Pioneer of Southern Azerbaijan Children's Literature: Samed Behrengi^{*}

Pervane Memmedli**

Abstract

Behrengi, who was closely interested in the problems of his time and the problems of the people he was a member of, realized the importance of raising Turkish children correctly and conveying the right messages to them, and wrote his works in fairy tale form to appeal to children. His masterpiece that brought him the real fame is his work called Little Black Fish and this work is described as "political manifesto". S. Behrengi, who taught in the remote village schools of Azerbaijan, always spoke in Azerbaijani Turkish and wrote all of his works in his native language. He wrote articles and essays on education and pedagogy as well as literary works that collected examples of folklore; He did translation work. Samet Behrengi is one of the authors who mirror the inner world of children and wrote about their clean feelings and desires. Therefore, he is considered the architect of children's literature in Iran and Southern Azerbaijan. In this study, within the framework of the life, ideas and works of Samed Behrengi in struggles, the contributions of the artist to the formation of Iran and South Azerbaijan children's literature with the qualitative research method and the Little Black Fish sample were examined.

Keywords

Samed Behrengi, Turkish children, fairy tale, political manifesto, Iran, South Azerbaijan.

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Introduction

Behrengi felt the originality and subtleties of the worldview of children in Iran. He was one of the first authors to feel that although they wanted justice, they were prone to miracles.

S. Behrengi, who lived only 29 years, worked as a teacher and engaged in artistic and scientific activities in the last eight years of her life. He has fit many valuable works in a short life. The masterpiece that brought him fame is *Little Black Fish*. This work is described as a "political manifesto".

S. Behrengi, who taught in the remote village schools of Azerbaijan, always spoke in Azerbaijani Turkish and wrote all of his works in his native language. He collected folklore samples (with Behruz Dehqani); besides literary works, he wrote articles and essays on education and pedagogy; he did translation works. Samed Behrengi is one of the writers who mirrors children to their inner worlds and writes about their clean feelings and desires. Therefore, he is considered the architect of children's literature in Iran and Southern Azerbaijan.

Samed Behrengi was born on June 29, 1939, in the Çerendab district of Tabriz, to a poor family. His father Izzet, with a great deal of trouble, carries and sells water and tries to support his family. Her mother Sara is a housewife. Samed's father was able to get two of his five children, including Samet, educated, albeit with great difficulty. Samed differs from his peers with his intelligence and talent. Because he is a brunette, his father calls him "Karabala" (Black child). Samed's brother, Esad Behrengi, describes his brother's childhood as follows:

"Early in the morning every day, residents saw a boy running fast with his shoes on his seat and asked each other who he was: "Why is he always running?", "Why is he squeezing his shoes under the armpits?". It turned out later that this boy is the son of Izzet, a worker living in their neighborhood. Since the school he is studying is far away, he runs so that he will not be late. His shoes were torn and tucked under his armpit to prevent him from running fast ... The boy's name is Samed" (Behrəngi 495).

Samed received his primary and secondary education at the Debiristani-Terbiyet ve Danesserayi school in Tabriz. Since his financial situation is not good, Samed continues his education in Tabriz Pedagogy Tehnikumu school

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like his brother Assad. At that time, Samet Behrengi published the weekly wall paper *Hande* (Gülüş) with a few friends. His first writings with satirical content began to appear in those years. After finishing the Tehnikum, he is sent to study in the school in the village of Mamagan, which is located between Tabriz and Tufarqan and, as he said, even God forgot. During the last ten years of his life, in various regions of Azerbaijan; He teaches in village schools such as Mamağan, Gogan and Ahircan.

During the years he teaches at Mamagan, he also continues his education. During his teaching career, he attended night classes at the English Language and Literature Department of the Tabriz Literature Faculty. In the same years he turned to Azerbaijani folk literature; compiles and publishes tales, riddles and many other folklore products.

Getting to know the village and peasant life closely in the places where he works stimulates Samed to write and create, to write what he saw and witnessed. He started to be known after he graduated from Tabriz University and wrote many valuable works. Behrengi voluntarily chose to be a village teacher. He always handed out books to children, wanting to wake up to a promising future.

"Behrengi's first tale is called "Yıldız ve Kargalar" (Star and Crows). He collected and organized lullabies and tales that circulated in the language of the people; he gave them artistic direction and rewrote them." (Haşimi 18).

He not only collected these but also wrote stories for children. His first stories *Adet* (Custom), *Adsuz* (Nameless) were published in 1959. After that, he wrote stories and tales such as *Çuğundursatan Oğlan* and *Little Black Fish* (1967-1969). His articles were published in newspapers for a while and he also wrote in *Mehdi Azadi* and *Adine* newspapers published in Tabriz at that time. Later, his articles were published as a book called *Mecmueyi Meqaleha* (Makaleler Mecmuası / Articles Magazine).

He worked on Azerbaijani folklore and Iran's education system; identified the problems and offered solutions to these problems. He has written articles for newspapers and magazines under various pseudonyms and also tried to publish newspapers. As it is known, the newspaper was a written mass communication tool and was an important medium for conveying cultural developments to large masses and transferring them to the next generations (Öztay 235). His written products were published in some wellknown newspapers and magazines of his time with the nicknames like "S. Qaranquş", "Chingiz", "Adıbatmış", "Babek", "Daryuş", "Nevvab Merağı", "Behreng", "S. Adam", "Solmaz".

Behrengî wrote his works for children and aimed to find solutions to the problems of poor children. The type of child in his works; Asking, questioning, researching, producing, asking for answers, brave, ready to set off, going over their fears and having a high imagination. In the stories he writes, various messages are delivered to children in accordance with the functionality of the fairy tale genre. Obstacles appear in front of them, just like in fairy tales, and the child overcomes these obstacles and develops himself. "Working, researching, wondering, trying, learning, improving oneself, finding rational solutions to any situation and event that goes wrong, being cautious, not getting something illegally, being brave, facing fears in Behrengî's tales and stories There are messages such as standing against injustice and standing by the righteous, drawing your own way, not giving up, learning from what happened, being in motion and active, questioning concepts such as right and wrong, being egalitarian, being liberal, being patriotic and having imagination" (Sarpkaya 67).

Of course, the author brought together Bayatılar (Azerbaijan lyrical folk poetry genre), Çocuk Edebiyatının Önemi (The Importance of Children's Literature), İranın Tabiatı Üzerine Araştırma (Research on the Nature of Iran), Pare-Pare (In Pieces), Azerbaycan Efsaneleri (Legends of Azerbaijan), Azerbaycan Çocukları İçin Farsi Alfabe (Persian Alphabet for Azerbaijan Children), Tapmacalar, Qoşmacalar (Riddles, Ballads), Azerbaycan ve İnkılap (Azerbaijan and Revolution), Folklor ve Şiir (Folklore and Poetry), Makaleler (Articles), Besides these books, there is also an unpublished Alfabe (Alphabet) book. Samed Behrengi, who succeeded in being "the vigilant conscience of the national culture" and "the living language of the peasants of South Azerbaijan", also deals with translating some literary works written in English and Persian into Turkish. At the same time, the poems of Mehdi Ehevan Salis, Ahmed Şamlu, Nima Yuşic, Foruğ Foruxzad and other poets are translated into Tabriz dialect of Azerbaijan Turkish and presented to the service of their kin. In the "Kar Tanecikleri" (Snowflakes) minimal story, while telling the fate of the snowflake, he saw the fate of the peoples who

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were faced with the danger of dissolving and disappearing under the control of the great states, and he was thinking about the ways of escape and exit from this fate (Nəbioğlu 45).

In the story "Alışkanlık" (Habit), Samed Behrengi's next criticism target is; Uneducated, there are charlatans, who ask students in the name of knowledge, meaningless, nonsense, let's say, "What is the color of the glass?", kill their time by waiting for an answer throughout the course. They complain to the principal that if they do not get the correct answer from the students as if the level of the whole class is low. Samet deeply regrets that the inferiors who are used to living like this are named as teachers. He devotes his life to supporting children. He struggles against the poverty of the people, those whom he raised half hungry and half full, and who morally mutilated the offspring he brought to school and entrusted him.

"Ahın Masalı" (The Tale of Ahın) tells about the wise, wise little daughter of a troubled father who loves his family, cares for his three daughters and fulfills their wishes, and returns many people, who are the servants of his soul, to unhappiness, to their previously happy life with the help of magic and enchantment. The master expands on this subject in the narrative of "Telhun" and this time talks about how a merchant father fulfilled the wishes of his seven daughters. It has profound implications for the little girl Telhun to ask for "a heart, a liver" from her father. Samed explains to children and young people that it is necessary to be courageous, brave, not cowardly and not be afraid of struggle with this desire: "Valiant ones die once, cowards how many times a day." sends his message.

In the story of "Ads12" (Nameless), based on the necessity of calling a person with a certain name and the fact that he is worthy of the name he bears, Samed Behrengi set out to educate his kin who struggle in the whirlwind of ignorance by making them laugh like Sabir and Mirze Celil, open their eyes and show the facts. The author, pitying the ignorance of the person who was cheated with someone else by his wife, wants to tell him the truth with a laugh, and at the end of the work, "Untitled", who knocked on the door of his house, said: "What is your name?". The words not to let you in without telling your name show us what "Ads12" (Nameless) thinks, how ignorant and miserable he is." (Behrəngi 34). "What was his name really? He hadn't read this yet. He had forgotten his name. Maybe he didn't have a name from

birth. If only he had been that way, he would have been consoled at that moment, he told himself: Our donkey had no tail when it was small. But he knew that whenever he had a name" (Behrəngi 35).

In the story of *Little Black Fish*, the words "Please do not offend me! My name is Karaca Fish. If you say your name, we will meet" also supports the idea that a person or every living thing should have a certain name from birth and should be called with the same name no matter where it is.

For the first time in Baku, in 1987, his works selected under the name of "Love Story" are brought together and published with a large circulation. Samet witnesses the shortcomings of the Iranian education system since the day he was sent to lecture in the village. The Ministry of Education, which blindly applied American educational standards to education and textbooks, did not take into account the children of Mazandaran who had not seen snow in their lives, the villagers who did not celebrate the Christmas holiday and such situations. Children often cannot grasp the foreign words given in the book. Samet takes these into consideration and prepares a new guide. In that book, he chooses and gives common words that are processed in Persian and Turkish and which are commonly used in spoken language. He wanted to go to Tehran and present the book he prepared to the Ministry. After the book is examined, it is asserted that the book should start with the pictures of the crown prince and his wife. It is also said that the first word of the «ş» (sh) part must be started with «şah» (Shah). His brother Esed Behrengi recounts this issue in his memoirs as follows: "I cannot write my signature on the book like many writers who gave nonsense to the minds of the people. I have not taught the letter «s» (sh) to children with the word" Shah "for once in my life. I quickly passed over the words "Şahbanu" (Shahbanu) and "Veliaht" (Crown Prince). How can I make the first page of my book special for them? Put the roof of our house to fall. I cannot teach the letter «ş» with the words "Şah" (Shah), "Şahbanu" (Shahbanu) and the letter "v" with the word "Veliaht" (Crown Prince). Yes, brother, they offer me this. Tell me, what should I do? Shall I put all the facts and my honor in the way of this book? Then what would I answer my students, children?" (Behrəngi 346).

Samed was bored with all this and left everything there and ran to the village, to the children he missed. As his brother Esed said, at that time the

livelihood was very difficult, the days passed with numerous difficulties. They promised Samed high prize money and high office in the future. But he abandoned them on behalf of his profession.

Samed Behrengi was a very good educator. He chose to teach in remote, neglected villages, which, as he said, even God forgot. It didn't matter where the classroom was. He also taught lessons in the seams, in the cemetery, in the makeshift places where the roof dripped from the rain, as long as the children would not fall behind the lesson. The distances between the villages where he taught and stayed were very far. According to the village residents, he confronted the dogs many times in the winter, by forcefully saving his life.

His friend Saedi wrote about S. Behrengi: "He used to stand in front of the bookstores for hours in his spare time, giving information to the young people who came to choose books." (Saedi 37).

When Samed Behrengi started lecturing in Mamakan, he realized that there are huge differences between the pedagogy principles of Western methodology and real life. First of all, instead of a school around the world, it encountered a one-chambered and no-equipped training center. In his garden, people like Hacı Kulu were lurking in ambush, so that the children who escaped from school were drawn to the carpet factory. In the past, Samed, who often wandered around the village and frequently appeared in public, in associations at weddings, in mosques, uses what he heard and what he knew to increase both his life and lesson experience. Later, they started doing this job with his colleague and student friend Behruz Dehqani. Thus, collecting folklore products from the people's mouth lays the groundwork for the emergence of artistic tales, stories and analyzes. These products are written as they are spoken in Turkish. Then they present it to the Ministry for printing, but broadcasting is not allowed. They have to translate the work into Persian. Only the story of "Telhun" is overlooked and published in Turkish.

Samed Behrengi, while criticizing the deficiencies of the education system in his early writings, gradually reaches out to other layers and problems of the society. In one of his articles on children's literature, he criticizes the passive and useless moral laws of society and says: "It is not the time to limit children's literature to propaganda and advice. Keep hands, face and body clean, obey parents, listen to the words of elders, do not speak in front of guests; one's success rises early in the morning, the world laughs with your smile, it is necessary to lend a helping hand to the poor, etc. As a result of giving advice with examples, we remove children from important and necessary problems and living conditions of society. Why should we wrap the child with the hope of joy and happiness in uselessness? In this case, it is not possible to breathe and express their sincere feelings without the older sibling's permission. Doesn't a child have the right to learn anything but cleanliness, obedience, listen to the teacher, and moral education? Which teacher's word do they listen to? Which morals should they learn? Those moral owners protect and encourage their own layer by living comfortably. Children need different things besides these" (Behrəngi 123).

S. Behrengi continued to write: "Why not say to our children: There are such children in our country that they did not see the color of meat, even heard the name of cheese but did not rub it on their tongue. This is why there is a small group of people who want to see ordinary people's tables full of food. Why not tell our children: There are more than half of the world hungry and why do they go hungry? And how would it be to stop this hunger? Why not teach our children about history, development and human evolution?" (Behrəngi 124). Samed Behrengi concludes his article as follows: "It is absolutely useless for prosperous people to talk about life, to talk about their love and morality, to people who need a piece of dry bread." (Behrəngi 125).

Being closely interested in the problems of his time and the troubles of the people he belongs to, and knowing about these problems, Behrengî realized the importance of raising Turkish children correctly and conveying correct messages to them and wrote his works in fairy tales or in fairy tale form to appeal to children. Behrengî was an intellectual who could not stay away from the problems of his society; through his works, he tried to convey messages to children that would prepare them for life, solve existing problems in their lifetime and provide future solutions to them. He thought that a didactic method would not be successful and aimed to cover this transmission process with a literary aesthetic distance.

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Tales have a special place in S. Behrengi's collections. The tales he compiled with his colleague Behruz Dehqani remained unnoticed for many years. However, after 25 years, self-sacrificing folklorist Mehemmedeli Fərzanə presented the original version of these tales in Azerbaijani language.

M. Fərzanə says: "Samed showed his trust in his native language with" Pare Pare ", which was considered his first work in 1342 and made him" the owner of knowledge "in his own words. Even an overview of this beautiful and compact work is a vivid proof of the cascade poetry in this language, even though its collector could not read in his native language. He placed the most beautiful and content poems of the poets of both sides, which he considers and touches in this magazine, with more than a hundred folk bayats. The printing of this first work cost Samed dearly and was summoned to court. He was warned for including "Azerbaijan" poem in the book (Fərzanə 11).

Thus, the book is banned and is not printed again during the Pahlavi regime, it is destroyed. And this book is made "pare pare" (in pieces) as it is called by the immoral and despotic regime. M. Fərzanə: "The peace, friendship and closeness between me and these two workers without seeing each other started with this book. They took the book bag on their shoulders, paper and pen in their hands, the feelings they had for the people and the country in their hearts, and they served as the first school teachers and gave way to Azerbaijani villages. they instilled the flame burning in their hearts on the children, they swarmed and mingled with them. For children, they were not teachers, but maybe "Uncle Samed", "Uncle Behruz". Although they were right to teach in secondary school because they graduated from Tabriz University, they considered teaching in primary school more valuable. They collected a great number of fairy tales, folk poetries, riddles, ballads, and proverbs. They wrote monographs of some villages " (Fərzanə 12).

The magazine of Samed and Behruz's Azerbaijani tales is one of the most valuable compilations published in South Azerbaijan so far. The interesting thing is that the fate of this magazine has been as strange as the fate of its compilers. Since they could not find the opportunity to publish these tales, which they collected from among the public, in Azerbaijani, they desperately translated them into Persian; published the first volume in Tabriz and the second in Tehran. His *Little Black Fish* (Küçük Kara Balık) work won the gold medal in the "Children's Books Competition" held in Bologna, Italy in 1968. After this success, his books were published in Italian, French, English and Turkish. After making the generals' coup in Turkey in 1980, Samet Behrengi's books were found in the homes of many young people who opposed the regime, and the publication of Samet's works in the country was prohibited. Author Qulamhüseyn Fernud, who researched the works of Samet, was chatting with Erdal Öz, the famous Turkish writer and publishing house manager in 1970 at the publishing house "Arkadaş" (Friend) in Istanbul. A young boy and girl came in, they requested 50 copies of Samet's books. It was understood from their conversations that they wanted to give Samet's books with a bunch of roses as gifts to the young people at the wedding (Fernud 27).

Samed Behrengi's name had circulated in different regions of Southern Azerbaijan during his life. After his untimely death, the publication of his works aroused great interest both in South Azerbaijan and Iran and in different countries of the world.

Samed spoke of such deep human relations in his art and reflected them in such a simple language that the masses of people living in both the village and the city saw and heard their common troubles and voices in his writings. On the day of Samed's death, Celal Al Ahmet said: "Now how can I believe Samed is dead? He was devoted to his own people, his past, his home. He wanted to prepare and print the *Alfabe* (Alphabet) book. But how many games they played on him. How should I believe Samed's death? Couldn't the "Küçük Kara Balık" (Little Black Fish) have joined the Araz river and the Caspian to be reborn? Samed drowned in the river, which is a partner of a tradition, a language, a nation. Araz was as holy to Samet as Medina was for Muslims (Aləhməd 93).

Samed Behrengi mysteriously drowned in Araz creek near the Humar settlement in Iran on 30 August 1968. It is estimated that he was killed by the Shah of Iran. Since he touched on the issues of injustice and poverty in the country in his fairy tales for children, he did not allow him to live under the shah regime. We hear his will almost from the mouth of Little Black Fish. He said in one of his articles: "Let death always approach me easily, but no matter how much I can manage it, I will live, I will not go towards death. It doesn't matter if one day I face death. Most importantly, what kind of traces can my art, my life, even death, leave on the lives of others..." (Behrengî 33).

Conclusion

Like many others, I agree: The author actually writes himself, his life, the events that happened to him or were brought to him; he describes the people he praises and loves for his existence, the identities he is proud of, the natural beauties of the country he is a fan of, and the environment in which he lives together. Poets, on the other hand, are influenced by all these features and turn them into poems. The works that do not reflect the secrets of his inner world and the echoes of the events he encountered in his time cannot convince the reader. The meaning of Samed's life, the inspiration of his works were these features, most of the children he was in contact with every day. He was only thinking of the fate of the people from which he came out. Since minors, who will become the elders of tomorrow, could change this fate, he was trying to portray the pains of life in front of the children and tell the secrets of life so that they could have a beautiful future. His first writing experiences, "Adet (Custom) and "Adsız" (Nameless) stories, in which his thoughts in this direction take place, were published in 1959. He transferred the story of "Küçük Kara Balık" (Little Black Fish) to white papers in the early 1960s.

"Küçük Kara Balık" (Little Black Fish) story brings great success to Samed and he returns to the manifesto of his life and promotes its name in various world countries. So much so that the work is deemed worthy of a gold medal at the "International Festival of Children's Literature" in Bologna, Italy in 1965. After this success, "Küçük Kara Balık" (*Little Black Fish*) was translated into Italian, French, English and Turkish languages and published with a large circulation. Besides, it arouses a sense of curiosity towards the literature and people of South Azerbaijan all over the world.

It is referred to and named in different ways among his people: "The living language of Azerbaijani peasants", "the vigilant conscience of the national culture", "A traveling teacher who opened his eyes to the world and headed towards Savalan, Xalxal between the lines of Heyderbabaya Selam", "Turning to the public", "itinerant teacher".

Samed Behrengi wrote books for the education of the Azerbaijani language, following the path of H. Rüşdiye, M. Fərzanə, and M. Zehtabi. As it is known from history, difficulties and pressures affected social-political and literary-cultural life in South Azerbaijan (Öztay 81). Despite all the difficulties and the pressures of the Pahlavi regime, he did not give up and continued the struggle. As he said in one of his stories: "No matter how little light is, it appears in the dark." Samed created thousands of stars from one of his stars, his little light illuminating everywhere.

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Güney Azerbaycan Çocuk Edebiyatının Öncüsü: Samed Behrengi^{*}

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Öz

Yaşadığı döneminin sorunlarıyla ve mensup olduğu halkın sıkıntılarıyla yakından ilgilenen ve bu problemler hakkında bilgi sahibi olan Behrengi, Türk çocuklarını doğru şekilde yetiştirmenin ve onlara doğru mesajlar iletmenin önemini fark etmiş ve eserlerini çocuklara hitap edecek şekilde masal formunda kaleme almıştır. Ona asıl ün getiren başyapıtı ise "Küçük Kara Balık" adlı eseridir ve bu eser, "siyasi manifesto" olarak nitelendirilir. Azerbaycan'ın ücra köy okullarında öğretmenlik yapan S. Behrengi, hep Azerbaycan Türkçesiyle konuşmuş ve eserlerinin de hepsini ana dilinde yazmıştır. Folklor örnekleri toplamış edebi eserlerin yanında, eğitime, pedagojiye dair makaleler, denemeler yazmış; tercüme işleri ile meşgul olmuştur. Samet Behrengi, çocukların iç dünyalarına ayna tutan, onların temiz duygularını, arzularını kaleme alan yazarlardan biridir. Bu yüzden, İran ve Güney Azerbaycan'da çocuk edebiyatının mimarı sayılır. Bu çalışmada, Samed Behrengi'nin mücadeleler içinde geçen hayatı, fikirleri ve eserleri çerçevesinde, nitel araştırma yöntemi ve Küçük Kara Balık örneklemiyle sanatçının, İran ve Güney Azerbaycan çocuk edebiyatının oluşumuna katkıları irdelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Samed Behrengi, Türk çocukları, masal, siyasi manifesto, İran, Güney Azerbaycan.

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Аннотация

Самет Бехранги подробно интересовался проблемами общества своего времени, знал о проблемах народа, осознавал важность правильного воспитания тюркских детей и передачи им необходимых знаний. Для этой цели он написал произведения для детей в форме народной сказки. Бехранги, как просветитель-интеллектуал не мог быть равнодушным к проблемам общества, он в своих работах пытался выразить идеи для подготовки детей к проблемам, с которыми они столкнутся в течении их жизни, и дать им ориентированные на будущее пути для их решения.

Главное произведение, которое принесло известность автору, – «Маленькая черная рыбка». Оно считается «политическим манифестом».

С. Бехранги, преподавая в отдаленных сельских школах Азербайджана, всегда говорил на азербайджанском тюркском языке и писал все свои произведения на родном языке. Помимо литературных произведений и собранных образцов фольклора (совместно с Бехрузом Дехкани) он писал статьи и очерки по образованию, педагогике, был занят переводческими работами. Самед Бехранги – один из авторов, которые отражают внутренний мир детей и доносят до читателя их чистые чувства и желания. Поэтому он считается зачинателем детской литературы в Иране и Южном Азербайджане.

Ключевые слова

Самет Бехранги, тюркские дети, сказка, "политический манифест", Иран, Южный Азербайджан.

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