that he has been forced to choose between two conflicting value systems, Magdi's dilemma can be seen as a metaphor for the post-colonial writer's predicament. The very title of "Oklikni menia v lesu" makes it clear that the story's primary focus is not Nora's search for greater independence, but Magdi's efforts to come to terms with his mother's search. In the article "Iazyk, avtor, zhizn'," Pulatov contends that for an Uzbek, "the concept of 'woods' practically does not exist in its physical meaning, but lives only as a metaphor, as a word expressing something complex, muddled, dark..." (Pulatov 1976, 110). The image of the woods is never employed in connection with Nora. It occurs in Magdi's nightmares and in descriptions of the front. Later, at the height of his confusion, Magdi himself compares his feelings to being "in those dark and scary woods" (Pulatov 1966, 175).

The difficulty Magdi has in accepting the changes in his mother's character is symbolized by his ambivalent feelings toward Erkin. The contention that Nora's attraction to Erkin merely represents her struggle for independence is further supported by Magdi's reaction to Erkin's return. Magdi finds himself, "not knowing what to think, whether it's a good thing or a bad thing that he has come back" (Pulatov 1966, 177. Emphasis added.). He uses almost the exact same words to describe his reaction to his mother's search for greater freedom and individuality:

Она очень хотела быть сильным и смелым человеком, быть самостоятельной, чтобы делать все самой. Я не знал, хорошо это или нет, я боялся: как быть с ней, когда она станет самостоятельной? Но папа сказал: это хорошо! (Pulatov 1966, 184. Emphasis added.)<sup>17</sup>

Thus the return of the boy's father provides him with the guidance he needs to determine what is good and what is bad. That the boy would need guidance out of his own personal "woods" had been presaged by the story Erkin told him about the war. This story was not Erkin's own, but rather a retelling of Maxim Gorky's "Goriashchee serdtse" ("The Burning Heart"), in which the hero, Danko, rips his burning heart from his chest and with it leads his detachment out of the dark woods. The reference to Gorky, one of the leading icons in Soviet Literature, and the juxtaposition of Magdi's enlightened father with the Slav, Danko, are further evidence of the young Pulatov's acceptance of Soviet and Russian ideals over those of his native Bukhara. In focusing on Magdi's struggle, however, he shows the tensions involved in making such a choice. In "Dzhamilia," on the other hand, Aitmatov does not vilify the old ways to the extent that Pulatov does in "Oklikni menia v lesu." Yet by making Seit's choice between Kyrgyz and Western values so simple, Aitmatov implies the superiority of the new, perhaps even more strongly than does Pulatov.

Aitmatov's and Pulatov's early works offer many glimpses of what is to come later in the writers' careers. Daniyar's ability to touch the soul with his beautiful Kyrgyz songs presages Aitmatov's later interest in the aesthetics of his people. The early Aitmatov punishes Altynai for leaving her *ail* by having her suffer from severe guilt. In later works he will be much harder on characters such as Sabitzhan (from *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*) and Osipbai (from *Voskhozhdenie na Fudziiamu*) who leave the country for the city. Magdi's feelings of confusion are early evidence of Pulatov's

obsession with identity. Characters with multiple and contradictory natures, such as the cat with a human face and the three headed cachalot, force their way into the story through the boy's imagination. In Pulatov's later works such characters will often move to the center of the narrative focus. Most of the tendencies described above become highly developed in the second stage of Pulatov's and Aitmatov's careers. Thus as the two authors move further away from socialist realist models, the difference in their styles grows more pronounced. Yet, despite their expanding stylistic divergence, the two writers share an increasingly negative view of both the Soviet system and Western culture in general. In this regard they both fit the pattern set forth by Fanon, Yetiv, and Miller, who contend that postcolonial writers initially accept the 'superiority' of the imposed culture only to return later to what they perceive as their native cultural roots.<sup>18</sup>

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Notes to Part One, Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>Mozur translates the title as "Water Lords" although the Kyrgyz word *sypaichi* 'water master' would have to serve as both a singular and plural form in Russian.

<sup>2</sup>"We are poor," said Duishen, now quietly, "All our lives we have been downtrodden and humiliated. We lived in darkness. But now Soviet power wants for us to see the light, to learn read and write."

[Here, and throughout the current study, all translations from non-English texts, whether in footnotes or in the body of the work, are my own unless otherwise stated.]

<sup>3</sup>It is hard to appreciate the full importance of this remarkable, progressive event in the history of the Kyrgyz. Even now, looking back at the path that my people have followed alongside of Russia for a hundred years, I exclaim from the bottom of my heart, "May the day be blest that forever linked us as a family with the great Russian people!" The Russian people gave us Lenin, gave us the October Revolution, led us to battle for Soviet power, introduced us to culture and knowledge. We live with the Russians in one land, together we are building a communist society. That is the greatest happiness that one can wish for his nation. Cited in Daniyarov from *Rodnaia Rossiia, ty nash utrennii vek!* Frunze: 1964, 29.

<sup>4</sup>For an example of Aitmatov's non-fiction treatment of the same question, see the article "Eto vasha vina, zemliaki" ("It's your fault, my fellow countrymen") in Aitmatov 1984, 225-228.

<sup>5</sup>Tokol. Second Wife. Oh, how I hate that word! Who, in what wretched times, came up with such a word? What could be more humiliating than the situation of a forcibly married second wife, a slave in body and soul? Rise, ye unfortunate,

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from your graves, rise, ye spirits of women who have been ruined, cursed, and deprived of all human dignity! Rise, ye martyrs, and may the dark gloom of those times shudder!

<sup>6</sup>This difference in the two versions is noted in Dzholdosheva, 139-140. Dzholdosheva, however, has little to say about the significance of the deviation.

<sup>7</sup>There is just one bad thing about it--all the windows face the courtyard and it is impossible to watch what is happening on the street. Our house is like the castle in the story "Ali-Baba and the Forty thieves"--everything is totally blocked off from the eyes of outsiders by four high walls. Just try and get a peek. You'll end up with a broken nose! And not just at our place. All our neighbors have the same blind and deaf houses. And no matter how much you were to run around looking for a house with eyes in our city, I'm willing to bet you'd never find one.

<sup>8</sup>The mosque looks like a gigantic stone magician's box with an owl--or rather an owl's head, with ten eyelike apertures--on top of it. Inside that box are old men. They fold themselves over like puppets, here rising in unison, there in unison falling to their knees and kissing the ground as if it had been sprinkled with sugar. Yum!

<sup>9</sup>And all this is overseen by the still rather young ishan, Kalantar, the son of the ishan who died after swallowing a bumble-bee in his sleep. Now when Ishan Kalantar gets mad he calls all non-believers bumble-bees and as a sign of his life long mourning he refuses to eat honey, not realizing that bumble-bees don't make honey.

<sup>10</sup>. Marat! Our native Islamic rituals are so very barbarous, senseless and hypocritical. But what is there to explain, you had the chance to see it for yourself after your father's death. Remember the crowd of wailing old women? And can they even manage to squeeze out a single tear, for propriety's sake?! No, they simply wail--for an hour, two, all day and all the next day--like marionettes on a string. And during

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breaks they stuff their faces with *plov*, licking the grease from their fingers carefully, with gusto. Then they wait some more, keeping one eye on the door, so as not to miss out when the next dish is served.

<sup>11</sup>"God lives within everyone," said the old man, "One should speak of god quietly or not at all. One should carry him within, inside one's body like a spirit. The ishans and mullahs cannot get this spirit to dwell inside themselves, because they use god to make money.

<sup>12</sup>Timur Pulatov, personal interview, Aug. 7, 1995.

<sup>13</sup>Not quite, dear father! I've had enough of being a naive, pure, pretty little wife. I kept thinking, "If only Anwar would go away somewhere for a few months, so I could live independently. I would be able to do everything myself. I could think for myself, fall and get up on on my own...

<sup>14</sup>As Massell writes, "[B]oth the Islamic and customary components of Central Asian folkways had always carried expectations that unrestricted female mobility and unveiling would lead to widespread social disorganization, demoralization, promiscuity and harlotry" (Massell, 276).

<sup>15</sup>Everyone had been saying awful things, arguing, and getting angry, but no one had said, "love." No one had said that it was love and I hadn't understood. If they had just told me about it a little sooner, had they explained that this was the same thing as Farhad and Shirin, Buratino and Malvina, that it was the thing that made people happy, made them suffer and cry, and change. And people can only do good like Farhad, and search for the gold key to happiness like Buratino and fight and defeat the horrible Karabas-Barabas.

<sup>16</sup>He loves you, too, mom. He's like Buratino, too, you know. He's like Farhad, like the good prince. What about him? You love dad and uncle Erkin. Dad

and Uncle Erkin love you. Everything is mixed-up again.

<sup>17</sup>She very much wanted to be a strong and brave person, to be independent, to do everything for herself. I didn't know if that was a good thing or a bad thing. I was afraid, "What will it be like to be around her when she becomes independent?" But dad said, "It's a good thing!" (emphasis added).

<sup>18</sup>See Yetiv (88) and Miller (70).

### III. Mountains and Horses, Cities and Trucks: Tradition versus Modernity in Aitmatov's Middle Period.

It is commonly accepted that the second stage of Aitmatov's career began with the story *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* ("Farewell, Gul'sary!"). In *Natsional'naia epicheskaia traditsiia v tvorchestve Chingiza Aitmatova*, Pariza Mirza-Akhmedova writes, "The povest' 'Proshchai, gul'sary!' was in many ways a breakthrough for the writer. It was in this work that Aitmatov achieved artistic maturity" (Mirza-Akhmedova, 9). Mozur calls the story a "major advance in Chingiz Aitmatov's literary career," commenting that it is not only "aesthetically superior to all of his fiction published before 1966" but "also signals a greater willingness on the part of the author to confront the controversial issues of contemporary Soviet life" (Mozur 1995, 39). In *Four Contemporary Russian (sic) Writers*, Robert Porter maintains that "The publication of *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* (*Farewell, Gul'sary!*) established Aitmatov's international reputation and set out the primary attributes of the author's mature fiction" (Porter, 62). Aitmatov himself says, "I tried to say something new in it in comparison to my earlier stories" (Aitmatov 1984, 359).

The long literary silence that preceded this ground breaking work may represent a period of soul searching and self-evaluation. Whether or not Aitmatov was making conscious decisions about the future course of his work during the three years between the publication of "Materinskoe pole" and *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* the stylistic and thematic changes this period wrought on his writing are numerous. The most easily recognized difference is that he first published *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* in Russian rather than Kyrgyz. While such a shift would seem to indicate an increased acceptance of the Russian's world, the other changes in his craft indicate the opposite. One of the most significant of these is what Mozur terms "an increasing use of the folklore and

oral legacy of Central Asia" (Mozur 1995, 38). The employment of these Kyrgyz stylistic elements is accompanied by a change in thematic focus, as well. On the evidence of *Proshchai, gul'sary!*, *Belyi parokhod* (*The White Ship*), *Voskhozhdenie na Fudziiamu* (*The Ascent of Mount Fuji*), *Rannie zhuravli* (*Early Cranes*), and *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* (*The Day Lasts More than One Hundred Years*) it is difficult to agree with Mozur's statement that this period in Aitmatov's career was marked by a "growing concern with problems whose implications transcend the confines of his native republic" (Mozur 1995, 38). Indeed, I will argue that the above mentioned works, along with *Pegii pes begushchii kraem moria* (*Piebald Dog Running Along the Shore*), mark a shift in Aitmatov's focus not from Kyrgyz problems to universal problems but from various problems within his republic to the question of his people's cultural survival.

Aitmatov's literary output from 1965 to 1980 does little to overturn Fanon's stereotype of the post-colonial writer in the second stage of his development. "[P]ast happenings of the bygone days of his childhood" are "brought up out of the depths of his memory" in *Belyi parokhod* and "Rannie zhuravli." During this period "old legends" are "reinterpreted in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and a conception of the world that was discovered under other skies" (Fanon 1968, 222) to such an extent that Mozur is able to focus on these "parables from the past" as the organizing principle in his approach to Aitmatov's career. According to Fanon this is the stage in which "The native intellectual decides to make an inventory of the bad habits drawn from the colonial world, and hastens to remind everyone of the good old customs of the people, that people which he has decided contains all truth and goodness" (Fanon 1968, 221). Aitmatov fits Fanon's generalization in this regard, as well. Indeed whereas in Aitmatov's early works the new is often shown as being better than the

old, beginning with *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* Kyrgyz tradition is almost invariably portrayed as being superior to Soviet and Western innovations.

*Proshchai, Gul'sary!* reflects Aitmatov's transformation on many levels. His use of folk elements is evidence of a desire to return to Kyrgyz esthetic and moral values, while his criticism of corruption within the party demonstrates a loss of faith in Soviet institutions. Indeed, the story's hero Tanabai can be seen to have undergone many of the same changes as Aitmatov. At one point Tanabai remembers his youthful hostility toward his native traditions:

А ведь в молодости сам был одним из таких могильщиков старины. Однажды выступил даже на комсомольском собрании с речью о ликвидации юрт. Услышав откуда-то, что юрта должна исчезнуть, что юрта -- дореволюционное жилье. «Долой юрту! Хватит жить по старинке». . . .

А потом оказалось, что отгонное животноводство немыслимо без юрт. И всякий раз теперь Танабай поражался, как он мог говорить такое, ругать юрту, лучше которой пока ничего не придумали для кочевья. Как он мог не видеть в юрте удивительное изобретение своего народа, где каждая мельчайшая деталь была точно выверена вековым опытом поколений?  
(Aitmatov 1982a, 431-432)<sup>1</sup>

If we recall Aitmatov's use of the yurt as a symbol for Altynai's imprisonment by the forces of reaction, it becomes clear that the author shares the hero's guilt for having abused the yurt. Thus Tanabai's newfound appreciation of the yurt can be seen to parallel Aitmatov's positive reevaluation of his ancestors' wisdom and ingenuity.

This passage about the yurt is but one manifestation of Aitmatov's recantation of the overzealous acceptance of Soviet "progress" at the expense of Kyrgyz tradition

that he himself had exhibited in his youth. In chapter three of *Proshchai, gul'sary!* Aitmatov uses the character of the truck driver as a symbol for all the evils that have been visited upon Kyrgyzstan. This driver could not possibly be further removed from the Kyrgyz countryside through which he is travelling. Indeed he and Tanabai are headed in different directions. Tanabai is returning to the mountains, a traditional symbol of the Kyrgyz homeland. Mirza-Akhmedova notes Aitmatov's use of the mountains to represent his native culture, underlining their meaning to the Kyrgyz people:

In Aitmatov's *povest'* the mountains generally represent a physically palpable, unbelievably varied and, at the same time, amazingly complete image of mountainous Kirghizia. Finding themselves in the most varied states depending on the time of year, on night and day, on good and bad weather conditions, they unfailingly leave their mark—strongly or barely noticeably—on the local inhabitants' world view. As the sea makes its impression on those who are in constant residence near it, the mountains do the same. And it was this permanent connection that Aitmatov showed through the character of his heroes. (Mirza-Akhmedova, 36-37)

Indeed in his "Oda respublike" ("Ode to a Republic"), Aitmatov chooses the mountains as the central image in his praise for his native land (Aitmatov 1988, 193-201). Thus when the driver says that the mountains are not on his way, it clearly shows that he is leaving his Kyrgyz roots behind.

Not only is the driver "a typical representative of the proletariat" (Mozur 1995, 50), but he also reeks of vodka: one of the most easily recognizable negative stereotypes of Russia. He scoffs at Tanabai and Gul'sary with the same term the Soviets used to describe Kyrgyz tradition, calling them, "remnants of a past way of

life" He then further emphasizes his links to the forces of change saying, "Now, my friend, technology runs the show." He even condemns Tanabai and Gul'sary, along with the traditional Kyrgyz way of life they represent, to the dust bin of history, proclaiming "And the time for old men and horses like that has come to an end." As he drives away he says, "To hell with everything [Pleval ia na vse.]" (Aitmatov 1982a, 397), revealing the extent to which his rejection of the past has left him devoid of morality. Nothing is sacred. He has spat on everything. Even his friend in the truck calls him a beast, *zveriuga*.

In the Kyrgyz version of the story, Aitmatov still further emphasizes the importance of remembering the past. He introduces the theme early in the chapter in which the truck driver is encountered, when Tanabai laments, "We forget that which is good, and we do not remember the bad" (Aitmatov 1982b, 54). Thus Aitmatov has shown that when one abandons the values of his people, he becomes little more than a "beast."

The horse, Gul'sary, is linked to Kyrgyz culture by more than the truck driver's statement that he is a remnant of a past way of life. Indeed the horse is no less a symbol of Kyrgyz culture than the mountains or the yurt.<sup>2</sup> Discussing the Kyrgyz in the book *Natsional'nye obrazy mira*, Georgii Gachev even goes so far as to state that "the horse is the nomad's universe, his unity, his godhead . . ." (Gachev 1988, 67). This link between the horse and Kyrgyz tradition is underlined in the passage describing the equestrian games, *baiga*. Gul'sary's success against the competition leads the people to compare him to *duldul*, a horse from Kyrgyz folklore. The games themselves are a Kyrgyz tradition and they are shown in an extremely positive manner. Indeed the narrator becomes so excited by the spectacle of *alaman-baiga* that he cannot keep from interjecting, "May our ancestors be blest for leaving us these manly games of the brave!" (Aitmatov 1982a, 410). Mirza-Akhmedova underlines the importance

of the portrayal of the *baiga* to Aitmatov's effort to represent the character of his people saying, "Nowhere else in the *povest'* does Aitmatov keep the attention of the reader on the national character or his heroes like he does in the *baiga* . . . " (Mirza-Akhmedova, 27). She notes, as well, that in the chapter about the *baiga* the narrative is executed in the zone of Gul'sary. That is to say, though the story is told in the third person, the narrator describes things as they are experienced by the horse (Mirza-Akhmedova, 23). Thus the *baiga* is the centerpiece of Aitmatov's attempt to portray his national culture and Gul'sary is at the heart of his description of the *baiga*.

That Gul'sary is constantly referred to as an *inokhodets* (ambler) strengthens the connection between him and Kyrgyzstan. The literal meaning of *inokhodets* is "one who walks otherwise." The prefix *ino-* means "other" and is employed by Russians in several words that they use to describe the Kyrgyz. To a Russian a Kyrgyz can be called an *inostranets*, a foreigner, or an *inoverets*, one who believes in a different religion. The closest Russian word phonetically to *inokhodets*, however, is the old tsarist term for such non-Russian subjects of the Russian empire as the Kyrgyz, *inorodets*, i.e. one "born elsewhere."

If we allow that Gul'sary is a symbol for Kyrgyz culture, his shackling and his castration must be seen as particularly sharp criticism of Soviet nationalities policies. That the gelding comes at the hands of Aldanov, whose distance from the roots of Kyrgyz culture are emphasized by his drunkenness and inability to ride a horse well, is further condemnation of the new ways. It would be hard to find a better symbol for culture that is "nationalist in form, but socialist in content" than a gelded horse. After the operation the animal continues to look the same on the outside but its very nature is changed. What is more, it cannot reproduce and thus has no future. Indeed the fate of Kyrgyz culture is directly linked to Gul'sary, when a child, a widely used symbol for the future, is seen to ride the gelded horse. The child cries, "[L]ook at me! I'm

Chapaev!" (Aitmatov 1982a, 509), indicating that his hero is not Manas or one of the Kyrgyz *batyrs* but a Soviet Russian military leader. The boy's tumble from the saddle implies that he is not fated to be the skilled horseman that a Kyrgyz should be. Thus we are shown that the younger generation will be unable to handle even a diluted form of Kyrgyzstan's traditional culture.

The image of a future without progeny is repeated in nearly all of the story's episodes and sub-plots. As Porter observes, "The single most recurrent idea in *Farewell, Gul'sary!* is that of loss" (Porter, 66). The she-camel loses her child, as do most of the sheep in Tanabai's flock. The mountain goat loses all of her children to Karagul's bow, while Karagul's father is forced to end his own son's life. These losses, from Gul'sary's spirit to the sheep in the flock, all represent the extinction of the Kyrgyz way of life. Nothing that has been gained is ever shown to be superior to that which has departed. Against these images, Tanabai's decision to rejoin the party is hardly convincing praise for the new ways. Mozur contends that Gul'sary's death, the lambing disaster, and the two Kyrgyz folk songs turn Aitmatov's *povest'* into "one long lament . . . on the tragedies in Tanabai's life" (Mozur 1995, 54). This perception stems from Mozur's assumption that Aitmatov employs folk elements as "literary subplots, which, when introduced to the primary narrative line, function as parables, providing lyrical and moral commentaries on the events portrayed in the more central, realistic plot line" (Mozur 1995, 8). It seems no less reasonable, however, to argue that Aitmatov uses the Kyrgyz national tradition to underscore the connection between the tragedy of the individual and the tragedy of his people. Aitmatov implies as much when he says, "Sometimes I include *impersonal* elements of the national consciousness. . . . I do so in those instances when I need to say something *general*" (Aitmatov 1984, 403. Aitmatov's emphasis). If the folk elements in *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* generalize the personal suffering of Tanabai, then the entire work must be

seen as a lament for Aitmatov's vision of Kyrgyz culture with Tanabai's tale as but one refrain in its complex composition. At the risk of "beating a dead horse," I will again point out that Gul'sary is a symbol for Kyrgyz culture. If his death represents the passing of the traditional Kyrgyz way of life, the story's title implies that the mourning of this loss is the central theme of the work. That Aitmatov has managed to criticize the results of the Soviet presence in Kyrgyzstan in a *povest'* whose main story line seems to fit all the formal requirements of socialist realism is deliciously ironic. He attacks Soviet nationalities policies in a work that stands them on their head: It is ostensibly socialist in form yet it is essentially nationalist in content.

Aitmatov's concern for Kyrgyz culture is again the center of the author's focus in the *povest'* *Belyi parokhod* ("The White Ship"). Indeed, in this story, the writer comes dangerously close to abandoning completely the veneer of optimism that had placated orthodox Soviet critics in *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* Mozur states, "*The White Ship* is an unmitigated tragedy. Whereas *Farewell, Gul'sary!* leaves the reader the illusion of an upbeat conclusion, the *Novyi mir* edition of *The White Ship* left nothing in its conclusion for Soviet critics to point to as optimistic . . ." (Mozur, 60). Later in the same chapter of his book, however, Mozur allows that "Aitmatov offers a glimmer of hope, albeit one exclusively in the realm of fantasy" (Mozur, 71-72). This "glimmer of hope" comes in the form of the boy's fever induced dream, in which Kulubek drives Orozkul away from the compound.

Although Aitmatov makes extensive use of the Kyrgyz national tradition in "Proshchai, Gul'sary!," these folk elements are part of the secondary structure of the work. In "Belyi Parokhod," on the other hand, they become the "primary conceptual plane of the *povest'*" (Aitmatov 1984, 403). Thus the use of myth, legend, and the folk tale in *Belyi parokhod* make up the very essence of the *povest'*. In *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* the primary metaphor for Kyrgyz culture is the horse and "the way people

treat him is one of the criteria for determining their humanity" (Mirza-Akhmedova, 40). The songs are used to emphasize the Kyrgyz nature of the story's events and to intensify the sense of tragedy the reader feels. In "Belyi Parokhod," on the other hand, the folk themes are the main touchstone of humanity. As Mozur points out, the myth of the Horned Deer-mother "in *The White Ship* plays a similar role to Gul'sary in Aitmatov's earlier novella, serving as a universal moral standard according to which positive characters are differentiated from negative ones" (Mozur 1995, 64). We must not forget, however, that these standards are not arbitrary and that those who abuse Gul'sary or do not believe in the Horned Deer-mother are seen to be wicked because of their rejection of traditional Kyrgyz values.

All of the folk elements in *Belyi parokhod* are in one way or another concerned with encroachment and autonomy. The brief legends that Momun tells the boy are transparent and require little interpretation. The etiological legend about the origin of the San-Tash winds deals with turning away attacking enemies. The tale of the khan, who is captured and chooses death with the right to listen to a shepherd's song as his final wish over a life as a slave, is about dignity and cultural memory. These legends serve a dual role in that they develop the theme of conflict with other nations while calling attention to traits that could be said to be traditionally Kyrgyz: love of music and a close relationship with the forces of nature.<sup>3</sup>

The myth of the Horned Deer-mother is, as Mozur notes, "the most important element of folklore in *The White Ship*" (Mozur 1995, 63), and thus it warrants a close reading. The myth describes a situation in which many tribes live in a constant state of war. Under these conditions, "Man exterminated man" and it was considered a triumph "to wipe out another tribe to the last soul" (Aitmatov 1983a, 39). Thus the specter of cultural extinction, that was implicit in "Proshchai, Gul'sary!," is raised explicitly in "Belyi parokhod." Soon, the theme of the survival of the Kyrgyz nation

itself arises, as we are shown the near complete annihilation of the Yenisey Kyrgyz. After the massacre, the hope of the tribe is represented by two children. This establishes the image of the child as the future of his people.

When the children discover that their own tribe has been destroyed, they attempt to follow those who were responsible for the massacre. Their attempt to catch up with the enemy can be seen as a metaphor for cultural assimilation. Yet, much as a Kyrgyz intellectual soon learns that he will never have a voice in his dealings with Russia, the children discover that, no matter how they try, they cannot make themselves heard (Aitmatov 1983a, 41). When they finally catch up with the enemy, they are immediately recognized because of their accents. Taken to the conquering Khan's yurt, they are sentenced to death "so that with that would come the end of the Kyrgyz tribe, so that there would be no recollection of its existence, so that its name would be forgotten for all time" (Aitmatov 1983a, 43). That the khan who wants to see the complete destruction of Kyrgyz culture lives in a red yurt is a less than subtle indication that the author sees communism as a threat to his nation's identity. The children's proposed mode of execution, drowning, not only presages the demise of Momun's grandson, but creates a parallel between his fate and that of the whole Kyrgyz nation, as well.

The arrival of the Horned Deer-mother and her rescue of the children establishes the link between the Kyrgyz and nature. She is further connected to Kyrgyz culture by the blessing she gives the children: "May your descendents not forget your language, which you have brought here. May they find it sweet to speak and sing in their own language. Live as people should live . . . (Aitmatov 1983a, 45). Therefore "people" should live as the Kyrgyz once lived, speaking their own language and respecting the natural environment. The Bugu tribe's subsequent deer hunts are seen as the abandonment of their cultural roots and traditional ties with nature. As

Mozur maintains, "The killing of the deer and the Bugu tribe's fall from grace stem from human arrogance vis-a-vis the natural world and its own heritage" (Mozur 1995, 67). He also points out that, "Orozkul, the initiator of the deer hunt at the outpost, is juxtaposed by the author with the Kirghiz of myth, who forgot their past and turned on their natural 'brothers'" (Mozur 1995, 67). Here again Aitmatov employs folk elements to generalize the specific actions of one of his "realistic" characters. The insertion of the myth into the story insures that the reader will understand that Orozkul is not an anomaly, but rather the representative of a large cross-section of Kyrgyz society.

The remaining folk element in "The White Ship" is the story, "Chypalak," which is similar to the Russian folktale "Mal'chik s pal'chik" or the English "Tom Thumb." Stepan Il'ev argues that "this tale is evoked as a corrective to the plot line of the boy versus Orozkul," explaining that "Chypalak, who gives the wolf away with his cries of danger, is the boy repudiating the evil that is personified in Orozkul" (Il'ev, 67). Although this argument satisfies the reader's desire to see the boy avenge himself against Orozkul, it neglects the complexity that this brief tale introduces to the text. While it would be convenient to view the wolf simply as a symbol of nastiness and evil, to do so would ignore the traditional Kyrgyz attitude toward the creature. As Mozur notes, the wolf often "stands as a symbol of proud Kirghiz ethnicity" having "positive connotations, standing for pride and tenacity" (Mozur, 152). Chypalak's threat to turn the wild wolf into a dog is reminiscent of the Russians' attempt to settle or domesticate the nomadic Kyrgyz. The wolf's troubles begin when he allows his greed to cause him to swallow Chypalak. As many Kyrgyz permitted the striving for material comfort to cause them to internalize Russian values and the Russian language, so, too, does the wolf's avarice lead him to internalize the 'other,' Chypalak. When the 'other's' voice speaks from within the wolf it is always against the wolf's own

interests. Eventually the wolf's very nature is changed and it loses all of its "pride and tenacity." Thus the tale of Chypalak underscores the importance of remaining close to nature and true to oneself.

One very brief reference to the Kyrgyz epic tradition is present only in the Kyrgyz language version of the story. When the boy plays war with the other children in the pasture many of the children cry the name of the epic hero, Manas. Others, however, do not understand and merely shout the Russian word, *ura* 'hoorah' (Aitmatov 1982c, 35). While the children who do not know the legend are certainly not ridiculed, the reader is left with the impression that the world of those who do know the legend is substantially richer.

Whereas the Kyrgyz songs in *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* serve mainly to generalize the feelings of loss in the *povest'*, the folkloric elements in *Belyi parokhod* make a much more comprehensive attempt to explain the reasons for that loss. Of course, Karagul's slaughter of the animals in *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* "testifies to the close communion of man and nature among the Kirghiz and serves as a warning to those who might be so arrogant as to destroy such harmony" (Mozur 1995, 53). It does not, however, indicate that this arrogance stems from forgetting one's past. The folkloric elements in "Belyi parokhod," on the other hand, help make cultural memory one of the dominant themes of the work.

Aitmatov's elevation of traditional Kyrgyz ways above Soviet, Russian, and Western culture is seen not only in the folk thematics of *Belyi parokhod*, but in his description of the events in the San-Tash preserve as well. Early in the *povest'* a mobile store comes to visit. It is met with great excitement and the women of the settlement grab everything they can get their hands on. They soon realize, however, that the mobile store has little to offer that is of real value, and slowly, piece by piece, they return the goods that they have taken. In the end the only things that this intruder

is seen to have brought to the preserve are some unnamed trifles, two bottles of vodka, and the briefcase that the boy is to take to school. In this scene, the mobile store, as an outside presence in the settlement, can be seen to represent the Russians as an outside presence in Kyrgyzstan. The locals greet its arrival with excitement, only to find it has nothing of value to offer them. The items that they eventually do obtain symbolize the Russian contribution to Kyrgyzstan. Other than the trifles that represent changes not worth mentioning, the store brings vodka, a symbol of moral degradation, and the school briefcase, a metaphor for education. The effects of the vodka on Orozkul's behavior are obvious. Aitmatov's attitude toward education, however, is somewhat more complex. I shall examine the significance of the boy's schooling in the chapter devoted to the treatment of the alienating effects of education in Aitmatov's and Pulatov's works.

Another troublesome intruder from outside of the settlement is the boy's step-grandmother. Much as the Russians would treat the Kyrgyz as outsiders in their own homeland, the step-grandmother calls the boy *chuzhoi*. Of course, she means that he is not her own, but the boy's repetition of the word causes the reader to ponder it in all of its meanings: strange, alien, foreign, stranger (Wheeler, 890). Thus the boy's step-grandmother, an outsider, attempts to make him feel like he does not belong in his own home.

The theme of cultural memory that is prevalent in the folk elements of the *povest'* plays a prominent role in the San-Tash story line as well. In an imaginary conversation, the boy tells his father what Momun has told him about the Horned Deer-Mother, "Grandpa says everyone who lives on lake Issyk-Kul has to know this tale. Not to know it is a sin" (Aitmatov 1983a, 34). Later the boy meets a Kazak soldier who has forgotten the Kyrgyz and Kazak tradition of memorizing seven generations of one's male ancestors. This tradition was very important in Aitmatov's

native village, where "it was considered absolutely obligatory to know one's ancestors to the seventh generation" (Mozur 1995, 82).<sup>4</sup> As with the boys who did not know about Manas, however, Aitmatov is not overly critical of this soldier. The author simply allows him to reveal his political beliefs, having him state, "We are on the path to communism . . ." (Aitmatov 1983a, 77). He also reveals the soldier's view that people, such as Momun, who preserve the legends and myths of the past are "ignorant" and "uncivilized" (Aitmatov 1983a, 77). Porter points to this soldier as the embodiment of the "spiritual poverty of the educated Stalinist" (Porter, 70). Yet there is little here to indicate that the Kazak is any more Stalinist than the average Soviet citizen. Thus the reader, who is already acquainted with the rich spiritual world of Momun, is presented with a representative of the official ideology. As depicted by Aitmatov, the ideology of moving toward communism has little to offer against the traditional values of the Kyrgyz that the old man represents.

In *Belyi parokhod* Aitmatov is very open in his rejection of the Soviet campaign against religion. Whereas in "Pervyi uchitel'" the positive hero, Duishen, criticizes Kartanbai for summoning a shaman, in *Belyi parokhod* it is the negative characters who condemn ancient Kyrgyz beliefs. As Mozur observes, Seidakhmat's threats to inform on Momun for his propagation of the myth of the Horned Deer-Mother parallel the party's "struggle against 'religious survivals from the past'" (Mozur 1995, 70).

The most damning commentary on the Russian presence in Kyrgyzstan, however, is Orozkul's total rejection of Kyrgyz tradition. Indeed, Orozkul's very name is within a single phonetic change from being a combination of the the Kyrgyz words for 'Russian' and 'slave', *Orus* and *kul*.<sup>5</sup> "Thus," as Mozur writes, "the character expresses the author's condemnation of those of his compatriots who rushed to worship everything Russian at the expense of their own culture" (Mozur 1995, 71).

Yet while the attack on Russia's influence in Kyrgyzstan contained in Orozkul's name is interesting in and of itself, this appellation's greatest value is that it allows us to view the villain's thoughts and actions as typical of those who slavishly adopt every aspect of Russian culture. Thus Orozkul's character flaws can be seen to reflect the negative Russian impact on an entire sub-class of Kyrgyz. Through the villain's actions we discover that drunkenness, lack of respect for one's elders,<sup>6</sup> the mistreatment of the environment, and hostility toward the folk beliefs of the Kyrgyz people are the expected result of unmitigated russification.

Another manifestation of Orozkul's russophilistism is his love of the city. He sees the city as a virtual paradise. He believes that if he lived in the city people would respect him. He dreams of marrying a singer and dressing in a tie. He fancies that his daughter would play the most European of musical instruments, the piano. He imagines that if he lived in town, his children would speak Russian, because city children are smart and they do not "fill their heads with country words" (Aitmatov 1983a, 52). Orozkul's romantic idealization of the urban environment stands in sharp contrast to Momun's impressions from a trip to town to sell potatoes and visit his daughter, the boy's mother, who works in a factory. Her husband works as a bus driver from "four in the morning until late at night" (Aitmatov 1983a, 28). She lives with her new family, a husband and two daughters, "in a small room, so small that there's no room to even turn around" (Aitmatov 1983a, 28). Because of her work she only sees her children once a week. Nobody in the building knows anyone else, and the city folk "always sit locked up in their homes as if in jail" (Aitmatov 1983a, 28). Thus the apartment has replaced the *yurt* as a symbol of cultural imprisonment.

The opposition between the city and the country in Aitmatov's works has been noted by many observers. Ada Mayo notes that, "Aitmatov with few exceptions, follows the way of Rousseau and Tolstoj in praising 'a natural man' and condemning

the city for influencing a human being in a negative way" (Mayo, 56). Mozur refers to a "rural bias" that is "prominent throughout Aitmatov's fiction" (Mozur 1995, 71). It would be impossible, however, to have such a conflict between city and country without the opposition of Soviet and Kyrgyz modes of existence. In his article, "National Identity and Imperialist Domination: The Crisis of Culture in Africa Today," Ngugi wa Thiong'o discusses the tendency among writers from developing countries to romanticize the rural as "traditional," while indentifying the urban with "modernity." In such a scheme, "modernity is supposed to evoke images of fast changes, instability, and isolation while tradition evokes contrary images of peace stability and communal existence." (Ngugi, 167). Brian Silver observes a similar attitude in the Soviet Union where, "urbanization tends to be associated with a change in important values that affect ethnic loyalties" (Silver, 253). According to Ngugi, Momun's daughter has literary relatives in other colonies and former colonies throughout the world: "The peasant who follows the mirage of prosperity and happiness in the big city only to find the opposite is a familiar character in many a novel from the developing world" (Ngugi, 167).

Orozkul's monologue establishes the connection between the country and the Kyrgyz way of life when he refers to Kyrgyz words as "country words." What is more, his statement that all city children speak Russian implies that the city is the realm of the Russians and the russified. This was usually the case in the Soviet Union where it was observed that "Urban non-Russians are substantially more russified linguistically than are rural non-Russians" (Silver, 252). Indeed the cities of Kyrgyzstan are all distinctly Soviet. In the article "Zoloty vorota" ("Golden Gates"), Aitmatov complains about the lack of originality in Frunze's (now Bishkek) architecture saying, "You take a look at a new building, and it seems as if you have seen it either in Tashkent or Vladivostok" (Aitmatov 1984, 234). He praises the cities

of Dushanbe and Ashkhabad, where the "structures are distinguished by a national coloration" (Aitmatov 1984, 234). He bemoans the absence of monuments to Kyrgyz culture in Frunze noting, "[W]e hardly have a single monument that is a symbol, a monument to the pride of our people. Even the great poet, Toktogul, has yet to find himself in bronze or granite" (Aitmatov 1984, 237). Perhaps then it is not the city in and of itself that is the villain in Aitmatov's works, but the type of city found in Soviet Kirgizia. Indeed, he suggests a plan to make Frunze more Kyrgyz and, thus, more pleasant and inhabitable:

А какие богатые возможности для росписи города таят в себе мотивы фольклора, национального эпоса! Мне представляется скульптура эпического героя Манаса, с именем которого связана прошлая культура и история киргизского народа. (Aitmatov 1984, 237)<sup>7</sup>

While Aitmatov would likely prefer the countryside to even the ideal Kyrgyz city, the real Kyrgyz city's greatest fault is not its existence as a city, but its lack of connection with its people's culture and history.

Thus the dichotomy between modernity and tradition is not absolute. The city is evil because it is a symbol of all that is Russian or Soviet. That is why Aitmatov almost exclusively condemns the city and praises that which is traditionally Kyrgyz. Yet the Kyrgyz way of life is seen as being essentially powerless to halt the encroaching forces of Soviet modernity. Not only are many Kyrgyz being turned into Orozkuls, but even those who love the old ways can be brutalized into betraying their values. Under pressure from Orozkul and Seidakhmat, it is Momun who kills the symbol of Kyrgyz culture, the Horned Deer-mother. The death of the culture is further underscored when Orozkul "pulled out the deer's horns and they made a sound like the tearing out of roots" (Aitmatov 1983a, 106). Having killed the deer, Momun

has lost the right to continue his existence as the keeper of Kyrgyz tradition. As Mozur explains, "his self betrayal and, on a deeper level, his violation of the tribal totem result in his symbolic death" (Mozur 1995, 71). Momun's spiritual death is further underscored when the boy imagines the doe's mutilated head when he looks at his drunken grandfather and when Orozkul lays the deer's antlers at the old man's feet (Mozur 1995, 71). After the death of the primary representatives of Kyrgyz culture, everyone partakes of the symbol of Russian culture, vodka (Aitmatov 1983a, 108). Thus it seems that the only "glimmers of hope" left for the Kyrgyz way of life are the boy and Kulubek.

Kulubek is a truck driver, yet he does not show the signs of moral corruption evident in the Kazak soldier, the driver of the mobile store, Il'ias (from *Topolek moi v krasnoi kosynke* [*My Little Poplar in a Red Scarf*]), or the truck driver in *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* Kulubek respects his elders and remembers his tribal heritage. Mozur contends that "Kulubek is the boy's grown up double" (Mozur 1995, 72) and suggests that Kulubek's way "is the *vykhod* (way out) of the tragic dead end in the author's microcosm of Soviet society" (Mozur 1995, 72). Mozur does not, however, elaborate on his reasons for referring to Kulubek as the boy's double. Other than their tribal relationship, the only thing that connects the two textually is that they use the epithet "fascist" when pursuing their enemies. Of course, the Kulubek that shouts "fascist" at Orozkul is nothing more than a product of the boy's own imagination. The boy's dream is significant, however, in that it links Kulubek to the two-dimensional war heroes of Socialist realist cinema. In establishing this connection, Aitmatov leads the reader to wonder how real the boy's knight in shining armor really is and to question Kulubek's viability as a "way out."

Both the ending of the povest' and Aitmatov's comments in "Neobkhodimye utochneniia" ("Necessary clarifications")<sup>8</sup> reveal that for Aitmatov the only way out for

the child was death. The boy had no choice but to reject "that with which his child's soul could not make peace" (Aitmatov 1983a, 114). "[T]he good personified by the boy, turned out to be incompatible with the evil personified by Orozkul" (Aitmatov 1984, 383). Yet Aitmatov does not explain why the boy could not simply get away from Orozkul. He could not have left with Kulubek because, as a typical Soviet positive hero, Kulubek was nothing more than a literary convention. Momun can no longer be expected to provide guidance because, as has been noted, he is spiritually dead.

With no one to look after him the boy probably would have been sent to a boarding school. Yet, as we shall see when we discuss the effects of a Soviet education, such a school would offer him nothing but russification. Even if the boy did manage escape from the Orozkul of the San-Tash preserve, the folk elements of the *povest'* along with the villain's very name imply that other Orozkuls lurk throughout Kyrgyzstan. Perhaps, however, the biggest threat to the boy does not come from an already existing army of Orozkuls but from the system that creates them. Indeed, as we will see when we discuss the *mankurt* in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, the worst lot that Aitmatov can imagine is to be transformed into a soulless cog in the system's wheel. Having implied that the child's Soviet education will inevitably lead to russification<sup>9</sup> and that russification leads to becoming a Russian slave like Orozkul, Aitmatov had no choice but to let the boy drown, as the only way of keeping the child's purity intact.

Indeed, the text of *Belyi parokhod* offers ample evidence that Orozkul and not Kulubek is the boy's "grown up double." The child shares Orozkul's mistaken belief that the city is full of good things. When the lad hears about the hero who gave his life to hear a song from his native land, he imagines that such people must live in big cities (Aitmatov 1983a, 32). Much as Orozkul dreams of life in the city, the boy dreams of

swimming to the city to see his father. Both of their dreams, however, end with the painful recognition of their otherness. Orozkul's reflections on life in the city end when he suddenly realizes "he won't go anywhere, no one needs him anywhere . . ." (Aitmatov 1983a, 53). The boy's fantasy trip to town ends in a similar manner. When he imagines that his stepmother will ask, "Who is that? Where is he from? What is he here for?" (Aitmatov 1983a, 35), he decides that it would be "better not to go" (Aitmatov 1983a, 35).

The boy echoes Orozkul's admiration of power as well. Orozkul is pleased that in the city "they know how to respect a man for his position. If that's how it should be, then they have to be respectful. A high ranking position means more respect" (Aitmatov 1983a, 52). While playing in the pasture the boy muses, "If you are a commander everyone obeys you. A commander must find it good to be a commander..." (Aitmatov 1983a, 32).

In drowning himself the boy can even be seen to be punishing the potential Orozkul inside himself. Early in povest' the child, unable to understand how the adults around him tolerate the villain, imagines throwing Orozkul into the water. This punishment is sure to work because Orozkul "could not become a fish..." (Aitmatov 1983a, 37). After the boy's death the narrator's voice asks, "Did you know that you would never turn into a fish" (Aitmatov 1983a, 113). This raises the possibility that the child did indeed know that he could not become a fish and that his suicide was not accidental. The tale of the Horned Deer-Mother contains the image of a choice similar to the one faced by the boy. If the old woman drowns the children, they will "abandon our repugnant world as children, with pure souls, [and] a child's conscience . . ." (Aitmatov 1983a, 43). The alternative is to go with the Horned Deer-Mother to live in a new land with a new religion. In other words the only options are death or a new culture. Fortunately for the children in the tale the new culture that they are

offered is based on respect for nature. That Aitmatov describes these children's innocence in the same terms he uses in Momun's grandson's epitaph draws the reader's attention to the similarity between the situations they face. Yet, the culture to which Momun's grandson would have to assimilate is the one that killed the Horned Deer-Mother and everything that she represents. Thus he has no choice but to die while his "child's soul" and "child's conscience" are still uncompromised.

The death of the child, no less than the killing of the Horned Deer-Mother, represents the demise of his people's culture. This is emphasized by his parallel with the children who represent the future of the Kyrgyz nation in the tale of the Horned Deer-Mother. The boy's function as a metaphor for his culture's fate is further strengthened when he pictures himself in the Deer-Mother's place under Orozkul's axe. Thus the image of the destruction of the Kyrgyz way of life is repeated several times throughout Aitmatov's *povest'*. Indeed the pessimism of the work is mitigated by but two factors. The first of these is a subtle religious reference. After the boy's death the narrator proclaims, "You lived like lightning flashing once and burning out. And lightning cuts across the sky. And the sky is eternal. And in that is my comfort" (Aitmatov 1983a, 114). Before adopting Islam the Kyrgyz worshiped the sky, *tengri*, above all other gods.<sup>10</sup> Perhaps this reference to the existence of God--and a Kyrgyz god at that--reflects the belief that some kind of divine justice will correct the wrongs that take place on earth. The second factor that mitigates the gloom of the *povest'* is the hope that the tragic ending will stir the reader to indignation, moving him or her to fight to preserve tradition and the natural environment. In "Neobkhodimoe utochnenie" Aitmatov expresses his hope that the boy--and hence, I might add, Kyrgyz culture--will find "refuge in the heart of reader . . ." (Aitmatov 1984, 383). The multiple images of the death of the culture, however, lead one to wonder if the indignant reader is not too late to do anything but lay flowers on the culture's grave.

Indeed one wonders if *Belyi parokhod* is, as Mozur indicates, a summons to "fight" for the truth or whether it is simply, in the words of Deming Brown, "a lament for a dying culture" (Brown, 308).

In *Voskhozhdenie na Fudziiamu (The Ascent of Mount Fuji)*, a play that Aitmatov coauthored with the Kazak playwright, Kaltai Mukhamedzhanov, Aitmatov concentrates more on exorcising demons from the Soviet Union's Stalinist past than on the clash between modern Western modes of existence and a traditional Kyrgyz way of life. As Mozur writes, "Nowhere is Stalin directly mentioned, but his presence is felt throughout the drama" (Mozur 1995, 76). Yet while the primary focus of the play is on the denunciation and repression of Sabur, the theme of cultural survival in the face of modernity is an important motif in the work as well. Indeed, on a symbolic level, Sabur's treatment can be seen to represent the fate of Central Asian culture.

The play begins with a reference to the superiority of past generations. The four modern Central Asians have great difficulty erecting a simple tent, evoking a comparison with the past: "How did our ancestors do it? I remember my mother could put up and break down a yurt all by herself with kids in tow. And next to a tent a yurt is a whole house" (Aitmatov 1975, 113).

The opposition between the city and the country is established early in the play. Predictably, the city dwellers turn out to be the play's most undesirable characters. On the other hand, the two characters who are portrayed in an essentially positive manner are the country school teachers, Mambet and Almagul'.

The most strikingly negative of the play's characters is the academician Osipbai Tataev. He is also the most thoroughly modern, constantly tuning his transistor radio and wearing a tie even in the mountains. He himself underscores his modernity, saying, "I'm a man of my times" (Aitmatov 1975, 170). That Osipbai is now known as Iosif Tataevich is testament to his russification. His first name has been totally

russified, but his patronymic continues to reveal his national origin. His very use of a Russian patronymic, however, is evidence of his cultural corruption. That Osipbai's wife cannot be present at "Mount Fuji" because she is defending her dissertation in Moscow further connects him with Russia. Indeed, Sabur calls Osipbai the son of two bureaucrats in one of his epigrams, implying that the future academician has lost his birthright as the son of "simple country folk from the aul" (Aitmatov 1975, 161). Osipbai has forfeited his own identity to such an extent that when asked to talk about himself he is at a loss (Aitmatov 1975, 136). The reason for this loss of identity is made clear when, after Dosbergen comments that "It is hard to be a husband in a time of scientific and technical revolution" (Aitmatov 1975, 141), Mambet adds "It is even harder to be yourself" (Aitmatov 1975, 141). Thus modernity is to blame for Osipbai's loss of self. Of everyone gathered on the mountain, Osipbai is the least willing to take responsibility for his actions and the most likely to blame the victim, Sabur, for his own fate.

Aitmatov mainly uses the play's other leading villain, the writer, Isabek, to criticize toadyism in the Soviet literary establishment. Though much of this criticism is no more applicable to Central Asia than to the rest of the Soviet Union, it occasionally has a purely Central Asian coloration. While still in school, Isabek attacked one of Sabur's poems for idealizing the yurt, "a dwelling of the accursed feudalistic past" (Aitmatov 1975, 117). At times it seems that Aitmatov employs the character of Isabek to reveal what he sees as his own faults as well as those of other writers around him. Isabek shares Aitmatov's position as an "internationalist" writer who travels to other countries as an example of the correctness of the Soviet Union's nationalities policy. That it is Osipbai who insists on the term "internationalist," is testament to the emptiness of the term. Furthermore Isabek, similar to Aitmatov, has shunned verse, his people's traditional literary form, for prose saying, "I found myself in a more

serious genre, in almighty prose" (Aitmatov 1975, 177). The Kyrgyz preference for poetry over prose is even reflected in the very language, in which the expression for prose is *kara söz* or "black word." Of course, as a writer of journalistic travel sketches, Isabek is much farther from poetry than Aitmatov, who uses many elements from folk epics in his prose style (Aitmatov 1975, 134).

Isabek's crimes are not only literary, however, he is guilty of abandoning one of Central Asia's most basic values, as well. He postpones his wife's desire to start a family until it is too late (Aitmatov 1975, 138). The importance of children in Central Asian culture is reflected in Kyrgyz folk sayings such as "A home with children is like a flower-bed, a home without children is like a cemetery" and "Without children there is no happiness" (Shambaev, 74-75). If we recall Aitmatov's use of mountains as a symbol for Kyrgyz culture, we will realize that confession before "Mount Fuji" is more than simply a game. That Gul'zhan is the only one who truly confesses and that her transgression is not having had children makes the cultural significance of Isabek's and Gul'zhan's sin clear. Yet whereas Gul'zhan's repentance makes her a sympathetic character in the play, Isabek's refusal to admit his own guilt serves to underscore his lack of humanity.

Although Dosbergen lives in the country he, too, shows signs of europeanization. In order not to appear "backward" or "poor," he has filled his house with furniture, abandoning his people's traditional preference to "sit and sleep on the floor" (Bacon, 130). Dosbergen's modernity is also emphasized by his infatuation with the automobile (Aitmatov 1975, 114). That Dosbergen's excessive materialism has cost him his freedom is seen when he is compared to a bear that dances in the circus all day for a lump of sugar (Aitmatov 1975, 151). Yet although through Dosbergen Aitmatov reveals that corruption affects even the country folk, the lesser extent of Dosbergen's degradation is evidenced by his return at the end of the play.

If we view Sabur as a symbol for Central Asian culture, we see that each character's attitude toward him reveals something about that character's type. Osipbai does not want to think about what happened saying, "Why stir up the past now?" This attitude was not unusual among Soviet "Doctors of History" who apparently saw no value in "stirring up" such historical memories as the famine that decimated the Kyrgyz and Kazak populations in the twenties and thirties. Isabek is also guilty for passing himself off as what he is not. As a youth he had signed his name to Sabur's poems, while as an adult he travels the world as a representative of a people and a culture that he has forgotten.

Mambet refers to Sabur in terms many use to talk of their cultural heritage, calling him "a part of my fate, a part of my very self" (Aitmatov 1975, 185). Nevertheless, he is guilty of not standing up for Sabur. He also bears the burden of having had a fight with Sabur after which he made accusations that he continues to regret. Similar to Mambet and Tanabai, many post-colonial intellectuals continue to carry the burden for their youthful exuberance in criticizing their native culture.

Not even the elderly school teacher and former boarding school principal, Aisha-Apa is without sin. She, too, knew of Sabur's arrest yet made no attempt to help him. She rebukes herself for this saying:

Не кинулась я, как мать, не бросилась стучать во все двери и окна.  
А меня-то всем в пример ставят: старая коммунистка, в  
президиумах сижу, речи говорю. Нет, я теперь спокойно жить не  
смогу и вам не советую... (Aitmatov 1975, 186).<sup>11</sup>

Perhaps had Aisha-Apa fought to save Sabur she could have kept the others from straying, too. As their teacher, she carries much of the responsibility for their character. In her youth she put too much faith in a Western education and Soviet morality thinking, "everyone will be educated, politically conscious, and a peaceful

cultured life will take hold . . . " (Aitmatov 1975, 183). She underestimated the positive effect that the national consciousness--and national conscience--represented by Sabur had on the four friends. By failing to emphasize the importance of the past, Aisha-Apa laid the groundwork for her own personal tragedy. Her only son has moved far away and has neglected her to the extent that she is reduced to asking others what he looks like (Aitmatov 1975, 133).

Thus while *Voskhozhdenie na Fudziiamu* is essentially about Stalin's excesses, Aitmatov treats this theme in its Central Asian context. He shows the more westernized elements in Central Asian society to be the most complicit in the Stalinist evil. Furthermore he implies that not only individuals but even entire nations were victims of Stalin's terror and that "the immorality of the Stalin era continues to cast its ominous shadow on contemporary Soviet society some twenty years after the tyrant's death" (Mozur 1995, 76).

In the povest' *Rannie zhuravli* (*Early Cranes*) Aitmatov essentially abandons his attacks on that which is evil for an attempt to praise that which is good. Whereas *Proshchai*, *Gul'sary!*, *Belyi Parokhod*, and *Voskhozhdenie na Fudziiamu* are concerned with the struggle against internal enemies, the villains in *Rannie zhuravli* lurk in the distance. Thus although the villains in *Rannie zhuravli* have much in common with those from Aitmatov's earlier stories, the focus is not on their evil, but on the heroes' good.

If not for the war, the setting for *Rannie zhuravli* would be a virtual paradise. The main character, Sultanmurat, has everything that one needs for happiness in Aitmatov's world view: "[A]n ideally wonderful and complete family: A father, a mother, children, a world of harmonic family love. And then there is intelligent labor, a culture of interaction with the horse and nature that has been fostered by the people over centuries..." (Gachev 1982, 233). Not even the war would be so bad if it did not

take Sultanmurat's father away. Indeed it is the war that frees him from a cold, unpleasant classroom and allows him to play the hero in the fields.

In his praise of his heroes Aitmatov makes an ambitious attempt to juxtapose images from the Kyrgyz oral epic *Manas* with his young heroes' wartime efforts to feed their people. As Mirza-Akhmedova observes, references to *Manas* can be found in the speech of the *povest*'s heroes and as well as in the voice of the narrator (Mirza-Akhmedova, 56). The constant presence of *Manas* in *Rannie zhuravli* emphasizes the meaning of the folk epic not only to the tale's heroes, as Mirza-Akhmedova points out, but to the author and his people, as well. These references to *Manas* indicate that beyond simply living in harmony with nature the story's characters have also managed to maintain their people's cultural heritage. Thus while Aitmatov's earlier tales serve as a warning about the dangers of mistreating nature and forgetting one's roots, *Rannie zhuravli* demonstrates the joy that comes from living in the way that Aitmatov feels is proper.

Although Sultanmurat remembers his people's heritage and lives in harmony with the land, he has not been completely sheltered from modernity and an urban environment. Indeed, his trip to town is a prominent episode in the *povest*'. While in *Rannie zhuravli* Aitmatov does not show the city to be as strikingly negative as it is in *Belyi Parokhod*, if we examine the imagery connected with Sultanmurat's journey to Dzhambul we will find the city to be associated with Russianness, education, and self-perception.

Despite not meeting any Russians in the narrative during the actual trip, Sultanmurat reminisces about a meeting he once had with a Russian projectionist. The boy makes an error in his Russian and is gently corrected by the projectionist. This memory is more than a simple reminder to the reader that Russian is not Sultanmurat's native language. By connecting a learning experience about the Russian language to

the boy's trip to the city, Aitmatov continues to link the concepts of education, urbanization, and russification. The town's role as a force for education continues to be seen when the boy visits the menagerie and listens intently to stories about the elephant.

The theme of self-perception is established in the Room of Laughter, a hall of fun house mirrors, where Sultanmurat's view of himself is altered. This can be seen to reflect the Kyrgyz reappraisal of their own culture through the distorted lense of Russian values. The mirrors are further associated with culture, through language and dignity, when Sultanmurat, in an imaginary conversation, tells Myrsagul', "I would like to get you into the Room of Laughter! . . . You would immediately start to speak differently, my pretty! Once you saw yourself in those mirrors, you would immediately quit putting on airs" (Aitmatov 1982a, 529). Thus the Room of Laughter is associated not only with an altered self-image but with a change in language, as well.

Yet, while the town is connected with some of the same images as it is in other Aitmatov works, the emotions associated with it are far more positive. Perhaps this is because, for the most part, Aitmatov emphasizes Dzhambul's Eastern character. Sultanmurat and his father spend the day at the bazaar and it is an Uzbek who tells everyone about the nature of the elephant. Indeed, the boy and his father shun the Western carousel. The other city that plays a prominent role in *Rannie zhuravli* is Tashkent. Unlike Dzhambul, Tashkent, the horse thieves' destination, is connected with the same negative images that accompany cities in Aitmatov's other works. That the horse thieves are going to Alaiskii Bazaar, the most European market in Tashkent, which itself is one of the most European cities in Central Asia, indicates that Aitmatov's attitude toward modernity and the city has remained essentially unchanged.

It is likely that the greatest factor in the positive evaluation of Sultanmurat's trip to the city is the presence of his father. Aitmatov's own father was killed in a purge of Kyrgyz intellectuals in 1938 (Mozur 1995, 21). Mozur discusses the impact that the loss of his father had on the author:

This event was to have a deep impact on Aitmatov's prose. Indeed, the author has never completely freed himself from the agony of being deprived of his father at an early age. Throughout his works, the reader encounters heartrending depictions of young boys who lose their fathers. (Mozur 1995, 21)

Apparently the same impulse that leads Aitmatov to depict "heartrending" scenes of boys losing their fathers, leads him to idealize one of the few fathers he portrays as being alive. Gachev notes the importance of the role played by Sultanmurat's father:

[D]eep down the main plot is completely lyrical and it consists of the declaration of irrepressible and unrealizable love for his father. . . . Everything that happens is filled with cherished thoughts of his father: Be it the memory of his happy prewar life with his father. . . . (Gachev 1982, 238)

If Sultanmurat's memories of his father are based on Aitmatov's feelings toward his own father, it becomes clear why a trip to town is involved. Aitmatov's father had a "keen interest in Russian culture" and the author's parents "acquainted their children with Russian culture, language and literature" (Mozur 1995, 18). Furthermore, the entire family moved to Moscow for two years when the young Chingiz was only six years old. Thus it is understandable that the author associates his father with cities and Russia, and his positive feelings toward the memory of his father are more powerful than his distaste for modernity and an urban environment.

One would expect much tension to be involved in Aitmatov's ambivalent feelings toward the city. On the one hand it is associated with his father, while on the other hand it is linked with the evils of modernity. Yet, somehow Aitmatov seems to be able to compartmentalize his mixed feelings toward the city. While in Aitmatov's earlier and later works the city is seen to rob its inhabitants of their independence and personality, Sultanmurat is able to travel to town with relative impunity. Perhaps Sultanmurat is able to survive his trip to the city because of the presence of his father, who overcomes the negative aspects of modernity through his connections to his past and his people.

It would seem then that, as Gachev contends, Sultanmurat is a stronger version of the boy from *Belyi Parokhod*. He is an excellent horseman and neither a trip to town nor long hours in a cold classroom can keep him from taking his place in the Kyrgyz mountains. His willingness to work for the good of his country transforms him from a boy to a hero. Indeed Aitmatov describes all of the boys in the language of Kyrgyz epic poetry. As Mirza-Akhmedova notes, "the war has dumped upon the boys' thin shoulders inordinate labors that could easily be compared to the feats of the heroic batyrs" (Mirza-Akhmedova, 57). The description of the boys as heroes includes descriptions of their horses. This is a part of the Kyrgyz epic formula and it underscores the importance of the horse as a Kyrgyz cultural symbol.<sup>12</sup> That Chabdar is the horse of Sultanmurat's father emphasizes the importance of passing one's culture on to one's children. With Chabdar, a symbol of the culture handed down from his father, Sultanmurat seems to be invincible. Yet although Sultanmurat's spirit cannot be broken he can be beaten by brute force.

The tale's villains represent the new breed of people in Kyrgyzstan. This is established when the boys see the horse thieves scouting the area. Sultanmurat calls to the men but they do not reply, ignoring the custom that dictates that they "wish the

ploughmen good health and a successful harvest." In the face of the men's boorishness, the boy recalls that "Old man Chekish says people aren't like they used to be." The men's anti-Kyrgyz behavior leads the boy to concur, saying, "Maybe wise old man Chekish is right" (Aitmatov 1982a, 591). Thus although they are not a major focus of the work, the villains are, nevertheless, revealed to be those who have abandoned the old Kyrgyz ways.

While Sultanmurat seems to be more suited for survival than the boy from *Belyi parokhod*, his fate is the same. The primary symbol for Kyrgyz culture, Chabdar, is murdered by those who have forgotten their people's ways. The boy might be expected to survive, but he cannot be a hero without his horse. Indeed, similar to the boy in *Belyi parokhod*, Sultanmurat must die to retain his integrity. He has promised Chabdar, "If we are to die, it will be together . . ." (Aitmatov 1982a, 598). Thus *Rannie zhuravli* ends in much the same way as Aitmatov's two previous *povest's* had ended: In tragedy for both the main characters and the culture that they hold dear.

Aitmatov's choice to set his next work outside of Central Asia does not necessarily imply that he has abandoned his concern for his national culture. Indeed, the animistic world view of the Nivkh fishermen portrayed in *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria* (*Piebald Dog Running Along the Shore*) is similar to the traditional Kyrgyz world view that the author champions in his previous four works. As Mozur maintains, "[B]oth Sangi's [a Nivkh writer] and Aitmatov's people share a not so distant shamanistic past" (Mozur 1995, 92). He adds that the author draws on his own culture's tradition of venerating one's ancestors in his attempt to capture the Nivkh people's animistic world view (Mozur 1995, 90-91). Indeed, in many ways the world portrayed in Aitmatov's *povest'* is even more Kyrgyz than Nivkh. The tale's very title evokes images of a mountain, Ala-Too, that serves as a symbol of

Kyrgyz culture to such an extent that Aitmatov writes, "It is the land of our fathers--Ala-Too, the cradle of the Kyrgyz people" (Aitmatov 1988, 195). Ala-Too, as Mozur notes, means "piebald mountain" (Mozur 1995, 187). Thus Kirisk's symbol for home is but a smaller version of the symbol the Kyrgyz have for their native land. Calling attention to another Kyrgyz element in the story, the Nivkh writer Vladimir Sangi points out:

Thirst is the experience of a man who has grown up in hot regions, of a person who knows what thirst is like in the steppe under a blazing sun. The Nivkhs experience no thirst in the fog and cold of the Sea of Okhotsk, nor is there a keg of water under a seat in the boat. (Rudenko and Sangi, 257)<sup>13</sup>

In connection with the theme of thirst, Aitmatov introduces yet another purely Kyrgyz element. Kirisk's incantation "blue mouse, give me some water" is believed by the Kyrgyz "to calm sick children who want to drink but are not allowed to have water" (Mozur 1995, 92).

Mozur contends that the alien setting and mythic tone of *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria* allow Aitmatov to make broader generalizations about the condition of the human species. Although I agree with this contention, I cannot concur with Mozur's interpretation of Aitmatov's message. Mozur argues that the boat in the tale is a metaphor for the planet Earth and that Aitmatov uses the danger experienced by the men in the boat as a symbol for the modern plight of humanity. Thus, according to Mozur, Aitmatov "presents solidarity as humankind's only hope in confronting such forces or in dealing with its own destructive irrationality" (Mozur 1995, 88). If solidarity were truly the message of the *povest'*, one would expect Aitmatov to have included people of various backgrounds in his boat. Even those of us who are idealists and believe that all men and women are brothers and sisters realize that there

are differences between people that must be overcome. The spirit of compromise that goes hand in hand with solidarity is absent in Aitmatov's tale. Indeed, the characters in the story are one family, one people.

The sheer number of Kyrgyz cultural images in the *povest'* should make it clear that the hunters in the boat represent the Kyrgyz people. In fact, the youngest of them, the one who represents the future, bears a name that is a virtual anagram for the Russian word for Kyrgyz. In the microcosmic world of the tale, the clan that resides beneath the hill by the name of "Piebald dog" is a symbol for the nation that lives in the shadow of Ala-too, the "Piebald" mountain. Indeed, the hunters are faced with the same predicament that faces the Kyrgyz nation. They are lost at sea. They cannot find the way back to their home, their culture.

The three generations in the boat correspond to the three generations that inhabit the San-Tash preserve in *Belyi parokhod*. The elder, Organ, shares Momun's wisdom and respect for tradition. The boy's uncle, Mylgun, endangers Kirisk's life, when he forgets the old ways and challenges the gods. Sangi points out that such heresy would be impossible in traditional Nivkh society:

The thing is a Nivkh is incapable of such an act. In his language there are no such curses aimed at nature, at one time they would have said, God. The Nivkhs, especially in the stage of their development shown in the *povest'*, did not so much view themselves in opposition to nature as they saw themselves as a part of it. (Rudenko and Sangi, 257)

This "error," however, is likely intentional. As an advocate of tradition over modernity, Aitmatov uses Mylgun's rebellion to imply that though such heresy is possible in contemporary Kyrgyzstan, it imperils the future of the nation. Thus Mylgun represents the generation of Kyrgyz, who are capable of challenging tradition and the harmony with nature that it dictates. That Mylgun's rebellion threatens the

boy's life is a warning that the actions of modern Kyrgyz Mylguns threaten the future of the nation. This future, of course, finds its representation in the boy Kirisk, who finds passage home by remembering the ways of the elder and utilizing nature's guidance. That nature and memory are the keys to the boys return follows the pattern of Aitmatov's previous four works. Although one would like to see Kirisk's survival as a sign of Aitmatov's optimism for Kyrgyzstan's future, there are two factors that make the nation's road more rocky than the boy's. The first of these is that the modern day Mylguns have yet to accept their role and agree to make sacrifices for the nation's future. The second factor is that Kirisk did not have to face the issue of modernity and the presence of Russians was hardly more than a rumor in his society.

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### Notes to Part One, Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>And in his youth he himself was one of those who dug graves for the old ways. Once at a Komsomol meeting he even spoke out in favor of the liquidation of *yurts*. Having heard somewhere that the *yurt* must go, that the *yurt* was a prerevolutionary form of habitation. "Down with the *yurt*! That is enough living by the old ways." . . .

And then it turned out that herding animals distant pastures is unthinkable without *yurts*. And every time now Tanabai was struck by how he had been able to say such things, to curse the *yurt*, which was still the best thing ever invented for a nomadic life. How could he have failed to see in the *yurt* the amazing invention of his own people, where every minutest detail had been tested by centuries of the experience of previous generations?

<sup>2</sup>See Mozur 1995, 48 and Bacon 29-30 (Although Bacon is talking specifically about the Kazaks, she later states that much of what she has written about the Kazaks applies to the Kyrgyz as well: "The Kirghiz were very similar in culture to the Kazaks" (Bacon, 47).

<sup>3</sup>For more on the Kyrgyz/Kazak love of music see page 46 in Bacon's *Central Asians Under Russian Rule*. For more on the Kyrgyz relationship to nature see Mirza-Akhmedova, 39-40.

<sup>4</sup>Mozur is quoting Aitmatov from "Zametki o sebe" in Zalutskii, 106.

<sup>5</sup>Mozur notes, "A slight vowel change in the name of Aitmatov's villain from Orozkul to *Oruzkul* further reveals the negative in the character's portrayal. In Kirghiz, *oruzkul* (sic) means Russian slave" (Mozur 1995, 71).

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<sup>6</sup>For brief explanations of the importance of respect for elders in Central Asian society see Bacon, 137 and 204. In Aitmatov's *povest'*, Momun trains the boy in this aspect of Kyrgyz culture saying, "The younger always extends his hand for a handshake first" ("[М]ладший всегда должен первым подавать руку людям" (Aitmatov 1983a, 31).

<sup>7</sup>And what rich possibilities for the decoration of the city the motifs of folklore and the national epic tradition conceal in themselves. I can envision a sculpture of the epic hero, Manas, whose name is connected with the past culture and the history of the Kyrgyz people.

<sup>8</sup>Aitmatov 1984, 378-384.

<sup>9</sup>This will be further discussed in Part II, Chapter Three of this dissertation.

<sup>10</sup>See Abramzon, 290-293.

<sup>11</sup>I didn't run to his aid like a mother. I didn't run from house to house banging on windows and doors. And they hold me up to everyone as an example. I'm an old communist. I participate in presidia. I give speeches. No, I cannot live in peace and I don't advise you to try either...

<sup>12</sup>For more on the necessity of describing the hero's horse in Kyrgyz epics see Mirza-Akhmedova, 57 and Gachev 1982, 239.

<sup>13</sup>Quoted in Mozur 1995, 92 (Translation Mozur's).

#### IV. Pulatov's Second Journey: You Can Never Go Home.

Aitmatov's childhood experience in rural settings, which were essentially traditional, and urban settings, which were essentially Russian, allowed him to create a set of oppositions, which, as we shall see, only begins to show signs of crumbling with the publication of the novel, *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*. Aitmatov's dualistic view of the world allowed him a clear vision of what is Russian and what is Kyrgyz. Therefore, in his works, Aitmatov was able to reject his conception of the modern and the Russian and retreat into his vision of the traditional and the Kyrgyz. Pulatov, on the other hand, is the product of a multicultural urban environment in which the boundaries between cultures are hazy and fluid. The Bukhara of Pulatov's childhood was a mixture of ancient architectural monuments and modern twentieth century factories and buildings. Thus, in contrast to Aitmatov, Pulatov does not have a dualistic touchstone that tells him what to accept and what to reject. Pulatov's mixed Uzbek and Tajik heritage seems to have been the source of at least as much inner conflict as his exposure to Russian culture. Although Pulatov does grow increasingly disenchanted with the Soviet system, he does not advocate a retreat into an idealized vision of his people's past. Furthermore, while he does not hesitate to criticize the Russian and European influence on his people's culture, he remains more likely than Aitmatov to direct sincere criticism at traditional attitudes as well. For the reasons stated above it is impossible to talk in terms of Pulatov's attempts to recapture the essence of his people's past glories or of his idolization of his native culture. Therefore if we were to posit a theory in which post-colonial writers necessarily reject their adopted culture and attempt to return to "pure" native roots, we would be disappointed by Pulatov. If we expect to see a growing concern for the situation of the

writer's people, however, Pulatov will vindicate our theory. Although Pulatov in no way ignores his people's past, he seems far more concerned with its future.

In his 1966 *povest'*, "Prochie naseleнные punkty" ("Other Inhabited Points"), Pulatov focuses on the dreams and disappointments of a pair of old Central Asian revolutionaries, Egamov and his commander Bekov. After defeating the *basmachi*, Central Asian anti-Soviet forces during the early days of Soviet power, Bekov's unit begins work on the construction of a town, Gazhdivan, and a collective farm. The dominant theme of the work is that the revolutionary zeal that enabled Bekov's unit to crush the *basmachi*, cannot be effective in helping to construct a new society.

Bekov's dream of building a town causes him to discount Nurov's objection that the river does not contain enough water to support an urban settlement. The collective farm, on the other hand, is being built on an oasis where a village has already stood for years. Of these new communities, the collective farm is being established on the basis of at least some tradition and continuity, while the town is expected to arise out of the sheer force of will. The use of these images creates an interesting parallel to the Soviet government's attempt to build communism. Although even in Russia the situation did not meet Marxist theory's requirements for a revolutionary society, the political and social climate for revolution was even far less suitable in Central Asia. Yet while revolutionary zeal was enough to overthrow the old system in Central Asia, to build communism without a proletariat, an orthodox Marxist might argue, is similar to creating a town without a supply of fresh water. That the Soviet system was better suited for Russia than for Central Asia is again indicated when the "little man" who works as the warehouse director tells Nurov, "Our whole problem is that we aren't in Russia where goods like lumber..." (Pulatov 1991b, 257). Of course Nurov's success is evidence that one can prosper in Uzbekistan, as long as he does not insist on following Russian patterns that do not apply in Central Asia.

Nurov's parable about the saint and the mulberry tree further illustrates the author's concerns with the problems of his Republic. In this story, a peasant is made into a saint by a prophet in Moscow for having crossed the desert on foot in order to visit Mecca. Now finding himself in the Central Asian desert, the saint discovers that a mulberry tree is growing out of the palm of his hand. The tree is growing out of some clay from the grave of the Muscovite prophet. This clay had gotten on his hand as he sat in thought, scratching his heels. Seeing a man working hard under the desert sun the saint invites the peasant to join him in the shade of his "palm" tree. After doing battle with the apes, beetles, crows, and snakes that make the tree their home, the peasant decides to take up residence under the saint's tree, bringing all his belongings with him. When the saint attempts to send the man back to work the man refuses, saying "No, father, I was created to obey you and to be by your side" (Pulatov 1991b, 258). Apparently, however, the mulberry tree, similar to the town of Gazhdivan, is not fit for survival in the hot desert, and the peasant ends up sitting idly in the blazing sun, listening to the saint's stories.

As we see, the parable begins with a combination of Russian and Central Asian elements. While it is not entirely clear whether the saint is originally from Russia or Central Asia, it is known that he became a saint in Moscow. Thus he must be seen to represent Russia, either as a Russian or as a russianized Central Asian. The man the saint invites to share his shade then, represents the stereotypical prerevolutionary Central Asian peasant, laboring fruitlessly under the harshest imaginable conditions. That this peasant symbolizes far more than a single person is clear by what he brings when he moves: "And his bazaars, and his bathhouses, and his trash cans and his cemetery" (Pulatov 1991b, 258). In this light, the peasant's battle with the apes, snakes, crows, and bugs that inhabit the mulberry tree makes for a somewhat insulting parallel to Central Asian communist's struggle with the *basmachi*. When the peasant

decides to live under the mulberry tree which can be seen to represent the advantages brought by the Russians, we are shown how an entire people gives up its traditional mode of life for an ostensibly easier mode of existence imported from Moscow. Thus the Russian stereotype of a servile and parasitic Central Asia is reflected in the parable.<sup>1</sup>

The peasant's decision to take up residence under the mulberry tree parallels the choice that many have made to live in Gazhdivan. Much as the tree has withered, Gazhdivan has deteriorated. The peasant's refusal to return to work parallels the Gazhdivanians' unwillingness to labor on the collective farm.

Although both Nurov's parable and the story of Gazhdivan create negative images of Soviet power neither of them trumpet the advantages of the pre-revolutionary Central Asian oasis life. While the story of the collective farm's success seems to offer up a more traditional mode of living as a superior alternative to life in town, Pulatov occasionally seems quite condescending in his portrayal of Central Asian society. Indeed, the narrator's attitude toward the Central Asians in the story is often colored by Russian perceptions of the region's culture.

The most strikingly negative images of the town's residents, however, all come through the eyes of Egamov. The old revolutionary has the same dislike for traditional Uzbek and Tajik homes that Magdi exhibits in "Oklikni menia v lesu." He recalls Bekov's instructions to his soldiers: "Build your houses so that they were one big house. Don't fence yourselves off. Be brothers" (Pulatov 1991b, 258). Egamov is extremely hostile toward small-time trade, labeling anyone who sells home-grown vegetables as "petty peddlers and speculators" (Pulatov 1991b, 230). In criticizing all small trade, Egamov seems to be battling not the individual traders but the specter of the crafty Asian merchant that is a common stereotype among Central Asia's Russian population. This attitude, especially toward Uzbeks, will continue to be prevalent

even in Pulatov's later works. For example, in "Zavsegdatai" ("The Regular"), Akhun states that the Uzbeks "were created to be second-hand dealers" (Pulatov 1991b, 437).

The one scene from Gazhdivan's streets that does not come through the eyes of Egamov, but nevertheless seems to play to Russian prejudice, is the depiction of a pole with a camel's skull on it. The reader is told that this is how "the superstitious Gazhdivanians drive away the spirits of misfortune" (Pulatov 1991b, 275). While this scene is presented without any real evaluation on the part of the narrator, it seems contrived to impress the reader with how "backward" the Gazhdivanians are. In many aspects, however, the values of the old revolutionaries are shown to be lacking in comparison to those of the town's inhabitants. The Gazhdivanians criticize Bekov for not having a family saying, "And a man who hasn't produced any children is just the same as an elm with rotted branches" (Pulatov 1991b, 279). Knowing that, similar to the Kyrgyz, the Uzbeks and Tajiks have traditionally placed a great value on large families,<sup>2</sup> we might assume that this is but more evidence of the Gazhdivanians' backward ways. Later, however, we see how much Bekov suffers for not having raised a family. The tone is quite melancholic when Egamov refuses to visit his own son and Bekov tells him, "But I would go though... I would go to the worst of sons" (Pulatov 1991b, 285).

The people of the town also criticize Bekov because he is a non-believer (Pulatov 1991b, 279). Birgit Fuch's sees the negative view that the townfolks hold toward Bekov's lack of family and rejection of god as Pulatov's attempt to demonstrate that Islamic traditions "continually and with recently renewed force determine public life in Central Asia" (Fuchs, 37). The need for belief in a god is then underlined by Egamov himself, who says, "A person needs God very much . . . ." (Pulatov 1991b, 280). Although Egamov is referring to his worship of Bekov, it would be difficult for any reader to find the pitiful figure cut by Bekov superior to

Allah. The religious feelings of the Gazhdivanians, however, are shown to be inferior to those of the inhabitants of the collective farm. Nurov has to remind the townsfolk of both the day of remembrance and the prayers that accompany it. He tells them, "In the afterworld you may be asked, 'Have you, human, done everything possible to purge that which is vile from your soul'" (Pulatov 1991b, 255). Nurov's spirituality must be seen as strong endorsement of religion, if we consider that everything Nurov does is seen as prudent and effective. Indeed, Nurov's superiority is witnessed not only by his success in directing a huge and thriving collective farm, but in his raising a family as well.

The collective farm director is also seen as being kinder than Bekov. This moral difference is illustrated by the contrast in their treatment of foxes. Bekov is shown to shoot at a fox even when he knows he cannot use the fur (Pulatov 1991b, 218). Nurov, on the other hand, dreams of an idyllic life, in which he could "tend to injured foxes, so they wouldn't be wiped out by hunters, who violate the balance of nature..." (Pulatov 1991b, 257).

Despite all of his positive characteristics, Nurov is not the primary focus of the *povest'*. Pulatov instead concentrates on Egamov and Bekov and their realization that they have lived their life in the service of a mistaken ideal: "Now life itself had shown that you can't treat people's fates like that... with nothing but sheer will and caprice. Without wisdom, without science, without careful consideration of all the conditions..." (Pulatov 1991b, 275). Thus the blame for the Republic's problems does not fall on an outside force, but rather upon local elites who attempted to build Uzbek socialism upon a foreign pattern, without taking local conditions into consideration.

Although Pulatov shows that Bekov is to blame for his own undoing, one would have to say that the author's dominant feeling for his hero is pity rather than

censure. Indeed, one senses an almost familial bond between the author and Bekov, who, it should be noted, has the same first name, Iskhak, as Pulatov's father. This parallel surely indicates that the *povest'* deals with some of the author's feelings toward his father, who was a convinced communist.<sup>3</sup> At one point the Gazhdivanians even call attention to Bekov's first name, mentioning that they find it unusual. This seems to be Pulatov's way of insuring that his readers notice the hero's name. Furthermore, Bekov is often referred to as the father of Gazhdivan. Thus "Prochie naselennye punkty" can be seen as a transitional work in which Pulatov breaks with the ideology of his father. At the same time, however, the author preserves his father's memory as an honest and dedicated man, who may have even uttered to his son the phrase that serves as Bekov's last words, "I wanted to do good... For everyone... And for you..." (Pulatov 1991b, 293).

If we were to talk about a period in Pulatov's development in which he rejected all things Russian and elevated his own national culture, we would have to limit our study to two works, "Za chest' emirata" and "Vtoroe puteshestvie Kaipa." "Za chest' emirata" is set at an unspecified point in time in prerevolutionary Bukhara. Despite its indeterminate time frame, however, "Za chest' emirata" contains rather transparent images of Central Asia's humiliation at the hands of the Russians. The hero of the story, Molla-bek, was once the wrestling champion of the Emirate of Bukhara. He is offered the chance to wrestle in the circus against an opponent by the conspicuously Russian name of Iakov. Molla-bek's prize will be twenty-five *tanga* if he wins or two hundred fifty *tanga* if he loses. Thus the hero is forced to choose between his own economic interests and the pride of his nation.

The contrast between the locals and the outsiders is underscored by the wording of the bargain: "[F]or every showing we'll pay you twenty five of your roubles, *tanga*" (Pulatov 1976b, 317). By calling the *tanga* "your rouble," the circus

director implies that Central Asian reality is but a distorted reflection of Russian reality. The knowledgeable reader, however, will realize who is distorting whose concepts: the turkic word *tanga* is the source of the Russian word for money *den'gi*.

Molla-bek is a far superior wrestler to Iakov, yet he allows the Russian to defeat him. Molla-bek makes a profit by creating the illusion that he is a worse wrestler than Iakov. Similarly, many Central Asians reaped material rewards for pretending to accept Russian cultural superiority, although "to many Central Asians the accomplishments of Soviet society paled before the exploits of their own ancient civilizations" (Fierman, 11). Molla-bek is seen to have paid for his rich reward with more than his pride, however, as Iakov bites him on the hand during the match. This seems to imply that feelings of betrayal are not the only painful aspect of selling out to the Russians. Molla-bek's reaction to Iakov's treachery indicates that he was too naive to expect such nastiness from his "colleague": "How can you bite someone's fingers? After all that's not fair..." (Pulatov 1976b, 319). Thus, the author seems to imply that the honorable, trusting Central Asians have been duped by the mean-spirited, dishonest Russians.

Much as russified Central Asian elites found themselves isolated from their own people, Molla-bek finds nothing but loneliness in the posh section of the *chaikhana*. When he first returns to the "large hall" frequented by the local poor, everything seems to be as it had been before he left: his friends recognize him and the waiter is more accommodating than he had been in the posh hall. Molla-bek soon discovers, however, that he no longer fits in among his own kind: "Molla merely shook his head, regretting that he had been left behind by the conversation, he had fallen off track while he was in the circus and that he had nothing to say at the *chaikhana* anymore and that he had now become a stranger to everyone" (Pulatov 1976b, 321).

Thus "Za chest' emirata" depicts but one narrow aspect of the damage done by the Russian presence in Central Asia. Pulatov neglects the foreigners' impact on the local society as a whole, in order to focus on the plight of the individual who is co-opted by the colonial society. Similar to the "europeanized" Central Asian, Molla-bek finds that he no longer fits in with his own people, but cannot find real acceptance among the colonizers either. Thus, the impact of the Russian presence in Central Asia is harshly criticized and Molla-bek realizes that he was better off in his previous mode of existence. Yet even in demonstrating the superiority of the past, Pulatov cannot advocate a return to it. To attempt to live in the past would be impossible. As Molla-bek realizes when he loses his rematch to Iakov: "[H]aving sold himself once, he had lost himself forever..." (Pulatov 1976b, 324).

Compared to "Za chest' emirata," "Vtoroe puteshestvie Kaipa" is a stronger yet more subtle allegory for the colonial experience. The old man, Kaip, has been living on the island, *Peschanyi*, for most of his adult life. He has not been back to his home island, *Zelenyi*, since he fled to *Peschanyi* after the rape of his fiancée, Aisha. Most of the tale's action, however, takes place at sea, between the two islands. Thus, the tale's physical setting is a rather simple scheme denoting the post-colonial intellectual's cultural exile. Having abandoned his native culture, yet not feeling at home in the colonizer's culture, the post-colonial intellectual is often left to navigate the sea between the two cultures in isolation.

On the most obvious symbolic level Pulatov obscures his islands' referential function. *Zelenyi*, meaning green, is the island that represents Central Asia, which is usually associated with deserts. Conversely, Pulatov names the island that represents lushly forested Russia *Peschanyi* 'Sandy.' Observing the details that Pulatov gives about the islands, however, we begin to see their hidden symbolism. The name *Zelenyi*, is not necessarily a description of the island, as is evidenced by the image of

Aisha burying fish "in the white-hot sand." Furthermore, "Whenever Kaip thinks of Aisha he is haunted by the smell of apricots" (Pulatov 1991b, 298), a fruit that is commonly associated with the Central Asian oases. *Peschanyi*, on the other hand, is inhabited by people with Russian names, such as Ermolai, Proshka, and Vladimir. Finally, it is the sight of an uproar that Pulatov calls a *syr-bor*, an expression that also means forest.

As the islands are associated with Russia and Central Asia, Kaip can be seen as being connected to Pulatov himself. Indeed, Kaip's position between the islands could be seen to represent the predicament of any russified Uzbek or Tajik. Kaip is linked directly to Pulatov, however, when the old man recalls his father, whose name, like that of the author's father, is Iskhak. Moreover, when Kaip recalls his last days on *Zelenyi*, the narrative point of view changes from the third person to the first—a narrative tactic seldom used by Pulatov.

If we view Kaip's exile as a metaphor for Pulatov's alienation, then the events that lead to his exile can offer considerable insight into the cultural tensions faced by the post-colonial writer. Kaip's fiancée, Aisha, who is always linked to the image of the island, can be seen to represent his native culture. As do most idealized versions of culture, Aisha "lived entirely in nature, near to god" (Pulatov 1991b, 314).

Karimbai, the outsider who rapes Aisha, is seen as essentially good, although he is corrupted by the thugs who always accompany him. There is even some similarity between Karimbai's situation and the Soviet revolution. Karimbai does not like his father's way of running things and hopes to restructure life on the island so that there "will be no hungry or poor people" (Pulatov 1991b, 313). Thus, responsibility for the "rape" of Central Asian culture is not easily established. While the Russians and even the Soviets are not necessarily bad at heart, a few undesirable characters among them are responsible for the "rape" of other cultures. After Aisha is

attacked, Kaip blames not only Karimbai and the thugs for their crime, but finds himself and Aisha guilty as well, even though neither he nor Aisha could have done anything to oppose the rapists. This seems to imply that a post-colonial intellectual suffers from feelings of complicity in his culture's degradation. Such feelings of betrayal are described by Andrew Gurr, who writes, "The accumulated guilt of the colonised is a social fact . . ." Gurr goes on to mention the tendency to compare Ngugi wa Thiong'o to Joseph Conrad, equivocating the post-colonial writer to "the exile writing in a foreign tongue and obsessed with his infidelity to his home" (Gurr, 103). Kaip's anger at Aisha indicates that the post-colonial intellectual's feelings of betrayal are mixed with resentment towards his own culture for not warding off the invaders. Yet despite Kaip's pangs of guilt, the reader realizes that there is nothing that either Kaip or Aisha could have been done to prevent the attack.

Upon deciding to leave *Zelenyi*, Kaip is forced to undergo a ritual in which all the women of the island, including Aisha, beat him up physically because he is leaving his fiancée. This most likely represents the rejection faced by post-colonial intellectuals at home, where they can be subjected to abuse for "forgetting their language" or "abandoning their culture." Having left *Zelenyi* behind, Kaip takes up residence on *Peschanyi*, where he recalls "So as not to be an outsider, I had to marry the girl that the old men brought me" (Pulatov 1991b, 327). Thus the symbol of one culture, Aisha, is replaced by the symbol of another culture. As an old man, however, Kaip has outlived his relationship with his new culture and his new home. His wife has passed on and he feels the need to return to *Zelenyi* before he, too, dies.

In the sea Kaip meets yet another woman who seems to represent a third culture, the in-between culture, the culture of the sea. This woman is a Lithuanian medical intern who has been sent to work on *Zelenyi*. She does not know a word of the local language and speaks, instead, in "an incomprehensible language consisting of

broken Russian and Lithuanian words" (Pulatov 1991b, 332). Unfortunately, Kaip and this woman have no means of communication and each is doomed to complete the journey in solitary silence.

Although it would seem that making the trip back home would be an easy task, it turns out to be nearly impossible. Natural hazards, such as the currents that surround the island, combine with ever vigilant anti-poaching patrols to make the waters unsafe for solitary travellers. If the attempt to go home is seen as an attempt to return to one's cultural roots, then these natural hazards can be seen as internal barriers while the patrols can be seen as political or social coercion. Kaip's arrests are a reminder of the Soviet Union's political barriers to returning to one's native culture. Indeed, the tale's penultimate chapter ends with Kaip's second arrest, leaving the reader with the feeling that the old man will never make it home.

The final chapter of the story, however, begins with the statement: "But, all the same, the old man finally made it home to his native land--*Zelenyi* Island" (Pulatov 1991b, 335). The reader is never told why Kaip was released by the patrol or how he made it the island. Indeed, one gets the feeling he was simply wished there by the author. Perhaps this is the case, and Pulatov, who could think of no convincing way to bring Kaip home to his native culture, was forced to resort to magic. Although, Pulatov gives the reader a glimpse at the ideal world in which Kaip can sit in a meadow with Aisha and charm snakes in a manner befitting an exotic oriental, the lasting impression made by the tale is that of an arduous, painful, and futile journey.

It stands to note, as well, that in "Vtoroe puteshestvie Kaipa," Pulatov calls attention to the Aral Sea tragedy many years before it becomes a *cause celebre*. Although the sea in the *povest'* is never named, the collective farm director's name is Aralov and, similar to the Aral, Kaip's sea is drying up: "And the sea moved farther and farther from their island. And people said, 'The fish are leaving us'" (Pulatov

1991b, 297). Even at this early time the water level has dropped low enough to allow new islands to surface (Pulatov 1991b, 317). Thus, although he hardly shouts it from the rooftops, Pulatov raises, however subtly, the topic of the Aral Sea's destruction long before it becomes fashionable.

In "Storozhevye bashni", on the other hand, Pulatov does not directly raise any questions that concern Central Asia's political, cultural, or ecological survival. Indeed, the tale's setting is extremely indeterminate both temporally and geographically. Despite the story's unusual setting, the symbols used in the *povest'* create extremely topical resonances for Pulatov's society.

The central image in the tale is the castle in which Vali-baba works. A castle, of course, is a symbol of power and antiquity. This particular castle is further tied to images of coercion by its use as a prison. If we recall the image of despotic Bukharan khans that was so widespread in Soviet days, one could argue that the castle represents Bukhara. Indeed the castle's past seems to parallel the Soviet vision of the Bukhara's history. After serving as a prison for many years the castle is destined to be a cultural monument amid the region's newly developed industrial economy. This parallels Bukhara's role as a monument to ancient Central Asian culture in a republic that the Soviets promised to modernize at a rapid pace. Of course, the revolution put an end to Bukhara's domination of the political and economic life of Central Asian oasis culture. The closing of the prison has had the same effect on the castle. At one time the castle was the main source of employment in the area, but now it is merely a warehouse and monument.

Significantly, all the changes in the area have been brought about by outsiders. The oil that has changed the economic orientation of the region was discovered by "visiting geologists" (Pulatov 1991b, 340). The builders are also from another land. As he does in "Prochie naseleennyye punkty," Pulatov points out the folly of the

imitating foreign models without taking local specifics into consideration. Vali-baba and his men are given helmets to wear as a reward for their hard work. Because of the heat, however, the helmets turn out to be a major inconvenience: "The helmets were not suited for the local climate, but they wore them all the same" (Pulatov 1991b, 346). Thus the locals' imitative behavior is seen to be to their own detriment. Yet while Pulatov is clear in his stand against mimicry, the image of the locals working with the strangers to build a bridge clearly indicates that he does not rule out cooperation.

Although the locals' mimicry of the newcomers is seen as imprudent, Vali-baba's attempt to return to the past is equally impossible. After capturing the escapees from a nearby prison, Vali-baba and his guards attempt to hold them in the castle. They find, however, that the structures that supported the old ways in the castle have disappeared. Therefore, the former guards' attempts to recreate the previous order appear ridiculous. They can hardly feed the prisoners properly, much less provide the appropriate labor and recreational activities. The prison's former administration is gone, leaving Vali-baba to attempt to fill the roles of both warden and chief interrogator. The prisoner, Musaev, notes how poorly Vali-baba fulfills these duties saying, "You are too inappropriate for your role" (Pulatov 1991b, 361). Thus Pulatov indicates that an attempt to recreate the past is no less artificial than blind mimicry of the "other." Not only is it artificial, it is futile, as well. Vali-baba himself realizes that he and his men will be unable to live as they once did: "There was no returning to the old ways now, the prison colony was gone forever . . ." (Pulatov 1991b, 361). Musaev refers to the castle's ancient frescoes that the prisoners restore as a source of "national pride" (Pulatov 1991b, 370). Thus, although a return to the old ways is impossible, the past can be a source of beauty, inspiration, and pride, and should not be forgotten.

The covering of the castle's frescoes also serves as a suitable metaphor for the history of Bukhara. In western historiography Bukhara is viewed as an ancient artistic and cultural center whose most recent pre-Soviet history was dominated by violence and coercion. While the castle was being used as a prison, the frescoes were covered with cement. Thus, symbolically, the image of a despotic Bukhara has eclipsed the beauty of ancient Bukhara and it is up to contemporary Bukharans to reveal that beauty to the world.

Whereas in *Proshchai gul'sary* and *Belyi parokhod* Aitmatov presents the passing of the traditional Kyrgyz way of life as a tragedy, Pulatov treats change as a morally neutral fact of existence. Upon discovering that the castle is slowly sinking into the sand, Vali-baba falls into depression:

«Да... Вот и замок наш, оказывается уходит. Теряем мы его», -- думал он, понимая, что вместе с замком уходит многое из его жизни, привязанности и привычки, и не только его, но и товарищей, всех жителей Гузара. (Pulatov 1991b, 377)<sup>4</sup>

These feelings of loss, however, cannot even begin to compare to Tanabai's grief at the death of Gul'sary. Moreover, Vali-baba is surprisingly easily comforted when Musaev tells him, "[T]he law of renewal is a thousand times correct. Here the castle is disappearing and in its place they will erect oil derricks . . ." (Pulatov 1991b, 361). Perhaps Vali-baba's acceptance of the new order could be seen as a concession to the Soviet literary establishment if not for the tale's ending. Vali-baba is offered a job as a guard, when he returns the prisoners to the colony. His refusal of this job in the other colony must be seen as his realization that he cannot go back to live in the past.

Of course the strictly allegorical nature of the *povest'* allows for other interpretations of its imagery. For instance, it is possible that the castle is a symbol not of pre-Soviet Bukhara but of Stalinist Central Asia. In this case the old guard, Vali-

baba, could be seen to represent an "old guard" Stalinist.<sup>5</sup> His request that the question of Musaev's innocence be reviewed, can be seen as a metaphor for the Soviet Union's need to reevaluate its Stalinist legacy, demonstrating that even old Stalinists can recognize that mistakes were made. In this light, Vali-baba and Bekov of "Prochie naselelennye punkty" have more in common with one another than the similar names of their yes-men, Kalikhan and Kulikhan respectively.

I have offered both of the above interpretations of the *povest'* because I find each of them quite convincing. Furthermore, I am not of the opinion that one necessarily excludes the other. Indeed, the tale's primary focus is the impossibility of living in the past and, thus, it is only reasonable that the author should illustrate his point with various images from different points in history. Yet, if the castle, at times, represents Stalinist Central Asia, the wistful tone of the tale's final paragraph indicates that the castle's primary function is as a symbol of old Bukhara: "Yes, that's all. Let the castle live its new life now. And if it is its fate to sink beneath the ground together with its guard towers, then what the heck, let it sink. Its image will remain in [the people's] memory forever" (Pulatov 1991b, 389).

In "Morskie kochevniki" ("Nautical Nomads") Pulatov retreats even further into allegory, leaving all direct references to Central Asia behind. This is not to say, however, that he abandons the question of Uzbekistan's relationship with the Russians and Soviet power. Indeed, he uses much of the tale's burlesque imagery to poke fun at colonial power relationships. At the same time, however, he delves into very serious questions concerning the identity of the individual in a colonized society.

The topic of colonialism is raised early in the book when we find that the "dangerous criminals" in the floating prison are "the chiefs of native tribes." We are then told, "The planners hoped that their floating prison would function for many centuries, until the time that civilized societies finally condemn the violence that whites

commit against blacks" (Pulatov 1990, 498). There is, of course, nothing that overtly connects these comments to the situation in Central Asia. Yet, although official Soviet ideology ignored the similarities between Western colonialism and the USSR's own treatment of the non-Russian republics, the residents of the Soviet Union could surely see the parallel.

The subject of colonial relations finds further reflection in the interactions between the prison administrator, Okho-Bokho, and the island's primates. The warden refers to his gorilla assistant as "a terribly lazy beast . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 516). By calling the gorilla lazy Pulatov establishes a connection between the situation on the island and the stereotype of Soviet Uzbekistan. As Fuch's mentions, "Pulatov very frequently refers to the laziness of Orientals . . ." in his works (Fuchs, 13). This reflects the picture that many Russians have of Central Asians as "violent, dishonest, backward, lazy, and wife abusers" (Wixman, 166). A parallel between the gorilla and the image of Central Asians as wife abusers can be seen in "Morskije kochevniki" when the gorilla nearly beats his lover to death (Pulatov 1990, 530). Furthermore Okho-Bokho reveals his suspicion that the gorilla wants to reclaim control of the island it had once ruled saying, "I know that he wants to become the ruler of the island again, so that he can enact his beastly laws. Like in the times before I was here..." (Pulatov 1990, 518). Fearing a revolt, Okho-Bokho permits the gorilla nearly absolute freedom. Indeed, the gorilla is seen to have much more control over the island's apes than the warden does. This situation in which two power structures exist side by side in an uneasy symbiosis can be seen to represent the system in Soviet Uzbekistan where local officials were perceived to be able to manipulate the Soviet system to their own advantage.<sup>6</sup> Although it may seem insulting that Pulatov represents his own people as gorrillas and apes, we must keep in mind that we are

seeing them through the eyes of the colonizers and, in spite of this, these creatures are shown to be more intelligent than Okho-Bokho, who represents Moscow.

The burlesque quality of "Morskie kochevniki" reveals Pulatov's cynicism toward politics. The relationship between the warden and his various charges represents a fascinating vision of the Soviet empire in which those in power are shown to be incompetent and self-delusional, while those who are ruled have a tremendous amount of leeway to live as they want and to mock their leaders' folly.

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Notes to Part One, Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup>See Rywkin, 13-14 for a discussion of the USSR's "welfare colonialism."

<sup>2</sup>See Lubin, 52-54.

<sup>3</sup>Interview of Aug. 7, 1995.

<sup>4</sup>"Yes... It turns out that our castle is disappearing. We are losing it," he thought, understanding that along with the castle many things were disappearing from his life--attachments and habits, and not only his own, but those of his comrades and all the residents of Guzar.

<sup>5</sup>Of course, I realize that Pulatov is not making the same connection based on the two meanings of "old guard," since the pun does not work in Russian.

<sup>6</sup>For a discussion of how Uzbek elites were able to exercise more power than Moscow in the region see Critchlow's "Prelude to 'Independence'." On the topic of power relations, he writes: "The decades after Stalin's death witnessed a quiet transfer of power in the region away from Moscow and into the hands of republican Party organs" (Critchlow, 131). On a more local level, the *mahalla*, a neighborhood commission that exerts great influence in the moral, political, and religious upbringing of its members, is a very powerful force in the daily functioning of Central Asian society. The power of the *mahalla* is discussed in Poliakov, 76-80.

V. *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* and *Plakha*: Life on the Lonely Steppe.

Much has been written about Aitmatov's novel, *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* (*The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*). The most thorough and thoughtful analyses of Aitmatov's treatment of his Central Asian heritage in this novel can be found in Mozur's *Doffing "Mankurt's Cap"* and *Parables from the Past*. Since these studies deal with the topic adequately enough, I shall attempt to avoid any non-essential repetitions, limiting myself to a small number of additions and observations. I shall then, in order to reach a better understanding of Aitmatov's cultural duality, focus briefly on several contradictions in both the novel and in criticism devoted to it.

That the novel is rife with not so thinly veiled criticism of Soviet nationalities policy is exceedingly clear to all but the most self-deluded and obtuse of Soviet critics.<sup>1</sup> Katerina Clark mentions the prominence of "the politically sensitive themes of memory, ethnic and national identity, and religiosity" (Clark, 579), in the novel. Noting the parallel between the tale of the *mankurt* and the plight of Modern Central Asians, Mozur observes "the Stalinist interrogators who confiscate Kuttybaev's memoirs become modern Zhuan'zhuany, trying to deprive him of the memory of his cultural heritage" (Mozur 1995, 109). He adds that in juxtaposing those who create *mankurts*--such as the Zhuan'zhuany and the seven wicked khans in *Manas*--to Soviet government officials, Aitmatov is depicting "Soviet authorities under Stalin . . . as seeking to rob the peoples of the Soviet Union of their memory, historical heritage, and national destiny" (Mozur 1995, 109). Even N. N. Shneidman, who generally avoids national interpretations of Aitmatov's works, calls attention to the author's criticism of the Soviet Union's treatment of its non-Russian peoples, saying, "The earthly cosmodrome represents, in a way, the intrusion of technological progress into the remote steppes of central (sic) Asia, perpetrated without regard to Kazak custom

and tradition or the will of the local people" (Shneidman 1989, 196). The subsequent publication of an omitted chapter, "Beloe oblako Chingizkhana" ("The White Cloud of Ghengiz Khan") further clarifies the message of the novel's *mankurt* subplot. As Mozur observes, "Aitmatov, through the consciousness of the prosecutor, reveals explicitly what the parable of the *mankurt* implied—that the text can be interpreted as a veiled call to 'oppose the assimilation of nations'" (Mozur 1995, 127).

One way in which the theme of russification manifests itself in the novel is through "The depiction of a Kazakh lieutenant who guards the cosmodrome as unable or unwilling to speak Kazakh" (Mozur 1995, 112). On the basis of articles written by Aitmatov in the late 1980s,<sup>2</sup> Mozur sums up the author's position on russification saying, "He especially condemns Kirghiz officials who, like the *mankurt*, praise everything Russian and denigrate their own language." Adding that "Aitmatov warns of the 'monopolization of Soviet spiritual life' through excessive Russification . . . ," Mozur offers the following caveat:

Aitmatov, of course, is not advocating the suppression of the Russian language in Central Asia; indeed, Russian has been the medium through which he has reached his readers for the past quarter of a century. Yet he expresses his fear at the time that Russian could eventually swallow up Kirghiz or the Soviet Union's other minority languages. (Mozur 1995, 113)

Indeed Aitmatov's relationship with the Russian language and Russian culture is surely extremely complex. The Russian speaking soldier is not the only image of russification in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*. While most of these are negative appraisals of the Russian presence in the area, two of them are quite positive. On the negative side, Sabitzhan's wife sells Kazangap's herd to buy an excessive amount of furniture

and a car (Aitmatov 1983a, 220). We also discover that Sabitzhan has an unhealthy penchant for vodka drinking.

Mozur maintains that the principal Russian character in the novel, the scholar Elizarov, "represents the author's concept of the ideal Russian attitude toward Central Asian culture . . ." (Mozur 1995, 117). Yet Mozur comes close to dismissing the character entirely, commenting, "One gets the impression that the character was hastily added to the novel to counterbalance the forceful criticism of Soviet reality in *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years*." Perhaps Aitmatov's "ideal" Russian "appears stereotyped and flat" (Mozur 1995, 117) because there is so much distance between him and the real Russians in Kazakhstan. As Mozur notes, Elizarov's ability to speak Kazak places him in a minority of less than one percent (Mozur 1995, 117). Thus one instance of praise for Russians in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* applies to an extreme minority, at best. At worst, it is nothing more than a literary bone that Aitmatov throws to conservatives in the Soviet literary establishment.

Trees have long held a prominent place in Russian cultural symbolism and thus it is natural that a non-Russian who is well acquainted with Russian literature and culture would exploit these images. In her article "Forging a Soviet People: Ethnolinguistics in Central Asia," Isabelle Kreindler discusses the drive to russify Central Asian school children by immersing them in Russian cultural symbols such as the bell and the birch tree (Kreindler, 223 and 227). She then notes that "in Chingiz Aitmatov's legend of Raimaly-aga in *The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years*, the aging freedom-loving bard is finally stopped from his wandering only when he is tied to a tree--a birch tree!" (Kreindler, 227).

The birch is not the only tree that serves as a cultural symbol in the novel. Indeed, the pine tree that Abdutalip Kuttybaev orders for the New Year celebration reveals the Central Asian acceptance of a holiday tradition that is not only Russian but

pan-European. In *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* Aitmatov emphasizes the alien nature of both the holiday and the symbol. Central Asians did not, of course, traditionally celebrate the European New Year and thus it is natural that, "Usually, the celebration of the New Year wasn't very important to the Boranlians . . ." (Aitmatov 1983a, 333). Likewise, Aitmatov emphasizes the foreignness of the pine tree to the barren Kazak steppe: "And where can you get a New Year Tree on the Sarozek steppe? It would be easier to find the eggs of a fossilized dinosaur" (Aitmatov 1983a, 334).

Despite the alien nature of the New Year holiday, however, the inhabitants of the Boranly-Burannyi settlement are shown to have a wonderful time. Thus the New Year celebration seems to indicate that not everything introduced to Central Asia by the Russians is bad. There is, however, one element of ambiguity in the portrayal of the New Year festivities. Abdutalip nearly freezes to death while unloading the tree from the train (Aitmatov 1983a, 334). One wonders if this is not a sign that Abdutalip will be destroyed by representatives of the culture for which the tree stands. On the strength of the parallel with the birch tree's role in Raimaly-aga's punishment, such an interpretation does not seem unreasonable--especially considering that Abdutalip's arrest occurs in the same chapter as the New Year scene. Thus even the essentially positive portrayal of the New Year celebration contains a fair amount of ambiguity.

The New Year episode is not the only place in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* where Aitmatov employs aesopian imagery to undercut essentially positive portrayals of Soviet innovations. Edigei recalls the times before the introduction of snowplows, when keeping the tracks free of snow was almost as hard as fighting on the front. He recalls that the winters of fifty-one and fifty-two were particularly harsh. One wonders if it is a coincidence that Aitmatov chooses these years that were especially grim for proponents of the preservation of the Central Asian cultural heritage.<sup>3</sup> We are told that shoveling snow was like doing battle and, "Although no one was trying to kill

you, you worked yourself to death" (Aitmatov 1983a, 209). Here it is necessary to look at the Russian original in order to fully appreciate the double meaning involved. The Russian version reads, "Pust' nikto tebia ne ubival. No zato sam ubivalsia." In Russian the verb *ubivat'sia* can mean to work hard, to kill oneself, or to grieve. Thus the verb can be used in any of its meanings to describe the political situation in Central Asia in 1951 and 1952. On one level its use evokes images of people working themselves to death in Soviet prison camps. On another level, by bringing up the war, Aitmatov invites the parallel between the war and the cultural purges of the early fifties. During the war Germany could be seen to be killing (*ubivat'*) the Soviet Union. During the purges the Soviet nation was killing itself (*ubivat'sia*).

For Kazangap and Edigei, the enemy in this war during peace time was the snowdrift or in Russian *zanos*. Perhaps Aitmatov selected this fairly uncommon word for its similarity to the word *donos* or denunciation. Indeed, for many Soviet citizens, including Abultalip, the *donos* was the prime enemy in 1951 and 1952. It is possible, on the other hand, that Aitmatov uses the word *zanos* because it can also mean importation. If so the *zanos* of Russian and Soviet values can be seen as an enemy to all of Central Asia. After the Khrushchev era's 'thaw', the Brezhnev government decided the best approach to Stalin's crimes was to ignore them. The narrator's summation of those harsh winters reflects government policy as well as the feelings of many Soviet citizens toward the era of Stalin. "But those snows have melted, those trains have sped by, those years have passed... No one cares about it now. Whether it happened or not" (Aitmatov 1983a, 209). While these last two lines seem particularly out of place in Edigei's recollection of the winters on the railroad tracks, they perfectly characterize Soviet attitudes toward the excesses of the Stalinist system. Thus although Aitmatov appears to be going against his earlier tendency to criticize

modernity, his praise of Soviet progress masks an attack on the Soviet Union's unwillingness to face up to its own history.

Perhaps the most ambiguous imagery, however, is to be found in the symbolism connected with the hoop, or *obruch*. That *Obruch* was the title that Aitmatov originally intended for the work testifies to the importance of this symbol (Mozur 1995, 97). Mozur draws attention to the way in which the image of the hoop links all three narrative planes of the novel. In the story of the *mankurt* the hoop is represented by the *shiri*<sup>4</sup> that is used to deprive Zholaman of his memory. Aitmatov clearly establishes this connection writing, "the *shiri* constricted and squeezed the shaven head of the slave like an iron hoop" (Aitmatov 1983a, 301).<sup>5</sup> In the science fiction subplot, *obruch* or hoop is the name of the operation intended to keep the alien *Lesnogradtsy* from approaching the Earth. This connection is strengthened even further by the cosmonauts' description of the Earth as "fragile, like the head of a child" (Aitmatov 1983a, 301).<sup>6</sup> Mozur also points out that the railroad tracks and the fences around the cosmodrome also serve as a sort of *shiri*. The tracks "cut the steppe in two," while "The fences around the cosmodrome are a threatening hindrance to the members of the funeral party, cordoning off their ancestral burial ground" (Mozur 1995, 114). The tracks are further connected to the image of the *shiri* in the subsequently published chapter "Beloe oblako Chingizkhana" in which Abdutalip eventually commits suicide on the tracks. This strengthens Mozur's analogy in which "Kuttybaev's death en route to the camps reveals that he is destined to share the fate not of the *mankurt* but of the prisoners in the legend who die from the torture" (Mozur 1995, 109). Thus, as the *shiri* had killed the *mankurt* candidates, the tracks kill the prisoner of the 'modern day zhuan'zhuan.' Furthermore the railroad, *zheleznaiia doroga* or iron road in Russian, is linked to the *mankurtization* process by the image of

the *shiri* as an iron hoop. Finally both of these images are linked to the space subplot by the name of the anti-alien operation, *obruch* or hoop.

Although the image of the hoop links all of the story's plots it also calls the reader's attention to a mass of contradictions. Mozur convincingly argues that the anti-alien operation is "only another form of mankurt's cap, with an identical sadistic function" and that its imagery is an attack on "the xenophobic attitude toward other peoples and their 'different ideas' characteristic of Soviet policies in the Brezhnev era" (Mozur 1995, 111). On the other hand, either missing or dismissing the connection between the *shiri* and operation *obruch*, Alla Latynina argues that nothing good can come from contact with the *Lesnogradtsy*. She contends that even if the aliens were to prove helpful, their 'superior' civilization would of necessity destroy human culture, asking rhetorically:

If the entire history of earthlings—a history of bloody wars, hostility, and violence—is but a useless burden of the past, then would not the very existence of a planet without such a burden tempt the intellect of the earthling to reject, to strike out the meaning of Earth's history, to strike out that which constitutes his particularity as a human being?  
(Latynina, 208)

Latynina further argues that the decision, made by 'competent parties,' to refuse to make contact was "justified because humanity must not receive stimuli for its development from the outside, it must not follow the will of another, it must control its own history" (Latynina, 208).

One cannot help but see the *Lesnogradtsy's* mission vis-a-vis Earth as potentially similar to Russia's purported role as elder brother to the Central Asian people. The Kyrgyz were often reminded of the "Russia's progressive mission in the development of the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia" (Daniyarov, 10-11).

Considering how the Russians executed this mission in Central Asia, the reader should find it rather difficult to condemn the superpowers for putting up defenses to keep the *Lesnogradtsy* from performing a similar mission on Earth. Thus although much of the novel's imagery leads us to view the implementation of operation *obruch* in a negative manner, our knowledge of Aitmatov's attitude toward the assistance rendered by his people's earthly elder brothers belies the positive image of the aliens. By making Russians such as Latynina aware of the threat posed to Russian culture by the hypothetical *Lesnogradtsy*, Aitmatov brings them that much closer to understanding why so many Central Asians reject Russia's 'more advanced' culture for more traditional ways.

What is more, the space sub-plot offers a contradictory view of technology. On the one hand, the *Lesnogradtsy* promise to make Earth a better place to live. On the other hand, as Latynina notes, they seem unable to stop a rampant environmental disaster on their own planet. Considering Aitmatov's stance in regard to the preservation of natural resources, this is hardly a minor flaw. In this regard it is difficult to argue with Latynina's observation that if humanity were to look to the *Lesnogradtsy* for the answer to its problems, it would resemble the fox who wants to find railroad tracks without a train—that is to say it is looking to reap the benefits of an outside technology without facing the problems that will surely come along with it. Yet in her analogy Latynina links the train and the tracks with the *Lesnogradtsy*. For this connection to be consistent, however, Edigei would have to run like a fox from the aliens and not from the rockets launched to keep them away from earth. Thus, the question as to whether the *Lesnogradtsy's* technology will be a blessing or a curse is left open and the science fiction subplot is as ambiguous as the New Year and snowplow scenes.

Indeed as Katerina Clark notes, "The text is full of ambiguity" (Clark, 582). Western critics have tended to see the contradictions in the work as a sort of a smoke screen used by Aitmatov to make his work acceptable to the Soviet literary establishment. For example, Clark contends:

*I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* provides a case study of the ways authors can play with the formal conventions of the socialist realist tradition to produce meanings that are highly elusive, so that it is not hard for critics to make their accounts of the novel respectable. (Clark, 587).

Likewise, implying that there is a correct reading of the novel, Mozur argues that Aitmatov provides the reader with "signposts leading to a more perceptive reading of the work" (Mozur 1995, 124). Yet while Soviet limits on artistic freedom certainly account for much of the ambiguity in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, there are other factors that should not be overlooked.

While Aitmatov's introduction to the novel has been dismissed as an attempt "to forestall criticism" from conservative Soviet readers (Shneidman 1989, 201), we can gain insight into the novel's ambiguity from the author's attempt to justify his inclusion of the science fiction subplot. Aitmatov says, "I thought up the entire space story with only one aim: to make a situation that was loaded with potential dangers to the people of Earth more intense through a paradoxical and hyperbolized form" (Aitmatov 1983a, 198). Indeed, in order to express his feelings about the Russian/Soviet presence in Central Asia Aitmatov had no choice but to employ "paradoxical form" because the colonial situation is itself rife with paradox. Having made his attitude toward the "train" abundantly clear in his past several works, the author is still unable to reject the benefits of living near the "tracks."

As Clark notes the Boranly-Buranyi settlement "serves simultaneously as the hermetic work site which was a favorite of Stalinist prose . . . and as a 'village'"

(Clark, 583). Thus the settlement's inhabitants are somewhere in between modernity and tradition. Their position outside of their traditional realm is further emphasized by their physical displacement. Edigei is originally from the Aral Sea region, but he is no longer able to work on the boats because "his head wasn't fit for the fishing business" (Aitmatov 1983a, 249). That a problem with his head should be the reason he cannot stay in the place of his birth is significant because he obtained his head injuries in the army. As service in the military was an effective force for the russification of Central Asians, it is natural that upon demobilization Edigei found that "it was as if his head were not his own" (Aitmatov 1983a, 247). Thus the russification he has undergone in the army has forced Edigei to abandon his home for a place that is located between the worlds of tradition and modernity. Moreover, if we view the Aral Sea as a symbol for Edigei's native culture, then the novel's treatment of its destruction simultaneously strikes two of Aitmatov's most oft-repeated chords. On the one hand, Aitmatov calls attention to the shrinking of the sea in order to arouse the readers' indignation that such an ecological disaster could be permitted to happen in Central Asia. On the other hand, the death of the Aral Sea stands as a symbol for the demise of Edigei's traditional culture. Thus, although it is bad enough that Edigei is unfit to live in his own milieu, it is even worse that his native environment is being destroyed.

Unable to continue his life at home, Edigei finds himself in a place that is neither a modern city nor a traditional village. That the settlement's name, Boranly-Burannyi, is both Kazak and Russian is but further proof of its dual nature. It is designated as a *polustannok* 'halt,' or more literally 'half-station'--another allusion to its intermediary character. The nature of the settlement is even further stressed in the refrain that runs throughout the story in which the Sary-Ozeki steppes are called the "Intermediate lands of the yellow steppe" (Aitmatov 1983a, 203).

As one might expect, Boranly-Burannyi's residents share in the settlement's dual nature. Edigei, for example, enjoys Russian vodka with his Kazak *shubat*, yet, unlike Sabitzhan, he does not drink to excess (Aitmatov 1983a, 227). The iron roof of Edigei's house is another modern innovation (Aitmatov 1983a, 265). The most striking image of the combination of the old and the new, however, is the funeral party. The men who set off toward the cemetery with Kazangap's body are accompanied by a camel and two tractors (Aitmatov 1983a, 271). Even the grave is dug partially by hand and partially by machine (Aitmatov 1983a, 272). Thus, as the settlement is made up of a combination of modern and traditional traits, so are its inhabitants.

Even in the intermediate world of the station, however, the excessive use of technology is frowned upon. Aitmatov uses the scene in which Ermek receives a haircut to link technology with mankurtization. In order to cut the boy's hair, Kazangap must resort to physical force: "He held him [Ermek] between his legs and worked him over with the machine." The results of this treatment are that Ermek "does not resemble himself at all . . ." (Aitmatov 1983a, 391). Thus while some technology is tolerated, an excess of modernity is still shown as a force that robs one of his identity.

As Samson loses more than his hair to Delilah, the boy's haircut seems to represent the emasculation of Kyrgyz culture. This image is not new for Aitmatov: we have already seen it with the gelding of Gul'sary. In contrast to these scenes of cultural castration Aitmatov offers the ungelded Karanar, whose beauty and power are only slightly diminished by his violence and unpredictability. Indeed, Aitmatov's fear that the Kyrgyz are becoming less manly and his admiration of the masculine strength of his traditional culture had already been reflected in *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* During the traditional Kyrgyz horse games, the narrator underlines the manliness of the

competition. This traditional masculinity stands in sharp contrast to the inability of Tanabai's citified, European educated son to stand up to his domineering wife (Aitmatov 1982a, 510).

While Tanabai's son's moral fiber suffers due to his rejection of his cultural heritage, Edigei's son dies because Ukubala accepts the belief in the superiority of modern medicine. In this scene, Aitmatov reverses the common literary stereotype of Soviet medical technology as the deliverance from the dark days when people died while applying ignorant and useless folk cures. In Mikhail Sheverdin's *Dzheikhun*, for example, a Russian doctor cures a Mufti's wife after the Muslim cleric's prayers had proven to be bad medicine. Sheverdin's narrator evaluates the situation with typical colonial arrogance, saying "Russian science was triumphant" (Sheverdin, 110). In Aitmatov's novel the advice given by the elderly Kazak women is sound and the trip to the Soviet doctor is the cause of the boy's death. Thus the propaganda that says you cannot trust your own people's wisdom can be blamed for the boy's death. Moreover, the boy's death from German measles 'krasnukha' or 'the red disease' seems to further implicate the "reds" in his demise (Aitmatov 1983a, 250-251).

If we return to the science fiction subplot, we will see that the isolation of the settlement is mirrored not only by the location of the space station but by the situation of the very planet Earth. This chain of resonating images creates, in the words of Latynina, "a tangle of difficult to resolve contradictions" (Latynina, 208). Although it has some ominous undertones, the cosmonauts' trip to the planet Lesnaia grud' is seen as a potentially positive step for humanity. Sabitzhan's contact with a supposedly superior culture, however, has resulted in his total mankurtization. An outside force has put the *shiri* on Zholaman to deprive him of his identity. The Earth has symbolically donned its own *shiri* in order to maintain its identity and isolate itself from an outside force. While the decision to prevent the aliens from visiting the Earth

is seen as a mistake, Edigei's isolation at Boranly-Burannyi is a source of freedom. The Earth's isolation makes it a symbolic *mankurt*, whereas contact with the world beyond the settlement robs Sabitzhan of his national heritage and kills Abutalip.

All of the above contradictions point to new departure in Aitmatov's artistic vision. Whereas in earlier works Aitmatov appeared to be a "moral absolutist" in his opposition to modernity (Mozur 1995, 69), in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* he "is less rigid . . . on the subject of how much machine can go into his garden" (Clark, 583). Indeed he has been forced to abandon the garden and, not having fully accepted the world of the machine, he has decided to focus on the neutral zone between modernity and tradition. This intermediate territory is all that is left to the novel's heroes. The Aral Sea is Kazangap's birthplace but his life experience has made Boranly-Burannyi his true home. The conditions there are difficult, but that is the price for the freedom it affords. Looking at the settlement on New Year's Eve, Zaripa comments, "How nice, and how terrifying!" (Aitmatov 1983a, 343). Yet, there is nowhere to escape from that terror. To go to the city is either to become a *mankurt* like Sabitzhan or die in the struggle against the *mankurtization* process like Abutalip. A return to tradition is impossible: the sea of their traditional heritage is drying up and their cultural holy of holies has been surrounded with guards and barbed wire. Yet although guards, barbed-wire, or killer satellites prevent them from returning to their cultural roots, they are obligated to preserve them in their memory.

Despite the author's continued interest in his people's past, the science fiction subplot implies that Aitmatov has distanced himself from the stance he took in *Belyi parokhod*, where he implied that death was superior to corruption or cultural impurity. His comparison of the Earth's decision to isolate itself to *mankurtization* suggests that once contact has been made such impurity becomes a part of culture. If a people's identity has become a mixture of the old and the new, to reject the new is as hostile to

that identity as to purge the old. Thus the reality of cultural interaction is somewhere between the heaven of Lesnaia grud' and the hell of Stalinist repression. The territory in between can be lonely and even "terrifying" yet it provides for a striking perspective. It is from the cold, dark isolation of space that the cosmonauts make the following observations:

Земля прекрасна невероятной, невиданной голубизной и отсюда хрупка, как голова младенца. Нам кажется отсюда, что все люди, которые живут на свете, все они наши сестры и братья, и без них мы не смеем и мыслить себя, хотя, мы знаем, на самой земле это далеко не так... (Aitmatov 1983a, 245)<sup>7</sup>

Thus, the cosmonaut's isolation allows them to witness beauty the likes of which no one else has ever seen and to gain what is offered by the author as a deep insight into the human condition.

Finally Aitmatov has lessened, although not completely abandoned, his pessimistic outlook for the future. Although Kazangap's son is a *mankurt* and Edigei's son has died, hope for the future remains. As the legend's white headed she-camels give birth to black headed he-camels and vice-versa, humans must not expect their progeny to be a carbon copy of the parent. Edigei has refused to geld his mighty black headed camel, Karanar, assuring that the legendary line will continue through the camel's daughters. Edigei, too, has daughters, and they represent his future. As Ukubala tells them when they arrive at the settlement, "This is your home, my children..." (Aitmatov 1983a, 489).

Thus, in his first novel, Aitmatov makes more than just an artistic departure. Although he has not forsaken his interest in the fate of his people's culture in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, Aitmatov has abandoned his obsession with "pure" culture and begun to focus on the identity of the individual who is caught between cultures. The

"Janus-faced" nature of the novel is best explained not as an attempt to dodge the censor but as a reflection of the author's own protean cultural identity.

Aitmatov's second novel, *Plakha (The Executioner's Block)*,<sup>8</sup> begins with a scene from the life of a pair of Central Asian wolves, Akbara and Tashchainar. They lose their cubs in a sudden stampede that is caused by the high-tech slaughter of an antelope herd. The wolves are again displaced when their new home on the banks of Lake Aldash is burned to clear space for a military project. Thus, again, Aitmatov shows the victimization of a Kyrgyz cultural symbol by the forces of modernity. As Mozur notes:

For Central Asian readers of *The Place of the Skull*, therefore, the incessant persecution of Akbara and Tashchainar, as well as the deaths of their offspring, can evoke the attacks by Soviet authorities on Turkic culture and ethnicity over many years, as well as the rape of the Central Asian ecology in the name of dubious military and industrial projects. Aitmatov's wolf story thus invites a number of readings, including such a narrow nationalistic one. (Mozur 1995, 153)

Similar to the castration of Gul'sary and the drowning of the boy in *Belyi parokhod*, the fate of the wolf cubs does more than merely evoke Soviet attacks on Central Asian culture: it implies that modernity has destroyed a way of life and deprived the culture represented by the wolves of its future. Indeed, Aitmatov underscores this lack of future, when, near the end of the novel the narrator says, "For Akbara it was as if the world had lost its value. Now her life consisted of memories of the past" (Aitmatov 1987, 290).

The problems faced by Central Asia and the image of a people that has been robbed of its future, is further developed in Part Three of the novel. As Mozur notes:

Ernazar complains to Boston about party authorities' attempts to eradicate Kirghiz customs. Ernazar laments that the party organizer, Kochkorbaev, 'condemns all the old ways,' from Kirghiz wedding customs to old-fashioned names (implied are Turkic and Islamic names) Kirghiz couples give their children. (Mozur 1995, 153)

As in many other Aitmatov stories, the main villain in this episode, Bazarbai, has an unhealthy addiction to the Russian vice of vodka drinking. Indeed, in selling the wolf cubs for money to buy vodka he has traded a noble symbol of his own culture for one of the most base symbols of the colonizer's culture. Bazarbai's moral degeneracy is further underscored by his history of blasphemy: "Bazarbai . . . remembered gods, into the beards of whom he had spat in other days" (Aitmatov 1987, 220). He is also seen to violate the Muslim taboo against consuming the meat of swine when he eats pork fat with his vodka (Aitmatov 1987, 227). Moreover, the villain's attitude toward the city is somewhat reminiscent of Orozkul's. Explaining why young people with work skills leave the country for the city, he says "[Y]oung people are a hundred times better off living and working there" (Aitmatov 1987, 223).

The hero of Part Three, Boston, displays both traditional and modern characteristics. In contrast to Bazarbai, Boston is said not to drink at all (Aitmatov 1987, 223). Although it is Bazarbai who eats the pork fat, he is seen to do so at Boston's house. Thus, somehow this taboo meat has made it into the hero's home. Whereas Bazarbai has scorned the gods, religion is seen to be alive in Boston's house when Guliumkan says, "[P]raise god and the spirits of our ancestors--the *arbaks*" (Aitmatov 1987, 255). While preparing to cross the pass, Ernazar asks Boston if he remembers the "pass-crossing prayer" used by their ancestors. Boston does not know the prayer, but he gets angry when Ernazar says, "These days nobody needs those kinds of prayers. In the schools these days they teach that all those things are

backwardness and darkness. 'Look,' they say, 'people are flying to space.'"

Insisting that modernity does not have to preclude tradition, Boston responds:

А при чем тут космос? Что, если в космос летаем, так надо и забыть прежние заклинания? Кто в космос летает, тех по пальцам перечесть можно, а сколько нас на земле и землей живет? Отцы наши, деды наши землей жили, что же нам в космосе? Пусть они себе летают -- у них свое дело, у нас свое. (Aitmatov 1987, 255)<sup>9</sup>

Boston's proximity to the natural world is emphasized by his knowledge that Akhbara and Tashchainar are in the area and that they are not local wolves. Mysteriously enough, he even knows their names. Nevertheless, despite Boston's near mystical link to the wolves which is underscored by his name, which means "gray coat" in Kyrgyz, he is seen to have killed a wolf in the past. Thus, Boston is a rather ambiguous character. He thinks that his people's ancient "pass-crossing" prayer is necessary, yet he does not know it. He tries to protect Akbara and her cubs, but he has a wolf skin on his wall. Indeed, Boston's dual nature is reflected in his very name, which has a Western meaning 'Boston, the city' and a Kyrgyz meaning 'gray coat.'

Much as Boston occupies an intermediary position between two cultures, he is also caught in the middle of the conflict between Akbara and Bazarbai. The wolf blames Boston for stealing her cubs, while Bazarbai accuses him of siding with the wolves against the shepherds. Although Bazarbai's theft of the cubs is committed purely out of greed and self-interest, he claims to have saved the area's shepherd's from the threat posed by the wolves. This can be seen to represent the Soviet Union's claims that it was trying to free the Kyrgyz people from the oppression inherent in their traditional way of life. That the wolves respond to Bazarbai's theft of the cubs by becoming blood-thirsty killers indicates that the Soviet presence in Central Asia has

caused a change in the forces of tradition in Kyrgyzstan, replacing their former power and beauty with mindless and vengeful cruelty. In many ways, Boston's predicament resembles that of a post-colonial writer. Traditionalists, represented by the wolves, accuse him of betraying the old ways, while those who assimilate to the colonizing power accuse him of supporting the old in a manner that poses a danger to the new. Guy Imart sums up one aspect of this problem as faced by Kyrgyz and Kazak intellectuals saying, "the worst fear of these neo-jadistists is to fall directly from the Russian socialist/imperialist frying pan into some variety of Islamic fundamentalist fire" (Imart, 29). Thus Boston's situation is similar to that of Central Asian intellectuals who, though they are more approving of Islam than Socialism, are attacked by fundamentalist Muslims who claim to represent tradition. While he is clearly sympathetic toward the wolves' plight, the creatures' aggressive and intolerant attitude toward him has put Boston in a position where he must fight back.

The novel's conclusion leaves no hope for tradition, represented by the wolves, or for the future of synthesis, represented by Boston's son, Kendzhesh. The modern Soviet state fares somewhat better, as its main representative, Kochkorbaev, remains untouched by the violence that breaks out in the end. Although it seems that Boston, as Akbara's killer, is ultimately responsible for the death of the symbol of traditional culture, the Soviet assaults on nature had already robbed Akbara of her future. Indeed, when Boston shoots Akbara he merely speeds her demise.

*Plakha* ends in a way that evokes the conclusions of some of Aitmatov's earlier stories. Boston stares at Issyk Kul, as if ready to drown himself and thus share the fate of the boy in *Belyi parokhod*. Similar to Tanabai and Sultanmurat, Boston parts with his horse as the novel comes to an end. Despite these similarities, however, there are substantial differences, as well. The most obvious of these is the release of Boston's horse. Whereas Tanabai's horse died a natural death after years of abuse and

Sultanmurat's horse was murdered by self-serving villains, Boston lets his own horse run free. If we recall that the horse is a symbol of Kyrgyz culture, we will find an interesting evolution in Aitmatov's attitude toward the future of his people's ways. Gul'sary's natural death from old age implies that Kyrgyz culture was the victim of the changing times. The Soviet functionaries who abuse and geld the horse are surely complicit in his lack of future, but time strikes the final blow. Sultanmurat's horse, on the other hand, is killed by Kyrgyz who have forgotten their traditional values. Thus, the idea that, with time, tradition inevitably gives way to modernity is replaced by an image of the crushing of tradition by modernity. In contrast to these earlier horses, Boston's mount does not die but is allowed to run free. Whereas Tanabai and Sultanmurat have their horses taken from them, Boston lets his go. The survival of Boston's horse implies that there is hope for Kyrgyz culture. The horse's release, on the other hand, suggests that those who find themselves with one foot in both cultures cannot continue to act as the custodians of tradition. Boston differs from the boy in *Belyi parokhod*, in that his death is not shown. This is because it is not his death that is important but his isolation. Hounded by the representatives of traditional culture and Soviet modernity, Boston violently rejects them both and goes off alone.

The pressures that forces symbolizing Soviet modernity and Central Asian tradition exert on Boston from both sides are similar to those faced by the novel's Russian hero, Avdii Kalistratov. Having rejected both traditional Christianity and Soviet atheism, Avdii is subjected to hostility from both camps. Aitmatov describes these conflicting belief systems as "two absolutely impenetrable and indestructible fortresses, the strength of which is built upon their mutual immovability and total non-acceptance of one another." Indeed the author describes conservative Orthodox Christianity as a collection of "paschal conceptions that cannot be influenced by the hands of time, which zealously guard the purity of their dogma from any, even well-

intentioned, innovations" (Aitmatov 1987, 43). This description is reminiscent of Soviet attitudes toward traditional Central Asian culture in general and Islam in particular. At first glance, the strange use of the word 'paschal' in the above cited passage seems difficult to explain. If we consider that Soviet attacks on Central Asia were often aimed at "patriarchal conceptions," however, we will find it rather likely that the word paschal's phonetic similarities to the word patriarchal led Aitmatov to plug it into the formula without dwelling on its meaning. Thus, Avdii's struggle with the forces of Orthodox dogma and "scientific atheism" parallel Boston's battle with the forces of tradition and modernity.

The Soviet Union's repression of Russian culture allows Aitmatov to employ a Russian character in the position of a post-colonial intellectual. This conveniently permits the author to project his fears about the situation in Kyrgyzstan onto a more neutral setting. In the late Twentieth century, it is certainly safer to criticize Orthodox Christianity than fundamentalist Islam. Upon hearing about Avdii's religious innovations, Viktor Nikiforovich reminds Aitmatov's hero of the price that has been paid by heretics in the past:

Да за такую неслыханную ересь где-нибудь в католической Европе, в Испании или в Италии, только за то хотя бы, что ты осмелился сказать, а я имел неосторожность выслушать тебя, нас бы с тобой, отец мой отрок, вначале четвертовали бы, потом сожгли бы на костре, потом перемололи бы останки в порошок и развеяли бы по ветру. (Aitmatov 1987, 79)<sup>10</sup>

For a Russian reader this passage is most likely to evoke images of the Soviet repression of dissidents. Readers, such as Riitta H. Pittman, who approach Aitmatov through their knowledge of Russian language and culture have observed the possibility of such a political interpretation:

[F]ormal religion stands for official Soviet ideology and the Church for the Party. (Georgy Gachov makes a fleeting reference to the political content of Avdy's discussion with the coordinator as he remarks suggestively that it is obvious to what to whom this episode alludes.). (Pittman, 365)

On the other hand, a Central Asian intellectual who is aware of events in Iran, Algeria, and other Islamic states, may see Avdii's struggles with the church to symbolize religious as well as political repression. Thus, to some, the "coordinator's" unwavering conservatism could represent a threat from both church and state, with the threat of fundamentalist repression superimposed upon the picture of the Soviet state's abuses of its citizens' rights. It is also possible that Aitmatov chose to employ a Russian hero not merely to keep from offending Muslim elements in Kyrgyzstan, but to avoid facing his own disappointment with his people's tradition, as well. Indeed, having so staunchly defended Kyrgyz culture in the past, Aitmatov must have found it hard to step away from this position, however slightly. The selection of a Russian rather than a Central Asian as his main character allows Aitmatov to explore the battle between tradition and modernity at a distance.

It should be kept in mind, however, that neither Boston nor Avdii is entirely neutral in his approach to the conflicting forces that lead to his demise. Despite his heresy, Avdii remains a Christian to the end. Boston's hostility to Bazarbai and Kochkorbaev is never in question, whereas his attitude toward the wolves is essentially positive. Thus, similar to Edigei of *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, both of these outcasts have more sympathy for the traditional than for the modern.

The fate of the novel's human heroes seems to indicate that the post-colonial intellectual is a helpless victim. Yet although neither Avdii nor Boston appears to have any control over his fate, each is implicated, however subtly, in his own demise. The

narrator makes it clear that Avdii could have avoided his fate had he remained entirely in the camp of tradition:

И если говорить о судьбе и судьбах, о разного рода житейских обстоятельствах, предопределяющих события, то, видит Бог, у Обера-Кандалова не было бы никаких забот с неудавшимся семинаристом Авдием, если бы тому довелось в свое время доучиться и дослужиться до рукоположения в соответствующий сан. (Aitmatov 1987, 41)<sup>11</sup>

Although the above statement is worded in a way that partially absolves Avdii—"had he had the occasion to finish his studies"--we are clearly shown that Avdii's seemingly free decision to break with tradition is the cause of his downfall. Similar to Avdii, Boston seems to be the victim of circumstances beyond his control. Boston's innocence is compromised, however, by the features his story has in common with that of the *chekist*, Sandro. Being a double agent Sandro is shown to share the values of the revolutionaries, yet as Mozur notes the *chekist* "becomes one" with the traditionalists during their songfest (Mozur 1995, 145). Thus Sandro also finds himself with one foot in each of two cultures. Similar to Boston, Sandro commits murder, frees his horse, and then takes his own life. Furthermore, the folk songs sung by Sandro's victims make them no less a symbol of Georgian culture than the wolves are a symbol of Kyrgyz culture. Thus, by giving Boston traits which make him similar to the treacherous Sandro, Aitmatov could be indicating that Boston's biculturalism is a betrayal of his own people. It must be noted, however, that the passages which suggest that Avdii and Boston are to blame for their own fates are a relatively minor part of the novel. The author is far more concerned with the harm brought on by colonialism and modernity than with the post-colonial intellectual's personal feelings that he has betrayed his people.

As a Russian, Avdii occasionally plays a role other than that of the post-colonial intellectual caught between tradition and modernity. During his trip to Central Asia on a journalistic crusade against marijuana use, Avdii's role is closer to that of an intrusive colonial presence. Having joined the company of a group of people whose values differ from his own, Avdii attempts to "civilize" them with a "missionary" zeal. Avdii's mission among the drug-runners is even shown to parallel one aspect of the Western presence in Asia, when Avdii imagines that in the days before colonization the bazaars were teeming with marijuana users:

Авдий пытался представить себе бывшие восточные базары (он читал о них в книгах) в Индии, Афганистане или Турции, где-нибудь в Стамбуле или в Джайпуре у старых крепостных стен, у ворот некогда знаменитых дворцов, где анашу открыто продавали, покупали и там же курили и где каждый на свой лад, в мере своей фантазии предавался разнообразным галлюцинациям - - кому мерещились наслаждения в гаремах, кому выезды на золоченых шахских слонах . . . кому мрачная тьма одиночества, порождаемая в недрах омертвевшего сознания, тьма, вызывающая клокочущую ярость, желание сокрушить и испепелить весь мир. Немедленно, сейчас, один на один!.. Не в этом ли крылась одна из роковых пагуб некогда процветавшего Востока? (Aitmatov 1987, 103)<sup>12</sup>

Thus as Western influence has put an end to drug abuse in Eastern bazaars, Avdii aims to prevent marijuana use among Soviet youth.

It is possible that the above cited passage's misconceptions about the effects of marijuana use can be attributed to Aitmatov's ignorance rather than Avdii's. The same can not be said, however, for Avdii's view of the East. The source of Avdii's

romantic "orientalist" perceptions of the East is given in a parenthetical aside that is charged with irony: "He read about them in books." If Aitmatov is intentionally showing Avdii's views of the East to be naive and prejudiced, perhaps we should approach the hero's attitude toward marijuana with the same sense of irony. Indeed, Avdii even goes as far as to blame nature for the "moral degradation" caused by the "wild" marijuana plant thinking "if nature were capable of thought, what a heavy load of guilt this monstrous connection between wild flora and the moral degradation of man would be to her" (Aitmatov 1987, 187). Knowing Aitmatov's reverence for nature, we are probably safe in assuming that the above statement belongs to the character and not the author. Thus, similar to a colonial power, Avdii goes to a community of strangers and asks them to reject ways about which he knows little or nothing for his way of life and his conception of god.

In his dialogue with the leader of the drug-runners, Grishan, Avdii is asked questions that have been posed to colonizers throughout the world: "What right do you have to take it upon yourself to meddle in our lives? . . . And who are you to judge us? Is it yours to decide how we should live and act?" (Aitmatov 1987, 120-121). Avdii's reply that he is doing what he is doing for the good of the drug-runners themselves echoes the justifications of centuries of colonization and the "white man's burden."

While the use of a Russian hero was a departure for Aitmatov, the employment of a "positive" character to represent a colonial force is an even bigger surprise. Moreover, the portrayal of the leader of the colonized through Grishan, a character that the author refers to in an interview as a "cynical punk who plays at being a superman" (Aitmatov 1988, 317), leads the reader to ask whether Aitmatov has returned to the pro-Western stance he exhibited in his early works. Perhaps, then, the ambiguity and the contradictions in the *mankurt* and space themes in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*

represent the intermediate point between Aitmatov's harsh rejection of the fruits of the Russian presence in Central Asia and his return to the values that his Soviet education has instilled in him. Yet if we choose to read the exchange between Avdii and Grishan as Aitmatov's recantation of his earlier stand against colonial attitudes and modern technology, then we will find it difficult to reconcile this reading with any possible interpretation of the wolf sub-plot. If, however, we examine the portrayal of Avdii and Grishan in terms other than "positive" and "negative," or "good" and "evil," we shall find evidence to suggest that Aitmatov's view of the Soviet presence in Central Asia remains closer to the ambiguity of *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* than to the acceptance of "Belyi dozhd'" or "Pervyi uchitel'."

We have already discussed Avdii's contention that nature should feel guilt for the moral degradation caused by marijuana. Pittman observes that "A considerable degree of irony is contained" in Aitmatov's portrayal of Avdii's reproachful attitude toward nature (Pittman, 162). Avdii's authority as a mouthpiece for the author is further eroded by the narrator's contention that Avdii is "green and impatient" (Aitmatov 1987, 81). Moreover, during a conversation with Avdii, Gorodetskii calls attention to the young heretic's theological errors, saying:

Ты программируешь Бога, а Бог не может быть умозрительно придуман, как бы это заманчиво и убедительно ни выглядело. . . .  
Так вот подумай, что сильнее, что могущественней и притягательней, что ближе -- Бог-мученик, который пошел на плаху, на крестную муку ради идеи, или совершенное верховное существо, пусть и современно мыслящее, этот абстрактный идеал. (Aitmatov 1987, 80)<sup>13</sup>

The narrator leaves no doubt as to the validity of Gorodetskii's judgement when he intrudes with the words: "He was right. He was right about everything. It was not

long before Avdii Kallistratov had the opportunity to be convinced of that" (Aitmatov 1987, 80). Thus Avdii is guilty of several sins--not the least of which is pride.

We might even accuse one who "programs" a God that is a supreme or verkhovnoe being, of advancing the concept of the superman, which in Russian can be either *supermen* or *sverkhchelovek*, for none but a superman could possibly construct an all-powerful God. Perhaps, then, Grishan is not the only one in the novel who, in Aitmatov's words "plays at being a superman." Indeed, Avdii and Grishan are linked in the novel through their connections to the figure of Christ. The religious symbols that link Avdii to Christ are, as Porter notes, "so obvious that one wonders how seriously they are to be taken" (Porter, 78). Yet, in a conversation between Avdii and Grishan, it is the latter who utters the biblical quotation, "Your words, not mine" (Aitmatov 1987, 125). Grishan's words are spoken cynically, yet his sudden appearance in the role of Christ addressing Pilate certainly adds ambiguity not only to the figure of Grishan, but to those of Christ, Pilate, and Avdii, who suddenly finds himself in the unflattering role of the representative of the Roman Empire in Judea. Indeed, Avdii's superficial similarities to Christ--his physical appearance, his betrayal by Peter, and his crucifixion--believe a fundamental difference in their philosophies. In his confrontation with the coordinator, Avdii states: "You are fighting for a monopoly on the truth, but that is, in the very least, a self-deception, as there cannot be a teaching, not even from God, that can once and for all attain complete truth" (Aitmatov 1987, 86). Christ, on the other hand, tells Pilate: "The truth is above all, and there is only one truth. There cannot be two truths" (Aitmatov 1987, 143). Such contradictions give birth to resonances that make it impossible to designate any one character as the touchstone of truth and righteousness.

If we return to the conflict between Avdii and the drug-runners, then, we shall find a clear parallel to *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*. As the Earth refuses the

*Lesnogradtsy's* assistance, implementing operation *obruch* to keep them away, the drug-runners reject Avdii's well-intentioned help. While there are many who feel that it was prudent for the Earth to reject the aliens' offer, however, it is clear that the drug-runners' failure to heed Avdii's warning is a mistake. Yet, Avdii himself must share in the blame for his own defeat. By failing to attempt to reach more than a superficial understanding of the drug culture, he undermines his own chances for success. Avdii was totally alien to the drug-runners' world, and thus their rejection of him must be seen as natural if regrettable.

*Plakha's* similarities to *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* are continued in the contradictions among its sub-plots. Much as the *mankurt* theme clashes with that of the *Lesnogradtsy*, the anti-colonial message in the story of the wolves, conflicts with Avdii's missionary activities among the drug-runners. Both novels balance these extremes with the portrayal of a Central Asian character who is neither fully traditional nor entirely modern. As in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, *Plakha's* contradictions seem to stem from Aitmatov's own internal ambivalence toward modernity. Nowhere is this ambiguity better reflected than in a 1986 interview with N. Anastasiev, where Aitmatov bemoans the effects that a consumer society has had on the arts in the West. Almost without transition, however, he begins to complain about the low quality of goods and services in the Soviet Union, contending that "a person who has been freed of unnecessary worries is better prepared for an encounter with real culture than a person who has been worn out by the daily grind." He goes on to say, "What, if we don't make things better and faster, then our culture will win out and our art will be more lofty? Nothing of the sort." Thus in a single interview, Aitmatov portrays modernity as both a bane and a boon to what he refers to as "real" culture.

If we examine the development of Aitmatov's literary career we will find that Avdii is a departure as a character not because he is a Russian but because he inhabits

the space between two cultures without striving to attain one or the other. While Edigei occupies a similar position between the traditional and the modern, he maintains strong connections to his Kazak roots. Avdii, on the other hand, has cut all ties to the forces that represent his traditional culture as embodied by the church. Aitmatov's earliest works indicate that the author's sympathy lies with the forces of modernity. In the works written in the late sixties and seventies, on the other hand, Aitmatov advocates the preservation of the traditional culture of the Kyrgyz. Finally, in his first two novels, Aitmatov exhibits a growing concern with the plight of the individual who is caught between two cultures. This does not mean, however, that he has abandoned his interest in the wrongs done to his people by the Soviet government.

In contrast to the majority of his works, Aitmatov's most recent novel, *Tavro Kassandry*, is set entirely outside of Central Asia. Because of this choice of setting, Aitmatov may be perceived to have given up his crusade in defense of his people's culture. Indeed, when Aitmatov speaks of the way in which his attitude toward his native village has changed over the years, it is obvious that for the author the concept of Sheker represents not only the village itself but the traditional Kyrgyz way of life that he associates with his home:

С ходом лет мои взаимоотношения с ним [Шекером] или, вернее, ощущения менялись. Сначала это было просто место рождения, детство, дом, горы, люди, которые меня окружали. Потом -- что-то большее. Корень, кровь давали о себе знать. . . . Я и сейчас могу вспомнить во всех подробностях, как жаждал я попасть побыстрее в свой аил. . . . Из-под слоя лет всплывают родные картины и лики, звуки, запахи дымов, и все это складывается в память о жизни со всем ее добром, да и с темными полосами тоже. Взгляд с годами становится жестче, судишь прошлое и

себя в нем суровее; и в то же время жаль, что ушло, уходит не только то, чему уйти должно, но и то, что заслуживает сохранения и от чего наша торопливая цивилизация иногда склонна бездумно отказаться. (Aitmatov 1988, 311-312).<sup>14</sup>

Thus the changes in Aitmatov's attitude toward his home town parallel his approach to Kyrgyz culture in his literary works. His early works are, for the most part, set in Kyrgyzstan yet it is "simply a place." He describes the mountains and the people but it is the individual people and not Kyrgyzstan or Kyrgyz culture that is the focus of these stories. Beginning with *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* Aitmatov begins to focus on the fate of the Kyrgyz people as a whole. After *Proshchai, Gul'sary!* and throughout the Seventies Aitmatov seems to grow progressively less tolerant of modernity, until finally, in *Pegii pes begushchii kraem moriia*, he brings us an idealized picture of a shamanistic tribal society that is devoid of the problems that come from extensive contact with European culture. In the Eighties, however, Aitmatov takes a "harsher" view of tradition, although he continues to lament the disappearance of "that which deserves to be preserved" in his culture. Aitmatov's works in the Eighties are also marked by a growing fascination with characters who occupy the territory between tradition and modernity, who "unify, connect temporal strata" (Aitmatov 1988, 313).

Explaining his reasons for turning away from Central Asian settings in his works, Aitmatov states that he felt it was time to move on to more "universal" topics. One reason for this change, he contends, is that the threat of nuclear disaster leads to a condition in which all the people of the Earth are united by the fear of war. "Therefore," Aitmatov explains, "the feeling of separateness grows weaker and weaker in the consciousness of the artist, as well. On the other hand, the impulse to depict the universal aspects of existence grows stronger" (Aitmatov 1988, 313). In the same interview Aitmatov states that "time flows onward and one has new experiences

that sometimes refute what was learned from previous experiences and it becomes impossible to stay in one and the same place" (Aitmatov 1988, 312). Thus, after going through periods in which he had accepted modernity and then rejected it for an attempt to recapture the roots of his cultural tradition, Aitmatov seems to have abandoned both extremes in order to search for what Fanon has called a "universal standpoint," while exploring the inner world of the individual who finds himself on the border of two cultures.

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Notes to Part One, Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>For more on the novels reception in the Soviet press, see Mozur 1995, 102-104 and 118-119; and Clark, 576-7.

<sup>2</sup>Namely "Tsena -- zhizn'," in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, August 13, 1986, 4 and "Zhivi sam i dai zhit' drugim. Po povodu proekta Zakona o iazykakh narodov SSSR," in *Literaturnaia gazeta*, November 22, 1989, 3.

<sup>3</sup>See Mozur 1995, 105; and Mozur 1987, 18-19.

<sup>4</sup>Mozur offers the following brief description of the *shiri*: "One of the methods used by the tribe to torture captives was to shave their victims' heads and to stretch taut caps (*shiri*) of fresh camel hide [more precisely, camel udder] over their skulls. As the hide dried and contracted in the intense heat of the steppes, most of the prisoners died in gony. The few who survived suffered a complete loss of memory and thus became submissive slaves of the Zhuan'zhuany" (Mozur 1995, 107).

<sup>5</sup>Cited in Mozur 1995, 108.

<sup>6</sup>Cited in Gachev 1982, 283.

<sup>7</sup>The Earth is marvelous in its unbelievable, unique blueness, and from here it is as fragile as the head of a child. From here it seems to us that all the people who live on Earth are all our brothers and sisters and we do not dare even think of ourselves without them, although we know that on Earth that is not how it is in the least...

<sup>8</sup>Translated into English as *The Place of the Skull*.

<sup>9</sup>What does space have to do with it? What, if we fly to space, then we have to forget our past incantations? You can count the people who fly to space on your

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fingers, but how many people live on Earth? Our fathers and our grandfathers lived through the Earth. What is there for us in space? Let them fly—they have their business and we have ours.

<sup>10</sup>Somewhere in Catholic Europe, in Spain or in Italy, they would have quartered us and then thrown us on a fire and then ground the remains into powder and scattered them to the wind for such an unheard of heresy, merely because of what you dared to say and because I had the imprudence to hear you out, my dear adolescent Father.

<sup>11</sup>And if we were to talk about fate and fates, about various worldly circumstances that predetermine events, then, God knows, Ober-Kandalov would not have had any problems with Avdii, the unsuccessful seminarian, had the latter had the occasion to finish his studies and earn the bestowment of the corresponding holy orders.

<sup>12</sup>Avdii tried to imagine the Eastern bazaars of the past (he had read about them in books) in India, Afghanistan, or Turkey--somewhere in Istanbul or Jaipur near the old fortified walls, at the gates of once famous palaces--where pot was sold openly. It was bought and smoked right there and everyone in his own way, as his imagination permitted, gave himself over to various hallucinations: some imagined experiencing pleasure in a harem, some fancied themselves to be riding the gilded elephant of a Shah, some imagined the gloomy darkness of solitude, born in the bowels of a numbed consciousness, a darkness that called forth a boiling fury, a desire to shatter the whole world, to reduce it to ashes. Immediately, now, one-on-one!.. Perhaps this was one of the banes of the once blossoming East.

<sup>13</sup>You are programming God, and God cannot be a speculative mental construction no matter how tempting and convincing that may seem. . . . So think

about it, what is more powerful, what is more mighty and inviting, what is closer to us--a martyr-God, who willingly went to the place of execution [*plakha*], to the trials of the cross for the sake of an idea, or a perfect supreme being, even one with a contemporary mindset, that abstract ideal.

<sup>14</sup>With the passing years my relationship with it [Sheker], or more accurately, my feelings toward it have changed. At first it was simply a place of birth: childhood, home, the mountains, the people around me. Then it was something more. My roots and my blood were making themselves felt. To this day I can remember in great detail my desire to get to my native *ail* as soon as possible. . . . From beneath the layer of years arise native pictures and faces, sounds, the smell of smoke, and all that comes together in my memory with all of its good, and, of course, with its bad elements as well. The view becomes harsher. You judge the past and yourself in it more severely. At the same time it is a shame that not only that which should disappear has vanished, but much of what deserves to be preserved has gone with it--that which our hasty civilization sometimes tends to reject thoughtlessly.

## VI. Pulatov's Novels: Searching for Home in the Desert, Bukhara, and Shakhgrad.

Pulatov sets his novel, *Cherepakha Tarazi*, at a time directly before Ghengiz Khan's conquests in Central Asia and in a location "somewhere between the Elysian Plain and the Aral depression" (Pulatov 1991b, 3). While the space of the novel is dominated by desert, each of the four inhabited areas described in the work is an allegory for one of the social forces that coexisted in Pulatov's Uzbekistan.

The city of Dengiz-khan represents Soviet society. The streets of the city are laid out in concentric circles, reminding the reader of the ring roads in Moscow or Tashkent. As is the Kremlin, the seat of the city's government is located in the very center of the city. To get to the center, however, is no easy task as there are no radial roads and the buildings and walls that line the city's circular roads block passage from one street to another. As Tarazi nears the middle of the town he notes that the wealthier streets are closer to the center. Thus, symbolically, the society has a rigid set of classes and mobility between them is nearly impossible. Indeed, Tarazi notes the conspicuous absence of locals in the underground tunnels that link the streets (Pulatov 1991b, 18). On another symbolic level the city's luxuriant underground tunnels are quite reminiscent of Moscow's or Tashkent's Metro systems: "The walls were made of red stone and tufa, and at crossroads, where the passage turned to the left or the right, stood white columns" (Pulatov 1991b, 18). As the USSR's Metro system was built to double as an emergency bomb shelter, the city's tunnels also have defensive applications: "[I]t was built in such a way that the cities wealthy inhabitants could survive a war in luxury under the ground from the beginning to the end" (Pulatov 1991b, 18).

The "Soviet" nature of Dengiz-khan's city is further evidenced in the behavior of its citizens. Much as foreigners were believed to be under surveillance in the

USSR, Terazi is constantly being watched while traveling about the city (Pulatov 1991b, 27). As was often the case in the former Soviet Union, the city's inhabitants are reluctant to talk to foreigners for fear of later harassment from the government (Pulatov 1991b, 15-16). Indeed, Tarazi's guide through the tunnels tells him that he is forbidden to converse with the visitor saying, "I'm not permitted to talk to you . . . You will leave, but I have to live here" (Pulatov 1991b, 27). In the tunnel Tarazi even comes across a dissident figure, who is dressed "in a long white garment that looked like a night gown" (Pulatov 1991b, 28). Such clothing, of course, brings to mind those opponents of the regime who were imprisoned in psychiatric institutes. Similar to the Soviet government, the representative of Dengiz-khan's regime reacts to the foreigner's disapproval by asserting that the dissident's punishment is an internal affair saying, "And what would you do, if someone were to try to violate the laws of the territory that you rule?" (Pulatov 1991b, 28). In a later episode, Kumysh's desire to punish the tortoise, whom he believes to be a petty merchant, reflects the anti-bourgeoisie prejudice in the USSR (Pulatov 1991b, 36). Finally, when Tarazi meets the city's emir, he receives a kiss from the leader's "fat, wet lips" (Pulatov 1991b, 22). There can be little doubt that this is a reference to the Soviet Union's most famous kisser of foreign visitors, Leonid Brezhnev.<sup>1</sup> The novel's use of the simple-minded buffoon, Dengiz-khan, to portray Brezhnev is certainly one of the reasons that it could not be published until 1985, after the advent of glasnost.

Knowing what we know in 1996, one is tempted to credit Pulatov with incredible foresight for his portrayal of the problems faced by Dengiz-khan's city. Much as the Soviet government was so obsessed with the Western military threat that it failed to halt its own creeping economic decay, Dengiz-khan is so fixated on the possibility that Chengiz Khan will invade that he ignores the gradually encroaching sands that will soon cover his city. Of course, even as early as 1972 when the novel

was written, the Soviet Union must have shown some signs of economic stress. Pulatov himself contends that such signs already existed in 1966, when he claims to have foreseen "the collapse of communism" in "Prochie naseleennye punkty."<sup>2</sup> Yet, if Pulatov indeed foresaw the demise of the USSR in *Cherepakha Tarazi*, his warning--like Tarazi's advice to Dengiz-khan--fell upon deaf ears.

The name of the city in which Tarazi conducts his experiments is Oruz, a name which closely approximates the word most Central Asian Turkic peoples use for Russia.<sup>3</sup> That Pulatov makes a distinction between that which is Russian and that which is Soviet is emphasized by the difference in the structure of the cities: "[I]n its layout, Oruz is very different from the city where the turtle was captured [the city of Dengiz-khan]" (Pulatov 1991b, 63). The two cities are likened to one another, however, in their secrecy before foreigners. Those outsiders who are permitted to learn the secrets of the city are forced to undergo a punishment. Thus, as Molla-bek learned when Iakov bit his fingers, too much contact with Russians can be painful.

While in Oruz, Tarazi recalls an earlier trip he has taken to the Mongolian steppes. By imbedding the passage about the Mongols within the description of Oruz, Pulatov establishes an associative connection between the Mongols and the city that represents Russia. The link between the two is further strengthened in the passage that describes the threat the Mongols pose to surrounding countries:

И, слушая, как они говорят, пьют и как, хмельные, вскакивают, растегивая ворот рубашки, будто им тесно уже в этих необозримых просторах, будто задыхаются они, желая глотнуть свежего воздуха других плоскостей земли, и, видя, как только что избранный ими властелин Темучин, которого нарекли они Чингисханом, понимающе усмехается в свои рыжие усы, Тарази подумал: в этой далекой от Бухары степи накапливается

исподволь столько силы, что не пройдет и пяти--десяти лет, как она начнет выплескиваться через край, чтобы затопить другие страны... (Pulatov 1991b, 64)<sup>4</sup>

Thus, the story's Mongols are connected to Russia not only by the location of the above passage within the description of Oruz, but by the Mongols' drinking habits and their dressing in button collars, as well.

Besides illustrating Russia's threat to surrounding nations, the passage that describes the Mongols is an excellent example of how Pulatov superimposes various national identities upon one another. By juxtaposing the Russians and the Mongols, Pulatov indicates that the Russians can be as frightening to some as the Mongol hordes are to the Russians.

Despite Oruz's shortcomings, however, it is the place where Tarazi finds a temporary home. Indeed, it is in Oruz that Tarazi conducts his experiments. Thus, as Pulatov uses Russian as the medium for his work, the city of Oruz is the location of Tarazi's work. Tarazi's work even turns out to be similar to Pulatov's in that its most notable result is a narrative: the story told by the tortoise, Bessaz.

The tortoise's tale takes us to the village of the Mushriks, which will be the third inhabited area in our discussion. The Mushriks' village can in many ways be seen to represent Soviet Uzbekistan. As Uzbekistan was far from the European power center of the USSR, the Mushrik's village is located on the fringes of Dengiz-khan's empire. In the same way that Uzbekistan was under Soviet control, the village is controlled by a foreign power that has sent the *starosta* to keep order. Much as the Muslim Uzbeks had to behave like Marxists, the villagers have their own religion, but most pretend to have accepted the religion imposed on them by the imperial center. Ironically, the religion that is being forced on the villagers is Islam. As has been seen by his reversal of the island names in "Vtoroe puteshestvie Kaipa" and in his use of the

image the nomadic Mongols to represent the sedentary Russians in *Cherepakha Tarazi*, Pulatov often portrays things as their opposites. This is again the case here, where the image of pre-Islamic Turkic people struggling against Islam represents Turkic Moslems struggling against Marxism. Thus, the Islam imposed on the villagers can be seen to represent Marxism and the religion of the villagers can be seen to represent Central Asian Islam. As Fuchs contends, Pulatov "projects the image of Soviet power in his time onto the Islamic imam, who wants to impose his religion against the traditional beliefs of the Mushriks in the same way that the Soviets attempted to make atheists out of Muslims" (Fuchs, 61). Sounding like a nostalgic Stalinist, who regrets that red terror and purges are no longer used to convert Central Asian muslims to Marxism the *starosta* says of the villagers, "Earlier, in the time of first imams, the we could force them to believe in Allah, but now... Now we have to save their souls through prayers, exhortations, and summonings . . ." (Pulatov 1991b, 81).

Similar to the apes on the island in "Morskie kochevniki," the Mushriks behave exactly as they wish, with only occasional deferences to the *starosta*. This seems to imply that the Uzbeks showed only formal allegiance to the Soviet system, while continuing to live in their own way. Although the *starosta* can hear everything the villagers say as he crosses the village's rooftops, he cannot know what to believe because the villagers know he is listening and thus offer much confusing and contradictory information. Again, Pulatov appears to intimate that the Uzbeks have found ways to circumvent and subvert Soviet control.

Tarazi, of course, is not at home in any of the three places that we have discussed. Tarazi is from Bukhara. That Pulatov's Bukhara should stand apart from his allegorical Uzbekistan has important political, social, and cultural significance. Before the advent of Soviet power, Bukhara had existed as a political entity with varying degrees of autonomy for centuries. The culture of pre-revolutionary Bukhara

was a mixture of Turkic and Persian elements and most Bukharans spoke two languages (Hanaway, 147-148). Pulatov pays tribute to this bilingual tradition by having Tarazi write "Na prieme u gospoda" ("A Reception with the Lord") in "Persian" and "O zashchite krepostei ot dikikh kochevnikov" ("On the Defense of Fortresses against Wild Nomads") in "Turkic" (Pulatov 1991b, 41 and 64).

In contrast to the ancient historic city of Bukhara, Uzbekistan is a recent construction, created by the Soviet government in 1924 (Allworth 1967, 256). Bukhara was made a part of the new Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic losing its last official claim to autonomy. Pulatov feels that the Tajiko-Persian cultural heritage of Bukhara was neglected under Soviet rule: "After the Soviet revolution, Bukhara was given to Uzbekistan. They started to call everyone Uzbeks--against their will. . . . There were no Tajik schools. Thus the culture gradually died out during the Soviet period."<sup>5</sup> By showing ancient Bukhara as a thriving and independent city state in *Cherepakha Tarazi*, Pulatov reminds the reader that Bukhara is not simply a part of Uzbekistan and the city's glorious past is more than merely a part of Uzbek history. Furthermore, the author insures that his audience notices the multicultural aspect of Bukhara's culture, by pointing out Tarazi's command of two languages. Of course, Pulatov's use of the image of Bukhara in *Cherepakha Tarazi* is not limited to reminding the reader of the city's past political and cultural significance. In many ways, Tarazi's exile from the city of his birth can be seen as a metaphor for the author's alienation from his native culture. Thus, I shall return to Pulatov's treatment of Bukhara in *Cherepakha Tarazi* when I discuss the question of identity in Pulatov's works.

Pulatov's novel, *Strasti bukharskogo doma* (*Passions of a House in Bukhara*), as the title indicates, exhibits even more interest in Bukhara than we see in *Cherepakha Tarazi*. In *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, Pulatov again attempts to reveal the cultural

significance of his city in a way that goes beyond the Soviet view. At the same time, however, Bukhara continues to serve as a metaphor for identity and cultural purity. Much of the second section of *Strasti bukharskogo doma* is concerned with Dushan's education and the alienation it causes. For this reason, I shall defer discussion of much of the novel until the chapter dedicated to the topic of education. Indeed, I shall limit the current discussion to the work's treatment of the topics of modernity, tradition, history, society, and culture.

The first cultural clashes we see in *Strasti bukharskogo doma* occur between Tajiks and Uzbeks. Indeed, the strife between Dushan's Tajik grandmother and his Uzbek father acquaints the boy with nationality conflicts before he ever goes outside for the first time. When Dushan's Uzbek grandfather visits from the country, it is clear that the boy's Tajik grandmother feels that the old man is ignorant and boorish, and "she didn't like the way he spoke Tajik with an accent" (Pulatov 1990, 43). Pulatov takes pains to emphasize the aristocratic nature of the Tajik side of Dushan's family, contrasting them to the stronger, yet less culturally refined Uzbek half of the family. Thus Pulatov calls attention to the historical role of the Tajiks in Bukhara, while somewhat dismissing the Uzbeks as rural intruders in the life of the city (Pulatov 1990, 43-44).

Dushan is later surprised to discover that not all Uzbeks live in the country. In Bukhara there is even tension between Tajik children and the Uzbek children, whom they refer to as outsiders. Dushan, however, does not take sides and tries to keep the peace between the children. Although in this instance Dushan sides with neither the Uzbeks nor the Tajiks, Pulatov's message that the Uzbeks were traditionally outsiders in Bukhara is fairly difficult to overlook (Pulatov 1990, 92-93).

When an argument arises at the boarding school, Dushan is offended by Appak's implication that Iamin is not an Uzbek. Dushan defends Iamin saying,

"You're almost right, Pak. Iamin is a Bukharan Tajik. After all, you yourself said that Uzbeks and Tajiks are so similar that there is no way to tell them apart. Now do you understand what distinguishes them?" (Pulatov 1990, 203-204). Although Dushan does not explain what the difference is in so many words, he clearly seems to be implying that a Tajik could not be as rude as Appak. Thus the image of Tajiks as more refined than Uzbeks is repeated.

While the portrayal of tensions between Uzbeks and Tajiks was unusual and somewhat daring at the time *Strasti bukharskogo doma* was published, the novel's exploration of the differences and conflicts between East and West were even bolder in that they came close to openly questioning the legitimacy of the Western scientific materialism that is the basis of Marxist philosophy.

Before Dushan has any contact with Russians or the Russian language his grandmother teaches him the traditions and religion of his own people. He is taught that it is a sin "to eat that which walks, with that which swims, with that which flies" (Pulatov 1990, 32). Dushan's grandmother frequently reads to him from a "book with a leather cover and gold lettering" that is obviously the Koran. Although he never mentions its name, Pulatov's description of the Koran reveals a reverence for the holy book that must have made conservatives in the Soviet literary establishment uncomfortable:

[О]на приносилась торжественно и так же торжественно уносилась после чтения и пряталась всегда в музыкальный сундучок под звон короткой и прелестной мелодии. Остальные книги (их не было так много, да и те почти все по медицине) стояли на полке, терпя пыль и духоту комнаты, написанное жадно ловило каждую струйку свежего воздуха, и оттого страницы книг раздувались и корбились, у этой же, которая особым своим

своим свойством заслужила право лежать в одиночестве в сундучке, слушая музыку, в сундучке, где пахло мускусом и индиго, страницы всегда были свежие и прозрачные, так что казалось, что между буквами на одной странице и другой есть слой воздуха, и от воздуха этого страницы всякий раз меняли свой свет, в зависимости от времени чтения. (Pulatov 1990, 58)<sup>6</sup>

If we recall the passage that derides the mosque in "Oklikni menia v lesu," it will be clear how much the attitude toward religion has changed in Pulatov's works. Indeed, whereas in "Oklikni menia v lesu" the religious elements are seen to be backward and ignorant, in *Strasti bukharskogo doma* Dushan's grandmother's religion is a source of culture and erudition. The boy refers to the old woman as "an intellectual [intelligentnaia] with a religious education . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 219).

As Dushan is taught the rules of his culture and society, the reader is given a glimpse of Bukhara's customs and way of life. When the boy drops a piece of bread his grandmother tells him, "Kiss the bread quickly and ask its forgiveness . . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 56). We also discover that Dushan does not know his mother's and father's names because, as is the custom among Uzbeks and Tajiks, his parents avoid addressing one another by name (Pulatov 1990, 34). We find that Bukharans avoid buying or giving things in odd numbers, which, incidently, runs counter to the Russian superstition which dictates that gifts such as flowers come in odd numbers (Pulatov 1990, 36). Indeed, the title of the novel's first section, "Khor mal'chikov" ("The Boys' Choir"), refers to the tradition in which boys go from door to door singing during the holy month of Ramazan. Although, Pulatov points out that nobody on Dushan's street fasts, he gives the boy's grandmother the last word: "[A]bstention can only be good for you. It cleanses a person from within for a new period of youth. Now, even doctors treat patients with fasting fairly often" (Pulatov 1990, 52). Thus,

the wisdom of the ages is seen to have long possessed wisdom that science is only beginning to uncover.

The conflict between the old and the new moves to the fore when Dushan's grandmother berates the boy's father for his desire to move into the "modern" part of the city. Similar to Aitmatov's Orozkul, Dushan's father wants to live in an apartment and imagines that his child will learn to play the piano. Dushan's grandmother warns that "a person must live in his own environment and not rush from that which is his own to that which is alien" (Pulatov 1990, 127). Dushan's father feels that the spirit of the times is on his side and that modernity is vindicated by historical trends and its place in the future. At this point, however, the narrator makes an uncharacteristic intrusion, questioning the validity of Dushan's father's reasoning: "But that future life still needed to be lived in order to sense its value. Or perhaps its folly [*oshibochnost'*]" (Pulatov 1990, 127).

Yet, unlike Aitmatov's Kyrgyzstan, in which the village represents tradition and the city represents modernity, Pulatov's Bukhara is a conglomeration of the new and the old. The struggle between these elements has both esthetic and moral implications. At times, such as when Dushan learns the old names of Bukhara's streets, the esthetic superiority of the old is clearly implied. The Soviet names of the streets are generic and lack imagination: *Rabochaia* (Workers'), *Shirokaia* (Broad), *Pervomaiskaia* (First of May), *Uritskogo* (Uritskii), *Verxne-Orenburgskaia* (Upper Orenburg), *Vos'mogo marta* (Eighth of March), and *Asfal'tnaia* (Asphalt). Pulatov attempts to show that these Soviet names pale in comparison to the traditional names of the streets: *Shaikh Rangrez* (The Old Dyer), *Pochcho Khodzha* (The Haji's Son-in-Law), *Kokilaii kalon* (Big Kokilo), *Alvondzh* (The Alvondzh-Cradle), *Makhallaii kukhna* (The Old Jewish Quarter), and *Kuii murgkushon* (The Street of the Killer Birds). Of course, beyond their esthetic superiority, these names further establish the

Tajik nature of the city.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, the discussion between Dushan and Mirakov, calls attention to the ancient roots of Bukharan civilization, as Mirakov reveals that at least one of the street names dates back to the tenth century (Pulatov 1990, 281-283). Finally, in his report to his boss Dushan calls attention to both the esthetic and cultural superiority of the old names:

Было бы поэтично и исторично вместо скучных, данных наспех, без любви и вкуса современных названий улиц -- Чугунная, Солидарная, вернуть им прежние. -- Душан специально почеркивал это слово -- «народные» имена: «Чуббоз», «Бабон нонкаш». (Pulatov 1990, 371)<sup>8</sup>

The superiority of the old is also seen to have been manifested in quality. Dushan's Grandmother recalls that the bread was better before the revolution: "The bread we had in my childhood years was so soft and smelled so good! But now everything is worse--there's something wrong with the flour, everything is a sham..." (Pulatov 1990, 59). Similar to bread baking, the art of carpet making has also been lost. When a couple complains that an inspector has stolen their carpet, they note, "It wasn't some kind of modern shoddy synthetic trash, but a real Persian carpet . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 342). Pulatov again connects the word modern to the image of garbage when he describes the yards of the houses that Dushan inspects:

Дворы . . . были завалены еще и железом -- всем современным, техническим, что стало завозиться в город каких-нибудь пятьдесят лет назад -- колесами, трубами... где-то под навесом было прислонено к стене сиденье от трактора... там к дереву привязано рулевое колесо... здесь виноградник притянут к водопроводному крану кабелем толщиной в две руки. (Pulatov 1990, 336-337)<sup>9</sup>

Thus the impact of Western technology is seen to be esthetically and qualitatively negative.

Pulatov finds many faults in Western intellectual imports, as well. Dushan's grandfather notes that nihilism "was never known to us [Central Asians] in any era." He goes on to say:

Оно привнесенное -- европейское, западное чувство. Этот нигилизм -- отрицание жизни как высшей справедливости, это неверие в самоценность бытия, где присутствует и твоя доля, и родило водородную бомбу... (Pulatov 1990, 302)<sup>10</sup>

As he matures, Dushan also grows highly critical of Western thought. When contesting Dushan's right to his inheritance, Said and Bonu force him to undergo a psychological examination, during which Dushan attacks psychology and the Western materialistic thought that gave birth to it. By focusing Dushan's attack on Freud, Pulatov makes his condemnation of materialistic thought more politically acceptable by heaping it upon a figure who was vilified by Soviet ideology. Despite being directed at Freud, however, Dushan's criticism seems to strike no less forcibly in the direction of atheism:

О чем думали великие пророки -- Муса, Иса, Мухаммед? Что несли они нам? Говорили умерщвляй плоть свою и спасешь душу... Доктор же Фрейд, западный пророк нового времени, провозгласил, роясь в паутине сознания, спасайте плоть свою, ибо все от спасенной плоти, сознавайте бессознательное. (Pulatov 1990, 444).<sup>11</sup>

It should be noted, however, that in the above passage all specific mentions of Freud's innovations are set off from the main clauses by commas. If we were to omit the references to the conscious and sub-conscious, this attack on materialism is no more

applicable to Freud than to dozens of other Western materialists--Marx and Lenin included. Indeed, as his focus is on the spirit and the flesh, Dushan's allusions to Freud almost seem to be non-sequiturs.

Yet if modernity is the source of many problems in Pulatov's vision of Central Asia, tradition is shown to have its faults, as well. For example, as a child, Dushan is concerned that his mother is unhappy living with his father. He wonders if she would be happier if she had married her own brother and not "a man whom she had not known at all until she became his wife . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 71). In showing Dushan's parents' life together to be unhappy and in eventually ending it in divorce, Pulatov seems to exhibit a modern European disdain for the institution of arranged marriage. Pulatov returns to the topic of marriage in Central Asia when Bunafsha tells Dushan that her parents have been seeing matchmakers and that if a girl is not married by eighteen she is likely to end up as an old maid (Pulatov 1990, 331). Although neither Dushan nor the narrator directly criticize the practice of early marriage, the feelings generated by every other aspect of this conversation between Dushan and Bunafsha are connected with disapproval and annoyance. These bad feelings are easily transferred to Bunafsha's mention of the matchmakers, which noticeably increases Dushan's irritation.

Pulatov, again, seems to question the old ways, when he shows Dushan's difficulty in understanding the practice of handing professions down from generation to generation:

Такое ощущение, будто жизнь для них традиционно, еще со времен дедов, чертит один и тот же круг, как игла патефона, застрявшая в одной бороздке пластинки и не в силах перескочить на другую, чтобы мелодия после легкого щелчка зазвучала

плавно. Но опять все тот же короткий звук, похожий на бормотание. (Pulatov 1990, 337)<sup>12</sup>

Although it offers a spurious image of phonograph technology, the above passage implies that some of Bukhara's traditions have led to cultural stagnation.

Pulatov again focuses on what he sees as the Bukharan resistance to change and innovation when Dushan's older and wiser co-worker, Mirakov, tells him:

Дорогие наши земляки, сами погрязшие в будничности, да разве они позволят хотя бы одной живой, трепетной, боговдохновенной душе взлететь? Да они над этой душой еще в ее зародыше с арканом стоят, и чуть она встрепенется -- они тут же ее в петлю привяжут к кольцам ворот, чтобы засохла она на горячем ветру да пылью покрылась... знаменитой нашей белой пылью, которая через поры в тело проникает. (Pulatov 1990, 359)<sup>13</sup>

Thus, Pulatov implies that although there is much about Bukharan culture that is positive, the society's conservatism has led to its stagnation.

Pulatov's approach to tradition permits him to accept some aspects of his people's culture yet reject others. As it is quite rare to turn away from something without an alternative, another model, we might assume that Pulatov's rejection of certain aspects of Bukharan culture stem from his acceptance of some Russian or Soviet mores. The author's negative view of traditional marriage practices, for example, might never have arisen had he not been exposed to Western alternatives. Likewise, Bukharan culture would not seem so conservative to Pulatov, if it were not viewed against the constant flux in Twentieth Century Europe. Indeed, Dushan makes precisely such a comparison when he says that "the world is only old in the East, whence the time-honored cult of old ideas, things, concepts, old bosses, who should

have retired long ago..." In contrast, he maintains "Europe is young . . . We need to pour everything new and scientific from Europe into here." Mirakov has the last word in this discussion, however, saying "Go ahead and pour, my child. Just be careful not to fill it beyond the rim" (Pulatov 1990, 379).

Much as Pulatov presents varying attitudes toward tradition in the novel, so, too, does he offer both positive and negative evaluations of the people of Bukhara. At times Bukharans are characterized as well-mannered and refined (Pulatov 1990, 152 and 178). It is even mentioned that a Chinese visitor had once referred to the residents of Bukhara as "the Parisians of the East" (Pulatov 1990, 471). On the other hand, Bukharans are occasionally characterized as fawning or tasteless (Pulatov 1990, 334 and 309). Furthermore, when Mirakov tells Dushan not to be a one hundred percent pure Bukharan his description of his fellow city folk is quite insulting: "By thirty you'll have eaten your way to a fat belly, your face will turn grey, you'll lose all of your thoughts, god forbid" (Pulatov 1990, 359). Thus, Pulatov's view of his people, similar to his attitude toward their tradition, is deeply ambivalent.

Judging by Mirakov's comments that Dushan should not try to be one hundred percent Bukharan and that a limited influx of European ideas should be permitted into Central Asia, one might get the impression that Pulatov is suggesting a synthesis between Bukharan and Western modes of existence. Yet, although at times Pulatov seems to favor an integration of cultures, he can also be harshly critical of the mixing of old and new, Bukharan and European, East and West.

The combination of cultures is obviously not effective for the boarding school's principal whose "European and Oriental aspects . . . could never manage to achieve harmony, so as not to make him so ridiculous" (Pulatov 1990, 143). Pulatov demonstrates the absurdity of mixing Eastern and Western esthetic forms, when he describes the dances the children study at the boarding school. Along with a number

of traditional Uzbek folk dances the children are taught the Bukharan Waltz, the Andijon Polka, and the Turkestan Tango. Unable to do these hybrid dances, Dushan sneers at those who would attempt to merge the East and the West (Pulatov 1990, 209).

Noticing that his brother, Amon, has decorated his European style apartment with hand-carved shutters from their traditional Bukharan home, Dushan thinks "That's what it's like to lead a modern life and to attach oneself to the noble past with such a tasteless combination" (Pulatov 1990, 309). Amon's lack of taste is soon seen to be shared by most of Bukhara. Indeed, Dushan lists the ugly cultural admixtures he sees every day as he makes his rounds as an inspector:

Резиновое колесо и кувшин с благородным налетом прошедших лет, железные трубы и черный мраморный столб из семейного склепа, халат, украшенный синтетической лентой галстука, вера и неверие, тихая отрешенность и плутовство, два языка, две скатерти для гостей, на столе и на полу, две мысли, раздвоенность, разбитость, несклеенность... И неуют, беспокойствие, желание не отстать от современного, которое не понято еще, не усвоено психологией. . . . (Pulatov 1990, 354-355)<sup>14</sup>

In the above passage, pictures of esthetic absurdities give way to descriptions of very serious inner conflicts, implying that Eastern and Western mindsets are as incompatible as the clashing images of the tire and the pitcher; the pipe and the column; and the tie and the robe.

Even when the idea of cultural synthesis is advanced by a character who is portrayed as a bearer of wisdom, the feasibility of attaining such a state of multicultural harmony is questioned. Dushan's grandfather says:

Сострадание -- идеал старой, доброй Европы. А сумел бы ты соединить в себе это с нашим, восточным идеалом -- справедливостью, чтобы через них, через оба сплетенных в одно сильное чувство, воспринимать жизнь? Как много ты понял бы!  
(Pulatov 1990, 302)<sup>15</sup>

He immediately casts doubt upon the feasibility of such a merger, however, adding: "But can you combine both of these flames without burning yourself up in the process?" (Pulatov 1990, 302).

Dushan and Amon discuss the need for a new breed of person, who combines the best of both worlds. Dushan says: "A new person is needed, grown from the choice seed of various cultures deep in the thick of life." When Amon says that Dushan himself may be that "new person," however, Dushan scoffs at the idea. He then argues that the new breed he has mentioned is still only an ideal adding, "but what he is like, I cannot even say. Maybe he has yet to be born and exists as an embryo in nature, in an egg... And maybe nature is still laying such eggs to no avail, the degree of spiritual warmth around is too low for anything to hatch from them" (Pulatov 1990, 458). Unfortunately, if a new breed of good people has yet to be born, the same cannot be said for the bad. This evil breed is represented by Dushan's mother's lover, Iurtaev. As Amon's description of Iurtaev shows, the villain was born of the same situation that is supposed to give rise to the new positive person: "He is something vicious, that was born in our time--without faith, without conscience, without a language, not belonging to any nationality. All of his designs are to tempt, to bring shame, to undermine and destroy families" (Pulatov 1990, 452). Thus, the mix of cultures in Central Asia has given birth to a new breed of villain, leaving us to wait and hope a new type of hero to arise.

Dushan reveals a similar attitude toward the future of Bukharan art. Realizing the futility of attempting to restore old forms, he awaits a heretofore unrealized synthesis saying:

И вместо того чтобы тратить свои силы на восстановление давно ушедшего и невозвратимого, утешая себя тем, что, мол, мы, бухарцы, снова причастны к великому, не лучше ли поискать себя в новом, чтобы выявить себя в доселе еще не рожденном искусстве во всем блеске национального гения?.. (Pulatov 1990, 371).<sup>16</sup>

In Mirakov's opinion, that which Dushan contends is true for art, applies to life, as well. When the old man discovers that Dushan and Amon have arranged to face their neighbors in a traditional Tajik fighting ritual called *dukbozi*, he says: "Now, of course, you cannot return everything in its original form, but you can parody a *dukbozi*" (Pulatov 1990, 373). Thus, in life as well as in art, a return to old forms is impossible. The new forms, however, have yet to make themselves apparent. A synthesis seems to be desirable, but every combination of the old and the new that we encounter is shown to be ridiculous.

At the novel's end Dushan seems resigned to seeking refuge in the old. He invites the aged men, whom he refers to as the *byvshie*, 'those who were,' to live with him in the house he has inherited. The old men agree at first, only to sneak away before the dawn of the next morning. Dushan then goes to the country to help care for his ailing grandfather. Unable to speak, Dushan's grandfather cannot reveal the secret that Dushan is certain the old man knows. Thus, although Dushan has turned his eyes to the past for guidance there is no real help to be found. Throughout *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, Dushan seeks an answer to the question of how one should live in contemporary Bukhara. Pulatov never provides a definitive answer to that question--

not for Dushan and not for the reader. The author, instead, focuses on a question that is much more personal: How does it feel to be Dushan?

In his most recent novel, *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*, Pulatov continues to exhibit a strong interest in the interaction between Eastern and Western cultural elements. The action in the novel takes place in the city of Shakhgrad. As the combination of Central Asian and Russian roots in its name indicates, the city is made up of elements from both cultures. Although the name Shakhgrad is a product of Pulatov's imagination, most of the city's particulars are recognizable to anyone familiar with Uzbekistan's capital of Tashkent. The two cities not only have similar populations, "over a million" (Pulatov 1991a, 3), but they share a history of earthquakes, as well. Shakhgrad is further linked to Tashkent by such details as its sizable Korean population and its method of numbering downtown areas as TsBK1, TsBK2, etc.: in Tashkent they employ the letters TsK (*tse*ntral'*nyi* kvartal 'central block').<sup>17</sup>

Tashkent would seem to be the ideal model for a fictional city that represents the convergence of Europe and Asia. During the Soviet era, the Uzbek capital was arguably the "most Russianized of Central Asian cities" (Bacon, 164), with a Slavic population that hovered around fifty percent (Allworth, 102). Having a Russian mother and an Uzbek father, Davliatov's mixed heritage would seem to make him the perfect representative of Shakhgrad. Pulatov's hero, however, is seen to possess an essentially negative view of the city. Looking at Shakhgrad from the vantage of the television tower, he comments: "It's strange, how anyone can love such a city. You would need to have perverted tastes in order to love this warped, tasteless, inhumane city that is devoid of beauty and comfort" (Pulatov 1991a, 70). Thus, as in *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, a character who epitomizes cultural duality is hostile to the city's attempt to be a synthesis between East and West. Perhaps we should expect such

irony, however, as Pulatov warns: "The mind of the people of Shakhgrad is paradoxical and contradictory!" (Pulatov 1991a, 187).

The line dividing the East and the West is much less clearly etched in *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia* than it is in *Strasti bukharskogo doma*. Indeed, Pulatov intentionally underscores Russia's complex relationship with Western Europe, indicating that Russia, a country that the Central Asians view as a part of the West is considered by some to represent the East. Likewise, Anna Ermilovna's complaint that the West has never understood the Russian mind, can be extrapolated to imply that the Russians have never understood the Central Asians (Pulatov 1991a, 13-14). The episode in the novel where the Russians get carried away with Central Asian culture and mysticism seems to parody this superficial "orientalist" approach to culture (Pulatov 1991a, 5-8).

The division of the world into East and West is further questioned when Anna Ermilovna talks about the Femudians. This tribe, she says, has passed its blood on to "all the thriving, energetic peoples who are inclined to inventiveness and science, among whom are both the English from one end of the Earth and the Japanese from the other" (Pulatov 1991a, 147). Of course if peoples from lands as far apart as Japan and England have so much in common, the concept of East and West as being opposites by nature has little meaning.

Pulatov continues to point out similarities in what are traditionally considered polar oppositions in *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*, juxtaposing religion and communism in much the same manner as he does in *Cherepakha Tarazi*. Having read about Muhammed's trip to paradise and hell, Davliatov makes a similar journey at the novel's end. Whereas Muhammed is taken on his pilgrimage by a messenger of Allah, Davliatov's guide is the nostalgic Stalinist, Nakhangov. The hell that Davliatov witnesses is filled with skyscrapers, smog, neon lights, chaotic automobile traffic, and

farmers who dump their produce in the sea "to maintain the level of prices at the bazaars." This hell's seeming appearance "of the sweet life cannot cover up its cruelty and treachery." In short, this vision of hell represents a "textbook" Soviet view of the capitalist West. As Nakhangov says, "Everything here is arranged according to the political economy textbook that I edited" (Pulatov 1991a, 253).

The second stop in Davliatov's tour is purgatory. Muhammed was not shown purgatory, but was told:

[А]ятоллы, полковники придумают чистилище. И поместят они его между адом и раем. Человека, заблудившегося в дороге и попавшего вместо рая в ад, они пообещают очистить, хорошенько промыть от скверны ада в чистилище и пропустить в рай. Так и будет... (Pulatov 1991a, 161)<sup>18</sup>

The purgatory witnessed by Davliatov is inhabited by Italian revolutionaries, Muslim extremists, and Joseph Stalin. Thus purgatory is seen as a symbol for revolution. Stalin has promised to purge the Earth of the "filth" of its capitalist hell, while the Ayatollah Chechebni has a more religious agenda. The views of Stalin and Chechebni are synthesized in Ibn-Muddafi, who combines elements of religion and socialism in his revolutionary program. Of course, the characters of Chechebni and Ibn-Muddafi are such obvious representations of Khomeini and Qaddafi that Pulatov can only have changed their names for comic effect, and not as an attempt to cloak their true identity.

Watching as Chechebni leads an army of blind children toward the gates of paradise, Davliatov listens to the following explanation:

Выдержав химическую атаку, но потеряв зрение от газа, они не дрогнули, не свернули и вспыхнули живыми факелами под танками врага, чтобы шахидами вступить прямо с поля боя в рай. Примечательно и то, что ни один из миллиона школьников,

поднятых в воздух вместе с танками, не выронил из рук ключа от врат рая, выданного каждому из них перед началом сражения аятоллой Чечибени, который лично показал чудеса героизма и также удостоился чести ступить в рай. (Pulatov 1991a, 270)<sup>19</sup>

The keys to paradise that are carried by Chechebni's followers are reminiscent of the golden key that Aleksei Tolstoi's Pinnocchio, Buratino, uses to get into the city that represents communism. Thus, the Ayatollah and Stalin are connected by their presence in purgatory and by the similarity of the paradises that they promise. In linking Chechebni and Stalin, Pulatov seems to be saying that the extreme of scientific Western Marxist thought leads into the same trap as the extreme of superstitious Eastern religious thought.

Science and superstition come together in a different context in the resolution of the novel's earthquake plot. Pulatov makes extensive use of the Koranic story of the prophet Salih (Salikh in Russian). In the Koran, the people ignore Salih's warnings and kill the camel that was a sign from Allah. As a result, Allah sends an earthquake that destroys their city and punishes them for their sinful ways (Koran, 7:75-79). Similarly, in *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia* a camel is killed by people who ignore Davliatov/Salikh's warning. The earthquake never comes, however, as the energy that is accumulating beneath the earth mysteriously transforms into "self-generated" atomic bombs. The implication is clear: whereas Allah punished Salih's contemporaries with an earthquake, modern humanity may be punished for its sins with an atomic blast.

As we have seen in his earlier works, Pulatov rejects extremes yet exhibits an aversion to synthesis. In *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*, however, the author seems to have softened his stance on synthesis to some degree. Indeed, he himself tries to combine Islam with Western liberal values in a way that some might find heretical. The result

of this attempt at synthesis is Pulatov's apostate portrayal of the Koranic figures, Muhammed and Salih.

Pulatov was heavily criticized in Tashkent for his "untraditional" portrayal of Muhammed in *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, Pulatov seems to blame the prophet for what the author apparently sees as the errors of modern day Islam. After witnessing a scene that seems violent and unjust, Muhammed is told that all the parties involved had received their punishment or reward for acts committed earlier in life. When everything has been explained to him, Muhammed realizes that Allah's justice is greater than man's. The prophet fails, however, to grasp the significance of the Archangel's warning, when Gabriel tells him: "And henceforth occupy yourself with your own piety, as the running of the kingdom is not your concern." Muhammed, however, "neither now, nor later, contemplated the true meaning of the warning that he had been given" (Pulatov 1991a, 205). Thus, the prophet is blamed for the bloody excesses of worldly political Islam. The results of claiming to know Allah's truth and attempting to impose his justice upon the world are shown through the starkly negative portrayal of the Qadhafi and Khomeini figures, Muddafi and Chechebni.

Whereas Pulatov's Muhammed is associated with power and dogma, his Salikh is seen as an iconoclast. Indeed, Salikh represents the half of Davliatov that is "the most active in doubting and questioning" (Pulatov 1991a, 102). As one of the novel's most sympathetic characters, Salikh offers what may be seen as a superior alternative to "pure" culture or to cultural synthesis: truth. The powerful people of his time, however, call for Salikh's to murder, saying:

Отрицая богов каждого племени, он, как червь, подтачивает  
вечнозеленое родовое дерево, возвращенное на дедовских обычаях,  
родном языке, непохожести нравов, в угоду чуждой,  
привнесенной откуда-то идее единобожия! (Pulatov 1991b, 131)<sup>21</sup>

Thus Salikh appears to be Pulatov's attempt to get to a "universal standpoint," to uncover a truth that stands above the sometimes contradictory beliefs that are held forth by the cultures in which he takes part. Similar to Christ in Aitmatov's *Plakha*, Salikh must suffer for a truth that he knows exists, even if those who surround him are blind to it.

Pulatov's Salikh is a solitary truth-seeker who is rejected by the masses because in Pulatov's world view solitude and rejection are the price one pays for enlightenment. Indeed, Pulatov's perception of organized religion is quite unflattering. He attributes unquestioning loyalty and dogmatism to rank-and-file Muslims and Christians alike, saying, "If I were to view religion in the same way as a typical believer, simply as a common philistine, I would accept it literally--what is written in the Bible or the Koran is what you believe."<sup>22</sup> Of course, Pulatov cannot accept every aspect of traditional Central Asian Islam: it contains too much that clashes with the values that his Western education has instilled in him. He cannot, on the other hand, accept everything he has learned at school: many Western values are hostile to truths he has accepted since childhood. Thus, what Pulatov perceives as Truth with a capital 'T' can only be found in the lonely desert between the two cultures and Salikh could not be a truth-seeker if he did not wander that lonely expanse.

Salikh's willingness to stand up for his beliefs puts him at odds not only with the representatives of power in *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*, but it shows him to ignore the advice of many of the wise characters in Pulatov's previous works, as well. Indeed, much of what Pulatov has written throughout his career is concerned with surpressing the ego and submitting to the inherent justice of life and fate. As far back as in "Prochie naseleynnye punkty," we see Bekov punished for trying to impose his own will upon the natural forces that should dictate the location and growth of human settlements. In "Storozhevye bashni" Musaev explains his inability to defeat his rival

as a runner as "pure accident" (Pulatov 1991b, 382), although it seems obvious to the reader that Musaev is simply destined to lose. Moreover, his attempts to overcome his fate through sheer will are the cause of his downfall. The ocean current in "Morskie kochevniki" is yet another symbol of the power of fate, as it is in complete control of the movement of all the boats, and the sailors are unable to alter their course in the least. Indeed the current punishes those who would attempt to interfere with its work. A passing sailor tells Oïia-Aïia:

Течение не любит, когда кто-то старается пересилить его или даже подсобить, оно несет лишь тех, кто смирился. Смирите свою гордыню, дружище! И вы почувствуете большое облегчение... Иначе течение погасит все ваши порывы. (Pulatov 1990, 501).<sup>23</sup>

Pulatov rephrases this allegorical reference to a philosophy of resignation before fate more directly in *Cherepakha Tarazi*. During a meeting with Tarazi, Armon's father, the judge, says:

Вы, Таразихан, говорят, много странствовали по странам ажнабийцев... Вот откуда ваша червоточина... Ажнабийцы воображают, что человек -- пуп земли, царь природы, венец творения... посему ему все дозволено. Он мудрее всех, умнее, лучше всех... а это шепчет дьявол, все время накручивает вокруг головы человека, как чалму, аркан гордыни... но боюсь, как бы аркан этот не сполз ниже, вокруг его шеи, и не потянул человека на виселицу... (Pulatov 1991b, 199)<sup>24</sup>

Although this scene is brief and the character of Armon's father may seem insignificant to the casual reader, the relationship between the judge and Tarazi reveals one of the most interesting conflicts in Pulatov's world view. Tarazi is diagnosed by an older,

and perhaps wiser, character to be suffering as the result of the excessive individualism and pride that he has acquired through contact with a foreign culture. There is nothing in the novel to indicate that the judge's conclusion is incorrect. Indeed, Tarazi does not argue with Armon's father's statement and seems to respect the older man's opinions.

The judge's appraisal of Tarazi's predicament seems all the more credible when viewed next to a similar scene in *Strasti Bukharskogo doma* in which Dushan's grandfather speaks of the price that one pays for opposing fate. Although because of his brief and seemingly minor role, readers cannot be sure of the value of the judge's opinion, they know that Dushan's grandfather is to be trusted. The old man tells Dushan:

Это вы, кто по-европейски воспитаны, ищите во всем только поверхностного смысла: справедливо -- несправедливо... А я знаю, что все по высшему счету, по судьбе... Справедлива с тобой судьба -- так и справедливо. (Pulatov 1990, 271)<sup>25</sup>

When Dushan objects that it is artificial to separate world views into "East" and "West," saying "life is one," the old man counters:

Жизнь-то одна, правильно... Но отношение к жизни разное... Видел я в лагере... больше всего злились, возмущались, искали справедливости, день и ночь писали жалобы именно те из наших, кто по-европейски был образован... Ты пойми, я не осуждаю их, глупо было бы... Просто после каждого их возмущения и желания сделать лучше -- хуже становилось, еще жестче. (Pulatov 1990, 271)<sup>26</sup>

Thus Dushan is seen to suffer from the same ailment as Tarazi: an inability to resign himself to the inherent justice of life. As Dushan's grandfather says of life: "It

contains no such concepts as just and unjust... A person struggles with that and suffers [*golovu lomaet*] over it... But life is *tavakkal*... fate.... that which is written on one's brow. That is its higher justice" (Pulatov 1990, 270).

Although both Tarazi and Dushan are shown to suffer from their search for truth and justice, neither seems to be able to accept his elder's advice and submit to fate. They do not, on the other hand, appear to question the wisdom of the advice that they are given. Thus Pulatov seems to imply that both characters would be better off if they were to follow the wisdom of the East, but they are unable to do so because of Western influence.

The conflicting impulses toward rebellion and truth-seeking on the one hand and resignation before fate on the other can be seen as one of the most prominent themes in Pulatov's novels. Dushan's grandfather's contention that a European education makes people unable accept their destiny implies that Pulatov views this conflict as another manifestation of the struggle between Eastern and Western world views. The extent to which these forces are deadlocked within the writer is illustrated in the following excerpt from an unpublished 1995 interview:

Он [образ Мухаммеда в романе *Плавающая Евразия*] немножко нетрадиционен, поэтому некоторые церковники, там, исламские фундаменталисты выступили против меня в Ташкенте, из-за этого образа. . . . Тогда была история Салмана Рушди. И начали меня тоже обвинять. Это в газете было, что я очень неправильно изобразил ислам. . . . Это мое восприятие Ислама. Если бы я воспринимал религию, как рядовой верующий, как, просто, человек-обыватель, я бы воспринимал ее буквально, что написано в Библии, в Коране, ты этому веришь. Но ты еще как писатель повержен сомнениям различного рода. Ты говоришь: «А

правильно ли это? А почему религия так повелевает? А где Бог? Почему нам много обещано в этой жизни, но ничего мы не получаем? Неужели виноваты мы только сами?» Это экзистенциализм, который для востока непонятен. Восток говорит, что есть предначертание. Судьба человека написана на его лбу, вот с дня рождения вот что написано так и будет. Он сам ничего не может менять, человек. Поэтому восток против революции. . . . Но восточный фундаментализм осуждает тоже терроризм, вот который сейчас развит. Это к сожалению перемешается политика.<sup>27</sup>

Discussing his portrayal of Muhammed, Pulatov defends his own right to question Islamic dogma. Near the end of his description of the writer's role as a truth-seeker, however, Pulatov's point of view seems to change, as he begins to criticize what he calls Western existentialism. Thus while he begins by defending the writer's right to question, he ends by criticizing what he sees as a Western inability to accept the inherent justice of fate. Even his evaluation of "Islamic fundamentalism" seems to undergo a change: at first the "Islamic fundamentalists" are seen as his unjust persecutors, while in the end "Islamic fundamentalism" is against terrorism but politics have corrupted it in certain parts of the globe. I have not cited the above passage, however, simply to illustrate the speed with which Pulatov's perspective can change. Rather, I wanted to illustrate the extent to which, in Pulatov's inner world, the search for justice and truth clashes with the impulse to believe in and accept life's higher justice.

The heroes of Pulatov's novels are all portrayed as suffering from their inability to resign themselves to fate. The narrator of *Cherepakha Tarazi* refers to the title character as "an eternal wanderer, who seeks the truth but always takes the wrong

path" (Pulatov 1991b, 198). Armon's father tells the testudologist: "You waver, your path leads to a dead-end... and all because you do not know, what man is--a tsar or a worm" (Pulatov 1991b, 199). In *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, Dushan is unable to fully understand his grandfather's wisdom, let alone live by it. In these novels Pulatov concentrates primarily on the characters' search for meaning and truth. Although wise characters state that the answer lies in accepting the inherent justice of life, the author's focus is on the heroes' struggle and the increased creative, perceptive, and ethical powers that arise from the effort. It seems that the author, similar to his heroes, is not fully convinced of the old mens' wisdom--although on one level he wants them to be right. Thus, Pulatov, as do so many of his characters, struggles to reconcile two value systems that seem to be incompatible.

If we return to *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*, we shall discover that Pulatov has projected the aspects of Davliatov's personality that are the "most active in doubting and questioning" upon Salikh. In this way Pulatov brings out into the open that which for Tarazi and Dushan was an inner struggle. In using a Koranic figure, Salikh, as the personification of what he has heretofore referred to as Western traits, Pulatov continues his reevaluation of the concepts of East and West. Indeed, Muhammed himself is seen to allow his ego to cause him to stray from Allah's true path. Thus even the founder of Islam is shown to be unable to follow its tenants--as interpreted by Pulatov--completely. If Muhammed himself could not free himself from his ego, the image of a large number of his followers in the East who live without ego, striving, or questioning is essentially discredited. Perhaps, though, Pulatov views resignation before fate as an Eastern ideal that many, including the prophet, have failed to live up to. Whether or not it is viewed as an Eastern concept, however, the theme of resignation before fate maintains its prominence in *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*. Indeed, Davliatov's struggle to rid himself of Salikh is one of the central conflicts in the novel.

The death of Salikh is by no means portrayed in purely positive terms. Whereas Tarazi and Dushan are advised to abandon their questioning ways by wise and kindly old men, it is the repulsive old Stalinist, Nakhangov, who presses Davliatov to destroy Salikh. Moreover, at the conference where he gives the speech that rids him of Salikh, Davliatov receives an academician's identification card which allows him access to a special cemetery that comes with many of the material comforts associated with Communist Party positions of prestige. Thus, it is easily argued that Davliatov has sold the better half of himself for a life of material comfort and ease.

Pulatov has identified writing with searching and questioning. Moreover, he has stated that the values of the East are hostile to the writer's mind set. Perhaps, then, Davliatov's driving out of Salikh is symbolic of Pulatov's purgation of the writer within himself. Indeed, in ridding himself of Salikh, Davliatov has also given up his "traditional" home and moved into a "European" apartment. In *Plavaiushchaia Evrasiia* Pulatov has abandoned the subject of Bukhara, indicating that he, too, perhaps, has resigned himself to exile. More significantly, Pulatov has not written fiction since the publication of the novel. Never one to turn away from possible negative interpretations of his heroes' motivation, however, he subtly questions Davliatov's motives for ridding himself of Salikh. One wonders if in examining his hero's motivation, the author is not questioning his own decision to quit writing, asking himself whether he is really following his conscience and choosing an Eastern path to contentment or merely selling out and taking the path of least resistance.

*Plavaiushchaia Evrasiia* closes with Davliatov playing dice with his neighbor and seeming more at home and more content than at any other point in the novel. His luck with the dice indicates that fortune smiles upon those who resign themselves to fate. One can only hope the author has found a similar contentment in his literary silence. Pulatov, like Davliatov, may feel "mild sympathy and nothing more" for the

Salikh he has buried, but there are many readers who will miss his complex, sometimes confusing, but always interesting artistic vision (Pulatov 1991a, 244). Thus, whereas Aitmatov's most recent works are inhabited by characters who decide to set off alone into environments that are beyond culture, the hero of Pulatov's most recent novel makes peace with the mix of cultures that fate has visited upon him.

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Notes to Part One, Chapter VI

<sup>1</sup>I offer as an example but one of many jokes about Brezhnev's kissing: After the leader of a third-world country boards a plane to leave the USSR Brezhnev's advisors begin to criticize the visitor. "He's a mediocrity," says one. "He's bankrupting his country," adds another. "He's involved in scandal after scandal," offers a third. "His policies could lead to war," says a fourth. Finally, Brezhnev interrupts them, saying, "Yeah, but what a great kisser!"

<sup>2</sup>Personal interview, August 7, 1995.

<sup>3</sup>Uzbek, *rus* or *urus*; Kazakh, *Orys*; Kyrgyz, *Orus*.

<sup>4</sup>And listening to how they talked, how they drank and how, intoxicated, they would jump up and unbutton their shirt collars, as if already feeling cramped in these boundless spaces, as if suffocating, wanting to breathe the fresh air of other earthly planes. Seeing the recently-chosen ruler Temuchin smiling wryly from behind his red mustache, Terazi began to think: "in this steppe far from Bukhara, forces are gradually accumulating which within no more than five or ten years will begin to overflow their boundaries and will bury other countries."

<sup>5</sup>Interview of Aug. 7, 1995.

<sup>6</sup>[I]t was brought in with ceremony and after being read it was carried out with the same ceremony. It was always hidden away in a musical box to the tinkling of a short and charming melody. The other books (There were not many of them and those were almost all about medicine.) stood on a shelf, where they were subjected to dust and the stuffiness of the room. What was written in them greedily grasped at every stream of fresh air, causing their pages to swell and to warp. But the pages of the

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other book that had, through its special nature, earned the right to lie in solitude in the box, listening to music, were always fresh and transparent. Thus it seemed that between the letters on one page and the next was a layer of air, and this air caused the letters to change colors every time, depending on the time of the reading.

<sup>7</sup>In our interview in August of 1995 Pulatov discussed his use of the old street names and the difficulty it caused him with the Soviet literary establishment:

Впервые я стал от новых названий отказываться. Это в моем романе было. Я возвращал в моем романе исторические имена бухарским улицам. Это еще в реальности они назывались улицей Свердлова, Урицкого, Сталина, Ленина. Но я называл их, как моя бабушка или мать говорила -- «Это улица имела другое название, более восточное, красивое». Поэтому этот роман не хотели даже печатать, говорили -- «Почему вы все улицы переименовали?».

[I was the the first to reject the new names. That was in my novel. In my novel, I returned the historical names to the streets of Bukhara. That was when in reality they were called Sverdlov Street, Uritskii Street, Stalin Street, Lenin Street. But I used the names my grandmother or mother had used, "That street had a different name, a more Eastern, more beautiful one." Therefore they didn't want to publish the novel, they said, "Why have you renamed all the streets?"]

<sup>8</sup>It would be far more poetic and historic to replace the boring modern names of the streets that were hastily assigned without love or taste--names such as Chugunnaia [Cast-iron] and Solidarnaia [Solidarity]--with the old--Dushan made certain to underline this word--"national" names such as "Chubboz" [Acrobat] and "Babon

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nonkash" [Bread deliverer]. [Pulatov himself glosses the Tajik street names as "Akrobat" and "Raznoschik khleba.']

<sup>9</sup>The yards . . . were piled up with iron, too--with everything modern and technical that had begun to be trucked into the city some fifty years ago--wheels, pipes... here under an over-hang a tractor seat was leaning against the wall... there a steering wheel was tied to a tree... here a trestle for a grapevine was attached to a water spigot with cable two hands wide.

<sup>10</sup>It is an imported European, Western attitude. This nihilism is the negation of life as the highest justice, it is not believing in the value of existence for its own sake, an existence in which you have your own fate. It is this attitude that has given birth to the hydrogen bomb...

<sup>11</sup>What concerned all the great prophets--Musa [Moses], Isa [Jesus], Muhammed? What did they bring to us? They said destroy your flesh and you will save your soul... Doctor Freud, the Western prophet of the new era, proclaimed, digging through the web of the consciousness, save your flesh, for all comes from the salvation of the flesh, recognize the unconscious.

<sup>12</sup>It seems as if for them life, traditionally--from the time of their grandfathers, has traced one and the same circle, like a phonograph needle, caught in a single groove on a record, lacking the strength to hop into another, so that the melody, after a light click would continue smoothly. But again its the same old short sound that resembles a mumble.

<sup>13</sup>Are our dear countrymen, who themselves are bogged down in the daily routine, really going to allow even a single living, anxious, god inspired soul to take flight? Even when such a soul is still in a fetal state they stand over it with a lasso and as soon as it quivers they immediately rope it and tie it to the rings of the gates, so that

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it dries up in the hot wind and is covered in dust... our famous white dust, which penetrates into the body through the pores.

<sup>14</sup>A rubber tire and a pitcher with the noble patina of past years; iron pipes and a black marble pillar from the family crypt; a robe decorated with the artificial ribbon of a tie; belief and disbelief; quiet aloofness and trickery; two languages; two table cloths for guests, one on a table and one on the floor; two modes of thought; split personality, fragmentation, incohesiveness... And discomfort, restlessness, the desire not to lag behind the modern, which is still not understood, not grasped by the psyche . . .

<sup>15</sup>Compassion is the ideal of good old Europe. And what if, within yourself, you were to be able to combine it with our Eastern ideal, fairness, so that you were able to perceive life through both of them, woven into a single powerful feeling. How much you would understand!

<sup>16</sup>And instead of wasting energy on the restoration of that which has long disappeared and cannot be brought back, consoling ourselves saying, 'We Bukharans are again a part of something great,' isn't it better to search for ourselves in something new in order to bare our essence in a heretofore unknown art form in all the splendor of the national genius?..

<sup>17</sup>Pulatov never explains the 'B' in Shakhgrad's TsBK, though, as a service to those from outside of Tashkent, he does state what the 'Ts' and 'K' represent.

<sup>18</sup>[A]yatollahs and colonels will invent purgatory. And they will place it between paradise and hell. They will promise to cleanse and thoroughly wash the filth of hell from the person who has strayed from the path and ended up in hell rather than heaven. They will cleanse the person in purgatory and then permit him to enter paradise. And that's what will happen...

<sup>19</sup>Having withstood a chemical attack, but losing their sight from the gas, they did not tremble or turn from the path and burst into flames like living torches beneath the tanks of the enemy, so that they could go straight from the field of battle into the gates of paradise as shakhids. It is notable that not one of the million school children, blown into the air along with the tanks, dropped the key to the gates of paradise given to each of them before the start of the battle by Ayatollah Chechebni, who personally exhibited wondrous feats of heroism and was also awarded the honor of entering paradise.

<sup>20</sup>Personal interview, August 7, 1995.

<sup>21</sup>Rejecting the gods of each tribe, he, like a worm, eats away at our eternally green ancestral tree, which is grown upon our forefather's traditions, the dissimilarity of customs, all to the benefit of the foreign concept of monotheism that has been imported from somewhere else!

<sup>22</sup>Personal interview, August 7, 1995.

<sup>23</sup>The current doesn't like it when someone tries to overpower it or even simply to assist it. It carries only those who have resigned themselves. Abandon your pride, my friend! You will feel great relief... Otherwise the current will extinguish all of your passions.

<sup>24</sup>They say that you, Tarazikhan, have done a lot of travelling in the land of the Azhnabians. That is where your depravity comes from. The Azhnabians imagine that man is the center of the universe, the lord of nature, creation's crowning glory... thus all is permitted to him. He is wiser than anything, smarter, the best of all... but that is whispered to him by the Devil, who constantly wraps the lasso of pride like a turban around the head of man... but I fear that the lasso will slip lower, around his neck and pull man onto the gallows...

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<sup>25</sup>It is you who receive a European education who look for a superficial meaning in everything: 'Is it just? Is it unjust?' But I know that everything is done according to a higher plan, according to fate... Fate treats you as it deems just--and that is justice.

<sup>26</sup>Your right, life is one... But there are different approaches to life... In camp I saw... more than anyone those among us it was precisely those who had a European education who were the angriest, the most upset, who looked for justice, wrote complaints day and night... Don't get me wrong, I'm not judging them. That would be stupid... It's just that after each of their fits of pique and desire to make things better things got worse, crueler.

<sup>27</sup>It [the portrayal of Muhammed in the novel *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*] is somewhat untraditional, and therefore some of the clerics there, Muslim fundamentalists in Tashkent came out against me because of that portrayal. . . . That was the time of the Salman Rushdie incident. They began to accuse me as well. That was in the paper: that I showed Islam in the wrong light. . . . That is my perception of Islam. If I were to view religion in the same way as a typical believer, simply as a common philistine, I would accept it literally--what is written in the Bible or the Koran is what you believe. But as a writer you are subject to doubts of various kinds. You say, "Is that right? Why does religion demand this? Where then is God? Why is it that we are promised so much in this life, but we do not receive anything? Can it be that we and we alone are to blame?" That is existentialism, which is incomprehensible for the East. The East maintains that there is predestination. The fate of a person is written on his brow and from the day of his birth that which is written is that which will happen. He himself, a person, cannot change a thing. That is why the East is against revolution. . . . But Eastern fundamentalism is also opposed to terrorism, of

the sort that is now so common. That is, unfortunately, the interference of politics.

(Personal interview, August 7, 1995)

## Part Two

### I. Introduction to Part Two

The connection between language, education, and culture has received much attention in the study of post-colonial literature. A common assumption made in such discussions is that a knowledge of the colonizer's language and an education in that language can lead to an alienation from the post-colonial writer's own people and cultural traditions. In *Theories of Africans* Christopher Miller contends, "European-language literacy is the most important element in a process of distancing, a displacement that removes the intellectual from the immediate sphere of traditional culture. That removal is a sensitive topic and is variously described as either alienation or the condition necessary for perspective and understanding" (Miller, 70). Fanon discusses the assimilating force of language, saying "The Negro of the Antilles will be proportionately whiter--that is, he will come closer to being a real human being--in direct ratio to his mastery of the French language" (Fanon 1967, 18). Yet even the most assimilated colonized individual will continue to be treated as an outsider by many members of the colonizing culture. He will thus be alienated from both his native and adopted cultures. Gloria Anzaldua, for instance, speaks of being "Alienated from her mother culture, 'alien' in the dominate culture . . ." (Anzaldua, 20). In examining Aitmatov's and Pulatov's views on language and education, as they are expressed in fiction and non-fiction alike, I will attempt to determine the extent to which the educational and linguistic background of these writers has led to the alienation that is so often attributed to the post-colonial author.

Although Pulatov spent his early childhood in a bilingual home, Russian was not one of the two languages he spoke. The son of a Tajik mother and an Uzbek

father, Pulatov "heard his first Russian word at the age of eight, after starting school" (Bitov, 257). Describing the environment in the school where he studied, Pulatov paints a striking picture of alienation: "It all seemed as if I had been torn from my family, as if they had forcibly made me into an orphan, and I had to feel that I was being educated outside of the home."<sup>1</sup> Pulatov's description of his schooling creates an image consistent with those of schools in other colonial societies such as French-colonized Africa where, as Isaac Yetiv writes, "French schools symbolized a break, a brutal separation from their native milieu, an uprooting" (Yetiv, 89). The African writer Kateb Yacine, for example, describes studying in a French school as "being thrown to the wolves" (Yetiv, 89).

Whereas Pulatov was essentially unprepared for his immersion into the Russian language and culture at school, Aitmatov's parents had taught him Russian and begun to acquaint him with Russian culture before he reached school age. It is likely that his parents' efforts eased his transition from home to school. At any rate there is no evidence to believe that he suffered the trauma described by Pulatov and Yacine. Indeed, one of Aitmatov's first memories involves an early encounter with the Russian language. At the age of five, he was asked to translate for a visiting Russian livestock inspector. Although his first reaction to the situation was to run and hide, his grandmother soon shamed him out of hiding, saying "What? Are you ashamed to speak Russian or are you ashamed of your own language? All languages come from god" (Aitmatov 1984, 110). After overcoming his fear the young Aitmatov proves to be a capable translator. As a reward for his services he received a piece of roasted meat and the approval and respect of everyone present. Thus while Pulatov's first memories of contact with the Russian language are fraught with feelings of alienation and rejection, Aitmatov's early encounter with the Russian language is the source of

pride and prestige among his peers, who tell him, "How cool! ... You speak Russian like the water in a river, without stopping" (Aitmatov 1984, 111).

Of course, the topic of language is one that both Aitmatov and Pulatov have touched upon in articles, essays, and interviews. The question arises, however, as to how reliable these sources are. In his article, "Soviet Literature at the Crossroads: The Controversial Prose of Chingiz Aitmatov," Shneidman points out that "Aitmatov is permitted to write literature which is considered of dubious value to the Soviet reader because in his journalistic writings and public appearances he ardently upholds the values, aims, and policies of the communist party and the Soviet state; because he supports unquestionably the Soviet policies on national minorities" (Shneidman 1979, 262). Here Shneidman clearly implies that Aitmatov can be less than sincere in non-literary forums in order to buy more freedom for his art. Yet, even if we cannot accept everything that Aitmatov says in articles, essays, and interviews at face value, we can certainly draw some interesting parallels between him and Pulatov on the basis of what the two writers say in them. After all, within the bounds of what was acceptable to the Soviet literary establishment there were many possible points of focus as far as the language question was concerned. The variance Pulatov's and Aitmatov's approaches to the topic of language reveals many of the ways in which the two authors differ in their feelings toward bilingualism and linguistic alienation.

After discussing the way in which a Soviet education and the use of the Russian language affect Aitmatov's and Pulatov's view of their identity, I shall discuss the ways in which their visions of the self are reflected in their use of mythic and folkloric elements. Finally, I shall examine other reflections of their search for a unified identity and their eventual rejection of the concept.

## II. The "Alienating Service" of the Colonizer's Language.

Pulatov, like many post-colonial writers, knows several languages but writes only in one. Aitmatov, on the other hand, not only speaks both Kyrgyz and Russian, but is bilingual as an author as well. It seems that his total mastery of two languages has enabled him to avoid the sense of alienation exhibited by African writers such as Malek Haddad who says, "The French language is my exile" (Yetiv, 89). Indeed Aitmatov exhorts in his knowledge of Russian saying, "For me Russian is no less native than Kyrgyz--native since childhood, native for life" (Aitmatov 1984, 284). He promotes bilingualism as "a new historical phenomenon, as the cultural achievement of the end of the twentieth century. The culture of bilingualism will give new potentialities to the spiritual development of our peoples. This will be like the two wings of a bird, when every man in the national republics has two languages--his mother tongue, and the common national language, Russian" (Aitmatov & Medvedev, 336). Aitmatov's support for bilingualism is quite specific, however, and calls for training in both languages in an environment of total equality from the time a child begins pre-school. He seems to understand the pitfalls of privileging one language over the other, although his own parents managed to avoid such problems in his upbringing.

Pulatov's article "Sluzhanka li nam istoriia?" ("Is History Our Servant?"), reminds us that bilingualism is not "a new historical phenomenon" but rather has long been the norm in the cities of the Central Asian oases, where Farsi and Turki (Tajik and Uzbek) have existed side by side for centuries. Although, like Aitmatov, Pulatov discusses the positive effects that the knowledge of multiple languages has on a writer's work, he does not speak of two native languages but rather of "two linguistic and artistic worlds, the world which still in childhood was named in the writer's native

language with his very first words, and the world already named and every time named anew in Russian" (Pulatov 1988, 3). This juxtaposition of signifying systems is indicative of the "disjunction between the apprehension of [i.e. 'the world named in childhood'], and communication about [i.e. 'the world every time named anew in Russian'], the world" that, according to D.E.S. Maxwell, is typical of "societies like those in India or Nigeria, where indigenous peoples were colonized in their own territories" (Ashcroft, 25).

In the essay "A Guide to a Renamed City," Joseph Brodsky raises the possibility that alienation may be a benefit to the writer's craft saying, "If it is true that every writer has to estrange himself from his experience to comment upon it, then the city [Leningrad], by rendering this alienating service saved them the trip" (Brodsky, 79). Those who believe in the facilitative powers of alienation must credit Peter the Great for rendering a great service to literature. Not only did he alienate a major part of the Russian population through his policy of Europeanization, but in establishing the Russian empire he started the process that would lead to the alienation of millions of people from Poland to Kamchatka, from the Arctic Circle to the Chinese border. Some post-colonial theorists share the belief that linguistic and cultural disjunction have, in the words of Gareth Griffiths, "often proved a stimulant rather than a disability" (Griffiths, 9) to the writer's work. Pulatov himself appreciates the artistic advantage brought on by the linguistic and cultural estrangement caused by his Russian education:

Двуязычие помогает как бы отстраниться, обрести дистанцию для более внимательного взгляда на свое, кровное, национальное. Но всегда ли это благо, когда имеешь два дополняющих друг друга взгляда на себя и своих соплеменников, видишь не только дальше и глубже, но и больше положительного и отрицательного

в своем народе? Характерно, что современные двуязычные писатели каждый у себя дома прошли через одно и то же стандартное обвинение -- в «неуважении к собственному народу».  
 . . . (Pulatov 1988, 3)<sup>2</sup>

While the estrangement that springs from the use of the colonizer's language is seen by Pulatov as an artistic boon in a bilingual writer's work, it is an advantage that comes at the very high price of alienation from his own people. Pulatov has paid this price dearly. Members of the Uzbek literary establishment such as the poet Muhammed Ali (Akhmedov) and the literary scholar Ergash Fazil tend to exclude him from the ranks of what they consider to be 'genuine' Uzbek writers saying that he has a "Russian mindset."<sup>3</sup> When, in an interview for the Uzbek paper *Ozbekiston Adabiyati va San'ati* (*The Literature and Art of Uzbekistan*), Kamol Matyoqubov asks Pulatov why his books are "greeted warmly" outside of Uzbekistan but rarely receive such a positive reaction among Uzbek readers, he is clearly implying that Pulatov is somehow alien to the reading public of Uzbekistan (Pulatov and Matyoqubov, 4). Aitmatov, on the other hand, is extremely popular among Kyrgyz readers.<sup>4</sup> Yet even he has been attacked by the Kyrgyz literary establishment for creating distorted images of Kyrgyz life and catering to the Russian reader's demand for the exotic (In Schneidman, 254).

The difference in the receptions that Aitmatov and Pulatov get among their own peoples is indicative of how closely connected to language the concept of culture is in the former Soviet Union. Even Pulatov, who writes about Central Asian culture in Russian, connects the two when he refers to language as "the living reflection of culture itself" (Pulatov 1988, 3). Many critics and theorists outside of the former Soviet Union make a similar connection between language and culture. Anzaldúa, for example, writes, "Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity--I am my language"

(Anzaldua, 59). The African writer Ngugi Wa Thiong'o has abandoned writing in English for Gikuyu, the language of his ancestors (Boehmer, 208). By publishing each work in Kyrgyz as well as Russian, Aitmatov can be perceived to show "respect" for his own people. Authors such as Pulatov, who write exclusively in Russian, on the other hand, can be seen by their compatriots to neglect their duty to the readership of their nation. In this regard Pulatov's treatment at the hands of the Uzbek literary establishment is similar to the way post-colonial intellectuals with a European education have been treated in other parts of the world. For example, in parts of Africa, as Elleke Boehmer points out, "with independence, the use of English came to be criticized as a form of national betrayal" (Boehmer, 207).

The disjunction between Pulatov's childhood world and the artistic world he creates with the Russian language as a medium is further complicated by differences in the emotional and symbolic meanings of words in the three languages he speaks. Pulatov explores these variations of meaning in the article "Tazyk, avtor, zhizn'" ("Language, the Author, Life"). He differentiates between the emotional connotations of the words for "sun" and "moon" in the minds of speakers of Russian, Uzbek, and Tajik:

[В]едь «солнце» по-русски -- это совсем не то, что «куеш» по-узбекски, и уж совсем не то, что «офтоб» по-таджикски... Ведь узбек, живущий большую часть года под палящими лучами, никогда не скажет ласково-уменьшительно «солнышко», так же, как и у русского нет ощущения того, что солнце может быть не только плоднесущим и землеобновляющим, но и враждебным. Зато к луне, этому ночному светилу, несущему прохладу и умиротворение, у узбека совсем иное отношение, -- все красивое и желанное он называет «луноликим», «луноподобным», да с такой

интонацией, что для русского слуха это может показаться по меньшей мере вычурным. (Pulatov 1976a, 109)<sup>5</sup>

Let us also recall Pulatov's contention that the image of the forest in "Oklikni menia v lesu" has a completely different meaning for a Russian than it has for an Uzbek, "in whose mind the concept of 'woods' practically does not exist in its physical meaning, but lives only as a metaphor, as a word expressing something complex, muddled, dark..." According to Pulatov the result of the effort "to 'reconcile' one life, one reality with another" allows the writer to "create on their foundation a new life--the life of the work" (Pulatov 1976a, 110).

Although Pulatov points out the occasional inadequacy of Russian to reflect Central Asian realia he very rarely resorts to the use of Uzbek or Tajik words in his Russian prose. Pointing out that "For Pulatov . . . the native lexicon plays not even a secondary, but a tertiary role," N. Mikhailovskaia notes, "There are not many writers who would risk using the word '*derevnia*' to denote an Uzbek settlement in the Russian text of a work" (Mikhailovskaia, 66). Aitmatov, in contrast, uses the Kyrgyz word (or the Russian adaptation of it) *ail* whenever he describes a Kyrgyz village. The insertion of Central Asian words into the text can be seen as pandering to the Russian reader's taste for the exotic. Joseph Mozur mentions this possibility in his study *Doffing "Mankurt's Cap"* :

On the surface Aitmatov's popular novel [*I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* ] appears to use the language and realia of Central Asia for 'local color,' to appeal to the exotic tastes of his Russian and Western readers. Like the many other literary works from Central Asia available in Russian, *The Day Lasts more than a Hundred Years* contains numerous Turkic words dispersed throughout the narration to evoke the flavor of life in the Muslim East. . . . (Mozur 1987, 3)

He concludes, however, that Aitmatov uses Central Asian words and realia not to satisfy the demand for any kind of a two-dimensional exotica but to convey the essence of Central Asian life, "Yet unlike much of the middle-brow literature from Soviet Central Asia, Aitmatov's presentation of the national Turkic and Muslim legacy runs much deeper . . ." (Mozur 1987, 3).

Much as Mozur maintains that Aitmatov's use of Central Asian words is more than simply window dressing, post-colonial theorists have argued that 'untranslated words' convey "the sense of cultural distinctiveness," and draw "the attention to the cultural differences between the groups of people involved" (Ashcroft, 64). Thus if we adhere to the above understanding of the role played by "untranslated words," it would seem that Aitmatov is more concerned with calling attention to cultural difference than is Pulatov. I believe, however, that the dynamic that determines the two authors' lexical choices may involve far more than a simple desire to distinguish between various cultures. Aitmatov knows that a Kyrgyz village is quite unlike a Russian village and by selecting the word *ail* he reminds the reader of this difference. We cannot, however, assume that Pulatov's choice not to use the word *kishlak* indicates an indifference toward cultural diversity. Perhaps he feels that to use the word would leave his work at the mercy of the reader, who may or may not understand it in the same way as the writer. To use it might, in fact, even contribute to a chauvinistic mindset, which might see a *kishlak* as backwards, Asiatic, and 'other.' In any case, the initial impression the word would make on a Russian reader would not likely be the image of a real *kishlak* but rather of a village that is 'other.' Any further description of the *kishlak* would have to compete with the image of an abstract non-Russian village that the word creates in the mind of the Russian reader. Thus by using the word *derevnia* Pulatov can go on to describe the life of the village in a way that will demonstrate difference on his own terms, without having to combat the

reader's preconceived notions. Aitmatov, on the other hand, chooses to place his trust in the reader's ability to appreciate the real otherness his use of Central Asian words implies. Perhaps Aitmatov's intimate knowledge of Kyrgyz and Russian culture can cause him to overestimate his reader's cultural awareness and, thus, the author's attempts to convey real cultural distinctiveness may unintentionally reinforce an 'orientalist' view of Central Asia.

If Pulatov dis-'orientalizes' his reader by applying the word *derevnia* to an Uzbek village, he continues the process by using the Central Asian names of cultural figures that the reader might assume are closer to the 'Western' Russians than to the 'Oriental' Central Asians. By referring to Alexander the Great as Iskander Zu-l' Karnain, Jesus as Isa, Goliath as Dzhalut, and the Koran's (as well as, of course, old Testament's) Joseph as Iusuf, he reminds the reader that Central Asians had access to "Western" culture even before the Russians did.

Pulatov also calls our assumptions about language into question by pointing to the inadequacy of one culture's terms in another's environment. In *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*, during one of the television panel discussions dedicated to the topic of earthquakes, a scientist explains that heavenly bodies have no effect on the Earth's seismic activities: "No comet, planet, moon, or sun affects earthquakes, in the same way that the Earth has no effect on moonquakes, marsquakes, venusquakes and so on and so forth... (Pulatov 1991a, 73). The use of such words as "moonquake" and "marsquake" reveal how attuned Pulatov is to otherness and how inappropriate the term earthquake really is on other planets.

If we consider the importance of language and education to the identity of the post-colonial writer, we should not be surprised to find that these themes are commonly treated in Aitmatov's and Pulatov's works. Both authors often center the action in their stories around young boys who are growing up in Central Asia. In

doing so they allow the reader to observe a young mind's struggles with the social and cultural implications of bilingualism. In *A Double Exile* Gareth Griffiths notes a similar tendency to focus on the world of a child among West Indian writers saying, "By recreating the experience of childhood the novelist can literally trace the growth of a specific West Indian consciousness, and show how it is shaped into a unique and distinct pattern by the social, political and geographical realities it encounters" (Griffiths, 87).

The reader meets Dushan, the hero of Pulatov's novel *Strasti Bukharskogo doma* before the child has learned how to speak the language of adults. The boy, however, has his own language with "words that are not acquired but his own." These words of his own are superior to those of the grown-ups because "with them he could express more than they could with their learned words, words that made them all like one another and speakers of one and the same thing..." (Pulatov 1990, 21). The encounter between Dushan's language and that of the adults clearly parallels the conflict between the language of a colonized people and that of the colonizer. Dushan's language is truly native (*rodnoi*) in that he was born with it. Those in power, in this case the adults, are very concerned that he learn their language. Much as colonizers often view ignorance of their language as a sign of backwardness, the adults see Dushan's inability to speak as a possible indication that something is wrong with him. Dushan knows that the adults' language is inadequate when applied to his world, yet he will be isolated if he fails to learn it. Those who acquire the language of adults, however, do so at the price of their own individuality. Of course Pulatov could have shown us a clash between Dushan's home languages and Russian, when Dushan is sent away to study at the boarding school, but then no Soviet journal would have ever accepted the novel for publication. By moving the time frame back and creating a struggle between an invented language and Tajik, Pulatov was able to show the reader

how it feels to have a "learned" or "acquired" language force one's native language into the background.

Pulatov employs Dushan's developing awareness of language "to convey a child's wonder and confusion at the conceptual contradictions, embodied in one and the same words, though spoken in different languages" (Pulatov 1976a, 109). As Dushan learns more about languages he comes to realize that a single object or concept can have one name in Tajik and another in Uzbek and that these names, despite representing the same thing, evoke differing and sometimes even diametrically opposite reactions:

Стоит, наверное, о чем-то сказать по-таджикски, как она тут же напугает, смутит: «ушиб, боль, смерть», а если по-узбекски -- успокоит, порадует, и наоборот: «снег, свет, игра», сказанные по-узбекски, разозлят, а по-таджикски -- вызовут восторг. (Pulatov 1990, 25)<sup>6</sup>

Of course the thoughtful reader realizes that this conflict between Uzbek and Tajik is being described in yet a third language. This allows the reader to appreciate the true complexity of the linguistic dynamic experienced by many Bukharans of Pulatov's generation. Dushan's confusion shows how bilingualism can be simultaneously a bane and a boon to a writer. Clearly the sense of wonder brought forth by the contradictions inherent in bilingualism arouses an interest in the workings of language that is essential to the writer's craft. Yet on the other hand to convey the emotional power of events and experiences associated with words in a language other than the language in which a work is being written is surely a difficult task.

Dushan notices, however, that there exist many words that are the same in both languages. These words are special in that they elicit only a positive response in the boy:

Впрочем, были и слова, которые произносились на обоих этих языках одинаково, с общим смыслом -- «мама, папа, брат, бабушка» и его имя -- Душан, все, что было для него особенно близким, пожалуй, самым близким из всех остальных слов, но их было мало, и вот они-то и были окружены тайной. Почему их произносят одинаково? Не потому ли, что они иногда не имеют другого смысла, кроме хорошего, и поэтому не раздваиваются, чтобы одних пугать, а других успокаивать? И почему их так мало? Не потому ли, что все страшное и таинственное существует не само по себе в отдельности, а живет в словах, стоит их только произнести, как страшное появляется, а молчи и не называй -- страшного нет и не было. (Pulatov 1990, 26)<sup>7</sup>

The above passage makes it clear that the boy's confusion is not only linguistic but metaphysical as well. Words have a power beyond their function as signifiers. Dushan maintains, "these words are both the face and the essence of things" (Pulatov 1990, 25) and "he was sure that things, both animate and inanimate, changed their essence every time you gave them a different name, everything had multiple faces" (Pulatov 1990, 37). If we return to Pulatov's statement that the attempt to reconcile the conflicting world views implied by various languages leads to a new artistic vision, we will recall that he does not elaborate on the nature of that vision. By demonstrating the way in which the clash of languages leads Dushan to believe in the mutable essence and multiple faces of reality, Pulatov may be indicating that bilingualism is the source of his own fantastic artistic vision, in which metamorphosis and doubling are common occurrences.

While Dushan is not a writer there is much to indicate that he represents the abstract image of 'the writer.' He is connected to the writer who creates him in that the

interplay between Tajik, Uzbek, and Russian is the same as that experienced by Pulatov himself.<sup>8</sup> Like a writer, he tells his friends stories, amusing them with tales from *A Thousand and One Nights*. Pulatov further links Dushan to the figure of 'the writer' by identifying him with the story-telling parrot who is "as mute as Dushan, but thanks to that or more precisely in spite of that, had suddenly become overly talkative" (Pulatov 1990, 27). Indeed the boy's first words have much in common with works of post-colonial literature. When he calls his grandmother *tuti*, "parrot", she understands him to say *tuta*, "aunt" (Pulatov 1990, 27). Thus while his utterance is seen as acceptable, it is in reality a multivalent text that subverts the main symbol of power in Dushan's household.

Unlike Pulatov, Aitmatov devotes little attention to the conflict between languages that takes place in the minds of his young heroes. On the rare occasions when he does deal with linguistic difference, he treats the subject in a way quite unlike Pulatov. When the young Sultanmurat meets the Russian projectionist in *Rannie zhuravli* he explains that the bird the Kyrgyz call *saraigyr* gets its name from its call "*chu, chu, saraigyr*."<sup>9</sup> When asked what the phrase means in Russian, Sulatanmurat answers "*no, no, zheltyj zherebets*," failing to understand that the Russian word *zheltyi* cannot be applied to horses. The projectionist politely corrects him, enriching the boy's knowledge of Russian and bestowing upon him a better understanding of the workings of language. Thus, though Aitmatov calls attention to the subtleties of language, the differences between Kyrgyz and Russian are hardly seen to be fraught with the same emotional conflict that is present in Pulatov's *Strasti bukharskogo doma*.

While Sultanmurat's error reveals the difference between the Kyrgyz and Russian languages, the ways in which he and the Russian projectionist interpret the bird's song indicate the cultural differences between the two nations. Sultanmurat

understands the bird to be imagining that it is hurrying to a wedding on a horse, whereas the projectionist believes the bird has been gambling and is singing "*chut', chut' tri rublia ne vyigral.*"<sup>10</sup> That a Kyrgyz and a Russian interpret the same phenomenon in such different ways indicates that peoples of various cultures can have quite different ways of perceiving the world. We should note also that Sultanmurat's understanding of the bird's song combines the traditional Kyrgyz images of the horse and a wedding, while the Russian's version is fraught with the vices of gambling and greed. Yet while the Kyrgyz and Russian languages and cultures are shown to indicate quite distinctive world views, the differences that these world views entail are easily understood and have no noticeable impact on the boys view of the nature of reality. The bird is but a bird and whether it is singing "*chut', chut' tri rublia ne vyigral*" or "*chu, chu, saraigyr*" it is doing so to no avail, for it will neither get to the wedding nor win three rubles (Aitmatov 1982a, 526).

Thus the two authors differ fundamentally when it comes to their view on the impact of multilingualism on the writer's world view. For Pulatov the knowledge of multiple languages leads to the creation of multiple worldviews that intrude upon one another and lead to ontological confusion. Aitmatov, on the other hand, feels that his bilingualism allows him free access to two separate and distinct worlds. Later we shall examine the impact that these different perceptions of their own multi-lingualism have on their respective artistic visions.

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Notes to Part Two, Chapter II

<sup>1</sup>Personal interview of Aug. 7, 1995.

<sup>2</sup>It is as if bilingualism allows the writer to estrange himself, to gain distance for a more careful vantage of that which is his own, the native, the national. But is it always a blessing, when you have two complementary views of yourself and your own people, when you see not only farther and deeper, but also more of the positive and negative in your people? It is characteristic that contemporary bilingual writers, each in his own land, have gone through one and the same standard charge--the charge of 'disrespect toward their own people.' . . .

<sup>3</sup>From personal interviews in the Summer of 1992 (Akhmedov) and the Spring of 1994 (Fazil).

<sup>4</sup>Aitmatov's popularity in Kyrgyzstan is confirmed by several polls, the results of which are recorded in *Chingis Aitmatov v sovremennom mire*, (60-61). While the polling methodology of the authors is somewhat suspect, Aitmatov enjoys a two to one margin over the next most popular Kyrgyz writer.

<sup>5</sup>[A]fter all "solntse" in Russian is not at all the same as "kuyosh" in Uzbek and it is already completely different from "oftob" in Tajik... An Uzbek, after all, having lived under the scorching rays for most of the year is never going to use the affectionate diminutive "solnyshko," just as a Russian is unable to feel that the sun is not only a source of life and renewal, but can be hostile as well. On the other hand an Uzbek has a completely different relationship with the moon. He calls everything that is beautiful and desirable "moonfaced" or "moonlike," and with an intonation that to the Russian ear can seem, at the least, pretentious.

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disturb you: 'injury, pain, death', but if you talk about these things in Uzbek it calms you and makes you happy, yet in contrast the words 'snow, light, play' uttered in Uzbek make you angry, but in Tajik they call forth delight.

<sup>7</sup>There were, though, words that were pronounced the same way in both languages with the same meaning, 'mama, papa, brother, grandmother' and his name 'Dushan', all that was especially close to him, perhaps closer than any other words. But there were few of them and they themselves were surrounded in secrecy. Why were they pronounced the same way? Was it not because they never had any other meaning but a good one and thus they did not split in two in order to frighten some and calm others? Is that why there were so few of them? Is it because everything frightening and mysterious exists not in and of itself but lives in words, one need but pronounce them and that which is frightening appears, but if one is silent and doesn't name them that which is frightening does not exist and never did.

<sup>8</sup>One must be careful, however, not to take this connection too far. Even his collected works contain a biographical sketch in which Pulatov (like Dushan) is supposed to have studied in a boarding school (Bocharov, 3). Pulatov, however, maintains that he never studied in such a school (Personal interview of Aug. 7, 1995).

<sup>9</sup>Giddyup yellow (light bay) horse.

<sup>10</sup>I nearly won three rubles.

### III. Learning Difference: The (dis-?)Function of a Soviet Education.

Although many of his works are centered on the experience of children, Aitmatov does not focus on the intricacies of the Soviet education system at any great length. He often, however, refers to the results of studying in the Soviet school system. If we compare what he says about the consequences of education in his early works to the view of education he exhibits in his later works, we shall discover a striking reappraisal of the Soviet system and its relationship to Kyrgyz culture.

Of course, the question of education plays a primary role in "Pervyi uchitel'," in which Kyrgyz society is shown to contain many patriarchal and backward elements. Not only does Duishen teach the students to read and write but he also tells them about Lenin<sup>1</sup> and Moscow. The students' "political vocabulary" consisted of words such as *bai*, *batrak*,<sup>2</sup> Soviets, and revolution--words that were certainly used to demonstrate the injustice of the old Kyrgyz ways (Aitmatov 1982a, 257). Isaac Yetiv describes a like-spirited educational experience in French colonized Africa:

For the culturally colonized individual is led to believe from the teachings of his masters, the exclusive purveyors of civilisation, that his country was a 'bush fit for jackals', that his people have no history, no culture, no geography even, since he is required to memorise the names of the French departments and their capitals. . . . (Yetiv, 89)

Unlike Aitmatov's Altynai, however, the African writers discussed by Yetiv are not thankful for these lessons, equating their schooling with being "thrown to the wolves" and calling it "the source of all the suffering, all of the impossible situations which arose in my life" (Yetiv, 89). Thus while Aitmatov's attitude toward Soviet education in "Pervyi uchitel'" is singularly positive, the image he presents of the Soviet school is

quite similar to that of the French-African school that is said to be so harmful to its pupils.

One result that education nearly always has in Aitmatov's works is displacement. Thus Altynai's education leads her away from her native village, Maselbek in *Materinskoe pole* (*Maternal Field*) excels in school and leaves for the city, and in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* Sabitzhan's education has caused him to leave home. Taking into account that post-colonial writers employ "the idea of home as cultural symbol and local language" (Nightingale, 2), the displacement caused by a Soviet education takes on a particular symbolic significance. In this context, Altynai's longing to return home and her inability to do so provide the story with an ambiguity toward Soviet education that seems absent at first glance.

In Aitmatov's later works this ambivalent view of education comes closer to the surface. Tanabai from "Proshchai, Gul'sary!" visits his son's boarding school and asks, "What is he going to come out of school like? He already knows how to play up to those in charge" (Aitmatov 1982a, 444). He is especially displeased to see that the Kyrgyz children are made to sing as if they were in a Russian choir:

А послушал бы, как они поют. Батрачил я в детстве у Ефремова в Александровке, как-то водил он меня в церковь на пасху. Вот и наши ребята и станут все на сцене, руки по швам, лица каменные, и поют, как в русской церкви. И все одно и то же... Не нравится мне это. (Aitmatov 1982a, 444)<sup>3</sup>

This scene, more than any other, shows the encroachment of Russian cultural practices into Kyrgyz society. Tanabai's negative reaction implies that traditional Kyrgyz songs are far more appropriate for the region. That this cultural encroachment takes place in a school, underscores the role of education in cultural russification.

In "Belyi parokhod" ("The White Ship") the boy obtains a briefcase in order to begin his Soviet education (although it is in a Kyrgyz-language school)<sup>4</sup> and we are told by the author, "Perhaps that was the start of it all" (Aitmatov 1983a, 6). We later see that "it all" ends with the boy's death. The school is located rather far from the boy's home. Thus symbolically the boy's education takes him far from his native language and culture. It takes older children even farther from home. The only way children in the area can continue beyond fourth grade is to go to a boarding school at the *sovkhos* (Aitmatov 1983a, 52). Indeed the ultimate result of a child's education is his separation from his native Kyrgyz mountains and the culture they represent. As the driver of the mobile store says, "And if you don't learn to read and write you'll have to stay with your grandfather in the mountains forever" (Aitmatov 1983a, 16). The role of education in destroying traditional modes of existence is again stressed in the boy's meeting with the Kazakh soldier from Karaganda. When the boy informs the soldier that his grandfather had taught him the importance of knowing seven generations of ancestors, the Kazakh answers, "If we could get him to our political training courses, we would educate him in an instant" (Aitmatov 1983a, 77). The soldier then implies that when the boy gets through with school (or, more fittingly, when school gets through with the boy) he will leave Momun and the traditional ways he represents behind, saying, "You'll grow up, get an education -- then, come on, leave your grandfather behind" (Aitmatov 1983a, 77). Thus abandoning one's cultural roots and physical displacement are directly linked to one another and to education.

Once the boy has been taken from home to the school, only his grandfather, Momun, can provide for his return. Momun's trip to get the boy is delayed, however, by the intimidation and violence the Russified Kyrgyz, Orozkul, uses to prevent the old man from bringing his grandson home. Perhaps this parallels the attempt of eager and/or corrupt Kyrgyz communists to hinder their own people's efforts to pass their

culture on to younger generations. Finally, Momun's failure to pick the boy up from school on time leads to the boy's illness, which causes the breakdown of his ability to differentiate between myth and reality and leads to his death. It may seem unreasonable to blame a death that appears to have been caused by many various factors on education alone, yet Aitmatov seems to be doing precisely that in pointing to the briefcase as the start of all the problems.

In *Rannie zhuravli* Myrzagul' has her mirror taken away by her teacher (Aitmatov 1982a, 529). As I have discussed earlier, Aitmatov uses the image of the mirror to represent national self-awareness in *Rannie zhuravli*. In this context, the teacher's confiscation of Myrzagul's mirror indicates that a Soviet education discouraged the Kyrgyz from any attempts at self-awareness.

By the time Aitmatov writes *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* in 1980 he has begun to question the value of a Soviet education more directly and openly. Sabitzhan may have received an education and moved to the city, but it is clear that he is morally inferior to the representatives of the uneducated older generation. At first Edigei wonders how an educated man can be so shallow. It is not long, however, before he raises the question as to whether Sabitzhan has turned out the way he is because of his education rather than in spite of it:

А что из того, что обучался он на разных курсах в разных институтах? Может быть его и обучали для того, чтобы он сделался таким, каким оказался. Может быть, где-то есть кто-то проницательный, как дьявол, который много трудов вложил в Сабитжана, чтобы Сабитжан стал Сабитжаном, а не кем-то другим. Ведь, сам он, Сабитжан, рассказывал, расписывал на все лады такую ерунду о радиоуправляемых людях. Грядут, мол, те

времена! А что, если им самим уже управляют по радио тот невидимый и всемогущий... (Aitmatov 1983a, 485)<sup>5</sup>

The strikingly negative vision of a Soviet education contained in the above cited passage is somewhat mitigated by Abutalip's erudition. As Alla Latynina asks:

Why do the city and an education at institutes give Sabitzhan mere scraps of knowledge and make him strive to live as well as anyone else in the big cities, destroying his historical and national self-awareness, while education gave Abutalip Kuttybaev true culture, polishing his natural and profound intellect? (Latynina, 207)

Yet, one wonders why, if Abutalip is a typical product of the Soviet educational system, that very same system refuses to allow him to teach. Furthermore, although Abutalip's education does not make him into a *mankurt*, his intellectual pursuit of writing leads to his arrest, displacement, and death. In this light, the power of Edigei's attack on the system that made a *mankurt* out of Sabitzhan overwhelms the ostensibly positive effects of Abutalip's education. Thus from the unmitigated praise found in "Pervyi uchitel'" to the barely mitigated condemnation found in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, the image of a Soviet education has undergone a fundamental change over Aitmatov's career as a writer.

In a 1988 interview Aitmatov reveals the extent to which education and his people's traditional culture (as he sees it) are incompatible:

In the present generation of *akyns* there is a quite special man who can improvise rhymed verse three or four hours without [a] break. What I am telling you now happened some time ago. We were both young men. He came up to me saying: "Help me. Put in a word for me with the rector of the university to take me as a student in one of the departments. I want to learn and get a degree.' [*sic*] "I have never

advised anybody not to learn, but I advise you to stay as you are," I answered. "You are to enroll nowhere. If nature has given you such a talent and memory, it would be quite right to preserve folklore unaltered. It's worth any sacrifice. Folklore can only exist in its primary form, in its primeval wilderness." (Aitmatov and Fruntelata, 80)

Thus, in Aitmatov's eyes, a modern European education is incompatible with the preservation of his people's traditional culture.

Aitmatov does, however, offer an alternative vision of education in *Pegii pes begushchii kraem moria*, in which Kirisk learns how to be a man on his trip to sea. Although even here education proves to be nearly fatal, the boy's close ties to nature and the assistance he receives from his elders allow him to make it home. This illustrates that if education includes a respect for nature and tradition it can be a positive instead of a negative. Thus, education is not bad in and of itself. It can be a benefit if it does not neglect traditional cultural values.

For Pulatov education can be seen not only as the cause of displacement but isolation as well. In "Oklikni menia v lesu," Erkin tells Magdi that he "left everything and went to Tashkent. I went to school there and became a teacher." Magdi immediately asks him if he has any children and Erkin answers, "I'm alone..." (Pulatov 1966, 158).

Similar to Aitmatov, Pulatov sometimes shows a modern education to be at odds with traditional morality. In *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia* a Soviet schooling has made it impossible to teach Melis proper behavior: "Melis was immune to a good upbringing [*vospitaniie*] because of all the knowledge that had been stuffed into his head" (Pulatov 1991a, 83). Thus the boy's education is at least partially responsible for his immorality and eventual participation in a murder.

The entire second book of Pulatov's trilogy *Strasti Bukharskogo doma*, "*Chisla i stupeni*" ("Numbers and steps") deals with Dushan's experiences in a boarding school. By setting the boy's education in a boarding school, Pulatov is trying to convey the feelings of alienation brought on by his own schooling.<sup>6</sup> He sets the tone for the whole chapter with words that are nearly identical to those with which he describes his own educational experience, "Now it seemed that he had been exiled from his previous existence, forcibly torn from it..." (Pulatov 1990, 122. Emphasis added.). While in the quotation above these feelings of isolation are connected with the death of his grandmother, his reactions to his grandmother's funeral will later be linked to the boarding school:

Думал о том дне, когда двор неожиданно открыл себя для чужих, шумный и серый от пыли, чтоб принять тех, кто пришел почтить усопшую бабушку. И был он удивительно похож на этот двор интерната. . . . (Pulatov 1990, 159)<sup>7</sup>

Whereas in the first book of the trilogy we are shown the conflict between the Uzbek and Tajik languages in great detail, Russian is introduced quite simply when Dushan asks his mother, "And how am I going to speak there?" She answers, "There's nothing frightening in any of it. Three languages are spoken at the boarding school: Tajik, Uzbek, and Russian. You can explain things in the one you know best or even mix all three languages--you'll be perfectly understood" (Pulatov 1990, 130-131). The reader, of course, realizes that Dushan's mother is simply trying to comfort him, as Pulatov has made it clear in the first book of the trilogy how difficult it is to reconcile several languages.

Upon arriving at school Dushan has to adjust to a different culture as well as a different language. When one of the pupils steps on his foot, the boy immediately asks Dushan to respond by stepping on his foot. The Bukharan Dushan is perplexed

by this well known custom among Russian school children (Pulatov 1990, 132). Thus, from the very beginning, the boarding school exhibits traits that identify it with Russia and Dushan's acculturation is seen to start immediately.

Whereas some of the new customs simply seem strange to Dushan, others come into direct conflict with his way of life. On his first day at the boarding school he discovers that the cafeteria regularly serves pork. He explains his aversion to pork saying, "At our house no one ate it." A teacher, who is sympathetic, yet nonetheless powerless to ease the boy's discomfort, tells him: "You have to get used to eating it, otherwise it will be difficult for you here among us..." (Pulatov 1990, 139).

Dushan's experience in the classroom depends upon the subject he is studying. He enjoys neither Math with its points A and B nor Grammar (most likely Russian grammar) with its "suffixes and prefixes that wear you out with cold memorization, repetition without understanding" (Pulatov 1990, 189). In contrast, however, he enjoys History and Literature. He is an excellent student of History, but he is at times 'corrected' for taking the wrong view of the subject, such as when he refers to Tamerlane as "Emir Timur, the son of Iskander Dvurogii, the bane of the faithless, pagans, and evildoers." Dushan is not, however, taken to task for praising Tamerlane. The teacher herself had proudly referred to him as "our countryman Temurleng, known in Europe as Tamerlane" (Pulatov 1990, 190). The reason Dushan is scolded is that he introduces a religious element to Tamerlane's story. Thus, at least in this one instance, the Soviets seem to afford more respect to Central Asian history than the French show African history in the schools described by Yetiv.

The education that Dushan receives at the boarding school goes beyond what he learns in the classroom. He observes the struggle between the progressive educators, who favor a more European approach and the traditionalists, who support more of a Central Asian education. This, of course, was a battle that was waged on all

levels of Central Asian society. Life at school also introduces him to Soviet morality when the school's principal, Abliasanov, asks him to spy on his fellow students (Pulatov 1990, 165).

Although Dushan does not allow those in charge to corrupt him, he does permit his peers to change him for the worse. Although the students who lead him astray are all Central Asians each of them is associated with the West in some way. The "scientific boys," Abdulla and Sher, are better known by their nicknames "Estrogen" and "Testosteron." These two "have a strong interest in invention, cold and exact comprehension." Pulatov shows that for Dushan these Western traits are ominous and threatening and thus "Somewhere in the depth of his soul Dushan is afraid of them [Abdulla and Sher], sensing that the future life belonged to them" (Pulatov 1990, 194). The teachers praise Abdulla and Sher for having cleared their minds of the remnants of prerevolutionary Central Asian life better than any of the other students and consider them to be, "among the smartest, the most modern thinking, who had managed to free themselves so quickly from the mystic eccentricities and the superstitious fog that had clouded their heads" (Pulatov 1990, 194).

The boys' leader, Appak, both attracts Dushan with his strength and energy and repels him with his amorality. Pulatov describes Appak as being darker than a black man but the character's name means 'lily white.' Appak, Abdulla, and Sher exert tremendous peer pressure on Dushan, forcing him to join in their game of terrorizing the younger children. Thus it is the white one and the European thinkers who cause Dushan to stray from his Bukharan morality. After stealing the younger pupils' treats from home, Dushan wins partial acceptance from his peers but loses his self-respect (Pulatov 1990, 208-211).

"Chisla i stupeni" ends with Dushan's return to Bukhara, demonstrating that he, unlike most of Aitmatov's educated characters and many of Pulatov's heroes as well, is able to return home if only temporarily. That the experience has changed him and alienated him from his roots, however, is beyond doubt. Dushan knows that things at home cannot be as they were before he was sent to the boarding school. He tells the wood-cutters with whom he wants to return to Bukhara, "I don't know what things will be like at home . . . but things will be different... because I am different" (Pulatov 1990, 246). The results of his education become even more clear to him when, "having returned home Dushan suddenly had a revelation, realizing that for all these nine years in Zarmitan he had been taken out of a thick, well-bodied life, the warmth and heat had been blown out of him, leaving him as a mere bare skeleton, all dried up and blackened..." (Pulatov 1990, 248). As if to confirm the infant Dushan's suspicion that changes in perception are accompanied by changes in essence, the house in Bukhara is different, as well, "The courtyard and the house looked different--rebuilt and painted over . . . ," but it remains Dushan's home and he "all the same noticed in it no small amount of recognizable and remembered traits" (Pulatov 1990, 258).

The more time Dushan spends in Bukhara the more the effects of his education make themselves known. He finds that although he is trilingual he is not completely comfortable in any of the three languages. Yet his "still equally shaky command of all three languages" causes him to compare and search for deeper meanings (Pulatov 1990, 282).

Along with creating linguistic chaos in his mind, Dushan's experience at the boarding school is shown to have caused him to lose touch with his people's ways and traditions. He has forgotten the fast that his people had traditionally observed during the month of Ramazan.<sup>8</sup> He is caught off guard when Bunafsha brings him the gift of food that marks the end of the fast. She chides him gently, while pointing out that his

education is to blame for his forgetting this tradition: "'Oh, you've forgotten everything in that school of yours...' Bunafsha looked at him not so much with reproach as with some kind of bewilderment, sympathy. 'The fast has ended'" (Pulatov 1990, 292). Later, Bunafsha informs Dushan that her brothers do not see what she finds in him, after all, they say: "He has not been a local for a long time, he's not Bukharan, he forgot about all our ways when he was at the boarding school..." (Pulatov 1990, 350). Upon hearing this "He was, for some reason, hurt most by her statement that he acted like an outsider, who had forgotten what was in his blood" (Pulatov 1990, 352). The alienating force of Dushan's educational experience becomes clear when one recalls that he was treated like an outsider at school, as well. Pulatov makes sure to remind us that Dushan is unable to fit in anywhere. After Bunafsha accuses him of acting like an outsider, the reader is told, "[H]e was always being reproached for that--both at home and at the boarding school . . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 352). Thus Dushan has no place where he truly feels as if he belongs.

Another manifestation of Dushan's education is that he sees the city differently than his fellow Bukharans do. Those that have never left the city have become inured to its sights, sounds, and odors: "His contemporaries knew everything about their city and so did not seem to notice the city at all" (Pulatov 1990, 283). In contrast, Dushan's role as an outsider permits him a fresher perspective:

[П]ока жил в интернате, его сверстники все обежали, осмотрели, прониклись духом улиц и переулков. . . . А он, оторванный все эти годы от дома, был теперь как гость, как чужой, и все манило его, волновало... (Pulatov 1990, 289)<sup>9</sup>

Thus although his role as an outsider can be painful, it enables him to see the city in a far more interesting, one might even say artistic, light than those who feel more comfortable within its walls do.

As is evidenced in the story "Sypaichi" even when Aitmatov's characters return home from a European education they reject the old ways. In Pulatov's works, however, we see that although education transforms a character it does not break his ties to his native culture, but rather changes the nature of his relationship with it. The writer, Ali, in "Chaikhana dlia starikov" ("The *Chaikhana* for Old Men") may have forgotten the Uzbek language but he seems to be the only one who truly mourns the disappearance of Tashkent's *chaikhanas*. In contrast, the Kazakh soldier who speaks only Russian to Edigei and Edil'bai is clearly on the other side of the fence both figuratively and literally (Aitmatov 1983a, 469). Thus in Aitmatov's works language and culture seem to be a package deal. Each language implies a world view that is complete unto itself. To reject your own people's language is to reject your own culture and to align yourself with the "other." As a writer, however, Aitmatov long seemed an exception to this pattern set forth in his own works. After all, having received a Russian education and having chosen to write in Russian he continued to focus on his native Central Asia. In his most recent novel, however, he has abandoned Central Asian themes entirely, choosing to locate most of the action in America. Whereas for Aitmatov bilingualism offers one the choice between two distinctive world views, for Pulatov the acquisition of a second or third language causes an irreversible inner change that fundamentally transforms one's view of each culture involved. Thus whereas Aitmatov's characters can either choose between worlds or reject the world entirely, Pulatov's characters have to learn to survive in a new, hybridized world of overlapping and, sometimes, conflicting views. As a result of a Soviet education the characters in both writers' works suffer alienation. Yet whereas Aitmatov's characters seem to be alienated from sharply delineated worlds, Pulatov's characters, being alienated from both worlds at once, suffer a profoundly more complex fate.

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Notes to Part Two, Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>One need only to compare the portrait of Lenin on pages 286-258 of "*Pervyi uchitel*" to the passages in which Lenin's ghost appears in Aitmatov's latest novel, *Tavro Kassandry*, in order to appreciate the sharp drop in the author's esteem for the Soviet Union's founder.

<sup>2</sup>A *bai* was a wealthy Kyrgyz, the rough equivalent in Soviet terms to a kulak. A *batrak* was a hired worker, who is assumed to be repressed by the *bai*.

<sup>3</sup>And if you could hear how they sing. I worked as a *batrak* [tenant farmer] for Efremov in Aleksandrovka. Once he took me to a church on Easter. And now our kids all stand at attention on the stage, all stonefaced, and they sing like in a Russian church. And all one and the same thing... I don't like it.

<sup>4</sup>This is evidenced by the sign 'mektep' (Kyrgyz for 'school') over the door.

<sup>5</sup>And what of it that he studied in various courses at various institutes? Maybe they taught him in order that he turn out the way he did. Maybe somewhere there is someone who is as shrewd as the devil, who put a lot of effort into Sabitzhan, in order to make Sabitzhan into Sabitzhan, and not into someone else. After all, he himself, Sabitzhan had told about--painted the picture in great detail of--that nonsense about radio-controlled people. Those times are coming he says! And what if he himself is already being controlled by that unseen and all-powerful one...

<sup>6</sup>Interview of Aug. 7, 1995.

<sup>7</sup>He thought about that day, when the courtyard, noisy and gray from the dust, had unexpectedly opened itself to outsiders in order to receive those who came to pay respects to his deceased grandmother. And it was amazingly similar to the boarding

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school courtyard. . .

<sup>8</sup>For more on this tradition and its significance in Central Asia see Baker, 81.

<sup>9</sup>[W]hile he lived in the boarding school his contemporaries ran all over town, checked everything out, were penetrated by the spirit of the streets and alleys. . . . And he torn from his home for all these years, was now like a guest, like an outsider, and everything was alluring and exciting to him...

#### IV. Myth and Reality as Competing and Complementary Discursive Systems.

Writing about the wealth of stylistic and thematic resources available to authors who have their roots in multiple cultural traditions, Aitmatov observes:

Латиноамериканская проза являет собой пример любопытного сочетания самых разнообразных элементов, художественных традиций и методов. Тут миф и реальность, достоверность фактографии и фантазия, социальный аспект и философский, политическое начало и лирическое, тут «частное», тут и «общее». И все это сливается в одно органическое целое. А причина -- воссоединение национальных культур, многочисленных «кусочков» пёстрой латиноамериканской жизни, питающих друг друга. (Aitmatov 1984, 391)<sup>1</sup>

Aitmatov is not alone in the belief that the combination of various national cultures in an author manifests itself in certain stylistic and thematic traits. Some theorists have identified certain stylistic features that they feel are characteristic of post-colonial literature. Such stylistic traits include magic realism, allegory, and a discontinuous narrative (Ashcroft, 28). Of course, it is clear from our earlier discussions of their works that both Aitmatov and Pulatov make extensive use of allegory. While the term magic realism is far more applicable to Pulatov than to Aitmatov, I shall examine both authors' use of myth in a way that utilizes previous studies of the use of magic realism in post-colonial literature. In exploring the two writers' juxtaposition of digression into myth and multiple story lines, I hope to reach a better understanding of their work. In gaining insight into Pulatov's and Aitmatov's narrative technique, perhaps we can gain a better grasp of the reasons why certain devices are so often employed by multi-cultural writers of all nations.

Stephen Slemons maintains that post-colonial writers frequently use magic realism because it:

suggests a binary opposition between the representational code of realism and that, roughly, of fantasy. In the language of narration in a magic realist text, a battle between two oppositional systems takes place, each working toward the creation of a different kind of fictional world from the other. Since the ground rules of these two worlds are incompatible, neither one can fully come into being, and each remains suspended, locked in a continuous dialectic with the 'other,' a situation which creates disjunctions within each of the separate discursive systems, rending them with gaps, absences, and silences. (Slemons, 10-11)

The worlds of myth and folklore, like the world of fantasy, spring from a discursive system that is incompatible with realism. In examining the use of mythic and folkloric elements in Aitmatov and Pulatov's works, I shall attempt to establish that they play a role similar to that which Slemons ascribes to magic realism. I shall discuss how Aitmatov's use of mythic and folkloric elements differs from Pulatov's and shall explore the extent to which each author's works exhibit the disjunctions that Slemons would lead us to expect to find in the works of post-colonial writers.

Aitmatov's use of myth, legend, and folklore as a complement to the primary story line in his works has been commented on by many observers. As Mozur points out:

Aitmatov transforms the material of myth, legend, and folklore into literary subplots, which, when introduced to the primary narrative line, function as parables, providing lyrical and moral commentaries on the

events portrayed in the more central, realistic plot line. (Mozur 1995, 8)

He goes on to say, "Aitmatov's folklore parables not only interpret but enhance the meaning of the author's portrayal of events in the main narrative plane" (Mozur 1995, 8). Other critics, such as Stepan Il'ev and Lazlo Jagusztin have also noted that Aitmatov's use of folkloric elements serves to add to the unity of his writing. Writing about "The Song of the Old Hunter" found in the *povest'*, "Proshchai Gul'sary," Il'ev observes:

The function of this parable is very significant: not only does it add new impressions to those that have already been made, but it--and this is the main thing--models the plot structural "knot" of the tale. This knot is where the most complicated vital connections are concentrated. The scheme cannot replace them, it is summoned to "untangle the knot," with the purpose of introducing definition and clarity. (Il'ev, 66)

Whereas Aitmatov's use of folkloric elements elucidates the author's moral position and reinforces what is written in the primary story line, Pulatov's employment of myth increases the ambiguity of his works. In *Cherepaxa Tarazi*, for example, the religion of the Mushriks is based on a variation of the Prometheus myth. When a storm reveals a man's body chained to a nearby cliff, the Muslim village elder attempts to convince the Mushriks that the figure is the horse thief, Farrukh. Meanwhile, the judge, Bessaz, comes up with several variants as to who the figure is and how he came to be chained to the cliff. According to Bessaz he could have been carrying the flame to warm the sick or he could have been planning to commit arson. He could be a god, a horse thief, or a hash addict. Bessaz's final decision does nothing to establish any kind of universal truth, but merely allows the village elder to deceive the

Mushriks. Later when we find that the Mushriks have a myth of their own about a meeting between the chained one and Iskander Zu-l' Karnain (the local name for Alexander the Great), we are told by the elder:

[О]ни знают десятки вариантов истории встречи Зу-ль-Карнайн с прикованным. В одном рассказе всё наоборот, Зу-ль-Карнайн -- наш святой, а прикованный -- непоколебимый мушрик. Зу-ль-Карнайн уходит побежденный его доводами. В другом рассказе оба мученики, и здесь они, естественно, говорят в один голос и в конце уходят, обнявшись, чтобы сразиться с воинами нашей веры... Словом, смысл истории встречи Зу-ль-Карнайн с прикованным меняется в зависимости от того, чьим голосом говорит чрево вещатель... (Pulatov 1991b, 149-150)<sup>2</sup>

Thus, while for Aitmatov the mythical and realistic strands parallel one another but do not intersect,<sup>3</sup> Pulatov's myths are woven into the primary narrative. If we continue with Il'ev's metaphor in which he refers to Aitmatov's primary narrative as a knot which is untied by his use of myth, Pulatov's use of myth does not untie the knot of his story lines but further entangles them. If we recall chapter four's discussion of setting, we see how the two authors' use of myth intensifies the difference in their choice of settings. Pulatov uses myth to make his world even more fantastic and alien, whereas Aitmatov's "primary story lines" seem all the more "realistic" against the background of the myths with which they are contrasted.

Recalling Slemons's contention that post-colonial writers frequently use "magic realism" because it causes the representational codes of realism and fantasy to come into conflict, paralleling the clash of cultures that takes place in a colonized society, we must conclude that the post-colonial dynamic in Pulatov's works is radically different from the post-colonial dynamic in Aitmatov's works. Whereas

Pulatov's codes overlap, causing disorientation and confusion, Aitmatov's parallel story lines allow him to clearly delineate between the two codes. The separation is so striking that it is even reflected in the narrator's language. In her study of the national epic tradition in Aitmatov's work, Mirza-Akhmedova observes that the narrative voice of Aitmatov's folklore sub-plots, marked by its rhythmic and musical nature, has much in common with the style of Kyrgyz oral epics (Mirza-Akhmedova, 34-35). This more lyrical style stands in sharp contrast to the more subdued, prosaic voice of the narrator in the "realistic" story line. The cultural significance of the variation in these stylistic voices is clear. The literary prose styling of the "realistic primary story line" came to the Kyrgyz through their contact with the Russians, whereas Aitmatov's folk themes reverberate with the sounds of centuries of Kyrgyz oral culture.

The contrast between these two worlds is best understood through a close examination of the works *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria* and *Belyi paroxod*. In both of these stories the folkloric elements occupy a more central role than in Aitmatov's other works. Aitmatov's use of myth in the two works is not, however, identical. Mirza-Akhmedova notes that in *Belyi paroxod*,

The narrator is a contemporary man, in whose consciousness the real world of today and the world of folk tales exist distinctly and in sharp definition. In *Piebald Dog...* Aitmatov comes out in the role of an epic narrator, that is to say a man who considers myth to be the most serious reality and the most absolute truth. (Mirza-Akhmedova, 80)

In both works the level of contrast between narrative tone of "the realistic story line" and the "folklore sub-plots" parallels the level of cultural conflict in the consciousness of Aitmatov's heroes.

The predominantly folkloric tone of *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria* arises out of the animistic world view shared by the heroes' and the narrator. As Mirza-

Akhmedova writes "Myths live in the consciousness of the heroes. . . . To the Nivkhs the duck Luvr really created the world. . . . To the Nivkhs the great Fish-woman really laid the foundations of the Ruifingun clan" (Mirza-Akhmedova, 81). The Nivkhs' world view has yet to clash with that of the West. They have had contact with the Russians but it has been minimal. The Russian world view has not yet caused a rift in their cultural consciousness. There is evidence, however, that the process has begun. When Emraiin brings up the stories of Christ told to the Nivkhs by Russian traders, the elder Organ does not reject Christ but puts him in his proper cultural place, saying "That means he is a great man, the greatest of the great. . . . But among us the greatest is the Fish-woman" (Aitmatov 1983a, 171). Thus the elder reminds a member of the younger generation of his cultural roots.

As I have mentioned, the world of the San-Tash preserve is divided into those who maintain Kyrgyz tradition and those who do not. This dichotomy is observed by Mozur, who observes, "The rich spiritual world of Momun and the boy is contrasted with the cynicism and disbelief of Orozkul and the other characters" (Mozur 1995, 64). Yet belief in myths and legends is not the only factor that distinguishes the good from the evil. The negative characters exhibit "antagonistic or apathetic attitudes toward the world of nature" and "positive attitudes toward modern life in the city" (Mozur 1995, 70). Orozkul's fantasies about life in the city, where he would raise his children in a Russophone environment is further evidence of his cultural depravity. The boy's adherence to the Kyrgyz tradition of knowing seven generations of male ancestors, on the other hand, serves to emphasize his cultural purity. Even the boy, however, has been affected by the clash of cultures. While three of his four rocks--the camel, the saddle, and the wolf--represent Kyrgyz cultural symbols, the fourth, his favorite, represents a tank. When he imagines himself a hero the boy's fantasy mixes traditional elements, such as batyrs and mountains, with modern Soviet images, such

as jet fighters and fascists (Aitmatov 1983a, 80). The boy has difficulty determining between modern and traditional art forms, as well. When he talks about folk tales, the boy says "I like to tell about and see everything, like in a movie" (Aitmatov 1983a, 38). His interest in the modern form of the cinema resurfaces when the children are playing in the pasture and he remarks "it seems as if you are in a movie" (Aitmatov 1983a, 32).

Perhaps the strongest manifestation of the boy's cultural duality is his creation of the tale about the white ship. His dream of changing into a fish, while retaining his human head can be seen as a symbol of his desire to be Russified, while remaining essentially Kyrgyz. As Gachev notes, the boy rejects the physical world of his people, while trying to hold on to its "attributes of the spirit (the mind, perception, thought)" (Gachev 1982, 232). Perhaps this represents a wish to adopt the convenience of modernity without the moral decay with which it is so often associated. The contradiction involved in the boy's dream is reflected in the boy's desire for his eyes to remain "the same as they had been" yet be "not quite the same, but rather able to see like fish eyes" (Aitmatov 1983a, 29). Thus, symbolically, the child hopes to perceive the world as a Kyrgyz and a Russian simultaneously.

Despite the boy's high hopes, however, his metamorphosis functions only to remove him from home. When his fantasy takes him to the city he is at a loss, realizing his superfluousness outside of his own cultural context: "How should he behave here? Should he go with his father? Would he take the boy with him? And if he were to take him his wife would ask, 'Who is that? Where's he from? What's he here for?' No, it would be better not to go" (Aitmatov 1983a, 35). Lest it be unclear why a trip to visit one's father should be connected with leaving one's cultural roots, we must take into account that Aitmatov's parents are the ones who introduced him to Russian culture, whereas his "love for the rich culture of his native land" was the

result of summers spent in the country with his grandmother and aunt (Mozur 1995, 18-19).

The artificiality of the tale of the white ship is evidenced by the notable difference in its stylistic register as compared to the other folk tales related in the story. The tale of the white ship's prosaic tone is especially striking in contrast to the language of the myth of the Horned Deer-mother. The tale of the white ship begins prosaically:

А пароход плыл, медленно удаляясь. Белый и длинный, он скользил по синей глади озера с дымами из труб и не знал, что к нему плыл мальчик, превратившись в рыбу-мальчика.

Он мечтал превратиться в рыбу так, чтобы всё у него было рыбе -- тело, хвост, плавники, чешуя, -- и только голова бы оставалась своя. . . . (Aitmatov 1983a, 28-29)<sup>4</sup>

The myth of the Horned Deer-mother, on the other hand, exhibits the formulaic phrases and repetition of key elements that we expect to find in mythic narratives:

Случилось это давно. В давние-предавние времена, когда лесов на земле было больше, чем травы, а воды в наших краях было больше, чем суши, жило одно киргизское племя на берегу большой и холодной реки. Энесай называлась та река. Протекает она далеко отсюда, в Сибири. На коне туда три года и три месяца скакать. (Aitmatov 1983a, 38-39)<sup>5</sup>

In both *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria* and *Belyi parokhod*, Aitmatov's use of myth reinforces the cultural themes of the works. The cultural unity of the animistic Nivkh fishermen is reflected in the predominately folkloric tone of the narration in *Pegii pes, begushchii kraem moria*, while the cultural duality of the Kyrgyz in the outpost near Issyk-kul is paralleled by the Aitmatov's use of two distinct narrative

styles. The unity of the Nivkh's world view transforms a story in which fantastic elements are entirely lacking into legend. That Kirisk names the wind, the waves, and the star after Organ, Mylgun, and his father, underscores the function of folklore as cultural memory. That the wind, the waves, and the star help the boy return home to his people underscores the value of folklore as a cultural guide. In *Belyi parokhod*, on the other hand, the boy's attempt to unite the worlds of myth and reality proves fatal. In the culturally unified world of the Nivkh hunters a synthesis of reality and legend is possible, whereas a synthesis of the Kyrgyz animistic world view and the realistic world view of the Russians is impossible. The two worlds can exist side by side as they do in the narrative, but when they are brought together only two outcomes are possible--either the myth must die like the maral who is taken by the boy to be the Horned Deer-mother, or "reality" must be rejected, as it is by the boy. Even in the Nivkh world the role of myth is limited to memory and guidance. The Nivkh elder, Organ, believes in the Fish-woman but he knows that she cannot live in his world. Thus his dream often ends with the realization that she cannot survive outside of her own element. The purpose of myth is not to replace reality but to exist parallel to reality, explaining life's complexities and providing moral guidance. In this light, and in light of the difficulty many Central Asians have in differentiating between hard and soft "I", perhaps the death of the maral (*maral*) symbolizes the loss of societies moral values (*moral'*).

The boundary between myth and "reality" is much more fluid in Pulatov's writing. In *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia* the Koranic savior from earthquakes, Salikh, meets the contemporary hero Davliatov when the latter is a child. Salikh even serves as Davliatov's double in the novel's complex interweaving of fantasy and Soviet Central Asian (sur-)realia (Pulatov 1991a, 148). In *Cherepakha Tarazi* Farrukh

suffers mysterious pains in his liver, which further blurs the distinction between him and the mythical figure chained to the cliff (Pulatov 1991b, 103).

In Aitmatov's works attempts at transformation prove fatal. For Pulatov's characters, on the other hand, magical changes in their physical nature prove liberating: as a tortoise, Bessaz finds contentment and, as a dolphin-man, Oïia-Aïia finds acceptance among the dolphins. In the same way that the boy in *Belyi parokhod* cannot have eyes that are both human eyes and fish eyes, Aitmatov cannot blend the mythic--the magical--and the real on one narrative plane. Pulatov, on the other hand, allows the two worlds to come together, creating a unique if not always perfectly focused vision.

Through a comparative reading of Aitmatov and Pulatov we find that there is a great deal of artistic and stylistic divergence between the two writers. Perhaps Aitmatov, who writes in both Kyrgyz and Russian, feels that he can compartmentalize the Russian and Kyrgyz aspects of his personality. His artistic vision, at least, implies that the two worlds are distinct. One can shed light upon the other, but the line dividing the two is sharply drawn. Ultimately the same moral laws apply in both worlds, but the traditional Kyrgyz have an advantage in that they can employ the guidance of myth. While Aitmatov's characters are at home in real Central Asian settings, for Pulatov's characters Bukhara and their cultural roots are little more than a childhood memory. By creating bizarre and fantastic worlds in which myth, magic, and reality exist on an equal footing, Pulatov allows the reader to share his characters' feelings of exile. Slemons's theory that the use of magic realism in post-colonial literature to blur the boundaries between the real and the fantastic parallels the blurring of the boundaries between the cultural worlds inhabited by the author implies that the post-colonial writer, by nature, suffers from a crisis of identity. Thus we find that his theory is far more applicable to Pulatov's works in which the two conflicting worlds

do not permit one another to "come fully into being" than to Aitmatov's works in which both worlds seem fully developed. In Pulatov's writing the battle between discursive systems resembles a guerrilla war that is waged on every page with no clear cut battle lines. Aitmatov, on the other hand, keeps a solid wall between the two world views, implying that, for him at least, they are separate and distinct.

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Notes to Part Two, Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup>Latin American prose is an example of a curious combination of the most various elements, artistic traditions and methods. Here we have myth and reality, the authenticity of factography and fantasy, a social aspect and a philosophical one, a political base and a lyrical one, here we have the "specific" and here the "general." And all this comes together in one organic whole. And the reason for this is the combination of national cultures, the multiple "pieces" of variegated Latin American life, nourishing each other.

<sup>2</sup>They know dozens of variations on the story of the meeting between Zu-l'-Karnain and the bound one. In one story everything is the other way around, Zu-l'-Karnain is our saint and the bound one is a steadfast Mushrik. Zu-l'-Karnain leaves convinced by his arguments. In another story they are both martyrs and here, naturally, they speak with one voice and in the end they embrace and go off to do battle with the forces of our faith... In a word, the meaning of the story of the meeting between Zu-l'-Karnain and the bound one changes depending on whose voice the ventriliquist is speaking with.

<sup>3</sup>While in his latest work, *Tavro Kassandry*, he does have the ghosts of Lenin and Stalin meet for a stroll on Red Square, they are, nevertheless, kept far from the main action in America.

<sup>4</sup>And the boat sailed, slowly moving into the distance. White and long, it slid along the smooth blue surface of the lake with smoke coming from its stacks and it didn't know that toward it was swimming a boy who had become a fish-boy.

He dreamed of turning into a fish in such a way that all his parts would be like those of a fish--his body, his tail, his fins, his scales--and only his head would remain his own.

It happened a long time ago. In far, far away times, when there were more woods on the Earth than grass, and there was more water in our parts than land, there lived a certain Kyrgyz tribe on the banks of a big and cold river. That river was called Enesei. It flows far away from here, in Siberia. On a horse it takes three years and three months to ride there.

## V. Dolphins, Doubles, and the "Other" Woman.

It has been said that "a pervasive concern with the myths of identity and authenticity" is "a feature common to all post-colonial literature in English" (Ashcroft, 9). Aitmatov and Pulatov have no less interest in such topics than writers of the English Commonwealth.

Much of what I have already written on the conflict of cultures in the two authors' works has dealt with their concern for authenticity. Aitmatov's world view, for example, strongly implies that a "genuine" Kyrgyz should know his seven ancestors, respect nature, ride a horse well, speak Kyrgyz, and remember his people's folk culture. A Kyrgyz who drinks vodka to excess, lives in an apartment, or forgets his language, on the other hand, is seen as less than "authentic." Although no single character in Aitmatov's works is shown to be entirely Kyrgyz, those that embody the greatest number of what the author considers to be Kyrgyz traits are the most positive characters.

Although Pulatov does not have a system of touchstones for verifying "authenticity," he often makes generalizations about the East and the West. He is capable of such statements as "They acted fawning, like true Bukharans" (Pulatov 1990, 334) or "[T]he public . . . was adorned with a truly Eastern lustre and richness, mixed with tastelessness" (Pulatov 1991a, 139). Yet, despite his use of words that imply "authenticity" such as "true" and "truly," Pulatov's stereotypes make little impression and are easily dismissed. Indeed, Pulatov himself reveals the way in which such labels, instead of establishing "authenticity," obscure one's vision of the "real" human being:

Афганец, лезгин, бухарский еврей, индус, перс-шиит... Из всех в семье, кажется, только она [бабушка] и обращала внимание на

принадлежность того, о ком шла речь, но делала это бабушка так искусно, говорила с такой иронией, пуская столько тумана, что все становилось похоже на игру, выдумку, и казалось, что люди, о которых она сейчас рассуждала с таким пылом, не только не живут по соседству, но и вообще не существуют в природе. (Pulatov 1990, 338)<sup>1</sup>

When as an adult Dushan goes to work as an inspector, he discovers that no one belonging to these nationalities fits the stereotyped images that his grandmother had created for them (Pulatov 1990, 338).

The *povest'* "Zavsegdatai" ("The Regular") focuses on the activities of Akhun, a Bukharan who, having lived and worked in Moscow, has returned to Central Asia. As both the narrator and main character, Akhun, makes occasional generalizations about national characteristics. Since, as a narrator, Akhun is less than totally reliable, it might be presumptuous to contend that these generalizations are indicative of Pulatov's attitude toward the peoples of Central Asia. It could be argued, on the other hand, that by making his hero both a writer and the son of an Uzbek father and a Tajik mother, Pulatov is inviting the reader to draw parallels between the character and the author. One could strengthen such an argument by mentioning that Pulatov makes it a point to call attention to his hero's age: thirty-seven, which makes him the same age as the author was at the time the tale was written.

The description of his mixed heritage provides Akhun with the opportunity to make generalizations about both Uzbeks and Tajiks. He contends that he has inherited "a tendency to dream" and "a artistically mysterious langor" from his mother, while his father has contributed "strength and open-heartedness" (Pulatov 1991b, 435). These images are quite similar to the portrayal of Uzbeks as simple energetic country folk and Tajiks as urban aristocratic intellectuals that we see in *Strasti bukharskogo doma*.

Despite these differences, however, Uzbeks and Tajiks, according to Akhun should have much in common. He characterizes all Asians as being, "sensuous, irrational, and contemplative" (Pulatov 1991b, 446). Thus, at least to some extent, Pulatov seems to accept European stereotypes of "Orientals."

While showing the reader around the bazaar, Akhun points out the caged birds. The captive fowl also bring stereotypes of "Orientals" to mind, with their "meekness" and "wise" gaze. Akhun even calls attention to the fact that among these imprisoned avians there are quail: the "national bird, a symbol" (Pulatov 1991b, 436). The connection between the caged birds and the Central Asians they represent is strengthened as Akhun discusses the bazaar's gates. He contrasts the ugly gates of his new city with those of Bukhara. Both old Bukhara and the new city have gates that place limits on the people. Yet, Bukhara's gates have no walls--they continue to function because of the people's "special attitude, reverence, toward such symbols as gates" (Pulatov 1991b, 436). Thus, the new city controls the people with ugly force. Bukhara, on the other hand, may be similarly despotic, but its rule incorporates elements of beauty, tradition, and reverence.

At times, however, Pulatov's flippant and vague generalizations create the sense that the narrator himself is not "genuine," because only an outsider could be so superficial. As the reader's grounding in world of the work, Pulatov's "inauthentic" narrator is truly "disingenuous." He is the party crasher posing as the host. He promises the reader an inside view of Central Asian culture but delivers, instead, an inside glimpse at the world of a consummate outsider.

This is not to say that Pulatov makes no attempts to characterize "authenticity." Bekov, for example, is most definitely an attempt to portray a "real" old guard communist, and Dushan's grandmother and the old men whom he calls the *byvshie* seem to be genuine attempts to capture the "true" essence of Bukhara. Significantly,

however, all of these images of "authenticity" are from past generations, implying that modern Central Asia is the realm of the cultural hybrid. Despite this implication that cultural purity is a thing of the past, Pulatov's main characters are seen to suffer greatly from crises of identity and complexes of inferiority toward fellow countrymen, whom they perceive as more "genuine," more comfortable with traditional culture.

The typical hero in Pulatov's stories is acutely aware of his own location at a cultural crossroads. In *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, for example, Dushan senses his otherness at an early age. Indeed the boy even feels like an outsider among his family:

Их четверо (Амон тоже с взрослыми), а он один -- так делилась в часы ссоры семья, большинство и меньшинство. Большинство, поддерживаемое друг другом, ничуть, кажется, не переживало размолвку, ибо видел он, что они по-прежнему разговаривают, ходят с равнодушными, ничуть не тронутыми горечью лицами, как будто горе их столь мало и ничтожно, что его и не пытаются они делить между собой, а отгоняют от себя и не думают о нем, зато часть горечи, доставшаяся ему, его горечь, была неделима и делала его таким несчастным и одиноким. (Pulatov 1990, 47).<sup>2</sup>

Upon reaching the age when he is permitted to play outside, Dushan suffers from a sense of loneliness that is still more profound than that which he had felt at home. His mother calls him an "ulichnyi mal'chik" 'street boy,' indicating that she now associates him with the outsiders, the "others." She does not realize, however, "that the street had not wholly accepted her son and beyond the gates Dushan often felt lonely, realizing that the boys did not trust him completely . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 76). Thus, even at this early age, Dushan is caught between two cultures, the culture of his home and the culture of the street. Neither, however, accepts him entirely as its own. It is only when he tells the other boys stories from *One Thousand and One Arabian*

*Nights* that Dushan earns their respect (Pulatov 1990, 77). Thus, Dushan, similar to Pulatov and other post-colonial writers, finds a place in his new culture through his gift of story telling.

Despite occasional acceptance, however, Dushan is literally cursed to be an outsider. When he teases the neighbor woman, she curses him with the words, "May you, boy, all your life, eat strange food among a foreign people" (Pulatov 1990, 95). The neighbor's words are the focus of an episode in the novel that is rife with images of "otherness."

Hearing the woman's curse, the distraught boy writes the following question to his mother and grandmother, "Wy iz it bad to eet other peepilz fud [Pachimu nilza est chuzhuiu pishu]" (Pulatov 1990, 94). Dushan's poor spelling emphasizes his otherness at home--the adults can all write properly. Moreover, the Russian rendition of this improperly written Tajik sentence evokes images of stereotypical Central Asians who speak poor Russian. Finally, because of its ambiguity the sentence is misunderstood. This misunderstanding underscores that without a common context, it is necessary to choose one's words carefully even if the speaker and the listener share a common language. All of the above images find parallels in the early stage of a post-colonial writer's career. A writer's early works in the colonizer's language can be criticized as being poorly written and the author can be misunderstood by his readers because of a lack of shared context. Similar to Dushan, Pulatov has also been criticized for grammatical and stylistic errors in his Russian prose.<sup>3</sup>

Yet another image of difference that is involved in the episode in which Dushan is cursed to eat a stranger's food, is that his father is seen to read a French book. When the boy takes to repeating the title, pronouncing his 'o' in the French manner, his grandmother calls him a "European" (Pulatov 1990, 95). Thus, the images of "otherness" in this episode resonate and overlap. On one level, Dushan is a Central

Asian who writes Russian poorly while on another he has become European and thus the object of his grandmother's ridicule. In every role, however, Dushan is an outsider and, thus, the neighbor woman's curse is effective. It does not matter where Dushan eats, it will always be among strangers.

Regardless of where Dushan is, he discovers that society is split into groups, none of which accepts him completely. The boys in the street were divided into groups of Uzbeks and Tajiks. When problems arose between these two groups, "Dushan would sense especially acutely, that neither the Tajik boys nor the Uzbek boys felt that he was one of their own" (Pulatov 1990, 93). A similar division exists in the boarding school. Appak even asks Dushan directly, "And what nationality are you yourself? Among Uzbeks you are an Uzbek, among Tajiks you are a Tajik, you are evasive and deceitful." Dushan answers, "Among bad Uzbeks I'm an Uzbek, among bad Tajiks I'm a Tajik, among bad Armenians allow me to be an Armenian... in order to have a language, understand, Pak, a language... a word... so I can say, 'You're a bad Uzbek.'" (Pulatov 1990, 204). Thus, again, although Dushan cannot find full acceptance among any of the cultures in which he exists, his mastery of the word allows him to make a connection, this time in the classic Soviet author's role of a conscience, to all of the peoples involved.

Despite his ability to entertain or edify those around him, Dushan suffers greatly. Indeed, his position between cultures is seen to be more painful than that of any other character in the novel. In a conversation between Dushan and his grandfather, Pulatov attempts to reveal the full intensity of the forces experienced by the post-colonial intellectual:

-- Ты «между», -- спокойно сказал дед, словно давно и это обдумал и был уверен в своей правоте. -- Между двумя укладами жизни -- традиционным и современным, между двумя языками,

между двумя отношениями к одному явлению -- скажем к рождению, смерти... Тебе труднее, чем мне, чем бабушке, -- об отце твоём и матери не говорю... они как бы выскочили... от одного полюса ушли, к другому не пришли... Тебе труднее, потому что когда два уклада трутся друг об друга, градус жизни повышается до точки кипения... Хотя кипения этого на поверхности и не видно... как с тем веществом -- напомни-ка, напомни... в химии, -- которое внешне спокойно, не шевелится не дышит... но спокойствие это обманчивое, ибо на самом деле оно кипит... Другое это, высшее кипение... Ты «между»... это такая нагрузка на нервы-то, градус то повышается до возбуждения, то потом резко падает, охладившись до меланхолии... (Pulatov 1990, 272)<sup>4</sup>

Dushan is not the only of Pulatov's characters to be "between." In "Zavsegdatai" Akhun occupies a unique place in the world of the bazaar. Indeed, if we choose to view the bazaar as a microcosm of Central Asian society, we can see the merchants, who are always present at the bazaar, as native Central Asians and the customers, who come to the bazaar from without, as Europeans.<sup>5</sup> Akhun, of course, is neither one nor the other. Not belonging fully to either group, however, Akhun exhibits characteristics of both. That he buys things is clear from his remarks that he gets bargains by taking advantage of the superstition that it brings bad luck if a merchant's first sale of the day is to a woman. He is treated as a merchant, however, by the Uighur, who seeks his help in arranging a deal. When Akhun asks Bobosho if there are any other regulars at the bazaar who are neither merchants nor customers, Bobosho answers, "Funny I never thought about it... There are only two kinds of people--merchants and customers, and that there is something between the two, a

middle ground--I never thought about it, brother" (Pulatov 1990b, 441). Thus, Akhun, similar to Dushan, is suspended between two cultures. He is partially accepted as a member of both, yet he never truly belongs to either.

A similar predicament is faced by Oïia-Aïia of "Morskie kochevniki." After spending years alone at sea in his yacht, Oïia-Aïia discovers that he enjoys passing the time beneath the water's surface. Finding this strange environment more comfortable than his yacht, he only comes up for meals and to sleep. He soon begins to adapt to his new surroundings, growing a blow-hole and a tale. The dolphins who inhabit his new environment--or culture--are slow to accept him. They are frustrated, as is Oïia-Aïia himself, by the outsider's inability to leap and dive like a dolphin. After much practice, however, "Oïia-Aïia was completely able to compete with the dolphins in jumping out of the water and he even jumped better and farther than they did, because he worked at it" (Pulatov 1991a, 510). In this instance, Oïia-Aïia seems to be going through a stage similar to that undergone by many post-colonial intellectuals: he is trying to be more dolphin than the dolphins or "whiter than Snow White herself" (Trinh, 52).<sup>6</sup> In the end, however, Oïia-Aïia leaves the dolphins behind as well, diving "beyond the point in the water, beneath which everything disappears forever in the darkness and the reflections of some other, unearthly life can be seen" (Pulatov 1991a, 540). Thus, Oïia-Aïia's experimentation with the culture of the "other" ends not in a return to his native culture but rather in a retreat into isolation and the self.

Tarazi, the hero of Pulatov's first novel, is both a poet and a scientist. Describing Tarazi, the narrator informs the reader that "this duality is his essence, his way of life, his fate . . ." (Pulatov 1991b, 13). Perhaps this ambivalence explains the frequency with which doubles are encountered in Pulatov's works. The only true double in *Cherepakha Tarazi* is found in Tarazi's short story "Na prieme u gospoda" ("At a Reception with the Lord") and even the title of this story reveals a type of

double: although on one level the word *gospod'* in the title refers to the Emir of Bukhara, Pulatov uses its connotations (compare the word 'Lord' in English) to enhance the story's mystic and religious imagery. A gift from the Lord allows the hero's self to split into its two parts, *Ia eto da* and *Ia tak sebe*.<sup>7</sup> While this may be the novel's only true double all of the other characters play multiple roles. As I have mentioned, Tarazi is at once a poet and a scientist. Bessaz is a human and a turtle, a judge and, according to Kumysh, a merchant. Farrukh is a simple servant, a horse-thief, and Prometheus. Although the reader may be tempted to try to solve the mystery as to who is the real Farrukh, Bessaz, or Tarazi, I think this would be a mistake. By showing us his characters' many sides Pulatov seems to be attempting to reveal the extent to which the ideal of a unified identity is a flawed concept.

The frequency of such doubles in Pulatov's works serves to undermine the concept of a unified and distinct identity—cultural or otherwise—in the readers mind. Aitmatov has also been known to employ doubles in his writing. In contrast to Pulatov's doubles, however, Aitmatov's doubles, are not one character with multiple personalities, but multiple characters, such as Gulsary and Tanabai,<sup>8</sup> Tansykbaev and Chengiz Khan, or the mankurt and Sabitzhan who share similar characteristics. Thus while Pulatov's use of doubles undermines the concept of a distinct identity, Aitmatov's use of doubles encourages us to think in types.

The combination of European and Asian elements that is found in the title of the novel *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia* is repeated not only in the name of the city where the story takes place, Shakhgrad, but in the ethnic background of its primary hero, Ruslan Davliatov. Born to a Russian mother and an Uzbek father, Davliatov is characterized as a *polukrovka* 'half-breed' and a *polushovka*, a word apparently coined by Pulatov which means "a person with a split consciousness" (Pulatov 1990a, 3).

Unlike Pulatov's earlier heroes, however, Davliatov has a second personality with a separate name. Davliatov further differs from Pulatov's previous protagonists in that he is surrounded by others with equally multifarious natures. As he tells Mirabov:

Я ведь человек, выражаясь вашим врачебным языком, амбивалентный, как и большинство сегодняшних типов. Так вот... ко всему я испытываю два чувства, всему даю две оценки... самые противоположные, мучительно раздваиваюсь. (Pulatov 1991a, 102)<sup>9</sup>

Despite his realization that almost everyone in his society suffers from the same inner cultural conflicts that he does, Davliatov is, nevertheless, isolated from most of his fellow Shakhgraders. The barrier between Davliatov and his neighbors is, however, of his own creation:

[О]н спокойно выдержал укоризненные взгляды соседей, их молчаливое неодобрение. Они чувствовали незримую черту, проведенную Давлятовым, как бы дающим им понять, что их душевное никак не совпадает с его, что он носит в себе то, что выше текущей жизни, в которой они живут с их желаниями, суетой и упреками. Да, окружающим его не понять! (Pulatov 1991a, 16)<sup>10</sup>

Here it is clear that Davliatov's isolation is connected with his role as an intellectual. Having received a Western education, he is too concerned with "higher" ideals to bother with the worries of daily life. Yet, the final line of the above cited passage is laden with irony, indicating that Davliatov's isolation is misguided and unnatural. Thus even Davliatov's seeming complicity in his own detachment is seen as a folly brought on by his contact with the colonizer's culture.

In that he suffers from isolation, Davliatov is not, of course, unique among Pulatov's characters. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that all of his characters are to some extent loners. In *Strasti bukharskogo doma* we are told that "Dushan was not able to get close to Appak, although he did try" (Pulatov 1990, 191). Dushan's inability to make emotional contact is repeated with the other boys in the boarding school and even with his own brother. In "Morskii Kochevnik" Oiiia-Aiia is alone in his yacht, able to have only brief meetings with passing vessels. Akhun of "Zavsegdatai" "is a man who feels like an outsider everywhere he goes" (Bocharov, 14). The kite in "Vladiiia" ("The Territory") makes its rounds alone. Abitai says of Tarazi that "He is a stranger everywhere, he is antisocial" (Pulatov 1991b, 124).

Although it has been said of Aitmatov's protagonists that most of them are 'lonely' (Jagusztin, 356), they, unlike Pulatov's heroes, are usually surrounded by a small circle of family and friends. Among Aitmatov's characters who could be defined as true loners we find Ilias from "Topolek moi v krasnoi kosynke" ("My little poplar in a red scarf"), Avdii from the novel *Plakha* (*The Place of the Skull*), and Filofei from *Tavro Kassandry* (*The Mark of Cassandra*). Others, however, are connected rather closely to at least one nearby person or creature. The boy in *Belyi parokhod* has his grandfather. Tanabai has Gulsary. Edigei has his wife and his camel. Kirisk has his family and the elder, Organ. Jamilia has Daniiar and Daniiar has Jamilia. The wolves in *Plakha*, Akbara and Tashchainar, have each other as well.

Thus, comparing the two authors, one could conclude that Pulatov's artistic vision is far more concerned with alienation than is Aitmatov's. This definitely seems to be the case upon a superficial reading of their works. Whereas Pulatov's narrators constantly refer to his characters' isolation, Aitmatov's narrators rarely speak in such terms. Yet, if we explore Pulatov's and Aitmatov's use of setting, their fascination with transformation, their employment of doubles, and their use of romantic

relationships as a symbol for cultural acceptance, we shall find that Aitmatov exhibits a similar, if less pronounced, concern for questions of alienation and isolation.

The different approaches that the two writers take to the settings of their works color every aspect of their writing's stylistic and compositional design. Aitmatov's works are nearly always set in a concrete place and time, whereas Pulatov seldom provides such specificity. In most instances Aitmatov informs the reader of the geographic setting of his stories within the first page of his text. The temporal settings of his stories are equally concrete, framed as they are by recognizable historical events, such as the Second World War, the death of Stalin, or the onset of Chingiz Khan's campaign in Europe. By fixing his narratives in places and periods that the reader recognizes as part of his own world, Aitmatov invites the reader to view the action in his stories as actual or potentially actual events.

While Aitmatov is quite consistent in his use of concrete geographical and temporal settings, Pulatov shows more stylistic heterogeneity. In "Prochie naseleenyie punkty," for example, he sets the stage with his first sentence saying, "On a summer night in 1932, outside the building of the Regional Committee in old Bukhara, there stood two pure-blooded steeds in military saddles" (Pulatov 1991b, 216). We also have a concrete setting in the povest' "Oklikni menia v lesu" which, as G. Trefilova writes, "Stands out in contrast to the rest [of Pulatov's writing] in the specificity of its physical and temporal setting" (Trefilova, 264). As implied in Trefilova's statement, however, the bulk of Pulatov's works take place in non-specific settings. In "Vtoroe puteshestvie Kaipa" the hero sails an anonymous sea that is dotted with islands which bear folkloresque names such as *Peschanyi* 'sandy' and *Zelenyi* 'green.' Whereas Aitmatov's *ails*, settlements, and towns seem typical for the time and place of his stories' occurrence, many of Pulatov's stories unfold in bizarre and fantastic settings. In *Cherepakha Tarazi*, as I have mentioned, the streets of Dengiz Khan's city are laid

out in concentric circles with buildings blocking access from one street to another. The castle where Vali-Baba works in "Storozhevye bashni" is surrounded by water on all sides with no bridges connecting it to the surrounding desert. In "Morskie kochevniki" the Island of Orang-Utan the Wise is inhabited by an anthropomorphized gorilla and orbited by a floating prison. These surreal settings place the reader in the role of an outsider allowing him to share in the alienation of many of Pulatov's characters. Even the novel *Strasti Buxarskogo doma*, in which the action takes place in and around Twentieth Century Bukhara, begins with the description of the infant Dushan's efforts to comprehend the strangeness (in his eyes) of the world beyond the "room where he was born, and the cradle where he was growing up" (Pulatov 1990, 18). Even in Pulatov's more fantastic and surreal works, references to Bukhara are not uncommon. In "Zavsegdatai" Akhun notes " I myself haven't lived in Bukhara since I was sixteen years old . . . " (Pulatov 1991b, 431) emphasizing his absence from Bukhara over his presence in the nameless town he currently inhabits. In *Cherepaxa Tarazi* the title character has been exiled from Bukhara for his criticism of alchemy and his writing of a politically unacceptable short story (Pulatov 1991b, 38 and 48). Indeed, in Pulatov's works, the world is divided into home, Bukhara, and exile, not Bukhara, and his use of fantastic, bizarre, and non-specific settings to allow the reader to feel the disorientation that comes with being an outsider. M. H. Nightingale notes a similar use of such settings in post-colonial literature written in English saying, "The New Literatures in English... also abound with authors and fictional creations who inhabit disturbed, homeless or chaotic worlds as displaced beings" (Nightingale, 2). Nightingale also observes that the image of home is used by many post-colonial writers as a metaphor for their national culture and native language. Thus for Pulatov exile from Bukhara does not only represent physical displacement, but serves as a symbol for cultural and linguistic alienation.

Nowhere in Pulatov's writing are the contradictions of post-colonial exile better captured than in the portrayal of Tarazi. The testudologist has been driven away from his native Bukhara and has been wandering for ten years. His exile is the source of both happiness and sorrow. Although his memories of home are vague, he longs for the Bukhara of his childhood: "He remembered his paternal home in Bukhara only in a complicated mix of colors, smells and lines and his heart would be wracked with longing—even from trifles—the blue pitcher of oil in the niche in the courtyard" (Pulatov 1991b, 63-64). When his sister arranges an audience for him to appeal to the Emir of Bukhara for an end to his exile, however, he gets only as far as the waiting room before deciding that whatever Bukhara could offer was not worth sacrificing "even a single hour of his freedom, his voluntary exile, his rhythmic rocking in the saddle on a desert road" (Pulatov 1991b, 64). Note here that Tarazi's references to his exile are as ambivalent as his feelings toward it. Although he has been forced to leave Bukhara, he refers to his exile as voluntary. This seems to reflect Pulatov's ambivalent feelings toward his own cultural exile. To be multi-cultural has many advantages, but it can leave one longing for the place where he truly belongs, the people with whom he can truly identify.

After his travels bring him into contact with the Mongols, Tarazi writes a treatise entitled, "On the Defense of Fortresses Against Wild Nomads." Pulatov's description of Tarazi's work on the tract offers a fascinating picture of the writer in exile:

В этом трактате, как в любом сочинении, ему приходилось то примирять свои непримиримые противоречия, то снова раздваиваться, чтобы выразиться сполна, то есть воображать себя и кочевником, пытающимся взять городскую крепость, что было нетрудно сделать при его образе жизни изгнанника,

странника, и горожанином, защитником крепости, что также было легко представить, благодаря ностальгии по отчужденному дому. (Pulatov 1991b, 64)<sup>11</sup>

Whereas the displacement experienced by Pulatov's characters is quite striking, Aitmatov's people usually appear to be at home. Of course, this is not true of all of Aitmatov's characters. In his early writing it was seen as a positive step when a hero left the backward *ail* for more modern settings or to work in Soviet agriculture. In his later works, as I have already noted, those characters who move to the city are seen as corrupted by modernity. Yet if we look closely, we shall see that Aitmatov's works contain many subtle examples of displacement which affect even those characters who never seem to leave home.

We have discussed the displacement that the boy's schooling causes in *Belyi parokhod*. If we combine the alienating effects of the boy's education with his dream to swim away and Orozkul's dream to move to the city, it becomes clear that displacement plays a major role in the tale. Thus although the entire *povest'* takes place in a small area of Kyrgyzstan, it treats the topic of cultural exile through its spacial symbolism.

Likewise, although in *Pegii pes begushchii kraem moria* the heroes never abandon a purely Nivkh environment, the plot hinges on their trip from home into the sea. Indeed, the entire *povest'* is dedicated to Kirisk's struggle to return to his village. If we view the elements of land and water as symbols for radically different cultures, then the story can be read as a metaphor for being lost in a foreign culture and needing the guidance of one's ancestors in order to return to one's own culture.

Whereas in his *povest'*s Aitmatov's primary concern seems to be the search for, the loss of, or the destruction of the home, the author's novels show more interest in what it means to be an exile. As we have discussed, Edigei lives in a "half-station,"

midway between tradition and modernity. Aitmatov's Russian heroes, Avdii from *Plakha* and Filofei from *Tavro Kassandry* (*The Mark of Cassandra*), are both outsiders and exiles.

Having been kicked out of his religious seminary, Avdii loses his apartment as well. Thus, homelessness and cultural alienation are shown to be connected, as Avdii has been torn from his religious roots and lost his home simultaneously. Akbara and Tashchainar are driven from their traditional home. The scene of the antelope massacre ends with the lines: "Behind them remained their now inaccessible den. Now there were people there..." (Aitmatov 1987, 38). The wolves, however, are adaptable and find a new home only to be displaced again. When they are hounded in yet a third milieu, we realize that there is no place left for them to hide.

In Aitmatov's most recent works, the exile experienced by the characters is of a more voluntary nature. Bakhiana leaves her home for mysterious reasons, choosing to live the rest of her life at an island nunnery. Such a decision could be viewed as the choice to live in the culture of the other. In "Bakhiana," however, choosing to live in the nunnery is seen less as the acceptance of the nun's way of life than as a rejection of the outside world. When asked how and why she has come to the nunnery, Bakhiana replies:

По пути сюда я прошла земли и народы. По-всякому приходилось. Но я выжила. И лишь укрепилась в моем желании удалиться в монастырь. Конечно, вы правы, преподобная мать, -- действительно, высшая благодать, когда обет возлагаешь из веры в идею, из чистых убеждений, как вы говорили. Я же к своему убеждению пришла иным путем -- из отрицания. (Aitmatov 1995, 417)<sup>12</sup>

Although her reason for joining the nunnery is shrouded in mystery, one of the few specific things that she mentions is her contact with various cultures and the need to assimilate in order to survive. Bakhiana does not specify what she negates or rejects, but she brings up negation immediately after talking about travelling through various lands and experiencing various cultures. Thus, Bakhiana's retreat from society is not the sacrifice of her own native culture for that of the nunnery, but the rejection of all earthly culture for the purely spiritual world of the nuns. That the nunnery is located on a remote and isolated island only serves to underscore its role as a place of voluntary cultural exile.

The "space monk" Filofei undertakes a similar retreat into the realm of the spirit in *Tavro Kassandry*. Having attempted to inform the human race of the threat modernity poses if it is not infused with the values of the past, Filofei takes his leave of all of human society by walking off into space. Filofei's retreat can be seen to echo many images from Aitmatov's earlier works. Many of the author's characters such as the boy from *Belyi parokhod*, the adults from *Pegii pes begushchii kraem moria*, and Boston from *Plakha* retreat into the water. Yet there are differences between Filofei's decision to retreat into the isolation of space and the choices that lead to the drowning deaths of the boy, the Nivkhs, and Boston.

The boy enters the water in a deluded state, believing on at least one level that he can become a fish and swim to his father. The Nivkhs do not leave the boat to escape their world, but rather to save Kirisk. Boston contemplates suicide in Issyk-Kul because he knows he has to pay for the murders of his son and Bazarbai. Filofei, on the other hand, could return to Earth and continue his life as a scientist. He rejects this path, however, choosing instead a cold and lonely death in space. Despite these differences, however, there are elements of Filofei's nihilism in both the boy's death and Boston's suicide. The boy is said to have rejected that which his child's soul

could not accept. Boston, having lost everything, can be seen to have already rejected society when he chooses to kill Bazarbai, and thus the murder can be seen as nothing more than a detour on the path to the water. Even the well-grounded, culturally-stable Organ seems to see his suicide as a kind of escape from the tribulations of existence on the land, in his own culture. Thus, although Aitmatov's earlier works privilege his traditional culture over modernity, they contain the seeds of the cultural nihilism that we will find in "Bakhiana" and *Tavro Kassandry*. Yet, the earlier works end with death and powerful feelings of loss. The characters would choose tradition over modernity if they could but they have been robbed of that choice. In these final two works, however, Aitmatov focuses on his heroes' voluntary exile from all earthly cultures. Of course we know that Filofei dies, but we are not shown his death. Indeed this "cosmic monk" steps out of his ship and straight into space--heaven. Aitmatov's final two heroes, with their pious rejection of the ways of the world, evoke an epithet used by Fanon to describe post-colonial intellectuals who "cannot or will not" choose between cultures. He calls them "individuals without anchor, without a horizon, colorless, stateless, rootless--a race of angels" (Fannon 1968, 218).

Perhaps the most interesting reflection of the tensions involved in the post-colonial situation is to be found in Aitmatov's and Pulatov's portrayal of romantic relationships. Aitmatov's characters are almost invariably forced to choose between two loves, while Pulatov's are usually unable to find success even with a single partner. These rather different dynamics can be seen to reflect the two authors' relationships with the cultures that surround them. Aitmatov, who claims two native languages, seems to feel that he is able to find acceptance in either a Kyrgyz or a Russian environment. Pulatov, who writes about Dushan's difficulties with all three of the languages that he knows, seems to feel equally rejected by Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Russians. If we examine the question more closely we shall find that the manner in

which the two authors portray love relationships in their works mirrors the writers' development in regard to cultural themes in general.

As we have already discussed, Pulatov's "Oklikni menia v lesu" and Aitmatov's "Dzhamilia" feature characters who are forced to choose between their husbands and their lovers. The extent to which these women's husbands represent traditional Central Asian values, while their lovers represent European or Soviet values is clearly quite great. The choices made by these women indicate that the young writers favor a cultural synthesis, although they give a clear preference to Western values and mores.

In Pulatov's "Oklikni menia v lesu," Nora must choose between her husband and a stranger whose name contains the Uzbek word for freedom. Nora does not need to go with Erkin, however, to be free. She manages to redefine her role as a woman while staying with her husband. Thus the early Pulatov seems to believe that one need not give oneself away entirely to the colonizing culture in order to enjoy its advantages. It is possible to stay within one's own culture while adopting that which is good from the culture of the "other."

Although it exhibits a similar message in favor of synthesis, Aitmatov's "Dzhamilia" implies that one must adapt to the new culture while maintaining that which is good from one's own traditional culture. Whereas Nora stays home with her husband, Dzhamilia runs off with Daniyar. Dzhamilia leaves her people, her home, and her culture behind. She has shown that she believes in the colonizer's Western values as it is embodied in the colonizer's vision of love. All that remains of her Kyrgyz culture are the beautiful songs of Daniyar. Thus she retains her people's esthetic values, while rejecting their moral code.

In another of Aitmatov's early works, "Na reke Baidamtal" ("On the River Baidamtal"),<sup>13</sup> the hero, Nurbek is taken away from his love by his duty as a worker

and citizen. That his love's name, Asiia, is but a letter away from the Russian word for Asia 'Aziia,' makes her a rather transparent symbol for Nurbek's native culture. Although he must leave Asiia, Nurbek is sure to repair the crossing over the river so that Asiia can follow him if and when she is ready. In this story we see the post-colonial intellectual as a self-sacrificing advance guard for his culture's crossing over into the realm of modernity. He may have to part with Asiia, the representative of his beloved culture, but the story ends with the hope that they will meet again in the future at a place that symbolizes the wonders of Soviet modernity: a *kolkhoz*.

"Na reke Baidamtal" finds many echoes in Aitmatov's 1961 povest' *Topolek moi v krasnoi kosynke*. The latter tale's hero, the hard-drinking truck driver, Il'ias, is constantly on the road. If we allow that home represents one's native culture, we must conclude that Il'ias spends the bulk of his time between cultures. Gachev discusses the tensions that keep Il'ias suspended between cultures:

Il'ias is experiencing a sudden change from patriarchal life to modern civilization. He is only partly responsible for the troubles that are afflicting him—he is also a victim (as is Asel') of the extreme complexity, which arises during turning points in history. (Gachev 1982, 97)

Although Gachev, in part, attributes Il'ias's wanderings to his nomadic roots, it can be just as convincingly argued that his homelessness represents cultural uprootedness (Gachev 1982, 112). Indeed, Il'ias makes a home for a while, first with Asel' and then with Kadicha. Gachev notes that each woman represents one of the modes of life that uneasily coexist in the hero's consciousness: "He finds himself between two loves. Asel' is from the steppe and Kadicha is from the city" (Gachev 1982, 112). Il'ias is unable to find happiness and acceptance with either Asel' or Kadicha. This is an unusual situation for an Aitmatov character: one that we shall not see again until the

publication of *Tavro Kassandry*. Perhaps in this period of transition between the pro-modernity stance of his early writings and the love of tradition he displays in the 1970s, Aitmatov found himself between the two: not entirely accepted by the traditional Kyrgyz and unable to feel at home in a modern environment. It is possible that the predicament that Il'ias faces represents Aitmatov's own cultural dilemma.

Il'ias meets Asel' on a rural road near a small village. Before his encounter with Asel', Il'ias had tried to avoid such roads on which he had to work harder in dirtier conditions. After meeting Asel', Il'ias becomes willing to accept the worse conditions in order to be near his love. In this way Il'ias resembles the post-colonial intellectual who has come to idealize his cultural roots after earlier having turned his back on them for the material advantages of the colonizer's culture. He now finds that the esthetic and moral superiority of his native culture more than compensate for its material inadequacies. Il'ias does not, however, decide to live in the country with Asel', but rather takes her away to live with him. At this stage in Aitmatov's career the author still seems to be looking for synthesis. Il'ias attempts to take Asel', the symbol of his culture's esthetic values, with him into the modern world of Soviet life.

Having failed in his attempt to haul a trailer across the pass at Dolon before the trucks are properly outfitted, Il'ias becomes a hostile and bitter drunk. Thus his attempt to cross over too fast has caused him to change for the worse. He begins to spend nights with Kadicha, who is westernized enough to work with and even drink with Il'ias. Yet although he feels comfortable with Kadicha, Il'ias knows that he can never love her in the way he loves Asel'.

Asel's role in Il'ias's life is not purely esthetic. She also serves, as Gachev notes, in the capacity of a conscience to Il'ias. The hero soon discovers that Asel's presence makes him too painfully aware of what he has become in the modern world. When he looks into her eyes he sees his own *iskazhennoe* 'twisted' or 'distorted' face

(Aitmatov 1982a, 163). Later she tells him, "I don't know you, Il'ias" (Aitmatov 1982a, 170). Thus Asel' is a constant reminder that he has changed and it has not been for the better. Il'ias even begins to avoid Asel' because her very presence is a reminder of how distant from her he has become. In the end Asel' leaves Il'ias, who goes to the big city, Frunze, with Kadicha. Il'ias soon realizes that he and Kadicha do not belong together and he leaves her. He cannot, however, return to Asel'. He has rejected the symbol of his new culture, but found it impossible to return to his own native culture.

A similar drama is played out in *Proshchai Gul'sary*. Tanabai is married but he has a fascination with another woman, Biubiuzhan. In *Proshchai Gul'sary* the cultures represented by the two women are not so clearly delineated. Although Tanabai, similar to Il'ias, enters into his lover's arms under the influence of the Russian demon, vodka, there is little else to indicate that she represents the colonizer's culture. Indeed, when the narrator observes that for Tanabai "everything about her [Biubiuzhan] was endlessly dear to him" (Aitmatov 1982a, 402), the word that he uses for 'dear' is *rodnoe*, which also means 'native.' Of course, this term is a common endearment in Russian that is used without any attention to its meaning in other contexts. On some level, however, the connection between these meanings could lead one to employ the image of a loved one as a symbol of his native land. In *Plakha*, Aitmatov uses another Russian expression that demonstrates that both the Russian language and Aitmatov's mindset are amiable to equating one's lover with one's homeland: when the Georgians in "Shestero i sed'moi" ("The Six and the Seventh") are preparing to cross the border, one of them says: "[A]nd if an enemy has invaded your land, fight for your land; and defend the honor of your love as you would your native land" (Aitmatov 1987, 71). The use of the term *rodnoe* in Biubiuzhan's address does not, however, preclude the possibility that she represents Russian culture as

Aitmatov has said that for him "Russian is no less native than Kyrgyz . . ." (Aitmatov 1984, 284). On the other hand, Tanabai's wife, Dzhaidar, is closely connected to Kyrgyz culture through her knowledge of folk songs and ability to play them on the traditional Kyrgyz *temir-komuz*. Thus, it seems that in *Proshchai Gul'sary* Aitmatov is more concerned with showing the pain of choosing between two women who are equally close than with assigning any symbolic value to either woman. Yet even if neither woman represents a specific culture, the pain involved in Tanabai's choice can be seen to represent the agony of being torn between two "native" cultures.

In *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* Edigei falls in love with Abutalip's wife, Zariipa, who may indeed represent modernity and/or Russian culture. More than any of the novel's other characters, Zariipa finds life in Boranly-Burannyi difficult to bear. Furthermore, after leaving the settlement, Zariipa relocates in Pavlodar, a city with a Russian name in the predominantly Russian North of Kazakhstan. Despite these traits that link Zariipa to the culture of the "other," Edigei exhibits the exact same feelings for her that Tanabai feels for Biubiuzhan, finding "everything about her endlessly *rodnoe*" (Aitmatov 1983a, 390). Although Edigei's inner struggle mirrors Tanabai's in many ways, Aitmatov describes the difficulty of Edigei's choice in far greater detail. Edigei cannot even begin to imagine a life without both Zariipa and Ukubala, yet he knows that he cannot love the two women at once: "[H]e could neither forget Zariipa nor could he give up, even in his mind's eye, Ukubala. To his own grief, he needed them both at the same time. . . ." Edigei's predicament can be seen to parallel that of those post-colonial intellectuals who reject modernity and a European education in theory, but cannot deny themselves the benefits they derive from technology and learning. Indeed, Edigei's attraction to two women may reflect Aitmatov's own inability to decide whether he wants to lead the traditional rural life extolled in many of his works or the life of a famous author who makes his home in a large modern city.

Much as the post-colonial intellectual can be critical of the system that has left him suspended between cultures, Edigei bemoans his fate which has "ordained that he be torn in two between two flames" (Aitmatov 1983a, 402). Moreover, Aitmatov's description of Edigei's inability to decide what is right parallels the post-colonial intellectual's difficulty in reconciling two or more value systems which sometimes give rise to serious inner conflicts. Edigei feels that he will be committing a serious mistake whether he stays with Ukubala or leaves her for Zaripa. Under these conditions he "couldn't manage to calm himself, to settle himself upon something singular, unquestionable, and unconditional" (Aitmatov 1983a, 402). Similarly, the post-colonial intellectual has difficulty settling upon a unified system of values, when many beliefs held by the cultures in which he takes part are incompatible with one another. Thus, the image of a man torn between two lovers is a very appropriate metaphor for the feelings of mixed loyalty experienced by the post-colonial intellectual. The above cited passage creates still more resonances as a symbol for the post-colonial condition in that Aitmatov uses the term *opredelit' sebia* to mean 'to settle oneself.' In other contexts this phrase can mean 'to define oneself.' Thus, Edigei's struggle to settle himself upon something singular in regard to his love life evokes associations of the post-colonial intellectual's attempt to define himself in a way that reconciles or unifies his inner contradictions. It seems that at the time of the writing of *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*, Aitmatov was struggling to reconcile the contradictory world views that coexisted within him. Unable to reconcile his own mixed loyalties he could not show Edigei to make a clear and reasoned choice between Zaripa and Ukubala. Therefore, he had to find a solution to the problem outside of Edigei: he simply made Zaripa leave the settlement without warning. The torment that Edigei and Tanabai undergo stands in sharp contrast to the beauty and purity of the feelings that Sultanmurat, the hero of

"Rannie zhuravli" has for Myrzagul'. Of course the boy has never left the *ail* for any significant amount of time and thus has yet to develop any cultural conflicts.

Pulatov, we recall from our earlier discussion of "Vtoroe puteshestvie Kaipa," makes use of Kaip's relationship with Aisha (whose name, similar to that of Aitmatov's Asiia, shares some phonetic traits with the word 'Asia'), as a symbol for the post-colonial intellectual's relationship with his native culture. As we have discussed, Kaip's decision to go back to Aisha indicates a desire to return to his native roots. The tale's focus on the journey home, however, implies that Pulatov wrote the tale at a time when he had decided to attempt to regain his heritage but had yet to complete the trip back. The speculative nature of the ending, in which tales of Kaip's happiness are presented as hearsay, adds to the impression that the story is about the desire and the struggle to return home more than it is about the results of the journey. Thus although Pulatov exhibits confidence that Kaip, along with the author himself, has made the right choice, the reader has to permit the possibility that the journey, upon which the author has so confidently embarked, may end in disappointment.

Although we cannot be sure that Kaip was able to return home to Aisha, we are certain that he wants to go home and rejoin his true love. In Pulatov's later works, on the other hand, many characters exhibit far more ambivalence not only toward home but toward the women with whom they find themselves romantically involved, as well.

Not only has Tarazi been driven from Bukhara, he has also been estranged from his family. Abitai tells Bessaz that Tarazi's wife has left him and taken the children (Aitmatov 1991b, 124). Most of Pulatov's other characters have no more success in love than Tarazi. Akhun has a brief tryst with Saviia and Dushan has a strange "hot and cold" relationship with Bunafsha. Davliatov's fairly serious affair with Shakhlo comes to an end when he gets carried away by his interest in Eastern

mysticism. While we know little about Tarazi's marriage and the circumstances that lead to its dissolution, we know considerably more about the relationships that the other characters have.

In "Morskie kochevniki," Oiiia-Aiia leaves his fiancée behind as he sets sail in search of the floating prison. After spending many years alone, Oiiia-Aiia begins to swim with the dolphins. One day while swimming, he encounters a woman who reminds him of his fiancée. He wants to be with her and thus tries to conceal his tail and the growth on his head. At first the woman accepts Oiiia-Aiia, but when she sees the changes that his contact with the dolphins has wrought, she screams and calls him a monster (Pulatov 1990, 511-514). Thus, the time spent among the "other," the dolphins, has changed him in a way that makes his own kind reject him.

Akhun is an outsider in the town where he meets Saviia. Although they have a brief affair, they are never truly connected to one another. Indeed, not long before they part she asks him, "What do you have to do with anything here?" (Pulatov 1991b, 486). Thus, while he participates in her life, he never really belongs in her world. Although he does everything a lover would do, Akhun is not accepted into Saviia's universe. Similarly, a post-colonial intellectual may dress in the same manner as the colonizer and speak the colonizer's language--that is to say, fully participate in the colonizer's life, yet never feel as if he is completely accepted in the colonizer's world.

While Saviia's indifference to Akhun may seem cruel, we must not forget that he is no more interested in belonging in her milieu than she is in having him belong. Thus, their seemingly simple relationship is quite complex. They both feel that they are using the other and they both feel that they are being used. Despite this, they have genuine positive feelings for one another and experience moments of real tenderness together. Moreover, they change one another's lives: the affair leads Saviia to choose

to leave her convict husband for a school-teacher, while it causes Akhun to miss the raid and lose the trust of his fellow smugglers. Although Akhun has never completely belonged among the smugglers, he is associated with them more than any other group. Thus Akhun's affair with a woman who is "other" causes him to fall out with the group to which he seems to belong. This, of course, can be seen to parallel the rejection that the post-colonial intellectual feels from his own people, when his contact with the other is viewed as "betrayal." Indeed, Akhun's eventual death at the hands of his fellow smugglers may reflect the hostility Pulatov has faced in Central Asia as a result of his perceived assimilation to Russian culture.

Akhun realizes that he will be accused of betrayal, but Saviia resorts to flattery to keep him around. When Akhun mentions that he will be attacked if he does not leave Saviia in order to rejoin his partners in crime, she answers: "Don't be afraid. . . . You are clever, you are smarter than they are--you'll get off the hook. They're like a herd. Nothing will happen to you" (Pulatov 1991b, 484). Here Saviia's behavior toward Akhun is quite similar to the approach that colonizers often take toward native intellectuals, telling the post-colonial intellectual that he is smarter than the rest of his people and was thus chosen for the special privilege of assimilation. Moreover her insulting attitude toward the smugglers is not unlike the hostility many colonizers feel toward the local population.

Whereas Akhun's affair with Saviia can be seen as a symbol for the post-colonial intellectual's interest in the culture of the colonizer, Dushan sees Bunafsha as being closely tied to Bukharan culture. Pulatov repeatedly underlines the traditional lifestyle of Bunafsha's family. Amon says that her brothers, and by implication all the members of her family, "are firmly grounded in our ancient traditions, they are connected through customs and traditions . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 454). Yet, although Bunafsha is closely identified with Bukharan culture she is no less "other" to Dushan

than Saviia is to Akhun. His mother notes the extent to which Bunafsha's world is alien to Dushan: "You two are so different... you won't make it together. You grew up differently... as if in different worlds. She grew up in a typical Bukharan environment, among everything ancient and traditional..." (Pulatov 1990, 386). Dushan ignores his mother's advice and continues to pursue his interest in Bunafsha. Indeed, it is only when he discovers that Bunafsha's world is not as exotic and alien as his mother claims that Dushan's love grows cold. He says to Amon: "I don't know... . . . it seems to me that she never moved me. That was simply me imagining things... And now that I've had a close look, I see that she is not at all unusual . . ." (Pulatov 1990, 457). Having been kept away from Bunafsha, Dushan goes through a period where he romanticizes her, only to be disappointed to discover that she is not as special as he had hoped. Thus, Dushan's relationship with Bunafsha can be seen to reflect the post-colonial intellectual's disillusionment, when, after being removed from his native culture, he begins to idealize his people's traditional ways, only to find under closer examination that they are neither as exotic nor pristine as he had imagined them to be. Dushan's feelings toward Bunafsha are mirrored in his disappointment in Bukhara, which he also leaves at the novel's end. Indeed with the publication of *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, Pulatov's obsession with Bukhara seems to have faded in much the same way as Dushan's love for Bunafsha: Bukhara does not play a role in his next novel, *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*.

Pulatov replaces Bukhara with the East/West hybrid Shakhgrad in his most recent novel. This switch is mirrored in the portrayal of Davliatov's lover, Shakhlo, who seems to possess many characteristics of both Central Asian and European culture. Davliatov meets Shakhlo at an exhibition entitled "Contemporary Painting of Shakhgrad." During a "period of tedious melancholy" Davliatov sees a poster for the exhibition and goes in hoping to see "his Shakhgrad in the same tones in which the

impressionists saw Paris..." Thus, Davliatov's cultural assimilation has even affected his memories of the past, causing him to romanticize it, but with a distinctly European coloration. The inspector, Liutfi, attributes this tendency to reminisce about the East in Western terms to Davliatov's education, saying: "Of course, it wasn't your fault that you sickly [*boleznenno*] imagined and dreamed of seeing the Shakhgrad of the latter part of our century embodied in the Paris of the last century--you were educated in such a European manner" (Pulatov 1991a, 191). It is amidst this search for his roots--or for a European re-rendering of his roots--that Davliatov meets Shakhlo, who works at the exhibit as a guide.

Although we are told that Shakhlo was drawn to Davliatov as "a fellow country man . . . in the cold Moscow autumn," we later find that she is "European educated" and wants to marry Davliatov in order to move to Moscow (Pulatov 1991, 192-193). Indeed, Shakhlo seems to represent a synthesis of cultures no less than does Davliatov. Thus, Davliatov enters the exhibit searching for a return to an imagined Shakhgrad but finds, instead, a representative of Shakhgrad as it really is. Seeking a romanticized European vision of his culture in a pure state, he finds Shakhgrad as embodied in Shakhlo, to be no less assimilated than he himself is.

After the passionate initial stages of the relationship, Davliatov begins to ignore Shakhlo because of his newfound interest in Eastern mysticism. Similar to Davliatov's memories of Shakhgrad, his fascination with Eastern mysticism is filtered through his Western sensibilities. Indeed, his interest in mysticism has little to do with the East itself, springing as it does from Moscow's trendy salon culture. Moreover, his knowledge of the East owes nothing to his upbringing or his national heritage, it is all attained through study at the library of the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (Pulatov 1991a, 5-8). Thus Davliatov's relationship with Shakhlo, the personification

of contemporary Shakhgrad, is undermined by an "orientalist" fascination with the East.

In the hopes of drawing Davliatov closer, Shakhlo has a son, whom Davliatov also ignores. Without parental guidance, the boy becomes an amoral murderer. Finally, Shakhlo gives up on Davliatov, marries an Arab, and leaves with him to become a terrorist. If Shakhlo does indeed represent Shakhgrad and thus the synthesis of culture that exists in modern day Central Asia, Pulatov can be seen to be saying that the European educated intelligentsia, by ignoring the region's current needs, is leaving the youth of Central Asia without moral guidance and driving the region into the arms of militant extremists from the Middle East. The final scene of the novel, in which Davliatov is seen to have decided to settle into Shakhgrad's routine is presaged by one of the images he sees on the fantastic journey he takes with Nakhangov. The lonely figure who is crossing the bridge Sirat drops the key to paradise, only to have it returned to him by Shakhlo. If the figure can be seen to represent Davliatov, then Shakhlo, or his nation as it is today, is the one that gives meaning to his difficult and arduous journey through existence.

In "Zavsegdatai," *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, and *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia* Pulatov explores the Central Asian intellectual's relationship with three various visions of culture as represented by his heroes' affairs with three quite different women. These women are linked to the cultures that they represent not only through the specifics of their behavior and background, but through the alliterative similarities between their names and those of the cultures they represent: Saviia--*Sovetskii* (pronounced 'savyetski'), Bunafsha--Bukhara, Shakhlo--Shakhgrad.

Judging from the works discussed above, one might conclude that Aitmatov's romantic subplots are all focused upon the agony of the choice between two loves, while Pulatov is more concerned with rejection and the inability to find mutual

compatibility. If this is so and if we continue our analogy of love relationships to culture, we must conclude that Aitmatov feels that he can fit in with either culture but must choose between them. Pulatov on the other hand seems both to reject and feel rejected by all of the cultures with which he has contact. In some cases, however, both authors defy the above stated generalizations. Il'ias is rejected by Asel' and he rejects Kadicha. Perhaps this is because he represents a transition between Dzhamilia, who leaves her husband and tradition for a lover and a new way of life, and Edigei, who remains at Boranly-Burannyi with his wife. Pulatov comes close to breaking his pattern in *Plavaiushchaia Evraziia*. Although Davliatov and Shakhlo do not end up together, the reader is left with the strong impression that this is a mistake on Davliatov's part. Thus Pulatov seems to have moved toward an acceptance of cultural synthesis as an alternative to the pursuit of bad relationships with idealized images of pure culture. Davliatov's decision to settle in Shakhgrad seems to support this interpretation.

While Pulatov moves toward the acceptance of cultural synthesis, Aitmatov's most recent writing shows signs that he has grown disillusioned with humanity to the extent that people of all cultures have become repugnant to him. Characters such as Avdii, Boston, and Robert Bork are virtually isolated in their goodness. They are surrounded by petty, hostile, and selfish people, who find it easier to kill them than to attempt to understand them. Under such conditions, characters such as Bakhiana and Filofei have no choice but to abandon this world for a life of holy isolation. If love has been seen to represent the connection to a culture in Aitmatov's previous works, the decision to become a monk or a nun must represent the rejection of all culture.

Not all characters in Aitmatov's most recent works retreat into total isolation. Even one who does, Filofei, has had two significant loves. The love relationships experienced by Filofei and Avdii differ significantly from those shown in most of

Aitmatov's earlier works. Avdii falls in love with Inga, another outsider in Central Asia. Indeed, her German name implies that she, similar to Avdii, is estranged from her native culture. Thus, Avdii seems to find a home with another cultural exile. He is not torn between her and another woman: when he left the seminary he made a clean break with the world of his past. Yet the differences in Avdii's and Inga's histories prove to be the force that keeps them apart as her trip to settle custody issues with her ex-husband is the first link in a chain of events that leads to Avdii's death.

When he is still Andrei Andreevich, Filofei's obsession with his scientific research causes his wife, Evgeniia, to leave him. Thus, modernity is seen to alienate European Russians from their culture no less than it does pastoral Central Asians. Indeed the extent to which Andrei Andreevich's scientific experiments have alienated him is underlined by the use of the second person in Filofei's narrative. He uses the first person until scientific hubris carries him "beyond the limits of morality," at which time the narrative changes over to the second person:

И ради торжества науки я вторгался туда, куда до меня не отваживался ступить никто из предшественников, в зону запретную для всех религий; я вызывающе бил ногою в дверь, на пороге которой следовало склониться перед Богом.

Вот куда тебя заносило! (Aitmatov 1995, 185. Emphasis added.)<sup>14</sup>

At a point when it seems that there is nothing that can return Andrei Andreevich's humanity, he meets a woman with the strange name 'Runa.' Aitmatov takes pains to point out the relationship between the woman's name and antiquity: Andrei Andreevich comments that "there is something runic about her name. . . ." and later refers to her as "the woman with the name from runic times" (Aitmatov 1995, 206 and 214). Thus, Aitmatov links Runa to the values that humanity has held since

antiquity, implying that science needs to stop ignoring these values if it is to alter its deadly course. Andrei Andreevich is touched by Runa's courage and conviction and wants to be with her and learn from her. He is denied this opportunity, however, when Runa is shot by a Soviet prison guard. Thus, similar to the Kyrgyz and the other peoples of the Soviet Union, the Russians have been robbed of their connection to the past by state-sponsored violence. With his own ancient culture dead, Andrei Andreevich sees no alternative but to become a cosmic monk and disappear into the isolation of space. It is interesting that Filofei has so much in common with Il'ias. Both characters allow an obsession with technological advancement to ruin their relationship with their wives. It is as if the pendulum of Aitmatov's cultural allegiance, which began on the side of modernity in the 1950s before swinging toward tradition in the 1970s, has returned to the place to which it paid a brief visit in 1961.

In their early works both writers use their heroes' love relationships to explore the relationship between the Central Asian intellectual and a clearly differentiated set of cultural symbols. The symbolism behind the choices made by Dzhamilya, Il'ias, and Kaip is quite clear. Pulatov, however, soon becomes interested in exile and the solitary life in the lonely desert beyond culture. Characters such as Tarazi, Akhun, and Dushan seem to reject both their native culture and the culture of the other as much as they are rejected by these cultures. This inability to find a home in any single culture is mirrored by their failure to make any genuine contact with the women they court. While Pulatov was focusing on the inability to fit in with either of two cultures, Aitmatov described the difficulty of choosing between two "equally native" cultures. As Tanabai loves both Dzhaidar and Biubiuzhan, so does Edigei love both Zaripa and Ukubala. In *Topolek moi v krasnoi kosynke* as well as in his most recent novels, Aitmatov's vision is closer to that of Pulatov. Avdii falls for a woman who, like himself, is between cultures, while Filofei and Bakhiana reject all culture, taking

monastic vows of celibacy. Thus, in his latest works, Aitmatov's artistic vision becomes more focused on those who completely reject society. In Pulatov's latest novel, on the other hand, the author returns from the lonely desert to suggest that a post-colonial intellectual can find happiness if he is willing to accept the synthesis that his culture has become.

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Notes to Part Two, Chapter V

<sup>1</sup> An Afghan, a Lezghin, a Bukharan Jew, a Hindu, a Persian Shiite... Out of the whole family it seemed only she [grandmother] paid any attention to the background of whoever was being discussed. Yet, she did so with such expertise, she spoke with such irony, creating so much haze, that everything began seem like a game, a fancy, and it seemed that the people that she was talking about with such passion, not only did not exist nearby, but didn't exist at all.

<sup>2</sup>There were four of them (Amon was also with the grown-ups) and he was alone. That is how the family was divided at the times when there were arguments--the majority and the minority. The majority, supported by each other, did not seem to worry about the disagreement one bit. After all, he saw that they continued to converse and and walk around with indifferent looks on their faces, which were absolutely untouched by bitterness, as if their grief was so small and insignificant that they did not even try to divide it among themselves, but rather drove it away and tried not to think about it. His share of the grief, on the other hand, was indivisible and it made him so unhappy and lonely.

<sup>3</sup>See Anninskii, 4.

<sup>4</sup>"You are 'between'" said his grandfather calmly, as if he had long ago thought it all out and was certain he was right. "You're between two ways of life--the traditional and the modern, between two languages, between two attitudes toward one phenomenon--say to birth or to death... It is harder for you, far more difficult, then for me or your grandmother--I won't even talk about your father and mother... it's as if they jumped... they left one pole and didn't reach the other... It's harder for you

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because when two ways of life rub against one other the temperature of life reaches the boiling point... Although on the surface that boiling is unseen... like with that substance--remind me, what's it called... in chemistry--the one that is calm on the outside, it doesn't move or breath... but that calmness is deceiving, as, in reality, it is boiling... It's a different kind, a higher form of boiling... You are 'between'... That is such a strain on the nerves, the temperature at times rises to the level of excitement, and at times, then, it sharply drops, cooling down into melancholy...

<sup>9</sup>Fuchs discusses the bazaar as a microcosm of society, but she is vague when it comes to assigning representative values to any of the images used by Pulatov. See Fuchs, 15-17.

<sup>6</sup>See also Fanon, 218-219.

<sup>7</sup>"Me. That's the ticket" and "So-so me".

<sup>8</sup>Gulsary's and Tanabai's relationship as doubles is treated by Mozur, who refers to them as "spiritual doubles" (48-49) and by Il'ev (64).

<sup>9</sup>After all, I am, to use your doctorese, an ambivalent person, like the majority of these modern characters. And so... I have two feelings toward everything. I give everything two different evaluations... the most contradictory. I painfully split into two.

<sup>10</sup>He calmly bore the reproachful gaze of his neighbors, their silent disapproval. They sensed the unseen line drawn by Davliatov as if to let them know that their mentality was in no way compatible with his, that he carried within himself something above the daily routine of the life they lived with their desires, concerns, and reproaches. No, those who surrounded him would never be able to understand him.

<sup>11</sup>In this tract, as in any composition, he at times had to reconcile irreconcilable contradictions within himself, while at others he again had to split into two in order to

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express himself fully, that is to imagine himself as both a nomad, trying to take a city fortress (which was not hard to do living, as he did, the life of an exile and a wanderer) and a city-dweller, a defender of the fortress (which was also easy to picture, thanks to his nostalgia for his paternal home).

<sup>12</sup>On the journey here I passed through many lands and peoples. I had to do things many different ways. But I survived. And I only became stronger in my desire to join a nunnery. Of course you are right, Reverend Mother: it is truly the greatest blessing when you take your vows out of belief in an idea, out of pure convictions, as you said. I, though, have come to my convictions by another route: through negation.

<sup>13</sup>Also called "Trudnaia pereprava" ("Difficult Crossing").

<sup>14</sup>And for the sake of the triumph of science I went where none of my forerunners dared to tread, into an area that was forbidden in all religions. I defiantly kicked at the door on the threshold of which one should bow before God.

That is how carried away you were. (Emphasis added).

## Conclusion

Both Pulatov and Aitmatov began their literary careers with stories that implied near total assimilation to the values instilled in them by their "European" Soviet education. Although these stories essentially followed party lines, they did offer some interesting glimpses into some of the themes that would become prevalent in the two writers' future works.

It was not long, however, before the two writers became disillusioned with the view of the world offered them by their modern Soviet education and they began to look to their cultural roots for answers to their moral and philosophical questions. Aitmatov's rejection of modernity was accompanied by a nostalgic idealization of his people's past that reached its peak in *Pegii pes begushchii kraem moria*, in which he superimposed shamanistic Kyrgyz culture upon the shamanistic Nivkhs, in an attempt to portray the harmony and moral superiority of a life without technology. Pulatov, on the other hand, similar to his hero Kaip, seemed unable to find his way back to his roots, choosing instead to focus on the area between cultures.

Although in *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'* and *Plakha* Aitmatov continues to write about the wrongs committed by the Soviet Union in Central Asia, he also begins to focus on the individual who is caught between cultures. This trend continues in his most recent works, in which he has abandoned his Central Asian settings but not his concern for the fate of the individual at the crossroads of culture. Indeed he may have abandoned Central Asian themes because it was too dangerous or too painful to portray Kyrgyz tradition in a negative manner. His most recent heroes find themselves caught between soulless modernity and forces of tradition that have been either destroyed or hopelessly corrupted by the colonial process. Thus, these heroes have no choice but to take their leave of both cultures and seek meaning in a "universal

standpoint" that is outside of culture yet preserves the best and truest values of all cultures.

The heroes of Pulatov's first two novels, *Cherepakha Tarazi* and *Strasti bukharskogo doma*, are seen to suffer greatly for their adoption of a "universal standpoint." They are compensated for their pain, however, with both heightened artistic sensibilities and a greater awareness of the truth. In his third novel, Pulatov seems to reach the conclusion that these advantages are not sufficient to make the pain of isolation bearable. Thus, Davliatov destroys the writer within, the part of himself that is most active in questioning and truth-seeking, choosing to accept the hybrid culture which is embodied by the image of contemporary Shakhgrad.

Although there are many similarities in the works of the two writers, the differences are impossible to ignore. Throughout all the stages of his career, Pulatov has been more interested in the individual's role in society than in the clash of cultures on a large scale. Aitmatov, on the other hand, was, for the better part of his career, more interested in the disappearance of an entire people's culture. This is not to say that Pulatov ignored broader social questions or that Aitmatov neglected the role of the individual: it is merely a question of where each writer chose to place the strongest emphasis. In the most recent stages of Aitmatov's career, the scope of his social activism has broadened enormously. He has moved from attempting to save Kyrgyz culture to trying to save the world. In doing so, however, he has introduced a number of heroes who allow him to explore the life of a post-colonial intellectual who attempts to discover a "universal standpoint" and exist outside of culture.

Many of the differences between the two writers can be attributed to the setting in which they were raised. Aitmatov was shuttled back and forth between the essentially modern Soviet city and the largely traditional *ail*. This contributed to a world view in which things seemed clearly delineated. This a dualistic world view

manifested itself not only in the depiction of the struggle between the forces of tradition against the forces of modernity, but in Aitmatov's parallel use of myth and realism and in the decisions that his heroes face in their romantic liaisons. Although this dualism was never absolute, it held more or less absolute primacy in Aitmatov's fiction until *I dol'she veka dlitsia den'*. Even in his most recent novels the choice between human culture and no culture at all implies that Aitmatov's artistic vision is not entirely free of such dualistic thought.

Pulatov's childhood in multi-ethnic Bukhara precluded the creation of simple dichotomies. Kyrgyz villagers lived an essentially traditional lifestyle that could be contrasted to the almost entirely modern lifestyle in the cities of Soviet Kyrgyzstan. In Bukhara, however, one could work in a fully modern office, only to return home to a traditional courtyard in the "old city." Thus, for Pulatov the boundaries between cultures have always been more fluid. Moreover, Bukhara's multi-ethnic composition allowed for cultural clashes of the type that Pulatov depicts in *Strasti bukharskogo doma*. This situation leads to the use of culture and ethnicity as a weapon and a means of excluding the "other." Being somewhat other among Uzbeks, Tajiks, and Russians, the young Pulatov felt much more alienation than the young Aitmatov, and thus he is more concerned with themes of rejection and "otherness" than his Kyrgyz counterpart. This alienation is reflected in Pulatov's use of strange and fantastic settings, while his mixing of mythical and realistic elements on a single narrative plain reflect the blurring of cultural boundaries.

It is not necessarily a bad thing that the works of these writers are discussed under the heading of "Russian" or "Soviet" literature. The concerns that Aitmatov and Pulatov exhibit for their peoples' future, however, make the titles Kyrgyz writer and Bukharan writer much more accurate. Indeed, it would be insulting to imply that such titles diminish either writer's importance to world literature. The questions these

authors raise in regard to the meaning of culture and national identity are among the most pressing universal issues in our ever shrinking, ever more interconnected world of cross-cultural contact.

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- 1993 "Letter From Political Exiles in the City of Pavlodar..." (Translation from Russian) and "First Summit of Turkic Republics in 1992," in *Kazakh & Kirghiz Studies Bulletin*, Spring 1993 (Newsletter).

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