FANS BY PROXY: CROSS-CULTURAL MEDIA FANDOM IN TURKEY

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
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ABSTRACT

Fans by Proxy: Cross-Cultural Media Fandom in Turkey

A “fan” can be anyone, from a regular viewer of a TV show, to a fan fiction writer, a collector, or an obsessive consumer. “Fandom”, therefore, is a community of these myriad of fans with their myriad of ways to interact with the text and each other. This study investigates the cross-cultural media fandom in Turkey and how -within a global context- Turkish media fans interact with the global media products in a different cultural, social and linguistic spheres. To investigate this community, this study relies on semi-structured interviews conducted with cross-cultural media fans in Turkey, who are urban middle-class young adults. The findings of the interviews are analyzed in five main topics: the fans share a specific kind of aesthetic attachment to the object of their fandom, they practice code-switching, they form a community by a sense of belonging and digital socialization processes, they show resistance toward the mass consumerism and Turkish popular culture, and they reject fandoms in their vernacular culture. All these practices render this group of people a community of practice, and these practices and dispositions are investigated within the light of the findings of the interviews.

ÖZET

Vekaleten Hayran: Türkiye'de Kültürlerarası Medya Hayranlığı

Hayran (*Fan*), bir televizyon programının düzenli bir takipçisinden, hayran kurgusu yazarına, bir koleksiyoncudan, takıntılı bir tüketiciye kadar herhangi biri olabilir. *Fandom* ise, metin ve birbirleri ile etkileşimde bulunmak için çok sayıda farklı yol deneyen, çok sayıda hayranın oluşturduğu bir topluluktur. Bu çalışma Türkiye'deki kültürlerarası medya hayranlığını araştırmakta ve küresel bağlamda Türk medya hayranlarının, farklı bir kültürel, sosyal ve dilbilimsel alan içerisinde küresel medya ürünleriyle kurdukları etkileşimi incelemektedir. Bu çalışmada, söz konusu topluluğu incelemek üzere, şehirli, orta sınıf, genç yetişkinler olan kültürlerarası medya hayranlarıyla yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Görüşmelerden alınan bilgiler, beş ana konu başlığı altında analiz edilmiştir: hayranların hayranlık objelerine karşı duydukları özellikli bir estetik bağlılık, düzenek değiştirme pratikleri, aidiyet duygusu ve dijital sosyalleşme süreçleriyle oluşturdukları topluluklar, kitle tüketim alışkanlıklarına ve Türk popüler kültürüne karşı gösterdikleri direnç ve yerel kültürlerini reddedişleri bu beş konuyu oluşturmaktadır. Tüm bu pratikler, söz konusu hayran topluluğunu bir uygulayıcı topluluk haline getirmektedir ve bu pratik ve davranış biçemleri, görüşmelerden sağlanan bilgiler ışığında incelenmektedir.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

"What really knocks me out is a book that, when you're all done reading it,
you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours
and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it.
That doesn't happen much, though."
- J. D. Salinger

To understand the transformation of viewing media texts, first we need to look at the transformation of the technology as a communicative tool in the recent years. 'Y2K bug', which was a widespread yet unfounded panic about the clash between digital and non-digital documentation of the year 2000 could be read as an uneasiness at the face of an unknowable future waiting for the humanity. During the early years of the twenty-first century, the fledgling internet has become more and more widespread and it found its way into the private spheres and living spaces of mankind. First, e-mail, then instant messaging, message boards, and most recently social media brought novel ways to communicate, share, like and appreciate content as if it was never done or possible before. Traditional media's discovery and appropriation of the social media changed the media consumption considerably. Media consumers –not fans- started to share what they watch, and get into conversations and discussions. Early 2000s may have seen a rise of the message boards or 'forums', but it was a relatively slower process of communication than the newer social media tools, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. In this regard, 'audience' ceased to be the 'spectator', and the audience, easily accessible by the social media and with its large marketing value, became the focal point for every

marketing campaign, be it a self-promotion of a celebrity, or a publicity for a movie franchise.

Fans however, had already ceased to be 'spectators' and had been 'participators' for quite some time when the 'social media boom' occurred in the end of the first decade of 2000s. Up until then, fan practices tended to be more corporal in the sense that fans used to meet and convene. Conventions were the primary occasions where fans got together to share their love for a text, which was clearly a part of their private sphere, with others in a public sphere. Comic and graphic novel fans gathered at annual Comic-Cons, and before the producers of such media ever discovered fan's marketing value, fans were organizing their own gatherings to share the affection they felt for their object of fandom. Because of the aforementioned social media and the widespread internet in general, the forms and meanings of fan practices have changed and fandom gained a new outlook. In the same vein with this newfound traction of fans and fandoms, Matt Hills (2002) defines a fan as not only a person who is obsessed with a celebrity or a product of popular culture (a TV Show, a film and so on), but also a person who can make meaningful contribution to the object of their fandom (p. ix). Fandom is, on the other hand is about performing as a fan, "a way of identifying oneself on a deep level as being a fan and enacting that role" (Duffett, 2013, p. 293). However the performance of a fan differs with the affect several considerations, such as language and culture. There are different practices that the fans partake in, considering a fan who lives within the same culture as an object of fandom, and a fan who consumes the object of fandom from a different cultural and linguistic setting. The second group of fans, or 'cross-cultural' media fans receive texts behind a firewall of language and culture. Thus, there is a

difference within their access, reception, appropriation of and proximity to the text. This study focuses on the cross-cultural media fans in Turkey, whose shared practices as fans differ from their counterparts who are part of the culture of the original media product.

Even though they were not labeled as such, Turkish popular culture witnessed the rise of fans and fandoms during 60s, the period dubbed as the golden era of Yeşilçam. Without the internet to communicate within the fandom, or without Twitter to instantly get in touch with the celebrity or star, audiences wrote letters to cinema magazines to communicate with their object of fandom. Kaya (2002) provides an in depth analysis of this early practice of fandom in Turkey which may be the closest to the fandoms observed in Turkey and the world in general today. Kaya examines more than 200 fan letters written to the magazines like *Sinema* and *Perde* in the 60s. While some of the letters contain criticisms, idea pitches or efforts to get in the studio circles, most of the letters were requests for autographs. For example, one letter published in 1961 in *Sinema* magazine, tells us that the every room of the fan's house is decorated with the photographs of Belgin Doruk, but she would like the "most valuable one of all", her signed portrait (Kaya, 2002, p. 190). Another fan in another letter (in *Perde 16,* 1967) writes that she and her seven friends prepared a scrapbook of Hülya Koçyiğit's photographs, and it would be an honor to have a photograph signed with her own hands (Kaya, 2002, p. 190). The practices of scrapbooking and the desire to have an autograph are all antecedents of today's merchandise culture seen in fan cultures. Scrapbooking is not the only predecessor of contemporary fandoms seen in Turkey during the 60s and 70s. Ayfer Tunç's (2001) part memoir, part literary work, *Bir Maniniz Yoksa Annemler*

Size Gelecek[1] illustrates that during the early years of television in Turkey (1970s), television widely affected the entertainment habits and global perceptions of the society and audiences. For example, mostly the American TV shows have garnered a different sort of viewing habit; it was not only the whole family coming together to watch, but the neighbors were also visiting each other to view the TV shows like *Columbo*, *Little House on the Prairie* and *The Fugitive* (Tunç, 2001, p. 87).

Among other Turkish cultural practices, there are studies that focus on the arabesque music and the culture closely related to this type of music. As the migrations from villages to urban areas which have started after the Second World War increased during the late 1970s, *arabesque culture* has begun to proliferate with the rise of *arabesque music* (Belge, 2002, p. 846). According to Kongar (2002), arabesque culture is the result of the displacement of communities who left their feudal identities and traditional values in their villages and who were having troubles to comply with the urban way of life, therefore creating a unique system of values, specific for their communities (p. 592). These unique ways of living and values bear resistive elements to both their feudal and rural roots which was inadequate to sustain their lives, and also the urban lifestyle which did not welcome them when they arrived. This doubly displaced perspective shaped the arabesque culture. All through the 80s, arabesque culture has taken root, and it added itself to the fandoms with names like Müslüm Gürses, Orhan Gencebay and İbrahim Tatlıses. These arabesque musicians all had and still have cult

[1] The title can loosely be translated as "My Parents Would Like to Visit You, If You are Available", but the title is actually reminiscing the practice of sending the child of a household to a neighbor's house to announce that they want to visit.

following, and because of the aforementioned displacement of the formerly feudal identities, arabesque became a subcultural practice, shunned by the Turkish intelligentsia as an unsuccessfully suppressed oriental identity in a Western country up until the early 90s when the arabesque culture was appropriated by the mainstream culture (Stokes, 2010). For example, Müslüm Gürses fans are seen as a pathological group of people who need serious mental treatment because they cut and bleed themselves with razors (Arsan, Çubukçu & Duran, 2007), and the intellectual communities deemed arabesque culture to be interconnected with violence during the 80s. During the late 90s and the first decade of 2000s, the perception of Müslüm Gürses has changed within the intelligentsia. He recorded songs with rock musician Teoman, covered internationally popular rock and folk songs,[2] and was accepted into the cultural sphere where the elite resides. While the state sponsored media never acknowledged these arabesque stars until the early 90s, İbrahim Tatlıses became almost like a leading figure for the Kurdish movement, singing Kurdish songs with Şivan Perwer, who fled Turkey in 1976 because of the political overtones of his music, and returned in 2013 at a state sponsored event in Diyarbakır. These cases and many others illustrates that during the first decade of the 2000s and early 2010s, arabesque culture became appropriated and accepted into the mainstream culture. Arabesque fandom was and still is one the most visible fandoms in Turkey, but arabesque music fans are not solely seen as pathological and violent cases

[2] In his 2006 cover album, *Aşk Tesadüfleri Sever*, Gürses worked with poet Murathan Mungan The covered musicians include Bob Dylan, David Bowie, Leonard Cohen, Rainbow, Garbage and Björk.

who bleed themselves anymore. Arabesque has fans from all walks of life, and that is mostly to do with its commercialization and appropriation by the mainstream culture.

When we look at the literature, we observe that the studies (see Büyüm, 2010 and Yegin, 2006) about Turkish fandoms lack works that would enable and encourage further studies in the area. For over 20 years, fan studies has become an acknowledged field within cultural studies and media studies. However, the studies in the Turkish context comprise mostly of football fandom (Irak, 2010), and the ones about media are conducted as audience research (Kaya-Mutlu, 2002). None of them deals with the cross-cultural and supranational elements regarding the media audiences.

1.1 Purpose of the study

The pervasive availability of Western culture has inevitably led to an overhaul of the concept of popular culture. The consumerist expansion during the 80s in Turkey gave way to the media expansion during the 90s and the first decade of 2000s. The expansion of media coincided with the formative years of the "Millennial generation", to use the term William Strauss and Neil Howe coined (1992). The millennials, who are globally connected and conspicuous in their consumption, may include a larger number of people of different classes and backgrounds in regard to the Western culture. However with the geographic, economic, linguistic and cultural differences, in Turkey, they coincide with urban middle class young adults, who are deeply impacted by these new consumerist and commercial cultural practices.

There are several purposes for conducting this study on fandom. First of all, there is a need to open up a discussion about cross-cultural fans by identifying their common characteristics and the fan practices. Finally, an inclusive analysis and discussion are needed to ground the theories. It must be investigated how fan practices operate within global fan formations and how fans define themselves and form their identity. In an attempt to answer these questions, my first aim in this thesis is to illuminate and formulate a discussion by defining who the cross-cultural fans are in Turkey. In connection to that, my second aim is to find out whether there are different types of fandom and if so, what the constitutive elements of such differences are.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

As it has been stated before, the purpose of this study is to provide a meaningful discussion about socially, culturally and economically relevant cross-cultural media fans in Turkey by investigating the key elements that render them a community of practice. For that purpose, some background information has been given in the introductory chapter, as well as an overview of Turkish fandoms. Chapter 2 presents a survey of the literature of fandom and fan studies in regard to the concepts of fandom, fan practices and identities, popular culture and cultural capital, transnational and global fan studies. Chapter 2 also investigates the studies of fandom in Turkey. Chapter 3 offers a theoretical framework through the seminal works of Michel de Certeau, John Fiske, Pierre Bourdieu and Henry Jenkins to position the research. Chapter 4 outlines the methodological framework used in this study. Chapter 5, through the excerpts from the interviews, offers a detailed analysis of and discussion around the above mentioned

practices. Finally, Chapter 6 provides the conclusion, the limitations of the study, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, the literature on fan studies will be reviewed with two considerations: first, most works on fandom are done by Anglo-American scholars, who mostly deal with local (for example, American) fans of local (American) media and second, since this thesis will be among the first to delve into the Turkish media fandoms, the previous studies on fandom conducted in Turkey need to be discussed. Therefore, in this review of the literature, the studies on fandom which deals with localities, internationality, global fandoms, intercultural and cross-cultural media fans will be examined.

Studies of fans and fandoms have been first developed in the Anglo-American academic sphere and the definitions and theories produced by this work has been outlined in the previous sections. The notion of fandoms in contexts that are not primarily Anglo-American and subsequent studies came only later, emphasizing the nature and practices of being a fan in different parts of the world. Such studies are of utmost significance since they prove that fandom may be as much about geography, race, ethnicity, religion and national culture as it is about class, gender and taste. This is part of the "third wave" of the fan studies, as has been coined by Gray, Sandvoss and Harrington (2007). The first wave had focused on fans as "others", as the society had labeled them, and fandoms as "sites of power struggle" (p. 2) while the second wave was preoccupied with the idea that rather than sites of power struggle and emancipation, fandoms were representative of the societies as they are, including the social inequalities inherent in them, following the ideas of Bourdieu (p. 6). The third wave, along with the

other departures it took from the previous two waves, focused not on the tightly knit groups as its precedents had, but on the much more loose and much larger communities which the advent of the internet has enabled (p. 7). Furthermore, it was with the third wave that the global aspect of fandom has been recognized (p. 9), a development that is no doubt a direct outcome of the advent of the internet. This thesis, then, belongs to such a third wave, as its participants have become fans in most part due to the internet. Being from Turkey, convening in the pre-internet age with people of the same interests would have been possible, yet might not have had such a strong impact, as one of the participants even states in his interview (see Excerpt 19 in Chapter 5.4).

Here, I will identify two types of research: the first type are the studies which deal with local fandoms of local media products and the second type are the accounts of local fandoms of international media products. With regards to the first type, an important study has been conducted by Harrington & Bielby (2007). Entitled "Global Fandom/Global Fan Studies", the work is concerned with how fandom is studied worldwide by interviewing scholars of fan studies around the world. A piece of analysis they have made, driven by their findings, has been that the non-Anglo-American/non-English fandoms have been platforms of the power struggles, fueled by social and economic inequalities (Harrington & Bielby, 2007, p. 180). Interestingly, this is to say that the subjects of power and inequality which had been focal to the first two waves of fan studies are now focal to global fan studies, which only became a widely researched field with the third wave. Another important point raised in this article regards what fandom and global fandom even mean. Under the discussion of global methodologies, the interviewees are cited to state that there can be no singular understanding of fandom

as “cultural contexts” (as well as, needless to say, national, religious and class-oriented contexts) are significant factors in the characterization of different fandoms (p. 192). Hence, these interviewees perceive fandom too broad a term to represent only one type of community with the same type of characteristics. Maybe this has been the challenge that the studies of local and global fandoms have brought forward: there is much more beyond the typical understanding of being a fan, and fans around the world are evidence to that, including the participants of this study.

Another study further supports the idea that there is more to fan studies than Western notions of it. In her article “Beyond Kung-Fu and Violence: Locating East Asian Cinema Fandom”, Bertha Chin (2007) questions whether “fan cultural theory is transferable between cultures when the object of fandom is produced in a different cultural and national context” (p. 211). After outlining the differences in the traits of East Asian and Western fandoms of East Asian cinema, Chin cites a number of Western fans on the reasons of their fandom (p. 216). The author then reaches a conclusion:

> Their participation in the fandom and their interest in East Asian cinema create a feeling that they are more ‘elite’ … than other fans or casual audiences. In a sense, these fans possess popular cultural capital that puts them in the forefront of an ongoing trend that is popularizing East Asian cinema in the West, even if these films are considered part of the mainstream in the East Asian region. (p. 217)

This study falls into the second type mentioned above, that is, it regards a fandom in which the cultural product and its fans are from different cultural and geographic regions. That the fans are feeling more elite than casual audiences and that their objects of fandom are considered to be niche products of culture while they may be of

mainstream culture in their countries of origin are two outcomes which have been similarly evoked in this thesis, as will be seen in later chapters.

As it is stated, fan studies started to delve more and more into the cross-cultural media fandoms globally. While the fan studies scholarship from Anglo-American sphere tend to look into the local fandoms of local media products, scholars from the rest of the world (particularly East Asia) tend to look into the local fandoms of global media products. This evokes an important question that has a much larger implication: what of global fandoms of global media products? The digitalized world and the advent of internet makes this question increasingly more relevant for the fan studies. Bertha Chin and Lori Hitchcock Morimoto's article, "Towards a Study of Transcultural Fandom" offers a useful discussion on the global media fandom. Chin and Morimoto (2013) propose an alternative framework to explain how fandoms can cross borders, and they argue that transnational fandom cannot fully explain the workings of becoming a fan, for fandom is more about affinity between the fan and the cross-cultural fan object, than a similarity (or difference) of nationality (or culture) (p. 93). Therefore, the authors successfully place the reasoning of cross-cultural fandom in a more individual endeavor, rather than a nationally predicated practice. Becoming a fan because of an individual affinity or affect could be a more contingent precursor for community forming, but the other explanation (that cross-cultural fandom is a result of national and transnational media strategies) offers a much more premeditated, engineered fandom.

The role of affinity on fandom can also be seen in Brian Larkin's (2008) study, which takes the focus away from Anglo-American sphere, both in regard to media and the fandom. A chapter is devoted to the Nigerian fans of Indian films in his intriguing

book, *Signal and Noise: Media, Infrastructure, and Urban Culture in Nigeria*. Within his comprehensive ethnographic study about the Hausa people who live in northern Nigeria, he observes that Muslim Hausa people liked Indian films, because unlike American films, Indian films had traditional values in them, where women were more demure in their sexuality (p. 196). His book is also significant for his conclusions are gathered not only with a review of literature and textual analysis. He conducted an over-encompassing ethnographic study, and the Nigerian fandom of Indian cinema is produced among many others which are not related to fan studies. The most interesting argument here regards the Nigerian people who liked Indian films because even though they did not know the Hindu religion, they saw the tradition there and that is what makes them fans of the Indian cinema, as opposed to the dangers of Westernization seen in American films (in Hausa people's context, for example, liberation of female sexuality is a danger) (p. 198). The significance of this study is that it illustrates the role of fandom or affinity in multiple contexts.

There is a handful of studies done in Turkey about fandom. While some of these deal with mostly football fandoms, the two studies, which have been done on media fandoms, disregard Turkish fans or fandoms and take their subject matters strictly in the respective national context (Japan and the US). Bestem Büyüm (2010) deals with Japanese anime and manga genres and their status of global products. According to Büyüm, the fans and the fandom of these products transformed with the advent of the internet. While it cannot be argued against that internet had a transformative effect on all of the fandoms worldwide, Büyüm limits her global context with the anime and manga fans in the US. Susan J. Napier (2000) argues that the fact that anime is Japanese media

product, above all else, signifies a deviance from the mainstream; it is first and foremost, something “different” than the American culture (p. 242). Anime has a very large viewership in Turkey just as manga has a very avid readership, and culturally, it is also very different than Turkey. Therefore, it would be very interesting to see a fan study regarding anime fandom in Turkey. Judging by my preliminary field work, there is a large fandom of anime and manga, even bigger than most other Anglo-American cultural products.

The only other work that I have encountered on participatory fandom conducted in Turkey is by Afşar Yegin (2006). In his thesis, he investigates the relationship between the narrative structure of the TV shows, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Angel* and *Veronica Mars*, and fandom. He looks at the space that a fan occupies while watching serialized media on TV. He argues that this space is a fictional universe, and the recreational fan practices are done in this space. While being an interesting and thought-evoking approach to a fan’s relationship with the text, the Turkish context is disregarded here again. Even in the interviews I have conducted, I encountered participants who are fans of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Veronica Mars*. Turkey, in a way, teems with fans of cross-cultural texts with very interesting narratives themselves, and all we have to do is to reach them when studying fandom.

Dağhan Irak (2010) does not look into participatory fandoms, but gives a very comprehensive account of Turkish football fandom. Irak defines football fans in Turkey as actors of social history, and the thesis explores the fan reactions to socio-political events from 1970 on. He gives a chronological account of Turkish social and cultural (and also sports) history, and football fandom through the years is positioned as an

important actor which has changed and transformed as a community through the years. Irak's study deals with both football fandoms abroad and in Turkey, however since football fandom are mostly local and do not have the tendency to cross borders within their fandom, Irak's work is valuable for football fan studies, but not necessarily for the media fandom scholarship.

The final and one of the most interesting studies belongs to Dilek Kaya (2002), which focuses on the audience reception of Yeşilçam. She uses the fan letters written to and published in *Sinema* and *Perde* cinema journals during the 1960s. She analyzes these letters to determine the reception of golden age of Yeşilçam. It is a very interesting topic because it deals with local fans of a local media product (or an 'event' to use her term). However, it is an example of audience research, and apart from a brief section, the study does not focus on the audience (or the fans), but their reception of Yeşilçam.

In this chapter, firstly, a number of works about cross-cultural fandom, internationality, cross-cultural affinity, and secondly, the fandom studies done in Turkey have been reviewed. One could argue that fan studies in Turkey is not just fledgling compared to Anglosphere, but also lacks a very important element: contextualizing its own culture. In this thesis where I try to explore a community in Turkey who are cross-cultural fans, I aim to open a path to this interesting phenomena to be discussed further.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A good number of the media viewers are fans, and if not, they probably know a fan, even though they may not always use the term in the same sense. With the proliferation of digital media outlets, fans consume, recreate and convene more easily than ever before. Before being a valid subject of inquiry, fandom is part of entertainment. "Fandom matters, because it matters to those who are fans" (Gray, Sandvoss & Harrington, 2007, p. 1), but it also matters because we are experiencing an era of digitized entertainment, and it would be safe to predict that as the audiences turn to fans, they will have more to say about the object of their fandom and they will have (or will be given) the chance to change the face of media.

3.1 Definitions of fan and fandom

There are many definitions of audience, and most of them deal with how these groups of people receive a text. Audience is a group of spectators and listeners often seen as a passive group of people, who are imagined as a predictable uniform group. However, audiences are anything but passive and predictable. In Stuart Hall's (1999) encoding/decoding model, the audience is active, and they interpret the disseminated message individually (p. 508). Social contexts play a large role on the agency of audience, and this agency bears the possibility of a collective action. Within the possibilities, the notion of audience cannot refer to one single type of formation of consumers of media. There are those who read/view texts on an irregular basis and/or as

leisure activity, as well as those who are more avid consumers, who have favorites and opinions and who pay regular attention. Fans can be found at the far end of this order in that they are known to be the audience group who are most passionate about the text, and they engage themselves with the text and even contribute to its production/reproduction.

Different definitions of the term "fan" are offered by various scholars. Hills (2002) defines a fan as "somebody who is *obsessed* with a particular star, celebrity, film, TV show, band; somebody who can produce reams of information on their object of fandom" (p. viii). Lewis (1992) claims that fans are "the ones who record their soap operas on VCRs to watch after the work day is over, the ones who tell you every detail about a movie star's life and work, the ones who sit in line for hours for front row tickets to rock concerts" (p. 1). Both of these definitions emphasize the excess that can be found in fandom. Joli Jenson (1992) also notes that literature on fandom focuses heavily on the notion of fans as obsessed deviants (p. 9). What is excessive here is not barely the act of producing lots of information about their object of fandom, or recording a favorite program in order not to miss it; it is the fashion with which one approaches a text (or a person or a group of people, such as a team or rock band). For the fan, there is always a more excessive way of expressing love and admiration (and criticism) for that particular object of fandom. In Japan, the obsessive media consumers (primarily manga and anime fans) are called 'otaku', and it denotes that these consumers have become disconnected from their surroundings (Duffett, 2013, p. 283). Even though this implicates that some fandoms are regarded as unhealthy obsessions (as in the case of 'otaku'), the perception about fans is changing. As the digital media proliferate and the global media companies

market their products to more and more niche groups, the mere audiences will be included in some of the fandoms of the text they are reading, if for nothing else, for the bombardment of information and circumstantial texts that the audience members encounter on the internet.

3.2 Poaching and textual poaching

The extent of the contribution by fans should be differentiated between the contribution of audiences or their lack thereof. John Fiske (1989a) states that a text becomes active only when it is received and interacted upon. In other words, texts by themselves as they have been created and produced become meaningful only when readers actively make meaning out of them. Perhaps, what distinguishes a fan from an ordinary user/follower/audience member/admirer is the potential to contribute to the text by activating a personalized meaning and transmitting it to the potential fellow participators, and thus creating a communalized reading of the text. This is also a two-sided process. As fans activate the text by reproducing it, the text also activates them, and the driving force here is the pleasure derived from it. This is not to say that audiences who are not fans are not involved in an active meaning-making process – following Fiske, even the most indifferent watchers of a series on TV would interpret something and anything out of that text. The contribution by the fans, though, can be summarized in a single word as “appropriation”. Michel de Certeau (1984), informs us of the struggle between the readers and writers to have the final say on the meaning of the text with this poetic explanation of his concept, “poaching”:

> "Far from being writers... readers are travelers; they move across lands belonging to someone else, like nomads poaching their way across fields they did not write, despoiling the wealth of Egypt to enjoy it themselves". (p. 174)

Jenkins (1992), drawing from de Certeau's model, proposes that fans act as "textual poachers" who personalize or own the texts in their own manners (p. 23-24). While poaching, fans transgress the borders between owner/creator and consumer, and as a result, are able to save much-loved programs from being cancelled by petitioning (*Star Trek*), to extend their legacy with their admiration if they are cancelled, by convening and discussing the program (*Firefly*), to crowd-fund[3] the production (as in the TV show's new feature film, *Veronica Mars*), and to reproduce/rewrite the text as they please through fan fiction, and fan art, music, video production (Jenkins, 1992, p. 159).

Michel de Certeau offers a clandestine mode of resistance; the practice of *la perruque*, meaning literally a wig. Figuratively, it is utilizing scraps of material and time from the established mode of production. It is stealing time and resources from the dominant culture which are generally reserved for the capitalist productivity, and reallocating these resources into one's own projects, hobbies, leisure; anything that is not promoted or condoned by the dominant discourse. *La perruque* is indeed a makeshift attempt to create something artistic, something only valued by the individual or a group of like-minded individuals. "Poaching" is in fact practicing *la perruque* on a text, using what the text offers, but reutilizing these offerings into their own circumstantial material. Henry Jenkins led the way to utilize de Certeau's notion of poaching and turned it into

[3] Crowd-funding: The practice of funding a project or venture by raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people, typically via the Internet. http://www.oxforddictionaries.com

"textual poaching" which stands as a solid basis for fan practice analysis. Here, a fan forms a commitment to a text and reads it actively, and the privileged space of the producer is now a shared domain of the reader/fan (Jenkins, 1992, p. 24).

The most overt practice of poaching may be writing fan fiction. Fan fiction is one of the widely exercised ways for fandoms to express admiration/criticism for, to participate in and to reproduce the text. Camille Bacon-Smith (1992) notes that as long as science fiction has existed, so has fan fiction. Before the internet, the main medium to publish and access fan fiction was fanzines, which were not always professional publications, but could as well be only fan-produced and distributed. New technologies have helped fan fiction, even more so than the fandoms themselves, to be produced in large amounts by an abundance of authors and on a variety of platforms. This shift in media has had the same effect on fan fictions as it had on fandom: Once underground and subversive, fan fiction has become both a space for fans to participate and share freely, and a mass produced and exercised hobby since for most fandoms, there are fewer original stories than fan-generated ones.

Jenkins (1992) classifies ten styles of fan fiction (recontextualization; expanding the series' timeline; refocalization; moral realignment; genre shifting; crossovers; character dislocation; personalization; emotional intensification; eroticization) and states that in all styles, the aim is to "rewrite" the text, even to "repair" it and to "develop interests not sufficiently explored" (p. 165). The idea of repairing indicates a feeling of pride and self-confidence on the part of the fans who feel that their knowledge of and involvement of the text can make them equivalents to producers, if not more privileged. Even if the fan fiction written with this aim in mind does not contain resistance to the

text itself, the action here is a resistance to those who create the original text. Developing interests not explored, on the other hand, signals a more modest act than the act of "repairing" the text, in which fans wish to produce texts that, even if lacking in power, would give such fans more pleasure.

Being the most vocal and also the most apparent form of resistance to mass culture within fan practices and the easiest to spot within the process of textual poaching, a short introduction to some basic terminology and concepts about fan fiction is needed. "Slash" fiction takes its name from the sign "/", referring to a pairing between two characters. Slash often connotes to a gay pairing rather than heterosexual. Sullivan (2013) explains that slash fiction features or is built around imagined relationships of romantic and (usually) sexual nature which would fall outside and pose a challenge to the heteronormative frame (p. 204), such as the gay relationships between Captain Kirk and Mr. Spock in *Star Trek*, and between Buffy and Willow in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (which would be called "femslash"). Fan fiction stories do not have to be in the same genre as the work they make reference to; genres can be bent or mixed, or a specific subgenre of the original text can be highlighted in fan fiction (such as writing "romance" stories for the *Harry Potter* books, in which romance takes less place than adventure and fantasy). Another common practice is "AU", an abbreviation for "Alternative Universe", in which the narrative might be taken to a completely different era and place. "Crossover" fiction combines characters and/or narrative elements from two or more different texts which could be of the same "universe" (such as bringing together narratives from different works by the director and producer Joss Whedon, like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Firefly*, *Angel*, and so on), as well as very unlikely to have been

combined otherwise. “OC” refers to the inclusion of an original character to the story by the fan fiction writer. Stories are rated according to the amount of sexuality, violence and explicit language. Fan fiction rated “M” (short for “Mature”), for example, refers to a story which may have one or all of the features mentioned above.

These terms and characteristics are well known within the fan fiction communities. Fan fiction writers use such descriptors to classify their stories and readers, who show their appreciation and criticism by adding a story in their favorites, following its progress or leaving comments on it and who find stories to their liking by applying filters and choose characters which they would like to be included in the story.

3.3 Tactics and everyday resistance

The power relations within media production/consumption cycle is unpredictable: the ever changing audiences are also altering the ways they interact with the text. The agency of audiences does not only affect the marketing strategies of media products and producers, but it also distorts the message of disseminated text multiple times via the help of the collective identity of fans: another feature that sets a fandom apart from an audience. Fan is an actively socializing being and fans act as an exponential force, becoming more influential as they move from being singular fans to becoming a fandom.

Opposing the previous theories on popular culture which tended to view popular culture as a top-down force on weak masses or as medium of entertainment, like Theodor Adorno’s (1991) view of the audiences as secondary to the culture industry,

even as an "appendage of the machinery" (p. 99), Fiske states that popular culture is a platform for resistance (1987, 1989a, 1989b) for the subordinate groups in the society. Fiske further claims that all codes of reading are by default resistive as opposed to Stuart Hall's influential "Encoding/Decoding" model which focuses on the imposed message delivered by the dominant discourse , since "the viewer is operating inside the dominant code" (Hall, 2001, p. 515). Accordingly, resistance is realized in everyday activities. Specifically on the topic of fandom, Fiske (1992) writes that resistance is "associated with the cultural tastes of subordinated formations of the people, particularly with those disempowered by any combination of gender, age, class and race" (p. 30). It is possible to add sexual orientation to this since, as will be discussed later on, subverting sexualities and sexual orientations is one tactic that fan fiction continuously employs.

One question to ask here would be this: is fandom, in the age of the internet, still resistive? The answer may depend on the specific context of one's object of fandom. While in the past most fandoms were indeed built upon that which the popular culture denigrated, contemporary devices and technologies have made accessing not only to information and content, but also to people (that is, actors, stars, filmmakers, musicians) easier. Social networks openly invite one to be a fan of something, and becoming a member of a fan community, at least initially, is as easy as clicking a "like" button. In a culture where everybody "like"s something and reaches knowledge through that simple act and where it is not impossible for an avid fan to be 'mentioned'[4] by a member of the

[4] Mention: On the social network site Twitter, with its direct interaction between the fan and the celebrity, "mentioning" someone means to insert the user name of a person in a tweet. It is understandably very important to be mentioned by a celebrity on Twitter.

band One Direction (a hugely popular British pop boy band) on Twitter (though it would be very unlikely), most fandoms today are probably not forms of resistance for the subordinate, but platforms for collective entertainment and participation, even a gateway to personal popularity.

In this vein, Michel de Certeau's implication in using *la perruque* was to explain a certain act of defiance within the dominant discursive and cultural practices where previously subversive practices are now celebrated by the dominant discourse. Watching an episode of one's favorite TV show would be an act of stealing time from the productive society as a whole, but in an age that is defined by the elements of popular culture, it is controversial that consumption of a product of popular culture would be considered as resistance towards the dominant discourse. Therefore, finding a deeper act of resistance within these products of popular culture and poststructuralist mode of existence becomes a relatively fickle subject to work with; thus, there is a need to look for a more profound connection to the popular culture in our audiences in order to be able to find an act of resistance, and that connection is what constitutes the fan audience, or fandom.

De Certeau (1984) gives the example of an individual using the pre-established urban streets in his own way to create a personalized act, much like a person who uses a language to form his own speech act in a specific preference (p. xxii). The metaphors can be extended into almost any facet of everyday life; while a book is written within a specific style, narrative and even purpose, it is the reader who finds his way through the pages and new meanings. Regardless of the certainty of differing emotions a work of art or a product of culture evokes in individuals, the form of a work of literature or music

can give way to many different interpretations as well. Some readings, receptions and evoked emotions can fall within the foreseeable and established culture, and thus reinforce these. They may and will be a gateway to place the audience outside the "acceptable" cultural practices. This is where de Certeau's "poaching" proves significant; the audience receives the material in a monolithic way; they read, listen or watch, but the way they reform and recreate and resemiotise the words and images is what makes the practice to be altered. This process of resemiotisation and recreation is what participatory culture is about, and participatory media fans "poach" the texts they love and the processes of dismantling, analyzing, restructuring, recreating the text constitutes the participation.

3.4 Audience transformation: a new form of production

Even though de Certeau's idea of everyday resistance is not considered holistic since it basically means fostering tactics in order to escape from the mundanity of dominant cultural practices, fan practices are seen to be enhancing the resistive disposition of poaching. De Certeau's ideas have much to do with making do or getting by in a dominant culture permeated by the practices predetermined, preferred and encouraged by either governments, elites or corporations. However as the popular culture found its own audience, it became not only a resistance towards the highbrow or social capital yielding cultural produce, but also a different sort of culture that is protected and encouraged by the consumer capitalism. Therefore, it may be argued that the consumption of popular culture alone is not a resistance towards the dominant culture,

but the fan practices within the popular culture, which have a specific popular cultural capital, is what still retains some of the resistive elements.

Desiring machine is Deleuze and Guattari's (1983) way of formulating the productivity of desire, and it is a machine with a definite agency. It is not unconsciously formed from lack as Freud would claim, but it yields a conscious production stemming from desire. However, with its loss of agency, the desiring machine disconnects from the product and the mode of production and re-production, but becomes only a receiver:

> The child still scrawls and daubs on his schoolbooks; even if he is punished for this crime, he has made a space for himself and signs his existence as an author on it. The television viewer cannot write anything on the screen of his set. He has been dislodged from the product; he plays no role in its apparition. He loses his author's rights and becomes, or so it seems, a pure receiver, the mirror of a multiform and narcissistic actor. Pushed to the limit, he would be the image of appliances that no longer need him in order to produce themselves, the reproduction of a "celibate machine". (De Certeau, 1984, p. 32)

In de Certeau's example, the television viewer has been subjected to hours of advertisements or TV shows that was made for him at the outset. However, the products that were created for him do not need this mechanized man in order to continue their existence. They are now able to self-produce themselves over and over again for the television viewer to consume. Thus, the desiring machine transforms into a "celibate machine", which consumes but does not yield any further production. He could not create spaces in which the production could take place. In this regard, the celibate machine is seemingly left to “make do” with the re-occurring, self-producing space of mass media.

However, in the age of mass culture, one should distinguish popular culture as another space in which a viewer not only is a recipient, but also holds an agency in a

much different manner. Another way of productivity is suggested by de Certeau (1984), and it is what is traditionally seen as the opposite of the production: consumption. As mentioned before, it is much more clandestine in nature, and yields an art different from the desiring machine. The celibate machine uses what it is subjected to not in an uncreative manner, but it is hidden in the act of *poaching*: "it shows itself not in its products … but in an art of using those imposed on it" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 33). He gives the example of indigenous peoples of Americas who were subjected to Spanish colonization and who reappropriated the rules and systems implemented by the colonizers and turned those into their own uses, even though they were always others in the system itself. He analogously turns to the cultural practices and the evaluation of preferred and reprobated culture within a dominant discourse. He argues that "popularization or degradation of a culture is … a partial and caricatural aspect of the revenge that utilizing tactics take on the power that dominates production" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 33) Therefore, even though the dominant culture and discourse prefer or disavow a certain aspect of culture, in the consumer's part –and in our context, from the fan's point of view- it is indeed a resistance shown in the face of pervasive 'elitist' cultural preferences. The reappropriating process that we call poaching is the creative aspect of fandom itself even though the fans form their identities with what they are a fan of –among other elements. They cannot be defined solely by those products, because each fan instils new meanings and interpretations into these works as individuals, and therefore, every productive process is distinct in its resistive force.

Production via participation is an integral part of media fandoms. To differentiate a specific kind of culture from the popular culture and mass cultures, Jenkins (2006)

proposes a type of culture that the fans adhere to in their day to day consumption of popular cultural material. “Participatory culture”, as Jenkins puts it, is a transformation of “spectatorial” culture that places one’s personal take on a product into the larger scale of social interaction. This being a building block of what constitutes of being a fan, consuming a media product drives fans into reading (fan fiction, previous works, adaptations), writing (fan fiction, analyses and so on), watching (fan videos, trailers, teasers, behind-the-scene footages, reproductions, interviews, convention panels) and sharing within a community. Jenkins (2006) finds three global trends that place this kind of participatory spectatorship in the front and center of media consumption. First, the advent of internet and other improvements in technology, predominantly the portable devices, enable the media consumers to make their own archives and ease the circulation of media products. Second, the production of circumstantial media, eased again by the technological improvements, is promoted by a new Do-It-Yourself discourse such as the fan videos and fictive fan works created by the fans. Third and the most important of all, the media conglomerates encourage the production of circumstantial media by providing more mediums such as social media in which the paratexts (the peripheral material that surrounds and mediates the primary text, like epigraphs, prefaces, (Genette, 1997, p. 3), and in this context, reviews, recaps and so on) of media products could be consumed by the fans. This third trend has to do with the indisputable marketing value of fans who are willing to consume any by-product of their object of fandom and to create such media themselves.

The marketing value of fans is also empowered by the ability of fans to alter the production of their media. Because of the niche marketing techniques, the viewership

could not be seen uniform. Jenkins (2006) explains how the global media and cultural goods move forward in this fragmented and niche market. He proposes that there are two forces in interplay creating a "global convergence" and the flow of media. Jenkins (2006) defines these two forces as "corporate convergence" and "grassroots convergence". Corporate convergence is "the concentration of media ownership in the hands of a smaller and smaller number of multinational conglomerates who thus have a vested interest in insuring the flow of media content across different platforms and national borders". On the other hand, grassroots convergence is "the increasingly central roles that digitally empowered consumers play in shaping the production, distribution, and reception of media content" (p. 155). The interaction between these forces creates global convergence, which according to Jenkins (2006) is promoting a modern type of cosmopolitanism. He argues that these new "cosmopolitans embrace cultural difference, seeking to escape the gravitational pull of their local communities in order to enter a broader sphere of cultural experience" (pp. 155-156). The primary agent of this flow and constant shift in media production is the empowered fans, who affect corporate convergence by forcing them into delve more into niche marketing techniques to lure more media fans into their platforms (Netflix, Amazon and so on), and also practice grassroots convergence.

The process of production goes into such lengths that any manner of reading of a text could be seen as a type of production. Here, Fiske's concept of popular culture production would prove useful. Fiske (1992) claims that "popular culture is produced by the people out of the products of the cultural industries: it must be understood, therefore, in terms of productivity, not of reception" (p. 37). He proposes three categories for

production: semiotic, enunciative and textual. Semiotic productivity is essentially producing meanings for social identity and experiences internally from the semiotic resources of the object of fandom (Fiske, 1992). For example, if a fan who roots for a character in a TV show gains confidence by watching his favorite character going through hardships and overcoming difficulties, it is a type of semiotic productivity. Enunciative productivity is external, and it requires an expression of fandom through speech or appearance. For example, fans talking about their fandom or wearing a Spider-Man t-shirt which would enunciate their Spider-Man fandom, or in some cases hairstyles, or any visual accompaniment that will bear the message of being a fan are an example. The last type of productivity according to Fiske (1992) is textual productivity, and that is the main type of productivity I addressed before: the creation of texts that are based on the object of fandom. Creating circumstantial media, writing fan fiction or any kind of paratext would be textual productivity, and that is exactly how poaching should be considered; as a definitive way to produce. Fiske (1992) addresses the differences between fan-produced texts and officially produced texts, and the difference is not the quality of the work for some works of fan fiction are very well written. The main difference between them is economic because fans do not create texts for money. Fans circulate their produced texts via the internet, forums, specific web-sites, review sites, or social media, and while they engage in a productive practice, it actually does not yield them economic capital, the reason being popular cultural capital or "subcultural capital" cannot be easily transformed into economic capital. However, this "shadow cultural economy" that fan practices created has other dividends that "lie in the pleasures and esteem of one's peers in a community of taste rather than those of one's social betters"

(Fiske, 1992, p. 34). All these three forms of production determine a fan's position, to other fans, to the fandom, to the society, and finally to themselves.

3.5 Cultural and popular cultural capitals

An individual, while carrying out the aforementioned cultural production, is never alone. There are variable numbers of people sharing their admiration, obsession or connection with the cultural product, and even if the actions and reactions of fans towards the cultural text differ from one another, they form a unique discourse, fully meaningful in their own communal environment. The texts that were previously considered as fringe or niche become part of the popular culture with the proliferation of the internet and globalized media which ensured a change of perspective regarding fandom since the early 80s. Today, fans open the ways to countless commercially successful films, they are buying billions of dollars of merchandise and they save TV shows from cancelation by putting pressure on sponsors. It is not really possible to put a price tag onto such a large group of individuals, but their collective taste brings in or costs billions of dollars. This marketing value deconstructs and reshapes the popular culture and everyday life as we previously knew it. The content creators of mainstream media cannot only rely on an imagined audience who may or may not watch the TV show at a given moment anymore. A constant check over a supposed audience should be kept, and the fans are so important because they spend the time to contribute to their object of fandom, and thus, they can be spotted more easily as audience members. The basic premise that creates the value of fans is the same; a sense of connection, love and enthusiasm.

While the marketing value of the fans made them an important part of the capitalist popular cultural exchanges, the previous distinctions between high and low

culture started to crumble. The economic importance of the fans here is not metaphorical; a grand metaphor of capital used for cultural exchanges coined by Pierre Bourdieu, who argued that every social interaction and relation could well be thought as an economic relation. Every individual makes an investment as they read literature, listen to music, and observe art. The exchange happens around these cultural products, such as learning how to evaluate a piece of art and making discussions on these evaluations with others. This is what creates and accumulates cultural (and social and economic, given the circumstances) capital. Bourdieu makes a class based division in the accumulation of cultural capital and he clearly states that the notion of being a fan is a misplacement of culturally acceptable tendencies. Bourdieu (1984) argues that the *petit bourgeoisie* accumulates perverse fan knowledge (such as cinema-buffs or jazz-freaks), and they are unable to gain the perks of having a legitimate (official) cultural capital (p. 330). Although this definition tends to reduce fans and fandoms to a perversion of official cultural capital, Bourdieu still gives a very insightful description on fans when he argues that the behavior of the fans towards culture is much more about the consumption of circumstantial information and paratexts of the work, rather than the consumption of the text itself (Hills, 2002). Fans, therefore, accumulate more popular cultural capital by consuming circumstantial media or paratexts of the work, and gain less by consuming the work in the field of their fandom.

This is actually what fan practice of consumption is, but interpreting it as a perversion of culture-consumption would be doing it injustice. The increasing fluidity between highbrow and popular cultural products makes it easier to reach information, knowledge, texts and images now more than ever, and it changes both the culture and

the rewards of cultural capital. John Fiske (1992) criticizes Bourdieu in this regard, and suggests that the habitus (the physical embodiment of the process of cultural capital, a disposition, the state of knowingness in the face of one's cultural environment) of fans is not only different from but also occupies a different sphere than the habitus Bourdieu deals with. Fiske (1992), therefore, coins the popular cultural capital as a different capital, not a deficiency or perversion of the proper one. He argues that the consumers of popular culture (fans) occupy the "popular habitus", whereas the consumers of official (deemed as proper, high) cultural capital occupy the "dominant habitus". It is also very important to keep in mind that cultural capital is not only the consumption of cultural products, but it also includes social capital, which means the public sphere one occupies and the people one knows. Fiske's idea that there are two separate spheres of cultural capital is also applicable here: An individual, who occupies the dominant habitus and accumulated dominant cultural capital would know people of influence, and that would further the rewards they gain from the dominant cultural capital. However, a fan, occupying the popular habitus and accumulating popular cultural capital would know the people who would further the rewards of popular cultural capital, and the fans are the creators of circumstantial knowledge on the product. Since being a fan is a participatory exchange, it can be said that a fan gains popular cultural capital as much as they know their peers. Henry Jenkins (2006) says in an interview that "fandom is not about Bourdieu's notion of holding art at a distance … it's about having control and mastery over art by pulling it close and integrating it into your sense of self" (p. 23). Although Jenkins uses the word integration in the sense of an emotional investment, it is also apparent that fans participate in the works they are a fan of, and the knowledge of being in a community makes the participation even more valuable. Jenkins (2006) argues that

"one becomes a fan not by being a regular viewer of a particular program but by translating that viewing into some kind of cultural activity, by sharing feelings and thoughts about the program content with friends, by joining a community of other fans who share common interests" (p. 41) Therefore, it bears more popular cultural capital if you are to join a "community", for fandom is participatory in nature.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has established the theoretical framework which I used in this study and has outlined my use of the interconnected work of Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, John Fiske and Henry Jenkins in my examination of fandom. Bourdieu's overarching notion of cultural capital will inform the discussion of community and attachment in the discussion, while Michel de Certeau's idea of poaching (and Jenkins's articulation of this idea) will inform the discussion on resistance towards mass culture and dominant cultural practices.

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

The primary purpose of this study is to open up a discussion about cross-cultural media fans by identifying their common characteristics and fan practices and to be able to shed light on how their fan practices operate within global fan formations and how fans define themselves and form their identities. In an effort to reach a meaningful answer, a collective case study conducted with seven participants in Turkey, with the primary concerns of defining the cross-cultural fans in Turkey and the constitutive elements of their fan practices.

Studying fandom requires dealing with subjectivity and self-identification. A fan is not a passive consumer, nor one who is objectified by the pervasive popular media culture. Fans have an agency; they exercise their power on media texts by poaching, shaping and reshaping, and also by forcing the hands of media to make changes in texts in accordance to their wishes. They alter the very thing they are a fan of, and it is inevitable for them to develop subjective meanings and experiences of these texts. Since being a fan is an individual decision, yet a communal practice, the subjective meanings of the experiences they gather are inevitably shaped by the way of social interaction. Therefore, the interpretive framework of this research is a social constructivist one. Because Creswell (2013) defines social constructivist framework which favors questions "broad and general so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons" (p. 25), in

my inquiry, I was mostly interested in how the participants act and what they talk about in their life settings.

Even though it seemed more convenient to conduct this research on fan sites and message boards because of the ease of access, I chose to do my case study research with fans face to face by conducting semi-structured interviews. I conducted a total of seven interviews within four months, between November 2014 and February 2015. I asked the participants to sign consent forms which ensured the anonymity of participants, accompanied by a preliminary questionnaire containing demographic details. I recorded the interviews as audio files digitally, and in total, the recordings are 200 minutes long. The duration of interviews range between 22 minutes to 48 minutes, but none of the interviews is shorter than 20 minutes.

After deciding to make interviews with participants in which I could both record what they say and observe their behavior and mannerisms, I had to decide on the sampling. Bearing in mind that being a fan is a cultural disposition and because of the literature written on fandoms and my experience as a fan myself, I knew that I could find people willing to do interviews with me online. I posted on the message board of a Facebook group called geekyapar.com,[5] and found my first interviewee through the message board. The other interviewees came from referrals, and it became a snowballing

[5] *geekyapar.com* is a news aggregator site for computer games, comics, TV shows and movies; and therefore the site is for the self-styled "geek"s. The Facebook page of the site is used by the web site's user base as a message board.

interview schema. Thus the sampling grew into a diverse group of people, who know at least one person from the sample group.

Since I had to gather the broadest possible range of information on fandom, I chose to do convenient sampling in order to find more participants. As the participants knew each other personally, or by proxy, the possibility of being able to replicate the interview procedures and therefore the results proved to be a promising property of this type of sampling. In Table 1, the demographic information that the participants have disclosed in the consent forms are shown.

Table 1. Participant Profile

	Education Level	Occupation	Level of English	Age
Z	University Student	Software Designer	Advanced	26
D	PhD candidate	English Instructor	Advanced	29
R	MA	Film Set Employee	Advanced	25
G	University Student	Game Designer	Advanced	27
O	University Graduate	Medical Translator	Advanced	29
M	University Graduate	Unemployed	Good	28
C	MA	Naval Architect	Good	31
				Average: 28

All of the participants have a good to advanced knowledge of English language. The sampling technique yielded an age range of 26 to 31 and the median age is 28, therefore creating a uniform sample group. There were various reasons why I have chosen such an age group to conduct my research. First of all, I predetermined that the participants should be at an age where they would be early internet users since before 1996, when the internet was not widely used in Turkey. Second, the formative years of such an age group have seen the rise of cross-cultural media products in Turkey with an

ease of access for the products. Almost all of the participants have used message boards and forums during their early teens, and they later used social media in order to form their online communities and fan identities.

Because I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews, I prepared the interview questions (which can be seen in Appendix A), in a manner that would encourage the participants to give the most input without giving any direction. The interviews all took place in public settings, such as cafes and restaurants. I stated I was a media fan as well before the interviews, and with the short chats I had with the participants helped building a rapport with the participants beforehand. I believe that this is an important aspect of this study, for they all implied a reservation at talking about their fandoms to a non-fan. The friendly manner made this research easier. I did not shy away from making my own comments during the talks, because I knew they expected that from an insider researcher.

The transcription of the recordings done with a software called InqScribe. The preliminary analysis consisted of listening to the recordings and breaking the collected data into common themes. The common areas of this inquiry pointed at their stance as a fan toward the text, their usage of English, their stance toward the Turkish vernacular cultural products and Turkey in general. After the preliminary analysis, the data gathered from the interviews are analyzed in the manner of content analysis.

Of course, I acknowledge that my own cultural background was thoroughly affecting the interview processes, since I positioned myself as another fan, talking about a shared interest, and my aim was to interpret how the participants give meaning to the practice of being a fan and having a fandom.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The consumer culture attached to the popular cultural practices of cult media production is ever growing. The urban middle class young adults in Turkey are deeply impacted by these popular cultural practices. 1980s saw the introduction of free market economy in Turkey, and the subsequent consumption created a culture akin to the ones in Western nations. This fledgling consumer culture came into full bloom during the years between 2000 and 2005 with the rapid growth of the internet at that time. Internet created many different trajectories to view the media. With the broadband connection and ease of access, several media products (TV shows such as *Lost, Battlestar Galactica, Prison Break* and so on) enjoyed cult status, and gained a massive following. The fans kept up with not only the original content of these cult media products, but the discussions in forums, cosplay activities, conventions, fan fiction and so on. Apart from the audience-created practices and media, the studios developed different media: Computer games, books, comic books and official merchandise for these avid followers, and all these practices and participation styled these followers as distinct "fandoms". Participatory fandoms enhance their sense of connection by creating new material about the cult media they are interested in.

Another important point is that the Turkish cross-cultural media fans use English in their everyday life, and even more while they communicate with other fans about the objects of their fandom. A very interesting outcome of my interviews is that almost all of the participants talked about being a part of a community, and almost none of the

interviewees have interest in Turkish media products. They have chosen to consume the products of Western popular culture with the advent of media and the internet over the products of Turkish popular culture, and therefore, they have chosen to be in cross-cultural fandoms, rather than their vernacular fandoms. It denotes a denial to be part of the vernacular culture.

With the preliminary analysis of the collected data, I felt the need to formulate the different characteristics between fandoms to investigate them further, for even during the process of data collection, the participant reactions towards certain fan objects differed greatly. In fan studies circles, for example, football fandom and comic book fandom may seem to have the same characteristics, but essentially, the practices and characteristics are only interpreted as the same, in order to have an all-encompassing theory of fandom. However, going to a football match and going to a comic book convention should not be considered the same, for one is spectatorship and the other is participation. Of course it is easy to find similarities and interpret the fandom as a holistic structure that has its definitive elements, but with the preliminary analysis of the collected data, I have encountered a different tableau. However hard might we try to theorize the fandom as a holistic structure, there are many contingent elements, and while inter-fandom transitions are common (a fan of a sports team would enjoy watching other games / a fan of a TV show would enjoy other TV shows), the participants in this research, who are cross-cultural media fans, distance themselves from the sports (and Turkish) fandoms. In this regard, I differentiated football and media fandom preliminarily. As the previously mentioned arabesque musicians and their fans (who are seen as pathological cases) constitute an important section of fandom in Turkey, and

being informed by the rejection of the participants, I theorized arabesque, celebrity and football fandoms together, and positioned media fandom in opposition to these.

It is doubtless that these fandoms have much in common. Nevertheless, the differentiation between these two types of fandom is used here to further the discussion. I term the first one as “participatory fandom”, (borrowing Henry Jenkins’s concept of “participatory culture”) which requires a more profound connection to the text and contribution, as in almost all media fandoms in Anglo-American popular culture. There is a deeply-embedded difference in what Turkish culture favors and discursively affirms as fandom. Turkish culture favors the type what I will call from here on "tribal fandom" which includes football, arabesque, and celebrity fandom. Although it may seem as a derogatory term at first, I borrowed the concept of neo-tribalism from Michel Maffesoli (1996), who defined neo-tribalism as a fluid group of people which replaced previous social groups with a post-modern power structure. Maffesoli calls this structure “puissance”, which is basically defined as the will to live (p. 20). He gives the examples of sports fans, community policing groups and local political parties to define the neo-tribes. Although I do not use the word tribe exactly in the way he does, football fandom could be seen as a neo-tribal structure and thus I decided to term this type of fandom tribal.

Tribal fandom in Turkey comprises primarily of football fandom and secondarily, fandom of musicians who sing arabesque and Turkish pop songs. With its widespread broadcasting, merchandising and marketing value, football fandom is the most visible fandom in Turkey. Football fans also hold a significant marketing value; apart from the match tickets they buy, they also buy football merchandise, like team

jerseys with their favorite player's name on them. Being a fan of a musical artist however lacks several of these practices. It may be because they do not hold so much of a marketing value as in the other fandoms, but they still buy albums, concert tickets and so on; however they are much more passive in their consumption of the product of their artist of choice.

I consider these two fandoms tribal in three respects: First, unlike the media fandoms, football and musical artist fans do not contribute to the primary product with new creations of their own. They do not create original content in order for other fans to see or experience. Second, being somehow passive in their consumption habits, their fandom relies heavily on inheritance (for example, fans of a football team inherited their fandoms from their parents) or admiration (as in arabesque or Turkish pop music artist fans) (Dixon, 2013). Finally, they are almost always local fandoms; there may be some Turkish football fans who support teams from outside Turkey, but they would primarily support a Turkish team, and the arabesque or pop music fans are primarily interested in Turkish celebrity artists.

Although the tribal fandoms in Turkey can be seen clearly day to day in the form of football fandoms, the participatory fandoms of cross-cultural media have not been under the spotlight even though a large section of the urban middle class young adults who were born during the 80s are now identifying themselves as a fan of a certain media, and the said media is important for their identity creation process. The purpose of this study was to find out how fans come together or differ within their fandoms, and how fandoms are similar or different within themselves, and for that purpose, I have conducted interviews with media fans.

5.1 Categorization of the findings

I will analyze the interviews in five subheadings with claims that fans proclaim their love toward their object of fandom, fans practice code-switching and it bears significance for their cultural preferences, they form a community of practice, and finally their fandom is both a mode of rejection and thus resistance to both the mass culture and Turkish culture.

Discussions and talks about fandom are almost always dominated by the practice of code-switching. The nature of these conversations first and foremost necessitates a basic understanding of English language in regard to Anglo-American media products as French would be essential if the object of fandom originated in Francophone cultures. A French Belgian *bande dessinée* fandom (French-Belgian comics) such as one of Hergé's *Tintin* or René Gosciny's *Asterix* would necessitate a knowledge of French to some degree. If the fandom is predominantly comprised of French-speaking fans, the paratexts of the media would be in French because being a fan also entails creating and consuming circumstantial materials. During the interviews, the interlocutors, who defined themselves as fans, often used English to express their position in regard to the media product, and also to convey their emotions more clearly.

Apart from the practice of code-switching, a significant inference from the interviews was how the participants used the words "love", "a deep connection", "passion" and so on to define their attachment to the media product of their fandom. These emotionally charged words are used in a self-directed manner, and are one of the common grounds for all the fans I have conducted interviews with.

Another outcome of the interviews were the distinct rejection of Turkish culture and what I have previously called tribal fandoms, most importantly the fandom of football. All of the participants were indifferent to the football fandom, and some were outspoken in their disregard. The participants who were practicing extensive code-switching were the most vocal ones about their rejection of Turkish media and generally Turkish cultural practices, and some participants, who did not code-switch frequently were the ones who actually did not profess any type of rejection or resistance to the cultural practice observed in Turkey.

5.2 Love, connection and attachment

Bourdieu (1984) defines taste as "what brings together things and people that go together" (p. 241) and states that "two people can give each other no better proof of the affinity of their tastes than the taste they have for each other" (pp. 241-243). These statements about taste (and frankly, about love) can easily be applied to the sphere of fandom, for fans and the objects of their fandom have a reciprocal relationship. It may seem that only fans are the ones who 'love' the objects, but the practices of fan objects, such as fan service (altering the text in order to please fans), fan-conventions, niche or individual marketing builds the reciprocity of this affection. A very significant example for the reciprocity built between the object of fandom and the fans is the AMA[6] sessions

[6] AMA stands for Ask Me Anything. The session prompts users to ask questions to the celebrities (and everyone else who wants to hold an AMA), and it is similar to an online press conference. https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/

held on the entertainment and social media site Reddit. During these sessions, most often a celebrity answers the questions of thousands of fans in a message board, and among the participants, there have been Barack Obama, Madonna, Dave Grohl from the band Foo Fighters, and Peter Dinklage, the star of the TV show *Game of Thrones*. While this reciprocal relationship was built only recently (and AMAs started around 2011), the wider reach of Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and other social networking sites brings the objects of fandom closer. The objects of fandom cannot only be seen as inanimate creations, for the media texts are layered with other communicative tools. Applying Bourdieu's notion of taste within fan and fan object interaction would be misleading, since Bourdieu (1984) sees fan interests as perversions and defines fan practices as collection of redundant knowledge. For him, only people without the access or indeed, the taste for legitimate cultural capital would be fans. Therefore the love that the fans show towards their object of fandom cannot increase their cultural capital, but only a specific "subcultural capital" (Thornton, 1996). Bourdieu (1984) sees taste in food as mostly to do with the habitus and infant learning, and music comes close to it as being a deep-seated taste (p. 79). In the light of this, Thornton (1996) argues that taste is actually replaceable with "love" and she states that "aesthetic appreciation is passionate (people love their music) and aesthetic intolerance violent (they hate that noise)" (p. 175). Such strong emotions and the word choices like "love" and "hate" are all too common with the participants of this study as well. Perhaps, it is needed to get past the disdain Bourdieu feels toward fans, and say that they do have a specific taste (therefore love) for specific objects, and that yields them subcultural capital, or as Fiske (1992) would call "fan cultural capital" (p. 40).

As stated before, in the interviews almost all of the participants talked about how much they love the object of their fandom, how much they are attached to it, and how they feel about it. Considering that these are actually media products, the participants rarely talk about how well they were made, or how badly they were produced; instead, they spoke mostly about how they felt about it. That is, they were defining the works in regard to how these media products affected them, not the works themselves. Consider the following extract in which G answers the question whether he builds different relationships with fans and non-fans.

Extract 1

> [00:20:52.06] Interviewer: Peki burada şeyi soracağım, mesela gene Doctor Who ve Yüzüklerin Efendisi, istediğini alabilirsin. Bunların fan'i olan insanlar var tanıdığın ve bunların fan'i olmayan insanlar var hayatında tabii ki ... Bu insanlarla olan ilişkilerin arasında bir farklılık var mı, nasıl bir farklılık var?
>
> [00:21:20.05] G: Yok. Şöyle var, çok sevdiğim bir şeyi, sevdiğim insanlara göstermek istiyorum. Onlar da sevsin istiyorum çünkü konuşabileyim diye değil, "ben bir şeyi sevdim, sen de onu seversen senin hayatın güzelleşecek bence, ve ben onu sevdiğim için çok daha neşeli oluyorum, sen de sevsen, sen de neşeli olursun", diye işliyor kafam.

> [00:20:52.06] Interviewer: I will ask now about Doctor Who or The Lord of the Rings, anyone you want. You know people who are not fans of these and there are people in your life who are not fans of these … Is there a difference between your relationships with these people and the fans, if so, what kind of difference?
>
> [00:21:20.05] G: No. There's this, I want to show something I love very much to the people I love. I want them to love it too, not just to be able to talk about it, but because my head works like "I liked something, and if you like it too, I think your life will be more beautiful, and I become happier because I like it, if you like it, you will be happy".

Here G (27), a game developer, talks about how he goes about promoting his fandom to other people. He uses the words "something I love very much" to describe his fandom.

This illustrates a stance towards the object of the fandom: rather than praising its qualities, and saying “something so good”, he decides to emphasize the emotion of love in regard to the object. He goes on to say that if another person would love the object like he does, that would make his or her life more beautiful. He uses the words “if you like it, you will be happy”, and he tells this to someone since he is happier as he likes it (the fan object). It is important to see that, the affirmation of the emotions the fan object evokes in a fan is more important than the object itself. Not the feeling he derives from the text, but rather his love for the text is more pronounced in this next part:

Extract 2

> [00:44:28.06] G: … Bir şeyler üretebilirsin ama üretmiyorsun, o başka üreten insanın eserini seviyorsun. Acayip, gönülden, çok seviyorsun.
>
> [00:44:28.06] G: … You can produce something, but you don’t, you love the work of another person who produces. You love it unusually, with your heart, very much.

Using the words “unusually, with your heart, very much”, he goes into a deeper kind of love, he regards his love to be unusual and he loves with his heart. This type of emotional expressions can commonly be found in most of the participants. They indeed associate themselves with the text in an emotional context. Here G talks about how fans do not create another text similar to or reminiscent of their object of fandom, but they actually create circumstantial texts (paratexts) to feed their fandoms. G goes on to say how he loves the text with fervor.

Extract 3

> [00:45:55.11] G: … gönülden sevmek... Ben öyle bir şeyleri sürekli gönülden seven bir insan değilim belki ama evet, fan'ı olduğum bir konu üzerine vakit, kafa, bazı durumlarda para harcamaktan çekinmem … Çünkü mesela bir şeyin fan'ısın, o konuda çok yoğun hislere sahipsin. Benim için yoğun hislere sahip olmama izin verdiğim konular mesela. Yoğun bir hisse sahibim, fikrim neyse onun doğru olduğuna inanıyorum. O yüzden çok seven biri başka bir fikre sahipse sonsuza dek tartışabiliyorsun, kavga bile edebiliyorsun.
>
> [00:45:55.11] G: … loving with your heart… I am not one to go and love things with my heart all the time, but yes, I don't shy away from spending time, mind power and in some cases money … Because, if you are a fan of something, you would have very strong emotions about that subject. I let myself have strong emotions about them. I have strong emotions and I believe what I think is right. So, if another one who loves that so much has a different opinion, you can argue them for eternity, even fight them.

G goes on to tell how he invests time and money on his fandom, and he tells that he loves the text or media he is a fan of with his heart (in his case, it is *The Lord of the Rings* franchise). He then says that he has "very strong emotions" about the fan media, to the point that he believes what he thinks is true. According to him, his self-righteousness stems from these very strong emotions, and he can argue about these ideas "for eternity", even to the point of arguments or fights. "Aesthetic appreciation is passionate and aesthetic intolerance violent" (Thornton, 1996, p.175), and being ready or at the verge of arguments for the sake of a fan media signifies that fan appreciation is not that different from aesthetic appreciation. Having strong emotions for a text manifests in clear ideas and preferences, which are indeed deemed worthy for the fans to argue or fight for. It is also important to note that G uses the phrase "intense feelings" ("*derin hisler*") three times to define his status as a fan. While this is indeed very different from a regular reader or consumer of a text, his emphasis shows that the affective aspect of

fandom feeds the fan status. Summation of these intense feelings could be love, and the next two extracts from R illustrate how love is a formative act in fandoms:

Extract 4

> [00:00:03.13] Interviewer: … Fan kelimesi ne anlama geliyor senin için?
> [00:00:54.07] R: Uzun süren, zaman içerisinde geçmeyen ve derin bir sevgi.
>
> [00:00:03.13] Interviewer: … What does the word fan mean to you?
> [00:00:54.07] R: A long lasting, a deep love that does not go away in time.

Extract 5

> [00:09:33.10] R: … yakın arkadaşlarımla yaptığım muhabbetlerin hatırı sayılır kısmı, hep yine fan'i olduğumuz, bu kadar tutkuyla bağlandığımız, ortak sevdiğimiz şeyler üzerine tartışmakla geçiyor.
>
> [00:09:33.10] R: … most of the conversations I have with my close friends are our arguments over the things we are fan of, the things we have a passionate connection and we all love.

When R (26), a film crew member, gives the answer to what he thinks of being a fan means, he states after a short pause that it is "a deep love that does not go away in time". The emphasis on temporality is indeed important, for R believes that fans are not transient or temporary consumers of a text. Even though people can become fans in any point of time, the "passion" felt for the objects of fandom and "love" are of importance to prolong these affinities. The transiency is not just about the regular media consumers, but the media products themselves. Fans choose to prolong their connection with the media text, but the media text (at least not until the relationship between the fan and object becomes reciprocal) does not necessarily require a prolonged affinity. In another point of the interview, he defined his fandom as something which he feels a "passionate connection". In R's case, these texts are Spider-Man comics, the TV show *Doctor Who*,

Star Wars franchise and so on. Such strongly worded emotional remarks were common in the interviews (R, G, D and M all gave similar reactions when they were talking about their object of fandom), and in the following sections of this chapter more and more examples can be seen about how being and becoming a fan affected the participants on personal and emotional levels. R was especially interesting, because he insisted on defining his relationship with the object of his fandom with very emotionally charged adjectives, such as "passionate", "deep". In the following part, R says that "he is attached to (his fandom) so much" that it is a part of his life:

Extract 6

> [00:02:59.08] R: Fan, dediğim gibi... Herhangi bir, muhtemelen eğlencelik olan bir şeye o kadar bağlanıyorsun ki artık senin hayatının bir parçası haline geliyor, seni define eden şeylerden biri haline geliyor.
>
> [00:02:59.08] R: A fan, as I said… you get attached to something probably just for fun so much that it becomes a part of your life, something that *define*s you.

R repeats the connection he feels towards the fan media, and uses the word "define" (in English) to say that fandom is one of the things that "defines himself" ("define eden" – "eden" here is a complementary verb used to make verbs in Turkish language). While I expected the usage of jargon regarding fandom in English during the interviews, the usage of an emotional and personal remark in English signified a more deeply embedded appropriation of a foreign culture. Seeing that R used the word "define" in English to explain what constitutes his identity, it is important to see that code-switching practices bear significance regarding fans to clarify themselves, or in general to communicate. In the next part, I will come up with more examples from the interviews pertaining code-

switching practices and the place bilingualism takes in fan communication of cross-cultural media fans in Turkey.

5.3 Cross-cultural fans are bilinguals

Code-switching can definitely be seen as a strategy used to establish a sense of belonging to a particular group with the usage of fandom-specific words and colloquialisms. Poplack (1980) proposes three types of code-switching: extra-sentential, inter-sentential and intra-sentential. Extra-sentential code-switching happens outside the sentence or clause level. Inter-sentential code-switching occurs on the sentence or clause level, which means to utilize the second language to form a sentence or clause after forming a sentence or clause in the first language, therefore it is a more intentional use of the second language switching. The last one, intra-sentential code-switching is predominantly occurs at the word level, and the code-switching is triggered in a more instantaneous manner.

Susan Gal (1988) defines code-switching as a "conversational strategy used to establish, cross or destroy group boundaries; to create, evoke or change interpersonal relations with their right and obligations" (p. 247). Within the framework of fandom, a *Doctor Who* fan might use the sentence "it's bigger on the inside" (a sentence used to describe the Doctor's spaceship Tardis) while talking to another fan as an inside joke or in some other occasion, but they would not use it while talking to a non-fan, simply because a non-fan would not understand. However in the case of Turkish fans, intra-sentential code-switching instead of inter-sentential seems to be more dominantly used. Ronald Wardhaugh (1992) defines code-switching as changing from one language to the

other within the course of a single utterance, and which are frequently used by bilinguals, as a solidarity marker. Intra-sentential code-switching, in contrast to inter-sentential, can occur without the change of topic that is seen more appropriate to speak in a particular language. Thus, it is almost always employed as a strategy when the other conversant is known to be a like-minded fan.

Using English words within Turkish sentences, or intra-sentential code-switching for fans does not result from an inability to express their thoughts and emotions through only using Turkish, but it stems from two reasons. First, the fans are predominantly fluent in English as a second language even though they do not use it in their day to day lives. However, since the jargon of fandom is predominantly English, it makes it nearly impossible for the fans to communicate about their fandom with a fellow fan in only Turkish. The second reason can be associated with the primary language they consume the media with, which is English. These bilingual fans almost always use fandom related terms and words in English with other fans with the knowledge that their interlocutor would find what they say easier to understand if they say it in the language of the product as they share the same interests. This, in a way, both creates a common ground for the fans while interacting with each other, and forms a solidarity in order to share thoughts and values.

The jargon used in order to discuss fandoms naturally includes the words fan and fandom, but the words like convention, community, review, recap, caption, canon, fan fiction, nerd, geek and many more (some of which can have clear Turkish translations) are also used in their original language to distinguish the particular practice or person clearly. The usage of such words connotatively places the utterer within the larger group

of fans, regardless of the media product they are a fan of. However, the practice of intra-sentential code-switching is twofold. Apart from the usage of jargon, these bilinguals are very fluent in English, and they use English in order to express their thoughts and emotions after they make sure that they are talking with another fan, whom they also expect to be fluent in English. The fans also expect the other fan whom they are talking with to be non-critical about the usage of code-switching, as it is seen somehow negatively by the monolingual majority, or people who have nationalistic sensitivities (for example Oktay Sinanoğlu's book about Turkish language education and the usage of English, *Bye Bye Türkçe*). Here, D (29), an English instructor uses English quite extensively to define Jane Austen fandom:

Extract 7

> [00:30:48.05] Interviewer: Jane Austen fan'i erkek çok değil. Kadın ağırlıklı bir fandom.
> [00:30:54.26] D: İşte kadın *dominated*, ama *merchandise*'ı yok, *expand* edilemiyor.
>
> [00:30:48.05] Interviewer: There are not many guys who are Jane Austen fans. It is a fandom dominated by women
> [00:30:54.26] D: Yeah, it's women *dominated*, but there's no *merchandise*, you cannot *expand* it.

In this extract, I say that Jane Austen fandom is a female dominated fandom, but I use the word "*ağırlıklı*" ("dominated") in Turkish. D responds by using the word "*dominated*" in English, rather than repeating the direct translation of the word I have just uttered. The linguistic choices D makes here using "dominated", "merchandise" and "expand" shows a tendency to talk about fandom in English, rather than Turkish. The object of fandom, Jane Austen, is a British literary figure, and it is appropriate to talk

about Jane Austen fandom in English. It can be argued that the word "merchandise" is used for creating a distinct understanding about the fan practices, since merchandise for fandoms means side products of the primary text (such as figures, posters, mugs, t-shirts) and in Turkish, a direct translation of the word would not evoke the same meaning between the fans ("ürün" could be used, but it fails to capture the culture around merchandise). The other English words she uses here are "dominated" and "expand" and these are much less connected to a jargon of fandoms. The fact that she used these words effortlessly (as I observed) shows that she acknowledged the interviewer as both a fan (she used the word "merchandise") and another bilingual who uses English in his everyday life. What this practice means in a larger context is that fans of cross-cultural media are being constantly displaced. They change how they talk and the language they use. This does not mean that they need to be in constant awareness of how they speak, but an awareness of with whom they speak is relatively important. Still, D uses Turkish grammatical structure to form her utterance; "*kadın dominated*", "*merchandise'ı yok*" and "*expand edilemiyor*" could easily be replaced with Turkish words and form a coherent sentence, but D deliberately chooses to use the words in English because the fandom she talks about is not widespread in Turkey, or even if it does have some following, it does not resonate with her fandom because, in any case, she positions herself with the global Jane Austen fandom. Consider the following extract in which D talks about how she perceives the global fandom:

Extract 8

> [00:06:54.18] D: Yani fan'lik bir kere benim gördüğüm şu, ben tumblr'da bir ara tumblr'da çok takılırken gördüğüm şey şu, yani bir çıta var ve orada *sky is the limit* gibi. Her zaman daha büyük bir fan'i var bir şeyin. …

> [00:06:54.18] D: First of all, I see that the fans, when I was hanging around in tumblr, there is a bar, and *sky is the limit* there. There is always a bigger fan of something.

D uses another phrase to express her emotions or perceptions about the fandoms on the internet and more specifically the blogging site Tumblr. [7] She uses the phrase 'sky is the limit'. Just before she uses this idiom, she says *there is a bar* ('bir çıta var') in Turkish, but she does not end it 'there is a bar that is set really high' in Turkish, as someone would expect an idiom to end in Turkish, without being cut in half. I see this abrupt switch not only of language, but also of idioms as an indicator of the fact that D depends more on English to explain complex emotions or instances than Turkish. In a later part of the interview, I ask D the reason why she deems herself different from a person who says he loves *Mad Men*, a TV period drama which D is a fan of.

Extract 9

> [00:12:36.02] D: Farkım benim çok daha mesai harcamam, çok daha büyük bir *engagement*'ım var. …
>
> [00:12:36.02] D: My difference is that I spend more time, I have a bigger *engagement* …

In a similar manner to her earlier utterances, D uses a non-fan jargon word "engagement" in English. In order to rank her interest to the media product, she says "I have a much bigger engagement" than a regular consumer, which I will get back to, when I try to discuss the relationship of fans contrasting themselves to regular consumers and their resistance to capitalist mass culture in section 5.5. In any case, D

[7] Tumblr: A (micro)blogging website which is famously used by different fans to share their affections with images and to connect with other fans.

uses the word “engagement” to position herself as a fan, and English again is used to utilize to that end.

With Z (26), a software developer, the interview was much more formal than the others. I observed that he was somehow cautious of his language usage during the interview, and this awareness drove him to use less code-switching, and more grammatically correct sentences. Still, since he is in the knowledge of being interviewed by a fan, he easily uses the jargon of fandom, most importantly, the words “geek” and “nerd”.

Extract 10

> [00:15:19.05] Z: Farklı olmalarına rağmen aynı anlamda kullanacağım *geek* ve *nerd*'ü. Fan'i olmak daha bir sanat eseri, daha kültürel bir ürün üzerine olan bir şey. *Nerd* veya *geek*, herhangi bir şeyin *geek*'i olabilirsin. Bu pul da olabilir, bayrak da olabilir, dizi de olabilir. Onun da *nerd*'ü olursun ama fan deyip geçiyorsun kendine. Ya da kitap *nerd*'ü olunca.
>
> [00:15:19.05] Z: Even though they are different, I’ll use the words *geek* and *nerd* as the same. You can be a fan of an artwork or a cultural product. You can be a *geek* of anything. It can be stamps, flags, or a TV show. You can be a *nerd* of those as well, but you just say that you are a fan. Or when you are a book *nerd*.

What is interesting here is that Z has a very distinct idea on who is a *geek*[8] and who is a *nerd*,[9] and he explains their difference to a fan. Even though words geek and nerd are quite common in almost every piece of fan studies literature, I have not come across

[8] The word geek was originated in the first half of twentieth century, meaning a circus or carnival performer, but it evolved into “a person who is very interested in and knows a lot about a particular field or activity” according to the Webster dictionary. http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/geek

[9] David A. Kinney describes nerds as “awkward, intelligent, shy, unattractive social outcasts with unfashionable hair and dress styles” (1993, p. 21). However the meaning of the word nerd has changed into what seems to be similar to geek, “a person who is very interested in technical subjects, computers, etc.” http://merriam-webster.com/dictionary/nerd

these words in the interviews apart from Z. Geek and nerd are some of the words that have been reappropriated mainly by fan cultures to identify and express themselves. Before 2000, both of these words had a negative connotation, meaning a misfit, and not 'cool'. As more and more audiences turned into fans, and since most of the fans are in fact "geeks" (in the positive sense), these words ceased to be pejorative and started to be regarded positively, not only within fan communities, but also by mass media with niche marketing techniques directed towards these geek communities. Still, the words can be pejorative when they are used by a non-fan, but they denote a sense of pride when used as a reappropriation for self-reference, and thus, refer to different perceived identities every time they are being used, altering the meaning within each and every context. It is clear that Z perceives himself as one, and he uses these words to set the position of any individual towards a text or activity. Z also gives a hint that there is a material aspect of fandoms. According to Z, there can be geeks of stamps or flags (fans) who collect these and also know a lot about the subject. However, the object of fandom does not have to be a commodity, the materiality of fandoms can also be seen from the buying merchandise about the fan object. In the following extract, O talks about the material aspect of fandom:

Extract 11

> [00:15:10.23] O: … *Episode 3* ilk çıktığında, 2005'te falan büyük bir *hype* yaratıldığı için çıkmadan önce hepimiz bayağı bir *merchandise*'a saldırmıştık. dört beş tane figürüm var *Star Wars* ile alakalı. Ama o kadar, normalde figür insanı değilim.
>
> [00:15:10.23] O: … When *Episode 3* was released, because of the *hype* they created we just jumped on the *merchandise*. I have four or five figures of Star Wars. But that's it; I'm not a figure guy.

Here O talks about a period of time which has seen the release of the latest entry of the movie franchise *Star Wars*, and he describes the commercial marketing campaign as a "hype". The word hype connotes a type of inflated advertising to get people to believe that everyone has to have the thing they advertise. What is significant here is that we can tell O's awareness of this marketing ploy from his switch to use a specific English word that has the exact meaning, and also the fact that he says "hype yaratıldığı için", because this hype was actually created by the mass media. This hype was exactly what got him to buy "merchandise" of *Star Wars*, even though he states that he is not an "action figure guy", and he was aware of this marketing ploy. He uses the word "attacking" ("saldırmıştık") to describe the aggressive consuming habit that was conceived by this "hype". He does not use code-switching with deliberation because as it is stated before, "merchandise" and "hype" could loosely be considered as a part of the fan jargon. However fans also code-switch on sentence or clause level to indicate their fan status to an object of fandom. In the following extract, O deliberately uses English to distinguish the difference between the word "admirer" ("hayran") and "fan":

Extract 12

> [00:02:04.06] Interviewer: Hayran'ı fan'in direkt karşılığı olarak kullanıyor musun, yoksa…?
>
> [00:02:04.12] O: Yani çok değil, fan dediğimiz de oluyor, hayran dediğimiz de oluyor. Bizde birazcık şey var, kültür üzerine bindiği için böyle fan diye yurtdışından alıp onu fan diye kullanıyoruz ama biz hayran kitlesi dediğimizde daha çok Serdar Ortaç'ın hayran kitlesi, *fans of Serdar Ortaç*'la aynı manaya gelmiyor bizim kulağımıza, ama aslında aynı şey kelime bazında. Hani bağlam olarak biraz daha farklı en azından benim için.

[00:02:04.06] Interviewer: Do you use hayran as a direct translation of fan?

[00:02:04.12] O: I mean, not really. We say hayran sometimes. There's this, because of the overarching culture, we use it as fan, since we took it from abroad as fan. But when we say fan base, it is mostly like Serdar Ortaç's fan base, it does not sound exactly like *fans of Serdar Ortaç*, but they are the same. At least for me, they are contextually different.

O contrasts the usage of "Serdar Ortaç's fan base" ("Serdar Ortaç'ın hayran kitlesi") *and fans of Serdar Ortaç*. Serdar Ortaç is a Turkish pop musician, and the mannerism and tone suggested that O deemed he is more appropriate for the word "hayran" ("admirer"). Fans of Serdar Ortaç certainly exists in Turkey, but apart from the 'fan club' formations, Serdar Ortaç's status as a fan object does not fulfil the arbitrary requirements to be an object of fandom for O. He states that it should be considered the same contextually, but the meaning of a fan is attached more to the cross-cultural media, rather than celebrity fandom in Turkey. The dichotomy of fan and "hayran" is also reflected in the self-profession of being a fan. He also says that because Anglo-American culture uses the word fan for these practices, he, too, uses this, but a direct translation does not convey the same meaning. The need to use English to describe one's status as a fan can also be seen in the following extract, where D talks about being a fan:

Extract 13

[00:05:56.29] Interviewer: Peki fan kelimesini kullanabiliyor musun?
[00:05:58.14] D: Yani, evet, kullanırım. *I'm a fan of Mad Men* derim.

[00:05:56.29] Interviewer: Would you use the word fan?
[00:05:58.14] D: I mean, yes, I would. I could say *I'm a fan of Mad Men*.

Here, I ask D if she can use the word fan to define herself as a fan of Mad Man (a TV series), and she responds that she can say *I'm a fan of Mad Men*. What is important here is that her fan status with her object of fandom is defined by English because the fandom of *Mad Men* is actually associated with the Anglo-American fans of the TV series. The fact that she finds it more appropriate to define herself as a fan in English illustrates the foreign status of such fandoms, even though there are bound to be several fans of *Mad Men* in Turkey, D chooses to position herself with the global community of Mad Men fans. I was merely asking if she could use the word fan, but the space she would use the sentence "I'm a fan of *Mad Men*" stems from the appropriation of the global fandom, rather than the local Turkish fandom of *Mad Men*, thus she states her fandom with a hypothetical direct quotation, as if she states it to the global *Mad Men* fandom. In this regard, similar to O, being a fan for a Turkish cross-cultural fan is being a fan of a foreign media product.

Even though some participants were much more at ease with switching to English when they feel appropriate and as the knowledge of being recorded was looming, all participants used code-switching to some degree, mostly to use jargon of fandom, and also to explain their emotions or to define themselves. Here, I selected some of the instances that code-switching occurred. Wardhaugh (1992) claims, bilinguals utilize code-switching as a solidarity marker. However, at the same time, it does not only yield bilingual solidarity, but it is also a solidarity marker for the community of practice, which the fans ultimately form. It is true that these fans are bilinguals, but apart from the fan-sphere, they cannot use most of the words they use when talking to a fan. It requires the knowledge that there is a shared practice and only then they can realize that they share much more than just fandom.

5.4 Cross-cultural fans are a community

Jenkins (2006) argues that "Fan communities have long defined their memberships through affinities rather than localities" (p. 137), and one of the most important aspects of fandom lies within the confessed "love" that the fans feel towards their object of fandom as discussed before. Some of the theories and definitions of fans tend to connect these feelings to an obsessive following of such fan materials, or even a pathological state. Jenson (1992) argues that fans were often seen as the others, and therefore their images are of an obsessive deviant. She also exemplifies some of the terminology used to explain fan behavior, such as 'losers', 'alienated' and 'violent' (Jenson, 1992).

Although the scholars define fan and fandom in a positive manner and more dependent on fan activities largely because of the newly realized marketing value of the fans, none of the assumptions (positive and negative) about fans can define fans and fandom in an all-encompassing manner. Fans are highly self-defining and do not shy away from defining themselves in their own words. Therefore, the self-proclamation of a more emotional connection bears more significance than labelling these attachments – somehow derogatorily- as a type of obsession. I am interested in how fans "feel" for the cross-cultural products, and therefore I will move onto the discussion of how they came to feel in their specific ways, and form practices around these feelings in order to be regarded as a community.

Penelope Eckert (2006) defines a community of practice as "a collection of people who engage on an ongoing basis in some common endeavor: a bowling team, a book club, a friendship group, a crack house, a nuclear family, a church congregation"

(p. 682). The broadness of the definition at first glance would seem overwhelming, but once we eliminate the more traditional ways of grouping people, like class, gender, geography and so on, a community of practice is a social group who came together by the way of practicing in the same way, sharing perspectives and values, and also the similarities in how they talk (Eckert, 2006). These shared practices conventionalize community-specific meaning making process, and they stem from shared experiences and understandings that have been cultivated over time. Just like any other community of practice, fandoms have an undeniable effect on the fans or individuals orientation to the world around them.

In order to posit that the fans and fandoms in general are communities of practice, the fan practices that render these groups a community should be clarified. Fans worldwide share certain practices regardless of their object of fandom. The first and maybe the most important of these practices is to convene and to gather in order to share what they love with other fans. The fans may come together in real life (in conventions like Comic-con), or online, on message boards, forums, social media sites and so on. Then, with the establishment of the communicative medium, they start sharing their contributions to the object of their fandom with other fans. It is not a single-layered sharing process, for the fans not only share their thoughts and feelings towards the media product, but also their creations: fan videos, works of fan fiction, analyses, theories, spoilers, parodies, alternate endings, and rewritings and so on. With these added circumstantial media to the primary object of fandom, fans have a very large amount of text and paratext to consume. However, their consumption is not to be understood in a capitalist, mass cultural type of activity; rather, it is a recreational practice that enables

them to further convene and share, and create or recreate further texts. Therefore, we can count four basic practices that a fan does: convene, create/recreate, share, consume as shown in Figure 1.

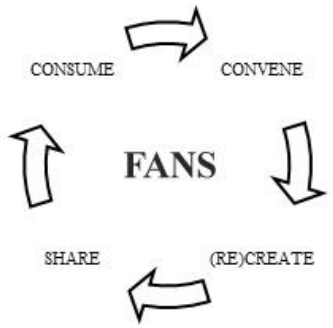


Figure 1: Cycle of Fan Practices

How do the Turkish fans of cross-cultural media fare when we consider these practices? As stated before, not all fan practices are being observed in the case of Turkish fans. For example, the fans I interviewed are not necessarily into reading or creating fan fiction or paratexts that complement the primary media. They are mostly interested in reading or watching analyses, news and so on. The main practice of Turkish fans I have interviewed is communicating with the other fans. The participants all have invested a particular amount of time to this practice, and this shared experience covers all areas of communication: they use online forums to discuss the text, they keep in touch with the individuals they communicate online, and they form their public spheres in accordance to these shared interests.

The practices of self-proclamation (being a fan) and identification are also important aspects of these shared experiences, and the statements of "love", "engagement", "attachment" and "passion" and such are very meaningful in forming a

community of practice. Following Jenkins's (2006) argument that one becomes a member of a fandom not for where they live but for what they love, we can see that Turkish cross-cultural media fans actually transgress their localities and define themselves by the things they feel strongly about. At the same time, their usage of language is also a marker of a group identity, and so is the utilization of specific linguistic practices. Even though these are all signifiers of a community of practice, the participants also gave ample examples about the "community" itself. Here, O talks about how internet forums were the primary source for fan interaction:

Extract 14

> [00:15:45.15] Interviewer: Nereden tanıştın bu diğer fan'ler ile?
>
> [00:15:46.18] O: Forumlarından genelde. İnternetten. Tabii çok enteresan şeyler de oldu, bu tür insanlar genelde aynı kafada insanlar oldukları için Star Wars'tur Yüzüklerin Efendisi'dir falan, bir nevi kapalı komünite. Ondan dolayı ben yuzuklerinefendisi.com forumlarına girip Star Wars fan'i adamlarla tanıştım. O yüzden oldukça fazla sayıda insan tanıdım ben.

> [00:15:45.15] Interviewer: Where did you meet these other fans?
>
> [00:15:46.18] O: Generally from its *forums*. From the internet. Of course very interesting things have happened to me, too. These people are usually in the same wavelength, what with *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings* – some kind of closed community. That's why I went on yuzuklerinefendisi.com forums and met guys who are fans of *Star Wars*.

O uses the phrase 'closed community' as though it means that the forum was not welcoming for outsiders. The most important aspect of O's remarks is the overlapping fan interests seen in Turkish cross-cultural media fans. According to O, this specific "closed community" he speaks of was comprised of *The Lord of the Rings* fans

(yuzuklerinefendisi.com is a forum site dedicated to J.R.R. Tolkien's works), but he also met *Star Wars* fans there. He says that they were on the same 'wavelength'. It is also interesting that O places himself outside the community when forming this sentence, ('these people are usually in the same frequency'). However, he met these people on online forums as well, and throughout the interview, he was very comfortable stating that he is both a *The Lord of the Rings* and *Star Wars* fan. The only reason I can see behind the fact that he positioned himself outside the fan circles linguistically by saying "these people" would be an attempt to show a certain awareness of the fan cultures in Turkey himself, as he is actually giving me information about the intersecting fandoms in Turkey, rather than his position within these fandoms. In contrast to this seemingly extrinsic point of view, R and G take a much more emotional stance regarding the community:

Extract 15

> [00:17:47.02] R: Arkadaşlarım, günlük hayatımda olanlar. Görüşmek istediğim ve düzenli olarak görüştüğüm insanlar. Benim gibi oldukları için...
>
> [00:17:47.02] R: My friends are those in my everyday life. They are the people that I want to see and I see regularly. Because they are like me…

Much like O, who described the affinity that these fans have as a similar 'frequency', R also emphasizes the fans whom he wants to be friends with are 'like him'. The defining difference between his statement and O's is that R gives us the information on how he perceives himself as being similar to a group of people, rather than individuals being similar to each other. I have received an even more personal answer from G:

Extract 16

> [00:11:12.25] Interviewer: … Kendini fan olarak tanımlıyor musun bu arada?
> [00:11:22.09] G: Tanımlarım. Herhalde, bütün diğer fanlikler için de geçerli, biri mesela Yüzüklerin Efendisi'yle ilgiliyse anında beni ilgilendiriyor. İyi-kötü, bir insan Yüzüklerin Efendisi'yle ilgileniyorsa, o insan anında benim ilgimi çeker. Üzerine en azından konuşacak bir şey oluyor ve bu benim için çok önemli ve derin bilgiye sahip olduğum bir şey.

> [00:11:12.25] Interviewer: … Do you define yourself as a fan?
> [00:11:22.09] G: I do. I guess it's the same for all kinds of fans, but if someone is interested in The Lord of the Rings, I am interested in them. If a person is interested in *The Lord of the Rings*, for better or worse, they catch my attention. Because then there's at least something to talk about and this is a topic that's very significant for me and on which I know a lot.

G states that he would be interested in somebody at the first stage if he or she is interested in *The Lord of the Rings*. He adds that "they catch his attention". Just the fact that a person likes *The Lord of the Rings* is enough for G to be interested in that person. While at first glance this may seem a quite telling behavior on intrapersonal relationships of fans, it can also be interpreted that it is very egocentric to be interested in a person only because you can talk to them about a subject you "know a lot" about. However, this is exactly the outset of fan communities, at first, these very different people are interested in each other on the basis that they share an interest and then they have shared practices. While sharing interest seems a very natural outcome of socializing, it is also important to note that fan communities form around these shared practices and point of views. People socialize in countless ways and reasons and all the fans I have interviewed were socializing outside their fan-sphere. However, being in a fan community, at the outset, needs a shared practice; be it a quotation of a line from the

text, or a signifier that you are doing fan practices, for example wearing a t-shirt of a favorite TV show or comic book.

As has been suggested before, members of a fandom actually form a community of practice, and they do not share an imagined camaraderie (as in the Benedict Anderson's notion of imagined communities), but common practices and understandings. The sense of belonging, however, has a very important effect on the acquisition of fan practices since the fans do not only hint that they feel a sense of belonging, but they also vocalize that they are in a group, alienated from another. Here D talks about being in a group and the sense of belonging:

Extract 17

> [00:25:39.17] D: Kültürel olarak zaten ben ve benim mensubu olduığumu söyleyebileceğim bir zümre insan benim çok tanıdığım var bu konuda, kendimizi o kadar alıştırdık ki yıllardır, Türkiye'ye dair zaten inancım, İngilizce öğrenirken ben Türkçe olan ve Türkiye'de üretilen... Türkçe grup asla sevemem, dinleyemem, hiçbir Türkçe film sevemem klasikler haricinde, hiçbir Türkçe dizi izleyemem falan gibi bir inancım vardı. O yüzden halen benim için şey çok şaşırtıcı olabiliyor, sonra fark ettim ki tabii ki bunu yapan insanlar, Türkçe şarkı dinleyen insanlara ben hala şaşırabiliyorum. Halbuki ne kadar kibirli bir şey, ama bu böyle. O yüzden...
>
> [00:25:39.17] D: Culturally I and a group of people whom I can say I belong to and there are so many like that I know have made ourselves so used to this thing about Turkey for years. When I was learning English, I used to believe that I can never like something that is Turkish and that's made in Turkey. I used to believe I can never listen to or like any Turkish bands, I can never love any Turkish films except the classics, I can never watch any Turkish TV shows. That's why it can be very surprising for me still, I can still be amazed by people who do this, who listen to Turkish songs. Isn't that very arrogant of me, but it's just like that.

D talks about how she cannot abide Turkish culture, and says that she belongs to a group of people culturally, and she knows a lot of people who are like her, sharing this cultural

alienation. She grounds her sense of belonging onto a sense of alienation. This is a predisposition that she acquired during her formative years, and it in fact was an outcome of her learning English (in our pre-interview chat, she specified that she went to a school where English was the language of the instruction). Even though she uses past tense while talking about her alienation from the Turkish cultural products, she still feels the same as it can be seen from the fact that she is still surprised about people who listens to Turkish songs. Her usage of past tense ("I used to believe") may also mean that she started listening to Turkish music, because even though she is surprised at people who listen Turkish music (Turkish pop) but she mentions "Turkish bands", that she never thought she could listen. This implies that she listens or may have listened Turkish rock music (since bands tend to make rock music), but even though the bands are Turkish, the music they make is rarely (except Anatolian Rock) pertain to Turkish culture. That also means that her formation as a fan did not start with a media text, but rather it was the alienation she felt as she learnt English. It is very interesting to see this rejection (I will be discussing the practice of cultural rejection in the following sections), and the subsequent sense of belonging actually a reaction towards the mainstream media of her teenage years (late 90s to early years of the first decade of 2000s) when she learned English (also see Section 5.6).

Extract 18

> [00:20:07.02] M: Sadece şeyi konuşurken, bu fandom ve fan'lik aslında aidiyet duygusu. Science Fiction veya fantastik edebiyat gibi şeylerden bahsediyorsak, belki biraz hayattan kaçış ama orada gördüğün şeyler daha fazla mutlu ediyorsa bence bunun bir sakıncası yok. Bu hayatına ters tesir etmiyorsa. Bu aidiyetle etrafındaki insanları, sosyal çevreni oluşturuyorsun ve bu çok güzel bir şey, bu kontrolün sende olması.

> [00:20:07.02] M: *Fandom*s and being a *fan* are actually related to belonging to something. If we are talking about things like *science fiction* or fantastic literature, maybe it's a bit of escapism from like but if the things you find there make you happier, I think then there's nothing wrong with that. Unless it affects you negatively. With this sense of belonging, you form the people around you, your social circle. And it's nice that you have control.

M (27) approaches the notion somehow different. He defines fandom and being a fan, as a sense of belonging. What is different here is that he makes the connection of this belonging to "escapism". Escapism is often seen as a characteristic of science and fantasy fiction, and it denotes that the readers of such fiction are trying to escape from the real world, because they feel alienated. Seeing fantasy and science fiction as escapist genres is widely criticized by the genre writers. J.R.R. Tolkien (1964), in his essay "On Fairy Stories", contrasts the notion of "escape" and "escapism". He asks, "Why should a man be scorned if, finding himself in prison, he tries to get out and go home?" (p. 61). He likens the difference between escape and escapism to the difference between the "Escape of the Prisoner" and the "Flight of the Deserter" (p. 61), meaning that it is commendable to escape from a repressive culture. This repressive culture for Tolkien is the "rawness and ugliness of modern European life" (Tolkien, 1964, p. 64), which can be interpreted as the precursor (the essay is first published in 1939) of contemporary mass culture. We can say that, when M talks about escapism, he talks about "escaping a prison", prison being the dominant popular culture in Turkey. He copes with the cultural repression by choosing other individuals who also seek to escape from this culture. He has the "control" to form his own social circle in this respect, and together, they make up a community of practice, initially marked by their rejection of the dominant cultural practices. Even though M emphasizes the escapism, he still tries to justify being a fan

within the dominant culture. He says that “there’s nothing wrong with that (fandom)”, and “if it (fandom) does not affect you negatively”. He assumes that being a fan could be seen as undesirable, wrong, or negative by dominant discourse, so he shows an effort to justify being a fan, belonging to a community, and escaping the dominant cultural environment.

The supposed control of choosing your social circle in accordance with their affinity to certain texts is made possible by the proliferation of the internet. Fans adopted the internet and World Wide Web relatively earlier than the standard user (Duffett, 2013). As mentioned before, O was a user of the internet forums. Here, O gives us further information on the time he started using these forums:

Extract 19

> [00:16:36.03] Interviewer: Hangi forumları kullanıyordun?
> [00:16:36.03] O: yuzuklerinefendisi.com forumu, starwars.gen.tr'yi kullanıyordum
> [00:16:43.25] Interviewer: Hangi yıllar bunlar?
> [00:16:44.16] O: Star Wars 2002, Yüzüklerin Efendisi'ne 2003'te girdim ama 2005'te yazmaya başladım
> [00:16:52.13] Interviewer: Bu insanlarla hala paylaşımda bulunuyor musun?
> [00:17:00.24] O: Tabii, o grupla iletişim halindeydim yıllar boyunca, hala da öyleyim ama konu ortak noktayla başlamış olsa da, sonra karşıdaki insanı tanıyıp normal arkadaşınız oluyor.

> [00:16:36.03] Interviewer: Which forums were you using?
> [00:16:36.03] O: The forums of yuzuklerinefendisi.com and starwars.gen.tr.
> [00:16:43.25] Interviewer: And what year is this?
> [00:16:44.16] O: I joined Star Wars in 2002, The Lord of the Rings in 2003, but I started participating in 2005.
> [00:16:52.13] Interviewer: Did you keep in touch with these people?
> [00:17:00.24] O: Sure, I was in connection with that group for years, I still am. It may have started with a common interest, but the person you get to know becomes your friend later on.

O made it clear that he does not participate in these forums any more, but he kept in touch with the friends he made there. We also see the years he joined these sites: 2002 and 2003. For all the participants of this study, their formative teen years coincided with the start of widespread internet use, in the first years of 2000s. Even today, forums are an integral part of online fandoms, even though the forum usage swiftly declined with the social media boom during the late 2000s. O also says that he started participating in these forums in 2005, at least two years after he joined the forums, which means that he read what other users post on the forum, but he did not join and participate in the discussions or other projects. Another practice of fans, especially within the then newly formed fandoms between 2000 and 2005 was to join and participate in forums (the forum he talks about, yuzuklerinefendisi.com was opened in 2002). As O stated earlier (Extract 14), these forums were like "closed communities", so the reason he did not start participating, but waited two years to participate was probably a hesitation to enter a newly formed and tight-knit digital community. On the other hand, the sense of belonging comes into being with participation, and the formative participatory practices of fans occur within forums. Fans write, read and discuss fan-fiction, discuss parts of the original text and they start unofficial projects (for example in yuzuklerinefendisi.com and starwars.gen.tr, users have taken on themselves to translate the then untranslated books of Tolkien[10] and *Star Wars*). G takes a different perspective about using forums and its formative values as shown in Extract 20:

[10] The users of yuzuklerinefendisi.com engaged in a project to translate the book, Unfinished Tales in 2003. http://www.yuzuklerinefendisi.com/categories.php?op=newindex&catid=12

Extract 20

> [00:17:50.24] Interviewer: Fan'ler arasındaki bu diyalog, fan olmak için önemli bir şey mi, biraz formatif bir şey mi? Eğer bu paylaşım olmasaydı da hala fan olur muydun sence?
>
> [00:18:06.09] G: Şu noktada olurdum çünkü internet diye bir şey var, etrafımda Yüzüklerin Efendisi seven kimse olmasa bile Yüzüklerin Efendisi üzerine konuşabileceğim yerler var. Ama başlangıçta muhtemelen fan olmazdım … Ama olmazdım muhtemelen çünkü ilk bir şeyle ilgilenmekten çok keyif alırım ama üzerine başka insanlarla paylaşabileceğim bir şey olmazsa bir yerden sonra azalarak biter diye düşünüyorum.
>
> [00:17:50.24] Interviewer: Do you think that this dialogue among the fans is important in becoming a fan, is it formative? If you hadn't shared, would you still be a fan?
>
> [00:18:06.09] G: I would, at this point, because the internet exists now. There are places in which I can talk about The Lord of the Rings, even when there is no one around me that enjoys The Lord of the Rings. But at the beginning, I wouldn't be a *fan* ... I wouldn't, because I really enjoy spending time about some stuff at first, but then if I wouldn't be able to share it with others, maybe my interest would wither and end.

G also was a relatively active forum member during the early years of first decade of 2000s, and he admits that he would not be a fan ("at the beginning") because there would not be such a widespread attention to any given subject at any given moment. Even though the internet existed during the early years of first decade of 2000s, he says, "because the internet exists now", meaning that the internet of early years of first decade of 2000s was predominantly different from the internet today. One interpretation of this could be that he means that today, with the social media boom and the abundance of dedicated circumstantial media sites about every fan object, it is easier to be a fan, without even sharing. However since such access points were not available when he became a fan, forums were of utmost importance to make a reader or a viewer a fan. Of course there were media fans before fans started convening on the internet, but for the

young adults whose teens were coincided with the proliferation of internet saw the digital platforms as a viable (and also the most accessible) form of conventions. M, however followed a different pattern as shown in Extract 21:

Extract 21

> [00:10:05.15] M: Evet, yani üniversiteye girdikten sonra fantastik edebiyat kulübüyle ortaya çıkan yuzuklerinefendisi.com üyeliğim vardı. Ve gerçekten beni çok mutlu etti, çok güzel insanlarla tanıştım, hala da çoğu hayatımdadır, üyeliğim bir sekiz dokuz yılı bulmuştur, artık girip bakmıyorum bile ama o insanlarla hala görüşürüm.
>
> [00:10:05.15] M: Yes, when I went to college and I joined the fantastic literature club, I became a member of yuzuklerinefendisi.com. And it made me so happy, I met so many great people, many of whom are still in my life. I must have been a member for 8-9 years now. I don't even enter the website anymore but I still see those people.

Even though O and M were on the same forum site, they were not subsequent referrals in my sampling. That is significant to show that the fan community in this age group is quite heterogeneous. M too joined the same forum site as O, after he joined his university's fantasy literature club, again during the years between 2000 and 2005. Like O, he deems the people he met as his friends, but he stopped sharing on the site, and continued seeing the people he met online. Sandvoss (2005) states that "there can be little doubt that many fans themselves imagine these networks as a community and equal to other friendship ties" (p. 56). Even though Sandvoss uses the word "imagine", the online fandoms as communities do not need to imagine themselves as a community, because it is not only the fans who deem their mutual online fan practices makes them a community, but also these online fan practices are a formative element of the

community of practice. Perhaps the time for separating online and offline relationships and investigating them as two different formations is outdated in this age, where being online is an essential part of being in "real life" as well. Duffett (2013) states that the online practices are far from being solely virtual, it is both mediated by and mediates by everyday interactions and practices. Conventions are the most important aspect of fan communities and the most influential practice, and online forums are the spaces where media fans in Turkey convened.

Contrary to my argument that internet access during the early years of the first decade of 2000s was very important in the formation of fan communities, and the digital socialization earlier turned into the social circle in later years, C does not specify a difference in his relationship with people who are fans and who are not as shown in Extract 22:

Extract 22

> [00:08:19.18] C: Yok, yani genelde ortak paydada buluşamadığım insanlarla da çok bir arada bulunmuyorsun zaten. Ama Star Wars, Yüzüklerin Efendisi ya da herhangi bir siyaset konusu olabilir, felsefe olabilir, tarih olabilir, insanlarla neticede önemli olan muhabbet edebilecek bir konunun olması. Ama özel ayrıcalık verdiğim bir konu yok. Önemli olan konuşabilmek, muhabbet edebilmek, vakit geçirebilmek, geyik yapabilmek.

> [00:08:19.18] C: No, because I don't often come together with people with whom I share little. It could be *Star Wars* or *The Lord of the Rings*, but it could also be a political, philosophical, historical subject. What's important is that you have something to talk about with people. But there isn't a subject which I prioritize. What's important is talking, chatting, spending time and just chit chat.

C (31), a naval engineer, simply says that he does not put his fandom above the other subjects like, politics, philosophy or history. C was a genuinely interesting participant, because he was the only person not to utilize code-switching, and also he did not show

any rejection or resistance towards the contemporary Turkish popular culture. Throughout the interview, he actually hinted he embraces Turkish culture, and he often said that he is a fan of history in general. He said he liked works that have an alternative history. However, even though his online practices are the same as the other media fans I interviewed (O was the referrer of C, they participated in the same online forums, yuzuklerinefendisi.com and starwars.gen.tr), he deliberately did not differentiated his status towards fans and non-fans, whereas other fans had clearly made it clear that they have different relationships with fans and non-fans. It shows that while online practices are stable and conjecturable, fans differ in their everyday lives, for fan communities are not the only social sphere they participate.

5.5 Cross-cultural fandom as a mode of resistance

Thus far I have argued that practices of confessing affinity, code-swiching and the sense of belonging are some of the formative elements of cross-cultural media fandom in Turkey as a community of practice. However, the shared practices and understandings are not limited to these, as there are more shared values within the community of fandom. Jenkins (1992) tells us that media fans are productive consumers and participating spectators. Although it is perfectly reasonable to see media fans as consumers, it may cause overlooking some other shared characteristics. In a way fans, as Cavicchi (1998) argues, are ideal consumers, because their pattern of consumption is relatively stable and conjecturable. The fandoms are catered with niche products more and more, directly oriented towards their tastes and patterns, and each one can maintain its own niche fandom with the help of digital media. However, it needs to be

investigated how fans perceive themselves to reach a conclusion before appropriating consumerist culture's labels to define them. Hills (2002) informs us that the media fans express hostility towards commercialization and commodification which has resulted in an anti-consumerist theorization of media fans. Then, this bears questions, such as why would fans express such hostility towards commercialization, which can be regarded as a way for a fandom to proliferate and why would fans be opposed to commodification, when merchandising and collecting actually complement fan formation. Here, I propose that media fans in Turkey do not oppose the practices of consumerism, but they position the consumer as the "other" to define themselves in contrast to the pervasive mass culture's flaws as they perceive it. Fans clearly enounce beliefs and ideologies that are anti-consumerist (Hills, 2002), and as they differentiate themselves from the consumerist society, they actually demonstrate a resistance. Fiske, for example suggests that popular culture is a platform for resistance (see 1987, 1989a, 1989b), and every action that makes the consumers "other" renders fans a resistive force in the face of commercial media. In this section, I want to look at the interviews from the perspective of resistance towards mass media and commercialist culture, and thus, illustrate that this is another fan practice that makes fans a community.

One thing is for sure: fans are consumers. They may not want to be identified as such, or they may attribute other characteristics to themselves, but they are engaged consumers. In fact one of the key elements that separate them from the standard media consumer is that they consume more. Here D talks about the merchandise she has on her object of fandom, TV show *Mad Men*:

Extract 23

[00:11:29.26] Interviewer: Hangi materyellere sahipsin diye soracaktım ben de.
[00:11:29.26] D: Kitaplarım var. Ama bu kitaplar şey kitabı değil, onunla da biraz gurur duyuyorum açıkçası böyle hani özellikle bazı filmlerin kitapları gibi resimli kitap gibi değil, mesela işte diziden bağımsız, franchise'ın içinde olmayarak da çıkan şeyler var. Mesela bir kişi illüstrasyonlar yapmış, bir kişi o dönemdeki olayların arkasında, dizide görünen olayların footnote'ları, hatta kitabın adı Footnotes, o olayları daha detaylı anlatıyor. Bunları yapıyorum yine, çok büyük bir fan miyim, değilim yine, bunları çok daha iyi takip edenler var ama normal izleyen gibi de değilim yani.
[00:12:24.02] Interviewer: İzleyen değil ama Mad Men'i sevdiğini söyleyen bir insandan senin farkın ne?
[00:12:36.02] D: Farkım benim çok daha mesai harcamam, çok daha büyük bir engagement'ım var. Ben dizinin her bölümünden sonra dizinin bölümünü izlemeyi kesinlikle 24 saatten fazla geciktirmiyorum, ne olursa olsun. Hiçbir şekilde benim için başka bir öncelik olamaz. Bütün haftayı, dört beş günü, üzerine çok yorum yapılan bir dizi olduğu için profesyonel bloglarda ve sitelerde, bütün o yazıları okurum. Ama çok paylaşmıyorum, paylaşamıyorum açıkçası. Hani çok paylaşabileceğim insanlar olduğunu düşünmüyorum çevremde.

[00:11:29.26] Interviewer: I was going to ask you which materials you have.
[00:11:29.26] D: I have books. But these aren't the kind of books, I'm actually proud to say… you know some films have photo books, not that kind. For example, there's independent stuff that is not part of the *franchise*. For instance, someone made illustrations, someone wrote about the *footnotes* of the events that are in the background of the series. The name of the book indeed is Footnotes. So the writer talks about background events in detail. I do these, but am I a big *fan*? I guess I'm not because there are people who follow this stuff much better. But I'm not just any spectator.
[00:12:24.02] Interviewer: What is your difference from a person who doesn't just watch but says that he or she loves *Mad Men*?
[00:12:36.02] D: My difference is that I put a lot of time into this, I have a much bigger *engagement*. I always watch a new episode within 24 hours of its release, no matter what happens. Nothing is more of a priority for me. All week, four or five days, I read all the articles on it on professional blogs and websites because it's commented on a lot. But I don't, I can't share a lot. I don't think there are people around me with whom I can share much about this.

D says that she has books, which are actually paratexts of the primary media, and are "not part of the franchise" (she uses the word franchise in English). She actually says that she is proud to own these non-franchise books, because she actually looks down on

the official “photo books” published by the TV studios. She does not think she is a big fan, but as she puts it, she is “not just any spectator” either. Later in the interview, she tells that she has a bigger “engagement” (see Extract 9) than “others” who prioritize different things when they watch a TV show, but she prioritizes the show above all else (“Nothing is more of a priority for me”). D gives us two qualities that separates her from the common spectator, or media consumer. She buys and reads non-franchise paratexts about the show, and she has different priorities in life. Fans do not only prioritize the consumption of the text, but they generally consume as much paratext as the original product.. The reason I used the term “media consumer” is that she actually consumes more than an average consumer by spending money on her fandom, however, she does not consider herself a regular consumer. In Extract 24, M talks about spending money on his fandom, as well:

Extract 24

> [00:16:20.29] M: … ben mesleğimi ne yaparsam yapayım, kazandığım parayla bunları sağlamak için yaşayacağım. Bunları finanse etsin diye para kazanacağım.
>
> [00:16:20.29] M: … whatever I do for a living, I’ll live for sustaining these (fandom and merchandise) with the money I earn. I will earn money to finance these.

We encounter another declaration of willingness to invest time and money on the object of fandom with the words of M. He says that he will earn his living to provide himself with the fan materials. This is a different aspect of the fandom: you have to have a larger investment than a regular consumer to ensure the continuity of fandom, but again, this happens in a more material manner. You have to surround yourself with not just the

primary text, or the paratexts that are easily accessible via the internet, but also with merchandise, like action figures, shirts, and further paraphernalia. This willingness to spend money, even holding a job to finance these needs as M says is what makes fans a market for all kinds of merchandise and what makes them different from a regular media consumer. In Extract 25, Z, a software developer, purports that difference:

Extract 25

> [00:02:43] Interviewer: … Neden kendini bir fan olarak tanımlıyorsun diye düzelteyim soruyu.
> [00:02:58] Z: Bazı eserleri veya şeyleri ortalama tüketiciden daha fazla sevip veya içselleştirip daha derin hakkında bilgi edinmek istediğim için bazı konularda ya da daha fazla hoşuma gidip sürekli aynı şeyleri tüketmek istediğim için olabilir.
>
> [00:02:43] Interviewer: … Let me rephrase it like this: why do you define yourself as a fan?
> [00:02:58] Z: It might be because that I love and internalize some works or things and love them more deeply than the average consumer, and to consume the same things I like and want to know more about over and over.

Z tells in the interview that the reason he defines himself as a fan is the difference of emotional attachment to a text, like D did (Extract 23). Z emphasizes that his difference than an "average consumer" is the habit of consuming his fan media "over and over". This hyperbolic consumption is what sets him apart. Average consumer watches a TV show or reads a book once, but a fan does these multiple times. Media consumption of these "average consumers" is actually seen as a mere pastime by fans, and in Extract 26, R mentions the difference between the emotional attachments of a fan and a media consumer.

Extract 26

> [00:07:09.18] R: Hayatımda herhalde en çok kendimi fan olarak adlandırabileceğim şeyler sinema ve çizgi romandır. İkisi de benim için günlük hayatta eğlence için, ya da genel geçer bir şekilde tükettiğim şeyler değil. Aklımda çok fazla yer eden, üzerine çok fazla düşündüğüm, duygusal olarak çok bağımlı olduğum, ve çocukluğumdan beri artık bir alışkanlık haline gelmiş şeyler benim için. Bazen günlük hayatta şahsi olarak başıma gelen şeylerden bile daha çok takıyorum hatta bu *fictional* şeylere.
>
> [00:07:09.18] R: I think I can identify myself a fan of mostly films and comic books. These two are not things that I consume casually for fun in daily life. They stick in my mind, I think so much on them, I am emotionally addicted to them and they are the things that have become a habit since childhood. Sometimes I dwell on these *fictional* things even more so than the personal stuff that happens to me in everyday life. …

In contrast to the regular consumer, R does not consume the media (films and comic books) casually, or for entertainment only. It is a formative experience for fans starting from childhood, and it is an emotional "addiction". Similar to what D (Extract 23) said, these media products are actually a priority for him, even more so than the real life struggles. Consuming not just for fun as a theme appeared in most of the interviews I have conducted, and O gives a good example how he perceives the media experience of the regular consumers in Extract 27:

Extract 27

> [00:10:35.07] O: Yani şey var, oynadığın, okuduğun, dinlediğin, izlediğin eseri bir sallapati deneyimlemek var, bir de ilgileniyorsan, seviyorsan, background'unu falan araştırarak bunları yapmak var.
>
> [00:10:35.07] O: I mean, there's experiencing a work you play, read, listen or watch haphazardly, and there's also, if you are interested, if you love, researching its *background* and such.

He thinks that there is a particular difference between experiencing a media product "haphazardly" and investing time to do the research on the media you are a fan of. It is very important to realize that they differentiate themselves from the consumer of a product on the basis of consuming more. This begs the question of what the required level of consumption that a fan needs to be a fan is, but this too is subject to how a fan perceives what being a fan entails.

It can be said that the media fans engage in a hyperbolic consumption of their object of fandom. Z said that he consumes the same thing over and over again (Extract 25), R does not consume for fun, but consume with an addiction (Extract 26), and O does not consume his fan object haphazardly (Extract 27). In all these cases, we see that the media fans contrast their consuming habits with the regular consumers, and what makes the fan consumption hyperbolic is that they consume the circumstantial media, the merchandise and the text time and time again. However, the fan's hyperbolic consumption of a single text can actually still result in consuming less than the regular consumer. Since the regular media consumers do not invest or spend time or money even as near enough as fans, are bound to consume (watch, read, listen, play, etc.) more media products than a fan. In a commercial culture where every consumer is expected and compelled to consume as many media products as they can, the fans invest their time, money and emotions to a single text that holds a powerful sway on their everyday lives. This, among all else, is how they resist the commercial culture's coercive attempts to make people consume more. They stick to one text and consume information, media and commodity about them.

Fans, of course, do not only show resistance to pervasive commercial culture. To evoke de Certeau's idea here, we can say that everyday resistance starts with a reactivated, liberated consumer, who now takes what he needs from a text and restructure it until it is more meaningful for him. He is no more a receiver, he produces as he consumes. However, resistance shown in the face of commercial culture is actually one of the easiest to spot, and disregarding the other modes of resistance would be doing injustice to fans in Turkey, and especially the participants of this study. A very interesting example of this multitude of resistive behavior is explained by D in Extract 28.

Extract 28

> [00:19:46.05] D: … artık LGBT kimlikler ve fandom çok iç içe girmeye başladı, internet sayesinde fan'i olunan ürünler yeniden üretilebildiği için artık büyük bir kimlik ifadesi görebiliyoruz. Resimlerle olsun, o eserin interpretation'larıyla olsun, fan fiction'ı ile, yeniden kurgulanması, yazılmasında hem de var olanın yorumlanmasında ben çok görüyorum. Ki zaten bu gözle baktığın zaman hani canonic ve fan'i olunan bir sürü eser çok fazla bu tür şeye açık bence. O yüzden o erkek egemenlik kalkacaktır diye düşünüyorum.

> [00:19:46.05] D: … now LGBT identities and *fandom* are so intertwined. Because the products of which people are *fans* can now be reproduced, we now see a big expression of identities. Be these with pictures, with the *interpretatio*ns of that product, the reediting of it with *fan fiction*… I see a lot of reinterpretations. And when you consider it that way, many *canonic* works or works which have a lot of *fans* are really open to this. So I believe that the male domination will no longer be a thing.

D here talks about a different type of resistance towards the dominant discourse, and says that "male domination" (in certain fan products) will not be the case as LGBT identities are more and more visible in fandoms. There are all kinds of different ways to illustrate this, but as I have previously mentioned, slash fiction is actually the most vocal

take on heteronormative stereotypes and male dominance of fandoms, and it is easier to grasp. According to Jenkins (2006):

> Academic accounts of slash seem preoccupied with the question of why straight women write stories about gay male characters, seeing slash as a heterosexual appropriation of queerness. In fact, lesbian and bisexual women have always participated alongside straight women in slash fandom, and people of all sexual orientations have found slash a place for exploring their differences and commonalities. (p. 64)

Straight women writing about gay pairings of canonically heterosexual characters (men) is a common element of slash fiction, and most of the scholars of fan studies actually see this as an appropriation of queer identities. However, slash fiction is not about heterosexual people at all; it is about the fluidity of identities, and rearranging the cultural and heteronormative stereotypes to find a common ground for all sexualities. Some slash fiction reinterpret characters as gay or bisexual, and they are in struggle with a homophobic society (Jenkins, 2006, p. 74). One of the examples of slash fan fiction that deals with the homophobic society is a *Harry Potter* slash fan fiction, titled to imitate the structure of book titles, "Harry Potter and the Horrors of Homophobia", on fanfiction.net. In the excerpt, the author writes: "Harry is devastated when almost everyone at Hogwarts turns their back on him when he announces he's gay".[11] There are over 100 reviews of this particular fan fiction, and while some commend the author for bringing the issue of coming out, others actually find the slash fiction irrelevant or intrusive for bringing up the issue of coming out. However it might be, it is a resistive

[11] Fan fiction: Harry Potter and the horrors of homophobia https://www.fanfiction.net/s/2054514/1/Harry-Potter-and-the-horrors-of-homophobia

practice towards the heteronormative dominant cultural norms and the original author's privileged position (in this case J.K. Rowling's). Of course there are thousands of slash fiction on the internet, and they deal with not just male homosexuality, but also a myriad of sexualities. Each and every one of these slash works are actually poaching what they can use to resist the primary text and the culture it was produced in.

None of the other participants talked about the subversive characteristic of fan fiction or fandom in general regarding sexualities, and most of the participants actually stated that they do not read or relate to fan fiction. All of the media texts they are fans of (*The Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, Doctor Who*, etc.) have extensive fan fiction in the dedicated fan sites, but the fans I interviewed had no interest in those. This begs a further research on Turkish works of fan fiction, since Turkish fan fiction database turkfanfiction.net only has two pieces about Turkish TV shows (one is about *Muhteşem Yüzyıl*, and the other is a crossover fan fiction of *Muhteşem Yüzyıl* and *Doctor Who*), while Anglo-American TV shows have 537 pieces of fan fiction to the date of this study.[12]

In regard to Turkey, little fan fiction was written before the emergence of teen dramas from the early 2010s. These teen dramas were mostly remakes and localized versions of American TV shows and the fan fictions were written predominantly about them; such as *Med-cezir*, a remake *The OC*, and *Küçük Sırlar*, a remake of *Gossip Girl.* Prior to these shows, very few examples of fan fiction had been written in the Turkish

[12] http://www.turkfanfiction.net/arsiv/browse.php?type=categories&catid=2

language and even less so in Turkish contexts. Fans of the musical acts One Direction and Justin Bieber, most notably, publish stories which feature themselves or other imaginary heroines in romantic contexts with the musicians. These stories can be often found on Facebook fan pages or independent fan web sites, as well as the fan fiction portal Wattpad, which is one of the biggest sources for fan fiction in Turkish language. The self-proclaimed "world's largest fan fiction archive" FanFiction.net has only a few stories in Turkish language, however they are written for the Harry Potter series, American teen show *Glee*, and Japanese anime series including *Naruto.*

Fan fiction is the most apparent form of productive practice regarding fandoms, and the lack of Turkish fan fiction again shows that participatory fandom has more to do with Anglo-American cultural products. Turkish participatory fans of Anglo-American texts are locally connected with likeminded people, who also feel a sense of belonging to a specific community, but they define themselves globally, without cultural boundaries. Their everyday culture is not Turkish culture, and it is important to see that they actively reject Turkish culture. Therefore, the final and the most significant act of resistance is the fact that the cross-cultural media fans in Turkey rejects dominant Turkish culture and cultural products that comes with it.

5.6 Cross-cultural fandom as a form of rejection

Jenkins (2006) argues that the global media consumers, the new "cosmopolitans embrace cultural difference, seeking to escape the gravitational pull of their local communities in order to enter a broader sphere of cultural experience" (pp. 155-156).

This bears the question whether the cross-cultural media fans in Turkey are trying to find a way to escape the dominance of Turkish culture to be part of a global cultural exchange. It became clear with the interviews that cross-cultural media fans in Turkey, especially within the age group I studied, actually made up their mind about Turkish mass culture a long time ago, during their formative years of childhood. A foreign fandom is useful in order not to feel alienated within their vernacular culture, for it creates a sense of belonging in a specific community. However, for almost all of the participants, they do not deem contemporary Turkish cultural products relevant. It is not to say that they disregard them altogether (as it will be shown at the end of this section), but the majority finds no commonality between their cultural preferences and the cultural preferences of Turkish mass culture. In Extract 29, D talks about the alienation and the rejection of Turkish popular culture:

Extract 29

> [00:25:39.17] D: Kültürel olarak zaten ben ve benim mensubu olduığumu söyleyebileceğim bir zümre insan benim çok tanıdığım var bu konuda, kendimizi o kadar alıştırdık ki yıllardır, Türkiye'ye dair zaten inancım, İngilizce öğrenirken ben Türkçe olan ve Türkiye'de üretilen... Türkçe grup asla sevemem, dinleyemem, hiçbir Türkçe film sevemem klasikler haricinde, hiçbir Türkçe dizi izleyemem falan gibi bir inancım vardı. O yüzden halen benim için şey çok şaşırtıcı olabiliyor, sonra fark ettim ki tabii ki bunu yapan insanlar, Türkçe şarkı dinleyen insanlara ben hala şaşırabiliyorum. Halbuki ne kadar kibirli bir şey, ama bu böyle.
>
> [00:25:39.17] D: Culturally I and a group of people whom I can say I belong to and there are so many like that I know have made ourselves so used to this thing about Turkey for years. When I was learning English, I believed that I can never like something that is Turkish and that's made in Turkey. I believed I can never listen to or like any Turkish bands, I can never love any Turkish films except the classics, I can never watch any Turkish TV shows… That's why it can be very surprising for me still, I can still be amazed by people who do this, who listen to Turkish songs. Isn't that very arrogant of me, but it's just like that.

D was one of the most outspoken critiques of Turkish cultural products and Turkey in general. In the extract above, she says that she never believed that she could love anything about Turkey. She cannot listen Turkish music or love Turkish bands, watch Turkish shows or films (apart from the classics). She even feels surprised when people listen to Turkish music. This cultural rejection was a process started in early adolescence, when she started learning English (as it is stated earlier, she learned English at an early age, in the middle-school where the medium of instruction was English). This again is a very clear indicator that learning English at an early age, which probably coupled with an exposure to Anglo-American culture, is formative when we regard fandom as an acquired sense of belonging. The rejection of Turkish culture is not without its consequences. From the general content of the extract above, we can infer that she deems the consumers of Turkish cultural products lacking some qualities that are important to her, and she acknowledges that she is being arrogant. This shows that she positions the vernacular Turkish media consumers below in an imaginary social strata. It can be inferred from her usage of the word "arrogance" that she feels somehow guilty or at least uneasy in the face of dominant cultural practices and their practitioners in Turkey. This uneasiness may also be a reaction to the fact that she feels alienated from the Turkish mass culture but she actually sees the said culture beneath her. In the Extract 30, she further explains the alienation she felt for the most part of her life:

Extract 30

> [00:26:36.23] D: Yani, her zaman Türkiye'de doğmuş olmaktan... eskiden daha güçlüydü... bir tuhaf. Şey düşünüyorsun, yani yurt dışında bulunduğun zaman da aynı şey aklına geliyor. Neden biz bunlarla uğraşmak zorundayız diye... Kültürün ürünlerinden kaynaklanıyor. Ben türkü dinlemek zorunda mıyım? Ben Recep İvedik'in doğduğu bir yerde bulunmak zorunda mıyım?

> [00:26:36.23] D: I mean, I've always considered being born in Turkey… it used to be a stronger feeling… a bit strange. You think, also when you are abroad, why we have to deal with this. It's because of the cultural products. Do I have to listen to *türkü*? Do I have to live somewhere where Recep İvedik is born?

In Extract 30, D goes deeper in her rejection of Turkish culture. Being born in Turkey actually creates a frustration within her. When she compares Turkish culture with other countries (presumably Western countries), she pins this frustration directly to the Turkish cultural products. She does not talk about Turkish high cultural products like Classical Turkish Music or literature. She actually rejects more vernacular cultural products and contemporary popular cultural products. She does not want to listen to Turkish folk songs ("*türkü*"). The other popular media product is interesting, because she says that she does not want to live in a place where Recep İvedik is born. Recep İvedik is the name of the oafish titular character of the *Recep İvedik* movie franchise. The films are farcical low comedies, but she approaches the lead character as a real person. She uses Recep İvedik to make an archetypal criticism about the lowbrow cultural products in Turkey. All of the Turkish cross-cultural fans I have conducted interviews with were middle class urban intellectual individuals, and while people from the same class could be a fan of Recep İvedik, the rejection is much to do with the exposure to Anglo-American culture and being conscious of the alternative media products in Anglo-American culture. In Extract 31, we see this exposure and consciousness, as well as a sense of escapism:

Extract 31

> [00:27:09.13] D: … bunların hepsi bana displaced hissetmememe yardımcı oldular. Evet, sokakta türkü çalıyor olabilir, arkadaşın düğününde pop çalabilir, televizyonda izleyecek şey bulamıyor olabilirim, normal televizyonda, ekstra

kanallar alınmadıysa, ama ne yaparım, hepsini kapatırım, açarım internetimi, açarım YouTube'u, açarım Jimmy Fallon'dan bir bölüm izlerim, hiç umurumda olmaz, ama tekrar bunu bana sağlayan şey İngilizce oldu.

[00:27:09.13] D: … all of this stuff has helped me not to feel *displaced*. Yes, there can be *türkü* on the street, there can be pop music playing in my friend's wedding, I could be finding nothing to watch on television if there are no foreign channels available. But what I could do is switch it all off, switch on the internet, get on YouTube, watch an episode of Jimmy Fallon and then I won't care. But again, it's been knowing English that has helped me do this.

D here elaborates on how she copes with the frustration that dominant Turkish popular culture created in her. She uses the word "displaced" in English to define her alienation from the Turkish cultural products. She says that being a bilingual has helped her to consume Anglo-American media, because it created the exposure to the global cultural material. Even a very mainstream late night TV talk show like *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon* is considered as an alternative to Turkish media products, and many of the fandoms that the participants mentioned were quite mainstream as well, such as *Star Wars* and *The Lord of the Rings*. However, D does not say that she is a fan of Jimmy Fallon's show, but rather it is regarded as an alternative and a way of avoiding Turkish media. Watching Jimmy Fallon on YouTube makes her content with the alienation and displacement she feels about the Turkish media products.

Media is not the only culprit of this sense of alienation within fans. Below are five extracts about sports and football:

Extract 32

[00:04:16.03] Interviewer: Spor deyince aklına ne geliyor?
[00:04:20.28] R: Futbol geliyor ama...
[00:04:25.04] Interviewer: Buradan biraz sporla ilgili olmadığını çıkarabilir miyiz?
[00:04:27.27] R: Kesinlikle.

[00:04:16.03] Interviewer: What comes to your mind when I say sports?
[00:04:20.28] R: I think of football, but...
[00:04:25.04] Interviewer: Can we say that you are not very interested in sports?
[00:04:27.27] R: Absolutely.

Extract 33

[00:04:25.11] Interviewer: Spor?
[00:04:25.11] M: Spesifik olarak bir ismi ya da grubu aklıma getirmiyorum. Spor yapma faaliyetini düşünüyorum. Bir spor salonunda çalışmayı düşünüyorum.

[00:04:25.11] Interviewer: Sports?
[00:04:25.11] M: I can't think of a name or a group specifically. I think about the action of doing sports. I think about working out in a gym.

Extract 34

[00:02:45.09] Interviewer: Spor deyince aklına ne geliyor?
[00:02:50.07] G: Olimpiyat. Ve futbol geliyor ne yazık ki. Futbol gelmese daha iyiydi.

[00:02:45.09] Interviewer: What do you think of when I say sports?
[00:02:50.07] G: The Olympics. And football, unfortunately. I wish football didn't come to my mind.

Extract 35

[00:01:21] Interviewer: Spor?
[00:01:27] Z: NBA sanırım. Bir zamanlar takip ettiğim için sadece.

[00:01:21.03] Interviewer: Sports?
[00:01:27.05] Z: (a very long pause) NBA, I guess. Just because I used to follow once upon a time.

Extract 36

[00:01:43.09] Interviewer: Spor?
[00:01:47.09] D: … Futbol geliyor aklıma ama futbol demek istemiyorum kendimle ilgili bir ankette.
[00:01:59.18] Interviewer: İlk olarak aklına futbol gelmesi normal. Normalde sporla ilgileniyor musun?
[00:02:02.24] D: Hayır, hiç ilgilenmiyorum. Yani buz pateni derdim en sevdiğim şey sorulacak olsa.

[00:01:43.09] Interviewer: Sports?
[00:01:47.09] D: … Football comes to my mind, but I don't want to say football in an interview about myself.
[00:01:59.18] Interviewer: It is normal that football comes to your mind. Do you interested in sports?
[00:02:02.24] D: No, not at all. If you were to ask what is your favorite sport, I would've said ice skating.

In the Extracts 32 to 36, the participants have shown a solidarity in not being interested in football, and some of them were reluctant to acknowledge that football is what comes to their mind when they are asked about sports. One of the most visible of tribal fandoms, football is the most widespread and observable fandom in Turkey. The fandom of clubs and generally the love for the sport are unparalleled in their prevalence within Turkish media. While it is true that media fandoms are almost always bound to be considered as subcultures when contrasted to football fandoms, football is also the focal point of rejection of participants. With its financial importance to the whole country with extensive merchandise lines, player and coach transfers, football is a much more commercial endeavor than a pastime. Obviously there is passion and love in the relationship between football fans and clubs, but they are much too large to form an interpretable or relevant communities. However, for the participants of this study, the football fandom seems to be the representation of Turkish culture as a whole, and it is not surprising that they reject football and its tribal fandoms completely. I asked the participants what springs to their minds when they think of sports. R (Extract 32) is simply not into sports, and he does not want to utter the word football when he is asked about what comes to his mind about sports. M (Extract 33) thinks of only the activity of doing sports when asked. It is interesting, since the participants all had the knowledge of the topic of the interviews, so when M says 'working out' pops into his mind rather than the immediately more memorable form of sports; football. In this regard, G (Extract 34)

expresses his wish that football had not come to his mind when asked about sports. He prefers to answer the question by saying Olympics, a more global occasion, and certainly more highbrow. Z, too, (Extract 35), albeit after a long pause, says that it is NBA that comes to his mind when he thinks about sports, but even that answer was given after a serious pause and hesitation, and he actually adds that it had been long since he stopped watching it. NBA, like Olympics is considered a niche sports interest in Turkey, thus have a more highbrow stance within sports viewership. D (Extract 36), like G, does not want to answer the question as football, but it is what comes to her mind at the first place. She says that her favorite sport is ice skating, and like Olympics, it is a predominantly non-Turkish, highbrow sport. She also makes a very interesting remark here, saying that she does not want to utter football during an 'interview about herself' and it is a very significant disposition that she does not want to be connected to football at all. I propose that there are two reasons for Turkish media fans' revulsion of football, both as an activity and a source of fandom. First of all, football could be seen as a focal point for contemporary Turkish mass culture in general. Everybody is expected to support a team, and being interested in football is often taken as granted in daily life in Turkey. The cross-cultural media fans in Turkey reject these assumptions, just like they reject Turkish cultural practices. In Extract 37, O tells us the second reason of this revulsion:

Extract 37

> [00:01:31.07] O: Türkçe'de fanatik biraz kötü bir manaya geliyor açıkçası. Fan kelimesinden daha kötü bir manaya geliyor çünkü fanatik bizde çok sporla ve dinle özdeşleştirilmiş bir kelime, bu ikisi de benim nazarımda iyi şeyler değiller. Spor dediğim de futbol. Spor olsa iyi.

> [00:01:31.07] O: Fanatic, in Turkish, has a bad meaning, frankly. It means a worse thing than *fan* because fanatic is a word associated with sports and religion in our context, both of which are not good things in my opinion. What I mean by sports is football. Not totally a sport.

I asked O what comes to his mind about the word 'fanatic', and he replied that it has a negative meaning, whereas 'fan' means something positive. He deems the word 'fanatic' to be connected to 'sports and religion', which O considers to be 'not good things'. He also goes on to say that football is not totally a sport. Some analysis and speculation are needed here. Religion is a hot topic in Turkey, and it is one of the most divisive elements in the society. Football ranks close to religion regarding the creation of a clash environment. Football is 'not totally a sport', because it is much more than that. Football both includes fans who go to a stadium and watch a game, and fanatics who bomb buses (Ercanlar, 2015). There are football fandoms who are leading figures of resistance towards state oppression and brutality (Başaran, 2015), and others who are ready to kill other football fans (Woodward et al., 2000). Football, with its wide reach, immense social force, massive economic significance, and fandoms that consist millions of people is the ultimate mass cultural product in Turkey. The participants of this study do not regard football as a sport or they do not want to utter the word football, and that is only because they position themselves at the far end of the spectrum, between a football fan and a media fan. The culture around football fandoms is volatile, harsh, contentious, and ultimately, for urban middle-class young adults who are media fans, it is lowbrow, violent, unenlightened. We can never deny football's importance in daily Turkish life, even in media fans' everyday lives, but we must approach it from a different perspective

if we are to understand why cross-cultural media fans in Turkey reject football, and Turkish culture altogether.

Not only social or cultural differences, but there is also a linguistic difference between the media fans and football fans (read: participatory fans and tribal fans) and therefore, between the words fanatic and fan or 'hayran' in Turkish language. 'Hayran' actually comes from Arabic, and it means 'admirer'; however, most of the participants used the words 'hayran' and 'fan' interchangeably, and 'hayran' is considered to be the direct translation of the word 'fan', whereas the direct translation of 'fanatic' is 'fanatik'. Even though it is a direct translation, we can also see that the words fan and 'hayran' are used in contrast to each other by participants in order to differentiate the Turkish and Anglo-American cultural products, and to add yet another layer to the meaning-making process linguistically. Fanatik is also the name of a famous sports newspaper in Turkey, and even though in fan circles, the word 'fanatik' has a negative connotation, in football fandom it is actually a rather positive attribute. In an interview between Esra Arsan, Mete Çubukçu and Ragıp Duran (2007) published in the journal *Cogito*, journalist Ragıp Duran says:

> R.D.: Fransa'da, İngiltere'de, Almanya'da ya da başka bir kültürde, bir spor gazetesi, Fanatik ismiyle çıkarsa satmaz, kimse almaz o gazeteyi. Sen o kadar çirkin bir isim takar mısın? Mesela sen oğluna 'Çirkin' diye bir isim takar mısın, ya da kızına 'Acuze' diye bir isim takar mısın? Takılmaz. (p. 74)
>
> R.D.: In France, in England, in Germany, or in another culture, if a sports newspaper would be published under the name *Fanatic*, it would not sell, no one would buy that. Would you give such an ugly name? For example, would you call your son "Ugly", or your daughter "Hag"? You wouldn't.

This quote is illustrative in several respects. First of all, the word ‘fanatik’ is presented as a name so ugly, that you wouldn’t call a newspaper. However in Turkey, especially in the field of sports is an accepted and celebrated feature and most fans of football clubs would define themselves as a fanatic. However, Duran here equates this word with ugliness and deformity. When we consider the word ‘hayran’, on the other hand, none of the negative connotations that used in the quote would be used to define ‘hayran’. Even though ‘hayran’ can be used as a direct translation of ‘fan’, media fans I interviewed all distinguished the meanings of these two words. Also they pointed out that they do not use the word ‘fan’ as an abbreviation of ‘fanatic’, largely because they deem the word ‘fanatic’ has a negative connotation. Thus, these three words, ‘hayran’, ‘fan’ and ‘fanatic’ have different meanings for media fans, football fans and presumably people who would not identify themselves as fans.

In a global fandom research conducted by C. Lee Harrington and Denise D. Bielby (2007), the authors sent several scholars of fan studies inquiries, and received the answer of how fans are perceived in their cultural environments. A scholar from Finland answered their e-mail inquiry as such:

> In Finland we do not have such prejudices concerning fans as ‘freaks’ as in the U.S. This may partly boil down to language: in Finnish the term ‘fani’ (fan) does not associate with ‘fanatic’ nearly as closely as in English and perhaps other Indo-European languages … There is less need for fandom studies to defend fans. (Harrison & Bielby, 2007, p. 187)

This quote applies in some ways to Turkish language and culture, but in some ways do not. Like in Finland, a fan is not seen as a ‘freak’ in Turkey, because the word fan (either

in Turkish or English pronunciation) is not used as a shortened version of the word ‘fanatic’ which is regarded to have a negative connotation, but as a standalone word, used to describe a specific group of people. However, the word ‘fan’ is not in fact a widely used word, apart from the fans themselves (even fan clubs are often mistakenly spelled as ‘fun’ clubs in Turkey). However, as it is the case with Finland, there is not much requirement to defend fans due to the connotations of the word. It indicates that the dichotomy between fan and fanatic, which causes different understandings for the fandom and the fan material itself, is a preoccupation of English language (and perhaps other Indo-European languages). In Turkish language, the word ‘fanatik’ is closely related to (a rather negative) football fandom and ‘fan’ is related to media fandom, and they are rarely used in connection with each other.

As stated before, cross-cultural fans in Turkey use the word *hayran* (‘admirer’) as a replacement word for fan in some cases and in other cases, fans use the words to differentiate tribal fans and participatory fans. D (Extract 38) and O (Extract 39) gave very similar responses when I asked them about the difference between these seemingly same words:

Extract 38

> [00:05:56.29] Interviewer: Peki fan kelimesini kullanabiliyor musun?
> [00:05:58.14] D: Yani, evet, kullanırım. I'm a fan of Mad Men derim.
> [00:06:05.22] Interviewer: Aynı anlamda mı kullanıyorsun peki hayranla fan'i?
> [00:06:08.17] D: Yani, aynı anlamda kullanırım evet. Ama hayran kelimesi biraz şey, yani kullanıyoruz Türkçe'de ama, hayran kelimesi böyle bir sanki Tarkan hayranı gibi bir şey.
> [00:06:27.12] Interviewer: Daha yerel bir şey mi?
> [00:06:27.12] D: Yerel değil de... Bilmem, onun yaptığı connotation bana farklı.

[00:05:56.29] Interviewer: Can you use the word *fan*, then?

[00:05:58.14] D: Well, yes, I can. I would say *I'm a fan of Mad Men*.
[00:06:05.22] Interviewer: Do you use *hayran* and *fan* the same way?
[00:06:08.17] D: Well, I guess I would use them in the same way. But the Word {hayran} is a bit… Of course we use it in Turkish, but the word *hayran* reminds me of like a Tarkan *hayran*.
[00:06:27.12] Interviewer: Is it more local?
[00:06:27.12] D: Not that it's local but... (PAUSE) I don't know, its *connotation* for me is different.

In Extract 38, when I ask D whether she uses the word fan to define herself, she says "I can say *I'm a fan of* Mad Men" in English. An implication here might be that as she appropriated the term fan, she took the context of being a fan as well, which is the Anglo-American media. Since she is a bilingual, she uses the clause in English, and establishes the difference between a fan and 'hayran'. She says that one could be a 'fan' of *Mad Men*, but can only be a 'hayran' of Tarkan. She adds that the 'connotation' (in English) is different for her regarding these two words. According to D, Tarkan, a pop star and celebrity, might be said to "have fans" in English language, but in Turkish, Tarkan can have 'hayran' or admirers, not fans (since Tarkan fandom is a tribal fandom). Furthermore, O uses these words to set up a difference between participatory and tribal fandoms again by referring to another Turkish pop star, Serdar Ortaç:

Extract 39

[00:01:31.07] O: Türkçe'de fanatik biraz kötü bir manaya geliyor açıkçası. Fan kelimesinden daha kötü bir manaya geliyor çünkü fanatik bizde çok sporla ve dinle özdeşleştirilmiş bir kelime, bu ikisi de benim nazarımda iyi şeyler değiller. Spor dediğim de futbol. Spor olsa iyi. Futbolla özdeşleştirilen bir sıkıntı. O yüzden ben fanatiğin kısaltması olsa da fan kelimesiyle ikisini aynı kefeye koymuyorum açıkçası.
[00:01:59.29] Interviewer: Peki hayran?

[00:02:01.14] O: Hayran daha uygun.
[00:02:04.06] Interviewer: Direkt karşılığı olarak kullanıyor musun, yoksa...?
[00:02:04.12] O: Yani çok değil, fan dediğimiz de oluyor, hayran dediğimiz de oluyor. Bizde birazcık şey var, kültür üzerine bindiği için böyle fan diye yurtdışından alıp onu fan diye kullanıyoruz ama biz hayran kitlesi dediğimizde daha çok Serdar Ortaç'ın hayran kitlesi, fans of Serdar Ortaç'la aynı manaya gelmiyor bizim kulağımıza, ama aslında aynı şey kelime bazında. Hani bağlam olarak biraz daha farklı en azından benim için.

[00:01:31.07] O: Fanatic, in Turkish, has a bad meaning, frankly. It means a worse thing than *fan* because fanatic is a word associated with sports and religion in our context, both of which are not good things in my opinion. What I mean by sports is football. Not totally a sport. The fact that it is identified with football is problematic. Therefore, I don't actually think fan and fanatic are the same even though fan is an abbreviation of fanatic.
[00:01:59.29] Interviewer: What about *hayran*?
[00:02:01.14] O: *Hayran* is more suitable.
[00:02:04.06] Interviewer: Do you use it as a direct translation, or?
[00:02:04.12] O: Well, not so much. Sometimes we call it a *fan*, sometimes we call it a *hayran*. We have a bit of this, because the culture is foreign, we get it from abroad directly and use it as *fan*. But when we say *hayran kitlesi*, the *hayran kitlesi* of Serdar Ortaç, does not sound the same to our ears as *fans of Serdar Ortaç* even though they're the same in terms of words. I guess it's a little different in terms of its context, at least for me.

The word 'fan' is borrowed from the English language and implemented within the Turkish language in order to define a specific type of people: cross-cultural media fans. However, the usage of the word still requires another layer of awareness in their language usage, and the participants switch back and forth, as a means to explain their stance towards a cultural product. 'Serdar Ortaç'ın hayran kitlesi' (Serdar Ortaç's fan base) means something different than '*fans of Serdar Ortaç*' (used in English). The fact that the second utterance is English, just like it has been uttered by D, establishes the difference between these words. One refers to a state of admiration, while other refers to an engagement. O explains this difference by saying that the foreign culture affected fans to use the word fan for their engagement, rather than their admiration. The word

‘fan’, in any case provides an agency for media fans, but ‘hayran’ (admirer) yields a more passive adoration directed towards celebrities or pop stars. Thus, football fans are called ‘fanatics’, pop star fans are being defined as ‘hayran’, and cross-cultural media has ‘fan’s in Turkish language. These definitions and labels are useful for Turkish fans to position themselves away from the tribal fans. The fanatics and admirers are ‘others’ for the media fans from whom they find the primary basis to define themselves as fans.

5.7 What kind of Turkish culture would fans want?

At this point, it should be investigated that how these urban, middle-class young adults could reconcile with the Turkish media and its products they so strongly reject. Living surrounded by all the vernacular and familiar social and cultural production that estranged them, fans carefully crafted themselves a foreign cultural environment to inhabit. However, these two cultures clash almost all the time; one could not just live in front of the computer, watching videos and reading books. Everyday life is always more complex than just consuming and recreating media products. Turkish popular culture and mass media are immensely active and effective, and cross-cultural media fans in Turkey ground their sense of belonging to their community onto a sense of alienation from the Turkish cultural practices (see Extracts 17, 18, 20, 21).

The last three examples below illustrate how an alternative Turkish culture, in past and present, has been constructed by the participants. I asked each one of them if they are fans of anything in Turkey, or if they like any media products from Turkish culture, and the answers collectively elicit very interesting interpretations.

Extract 40

> [00:37:06.22] Interviewer: Türkiye'den bir şey seviyor musun, bir şeyin fan'i misin?
> [00:37:24.18] G: Sevdiğim şeyler var, ama... Fan'iyim demek isterim ama fan olduğuma dair bir kanıt bulamıyorum şu an hayatımda.
> [00:37:41.12] Interviewer: Ne gibi mesela?
> [00:37:41.12] G: Sabahattin Ali mesela. Çocukluğumda değil de ortaokul, lisenin bir kısmında Sunay Akın'ı çok severdim. Bir gün Oğuz Atay fan'ı olacağım, onu biliyorum çünkü Tutunamayanlar'a iki kere başlayıp çok keyif aldığım için bıraktım gerçekten. Ama bence değilim çünkü üçüyle ilgili de oturup çok bilen biriyle konuşsam söyleyecek hiçbir şeyim yok.
>
> [00:37:06.22] Interviewer: … Do you like anything in Turkey, are you a *fan* of something?
> [00:37:24.18] G: There are things I like, but… (a long pause) I'd like to say I'm a *fan* but I can't find any evidence in my life to prove I'm a *fan*.
> [00:37:41.12] Interviewer: Like what?
> [00:37:41.12] G: Sabahattin Ali, for example. I liked Sunay Akın very much during the middle school and some of high school. I will be an Oğuz Atay fan one day, I know that, because, seriously, I have started reading *Tutunamayanlar* twice, and I had to put it down, because I was enjoying it so much. But I don't think I'm a fan, because I would have nothing to say to a person who knows a lot about them.

G admits that there are some people or products that he likes in Turkish culture, but he cannot bring himself to say that he is a fan of any of them, because he cannot 'find any evidence' to prove his fan status, vis-à-vis his media fandoms. He lists literary figures like Sabahattin Ali, Oğuz Atay, and Sunay Akın. In fairness, Oğuz Atay's *Tutunamayanlar* ('The Disconnected'), and Sabahattin Ali's *Kürk Mantolu Madonna* ('Madonna in a Fur Coat') are books with a cult following in Turkey, but G does not consider himself a fan of these works, rather he aspires to be one. Why these authors and not some others? Why only literary figures? Could it be because literature is seen outside the mass culture of Turkey, and exempt from fandoms? Answering these questions require further studies, but I can speculate that reading literature in Turkey is

seen as an high-cultural practice, and while the fandoms of cross-cultural media texts fill the everyday culture, they do not necessarily fill every cultural requirement. Although it is not only related to a fulfilment of a cultural requirement, it is a type of nostalgia, felt towards an indistinct past where the participants were not alive, or cannot truthfully remember. O gives us a very good example of nostalgia in Extract 41:

Extract 41

> [00:27:00.06] Interviewer: Türkiye'de fan'i olduğun, hayranı olduğun bir şey var mı?
> [00:27:04.06] O: Ya, yok. Şimdi düşününce fan'i olduğum hiçbir şey yok. Şarkıcılardan falan soruyorsan durum farklı. Çocukluktan beri Barış Manço. O var. Çocukluğumdan beri Barış Manço hayranıyım onu biliyorum …

> [00:27:00.06] Interviewer: Is there anything that you are a *fan* of in Turkey?
> [00:27:04.06] O: Well, no. (pause) Now that I think about it there's nothing I'm a *fan* of. If you are asking about singers, maybe that's different then. Barış Manço, since my childhood. I know that I've been a fan of Barış Manço since my childhood …

Just like G was thinking about literary figures instead of media texts, O starts with saying that he is not fan of anything in Turkey, but he changes his answer when he thinks on it and considers including musical performers. This is simply because being a 'fan' in Turkey is mostly connected to media fandoms. As a media fan, O did not think that he was a fan of Barış Manço, simply because he did not associate his love or admiration for Barış Manço as a fandom in the general sense. After a pause, and admitting that he has no fandoms within Turkish culture, he states that he has been a fan of Barış Manço from an early age on. Barış Manço was a Turkish folk rock musician, and remains a very popular public figure after his death. What is more, he hosted a

children's TV show, called *7'den 77'ye* ('From 7 to 77'), and the show ran for 10 years between 1988 to 1998, which coincides with the childhood years of the participants of this study. This again shows that O is a fan of Barış Manço, because he makes an imaginary connection between Manço and his childhood. It is a nostalgic and very personal connection. In Extract 42 O talks about his connection to Barış Manço again:

Extract 42

> [00:27:41.26] Interviewer: Peki Barış Manço'nun fan'iyim mi dersin, hayranıyım mı dersin?
> [00:27:42.18] O: Barış Manço'nun çocuğuyum demeyi tercih ederim. Onunla büyüdük çünkü, bir nevi ikinci babamızdı.

> [00:27:41.26] Interviewer: Would you call yourself a fan of Barış Manço, or a admirer ("hayran") of him?
> [00:27:42.18] O: I would like to call myself Barış Manço's child. We grew up with him, he was like a second father to us.

O demonstrates a very deep connection with Barış Manço, and even though in Extract 41 he said that he was a fan of Barış Manço after a brief pause, he now defines himself as neither a fan, nor an admirer, but rather in a very emotional manner, he says that he would like to call himself his child. The father figure of Barış Manço may be derived from the children's TV show he hosted, but also, the fandom of musicians in Turkey actually shows a pattern of a father figure. The arabesque musicians *Orhan Gencebay* and *Müslüm Gürses*, as mentioned before, have cult followings and they are mostly called as Orhan Baba and Müslüm Baba (Papa Orhan, Papa Müslüm) by their fans. The injection of this imaginary familial ties could illustrate the hereditary and nostalgic aspects of tribal fandoms.

Jenkins (2007) tells us that "for nostalgia to operate, we must in fact forget aspects of the actual past and substitute a sentimental myth about how things might have been" (Jenkins, 2007, p. 157). Nostalgia is a state of yearning, the effect of past on our present selves, and it has the power to alter our perspectives and realities in accordance with the imagined past we retroactively aspire.

Among all others, D was forthright about her rejection of Turkish culture, and she was very vocal about it. However, while she professes an inability to love anything related to Turkish culture, she loves 'the classic Turkish films', as can be seen in Extract 43:

Extract 43

> [00:25:39.17] D: … ben Türkçe olan ve Türkiye'de üretilen... Türkçe grup asla sevemem, dinleyemem, hiçbir Türkçe film sevemem klasikler haricinde, hiçbir Türkçe dizi izleyemem falan gibi bir inancım vardı …
>
> [00:25:39.17] D: … I believed that I can never like something that is Turkish and that's made in Turkey. I believed I can never listen to or like any Turkish bands, I can never love any Turkish films except the classics, I can never watch any Turkish TV shows. …

The reason behind her love for classic Turkish films is that, during the 60s and 70s (the golden age of Turkish cinema), the representation of life in Yeşilçam was unrealistic and idealized. Many of the commercially successful Turkish films of the time relied on tropes very much, like a rich man loving a poor girl, or a mansion where a party is held, or a 'tree on the island' where lovers meet (Tunç, 2001, pp. 149-155). Yeşilçam in its glory was a vessel of nostalgia. From these last three extracts, we can say that fans only reconcile with (a specific type of) Turkish culture when they employ nostalgia. They

may be yearning for an imaginary past, or a person who they deem to be a powerful image from their past, or even maybe a representation of an idyllic life and style they have seen on the screen, where people were friendlier, loves were truer, and Turkey was a better place.

5.8 Conclusion

The study has five main findings. First, expressing love for the object of fandom, second, the practice of code-switching, third, forming a community of practice, fourth, fan rejection of dominant mass culture and fifth, resistance to the dominant mass culture.

The passionate appreciation and the emotionally charged responses of the participants read through the lens of Bourdieu's concept of taste. The intensity of the utterances invoked an elevated sense of commitment and affinity, and this self-profession is both the first signifier and the basis of emotional reasoning behind being a fan, and it yielded ‘fan cultural capital’.

The practice of code-switching for fans indicated a technique to by-pass the distance they have with the text because of the linguistic and cultural barriers. With the usage of code-switching between Turkish to English, especially when the participants talked about their object of fandom was a type of poaching, to use the concept of Michel de Certeau, as they change the meaning of an utterance by using English to increase their proximity to the text.

The participants were very selective about Turkish media products, and they have only shown some affinity towards nostalgic media texts or personalities. In connection to his notion of textual poaching, Henry Jenkins argues that nostalgia can

only be valid, if there is an imagined past. So when participants responded with their affinity towards Yeşilçam cinema or Sabahattin Ali, they are actually poaching the text to their own ends, to feel nostalgia about an imaginary past. Nostalgia seemed to be an act of *la perruque*, as de Certeau puts it, a tactic used to escape from the dominant cultural practices that they reject.

The rejection and resistance towards Turkish media products was also augmented by their resistance towards consumerism. Participants expressively positioned themselves against consumerism and stated that they were not regular consumers. Because of the participatory fan practices as in Fiske's framework of participation, consumerism is replaced with textual, enunciative and semiotic participation by the fans, and they do not see their consumption habits as regular consumption. In the findings it was apparent that the love that fans profess is not the feeling they derive from the text itself, but the love they felt for the text. The evoked emotions are more pronounced than the text. In regard to code-switching, I observed that participants depended more on English to explain complex emotions or instances, describe their status as a fan, and also as a solidarity marker, for it is a common practice among fans.

Another findings was that the participants formed first a community by using the communicative tools of internet, then they formed a community of practice because of the practices they share. The participants talked about convening, sharing, creating and recreating texts as their shared practices. These practices, alongside participants' self-proclamation of being a fan, their profession of love towards the object, and the online fan practices rendered them a community of practice.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study is to open up a discussion about cross-cultural media fans by identifying their common characteristics and fan practices and to be able to illustrate on how their fan practices operate within global fan formations and how fans define themselves and form their identities. My first aim was to define who the cross-cultural fans are in Turkey. And my second aim was to find out whether there are different types of fandom and if there are, what are the constitutive elements of such differences.

The five main findings of this study has been informed by a theoretical framework consisting of the concepts of de Certeau, Bourdieu, Fiske and Jenkins. The emotional positioning of the participants in regard to their object of fandom was readily confessed, and it was not only an aesthetic appreciation, but also an emotionally charged self-identification process. The practice of code-switching enabled fans to by-pass the limitations of their own culture and language. It was a tactic to 'make do' within an inhospitable culture and language in a de Certeauean sense. The participants were selective in regard to the Turkish media products, but they showed some sympathy towards media products or personalities with a definite nostalgic quality. Using de Certeau's notion of poaching, they used the older texts (for example, Yeşilçam films and musician Barış Manço) to build an imaginary, almost idyllic past. The rejection and resistance that the participants illustrate towards Turkish media texts were also amplified as they also showed resistance to consumerism. Participants situated themselves against consumerist practices by contrasting the practices of participation and consumption. The

findings illustrated that the participants first formed a community by the practice of participation in the internet communities, then, because of the practices they share, they formed a community of practice. The participants talked about convening, sharing, creating and recreating texts as their shared practices. These practices, alongside participants' self-proclamation of being a fan, their confession of love towards the object, and the online fan practices rendered them a community of practice.

Many of the scholars of media and cultural studies approach fandom as a phenomenon that is already in place, in which fans first identify themselves as fans, then, collectively, they form a fandom. Rather interestingly, these works disregard the personal narratives and processes of being a fan. In this study, I tried not to overlook the ever important processes and narratives of becoming a fan. It is possible to see that, with their readily-confessed love and attachments and their rejection of the culture they were born into, participants of this study from Turkey give us ample clues when and where their journey of becoming a fan started. With belated access to the media products, years spent in a culture to which they have become less and less attached over years, nationally sponsored and cultivated fandoms such as football, and linguistic and geographic chasms, cross-cultural media fans in Turkey have coped with much more than the cult media fans in the Anglosphere to become fans of their media text of choice.

The difference of proximity to the fan object between the fans who are living in the same culture as the media product and in Turkey decreases as the digital media seeps into every part of our daily lives. It is much easier now for Turkish teens to love, adore, become a fan, convene and share any media product or international celebrity. Fluency in English was almost non-negotiable for the fans to continue with their fan practices during the early 90s to early 2010s, but the teens of today can become fans without that

ever being a problem, let alone the fact that they are mostly bilingual themselves. Their vernacular culture does not only favor football fandom, or condone arabesque fandom, as was the case with the teens of 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, but the everyday culture itself is being transformed into a more global culture that favors a hybrid of everything.

The fan studies scene is still relatively new and teeming with unexplored terrains, but it was the social scientists who started to theorize fans, and the initial theories focused more on the disruptive behavior of the fans (akin to fanatics), and their violent tendencies. Jenson (1992) says that in the early literature about fans "fandom is seen as excessive, bordering on deranged, behavior" and a “pathology” (p. 9). The fans in the spotlight during the 80s were mostly violent and mentally unstable people like Mark David Chapman, who murdered John Lennon in 1980 and who was a fan of *The Catcher in the Rye*, said to have modelled his life around the protagonist, Holden Caulfield (Whitfield, 1997, p. 573). Another was John Hinckley Jr. who tried to assassinate President Ronald Reagan in 1981, and he was a man with an obsession for the film *Taxi Driver* (Jenson, 1992, p. 11). These two actions were committed by mentally unstable individuals, and regardless of the reason, be it a work of art and culture, or any other social phenomena, fandom was then on connected to obsession, violence, madness and irrationality by many social scientists and scholars. It was up to a new generation of scholars to acquit fans of these stereotypes. I was predisposed in some areas before and during the process of the thesis. For example, I have not dwelled too long to redeem fans and earn them a cultural validity, or I have not tried to remove the negative stereotypes attached on these individuals and communities.

I acknowledge that I am a fan as well, a peer to the participants, and that, I believe, has made the research stronger. Insider information, especially within these close-knit communities, is hard to achieve, and an ethnographic study to analyze these communities would be much more arduous if I were to familiarize myself with every bit of difference in jargon, language use, and the objects of fandom before the research. I started this research with a full set of 'fan skills', and it helped me to conduct more meaningful interviews.

In this study, I tried to alter the outlook of Turkish culture to fandom and fanaticism. In a global world, any text, event or person could have a cult following, but none of them are the same. It was this diversity that drove me to categorize fandoms as tribal and participatory. I believe in Turkey, and in the world general, scholars need to theorize fandoms separately, just as digital fandoms are not the same as fans at a convention, sports fans, celebrity fans, media fans, and countless other types of fans who all need to be theorized accordingly. Fans tell us a story from a specific point in time, and we should not see this group of people who are socially and economically significant as a deviation from the dominant culture, because the dominant culture is subject to change. Fans and fandoms are here now, and they are here to stay.

6.1 Limitations of the study

There have been some restrictions during the process of conducting this study. First of all, the interviews I have conducted were naturally limited. The biggest limitation was that this was a case study, and the participants do not represent the whole Turkish cross-cultural media fans. If the study was to be replicated with different participants, the

findings and therefore analysis might be different. However, with the participants I have conducted interviews with, I aimed a certain degree of transferability within the study.

The age group chosen for this study covered people who were in their early teens when the internet become accessible in Turkey, but other age groups could be studied. As with all face-to-face interviews, the success of the interview was dependent on the demeanor of the participant, and the rapport between the interviewer and the participant. This may have affected the quality of the interviews greatly. Finally, I was unable to do focus groups with the participants. I have conducted the interviews in Istanbul and Ankara, and I did not have the opportunity to schedule a suitable group meeting for any of the participants. Focus groups might prove useful to see the fan interaction at work.

6.2 Suggestions for future research

As the fans grow in their discursive, economic, social and cultural prowess, fan studies will definitely draw more and more attention. Here, I want to conclude by suggesting some possibilities which I see lacking in the current environment.

Even though in the US and the UK it is a very hot topic for fan studies, LGBTQ fandoms are not necessarily investigated in Turkey. Queer identities in fandoms everywhere have myriad of practices (sexual, cultural and social practices) that are waiting to be explored. As it can be seen in the Excerpt 27, queer identities and LGBT community's interest in media fandoms (for example, slash fiction), actually informs a feminist and queer agenda in Turkey. Therefore, the male dominance within certain fandoms, and female dominance in others should be explored.

Another subject that has been overlooked even by the leading scholars of fan studies is that as Duffett (2013) points out, "most researchers examine the fan community or its representative individuals, as if personal fandom had always existed and was a timeless, all-encompassing identity" (p. 124). However, we need to investigate “why fans are who they are and why they do what they do” (Duffett, 2013, p. 124), which I tried to illustrate in this study to a limited degree. These kinds of studies are sparse even in the UK and the US, and in Turkey, there was a lack of research pertaining this. There are great sociological and economic implications of a fan’s initiation, and a narrative analysis and a longitudinal study would prove very useful to study such a topic.

Another topic to look at would prove very valuable for Turkish cultural products. Throughout this study, a common theme was the inability of Turkish cultural products to yield a media fandom in the traditional sense. The reason for such a theme could be the participants of this study, their age group, education level, class and so on. They positioned themselves against the Turkish culture they rejected, and they did not derive any fan belongings from the texts and products they like. Whether this is an inability pertaining Turkish culture itself, or it is a result of the chosen age group, class and education level in this study, it could only be decided with further research aimed towards answering these questions.

There is also a need to study digital fandoms in Turkey. There are countless Turkish websites on the internet, which are dedicated to a specific media text. In the interviews, I have encountered one or two of them, like yuzuklerinefendisi.com, or starwars.gen.tr, but these sites were active during the mid-2000s according to the participants. With the advent of smartphones, the internet is greatly mobilized, so one

can only imagine how much these fan formations proliferated on the internet. A multimodal analysis, using both forum posts, inquiries and different media texts would prove fruitful in this regard.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1- İlk olarak birkaç kelimenin senin için ne anlama geldiğini sormak istiyorum:
   a. Fan
   b. Fanatik
   c. Hayran
   d. İzleyici
   e. Seyirci
2- Fan kelimesini fanatik kelimesinin kısaltması olarak mı kullanıyorsun?
3- Neden?
4- (Eğer varsa) Aradaki fark sence nedir?
5- Birazdan söyleyeceğim mecralarda konusunda aklına gelen eserleri/ürünleri söyleyebilir misin?
   a. Televizyon
   b. Sinema
   c. Edebiyat
   d. Müzik
   e. Spor
   f. Radyo
   g. Çizgi roman
   h. Oyun
   i. İnternet
   j. Süreli yayın
6- Biraz önce söylediklerin içinden herhangi birinin sıkı bir hayranı ya da "fan"ı olduğunu söyleyebilir misin?

(Cevap Hayır ise)

7- Neden kendini bir fan olarak tanımlamıyorsun?
8- Fan'ler sana göre nasıl insanlar?

9- Biraz önce söylediğin kültürel ürünlerle olan ilişkin nedir?
10- Bu eserler için hissettiklerin neler?
11- Biraz önce bahsettiğimiz mecralar hangi ülke kaynaklı? Bu mecralardaki eser/ürün veya kişileri hangi dilde izliyorsun, okuyorsun veya dinliyorsun?
12- Bir eserin veya kişinin popülerliği sence hayran veya fan olmayı etkiliyor mu?
13- Bunun senin seçimine etkisi oldu mu?

(Cevap Evet ise)

14- Neden kendini bir fan olarak tanımlıyorsun?
15- Seni bir izleyici/dinleyici/okuyucudan ziyade fan yapan şey nedir?
16- Bir fan olarak bu bahsettiğin esere ait nelere (hangi materyallere) sahipsin?
17- Bunlara sahip olmanın veya sahip olmak istemenin sebebi nedir?
18- Koleksiyon yapıyor musun?
19- Nelerin koleksiyonunu yapıyorsun ve neden?
20- Bu bahsettiğin şeylerin fan'i olan başka kişiler tanıyor musun?
21- Bu insanlarla bir paylaşımda bulunuyor musun?
22- Sence bu paylaşım bir fan olmak için önemli mi?
23- Bahsettiğimizin fan'i olmayan insanlar ve fan'i olanlar ile olan ilişkinde farklılıklar var mı?
24- Başka nelerin fan'i olduğunu söyleyebilirsin?
25- Hepsine aynı düzeyde mi ilgi duyuyorsun? İlgi düzeyini neler belirliyor?
26- Bahsettiğimiz tüm eser/kişi/ürünlerin hepsi/çoğunluğu Türkiye dışındandı. Bunlara nasıl erişiyorsun?
27- Farklı dildeki ve kültürdeki bir eserin hayranı olmanın günlük hayatına nasıl bir etkisi var? Dil veya kültür, günlük hayatında olumlu veya olumsuz bir etkisi oluyor mu? Diğer insanlardan bu konuda geribildirim alıyor musun?
28- İnternetin ürünlerin kendisine erişmen dışında nasıl bir yardımı var?
29- İnternet üzerinden hayran gruplarıyla veya diğer fan'ler ile iletişim kuruyor musun?
30- Eğitimin veya mesleğin ile fan'i olduğun ürünün arasında bir bağlantı var mı?
31- İşte veya okuldayken fan'i olduğun eser veya ürünle ilgileniyor musun?

32- Meslek veya eğitim seçiminde fan'i olduğun kültürel ürünlerin etkisi oldu mu?
33- Daha gençken bu eser veya ürünle kurduğun ilişkiyle şu an kurduğun ilişki arasında bir fark var mı?
34- Bu farkı sence ne yaratıyor?
35- Benim sormadığım, senin önemli bulduğun ve eklemek istediğin eklemek istediğin herhangi bir şey var mı?

APPENDIX B

PRELIMINARY QUESTIONNAIRE AND CONSENT FORM

Yaşınız:

Cinsiyetiniz:

Yaşadığınız yer:

Hangi yabancı dilleri biliyorsunuz ve bu dillere hangi seviyelerde hakimsiniz?

(İleri / Orta-İyi / Orta / Başlangıç)

Dil	Seviye
1-	
2-	
3-	
4-	

Öğrenim durumunuz

- Ortaokul mezunu
- Lise öğrencisi
- Lise mezunu
- Üniversite öğrencisi
- Üniversite mezunu
- Yüksek lisans öğrencisi
- Yüksek lisans sahibi
- Doktora öğrencisi
- Doktora sahibi

Mesleğiniz:

İsmimin çalışmada kullanılmayacağını, diğer bilgilerin ise talep etmem durumunda çalışmada yer almayacağını biliyorum ve verdiğim bilgilerin yapılacak olan çalışmada kullanılmasına izin veriyorum.

Tarih İsim - İmza

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