

## Chyngyz Aitmatov's Works As a Soft Power Element of the Turkic World

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to elucidate the role of the works of Chyngyz Aitmatov, a prominent figure in the Turkic world and a writer-statesman, in intercultural communication. Despite numerous studies on Aitmatov's works in literature and folklore, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the role his works play in intercultural communication. In this context, Aitmatov's works will be examined in the framework of their reflection on the Turkic world, the manner in which they portray it, and the legacy they leave to the present day. The translations of Aitmatov's works are shown to effectively establish cultural bridges, particularly in introducing Turkic world culture and promoting cultural exchange on the global stage. The study aims to illustrate through quotes and examples from his works, the way these translations contribute to cultural diplomacy by fostering mutual understanding, justice, equality, dialogue, and human rights. By establishing connections between the disciplines of International Relations and Literature this study demonstrates that Aitmatov has a much broader impact worldwide than commonly assumed. The research positions his literary works as a significant element of soft power within the framework of public diplomacy. The study will be conducted by taking into account the importance of Aitmatov's works as a crucial element in public diplomacy within the broader scope of cultural diplomacy.

*Keywords:* Soft Power, Public Diplomacy, Cultural Diplomacy, Chyngyz Aitmatov, Literary Works

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## Introduction

Soft power is recognized as a vital component of public diplomacy, a communication strategy employed by governments to transmit their beliefs, values, institutions, culture, national objectives, and current policies to international audiences. This approach aids in the resolution of disputes, the alteration of perceptions and expectations, the facilitation of negotiations and conflict resolution, and the establishment of conducive environments for reconciliation among conflicting parties (Ünal, 2016a).

Soft power operates through various channels, including culture, language, education, media, and values. It relies on the attractiveness of a nation's political ideals, policies, and way of life, as well as its ability to effectively communicate and resonate with global audiences. Unlike hard power, which relies on coercion and force, soft power aims to build relationships, enhance a country's reputation, and influence the behavior of other nations by persuasion and inspiration.

Cultural exports, like literature, film, music, and art, play a significant role in projecting soft power. For example, the works of renowned authors, filmmakers, and artists can help convey a nation's values and identity to international audiences, fostering cross-cultural understanding and creating a positive image abroad.

In the realm of education, academic institutions, and scholarship, soft power is often promoted through educational exchange programs, scholarships for international students, and collaborative research initiatives. These initiatives not only facilitate the transfer of knowledge but also promote cultural understanding and build long-lasting relationships between countries.

The term public diplomacy was adopted by practitioners in the United States in the 1970s as an alternative to propaganda, which had negative connotations, and as an umbrella label for the U.S. government's international information, cultural relations, and broadcasting activities. Public diplomacy is the art of a nation interacting with foreign populations in order to advance its national interests and enhance its image and reputation. It encompasses the utilization of a variety of communication techniques and strategies to establish connections, encourage comprehension, and impact the opinions of the public in other countries. Public diplomacy seeks to mold the way foreign audiences perceive, think, and act through means like cultural exchanges, educational initiatives, media engagement, and other forms of interaction. It is frequently regarded as a soft power instrument, relying on attraction and persuasion rather than coercion. Public diplomacy can be employed to bolster a nation's diplomatic initiatives, form partnerships, and advocate for its values and policies on the global stage (Nye, 2008; Erzen 2012; Ünal, 2016a; Kömür, 2020).

Public diplomacy is a type of diplomacy based upon delivering messages to the target public (Caymaz, Büyüksağnak &, Özsoy, 2021). In this context public diplomacy is a strategy and practice of foreign policy aimed at strengthening relations between countries and peoples through information exchange, cultural exchanges, soft power, and people-to-people communication, as opposed to traditional government-to-government diplomacy.

Public diplomacy is a strategic communication and engagement process used by governments and international organizations to build and maintain positive relationships with foreign publics, inform and influence international opinions, and promote their national interests. It involves various activities such as cultural exchange programs, educational initiatives, media outreach, and digital communication channels to foster mutual understanding, create goodwill, and enhance a country's reputation on the global stage. Public diplomacy seeks to build bridges between nations, improve cross-cultural relations, and contribute to a more peaceful and interconnected world. It plays a vital role in shaping a country's image, furthering its foreign policy objectives, and fostering international cooperation.

Cultural diplomacy is a subset of public diplomacy that focuses on the exchange and promotion of a nation's culture, arts, and heritage to foster positive relationships and enhance its global reputation. It involves activities such as cultural exhibitions, artistic performances, language programs, and initiatives to share a country's cultural values and traditions. Cultural diplomacy aims to build bridges between nations, promote cross-cultural understanding, and create goodwill by highlighting the cultural richness and diversity of a country (Snow et al. 2009: 33). Like public diplomacy, cultural diplomacy plays a crucial role in shaping a country's image, advancing its foreign policy objectives, and contributing to international harmony and cooperation.

Cultural diplomacy plays a pivotal role in the modern globalized world, serving as a crucial aspect of public diplomacy and a significant element of a nation's soft power. By leveraging cultural assets such as art, music, education, and sports, countries aim to enhance their international image and foster mutual understanding. This approach allows nations to build stronger diplomatic ties and influence global audiences more subtly and effectively than traditional hard power tactics. As Ařlı Yağmurlu (2019) highlights, cultural diplomacy involves the presentation of a nation's cultural activities, both directly and indirectly controlled by the state, to improve its reputation and establish international relationships. The practice underscores the importance of shared cultural values and exchanges in promoting unity and collaboration on the global stage. Through cultural diplomacy, countries can project a positive image and influence abroad, enhancing their soft power and creating a favorable environment for political and economic collaborations. For the Turkic Republics, engaging in cultural diplomacy helps to reaffirm shared values and cultural bonds, promoting unity and collaboration in various spheres (Çınar & Uzun, 2023).

Representing a nation through literature is a crucial aspect of public diplomacy. Literature, including the works of writers like Chyngyz Aitmatov, can be a powerful tool for showcasing national culture, identity, and values on the world stage. Public diplomacy involves various channels and activities, such as cultural exchanges, media engagement, educational programs, and economic cooperation, to effectively communicate a country's values and ideals to foreign audiences (Ünal, 2016b). The importance of this lies in the following:

- *Cultural Exchange:* Literature allows countries to present their culture, history, and national spirit. Works of writers can shed light on unique aspects of national life and share them with the global community.
- *Bridge for Understanding:* Literature contributes to a better understanding and closer connection between different cultures and peoples. It enables readers in other countries to see the world through the author's eyes and better assimilate a foreign culture.
- *Dialogue and Cultural Exchange:* Literary works can serve as a basis for dialogue between different cultures. They can spark discussions, reflections, and the exchange of ideas, promoting stronger relationships between nations.
- *Shaping a Country's Image:* Writers can create an image of their country in the eyes of the global public. These images can influence how a country is perceived as a significant global player and its positioning in the world.

Through literature public diplomacy can achieve the goal of strengthening international relations and maintaining open dialogue between different cultures and peoples.

It is known that the talent of an artist or writer is measured, as it was said, in comparison with the talent of another writer or artist. Therefore, despite the surrounding creative atmosphere in which an artist works, absorbing everything inherent to humanity, even temporal boundaries do not become obstacles, as the great writers of all times and nations are connected to each other by invisible threads.

## Methodology

Qualitative research is a methodological approach that focuses on exploring and understanding the depth and complexity of human phenomena. It is often used to gain insights into people's behaviors, attitudes, perceptions, and experiences. Unlike quantitative research, which is numerical and statistical in nature, qualitative research is characterized by its subjective and interpretative nature (Teddle & Yu, 2007).

Qualitative research is particularly valuable when investigating social and cultural phenomena, exploring the meaning behind behaviors, and gaining a deeper understanding of subjective experiences. It is widely used in disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, education, and healthcare (Cropley, 2023; Hancock et al 2009.; Hennink et al. 2011).

This study adopts a qualitative research approach, focusing on the descriptive analysis of Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary works as a soft power element within the Turkic world. Qualitative methods are particularly apt for exploring the nuanced aspects of cultural influence and the subjective experiences of individuals. Through an in-depth examination of Aitmatov's writings, the research aims to uncover the underlying mechanisms through which his works resonate and contribute to the cultural cohesion of the Turkic community.

The descriptive analysis employed in this research involves a meticulous examination and interpretation of Aitmatov's narratives and themes. By delving into the content of his works, we aim to provide a nuanced understanding of how specific elements within his stories evoke shared cultural sentiments, moral values, and historical consciousness among the Turkic audience. This qualitative exploration allows us to uncover the subtle ways in which Aitmatov's writings act as a soft power catalyst, fostering a sense of unity and identity within the diverse tapestry of the Turkic world. Through descriptive analysis, this study seeks to unveil the cultural resonance embedded in Aitmatov's literary creations, shedding light on the intricate threads that bind his narratives to the collective consciousness of the Turkic community.

## Findings

### Universal themes in the literary works of Chyngyz Aitmatov

Chyngyz Aitmatov is known for addressing various universal themes in his literary works. Some of the main themes that are recurrent in Aitmatov's literary works include (Ukubaeva, 2018):

***Human Nature:*** Aitmatov often delves into the depths of human nature, exploring the complexities of human emotions, motivations, and the struggle between good and evil. His characters are deeply introspective, making his works resonate with readers on a personal level.

For example, in Aitmatov's novella "Jamila," the protagonist, Daniyar, reflects the depth of human emotions as he struggles with his feelings for Jamila, who is married to another man. This story beautifully portrays the intricacies of love, desire, and the human capacity for both self-sacrifice and moral dilemma (Logan, nd.).

In "The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years," (Aitmatov) Aitmatov delves into the human psyche through the character of Kamal. Kamal's internal struggles, memories, and emotions are vividly depicted as he contemplates the passage of time and the choices he has made in life. The novel offers a profound exploration of the human experience and the complexities of the human heart.

Aitmatov's characters often grapple with their inner demons, moral dilemmas, and the quest for goodness in a world marked by both beauty and cruelty. Through his storytelling, he invites readers to reflect on their own humanity and the universal struggles that define us all, making his works deeply relatable and thought-provoking.

***Tradition and Modernity:*** Aitmatov frequently juxtaposes traditional values and modern influences in his stories. He examines the clash between old and new ways of life, and the impact of this conflict on individuals and communities.

"The Place of the Skull" (Pittman, 1998) follows the story of a character named Abdias and his journey through various experiences and encounters. The narrative explores themes of survival, identity, and the human condition in a complex and challenging world.

The novel delves into the tension and interaction between tradition and modernity. It highlights the clash between traditional values and the changing world, as characters navigate the challenges and consequences of embracing or resisting modern influences. The struggle between these two forces shapes the characters' choices and actions, reflecting the broader societal shifts occurring during the time period in which the novel is set.

In Aitmatov's novel "Farewell, Gulsary!" (Mozur, 1982), the clash between traditional nomadic life and the encroachment of modernization is vividly depicted. The protagonist, Janyl, embodies the traditional values of his people, deeply connected to the nomadic way of life and its customs. As modernization and Soviet influence begin to transform their society, a conflict arises as these traditional values are challenged. Aitmatov's portrayal of the struggle between preserving age-old traditions and adapting to a rapidly changing world serves as a poignant reflection of this theme.

Similarly, in "The White Ship" (Malashenko 2012), Aitmatov presents a narrative that juxtaposes the traditional Kyrgyz lifestyle with the intrusions of Soviet collectivization and industrialization. The story follows the fate of an old shepherd, Syrgak, who is torn between his deep-rooted connection to the land and the allure of the industrial progress offered by the Soviet authorities. This novella reflects the tension between preserving traditional values and embracing the advancements of the modern era.

Aitmatov's exploration of the clash between tradition and modernity serves as a powerful commentary on the challenges faced by societies in transition. His characters grapple with the need to adapt to new ways while holding onto their cultural heritage, making his works a reflection of the broader changes and dilemmas faced by many communities in a rapidly changing world. This theme underscores the complexities of cultural identity and the impact of external influences on traditional lifestyles.

**Nature and Environment:** Nature is a significant element in Aitmatov's works. He frequently uses the natural world as a backdrop to his narratives, and his writing reflects a deep connection to the land, animals, and the environment. This theme highlights the importance of environmental preservation and the interdependence of humanity and nature.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's own literary works provide excellent examples of his emphasis on the connection between nature and humanity. Here are a few examples from Aitmatov's bibliography:

“The First Teacher” (Aitmatov). In this novella, Aitmatov explores the life of a young teacher, Duishon, who is sent to a remote Kyrgyz village. The story takes place against the backdrop of the beautiful Kyrgyz landscape, with its vast steppes and majestic mountains. The natural setting plays a significant role in the narrative, emphasizing the teacher's journey of personal growth and the transformative power of the environment.

“Mother's Field” (Aitmatov): This novel tells the story of a boy, Jusup, and his mother, who have a deep connection to the land they cultivate in the Kyrgyz countryside. The novel beautifully portrays the love and reverence for the land, highlighting the importance of traditional values and the bond between the characters and their natural surroundings.

“The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years” (Aitmatov): Aitmatov's novel features the vast and majestic Central Asian steppes as a central element of the story. The nomadic lifestyle and the enduring relationship between humans and the environment are explored in-depth. The novel reflects the harmony between nature and humanity and underscores the need for responsible environmental stewardship.

These examples from Aitmatov's own works demonstrate his profound appreciation for the natural world and its integral role in the lives of the characters. They underscore the themes of environmental preservation, cultural identity, and the interdependence of humanity and nature that are consistently woven into his literature.

**Cultural Identity:** Aitmatov's works often explore the concept of cultural identity, especially in the context of Central Asian culture. He reflects on the preservation of cultural heritage and the effects of globalization on cultural identity.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's exploration of cultural identity, particularly in the context of Central Asian culture, is a significant theme in his literary works. He delves into the preservation of cultural heritage and the effects of globalization on cultural identity, offering thought-provoking insights into the evolving dynamics of his region.

In Aitmatov's novella “Jamila,” (Aitmatov) the preservation of cultural identity is a central theme. The story is set in a Kyrgyz village during World War II, where the protagonist, Daniyar, experiences a cultural conflict as Soviet modernization and the war disrupt traditional Kyrgyz life. The character of Jamila embodies the values and cultural identity of the Kyrgyz people, and her role is symbolic of the importance of preserving cultural heritage in the face of external pressures.

**Social Justice and Equality:** Chyngyz Aitmatov's works regularly address issues of social justice and equality, and his novels and novellas often deal with the rights and dignity of people, especially those who are marginalized or oppressed. Here are some examples from his works:

“Jamila”: In this novel, Aitmatov addresses the theme of social justice by depicting the situation of women in a Kyrgyz village during World War II. Protagonist Daniyar reflects on the limited rights and opportunities of women and becomes an advocate for change. The portrait of women and the struggle for gender equality are important aspects of the story.

“Farewell, Gulsary!”: This novella explores social justice through the lens of the Kyrgyz nomadic way of life. It highlights the struggles of ordinary people as they confront the changes imposed by Soviet policies, which often lead to economic disparities and injustices. The story underscores the importance of addressing social and economic inequalities.

**Love and Relationships:** Love, in its various forms, is a central theme in Aitmatov's writings. He explores romantic love, familial bonds, and the intricacies of human relationships, often using them as a means to reflect on broader societal issues.

“The Red Apple” (Aitmatov) is a story by Chyngyz Aitmatov, in which the author explores not only the theme of love, but also complex socio-cultural and moral aspects of human relationships.

“The Red Apple” reflects the complexities and multifaceted aspects of human relationships and love presented in the context of rural life and traditional values, making it a work that inspires reflection on moral aspects and human nature.

**Political and Social Commentary:** Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary works are known for their subtle yet powerful political and social commentary. Through allegory and symbolism, he skillfully critiques and reflects on the socio-political conditions of his time, offering readers a nuanced perspective on various issues. Here are a few aspects of his works that highlight this characteristic:

*Historical Context:* Aitmatov's works are often set against the backdrop of significant historical events, such as the Soviet era and the cultural and political changes in Central Asia. By weaving his narratives into the historical fabric, he provides a lens through which readers can analyze and reflect on the political and social dynamics of the time.

*Allegorical Elements:* Aitmatov frequently employs allegorical elements to convey deeper meanings. Characters and events in his stories often represent broader societal issues and political ideologies. This technique allows him to address sensitive topics with a degree of abstraction, providing readers with a space for contemplation and interpretation.

*Cultural Critique:* The preservation of cultural identity and the clash between tradition and modernity are recurrent themes in Aitmatov's works. Through his characters and plots, he comments on the impact of political ideologies on traditional ways of life, emphasizing the importance of cultural heritage in the face of external pressures.

*Humanism and Social Justice:* Aitmatov's works often advocate for humanism and social justice. He explores the struggles of individuals against oppressive systems and highlights the importance of compassion and understanding. These themes serve as a subtle commentary on the need for societal change and a more equitable world.

*Environmental Concerns:* Aitmatov's deep connection to nature is not only a thematic element but also a commentary on environmental issues. The depiction of the natural world in his works can be seen as a reflection of the consequences of human actions on the environment, subtly urging readers to consider the ecological impact of political decisions.

In summary, Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary legacy is marked by his ability to infuse political and social commentary into his works without sacrificing the richness of storytelling. Through allegory, symbolism, and a deep understanding of his cultural and historical context, he engages readers in thought-provoking reflections on the complexities of the human experience within the broader socio-political landscape.

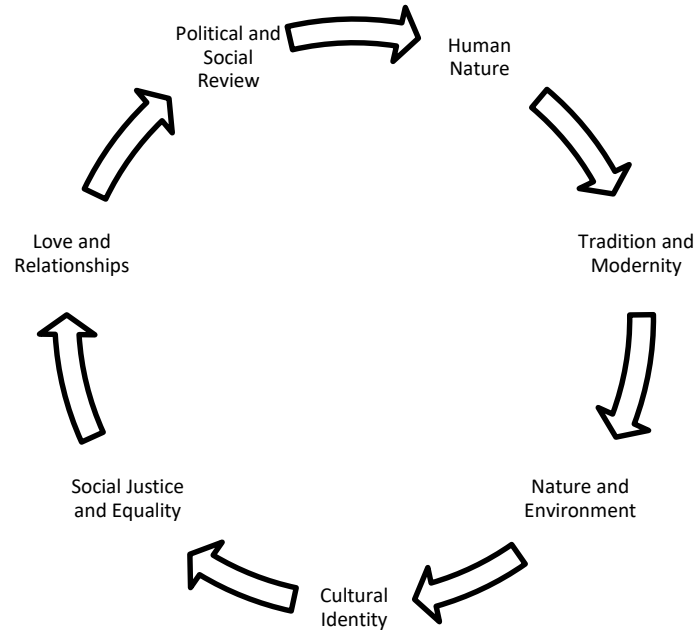


Figure 1. *Universal themes in the literary works of Chyngyz Aitmatov*

Overall, Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary works offer readers profound insights into the human experience, cultural heritage, and the pressing issues of the modern world. His stories are not only beautifully written but also carry enduring messages that resonate with a global audience.

### Translation of Aitmatov's Literary Works

The translation of literature and its popularity across the world has played a significant role in public diplomacy, fostering cultural exchange and understanding. Here are a few examples of works by authors that were translated into various languages and achieved global popularity, enhancing cultural diplomacy in the process:

When studying any culture, it is always possible to identify a group of items, concepts, and designations that are unique and inherent only to that specific linguistic-cultural community. In the context of cultural diplomacy, such lexicon can play a crucial role in conveying the distinctive cultural nuances.

In recent times, due to the increasing frequency of cross-cultural communication, more emphasis is placed on cultural factors in translation studies. Consequently, in the early 1990s, translation studies transitioned towards a more culturally oriented field.

Translation theorists adopted the style of cultural studies and incorporated social, political, and cultural factors outside of the literary system into translation studies. They firmly argue that translation is not something that occurs in a vacuum and that translation issues cannot be resolved solely through linguistic means. Besides linguistic factors, translation is also influenced and manipulated by political factors. In this sense, translation is considered a form of political action equipped with cultural tendencies such as ideology, poetics, and patronage, serving political purposes as well (Lefevere 1992, 51). Since then, an increasing number of people have started to examine the interaction between politics and translation, and research in this area has grown.

In the exchange of cultures between countries, cultural soft power, which is an integral part of comprehensive national power, plays a crucial role in determining a country's cultural transmission power. Therefore, this article aims to demonstrate the presence of the political term "cultural soft power" in translations by analyzing the popularity of Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary works.

In the field of translation studies, scholars' traditional understanding of translation has evolved alongside the popularity and recent successful development of cultural studies. Translation is no longer seen merely as an activity between languages but fundamentally as intercultural communication. Wilss takes a significant step in this regard. His definition of translation takes into account the social context in which translation is seen as a form of communicative behavior. He believes that translation is the manifestation of

a dynamic interaction among the source text author, source text, translator, target text, the reader of the target text, and finally, the social context in which the translator operates. From this perspective, translation is an activity with a purposeful and social dimension, one that establishes connections between a source language community and a target language community, requiring a specific type of communicative behavior (Wilss 1996, 166). Mary Snell-Hornby, in her work “Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach” (Snell-Hornby, 1998: 81), defines translation as an interaction between two cultures rather than a mere activity between two languages.

Cultural transmission power is an integral part of a country's comprehensive national power in the modern society, as it plays a special role in sustaining, enhancing, and achieving national interests. A nation's cultural soft power will determine its cultural transmission power in intercultural communication. Therefore, translation as a means of cultural dissemination is inevitably influenced and constrained by cultural soft power.

Among the findings, it is paramount to emphasize the translations of Aitmatov's works since, without the translation of his literary works into over 150 languages worldwide, only a limited number of people would be aware of this prolific author. After examining encyclopedic sources, the number of translations into other languages has been calculated. Aitmatov's most frequently translated work is the story “Jamila,” which has been lauded by French author Louis Aragon as “the world's greatest love story.” J. Darl also described it as “Camila, a work that evokes the grandeur of love in our time, excites and astonishes with all its innovations, and accurately and aptly portrays a level of artistry” (Akmataliev 1988, 28-31).

When ranking the works based on the number of translations, there are 34 works translated into Russian, 26 into Turkish, 19 into English, 17 into German, 13 into French, 12 into Greek, and 7 into Arabic. Aitmatov's works have been incorporated into the curricula of schools and higher education institutions in many countries, translated into more than 180 foreign languages, and published abroad with a total circulation exceeding 60 million copies. His status as the most translated author is not a coincidence. Hence, it is unsurprising that mentioning a country where this author's name is not recognized has become challenging. Today, Aitmatov is the world's most widely read author (Bakashova et al. 2019, 205).

**Table 1.** *Number of different works of Chyngyz Aitmatov translated into different languages*

Languages	Number of various translated works
Russian	34
Turkish	26
English	19
German	17
French	13
Greek	12
Arabic	7
Other languages	1-6

According to UNESCO, Aitmatov's works rank highly in terms of worldwide publications and translations. His works have been translated into 180 languages worldwide and have been published with a total circulation of more than 60 million copies (Akmataliev 2018, 167).

According to Ch. Aitmatov, the main principle of translation is “to feel not only the dictionary and idioms but, above all, a word's moral and psychological atmosphere, the 'why' and 'how' it was born, so to speak” (Akmataliyev 2018, 291).

P. Frugier, the French translator and literary representative of C. Aitmatov in Paris, shares his thoughts on the importance of the author's works for world culture. He believes that “Chyngyz Aitmatov is Kyrgyzstan's finest gift to the world.” The author explores the eternal problems of literature and shows how these eternal problems are reflected in our modernity (Bakashova et al. 2019, 371).

The introduction of Chyngyz Aitmatov's works to the world began in April 1959 when the outstanding work "Jamila" was published in Paris. It initiated a triumphant journey across European countries and worldwide. The first translator of "Jamila," Louis Aragon, wrote an enthusiastic article about it, dubbing it “the world's most beautiful love story.”

According to data obtained from the well-known Amazon online store website (www.amazon.com, visit date: June 14, 2023), Aitmatov's 257 translations are currently available for sale in various languages



around the world. This indicates that the sales of translated works have continued to date, and an increasing number of people and generations are gaining knowledge about the author by purchasing e-books.

The translation of literary works offers a new perspective for conducting research in the realm of international politics. Through this perspective, translation scholars can explore the interaction between translation and cultural soft power. The impacts and constraints of cultural soft power on translation, as well as the comprehensive national power that encompasses cultural soft power, serve as the foundation and supporting force of translation. Furthermore, translation is necessary to enhance cultural soft power because in today's world, translation has penetrated into most countries and plays a crucial role in promoting the development of politics, economics, culture, science, technology, and trade.

Chyngyz Aitmatov, the celebrated Kyrgyz writer, deserves to be mentioned in the context of globally renowned authors whose works have been translated and have contributed to public diplomacy (Gachev et al., 1989: 114). Aitmatov's literary contributions include:

Chyngyz Aitmatov's "Jamila" (1958) (Aitmatov) This novella, originally written in Kyrgyz, has been translated into numerous languages and captivated readers worldwide. "Jamila" is not only a love story but also a portrayal of the Kyrgyz people and their culture, making it an essential work of Kyrgyz literature that has promoted cultural understanding.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's "The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years" (1980) (Aitmatov). Translated into many languages, this novel explores themes of tradition and change in the context of Central Asian culture. It has given readers across the globe an opportunity to gain insights into the complex history and dynamics of the region.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's novels have not only been popular but also have represented cultural diplomacy, showcasing the rich heritage of Turkic people. Here are a couple of his popular novels that have played a significant role in promoting Turkic culture:

Chyngyz Aitmatov's "The White Ship" (1970) (Aitmatov): Originally written in Kyrgyz as "Ak Keme", this novel has been translated into many languages and has been influential in promoting Kyrgyz culture and heritage. It tells the story of a white steamship as a symbol of progress and change in a traditional Kyrgyz village. Through this narrative, Aitmatov explores the clash between tradition and modernity, a theme that resonates not only in Kyrgyzstan but also across Turkic-speaking countries and beyond.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's "The First Teacher" (1962): Although this novella is set in the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic and not Kyrgyzstan, it's an example of Aitmatov's ability to portray the lives and cultures of Turkic-speaking peoples. "The First Teacher" has been translated into multiple languages and addresses the issues of education, transformation, and the clash between different worldviews. It serves as a window into the world of Central Asian Turkic cultures.

These novels by Chyngyz Aitmatov not only resonate with Turkic people but also provide valuable insights into their traditions, values, and struggles. They serve as cultural ambassadors, fostering a deeper understanding of Turkic heritage and promoting diplomacy among Turkic-speaking nations and the global community.

It may seem that the generations preceding Aitmatov have covered all themes, and it appears that all artistic methods and ways of reflecting the world have already been exhausted. However, Aitmatov, addressing the same problems and themes and using largely the same artistic methods, reevaluated and substantially expanded the "continents" of literature opened by the classics. In the context of universal aesthetic culture, this expansion imprints its mark on his works, propelling him forward as a flagbearer of profound progressive thought. This is primarily what constitutes the novelty of Aitmatov's creations

In Aitmatov's prose, the fundamental problems of humanity are brought to the forefront in a new light. It celebrates the greatness of Man, the benevolence of Nature, and the eternity of Life. The writer's works depict reality and everyday life in which our existence unfolds, but through them shines the perfection of life that we aspire to but may not reach today or tomorrow. This path is challenging, and the artist realistically describes it in its simplicity and complexity, tracing different facets and layers of life in their contradictions and dialectical interrelation: soullessness and morality, sorrow and joy, defeat and victory, bitter tears and happy smiles, cunning and honesty. The main focus is not on the endings of the works, whether tragic or happy; the main focus is that the artist makes readers empathize with and sympathize with

the characters of the work, thereby placing a kind of responsibility on them for everything that happens on Earth.

Incorporating the traditions of artistic creativity from both Europe and Asia, Aitmatov, in a way, personifies the history, culture, and traditions of the Kyrgyz people, integrating them into the global societal process and serving as a bridge connecting Kyrgyzstan with the world.

Writers, literary scholars, and critics rightly note that Aitmatov's work became a genuine example of craftsmanship and made a significant contribution to the development of Soviet multi-ethnic literature, especially in the aspect of interliterary interaction and mutual enrichment.

Aitmatov opened up new possibilities for psychological analysis in literature. By delving into the inner world of his characters, he skillfully used expressive detail that combined imagery with deep psychological characterizations (Yilmaz, 2021: 18). The psychology of his characters is revealed in all its complexity. The psychology of the individual is an artistic discovery of Chyngyz Aitmatov. His artistic vision encompasses the entire world of a person.

Aitmatov's concept of the relationship between humans and nature expands the boundaries of the inner world of the human soul. Nature, in his works, plays the role of a unique criterion for evaluating human life. Descriptions of landscapes contribute to the author's ideas, expressed directly and openly.

Aitmatov teaches us to keenly sense the aesthetics of facts, perceive the details of real life within the context of a broader philosophy, and elevate events from the mundane to the social sphere. His aesthetics represent a unique system of concepts about the nature and social purpose of art, about the artistic skill and sincerity of the writer, about the various aspects of the content and form of works of art.

The humanity present in Aitmatov's works defines their artistic qualities. Through the pages of his books, a person appears in all their diversity, united with their nation, nature, and homeland, which warm them and help fulfill the difficult human duty to life and to other people. By depicting the person in all their endless variety, the writer understands the individuality of a human being as part of nature.

In all his works, even when describing natural phenomena or the world of animals, there is clearly present the philosophical content mentioned above, making his works relevant and significant on a global scale.

Aitmatov's creative work has a universal impact, and for any writer, it becomes a kind of artistic necessity, stimulating the creation of original artistic generalizations and new ideational-aesthetic values.

In his latest novel, Chyngyz Aitmatov takes the profound ideological concept of "Do Not Kill!" and places it at the forefront of the narrative. Through the lens of this eternal question, Aitmatov skillfully weaves together the views and relationships of people from different generations and nationalities across time and space. His storytelling is imbued with profound psychological insight, sharp drama, and a profound sense of humanism. This novel, with its universal message of peace and non-violence, has the potential to become a powerful tool of cultural diplomacy.

Aitmatov's work, by addressing the timeless theme of not taking life, transcends borders and languages. It has the capacity to resonate with readers from diverse backgrounds, transcending cultural and geographical boundaries. As it gains popularity and acclaim, this novel becomes a cultural bridge, fostering mutual understanding and empathy among people of various nations. It can serve as a testament to the shared values of humanity, promoting peaceful coexistence and dialogue on a global scale.

In the realm of cultural diplomacy, literature has a unique power to convey the essence of a culture and its people. Aitmatov's latest novel, with its exploration of the fundamental principle of non-violence, has the potential to spark conversations and reflections on the importance of peace and tolerance. As readers around the world embrace this work, it contributes to the cultural exchange that lies at the heart of diplomacy, promoting a more peaceful and interconnected world.

Chyngyz Aitmatov enriched world literature with his broad, global, and philosophical views, addressing eternal questions of human destiny and society and embodying them in large-scale artistic images.

The peculiarity of Chyngyz Aitmatov's worldview lies in the uniqueness of the artistic consciousness of the Kyrgyz writer who combines features of both Eastern and European thinking. Aitmatov's prose allows us to understand another person, penetrate into their inner world, accept that a representative of

another nation may see the world slightly differently than “I” do; and at the same time, grasp what unites different peoples and continents, approach philosophical, universal human issues (Demchenko, 2014).

Authorial translations of Aitmatov's works served as a tool of cultural diplomacy among Turkic peoples who were part of the USSR and were familiar with the Russian language. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 the Turkic Republics gained their independence. To maintain their independence and enhance their strength, these states with shared histories and origins needed to establish strong cooperation in military, diplomatic, economic, security, and political areas (Erkan & Nergiz, 2024: 1005). In discussing the translation of Aitmatov's works, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of authorial translations and the way Aitmatov masterfully conveyed the essence of the original text in the native language.

Aitmatov's authorial translations not only bridged the linguistic gap but also preserved the cultural nuances and artistic depth of his original works (Apyshev, 2010: 97). These translations played a vital role in sharing the rich literary heritage of the Turkic peoples within the Soviet Union fostering understanding and appreciation among readers who were fluent in Russian. Through his skillful translations Aitmatov ensured that the beauty and profound messages of his works were faithfully transmitted to a wider audience.

In essence, Aitmatov's authorial translations were a testament to his commitment to cultural diplomacy and his desire to strengthen the bonds between Turkic-speaking nations, all while upholding the integrity of his literary creations.

It is widely known that Chyngyz Aitmatov, as a writer with a special gift for bilingualism, created works initially in his native Kyrgyz language and gave them a secondary life in Russian. He had a unique ability to preserve the stylistic and expressive features of both languages when shifting from one cultural code to another.

Aitmatov's mastery of bilingualism allowed him to bridge the gap between Kyrgyz and Russian literary traditions. He skillfully retained the nuances, cultural references, and linguistic richness of each language in his works. This bilingual approach not only expanded his audience to both Kyrgyz and Russian readers but also enriched the depth and authenticity of his storytelling.

Aitmatov's ability to seamlessly switch between languages while maintaining the essence of his narratives is a testament to his exceptional talent as a writer and his deep understanding of the nuances of both Kyrgyz and Russian cultures. His works serve as a remarkable example of how language can be a powerful tool for cultural expression and communication.

Chyngyz Aitmatov personally translated his own works into Russian. He was a bilingual writer who was fluent in both Kyrgyz and Russian languages at a high level, which allowed him to independently translate his Kyrgyz works into Russian. His translations were done with special attention to maintaining the style and cultural nuances, preserving the authenticity and beauty of his works in both languages.

Aitmatov's books have been translated into 180 languages and published in 128 countries with more than 100 million copies. For example, the writer's short story “Jamiyla” has been translated into dozens of languages. In German alone, this story has been reprinted 37 times (Kabar.kg).

B. E. Darbanov, in his article “Some Features of the Perception of Ch. Aitmatov's Works of Art in Russia and Abroad” writes that Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary journey in France commenced in 1959. French critics perceived him as a symbol of the remarkable cultural resurgence among the Kyrgyz people within the context of developed socialism, characterized by a unique fusion of profound modernity and the finest traditions of the past. Aitmatov's prose was lauded for its deep humanism, ethical reflections, poetic essence, and the diverse narrative palette (Darbanov 2014, 142-143).

In Italy, the publication of Chyngyz Aitmatov's stories in 1961 and 1973 evoked considerable attention within the press. Italian critics incorporated the analysis of Aitmatov's oeuvre into the wider discourse of cultural ties with socialist nations. The communist press in Italy regarded Aitmatov as one of the preeminent contemporary Soviet authors, with Andriano Guerra underlining the writer's profound sense of responsibility for the destinies of future generations as a central motif in his literary works.

In the early 1970's Chyngyz Aitmatov's writings gained recognition in the English-speaking world, particularly in London. This period witnessed a growing interest in Aitmatov's work and an acknowledgment of his literary talent. However, it was also marked by a politically charged analysis of his works.

The publishing house "Hodder and Stoughton" published English translations of "Farewell, Gulsary!" and "The White Ship," skillfully rendered by French and Feifer. The "Morning Star" newspaper introduced him as a significant literary figure to English readers, with critics such as M. Blumberg praising the philosophical depth and poetic qualities of his writing.

In the United States, Aitmatov's "Tales of Mountains and Steppes," "Jamila," and "The White Ship" were translated during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Notably, the "Crown" publishing house, while producing a large print run of "The White Ship," included a preface critical of socialist realism in literature, leading to a backlash from progressive American critics. On a positive note, R. Kiffer warmly celebrated Aitmatov's literary achievements, drawing parallels between scenes from "Farewell, Gulsary!" and the finest excerpts from Greek and French epic poems.

Facilitating mutual understanding, the first Soviet-American writers' meeting in Moscow in 1978, initiated by the "Saturday Review" and "Foreign Literature" journals, emphasized Aitmatov's significant role in the global literary landscape. It highlighted the fusion of both national and international elements in his works and his profound sense of responsibility for the world's destiny, underscoring his inherent humanity.

Prominent Kyrgyz literary scholar A. Akmatolieva offers a detailed analysis of the translations of the writer's works in her article "Ch. Aitmatov's Works in Foreign Languages (Akmatoliev A. 4; Akmatoliev 4). It is worth noting that Chyngyz Aitmatov's works reached a wide, comprehensive, and complete audience, capturing the world through his literary mastery.

Indeed, Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary works have transcended national boundaries and have become part of world literature. The study of the translation of Aitmatov's stories and novels into foreign languages remains an open and fascinating area of research that holds great interest for both the theory and practice of translation. Aitmatov's unique blend of storytelling, rich cultural themes, and universal human values makes his works a valuable contribution to global literature, and the challenges and nuances of translating his works into various languages continue to be a subject of scholarly exploration and cultural exchange (Duishembieva 2018, 19).

The Turkic ethno-cultural vocabulary in the works of the famous Kyrgyz writer Chyngyz Aitmatov is a representation of the national culture intrinsic to this ethnic community. In his novel "The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years", the word "mankurt" takes center stage with its national and ethnic connotations. Aitmatov's portrayal of the mankurt image in this novel was so convincing that it not only ingrained itself in the collective consciousness but also found roots in other languages. The identification and explanation of the linguistic, historical, and ethnographic facts associated with the use of the term "mankurt" in literary texts are crucial for understanding the content, ideological significance, and artistic originality of the work.

The translation of Aitmatov's works into other languages can indeed be viewed as a form of public diplomacy aimed at introducing Turkic peoples, especially the Kyrgyz people, to the world while incorporating new concepts.

These translations play a role beyond literature. They offer an opportunity to share the cultural values and worldviews of the Kyrgyz people and, in a broader sense, Turkic peoples. At the same time, these translations of Aitmatov's works, enriched with new concepts and intellectual depth, become an important tool of public diplomacy.

These translations enable the rich concepts and symbols in Aitmatov's works to be conveyed to an international readership accurately. For instance, the term "mankurt" is a concept deeply rooted in Kyrgyz culture, and translating such terms correctly can help international readers understand these cultural elements. This, in turn, is a way to share the cultural diversity and richness of Turkic peoples with a broader audience.

Furthermore, Aitmatov's works address universal themes such as human rights, environmental protection, and social justice. These themes can be used to draw attention to issues that people worldwide face and provide a platform for international cooperation. Therefore, translations of Aitmatov's works can also be seen as a tool for addressing significant global issues.

Translating Aitmatov's works into other languages serves not only a literary purpose but also functions as a cultural bridge. These translations contribute to public diplomacy by introducing the cultural heritage

of Turkic peoples, facilitating discussions on universal issues, and providing a platform for international cooperation.

## Conclusion

The main themes explored in Chyngyz Aitmatov's works are indeed intertwined with cultural diplomacy and play a significant role in intercultural communication. Aitmatov's writings often delve into universal themes that transcend cultural boundaries, making them effective tools for cultural diplomacy and fostering cross-cultural understanding. Here are some of the key themes and their connection to cultural diplomacy:

**Humanism and Universal Values:** Aitmatov's works often emphasize the importance of universal human values such as love, compassion, and understanding. These themes resonate with readers from different cultural backgrounds and serve as a common ground for dialogue and empathy.

**Cultural Heritage and Identity:** Aitmatov's exploration of cultural heritage and identity, especially in the context of Central Asia, sheds light on the richness of diverse cultures. His writings help outsiders gain a deeper appreciation for the cultural nuances of the region.

**Environmental Concerns:** Aitmatov's environmental themes, like those in "The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years," have global relevance. They highlight the interconnectedness of environmental issues and the need for international cooperation to address them.

**Historical Reflection:** Some of Aitmatov's works, like "Jamila," are set against the backdrop of historical events. They provide insights into the history and experiences of Central Asian peoples contributing to a better understanding of the region's history and its place in the world.

**Peace and Conflict Resolution:** Aitmatov's works often advocate for peace and reconciliation advocating for dialogue over conflict. These themes align with the goals of cultural diplomacy in promoting peaceful relations between nations.

**Translation and Cross-Cultural Exchange:** The translation of Aitmatov's works into multiple languages facilitates cross-cultural communication. It allows readers worldwide to access his stories, fostering a sense of connection and shared human experiences.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's works address universal themes that resonate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. They serve as bridges between cultures, promoting intercultural dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. Through his literary contributions Aitmatov has played a significant role in cultural diplomacy and the promotion of global harmony.

In the context of cultural diplomacy, Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary works take center stage, addressing essential themes that transcend cultural boundaries. Aitmatov's storytelling traverses universal human experiences, making his writings invaluable tools for fostering intercultural communication and understanding.

Chyngyz Aitmatov stands out as a prominent figure in Turkish literature demonstrating his role as a cultural diplomacy actor for the Turkic world through his literary works. Aitmatov's contributions extend beyond the realm of literature exerting a significant influence not only on the literary scene but also on the cultural diplomacy of the Turkic world. His works possess not only literary value but also a profound commitment to Turkish culture, history, and human relationships.

One of Aitmatov's most renowned works, "The Day Lasts More Than a Hundred Years", serves as a masterpiece that delves into the challenges faced by the Kyrgyz people, societal transformations, and interpersonal relationships. This novel not only explores the intricacies of Kyrgyzstan but also resonates with the depths of Turkish culture, simultaneously touching upon universal themes such as human rights, justice, love, and tolerance. Aitmatov skillfully intertwines these universal themes with the rich culture of the Turkic world.

Aitmatov's works serve as a crucial source for understanding the history, culture, and human connections within the Turkic world. His literary creations contribute to a shared understanding of the common past, values, and cultural ties among Turkic peoples. This aspect positions Aitmatov as an actor in the cultural diplomacy of the Turkic world.

The author's works not only facilitate an understanding of the shared history among Turkish people but also build bridges with other cultures. Aitmatov promotes understanding and tolerance between different cultures in his works, thereby making a positive contribution to cultural diplomacy.

Chyngyz Aitmatov's literary works transcend being mere literary masterpieces; they serve as essential sources for comprehending the cultural richness, history, and human relationships within the Turkic world. Consequently, Aitmatov can be acknowledged as a writer who plays a crucial role in the cultural diplomacy of the Turkic world.

### Ethical Declaration

During the writing process of the study “*Chyngyz Aitmatov's Works as a Soft Power Element of the Turkic World*” scientific rules, ethical and citation rules were followed. No falsification was made on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic publication medium for evaluation.

### Statement of Contribution Rate of Researchers

The contribution rates of the authors in the study are equal.

### Declaration of Conflict

There is no potential conflict of interest in the study.

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