

ANALYZING CHILDHOOD THROUGH GAMES

**An Ethnological Study of Games Played by Children in Turkey during
the 21st Century Compared to Games Played by Prior Generations.**

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ÇOCUKLUĞUN OYUNLAR ÜZERİNDEN ANALİZİ:
Türkiye’de Önceki Nesillerde Büyüyen Çocukların Oynadığı Oyunlar ile
21. Yüzyılda Büyüyen Çocukların Oynadığı Oyunları Karşılaştıran Bir Etnolojik
Araştırma.

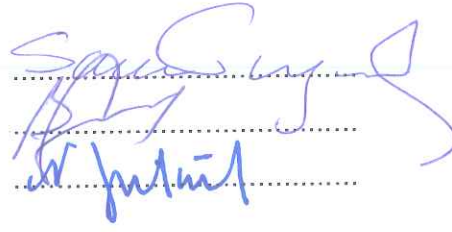
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- 2) Childhood
- 3) Culture Industry
- 4) Play
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Abstract

Based on the literature from the area of Childhood Studies, the concept of childhood was conceived towards the early 17th century and developed during the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution. The economic and social changes of these periods shaped adult's views about children and led to the separation of children from adults' activities. A separate world for children developed, known as childhood, thus, enabling children to have their individual lives.

First, the history of childhood, in the Western culture and, in Turkey is explained to display the differences between both cultures. The traditional games played by children throughout both cultures are described. Then, these traditional games are compared with the video games played by children during the 21st century. The aim of this research is to show how childhood is disappearing in relation to video games.

An ethnological field-research was conducted with seventy-nine children from an elementary school, in an urban area of İstanbul, Turkey. The results of the findings are analyzed with the most recent literature about childhood and video games. Finally, based on the theories of play, New Media and Adorno's Culture Industry, this thesis concurs that as New Media, video games are part of the Culture Industry and belong to the adult world. Therefore, children's world of play has become part of the adult world which causes the disappearance of childhood.

Özet

Çocukluk Çalışmaları alanında yer alan araştırmalara göre çocukluk konsepti 17. yüzyılın başında oluşup, Aydınlanma Çağı ve Endüstri Devrimi'nden sonra gelişmiştir. Bu dönemlerde oluşan ekonomik ve sosyal değişiklikler yetişkinlerin çocuklara karşı olan düşüncelerin değişmesine sebep olup, yetişkinler ile çocukların yer aldığı aktiviteler ayrıldı. Böylece, sadece çocuklara ait olan ayrı bir dünya yaratılmış, çocukluk olarak adlandırılan bu dünyada çocukların kendilerine ait bireysel bir hayat yaşamalarını sağlamıştır.

Bu tezin ilk bölümlerinde, aralarındaki farkları görebilmek için hem Batı kültüründeki hem de Türkiye'deki çocukluk konseptlerinin tarihi anlatılmakta ve her iki kültürde çocuklar tarafından oynanan geleneksel oyunlar açıklanmaktadır. Sonraki bölümlerde bu geleneksel oyunlar, 21. yüzyılda büyüyen çocuklar tarafından oynanan bilgisayar oyunları ile karşılaştırılmaktadır. Bu tezin hedef noktası bilgisayar oyunları ile çocukluk konseptinin yok oluşu arasındaki bağlantıyı araştırmaktır.

İstanbul'da bir ilköğretim okulunun yetmiş dokuz öğrencisi ile etnolojik saha araştırması yapılmıştır. Bu araştırmanın sonuçları, güncel araştırmalara göre analiz edilmiştir. Oyun, Yeni Medya ve Adorno'nun Kültür Endüstrisi teorilerine dayanarak bilgisayar oyunlarının sadece Yeni Medya araçları oldukları için Kültür Endüstrisi'nin parçası olduğu ve yetişkinlerin dünyasına ait olduğu açıklanmaktadır. Çocukların oyun dünyası tekrardan yetişkin dünyasında yer aldığı için modern çocukluk konsepti yok olmaktadır.

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Finally, I would like to thank my fiancé, Fırat Özak for always being by my side and motivating me to make my dream come true.

I am most grateful for you all. Thank you!

Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to Fırat Özak and my sister Pınar.

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Chapter 1- Introduction

Traditional games such as Leap frog, Hide-and-Seek, Playing house, marbles, and Hopscotch, are considered the highlights of childhood, and are a significant part of children's world. But, in the mid- 20th century, with advancements in computer imaging and programming, a social phenomenon occurred throughout children's world. Computers which only used to be for business purposes became tools for children's leisure and entertainment.

The first video games were developed in the early '60s by computer programmers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. At first these games were only played by adult computer enthusiasts and were not meant for children. But, in the '80s, with the commercialization of personal computers and video game consoles, more families began to purchase them. Soon, video games became more accessible to children. By the '90s, video games were part of popular culture and children began to play them more than adults did.

Finally, in the 21st century, video games became the new form of children's play and replaced the traditional games which were once a significant part of children's world. This thesis argues that since video games are part of the children's world, children's world intertwines with the adult world. Thus, the modern concept of childhood, which formed the distinction between both worlds, disappeared.

In the second chapter the history of childhood, how it formed and how it evolved throughout the centuries. First I explain the history of childhood

throughout the Western culture. Since the main focus of my thesis is on childhood, and the games played by children in Turkey, I explain the formation of childhood in Turkey parallel to the history of childhood in the Western culture.

In Chapter 3, I describe the aspect of play through different perspectives. Then I discuss how play exists in the traditional children's games of the Western culture and in Turkey. In order to show the importance of games during childhood, I close the chapter with an analysis of the literature on childhood and games from the Western culture and from Turkey.

My aim in Chapter 3 is to show how traditional games, which have been passed down from generation- to-generation, are part of children's world and maintain the 'play-element' which makes them vital to the existence of childhood. Only through these traditional games can children express genuine play.

In Chapter 4, I explain the history of digital games, which refers to all types of video games, computer games, or video console games. Throughout this thesis I use the term video games to refer to all digital games. My aim in Chapter 4 is to describe how video games came to exist and the genres of video games.

Then, in Chapter 5, I examine the recent literature on video games and childhood studies in order to display the impact of video games on children's lives throughout both cultures. My objective throughout Chapter 5 is to investigate how childhood disappeared in relation to video games. Through

three different perspectives, I explain how video games have led to the disappearance of childhood.

First, through the ludological perspective I display how the 'play-element' exists in traditional games in comparison to video games. Then, through the perspective of Media, I explain how video games are considered New Media. Through use of Theodor Adorno's theory of the 'Culture Industry,' I analyze how video games are part of the Culture Industry as New Media.

Based on these theories, I conclude that video games are part of the adult world. Children's play collides with the adult world and children's lives are no longer separate from the adult world. Therefore, the modern concept of childhood disintegrates.

In Chapter 6, I describe the findings from my ethnological field-research and analyze them according to the literature from Chapter 5. Finally, in the last chapter, I conclude my thesis with closing statements about the findings from my review of literature about childhood, play, traditional children's games and video games. I also describe some of the limitations that might exist throughout my research and what can be done for other research in this area.

The points I try to make throughout my thesis in order to develop my argument are summarized below.

1. Childhood is a social construct that developed as adults views about children changed in accordance with the social and economic changes of the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution,
2. The concept of childhood enables the separation of children's lives from the adult world,

3. The 'play-element' exists in all structures of culture, during childhood it is found in the traditional games children play,
4. Playing is an important factor in the social, physical and psychological development of children and can only be carried out through traditional games,
5. After the advent of the television and the computer, a new form of leisure formed throughout the culture of industrialized –and newly industrialized countries– known as video games,
6. Video games are part of the adult world, and they became more accessible to children when they were commercialized,
7. Children do not play as much traditional games as prior generations did,
8. Video games do not maintain the 'play-element' important to childhood,
9. Video games exist only as part of media referred to as New Media,
10. As New Media video games are part of the Culture Industry which is part of the adult world,
11. By playing video games, instead of traditional games, children become more integrated into the adult world,
12. As children become more integrated into the adult world, both worlds collide, and children are no longer able to 'play' and experience their childhood, and
13. The children's world is no longer distinguishable from the adult world, thus, the modern concept of childhood disappears.

Chapter 2- The History of Childhood as a Concept

In this chapter I explore the concept of childhood in the Western culture and in Turkey. Studies about childhood began in the mid-1950s and were mainly done in regards to children living in Western countries, such as England and the United States of America. In Turkey, because research on children began towards the late 19th and early 20th centuries the number of studies about childhood is limited compared to that of the Western culture.

In the first section, I describe how childhood formed in the Western culture in the early 17th century and how it evolved until the late 19th century. In the second section I discuss the formation and development of childhood in Turkey parallel to that in the Western culture. My goal in this chapter is to clarify how childhood developed in relation to adults' views towards children and to show the differences in the concept of childhood between both cultures.

2.1. Childhood in the West

The approach I use to discuss the concept of childhood is based on the social constructionist perspective. Through this approach I argue that childhood is a concept formed by society, through the development of certain institutions, values, and rules. Childhood is based on a system of continuity and change, which means that it exists no matter the various dynamics of each culture.

2.1.1. The Construction of Childhood

Researchers from various fields have done studies on the concept of childhood. The majority of these researchers, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and

psychologists all agree that the concept of childhood was established towards the late 17th century. This notion was first brought about by historian Phillippe Aries.¹

Aries' significant work on childhood, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* is mentioned frequently throughout the literature on childhood. For his research, Aries examined the personal items, paintings of family portraits, leisure activities, and diaries of upper-class families living in France during the Middle Ages. According to his findings, during the late 16th century, children were thought of as smaller versions of adults, or miniature adults. Especially in some paintings this seems to be more obvious because children were painted either as smaller versions of adults or were not there at all.

Furthermore, Aries analyzes the diary of Dr. Heroard, the physician of Louis XIII, to understand what kinds of activities children during this period took part in. Based on Heroard's accounts, Louis XIII took part in the same activities as adults, no matter the indecency exposed, the immoral behaviors presented and the language used.² Based on Dr. Heroard's writing, when Louis XIII was 6-years of age, he learned how to write, practice archery, play adult games such as chess, Racket ball, Prisoners Base, and other parlor games. By the age of 7-years Louis XIII, and other upper-class or noble children, dressed

¹ Phillippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962), 132-133.

² Aries, *Ibid*, 62-64.

in the same clothes as adults, and were told to stop playing with dolls or other toys. Instead, these children were taught how to ride horses, shoot, hunt and do take part in all other adult activities.

Through these examples, and many others, Aries shows that, during the Middle Ages children were not provided any assistance or guardianship and were not thought of as having different needs than adults, or separate lives and identities of their own.³ But, between the 15th -16th centuries, the Moralists began condemning the adult activities which they found to be indecent and inappropriate for children because, at the time, adults had “a desire to safeguard it’s (the child’s) morality and also educate it (the child), by forbidding it (the child) to play games henceforth recognized as good.” Adults no longer took part in activities such as gambling games, parlor games, dancing or theatre.⁴

Between the 17th -18th centuries, the effects of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment brought about new views towards games and other activities. Specific games were considered to be educational, and help prepare children for adulthood or for war. New teachings from pedagogues brought about gymnastics and other physical activities into the school curriculum. Slowly the distinction between adult activities and children’s activities became more visible. More specifically, adults no longer played games such as Hide-and-seek, Blind Man’s Bluff, or Kiss Under the Chandelier because they found

³ Phillippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962), 65-66.

⁴ Aries, *Ibid*, 81-87.

them to be childish. Adults who still played these games were thought of as being of lower-class or uneducated and uncivilized.⁵

Finally, in the beginning of the 18th century, adults of the upper-class/nobility no longer played any types of games, only children were permitted to play games and adults of the lower-class were thought to play as well. Most importantly, Aries concurs that the “old community of games was destroyed at one and the same time between children and adults, between lower class and middle class” and this can be thought as the beginning of childhood.⁶ These changes mentioned by Aries show how childhood formed as adults’ learned more about children.

2.1.2. The Development of Childhood-18th-20th Centuries

In this section I describe how the concept of childhood developed throughout the 18th-20th centuries in the Western culture.

In *The Making of a Modern Family*, Shorter elaborates on the formation of the modern family throughout the Western culture. Based on Shorter’s work, the formation of the institution of family facilitated the advancement of the fundamental ideas of childhood throughout England, Europe and the United States of America.

According to Shorter, in England and the rest of Europe, infant mortality was very high because adults were not able to properly take care of their

⁵ Phillipe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life*, trans. Robert Baldick (New York: Vintage, 1962), 87-91.

⁶ Aries, *Ibid*, 91-99.

children due to the harsh economic and social conditions during the early years of industrialization.⁷ During the 19th century, Shorter explains that the technological and economical advancements brought by the Industrial Revolution and the Enlightenment introduced new books and periodical magazines about child-rearing. These books helped mothers take better care of their children. Along with new advancements in science, parents took special precautions taking care of their children and infant deaths began to decrease.

Meanwhile, during the same period, the writings of Rousseau and Locke influenced more research on child-rearing practices. In their writings, Rousseau and Locke explained the importance of children to society. They believed that it was important for children to be educated. Based on Rousseau⁸, childhood was children's separate world from the world of adults. Rousseau believed that childhood was a time for children to learn how to be a good human being and grow to become a good citizen. Similar to Rousseau, Locke⁹ also believed that children had to be educated. But, Locke argued that children were clean slates, or *tabula rasa*. For this reason, children needed to be taught how to behave and act in order to survive later in life as an adult.

Eventually, as child-rearing practices were learned by society and the adults' views about children changed more improvement was made in

⁷ Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1977), 210-220.

⁸ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education*, trans., Alan Bloom (USA: Basic Books, 1979), 10.

children's lives. The concept of childhood was further developed. With changes in children's lives, the aspects of traditional society diverged as well. As mothers began spending more time taking care of their children, they spent more time at home. Fathers began socializing less outside and spending more time at home with their children and wives. Soon, the nuclear family formed with the mother, the father and the child at the center. Families spent more time together and the private life of the family formed, which Shorter refers to as 'domesticity.'¹⁰

The rise of domesticity increased the roles of both the mother and the father, and parents focused more on the well-being of their children. Thus, the formation of the family led to the increase of adults focus on children. Based on Shorter's work, the modern concept of the nuclear family increased the importance given to children and facilitated the formation of the modern concept of childhood.

According to Hendrick,¹¹ the concept of childhood has always been studied in relation to the adult world and through the adult perspective. Similar to the arguments of Aries' and Shorter, Hendrick argues that after the 18th century, the societal relations between adults and children changed during "the Enlightenment, the Rousseauian theory of Nature, the Industrial Revolution, the

¹⁰ Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1977), 217-225.

¹¹ Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English society- 1880-1990* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1-8.

Romantics and the Evangelical revival.”¹² With these changes, children were thought of as individuals with lives different from adults’ lives and the concept of childhood was conceived. After this, children no longer took part in the same activities as adults.

However, in *Pricing the Priceless Child- The Changing Social Value of Children*, Zelizer explains that between the late 18th – mid-19th centuries, children of lower- class and working- class families had to work in order to provide for their families. Before the 19th century, when childhood was still developing adults whose children worked thought of children only in an economical way, which Zelizer refers to as an “economic value.”

Later, in the mid -1950s, as job opportunities for adults increased, the working conditions in factories became better and laws prohibiting child labor were developed. Families of the lower-class and the working-class began to earn more, and they no longer had to send their children to work. This helped parents to focus more on the psychological and emotional needs of their children, thus, children became more of an “emotional and affective asset” rather than being an “economic value.” Zelizer argues that parents, and society as a whole, had recognized that children should be raised at home with their

¹² Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English society- 1880-1990*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.

family, they should be sent to school in order to receive a good education and they should be allowed to play instead of work.¹³

One final point I would like to make is about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC).¹⁴ The UNCRC is a treaty formed distinctly for children and youth (from 0-18 years of age), different from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Enacted on November 20, 1989, all children possess “the right to survival, to develop the fullest, to protection from harmful influences, abuse and exploitation, and to participate fully in family, cultural and social life.” I found it necessary to mention the statements of the UNCRC because they show the general outlook society has towards children. Each statement of the UNCRC display the steps in which childhood was conceived can be traced.

Through these studies on childhood, it can be seen that as adults’ views about children changed, the concept of childhood formed concrete foundations and the lives of children began to improve. Having explored the history of childhood in the West, in the next section I focus on how the concept of childhood formed and developed in Turkey.

2.2. Childhood in Turkey

As I mentioned earlier, research on childhood in Turkey is limited. The years between the 17th -19th centuries are considered to be the Dark Ages of the

¹³ Viviana A. Rotman Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (United Kingdom: Princeton University Press, 1985), 10.

¹⁴ Unicef, “Conventions on the Rights of the Child,” <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>, April 4, 2013.

Ottoman Empire and research in any field begins in the early 19th century. For this reason, there are only records of children's lives from the Tanzimat era, from the year 1839 to the early years after the Second World War.¹⁵

From the year 1299 until the year 1922, the Ottoman Empire ruled the land now known as Turkey, along with others. Turkey was the center of the empire with İstanbul as its capital, and this caused for peoples of various cultures to reside in İstanbul. Even after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, with its cultural capital still being İstanbul, the Republic of Turkey is still home to groups of people from different cultures.

Being a multicultural country, it would be difficult to say that the meaning of childhood is the same throughout all of Turkey. Especially in İstanbul there are people from various regions of Turkey who have different cultural backgrounds. But, as a whole, the general perspective of people living in İstanbul is less traditional compared to other parts of Turkey. Therefore, in order to prevent any generalizations, the literature I discuss in this chapter, and throughout this thesis, is only in regards to the history of childhood as it developed in İstanbul, and not throughout Turkey as a whole.

2.2.1. Childhood in the Ottoman Empire-18th -20th Centuries

Research on children in Turkey begins with discussion about the lives of children who lived during the Tanzimat era, and increases in detail during the Second Constitutional Period, between the years 1908-1918.

¹⁵ Alan Duben, *Turkish Families and Households in Historical Perspective*, Research Paper No. 84-014 (İstanbul: Boğaziçi University, Institute of Social Sciences, April 1984), 2-3.

As I mentioned previously, research on childhood in Turkey began very late compared to the West. According to Okay,¹⁶ there is no recorded information about children before the Tanzimat era. The literature on how childhood developed in Turkey is discussed as a succession of how childhood developed in the Western culture. For this reason, the points in the literature from Turkey are the same as those made in the literature of the Western culture. Many studies share a majority of the same aspects, so, I only discuss specific studies.

In his work, Onur¹⁷ confirms that the concept of childhood formed in Turkey the same way it had throughout the Western culture, after the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution. Onur argues that the change from an agricultural country to an industrialized country, the formation of the middle-class and the new teachings about children and society were the factors that led to the separation of children's lives from the adult's world. These factors enabled children to become more important for the family and society as a whole.¹⁸

Okay explains that in the year 1869, the new educational system in France was adopted to the schools of the Ottoman Empire. With this system, students were divided into classes according to their ages. This allowed each

¹⁶ Cüneyd Okay, *Osmanlı Çocuk Hayatında Yenileşmeler 1850-1900* (İstanbul: Kırkambar Yayınları, 1998), 10-30.

¹⁷ Bekir Onur, *Toplumsal Tarihte Çocuk: 23-24 Nisan 1993 Sempozyumu* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1994), 4.

¹⁸ Onur, *Ibid*, 1-5.

child to learn according to his/her individual capacity. Improvements were also made in regards to children's health and hygiene, children's clothes, toys, games, activities and literature. For the first time, toys from the West were being brought into the Ottoman Empire, causing children to stop playing with the toys made locally in the Ottoman town of Eyüp. According to Okay, the changes experienced in the Ottoman Empire occurred parallel to the social and economic changes throughout the Western culture. Childhood developed simultaneously in both the Western culture and in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁹

Aside from these, in another work, Öztan describes an interesting point about the commerce between the West and the Ottoman Empire and how it affected children's lives. During the mid-19th century, upper-class businessman from the cities of Thessalonica, İzmir and İstanbul traveled to Europe and brought back clothes, books, and toys for their children and for the Sultanate.²⁰ Thus, children of the upper-class and the sultanate dressed in the Western style, and played with toys of the Western culture.²¹ But, Öztan states that the most important change occurred towards the end of the 19th century, during the beginning of the First World War. Scholars and intellectuals of the Empire began to translate the books of thinkers, such as Locke and Rousseau.

¹⁹ Cüneyd Okay, *Osmanlı Çocuk Hayatında Yenileşmeler 1850-1900* (İstanbul: Kırkambar Yayınları, 1998), 32-50.

²⁰ Güven Gürkan Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 44-45.

²¹ Öztan does not discuss the games played by children of the upper-class, the Sultanate or the working-class. Therefore, his work does not provide any information on whether the games played during that period were affected by the Western culture as well.

Children's books were published with fairy tales and fables, and other books about child care were published for adults. Soon, the mass production of these books helped parents learn more about child care and children were able to entertain themselves.

During the Young Turks revolt, between the years 1908-1918, children were placed under strict training by the Young Turks so that they would become 'good citizens' of the country. Öztan argues that children were being militarized through the radical nationalist principles of the Young Turks. At the same time, because of mass production, more war toys and games about war were being created. These factors impacted children's lives greatly. Until the formation of the Republic of Turkey, in the year 1923 children were part of the adults' world of politics and could not live out their childhoods.²²

2.2.2. Childhood in the Republic of Turkey- 20th Century

In the year 1923, the Republic of Turkey was established. Several reforms were implemented throughout society in order to develop the new republic. Some reforms were done in regards to the alphabet, the spoken and written language, clothes and the educational system. The changes in the educational system were imperative to children's lives. Children were taught new principles about the values of family, nationalism and love for the Republic of Turkey. Centers for the care of orphans (Çocuk Esirgeme Kurumu, 1921), holidays, activities and other celebrations, such as the National Sovereignty and Child Holiday (23

²² Güven Gürkan Öztan, *Türkiye'de Çocukluğun Politik İnşası* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2011), 46.

Nisan Bayramı) were developed especially for children. New laws were placed into the Constitution in regards to children's basic human rights. Altogether, these developments helped motivate children after the difficult period they had faced. The transformation from the Ottoman Empire to Turkey was quite difficult but, as Öztan shows, children were never left out during the process. They were always taken care of by society during the formation of the Republic.

In the 1950s, the modernization period of Turkey advancements occurred throughout society and the economy. Adults, especially parents, began to think of children in the sense of the 'modern childhood paradigm' as in the Western culture. According to this paradigm, adults began to believe that children should enjoy their time as children, go to school, play with friends and be with their family.

Along with this, I feel it is important to point out another point. Focusing entirely on the Western culture without considering the religious foundation of the Turkish culture would cause flaws in the explanation of how children are seen and thought of in Turkey. Since the majority of the Turkish population consists of Muslim citizens, it would be important to discuss the Islamic views of children. Based on the work of Fernea,²³ in Islam, children are considered to be pure and innocent as soon as they are born. As in the Lockean sense, children are thought of as 'empty slates' – tabula rasa- and need to be

²³ Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, *Children in the Muslim Middle East* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 6-7.

taught everything about life, family and the world from their parents. Muslim children are not considered to be evil or with fault when they are born. But, Fernea explains that in the belief of Islam, in order to be a good person, and live a good life, children have to respect and abide their parents.²⁴ Based on the teachings of Islam, children in Turkey are idealized and the family is paramount to Turkish society. Traditionally, marriage is seen as the conjoining of two families.²⁵ Fernea explains that, the structure of the Turkish family is in fact quite the opposite of the Western idea of the nuclear family, especially in most parts of Turkey.

As Shorter²⁶ explains, factors which led to the further development of childhood in the Western culture were the formation of the nuclear family, the formation of the private life, and domesticity. Such was the case in Turkey, but, there was even more emphasis on children. For example, according to another study done by Kağıtçıbaşı,²⁷ the model of family in Turkey differs from the model of family in the Western culture. Based on the relationships between the members of the family, the family members as individuals and the adults' views towards their children, the members of a traditional Turkish family are more interwoven with one another when compared to the Western family.

²⁴ Elizabeth Warnock Fernea, *Children in the Muslim Middle East* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 8.

²⁵ Fernea, *Ibid*, 4.

²⁶ Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1977), 217-225.

²⁷ Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, *Kültürel Psikoloji: Kültür Bağlamında İnsan ve Aile* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998), 106-107.

According to Kağıtçıbaşı, there are three types of families that exist throughout the Turkish culture. These types of family are the “Karşılıklı bağımlılığa dayanan, Bağımsızlık ve Karşılıklı duygusal bağlılık.”²⁸ In “karşılıklı bağımlılığa dayanan” families, relatives are more dependent on each other, the relationship between parents and children are based more on the financial support the child provides to the family-usually males, and more traditional values are emphasized.

In the “bağımsızlık” and “karşılıklı duygusal bağlılık” families, relatives are less dependent on each other, there is more room for individualism of the family members and the relationship between parents and children are based more on a psychological and emotional connection rather than an economic benefit. These findings are confirmed in another study done by Kağıtçıbaşı, the Turkish Value of Children (VOC) study.²⁹

For the VOC study, Dinn and Kağıtçıbaşı asked middle-class and lower-class couples the reasons why they decided to have children. The reasons found were based on specific factors which Dinn and Kağıtçıbaşı later categorized as the economic/utilitarian, psychological, and social/normative.³⁰ The economic/utilitarian factor is based on parents having children for economic

²⁸ Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, *Kültürel Psikoloji: Kültür Bağlamında İnsan ve Aile* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998),111.

²⁹ Ayşe Ayçiçeği Dinn and Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, “The Value of Children for Parents in the Minds of Emerging Adults,” *Cross-Cultural Research*, 44:2(2010), 151-177. (Accessed 23.01.2013)

³⁰ Dinn and Kağıtçıbaşı, *Ibid*, 155-160.

reasons, so that they can work and provide for the family. The psychological factor is based on parents having children, especially mothers, so that they are not alone in the house or have someone to take care of, nurture and spent time with. The social/normative factor is based on parents having children, especially fathers, so that the children may carry on the family business and the family name (esp. male children).

Based on findings from Kağıtçıbaşı's study, the reasons why parents decide to have children change according to the adults' education, socio-economic status and predetermined views about children. Parents of the lower/working-class, who are high-school graduates, middle-school graduates or neither, were found to have children based more on the economic/utilitarian factor, so that the children may work and provide for the family. Whereas, the reasons why parents of middle/upper-class, who were high-school graduates or higher, had children were based more on the psychological factor or the social/normative factor. Mothers of the middle/upper-class stated that they have children because they want a crowded home, and so they want to pass on their family lineage.³¹ This study helps to show the different reasons why adults have children. Knowing these reasons, and the factors which effect adults' decisions to have children, help to understand the different views that adults in Turkey have about children.

³¹ Ayşe Ayçiçeği Dinn and Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, "The Value of Children for Parents in the Minds of Emerging Adults," *Cross-Cultural Research*, 44:2(2010), 151-177. (Accessed 23.01.2013)

Overall, based on the literature of Duben, Okay, Onur, Fernea and Dinn and Kağıtçıbaşı, the modern concept of childhood in Turkey seems to be a variation of the teachings of the Western culture and of Islam. But, with urbanization, globalization and further advancements in technology, adults' views about children changed throughout Turkey. The institution of family also changed along with a modification of children's lives and how they were valued within society.³²

In conclusion, in this chapter I explored the history of childhood in the Western culture and during the Ottoman Empire and in Turkey. In the next chapter, Chapter 3, I explain the importance of play in culture. Then, I continue to discuss the traditional children's games played in the Western and in (the Ottoman Empire) Turkey, between the 18th-20th centuries.

³² Çiğdem Kağıtçıbaşı, *Kültürel Psikoloji: Kültür Bağlamında İnsan ve Aile* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1998), 106-130.

Chapter 3- Review of Traditional Children's Games

*We don't stop playing because
we grow old, we grow old
because we stop playing.*
George Bernard Shaw

In the first section of this chapter I explain how play is the fundamental aspect of culture. In the next two sections I describe the traditional children's games of the Western culture and of Turkey. My goal in this chapter is to display how the traditional games played by children-of both cultures- create a world separate from the adult-world through the aspect of playing.

3.1. Play and Games

Games of all sorts have existed throughout civilizations for thousands of years. The very first board game developed by humans is considered to be the Mancala developed 2,000 years ago.³³ Discovered by archaeologists in the areas of North Africa and the Near East, the game Mancala is a strategic game similar to chess. This shows that games exist for centuries throughout different cultures, in different ways and through use of different tools. The main concept behind all games is playing. Playing can be defined in many different ways. I try to explain play through various perspectives. Then I try to explain how play exists in culture and throughout children's games.

³³ Vesna Bikic and Jesna Vukovic, "Board Games Reconsidered: Mancala in the Balkans," *Orijinalni Naucni Clanak UDK*, 79 (2010):184-209. (Accessed 20.05.2013)

3.1.1. The 'Play-element' in Culture

Historian Johan Huizinga was the first researcher to explain that play is not just the lack of work but is, in fact, the main component of culture and society.

Huizinga's work on the theory of play has been the basis of research in the area of Games studies. In *Homo Ludens: The Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, Huizinga defines play as an action which helps to maintain the survival of a living creature and explains that the structures of culture, such as religion, poetry, language, and drama all carry the 'play-element.'

Huizinga explains that the 'play-element' is the essence and spirit of these structures and thus, the foundation of culture and civilization as a whole.³⁴

When people take part in sacred rituals and activities that exist within these structures, (e.g. writing as the activity of language, praying as the activity of religion and so on) the 'play-element' comes to form. With these rituals and activities, people 'play' and create a world different than the real world. But this can only be possible if the other characteristics of play come to form as a result of the activity. In order for this to happen, the activity must be able to separate the player(s) from the real, create an escape from the real, have certain rules and be played seriously. When games are played seriously, player(s) are aware that it is imaginary but they still pretend as if it were real.³⁵

³⁴ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: The Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 33.

³⁵ Huizinga, *Ibid*, 19-21.

By pretending to be in the imaginary world of the game, players bring out the “ludic function” of the play-element. The purpose of the ludic function is to create an object, a location, a world or a person that is not part of reality.³⁶ Unfortunately, throughout his work, Huizinga does not describe traditional children’s games. But, Huizinga does discuss some other important aspects of games. For instance, Huizinga discusses the competitive aspect of games. Usually, people play these games in order to win and become victorious over the other players. I decided to use this interpretation for the ball games, running and catching games, or hiding games played by children. In these games children also compete against one another in order to score a goal or catch someone. Then they gain victory in their realm of the play world, which they cannot yet do in the world of adults. This enables children to live out their competitive instinct which helps them learn the skills they need to survive in life.³⁷

In general, Huizinga shows how play is the key component of everything in culture. One disadvantage of his work is that he does not discuss child’s play or describe any children’s games in detail. Since he focuses more on the play-element throughout structures of society there have been many critics in the field who find this inefficient. But, still, Huizinga’s work is considered to be fundamental for all studies about games and play.

³⁶ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: The Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 25.

³⁷ Huizinga, *Ibid*, 50-52.

After Huizinga, anthropologist Caillois provides a detailed analysis of play in the world of adults, children and animals. Through his analysis of the different characteristics of play, Caillois formulates the four most important forms³⁸ which the 'play-element' may take throughout any activity or structure of culture. Caillois called these the "Four Main Rubrics," which consisted of the traits of Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx.

Agon refers to games that consist of competition between players based on their physical skills such as football, billiards, chess, soccer, and basketball. Alea refers to games which involve external chance or destiny that cannot be changed by any of the players' skills, such as roulette, lottery, card games and casino games. Mimicry refers to games in which players pretend to be something or someone else, such as, simulation, theatre, children's pretend games of House, doctor and bank. Lastly, Ilinx refers to games which cause players dizziness or temporary changes in the body's physical equilibrium, such as, swinging, jumping, spinning around and other whirling or rapid movements.

Caillois notes that these groups were not necessarily organized based on children's games alone.³⁹ But, many studies on children's games have applied Caillois' groups to children's games. The important thing is to keep in mind that they are significant for adult games (casino games, card games or betting games) and can also be used to analyze theatre, film, and other forms of leisure

³⁸ Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans., Meyer Barash. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 12-13.

³⁹ Caillois, *Ibid*, 14.

or entertainment. Thus, I use these traits in the second section of this chapter in which I describe the traditional games of Turkey.

3.1.2. A Psychoanalysis of Play

From a psychoanalytical perspective, Freud shows how play is an imperative part of early childhood. In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud explains that playing helps children live out unpleasant events they may experience during early childhood. Through analysis of a 1.5 year old male child's playing behavior, Freud illustrates⁴⁰ how the child transfers the stress he felt during an unpleasant event through use of a toy. By throwing the specific toy away from him and then taking it back, the child would relive the arrival and departure of his mother.

Freud interprets the child's behavior in several ways. But, the interpretation I found relevant was the one in which Freud explains that when the child would take back his toy he would create a world in which he had control over his mother's return. By repeating this movement whenever his mother left, the child would also yell out a word and this would relieve him of the stress experienced with his mother's departure. Freud concludes that, the child's play helped him to handle his instinctual urge of having his mother by his side. Therefore, based on the pleasure principle, all individuals want to possess things that give them pleasure and stay away from things that give them

⁴⁰ Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," *Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works, The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol XVIII (1920-1922)* (London: Vintage, 2001), 14-18.

less pleasure. Since life does not instantly provide things that give pleasure, individuals learn how to regulate their urges. Therefore, early playing is important for children because they learn how to control their actions and they acquire the discipline necessary for dealing with the future endeavors in life.

Another psychoanalyst, Winnicott,⁴¹ explains that play is a 'transitional phenomenon' of childhood. Since the first object the child sees is the mother's breast, and the person the child is close to is also the mother there is an immediate bond formed between the mother and the child. In order to successfully pass the transitional phase, children need to change this bond. Winnicott claims that by playing with objects, that symbolize the mother, children will gradually learn how the emotions we feel can also be expressed in the outside world. Thumb sucking, for example is a primary action which small infants take part in when they are no longer being breast fed. After this, children move on to other objects such as toys, or blankets. Playing with these objects, along with the support of the mother, helps the child to form experiences in the external world and associate them with his/her internal world in order to form a stable connection.

The transitional phase is imperative because it allows the child to journey into 'experiencing' other objects in the world from a more objective viewpoint. This phase is critical for children to live-out so that they do not experience problems with their relationships with life and other people when they become

⁴¹ D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), 47-52.

adults. It is imperative that the changes experienced during this period be supported by the mother both emotionally and physically. Thus, by playing, children experience the transitional phenomenon without any problems, and this helps children to comprehend and distinguish between the things that are real and those that are unreal.

Thus far, through different views I have explained how the 'play-element' is an imperative component of culture and society. My goal for this section was to explain how play is an important part of childhood. In the next section I describe the games played throughout the Western culture.

3.2. Traditional Games of the Western Culture

After prominent folklorists such as Gomme, and W.W. Newell, more advanced research methods were being used, in the early '50s, by researchers of children's games. American folklorist, Brewster, was the first to collect data about games children played in America based on field-research. Brewster went to different parts of the United States of America to learn what games children played, how they played them and what the rules of the games were. But, I do not discuss the details of Brewster's study because I provide information from more recent and detailed studies in the following passages.

A more important study on children's games was done in the 1950s, by anthropologists Iona Opie and Peter Opie. The research was done on street and playground games played by children from different areas of the United Kingdom. By the year, 1959, two-thousand five hundred games were collected and described in *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren*. With the

information gathered about these games, in the 1960s, they began their second research.

In their second research, *Children's Street and Playground Games*, Opie and Opie provide detailed descriptions of "rough-and-tumble games" from ten-thousand children aged 6-12-years.⁴² They collected data by asking children from elementary schools in nearly sixty different areas of the United Kingdom about the games they played at school and observed how they played those games. Opie and Opie's research was the first field-research that obtained information directly from children based on children's responses. Based on the children's responses, the rules, directions and goals of all the games were collected.

The main goal of Opie and Opie's work was to learn the games children play freely. In order to do so, they observed, first-hand, only the games children played without any other material but the players themselves, without any adult supervision and within their own space. After their collection of data, Opie and Opie grouped games according to the specific movements, rules and steps that they possess. The groups Opie and Opie compiled the games into were "Starting a Game, Chasing Games, Catching Games, Seeking Games,

⁴² Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Hunting Games, Racing Games, Dueling Games, Exerting Games, Daring Games, Guessing Games, Acting Games and Pretending Games.”⁴³

In the first group of games, the Starting Games, children perform certain actions and sing certain rigmaroles or rhymes in order to choose the player who will play first or the player who will be It. Since these games are similar to each other I do not explain them here in detail.

In the second category, Chasing games, the main goal is for one player, chosen as the catcher, to chase the other players while the other players run away, hide or play jokes on the catcher. Opie and Opie state that children’s “pleasure in chasing games seems to lie simply in the exercise and excitement of chasing and being chased.” There is also an aspect of contagion in these games because the children tag each other by touching one another, but, Opie and Opie state that children do not seem to mind this because it “had significance in the past.”

One fundamental example of a chasing game, is Three Lives⁴⁴ in which players use a ball to tag one another. No specific player is chosen to be It. The game begins when one of the players “throws it (the ball) at someone else, and whoever is hit by the ball below the thigh loses a ‘life.’” With lives, players have more chances of continuing in the game no matter if they get hit by the ball. All players receive three lives, and try to run away from the ball as much as

⁴³ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children’s Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), xvii-xxvi.

⁴⁴ Opie and Opie, *Ibid*, 74.

possible in order not to get hit. The game ends when the last player is tagged with the ball. Other chasing games are Blindman's Bluff, What's the Time Mr. Wolf?, Touchwood, Shadow touch, Help Chase, and Little Black Man.

The third category, Catching games, involves games in which one player becomes the catcher, or 'It,' and tries to catch other players. The main goal of catching games is for the person chosen as the catcher, or 'It', to catch another player in order to change places with them. Some examples of catching games are Wall to wall, Bar the Door, British Bulldog and Prisoner's Base. Since these games are similar to the chasing games I do not discuss them here in detail.

In the fourth category, Seeking games, players must hide in a location where the player who is 'It,' the catcher, cannot find them. The goal of the game is not to be found by the catcher and not to become the catcher. The most popular game is Hide-and-Seek which Opie and Opie state is the simplest form of seeking games, and is usually played by younger children.⁴⁵ In this game, one player becomes the seeker. S/he turns around with eyes closed and counts back from 100 or 50, then tries to find the other players either with eyes closed or open. Variations of this game involve blindfolding the seeker, choosing more than one seeker, or being poked by the seeker.⁴⁶ Other examples of seeking

⁴⁵ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 153-154.

⁴⁶ Opie and Opie, *Ibid*, 153-157.

games are Man hunting, I draw a snake upon your back, Buzz Off, Tin Can Tommy and Sardines.

The fifth category, Hunting games, involves two separate teams of players who compete with each other, which Opie and Opie refer to as “the pursuers” and “the pursued.”⁴⁷ The pursued is the team being followed by the other team. The other team is the pursuers and they try to find the pursued. But, the pursued also help the pursuers find them by leaving behind clues. The main goal of these games is for the pursued to help the pursuers find them. Some examples of hunting games are Hare and Hounds, Jack, Jack, Shine a Light, Tracking, Paper chase, Stalking and Hoist the Green flag.

The sixth category, Racing games, involves more physical activity and players rely on their individual skills when competing against the other players. But, as Opie and Opie point out, “the fleetness of foot is not necessarily the decisive factor.” These games also consist of obstacles or other steps which players have to overcome as they race against the other players. Some racing games are May I, Peep behind the curtain, Black Magic, Drop Handkerchief, Bump-on-the-back and Puss in the Corner.

Dueling games, the seventh category, are generally played with two players. The goal of these games is for the players to compete with one another in a battle or duel. In these games players rely on their physical strength and fortitude. Some examples of dueling games are Piggyback fights, Danger Ride,

⁴⁷ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 157-210.

Knuckles, Flat Jack, Slappies and Stinging. These are the games which Opie and Opie refer to as rough-and-tumble. They involve physical conflict among the players and usually involve male children.⁴⁸

In the ninth category, Exerting games, the players battle each other's qualities and usually the last player standing wins. The main goal of these games is for the players to compete against one another through certain obstacles while doing certain movements. One example of an Exerting game is Leapfrog, which Opie and Opie state was quite popular in the 16th century but lost popularity towards the 19th century, before the end of the First World War.

In the game Leapfrog, which can be played with just two players or more, the players all bend down and crouch in a straight line. The first player in line "jumps over him and runs forward a few steps, and makes a back himself, the second in the line jumps over each of these two players and runs forward a few more steps and makes a third back."⁴⁹ This continues until all the players have jumped over each other and of course, this game also has many variations such as Gentle Jack and it is also known in Turkey as Birdirbir.

The next categories, Daring, Guessing, Acting and Pretending games involve less physical activities and more talent-oriented or social skills in order to pretend, imitate or act dramatically. According to Opie and Opie, Film Stars is a very popular outdoor game played by children in England during the 20th

⁴⁸ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 212-227.

⁴⁹ Opie and Opie, *Ibid*, 247-249.

century. In Film Stars, a group of players who are usually girls, stay on separate sides of a road and call out names of famous actors from films to each other. The player on one side tries to guess the name of the actor, then she has to run back to the other side of the road and say the actor's aloud. If she guesses the name correctly, then she changes places with the other player and the steps are repeated.⁵⁰

Another example is the game Mothers and Fathers. This game is also played more by younger female children. Players create a pretend house, then, each player becomes the mother, the father and the baby. Throughout the game each player acts out certain behaviors and actions of their character. Another similar game is Playing School, in which children pretend to be teachers and students. Other games that are played more often by male children are war games, cops and robbers or other games based on the superhero or fantasy characters in television shows, cartoons, comic books or movies.⁵¹

Games of the pretending category are very important because they directly exhibit the ludic function of games. As Huizinga states, the ludic function is when players create a different world from reality, which has imaginary objects or characters. As long as all the players pretend that the world is real, even though they know it is imaginary, the ludic function is

⁵⁰ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 275-277.

⁵¹ Opie and Opie, *Ibid*, 331-343.

utilized. The ludic function is most imperative because it allows the freedom for children to utilize their imagination and express their emotions.

For this study, Opie and Opie⁵² used the method of first-hand interviews. They met with children face-to-face and asked them about what kinds of games they played. The questions they asked were about the rules, the steps, the names and whether any other materials were required to play the games. The groups of children they interviewed were from specific parts of the United Kingdom, went to an elementary-school, and were between the ages of 9-12 years.

Since the criteria for children (age, school, location) they chose to interview were standardized, this study is academically reliable and I chose to use it as a template for my field-research (which I discuss in Chapter 6). Aside from the research methods used, the main importance of Opie and Opie's study is that it showed how children behave during free-play.

Opie and Opie's research was the first study to accurately explore and record children's free-play. They showed how during free-play, without any adult supervision, without use of any other materials and within their own space, children live out their imaginary worlds by playing games in any way they desire. Opie and Opie's research also shows how traditional games possess the ludic function which as I explain later on throughout this thesis, video games do not.

⁵² Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

According to the volume put together by Avedon and Sutton-Smith, play is “behavior for fun, for pleasure of action without thought of consequence or results.”⁵³ In *The Study of Games*, Avedon and Sutton-Smith compiled literature about different studies done in regards to games and childhood. Studies from different fields are divided among chapters and there were several studies done about different ways that traditional games can be categorized.

In the article, “The Kissing Games of Adolescents in Ohio,” Sutton-Smith explains the outcome of a field-research done in the 1950s about how both younger and older children played the Chasing game called Kiss and chase. In order to gather data, questionnaires were given to 246 high-school children in the 5th-12th grades (approximately between 9-18 years old), and 100 university students between the ages of 18-19 years.⁵⁴

The questionnaire used listed 54 different variations of the Kiss and Chase games. Students had to respond whether they liked or disliked the games listed. One requirement was that, students had to respond only to the games they played themselves. Along with the questionnaires, a group of children from another rural high school in Ohio provided detailed descriptions about the 54 games listed. The objective of this research was to find any differences that might exist between the age groups and how the games were played in

⁵³ Elliott M. Avedon and Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Study of Games* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971), 5.

⁵⁴ Avedon and Sutton-Smith, *Ibid*, 194-216.

comparison to the older descriptions of the games from the collections of Gomme and Newell.

Sutton-Smith divided the responses into three different groups based on the players' ages, the rules of the games and the directions of the games. Based on the responses, there was a difference in how the older children played each game compared to how the younger children played them. Sutton-Smith explains that the rules of the Kiss and Chase were different in the 19th century as described in Gomme's and Newell's collection. Players would only be kissed as a penalty during the games. But, as Sutton-Smith found, the older students' descriptions of these games had more instances of kissing than usual. This showed that changes do not only occur among different types of games but also within one category of traditional games as well. The findings of this study are important because they show that the rules of games can change with time and that traditional games are flexible. Children of different ages, living in different areas can play the same games in different ways.⁵⁵

All of the descriptions of traditional games I provided thus far, all show how traditional games have many aspects, such as rules, directions and certain requirements, which need a great deal of organization by the players. But, no matter where the games are played or who they are played by, the rules can vary and players can play them however way they want as long as the end-goal of the game is the same. The studies done by Opie and Opie, Avedon, and

⁵⁵ Elliott M. Avedon, Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Study of Games* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1971), 210-216.

Sutton-Smith are elaborate in showing the different traits, rules, directions, goals and steps of the games. This array of traditional games has now been collected by the British Library's project called "Learning- Playtimes: A Century of Children's Games and Rhymes."

This project compiles the work of researchers such as Opie and Opie, Newell, Gomme, and Avedon and Sutton-Smith. The games are divided into the groups of Pretend Play, Singing and Dancing, Playing with Things, Running around Games, Skipping Games, Counting out Rhymes, Clapping Games, Ball Games, and Jokes and Rude Rhymes.⁵⁶ This collection provides a summary of all traditional games played throughout the United Kingdom, and they are quite similar to the games played throughout the United States of America, Europe, as well as Turkey, which I show in the next section.

3.3. Traditional Games of Turkey

In this section I describe the traditional games played by children in the Ottoman Empire and Turkey between the 19th-20th centuries.

In *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı*, Turkish folklorist And describes the traditional games of the Turkish culture through use of Huizinga's 'play-element.'⁵⁷ And specializes in the theatre and plays of the Turkish culture, and for this reason his study of children's games is based on the fundamental idea that all aspects of the Turkish culture, including the

⁵⁶ British Library, "Learning: Playtimes: A Century of Children's Games and Rhymes."

⁵⁷ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 27-33.

sacrifices, ceremonies, and dances, consist of the 'play-element.' The examples of children's games he discusses are from the Islamic culture and the Anatolian culture. I thought that focusing only on the Islamic culture would be biased towards the population in Turkey who are not Muslim, so, I only provide examples of traditional games from the Anatolian culture.

First, And discusses the "Four Main Rubrics" (Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx) organized by Caillois.⁵⁸ Along with the criteria of these four groups, And displays eleven groups of his own, and divides the games according to the tools used in the games. And states that these groups are not academically organized and one game may be listed in more than one of the groups because of its properties. Even so, these categories are similar to the first grouping provided by Turkish folklore expert Boratav and provide a consistent grouping for the games. For this reason, I use them to describe the games played in Turkey.

Based on the tools used, the movements involved and the goals of the game, And divides the games into the groups of "Aşık oyunları, Yüzük oyunları, Top oyunları, Değnek oyunları, Taş ve Gülle oyunları, Koşma-Kovalama- Kurtarma-Zor Kullanma oyunları, Atlama-Sıçrama-Sekme oyunları, Dilsiz-Şaşırtma- Şaka oyunları, Dramatik Nitelikte- Büyülük-Törensiz oyunlar" and "Çeşitli oyunlar."⁵⁹ Aside from some minor differences, the Culture and

⁵⁸ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 68.

⁵⁹ And, *Ibid*, 239-289.

Tourism Ministry of the Turkish Republic has also grouped the types of children's games in Turkey according to similar groups as shown below.

1. Aşık Bilye Oyunları
2. Atlama-Sıçrama-Sekme Oyunları
3. Değnek Oyunları
4. Dilsiz-Şaşırtma-Şaka Oyunları
5. Dramatik Nitelikli Oyunlar
6. Ezgili Oyunlar
7. Koşma – Kovalama –Kapma Oyunları
8. Saklama-Saklanma Oyunları
9. Taş Oyunları
10. Top Oyunları.⁶⁰

The first group of games is called “Aşık” games, or games played with knucklebones or Jackstones. Originally, these games are played with aşık, which are the knucklebones taken from the knee joint of a goat or sheep. But, in place of these knuckles, marbles or pieces of rock are also used. In the Western culture, these games are the same as the Jacks games which are played with several jacks and a rubber ball.

There are many different games that can be played with aşık, but, more often the aşık are used as dice.⁶¹ Each of the sides of the aşık are given different names according to the regions they are played in. There are also certain terms used throughout the game to distinguish each of the steps. Since the aşık are

⁶⁰ Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı, “Oyun Türleri,” Araştırma ve Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü.

⁶¹ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 246.

used more often as dice, the games played are usually selection games, starting games or counting games. The goal of these games is to choose which players will be the catcher. Other variations of games with aşık involve steps in which the players must compete to collect the most aşık. One example is Çizgili Aşık.⁶²

Based on Caillois' groups, these games consist of Agon, or competition and Ilinx, or vertigo. Players compete with one another to collect the most pieces of aşık, which exhibits the trait of Agon. While doing so, players run around in a circle or jump and these rapid movements exhibit the trait of Ilinx, which is consistent of rapid movement that may cause the person dizziness or imbalance.

The second group, "Yüzük" games, or object hiding-and-finding games are played with rings. And explains one example of a Yüzük game in which he states a group of children try to find rings that are hidden. Players place several cups upside-down and hide rings underneath them. Then, players divided into two teams and players from both teams try to find the rings. The goal of the game is to find the most number of rings.⁶³ Once again, this game also possesses the trait Caillois refers to as Agon, or competition. But, this game also has a small factor of chance, in which the players do not know whether

⁶² Mevlüt Özhan, *Türkiye'de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 89-91.

⁶³ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 247-248.

they will open the cup with a ring in it. So, this game also has the trait of Alea, or chance.

The third group, "Top" games, or ball games, is the most popular type of games. There are several varieties of ball games that can be played with different types of balls and sometimes with other materials as well, such as bats or sticks. According to And, there are seven different types of ball games. The types of ball games vary from games that are only played by girls, by tagging others with the ball, by throwing the ball into a ditch or into a goal post, by using a stick or bat, played by using feet, or by using a ball made from soft material.⁶⁴

Some examples of ball games are İstop, Yakan top (Dodge ball), Cicili Tavuk,⁶⁵ Soccer, Basketball, and Volleyball. These ball games express two traits from Caillois' categories Agon and Ilinx. They possess Agon because of the competition which exists between players' physical skills and Ilinx because of the running-around, jumping, hitting the ball and other rapid movements.

The fourth group of games And discusses is the "Değnek" games, or games in which sticks are used to hit a ball towards a target or into a goal post. One example, which And explains, is the most popular in the Anatolian culture, is the game Çelik Çomak.⁶⁶ A çelik, which is a short narrow stick and a çomak

⁶⁴ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 252-255.

⁶⁵ Mevlüt Özhan, *Türkiye'de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 116-117.

⁶⁶ And, *Ibid* 256-258.

(değnek), which is a longer, thicker stick are used among players of two different teams. The goal of the game is for one team to catch and throw the çelik as many times, and as far away, as possible so it is not caught by the other team. Again this is a game of competition based on the skills of the players and belongs to the group Agon.

The fifth group of games And discusses is the “Taş” and “Gülle” games, or rocks and (cannon) ball games. According to And, these games have existed for centuries, drawings of these games have been discovered by archaeologists in the tombs of ancient Egyptians, drawn on the streets of ancient Rome, Greece and Crete which makes them the first examples of games in the world. In Turkey, the most common and most varied game with rocks is Dokuz Taş (Nine Men Morris, or Tic-Tac-Toe).⁶⁷ Similar to the games with knucklebones or jacks, players have to gather as much of the stones or small pieces as possible. Other examples of games with rocks are Beştaş, Bilye ve bilye oyunları⁶⁸ and others. Due to the physical skills required and the competitive traits of the games, they belong to Caillois’ Agon group.

The sixth group of games which And describes is the “Koşma-Kovalama-Kurtarma-Zor Kullanma”⁶⁹ games, or running, chasing, catching, or tagging games. In these games, there is an area designated where the players

⁶⁷ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 265, Footnote 249.

⁶⁸ Mevlüt Özhan, *Türkiye’de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 103-106.

⁶⁹ And, *Ibid*, 267.

are safe and cannot be tagged. One of the players is chosen to be 'It,' or the Ebe, and tries to catch the other players so that s/he may gain freedom from being It. The objective of these games is for one person to remain out and become the catcher. The goal of the catcher is to catch or tag other players so that they become the catcher instead. The goal of the other players is to run away from, hide and sometimes mock the catcher in order not to become It. Some of these running and catching games are Köşe Kapmaca (Puss in the Corner), Bom Ateş,⁷⁰ Esir Almaca, and Aç Kapıyı Bezirgan Başı.⁷¹

As a result, the running-catching games all have the same goals of running away from someone, getting hold of something or a place, and not being left out from the other players, the group. These games, aside from minor differences in rules or names, possess the traits of Agon because they involve competition, and Ilinx because they involve dizziness or involve rapid movement such as running, jumping, being blindfolded, being spun around or going around in a circle.

The seventh group is "Atlama-Sıçrama- Sekme" games, or jumping, skipping and hopping games. There are many popular games that belong to this group. Two very important games, And states, are Birdirbir (Leapfrog)⁷² and

⁷⁰ Mevlüt Özhan, *Türkiye'de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 113-114.

⁷¹ Özhan, *Ibid*, 81.

⁷² Özhan, *Ibid*, 110-112.

Uzun Eşek.⁷³ Some variations involve the players singing certain rhymes as they play along, tagging other players by touch or jumping over more than one person. But, overall, the goal of these games is to get over the obstacles successfully and win. Other jumping or skipping games are İp Atlama (Jump-rope), Seksek (Hopscotch) and variations of hopscotch such as Ayine-I Devran.⁷⁴

The jumping, skipping and running games are very similar to the running, catching and tagging games. Both types of games involve what Caillois categorized as Ilinx, or vertigo. Players enjoy being outside of their regular physical state and do this through excessive, rapid movement. Along with Ilinx, these games also share the trait of Agon, or competition, because the players rely on their own physical skills in order to compete with each other and win the game.

The eighth group is “Saklama- Saklanma-Oranlama” games, or hiding, seeking, and guessing games. The most popular game of this type is Saklambaç, known as Hide-and-Seek in the Western culture. The goal of these games is for players to hide from each other or hide objects from each other. Usually there are two competing sides, either two different teams or just one catcher against several players. Other examples of hiding-and-seeking games are Deve Cüce,⁷⁵

⁷³ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 273.

⁷⁴ And, *Ibid*, 274-276.

⁷⁵ Mevlüt Özhan, *Türkiye’de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 132.

Körebe⁷⁶ (Blindman's Bluff), and Mendil Kapmaca.⁷⁷ These games involve the traits of Agon, Ilinx and Alea. Since players rely on their individual skills of running, hiding and catching, in order to compete with other players, these games also possess the traits of Ilinx and Agon. Perhaps, a small chance of not being chosen to be the catcher is involved, which would be Alea.

The ninth group, "Dilsiz-Şaşırtma-Şaka" games are games in which joking, pretending or amusing is involved. Some examples of joking and pretending games which And describes are Samut Dilsiz or Dilsiz Oyunu.⁷⁸ The goal of these games is for the players to pretend to be someone or something else and make the other players believe that they are that person or that thing. Since players rely on their personal skills of pretend, imagination, and imitation, these games possess the traits of Mimicry. The most important aspect of these games is that players create another world, different from reality, and all of the players must play accordingly so that the 'magic' of the other world is not spoiled.

The tenth group, "Dramatik Nitelikte-Büyükük-Törens el Oyunlar," or games of dramatic nature, with grand ceremonies is similar to the aforementioned, ninth group, because they involve pretend play and imitation. The only difference is that this group of games involves more emphasize on imitation, impersonation, theatrical presentation and drama. These games are

⁷⁶ Mevlüt Özhan, *Türkiye'de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 166.

⁷⁷ Özhan, *Ibid*, 171.

⁷⁸ Metin And, *Oyun ve Bugü: Türk Kültüründe Oyun Kavramı* (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 280.

usually played along with a scenario or specific topic. A very popular pretending game is Evcilik (Playing house),⁷⁹ and is explained in detail on the next page. The goal of these games is for players to pretend they are other people or objects and for the other players to pretend along with them so that the make-believe world seems no different than the real world. Otherwise, the game would be ruined. These games involve what Caillois refers to as Mimicry. But, they may also possess the traits of Agon, in which players need to have certain skills to be able to imitate others and Ilinx, in which the players are in rapid movement, such as in the game Cops and Robbers.

Finally, And refers to the last group, the eleventh category as “Çeşitli,” or other games. These games do not have any rough-and-tumble moves. They involve a group of players forming a circle and singing along with each other to a specific rigmarole. The goal of these games is based on simple fun among a group of children, and does not involve any competition. Based on variations of these games, they involve rapid movements such as running around in a circle, chasing other players, jumping, hand games and skipping which belong to Caillois’ Ilinx group. A very popular example of the Çeşitli games is Yağ Satarım Bal Satarım in which players form a circle and sing the rigmarole ‘Yağ Satarım Bal Satarım.’ I tried to describe the most popular traditional games of the Turkish culture through the works of And and Özhan.

⁷⁹ Mevlüt Özhan, *Türkiye’de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 140.

Next, I explain the more recent research done by folklore researchers Öcal and Ersoy.⁸⁰ Their research was done with children about what games they played. This was a research project done for the Gazi University Halkbilimi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi (THBMER). For this project students and professors met with children from different towns and cities of Turkey in order to learn about the games they played.

The details of the games children described are noted throughout the research. Based on the findings, the personal data of the children, along with the names of the games, the type of setting needed to play the game, who the children learned the games from, the name of the toys (if used) necessary, and the gender of the players who play the game.

An example from the collection is the game, Evcilik oyunu,⁸¹ or Playing House. In this game, players pretend to be adult woman who visit each other for tea, take care of each other's babies and talk. When the players return home, the baby is put to sleep and the game ends. This is one of the pretending games, aforementioned. Like other pretend games, the goal is for the players to pretend along with each other so that the 'play-element' of the game does not disappear. The importance of this study was that it provided information about the traditional games still played by children in Turkey during the 21st century.

⁸⁰ M. Öcal Oğuz and Petek Ersoy, *Türkiye'de 2004 Yılında Yaşayan Geleneksel Çocuk Oyunları*, (Ankara: Gazi Üniversitesi THBMER Yayını, 2006).

⁸¹ Oğuz and Ersoy, *Ibid*, 23.

In another recent study, Bařal⁸² explores the traditional games through research done with children from different parts of Turkey. For the research, children were asked what games they played and who they learned them from. The games described by the children were listed along with who they learned them from. Some of the games listed were Ellem Büllem, which the child learned from a 23-year old sibling, who learned it from their 73-year old grandparent and Kömbeç, which the child learned from a 22-year old relative, who learned it from their 68-year old grandparent. With these findings Bařal claims that “the games played by children currently tend to be more individualized, hence the traditional childhood as well as traditional games seem (sic) to be disappearing recently.”⁸³ In this quote, Bařal states that children still play traditional games but, they prefer to play games in solitary rather in groups. Bařal’s study is important because it shows that children still learn traditional games from generation to generation and still play they until today.

However, a study done by Binbařıođlu shows the opposite of Bařal’s study. A group of families were asked about the games their children play. Parents were asked about their overall thought about their children playing games and about what games they played. Then, children, whom were of the school-age, were asked about the games they played. According to the

⁸² Handan Asude Bařal, “Geçmiş Yıllarda Türkiye’de Çocuklar Tarafından Oynanan Çocuk Oyunları,” *Uludağ Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 20:2 (2012), 243-266. (accessed 14.03.2013)

⁸³ Bařal, *Ibid*, 248-250.

responses, children preferred more outdoor games and games that could be played in open-spaces.⁸⁴ Forty-three children chose playing house or playing neighbors (Evcilik veya Komşuculuk) games whereas, two children chose playing with a jump-rope and three children chose playing with a kite. These results show that, even though children like to play in bigger and more spacious areas, they prefer to take part in pretend play rather than regular play with just the use of toys. This study displays how pretend play is preferred more by children because of the 'magic circle.' According to Huizinga, the 'magic circle' is the location and the context in which play occurs, as Huizinga has described in the quote below.

The magic circle, the temple, the stage, the screen
the tennis court, the court of justice, etc., are all in form
and function play-grounds, ie. Forbidden spots, isolated,
hedged, round, hallowed, within which special rules obtain.⁸⁵

Based on the notion of the 'magic circle' and 'deep flow,' these are ways in which players escape from the real world into the world of fantasy and pretend.

Consequently, as stated by folklorist Özhan, the concept of play refers to activities that have certain rules and which help to spend free-time. These activities, Özhan states, also help develop a person's physical skills.⁸⁶ In this chapter, I tried to describe the traditional games of both the Western culture and

⁸⁴ Cavit Binbaşıoğlu, *Geleneksel Kültüre Göre Türkiye'de Çocuk Eğitimi Üzerinde Bir Araştırma* (Ankara: T.C. Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1998), 65-66.

⁸⁵ Johan Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: The Study of the Play-Element in Culture* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), 10.

⁸⁶ Mevlut Özhan, *Türkiye'de Çocuk Oyunları Kültürü* (Ankara: Feryal Matbaası, 1997), 7.

of Turkey. Both cultures have their own names, terms, directions and materials for these games. But, all the games share the same properties. Apart from minor details, traditional games throughout both cultures possess the play-concept, they can be played by children of all ages, anywhere in the world and they allow more freedom for children's play. In the next chapter I describe the video games which children play during the 21st century.

Chapter 4 – Digital Games of the 20th -21st Centuries

In this chapter, I explore the digital games created in the turn of the 20th century. The term ‘digital games’ is used throughout literature to define video games, arcade games, computer games, and all other electronic games played through use of the personal computer (PC), cellular phones, tablets, smart phones or laptops. In this chapter I refer to these digital games as video games or computer games. I use both terms interchangeably throughout this thesis.

My aim in this chapter is to explain the history of video games and to describe the different genres of video games. First, I explain how video games were first developed and how they came to Turkey. Then, I provide brief descriptions of the genres of video games.

4.1. The History of Video Games

Between the mid-1950s and the early 1960s, computer scientists and electrical engineers began to develop new forms of digital games. At first, these games were not created for the public. But, by the mid-1980s, video games spread into mainstream culture.

Throughout the literature on the history of computer and videogames, Spacewar! is considered to be “the first influential computer game”⁸⁷ developed. After the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) was given the PDP-1 model computer, students of the university had an idea of running a program on it in order to make the computer more attractive. In 1962, some of

⁸⁷ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 150th Exhibition, “Analog/Digital MIT- Spacewar!” accessed March 25, 2013.

the students made the idea come true. The game Spacewar! was made accessible to computer enthusiasts by Stephen Russell and other programmers at MIT.⁸⁸

The creation of Spacewar! began the spread of video games throughout the world of computer enthusiasts. But, according to Poole, the idea of a computer, or more specifically, an electronic device being used to play games was first created by William A. Higinbotham. In the year 1958, at the Brookhaven National Laboratory, Higinbotham used an oscilloscope to make a two-player tennis game with two small lines that would hit a small green dot.⁸⁹ Later on, this tennis game caused what Poole called a “blitzkrieg on the digital plains” which began the commercial sale of almost fifty-thousand computers in the world.⁹⁰

More video games were developed throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s. Some games which existed at the time were Lunar Lander, Hammurabi, Asteroids, Space Invaders, Missile Command, Adventure and many others. These games were available only to the audience interested in computers, such as, students of computer science, programmers, engineers, or

⁸⁸ Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 150th Exhibition, “Analog/Digital MIT- Spacewar!” accessed March 25, 2013.

⁸⁹ Brookhaven National Laboratory, “The First Video Game? Before ‘Pong,’ there was ‘Tennis for Two,’” accessed February 16, 2013.

⁹⁰ Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 17.

other fans of the digital world. The early video games were not open to the general public, and especially not to younger children.

The late 1970s and the early 1980s are considered to be the Golden Age of video games by most experts. Baer, an electrical engineer, created the first commercial home video-game console, the Magnavox Odyssey in 1972.⁹¹ Meanwhile, Bushnell, a student of MIT had formed the company, Atari in 1972 and then developed the game, Pong, which was the advanced form of the two-player tennis game first invented by Higinbotham in 1958. Pong became tremendously popular, and in 1976, Bushnell sold Atari to Warner for twenty-eight million dollars.⁹²

But to Bushnell's dismay, in 1980, the company, Mattel developed their own video game console, the Intellivision, which presented a competition to Atari's console, the Atari 2600. Other developers of video games and consoles copied the work of Atari and Mattel, and created "unlicensed" games and devices. With the wide-span spread of unofficial games and devices, in the year 1983, pioneer video game companies, such as Atari and Mattell, experienced a great economic crash.⁹³

The introduction of a Japanese video game company called Nintendo saved the crash with the development of their first game, *Donkey Kong*. After

⁹¹ John Kirriemuir, "A History of Digital Games," *Understanding Digital Games*, eds., Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006), 23-25.

⁹² Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 19-23.

⁹³ Time Magazine, "A History of Video Games," accessed February 16, 2013.

the advent of this Action platform game, the video game industry began to revive from the crash. More computer fans formed from different audiences. The demand of video game consoles and computers increased and new companies were established. By the 1990s, video games became accessible to a wider and younger audience. Until the late 20th and early 21st centuries, video games became part of popular culture. Soon, every home in industrialized countries, and newly industrialized countries, had a video game console, a television and a personal computer.

4.1.1. How Super Mario Came to Turkey

In “Elektronik Oyunlar ve Türkiye,” Yılmaz and Çağiltay⁹⁴ explain how video games first came to Turkey and how they were spread into children’s lives.

Compared to the United States and other Western countries, video games came to Turkey around the same time but the commercial spread of the video games occurred in different ways. In the 1980s, when the first home video consoles were being sold to the public, many middle/working-class families were not able to purchase them because of their high price. So children who were interested in these games went to Internet cafes in order to play them.

As Binark, Sütçü and Buçakçı⁹⁵ explain, in order for children to have access to computers, the Turkish government formed “Atari salons” or Internet

⁹⁴ Erdal Yılmaz and Kürşat Çağiltay, “Elektronik Oyunlar ve Türkiye,” *Bilgisayar ve Öğretim Teknolojileri Eğitimi Bölümü* (Ankara: Ortadoğu Teknik Üniversitesi), 1-2.

⁹⁵ Mutlu Binark, Günseli Bayraktutan-Sütçü and Fatma Buçakçı, “How Turkish Young People Utilize Internet Cafes: The Results of Ethnographic Research in Ankara,” *Observatorio Journal OBS*, 8(2009), 286-310. (accessed 21.03.2013)

cafes. At these cafes children were able to play video games. But, because they were similar to the coffee houses in Turkey, Internet cafes were thought as a waste of time. Adults had negative thoughts about children who played video games or spent time in the Internet cafes. In general, parents did not prefer to send their children to Internet cafes because they thought the video games were violent and were bad influences for their children. In the new millennia, mostly children and youth occupied the Internet cafes.

For their research, Binark et al. had interviews with children in Ankara who went to Internet cafes. Based on their findings, Binark et al. argue that children go to Internet cafes in order to socialize with other people. Thus, according to Binark et al., Internet cafes provide children with a social network. Children can play video games together in teams and even organize LAN tournaments where players come to compete against each other in video games.

4.2. The Genres of Video Games

According to Herz,⁹⁶ there are eight different game genres of computer and video games. The genres consist of Action, Adventure, Fighting, Puzzle, Role-playing, Simulations, Sports and Strategy. Another expert, Fritts,⁹⁷ divides computer games into Action, Adventure, Action-Adventure, Role Playing

⁹⁶ Aphra Kerr, "‘Live Life to the Power of PS2’ Locating the Digital Games Industry in the New Media Environment," *Irish Communications Review*, 9:9 (2003), 9. (accessed 22.04.2013)

⁹⁷ Prof. James Fritts, "Computer and Video Game Genres," Mathematics and Computer Science, Computer Game Design (Missouri: Saint Louis University), 2, accessed February 18, 2013.

Games (RPG), Massive Multiplayer Online (MMO), Strategy, Simulation and Casual (and/or Browser) games.

Alongside Herz and Fritts, Poole⁹⁸ also divides the games into Shoot-'em ups, Racing, Platforms, Beat-'em ups, God games, Real-Time Strategy games, Sports games, Fantasy and magic games and Puzzles. Compared to Herz's and Fritts' categorizations, Poole organizes games according to the specific actions taken place while playing them. But, Herz leaves out MMO games, Fritts leaves out the sub-genres of First-Person Shooter, and the sub-genres of Strategy games and Poole leaves out the genre of Simulation video games. So, I choose to utilize Herz's, Fritts', and Poole's categorizations in combination with a more updated version of categorization.

The more updated categorization is provided by the authors of the monthly Turkish video game magazine, LEVEL. This categorization is compiles the most recent games and the details and sub-genres of all the video games. Binark, Bayraktutan-Sütçü and Fidaner explain the genres of video games, from the authors of LEVEL, as stated below:

Ağ oyunları; aksiyon oyunları; first-person shooter – FPS;
macera oyunları; motorspor ve yarış oyunları;
rol yapma/canlandırma oyunları- RPG; simülasyon oyunları;
spor oyunları ve strateji oyunları.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 25-30.

⁹⁹ Mutlu Binark, Günsel Bayraktutan-Sütçü and Işık Fidaner, *Dijital Oyun Rehberi- Oyun Tasarımı, Türler ve Oyuncu* (İstanbul: Kalkedon Yayınları, 2009), 46.

As such, the groups I use for my analysis in Chapter 5 are the following: Action (FPS: First-Person Shooter and TPS: Third-Person Shooter), Adventure, Action-Adventure, Simulation, Strategy (Real-Time Strategy and Turn-Based Strategy), MMO, RPG, Sports, Music, and Racing.¹⁰⁰ I combined the last three types of genres (Sports, Music and Racing) into one whole group as Casual games.

In order to show how the concept of play takes different forms throughout video games, I describe the video games based on these genres in more detail in the next chapter.

¹⁰⁰ Fırat Akyıldız, Şefik Akkoç, Tuna Şentuna, Cem Şancı, and Ertuğrul Süngü, LEVEL Online Forum, “Kategoriler, Oyunlar,” accessed April 20, 2013.

Chapter 5 -Theoretical Analysis: Play, Childhood and Video Games

In order to understand how video games influence the social composition of childhood, as a concept, I have taken the ludological perspective to analyze video games that are played by children during the 21st century. First, I review literature that focuses on the concept of play in video games. Then, through the literature about video games as New Media, I argue that video games belong to the adult world.

First, I would like to point out that in my analysis of literature I did not consider the more specific details of video games such as the language, the actions, and the cheat codes used by more experienced players. These details make-up the Games Culture of video games, and I think it would be better to investigate them in a separate study. Also, examining video games through the Games culture would undertake a different perspective that requires video games to be studied as a culture, rather than to study video games culturally. Therefore, I do not discuss the Games culture.

The play approach argues that play exists throughout different structures and is an important component of culture and distinguishes play as a serious notion that is not part of leisure. On the other hand, the New Media approach argues that the computer, the Internet and video games are part of the leisure and entertainment sector. There is no mention of play in the New Media approach because it does not consider video games as part of children's play,

but consider them as media that children use. Naturally, I thought this would cause bias in my analysis. But, the play and New Media approach supported my argument that video games are part of popular culture as New Media. The literature shows that specific video games, such as Simulation, Strategy, and MMORPG games possess the play element. Therefore, I cannot assume that all video games do not possess the concept of play.

5.1. The 'Play-Element' in Video Games

According to Sykes, "the play experience" in video games "is a product of the *category of play*, the *formality of play*, and the *affective tone*."¹⁰¹ The *category of play* Sykes refers to are Caillois' "Four Main Rubrics," Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx. The *formality of play* refers to the two dimensions of play, which Caillois referred to as Ludus and Paidia. The *affective tone* is the emotion presented by the games.

Based on Caillois' work, Ludus is the dimension which consists of games that are more-serious and have organized rules. Whereas, Paidia is the dimension that consists of games that are less-serious and are unorganized.¹⁰² For example, along with the 'Four Main Rubrics' (Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx), strategic games of chess or bridge would fall under the dimension Ludus and the category Agon, because both games have a set of rules and are played for competition.

¹⁰¹ Jonathan Sykes, "A Play-centred Approach to Digital Game Design," *Understanding Digital Games*, eds., Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006), 79.

¹⁰² Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans., Meyer Barash (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

Furthermore, Sykes describes that, in video games the dimensions of Ludus and Paidia, make-up the *formality scale* which evaluates the influence games have on the play experience. Paidia is considered to be an 'informal' influence and Ludus is considered to be a 'formal' influence. Video games that can be connected to the dimension of Paidia, Sykes explains, are the games "*House of the Dead*, or *Samba de Amigo*." Whereas, video games closer to the Ludus scale, are the games "*Silent Hill*, or the *Microsoft Flight Simulator*."¹⁰³

The emotion set forth by the stimuli within the games is referred to as the *affective tone* of the games. As Sykes states, "the emotion the game designer aims to evoke during play" is evaluated. Through the settings of the game, the background images, "the music, the plot development, and the ways the characters move," video games affect the players emotionally so that they can connect to the game more deeply.

In order to understand the differences between traditional games and video games, next, I describe the different forms of play that the genres of video games possess. I discuss the video games based on the categorization I mentioned above which consists of these groups: Action (First-Person Shooter and Third-Person Shooter), Adventure, Action-Adventure, Simulation, Strategy (Turn-Based and Real-Time), MMO, RPG, and Casual games (which consist of all Sports, Music and Racing games).

¹⁰³ Jonathan Sykes, "A Play-centred Approach to Digital Game Design," *Understanding Digital Games*, eds. Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006), 80.

Under the first category, Action games, players compete against or duel other players by shooting, fighting, racing and jumping through platforms. The second category, Adventure games, have more detailed stories and consist of more relaxed actions such as “exploration, puzzle-solving, and collecting items.” Compared to the traditional game *Three Lives*, the Action and Adventure group of games can differ in some of their rules. For example, in *Three Lives*, players are given three chances to play in the game. In video games, players are only given extra lives when they perform a certain action or when they collect certain items. This can be seen in the Action platform video game *Super Mario Bros*. In this game, players can keep playing the same game as long as they do not run out of lives, which they gain from collecting mushrooms. But, the difference between the traditional games *Three Lives* and video games occurs when the players run out of extra lives.

In *Three Lives*, when the player runs out of his/her three lives, the player has to leave the game. Whereas, in *Super Mario Bros*. when players run out of lives, the game they are playing ends and they have to start a new game in order to play again. Thus, the difference occurs when the game ends. Once the game ends, in *Super Mario Bros*. the ‘Game Over’ sign appears on the screen. When this happens, the player has to stop playing the game and start another a game. Poole explains that the ‘Game Over’ sign is “not a simple death, but a violent ejaculation from the safety of the entire game universe. The *petit mort* of *Homo*

*Ludens: Game Over.*¹⁰⁴ Based on Caillois' notion of Ludus, in video games the rules cannot be changed. But, in traditional games players can be more flexible with the rules and allow the player to reenter the game as long s/he does something.

In general, in the Action and Adventure games players can make their characters jump, run, fight, hit, or shoot an object or figure. There is always an adventure with a specific story plot, and tasks that need to be completed throughout the adventure. These games are not as serious as the next category- MMO/RPG- of games but they usually have a story-line. Some examples of more recent versions of Action-Adventure, Adventure or Action games are the Crisis series, Call of Duty, God of War, Mortal Kombat, Street Fighter, and Hitman.

More specifically, there are Action games which are distinguished as First-Person Shooter (FPS) games. In these games players can view what their characters do from a first-person perspective. Players can watch how their character walks, and how their character aims towards a certain target. One difference between FPS games and traditional games can be seen based on the virtual worlds of the video games.

Especially with the advances in technology, these video games are more realistic and involve more real-live movement. Poole explains that, in order to make them more realistic, real laws of physics are used by game development

¹⁰⁴ Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 56.

departments. Real calf and foot models of animals are brought in to examine their calisthenics; how the feet move, and which muscles are used.¹⁰⁵ Then, designers create images and develop the movements in the video games based on the real laws of physics. Players can then move their virtual characters based on more realistic actions and feel more a part of the game. Thus, facilitating players to envision themselves as the virtual character and feel less 'ambiguous' when playing. Some examples of current FSP or TSP Action games are Far Cry 3, Call of Duty: Black Ops II, Bioshock Infinite and Halo 4.

Poole argues, however, that despite the physics laws being utilized to develop real-like movements, players would not really be able to do the things they can in the video game. There is a limit to the things players can do because "in a videogame you can only perform such actions as the programmers have allowed for."¹⁰⁶ Whereas, in the traditional games such as hide-and-seek, players can hide and run to wherever they want and they can move however they want.

There is also the other fact that, in video games, players can pretend to move and do things they cannot in real life through a virtual character. For example, in the game Tomb Raider: Lara Croft,¹⁰⁷ Poole states that the player can have the character, Lara Croft jump onto a cliff while shooting at enemies

¹⁰⁵ Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 48.

¹⁰⁶ Poole, *Ibid*, 57.

¹⁰⁷ This game is considered to be an Action-Adventure game, but it is not a FPS game.

and still survive. In real life, it would be less likely for the player to do so and still live. So, the fact that Lara Croft can do such things in the video game is an exaggeration of real life. Therefore, as Poole concludes, the “purpose of the video game is never to simulate real life, but to offer the gift of play.”¹⁰⁸

In traditional games, for example, players create an imaginary world which is different from the real world and pretend to be characters within a certain story or plot which they create as they play along in the game. This is similar to the category of Simulation video games. The traditional games of pretend and imitating such as *Playing House*, and *Cops and Robbers* can be compared to the Simulation video games such as *SimCity* and the *Sims* series.

The goal in traditional pretend and imitation games is for all the characters to pretend, and play along, with the fantasy world. If any of the players stops pretending, then the fantasy world becomes lost. So the traditional pretending games possess the traits *Agon*, *Mimicry*, *Ilinx* and are part of *Paidia* because they can be played spontaneously. In the Simulation video games such as *Sims*, the players also play characters in the virtual world and have to do complete certain tasks. But, the difference in *Sims* is that the conditions of the games are altered by adults and cannot be changed by the players in any way. Therefore, players cannot utilize their imaginations as they would be able to do while playing traditional games of pretend.

¹⁰⁸ Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 63.

Another difference lies in the boundaries of real-life and play. In video games the images and the setting are nearly realistic and human-like. This makes it difficult for players to separate what is pretend from what is real. In response to this, Caillois would argue that the separation between real life and games become blurred. For example, in Sports Simulation video games (e.g. PES) the players feel as if they are the football player on the field hitting the ball. These types of games change forms and the aspect of play becomes lost between the two different forms.¹⁰⁹ Therefore, these differences show how the properties of video games are governed by the game developers who created the games. Unlike traditional games, in video games, players cannot perform any actions that are outside the limits of the video game's program.

The next genre of video games is the Strategy games such as the *Civilization* series, and the *Age of Empires* series. In these games, players build their own empires, cities or civilizations. In order to do so, they must develop resources, negotiate with other countries, maintain workers that will construct buildings, and train soldiers who will fight during battles with other countries. If players do not fulfill these tasks, then their civilization slowly crumbles and becomes easier for other countries to attack.

Poole explains that in Strategy video games because players build their own cities, develop their own character, and control the destiny of their civilization, the player of the video game can be considered as gods. So, Poole

¹⁰⁹ Roger Caillois, *Man, Play and Games*, trans., Meyer Barash. (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 43-45.

refers to these games as 'god games'. In god games, Poole explains, the "gameplayer doesn't count as an individual, he or she is, after all, God." But this would not be the case in traditional games because each player is considered an individual and the rules are the same for all players.

'God games' or other strategy games, such as war games, possess the trait of Agon, because players compete against other countries (the computer) or other players. These games also belong to the dimension of Ludus because they have certain rules which players have to follow in order to keep their civilization intact and advance in the game. Lastly, since the players pretend to someone through their virtual character, or avatar, these games also possess the trait of Mimicry.

Despite shared properties of Agon, Mimicry and Ludus, these games differ with traditional strategy games. For example, Poole explains, in the game of chess, players can "create moves"¹¹⁰ as they please and do not have to compete against the games fixed program as they would in video games. So the main difference lies in what Sykes calls the *formality scale* of the games. Most video games of the strategy genre are more formal than other video games. This inhibits players from acting and moving freely while playing the games.

Furthermore, Real-time strategy games are more complex and sophisticated compared to other genres of video games. For these reasons, RTS games are played more by adults, or older teenagers, rather than adolescents, or

¹¹⁰ Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 57.

younger children. Some examples of RTS games are Wargame: AirLand Battle, Anomaly 2, Age of Empires and Medieval II: Total War. There are other sub-genres of RTS games, as Adam explains, such as real-time tactical games, and more. But, because these genres are not relevant for this thesis I do not explain them.

Whereas, TBS games involve tactics and plotted schemes which players need to coordinate against another player. TBS games differ from RTS games because they are based more on how the player fights against another player. Some examples of TBS games are Total War: Shogun 2, Sid Meier's Civilization series, and Tiny Token Empires. Generally, RTS games and TBS games may also involve other forms of play. There are turn-based strategy games which are also role-playing games. But, based on McCasker, turn-based games are no longer popular, and more video game companies develop more RTS games instead.¹¹¹ For example, the most important Real-time strategy games that are also MMO (massive multiplayer online) and RPG (role-playing games) are the popular World of Warcraft series, Starcraft series and the Age of Empires series. In these games players have to take part in quick-speed movements based on real-time while competing with other players. For this reason, these games seem to possess more realistic properties that make them similar to traditional games.

¹¹¹ Toby McCasker, "Should More Games be Turn-Based?" IGN Entertainment Inc., September 18, 2011, accessed April 24, 2013.

Before discussing MMO games, I find it necessary to describe Role Playing Games (referred to more often as RPGs). Alongside MMO and FPS games, RPG games are also very popular among older and more experienced video game players. RPG games allow players to increase the skills and capabilities of their character. As Fritts explains, RPGs “usually have strong storylines, often involving a “save the world” theme” and the settings are usually based on fantasy worlds or science fiction.

In *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, Pringle describes how a simple role-playing board game led to the creation of the first fantasy computer game with the same name, *Dungeons & Dragons*.¹¹² The *Dungeons & Dragons* board game was played with dice, cards and a number of players who followed the commands presented to them by the cards, which was known as the Dungeon Master (DM).

In the year 1973, the elements of the board game *Dungeons and Dragons* were placed into the computer using short textual commands. In the original board game, tasks that were once given by the ‘Dungeon Master’ through cards, showed up on the computer screen. So, the computer became the Dungeon Master. Based on the tasks, players had to type in a specific action (turn right = type R, turn left = type L) in order to solve the tasks. Players who chose the correct actions advanced in the game and their characters would “grow

¹¹² David Pringle, “Fantasy Games,” *The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Fantasy- The Definitive Illustrated Guide* (Woodstock, New York: Carlton Books Limited, 1998), 220-225.

personality and ability from game to game.” This marked the beginning of the role-playing games, known more often as RPGs.

Most RPG games (Ultima Online, Final Fantasy and others) are based on fantasy literature such as Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings trilogy, Nordic mythology, or other mythologies. They have a context even without the images on the computer screen and exist on their own as stories throughout culture. For example, Doom is the first adventure and role-playing video game to provide the player a first-person perspective of themselves, which is referred to as first-person shooter. In the game, players can follow their character’s footsteps and are able to aim for targets through the first-person perspective, thus making it more realistic.

Finally, the last genre of video games is Massive Multiplayer Online games, known as MMO games. MMO games allow several players to go online and play together simultaneously through a server. Similar to RPG games, these games also have a deep story-line based on fantasy and adventure. These games are mostly combined with RPG games.

When MMO and RPG games combine they are called MMORPG games. MMORPG games also possess the traits of Agon, Alea, Mimicry and Ilinx, and are part of the dimension Ludus. In practice, MMORPG games can be considered the combination of all traditional games. But, the main aspect which makes them popular, and different from traditional games, is “their ability to

foster a strong player community,” which Sykes states, is enabled through the game’s focus on social interaction.¹¹³

As I mentioned earlier, in traditional pretending games players form a pretend world in which they move and behave as their pretend character. The tricky part is that when it comes to MMORPG games, the fantasy world becomes real –on the screen- through the use of specific computer languages, programs, an online connection, a virtual interface and, most importantly, a “mechanic supporting communication.”¹¹⁴ Players can communicate and interact with thousands of people from all over the world through the Massive Multiplayer Online capability. Therefore, the main difference between MMORPGs and other video games is the social interaction presented to the players.

In recent years the most popular MMORPG video game was World of Warcraft. According to Castranova, when it first came out, World of Warcraft (WOW) had 1 million subscribers- both active and offline- in the year 2004.¹¹⁵ However, World of Warcraft was a fantasy world created by adults, and is mostly played by adults. As Castranova explains, the age of players who play

¹¹³ Jonathan Sykes, “A Play-centred Approach to Digital Game Design,” *Understanding Digital Games*, eds., Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006).

¹¹⁴ Sykes, *Ibid*, 84.

¹¹⁵ Edward Castranova, *Exodus to the Virtual World: How Online Fun is Changing Reality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

video games during the 21st century has increased to 30-years.¹¹⁶ The reason why more adults play MMORPG games, Castronova states, is because they are fun.¹¹⁷ Throughout the literature, I discovered that, MMORPG games carry the traits of the traditional pretending games, running and catching games, and hiding- and-seeking games combined. However, unlike traditional pretending, running, catching, hiding-and-seeking, and hunting games, in games like World of Warcraft, players can alter their characters' skills, advance up to 100+ levels, travel different worlds and become any character they want.

But, younger children find other video games, ones that are less complicated, such as Racing, Simulation, Action, Adventure and other Casual games to be fun instead. These games which "have low positive offset"¹¹⁸ and they do not require as much skill and concentration in order to play unlike the Strategy, or MMORPG games do. This is why children choose to play the easy, casual, and less-serious games. Children need an escape from the real-world, and this is not provided by the more difficult video games.

Whereas, Calleja states that video games are not sufficient for children to escape either because they do not create a 'magic circle.' As Calleja explains, only the physical games which children play, such as the traditional games provide Huizinga's 'magic circle.' Since video games are part of the virtual world, they do not allow a physical separation from the real world which

¹¹⁶ Edward Castronova, *Exodus to the Virtual World: How Online Fun is Changing Reality* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 21.

¹¹⁷ Castronova, *Ibid*, 91.

¹¹⁸ Castronova, *Ibid*, 96.

physical games do. The 'magic circle' can only develop if the real-world space is separated from the game-space.¹¹⁹ The casual video games children play mostly consist of simple puzzles, paper-and-pencil games, word games or other card games. They possess the traits of Agon, Alea and Ludus, as their traditional versions do. But, these games do not provide the 'playing' involved with traditional games because children do not interact with each other, there are no complex tasks involved and most of all, there is no transference of emotion or action between the player and the game. This transfer is necessary, as Freud and Winnicott explain, for children to relieve themselves of stress or other negative feelings and to differentiate between what is real and what is unreal. Play may exist in all forms, but the action of 'playing' is different.

In his second volume of work, *The Ambiguity of Play*, developmental psychologist Sutton-Smith,¹²⁰ explains that no matter how ambiguous it might be, the concept of play exists within all structures and activities throughout culture. Sutton-Smith categorizes these forms of play into eight groups. I only describe the categories relevant to video games, computers and the Internet, or other forms of play that may be significant for this thesis.

For example, the first category, *Mind or Subjective play*, includes "dreams, daydreams, fantasy, imagination (...and) Dungeons and Dragons." Most of these elements are combined in Adventure games or MMORPG games.

¹¹⁹ Gordon Calleja, "Digital Games and Escapism," *Games and Culture*, 5:4(2010), 340-344. (Accessed 04.05.2013)

¹²⁰ Brian Sutton-Smith, *The Ambiguity of Play* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).

These games all have a story line based on fantasy, and players can become characters from that fantasy when they play these games. Based on this explanation, MMORPG and Adventure games show play in the form of imagination based on the work of others (e.g. fantasy literature). Sutton-Smith does not discuss any other video games throughout the other groups. Hence, from this I assume that only MMORPG and Adventure games, and all other video games that involve “fantasy” or “imagination,” present the concept of play.

From this array of literature I have tried to show that the concept of play does not exist in video games. However, based on the studies mentioned above, as all other structures and activities within culture, specific video games possess the concept of play.

5.2. Play and Childhood

In chapter 2, I described some points from Hendrick. Here I would like to describe some important points Hendrick describes from the work of other researchers.

Hendrick explains that, according to Springhall,¹²¹ a common culture between the social classes was forming in the 20th century between adults and children. Economic and social changes such as urbanization, mass production, globalization and the development of advanced electronic devices led to the

¹²¹ John Springhall, *Youth, Empire and Society: British Youth Movements, 1883-1840*, Standard Account, Harry Hendrick, “Chapter 6 Children’s Leisure,” *Children, Childhood and English Society: 1880-1990* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 79-80.

worlds of adults and children to combine. “The mass production of toys, games and dolls” and “the impact of television from the 1960s and, from the 1980s, that of video films and computer games” had caused “the consumer revolution.” But, as Hendrick explains, Springhall’s argument does not necessarily show that a common culture formed between children and adults. Adults, mostly parents of the middle-class, still controlled the leisure activities their children took part in as is the case for video games.

From a study by Davin,¹²² Hendrick explains the leisure activities of working-class children. In the early 20th century, the introduction of laws for mandatory schooling greatly impacted the lives of children who still had to work in order to provide for their family. These children would spend the majority of their days going back-and-forth from work to school. Making it difficult for them to concentrate on schoolwork or attend school regularly, their hectic schedules did not leave any time for play either.

To take matters into their own hands, schools implemented sports and physical education into their curriculum. Davin makes it clear that, because adults did not want children to take part in any nonsense or less –serious activities, such as playing games or frolicking around outside, they prevented this by deciding which activities children should take part in and organized

¹²² Anna Davin, *Growing up Poor. Home, School, and Street in London, 1870-1914*, 1996, Harry Hendrick, “Chapter 6 Children’s Leisure,” *Children, Childhood and English Society: 1880-1990* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 80-82.

them into children's lives accordingly. Again, this is an example of how adults intervened in the activities of children.

Furthermore, in regards to outdoor play, Hendrick describes a study from Humphries about how the games played by children in rural and urban areas changed as a result of the development of playgrounds. In rural areas, children played chasing games such as 'fox and hounds', 'sheep come home' and 'a night's lodging,'¹²³ These games mainly involved running around and catching other players, so, children played them in open fields or backyards. In more urban areas, if the weather was appropriate children played "hopscotch, swinging on lamp-posts, five-stones and door knocking" on the streets.¹²³

But, later on throughout the years, playgrounds were formed in both rural and urban areas. The boundaries of these playgrounds restricted children's play space, thus, hindering them from playing the games they once used to. Once again, Hendrick shows¹²⁴ that as childhood gained more importance, adults began controlling children's leisure activities even more, especially if the games were played outdoors.

In the next section I show how video games are part of New Media. Then, I associate the findings from these studies to argue that video games are part of the adult world.

¹²³ Steve Humphries, Joanna Mack, and Robert Perks, *A Century of Childhood*, 1988, Harry Hendrick, "Chapter 6 Children's Leisure," *Children, Childhood and English Society: 1880-1990* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 83-84.

¹²⁴ Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society: 1880-1990* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

5.3. A 'New Media' Look into the Culture Industry of Video Games

Towards the later years of the 19th century, from 1950-1970, there was an increase in the production of clothes, toys, and books for children, and adults. New innovations, such as the television, the computer and the radio were developed. New entertainment centers, such as the cinema, the theatre, arcades, theme parks, and shopping malls were established.

According to Lefebvre,¹²⁵ this was the formation of a 'New Life' for society, one which focused more on the entertainment and leisurely activities. The goal of this 'New Life' was to bring comfort and well-being to people. But this was not the case for all social classes or everyone in society, especially not children. Until the 1980s, as computer enthusiast's curiosity and work on game-play grew, the personal computer became used more often for aesthetic purposes rather than for "home accounting and word processing."¹²⁶ Soon, with the commercialization of video games, computer enthusiasts no longer had to spend time writing, or copying, programs in order to play video games.

There are many different techniques and developments which computer enthusiasts and hardcore game players have formed about video games and the game world (modding, MUDs, cheats, etc.) But, the most important point brought about by Giddings and Kennedy is that video games are not just part of the virtual world, "digital games *are* cyberspace: actual computer-generated

¹²⁵ Henri Lefebvre, trans., John Moore, *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes Sept 1959-May 1961* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 85-88.

¹²⁶ Seth Giddings and Helen W. Kennedy, "Digital Games as New Media," *Understanding Digital Games*, eds., Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006), 131-132.

dynamic spaces.” This is how they have become part of the world of media and media studies. Video games exist only through computers, video game consoles and televisions. So, they are dependent on other media as well. The question to ask then would be, if video games are new media, how can they be part of the children’s play world?

The interactive trait of video games, Giddings and Kennedy explain, allows them to flow from one media to another. For example, the game *Tomb Raider* was made into a film shortly after it first came out.¹²⁷ This caused the game to be advertised through the movie and vice versa. So players who had not heard of the video game before the movie, learned about it. Giddings and Kennedy further argue that video games are cultural products because they are still created based on certain texts.¹²⁸ For example, in the simulation video game, *The Sims* there are certain rules which characters have to follow in order to play the game. As such, players must interact with every aspect of the game in order to succeed.

Giddings and Kennedy conclude by stating that, unlike other screen media, video games also cause players to become immersed in the game world. But, the level of immersion players experience while playing video games is different from the immersion experienced when watching a movie. The more a player learns how to use the controller and enables his/her character to perform

¹²⁷ Seth Giddings and Helen W. Kennedy, “Digital Games as New Media,” *Understanding Digital Games*, eds., Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006), 139.

¹²⁸ Giddings, *Ibid*, 139-141.

certain actions, the more s/he becomes immersed in the game. In the game world, Giddings and Kennedy describe this immersion as “ ‘deep flow’- a total absorption in an activity which is both challenging and emotionally rewarding (Czikszentmihalyi, 1993,1996, 1997).”¹²⁹

According to Crawford and Rutter, “it is the entertainment and enjoyment that popular culture offers which Adorno suggests provides a release and escape for people, taking their minds off their exploitation and allowing capitalism to run smoothly.”¹³⁰ Based on Adorno and Horkheimer’s *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the concept of Enlightenment was thought to bring about more reason instead of myths and more logic instead of emotion. But, along with the advancements brought by industrialization, the Enlightenment led to society becoming dependent on technology and the loss of ‘high culture.’

Adorno explains that technology was controlled by the “Kings and businessman”¹³¹ and the working-class worked to make the ideals of the Enlightenment come true. Technology, which people had enjoyed so much, along with the advancements brought by industrialization, led to the exploitation of labor and money. The ideals of the Enlightenment, in reality were an abstraction that allowed the upper-class, kings and businessman, to rule

¹²⁹ Seth Giddings and Helen W. Kennedy, “Digital Games as New Media,” *Understanding Digital Games*, eds., Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006), 142.

¹³⁰ Garry Crawford and Jason Rutter, “Digital Games and Cultural Studies,” *Understanding Digital Games*, eds., Jason Rutter and Jo Bryce (London: SAGE, 2006), 151.

¹³¹ Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Concept of Enlightenment,” *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans., John Cumming (London and New York: Verso, 1997), xiii-8.

over the masses. Therefore, the exploitation people wanted to forget about and escape from was that brought by technology, in the hands of the “kings and businessman.”

Based on his work, Adorno would argue that the concept of childhood was also a concept, an abstraction of the Enlightenment. Childhood, Adorno would explain, only existed because adults wanted children to remain as the ‘Other’ in order to distance themselves from children.¹³² If this is considered to be true, then the concept of childhood actually distances children more from the adult world and allows them to have a world of their own. This argument is confirmed by the literature reviewed in the previous chapters which states that the concept of childhood separates children from the adult world.

But, if the concept of childhood is based on the ideals of the Enlightenment than this would mean it is a dialectic in itself. This would then show that society formulated childhood so that adults could control children’s lives, what activities they took part in, what clothes they wore, their education, and, most importantly, what games they played. Therefore, children are exploited by society, especially now more than ever because the video game industry has made children their number one targets. When children used to be producers, they have become consumers with the increasing mass culture of the 21st century.

¹³² Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer, “The Concept of Enlightenment,” *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans., John Cumming (London and New York: Verso, 1997), 13-28.

The first separation of adult's activities in the 17th century led to the conception of childhood. Ever since then, adults have meddled with the games children play and the activities they take part in. So children have no way of escape from the pressures presented to them by adults.

The 'New Life' presented by Lefebvre shows that the products of mass culture, provide people the escape they need. But, this escape is only possible without the essence, or the aesthetic semblance which Adorno refers to. The products of mass culture do not possess such essence or ideology, as Adorno concurs, because once the device is used to distract society there is no need for an ideology anymore.¹³³

The research done by Livingstone, an expert of new media studies, shows how much of these devices are now used by children growing up in the 21st century. As Livingstone explains, during the 21st century, in research, children are no longer thought of in the "child-as-object" view. Instead, they are seen from the view of "child-as-agent." The "child-as-agent," according to Livingstone, "lives on a non-mediated childhood- a carefree child playing hopscotch with friends in a nearby park, not a child with music on the headphones watching television in her bedroom."¹³⁴ However, in this statement Livingstone is being subtle in pointing out that the children of the 21st century are no longer living their childhoods playing outside, rather they spend most of

¹³³ Theodor W. Adorno, "The Schema of Mass Culture," *The Culture Industry Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J.M. Bernstein (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 62-67.

¹³⁴ Sonia Livingstone, *Young People and New Media Childhood and the Changing Environment* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 14.

their days in their bedrooms with their 'media center' composed of a television, a personal computer, and a video game console.

With this statement Livingstone depicts how mass culture, the adult world, has affected children's worlds. Before when children were associated with playing, skipping, running and jumping-around, now they are associated with electronic devices that are part of mass culture. In *Young People and New Media Childhood and the Changing Environment*, Livingstone describes their research with children. For their research they used the YPNM survey in order to ask children about the media devices they have at home and which ones they used. Their sample groups consisted of children between 6-17- years of age from the United Kingdom. In order to confirm their answers, the researchers also checked the responses with the parents of the children they interviewed. The findings of Livingstone et al. study revealed that almost all of the homes with children had at least one type of screen media, such as a "television and a video recorder (...or) a TV-linked games machine."¹³⁵

The number of families who had computers at home changed according to the socio-economic status. Middle-class families were found more likely to have computers at home compared to working-class families. Most of all, the middle child in families with more than one child, were more likely to possess

¹³⁵ Sonia Livingstone, *Young People and New Media Childhood and the Changing Environment* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 37.

either “a Gameboy and/or a TV-linked games machine in the home.”¹³⁶ When Livingstone et al. compared the number of children whom had personal computers with the number of children whom had TV-linked games machines, they found that 75% of male children had game machines at home while almost 50% of female children had a computer.¹³⁷ The amount of time children spent with media such as computer games and the personal computer were also shown with results from the same survey. Almost 66% of children between 6-17 years of age spent “three days per week, for around 79 minutes” per day playing computer games. Whereas, of the children who had computers at home, 34% of male children and 42% of female children, between the same ages said that “they only use it (the computer) to play games.”¹³⁸

Furthermore, Livingstone explains that parents of the middle-class and upper-class spend time organizing the activities their children take part in, while parents of the working-class are not able to structure their children’s activities. The activities she refers to are both outdoor play, and extracurricular activities. Children of working-class families are shown to spend more time playing outdoors while children of middle-class families spend more time with homework, painting, drawing and other hobby-like activities.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ Sonia Livingstone, *Young People and New Media Childhood and the Changing Environment* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 38.

¹³⁷ Livingstone, *Ibid*, 39.

¹³⁸ Livingstone, *Ibid*, 62.

¹³⁹ Livingstone, *Ibid*, 85.

Ever since they were first developed, adults have been worried that video games, computers, the television, the radio and other innovations of the 20th-21st centuries would cause harm to children and society in general. There was an increase in emphasis on entertainment and leisure. Shopping malls, cinemas, and arcades were formed and society began to experience the 'New Life.' According to Lefebvre, because of this 'New Life' of leisure and entertainment ideology had lost its effectiveness.¹⁴⁰ But I disagree with Lefebvre because once more leisure activities were brought into society, anything that involved playing, or having fun, was thought to be dangerous and people behaved toward the innovations with great skepticism.

As shown in previous chapters, playing has not always been thought of seriously, and society has always thought of playing as a waste of time. Similar to when the television first came out in the mid-20th century, video games were thought to be harmful for children. Until today, according to Poole, adults still believe that video games cause "A generation of screen-glazed androids with no social skills, poetical sensitivity or entrepreneurial ambition."¹⁴¹

Especially, in the 1980s, the first commercial video game console for homes was introduced. During that time, prices of these consoles were quite high and the target audience was generally adults, not children. During the early years of video games, Poole explains that in the United States, the average age

¹⁴⁰ Henri Lefebvre, trans., John Moore, *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes Sept 1959-May 1961* (London and New York: Verso, 1995), 89-91.

¹⁴¹ Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 3.

of players was 36-years or older. Now the average age of players has decreased to 28-years.¹⁴²

The reason for this decrease in the age of users is that electronic companies have invested in selling their products to a younger audience. Even though children do not have the financial income necessary to purchase video games, consoles or computers, they can easily persuade their parents to purchase them. The new demand for video games and video game equipment among children led to the mass production of these items. Similar to the more common mass produced items (clothes, music, food, books and toys) video games also became a product of mass consumption.

Before the concept of childhood had developed in the early 18th-19th centuries, children's activities were separated from the adult's activities. Children would play games on the street or at school with their friends and were far away from the adult world. With the advent of video games, children are no longer as distant from the adult world, even adults play video games now, and this makes them even more a part of the games children play.

As traditional games are being replaced by video games, children are being swept into the adult world more and more each day and their period of childhood is being distilled as adults now create and control the games they play. Whereas, traditional games, even if some of them were once developed by

¹⁴² Steven Poole, *Trigger Happy: Videogames and the Entertainment Revolution* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000), 6-7.

adults, have the unique qualities of Huizinga's 'play-element' and possess the traits of Caillois' Four Main Rubrics.

If video games do not offer the concept of play as much as traditional games do, then children may not develop the social, psychological, emotional and physical traits necessary to survive in the world later on in their life.

There are others who argue the opposite. For example, Binark explains how compared to traditional games, even though the play concept may show itself differently throughout video games does not mean that video games do not possess the element of play. In fact according to Binark,

Dijital oyunlarda haz, bu oyunların kişiye gerçek yaşamda olduğundan bambaşka bir karakter yaratma olanağı sunmasından, yarattığı sanal karakteri istediği bir evrende istediği biçimde- elbette oyunun genel kuralları ve amaçları çerçevesinde- devindirmesinden kaynaklanır. (...) Kimlik egzersizi yaptırır.¹⁴³

Based on this quote, video games allow the players to develop and create characters which they would not be able to do in real life. Binark states that by being able to act, move, and travel freely from one realm to the next provides players with pleasure. Based on Binark's notion, video games are similar to Traditional Pretending games which also allow children more freedom to create and develop characters based on their imaginations.

But, the question of why children prefer to play video games instead of traditional games is still left unanswered. The advancements in the adult world,

¹⁴³ Mutlu Binark, Günseli Bayraktutan-Sütçü, and Işık Barış Fidaner, *Dijital Oyun Rehberi: Oyun Tasarımı, Türler ve Oyuncu* (İstanbul: Kalkedon Yayınları, 2009), 44.

video games in particular, have caused children's activities to change. In the next section, I explain how this has led to the discourse of the 'disappearing childhood' in further detail.

5.4. The Discourse of 'Disappearing Childhood'

In the work of Ahioğlu and Güney, there is an article by Atay which explains how industrialization, capitalism, urbanization and nationalism have caused the commercialization and disappearance of childhood. Atay states that

Kapitalistleşme, endüstrileşme, kentleşme ve uluslaşma gibi dönüşümlerle keşfedilen ve yetişkin dünyasından ayrı, başlıbaşına bir varoluş alanı olarak ortaya çıkan çocukluk, şimdilerde yeniden ortadan kaybolmaya, daha doğrusu yetişkin dünyasıyla iç içe geçmeye başladı.¹⁴⁴

If Winnicott and Freud's theories on play are considered, children need to play with objects in order to transfer their stress or unconscious emotions towards in order to form a healthy relationship between the world and him or herself and to differentiate what is real and what is not.

In video games there are no physical objects which children can do this. Only the video console or the computer, the game controller or the mouse, the television or the computer screen are available and the contents of the visual world in which they play in. But, these are not enough for children to 'play' with. In the psychoanalytical view, there need to be physical objects available

¹⁴⁴ Tayfun Atay, "Popüler Kültürden Kitle Kültürüne Çocukluğun Dönüşümleri," Nihal Ahioğlu and Neslihan Güney, *Popüler Kültür ve Çocuk* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Çocuk Kültürü Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi, 2007), 96.

so that children can touch, and feel. Most importantly, as Winnicott explains, only through playing with these objects can children learn to 'experience.'¹⁴⁵

Other than their psychology, video games may also hinder children's social and physical development. As Baudrillard explains, before children are fully developed, before they have mastered to discipline the pleasure-principle, children fall into the "post-reality-principle world, in which the real and the virtual merge."¹⁴⁶ The world that Baudrillard refers to is the world of computers, the Internet and could also be considered the world of video games. Baudrillard elucidates that the future will be a virtual and quick-paced world and children will not be ready for this world because they will not have developed. With the new technologies and the loss of the old, slow traditions, which helped develop children, Baudrillard concludes that "the pace of life condemns childhood to accelerated obsolescence"¹⁴⁷ and that soon it will disappear as a phase in children's lives.¹⁴⁸

Children's world of playing has combined with the adult world. It has become more difficult to distinguish where children's world ends and the adult world begins. Just as children's lives are changing, society changes as well. In the next chapter, I explain the findings of my field-research and analyze whether or not the aforementioned is the case for children in Turkey.

¹⁴⁵ D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

¹⁴⁶ Jean Baudrillard, "The Dark Continent of Childhood," *Screened Out*, trans., Chris Turner (London and New York: Verso, 2002), 104- 106.

¹⁴⁷ Baudrillard, *Ibid*, 104.

¹⁴⁸ Baudrillard, *Ibid*, 106.

Chapter 6 - Results and Analysis

6.1. Method and Results of Field- Research

Based on the research methods used throughout the studies mentioned in the literature of Avedon, Sutton-Smith and Livingstone, I decided to develop a short questionnaire asking questions about the types of games children play and why they choose those games.¹⁴⁹

As a template for my questionnaire I used the questions asked by Goldstein in his study about children's counting-games. In the article "Strategy in Counting Out: An Ethnographic Folklore Field Study," Goldstein describes the questions he wanted the children to answer but, these are not the questions written in his questionnaire, they are only questions which point out the things he analyzed.

1. What is the game's objective?
2. How do children know about the game?
3. What are needed to play the game?
4. Who, what age or gender groups play the game?
5. What are the steps of the game or the actions taken during the game?
6. Why did the child choose this game?
7. What is the strategy of the game? (If there is one.)

From these questions I began to shape the questions I wanted to ask for my own questionnaire. When thinking about the questions, I also thought about the information from the literature I reviewed. This led me to formulate the questions below, which are translated from my original questionnaire.

¹⁴⁹ An example of the questionnaire is in Appendix II.

1. What type of games do you play with your friends when it is recess-time at school?
2. When you are not at school, what do you do during your free-time?
3. Which types of games do you play on the computer/Internet/PlayStation/Wii/XBOX?
4. What types of games do you play the most? How many hours per week/day? (Please write down the number.)
5. What types of games do you like playing the most? Why? (Please write in down the reason.)

Then, from my analysis of video games and traditional games I listed multiple choice items which the children could choose from, they were allowed to choose more than one. After organizing my questionnaires I went to an elementary school located in the town of Topkapı in Istanbul. The school was a public school and children who went there were mostly from middle/working-class families, which I learned after talking with the principal and teachers.

First I visited the classroom of 8th grade children, which consisted of 16 males and 20 females. Then I visited the classroom of 5th grade children, which consisted of 19 males and 24 females. For each class of students, I handed-out the questionnaire forms and then went over each of the questions as the students filled-out the questionnaires.

The first class, the 8th graders, was more cooperative and because there was a teacher by my side she helped me explain the procedures of the questionnaire. But, the second class, the 5th graders, was less cooperative and because there was no teacher to supervise them I had trouble having them listen to me.

Each class was nervous, because they thought I was handing out tests. In order to relieve some of their nervousness, I announced to each class that the questionnaire was not a test, there was no right or wrong answer and that they should fill each one as best they could. Then, I went through all of the questions one-by-one. Overall, the children of each group responded to all the questions according to the procedures as I had directed.

6.2. Analysis of the Results

First, I want to briefly remind an important factor which I think, has affected the results of my research. As I mentioned earlier in Chapter 2, before the Western ideals of the modern view of childhood, the nuclear family, domesticity and private life were adapted into the Turkish culture, parents' views on children and childhood differed among families of different socio-economic status and location. The views of both middle-class and upper-class families are considered to be less traditional compared to the views of working-class families.

Despite some differences, it is important to understand that the concept of childhood in Turkey, especially in İstanbul, is generally based on a combination of both the modern ideals of the Western culture and the more traditional ideals of the Turkish culture which are based on the teachings of Islam. Another important point, specific for Turkey, is gender differences. The views of parents may vary between these predetermined views: female children are not allowed to play outside as much as male children are, female children are expected to be studious and good at school compared to male children, and

female children do not play as much on the computer as male children do (this seems to exist in both cultures.)

After completing my questionnaires, I gathered the results first, by going through the responses for each question one-by-one by hand. Then, I placed the results into SPSS. Coding the responses were somewhat difficult because the children selected too many of the choices for some of the questions. But, the responses from both groups were analyzed for each question. Then, they were compared between groups and between genders. I explain these findings below.

First, the descriptive statistics (N=79) showed that there were 35 male and 44 female children. The average age of Group A (8th grade) was M=10,5 while the average age of Group B (5th grade) was M= 12,5. Then, the responses given to all the questions were analyzed using the cross-tabulations method and the Independent Samples t-test. Analysis of the first question (“Okuldayken, teneffüs zamanında, arkadaşlarıyla beraber hangi oyunları oynuyorsun?”) revealed a significant difference in the games played by the older children, from the 8th grade and the younger children, from the 5th grade.

As follows, an Independent Samples t-test between the two groups was used for each response choice between 1a-1e. The results of the analysis were found significant ($p<0,05$) for the multiple choice items 1b, 1c and 1e. The Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances showed a significant difference between the groups for 1b (“Saklambaç, Yakalamaca, Kovalamaca”, $T=0.00$, $p<0.05$). The difference between the average number of children who selected

multiple choice item 1b between Group A and Group B was $M^1 = 0.14 < M^2 = 0.51$. This shows that children in Group B selected multiple choice item 1b more than the children in Group A. From this I assume that younger children choose to play more traditional games, such as Hide-and-Seek, compared to older children. This is confirmed in the research done by Opie and Opie, in which they also found that younger children tend to play more games similar to hide-and-seek because they are easy and fun.¹⁵⁰

For the third choice, 1c (“İp atlama, Birdirbir, Çanak Çömlek, Bilye, Misket, Zıpzip,” $T=0.00$, $p<0.05$), the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances showed a significant difference between the groups. The difference between the average number of children who selected multiple choice item 1c between Group A and Group B was $M^1=0,00 < M^2= 0,09$. This shows that Group B selected multiple choice item 1c more than Group A which means that younger children play more traditional games compared to the older children.

Analyzing the fifth multiple choice item 1e (“Başka bir oyun oynuyoruz, Oyunların adları”) was somewhat tricky because it had fill-in-the-blank lines for the students, who did not play games during recess-time, to write what they did. The responses from Group A varied from “I don’t play,” “I study,” “We play soccer,” “We play volleyball,” to “We chat.” The responses from Group B varied from “I don’t play,” “We chat,” “We walk around,” “We

¹⁵⁰ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 153-154.

play SOS,” “We play Tic-Tac-Toe,” “We play Hangman,” “We imitate,” “We play Yerden Yüksek,” to “We play Call of Duty.”

The Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances also showed a significant difference ($T=0.00$, $p<0.05$) between the groups, among students who selected multiple choice item 1e. The difference between the average number of children who selected multiple choice item 1e between Group A and Group B was $M^1=0.00 < M^2=0.12$. The children from Group B, the younger children, selected more responses with traditional games compared to the older children from Group A. The responses of Group B varied from “We play SOS,” “We play Tic-Tac-Toe,” “We play Hangman,” “We imitate” to “We play Yerden Yüksek.”

Based on the research done by Opie and Opie, the finding that younger children play more traditional games is confirmed.¹⁵¹ Opie and Opie especially point out that younger female children play games of Imitation or other traditional games such as SOS (another term for Tic-Tac-Toe), Hangman, and Yerden Yüksek, an Exerting game similar to Leapfrog, or Birdirbir.

I used the same method to analyze the responses given to the second question (“Okulda değilken, boş zamanında en çok ne yaparsın?”). Based on the Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances, a significant difference ($T=0.00$, $p<0.05$), was found only for multiple choice item 2c which was “Saklambaç, yakalamaca, ip atlama, futbol oynarım, Oyunların adları.” The difference

¹⁵¹ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children’s Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 331-343.

between the average number of children who selected multiple choice item 2c between Group A and Group B was $M^1=0.014 < M2=0.40$. This shows once again that the younger children selected multiple choice item 2c more than the older children did, which means that the younger children play traditional games more than the older children.

The second question is important because it asked children how they spend their free time. Based on the literature of Livingstone et al., I assumed that the younger children play more traditional games and the older children prefer to go online, look through social media websites or do things that do not take up too much time.¹⁵² Some of the responses given by the older children were “Go out with friends/family,” “Play Assassin’s Creed III,” (a video game of the Action genre), “Sleep,” “Go online,” “Listen to music,” and “Go over my schoolwork, solve test problems and go to the dersane.”

Some of the responses from the younger children from Group B were “Go online,” “Go out with friends/ family,” “Go shopping,” and “Watch documentary films.” Compared to the younger children, the older children prefer to use the computer to go online, and spend their time on social media websites, rather than play video games. Based on the study of children in Europe, done by Livingstone et al., the results from their YPNM surveys showed that almost 66% of children between 6-17 years of age, from middle-class families who had only video game consoles at home, spent “three days per

¹⁵² Sonia Livingstone, *Young People and New Media Childhood and the Changing Environment* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 37.

week, for around 79 minutes” per day playing video games. Of the children who only had computers at home, 34% of male children and 42% of female children, between the same ages said that “they only use it (the computer) to play games.”¹⁵³ Therefore, Livingstone’s findings confirm that there are differences in age and gender in regards to how much children spend time using the computer for ‘non-play’ or play.

Unfortunately there was no significant difference found between either group’s responses to Question 3 which was “Bilgisayar /Internet /PlayStation /Wii /XBOX da hangi oyunları oynuyorsun?” But, a significant difference was found between the responses given to Question 4 which was “En çok hangi oyunları oynuyorsun? Haftada kaç kere oynuyorsun? (Lütfen boşluğa rakam yaz).” This question had two parts, the first part asked children what games they play the most, and the second part asked how many times – or hours- per week they play those types of games. There were two different choices to this question. The first choice was for traditional games which I labeled as 4a, and the second choice was for video games which I labeled as 4b. Also, because the question asked how many times-or hours- per week the children played these games, while coding the data, I labeled this part of the question for both choices. For choice 4a I labeled the amount of time spent as 4a1 and for choice 4b I labeled the amount of time as 4b1.

¹⁵³ Sonia Livingstone, *Young People and New Media Childhood and the Changing Environment* (London: Sage Publications, 2002), 62.

As such, the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances showed significant difference ($T=0.00$, $p<0.05$) only for 4a1 ("Haftada kaç kere oynuyorsun?") and not for 4a. The difference between the average number of children, who selected multiple choice item 4a and responded to 4a1, between both groups was $M^1=0.015 < M^2=0.012$. In this case, the older children, from Group A selected multiple choice item 4a ("Saklambaç, yakalamaca, ip atlama, futbol oyunları") and responded to spending more time per week playing traditional games. But, because a significant difference was not found between the groups for 4a, I was not able to assume that there is a significant difference between children's responses for the entirety of Question 4 which asks what types of games they play the most.

For Question 4, and similarly, for Question 5, most of the children left the second parts of both Question 4 (4a1 and 4b1) and Question 5 (5a1 and 5b1) blank. This caused a problem during my analysis, and made the interpretation of the findings quite difficult. For the same reason, there was no significant difference found for Question 5 either.

Again with SPSS, I performed a second test and checked for differences between each gender for the responses from the children of each group. For Question 1 ("Okuldayken, tenefüs zamanında, arkadaşlarıyla beraber hangi oyunları oynuyorsun?") a significant difference ($T=0.00$, $p<0.05$) was found according to the results of the Levene's Test for Equality of Variances. This shows that the female students play more traditional games compared to the male students.

Question 3 was one of my most important questions because it asked children from both groups, who play video games, what types of games they played (“Bilgisayar/Internet/... da hangi oyunları oynuyorsun?”) The multiple choice items for Question 3 are stated below.

- 3a- Yarışma: Need for Speed, Burnot Paradise, GTA,
- 3b- Savaş/Strateji: Civilization, Age of Empires, Crysis, Fallout, Call of Duty
- 3c- Kavg/Macara: Street Fighter, Tekken, Super Mario, Legend of Zelda
- 3d- Simülasyon: Farmville, Sims, Minecraft, Uçak Simülatörü, PES
- 3e- MMO/RPG: World of Warcraft, Dreamquest, Dungeons & Dragons
- 3f- Bunların dışında başka oyunlar oynuyorum, Oyunların adları.

I analyzed the responses from both groups by using the method of Cross-tabulation. During my input of the data, for the multiple choice items between 3a to 3e, if children selected either one – or more- of them, I used ‘1’ to define the children who selected that choice and ‘0’ to define the children who did not select that choice. Most of the children also wrote down the names of the games they played next to the response. But, I recorded these answers under 3f in which I categorized the games as Casual (Fruit Ninja, Temple Run 2, Subway Surfers, Diamond Dash, Angry Birds and Bubble Trouble), Browser (Stardoll, Ask FM, Bil ve Fethet, Pou, Kral Oyun, Dragon City and Su ve Ateş), Social Media (Facebook and Twitter), Action (GTA, Smackdown, Fantastic 4, Epic Battle, Far Cry, Crysis, and Call of Duty), Simulation (PES, Sims and Minecraft), and MMO/RPG (World of Tanks and Ultimate Alliance).

Based on the findings from the Cross-tabulations, choice 3a (“Yarışma”) was selected more by the older children, from Group A (0.42) than

by the younger children, from Group B (0.40). Choice 3b (“Savaş/Strateji”) was selected more by the older children, from Group A (9) than by the younger children, from Group B (7). Choice 3c (“Kavgı/Macera”) was selected more by the younger children, from Group B (7) than the older children, from Group A (11). Choice 3d (“Simülasyon”) was chosen more by the younger children, from Group B (30) than by the older children, from Group A (20). Choice 3e (MMO/RPG) was chosen quite less by the both groups of children. There was no difference found because only two of the children from the older group said they played any kind of MMO/RPG games.

I have summarized the important points from my findings below.

1. Younger children play traditional games more often than older children, with no difference in gender.
2. The majority of female children who use the computer for ‘non-play’ prefer to go on social media websites to talk with friends, listen to music, watch videos on Youtube or check their e-mail,
3. Male children use the computer less for ‘non-play’ things compared to female children.
4. Younger children who play video games choose to play games of the Action, Action-Adventure, Simulation and Racing genres.
5. Of the older children, from Group A, the majority of male children who play video games choose to play Action, Action-Adventure and Simulation games.
6. Of the older children, from Group A, the majority of female children who play video games choose to play Casual games on their computer, smartphone, laptop or tablet or the Simulation/Browser game Stardoll.
7. Female children who play Stardoll, a Simulation/Browser game based on Fashion and making clothes, provided more detailed, rational responses for playing the game and about childhood. (Reasons for playing were mostly, “I like fashion,” “I can create clothes,” and “I can chat with my friends.” Definitions of childhood were mostly, “Live with your family and be happy,” “Go to school and study,” and “Play with friends.”)

8. Male children who play PES, a Simulation soccer game, provided rational responses for playing the game and about childhood. (Reasons for playing were mostly, "I want to be a football player when I grow up," and "It is easier to play than real football and you can change the rules." Definitions of childhood were mostly, "Play outside with friends," "Play games," and "Go to school.")
9. Older children provided rational responses that were more positive such as, "to study and go to school," and "to play games when I am bored."
10. Younger children provided rational responses that were negative such as, "to obey your parents," "to live in a nut house," and "to not be able to do what you want to."
11. The responses of the outlier group- the older children who did not have permission from their parents to use the computer and play video games (because they had to study for their exams)- changed.
 - a. Based on gender
 - i. Females responded 'Don't play' to most of the questions that were about video games and
 - ii. Males responded to more of the questions about video games because they exaggerated.
 - b. When defining childhood
 - i. Females provided more emotionally negative responses because they are growing through puberty and they spend more of their time studying instead of playing.
 - ii. Males provided less rational negative responses because they are going through puberty as well, but, they spend less time studying compared to girls and more time playing.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

The main objective of this thesis was to understand how video games are causing the disappearance of childhood. In order to claim truth to this argument, the points which I tried to explain were that video games do not possess the 'play-element' which is important to children's games, they are considered as New Media which is part of the Culture Industry, this makes them part of the adult world and the introduction of video games into children's realm of playing is causing the disappearance of childhood.

Based on the literature, I claim that only casual video games, which were once traditional games, such as puzzles, paper-and-pencil games, word games, and card games, possess the same traits as traditional games. The reason for this is that, even as traditional games, casual games only possess the trait of Alea, and Ludus, which can both be found throughout almost all video games.

But, all other traditional games, such as Catching and running, Hiding and finding, Ball games, Hand games, Jumping and skipping games, Pretending games, possess the traits of Agon, Mimicry and Ilinx. In fact, most of them contain all of these traits at once, while others may have just two of them and yet, other games may also have the trait of Alea. Traditional games can also be part of both Ludus and Paidia. Some have organized rules and others have unorganized rules which players can change according to their imagination (as in Pretending games.)

But, in video games, these traits and dimensions cannot be found in the same ways. Most importantly, the trait of Iinx, cannot be found in most video games (accept for some games like Dance Dance Revolution in which players jump up-and-down and in other Wii type of games.) Still even the video games that might possess Iinx, do not have the capability of presenting other live players, so that you can catch them or tag them, as in traditional games. Lastly, another distinct difference is that video games players cannot change the rules or the context of the game because the story-line, images, moves, tasks, etc. – especially in MMORPG games or Adventure games- are fixed, and hardwired into the machine.

The findings from my field-research showed that children between the ages of 9-14 years, who live in the city of İstanbul, spend more time playing video games but, also play traditional games when they are outside. Even so, there were some limitations to my research.

First, I believe the questions I asked on the questionnaire could have been stated more simply. Despite that I went over each of the questions and the choices one by one with each group, children had difficulty understanding them and some of them responded inaccurately.

Secondly, I had a restricted amount of time because I was only allowed to meet with the children in the classroom during their free period. But, as the studies throughout the literature have showed, the method that proves to be most useful is face-to-face short-interviewing with one child about the games

s/he plays, rather than a group interview.¹⁵⁴ Especially if children are younger, I believe it would better to interview them separately. When responding to questions, children are self-conscious about what games they play -or do not play- because they are worried about what other children would say. It is even more important when asking about video games because some children do not have computers or video consoles at home, and they feel left out.

Another limitation I believe was the fact that I performed my field-research towards the end of the spring semester, and the older children were getting ready for their annual examinations. During my short-interview with the groups, some of the children told me that their parents did not allow them to use the computer or play games outside because they were preparing for their examinations. This created the responses of the older group to be skewed.

Also, because my sample group size was low it is not possible to generalize these findings to all the middle/working class children living in a certain area of İstanbul. More research of this kind needs to be carried out for larger groups of different populations whom are from different cultural backgrounds, classes and are of different ages. Based on the methods and approaches of other studies, I think that it would be more effective to do this research again with a simpler questionnaire form, brief face-to-face individual interviews and group observations of the children.

¹⁵⁴ Iona Opie and Peter Opie, *Children's Games in Street and Playground* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to show how playing is an important part of childhood and can only be done through children's free-play of traditional games. Based on the findings of my field-research, and the review of literature about play, childhood and video games, children's traditional games have been intercepted by the video games of the Culture Industry, based on the mass consumption of technological devices. Children are growing-up spending lesser time playing outside, and spending more time playing indoors on computers or with video consoles and the modern concept of childhood has turned into a postmodern dystopia of the 'disappearing childhood.'

In conclusion, I proclaim that within society of the 21st century, children have become consumers of video games. Instead of playing traditional games – either outdoors or during recess time at school- they play more video games, and spend more time with New Media. This has caused changes in their daily activities, their relations with adults and their most basic right of playing. If children are swept more into the adult world of New Media and they no longer play, then we can no longer discuss the modern concept of childhood.

Perhaps after further research, the 21st century can be marked as a transition period in childhood and traditional games, in which the games played by prior centuries are replaced by video games and New Media. Children living in industrialized and newly-industrialized countries, no longer play, or have knowledge of, the traditional games which their parents or grandparents used to play. These are all insights which I think should be considered for further research.

Appendix I

Tables

Table 1- Descriptive Statistics

Frequency between Female and Male Children

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Kız	44	55,7	55,7	55,7
	Erkek	35	44,3	44,3	100,0
	Total	79	100,0	100,0	

Table 2- Group Statistics

Means between Groups for Independent Samples t-test for Questions 1-5

Group A= "Alp", Group B= "Barış"

Grup	N=79	Mean
1a Alp	36	,58
	43	,44
1b Alp	36	,14
	43	,51
1c Alp	36	,00
	43	,09
1d Alp	36	,14
	43	,09
1e Alp	36	,00
	43	,12
2a Alp	36	,19
	43	,28
2b Alp	36	,61
	43	,58
2c Alp	36	,14
	43	,40

2d	Alp	36	1,50
	Bariş	43	1,81
2e	Alp	36	,08
	Bariş	43	,14
3a	Alp	36	,42
	Bariş	43	,40
3b	Alp	36	,25
	Bariş	43	,16
3c	Alp	36	,19
	Bariş	43	,26
3d	Alp	36	,56
	Bariş	43	,70
3e	Alp	36	,11
	Bariş	43	,09
3f	Alp	36	1,06
	Bariş	43	1,37
4a	Alp	36	,42
	Bariş	43	,56
4a1	Alp	36	1,03
	Bariş	43	2,35

4b	Alp	36	2,50				
	Bariş	43	1,81				
4b1	Alp	36	3,00				
	Bariş	43	3,21				
4c	Alp	36	,03				
	Bariş	43	,28				
4c1	Alp	36	,00				
	Bariş	43	,93				
5a	Alp	36	,36				
	Bariş	43	,60				
5a1	Alp	36	,83				
	Bariş	43	1,28				
5b	Alp	36	,83				
	Bariş	43	,77				
5b1	Alp	36	1,67				
	Bariş	43	1,67				
5c	Alp	36	,00	5c1	Alp	36	,00
	Bariş	43	,00				

Table 3- Independent Samples t-Test Results

Differences of Responses between Groups for Questions 1-5

Levene's Test for Equality of Variances

Question Items #	F value	Significance
1a	.198	.657
1b	45,485	.000
1c	17,874	.000
1d	1,611	.208
1e	24,488	.000
2a	3,157	.080
2b	.282	.597
2c	31,939	.000
2d	.864	.356
2e	2,507	.117
3a	.140	.710
3b	3,636	.060
3c	1,693	.197
3d	5,118	.027
3e	.276	.602
3f	8,607	.004
4a	.198	.657
4a1	17,381	.000
4b	.858	.357
4b1	5,332	.024
4c	71,632	.000

4c1	26,242	,000
5a	,385	,587
5a1	,093	,761
5b	2,141	,148
5b1	,001	,973
5c	Invalid	Invalid
5c1	Invalid	Invalid

Table 4- Cross-tabulation Results for Video Games

Difference in Responses between Groups for Question 3

Number of Responses to Choice 3a Crosstabulation

		3a		Total
		Yok	Var	
K/E	Erkek	13	22	35
	Kız	34	10	44
	Total	47	32	79

Number of Responses to Choice 3b Crosstabulation

		3b		Total
		Yok	Var	
K/E	Erkek	20	15	35
	Kız	43	1	44
	Total	63	16	79

Number of Responses to Choice 3c Crosstabulation

		3c		Total
		Yok	Var	
K/E	Erkek	23	12	35
	Kız	38	6	44
	Total	61	18	79

Number of Responses to Choice 3d Crosstabulation

		3d		Total
		Yok	Var	
K/E	Erkek	8	27	35
	Kız	21	23	44
	Total	29	50	79

Number of Responses to Choice 3e Crosstabulation

		3e		Total
		Yok	Var	
K/E	Erkek	29	6	35
	Kız	42	2	44
	Total	71	8	79

Number of Responses to Choice 3e Crosstabulation

	Yok	Casual	Browser	Social Media	Casual, Browser, Social Media	Total
Erkek	27	3	1	1	3	35
Kız	12	9	10	4	9	44
Total	39	12	11	5	12	79

Appendix II

Questionnaire

Sınıf:

Yaş:

Kız /Erkek:

OYUNLAR HAKKINDA ANKET

1. Okuldayken, teneffüs zamanında, arkadaşlarınla beraber hangi oyunları oynuyorsun?

- Futbol, basketbol, istop, yakan top
- Saklambaç, yakalamaca, kovalamaca
- İp atlama, Birdirbir, Çelik Çomak, Bilye, Misket, Zıpzip
- Bilgisayar/İnternet/PlayStation/Wii/XBOX oyunları oynuyorum
- Başka bir oyun oynuyoruz, Oyunların adları:

2. Okulda değilken, boş zamanında en çok ne yaparsın?

- Televizyon izlerim
- Kitap okur, ödevimi yaparım
- Saklambaç, yakalamaca, ip atlama, futbol, Oynadığım oyunların adları: _____
- Bilgisayar/İnternet/Playstation/Wii/XBOX oyunları oynarım, Oynadığım oyunların adları:

- Bunların dışında başka bir şey yaparım: _____

3. Bilgisayar/İnternet/Playstation/Wii/XBOX da hangi oyunları oynuyorsun?

- Yarışma:** Need for Speed, Burnout Paradise, GTA, vb.
- Savaş/Strateji:** Civilization, Age of Empires, Crysis, Fallout, Call of Duty, vb.
- Kavga/Macera:** Street fighter, Tekken, Super Mario, Legend of Zelda, vb.
- Simülasyon:** Farmville, Sims, Minecraft, Uçak Simulatörü, PES, vb.
- MMO/RPG:** World of Warcraft, Dreamquest, Ultima Online, vb.
- Bunların dışında başka oyunlar oynarım, Oyunların adları:

4. En çok hangi oyunları oynuyorsun? Haftada kaç kere oynuyorsun?
(Lütfen boşluğa rakam yaz)
- Saklambaç, yakalamaca, ip atlama, futbol oyunları,
Oyunların adları: _____
 - Bilgisayar/Internet/Playstation /Wii/XBOX daki oyunları oynarım,
Oyunların adları: _____
 - Başka oyunlar oynarım, Oyunların adları: _____
5. En çok hangi oyunları oynamayı seviyorsun? Neden? (Lütfen boşluğa yaz)
- Saklambaç, yakalamaca, ip atlama, futbol oyunları,
Oyunların adları: _____
 - Bilgisayar/Internet/Playstation/Wii/XBOX oyunları,
Oyunların adları: _____
 - Başka oyunlar oynamayı seviyorum, Oyunların adları:

6. Kendi sözlerinle sence çocuk olmak ne demek?

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