

**THE IMPACT OF ALTERNATIVE LIFE IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD
ON EVERYDAY LIFE: THE EXAMPLE OF THE SIMS**



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January 2022

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January 2022

PLAGIARISM

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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ABSTRACT

The Impact of Alternative Life in the Virtual World on Everyday Life: The Example of The Sims deals with how digital games affect people's everyday life. First, the concept of "everyday life" is defined and later the changes it has undergone with digitalization are explained in detail. The digitalization-led transformation of self-presentations in everyday life and how they're reproduced in each digital medium are described. Self-presentations are diversified in social media and digital games, which are categorized among the new media tools as it is much easier for one to create a new self or to present oneself as one wishes in the virtual world. Compared to real life, in the virtual worlds offered by new media platforms, people have the identities and lives they desire or show others that they have them. Simulation games, which are a type of digital game, resume as a virtual alternative life against everyday life and have become very popular recently. In this study, the simulation game "The Sims" is selected as a sample and it is investigated for how it offers an alternative life to the real world. Unlike other digital games, "The Sims" and similar simulation games do not have concepts such as racing, competition, action or adventure, but rather focus on people's everyday routines and activities. Whenever the person wants to quit the game, then the game is over. "The Sims" or similar others, which come across as simulations of a normal life, offer people an alternative character and life created in the virtual world. In this study, the findings obtained as a result of interviews conducted with 8 players of "The Sims" are discussed.

Keywords: Everyday life, self-presentation, simulation and simulacrum, virtual world, digital games, The Sims

ÖZET

Sanal dünyada kurulan alternatif hayatların gündelik hayata etkisi: The Sims örneği

çalışması dijital oyunların gündelik hayata etkilerini ele almaktadır. Öncelikle gündelik hayat kavramını ve dijitalleşmeyle beraber bu kavramın uğradığı değişimler açıklanmıştır. Buna bağlı olarak dijitalleşmeyle beraber gündelik hayatta benlik sunumlarının de değişime uğrayarak her bir dijital mecrada yeniden üretildiği anlatılmıştır. Yeni medya araçları olan sosyal medya ve dijital oyunlarda benlik sunumları çeşitlenmiştir çünkü sanal dünyada kişinin yeni bir benlik oluşturması ya da kişinin benliğini istediği gibi sunması çok daha kolaydır. Gerçek yaşamla kıyaslandığında yeni medya platformlarının sunduğu sanal dünyalarda kişiler arzu ettikleri kimliklere ve hayatlar sahip olmakta ya da sahip olduğunu diğerlerine göstermektedir. Dijital oyunların bir çeşidi olan simülasyon oyunları, gündelik hayatın içerisinde kurulan sanal bir alternatif hayat olarak varlıklarını sürdürmektedir ve son dönemde oldukça popüler hale gelmiştir. Bu çalışmada *The Sims* isimli simülasyon oyunu örneklem olarak seçilerek gerçek dünyaya nasıl bir alternatif hayat sunduğunu araştırılmıştır. *The Sims* ve benzeri simülasyon oyunlarını diğer dijital oyunlarda olduğu gibi yarış, rekabet, aksiyon ya da macera gibi kavramlar yer almaz; kişilerin gündelik hayat rutinlerine ve faaliyetleri odaklanır, kişi ne zaman oyunu bırakmaz isterse oyun o zaman biter. Normal bir yaşamın simülasyonu olarak karşımıza çıkan bu ve benzeri oyunlar, kişilere sanal dünyada oluşturulan alternatif bir karakter ve alternatif bir hayat sunar. Bu çalışmada bu mesela *The Sims* oynayan 8 kişiyle mülakat yapılarak araştırılmış ve yapılan mülakatlar sonucunda çıkan bulgular üzerinden tartışılmıştır.

Keywords: *Gündelik hayat, benliğin sunumu, simülasyon ve simülark, sanal dünya, dijital oyunlar, The Sims.*

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of everyday life, which has a wide coverage in the literature, is very important in social science studies. The main reason is that all activities, routines, habits, thoughts and ideas of people are included in it. With technological developments such as the Industrial Revolution and digitalization, people's everyday lives have changed all over the world. The very change continues to further with new, subsequent developments. Currently, the most important example is undoubtedly the internet itself, - a reality that became a part of our lives since 2000's. The internet, which is easily accessible in almost all around the world, has brought new forms for people's daily practices. For the very new forms gaining importance, what we call "new media" has played the biggest role.

It offers people a virtual world by bringing new media consisting of internet, social media and digital games. While people continue their daily lives in the physical world by going to work, school or engaging in social activities, they also "construct" a life in the virtual world in parallel with this. With the construction term, the following is actually explained: All situations that cannot be intervened in the physical world are easily changed in the virtual world, which is unique to the person. A person who does not have a body type he/she dreams of can present his/her body as he/she wishes by using photo filters, editing tools or etc. on social media. He/she can present not only his/her physical features, but also the character he/she wants to be to other people with the comments, text, thoughts or posts he/she shares on social media platforms. In this respect, it can be said that social media has diversified and differentiated the self-presentations of people. At the same time, new media tools help people to live a life they want to have or to show them as if they are living. In fact, this is one of the reasons explaining the increasing popularity of the new media platforms.

Especially in the last 10 years, the digital games, as a new media tool, have been seen in every aspect of daily life through the internet, computers, game consoles and phones. Today, playing games is considered as an activity not specific to children but an activity that individuals from all age groups, genders and social classes spend time for in their daily lives. The main reason for this is the development of the digital game industry along with the internet and other technological developments. The Sims video games series, which is chosen as the sample in this study, is a real-life simulation. In this game series, players construct a

life just like in real life with the avatars they create (the concept of “avatar” is used instead of characters in games). The game consists of simple everyday life activities such as working, going to school, starting a family and spending time with them, making friends and socializing, eating, having a pet or etc. It offers the player the opportunity to build a life from scratch in a virtual world. The player can intervene in all situations that cannot be interfered with in real life. For from physical appearance to family issues, the player can create own options. The game differs from other new media devices in terms of constructing a freer life and presenting a much more diverse self. With all these features, The Sims and similar simulation games appear as an alternative to real life. In other words, in such games, one can freely experience alternatives that he/she cannot experience in real life for certain reasons, and can create his/her own alternatives. This could be an alternative profession, an alternative family, an alternative identity, an alternative lifestyle... For example, an individual who does not experience his/her sexual orientation as a result of social pressures can live the identity and lifestyle, he/she wants in a real-life simulation. In this game, the person can continue his/her life with the real himself or herself. For this reason, The Sims is described as an alternative life in the study. It is framed as an alternative life in everyday life, as it is an activity spent long hours in everyday life and there are many different connections. In these alternative lives, there are psychological and sociological factors such as will, desire, dream, escape from reality and the aim of getting away from real life.

In this study, three concepts in the title were examined under separate headings; “everyday life,” “virtual and simulation life” and “alternative life.” In the first part of the study, the meaning of daily life, the changing daily life forms, the self-presentations in daily life, the concept of leisure, the internet as a daily routine and the virtualization of daily life together with digital technologies are discussed. In this section, the concept of daily life is discussed in detail. In the second part, the virtual life and the worlds of virtual and simulation included in daily life are explained. The self-presentations presented in the virtual worlds and the purposes of using virtual worlds of people are examined. In this section, new media tools are treated as simulations while the simulation views such as social media and “Metaverse” in daily life are included. In the second part, the concept of the virtual life is discussed in detail and it is based on the daily life forms established in virtual life. In this section, the virtual world identities are explained with Goffman's theory of self-presentation, Katz's “Uses and Gratifications Theory,” McLuhan's “The Medium is the Message” theory. In the second part, Baudrillard's simulation and simulacra theory and simulations that reproduce reality and the

platforms where these productions are made are given. In the third chapter, games are considered as a communication tool. Under the title of game, the concepts of game and digital games, the history of digital games, the perspective of digital games within the framework of the culture industry, consumer society and culture industry are explained. In this section, the theories of Adorno and other thinkers about the culture industry and consumer society are connected with digital games. In this section, the impact of digital games on daily life is discussed. Squid Game, a Netflix drama released in October 2021 and was watched all over the world, was analyzed as well. In the fourth and last chapter, taking The Sims as the main sample, the interaction between daily life and digital games are explained. It is further explained in detail that simulation games, which are a type of digital games, continue to exist as an alternative to daily life. The findings of the interviewed participants are also included in the last section.

1.1. Subject and aim of the study

New media tools have become a part of life with digital technologies and have reshaped many routines, habits and forms of activities in daily life. In this study, it is focused on the new media tools to offer people a life in which they can live more freely in daily life and to realize a wide variety of self-presentations in these lives. In the study, digital games, the new media form, whose popularity has peaked in recent times, are discussed as a communication tool. The aim of the study is to examine the alternative lives established in daily life through various digital games, to reveal the purposes of the use of digital games that have entered people's lives with digital technologies, to explain the motivations of people to establish alternative lives, to reveal the place of these alternative lives in daily life and the links between people's real lives in these alternative lives.

For this purpose, The Sims has been chosen as the sample as it is the most preferred game in its segment since the first day it was released. The very game series and similar others of its kind appear as an alternative to real life. In other words, in such games, the player can freely experience alternatives that he/she cannot experience in own real life for certain reasons, and can create his/her own alternatives instead. In the study, both the interaction of new media tools with daily life and the alternative lives established in daily life are explained in detail. It is thought that the study will provide contributions to the literature as the subject studied is quite up-to-date and it is predicted that it will be discussed more in the future.

Another important aspect of this study is the case of the virtual universe called “Metaverse,” which was introduced to the whole world in October 2021 and is a prediction of the future. There is a kind of new reality in which the virtual world and the real world can be experienced simultaneously. This is a fairly new concept for humans. This topic was chosen because Metaverse is an advanced version of The Sims game and is likely to reshape everyday life in the future.

1.2. Research method

For these purposes, 8 people from different age groups who have been playing The Sims for at least 10 years have been selected. In-depth interviews were conducted with them face-to-face or online. As a purposeful sample, it has been determined that the participants have had to at least 8-year experience of playing in order to properly detect the game’s impacts. The participants were first selected from the study owner’s environment and later the snowball sampling method was implemented. During the in-depth interviews, the selected people are asked several questions. How do they choose characters in the game? What kind of life do they build? Why have they been playing the game for years? How do they bond with real life? How does the game affect everyday life? How does everyday life affect the game and how much time do they spend on the game per day? It has been ensured that the study reaches its goal with real experiences as well as theories. That is, the theories have been verified.

1.3. Similar studies previously conducted on this topic

The opinions presented in this study are basically explained by everyday life, leisure concepts, the theories of self-presentation, simulation, uses and gratifications theory, internet and the other theories. It has been observed that these concepts and theories are generally used in media and communication studies.

In the literature, the subjects are mentioned separately in the studies conducted in the fields of communication and media, and it has been seen that many studies have been carried out with a different perspective from the theories in this study. However, when the studies on communication and media in the thesis center of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK)

were examined, it was determined that the master's theses on the digital game started to be published since the 2010s. For this reason, there are not many theses in the literature, in which the above-mentioned theories and concepts are associated with digital games. It has been observed that the studies related to the subject and benefited from in this study are generally doctoral theses. When examined in the context of master's theses, it has been determined that studies that focus on the digital games as everyday life alternatives are insufficient.

Looking at some of the theses used in this study, the following were identified: “Determining the Self-Presentation Behaviors in Second Life” (doctoral thesis, 2011) revealed the similarities and differences between “Second Life” members' preferences for presenting themselves in the virtual environment and their preferences for presenting themselves in the real world. In the thesis of “An Example for Second Life in Virtual World Games in Social Media by Virtue of Usage and Satisfaction Approach” (doctoral thesis, 2014), it is discussed how digital games virtually satisfy real social life needs with the Uses and Gratifications Theory through the Second Life sample. It contributed to this study in terms of handling Second Life, which was produced for a similar purpose to The Sims, in both doctoral theses and the research methods they used in their studies. However, they differ from this work in that one focuses on self-presentation and the other focuses on the Uses and Gratifications perspective.

In the master's thesis titled “Construction of Everyday Reality in A Virtual World: The Case of World of Warcraft” (2016), the digital games with fantastic elements are examined and the lives established in these virtual universes are discussed with Berger and Luckmann's concept of “Social Construction of Reality.” “Real Agenda of Virtual Character: Text-Based Communication in Online Games and The Case of World of Warcraft” (2016), on the other hand, focused on the fact that online games are a simulation of the real social space, based on Baudrillard's simulation theory. In this study, the two master's degree theses were used on the digital game studies and the virtual world literature, but the selection of the World of Warcraft game set in the fantasy-themed Warcraft universe in the studies distanced the studies from real life. It differs from this study due to these aspects and the research methods used.

“Self-Presentation on Instagram: An Analysis of Goffman's Dramaturgical Approach” (doctoral thesis, 2020) was used in this study because it deals with the diversified self-presentations as a result of the spread of new media tools. In the thesis of “The Reflections of

Digitalization on Modern Everyday Life and The Case of Hikikomori” (2019), the changes in concepts such as working order, education system, leisure time, time, space, communication, identity, body and reality in daily life are handled with the developing digital technologies. This is another thesis referenced in this study. “Digital Game Industry in Turkey and Creative Labor” (doctoral thesis, 2019), which comprehensively explains the game and digital game literature, was used for the “Game” section of the study. “Construction and Presentation of Digital Player Identity” (doctoral thesis, 2017) has been a reference in this study in terms of dealing with the interaction of today's digital players with the game and the players. “The Culture under The Grip of Culture Industry” (doctoral thesis, 2016) has been one of the theses benefited from because of the fact that new media tools are handled in terms of the culture industry framework.

When we look at the dates in this study and similar others, it is observed that the studies on this subject have been carried out only in the last 10 years.

CHAPTER I: THE CONCEPTS OF “EVERYDAY” LIFE

In this chapter, the concept of daily life and the changes it has undergone over time is explained in detail with the help of various concepts and theories. Later, the notions of leisure time in everyday life, self-presentations of individuals in daily life and the internet as a daily life routine are the subjects to be discussed.

1.1. The Concepts of Everyday Life

Since ancient times, new theses have been developed on the concept of everyday life, different discussions have been carried out on the subject, and different approaches have been introduced by many researchers. Everyday life, as a concept, is one of the main topics of sociology as it deals with the individual and society as a whole. With simple words, everyday life is an interaction area where both needs and desires are met (Yıldırım, 2019). To put it more clearly, it is the activities that routinely meet the needs and wishes of the person in social life such as eating, drinking, sleeping, working and socializing. It covers the actions that people need to perform in order to maintain their lives, and it is also an area that includes emotions, thoughts and other abstract concepts, and is also in contact with other people (Şahin and Balta, 2001: 186). In other words, it is a concept that explains the activities that these people do to maintain their own lives. From society to society, culture to culture, all these activities can vary.

In the sociology literature, this concept is discussed in detail by many researchers. According to Lefebvre, who likens everyday life to “a fertile land,” the concept has always existed in all societies; however, with the developments such as the Industrial Revolution, the advancement of technology, modernization and digital life, the everyday life concept has undergone certain changes, meaning that it has taken on new forms (Lefebvre, 2016: 24). Separating the concept as pre-modern and post-modern, Lefebvre states that everyday life in pre-industrial societies naturally revolves around the movements of nature. In modern societies, on the other hand, due to the clock that constructs every moment of life, the concept has turned from being natural and turned into a routine that is programmed in every aspect. (Lefebvre, 2016).

Lefebvre defines the “place” as where we are actually “human,” saying: “It is both a space and a way station, a stage and a springboard, a moment made up of moments, a journey from oneself to realize the possible, and a dialectical interaction in which it is inevitable.” However, according to the same researcher, with the development of capitalism, everyday life has been manipulated as capitalism and the social order created by it have not only taken over the production activities, but also the entire time of the person. “Capitalism controls everyday life with concepts such as life, nutrition and fashion” (Lefebvre, 2016).

In his work “The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life,” Goffman describes the interaction of people with each other during everyday life with the “theater” sample. He compares the everyday life to a play. Here, the individual takes the actor role. “I have used the word “performance” to describe all the activities that a person performs during a period of permanent presence in front of a particular group of observers that has some influence on the observers,” Goffman says (1959). In other words, a person is always interested in how he/she presents himself/herself and how he/she creates impressions on others in his/her everyday life. The behaviors we repeat constantly during performance are routines. In everyday life, actors can perform different from each other and take on different roles. This does not mean that the person’s life is completely transparent; on the contrary, there are many issues people do hide. Goffman gives examples of lurking situations, saying: “Real opinions about marriage, finances, past experiences, personal aspirations and worries, bad habits, relatives or mutual friends.” For this reason, the person continues his/her performance with the anxiety of revealing what he/she wants to hide in everyday life. Goffman uses the following sentences about the behavior of people in everyday life in his work:

“Many habits, attitudes and practices in our everyday life (reading, talking, walking around, going to the market or cooking, etc.) are tactical types. A large part of the modes of action, practice, and production are also tactical: the victory of the weak over the strong, the art of caballing and steering, special tricks for 'hunters', traps, sleight of hand, multi-form simulations (emulations), poetic, joyful, joyful as well as challenging finds are all tactical.” (Goffman, 1959).

Everyday life can be divided into two as before and after the 18th century, due to factors such as the Industrial Revolution, migration from villages to cities, the emergence of metropolises and the birth of modern humans. All these factors are the main factors on the change and reshaping of people's everyday life practices.

1.1.1. Everyday Life and the Leisure

There is a complex situation between everyday life and leisure due to the existence of a dialectical relationship based on unity and contradiction (Lefebvre, 2017:35). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the concept of leisure, which means “the period of time when one does not do a job or study, but enjoys activities,” comes from “Licere,” the Latin-origin word of “free time” and the Greek word “scholē,” which means knowledge gained by talking to each other during this time (Bahadır, 2016). The concept of leisure has been discussed over every period. Separating all conceptual discussions and definitions as before and after modernity makes the subject easier to grasp. Because after modernity, many theorists state that the concept of leisure has become a problem by taking another form.

In the early pre-modern period, many thinkers produced various theses on leisure. In his work titled “The Theoretical Approaches to Leisure” (2002), Aytaç states that in ancient Greece, leisure was understood as dealing with and thinking about the superior values of the world such as goodness, beauty, truth and knowledge (Aytaç, 2002). To express this definition better, in ancient times, people did not perceive leisure as “empty,” but saw it as a period reserved for cultural and artistic production, where production could be continued in a mental sense. Again, in his article, Aytaç explains how the concept of leisure was used in the old period by saying “While working is an activity specific to the lower class, leisure was a privilege belonging to the elites/power circles,” (Aytaç, 2002).

Plato is one of the thinkers who worked on the concept of leisure. He evaluates leisure through two different poles. Plato interprets one's overwork and ambition as “voluntary slavery.” However, he states that “not working,” that is, “idleness,” is also “unwise.” For this reason, according to him, leisure is not a time to work hard, to be idle or to sleep. Engaging in music and sports or philosophizing is one of the best forms of leisure evaluation. (Hunnicut, 2006).

With the rise of the capitalist system, the concept of free time has changed form and has been sharply divided into two as working life and leisure. At the end of the 19th century, when working hours were up to 17 hours, Lafargue, in “The Right to Laziness” (1883), advocated the incessant working class to be lazy. Emphasizing that capitalism is a system that

enslaves people and makes them unhappy and impoverished, Lafargue created an important perception at that time by talking about the freedom of employees to have leisure (Lafargue, 1999).

Russell argues that all people should have an equal right to leisure in his book “In Praise of Idleness” (1935). He emphasizes that “hard work” is harmful in the modern world, where the idea that hard work is a virtuous behavior is imposed, and according to him, “work ethic is a slave ethic, and there is no need for slaves in the modern world” (2004: 13). He says that the privileged class, which he calls “idlers,” is more involved in science, art, technology and entertainment because they work less, but this is wrong. According to him, everyone's having equal leisure means that everyone in the society is engaged in activities such as science and art in which they can improve themselves and the society. He states that this new system will destroy people's negative feelings such as unhappiness and boredom, instead people will find the joy of life and happiness, and the society will develop with science and art. (Russell, 2004).

At the end of the 20th century and in the 21st century, together with the culture industry, leisure has become a consumption area. Aytaç states that the leisure time, whose meaning has transformed in the modern age, is a tool for the profit-making goals of the capitalist system. Aytaç furthers that the very goals are achieved through advertising and propaganda in everyday life, saying: “It transforms leisure time from being a right to live into a commercial, industrial, political and ideological 'hunting ground'. Leisure industries produce to sell artificial entertainment/leisure in the way of spending free time” (Aytaç, 2002: 233-248).

From this point of view, it can be understood how the concept of leisure has evolved in today's modern societies compared to the past and where it has reached. It can be said that it has moved away from its meaning in ancient Greece and is included in the scope of the culture industry. Today, it can be said that people spend their free time with certain activities such as watching TV series and movies, browsing social media, listening to music, doing sports or playing games (Sezgin, 2019).

“Playing” is an activity performed in free time (Huizinga, 1938) and one of the most popular forms of leisure among the numerous products in modern societies is entertainment

(Stevenson, 2006). Aytaç (2002) states that the leisure industries produce to sell artificial entertainment/leisure in order to spend their spare time, saying: “The transformation of spending time with television, cinema, computer games, newspapers, magazines, popular novels, music, football, games of chance into an industry and the fact that it has become a sector where big money circulates shows that these areas have become a mass hunting ground” (2002: 248). Based on this definition, it can be said that digital games have turned into an industry today and are a leisure assessment tool for people.

1.1.2. Self-Presentation in the Everyday Life

The concept of “self” is directly associated with everyday life. It covers the communication that people establish with other people and the formation of one's own feelings and thoughts as a result of this communication. In other words, the self should be evaluated in direct connection with the situations that occur in people's lives (Giddens, 2000: 134). In other words, a person gains savings within himself by using all factors, internal and external, in everyday life throughout his/her life. These accumulations continue to develop and take shape as a result of communication with others over time. This creates the self itself (Brown, 1989: 3).

It can be said that studies on the self as a concept are very old. It is a concept mostly used in psychology through its relation with people's self-perception; however, social scientists do not consider it as such. They believe one's self and identity should be evaluated in the context of society. Giddens evaluates the concept of self, which is accepted as a concept belonging to psychology but he at the same time argues that, besides psychological terms, more social and cultural components should be evaluated together with communication and mass media. According to him, a person presents his/her movements, which he/she thinks appropriate to his/her society. He also emphasizes that each person has the desire to control other people's opinions about himself/herself (Giddens, 2010). He says “the concept of the self is largely transformed into pursuits of owning desirable goods and achieving artificially framed lifestyles” (Giddens, 2014: 248).

Mead, another social scientist researching on the subject, says that the body is not a self in itself and defines this concept as follows: “When a mind develops in the context of social experience, it only becomes a self. The self has a different quality from that of the

physiological organism. It shows progress. The self is formed as a result of the individual's process of social experience as a whole and his relationships with other individuals involved in this process" (Mead, 2017:90-165). Mead emphasizes social factors and social interaction in the formation of the self. In addition, the concepts of "I" and "social me," which Mead uses to define the self, highlight the role of society in the formation of the self.

The concept of the self is explained with multidimensional concepts. Basically, it is possible to classify into three categories. First is the spiritual self, which includes one's own moral sensitivity and conscience, while the second is the social self that expresses the image seen by the society. The third is the ideal self that includes the self the person wants to be. (Higgins, 1987: 320). From another point of view, it can be classified in more detail as follows: The spiritual self is about how a person perceives himself/herself. While the social self is the image of the person perceived by others, the ideal self is the image the individual wants to be. The ideal social self refers to the image one wants to be perceived as by others. (Armutlu, 2008:63).

Both internal and external factors play a determinant factor in people's building their social existence. The social assets of individuals determine their social status (Goffman, 1959). In this context, Goffman bases his claim on individuals' interactions with others in social life. According to him, an individual wants to control and direct the thoughts, opinions, and impressions of others about himself/herself. He/she tries to change the parts he/she doesn't like. For this reason, the individual begins to "present their social selves, consisting of a repertoire of roles." These roles are both attributed to the individual by the society and those determined by the person himself/herself. In time, the individual may change their roles in the light of the impressions they gain. Goffman states that the individual behavior patterns have a direct relationship with the society in which they live. According to him, a person makes a self-presentation based on social expectations or directing society's impression of him/her (Goffman, 1959).

1.1.3. Internet as Everyday Life Routine

In the last 20 years, one of the main factors for the diversification of self-presentations, which globally influences people and dominates their daily lives, has become the developing internet technology over time. The internet has been a part of the daily activity

around the world. With the easy access, the widespread use of the internet has resumed since the 2000s. (Wellman, 2002). The most important practical equivalent of the simulation theory put forward by Baudrillard (1994) is the internet and today's internet usage habits. One of the purposes of the use of the internet is to transfer physical life and daily routines to the virtual one.

Today, the use of the internet can be found in various institutions such as school, work, hospital, university, bank and so on. It is possible to list the purposes of this common usage as follows; to facilitate the life of individuals, to obtain information, to socialize, to travel, to chat, to read books, to listen to music, to access popular culture, to have fun and to play games. The use of the internet is preferred, especially since it provides the opportunity to communicate and facilitate communication with family, friends or other people. (Howard, 2002).

As of January 2021, there are 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide. This rate constitutes approximately 59.5 percent of the world's population. The 92.6 percent (4.32 billion) of them access the internet from mobile devices. While northern Europe, with the 96 percent of the population, uses the internet most, North Korea is at the bottom of the internet usage list in the world ranking. The countries with the highest rate of internet usage are the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Denmark and Sweden. Asia is the continent with the highest number of online users with 2.5 billion people. It is followed by Europe with approximately 728 million internet users. While China (over 854 million), India (over 560 million) and the U.S. are the countries with the highest users on a per-person basis, most of the country is still offline in China and India (Johnson, 2021).

As of the third quarter of 2020, an average of 6 hours and 54 minutes per day is spent on the internet in the world. About 2 hours and 25 minutes of this amount is spent on social media. While the average time spent on the internet in Turkey is 7 hours 57 minutes, the average daily time spent on social media is 2 hours 57 minutes. The average rate of active social media users all over the world is 53.6%, and this figure is 70.8% on average in Turkey (We Are Social, 2021). These data show that people spend a long time on the internet in their everyday life.

McLuhan, who has made important studies on internet technologies, argues that the world will turn into a “global village” in the future with the communication technologies developed in the 1960s (McLuhan, 1992). Although the communication technology started improving with telegraph and printing technology during McLuhan's age, it can easily be applied to communication and internet technologies in today's age. In the “global village,” time and space become insignificant and everything happens at the same time. McLuhan states that he recreates the relationships of all people on an electromagnetic platform, and thus, all humanity communicates with each other quite easily as if they were in a village (McLuhan, 1992). It can be said that this discourse describes the discovery of the internet and new media tools at that time.

One of McLuhan's best-known theories, “The Medium is the Message,” is a determination that covers all media tools and actions from the past to the present and even tomorrow (McLuhan, 1964). McLuhan explained this idea in an interview as follows:

“In emphasizing that the message is the tool rather than the content, I am not implying that the content plays no role, it only plays a secondary role. When we put all the emphasis on the content and give no importance to the tool, we completely lose our chance to perceive and influence the effects of new technologies on people. That is why we are always unprepared and baffled by the revolutionary environmental transformations brought about by the new media” (McLuhan, 1969, see. Atalay, 2018: 39).

McLuhan states that the new media technologies will replace the actions of seeing and listening with reading and writing (McLuhan, 1992). Atalay (2018) is of the same opinion that he backs his arguments by giving examples of the TEDx talks, vloggers who produce content for YouTube, podcasts and the fact that people's learning and information habits have undergone a change in the direction of listening and watching (2018: 44).

The Medium is the Message theory, which is related to “the medium” rather than “the content of the message,” also includes the message that media content producers want to convey. In other words, a media tool presents the message the producer wants to give to the society. As McLuhan says, if there were no media tools, perceptions about many issues would be much different (McLuhan, 1992). For example, a digital game is full of producer decisions,

from controls to game type. Any story, any image or any game segment conveys a message to the user and integrates him/her just like the narrative forms in other media (Bogost, 2011:15).

Digital games act as a tool through a screen and affect both users and society at the same time. It's because the advancements in the gaming technology have removed the concept of playing from the children's self. It has evolved into an area mostly used by adults (Buckingham, 2006). McLuhan states that television works to build images from the flow on the screen and adds that the images reflect the people on the television, so that the screen is the people themselves (McLuhan, 1992). The difference between digital games and television is that people become disembodied on the television screen while, in the digital games, people have a concrete body through avatars. Their common feature is that both screens progress independently of time and space.

No matter how much digital games take place in a virtual world, there is always a physical contact in them. The player uses a physical tool such as keys, buttons or joysticks to interact with the images on the screen. In many games, which are actually an extension of the body, the touch is elevated and it may be necessary to swing the console arm to control the character or for an action in the game. The action of the characters in this game is that the player does the same. For example, in "Cooking Mama," the player moves the lever to stir the food, simulating the actual stirring action. McLuhan expresses this by emphasizing the importance of physical interaction in the game.

Karakaş says the following about McLuhan's concept of time after media technologies: "The fact that everything is in the present state also makes the concepts of memory and imagination question. In this case, it seems difficult to talk about a past to be missed or a future to be hoped for." In addition, McLuhan states that the past, present and future are intertwined with new technologies (Karakaş, 2019:66). The fact that it is possible to reproduce the past in the present or to live a future plan or dream with new media supports this view.

1.1.4. Everyday Life Becoming Virtual Life

In today's world, where all elements of everyday life have been transferred to digital, it is seen that factors such as time, space, self, communication and consumption have now

evolved into digital and they have been reconstructed with new forms in digital media. This means the reshaping of social structures, norms and needs, taking on new forms, and the emergence of new cultures. The digitalized culture is embodied primarily by means of TV screen, developing technology, computers, video, cinema and telephone, and has changed the daily activities of people. It manages the practices of digitalization everyday life as well as shaping them and transforming them into other forms.

The social changes that have occurred throughout history have brought along a different name for each era. When we look at the past, there have been periods such as the Enlightenment and the Renaissance, with the progress of reason and science. With the development of technology and the increase in mechanization, the Industrial Age was experienced. Today's age, in which information and communication technologies are at the forefront, has penetrated the entire society and has turned into a culture, which is called by different names such as "Digital Age, Information Age or Space Age." Toffler describes the agricultural societies as the "first wave" and the industrial societies as the "second wave" with the "third wave" metaphor (Toffler, 2008).

Societies re-determine the needs with the new technologies of the period. Digital technologies are also restructuring societies by creating new possibilities. The concepts of digital natives and digital immigrants conceptualized by Prensky (2001) divided people into "before and after digital," according to the time they were born. According to Prensky, the internet is a part of everyday life practices for "net generation (NGen)." This generation digitally spends their lives with computers, mobile phones, video games and all other technology tools. Digital immigrants, on the other hand, are people who are introduced to the internet after their 20s and therefore may encounter some adaptation problems in the use of technological tools (Prensky, 2001: 5). These concepts are important in terms of understanding the cultural and social changes and the strong impact on societies living with the spread of internet technology to the whole society. From this point of view, a generation born in the digital environment carries out all the practices of everyday life digitally in its natural course. Daily practices and the course of everyday life have accelerated considerably with these technologies. Even states have moved all their official business digitally. Individuals do their banking transactions, the habit of reading the newspaper, leisure activities such as watching movies or going to concerts, their daily home life with smart homes, communication and socialization forms with new media in digital environments.

There are some common features of these communication and interactions with new generation social networks and new media. In the common features, the surveillance between individuals is decentralized and it is reciprocal over the sharing of people about themselves (Marwick, 2012: 379).

It can be concluded that the two concepts are intertwined today from Kalamani's statement "Every practice experienced in everyday life is transferred to the virtual environment, and sharing in the virtual environment affects daily practices" (Kalamani, 2016: 286). In societies where the digital culture is so settled, everyday life practices are not the only thing that has changed. At the same time, it has taken different forms by changing the social and individual perception of reality, one's feelings and thoughts, dreams and ideals, ideologies and identities, and the tools used.

Under this title, the concept everyday life, which covers an important part of the work, and the changes and digitalization that some everyday life forms have undergone, together with digital technologies, are explained. It is concluded that with the virtual life form, self-presentations are diversified and people become freer in their self-presentations.

CHAPTER 2: THE CONCEPT OF VIRTUAL LIFE AND SIMULATION

In this chapter, where the simulation theory will be discussed, simulations that occur in everyday life and the concepts that Baudrillard refers to as "simulation community" are explained. First, the concept of "real" and the "hyperreality" and "simulation universe" are defined in the light of Baudrillard's theories. Then, the simulative life forms that occur in everyday life in today's societies are discussed. Social media, which is one of the best examples of this subject, is detailed with the title of simulation and social media. Metaverse, another simulation life example, a prediction of the future, and digital games, which will be explained in detail in the next sections, are among the topics mentioned in this chapter.

With the widespread use of the internet, some life forms related to daily life have also been digitalized and the concept of virtual life has been included in the everyday life of people. Thus, new life forms established in virtual environments along with real life have emerged. This chapter also examines how the diversified self-presentations exist in virtual environments. The Uses and Gratifications Theory, which is frequently used in media and communication studies, is also detailed in this chapter through virtual worlds.

2.1. Virtual Life

The virtual life is set up to reflect the real world or some kind of fantasy world. It is an “online medium” that allows users to interact with each other and discover the innovations there (Miletsky, 2010: 200). According to Burdea, the virtual reality is a world of simulation created using computer graphics, which has a similar appearance to the real world, but it is not static and can respond to demands from the user. (Burdea and Coiffier 2003). The virtual worlds are also explained as “the reflection of dreams created in digital with pictures or words and places that give the person the feeling of being in that world enough” (Damer, 2008: 2). The concepts such as “the synthetic world,” “alternative to the world” and “the new world” were used by Castronova for the virtual world (Uzun, 2011). As can be understood from these definitions, one of the purposes and functions of virtual worlds is to create an alternative and ideal world (Robins, 1999). This happens through a simulation, digital technologies and virtual worlds that are set to replace reality. The fact that this virtual life is fictional and untouchable is one of the factors that attracts it, because this medium is “an alternative world where desires and dreams can relax” (Robins, 1999).

Virtual worlds have their own laws, economy, culture and institutions, just like sovereign states. They have their own reality (Kücklich, 2009: 341). People act in accordance with their own realities of the virtual world. The construction of the self in the virtual world is much easier than in the real world as it takes time to get things in the real world. There are also certain physical constraints in the real world. Under all these conditions, the person has difficulty in having the identity and the self he/she imagines or he/she cannot have at all. Creating an online self is very easy in that virtual life is fast, independent of location and does not pose any physical barriers to the person (Huffaker, 2005). With technological possibilities, a person can shape the self as he/she wishes, even while sitting at home.

2.1.1. Virtual Worlds That Look Like the Real World

Without a doubt, smartphones are the most specific tool for incorporating the virtual world into a large part of everyday life and even managing people's lives. Daniel Miller, professor of anthropology at University College London, makes the following definition for smartphones: “The smartphone has now become not just a device we use, but also the place we live in.” Almost all of the physical life can be copied to the virtual one together with smart phones (Hern, 2021). In this way, routines and interests such as shopping, entertainment, hobbies, entertainment and games can be easily transferred to digital.

With the post-Industrial Age, in which the internet and digitalization spread rapidly, new types of relationships and virtual communities have emerged. Rheingold gives the name “virtual community” to online social communities independent of location, which come together through the internet as a result of people's common thoughts and interests and can have millions of members (Rheingold, 2000). Rheingold defines virtual communities where there is no physical connection between individuals as follows: “While people have humor, scientific and cultural discussions, they also do business, read books, take an interest in art, fall in love, make friends, and play games” (Rheingold, 2000). In everyday life, they can easily do everything that can or cannot be done physically in the virtual world. For example, a book whose physical copy is not available can be obtained online. Some thinkers, such as Baudrillard, claim that virtual communities are insincere and unreliable, stealing the time people spend with their families or other social activities, and cause alienation because they reduce face-to-face interaction (Baudrillard, 1994). However, Rheingold argues that virtual worlds are a new field of communication and will be beneficial in terms of increasing communication and socialization of people with each other (Rheingold, 2000).

Anderson says that there is no difference between “real” and “imaginary” communities, that the fact that a situation is presented through electronic devices does not make it unrealistic, and argues that these communities basically emerge from an imagination (Anderson, 1991). In addition, Poster also highlights the imagination in real and virtual communities and states that the most important thing is communication in the community (Poster, 1995).

The internet has become an enormous social laboratory for experimenting with the construction of the self that is characteristic of postmodern life (Dreyfus, 2016). There are many different studies and different views on identities constructed in the virtual world. Bargh states that due to the freedom to be anonymous in the virtual world, people act honestly and present their true selves (Bargh, 2002). Another study revealed that people in the virtual world hide some of their features, while others exaggerate (Chester, 2004).

2.1.2. Self-Presentations Created in Digital Life

In Goffman's words, on “the stage” (he describes the world as the stage), individuals are actually reproducing their lives while performing their roles, that is, presenting their self-presentations. These performances are directed against the expectations of external factors and their own wishes and desires (Goffman, 1959). Goffman's in-depth self-presentation can be easily adapted to today's communication world, where media technologies are developing and face-to-face communication is replaced by virtual communication. With the internet and public accounts that came into our lives in the 1990s, people started to make presentations of the self in the virtual environment. Today, social media platforms appear as a kind of self-presentation tools and they become an important tool in self-presentations because of their high interaction power. The following can be said as the reason for creating an account and an identity on social media: “It is the person's adopting an identity that will be accepted by the society, exhibiting an individual stance, being in full control against the negative effects that may come from environmental factors and creating a positive image” (Yeniçiftçi, 2016:91).

With the widespread use of social media tools, communication channels have diversified. In addition, self-presentations have taken on different forms compared to the past, and the channels where people make their self-presentations have increased numerically. For example, while in the past a person could not perform outside of his/her own social circle, today he/she has a platform where he/she can present more than one self with virtual channels. From this point of view, self-presentation does not lose its original meaning. On the contrary, the performance and roles of the person differ, the audience to which he/she can perform his/her performance expands, and even the audience consists of many people he/she does not know.

With the digital tools of self-presentation through blog pages in the 1990s, today through Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, Youtube, TikTok, one can present himself/herself according to how he/she wants to present himself/herself to others. It is much more comfortable and easier to direct the perspective of others and control the impression in these channels. Individuals can easily present their identities to others in the form they want. He/she is free to share any photo he/she wants on social media and chooses a photo according to how he/she wants to show himself/herself to others. He/she can share any text he/she wants, make plans what he/she talks in a video, hide his/her physical flaws and even destroy them through phone apps. A person can highlight his/her desired feature in social media, not only physically, but also in terms of character. He/she can hide his/her character, family or friends that he/she does not want to be known more easily because he/she spends as much time as he/she wants on social media. Thus, they have the opportunity to control their perception much more easily. From this point of view, it can be said that one of the main purposes of use of personal pages is to easily manage self-presentation (Kramer and Winter, 2008: 106).

It is also possible to define self-presentations realized in digital media under the umbrella of the ideal self-presentation and the social ideal self. The selves established in digital are usually pre-constructed and the selves presented every day are exhibited closer to the ideal self. Images or articles shared on social media are designed in the most appropriate way for the perfect perception of people and shared with others. The person tries to create certain impressions of himself/herself for others and wants to give the message “Get to know me by this image.” Social media is the most comfortable area where the ideal self and social self-images can be established in everyday life. Çitil explains this subject in his work as follows: “Individuals can create frameworks within their own principles in their communication in the virtual environment and can direct the interaction more than in face-to-face interaction. This leads individuals to get a second life alternative by being liberated from limited communication environments” (Çitil, 2020:228).

Although it is easy to present an ideal self in social media, which is a part of digital life, these platforms still carry traces of real life. This freedom in self-presentations on social media is a limited freedom; imagination can be allowed within certain limits. The virtual media, which is freer than the social media platforms of imagination and more disconnected from physical life, is digital games. In these platforms, which have increased the number of

users recently, individuals present their daily experiences and continue their self-presentations. (Belk, 2014).

Simulation games emerge as an alternative preferred by individuals who hide their identity in the virtual world and want to remain anonymous. Some of the reasons for the desire to hide are the fear of being excluded by the society, the pressure to hide one's identity, and the problems such as being exposed to environmental pressure. These people hide their identities in the physical world with games such as *The Sims* and *Second Life* and start to create a second life for themselves by using a digital identity. The motivations for choosing these games can be listed as follows: The desire to have feelings and possessions that cannot be experienced in the physical world, to get rid of the assigned roles, to freely present the self that is hindered by social pressures, or to reach the imagined self. These games have no connection with physical life. In this way, the person is much freer to lead a new life in the virtual world, and these virtual worlds contain many different life options. For all these reasons, simulation games can be shown as the highest level of ideal self-presentation (Gündüz, Engin, 2016).

2.1.3. Virtual Life in the Framework of Uses and Gratifications Theory

The Uses and Gratifications Theory put forward by Elihu Katz in 1959 in the context of communication tools, - despite the fact that it seems to be related to traditional media tools due to its period, - has become an approach that is adapted to today's tools, which is why it's up-to-date. The theory differs from other media studies as it is not concerned with the effect of the media on people but it focuses on what people use the media for and what they do with the media (McQuail, Windahl 1993: 110).

The theory is based on the aim of satisfying the needs of individuals through media tools. People aim to satisfy their needs by using the media. While the “uses” represent communication tools, “gratifications” express individuals' using communication tools to meet certain needs and seeking certain satisfactions. After the satisfactions are provided, the person experiences peace and happiness (Sucu, 2014: 12). In other words, one of the roles of mass media, which has become widespread in society, is to meet the psychological or social demands and needs of people. Because, in line with his/her needs, the person chooses what he/she wants among the media tools and fulfills his/her needs.

The theory is based on people who find possible solutions to their problems through media-based activities. People turn to media consumption upon problem solving, meeting demands or seeking satisfaction. For example, someone who wants to meet their entertainment needs opens comedy programs on television, and watches the evening news for news. (Sherry, 2004).

According to the theory, the audience is not in a passive position, but in an active position because it determines what and why it will use in the media. Lull explains this approach in his study as follows: “In uses and gratifications theory, audiences are not passive recipients or victims of mass media. People actively use the media to satisfy their needs” (Lull, 2001: 127).

This theory can easily work in the new media studies that are replacing the dominant role of the traditional media. Today, with the new media and its extension social media tools, the needs aimed to be satisfied are met more effectively than the traditional media. Especially the video and audio communication opportunities provided by social media and internet technology address the needs of people much more than before (Güngör, 2011: 110).

2.2. Simulation and Simulation Community in Daily Life

Baudrillard is a researcher who has brought new approaches to the literature with his studies and the concepts he has produced. The concept of “simulation” is one of his important works. Especially in the Western world, the capital economy has risen and technology has developed since the 1970s. Thus, in the era that we describe as the “modern world,” economy, politics, art, society, culture and everyday life practices have also undergone various changes. Simulation, a concept that criticizes modernism and the Western world, covers all of these changes. Baudrillard approaches the concept of reality from another angle, by working extensively on the concepts of reality and simulation. According to him, everything is a simulation and the world is a universe of “likes.” (Baudrillard, 1994).

2.2.1. Reality, Hyperreality and Simulation Universe

The concept of “real” is one of the main issues discussed by thinkers since the existence of humanity. The definition of the concept of real can be made as follows: “It is used for the actual existing as opposed to the fictional, illusory, artificial, fantasy, or imaginary, which is concrete, factual, and mind-independent, as opposed to the ideal, conditional, potential, or possible” (Cevizci, 2014:710).

In the modern period, Lacan's studies on reality attracted attention. While defining the real, Lacan says briefly: “It is the one who resists this symbolization, what is outside the symbolized.” More precisely, Lacan sees reality in a prehuman position. From the moment a baby is born, all his/her experiences are real because he/she is surrounded only by his/her needs and the objects that meet those needs. When the baby leaves the mother and enters the cultural space and begins to speak, it is greeted with symbols. For example, language is also a symbol, but according to Lacan it is more than real language (Lacan, 1977).

Zizek exemplifies reality through the experience of death. He proposes that death is always a fact, since it is intransferable and non-symbolizable. Zizek, like Lacan, says that there is a symbolic universe and states that the truth can only be reached through symbols, but the truth escapes the symbolic, so the truth is revealed through the defects in the symbolic. The real, for him, is a hole in the middle of the symbolic order (Zizek, 2002).

Baudrillard, with the concept of simulation, in which he criticizes the modern Western society in which he lives, expresses that today's reality has almost disappeared. Baudrillard discusses the concept of reality on the basis of the idea that the distinction between real and unreal in societies is getting blurred, and the real is replaced by “hyperrealities.” The concept of simulation, which means the reproduction of reality through various forms and models, refers to pretending to have something that is not owned (Baudrillard, 1994). One of the most well-known examples of Baudrillard, who explains the concept of simulation, which is derived from the word “simulare,” which originally means “to imitate,” is the example of “the mad.” A person pretends to be crazy by showing all the symptoms of madness and can fool the doctor and get the mad report. Here the real madman and the unreal madman are indistinguishable. Because simulation tries to eliminate the difference between “real-fake” and “real-imaginary” (Baudrillard, 1994). Baudrillard puts it this way: “In the era of simulation, it is also impossible to talk about illusion anymore, because it is impossible to come across such a thing as reality” (Baudrillard, 1994:43). In this simulation era, simulations

have spread to cover all areas of life such as politics, economy, religion, culture, family, communication and morality. In fact, Baudrillard defines this age as the age in which even God is simulated as a result of the disappearance of the reality of divine power (Baudrillard, 1994:18).

Baudrillard carries the simulation view, perceived as a kind of reality, from the Renaissance period to the present. In different studies, he divided it into stages and explained how it came to the present day. The three successive steps of the Baudrillard order of “simulacra” are listed as follows; the first is the form that determines the “classical” period from the Renaissance to the Industrial Revolution is copying. The second is the dominant form in the industrialization period is production. And the last is that in the current phase determined by the code, the dominant form is simulation (Baudrillard, 1994:87).

In another study, Baudrillard divides the simulacrum into three and conveys it as follows; the first is the simulacra order, naturally based on image, imitation and copying, aiming to replicate the ideal nature created by God; naturalistic simulacra. The second is the simulacra order: the manufacturer who embodies the production order and embodies it with machines; productive simulacra. The third one is the simulacra order that consists of information and cybernetic games, aiming at hyperreality and control; simulation simulacra (Timur, 2018).

While addressing the problems of today's society, Baudrillard points to consumption as the most fundamental problem. The consumption proceeds not according to needs but within the framework of desires (Timur, 2018). For this reason, Baudrillard describes this era as the simulation universe and states that it is not possible to encounter the real and the illusion of the real in this era (Baudrillard, 1994). It is possible to say the following when describing the simulation universe: “In a phase where reality turns into sign, social into mass, exchange value into structural value, sexuality into porn, body into commodity, need into fashion, death into chaos, political into spectacle, and media into fiction, the universe of simulation, which is the universe of false signifiers, has now passed” (Okuyan, 2018: 83).

With the development of technology and the increase in digitalization, it is possible to say that even “simulacra” are simulated and everything is reproduced in today's societies. Referring to this, Baudrillard states that ideologies have disappeared in today's age. (Baudrillard, 1994). Neil Postman, who calls today's age as “the media age,” deals with this

issue as follows: “The media age is an age of show. In the age of the show, the following happens: Ideology is replaced by cosmetics, truth succumbs to the image, everything is presented in an entertaining way and becomes devoid of content, a tremendous information bombardment makes people unresponsive by tearing them apart, memory is lost, perception and reasoning abilities decrease” (Postman, 1981).

In other words, while Baudrillard talks about some images that take the place of reality in this age we live in, Postman underlines the active role of the media. According to him, due to all media tools, especially television, the content of all facts is melted and presented to people by reproducing images and entertainment.

Baudrillard cites the Gulf War, which was broadcasted live on TVs in 1991, as an example. He says that “war has turned into a visual show, a fiction” because this great event, which people watch unresponsively on live television, presents images of war rather than a real war. He states that due to this type of reality reflected by the media, the society has become one that only takes what the screen gives and accepts it as correct (Baudrillard, 2012: 89). In fact, Baudrillard defines the wars, which were watched on TVs such as the Gulf War and the Bosnian War, as “pornographic wars” (Baudrillard, 2012: 155). The traditional media, which these two researchers mentioned as a reason for the disinformation in today's age, is gradually being replaced by social media and digital games.

2.2.2. Simulation in Everyday Life

Simulation, by definition, is the artificial reproduction of a tool, a machine, a system, or a phenomenon-specific mechanism for the purpose of examining, demonstrating or explaining through a market or a computer program (Baudrillard, 1994). The reality has disappeared, its place has been taken by “simulacra” (the view that wants to be perceived as a reality). For this reason, the reality is reproduced with simulations (Baudrillard, 1994). Simulations destroy the reality and become hyperreality (here, hyperreality and simulation are used as the same concept).

We encounter people's everyday life in two different worlds. One of them is the physical world, and the other is the world defined by concepts such as “digital, virtual,

simulated” (Shore and Zhou, 2009:18). In the period we live in, it is seen that the two worlds are intertwined. For example, the effect of an event experienced in the physical life is instantly reflected in the digital life. All events and phenomena such as individuals' bilateral relations, discussions, dreams and hopes have been moved to the virtual world. However, individuals do not always carry their selves in the virtual world in the same way. They can exhibit different behaviors depending on the purpose of the use of the two worlds and the required situation (Shore and Zhou, 2009:18).

As an everyday life routine, shopping centers are actually simulations. To put it more clearly, shopping centers are a place filled with objects of desire that a person needs or wants to buy, and they can be found innumerable especially in metropolitan cities. Shopping centers, which cover many everyday life activities such as consumption, eating and drinking, socializing, entertainment, sports, cinema and other art activities are indispensable in everyday life. From this point of view, it symbolizes a tiny city and continues its existence as a place that reproduces the whole city and even the world. Even artificial trees inside the malls simulate the leaf trees “as if they were real.” For example, the shopping gondola named Venezia Mega Outlet in Istanbul aims to give the feeling of walking around in Venice with its canal and interesting street decor. It reproduces Venice in a simulation format by destroying the boundaries of time and space. Baudrillard refers to this as “drugstore” or “Parly 2,” where everything from shoelaces to plane tickets is accessed, and everyday life with an artificial atmosphere, including an art gallery, promenade, and playground, is organized (Baudrillard, consumerism).

In addition to the shopping center, these places in the city such as botanical gardens, zoos and aquariums are almost exactly the same as the natural state they are copied and therefore they reproduce the reality. People who visit a giant aquarium in a city see sharks or an octopus and feel like they are in the ocean. When the examples are considered together from this point of view, many habits and routine activities in everyday life are simulations.

“Big Brother” is a house simulation that behaves as if there are no cameras, which we watch on television in daily life. “Survivor” has the concept of fighting for life on a deserted island. Television consists entirely of fictional series and commercials. These are simulations that people spend hours on. Likewise, social media and digital games can be listed as examples of simulations in everyday life. The age in which the difference between reality and

simulation expressed by Baudrillard cannot be clear emerges in everyday life routines (Baudrillard, 1994).

2.2.3. Social Media within the Framework of Simulation Theory

The social media tools created in the virtual world and independent of space have become an indispensable part of everyday life for people in a very short time after the internet became one of the largest communication networks and included in our everyday life. Social media platforms, which have influenced everyday life for the last 15 years, diversify day by day. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok, which has dominated the industry for the last few years, are some of the main social media applications. One of the most important features that distinguishes social media from traditional media tools is that it allows communication in a fast and practical way. It doesn't matter where the other person is while this is happening. Social media is a representation of the virtual world. Today, it has come out of the position of only a means of communication and has become an institution that builds social relations. (Okuyan, 2018).

Foucault carries Bentham's (2008) "panopticon" building design to his works as "the giant eye, the watcher, the organ that has power and watches," and he talks about a form of surveillance in which the power is constantly spying on someone, but the watchers are not seen by the watched (Foucault, 1992). When we adapt this concept to today, it can be stated that we are under a giant surveillance society. In addition, with the introduction of social media into people's lives, it is possible to say that the society has transitioned to the "omnitecton" (the surveillance system where everyone watches each other) (Timur, 2018). Social media basically has a structure in which people constantly watch someone's lives under their free will, and at the same time present their lives to others with their own free will.

Baudrillard's critique of simulation machines that produce "hyperreal" images by simulating reality over all mass media also includes social media tools in the context of new media (1994). In other words, it is quite possible to use Baudrillard's various criticisms of modernism and media in the 1980s to explain today's societies and technologies. It can be said that the social media tools create a hyperreal appearance just like the traditional media tools. The biggest difference here is that people don't just consume existing content on social media, as Wiggins states: "It is the theory that they themselves turn into producers in the

virtual world” (Wiggins, 2013). Today, we can define the point of internet and social media as follows: “These have become an enormous social laboratory for experimenting with the construction and reconstruction of the self, which is the hallmark of postmodern life” (Hubert, 2016).

Social media has emerged as a kind of simulation of the real world. The real world has been modeled and a virtual system has been created by disconnecting it from realities. Robins describes this like: “This micro-world is a self-contained artificially constructed space independent of the complexity of the real world 'out there” (2013:94). Based on this definition, the content that people share on channels such as Instagram and YouTube is the reproduction of their own reality. It is created similar to reality. They create a new reality by integrating their own concrete reality into the virtual world. This system is repeated by hundreds of thousands of users every day (Timur, 2018).

Baudrillard, in one of his studies, defines people who are disappearing behind their biological copies and virtual images with high technology (2012:57) and, according to him, “shadows are no longer reflections of bodies, but bodies are reflections of shadows” (2012:57). He says that “bodies will no longer be anything but the shadow of the shadow” (2012:49). Baudrillard exemplifies the virtual images of people with the warning that “we are not at home right now, please leave a message.” Today, on all virtual platforms, especially in digital environments, people have their own virtual images based on their own biological characteristics. For example, Facebook introduced avatars with features that can represent as many people as possible in order to determine how many people are on the platform. In this way, the person will be able to create a virtual character that looks exactly like himself/herself, and this character will be able to represent him/her in the Facebook environment. This development is considered one of the first steps towards avatar and simulation technology.

Baudrillard criticizes media devices in one of his studies: “We are no longer viewers, but players who are successful and increasingly integrated into the flow of the game. While we can struggle with the unreality of the world as a spectacle, we are vulnerable to the extreme reality of this world, this virtual perfection” (2012:42). According to Baudrillard, who mentioned the term “virtual perfection” several times, everything virtual aims to present a flawless image. In other words, the subtext of everything simulated is the desire of

faultlessness and perfection. For this reason, it is highly likely that anything with a flaw is an image of reality (Okuyan, 2018: 81). This definition quite overlaps with the social media usage habits of the society.

Perfection is one of the basic elements imposed in today's societies, especially over the body. Regarding the public shame particularly observed for overweight or short people, Baudrillard refers to the skin color sample and says that the bronze skin is perceived as perfection by the society. Makeup is another example. The body with these external factors, especially by women, turns into a desired body. In this context, advertising is very important as it plays a big role in creating a perception and imposing it on the public. Another example is the Goldfinger film, in which the problematic parts of a woman's body are covered with paint and her entire body is painted gold. Baudrillard argues that his view of the human body is a simulation of the future point (2008: 183-185).

Today, the idealized bodies are presented to the society through advertisements and social media. The ever-changing perception of beauty is imposed on men and women in every period. Individuals who are out of this perception undergo various aesthetic operations due to the perception of ugliness they feel. At this point, women are forced to pursue other needs by making them feel unhappy over their own bodies (Ersöz, 2010:46). The person who feels deficient about his/her body tends to buy the products he/she needs constantly. Society constantly transfers consumption to the masses by these means; media is the most fundamental creator of consumption relations (Dağtaş, 2009:58). Social media is an alternative area where people present their consumption habits and shape their selves with what they consume. Users present their ideologies, their own perceptions, tastes and their own bodies to countless people and, by doing so, they proceed within the framework of a fiction (Çetinkaya, 2019).

It is seen that the social media applications, which are very popular globally, have diversified and several alternatives have begun to emerge. Simulation games are very similar to social media platforms because they are fictional, promise to offer a perfect and flawless life, offer the opportunity to be not only a consumer but also a producer, an alternative to physical life, and the main activities in everyday life. It is the next step of social media platforms. For this reason, it is also necessary to understand the usage purposes of social media platforms in order to better understand simulation games. Metaverse, which is a future

prediction apart from games, gives the signals of how the future will progress in the light of the mentioned factors.

2.2.4. First Big Simulation of the Humanity: Metaverse

The transfer of reality, which is one of the purposes of the use of the internet, to the virtual has progressed rapidly. Today, the fact that virtual and reality are becoming increasingly interrelated elements has paved the way for virtual to be complementary to each other, as well as an alternative to reality (O'hagan and Mangiron, 2013). Facebook's founder Mark Zuckerberg announced on October 28, 2021, in Menlo Park, California, that he was rebranding the company's name to Meta. However, this technology, whose meaning is not yet known and which is quite new for people, aroused curiosity. It is predicted that the internet, which entered human life in the 1990s, will evolve into a completely different form by experiencing a breaking point since the Metaverse technology, which is expressed as an extraordinary technology revolution in the 2020s. Metaverse, briefly, is a technology that allows life in the virtual world in the form of a simulation. Metaverse that is called "the new internet," "democratic virtual society," "digital twin of the world we live in," or "a unified reality that blends your physical and digital personality" has been introduced to the world in detail. It signals what kind of world awaits people in the future and where virtual life and simulation technologies will evolve into. Based on this introduction, we can define this new generation technology as follows: A 3D digital world that is as easy to access as the internet, where we do the activities, routines and moods we do in a simulation universe in everyday life, such as walking in the park, eating, playing games, watching a concert or experiencing the feeling of stress at a business conference (Brown, 2021).





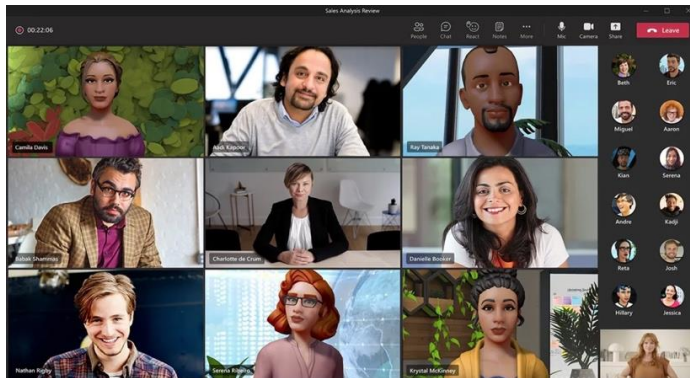
****Images describing the Metaverse technology***

With the transfer of all daily routines and activities to the internet, people have started to move away from physical life. Breakthroughs such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, NFT, virtual reality or VR glasses, which are the products of developing digital technologies, are perceived as developments focused on digitizing processes and interactions in the physical world. Metaverse, on the other hand, is the point where these technologies, which develop independently from each other, are connected to each other. In other words, Metaverse, which has a very high simulation power, is a new technology that brings all technologies together and makes sense as a whole. In 2021, the question of how technology will affect daily life in the future has been answered with this presentation. Its purpose and system are explained in detail by Zuckerberg:

“With Metaverse, you will be able to teleport to the office, concert or home with your family as a hologram without moving anywhere. This will likely look like some sort of mix of social platforms we see today, but an environment in which you are embodied. From the moment we wake up to the moment we go to bed, you have the ability to jump into the metaverse to do just about anything you can imagine. You have an avatar and digital items and you want to be able to teleport anywhere. The software we've developed, where people can work or hang out and build these different worlds, will do it all (Newton, 2021).”

Saying that this technological product will exist everywhere, just like Facebook and Instagram, Zuckerberg explains that the new version of the virtual world is the most maximalist state of the internet, social media and simulation games. In this universe, announced with the motto of “no one wants to be limited to a place,” the world does not have

to be a complete copy of the real thing. It can also consist of a fantasy world, heralding the possibility of an “ideal world order” in the future (Newton, 2021).



****Images describing the Metaverse technology***

Metaverse is a set of sandboxes you can create and explore with other people who are not in the same physical space as you are in. It is aptly defined: “The digital intersection of social media, augmented reality, virtual reality, gaming, shopping, cryptocurrency, and reality.” Basically, people will be able to make avatars that look almost exactly like themselves and that they can convey their own characteristics, movements and voices. These avatars will be able to represent people in the Metaverse world. People will be able to participate in a Zoom meeting with their own avatar or watch a concert in another city with hologram technology. Today, this technology can be obtained with simulation games such as Second Life and The Sims. As an “alternative” life to the physical life, a life can also be established in the virtual world, but Metaverse is preparing to integrate all these technologies into the physical life and present it together with the physical life. People find the opportunity to realize what they want to do or whom they want to be with simulation games or social media accounts of people's own fictions. With Metaverse, this area is expected to expand

considerably and spread to every area of everyday life. One of the aims of this technology is to bring everything that is imagined into one's own hands while aiming to bring everything done in physical life to the virtual.



****Avatars that will be created exactly with the Metaverse technology***

The idea of integrating the virtual world into the physical world, which has been encountered in science fiction novels and movies for the last 20-30 years, has gone beyond being an idea. Thus, it turns into the technology of the future, which is in the design phase, where billions of dollars of investments are made. It is predicted that the physical and virtual worlds will exist on the same plane in the future. Baudrillard describes today's world as “the era in which reality turns into hyperreality” as follows: “An infinite number of reproductions of reality are possible. We will not need a rational truth because it is not in a position to deal with ideal or negative processes. Synthetically produced reality, also known as hyperreality” (Baudrillard, 1994:14).

Metaverse, as Baudrillard put forward, is a giant simulation universe in which reality turns into hyperreality, human bodies turn into simulations, and simulations such as virtual games or social media tools turn into simulations again. While it promises speed and perfection, it offers the opportunity to reach their dreams in a practical way. This statement of Baudrillard, who says that the simulation universe consists of objects and signs, and that it will be difficult to distinguish between reality and simulation, has become even more real with the latest technology. The underlying design of Metaverse is the intertwining of real and digital. Although Facebook, Instagram and digital games are seen as the first leg of Metaverse, Disneyland (1994), which Baudrillard lists as an example of simulation, may be one of the first steps of Metaverse, the virtual version of the universe.

In this chapter, the concept of simulation, the concept of virtual life and how this concept finds its way in everyday life are explained. It has been concluded that today, new media tools such as social media and digital games appear as simulations in life. In addition, it was another subject explained under the title of “The first great simulation of humanity.” The simulation in the future life form will not exist as a part of life as it is today, but as life itself. In addition, another result reached is that in the Uses and Gratifications Theory, in the light of examples from the virtual world, the new media tools provide many satisfactions by meeting people’s different needs.

CHAPTER 3: GAME AND DIGITAL GAME

In this chapter, topics such as the concept of the game from the past to the present, the history of the games, the meaning and form of the game concept are discussed. The theories of Huizinga and other researchers about the game are included. Along with technological developments and the internet, the concept of digital games and digital games are explained within the framework of the culture industry. In terms of socializing, discovering new cultures and learning new languages, digital games are considered as a communication tool. Simulation games as a type of digital game are also included in this chapter. In addition, the Squid Game series published during the study is considered as a sample in terms of dealing with everyday life problems through a game and explaining the expectations from the games.

3.1. The Concept of Game in the Historical Process

“Game” is a concept older than culture (Huizinga, 1938). According to the Turkish Language Association (TDK), it means “to pretend to be or do something for fun, to enjoy yourself, rather than work.” It has a concept as old as the history of humanity and takes place

in many stages of human life. So far, it has been one of the most important tools in the transfer of culture to the next generations. For this reason, opinions about the game date back to the early times of the history of thought of humanity. One of the most important philosophers of history, Heraclitus (approximately 540-480 BC), the concept of game is encountered in his work *Fragment* as follows: “Life is a child playing by putting stones forward. The Kingdom is the child” (Heraclitus, 2020). Nietzsche interprets the game as follows: “According to Heraclitus, the world is a game of Zeus, or to put it more physically, it is a game of fire with itself” (Soykan, 1991).

It is assumed that the game has been thought about since ancient times and it emerged when people imitated the movements, they saw around them (Argün, 2019). While several philosophers have so far thought about the game as an idea, the concept of game was first broadly treated as a theory by Friedrich von Schiller (1965) by blending it with art. According to Schiller, human is fully human as long as he/she plays. He used this definition in the sense of “only art can bring people to real freedom.” There are thinkers who say that art, like a game, is not only a fiction, but also a mental and emotional complex phenomenon. For them, art is not just a simple game, but also a creative and productive game. (Schiller, 1965). According to Schiller, an individual who plays games leads a more fulfilling life. Game is one of the best opportunities and tools for the individual to express himself/herself, as well as providing fun, pleasure and satisfying emotions. (Sevinç, 2005).

Another name that carries the concept of game to a different dimension in the literature is Huizinga. In one of his most important works, *Homo Ludens* (1938), Huizinga defines human with the concept of “playing person,” that is, “homo ludens,” next to the concepts of homo sapiens, which means wise/intelligent person, and “homo faber,” which means man who manufactures. Huizinga claims that the two concepts are insufficient to define human and that there will be a more holistic definition with the concept of playing human. According to him, playing is a voluntary action and arises from the desire to do something or to determine something, together with the need to relax, the desire to dominate, the need for competition by separating the person from everyday life. Game, one of the indispensable products of culture, plays a major role in the transfer of culture from generation to generation (Huizinga, 1938).

Caillois, who contributed to the game literature with his book “Man, Play, Games” (2001), describes game as a source of entertainment that does not require obligation, responsibility, voluntary participation and where the person is free. In addition to these, one of the features of the game is that there is a second reality unlike real life and its believability is mentioned. Caillois also states that the person imitates another character by taking on the role he/she wants in the game (Caillois, 2001). In these definitions, the fictional dimension of the game is also prominent by removing the person from the real world. Caillois explains the game under four main headings: “Agon” (competition) covers mostly sports-oriented games such as football, billiards, chess, which have an equal chance of winning with the opponent. “Alea” (luck) defines games based on luck such as lotto and dice. Activities such as the carousel, ferris wheel, swinging on a swing, skiing or tightrope walking are included in this category. In the mimicry (story-simulation) type games, an imaginary character is created and treated as such; thus, it takes a distance from the real life character for a certain period of time (Caillois, 2001). The playing activity for families is enlisted in the “Ilinx” type games while the backgammon is among the alea type games and The Sims is an example for the mimicry type.

Game basically means a pleasant break in everyday life (And, 2012). According to all theories, the very definition is observed, - a leisure evaluation activity mainly for entertainment purposes. Imitation and pretending, which are the practices of everyday life, are one of the indispensable concepts of the game. In addition to being a fact of one's everyday life, one of the parts that complete a culture or civilization is the game. Just like Huizinga, Caillois says that play and culture are interconnected concepts. He states that while many states or empires disappeared in the world, games didn't (Caillois, 2001). For instance, chess was played with 4 kings in India. When it became widespread in Europe during the Middle Age, one of the kings in the game was named “queen” and later the queen became the strongest piece of the game. When it became widespread in Turkey, the strongest stone was called the vizier (Sakallıoğlu, 2014).

Besides the definition of “having fun,” to summarize the common features of all game definitions, it can be listed as talent, intelligence, education, training, rules, harmonious work, imagination, desire for innovation and change, creativity, personal desire and will. Moreover, theorists talk about the places where the games are played with examples such as arena,

stadium, street, but as time goes by, the games are played independently of the place and the space.

In the mid-19th century, different theorists opened up the concept of game and discussed it from different angles. These theories can be listed as Classical Game Theories, Excess Energy Theory, Recapitulation Theory, Adult Life Theory, Rest Theory, Dynamic Game Theories, Sigmund Freud's Game Theory and other theories (Binark and Bayraktutan, 2011).

In all definitions, game has been an indispensable element of civilizations. It has contributed to the development of the oral tradition; at the same time, it has made people have fun and contributed to the learning processes. As the cultures differed, the games also diversified. As technology develops, games have also changed and transformed, and the concept itself has also changed. Each technological development has brought innovation in the field of playing. In the last quarter of the 19th century, all activities called games began to be carried out under the name of sports. This has been a factor that has led to more regular, more detailed and more serious activities. Cricket is an example of this (Huizinga, 1938: 236). Especially in the modern period, the game became much more widespread and transformed. In addition to providing physical participation in the game, it has been shaped as strategy games that require intelligence and games that continue over digital. With all these developments, the game has a very wide economic market. Today, the concept of game is dominated by the perception of digital games (Arda, 2021).

3.1.1. Digital Game as a Communication Device

The Oxford English Dictionary defines a video game as “a game played by electronically manipulating images produced on a monitor or other screen by a computer program.” Recently, it can be observed that there has been an increase in the tendency of large masses, especially young people, to use digital games to evaluate their daily leisure. The reason for this increase is that people's access to digital games is very easy, thanks to technological development, the spread of the internet and the development of socio-economic level (Binark, Bayraktutan, 2011). People can easily play digital games, which have many different types, with different people, regardless of time and place, via the internet. Although digital games include different games designed from the computer, they also refer to the versions of the

games played on the streets such as football and basketball before technological developments (Soydaş and Kahraman, 2020: 241).

As of 2021, an estimated 3.24 billion online gamers are known in the world. This number corresponds to 40% of the world's population. China, South Korea and Japan are among the countries with the largest access to online games. In 2021, the number of players in Asia is almost 1.48 billion. Europe ranks second with 715 million gamers. Latin America has 383 million and North America has 261 million gamers. A survey conducted in China in January 2021 found that an average of 12.39 hours of gaming per week was played. Worldwide, this figure is 8.45 hours per week (Clement, 2021). The digital game market covers audiences of all age groups globally. In the U.S., 70% of under-18s and 64% of adults regularly play video games. 59% of the players are men and 41% are women (Finances Online, 2021).

Digital games have become a big industry over time, not just a means of entertainment or a leisure time activity, as in traditional games. The digital game industry, which is a major source of economic income today, has created a global market. According to the European Commission e-commerce report, software and digital games are among the top 10 products purchased online in Europe (European Commission, 2017). With the COVID-19 pandemic, all the figures in the past have grown exponentially. According to the 2020 Digital Games Report prepared by the Safe Internet Center, the industry increased by 9.3% on a global scale and reached \$159 billion. It is predicted that this sector will exceed \$295 billion by 2026. In the report, which states that the biggest increase was achieved with mobile games during this epidemic period, it is stated that \$77.2 billion of revenue was obtained in 2020 with these games. According to the information in the report, it was revealed that 79% of adults in Turkey played mobile games on average last year, of which 81.7% were women and 76.5% were men. It has been determined that people who are locked in their homes due to the pandemic show great interest in mobile games, and people spend an average of 4 hours playing games a day (Dijital Oyunlar Raporu, 2020). These results indicate that digital games appeal to a wide audience of all ages and groups.

Despain (2009) mentions 19 different types of games: Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMO), Role Playing Game (RPG), Platform Games, Adventure Games, Action-Adventure Games, First-person Shooter (FPS), Real-time Strategy, Sports Games, Simulator Games, Driving Games, Horror Games, Sci-Fi and Fantasy Games, Sandbox Games,

Alternative Reality Game, Serious Games, General Games, Handheld Game Consoles, Mobile Phone Games and Interactive Games (Despain, 2009).

There is a lot of research about why digital games are preferred so much. There are many reasons for the results. However, when different studies from different locations are examined, certain common goals stand out in the research results. Enjoyment and pleasure, idle time, desire to socialize, desire to be isolated from real life are the most common reasons.

In a study, it was concluded that users play games because of communicating with other players, meeting their leisure activities, entertainment and information needs, and having the feeling of happiness (Tran and Strutton, 2013: 456). According to another study, escaping from reality and boredom are among the reasons why online games are preferred. Most of the users who participated in the research gave the following answers: “Playing gives me something to occupy my time,” “I play games when I have nothing better to do and I am bored,” “Because I spend time with the game,” or “I can forget about school, work or other things by getting away from what I am doing while playing” (Lee and Choi, 2012).

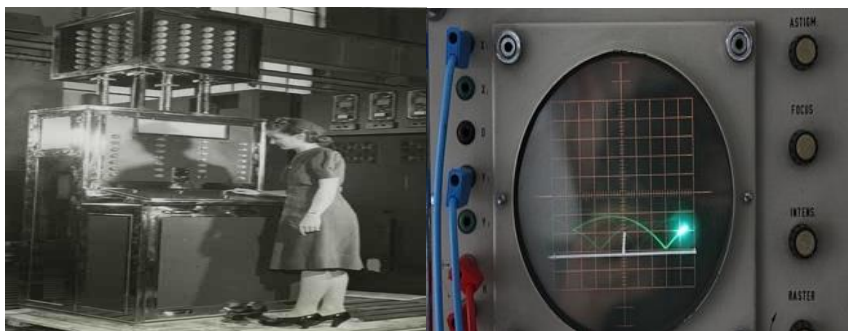
Another study showed similar results. One of the common answers of people who play a lot of games is that when they encounter an obstacle in the world they live in, they want to escape and seek another world. They find this other world in games. The most common of these obstacles for young people is family pressure. Users state the reason for spending hours in a game as isolation from the environment and the accompanying relaxation (Akkaya, 2020). Another research presents that people consider the pleasure they get from the game as a kind of need, and therefore they believe that the game is a necessary thing. It is stated that online games cause addiction due to their socializing, anonymous and reinforcing nature (Topal, 2016).

3.1.2. The History of Digital Games

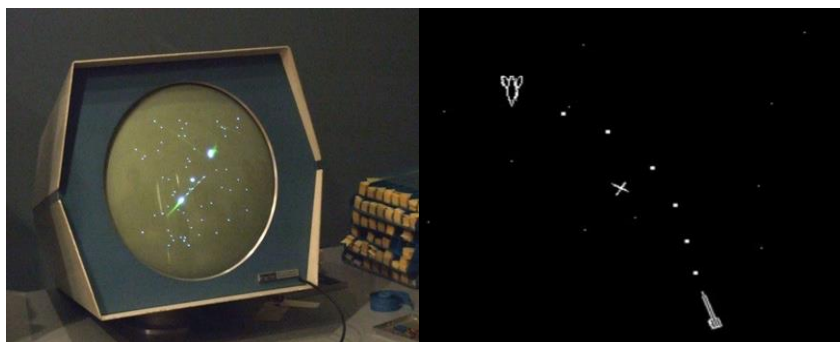
Digital games, one of the most popular forms of entertainment today, have been both the most important entertainment tool for the masses and a large industry since the 1960s (Arda, 2021). Digital games are digital simulations that need virtual environment support; they are supported by animated graphics and are shaped by the eye and hand coordination of

the player. They have certain sub-disciplines, especially interactivity, and contain a wide variety” (Crawford, 1984, cited in Denizel, 2012: 109). Digital games include computer, video and mobile games. The development of video games can be studied in five stages; laying the foundations of this new sector in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the growth phase of the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s, the development until the end of the 1990s, the process maturation between 2000-2005 and the progress from 2005 to present (O’hagan and Mangiron 2013).

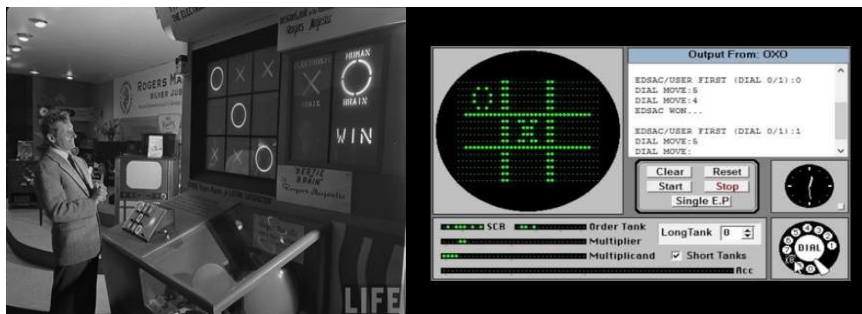
First presented as a form of entertainment at the New York World's Fair in 1940 and designed by physicist Edward Condon for a computer to play a game for only one person, Nim is considered one of the first games. In the 1950s, the digital versions of the traditional games such as chess, checkers and baseball began to be created in the U.S. Bertie The Brain (1950), based on the traditional three-piece game, OXO (1952), war game Hutschpiel (1955), NSS Chess Program (1958), Mouse in the Maze (1959), Baseball (1960) are some of them. In 1965, the first computer-playable football game was created. The first digital computer video games were Tennis for Two, developed by physicist William Higinbotham in 1958, and Spacewar, developed by Steve Russell in 1962. Tennis for Two is a game produced with the logic of ping-pong played with two people, and the first graphical visual elements were used in this game. The construction phase of Spacewar, which is played for two players, took approximately 200 hours. These games are very important in terms of inspiring the games that came after them. Brown Box, which can be used interactively with televisions in 1967, is the first game console. Among the first games played, tennis is at the forefront.



** Images of the game Nim and Tennis for Two*



*** Images of the game Spacewar**



*** Images of the game Bertie the Brain and Hutspiel**

The digital games appeared in Europe and Japan after the U.S. in the 1970s. In 1972, Atari, which includes various games as a video game console, was produced in the U.S. Along with this, the digital games began to enter homes outside of arcades. With the popularity of such games and game consoles among the public, this sector became increasingly widespread, first in the U.S., then in Europe and Japan, and then globally. In other words, these game consoles managed to enter the homes of millions of people. This success was one of the most important developments in the gaming industry. The emergence of Adventure in 1976 paved the way for role-playing games that would later emerge in many different varieties.

In 1981, Japan established its own game console brands, Nintendo and Sega, and entered both the local and the world market rapidly. By producing the Game Boy handheld computer, Nintendo started to make people get into the habit of playing games outside the house at any time. Tetris, one of the most played games in the world, created by Alexey Pajitnov, also became very popular thanks to Game Boys. The game named Mario (Jumpman) is at the forefront of the most popular Nintendo game globally.



****Atari and Nintendo***

In the 1990s, war and strategy games became more effective. A few of the most popular games were war and strategy games set in a universe of their own called Dune II (1992), Mortal Kombat (1993), Warcraft: Orcs & Humans (1994). This and similar war games later developed and still remain popular today. The game console named Playstation was released by the Sony brand in 1994, and hundreds of different game options were offered to the users. On the other hand, some different games such as the card game called Solitaire, which was only played on computers, began to emerge.

The 2000s, when the internet and computers reached almost every home, was the date when the digital game industry was most active. The real life simulation games started to be played with The Sims (2000). The first of The Sims series was released by the computer game designer Will Wright. In addition, such games broke the dominance of war games and attracted female users to the sector. The games such as Rock Band (2007), a music video game, and Farmville (2009), another simulation game, were some of the games played by millions in the 2000s. At the same time, games started to be played on phones other than game consoles and computers, many of them were integrated with Facebook. The role-playing games were developed considerably in the 2010s. The story games with different concepts such as horror or mystery found their place in the market. In the last 10 years, the war and strategy games were mostly preferred. Minecraft (2010), Skylanders: Spyro's Adventure (2011), Gone Home (2013), real-time Clash of Clans (2014), World of Tanks (2014), and Fortnite (2019) were some of the hits and million-dollar games. Apart from Playstation, the game consoles such as Ouya (2012) started to take place in the global market. Pokemon Go (2016) was the first augmented reality game (Video Game History Timeline, 2020).

The use of the lifelike image technologies in the game market has ensured that the games overlap with real life as much as possible. With the internet, the space limitation has been removed, and people from different countries have had the opportunity to play the same game at the same time. Players who come together in the virtual environment have the opportunity to socialize online. While digital games can be played for free with the internet, a separate game market has emerged as different features in the games are purchased for a fee. For example, in a war game, the player can buy a weapon with higher features by paying money in order to better defeat the enemies. The game market is not only based on selling in the game. After playing a game and reaching a certain level in that game, the account can be sold to another person. For example, an account playing the online strategy game Clash of Clans can post an ad on a website like “7.5 years of labor account 244 level vote building is close to 14 level max” and can sell the game account for 970 TL (Game Satış 2021). In addition to the possibility of choosing an unlimited number of games, the players can also determine the people who play the game themselves. They have the opportunity to change not only the physical characteristics of the character they create in the environment, but also their character as they wish.

The growth and development provided by the development of digital games is not limited to the economic field. With the digital games, the intercultural interaction has increased and country borders have disappeared. For example, a young person playing a game in Istanbul can text, voice or video chat with people from Tokyo, Los Angeles and Cape Town playing the same game at the same time. In other words, these games have become one of the most important communication devices of today, which serves to unite different cultures. In addition, it is an effective tool in terms of foreign language development, socialization and getting to know new cultures. It is even possible to say that a language consisting of abbreviated terms created by people who play digital games to be used only in games has emerged. Terms consisting of English abbreviations such as AFK: Away from keyboard, B4N: Bye for now, GG: Good game, BRB: Be right back are examples of this game language that has become universal (Argün, 2019).

3.1.3. Looking at Digital Games with the Uses and Gratifications Theory

In digital games, which is an area where users are in a very active position within the platform, the players are the people who direct the action, actively establish and maintain the game, and make choices among the alternatives throughout the game. From this point of view, it is appropriate to explain digital games with the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Williams, 2008).

Some of the main motives for using the internet are the desire for relaxation, entertainment and status (Hou, 2011). These factors can be listed as the purposes of using digital games. Philips (1995) listed the usage purposes of computer games as follows: “for spending time, avoiding other work, being cheerful and having fun” Sherry and Lucas (2003). The reasons for the use of these games based on their study is listed as follows; competition: to be the best player in the game; challenge: to challenge yourself to win the game or move on to the next highest level; social interaction: to have a social experience with friends, lingering; diversion: to pass time or relieve boredom; fantasy: to do things you can't do in real life, like driving race cars or flying; arousal: to play game because the it is exciting (Sherry, 2004). In this context, it is seen that users apply to games not only for different basic needs, but also for desires and some social factors.

People spend long hours playing digital games because they want to improve their social status and enjoy the activities in the game. For example, they want to help many friends during the game or choose special gifts for some friends (Hou, 2011). That is, players prefer to play an online digital game not only for a specific need, but also to try to show their desire for empowerment or other conscientiousness. There are countless online games to suit people's interests, needs and other desires. The user is free to choose among these games. As these people become successful, enjoy or engage in a social interaction, they are satisfied by getting the satisfaction they want. This provides motivation to keep playing (Wu, Wang, Tsai, 2009).

In his study, Sucu (2014) lists some of the satisfactions in terms of real social life needs in an online game called Second Life as follows: “The decreased desire to realize desired lifestyles in real life, feeling like you are in a real second life, self, belonging, family and social status satisfaction, getting a second chance at life, quenching the desire to have valuable products, accepting virtual experiences as realistic and feeling valuable.” In the same study, Sucu states that users tend to have products that they cannot have in real life, to avoid

the real life order and to satisfy their need for attention. As a result of this tendency, they create a virtual satisfaction in the direction of having valuable products and relieving their desire to show off. In other words, he states that, with this game, people are trying to get satisfaction by buying virtual products and services and consuming products and services that they would not have in real life (Sucu, 2014).

Online games are a media device preferred by people today both for the reasons mentioned above and for providing comfortable access to leisure at home with free or low fees. These games and other new media devices provide spiritual and psychological satisfaction to the person. However, people prefer online games to get social escape. Along with the development of technology, many innovations have been made in the field of play, and as a result of the innovations, people have become more demanding of satisfaction. This is one of the biggest motivations for playing online games for long periods.

3.2. Everyday Life Forms in Virtual Life and Simulation Games

One of the biggest representatives of the simulation theory today is digital games. The simulation game universe helps the person to remove the restrictions of the physical world he/she is in. As stated in the previous chapter, it is impossible to fly in the physical world due to the laws of physics. However, in a simulation game, one is free to fly. He/she can achieve anything he/she wants to achieve, not just flying, because there are no physical restrictions in the virtual world (Meredith, 2014:38). Especially, the role-playing games can change people's perception of reality. It can be said that a big step was taken in the category of simulation games with The Sims game, which was released in 2000 (Alan and Taşdemir, 2017:9). Sayılğan uses the following expressions: “Just like cinema, digital gaming media has the potential to transmit emotions such as fear, excitement, sadness or joy to the person using it through the story and character” (Sayılğan, 2012:119). What is needed to experience these emotions is a story and a character. Simulation games are a tool that gives both to the user.

With the prevalence of games such as simulation in the virtual environment, the concept of game has ceased to be specific to children and has become an activity that covers all age groups. It has been observed that people who play games such as RPG and simulation try to live the life of the virtual character in their real life or try to live this life that they cannot live in everyday life in a virtual environment through the game (Soydaş and

Kahraman, 2020: 241). The person associates his/her physical world with the virtual human called avatar in the simulation for many reasons.

For the avatar, which means “representation of the player in a virtual world,” the following definition can be made for today: “interactive, customizable, 3D, humanoid appearance” (Carter, 2012, 68). Avatars are an important factor in games because they are the virtual embodiment of the person and the player is in that game thanks to the avatar. Characteristics of avatars vary from game to game and are up to one's design. In other words, the person can give any shape to his/her virtual representation. As mentioned in the previous section, with Metaverse, it is planned to provide detailed design opportunities by adding voice, movements and characteristics to the avatars that each person will have in the future.

Gamers can spend a lot of time customizing their avatars. While this is part of the enjoyment of the game, it is also related to the importance of interacting with people's avatars (Ducheneaut, 2006). In a study, while designing avatars, women paid more attention to details than men, while characters suitable for gender roles were created for both genders in both physical features and clothes (Villani, 2012).

The avatar selection created in a simulation game cannot be considered an arbitrary process. There are two options for the avatar selection. The first is that the person either creates a character that he/she identifies with himself/herself or creates an avatar with the features he/she dreams of and envies. In fact, both are connected to the subconscious and so it is not a coincidence. However, since the person has as many avatars as he/she wants in the virtual world, he/she does not stick to a single character. He/she is free to choose multiple avatars according to his/her own liking. Factors such as physical characteristics, race, gender may change (Şengün, 2015). Donats defines it as there is no anchor identity in virtual communities that are disembodied (Donath, 1999: 29). Avatars are also important as they are one of the virtual identities of the users, just like social media profiles, and the representation area will expand further in the future.

3.2.1. The Impact of Digital Games on Everyday Life

With the development of communication technologies, media devices such as television, radio, telephone, social media and digital games have begun to dominate every

area of everyday life. No matter what the purpose of everyday life is, any media device can no longer be considered independent. Over time, traditional media tools have been replaced by new media tools, and this change has also affected people's daily lives.

Digital games allow individuals to be the scriptwriters, directors and lead actors of the films they watch on television or in the cinema. The person opens a digital simulation for entertainment in everyday life in the leisure zone. He/she shapes and expands the game universe according to his/her own imagination and desire. A simulation game is more associated with real life rather than a game (Doğu, 2009). This universe is designed on a virtual plane, away from the physical self, based on artificial realities, free expression of imagination, in the circle of tastes and desires and continues until the user finishes it (Uzun, 2011).

While the images of himself/herself are formed in the mind of the person who prefers to read a book in everyday life, these images are presented directly to the player in digital games. An established life is recommended to him/her. This second life is of a quality that directly affects the first life. Thus, everyday life becomes unthinkable without the digital world (Kulak, 2016).

Schulzke says “most individuals play online games to evaluate their leisure and get away from their daily problems” (2014,24). Digital games, in which the person creates a virtual representation or copy and alternative identities are designed, are parallel worlds in which culture, economy and societies are reproduced. These environments, where competing experiences are built as an alternative to the physical world, are seen as places where people form new communities, socialize, fall in love, choose government, that is, move freely (Timisi, 2003) (Yee, 2006).

Players also have everyday life routines in digital games. These routines come to life differently from the physical world, because in the virtual environment, people have the freedom to choose their abilities, profession, gender and skin color. Basically, everyone is born equal, so there is an equality of opportunity. People who play games like The Sims do not give up on the routines of modern life. They go to work or school, play sports, meet friends, but these routines go exactly according to one's wishes in a new life form (Castronova, 2001).

Another example of digital games becoming a part of everyday life is that the player wants the place and decor to be integrated into the game. It buys the necessary tools such as monitor, game console, speaker and arranges the space in accordance with those tools (Kulak, 2016). It is similar to the design of the living room in the direction of the television in homes.

In Rockstar Games' Grand Theft Auto series (1997-2014), one of the most preferred digital games, a character existing in the criminal world is created. In the game, it is essential to engage in criminal actions such as mafia, being a member of a gang, killing people, confiscating a car, stealing. In other words, it offers the user the opportunity to do almost everything negative that they cannot do in everyday life. Seeing crimes as a normal state of everyday life paves the way for the individual to become desensitized to the crimes and criminals they are exposed to in everyday life. This serves the negative function of encouraging criminals. Both individual and social consequences of these and similar games become inevitable in everyday life (Kulak, 2016).

Turkle takes Second Life as an example, evaluating it as a way for one to get rid of everyday life and search for meaning in the virtual world. Second Life promises people a world where they can build and live their lives as they wish, continue or quit. This world is designed as second chance, second life or re-existence (Turkle, 2011).

3.3. Digital Game within the Concept of Culture Industry

Under this title, the concept of "culture industry" is explained within the framework of Adorno's "culture industry promises escape from everyday life" approach. A transition is made to the subject of consumer society and it is detailed that consumption is now more than a need. In many studies, TV series or movies are cited as examples of the culture industry. In this study, digital games are discussed as a part of a culture industry and a consumption society. Games such as Farmville and Youtuber's Life are examples of this.

3.3.1. The Concept of Culture Industry

The idea of culture industry was first introduced by Adorno and Horkheimer in the chapter “Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception in Dialectic of Enlightenment” (1944). It means making basic cultural elements such as music, cinema and literature produced for commodities and ultimately commodifying these cultural elements. After these commodified products become objects that are bought and sold, a culture based on rationalization is built. Adorno says following: “Cultural products are economically and culturally similar, or at least intertwined. They form a virtually gapless system” (Adorno, 2009). One of the best examples of the culture industry is the art-bank relationship. Films, jazz festivals, art exhibitions and other cultural activities are always sponsored by a bank. This means that a cultural activity is produced as much as the allowance and opportunity given by the bank (Adorno, 2009).

The concept of culture industry is generally understood to mean the contents of cinema, television, radio, music or magazines, which are the tools emphasized by Adorno. While all these cultural contents are commodified within the culture industry and turn into a fetish, at the same time, the culture industry gains a dominance in the society. These cultural products, which turn into commodities, build a new cultural structure by adapting to the existing culture.

Today, many people are struggling with problems such as long working hours, anxiety about the future, expense items such as compulsory rent, bills, excessive incentives for consumption, and depression. All these bring unhappiness in everyday life. It can be a little difficult to say that people globally are very satisfied with their living conditions. All these problems are not individual, they are insoluble problems that exist due to the nature of the society we live in. These problems that exist in everyday life also lead to unhappiness (Kulak, 2016). In this context, the culture industry comes before the person as a solution proposal, but his/her suggestion is not to solve the problem, but to escape from the problem in everyday life. For example, a person who lives in the city and comes home from work in the evening with a stress can turn on a popular TV series and get away from that problem for that evening. The person connects with the character and his/her life in the series, and experiences a common identification with all the emotional states of the character. Adorno expresses this in his book *Minima Moralia*: “Always talk about it, but don't think about it. Today, depth psychology has permeated even the most secluded corners, with the help of movies, sad TV shows, and Horney. Accordingly, the last possibility of people to face themselves and to

experience themselves is also eliminated by organized culture” (Adorno, 1951). It is possible to deduce from this definition that the culture industry distances the individual from his/her self as much as possible.

Adorno uses the following expressions while describing the culture industry in his work: “The most important law of the culture industry is to ensure that people do not get the things they desire and that they reach satisfaction by laughing in this deprivation. The culture industry and all its branches promise an escape from everyday life” (Adorno, 2009). One of the main features of the culture industry is the desire to reach everything that one cannot reach. The fictional life he/she follows and the character he/she identifies with himself/herself actually express a life and a person that the person wants to achieve but cannot reach. When he/she immerses himself/herself in this fictional life, he/she achieves what he/she wanted to have but could not have (Adorno, 2009). It can be a beautiful love lived, a luxurious house to live in, or a successful career to have. The good-looking and rich character he/she follows is none other than the character one imagines for himself/herself. In all these fictions, the person enters into the thought of “I can have this life too.” It is the culture industry that offers all these dreams to him/her (Adorno, 2009). Adorno gives the example of a secretary here. A secretary girl living in a poor neighborhood dream that she will one day become a star and wear flashy clothes because she watched a movie with the same story (Adorno, 2009).

Wiggins states that the culture industry is produced directly by consumers in today's world where the internet has become very widespread. In other words, as stated above, Wiggins states that the consumer voluntarily turns into a producer and becomes both a producer and a consumer. He defines individuals as “a parasite that exploits materials it produces” (Wiggins, 2013).

With the introduction of the internet and digital games into our lives, an audience who watches ready-made content in the culture industry can now have the chance to become a producer. In other words, by using social media accounts, a person can shape his/her life, which is presented to countless people, as he/she wishes, and reflect it to his/her followers as he/she wishes. In digital games, just like social media accounts, a fictional character can be created, and that character and the character's life can be put into the desired form (Kulak, 2016). In this way, as Wiggins stated, people do not only participate in consumption, but also contribute to production, just like a producer.

3.3.2. Consumerism in Culture Industry

Like all living things on Earth, people constantly consume something in their lives. While this is consumption as a result of the physical needs such as food and shelter, consumption can also occur as a result of the psychological and social needs. In fact, when defining consumption, it can be said that it is a tool that serves to satisfy material and spiritual needs. With capitalism's entrance into our lives, not only the way of production but also the way of consumption has undergone a major change. Thus, the definition of consumption gradually began to differ. Consumption began to make its presence felt at the end of the 19th century, and in later periods it became an important event not only for the elite but also for the entire public. At this point, the most important reason is that the goods produced as a result of the factoring that came with capitalism should be consumed quickly in the same way (Dal, 2017). Bocock explained the form of consumption in his work titled *Consumption* (1997) as follows: "In Western capitalism, it is possible to consider the consumption phenomenon of the type encountered at the end of the 20th century, not only in terms of utilitarianism and as an economic process, but also as a social and cultural process that includes signs and symbols" (Bocock, 1997). According to this definition, it can be said that the concept of consumption was divided into two as "before the 20th century" and "after the 20th century" and, during this time, the concept forms changed. The mechanized production system with the Industrial Revolution that started in Europe at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, and the Fordism that followed, is the breaking point. Fordism, which is a "mass production technology," is based on the belt system used in the production process and its purpose is to produce a large amount of the same product quickly. The belt system has led to a decrease in the price of the product produced by eliminating labor. In this way, even high-class products such as television, radio and automobiles have become easy to obtain by large masses. With this system, consumption habits began to gradually change form (Argün, 1992).

Veblen argues that consumption never consists of biological needs, but that consumption of the consumer is one of the main tools in showing his/her social status. He emphasizes that this consumption system also gave birth to an "idle class," and this class consumes for "disclosure of wealth" in order to gain status and show the existing status. Veblen calls this conspicuous consumption and says that this type of consumption has nothing

to do with meeting daily needs. He states that this is just the expense of getting into the upper class they want to see themselves in (Veblen, 2015).

Expressing those endless needs arise and we are in an endless consumption process, Baudrillard argues that objects now have a personality in the modern system (2020). Debord, on the other hand, states that “the world seen is the world of commodities” (Debord, 2016). He states that all these objects turn into signs, thus occupying our lives completely. Now, the object that has a personality and skips a position has turned into a part that contributes to both the individual and social life of the person and serves to fill the deficiencies. A person becomes a member of a social group by buying a “brand” product. This system, built with personalized objects, is an order built on a person's desire for everything. However, even when desiring everything, Baudrillard says that desires are not free (2020). In fact, the person is first made to feel that they need a product. Later, although the person desires it and seems to have bought it of his own free will, in fact, the person buys the product through this imposition. Baudrillard describes this system as “controlling desires.” In this system, in which people are forced to sell every product, John questions people's free will for consumption. Every product that is not bought is a deficiency for the person because there is a need. In his System of Objects, Baudrillard summarizes the system as follows:

“(…) It is said that it is enough for a person to satisfy himself by buying the things he desires, that is, a freedom that does not have a name: We can hope that every person who feels like a deprived person and takes action to fill this deficiency will be able to get rid of these aspirations produced by a certain group by purchasing a certain product. It can be said that such a product has a very high chance of being sold.” (Baudrillard, 2020:227).

The concept of consumerism is roughly as follows: to show a person as if he/she needs a product that he/she does not need, to constantly feel the need for something new, to convince the belief that the uneasiness and unhappiness experienced in modern times can be overcome by shopping and buying new things. That is, the form of society we live in offers spending as the solution and imposes on us the idea that the pleasure to come from it will cure everything (Kadıoğlu, 2014:43).

Bauman describes the society we live in as a consumerism founded on appealing and says: “Our society is a society of consumers in the same deep and fundamental sense, just as the society of our ancestors, the modern society in its founding stage, the industrial age was a society of producers” (Bauman, 2016).

Bauman evaluates consumerism from a critical point of view. According to him, the criterion for measuring how well a society lives and the level of well-being in the society is the lower class in that society. Because consumerism, by its existence, brings poverty and reduces the quality of life of the person. Therefore, poverty and poor quality of life are inevitable in a consumerist state. For example, the poor, refugees and marginalized groups are forced to live in ghettos, suburbs and slums and are excommunicated from “cathedrals of consumption” (Şimşek, 2014:179). In his book *Enchanting a Disenchanted World*, Ritzer describes the transition to a consumption-oriented society. It is the World War II, which makes us consume everything constantly. He gives the name “cathedrals of consumption” for fast-food restaurants, shopping centers, restaurants, casinos, sports centers, luxury entrance complexes, large luxury ships and theme parks, which are the new consumption tools that emerged after the World War II. According to Ritzer, with these new consumption tools, almost everyone has turned into an active consumer. Objects have been commodified and sanctified, society has become associated with consumption (Ritzer, 2016: 17-49).

Explaining the concept of consumerism in detail, Baudrillard states that consumption is now more than a process that serves to meet the needs. The meaning of “fulfilling the need” of any product we buy changes form and starts to carry abstract messages. A person no longer buys sunglasses to protect his eyes from harmful sun rays, but for the style he/she will gain with sunglasses and the message it will convey. According to Baudrillard, each abstract product carries abstract meanings out of necessity, just like sunglasses. Abstract concepts such as wishes, desires, relationships and marriage also acquire concrete meanings in consumerism. He gives the example of gifts constantly received to express love (Baudrillard, 2020:242). Baudrillard defines consumerism as “need objects to exist.”

Featherstone states that today the consumption of high cultural elements such as opera, art and literature is similar to the consumption patterns of necessities such as food and clothing. This system, which is now based on consumption, also affects culture and the production of culture. The main element in consumption is desire and pleasure, not its

meaning. He explains the basic components of consumer culture as shopping malls, holidays, entertainment and advertising industry. In particular, the advertising industry places interesting images such as love, pleasure, satisfaction and beauty in consumer goods and manipulates the consumer in this way. According to him, today's consumption redefines our judgments of taste towards other people (Featherstone, 2013:185). According to Fiske, “cars are not only a means of transportation, but also an act of speaking,” enabling brands to reach the identity they want to the consumer (Fiske, 1990). The consumer, who buys the brand car he/she wants, feels that he/she has the image and identity he/she desires. He/she also directs other people's thoughts about his/her image.

Lodziak, on the other hand, defines consumerism as making products that we do not need. He calls this “Manipulation of Needs.” According to this thesis, the working class is forced to be dependent on consumption in order to reproduce the capitalist system and maintain its dominance (Lodziak, 2003:60).

3.3.3. Digital Game as a Reflection of the Culture Industry

The culture industry's communication and media products constantly suggest a fun, enjoyable, reality-avoiding and utopian/ideal world (O'Shaughnessy&Stadler,2005). In this context, a television series, a movie or a popular novel allow a person to watch and imagine the life they want to be. Today, with the development of technology, digital games, one of the most powerful branches of new media, have entered our lives thoroughly. Thus, it can be said that it has become one of the biggest tools of the culture industry. It is possible to list digital games, social media and the internet as the culture industry tools. Today, with these games, a person in the fictional life is not content with watching what is presented to him/her. He/she himself/herself has the opportunity to create a new life and persona in line with his/her dreams and desires. The person not only enters a fictional world that exists from afar, but he/she can also create that world however he/she wants. For example, The Sims is a kind of digital simulation game that explains exactly this situation. The game, which consists of virtual people called “sim,” takes place in a virtual neighborhood and sims perform all the routines of everyday life. In this game, a person is free to shape this world of sims as he/she wishes. This and similar simulation games continue to exist on the market by being diversified by game designers.

According to the concept of the culture industry, the traditional role of families' role in raising awareness and socializing the individual has almost come to end; that task now belongs to the culture industry. Until the recent years, there were criticisms over television's replacement with the family in all narratives and stories. However, currently, that role is played by the digital games we play. New media devices are behind the transfer of the task of raising awareness from the family (Sayılğan, 2017). The Ottoman Empire-themed game concepts can be an example. It is often criticized that history is learned from historical TV series. Now, some historical narratives from real-time strategy games are transferred to the player. Representations such as heroism and leadership create perception in people's mind through digital games.

Along with digital games, the game gained much more comprehensive and detailed dimensions such as game design, game trade, legal aspects, AI and computer systems, as well as its social, psychological and economic dimensions. In a digital game, we come across many different disciplines such as art, history, media, cultural studies, aesthetic economy and informatics (Binark and Bayraktutan, 2011). In an Ottoman Empire-themed strategy game, the main character becomes a sultan. There is a harem just like in that period and its costumes and decorations have a design unique to the Ottomans. In this context, it is seen that a game design is made by integrating history, culture, art and strategy. Consumption, which is also a part of the culture industry, is a significant part of digital games. With the versions/updates coming every year, the game imposes on the player that they should constantly buy the new model. For the consumer, the newly released game is an object of desire and he/she takes pleasure in every new game as he/she buys it. FIFA, a football game series that has been played since 1993, is one of the best examples here. The game releases a new version every year. When the new version is released with new players, the former version instantly becomes insignificant as the teams and players are not up to date. Therefore, the consumer feels obliged to buy every new game and experience the feeling of pleasure.

Although digital games carry the basic features of classical games, they are simulations that mainly reflect social life. These are a world based on the macro world but has its own rules as well (Kirkpatrick, 2007). There are 8 basic elements that are effective in the system of digital games. These can be listed as system, players, competition, rules, interaction, feedback, progress and motivation. Digital games can be categorized as follows

according to their types; content, position of the characters in the game design and platforms on which it is played (Argün, 2019).

It is very difficult to examine the concept of traditional game and digital game under a single title as it is a controversial issue whether digital game is an extension of the traditional game concept or not. Although both groups carry many of the game features mentioned above, they differ sharply from each other in some ways. Binark and Bayraktutan describe the concept of digital game in their book titled “Digital Game as Culture Industry”: “Rules are essential in a digital game. There is always a fiction in a digital game and the whole game continues on this story. Everything moves fast, sometimes played as a team, sometimes individually” (2011). In the same work, the difference is explained as follows: “Especially real-life simulation games and life platforms and massive online games require the player to invest both materially and morally in game time and space with great seriousness” (2011).

It is possible to say that the main factor in digital games is imagination, because the main thing to produce and construct any game is one's dreams and imagination (Kulak, 2016). An example of this is that when a person imagines buying a car, he/she can easily buy a car in a game. This car is abstract; it can be seen, heard, but not physically touched. It can be controlled by remote keyboard, mouse or console game. The person who buys a car through the game not only owns a car in the universe he/she creates with his/her imagination, but also gets the opportunity to design that car as in his/her dreams. In this way, digital games enable the person to create the world he/she wants in the virtual universe (Kulak, 2016). At this point, the digital game is quite different from the classical game. It is very difficult to find a real car in a classic game. The moment the car is included in the game plot, it is removed from the game due to lack of items.

Digital games allow people to travel to endless places in a single space. In fact, the concept of space appears in a changed form. The fact that the person is in very different places at the same time is generally encountered by many theorists with the concept of virtual space. Virtual space is undefined, unlimited, flexible and ever-changing. It is a concept of space that has an autonomous ground from traditional space but has no boundaries. Güngör briefly defines these places as follows: “Virtual spaces are at the center of daily activities and experiences with the most important element of virtual reality, the internet” (2019) Being in this unlimited space is easily exemplified by social media tools or applications such as

Google Maps. By eliminating the boundaries of the physical space with digital games, all these appear in the form of a simulation. The player travels to a different digital space in each game.

According to Nohr, the person who creates himself/herself in any virtual space during the game also creates a digital character within the boundaries of the game. The created virtual character also complies with the limits and rules in a social circle in the digital space, because the nature of the games is based on everyday life. Everyday life habits, social relations and norms continue to exist in games. Nohr interprets it as “being compatible both in the game and in everyday life.” In other words, although it seems free and unlimited, these places definitely have limits (2012).

As mentioned above, the culture industry appeals to human emotions such as pleasure and desire. The examples for it can also be found in digital games. In Farmville, a farm simulation game played on Facebook in 2009, the main character is a farmer who can grow many crops on his large farmland. He/she can obtain animal food from his/her animals, sell and trade all these products. Zynga, the owner of this game, which has gained a wide audience of all ages since its release, has achieved a market value of \$9 billion. Consumers spent about 70 million hours a week on this game, which is the most played game of Facebook (Argün, 2019). This game has emerged to address these desires of people who miss nature or want to live in a village by appealing to people's sense of longing. The person who lives in the city and longs for his/her village and nature has tried to satisfy his/her longing and desire by playing this simulation. This person has had the opportunity to irrigate his/her field, grow fruit in that field, collect his/her milk and live a virtual farm.

In today's world, people who come in stress from work or school find a new way out in digital life by getting away from this stress and anxiety with Farmville and similar games (Ünal, Batı, 2011: 9-14). While Farmville attracts users who yearn for natural life, the city simulation game CityVille, designed by the same company in 2010, offers users the opportunity to build a metropolis from scratch. A person who starts from a level as small as a village increases the population and develops the city as they level up. He/she can create a big city by gaining all the features of big cities such as giant buildings, factories, entertainment centers, main roads and ports. In this way, the person who has the opportunity to manage a city and live in a city can fulfill this desire in CityVille, just like in Farmville. Like these

games, it is quite possible to find a wide variety of simulation games suitable for every person's needs.



** Images from the Farmville and Cityville games*

Digital games, one of the powerful tools of today's culture industry, position the person in both production and consumption positions. For this reason, people spend more of their time with the culture industry devices. Although it seems to be in control with new media tools, it is actually directed by a tool (Gül, 2019). For example, someone playing Farmville should water the crops in his/her field at a certain time interval or take care of his/her animals in the farm at certain hours. If he/she is not active in the game in this time zone, his/her products will rot or he/she will not be able to get products from animals. These and similar games actually give an order to the person when they should be active, that is, when they should start the game. As seen with this example, digital games are one of the most powerful tools of the culture industry in the last period.

In consumerism, which continues in the cycle of need, desire and lack, it is not possible for everyone to buy everything. For this reason, the person can be dragged into unhappiness and depression for each product he/she cannot buy because he/she faces the feeling of being lacking and being deprived of something in his/her life. Until he/she buys that product, he/she cannot get rid of the feeling of desire and lack. In other words, it seeks new "alternative" ways to keep up with consumerism and to own every object. One of these alternative ways is simulation games in terms of being both easy and practical. Dellaloğlu, digital games give people the chance to relive the physical world we live in. He states that these offer people the illusion of being an "individual" by making new choices on their own (Dellaloğlu, 2007). Simulation games are exact replicas of the physical world we live in. In

whatever world a person wants to create a virtual life for himself/herself, he/she can find a simulation game of his/her own; Farmville for those who want a natural life, Cityville for those who want a life in the metropolis.

YouTube, which has become a very popular line of business today, is quite common, especially among young people. Youtubers Life, the 3D simulation game released in 2015, is ideal for a young person who wants to be a Youtuber in the physical world. The game starts out as a student living with his family and making videos for his YouTube channel in his leisure time. At first, the opportunities are limited, but as you participate in the events and shoot new videos, the number of subscribers of the channel and the number of views of the videos increase. The aim of the game is to increase the number of subscribers and views of this channel with the videos shot. In this way, both his income and popularity increase, and the student starts to have a house of his own. He can also hire friends to upload videos to the channel. The person playing this game thus "produces a new individual" for himself.



**Images of the Youtuber Life game*

Harig states that the games people choose are closely related to the daily problems they encounter (Harig, 2012). Since digital games are a virtual world where a person can transition to the universe they want, it is quite normal for this person to prefer these games as an escape from their daily problems. Each level played in these universes, each new decision may consist of possible choices that can be made in real life and that are in the person's subconscious.

Some of the most well-known and popular games that carry human life to the virtual plane and are suitable for human anatomy are: The Sims and Second Life, which are simulations of all the daily activities of a person, Virtual Families, a real-time game about the

ordinary life of a family, Eccky, where the two actors are raising a common baby by connecting to each other via the internet (Güngör, 2012:14).



** Images of Virtual Families and Eccky*

3.4. When Writing My Thesis: Squid Game

During this study, it is necessary to mention the Netflix production called Squid Game, which is thought to be relevant to the subject and has had a great impact on the world. Because it is both a game-based series and deals with issues that deal with everyday life issues through games. It is also suitable for this study because it is about people wanting to meet their needs from the game.

Squid Game, a South Korean drama series about survival, mystery, thriller and horror, was released on Netflix on September 17, 2021. The series, which attracted great attention globally, broke the records and became the most watched production of the platform in 17 days. Its story and plot were well accepted by the people. The drama is about a group of people in need of money accepting a huge production game where one person wins a large sum of money and the losers die. The fact that it deals with universal problems such as poverty, neediness and class differences and presents this subject within the framework of games, one of the most popular new media tools of the last period, made this series very attractive. Actually, the event takes place in South Korea, but the story appeals to all societies. People giving up their lives to make money and feeling hopeless and helpless are among today's most common problems. In the face of these problems in real life, people see digital games as a shelter and demand to meet their expectations, just like in the series. The digital

screen welcomes the modern life person who comes home in the evening with stress and gives a positive energy to the person. The playground where dozens of people died in this series is filled with soft colors, objects reminiscent of childhood and colorful wall paints.

Squid Game is a contrast to the “games are simulations of real life” theory explained in all game theories. This comes up with the premise that “real life is a simulation of simulation games” because the losing player is instantly killed by the quarterbacks, just like in a simulation game. Then life immediately returns to normal just like in the game. This is a re-simulation of the simulation.

Although the players know that they will most likely die in the end, continuing the game and not giving up is related to the demand for meeting the pleasure and needs of the game. Everyone wants to meet the money they need in this game, but some players enjoy this game and just want to win the game. The old character, who is the creator of the game, does not just watch the game from afar, although he edits and directs the game, he enters the universe he has created and plays the game according to the rules. It is active in the game but in a passive position while watching. Just as people exist with their own characters in universes established in simulation games, the producer also exists in his own universe, with his own character. He participates in the game by choosing to control himself and direct the story himself.

The pleasure of playing games is much more than watching from a distance. Throughout the series, players are shown a large amount of money. This is the “you're addicted here” message to the players. People are connected to the game with greater motivation by seeing money in a tangible way. Within the scope of consumerism, the perception that we are just as dependent on money, commodities and consumption, this is what we really need to continue our lives, pushes people to consumption. Just as described in the chapter of consumerism, the participants are adapted to the game by imposing that they need this game and they are made addicted to them. For this reason, this series is mentioned in this study.

In the third chapter, digital games as a communication device and their sub-titles are discussed, while they are examined within the framework of the culture industry and consumerism. In digital games, a new generation communication tool, the person is both a

producer and a consumer. For this reason, they are seen as the most powerful tools of the culture industry. In addition, simulation games continue their existence as a simulation of everyday life. For this reason, in this chapter, it has been concluded that simulation games are one of the most important tools representing the simulation theory today.

CHAPTER 4: THE SIMS: AN ALTERNATIVE LIFE ESTABLISHED IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In this chapter, the separate topics mentioned above are handled by connecting them to each other. The idea that everyday life is a simulation and that everyday life is reproduced in a virtual environment is explained. In addition, simulation games are considered as “alternative lives established in everyday life.” First of all, the effect of digital games and everyday life on each other is discussed. Later, The Sims is referred to as “The Sims as an alternative life example.”

4.1. The Sims as an Alternative Life Model

Goffman likens everyday life to a theater stage, and Baudrillard states that we live in a simulation universe and says that reality disappears and everything turns into simulation. One of the best examples of these theories is The Sims.

The Sims is a strategic life simulation game developed by Maxis and by Electronic Arts, the first version of which was released in 2000. Players have a system where they can control all the movements of virtual people called “sim” in the virtual world they live in, via a computer. Both physically and in terms of life, players can create sims as they want, develop their careers, design the houses they live in and socialize with other sims. The game proceeds

on a fictional plane from beginning to end. In the past 21 years, it has improved itself with the innovations and updates that came to the game. Currently, the fourth version of the game, The Sims 4, released in 2014, is on the market. The reason why The Sims is a sample for research is that it is a virtual version of the physical world. It is one of the most popular platforms of virtual worlds used as a means of entertainment, commerce, communication, socialization and information.

The Sims can be explained as the equivalent of Baudrillard's concept of simulacra. The world of The Sims is one of the best examples of describing a universe made up of only hyperrealities. It promises to have something that cannot be acquired in the real world. At the same time, it gives the opportunity to reconstruct and live the life idealized by people's imaginations or as a result of social perceptions and impositions from a simulation. In The Sims, people design and play their own character or another character. Each can control a character's entire life and direct it as he/she wishes. Any physical problem is not possible in The Sims universe. For example, marriage between a man and a man, which is prohibited in many countries, is possible in The Sims. It is also possible in this universe for male sims to get pregnant and give birth to children and the pregnancy process depends on what the person wants. This hyperreality situation, which Baudrillard points out, turns into The Sims reality on its own.



**** Some everyday life routines set in the Sims universe***

This hyperreal world set in a virtual universe is more than a playground for users. This is an alternative life they construct in their spare time as an escape from the physical world and daily routines. Users are free to write and play the story they want in the alternative world, within the limits determined by the game.



**** An image from the sim creation phase***



****An image describing the physical characteristics of sims and their daily sports routine***

The avatar in the game is not a warrior, mage, vampire or zombie. It does not aim to conquer a region, save the princess or level up like in other games. It does not promise any rewards in the finale and has no clear ending. The most ordinary ending would be for a sim to starve to death. The object of the game is to present sim life and make achieve his/her personal goals such as the physical world. The object of the game is to make a character achieve their personal goals, as in a sim physical world. The game, which takes place in this alternative world offered by digital possibilities, consists of the reflections of real life. The

Sims not only offers an alternative life to one's own life, but also confirms Timisi's idea that virtual games develop as an alternative to the definition of reality (Timisi, 2003).

Sims can make all the activities found in everyday life. Even if the player leaves the game, sims continue their lives in the fictional world. Going to school, going to work, making money, getting married, meeting with friends and having a pet are the most basic features of this stage. It can take two actions at once, or if the sim is angry or excited, it will do the job faster. Emotions and actions move together just as they are in humans. This game is the kind of the mimicry game concept Caillois talks about in his book (Caillois, 2001).



** Images showing different cultural experiences in the Sims universe*

In this game, the person has the opportunity to choose many professions such as doctor, police, writer, thief or social media phenomenon. You can go to an island for a summer vacation and a skiing for a winter vacation. He/she can buy clothes. If he/she is rich, he/she may prefer luxury products as well. If he/she is an environmental person, he/she can get a solar panel, for example. A sim who chooses a minimal lifestyle can decorate his/her home accordingly. He/she can knit and sell to others, paint and open a gallery. You can do housework, go to the gym, meditate, ride a bike or even own a hedgehog. You can meet someone at work, marry or have a homosexual relationship. You can get pregnant and have

children, or fall in love with a married person and have a secret love affair. Besides, there are more than 100 skin colors to create a glitter. The elements such as hair, make-up and clothes are included in the game in countless ways, and the player creates a sim from scratch according to his/her own choice. Sims can be designed in detail to have optional cheekbones, thin legs or muscles. Not only the avatar, but also the social circle can be personalized. Much more of these examples are included in The Sims with updates coming every year (The Sims 4, 2014).



** Some images from the Sims universe*

A person playing The Sims performs in the virtual world, as Goffman puts it. Personalizing the avatar and owning personal tools such as a house and a car refers to the person's showcase. In this game, the character constantly rebuilds his/her performance, with the ability to recreate a sim and add new roles. Unadmired and unwanted features of the previous character are not added to the next sims. In this way, unwanted roles and performances are prevented.

The number of players in The Sims, which was released 21 years ago, has reached 20 million in 2020. With the effect of the coronavirus pandemic, it increased by 15% compared to the previous year in 2020 and reached a budget of \$4.128 billion. The game constantly develops and maintains its popularity even though it has been on the market for many years (Güner, 2020).

With the countless alternatives, the game give the opportunity to players to acquire or display wealth or status. The display of the assets obtained in the online world corresponds to the presentation of the self, just as in the offline world (Belk, 2014). In The Sims and similar

RPGs, people can try alternative genders and shape their physical features as they wish. In some studies, it has been revealed that people create avatars that are not very different from their offline selves in such games. Individuals who create avatars that represent their real selves are more psychologically involved in the game world than those who create avatars that represent their ideal selves (Belk, 2014).



**The situations fictionalized in the Sims universe and not possible in real life*



**The life fictionalized in the Sims universe but cannot be established due to some reasons in real life*

The Sims universe contains not only a simulation of today's modern life, but every version of life. For example, in the 1800s, a universe can be created in which money is made from agriculture, or a royal family universe can be established and the game can continue in the palace. Fiction series or programs on television can also optionally be moved to The Sims universe such as Survivor, MasterChef, Home Sweet Home and Big Brother etc. (The Sims 4, 2021). The Sims universe, in which even the past is reproduced, is also an example of the re-simulation of not only reality but also simulation, as Baudrillard said.



** Some nostalgic sims and Royal Family-themed sims*



**Sims versions of TV programs, MasterChef and Home Sweet Home*

The Sims also includes farm games or games that reflect the traditional lifestyle. In this way, one does not have to choose only a modern lifestyle while playing The Sims. On the other hand, one can maintain both the flamboyant lifestyle of modern life and a farm life at the same time. A sim can earn his/her money from farming while living in a luxury villa with a pool. In this context, The Sims offers people different alternatives not only on identity but also on lifestyle. While presenting the village life longed for by people living in metropolises,

it also provides the comfort of a luxurious life. In other words, it presents the desired life, identity or objects to the user by intertwining them (Sucu, 2014).

Hibbins states that leisure means emancipation and liberation from the compulsion of a job and calls the activities done in leisure relaxation and escape (1996: 23). Today, where the concept of leisure is demanded to provide intense pleasure and entertainment, The Sims provides people with a sense of pleasure as well as entertainment. In this universe, which offers an alternative life, everything is for one's own fiction. For this reason, everything proceeds as the person desires. In this universe, the person does not belong to any role or responsibility. There are no gender norms. Now, the person switches from the physical life that he/she cannot control to his/her virtual life, which he/she completely controls by opening the game. It's kind of an escape. It is a state of getting away from the physical life, detaching from the reality, escaping to a simulation universe where you live a free life and control everything, away from all negativities. Adapted to real life, this new media device responds to the search for different lifestyles.

The Sims is chosen as a sample in this study as it is one of the first simulation games and a highly developed life simulation that incorporates all these features. In addition, the Metaverse technology, in which projects are completed and necessary steps are taken for the future realization, brings to mind The Sims game series. There is a technology, whose basic concept is like The Sims universe and which establishes a future ideal that can integrate this universe into physical life. The Sims are important as they are the first steps of this universe. One of the fundamental elements in both The Sims and Metaverse is the avatar control and it consists of a simulation.

Everything in The Sims belongs to the real world. If desired, you can also switch to fantastic universes, but the starting point of the game and all the innovations are to make the game look like reality and increase its realism. This is the most basic factor that distinguishes The Sims from the others, and it has become a game that appeals to all age groups. Users can manage their virtual lives by constructing their own digital identities. They can get the opportunity to see other lives they want to experience with other characters they have created from scratch. In this study, the motivations of playing this game were investigated by conducting in-depth interviews with 10 people, 4 men, 6 women, who played The Sims game in total.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, 8 people, 3 men and 5 women, who play The Sims, are interviewed face-to-face and their motivations for playing this game are investigated. The following table gives the information of the people interviewed face to face. Also, they are long-term users who have been playing The Sims game from the very first version.

Gender	Age	Educational status	Occupation	Marital status	Name	How long has he/she been playing this game?
Male	18	High-school graduate	Student	Single	Kaan	Since he was about 9 years old
Female	21	Undergraduate in medicine school	Student	Single	Zuhal	Since she was about 8 years old
Female	30	Graduated	Architect	Married	Beren	Since she was about 9 years old
Male	21	Undergraduate in fine arts	Artist educators/ Student	Single	Mert	Since he was 9 years old
Female	29	Master's degree	Corporate communications specialist	Single	Çiğdem	Since she was 8 years ago
Female	27	Master's degree	Copywriter	Single	Ece	Since she was 18 years ago
Female	31	Graduated	Unemployed	Married	Kumru	Since she was 12 years ago

Male	26	Graduated	Journalist	Single	Efe	Since he was 16 years ago
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Table*1

In this study, various findings were obtained by using the in-depth interview method with 8 different people. Some of the participants were interviewed face-to-face at different times, and online interviews were made with some of them. A few of the participants were selected from their own social environment of the research, and the rest were selected from the snowball sample and their social environment upon the recommendation of these participants.

The purposeful sample has been determined as “people who have been playing the game for at least 8 or 10 years” as it is aimed to see how the daily life practices that changed over time in the game changed. 5 of the participants are female while the rest 3 are male. The equality of the number of men and women was not taken into account while selecting the participants. When they first heard the subject and the questions, almost all of the participants stated that they did not understand and could not establish a connection with the subject. However, during the interviews, the all-participants’ opinions changed.

Each of them meet in one sentence: “I thought it was just a game. As you asked questions, I realized that every move in the game has a meaning.” Thus, at the end of the interview, all the participants completely moved away from their initial ideas as a result of their own conversations and discussions, and got the idea that the subject of the study is actually very meaningful. In addition, it has been observed that the researcher's playing this game for a long period of time provides an advantage in terms of empathizing with the participants and making the conversation more sincere and open. However, since the researcher plays the game, it can, at the same time, create a disadvantage in terms of having difficulty seeing different perspectives.

The participants were asked how they started The Sims and why they chose it, what kind of avatar and what kind of universe they created, the reasons for all these fictions, how much time they spent during the day, the connection between the game and daily life and its

impact on daily life. In line with the answers given, the reasons for people's motivation to play a life simulation game were revealed.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS

6.1. Do I Have the Control?

In this chapter, the participants were asked why they started this game and the parts of this game that attracted their attention the most, and why they have been playing this game for years. Some of the participants answered that it was attractive to impersonate them in real life. Some said that it is strange to experience interesting lives, while others said that it gives a different pleasure to establish and lead different lives. All participants agree that the logic and operation of the game is different from other computer games with concepts such as adventure, winning and losing and racing. Many participants expressed their pleasure in controlling a universe. Some of them said this idea by comparing with traditional media and they also said that they feel freer when controlling the beginning and the end in digital games. This course can be explaining the reason of request to these types of games rather than the request to books and films etc. People say they enjoy controlling both their own and others' lives.

Zuhal states that she is most interested in the idea of building a house and starting a family, and that she has been playing this game for years on her own dreams. According to her, The Sims is quite different from the others because it only allows you to live a normal life. Zuhal explains this normal life in the game as follows: “In this life, you can do everything as you dream, however you want.” For this reason, Zuhal adds that she has been playing the game from time to time since her childhood. She also states that they play the

game as a leisure activity with her sister at home. Zuhail expresses it like this: “My sister used to create a family in the same Sims universe and in real life I would go to visit her in the game by saying 'Sister, I came to you'.”

Kaan is another participant who states that he plays this game within the framework of his dreams and interests. However, Kaan started this game over a very specific dream that was difficult for him to realize. Survivor, a life simulation program he watched on TV, was very popular when he started the game. Due to the idea of reproducing this simulation program through a simulation game, Kaan started the game and continued in different forms afterwards. Kaan states that he watches this program because he loves people to establish their own civilizations, build their own huts, try to survive and struggle to find food and live on a desert island. Kaan also says that he always wanted to participate in the program. Kaan says that he has experienced this in The Sims until he realizes this dream. He states that this experience also has a uniquely interesting side: “It is very interesting that you create another character and direct all the stories.” Except for Survivor, Kaan says that he plays these games as a hobby, as they are for his interests. Stating that he is very interested in history and the Middle Ages, the participant states the following as the reason for choosing The Sims and similar games: “I guess I want to live there and see what it was like back then. I can't say that I really feel alive, but it gives a different pleasure while playing because you are in an age where you are curious.” When asked why he prefers games rather than movies or a book related to her interests such as history, Kaan answered: “I read historical novels and watch movies, but these games are really different. For example, if you are reading a book, the characteristics of the character are clear. If the character has a trait like he wouldn't say boo to a goose and you wouldn't too. Because you're just a reader. There is no alternative way for them, the end is always the same. But while advancing the game, it makes you say, ‘I did this’ and you can say, ‘This is my choice.’ For example, in the movie, the good guy can forgive the bad guy. The movie continues like that, or even if the movie ends there, we make up the sequel ourselves, we say that the man goes to jail. However, it's up to you to forgive this man in the game. For example, there is a horror game called “Until Dawn.” A few people are going somewhere. Whether these men die or live is entirely up to me. When I was playing, I only saved 3 people, but then I was sad, 'Why did this man die?’” For this reason, Kaan adds that the idea of being in control in the universe he has created attracts his attention in the games.

Kumru says that she preferred this game because it was very close to reality, and it impressed her because it was just like a real world. She says following: “My sim was hungry, I would eat, I would take a bath and so on. This is how I first started. The game has improved a lot now. As the game developed, I never broke up. On the one hand, it is a game, but not artificial. I guess I can say that the fact that it is based on reality rather than being artificial affects the fact that I can write the story myself. Because I can manage the whole story the way I want with one click. It's been 20 years; I still play for this reason. In reality we are not in control, it is pleasure to control another life.”

Beren, on the other hand, states that she enjoys building her own life online and managing everything, and that's why she hasn't been able to give up on this game for years. She states that she loved playing with the virtual doll before The Sims, and that this game attracted her attention because it is a much higher version of the virtual doll. She says that "they go hungry, they don't go to the toilet, they piss on their clothes if you don't send them" and taking care of their own avatars is the best part of the game. Beren uses the following sentence as the reason for choosing the game and playing it for years: “It is very enjoyable to create life alternatives.” When Beren is asked what life alternatives mean, she says: “You can establish families that are rich or poor, living alone or crowded. You can create some houses as a competition house, and some from people in your real life. So, you have multiple Sims universes and you're in control. For example, the friendships of two women or two men in the house where there were two close friends reached other dimensions. This seemed funny to us at the time, like a flaw in the game. Of course, I realize this later. At that time, the game showed that there could be different sexual orientations and different alternatives to our minds. Because, even as a friend, the kiss option was opened after the hug and hug option.” Beren says that “It is a game that you have the control.” She says that no matter how free the games seem, they are actually a mechanism of perception in itself. She emphasizes with the following words that the boundaries and features in the game are not accidental or accidental, but exist with the aim of directing people to a certain event or situation: “For example, new options or new features are constantly coming out. When I realize this, I'm going over it this time. For example, when a husband and wife bring a third person next to their husband and command one of the spouses to hug him too much, the third person gets jealous and another fight option emerges. So much smoke was coming out of the fight. This time, I'm trying to get this fight option. In fact, while trying to create your own world, the

game starts to rule you thanks to the new feature that opens in the game after a while because the new feature is attractive to people.”

Ece says that she couldn't quit the game because of the pleasure she felt from building a universe in her game and completely controlling that universe. At first, just like a game, she played "according to the rules" in his own words. However, she created a universe in the game with the guidance of her own subconscious and her discovery of this feature caused her to play the game "serious." She says: “I said to myself, I'm going to create a decent Sims world. The creation is an important point, I think. Yes, the game has its own limits, you create a universe within those limits, it gives you a creative pleasure. That's what the game makes me feel. It's a universe and you're in control.”

Efe defines this game as a “virtual universe” where he realizes what he could not do in his real life. He expresses that he enjoys doing any situation in the game that is not easy to do in real life. He explains it this way: “In the physical life, we cannot build houses for our loved ones, for example, my family is a builder, but everything is money in this period. That's why you can't build a comfortable life with your loved ones in reality, but you can do it virtually. For example, if I were a truck driver in real life, I would act like this. But being a truck driver in real life is a remote possibility for me. I don't prefer it as a profession, but I can try to be a truck driver for two days virtually.”

Çiğdem considers the game as an alternative life to her own life and states that she enjoys constructing this alternative life according to her wishes. She says: “It shows how I would have been in a completely different life if this wasn't my life right now. That's why I've been playing continuously for 20 years. Because it is possible for you to reflect yourself differently in The Sims.” Çiğdem tells that in this game, one can easily present the self that one wants, which is not possible in real life, and that she can easily perform the desired performance. Then, she expresses the alternative life she wants to construct as follows: “For example, I could be a writer other than the job I want to do right now. I can experience this in The Sims. I can't be a writer here today. Because I have no such education, no infrastructure, no environment. There is nothing necessary for me to be a writer. I mean, I don't have such a strong motivation right now, but I can do this even if it's an imaginary simulation. I can see how I would be today if I wasn't a Çiğdem with this character, this body shape, this appearance.” Çiğdem explains that this game is different from other games and that's why it is

quite interesting to her: “It was different when I started anyway, it wasn't like the games we were used to. This is a different world, so you don't sit around and hunt birds. It is actually a place where you can recreate and play with yourself, revive yourself in different ways, buy a house and decorate it however you want. The Sims is the first of these games on the market. That's why it was so interesting to everyone when it first came out.”

6.2. The Desire to Satisfy the Ego

The participants are asked about the avatar creation, which is one of the most important features of The Sims game, and what that avatar does in a day. While many say that they create an avatar with physical features that they find ideal for them in real life, others state that they make and play a virtual version of themselves that looks like them. The answer is received that this game, which many of the participants think they are playing unconsciously, is actually a reflection of their subconscious, and an awareness is observed in the participants. The answers of many of the participants as “I never thought of it that way” as they talked supports this idea.

Zuhal says that when a woman creates a sim, she creates a female character that fits her perception of beauty. She states that she has created many different sims for many years, but she did not make any character overweight. When asked what her perception of beauty is and what kind of avatar she creates, she usually draws a character with full cheekbones, fair skin, and a very beautiful nose. She says that male sims try to be handsome according to their own perception as much as possible. Zuhal is a girl with a height of 155 cm and can be relatively called short in public. For this reason, she also added: “People's heights are standard in the game but I'd make a tall woman if I could.” Zuhal, who is very attentive to her dress choices, is asked whether the sims look like themselves, and gives the answer: “I would never compare my sims to myself, I would make them very different from my own. I used to shape them according to my own perception of beauty, but my sister used to liken them to herself. My sister is wearing a headscarf, so she used to wear a beret on her sims to make it look like a headscarf.” Zuhal, a medical student, gives the following answer when asked what the created avatars deal with in their everyday lives: “I created whatever I wanted there myself. For example, they were usually doctors. As I said at the beginning, beautiful women and handsome men would definitely get married later. So, I played family. They would have children. It would have 6 children; we would have lived in a crowded house a lot. Medical

doctor, which I chose as a profession in the game, has now become my profession. Actually, I didn't think that I chose them to be doctors very consciously before.” She has both established a connection with her own daily life in the game and unwittingly assigned a mission to meet a need in the game. In addition, after the questions, she says to reinforce this: “I mean, I was playing myself in an ideal body, now I realize this better.” She carries the imposition of beauty in everyday life into the game again. Zuhail states that she makes them enjoy life by keeping them in social activities such as watching movies, as a requirement of the game rule, so that their avatars never grow old or die during the game. As another example, she says that because she loves triplets so much, she tries to make her sims have triplets.

Kaan says that he tried to make his first sim similar to himself. However, later, he preferred to make sims little weaker. Thus, he says that he made some changes in the sim he wants to make similar to himself. When asked why, he replied: “We always say handsome if he is blond, blue-eyed, thin, tall, or I don't know. So, I did something handsome with blue eyes.” Kaan says he never carries his own flawed features into the game and adds that he exists in the game with a body close to his idealized body. Kaan, who stated that he would prefer to study at a digital department at the university, answers the question of what the avatar does in everyday life as follows: “I was creating an engineer character. Because we are on an island, or I would build a house on the island and be comfortable. For example, in the game, you climb the coconut tree and collect coconut, and there was a part of the bush, and when you passed there, you were torn. Then you had to make clothes again. I loved these events; it was the part I enjoyed more from the game.” Later, Kaan explains: “For example, most male users create female characters for themselves. I think it's because it looks more beautiful to one's eyes.” It indicates that a wide variety of self-presentations can be made in each game.

Beren first answered that “this is the beautiful thing; you can try anything” and then she stated that she designed random sims without any criteria and tried every option. “Actually, I would never make a character with a hat because there was no chance to take it off and I don't like to wear a hat,” she stated. The sims she created were not independent of her own wishes and desires, as she said. When asked about the activities of her sims during the day, she says: “There was no limit in the professions I chose, there was an option to look for a job on the phone or in the newspaper. Shortly after I pressed it, the phone was ringing, with money on the screen for a job offer. If the money was good, I would approve.” She later

says: "Now that I think about it, she always wanted to be an architect, my mother used to sing a lot when she was little. I guess I reflected this in the game, I wasn't aware of it either" and states that she reflects her own wishes and desires to the game. By doing so, she aims to meet a need from the game and feels a pleasure. Beren describes the activities of sims who are architects during the day as follows: "Since we lived in an apartment, the houses we created were very different. We were actually designing our dream houses because we were building villas. For example, I used to draw a pool in every house. I wouldn't have a home without a pool. Or I had the option of entering a money code in a house and living a very luxurious life, but I did not like this situation at all. Let's just say I couldn't fit it myself. In the houses I built myself, I often did not apply this. I used to go to work and earn money, put cheap items first, send them to work and renew items as I earn." Beren states that she has built the life she wants to have in the future by combining both the profession she wants to have and the house she desires in the game.

Ece states that she created a sim that complies with the beauty standards existing in society today, by saying: "Obviously, I am totally in line with the imposed perception of beauty" on her avatars. When asked to explain in more detail, she continues: "I am a very beautiful woman in The Sims. I have blonde long hair. I dress very well. I also did some plastic surgery or something." In the continuation, she says she didn't get plastic surgery because she was afraid of medical procedures in real life and didn't know how to stop. She says: "In the Sims, I don't need to be afraid as I'm sure I'll be beautiful because that's how I set it up." Ece wants to have plastic surgery in real life; however, since its result is not under her control, she wants to meet her need in The Sims. Ece defines The Sims as follows: "I'm cool, I have a cool house, an environment. I'm an artist there. I am also a famous artist. My environment is not crowded, I am a single person who is seen as a little cocky. I chose this myself. Because if you ask me right now, I guess I would say yes if I would like to go back to Ece there. I don't know if she's happy there, but I built the perfect character." When asked what she means by "perfect," Ece says her own tastes, desires and idealized lives. In this game, Ece creates a universe completely according to her wishes and plays.

Çiğdem says that she creates different types of sims in each game. However, when it comes to herself, she designs a sim similar to herself. In The Sims universe, she doesn't change her environment of friends, boyfriend and family but she changes her profession and financial status. "For example, if I have a boyfriend, we have the same relationship in The

Sims. I create my best friend; we have a friendship like in reality. In other words, I carry a life close to myself and my own life there. But, for example, while I live in a small house with my cats, we live in a duplex house with the same team in the game. The only difference is that I direct things the way I want. In other words, I improve the missing or flawed places in real life and continue the game.” This gives the feeling of the ideal life, Çiğdem says. When asked about the reason, she said: “The answer to my curiosity about how I would be in a different world, in different conditions, is in The Sims. For example, you are making a decision in your real life, you want to join company X and you are wondering about your future here. It is possible to see this in the game. I can see the results when I do something and when I don't. I think that adds excitement to the game. There is also this; I currently have at least a year ahead of me to get promoted. In The Sims, I speed up time, get promoted immediately, increase my salary. I live there as a simulation of not only the missing parts of life, but also the situations that I aim to do and dream of in the future. Maybe it's just a game, but it's nice to feel the satisfaction of that promotion even if it's in the game. So, you experience that pleasure. People's life consists of their work and social circle. We always say, I wish it was like this, not like that. Sims offers you this opportunity.” It is evident that Çiğdem played The Sims with the aim of establishing an alternative life, getting away from the undesirable situations of life, and experiencing her ideal life.

Kumru states that she established two separate universes in one game. The first is the universe of sims, which she created from scratch, consisting of strangers and unknown people. The second is the universe in which she and her family are constructed. She expresses that she has created different avatars from both of them. In the universe where her real environment is created, she even used the real names in the game. Kumru also fictionalized herself in the game. When asked what the avatar does in one day, she said that she got married for the first time, for example. She says that she chooses a mate for someone who is handsome, has a nice house, a decent family and a good career. When asked why, she replied: “I would have thought that even in the game,” expressing how much she identifies with a character in the virtual game. “I would neither be friends nor marry a stranger. You can be a thief in the game, I've never been a thief or, instead of using money cheats and getting rich all of a sudden, I would like to work and rise. I would love to do everything that needed to be done until that sim got a good salary and did well in her career. I wouldn't take pleasure in getting rich with a password all of a sudden. Because the artificial and sudden cheating didn't make me happy, I guess because it didn't fit with reality either.” When Kumru is asked about

the avatars in the other universe she plays, she expresses that she designs women and men as blond and thin, as beautiful and handsome in accordance with her own perception of beauty. She adds: “Instead of starting a couple first, I'd develop a single person in a good job by furthering his career. I was also moving my sims based on reality. Actually, there is another thing that came to my mind when you asked; I used to make most sims usually doctors, cops, and writers. Because she could earn the most money in these professions.” She reiterates: “I began to question my own actions. Why didn't I play in a relaxed way? This is the game after all, but I played it with a lot of planning, you don't think that deeply while playing.” The expression “planning” actually shows Kumru's pleasure in playing different scenarios in different universes and that she creates herself from another phase and keeps herself alive from a universe that suits her dreams.

Mert, on the other hand, says: “I will definitely do it myself, but I do not put anyone from my real life.” He explains his purpose in designing himself as follows: “It's so fun to be able to make someone similar to me, to be able to replicate my face, or to make any changes I want whenever I want.” He expresses his pleasure in seeing his version on a virtual platform. Emphasizing the speed feature of the game, Mert states that he cuts his hair in the game, and when he gets bored, he immediately lengthens it. He says it's enjoyable to access many options quickly, even at the same time. It is understood that Mert, who says “I wish real life was like this,” continues playing the game in order to have the features that he could not achieve. When asked a few more questions about speed, Mert says: “I make my legs thin and I also build myself abs. I think I do things that take time to do in everyday life. In my opinion, the feature of everything being one click away is very nice. Doing something quickly is generally pleasing.” When asked what job his sim does in everyday life, Mert says: “I'm an actor and very famous in The Sims. I have a white house with a pool. In the future, I want to be in the movie or TV series industry. I think I reflect that in the game. It's not like a game, it's like they're characters in my favorite TV series and I'm directing them. Just like the directors. That's why I like it more. It's more fun than watching TV series. In the series, we only see what the director wants, but there it happens exactly the way I want it. I always have certain scenarios in my head.” This is how Mert explains that he experienced the future he dreamed of for himself in the game.

6.3. A World with Countless Possibilities

In this chapter, the participants are asked what kind of environment and life they have built in the game, and what their goals are in this fiction world. It is observed that the participants give more comfortable and fluent answers to these questions.

Zuhal says that she always put a fireplace in the house where her sims live. He explained the reason with the following sentence: "I used to think that families should be happy and peaceful back then. The fireplace feels like that." It is observed that Zuhal wishes not to be asked questions about the family question. Zuhal says that she enjoys setting up many different Sims universes, that she starts many sims from scratch and plays them at the same time. Zuhal emphasizes again that they started life by finding a job first, and that job is usually a doctorate. Zuhal adds that she has a hobby like painting after work. "For example, a sim whose hobby is painting becomes a very famous painter in the future. Because I design it as very talented. Since there are so many job options in the game, they can earn money from the business area I want. Sometimes I try to make beautiful mansions, for example. I love doing this; I create two sims at first and they have children. Then I make another family like this, they have children too. Then I get those children married too. That's how I run the entire Sims universe with my sims and their children. It's a pretty big family tree. His grandparents appear in the family tree as the sim I made." When Zuhal is asked about establishing such various universes, she mentions that The Sims, which she called "a game from the beginning," is actually a "very nice simulation, that there is a life there, and there are so many possibilities in that life." "You can be a thief, a doctor or a soldier. You have a chance to try and see all the possibilities. You choose all these possibilities; you are in control. I also know that this universe is very different from the real world. I wasn't saying this would happen if I became a doctor, but I was seeing it in simulation." When she was asked whether she had ever been a thief, she replied: "I have never been a thief. I think I can't ascribe evil to my sims" and shows the bond she has established with virtual characters.

Beren says that in this game, she recreates the characters of a TV show, "Big Brother Watching Us" and replays them according to her own pleasure. Beren actually creates the simulation of a simulation. Beren, who placed her own family members, aunt and uncle, who look exactly like them in appearance and name, in the neighboring houses, says that she later released them.

Ece defines the Sims universe as her own “parallel universe” and states that the environment she creates progresses within the framework of her own wishes, desires and dreams. When asked to explain in detail, Ece says: “Sometimes I date handsome artists, but then I break up with them. For example, I had a teacher at my university. He was a young blond English man. I liked the teacher very much, but of course he was just my teacher. I would never have thought otherwise, let's just say admiration from afar. It's unethical and unpleasant, I would never want that. But The Sims universe is a free universe in every way, and I made someone very similar to the teacher and fell in love with him for a long time. But I never named the teacher's name, on the other hand, I guess I didn't find it right. I mean, it seems so weird right now when you think about it. But here the game gives you the opportunity to try some things. It doesn't stay in it.” In this game, Ece finds the opportunity to realize some of the events she wants to experience in everyday life and the material items she wants to have on this platform. She expresses it again as: “We actually live very crowded at home right now. If I had a little more salary, I would go to a house separately, but I can't afford it right now. I experience that calmness and loneliness in my own game. We have a cat, I love it very much, but I didn't even move the cat there. I'm so sick of the crowd.” She also says: “I've never created anyone I know in the game. What is the need for this? In normal life, I am always with everyone. When I get the game in my hands, I want to break away from normal life anyway. Why would I move my social circle there?”

Çiğdem concludes that she has constructed a universe she wants to see a fun life in. There are many different sims from Çiğdem's universe sitting in the same place and they are all communicating with each other. She talks about the universe she built entirely for entertainment: “My A sim can be hostile to my B sim. My C sim is in love with my D sim but my D sim is actually married. There are different characters, there are different stories. One is a singer, one is a writer, one is a doctor, one is a veterinarian. Now that I think about it, I have always chosen professions that are respectable. They are constantly experiencing drama for themselves.” But she later realizes that there are some reflections from her real life again in the game and says: “I don't add a different person I don't know to my circle. When I create Rihanna, I don't add her to my circle. She continues to live in another universe. Even the game seems unsafe to me, I guess. This is how I can describe it now.”

Since Kumru has been playing this game for a long time, she states that her playing practices have changed compared to the past when she realizes that there are changes in the

lives she has built in the game. When asked a question about how she plays today, Kumru says: "I'm not designing myself right now, for example. I always do foreign characters and completely the extremes in the game. For example, instead of making a good career, I become a bartender. I can't stand it; I cheat money and buy a good house and play my game. I don't think I have to work from scratch like I used to, or it has to be perfect." Kumru was asked how she used to play. She said she used to choose a profession with financial means and status, earn good money and offer a very good life to her sims. When asked what she means by "being perfect," she answers: "I don't mean it because not everyone has to earn a very good salary and be in very good professions." When asked about the reason for this change, she answers as follows: "Some of your perceptions about life also change over time, and this is also reflected in the game you play. And now I'm tasting how other jobs and lives are enjoyable professions. I turn to the lives that I am curious about. For example, I was a bartender in a bar. What's the point now? I don't even go to the bar. I realized this while talking to you right now. I didn't realize I was doing this before." Kumru divides the various universes she has created into "fun" and "boring." "Some families are very neat. They have two children; they go to work during the day. It's a boring house." She says: "The father was in a good job; the mother was not. There were friends, we could have a party at their house and it was more fun. Actually, I edited both, but I liked going to party houses more." When asked why she makes her own fiction boring, Kumru says that she simulates both real life and TV series, which are a simulation, in the game. She says: "So, think about TV series. There are different kinds of families and people. I mean, I was making various kinds of games in the same way and keeping them alive. Just like in real life, isn't it?"

Mert, on the other hand, says that he has built a life that is very connected with his dreams and future plans. While emphasizing that he is famous in the game, he states that his environment consists entirely of TV series and movie characters. The circle of Mert, who does not include his real social circle in the game, is composed of serial and movie characters. "When we watch a TV series, we say what if this character was my friend. That's how I am in The Sims. They're all my friends, they live in my circle. For example, this is why I don't put my relatives in my normal life in The Sims. It's more fun than I did. I remake fictional characters. They live the way I want them to." Then he gives the following answer to the question of which TV series he chose: "All Game of Thrones characters were included. There were also characters from the TV series The Office and the Sopranos. So, I created such a universe in the game. I think I have combined the life that I both targeted and idealized in one

universe.” Mert states that he reproduces the fictional character and makes him live in the virtual world as he wishes. He also says that he dreams of it in everyday life.

6.4. Leisure Industry

In this section, participants who have been playing this game for many years are asked how much time they spend on this game during a day. It is observed that people play the game more or less depending on the presence of their leisure. In this question, it is determined that people see this game as a means of filling their leisure. In another word, the time of playing is inversely proportional with the intensity of working or studying.

When Zuhail heard this question, she answered with a sad tone, "This is a bit of a bitter truth, but it has only been 12 hours." She explains that this period may be longer because "if you always stay at the beginning of the game, there is always something to do." "The summer vacation," Zuhail says when asked which period she played for 12 hours. "Just imagine that It's already summer vacation. The next day and the next days you are always at home. That's why it was the next day in The Sims that caught my attention more, as the next day in the real world was no different from today. Of course, I can't play that much during school. There is nothing to do on vacation in the summer. But, in The Sims, there is. You can go to work with your sim. For example, you can have a child in 3 days. For example, you become an interior designer, someone tells you to repeat my shower, and you go and shower for him. You become a detective, you go and solve a case." Zuhail says that she has been spending less time for a few years due to schoolwork.

Kaan states that he has hardly played since he is preparing for the university exam this year. In previous years, he describes the time he spent on this game in his everyday life routine as follows: "I used to come from school, I went out with my friends from the site. In the evening, when I got home, I would sit at the beginning of the game, then I would go to bed. This cycle would go on like this. Actually, I have played quite a few of these games. When I found a gap, I would fill it with games, but I don't have such a gap right now."

Ece confessed that she even played in classes during her university years and her teacher was angry with her at some time. She said that she used to spend 5 to 10 hours in those years. When she started working, however, Ece couldn't play in the company. And, since she usually had a job in the evenings, she couldn't spend as much time as she used to. Ece says that she definitely opens the game on Sundays because Sunday is her off day, which is "a great time" for her to play. "When I started playing the game, I would not leave the computer for hours. My parents used to say get up and do your homework. I was neglecting my homework and stuff to build those buildings."

Çiğdem says that she spent about 6-7 hours a day while she was at university and explains the place of this game as follows: "Even though I wasn't sitting and playing, I was playing the game, I was doing something else. The game continued in the background. You can't open it while you work, of course. But when I have free time at home, I immediately think of The Sims and say, 'Let me open The Sims'."

Kumru says that, up to a few years, she spent all her free time playing The Sims with her brother. She describes this game, which she says her "biggest social activity with her brother," as follows: "We used to sit side by side and play, I would never play alone, I could not fictionalize my life alone. Now we sit down with my brother and say, let's do this and that. It's like a leisure activity that we do together, like a hobby. He comes to me, we sit down and we say, 'Let's do this, let's do this and that.'"

6.5. A Game between the Virtual and the Real

In this section, participants are asked about The Sims' impact on their everyday life. Most of them first stated that they did not understand the question; however, they later easily answered when more details were shared. Their answers show that they clearly realize the game's impacts on themselves and their everyday life.

Zuhal repeats her previous answer, saying that "this is not a game, but a simulation of possibilities." When asked to explain her answer, she expresses that "in this simulation, there is a house, work and family in this simulation, as in everyday life, it is similar to the virtual version of everyday life in this respect." She also says: "Something you don't expect does not happen in this universe. In the worst case, a thief breaks into your house. It's not a life of

surprises as everything goes as you expect it to. However, it attracts people.” In addition, Zuha explains that this game has affected her everyday life with the following example: “When I played a lot, I used to have dialogues with my family like this: I thought I would have a child the next day, but this was the Sims universe the next day. When I say next day, I don't mean normal life, but my family also thinks about the next day in the real world. There was such confusion in our lives. Because when you play for 12 hours, you automatically break away from real life. You are transitioning into the world of Sims.” Zuhail states that she realized the following as she talked: “Actually, I brought my life to the game and my daily life has been added to the game. I usually try to make my Sims look like my best friends. But I would never do it myself. If you are asking about the effect of everyday life on the game, for example, some sims would have children without my knowledge. They named them Alex or something. I would change them; I usually name my friends.”

Kaan explains that the game is an important element in the daily life of himself and his environment, giving an example: “I was playing the game from my brother's account for a while. One day, our next-door neighbor also came to us, we were playing together. We were going to light a fire later, we set up the fire near the house. That's why the house burned down. When my brother saw this, he got angry and beat me.”

Kumru says: “I think people can do things there that they cannot or would not do in real life. And all the fiction, the scenario is in your hands, under your control. The author determines the ending in a book, you just read it, but not in games, not in real life. Most of the time, the end of things is up to you. For example, this game and real life are similar in this respect. The end of events is up to me.” Kumru says that the game is an alternative to everyday life in terms of providing access to some wishes and desires that cannot be reached in everyday life. After this speech, Kumru explains her conclusion about this game as follows: “The so-called subconscious guides you in one way or another. I definitely think that every single step is a subconscious reflection. Now that I think about it, it would be interesting for me to play my aunt in the game. I'd build a beautiful house there, then I'd actually show her the house eagerly, just to see what I've done for her. Maybe that's why we're playing them in the game. So, in reality, what you do to your loved ones is limited, but you can buy a super house for your family there. For example, I wouldn't make my father work, I'm thinking about this right now. They were living happily at home with my mother, which means it's a subconscious reflection. In fact, since I couldn't do something that made

them happy, I thought I'd do it in that universe.” In addition, Kumru says: “It's actually a simulation of dreaming in your mind, of our imagination. I think that's the logic of the game. Very close to reality” and she states that this is a simulation of the reality.

Beren points out that although the game is close to the real life, it is actually “more practical and freer.” She says: “People see themselves as the mother of all, after a while you have to take care of them all the time. And you create your own dream, your own character and build the world you want. In the latest versions, you can now approach the character you want exactly because you can decide on the smallest detail, down to the cheek filling. She becomes a full-fledged character. It adds a lot to the realism. It falls somewhere between virtual and reality. I think this is one of the most attractive parts of it.” She says that the game is closer to reality thanks to its continuity, the absence of a beginning and an end like a classic computer game, and the fact that there is always something to do just like in real life. That's why she states that it definitely has a connection with everyday life. In addition, Beren gives an example of this question from her own family: “I was actually telling my aunts and uncles what happened in the houses where I created my aunts and uncles: 'I did this to you, you did that today'. I even used it to my uncle. My uncle was also very funny, there are events in the family that are still in the game, that we cannot forget and laugh. My uncle had created his own family in the game, he had lifted the pool ladder and killed my aunt in the game. Then there was his grave in the garden of the house, he used to go and cry every day and we laugh about it as a family.”

Ece repeats that she sees The Sims as a “parallel universe in everyday life.” For this reason, she adds that it should not be considered independently from daily life. When asked why, she answers as follows: “You can build a parallel universe in The Sims. You build it down to the smallest detail. Everything is fiction anyway. You fill it according to your own will. Being in control gives you pleasure, but it's a momentary pleasure. There is also something you dream of, for example, a job. If it's impossible for you to be in reality, at least set it up in the virtual world. Better than nothing. You can also be satisfied in the game. It gives you feelings of happiness and pleasure.” In addition, Ece says that games have the feature of escaping from the realities of everyday life, but that this game builds a new everyday life in virtual reality with escaping. She describes it this way: “It's a great getaway for people. An escape from reality. There is such a thing as 'to let it all hang out', you watch Survivor or something during the day to get away from stress. The game does the same. And

you are completely free. For example, I have friends who make male sims. She lives the male life; she has lots of girlfriends. If you noticed I used plural by saying ‘friends’ However, I’ve never been a man in the game. I never want to try it.” Referring to her friends’ different self-presentations in the game, Ece says that she does not wonder about being a man in real life. That’s why she says that she doesn’t want to present a self as a man and perform in the play.

Çiğdem says that because daily life is a way of getting what she wants, she has a connection with everyday life: “For example, when you are married to one person, you can immediately divorce them and be with another person, or your sim is very low on energy, tired and cannot wake up early. You can leave the job right that morning, you can find a new job from scratch after you get your sleep. I mean, these kinds of things give me great pleasure because we can’t do them even if we want to in normal life. So, you can actually create your own ideal world in The Sims. You don’t bring the parts that you see missing in your life to the game. I live there as a simulation of the situations that I dream of doing in the future. Yes, it’s a game, but it’s nice to feel the satisfaction of that promotion even if it’s in the game. So, you experience that pleasure. People’s life consists of their work and social environment. We always say, I wish it was like this, not like that. If this is not the case, if you do not put the place you say, it becomes an ideal life. Sims offers you this opportunity.” Then she adds: “For example, I am curious about the next stories, just like in real life. Actually, this is not a game whose script was written and should proceed that way. You control everything but I’m still wondering.”

Efe talks about the advantages of games in everyday life: “I can say that those who have mastered role playing games from an early age can have better problem-solving skills. Because there is usually a task in RPG and how we complete this task is left to us. At this point, RPG actually acts as a kind of puzzle. Of course, being able to adapt RPG games to real life is another positive side. In other words, we can either compare the characters to the people around us, or the spaces to the spaces around us. In other words, positioning the real life in the game, not because it is needed in the games, can bring more pleasure from the game. While creating contacts in The Sims, we can do this by thinking about our close friends, family, etc. In this respect, I think it is directly in the normal life.” With this answer, Efe emphasizes that games like The Sims are directly linked with life because they simulate real life. Efe primarily emphasizes the pleasure and entertainment side of role-playing games.

He then mentions the mission of the games to meet the needs by saying “pleasure and entertainment are also a need in everyday life”.

6.6. A Virtual Platform Where the Need for Socialization is Satisfied

In this chapter, after the participants frequently gave answers related to “needs” and “pleasures” in the previous questions, the pleasure they got while playing the game and their needs met are mentioned.

Zuhal states that she chooses playing the game so that there is nothing to do in this everyday life and then it becomes an addiction. She says that if she had a hobby to spend her leisure time, she would not be addicted to it. She says: “I think we go to these games when we have nothing interesting to do in real life. For example, I met a lot of friends this summer, I went on vacation. If I didn't do these things, I would still play that much. It was more difficult for me to meet my friend in the past summers. My family wouldn't let me go anywhere because I was young. There is no school, I am always at home, I could watch TV the most. I didn't have any hobbies, for example, if I went to a place with sea, I would swim. I was thinking a lot about why I don't have a hobby. I think our education system does not allow us to have hobbies. Our families do not raise us very consciously in this regard, because they have not seen anything, nor have they had any hobbies. If I asked my mother, she provided me with many things that she couldn't get herself. That's why I don't expect them to think that their children should take up a hobby.” Upon these answers, Zuhal concludes that she wants to meet her hobby needs in the game, but she says that this includes temporary feelings, not permanent.

Kaan emphasizes the enjoyment aspect of games and answers as follows: “Did I enjoy playing the game? Yes.” Later, Kaan emphasizes the aspect of games in meeting his own needs and says: “These games improve me a lot by teaching me how to talk and get to know different people. I was a very introverted person. I have circumvented this problem a bit by talking in these online games. There were even people I talked to, both in real and virtual, and became very close to. Thanks to this, I made new friends. So that would be a socializing space

for me. I think this part is useful.” With this answer, Kaan indeed emphasizes the feature of digital games as the new socialization platform.

Ece says that the pleasure she has in this game, where she spends long hours, is temporary because emotions are not included in it. She says: “she (sim) has physical needs, but emotionally, I don't know how the avatar feels, whether she is happy to be under my control. I don't know if I'm empathizing a little too much with the universe out there. What makes the game boring at some point is the lack of emotions anyway. Sims fall in love, but you're already controlling her. It does not promise a permanent feeling. You're just having that day. That moment is enjoyable, but the moment you exit the game, you return to the real world you want to get rid of. Real-world problems instantly spoil you. This must be what drives people to addiction. She runs away so much that she really wants to break up and makes her life a game. These games do not solve anything permanent; they just save the moment.” Ece's answer can be concluded that the game is an escape tool from the realities of everyday life and that's why she plays it.

6.7. Interpretation of the Findings

Each participant gave different answers to the questions asked. All stated that their answers made them realize why they have been playing the game for years and understand the logic of the game better. The following answers were given when they were asked why they play the game; the need for an escape from the real world, the pleasure of practically owning things that cannot be obtained in the real world, the opportunity to present the selves that cannot be presented in everyday life for certain reasons. When talking about sims fictionalized in the game's universe, most of them said that they created sims similar to themselves, but they fixed some of the flaws they saw as well. While some people completely enjoyed constructing themselves and their own life, others said that they constructed an ideal character and an ideal life in their own way. When asked how much time they spent playing the game, they stated that they spent quite a lot of hours during the day. In addition, they tried to explain that the game is related to the concept of leisure in everyday life, expressing that they play The Sims because they have free time and do not have a hobby to do in their leisure. Participants were also asked about the game's impact on everyday life and whether there is a connection with it. They described how they brought most everyday life into the game, but changed the unwanted situations and made them better. Playing a game was an activity spent

hours in everyday life and an activity with family and friends; for this reason, they mentioned about its direct impact on everyday life. Since all everyday life activities can be carried into the game, they said, everyday life affects the game at the same time. Many of the participants used the word “alternative” in their answers. What they mean by it is that it is an alternative life simulation that progresses in parallel with everyday life. It was noticed that some participants initially mentioned *The Sims* as a game; however, their answers showed they saw it as a life simulation.

One of the important emphases that emerged as a result of the answers given is the demand and desire of people to control something. Each user expressed their pleasure in controlling a universe and a character. Some compared it to the traditional media tools and noted that, in the digital games, the beginning and end of the game is under the control of the individual, making them feel freer. As a result of the bond, they established between control and freedom. It was concluded that the more a person can control an event or phenomenon, the freer he/she is. It can be said that this point of view is one of the reasons for the recent tendency towards such games rather than the traditional communication tools such as books and movies. People say they enjoy controlling both their own and others’ lives. However, as one user noted, while people think that they build a life from scratching and controlling every step of the game, this game actually has a creator and the player determines the boundaries in the game. Although people think they are freer, this is just pretending to be free, as Baudrillard said.

As a result of the answers received from the interviews, it can be said that *The Sims* is compatible with the concept of appropriation. In İnce’s doctoral thesis (2014), he refers to the work of Lupton (1998) and talks about people's demand to personalize the objects around them. According to the concept of “ownization,” which Lupton also uses, a commodity that exists in everyday life is transformed and made subjective by the person who starts using it. Thus, a bond is established between this commodity and the person, and the personalized commodity ceases to be a product and becomes a part of the person's daily life. This object undergoes a transformation and is loaded with emotion (2014:91). In these works, the concept is exemplified through objects purchased, a piece of art given as a gift, or a piece of furniture used at home. In recent times, we frequently see the concept of “self-owning” in digital games included in daily life. The character types and other game objects in the games were observed as a result of the interviews that the people constructed over their own daily lives, dreams and

desires. It was observed that all of the participants conveyed their own feelings and thoughts while describing the avatars they created in the game and the environment of these avatars. All objects in the game are subjective and have the characteristics of the player.

To give an example, the two participants' statements can be given as each said "I did not like being a thief/murderer in the game," showing the strong bond that these people identify with and establish with the characters in the game. Another example is that a relative of the participants wearing headscarf uses their avatar in a hat throughout the game. Just like the others, this player has given a meaning to the game and his character there. From this point of view, the habit of playing The Sims can be explained through the concept of owning.

Another issue emphasized by all participants in the results was the speed factor. All participants talked about the enjoyment of the fact that their daily life practices are quite fast in the games. For example, the duration of hair growth after a haircut, the duration of pregnancy, the duration of being promoted at a workplace, the duration of owning a dream house or other object were among the subjects that emerged in the findings. People want to reach their dreams quickly without making any effort. They said that they had the opportunity to quickly experience situations that take a long time to return, such as the same haircut or plastic surgery. We can explain this with the following example: An individual who wants to have a slim body by losing weight can achieve the body he/she wants as a result of months of effort together with sports and diet. However, in The Sims and similar others, this period does not last longer than a few days. The answers focused on the desire for speed obtained from the interviews concluded that all participants want to make their daily life routines fast. The transformation of communication is an important factor here. In other words, the character and time limitations existing in new media tools are also reflected in people's daily lives; while affecting learning practices, it also created the need to live in a flow as fast as possible. The term "global village" is used by McLuhan (1967) to describe this period in which technology and information spread rapidly all over the world and people use information rapidly.

It can be easily adapted to the new media tools. As McLuhan mentioned years ago, the prediction that the change in communication tools will also reshape the needs and expectations of the society is valid today. In this age where everyone both produces and consumes information with new media tools and the perception of time and space has been

transformed, rapid information flow is a part of daily life. In daily life, where countless information flows rapidly, the person falls into the desire of “being faster” as time passes. The information as a result of the interviews is interpreted in this way.

CONCLUSION

It has been determined that The Sims, played by all participants during their leisure time, is in a mutual connection with daily life. The life built in the virtual universe thanks to new media tools and the changing forms of daily life are mentioned.

First of all, the actions, feelings, thoughts and the daily life concept, - an area where people are in contact with other people, - are explained in detail. With the spread of digital technologies and the internet, the changes in daily life forms and the individual perception of reality in daily life, the person’s feelings and thoughts, dreams and ideals, ideologies and reshaping of identities are explained.

Later, the concept of the virtual world, which was established to reflect the real world or a kind of fantasy world as a result of the internet’s penetration into every home, was detailed with a viewpoint as a world simulation that has a similar appearance to the real world, but is not static. In another word, it can respond to the demands of the user. Based on the definitions of the “synthetic world” or the “alternative world” used by different thinkers for virtual worlds, daily life forms and self-presentations in the virtual world are included. Here, new media tools are explained in detail and it is explained that people lead a “as if” life in virtual worlds and social media platforms through Baudrillard’s concept of “as if.” In addition, the concept of Metaverse, a future foresight, which is seen as the highest level of these technologies, is also mentioned in terms of establishing integrity.

The concept of game, which is another important subject of the study, has been examined with a historical process from the past to the present, and digital games have been approached as a communication tool. Under this title, digital games are mentioned as

everyday life forms in the virtual world, just like in social media, and the impact of digital games that have developed over time on daily life is presented.

The Sims, as the sample in the last section, is explained as an alternative life fictionalized in daily life as a combination of all these concepts explained above. It is mentioned that the game, which is a daily life simulation, is a virtual version of the physical world used as a means of entertainment, communication, socialization and information. For this reason, by using the in-depth interview method, the interviews were made with 8 people who have been playing this game for many years, and it has been explained in detail with various theories that this game, which the participants play in their spare time, is in a mutual connection with daily life. It has been concluded that simulation games such as The Sims are alternative lives established in everyday life. In the first three sections of the study, the concepts and theories related to the subject are included, while in the last section, what these theories mean in practice is revealed. It is possible to concretize the findings obtained at the end of the interviews by connecting them with theoretical knowledge. In the findings, it has been seen that the gamers construct a virtual life through their desires or dreams with simulation games in daily life.

The participants said that they have never thought the meaning of moves in this game. After these questions they expressed to notice that all these moves were made the result of their own wish, dream, curiosity and needed. On the other hand, they said that most of the participants took refuge in these games with the desire to get away from real life, to escape from stress, and because the life in the game is under their control, they progress according to their own wishes and they build a better life. In this respect, in connection with the Uses and Gratifications theory, it can be said that individuals use this game to meet certain needs and seek certain satisfactions. We have concluded that the most basic satisfaction here is the pleasure of all participants in controlling the whole game they repeat. Therefore, it can be said people suppose that they have a control on The Sims.

The participant states that he has overcome his game social phobia and socialized through the game by meeting new people. This is appropriate for interpreting digital games as a means of communication. It is associated with the concept of the global village, which he put forward on the fact that people in different locations can easily communicate with each

other and take place in a common environment at the same time. It has also shown that new media platforms are a new socializing space.

Most of the participants say that they take shelter in these games with the desire to get away from real life and to escape from stress. They said that they built a better life because the life in the game is under their control. In this respect, it is seen that the game is related to the uses and gratifications theory. It means that individuals use communication tools to meet certain needs and seek certain satisfactions. After the satisfactions are provided, the person experiences peace and happiness. People often expressed their pleasure when they got what they wanted.

All of the participants are of the same opinion that while describing the Sims universes they created, they “really have a life they want to live in.” A house with a pool, a job with a high status and income, having a relationship with a handsome/beautiful opposite sex were repeated by the participants. Three of the participants stated that they enjoy watching television programs such as Survivor, Big Brother and The Office in their daily lives. They said that they reproduced these programs they watched during the day in a simulation game. The reason for this is that the participants enjoy re-editing their favorite characters and programs on television with their own stories.

They stated that some of the participants corrected the places they found faulty while making avatars similar to themselves while the others said that they continued their profession but were promoted. We can explain that the digital games give people the chance to re-live the physical world we live in by removing the places they don't like in their lives. For all these reasons, it's safe to state that such games appear as an alternative life in daily life.

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