



CHILDREN VII. CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

CHILDREN

vii. Children's Literature

Children's literature is a genre employing themes, language, and illustrations geared to the developmental levels of children, introduced in Persia in the 13th/19th century.

Before 1911. Up to the [Constitutional movement](#) (1323-29/1905-11) the standard curriculum of traditional Persian elementary schools (*maktabs*), which were privately operated, included the alphabet, the Qur'ān, selections from popular Persian poetry and prose, and the traditional sciences. Beside textbooks children read edifying and entertaining stories drawn from Persian classics, for example, *Mūš o gorba* by 'Obayd Zākānī (8th/14th century); a prose version of the *Eskandar-nāma* written for adults during the Safavid period (907-1145/1501-1732); the didactic *maṭnawīs* (poems consisting of rhymed couplets) *Nān o ḥalwā* and *Šīr o šekar*, by Shaikh [Bahā'-al-Dīn 'Āmelī](#); *Romūz-e Ḥamza*, about the exploits of the Prophet Moḥammad's uncle Ḥamza b. 'Abd-al-Moṭṭaleb; and the similar *Ḳāvar-nāma* by Moḥammad b. Ḥosām-al-Dīn [Ḳvāfī](#) (d. 875/1470-71), about 'Alī b. [Abī Ṭāleb](#). Young people also read popular adult stories like *Ḥosayn-e Kord-e Šabestari*, *Šīrūya-ye nāmdār*, *Malek Jamšīd*, *Malek Bahman*, *Amīr Arsalān*, *Čehel ṭūṭī*, and *Hazār o yak šab* (see [alf layla wa layla](#)), most of



them written during the Safavid and Qajar periods and generally considered unsuitable for young people (Şadīq, 1336 Š./1957, pp. 360-80; Mostawfī, *Šarḥ-e zendagānī* I, pp. 218-22).

In the late 13th/19th century Persian intellectuals became familiar with scientific, literary, and artistic developments in the West, and some of them sought to reform the Persian educational system on European models (Eḥtešām-al-Salṭana, pp. 314-47; Dawlatābādī, *Ḥayāt-e Yaḥyā* I, pp. 178-313). For example, Mīrzā Maḥmūd Khan Meftāḥ-al-Molk, in the preface to his illustrated *Ta'dīb al-aṭfāl* (Tehran, 1293/1976, pp. 4-5), complained that children's reading materials either were drawn from classics that were too difficult for them, like the *Golestān* of Sa'dī (comp. 656/1258), or were inappropriate fables like *Čehel tuṭī* and *Dozd o qāzī*. His work, the first Persian book for children, is a collection of twenty-one stories translated from Arabic translations of French originals. Meftāḥ-al-Molk noted that, in his translation, he had avoided rhymes, Arabic phrases, and didactic verses, in order to render the text more accessible to children. The black-and-white illustrations were by contemporary Persian artists. One of the earliest such illustrators of children's books on Western models was Moḥammad Nāşer Şafā, about whom nothing is known. A few Persian authors also wrote original works specifically adapted to children's needs. In 1311/1893, for example, 'Abd-al-Raḥīm Ṭālebof published in Istanbul *Ketāb-e Aḥmad*, also known as *Safīna-ye ṭālebī*, which presented elementary science in comprehensible terms (Āryanpūr, *Az Şabā tā Nīmā* I, pp. 292-95).

The formative period (1920-46). Initial attempts to improve reading materials for children were closely connected with educational reform. In the 1300s-10s Š./1920s-30s a number of scholars and teachers were officially assigned to prepare textbooks for elementary and secondary schools (Şadīq, 1352, pp. 225, 229, 234), covering a range of subject matter from graded instruction in the Persian language to history, geography, literature, conduct, and the natural sciences. They frequently consulted curricula used in European countries; for example, in the choice of poetry to be included, the most important criteria were relevance of theme and clarity of language. Among contemporary poets whose works appeared in these textbooks were [Moḥammad-Taḳī Bahār](#), [Ḥājj Mīrzā Yaḥyā Dawlatābādī](#), [Parvīn E'teşāmī](#), and [Īraj Mīrzā](#).

Many of these reformers prepared illustrated stories, games, poetry, and plays, guided by what was then known about child psychology. One pioneer author of such works was Moḥammad-'Alī Tehrānī Kātūzīān, who published *Aklāq-e*



asāsī (2 vols., Tehran, 1331-33/1912-15), including simplified stories from the Persian translation of *Kalīla wa Demna* (6th/12th century), *Marzbān-nāma* by Varāvīnī (fl. 7th/13th century), and *Anwār-e Sohaylī* by Ḥosayn Wā‘eẓ Kāšefī (d. ca. 910/1504). In 1311 Š./1932 ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Ṣaṇ‘atīzāda Kermānī combined legendary and contemporary elements in *Rostam dar qarn-e bīstom*, in which Rostam, the legendary hero of the *Šāh-nāma*, and his horse, Raḳš, race the modern protagonist, Jankās, on his motorcycle. The first Persian periodical for children, *Se fandoq*, founded on the initiative of Mokḵber-al-Salṭana Maḥdīqolī Khan Hedāyat in 1307 Š./1928, was also modeled on European children’s magazines.

Mīrzā Jabbār ‘Askarzāda Bāgčabān (1264-1345 Š./1885-1966), who established the first kindergarten in Tabrīz in 1303 Š./1924, was the first to write books for young people on the basis of his experience with children. His first children’s play, *Kānom Kazūk* (Shiraz, 1307 Š./1928), was in a combination of verse and prose. In the following year he published *Zendagī-e kūdakān* (Tehran, 1308 Š./1929), a collection of verse. After Bāgčabān the most prolific children’s poet of the period was ‘Abbās Yamīnī Šarīf (1298-1368 Š./1919-89), who began his career in 1317 Š./1938. Many of his poems, on themes related to the lives and development of children, were later collected and published in book form: *Ferī be āsmān mīravād* (Tehran, 1344 Š./1965), *Āvāz-e fererštagān yā aš‘ār-e kūdakān* (Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, and *Nīm qarn dar bāg-e še‘r* (Tehran, 1366 Š./1987).

During World War II, after the fall of Rezā Shah in 1320 Š./1941 and the Allied occupation of Persia, which lasted until 1325 Š./1946, the British, as part of their program of public relations and technical assistance, enlisted a group of Persians to publish magazines for young people. The best known was *Nownahālān*, a supplement to the adult publication *Šeypūr*; it was first published in 1321 Š./1942 by the British Council and continued to appear under the direction of ‘Abd-Allāh Faryār for the next four years; it included poems by Yamīnī Šarīf and others. One of the earliest Persian publishers to focus on translations for children in this period was Nūr-e Jahān in Tehran, which was affiliated with American Protestant missionaries; in addition to several illustrated stories, it issued eight biographies of eminent figures in Western history, including Abraham Lincoln and Benjamin Franklin. Owing to the firm’s religious associations, however, the series was not very successful.

In the same period ‘Alī-Naqī Wazīrī (1266-1358 Š./1877-1979), a well-known composer and musician and founder of the first music school in Persia,



compiled three anthologies under the title *Kvāndanīhā-ye kūdakān. Afsānahā* (Tehran, 1326 Š./1947). Most of the stories, along with the illustrations, had been taken from Western readers and adapted to Persian customs and beliefs. Some phrases were, however, printed in the cursive style of Persian writing, in order to acquaint young readers with it. A number of short plays and his own songs for children were included in each volume. Fażl-Allāh Şobhī Mohtadī (d. 1341 Š./1962), who narrated popular stories on the radio every Friday for twenty years (1319-39 Š./1940-60), was the first to collect folktales and rewrite them for children. He eventually published them in seven volumes (Tehran, 1323-47 Š./1944-68), with illustrations in black and white by Laylī Taqīpūr and Moḥsen Wazīrī Moqaddam. Among these collections were *Afsānahā-ye kohan*, *Deż-e hūşrobā*, *Amū norūz*, and *Dīvān-e Balq*.

In 1324 Š./1945 Yamīnī Şarīf, with the help of Ebrāhīm Banī-Aḥmad, a teacher at the Tehran normal school, founded the pocket-size magazine *Bāzī-e kūdakān*. In the same year Rūḥī Arbāb, a translator of foreign children's literature, began publication of the magazine *Kūdak*, and Ja'far Badī'ī introduced another, *Bāzī*.

The period of growth (1946-60). In 1327 Š./1948 the Ministry of Education established the periodical *Dāneşāmūz* under the editorship of Maşāyeḡ Farīdanī; he was succeeded two years later by Yamīnī Şarīf, who served until 1332 Š./1953, when Eqbāl Yaḡmā'ī took over. During the same period Sāzmān-e Javānān-e Jam'iyat-e Şīr o Kvorşīd-e Sorḡ-e Īrān (youth organization of the Persian Red Lion and Sun Society, corresponding to the Western Red Cross) published a magazine for its members. In addition, the Persian student organization affiliated with the Tūda (Tudeh) party (see [communism](#)) issued a weekly magazine, also entitled *Dāneşāmūz*, which included writings of upper elementary-school and secondary-school students and offered prizes to encourage young writers. At a contest held in 1329 Š./1950 the winners of the first and second prizes were Maḥmūd Kīānūş, now an author of children's books, and Ġolām Ḥosayn Sā'edī, who became a noted playwright. This *Dāneşāmūz* ceased publication in Mordād 1332 Š./August 1953, when leftist organizations were suppressed following the fall of Moşaddeq in Mordād 1332 Š./1953. In 1332 Š./1953, Āḡar Rahnemā and Moḥammad-Bāqer Hūşyār founded the magazine *Sapīda-ye fardā*; they organized in 1335 Š./1956 the first children's book exhibition and published in 1337 Š./1958 a bibliography of children's books.

In 1333 Š./1954 the Ministry of Education, with funding from the Şandūq-e



Moštarak-e Īrān wa Āmrīkā (Common fund of Persia and the United States, administered under the American Point Four program), undertook preparation of Persian reading materials for schools. Well-known writers were invited to contribute simplified versions of stories from the Persian classics, biographies of great men and women; and essays on geography, history, arts and crafts, Persian customs, and aspects of life in other countries to *Kvāndanīhā wa sargarmīhā*, (4 vols., 1335-36 Š./1956-57), edited by Ehsān Yār-e Šāṭer specifically for children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades respectively. Riddles, games, crossword puzzles, simple tricks, and original illustrations were also included. Among those who contributed were Badīʿ-al-Zamān Forūzānfar, Moḥammad-Bāqer Hūšyār, Parvīn Javān, Nāmī Mošīrī, ʿIsā Šadīq, Ḥabīb-Allāh Šaḥīḥī, Dabīḥ-Allāh Tābetiān, Sīrūs Tawfīq, and Ḥabīb Yaḡmāʿī.

Private firms continued to publish translations for children. Antoine de Saint-Exupery's *Le petit prince*, translated by Moḥammad Qāzī as *Šāhzāda-ye kūčūlū*, appeared in Tehran in 1334 Š./1955 (12th printing 1366/1987). A year later Šādeq Čūbak, an accomplished writer of adult short stories, translated Carlo Claudi's *Pinocchio* (*Pīnūkū, ādamak-e čūbī*; Tehran, 1335 Š./1956; 17th printing, 1366/1987), and Eqbāl Yaḡmāʿī retranslated *Robinson Crusoe* (Tehran, 1335 Š./1956). In the same year the Tehran daily newspapers *Eṭṭelāʿāt* and *Keyhān* began publication of their respective weeklies for young readers, *Eṭṭelāʿāt-e kūdakān* and *Keyhān-e baččahā*.

The educational and commercial value of superior visual material came to be fully appreciated during this period, and painters and graphic artists with experience in illustration and book design were commissioned specifically to illustrate children's books. Among the first books published with such professional illustrations were *Kadū-ye qelqelazan* (Tehran, 1338 Š./1959) and *Parvānahā wa bārān* (Tehran, 1339 Š./1960), written by Jaʿfar Ebrāhīmī (known as Šāhed) and illustrated by Moḥammad-Zamān Zamānī; and *Qeṣṣa qeṣṣa* by Hūšmand Fath-Aʿzam and *Paltow-e qermez* and *Har kas kāna-ī dārad* by Līlī Āhī (Ayman), all illustrated by Mortazā Momayyez (all Bongāh, Tehran, n.d. [ca. 1338 Š./1959]). Other noteworthy children's books published in this period include *Dāstānhā-ye Īrān-e bāstān* (Tehran, 1337 Š./1958), by Yār-e Šāṭer, containing eleven stories based on the myths and written records of the Iranian past, with illustrations by Maḥmūd Jawādīpūr; and *Qeṣṣahā-ye kūb barā-ye baččahā-ye kūb*, a collection of simplified tales from *Kalīla wa Demna* and *Anwār-e Sohaylī* by Mahdī Āḍar Yazdī (Tehran, 1338 Š./1959).



The period of achievement (1960-79). In the 1960s a systematic effort to provide reading materials for children from kindergarten through adolescence was undertaken by *Bongāh-e Tarjoma wa Našr-e Ketāb*, in three separate series: *Majmū'a-ye kūdakān*, for ages five to seven years; *Majmū'a-ye now javānān*, for ages eight to twelve years; and *Majmū'a-ye javānān*, for ages thirteen to fifteen years. The first of these series included both original works and translations. Āhī, the first editor, and Faṭḥ-A'zam produced a total of five volumes containing brief texts printed in large type and with appropriate color illustrations by Momayyez. The series for the middle group consisted entirely of translations from French, English, German, and Russian works either originally written specifically for children or simplified from literary classics. Approximately twenty-five volumes, most with original black-and-white or color illustrations, had been published in this series by 1358 Š./1979. The translators included Mehrī Āhī, Rūḥī Arbāb, Ḥaydar Bāqerzāda, Moḥammad-'Alī Jamālzāda, Ḥosayn-'Alī Mallāḥ, Šams-al-Molūk Mošāḥeb, Esmā'īl Sa'adat, and Badrī Wazirī. The series for teenagers included primarily simplified versions of widely read Western novels by such writers as Alphonse Daudet, Charles Dickens, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Rudyard Kipling, Guy de Maupassant, Molière, Walter Scott, William Shakespeare, Robert Louis Stevenson, William Makepeace Thackeray, Leo Tolstoy, and Jules Verne. Almost forty volumes had been published in a uniform format by 1358 Š./1979. Most of the translators were well-known-writers like Arbāb, Abu'l-Faẓl Mīr Bahā', Faraḥ Davāčī, 'Ozmā Nafīsī, Sa'īd Nafīsī, Ardašīr Nikpūr, Farīda Qaračadāgī, Nayyera Sa'īdī, Abū-Ṭāleb Šāremī, Hājar Tarbiāt, Jamšīd Tavallalī, Fereydūn Vahman, and Yamīnī Šarīf.

Another series, *Čehra-ye melal* (translations of the English series *Portraits of the Nations*), aimed at readers between nine and twelve years old, included books on the geography, history, culture, and ways of life of various peoples. It was also published by the Bongāh in collaboration with Franklin Publications, an American firm primarily devoted to familiarizing the Persian public with works by American authors. In general the firm engaged translators and then made the results available to different publishers on a royalty basis. Beside *Čehra-ye melal* Franklin produced a number of children's books and series on history, science, literature, and the like. In this decade several other private publishers also launched series of translations for children. Chief among them was *Ketābhā-ye ʔelāʔ*, translated mainly from English. Aside from the Bongāh and Franklin Publications, however, publishers showed little concern for the accuracy of their translations; books often appeared in inadequate or distorted



versions. One reason was that, though many young writers and novice translators attempted books for younger age groups, they were largely untrained and for the most part not guided by scientific method; in fact, the grading of Persian vocabulary according to age level and cultural background still remains rudimentary.

Partly in response to such problems, in the 1340s Š./1960s several advisory bodies were organized to raise children's literature to a level of quality comparable to that of adult literature. A substantial number of writers, poets, translators, artists, and educators were attracted to the genre. In the winter of 1341 Š./1963 a group of teachers and educators, including Līlī Āhī, Ṭamīna Bāgčabān, Tūrān Mīrhādī (Kōmārlū), and Yamīnī Šarīf, founded Šūrā-ye Ketāb-e Kūdak (Council on children's books) with the primary objective of developing a national literature specifically for children. The council provided a forum for discussion and study of children's literature and awarded prizes for the best children's books published each year (Šūrā, 1361, pp. 1-2).

A further stimulus was the establishment in 1343 Š./1964 of the biweekly *Peyk*, five illustrated magazines issued for different grade levels during the school year by Markaz-e Entesārāt-e Āmūzešī (Center for educational publications) of the Ministry of Education, with the cooperation of Franklin Publications. They were distributed at a low price in all elementary and high schools throughout the country, however remote, and had a total circulation of about 1.7 million copies. The Markaz employed a staff of artists, including Parvīz Kalāntarī, Ġolām-'Alī Maktabī, Pāyān Ṭabarī, and Moḥammad-Zamān Zamānī, who worked closely with the writers for *Peyk*, each specializing in illustrations for one kind of writing.

In 1344 Š./1965 the influential Kānūn-e Parvareš-e Fekrī-e Kūdakān o Now-javānān (Center for the intellectual development of children and young people) was founded by Līlī Jahānarā, Yār-e Šāṭer, and Homā Zāhedī, with the support of Queen Farah. With adequate funding and liberal assistance from government agencies, it was possible to engage a number of experienced writers, translators, and artists to prepare appropriate and attractively designed books for children. Although at first some translations were published, the Kānūn increasingly emphasized original writing and artwork. The first work issued under its auspices was *Mehmānhā-ye nāk'vānda* (Tehran, 1345 Š./1966), containing free adaptations of folktales by Farīda Farjām, with illustrations by Jūdī Farmānfarmā'īān. Other professional illustrators who worked for the Kānūn included Bahman Dādḡvāh, Bahrām Kā'ef, Nāhīd



Ḥaḳīqat, Kalāntarī, 'Abbās Kīā-Rostamī, Faršīd Metqālī, Nikzād Nojūmī, 'Alī-Akbar Šādeqī, and Nūr-al-Dīn Zarrīn-kelk. By Bahman 1357 Š./February 1979, 146 children's books had been published by the Kānūn. Another aspect of its activity was the establishment of public libraries throughout the country, particularly in heavily populated or poor areas. Many of these libraries evolved into cultural centers, where young readers were encouraged to write and draw (Ṭāhbāz, 1354, p. 82).

Owing to all these developments, the quality of Persian children's literature seems to have improved in this period. For example, the percentage of published works rated suitable by the Šūrā increased steadily, from 35 percent in 1347-48 Š./1968-69 to 60 percent in the period 1356-57 Š./1977-78. The great majority of the children's books published during this period consisted of narrative works, though the proportion declined from 87 percent of the total in 1347-48 Š./1968-69 to about 69 percent in 1355-56 Š./1976-77 (see [Table 37](#)).

Among such suitable works were Āḍar Yazdī's *Qeṣṣahā-ye Qor'ān* (Tehran, 1343 Š./1964), which was selected by the Šūrā as the best children's book of 1345 Š./1966; *Qeṣṣahā-ye tāza az ketābhā-ye kohān*, which in the style of his previous series *Qeṣṣahā-ye kūb barā-ye baččahā-ye kūb*, (see above), included five selections from Persian classics adapted for the young readers, for example, *Haft peykar* of Neẓāmī Ganjavī; *Hazār o yak šab*; and a children's version of the *Sīāsāt-nāma* of K̄vāja Neẓām-al-Molk (q.v.). They also included folktales and original works written in the style of folktales, for example, *Afsānahā-ye Āḍarbāyjān* (2nd ed., 2 vols., Tehran, 1348 Š./1969) by [Šamad Behrangī](#) and Behrūz Dehqānī; *Afsānahā, bāzihā wa nemāyeš-nāmahā-ye kordī* (Tehran, 1336 Š./1987) by 'Alī Darvīšīān; two books by Kīānuš: *Dehkada-ye now* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969) and *Ādam yā rūbāh*, which was selected as best story of 1348 Š./1969 by the Šūrā; *Kalāghā* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969) and *Sanjābhā* (Tehran, 1349 Š./1970) by Nāder Ebrāhīmī, an established author of short stories for adults; *Čekas-ī be čašm-e pesarak 'aynakzad?* (Tehran, 1350 Š./1971), *Do paranda* (Tehran, 1351 Š./1972), and *Ārzū* (Tehran, 1352 Š./1973) by Qodsī Qāzīnūr, who also did the illustrations; *Bābā barfī* (Tehran, 1349 Š./1970) by Mīrzā Jabbār 'Askarzāda Bāgčabān (see above); *Qeṣṣa-ye bāg-e Maryam* (Tehran, 1350 Š./1971) by Mortazā Reẓwān, who attempted to communicate social and political ideas to children; and more than thirty stories by Dāryūš 'Ebād-Allāhī published in Tehran between 1348 Š./1969 and 1356 Š./1977. Behrangī's posthumous collection of original stories imitating folktales, *Māhī-e sīāh-e kūčulū* (Tehran, 1347 Š./1968), soon came to be taken in Persia as an



allegory of the struggle for survival against absolute power and oppression; the illustrations by Metqālī won a prize at the 1969 international exhibition in Bologna, Italy, and in the same year the biannual Bratislava (Czechoslovakia) prize. Stories adapted from myths and legends included another work by Yār-e Šāter, *Bargozīda-ye dāstānhā-ye Šāh-nāma* (A selection of stories from the *Šāh-nāma*; Tehran, 1344 Š./1965); *Afsāna-ye Sīmorḡ* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969) by Zahrā Kānlarī (Kīā), with illustrations by Zarrīn-kelk; *Jamšīd Šāh* (Tehran, 1346 Š./1967) and *Bastūr* (Tehran, 1347 Š./1968) by Mehrdād Bahār, with illustrations by Metqālī and Nojūmī; *Zāl o Sīmorḡ* (Tehran, 1351 Š./1972), *Haft k̄vān-e Rostam* (Tehran, 1357 Š./1978), and *Zāl o Rūdāba* (Tehran, 1352 Š./1973) by Maḥmūd-Mošref Āzād Tehrānī (M. Āzād), with illustrations by Zarrīn-kelk and Nafisa Rīāhī; and the stories *Sīāhī*, *Šabgīr*, and *Āftāb*, drawn from the *Šāh-nāma* by Kīānūš (Tehran, 1354 Š./1975).

In the mid-1340s Š./1960s the Šūrā concluded from a survey of available children's literature that there was too much emphasis on mystery and fantasy and too little on the realities of life and society, even though its members believed that children find realistic stories easier to grasp from their own experience (*Gozāreš*, 1348 Š./1969). The Šūrā's published lists of suitable children's books carried considerable weight, and authors and publishers were thus stimulated to produce more stories with a realistic approach. Behrangī, for example, wrote stories based on the lives of rural children in Azarbaijan, though still incorporating elements of fantasy; among his best-known works of this type are *Bīst o čahār sā'at dar k̄vāb o bīdārī* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969), *Pesarak-e labūforūš* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969), and *Yak holū, hazār holū* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969). In *Ta'mīrgāh* (Tehran, 2535 = 1355 Š./1976), *Asbāb-kešī* (Tehran, 1354 Š./1975), and *Ammā če kerm-e abrišamī* (Tehran, 1354 Š./1975), etc. Qāzīnūr focused on social problems, without losing sight of the feelings and wishes of children. Among established adult writers who also wrote realistic stories for children Nāder Ebrāhīmī was the most prominent. His first such effort was *Dūr az kāna* (Tehran, 1347 Š./1968), followed by *Man rāh-e kāna rā balad nīstam* (Tehran, 1354 Š./1975). Although some of these works were relatively long, in terms of plot and character development none can be considered a novel. In fact, few Persian novels for children have been written, though *Saktūn* (Tehran, 1358 Š./1979) by Nāṣer Īrānī may be considered a first step in that direction.

Nor were many plays of quality written for children, perhaps partly because educational institutions were not very active in the performing arts. The first



significant plays after Bāgčabān's early *Kānom Kazūk* (see above) were *Behtarīn bābā-ye donyā* (Tabrīz, 1344 Š./1965) and *Čašm dar barābar-e čašm* (Tehran, 1350 Š./1971) by Sā'edī. Despite its symbolism, which was intended for adults, *Behtarīn bābā-ye donyā* was probably the most mature and coherent Persian play ever written for children. In the 1340s Š./1960s the actor and director Bīžan Mofīd wrote the musical plays *Šahr-e qešša* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969), incorporating elements of social and political satire, and *Māh wa palang* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969), both based on nursery rhymes and folk songs. In the same period a children's theater was established in Tehran under the auspices of the Kānūn, which generated a demand for children's plays. Other plays for children were *Āraš* by Bahrām Bayzā'ī (Tehran, 1356 Š./1977) and *Kāva* by Maḥmūd E'temādzāda Behāzīn (Tehran, 1357 Š./1978). The Kānūn also produced films for children, for example, *Amū Sibīlū* (Tehran, 1349 Š./1970), written by Bayzā'ī, and *Nān o kūča* (Tehran, 1349 Š./1970) by Kīā-Rostamī (see [cinema](#)).

Before the pioneering work of Yamīnī Šarīf (see above) there had been little Persian poetry written expressly for children, but in this period the genre flourished. Between 1350 Š./1971 and 1356 Š./1977 Kīānūš published seven books of poetry for children ranging in age from five to fifteen years. Publication of children's poems in the periodicals *Peyk*, *Keyhān-e baččahā*, *Eṭṭelā'āt-e kūdakān*, *Najāt-e nasl-e javān*, and *Payām-e šādī* encouraged poets to write for young audiences. Particularly important were rhymes to be sung or recited in games. The pioneer in collecting and recording folk songs for children was Maḥdoḳt Dawlatābādī, whose best-known collection is *Jomjomak barg-e kazūn* (Tehran, 1348 Š./1969), with illustrations by Kalāntarī. Some poets composed original works for children in the style of folk songs. Following the lead of Bāgčabān, Mošref Āzād Tehrānī wrote *Qešša-ya ṭawqī* (Tehran, 1347 Š./1968), a story in song with drawings by Ḥaḳīqat, and Manūčehr Neyestānī composed *Gol ūmad, bahār ūmad* (Tehran, 1347 Š./1968), illustrated by Kalāntarī. Another volume of Bāgčabān's own poems of this type, *Man ham dar donyā ārzū dāram* (Tehran, n.d.), was published after his death in 1345 Š./1966. Yamīnī Šarīf and a few others also occasionally wrote poems in syllabic meter and the colloquial style of nursery rhymes.

The best available biographies for children were translations of books about foreign personalities. A few works were, however, published about figures in Persian history, for example, the anonymous *Kūroš Šāh* about [Cyrus the Great](#) (1356 Š./1977); *Āvarda-and ke Ferdowsī* (Tehran, 1354 Š./1975) by Maḥdī



Aḳawān-e Tālet; *Ostād-e ostādān* (Tehran, 1349 Š./1970) about the life of *Ebn Sīnā* by Nūr-Allāh Lārūdī, with illustrations by ‘Alī-Aṣḡar Ma‘šūmī; and *Mājarā-ye Sattār Kān* (Tehran, 1353 Š./1974) by ‘Ebād-Allāhī.

As the genre of Persian children’s literature developed during the 1340s Š./1960s it became the object of study and criticism. In the regular reports issued by the Šūrā, beside evaluations and ratings of the new books published each year, there were articles on principles and standards for writing for children, designed to provide guidelines for authors, publishers, teachers, and parents. Toward the end of the decade children’s literature was introduced into the curriculum of Persian teachers’ colleges. In 1352 Š./1973 Kīānūš published *Še’r-e kūdak dar Īrān* (Tehran, 1356 Š./1977), a handbook on the principles of writing for children. In the same year Tūrān Mīr Hādī, an educator and active member of the Šūrā, published *Goḏar-ī dar adabīyāt-e kūdakān* (Tehran), drawn from her own experiences and observations. It is a major source for research on children’s literature in Persia. Authors also began to review one another’s works in this period. For example, Farroḳ Šādeqī in particular wrote on the works of ten writers of children’s fiction, in which she emphasized general rules, rather than individual strengths and weaknesses. They appeared first in the literary journal *Čahār fašl* and then in book form under the title *Barrasī-e adabīyāt-e kūdakān* (Tehran, 1357 Š./1978). The Persian press also began both to report news related to children and to carry reviews of children’s books. In its report “Maḡāla-nāma-ye adabīyāt-e kūdakān wa now-javānān” for 1356 Š./1977-78, for example, the Šūrā listed forty-seven such articles.

Since the revolution of February 1979. With the rise of anti-Western feelings in Persia at the end of the 1350s Š./1970s children’s literature and the industry associated with it underwent radical changes. The regime, anxious to counteract secular tendencies and foreign cultural influences in Persian society, immediately banned translation of many foreign, particularly Western, works, and the agencies that had been largely responsible for translation projects were reorganized or abolished. The Bongāh, after a year or two of precarious existence, was combined with several other institutions, and its traditional program was abandoned; the Persian operations of Franklin Publications were closed down. The Šūrā and the Kānūn, however, continued their activities, the latter under different direction and with substantial resources provided by the government; *Peyk*, renamed *Rošd*, also continued publication, with contents reflecting the new social and political



climate.

As a result of the new policies, the ratio of original works for children to translations, which in 1355-56 Š./1976-77 had been 49:51, rose in 1359-60 Š./1980-81 to 59:41 (see [Table 37](#)). Commercial publishers did continue to issue translations for children. By the twentieth anniversary of the Šūrā in 1361 Š./1983 the percentage of such works had again risen slightly. Indigenous writers began to search for themes relevant to contemporary life, particularly the poor and the working classes, identified as *mostaz'afān* (the oppressed) under the Islamic Republic. In order to benefit from government resources, however, they had to conform to official guidelines that were quite restrictive. For example, themes and handling had to be in harmony with Islamic religious principles and the policies of the Islamic Republic. Of 332 children's books published by the Kānūn between 1358 Š./1979 and 1368 Š./1989 at least eighty were on themes related to religion, the revolution, and support of the war with Iraq (1359-66 Š./1980-87); titles include *Šokūh-e šahādat* (1359 Š./1980) by Ḥosayn Šadrī, *Ān forū pīčīda dar jāma-ye taqwā* (n.d.) by Šādeq Mūsawī Garmārūdī. It was probably partly as a result of the new requirements that the percentage of books considered suitable by the Šūrā dropped from 60 percent in 1355-56 Š./1976-77 to 18 percent in 1359-60 Š./1980-81 (see [Table 37](#)).

Some established writers of children's books, for example, Ādar Yazdī, Aḥmad-Rezā Aḥmadī, Mošref Āzād Tehrānī, Sīrūs Ṭāhbāz, continued to work after the Revolution. The illustrators Kā'ef, Kalāntarī, and Metqālī continued to work for the Kānūn. Others included Īrānī, whose *Saktūn* had appeared during the Revolution (see above) and who also wrote *Fīl dar kāna-ye tārikī* (Tehran, 1366 Š./1987); Maḥmūd Golābdarrā'ī, who published *Ḥosayn āhanī* (Tehran, 1359 Š./1980) and *Esmā'īl*, *Esmā'īl* (Tehran, 1360 Š./1981); and Mūsawī Garmārūdī, author of *Ḳoftagān-e bīdār* (Tehran, 1365 Š./1984). The poets Raḥmāndūst and Ja'far Ebrāhīmī wrote stories on religion and war. Raḥmāndūst's *Esm-e man 'Alī-Ašgar ast* (Tehran, 1360 Š./1981), with illustrations by Asad-Allāh A'lā'ī, has sold more than 250,000 copies. Several recognized writers of adult literature also began to write for children after the Revolution.

A particularly significant development was the maturing of a new generation of writers and illustrators of children's books. In 1359 Š./1980 Jahānšāhī and Ḥasan Anwarī, who had many years' experience writing textbooks, published *Āyīn-e negāreš wa adabīyāt-e kūdakān wa now-javānān* (Rules for writing and the literature of children and young people; Tehran) as a guide for those new to the genre. Nāder Ebrāhīmī also published three books for professionals in



this field: *Moqaddama-ī bar fārsīnevīsī barā-ye kūdakān* (Introduction to writing Persian for children; Tehran, 1364 Š./1986), *Moqaddama-ī bar moṣawwar-sāzī-e ketāb-e kūdakān* (Tehran, 1367 Š./1988), and *Moqaddama-ī bar ārāyeš wa pīrāyeš-e ketābhā-ye kūdakān* (Tehran, 1368 Š./1989). Among the most accomplished members of the new generation are Hūšang Morādī, who writes stories based on the lives of villagers, for example, *Bačahā-ye-qālībāf-kāna* (Tehran, 1359 Š./1980), which was chosen book of the year by the Šūrā in 1359 Š./1980 and was awarded a certificate of distinction by the judges of the Hans Christian Andersen international prize in Copenhagen. Qāzī Rabīhāvī wrote stories about the war with Iraq, the best known being *Morād pā-ye kūrahā-ye janūb* (Tehran, 1358 Š./1979), *Naql o bārūt* (Tehran, 1359 Š./1980), and *Kāṭerāt-e yak sarbāz* (Tehran, 1360 Š./1981). Of the few plays rated suitable by the Šūrā since the revolution two are by Behrūz Ġarībpūr: *Kačal-e kaftarbāz* (Tehran, 1361 Š./1982), based on a story of the same title by Behrangī, and *Safar-e sabz dar sabz* (Tehran, 1363 Š./1984), apparently based on the pious legend of Ebrāhīm Adham, who gave up everything to search for his soul. Some of the new writers for children also published criticism based on religious and revolutionary ideology. For instance, the novelist Reżā Rahgoḍar wrote *Negāh-ī be adabiyāt-e kūdakān qabl wa ba'd az enqelāb* (2 vols.; Tehran, 1368 Š./1989), employing a more detailed and analytical method than that of Farroḡ Šādeqī. Another such work is *Soḡan-ī čand dar bāra-ye adabiyāt-e kūdakān wa now-javānān* (Tehran, 1360 Š./1981) by Maḥmūd Ḥakīmī.

Illustrators have also produced some distinguished work since the revolution. Between 1360 Š./1981 and 1368 Š./1989 ten children's books published by the Kānūn won awards for their illustrations in international competitions.

‘Alī-Akbar Šādeqī won first prize in Germany in 1360 Š./1981 for his design of *Farzand-e zamān-e k̄vīštan bāš* by Ġolām-Reżā Emāmī. Moḥammad-Reżā Dādgar received the golden plaque in Bologna in 1366 Š./1987 for his illustrations to *Yak ḥarf o do ḥarf* by Mošref Āzād Tehrānī (1365 Š./1986). Other young Persian illustrators include Parvīz Ḥaydarzāda, Abu'l-Faẓl Hemmatī Āhū'ī, Moḥammad-‘Alī Kešāvarz, Jamāl Korramī-nežād, Parvīz Maḥallātī, Hūšang Moḥammadiān, and K. Ṭālaqānī. In Ābān 1367 Š./November 1988 the Wezārat-e Farhang wa Eršād-e Eslāmī (Ministry of culture and Islamic guidance) held the first exhibition of works by Persian illustrators of children's books; eighty-six illustrators were represented by more than 700 paintings and drawings (*Rūyeš* 2, 15 Ābān 1368 Š./6 October 1989, p. 8).



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Compiled from information supplied by L. Ayman, M. Kīānūš, M. Şaṇ‘atī, and ‘A. Yamīnī-Şarīf.

Table 37. Classification of Children’s Books by Type, 1968-81.