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Efforts to Modernize Chapbooks during the Initial Years of the Turkish Republic

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ABSTRACT

Chapbook reform was part and parcel of larger projects of folk culture reform in Europe between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Political powers excised content perceived as dangerous and substituted material reflecting their own principles and aims. This article examines the reflections of this process in Turkey. The modernization of chapbooks was carried out by the Turkish political authorities as a state project only in 1937. That project included the transformation of traditional heroes and events in these chapbooks to place them in line with the Republican revolution and the state ideology of modernity.

KEY WORDS: chapbooks, folk culture, lithography, modernization, reform

Introduction

Peter Burke defines what was known in the Victorian age as ‘folk culture reform’ as the systematic attempts of literate elites to change the ways of thinking and values of the illiterate, as well as effect their refinement.¹ The intention was to infuse folk culture with the ‘divine collection’ of Luther, in order to keep the young generation away from love songs and poems that were full of lust and to teach them significant values. The attempts to purge what were seen as the negative facets of traditional folk culture predominantly involved repression and surveillance. Many of these reforms, carried out in the arena of traditional folk culture in Europe, were implemented by the 1650s, although the effects did not reach those who lived in rural areas nor did the reforms impact on those who spoke minority languages.² By the beginning of the 1800s, however, these reforms in folk culture began to have an influence on those living at a distance from major urban centres.³

The revision, renewal and replacement of chapbooks – one aspect of folk culture reform – and the distribution of these books among members of all levels of society was common practice by the beginning of the nineteenth century. In this era textuality,

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exemplified by journalistic writing and book printing, began to take precedence over oral cultural traditions. As a result of the introduction of printing in the mid-fifteenth century and increased press production at the beginning of the seventeenth century, a written cultural tradition was gradually internalized by society.⁴

Yet, the Ottoman Empire was maintaining an oral cultural tradition. Ashiks and *meddahlar* (story-tellers), the bearers of oral culture, relayed traditional tales and epics to the populace via public performances.⁵

This article reflects on state policy regarding chapbooks conducted within the larger project of folk culture reform following the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. Was there a similarity between the difficulties encountered with chapbook reform in the European context and those met with in Turkey? If there were attempts to reform and modernize chapbooks, when did it begin, what were the methods employed and what was the outcome? How did intellectuals react to the modernization of chapbooks? This article will try to reveal, define and describe the developments in Turkey regarding chapbook reform, which had a longer history in Europe, by starting off with an examination of the characteristics of Ottoman and Turkish chapbooks and then analysing the modernizing efforts exerted over them in the context of the Turkish Republic.

Characteristics of Chapbooks

Chapbooks contain epics and folk romances, and they can be categorized in two ways: those that incorporate true events, and those that are purely fictional. It is traditionally accepted that the ashiks in some chapbooks were real characters who had lived in the real world. However, it is not known if some heroes were merely fictional.¹ In the period prior to 1945 – the main area of focus in this study – there were 56 folk romance chapbooks, 13 of which were handwritten manuscripts (the printed editions of these 13 copies still exist).⁷ In addition, there were 33 books printed on the subject of folk romance.⁸ While some chapbooks involving folk romance such as *Leyla and Mecnun* and *Ferhat and Şirin* are found in the curricula of non-Arabic classical literature, those that evolved within the framework of folk poets' lives bear the names of *Aşık Kerem* and *Aşık Garip*. The origins of some chapbooks on folk romance such as *Tahir and Zühre* and *Şah İsmail* are, however, unknown.⁹

Heroism-themed chapbooks can be grouped into two categories: Muslim popular epics and *Köroğlu*. While the theme of love is discussed in these books, the key themes are bravery, heroism and occasionally religion in Muslim popular epics, of which there were 12.¹⁰ The epic book *Köroğlu* relates the adventures of that eponymous character, relating his rebellion against Bolu Beg, his protection of the poor and his stealing from the rich to share with the poor.

As folklorist Fikret Türkmen argues, nearly all of the published manuscripts of chapbooks are composed of folk romance.¹¹ A classification made by the Ministry

of Internal Affairs in 1937 showed that there were 70 entries under the heading of chapbooks.¹² By 1945 this number had reached 77, two of which were published by the Directorate General of Press, an institution linked to the reigning political power, an issue which will be further discussed in the following pages.¹³

Chapbooks are anonymous. As a result, as Otto Spies claimed, the language used in these stories is simple and plain:

The language of chapbooks is of a 'crude dialect', that is, the language of an ill-mannered, coarse, hapless man, the people of a lower class. As is known, the difference between the spoken language and written language was not as great anywhere else than with the Turks, where classical literature was the property of intellectuals. The language of the ordinary people, above all, can be found in folk culture. The story-teller's language in chapbooks is simple and plain, absolutely primitive for those immersed in literary culture. The narration is totally unassertive, plain and told in few words. The story flows free from the grammatical requirements of language and the grammatical structures employed were quite simple, light and elementary; such structures were, however, quite artificial in nature.¹⁴

The topics of these stories are quite fixed and they resemble one another. The narration consists of classic themes: adventures that begin with the birth of two lovers and continue until the time they get married, until they attain their desires, or until the day they die as a consequence of their love for one another, all related within the context of bravery, courage and struggle. The books consist of four *fasıl* (chapters). The first chapter involves the subject of childlessness, the source of the Ottoman Sultan's woes, and the Begs and rich merchants who live in harmonious coexistence within the sultanate. The real story begins with the miraculous conception of a child, conceived by such means as the eating of a magical apple. After the child grows up and sets eyes on a young girl or sees her picture, he falls in love with her, which constitutes the second chapter. This chapter often contains instances of irreligious behaviour, such as alcohol-intoxicated lovers, who, with the magical strength of the drink, can think of nothing other than satisfying their love. The third chapter dwells on the lovers' struggles to unite and the complications preventing them from getting married. These difficulties need to be resolved, the lovers have to overcome dangers and obstacles, they have to protect themselves against their pursuers and attacks, and they also defend themselves against talismans and giants. The last chapter generally relates a sad ending concluding in death, or presents a happy ending in which the couples unite and get married.

As the stories' themes deal with such timeless dilemmas, they provide a significant power of inspiration. In order to achieve one's objective, 'the unbending determination, honesty, kindness and love of people enduring endless amounts of hardship [and] the victory of their righteous rebellion ... hide the force of inspiration' and

comprise 'a lesson learnt through misfortunes'. Making use of social events and the dominant ideas that exist within certain societies, these tales incorporate the most significant characteristics of folk stories.¹⁵

Spirituality in chapbooks is perceived as a tangential attribute and few chapbooks address religion. Aside from a few accounts where heroism is embellished with religious motifs, the links between superstition and its underlying religious tenets are weak. Spies relates that very few spiritual components can be found in these books and that the Islamic religion, as a religious adjective, is encountered as a 'detail'. The *saz* (a musical instrument) was played, alcohol was drunk and wedding ceremonies were held in Turkish chapbooks, but the presence of faith is rarely displayed in descriptions of such festivals.¹⁶

Summarizing a few chapbooks provides a clearer picture of their characteristic features. *Aşık Garip*, one of the most popular chapbooks on folk romance, recounts the love between Ashik Garip and Şahsenem. After the death of Ashik Garip's father, the toadies around him started making plans to pilfer Ashik Garip's inheritance. By organizing drinking celebrations they were able to deprive him of his fortune and Ashik Garip, having lost everything, ventured into various trades but he was unable to succeed in any of them. Then in a dream Ashik Garip saw a beautiful woman named Şahsenem. A *Hızır* (a legendary person who attained immortality by drinking from the Water of Life) made Garip eat from the sherbet of love and under the influence of the sherbet, Garip fell in love with Şahsenem. Acting on the force of this love he started to play the *saz* and sing *türküler* (folk songs) the next day and he set out to find his loved one. Although they faced various difficulties, Ashik Garip and Şahsenem ultimately get married.

Tahir and Zühre, another folk romance, describes the birth of the hero Tahir and the heroine Zühre and their school days and adolescence. The story relates how they fell in love, the difficulties put in place to prevent their marriage, the exile of Tahir, and his return from exile and his re-exile. Overcoming all these difficulties, Tahir is reunited with his love Zühre. While in some versions the story of *Tahir and Zühre* concludes happily with a marriage scene, in others Tahir is killed and as a result Zühre goes mad and dies because of her love for him.

This brief outline traces the contours of the themes that chapbooks covered, which did not shy away from discussing the pleasures and pains of the profane world and in which religion played a minor role. As will be argued in the following section, the content of chapbooks as outlined above underwent revision and redrafting as the Republican era drew near, and one aspect of these changes was a shift from oral to text-based traditions that occurred in the late Ottoman era.

From Oral Culture to Written Culture: The Development of Chapbooks in the Ottoman Empire

Before epics and stories – which constitute the contents of chapbooks – had been put into writing, they had circulated within society through oral culture. Performers who composed epics, sang poems accompanied by a *saz* and who reshaped folk stories, utilized coffeehouses in towns and cities or the houses of *agalar* (peasant landlords) to perform in. Their roots went back to the *ozanlar* (Turkish bards) who, from the fifteenth century were known as *ashiks*. From the beginning of the sixteenth century, the tradition of story-telling became prevalent. While fairy-tales and folk romances were told by women in homes,¹⁷ folk stories were narrated by *ashiks* in places such as coffeehouses in villages, towns and cities where men gathered.¹⁸ These narrations provided a means of education and amusement, and continued to do so up to and through the legal, financial, military and social changes enacted during the *Tanzimat* era (the administrative reforms initiated in 1839 by the Ottoman government), when new forms such as the novel began to emerge:

[T]he language and expressions used in stories written in the verses of the *Divan* literature [classical school of poetry which had been more in the form of a poem rather than a story] had been embellished and unclear. Thus they could not meet the cultural needs of the ordinary people. Hence, exactly as had been done by those dwelling in epics, these narrators who had told stories according to a specific tradition in a time when very few people knew how to read or write, when printing had not been common, were the representatives of the novel literature.¹⁹

These oral narratives were eventually put down on paper. Cemal Kafadar suggests that epics such as *Battalname* and *Hamzaname*, stories relating the *gazi* tradition (military prowess in the name of Islam) of the initial years of the Ottoman Empire,²¹ had been put into writing in the fifteenth century.²⁰ There is a general agreement that folk stories were written down in the nineteenth century and were printed during the years that followed.²² While Başgöz believes that the first written texts on folk stories materialized in the 1830s,²³ Boratav suggests that they were put into writing and printed between 1870 and 1880.²⁴ According to Boratav this was also when the first modern Turkish novel appeared, first as lithography and later printed.²⁵ As lithography was introduced in the Ottoman Empire in 1831,²⁶ Başgöz may be correct on this point. However, very few chapbooks produced via lithography were found in any libraries or private collections until 1850. Although Fikret Türkmen suggests that one of the oldest chapbooks was published under the title *Hikâye-i Tahir il Zühre* (The Story of Tahir and Zühre) by the Imperial Printing House in Istanbul in 1850, he does not present any information on the location of the book.²⁷ The major obstacle to dating such texts is that the date of issue (and the place of publication) in some copies has not been indicated within the books themselves. For instance, the

lithography of *Leyla and Mecnun*, containing 49 pages (14.5 x 22.5 cm) and which can be found in Gül Derman's collection, does not state the place of publication or date. Another edition of the same book, however, found in Kemal Elker's collection, measuring 11.5 x 19.5 cm and containing 129 pages, was printed in 1857. The publication date of the book titled *Hikaye-i Seyfölmölük ve Padişah-ı Mısır ve Asım bin Saffan* (no. 89099) (Story of Seyfölmölük, the Sultan of Egypt and Asım bin Saffan), located in the Istanbul University Library, dates back to 1866. The publication date of the chapbook titled *Şah İsmail ve Derdi Yok ile Zülfisiyah Hikayesi* (The Story of Shah Ismail, Derdi Yok and Zülfisiyah) located in Cüneyt Kut's collection is dated 1884. These examples show that it would be more correct to think that chapbooks had been printed from the 1850s onwards for, as Türkmen mentions in another study, 14 lithography chapbooks had been published by 1899.²⁸ These relatively poor copies were generally printed in Istanbul. Lithographically-printed chapbooks continued to be published until the 1950s in the Turkish Republic, copies of which are housed in Istanbul in private collections, the Istanbul University Library, the Beyazıt Library, and in the Istanbul Municipal Library, and in Ankara at the National Library.

By whom, how and why were these narrations put into writing? Boratav argues that definite answers cannot be given: the recorder may have been the owner of a printing house who witnessed a narration, a 'curious' listener or even the narrator himself. The reason for such an act could have been the necessity to read these stories at a time when no story-tellers were to be found.²⁹ The weakening of the oral tradition in certain places, such as metropolitan Istanbul, may also have led to the printing of these stories. From the notes in one of the copies of *Aşık Garip* located in the Atatürk Library of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, it is quite apparent that this text was put into print by an ashik named Muradi from East Anatolia while he was doing his military service in Istanbul at the end of the nineteenth century. Muradi may have put the oral narration into writing because the oral tradition, when compared to the Eastern Anatolian Region, had weakened in Istanbul. In more literate Istanbul, the printed text may also have been more accessible to a wider audience than the oral version would have been.

This point raises the question: were the stories and epics in chapbooks that had been written down and printed identical to those that had been told within the oral tradition? Scholars on oral and written traditions agree that the products of oral culture, when textualized, differ from the original. As the written work had come to mean that words would be stabilized on a surface per se, such a process of finalization that exceeded the barriers of time and place entailed auto-censorship between the narrator and the relater. The story-teller, while in the process of narration, could have monitored and restricted himself. Aware that he was being observed by a certain person who was noting down what he was telling, or according to the identity of the person or the political stance of the country the story-teller inhabits, the narrator might not tell the whole story or might just relate a variation of the story which he thinks most appropriate. However, the matter does not end here, for the same

dilemma applies for the person who is re-telling the story. Like the story-teller, the relater would also evaluate the political condition he was living in and as a result might not have written everything down or might have changed what he heard. In short, auto-censorship can be applicable for both the story-teller and the relater.

Another dimension of this control could also emerge in the process of printing. Manuscripts were edited in shape and format before printing and, if needed, changes were made.³⁰ As İlhan Başgöz argues, manuscripts of narrations thus became lifeless, weak and isolated from the elements of performance: only a section of what had been narrated by the story-teller appeared in the texts. The pace of the writer could never have matched that of the narrator. For this reason, the writer either noted down the words he was able to grasp or just wrote down those words that had stuck with him, leading to a summarizing of the actual story. Additionally, the transcription of the story mutes sections that could not have been expressed in writing, leaving out such elements as the voice and *saz* of the ashik, his imitation of other people's voices, the emotion in his voice and his intonation. Even his silence and occasional pauses affect the flow of the narration. His bodily movements, his sitting down or wandering amongst the listeners, or 'the beautiful or different' way he holds his *saz* are all elements that influence the performance. Furthermore, the story-telling in a live performance is determined and shaped 'within both the nearer and further environs of man' and is re-formed and re-created within this traditional realm. And the focal point of this human environment is the story-teller himself.³¹

Hence, it would be erroneous to regard lithographic chapbooks, which were printed subsequent to modernization processes engendered by the *Tanzimat*, within the same context as traditional stories. Boratav also notes that these stories had taken a new shape and included some new elements introduced during the actual act of writing and the stages that followed. The changes that occurred in the transition from narration based on verbal memory into writing had, above all, affected the verbal telling of the story and thus the stories were transformed.³² Otto Spies claims that after the 1900s in the Ottoman Empire, lithographically-printed chapbooks were modified during the printing process so that they would suit audiences' likes and expectations, including both literate readers and illiterate listeners as they heard the books read out loud. In order to facilitate reading and listening, content was chosen carefully so that it would be 'fluent, smooth and appropriate to the modern manner of expression'.³³

The readability of these texts led to an increase in their popularity and the public read and listened to chapbooks for the simplicity and plainness of their language.³⁴ As a result of these chapbooks, people's reading and listening habits changed. The messages conveyed in chapbooks, above all, were disseminated via reading sessions of the literate for the illiterate, as reading and listening are two complementary elements. As emphasized by Sanders, during the first stages of literacy in the West, an individual who knew the alphabet in Medieval times read to illiterate listeners. Historians specializing in the Medieval era term these groups 'textual communities'. The spoken word and literacy were regarded as inseparable, two elements that

complemented one another.³⁵ From this perspective, it can be argued that people acquired the habit of reading along with listening, thus developing themselves through chapbooks in that the act of listening conformed to the text itself.

In such an environment where oration and reading merged, chapbooks chiefly appealed to the public at large. Even in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, non-elites gathered in public places to read and listen together. Literary coffeehouses and neighbourhood coffeehouses were social communication centres where people listened to stories and epics told by *meddahlar*.³⁶ Such locales constituted arenas where written and oral culture was disseminated, where written texts were read loud and passed from hand to hand, and it was lithographic chapbooks which were the most prevalent amongst these texts.

Prior to the *Tanzimat* modernization efforts in the mid-nineteenth century, published materials were not only intended for those who were educated, but also for the common people. While lithographic chapbooks were printed by second-hand booksellers in Beyazıt in Istanbul and appealed to the average person, other texts such as novels were printed by other publishers, appealing to readers open to the process of modernization.³⁷

Initial Efforts to Reform Chapbooks

Projects to reform chapbooks were put forth by political and military figures, individuals unconnected to story-telling though some of them were engaged in increasing the popularity of chapbooks. One of the most significant projects concerning this matter was proposed by Kazım Karabekir, a leading military figure. During the Turkish War of Independence in 1922 he noted:

The stories *Battal Gazi*, *Köroğlu* and *Aşık Garip*, exceptional books of long standing, are read in nearly all the villages, even in the towns of Anatolia, especially in the Eastern regions. It is virtually impossible to prevent these books from being read at any given time ... One should notice that these stories involve incentive elements that seek to redress social ills in areas concerning health, economy and other related matters by putting emphasis on patriotism, public spirit, religious sentiments, heroism, horsemanship, marksmanship and wrestling. I propose that after such additions they should be delivered to every corner of Turkey, retaining their original reputation, name and style.³⁸

In his memoirs, Karabekir relates that no answer came from the Ministry of Education for his proposal.³⁹ In its character, Karabekir's proposal parallels positive features of popular culture reforms enacted in Europe in early modern times. Reform efforts in Europe between the 1500s and 1800s were both positively and negatively defined. The negatives were conceived of as dangers to traditional popular culture requiring the cleansing of all elements considered inappropriate. The positives entailed the

introduction of Catholic and Protestant reforms directed towards peasants and craftsmen.⁴⁰ However, in Karabekir's proposal there is no injunction to eradicate or simplify entries considered improper in chapbooks. In other words, he was not concerned with the negative elements of chapbook reforms conducted in early modern Europe. Instead, he proposed certain additions and the inclusion of certain components and ideas considered lacking or incomplete in chapbooks. Karabekir's proposal thus focused only on the positive aspects of chapbook reform.

Chapbooks in the Initial Years of the Turkish Republic (1923–1937)

The founders of the Republic aimed to construct a new society based on certain conceptualizations of the national identity of the population. In order to achieve this goal social and cultural reforms were undertaken: *tekke* and *zaviyeler* (dervish lodges) were abolished, a linguistic revolution was carried out, clothing reforms were effected, and a civil code of law was established. These reforms thus had both positive and negative dimensions. While certain establishments, rules and values were eradicated, they were then replaced by what were perceived as more modern, newer elements. All these efforts were top-down, leading Trimberger to argue that the Turkish Revolution was a 'revolution from above'.⁴¹ This revolution from above was conceived of not as a means to oppress or control society, but rather as a means to modernize it, which Zafer Toprak defined as 'authoritarian modernism'.⁴² Authoritarian modernism was the foundation of state politics and evolved via various political, economic and social causes in the early 1930s.

The impact of statist and authoritarian modernism on daily life became obvious mainly during these years,⁴³ a point corroborated by historians of political science. As Migdal suggests, leading state officials strove to dominate every niche of society in order to transform social, economic and political realities. Authoritarian modernist states take it upon themselves to mould people's self-perception via 'mattering maps'⁴⁴ by defining moral orders and setting the parameters of daily behaviour, or, minimally, by authorizing other social organizations to undertake some of those tasks.⁴⁵ In light of Migdal's analysis, these efforts of social control, from a theoretical viewpoint, represent a scale of three indicators of which the first is force. The goal was the rendering of a compliant population via state organs and legal dictates, reflective of the top-down approach to modernity applied by the state as force. The second indicator points to efforts employed to organize the population for specialized tasks in the institutional components of state organizations. Basically, leaders could encourage people to frequent state-licensed clinics instead of unauthorized physicians, which Migdal defines as 'participation'. However, in order for state leaders to maintain their strength, they needed to establish legitimacy within society. Legitimacy represents the efforts of state officials to monitor and control society through rules and regulations, and also the internalization of these efforts by the public.⁴⁶

In order to effect the internalization of reforms within society – reforms which were earlier instituted and which were still in effect – the Turkish government from the early 1930s took measures within the cultural arena. The government established People's Houses, the Turkish Historical Society, the Turkish Language Society and, in order to promote reading to a wider audience, public reading rooms.⁴⁷ Books, the language of which had been brought down to the level of public understanding, were published by the government itself and distributed free of charge to large numbers of the population from the early 1930s onwards. These books were read out loud to the public by staff members of People's Houses or by educators in villages. Some of these books focused on health, agriculture, technical subjects and education, and there were also texts that aimed at teaching and the internalization of the reforms of the Republic.⁴⁸ For instance, in 1933 the Ministry of Education determined which books were fundamental in relating the reforms of the Turkish Republic to the general public via a notice which was conveyed to all of the teachers in the villages. One of the selected texts was *Nutuk* (the Speech), by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. According to this notice, teachers in the villages were entrusted with the duty of reading 'the historical speech of Atatürk' and to explain in detail the contents of the reading to villagers in places where they gathered on winter nights, as the villagers spent 'the winter consuming the food they had gathered all summer' and especially because they 'spent their evenings doing nothing'.⁴⁹

These developments could be perceived as irrelevant in the case of chapbooks, which contained the folk stories and epics that Kazım Karabekir referred to. However, when taking into account the fact that peasants did not spend their free time just talking in places such as coffeehouses and village rooms where they had gathered, but they also read classical chapbooks, it is quite clear that state officials, albeit indirectly, had focused on a traditional activity that included reading and listening to chapbooks. In fact, in the initial years of the Republic, a dichotomy was established between progressivism and backwardness and chapbooks were seen as backward, which was emphasized by the founders of the Republic. Mustafa Kemal on entering a coffeehouse located right beneath the *Aydın Türkoçağı* (a non-governmental organization) building, in the year 1931 and, seeing the President of the *Türkoçağı* and the members of the Board of Directors at a game of cards, criticized the conduct of these officials and stated that 'bigoted, sheikh disciples with their rawhide sandals and bundles on their backs pretending to sell carnation oil and such things have wandered every village with publications impeding the Turkish Reforms'.⁵⁰ Furthermore, İsmail Hakkı Tonguç's article on the benefits of reading modern and nationalist epics and folk stories sent to peasants by the central administration (instead of chapbooks) posited a relationship between chapbooks and their use in the early thirties (1930–1933). According to Tonguç, on winter evenings the peasants would generally spend their free time in village rooms and coffeehouses, gossiping, reading and listening to various chapbooks. However, the contents of these chapbooks were related to a past civilization and social system. It was necessary to force

peasants to read more books with useful information and to make them 'listen to the epics of established and constructive individuals; of heroes born within the core individuality of the nation in order for such stories to be passed on from one generation to the next'.⁵¹

Tonguç tried to implement his thoughts with the help of educators in villages and before the project of 1937, which will be studied in detail below. Instead of chapbooks, village teachers would read stories such as *3 Şehitler Tepesi* (3 Martyrs Hill), *Cumhuriyet'in Yaptıkları* (The Makings of the Republic) and *Antepli Şahin* (The Hawk of Antep) which had been sent from the central administration to peasants in places where they gathered.⁵²

Efforts of Intellectuals to Modernize Chapbooks

Before the 1930s some journalists and writers in Turkey began to modernize classical chapbooks both positively and negatively, and not as part of state projects. The negative approach included warnings for the public 'not to believe in the supernatural elements' of chapbooks which were seen as not consistent with modern life, and should be discarded. The positive approach was implemented by either substituting elements considered to be backward with items that represented modern life, or, on occasion, by writing entirely new chapbooks. There is no definite data on when these efforts commenced but the process can likely be traced back to the founding years of the Republic, as will be explored below.

As journalist Hikmet Feridun suggested in one of his articles dating back to 1939, some 'writers' had started to modernize chapbooks in 'their columns' long before that year and without any pressure from the administration. When Süleyman Tevfik died in 1939 he left enough books and made enough revisions of old documents to allow the Ministry of Internal Affairs to accumulate a library of modernized books.⁵³

Aside from Süleyman Tevfik, writers such as Muharrem Zeki and Selami Münir had also embarked on attempts to modernize stories and epics independent of state interference and supervision. These individuals who set to work on chapbooks appended such comments as 'these are superstitions, representations, do not accept them as true' at certain places in the stories, with the intention of minimizing the stories' perceived negative effects. 'Fallacies' were omitted, 'religious elements' were 'moderated' and 'positive aspects' were emphasized in various chapbooks. This effort to modernize was especially applied to religious epics such as the *Hazret-i Ali Cenklere* (The Wars of Hazreti Ali).

Modernization projects were not merely restricted to making alterations to the existing chapbooks, however. New chapbooks were also written by intellectuals such as Peyami Safa and Muharrem Zeki Korgunal. Safa stated that he wrote such chapbooks as *Billur Köşk Hikayesi* (The Story of the Crystal Palace), *Leyla and Mecnun* and *Şah İsmail İlah* (The Idol Shah Ismail) under assumed names and, although innumerable copies were published, his efforts proved fruitless. He questioned and

criticized his own efforts to write new chapbooks and concluded that they had been futile.⁵⁴ Korgunal, on the other hand, emphasized that he had written chapbooks containing stories and epics of national characters rather than classical chapbooks such as *Sürmeli Bey*, *Hamza Böke* and *Aşık Garip*. The author characterized the books that he wrote as 'those without a reactionary spirit' and 'those implementing Turkish reforms'.⁵⁵

Observations on the Efforts of Intellectuals

Perteve Naili Boratav was one renowned author who argued that the modernizing efforts of these intellectuals should be seen in a negative light. According to him, the changes that had been made to lithographed chapbooks were in a sense 'censorship'⁵⁶ and diminished the authenticity of chapbooks.⁵⁷ Boratav claimed that warnings in chapbooks such as 'these are superstitions, do not believe them' undermined the originality of a story to such an extent that it became a different work. These differences caused newly printed folk stories to 'become unpopular' within society.⁵⁸ For Boratav the reason for this was clear: it is impossible for people unexposed to facets of modern life to embrace modernized chapbooks.⁵⁹ According to this line of thinking, traditional stories slowly disappear as a result of changing lifestyles. The products and narrators of a traditional oral culture start to lose their significance in large cities along with changing living conditions and new means of communication. Newspapers and novels become major vehicles for public entertainment, highlighting 'political satisfaction'. The effects of social change are felt much later in regions where peasants and nomads live, where, for example, even in the twentieth century, one still saw authentic and authoritative folk poets functioning in place of newspapers and novels. However, media such as radios, newspapers and gramophone records, as well as institutions such as schools, could be considered as the 'modern rivals' of traditional narrators and their products and they had also started to enter into previously closed-off regions of Anatolia.⁶⁰

Faruk Rıza Güloğul rates foremost among those who perceived these efforts positively. In an article written in 1938, Güloğul did not share the same perspective as Boratav. He argued that non-state efforts must be exerted to modernize chapbooks by new writers becoming familiar with this practice.⁶¹

Peyami Safa and Muharrem Zeki Korgunal, who were involved with chapbook-modernizing projects, later examined the positive and negative dimensions of their work, but they arrived at differing conclusions. Safa claimed that the public had shown no interest in the chapbooks that he himself had written, and that, as before, the public preferred classical lithographic chapbooks, proving his endeavours fruitless.⁶² For this reason, he saw the chapbooks that he had previously written negatively. But, this negativity was transformed by Korgunal. He claimed that, from the perspective of language and style, his stories were quite simple and clear, and moreover, they tried to introduce revolutionary ideas to the public. Korgunal questioned

what the difference could be between the efforts of leading state officials to modernize chapbooks and his own.⁶³

1937: The Project to Modernize Chapbooks

The year that Korgunal was involved in this undertaking, leading state officials embarked on a large-scale project to modernize chapbooks. Şükrü Kaya, the Minister of Internal Affairs in 1937, wrote to every significant writer of the period to invite them to modernize chapbooks. According to a letter revealed by the press, every year while the sale of an intellectual book might not reach 2000 people, the realization that as many as 50,000 chapbooks were sold caused quite a stir amongst state officials. The proposal suggested:

1. The public loves the heroism of chapbooks. The heroes should be left as they are; they should, however, be placed within new, reasonable settings, appropriate to the spirit of the regime. This way one will create the opportunity to encourage the public through the books they love. As the character Mickey Mouse always remains as he is, we want to support heroes which the public are used to.
2. According to this principle, the books that will be initially prepared are the following: *Aşık Garip*, *Köroğlu*, *Ferhad and Şirin*, *Leyla and Mecnun*, *Yedi Alimler* [the Seven Scholars], *Tahir and Zühre*, *Arzu and Kanber*, *Şahmaran*, *Kerem and Ashi*, and *Nasrettin Hodja*.⁶⁴

This notice required that new chapbooks be written in order 'to meet the reading requirements of large masses' in villages, towns and coffeehouses and thus impact people's 'national and cultural discipline'. The heroes of the stories were to be maintained, however, as in the example of Mickey Mouse, but they were to be set in new locales. Hence 'these characters deeply loved by the public can be retained in a manner appropriate to the aims of the new Turkish reforms and civilization'.⁶⁵

The notice states that 'long research' resulted in the identification of the public's reading tastes. According to the Ministry, this demanded that folk stories 'conforming to new events' be written. The government also wanted to convey messages consistent with its principles and goals through such books 'conforming to new events'.⁶⁶ Another perspective was the belief that a relationship between intellectuals and the public could be established by means of modernized chapbooks. Chapbooks were seen as a conduit which would establish a warm and candid interaction between authors and their readers. It was noted that this conduit had previously been used by 'any person in possession of a pen'. In order for intellectuals and peasants to come face-to-face with one another for the very first time, it was proposed that authors and writers become involved.⁶⁷

To sum up, there were two dimensions to the efforts to reform chapbooks. The first involved eliminating from chapbooks their perceived backward-looking scenarios

full of sorcery, talismans, spells and miracles, all of which conflicted with what was seen as a modern and positive understanding of the world. This heavy-handed editing represented the authoritarian approach to reform. The second dimension involved the presentation of technical and rational elements rather than a world full of 'miracles', which also meant that it was possible for the government to convey messages to the masses by utilizing folk culture. The folk culture reforms in these two areas were not significantly different from those in Europe between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, there is a significant time difference in that folk culture reform was a project of the Turkish state in the first half of the twentieth century. The other issue to be emphasized is that the project did not involve extensive surveillance and regulation, such as the prohibition of chapbooks and the monitoring of printing activities.

Differences between Traditional and Modern Chapbooks

At this point, it will be helpful to illustrate the differences between traditional and modern chapbooks via a comparison of a few chapbooks and by contrasting their different versions. While different versions of chapbooks vary to some extent, comparison allows us to observe the salient changes that emerged during the shift from traditional to 'modern' chapbooks. Chapbooks which were the most well known and popular are examined, chosen on the basis of their common theme: love. The chapbooks *Aşık Garip*, *Arzu and Kanber* and *Sümmâni*, which were popular and widely read, will be discussed below. The different versions of these chapbooks illustrate how much their style and content changed over time. It should be noted, however, that further comparative study on less popular chapbooks would be helpful in reinforcing or revising the conclusions drawn in this paper.

Written and printed chapbooks on *Sümmâni* by M.U. (possibly penned by Muharrem Zeki) in 1938 and Nesib Yağmurdereli in 1939 are examples of how chapbooks, in general, accumulated what was perceived as modern elements. These books no longer centred on a wandering lover nor did they describe hospitable people who open their doors to guests and entertain them in their homes. Perhaps influenced by developments that accompanied the rise of capitalism, previous depicted efforts of Agas to show off their prestige to people were not reflected in new versions of *Sümmâni*. Individuality was emphasized and ashik *Sümmâni*, the hero of the book, spent his days alone in foreign territories, without anyone calling upon him, in a *han* (an inn, or a large commercial building). While the reputation of an ashik spread over a vast geographical area in previous books, his reputation now, however, was recognized only in his village and the surrounding villages.⁶⁸

A comparison of earlier written samples of chapbook stories and those published in the early years of the Turkish Republic illustrate some of the stylistic and content changes that chapbooks underwent in the transition from public story-telling to text.

A scene from an *Aşık Garip* text titled *Destân-ı Hikayet-i Makşûd* (The Epic of the Makşûd Story) dating from 1831 relates:

They [the *haramzadeler* – villains] had at that moment stood up and came to the coffeehouse, bringing along Makşud. To the coffeehouse owner they said, 'bring coffee to our master'. At that moment the owner gave them coffee. While Makşud drank his coffee, one of them said: 'Brother, go to the tavern in Gümüş Halkalı and give them my respect, and tell them to prepare a grand table, a table which will also include bird's milk' [meaning that there will be every conceivable thing to eat].⁶⁹

Another version of *Aşık Garip* published in 1946 recounts the same scene as:

All of them went outside together. There was a rose garden nearby. In the garden there was also a very beautiful palace, where a pond was flowing with water and nightingales were singing in the trees. Together, they all sat around the pond. Resul, not having seen anywhere so beautiful in his life, was quite content with this place. Here he felt relief and happiness. 'We did good by coming here', a *haramzade* said. After saying this, they started to sweet talk and deceive the young boy. One of the *haramzadeler* went to the market place and bought some *neşade* [an alcoholic drink]. They immediately prepared a grand table next to the pond and made all kinds of delicacies and savoury foods.⁷⁰

This version of *Aşık Garip* was published in 1946 by Education Publications. This publishing house, influenced by the ideological hegemony of the state, avoided obscene vocabulary and criticism directed towards the regime. The scene in which Ashik Garip becomes drunk and thus loses his fortune to others is quite different in the old and new editions of the chapbook. While the setting is staged in a tavern in the old version, it becomes a grandiose place in the new. This change had to do with changing attitudes at the time the new version was published. The social mores of the 1940s established a clear relationship between decreases in production and the tavern. The idea, which connected declining productivity with alcohol consumption was vigorously discussed amongst both those in political power and intellectuals. Naci Kasım, the owner of Education Publications, which published this book, agreed with the idea of there being such a connection, and thus it is understandable that the tavern was extracted from the new edition.

The eradication of obscene language and slang from chapbooks also reflects the moral scruples of the era and a concern about the effect of such language on society and politics. In the old version, which still preserved and presented everything in its original context, one openly encounters the use of obscene language: 'Oh fuck off, who introduced me as a pimp?' 'like I fucking care, just get up and fuck off', 'you have complemented that shit enough'. However in the newly published chapbook, these expressions have been removed.⁷¹

Another notable difference in the modern version is the dryness and shortness of the narration. In the old version, the scene that involved Ashik Garib's lover, Şah Senem was described thus:

In the front of the palace was a fountain. Ashik Garip stood up and at that moment wanted to wash his hands. He reached the fountain. Reflected in the water, he saw the face of the girl by the window across from him. As Ashik Garip saw this face in the fountain, he looked up and saw the girl sitting there. As the boy's eyes locked on her, he thought: 'Cruel destiny! For you, I would willingly bear the difficulties of foreign lands. Everything has lost its meaning, the night is no longer dark and the day is no longer so bright. Oh sweet dear, while I'm so miserable, are you enjoying yourself'. Finishing his thoughts, he washed his hands, went back and sat down.⁷²

On the other hand, the new printed version of the same scene reads as follows:

They had come to the fountain in the garden. Şah Senem was looking at the garden from her window. The reflection of her face had fallen on the water. When Ashik Garip saw her image, he sighed deeply and said: 'This is what drives a man into foreign lands ...'.⁷³

The 1930 and 1933 versions of *Aşık Garip* published by the state make reference to the fact that certain sections which involve supernatural elements should be seen as irrational. For instance, the impossibility of *Hızır* taking Ashik Garip on his horse and roaming from county to country within the time span of a blink of an eye was referred to in a footnote:

There is no basis for such things as *Hızır*, talismans and sorcery. It is not possible to go to far away places in just the blink of an eye. As knowledge and science develop, travelling will surely become much easier.⁷⁴

In another reference the readers are warned that:

No illness can be cured with a *muska* [an amulet] that has been obtained by one way or another, or, as mentioned in the story, by the dirt which had been brought from the horseshoe. The patient can only be cured by means of medicine prescribed by physicians or as the illness loses its effect or declines in force through time.⁷⁵

In short, cases of irrationality were found in the copies of *Aşık Garip* which the state published and which the Ministry of Education approved, and notes were provided for the reader to clarify that these were considered unsound and invalid from a scientific perspective.

Likewise, the chapbooks published by the Directorate General of Press, an institution of the state, were altered more than those published by Education Publications, Bozkurt Publications and İkbâl Publications. Propaganda had evidently been added

to these books while aspects considered harmful had been deleted. Some of the scenes referred to in these books bear no similarity to those found in the traditional chapbooks. Such a book, one that was included in the series published by the Directorate General of Press, was the new version of *Arzu and Kanber*, written by Bekir Sıtkı Kunt. This chapbook had also been 'modernized' and the subject of the story underwent numerous changes reflecting state propaganda. Indeed, while the original theme of *Arzu and Kanber* revolved around love and bravery, one can clearly see that the modern version was heavily modified and conveyed the principles and goals of the state.⁷⁶

This idea is well exemplified by an analogy drawn between the book mentioned above and the book *Arzu and Kanber* dating back to 1931 which was published by Yusuf Ziya Publications with great attention paid to the original.⁷⁷ The chapbook, written by Kunt, starts with the finding of a four-year-old boy Kanber by the villagers. The peasants find the boy half asleep on the road and they bring him to the village. In the original version, however, the first nine pages prior to the scene in question had recounted such events as: the decision of Kanber's father, Hacı Behram, to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca; the conferring of responsibilities to his eldest son; a description of how he sets out on his voyage by taking his youngest son Kanber and his manservant along with him; and, finally, how they are robbed by a band of thieves along the way. Kanber's father and his friends are killed. The boy and the manservant continue on until they reach a village and the villagers provide food for both of them.

While in the original book the boy is adopted by one of the village notables, in the new version he is handed over to the Gendarme headquarters and the book then goes on to describe how they had wanted to hand him over to an institution for homeless children. However, Sergeant Hasan, upon seeing the boy says that if he were to adopt the boy he would teach him how to read and write. The adoption process depicts the bureaucratic mechanism of the modern state and care is given to even the smallest details: 'Certain documents were prepared in the police station and Sergeant Hasan had signed papers which showed that he had adopted the boy'.⁷⁸ In addition to this, it is quite interesting to see how the book emphasizes the characteristics of a modern state by depicting the town prosecutor's involvement and the government doctor's arrival in the village to investigate the adoption case. The original book gives no such details.

In both chapbooks both Kanber and Arzu, the daughter of the family that adopted Kanber, go to school together. Yet the description of the school in the new book is embellished with modern elements:

The village school was newly constructed. There were desks in the classrooms. And on the walls were maps. Facing the desks, there was a blackboard and right next to it was the teacher's desk. The schoolteacher was a young man who had just graduated from the teacher training college in Ankara; he

was an educated man. He took care of the children. He taught them many things. On Republic Day they decorated the school with flags. The young teacher gathered everyone in the school and told them about the cruelties of the sultanate regime and afterwards talked about the advantages and the good of the Republic, the greatness of Ataturk, which was known throughout the world, and the benefits of being born as a Turk. The students started to understand that they had been quite lucky because, together with Kanber and Arzu, they were born as brothers and sisters in the era of the Republic under the leadership of a great man like Ataturk.⁷⁹

In the original book, however, the school Arzu and Kanber attend is a madrasah and the teacher is a bearded, old madrasah hodja.

Arzu and Kanber are in love with each other in both books. While Arzu openly declares her love to Kanber in the new edition, in contrast the madrasah hodja had acted as an intermediary in the old version. The madrasah hodja resorts to magic in order for Kanber to fall in love with Arzu, whereas the new version dispenses with superstition.

In the old text both love and sexuality are intertwined:

The boy was clutching the girl's hands and started to slowly, very slowly stroke them ... enfolding his lover's hand, with a sudden movement he grasped her slim waist. He took her lips into his mouth, slowly sucking on them, savouring every moment ...⁸⁰

In Kunt's chapbook, however, no explicit mention is made of such a sexual scene: 'Kanber was holding Arzu's hand in his. It was as though his body had caught fire. His heart was beating very fast and at last he tasted love'.⁸¹

The story in the old version of the book ends with the problem that Arzu and Kanber are unable to get married (the girl's mother prevented their marriage) and thus concludes with the death of the two lovers. Both of them are buried with accompanying prayers. While Arzu's mother does not permit both lovers to get married in the new version, her reason for objection is quite different. The reason Arzu's mother does not allow her to marry Kanber in the old version was due to the fact that Kanber had been an orphan. However, in the new version the mother wanted her daughter to marry a wealthy man. She tries to persuade her daughter to marry the man who has a car and rejecting Kanber, who did not possess one, and it is interesting to note that a modern element such as an automobile was thus included in the modernized folk story.

Modern elements are also present in Kanber's planting of sugar beets and his being a worker in a sugar factory. The importance given to factories and production in the initial years of the Republic, especially the emphasis put on industrial activities such as the production of sugar beets, is reflected in the modern version of the folk story. At every opportunity, the story emphasizes the importance of saving

money, working, paying taxes and economizing,⁸² and elements such as automobiles, doctors and hospitals⁸³ – symbols perceived as modern – stand out. Importantly, the story also contains an idealized scene of a People's House. The village branch of the People's House takes on the task of preparing a ball for Arzu and Kanber's wedding in the village. Arzu is dressed in white while Kanber is dressed in a black suit for the ball. The governor of the province also attends the ball. In short, the story presents the ideal image of village and peasants. Moreover, this book concludes with a happy ending, culminating in the marriage of Arzu and Kanber rather than their deaths.

Results of the Efforts to Modernize Chapbooks

Several observers in the early Republican era doubted the effectiveness of campaigns to modernize chapbooks and their comments call into question the success of the project. In 1939, the author Deliorman expressed that the effort had been quite limited, resulting in the production of only three to four books, which had been sent to a restricted number of villages and – in his own words – 'even the most enlightened peasant had not heard of' the modernized epics.⁸⁴ As the state sent 'newspapers that would appeal to peasants' as well as periodicals that had nothing to do with them, it appeared that the average peasant showed little interest in such publications and as in previous times continued to read *Aşık Garib*, *Aslı and Kerem*, *Arzu and Kanber* and *Tahir and Zühre*.⁸⁵ Other studies seemed to arrive at the same conclusions as those based on observations by Tuğrul Deliorman in Western and Central Anatolia. Even in the 1940s, it was reported that peasants read chapbooks out loud in village rooms, especially on very cold winter nights. Writers complained, however, that not even one modernized chapbook could be found in libraries nor had any been sold by mobile booksellers in 1941.⁸⁶

Folklorist Pertev Naili Boratav relates that story-tellers had continued their tradition of story-telling in Anatolian coffeehouses during the 1940s:

Recently I went to listen to one of the folk story-tellers who performed on winter nights in many of the coffeehouses of the village where I had been staying with a doctor friend. The tradition of story-telling was still kept fully alive in this region of the country. There were about fifty–sixty people in the coffeehouse where we were staying. With an expression of excitement and interest, everyone was intoxicated by the words and actions of the story-teller. For three hours the ashik played his instrument, sang and narrated his story, wandering around the centre of the coffeehouse. While he told his story, he hung his *saz* on one shoulder, and during sections that involved singing *türküler* he would hold the instrument against his chest and while still standing, like the troubadours that one comes across in the pictures of medieval books, his expression translated the feeling of the *türkü*. Sometimes he used his body or one of his hands, the other hand and fingers still holding his

saz, to make the necessary gestures to describe events, or he would soften his *gah* voice and make his voice sound sad. He would sometimes roar the cries, which seemed to move heaven and earth, of 'the brave and courageous men' described in the *gah* story and, at times, play sad, heartbreaking melodies, or merry, cheerful, joyous, fervent rhythms on his strings. The man in front of us had staged a one-man show.⁸⁷

Boratav believed that folk stories maintained their force in coffeehouses and places he described as regions of the country where cultural innovations such as 'theatre, cinema and books' were not found. He states that the people who gathered in coffeehouses in order to listen to story-tellers were uneducated and had not even read such books as *Aşık Garip*, *Tahir and Zühre*; others who went to listen included those with limited literacy and high-school students. The attendance of high-school students at such a social event suggests that there was little if any connection between education and the consumption of folk stories. Social conditions, which were reflected in such stories 100 years before, were little changed by 1941 in many of the Anatolian towns of Turkey – one possible reason why folk stories and story-telling continued to be popular:

The living conditions of the crowded audience were the conditions described in the stories of the era, conditions which had evolved hundreds of years ago, and the narration's function, both past and present, remained very much the same. As a result, folk stories retained their importance alongside theatre, cinema and literature, especially for those who were deprived of more modern sources of entertainment. We see high-school students listening to and enjoying the story-teller in a coffeehouse. So this meant that school and city life had not affected the habits of students, which were shaped via the teachings of their families or which were picked up from their surroundings. In an age when children were brought up listening to the stories of their mothers and grandmothers, they had then re-discovered this imaginary world of theirs later on, from the moment they became familiar with places such as coffeehouses. Ashik story-tellers will continue to dominate for a while longer as long as there are no rivals, such as theatres, cinemas and books, which are a means of entertainment that would help create an imaginary world full of colourful pictures, a different realm from their everyday life.⁸⁸

Boratav argues that in certain corners of the country, places far from cultural centres, story-tellers would continue their activities in coffeehouses for a little while longer although the newly opened movie theatres and bookstores would eventually replace 'coffeehouses where story-tellers had practised their trade' on winter and Ramadan evenings.⁸⁹ Fuad Köprülü also draws attention to the same fact, claiming that entertainers involved in traditional performances of oral culture lose significance as developments in communication, transportation and industrial production move into

remote units of the country. Furthermore, Köprülü points out that efforts to shape ideology and 'public discipline' from above during the initial years of the Republic also deeply affected the conditions that sustained the ashiks.⁹⁰

Limitations of the Project to Modernize Chapbooks

As the above examples suggest, efforts to modernize chapbooks were hindered for two fundamental reasons. The first was that the efforts of political powers to reproduce chapbooks were insufficient by themselves. If the socio-economic standards of those people living in regions where chapbooks still existed did not change, the project could not be fully achieved, and the revolution 'from above' needed a complementary revolution 'from below'. The observations of Boratav and Fuad Köprülü regarding coffeehouses in remote parts of Anatolia support this claim. Furthermore, the European experience of folk reform also supports the views of both Boratav and Köprülü. As suggested by Burke, attempts to reform folk culture prior to the nineteenth century were not entirely successful due to deficiencies in institutional infrastructure and economic support. However, rapid change was inevitable in the nineteenth-century folk culture due to a number of factors including the growth of towns, the increase in the number of schools and the development of railways.⁹¹

Chartier's association of failures in folk culture reform with issues concerning the reception of attempted reforms suggests another hindrance to the project. Chartier argues that there is always a difference between rule and actual circumstances, command and application, and between the targeted meanings and the meanings formed. And this separation, concentrically, gives rise to new formations and diversions.⁹² In fact, such diversions are familiar to historians. The failure of state officials in their struggle to control coffeehouses, social entities where traditional folk culture thrived, has been well documented.⁹³ Chartier wrote that there was tension between the expectations of those who reformed chapbooks (state officials) and the perceptions of those who received them (the public) in Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries:

When considering how they [the chapbooks] had been perceived by the targeted audience (which of course is a difficult task for an historian to solve), these texts, without any consideration for the fundamental expectations that had been hoped for during production and distribution, had been received and adopted in a totally different manner by the 'public' readers. Thus, in order to 'be useful' publications printed under an 'educational' platform could be considered to be fictional products and conversely, texts that were presented within the science fiction category could be perceived as real.⁹⁴

Chartier's explication of the matter was echoed in the thoughts of Halit Fahri Ozansoy recounted during the time when the 1937 Project and the observations of Boratav were first discussed. Ozansoy stated that the public would reject any elements

of chapbooks that gave a place to new heroes and to situations which could not be applied to real life conditions. According to him, although some Turkish intellectuals received the modernization of even the chapbook classics favourably, one could not see the same positive reflection in the public sphere. For Ozansay, 'every social class' had 'shown resistance' to changing the old characters in chapbooks as they had been so 'admired'. It was quite difficult to recreate the 'revolutionary spirited' character without the heroes losing their essential characteristics. It was easy for Mickey Mouse to be adapted to any kind of modernization project or innovation as he had no past or future; however, the heroes that were to be modernized here were characters frozen in the past.⁹⁵ Boratav also emphasized that the public would not accept any fundamental changes that had simply been made for the sake of modernization. He further suggested that despite all the efforts to modernize chapbooks, the public, as before, continued to listen to the stories of ashiks and *meddahlar* in coffeehouses, stories that they knew from the old lithographed texts:

The readers of chapbooks could not stand to see stories out of their original context, nor deprived of their original form. Authors who undertook the project to renew chapbooks did not seem to understand the fact that modern novels (and stories) and folk stories were two different genres, that the topics of chapbooks could not have the same form and employ the same techniques of modern stories, and that every era and social environment had, in its own way, a literary form, that had a style of its own.⁹⁶

Reşat Nuri Güntekin expressed the same idea: '... like a mussel who sensed an approaching crab, the public mind would close tightly if it sensed propaganda'. This conclusion was based on his observations made in Anatolia during the 1930s. According to the author, the books that were effective were those that 'did not directly present lessons or propaganda'.⁹⁷

Conclusion

While numerous modernization projects were undertaken, the pace of which quickened following the *Tanzimat*, an extensive cultural project targeting the modernization of chapbooks was not carried out until 1937. Epics and folk stories carried on by oral traditions began to be printed during the modernization process of *Tanzimat*. Certain developments, linked to the reforms of this era, occurred within supervisory processes that generally occur during the transition from an oral to a text-based culture. While literacy is in the process of becoming established, both the self-supervision of traditional oral story-tellers and their stories gets transferred into the textual format of the stories, and regulations regarding content and form that printing presses applied to chapbooks before and after the actual printing should be seen as inseparable from these developments. Changes that occurred during the transition from oral to written culture were witnessed in Europe, with such reforms launched by politicians aiming to

renew folk culture. In the nineteenth-century Ottoman context, however, such state-implemented folk culture reforms were not carried out with regards to chapbooks, and the evolution of textual traditions in the late Ottoman and the early Republican eras was distinct from that of neighbouring Europe.

Kazım Karabekir proposed to take on the matter as a project in the Ottoman Empire during the National War of Independence one year before the declaration of the Turkish Republic. One of the leading figures associated with legislation aimed at organizing and shaping society, he wanted to focus on health, the economy, sports, and nationalistic sentiment, and at the same time stress the importance of religious feeling in these books. However, a state-supported project targeting chapbooks as part of the modernizing push would not materialize until over a decade later.

Despite the fact that during the years from the founding of the Republic in 1923 to 1937 an extensive state project to modernize chapbooks was not implemented, some intellectuals undertook chapbook modernizing projects on their own. These intellectuals identified elements they themselves characterized as 'harmful' in chapbooks and warned readers of such dangerous material via notes within the texts themselves, plus they also wrote new chapbooks.

The first serious project regarding chapbooks was initiated by the government in 1937. In accordance with plans to engender new individualism and a new society for the fledgling state, the project was bound up with modernization efforts impacting social and cultural ideologies. Instead of forcing the project down from above, the government opened it up to public discussion in which leading state officials considered the perspectives of intellectuals on possible strategies. Authors and writers were encouraged via state organized contests, and prizes were awarded. However, as the project was not fully implemented, this led to even more intense debates. The views of intellectuals who participated in this debate were various, with some of them supporting modernization of chapbooks and others against it. Two reasons were put forward by contemporaries of the era to explain the limited success of the project. The first, emphasized by intellectuals, was the fact that the public had opposed the messages conveyed in the revised chapbooks, which entailed flagrant propaganda and presented content that did not reflect the public's 'real-life' living conditions. As Halit Fahri Ozansoy argued, the public resisted these 'modernized' chapbooks. The second argument was that changes had occurred in the social and economic lives of the citizens of the Republic, and while these top-down changes were the driving force to modernize chapbooks, the subjective effort did not coincide with objective conditions. The public identified themselves with the heroes of these chapbooks, characters who reflected a very familiar traditional way of life, and the public arguably could not internalize books invoking symbols and evoking scenarios of a 'modern' world imposed from above.

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Notes

1. Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Burlington 2002), 207.
2. *Ibid.*, 207, 218, 222–23, 252.
3. *Ibid.*, 270–71.
4. Barry Sanders, *A is for Ox: Violence, Electronic Media, and the Silencing of the Written Word* (New York 1994), 60.
5. Metin And, *A History of Theatre and Popular Entertainment in Turkey* (Ankara 1963–1964), 31; Pertev Naili Boratav, *Folklor ve Edebiyat II* (İstanbul 1982), 498–9; Muharrem Kaya Kaya, *Türk Romanında Destan Etkisi* (Ankara 2004), 29; Özdemir Nutku, *Meddahlık ve Meddah Hikayeleri* (İstanbul 1997), 4.
6. Pertev Naili Boratav, *Halk Hikayeleri ve Halk Hikayeciliği* (İstanbul 2002), 16–17. There are four types of chapbooks where the heroes are unknown: *Mirza-yı Mahmut* (Prince Mahmut); *Ülfetin; Derdiyok and Zülfi Siyah; Elif and Mahmut*. There are two types which relate the lives of those whose loves have been novelized: *Ercişli Emrah ile Selvi Han* (Emrah of Erciş and Selvi Han); *Aşık Garip; Tufarkanlı Abbas* (Abbas of Tufarkan); *Aşık Kerem; Kurbani* and *Tahir Mirza. Aşık Ali İzzet, Sümmani* and *Karacaoğlan* can be counted among those characters of the main chapbooks who are known to have existed.
7. The written copies are: *Arzu and Kanber; Asuman and Zeycan; Aşık Garib; Derdiyok and Zülfi Siyah; Elif and Mahmud; Hurşid ile İlik Hanım* (Hurşid and Lady İlik); *Hurşid and Mahmihri; Kerem and Aslı; Kurbani; Leyla and Mecnun; Melik Şah and Güllü Han; Şah İsmail and Gülizar; Tahir and Zühre*.
8. *Âşık Garip and Şah Senem, Âşık Ömer Divanı* (Divan of Âşık Ömer), *Çobanın Kızı Ayşe* (Ayşe, the Shepherd's Daughter), *Çöl Kızı Cemile ile Şeyh Abdullah* (The Desert Girl Cemile and Sheikh Abdullah), *Derli Hasan ile Nazlı Han Hikayesi* (The Story of the Aggrieved Hasan and Nazlı Han), *Elif ile Yaralı Mahmut* (Elif and the Wounded Mahmut), *Ferhat and Şirin, Gül ile Bülbül* (The Rose and the Nightingale), *Gül ile Sitemkâr* (The Rose and the Reproachful), *Mısır Saraylarında Yusuf ile Züleyha Firavun ile Hazreti Musa* (Yusuf, Züleyha Pharaoh and Hazreti Musa in Egyptian Palaces), *Kılıç Aslan ile Nazlı Hanım* (Kılıç Aslan and Lady Nazlı), *Razi Niham and Mahı Firuze, Resimli Beybögrek ile Akkavak Kızı Hikâyesi* (The Illustrated Story of Beybögrek and the White Poplar Girl), *Suna ile Çoban Hikâyesi* (The Story of Suna and the Shepherd), *Şeyhin Oğlu ile Oyuncu Yasemin* (The Sheikh's Son and the Actress Yasemin), *Yanık Ömer ile Güzel Zeynep* (Ömer in Love and Beautiful Zeynep), *Yesirci Şahın Hikâyesi* (The Story of the Easy-Going Shah), *Yusuf and Züleyha, Sürmeli Beg, Ali İzzet, Ali Sir and Gül, Ayhan, Emrah ile Selvi Han* (Emrah and Lady Selvi), *Karacaoğlan, Necip and Telli, Oğuz Pehlivan, Raznihan and Mahfiruze, Sevdakar, Sümmani, Kurbani and Perizat, Seyfi Zulyezen Hikayesi* (The Story of Seyfi Zulyezen).
9. Pertev Naili Boratav, *Köroğlu Destanı* (İstanbul 1984), 18–19.
10. *Hazreti Ali, Ateş Kalesi* (The Castle of Fire), *Billür-i Âzam Cengi* (The War of the Great Crystal), *Elburz Kalesi Cengi* (The War of Elburz Castle), *Hamza Böke, Hayber Kalesi* (Hayber Castle), *Kaf Kalesi* (The Kaf Castle), *Muhammed Hanefi, Taberiye Kalesi Cengi* (The War of Taberiye Castle), *Veysel Karani Hikayesi* (The Story of Veysel Karani), *Yedi Alimler Hikâyesi* (The Story of the Seven Scholars), *Yedi Kale Cengi* (The War of Seven Castles). It should be noted here that religious chapbooks have a strong place in the Alevi tradition, an issue which deserves further research but is beyond the scope of the paper at hand. The book *Buyruk*, which Alevi date to

the time of Shah Ismail, is an integral component of the Alevi *dede* institution. Such alternative literature is part of the Alevi system of localized inherited sanctity, and *Buyruk* texts are dedicated to explaining and propagating the fundamental pillars of the faith and the principal regulations of their practice.

11. Fikret Türkmen, *Aşık Garip Hikayesi* (Ankara 1974), XIV.
12. 'Halk kütlesi için kitaplar bastırılacak', *Akşam*, 17 May 1937, 1. According to Faruk Rıza Güloğlu's classification these books were categorized under six variations: (1) love stories, as *Kerem, Garip*; (2) books on national wars and heroism, as *Koroğlu*; (3) stories on religious wars, such as *Wars of Hazreti Ali, Battal Gazi*; (4) 'new made-up stories' that were influenced by the first, second or even the third group and which were set up as an example, such as the books *Aşık Garip'in Oğlu* (The Son of Ashik Garip), written by the author Muharrem Zeki Korgunal, 1936, Emniyet Kütüphanesi, *Aşık Garibi'in Torunu* (The Grandson of Ashik Garip), by the same author, 1936, *Şah İsmail'in Torunu* (The Grandson of Shah Ismail); (5) stories that were identified and printed on a date different from the time they were directly narrated by the teller, unlike the process of directly rendering lithography into writing: *Bey Börek Hikayesi* (The Story of Beg Börek) identified by Muharrem Zeki Kargunal (1936), the story of *Emrah and Selvi* related by Aşık Kemal and put together by M.Ü. (Murat Uraz); and (6) certain stories by various authors on simple, realistic subjects under the title of *National Stories*. See Faruk Rıza Güloğlu, *Halk Kitaplarına Dair* (İstanbul 1938).
13. See Besim Atalay, *Suna ile Çoban Hikâyesi* (The Story of Suna and the Shepherd) (Ankara 1939); Bekir Sıtkı Kunt, *Arzu ile Kanber* (Ankara 1940).
14. Otto Spies, *Türk Halk Kitapları* (İstanbul 1941), 49.
15. Boratav, *Folklor ve Edebiyat II.*, 213.
16. Spies, op. cit., 56.
17. *Tahir and Zühre* were told as a poem among women, because poetry is more appropriate to the narrations of women. Female story-tellers altered stories by shortening them and adding new poems. It is for this reason that one can find a sequence of *mania* in printed copies. There is a strong probability that such stories were put on paper by female narrators.
18. Kaya, op. cit., 29; Serdar Öztürk, 'Karagöz Co-Opted: Turkish Shadow Theatre of the Early Republic (1923–1945)', *Asian Theatre Journal*, Vol. 23(2) (2006), 292–313.
19. Boratav, *Folklor ve Edebiyat II*, 66.
20. Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds* (California 1995), 63–8.
21. *Ibid.*, 94.
22. İlhan Başgöz, *Sibirya'dan Bir Masal Anası* (Ankara 2002), 256. Boratav, *Folklor ve Edebiyat II*, 31.
23. Başgöz, *Sibirya'dan*, 256.
24. Boratav, *Folklor ve Edebiyat II*, 312.
25. Pertev Naili Boratav, *Halk Edebiyatı Dersleri*, Vol. 1 (İstanbul 2000), 39; Başgöz, *Sibirya'dan*, 256; Bernard Lewis, *Modern Türkiye'nin Doğuşu* (Ankara 1993), 444; Spies, op. cit., 9–10.
26. Selim Nüzhet Gerçek, *Türk Matbaacılığı* (Ankara 1939), 14.
27. Fikret Türkmen, *Tahir ile Zühre* (Ankara 1998), 14.
28. Türkmen, *Aşık Garip*, XV.
29. Boratav, *Halk Edebiyatı Dersleri*, 39.
30. For more information see Başgöz, *Sibirya'dan*; Jacques Ellul, *Sözün Düşüşü* (İstanbul 1998); Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York 1982); Sanders, op. cit.
31. Başgöz, *Sibirya'dan*, 25–26.
32. Boratav, *Halk Edebiyatı Dersleri*, 261.
33. Spies, op. cit., 9.

34. Alpay Kabacalı, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Türkiye'de Matbaa, Basın ve Yayın* (İstanbul 2000), 15.
35. Sanders, op. cit., 59.
36. Salah Birsel, *Kahveler Kitabı* (İstanbul 2002); Ralph Hattox, *Kahve ve Kahvehane: Bir İçeceğin Yakın Doğu'daki Kökenleri* (İstanbul 1998); Osman Cemal Kaygılı, *İstanbul'da Semai Kahveleri ve Meydan Şairleri* (İstanbul 1937); Serdar Öztürk, 'The Struggle Over Turkish Village Coffeehouses (1923–1945)', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44(3) (2008), 435–54.
37. Kabacalı, op. cit., 101.
38. Kazım Karabekir, *İstiklal Harbimiz* (İstanbul 1988), 1013.
39. *Ibid.*, 1013.
40. Burke, op. cit., 207–8.
41. Ellen Kay Trimberger, *Revolution from Above: Military Bureaucrats and Development in Japan, Turkey, Egypt and Peru* (New Brunswick 1978), 3.
42. Zafer Toprak, 'Türkiye'de Sol Faşizm Ya da Otoriter Modernizm 1923–1946', *Toplum ve Bilim*, Vol. 100 (2004), 84–99, 98.
43. See Feroz Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London 1993); Kemal Karpat, *Turkey's Politics: The Transition to a Multi-Party System* (Princeton 1959); Kemal Karpat, 'The Republican People's Party 1923–1945', in Metin Heper and Jacob M. Landau (eds) *Political Parties and Democracy in Turkey* (London 1991), 42–64; Toprak, op. cit.
44. This term is from Lawrence Grossberg's *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York and London 1992). In the glossary, Grossberg defines a 'mattering map' as: 'a socially determined structure of affect which defines the things that do and can matter to those living within the map' (398) which place people in relation to others in their ordinary lives.
45. Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge 2001), 114.
46. *Ibid.*, 52–3.
47. For 'public reading rooms' see Serdar Öztürk, *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesinde Kahvehane ve İktidar* (İstanbul 2006), 184–95.
48. İlhan Başgöz and Howard Wilson, *Türkiye Cumhuriyetinde Milli Eğitim ve Atatürk* (Ankara 1968), 159.
49. 'Köylerde Toplantılar Yapılacak', *Son Posta*, 24 December 1933, 3.
50. Mehmet Aldan, 'Atatürk'ün Bir Uyarısı', *İdarecinin Sesi*, Vol. 11(66) (1997), 29.
51. İsmail Hakkı Tonguç, *Canlandırılacak Köy* (İstanbul 1939), 134–5.
52. *Ibid.*, 135.
53. Hikmet Feridun, 'Beybaba', *Akşam*, 1 December 1939, 3.
54. Peyami Safa, 'Halk Masalları Nasıl Yazılmalı?', *Cumhuriyet*, 21 May 1937, 3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Pertev Naili Boratav, *Halk Hikayeleri ve Halk Hikayeciliği* (Ankara 1946), 214.
57. *Ibid.*, 227.
58. *Ibid.*, 217.
59. Boratav, *Halk Edebiyatı Dersleri*, 97.
60. *Ibid.*, 96–7. It is quite interesting that the schema of Boratav was similar to the development schemes drawn up by writers on oral culture in the West. This schema was drawn up as primary oral culture, written culture and secondary oral culture by Walter J. Ong (op. cit.) and as oral culture, written culture and electronic culture by Barry Sanders (op. cit.). Boratav, on the other hand, emphasized that the nature of story-telling changed, and that story-tellers of oral traditions (oral tradition/primary oral culture) were to be replaced first by books and gazettes (written culture), and later on by electronic devices such as gramophones (electronic culture/secondary oral culture) as a result of social and economic conditions. There is an example which supports

Boratav's conception that new means of communication coinciding with changing living conditions (due to social and economic developments) can change the traditional elements of story-telling: Hacı Ali, a story-teller (ashik) in a coffeehouse in Iran in 1967, complained that young boys eager to be ashiks learned their stories from radio broadcasts instead of learning from a master, and he went on to complain that they did not recognize the master-apprentice relationship. See İlhan Başgöz, 'Turkish Hikaye-Telling Tradition in Azerbaijan, Iran', *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 83(330) (1970), 394. As seen in this example, radio assumed the role of story-telling that was developing in those years. The same could have been said about television if it had been internalized within Iranian social life during the years in question. However, George Gerbner, the pioneer of 'Cultivation Theory', accorded television its due importance (at least in the United States), as it was an essential means of communication in American social life. Television, according to Gerbner, was to be the most significant 'story-teller' of modern-day living. See George Gerbner, 'The Stories We Tell', *Kültür ve İletişim*, Vol. 1 (1998), 17–30.

61. Güloğul, op. cit., 4–5.
62. Safa, op. cit.
63. Ibid.
64. Güloğul, op. cit., 56–7.
65. 'Halk Kitapları ve Halk Resimleri İçin Birer Müsabaka Açıldı', *Kurun*, 16 May 1937, 1.
66. Ibid.; Tuğrul Deliorman, 'Köy Gençliğini Yetiştirme Çareleri ve Okuma Odaları', *Köy Dergisi*, No. 1 (April 1939), 6.
67. 'Halk Kitapları ve', op. cit.
68. Nesip Yağmurdereli, *Sümmâni: Hayatı ve Şiirleri* (İstanbul 1939).
69. Türkmen, *Aşık Garip*, 115.
70. *Aşık Garip ile Şahsenem* (İstanbul 1946), 3.
71. Türkmen, *Aşık Garip*, 140, 144.
72. Ibid., 134.
73. *Aşık Garip ile Şahsenem*, op. cit., 15.
74. *Aşık Garip* (İstanbul 1930), 45; *Aşık Garip* (İstanbul 1933), 45.
75. Ibid., 46.
76. Bekir Sıtkı Kunt, *Arzu ile Kanber* (Ankara 1940).
77. Muharrem Zeki, *Arzu ile Kamber* (İstanbul 1931).
78. Kunt, op. cit., 4.
79. Ibid., 5.
80. Muharrem Zeki, op. cit., 19.
81. Kunt, op. cit., 9.
82. Ibid., 6.

Sergeant Hasan had several fields, vineyards and orchards near the village. Every year at harvest they stocked up on food for the winter and sold the rest in town. With the money they earned, they spent some on the fabrics of the Nazilli Factory. They paid their tax that was calculated according to the amount of animals they owned. Later on, they deposited the remaining money in the town bank.

83. Ibid., 14.

As Kanber could not move his arm, it was quite clear that he had broken it. Immediately a car was found near where Kanber was carefully laid down, and he was taken to the state hospital in the city. The doctors examined his arm and utilizing X-ray technology, took images of his bones. Later on they applied a plaster cast.

84. Deliorman, op. cit., 6.
85. Ibid., 7.

86. Mediha Esenal, *Geç Kalmış Kitap: 1940'lı Yıllarda Anadolu Köylerinden Araştırmalar ve Yaşadığım Çevreden İzlenimler* (İstanbul 1999); Akif Koran, 'Yaren', *Ülkü*, Vol. 5(54) (1943), 11–12; Turhan Kut, 'Köylü Neler Okuyor?', *Yeni Adam*, Vol. 10(341) (1941), 3.
 87. Boratav, *Folklor ve Edebiyat II*, 211.
 88. *Ibid.*, 214.
 89. *Ibid.*, 214.
 90. Fuad Köprülü, *Edebiyat Araştırmaları* (Ankara 1999), 165.
 91. Burke, *op. cit.*, 234, 244–9.
 92. Roger Chartier, *Yeniden Geçmiş: Tarih, Yazılı Kültür, Toplum* (Ankara 1998), 260. (English version: *On the Edge of the Cliff. History, Language, and Practices* (Baltimore and London 1997)).
 93. Öztürk, *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesinde*.
 94. Chartier, *op. cit.*, 274–5, translation mine.
 95. Halit Fahri Ozansoy, 'Halk Roman ve Hikayeleri', *Son Posta*, 12 June 1937, 6.
 96. Boratav, *Halk Hikayeleri*, 217.
 97. Reşat Nuri Güntekin, *Anadolu Notları I–II* (İstanbul n.d.), 142–3.
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