

Re: Armenian, Sumerian, Burushaski, and Turkic languages

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- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sat, 09 Jun 2007 17:09:20 -0700
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On Jun 9, 5:51 pm, Trond Engen <trond...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote:

Paul J Kriha skreiv:

Trond Engen <trond...@xxxxxxxxxxxxx> wrote in message
[news:466aad4f\\$0\\$15294\\$8404b019@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx](mailto:news:466aad4f$0$15294$8404b019@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx)

Trond Engen
– sort of a blank character, himself

Is that a valued attribute in .no rather than being a colourful character? :-)

Nah, I meant it in the "lack of personality" sense. But thinking of it, maybe it really is a Norwegian thing. The idiomatic metaphor 'ubeskrevet blad', lit. "blank paper", is used for someone unexperienced yet promising — the brave choice for the post of environmental minister, defensive midfielder, or lead role in an expensive movie.

In English, "blank slate" — hence the title of Steven Pinker's rather notorious book on the human mind.

Another idiom with the same literal meaning, 'blanke ark', is used for a new start, from the simple dream of a better tomorrow to the optimism of someone just escaping a disaster. Turning OT for illustration, there's a song, written and sung in (modified) Hedmark dialect by Alf Prøysen (1914–70) and printed into the heart of every Norwegian:

DU SKAL FÅ EN DAG I MÅRÅ

Re: Armenian, Sumerian, Burushaski, and Turkic languages

Det var en liten gutt som gikk og græt og var så lei,
hæin skulle tegne Babylon, men lærer'n hæin sa nei.
Hæin ød'la hele arket, hæin var tufsete og dum,
men så hørte hæin et sus som over furukrona kom:
Du skal få en dag i mårå som rein og ubrukt står
med blanke ark og fargestifter tel.
Da kan du rette oppat æille feil ifrå i går
og da får du det så godt i mårå kvæll.

My translation for the occation:

There was a little boy who went from school and was so sad,
he had been drawing Babel and the teacher had been bad.
It was a waist of paper, he's a failure and a fool,
now the wind between the pine trees comes with comfort and with cool:
You'll have a day tomorrow, it's waiting white and clean
with empty sheets and coloured crayons, too.
You can do it all again without the blunders that have been,
and tomorrow night the moon will shine for you.

(and two more verses making it the history of life in general)

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Trond Engen

– providing culture for the masses on sci.lang