

Teaching Virtue from Unequal Texts: A Framework for The Critical Transfer of Values from Heritage Narrative



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Abstract: Education systems across post-Soviet Central Asia, and heritage-based curricula elsewhere, instruct schools to build values education on national oral tradition. The material they mandate encodes the gender order of the society that produced it, so curricula are asked to recommend as moral exemplars figures whose admired virtues were formed inside relations of dependence and asymmetric obligation. Existing scholarship names this tension without turning it into anything usable: culturally sustaining pedagogy insists that heritage may be contested as well as sustained, indigenous-knowledge scholarship warns against extracting content as method-free material, and multicultural political theory has long argued that group culture and women's equality can conflict. None supplies an operational rule for deciding, about a particular figure in a particular text, what may be endorsed, what must be historicised, what must be contested and what should be withdrawn from the exemplar repertoire. This conceptual paper offers one. It proposes three decision tests – reciprocity, conditions and addressee – and a four-relation typology of transfer: direct endorsement, historical contextualisation, critical contestation and non-exemplary use. An analysis protocol sequences the tests into teacher moves and leaves a written record. The framework is worked through six quoted episodes from two Uzbek oral heroic epics, treated as one instance of a general problem rather than as a regional curiosity. The paper defends a deliberately weak claim: it does not dissolve the tension between heritage and equality, but makes that tension decidable case by case and auditable by a third party. The framework is untested; the paper states what would test it and what failure would look like.

Keywords: Values education; heritage curricula; moral exemplars; culturally sustaining pedagogy; gender and curriculum; oral epic.

Introduction: Many education systems now treat national heritage not as one resource among others but as the substance of moral formation. Values education then acquires a canon: oral narrative, proverb and epic that schools must use and from which pupils draw models of conduct. Teachers learn which texts to teach and which virtues they carry, not what to do when the two do not fit.

They often do not fit together. Heroic epic records the moral world that produced it, and that world distributed obligation unequally. An epic may admire a woman who waits seven years for an absent husband while nothing is asked of him; the devotion of a bondwoman who had

no way of withholding it; an old woman as the standing figure of malice. Each is a value claim offered to a classroom in which girls and boys are promised the same education. The problem is not that the texts are old, but that the curriculum asks them to speak in the present tense.

This paper develops a decision procedure for that moment and works it through six episodes from two Uzbek oral heroic epics. They are illustrations, not a case study of a distant tradition: the structural problem – a mandated corpus carrying an unequal moral order into a classroom committed to equality – recurs wherever heritage is made curricular. This section sets out the policy setting, the material, and the literatures that

describe the difficulty, before stating the gap and aims. That public moral education should draw on the moral resources of a particular people is neither new nor regional. Ushinsky (1948) argued that education works only when it grows from the character of a people and its language; reworked as ethnopedagogy (Volkov, 1999), that argument gave post-Soviet ministries a framework when an ideological curriculum had to be replaced by a national one. Reform after 1991 across Central Asia combined international templates with a strong emphasis on national heritage as the content of upbringing (Silova & Niyozov, 2020). The policy form has a shape: a state names a canon, attaches a list of virtues, and directs schools to use the first to instil the second.

Values education has generally been an area in which policy runs ahead of evidence and content is selected on grounds that are not pedagogical (Halstead & Taylor, 2000; Lovat & Toomey, 2009). Heritage mandates add content fixed in advance and carrying symbolic weight of its own: a teacher may not quietly drop a difficult episode, because it is there not for its moral content but because it is heritage. The attraction of narrative is nonetheless real, since it supplies the vocabulary in which pupils first learn to describe their moral experience (Tappan & Brown, 1989).

Oral epic is not a neutral container. It was composed in performance, over generations, within a system of formula and theme that stabilised what audiences expected (Lord, 2000; Reichl, 1992). What stabilised included the arrangements those audiences inhabited: betrothal arranged by elders, bride capture and its refusal, bondage as an ordinary domestic status, honour held by women and administered by men.

These are the conditions under which the epic's virtues are exercised and by which they are individuated. Fidelity in "Alpomish" is that of a betrothed woman under threat of forced marriage while her husband is absent and unaccountable. Devotion in "Rustamxon" has as its fullest instance a bondswoman in the household she serves. Remove the asymmetry and one obtains no purified virtue; sometimes one obtains no episode.

The material also carries counter-evidence to its own gender order – a woman who administers a market's weights, a woman who throws an assailant to the ground, a princess who helps an enemy captive. A

framework treating heritage as uniformly patriarchal misdescribes it as badly as one treating it as wholesome.

Exemplarist moral theory takes admiration as the basic unit of moral learning: we identify the good by identifying admirable persons, and moral concepts are fixed by reference to them (Zagzebski, 2017). Admiration, on that account, is defeasible. Zagzebski builds this revisability in, so testing admiration is an operation of exemplarist education rather than an intrusion into it.

Kristjansson (2006) supplies the practical version: role models can produce imitation of surface conduct rather than of the reasons behind it. The Aristotelian remedy is *phronesis* – deciding what a virtue requires here, which means deciding what it required there (Kristjansson, 2015).

Two further resources matter. Taylor (1989) shows that the goods by which people orient themselves are historically constituted. Noddings' (2013) ethics of care allows values that epic states hierarchically to be restated as features of a relation rather than a rank.

Culturally sustaining pedagogy is the closest existing framework, and its commitment is adopted here: pupils have a right to their inheritance and a right to argue with it, and a pedagogy granting the first while withholding the second has embalmed the culture rather than sustained it (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017). Critical consciousness was built into culturally relevant pedagogy from the start (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Gay, 2018).

The right to contest becomes usable only when a teacher can say what she is contesting and why, in terms another person can evaluate. Freire's (2000) insistence that critical literacy consists in reading the word and the world together describes the aim; the aim is not self-executing, and a teacher told to sustain and to contest, given no criteria, will do whichever her institution rewards.

Three results from the debate opened by Okin (1999) are used here. The distinction between what a group may be protected in doing and what it may impose on its members does work (Kymlicka, 1995). No group speaks with one voice, so who may state what the tradition requires is a political question inside the group, not a fact about it (Benhabib, 2002). And appeals to "culture" often explain away conduct better

described as interest and power (Phillips, 2007).

Two further arguments supply a normative floor. Nussbaum's (2000) capabilities approach gives a non-arbitrary basis for asking whether a practice leaves those subject to it able to function in specified respects. Appiah's (2005) treatment of identity as something individuals work with explains why teaching a pupil to argue with her inheritance is not teaching her to abandon it, and Kandiyoti (1988) adds that women in such systems act strategically within available constraints.

Each of these literatures stops short of the classroom decision. Culturally sustaining pedagogy states a stance rather than a procedure: "contest the regressive elements" presupposes that the teacher has identified which elements are regressive and how far to go, and those are the judgements at issue. Decolonising and indigenous-knowledge scholarship warns that heritage lifted from its epistemic setting is consumed rather than respected, and that the authority to say what a tradition means is contested (Semali & Kincheloe, 1999; Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2013); this tells a teacher to be careful about who decides, not how to decide in a way a colleague could check. Multicultural political theory settles what a state may permit, not what a teacher should say about one episode. And character-education scholarship has developed accounts of how exemplars work without addressing exemplars that are supplied by mandate and morally mixed.

The gap is specific: no available framework yields a rule of assignment, at the level of the individual value in the individual episode, that produces a decision, states its grounds and can be disputed. The aim is to construct such a rule and to test whether it discriminates on a mandated corpus.

Three questions organise the paper. First, on what grounds can a value carried by a heritage narrative be assigned to a determinate pedagogical relation? Second, do those grounds discriminate – do they sort superficially similar cases differently, and superficially different cases alike, for reasons that can be stated? Third, what does such a framework achieve that a general injunction to engage critically does not?

METHODS

The corpus is two Uzbek oral heroic epics in their scholarly editions: "Alpomish" (1998), edited by H. Zarif

and T. Mirzaev, and "Rustamxon" (2007), edited by J. Eshonqul and S. Fidokor, both from the performances of Fozil Yo'ldosh o'g'li. They are the epics most frequently prescribed for values teaching in the setting described in Section 1.1; they belong to one performance tradition and one performer, which limits variation attributable to the singer; and together they contain the full range of figures the literature treats as exemplary – mother, betrothed, helper, and the warning figure.

Six episodes were selected purposively, on criteria declared before the analysis: each must be an episode the pedagogical literature already recommends; each must carry a value statable as a single norm; the six must cover the figures just named; and each must be attached to a passage whose page reference could be verified in the printed edition, so that the reading rests on quoted text rather than paraphrase. Ten passages were verified and are quoted below; their Uzbek text is reproduced in the Appendix, in Cyrillic and in transliteration, so that the translations can be checked. All translations are the author's own; short verse lines are given in translation with the transliterated Uzbek in square brackets, prose passages in translation only.

The selection is purposive and illustrative: not exhaustive of either epic, not representative of Uzbek oral tradition, and not a sample in any statistical sense.

The three tests were not read off the material but derived by conceptual analysis from the literature reviewed in Section 1, in four steps.

The first step was to identify, in each body of work, the operative complaint about transferring a value from an unequal text. Exemplarist scholarship complains that admiration may be misplaced because the trait is not a virtue in the circumstances (Zagzebski, 2017; Kristjansson, 2006); multicultural theory, that a norm may bind one party only and that its costs fall on those with least say (Okin, 1999; Nussbaum, 2000; Phillips, 2007); work on agency under constraint, that conduct produced by a closed option set is read as freely chosen (Kandiyoti, 1988).

The second step was to restate each complaint as a question that can be put to a text and answered from it: about the symmetry of the norm within the narrative, the conditions under which the admired disposition was formed, and who the derived lesson addresses and who pays.

The third step was to specify, for each question, what counts as passing, failing and an intermediate outcome, written so that two readers working from the same text would have something determinate to disagree about. The fourth was to define the relations into which combinations of outcomes fall, and to attach a teacher move to each, so that the analysis terminates in an instruction rather than a characterisation. The tests were then applied to the six episodes; where one exposed an underspecification – a case in which no relation between parties is on offer, for example – the specification was revised and all six reworked.

Each episode was worked in a fixed order. The candidate norm was written out as one sentence, in the present tense, as advice addressed to learners. The broadest formulation the episode plausibly supports was written beside it, which guards against restating a norm ever more narrowly until it passes. The parties were identified, and the three tests applied in order – reciprocity, conditions, addressee – each yielding pass, qualified or fail, with the reason recorded against the quoted text. The relation was then read off the profile, the teacher move derived, and the record retained.

This is conceptual analysis of texts, and should be judged by the standards proper to it. It can establish whether a distinction is coherent, whether criteria are tight enough to be applied by someone other than their author, and whether they discriminate. It cannot establish what teachers or pupils would do; no claim about effects is made below.

Three limits should be stated. The analysis works from translations made by the author, which is why the originals are reproduced in the Appendix and why the argument is built on features – who is addressed, what is asked of whom, what alternatives the text allows – that survive translation more robustly than tone. The printed editions are editorial settlements of a performance tradition, so what is analysed is one stabilised version. And the author writes from within the tradition analysed, and from a commitment to moral equality the framework embeds rather than derives; that commitment is defended in Section 4.3.3.

RESULTS

The unit of analysis is a single value stated as a norm addressed to learners. Characters are morally mixed

and episodes carry several norms, so disagreements about "what Barchin teaches" are usually about which norm is extracted.

The reciprocity test asks: can the norm be stated as one rule binding both parties to the relation in which it is displayed, without losing the content that made it admirable? The procedure is to name the parties, swap them, and ask whether the text sanctions the other party for a corresponding failure. It passes when the party-neutral statement is intelligible and consistent with the narrative – when the epic would condemn the mirror-image lapse; fails when that statement is vacuous or contradicted, most clearly when the text states no corresponding expectation of the other party; and is qualified when universalisation requires subtracting a feature the narrative treats as essential.

The conditions test asks: could the disposition the narrative admires have been withheld by the person who displays it? This is not a demand that admired conduct be free of pressure; courage is admirable because of pressure. The narrower question is: does the narrative give any way of telling the virtue apart from compliance? It passes when the text shows the person acting against the pressure – refusing, delaying, resisting, choosing at a cost; fails when the admired conduct and the conduct sanction would have extracted are identical and the sanction was severe, and in a strong form when the disposition cannot be individuated apart from the status relation that produced it; and is qualified where she acts against the pressure only within an option set the pressure has drawn.

The addressee test asks: does the classroom norm derived from the value fall with equal weight on learners of different genders and statuses, and do the costs of compliance fall symmetrically? Where reciprocity concerns the relation inside the narrative, this concerns the relation outside it. It passes when the norm is stateable as advice to any pupil and following it costs comparably; fails when the lesson is intelligible only as advice to one group, or when both are addressed but only one is sanctioned, and at type when the moral content attaches to a category of person rather than to conduct; and is qualified when the norm is symmetrical in statement but has a settled asymmetrical uptake.

Table 1. Three tests for the transfer of a value from heritage narrative

Test	Question	Passes when	Qualified when	Fails when
Reciprocity	Can the norm be stated as one rule binding both parties to the relation in which it is displayed, without losing what made it admirable?	The party-neutral statement is intelligible and the narrative would condemn the mirror-image lapse by the other party.	Universalisation requires subtracting a feature the narrative treats as essential.	The narrative states no corresponding expectation of the other party and treats its absence as unremarkable, or the neutral statement is vacuous.
Conditions	Does the narrative give any way of telling the admired disposition apart from compliance under sanction?	The text shows the person acting against the pressure – refusing, delaying, resisting, or choosing at a cost.	The person acts against the pressure, but only within an option set the pressure has drawn.	The admired conduct and the conduct sanction would have extracted are identical, and the sanction was severe. Strong failure: the disposition cannot be individuated apart from the status relation that produced it.
Addressee	Does the derived classroom norm fall with equal weight on learners of	The norm is stateable as advice to any pupil and compliance	The norm is symmetrical in statement but has a settled asymmetrical	The lesson is intelligible only as advice to one group, or only one group is

	different genders and statuses, and do the costs of compliance fall symmetrically?	costs comparably.	uptake the teacher can name.	sanctioned for failure. Type failure: the moral content attaches to a category of person rather than to conduct.
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The tests are independent, which is what lets the framework discriminate; their outcomes form a profile, and the profile assigns the case. Direct endorsement requires all three to pass: the value survives translation into a relation between equals. Historical contextualisation applies where reciprocity passes, possibly after reformulation, and no test fails outright: the value is defensible, but its narrative form encodes an asymmetry that must be named first. Critical contestation applies where a test fails and a defensible value can still be reconstructed from material the text supplies. Non-exemplary use applies where conditions fails in its strong form or addressee fails at type: the

passage keeps its place as literature and leaves the exemplar repertoire.

Two distinctions carry the discriminating work. Endorsement with a boundary is compatible with declining to endorse an adjacent norm the episode also supports, whereas contextualisation is required when the asymmetry lies inside the value offered; the difference is checkable, by asking whether the asymmetry appears in the sentence in which the norm was written down. And contestation, unlike withdrawal, is available only when the text supplies material for the counter-position.

Table 2. Four relations of transfer: criteria, teacher move, classroom form and characteristic failure

Relation	Assignment criterion	Teacher move	Classroom form	Characteristic failure
Direct endorsement	All three tests pass.	Offer the value as stated; name the boundary of the endorsement, that is, the adjacent norm not being endorsed.	Narrative reading and application to present cases; the value is used as a criterion, not defended.	Boundary creep: the adjacent norm is absorbed into the endorsement because it was never stated.
Historical contextualisation	Reciprocity passes, possibly after	Name the asymmetry in the narrative form	Paired reading of the episode and its social	Decorative framing: the asymmetry is

	reformulation; no test fails outright.	before offering the value; state the reformulated norm explicitly.	conditions; pupils restate the norm in reciprocal form.	mentioned in an aside and the original form is what pupils take away.
Critical contestation	At least one test fails, and the text supplies material from which a defensible value can be reconstructed.	Set the figure as the object of an argument with sides drawn from the text; withhold the recommendation.	Structured disagreement with textual evidence on both sides; what is assessed is the quality of reasoning, not the conclusion.	Rhetorical contestation: the question is posed and then answered by the teacher, so pupils learn the verdict rather than the argument.
Non-exemplary use	Conditions fails in the strong form, or addressee fails at the level of type.	Withdraw the figure from the exemplar repertoire; retain the passage as literature and as evidence about the society that produced it.	Analysis of narrative convention and social history, with an explicit statement that no conduct here is being recommended.	Silent retention: the passage stays in the lesson with its exemplary function unrevoked because withdrawal was never announced.

For classroom use the tests resolve into eight moves. (1) Write the candidate norm as one sentence, in the present tense, addressed to learners. (2) Write the broadest formulation the episode plausibly supports, if it differs. (3) Identify the parties and the relation in which the norm is displayed. (4) Apply the reciprocity test by swapping the parties. (5) Apply the conditions test by asking what refusal would have cost. (6) Apply the addressee test by asking who the norm is for and

who pays. (7) Read the relation off the profile. (8) Execute the teacher move and retain the record.

Steps 1, 2 and 8 carry the second-order claim. A written norm statement makes the analysis reproducible: two teachers who reach different relations can locate the disagreement, since it lies either in the sentence or in one named test. Where the two formulations diverge, the teacher teaches the narrow one and names the broad one as what she is not endorsing.

The outcomes are reported below and summarised in Section 3.5.

In "Rustamxon", Huroyim is one of three wives of the ruler of Oqtosh and the only one to conceive. Before any threat appears, the epic gives her wish for the unborn child: "If my child came of age and mounted a horse, and took two hounds on the leash and rode out across the steppe in joy" [Bolam kamolga kirsas, ot beliga minsa, / ikki tozini iyarti(b), saholarda / gasht qilib yursa] (Rustamxon, 2007, p. 13). Denounced by a forged letter procured by her childless co-wives, she is condemned, and at the gallows protests to God: "Almighty God, You know my condition; / untimely You have given me an unjust death ... / do not take upon Yourself an innocent body" [Qodir Ollo, sen bilasan holimdi, / Bevaqt berding menga nohaq o'limdi... / Begunoh ustinga olma tanimi] (Rustamxon, 2007, p. 53). Her grief is for the son she will not see, and the hounds return without him: "The two hounds came back, my child did not come; / my only child did not amount even to the hounds" [Ikki tozi keldi, bolam kelmadi, / Yolg'iz bolam tozilarcha bo'lmadi] (Rustamxon, 2007, p. 54). Rustamxon rescues her, and the epic closes on a formula: having received Huroyim's blessing, the two attained their heart's desire (Rustamxon, 2007, p. 132). Candidate norm: care across generations creates an obligation to return it. Broad formulation: a mother's approval is the condition of her adult child's happiness.

Reciprocity: pass. The norm binds both parties – each generation owes the other care appropriate to its position – and the narrative enacts both halves, the wish and the rescue answering one another. Conditions: pass. The wish is uttered when no sanction operates, and the gallows lament shows the same care under the strongest pressure. Addressee: pass, for the narrow norm, which is stateable to any pupil.

Relation: direct endorsement. Teacher move: offer the value as it stands and state the boundary, which is the broad formulation carried by the closing formula – what the couple obtain, they obtain by receiving her blessing. So stated, the norm fails the addressee test, because making parental approval the condition of an adult child's happiness is addressed in practice to daughters and works as a veto over their choices.

In "Alpomish", Barchin's marriage is settled before she can speak: the saint Shohimardon betrothed moon-

Barchin to Hakimbek in the cradle, saying "let these two be husband and wife", and drew the blessing across his face (Alpomish, 1998, p. 14). Pressed later by a body of suitors in Kalmyk territory, she takes six months' delay and sets her own terms: "I have four conditions; I shall marry the man who fulfils them ... I shall marry the strong-armed champion who throws ninety alps in wrestling" [Mening to'rt shartim bor, shul to'rt shartimni qilgan kishiga tegaman... Kurash qilib to'qson alpni yiqqanga, Men tegaman nor bilakli polvonga] (Alpomish, 1998, pp. 117-118). Candidate norm: a person is entitled to set the terms on which she will marry. Broad formulation: a woman secures her standing by tests that select the strongest man.

Reciprocity: pass. The entitlement to set terms binds both parties and loses nothing in the party-neutral statement; the narrative treats the conditions as binding on the suitors. Conditions: qualified. Delay and conditions are resistance, but the option set is drawn by the pressure and the cradle betrothal had fixed the destination; marriage to somebody is not among the things she can refuse. Addressee: qualified. The line names the prize as the champion who throws ninety alps, and having set the terms she is bound by the result.

Relation: historical contextualisation. Teacher move: name the asymmetry before offering the value, and state the reformulated norm – consent belongs to the person marrying, and consent that cannot be withheld altogether is not yet consent. Pupils then restate the four conditions to satisfy it. The case is usually taught as straightforward female agency; the framework does not deny the agency, it declines to endorse the market in which it was exercised.

Alpomish is held captive for seven years. In his absence the slave Ultontoz seizes power and moves to marry Barchin; she refuses and waits. The epic states the expectation directly: "Weeping in longing for Alpomish, let her never accept Ultontoz" [Alpomish deb firog'inda yig'latib, Ultontozni sira qabul qilmasin] (Alpomish, 1998, p. 346). The grammar repays attention: the line is a wish expressed about her rather than by her, and makes the weeping part of what is admired. Candidate norm: fidelity should be maintained through separation and hardship. Broad formulation: a woman's virtue consists in remaining available to one man however long he is absent.

Reciprocity: fail. Swapping the parties produces a statement the narrative does not support: the epic makes no matching demand on the absent husband and treats that absence as unremarkable. Conditions: qualified. Her refusal of Ultontoz is action against pressure; but the weeping and waiting, as distinct from the refusal, are what the line admires, and are inseparable from the fact that no other future was available. Addressee: fail. The lesson is advice to girls, and its costs – years of a life – fall on one party only.

Relation: critical contestation. The text supplies the reconstruction: fidelity as a mutual undertaking is defensible, and the epic's own materials show what a one-sided version costs. Teacher move: set the case as an argument with sides drawn from the text. The decisive step is separation – the line contains two norms, and the refusal of a coerced marriage passes all three tests while the waiting fails two.

In "Rustamxon", Ximchaoyim is a kaniz – a bondwoman – in Huroyim's household, and the most devoted figure in the epic. She loves her mistress and shares her grief; she puts on men's clothing, takes up a weapon and stands guard; she acts decisively when Huroyim is condemned. The epic uses her to make a point it intends as democratic: moral quality is independent of rank. Candidate norm: devotion to those one serves is admirable regardless of station. No narrower formulation is available.

The framework's discrimination shows clearest when Ximchaoyim is set beside Tovka, a Kalmyk shah's daughter who finds Alpomish in the dungeon and offers herself unprompted: "My name is Tovka, I am the shah's daughter; I shall serve you until I die" [Otim Tovka, shohning qizi bo'laman, To o'lguncha senga xizmat qilaman] (Alpomish, 1998, p. 269). The disposition is the same in both – lifelong service to another – yet the cases come apart, because the conditions test asks not what was done but whether it could have been withheld. Tovka owes nothing to a captive from an enemy people and could have walked away at no cost; her pledge runs against what her position recommends, and passes. Ximchaoyim's identical pledge is made from a status in which refusal has no price because it has no availability. That the same conduct is assigned to different relations shows the test discriminating rather than merely disapproving: it does not condemn service, it asks what produced it.

Reciprocity: fail. No corresponding obligation runs from mistress to bondwoman that the epic states or whose absence it marks. Conditions: fail in the strong form. Strip out the bondage and there is no episode: the courage, the disguise and the risk are organised around a duty she did not undertake and could not decline. Addressee: fail. The lesson is intelligible as advice to subordinates.

Relation: non-exemplary use. Teacher move: withdraw the figure from the exemplar repertoire, say so explicitly, and retain the passage as evidence about domestic bondage and about how a moral system represents to itself the loyalty of those it does not free.

Or-nomus, honour, is the organising moral term applied to women across both epics, and folk-pedagogical commentary treats it as the central criterion of a girl's upbringing, with iffat and ibo, chastity and modesty. Two lines already quoted display its two faces. Huroyim's protest at the gallows is addressed to God rather than to the court that condemned her (Rustamxon, 2007, p. 53): her honour has been destroyed by a document she did not write, and is defensible only by appeal beyond the authority that took it – nomus as reputation, held on her behalf by others and not restorable by her own conduct. The line on Barchin – "let her never accept Ultontoz" (Alpomish, 1998, p. 346) – ties standing to a refusal others require of her. Against both stands honour a woman exercises herself, as when Barchin throws down the alp who seizes her braid. Candidate norm: a person should guard her honour. Broad formulation: a woman's worth is measured by her chastity and her reputation for it.

Reciprocity: fail as used. There is no symmetrical male counterpart; men's honour here is won by conduct, women's lost by suspicion, and Huroyim's case shows it can be lost by suspicion alone. Conditions: fail. The disposition is produced by surveillance and sanction, and the narrative gives no way of distinguishing modesty from prudent compliance. Addressee: fail. The norm falls on girls, and its costs – restricted movement and speech, liability for the conduct of others – fall on girls.

Relation: critical contestation, and the route differs from Section 3.4.3 in what makes the reconstruction available: here the value has content of its own inside the text, since the self-defending honour Barchin

exercises is not the reputational honour Huroyim loses. Honour codes are revisable from within, revision typically extending the grounds of standing rather than abolishing the concept (Appiah, 2010). Teacher move: set the two senses against each other, with the epic's lines as evidence.

Both epics assign the role of chief antagonist to an old woman. In "Rustamxon", Momagul maston is hired to destroy Huroyim, and the text gives curse and contrivance together: "May their Huroyim of the Oqtosh people wither ... She made a horse of wood, and wings of paper" [Oqtosh elda Huroyimi qurisin... Yog'ochdan qildi otni, qog'ozdan qildi qanotni] (Rustamxon, 2007, p. 21). In "Alpomish", Surxayil maston works on the beks by performance: "Working guile and deceit, loosening her hair and tearing at her face ..." (Alpomish, 1998, p. 210). The literature treats both as an "anti-ideal". Candidate norm: cunning, slander and vengefulness are to be rejected. Broad formulation: the old woman outside a household's protection is the bearer of malice.

Reciprocity: not applicable, and this is itself diagnostic. There is no relation between parties in which a norm is displayed, only an ascription, and where the test cannot be run the framework records a failure. Conditions: not applicable for the same reason. Addressee: fail at type. The wish that Huroyim should wither precedes any act of hers, and the loosened hair and torn face are the signs of an old woman's grief turned into marks of malice.

Relation: non-exemplary use, by a route distinct from Section 3.4.4: there a positive exemplar was withdrawn on strong conditions failure, here an anti-exemplar on type failure. Teacher move: revoke the warning function and retain the passage as evidence. The maston fills the villain's structural slot, the interference that sets the plot moving (Propp, 1968), and why that slot is filled by an old woman is a real question about narrative convention.

The six cases distribute across all four relations, each with a distinct profile; the two that recur are reached by different routes and carry different teacher moves.

Table 3. The six cases: test outcomes and assigned relation

Case	Candidate norm as stated	Reciprocity	Conditions	Addressee	Relation
3.4.1 The mother's blessing (Huroyim)	Care given across generations creates an obligation to return it.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Direct endorsement, with the boundary named
3.4.2 Barchin's four conditions	A person is entitled to set the terms on which she will marry.	Pass	Qualified	Qualified	Historical contextualisation
3.4.3 Barchin's	Fidelity should be maintained	Fail	Qualified	Fail	Critical contestation, by

seven-year wait	through separation and hardship.				separating two norms
3.4.4 Ximchaoyim the bondwoman	Devotion to those one serves is admirable regardless of station.	Fail	Fail (strong)	Fail	Non-exemplary use, positive exemplar withdrawn
3.4.5 Honour as a woman's measure	A person should guard her honour.	Fail	Fail	Fail	Critical contestation, by disaggregating two senses
3.4.6 The maston as anti-exemplar	Cunning, slander and vengeance are to be rejected.	Not applicable, recorded as failure	Not applicable, recorded as failure	Fail (type)	Non-exemplary use, anti-exemplar withdrawn

DISCUSSION

The first question asked on what grounds a value carried by heritage narrative can be assigned to a determinate pedagogical relation. The answer is: on three, statable tightly enough to be applied by someone other than their author. Whether the norm binds both parties, whether the admired disposition is distinguishable from compliance, and whether the derived lesson falls symmetrically are answerable from the text, and their combination fixes the relation without appeal to a verdict on the tradition as a whole.

The second question asked whether those grounds discriminate. They do, in both directions. Similar cases come apart: Tovka's pledge and Ximchaoyim's are behaviourally identical yet assigned differently, because one was withholdable and the other was not. Different cases converge: the admired bondwoman and the reviled maston, opposite in valence, both leave the exemplar repertoire. And a single episode can split, as the seven-year wait does, into a norm that passes all

three tests and one that fails two.

The third question asked what is achieved beyond an injunction to engage critically. The gain is a different kind of judgement: one terminating in a decision, stating its ground in a sentence, leaving a record a third party can dispute. "Engage critically" cannot be wrong, and cannot be checked. An assignment of a named figure to non-exemplary use on a named test can be both.

The framework does not displace the literatures reviewed in Section 1; it operationalises a commitment they share. Culturally sustaining pedagogy insists that the right to contest belongs with the right to inherit (Paris, 2012; Paris & Alim, 2017); what is added is a way of saying which elements are contested and on what ground. Exemplarist theory treats admiration as defeasible (Zagzebski, 2017); what is added is a procedure for defeating it in a case. Multicultural theory settles what a state may permit (Okin, 1999; Kymlicka, 1995; Benhabib, 2002; Phillips, 2007); what is added is

a rule operating one episode at a time.

Two frictions deserve naming. The conditions test demands that a text's setting be described before its value is extracted, as decolonising work requires, but it also subjects that setting to assessment, which that work does not straightforwardly license (Smith, 2012; Battiste, 2013). And against ethnopedagogy's premise that a people's moral resources are the proper content of upbringing (Ushinsky, 1948; Volkov, 1999), it holds that being a people's resource is not by itself a reason to recommend a norm.

The strongest objection is that the framework is well designed for settings that do not need it. Where a state has made heritage the substance of moral education it has usually done so for reasons of legitimation, and a teacher who tells a class that a canonical heroine is not a model takes a professional risk. It may then be adopted in name while every case comes out as endorsement. This cannot be answered by insisting on the teacher's critical vocation: teachers sit within institutions that reward some judgements and punish others, and treating them as intellectuals says how they should be positioned, not how they are (Giroux, 1988).

The region's history sharpens this. The Soviet assault on veiling and seclusion was experienced as an attack on the community and produced defensive entrenchment as well as change (Northrop, 2004). A teacher who contests an epic's treatment of women can be heard as repeating that assault, and post-socialist reform has shown borrowed frameworks received in ways their authors did not anticipate (Silova & Niyozov, 2020).

Three considerations limit the damage without removing it. First, most of what the framework produces is not contestation: two of the four relations are compatible with a curriculum that honours its heritage, and "endorse, and name the boundary" is harder to call hostile than a general injunction to critique. Second, where contestation is unavailable, withdrawal often is not: reassigning a figure to the literary syllabus removes the endorsement without a confrontation. Third, contestation in the tradition's own vocabulary is more survivable; honour codes have been revised from within, by people appealing to the code rather than repudiating it (Appiah, 2010), and a tradition is constituted by its internal arguments (MacIntyre, 2007). The concession stands: the

framework can be hollowed out, and its only defence is that the record makes that detectable rather than preventable.

The second objection is internal to exemplarist education. Educators reach for narrative because it moves people, and admiration is the mechanism (Zagzebski, 2017). Interrupting admiration with an account of the conditions that produced the admired conduct converts an exemplar into a specimen; if every heroine arrives with an apparatus of qualification, pupils will learn to analyse and not to admire.

Part of the answer concedes the point: contextualisation costs something in immediacy, and the cost is real for younger learners. But the objection assumes a version of exemplarism its own theorists reject. Admiration in Zagzebski's account is defeasible, so testing it belongs to the theory rather than intruding on it, and the Aristotelian aim lies not in copying exemplary acts but in the practical wisdom deciding what a virtue requires now (Kristjansson, 2006, 2015).

Contestation is also not only subtractive. The cases above generate their own occasions for admiration – Barchin throwing an assailant to the ground, Tovka helping an enemy captive against her people's interest. A framework that withdraws some exemplars while identifying others re-sorts the repertoire rather than depleting it. The objection also over-estimates how much of moral formation runs through admiration; narrative gives pupils the vocabulary for their own situations (Tappan & Brown, 1989).

The third objection is that the framework presents itself as a procedure while functioning as a verdict. Reciprocity asks whether a norm binds both parties; addressee, whether it falls symmetrically on learners. Both presuppose that persons are entitled to equal moral consideration irrespective of gender and status. A tradition not sharing that premise fails the tests by construction, and calling the result a procedure dresses a substantive commitment as a method.

The premise is there, and should be defended rather than denied. First, the commitment is thin, and its thinness does work. The tests do not rank ways of life, do not require that a tradition be abandoned, and do not license a classroom to declare a corpus defective; they ask, of one norm at a time, whether it binds both parties and falls symmetrically.

Second, the commitment is not imported from outside; it is already present. A state that mandates compulsory education for girls and boys, and promises both the same curriculum, has adopted the premise the addressee test formalises. The framework asks that system to apply consistently a commitment made in its own founding documents – internal criticism, not external imposition. The same holds within the tradition: who may say what the epics require is a contest inside the community rather than a fact about it (Benhabib, 2002), and the women whose conduct the epics record acted strategically (Kandiyoti, 1988).

Third, the premise can be given content that is not merely the local intuition of one political tradition. Whether a practice leaves those subject to it able to function in specified human respects can be asked of any practice, including those of the societies from which such frameworks come (Nussbaum, 2000). And treating a pupil as entitled to argue with her inheritance is not treating it as disposable; the capacity to revise an identity from inside is part of what having one amounts to (Appiah, 2005). What cannot be answered is the sharpest form of the charge: a framework built from these materials and applied to an Uzbek corpus does reproduce a familiar direction of authority. Two things mitigate and neither dissolves it: the outputs are contestable, and the framework is meant to be turned on any corpus, including the readership's own.

Several things lie outside its scope. It says nothing about which texts should be in the curriculum; it operates on material already selected, and selection is the more consequential decision. It offers no theory of assessment, and does not adjudicate between rival candidate norms when a class disagrees – it makes the disagreement visible and stops. It says nothing about non-narrative heritage, and it presupposes a teacher able to describe an episode's social conditions accurately.

The unit of adoption should be the department rather than the individual teacher, because the protocol's value lies in the comparability of the records it produces. A department would hold, for each recommended figure, one sheet: the norm as taught, the broadest formulation, the three outcomes with their textual grounds, the relation, and the move. Disagreement then becomes locatable rather than temperamental, and the distribution of relations across

a corpus becomes visible – the only check on the failure described in Section 4.3.1.

Teacher formation is the harder implication: the conditions test requires knowing what alternatives a text's world afforded, which is historical knowledge rather than pedagogical technique.

The framework is untested. Nothing here establishes that teachers can use it, that using it changes anything, or that its assignments would command agreement.

Three kinds of evidence would test it. The first concerns convergence: whether two teachers, given the same episode and protocol, arrive at the same relation, and – more importantly – whether, when they diverge, they can locate the divergence in the written norm statement or in one named test. The claim to auditability rests on this. The second concerns what teachers do, since a framework can be applied correctly on paper and delivered as something else in a room: which relations are assigned, whether the teacher move is made, and whether contestation is conducted or performed. The third concerns learners: whether pupils taught under the protocol reason differently about unfamiliar material. A fourth is institutional: whether the audit record survives inspection or becomes a compliance document.

It is worth saying plainly what failure would look like. The framework fails if independent teachers reach divergent relations and cannot resolve the divergence by pointing at the record, since it is then a vocabulary, not a procedure. It fails if assignments track teachers' prior dispositions more closely than the tests, if every case is assigned to direct endorsement, or if pupils recite the four relations without applying them. Two extensions are worth attempting: application to a corpus outside this tradition, and to asymmetries other than gender and status.

CONCLUSION

Heritage mandates are not going to be withdrawn, and there is no good reason to want them withdrawn. The material is rich, recognised by the pupils who study it, and carries moral content in the form most readily learned. The difficulty is that it also carries the social order that produced it, so a curriculum recommending its figures as models recommends more than it means.

The response proposed here is neither to defend the material as it stands nor to replace it, but to make the

transfer of a value from narrative to classroom a decision with stated grounds. Three tests, applied to a norm written in one sentence, assign the case to one of four relations, each carrying a teacher move. The output is not a verdict about a tradition but a record.

That is a smaller achievement than resolving the tension between heritage and equality, and the smallness is the point: the tension is not the kind of thing a framework resolves. What can change is whether decisions about it are made case by case on stated grounds, or settled in advance by whatever the institution finds comfortable.

A teacher who has assigned a figure to non-exemplary use, and written why, has done something a third party can dispute. A curriculum asserting that it engages critically has not.

The passages are reproduced as printed in the scholarly editions, in the Cyrillic orthography of those editions, with a Latin transliteration beneath each. The section in which each passage is discussed is given in the right-hand column. Translations in the article are the author's own.

No.	Original (Cyrillic) and transliteration	Source	Section
A1	"Болам камолга кирса, от белига минса, / икки тозини иярти(б), саҳроларда / гашт қилиб юрса", деб орзу қилар эди. <i>"Bolam kamolga kirsа, ot beliga minsа, / ikki tozini iyarti(b), sahrolarda / gasht qilib yursa", deb orzu qilar edi.</i>	Rustamxon, 2007, p. 13	5.1
A2	"Оқтош элда Хуройими қурисин... Ёғочдан қилди отни, қоғоздан қилди қанотни". <i>"Oqtosh elda Huroyimi qurisin... Yog'ochdan qildi otni, qog'ozdan qildi qanotni".</i>	Rustamxon, 2007, p. 21	5.6
A3	"Қодир Олло, сен биласан ҳолимди, / Бевақт бердинг менга	Rustamxon, 2007, p. 53	5.1, 5.5

	ноҳақ ўлимди... / Бегуноҳ устинга олма таними". <i>"Qodir Ollo, sen bilasan holimdi, / Bevaqt berding menga nohaq o'limdi... / Begunoh ustinga olma tanimi".</i>		
A4	"Икки този келди, болам келмади, / Ёлғиз болам тозиларча бўлмади". <i>"Ikki tozi keldi, bolam kelmadi, / Yolg'iz bolam tozilarcha bo'lmadi".</i>	Rustamxon, 2007, p. 54	5.1
A5	"...иккови Ҳурайимнинг дуосини олиб... мурод- мақсадига етди". <i>"...ikkovi Huroyimning duosini olib... murod- maqsadiga yetdi".</i>	Rustamxon, 2007, p. 132	5.1
A6	"...Шоҳимардон пири Ҳакимбекка ой Барчинни аташтириб, бешкирти қилиб: "Бу иккови эр-хотин бўлсин..." деб фотиҳани бетига тортди". <i>"...Shohimardon piri Hakimbekka oy Barchinni atashtirib, beshkirti qilib: "Bu ikkovi er-xotin</i>	Alpomish, 1998, p. 14	5.2

	<i>bo'lsin..." deb fotihani betiga tortdi".</i>		
A7	"Менинг тўрт шартим бор, шул тўрт шартимни / қилган кишига тегаман... / Кураш қилиб тўқсон алпни йиққанга, / Мен тегаман нор билакли полвонга". <i>"Mening to'rt shartim bor, shul to'rt shartimni / qilgan kishiga tegaman... / Kurash qilib to'qson alpni yiqqanga, / Men tegaman nor bilakli polvonga".</i>	Alpomish, 1998, pp. 117–118	5.2
A8	"Ҳийлаю-макрлик қилиб, чочини ёйиб, бетини юлиб..." <i>"Hiylayu-makrlik qilib, chochini yoyib, betini yulib..."</i>	Alpomish, 1998, p. 210	5.6
A9	"Отим Товка, шоҳнинг қизи бўламан, / То ўлгунча сенга хизмат қиламан". <i>"Otim Tovka, shohning qizi bo'laman, / To o'lguncha senga xizmat qilaman".</i>	Alpomish, 1998, p. 269	5.4
A10	"Алпомиш деб фироғинда йиғлатиб, /	Alpomish, 1998, p. 346	5.3, 5.5

	Ултонтозни сира қабул қилмасин". <i>"Alpomish deb firog'inda yig'latib, / Ultontozni sira qabul qilmasin".</i>		
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