Working Together: Translated and Original Children's Literature in the Soviet Union

1930s – 1950s

By

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Submitted to
Central European University
Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

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Budapest, Hungary

2016

Abstract

The purpose of literature in Soviet Central Asia was to integrate its population into the Soviet project. Despite that, the historiography of Soviet Central Asia's literary experiences is a newly developing branch of study and so far remains limited, while children's literature in Soviet Central Asia is a practically unstudied field. This thesis looks at the case of Soviet literature in Turkmenistan, specifically at the endeavor to bring the new Soviet reality into Turkmen life through the medium of the newly created Soviet Turkmen children's literature.

The thesis addresses the process of creation of children's literature in Soviet Turkmenistan from its origins in the early 1930s till the early 1950s. The goal of the thesis is to look at one aspect of how the program of creating Soviet Turkmen children's literature happened in the Turkmen context of the early Soviet rule and what its literary results represented. The process of creating children's literature in Soviet Turkmenistan was publicized in the Turkmen press. A study of press articles reveals the importance of translated and original literature in the development of Turkmen children's literature. An overview of the translated children's literature shows which themes were found proper for socialization of Turkmen children into the Soviet Union. A comparison with the original children's literature reveals that it did not engage in the same themes. The original literature was concerned with educating readers on the value of literacy, hygiene, and building friendships. Despite the apparent disparity, the translated and original Turkmen children's literature served the same purpose of integrating Turkmen children into the Soviet world. The former did it by propagating themes familiar from Russian Soviet children's literature such as patriotism and socialist construction, while the latter established the foundation for the new Soviet realities of universal education, personal hygiene, gender equality, and other.

Acknowledgements

I appreciate the help and support I got from my supervisor, Professor Marsha Siefert, second reader, Professor Karl Hall, and the faculty and stuff of the Department of History of CEU. I would also like to thank Professors Filitsa Sofianou-Mullen, John Mullen, Diego Lucci, and, especially, Markus Wien for encouraging me to grow.

I am grateful to my sister, Bahar Basharman, for taking the time to go to the Turkmen State Library to make photocopies of children's books, and my friend, Georgi Georgiev, for standing by me in the last few days and encouraging to do more. Thank you to Matt Tappert for technical assistance – I submitted on time with 'bookmarks', and my flat mates, whose names they know, for being great all along. Finally, I am thankful to have had my friends' support, especially Ioana Haşu-Georgiev, Ester Petrosyan, and Paige Richmond, among others.

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Introduction

"In a class based society, there is no and cannot be neutral art," stated early Bolshevik decrees. The need to break away from "barstvo" in literature was emphasized, instead creating a "corresponding form comprehensible to millions." This was a "great task" for new Soviet literature that had to be accomplished for it to complete its cultural and historical "mission." Such was the Communist party's vision of what was Soviet literature in the 1920s. It was understood to be a result of a cultural revolution that gave rise to a socialist society. Therefore, Soviet literature was to be ideologically aware and class conscious. It was also to be mass-oriented with the purpose of enlisting the masses into the Soviet project.

In this framework, Soviet children's literature was to make an important contribution. The main task of children's literature was to foster "communist upbringing" of children. Ideally, Soviet children's literature was to instill in the younger generation Communist spirit, class consciousness, and motivation for socialist construction. Children's literature was to truly orient itself toward children, address their social and everyday concerns, and encourage thinking in the lines of collectivism. Publishing children's literature in national languages acquired significance already in 1928.[1]

It was around 1930 that Soviet literature in general went through a significant

[1] "Ob obslujivanii knigoi massovogo chitatelia" [About providing the mass reader with a book], 380-82; "O politike partii v oblasti khudojestvennoi literatury" [About the policy of the Party in the field of literature], 343-47; and "O meropriiatiiah po uluchsheniiu iunosheskoi i detskoi pechati" [About the measures to improve youth and children's publishing], 377-78; in *O partiinoi i sovetskoi pechati. Sbornik dokumentov.* [About party and soviet print. Collection of documents.] (Moskva: Pravda, 1954).

development as it acquired a multinational character.[2] In that respect, Soviet literature provided the foundation for "articulating the assumptions, values, and goals of a new society and a primary tool for reforging individuals *and nations* into fit members of that society."[3] The purpose of literature in Soviet Central Asia – to integrate its population into the Soviet project – was particularly salient because the region, in the eyes of the Soviet authorities, lagged behind in all aspects of its historical development, earning it the status of "backwardness."[4] Despite that, the historiography of Soviet Central Asia's literary experiences is a newly developing branch of study and so far remains limited, while children's literature in Soviet Central Asia is a practically unstudied field.[5] Nevertheless, the creation of Soviet literature in Central Asia partook in adoption of the region in a new reality of the Soviet Union. This thesis looks at the case of Soviet literature in Turkmenistan, specifically at the Soviet endeavor to bring the new Soviet reality into Turkmen life through the medium of the newly created Soviet Turkmen children's literature.

Recent English and Russian scholarship and PhD theses reconsider and shed light on the political use of different kinds of media as seen in the published Soviet literature works and children's books in particular. The change in the national republics was coordinated through official mediums such as committees and congresses. Thus, in her PhD dissertation, Kathryn Douglas Schild finds that the Soviet multinational literature was established

[2] Evgeniy Dobrenko, "Gomer Stalinizma: Suleiman Stal'skii i sovetskaia mnogonatsional'naia literatura," Ab Imperio (3/2013): 191-249.

[3] Kathryn Douglas Schild, "Between Moscow and Baku: National Literatures at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers" (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2010): 2.

[4] Central Asia was found to be by the Party in the feudal stage of development. Francine Hirsch, *Empire of nations: ethnographic knowledge & the making of the Soviet Union,* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2005): 6-9, and Adeeb Khaleed, "Backwardness and the Quest for Civilization: Early Soviet Central Asia in Comparative Perspective," *Slavic Review* 65 (2006): 232-34.

[5] One such rare study is done by Christopher M. Murphy on "New Books for New People: Soviet Central Asian Chilren's Books (1926-32)," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 32.2 (2012): 310-22. Murphy studies children's books published in the given years, following the change of the script from Arabic to Latin. His analysis is, however, limited to the study of the print, paper, and illustrations.

through the preparation for and the event of the First Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934.[6] Susanna Witt studies the role and complexity of translation practices in the creation of the Soviet multinational literature, especially in its initial stages of national folklore literature.[7] Katharine Holt analyzes how the turn towards multinational literature led to the development of local national authors over the former practice of Russian ones writing about national republics. She concludes that in the first half of the 1930, especially leading to 1934, the official demand for the "native" perspective instead of that of 'outsider' cultural producers grew. As a result, the Soviet film and culture produced in the period was a collaboration of the two, with the "outsiders" still being producers who now referred to the "insiders" for their perception.[8]

The problem of Turkmen Soviet children's literature in Central Asia was already a visible topic in the Soviet Turkmen scholarship in 1984 in the multivolume series on *The History of Turkmen literature*.[9] The particulars of developments in children's literature can be found in the second book of the sixth volume of the series. The book was published in Turkmenistan as a monograph with no author or publisher indicated. The book discusses that Turkmen children's literature "was created and began to grow" in the late 1920s. By the early 1930s, it was not "yet formed as independent literature," even though the first half of the 1930s is when "Turkmen Soviet children's literature appeared in its true sense." Looking back, *History* identifies three elements as the foundation of Turkmen Soviet children's literature: Turkmen folklore, Turkmen classical literature, and "integrating the

[6] Schild, "Between Moscow and Baku."

[7] Susanna Witt, "The Shorthand of Empire: *Podstrochnik* Practices and the Making of Soviet Literature," *Ab Imperio* (3/2013): 155-190.

[8] Katharine Holt, "The Rise of Insider Iconography: Visions of Soviet Turkmenia in Russian-Language Literature and Film, 1921-1935," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2013).

[9] Further referred in the thesis as *History*.

traditions of developed brotherly literatures."[10] *History* describes the endeavor in Turkmen children's literature to go from verse-based to prose-based literature.

This thesis addresses the process of creation of children's literature in Soviet Turkmenistan from its origins in the early 1930s till the early 1950s. The thesis adopts Evgeny Dobrenko's definition of Soviet children's literature as "Socialist Realist literature for children." He locates its beginning in the mid-1930s when children's literature in the Soviet Union abandoned the avant-garde tendencies of the 1920s and the adventurism of the pre-revolutionary period.[11] The goal of the thesis is to look at one aspect of how the program of creating Turkmen Soviet children's literature happened in the Turkmen context of the early Soviet rule and what its literary results represented. The creation of children's literature in Soviet Turkmenistan was a years-long project that was publicized in the Turkmen press. A study of press articles on the subject indicates books translated into Turkmen and books written by Turkmen writers as the building components of Turkmen children's literature. In the 1930s, due to institutional and authorship difficulties expressed in the press, the number of translated books was larger than the number of originals. In line with the nationalities policy, it was also the press's main message that the original literature written by Turkmen writers needs to develop and increase.[12] While the amount of translated literature helps to track the development of original literature, it also shows which themes were found proper for socialization of Turkmen children into the Soviet Union.

As this thesis will show, it is then curious that original children's literature does not really support these themes. Original literature is concerned with educating readers on the

[10] "Çagalaň edebiýaty" [Children's literature], in *Turkmen edebiýatynyň taryhy VI.2* [The History of Turkmen literature], (Ashgabat: n.p., 1984): 123-28.
[11] Evgeny Dobrenko, "The School Tale in Children's Literature of Socialist Realism," in *Russian Children's Literature and Culture*, ed. Marina Balina and Larissa Rudova (New York: Routledge, 2005): 43-51.
[12] Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923-1939* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2001): 1-25.

value of literacy, hygiene, and building friendships. By comparing the old Turkmen practices and new Soviet possibilities, the original literature demonstrated the advantages of the Soviet Union, thus also contributing to the integration of Turkmen children into the Soviet world. The thesis finds that, even though as a whole the newly created Turkmen Soviet children's literature's purpose was to bring Soviet Central Asia closer to the rest of the Soviet Union, thematically and content-wise the translated and original children's literature were notably different. If the former propagated themes familiar from Russian Soviet children's literature such as patriotism and socialist construction, the latter's purpose was to establish the foundation for the new Soviet realities of universal education, personal hygiene, gender equality, and other.

Who exactly was understood to be the target audience of children's literature is uncertain because of a combination of reasons. It is reasonable to be skeptical of the press's claim that in 1940 out of a thousand people, 800 were literate.[13] The changes of the alphabet in Soviet Turkmenistan from Arabic to Latin in 1928 and then to Cyrillic in 1940 obstructed the liquidation of illiteracy.[14] In the same year, the Turkmen state publishing house used schooling categories in allocating books from the 1940 publication plan for children's literature.[15] Thus, out of 92 books planned for publication, it assigned 21 for pre-school children, 45 for the libraries of elementary schools, and 26 for the libraries of middle schools.[16] The allocation, though, could not have reflected the actual state of schooling in

[13] "Ýash ösdürimlere laýykly eserler bereliň" [Let's give the growing generation appropriate stories], *Ýash Kommunist*, 30 Jan. 1940.
[14] Adrienne Lynn Edgar, *Tribal Nations: the Making of Soviet Turkmenistan* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2004): 78, 139.
[15] The Turkmen State Publishing with the Turkmen Writers' Union are recognized as the two institutions responsible for children's literature. The former had a department for children's literature established in 1936 that was to become its own publishing house for children and youth in 1941 but was closed down before that. "Let's give the growing generation appropriate stories," *Ýash Kommunist*.
[16] "Çagalara iň ýagşy çeper eserleri bereris" [We will give children the best stories], *Sovet Turkmenistana*, 10 Sept. 1940. Libraries before the 1950s were considered the "centers of the Soviet civilizing mission." There, children's reading choices were directed, corrected and monitored by library staff. Catriona Kelly, "'Thank

the republic. Universal primary education in Turkmenistan was expected to be introduced only in 1939, and it promised merely one year of schooling. Only urban and some fortunate rural areas had more years of school education.[17] The publishing house's distribution of books according to the schooling level of children was also not indicated in the books themselves. It is in the 1950s that children's books started being published for a certain designated readership. That is revealed in a 1958 article in *Mugallymlar gazety* (Teachers' newspaper). The article makes a reference to a recent practice of "the last three-four years" to publish children's books with print dedications to "pre-school," "little," and "pre-school and little children."[18] Therefore, the combination of persistent illiteracy and limited secondary education leads to the presumption that it is not the age of children's literature's target audience that mattered but their ability to read.

The thesis is based on two sources of primary material. The first source is Turkmen Soviet press as a medium of information that made publicly available the developments in the field of Turkmen Soviet children's literature. The thesis analyzes press coverage of one newspaper in particular – youth-oriented, Turkmen language *Yash Kommunist* (Young Communist). It began publishing in 1925 and was the first and the only youth newspaper in the country until 1938 when a Russian language youth newspaper appeared.[19] The second source originates in the press coverage of Turkmen children's literature. It was decreed in 1928 that the Soviet press was to lead bibliographic record of all new literature, technical, industrial, scientific, cultural, and literary. The rule encompassed both enumeration of new

you for the Wonderful Book': Soviet Child Readers and the Management of Children's Reading, 1950-1975," *Kritika* 6.4 (2005): 718.

[17] Edgar, *Tribal Nations*: 78, 139.

[18] Abdylla Myradov, "Mekdebe çenli we kiçi ýaşly çagalar üçin" [For pre-school and little children], *Mugallymlar gazeti*, 13 Feb. 1958.

[19] In 1938 *KomsomoletsTurkmenistana* appeared as a youth newspaper in Russian language. It had a run of 12 issues a month. *Ýash Kommunist* ran on a daily basis. Myratgeldi Ovezberdiyev, "Molodejnaia pechat Turkmenistana v 1925-1941: istoriia i opyt," MA thesis, Rostov state university, 1991. <http://cheloveknauka.com/molodezhnaya-pechat-turkmenistana-v-1925-1941-gg-istoriya-i-opyt>.

books and a critical recommendation for readers.[20] Titles provided in the Turkmen press, therefore, represent the result of official efforts at creating a Turkmen Soviet children's literature and a sample of officially sanctioned Soviet children's literature. Moreover, I believe the bibliography on Turkmen children's literature to be reasonably encompassing based on the reports' seeming desperation to portray an appearance of plenty out of the slim offerings of both original and translated Turkmen children's literature.

An additional source of primary material comes in the form of a published collection of the Party documents oriented at the Soviet Union in general and Russia in particular. The document collection spans the years from 1903 to 1954 and has to do with the Bolshevik Party and Soviet print material.[21] While the document collection in part compensates for the historiographical limitation of the thesis in not using archival material of Turkmen official records concerning children's literature, I believe the absence is not too limiting for the study as the accent of the thesis lies in the literary result of Soviet endeavors to create the new Turkmen Soviet children's literature. Thus, the thesis uses the Soviet Russian documents in order to orient itself in the developments in the Turkmen field.

In the bibliography provided by the Turkmen press, the books can be organized into three categories: those written by Turkmen authors – what the press refers to as *original* literature, those written by Russian authors and translated into Turkmen – referred to as *translated* literature, and those written by foreign authors and translated into Turkmen. The occurrence of the last category of literature was limited to the early years of the endeavor to create Turkmen children's literature. It thus happened only before 1935.[22] Unlike the

[20] " About providing the mass reader with a book," 380-82, and "O literaturnoi kritike i bibliographii" [About literary criticism and bibliography], in *O partiinoi i sovetskoi pechati. Sbornik dokumentov.* (Moskva: Pravda, 1954): 487.
[21] *O partiinoi i sovetskoi pechati. Sbornik dokumentov*. [About party and soviet print. Collection of documents.] (Moskva: Pravda, 1954).
[22] Aman Kekilov, "Çagalary edebiýat bilen üpçün ederis" [We will provide children with literature], *Ýash Kommunist*, 18 Jan. 1935.

translation of non-Russian literature, the translation of Russian Soviet literature into Turkmen language persisted alongside with the emphasis on the creation of *original* Turkmen children's books.

Thus, the thesis's sample pool of Turkmen Soviet children's literature consists of a combination of *translated* and *original* Turkmen children's literature. As the press coverage of Turkmen children's literature mainly comes from the years 1934, 1940, and 1950, the thesis looks at the book publications reported on in newspaper articles approximately bounded by these years. According to this periodization, in *translated* Turkmen children's literature, there are eleven books published between 1934 and 1940, and eight books published between 1941 and 1950. The majority of the translations from the Russian children's literature come from the Soviet period. In *original* Turkmen children's literature, there are thirteen books published between 1934 and 1940, and ten books published between 1941 and 1950.[23]

As for methodology, the thesis relies on a number of approaches used previously in historical studies. For the press chapter, the thesis uses the analysis of criticism and self-criticism (*kritikaisamokritika*) established by Alexei Kojevnikov in his study of official meetings or gatherings as "rule-governed public performances." Kojevnikov argues that, with the lack of oppositional forces, the notion allowed for accountability to the masses of all ranks of the Party members. The practice carried several functions at once: to educate Communists in the Party ways, exercise "grass-roots criticism," and "revealing and repairing shortcomings."[24] The thesis employs these points in the study of the press

[23] In the original literature, 11 of the books were prose based, and the rest were written in verse. Because of the difficulty of accessing the books, the thesis studies six of the prose and three of the verse based books.
[24] Alexei Kojevnikov, "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work: Science and the Games of intraparty Democracy circa 1948," *The Russian Review* 57.1 (1998): 32-36.

coverage on the creation of Turkmen children's literature as a metaphorical meeting between responsible agents such as writers and the rest of the republic's society.

In the analysis of children's literature, the thesis relies on scholarly studies of Soviet Russian children's literature. One such study is William B. Husband's analysis of the place of environment in Soviet Russian children's literature between 1928 and 1941. He observes that Russia was leading its own struggle against "backwardness" through encouragement of science and technology, which took the form of a "Stalinist campaign to 'correct nature's mistakes'." Husband finds the reflection of the campaign as a regular theme in children's literature in the given years which nevertheless did not carry only the official message.[25] Another study by Evgeny Dobrenko expands on the significance and development of the "school tale" in Soviet Russian children's literature to promote children's organization and learning independently from schooling institutions.[26] The authors highlight a predominance of these themes in children's literature and how they were utilized to push forward certain lines of thinking. The final study is a dissertation by Svetlana Gennad'evna Leont'eva which makes a sweeping overview of artistic productions such as literary works, theatre plays, songs, and pamphlets that featured pioneers as the main characters. Leont'eva defines these artistic productions as "pioneer literature." Through the study of the changing values the pioneer literature promoted, she analyzes the intended role of pioneer characters in the upbringing of Soviet children.[27]

Using these studies, the thesis aims in the following chapters to identify and explain uniting and varying characteristics of translated and original Turkmen children's literature.

[25] William B. Husband, "'Correcting Nature's Mistakes': Transforming the Environment and Soviet Children's Literature, 1928-1941," *Environmental History* 11.2 (2006): 300-318.
[26] Dobrenko, "The School Tale," 43-66.
[27] Svetlana Gennad'evna Leont'eva, "Literatura pionerskoi organizatsii: ideologiia i poetika," [Literature of the pioneer organization: ideology and poetics.] (Diss., Tver' State University, 2006).

Thus, the first chapter studies the press articles from the period of the 1930s – 1950s to follow the process of creation of Turkmen children's literature. It finds that, surrounded by the spirit of criticism, it developed slowly and grew out of contributions of translated and original literature. The second chapter takes a close look at translated children's literature to identify the themes and regression in the amount of translated books as a positive mark of the growth of original literature. The final chapter analyzes original children's books in comparison with translated literature which reveals themes developed by the local authors for Turkmen children.

Chapter One. Children's literature in Turkmen Soviet Press in the 1930s – 1950s

Looking back at Turkmen Soviet literature in his 1996 article, *Turkmenistan: Toward a New Maturity*, Khudayberdy Durdyev criticizes the Soviet literary influence for he says Socialist Realism restricted Turkmen literary creativity to one path of expression – the portrayal of "revolutionary development." On the other hand, he finds Turkmen literature benefited from learning of "a realist tradition" of "Russian and other literatures." In this aspect, he points at the important experience of integrating prose as a literary form in Turkmen literature and outside literary influences in the program of creating Turkmen Soviet literature. Despite that, he assesses that, as a result of tight control and censorship "demanding the faithful execution of directives sent from above," the first three decades to be literarily unimaginative.[28] The endeavor to introduce prose as a form of writing in Turkmen Soviet literature was notable in Turkmen's press's detailed coverage of original books. It was also studied by the Turkmen Soviet scholarship which recognized the challenge the introduction of prose writing in the newly developing field of Turkmen Soviet children's literature presented.

From *The History of Turkmen literature*'s record of the developments in children's literature, it is apparent that the Soviet allegations that there was no pre-Soviet Turkmen children's literature are based on the apparent measure of prose as a universal form of writing and the lack of it in Turkmen classical literature. Indeed, while the pre-Soviet Turkmen literature existed in verse-based form, prose as a form of writing in the Turkmen literary context appeared only under the Soviet rule. In fact, Walter Feldman observes that Turkmen written literature, i.e. poetry, as opposed to traditional oral transmission, appeared

[28] Khudayberdy Durdyev, "Toward a New Maturity," *World Literature Today* 70.3 (1996): 589-592.

"quite suddenly" quite late – in the first half of the eighteenth century. The literature combined in itself Turkmen folksong and oral epic, historical legends, courtly and Sufistic-Chaghatay poetry. The major early figures in Turkmen classical literature are Dovletmemmet Azadi (b. 1700) who was the first to write in the Turkmen language, and his son Makhtumquli (about 1732-1790) who, despite Durdyev's contention of Soviet rejection of Turkmen heritage, was recognized by the Soviet literary authorities. The recognition owes to Makhtumquli's work carrying a "proto-nationalistic" element in its "call for the union of the major tribes" and the usage of the word *Turkmen*. Most of Makhtumquli's work was written in the form of *goshghi* – usually strophic quatrains resembling the form of Turkmen folksongs. Makhtumquli and his father came from "the first generations of madrassa-educated Turkmens." Another important name of the period is Andalib who began the custom of transforming oral epics of Turkmen *bakhshis* (folk singers) into literary works called *dessan*. His literary successor Maghrupi then wrote original Turkmen dessans.[29] Thus, Feldman's usage of the word poetry as an equivalent for Turkmen classical literature confirms the absence of prose as a form of composition in Turkmen literature till it was institutionalized by the Soviet Union.

History, documenting the early attempts of prose writing for children in Soviet Turkmenistan, observes that in the late 1920s and early 1930s children's books were autobiographic, contained a prelude before the main story, a static plot line, flat main character and narration. *History* comments that initially there was no "separation" among poets and writers of those who made children's literature their specialization. As a result, Turkmen children were exposed to literature intended for an adult audience. Prose in Turkmen Soviet children's literature took firm roots only around 1940. A distinguishing

[29] Walter Feldman, "Interpreting the Poetry of Makhtumquli," in *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change*, ed. Jo-Ann Gross, (Duke UP: Durham and London, 1992): 167-75.

feature of the period was short stories (*рассказы* or *hekaỳa*). The first prose work in Turkmen children's literature appeared in 1928 (Berdy Kerbabayev's *In the pioneer camp*). As prose writing took root, new themes and authors appeared. The themes progressed from topics unrelated to socialism to socialist construction. Authors, *History* notes, finally learned to use a language children would understand. With all these developments, *History* finds, Turkmen Soviet children's literature was able to stand alongside other national children's literatures qualitatively and quantitatively only by 1940s.[30] These observations, made decades later, reflect Turkmen press reports made at the time of the becoming of Turkmen Soviet children's literature. As Turkmen press followed the process, it is the best source for comparison with *History* and more detail on the creation of Turkmen Soviet children's literature.

The Turkmen Soviet press can be divided into three component branches: adult, youth and pioneer periodical press.[31] The pioneer press, interestingly, did not lead a commentary on the state of children's literature. It is reasonable when one considers that children were the target audience rather than the agents of children's literature.[32] The subject was of interest to both adult and youth periodical press.[33] In this paper, the focus will be on youth press because it was intended for young readership or readership interested in youth. Turkmen youth press was represented by *Ýash Kommunist* which was "[t]he first Soviet youth newspaper in Turkmenistan" and the only one till 1938. The paper was an organ of the Turkmen Komsomol; it began publishing in 1925 in Turkmen language on a

[30] "Children's literature," in *The History of Turkmen literature VI.2*, 123-28.
[31] Ovezberdiyev, "Molodejnaia pechat Turkmenistana."
[32] The newspapers that composed the pioneer press included *Gyzyl ýaglyk* [Red tie] 1925, *Pioner* 1926, *Mydam taýýar* [Always ready] 1930, *Vojatyý* [Leader] 1931; all in Turkmen language. Ovezberdiyev, "Molodejnaia pechat Turkmenistana."
[33] These observations come from my research in the State Library of Ashgabat, Turkmenistan that yielded a number of results on children's literature in youth- and adult-targeted press but not in non-pioneer one.

daily run.[34] Almost all of the press discussion looked at in this chapter comes from the newspaper *Ýash Kommunist*.

The press articles studied here cover the period from 1935 to 1950. Instead of looking at how the historical events of these years might have affected changes in the press on Turkmen children's literature, the chapter will look at continuities the press coverage of children's literature offers. There are three persistent tropes: the discussion of Turkmen (Soviet) children's literature as a newborn phenomenon, criticism and self-criticism of actors and institutions involved in the creation of children's literature, and, finally, literary criticism of and bibliographical work on children's literature. These three components of press discussion on Turkmen children's literature are present throughout the period. Consequently, a conclusion can be drawn that, despite the Soviet efforts advertised in the press to "eliminate" the "shortcomings" of Turkmen children's literature, the endeavor was not fruitful, and, in 1950 Turkmen Soviet children's literature as a branch of Soviet literature remained as newborn as it was in 1935.

Turkmen press coverage of children's literature demonstrates the occurrence of criticism and self-criticism practice (*kritika i samokritika*) in the press. Alexei Kojevnikov studies the notion as a component of Stalinist "intraparty democracy." He argues that the Communists genuinely regarded it "as a mechanism for making officials accountable to the party masses." Even high Party officials were vulnerable to it. The phenomenon appeared in late 1920s and was explained by lack of oppositional political forces, as a result of which the Party had "the burden of self-criticism." By 1930s, the practice fully functioned as a method of controlling and clearing through local party officials. Kojevnikov looks at the practice in the context of various meetings and gatherings, describing them as "rule-

[34] In 1938 *Komsomolets Turkmenistana* appeared as a youth newspaper in Russian language. It had a run of 12 issues a month. Ovezberdiyev, "Molodejnaia pechat Turkmenistana."

governed public performances" that usually happened on "special occasions" and with a "permission or initiative from above." The practice carried a "personal" character and is described to consist of two elements: "initiation (educating and enculturating party cadres) and terror (exposing and destroying enemies)." One of the main functions of the practice was "grass-roots criticism" and "revealing and repairing shortcomings." As a reaffirmation of belonging, it was important to show ability to discharge and accept criticism for greater collective benefit.[35]

Ýash Kommunist articles from 1935, 1940, and 1950 that specifically address the topic of children's literature are textbook illustrations of the practice. As Kojevnikov noted, these articles came out in conjunction with "special occasions." The 18 Jan. 1935 article from writer Aman Kekilov was written in the wake of a meeting between Turkmen state publishing (Turkmengosizdat) and Turkmen writers. The 16 Sept. 1940 series of articles discussed the Second Congress of Turkmen writers that happened a day earlier. The 6 June 1950 article came out a day before the plenum of Turkmen Soviet writers. The final article presented in this paper was written by the Minister of Enlightenment O. Mamedniiazov and was published in a different newspaper, *Turkmenskaia Iskra*, on 15 Dec. 1950. The message of all of them was Turkmen children's literature lags behind the general development of Turkmen Soviet literature.[36]

Aman Kekilov, a prominent figure in the Turkmen literary world, establishes the trope of Turkmen children's literature being newborn with an indignant observation that up

[35] Kojevnikov, "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work," 32-36.

[36] Kekilov, "We will provide children with literature;" Nurjan Amanov, "Türkmen ýazyjylary çagalara nämeler berdiler" [What Turkmen writers gave children], and Berdi Kerbabayev, "Gurultaý bize görkezme berer" [The Congress will give us directives], *Ýash Kommunist,* January 16, 1940; G. Velmyradov, "Çagalar edebiýatynda yza galaklygy ýok etmeli" [The backwardness in children's literature needs to be eliminated], *Ýash Kommunist,* June 6, 1950; O. Mamedniiazov, "O turkmenskoi detskoi literature" [About Turkmen children's literature], *Turkmenskaia Iskra,* December 15, 1950.

to 1935 not a single children's story was written by Turkmen authors. Kekilov, along the lines of party criticism, starts looking for the cause of this failure. A major responsible group in his eyes or a target of criticism is the writers who, he finds, are at fault in front of Turkmen children. Kekilov thus exposes a serious problem in the field and indicates for his readers who is to blame. As he himself was a writer, this could be indirect self-criticism, although nowhere in the article does he acknowledge a connection with the writers or takes blame. Kekilov's criticism also becomes quite personal in that it extends to naming a writer with the accusation of irresponsible and unproductive literary work. Kekilov addresses the venture of literary translation which, in his words, was the only provider of Turkmen children's literature, and was unsatisfactory in the choice of literature for translation into the Turkmen language, the design and paper of the books. Finally, Kekilov criticizes the institution of the Union of Turkmen Writers, which is blamed for having accomplished no work on children's literature till recent times. The only concession given to the Union is an acknowledgement at the First Congress, which ostensibly happened earlier that year, of the lack of attention paid to Turkmen children's literature.[37] Thus, to a naked eye, Kekilov's article more than anything transmits honest zeal and demonstrates lack of sympathy for his fellows in his severe and gloomy look at Turkmen children's literature. However, with the understanding of the notion of criticism and self-criticism, he was simply expressing allegiance to the Party ways in an unsympathetic Party practice.

Remarkably, about a half of the 1940 *Yash Kommunist* coverage of the Second Congress of Turkmen Writers was dedicated to children's literature. It is telling of the importance children's literature was given by the authorities, but also it was a common practice of explaining children's literature as an actual concern to and raising the awareness

[37] Kekilov, "We will provide children with literature."

about it among the Party officials and wider public.[38] September 16 *Yash Kommunist* coverage included two short pieces by writers and two longer pieces by literary critics. Nurjan Amanov is one of those critics, and criticism is abundant in his evaluation. He wrote an article titled "What Turkmen writers gave children." Amanov responds – not much. He finds that a satisfactory involvement of Turkmen writers in children's literature was achieved only in 1940. He then lists titles, the work on which was not completed by their authors. Amanov's article is presented in a way that creates an impression he found the cause behind the scarcity of children's literature. The cause is the writers. Amanov proposes that if they would just do their job, and not have-work, there would be children's literature. Presenting the names of authors with unfinished pieces does not only make the censure personal, but puts the problem in a more realistic and approachable light. It also makes Amanov appear ruthless. However, Amanov is only more diligent than Kekilov in the personal aspect of criticism and does not bring up any responsible institutions. That is why Amanov's criticism carries a strong personally accusatory tone, and his assessment appears pessimistic.[39]

The article by the renowned Turkmen writer Berdi Kerbabayev is markedly different from the two previous examples. Kerbabayev does not censure others or himself. The piece straightforwardly reports on the literary work he has written, his contributions to children's literature, and his present projects. He thus presents his literary figure as an active and productive contributor, one undeserving of incrimination. In addition, he writes "[t]he Congress will set the agenda for work for us. On its basis, we will involve in literature anew." It is a wholehearted demonstration of support for and readiness to follow the Party

[38] Kojevnikov, "Rituals of Stalinist Culture at Work," 32-36; Jeffrey Brooks talks about dogmatic public discourse in *Pravda* driven partially by "a very human need for public explanation" in "Socialist Realism in Pravda: Read All about It!" *Slavic Review* 53.4 (1994): 975-978.
[39] Amanov, "What Turkmen writers gave children."

directives. Nevertheless, in a subtle fashion Kerbabayev manages to separate himself from the culture of criticism and self-criticism. It is a quiet announcement of autonomy.[40]

In 1950 an article titled "The backwardness in children's literature needs to be eliminated" was written by G. Velmyradov. The article identifies a new problem – Turkmen children's literature lags behind in the development of Turkmen Soviet literature. Velmyradov determines the cause of the problem as absence of children's writers. Under this interpretation of the cause of the slow growth of children's literature, writers come under fire again. The article explains why there are no "special children's writer[s]" in Turkmen Soviet literature. Velmyradov points out that the general body of writers restrains itself from writing for children because they do not "fully understand the demands made from them" with regards to children's literature. He specifically seems to imply that they do not know what children's literature should contain as he observes that some writers think children's literature should be "only about children's lives." Velmyradov takes a step further to declare that "[t]here are writers who think it below them to write for children." As a result, "children cannot find enough original stories written for them." Interestingly, he does not investigate the cause of the writers' ignorance on how to write for children. He does not indentify reasons or institutions which are responsible for this situation. His inquiry into the problem ends with the writers. When he does mention official organs – the Turkmen state publishing, Writers' Union and journal *Soviet literature*, it is for other reasons, and they receive much less attention from Velmyradov than the writers. One instance of criticism of the Turkmen state publishing is that none of children's literature planned for 1950 was published. Velmyradov's criticism too targets specific individuals when the article names two authors who had written nothing for children.[41]

[40] Kerbabayev, "The Congress will give us directives."
[41] Velmyradov, "The backwardness in children's literature needs to be eliminated."

In the same year the Minister of Enlightenment O. Mamedniiazov made an assessment of Turkmen children's literature. He stated that the development of Soviet literature and Soviet children's literature was most evident in the national republics. In Soviet Turkmenistan, he too observed that children's literature lagged behind the development of Turkmen literature. He cited that in the last ten years in children's literature only 20 titles were published. Familiarly, Mamedniiazov assigned responsibility for this shortcoming but in a way quite different from Velmyradov's. Unlike the latter, Mamedniiazov called on the institutions of the Turkmen Writers' Union, Turkmen state publishing, and his own Ministry for the lack of "appropriate attention" given to the issue. He therefore exercised both criticism and self-criticism. Later, however, he cleverly redirects the blame to the state publishing by explaining that publishing plans are not fulfilled each year, and the titles recommended by the Ministry were ignored that year. Mamedniiazov summarizes that, as a result, since 1945 only 6 titles of translated children's literature were published. As for original work, in 1950 out of twenty one titles planned, only one was published; the rest were either with the authors or at the publisher. One failure Mamedniiazov owns is that the Ministry of Enlightenment and Writers' Union do not attract authors and pedagogues to the task of creating original children's literature. Thus, he states, the number of people working on the task by 1950 is quite few. He also finds that authors who write for children are not acquainted with school life, life of rural children, and work of pioneer and Komsomol organizations. They do not know "their heroes and readers, their life, social involvement." He concludes, similarly to Velmyradov, that these authors cannot write properly for children.[42]

In Turkmen press, it was a general rule to enumerate the titles of new children's books, original and in translation, in articles on children's literature. The practice originates

[42] O. Mamedniyazov, "About Turkmen children's literature."

in the field of Soviet bibliographic work that was seen as a facilitator in the multidirectional development of the society. Bibliographic material mainly represented recommended reading lists and came hand-in-hand with literary criticism.[43] From the mid-1920s, literary criticism carried the function of socialist education in the Soviet Union. The uniqueness of Soviet literary criticism was that it did not rely on literary considerations but rather on "*ideological* superiority."[44] Thus, criticism's significance was in educating authors, keeping or directing them to the right ideological track. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Turkmen authors' and officials' commentary on literary pieces was quite vague and curt, such as "very bad," "not good at all," or "acceptable." It could be due to the fact that prose was a new genre for Turkmen writers, and they did not know how to evaluate it.[45] Thus, they led active bibliographical work, wrote prose, and did not partake in its criticism. One article that reflects this situation belongs to A. Aborskiy – presumably a Russian and was written as part of the 1940 *Yash Kommunist* package on the Writers' Congress. Aborskiy at once praises and critiques Turkmen prose by looking at particular authors and their prose work.[46]

The argument that Turkmen Soviet children's literature remained relatively newborn is based on the bibliographic work and the overviews of the field the Turkmen press provides over the years. In 1935, Kekilov finds there was no original Turkmen Soviet children's literature. In 1940, Amanov observes Turkmen writers have started writing for children but still had not made a sufficient contribution to the field. In 1950, Mamedniiazov cites that the last decade witnessed only 20 new original children's titles, and the last five years – half a dozen translated children's titles. These observations lead to the conclusion that the Turkmen Soviet children's literature may have been created but its development

[43] " About literary criticism and bibliography," 487-490.
[44] " About the policy of the Party in the field of literature," 343-347.
[45] Feldman, 167-175.
[46] A. Aborskii, "Turkmen ýazyjylaryň prozasy," [The prose of Turkmen writers] *Ýash Kommunist*, September 16, 1940.

does not seem to have been proportionate to the passage of time. Its slow growth was caused by an apparent combination of factors such as institutional negligence, unpopularity of the field of children's literature among writers, and their lack of knowledge on how to write Soviet Turkmen children's literature.

Overall, in their discussion of children's literature in the press, Turkmen writers and officials aimed to periodically provide an outline of the developments in the field. Moreover, similar to *History* that tells a story of deficiency in Turkmen Soviet children's literature and offers a humble admission of a shortcoming, the Turkmen press assessed Turkmen children's literature and regularly found it wanting. In these assessments, the speakers were more ready to discharge criticism than to exercise self-criticism. Habitually, writers were found guilty for the lack of plenty in children's literature. Despite these factors, new books for Turkmen children did appear. As *History* observes and the press confirms, the body of Turkmen children's literature grew by two methods, contributions of Turkmen authors and translations into Turkmen language.[47] The following chapters first look at the translations and their role in the creation of Turkmen Soviet children's literature, and then study the input made by the original work of Turkmen writers.

[47] "Children's literature," in *The History of Turkmen literature VI.2*, 127.

Chapter Two. Themes and change in translated Turkmen children's literature

In the 1930s, before the original Turkmen children's books began appearing, children's literature in Turkmenistan consisted of books translated into Turkmen. This can be glimpsed from Turkmen press reports that informed of the condition of children's literature overall and led a bibliographic record of children's books that were published or were planned for publication. In the given decade, Turkmen press proliferated with announcements on the practical absence of original stories, and Turkmen children's literature existing solely on the basis of translated books. While the issue of too much dependence on translated literature in the creation and continued existence of Turkmen children's literature improved over the next decade, the problem of overreliance on translation and scarcity of original stories persisted. The extent of Turkmen children's literature's need of translated literature is clear in the 1940 publication plan that instructed that out of 92 children's books planned for that year, 23 were to be authored by Turkmen writers. The rest, 69 books, were to be translated.[48] Consequently, although the press was confident that translated literature alone was not good enough for Turkmen children's consumption, and Turkmen children needed authentic Turkmen stories, for a while, Turkmen children's literature had to rely on translated books.

Soviet children's literature's first function was to direct children's upbringing, also understood as character education, toward "approved norms" of the Soviet society. As a result, children's literature played a big part in socialization of Soviet children.[49] Therefore, children's reading was encouraged as part of the school curriculum as well as outside of

[48] Nurjan Amanov, "Çagalara iň ýagshy çeper eserleri bereris" [We will give the best books to children], *Sovet Turkmenistana*, September 10, 1940.
[49] Felicity Ann O'Dell, *Socialization Through Children's Literature: the Soviet Example* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1978), 3-24.

school in the form of extracurricular reading by teachers, parents, and librarians.[50] Based on these considerations, looking at the themes of children's books chosen for translation into Turkmen informs what was found necessary for Turkmen children's adoption into the Soviet world. Moreover, the study of the books that were selected for translation in the 1930s and 1940s sheds light on changes in the development of Turkmen children's literature. For the translated books from the early 1930s came from various sources and did not build a united informative foundation for Turkmen children's integration into the Soviet society. Around the 1940s, the translated books came from Russian classical and Soviet authors only, and an attempt was made to be more thematically selective. In the late 1940s, the thematic selection was settled on books about the leaders, the Red Army, and nature. The change in the number of books translated into Turkmen is also indicative of how the process of creation progressed. As the years went, less books were translated which means that the reliance on translated literature in Turkmen children's literature diminished. More original books were published which indicates that original literature managed to find its footing, especially in the late 1940s. It follows then that the change in the thematic and quantitative selection of books for translation reflected the process of creation and development of Turkmen children's literature.

While scholarship looks at the problems of translation from non-Russian languages into Russian language,[51] translation in the other direction – from Russian into non-Russian languages was an important enterprise too. That is clear from a 1939 article reporting in Turkmenistan that out of 24 children's books planned for publication that year, only 7 were actually published,[52] and all of them were translations from Russian into Turkmen. Moreover, talking of the 1940 publication plan, the head of the children's department of the

[50] Kelly, "'Thank you for the Wonderful Book'," 718.
[51] Witt, "The Shorthand of Empire," 159-185.
[52] Amanov, "What Turkmen writers gave children."

Turkmen state publishing Nurjan Amanov confirmed that "the majority of the plan consisted of books written by Soviet writers in Russian language." He also communicated that "[t]heir translation and offer to children will provide children with stories on the most interesting topics."[53] While revealing the high regard for Soviet Russian children's literature, the statement also reaffirms that, in Soviet Turkmenistan in the 1930s, children's literature existed primarily thanks to children's books translated from Russian into Turkmen. And yet, in the 1930s, the quality of literary translation in Soviet literature was low.

Even though the matter of translation held a primary role in the Soviet literary system, the organization of translation was far from faultless. In the Soviet Union, the literary system went beyond the imperial framework of translation "from the language of colonizers to that of the colonized." It included translation in "double directions," which was especially true in the 1930s and 1940s at the time of "a boom of translations from and into the languages" of Soviet peoples. The double translation, however, was also a source of problems. The mechanism of Soviet translation did not come directly from original texts but relied on "intermediary texts" – *podstrochniki. Podstrochnik* was "a crude rendering of original source text "content" in the target language." The system provided for the existence of *podstrochnik* creators separately from translators, in which case translators did not necessarily or at all speak the original language. Inevitable deviance from the meaning and content of the original text was why the usage of *podstrochniki* was seen as professionally and ideologically imperfect. This way of indirect translation was used as the principal way of translation from non-Russian languages into Russian and between non-Russian languages.[54]

[53] Amanov, "We will give the best books to children."
[54] Witt, "The Shorthand of Empire," 156-159.

In the Turkmen press, the note of discontent with translated literature when it came to children's literature was a constant.[55] However, it was not due to the lack of literary precision or faithfulness in the translations. The cause of dissatisfaction with translated literature lay, in part, in the low quality of materials used in publishing and, in part, in the selection of books for translation. As such, fault was found in the material presentation of translated books. It was observed that the paper of the books was not good, and the font was hard to read. The other fault was related to the stories themselves. Thus, Kekilov was confounded by and disapproved translation of Bremen tales about animals such as "monkeys, lions, elephants, [and] bears."[56] The attitudes in the press toward translation in Turkmen children's literature, therefore, were contested between appreciation for and criticism of it. The complexity of the matter of translation is revealed, however, in the thematic change of the books selected for translation in the decades of the 1930s and 1940s.

As to books selected for translation, in the first half of the 1930s, a big part of translations came from pre-Soviet times as well as outside the borders of the country. The foreign selection of literature meant for Turkmen children consisted of books such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1934), Rudolf Erich Raspe's *Baron Munchausen's Adventures* (1934), and Brothers Grimm's *Town Musicians of Bremen* (1931). Also, Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Jules Verne's *Captain Grant's Children*, and Emila Zola's *Germinal* were given a place in the publication plan for children's reading. As to pre-Soviet Russian books chosen for translation, the books included Korolenko's *Blind Musician*[57] (1934), and intended publication of Anton Chekhov's *Kashtanka* and I.S. Turgenev's *Mumu*. These books not only did not fit into the definition of Soviet literature articulated in

[55] "Turkmenistanda çagalar edebiýaty" [Children's literature in Turkmenistan], *Tokmak* # 6, 1937.
[56] Kekilov, "We will provide children with literature."
[57] The title was translated into Turkmen as "The blind and his female friend."

1934 that required to put political and ideological needs of the country before aesthetics.[58] They also neither introduced Turkmen children with the new Soviet reality nor acquainted them with the new social norms. The few books that came from the early Soviet period were about socialist construction and progress. They includedthe partial translation of Il'ia Erenburg's *Thirteen Pipes* (1932), M. Il'in's *The Story of the Great Plan* and *What hour is it?* (1932).[59] Soviet children's writers of 1920s such as Chukovsky and Marshak were also said to had been translated.[60] The outcome of the above selection of books for translation into Turkmen was that by the mid-1930s translated children's literature, which at that time was representative of the whole Turkmen children's literature, ignited numerous press complaints on children's literature not meeting children's needs in Turkmenistan.[61]

After the second half of the 1930s, non-Russian literature was left behind in the selection of books to be translated, while the Russian classics persisted. A new development was the integration of Soviet Russian books into the project of creating Turkmen children's literature. The books were chosen thematically. The 1940 publication plan categorized the books chosen for translation into four general groups. There were books about the leaders of the country and books about prominent figures in the Party such as Smirnov's *Comrade Stalin's school years*, Zoshchenko's *Converstations about Lenin*, and German's *About Dzherzinski*.[62] As beginning with the early 1930s the public culture in the Soviet Union cultivated a sense of gratefulness toward Stalin, these books too appear to have aimed to ingrain a sense of awe toward the Party's rule and its leaders in Turkmen children.[63] In order

[58] Schild, "Between Moscow and Baku," 8-12.
[59] In the brackets, years of publication in Turkmenistan are indicated.
[60] Kekilov, "We will provide children with literature."
[61] See the previous chapter.
[62] The latter group necessarily had "About" (*Hakynda*) in its title and made a little subsection.
[63] Jeffrey Brooks, "The Economy of the Gift: Thank you Comrade Stalin for a Happy Childhood," in *Thank You, Comrade Stalin!: Soviet Public Culture from Revolution to Cold War*. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton UP, 2000): 83-105.

to instill patriotism, a big group was dedicated to the books about the Red Army. It included Mikhalkov's *The Red Army*, Jakovlev's *Pavlik Morozov*, Barton's *On the outpost*, and Gutelman's *How the Japanese interventionists were driven away from the Far East*. Another group of books was dedicated to nature which main purpose was to show the superiority of humans through transformation and utilization of nature.[64] Finally, there were books by "the great writers" of the Union such as Vladimir Maiakovsky's *What is Good and What is Bad*.

At the time of the plan's announcement in the press on September 10th all of the above books remained an unpublished part of the plan. What was published of the plan by then was only classics; that is Anton Chekhov's *Fugitive*, Alexander Ostrovsky's *Toot*, Nikolay Nekrasov's *General Taptygin*, and Leo Tolstoy's *Akula*. The one partial exception is Maxim Gorkiy's pre-revolutionary books of *Chelkash* and *The song about a falcon.*[65] This could reflect the attempt to rise "the cultural level of the [Turkmen] youth" for it was believed that "their interest in literature will naturally grow too."[66]

It was in the late 1940s that the number of published translated books approximately equaled the number of original books. Thus, one 1950 article, reporting on children's titles published in the last few years, provides three original book titles to three translated book titles.[67] Another article, also updating on the state of children's literature, gives more original published titles than translated. It offers ten original titles to six translated ones.[68] These articles offer more of an overview than a precise analysis of the state of Turkmen children's literature. It is possible, of course, that they were also trying to create an

[64] See Husband, "'Correcting Nature's Mistakes'."
[65] Amanov, "We will give the best books to children."
[66] Amanov, "What Turkmen writers gave children."
[67] Velmyradov, "The backwardness in children's literature needs to be eliminated."
[68] O. Mamedniyazov, "About Turkmen children's literature."

impression that original children's literature was surpassing the translated one. It is difficult to determine in this thesis whether the original ones indeed surpassed the translated by the late 1940s or it was just an attempt to make it looks so. Even if it was an attempt instead of the actual state of things, it indicates that the creation of Turkmen children's literature based on predominance of original books over translated was a work in progress.

In the translated books of the late 1940s, the themes of patriotism, socialist construction, and presence of the Russian classics persisted. Alongside of them, the new themes of adventure and education were introduced in Turkmen children's literature through translation. The patriotic element was advanced in the work of Valentin Kataev's *Son of the Regiment*, while socialist construction prospered in Nikolai Ostrovsky's *How the Steel was Tempered*. Nekrasov's *Grandfather Frost the Red Nose* and Tolstoi's *Sevastopol Sketches* were representative of the Russian classics. A new direction introduced into the translated literature was adventure books such as P. Karpov's *Treasure* and Aleksandrov's *Treasure Hunters*.[69] However, the most influential thematically on original Turkmen children's literature was children's self-generation to learn attractively developed in Arkadii Gaidar *Timur and his Team*.[70]

Turkmen original books, unlike the Russian books translated into Turkmen, had mainly to do with the world of education that was inhabited by pioneers and friendship. In this light, Dobrenko's study on the school tale and Leont'eva's dissertation on the pioneer literature are important. Dobrenko argues that the genre of the school tale was established in 1936 to give a positive contemporary account of children's school life. The genre was to

[69] O. Mamedniyazov, "About Turkmen children's literature," and Velmyradov, "The backwardness in children's literature needs to be eliminated."
[70] The book was published in Russian in 1940.

incite children to socialize and collectivize through the act of reading.[71] He finds that the school tale was fully established after the war as fusion between children's self-generation that revealed their maturity and consciousness, and the institution of school. As a result, "The school became an informal institution, discipline became conscious, and schooling turned into joy and pleasure. … Violence went from being visible to invisible and turned into its opposite – pleasure." In the postwar years, the school tale entailed "the theme of reeducation (*perevospitanie*)." It aimed to show that transformation could be achieved by anyone sympathetic such as teachers, parents, friends from pioneer or Komsomol organizations. Academic success is usually the main task of the school tale. It promotes "conscious discipline" as opposed to blind bourgeois obedience in which the driving force is communist belief instead of fear or gain.[72]

Dobrenko states that Gaidar was the founding figure in the school tale with his book *Timur and his team*, published in 1940 and translated into Turkmen in the late 1940s. Dobrenko finds that Gaidar established the idea of "self-generation" among children which allowed pedagogy imposed from outside-school by adults to transform into self-driven "internal" phenomenon. Dobrenko defines the book as a subgenre of the school tale, specifically as "vacation tale" (*kanikuliarnaia povest'*). In it children maintain high standards of "discipline and organization" despite being out of school as the vacation tale implies a trip the rural countryside to visit someone. The tale is more about personal development than collective.[73]

[71] His referral to the school tale as a genre is problematic as is explained by Greg Carleton in "Genre in Socialist Realism" who argues that Socialist Realism as a whole was not based on genres but a system of topoi. *Slavic Review* 53.4 (1994): 992-1009.
[72] Dobrenko, "The School Tale," 47-50, 59-60, 64.
[73] Dobrenko, "The School Tale," 50, 56.

Like the Russian children's literature, the original Turkmen children's books contained both vacation and school tale, indicating the importance of nurturing appreciation for education and initiating self-generation among Turkmen children. However, unlike in Russian children's literature, the theme of learning and reeducation was not limited to the school tale. In fact, in Turkmen children's books, the main educators were not the institution of school or parents but pioneers. Leont'eva identifies the significance of pioneer characters in transformation of children through her study of pioneer literature as a branch of Soviet Russian children's literature.[74] The pioneer literature usually presented a problematic child go through a challenging situation to come out on the side of the Soviet authorities, good students, and pioneers. In the process of reeducation, "every child… acquires in communication with pioneers maturity and consciousness" which complemented the power of communist ideology. Pioneer literature was addressed to either children or educators, such as teachers and pioneer leaders (*пионер вожатые*), and carried the principles and priorities of the pioneer organization. Hence, the pioneer literature offered children an exemplary model of behavior and inspired them to achieve that model by entering the ranks of pioneers and striving to meet the standards of being a pioneer. This branch of children's literature is estimated to originate as early as 1919.[75]

The values promoted in the pioneer literature changed over time. In the 1920s and 1930s labor, the struggle for a classless society, and friendship were prominent, while in the 1970s and 1980s the emphasis shifted to the fulfilling experience of childhood, school, and friendship. At all times though, collectivity and belonging to the pioneer organization was

[74] S. G. Leont'eva, "'Deti ran'she i teper' v pionerskoi knige 1920-h godov" ['Children before and now' in the pioneer book of the 1920s], in *"Guliai tam gde vse": Istoriia sovetskogo detsva: opyt I perspektivy issledovaniia* ['Walk where everyone else does': the history of Soviet childhood: experience and prospects for research], ed. M. P. Balina, V. G. Bezrogov et al. (Moskva: Rossiiskii gosudarstvennii gumanitarnii universitet, 2013), 148. While Leont'eva does not say Russian herself, all the examples come from Russian books.
[75] Leont'eva, "Literatura pionerskoi organizatsii," 9-12.

emphasized. During peace time, the pioneer literature presented the everyday life of pioneers "to form an understanding of the lifestyle of a typical contemporary child" in order to develop "everyday readiness to accomplish a feat." During the wartime, the figure of a pioneer hero, who accomplished a feat and died in the process, was prevalent. The character of a pioneer child demonstrated a regular appearance but outstanding qualities of personality, such as neatness, trustworthiness, good performance at school as a contribution to socialist construction, participation in social work, respect of parents, and care for social property.[76] The original Turkmen children's books too made a point of exhibiting similar high qualities of pioneers. Curiously though, the pioneers of the original Turkmen books did not accomplish heroic feats during war or other time. Main fictional duties of Turkmen pioneers were supporting personal hygiene, studying well, and encouraging other children to do the same.

In this chapter, the thesis argued that translated children's literature, in its own way, developed alongside of original children's literature. Hence, the change in the selection of books for translation was sweepingly wide at first and narrowed down to certain themes only later. These themes in themselves are interesting for they allowed learning through which subjects Turkmen children were to be socialized in the Soviet Union. Moreover, at first, the body of translated literature was much bigger than the original. As the latter literature expanded, fewer books were translated. Having argued that understanding what translated literature presented is important in order to understand Turkmen children's literature as a whole, and because it provides a comparison point with original literature, the thesis now proceeds to analyze the books written for children by Turkmen authors. The

[76] Leont'eva, "Literatura pionerskoi organizatsii," 12-6.

analysis reveals that only a few of the themes from translated literature were integrated in the original, and they developed in a different direction. ‘

Chapter Three. The New Life of Education and Friendship in Original Turkmen Children's Literature

In the 1930s, there was a new local perspective of cultural products of film and literature coming from Soviet Central Asia. This local perspective was realized by gradual transference of the creative mantel to the hands of local "insider" representatives instead of visiting cultural producers.[77] The same emphasis on the need of local creative input in children's literature is found in newspapers in Turkmenistan beginning around the mid-1930s. The answer as to why so much emphasis was put on the creation of original Turkmen children's literature can be found in the original books themselves. Each original book was clearly meant to promote new Soviet ideas and integrate Turkmenistan into the Soviet world.[78] Even though Turkmen newspapers led the bibliographic record of original and translated children's books published in Turkmenistan, the press record does not accurately represent the state or content of the original books. The bibliography published in the press can be seen as an advertisement for the books, not necessarily a positive one, but nonetheless a pronouncement of the titles to a wider audience. An announcement of a book in the press, however, did not mean its immediate availability to the public. While usually books came out about a year after publication, for some books it took a few years between the announcement and publication.[79]

In the original children's books that were advertised in the press around the 1940s, a few themes are constant and interconnected. These are the themes that were found necessary in order to socialize Turkmen children in the new Soviet reality by making it appear

[77] Holt, "The Rise of Insider Iconography."
[78] Martin describes the similar practice of 'sblizhenie' in *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 12.
[79] Garaja Burunov's *Maýsa* was announced in 1937 as a publication of 1935 in *Tokmak*'s 6th issue in the article "Children's literature in Turkmenistan." The book itself however indicates 1968 as its year of publication with no information on it being a second print-run. Similarly, Berdi Soltannyazov's *Kümüsh* was announced in 1940, Jan. 16 in *Ýash Kommunist* in "What did Turkmen writers give to Turkmen children." The book came out in 1956.

reachable and advantageous. The theme of school education goes hand in hand with the presence of pioneer characters and addresses topics such as exemplary student models and equal gender participation in secondary education. The theme of the old beliefs and values vs. the new ones makes a strong appearance in the way in which family relations and issues of health are portrayed. The theme of friendship is prominent as an expression of connection between two otherwise unconnected entities, for instance between village and city. The original books advance the Soviet ideas of literacy, medicine, and friendship. This function of the books leads to the creation of a stark contrast between the native Turkmen circumstances and imported Soviet conditions in the original Turkmen children's literature. In their promotion of the Soviet ideas, authors' categorical stance eliminates the chance of co-existence of the two realities. The Turkmen reality is transformed and adopted in favor of the Soviet reality. And yet, there are rare cases in which the endeavor does not take place either accidentally or intentionally.

The question of education is a major issue in the original Turkmen children's literature. Education in the original books refers to secondary school or self-teaching by adults and children. In that respect, from the beginning of the original Turkmen children's literature, the school tale was integrated in the narrative of education. The objectives of the educational program in Turkmen children's literature at the time were modest. They revolved around literacy and hygiene. The authors achieved these objectives through encouragement of learning and even demonstration of how the learning process happened. The best example is Durdyev's *Signal*. In the book, Akmyrat suffers from ignorance and bad attitude. He is a boy who does not care for learning, carries an untidy appearance, keeps his school materials messy, his family life is unhygienic, and he is unruly at school. At home, Akmyrat gets food poisoning from which he almost dies. At school, he is made an example of what a student does not want to be like. Durdyev places the demonstration of

Akmyrat's failings during the two classes students have on "environmental cleanliness and health preservation" and physical education. Each class is described in detail and consists of the teacher calling forth students who are either criticized or praised in front of their class.[80] Durdyev's demonstration of the learning process is so primitive that it makes one think that the press's outcry that the authors who wrote for children did not know what happened in children's lives was indeed true or the school education in the 1930s was quite wanting.

What *Signal* makes abundantly clear though is that children's learning in the original children's books was based on student models of good and bad. Following the example of the school tale, each book was a story of reeducation or transformation of the bad student. In the Turkmen context, however, the agents of change were the good students and not school institution or adults.[81] In this scheme, good students served as role-models and in some way influenced the transformation of their unsatisfactory peers into better children. The good students necessarily were pioneers. Thus, in *Signal*, Akmyrat is representative of *yakymsyz* (unpleasant) students who are counterpoised against studious children who do morning exercise and support personal hygiene. The latter are enacted by pioneers Nazar and Maysa; Nazar is presented by the school teacher as a counter-example to Akmyrat during class. Both children also help to save Akmyrat from his food poisoning by insisting that a doctor be called. Akmyrat, in his turn, learns the dangers of being unhygienic and ignorant.[82] Such extreme contrasts between bad and good children necessarily showed the latter as much more preferable. They also showed however that the possibility of reeducation and moral

[80] Agahan Durdyev, *Signal* (Aşgabat: Turkmendövletneşir, 1936), 9-16.
[81] Possibly because of the shortage of educational services or competent adults, able children were encouraged to teach other children in the original Turkmen children's literature. Edgar, *Tribal Nation*, 167-196.
[82] Durdyev, *Signal*, 8.

transformation was right there; children only had to observe their better pioneer classmates and follow their example.

Thus, in the original books, pioneers as the main agents of education had the role of bringing positive change to their fellow students. Hence, in Agahan Durdy's *Cherkez Nahili Okayar* (How Cherkez studies) that is further discussed below, despite readers not witnessing the process, the promise of Cherkez transformation into a better student made by pioneer Kakov is present. In *Signal*, Nazar and Maysa contribute to Akmyrat's growth of self-awareness. However, even though the school tale of Russian children's literature explores individual character development, in the original Turkmen children's books the targets of reeducation were more numerous and various. Consequently, the changes pioneer characters brought were not limited to individual children's characters; pioneers in the original books also brought enlightenment to adults and groups of children. In *Iki Okuwchy* (The Two students) by Aman Kekilov, for instance, the good girl Bibi teaches her parents to read who, due to their enthusiasm, accomplish the task in a month and a half. Bibi inspires her parents by making them compete against each other, so that, even though her father falls behind at first, he then catches up with his wife.[83] Whether the idea of using school children to teach literacy to adults was put into practice remains unknown, but the idea itself is revolutionary. At the very least, the seed of the possibility of that school children can educate their closest relations was planted.

Furthermore, the collective aspect of education brought by pioneers was also emphasized. In Hadjy Ismailov's *Mugallymyn gyzy* (The Teacher's Daughter), the city pioneer girl Dursun observes that not many village children read books or wash in the mornings. Following the example of her father who reads the newspaper to the adults of the

[83] Aman Kekilov, *Iki Okuwçy* [The Two Students] (n.p./n.d.), 8-10.

village, she decides to use her "many interesting books" for the same purpose.[84] Thus, it is shown by the author that adults and children of the village did not, or possibly could not, read unless it was done for them in a collective manner by an educated person. Dursun, relatively distinguished for being from the city and the teacher's daughter, attracts the attention of the village girls first because of her reading initiative. Later, with the help of the local pioneer group, her group turns into a reading club attended by both boys and girls. Dursun's objective here was twofold: to interest the village children in reading and to introduce them to hygiene.[85] Her agenda of encouraging learning and cleanliness among children personifies the goal of every original Turkmen children's book about education. As a result, the repetition of the message over and over again in the context of Turkmen conditions seems to make it reachable.[86]

In the Turkmen school tale, the story of children's reeducation as a rule affirms that the upbringing children receive at home is important in whether they turn out good or bad. A rounded example of how a child turns out in a home of a negligent parent and adult is given in *The Two students*. Kekilov paints a verbal portrait of bad student Durdy and good student Bibi. Durdy is a boy who misbehaves at school by arriving late and bullying other students. He does not listen to the teacher and does not study. He is unclean and his school materials are untidy; Durdy often loses things. Bibi is a girl who comes to school early and does not engage in "empty talk" with friends. The author explains that the difference between the children originates in who their parents are. Bibi's parents work a lot; they are illiterate but they want to learn, and Bibi teaches them to read. Durdy seems to only have a

[84] Hadjy Ismailov, *Mugallymyň gyzy* [The Teacher's Daughter] (Aşgabat: Turkmendövletneşir, 1947), 16.
[85] Ismailov, *The Teacher's Daughter*.
[86] The educational message's reoccurrence in the children's stories about school and pioneers reminds of Katerina Clark's study of "the master plot" in the Soviet novel where the main points of the plot repeated themselves, while the rest of the book was allowed freer expression. Katerina Clark, *The Soviet novel: history as ritual* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, c2000): 3-24.

father who misses work a lot and instead goes to visit people. His son, Kekilov says, takes after him.[87]

Another source of problematic upbringing is given in Agahan Durdy's *How Cherkez Studies*. The boy Cherkez was spoiled by his parents' love. They praised him for liveliness when Cherkez fought or argued with other children. He grew up lazy, and prefers play to school so that his mother has to watch till he gets into school grounds. At school, Cherkez bothers other children during classes and lies about being late. The discovery of Cherkez's behavior and lies by pioneer leader Kakov identifies Cherkez as the bad student. The story demonstrates that Cherkez was not given proper upbringing at home that would have allowed him to become a good student. As Cherkez's is a case in which neither the school nor parents can reeducate him, interference and guidance from the pioneer leader Kakov seem to be the last hope for Cherkez. Bypassing these deliberations, the book informs readers that Kakov gives a promise to Cherkez's mother to transform the boy into an excellent student.[88] At this promise the book ends which means the readers are to take the pioneer Kakov's word as a done deal. The flat narration found here shows that the press's criticism of the literary simplicity of the original Turkmen children's literature was not baseless. Despite the abruptness of the narration, Cherkez's story underlines that even if home upbringing is lacking, pioneers can be relied on for help in reeducation of children.

Dursun's positive characterization is representative of how girls are portrayed in the original Turkmen children's literature. Interestingly, with rare exceptions, representation of girls was overwhelmingly complimentary. Moreover, girls' education at school is not made an issue at all; it is presented as a given that they, as well as boys, learn. In addition, the

[87] Kekilov, *The Two Students*, 5-13.
[88] Agahan Durdy, *Çerkez Nähili Okaýar* [How Cherkez Studies] (Aşgabat: Turkmendövletokuv-pedagogikneşr, 1940).

number of female characters in the books is more or less equal to the number of male characters. For instance, there is the levelheaded and diligent Maysa to the figure of Nazar in *Signal*. Good Bibi acts as the polar opposite of troublesome Durdy in *The Two Students.* The teacher's daughter, Dursun, despite some youthful curiosity, is all around perfect. Thus, the majority of female characters are good, acting as a counter-example to the negative male character or partner to the positive male character. The exception here is Garaja Burunov's *Maysa* who is so lazy and unclean that even the flies and her doll scold her.[89] Such advocacy of girls in the original books can be understood in the framework of the region-wide campaign to liberate women.[90]

Nevertheless, despite the equal inclusion of girls in school education in the original books, the authors distinguish their characters with feminine qualities. Thus, both Maysa and Bibi have "soft conversation,"[91] while Dursun is so *utanjan* (bashful) that she cannot tell her name when she meets adults in the village. In fact, bashfulness is a common characteristic of the village girls in *The Teacher's Daughter*. Their modesty is respected to a degree that the elders say the requisite hello to them first upon a meeting, whilst if boys do not say it first, it is considered rude. Moreover, in her educational program in the village, Dursun did not expect to make a big impact with the reading group because of her shy nature and lack of organizational experience. A reader is told that the local pioneer leader, a boy of order and determination, masterfully used Dursun's "little" help to strengthen and expand his pioneer team.[92] Therefore, the original Turkmen children's literature, despite

[89] Garaja Burunov, *Maýsa* (Aşgabat: Turkmenistan Neşirýaty, 1968).
[90] See Edgar, *Tribal Nations*, 221-60, and Gregory J. Massell, *The Surrogate Proletariat. Moslem Women and Revolutionary Strategies in Soviet Central Asia, 1919-1929* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1974).
[91] Durdyev, *Signal*, 5 and Kekilov, *The Two Students*, 11.
[92] Ismailov, *The Teacher's Daughter*, 66-8.

attempting to project gender equality among children, did not rid of subtle condescension toward girls or clear cut cultural distinction between boys and girls.

Gender distinction is even more apparent among adults, especially in family relations. It becomes clear when Dursun's father reads news to the villagers in the evenings. It is a gathering of men he reads to; women sit separately, talk amongst themselves, and do not listen to men's conversation.[93] In *Signal*, Nazar's mother serves breakfast to his father, stands by Nazar as he washes his face to then give him a towel and serve breakfast to him.[94] As a result, surprisingly, gender liberalism in the original children's literature covered children only and did not extend to adults.

A less weighty than education, but no less pervasive theme in the original children's literature was friendship. The portrayal of friendship in the books is notable because authors showed not only friendships in which connection between friends is eased by given conditions such as studying in one school, living in one village, but also friendships in which the participating people came from different backgrounds. This sort of friendship is significantly present in Kerbabayev's *Dostluk* (Friendship), Chary Ashyrov's *Serhetde* (On the border), and Ismailov's *The Teacher's Daughter*. Looking at friendship from the aspect of difference, these books provide an answer to whether such friendship can work. An officially expected answer would be that it should in order to encourage better understanding among the peoples of the Union and therefore to associate greater intimacy with the Soviet Union.[95] Unexpectedly, the answer given is that it does not work in every

[93] Ismailov, *The Teacher's Daughter*, 8-9, 16, 35.
[94] Durdyev, *Signal*, 2-3.
[95] Making the Soviet power more familiar to the local population was the goal of the *korenizatsiia* of the nationalities policy. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 10-3.

case. The original Turkmen children's literature offers that such a friendship can work very well, with some limitation, or not at all.[96]

Ashyrov's *On the Border*, being a singular instance of the original children's literature on the subject of war, offers a textbook example of unity in the face of an enemy. It tells the tale of a border guard Durdy and his, presumably Russian, friend and colleague Boris. Before military service, Durdy was a sheep herder. He has no father; his mother was a kept woman of a wealthy man before being abandoned by him. That forced Durdy to leave school and herd the village's sheep. On the border, Durdy becomes friends with Boris and his dog. Boris teaches him the art of tracking a trespassing enemy. The enemy remains unidentified, as does the border at which Durdy and Boris serve; the landscape description fluctuates between typical Russian abundance of trees and snow, to regular Turkmen characteristics of desert and a camel. The three of them – Durdy, Boris, and the dog, protect each other, overcome the enemy, and their friendship lives on.[97] Durdy and Boris, predictably, successfully establish a productive connection in which Durdy is the one who learns and grows, and pays with his loyalty in return for knowledge and skills.

The connection established by friendship between village children and a pioneer girl from the city in Ismailov's *The Teacher's Daughter*, even though similarly uniting, comes with a hiccup. The story consists of two books. The first book takes place in the village; the second – in the city. In the first book, the author inserts the teacher's daughter – a city pioneer girl Dursun into the village life at the beginning of the school summer break. At the end of the first book, the summer break ends, and the author extracts her out of the village.

[96] As such, the treatment of friendship is similar to the treatment of nature in Soviet Russian children's literature analyzed in William B. Husband's study, in which he found that while some books completely endorsed the official line of exploitation of nature, others allowed for coexistence with nature, while others yet praised its beauty. Husband, "'Correcting Nature's Mistakes'."

[97] Çary Aşyrov, *Serhetde* [On the Border] (Aşgabat: Turkmendovletokuv-pedagogikneşriň çagalar edebiýat bolümi, 1941).

Hence, Dursun appears to be a foreign element in the village rather than an integrated part of it.

Dursun's city person origins is emphasized repeatedly in the book; she had never been to a village before her father – the teacher takes her family there. She thus has to go through an adaptation period in which she gets to know the village people and experiences awkward moments due to her city ignorance. For instance, she becomes excited with the idea of mounting a camel, which she does in secret from her parents at nighttime. Once having mounted, she is unable to get off, and after having spent some time on it and having scolded the camel, one of the village boys helps her down with a simple command to the camel. The foreignness of her character is also evident in the changes she brings into the life of village children. Dursun insists on encouraging the children of her age, which is undetermined, to support personal hygiene. Dursun also launches a reading club, successfully attracting children from both genders of pioneer and non-pioneer affiliation. Many village children become involved in her endeavors, and she builds connections and establishes understanding with them.

Thus, through Dursun's comprehension and her actions, the village and city come closer. On the other hand, while the city in the character of Dursun leaves a considerable positive impact on the village after her departure, the departure itself is inevitable and abrupt. Celebrated with fanfare by the village children, Dursun's extraction makes clear that despite her contributions, she does not belong in the village.[98] Obviously, the connection between the village and the city is temporary and circumstantial; otherwise, the two remain divorced.

[98] Ismailov, *The Teacher's Daughter*, 67-8.

Another case in which Turkmen's children literature discusses the theme of friendship is Kerbabayev's *Friendship.* This is an intricate story of a cunning mouse and wild cat. The cat is caught in a trap by a hunter; the mouse is trapped by other preying animals. The mouse turns to the cat for they each can help the other. The wild cat scatters the praying animals. The mouse helps the cat to escape the trap. However, throughout the cooperation the mouse is jittery and distrustful of the wild cat. It thus frees the wild cat only when the hunter is close so the cat would be busy making its escape and would not have time to eat the mouse. When the wild cat returns later to offer friendship, the mouse rejects the offer saying there can be no friendship between their kinds. As an explanation, the story offers two interpretations of friendship: true friendship and friendship out of necessity. In the first kind, one can trust one's life to a friend. The second kind can be engaged in even between enemies. While the story does not disclose the wild cat's thoughts on its friendship with the mouse, the mouse, from the beginning till the end of the end of the story, consciously engages in a friendship out of necessity with the cat. Once there is no necessity, it rejects the possibility of true friendship between them.[99]

As a result, in a children's book titled *Friendship* there is no actual friendship, there is only survival. As there is no positive example of friendship in the story, the book teaches what friendship is through showing what it is not. Moreover, it presents friendship to be a practical union rather than a sympathetic connection. Kerbabayev's work therefore is, in general, in line with common characteristics of the original Turkmen children's books for in it the worlds of the mouse and cat cannot co-exist. However, its attitude toward friendship is exceptional since it proposes that sometimes backgrounds are so different that friendship cannot occur.

[99] Berdi Kerbabaýev, *Dostluk* [Friendship] (Aşgabat: Turkmenneşr, 1937).

Other than the themes of education and friendship, the contrast between Turkmen ways and Soviet innovations is most evident in opposition between old Turkmen and new Soviet practices in family and health. While the Soviet practices come victorious in the original books, the methods of persuasion the authors use are openly non-pacifist. For instance, a young bride disagrees with her mother-in-law about giving her baby to the local kindergarten. The bride wants to; however, the mother-in-law is vehemently against it. The argument escalates as the bride accuses the mother-in-law of being a bad mother to the aforementioned Akmyrat, who is lazy, unclean, and a bad student. When dared to do a better job, the bride responds: "If I cannot give it good upbringing (*terbiye bermek*), I will give it to the place where they [babies] are brought up well. They will keep it clean, educate and raise it for me." The argument continues in a similar fashion for four pages and ends with the mother-in-law begging the bride not to give her grandchild to the kindergarten.[100] It is an incident full of intense negativity from the mother-in-law who is hostile to the idea of the baby in the kindergarten and aghast at being called a bad mother, and the bride who is repulsed with her mother-in-law's ways and indifferent to her fears.

Another representative episode of the clash between Soviet and Turkmen ways and customs occurs in Dursun's reading club. As Dursun leads a campaign on personal hygiene, the new "cleanliness committee" check the cleanliness of children's clothes, faces, and hands at the beginning of a meeting. Those who are dirty are put on an especial list for public scrutiny on a wall of the reading room with the children's names and drawings on it. Two troublemaker boys with nicknames Oraty and Ketjal find themselves immediately on the list because they habitually do not wash and take daily care of their families' cattle. Downcast about it, their first reaction is to consider beating up the committee officer. The boys decide against that in fear of being banned from the club. As they go their separate

[100] Durdyev, *Signal*, 4-7.

ways, Ketjal's character is enriched. Ketjal's responsibilities at home of cutting grass in a field to bring it home to feed and water the animals indicate that he is not a worry-free boy. He is transformed though, as the next day he decides to sneakingly wash his hands, face and neck not to be discovered by Oraty. Ketjal has to scrub his hands and wash repeatedly as the water turns yellow. However, when he arrives at the club early in the hopes of being unnoticed, he only finds Oraty has done the same, and their names are taken from the list.[101] Despite the humorous narration of the incident, the committee officer was under actual danger of being beaten up, and the boys felt put down by the public disdain. The author used their upset feelings as even more reason to transform and switch sides from unclean hooliganism to neat studiousness.

The original children's literature had a number of clearly stated objectives. It promoted appreciation for education, even though its educational program modestly aimed to only increase literacy and hygiene. The mediums of the educational message were good students, i. e. pioneers, who served as role-models and transformed their misbehaving and ignorant peers into better children. The original children's literature provides for parents' and school's inability to positively influence and change children by making pioneers as the main agents of education. The books also promote equal participation of genders in education. While girls' characters are curiously commendable in comparison to boys', there still exists a certain condescension and distinction of girls in everyday life. Moreover, gender equality does not extend to adults. The original literature also promoted adaptation of new Soviet practices through the comparison of Turkmen and Soviet circumstances. The contrast was often presented as a clash between the two, in which Soviet ideas came out to be more desirable. Nonetheless, the original literature did not want to alienate Turkmen understanding from Soviet reality which is why the topic of friendship between different

[101] Ismailov, *The Teacher's Daughter*, 36-45.

backgrounds was important. Inexplicably, in some cases such friendship prospered and, in others, was found obstructed or incompatible.

Conclusion

Turkmen Soviet children's literature appeared around the same time as did its Russian counterpart – the mid-1930s. In the next decade and a half, it struggled to get on its own feet. While Turkmen Soviet historiography claims Turkmen Soviet children's literature established itself by 1940, the literary officials whose voices are found in the Turkmen press were of a different opinion. Up to 1950, the Turkmen press expressed concern, discontent, and wish for a better and bigger Turkmen children's literature. Reporting faithfully original books that were published and Russian books that were translated, or that were being planned for publication and translation, the press was a grudging supporter of Turkmen children's literature. It allowed to see the branching of children's literature into translated and original kinds. Even though the press gave preference to original literature because of the emphasis on the need of the native perspective on the new Soviet world, the bibliography of the newly created Turkmen children's literature the press provided covered both.

To understand Turkmen Soviet children's literature, it is necessary to look at translated as well as original literature. In the initial stages, translation from Russian was a life force for Turkmen children's literature. While providing for the body of Turkmen children's literature, it was also a mix of foreign and Russian classics, and some Soviet books. Only later, when there was less reliance on it because of more frequent input of original books from Turkmen authors, the choice of literature for translation systematized to include only Russian classics and selected themes from Russian Soviet children's literature that were intended to socialize Turkmen children into the Soviet society. The decrease in the amount of translated children's literature in the late 1940 reflects the changes in original

children's literature, for the two took shape together and created one whole – Turkmen children's literature.

Despite their interconnection, original children's literature was thematically different from translated literature. There is little place in original literature for war, patriotism or socialist construction. Rather, it encourages to learn at every opportunity, to live healthy, to leave the old ways, to embrace the new Soviet world and make friends. Though the message seems idyllic, its implementation in original literature, especially in the case of failure to comply with the demands of the new world, is rather harsh. Nevertheless, original children's literature compliments translated literature in creating a Turkmen Soviet children's literature that at once introduced, explained, and advertised the new Soviet world.

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