

INFANTILIZATION IN 21ST CENTURY ADVERTISING



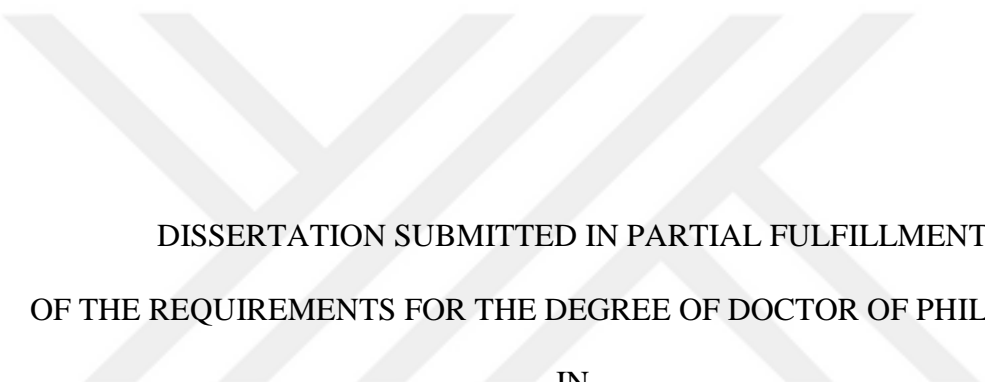
BENGÜ BAŞBUĞ

JULY, 2018

INFANTILIZATION IN 21ST CENTURY ADVERTISING

BY

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Approval of the Institute of Social Sciences

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PLAGIARISM

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

10.07.2018

Bengü BAŞBUĞ



ABSTRACT

The consumption orientation of 21st century capitalism – manifested in many ways, but key among them being advertising – is considered to be driven increasingly by an infantilist ethos that targets adults as if they were children. The purpose of the doctoral thesis is to examine and improve a deeper understanding of infantilization as an emerging phenomenon in 21st century with regard to its implementation in Turkish advertising. Consumer infantilization increasingly becomes a technique to attract adults by approaching them like children with advertisements based on the imagination and level of a child. With this regard, the present thesis will demonstrate how and why brands implement the concept of infantilization within the framework of their marketing strategy in Turkish advertisements. Using the qualitative multiple-case study research design, the thesis adopts a psycho-semiotic method within the postmodern worldview by analyzing selected advertising campaigns (226 commercials and 52 Facebook posts) of 60 well-known brands in Turkey between 2004-2018. On a global scale, academic research on infantilization in advertising context in-depth is scarce, and in respect to Turkish advertising even in total absence which is quite surprising. In fact, the Turkish advertising landscape is rich in elements from children's worlds which originally address children, but actually are instrumentalized in particular for adult consumer purposes with the effect that psychic dynamics are activated. For this reason, the overriding aim of the thesis is to reveal how the ideal postmodern consumer – the *child-like* adult – is attempted to create through infantilization by the means of childhood signs in Turkish advertisements. Thus, the study will show that infantilization has the potential to serve as a catalyst to reinforce consumerist behavior and, therefore, is an effective strategy which is used by companies to manipulate adult consumers within unconscious processes. As a result, the thesis wants to fill this huge research gap by exploring infantilization both in theory and practice.

Keywords: Infantilization, Advertising, Postmodernism, Psychology, Semiotics

ÖZET

21. yüzyılda, yetişkinleri çocuk yerine koymayı hedefleyen özelliği ile hızla yükselen infantilist ethosu (çocuksu ideoloji), kapitalizmin tüketimi yönlendirişinde baş rolü oynamakta ve özellikle reklamlarda görülmektedir. Bu doktora tezi, 21. yüzyılda Türk reklamlarında ön plana çıkan infantilizasyon fenomenini – diğer bir deyişle yetişkin tüketicilerin “çocuklaştırma” serüvenini – incelemekte ve daha derin bir anlayışa kavuşturmayı amaçlamaktadır. Tüketici infantilizasyonu, yetişkinlere çocukların hayal dünyasını ve seviyesini baz alarak hazırlanan reklamlarla hitap eden ve son dönemlerde özellikle kullanıldığı gözlemlenen bir yöntem olarak dikkati çekmektedir. Bu bağlamda, infantilizasyonunun markalar tarafından reklamlarında nasıl ve neden pazarlama stratejileri çerçevesi içinde uygulandığı ortaya konulacaktır. Bunun için 2004-2018 yılları arasında Türkiye’de tanınmış 60 markadan seçilmiş reklam kampanyalarının incelenmesi (226 reklam filmi ve 52 Facebook paylaşımı) kalitatif vaka analizi yöntemi ile sağlanmış, psikolojik ve göstergebilim metodlarıyla ve postmodern görüş çerçevesinde değerlendirilmiştir. Bugüne kadar reklamcılık alanında infantilizasyonu inceleyen global çapta yapılmış akademik çalışmalar sınırlıdır. Türkiye’de ise bu konu ile ilgili ciddi bir çalışmaya rastlanılamamaktadır, oysaki Türk reklamları çocuk dünyalarından zengin malzemeleri ekranlara taşımakta ve bunlarla çocuğa hitap ediyor gibi görünse de aslında özellikle yetişkin tüketici kitlenin psikik dinamiklerini harekete geçirmektedir. Bu sebeple bu tezin amacı, reklamlar üzerinden infantilizasyonun çocuksu göstergeler aracılığı ile ideal postmodern tüketiciyi – *çocuksu* yetişkin profilini – inşa etmeyi hedeflediğini açığa çıkartmaktır. Böylece katalizör özelliği sebebiyle tüketici davranışını sürekli teşvik ve tekrar ettirme potansiyeline sahip olan infantilizasyonun markalar tarafından yetişkin tüketicileri bilinçdışı süreçler kapsamında manipüle etmekte etkili bir strateji olarak neden tercih edildiği anlaşılacaktır. Sonuç olarak bu tez çalışması teorik ve pratik incelemeleriyle akademik alandaki önemli bir boşluğu doldurmada öncü bir rol oynayabilecek niteliktedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Infantilizasyon, Reklam, Postmodernizm, Psikoloji, Göstergebilim

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Feeling overwhelmed, interrupted, and even stalked by the volume of ads flying across billboards, computer screens, smartphones or TV, is a prevalent reality today in the first half of 21st century. If given the option, many people would choose a world where advertising simply does not exist or, at least, ignore and avoid it by any means. I belonged to those people who usually avoided advertisements and often even did not noticed them – until 2005, when I started to live in Istanbul in order to discover my roots as someone who was born and raised in Hamburg, Germany. Even if it sounds strange – one of the first things I strongly noticed and that influenced me so dramatically in my new daily life in Istanbul that years later I have decided to write a doctoral thesis about it, were Turkish advertisements! Actually, it was not their unbelievable omnipresence which astonished and concerned me. It was their content.

Over the years, I collected advertisements that somehow attracted my attention and which I found different in their entertaining, creative, and often funny way. I shifted from an overwhelmed consumer to an overjoyed one by starting to create enthusiastically a collage by frequently up-dating the advertising images as shown on the next page. Keeping a close eye on this mosaic, which was colorful and playful from the very beginning, I asked myself several questions: What do all these advertisements have in common, actually? Why do they attract me? Why do I not avoid exactly these advertisements whereas I forgot the many others immediately?

After a first view of this “big picture” we can say that, primarily, the eyecatcher is the dominant use of childlike aesthetics and content. Secondly, and here starts the interesting point, after checking the product categories, the target group of most promoted products must be adult consumers, not children. However, before these childlike advertisements, generally brands had a much more conservative advertising policy, centred around real life of adults by providing product-related informations. I asked myself if Turkish advertisements for banks, credit cards, automobiles or cleaning products – to name just a few categories – are actually not supposed to be more serious, trustworthy, and sophisticated with wise sounding actors and calm backgrounds having an adult quality in order to make the consumer an appropriate “grown-up” decision.

Thus, the process of writing this doctoral thesis has been a very special and exciting one. In this light, my wish is the attempt to illuminate the interesting phenomenon of infantilization we actually all are exposed to, but which in terms of

1. INTRODUCTION

Infantilism is possibly the hallmark of our generation.

– John Wells, British actor and satirist

The infantile ethos is potent in shaping the ideology and behaviors of our radical consumerist society today.

– Benjamin Barber, American political scientist

1.1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Living in a media-dominated age in which countless images circulate around the world, we are constantly faced with an environment that has become increasingly saturated by advertising. Being an important tool of marketing for promoting consumerism to inspire brand systems, advertising is an incredible means of persuasion with its textual, visual, and auditory components (Moriarty et al., 2009). An emerging phenomenon that can be increasingly noticed in a global sense, but especially in Turkish advertising of 21st century which will be explored in this thesis, is *infantilization*.

Infantilization (in Turkish: “enfantilizasyon”, meaning *çocuklaştırma*) – the practice of treating adults like children and, thus, viewing them as if they have never grown up – is an old concept which appears in a great number of fields, from natural sciences to social and cultural studies. However, infantilization received rarely attention until late 20th century, even processes of infantilization had been occurring for centuries in various areas of life from religion to politics. But although infantilization is not new, its contemporary range of development and its influence on consumers today is. Infantilization has now achieved a new twist reaching its ultimate breakthrough in the realms of marketing and is meanwhile an essential centerpiece of mass media culture (Dorfman, 1987: 177; Danesi, 2003; Barber, 2007). However, infantilization has not developed randomly out of nowhere; it is an omnipresent large-scale, strategically

planned and industrially promoted postmodern phenomenon emerging in 21st century, which operates and establishes itself, slowly but surely, at the very centre of contemporary Western societies. This has further led to the point that the consumption orientation of 21st century capitalism – manifested in many ways, but key among them being entertainment-oriented media and advertising – is considered to be driven increasingly by the *infantilist ethos* – a notion coined by American political theorist Benjamin Barber in his book *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens Whole* in 2007.

Accordingly, this hedonistic-driven infantilist ethos seems to have the strength in shaping the ideology of the consumerist capitalism today, at least at the same level, as what German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864-1920) called the *Protestant ethic* – driven by an ascetic acceptance of values like hard work or deferred gratification – was an important force in shaping the entrepreneurial culture of the productivist early capitalist society based on the new religious spirit of Protestantism since the 16th century (Weber, 2003). The infantilist ethos, which describes the contemporary culture we now inhabit, is characterized by generating a “set of habits, preferences, and attitudes that encourage and legitimate childishness” (Barber, 2007: 81) by privileging of “the easy over hard”, “the simple over complex”, and “the fast over the slow” (ibid.: 83-86). In *Arrested Development: Pop Culture and the Erosion of Adulthood*, British popular culture critic Andrew Calcutt (2000) has already noticed in the late 1990s that popular culture increasingly embraces childishness due to its positively perceived qualities, and even evolves to a culture of children in retreat from adulthood. Similarly in *Forever Young: The Teen-Aging of Modern Culture*, Italian semiotician Marcel Danesi (2003) argued years before Barber (2007), how contemporary culture becomes infantilized with childish and teen tastes. This

observations crystallize that infantilization begins to function as an ideology which aims to spread features of a childhood mindset, and impose a youth-oriented lifestyle as a model for adults to follow – ideally lifelong.

The seductive charms of infantilization, to which adult consumers are exposed to, develop to something more than just a phenomenon we have to analyze; it becomes a mainstream concern as it begins to influence and even reshape the ideas of adult consumers becoming a direct and influential part of the psychological journey of adulthood – a stage in life which places a single word on a very large part of the lifespan from 18 to, at least, 80 years today. Rarely in a positive but mostly in a worried tone, many critical voices have indicated to infantilization, already before but mostly after the turn of the new millennium, by arguing that mass media and popular culture have a great impact on societies in terms of rapidly affecting even transforming traditional life stages by blurring the line between childhood and adulthood, which actually are supposed to be separated (Postman, 1982; Meyrowitz, 1985; Dorfman, 1987; Bly, 1996; Calcutt, 2000; Epstein, 2004: 349; Samuelson, 2003; Mintz, 2004: 50; Danesi, 2003; Barber, 2007). Infantilization becomes a cultural process, which has the effect of fostering a form of *consumer infantilism (tüketici çocuksuluğu)* by favoring of artificially produced pathological conditions in adult consumers. In *Klinik Reklamcılık*, Turkish scholar T. Emre Yıldırım argues that features of personality disorders, including borderline and narcissistic personality disorder, are common in use for the purpose of brand communication as they trigger psychic mechanisms in consumers to make them purchase the promoted product (2013: 12). Similarly, it seems that patterns of infantilism, which originally is a personality disorder, are promoted by media and business companies in various forms to adults who actually do not suffer from the disorder but are encouraged to “get in board”. The aim is to “encourage adult

regression, hoping to rekindle in grown-ups the tastes and habits of children” (Barber, 2007: 7). Evolving to a significant hallmark of postmodern culture, infantilization together with its result – infantilism or better in Ottoman Turkish “yeni zamanların alamet-i farikası çocuksuluk” (Değer, 2016) – has the power to influence and redescribe traditional adulthood by showing us that other versions of it might exist, in terms of marketing, by gradually forming the ideal consumer who is certainly not a child acting in an imprudent manner, nor an adult with a completely rationalized mind, but something *in-between*: the infantilized adult, the kid within the adult, the *kidult* (Hensher, 2002; Barber, 2007; Brown, 2016) as the “new breed of adult” (Noxon, 2006). With respect to this, media coverage about infantilization has highly intensified. Many cover stories and articles have reported about the rise of infantilization, in general, and the increasing infantilism in adults, in particular (See Figure 1.1).¹



Figure 1.1 Examples of Foreign Covers Reporting on Infantilization

¹ Among many others, the most outstanding titles of cover stories and headlines are: “Kidult: Erwachsene werden Kinder beim weltweiten Konsum“ [Kidult: Adults become children in global consumerism] (*Tagesspiegel*, 2000), “Adventures in Agelessness” (*Newsweek*, 2003), “Kindliches als Megatrend” [Childishness as mega-trend] (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 2003), “Die Deutschen werden immer infantiler” [The Germans become more and more infantile] (*Frankfurter Allgemeine*, 2003), “The Perpetual Adolescent” (*The Weekly Standard*, 2004), “They Just Won’t Grow Up” (*Time*, 2005), “Forever Youngish: Why Nobody Wants to Be an Adult Anymore” (*New York*, 2006), “Big Babies” (*New Internationalist*, 2007), “Erwachsene werden zu infantilen Kidults, und Kinder sind die neuen Erwachsenen” [Adults Become Infantilized Kidults, Children are the New Adults] (*Spiegel*, 2009), “Wenn Erwachsene zu kleinen Kindern werden” [When Adults Become Infants] (*Welt Online*, 2010), “Kindisches Zeitalter” [A Childish era] (*Welt*, 2012), “Generation who refuse to grow up” (*Daily Mail*, 2012), “Have our cultural tastes become too childish?” (*The Guardian*, 2015).

Today, infantilization is an important buzzword and a favorite topic of a rising tide of sub-academic and populist commentary in mainstream magazines and newspapers most notably from North America and Europe. Infantilization is an outstanding *phenomenon*, “any occurrence worthy of note and investigation, typically an untoward or unusual [...] fact that is of special significance or otherwise notable” (Sandywell, 2016). Infantilization seems to hit the pulse of the era we live in, and has the potential to cause significant changes. Advertising, on the other hand, is the “most effective communicative method for changing the beliefs, values and interpretations of society” (Elliott & Ritson, 2005: 197). However, by melting the boundaries between adults and children, advertisements themselves begin to change – an interesting aspect to explore in this thesis with respect to *consumer infantilization*, the marketing tactic to address adults as children by creating advertisements based on the imagination and level of a child, that increasingly becomes the preferred style in form of an effective strategy to attract and convince adults. So what is the effect when two powerful forces – advertising and infantilization – are merging together? Applied in advertising context, the concept of infantilization offers theoretical and practical explanations to recognize and interpret changing characteristics of consumer capitalism during the first half of the 21st century, and exactly this will be the motivation of conducting the present research.

1.2. FOCUS

Over the last years, children and childhood related motifs generally have become a major theme in marketing, which definitely is not an accident. If we take a closer look to the trend towards infantilization in advertising, it certainly reflects the changing ethos in postmodern times with the relentless pursuit of novelty in the marketing realm, but it also springs from the increasing awareness of companies that

children represent an important demographic, especially in Turkey as a country with a young population in contrast to aging Europe. Becoming the new market focus, children have their own purchasing power, influence their parents' buying decisions, further are brands' future customers (McNeal, 1992; Bridges & Briesch, 2006; Keillor, 2007), and thus “the epicenter of consumer culture who command the attention, creativity and spendings of advertisers; their tastes drive market trends and their opinions shape brand strategies” (Schor, 2004: 9).

Infantilization is *literal* in that advertisers are increasingly focusing their attention on children, but it is also *metaphorical* which makes this concept so special to investigate. Infantilization, in a metaphorical sense, is a process that must be triggered and initiated somehow, which further indicates the fact that the adult consumer has to be *positioned* as a child (*çocuk yerine koymak*) and *addressed* as a child (*çocuğa hitap eder gibi yaklaşmak*) in order to be able to treat him or her as a child (*çocuk muamelesi yapmak*). Thus, when infantilization is the chosen advertising technique, this implies in some way that adults have to be attracted and persuaded rhetorically in visual, textual, and auditory terms as if they were children – but not in a way where an adult has the impression that he or she would really slip into the position of an infantile persona. This must happen in a hidden manner, as the “operation of ideology in signifying practices is typically masked” (Chandler, 2017: 191), and exactly here lies the crux of the matter: Infantilization, in a psychoanalytical sense, occurs in a way that adults are unaware of – it is an ideological, *unconscious* process and not recognized as such. However, infantilization is triggered, moreover, *initiates* itself through obvious and *consciously* perceptible signs. In the short amount of time that it has consumers' attention, “advertising as a sign-creating system” (Danesi, 2004: 256) can only bring meaning and value to its unfamiliar products if it speaks to adult consumers in widely

recognizable systems of meaning and colonizes upon pre-existing bodies of knowledge to quicken communication (Bignell, 2002). One of the best known and, thus, powerful sign system brands can make use of to produce meaning and trigger psychological processes by activating existing knowledge would be – without doubt – that of childhood, and in particular children’s culture. Such advertising would have the potential to seduce to a consumption that appears as a playful gateway to enter artificially constructed hyperrealities in form of children’s utopian fantasies, magical thoughts, and childlike visions and illusions of how brand worlds work and look like.

Hence, companies increasingly segment consumers with an approach we can name as *uniage*, meaning both children and adults are addressed simultaneously the same way in the same advertising but by operating at the level of a child – comparable with the term “unisex” concerning products that not divide between male and female anymore.² This further implies that we have a *dual* audience but, moreover, an *ambiguity* of the target group, which might explain the proliferation of child-oriented advertisements over the last years that aim to positively influence children’s recognition, even if the promoted product – and here the interesting part starts – is *ostensibly* intended for adults, including life insurances, credit cards, and automobiles as adult-targeted products (McNeal, 1999: 217; Keillor, 2007: 5-7).

A crucial question arises, then: Is this all really happening *only* and *especially* to attract children? Notably, not only children are confronted to these advertisements,

² Infantilization is, simultaneously, accompanied by its opposite, which is another phenomenon named as *adultification*: the process of treating children as adults by viewing them as if they have grown up. This would also be an uniage-approach, but this time with the dominance of adult features operating at the level of an adult. Adultification allows the child to enter directly in the realm of adulthood behaving and acting with reason and responsibility. In the present research, however, it will be concentrated on the notion of infantilization that targets adults operating at the level of a child.

quite the contrary. What about adult consumers, then, who are exposed to such a childish marketing scenery, even in the night when children already sleep? Thus, another important consideration emerges: What if companies are not targeting as always argued younger audiences with this, but are particularly trying to reach and impress adults? Not to forget, it was American animator and producer Walt Disney who gave us the decisive hint decades ago by saying, “You’re dead if you aim only for kids. Adults are only kids grown up, anyway”! Besides, we live in a time of harsh and ugly realities where “the motif of escape back into childhood is frequently promoted” (Furedi, 2015), which makes sense, because to be honest: Where else were the majority of today’s adults most comfortable, gratified and in pleasure than their childhood?

With this in mind, if advertising is tempting adult consumers – as Australian cultural critic Robert Hughes (1993) would say – to abandon their *inner adult* and let instead their *inner child* out, and thus addresses and treats adults as children, media and marketing research, then, has surprisingly never really paid attention to this phenomenon which we have to change in this thesis. To reduce an adult consumer to the level of a child, who actually is not a child anymore, and to build on this basis whole advertising campaigns and even brand images must have specific reasons and methods, and raises many questions to which the thesis wants to find concrete answers. In this regard, the core research question explored in this study is as follows:

How and why do brands implement the concept of infantilization within the framework of their marketing strategy in Turkish advertisements?

Accordingly, the thesis can be further divided to specific sub-questions related to the main research question which will be investigated as presented below:

- RQ1:** *What constitutes the concept of infantilization, and why has it emerged globally in media and marketing, but especially in Turkish advertising?*
- RQ2:** *Through which signs of childhood is infantilization revealing itself, and what are the methods and techniques that are used to engender it?*
- RQ3:** *What psychological dynamics are in work within the process of infantilization that makes it so powerful?*
- RQ4:** *What messages are given when adults are addressed as children, and to what extent is the postmodern-ironist worldview promoted by this?*
- RQ5:** *In what aspects, with regard to infantilization, differs Turkey and its advertising landscape from other Western countries, and what role plays Turkish advertising in the promotion of adult consumer infantilization?*

1.3. STRATEGY

In order to answer these research questions, we need to clarify how infantilization in advertising context can be best approached and analyzed. When investigating a phenomenon like infantilization, a qualitative research approach is the most suitable one as it goes deeper than just measure the observable phenomenon by searching for the meaning and beliefs underlying it – the “why” and “how” (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). The qualitative researcher, then, drafts the study’s roadmap as a *bricoleur* that “adds different tools, methods and techniques of representation and interpretation of the puzzle” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005: 4). The complexity of infantilization makes it necessary to explore it from different standpoints by using multidisciplinary approaches deriving from Media, Communication and Cultural Studies, as well as Marketing and Consumer Studies. The research draws on postmodern, semiotic, and psychological theories and critical frameworks, which combine an important methodology from empirical research – the case study analysis. With this regard, the research is firmly situated within a critical-interpretive perspective by which infantilization will be explored as explained below:

- **Postmodern-Ironist Worldview**

According to American historian and philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn (1970), different worldviews dominate different eras and, therefore, influence the research of specific periods. Infantilization emerges in a time of worldwide change where scholars point out to the fact that “we are in the midst of an epochal transformation from the modern to the postmodern era” (Firat et al., 1994: 40) which “appears to have infected almost every arena” (Brown, 1993: 19), and meanwhile also 21st century advertising which becomes highly creative than in the past, compared to their more informative styled predecessors in modern times (Brown, 1995; Odabaşı, 2004; Firat & Dholakia, 2006; Odih, 2007). Political scientist and social psychologist Walter Truett Anderson (1995) describes postmodernism as a new paradigm of thought which belongs to one of four typological world views.³ Thus, rooting the present study within the postmodern-ironist worldview was appropriate as it served as a critical frame of reference for this thesis, by extending the application of postmodern theory to marketing with regard to infantilization in Turkish advertising. In this sense, especially concepts of hyperreality, intertextuality, and nostalgia will gain importance in the study.

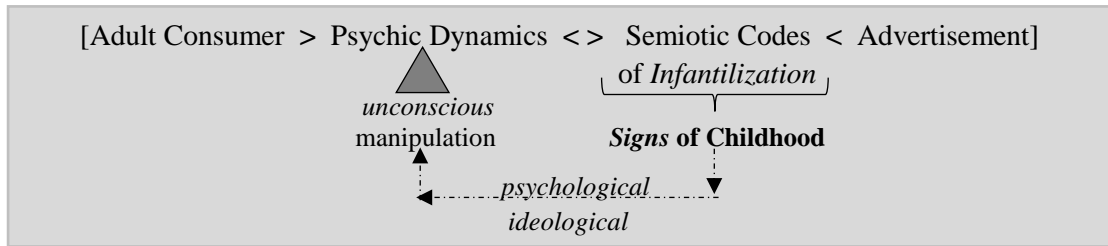
- **Psycho-Semiotic Approach**

Infantilization is a psychological process, but also an ideological one. The analysis will, therefore, be a two-step one. Infantilization will be explored *psycho-semiotically* via signs of childhood to identify, analyze and interpret the dynamic processes of signification in order to reveal infantilization’s unconscious, ideological,

³ According to Anderson (1995), there are actually four worldviews currently in use: *postmodern-ironist*, which sees truth as socially constructed; *scientific-rational*, in which truth is found through methodical, disciplined inquiry; *social-traditional*, in which truth is found in the heritage of American and Western civilization, or *neo-romantic*, in which truth is found through attaining harmony with nature and/or spiritual exploration of the inner self.

and aesthetic potentialities in the context of Turkish advertising. In the field of advertising, the partnership between semiotics and psychology has proven to be a very powerful one (Beasley & Danesi, 2002: 33). *Semiotics*, the science of meaning-making or interpretations of signs, has become very popular and useful in the last decades concerning its application to advertising. As well as a tool to deconstruct advertisements, semiotics is also employed to create advertisements which makes it so crucial (Bignell, 2002; Kress & Leeuwen, 2006). *Psychology*, on the other hand, is understood as the scientific study of the mind and behavior, which provides a variety of concepts, especially in psychoanalytic terms, that on closer inspection drive the process of infantilization – including regression, magical thinking, dream theory, symbolism, archetypes, and transactional analysis.

First, a semiotic analysis which “always involves ideological analysis” (Chandler, 2017: 191) will be applied. Thus, we will investigate the role of advertising in the construction and circulation of meaning through certain childhood signs, especially in visual terms, that are displayed on the surface in advertisements, which stir up and excite various meanings at deeper levels on the part of adult consumers’ psyches, corresponding to the manipulative and hidden intention of marketers. These connotations refer to the additional meaning which usually an intertextual or symbolic reference gains besides its principal meaning. Because of this, in a second step, the semiotic analysis will be complemented by a psychological interpretation to dissolve the latent and symbolic significance of childhood signs that operate, similar as in dreams, in symbol-saturated advertisements. With this regard, we can develop a general theory of advertising based on the dialectical implication of psychic dynamics, on the side of the adult consumer, and semiotic codes of infantilization based on signs of childhood, on the side of advertising, that can be visualized with following formula:



According to the founding fathers of semiotics – Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914) – a sign is a “psychological entity” (Saussure, 1966: 66), “which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity” (Peirce, 1985: 5). The attempt to mask the communicative intention, however, is a dominant theme in much of French semiotician Roland Barthes’ analysis. While the works of Saussure and Peirce are at the roots of semiotics and, thus, are essential to cover in this thesis, Barthes’ semiotics is added to the content, as it is also at the core of methodological framework. Besides, theories of psychodynamic psychology from Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the father of psychoanalysis, and Neo-Freudians (C.G. Jung, E. Berne, J. Lacan, G. Deleuze & F. Guattari) will be taken up to figure out how advertising makes use of the basic elements of the human psyche to reach the consumers’ unconscious mind. Additionally, an evolutionary psychological perspective will be integrated as both the attraction to infantile patterns and reasons for infantile behavior can be explained with it, in particular, through the concept of neoteny.

- **Case Study Methodology**

In the thesis, a *multiple case study methodology* will be applied as it is well suited by offering better and valuable insights into phenomena in relatively new fields or research areas for which existing theory seems insufficient (Yin, 2003: 13). Within three major case studies, 17 mini-case studies are developed that involve the most

striking key themes related to infantilization. For this, the study examines 60 brands of different product categories in Turkey by reviewing brands' official websites, Facebook Pages, and YouTube channels. As every selected brand has chosen at a different time the infantilization strategy, this was only possible to show by not restricting the time period. As the infantilist ethos has especially emerged with the turn of the new millennium, advertising campaigns between a time span of 2004 and 2018 were carefully selected and analyzed. The focus lied on commercials (n=226), the "most powerful form of advertising" (Berger, 1996: 61), and Facebook posts (n=52), one of the most effective digital tools in brand communication today to keep in touch with consumers, which gave additional crucial insights into the research topic.

1.4. PURPOSE

The purpose of the doctoral thesis is to examine and improve a deeper understanding of infantilization as an emerging phenomenon in 21st century with regard to its implementation in Turkish advertising. Revealing symbolic advertising messages that brands try to send adult consumers through the mask of childhood, serving as an ideological camouflage, is the objective of this study. The thesis aims to illuminate the semiotic aspects of the psychologically-driven phenomenon of infantilization to make what is invisible, *visible*, by demonstrating that infantilizing practices occur through the reconstruction of the most obvious features of childhood that not only attract today's children, but are especially instrumentalized for adult consumer purposes, including:

- children's *traditional stories* in form of fairy tales, fables, and myths;
- children's *retro and popular entertainment media* in form of cartoons, animated movies, TV programs, and video games; and
- childhood *symbols and motifs* representing components of children's daily life in form of toys, tastes, places, and habits.

The thesis will show that infantilization is not an exceptional phenomenon, but exists in numerous cases in the Turkish advertising landscape where a new type of *adult-oriented* child culture – most notably on screen – is in development, which is a *cloned* one that frequently undergoes a *metamorphosis*, further leading to new formations of childhood patterns which rather appear as *mutants*. The mere projection of such childhood signs mediated through advertising become *simulacra of childhood*, which serve companies to create well-selling *infantile brand mythologies* operating with their own meaning-making rules and mechanisms. With this regard, the overriding aim of the thesis is to illustrate how the ideal postmodern consumer – the *child-like* adult – is attempted to create through infantilization by the means of childhood signs in Turkish advertisements. The study will show that infantilization has the potential to serve as a catalyst to reinforce consumerist behavior and, therefore, is an effective strategy which is used by companies to manipulate adult consumers within unconscious processes.

1.5. SIGNIFICANCE

The relevance of the present study can be explained with, at least, four points. First, although infantilization is an old concept and a global phenomenon which can be observed especially throughout the media and advertising, many people do not recognize it, and actually know anything about it. The experience of the author of this thesis showed that only when people are confronted to it explicitly, they may recognize infantilization. However, it is a current and important topic as it concerns future development that could have significant effects and influences on 21st century societies. For the first time in history, a large-scaled and mass “controlled regression” occurs by “promoting puerility rather than maturation” (Barber, 2007: 111), which is surely worth

investigating in detail. To draw attention to this emerging phenomenon will be the first contribution.

Second, the above mentioned circumstance might have led to the fact that contemporary research into this influential phenomenon remains incomplete. There is a general lack of theoretical and empirical research done on infantilization in marketing and advertising context. Further, if we search in academic databases and popular search engines like Google for “infantilization in advertising”, we mostly find articles about infantilization of women in relation to feminine sexuality, which gives the impression that it would be just a women’s issue. This concept of infantilization is investigated as a sub-topic by Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman in his book *Gender Advertisements* (1979), and is mainly seen as the portrayal of grown women acting and looking childish, often in sexually suggestive ways as shown in Figure 1.2, which is the most prominent form of infantilization being explored in advertising context so far.

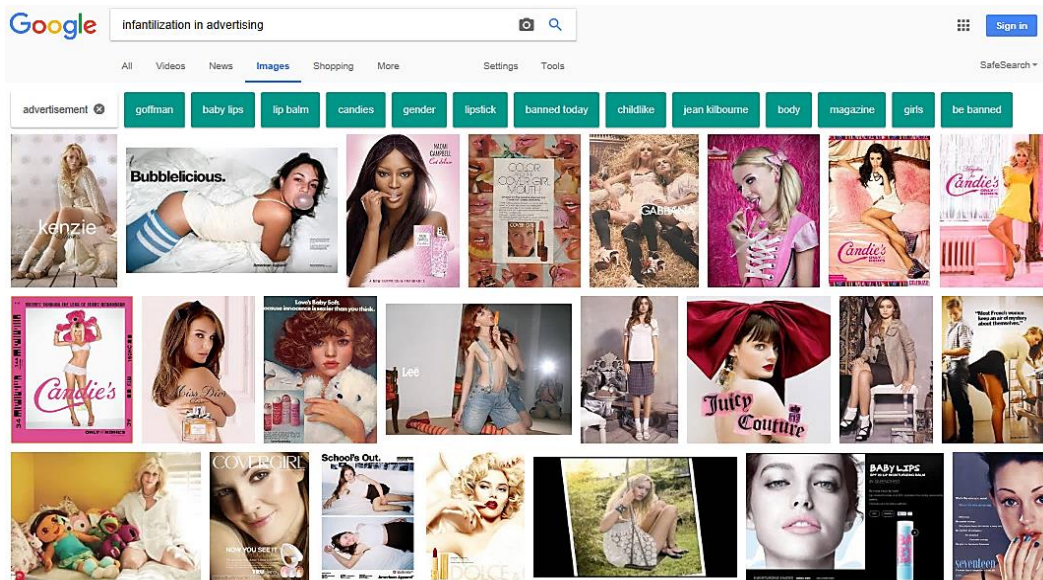


Figure 1.2 Google Image Search for “Infantilization in Advertising” (15.5.2018)

Nevertheless, this one-sided tableau may be *deceiving* because this is just one type of infantilization that can be observed. This will be, therefore, not investigated

further in the present study. The contribution will be, instead, to explore and give insights into a more obvious and recurring version of infantilization, underestimated so far but that clearly shows itself in contemporary Turkish advertising, based on the idyllic notion of childhood consisting of innocent, playful, and naïve features without any sexual undertone that, without doubt, is clearly to be distinguished from the above mentioned one.

Third, as academic research on infantilization in advertising context in-depth is scarce, it is in respect to Turkish advertising even not-existent. Until now, infantilization has not received scholarly attention in Turkey and is even an unknown expression there, whereas in other Western countries it is a hot topic which is discussed for years. With this regard, the total absence of Turkish academic publications concerning infantilization, in general, is quite surprising because, actually, it is a prevalent reality in Turkey. Moreover, it seems as if this issue is left to the columns of four Turkish journalists – Haşmet Babaoğlu (2010, 2013), Gülin Yıldırımkaaya (2010), Kürşat Başar (2012), and Abdülbaki Değer (2016) – who were the only ones so far having briefly pointed to an “infantilist trend” (“çocuksulaşma trendi”), but not to infantilization as its cause, and by only writing their personal thoughts. What else can be noticed is that infantilization is partially discussed, but under other prevalent topics and terms, mostly published in Turkish magazines that are specialized on business and marketing communication, reporting about current trends in outstanding cover stories (See Figure 1.3).⁴ For instance, infantile mascots for adult-oriented products are

⁴ To give some examples: In “Markanızı Artık O [Gençlik] Yönetiyor“ [Youth is managing your brand now] (*The BrandAge*, December 2011), it is argued that the youth is the main focus of brands because of its influencing power that is greater than any other age group forcing brands to reshape their image and campaigns according to it (p.64); in “Reklamın Cinleri | Reklamın Sihirli Gücü” [The Dschinns of Advertising | The Magical Power of Advertising] (*Infomag*, August 2012), it is argued that brands try to conquer the heart of consumers by using the magical power of advertisements by creating entertaining icons as, for example, the large teddy bear of the ice-cream brand Algida (p.99); and in “Olağan Şüpheliler: Marka Öykülerinin Çizgi Başrolleri” [Potential Suspects: Animated Characters

considered by many as cute and friendly, that are loved by children and embraced by adults as well. But which idea lies beneath them, and what psychological mechanisms are engendered having which impact on adults – concerning this there is hardly any research. Besides, infantilization has been examined so far mainly within Western societies (Wang et al. 2009), including the USA and Western Europe; it would be now interesting and crucial to explore infantilization with a special reference to Turkey as an emerging country between Western culture and Eastern tradition, which has one of the most exciting and challenging media markets in the world. As the literature is still embryonic, this thesis seeks to contribute filling this huge gap.



Figure 1.3 Covers of Turkish Magazines: *The BrandAge*, *Infomag*, and *MediaCat*

Fourth, this study will be the first in Turkey, but also on a global scale, by focussing on infantilization in contemporary advertising from different standpoints by using multidisciplinary approaches. Thus, it provides a new illuminating perspective which makes the thesis unique in its approach to Turkish advertising. With this, the scholarly objective is to start and advance the discussion that concerns the great presence of infantilization in media and marketing, and further its impact on the

of Brand Stories] (*MediaCat*, August 2014), the rise of brands’ animated characters in advertising campaigns is indicated with formulations like “in order to reach the consumer”, “cosy, truthful, longlasting solution”, “pleasant and loveable characters” (p.35) which are shown as reasons why animation advertising is successful and preferred by more and more brands.

audience. Through its originality of approach, this thesis is intended to a wide audience including advertising creators, researchers (in the field of Media, Communication, Cultural Studies, and Marketing), business companies of different industries and, of course, the target audience of the analyzed advertisements meaning the adult consumer itself. The research approach results in applicable knowledge which can potentially be used as a platform of thinking in practice and as grounds for further research.

1.6. DISPOSITION

The research is composed of six chapters. After this introducing section, *Chapter 2* illustrates the era we live in by highlighting key features of 21st century, further relates to the field of advertising within postmodern theory, and concludes with an analysis of Turkey to show various characteristics in order to realize its importance in advertising context and its interplay with infantilization. *Chapter 3* aims to review the literature on infantilization to understand the meaning, nature, causes, and consequences of it as a phenomenon which emerges as a new ethos of 21st century in Western societies. *Chapter 4* presents the theoretical foundation of infantilization in advertising context by providing a conceptual framework from a psychological and semiotic perspective. It concludes by giving an account of the methodology of the study and discusses the nature of research design, sampling, data collection procedure, and selection of the case studies. *Chapter 5* presents three major case studies analyzing infantilization in contemporary Turkish advertising, including children's traditional stories, children's entertainment media, and childhood symbols and motifs instrumentalized for adult consumer purposes. *Chapter 6* deals with the discussion on the results and the conclusions of the research. It gives a summary of the multiple case study analysis, an evaluation of the key findings, and makes recommendations.

2. 21ST CENTURY ADVERTISING

Historians and archaeologists will one day discover that the ads of our time are the richest and most faithful daily reflections any society ever made of its whole range of activities.

– Marshall McLuhan,
Canadian communication theorist

In this media-saturated and competitive world we live in, an advertisement has only few seconds to make an impact and catch the consumer's eye. In that time, a brand must communicate its message and convince the consumer to purchase the promoted product. When imagery and content suitable for children, then, is the chosen style to give adults advertising messages in order to attract their attention and convince them, the phenomenon of infantilization begins to start. Before we can explore infantilization and its implementation in advertising, we first have to understand the key features of the era we live in and its impact on advertising with respect to Turkey, which maybe is one of the most special countries, caught between Western culture and Eastern tradition.

2.1. THE ERA WE LIVE IN: KEY FEATURES OF 21ST CENTURY

The era we live in is characterized by the emergence of postmodernism, and with it, the increasing globalization and advances in technology leading to media explosion and massive consumerism as the main driving forces of 21st century we have to focus on. It is also an era of uncertainty, where infantilization has its breakthrough.

2.1.1. Postmodern Times

Infantilization has emerged, in particular, concurrently with Western societies' departure from the modern world of the Industrial Age (1750-1950) into what it is

rapidly transforming now that is mostly referred to as “postmodern”⁵ in the Information and Communication Age since the 1950s (Toffler, 1980; Harvey, 1989):

Over the past decades there have been persistent claims that Western societies have entered a new era of their history. While still being undoubtedly industrial, they have undergone such far-reaching changes that they can no longer be considered under the old names and by means of the old theories. Western societies are now in various ways ‘post-industrial’: ‘post-Fordist’, ‘post-modern’, [...] In the information and communication revolution, in the transformation of work and organization in the global economy, and in the crisis of political ideologies and cultural beliefs, these theories see the signs of a turning point in the evolution of modern societies. (Kumar, 2005: ix)

Modernity is the time period marked by cultural trends and changes due to wide-scale and far-reaching transformations in Western societies during the late 19th and early 20th century. The ideals of the Enlightenment movement provided a basis on which modernism was built, developing features as rationalism (the belief in knowledge through reason), empiricism (the belief in knowledge through experience) and materialism (the belief in a purely physical universe), that guided individuals’ understanding of the human condition, and permeated all spheres of life from the operation of the economy to the organisation of communities. Postmodernism, however, rejects the modern premises and belief systems of the Enlightenment project that still continues to speak of reason, freedom, and progress, whereas “its pathologies

⁵ Postmodernism curiously identifies itself by what it is not. The term indicates that it is not modern anymore but, then, it is to be questioned in which sense it is exactly “post”: Does postmodernism mean “the aftermath of modernism”, “a result of modernism”, “the afterbirth of modernism”, “the development of modernism”, “the denial of modernism”, or “the rejection of modernism” (Appignanesi & Garrett, 2013: 4)? It seems that postmodernism has all of these meanings, or some combination of these meanings. But the confusion surrounding the term stems from two primary facts: the postmodern “resists and obscures the sense of modernism” and it “implies a complete knowledge of the modern which has been surpassed by a new age” (ibid.).

tell another story” (Hicks, 2011: 14). Accordingly, modernism failed. The point is that many people have developed a distrust for modernity which was perceived to have promised wonders and intended to free people from superstition and tyranny; but it only delivered disillusionment, misery, and anxiety as it has reached extremes in leading to a world of ideological fanaticism, facism, colonialism, political oppression, and most important, two devastating world wars, and poverty still marking our lives. The Enlightenment reshaped the entire world, and postmodernism, in this sense, hopes to do the same with its own philosophy (ibid.:21). Best known for his highly influential book *The Postmodern Condition*, French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard (1924-1998) famously described “postmodernism as an incredulity towards meta-narratives” (1984: xxiv). Metanarratives are prevalent grand theories which provide a single way of perceiving reality, and dominate and determine the meanings of life. They give explanations for a wide range of things and thoughts – including political ideologies, religious doctrines, or cultural and social constructions – based upon the appeal to universal truth and objective knowledge. These are stories which are constructed to legitimize power, authority, and social customs (Jameson, 1985). Thus, postmodernism deals especially with the collision of generally established metanarratives, the liberation from all conformity and the freedom to experience as many ways of being as desired (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993: 229).

First introduced in the field of architecture, the concept of postmodernism became a term for reaction to modernism by quickly extending to all other fields of art, then in the society as a whole since the mid-1960s (Lyotard, 1984). Postmodernism is associated with the historical transformations that followed World War II and with the cultural logics of late capitalism (Jameson, 1985). The use of postmodernism as a concept to describe the phenomenon of worldwide change, in this sense, has become

widespread as scholars point out to the fact that “we are in the midst of an epochal transformation from the modern to the postmodern era” (Firat et al., 1994: 40) that “appears to have infected almost every arena of late-twentieth century intellectual endeavour” (Brown, 1993: 19), and meanwhile of early 21st century.

Postmodernism is associated with contemporary life patterns that are widespread in developed societies, such as a fast pace of life, technological innovation, continuous change in social tastes and trends, increasing dependence on media, consumerism, globalization, and multi-culturalism (Strinati, 1995). Postmodernism is primarily “an aesthetic movement, a revolt against the once shocking, subsequently tamed ‘modern’ movement of the early- to mid-twentieth century. It is considered as an attitude, a feeling, a mood, a sensibility, an orientation, and a way of looking at the world – a way of looking askance at the world” (Foxall et al., 1998: 239). An important contribution to the understanding of postmodernism is provided by sociologist Dominic Strinati (1995), who summarizes the distinguishing features of postmodern culture. In this vein, Strinati identifies five key features in form of societal shifts that reflect postmodern influences that break the old-established rules:

1. *Decline of meta-narratives*: Grand theories such as Marxism, Christianity, and modernism itself have lost their currency for postmodern societies. People are no longer believing in authorities and absolute ways to explain reality.
2. *Breakdown of the distinction between culture and society*: Postmodernism describes the emergence of a social order in which the importance and power of the mass media and popular culture means that they govern and shape all forms of social relationships, increasingly dominate our sense of reality, the way we define ourselves, and the world around us. Our perceptions are largely informed by mediated cultural representations such as news and advertising images.

3. *Emphasis on style over substance:* Our reality becomes more idealized and more media saturated with the effect that postmodern texts have little real substance to refer to. In media texts, especially in advertising, this can manifest itself in intertextuality where texts make their meaning through reference to previous texts. Superficially, we consume images and signs for their own sake rather than for their usefulness or for deeper values. Thus, we are strongly influenced by branding when buying – the label, packaging, and advertising image become more important than the product and its quality of content.
4. *Breakdown of the distinction between high art and popular culture:* There is no longer any agreed criteria which can serve to differentiate high art from popular culture – once a modernist distinction that is now threatened by postmodern media culture embraces both art and the popular by mixing the old with the new (e.g., Andy Warhol's multi-colored prints of Mona Lisa, or pop songs borrowing catchy melodies from classical music). Art becomes now integrated into economy both because it is used to encourage people to consume through the expanded role it plays in advertising, and because it becomes a commercial product in its own right
5. *Confusion over time and space:* The globalizing tendencies and digital transformations of communication technologies are distorting traditional conceptions of time and space dimensions leading to increasing confusion and incoherence in our sense of reality (e.g., internet can send mails to someone on the other side of the world immediately, or satellites beam down TV links from other countries in seconds). The whole world is now quickly accessible to us because of the speed and scope of mass media and the relative ease with which people and information can travel beyond boundaries.

As a result, we can say that the current world in 21st century is characterized by four main cultural axioms (Lipovetsky and Serroy, 2011: 10):

- *Hypercapitalism*, which represents the driving force of globalization embodied by the homo economicus;
- *Hyperconsumerism*, which favors comfort and convenience above any other thing, but leads to growing disorientation in the hypermodern societies.
- *Hypertecnification*, which defines the digital era, with individuals living an abstract life, cloistered in their new technologies, while they may stay at home;
- *Hyperindividualism*, or life à la carte, which is centered on premises such as self-realization, subjective autonomy, hedonism, and following a narcissistic tendency.

2.1.2. Media Explosion

It was only in the 1920s that people began to speak of “the media”, and a generation later, in the 1950s, of “a communication revolution”. What then has developed as *media studies*, is the “study of the mass media as an academic subject”.⁶ Mass media is a relatively new idea in human culture, and incorporates all those

⁶ Media studies can be thought of as a field of study rather than a discipline with its own discrete concepts, traditions and methods. On the one side, media studies seem to concentrate mostly on its core disciplines of communication by interacting with cognate fields concerned with journalism, film and television, popular music, photography and new media forms. But on the other side, media studies is influenced by many other disciplines and, therefore, may draw on traditions especially from both the social sciences and the humanities. These encompass cultural studies, philosophy, literary theory, psychology, political science, economics, sociology, anthropology, and history to name the most obvious. Thus, media studies refers to a meeting place for a lot of different approaches, questions and agendas. It further considers the transformation of the public sphere and individual imagination through the forms and effects of media upon social practices.

mediums through which information is distributed to the masses. Mass media is communication – whether written, broadcast, or spoken – that reaches a large audience. In the late 2000s, a classification called the “seven mass media” became popular, that was coined by Finnish technology consultant and bestselling author Tomi Ahonen to describe the evolution and convergence of mass media from print to mobile. Accordingly, mass media can be categorized into seven branches: print (books, pamphlets, newspapers, magazines), recording (gramophone records, magnetic tapes, cassettes, cartridges, CDs, and DVDs), cinema, radio, television, internet, and mobile phones as shown in Figure 2.1.

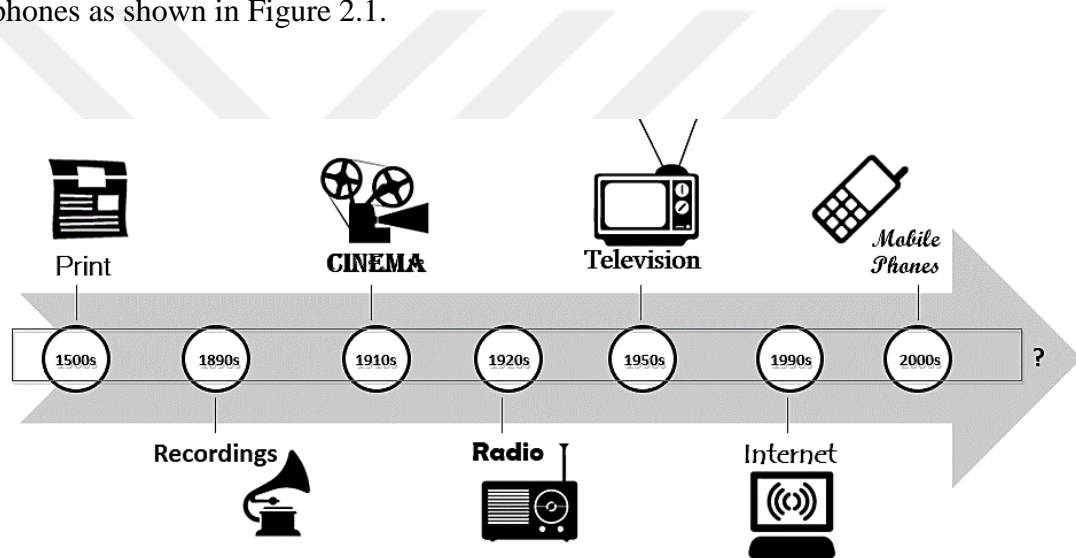


Figure 2.1 Evolution of Mass Media

The first four mass media are the traditional ones that are well known with established formats. *Print* (from the late 15th century) is the oldest, which has introduced long-form stories in books, advertising and subscriptions to newspapers and magazines. *Recordings* (from the late 19th century) introduced performance media separating the creative element (the writer/composer) and the performer with the global performance celebrity star. *Cinema* (from about 1900s) introduced moving images and multimedia content; and with it, many superstars were born. *Radio* (from about 1910s) brought the broadcast model with a streaming type of content delivery such as news,

weather, and music. Radio, in this sense, was the first pervasive media, received simultaneously by all. The most dominant mass media for the past 50 years, however, has been *television* (from the 1950s), yet it did not really introduce anything new but soon dominated all other existing media forms by delivering combined forms of them. Television soon took over totally the news from cinema, and with the emergence with video cassettes and later DVDs even the movies; and it took over much of the drama series, concerts, and live sports broadcasts from radio to which whole families listened to. Television introduced series and shows that promoted celebrity, and later propelled “normal” people into temporary celebrity status such as game shows, reality TV, etc.

With the sixth mass media, the *internet* (from the 1990s) as a very complex and revolutionary invention, the world got globally connected. It is the first that is capable of replicating all of the other five previous media: we can read books, magazines and newspapers online; view movies; listen to radio; view TV; download recordings (e.g. MP3 files, computer software, videogames etc). Further, the e-mail technology was developed, evolving to the postmodern version of letter writing. Most notably, the internet introduced two new elements: interactivity and search providing us with information and connectivity. The *mobile phone*, then, emerged as a mass media from about the year 2000, more recently smartphones, which have brought about a major change in the lives of people. The youngest of the seven mass media with the small screen is by far the most powerful with its applications which have added comfort and convenience. Mobile, in this sense, has eight unique elements not available on previous mass media: it is the first truly portable personal media, permanently carried, always-on, having a built-in payment mechanism, available at the point of creative impulse (e.g. camera function), provides most accurate audience information, captures social context of media consumption, and enables augmented reality (Ahonen, 2008).

The rise of traditional mass media ranging from film to broadcasting was one of the major phenomena of the 20th century. But especially “televisual technology has undergone a tremendous revolution [...]. From the cinema screen through the television screen to the video screen, we have constantly been subjected to an increasingly Orwellian screen culture” (Woods, 1999: 218). In late 20th century and in early 21st century, new screens were added – computer and mobile screens. New media technologies, in this sense, have become powerful tools by greatly contributing to the creation of a globalized society unlimited by physical distance, altering the concepts of location, space, and time. Against this backdrop, we are seduced and reduced to place a high premium on these technological devices – actually being electronic toys – that have turned out to be so pervasive that our daily lives are becoming more and more centered around them, nearly transforming us to some kind of “Lord of the Screens”: The world is now at our fingertips, and with just one magical click we can attain anything we want! The effect is that people become *technofetishized*; they cannot live without technology anymore, that is constantly teaching them to adapt to and yearn for the next newness, urging them to instant gratification and screen addiction.

2.1.3. Massive Consumerism

Mass media, a significant force particularly in Western capitalist societies, is leading to mass consumerism. Consumerism, in this sense, is a social and economic state of an advanced industrial society which is based on the systematic creation and fostering of a desire to purchase and sell products in ever greater amounts mainly promoted by media. Media can play a critical role in informing citizens, influencing attitudes and values, and touting the latest trends. However, the explosive emergence and development of a *mediated* culture shows the overall impact and guidance created

and exerted by the *culture industry*, a notion already coined in 1944 by the two German critical theorists Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, leading members of the Frankfurt School most known for their work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. The culture industry refers to a commodified and uniform popular culture in the capitalist society, which functions like an industry in producing standardized products which, in turn, produce standardized consumers. The culture industry is a main phenomenon of late capitalism, enhanced and propagated by the media, which encompasses all products and forms of light entertainment – from Hollywood films to popular music. With this regard, in *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), the French theorist Guy Debord developed the concept of the “spectacle” to refer to the domination of media images and consumer society over the individual while obscuring the nature and effects of capitalism. According to Debord, the spectacle is a tool that distracts and seduces people using the mechanisms of leisure, consumption, and entertainment as ruled by culture industries and especially advertising. These forms of culture are designed to cultivate false psychological needs that can only be met and satisfied by the products of consumer capitalism, which are used to manipulate mass society into passivity. We see that already decades ago it was observed that the culture industry shapes a dependent consuming public that is offered with trivial content contributing to a “regressive” audience that is “arrested at the infantile stage” (Adorno: 2001: 41-47).

Consumerism, as a powerful symbol of capitalist mass society, has become central to the meaningful practice of our everyday life, where choices are based not only on a product’s utility value anymore, but especially from the personal symbolic meanings they invest in objects. Highly visible becomes advertising, permeating the public and private spaces with messages that affect how we think – consciously and unconsciously – about ourselves, others, and the wider world. We learn to live role

models lives that are representative through TV, movies, and advertising, which promote lifestyles and products that are created to cater to the capitalist market. “I shop, therefore I am” is a striking slogan by American pop artist Barbara Kruger, who highlights that consumerism has turned out to be the lifestyle of postmodern society shaping consumer identities. However, the critique of consumerism lies in its huge power to play upon the desires and anxieties which attend the constructions of our identity. This is mainly due to five general consumer enticements we cannot escape, because they are *ubiquitous* (everywhere), *omnipresent* (always there), *addictive* (creates reinforcements), *self-replicating* (spreads “virally”), and *omnilegitimate* (self-promotional) (Barber, 2007: 222). Although those of us doing most of the consuming may feel better through our purchases, enjoyment often is fleeting after a short time. But then, we are again bombarded with messages from a multitude of media sources that promote not only products, but especially moods, tastes, and a sense of what is and is not important. Thus, it is difficult to break out of that vicious consumer cycle. Media studies helps us to understand and reveal “how media culture manipulates and indoctrinates us, and thus can empower people to contest the dominant meanings in cultural artifacts and to produce their own meanings and alternative media” (Hammer & Kellner, 2009: xxxiv).

2.1.4. Age of Uncertainty

The first decade of the 21st century is marked by rapid changes and technological saturation. But, simultaneously, we also live in a world that is intensely worrying in regard to deep conflicts, tensions, and social divisions. We witness terrible events and tragic occurrences, “when terrorism stalks the planet, when fear of Jihad is as prevalent as the infringement of liberties to which fear gives rise, when AIDS and tsunamis and

war and genocide put democracy at risk in both developing and the developed world” (Barber, 2007: 4). More recent global issues show the wave of Syrian refugees, winds of war in Jerusalem, and increasing terrorist coups in European capital cities like Paris and London which are new in the Western world. In Turkey, we have even witnessed an attempted military coup on 15 July 2016 which affected the whole Turkish folk until today. In contrast to earlier times, we can follow today everything up to the smallest detail live on our smartphones, laptops, and TV. The images we see from day to day overwhelm and frighten us. The new millennium has also brought unprecedented developments challenging the personal lives of adults in general:

Twenty-first-century adults have to adapt to, and remain adaptable to, a world that is full of the promise and threat of rapid change, both at work and in their intimate lives. Change and incompleteness have entered adulthood as principles for living that replace stability and completeness. In other words, one of the main bases for the clear contrast between adulthood and childhood is being eroded. (Lee, 2001, p.8)

Without doubt, we live in an “age of uncertainty” (Lee, 2001; Bauman, 2007) where most notably in times of crises, there is especially an inevitable search for certainties. Adults, in this sense, are responding in a variety of ways to this new world. So do companies. For some, this erosion of clear boundaries has created confusion (Côté, 2000; Lee, 2001; Barber, 2007). For many others it seems that the response involves, necessarily, some kind of optimism that has to be triggered somehow, most quickly with a nostalgic longing for the past where everything seemed to be better. With this regard, the “20th century began with utopia and ended with nostalgia” (Boym, 2007: 7). Thus, the first decade of the 21st century is actually not characterized by the search for novelties from the perspective of individuals, but by finding ways out of the

increasingly harsh and ugly realities of the current world which shows itself particularly in the proliferation of “postmodern nostalgias” (Boym, 2007; Booker, 2007), mediated by media and business companies in contrast to earlier forms of nostalgia. Nostalgia is more frequent in uncertain times and times of transition or change striving for merely better time, or slower time – time out of time, not encumbered by appointment books (Burton, 2014).

Infantilization, in this respect, seems to hit the pulse of the era we live in and, probably, appears as a response even solution for many: “In 21st century, the motif of escape back into childhood is frequently promoted as the best way to attain existential security” (Furedi, 2015). Indeed, adults are increasingly encouraged to look to the past, specifically to the realm of childhood, searching for ways of coping with dissatisfaction, stress, fear, and the external threat of the Other. The invitation to return to a child-like state, engage in youthful activities and consume entertainment that has been considered to be immature just few decades before, is meanwhile not perceived as inappropriate, but very welcoming with the consequence that a growing number of adults accept the invitation without any hesitation. And it is because of this that we can observe an increasing *glamorization of the childlike* penetrating aesthetics and contents across industries which is promoted by advertising:

In today’s chaotic, information-saturated society, a childlike, bias-free perspective is something to strive toward. Expanding beyond a child-inspired attitude, design across industries is taking on a more childlike look. This kidcentric aesthetic speaks to a desire for less serious, more imaginative and lighthearted products and services. (Trend Hunter, 2014)

2.2. ADVERTISING

Released in 1971, “Imagine” was a song written and performed by the English musician John Lennon (1940-1980), former member of *The Beatles*. The lyrics of the song seduced the listener to imagine a world at peace without the barriers of borders or conflicts due to religions and nationalities, and to consider the possibility that the focus of humanity should be living a life unattached to material possessions where no capitalist exploitation exists. “Imagine” was a depiction of what Lennon considered to be a utopia – an imagined place or state of things in which everything is perfect. In this light, let us fantasize for just a moment about the following consideration: Imagine a world *without* advertising!

Today, an “ad-free world” may sound really utopian. It is quite hard to imagine an environment with the lack of advertising because as members of a consumer society living in a media-dominated age, we are constantly bombarded from birth with millions of commodified images of wish-fulfilment that are intended to sell products to us. In the following, we will gain some crucial insights into contemporary advertising in its contemporary postmodern form and how it differs from its preceding modern version.

2.2.1. Definition and Key Characteristics

In 21st century, the omnipresent and ubiquitous nature of advertising is obvious. We live in a consumer-driven world that is saturated with advertising in all kinds of forms urging us to buy and consume products which are presented as the perfect way to find happiness, wish fulfillment and self-transformation. Advertising “has increasingly filled up the spaces of our daily existence [...] it is the air that we breathe as we live our daily lives” (Jhally, 2011: 200). However, the origins of advertising, as

a way of attracting attention and disseminating information, has always existed and can be dated back into the histories of different cultures in Ancient Egypt and Greece. From then until now, advertising has developed in incredible dimensions and is largely effective as a means of reaching large audiences more than ever before.

Advertising is a term derived from the Latin word “advertere”, which means “to turn the attention”, and can be defined as the “paid form of persuasive communication that uses mass and interactive media to reach beyond audiences in order to connect an identified sponsor with buyers (a target audience) and provide information about products (goods, services, and ideas)” (Moriarty et al., 2009: 55). As a process of *making known*, advertising is a strategic form of communicative activation that can be *informative* and *persuasive* in order to create impact. This means that advertising serves as the channel through which consumers get to know about products and services; it seeks to inform consumers and make them aware of a brand or company. Apart from informing consumers, advertising goes further and tries to persuade or influence them to make a purchase. Informative advertising, then, may employ persuasive techniques, but relies more on *rationality* and thus heavily on facts and knowledge; whereas persuasive advertising highly plays on desires and needs, and seeks to appeal to consumer *emotion* to close the sale.

To better understand how advertising works, it will be necessary to consider the four primary roles advertising plays in society and business: communication, marketing, economic, and societal (ibid.: 57-58). First of all, advertising is a type of communication; it is a message to consumers about a company’s product, which can be goods (e.g., refrigerators, soft drinks, cars), services (e.g., insurance, real estate, restaurant), or an idea (e.g., supporting an organization, vote for a candidate) in order to get attention and to create some kind of response such as a sale. As a form of mass

communication, advertising transmits product information to connect buyers and sellers in the marketplace. In its branding role, it transforms a product by creating an image that goes beyond straightforward facts. This makes advertising also to a form of marketing communication which is done by the marketing department or manager responsible for selling a company's product. Marketing is the process a business uses in order to satisfy consumer needs and wants by providing goods and services, and creating customer relationships. In this sense, advertising is one of the most important promotion tools within the marketing mix that refers to the set of actions or tactics that a company uses to promote its brand or product in the market. Also known as the "4Ps", a typical marketing mix consists of price, product, promotion, and place which meanwhile increasingly includes several other Ps like packaging, positioning, people and even politics as vital mix elements.

Advertising's economic contributions come from its advantage as a mass-marketing tool. Companies manufacture products and services with the aim of selling them to consumers; without sales, these companies would run at a loss and soon would be out of business. Therefore, the more people know about a product, the higher the opportunity they buy it, meaning the higher the sales. Another important point is that advertising is responsible for the promotion and preservation of the brand image as it reflects and forms a brand reception by the audience which in the long run helps to boost a company's reputation and long term investments. Moreover, advertising plays a determining role in terms of supporting and maintaining the system of consumer-driven capitalism (Barber, 2007).

But advertising also has a number of social roles. In addition to informing people about new and improved products, it also mirrors fashion and design trends and adds to people's sense. Further, it helps people to shape an image of themselves by

setting up role models with which they can identify, and it gives them a way to express themselves in their personalities. Advertising, in this sense, is viewed as a mirror of society as well as an agent of change because advertisements both influence and also get influenced by society. However, it can be argued that in many cases advertising content shapes rather than reflects societal values, as it tends to change the consumption patterns such as behavior, lifestyle and attitudes of people. This is because it has the power to influence consumers “to do things they would not do if they were not exposed to advertising” (Shimp, 2007: 63).

In describing the practice of advertising, it can be referred to four components: strategy, creative idea, creative execution, and media planning. These four areas are also the fundamental concepts professionals use to analyze the effectiveness of their advertising efforts. The advertising strategy is the logic and planning behind the advertisement what gives it direction and focus. The advertisement is developed to meet specific objectives, directed to a certain audience with a message to speak to that audience’s most important concerns, designed in the most professional and creative way in order to attract the audience’s attention and run in media (e.g., print, broadcast, or the Internet) that will reach this audience most effectively. In this vein, advertising is a *process*, not a medium in its own right, although it uses different media forms to communicate. As companies still have access to traditional tools, such as newspapers, radio, and television, now they also have a wide range of online tools, including social media. Technology has offered not only more options for sharing advertising messages, but also more selections for creating these messages as well. Today, a range of tools exist to enhance communications through graphics, sound, and animation. However, there is also more competition for businesses from varied sources, especially as the Internet has made it possible for companies to establish a regional, national, or even

international presence to compete virtually. With this, competition now comes not only from the business across the street, but also from across the world.

2.2.2. Postmodern Marketing Strategy in 21st Century Advertising

With the start of the new millennium, the 21st century brought unprecedented competition for the attention of consumers. As highlighted by Seth Godin, an American world-renowned entrepreneur and best-selling author of the landmark book *Purple Cow* (2004), the emerging problem was and still is that advertising is losing its power because it is so abundant. The huge challenge for companies lies in the fact that they are increasingly forced to promote with more and more creative and outstanding advertisements which would not get lost but penetrate the enormous amount of information in the media explosion in order to reach and convince consumers.

With this regard, contemporary advertising is fundamentally influenced by the postmodern orientation; advertising is “fed by postmodernism in all the arts and inconceivable without it” (Jameson, 1985: 124). Thus, it can be argued that advertising is one of the primary media spheres that generates postmodern culture and practices. Postmodern advertisements, in this sense, are closely related to the emergence of visual media, technologically defined and enforced, providing the audience with a multitude of outstanding commodity aesthetics that is characterized by the depthless collage of images, an abundance of euphoria, and a fabrication of fantasy.

2.2.2.1. Why Postmodern Advertising Appeals

In 21st century, postmodernism has forced marketers to rethink their marketing and advertising strategies, and to become even more creative – as they already had been

in the last decades of 20th century – in order to attract consumers’ attention. As the “notion of creativity is at the very centre of successful contemporary advertising” (McStay, 2013: 1), this is in accordance with what many companies today are trying to do: discovering and finding extraordinary new ideas and techniques, inspired by the huge repertoire the postmodern worldview offers, that allows to mix all available styles under the motto “anything goes”. As a result, advertising has begun to change.

Creativity is one of the key components of advertising (Moriarty et. al, 2009: 53). Advertising through the use of creativity, appropriate media and persuasive tactics can influence consumers causing them to change beliefs and desires about particular products or services. However, the omnipresence of advertising throughout Western societies in 21st century is obvious. Advertisements are all around us and can be seen everywhere, such as on television, newspapers, billboards, and the internet with the aim to attract our attention. As the environment is turbulent, companies require organizations to be fast, flexible and very open to changes in order to adjust themselves again and again to new circumstances and to meet the demand of the consumers. One of the most significant impacts is the immense empowering of the consumer in 21st century than in previous times. With the plethora of media and numerous products and options existing, customers are no longer bound by rules to any particular brand. Via the internet, search engines and a huge range of products available online, consumers are more and more in control of what they wish to see, hear and buy – whenever and wherever they want. Thus, creativity and outstanding ideas in marketing are gaining increasingly importance over the recent years due to high competition, mature markets and technological developments.

But what makes an advertisement creative and outstanding? The creative concept is the advertisement’s central idea, even its soul, that attracts people’s attention

and sticks in their memory. The word “creative” describes a critical aspect that drives the entire field of advertising. Planning the strategy calls for imaginative problem solving: The research efforts need to be creative, and the buying and placing of advertisements in the media require creative thinking (Moriarty et al., 2009: 56). In this sense, creativity is sometimes seen as a gift, a special way of seeing the world:

Creativity is the ability to consider and hold together seemingly inconsistent elements and forces, making a new connection. This ability to step outside of everyday logic, to free oneself of thinking in terms of “the way things are” or “the way things have to be,” apparently allows creative people to put things together in a way that, once we see it, makes sense, is interesting, is creative. (O’Guinn et al., 2015: 181)

In contemporary advertising, creativity becomes essential to marketers. With companies’ desire for greater profit and returns from marketing investments, the need for effective and efficient advertising has never been more important than today. Generally, creativity is seen to be the key to successful advertising as it can increase the effectiveness and, consequently, brand recognition leading to more sales and profitability. Mostly, creative advertising is *great* advertising as it is clearly recognized, thus creating brand awareness, and enjoyed as it is entertaining and creates memorable moments. Effective advertising, then, is both “an art in its creative dimension and a science in its strategic dimension” (Moriarty et al., 2009: 398). As advertising is basically an “idea business” (ibid.: 417), it is especially the idea that becomes a point of focus for communicating the message strategy – a theme or a central concept – what is called “Big Idea” or creative concept. An advertising idea must be both *creative* (original, different, novel, unexpected) and *strategic* (right for the product and target, meeting the advertising objectives) (ibid.: 402). However, it is not just about creating a

brand new idea that no one has thought of before. Advertising creativity is rather producing an idea that solves a communication problem in an *original* way. Therefore, it is crucial to explore how the two dimensions come together as creative strategy in advertising. Although it is a challenging task to identify advertising creativity, there is some agreement that creative advertisements share three common features, the so-called “CAN” elements consisting of connectedness, appropriateness, and novelty (Shimp & Andrews, 2013: 262) as shown in Figure 2.2:

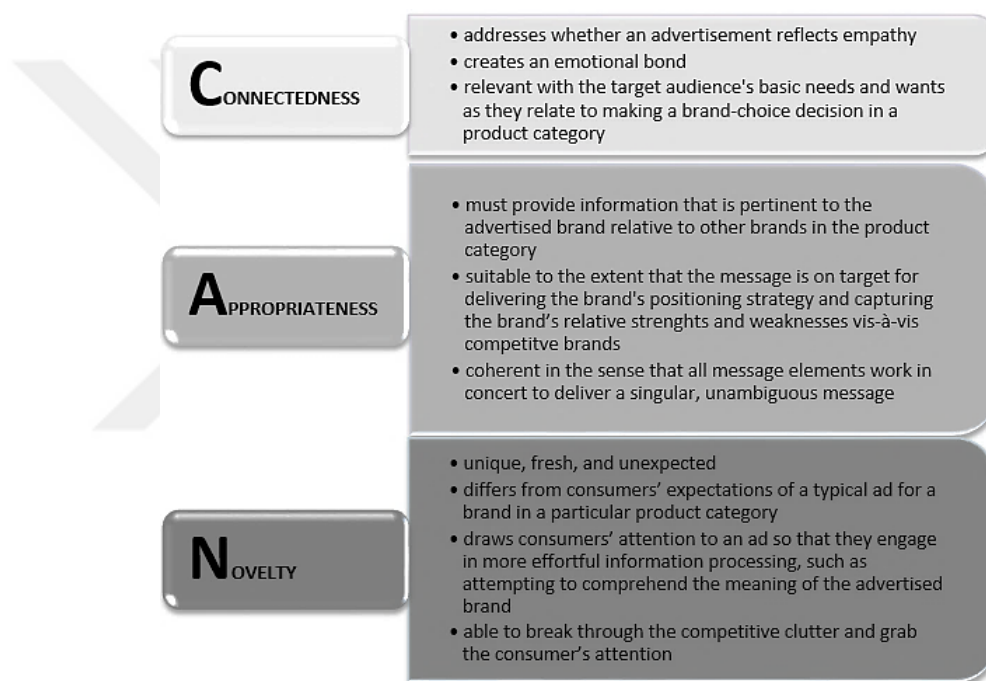


Figure 2.2. Features of Creative Advertisements: “CAN” Elements

Advertising agencies may develop advertisements that are unique, different, unexpected, and even weird. Yet, novel advertisements can be considered creative and effective only when they are also connected and appropriate. Beyond being creative, advertisers want their advertising to “stick” – the audience comprehends the advertiser’s intended message, it is strongly memorable, and it changes the target audience’s brand-related opinions or behavior. Sticky messages are those that have lasting impact but most notably are persistent. As Figure 2.3 shows, there are six

elements of sticky messages that tend to strike and can be described as “SUCCES”: simplicity, unexpectedness, concreteness, credibility, emotionality, and storytelling (Shimp & Andrews, 2013: 263).

S implicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • simple and profound, prioritizing the most important • represents the brand’s core idea or key positioning statement (i.e., the advertising execution is stripped to its critical essence and captures the key element that needs to be communicated) • appropriate in the sense of the term’s CAN elements of creative usage.
U nexpectedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate interest and curiosity by deviating from audience members’ expectation • violating classic schemes to overcome consumers’ natural tendency to attend selectively only those messages that are relevant to them • similarity of unexpectedness to the novelty element in the list of creative CAN features.
C redibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • believable and authentic • have a sense of authority • provide reasons why they should be accepted as fact • using statistics, integrating authorities, people’s opinions, vivid details
C oncreteness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • possess concrete images as compared to abstract representations • clear messages to facilitate both consumer learning and retrieval of brand information • easier for people to remember and retrieve concrete information • using tangible, substantive words and demonstrations.
E motionality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • generate feelings and moods • affect in the form of happiness, joy, fun, cheerfulness, amusement, and other favorable emotions • appealing to emotions that are relevant to the product category in which the advertised brand competes
S torytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create plots, characters, and settings • use key ingredients as heroes and desires • drive action through simulation (what to do) and inspiration (the motivation to do it)

Figure 2.3. Features of Sticky Advertisements: “SUCCES” Elements

Against this backdrop, we can argue that postmodern advertising is in general highly creative for many reasons. First and foremost, it is influenced and reinforced by new technologies creating favorable brand situations which are attracting in every aspect. Postmodern advertisements indispensably employ computer graphics, video editing technologies and various kinds of sound effects. New technologies make possible the introduction of innovations in visualization, color combination and free-floating camera movement that facilitate the visual expression of postmodern creativity. Many of the 15- to 20-second commercials – and sometimes even longer up to 1 or 2 minutes in Turkey – often resemble miniature versions of cinematic productions in order to display commercialized dreamworlds – most notably on screen – based on instant fantasy gratification. Such commercials increasingly become a dynamic graphic

field that tell stories with ultra-abbreviated plots composed of bombastic images, theatrical and musical performances, superimposed illustrations, narration, and other elements, which reinforce each other to achieve their effect. Capitalizing on the benefits of this new technology, advertisements – for the first time maybe – are now able to produce these fantasies on a believable and convincing level of quality. However, the overall aim of companies with this is to differentiate themselves from competition and to evoke desired reactions from audiences.

2.2.2.2. Features of Postmodern Advertising

Postmodern marketing strategy in 21st century is a reaction to the marketing practices of the 20th century favoring a more ironic, cynical, and less scientific view of advertising. Consumers do “not expect truth from marketers; they want marketing to be about glitz and glamour and to be mischievous and mysterious. Marketing should be fun, but any nastiness is forbidden”. With this regard, postmodern advertising consists of the combination of several distinctive representational features. Most notably, it makes use of *eclecticism* to generate some kind of *hodgepodge*, in particular, composed of parody, pastiche and bricolage which are intertextual in nature (Odabaşı, 2004; Odih, 2007). *Intertextuality* is extremely important in postmodern theories of art and culture, which describes the deliberate reference to other texts; its meaning is shaped by another source. With this regard, *parody* is a work (e.g., art, literature, music, movie, etc.) that mimics or imitates in an absurd way the conventions and style of another work in order to derive ridicule, ironic comment or sarcasm; whereas *pastiche* is a work that imitates previous work but embracing it in a positive way. *Bricolage* is a collection or collage of different works which is constructed from various available “old” materials in order to form one “new” text.

Another important and maybe the most pervasive mode of intertextuality is *retro*, the recycling and revival of old-fashioned forms by adapting them to new uses, which is a very clear referencing of the past. Postmodern advertising is fascinated with styles and fashions from the past, and in general with *nostalgia*⁷, and is keen on shattering historical time into a never-ending “now” leading to a loss of reality. Postmodern culture often allows doing things completely out of their original context and in juxtaposition as, for example, recycled TV shows from earlier times or relaunching of retro products. Thus, advertising “tricks consumers into missing what they haven’t lost” (Boym, 2001: 38). But further, advertising is “either directly nostalgic for the past or feeds off it parasitically because there is nothing new to do any more. It is thus related to processes such as pastiche, intertextuality, and the *recycling* of the past” (Mason, 2007: 229).

However, nostalgia as a historical emotion came of age during the time of Romanticism and is coeval with the birth of mass culture (Boym, 2007: 13). In the modern age, nostalgia was a rebellion against the modern idea of time, the time of history and progress. Further, the rapid pace of industrialization and modernization increased the intensity of people’s longing for the slower rhythms of the past. In contrast, postmodern nostalgia in general expresses symptomatically an overall sense of cultural loss of authenticity, originality, or cohesion, and thus forming a nostalgia for an idealized longing for the lost past that is perceived to be better than the present. However, the past serves as a purpose in the contemporary consumer world only if *mythologized* as nostalgia and when it can be used to sell something (Niemeyer, 2014: 216). In fact, there is a conversion of nostalgia into a marketing strategy disengaging it

⁷ Nostalgia, a concept coined in 1688 by Swiss physician Johannes Hofer to designate a pathological longing for distant homeland, is today understood as a personal emotional attachment or sentimental longing to the past, or rather, to a version of the past (Niemeyer, 2014: 216).

from memories of any specific historical past allowing it to float freely through different periods.

Regarding the feature of anti-form, postmodern advertising permits more open signification than in modernist advertisements by mixing reality and fictional reality, and putting a visual frame within a frame as, for example, an advertising in advertising. By considering the appeal of the imagery, postmodern advertising presents little information about the utility and quality of products, focusing instead on symbolic relationships in the context of consumption. Postmodern advertising is more concerned with the cultural representations of the stylish look of the advertisement, its clever references drawn from popular culture and art, its concern with the surface of things and jokey nature at the expense of advertising itself that are all indicative of the emergence of postmodernism in advertising. Advertising, in this sense, tries to show the image of consumers they strive to be or should be – at least in the eyes of advertisers. Postmodern advertising focuses on this image creation which has become one of the leading persuasive techniques. The product itself is no longer in focus, nor is its description used as a primary persuasive means. Image creation centers on consumers through creating product-imagery with which they can easily identify. Postmodern advertising depends largely on non-linguistic codes (e.g., visuality, music, and sound effects) by creating symbolic worlds of reality, and for this it makes use of overlapping and fragmented images.

In general, it can be argued that the use of postmodern advertising techniques such as symbolic associations, surreal visuality, and humorous juxtapositions has increased during the last decades. On the contrary, modern advertising approaches still consist of realistic visuals, the use of experts and high levels of information content even if such form of advertising is in decline. We can conclude that postmodernism

provides a useful analytical framework to interpret and explain the changes in contemporary consumption patterns, especially in advertising, as it is capable of providing the marketer with practical and meaningful insights into the consumption landscape, in general, and the behaviour of the postmodern consumer in particular (Brown, 1995; Firat & Venkatesh, 1993; Firat & Shultz 1997: 183).

Postmodern culture calls for engagement with numerous new conditions which represent a blurring of distinctions that were fundamental to the constitution of modernity (Firat & Vankatech,1995; Firat & Dholakia, 2006). Different interpretations of postmodernism across various disciplines have resulted in a lack of consensus on precise definitions of postmodernism and its inherent characteristics (Brown, 1995: 106). However, there are five most common postmodern conditions with specific traits influencing postmodern advertising – some of them where already mentioned above – that will be briefly summarized to conclude this section:

□ *Hyperreality*

Reality created in postmodern terms is *hyperreal* (meaning “over” or “beyond”): “It is a reality beyond what reality has been understood to be in the modernistic, scientific sense – reality independent of human agency, universal and unique” (Firat & Venkatesh, 1993: 230). Hyperreality blurs distinctions between what is considered to be as real and what is to be believed as imaginary, which makes it increasingly difficult to distinguish reality from fantasy (Firat & Dholakia, 2006: 128). The recognition that reality is culturally constructed emerges with postmodernism’s “fascination with the fake, the fantastic, the recreation, the reproduction, the inauthentic” (Brown, 2005: 104). The two core strategies through which hyperreality is constructed are simulation and simulacrum, first conceptualized by French philosopher Jean Baudrillard.

Threatening the difference between true and false, a *simulation* is a form of feigned appearance or deception, an imitation of a real-world situation or process, which is best epitomized by computer games, music videos, virtual reality, and most notably, by the theming phenomenon including hotels, restaurants, shopping malls, amusement parks like Disneyland or casinos and cities as Las Vegas (Firat & Dholakia, 2006: 129). *Simulacrum* is something or someone that looks like a copy of a real existing thing or person. It is a copy for which there is no original; it is something which replaces reality with its representation. These would occur in successive phases of the image where, first, it is the reflection of a basic reality; second, it masks and perverts a basic reality; third, it masks the *absence* of a basic reality; and fourth, it bears no relation to any reality whatever, it is its own pure simulacrum (Baudrillard, 2001: 173). Postmodern advertising is a powerful tool to add hyperreality to brand's products. Marketers create brand realities which are perceived "*more real than real*" (Firat and Venkatesh, 1995: 252), experienced as even better than real as it seems to provide an extra special-effect-like reality, even too much reality; it appears too perfect to be true and, as a consequence, gives more playful pleasure rather than the standing quest for moments of "real" reality (Eco, 1986; Baudrillard, 1994, 1998). Thus, models of the real become substituted for reality itself, which is then beyond reach. The image of life holds more importance than life itself as presented in many advertisements promoting ideas about an entirely simulated world through symbols and artificial imagery that are preferred to use, instead of realistic representations and characteristics of products.

❑ ***Fragmentation***

Fragmentation means the "breaking up into parts and erasing of the whole, single reality into multiple realities, all claiming legitimacy, and all decoupling any link to the presumed whole" (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 253). In postmodern terms,

fragmentation refers to the dissolution of established systems and the relationships between entities within a system (Brown, 1995: 106; Firat & Dholakia, 2006: 131). Moreover, it refers to the disconnection from one truth, one way of being, one way of thinking with the consequence that people can no longer be categorized as being one certain type or belonging to one certain segment. In postmodern societies, people “assert their existence through the power of the images that they represent” (Firat & Shultz 1997: 195). They can use different images in order to make them appealing in different scenarios. Consequently, there is an increasing demand for products that help consumers project their self-images but who reject to commit to just one single style or brand (ibid.: 197). Fragmentation invades all activities, including consumption, where everything is discontinuous and disjointed. Marketing, then, becomes “an activity that fragments consumption signs and environments and reconfigures them through style and fashion” (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 252). In this sense, advertisements increasingly may resemble to music videos representing collages of fleeting moments that excite the senses, yet rarely connect to a central, unified theme or focus. Products increasingly represent disconnected experiences without linkages, contexts and historical roots. The fragmentation in everyday life experiences and the loss of commitment to any single way of being result in *bricolage* markets (ibid.: 191). Consumers do not present a united, centred self anymore – the “human subject has a divided self” (ibid.: 252) with multiple representations of selves even when approaching the same product category.

❑ *Decentred Subject*

In opposition to the modernist notion of a Cartesian unified subject – the idea of separation of mind and body –, the fragmented postmodern consumer is a decentered subject whose authentic self is said to be displaced by a “made-up self” (Firat &

Venkatesh, 1995: 252). The Cartesian idea of selfhood as a stable core identity that is fixed, permanent, and rational is now dismantled as postmodernism reveals the self to have multiple dimensions, further positioning the self as an imaginary construct with many interpersonal subjective levels. Thus, the postmodern consumer is *liberated* from having or seeking a centred, integrated self (ibid.: 254). Further, the supposed human control over human destiny and over objects that surround humanity is questioned. Postmodern culture takes the privileged status of the human subject away; instead, the control or even the power that objects and constructed structures come to exert over the human subject are emerging. A playful engagement with the complexity and frequent reversibility of the subject–object relationship is suggested, rather than its simplification or repression into the modern duality of the superior subject versus the inferior object (Firat & Dholakia, 2006: 132). However, the relationship between the subject and the object becomes complicated and confusing, moreover, a blurring of differences can be seen (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 252). Advertisements, in particular, show the reversal of subject and object as, for example, in Absolut Vodka or Bacardi rum bottles possessing the power to act on and transform mundane people and settings into exotic ones (Firat & Dholakia, 2006: 130). Besides, commercials for Pepsi Cola, Budweiser beer, and Energizer batteries often present the brand object as the hero who is capable of transforming dogs or chimpanzees into party animals or defeating evil men. These examples show that the consumer – the human subject – is at the margin who is decentred but enjoying its positioning (Firat et al., 1994: 42).

❑ ***Reversal of Production and Consumption***

Postmodernism is basically a culture of consumption, while modernism represents a culture of production (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 252). The reversals in

production and consumption arise from production losing its privileged status in culture and consumption becoming the means through which individuals define their self-images for themselves. With this regard, postmodern consumption offers the decentered subject a wide array of products and services to enable the representation of the self, often in order to seek recognition and empowerment in everyday life.

As consumers are considered as fictions – meaning that there is no permanent understanding of who they are as they can be re-constructed again and again – the confusion between subject and object is reinforced in part by the fact that also consumers tend to view themselves as marketable items – a so-called “self-objectification” – to be customized and produced, to be positioned and promoted, as a product (Firat et al., 1994: 41). These can be, for example, people in Reality TV or YouTube personalities, who redefine the roles of producer and consumer by actively producing their own content with “symbols and signs of consumption” (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 252). Postmodern consumers define themselves through advertising images; hence, they create their own image through consumption and the experiences derived from it. This provides consumers some kind of liberation of “freedom from boredom, monotony and the necessity to conform” (Firat & Shultz, 1997: 193).

□ *Juxtaposition of Opposites*

The major characteristic of postmodern culture is its paradoxical nature. Since the confusion between subject and object is established, they can be mutually represented and juxtaposed at all times as anything can be combined with anything else (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 255). This combination of different elements, in this sense, always seems to create something new out of the old. What in modernist thought would be considered “disjointed, paradoxical and inconsistent, hence schizophrenic and

pathological, is not so considered in postmodern sensibility” (Firat et al., 1994: 43). Oppositional and contradictory emotions (e.g. contempt with admiration or love with hate) and cognitions (e.g. reverence with ridicule or beliefs with doubt) can arise and occur in the individuals simultaneously. The postmodern condition rejects the uniformity of style, function, form and content inherent in the modern; instead, it embraces the “juxtaposition of opposites” in which “fragmentation, rather than unification, is the basis of consumption” (Firat & Venkatesh, 1995: 252). Moreover, postmodern consumption thematizes social differences and paradoxes in order “to allow them to exist freely” (ibid.). The ability and willingness to represent different self-images in fragmented moments liberate consumers from conformity to a single image throughout their life where consumer culture, then, becomes a way to differentiate oneself by constructing unique identities. Thus, experimentation with and tolerance for different, multiple options are allowed and encouraged. The consumer of postmodern culture appreciates and enjoys the paradox and the playfulness, the difference and the satire that such juxtapositions provide which are mostly enabled through pastiche. Pastiche, as an underlying principle of juxtaposition, “consists of playful, tongue-in-cheek collage or medley of available styles, an ironic, self-referential mixing of existing codes, be they architectural, artistic, cinematic, literary, musical or whatever” (Brown, 1995: 107). Thus, postmodern advertising may be liberating while surprising and even shocking, frequently unrelated to the product or the brand by showing no product at all, but attract attention and elicit positive sensations and emotions with no deeper meaning with a bizarre combination of visuals and impressions where heterogeneity, incongruity, irony and double meaning can be observed at a high level.

2.3. BETWEEN WESTERN ORIENTATION AND EASTERN TRADITION: TURKEY

Bütün reklamlarda bir çocuksuluk,
bir oyunculuk, bir neşe...
Kim bilir belki de geç büyüyen bir
toplum olarak bu tür şeylere daha
fazla ilgi duyuyoruz.

– Kürşat Başar, Turkish journalist

With regard to the fact that the present research is about infantilization in postmodern advertising context, it was necessary to further narrow the focus on a certain country. Since infantilization has been examined mostly within Western societies especially with respect to the USA and West Europe, it was considered to take an entirely different direction with a closer look to maybe one of the most fascinating countries in the world: Turkey. Infantilization in advertisements with a special reference to Turkey will be interesting to analyze as Turkey is an emerging country struggling between its Western orientation and its Eastern tradition.⁸ Being a crossroad between East and West, Turkey lies between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea, and between Europe and Asia serving as a bridge geographically, culturally, and economically. For many reasons, Turkey is an interesting “object of study” in order to examine how infantilization in terms of advertising is in progress in a Western-oriented country like Turkey with the influence of its Eastern roots yet. However, Turkish consumers’ characteristics are significantly different from those of Western consumers in terms of demographic, socio-cultural, media, and political economic aspects as will be discussed in detail.

⁸ The question of whether or not Turkey is a Western country, is hotly debated on various platforms. Huntington (1996) describes Turkey as the most obvious and prototypical example of a “torn country” claiming that while Turkey elite define Turkey as a Western society, on the contrary its history, culture and traditions are non-Western which is the reason why Western elites refuse to accept the country as such. Thus, Turkey is often perceived as an emerging Western country of the Middle East.

- **Demographic Features**

Turkey has a population of 81 million which shows an increase of more than 10 million people since the turn of the millennium – a faster growth than in any other country in Europe. Turkey, as an emerging economy, has especially a young population with a median age of 32 by 2018 (0-14 years: 24.68%, 15-24 years: 15.99%, 25-54 years: 43.21%, 55-64 years: 8.58%, 65 years and over: 7.53%) – a striking contrast when compared with aging European and other industrialized countries. For instance, Germany has a population of over 82 million – a number similar to Turkey – but the younger population is declining whereas the older is growing as figures show (0-14 years: 12,82%, 15-24: 10,09%, 25-54 years: 40,45%, 55-64 years: 14,58%, 65 years and over: 22,06%). According to the European Statistical Institute (EuroStat, 2018), in the 28 member states of the European Union the median age was almost 43 by 2016; while the youngsters among Europeans are shrinking chronically day by day, 19.2% of Europeans are elderly (aged 65 and over) as of 2016 – and it is in an immense increase trend.

Why are demographic factors important in the discussion of infantilization? After the baby boom years between 1945-1960, the birth rate in the Western world has progressively decreased and, as a consequence, the average age has strongly increased in the last fifty years. An important motivation for the constant promotion of infantilism by the mainstream media and marketing (as will be later illustrated, see Section 3.5.2) can be traced to this imbalance. Young people are elsewhere than in the Western world; young people are in emerging countries, but especially in the Third World, which are unable to afford products that even often are unnecessary (this will be further discussed in detail under the topic “Infantilist Ethos” in Section 3.5.1). Consequently, a possible market for youthful goods must be, then, necessarily redirected to Western societies.

Thus, even if the population in the developed world is aged and continues to age, one solution is found in *inducing* infantilization to make older people thinking and acting younger somehow by treating them as such, which even becomes a necessary instrument in order to handle the problem with older becoming populations (Schirmacher, 2004: 73). The choice of starting infantilizing processes in media and marketing, then, leads to the circumstance that the definition of youth simply moves up (ibid.).

As the present thesis will focus on infantilization in Turkish advertising, it can be questioned why, then, infantilization in Turkey with a young population might occur, and how it has to be evaluated in terms of media and marketing strategies. Moreover, it can be argued that infantilization functions in younger populations as that of Turkey because of the great amount of children, where actually child-oriented advertisements even for adult-targeted products, then, could be evaluated as normal. Certainly, this might be one plausible explanation. Partially, this explanation would even answer the question why Turkish adults are affected as well. If we assume that more and more childlike advertisements are created to attract children, then we can also argue that adults are increasingly exposed to these as well which, however, would have an infantilizing effect in the long run on them as they are confronted to something below their adult level. But there are also other arguments why infantilization not also affects aging populations but also emerging ones like that of Turkey, and this not because of the great number of children only. We can argue that infantilization occurs and functions in Turkey differently but even more powerfully in contrast to aging populations, and this has especially socio-cultural reasons.

- **Socio-Cultural Background**

In many ways Turkey is a paradox, as it is a Muslim country where liberal Westernized orientations are deeply integrated into the culture which, without doubt, can be traced to its history. Turkish culture has undergone a huge amount of changes with the establishment of Turkey as a republic in 1923 after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. The social revolution undertaken by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938), the founder of Turkey, changed nearly every aspect of the country's economy, culture, and society in a short period of time from the clothing style to the alphabet. The empire's rural, traditional and Islamic-based value system was slowly transformed to an industrial, modern and secular republic, which was paternalistic and authoritarian in its nature, trying to adopt the principles of rationality, technology and science in order to become a prosperous and civilized country. However, the ambitious but hard adaptation process was accompanied by economic and political turmoil which led to various military coups since 1960, and most recently in 2016.

From the very beginning, industrialization had been uneven across Turkey, with companies concentrating mostly in Istanbul and other big cities like İzmir and Ankara in the Western parts of the country. Thus, in the larger towns and cosmopolitan coastal cities of Turkey the culture is rather secular and similar to Europe in many ways, whereas in the rest of the Republic the cultural traits remain fairly similar to that of the small towns of neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, where life is lived in a more traditional way in rural areas. An inevitable consequence of this was the influx of people from the rural Eastern parts to Istanbul and other developing cities with the hope of finding employment and better living conditions. The Turkish Republic, in this sense, was a project to force all within its borders existing ethnic and religious identities from Kurds to the Alevis to mix with each other, that earlier in the empire were supposed to

be separated, with the aim of producing one national and cultural identity. However instead, what resulted as we can clearly see today, is a complicated culture with many shady sides bearing unsolvable conflicts as especially, at the latest, the traditional Muslim cultures of Anatolia clashed with the cosmopolitan modernity of Istanbul and the West since the 1950s due to the huge increasing immigration from Eastern Turkey.

Since then, the Turkish social texture was undergoing a period of intense change. The migrants developed a culture of their own that combined rural traditions with the Western-oriented values of the city. But most important, they invaded the life space of the secular and westernized middle classes, bringing the geographically and socially peripheral conservative and religious value system and ethnic aspects of identification into the centre of the big cities. Against this backdrop, we can say that Turkey is a collectivistic society based on traditional cultural values of commitment to group and family. However, while societies generally evolve from what German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies described as *Gemeinschaft* (community) to *Gesellschaft* (civil society)⁹ – meaning from collectivistic to individualistic societies –, we can observe in Turkey a partial shift to an individualist culture in the last decades. Individualist cultures generally reflect Western ideals typical for civil societies, and collectivist cultures in contrast refer to Eastern values in communities. Exactly this mix

⁹ The concepts of *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* were elaborated by Tönnies in his influential work *Community and Society* (1887) to describe the evolutionary nature of types of social systems. *Gemeinschaft* as a pre-modern community, or *cemaat* in Turkish, involves familial networks founded upon co-operation, referring to the rural, peasant communities in which personal relationships are defined and regulated on the basis of traditional social rules. People have simple and direct face-to-face relations with each other by sharing everything, both material and immaterial, determined by *Wesenwille* (natural will) – i.e., natural and spontaneously arising emotions and expressions of sentiment. In contrast, *Gesellschaft* or *cemiyet* in Turkey is the creation of *Kürwille* (rational will) and is typified by modern, cosmopolitan societies with their government bureaucracies and large industrial organizations. Human relations are more impersonal and indirect, being rationally constructed in the interest of efficiency or other economic and political considerations. Self-interest and self-will tend to weaken the traditional bonds of family, kinship, and religion that permeate the *Gemeinschaft*'s structure.

of being *in-between* makes Turkey very interesting and actually explains its dilemma of being caught between collectivism and individualism, and Eastern tradition and Western ideals.

Individualism is a circumstance in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and close family members only. Individualistic cultures are characterized by underlining individual rights but not responsibilities, personal autonomy, privacy, self-realization, independence, individual decision making, competitiveness, and less concern about the needs and interests of others. Even if many modern Turks attempt to act and think individualistic, it is quite difficult and even impossible while living in a society where predominantly a collectivistic culture exists. Collectivism, in this sense, describes a culture where people are born into extended families or people feel they belong to larger groups which protect and care for the well-being of them in exchange for loyalty. Here, the “We” consciousness is in the foreground. Thus, collectivistic societies are characterized by emotional dependence on groups, obedience due to the belief that group decisions are superior to individual decisions, less personal privacy and self-sacrificing, and concern about the needs and interests of others. In this sense, the majority of Turks – and this is maybe the most important characteristic that all have in common – is family-centric and child-oriented.

Family values play an enormous part in the culture of Turkey as a whole. Turkish families, and further educational institutions, nurture collectivist values as they present themselves as authoritarian, patriarchal, and traditional by demanding respect for elder people which, however, can vary among regions. The social context of the Turkish family system, in this sense, is based on “close group ties, accountability, loyalty, and interdependence rather than autonomy and individualism” (Palut, 2009: 242). All these factors lead to the point that we can observe natural forms of

infantilizing mechanisms caused by the collectivistic structures in Turkish families that can be generally seen throughout Turkish society. For instance, most Turks even over the age of 18 (60.9% of the total population) live with their parents for a long time, mostly until they get married, which is regarded as normal. In general, families in Turkish culture meet their adult childrens' material and psychological needs not only for many years but often lifelong; thus, dependency is normally encouraged and is perceived as "the manifestation of being a good son or daughter who respects and cares for the elders of the family" (ibid.).

There is an emotional interdependence in traditional obedience-oriented Turkish families, whereas families with Western practices are more oriented toward developing autonomy and self-reliance which, however, not makes up the majority of the population. Many Turks take their decisions not on their own, no matter what the topic is – before making any action parents or elderly family members are asked, and only after an approval they feel content and are able to make a step. And even if adults are able to make their very own decisions, it is quite difficult to implement them because everyone from the family and around is getting involved somehow by trying to interfere in the matter. It is normal when adults, even if they are 40, will always be children in the eyes of their parents. But the problem is that many Turkish adults are continuously treated by their parents as if they were still like children with the effect that maybe Turkish adults never really grow mature, and if they do, then very late. Parents and other elderly family members may still worry, then, that their adult children are not wearing warm enough clothes in the winter, not hanging out with the right people or even having married the wrong person. But further, they may dictate them what to do.

We can say that, in many ways, Turkey can be considered as a "childish society" because it is in the nature of Turks to polarize in an imprudent manner in various

situations of life – not only in the family but also in other circles – as different interests and forces are continually running up against one another: “Türkiye çocuksu bir toplum. Çocuksu bir toplum olarak çok kolay kutuplaşıyoruz, çok kolay birbirimizin boğazına çöküyoruz” (Tekelioğlu, 2012).

- **Media Markets**

As a matter of fact, it is not astonishing then to observe infantilizing tendencies also in Turkish advertisements and other media forms as this perfectly fits in the Turkish consumers’ life scheme; Turks are familiar with infantilization from their family lifes and the society they live in. Childish advertisements, then, are perceived as normal – whether intended for the child or for the adult does not matter – and even may have an antidepressant function. A great example for this are “Yeşilçam” movies – literally “Green Pine” which is a metonym for the older Turkish film industry having its heyday during the 1950s-1970s, similar to Hollywood in the United States. Turkish audiences developed a semi-parodic affection but also appreciation for the Yeşilçam movies with their childish storylines and settings, by portaying again and again melodramatic plots of the poor boy and the wealthy girl, brothers and sisters separated at birth having later a tragic reunion, blind singers who at the end of the films can see again, foolish and puerile characters like Şaban featured by Turkish actor Kemal Sunal, or heroic fighters mostly featured by Turkish actor Cüneyt Arkın in historical film roles epitomizing the childish fantasies of the Turkish folk to beat every possible enemy (Yıldırım, 2006: 155).

Thus, Turkish people are also best familiar with childish and puerile representations in cinematic terms. With this regard, Yeşilçam’s film industry’s main objective was to make money by merely entertaining the Turkish people representing a

“childish society” which, thus, was entertained with simple, childish narratives: “Çocuksu toplumu basit, çocuksu anlatılarla eğlendirdiler” (İnci, 2014). This was continued with productions on TV especially since 1990, which was the starting point for private television channels in Turkey that were transforming the nature and scope of advertising dramatically. As the majority of Turks has grown up in an atmosphere where they were continuously spoiled and entertained by parents and many others, and the whole attention were basically on them, we can argue that television and later social media inherent with advertising, seems to serve as a surrogate that continues with the fulfillment of adults’ need for spoiling and entertainment. In fact, especially advertising slogans and promises make adults unconsciously happy again like in the old days. Nike’s “Just do it” or L’Oréal’s “Because you’re worth it” are only two examples which show that adults’ innermost core can be touched through simple, verbal motivations they actually need and normally no longer receive from parents and elsewhere.

Indeed, Turkey presents one of the most active and exciting media markets in the world today, no matter from which perspective we consider it. Television plays a fundamental role as a mass medium as it is the main source of information and especially entertainment for the majority of the Turkish population, with an average daily TV watching of 330 minutes, which is the highest in the world along with the US. With around 19 million television-owning households and user coverage of about 95 percent, the Turkish broadcasting market is one of the largest in Europe with more than 500 TV channels (national, regional and local combined). Further, television concentrates on its own more than half of advertising expenses (52.7% of total advertising in 2017 with a total of TRY 2 billion) (Santander Trade, 2018). With the emergence of the internet, the numbers boom also in this area: Internet users are estimated to be 56 million in 2017 with a penetration rate of 69.6% among Turks aged

between 16 and 74 that puts Turkey in 18th place worldwide (ibid.). With the proliferation of mobile devices, Turks are highly interested to navigate through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. With 44 million Facebook members, Turks are one of the most active users in the world by connecting to the social network on a daily basis. Thus, digital advertising has been constantly on the rise and reached TRY 953 million in 2017.

- **Political Economic Conditions**

Turkey, strategically located in the so-called Eurasia region, is a dynamic country with a robust economy characterized by the rise of consumerism. Turkey, like many other emerging countries, is in full swing with its economy growing. The Turkish economy delivers a sustainable and steady performance, and even registered in 2017 the highest growth rate at 7.4% since 2013 when Turkey's economy expanded by 8.5%, leading to Turkey's status as one of the world's fastest growing economies today despite the coup attempt in the summer of 2016. However, this was not always the case. Until the 1980s, Turkey's economic development strategy was based on the import-substitution model. The semi-controlled mixed Turkish economy consisted of domestically-oriented publicly and privately owned industrial sector and mostly privately owned small agricultural businesses. Nevertheless, the growth in the industry sector had been very slow, and technological development and investments in this area had been very minimal as the main importance had been given to foreign trade and foreign capital. Since the 1980s, however, Turkey's development strategy has changed drastically. Turkish society witnessed a rapid neoliberal transformation due to the government's economic and political restructuring measures. The neoliberal reforms were, in particular, concerned with establishing a stable political-economic

environment in Turkey which was never achieved before in earlier times. The objective was to establish Turkey's appearance as a stronger nation versus the developing non-Western neighbouring countries and the developed Western countries.

Turkish economy registered high rates of growth from 1980 to 1993 through the structural reforms that made an emphasis on a liberal, market-oriented, and outward-looking development strategy with the aim to open up Turkey to the global competition. As a result, the increase in the per capita income, the rise of education levels, the growth in urban population, and the increase in female labour force participation were among the crucial factors that changed the consumption habits of Turks who increasingly were able to purchase products and services at higher levels. Thus, the "golden age of advertising" in Turkey started with the favourable economic developments since the 1980s when globalization was showing its positive effects and international brands were looking for new markets (BCCT, 2018). Since the 1990s, as a result of the liberalization policies, Turkey was further attracting attention with the youth population's excessive demand for consumption, with its ease of accessibility to other great markets and low tax policy with the result that investments grew on and on (ibid.). This was a time where Turks found themselves bombarded with foreign brands, shopping malls, fast-food restaurants, five-star hotels, and office towers which became the new hallmarks of Turkey's big cities.

Atatürk was not only Turkey's founder, but also one of the greatest and skillful leaders of 20th century adored by millions of Turks still today, who favored the adoption of Western habits and principles because the West, in general, was symbolized by intellectual and scientific supremacy and progress, that provided ideal values for the young Turkish Republic. Without doubt, Turk's love affair with the Western world stems in general from this positive view that implies the "West must be the best", and

therefore, it is important to adopt Western values and become like Westerners. In more recent times, Western ideals have impelled Turkish people towards a symbolic consumption that is linked to the desire to become modern by leaving the failed past – characterized as rural, traditional, and poor – in order to catch up with the Western style, moreover, to live like the Westerners as seen in television, films, and magazines. Most Turks, especially the lower and middle classes, consume to communicate to themselves and to others their modern identity by purchasing new and improved mass-produced products from hi-tech electronics to detergents that provide comfort, pleasure and fun. This even may lead to the desire to reach an “altered state” or even “total transformation”, a “permanent escape”, and “removal of constraints” by wishing to experience the complex and exciting life in world cities such as New York and the “glittery life of Barbie” (Belk et al., 2003: 336).

To conclude this section, it will be important to point out to the fact that Turkey’s neoliberal project culminated in the new millennium with the rise of the pro-Islamic AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi/ Justice and Development Party) after the 2002 general elections. Thus, after the turn of the millennium Turkey witnessed a new shift in power politics under the rule of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. But the opinions are divided which meanwhile polarize the whole country: the one half appreciates and loves Erdoğan, and the other half criticizes and even hates him. According to the positive view, Turkey has incredibly developed and grown rapidly under AKP’s rule. The negative view, however, is that AKP has turned the country, which it calls “Yeni Türkiye (“New Turkey”)", into a “capitalist nightmare” consisting of “a triad of neoliberal economics, political despotism, and Islamist conservatism” (Gündüz, 2015).

Interestingly, infantilization in advertising has especially emerged after the banking crises in Turkey during 2000-2001 and concurrently with the coming to power of AKP since 2002 until now in 2018 – a time span where the after-effects of the banking crisis were attempted to overcome, the global financial crisis during 2008-2012 took place, and in general political turmoil continued which peaked with the military coup on 15 July 2016 affecting the whole Turkish folk until today. All this might seem to be a coincidence but rather it is not. The global ethos of consumerism is affecting every Western-oriented country, which is therefore not a Turkish phenomenon and by far not the product of the AKP era. But we must say that one of the most important pillars AKP's economic model is built on – the intense consumption enabled with huge consumer credits – certainly reinforces this consumer ethos and therefore also infantilization, which is indeed important in times of financial and political turmoil to sustain and revive the country's economy. But recent numbers show that the total number of credit cards reached 62.2 million while the number of bank cards is 130 million, which makes Turkey the biggest credit and bank card market in Europe (Santander Trade, 2018). Further, total use of bank loans reached TRY 2.24 trillion in 2017 (24% year-on-year increase), while personal loans accounted for TRY 525 billion during the same period with a 17% year-on-year increase (ibid.). Giving the public consumer credit “en masse” was the main factor of Turkey's economic growth and “the magic trick that filled empty malls, and the opium that kept the majority of people quiet, happy and obedient” (ibid.). The extreme *stimulus* for this is infantilization via advertising. Every single image that we see or every single word or sound we hear is a representation of a certain ideology which repetitively make us accept and normalize what they are. If we are treated like children, then, the effect becomes even more stronger which we will discuss throughout the thesis.

3. INFANTILIZATION

The aim of this chapter will be to understand the concept of infantilization as a whole. With this regard, we will explore the meaning, nature, causes, and consequences of infantilization emerging as a new cultural ethos of 21st century in Western societies. The groundwork will be laid for a detailed discussion of infantilization that will continue to evolve throughout the thesis as this will be later related to advertising.

First, infantilization as the key term of the research will be enlightened. Second, a socio-economic interpretation that is indispensable in the analysis of infantilization will be given to show that the consumption orientation of 21st century capitalism is driven, most notably, by an infantile ethos. Third, infantilization which has its breakthrough in the realms of media and marketing will be illustrated by showing how adults' consumer interest has increasingly shifted to child-targeted culture and youth-oriented entertainment fostering infantilism among adults, whereby media and business companies play a serious role by further promoting it. Fourth, the formation of the infantilized adult, who has emerged in postmodern times due to socio-economic changes linked to the infantilization through media and marketing, will be discussed and evaluated by underlining the concerns about it but also highlighting the generational motivations behind its irresistible charm in the light of changing age identities as a response to a changing *Zeitgeist*, where a *childlike* youthfulness in the grown adult becomes increasingly important. This concluding part will show that new approaches to adulthood are inevitable especially in times, where the traditional model of modern adulthood with its old values is not sufficient and satisfying anymore, and life stages are eroded by the process of infantilization which shows itself through the emergence of the postmodern adult-child, the kidult.

3.1. DEFINITIONS, TERMINOLOGY, AND METAPHORICAL DIMENSIONS

The very first question that might arise when reading the title of the present research is what infantilization means. When trying to explain the meaning of a foreign term which makes not much sense at first sight, the shortest and clearest solution is to make use of translated versions of the word, if available, depending on the spoken native language. However, infantilization as a term is not popular in daily use, even a quite unknown expression for an ordinary citizen, and this not only in Turkey. Against this backdrop, it is crucial that infantilization as the key term of the research has to be enlightened in detail.

In Turkish language, the word for infantilization is “enfantilizasyon” – if it would be used. However, as it is *not* used in Turkish, we have to consider an alternative term which would be, without doubt, *çocuklaştırma*. Then, infantilization seems to be a word that appears at first glance to be simple enough to define and to understand. But actually, it is surprisingly difficult to explain because in itself it includes an immense content and a multifaceted, interdisciplinary spectrum that has to be revealed, which is only possible after a deeper analysis. Before we come to broader definitions and a brief overview of the various facets infantilization has, it will be necessary to figure out the etymological roots of the term.

Infantilization stems from the word “infant”, and if we take a closer look to it in the *Oxford Dictionary* and go below to the next terms, we have the following picture as shown in Figure 2.1. Accordingly, the *Oxford Dictionary* defines *infant* as “a very young child or baby”. It comes from the Latin *infans* which is derived from *in-* (not) and *fari-* (to speak) meaning “unable to speak, speechless”. The idea is that, since the ability to speak was thought to arrive at the age of approximately two, younger children were called infants. The definition also includes the words “child” and “baby” as

synonyms of infant.¹⁰ Regarding the definition of *infantile*, we can determine that beside its first meaning “of or occurring among babies or very young children”, a second meaning is denoted as a negative one: “derogatory = childish: infantile jokes”. Coming to *infantilism*, the term is defined as “childish behaviour”; moreover, it is highlighted that from a *psychological* point of view, it means “the persistence of infantile characteristics or behaviour in adult life”.

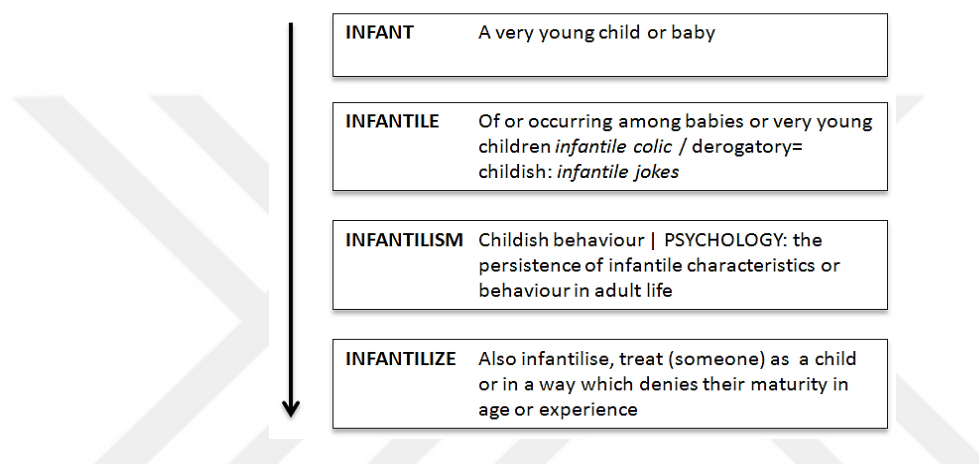


Figure 3.1 Etymological Roots of Infantilization

Source: Adapted from *Oxford Dictionary of English* (Stevenson, A.,2010, pp. 894-895)

It is important, at this point, to differentiate between *childishness* and *childlikeness* because both terms are commonly confused as they have roughly the same definition, although there is a great difference between them. *Childishness* generally points to unfavorable, negative qualities such as being silly or immature, whereas *childlikeness* points to more favorable, positive associations like trusting or innocent. With this regard, *childlikeness* is considered as having a gifted disposition; but to “remain in childhood as a literal, psychological condition stifles the human maturation

¹⁰ *Child* is defined as “a young human being below the age of puberty or below the legal age of majority”, but it can also mean “an immature or irresponsible person” (e.g. ‘she’s such a child!’). *Baby* is defined as a “very young child” and “the youngest member of a family or group”. Another meaning is “timid or childish person” (e.g. “Don’t be such a baby!” she said witheringly’).

process in a cloud of innocence and infantilism. Childishness is then mistaken for childlikeness, and the society, like the person, becomes arrested in a self-satisfied state of youthful stupor” (Geller, 2001: 208).¹¹

If we now go over to the final and most crucial term of the research, we find the following definition for *infantilize*: “treat (someone) as a child or in a way which denies their maturity in age or experience”. *Infantilization*, the noun of “infantilize” with its suffix “-ation”, indicates to an action or process. According to *Collins Dictionary*, infantilization is an “act of infantilizing, the act of prolonging an infantile state in a person by treating them as an infant. The *Cambridge Dictionary* defines infantilization by remarking that the term is usually used in a disapproving sense as “to treat s.o. as if that person were a child, with the result that they start behaving like one.” Further in the *Free Dictionary*, infantilization is defined as “to keep in a dependent, infantile stage or condition”. Similar in *Merriam-Webster*, infantilization stands for “to make or keep infantile; to treat as if infantile”. Thus, it can be concluded that the standard dictionary definition of infantilization is a process to reduce someone to the level or condition of a child.

Infantilization and infantilism are terms which are frequently confused as both have similar meanings and, consequently, are often used interchangeably in the literature. In fact, the suffixes of the terms show the main difference. *Infantilization* indicates to an action or process, whereas *infantilism* points to a state or quality.

¹¹ *Childish* is defined as “of, like, or appropriate to a child: childish enthusiasm/ silly and immature: a childish outburst” (Stevenson, 2010: 302). The most common synonyms of “childish” – “silly”, “puerile” and “immature” – are negative words in their character. *Childlike*, on the contrary, is defined as “(of an adult) having the good qualities, such as innocence, associated with a child: she speaks with a childlike directness” (ibid.). The most common synonyms of “childlike” are “youth(ful)”, “juvenile”, and “innocent”.

Infantilization is not a practice that, coincidentally, falls from the sky. In order to generate infantilization, it must be triggered and initiated externally somehow by someone; it is an *active* process. But infantilism, originally a medical term that later received a psychiatric status, reflects a person's inner state; it is *passive* as it refers to infantile characteristics in adult life due to "transfer into adulthood of attributes and the privileges of childhood" (Bruckner, 2007: 9). Infantilism in adulthood, however, is considered as not age-appropriate and, thus, deviant behavior while it is, in moderation, considered as healthy and normal during childhood. But the sum effect of the activated and continuous process of infantilization *is* infantilism. Infantilization can foster pathological conditions which may lead to the formation of infantile personality traits in adults as will be later discussed. For now we can say that infantilization and infantilism often go in pair as a strong cause-and-effect relationship exists.

Notably to mention is that the notion of infantilization can be considered as a generic term today. Other related terms like "babyfication", "childification", "youthification", "juvenilization" or "teenaging", for example, would be plausible alternatives and maybe, in some cases, more appropriate to use. But infantilization as a term is well established in popular press and academic circles that it is the preferred one. Further, the infantilized adult can be positioned in a range from a newborn infant to an adolescent. Thus, infantilization may refer to each of the shown five figures in Figure 3.2. What matters by using the notion of infantilization, for the purpose of this thesis, is the overall reference to the "non-adult" which, then, can relate to the age categories from 0 to 18 years manifesting itself in appearance and/or behavior. However, in most of the cases as we will later see during the analysis of Turkish advertisements, not the adolescent but the child *within* the adult seems to be targeted.

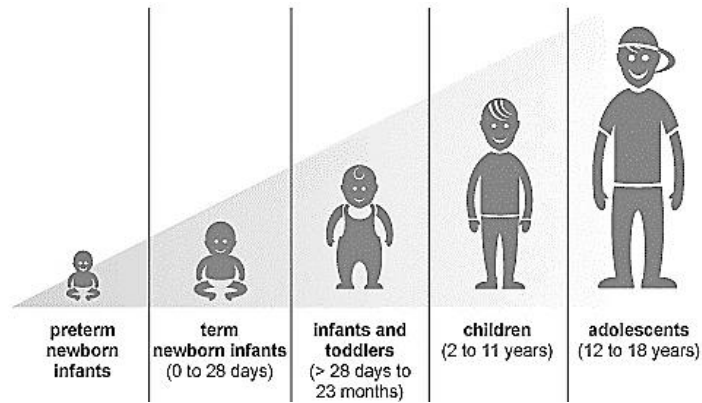


Figure 3.2 From Infant to Adolescent: Range of Positioning of the Infantilized Individual

But how would we imagine a “real” infantilized adult in visual terms? In 2012, German photographer Paul Ripke and artistic director Florian Schmucker created *Kindsköpfe* (“Children’s Heads”) which was a series of photos where the heads of forty-five different parents and children were exchanged as shown below in Figure 3.3. The effect was that adults looked and acted like children and vice versa. The images were so eye-catching that they have circulated around the world.



Figure 3.3 Selected Images of *Kindsköpfe* in 2012

Source: <http://www.pop-postproduction.com/kindskoepfe>

Later in 2013, another artistic work named *L'Enfant Extérieur* (“*The Outer Child*”), Paris-based retoucher Cristian Girotto and photographer Quentin Curtat created bizarre portraits that made adults look like little children as shown in Figure 3.4. It was stated that:

[...] somewhere inside each of us, there's a young core, instinctive, creative but also innocent and naïve. What would happen if this intimate essence would be completely revealed? *L'Enfant Extérieur* takes into analysis this possibility, showing us a world of men in the shape of children, as if the body could slip on the ugliness of life, less expected to imagine big fawn's eyes winking in the night clubs or little chubby hands shaking in the offices. (Girotto, 2013)



Figure 3.4 Selected Images of *L'Enfant Extérieur* in 2013

Source: <http://cristiangirotto.com/lenfant-extrieur>

Both artistic projects offer quite realistic images by exaggerating extremes related to childhood in a caricatural way, which maybe best visualize the notion of infantilization in a *metaphorical* sense concerning its result – the erosion and melting

of the boundaries of the two life stages childhood and adulthood. In these examples from an infantilizing point of view, the image of the child is connoted in such a way that the adult status becomes *obscured*. But what makes the infantilization trope so special? Infantilization positions and treats the adult as a child with the effect that the adult *seems* to be(come) a child. In fact, metaphors communicate meaning by *analogy* – they explain one thing by mentally comparing it to something else. Metaphors work through identification of similarity and difference at the same time, which means that both items must be obviously different but are made similar in certain respects. Infantilization, in this sense, comprises adulthood and childhood – both are obviously different but are connected somehow and made similar in certain aspects.

In employing infantilization as a basis for interpretation, the image of the child is used as a metaphor. Thus, in an infantilizing context, adults are *transformed* into *metaphoric* children. To say that an adult is *like* a child may not imply at all that an adult *really* has anything to do with a child; because adults are not literally a child, but if we think of an adult in those terms as wishing, fearing, and experiencing like a child, then they merely *resemble* a child. This is just the starting point and makes up only one ideological and powerful aspect of infantilization as a “potent metaphor” (Barber, 2007: 5). However, this may further suggest that in some underlying, deeper sense, an adult and a child are closely related. In psychoanalytic view, the present is regarded as a direct derivative of the past. In *psychic* reality, there is even no distinction between past and present; “the present *is* the past, played out over and over again” where “infantile motives and experiences operate beneath the appearance of maturity, guiding and shaping feelings and behaviors” (Mitchell, 1988: 128). Infantilism, then, often ceases to be a metaphor and becomes a psychic reality where the adult *is* the child.

3.2. INTERDISCIPLINARY SPECTRUM

The journey of exploration continues with the surprising fact that the term “infantilization” appears in a wide spectrum as it has been studied in the most different fields. Thus, we have to gain insights into some of the main areas in which infantilization can be observed, and who is affected from it, including: religion (the believer), clinical medicine and psychoanalysis (the patient), gerontology (the elderly person), education (the student), employment (the worker), and politics (the citizen).

- **Religion: The Believer**

An important area that is considered to keep people infantilized is religion. In *The Future of Illusion* in 1927, Sigmund Freud – the Austrian neurologist and the founder of psychoanalysis – discusses the infantilizing force of faith by stating that religion, particularly Christianity, creates an “unhealthy childlike dependence on a ‘Father figure’ who, by turns, punishes while demanding allegiance, obedience, love, and servility” (Cunningham & Egan, 1996: 56). Freud goes so far as to suggest, but this time in *Civilization and Its Discontents* in 1930, that the guidance provided by religion is such restrictive that it fixes people in a state of *psychic infantilism*. Freud further considers religion as an escape from painful reality which helps adults feel again the security and happiness of their young childhood in the face of life’s pressures and disappointments (1961: 20-22). He condemns religious feelings as a “mass delusion based on the oceanic feeling experienced by the infant at the mother’s breast” (Slipp, 1993: 21). Indeed, most adults would “gladly accept infantilization if it means not having to grow up into reality” (Bingaman, 2003: 32). With this, the critic consists in the possible failure to mature as responsible adults; moreover, the warning is about the dangers of “infantilizing spirituality by too much emphasis on blind obedience,

fearfulness about intellectual and emotional growth” (Cunningham & Egan, 1996: 55-56). Developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson rejects the view of calling religious behavior childish or regressive, but he notes that “it is obvious that large-scale infantilization is not foreign to the practice and the intent of organized religion” (1994: 106). He further highlights that the “glory of childhood also survives in adult life”, which “becomes the capacity for faith”, a “vital need” which most commonly finds institutional confirmation in religion (ibid.). In *Becoming God’s Children: Religion’s Infantilizing Process* (2010), Mel D. Faber, a professor of English language and literature, further discusses in detail the role of infantilization in the Judeo-Christian tradition in general. In this line, infantilization results when religious institutions and leaders “keep their followers in a state of developmental arrest, playing on peoples’ needs for over-idealization by representing themselves and their message as perfect” (Jones, 2002a: 66), which can also be referred to so-called Islamic leaders, for which the best example would be Fethullah Gülen, who after the coup attempt on 15 July 2016 is Turkey’s most prominent and wanted criminal. Besides, the playful and kitsch imagery of a religion can be considered as infantilizing, too, as in the case of Catholic church or polytheistic Hinduism (Pintchman, 2005: 157).

- **Clinical Medicine and Psychoanalysis: The Patient**

From a psychological perspective, infantilization is *regression* which occurs when people return to a child state concerning their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. In Freudian psychoanalysis – the clinical approach to human mental pathologies being both a therapy and theory – regression to earlier stages of development is a key form of defense mechanism, which is a response to the Ego’s conflict with the Id (our instinctual, libidinal drives) and the Superego (the symbolic internalization of parental

authority or cultural regulations and taboos). Regression involves taking the position of a child in response to problematic and stressful situations, rather than acting in a more adult way. This can be simple and harmless as, for example, an adult sucks on a pen, or in a more dramatic way when an adult really begins to act like a child by starting crying, banging a door or using childish arguments in an extreme discussion (Lokko & Stern, 2015). Like other forms of Ego-defense – such as denial, rationalization or sublimation – regression involves a retreat from, and distortion of, reality. Infantilization, in this sense, is regression as a form of retreat by bringing back a time when the adult felt safer and taken care of as a child, where the stresses in question were not known, or an all-powerful parent took them away, and in general everything was taking care of magically. Regression to a childish state provides a temporary release from anxiety, anger and, in general, the pressures of adulthood in stress situations meaning less obligations, less responsibilities, and fewer restrictions (Rogin, 1991: 208). Regression helps to meet short-time benefits and, thus, is something what many people do constantly, yet most of it is unconscious. However, in recent times there is also the message that “we might as well consciously embrace and direct regression to our benefit” (Sisgold, 2014) by doing, for example, inner child work, regression therapy, or breath sessions, because going back to past high impact moments may influence positively daily behavior, and therefore can be enlightening and healing.

Nevertheless, a problem arises when we become dependent on such defense mechanisms. In clinical sense, then, infantilization is “a mental process of disorder¹² in which the individual, either consciously or unconsciously regresses to an infantile stage or condition and acts like a small child or baby, losing competence at adult functions

¹² A personality disorder is characterized by long-lasting rigid patterns of deviant or abnormal thought and behavior that the person does not change even though it causes emotional upsets and trouble in personal relationships.

and a sense of responsibility” (Jung, 2010: 627). *Infantilism*, in this sense, is a term used for addressing people who regress into the personality of a baby, especially with the desire to dress and be treated like one – a phenomenon better known as *Adult Baby Syndrome*, which is a kind of paraphilic infantilism or a fetish in form of age play.¹³

A completely different kind of infantilization can be observed in the field of diseases, which is much a question of representation. A prominent example might be the *infantilization of autism*, a developmental disorder characterized by troubles with social interaction and communication, which has been used to describe it as a child-only disability, especially supported with the public discourse by parents, charities, and the media. In that context, society views autism itself as being a childhood diagnosis with the underlying premise that autistic adults do not exist (Stevenson et al. 2011). The cycle of infantilization, however, comes full circle with the mass marketing of expensive therapies by spreading two messages: the urgent need for early detection and the terrible consequences of delayed intervention. Another case, the *infantilization of female breast cancer patients*, shows parallels to the above mentioned. Breast cancer awareness through widespread campaigns has become associated with the color pink – a color that is associated as feminine, especially with little girlhood. The *Breast Cancer Consortium*¹⁴ points on its website to American author and political activist Barbara Ehrenreich’s essay “Welcome to Cancerland”, published by *Harper’s Magazine* in 2001, in which Ehrenreich’s infantilizing experience with breast cancer is reported remarkably: “Why, when an adult woman is diagnosed with a deadly disease that offers miserable and often debilitating treatments, she is surrounded by such child-like

¹³ Adults suffering from *Adult Baby Syndrome* mostly keep their pervasive symptoms of needing to act out the regression hidden from family, friends and others. A common theme revolves around wearing diapers and using other infantile objects such as pacifiers, baby blankets, baby bottles and soft stuffed figures, which in most cases will give rise toward a role-identification of an infantile personality.

¹⁴ See Homepage of *Breast Cancer Consortium*, <http://breastcancerconsortium.net/resources/beyond-awareness-workbook/trends-in-awareness-campaigns/infantilization/>, Retrieved 15.6.2018.

imagery [pink ribbon teddy bears and given a box of crayons as part of a cancer care bag]? Men diagnosed with prostate cancer do not receive gifts of Matchbox cars.”

- **Gerontology: The Elderly Person**

In gerontology, the multidisciplinary study of aging and older adults, infantilization is a process, especially in the lives of the institutionalized elderly, that involves “treating an elderly individual like a child, [...] reflected in the characterization of later life as a ‘second childhood’” (Whitbourne & Wills, 1993: 21). Older persons, then, behave similarly as children do (e.g. undisciplined, unproductive, disruptive, irrational, silly or impulsive) and, thus, seem to repeat a childhood experience. Their need for help with the activities of daily living that small children need help with – eating, dressing, and toileting – further supports this characterization of older adults as infantile. It is, perhaps, in the attitudes and general behaviors of professional caregivers directed toward residents in old people’s home that infantilization occurs in its most extreme form as, for example, decorating the environment so that it resembles a kindergarten or preschool, and rewarding residents by patting or kissing them, which is like cuddling or hugging babies when they are good (ibid.: 22). However, family members may also see their elders as children; then, a “role reversal between adult children and their parents is regarded as almost an inevitable concomitant of the parents’ aging process” (Whitbourne & Wills, 1993: 24). Considering the causes of such infantilization, the most straightforward explanation is that it occurs as a function of the elderly adult’s being placed in a dependent position with regard to the professional caregiver (Hockey & James, 2005). Accordingly, the elderly person acquires by association the status of a child which may begin the process of infantilization. In this case, infantilization is regarded as a prime example of ageism

and, as such, is damaging to the elderly's self-esteem. Once set in motion, though, infantilization becomes a vicious cycle: The resident, feeling increasingly helpless and dependent, begins to regress behaviorally to the level of a child, and the more helpless the resident feels, the more this regression occurs.

- **Education: The Student**

Infantilization in the process of education is, in general, considered as “normal” as it is connected with authority; the greater the authority of the teacher, the greater the process of infantilization (Lozanov, 1979: 191). However, Hungarian-British sociologist Frank Furedi makes several important points by expressing his concern about the infantilization of education, which is a direct result of challenges facing adults in exercising authority. He argues that “the age-old distinction between schoolchildren and university students is fast losing its meaning” (Furedi, 2018) as on many campuses the infantilization of university students has become institutionalized. Students are treated as if they were “biologically mature children rather than young men and women” (ibid.). Furedi further claims that infantilization of education is promoted through pedagogic styles: Students are no longer expected to deeply study and apply knowledge, but instead to strive for a superficial learning to pass exams.

A quite different perspective on infantilization applied for educational purposes offers *Suggestopedia*, a term combining the two words “suggestion” and “pedagogy”, which is a well-known teaching method using infantilization as one of its main principles. Developed in the 1960s by Bulgarian psychiatrist and educator Georgi Lozanov for language learning, Suggestopedia is designed as an alternative tool to help students to overcome the negative feelings that may arise while learning something new. For this, the student is supposed to learn in a suitable and relaxing environment,

to engage in different activities – such as role-plays, games, songs, and gymnastic exercises – and to rely on the authoritative behaviour of the teacher (Richards & Rodgers, 2001: 100). The method aims to put the students into a pure and naïve state of a child by adopting a childlike role that Lozanov describes as infantilization. According to Lozanov, infantilization does not imply childish behavior or a complete return to an earlier stage as that of a child, but rather a “selective mental setup” (1979: 192) in order to reach, to some extent, to the more favorable state of mind during childhood where no barriers of learning exist. The experience of life and the intellectual abilities of the adult are not eliminated or decreased with infantilization, but certain characteristics of the child such as curiosity for new information, motivation, spontaneity, confidence, freedom to make mistakes, or ability to memorize are brought to the fore. This is neither childish, nor regressive, but a *childlike attitude*. The overall aim of this kind of infantilization, which certainly can be perceived as a positive one, is to make it possible for the student to be as receptive as a small child exploring through experimentation and discovering the world, and to easier absorb a huge amount of information with a sense of play, ease and permanence.

- **Employment: The Worker**

Infantilization is prevalent in contemporary corporations. On the one hand, there is an ongoing tendency and attempt to infantilize workers. In this sense, “the only pattern most western workers can relate to is that of the child vis-a-vis its parents” (Sievers, 1993: 64). Accordingly, the relationship of the workers to their enterprises becomes *infant-like*: “Through the nature of the work provided for them the employing institutions infantilize the workers. They do not allow them to develop or mature, but limit them to regressive and familiar reactions” (ibid.). To give some examples; workers

are at the receiving end of the chains of command which is reminiscent of the authority structure of childhood, but notably, decisions that affect their immediate work-life are always in others' hands (e.g., arrangements of shift working, organization of production schedules, etc.). This can be considered as “the consequence of a system that prevents people from thinking independently and that fails to treat employees as adults” (Verhaeghe, 2014). On the other hand, “the rise of childish workplace behavior” (Kennedy, 2015) makes headlines, such as “Waaaaah! How to deal with childish behavior at work” (McIntyre, 2014) or “Strategies: Childish adults can ruin a workplace” (Leichtling, 2013). According to a survey of CareerBuilder (2015), 3 in 4 workers report puerile behaviors in the workplace, meaning nearly 80% of workers have witnessed co-workers acting like children. Signs of childish behaviors are such as whining, pouting over things that do not go their way, playing pranks on co-workers, throwing temper tantrums, tattletales, not sharing their resources with others, make a face behind someone's back, and forming cliques. Some degree of childish conduct can be harmless, because it enables employees to let off some steam and even promote a sense of camaraderie in the office. In this sense, in *Culture of Complaint: The Fraying of America*, Robert Hughes states: “[...] To be infantile is a regressive way to defy the stress of corporate culture: Don't tread on me, I'm vulnerable” (1993: 10). However, there seems to be a fine line between innocent fun and inappropriate behavior. As a result, consulting coaches increasingly emerge who offer solutions for “how to deal with childish adults” at work as this problem is described as follows:

Ideally, everyone would behave in a calm, rational, adult manner at work. But unfortunately, some people just never grow up completely. If you have to deal with immature bosses, coworkers, or employees, perhaps the suggestions [...] will help you keep your sanity. (McIntyre, n.d.)

Besides, infantilization in corporations can also be understood literal; this refers then to the growing preference for younger employees where “the hidden logic seems, in fact, to be ‘the younger, the better’” (Teodorescu, 2017: 132).

- **Politics: The Citizen**

In the political realm, there seems to exist many aspects of infantilization. One of the most discussed topics is the *dumbing down* of politics (Barber, 2007), by generally questioning if we have to fear a political culture in its contemporary dimensions where we are being treated like children as, for example, “Did you ever get to stop being a child – at least in the eyes of the authorities?” (Swift, 2007), or “Rage, powerlessness, magical thinking – why is how we think about politics increasingly mirroring the mind-set of a small child?” (Senior, 2010). The claim is that politicians reduce complex political issues to simple solutions, exploit the fears of voters, and use voters’ psychological need for a decisive leader. Such a *political* infantilization comes with “a rigid polarization between good and bad (‘you are either with us or against us’), which reduces reality to fairy stories [...] In this, the ‘audience’ is treated like an infantilized mob” (Diken & Laustsen, 2007: 55). Further, manipulative visual imagery and political images are emphasized over political ideas. The result is that politics become a manageable “media spectacle” (Kellner, 2016: 3), entering the living rooms of citizens and turning them into spectators who receive one-way messages, with only the right to vote once every four or five years (Nandy, 2007). Politics, then, becomes a “spectator sport”, where democracy is something we watch on TV rather than an activity we engage in” (Barber, 2007: 191), giving the impression of a feeling of active participation in public life.

American sociologist Richard Sennett points to a political “infantilization thesis” in relation to dependency, particularly dependency on government, which makes adults behave like children (2004: 103). In absolute monarchies or communist regimes, for example, infantilization was a way of increasing people’s vulnerability, of reinforcing the dependent relationship of the citizen to the state – resembling the paternal authority over children – and of facilitating the authorities’ control representing a legitimate power through dominion and submission. When a government, “blocks the capacity to reason independently and rationally as an adult”, then, in psychological terms, “adults regress to childhood as it was experienced in the private realm” (ibid.: 104). Sennett further maintains that we have a psychological need for the comfort and emotional satisfaction and the strong desire to be looked after to maintain our security, which a resolute authority can provide. Politics, in this sense, “redefines the citizen as a fearful subject, like a child to be protected” (Diken & Laustsen, 2007: 55).

3.3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND USAGE

To mention all areas and forms of infantilization is impossible and would go beyond the scope of this thesis, but generally we can say: Infantilization seems to exist in societies in the most different areas since mankind exists. But without going further into detail, in this thesis we will proceed from works in the fields of cultural studies, in general, and psychology, in particular, as infantilization is primarily a matter of psychology having an influential impact on the psyche of the infantilized subject.

We can further argue that infantilization has mainly caused considerable problems in many spheres for a very long time. Thus, it has been studied in many contexts by focussing on different aspects of this phenomenon, such as “concentration camps; slave societies; total institutions such as insane asylums, old people’s homes

and prisons; environments of isolation and sensory deprivation; schizophrenic families; housewives in suburban homes; and efforts to manipulate mass publics for political purposes” (Rogin, 1991: 208). Thus, the generalization of published research on this issue is quite problematic. But one striking feature we can highlight is that the affected persons are always to a certain extent in a victim role.

Infantilization is a term that is used more technically in natural sciences, especially in the fields of medicine and psychoanalysis. In the humanities, however, there are vague and not exact uses of infantilization. While the term has been widely applied in studies of race, gender, and class, it is treated as self-explanatory and is, with rare exception, written without clarification. The wide variety of the uses of infantilization illustrates the usefulness and importance of this term, but it also shows the lack of precision in its use. Thus, any exploration of infantilization seems by its nature “imprecise and subjective” (Swift, 2007).

Similarly, even if it can be argued that in a general tendency infantilization as a term began to appear in many fields in the late 19th century, it is difficult to give a precise historical background because, according to which field the term refers, it has different historical positionings. In some fields, it is possible to date the term exactly. For example, Sigmund Freud uses infantilization as a term in relation to religion in his work *The Future of an Illusion* in 1927. But in general, especially in humanities, the historical background of the term cannot be exactly determined. Thus, it is only possible to argue in a broader sense that “infantilization can be dated from the 19th century, a response to two developments which became global systems after the Enlightenment: the consolidation of the Atlantic slave trade and modern colonialism” (Nandy, 2007).

The slave system resulted in the infantilization of indigenous people through a kind of subordination, reducing them to a status somewhere between childishness and

dependency. Further, the “strategy of infantilization is especially common in colonial discourse and is associated closely with the concept of the primitive and the subject status of the races of empire” (Stella, 2007: 103). Brazil “Indians”, for example, were not allowed to play themselves in films because of their legal status as children; it was only in 1988 that the new Brazilian constitution recognized indigenous people as adult citizens (Shohat & Stam, 1994: 140). Thus, infantilization can function as a *strategy of representation* (Cox & Stokes, 2012: 184) – the representation of the Other by attributing childlike or immature characteristics and behaviors to individuals or groups embodying an earlier stage of human development that is considered as uncivilized. Terms like “underdevelopment”, as diplomatic synonyms for “childlike, project the *infantilizing trope* on a global scale: “The “Third World toddler”, even when the project of a thousand years of civilization, is not yet in control of its body/psyche, and therefore needs the guiding hand of the more “adult” and “advanced” societies, gently pulling it into modern times” (ibid.). But also Arab or Muslim populations are often considered by Western societies as not very developed, and therefore are viewed as need to be *saved* – like a child – by the Western world, most notably by the United States.

In view of this, infantilization has the power to “ascribe a childlike status to an adult which can be seen as a form of disempowerment, a denial of rights and citizenship” (Thompson, 2011: 95). To infantilize, then, is to belittle the mind involving a paternalistic, often condescending, attitude towards adults that dismisses their abilities, opinions, and social standing (Kline, 2011). In this sense, control over masses can be made more effective through infantilization as an act of treating individuals like children in order to direct them, decide for them, to make them dependent on those who infantilize. Hence, infantilization may be considered by many as a threat. As a matter of fact, infantilization is at once “an elusive and a confrontational term” (Barber, 2007:

5). It can be concluded that it is mostly used pejoratively as it is any kind of practice to ensure subordination and obedience by treating, positioning or reducing individuals to a status of a child. The consequence is that adults might act out childlike dependency: they seem to be help-less, choice-less, voice-less, with limited awareness, and even little comprehension. Infantilization, thus, tends to occur mostly in *unequal* power dynamics, where one side is always superior and the other inferior.

Nevertheless, social interactions and relationships – the way in which two or more people or things are connected – can also have a positive potential for infantilization. A prominent case for this is the *mutual* infantilization being part of any love relationship (Leak, 2006: 23). Infantilization, in this sense, manifests itself particularly in the language couples use – speaking with intonations and words that would be used to address a small child better known as “baby talk”¹⁵. This happens for the same reason adults talk to babies that way – feeling love. Infantilization, then, is in a position of *active affectation* because it is “an inauthentic attitude at time of its adoption. It is a form of kitsch. It is baby talk adopted by a grown-up. And, as a counterpart to infantile, it is the product of a personal decision, not a forced one” (Camnitzer, 2009: 151). Similarly, infantilization occurs in human-animal-relationships. It is very common for adult pet owners to identify their pets not as companion animals but above all as their “baby” or “child”. In this sense, infantilization is the treatment of an animal as an infant. Behaviors associated with infantilization include the cuddling or nuzzling of a pet, cradling, placing a pet in a carriage, “intimate dialogue” and other behaviors associated with the care of children.

¹⁵ Babies who cannot speak yet need to hear basic sounds repeated over and over again, and the melodic tones of baby talk help to get their attention. Thus, when we “communicate” with babies, we start “making cooing noises, talking in sing-song, and adding diminutive *eee*’s at the ends of words”.

3.4. BETWEEN TWO POLES: CHILDHOOD VERSUS ADULTHOOD

Infantilization illustrates some kind of *in-between*, forcing the clash of two life stages – childhood and adulthood. Today we take it for granted that there are stages in life which are labelled as “childhood”, usually the period between birth and twelve years of age, and “adulthood”,¹⁶ which comes after childhood and places a single word on a very large part of the lifespan from the age of 18 until death. Besides, we may think of childhood and adulthood as biological, natural categories. However, we often undergoe that both notions are actually ambiguous, factually and normatively determined by changing cultural expectations, and only seem to be clear from a quite superficially and unilateral perspective.

What notions mean – in this case childhood and adulthood – varies over time (diachronically) and between cultural contexts at the same time (synchronically). In this context, adulthood is a social construction, moreover, a “modern invention” (Elkind, 1997:1) that was created in the late 19th century, and in actual fact, as a counterpart to the corresponding invention and scientific investigation of childhood.

3.4.1. Childhood

The circumstance that childhood had no clear boundaries and did not “exist” as a concept until after the Middle Ages, even had to be “discovered” or “invented”, may

¹⁶ Adulthood as a term is not old and appeared in English dictionaries around 1870 (Côté, 2000). The *Oxford Dictionary of English* defines an adult as a “a person who is fully grown or developed” and who is “emotionally and mentally mature” (Stevenson, 2010: 23). Moreover, an adult is someone who has “reached the age of majority” (ibid); it is the official term for the age at which a person legally enters adulthood. In the majority of the world’s nations, the age of majority is 18. When a young person has reached the age of majority, parents are no longer legally responsible for them or held accountable for their actions. From that point on, a person is considered capable of understanding the outcomes and implications of their actions and therefore able to make informed decisions about which course of action to pursue.

be a surprising but historical fact best explained by French historian Philippe Ariès in his influential work *Centuries of Childhood* (1962).¹⁷ In this sense, the discovery of childhood entails the “emergence of the idea that childhood is its *own* stage of life, a time separate from adulthood with its own unique qualities and experiences” (Rowland, 2012: 7). This produces a “gap between adults and children [...] to be held and studied apart from that of adulthood” (ibid.), which is a fundamental tenet of childhood studies. Childhood is less a biological fact than an invention of human imagination, created for social, economic, and political purposes (Barber, 2007: 82). What counts as childish, then, is measured by norms embodied in the construct of childhood itself.

In *The Disappearance of Childhood*, American media theorist and cultural critic Neil Postman (1982) further argued that it was even the idea of childhood that permitted a portrait of the modern idea of adulthood. He argued that “in an illiterate society (like that of the Middle Ages) there was no need to sharply distinguish between children and adults, such a society harbours few secrets, and civilization does not need to supply education in order to understand itself” (Postman, 1982: 22). The invention of the printing press, most likely by Johannes Gutenberg in 1440, resulted in “adulthood becoming a symbolic achievement, not a biological phenomenon. With the invention of the art of printing, children were required to develop, which would be effected by learning to read, by entering the world of typography” (ibid.: 43).

Since its emergence in modernity, the category of adulthood has been in binary relationship with its other part – the category of childhood. Adulthood was viewed as the more developed and civilized, gaining its unique status almost by default: “Children were weak, innocent and dependent whereas adults were strong, sophisticated and

¹⁷ Conceptions and representations of children and childhood are described as histories of adult ideas about childhood – and not the lived experience of children. That is one reason why a discovery or invention of childhood can be ascribed even though children have always existed (Rowland, 2012:7).

independent. Children were impulsive, emotionally labile and morally deficient. Adults were reflective, emotionally stable and morally upright” (Elkind, 1997: 1). Although childhood constitutes a part of each one of us, as we – as adults – all have been children, childhood is regarded as something separate from adulthood. Thus, children are often defined as whatever adults are *not*. Adulthood, then, is represented as the complete opposite of childhood (Lee, 2001: 8). Conceptions of childhood have increasingly stressed the differences, rather than similarities, between children and adults. In the emergence of contemporary ideas of childhood, four characteristics of the child can be distilled through histories: 1. the child is temporally set apart due to age as different, as the “other”; 2. the child is said to have a special nature, and to be associated with nature; 3. the child is innocent; and 4. the child is vulnerably dependent (Hockey & James, 2005: 136).

In this respect, there are many expectations and assumptions surround childhood in contemporary Western cultures. The age hierarchy which permeates the whole of society has created a separating distance between adults and children, which shows itself by the multitude of specialist products for children including clothes, films, toys, books, food, play spaces, and schools. Further, the images of the child which have “gained maximum currency are primarily nostalgic or sentimental” that form the myth of childhood perceived as a “golden age” (ibid.: 137). Whilst not always explicit, these features help explain why childhood, in general, has become a culturally legitimated metaphor for innocence, naturalness, and dependency (ibid.: 136).

What a child is, however, reflects the characteristics of particular socio-cultural contexts. Images of childhood have changed over time, and will continue to change as they are created and produced by adults. In this sense, there seems to be a correlation between changes in society and changes in how adults imagine children: History has

witnessed the “small adult” of the Middle Ages, the “sinful child” of the Calvinists, the “naturally good and innocent child” of the Humanists and Romantics, the “conditioned” child of the behaviourists, and the “sexual child” of the Freudians. This is because adults see the world of children through adult eyes: “We see childhood within a historical framework written, interpreted and understood by adults, not children. And that means, to an extent, we are blinkered. We can try to be child-centred, but it will always be from an adult perspective” (Donahoo, 2007: 26-27).

3.4.2. Adulthood

In comparison with childhood, adulthood has not had the historical attention it maybe deserved. A survey of history reveals that adulthood was, so far, never the centre of research in life course context. In *Adulthood* (2007), British psychotherapist Bentley states that researchers have focused their interest on adulthood and its conceptualization just recently whereas earlier research focused only on childhood – not at least because several influential psychologists as Piaget and Freud thought that little or no further psychological development occurred after adolescence or from an even earlier stage. One important reason for the increasing interest now in adulthood may lie in the fact that features considered as typical for adulthood so far begin to change.

Meanwhile, there is a consensus that adulthood has lost much of its role structure and traditional meaning (Côté, 2000: 4). Cultural anxieties over “traditional adulthood under attack” (Noxon, 2006: 101) or even “the death of the grown-up” (West, 2007) and, consequently, the “disappearance of adulthood” (Quill, 2011) – a reverse consideration of Postman’s thesis of the “disappearance of childhood” – have become ongoing hot topics in Western media and wider public discourse leading to a negative perception about changes in adult life. Nevertheless, it lies in the nature of adulthood

itself which is a vague concept: “adulthood is a hazardous and difficult journey for many people, not a destination of safety and security that is reached once and for all” (Côté, 2000: 1). Additionally, an increasing number of people are “left to their own wits to define what it means to be an adult” (ibid.:79) – even when adulthood is reached. “I’m 40. Am I grown up yet?” was the title of an article published in *The Guardian* (Butler, 2012). Like it would be the answer, in *Psychology Today*, it is questioned: “Adulthood: If Not Now, When?” (Anthis, 2010). Turkish journalist and screen writer Gülse Birsal (2009), in this sense, even asks: “Çocukluk ne zaman biter?” (“When does childhood end?”). Other publications as, for example, Kelly W. Brown’s *Adulthood: How to Become a Grown-Up in 468 Easy(ish) Steps* (2013) and David Richo’s *How to Be an Adult in Relationships* (2002) also problematize this issue from different perspectives. What then, constitutes adulthood today? At what age do we become adult, or rather: What does it mean to be adult?



Figure 3.5 When Are You Really An Adult?

Source: <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/01/when-are-you-really-an-adult/422487/>

Contemporary research on adulthood most notably discusses the weaknesses even insufficiencies of the traditional paradigm of adulthood that still serves as a social representation today. So far, adulthood with all its connotations of stability, experience, completeness, and certainty, has operated as *the* ultimate standard model of a person

which was seen as the final, idealized destination of human. But as adulthood is led into flexibility by socio-economic and cultural changes across the globe in 21st century, it is clear that this stable standard adulthood, which earlier could be treated as a fixed point, can no longer be presumed to exist (Lee, 2001: 19). It seems that adulthood has been preserved over time, but today this representation from an idea, has been transformed into a plain ideal that people fail to live up to (Arnett, 1998). Problematic is that such an “outdated model of adulthood is often held up as something to be striven for at a time when the realization of standard adulthood is for many not only impossible, but also hardly desirable” (Blatterer, 2007: 24). Thus, it is questioned how well, even whether adults match up to the *wanted* image of the standard adult (Lee, 2001: 18).

Fact is that, nowadays, more and more people seem not capable of making their way from childhood into their adult years in an effective manner (Côté, 2000: 79). In general, it takes much longer to cross into adulthood. But what has changed for people attempting to make the transition to adulthood? Earlier, in archaic societies most transitions, indicating the social maturation of an individual, were through distinct stages accompanied by endorsed rites of passage all serving the same basic function: to formally announce the end of childhood and the assumption of new duties and freedoms.¹⁸ Meanwhile, the few remaining rites of passage that historically set adults on a new course in their life are fading or losing their meaning altogether whereas “a guidance for the passage into and through adulthood is deficient or absent for many people” (Côté, 2000: 79). Moreover, the long-held conservative and traditionalist worldview understood adulthood to be achieved through different milestones – completion of education (leaving school), living independently (leaving the parental

¹⁸ The distinction between childhood and adulthood forms the basis of rites of passage that are as old as human history as, for example, shamanic initiation rites, Muslim khatm al-Qur’ans, and Christians confirmations.

home), work (becoming financially independent), marriage (starting a family), and parenthood (getting a child).¹⁹ However, their meaning have deeply changed in recent decades. Today, the transitions are distinguished increasingly by the fact that they are individual, negotiable, optional, poorly ritualistic, and relatively undefined, both in the modalities and in the timing. Thus, in a society of lifelong learning, it is virtually impossible to complete one's education. Marriage is no longer a well-defined stage, but an individual choice which is avoidable and replaceable with other forms of non-traditional unions. Job stability clashes with employment trends which have become characterized by uncertainty and flexibility. Leaving parental home can be postponed. The nonattainment of these markers by many people in their 20s, 30s and beyond is, thus, taken as a sign that their adolescent state is prolonged, that they in fact defer or reject adulthood for a time, only to emerge into the standard model of adulthood later. In this regard, nowadays many people are of the opinion that

adulthood is oppressive, banal and destructive of creativity and imagination. Adults are tired, stressed and shoulder burdens like employment, taxes and mortgages. Adults are incomponent, uncool and in some instances, dangerous. [...] But given the images of adulthood presented to many of us, is it any wonder even more young people are postponing the journey? (Donahoo, 2007, p. 53)

What is most significant for now is the fact that the “current benchmark of adult behavior is anachronistic” (Blatterer, 2007: 24); the reality of delayed adulthood is not taken into account. The socially constructed life stages are not fixed; rather, they have

¹⁹ A person is considered to become adult only after crossing a series of thresholds that can be marked by the mentioned five milestones which are conceptualized by researchers in a framework of social and biological role transitions (Arnett, 1998; Noxon, 2006: 174). These indicators can be connected to a standard model of adulthood because their value has been universally recognized by the modern scientific community.

expanded and contracted in length and new ones have emerged in response to broader social changes. American psychologist Jeffrey Arnett (2000) proposed “emerging adulthood” as a new conception of development for the period from the late teenage years through the twenties and even thirties in industrialized societies that allow young people a prolonged period of independent role exploration.²⁰ James Côté (2000), a Canadian professor of sociology, introduced a different term, the concept of “youthhood”, which he defined as a new phase of life with its own characteristics and as a form of “psychological adulthood”. Besides, there are serious attempts to increase the age of adolescence: It is not far that we can say that “in the 21st century, 26 has become the new 18” (Woollaston, 2013). Nevertheless, the classic indicators of adulthood do not disappear, as feared by many, moreover they have been gradually delayed and rescaled in the social and individual value to them attributed. It seems that it is no longer possible – if it ever was – to try desperately to be(come) like our parents or reproduce the models of adult life around us as in a flexible, post-industrial economy, we each face the task of inventing ourselves, of deciding who we are and what we want to be (Giddens, 1991). As a result, there is no simple destination for growing up. Thus, “adulthood does not exist, it has to be invented” (Henderson et al., 2007: 20).

²⁰ The definition of adulthood may change from personal and social perspectives. It might be true that individuals are legally adults when they reach the age of majority, but they may not actually view themselves as an adult, and others may not either. Research has found that when young people between the ages of 18 and 25 are asked if they consider themselves to be an adult, the most common answer is “in some respects yes and in some respects no” (Arnett, 1998). This finding alludes to the fact that adults go through a stage of life during which they are legally considered to be an adult, but are not in adult roles. Arnett refers to this in-between phase as the term “emerging adulthood”.

3.5. OLD CONCEPT, NEW TWIST

We live in an almost infantile world where any demand, any possibility, whether for life-styles, travel, sexual roles and identities, can be satisfied instantly.

– From *The Crash* (1974) by J.G. Ballard, p.3

The daydreams of our 1980s and 1990s childhoods have become a 21st-century reality.

– Michael Hogan and Ed Cumming,
Guardian columnists

Infantilization is nothing new, even an old concept as we have seen. But although infantilization is not new, its range of development and its influence on people in 21st century is. It would not be wrong to say that we have here a prime example of the career of a concept. In this sense, infantilization has reached now what are arguably the right conditions for a “perfect storm” (Swift, 2007); it has achieved a new twist reaching its ultimate breakthrough in the realms of marketing and is meanwhile an essential centerpiece of mass media culture” (Dorfman, 1987: 177). The question to clarify is what has caused the explosion of infantilization as a whole and what the consequences are.

3.5.1. From Protestant Ethic to Infantilist Ethos: The New Spirit of 21st Century Capitalism

Long before we entered the new millennium, discussions about the change, collapse or even the end of capitalism circulated around the world. One significant view was that capitalism would further undergo substantial changes depending on the region or country that adapts it (Murthy, 2001: 48). Moreover, it was assumed that there may be not a single type of capitalism any longer. On the contrary, 21st century capitalism would be “dominated by a spectrum of capitalisms, some successful, some not”

(Heilbroner, 1993: 162). The historical inevitability of capitalism was already a component in Karl Marx's materialist analysis, still being an inevitable form that economic organization can take in the contemporary world.²¹ Thus, the question of the new millennium was not so much "*whether* capitalism" but "*what kind* of capitalism" (Forword by Barber in Norris, 2011: xiii).

As capitalism has transformed throughout the ages, so too have its virtues. In *The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), American literary critic and Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson cites three stages of capitalism – market, monopoly, and postindustrial (or multinational). The first phase is tied to the Industrial Revolution of the 19th century, the second to modernity (and the rise of the great American capitalists). The third phase, which he ties to postmodernity, places an emphasis on the media and advertising industries, and the reproduction, marketing, selling, and consumption of goods, rather than the production of them. The changes in the capitalist mode of production in Western industrialized societies since the 1920s can be roughly described as the shift from an industrial productivist capitalism to consumer capitalism²².

In a general tendency, a major expansion of consumerism is under way in many parts of the world especially in Western societies especially since the early years of the new millennium (Ritzer, 2005). With this regard, the consumption orientation of 21st century capitalism is considered to be driven, most notably, by an emerging *ethos of infantilization* (Barber, 2007). That in the late 20th century a new ethos was emerging

²¹ Rival ideologies of capitalism like socialism or communism rooted in the command economy that have not survived their application in the real world.

²² Consumer capitalism is a condition of economic and social development of capitalism in which consumer demand is of steadily increasing importance and controls market activities. Mass production, which is at the core of consumer capitalism, needs large markets based on the systematic generation and the continuous stimulation of desires of consumers. Thus, capitalism relies on the creation of a consumer culture, a large segment of the population that is not producing most of what it is consuming.

was already discussed by American sociologist Daniel Bell in his book *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* in 1976. Bell identified a new countercultural ethic, based not on production but on consumption. The virtue was not public duty anymore, but the celebration of sensual enjoyment, the exploration and liberation of the self. However, it was Benjamin Barber who first gave this ethos a name – “infantilist ethos”. Further, infantilization became an issue that has been analyzed by none more profound and eloquently than Barber, who has primarily related it to 21st century consumer capitalism in-depth on which we will, therefore, focus in the following.

3.5.1.1. Ideological Shift

In *Consumed: How Markets Corrupt Children, Infantilize Adults, and Swallow Citizens* (2007), Barber argues that infantilization of adults is on the rise. He does not suggest in the passive voice that there is a process of infantilization “under way” (ibid.: 12); he indicates that many of primary business, educational, and governmental institutions are consciously and purposefully engaged in infantilization and, as a consequence, that individuals are now exposed to such associated practices. With this, Barber underlines that infantilization is not just a trend, but the “clear rise of a new cultural ethos” (Barber, 2007: 7) that is intimately associated with global consumerism. But what do we have to understand under the term “ethos” and its combination with infantilization?

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *ethos* is defined as “the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations” (Stevenson, 2010: 601). Ethos can be considered as the “background network of worldviews, styles, and inspirations found in a society, or a framework for cultural interpretation” (Cowen, 2004: 48). An ethos, then, is accepted uncritically

because it appears to be shared by the majority in the dominant culture. The well-established German words *Weltanschauung* and *Zeitgeist*, in this sense, express the notion more precisely than any English language equivalent (ibid.).²³ The definitions highlight the *pervasive* nature of ethos; the fact that ethos underpins our *practice*, what we do and how we do it by explaining why we act in particular ways and why our actions can be different according to the particular issue to which we are confronted to; and the circumstance that it focuses on the idea of a group, a *collective understanding* of how things are done (Munn et al., 2000: 49).

In this context, Barber invents the term “infantilist ethos” (also “infantilization ethos”) to describe the culture we now inhabit in 21st century, which is characterized by inducing puerility and generating a “set of habits, preferences, and attitudes that encourage and legitimate childishness” (2007: 81). In this sense, infantilization – “not second childhood but enduring childishness” (ibid.: 7) – evolves to much more than just a metaphor. Infantilization begins to function as an ideology which aims to spread features of a childhood mindset, and a youth-oriented lifestyle as a model for adults to follow – ideally lifelong. Manifested in many ways, but key among them being entertainment-oriented media and marketing, this ethos of infantilization heavily targets adults often with a child-oriented style, and treats them as childish beings. Accordingly, audience demographics are collapsed together, with boys and men, and women and girls, consuming the same. In this sense, infantilization deals with the dumbing down of adult consumers, who are ideally operating on the level of a child. Consumptive

²³ *Weltanschauung* is “a particular philosophy or view of life; the world view of an individual or group” (Stevenson, 2010: 2045), whereas *Zeitgeist* means “the defining spirit or mood of a particular period of history as shown by the ideas and beliefs of the time” (Stevenson, 2010: 2064). Thus, the particular way of looking at the world within a spirit of a certain age refers to ethos which comprises a set of attitudes, guiding beliefs, standards, ideas, and ideals that, at one point in time, characterise or pervade a group, a community, nation, or ideology.

pleasures one experienced as a child, then, might be encouraged to be continued through adult life.

Capitalism has always been associated with different states of mind. If the ethos of infantilization is described as a *new* mind, then, there must be a preceding old one. More than a century ago German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920), in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*²⁴ (1904-05), attributed the rise of capitalism, in its earliest phases, to the new religious spirit of Protestantism.²⁵ More than ten years ago, then, Barber sought to revise Weber with an idea equally “provocative and controversial” (Barber, 2007: 5) by introducing the notion of the “infantilist ethos” which seems to influence now late capitalism. According to Barber, the infantilist ethos seems to have the strength in shaping the ideology of consumerist capitalism today, at least at the same level, as what Weber called the *Protestant ethic*²⁶ was an important force in shaping the entrepreneurial culture of the productivist early capitalist society (Weber, 2003). The comparison of Barber is not far-fetched; on the contrary, it is a useful introduction to the understanding of the magnitude of infantilization in its socio-economic dimension.

²⁴ Originally published as a two-part essay in the scholarly journal *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik*, Weber’s work considered to be a founding text in economic sociology and sociology in general. Basically, it is a work of cultural history. Weber was interested in the following main question: Why did the institutions of modern capitalism come into being in a particular region (northern Europe) at a particular time (the 17th century) even though the greed for money and, therefore, profit is as old as the history of man?

²⁵ Protestantism is a Christian movement that began in northern Europe in the early 16th century as a reaction to medieval Roman Catholic doctrines and practices. With its origins in Germany, the modern movement was populated by Martin Luther in 1517.

²⁶ “Ethos” and “ethic” are terms that are often confused in their meanings due to similarities. As *ethos* was already defined as “the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations” (Stevenson, 2010: 601), *ethic*, whereas, means “a set of moral principles, especially ones relating to or affirming a specified group, field, or form of conduct (ibid.: 600). Nevertheless, we often see in the literature that both terms are used interchangeably.

Weber's attempt was to demonstrate that the mindset promoted by the Protestant religion was an important factor in the economic success of Protestant groups in the early stages of European capitalism. Moreover, it enabled the transition from feudalism to capitalism in Western Europe in the 16th century. This mindset, better known as the socio-theological concept of *Protestant work ethic* (also *Calvinist* or *Puritan work ethic*), is a code of morals based on particular principles – as discipline, hard work, thrift, self-restraint, willingness to forgo or postpone pleasures, and other characteristics mostly associated with adulthood – representing one's worldly calling as a result of a person's subscription to the values espoused by the Protestant faith. These values were deemed signs of an individual's election or eternal salvation through endeavor which were possible to reach with inner-worldly asceticism shaping a personality fit for success both in heaven and on earth. As a consequence, the early Protestants worked so hard that they made inevitably lots of money while their moral scruples prevented them from spending it, at least on worldly pleasures. Instead, they saved their money, put it in banks, and invested it. As a result, they transformed their money into capital, thus creating capitalism.

However, being once the womb from which modern capitalism was born, the Protestant ethic is now declining; it seems to have a dramatic shift into its complete opposite in postmodern times, showing itself in the rise of the infantilist ethos due to deformities of late stage capitalism (Barber, 2007: 36). If once early productivist capitalism was driven by an ascetic acceptance of Protestant values as hard work, saving, and deferred gratification, today in the consumerist economy of 21st century what is required is an *infantilist ethos* that is characterized by an aesthetic-hedonistic, consumption-oriented expressive culture offering limitless self-fulfillment, and distracting adults from the reality of life by encouraging them to prefer leisure rather

than work, spending rather than saving, and impulsive self-gratification rather than a prudent deferral of needs. Barber's core claim is that the Protestant ethic that Weber discerned as the animus of early capitalism is replaced by the infantilist ethos of consumption into which consumers are constantly being seduced.

3.5.1.2. *Core Traits*

Barber suggests, similar to Weber but on the opposite level, that an apparently *religious-like attachment* to consumption of products is enabled and enhanced by infantilization which has, at least, three major features. The core traits of the infantilist ethos can be reduced, according to Barber (2007: 83-86), to three primary pairs in form of archetypal dualisms involving a privileging of

1. the *easy* over the hard,
2. the *simple* over the complex, and
3. the *fast* over the slow.

These sets of dyads capture the nature of infantilization by offering a psychological landscape as manifested by child–adult dualisms which often tend to intersect and overlap with one another in ways that are more dialectical than dyadic – ways that can conserve in adults what is virtuous and attractive in children while superseding what is merely puerile or (in adults) retarded. Moreover, the move from “easy to hard”, “simple to complex” or “fast to slow” can take the form of an evolution in which something of the child (the easy, the simple, and the fast) is retained and elaborated in the fully evolved adult.

The first pair “*easy versus hard*” acts as a template for much of what distinguishes the child from the adult. Phrases such as “easy listening,” “shopping made

easy,” “easy (appropriate for ages 7-77) games”, and a person of “easy morals” push and promote commercial products tailored to the attention span and tastes of the young (Barber, 2007: 86). An infantile dream-view of the world in which saying “I want it to be so” is enough to make it so, in which Slovenian psychoanalytic philosopher and cultural critic Slavoj Žižek has pointedly remarked, the consumer market offers products that make choice easy : “products deprived of their malignant property: coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol” (2006: 269). Similarly, the contemporary consumer tends to “age without dignity, dress without formality, sex without reproduction, work without discipline, acquisition without purpose, life without responsibility, and narcissism into old age and unto death without a hint of wisdom or humility” (Barber, 2007: 7) – the very opposite of a Protestant ethos: not “no pain, no gain,” but “all gain, no pain.” It is obvious that it is easier to be a child than an adult: it is easier to watch television – where the imagination is more passive – than to read books – where the imagination must be activated; or it is easier to masturbate than establish relationships with reciprocal sexuality and interpersonal sensuality without an involving commitment (ibid.: 89-90).

As an entailment of its preference for easy over hard, the infantilist ethos also prefers the “*simple to the complex*”, the second pair. Even if simplicity seems to be attractive, adult civilizations are generally defined by their capacity to embrace nuance and complexity. Considering the world of an infant, which is simple and primitive, there is no place for any semitones or complicated intellectual constructions but only an infantile directness in perceiving the world. The association of complexity with mature adulthood and civilization, and of simplicity with childhood, is everywhere evidenced today in the commercial marketplace. The preference for the simple over the complex can be observed in domains dominated by simple tastes – “fast food and moronic

movies, revved up spectator sports and dumbed down video games, for example, all of which are linked in a nexus of consumer merchandizing that the infantilist ethos nurtures and promotes” (ibid.: 91).

The preference for easy over hard and simple over complex issues, naturally, in a preference for “*fast over slow*”, the third pair. Speed is something the infantilist ethos demands from both technology and capitalism: “Fast food, fast music, fast film-editing, fast computers, digitalization where speed is the primary objective, the fast-track life” – these are the ever more embedded trends that dominate popular youth culture and commerce worldwide” (ibid.: 97). Besides, there is a range of examples supporting this: “a grab for a few extra seconds of time with fast ovens, quick playback, quick freezing, and fast credit” (ibid.); moreover, “fast translates into instantaneity with instant coffee, instant intimacy, and instant replay – all indicating to what is perhaps infantilization’s greatest departure from the Protestant ethos, the instant gratification” (ibid.).

Playing on child-adult dualisms, infantilization can be structured in terms of psychological dyads that contrast childhood-related characteristics – what makes up the infantilist ethos – *over* adulthood features, which represent values mostly associated with those of the Protestant ethic. Accordingly, adults are increasingly characterized by the predominance of certain indicators of infantile personality traits on their antithetical compensations, which are typical of a standard conception of maturity. As shown in Figure 3.6, some important dyads are illustrated (Barber, 2007; 83, 106). The dialectical approach in the following helps to explain how certain features of childhood impact on adult culture, not by being conserved in their original form, but by being transformed and reintegrated into mature behavior in a way that retain the virtues of the childlike in a mature adult setting (ibid.: 83-85). Such dialectical complexity needs to stand in the

background of the present analysis, which will be briefly explained in the following without going too much into detail.

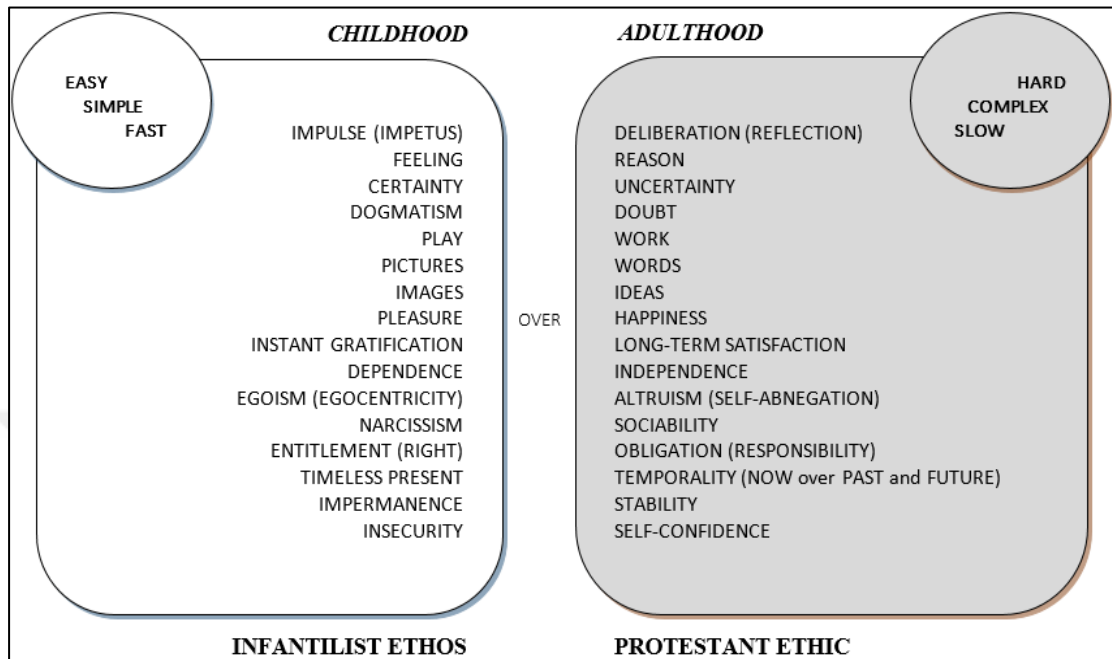


Figure 3.6 Landscape of Child-Adult Dualism According to Barber (Own Presentation)

The first two dyads “*Impulse (Impetus) over Deliberation (Reflection)*” and “*Feeling over Reason*” indicate to adults’ action in response to a desire, which are not mainly affected by external factors that stimulate rational forces, but rather by blind-forces which represent a characteristic of the infantilized adult – just like children, adults will be frequently influenced by the impulse rather than by reason. The lack of logical thinking and understanding of the value of life, including one’s own, is perhaps the main characteristics of an infantile person. The third and the fourth dyad, “*Certainty over Uncertainty*” and “*Dogmatism over Doubt*“, indicate to the fact that childhood tends to treat “truth” absolutely, even dogmatically, while doubt and uncertainty characterize sceptical adult understandings of the world (Barber, 2007: 85). In general, the infantilized adult calls into question or even ignore sceptical circumstances that used to permanently turn him into an adult. The fifth dyad is “*Play over Work*”. It is a matter

of fact that the impulse and ability to play all the time and the same way like children begins to vanish slowly in adulthood as, normally, play is abandoned for more mature pursuits. In *Homo Ludens* (1971), Dutch Historian John Huizinga defined that two of the essential characteristics of play are that it is outside of ordinary life, and that it implies a lack of seriousness. Play as an activity of pure entertainment or leisure is separated from serious work. Even if playfulness in humans does not end when adulthood begins and serves many functions beyond the learning of species-specific skills, there is a general tendency of the preference of play over work which, among other indicators, can be especially observed in the spreading of gamification and ludification in different areas of Western societies.

The sixth and seventh dyads are the domination of “*Pictures over Words*” and “*Images over Ideas*” meaning that visuality in all its forms increases and becomes more important. Infantilization plays out across consumer society by privileging simple, colorful, and sensational images over complex and sophisticated ideas through words. Emoticons, in this sense, are another good example to realize how pictorial representations of facial expressions increasingly gain importance as they make long explanations with words unnecessary. The eighth and ninth dyads “*Pleasure over Happiness*” and “*Instant Gratification over Long-Term Satisfaction*” are widespread phenomena in which the adult, just like the child, privileges instantaneous pleasure and immediate gratification. On the contrary, major characteristics of psychological maturity is the ability to delay gratification, control impulses, and make choices in the long run for future benefits. However, striving for ultimate fun, hedonism, and puerilism become increasingly important than long-term happiness. Considering the tenth dyad, “*Dependency over Independence*”, it was discussed earlier that in many Western societies today adults are continuing to be dependent on their parents well into

their twenties, thirties and even longer. Further, the capacity to reason independently is undeveloped in infantile adults – similar as in the child. But normally, as individuals grow, they normally become more able to judge on their own and act rationally, and to govern themselves; thus, they can move from private to public life (Sennett, 2003: 104).

The eleventh dyad, “*Egoism (Egocentricity) over Altruism (Self-Abnegation)*”, points out that the adult, similar to the child, puts his or her problems at the centre of each experience, disregards the presence and the interests of others and is often convinced that everything is allowed to him or her. If, at a macro-level, the extent of egocentricity has increased, at a micro-level individual ambition has grown to the point that a job, for example, not only must ensure a salary today but also give satisfactions. This is supported by the twelfth dyad “*Narcissism over Sociability*”. Narcissistic features in individuals such as self-admiration, self-satisfaction and self-glorification increasingly begin to unfold, leading to an asocial individualism in clear juxtaposition with the cooperation, devotion, and love toward other people. However, narcissism is widespread today as even the birth of a new culture of narcissism can be observed which brings individuals to an “egomaniacal, experience-devouring, imperial self regression into a grandiose, narcissistic, infantile, empty self“ (Lasch, 1991: 12).

The thirteenth dyad is “*Entitlement (Right) over Obligation (Responsibility)*”. The main distinctive feature of an adult person is the ability to bear responsibility for others and – most importantly – responsibility for one’s own actions. Infantilism shows itself through the inability to take responsibility for one’s own actions; the inability to draw causal links and to understand that certain actions lead to certain, mostly unwanted consequences. Moreover, an infantile adult may think that he or she is allowed, even has the right to do everything desired without having any obligation. The fourteenth dyad “*Timeless Present over Temporality*” indicates that, in particular, narcissistic

tendencies promote and reflect a preference for the “here and now” over temporality itself, whether past or future. This is related to the fifteenth dyad “*Impermanence over Stability*”. The traditional, long-enduring stability is denied; temporariness of various trends is preferred which urge to make adjustments of nearly everything in a person’s life – from changing frequently jobs, houses, and even life partners to give the most important examples. This leads to the sixteenth dyad where “*Insecurity over Self-Confidence*” dominates. Adults begin to focus their attention almost exclusively on the day-to-day dimension and are unable to make long-term projections – a conduct necessary to overcome the insecurity and anxiety related to the vision of the future. Lack of confidence is the direct consequence of the increasing demand for labor flexibility or the loss of expectations in a permanent marriage.

3.5.1.3. *Economic Imperative*

There is little doubt that adult culture can draw from childhood’s more attractive attributes and privileges; there are certainly “protoethical aspects of some childhood’s ideals” (Barber, 2007: 107) to be strived for in adulthood. However, according to Barber, infantilization does not represent a positive countercultural campaign to recognize those features of childhood that might be sources of virtue, such as innocence, authenticity, creativity, spontaneity, freshness, and playfulness to name a few (ibid.: 111). On the contrary, Barber argues that it is a *campaign* to repress those features of childhood in favor of others that make adults vulnerable, manipulable, impulsive, and irrational. From an economic point of view, this makes good sense, since “the market does not infantilize out of an ethical love for childhood and its positive virtues but only out of an instrumental need” (ibid.: 112).

Weber's thesis about the relationship between religion and economic progress has not only shown the importance that the Protestant religion has played in the promotion of the capitalist economy. He also showed that capitalism and culture are much more bound together than the limitations imposed by the economy, sociology and psychology of the time suggested. In the same way, late capitalism can be correlated with the rise of infantilization. The ethos of infantilization, in this sense, is a result of the demands of consumer capitalism in a global market economy (Barber, 2007: 3,7). But the point is, so Barber argues, that this circumstance has not developed randomly and come out of nowhere. Infantilization which is being forged as a new cultural ethos is a *wanted* and *market-generated* process; it is planned, encouraged and implemented strategically by media, market, and advertising:

Those responsible for manufacturing and merchandizing goods for the global market place, those who are actually researching, teaching, and practising marketing and advertising today, are aiming [...] to imbue older consumers with the tastes of the young. Marketers and merchandisers are self-consciously chasing a youthful commercial constituency [...] to be a very attractive market, yet sufficiently uninformed in its tastes to be vulnerable to conscious corporate manipulation via advertising, marketing, and branding. [...] [T]hese avatars of consumer capitalism are seeking to encourage adult regression, hoping to rekindle in grown-ups the tastes and habits of children. (Barber, 2007, p.7)

In *Forever Young: The Teen-Aging of Modern Culture* (2003), Danesi argues similarly to Barber (2007), how contemporary culture is infantilized with childish and teen tastes becoming representative because of the demands of consumer capitalism:

Teen tastes have become the tastes of all because the economic system in which we live now requires this to be so, and it has thus joined forces with the media-

entertainment oligarchy to promote its forever young philosophy on a daily basis. In a phrase, youth sells! (Danesi, 2003, p. ix)

However, if it is a strategic mission to attract adults to a childish culture and youthful lifestyle, then first and foremost it is to be questioned which reasons, actually, are behind the promotion of such an infantile consumer culture that targets adults. Once, *productivist* capitalism sought to meet the real needs of people. Creating a synergy between making money and helping others, which was the Puritan Protestant formula for entrepreneurial virtue, producers profited by making commodities for the workers they employed – a circle of virtue that, while it involved elements of risk-taking for producers and of exploitation for workers, benefited both classes and society at large. Today, however, *consumerist* capitalism profits only when it can address to those whose essential needs have already been satisfied but have the means to facilitate to sell new invented needs. It is a well known logic of the market: as early as in the late 19th century, Marx argued that once the old needs are satisfied, the individual is brought to seek new, *imaginary* needs. Supporting this, French Marxist theorist and filmmaker Guy Debord (1967: 15) stated that the satisfaction of primary human needs is now met by a ceaseless manufacture of *pseudo-needs*.

The infantilist ethos, then, becomes an economic *imperative* in 21st century as it is impressively efficient in creating market demand by stimulating and generating such false needs. It serves consumer capitalism to reproduce itself directly by nurturing a culture of impulsive consumption necessary to sell unnecessary products and to make profits in a developed world that has few real needs (Barber, 2007: 81). However, this is of great importance because we live in an era of late capitalism that suffers from a

crisis of *overproduction*²⁷: the economic circumstance when capitalists produce too much compared to the demand for goods or services. But, at the same time paradoxically, it is exactly the benefit of this form of production that keeps the economic system running through which, most notably, jobs and profits are created (Swift, 2007). Thus, in hyper-privileged societies, where citizens have few real needs, the market must stimulate and generate wants in order to continue to move products and turn profits; the infantile ethos, in this sense, assures the sale of all the goods and services capitalism is overproducing (Barber, 2007: 82).

In this light, the crucial element for achieving this seems to be the advertising industry which continuously exerts pressure on consumer-driven societies especially through infantilizing practices by, most notably, triggering childish behavioral features in adult consumers. In fact, these are more useful characteristics to cultivate than adult deliberateness and restraint in the push to encourage compulsive shopping activities to which mature and careful judgment would be an obstacle. Consequently, we can witness that it is especially Turkish advertising that continuously makes irresistible offers to create endless desires in adults, just as in children, and thus make them buy anything without reflection that produces spontaneous pleasure and immediate gratification. In Turkey this is very easily possible by so-called “new facilities” (Ritzer, 2009: 69), such as credit cards providing easy options of taking a quick loan for a chosen product, or installments postponed to a later date, which certainly encourage and enable the immediate buying of more desired products on credit. In line with this,

²⁷ A common connection of overproduction is based on Marx’s theory of surplus value, in turn based on the labor theory of value. Overproduction is the very expression of a capitalist crisis. Before capitalism, crises were ones of underproduction, namely famine or scarcity. But to say overproduction is the *form* that a capitalist crisis takes, is not to say it is the *cause* of the crisis. If it were the cause, then capitalism would be in permanent slump because workers can never buy back all the goods they produce. After all, the difference between what the workers get in wages and the price of the goods or services they produce that are sold by the capitalists are the profits. By definition, that value is not available to workers to spend, but is in the hands of the capitalist owners.

advertisements dictate – like a parent in order to discipline and then award its child – collective behavior with catchy slogans, including “buy now, pay later” (“şimdi al, sonra öde”) or “call now, gain points (“hemen ara, puan kazan”).

3.5.1.4. Formula of the Ideal Consumer: Kid + Adult = Kid-ult

Wants of children are potentially infinite, while the adults’ demand for products has proven not to be endless to sell in the global marketplace (Del Vecchio, 1997). Children would buy anything if they could, but adults who have ideally not grown out of the childish mindset are even much easier to surrender to consumption suggestions. In contrast to their position in childhood years, adults are financially capable of purchasing what they want. Further, adults can consciously assess the real need for a product; children, on the contrary, tend to the accumulation of products which are superfluous and not limit their desire for new goods. If adult cultures are pluralist and distinctive, the culture of children is extraordinarily universal:

In general, it appears that before there is a geographic culture, there is a children’s culture, that children are very much alike around the industrialized world. They love to play [...] they love to snack [...] And they love being children with other children (in contrast to assuming most adult roles). The result is that they very much want the same things, that they generally translate their needs into similar wants that tend to transcend culture. Therefore, it appears that fairly standardized multinational marketing strategies to children around the globe are viable. (McNeal, 1992, p.250)

In this sense, a global consumer economy with different cultures depends on the ability to sell uniform, identical products to address the whole world at once. The implementation of this consideration turns out to be the spirit of postmodern consumer

capitalism: in a world of too many commodities and too few consumers, children become valuable as consumers having their own purchasing power and influencing their parents' buying decisions (McNeal, 1992; Bridges & Briesch, 2006; Barber, 2007). Further, it is argued that companies' try to attract and reach children in their early years in order to transform them in later times to consumers of their brands (Keillor, 2007: 6). As American cultural critic Juliet B. Schor depicts:

the United States is the most consumer-oriented society in the world and the architects of this culture [...] have now set their sights on children. [...] Kids and teens command the attention, creativity and spendings of advertisers; their tastes drive market trends and their opinions shape brand strategies. (2004, p.9)

With this regard, Barber (2007) places the source of infantilization in the increasing targeting of children as the new market focus. Hence, it can be observed that different methods are used to capture the attention of children with the result that contemporary media and marketing landscape is becoming more and more infantile concerning its content and style to certainly "positively influence children's recognition" (Keillor, 2007: 5-7), but to which adults are exposed as well. It is important to highlight at this point that the market has not caused production to deviate *only* and *especially* toward the child-consumer as might be expected. As Schor further argues, the Western world in general is going through a period in which the child and teenager become "the epicenter of the consumerist culture" (ibid.), also influencing and reforming the needs, wishes, and behaviors of a growing number of adults.

In this context, the child not only acquires a new value as a consumer, but also becomes the *prototypic* figure of consumption, endowed with several characters vital to the market: The child is easily suggestible, tends to want objects that have no

utilitarian purpose, is driven by hedonistic, irrational and exclusively playful desires, does not take into account the needs of others, and lack of long-term thought patterns. The child, whose natural capacities had been viewed as “weak and wayward for centuries, is now discovered as a primary source of inspiration and profit” (Noxon, 2006: 21); moreover, it becomes a metaphor for the strategies and functions in economic systems of postmodern life.

According to a purely economic logic, the young – both real and metaphorically – represent the most profitable target since they allow the sale of identical products in necessarily different realities. Even if children are a lucrative target, in order to maintain and grow sales, an appeal had to be made especially to adults, not least because of demographic reasons, as adults are dominant in populations and have the economic power. However, it is in particular the *child-like* adult in which the market seems to be interested, and who presents the type of the most ideal consumer that generally does not exist by nature, but has to be created by constantly radiating features of childhood on the adult. This seems to be possible as infantilization through its metaphorical dimension has the powerful potential of a “*self-fulfilling prophecy*, which refers to a situation in which because people are induced to believe something is true, it becomes true; this is a variant on another term, *vicious circle*, in which an effect of some cause itself reinforces that cause, creating a loop that is difficult to break” (Lazere, 2016: 10). In this case, if adults are treated like children, indeed, many will act like such and develop infantile tendencies in their interests. Only those adults who attempt to break the vicious circle of infantilization may be able to counter it – by assuming that adults want to deal with adult realities and complexities frustrating as they can be.

The purpose, then, is not only to make products more appealing to children, but to foster a behavioral regression in adult consumers in order to make them more

compatible with a capitalist logic based on surplus production to facilitate the promotion of ephemeral goods that are, actually, intended to the young. Thus, the mission would be to encourage adults to hold onto, if not follow, the tastes and habits of children which is highly demanded by market forces as consumerism is based on a prolonged lifetime of buying: “Inducing consumers to remain childish and impetuous in their taste helps ensure that they will buy the global goods designed for indolent and prosperous youth” (Barber, 2007: 11) with the effect that more consumer goods can be sold for which there is actually “no discernible need market other than the one created by capitalism’s own frantic imperative to sell” (ibid.: 7).

In light of the above mentioned we can conclude that for the first time in history, a *controlled* infantilization occurs by “promoting puerility rather than maturation” (Barber, 2007: 111) which becomes “a necessary tactic of the mandate to consume, infantilization a condition for capitalism’s success” (ibid.: 130), even for capitalism’s survival. But further, the continuous infantilization has led to the gradual formation of a new unprecedented type of adult, the *infantilist adult*, who is definitely not a child in literal sense, nor an adult we are used to know, but a quite interesting *hybrid* identity. Meanwhile, many pop neologisms have been created to name this *human fruit* as the consequence of the infantilist ethos. The most outstanding expressions are “rejuvenile”, “adultescent”, and “kidult”. Stemming from the term *juvenilize* (meaning “make or keep young”), “rejuveniles” are “people who cultivate tastes and mindsets traditionally associated with those younger than themselves” (Noxon, 2006). “Adultescent”, blend of adult and adolescent, is defined as “a middle-aged person whose clothes, interests, and activities are typically associated with youth culture” (Stevenson, 2010: 23) – a term that the editors of the *Webster’s New World College Dictionary* even chosed as

the Word of the Year in 2004. A “kidult” – another term that blends kid and adult – is defined as “an adult with childish tastes”, and “a genre of television programmes, films, or games intended to appeal to both children and adults” (Stevenson, 2010: 966). It is especially the term of the kidult which has gained wider attention and acceptance in popular press and scholarly research which is, therefore, used in the present research.

The kidult embodies the figure of a “perennial adolescent” (Barber, 2007: 3) with childish tastes pursuing a lifestyle, apparently as that of a neverending pubescent, imagined with a mix of adult rights without seriously taken adult responsibilities. These adults represent those who have interests that were traditionally thought to be only suitable for children. Kidults carry the pleasures of childhood into adulthood and are not defined by age, but by their attitude. Instead of growing into mature, adult pursuits and activities, these adults represent those who prefer pursuing habits, hobbies, predilections, opinions and thought processes that are traditionally associated with and actually are suitable for children. Moreover, a kidult is anyone who is involved in “kidult consumerism” to which Barber (2007) ranks representatives as Michael Jackson, *Shrek*, *Super Mario Bros.*, Steven Spielberg, Britney Spears, *Grand Theft Auto*, Kobe Bryant, *American Idol*, and Disney World. For this reason, we will have to take a closer but general look at the contemporary media and marketing landscape in the next section.

3.5.2. Infantilization Becomes Mainstream: The Contemporary Media and Marketing Landscape

Infantilism arises as “a desire for boundless greed; it strongly colors every aspect of our lives, because it has two allies in society which continuously feed it and secrete it: consumerism and entertainment” (Bruckner, 2007: 9). Thus, we can observe infantilization as an occurring phenomenon strongly in the fields of contemporary consumer culture and entertainment media, creating an environment that has an enormous influence on all of us as both are founded on the principle of constant surprise and endless satisfaction (ibid.). Further, over the last years many things associated with childhood have been marketed to adult consumers and the list of examples is long (Tuttle, 2014). As a result, the distinction between items created for adults and those originally intended for children increasingly becomes harder, resulting in a new kind of understanding of culture and entertainment for all ages but mostly on the level of the young. The consequence is that adults start to develop an interest in “kids’ stuff” that, indeed, is increasingly consumed by an adult audience then. There are many clues reflecting the systematic increase of the infantilist influence in many areas where technologies of mass persuasion are in place. The evidence of infantilization is common in various categories on which we will focus now by giving many examples from Turkey and the Western world as will be presented briefly in the following.

- **Television:**

The promotion of the infantilist culture can be observed especially in television which is ubiquitous since decades and meanwhile so ingrained into the routines of everyday life, that most people now simply take it for granted as a constitutive part of social life (Giddens, 2009: 732). Compared to the past, television schedules today have

gradually lost their original mainly pedagogic and cultural depth in favor of fun and entertainment (Barber, 2007). Instead, today the audience is confronted to a large number of reality shows, talk shows, and other eye-catching TV programs where participants and protagonists are encouraged to dispute, to scream, and to insult each other; further to behave like spoiled and rebellious children that shock and amuse the viewer at the same time. In general, television's scopic regime is infantilizing:

[Television] induces a literal regression in the viewer, and in the collective, which is returned to the darkest and most impulsive strata of the group mind. Television lulls the viewer with its play of images into a condition of passive receptivity. It is in every sense the 'boob tube' or 'glass teat' at which the infant-viewer suckles in unthinking dependency. (Taylor & Harris, 2008, p. 81)

In this sense, an important television sector to point out are cartoons and animated films, frequently considered as symbols of infantile culture, as adults continue to enjoy watching them like in their childhood. Especially the popularity of animated sitcoms specifically aimed at a young adult audience – such as the *Simpsons*, *Futurama*, *South Park*, or *Family Guy* – challenged since the 1990s the notion that cartoons are children's genre with their adult-oriented themes. In the field of comedy series, adult infantilization is also prevalent and can be observed, to give an example, in *The Big Bang Theory* that feature nerdy male characters with scientific interest but, at the same time, live for their comic books, video games, and movies. Infantilization, in this sense, does not concern exclusively cartoon, animated series, and comedy sitcoms, but also documentaries, topical talk shows and, most of all, newscasts which increasingly turn to infotainment (a mix between information and entertainment). From an aesthetic point of view, the image dominates the news; newscasts, then, seem to be

pursuing the visual spectacle and sensational content of current happenings more than their real importance with deeper lying context.

- **Film Industry:**

In the film industry, juvenile themes have increased over the past two decades which became the most successful productions – most notably adaptations of comic books and animations that are no longer the preserve of young audiences. In 2015, Disney-Pixar movie *Inside Out*, for example, succeeded in approaching older audiences with stories that made them reminisce about their childhood. But in general, infantilization has become “Hollywood’s adaptive strategy” (Barber, 2007: 27). On the one hand, in the last few years the production of American youth-oriented but adult-themed movies has increased greatly, as have films that highlight the immaturity of adults in particular celebrating adults who refuse to grow up – male for the most part – or emphasize their inability to take responsibility and their propensity to constantly look to their past such as “Grandma’s Boy” (2006), “Step Brothers” (2008), “Young Adult” (2011), and “Ted” (2012) just to name a few. On the other hand, there is the success of sequels, prequels and remakes of movies of the past, in which aged actors play the role of the young or that, referring to films that have shaped the history of cinema in the 1980s and 1990s, rely on the nostalgia of the viewer. This is itself a psychological regression to earlier life stages. Obviously, the major Hollywood strategy seems to produce fun, amusing and puerile blockbusters with simple plots and minimal dialogues, apparently addressed to a young audience, but which can be easily appreciated by adults as well. In this sense, *Star Trek* writer and American actor Simon Pegg even warned that “science fiction movies are infantilizing us” and stated that

“we’re essentially all consuming very childish things – comic books, superheroes. Adults are watching this stuff and taking it seriously” (Pegg, 2015; Singh, 2015).

Besides, particularly dominant is everything around Disney, having today its own “Disney” culture, which many of us have first got to know from the movies. Today, Disney is directly associated with images of childhood fantasy that it has produced in every kind of form for decades now. Cartoon and animated characters – often unusual humans, human-like animals and non-human figures – continue to be very important component in Western childhood. Any childhood exists without the characters of Snow White providing a child’s image of dwarfs, Peter Pan’s fairies and pirates, creatures in Wonderlands and other worlds which in reality never could be seen as they actually do not exist. But Disney is not just intended for children; it also aims to bring out the child in adults or even exploit the “not-so-inner child through pester power and tweenie-oriented advertising” (Brown, 2001: 201) – moreover it sells for decades childhood mythology in order to reap adult profits.

- **Theme Parks:**

In *May the Farce Be With You: On Las Vegas and Consumer Infantilization* (2000), American business academic Russell Belk describes that the concept of adult infantilization helps to explain the current popularity of places like Las Vegas but also amusement park like Disneyland. Adults, once they become infantilized by the magic, fun, and fantasy make better consumers generally (Belk, 2000: 116). Accordingly, Las Vegas is “never-never land for all those Peter Pans who do not want to grow up” (ibid.:115), representing the “reawakening of dreams; a childhood liberation in a town where nobody can make us go to bed”, and being “not a place for those hard headed adults who cannot let go of the control, rationality, and incredulity of adulthood. But

for those who can indulge themselves in the magic, fun, and fantasy of childhood, Las Vegas is Mecca” (ibid.:116). But maybe the most popular tourist destination in the world is Disneyland, the theme park where “generations of families have made their Disney dreams come true” (Disney.com, n.d.). Disneyland sells its very own childhood mythology that can be even touched from “children of all ages”. However, French philosopher and cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard claims that Disneyland is a play of illusions and phantasms; it is a cover-up for the omnipresence of childishness, which is an inherent feature of contemporary Western societies:

The Disneyland imaginary is neither true nor false: it is a deterrence machine set up in order to rejuvenate in reverse the fiction of the real. Whence the debility, the infantile degeneration of this imaginary. It’s meant to be an infantile world, in order to make us believe that the adults are elsewhere, in the “real” world, and to conceal the fact that real childishness is everywhere, particularly among those adults who go there to act the child in order to foster illusions of their real childishness. (Baudrillard, 1994, p.13)

Visitors of Disneyland and other theme parks plunge into an imaginary fantasyland revealing the deep desire to escape the harsh world of adulthood, and indulge in childish fantasy as escapism.

- **Leisure Activities:**

A growing trend lies in the attempt of companies such as Evian and Ikea to indulge adults in outdoor but typically childish activities organized in form of special events in order to make adults escape from the responsibilities of their mundane life as shown in Figure 3.7. In 2013, French water brand Evian, better known for its “Live Young” campaign associated with dancing babies in advertisements, installed outside

playgrounds for adults in London and challenged them to discover their inner child by playing on the adult-size swings triggering a snow machine to make it snow. In 2015, IKEA – the ready-to-assemble home furnishing Swedish company – organized at its store at Spreitenbach in Switzerland a huge ballpit party for adults on a big play area outside where hundreds of adults were bathing like little children in the colorful balls. Another organization was a hide-and-seek game at an Ikea store in Wilrijl, Belgium. During the game around 500 people hid in fridges, under stuffed toys and beds and in the iconic blue shopping bags.

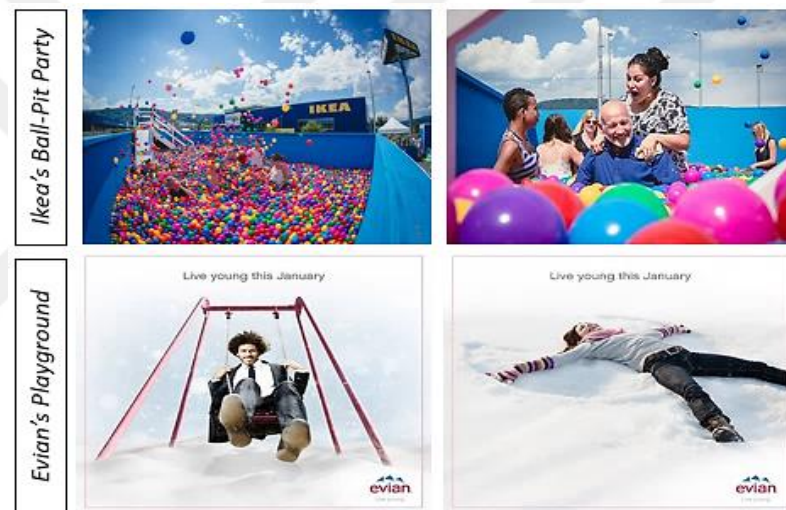


Figure 3.7 Ikea’s Ball-Pit Party and Evian’s Playground for Adults
 Source: Ikea’s Event (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9oG7FrT9OMM>)
 and Evian’s Event (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANTe7sEMYrI>)

- **Crossover Literature:**

Infantilization in publishing can be especially observed in the emergence of crossover books. Crossover literature is “generally seen as a new publishing trend, even as an invention of the 21st century” (Beckett, 2010: 1). Crossover books are composed of stories that appeal to adults as much as they do to children. J. K. Rowling’s story of the young wizard, *Harry Potter*, was considered as the prototype of the crossover genre, which was written mainly for children and teenagers but was widely read among adults.

The extraordinary success of *Harry Potter*, who was even featured on the cover of *Time* in the fall of 1999 with the caption “he’s not just for kids”, brought the phenomenon to the attention of millions around the world. With this, there was voiced concern about the infantilization of adult culture as more adult readers have come to accept the story as a literary classic (Hensher, 2000). The emergence of recreational reading that especially appealed to adults was continued with other successful series as *The Twilight Saga* and *The Hunger Games* that were targeted primarily at adolescents and, as a consequence, gained huge popularity that children’s literature is currently enjoying. With time, the screen versions of the mentioned crossover books have flooded the film industry and today, these movies are among the top-grossing films.

- **Adult Coloring Books:**

Another phenomenon is the rise of adult coloring books. In recent times, many adults are picking up their crayons again to indulge themselves passionately in coloring pictures in coloring books. It sounds like a child’s pastime but the fact is that these books are specifically designed for adults. Coloring, which was once regarded as an activity suitable for preschool children, has become a global phenomenon turning to an immense success in the publishing business. Even if adult coloring books have been around for years, they have now surged in popularity starting 2013, when Johanna Basford’s *Secret Garden* was released and since then sold about 2 million copies worldwide. Following the global success, many coloring books with diverse topics and drawing styles were also published in Turkey’s book market which topped – as in other parts of the world – the bestseller book charts as seen in Figure 3.8 (Odabaşı, 2015). In 2014, the phenomenon was described in the *Guardian* which included a statement to the effect that adults who were “coloring in” were “regressing to the mental age of

seven” (Bromwich, 2014). Comparing this coverage to an article by Williams (2015) a year later, in the same newspaper, this time the virtues of this hugely popular leisure activity was highlighted as “the latest weapon against stress and anxiety” in a technology-saturated world. Nevertheless, some critics have called the rise of adult coloring books as a sign of just another step in the infantilization of adults. Sociologist Frank Furedi lamented “the infantilization of the therapeutic imagination” and the marketing of relaxation in a way that reflects the nostalgia of childhood. Similarly Susan Jacoby, the American author of *The Age of American Unreason*, is sceptical of the phenomenon: “The coloring book is an artifact of a broader cultural shift. And that cultural shift is a bad thing” (cited in Raphel, 2015). According to Jacobi, adults who immerse themselves in escapist fantasies like coloring books are regressing into safe patterns in order to avoid confronting the world around them.



Figure 3.8 Adult Coloring Book on the Turkish Book Market

- **Video Games:**

Video games are a popular form of entertainment among the young. However, video games – once a prerogative of youth – are increasingly becoming popular among adults as well, including husbands in their 40s who spend hours playing the same video games that normally obsess younger audiences. According to the annual research of the Entertainment Software Association (2016), which is the largest trade association for the video game industry in the world, the widespread connection between video games

and the young can be denied today as the report highlights an unexpected yet significant fact: Only 27% of those who in 2015 regularly played videogames are less than 18 years old, and about half, however, are between 18 and 49 years. Meanwhile, the average age of the worldwide gamer is 37, meaning that the “video game industry is maturing” (Sanati, 2015). Not only that, in 1999 only 9% of those who used video games were over 50 years old; in 2015 this age group represents 26% of the market, whereas those ranging from 3 to 18 years old represent only 27%. Thus, it can be stated that today middle-aged people are more inclined to play video games than the younger ones. Turkish people may have encountered computer games later than many Westerners, but they have wasted no time catching up. Today, the Turkish game industry is one of the most rapidly growing markets in the world. According to Newzoo (2016), a leading research company in the game market, Turkey is sixteenth on the list of total national game revenue with \$464.3 million from a meanwhile 81-million population. The average Turkish game player age is 31 years.

The majority of research have concentrated so far on the more negative aspects such as excessive play and addiction of adolescents’ computer game playing. A more recent concern is the growth in playtime spent by adults, especially with video games, which signals the infantilization of adults (Rubin & Casper, 2013: 138). The concern that many adults spend a large time playing video games makes up a notable public discourse by claiming that through gaming adults do not stay young, but stay immature. In economic sense, the global video game market has grown by approximately 10% in the last 10 years, while during the same period the Western economy was growing at a rate of less than 2%. It is undeniable that such growth is due, at least in part, to the expansion of the target towards the adult world. However, many adults do not necessarily enjoy games of a mature content, but still prefer escapist, childish and fun

games like *Super Mario* or newer games like *Candy Crush* or *Bubble Breaker*. It is to be questioned, then, whether the market has been gradually addressed to adults or, conversely, adults have decided to pursue a market that should not belong to them.

- **Digital Technology and Internet:**

Infantilization is an occurring phenomenon in digital environments; not only in video games, but in the world of digital technology and internet as a whole, where adults find themselves addressed as children. More than ever before, the online world presents itself in a childish way. Animated animals or things with friendly faces, simple and colourful designs, big typography on digital interfaces can be found all over the Internet giving the impression as if one would be in a fairy tale (Bunz, 2015: 192). Such cheerful design sets users free from thoughts about the complexity of the technological apparatus, or about the complexity of the world we live in: “The user does not need to understand, but just needs to try it: go create! No need to think twice. Simply do as you are invited, and play along happily, dear child” (ibid.: 200). *Google*, the most used search engine in the world, is famous for its infantile appearance declaring on its website: “The Google logo has always had a simple, friendly, and approachable style. We wanted to retain these qualities by combining the mathematical purity of geometric forms with the childlike simplicity of schoolbook letter printing” (Cook et al., n.d.). Further, today’s computers, cell phones, and other electronic gadgets bear an unmistakable resemblance to toys to make feel people comfortable and “play” with the technological device. The appeal of *Apple* computers, for example, is intentionally fostered by childish playfulness, being simple on the surface, easy on the eye, friendly in function, and yet containing limitless possibilities:

Apple created the first viable commercial version of a system that incorporated a mouse, a desktop, and simple, cartoon-like icons that could be clicked on, dragged about, and otherwise toyed with. The actual nuts and bolts of computing were hidden behind this decorative partition, the unseen hands of code fattening up whimsical, happy-face icons. Twenty years later, we take this interface for granted, but it's worth recognizing for what it is: Computing as puppet show. (Noxon, 2006)

The Internet is the dimension in which, probably, may be encountered the most striking signs of how the infantilization phenomenon takes root in recent times, also through social networks and online communities. According to Susan Greenfield, a British neuroscientist, “social network sites risk infantilising the mid-21st century mind, leaving it characterised by short attention spans, sensationalism, inability to empathise and a shaky sense of identity” (Wintour, 2009).

- **Songs, Singers, Performances:**

Infantilization in the music industry shows itself especially in popular music. Already in 1938, Adorno noted a process of infantilization when he analyzed popular music. According to Adorno (2001), the infantilization of pop songs is both a symptom and the cause of the formation of a mass culture – a culture in which individuals' sense of taste has been standardized by a culture industry. In his theory of listener regression, Adorno described the process by which music industry forces transform listeners from independent individuals into passive, compliant consumers of musical product (2001: 29-60). Adorno argued that contemporary music required infantilized listeners whose critical auditory abilities were diminished to the extent that they could only enjoy music with easily memorized fragments and repetitive refrains such as melodic hooks and phrases which were above all highly consumable hits that promoted fetishistic

adoration. In this sense, popular music requires little effort to engage with; further, mechanical reproduction not only facilitated but necessitated the process.

Nowdays, music industry's infantilizing representation of female pop singers, especially in music videos and at concerts, is one of the most striking occurring phenomena. While women are portrayed as young girls, they are simultaneously sexualized. Many examples indicate to such infantilization of music projects. In 2010, Katy Perry dressed like a teen, her album was named as "Teenage Dream" and she misspelled her song titles in text-speak (e.g. "Ur So Gay" and "California Gurls") – a clear infantilization of language by using baby talk or teen speak. Further, in her music videos life was presented as fun and silly, where various women were presented like little girls, dressed up in candy and food themed dresses and looked like childish dolls. The project in a whole looked like the game *Candy Land* – a children's game. Other singers use the same instrument of infantilization but with an entirely different approach. An interesting example is Madonna, being in her 50s, but who was appearing like a mini-skirted high school cheerleader with red pom poms for her song performance "Give Me All Your Luvn" in 2012. Miley Cyrus, another provocative name, criticized in her song "BB Talk" in 2015 the way women are often infantilized, not only in popular culture, but in their everyday lives especially by men treating them like a baby and not a women. Exactly this was simulated in Cyrus' music video which looks like a metaphor for the "baby talking": Cyrus dances around in a baby crib, sucks a pacifier, and plays in a baby suit with some of her baby friends. The mentioned female singers – Perry, Madonna and Cyrus – belong to the most influential singers in the world having millions of fans idolising them (see Figure 3.9). Consequently, one can assume that such images which increasingly are produced might also have certain infantilizing effects on consumers as the mentioned artists are very influential.



Figure 3.9 Katy Perry, Madonna, and Miley Cyrus

- **Toys:**

Toy brands are increasingly targeting adults (Engagement Labs, 2015). The toy industry sees one sign for optimism in the growing adult market for toys where purchases are made by adults not for children, but for themselves. Toys appeal to many adults who grew up during times when there was less access to material goods, and are eager now to enjoy them by “satisfying the big kid within” (ibid.). As shown in Figure 3.10, a perfect example for this is the toy brand *Funko*²⁸ which targets an older demographic as they produce pop-culture toys that many consider as collector items.



Figure 3.10 Funko Pop Figures

Another prominent example is *Hello Kitty*²⁹ which can be best exemplified as a toy brand that is opening up to an older market for mature customers. *Hello Kitty* lacks a background story without an ongoing adventure as a character which is not a kitty,

²⁸ Founded in 1998, Funko is an American company that produces licensed pop culture toys. Funko is most known for producing over 1000 different licensed vinyl figures.

²⁹ Hello Kitty is a fictional character created in 1974 and produced by the Japanese company Sanrio.

but rather an image – one that has done remarkably well in replicating itself to sell all sorts of goods. As shown in Figure 3.11, *Hello Kitty* appears ubiquitously through every available medium and products outside its originating territories, including references to established adult brands (e.g. adult-size clothing, electrical goods, handbags, or beer). The crossover indicates that the brand is being marketed to adults as well as children.



Figure 3.11 Hello Kitty Products for Adults

Hello Kitty's impact on Turkey is in greater dimensions. In 2013, the world's biggest *Hello Kitty* entertainment and retail complex named "Hello Kitty World" opened in Ataşehir, Istanbul. Further, *Hello Kitty* as a global icon is also very popular among Turkish girls and young women in their 20s and 30s (or even older). The most prominent examples are the Turkish Twitter celebrities Esra (born 1984) and Ceyda (born 1988) – the Ersoy sisters better known as the "Cicişler" – who identify and present themselves in a childish manner with *Hello Kitty* items in many public appearances to show their strong connection to the icon. These are woman-children who proudly announce: "Young girls dress like us, they make their hair like us. It is because of our own promotion that the demand to the color pink and Hello Kitty has increased. This is all our achievement" (Giritlioğlu, 2016). Certainly since September 2016, when Turkish football club Fenerbahçe announced a sponsorship deal with Hello Kitty's owner, the Japanese company Sanrio, the icon has best established its place in Turkish society (Hürriyet, 2016). Figure 3.12 illustrates the above mentioned examples.



Figure 3.12 Turkish IT-Girls Esra and Ceyda with Hello Kitty (left) and Hello Kitty Sponsorship with Fenerbahçe (right)

Interestingly to observe are also the huge fandom communities around toys – *Lego*³⁰ and *My Little Pony* to name the most important global ones. Adult fans of *Lego*, named the “AFOLs” (adult followers/fans of *Lego*) and *My Little Pony*, the “Bronies” (a mash-up of “bro”, abbreviation for brother, and “ponies”), reflect the infantilization of adults in many parts of the world. By keeping their old entertainment habits, infantilized adults remain in the intellectual and emotional world of the child. *Lego* for adults is a well functioning concept as it embraces the nostalgia of post-childhood fans:

What is the point of *Lego* for adults – and creative play as a whole, for anyone? Is it to simply embrace the inner child, and experience the freedom of building a Pirate Ship for unicorns which is also a petrol station? Or is it to use play as a *process*, as a studious method to meet a serious goal? Are adults playing with toys pretending to be children? Or are children playing with toys learning to be creative adults? (Rundle, 2014)

“The *Lego* Movie” in 2014, in this sense, was attracting a large adult audience, especially adults who grew up building with the bricks. Lately, *Lego* has been making another appeal to adults. Several Legoland Discovery Centers – which normally attract

³⁰ The name ‘*Lego*’ is an abbreviation of the two Danish words “leg godt”, meaning “play well”. The *Lego* Group was founded in 1932 by Ole Kirk Kristiansen. It has come a long way over the past almost 80 years – from a small carpenter’s workshop to a modern, global enterprise that is now, in terms of sales, the world’s third-largest manufacturer of toys.

families with children under the age of 10 or 12 – have been offering special Adult Nights, where visitors must be 18 or over.

Another bizarre variation on the theme of adult infantilization is, however, the growing number of adult men who collect *My Little Pony* products – the magical equine toys introduced in 1983 to little girls around the world. In recent times, the childhood classic is back and has found a surprisingly masculine (and much older) fan base. It is a tremendous adult market and the “Bronies”, most of whom are aged between 20 and 50, are the adult male fans of the TV series *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*, which started in 2010 and is based on the classic pony dolls marketed on the mentality and emotional level of little girls. However, it is difficult to understand what it is that attracts grown men to a brand that has predominantly been targeted to preteen girls (Miller, 2014).

- **Consumer Trends: The Case of Unicorn Hype**

Nowadays, we can witness an intense and globally shared enthusiasm for the unicorn – the mythological creature looking like a pony with one long, single and white horn on its head – which in marketing terms has commercial value and thus has turned to a hype, even obsession, that hit the world in 2017. Although humans have been fascinated with unicorns for centuries, they became especially a cultural touchstone of the 1990s – in particular thanks to *My Little Pony*. However, it was not until recently that unicorns made an incredible comeback appealing not only to the young anymore, but clearly entering the adult world. Meanwhile, all kinds of unicorn-themed products exist from which consumers cannot get enough – including toilet paper, beer, saussages, pizza, cheese, cosmetics, and even Starbucks drinks that are promoted as if they have

been given a magical twist. In Turkey, this trend has shown itself mostly in unicorn hair color, make-up style, and food. But in Germany, for example, unicorns have exploded in nearly every product category. This unicorn economy is based on a kitschy aesthetic which is characterized by pastel colors, rainbows, iridescent hues, everything shimmery, glitter, and sparkle, and a cute unicorn motif infantile in design.

Nevertheless, the popularity of unicorns can be explained with the fact that “for the young, the unicorn trend is just fun and colorful, but older millennials are drawn to it because it reminds them of something they grew up with. It’s a reminder of what they used to play with, watch on TV, and love” (Segran, 2017). Such childhood nostalgia is definitely at play here, and the trend is an infantilizing one as fully grown adults are more involved rather than children. Women and men, then, transform into unicorn-addicted girls and boys most evident in their posts in social media platforms (Davis, 2017). Unicorns, in this sense, are a carefree symbol of magic, miracles, innocence, purity, enchantment, and also happier times providing hope and positivity for many adults who are trying to reach for the past to escape the confusing contemporary reality where things are perceived as scarier and darker than ever before.

- **Baby Products:**

A shift within the target market normally necessitates product development, since adult tastes differ from those of children: “Adults prefer more sophisticated products, for which they are prepared to pay premium prices” (Brennan et al., 2007: 261). But in some cases even no adjustments are necessary. Most extremely, which seems even strange, is the circumstance that nowadays also baby products are marketed directly to adults. Baby-care products, for example, are not limited to babies anymore. In growing numbers, adults are opting to care for their skin and hair with soaps, shampoos, powders, lotions, creams and ils marketed for the diaper set. Johnson’s, a

brand for toiletries of infants, says that 70% of its baby powder is used by adults. Behind this boom is the perception that baby products are milder than others (Johnson's, 2016). Another domain is baby food that nowadays is also consumed by adults. The Bavaria-based German firm Hipp, which is the world's largest producer of baby food, seems to be the most prominent example. About a quarter of those who eat Hipp's pulped meals – from apple and cranberry breakfast to vegetable and beef hotpot – are adults, not babies. In recent years, Hipp's products have grown in popularity, particularly among elderly people. An increasing number of adults are turning more and more to baby food pre-cooked, pureed meals because they find them easier to swallow and digest but even a good alternative to lose weight. Despite the fact that birth rates have dropped and the population ages in most European countries, most notably in Germany, Hipp is now turning its attention also to the adult market rather than babies. As Western societies get ever older, baby food is showing that it has indeed a future in the adult market. But the company, which recommends its organic meals to babies “at the start of weaning to three years of age”, makes no mention on its packaging of anyone above that age; it wants to keep the baby image of the brand and has no intention of relaunching the products for a separate market (Connolly, 2010).



Figure 3.13 German Print Ads Promoting Baby Food for Adults: Hipp and Alete

3.6. RESPONSE TO A CHANGING ZEITGEIST: SERIOUS CONCERNS AND IRRESISTABLE CHARM OF INFANTILIZATION

Infantilization is an extraordinary concept that received rarely attention until late 20th century, but today, it is a buzz word. However, infantilization has enormously attracted attention and become important since it emerged in media and marketing, having the potential to influence adults' lives. But why now, actually, and not before? What are the concerns about it, and what is the charme that motivates so many adults to embrace it today? In the following, this will be profoundly discussed and evaluated.

3.6.1. Serious Concerns: Infantilization in the Critical View

Infantilization bursts upon contemporary societies relatively recently, but soon became a mainstream concern. This is because infantilization illustrates some kind of *in-between*, forcing the erosion and melting of the boundaries of the two life stages childhood and adulthood to which many critical voices have indicated already before the turn of the new millennium, most notably, by arguing that there is a trend toward infantilization in the mass culture of late 20th century capitalism that is to be considered as negative.

In *The Disappearance of Childhood* (1982), American media theorist and cultural critic Neil Postman described the mediatization of culture, and further, the privileging of entertainment over public discourse as a process of infantilization. Postman offered an extensive analysis of the role of television and advertising in eroding the line between adults and children. Postman also contended that television promotes role reversal where children on television become more adult-like whereas adults become more child-like. In *No Sense of Place* (1985), American communication professor Joshua Meyrowitz argued that in present times, there seems to be a blurring

of the boundaries between adulthood and childhood (p.19). Thus, children are becoming more adult-like and adults more child-like. This merging is reflected in the way children and adults dress (“uni-age” clothes, e.g. children wearing suits or adults wearing sneakers and cartoon T-shirts), behave (similar gestures and postures, playing children’s games at any age, etc.) and, most obvious, in their vocabulary (ibid.: 25). But the turning point came with the rise of the visual media that required no special skills to decode the information they carry and, consequently, the barrier between children and adults was breaking down once more. Argentine-American author Ariel Dorfman claimed in *Infantilizing of Culture* (1987), that mass culture in its different forms affected life-stages in a serious and rapidly way by blurring the line between adults and children. Oversimplification became the main mechanism of creating meanings, where the “childishness of the media” allowed the coexistence of the innocence and of the monstrous at the same time (Dorfman, 1987: 146-150). Towards the last decade of the 20th century, then, the narrowing of differences between children and adults have been picked up. In *Sibling Society* (1996), American poet and essayist Robert Bly explained how unexpectedly childish the American society had become, and how childishness was exported over the world. Americans were not growing up anymore, showing no longing to be adults: a world where “adults regress toward adolescence” and “adolescents [...] have no desire to become adults” (p.viii). Bly distinguished between the half-adult (one third of the “adult” population) and the other two-thirds, who attempted to resist the social and economic conditions that would rob them of their maturity and sense of responsibility for their actions. In *Adventures in Agelessness* (2003), American journalist Robert J. Samuelson argued that we live in a time when people increasingly “refuse to act their age” and “the older yearn to be younger”, but most important “we have progressively demolished the life cycle’s traditional stages.”

Today, infantilization has turned to an overall reality penetrating daily lives of adults. Infantilization brings the two very different phases in the life courses, childhood and adulthood into association – not only as parallel social categories but also parallel stages of experience. The transformatory power of the infantile metaphor, then, seems to take shape: Adulthood is no longer simply set alongside childhood; it *becomes* childhood. We can further argue that infantilization, as a process, and infantilism, as its result, is therefore a significant hallmark of postmodern culture. The traditional paradigm of adulthood, in the sense we literally still know, is a “social construction” as the same is its counterpart childhood (Ariès, 1962; Postman, 1982). One of the main features in the process of individualism was the institutionalization of the modern life cycle, clearly separated in stages and defined by chronological age. In this sense, adulthood was one of the clear defined life stages and, thus, a modern metanarrative which through the postmodern lens is viewed with suspicion, and considered as an “outdated model” (Blatterer, 2007: 24), that has to be rejected. It seems inevitable to debate over the distinctions by which children and adults are, or even should be, separated into paradigmatic groups. Infantilization has the power, however, to blur exactly these distinctive lines between childhood and adulthood confronting us to a new and unknown situation, and thus we can clearly argue that it becomes, then, according to Lyotard’s terminology, a *postmodern condition*.

Obviously, it is the evidence of infantilization which shows itself in the most clear way by its product: the formation of the “postmodern adult-child” (Stables, 2008: 81). Infantilization redefines the understanding of classical adulthood by showing us that other versions of adults might exist, in present times by indicating the kidult as a “new breed of adult” (Noxon, 2006). The kidult, who is characterized by an unprecedented infantile nature, ironically embodies the “distasteful and lamentable

erosion of previously intractable socio-behavioral barriers between childhood and adulthood” (Brown, 2016: 19). With this regard, the kidult has become “a descriptor of a dominantly recurring archetype in Western civilization: a notion of an amalgamated child-adult” (ibid.: 21), who rather evokes the impression that a new kind of adult is born. According to Postman, who best explains this phenomenon maybe as the first, life now commonly passes through three stages – infancy, adult-child and senility –, and the “adult-child may be defined as a grown-up whose intellectual and emotional capacities are unrealised” (1994: 97).

This transformation may appear purely figurative, but it seems to become also literal – an issue that is open to dispute as we cannot predict yet where all this might lead to. When “becoming” a child, this can be symptomatic of a more damaging and embedded set of infantilizing practices. The classic paradigm of adulthood, in fact, would interpret the practice and consumption of an infantile culture by an adult audience as a symptom of deviance signaling immaturity which, however, is strongly promoted by many profit-driven media and business companies as shown in the previous section. But for kidults, this means a big opportunity to have the legitimization to escape mature moral insufficiencies of traditional notions of what it means to be an adult (e.g. rigidity, conventionalism, closed-mindedness) through the chance of a sudden lifting of adult sanctions in order to feel free that would otherwise not *allow* them to pursue a *childlike* youthful life concerning predilections, habits, interests, activities, and entertainment. With this regard, when contemporary Western adults are compared with adults from earlier centuries, remarkable differences are evident (Côté, 2000: 2). Indeed, it is hard to imagine kidults in previous eras because in early views of midlife in the field of adult development, adults were characterized by maturity, acceptance, and with increasing age, preparation for the years of retirement and

grandparenthood (Whitbourne & Willis, 2006: 162). But as more adults express greater interest in an infantilist culture, more social concerns over the infantilization of adults and, as a consequence, a *crisis* of adulthood get raised as well.

The circumstance that adults engage in such cultural practices that seem age and socially inappropriate is called *reading down* (Kearney, 2007: 25). Reading down, which is often understood to indicate immaturity and lack of sophistication and intelligence, has a negative connotation, especially when it happens on a wide social scale because of the socially constructed common assumption that individual's taste matures with age and therefore adults find pleasure in well-crafted, mature, and intellectually rigorous cultural texts. Thus, watching comic book movies such as Batman or Spiderman, anxiously awaiting the release of new video games, queuing up to buy Harry Potter books, playing Legos, being permanent guests at amusement parks like that of Disneyland or having a strong affection to items on which is illustrated, for example, Hello Kitty – all and much more, which could not be listed here, have been viewed as evidence of adults desiring to be like children, and therefore, problematic:

It is absolutely appropriate for an infant to act like an infant and a child to enjoy childish things. Children should have a secure space to behave in these ways. There is even a case to be made that adults should never lose the sense of playfulness and wonder at the world that comes with childhood [...] The psychological tendency to revert to childish impulses and reactions exists in us all. But what happens when an entire culture and its politics systematically caters to such impulses? (Swift, 2007).

Considering the fact that media, entertainment, and especially advertising play a dominant role in providing individuals materials for identity, people indeed take up their attitudes, style, and behavior after images which are mediated (Kellner, 1995).

Thus, it is not surprising that various critics have raised concerns about whether there is a risk of infantilizing contemporary adulthood. According to many cultural critics we have mentioned above (Meyrowitz, 1985; Postman, 1982; Dorfman, 1987; Bly, 1996; Danesi, 2003; Barber, 2007; West, 2007), adults' excessive engagement in order to have childish pleasure is deemed to be not only socially problematic, but particularly perverse, and in need of correction as it challenges the boundary between adulthood and childhood, most notably, concerning their cultures. The argument is that through the constant feed of infantilizing things, perpetual childishness would be inserted in adults; they would be encouraged to remain as children who have the tastes of the young which is antithetical to adult citizenship that is based on maturity, responsibility, and wisdom (Danesi, 2003; Barber, 2007; West, 2007).

The cultural panic surrounding today's infantilized adulthood is not a gender-trait – it is a generational one targeting both male and female adults. While the so-called “man-child” is on the rise, so too is the “woman-child” (Merz, 2014). On the one hand, it can be observed that publications support the peculiarly masculine phenomenon of infantilization, a certain crisis of manhood, that focus on today's immature male adulthood, such as Gary Cross's *Men to Boys: The Making of Modern Immaturity* (2010) and Kay Hymowitz's *Manning Up: How the Rise of Women Has Turned Men into Boys* (2011). Men, in this context, are taking the opportunity to stop trying to prove themselves worthy of women in any way except “being cool”; for instance, they dive into the world of video games, and wear T-shirts and sneakers as their official uniform for every occasion. Women, on the other hand, are affected differently. The occurring female infantilization goes beyond the desire of youth, and the attempt to appear and behave girlish. From a feminist perspective, women in Western cultures suffer from a “double standard of aging” (Westerhof, 2008: 12). Whereas aging comes with grace for

men, it comes with disrespect and disregard for older women. As a consequence, women will try to escape this double standard by overstating their own youthfulness more than men do by creating and adjusting to an ideal womanhood that profoundly affects the perceptions of others (ibid.: 12-13). The “girly” woman, then, relives her youth being an “increasingly powerful breed of pop-culture female who seems to be ageing backwards” (Mesure, 2012).

Obviously, a “gradual emptying out of adult identity occurs that discourages men and women from embracing the next stage of their lives” (Furedi, 2003). In a broader sense, it is to be assumed that the traditional concept of adulthood does not meet the requirements of contemporary adults anymore; moreover, it seems not to match with the present situation of the new emerging adult:

The boom in childish entertainment points to a much larger problem: our culture no longer offers any models of adulthood that are remotely appealing. Growing up is identified with resignation; abandoning all the dreams of adventure, all the hopes you had for enjoying, and contributing to, a better future. (Neiman, 2016)

Adults turn away from a defaulting adult society that seems to offer no guidance or perspective. In line with this, American philosopher Susan Neiman (2016) entitles her book as “Why Grow Up? Philosophy for a Generation of Adult Infants” by further asking if we have created an infantile culture that makes growing up, in the classical sense we know, a viable option but more importantly, that we maybe not know to grow up *as what*. Accordingly, individuals should attempt to value maturity as a subversive ideal “again”, and find their way out of the “infantile age” we live in that, basically, dates back to the 18th century. Hence, the forces that shape our world today are no more interested in *real* adults than they were in the days of German philosopher

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), a central figure in modern philosophy, who indicated that Enlightenment is a process that releases us from the status of “immaturity”. This he explained in his brief essay of 1780, “What is Enlightenment?” with his famous opening declaration:

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's reason without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies not in lack of reason, but in lack of resolve and courage to use it without guidance from another. *Sapere Aude!* [dare to know] “Have courage to use your own understanding!” – that is the motto of enlightenment. (Kant, 1784)

Not accepting someone else’s authority by using one’s own reason and, thus, moving to self-responsibility is not only difficult, it is also “inherently subversive: It is not by accident that those rulers who seek power over others always seek before anything else to infantilize those they rule. [...] The ruled are made to feel infantile, to believe themselves to be in need of protection” (Raffoul, 2010: 76). Kant assumed, in this context, that there is a fundamental difference between immature and mature individuals and that this difference maps onto the distinction between childhood and adulthood. He defined maturity in terms of rationality – the proper use of one’s reason – and saw rationality as the basis for independence and autonomy, being key to achieve enlightenment. For this reason, Kant prized adulthood over immaturity as a higher form of enlightened existence, while recognizing that the process of maturation that led from childhood to adulthood was necessarily challenging.

As a result, Enlightenment principles became the standard for maturity in modern Western culture. But meanwhile, in postmodern times, we can witness a multitude of signs indicating an increasing immaturity in adulthood that is tolerated.

However, the immaturity about which Kant wrote more than 200 years ago is today more than just self-imposed; the infantilist ethos promotes immaturity in any possible form since the immature, childlike adult is more valuable as a source of profit-making than the mature adult that has to be suppressed as far as possible. Therefore, infantilization contradicts, moreover, rejects Kant's well-established representation of the Enlightenment. But does this not also describe and define the "postmodern adult-child" just as much as the "immature" adult before the Enlightenment described by Kant who, in Max Weber's celebrated term, was *disenchanted*? In the "enchanted world" prior to the Enlightenment, immature adults may have uncritically obeyed magical-religious or governmental authorities without making use of their reason. "But what about now, then?", we could ask. To what extent can adult consumers, then, make use of their reason in a time when they are becoming increasingly immature while they are even striving for the childlike – and obey, similarly as mentioned above, media and marketing authorities? For Firat and Venkatesh (1995: 240) it is clear: "The modernist project has rendered the consumer a reluctant participant in a rational economic system that affords no emotional, symbolic, or spiritual relief to the consumer [...] The postmodernist quest is therefore to "re-enchanted human life" and to liberate the consumer from a repressive rational/technological scheme" – and this with a childlike ideology.

3.6.2. Irresistible Charm: Generational Motivations for Infantilization

In the last decades, what increasingly was promoted and thus became important for adults was "preserving one's youth as long as possible, both in appearance and in behavior. Especially common is a desire to experience as much pleasure and to avoid responsibilities indefinitely" (Côté, 2000: 2). In general, we have witnessed an increasing *younging* of culture – a "juvenation" or "the creative practice of

communicating [...] via the *medium* of youthfulness” (Hartley, 2001: 51). But why has youthfulness become a more valued and attractive status than old age?

In *The Perpetual Adolescent*, American writer Joseph Epstein (2004) highlights that if youth was once viewed as a transitory state that was necessary for one to pass through childhood to adulthood it has now become “an aspiration, a vaunted condition in which, if one can only arrange it, to settle in perpetuity”. Youth is considered – by the young, at least, and a substantial number of their elders – the ideal time of life; to be young is believed to be the most desirable age of all (Montagu, 1989: 4). We regard youth as the time that is most important, most enjoyable and worthy of idolizing, “which means the best of your life is over once it has really begun – and we spend the rest of our lives trying to relive our youth, rather than live the age we are” (Donahoo, 2007: 20-21). Thus, youth - originally a biological condition prior to adulthood – seems to have become a cultural definition. Being young today is no more defined by age, but rather by attitude; it becomes a lifestyle choice that can endure lifelong which is indeed charming.

However, nowadays childhood – most notably child-likeness – has become a valuable and symbolic commodity for sale in the media market like “youth” before it (Buckingham, 2013: 29). Today, childhood values even surpass motifs of youth culture which are meanwhile exhausted due to extreme use in media and marketing especially until the 2000s. Thus, something new and much more fresh like the childhood motif was needed. The value attributed to childhood as a stage of life characterized by happiness, innocence, curiosity, naiveté, dynamism, and creativity are very attractive, even more than those of youth – mostly associated as a symbol of rebellion that emerged in the post-war era since the 1960s. Thus, the childhood motif runs not parallel to the youth motif; meanwhile it is even superior to it. In this context, we have to take a closer

look to the “cult of the child” (Calcutt, 2000) that has taken over a large segment of society especially in the last two decades. However, the fascination and identification with childhood is originally not that new; a romantic idealized and thus positive view of childhood rooted in 18th-century Enlightenment, when the modern idea of childhood was forged. It gained ground with the thoughts of writers and philosophers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau who insisted on the idea that children were to be understood not merely as little adults in waiting – as this was the view in the Middle Ages – but as distinctive autonomous beings that are naturally innocent, and who need special attention, care, parental adoration, and education (Barber, 2007: 82). Childhood, then, became “a privileged age and a particular division of human life” (Ariès, 1962: 29). The true human being, not yet ruined by civilization, was now the child that achieved cult status first echoed during the Victorian period (1837-1901). Thus, becoming adult from a Romantic³¹ point of view, was almost to be seen as a dehumanization process.

The cult of the child, in this sense, offers core values which correspond to the “defect of our adult sense of agency” and, therefore, is “expressed through celebration of childhood” (Calcutt, 2000: 91). Instead of facing reality, adults are in search of a childlike purity. The child is admired as a symbol of that which is untouched by age and the experience of reality. This image of the child as an innocent and pure human being, further regarded as a beautiful little angel adults have a duty to protect, is still and constantly represented across cultures especially in the sentimental world of

³¹ Romanticism was an artistic, literary, and intellectual movement that originated in Europe toward the end of the 18th century and in most areas was at its peak in the period from 1800 to 1850. Romanticism was characterized by its emphasis on emotion and individualism as well as glorification of all the past and nature, preferring the medieval rather than the classical. It was partly a reaction to the Industrial Revolution, the aristocratic social and political norms of the Age of Enlightenment, and the scientific rationalization of nature. Romanticism influenced especially the Victorian period.

greeting cards, in the arts and literature, in religion, and it also plays out in the media portrayal of tragic events including children. In parallel, another important development was that adults began to see childhood not as a state to be hurried through in order to achieve adulthood; moreover, they began to plunge into a world of *transgenerational* imagination. The yearn for an ambivalent relationship between different life stages, which we witness today and we might consider as a new phenomenon, can actually be traced back to this time seeming to be the postmodern prototype of blurring lines of life stages; encapsulated by an assortment of Victorian fantasies such as in Oscar Wilde's famous novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) that figures the relationship between an adult consciousness and an unnaturally youthful body as at once possessive and hostile.

The cult of the child persisted into the 20th century, reaching its height in J. M. Barrie's well-known novel *Peter Pan* (1911), who famously refused to grow up, but that has become a cultural emblem of our times (Neiman, 2016). The child has evolved to "our new idol for the past century – our little household god, he who is permitted everything in exchange for nothing – and how he embodies (at least in our fantasy) that model of humanity which we would like to reproduce at every stage of life" (Bruckner, 2007: 9). However, no one could have foreseen that one day the cult of the child would eventually become such mainstream (Calcutt, 2000: 82). This cult of the child, on which the infantilist ethos is based in particular, has reemerged in postmodern times, which is connected to cultural and generational motivations rather than socio-economic factors. Turkish people, in this sense, are certainly one of the most child-centric folks that exist; and therefore they are especially attracted to everything around children, and childhood and childlikeness in general. Thus, they are willing to embrace it not only due to their own children or the general love for children, but because they can identify with and

enjoy it as well. In a broader sense, infantilization is actually a general cultural phenomenon, extending over all age groups. However, it especially concerns people currently in their late twenties, thirties, forties, and also fifties and sixties, rotating around three generational figures who are labeled as (1) *Generation X* (1965-1977: people between 41 and 53 years) and (2) *Generation Y* (1977-1994: people between 24 and 41 years), both characterized by the significant contrast of values and behaviors in respect to their fathers and mothers, (3) the *Baby Boomers* (1945-1965: people between 53 and 73 years).

The bias toward younger age identities can be best understood through the strong interest in remaining “forever young” which, definitely, is not new: The yearning for “eternal youth” – the quest for eternal innocence, beauty, health, and youthful appearance and manners – has always existed. It is a mythologically-based and psychologically-driven concept that can be traced throughout history of mankind, also being a common theme used in marketing and advertising (Başbuğ, 2013). Nevertheless, besides it is a matter of fact that in most prehistoric and agrarian societies, older people were often held in high regard. They were the teachers by virtue of their age and greater experience, they were regarded as wise and they were the custodians of the traditions and history of their people (Nelson, 2005: 208). In 20th century, however, we see that things have dramatically changed. It was precisely in the generation of the economic and demographic boom – the *Baby Boomers* – that the main causes of the contemporary infantilization can be encountered. *Baby Boomers*, especially in the USA and Western Europe, adopted an ideal of eternal youthfulness as a symbol of progressiveness by really implementing it in possible dimensions, and developed an indifferent attitude toward the wisdom of age and aging in general by really denying it to the most possible extent. This is a double process that reconfigures adulthood,

1. by *reifying youthfulness* into an independent value system with the consequence that youth is losing its connection to a specific age group and, therefore, can be now achieved by and maintained at any age by consuming the appropriate goods and services; and simultaneously
2. by *rejecting the aging process* and the culture of older people in general and, therefore, to take control, prevent, and even mask the signs of it.

This leads to the point that age differences and the very idea of life stages seem to be losing their meaning. *Baby Boomers*, in this sense, have been a generation that has preferred to deny the culture of prior generations – the so-called *great generations* including the *Depression Generation* and *War Generation* determined by a culture based on authoritarianism, patriarchy and masculinity. Thus, unlike their fathers and mothers, the *Baby Boomers* have not been able to produce new and better styles of maturity. But what the *Baby Boomers* have produced was something quite different. They were responsible for many socio-cultural changes caused, most notably, by scientific and technological innovations in their generation that reshaped the world we live in today – ranging from cell phone (1973), World Wide Web (1989), cosmetic surgery (starting in the 1980s) to anti-aging medicine (1993) – whereas important movements as the birth of feminism or the overall rising of the level of education, for example, also has marked the changes. But most important, *Baby Boomers* have pioneered the youth culture since the 1960s; they invented the very notion of being young and generated a “youthquake”³². They have discovered the potential of youth for

³² Beginning in the 1960s, “Youthquake” was a fashion, musical and cultural movement centered in London. The term was coined by Vogue’s editor-in-chief Diana Vreeland in 1965. The fashion of youthquake was fun, spirited and youthful, most notably, the launch of miniskirts and jumpsuits. Poster girls of the youthquakers such as Jean Shrimpton, Twiggy, or Penelope Tree, often were seen on the cover of fashion magazines such as Vogue. Popular music developed and was dominated by

adult lifestyle use. Moreover, the “preference for the childlike rather than the adult was ceasing to be the distinctive motif of scattered groups of Romantics and starting to become widespread throughout society as a whole” (Calcutt, 2000: 82). With this, *Baby Boomers* were maybe the first generation that was resisting aging – both from physical and behavioral aspects. In a passage worth quoting in full, Whitbourne and Willis, two professors in the field of psychology, best describe this generation as follows:

The Baby Boomers, an imposing force in society from the time of their entry into youth, continue to exert a powerful impact on the media, fiction, movies, and even popular music. As they enter the years normally considered to represent midlife, they are redefining how we as a society regard adults in their middle and later years. Just as they challenged the existing norms and values when they were teenagers and young adults, the Baby Boomers are questioning the standards and expectations for behavior of people in their 50s and 60s. They are healthier than previous generations of middle-aged adults, better educated, and in possession of more disposable income. A formidable target of marketers, the Baby Boomers are willing and able to avail themselves of products that will help them preserve their youthful appearance and approach to life. (2006, p.vii)

With the glorification of the value that the life stage of youth was acquiring, a model of enjoyment and freedom for achieving youthfulness emerged (Cross, 2010). Occupying an important place in this new system, kidults are assumed to live an artificial youthfulness with infinite potential in absence of restricting adulthood. In line with this, we can observe that

Elvis Presley and The Beatles. Other prominent figures as James Dean, an icon of the youth rebel image, emerged .

[t]he message embedded in our media is that adulthood must be actively avoided: and lucky for us, this isn't too difficult. Our culture is becoming so focused on those who stay child-like, who look young and act young, that it's becoming harder to grow up. [...] Call it adulescence or Peter Pan Syndrome, midlife crisis or an extreme makeover, youth is what drives this society. Youth is no longer a life stage: it is a lifestyle choice. (Donahoo, 2007, p.47)

But what if the celebration of youth is more than merely a lifestyle *choice*? It can be assumed that today, in an age that is predicated on the primacy of youth, this may be not just a choice anymore, but a necessary *obligation* to keep up with members in contemporary societies. The desire to be young means then the urge to *stay* and *appear* young – meaning to be *perceived* more attractive, healthier and thus look “better” for a longer period of one’s life. In fact, an entire anti-aging industry has been created in order to keep the adult young by avoiding or minimizing the physical changes associated with aging. Because adults are confronted with the fact of getting older and often have a great fear of the aging process, almost a “prejudice against their feared future self” (Nelson, 2005). This aging reality may turn to a psychological disaster as in Western societies it largely equates with physical decline (Westerhof, 2008: 12). Against this backdrop, what is required is a reconstruction of aging bodies with the help of biomedical technology which to a certain extent is possible today, but simultaneously it definitely *reinvents* aging, becoming a conscious escape from one’s biological age (Weintraub, 2008). The fields of cosmetic surgery and beauty products have systematically grown over the past decades even in the recent period of economic recession. The increasing market of hair transplants, liposuction, Botox injections, anti-aging facial treatments, rejuvenating creams, and sexual enhancement drugs is booming. Figures show the magnitude: The global market for anti-aging products and services is set to reach \$216.52 billion by 2021 (Zion Market Research, 2016).

However, the desire to be young means not only to look younger, but also the urge to be young *at heart* as well as *in mind* and therefore think and act younger, which is indispensably linked to the strong desire of *feeling* younger. Drawing on the widespread maxim that “one is only as old as one feels” (Westerhof, 2008: 10), the consideration that age is just a number and only defined by one’s attitude becomes wider acceptance – a situation which deviates from the well-established reference point of modern age identity, the *chronological age*, which is measured from birth to a given date. The concept of age identity refers now to the inner experience of a person’s age which is frequently lower than their chronological age, approved by indicators as *feel-age* (state of feeling younger), *ideal-age* (wish to be younger at an age a person wants to be) and *look-age* (perceived age that make others believe to appear younger) (Öberg, 2003: 108). The variety of several ages which may coexist within an adult represent one of the important driving forces of *postmodern aging* (Katz, 2005). Thus, the relentless pursuit to stay young could be opening doors for *age blending* (Nikander, 2009: 875), supported by mottos such as “30 is the new 20”, or “50 is the new 30” by generally arguing that “old is the new young”. In this sense, common expressions in Turkey like “Maşallah, hiç yaşınızı göstermiyorsunuz!” (“Oh, you don’t look your age!”), or “Hala genç kız/delikanlı gibisiniz” (“You’re still like a young girl/lad”) seem to become important compliments that today most adults apparently need to hear.

As a consequence, age identities of adults begin to change. If the slogan of the famous Turkish poet Cahit Sıtkı Tarancı’s “Yaş otuz beş! Yolun yarısı eder. Dante gibi ortasındayız ömrün” (“Age thirty-five! That makes half of the way. We are in the middle of life like Dante.”) was once an indicator of mid-life identity, nowadays, this has certainly changed. As early views of midlife in the field of adult development characterized the years of 30 and 65 as a period of quiescence and stability, many

midlife adults of today are active and in search of changes and new challenges (Whitbourne & Willis, 2006: 162). This is strongly promoted by postmodern cultural industries which produce new ageing identities by replacing the modern homogenizing grand narratives on the effects of age, that distributes pleasure and leisure across an unrestricted range of objects, activities, styles and expectations. As a consequence, “age is increasingly becoming a blurred genre that is blended in and by the uni-age, free-floating styles of postmodern culture” (Nikander, 2009: 875). Thus, it is not without reason that kidult consumerism is spreading on the global scale throughout the whole cultural domain “in a variety of media and merchandise, not limited to film and television; there is also the fiction novel, the comic book, the video game, and all manner of toys and accessories” (Brown, 2016: 21).

However, the notion of kidult in earlier times generally had a negative connotation because people simply viewed infantile adults as psychologically disturbed, but today this has completely changed. As more kidults openly share their interests and hobbies, many people now acknowledge kidulthood as a lifestyle choice. Since kidult culture has attained a more positive resonance from the public, it also has become important to more businesses to refer to it (Park, 2017). As a consequence, youthful patterns are increasingly redirected to the mainstream and it seems that especially products, which are created based on childish tastes, are promoted to form an illusion that they will provide a “fountain of youth” – or to be more precisely “fountain of childhood” – for adults. In a metaphorical sense: all an adult needs to do then in order to stay young is to “drink” from that fountain by constantly purchasing and consuming products based on these tastes (Danesi, 2003: 18). How old we are – or how old we imagine ourselves to be – is increasingly defined, then, by what we consume. As a result, the adulthood and aging experience in the 21st century is likely to

be substantially different and unprecedented in many respects from what it has been over the last several decades in most developed countries after World War II. In this sense, infantilization makes its way in societies by gaining increasing acceptance.

As we have discussed in the beginning of this section, it is mostly argued that infantilization has “prohibited today’s adults from maturing into healthy, responsible citizens but relegated them into lifelong consumers with ‘imaginary needs’” (Lee, 2010: 3). Psychologically mature, in this comprehension, is a person who is capable of adjusting to new and challenging circumstances, and thus becoming independent, reasonable and understandable to others. But such a mature person does not reach a higher level of development, only a different developmental phase: “This kind of maturity is incompatible with mental health, as it is based on unreflective adherence to low level norms and standards of behavior, which leads to stagnation rather than development (Mika, 2008: 142).

With regard to this, we have an interesting and important point here: Infantilism or immaturity, declared as an arrested or low level of state of development and therefore considered as negative, apparently can also serve for further personal development in some way. Childlike qualities and motifs are often seen as desirable by adults; and an immaturity in adults which consists of childlike features is culturally appreciated as it is associated, according to Polish psychologist and psychiatrist Kazimierz Dabrowski (1902-1980), with “creativity and the capacity for *accelerated* development” (1973: 153). As anyone knows, there is always a great enthusiasm and public recognition for the many, if not most, highly gifted and creative individuals that work with their childlike side, especially artists (e.g., Chopin, van Gogh, Musset, Slowacki, Kafka, and Shelley as Dabrowski lists to name a few), who actually ever achieve maturity

understood the classical way. They are infantile as they “remain forever immature: naïve; too open; too sensitive; idealistic; romantic; ineffective in their daily functioning; prone to animistic and magical thinking, to extreme expressions of feelings and child-like wonder” – characteristics of a condition which Dabrowski even coined as *positive infantilism* or *positive immaturity* (ibid).

Many creatives tend to return to the conceptual world of childhood as catalysts for either their work or their ideas. However, the privilege of the living out of artistic and aesthetic interests what was limited to a “lucky” few in earlier times, is now promoted in nearly every aspect of life to the masses. Nowadays, the propaganda for the childlike can be seen everywhere for everyone, most recently in social media. One of the most common post types we see today when looking through pages such as Facebook or Instagram are inspirational quotes of famous personalities. Among them, we can list the following popular ones “That’s the real trouble with the world, too many people grow up” (W. Disney), “Growing old is mandatory, but growing up is optional” (W. Disney) “The creative adult is the child who survived” (U. Le Guin), “It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child” (P. Picasso), “Be like children, NOT childish BUT childlike” (M. Jackson), “The pursuit of truth and beauty is a sphere of activity in which we are permitted to remain children all our lives” (A. Einstein), or “Hold the hand of the child that lives in your soul. For this child, nothing is impossible” (P. Coelho). The general message is that most people lose their childlike nature when they grow up which is considered to be a tragic thing, and therefore has to be made reverse; the child and childlike we have to search for must be somewhere in us that has to be found and let out by all means. Infantilization, then, becomes a necessary instrument to achieve somehow such state again.

Infantilization, often regarded and understood as a controversial and a problematic notion, might also breed new but also unknown challenges which are perceived even as charming. However, it is this challenging character that also implies a powerful potential which could bear benefits of some kind. In other words, infantilization might also have positive aspects which are often unexplored and further masked in the discussion whereas the negative ones are justifiably highlighted and always set in the foreground. In this sense, it is to be questioned if versions of infantilization exist that can be, maybe in some way, the key to something better. Even there is little research, it has been scientifically proved in one impressive study that infantilizing activities promote ethical behavior (Gino & Desai, 2011). Accordingly, findings have shown that adults are less likely to cheat and more likely to engage in prosocial behaviors when objects associated with childhood that function as reminders, such as toys like teddy bears and crayons, are present in their surroundings (ibid.: 5). Apparently, patterns associated with childhood activate thoughts and feelings of moral purity and thus motivate people to behave more ethically. These findings raise the question if infantilization could also have good effects instead of categorizing things, habits, tastes, or activities from childhood directly as bad, meaning age-inappropriate and immature for adult purposes.

4. INFANTILIZATION IN ADVERTISING CONTEXT: A PSYCHO-SEMIOTIC FRAMEWORK AND CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the conceptual framework for further developing the research and, with this, to present the methodology. In order to explore infantilization in advertising context, we will approach it from different standpoints by bringing together a number of related concepts with the aim to give a broader understanding of the phenomenon to be examined. In the following, we will turn our attention to two major fields – psychology and semiotics – in relation to infantilization and advertising by identifying the ideas, tactics, and strategies developed by advertisers which are used consciously or intuitively to sell products and services, and to meet the desires consumers have.

4.1. A MASS CULTURAL DESIRE FOR THE CHILDLIKE: PSYCHOLOGICAL DYNAMICS DRIVING INFANTILIZATION

Consumption is not only an economic phenomenon, but especially a psychological one. In terms of economics, consumption appears to feed the physical needs of consumers, while in terms of culture, consumption seems to feed the psychological needs through the symbolic meanings of the products rather their utilitarian aspects. Named by Welsh cultural critic Raymond Williams as the “magic system” (1961), advertising is often considered as an *omnipotent machine* having the power to stimulate endless mass desire through the subliminal effects of advertising and, thus, to dictate collective behavior by creating “false consumer desires, making people buy things they did not need” (Payne, 2012: 35). While needs are supposedly biological and limited, desires are infinite in social and symbolic relations and thus are insatiable. Appealing to the insatiable desire instead of the limited need, consumerism

has turned individuals from users of objects to consumers of products. Exactly this ensures the reproduction of consumer society which depends upon its continuous ability to make people permanently dissatisfied with what they are and what they possess in order to stimulate an insatiable craving for the next product. Advertising not only promotes products and services in order to sell people what they desire. It also materially changes their desire, and thus the people themselves in the process. Advertising may function as a manipulator of consumers' minds and an industry so powerful in persuasion it can alter even culture. In this context, infantilization emerges as a phenomenon in advertising that is driven by psychological dynamics. It is important, then, to identify and understand what *drives* a consumer to purchase certain products.

In order to understand the way advertising works and how the persuasion of individuals is attempted to achieve through infantilization, we have earlier considered the shift from Protestant ethic to infantile ethos to understand the ideology behind contemporary capitalism, and will now in particular illuminate how psychological dynamics that drive infantilization are used by the advertising industry to sustain and increase consumer demands for products. In this sense, we will use theories of psychodynamic psychology (Freudian and Neo-Freudian) and provide an evolutionary psychological perspective to comprehend the deeper meanings underlying infantilization in advertisements.

4.1.1. On the Freudian Couch: Psychoanalyzing Infantilization

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), the father of psychoanalysis, developed a collection of theories of personality which have formed the basis of the psychodynamic approach to psychology.³³ His theories are clinically derived and based on what his patients, who suffered from depression or anxiety related disorders, told him during therapy. Thus, psychoanalysis, the clinical approach to human mental pathologies, is both a therapy and theory. Psychoanalytic theory is an interpretive approach, which can be also applied to understand how marketing and advertising functions. Psychoanalytic criticism, then, is a form of applied psychoanalysis which will help us to discover and interpret infantilization in terms of psychoanalytic concepts and processes. As Freud's theory is very big and complex in many ways, we will focus on some core ideas by relating them to infantilization that are of special importance for the thesis.

- **Infantilization: An *Unconscious* Process**

Freud's psychoanalytic theory is built on the premise that unconscious drives are at the heart of human motivation, personality, and behavior. Many of these are urges that resulted from events which happened in early childhood, whose memory had been "repressed" into the unconscious while growing up, but which come out later in life in form of neuroses, meaning mental problems. In his "Topographic Model", Freud divides the human psyche into three discrete parts (that do *not* refer to physical parts of the brain): the *conscious*, *pre-conscious*, and the *unconscious*. The iceberg is an

³³ The words psychodynamic and psychoanalytic are often confused. The psychodynamic approach includes all the theories in psychology that see human functioning based upon the interaction of drives and forces within the person, particularly unconscious, and between the different structures of the personality. Freud's psychoanalysis was the original psychodynamic theory, but the psychodynamic approach as a whole includes all theories that were based on his ideas but also on those of his followers, e.g. Jung, Lacan, Berne, Adler and Erikson.

excellent visual metaphor for these three levels of the psyche as we see below in Figure 4.1. The area of our psyche of which we are *conscious* is the tip of the iceberg floating above the water, the very small part we can see – consisting of thoughts, ideas, and memories that we are aware of. There is a thin layer of the iceberg just beneath the surface that we can dimly perceive, which represents the *pre-conscious* part of our psyches – the material buried just beneath our consciousness that can be recalled. The remainder of the iceberg, by far the greater part of it, lies hidden beneath the water buried in the darkness as the *unconscious*, which constitutes most of the human psyche and is unavailable to us, but accessible to trained experts through depth interviewing and dream analysis.

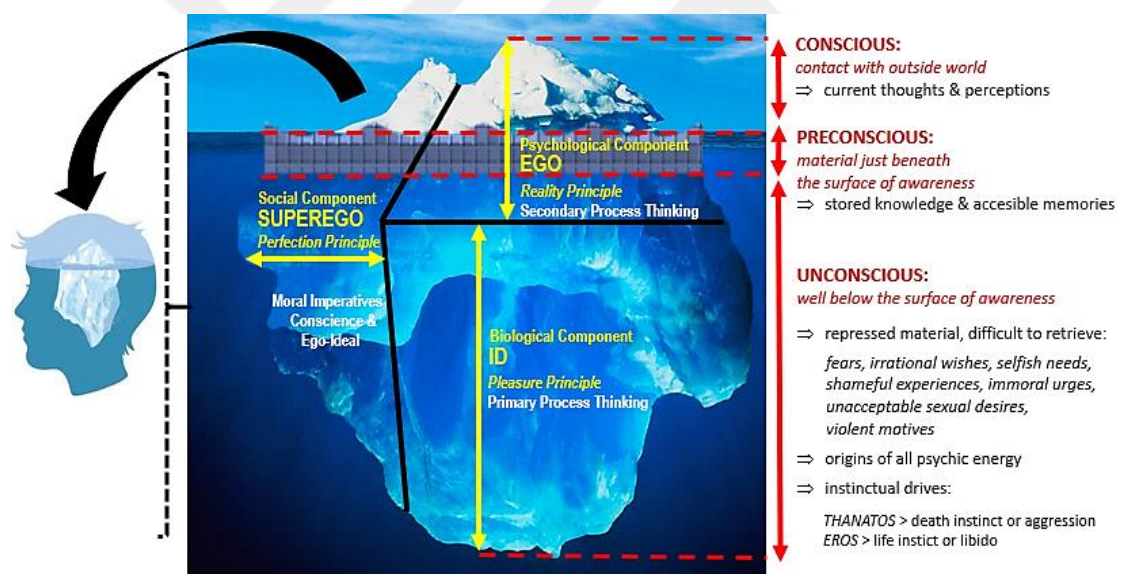


Figure 4.1 Freud's Model of the Human Mind: The Iceberg Metaphor

The main contribution of the psychodynamic approach, in marketing terms, has been that it has exposed how the persuasion techniques used by advertisers are directed to the *unconscious* mind, considered to be the area which contains our hidden wishes, memories, fears, feelings, and images that are prevented from gaining expression by our consciousness (Danesi, 2008: 26). What psychoanalytic theory tells us is that many

of our daily decisions, including consumer purchases, are governed by belief, attitudes, and motivations that are, in Freudian terms, buried in the unconscious over which we have no control and often are unaware of. Thus, if many of our actions are based on our unconscious, and marketers can discover unconscious imperatives by pushing the buttons that stimulate, activate and turn us on, they have a powerful tool that can motivate us to behave in the ways they want us to behave, especially when it comes to selling products and services. Infantilization, in this sense, *is* an unconscious process of which consumers are not aware of when it occurs. Otherwise, as we all know, *consciously* no psychologically healthy adult would accept to be treated like a child.³⁴

- **Childish *Libidinal* Desires: Infantilizing Advertising Appeals to the *Id***

According to Freud's "Structural Model of the Psyche", which is illustrated within the Topographic model as shown above in Figure 4.1, human personality consists of three parts: the *id* (instinctual and irrational part of the mind), *superego* (moral part of the mind), and *ego* (rational part of the mind).

The *id* contains the primitive and impulsive part of our psyche that exists at birth. It is the component of our psyche which consists of the reservoir of instincts that are, to a large extent, biologically determined and entirely unconscious. It encompasses basic physiological drives such as thirst, hunger, sex, and aggression. The *id* is completely oriented towards immediate gratification of all its desires, wants, and needs as it operates on the pleasure principle. The *superego*, as the counterbalance to the *id*, develops during childhood through interactions with parents and other adults who transmit society's cultural values, norms, laws, and taboos. The *superego* is the aspect

³⁴ Possible reactions of Turkish adults in such a situation would be like, "Bu ne şimdi, çocuk muyum ben?," "Bana çocuk muşum gibi davranma ya", or "Aptal yerine koyma beni, çocuk mu var karşında!?" – all phrases indicating to the condition of being angry and feeling stupid when having the impression of being treated as a child.

of personality that holds all of our internalized moral standards and ideals that we acquire externally from the environment, shaping our sense of right and wrong, which provides guidelines for making judgments and demands self-control by operating on the perfection principle. Thus, it consists of two operating systems: The conscience, which can punish the ego through causing feelings of guilt, and the ideal self, which is the ego-ideal as an imaginary picture of an individual ought to be, for instance, representing personal and career aspirations, but also how to treat other people, and how to behave as a member of society. The *ego*, however, is the structure that mediates between the id and the superego. The ego develops from the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world. It operates on the reality principle as the voice of reason like a rational adult with the attempt to stabilize and resolve the conflicting forces in form of an id–superego dispute that takes place at an unconscious level. Patiently and logically, the ego tries to find realistic and socially appropriate ways of satisfying the insatiable id in a way that the superego will accept – it is the decision-making component of personality.

According to this theory, individual's feelings, thoughts, and behaviors are the result of the interaction of these three forces – all of which must work together and need to be well-balanced to produce reasonable mental health and stability in an individual. However, most of an adult's personality originates from the deep-seated conflict between an individual's wish to satisfy physical drives, and the obligation to function as a responsible part of society (Solomon et al., 2010: 110).

It will be important, at this point, to take a closer look to the id. The *libido* is part of the id, and is the driving force of behavior. Libido is the source of all psychic energy in an individual, generated by the id, which makes up the primary component

of personality. Individuals, in this sense, are almost entirely driven by two major primitive urges that are innate, universal and constantly felt: *Eros*, the life instinct or libido, and *Thanatos*, the death drive or aggression. Eros is concerned with the preservation and creation of life in general. It thus appears as basic needs for health, safety and sustenance, and sexual drives. Eros is further associated with positive emotions of love, pro-social behavior, cooperation, collaboration and other behaviors that support harmonious societies. Thanatos appears in opposition and balance to Eros, that is associated with negative emotions such as fear, hate and anger, leading to anti-social acts from bullying to murder.

As Eros motivates people to focus on pleasure-seeking tendencies, it is especially the sex motif as a powerful drive that is most known and frequently used as a theme or undertone in advertisements, to gratify this part of the psyche in consumers. But what else is operating on the pleasure principle seeking for immediate gratification and is, therefore, powerful to use for advertising purposes? Actually, this would be the child itself or behavioral patterns normally manifested in a child. So what if adults are encouraged to think and act like a child through processes of infantilization? Therefore, it is because of this why advertising increasingly attempts to promote products and services that make adults appeal to their instinctual and irrational part of the unconscious mind, in Freudian view to the *id*, that “desires positive feelings and emotions and is likened to the child inside us: impulsive, carefree, selfish, and demanding” (Lantos, 2015: 319) that favors fantasy, fun, and play. The *id* is “illogical; it directs a person’s psychic energy toward pleasurable acts without regard for any consequences” (Solomon, 2007: 110). Further, the *id* remains infantile in its function throughout an adult’s life and does not change with time or experience, as it is not in touch with and affected by reality of the external world, because it operates within the

unconscious part of the mind. Being the source of childish thoughts and feelings, the id always seeks comfort, immediate gratification and pleasure, and where else were the majority of adults most comfortable, gratified and in pleasure than their childhood?

Thus, products from categories which may not have well-defined functional attributes can be made oriented towards a childlike pleasure through a hedonic motivation by making them appeal to the id to be satisfied with impulse purchasing. Freud's concept of *cathexis* can help us further to understand this. Cathexis is the investment or attachment of libidinal energy in an idea, object or activity. Even if Freud considered the libido as sexual in origin, it expresses itself in many different ways as a general life energy. Libido, then, can invest almost anything with an attractiveness – like youthfulness and childlikeness – by referring to various kinds of sensual pleasures and gratifications. Therefore, advertising can orchestrate the flow of libido in order to reposition or revalue products and ideas related to them – in our case with childhood-related symbols, motifs, and themes. Through this, products can be enhanced by means of libidinal manipulations.

- **Primary Process Thought: Childlike Fantasy through Magical Thinking**

In the Freudian view, there are two fundamental forms of thought: primary and secondary process. *Primary process thought* is governed by the pleasure principle, whereby id-driven instinctual desires seek fulfillment without consideration of the constraints of the external world. *Magical thinking* – the belief that wishes can impose their own order on the material world – is a form of primary process thought. The psychodynamic explanation suggests that magical thinking is an infantile thought which projects our real feelings into the world. However, magical thinking is typically the child's way of trying to figure out how things work in the world. Children are not

able to easily distinguish between reality and fantasy, and often resort to fantasies to satisfy their urges for pleasure. But increasingly so do adults as well today, as they develop an infantile belief in fantasy worlds of advertising and blindly consume whatever explanations are supplied by it. While promising unbelievable benefits and results from the banal action of purchasing a product, it exploits consumers' basic psychological need for a feeling of control in insecure times by making ordinary products in brand worlds, even on screen, magically turning fantasy into reality.

Secondary process, in contrast, is a more advanced development and considered as a mature thought process resulting from the emergence of the ego, which provides logical thinking and rational assessments under the direction of the reality principle that allow for adaptive responses to the external world. However, infantilizing advertising relies on play and illusion; it is governed by primary process thought as a form of magical thinking, embedded with id-directed themes of fantasy, wish fulfillment, dreams and daydreams, aspirations, and escape from reality in a childlike manner. Secondary process thoughts in form of ego constraints and rationality of adulthood, then, have to be avoided in this scenario, which otherwise would not allow to successfully engender infantilizing mechanisms.

- **Infantilization via Dream-Work and Symbolism**

Freud's dream theory is useful in deconstructing advertisements. Advertisements, in this context, are in a certain way structured like dreams. An advertisement, then, would be subject to the same interpretation as unconscious formations. The idea behind the dream theory is that dreams express current wishes as well as unfulfilled childhood desires that the dreamer unconsciously wants to be fulfilled. The mind encodes these wishes and desires into dream symbols – symbols

which we also may encounter in advertisements. With this regard, we can refer to Baudrillard, who draws an analogy between the dream and the advertisement, both having “an essential regulatory function”:

Like the dream, advertising defines and redirects an imaginary potentiality. Like the dream's, its practical character is strictly subjective and individual. And, like the dream, advertising is devoid of all negativity and relativity: with never a sign too many or a sign too few, it is essentially superlative and totally immanent in nature. (Baudrillard, 2001, p.173)

In his analysis of dreams, Freud developed two vital concepts, condensation (*Verdichtung*) and displacement (*Verschiebung*), to explain the symbolic function in respect to psychic drives in form of energy flows. In *displacement*, wishes or desires as strong emotions with deeper meanings are transferred from the mind to external representations. This occurs especially then, when we cannot show what we truly mean because of cultural or moral limits. The phallic symbol is Freud's classic example of displacement. In *condensation*, several unconscious wishes and impulses are combined in a single, polyvalent symbol in the dream manifest.

The processes of displacement and condensation involved in the dreamwork are also employed by the advertising industry in an effort to stimulate and increase consumer demands for products. The advertiser – like the dreamer – splits, displaces and decomposes one thing into several figures; or condenses several figures, images, or words into one. Through this, childhood-related symbols and motifs can be easily embedded in advertisements. With this regard, Freud suggests that dreams have two types of content: manifest and latent. The *manifest* content is the literal subject matter or the story of the dream, while the *latent* content is the underlying and hiddenpsychological meaning of it expressed in symbols. We can create the following

scenario to make this more clearer: If we design an advertisement, where a woman is shown trying to climb out of a bathtub from which the water overflows as a result, the manifest content is exactly that what we see – a woman climbing out of a bathtub from which water comes out. But the latent content is the true meaning of the scene: the water in the tub symbolizes the water of the womb that comes out by birth, and the tub itself symbolizes the mother's womb the woman is trying to come out. In Freudian terms, the woman is illustrated as being born; and if we now integrate a product to the advertisement which could be anything from ice-cream to high-tech gadget, we have perfectly created the latent content because the product to be promoted then will mean, in a hidden manner, that consumers will be “reborn” when they purchase the product.

Symbolism, in this sense, is especially used in advertisements just as dreams use symbols to represent an individual's unconscious desire. The Freudian viewpoint implies that the “ego relies on the symbolism in products to compromise between the demands of the id and the prohibitions of the superego” (Solomon et al., 2010: 110). The unconscious makes links between symbols and personal desires through *association* in order to understand the motives for the dreams. Although the association may be forgotten, the connection remains in the unconscious mind which makes the dream value of symbol-saturated advertisements such important; they trigger unconscious fantasies by giving consumers' mind visual input in form of childlike imagery via childhood symbolism, which not directly invites to buy a product but makes an indirect appeal to emotions that will stimulate desire to buy the product.

4.1.2. Trip Back to Childhood: Consumer Regression, Infantilism, and Postmodern Nostalgia

Advertising aims to satisfy desire while actually creating and managing desire. The few seconds of advertisement when the libido is mobilized through a childhood-related image offers a sufficient opportunity to invade us in its mechanisms of regression which we have already discussed in Chapter 3 within Section 3.2. The classical Freudian and Neo-Freudian literature describes infantile behavior as a consequence of a regressive process that offers itself as a defense mechanism against intimidating adult dilemmas. Regressive behavior is immature and childish, thus, often understood as contrary to progression. Regression is what happens to people when, emotionally, they leave the present moment:

When we regress, we go from being clear-thinking adults to talking, acting, and sometimes even looking like children who are not getting their way. We feel powerless and out of control, as if we don't have choices. [...] As we regress, we fall back toward an earlier time in life, usually childhood. (Lee, 2001, p.1)

Exactly this seems to happen through consumer culture which encourages the regression of consumers back to childhood. Through regression, adults are released from their daily responsibilities by seducing them into the mythical sphere of childhood. The perfect example for this is Disney and the world it has created, and together with it the process of *Disneyfication* which indicates the “transformation of something into a childlike and maybe simpler form” (Suvin, 2003: 194-5). Moreover, Disneyfication is a retrograde process of converting adults into children by transferring responsibilities for decisions from individuals to paternalistic institutions, seeking to eradicate risk and discomfort from society, or creating an artificial world of predictability and uniformity:

Psychologically, the Disneyfication strategy is one of the infantilization of adults. Its images function as an infantile “security blanket” producing constantly repeated demand to match the constantly recycled offer [...] Disneyfication is a shaping of *affective investment into commodifying which reduces the mind to infantilism* as an illusory escape from death: a mythology. It can serve as a metonymy of what Fredric Jameson has discussed as the post-modern “consumption of the very process of consumption,” say in TV. (ibid.)

This “trip back” to symbolic childhood, or the reversion to a childlike state of fantasy, is highly lucrative and vital in marketing terms as the motivation is to move adults into the spheres of childhood in order to make them feel happy again and trigger childlike and irrational thought processes in adult consumers decision-making. Adults, then, can be easily led and tend to believe what they are told of products and increasingly rely more on intuitive, narcissistic, interactive, playful and fun-generating methods of making choices between brands. Especially the nostalgia for childhood, and to find meaning in a romanticized happier childhood, is a powerful motivating force. Nostalgia can be an effective way to evoke positive mood, make people feel “younger” as it makes use from previous emotional connections by creating new connections. It is a simple but powerful tool through which the consumer relives past experiences and regresses once again toward previous life stages. Reverting and reconnecting to childhood memories as a means of blocking out unpleasant realities is, in this sense, symptomatic of the regression to infantilism. Adult coloring books and organized playground parties for adults are only few of the many examples we have earlier mentioned that show how adults are increasingly immersed in activities that once were exclusive to children:

It may seem strange that we seek 'stability' in what lasted only briefly when we were young, but, as we age, our experiences as children and teens seem to be 'timeless'. It is the effect of a frenetic and uncertain society in which the consumer finds stability in the memory of past experiences. It is not, therefore, a simplistic inability to make new resolutions: actually, looking at the past is often more fruitful than imagining the future. (Cross, 2010, p.158)

Freud's term "regression", in a certain way, points to the general idea of return. Nostalgia, in this sense, becomes *collective regression* in the course of the hectic world we live in; it is an escapist reaction to postmodern times. Nostalgia seems to help adults to cope with the extraordinary speed-up of time which, however, is more than a regression into the superficial and puerile but instead a quest for an experience lost to today's adults (Cross, 2015: 16). Remarkably in earlier times, these may have been religious icons, ceremonial clothing or monuments but nowadays, these things are mostly consumer goods and experiences from adults' childhood. As a matter of fact, it becomes obvious that the nostalgia for them is especially associated with two stages of childhood: the emerging autonomy and persistent memory of primary-school-age childhood and the increasing consumer freedom and emotionally charged peer-group experience of adolescence (ibid.: 17). If we concentrate on nostalgia for childhood things, we can say that these invite adults to return to their years of wondrous innocence, but, in doing so, they may be merely "putting on" rather than "turning into" the child (ibid.: 18).

When used for advertising purposes, the past serves only if mythologized as an *instantly available* nostalgia; indeed, this is an extremely lucrative construction of the past as it becomes a well-selling commercial commodity (Niemeyer, 2014: 216). Nostalgia can be triggered by an evocation of something adults recognize from their past. In this sense, most adults experience nostalgia to some degree as a longing for past

childhood. Further, adults are extraordinarily interested in preserving the memory of their own youth (Cross, 2010: 158). Nostalgia combines the “sadness of loss with the joy or satisfaction that the loss is incomplete, nor can ever be” (Burton, 2014). A nostalgic desire stems from the absence of childhood in the years of adulthood. In this sense, it will be helpful to consider briefly an important consideration of French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, who suggests that desire and together with this *lack* (manque) – which we can consider here as the absence of childhood – are central motivating forces in our lives that are always unfulfilled. We constantly strive, through various activities such as consumerism to fill that lack. It is this drive to fill our sense of lack that allows advertising to speak to our desires. Advertisements, in this sense, often foster fantasies to appeal to our ids and to facilitate regression to the childhood phase. As a result, consumer capitalism is a “producer of desire” and a “perpetual lack filler”, that always stimulates, but never satisfies.

Further, through their advertisements brands can reduce adults to the status of a child which can occur in form of temporal regression to one of the primary libidinal phases. This is better known as Freud’s theory of *psychosexual stages of development*, which illustrates that our personality develops as we pass through five distinct stages of childhood development – oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital. Particularly during the first three stages, the child’s personality develops as the source of its libido, the psychic energy, moves around its body and different impulses come to bear from the parents. In the *oral stage* (Birth to 18 months), the infant gets pleasure from activities such as breast suckling, biting, or eating. In the *anal stage* (18 months to 3 years), the child is confronted with the problem of toilet training, and gets pleasure from being able to control bowel movements. In the *phallic stage* (3-6 years), the child becomes

aware of its genitals and must deal with desires for the opposite-sex parent, better known as the *Oedipus complex*, which is the most important aspect of this stage. Boys begin to view their fathers as a rival for the mother's affection. The conflict arises as the boy develops a pleasurable feeling of wanting to possess the mother exclusively and the desire to replace the father. But the boy also fears that he will be punished by the father for these feelings, a fear which Freud termed *castration anxiety*. The same applies for girls. The girl desires the father, but realizes that she does not have a penis, which leads to the development of *penis envy* and the wish to be a boy. The girl blames her mother for her "castrated state", which creates great tension. The girl then represses her feelings to remove the tension and identifies with the mother to take on the female gender role.

The theory postulates that the failure to resolve the conflicts moving from one stage to the next lie at the heart of adult personality which is determined by how well different crises at different times are experienced. Such conflicts can result in the child getting *fixated* or stuck at a stage. If this happens, traces of that stage will remain in its behaviour as an adult. For instance, in the oral stage the extent of too much or too little gratification can result in an oral fixation or oral personality which can result in problems with oral activities (e.g., drinking alcohol, smoking, overeating, or nail biting). Besides, adults may become overly dependent upon others and gullible; or they may also fight these urges and develop pessimism and aggression toward others. Effects of an anal fixation, however, can result in an obsession with cleanliness, perfection, and control ("anal retentive" when toilet training was too restrictive). On the opposite end, adults may become messy and disorganized ("anal expulsive", when toilet training was overly lenient).

In fact, adulthood – a life stage which basically comprises the longest term of our life – seems to be a difficult journey for many people, and not a destination of safety and security that is reached once and for all. Psychological maturity, normally a state desired and promoted by many psychological and psychiatric approaches to mental health and human development, is achieved after often tumultuous and disintegrative experiences of youth. Thus, especially the transition from childhood to adulthood is not an easy one as most adults may remember. As long ago as 1950, German developmental psychologist and psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1902-1994)³⁵ called attention to potential difficulties that might be faced even when adulthood is already reached:

Every society consists of men (and women) in the process of developing from children into adults. To assume continuity of tradition, society must [...] take care of the unavoidable remnants of infantility in its adults. (1950: 405)

In adulthood, individuals retain, or revert to, traits and patterns of behavior from their childhood which is normal to a certain extent. In this sense, when adults grow up this does not automatically mean that they put away childish things. On the contrary, many childish things stay with them, remaining important throughout their lives. However, what Erikson has described as “unavoidable remnants of infantility” may lead, in extreme cases, to infantilism that is considered as a personality disorder, a syndrome of developmental failure and early fixations, as we have already discussed (see Chapter 3, in Section 3.2.).³⁶ Today, however, we have the situation that not only

³⁵ Erikson was personally trained by Freud, and maintained respect for Freud’s theory. However, he expanded Freud’s concept of psychosexual development to include psychosocial development which refers to the characteristic ways in which the individual learns to respond to other people.

³⁶ Infantilism was first coined in the field of medicine by French neurologist Charles Lasègue in 1871, who described it as the persistence of childish characteristics, physically as well as psychically, into the adult stage. Since then, the concept has undergone considerable changes. From 1908 it was also used to describe retarded developments during childhood, and subsequently became the subject of

in extreme cases the state of infantilism can be reached, but also becomes more and more usual as it is promoted in form of a consumer infantilism. As adults are attempting to overcome the rests of infantility from their personality, which is an important and difficult task in the process of becoming adult as Erikson underlines, most notably media and business companies seem to exploit this potential weak point of adults trying to left their childhood behind them. Obviously, adults are increasingly animated *not* to overcome but to *develop* these rests of infantility in them. Such infantilism draws not only on the model of classical developmental psychology, where it characterizes a pathologically arrested stage of emotional development; besides, it also indicates a form of infantilism in cultural-psychological sense which represents a process of “pathologically regressive stage of consumer market development” (Barber, 2007: 34).³⁷ These two concepts of infantilism together are apparently comprising what Freud spoke of as “a pathology of cultural communities” in *Civilizations and Its Discontents* (1930: 144) on the study of which he hoped, as a legacy wish, “one day someone will venture to embark” (ibid.).

In this sense, Barber points out to a *cultural pathology* in relation to late consumer capitalism that effectively prioritizes consumerism at the expense of capitalism’s traditional balance between production and consumption, work and leisure, and investment and spending (2007: 34). For the first time in history, a *wanted* and *controlled* regression occurs by “promoting puerility rather than maturation” (Barber, 2007: 111) which is shaping a passive and dependent consuming public, arrested at the infantile stage. The sum effect of the process of infantilization is to foster

ongoing psychiatric research. (Adler, 2002: 76-77). In 1987, then, infantilism received a psychiatric status by the American Psychiatric Association, and was considered as a mental process of disorder.

³⁷ Developmental psychology is the scientific study of how and why human beings change over the course of their life. Cultural psychology is the study of how psychological and behavioral tendencies are rooted and embodied in culture.

a form of infantilism, in other words, the favoring of artificially produced pathological conditions which makes it easier to promote products to adults. This facilitates the recreation of an infantile basis of adults' dreams and longings in terms of consumerism.

Yıldırım argues in his analysis of clinical advertising (“*Klinik Reklamcılık*”) that features of personality disorders, including borderline and narcissistic personality disorder, are common in use for the purpose of brand communication; these features trigger psychic mechanisms in consumers to make them purchase the promoted product who are, actually, unaware of their true reasons for buying what they buy (2013: 12). Similarly, it seems that patterns of infantilism, which originally is a personality disorder, are promoted by media and business companies in various forms to adults who actually do not suffer from the disorder but are seduced and encouraged to “get in board” – nota bene, unconsciously. With this regard, as in many Western societies birthrates fall and life spans lengthen, companies which produce diapers, to give an extreme example, pronounce that there is “plenty of room for expansion, because babies grow out of diapers, but incontinent adults usually do not” (Hymowitz & Coleman-Lochner, 2016). This example shows that a shift from clinical to consumer realms is possible: the aim is to make baby-oriented products “more normal”, “even fun” and “fashionable” (ibid.) for the healthy adult.

The next step would be then to understand the concept of *Becoming-Child* which was developed by French philosopher Gilles Deleuze and psychoanalyst Félix Guattari, who generally analyzed the relationship of desire to reality and to capitalist society in particular. Becoming is a “process of desire” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 272). As the name might be misinterpreted, *Becoming-Child* is not indicating “a matter of imitating children, but of entering into a relation with child-ness that unsettles fixed identities

and categories” (Bogue, 2010: 98). As Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 272) argue, “becoming” is not an issue of resemblance, mimicry or “being-like”; moreover, “becoming is to extract particles between which one establishes the relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness that are the closest to what one is becoming, and through which one becomes”. Therefore, Becoming-Child does not necessarily entail childlike behaviour or childishness per se; furthermore, it happens when there is a certain “assemblage that allows a childlike start or stop, a childlike connection or disconnection, a certain childlike relation between things” (Appel, 2014: 92). In this sense, Becoming-Child does not indicate a return to the child that the adult once was, but a childlike movement towards something else that is neither adult nor child. What matters most about Becoming-Child is not the specific age of an individual, but the force that is activated in the existing and potential playful world of the adult. Becoming-child is a way to “get outside the dualisms [...] to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo [...] the child is the becoming-young of every age” (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987: 277).

4.1.3. Archetypal Traces: Jung’s Eternal Child and Mother

Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) saw Freud’s interpretation of the unconscious as too narrow. Jung accepted Freud’s basic idea, but he divided the unconscious instead into two regions: a *personal unconscious*, containing the feelings and thoughts developed by individuals that are directive of their particular life schemes, and a second psychic system named as *collective unconscious*, which does not develop individually but is inherited and, therefore, universal (Jung, 1969: 43). Thus, the collective unconscious is key to Jung’s theories of the mind. He proposed that we are each born with a collective unconscious which contains a set of

shared memories and ideas, which we all can identify with, regardless of the culture that we were born into or the time period in which we live. We recognize these innately, which gain expression and frequently appear in the symbols and forms that constitute the myths, sacred texts, folklore, tales, rituals, dreams, and visions that are found in all cultures across the world in the history of humanity. Jung called these universal images *archetypes*, through which the collective unconscious is expressed, in order to define their underlying psychological patterns as “pieces of life itself” (ibid.: 97), to which people have an emotional connection as they become dynamic in providing a certain subjective intensity and personal meaning to experience.

Today, archetypes are primarily used in the field of psychology, but they have also proven to be a valuable tool for narrative and, as it turns out, advertising. Today stories are no longer told sitting around a fire, and they are also not all captured in books or movies. Using the craft of storytelling in advertising, working with archetypes and bringing classic characters to life thanks to advanced digital technology, creates an engaging and magical experience for the audience, draws viewers in and builds attracting brands. Archetypes, which can be used as a source of inspiration when creating successful communication, allow a brand to set themselves apart from a line of brands that offer the same product. Archetypes also help them connect with the unconscious and basic human needs of a target audience. This connection of familiarity and universality is what makes archetypes such a powerful tool for advertising to activate archetypal association in consumers’ mind in order to manipulate consumers’ emotional reactions.

Jung highlighted a number of personality archetypes, including the “child” and the “mother”, at which we will take a closer look now as they play a vital role in the process of infantilization in advertising. They become perceptible as psychic forms but

can appear concretely in the form of physical facts as well. Infantilization in advertising, in this sense, becomes especially effective as it is based on the archetype of the Eternal Child – addressing and triggering dormant aspects of the child motif within adult consumers – and on the Mother archetype, when it seems that advertising gives the impression of showing motherly care and guidance.

The Child archetype resides in all of us and is the first that we come to know. The child motif is a “vestigial memory of one’s own childhood”; it is a “picture of a certain *forgotten* things in our childhood” (Jung, 1969: 161). Since the archetype is always an image belonging to the whole human race and not merely to the individual, it can be stated that “the child motif represents the preconscious, childhood aspect of the collective psyche” (ibid.). There are many aspects of the Child archetype each with their own set of specific expressions. While we can carry expressions of all of these aspects, one is usually dominant and addressed in advertising in order to awaken a strong relationship with promoted products: the *Eternal Child*. In this sense, the Eternal Child appears in two variants as *puer aeternus* (Latin: “eternal boy”) or as *puella aeterna*, (Latin: “eternal girl”).³⁸ In polar opposition to the *senex* or “Old Man”, the *puer* symbolizes youthful irresponsibility refusing to face up to the demands of adult life. This shows that the figure of the child points not merely back to childhood, as for Freud, but also on to adulthood in Jungian understanding (Segal, 1999: 84). The Eternal Child influences the individual by enforcing the desire to remain eternally young in body, mind, and spirit. Positive aspects of the Eternal Child manifest as the embodiment of the potential of possibilities, enthusiasm, and optimism as the archetype is a symbol

³⁸ *Puer aeternus* come from *Metamorphoses*, the epic work by the Roman poet Ovid. Ovid addresses the child-god Iacchus as *puer aeternus* and praises him for his role in the Eleusinian mysteries.

of hope and rebirth. Negative aspects of the archetype are the dislike of changes and especially, the reluctance to grow up. It avoids commitments, cannot and does not like to be responsible as an adult, and tries to evade the powers that can limit them (Kostera, 2012: 189). An individual whose Eternal Child is quite pronounced lives outside the conventional norm of adulthood and remains childlike, not taking on the responsibilities of the adult. Men, then, become beings like another child to care for, whereas for a woman, the Eternal Child archetype can manifest as extreme dependence or in not accepting the aging process.

In terms of Jungian psychology, it is useful to compare the Eternal Child archetype to the fictive figure of Peter Pan, best representing the spirit of perpetual youth. Originally, *Peter Pan* (1904) was a novel written by J.M. Barrie (1860-1937), which is about a magical boy, who can fly and never ages, spending his never-ending childhood adventuring on the small island of Neverland as the leader of his gang the Lost Boys. Peter Pan became a phenomenon, moreover a modern myth, which may be due to his shaping of a yearning for youth that was being developed in society during the Victorian age when a Romantic cult of childhood emerged as we have earlier discussed. Based on this and several decades later, a popular publication was American psychologist Dan Kiley's 1983 best-selling book *The Peter Pan Syndrome: Men Who Have Never Grown Up*, which first identified "the mass exodus away from adult responsibilities" in 20th century by giving it a name. The Peter Pan syndrome³⁹ is a pop-psychology term used to describe certain adults who can not keep up with the adult world; despite their age, they feel emotionally, sexually and socially like children. It

³⁹ Peter Pan Syndrome is not an official psychiatric term. Thus, it will not be found in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, and is not recognized by the American Psychiatric Association as a specific mental disorder. Though, the disease is relatively well known by the psychologists and the general public, finding it a useful concept to describe an increasingly larger number of adults presenting emotionally immature behaviors in Western society.

can affect both men and women, thus it is not gender-specific. These adults refuse or even are unable to grow into maturity and pursue the spirit of being forever young as the famous fictional character Peter Pan. According to Kiley (1983), the characteristics of Peter-Pan-adults include attributes such as rebelliousness, narcissism, excessive care about the way they look, personal well-being and their lack of self-confidence, even though they do not seem to show it and actually come across as exactly the opposite. Frequently, there is a preference for living in a fantasy world in own head, rather than in reality. The dilemma here seems to be struggling to grow up and to balance the conflicting demands on one's roles as in profession, adult, and perpetual child.

Besides, the archetypal Jungian notion of the Eternal Child provides the basis for what is to be known as the *Inner Child*. It is often said, that there is a child in every adult. Even not touchable, the Inner Child is explained as being real – not literally nor physically, but *metaphorically real* in psychological and phenomenological sense, where it lives in the intra-psychic world of the adult person. Further, the Inner Child is the individual's childlike aspect and basically understood as the component of our psyche that contains what an individual learned and experienced as a child (Berry, 2017). Moreover, it implicits that the goal is to become more child-like, and less child-ish. The concept of the Inner Child emerged in psychology, counseling and healing therapy in the 1960s and came quickly into popularity over the next decades until now. Frequently, it is questioned if the Inner Child truly exists. Moreover, if it is credible to consider a child continuing to exist in us as it is often promoted as a new-age catch-phrase attached to varying forms of therapy, workshops and development courses. However, the concept of the Inner Child is in fact not a new ideology but was originally developed as the Divine Child by Jung, growing in popularity in the early 1940s, with the introduction of Eric Berne's Transactional Analysis (as will be discussed in the next

section) and undergoing a widespread reawakening in the late 1970s with American motivational author Louise Hay’s “Heal Your Body” system. The therapeutic concept of the Inner Child is a pop-psychological trend and self-help movement since the 1980s and 1990s, elaborated in books such as *Reclaiming the Inner Child* by Jeremiah Abrams (1990). In particular it is argued that psychologically wounded adults can only be healed when they would rediscover and reintegrate their repressed, lost, or even abused childhood selves. But the general message is that each of us spends most of our time as a false, inauthentic, and dependent self because in becoming adults, according to the Inner Child theory, we somehow lose the ability to act in ways in which our true self – our child-nature being beautiful, unspoiled, and driven by a creative force – intended for us to act (Pareski, 2017). Thus, getting in touch with one’s inner child is considered to be an important step toward psychological well-being. Below in Figure 4.2, we see contemporary representations of the Inner Child.



Figure 4.2 Google Search for Inner Child Imaginations

Certainly, when Jung developed his theory of the child archetype and its important function in the human psyche, he did not have in mind this meanwhile literalized version of an inner child which pop psychology has made into a dogma and icon. But in *Development of Personality*, Jung states: “In every adult there lurks a child. An eternal child, something that is always becoming, is never completed, and calls for

unceasing care, attention, and education. That is the part of the human personality that wants to develop and become whole” (1954: 286). With this in mind, the Child archetype can be defined as an aspect of an individual’s total personality – the aspect that defines a person who used to be before social and cultural norms as well as one’s life experiences moulded one into someone different. Therefore, the Child archetype even can be considered as a sub-self, moreover, an autonomous sub-personality which has its own needs and desires, and represent the child-self we once were. From a postmodern perspective, it can be argued that especially the Inner child as a concept is like an offense to suggest that an individual’s self might be other than a single, unified entity, but eventually fragmented – in perpetual search for another juvenile entity of us *within* us.

Another important archetype is that of the Mother. Jung considered the Mother the most important archetype because it seemed to contain all else. The relationship between mother and child are the most intimate of all interpersonal interactions, which gives us our first identity in the world. Faith in mother is the primary manifestation of religious feeling; it builds the hierarchy of meaning in the childhood and later makes the basis for the entire subsequent life. The Mother archetype can take the form of personal mother, grandmother, stepmother, mother in law, nurse, or nanny. It can be fulfilled in figurative Mothers such as Mary Mother in Christian faith, or the Mother who becomes a maiden again in the myth of Demeter and Kore. The Mother archetype can be also transferred to such abstract state institutions as the church, state (like Turkey, *anadolu* meaning “land of mothers”), authority, or the Earth (Mother Nature) giving them the power. The Mother archetype expresses everything “motherly”, meaning love and warmth, that makes us feel adoration, affection and security. Under

the conditions of the social crisis of family and kinship, the image of mother as a “guardian” is transformed within the framework of the advertising space. The impression of advertisements’ concerns and solutions for our dramatic problems such as to attain pure and beautiful skin, fresh breath, or to get the next real estate “because we’re worth it” creates the impression of a mystical supercaring being, which cares and makes the choice for us – like a mother – turning adults into a passive, eternal child. In this sense, each child is guided by the authority of a mother: she is the first and often the only one who guides and directs the young human. In the consumer society, this sacred role is taken up by advertising. Advertising is the only one to know what is fashionable, prestigious, delicious, or useful for us. The consumers have no right to choose; the choice is imposed on them by advertising that conquers with its motherly care as “she” *understands* us, *wants the best* for us, and is *always there* for us. Consumers need this illusionary surrogate care of advertising: by purchasing things they strive to get their portion of approval, support and praise. But unlike the natural spontaneous warmth and affection of a real mother, advertisements are artificially fabricated. The bodies that put themselves as motherly beings who ensure comfort, protection, prosperity, and security, are now usually – among many others – banks, insurance companies, or household products.

Jung’s approach is important for advertising because it provides a way not only to explore universal archetypes, myths, images, and symbols in general, but to integrate them as building blocks in the process of advertising design for creating marketing phenomena as well. In more recent times, *brand archetypes* which are based on Jungian archetypes have emerged indicating the brand’s driving force or motivation. In *The Hero and the Outlaw: Building Extraordinary Brands Through the Power of Archetypes*, Mark and Pearson (2001) rewrote Jung’s original archetypes to fit in with

marketing principles and described, in this sense, 12 new archetypes: Innocent, Explorer, Sage, Hero, Outlaw, Magician, Regular Guy/Gal, Lover, Jester, Caregiver, Creator, and Ruler. It is especially the archetype of the *Innocent*, which is in our special interest with regard to the present research.

The promise of the Innocent is that life does not need to be hard. It conveys the message that we are free to be ourselves and to live out our dreams right now. Thus, the Innocent is extraordinarily attractive in this hectic, stressful age because it promises that consumers can escape and truly enjoy their life for the moment. Further, its attributes are trust, purity, boundless optimism, and happiness; whereas its values are honesty, goodness, and simplicity. Innocent brands make life in general simple, for example, products are made user-friendly and fun such as smartphones and tablets, or credit cards promise instant gratification through providing instant money. Innocent brands often appear in the form of a child or naïve youth, as well as a saint or mystic; and they symbolize belief in the promise of paradise, and the existence of an idyllic, utopian world. The archetype is also active when there is a longing for a return to childhood, a warm nostalgia for the traditional way of doing things, and back to the nature – all features that are needed to engender infantilizing mechanisms in advertising.

4.1.4. Parent-Child Ego States: Berne's Transactional Analysis

Transactional Analysis, or its abbreviation TA as it is often called, is one of the most accessible theories of contemporary psychology that was developed by psychiatrist Eric Berne during the 1960s. TA is at the same time a personality theory, a communication model, and a study of behaviors. From his training in psychoanalysis, Berne worked on the notion of the ego and began to think in terms of an “adult”, a

“child”, and a “parent” in the personality of an individual. To give a concrete example: Berne once had an adult male patient, who admitted that sometimes he would feel that he is not really a lawyer, but just a little boy (Berne, 1991). From his studies, he concluded that each person has consistent states of ego that they tend to use regularly in similar situations or with similar kind of people. Berne began to theorize that all of us have a little child within, and that sometimes this child moves to centre stage in the way we relate to others. The adult dimension in the personality, then, is put out of commission for a time and the child takes over. According to Berne, within each individual are three selves or “ego states” (Parent–Adult–Child)⁴⁰ as shown in Figure 4.3, which converse with one another in transactions in any given social interaction, and that can easily shift from one to the other.

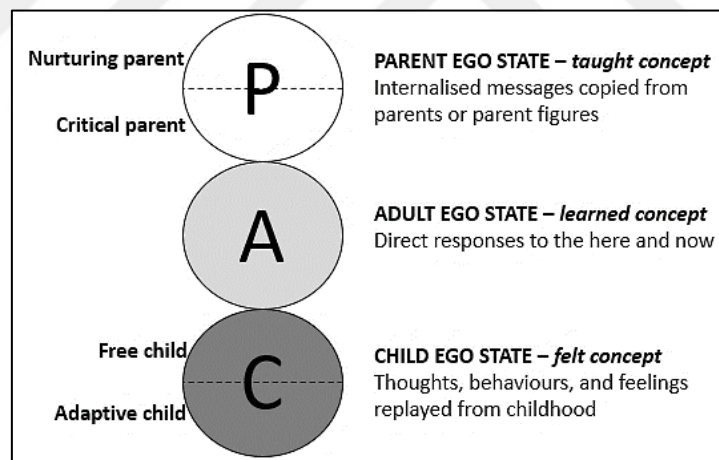


Figure 4.3. Structural Diagram of Transactional Analysis

Berne describes the three selves that seem to correspond to Freud’s superego (Parent), ego (Adult) and id (Child). In fact, Berne’s theory of TA is based on the ideas of Freud, however, it is distinctly different. Freudian psychoanalysts focus on talk

⁴⁰ It is important to note that this theory is not about the relationship between a parent and their child, for example, but about the way in which people of all ages adopt certain behaviors (“ego states”) when interacting with others.

therapy as a way of gaining insight to patients' personalities. Berne believes, instead, that insight could be better discovered by analyzing patients' social transactions. However, the theory, rooted in clinical experience, moved from a structural analysis (ego states) to an interactional analysis (transactions). The distinction from psychoanalysis is that Freud's ego understanding is developed as a theoretical concept; whereas Berne's understanding indicates that the ego state is directly exhibited as well as experienced, and all three ego states are part of the ego.

Each individual starts out with the *Child ego state*. This ego state consists of the child's internal emotional responses to parental actions in early childhood which become the stances and fixations of a child. This ego state contains all of the experiences individuals have had, and sometimes these childlike ways come up. The Child ego state is exhibited in two ways: the *Free Child* ego state (also referred to as the Natural Child) and the *Adapted Child* ego state (which also contains the Rebellious Child ego state). The adapted child is the one that modifies behavior under parental introjects. The free child is a spontaneous expression of a creative kind.

Then, as individuals grow, they develop the *Parent ego state* into which they integrate parental thoughts, instructions and examples of behaviour. This ego state comprises the various parental teachings, injunctions and emotional responses "recorded" early in individuals lives. The Parent ego state can be divided into two functions. One part includes the nurturing side and can be soft, loving, and permission giving. It can also set limits in a healthy way. This is called the *Nurturing Parent* concerned with caring, and helping. The other side is called the *Critical Parent* concerned with criticising, censoring, and punishing. This part contains the prejudged thoughts, feelings or beliefs that an individual learned from its parents.

Finally, the *Adult ego state* (including adult-like rationality, objectivity and acceptance of the truth) becomes functional; this means that individuals have acquired the capability for logical thought and can process reality more objectively. The Adult ego state operates like a computer, a data-processing center; clear, rational thinking, precise and factual, without being emotional judgmental. The Adult ego state mediates between the Parent and Child ego states. By the time a person has grown, all the three ego states operate interchangeably.

Transactional Analysis provides a technique that can be adapted, in particular, to understand brand communication and advertising with reference to infantilization. The communication transaction between the brand and the consumer would be, then, a Parent-Child, a complementary transaction as shown in Figure 4.4. Thus, the brand is engaging the Child ego state in the consumer, moreover, to ensure its domination in contrast to the other two selves. Therefore, brands – even from adult-oriented product categories offering high value items and services as banks, insurance companies and cars – would operate from the Nurturing Parent ego state addressing the Child ego state of the consumer. This leads to a process we can name as *parentification*⁴¹ of advertising, based on characteristics of a parent-child relationship that can be observed in a transferred manner between advertising and adult consumers. Advertising slips into the role of a parent and the adult is treated as a child. While the real parent-child relation is family-generated, the transferred relation is media-generated. In this sense, advertising

⁴¹ The term parentification was first used by Boszormenyi-Nagy and Spark (1973) to describe the problematic family dynamic in which parent and child roles are reversed. Besides, parentification is the term most commonly associated with role corruption in the context of divorce. “Parentification” or “parenting” are purposive activities aimed at ensuring the survival and development of children. Parenting, from its root, is more concerned with the *activity* of developing and educating than *who* does it. On the other hand, the verb “to parent” denotes a process, an activity and an interaction, by grown ups with children, but not necessarily or exclusively their own.

may generate a powerful parent-child dynamic; similarly, it exercises parental authority, responsibility, and supervision over the consumer by embracing him, caring for, supporting, disciplining, and guiding him or her, including making decisions about the consumer's beliefs, thoughts, and preferences. Advertising, then, also has the power to dictate consumers what to eat, what to wear, where to go, etc. – almost a type of behavior that adults are used to know from their parents. Thus, infantilization from the brands' point of view can display a parental character. For this, engaging the Child ego state of the consumer is particularly useful as it helps arrest attention and create interest and involvement – a way of integrating archaic child material into adult. Another way, however, is the child-to-child transaction. Brands may also appeal to the child in adults by moving themselves to the ego state of the Child; advertisements might be, then, naughty and fun-loving, and adopt a playful, spontaneous tone of voice. But what is normally avoided, in this sense, is to speak to the rational adult part of consumers – this would minimize or even hinder the effect of infantilization.

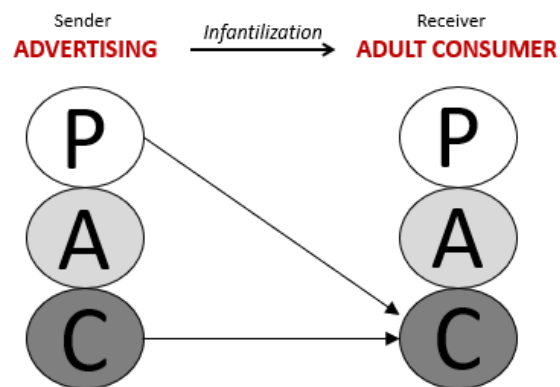


Figure 4.4 Infantilizing Transactional Analysis

4.1.5. Cute at First Sight, Young at Heart: An Evolutionary Psychological Perspective on Infantilization

The infantilization that seems to be such an essential centerpiece of media and marketing today is, actually, grounded in a certain form of human nature that goes beyond historical, sociological, and economic circumstances. The way in which mass culture reaches out to adults may touch upon mechanisms “embedded in the human’s innermost being” (Dorfman, 1987: 177). In this sense, a 20th century idea which is probably important in human evolution is the biological phenomenon of *neoteny*, or the “evolutionary infantilization” (Dawkins, 2004: 74). Evolutionary psychology, in this context, is an emerging paradigm in psychological science (Buss, 2009). It is important as it provides a theory about the functional properties of the human mind, but further, explains what the mechanisms of mind are designed to do. As yet, media and marketing researchers have not displayed a deep interest in the evolutionary causes of consumer behavior in general; however, it is possible to provide a clearer understanding of a consumption phenomenon such as the huge attraction of adults to infantile patterns in advertising and, besides, adults’ childlike consumer behavior caused by infantilization in considering behavioral dispositions from an evolutionary perspective (Buss, 2009; Granot et al., 2014; Oliver, 2016).

4.1.5.1. Cuteness Sells! Why Consumers Are Attracted to the Infantile

In *How Customers Think: Essential Insights into the Mind of the Market* (2003), Gerald Zaltman, emeritus professor at Harvard Business School, suggests that there is a “95-5 split” in our minds. He argues that only 5% of our cognition is found in high order consciousness and 95% is in our unconscious, below the level of our awareness.

Concerning this, unconscious memories are of great importance in shaping our conscious experience. These unconscious aspects of our psyches play a major role, but are unrecognized by us, especially in our purchasing decisions. In this sense, Zaltman underlines that in most of the cases both consumers and creative staffs like advertisers unconsciously use, in particular, the criteria related to neoteny that works on people's fascination with infants, baby animals and childlike characteristics in general (2003: 54). However, consciously they are not aware of the power of neoteny. So, what is neoteny, and how does it appear and function in the process of infantilization in advertising?

The term of *neoteny* is derived from Greek *neos* (“new”, in the sense of “juvenile”) and *teinein* (“extend”), meaning “holding youth” or “remaining young”. Being a case of paedomorphosis⁴², neoteny is a concept in developmental biology and evolutionary thought that refers to the “retention of into adult life of those human traits associated with childhood” (Montagu, 1989: 1). Besides the conspicuously youthful traits that are carried into adulthood that actually are only seen in the young, neoteny “includes the slowing down of the rate of development and the extension of the phases of development from birth to old age” (ibid.). Neoteny was first coined in 1885 by Julius Kollman, a professor of zoology at the University of Basel, to describe the sexual maturation of an animal while it is still in a mainly larval state. Kollmann cited the axolotl, the aquatic larval stage of the Mexican salamander as a representative form which became the most widely known case of neoteny (ibid.: 207). The interesting point is that as axolotls grow bigger, they never mature. This means that such creatures can reach maturity without going through metamorphosis. As biologist Randal Voss states,

⁴² Pedomorphosis is the appearance of ancestral juvenile traits in adult descendants.

“the one thing that neotenic species have as an advantage is that if you don’t undergo this metamorphosis, you’re more likely to reproduce sooner. You’re already one step ahead” (cited in Simon, 2014). In line with this biological fact, more and more brands similarly design their products, brand characters, mascots, etc. with neotenic traits (e.g., young-looking, cute, naive, playful, and curious) in order to have the same advantage in the market – being already one step ahead! We will later see how the axolotl looks like but, most importantly, how features of its appearance even are used as a prototype to create one of the most famous brand mascots in Turkish advertising ever (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2).

From the evolutionary perspective, neotenic traits are generally attractive due to their association with youth. Accordingly, humans (and also animals) have a special ability to recognize youth, having certain features to make them noticed and appreciated. The physical evidence of neoteny was described by the Austrian ethologist Konrad Lorenz in 1943 with the *Kindchenschema* (“Child Schema”) as a set of certain infantile physical and behavioral features commonly found both in human children and baby animals (e.g. relatively large head, predominance of the brain capsule, round face, big and low-lying eyes, chubby cheeks, small nose and mouth, short and thick extremities, plump and hairless body shape, a springy elastic consistency, and clumsy movements). These representative neotenic traits in humans are perceived as “cute”, having a pleasant and attractive appeal, and trigger in people an instinctive feeling of tenderness and affection which are accompanied by a behavioral juvenilization including playful friendliness and infantile speech (Dale et al., 2016).

More popular is the expression “babyfaceness”, a configuration of facial qualities that differentiates babies from adults. Research on facial attractiveness has shown that the presence of childlike facial features, especially in adulthood, increases

attractiveness. According to Gould (1977), adult humans may also display a high level of neoteny. As shown below in Figure 4.5, we see on the left an image of English supermodel Kate Moss, and on the right an example of a photographed 4-year-old girl. The face of Kate Moss clearly shows characteristic features of a babyface, but at the same time it also includes mature female features like high, prominent cheek bones and concave cheeks which are accentuated by using make-up. As a result, the presence of childlike traits in an adult woman and her mature features simultaneously make faces very attractive, look younger and in some way cute. Neotenous features elicit behavioral as well as physiological reactions, including positive aesthetic judgments with the consequence that cuter appearance is perceived as more favorable, healthy, and sociable which engender more parental nurturing behavior and stronger motivation for caretaking but, in general, more interest in the person (Gould, 1977; Dale et al. 2006).



Figure 4.5. Kindchenschema: Supermodel Kate Moss and a Little Girl
Source: <http://beautycheck.de/cmsms/index.php/kindchenschema>

Given the scientific respectability of works on neoteny, the concept which is better known as *cuteness* – as neotenous patterns are recognized as being “cute” – has been popularized in Western society and adopted into many other areas (Bogin, 2001: 161). Actually, it has even evolved to a “popular culture of cuteness”, called *kawaii* (Japanese for “cute”) with its Japanese roots and Asian-Pacific origins that later moved into American and Western mainstream consumer audiences. While the original

understanding of cute is associated with childlike innocence, naturalness and naivety unaffected by adult restraints, ironically, *kawaii cute* is “consumer-oriented, contrived, cultivated, artificial, bought and sold” (Granot et al., 2014: 71). It has its own artistic and cultural style emphasizing the positive qualities of anything nice, sweet, and babylike by using bright colours and characters with a childlike appearance which is preferred over the mature appearing ones – and this from fashion or construction objects to makeup and even people’s behavior.

Such cuteness describes a type of charming and attractiveness commonly associated with youthfulness which, meanwhile, has evolved to a major marketing tool as, apparently, “*cute sells!*”. Things are perceived as “cute at first sight” – in some way comparable with the complete opposite marketing motto “*sex sells!*”. However, neotenous characteristics are not always immediately recognizable like sex appeal in terms of features exaggerated and emphasized by advertising stimuli. Nevertheless, neoteny and the presentation of juvenile features play a vital role both in marketing and in product design. It has developed to one of the most powerful and culturally pervasive aesthetics that can be increasingly found in brand attributes whose rapid proliferation has been striking as the affective responses it provokes find particular purchase in contemporary times in a world of harsh realities (Dale et al., 2016).

In this sense, people are especially attuned to helpless, childlike features in the external environment, and this behavior endures even when the childlike features have no actual relationship to a human child or baby animal. Thus, the power of a neotenous consumer product is best illustrated by the example of the teddy bear, heavily represented in gift shops and bedrooms across global societies. Due to buyer preferences, the evolution of the teddy bear has progressed from originally a realistic and more adult bear-like appearance (e.g., low forehead and big snout) to the current

teddy bear design with more child-like features (e.g., high forehead, round and friendlier face). Another outstanding example is the evolution of Disney's Mickey Mouse that similarly underwent progressive juvenilization. It is obvious that over time the image of the mouse has been increasingly neotenized; it had been drawn more and more to resemble an infant with a bigger head, bigger eyes, thicker and shorter nose. These examples, as shown in Figure 4.6, illustrate how design can change to reflect the human propensity toward cuteness and, with this, to increase popularity and saleability of products and characters by making them appear more neotenous which, indeed, is a *methodical* infantilization which attracts not only children, but especially adults.



Figure 4.6. Infantilization of Teddy Bear and Mickey Mouse: An Evolution

Today, the advertising industry makes use of neotenous patterns to sell all sorts of products. In order to make their advertisements more appealing to the target market, companies create advertisements with cute appearing animated animals, babies and baby-like creatures, mascots, and other fictional characters. Through different design techniques that generate an infantilizing effect, cuteness can be attributed into products through the clever use of color, texture, motion, sound, shape, size, and proportion. This can be realized, for example, through visual forms predominantly with large-eyed

characters, bright colors and pastels, and biomorphic shapes. With cuteness, a personality and a subjective presence can be given to otherwise meaningless and often literally useless consumer goods, and in this way they are made much more attractive to consumers (Granot et al., 2014: 82). Further, product designers can create, for example, inanimate objects performing in advertisements – everything from tea pots to cars that appear neotenous as they are shaped like a human child – to be more appealing and make the promoted product more interesting (Bogin, 1999).

In advertising, the concept of neoteny most often deals with anthropomorphic design. Anthropomorphism is the ascription of human-like physical features and a human-like mind to non-human beings. In this context, neoteny can be considered as a useful feature for anthropomorphic brand characters with the tendency for some to “get younger, more cherubic, more cuddly, more childlike, more and more cute with the passing years” (Brown, 2010: 219). Since the 1960s, the saleability of products with popular anthropomorphic characters of Disney, in particular, left a deep impression on children’s marketers, who began to use animated characters as brand-image devices in children’s advertising (Kline, 1995:136). However, it can be observed today that the same tactic is increasingly used in adult-oriented advertisements. The promotion of products occurs frequently with neotenous brand characters and environments which might be explained with the fact that adult consumers will develop affective responses and positive attitudes toward childlike anthropomorphic characteristics.

Besides, products themselves can also be designed with childlike features to enhance their appeal. This kind of design can be observed, meanwhile, in adult-oriented products as, for example, automobiles that have cute features most evident in brands such as Smart, the new Volkswagen Beetle or Mini Cooper. These cars are not only small, which enhances their cuteness, but appear to have babyish facial features with a

large windshield forehead, big headlamp eyes, a hood design that serves as a smiling face or a cute mustache. Such baby-faced traits in cars, which are characteristics of the innocent, can signal in a psychoanalytic sense that there is no threat, in the same way, like it tells consumers they can develop a playful relationship with the product (Woodside, 2010: 56). As seen in Figure 4.7, these cars appear like toy cars for children. In general, brands increasingly embrace cuteness as a design aesthetic, and advertisers borrow cuteness to lend its status to brand images. To be continuously exposed to such neotenous patterns, adults preferences and tastes may begin to change. Not seriousness and adult-likeness, but cuteness and child-likeness might become the desired focus point as adults are unconsciously attracted to infantile features. The infantilization of the adult consumer, then, may occur with the help of neoteny as an infantilizing factor.



Figure 4.7 Like Toy Cars: Smart, Volkswagen New Beetle and Mini Cooper

4.1.5.2. *Childlike Consumer Behavior and Psychological Neoteny*

According to some eminent scholars (Gould, 1977; Montagu, 1989; Charlton, 2006), the principle of neoteny has affected first human's physical evolution and development, but later, perhaps the most fascinating part, the evolution of human's behavior that increasingly is encouraged to remain immature! British medical doctor and evolutionary psychiatrist Bruce Charlton (2006: 679) speaks about a *psychological neoteny* which he evaluates as *positive* by suggesting that a personality type characterized by prolonged youthfulness is advantageous both in science and modern

life in general, most notably in a dynamic and rapidly changing world. This characterizes the evolution of psychological neoteny, in which ever-more people retain for ever-longer the characteristic behaviors and attitudes of earlier developmental stages. Charlton (2006) argues that unlike previous, traditional and more settled societies that could afford to honor a narrow and well-defined mature worldview, life in 21st century is tumultuous where social roles have become less fixed. Individuals are expected to adapt to change throughout their lives, both in their personal relationships and in their careers. In this sense, such kind of *psychological immaturity* in form of a child-like flexibility of attitudes, behaviors and knowledge – as we have earlier discussed under “positive infantilism” in Section 3.6.2. – seems to be helpful and even necessary in making the best out of repeatedly or enforced job changes, the need for learning new skills or geographic mobility, and the requirement to make new social networks (Charlton, 2006: 679).

Neoteny, in psychological terms, puts a premium on learning and flexible adaptation to the environment, rather than reliance on instincts for survival, as it elevates the importance of several psychological traits of children that enable such flexibility (e.g. playfulness, curiosity, humor, openness, creativity, intrinsic motivation to learn, and wonder) – traits that need to be retained into adulthood (Gould 1977; Montagu 1989). It becomes obvious that this adaptation is achieved by the expedient of postponing cognitive maturation. Charlton considers this phenomenon as a psychological response to cultural pressures including, “prolonged average duration of formal education, since students’ minds are in a significant sense ‘unfinished’” (2006: 679). Further, he argues that “since modern cultures favour cognitive flexibility, ‘immature’ people tend to thrive and succeed, and have set the tone of contemporary life: the greatest praise of an elderly person is to state that they retain the characteristics

of youth” (ibid.). Simultaneously, Charlton underlines that the faults of youth are retained with well as its virtues like “short attention span, sensation- and novelty-seeking, short cycles of arbitrary fashion and a sense of cultural shallowness” (ibid.), just to name a few. Further, research has shown that the pre-frontal cortex – the part of the brain controlling adult-like reason and planning – is active in adolescents, but it is trumped by the hormone dopamine which triggers feelings of happiness when taking risks (Chevel, 2015). Therefore, putting off mature interests and responsibilities such as marriage, a career or parenthood, encourages the brain to stay in a state of adolescence (ibid.). Such adults remain in the intellectual and emotional world of the child in order to avoid dealing with real-life problems and dilemmas. It can take many forms – narcissism, magical thinking, or belief in invisible friends or enemies (Swift, 2007).

It is important, at this point, not to misunderstand the meaning of neoteny which means not that humans remain arrested at an infantile stage, but that they continue to develop the generalized traits that are seen in children, rather than become restricted by adult specializations that constrain other primates (Montagu, 1989: 237). British-American social anthropologist Ashley Montagu clarifies, in this sense, that the meaning of neoteny should not be confused with pure childishness or, worse, infantilism in its clinical sense which indicates to remain arrested at childhood stages of development (1989: 240), but “to *retain* the developmental directiveness of the traits of the child (ibid.: 94). Moreover, he states that humans are “designed to fulfill the bountiful promise of the child; to grow and develop as children, rather than into the kind of adults [they] have been taught to believe [they] ought to become” (ibid.). The consideration seems to be that a thoughtful application of infantilization might be

fruitful, even enriching and, from an evolutionary point of view, species-appropriate concerning humans. Because according to Montagu, humans are prepared by evolution, if conditions are conducive for learning and growth, to “grow young” (1989: 5), or to utilize childlike qualities as they mature. Thus, Montagu believes that the great potential benefits of an applied understanding of neoteny are not fully recognized:

The truth about the human species is that in body, spirit, feeling, and conduct we are designed to grow and develop in ways that emphasize rather than minimize childlike traits. We are intended to remain in many ways childlike; we were never intended to grow “up” into the kind of adults most of us have become. [...] The role neoteny is designed to play in our social development is of fundamental significance. The marked retention of juvenile physical traits is one of the major characteristics that differentiates human beings from other animals. When this process is carried over from physical traits to behavioral patterns, human beings can revolutionize their lives and become for the first time, perhaps, the kinds of creatures their heritage has prepared them to be – youthful all the days of their lives. (Montagu, 1989, p.2)

Such an understanding would encourage the celebration and nurturance of childlike traits in adults, leading to significant adjustments in, for example, parenting and teaching philosophies; it would also redefine society as a support system designed to extend the neotenous traits of humankind, most notably through the help of media and especially advertising. In *The Mismeasure of Man* (1977), American evolutionary biologist and paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould concurs with this view and makes his interpretation of the positive features of neoteny in a very impressive way:

If humans evolved, as I believe, by neoteny then we are, in a more than metaphorical sense, permanent children. [...] Many central features of our anatomy link us with fetal and juvenile stages of primates. [...] In other

mammals, exploration, play, and flexibility of behavior are qualities of juveniles, only rarely of adults. We retain not only the anatomical stamp of childhood, but its mental flexibility. [...] Humans are learning animals. (Gould, 1981, pp. 333-334)

The exciting question arises: Could it be really true that humans are actually *permanent children*? Some eminent personalities believed it. Already Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), one of the Founding Fathers of the United States, was certain that “our whole life is but a greater and longer childhood”, and Sigmund Freud as well was of the opinion that “in our innermost soul we are children and remain so for the rest of our lives” (all quotes cited in Montagu, 1989) – as it would be an appeal to authorities in societies making them allow to continue the childhood stage the long as it really should. The consideration of *reconfiguring* and even *reinventing* adulthood in terms of reshaping childhood was earlier discussed in this thesis; and perhaps, in this context, it is true that the idea that “adults and children are in some way fundamentally different [...] was always just a convenient fiction, a quick and easy way of avoiding confusion” (Lee, 2001: 9). In *The Disappearance of Childhood*, Postman maintains that differences between adults and children are disappearing, but even more important is his consideration, which would support the debate of psychological neoteny, that a new kind of adult emerges – the so-called *kidult* – as he states that “the adult-child may be defined as a grown-up whose intellectual and emotional capacities are unrealized and, in particular, not significantly different from those associated with children” (1982: 99).

In *Consumer Neoteny: An Evolutionary Perspective on Childlike Behavior in Consumer Society*, Oliver (2016) questions to what extent the infantilist ethos is tied to evolutionary processes. He identifies four dimensions of consumer behavior – stimulus

seeking (or the need for arousal), reality conflict, escapism, and control of aggression – that are partly explained by neoteny and which represent childlike consumer behavior. One possible consequence of the preference for neotenous features due to great presence of neotenous subjects in media, in this sense, might be consumers' willingness to transform into more neotenous species by accepting and imitating the prevalent aesthetic standards (e.g., neotenous physical traits) and to adopt childlike behavior. Nowadays, this especially shows itself in the quest for rejuvenescence through, for example, the consumption of clothes, cosmetics, Botox and plastic surgery, but also in the rise of representations of cuteness in popular culture and various infantile consumption forms.

To conclude the discussion, we see that these approaches make clear that we have to consider the fact that the child *within* the adult, to whom brands try to reach, is not just symbolic but indicates apparently the adult's "true" self, essentially is expected to be really him or her that is capable of unfolding, as the potential of being permanent child exists in adults according to the evolutionary psychological view. In this sense, media and business companies – whether they know it or not, or if its just intuitively in order to keep up with the new emerging postmodern zeitgeist –, they begin to structure consumers' desire to make adults believe that they are independent grown-ups being totally free in their choices, while they attempt to touch adults' child-core by appealing to adults' unconscious, who then want to fulfill a deep-lying transgressive desire to continue remaining child, or strive for becoming-child, while playing on adult.

4.2. SEMIOTICS OF INFANTILIZATION: READING SIGNS OF CHILDHOOD IN ADVERTISING

If we want to gain a better understanding of infantilization in connection with advertising and the role it plays in our society, we need to ask how advertising organizes and constructs reality, how ideology and meanings are produced within the advertising discourse and why some images are the way they are, and how they could have been constructed with which intention. In order to approach these questions we need to consider a framework for analysis established by *semiotics* (Turkish: *göstergebilim*). In this light, semiotics is special as it is both the theory and analysis of signs and signifying practices at the same time. For the purpose of the current research, the following subsections will explain the importance of semiotics by briefly illustrating its history, the emerging key figures in formation and development of the field, as well as basic terms and concepts, which are crucial in developing an understanding of the semiotic of infantilization in advertising context.

4.2.1. Semiotics: What it Means and Why it Matters

The word “semiotics” can be quite distant to many of us, although it is actually ubiquitous in our everyday lives. A *sign*, which is the basic unit of semiotics, can be simply anything that stands for something else, which can take the form of a spoken or written word, images, sounds, smells, or a material object unified in the mind with a particular cultural concept (Chandler, 2017). With this regard, we live in a world of signs, and of signs about signs. And we seem to be a species to be driven by a desire to make meanings. As meaning-makers, everyone of us can actually be considered as a semiotician, because we are constantly unconsciously creating and interpreting the meaning of signs around us – from traffic lights to the design of products. What we

think and do automatically is frequently influenced and regulated by messages and conventions which is dependent upon our cultural knowledge and ability to interpret them instinctively and instantly. For example, when we see the different colors of a traffic light, we automatically know how to react to them. We stop when we see red without even thinking about it but, in fact, this is a sign which has been established by cultural convention over a long period of time that we learn as children.

A growing awareness of this situation in the last decades of the 20th century brought a monumental change in perspective on the very nature of reality. It forced us to recognize the possibility that reality inheres not in things themselves, but in the relationships we perceive between things; not in items but in structures. In exploring to deepen these ideas, many theorists whose works gave rise to a revolution in critical theory turned to the methods of analysis termed “structuralism” and “semiotics”. The basic idea of structuralism – an intellectual approach and movement that was quite influential in the humanities in the 1960s and 1970s – is that individual social or cultural phenomena have common structures in form of sign-systems, which have to be considered more than their mere surface appearance, as these basically operate according to the rules of a deeper structure or hidden level (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 2007: 329). Emerging from structuralist traditions, semiotics is originally an approach that has adopted concepts and tools of analysis from structural linguistics. But semiotics has cast its net wider, and can be applied to any system of signs that has meaning within a culture whether it is verbal, visual, auditory or a complex mixture of various components. Thus speech, myth, folktales, novels, paintings, cinema, comics, news items and advertisements, just to name a few, can all be analyzed semiotically as systems of signification similar to languages.

With this regard, semiotics is basically the field concerned with the investigation of signs and sign systems seeking to shed light on how meaning is created, communicated, and understood within cultural and social domains. Indeed, semiotics is a way of seeing the world, and vital to understand the hyper-capitalist culture we are currently living in which has a massive impact on all of us we consciously are not really aware of. Semiotics, in this sense, is an important tool that can help us to uncover and thus realize the underlying messages that are fed to us on a daily basis through all of the different forms of media available today. With semiotics, we can decipher marketing and advertising strategies that are designed to keep people purchasing and consuming products throughout their lives. Semiotic analysis of advertising, then, answers questions on meaning that can be developed to understand the deeper structures within brand communication. Semiotics, in this sense, is concerned with *how* signs mean, in other words, *how* meanings are made – being concerned not only with communication but also with the construction and maintenance of reality – and *how* signification changes in different contexts in order to uncover the internal relationships which give advertisements their form and function. Thus, we need to understand the context but also the conditions in which a sign is communicated in order to comprehend its real meaning.

4.2.2. Science of Signs: Origins and Features of Semiotics

Although semiotics is regarded as a relatively new discipline, it has a long history dating back more than two thousand years. The term itself originates from the Greek word *semeion*, meaning “sign”, and its core notions and concepts are rooted in the time of antiquity. Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.), the “father of Western medicine”, has established semiotics as a branch of medicine; he was interested in signs and their

relation to medical symptoms as vital to the diagnoses of diseases. The study of signs, in non-medical terms, became the target of philosophers around the time of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) and the Stoic philosophers who viewed the idea of sign in a wider context and explored how signs produce and communicate meanings. Dealing with signs, especially elaborating on their character and functions, was a field of profound interest for scholars also during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It was Saint Augustine (354-430), Roman philosopher and religious thinker, who made the next major step concerning the development of semiotics; he was among the first to distinguish clearly between natural (e.g., animal signals) and conventional (human-made) signs, and to support the view that there is an inbuilt interpretive component to the whole process of representation. Later, John Locke (1632-1704), the English philosopher who set out the principles of empiricism, considered signs as necessary to communicate our thoughts to one another, as well as to record them for our own use, and proposed importing semiotics into philosophy.

Nevertheless, while various theories of signs have been appearing throughout the history since ancient times, it was not until the end of 19th and the beginning of the 20th century that semiotics in its contemporary form was developed in detail by two intellectuals who were working simultaneously but independently without knowing each other on different sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Introduced as *semiotics* by Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914), an American philosopher at Harvard University in North America, and as *semiology* in Europe by Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913), professor at the University of Geneva, today both terms are often used synonymous and interchangeably to refer basically to the same discipline – the study of signs. However, it appears that “semiotics” has become the more commonly preferred term, probably due to the strong influence of Peirce on modern-day theory

and practice. Thus, in order to avoid confusion and preserve consistency, this thesis applies the term semiotics throughout its entire content. Further, there are certain basic differences in the way both Peirce and Saussure perceived, defined and classified the sign as will be reviewed in the following.

4.2.2.1. Saussure's Dyadic Sign: Signifier and Signified

In the late 19th and early 20th century, Swiss academic Ferdinand de Saussure gave an influential series of lectures on linguistics in which he proposed *la sémiologie* ("semiology") as a model for the investigation of language and language systems. Saussure's work was unusual and revolutionary in several respects, because he did not refer to the dominant approach advocated by linguists at the time and thus was not concerned with uncovering the etymology and philology of language. He was interested with the ways in which language was used in the here and now. Saussure introduced several concepts, which played a crucial role in emergence and development of semiological analysis in its contemporary sense. As a linguist, Saussure was concerned with the structural features of language; he described language as a system of signs, pointing out that a word *is* a sign, to which we respond in a predictable way. He explored what the relation might be between a word and the thing it stands for. His view of such relations forms one of the founding pillars of the study of signs. Saussure's findings became widely available after his death in 1912, when his students collected his lecture notes and published them as *Course in General Linguistics* in 1915.

A sign has no separate meaning, and only delivers "value" in relation to other signs in related sets. In this sense, paradigm and syntagm are a pair of concepts defined by Saussure regarding the relationships of signs. *Paradigmatic* relations involve selection – signs can replace each other, usually changing the meaning through

substitution, as they belong to the same associative set by virtue of the function in an overarching category they share, which can occur in the same context but not at the same time. For instance, a Rolex watch evokes connotations of wealth and status, but further, images such as a luxury car, a yacht, an expensive suit, or diamond necklace can be associated also all together because they are part of the same paradigm. *Syntagmatic* relationships are about positioning – they provide possibilities of combination, involving a sequence of signs like a chain that together create an overall meaning in an organized way. For instance, a print ad is a syntagm of visual signifiers; it can exist as combinations of different shapes, forms, and colors that are organized in different physical positions to produce some form of meaningful or aesthetic whole.

The most crucial contribution of Saussure was his notion about duality encompassed within a sign. In Saussure's terms, every sign consists of two complementary parts, a form which signifies – the *signifier* – and a meaning – the *signified*. Saussure proposed that a sign is like a coin having both sides united which are inseparable. The *signifier* refers to the explicit, physical form that a sign takes; it is perceptible and material, an acoustic or visual signal of the word, the “sound-image” of the sign that triggers a mental concept, the *signified*, which is the implicit side of the sign – both together forming the linguistic sign as a two-sided psychological entity. Saussure's model displays that a sign is functioning through the interaction of signifier and signified, while the relation between these two elements is not natural but *arbitrary* and based on convention – there is no direct logic of the meaning in relations of signifier and signified. For instance, perceiving the sound or written marks of “c-h-i-l-d” (“child” as a word) signals the object “child” (connection to the mental idea or image of a young human being) as shown in Figure 4.8. However, “child” as an English word has nothing to do with the actual phenomenon it describes – it does not sound like the voice of a

child, and neither does it look like it. What is more, words for child in different languages demonstrate that the signifier for this phenomenon can easily be something entirely different as any word can be used to signify anything: the Turkish word “çocuk” or the French word “enfant”, do not have anything in common.

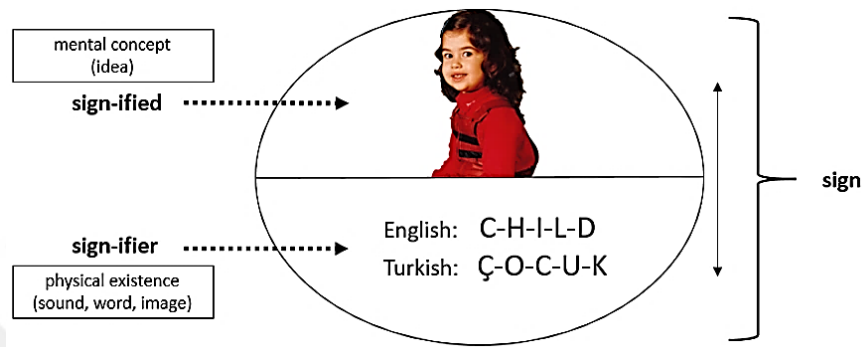


Figure 4.8. Saussure's Dyadic Sign

The meaning of signs can change over time. Thus, Saussure made the distinction between two ways how signs can be studied: *synchronically* (static), at a given point in time which is normally the present, and *diachronically* (evolutionary), as signs develop or evolve in form of meaning over time (Danesi, 2004: 9). For instance, what childhood *signifies* has varied and changed over time – this is the diachronic approach. What childhood and certain signs of it means to us *now* between cultural contexts at the same time is a synchronic approach. Nevertheless, Saussure basically dealt with words as *linguistic signs*, but envisioned a science of signs in general, modeled after the study of linguistic in broader terms. Hence, language is merely one kind of sign system that can be studied by semiology. There are numerous sign systems in our world, from the clothes we wear to the food we eat. Everything in society is a sign in this sense and thus belongs to a system which, Saussure argues, can be studied like the system of language. Semiology, in this sense, was viewed by Saussure as a key to unlocking a variety of cultural phenomena all of which are various sign systems.

4.2.2.2. Peirce's Triadic Sign and Typologies

At roughly the same time that Saussure was developing his theory of semiology, Charles S. Peirce was working independently on a similar project. Peirce was investigating and developing his own theoretical model of signs systems that he called *semiotics*. Peirce's semiotics was not confined to linguistic theory in the same way as Saussure's; it was more integrated into his philosophical interests, and it is this broader application of a theory of meaning systems that distinguishes his work. Thus, in contrast to Saussure's model, Peirce was convinced that there were different types of signs, and that the relation between a sign and its object was not necessarily arbitrary. Peirce formulated the *triadic* or three-part model which defines the sign as consisting of three elements that form a semiotic triangle as shown in Figure 4.9: the *representamen* (the form which the sign takes, similar to Saussure's signifier), the *interpretant* (not an interpreter but the sense made of the sign; Saussure's signified), and the *object* (to which the sign refers that is "hidden"; and not featured directly in Saussure's model).

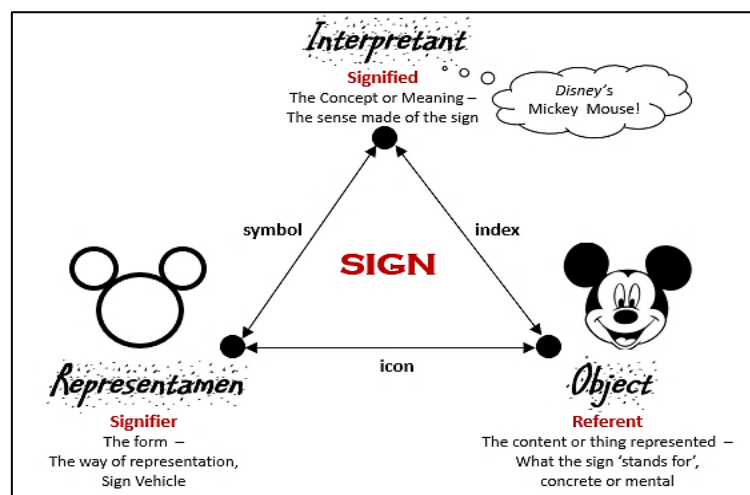


Figure 4.9 Peirce's Triadic Sign

For instance, above we can see three circles in a specific combination as the sign vehicle (the *representamen*), which – without doubt – can be linked to the head of

Mickey Mouse (the *object*) – even if it is not directly represented, somehow hidden, as we only imply to have perceived Disney’s iconic Mouse which is our interpretation (the *interpretant*). But exactly this makes the sense of the representamen and the object by connecting the two, thereby completing the triangle and turning the three circles into a “sign” for Mickey Mouse – a sign that further stands for the whole concept of Disney culture. In fact, without the interpretant, we might still have a signal (three circles), but without someone to interpret that signal it does not become a meaningful entity, or sign.

Peirce further argued that a sign as a triadic unity of object, representamen, and interpretant can be categorized into three main types: icon, index, and symbol. The *icon* is a sign in which the representation resembles or imitates the object strongly enough to be recognizable as the “real thing”. For instance, this is the case for drawings, photographs, or a video recording. The important link in the triangle is between the object and its meaning, but the referent is less relevant. When we see a news picture of an explosion like that of 9/11, our attention goes to the object, on the assumption that we are indeed seeing the real event “as it is”. The fact that we are looking at an artificially created and edited representation is probably not our main concern – unless, of course, we are critically analyzing how the image was constructed. For Peirce, the icon was the most effective of all forms of sign system.

The second kind of sign is the *index*, which possesses a direct causal physical link between the sign and the thing it represents, providing evidence or traces that the thing represented was there. Here, the representamen is the consequence of the object, and the meaning is not crucial to the relationship. Thus, the link between the representamen and its object may only be inferred. Smoke, for example, is an indexical sign of fire. However, something is burning regardless of whether anyone is there to interpret the smoke. An index alludes to such natural occurrences, or also

animal or human footprints in the natural environment indicating the prior presence of a living creature.

Finally, there is the type of sign that Saussure was writing about: the kind that does not have a strong relation to its object. Peirce refers to such signs as *symbols*. The symbol counts as a sign because of its use as it has come to have a certain familiar meaning over time. The relation that matters is the one between the representamen and its meaning, as is the case with words, company logos, national flags, or hand gestures. However, the link to the object is purely a social convention and must be learned. A symbolic sign is, therefore, arbitrarily linked to what it represents; it neither looks like the thing represented nor possesses a physical link to the thing represented. It is a sign that stands in the place of the thing represented.

Below in Figure 4.10, the typology of signs is summarized by also illustrating the example of the sign of “man”: on the left we have a photograph of a man, who coincidentally represents the supervisor of this thesis (icon); in the centre we see a mustache and shoes indicating to features of a man (index); and on the right, the diagonal arrow coming from the circle pointing out the top-right is a gender sign symbolizing the male sex, that can only be understood if we know this cultural code.

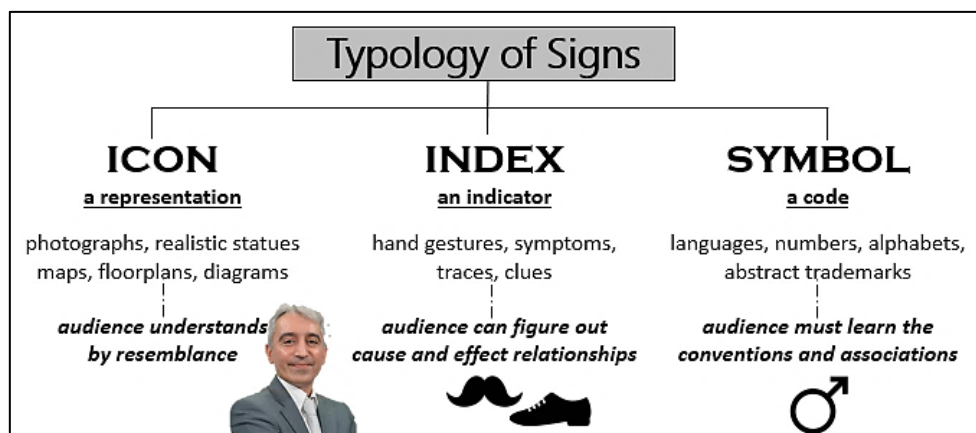


Figure 4.10 Peirce’s Typology of Signs

4.2.2.3. *Barthes' Mythical Sign and Orders of Signification*

Saussure developed the principles of semiology applied to language by introducing the concept of the linguistic sign with his two part dyadic model, consisting of a signifier (vehicle for the meaning) and the signified (the meaning being conveyed), whereas Peirce developed his own theoretical model with its main principles by proposing the three-dimensional or triadic sign system (object, referent and interpretant) and, in this regard, the three typologies or taxonomies of signs (icon, index and symbol). Nevertheless, most explanations of and operating guidelines for semiotic analysis of texts including advertisements begin with the various works of French literary theorist, cultural critic and semiotician Roland Barthes (1915-80) who based and developed his theories on previous research, especially that of Saussure's, and extended these ideas to messages to word and image relations of all sorts. Barthes was particularly interested in reading and interpreting daily life and popular culture by means of semiotics by analyzing and decoding signs within a variety of areas (e.g., photography, advertising, fashion, food etc.). In this regard, his landmark study *Mythologies* (1957) is perhaps one of the most important books on contemporary semiotics which consists of a series of short essays on various examples of daily life and popular culture, originally published in magazines, and an outline of his developed concepts and methods of semiology in the section named as "Myth Today". In particular, one of Barthes's major contributions is the notion of the two *orders of signification*: denotation and connotation.

Denotation presents the first order of signification, in which there is a sign, comprised of a signifier and signified, based on Saussurian theory. Denotation refers to the dictionary or literal meaning of a sign, which is obvious, objectively present and easily recognized or identified and, thus, has a representational character. *Connotation*

is the second order of signification, which utilizes the first-order sign (denotative) as signifier and adding to it another signified. Connotation refers to figurative or associative meanings which lie beyond denotation but are dependent on it. It comprises historical, emotional and symbolic values that form cultural meanings activated by the means of conventions or codes and must be, therefore, inferred. Any sign in society has its denotative meaning (what we *explicitly* see), while the connotative one (what we *implicitly* think) depends on context, situation and relationship. Thus, signifiers can have multiple signifieds. For instance, red color at *denotative level* is a color distinguished from any other color. But at a *connotative level* it can stand for danger, stop, revolution, blood, love, or erotic passion. The key idea of Barthes's approach is the layering of meaning in a sign on the mentioned two levels as shown in Figure 4.11. In denotative terms, we see the word "HEART" as a signifier and an iconic representation of the organ referring to the heart. But the connotation refers more than to the heart's real function as a muscle; it refers to the idea of the heart, what the heart represents in our mind – its typical red symbolic, infantile representation which stands for love, that further is connoted with feelings, romance, passion, and Valentine's Day.

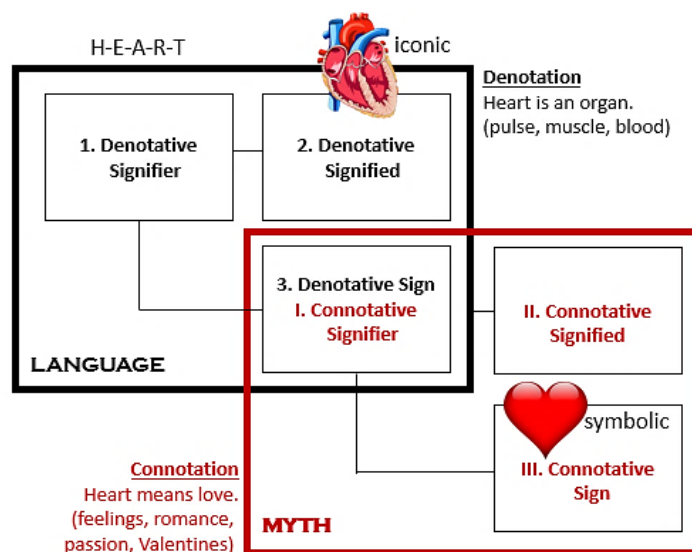


Figure 4.11 Barthes's Mythical Sign and Orders of Signification

Another example would be an image which may denote a “child” in such a context that generates the connotation of “innocence” and “naivety”, what Barthes would call a myth of childhood which functions ideologically to justify dominant assumptions about the status of children in society (Fiske, 1990: 89). As connotation works on the subjective level, we are frequently not made consciously aware of it (Fiske, 1990: 87). In this sense, Barthes argues that some connotations are so widely held that they reach the level of *myth*. However, Barthes interprets “myth” not in the conventional sense. Barthesian myths have nothing to do with classical fables, stories or legends about mythological gods and heroes, or ideas that are seen as falsehoods. For French anthropologist and structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss, myths are mediating between nature and culture. But for Barthes, myths are the dominant ideologies of our time. Barthes argues that the combination of the two orders of signification – denotation and connotation – creates *myth* implying various cultural concepts, which reflect and contribute to a specific perspective on and perception of the world, in other words, producing ideology.

Barthes famously offered an analysis of the layers of meaning of a 1955 *Paris Match* cover in which a young black soldier is seen to salute the French flag. At the level of first-order language, this picture is a signifier (physical image of the boy) which denotes an event (a soldier saluting a flag). But at the second-order, it signifies something else: the idea of France as a great multi-ethnic empire and patriotism, the combination of Frenchness and militariness. However, the deeper, mythological meaning of the entire sign is the reinforcement of French imperialism, by implying that French non-white citizens are satisfied in the Empire in question (Barthes, 1977: 58-59). Barthes’s vital contribution, with this regard, is that he analyzed the image using his proposed semiological process and revealed how the cover created a positive image

of France and its imperial politics. This was for Barthes the mythic process of signification.

Myth cannot naturally occur; it is artificially produced by those who Barthes called the “bourgeoisie”. Myth reflects the power structure in a society at a given time, and serves the ideological interests of the dominating bourgeois culture having the power to feed people ideas about how the world works. Because of this, there are always some communicative intentions in a myth that is created by members of the bourgeoisie who can easily destroy or change it. By changing the context, one can change the effects of myth. Myth as “a second-order semiological system” (Barthes, 1977: 123), relies upon signs in other first-order systems in order to engage in the process of signification. We can recognize that myth removes signs from their context, by hiding the process of attaching signifier to signified, and fills them with a new different meaning which is relevant to the communicative intentions of those who are creating the myth. Thus, myth *hijacks* meaning and turns it into a second-order signification. Myth is, therefore, a *metalanguage*: a second-order language which acts on a first-order language, a language which generates meaning through the transformation of already existent meaning of first-order signs. Myth, then, acts as an *alibi*, a way of covering up the lack of its originally empty ground. However, myth works not because it hides its intentions, but because the intentions of myth have been *naturalized*. Indeed, myths play a dominant role in the processes of naturalizing the dominant cultural constructs – values, attitudes, and beliefs – that entirely appear normal and commonplace as if they were true and natural reflections of the way things really are (Barthes, 1977, 45-6). The power of such myths, however, is that they “go without saying” and so appear not to need to be deciphered, interpreted or demystified.

Connotation and myth are the main two ways in which signs work in the second order of signification. But Barthes (1977) refers to a third way of signifying in this order that he terms as the *symbolic*. In semiotic sense, an object becomes a symbol when it acquires through historical and cultural convention and uses a meaning that enables it to stand for something else. Symbols help us make sense of things and play an important role in shaping our behavior in many areas, such as religion (cross for Christians or Star of David for Jews), nationalism (flag), and status (the kind of car we drive). We can give a more interesting example concerning Turkey, where the symbolic meaning of “the star and crescent” is at least threefold: nationalistically, it expresses the Turkish flag, better known as *ay yıldız* (“moon star”); religiously, it stands for Islam, which is the religion of the majority of Turkish people; and historically it is a symbol of the former Ottoman Empire (1299-1922). Barthes’s ideas of the symbolic are less systematically developed than those of connotation and myth, and are less satisfactory. We might prefer, then, Peirce’s terms. A Rolls-Royce, for instance, is often considered to be a symbol of wealth; but if we visualize now a dramatic scene in our minds in which a man is forced to sell his beloved Rolls-Royce, it can be *symbolic* of the failure of his business and the loss of his fortune. The Rolls-Royce, then, is an *index* of wealth, but a *symbol* – according to Peirce’s use, not Barthes’s – of the owner’s social status.

4.2.3. Advertising as a Sign-Creating System: Insights and Instruments

Semiotics started out as an academic investigation of the meaning of words in the field of linguistics, and finally and more recently became a theory and methodology for applying, researching and analyzing consumer behaviour and brand communications. Being one of the most creative promotional industries in the world, advertising is “magic” as it transforms commodities into attracting and glamorous

signifiers – turning a car into a sign of masculinity or a perfume into a sign of femininity – and these signifiers present an imaginary, in the sense of an unreal world (Williams, 1961). More than just an act of promoting a product, advertisements provide a system of ideas by means of myths as a way of constructing a new reality of and around the promoted product. Thus, products carry significance, not because of their physical use, but because we attach meanings to them that enable these products to fulfill our symbolic, intangible desires. This shows us the importance of semiotic dimensions in consumer-driven societies, where meaning is made simple through branding in advertisements: “If we consume the product as product, we consume its meaning through advertising” (Baudrillard, 2001: 13). With this regard, it was Barthes who introduced semiotics to the marketing discipline in the 1960s. Both semiotics and marketing spread, then, throughout Europe in the 1970s, and worldwide in the 1980s and 1990s. Semiotics has gained importance internationally as an assortment of perspectives, concepts, and tools for fostering new insights on communication and meaning in marketing and consumer behavior. Advertising as a sign-creating system makes use of powerful instruments in order to strengthen its meanings. In the following, we will take a closer look to codes, metaphor and metonymy, and intertextuality.

- **Codes**

In his 1964 essay *Rhetoric of the Image*, Barthes famously analyzed the three messages at work in the advertisement for the pasta brand Panzani, consisting of “a linguistic message, a coded iconic message and a non-coded iconic message” (1977: 36). In the linguistic domain, Barthes discovered a double communication in the name Panzani, which denotes a France-based food company, while at the same time, it evokes acoustically a culturally coded connotation he called “Italianicity” (ibid.: 34). On the

level of the pictorial representation, the coded iconic message carries a number of connotations, such as freshness (expressed by the depiction of the half-opened bag); Italianicity (with the vegetables and the “tri-coloured hues”); “the idea of a total culinary service” with “the serried collection” of all the objects necessary “for a carefully balanced dish”; and finally the “nature morte” (“still life”) with its tradition in painting and photography (1977: 34–35). Italianicity, for instance, requires a stereotyped image of Italian culture as constructed by foreigners and their tourist experience, be it personal or mediated through magazines or movies. The more this quality is established, the more it becomes transparent and thus ideologically charged on a very subliminal level.

However, each of these connotations requires specific knowledge to be deciphered, knowledge that is culturally coded to various degrees. While some components of this knowledge stem from simple everyday experience, others are based on a broader cultural context formed by the history of a given society. As we can see, signs are rarely appearing in isolation, but rather form groups and systems, which are organized in accordance with certain set of rules conveying meaning that, in semiotic terms, are referred to as *codes* (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 2007: 63). In order to create an advertising, signs are selected and joined into system in accordance with suitable familiar codes. We interpret things as signs largely unconsciously by relating them to familiar systems of codes that provide a framework within which signs make sense. One of the main purposes of semiotics, then, is to identify the hidden codes that shape our beliefs and the way we find meaning in the world (Berger, 2010: 25). British semiotician Daniel Chandler (2017), in this sense, especially deals with codes in his book *Semiotics: The Basics*. He describes three types of codes that are common to media, communication, and cultural studies: *social codes* (involving verbal and non-verbal

language, our bodies such as appearance and gestures, commodities we use such as clothing and cars, and our behavior such in rituals, games, or protocols), *representational codes* (involving scientific practices such as mathematics, aesthetics within various expressive arts such as painting and music, genres with rhetorical and stylistic features, and the mass media including photographic, filmic and televisual forms), and *interpretive codes* (involving especially visual perception, and ideologies such as individualism and capitalism) (2017: 186-187). Chandler emphasizes that in wider terms, all semiotic codes can be considered as “social”, and all codes can be viewed as ideological (ibid.).

- **Metaphor and Metonymy**

Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), a Russian-American linguist, was one of the most influential semioticians of the 20th century. According to Jakobson, metaphor and metonymy are the two fundamental modes of communicating and, thus, essential to semiotics as both present important component of our way of thinking and making sense of the world, the basis for much of our understanding, and means of generating and conveying meaning – especially in advertising.

Metaphorically, signs can be created that stand for something else than original. The shift of the meaning is based on analogy, and functions through identification of similarity and difference at the same time. Such signs cause the viewer to make mental comparisons and imaginations. Thus, if we say that a performer was “on fire”, this does not literally mean that he or she was in flames, but that the quality of the performance was such that it had fiery, inspirational or dramatic qualities that can be understood by this substitution (Abercrombie & Longhurst, 2007: 223). Metaphors have implications or what we might describe as “hidden imperatives” that come with them, even though

we may not be aware of them (Berger, 2010: 18). They do not draw attention to themselves as metaphors, and thus do not invite us to decode them consciously as they are taken for-granted assumptions that are widespread throughout society. Such common sense appears to be natural, but it never is: it is always arbitrary, always socially produced. It is ideological common sense. Thus, metaphors extend into myths. Dominant metaphors tend both to reflect and influence values in a culture as, for instance, the pervasive Western metaphors that make us think “having fun is wasting time”, or “knowledge is power”, involved in the maintenance of dominant ideology (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The most familiar but weaker form of metaphor is called *simile*. Both similes and metaphors compare two different things; however, they do so differently. A simile is a comparison which is made explicit through the use of the word “like” or “as”, whereas a metaphor is a comparison that says something is something else by using some form of the verb “to be” (Berger, 2010: 16-17). Thus, if we say “my love *is* a rose,” we are metaphorically comparing our loved one to a beautiful flower, a rose. Saying “my love *is like* a rose” is a simile, and is not as strong as a comparison (ibid.).

Metonymically, signs can be created that are connected by part to something else. The shift is based on indexical relationships between signifieds, primarily having a referential function that allows to use one thing to stand for another (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980: 36). These signs cause the viewer to make (emotional) associations, in other words, strong connotations. Many metonymic relations are of a symbolic nature. An example is “the White House” as a symbol of the authorities in the United States, “The Big Apple” as a symbol for New York, and only “Apple” standing for one of the world’s most valuable tech brands. In this sense, the most commonly known and applied forms of metonymy is *synecdoche*, which implies a relationship where either a

part represents the whole, or the whole stands for a part. Metonymy, then, is the evocation of the whole by a connection made through a part of “reality” that is chosen to represent it. This means that particular connotations are made very strong through the use of a particular sign or a set of signs. According to Berger (2010), such metonymic relationship “implies the existence of codes in people’s minds that enable them to make the proper connections” (p. 19). Indeed, as we grow up and become imprinted with culture codes, we learn all kinds of associations, which means that metonymy can rely on information we already have in our heads (i.e. conventional associations) to convey information. For example, the urban settings of television crime serials are metonyms – a photographed street is not meant to stand for the street itself, but as a metonym of a particular type of city life – inner-city squalor, suburban respectability, or city-centre sophistication (Fiske, 1990: 111).

Because they provide shortcuts to generating information, advertisers highly make use of metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor allows advertisers to convey information very quickly, and metonymy allows advertisers to use information stored in our heads – mostly in our pre-conscious and unconscious mind – for their particular purposes and do not have to convey extra information to us for what we already know. It is a much quicker and much more effective process having a powerful emotional impact on us. Metaphor and metonymy are interweaving with regard to Freud’s concepts of condensation and displacement, and their interplay. French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, in this sense, was one of the main theorists in the conversion of the Saussurean sign model, appropriating Saussure through Jakobson to Freud. Lacan related metaphor to condensation, and metonymy to displacement. Condensation and displacement, then, can be seen as two operations in the semiotic process.

- **Intertextuality**

We have previously discussed that a metaphor uses something familiar to explain something unfamiliar, which may be an idea or an object in the environment, but not a text. In the same way, metonymy associates one sign with another, but that sign does not refer to another text. These two tropes have to be distinguished from the concept of intertextuality that can be confused. Bulgarian-French semiotician Julia Kristeva (1941-) argues that Freudian concepts of displacement and condensation, in semiotic terms, must be supplemented by intertextuality as a third operation within the semiotic process. For this reason, we have to take a closer look to intertextuality.

Intertextuality, a term coined by Kristeva, refers to the relationships between texts, specifically the process by which one text is constructed and interpreted in terms of previous texts. The hallmark of intertextuality is the passage from one sign system to another, in which a variety of diverse meanings overlap. An entire code is redistributed from text to text and, related and recombined with other codes to produce a new sign system. Intertextuality is basically a semiotic mechanism through which texts are recognized in terms of their dependence on other relevant texts by alluding to, adopting, or invoking meanings expressed in those other texts. It is the interconnection between similar or related works of other domains that reflect and influence the consumers' interpretation of the text. Intertextual references can include well-known clichés and proverbs. But it can also include powerful mechanisms such as allusion, pastiche, and parody that help the consumer familiarize with uncommon topics by comparing them to more well-known examples.

Allusion, in this sense, gains special importance. Allusions can be direct, but are mostly indirect. They can explicitly state the name of something they are referring to, but more powerfully, they might hint at something in other, subtler ways, which makes

them then often harder to identify. Allusion as the implied or indirect reference to something or someone assumed to be known (e.g., persons, places, symbols, things or ideas of historical, cultural, literal or political realms) calls something to mind without mentioning it explicitly. Allusion is similar to two other important techniques, parody and pastiche. *Parody* is the imitation of patterns of something or the style of someone characteristic of a particular context or a previous text in an absurd and amusing way to produce a satirical effect with the intent to ridicule, whereas *pastiche* embraces such imitation in a positive way, rather than mocks it, with the intent to celebrate.

An important subtype of intertextuality is the concept of *bricolage*, a concept developed by French anthropologist and structuralist Lévi-Strauss. Bricolage is a collection or collage, even montage, of different works which is constructed from various available materials in order to form one new text. This is an important instrument because bricolage appropriates old elements, meaning things are *borrowed* to create new signs in unexpected ways. Intertextuality is, in a sense, an effect of signification, bricolage an activity or practice which necessarily posits the existence of a new sign. Thus, intertextuality as a whole is a useful way to study how advertising came into being, but also serves to create it. Intertextuality and bricolage together serve as shorthands, reminding consumers of previous texts.

4.2.4. Infantilization via Signs of Childhood: A Theory Development

4.2.4.1. Instrumentalizing Childhood for Adult Consumer Purposes

Brands are systems producing meaning via signs. However, today many brands exist which essentially sell similar products in their category. Advertisements for products have, therefore, to create differences through the use of signs arranged in structures. Nevertheless, there are certain signs that work much more effectively in

advertisements than others. In this sense, and with respect to not only this present research, we can clearly argue that the most plausible and powerful sign system brands can make use of to produce meaning would be – without doubt – that of childhood, and in particular children’s culture, as this draws upon the most and best known system ever. *Children’s culture*, in this context, is a concept with more than one meaning that is used in special senses concerning various cultural products that are made for children, and in a wider sense of the life contexts in which children are involved (Mouritsen, 1998: 1). It consists of expressive activities that include children’s imaginative world, children’s social relationships and interactions with peers, children’s play – including games, sports, and computer and video games – and children’s consumption of commercial popular culture, such as children’s books, television shows, and movies (Kline, 1998).

With this regard, advertisements can use patterns of children’s culture as an already existing sign system, and by appropriating an association that is present in that system between a signifier and signified, the advertisement is able to articulate its product in terms of the equivalent relationship. Thus, we can say that the objective of advertisements is not to formulate a meaning per se, but to translate meaning by way of childhood as a sign system that we are familiar with from our own childhood. Through this, significance of one system can be used to create a new system of significance in advertising. This can occur by integrating obvious childhood-related signs in advertisements, that create meaning for adults somehow by manipulating adults unconsciously, and trigger, on a connotative level, psychic processes in them which stimulate a desire for the product by activating existing knowledge and evoking positive memories and emotions. A nostalgic desire is stimulated that stems from the absence – absence of childhood in the years of adulthood – which epitomizes a semiotic

mechanism based on pre-existing knowledge consisting of patterns of children's culture adults have grown up with, including fairy tales they were told, the games and toys they played with, the comics they read, the cartoons, animated movies and TV shows they watched, or ice-creams they ate in their own childhood, etc. Then, it would be quite reasonable if these specific patterns, which must not be exactly the same as only a simple resemblance is sufficient, would be instrumentalized for advertising purposes.

In the field of advertising, everything that is shown to the public is strategically planned to make an impact on people whether they realize it or not. In order for the audience to make sense of the information, however, the message has to use appropriate signs to stimulate the individual's perceptual system into action. An advertisement successfully transfers meaning by associating things that represent individual desires with products. As there is simply not much time in most advertisements for elaborated message development, the message depends upon certain cues to elicit the associated meanings. Thus, advertising with its highly condensed message formats is frequently forced to use a shortcut form of information processing. This enables consumers to create meanings for the things they perceive by incorporating ideas into their interpretations of products which can be triggered by verbal, and especially by non-verbal cues (cultural symbols, images, music, themes, colors, etc.), functioning as a reminder and bringing to mind something from past knowledge or previous experience. Exactly this provides a framework of meaning that can be used to encode signs, helping companies to reach consumers and to predict their emotional responses to a product.

An effective application of semiotics starts by focusing on visuality which, in fact, is maybe the most important element in brand communication as, on the one hand, seeing comes before everything, and on the other hand, much of past knowledge and experience is filed in memory in our pre-conscious and unconscious as a visual element.

To make use of childhood patterns, in visual terms, would mean to focus on a strong child-centric aesthetic – colorful, playful, and magical in nature – that embodies symbols, metaphors, metonymy, mythic allusions and other forms of intertextuality providing powerful shortcuts to generate meaning by creating signs of a transformative relationship between children’s culture and products. With this, connoting referents would be – among many other associations – happiness, naturalness, innocence, freedom, security, and in general nostalgia for a better time. All this makes up the dominant myth of childhood which comprises the above mentioned idealized attributes perceived as positive, further based on a widespread belief in Western culture that the countryside is the proper place for childhood (Fiske, 1990: 89). In contrast to this, which strengthens the myth, is its counterpart as the not desired reality of adulthood because after the sunny period of childhood “growing up means adapting to the demands of society, which means losing naturalness and freedom”.

This actually shows the dilemma on which infantilization builds up its pillars. On the one hand, childhood is a life stage where every child wants to be an adult. As we all know, when we were children we all could not wait to become an adult, but after we have waited our entire lives to grow up, it actually happens then with the interesting effect that one day we begin to look backwards: the more we age, the more we do not want to grow older. This is a paradox: once there was the immediate urge to grow up, but then the strong desire arises to grow back in order to stay young somehow.



Figure 4.12 Differences Between Childhood and Adulthood

Source: <https://www.quora.com/Whats-the-difference-between-childhood-and-adulthood>

Peter Pan was maybe the first who actually warned us with his famous saying, “Never grow up, it’s a trap”. In fact, we realize that growing up is not such a great thing as we have expected in childhood. Adulthood mostly consists of great responsibilities, uncertainties, and other stress factors which brings the idealization of childhood. Thus, adulthood turns out to be time where every adult, sooner or later, secretly wants to be a child again leading to the point that we consider the option of – even if not technically, but figuratively – to stay child by finding meaning in an unconscious perceived and romanticized happier childhood which is especially provided by advertising images.

Visual elements related to childhood, then, can also assume a new meaning through signifiers. What we have categorized as childhood so far, no longer has to be associated with only a life stage that is completely over for the adult. Childhood now can signify a better and, in some ways, ideal state of soul and mindset to be reached with the desire to reexperience this idyllic life stage somehow in an adult setting. This is therefore possible as the arbitrariness – to which Saussure vehemently points to – is in postmodern times extremely exploited by attaching, creatively and with the use of many techniques, any wanted meaning to signifiers.

4.2.4.2. *The Kinder Surprise Effect: How Can We Reveal Infantilization?*

▪ Infantilization via Childhood Signs

Advertising begins to capitalize on the childhood paradigm in order to create associations in the adult consumer’s mind between the allure of childhood concerning its privileges and positive attributes, and the desirability of the brand. Infantilization, in this sense, *initiates itself* through *consciously* recognizable signs of childhood having an *unconscious* impact on our minds. These signs are indicating the process of infantilization which appear on surface; and the appearance of these signs announces

that an adult is exposed to an infantilizing act. Infantilization is indeed “felt more than recognized (Barber, 2007: 3). However, infantilization *reveals* itself through signs of childhood and the way how they communicate meaning to adults. But the appearance in question announces something that itself is not: a childhood sign is *not* infantilization per se. Such appearing is only a not-showing-itself that can be determined in form of childhood signs, through which infantilization *announces* itself *without showing itself*. Signs of childhood are *merely* an *appearance* and not to be trusted in their primary meaning as they are *illusionary* – a visual trick that is used in the context of anything that disguises or hides the truth and, thus, not represents real patterns of childhood.

We can move forward on this thought if we take the example of the Kinder Surprise, which makes develop a desire for something beyond the thing we need, as the hollow chocolate shell is discarded for another plastic yellow shell, the one holding the toy inside. Like a Kinder Surprise, therefore, we have to unpack advertisements in order to see what is really inside; it offers the “something more”, the surprising but “hidden” meaning and intention of the advertisement beyond the promoted product itself, that is discarded or neglected for it. In this sense, certain patterns of child culture, which *surprisingly* appear in advertisements not just to attract children, but also or especially to attract adults, serve as an ideological camouflage for unconscious manipulation, corresponding to the hidden intention of marketers. We can formulate a general theory of advertising based on the dialectical implication of psychic dynamics, on the side of the adult consumer, and semiotic codes of infantilization, on the side of advertising as shown in Figure 4.13. The use of child-centric aesthetics, in particular, entreats adults’ emotions and stimulates unconscious desires. Through the mask of childhood, which serves as an *alibi* as Barthes would agree, infantilization is engendered as an ideological mechanism that becomes visible by dissolving the hidden codes in advertisements.

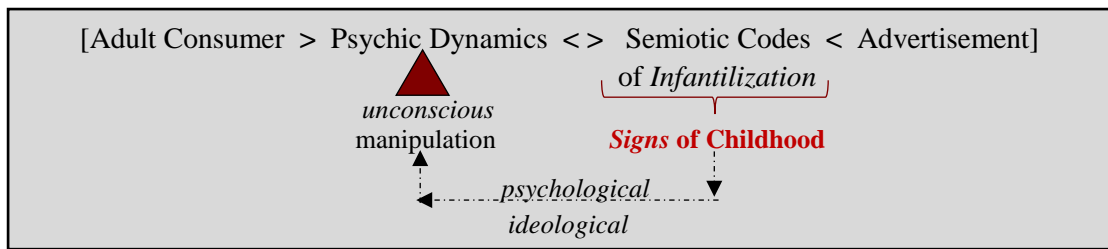


Figure 4.13 Semiotic of Infantilization via Signs of Childhood: A Formula

Artificially created childlike brand worlds where the promoted products are placed in advertisements, defined and idealized in an irresistible perfection of technological magic, are not questioned. They are presented to the consumer in a narrative that has no negative meanings, even is naturalized. Infantilization, in this sense, is reflected by textures of childhood as repetitive patterns in advertisements, but actually it is a mythical process that exploits features related to childhood for its own sake through which it comes alive and begins to function. It empties the original meaning, and fills it up with another one. At the first sight, on a denotative level, we see childhood-related patterns which we would probably categorize as something appropriate or intended for children. But on the connotative level which much works at a pre-conscious and unconscious dimension, we realize that these childlike patterns are instrumentalized for something else – to give adult consumers messages what to do.

With this regard, the new sign generates a *polysemy*. Polysemy, in semiotic terms, indicates that meaning is never permanently fixed. It further shows the capacity of a sign that is able to have multiple meanings. In this sense, childhood signs may have multiple meanings as they receive new meanings with the time; further, they refer to both children and adults, and can be read differently according to which group one pertains to. To serve both groups simultaneously even if the promoted product is intended for adults, however, is a recent development we have to further focus on in order to understand it.

- **Infantilization with Uniage Strategy**

Infantilization has the potential power to break down the age barrier between childhood and adulthood. Companies seem to acknowledge this as they increasingly segment consumers with an approach that supports the ideology of infantilization which we can name as *uniage*, meaning both children and adults are addressed simultaneously the same way in the same advertising, but by operating at the level of a child – a phenomenon comparable with the well-known marketing term “unisex” concerning products that not divide between male and female anymore. The installation of such an advertisement is playful and childlike, displaying child-centric passions and a sense of wonder, yet the content can actually be quite serious concerning financial issues, hygiene or delivery service which definitely is not children’s “stuff” by nature. This, however, leads to a *dual* audience but, moreover, to an *ambiguity* of the target group. Normally, gender and age are demographic factors that are used to distinguish between and create target groups. But as we can see, nowadays, this distinction is not necessary anymore, even inefficient in marketing terms.

If we take a closer look to the unisex phenomenon, we can say that it has emerged to make more profit which requires expanded markets. In this sense, women were taught by market forces – mostly by advertisements – to buy and to enjoy traditional male commodities and vice versa. With this, consumer capitalism has changed gender relations. It becomes evident that this is one of the major characteristics of postmodernism – to reject, even to destroy metanarratives by eliminating distinctions. The example of unisex shows that the boundaries between men and women – a distinction that has been imposed by an oppressive patriarchal society – are attempted to be blurred. Now, the same occurs with life stages and age identities – the melting down of the boundaries between childhood and adulthood can be witnessed.

Consumer capitalism now aims to blur the distinctions of life stages as adults are relegated into lifelong consumers with “imaginary needs”: objects of consumption are reproduced and reconstructed with new meanings not in order to fulfill the real needs and wants of people but to stimulate desires for individuals as that of children’s (Danesi, 2003). The goal seems to be the encouragement of becoming a much more childish, impulsive and undisciplined adult consumer – because a childish mindset in contrast to the adult one, is so much more profitable to the economy of consumerism. In this sense, both infantilization and advertising are, when merging together, the most vital and powerful instruments to achieve this.

With this regard, modernity involved a chronologization of life, whereas postmodernity, on the contrary, sets in motion a deconstruction of the life course which favours uniageism. Adults are seduced and taught to be “young at heart” in order to act with an immediate desire, and to have instantaneous pleasure and gratification like children. Not the age is in the foreground anymore, but the childlike attitude. Hence, companies increasingly continue to segment and target consumers on an uniage-basis which exactly is the deciding trick as this enables that both children and adults can be simultaneously addressed and invited to embrace the promoted products – but at the level of a child – which adults apparently perceive as natural and not wrong. With this, it seems that companies have identified this relatively new demographic – children *within* adults or the kidults-to-be – as an incredibly lucrative wellspring of consumerist potential. Suddenly, here is an entire adult generation offered an evolved version of the things they were consuming as children that is now well and truly packed to be serviced in all facets of childhood. The ways in which consumers are differentiated today, at least in terms of age, are becoming more fluid, complex and uncertain. In general, new forms of transgenerational address emerge that even permit the same products to be

marketed to different generations because it is much more profitable to sell to a broadly defined audience.

- **Semiotizing a Product in the Infantilization Process**

The strategy in the “semiotizing of a product” lies in the presentation of a product as something else than the product itself (Danesi, 2008: 95). This is important because nowadays to promote only the “real” traits of a product is not sufficient as this does, interestingly, not persuade anyone in postmodern times, even is perceived as boring. Much of the seductive power of advertising derives from drawing on associational meanings so that we do not even realize that we are being influenced. Thus, effective advertising messages which involve infantilizing practices via signs of childhood are like the best psycho-semiotic interpretations one can make: they simultaneously speak to the deepest psychic desires and wishes we have while intermixing new and unexpected meanings of signs we are familiar from our childhood. In this sense, there are especially three techniques we can figure out in this thesis to understand how patterns of childhood, in general, and children’s culture, in particular, can be used and implemented in advertisements as shown in Figure 4.14. In order to illustrate the techniques, three examples from children’s cartoons and fairy tale world were selected that are known by certainly anyone – Betty Boop, Peter Pan, and Heidi.⁴³

Technique 1 is the most obvious one. Consumers can recognize immediately the pattern that is exactly the same as the original; it is a copy of the original. There is nothing to be questioned as it is clear what is shown. For instance, Betty Boop can be immediately recognized in the Papia commercial as it is the exact copy of the original.

⁴³ All the above mentioned examples will be later analyzed in detail (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1.3. for Betty Boop, 5.1.7. for Peter Pan, and 5.1.2. for Heidi).

Technique 2 is an advanced version of the prior one. Patterns that are partially copied have to be adjusted or adapted in order to serve for advertising purposes. *Adjustment* involves making changes within the original design parameters of the pattern being adjusted, whereas *adaptation* involves modifying a pattern for a new purpose – one that was not originally anticipated in the pattern’s design. The example shows an adaptation of Disney’s Peter Pan in the Turk Telekom campaign in which Turkish comedian Cem Yılmaz stands for a postmodern version of Peter Pan – the index for this is the constellation with the fairy we can clearly associate with Tinkerbell. *Technique 3* is the most interesting one, but also the more difficult to recognize as the used patterns often are not obvious in contrast to the first two techniques. However, the audience has the necessary knowledge and experience to make sense of the new meanings. In the example, Turkish singer Gülben Ergen is in the arms of Rinso’s brand mascot, the Bubble Man – a setting which strongly implies a Heidi scenery, where Heidi is in the arms of her grandfather in a natural environment.

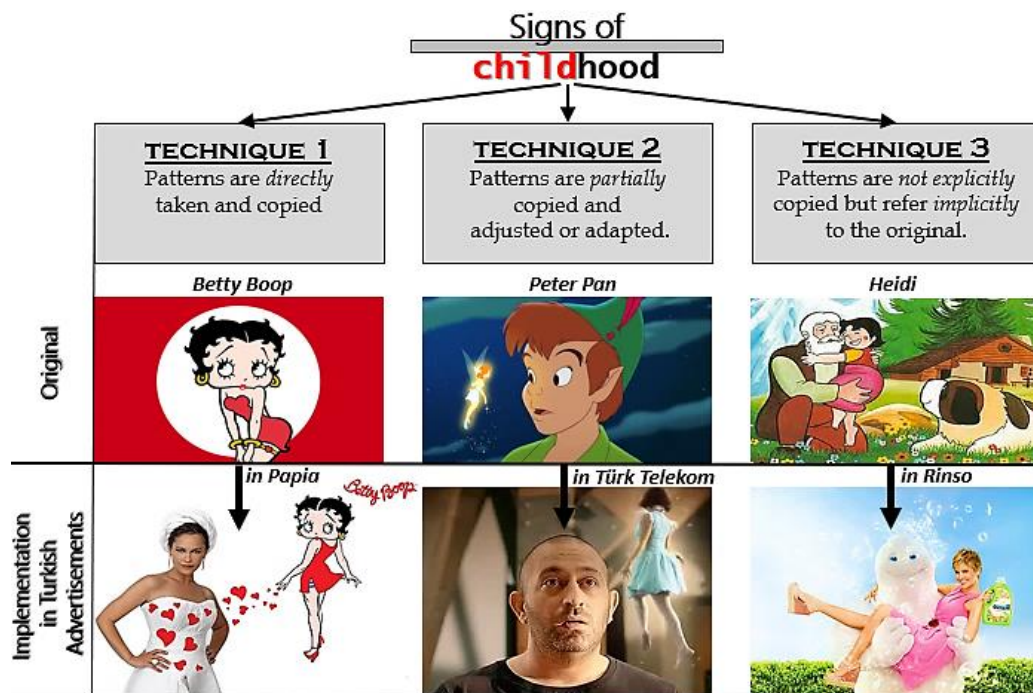


Figure 4.14 Integrating Signs of Childhood in Advertisements: Three Techniques

As a result, we recognize that in a Barthesian understanding, these new meanings are made through robbing, cannibalizing, and recycling old meanings, which are commonly understood easily and perceived as natural. Infantilizing advertisements that we are going to analyze especially make use of such childhood features in relation to adulthood. We can further develop our theory by arguing that a new type of *adult-oriented* child culture – most notably on the screen – is in development, which is

- ❑ a *cloned* one (that appears to be a copy of the original form),
- ❑ frequently undergoes a *metamorphosis* (that changes its physical form or structure), and through this,
- ❑ leads to new formations of childhood patterns which rather appear as *mutants* (that are different from others of its type because of a permanent change),

being now available in a consumable form, and thus, becoming commodity, spectacle, and representation at the same time.

As Baudrillard notes, “in order to become the object of consumption, the object must become sign” (2001: 25). With this regard, such childhood features are the mere projection of signs mediated through advertising that become *simulacra of childhood*, having the effect of preceding real experienced childhood, and which serve companies to create well-selling *infantile brand mythologies* operating with their own meaning-making rules and mechanisms. Even if childhood cannot be bought – at least psychologically the feeling of a continuing participation in it is made available through its symbolic significance that can refer to childlike fantasy identities perceived as very welcoming, which can only help to widen a brand’s audience, and hence to enhance its market value and profit.

4.3. PSYCHO-SEMIOTIC APPROACH AND CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

The empirical research will focus on the analysis of the implementation of infantilization in Turkish advertising context. In this section, the choice of qualitative research design, case study methodology, and psychoanalytic/evolutionary psychological and semiotic methods of advertising analysis are discussed, which will prove beneficial to gain a deeper meaning and understanding behind what the advertisements to be analyzed are trying to say and how they work. The data collection procedures are outlined, followed by the presentation of the research process, and the analysis and interpretation of the collected data. The section ends with the identification and description of the case studies to be examined.

4.3.1. Research Design: Qualitative Case Study Methodology

The empirical part of the thesis was conducted through qualitative research. When investigating a phenomenon like infantilization, a qualitative research approach is the most suitable one as it goes deeper than just measure the observable phenomenon by searching for the meaning and beliefs underlying it – the “why” and “how” (Marschan-Piekkari & Welch, 2004). As indicated in the introducing chapter of this thesis, infantilization has not been vastly researched in advertising context so far. For a complete and careful illustration of such a phenomenon, a qualitative research methodology was necessary as the topic “infantilization in 21st century advertising” with a special reference to Turkey points out to the emergence of something new and unexpected, which indeed is an under-researched area, and therefore requires an in-depth examination that is difficult to quantify in practice as the phenomenon has primarily to be understood in a qualitative sense.

Qualitative research emphasizes comprehending and gaining insights, being thus especially relevant in situations in which the objective is to understand and uncover a topic about which only little is known as it is exploratory, flexible, and unstructured in its nature, and further characterized by its closeness to data (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). When investigating a phenomenon like infantilization, a qualitative approach is appropriate for theory development as opposed to a quantitative approach for theory testing or verification (Weischedel et al., 2005). Thus, it is not concerned with counting the number of times different dimensions appear, but rather with examining *what* appears and what it *means* (Hansen & Machin, 2013: 292). However, “due to its intrinsically interpretive and more subjective nature, it is often difficult to obtain high reliability or replicability, while, on the other hand, qualitative research tends to benefit from a high degree of validity” (ibid.). These features advocated the use of the qualitative research approach which appeared most suitable for the present study considering the objectives of the research.

Further, an appropriate specific methodology was considered which would meet the main research problem of the thesis: *How* and *why* do brands implement the concept of infantilization within the framework of their marketing strategy in Turkish advertisements? In this sense, qualitative research can take the form of a case study which “investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003: 13). Moreover, case study is a method of conducting social science research which is the preferred strategy when especially “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events over which the investigator has little or no control” (ibid.: 9). In the present study, the case study strategy was selected, because the existing knowledge of infantilization in advertising context in general is scarce as

little research exists, and with respect to Turkey even non-existent. Thus, it may offer better insights into the phenomenon of interest that would be difficult to approach or even not to be achieved with other approaches. Thus, case studies are especially well suited when investigating relatively new fields or research areas for which existing theory seems insufficient. Moreover, they are useful in early stages of research on a topic or when a fresh perspective is needed.

Case studies are about selected examples or cases that want to be studied or analyzed (Yin, 2003). The case study inquiry is usually associated with an intensive in-depth, longitudinal investigation as the “case may be an organization, a set of people such as a social or work group, a community, an event, an issue or a campaign” (Daymon & Holloway, 2002: 105). Case study research typically combines various methods of collecting data, such as experimentation, archival analyses, surveys, interviews and observation (Yin, 2003: 14, 23). Through this, the investigator can observe the phenomenon as it occurs, look for the roots of issues, and conceptualize and seek the underlying reality. However, the use of case studies as a research strategy has met with some criticism mainly on two major grounds. Probably the greatest criticism is related to the lack of rigour in case study research but, in fact, this is not a potential weakness of the case study alone. Bias can also enter into the conducting of an experiment, design of a survey questionnaire, and into historical research (ibid.). Another criticism argues that the method provides a limited basis for scientific generalization. Nevertheless, as mentioned before, this is not the purpose of the qualitative case method. Its main aim is to examine and interpret phenomena in order to develop a theory for further empirical studies.

One way to respond to this criticism is the use of a multiple case study design as a viable strategy. Multiple case studies enhance external validity and strengthen the

results; the “evidence [...] is often considered more compelling and the overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust” (Yin, 2003: 45). In this research, the multiple case study design is used to produce detailed descriptions of infantilization in Turkish advertising context which enables to understand the similarities and differences within and between cases. Extensive case studies can further consist of multiple mini-case studies, which were conducted in the present research, and that aimed at mapping various patterns and properties across cases. In this approach, it is not the cases per se where the interest of the researcher lies but it is the investigating, elaborating, and explaining of the phenomenon which is of interest to the researcher (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008: 123).

4.3.2. Psycho-Semiotic as Research Method

In the beginning of this chapter, we have presented in detail the psycho-semiotic framework in relation to infantilization in advertising context. This theoretical psycho-semiotic approach will be now applied as a method. In the field of advertising, semiotics has forged a partnership with psychology. This partnership between semiotics and psychology has proven to be a very powerful one (Beasley & Danesi, 2002: 33). Both semiotics and psychoanalysis are “intellectual traditions that offer conceptual tools to understand different dimensions of the influence of advertising” (Stocchetti & Kukkonen, 2011: 89). Semiotics, in this sense, focus on the role of advertising in the construction and circulation of meaning through signs, whereas the psychoanalytical interpretation of advertising allows to dissolve the manipulative intent and to identify the latent meanings that, as in dreams, contains important knowledge about society (ibid.). By examining the intersection of semiotic codes and the psychic dynamics, we will use the psycho-semiotic approach to analyze and understand the meaning of

childhood signs and their psychic effect in brand communication within symbol-saturated advertisements, which will make the process of infantilization to a certain extent visible. Through this, we will be able to identify and interpret infantilization's unconscious, ideological, and aesthetic potentialities in the context of Turkish advertising. We will have to investigate, therefore, how certain childhood signs are displayed on the surface in advertising, and how they stir up and excite various meanings at deeper levels on the part of adult consumers' psyches, exposing and corresponding to the hidden intention of marketers. This is in accordance with the syntagmatic analysis that studies the manifest or "surface structure" of a text, whereas paradigmatic analysis seeks to identify latent elements which underlie the manifest content of texts (Chandler, 2017: 102). In general, psycho-semiotics as a method will help to deconstruct the connotative system where psychic dynamics are at work that can be revealed through decoding the meanings of signs operating on a mythical level.

Infantilization is a psychological process, but also an ideological one, accompanied with a multitude of visual childhood signs on which we will concentrate during the analysis. The analysis will, therefore, be a two-step one. First, a semiotic analysis which "always involves ideological analysis" (Chandler, 2017: 191) will be applied with the main focus on visual components of advertising images, as it is "the most developed method of visual analysis" (Hansen et al., 1998: 6). In the second step, the semiotic analysis will be complemented by a psychological/ psychoanalytical perspective when necessary to interpret the latent meanings and symbolic significance of signs. On a denotative level, all obvious signs of childhood we literally see without further interpretation will be identified, and then decoded in order to discover the meaning they create for adults and trigger, on a connotative level, psychological processes in them by activating existing knowledge and experience. These connotations

refer to the additional meaning which usually an intertextual or symbolic reference gains besides its principal meaning.

4.3.3. Research Process of the Study

4.3.3.1. Cross-Sectoral Data Analysis and Selection of Brands

As infantilization is a phenomenon that is “felt more than recognized” (Barber, 2007: 3), the most challenging part of the investigation began at the point by making the research content as tangible as possible by drawing clear lines. Developing a suitable approach to infantilization, even a theoretical scheme how it could be analyzed, was actually only possible after a long time of data gathering and data interpretation. The literature review has shown that adult consumers’ interest was increasingly shifting to a child-targeted consumer culture and youth-oriented media entertainment in Western societies. The researcher’s observation was that this phenomenon was also reflected in Turkish advertisements through especially childlike design elements and techniques. In general, it was considered that infantilization in advertising was at play and that, most notably, adult-oriented product categories were affected.

The next step was to determine which brands and their related product categories were for adults-only or mostly adult-oriented, moreover, to distinguish adult- and child-oriented products (see Figure 4.15). Children represent meanwhile an important demographic to marketers and are increasingly targeted today. In this sense, advertisers are aware that children influence the purchase of not just children’s products anymore, but everything in the household (McNeal, 1992; Barber, 2007). Consequently, it was assumed that because of this many advertisements seemed to become more childlike in their character even if the advertised product was primarily

intended for adults. One plausible anticipation was, as a result, that children and adults were addressed simultaneously. This would mean that a “dual impact of product categories” (Bridges & Briesch, 2006: 159) exists. A consequence of this seemed to be that even “adults-only” products such as financial services (including life insurance, banking and credit card) or automobiles were paired with features typically used when addressing children, including child-oriented logos, mascots, imagery, etc. (McNeal, 1999: 217). This further led to the fact that various product categories had to be considered and analyzed in order to understand which brands implement infantilization in their advertisements. Besides, it was considered that brands associated more as child-oriented may also indicate an infantilization towards adults as, for example, advertisement for candies or ice-cream. As a matter of fact, various options were considered and studied.

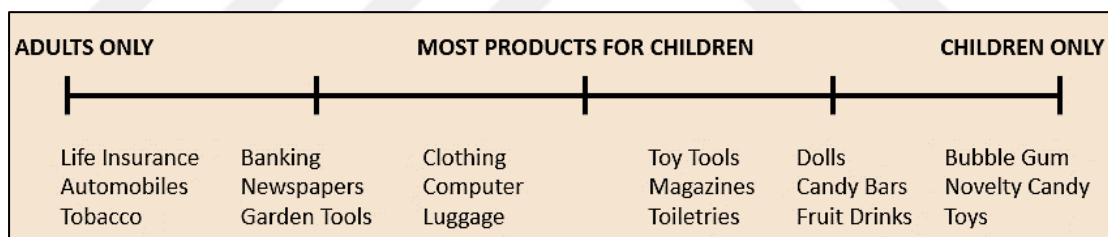


Figure 4.15 Scale of Products Ranging from Adults-Only to Children-Only. Adapted from *The Kids Market: Myths and Realities* (p. 217), by James U. McNeal, 1999, New York: Paramount Books.

In order to construct the case studies, it was considered to analyze advertising campaigns of various brands of different product categories. First and foremost, many brands as possible were reviewed. At the beginning, the goal was to figure out in which product categories infantilization appears, but most notably, how and why it appears. In the digital era of 21st century, companies’ websites have become a vehicle to market and disseminate advertisements. They include archives of advertisements, announce new advertisements, and in general offer some depth of information that could not be

provided in traditional media. Besides, nowadays companies maintain an active presence on social media platforms and share informations about their products as well as other notifications. Thus, the overall objective was to recognize and evaluate how brands present themselves on their personal spaces, what they put on their own pages and what they share with their followers to keep in touch, but most important, to what extent we can observe, through this, infantilizing practices.

Data collection for this research was, therefore, mainly carried out through reviewing advertisements on the internet from three primary sources: companies' official websites, companies' Facebook pages and companies' YouTube channels. Where those official channels were not sufficient, online video search engines such as Vimeo and Dailymotion were also used. This made it possible to investigate a large number of brands as their advertising archives were attainable all together on the mentioned pages – an advantage for the researcher to follow brands' marketing communication as a whole. In earlier times, commercials were broadcasted only on television. Today, many brands put their advertising films first on their Facebook pages and later on their YouTube channels. In the present study, the focus has lied on the analysis of commercials since they are the “most powerful form of advertising” (Berger, 1996: 61), which should be seen as “works of art that have their own conventions; they might be best thought of as minidramas that employ all the techniques of the theater and the cinema to achieve their aims” (ibid.). Besides, brands' Facebook posts as a new form of brand communication were selected. Being one of the most influential and effective digital tools in marketing today, brands' Facebook posts were additionally considered and analyzed which gave further crucial and valuable insights into the research topic. Moreover, other sources such as brand's annual and non-financial reports, news reports, etc. have helped by providing various informations about the

companies and understanding their advertising campaigns better. Additionally, three renowned Turkish marketing magazines – *Marketing Türkiye*, *MediaCat* and *The Brand Age* – were taken into consideration in order to gain a deeper understanding of the analyzed brands, product categories and marketing campaigns. All the mentioned data was crucially important to acquire multiple perspectives and to relate the gained information to the research topic. As a result, 60 brands were selected, most of them being Superbrands or Lovemarks with awarded campaigns in Turkey, which were allocated to 11 product categories in the research (see Table 4.1 and APPENDIX A).

Table 4.1. Selected Product Categories and Brands

PRODUCT CATEGORIES	BRANDS
Finance (Banks, Credit Cards, Insurance)	Anadolu Sigorta, Card Finans, Enpara.com, Garanti Bank, Halkbank, ING Bank, Maximum Card, MetLife, Money Club, Odeabank, QNB Finansbank, Türkiye İş Bankası, World Card
Transport & Delivery	Aras Kargo, Turkish Airlines
Construction & Decoration	Alarko Carrier, Düfa, Dyo, Polisan, Vitra
Automotive & Aftermarket	Toyota, Opet
Housekeeping Products	Cif, Domestos, Sunlight Cif, Omo, Papia, Rinso, Scotch Brite, Yumoş, Selpak
Food and Beverage	Algida, Banvit, Binbirçiçek, Domino's Pizza, Evian, Haribo, İçim, L'Era Fresca, Nestlé Coffee-Mate, Panda, Pınar, Sana, Sarelle, Tat, Torku
Personal Care & Cosmetics	Axe, Bruno, L'Oréal, Okey
Fashion	DeFacto
Telecommunication	Turkcell, Türk Telekom (Avea), 118 80
Domestic Furnishing & Electronical Appliances	Bernardo, Duracell, Royal Halı
Retail	Hopi, Ikea, TeknoSa

The sample of campaigns were narrowed by determining advertisements that differ from each other in content for avoiding any duplicate in the thesis work. In this context, the research analyzed on a corpus of 226 commercials and 52 Facebook posts between the years 2004 and 2018. While it would be absolutely impossible to quantify and analyze the vast amount of advertisements created in the last 14 years of 60 brands, the qualitative case study approach has made it possible to consciously select

outstanding advertisements, and analyze them as mini-case studies in order to demonstrate in which different forms infantilization reveals itself in Turkish advertising, instead of trying to measure it in a specific time period. Moreover, it was not possible to determine or limit the sample to a shorter period of time as the case studies, each different in their nature, required each time a different approach and thus a different selection. In this sense, the material for the study consists of both long-lasting advertising campaigns produced as series and advertising campaigns of singular production. For instance, Omo has created many commercials and shared a multitude of Facebook posts at various points in time (2004-2018) that could be related to the research topic, and thus were selected and analyzed within different mini-case studies; whereas one single commercial as that of Vitra in 2015 was selected to be analyzed as a mini-case study as well. As every selected brand in this research has chosen at a certain time the infantilization strategy, this was only possible to show by not restricting the time period where otherwise valuable sample units would have been eliminated. Because of this, the general criteria was that campaigns since the 2000s were considered and not before, as the infantile ethos has especially emerged with the turn of the new millennium. This approach has enabled to explore and compare infantilization across a wider range of time and brands of different product categories.

Among the selected brands are older and newer ones. This means that newer brands ensured a more precise analysis because on their online pages they generally provide all material needed from the beginning. Whereas older brands, which some of them might have a history of several decades, did not add older material on their pages with only a few exceptions. Therefore, it was decided only to consider the material which was available on brands' digital spaces. Another point important to mention is that with time some brands renew or refresh their pages. This may lead to the

circumstance that material which was available before does not exist after a while because it is deleted. However, each advertising campaign that has been analyzed in the research was listed (See Appendix B).

4.3.3.2. Identification of Infantilizing Design Elements and Techniques in Advertisements

Advertisements can be analyzed in terms of their various components. Every aspect of an advertisement – whether a commercial or Facebook post – can be considered as important and, thus, demand a great deal of attention if one is to discover the infantilizing mechanisms. In order to analyze infantilization in advertising context, it was necessary to examine the design elements and techniques used in advertisements through which infantilization is engendered and further reveals itself. There are many obvious differences between the formats that are used when targeting children and adults. Under “normal” circumstances, the advertisement has to be created for an adult in an “adult-appropriate” style which differs strongly from the child-appropriate one:

Advertising directed at adults, for adult products, tends to aim at building brand loyalty, focusing on product characteristics that are perceived to be of long-term value. Children’s products, on the other hand, must be updated frequently, reflecting the latest theme or character in order to grab attention. Advertising aimed at children does not focus on brand loyalty, but on the new and exciting features and tie-ins that are available. Typically, purchases are made by adult consumers, regardless of whether the product category is targeted primarily for adults or children. Thus, advertising for adult products is aimed directly at the decision maker/buyer. (Bridges & Briesch, 2006, p.158)

Further, when advertising messages are aimed at young children, brand appeals offer a “constant stream of new characters, bonus offers, movie tie-ins and premiums”

(ibid.: 158). Moreover, a televised child format is animated, characterized by sprightly music, and is frequently narrated by a cartoon-character voice using second-person pronouns, for example, “You are stronger when you eat X” (Huston et al., 2009: 52). Whereas an adult format uses live photography, sedate music, and is narrated by an adult male using third-person pronouns, for example, “People are stronger when they eat X” (ibid.). However, child-centered advertising does not mean that an infantilization towards adults must, automatically, exist.

The most crucial differentiating factor seems to be to identify and to determine those features in advertisements that address in some way the adult consumer while the scenery and, thus, impression of a child-oriented advertising is given. This can happen through situations in advertisements in which housewives are directly spoken to, or when a childlike mascot seems to treat an adult man like a child during an actually serious conversation. However, there are also advertisements that, at first sight, not seem to be childlike. In some cases, advertisements are designed in realistic adult-appropriate formats, as mentioned above, but somehow they reconnect and bring back the adult consumers to childhood years. As a matter of fact, by analyzing the sample it was important to observe carefully to what extent adults are involved in advertisements, how adults are represented in general and how they are treated. Besides, it was questioned how companies instrumentalize certain childhood-related features for adult consumer purposes, how these features are used in order to engender infantilization, and whether companies use the same design elements and techniques in advertisements to capture the attention of adult consumers like that of children. For this, an analytical scheme was developed in order to examine the main components of advertisements (see APPENDIX C).

4.3.3.3. Development of Multiple Cases Studies

The last step was to decide how the case studies could be developed and selected in order to investigate infantilization and the ways in which it occurs in advertisements. The development and selection of cases was not randomly; instead a purposeful sampling was necessary for the identification and later selection of information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of interest. Remarkably, the selected advertisements were showing effective repetitive patterns – infantilization seemed to be engendered to the extent how specific childhood features were instrumentalized for adult purposes.

This insight has led to the necessity to identify and analyze features of childhood. The anticipation was, in this sense, that components of childhood and children's worlds are embedded in advertisements to reconstruct childhood features that might engender and enforce infantilizing mechanisms in numerous different ways in order to address and affect adult consumers. The overall consideration was that common themes would exist in advertisements well-known from childhood or features related to it. In order to show existing connections, it was necessary to discover equivalent analogies and allusions, and generally to recognize a cluster of parallel characteristics. It was concentrated on the use of motifs in parallel terms rather than on the entire contextual idea, serving as a crucial signal by which the surface context in the advertisement triggers a memory of the infracontext.

The next important step in the development of the case study research design was to discover and to determine the key themes. Against this backdrop, the first method for analyzing and interpreting the collected data was a thematic content analysis of the advertising campaigns. Thematic content analysis is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data which may take the form of texts that reflect experientially on the topic of study (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Image, video, and other forms of data may accompany

the textual data. In conducting a thematic content analysis, the researcher's epistemological stance is objective. In this research, one of the most important parts was the thematic content analysis as this method has helped for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns and various aspects of themes within the collected data in order to develop the case studies.

After having considered the possibility of merging similar themes together as well as checking for the frequency of each recurring data extract, a total of three main themes with a range of four to seven sub-themes were identified and brought out for further analysis from the data set. As a result, within three major case studies a series of 17 mini-case studies were developed that involve the most striking key themes related to infantilization. In some cases, there were overlaps. For instance, what can be allocated to fairy tales, could also be placed in the category of retro cartoons as both forms simultaneously exist. To give an example: *Heidi* is originally a fairy tale, but has become more popular through the anime series; and this anime image is what we identify with *Heidi* today. In such situations, the original category was preferred, meaning that *Heidi* was categorized in the case study of fairy tales.

The manifest and latent themes present in the advertisements that could be related to infantilization were figured out for further examination. In general, the collected data has shown that advertisements in which infantilization can be observed took different forms. The aim was to reveal infantilization in advertisements of adult-oriented product categories, in some cases also in child-oriented ones, in order to attract adult consumers, including: children's traditional stories in form of fairy tales, fables, and myths; children's popular entertainment media in form of cartoons, animated movies, TV programs, and video games; and general childhood symbols and motifs

representing components of children’s daily life in form of toys, tastes, places, and habits. The general thematic analysis in form of three major case studies are diagrammed and shown in Figure 4.16. The objective was to unpack the advertisements like a Kinder Surprise to see what is really inside, and what the surprising component of the childhood sign is by analyzing the underlying meanings in the mini-case studies.

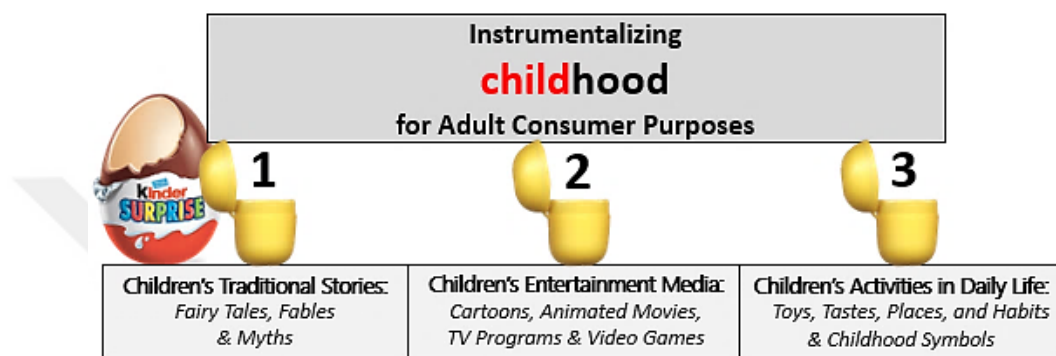


Figure 4.16 Thematic Case Studies of the Research: An Overview

Firstly, the collected data has shown that many advertisements employed motifs of children’s stories, most notably, fairy tales in adapted versions. Fairy tales are one of the oldest and most popular literary forms that share certain formal features concerning the characters, the setting, the plot with a thematic core, the use of magic and, in particular, a happy ending (Jones, 2002b). In this sense, fairy tales generally have some sort of fantastic element, take place in made-up times or places indicating a make-believe land in a distant past, and frequently feature royal characters (such as queens, kings, princes, and princesses) as well as imaginary creatures (such as dragons, fairies, elves, giants, and monsters). These characters often have magical powers or magical objects, and wishes are often granted. Frequently, there is a conflict between sides that are clearly good – mostly in form of the use of a sympathetic protagonists and their helpers – and evil – as the enemy of the protagonist. The confronting of a

difficult problem, which seems to be very hard to solve, leads to a successful solution which has a pleasing outcome often with a happy ending phrase or a lesson that can be learned from the ending of the fairy tale.

Thus, in the first case study advertisements which used plots or motifs from widely known fairy tales were identified and selected. Further, common characteristic elements that are found in fairy tales, as mentioned above, were reviewed. In the analysis, it was also looked for fairy-tale elements which were smartly embedded in advertisements and, thus, could not be perceived always directly at the first glance. Against this backdrop, other literary forms as fables and myths were also considered. A fable is a short story and a type of fairy tale that attempts to illustrate a particular moral and teach a lesson in its telling (Capri, 2016: 6). It often has the same fantastic elements of fairy tales, especially talking animals, but the main important part is the meaning behind the story. Besides, in most literary contexts, myths are regarded as traditional fictional stories that usually involve supernatural or imaginary things and creatures embodying ideas on natural or social phenomena. Further, they may contain deeper truths, expressing collective attitudes to fundamental matters of life (ibid.: 3).

Secondly, the data has shown that many advertisements consist of features that often can be easily related to children's entertainment media including cartoons, TV shows, animated movies (such as Disney, Pixar, DreamWorks), and video games especially from the 1980s. In this sense, it was attempted to identify the same or resembling characteristic elements of children's entertainment media in all its forms that now seemed to revive in advertisements. Further, it was expected that, in particular, elder series and formats were used in contemporary advertising with the aim to involve adults in something they loved as children in order to carry them into some kind of

nostalgia as they quickly can identify with media content from their childhood. Besides, it was also examined if features of newer popular children's formats from various media were integrated in the advertisements. It was generally anticipated that playful and childlike designs from the above mentioned media forms were incorporated into more mainstream advertising techniques with adult references in order to make them more identifiable with an older audience. Thus, in the second case study, advertisements were analyzed that demonstrate how essential features of children's retro and popular entertainment media are now being used, but also other infantile forms of representation in order to add a childlike fresh touch to brands' products and services by, simultaneously, addressing adults like children with childlike formats.

Thirdly, it was explored to identify general symbols, motifs and themes associated with other activities of children's daily life apart from stories and media. The first research has shown that many childhood icons were embedded in advertisements. However, the most symbolic ones that are generally associated with childhood such as milk, baby figure, teddy bear, toy car, Lego bricks, school blackboard, abacus, candies, ice-cream, and doll – are shown in Figure 4.17.



Figure 4.17 Examples of Baby and Childhood Icons taken from <https://www.iconfinder.com>

In general, these objects indicate the things a child is typically surrounded by. Moreover, it may also indicate the places it regularly visits like kindergarden and

school. It also shows the things it enjoys to eat – such as candies and ice-cream – and also food it must eat – such as milk. As a consequence, it was questioned if adult consumers could also be addressed with these childhood symbols in advertisements.

It was considered that if such typical symbols would be integrated in advertisements while addressing adults, this could imply that there might be the attempt of infantilization. The use of such childhood symbolism might, initially, simply evoke the idea of childhood. But it might also serve as nostalgia-based properties that may engender certain infantilizing mechanisms in advertisements to make adults remember their childhood memories and experiences again in order to link to the promoted product about which the third case study is about.

5. MULTIPLE CASE STUDIES: INFANTILIZATION IN TURKISH ADVERTISING

5.1. REINVENTING CHILDREN’S TRADITIONAL STORIES: ADULTS’ ADVENTURES IN THE FANTASY WORLDS OF BRANDS

Deeper meaning lies in the fairy tales of
my childhood than in the truth that life teaches.

– Friedrich Schiller, German poet

5.1.1. “I Have a Dream...”: Like *Alice in Consumerland*

Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (“Alice Harikalar Diyarında”) is a novel, published in 1865, which is about the seven-year-old girl named Alice who has a dream – she falls through a rabbit hole into a fantasy world where she encounters with many peculiar characters such as the Cheshire Cat, the Mad Hatter, and the Queen of Hearts. The story is characterized by a heightened sense of imagination and play that is often illustrated what can be figured out as “children’s worlds” through the uniquely child-centered settings of *wonderland* – “a place that is filled with things that are beautiful, impressive, or surprising” or “an imaginary place of delicate beauty or magical charm” that “excites admiration or wonder” (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

Western adults are mostly familiar with the notion of wonderland from childhood years. Since its first publication, the “Alice in Wonderland” theme in particular has held a powerful grip on the collective imagination giving the story lasting popularity with children as well as with adults – even if the story belonged to those fairy tales that were intended “only for children and could not have appealed to any but the most sentimental adults” (O’Keefe, 2004: 12). It can be observed that a story such that of Alice with its narrative course and structure, characters, and imagery has been enormously influential in popular culture through its huge potential which also allows

to function as a larger system in terms of infantilization in advertising. Ever since the book was published, there have been numerous adaptations made after it, but today, many people associate Alice especially with the visual product sprung from the magical world of Walt Disney in the 1951 movie, which became one of the biggest cult classics in the animation medium, and one of the most popular and commercially successful Disney films of all times. In the following, we will take a closer look to the Wonderland theme to figure out how brands implicitly make use of it in their advertisements, most notably, in respect to Disney's version which we will, therefore, consider when analyzing the campaigns.

**5.1.1.1. *Get Whatever You Want, Whenever You Want:
Welcome to Odealand!***

Being one of the most prominent banks in the Middle East and North Africa ("MENA") region, Lebanon-based Bank Audi entered the Turkish banking market in 2012 under the name of Odeabank as a fully-owned subsidiary. Today, Odeabank operates in 16 provinces across Turkey with 50 branch locations and 1,681 employees. The bank has reached 800,000 active customers and around 400,000 credit card holders in Turkey in the retail banking sector (Odeabank Annual Report, 2016). Having entered the banking sector in 49th place, Odeabank meanwhile ranks 8th in deposits and 9th in assets among all private deposit banks (ibid.). Continuing to receive international acclaim due to its rapid growth, personalized banking services and effective management model, Odeabank's success as a young and fast-moving player of the sector has been crowned with numerous international prizes since 2013, most notably to mention the Stevie Awards and Global Banking & Financial Review Awards. In 2017, Odeabank celebrated its fifth year in business and aims to become one of the first

brands to come to mind in all segments of banking with a view to joining the premier league of Turkish banking. In fact, this success story began like a fairy tale, in the true sense of the word!

During the launch period of Odeabank as a new banking brand in general and later its credit card “Bank'O Card Akses” in particular, special marketing activities were undertaken. At the beginning of 2013, the launch campaign of Odeabank started with a series of short commercials, in which famous Turkish actress and singer Hülya Avşar acted. Even Avşar was part of the commercials which gave no information about the product and services of the bank, it was permanently questioned in the advertisements if she would really act in them, as the following titles of the commercials show: “Hülya Avşar acting in a new advertisement?”, “Hülya Avşar: "I wonder if I am acting in Odeabank Advertisement?"”, and “Hülya Avşar is not acting in Odeabank advertisement”. This indicates a typical postmodern confusion that shows in itself a performative contradiction through self-reference. It is a circumstance for the viewer of not knowing of how to be sure what is going on in the advertisements, until, in the later outstanding commercial at the end of the year, the situation is clarified to some degree when the “real” advertising campaign – of course *with* Hülya Avşar – really started.

In October 2013, when Odeabank added “Bank'O Card Akses” to its range of distinctive services, the advertising campaign dramatically changed and was completely different than the preceding ones. It seemed that Hülya Avşar, who acted herself in the previous commercials, was now not her anymore. On a denotative level, we again saw Hülya Avşar in the commercial, but at the connotative level, obviously she turned out to become *Alice* in form of a woman-child entering Odea's *Wonderland*. Most notably, she seemed to dive into a dream – like Alice. The idea of a magical land to which Alice finds her way into, is recalled immediately after having seen Odeabank's

commercial as many scenes, in visual terms, have a strong intertextual reference to the well-known story. The commercial begins with the scene where Hülya Avşar sparks the viewers' curiosity and causes them to follow her in order to join the adventures that await when falling down the "Odeabank hole", positioned on an oversized Bank'O Card. The analogy is clear – we have the same situation where Alice follows the White Rabbit, then discovers a rabbit hole under a tree and goes underground to a different world by falling through the hole (see Figure 5.1). Bank'O Card's "O" has a double meaning here: It denotes the "O" as the bank's first beginning letter, but on a connotative level, it stands for the gateway to Odeabank's consumer world – Odealand – that is symbolized by the rabbit-like hole leading to it. In the metaphor going down the rabbit hole, the White Rabbit who seems to be represented for a moment by Hülya Avşar, is a symbol of invitation that strongly peaks our curiosity, and which we have to accept with the consequence that we are taken to a place that is quite unbelievable.

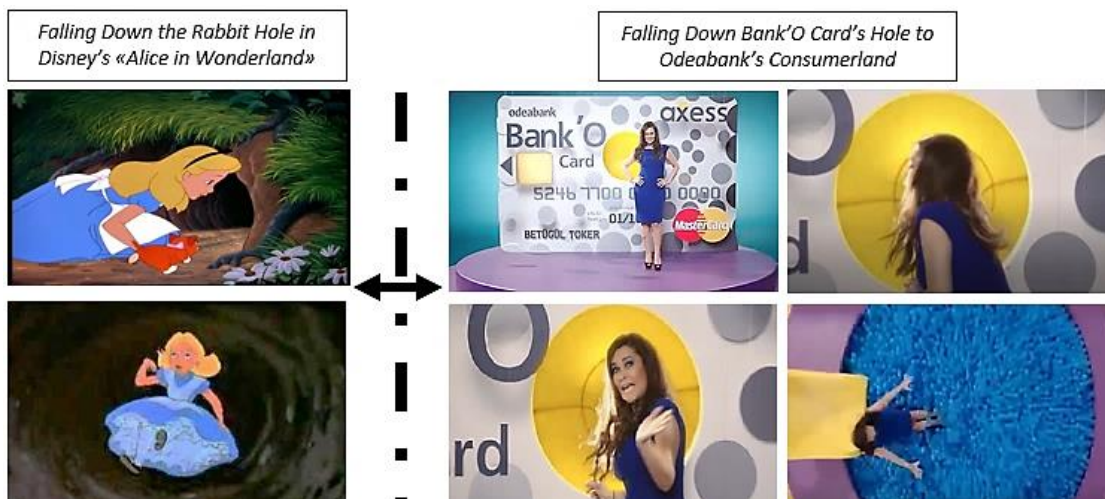


Figure 5.1. Falling Down the Hole: Alice's and Hülya Avşar's Way to Wonderland

While standing in front of the credit card, still being in the real world, she wears a blue dress and has her hair open. Further, the color of the hole and the chute Hülya Avşar is sliding down is yellow – the color of Alice's hair – and the balls that fill the

pool in which she falls are blue – like the main color of Alice’s dress. But after Hülya Avşar fell down the “Odea hole”, her appearance changes. Soon after when she arrives to Odealand, she transforms to a lady in white dress with a pinned-up hairstyle (see Figure 5.2). Disney’s Alice wears the famous blue-white dress; Hülya Avşar, whereas, has two outfits combining the two colours that, at the same time, draw the boundaries of the two worlds: the blue dress stands for our conscious reality before entering Odealand, whereas the white one is used in Odealand after the arrival symbolizing our unconscious world of the dream we are in. Obviously, two Alices are created. This duality is confirmed at the end of the commercial when Hülya Avşar in her white dress points out to her blue-dressed version, looking through the Odea hole to the viewer.



Figure 5.2. Duality of Alice Archetype

Hülya Avşar begins to introduce Odeabank with a cheerful song. Through it, we are informed that the bank has opened its gates to the new privileged world of Axess Card with its advantages for its customers with the slogan: “*Ne istersen iste Bank’O sende*” (“Absolutely, whatever you want, you have it at hand with Bank’O”). As the whole scenery of the commercial is constructed as a dream, this feeling is enhanced

when it is touted: “Everything you dream of is available with installments! Everything from market shopping to buying gas is available with installments”. The card owners are promised to get a special package to meet all their consumption needs. Hülya Avşar further declares that we are “*invited to a new world*”; and this world of advantages is represented in a wonderland-like playground where Avşar enjoys her consumerist adventures that are full of dream symbols best known from *Alice in Wonderland*.

Indeed, the Wonderland adventure is created in a very idyllic manner, starting in a beach-themed arrangement and continuing in other simulated locations such as a supermarket and gas station. In this consumer-driven world, Hülya Avşar is not surrounded by butterflies, flowers and bees like Alice in the original plot. Instead we see consumer-related objects as, for example, ice-cream, beach ball, shopping trolley or donut, but all in overdimensional sizes – one of the main characteristic aspects of Wonderland. But more than this, the commercial includes index signs in form of analogies between the original plot and the commercial as shown in Figure 5.3.

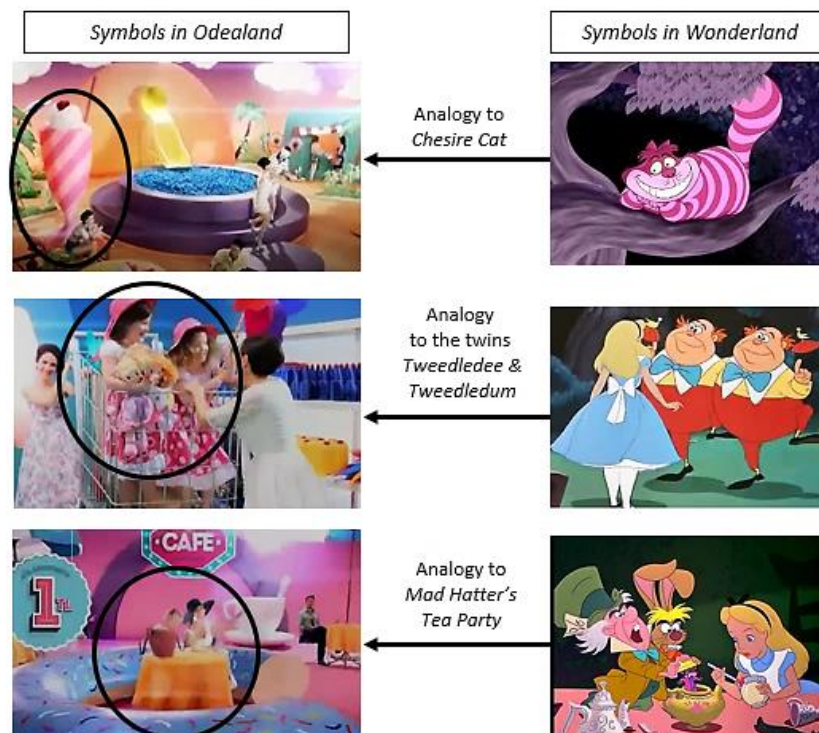


Figure 5.3 Symbols of the Wonderland Theme in Odeabank Commercial

In the beginning scene, we see a huge ice-cream which is an allusion to the “Cheshire Cat”, being pink and purple striped. Then, Hülya Avşar encounters twins in an oversized shopping trolley – a clear analogy to the twins “Tweedledee and Tweedledum” from the original plot. Later, when Hülya Avşar sits in a cafe, we see that she wears a hat, drinks a cup of tea, and on the table is a bag with a little dog in it as similar in the original plot a mouse pops its head out of the teapot, and in the background an oversized tea cup is positioned – all signs indicating to a simulation of the “Mad Hatter’s Tea Party” in an adapted version.

Alice’s adventures in Wonderland originally represent the child’s struggle to survive in the confusing world of adults. Moreover, the most obvious psychological theme that can be found in the story is that of growing up. When Alice travels through Wonderland, she encounters a way of living and reasoning that is quite different from her own. Many things do not make sense to her, but over the course of her time there she begins to understand. This is her transition to becoming more of an adult. This is also represented by her physical changes during the story, the growing and shrinking. In Odealand, there are only oversized objects which means that Hülya Avşar is shrunk throughout the whole commercial, like a little girl whose height is small, and consequently everything around her is bigger than herself. In his story, Carroll wanted to show his readers the unprejudiced and innocent way a child sees and approaches the adult world. In Odealand, we witness this as Hülya Avşar shows us how wonderful life can be via Bank’O Card Akses, and that being happy like a child again is not impossible.

The original story takes place in Alice’s dream, and the fantastic characters and phenomena of the real world are mixed with elements of Alice’s unconscious state. The dream motif explains the abundance of nonsensical and disparate events in the story. Because Wonderland is a dream, characters and settings change in dreamlike ways. The

Wonderland simulation in Odeabank's commercial which wants to reflect a better reality constructs its representation from a *phantasmagoria*: a fantastic sequence of haphazardly associative and dreamlike imagery mostly observable in many music videos (Firat & Dholakia, 2006: 129). Such fragmented images reveal the contours of dreams, which further uncover a realm of condensations and displacements that appear fabulous by the standards of Wonderland. In Odealand, we can observe the same. A shifting series of phantasms, illusions, or deceptive appearances created by a dreamlike imagination occur in a high intensity also at the end of the commercial (see Figure 5.4).



Figure 5.4 Phantasmagoria and Dreamlike Imagery in Wonderland

Finally, in the original plot, Alice adapts and loses most of her vivid imagination that comes with childhood. At this point, she has matured too much to stay in Wonderland, the world of the children, and wakes up into the “real” world, the world of adults. Conversely in Odeabank's commercial, where nonsense and other features of typically childish conduct are glorified by emphasizing and insisting on the desire and possibility for “getting whatever we want, whenever we want” – a typical feature of the infantilist ethos. All the paradigmatic signs, cleverly embedded in the campaign, are working together to communicate through the Alice in Wonderland story the latent meaning of the Odea dream, seducing adults to a perpetual state of eternal childhood. The ideological message is that everything is possible as everything is now attainable through credit cards. The attempt is to make us believe that Bank'O Card Axxess will

ensure the life we dream about, but in order to get what we want immediately, we have to leave the serious adult world behind us, in which many things are difficult or even impossible to reach under “normal” circumstances. But by entering Odealand, we can easily achieve in a playful and entertaining way everything we desire – like a child. Many people consider fantasy as an escape from their daily life by turning their frightening lives to a pleasant, impossible world (O’Keefe, 2004: 11). Experiencing such a fantasy, however, is “not so much an escape *from* something as a liberation *into* something, into openness and possibility and coherence” (ibid.: 12), which is supported by the postmodern worldview. In fact, at an unconscious level, consumers are “liberated” from their daily life worries and especially financial problems when they fall in a parallel world where they are promised to get everything they want as anything seems possible – like in a dream.

Alice’s Wonderland is a place where one has to think differently and forget about logic or natural order of things. In this sense, postmodern consumerism *is* Wonderland and challenges the modern ideas of rationalization, reality, truth or science, which is no longer reserved for technical developments, but for illusions and reenchantment. It is a hyperreality in which consumers can fulfill their desires for extravagant expectations if they believe and accept all the illusions in Wonderland as a serious alternative what modernism has limited to and named as reality. In effect, it seems that advertising itself becomes the White Rabbit in some way, that is trying to attract us, but especially to seduce the Alice in us to dive into Consumerland.

5.1.1.2. Diving into Brand New Worlds: A Child's Play with Yumoş

The Wonderland theme seems to continue in Yumoş's version of Wonderland. Yumoş is one of Turkey's most popular detergent brands, which has met with Turkish consumers in 1986. Since then it has become a requested brand in the Turkish detergent market with its quality products. Offering a multitude of fragrant varieties, Yumoş aims to bring softness, comfort, and above all good smell to clothes, and exactly this is promoted in outstanding commercials, especially in those, which simulate Wonderland. In 2013, the "Yumoş Extra" commercial shows a woman who is already positioned in an environment which typically resembles the Wonderland scenery. The intertextual reference to the fairy tale is given when we closer analyze the commercial.

Once again, like in Odeabank's commercial, we can recognize the archetypal figure of Alice in the woman shown in the commercial, who is blue-dressed with open hair, and has a great adventure like Alice in Wonderland as shown in Figure 5.5. Accompanied by the brand's mascot, the Yumoş bear, to which we will come later (see "Commercial Teddy Bears" in 5.3.1.3.), we see the woman enjoying Wonderland, especially the many colorful flowers that surround her. As they provide unique variations of smell, flowers are very important to Yumoş's product to distinct themselves from competitors. Nevertheless, the whole imagery gives the impression as if the woman would be in an animated movie for children, where the infantile design dominates and only the woman is real. Then, we witness the situation that both the woman and Yumoş bear are trying to dispel with oversized flowers in their hands an approaching shoal of fish, really evil and dirty looking, but that has no chance against the smell of Yumoş's powerful flowers. Here, the shoal of fishes is the signifier for the enemy; it stands for the awful smell and in fact, spoiled fish smells very bad. But as in every fairy tale, the enemy is defeated by the hero that is symbolized by the Yumoş

bottle, which is the signifier for amazing and magical smell against no enemy has any chance. However, if we would only consider the female voice-over, that can be heard during the above described scenes, we never could imagine that such a childlike imagery is parallely running on screen: “Güne ne kadar ferah başlasanızda, bazı kokular bunu gölgeleyebilir. İşte bu yüzden Yumoş Extra’nın ferahlığı etrafınızı kötü kokular sarsa da, sizinle kalır” (“No matter how fresh you start the day, bad smell could overshadow it. Because of this, the fresh smell of Yumoş Extra always lasts on you even you are surrounded by bad smell.”).

We recognize that the text and the imagery are created in two different styles: the text is informative and to be categorized as ordinary concerning its message from a typical detergent brand. However, this is nowadays not sufficient to attract attention. One way to make a significant change is by implementing the infantilization strategy. Then, the unwanted bad smell can be illustrated in an infantile way through a primitive representation of it in form of a shoal of fishes as Yumoş did, and in general, the whole commercial must be designed in a cartoon and child-centric format to make the fishes fit in the whole scenery – even if the target group is clearly grown women.

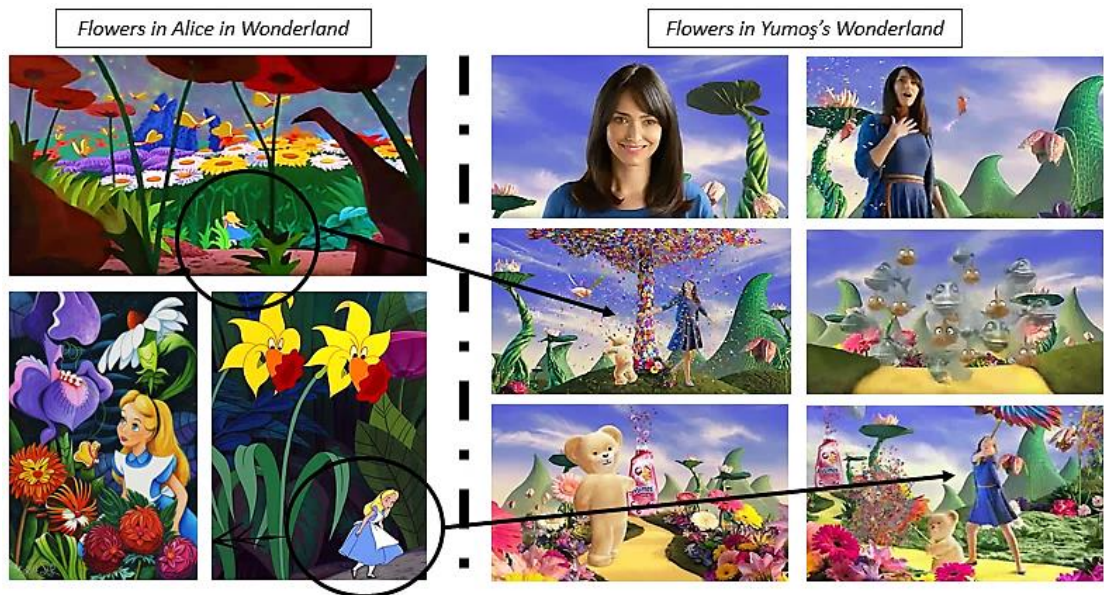


Figure 5.5 Flowers in Alice’s and Yumoş’s Version of Wonderland

Turkish women are invited to enter childlike worlds, moreover, to find themselves in spheres which actually are appropriate for little girls. We can find the same scenario in the preceding Yumoş “Extra Creations” commercial in 2012, where a woman – this time in white dress – again represents an adapted version of the Alice archetype. The woman opens a Yumoş bottle and is overwhelmed by the wonderful smell coming out of it. Soon after, she sees Yumoş bear’s footsteps appearing on the floor which she begins to follow and then, suddenly, enters Wonderland. The commercial invites the viewer to discover the “symphony of smell” of the new Yumoş Extra Creation (“*Yeni Yumoş Extra Creations’la kokuların senfonisini keşfedin!*”) and to “enjoy a brand new world” through the mixes of the smell of rose and jasmine (“*Gül ve yasemin kokularının karışımıyla oluşan yepyeni dünyanın keyfine varın!*”). In the commercial, the Yumoş bear performs like the conductor of an orchestra in order to make the flowers sing. Through this, as it can be seen by the symbols of musical notes coming out of the flowers, the smell of the roses and jasmines can be mixed.

In Disney’s *Alice in Wonderland*, flowers sing as well – scenes which are among the most characteristic ones in the movie. Besides, there are also the Queen’s flowers. In the commercial, we see white and red flowers on trees in the background. There is another characteristic scene from the Disney movie that somehow comes to mind in which the gardeners paint the white roses on the rose trees in red color as the Queen of Hearts wishes all roses to be red. In the commercial, it seems as if there is a visual analogy concerning the flowers on the trees, which are white and red as well, among them also roses but additionally jasmines, fluttering in the breeze-nature of Yumoş’s Wonderland as shown in Figure 5.6.

At the end, the woman is shown again while she is smelling the bottle, which makes clear that it was just a dream. Similar like the woman before, we understand that these dreamy short trips to Wonderland can be repeated each time when using Yumoş.

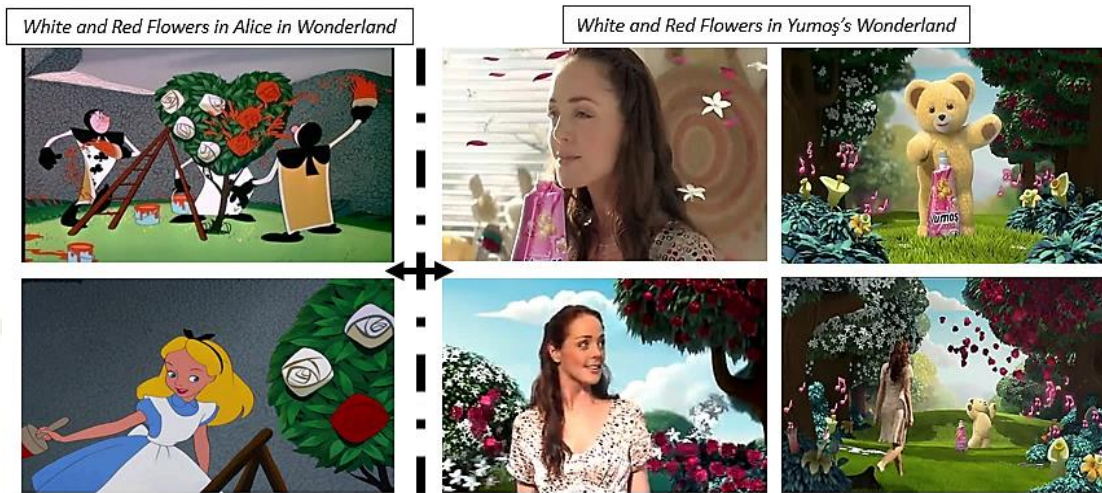


Figure 5.6 Flowers in Yumoş Extra Creations Commercial

The Yumoş bottle is the signifier for a gateway to Wonderland. Further, the potential exists, on a connotative level, to associate and identify oneself with the women shown in Yumoş's Wonderland. As a result, the mythical dimension enhances the value of the brand – consumers not only buy the detergent, but the whole concept of Yumoş's childlike wonderland. However, normally no adult women would daydream and imagine herself in such a scenery – but exactly this is repetitively shown in form of commercials on TV. The interesting point is that this, actually, makes no sense until we relate to theories concerning the infantilist ethos. The woman-child is excepted to perform girliness, navigate in imaginary spheres where everything is perfect, and express herself in childlike ways wherever possible. Even if many Turkish women cannot or never will be able to implement this in their real life, they are frequently confronted to this form of imagery when watching such commercials and, thus, reduced to the level of little girls.

5.1.1.3. *Toyota Joyride through Wonderland*

Founded in 1937 in Japan, Toyota is one of the world's largest automotive manufacturer and one of the most popular car brands in the world, which stands for reliability and safety as the most common characteristics associated with it. Toyota cars have always been regarded as family-oriented vehicles, that rarely break down, that are relatively affordable and economical, appealing to the masses. The company aimed to reinforce those values while including consumers to associate additional positive traits with its cars. For this, the past several decades Toyota has created outstanding marketing campaigns worldwide. Also in Turkey, Toyota frequently ranks among the highest in brand awareness. But most notably in 2010, Toyota started the remarkable campaign "Toyota Gibi Adam" ("A Man Like Toyota") which provided a quite different approach to a car. Individuals' features were now directly compared to Toyota's positive brand characteristics, moreover, they were *automobilized* as "becoming Toyota" was presented as an ideal to be reached. The campaign was continued in 2011 with a commercial which was again very striking, even more than the preceding one.

In the commercial, a little boy with a red wooden push cart is shown, who is following a path through a wonderland-like environment leading to a blue house. The dreamy, natural landscapes through which the boy slowly walks, easily can be connoted with fairy tale landscapes as many typical elements are positioned: windmills, small bridges, classic red-and-white spotted mushrooms, uniquely shaped strange trees, and big flowers. These advertising images are synonymous to pictures typically to be found in children's fairy-tale books as shown in Figure 5.7. It further represents a typical childhood utopia that has the above described particular setting, and further indicates that it is set apart from the rest of the world, being a place full of harmony, which evokes

a general sense of innocence. Such idyllic imagery is mainly rural, with a dominant imagery of trees, meadows, gardens, and always excellent weather, shiny with a blue sky and some clouds, as the season is usually summer.

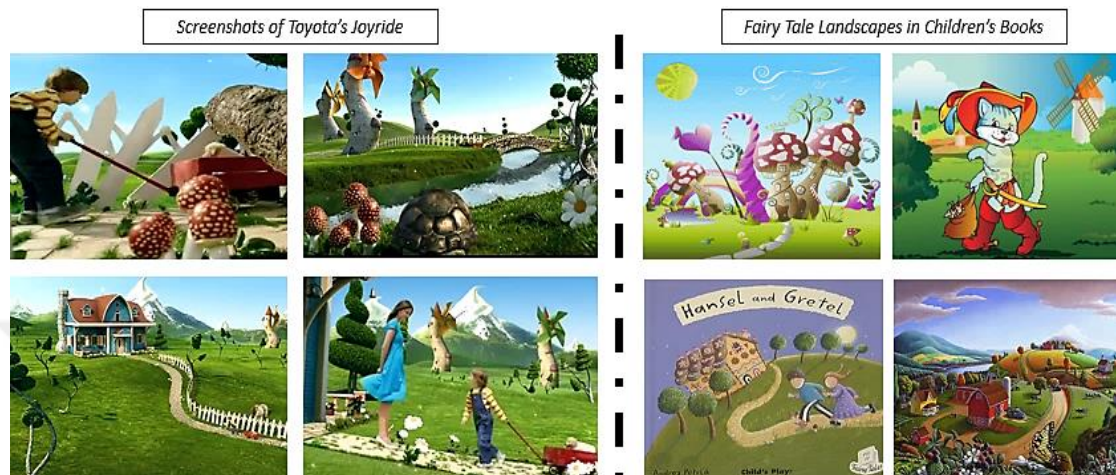


Figure 5.7 Toyota's Wonderland Versus Fairy Tale Landscapes

This utopian Wonderland shown in the commercial does not exactly resemble the *Alice in Wonderland* concept concerning its design. It is rather a classical picturization of a fantasy land where a fairy tale could take place. However, when the little boy arrives to the blue house where the path ends, which also could have been the path that the neighboring fairy-tale characters Hansel and Gretel had followed by finally arriving to the witch's gingerbread house, we indeed can see a woman that is shown waiting in front of the door of a house. However, it is not the witch, but again a blue-dressed woman with open hair – an indexical sign for the third Alice archetype in a row in our analysis. At first sight, it might be expected that the woman is the little boy's mother. But soon after the boy arrives, he again hits the road independently and goes the path back. Like in an extended version that could have been written as the continuation of *Alice in Wonderland*, it can be assumed that we see a simulation of the situation that Alice has grown up and now lives in her dreams in this wonderland

setting, and welcomes the little boy who travels like her through the dream as once she did when she was a child.

So far, it seems that we are watching a fairy tale story. This is enhanced with the gentle male voice-over which, like a parent, seems to have the role of storytelling a child off to sleep, and lulling the child into a place of safety and aspiration. The voice-over speaks the following phrases: “*Şu hayatta gizli kahramanlar vardır. Onlar kimseyi yarı yolda bırakmazlar. Zorlukların üstesinden yılmadan gelirler. Her engelde daha da güçlenirler. Güçleri ile cesaret, varlıkları ile güven ve mutluluk verirler.*” (“There are secret heroes in life who never let someone down halfway through. With every difficulty and every new obstacle, they become even stronger. With their power they give courage, and with their existence they give safety and happiness”).

Again as in the Yumoş commercial before, we have the situation that this quite motivating text actually not matches with the childlike imagery we see. In other words, it is to be questioned if someone would imagine this fairy tale scenes when hearing the above text only – normally not. Further, although it is actually a car commercial for the Toyota brand, there is any Toyota car shown that could be promoted, which may be due to the fact that in fairy tales cars not exist. As a result, in denotative terms we see typical fairy tale scenes embedded with the blue-dressed woman and a boy with his push cart. On a connotative level, however, this is a dream having a latent meaning: we can recognize in the blue-dressed woman the mother archetype in form of the grown Alice with an aura full of love and warmth, but in a mythical dimension, this is associated with affection and security – attributes which are further attached to the boy’s push cart which is the infantile signifier for the Toyota car, being the representative for the real car giving us affection and security, further supported by the infantile and lovely brand signature in the blue sky in form of a Toyota cloud as we can see in Figure 5.8.

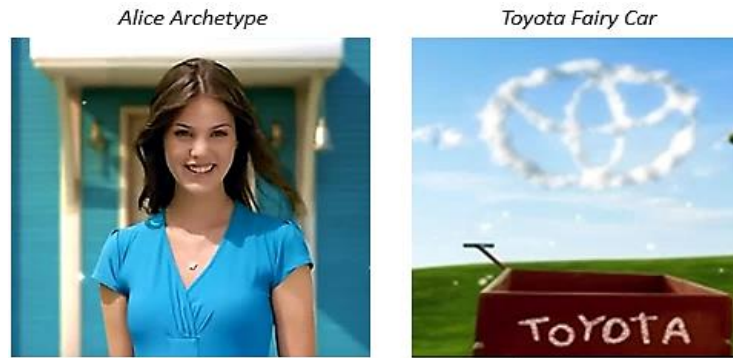


Figure 5.8 Alice Archetype and Toyota Push Cart

As the whole imagery does not look like a typical car advertisement the audience is normally familiar with, the last sentences of the voice-over clarifies the situation a little more: *“İşte biz o gizli kahramanlara Toyota gibi adamlar deriz. Toyota’sı olsun, olmasın tüm Toyota gibi adamlara selam olsun.”* (“These secret heroes we call ‘men like Toyota’! If they have a Toyota or not, we greet all men that are like Toyota.”). Remarkably, the hero archetype is now compared to “men like Toyota”. Toyota car’s positive character is transformed to a heroic brand archetype showing postmodern consumers – clearly directed towards adult men – new ways of building identities and self-expression. The message is enforced by highlighting that a man has not necessarily to own a Toyota car in order to be a “man like Toyota”. The Toyota character is presented as independent, to be separated from the car, and in order to make the effect even stronger, all this is told in a fairy-tale style to make the viewers feel safe by appealing to their unconscious mind, and even give them a new perspective that strong and good characteristics must not necessarily be human-like. With an emphasis to be close to nature as it is visually highlighted throughout the whole commercial, postmodern consumers are seduced to this organic environment in form of a wonderland dream in a lost time and, thus, satisfied for a while as this portrays the extreme contrast of where they actually live – crowded cities with artificial environments in stressful atmospheres of 21st century.

5.1.2. Back to Idyllic Nature and Purity: A *Heidi*-fication with Rinso

Rinso is a global brand of laundry detergent made by Unilever, and was introduced to Turkey in 1994. Even if Rinso has effectively managed its product life cycle with the help of product innovations, it was not able to promote its brand with great and outstanding marketing strategies for a long time. On the contrary, it pursued the classic way of detergent advertising by using housewives and from time to time Turkish celebrities as Beyazıt Öztürk or Ozan Güven who gave the message that the detergent makes the laundry whiter and brighter. However, this changed dramatically in 2012, when Rinso began a completely new marketing strategy in order to differentiate itself from other long-established competitors.

Rinso as a detergent produces – logically – bubbles and, thus, has connoted this with the “Bubble Man” that was created as the brand’s mascot in 2012. The Bubble Man is an infantile mascot with neotenous traits, mostly resembling the Michelin Man. It cannot speak, is cute and innocent in appearance, and makes the impression of a friendly and loveable character. In order to give a fresh, airy and translucent look to its character, the Bubble Man with its big blue eyes purely consists of bubbles and foam, who literally spreads cleanliness with its bubbles by flying around. In 2014, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of Rinso, a special advertising campaign was launched with Gülben Ergen, a famous Turkish singer, acting together with the Bubble Man. This campaign won the Bronze Effie Award in 2015 and not without reason as we will see.

The commercial begins with the scene where Gülben Ergen opens the washing machine and takes the laundry out of it. After she has smelled the freshness, suddenly Bubble Man comes out of the machine. Together, they go out to the garden, where another party of laundry is already hanging on the ceiling. Gülben Ergen, appearing happy than ever, continues to smell the laundry by taking one piece of clothes in her

hands. We further see flowers flying in the wind, caused by Bubble Man as he blows them towards the hanging laundry which explains its wonderful scent. These scenes are accompanied by Gülben Ergen' song, originally with the title “Sen (Düşman Olmaz Benden)”, that in a rewritten version is performed by her with the following lyrics: “*Tertemiz çamaşırlar, renklerini seviyorum. Mis gibi kokun var, sana doyamıyorum*” (“Fresh laundry, whose colors I love. You smell fresh, I can’t get enough of you.”). Actually, we witness how Gülben Ergen sings a serenade to the Bubble Man, who is responsible for the overwhelming Rinso smell, to whom she further sings: “*Hele sen, hele sen, sana bayılıyorum.*” (“Above all, I adore you.”).

However, this whole advertising imagery has a strong intertextual reference to a very well-known children’s story – *Heidi*. In denotative terms, the commercial denotes Gülben Ergen and the brand mascot Bubble Man, both placed in a housing project nested inside a nature setting. But in a connotative meaning, Gülben Ergen is the signifier for Heidi, and the Bubble Man the signifier for Heidi’s grandfather, symbolizing all together an idyllic childhood scenery in an environment that further is associated with rural nature as shown in Figure 5.9.

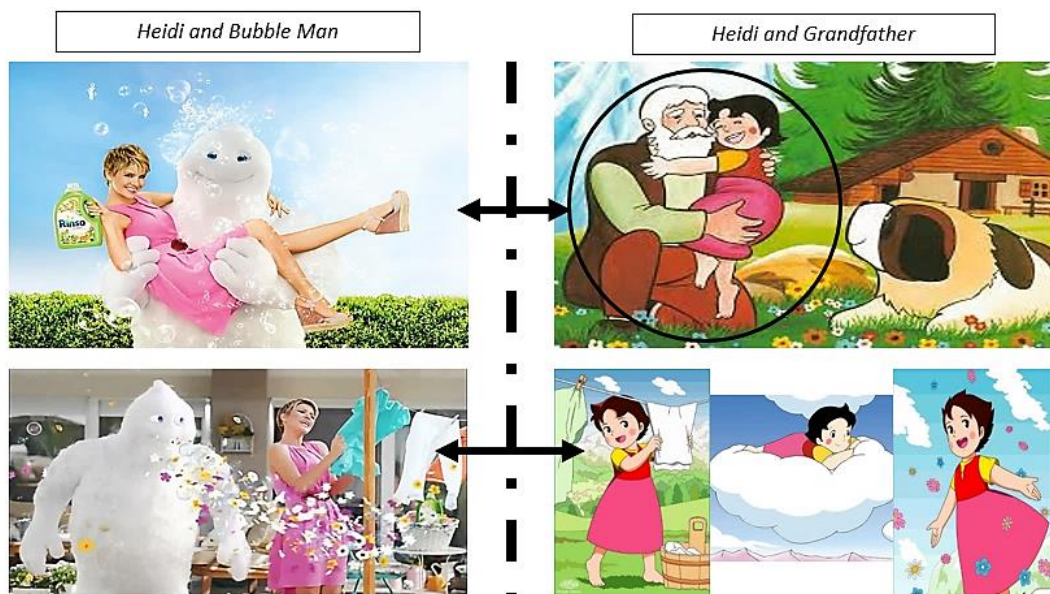


Figure 5.9 Gülben Ergen and Bubble Man in Rinso Campaign with Heidi Imagery

Written by Swiss author Johanna Spyri and published in 1880, Heidi originally is a children's classic which tells the story about a little girl's life in the Alp living together with her grandfather. Better known is the popular image of Heidi from the meanwhile nostalgic Japanese anime series by Zuiyo Eizo since 1974. Indeed, Heidi's transition from novel to anime has such been successful that decades after, people all over the world do not forget this little girl by having this specific and characteristic visual image of her in mind which is also implemented in the persona of Gülben Ergen in the Rinso campaign.

With this regard, many indexical signs exist – Gülben Ergen is shorthaired, wears a pink dirndl and shoes in skin color, acts playful and cheerful, and sings. In fact, we can definitely see a Heidi figure in Gülben Ergen as all features refer to the little girl from the Alp. But more than this, we can recognize various iconic poses that are quite identical from scenes we know from the *Heidi* anime as shown above in Figure 5.9. We see Gülben Ergen in Bubble Man's arms, as the same when Heidi's grandfather takes her in his arms. Heidi holds the laundry, so does Gülben Ergen. Flowers are flying around Heidi, which we can also see around Gülben Ergen. Famously, Heidi sits on a cloud; and Gülben Ergen merges with Bubble Man that also resembles the cloud having the same color, consistence, and ability to fly. In other words, we witness a process which we can name as *Heidification*, where Gülben Ergen is becomes Heidi.

Heidi is one of the most celebrated examples of a romantic image of rural childhood, the “very epitome of idyll”, perceived as a “natural child, simple (although far from simple-minded), innocent, with a keen eye and healthy spirit” (Nikolajeva, 2002: 118). The setting of the advertising campaign seems to simulate the charm of an idyllic nature we are familiar from the anime series of Heidi, implying an intact quasi-alpine atmosphere, where the alps are substituted by postmodern housing blocks

surrounded by a green and clean environment – a strong contrast to crowded cities like Istanbul that are polluted, unhealthy, tiring, overwhelming, and confusing. With this, the campaign has a deeper connotive meaning: it encapsulates the yearning for a natural and organic way of life, symbolized by the rural idyll, as more and more city-dwellers have the deep desire to go back to nature, being apart from industrial environments and technology. In this sense, a rural idyll is an idealized, romanticized construct that presents rural areas as happier, healthier, and with fewer problems than urban areas. Within this frame, the commercial utilises the ideological idea of postmodern living; the scenery is in accordance with what is frequently promoted in many other commercials that can be seen on TV and print press – the emerging trend of isolated housing projects in Turkish metropol cities, many promising a better and more natural life atmosphere.

It is Heidi's idyllic world which is a symbol for childhood innocence today that stands in strong contrast to our current world we live in, where we permanently feel insecure. Thus, when seeing Heidi, we immediately associate notions like naturalness, happiness, health, purity, and security. Heidi's story highlights in particular the relationship between granddaughter and grandfather. In general, grandfathers and granddaughters are characterized by an intimate relationship, where an emotional bonding and love between the two figures exists. Grandfathers can be connoted with protection and security. Further, grandfathers have a soft spot for granddaughters, and granddaughters adore their grandfathers. Against this backdrop, Gülben Ergen declares the Bubble Man that she adores him through the above mentioned song, and the Bubble Man also seems to have a soft spot for her. Gülben Ergen in form of a woman-child is even flirting in an innocent way with the Bubble Man which the lyrics of the song underline. From a psychoanalytical point of view, the campaign is built upon an oedipal

scenario. The father figure, which also can be embodied by the figure of the grandfather, is represented by the Bubble Man to whom Gülben Ergen is attracted as she adores him.

We recognize that the Rinso scenery is a sparkling reminder of the connection to this oedipal relationship appealing to our unconscious. With the Bubble Man, then, we feel embraced, and connected in a way as we would be to a grandfather who wants to protect us and gives us security. In the search of purity, Rinso detergent helps to “clean us up” from the dirty world we live in and from the dirt that is inside us which communicates the campaign’s deeper mythical meaning. Rinso makes use of the Heidi simulation, where reality seems to be a better one, and where we could be cleaner in psychoanalytical context. Rinso’s green bottle signifies a gateway to this innocent, natural, and childlike Heidi world. The connotation is made through the fact that Rinso promises with its product a cleaning process which becomes easy, enjoyable, and pleasant.

To conclude the analysis, it would be interesting to question if the above described considerations are not far-fetched as maybe there is no allusion to any Heidi scenario. It can be also argued that advertisers create this imagery intuitively without any intention. Well, if we take a closer look to Gülben Ergen’s official Instagram account we can find – what a coincidence – four posts within two years where she expresses her feelings for her favorite fairy tale which always was *Heidi*. One of that posts is shown in Figure 5.10. As a matter of fact, Heidi seems to be loved by everyone as well as by Gülben Ergen, who even seems to be a great fan of Heidi and further had the chance to slip into her role in Rinso’s campaign. Thus, we can clearly say that such advertising images mostly are never coincidentally created this way, and that Gülben Ergen, in this sense, even *is* the very epitome of a real-life Heidi that was employed and realized as a project in the Rinso scenario.



Figure 5.10 Facebook Post “Heidi” of Gülben Ergen

5.1.3. Enchanted Brands Environments

5.1.3.1. From Ikea to Cif: How Brands Satisfy the Inner Princess

In Western societies, many women grew up in the imaginary world of princesses. Originally, a princess is an important female member of a royal family like contemporary princess figures such as Princess Diana and Kate Middleton from England. Besides, there are fictional princesses that appear in fairy tales and other popular works of fiction as, for example, the Disney Princesses and Princess Barbie. There are many forms that princess culture has taken across time and space, but always enjoying a prominent and privileged position in girls’ everyday lives and fantasy worlds and, consequently, women’s collective memories. In some way, there are numerous messages everywhere presented to girls and women that being a princess is the best way to be. As a result of the two princess forms mentioned above, a third form emerges: wannabe princesses. These are any girls or women who want to be like a princess by living a life as a fairy-tale. This dreamlike imagination, more than a trend, has taken over the minds of many girls, but most notably, women in contemporary

societies who may continue to have daydreams of big, towered castles, lavish gowns, a fantastic wedding, and of course, the expectation of the big love by finally marrying the “perfect man” in shining armor who is awaited to come someday.

In *Mothering from Your Center: Tapping Your Body's Natural Energy for Pregnancy, Birth, and Parenting* (2013), Kent suggests mothers, whose daughters pretend to be a princess, to celebrate this sparkly aspect of their little girls’ self-expression; further, to teach them to celebrate their “inner princess” for a blossoming of their feminine essence. However, it seems that if especially brands pick up this suggestion in order to attract adult female consumers. In this sense, the *Inner Princess* – apparently an adapted version of the Inner Child concerning women – seems to be the self that believes itself to be more important than those around it, and because of that, deserving of special treatment. Women, then, desire certain things in life, such as extra rest, better holidays, special food, or more help. Their Inner Princess expects others to come to her aid and to do things for her that she would not consider to do for others; thus, for example, she genuinely believes that she is not made to do household chores and harder activities.

Seeing these women under and even over the age of 30, wishing for a fairy-tale fantasy that can never be, is both discouraging and disgusting because those women are infantilizing their womanhood for the sake of a myth. But many brands are supporting this, directly or indirectly, attempting to make a woman feel like a princess or a fairy tale star, at least for a few moments. Advertisements, in this sense, make use of numerous existing elements from fairy tales, mostly as kitsch, by reducing them into easily marketable forms. Figure 5.11 illustrates the most easiest way to implement this. On 6.3.2017, a Facebook post from ING Bank shows a woman excited like a little “princess” because of a sales promotion for ING customers. As if drawn by a little child,

a crown is positioned on her head and other consumer objects are sparkling around her – the childlike princess image seems to be perfect. On a connotative level, the drawn objects all together imply that she “could” be a princess as long as she can finance the products she needs in order to become one which is the ideological message. Women, then, are willing to regress to a childlike state where everything seems sparkling and pretty; they are willing to buy products in order to fulfill their dream of a princess-like lifestyle. The infantilization of womanhood, in this sense, is possible with the promotion of a princess ideology that begins in the woman’s childhood and does not end even when reaching adulthood. Thus, many women can be equated with childhood in such a way that they never seem to leave girlhood behind or continue with some form of girliness by never being satisfied with any product. As a consequence, it is not surprising that the “ideal” female consumer is the woman in form of a princess girl.



Figure 5.11 Become a Princess: ING Bank’s Facebook Post

The idea of the princess, which at a connotative level means feminine perfection for many, is well embodied by a multitude of Disney heroines, especially the more classic, mid-20th century ones. Merely having a perfect combination of beauty and pleasant nature, Disney’s princesses in earlier movies consist of the most popular characters of *Snow White* (1937), *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). In

the world of advertising, we can encounter childlike elements indicating the perfect Disney fantasy world of a princess, that can be cleverly integrated in campaigns, which is sometimes not recognizable immediately. The life of a princess is portrayed as an ideal – and who would not want to pass her days singing to birds while awaiting somewhere for Prince Charming? Exactly this seems to happen, in some way, in the Ikea spring commercial in 2015.

In an adjusted version, the commercial shows colorful, cartoonized birds flying to a family's house in a real environment. The instrumental music in the background strongly recalls the sound we are mostly familiar with from Disney's *Snow White* movie. In the spot, we see a housewife doing spring cleaning at a denotative level. However, she appears like a real-life Snow White with a hair bow, making playful movements and gestures during tidying and cleaning up her home. Here we have an allusion to movie scenes where Snow White is singing while she is cleaning the dwarfs' house. But the most striking signifiers are the cartoonized birds. In the commercial, the woman is surrounded by birds which bring various Ikea products to her home and help her in the household by tidying up. The little, colorful and lovely birds we see in the commercial seem to be a mix of birds performing in different Disney Princess movies above mentioned and shown in Figure 5.12. In the Disney movies, the birds play an important role as they are good friends and helpers of the princesses. Similarly in the commercial, it is obvious that the birds are by the woman's side. At the end, a male voice-over says in the commercial: "*Evlere bahar Ikea ile geliyor*" ("Spring comes to home with Ikea"). Birds, symbolizing spring time, bring new products from Ikea to people's home; and unconsciously, we connote this whole advertising imagery with Snow White's cleaning process and, in general, with a Disney movie-like atmosphere. The birds are the signifier for Ikea as a friend who can help. Like the birds, Ikea is able

to make life easier. Ikea – the Swedish multinational furniture retailer – is meanwhile very popular in Turkey since its first opening in 2005, and sells ready-to-assemble furniture, kitchen appliances and home accessories easy in construction and fun in use that “helps” the consumer to make life easier in contrast to other furniture stores in the classical sense. Normally, Ikea has a quite different advertising style which is based on “real” figures by showing the specific traits of the promoted products. However, this commercial seems to be an exception as a fairy-tale inspired theme was applied which is, without doubt, appealing to the viewer.

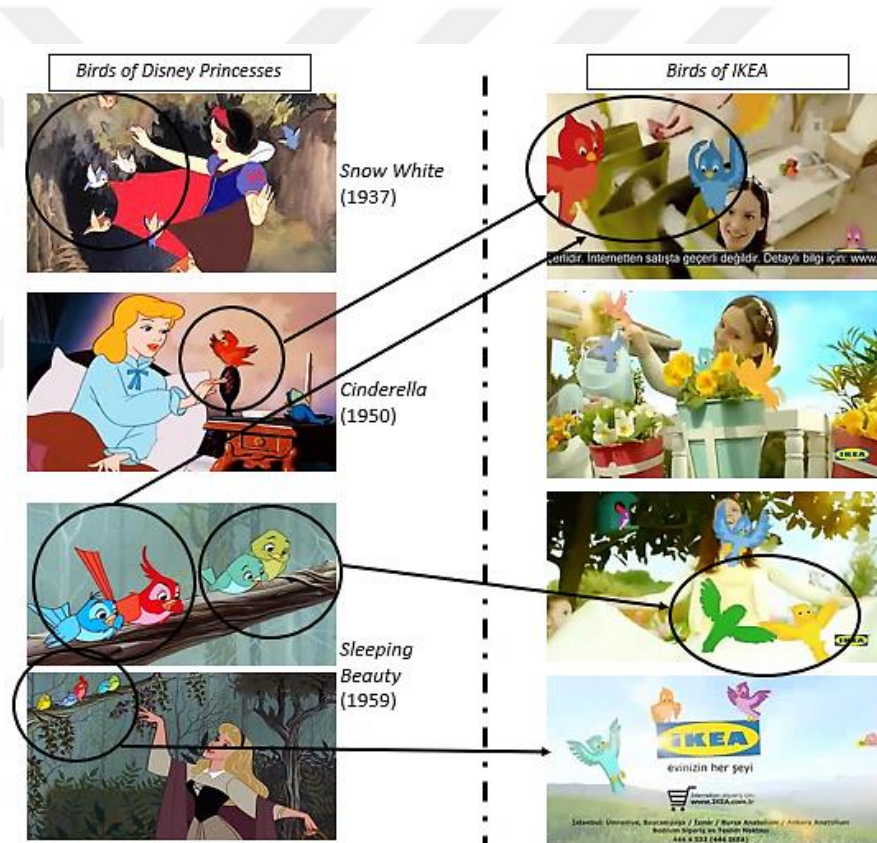


Figure 5.12 Disney Princesses with Birds and Ikea’s Birds

The promotion of the princess ideology includes an incredible life of wish-fulfillment and portrays the idea of a very special woman whose troubles are magically swept away by the entrance onto the scene of a fairy godmother or a handsome prince, that in marketing terms is the product. In particular, magical thinking allows a woman

to be a princess or even a queen of an imaginary world, where the laws of nature are suspended and where wonderful things can happen of which brands can also make use. Maybe one of the most remarkable series of commercials were created by Cif concerning this. Cif is a brand of household cleaning products by Unliever and has produced a line of animated commercials for its products since 2014, parodying various popular fairy tales with princesses like Cinderella as shown in Figure 5.13.



Figure 5.13 Becoming a Fairy Tale Star in Cif Commercials

In the spots, Cif uses typical fairy tale characters, setting them within stories about the “magical” power of Cif’s cleaning products – including princesses living in castles, sometimes adding a king or a queen, and also magical creatures like fairies can be seen or magical things like a curse happen. Cif’s primary audience is an older, generally female demographic, mainly mothers, meaning that the commercials are clearly directed at women. Remarkably, the female protagonists of each spot fulfill their missions which can be, for example, to break the curse by “cleaning the curse away” with the help of a hero – the Cif product. In order to make women reconnect with that

fairy tale magic, the commercials set out to transport them to a world where the boundary between reality and fantasy is blurred. At the end of the commercials, each time it is shown how the protagonists of the story suddenly transform to ordinary housewives.

We recognize that all the commercials, childlike in design, connote one thing in their message – that a woman using Cif operates on the level of a fairy tale character which means that they gain magical power that otherwise would not be attainable. The *Cif woman* is a powerful woman who is successful in cleaning issues, but only if she uses Cif, which symbolizes at an unconscious level the prince who will come and save her – not one day, but every time when she needs him. Thus, living in a time today where everyone wants magical solutions to their problems, this seems to fit perfect. Further, it becomes clear that these commercials, which are rolled out globally, are trying to reach women’s girlhood core in satisfying their “princess needs” even when they are already adult.

On Cif’s Facebook Page, this infantilization process is continued. With different posts, Cif attempts to communicate with female consumers in order to make them associate with fairy tale characters again and again. Posts like “Kraliçe gibi hissetme; çünkü "gibisi" fazla... Cif’le evin kraliçesi zaten sensin!” (“Don’t feel like a queen; because you are more than just like a queen... With Cif, you are already your home’s queen!) on 27.2.2015 and “Hepimiz masallarla büyüdük, peki sizin küçükken en sevdiğiniz masal hangisiydi?” (“We all grew up with fairy tales. What was your favorite fairy tale when you were a child?”) on 24.12.2012 support this. However, the deep wish of women who really want to be(come) a princess or any other fairy tale character may turn into a real life complex, actually, even there is no sustainable emotional drive behind this childish attitude. Striving for this princess lifestyle means to imitate the

idealized image of a princess world that women mainly know from Disney and other Hollywood productions which resemble each other in their core messages. It is to be questioned if such infantilizing ideological notions which are rooted in every woman's childhood should be celebrated into adulthood, but moreover, into the serious real world that surrounds us actually. Nevertheless, infantilization in difficult times may help to escape real-life problems by diving into a complete different fantasy world – a world where we feel good and happy for at least some seconds.

5.1.3.2. *Enchanted Kitchen Ensemble: Sunlight Cif's Beauty and the Beast*

In 2010, washing-up liquids produced under the brand Cif started to be marketed with the new compound brand Sunlight Cif. In its commercials, it was promoted that with the combined cleaning power of 100 lemons, Sunlight Dishwashing Liquid makes washing the dishes faster and easier, leaving dishes shining bright and residue free. Remarkably, the protagonists of the whole advertising campaign were dirty dishes that could talk. Even if there are numerous fairy tales in which objects talk, the best known for its talking household objects, including dishes, is *Beauty and the Beast*, a traditional fairy tale written by French novelist Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot de Villeneuve in 1740, and later slightly changed and released again by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont in 1756. However, as similar in Alice in Wonderland, the 1991 Disney version of *Beauty and the Beast* based on Beaumont's interpretation, is the first which comes to mind especially in terms of visuality. A tale as old as time may be, Sunlight Cif's campaign seems to cleverly borrow motifs of the 18th-century fairy tale that little resembles the original but more to its Disney movie version. However, the motives are adjusted and adapted in such a way that they are almost unrecognizable.

Aside from its huge international box office sales and being the first animated film to be nominated for an Oscar for Best Picture, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* tells the fantastic journey of the protagonist Belle, an independent young woman who is taken prisoner by a beast in his castle which is under a spell. Belle befriends the castle's enchanted household staff, including a candlestick named Lumière, a clock named Cogsworth, and a teapot named Mrs. Potts with her fun-loving sun Chip, a teacup. Once the human servants of the castle, who were transformed into objects as part of a curse, these enchanted friends are the Beast's faithful companions recognizing the potential in Belle and hold hope she might be the one to break the spell. One of the most charming elements of the movie is, without doubt, the enchanted furniture and inanimate objects. Without the enchanted objects, the story would become quite depressing as Belle would be completely isolated from the outside world. This also concerns the Sunlight Cif campaign – without the dishes the campaign would be uninteresting and boring. With this regard, these dishes as an extraordinary kitchen ensemble signify more than just normal dishes. In fact, they are an index for the intertextual relation to the dishes in Disney's *Beauty and the Beast* – they seem to talk and act the same way, thus, seem to be enchanted as well as shown in Figure 5.14.



Figure 5.14 Sunlight Cif's Dishes and Enchanted Objects from Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*

In an adopted postmodern remake, it seems as if the dishes – probably also once humans as in the original story – were enchanted, but most notably it is Belle – even if not notable at first sight – who appears in some form in the campaign where actually no “real” woman is seen. Belle has emerged in the last two decades as one of Disney’s most popular princesses, and it seems as if she has turned into an object now for advertising purposes as shown in Figure 5.15. Belle is no longer a princess in a wonderful yellow dress as we know her from the Disney movie; now she is the yellow Sunlight Cif bottle and even the bottle’s top color is the same as her hair. The letters of the brand name “Sunlight” are depicted on the bottle in dark blue color – the same color as of the suit jacket of the Beast, originally a prince who was magically transformed into a monster as punishment for his arrogance. The iconic pose of Belle and the Beast dancing together seems apparently objectified and transferred to the bottle cover – as the yellow bottle and the blue-colored letters are composed together. Thus, the Sunlight Cif bottle is the signifier for Belle, and together with the enchanted dishes, we make positive associations with this story at an unconscious level, which consciously is difficult to be aware of.



Figure 5.15 Sunlight Cif Product as Disney’s Belle

This childlike enchanted brand environment is a good example to understand how differently motives of fairy tales can be used and simulated to attract adults' attention – especially when hidden, from a semiotic perspective, such brilliantly. The story of the dishes further goes on Cif's Facebook page. On numerous Facebook posts, the illustration of the dishes' enchanted life is continued at every opportunity. With ironic posts such as “Sunlight sayesinde kirleri adadan gönderiyoruz!” (“Thanks to Sunlight, we send the dirt away from the island”) on 18.6.2014, referring to the popular reality TV competition *Survivor*. In general, it is attempted to establish a closer contact to the consumer with the slogan “Gününe sihir katar!” (“[Sunlight Cif] adds magic to your day!”), further enforced in a post on 3.11.2015: “Sunlight'in sihirli şapkasından ışıltılı tabaklar çıktı. Hadi bu sihir sizin de mutfağınızı sarsın” (“Sparkling dishes came out of Sunlight's magician hat. Let the magic also happen in your kitchen”).

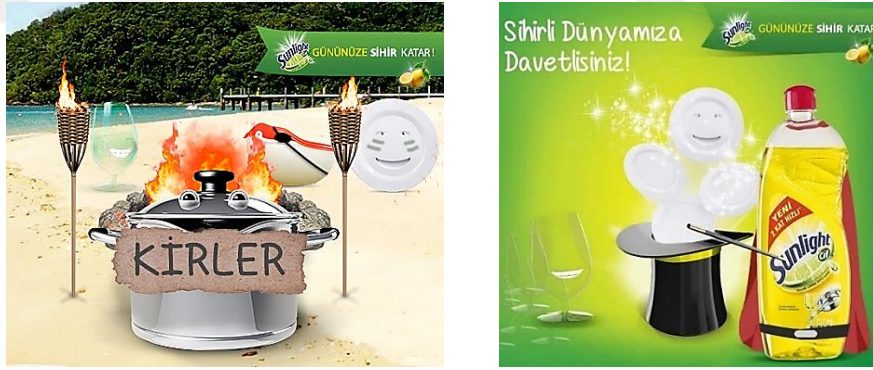


Figure 5.16 Sunlight Cif's Facebook Posts

5.1.4. When Talking Animals Advise Adults in Financial Issues: Garanti Bank's Fabulous *Bremen Town Musicians*

Garanti Bank, established in 1946, is Turkey's second largest private bank providing a wide range of financial services to its more than 14.6 million customers with approximately 20.000 employees in 959 domestic branches. Garanti is in the leading position in the Turkish banking sector, also well recognized around the globe

due to its dynamic human resource, unique technological infrastructure, customer-centric and innovative products and services. Garanti builds its strategy on the principles of efficient, profitable and sustainable growth it has pursued since inception. Moreover, the bank aims to approach its customers in a transparent, and responsible manner, improving customer experience continuously by offering products and services that are tailored to their needs.

Until now, Garanti Bank has launched numerous advertising campaigns. But at the end of the year 2011, Garanti Bank started a series of commercials which not only lasted for the next four years but were completely different in comparison to its preceding marketing campaigns. The new campaign was inspired by one of the best-known and most popular fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm, the “Bremen Town Musicians” (Turkish: “Bremen Mızıkacıları”) in 1819. The original plot of the German folk story is about a small group of elderly animals who escape from their cruel human owners and set out to start new lives as musicians by forming a musical group. Because of their singing which is beyond awful, they scare away their first audience, a group of robbers stationed in a cottage. As a consequence, the animals settle into the cottage and live happily ever after. Even if the animals are old and weak, they are wise and clever in engaging in teamwork which is one important message of the story: by using their head they work together and, consequently, they achieve to live better.

Garanti Bank used the popularity and appeal of the animals which were considered to help now the bank’s customers to improve their lives for the better. The campaign brought these animals to life by creating a cast of animated characters each different and unique in its own way, being copies of the original but modified and adapted to Turkish culture, acting and talking to real people in a real constructed environment. Whereas the original story had a donkey, dog, cat and rooster as animal

characters, the adapted version in the advertisement substituted a dove and a hen instead of the cat and the rooster. The first commercial started with a trailer comprising all the four animals singing the bank's new jingle beyond awful like we know from the original plot, and performing in the style of a musical where we also see the famous silhouette of the animal pyramid. Humorous in its nature, the advertising campaign was designed in form of an episodic sitcom with the aim that consumers would build an emotional attachment to the brand with its talking animals that were dubbed by actors and actresses who are famous cinema and television characters in Turkey.

At the first glance, it is obvious that the chosen animals embody positive cultural meanings and represent symbolic qualities being desirable characteristics appropriate to be transferred to the attributes of Garanti Bank. On a denotative level, the animals represent the Bremen Town Musicians. However, in connotative terms, all animals are signifiers carrying certain symbolic meanings as we can recognize in the advertising campaign. The dove, a symbol of messenger and hopefulness, brings the good news of the bank's support credit to a young office worker desperately sitting in the office who wants to marry but has not enough money. The hen, identified with features like assurance which can be associated easily with the bank in Turkish culture, promises an older man that everything will be "in guarantee" for retirees who do not have to wait in line for long hours anymore but can now have their salaries deposited at the bank. The dog, known as the man's best friend because of its guardianship and loyalty, advises a small business owner while playing backgammon in front of his shop to get a home insurance from the bank where he needs only small amounts to pay. And an employee with low income learns from the donkey – a symbolic representation of hard working, guidance, and determination – that no matter how small his saving is, the bank will give

him the best rates. Below in Figure 5.17, we see a visual summary of the animals in the commercials.

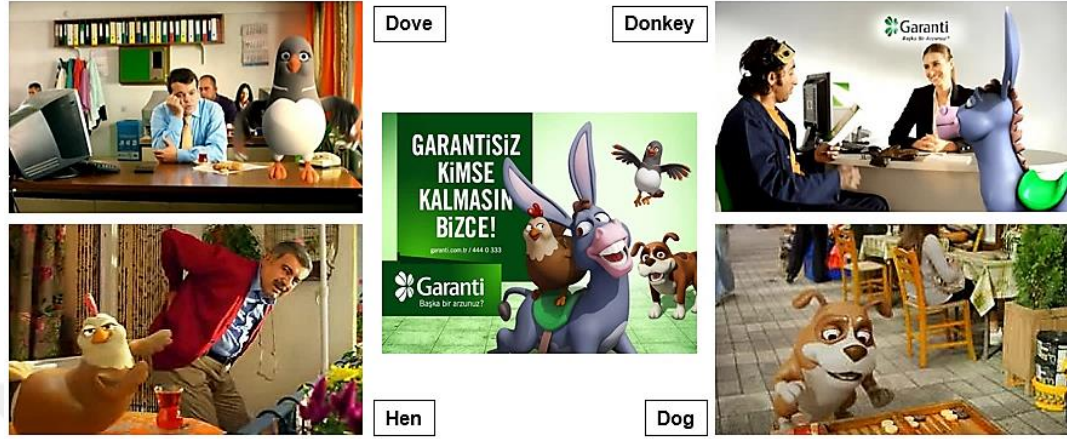


Figure 5.17 Scenes of Garanti Bank's Launch Campaign with the *Bremen Town Musicians*

With the slogan “Garantisiz kimse kalmasin bizce” (“We think everyone should have Garanti”), the overall message is expected to be given to all classes of Turkish society but especially to low and middle classes as the main target audience such as office workers, employees, housewives, retirees and small business owners who have faced financial problems because of the economic situation of the country and generally in the world, and have lost trust in banks. Garanti Bank's animals advise these classes to take active steps to change their financial situation for a better life like the Bremen Town musicians have earlier done, who were also dissatisfied with their lives and made the choice to improve themselves, rather than sitting back and tolerating their situation. This advice occurs in the advertising campaign in two infantilizing ways.

Primarily, the visuality of the advertisements is designed in an infantile manner concerning its protagonists. The whole imagery creates the impression as if the viewer is confronted to scenes of a typical Pixar-like animation movie. Moreover, different mixes of other productions can be figured out which indicate to postmodern features, most notably, containing intertextual patterns. The donkey, for example, seems to be a

hybrid; the result of a combination of the donkey from the children’s program *Winnie-the-Pooh*, concerning the color, and the type and character of the donkey from DreamWorks animated movie *Shrek*, concerning its movements and the behavior including features as being hyperactive, talkative, and funny as shown in Figure 5.18.



Figure 5.18 Garanti Bank’s Donkey: Adapted from Donkey Characters of Winnie-the-Pooh and Shrek

It seems if the campaign is anchoring in the adult viewer’s psyche as a child by creating some kind of positive feelings and experiences via funny and childlike entertainment. But if the target group are adults like retirees or small business owners why, then, are they addressed in such a childlike way? It can be questioned how normal or appropriate it is, or even to what extent could or even should an adult viewer take the bank and its message seriously when serious financial matters are promoted for years as a whole campaign series in an infantile style with fairy tale characters, that in the original plot were indeed serious and presented in a sophisticated manner. But now we can see that, for example and as mentioned above, that the old donkey from the original plot returns to a puerile Disneyfied Winnie-the-Pooh-and-Shrek-like animated donkey, that is presented as being smart enough to give advise to an adult man who has serious financial problems.

Anthropomorphized animals – the attribution of human traits to animals – go back at least as far as the talking animals of Aesop, a Greek storyteller, who used to make moral lessons in his fables by the end of 5th century BC. Inspired by fable writers of classical antiquity, and more specifically by Aesop, it was especially Jean de la Fontaine (1621–95), who later became famous for his anthropomorphic animals. Being a type of fairy tale, fables are short stories. They frequently have the same fantastic elements of fairy tales, usually animals acting and talking like humans whilst retaining their animal traits, but the most important part is the meaning behind the story. Typically, fables illustrate a particular moral conclusion and teach a lesson. Animals are “useful vehicles for educating and entertaining children because of their ability to be like us and yet not like us” (DeMello, 2012: 331). The make-believe world in which fantasy creatures live and animals talk to each other (and to humans) is the ideal world in which to include lessons on friendship, morality, kindness, or bravery (ibid.).

Originally, Aesop’s fables were not meant for children but over time, however, they were regarded as children’s literature (Silvey, 2002: 1). Talking animals have been featured especially in children’s literature, most notably, because the themes and characters appeal especially to the young as the stories are often humorous and entertaining for children. Besides, animals play a major role in children’s stories because, even today, children still live in a world in which animals possess human characteristics and can be friends, teachers, or even parents (ibid.: 332). Further, fables are instructive tales that can be used by parents and pedagogues. They include captivating stories, compelling characters, and imaginative use of language. “Because childhood is so brief, we need to expose our children to the best of our literary heritage in their childhood years – and even beyond” (ibid.: ix) and, apparently, exactly this is happening in many advertisements now by addressing adults with such animals. In this

regard, it seems if Garanti Bank has instrumentalized the original fairy tale of the Bremen Town Musicians into various fable-like short episodes as its advertising campaign, each having a distinct moral conclusion by teaching a lesson not to children, but adult consumers, in a playful way as if they would be children to be entertained while they learn something new.

Mostly, the purpose of fables is to indicate but often to ridicule negative human qualities. With this regard, Turkish culture is rich with proverbs and folktales around animals and obviously many of them are indicated by the animals in the campaign. A critical approach, in this sense, illustrates the consideration that the campaign's real message is as the following: "Kuş kadar beyninizle, eşek gibi kredi alacaksınız, köpek gibi ödeyeceksiniz, biz de sizi tavuk gibi yolacağız" (Çetiner, 2012). Literally, this means "With your bird brain, you will take a loan like a donkey, pay for it like a dog and we will pluck you like a chicken", which makes in English no sense at first sight. However, the "bird brain" stands for a stupid person, who has not the capacity to gain knowledge and to make right decisions; "donkey" is also a negative term when referring to a person by reducing him or her to a primitive level, but additionally it means here that a person will carry the burden of taking a loan like a donkey; "dog", another pejorative term when referring to a person, can embody the view that it has nearly the position of a slave who has to obey his owner, here the bank, who now is dependent on the institution. With "pluck a person like a chicken" it is implied that the bank actually will take all the money much as it can from its customers. Thus, it can be argued that the negative attributes of the animals are actually transferred to the customers (ibid.).

One major characteristic of infantilization is about the unequal power relations it ensures, and obviously we have this circumstance here which refers to such kind of infantilization that may be associated with *stupefication*, a combination of the word

“stupefy” and “stultification”. In comedy, but especially in satire, through which reality is reflected by abstracting it, childishness is in most cases an oblique representation of mental immaturity and for insufficient intellectual development (Draitser, 1994: 48). Infantilization, then, can be described as a technique of comedy that is frequently used in humorous advertising. This is enabled with, first, the use of childlike imagery to gain the attention of adults, and, second, the way how the animals approach the adults in the commercials – as if they would know everything better than the adults who are in trouble. Later, a new member was added to Garanti’s animal family – a turtle – that could be seen in the campaign’s last commercials until December 2015, whereas the previous animals began to disappear. Finally, all animals were capable to influence the adults in the commercials in order to make them go to the bank. It seems that in reality it was not different. After two years of the campaign, in 2013 the total number of customers has increased from 10.701.000 to 12.400.000. An increasement in the number of credit cards from 8.500.000 to 9.300.000 and bank cards from 6.500.000 to 7.350.000 could also be observed which underlines the success of the campaign.

5.1.5. Following in the Footsteps of *Nils Holgersson*: Around the World with Turkish Airlines’ Wingo

Established in 1933, Turkish Airlines is a global brand today, following an effective strategy of turning industry-related opportunities to its advantage due to its robust commercial characteristics. Especially since 2012, Turkish Airlines makes important steps to become more successful in terms of brand awareness, wherein the company realized many crucial projects to further develop its global brand image. In addition to effective and successful campaigns in the social media, new brand investments through sponsorship agreements, most notably in the fields of sports, and advertisements featuring sporting sensations in form of celebrities such as Kobe Bryant

and Lionel Messi have a worldwide impact (Başbuğ, 2013b). In 2012, Turkish Airlines also created a sub-brand called “Wingo” for promotional flights of Turkish Airlines with the slogan “Wherever you go, it’s easier with Wingo!”. Soon after, the new brand mascot was introduced – *Wingo*, a lovable wild graylag goose (see Figure 5.19).



Figure 5.19 Turkish Airlines Homepage with Brand Mascot Wingo (1.6.2017)

The goose is a talking animated character, which is adventurous and fun-filled, and has the great function to keep passengers up-to-date the airline’s latest deals in order to make customer’s life and flying easier. As a matter of fact, it seems to be a plausible reason to use a goose as a brand mascot for an airline. In this sense, Wingo denotes a wild goose, but the connotative meaning is decisive: geese are long-distance flyers, they can fly for a long time before they must stop for rest, which are features that can be easily associated with Turkish Airlines. Thus, with the introduction of Wingo, Turkish Airlines has announced new deals and campaigns through the goose as the brand’s ambassador. However, on a mythical level, we can realize that the goose signifies much more than its above described connotation. There seems to exist a strong

intertextual reference to a well-known fairy tale from which the main idea of the brand mascot might be inspired from. Swedish novelist and Nobel Prize winner Selma Lagerlöf's most internationally well-known book *The Wonderful Adventure of Nils Holgersson* (better known in Turkey as "Nils ve Uçan Kaz") became a children's story first published in 1907, which was originally written as a geography schoolbook for public schools in Sweden. The book does, indeed, inform the reader of the geography, flora and fauna of the country, but not in the format of an expected study guide. Moreover, the frame of the book is a traditional fairy-tale plot in which the protagonist Nils is initially a lazy boy and cruel to animals, but later is cursed after having trapped a gnome. He is transformed into a midget and must improve in order to become human again. As this is familiar to us from Alice's metamorphoses in Wonderland, Nils is now shrunk – a circumstance which leads to the essential component of the children's book: an expansion of the child's worldview through a journey on and with Martin, the wild goose, he soon befriends. With the story, Lagerlöf delivered such a vivid narrative that immediately draws the reader in, thus, developing a feeling for flying high and swooping low with the goose. In fact, who has not one day dreamed of being able to fly as a child? A hundred years ago when children were not familiar with air travel, the book would have provided a wonderful aerial perspective of the landscape of Sweden.

Nevertheless, the fairy-tale became in particular popular due to its anime adaptation in the 1980s, later with its movie versions in 1962 and 2011, and most recently with a new animation series in 2017. As evident from the visuality, there is a striking resemblance between the fairy tale's goose and Turkish Airlines's mascot as shown in Figure 5.20. In general, it seems that the fairy tale, in its concept, is quite appropriate to the story that Turkish Airlines wants to tell its customers. Thus, Turkish Airlines adapted the tale by copying the figure of the goose and making it as its new

brand mascot. However, one important question arises: Where has remained Nils? We cannot see him in the advertisements of Turkish Airlines.



Figure 5.20 Nils Holgersson in Turkish Airlines' Brand Communication

In this sense, adding Nils to the campaign was not necessary. The goose becomes a sign which refers to another sign's absence – here it marks the absence of Nils. Further, the goose is an index for the Nils who is not present. This absence has to be filled by the Turkish Airlines passenger. The connotation succeeds when consumers unconsciously understand themselves as *becoming* Nils Holgersson – they now have the chance to follow in his footsteps by travelling around the world on Wingo which, actually, stands for the planes of Turkish Airlines. The consumer is invited to “Meet Wingo! The adventurous graylag of Turkish Airlines [...]! He loves to discover new worlds!”, as stated on Turkish Airline’s Homepage. However, whereas Nils Holgersson was only allowed to see Sweden, Turkish Airlines opens the doors to the whole world offering its customers flight options to more than 200 destinations worldwide. We realize at the end of this analysis that Wingo speaks to the *Nils in us*, as the whole

marketing scenery is constructed to make us regress to this simulated fairy tale world where no boundaries exist to which the postmodern consumer yearns for.

5.1.6. Monstrous Insights into Brands' Microworlds

In 21st century consumer culture, hygiene has complex associations, most of which derive from the notion of progress and which demands, above all, purity and sterility. The mission of being germ-free, for example, must be pursued whatever it costs, even if the elimination of germs requires heavy doses of pesticides, chemical preservatives, fumigation, radiation, and other artificial substances. Especially household products and other home-related product categories as carpets and paint attempt to ensure hygiene at the highest level. The same occurs in other areas. Food is not just food anymore – it has to be clean, free of additives and ideally organic.

Most of the time, people spend the days of their lives in different ways, but completely oblivious to the microscopic world around them. In fact, this is great because most of that microscopic world seems to be scary and unhygienic – especially if we consider advertisements that exactly try to depict this in remarkably creative ways and provide insights into their brand's microworlds. Advertising allows the consumer to recognize a reality which could be real enough to make consumers believe that life under the microscopic level might definitively look like this if it actually could be “real”. With this hyperreal approach, it seems that the infantile, anthropomorphic, and dwarf-like representation of micro-organisms has emerged as a distinct commercial narrative. This infantilizing narrative style concentrates on qualities such as childishness, cuteness, and humour which are normally used in children's entertainment. The contrary representation of micro-organisms would be depicting it in a gloomy, dark and realistic style, positioning them as being responsible for evil

contagion and invasion, being frightening and repulsive. Infantilization, in this sense, may allude to the world of brands in a way the consumer wants to see and, in fact, can only see in hyperreal circumstances: cute, little colorful monsters representing the “unwanted”, yet leading to a “general fascination for spectacular invisible creatures into a cocktail of irony and contemporary scepticism” (King, 2013: 115).

The fantasy world of children shows that monsters – usually large, ugly, and frightening imaginary creatures in mythology – play an important role in childhood. In *Killing Monsters: Why Children Need Fantasy, Super Heroes, and Make-Believe Violence*, Jones suggested that all children want to feel secure, happy and strong and that their fantasies can tell what they need in order to attain these feelings (2002c: 21). In this sense, children’s stories featuring monsters may help children to constructively manage and decrease their fears. Furthermore, they could empower children by offering them a unique vehicle through which to learn and reconstruct things in their world, and by allowing them to imagine, hope and dream.

The monster story offers children the opportunity for *catharsis*, which is a psychological process of releasing, and thereby providing relief from, strong or repressed emotions. Typically, a monster must be destroyed and the protagonists must triumph because of determination, goodness, and ingenuity. In the end of the story, when the monster is driven back or destroyed, the catharsis is enormously relieving. Through the monster story, a child is given permission to exercise antisocial feelings like fear and aggression which society normally demands to keep under control or even to suppress in the unconscious, which thus provides a kind of safety valve from the stresses of everyday life (Jones, 2002c: 6). Obviously, it seems that the same happens in advertising when adults are involved as well in a scenery that makes them confront to monster stories, that in contrast to earlier times in their childhood provide now the

opportunity to achieve a state of catharsis – both childlike and primitive in nature – as a satisfying cleansing experience is enabled by brands' products through which all negative affect seems to be obliterated. In the following, we will see how different brands make use of infantile monster-like creatures in their campaigns in order to drive them back and, if possible, even to destroy them completely to trigger an internal release in adults. Instead of using a realistic picturization of monsters, which might have an repulsive effect, the infantilizing approach is mostly preferred in such advertising as it is perceived as harmless and, thus, having an attracting effect, not only on children but also on adults. As Figure 5.21 shows, it makes a huge difference whether the realistic or the infantilizing approach is used.



Figure 5.21 From Realistic to Infantile: Representation of Monsters in Movies

5.1.6.1. *Infantile Germ Wars with Domestos*

House cleaning rituals have an element of warding off the dangers of dirt and pollution. Especially advertisements referring to toilet cleaning play on concerns about being unclean, and encourage a moral virtue through exaggerating the need for killing germs, so that more of the promoted cleaning products will be bought. Without doubt, it is Domestos which comes first to mind when talking about germs. In the 1920s, Domestos was first launched in Britain, but after being acquired by manufacturer

Unilever in the 1960s, it has gained international expansion especially with its product Domestos Thick Bleach. Today, Domestos is a well-established global household cleaning brand, sold in 35 countries and best known for “killing all germs dead” in the toilet. With this, Domestos is taking a *war on germs* to which people are most affected.

Many TV advertisements for toilet cleaners or disinfectants include men in white coats telling the consumer that toilets, baths, and sinks are full of germs. The use of such experts is a technique used to gain not only the consumer’s attention but also to provide credibility for the message. Nevertheless, since 2005, Domestos has pursued a different strategy by inventing computer-generated germs representing Salmonella, E.Coli and Staphylococcus. Each germ asserted their plans to inflict suffering, sometimes in parody of well known movies such as *The Godfather*, before being wiped out by the hero – Domestos. The slogan for the campaigns was “Milyonlarca mikrop ölecek” (“Millions of Germs Will Die”), that are further communicated until today through germs as cartoonized green monsters. The below illustration in Figure 5.22 shows the striking depiction of germs. Compared to the photographic documentation on the left, which shows how germs really look like from the scientific perspective in denotative terms, Domestos’ cartoon version on the right side is extremely dramatic and exaggerated which, however, is our connotation with germs today .

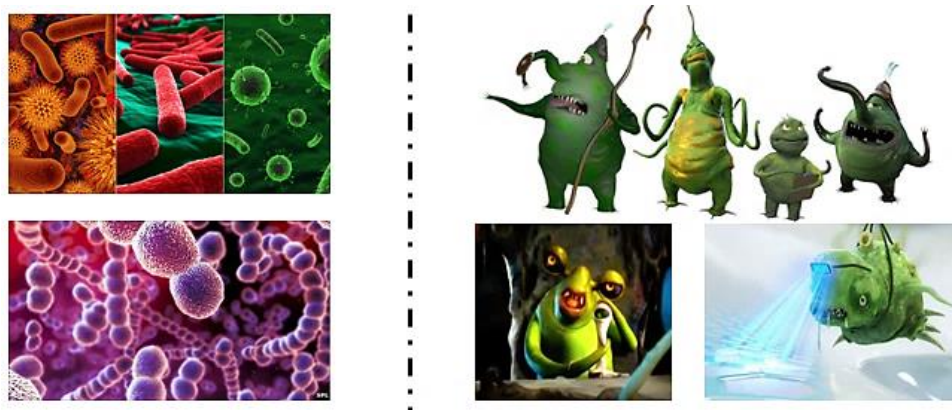


Figure 5.22 Germs: Scientific Images and Domestos’ Representation

The Domestos germs are mischevious but infantile monsters, destined to live in their own realities as some kind of mythic characters intended to generate irrational fears. At the same time, it seems particularly remarkable how consistently the central connotation “contagious” disappears: “Instead of being conceived as murderous enemy, the microbe is made to seem absurd; a suitable protagonist for children’s entertainment” (King, 2013: 115) which is also used to attract adult consumers, in particular, housewomen. The juxtaposition lies in the fact that microbes, germs, etc. which are declared as enemies, are often represented as cute figures consumers can even feel a great affection for. This provides a refracted image of that which is hard to gaze on directly. What seems to be most curious concerning this and many other cleaning products is that germs are brought to life, put in Armageddon-like scenarios and, most notably, humanized in order to be combated. But as long as the commercials appear childlike and are only animated, this “germ wars” seem to be harmless and legitimate.

But what happens if these infantile germs jump into our *real* life? Exactly this happened. As the “postmodern consumption is summed up in a dive in experiential moments made of magical encounters, spectacular and multifaceted” (Firat et al., 1998, p. 101) more and more brands attempt to reach consumers by providing them exciting consumption experiences rather than make them simply purchase the products and services. In this sense, augmented reality (AR) has become one of the recent advertising trends which provides a technology that layers computer-generated enhancements on an existing reality in order to make it more meaningful through the ability to interact with it. In Turkey, Domestos has used this technology in two outstanding examples as shown in Figure 5.23. Bus shelters are an appropriate medium for advertising, but it takes a lot of creativity to make the best of it as Domestos has showed. In its AR advert,

Domestos designed an augmented reality screened on a bus shelter display in a bus stop in Nişantaşı, Istanbul. The germs in the Domestos commercials, the Turkish audience is best familiar with from TV, now tried to “attack” – in hyperreal terms – people around the bus stop which must have been perceived as very realistic and terrifying in some cases as shown in Figure 5.23. Many adults were surprised, mostly confused, and even frightened. This technological innovation provides, therefore, possibility of showing information in a completely different way than the traditional one. A similar but different AR was created in an advertorial in a Turkish morning show with Turkish actress Melek Baykal in 2015. In the advert, germs invaded the Turkish TV studio, Melek Baykal broke out in panic, but soon after just when Domestos’ name was called, the germs were killed. After this scenes, Melek Baykal talked about the product and clearly addressed housewomen. As a result, we can say that the Domestos germs are not the cutest monsters in this sense, but indicate a childlike approach that certainly also targets children to make them aware of germs and train them to protect themselves. However, from the adult point of view, Domestos signifies more than an enemy that has to be defeated to protect the whole family. In a psychoanalytic meaning, Domestos enables adults to “flush their inner fears and dirt” in a cathartic way through an imaginary toilet to release it and, then, enable a purification of emotions for the moment.

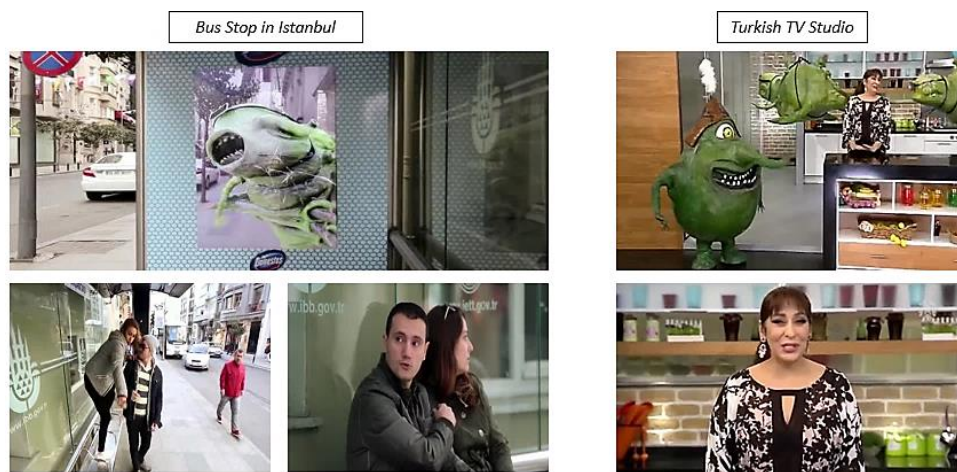


Figure 5.23 Domestos’ Augmented Reality Adverts

5.1.6.2. Antibacterial, Tough, and Durable: Royal Halı and Düfa Boya

Germs are found all over the world, in all kinds of places, not just in toilets as Domestos has made it to its mission to kill all the germs dead there. Apart from household products, there are also other product categories as carpet and paint which are affected. In the following, outstanding advertising campaigns of Royal Halı and Düfa Boya will be presented that make use of childlike monstrous creatures.

Turkey has become a global player in the carpet sector, ranking number two in the world behind the industry leader China, and holding a 15% market share in the global carpet trade. Many popular Turkish carpet brands exist: Merinos is the largest and leading carpet manufacturer in Turkey and one of the leading players in the world carpet industry, which is followed by Royal Halı. Established in 2005 in Gaziantep, a province in southeast Turkey, Royal Halı is Turkey's second largest carpet manufacturer. Royal Halı as a brand has earned a respected name in the market, not only thanks to high-quality production and attractive design capabilities, but also innovative skills. With the efforts of developing a hygienic carpet, Royal Halı created the first certified "antibacterial carpet" of Turkey, which offers a three layer protection that, simultaneously, "destroys the rapidly-multiplying bacteria, mites, fungi and microbes all of which are harmful to human health and normally found on carpets" (Royal Halı, 2015).

This special, even "magical carpet" with its destroying power of the carpet's enemies was promoted in 2012, when Royal Halı launched a series of commercials which were extraordinary different from advertisements of other brands in the Turkish carpet industry. In the spots, Royal Halı marketed its revolutionary anti-bacterial carpet concept in an outstanding, but infantile way. It told the story about a desperate yellow

bacterium, designed as an animated figure in form of a cute but monster-like creature, who was bound with a kind of platonic love to the anti-bacterial carpet of Royal Halı (see Figure 5.24). The problem was that this love was not only a platonic love but also a hopeless one, an inaccessible dream, as entitled the first commercial of the series “Bakterinin Umutsuz Aşkı” (“The hopeless love of the bacterium”). In order to dramatize the situation, the male bacterium sang in a musical style about his feelings, moreover, his frustration about the circumstance that he cannot touch the carpet because it is a forbidden love as he would be destroyed. In another commercial, the bacterium talked to his friends, fungus and mite, and told them not to touch the carpet because it would come to a bad end (“*Dokunma! Manti, napıyorsun, canına mı susadın, Manti? Bizim gibiler ona dokunamaz!*”). In an amusing way, the campaign showed that no bacterium, no mite and no fungus has the chance to reach Royal Halı carpet because of the new developed technology it is now impossible. But later, the ad campaign took an unexpected turn: the whole love story was a fake, it was just for an advertising campaign! Suddenly, we saw a set, moreover a behind of scenes arrangement where the well-known Turkish director Ezel Akay appeared and gave orders to the bacterium how to act, that turned out to be a capricious actor – a very postmodern situation as we witness an advertising in an advertising which is confusing as the bacterium performed for an advertisement that we perceived, in the very beginning, not as an advertisement but a true love story as part of the Royal Halı’s brand communication.



Figure 5.24 Screenshots of Royal Halı’s Commercials

Another remarkable example of how monster-like creatures can be used in advertisements was shown by Düfa. Düfa, originally a German paint brand, is owned by Kayalar Kimya in Turkey since it acquired all rights of the partnership in 2009. With its motto “Boyanın Ustası” (“Master of Paint”), Düfa gave a novel touch to the paint market, in particular, concerning its advertising campaign in 2013. The animated series of three commercials promoted Düfa’s high durable paint products which are such strong and tough that Düfa’s brand mascot, a hedgehog that is well-trained like a professional fighter, can easily defeat all possible threats it may encounter. These threats are represented as colorful monsters which, in indexical terms, remind of already well-known ones as shown in Figure 5.25.

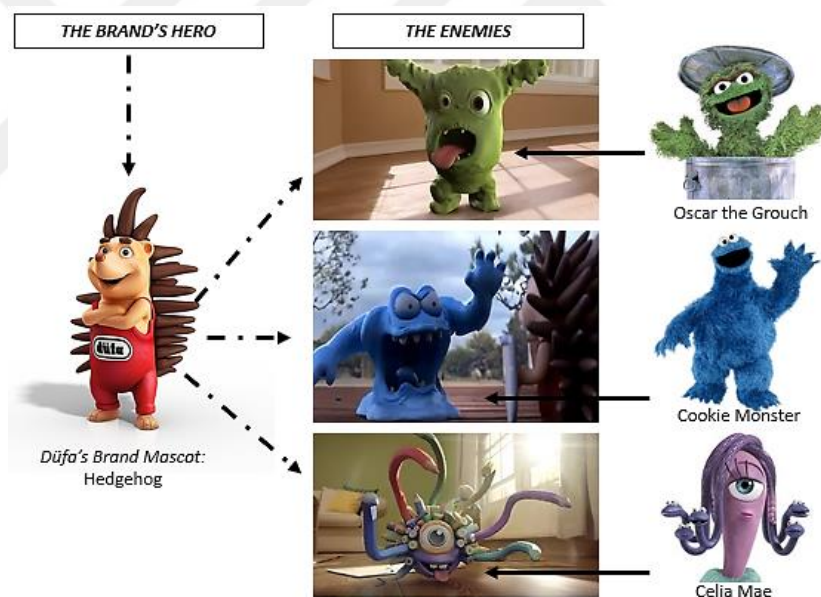


Figure 5.25 Düfa Boya’s Hero Mascot and Monster Enemies

The green monster stands for mold and mildew and appears like an adapted version of “Oscar the Grouch” from *Sesame Street*, the famous children’s TV program which will be later discussed. Another monster character also best known from *Sesame Street*, the “Cookie Monster”, is nearly made synonymous to the blue monster in the commercial representing water. The third monster is a Cyclops-Medusa-like creature

in violet which strongly resembles to “Celia Mae”, the female receptionist in Pixar’s animated movie *Monster, Inc.*, but her snakes are substituted by colored pencils indicating to the threat of children’s scribbling on the walls. Düfa Boya wanted to show that its paint products are mold and mildew resistant (“Küfe mantara dayanıklı boya”), water repellent (“Suya yağmura dayanıklı boya”), and smudge-proof (“Yaramazlıklara dayanıklı boya”). This is symbolized by Düfa’s animated hedgehog mascot who is able to do karate and archery in order to defend and eliminate the paint’s enemies, a monster potpourri well-known from *Sesame Street* and *Monster, Inc.* As a result, we can say that both Royal Halı and Düfa Boya have attempted to attract adults’ attention with childlike imagery based on monster-like creatures. In a mythical sense, we are told again – as similar in Domestos’ campaign – that we have to protect our homes from the above described “enemies”. In this sense, Royal Halı’s bacterium and his friends as well as the monsters in Düfa Boya are signifiers for the enemy, and the Royal carpet with its magical powers and Düfa Boya’s fighting hedgehog are associated as heroes. At a connotative level, these brands are symbolizing a protective hand or even a security agent, moreover, a fire wall that will hinder enemies to penetrate and threaten homes – a message which has only a deeper meaning for adults.

5.1.6.3. Organic Food Style with L’Era Fresca

L’Era Fresca, Turkey’s newest and distinctive ice-cream brand, opened its first stores in 2011 in Istanbul. The brand produces gelato style ice-cream according to Italian process traditions to offer a natural, delightful ice-cream using their own L’Era Fresca milk, also sold separately, and promoted as having the most qualitative ingredients. After opening their ice-cream cafes in the whole country, L’Era Fresca decided to launch packaged ice-cream to be sold in retail shops. The brand’s objective

was to convey the naturalness, freshness, and high quality ingredients of the ice-cream. In general, L’Era Fresca’s campaigns are playful. But in 2015, the brand has chosen a quite different advertising style. L’Era Fresca launched a new campaign to emphasize that its products do not contain additives such as emulgator, food colouring and glucose syrup. However, exactly the mentioned additives were portrayed by three animated characters, in shape of colorful monsters but cute and childlike in appearance, who were trying to enter several times the life of Aslı Bekiroğlu, a young woman and Turkish actress, but each time without success as we can see in a scene in Figure 5.26. Being easy and relaxed, the woman was never impressed by the monsters. However, in three episodic commercials humourous situations were created which showed the insisting monsters as door-to-door salesmen (“Kapıdan Satış”), asking for the girl’s hand in marriage (“Kız isteme”), or for a drive through the city (“Cadde”), but each time the girl rejected them in some way. L’Era Fesca as an ice-cream which actually is the Italian expression for “Era of Naturalness” (“Doğallık Devri”). Thus, at the connotative level it signifies naturalness, organic production, and health – and not an abundance of harmful and “monstrous” appearing ingredients. The monsters, in this sense, are the signifier for unhealthy food. Thus, L’Era Fresca symbolizes a 100% natural ice-cream without any preservatives and additives.



Figure 5.26 L’Era Fresca Commercial

The monster trio we see in the commercials looks like if it would be an adapted version of *Monster Math Squad*, a Canadian animated series since 2012, which shows the adventures of three monsters who go on missions that require to solve math problems – a show intended for young children learning mathematical skills. As Figure 5.27 shows, in various aspects the resemblance is astonishing by comparing both trios.

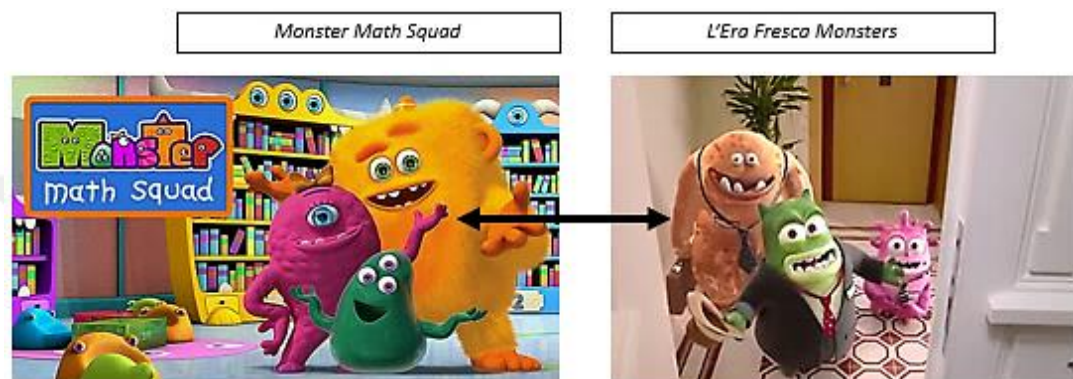


Figure 5.27 Monster Math Squad and L'Era Fresca's Monster Squad

By providing a healthy ice-cream without additives, the brand utilizes the ideological idea of an organic lifestyle, which increasingly becomes important in 21st century that is further supported by the “getting back to nature” trend. As a result of changing lifestyles and eating habits around the world, especially in Western countries, people are becoming more concerned about nutrition. Consequently, the demand for organic products has increased in recent years through the alternative in opting for organic food, which is strongly promoted throughout the media, and that is much more expensive than conventional food. Further, it is an effectual choice for personal and planetary health because of being free of harmful chemicals, bursting with more nutrition, taste, and sustainable sustenance. Thus, postmodern consumers become aware of this trend and, meanwhile, they not only want just any food, but clean and super food that is all natural with no additives and for this, they are willing to pay more.

Nevertheless, only adults are able to be aware of healthy eating and prefer organic food – not children. L’Era Fresca belongs to those brands who have joined the era of naturalness as its slogan also highlights, and to make this absolutely clear it has used an infantilizing way by employing childlike monsters which, in a deeper meaning, represent our great fear to eat unhealthy food which has to be avoided as it is considered as wrong. Because of this, we are confronted with the L’Era Fresca monster trio as the whole advertising has the attempt to teach us – not mathematical skills as Monster Math Squad does – but the importance to gain the right nutritional skills in a playful way in order to be able to prefer a healthy ice-cream, meaning L’Era Fresca. As a result, we begin to understand that the young woman in the commercial is cool and self-confident from the very beginning – even if she is permanently confronted to the monsters – because she is not afraid or irritated of them as she prefers L’Era Fresca, and feels safe.

5.1.6.4. Anadolu Sigorta’s Infantile Cyclopes: Nazar and Kismet

Nowadays, cyclopes are widespread and popular more than ever. This bizarre monstrous creature, huge in size and with one giant eye centered in the middle of the face, stems from ancient mythology and is, basically, terrifying. Nevertheless, the figure of the cyclops is one of the most recognizable figures in popular culture which reflects its pervasiveness and influence in present times that simply cannot be denied (see Figure 5.28). Though originally intended to be a very frightening figure, a cyclops as people understand it today can be a much less intimidating figure. In media and marketing, the image of cyclops has been made to be very cute, childlike and charming as opposed to scary. However, it can be observed that this figure has also entered the realms of advertising most evident in Anadolu Sigorta’s marketing campaign.

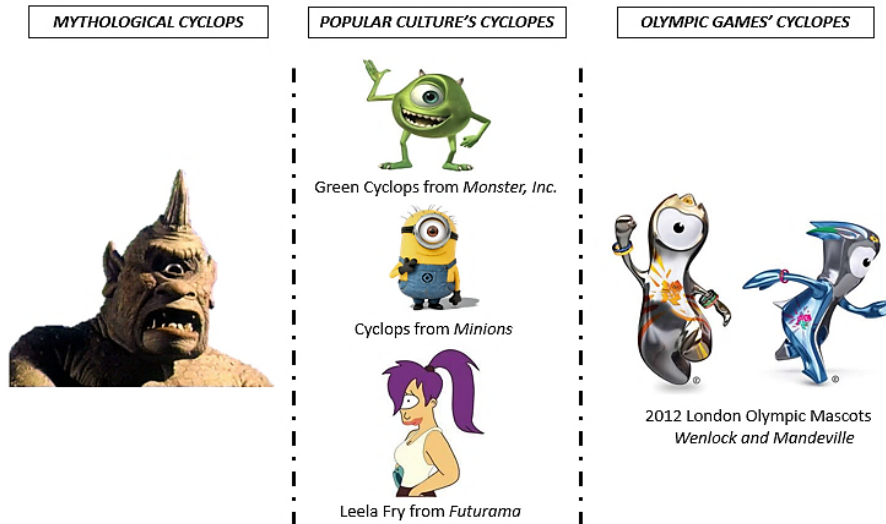


Figure 5.28 Cyclops in Mythology, Populare Culture, and Events

Anadolu Sigorta, a Turkish insurance company, was founded in 1925 at the initiative of Atatürk and under the leadership of İşbank, Turkey’s first national bank. As a privately-owned insurance company, Anadolu Sigorta has played an important role in the development of the insurance industry in Turkey and in the modernization of the country’s socio-economic environment. Until now, the company has created numerous creative advertisements. However, in 2016, it launched a new advertising campaign consisting of a series of commercials in sitcom format. The denotative aspect of the campaign were the two protagonists infantile in design and in a cartoon setting. However, both figures are not just any cartoon figures. They stand for Nazar and Kısmet.

Nazar and Kısmet are both very special words in the Turkish language, most notably, in Turkish culture. *Nazar* is the evil eye and many Turks believe that if they have a good thing or have done something well and someone is jealous of it, they can get “nazar” and subsequently lose that good thing or the ability. Therefore, *nazar boncuk* is widespread in Turkish culture which is an eye-shaped blue glass that Turks hang everywhere – whether in the workplace or on apartment doors – and which are

meant to protect against nazar. The phrase “Allah nazardan korusun” means “may God protect you from the evil eye” and is especially important to use after praising or complimenting someone or a situation to ensure that the omnipresent nazar as a result of envy does not end up altering it somehow. In contrast to nazar, *Kismet* has actually a place in English language meaning “fate”. In connection with the word “kader”, terms which are often used together, it becomes the meaning of “destiny” or in other words, the predestined lot. Turks believe that much of what happens in their lives is predetermined by a supreme power. When someone encounters something by chance that seems like it was meant to be, then it could be *kismet*, his or her destiny. Against this backdrop of Turkish cultural concepts, on which Anadolu Sigorta’s campaign builds on, we see that the two protagonists are an embodiment of “Nazar and Kismet”.



Figure 5.29 Anadolu Sigorta’s Advertising Campaign with Nazar and Kismet

As shown in Figure 5.29, Nazar and Kismet are reified. Reification, in other words “thingification”, is attributing a concrete characteristic to something that is abstract. The process of reification, then, as the conversion of the abstract into the concrete, is the transformation of aspects of human life into objects which tackles more than the issue of commodification; in advertisements we can see this in the implementation of reducing abstract ideas to a simplified minimum to make them (more) tangible. By giving them concrete shapes, we can now imagine how Nazar and Kismet could look like, and about what they might talk about. In the commercials,

Nazar and Kismet are illustrated as one-eyed, cute and infantile cartoonish cyclopes, Nazar in blue color alluding to “nazar boncuk” and Kismet in violet color that mostly resembles to Leyla Fry from *Futurama*, a popular animated science fiction sitcom since 1999. In different episodes, their adventures are shown that are full of misfortunes and resignation – scenes representing daily situations that are unexpected as, for example, accidents or theft. The advertising campaign attempted to highlight how important it is to be insured. This is perfectly underlined with the campaign’s slogan: “Nazar demeyin, kismet demeyin, Anadolu Sigorta’ya gelin” (“Don’t say it’s nazar or kismet, come to Anadolu Sigorta”). Obviously, postmodern consumers are told and taught through the infantile representation and reification of Nazar and Kismet what they have to do differently in contrast to earlier generations. The ideological meaning emphasizes in a certain way that cultural belief systems such that of nazar and kismet, deeply rooted in Turkish culture and Islam, are not supposed to be just accepted anymore the way it was in earlier times as previous generations did. On the contrary, it is argued that provisions have to be made and that the consumer should not say anymore that it was because of nazar or kismet. As a result, we recognize that through infantile design ideological ideas can be transmitted much easier. But at the same time this may lead to trivialization and primitivism – nazar and kismet are important cultural values in Turkish society and, thus, it is to be questioned if such representations are to be considered only as cute

5.1.7. Consumer-Driven Neverland and *Peter Pan* in Türk Telekom: Are Consumers the Lost Boys?

With 176 years of long-standing history, Türk Telekom is the first integrated telecommunication company. The company adopted a customer-oriented integrated structure in order to respond to the rapidly changing communication and technology needs of customers in 21st century, in the most powerful way, while unifying Türk

Telekom, Avea and TTNET under the single umbrella of “Türk Telekom” brand as of January 2016. For years, Türk Telekom has created remarkable advertising campaigns, in particular, with Cem Yılmaz (2010-2012). “Home”, in this sense, was the main theme in the very first campaign series as Türk Telekom promoted its tariffs for house telephones.

Now, let us consider what a home is. A home is generally considered to be a place where a person can feel comfortable and safe; a place that becomes close to the heart of the owner which popular sayings highlight as, for example, “home sweet home”, “a man’s home is his castle”, and “there is no place like home”. The latter saying even became Türk Telekom’s campaign name: In 2010, the company created a series of commercials which promoted the “Ev Avantaj” (“Home Advantage”) tariffs and the value added services offered under the “Ev Gibisi Yok” (“No Place Like Home”) concept. The campaign had an outstanding success which could be traced back to the performance of Cem Yılmaz, maybe the most popular Turkish stand-up comedian in contemporary times. In the commercials, the main protagonists Cem Yılmaz, who acts himself, and a fairy, featured by Nil Erkoçlar, live together by sharing a home. On a denotative level, Cem Yılmaz and the fairy have no special significance. But on closer inspection, however, we can recognize on a connotative level that the imagery recalls intertextual nuances from the story of *Peter Pan*, most notably, from its Disney version.

Originally, *Peter Pan* (1904) was a novel written by J.M. Barrie (1860-1937), which is about a magical boy, who can fly and who never ages, spending his never-ending childhood adventuring on the small island of Neverland as the leader of his gang the *Lost Boys*. The novel has two important components. On the one hand, the protagonist Peter Pan, embodying the eternal child, refuses to grow up and resists ending a cycle of life in which he is free to live outside the boundaries of conventional

adulthood. On the other hand, it is the fictional faraway place of Neverland where boys and girls do not grow old, in other words, stay children forever. Especially two female figures of the story are striking: Wendy, an English girl living in London during the Edwardian era (1901-1910), and Tinkerbell, a vivacious fairy. In the story, Peter Pan is close friends with Tinkerbell until he brings Wendy to Neverland and the fairy became jealous. In general, we can recognize that the commercials have a clear analogy to aspects of Disney's *Peter Pan*. Cem Yılmaz, who embodies a typical man-child, is the signifier for a postmodern version of Peter Pan; in other words, the image of Peter Pan is attached to Cem Yılmaz, who lives in his home that signifies a miniature format of Neverland. Türk Telekom connotes "home" with Neverland, and Cem Yılmaz is a role model like Peter Pan. The index for this is the constellation with the fairy we can clearly associate with Tinkerbell, who lives with Cem Yılmaz together as shown in Figure 5.30.

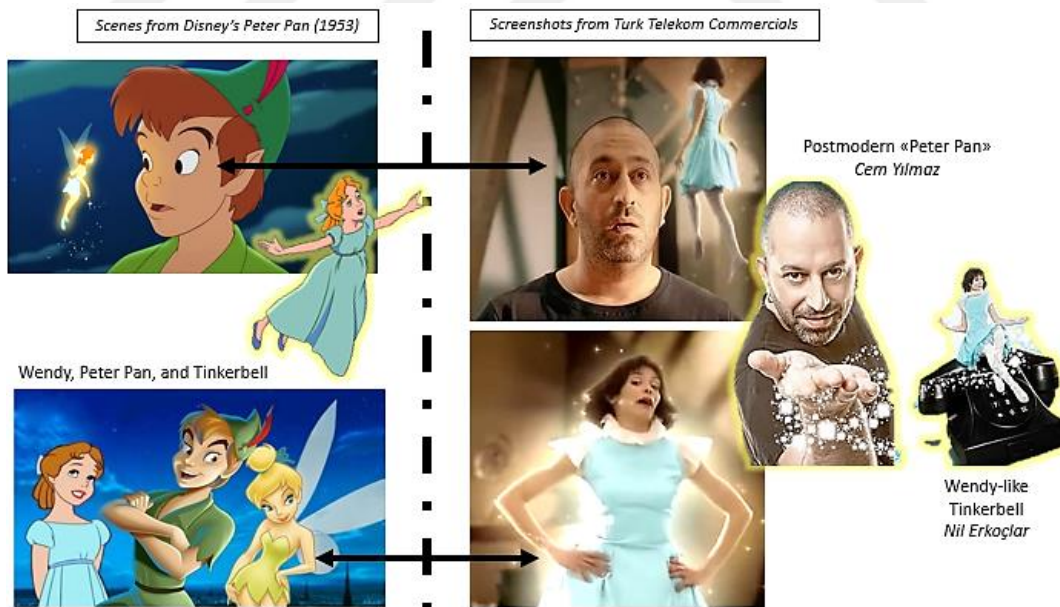


Figure 5.30 Disney's *Peter Pan* and Türk Telekom's Peter Pan Version

The fairy represents some sort of Tinkerbell, but there seems to be no Wendy. However, it seems if the fairy was designed as a Wendy-like Tinkerbell. As known from the Disney movie, Tinkerbell has blonde hair and wears a bright green strapless

mini-dress, whereas Wendy has brown hair and wears a blue nightdress. The fairy in the commercial resembles to a great extent to Wendy but in Tinkerbell format. In the very first commercial, when Cem Yılmaz first encounters the fairy, he is astonished and confused of the magical creature he sees, but soon they befriend. Just the same as in the movie and even the same sound, the fairy leaves like Tinkerbell a trail of twinkling pixie dust when flying. Besides, the fairy in the spot is also impulsive, impatient and temperamental, yet charming and lovable, and a good friend. Like Peter Pan, Cem Yılmaz is accompanied by the fairy with the difference that they can talk with each other – of course about Türk Telekom’s privileges for its customers – whereas Tinkerbell cannot speak with words to Peter Pan.

As earlier discussed, the *puer* or the “eternal child” becomes the inspiration not for joy and creativity but for “all kinds of manifestations of supposed psychological immaturity such as distaste for work, Don Juanism, homosexuality, and ‘the misunderstood genius’ syndrome” (Walker, 2014: 151). Further, a “comedian can be as free and playful as the eternal child”, who is “unbounded and undisciplined” (Balducci, 2016:9). In contemporary popular culture, the *puer*-fixations can be found in numerous figures, including that of James Bond who at the first glance seems not to be comparable to such an archetype. But after a closer look, Bond, like Peter Pan, is ageless and timeless. Moreover he is an “eternal child, albeit one with adult toys, such as watches with built-in lasers, cars that turn into submarines, and a rocket-powered backpack that lets him take to the skies” (Hockley, 2009: 105). With this, the movie audiences participate in the “fantasy of maintaining a perpetual childlike state – [...] the condition in which the puer embodies a desire to avoid coming to terms with the complexities and ambiguities of life” (ibid.). Maybe the worldwide best known person who was

frequently described as suffering from the Peter Pan Syndrome was Michael Jackson considering himself as a “Peter Pan in heart” with his house in a Neverland-themed park called “Neverland Range”. Nowadays, the image of Peter Pan, as a fairy tale character, has been replaced by famous postmodern Peter Pans, fictive as well as non-fictive, and in Turkey mostly seen in and through various Turkish comedians. Apart from Cem Yılmaz, there are many other popular comedians who often can be seen in brand’s marketing campaigns such as Tolga Çevik, Şahan Gökbakar, Şafak Sezer or Ata Demirer just to name a few. In fact, there is a boom of infantilist comedy advertising, a kind of puerile entertainment on TV which often seems to be childish, silly, and immature.

For *Peter Pan*’s author Barrie the dream was for children never to grow up so that they might be spared the burdens of responsible adulthood as, for example, work, family, mortgages and moral responsibilities. Similarly, contemporary brands do not want consumers to grow up either: they want to make them their loyal customer, to prompt them to buy the fun for which their youth once offered them costless access. It seems if the message is: “Fly to Neverland, where we await you with everything the little child in you ever wanted.” Türk Telekom is only one example who has integrated the world of Peter Pan obviously in its campaign. But in a general tendency, this is what many companies are trying to do. Psychologically, the desire to think and act *young* is supported by brand communication that attempts to trigger the Peter Pan in consumers and, indeed, many adults continue to act like the “lost boys” of the story, including Peter Pan. Such lost children, as in the original plot, appear more as a group than individually, and react and act collectively – this is in accordance with the infantilist ethos that targets the masses, both adult and child simultaneously, and hopefully reaches especially the lost children within adults.

Neverland, as an imaginary place where everything is pleasant or perfect in a way that is impossible to achieve in real life, is often used as a metaphor for eternal childhood and escapism. Moreover, a 21st century commercial culture has developed that markets itself as the playground of adults who should not grow up. We can label the world of consuming then as a prototype of Neverland, in marketing terms *Consumerland*, where consumers in such brand environments should feel “at home”, which is the overall ideological message, and what actually happens in Turkey. Especially families of lower and middle classes are generally large, where still three generations live together. Besides, many guests come frequently to their home with the result that there is much action and distraction within their own four walls. This leads to the point that many, especially young adults, want to break out and feel better when they are outside, in particular, in one of the many existing shopping malls which provide attracting environments – for many indeed better than their “real” home where these figuratively lost children find their new place. Consumers are not children at heart, but new kinds of consuming men and women who, intuitively, are trying to put the archetype of eternal childhood into practice, which is supposed to be free from the influences of the established adult world, thus not attainable – like Neverland. At the end, after the adventure in Neverland – or a long shopping session – the consumer is enforced to choose the idea of growing old in daily life, as protagonist Wendy does, rather than staying in Neverland forever but which unconsciously is desired but is impossible.

5.2. REVIVAL, REMAKE, RECONNECTION: INFANTILE BRAND PROMOTION WITH CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA FOR ADULTS

5.2.1. Retro Cartoons

5.2.1.1. *“Money Must Be Funny in the Rich Man's World”: Duck Tales in Enpara.com*

In 2012, QNB Finansbank launched a new bank brand named as “Enpara.com” (“En” means “most”, and “para” means “money” in Turkish). Whereas the competition called their self-service solutions as “alternative banking”, Enpara.com entered the market as “digital banking”, being the first bank with no branches in Turkey that offers services exclusively on digital channels which is, therefore, a cost saving model that makes its services possible. Being part of QNB Finansbank, Enpara.com serves a specific segment. The core target audience are young professionals, 25 to 45 years old, working in corporations and residing in plazas, who are busy during the day and do not have much time to visit a branch, and tend to do their banking online. Thus, Enpara.com generated a unique and competitive offer to attract this niche.

Enpara.com's target audience is not the richest consumer segment, yet they seem to suffer from it psychologically in always comparing themselves to the rich. There is the general prejudice that when it comes to their “small” savings, they are not considered as valuable as the rich customers of a bank. Because of this rooted thought, they think they are never offered high rates. In order to reverse this understanding, Enpara.com named its interest rates as “Zengin Faizi” (“The rich man's interest rates”). Since Enpara.com does not have any “tangible” branches, it can always offer anyone, rich or poor, the rich man's prices. To underline this important innovation, the huge marketing campaign “Herkes Zengin Faizi” was created in 2012.

Enpara.com was positioned and presented as an answer to dreams of making big money through the internet; this was, in fact, ironically shown in the Teaser, before the main campaign started, where in a garage two men – Turkish comedian Şafak Sezer and his friend Altan – were trying to invent something by alluding to the myth as if each self-made millionaire would have started its business empire out of a garage (like Steve Jobs with Apple) or even a dorm room (like Mark Zuckerberg with Facebook). After the Teaser, a series of commercials began, where the key to the golden coin was created as a visual sign. Most eye-catching are two commercials, where Şafak is standing with his friend Altan on a springboard at a swimming pool – later former Turkish soccer star Seren Yalçın is added as well – who are looking down to the pool full of Enpara.com gold coins in which people are swimming in.

At one level the advertising message can mean that Enpara.com attempts to resemble the image of wealth provided through Enpara.com that promises comfort and a modest wealth by symbolizing this with a pool full of gold coins. Indeed, the gold coins are a key indexical signifier for wealth and royalty, and a symbol for power. The connection is being made between Enpara.com's pool full of gold coins (signifier) and wealth that is reachable even tangible (signified). This is further underlined with the slogan "Herkesin Zengin Faizi" ("For everyone the rich man's interest rates") which in an ideological meaning implies that there is no barrier anymore to become rich – even if you are a normal or poor person. The advertising message operates then also metaphorically implemented in visual terms – the illustration of the idea to swim in richness and moreover in gold coins. This is further combined with the rational statement about the financial advantages Enpara.com will provide.

But there is an assumed narrative in the campaign which works beneath the surface, which is only implied by the visual message. For anyone in and around the age

group who grew up especially in the 1980s and 1990s and even much more earlier, these advertising images will have a strong mythical meaning as shown in Figure 5.31. Even simply mentioning the word “gold coin”, will immediately bring to mind Scrooge McDuck (in Turkey: “Varyemez Amca”), “diving” into his big pool of gold coins and “swimming” around in it which was always shown during the opening theme song of each episode of *Duck Tales*.

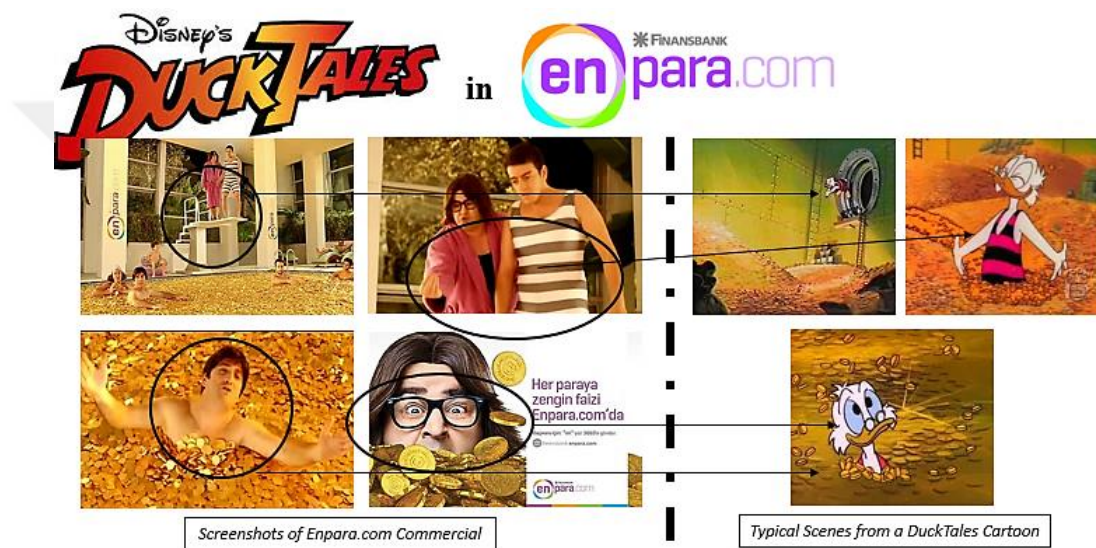


Figure 5.31 DuckTales in Enpara.com: “Herkes Zengin Faizi” Campaign

Every child of that time will have fond memories of the popular cartoon about the adventures of the billionaire Scrooge McDuck and his three grandnephews Huey, Dewey, and Louie. As a matter of fact, Enpara.com’s commercials can be considered as the real picturization of *Duck Tales* with all its details. Şafak Sezer’s and Altan’s appearances, the springboard and the pool filled with gold coins, and people swimming in the pool – all these signifiers make, on a denotative level, not much sense and can be considered as randomly chosen. But at the connotative level, we see the strong intertextual reference to *Duck Tales*, today a retro cartoon (1987-1990), as many signs are created nearly identically we know from the original.

Scrooge McDuck or better known as Donald's Duck rich uncle Scrooge, was one of the most famous and iconic children's cartoon characters in form of a shrewd businessduck, noted as tightwad, and already invented in 1947. It is surely the secret hope of many people that they will someday amass enough gold to partake in this rich duck's sport, too. This, in fact, is clearly portrayed throughout the campaign, where we see two Wannabe Scrooge McDucks – Şafak Sezer and Altan – who yearn to become very rich, symbolized with a richness that equals to that of McDuck, which is further reflected in the two men's clothing and general appearance. It is certainly not a coincidence that especially Sezer seems to epitomize Scrooge McDuck in important details. Sezer's pink bathrobe and black T-shirt are in the same colors of McDucks's swimsuit; whereas the stripes are missing, but are complemented through Altan's presence who wears a swimsuit similar to that of McDuck. Sezer's wig and glasses makes his head area strongly resembling to that of McDuck. We further know that McDuck is being fond of diving into and swimming in his money, which indeed is a pool full of gold coins – exactly this is what we see in similar images in the campaign, where the springboard and the pool filled with gold coins, in which people are swimming, can be seen that makes the whole *Duck Tales* scenary complete and perfect.

The coins in the pool, that substitute the water, represent an artificial womb; consumers are enthused and ready to strip of their clothes to dive in – representing the nakedness of being reborn, most notably, in money. This regression to infancy occurs in order to attain security – as having much money means having security – which strongly appeals to consumers' unconscious mind. Thus, people want to live and consume in this womblike, infantile and golden world, which is safe and where all of their wishes can be immediately satisfied due to richness. Gold is a valued and expensive metal; its currency is recognized outside the advertisement. This meaning is

incorporated into the campaign and carried by it. Wealth is an important ideal in many societies and the value of it is attached to the product – Enpara.com as a digital banking tool which produces wealth.

The *Duck Tales* series taught children in some way to dream and think big, moreover, to discover new ways to become rich and smart. It seems if the *Duck Tales* Saga has its revival with Enpara.com that has taken the role of it, but with the difference that the children from that time, now being adults, have today the possibility of making big money – even if not in the extent as shown in the cartoon and the commercial itself. But above all, it is once again drawn attention to the fact – how ABBA the iconic Swedish pop band from the 1970s would sang – that “money must be funny in the rich man’s world”.

The overall message is that the postmodern consumer has to adjust to new conditions. Old banking systems have no future in a time where physical-branch-free banking is emerging. Enpara.com with its main slogan “şube yok, masraf yok” (“no branches, no expenditures”) underlines this, and offers high interest rates, save people’s time and never charges any fees – important factors that distinguishes it from traditional banking. As a result, Enapar.com as a brand was launched in October 2012 and as of June 2013, 91.000 new customers have come, 50% of which were active with money in their accounts and frequent transactions. In 2013, Enpara.com had reached an almost 3 billion TL of deposits becoming the year’s most successful banking new product and marketing project. That it has also received the Gold Effie Award in 2013 for its “Herkese Zengin Faizi” campaign, is after this advertising analysis probably not astonishing anymore.

5.2.1.2. *Peanut's Snoopy in MetLife*

Snoopy is a fictional character in the long-running comic strip *Peanuts* dealing about a children's gang, but especially of the relationship between a boy, Charlie Brown and his pet dog Snoopy, created by Charles M. Schulz in 1950. The *Peanuts* gang is meanwhile legendary for its characters, especially for Snoopy. Snoopy is presented as a fairly conventional dog, but eventually evolved into perhaps the strip's most dynamic character – and among the most recognizable comic characters in the world. Being a global icon today, *Peanuts* even has become a powerful brand providing license options even decades after it first appeared. It reaches fans worldwide via all different media, and has over 1,000 licensees including Hallmark, Universal Studios and Warner Bros., and millions of products.

It is in particular Snoopy whose cute appeal, simplistic and timeless look seems to be the reason why adults, a main target group of the brand, love the philosophy and humor of the *Peanuts*, who grew up with the comic strips and cartoon series on TV. Being one of the leader licensing, distributing and marketing agencies in Turkey, Sinerji Lisans has especially promoted Snoopy in Turkish Marketing Magazines since 2012 as a brand that promises “to create happiness”, but further that helps to put signature to new cooperations. The idea was to bring Snoopy and new brands together in order to enhance the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Nevertheless, the most prominent global example is MetLife which licensed for 31 years the characters of the *Peanuts* to the tune of estimated \$12 million a year. Founded in 1868, MetLife is one of the largest insurance companies in the world. As a global provider of life insurance, annuities, employee benefits and asset management, MetLife serves approximately 100 million customers and has operations in nearly 50 countries. The company holds leading market positions in the United States, Japan, Latin America, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

Used as a way to soften the coldness and harshness of life insurance, Snoopy danced his way around MetLife’s logo for decades and along with the rest of the gang, creating memorable TV ads. MetLife profited much from Snoopy and the *Peanuts* which helped, in general, the company to differentiate it from other competitors since 1985.

With this regard, MetLife has also established a successful leadership position in Turkey which is considered as a strategic market for the company. In 2011, MetLife bought Deniz Emeklilik (Deniz Pension), the life insurance and pension subsidiary of DenizBank in Turkey. DenizEmeklilik was chosen due to traits such as high profitability, strong capital structure and rapid growth performance. As a result, in 2015, MetLife has won the prestigious “Best Life Insurance Company in Turkey” award organized by Global Banking and Finance Review, one of the world’s leading publications on economy. In a way, the MetLife name carried on the marine theme used to great effect by Denizbank and Deniz Emeklilik. “Deniz” means sea in Turkish, whereas “Met” means a high tide, or a flood tide. But most notably, Snoopy was added to the campaigns as shown in Figure 5.32.

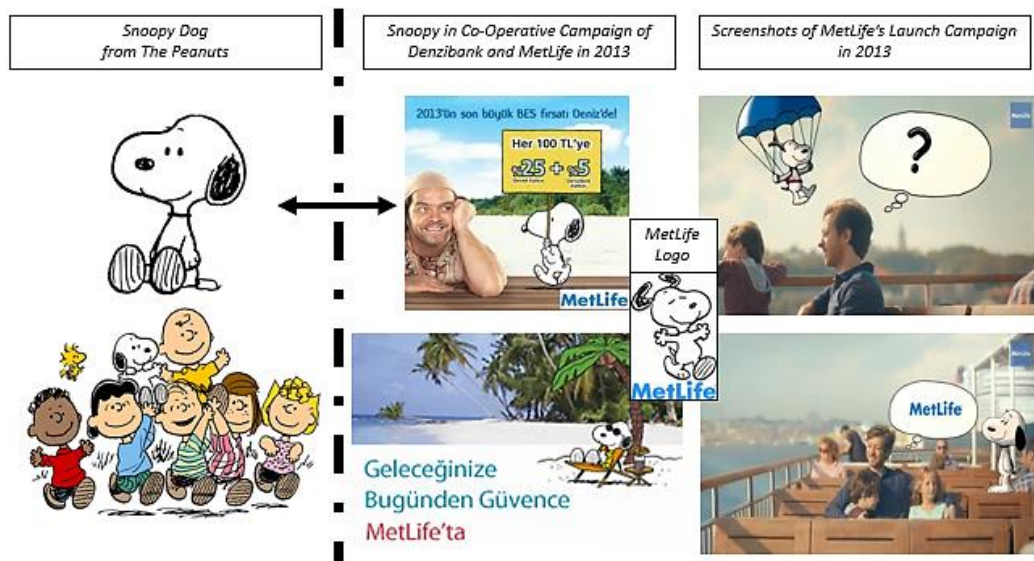


Figure 5.32 Peanuts’ Snoopy in Metlife Turkey’s Commercials

In 2014, Snoopy as MetLife’s brand ambassador appeared as the main protagonist in two commercials which attempted to explain that, under the private pensions scheme, the government contributes 25% of the pension to participants every month. In the commercials, it was Snoopy with the help of its body language to make this message public. Snoopy, as a figure, was directly copied without any adjustment or adaptation. Further, Snoopy did nothing special in the commercials. But this is not much important – for the viewers it is sufficient only to see the retro character with which we connotate positive feelings. Snoopy as a signifier is standing for a whole childhood era, and thus we feel a strong nostalgia for it as we grew up with it.

The challenge with an iconic brand like Snoopy is to make sure it stays authentic. In 2016, MetLife introduced a new brand image and announced the end of its association with Snoopy and the *Peanuts* characters as a key element of its branding and advertising. MetLife’s new visual branding was built around a more sophisticated style in clean, modern aesthetic. The iconic MetLife blue color carries forth the brand’s legacy, but has been brightened and now lives alongside a new color – green – which represents life, renewal and energy (see Figure 5.33).

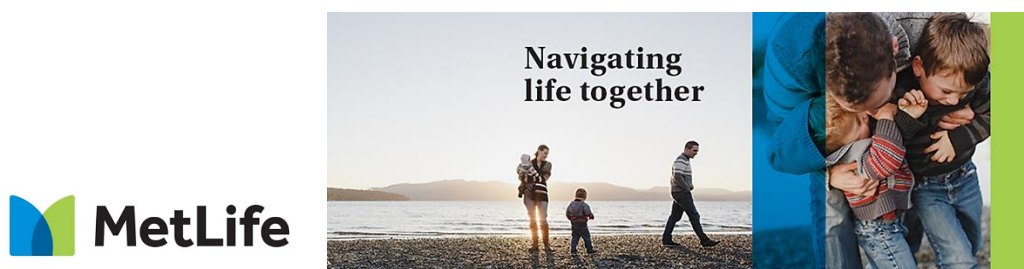


Figure 5.33 MetLife’s New Brand Image after *Peanuts*

The marketing shift comes as MetLife prepares to spin off the U.S. retail portion of its consumer life insurance business to shareholders as a new company called Brighthouse Financial. The decision to leave Snoopy reflects this shift. Over 30 years

ago, Snoopy was brought to make MetLife more friendly and approachable during a time when insurance companies were seen as cold and distant, but as MetLife focus on its future, for the company it is important that it associates its brand directly with the work they do now and the partnership they have with their customers, as stated in a Press Release (MetLife Press Release, 2016).

As a result, it is understandable why the relationship to the *Peanuts* characters was set up as explained above but, in terms of an insurance company branding, it never felt organic or intuitive to make use of the cartoon show. As a matter of fact, it are adults who buy life insurance – not children – but the appearance and performance of *Peanuts* characters in the campaigns, not only in Turkey but especially in international context, always seem to imply some kind of childhood atmosphere. As charming as Snoopy is, there was a disconnect between product offering, but also the industry it operated in, and the associations triggered by Snoopy. The crux of the matter is: “Sure, the Peanuts gang is likeable, but do you really want to buy insurance from kids?” (Sherwood, 2016).

However, it becomes clear that the use of the infantilization strategy may help a company operating in a tough market to differentiate itself from other companies. It helps to call attention of consumers, with marketing campaigns designed with childlike patterns that appear entertaining and funny, and unconsciously, amaze consumers with their flavour of childhood. But the move from infantilization to sophistication then, like the case of MetLife shows, is inevitable if a company wants to appear more serious.

5.2.1.3. *Betty Boop in Papia and Bernardo*

Papia, owned by Hayat Kimya, is a Turkish tissue brand and was introduced to consumers in 2006. But it was not before 2012, however, that the brand caught attention by launching its products in various advertising campaigns with Turkish singer Hlyla Avar, who was Papia's new brand face. The last commercial of the series was the most outstanding one, and it was not Hlyla Avar that was eye-catching – it was the cartoon figure of Betty Boop. In the commercial, we first see Hlyla Avar wearing a wedding dress and walking the runway like a model, but soon after, Betty Boop is simultaneously shown as well. Betty Boop throws heart-shaped kisses in the air, which are sticking then on Hlyla Avar's wedding dress. The voice-over says: “*İte Hlyla, Betty Boop ile Papia'da! Betty Boop'lu Papia dekor havlu Őimdi ok daha modern.*” (“Here we have Hlyla, together with Betty Boop in Papia! The decor kitchen towel with Betty Boop is now much more modern.”). Papia uses the motif of Betty Boop not only as an advertising character but also for its product, the kitchen paper towel, which is patterned with the iconic cartoon character. The commercial ends with Papia's slogan “nk daha iyisine layıksın” (“Because you deserve the best”) – quite similar to that of the cosmetic brand L'Oréal “Because you're worth it” (“nk sen buna deęersin”). From all this, we understand two things: before Betty Boop, Papia's product was not modern enough, meaning not good enough, and through Betty Boop now, we get something much more better as “we deserve the best.” Thus, we are associating positive things with it; here, Betty Boop signifies “further development”, which enables a colorful life and the happiness we are searching for.

But who is Betty Boop, and what makes her so special? Becoming a cultural icon already in the 1930s, Betty Boop was a big hit with the children. She is one of the best-known and most popular cartoon characters in the world. Thus, many women

know Betty Boop from childhood years as they have watched the childish cartoons as they were frequently broadcasted on TV. Betty Boop was always a beloved and fascinating character with a tremendous appeal for girls who tried to identify with her. This must have had great impact because many grown women are obsessed with her today as many items from different product categories are available with the Betty Boop motif. For instance, Hungarian model Eva Maya, who promoted Betty Boop bags and clothing in Turkey, stated that Betty Boop would trigger her inner child out, and that Betty Boop is both childlike and sporty (Hürriyet Online, 2009); or Turkish journalist and screen writer Gülse Birsal (2009) admitted that she has a huge collection of Betty Boop clothing. The cartoons portrayed Betty Boop as a cute and beautiful dancing, flirty glamorous showgirl with her famous “Boop-Oop-a-Doop” trademark catchphrase. She is youthful, vibrant, stylish, and magnetic – she is inspiring and sexy at the same time, but never to please anyone but herself. These are characteristics which Papia wants to connote with its product, moreover with those women who will use it, as Papia’s second commercial shows.

The promoted product, Papia’s Betty Boop patterned decor kitchen towel, was a great success, and awarded as the “Best New Product of the Year 2013” in its category according to a research conducted by BrandSpark International Research Company with 15.000 consumers. Due to this occasion, Papia wanted to thank its customers by highlighting the distinctiveness of its product in a new advertising campaign – again with Betty Boop. In 2014, Papia created a commercial for its decor kitchen paper towel which combined the feminine world of Papia and the amusing glamour world of Betty Boop with the slogan “Sizin de havanızı değiştirecek” (“It will change your mood, too”). In the commercial, we are told that Papia’s kitchen towel becomes an important decoration factor for the place where it is used. We are further promised that it both

changes the atmosphere of the place and the mood of the female consumer. This is attempted to demonstrate by a woman with a violet shirt shown in the kitchen when she spills a glass of water on the kitchen bench – an undesirable situation – and thus needs a piece of kitchen towel – a desirable situation as she will see Betty Boop because with every piece the woman takes from the towel, the Betty Boop patterns begin to move and to dance like animated figures accompanied by music. With this, the woman begins to dance, too. Moreover, it seems if she even herself becomes, in some way, Betty Boop as shown in Figure 5.34, where we also see Hüllya Avşar with Betty Boop.

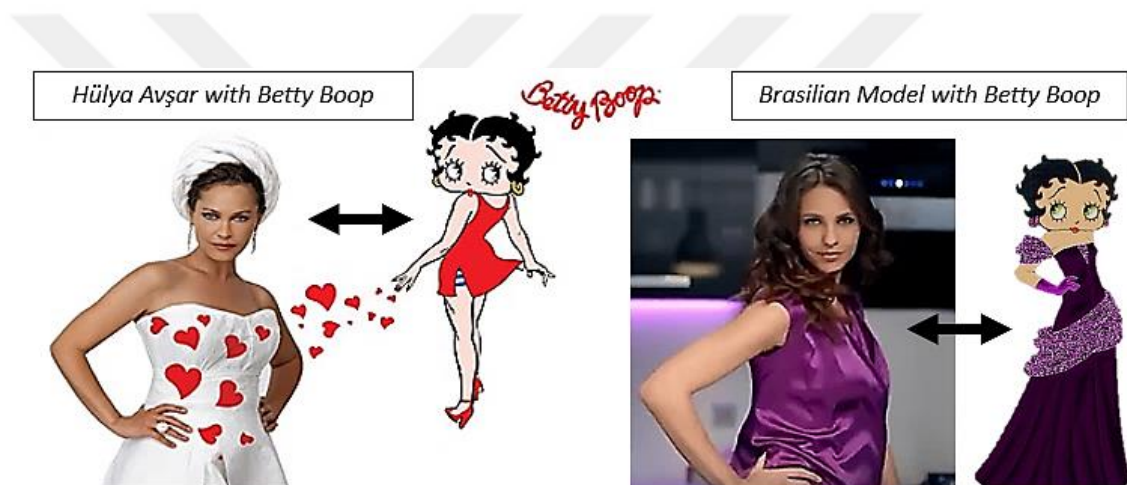


Figure 5.34 Betty Boop in Papia Commercials

Betty Boop seems to be *the* perfect prototype for the “woman-child” in human terms, based on the archetype of the eternal girl. Betty Boop is a childlike women, neotenous in appearance, with an infantile air of innocence but sexy mature Lolita at the same time, comprising two paradox poles in one persona. She definitely embodies the child in the adult woman – an idealized woman type in 21st century. It can be reasonably argued that an understanding of the concept of cute combined with attractiveness is important to a balanced understanding of subjectivity in contemporary postmodern consumer culture, not only in youth markets but also in older lifestyle markets. This connection between cute and sexy, which is best embodied by Betty Boop

from modern times, continues with one of the most popular famous brands such as *Victoria's Secret* in postmodernity – the iconic lingerie brand featuring celebrated supermodels and a world-famous playful runway show that everyone knows today.

When we consider the second commercial again, we recognize that Betty Boop is *activated* after the woman in the kitchen uses the Papia towel and then begins to change. She turns around her own axe while a light breeze blows through her hair which is simulating and evoking the flair of a *Victoria's Secret* model – and the woman in the commercial is indeed a Brazilian model in real life. The message is that the woman-child is allowed to maintain an external appearance of her choice while remaining girlishly cute and simultaneously sexy – like Betty Boop – which always can be activated at any time. Betty Boop knows how to make a lasting impression, she sets trends, and seeks to make a positive change in the world around her with her childish charm. These are features Papia attempts to radiate on the female consumer by indicating Betty Boop as a role model by enhancing this image with elements of newer representation as that of *Victoria's Secret*, in other words, yesterday's vintage glamour meets the glamour of today.

In 2015, Betty Boop appeared also in Bernardo's products, Turkey's most-preferred tableware and kitchenware brand by upper consumer class founded in 1984. Bernardo's target group mainly consists of women between the ages of 18-45, residing in cities. In one bigger collection, it introduced its tableware designed with the figure of Betty Boop. In Bernardo's advertisements that were also posted on Facebook, it promoted its new collection through Betty Boop by highlighting that she is the famous cartoon character as the unifying symbol of "innocence" ("masumiyet") and "attractiveness" ("cazibe") as shown in Figure 5.35. This clear juxtaposition of

opposites has a powerful appeal – as already seen in Papia – to especially many Turkish women who want to appear both innocent – a childlike character – and attractive – an adult women’s character – at the same time. It is quite important in conservative parts of Turkish society to appear innocent in order to be perceived as a “pure” and “good” woman in terms of morality and not to attract men’s interest. But on the other side, such women are trying to be attractive somehow at the same time and, thus, have to combine innocence and sex-appeal which is acceptable to a certain degree in cultural context. Betty Boop, in this sense, fits perfect in this paradox and with this, Bernardo attempts to attract women to make them buy the tableware.



Figure 5.35 Bernardo’s Tableware Set with Betty Boop

5.2.1.4. Wannabe Garfields: The Cats of Türk Telekom and Alarko

Garfield is a fictional cat and protagonist from the comic strip entitled with the same name that was created by Jim Davis. The story centers on *Garfield*, portrayed as a lazy, fat, and cynical orange cat who loves lasagna. Since the comic debuted in 1978, *Garfield*’s core qualities have shifted less than the mostly immobile cat himself. Today, *Garfield* seems to serve as an archetype for brands. Standing for attributes like home-loving, warmth, affection, and friendship particular brands with home-related products and services such as Türk Telekom and Alarko Carrier make use of the famous cat by

copying it directly or by producing adapted versions of it for their advertisements as shown in Figure 5.36. For this purpose, the newer animated version of the cat is preferred that stems from *Garfield: The Movie*, a remake of the retro cartoon now in the format of a family comedy film in 2004. With this regard, *Garfield* may denote a house cat, but on a connotative level, the cat is associated with a happy home in which the highest level of comfort and no disturbance exists.

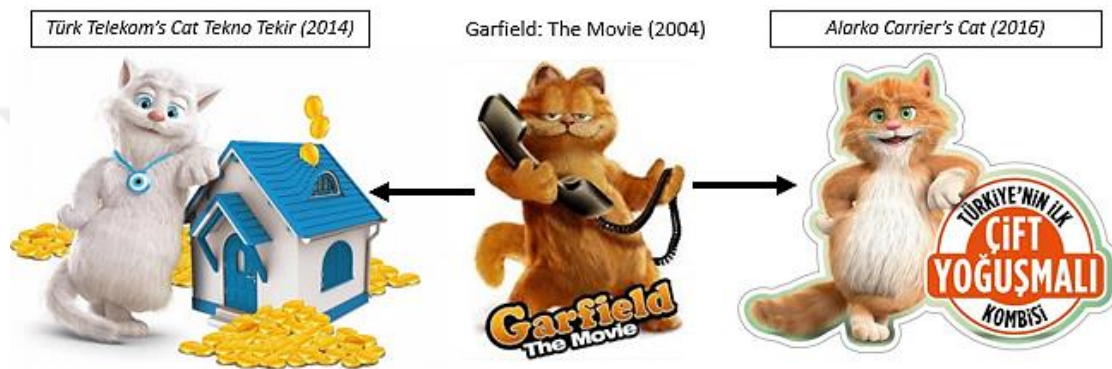


Figure 5.36 Garfield and Wannabe Garfields: Tekno Tekir and Alarko Carrier's Cat

In 2014, Tekno Tekir became the new brand face of Türk Telekom. In its launch campaign, the cat appeared to Arzum Onan, a Turkish actress and model, at her home coincidentally at the moment when she sings “Gülümse”, a famous song written by the Turkish Queen of Pop Sezen Aksu in 1991 with the following part: “Bir kedim bile yok, anlıyorsunuz...” (“I don’t even have a cat, do you understand...”). At first sight, the blue-eyed cat with white hair wearing a collar in form of a “Nazar boncuk”, a Turkish evil eye talisman, is completely different from *Garfield* concerning its colors. But in terms of movements and behavior, we can recognize an indexical reference as Tekno Tekir strongly reminds *Garfield*, especially the way it behaves and talks with its owner Dave is quite similar to the situation when Tekno Tekir has a conversation with Arzum Onan as shown in Figure 5.37. When Tekno Tekir explains Türk Telekom’s

products and services, he first mentions that he will be, from now on, in the lives of the company's home phone subscribers by providing many advantages. During the conversation, Arzum Onan shows her happiness about the cat's good news, in particular, when she hears that smart phones will now also serve as home phones. Happy like a little girl, Arzum Onan says: "Ay, çok güzelmiş!" ("Aw, that's so gorgeous!"). As the cat further demonstrates that also the internet can be used and games can be played, Arzum Onan shifts to the parent ego state for a moment by praising the cat as if he were a child and has done something very good by saying to him "Aferin sana!" ("Well done!"), and finally kissing him on his cheek. But then, she removes to the child ego state, and both parties seem to communicate again at eye level, but the cat is always superior to the woman as he has the necessary knowledge to inform her which is an infantilizing act.

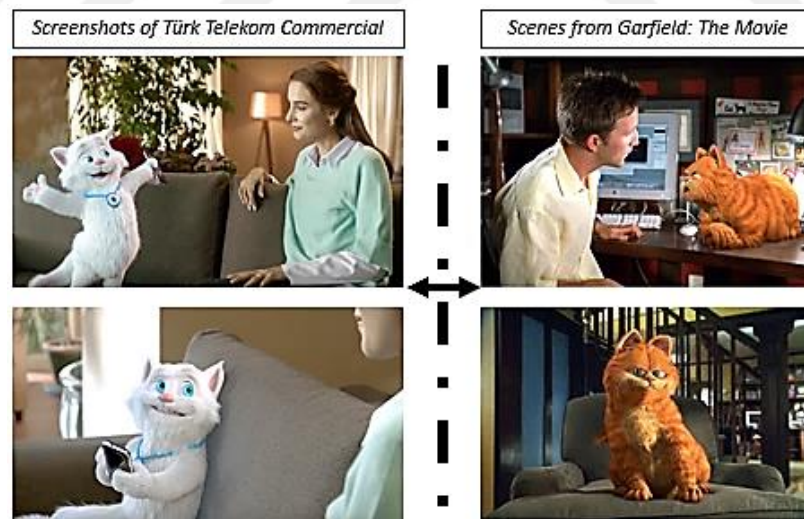


Figure 5.37 Tekno Tekir with Arzum Onan and Garfield with Its Owner Dave

In general, Arzum Onan is flashed by the cuteness of the cat and takes the cat seriously by listening carefully to what he says concerning relevant informations. Indeed, according to Gould (1977), domesticated companion animals display a high level of neoteny also represented in Tekno Tekir symbolizing a house cat, designed and

also recognized as cute and childlike. On the one hand, the adult consumer becomes a pupil, learning a lesson from the infantile cat with an adult male voice, and on the other hand, the cat attracts with his neotenous appearance, and thus evokes positive feelings in adult consumers.

Since its establishment in 1954, Alarko had been active in the fields of heating, cooling, air conditioning, water treatment and pressurization until 1998, the year in which the company merged with global leader Carrier and changed its name to Alarko Carrier. The “child” of the Alarko-Carrier merger was considered to be “born big”, as the know-how and a century old experience of Carrier combined with the dynamism and resources of Alarko. Alarko Carrier renovated its technology, increased its foreign market access possibilities and competitive power. Today, Alarko Carrier is one of the leading companies in the air conditioning sector in Turkey. It was listed among the “Most Valuable 100 Brands of Turkey” with its US \$20 million brand value in the research conducted in 2014 by Brand Finance, an international brand valuation consultancy company. Besides, in 2017, Alarko Carrier was elected the most successful brand in the air conditioning sector by the public jury within the scope of “The ONE Awards Integrated Marketing Awards”.

In 2016, Alarko Carrier created a special commercial in which it introduced Turkey’s first and only double-condensing combi boilers (“Çift Yoğuşmalı Kombi”). But most notably, it was the cat that was outstanding in the commercial as it was promoting the product. Similar in form and behavior, an adapted *Garfield* double was constructed: an animated, orange-white colored cat presented as comfort-seeking and self-indulgent. Similar as in Türk Telekom’s marketing campaign, Alarko’s cat attempted to help consumers by explaining, in a funny and entertaining way, the

“double gain” which the double-condensing combi boilers provided: the technology of simultaneously condensing water circulating for both heating and domestic hot water, thus providing over 100% efficiency. We see here a type of *Garfield* that promotes a product which is definitely intended for adults. It seems that technical issues related with the new combi boiler might be complicated to explain and even boring if informations would be given in a more sophisticated manner. Alarko Carrier has chosen a childlike way by creating a cute figure which calls attention to the product. The connotation is made that Alarko Carrier is the right address for all those seeking comfort. But more interesting is that already in 2007, Alarko has really used *Garfield* in two of its commercials. The figure was directly copied without any adjustment. Apparently, Alarko Carrier could not forget the cat – probably the Turkish audience as well – as the company has decided years later to create its very own version of *Garfield* which is serving the company until today as shown in Figure 5.38.



Figure 5.38 Garfield and Garfield Double in Alarko Carrier’s Commercials

5.2.1.5. *Casper-ly Ghost: Türk Telekom’s Bulut*

Created in the late 1930s, *Casper* (in Turkey: “*Sevimli Hayalet Casper*”) is a child-ghost character and the main protagonist of the animated cartoon series of the same name. Contrary to most ghosts that are scary, *Casper* is a friendly ghost which makes him so special. Thus, even if he is a ghost, yet he is quite personable. Numerous

Casper cartoons were released since its creation, also adapting the little ghost into a live-action feature film in 1995 and, thus, many adults grew up with this lovely character. With this regard, it seems if Türk Telekom has made a *Casper*-like adaptation for its advertising campaign. There are certain characteristics identifiable with the figure of *Casper* that can be transferred in some ways to brand's own new created figures for the use in advertisements such as Türk Telekom did as shown in Figure 5.39.



Figure 5.39 Casper and Türk Telekom's Bulut Character

In 2013, Türk Telekom started a new campaign and created for this an animated anthropomorphized figure representing a cloud named as “Bulut”, the meaning for cloud in Turkish. However, Türk Telekom makes a strong allusion to *Casper* with its Bulut figure. Bulut suddenly appears out of nowhere like the ghost, flies and moves like the ghost, and even resembles the ghost in its little, cute, and white appearance and consistence. In two commercials, we see how Bulut communicates with adult men – similar as *Casper* does – who are worried about possible problems that might arise at their workplaces such as, for example, the shop could burn down if they do not control it permanently. In the same manner as *Casper*, Bulut wants to help people. Therefore, he appears everytime when he notices that adults are worrying. Through Bulut, Türk

Telekom introduces and promotes the new “Cloud Technology” which provides access to various shared IT sources that will help to remove the above described worries of adults. In marketing terms, Türk Telekom’s Cloud Technology is connoted with the cloudy figure of Bulut. With the association of *Casper*, which must not happen consciously, Bulut not just denotes a cloudy animated character then, but carries at a connotative level *Casper*’s features which makes it familiar and trustworthy somehow. The ideological meaning is that Bulut stands for the visible help, being the signifier for technological solution of the existing problem, a *Casper*-ly ghost always by adults’ side, always present when it is needed. In psychological context, this gives security, hope, and trust.

5.2.2. Vadaa, Moneygiller, Emocanlar: Infantile Heroic Brand Creatures

In recent years, an increased focus on the terms of brand identity has influenced the world of brand development and branding strategies. The companies of today are competing not only on products but also on the brand’s inner inspiration and identity. Thereby, it is no longer sufficient solely to focus on product attributions. Moreover, it seems if brands are urged to create their own mythological worlds, and the most successful ones seem to be extremely infantile. With this, brands invent their own creatures which resemble – at the first glance – to anything known before, living in their own brand mythologies coexisting in a parallel world alongside the human world. In the following, we will focus on three types of infantile creatures – World Card’s *Vadaa*, Migros Money Card’s *Moneygiller*, and Turkcell’s *Emocanlar* – which have proven to be the most outstanding and the long-existing ones so far, and without them, the contemporary Turkish advertising landscape would be unimaginable. An overview of the creatures is given in Figure 5.40



Figure 5.40 Creation of Infantile Brand Mythologies with Fantastic Creatures

Being Turkey's first on-account credit card, Worldcard was launched in 1988 by Turkey's first private bank, Yapı Kredi, and with it, a new era in banking started. Yapı Kredi integrated "İşlempuan" ("Transaction Points") with "Worldpuan" ("World Points") to form a single spend-and-win-system. With this new system, it was enabled that Yapı Kredi customers could now earn World Points on their everyday banking transactions regardless of whether they owned a Worldcard or not.

In October 2003, the new mascot of Worldcard was introduced – Vadaa – opening the way for a new communication platform and enabling the brand to create its very own identity. Vadaa is an animated purple and fat creature which can only say "vadaa" in a baby-like voice, and more we do not know about it – even it is on the screens for more than 15 years now. If we take a closer look to Vadaa, however, we can find various analogies to forms that already existed before it as shown in Figure 5.41. Most notably, he seems to be an adjusted copy of the axolotl, which is one of the most unique amphibians in the world. Apart from its flashy outward appearance, the axolotl's neotenuous features are particularly evident in the prominent gills and fins throughout its life, which most other amphibians lose in their adult stage. The axolotl is further considered as a "real-life Pokémon" (Simon, 2014). Pokémon, the portmanteau of

“pocket monsters”, are creatures of all shapes and sizes who live in the wild or alongside humans, and became popular worldwide in the 1990s through media franchise including video games, animated television shows and movies, comic books, and toys. Pokémon are raised and commanded by their owners, called “Trainers”, and there are currently more than 700 creatures that inhabit the “Pokémon universe” being still popular today (Pokemon, 2017). Apparently, creators of Vadaa were inspired by this, and made their own neotenous character, cute and lovely appearing, which still today has an attracting appeal on consumers as many even do not know as what they can categorize the Vadaa figure: “Bir [...] banka, tam ne olduğunu çözemediğim mor renkte bir hayvan karakterini konuşturuyor” (Başar, 2012). Vadaa is presented as a generous (“bonkör”) creature from which Yapı Kredi customers shall benefit – this is always underlined in the commercials. On a connotative level, Vadaa represents Worldpoints which offer financial advantages while also bringing happiness to customers through this. Thus, Vadaa is associated with positive energy, strong feeling of belonging, and childlike pleasure and joy. Since its introduction, Vadaa has become the card’s trademark that resulted in high value in terms of image, frequent use and awareness.

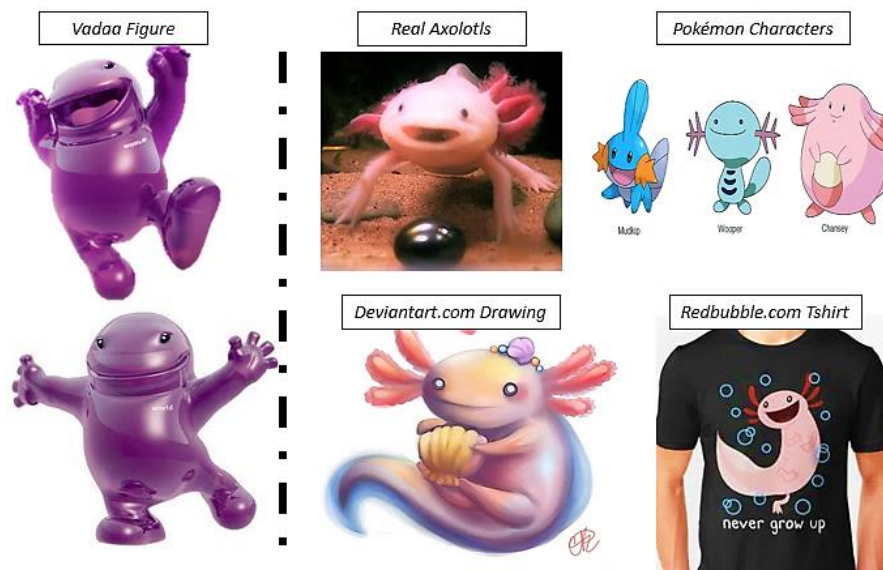


Figure 5.41 Vadaa and Related Imagery in Biology and Popular Culture

Concerning its advertising campaigns, we can observe in general two ways how Vadaa is employed. On the one side, we can see Vadaa in cartoon-style animations, but on the other side, it is especially integrated in the interaction with “real” people which in general are Turkish celebrities. Since 2003, numerous advertising campaigns have been created, and if we consider just a few, we can get a general impression as the commercials are designed as frequently the same concerning Vadaa’s performance. Below in Figure 5.42, we can see a selection of various celebrities from Kadir Çöpdemir to Zeki Alasya who are trying to talk to Vadaa. The problem is that Vadaa does not talk and always just reacts with saying “vadaa”, which means, that there is actually no conversation. The celebrities seem to be in a monologue. Like to a baby, they speak and become no feedback. However, we recognize that, even Vadaa reacts always with the same word “vadaa”, the celebrities seem to understand it because they repeat in their own words what Vadaa says, and through this we understand the commercial. In fact, this is a quite simple but, at the same time, infantile strategy Worldcard uses; by confronting the consumer with a strange infantile figure who is not able to communicate with the consumer itself, this in general gives the impression as a baby would talk by reducing us to the same level of it somehow, as we are even not able to understand it. But this strategy works as Vadaa has contributed strongly to Worldcard’s brand success.

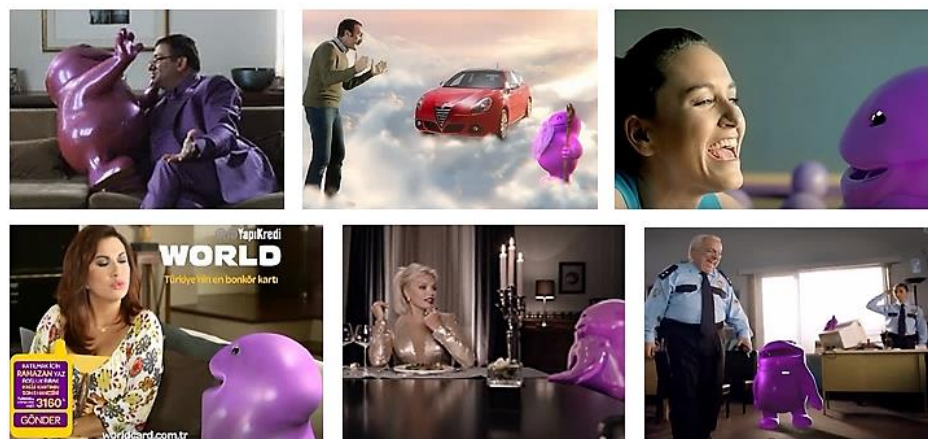


Figure 5.42 Turkish Celebrities “Talking” to Vadaa

Migros is another example that has created its own creatures. In order to better familiarize its members with its fun-filled and rewarding world, in 2013 Migros' Money Club introduced the "Moneygiller" family. The characters of the Moneygiller attempt to seduce members of Turkish families – from young to old – to consumption. As it is stated in the commercials, Moneygiller's biggest passion is to make people earn with every purchase ("Kazandırmak en büyük tutkuları"). With the launch of the Moneygiller characters, Money Club also introduced its new loyalty program point-earning mechanism. With this new system, Money Club members not only earn points when they make purchases of specific products, but can also do so on the basis of all of their shopping (Migros Annual Report, 2013: 38). The Moneygiller are orange, anthropomorphized creatures small in size and in some way looking like a cute sausage. But actually, as shown in Figure 5.43, we can recognize an intertextual reference to the family of *The Flintstones*.

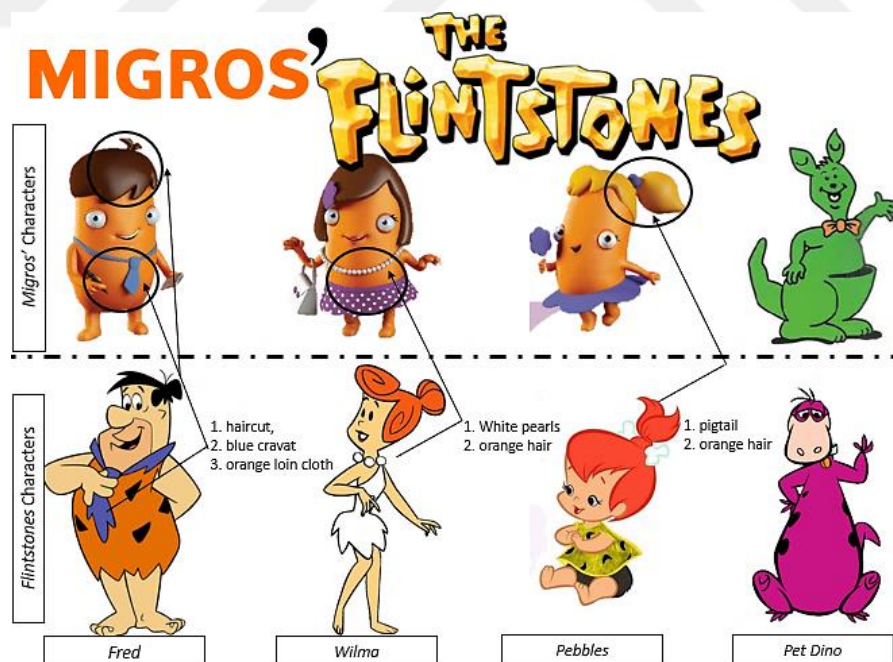


Figure 5.43 Moneygiller and The Flintstones

The Flintstones is an American animated sitcom that takes place in a Stone Age setting in juxtaposition of contemporary times, depicting the lives of the titular

characters and their next-door neighbors and best friends. The series was first broadcasted in 1960 and became the most financially successful network animated franchise for three decades, until *The Simpsons* debuted decades later. Metonymically, we can recognize that Migros seems to have used certain features of *The Flintstones* characters which have an indexical function. The male character wears the same blue cravat, has the same hairstyle, and its skin color is the same as that of the dress of Fred Flintstone; the female character wears Wilma Flintstone's white pearls and the little girl resembles in her hairstyle to Pebbles Flintstone, further the hair color of both females is in orange as the skin color of the Moneygiller females. Even Migros' brand mascot, the green kangaroo, can be compared to The Flintstone's pet dinosaur. As a result, the mentioned parts lead us to the whole, making the ideological message perfect: We have the allusion of a happy *Flintstone* family we unconsciously perceive when we see the Moneygiller that symbolize the happy Turkish family, which is extremely lucky as it is in financial advantage with Money Card – an association which has the effect to develop the desire to pertain to the “club” of wealthy and, therefore, lucky families, too.

As the leading mobile phone operator of Turkey, Turkcell was founded in 1994, and has today more than 33 million subscribers. From the very beginning, Turkcell has created outstanding campaigns with great impact. For a long time, Turkcell used Selocan as its brand mascot, a yellow bug with two antennas. Later, little children who wear a Selocan costume were integrated for years in the campaigns. At the end of 2016, then, Turkcell has joined with a whole new mascot family called “Emocanlar”. In the last one and a half years, Turkcell has produced over 40 commercials with Emocanlar. In contrast to earlier times, Turkcell has created animated characters that could directly stem from a Pixar or DreamWorks movie. However, as shown in Figure 5.44, the

Emocanlar have a strong intertextual reference to the characters of the *Snorks*, which was an animated TV series in the late 1980s. The *Snorks* were essentially the story of underwater-dwelling *Smurfs* with breathing tubes. These tubes are now the antennas of the Emocanlar, who similar live in a community. The antennas of the Emocanlar, like before on Selocan, stand for connection and communication. The Emocanlar are talkative characters that interact with many adults in the commercials. Mostly, they inform the viewer about the latest Turkcell campaigns in a funny and entertaining way.



Figure 5.44 Turkcell’s Emocanlar and Snorks

Turkcell attempts with its new characters to target one big consumer group between the ages of 7 and 70 (most known under the Turkish expression “7’den 70’e“, meaning from young to old) – and this with only one little, yellow childlike figure. This is an attempt to target with an uniage approach, but on the level of a child, where everyone is supposed to find something appealing in the figures to oneself, from young to old. As shown in Figure 5.45, on the right side the Facebook images illustrate that the Emocanlar are everywhere among us – indeed, they are mostly placed in presence of adults in the campaigns, but they also strongly catch attention of viewers as there is actually no escape from them, as these figures appear, in fact, everywhere from all

screens to bill boards. However, this situation also attracts criticism. We see below in Figure 5.45, on the left side, a Facebook post on 25.2.2017 that was shared by a Turkish citizen who points out to the dramatic shift of Turkcell: “Turkcell ne ara bu kadar deđiřti”. Once, in its beginning phase, Turkcell launched the legendary “Free Girl” campaign in 2001, which was associated with freedom, independence, and adventure, but yet in a quite adult style. Today, Turkcell has turned to an infantile Emocan culture – critical voices are right by questioning *when* Turkey has undergone *such* a cultural transformation obviously not only in marketing terms, which can be, however, explained by the emergence and impact of the infantilist ethos in Turkey.



Figure 5.45 From Legendary “Free Girl” Campaign (2001) to Infantile Emocanlar (2016): Evolution of Turkcell’s Image. Retrieved from <http://odatv.com/turkcell-ne-ara-bu-kadar-degisti-2602171200.html>.

5.2.3. Classic TV Shows: Fragments of *Sesame Street* and *The Muppets*

5.2.3.1. *If “Your Better Half” Infantilizes You: Spectres of Simulacra with Maximum Card*

Established in 1924, Türkiye İş Bankası has provided banking services for over 90 years now. Since 2001, it has a a credit card named “Maximum” which allows installment payments and MaxiPuan (“bonus points”), which are gained on point of purchases at businesses that accept Maximum credit card. Chosen as Turkey’s

Superbrand in 2007, Maximum card uses the meanwhile wide-spread slogan “Herkes Maximum’da” which means “Everyone is in/at Maximum” in its advertisements. Especially in the last ten years, Maximum has created numerous outstanding marketing campaigns of which some selected ones will be analyzed now at this point. A very striking campaign began in 2012, when Maximum started an ad series with Turkish actor Mert Fırat. But Fırat was not acting alone – he was accompanied by his friend in form of a puppet. The whole campaign was continued with a puppet-like comedy theme in various episodes and always showing Fırat and the puppet together (see Figure 5.46).

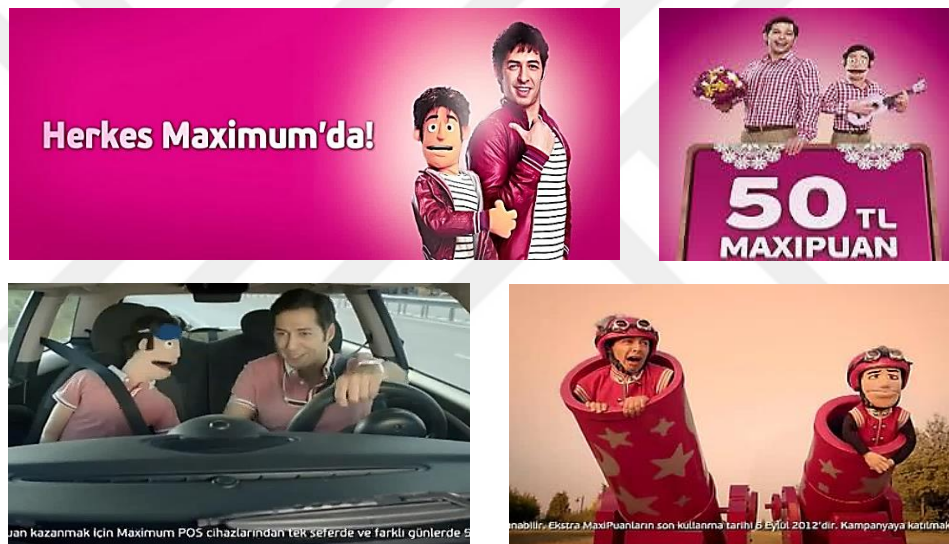


Figure 5.46 Facebook Posts and Screenshots of Maximum Campaigns with Mert Fırat

In general, the whole campaign gave the impression as if we saw a mixture of episodes of *The Muppet Show* and *Sesame Street*. *The Muppets* are an ensemble cast of comedic puppet characters created by actor-director Jim Henson that appeared first on the educational American children’s TV programme *Sesame Street* and then starring in their own TV show in 1976 until 1981. The popularity of the Muppets, known for their self-aware, burlesque, and meta-referential style of variety-sketch comedy, was such big that they appeared in several feature films alongside with real actors. Whereas *The Muppet Show* was a child-friendly comedy music hall-style song-and-dance variety

show, *Sesame Street* was the longest-running and probably the most popular children's show in television history, watched in over 150 countries since 1969.



Figure 5.47 Characters of *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*

It was especially *Sesame Street* that set the standard for contemporary educational and entertainment children's shows by teaching children many subjects as, for example, spelling words, social skills, healthy eating, pet care, and about many other topics. In short, it showed children that learning is fun by using puppets, animation, and games (Medoff & Kaye, 2016: 108). *Sesame Street* had a huge impact not only because of its entertaining but also because of its educational side which was not in the traditional sense – the puppets on *Sesame Street* guided children through their formative stages, helping them to both learn and grow as individuals. The puppets of the two shows were among the most powerful figures of many adults' childhood which may explain why adults still are a large audience for such children's programs:

From Kermit to Big Bird, Cookie Monster to Gonzo, they touched us, and stayed with us. As we aged, they remained accessible, growing with us from *Sesame Street* to *The Muppet Show* [...]. We fell in love with their childlike playfulness, grew to appreciate their comedy, and then began to embrace their imaginative take on life. (Dan Leidl in Henseler, 2013: xv)

With this regard, there are clear conceptual and intertextual analogies between Maximum card's advertisements and the two mentioned TV shows. Most notably, the

first commercial of the Maximum campaign, entitled as “Yılın Düeti: Herkes Maximum’da” (“Duet of the year: Everyone is in/at Maximum”), is one of outstanding nature concerning this. Mert Fırat and the puppet beside him perform a song, an expanded musical version of the Maximum jingle, reflecting the brand’s philosophy in very simple phrases. Remarkably, the puppet is not just any puppet as might be expected. It is none other than representing Mert Fırat himself. Mert Fırat’s puppet is a human simulacrum, a copy of him and in everything it resembles its original, for example, by having the same hairstyle, clothes, and gestures. The postmodern world, according to Baudrillard, is a world in which the Marxist model of production has been replaced by the cybernetic model of *simulation* – a copy or imitation that substitutes for reality. In this sense, Baudrillard further pointed to *simulacrum* which is a copy or reproduction of the real, a mock appearance that seems to mimic reality and, in some kind, is divorced from the real (Baudrillard, 2001: 173).

Baudrillard’s approach is easily demonstrated with *The Muppets* themselves. Many of the show’s puppets are based on real animals as, for example, a frog or a pig. Their personalities subsequently develop through their performance and interaction with a culture that shapes the viewers expectations of them. *The Muppets*, then, form their own destabilization of reality; they make “real” celebrity guests feel awkward as they hold some kind of representational power over human’s own conception of the real. Nevertheless, Maximum’s advertising theme concerning the scenario and representational features are apparently copied from the *The Muppets* movie in 2011, and adapted for its own purposes. Especially the scenes of “Man or Muppet”, which was the Oscar-winning song from the musical film, are in direct comparison nearly identical. The lyrics of the song are also noteworthy: “*I reflect on my reflection. And I ask myself the question. Whats the right direction to go, I don’t know. Am I a man or*

am I a muppet. If I'm a muppet then I'm a very manly muppet. If I'm a man that makes me a muppet of a man." In the film, the song is performed by the main characters Gary and its puppet Walter, where simultaneously each with their respective counterpart as a Muppet form of Gary and Walter's human form is shown. In an abstract and recondite musical setting, the song is a piece that reflects Gary and Walter questioning what their true identities are. This idea stems from Walter's admiration for the Muppets, who develops a desire of becoming part of the Muppets, which has been his lifelong dream. However, this scene strongly resembles to what we see in the Maximum campaign when Mert Fırat is singing the Maximum song together with its puppet by playing on piano facing each other as shown in Figure 5.48. In psychological sense, the visual idea that Fırat would see a reflection of himself as a puppet, and the puppet would see a reflection of himself as a man is given in a different way. In contrast to the movie, Fırat and its puppet seem to celebrate this in a very cheerful way, both being very happy.



Figure 5.48 Mert Fırat and Gary Playing Piano with their Simulacra

Later but again in 2012, Maximum's puppet series was continued with a female version of the campaign in which Turkish actress Şebnem Bozoklu acted and sang the same song with her simulacrum. Similar to the ad series with Mert Fırat, Bozoklu was always accompanied by her puppet whether she went to a big shopping mall or to the petrol station. With this regard, in 1978 American actress Raquel Welch was invited to *The Muppet Show* as a special guest into the studio for a sing-along with Miss Piggy,

both performing the song “I’m A Woman” and matching in white suits and red bow-ties for an episode. It becomes obvious that again we see a similar situation in the Maximum campaign; both women with their simulacra are dressed the same while they perform the song as shown in Figure 5.49.



Figure 5.49 Şebnem Bozoklu with her Puppet and Raquel Welch with Miss Piggy

The first commercial with Şebnem Bozoklu shows her together with the puppet at *Canyon*, a huge and well-known shopping mall in Istanbul. Today, shopping is often the most common leisure activity of Turkish people; it has further evolved to an entertainment experience in our daily lives. On the basis of social changes, brand experiences become crucial differentiation and success factors for many industries, especially as developed and emerging countries increasingly transform themselves into an *Erlebnisgesellschaft* (experience-driven society), a term first coined by the German sociologist Gerhard Schulze in 1992. This entertainment experience, in terms of shopping, must be financed somehow which is clearly supported in the advert as of many credit cards. In this sense, shoppers are seduced to consume, entrapped in the phantasmagoria of the world of consumption which is a hyperreal world of plenitude and excess where anything seems to be *such* attainable – as long as they have a credit card. Through it, the consumer finds peace in the utopian escapist place, loses itself in shopping malls designed as new quasi-sacral environments generating their own mysticism (Yıldırım, 2013). These brand worlds are designed to embody the state of

universal happiness in order to embrace the consumer – like Maximum does. With this regard, the body language of showing how much a child loves someone very close, especially its parents, is an embracing gesture by wide opening arms, which is symbolized within Maximum's name through the letter "X", that at a connotative level stands for the brands' embracement gesture, meaning how much it loves its customers.

These "postmodern centers suggest that shopping is a pleasure not a chore. They say, in effect, enjoy yourself, call again, bring the family, fulfill your fantasies, relive your childhood, imagine yourself in another world or another part of the world, or both" (Foxall, 1998: 241). But more than that, consumption exerts enough of an influence on our lives that it becomes part of our identities. If in earlier times French philosopher René Descartes coined the phrase "I think, therefore I am" in 1637, then in postmodern times, as artist Barbara Kruger best stated in 1987, the motto seems to be "I shop, therefore I am". With this, the urge to buy more becomes mandatory. But consumers' desire for more and more commodities and new experiences seem to be insatiable and never satisfied – as best known from children who can never get enough of anything.

At first sight, it seems as if the puppets accompany the actors through their lives – just like friends. But especially when it comes to spend money, the puppets begin to give advise about what to do by even giving orders, and how to decide rightly by providing their human selves concrete tips, in other words, guide them as in a *Sesame Street* show – this is something more than a friend would do. The puppets function, then, as the adults' *better half* in an infantilizing way. The dialogues in the commercials show that the puppets, rather like a mother or a father, even scold their other adult halves. In one scene, Şebnem Bozoklu's puppet said: "How do adults make savings, Şebnem? Use your brain, Şebnem!". The same happens in the commercials with Mert Fırat where his simulacrum is also superior saying to him as he were his son "I can't

left you two minutes alone. Go on, we drive to Shell. Use your brain.” This is also emphasized by the Maximum song: “Aklımı kullandığımda, o her yerde hep yanımda. Mutlu olduğum her anda, o elbette hep yanımda, dün de bugünde yarında! (“Everytime I use my mind, it [Maximum] is always by my side. Everytime when I am happy, it is of course always by side – this was yesterday, today, and also tomorrow”).

Today, the world “muppet” is a generic name given to various puppets and marionettes created by Jim Henson (1936–90) for *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*. Besides, the term also has another meaning as an alternative expression for an incompetent or foolish person. As a result, we can recognize an infantilizing practice in the campaigns as the actors in the commercials are not capable of thinking on their own in order to make right decisions – they have become “muppets” in some sense. Their simulacra in form of the puppets we see in the campaigns, however, behave quite adult-like and imply by saying “Use your brain” that their other half needs help like a little child, who does not know what to do or how to decide and, thus, the puppets have to be always by their side. The puppet, in a deeper meaning, is the signifier for Maximum card; through it, consumers feel happy as they are always accompanied by it to buy things they desire – the card is adults’ other and better half represented by the puppets.

5.2.3.2. Seeing the World through Children’s Eyes: Secret Sides of the ING Bank’s Lion Puppet

Being one of the major players in global finance, Netherland-based ING Bank started its operations in Turkey after acquiring Oyak Bank in 2008. Today, ING Bank is one of the seven largest banks in Turkey with its 367 branch offices. From the start, ING Bank has created numerous advertising campaigns in order to attract consumer’s attention. The bank’s orange colour scheme and its lion image are the components of

the official ING Bank logo but also main elements that are used in the bank's advertising campaigns. Orange is a cheerful color, and a signifier for fun, joy, vitality and enthusiasm, but moreover, it is often viewed as childlike and exuberant. The combination of this attributes evoke friendliness and mental stimulation for inspiring consumers to take action. Thus, an orange logo sends the message that the company is friendly and cheerful – a good choice for brands that want to be seen as light-hearted and not too serious, but still confident.

However, the question must have been asked how the lion of the bank's logo – sitting there in a one-dimensional and static position – would look like if it could come alive because exactly this happened – a lion was created with a very special appearance. With the slogan "Paran burada değerli" ("Your money is valuable here"), the bank aimed to create an emotional bond with its customers that it wanted to establish through its own brand hero. Inspired by the lion that already existed in the bank's global logo, the lion was reinvented as a mascot and created specifically for Turkey as shown in Figure 5.50. It is obvious that the new infantilized look of the lion serving as the new brand mascot has a complete different charme than the lion of the bank's logo.



Figure 5.50 From the Classic Lion to Puppet Lion

With its aim of becoming the leading savings bank ("tasarruf bankası") of Turkey, ING Bank started to use the new brand mascot in its advertising campaigns in 2012. With this, the bank wanted to communicate to its customers, in a modest and warm way, to be more conscious and efficient in the use of their money, further, to save

their money. The mission of ING Bank's “goodwill ambassador” was to remind people of ING Bank’s services providing special advantages. Therefore, the bank aimed to connote its activities with attributes such as sincerity, simplicity, and transparency in the brand communication with the lion character. As in the previous example of Maximum card and its puppets, we have here again the presence of a puppet but this time of an animal, the lion. The appearance and the movements of the full-body lion are strongly similar to those of Samson, a central character from *Sesame Street*. Even if Samson is a male bear, the analogy is truly astonishing. As many adults grew up with Samson, who was in fact one of the most prominent and lovely characters of the show, the Samson-like appearance of the ING lion can evoke positive associations if the viewer consciously see the connection, but otherwise it would be probably more perceived as a familiar unfamiliarity the viewer could not explain but still would find the lion nice and attracting. Besides, concerning the lion’s head area, it can be clearly said that the neotenous facial traits, similar to childlike illustrations of lions, give the mascot the ultimate infantile touch as shown in Figure 5.51.

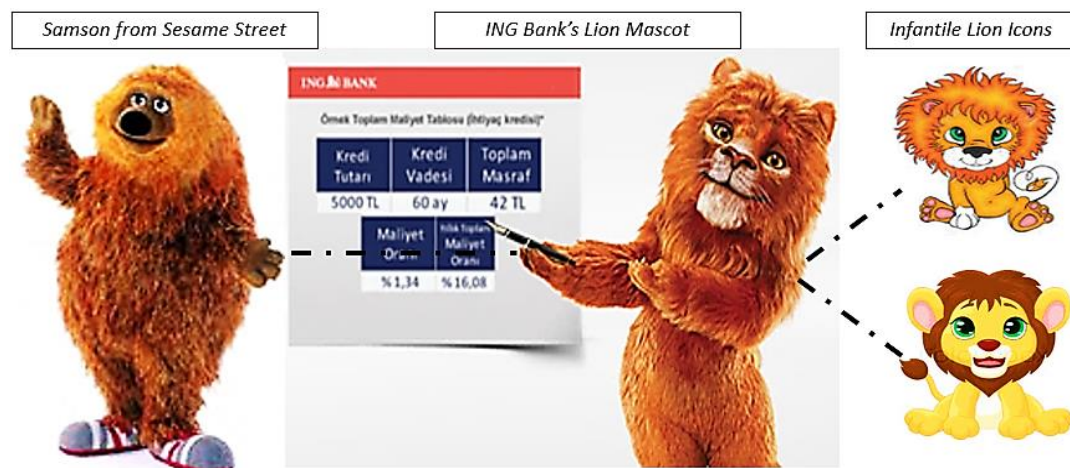


Figure 5.51 ING Bank’s Lion Character: Mixture of *Sesame Street*’s Samson and Infantile Lion Icons

ING Bank launched the new brand mascot with a commercial that showed the beginning of an ordinary working day while bank employees were going to their

workplace, the ING Bank. Being already in the building and even standing in the centre, the lion was noticed by none of the employees around him. Only a little girl saw the lion and wave to him after he has left the building. The circumstance that no one except the girl noticed him lies in the fact that only the girl could see the lion because she was a child. Thus, the special feature of the lion is that he is only visible to children – not to adults. In the second commercial, this was confirmed by the fact that only a little boy at home could see the lion, but not his mother or father as shown in Figure 5.52. Remarkably, the lion does not speak, even to children who see him. The most important feature of the lion is that he wants to help adults having financial problems. But the adults are not able to recognize the lion’s help as they cannot see it. Through different signals the lion is trying to send by putting notes all around the flat, the adult man in the second commercial begins to pay attention to ING Bank’s latest campaigns advantages that seem to be a solution for his financial worries.



Figure 5.52 Scenes from ING Bank’s Commercials: Lion’s Visibility to Children-Only

Put this fact aside, the most vital part of the campaign began when a new, well-known face started to act in the advertisements: Acun Ilıcalı, a Turkish television personality and producer of many popular TV show as, for example, *O Ses Türkiye*

(Turkish version of *The Voice*), *Yetenek Sizsiniz Türkiye* (Turkish version of the *Got Talent* series) or *Survivor*. Remarkably, although until now only children had the privilege to see the ING Bank's lion, we were now confronted to the situation that an adult, in this case Acun Ilıcalı, not only can see the lion, but even can talk and joke with the lion as shown in Figure 5.53.



Figure 5.53 Acun Ilıcalı and ING Bank's Lion

The question arises how or why the lion is now visible to an adult that actually is only visible to children. Obviously, Ilıcalı sees the lion because he is a man-child, who is young at heart and maybe even is not that serious like an ordinary man in the age of 42 – at the date of 2012 he was – would be. Ilıcalı is an easy-going person, youthful and probably child enough which allows him to see and communicate with the lion. With this, the importance of the switch to childlikeness is implied on a connotative level: A privilege for children can also be turned to a privilege for adults when adults use the potential of childlikeness, and learn to see the world through the eyes of a child again which is the ideological message. Adults, then, could see the magic in everything as they did when they were children, widen their horizon, learn to live more from the heart and discover things that otherwise remain closed to them.

5.2.4. Cartoonized and Animated: Infantile Inner Lives of Products

5.2.4.1. *Dyo's Molecules, Margarine Girl & Co.: The Many Infantile Figures of Brand Spheres*

Many brands from different product categories are keen on creating infantile brand faces for their products. Because of this, we can often see cartoonized and animated anthropomorphic figures living in brand spheres especially created for advertisements – figures which in earlier times would have been used to entertain children. Further, we can identify again and again intertextual allusions. In the following, we will look at some examples how this is implemented in general.

In the housekeeping sector, for example, the washing sponge of Scotch Brite which is an animated figure in the 2014 commercial, not only denotes a sponge, but further can be associated with *SpongeBob*, the main character of the animated television series that premiered in 1999 on the TV Channel Nickelodeon. The initials of both names – S and B – are even the same. The *SpongeBob* series depict the misadventures of its talking title character, a child-like sponge who works at a fast food restaurant, attends a boating school, and lives in an underwater pineapple in the fictional city of “Bikini Bottom”. The series was a massive success and continues to air new episodes to this day, and has generated over 8 billion dollars in revenue for Nickelodeon. In fact, *SpongeBob* was especially very popular among children who today are young adults. In many episodes *SpongeBob* could be seen in the kitchen cleaning the floor and washing the dishes. It makes sense that Scotch Brite has used a similar, infantilizing way to give life to its own sponge as it is the case of *SpongeBob*, and we can connote with this an entertaining washing experience as shown in Figure 5.54. The effect is that Scotch Brite’s sponge gets an attracting character that helps to distinguish itself from other sponges.



Figure 5.54 Scotch Brite's Sponge and SpongeBob

Another example can be given from the paint sector. Dyo, a leading paint brand in Turkey, created infantile and colorful figures for its advertising campaign in 2013 in order to illustrate its “heroes” as animated paint drops in red, blue, green, and yellow colors. On a mythical level, these drops are supposed to exist in the paint boxes, moreover, represent the secret of Dyo (“Dyo’nun sırrı”). Each of the drops embodies a different type, characterizing Dyo’s technological and innovative features – from the green Dyo knights as a symbol for resistance to the yellow Dyo Sherlock Homes’ as a symbol for quality and control as we can see in Figure 5.55. It is clever to name this as the “secret of a brand’s succes” for which the Dyo molecules are the signifier, illustrated in a concrete but fictive and childlike way in order to make us believe something that would have been otherwise difficult to explain in “real” advertising conditions, even would not be credible. But this way, the brand makes itself very appealing.



Figure 5.55 Infantile Dyo Paint Molecules

Especially in the food and beverage sector, brands have invented various fictional characters. Tat Gıda, for example, is the leading brand in the Turkish market of the tomato paste, ketchup and tomato products, which has changed its advertising tactic to grow closer to consumers by rejuvenating itself. The brand has launched the “Tatlı Domatesler Ailesi” (“Sweet Tomatoes Family”) in 2015, showing the funny life of its ketchup ingredients as a family of little, cute tomatoes – scenes that again could stem from a children’s program. We are confronted with the imagination of how the ingredients – the tomatoes – look and live like. As adults, mostly Turkish women, are those who use the products of Tat when they cook, we can say that if *they* are really addressed besides children with this imagery, then this is an infantilizing act.



Figure 5.56 Sweet Tomatoes Family of Tat Gıda

Sana’s Margarine Girl is another interesting example. Unilever’s margarine products are a central part of the company that owns dozens of margarine brands around the world where only the name changes in different countries. Sana, as the Turkish brand version since 1953, refreshed its brand image in 2015 with a cute Margarine girl, living in the Sana package and dancing like a ballerina around the kitchen by allocating pieces of margarine to every meal. In mythical sense, the Margarine girl in the commercial is presented as the “real” reason for better tasting meals – she is the signifier for the “renewed flavor” (“Yenilenen Lezzet”). However, as the margarine will be mostly used by Turkish women, *they* will allocate the margarine to the meals which means that they stand for the enchanting Margarine girl as shown in Figure 5.57.



Figure 5.57 Sana's Margarine Girl

Another example is the campaign of Binbirçiçek (literally meaning: 1001 flowers), a Turkish honey brand. The brand has refreshed its image in 2014 by introducing an animated bee character that has a strong analogy to the bee character of Barry from the animated DreamWorks film *Bee Movie* in 2007 (see Figure 5.58).



Figure 5.58 Screenshots of Binbirçiçek's Campaign and *Bee Movie*'s Poster

It makes sense to use an animated bee as a character to promote a honey product. With this, Binbirçiçek clearly targets women with the slogan “Her kadın bir çiçek, tercihi Binbirçiçek” (“Every woman is a flower who prefers Binbirçiçek”) by emphasizing that women are the “true masters of life” – interesting to hear this compliment from an animated male bee. However, in a connotative meaning, this implies in respect to the use of the bee character that Turkish women are *like* bees, who

are “busy as a bee” concerning household, work life, and family issues but are able to do and manage everything at the same time by working hard “like a bee”. And such successful women, in a deeper meaning, would prefer Binbirçiçek.

A “true” infantile love story can be observed in Nestlé’s Coffee-Mate commercial. On a romantic boat ride under the moon, we can see a “couple”. An animated red coffee mug and Coffee-Mate hug each other – they are in love as the commercial underlines: “Everyone has a true love like coffee’s big love is Coffee-Mate.” Like a human couple, the Coffee-Mate and the coffee mug appear very cute in the simulated romantic kitsch. Simultaneously, in accordance with the same romantic storyline, a real couple in love is shown, both drinking coffee with Coffee-Mate. The illustrated infantile love between the two objects is compared with the love of real couples (see Figure 5.59). Thus, on a connotative level, we understand that we do not have the right to separate the both, coffee and Coffee-Mate (“ayrılmaz ikili”), as they are in deep love and we have to drink our coffee, because of this, with Coffee-Mate.



Figure 5.59 Nestlé Coffeemate Commercial “Kahve’nin Aşkı”

These brief examples show how frequently and to which different occasions infantile marketing techniques can be used. We see that *product infantilization* itself is a very common method to make products cuter and more appealing to nearly everyone.

5.2.4.2. *Banvit's Lezzetçibaşı: The Imaginary Friend of Housewives*

Banvit joined early to the trend of the creation of infantile figures for advertising purposes. Being the largest poultry producer in Turkey with the highest brand awareness in the sector and awarded three times as Turkey's Superbrand, Banvit used for many years animated chickens designed in an infantile style in its advertisements. In 2013, Banvit started a new advertising campaign with a new brand face called "Lezzetçibaşı", meaning the "Master of Tastes", which is an animated character that denotes a small cook, further embodies a head chef. However, in a connotative meaning, the cook's visuality as well his behavioral features recalls scenes of well-known Disney movies such as *Lady and the Tramp* (1955) and *Ratatouille* (2007). The figure of a Chef de cuisine with a typical moustache in French style was cartoonized in "Lady of the Trump". But from a behavioral perspective, it seems if the Banvit campaign indicates a mix of intertextual elements relating to the two protagonists of *Ratatouille*: an anthropomorphic rat called Remy having the talent to cook excellently like a professional chef and Alfredo Linguini who is a young garbage boy hired in a restaurant. Linguini befriends Remy after a first surprising meeting and discovers the rat's talent for cooking in contrast to him who has any talent. Soon after, they work together undercover: Remy guides Linguini like a marionette by giving him instructions pulling on his hair while hidden under Linguini's toque. We have a similar situation in Banvit's launch commercial, where one day a housewife in her kitchen meets Lezzetçibaşı for the first time, who appears out of nothing, and the woman is therefore very surprised. But immediately, they become friends and even more: Lezzetçibaşı becomes her "confidant" as the slogan underlines "Kadınların mutfaktaki lezzet sırdaşı" (literally: "Women's confidant of taste in the kitchen") – similarly as Remy the rat becomes the confidant of Linguini as shown in Figure 5.60.



Figure 5.60 Banvit's LezzetçiBaşı and Ratatouille's Rat as Cooking Confidants

In Banvit's second commercial, the same housewife is distressed and seeks out secretly, without her family being aware of this, LezzetçiBaşı's help because she has no idea what to cook for dinner. Like a genie, a term which comes from the Arabic word "jinn" and means an all-powerful spirit residing in a magical oil lamp best known from the story of Aladdin, the same way LezzetçiBaşı is available at all times in order to fulfill her wishes by saying "Dile benden ne dilersem" (literally: "Whatever you wish for I will treat it as a command"). As being enchanted, the kitchen suddenly turns to a disco-like environment in which LezzetçiBaşı, like a DJ, seems to spin different dishes like music discs in order to show the wide range of meal options he can offer the woman. After the woman opts for a meal, LezzetçiBaşı begins to prepare dinner by doing everything on his own. Whereas Linguini followed the orders of the rat in order to prepare the meal, the woman of the commercial just watches LezzetçiBaşı during the whole cooking process by doing nothing – she is in no way involved in the meal preparation. At the end, she only serves the meal to her family. Remarkably in this last scene it becomes apparent that her husband and her son can not see LezzetçiBaşı even when he is shown standing on the dining table. This indicates that he is only visible to women in the kitchen and to no one else, which reinforces his position of the confidant even more. In *Ratatouille*, however, Linguini tries to hide the rat so that nobody can see that it is the rat who cooks by behaving as if he were the cook. In Figure 5.61, we see both cooks in comparison.

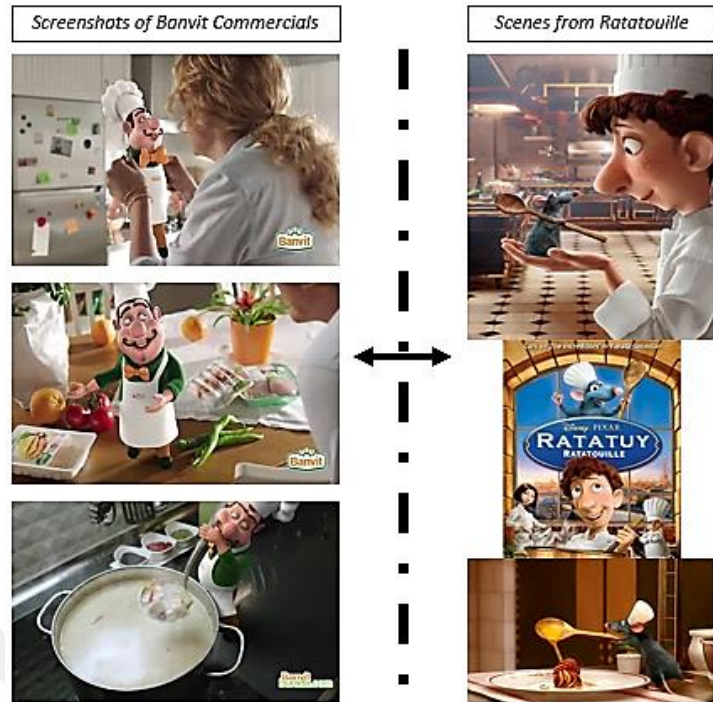


Figure 5.61 Banvit's Cook Versus Ratatouille's Cook

At least in the third commercial, it is obvious that Lezzetçibaşı is a signifier for the real heroes beyond the brand – the whole team of Banvit workers. First appearing as a magical cook only visible to women, Lezzetçibaşı turns out to be the symbolizing spirit of the company who can also be seen by all who are in Banvit's team, moreover, who are “involved” in the secret. Lezzetçibaşı, in persona, does not exist, he is a ghost. As a result, Banvit has attempted to give women a new cooking perspective with a computer-animated cook. Further, it is attempted to give the impression that Turkish women, who are often overwhelmed to prepare day for day different menus for their families, are not alone anymore. Indeed, Banvit has created an *imaginary friend* for women – a phenomenon which is extremely common in childhood. Thus, closely related to the child's imaginary world is the imaginary playmate, an important stage of social development for many preschoolers. At this age, when the child is testing the world it lives in, an imaginary friend can offer a safe opportunity to feel in charge by sometimes breaking the rules, and to feel a measure of control over one's own life.

Besides, imaginary friends may give children the refreshing opportunity to tell someone else what to do. Their invisible friend behaves then exactly the way they want them to. It seems that this is exactly what happens in the Banvit commercials. There is a best, imaginary friend women can trust – Banvit’s cook Lezzetçibaşı – with whom they can have a big secret together, promised never to be shared. Thus, they can tell Lezzetçibaşı what to do, and feel safe as the cook offers them a safe opportunity to feel in charge by breaking the rules, which means that women are not forced to cook all the meals anymore – a situation which millions of Turkish women dream about.

5.2.4.3. Algida’s Ice Creams Making Propaganda: Political Election Spectacle as Infantile Infotainment

Unilever’s ice-cream brand Algida has entered the Turkish market in 1990, and was since then always very active in creating successful advertising campaigns. However, in the summer of 2015, we saw a quite different Algida. Using a talking ice cream concept, Algida made a fun campaign to promote its legendary ice cream sorts Winner, Banana Joe, and Buzzy which many Turkish adults know from their childhood. Nevertheless, Algida started not just an advertising campaign, but a political election-like campaign – not with “normal” politicians but with the above mentioned animated and talking Algida ice cream sorts acting like politicians to be elected. The whole campaign was designed as a grand political spectacle with all its typical features. Further, Algida’s followers were asked on Twitter to vote for the ice cream sort they want to return back. The candidates – Banana Joe, Buzzy and Winner – were shown during their election campaigns making their speeches in a series of short commercials. What was even more astonishing, later the advertising campaign was dramatically intensified by simulating a whole news program series with news anchorman Korcan

Karar in the special show “Efsane Seçime Doğru“ (“Toward the Legendary Election”), and then “Efsane Seçim Özel” (see Figure 5.62) – program formats that Turkish people know very well as Turkey is a country where frequently elections take place.



Figure 5.62 Algidá’s Voting Results as Commercial Spectacle

However, the most remarkable point is that in Turkey, simultaneously at that time period, a “real” election campaign was promoted throughout the media for the Turkish general election which was held on June 2015. The Turkish audience was confronted to the collision of Algidá’s political election spectacle of its ice creams sorts in form of an infantile infotainment with the hashtag “#BenimSeçimim”, and the real political campaign for the election of Turkish parties. Algidá’s campaign especially became a marketing spectacle as it was created so real. Even on Istanbul’s streets, ballot boxes were placed that formed a hyperreal brand sphere where people could vote for the ice creams as we can see in Figure 5.64. With this regard, the boundary between the sphere of seriousness and the sphere of entertainment, clearly visible in the past, is now blurred. In the reality of 21st century, almost everything serves for entertainment, it is aimed at fun, therefore it is intended to provide possibly the greatest amount of pleasure. The world has entered an era of “technocapitalism, which unites capital, technology,

and the information and entertainment industries, producing an infotainment society and spectacle culture” (Kellner, 1995: 11), where “entertainment is shaping every domain of life from the Internet to politics” (ibid.: 12). In a time where traditional news and current affairs are on the decline, infotainment is on the rise. Lines between news, information and entertainment have eroded, and also politics has become a form of entertainment and spectacle (Kellner, 2009: 715-716).



Figure 5.63 Hyperreal Brands Spheres: Algida’s Public Voting Booths on Turkish Streets

In this sense, Algida’s advertising campaign is a key example for the use of infotainment to portray a political election in respect to a product in brand communication. Such informational entertainment can become an attracting technique to get consumers interested in the advertisers’ messages. Because spectacles are media constructs that are out of the ordinary and habitual daily routine, they capture the attention of the viewer. Algida has created such spectacle in its campaign by making the analogy to a political election. Finally, we have witnessed that Winner won the election; the ice cream stands – like its name – for a “winner” and is connoted with success, respect, and appreciation, as it is officially the most desired ice cream by the public. Algida’s campaign has the potential to evoke nostalgic feelings and reignite adults’ desire for the ice-cream of their childhood. With its childlike aspects combined with a news show, Algida’s campaign gives consumers a break from the serious side of life, bringing character to the iconic ice creams with a light-hearted approach.

5.2.4.4. *From Brush Man to Manga Girl Ajda Pekkan: Polisan Boya*

Since its inception in 1985, Polisan Boya is the leader of the Turkish decorative segment, which captures a 60% share in Turkish Paint Industry. Most notably, Polisan’s slogan “Gülen Boya” (“Smiling Paint”) is indicative of the company’s aim to put a smile on its consumers’ faces reflecting the company’s positive nature. Selected as a Superbrand in 2005, the company has especially strengthened its brand name through advertising. Since the mid-1980s, Polisan created especially humouristic advertisements with popular Turkish comedians. But later in 2006, Polisan has completely changed its marketing strategy by beginning to refresh its brand image with commercials in cartoon style in which the main protagonist was a humanized paintbrush in form of a young, adolescent man named as “Fırça Adam” (“The Brush Man”). Becoming the new brand mascot, Fırça Adam was first shown when he went to the disco with his best friend and met there the love of his life – a beautiful Polisan paint bucket in white as shown in Figure 5.64. The viewer witnessed a funny love story with an happy end: both Fırça Adam and the Polisan paint bucket decided to marry and for this, they began to furnish and, of course, painted their new home with Polisan.



Figure 5.64 Polisan’s Commercial with Brush Man

In 2008, a completely new advertising campaign was launched together with the new slogan “Yıllarca genç kalır” (“Stays young for years”). Notably, Polisan made the next important step to become a prominent example to show how products can be made

or kept youthful over a long period of time as it belongs to those brands that are renewing their brand identities by rejuvenilizing over time again and again as we will see in the following. *Juvenilize* is defined as “make or keep young or youthful; arrest the development of” (Stevenson, 2010: 952). In marketing terms, this means to give a product a juvenile appearance or make a product look younger and vital. This mostly can occur at a mythical level through certain connotations to be made. Obviously, there might have been no better alternative for Polisan than to choose Ajda Pekkan as its new brand face in order to juvenilize its product to appear more fresh and young.

Ajda Pekkan, famous Turkish singer and actress nicknamed as the “Süperstar”, is the Grande Dame of Turkish pop music and idol of millions of Turkish people from every generation. But more than this, she is famous for her long enduring youthfulness, even at the age of 72 at that date, being “Turkey’s eternal, surgery-perfect diva” (Ertan, 2008). Since the 1960s, the Turkish audience has seen Pekkan going from one transformation to another as with every new song a new and different image of Ajda Pekkan emerged. Then the moment came when make-up and different fashion styles simply were not sufficient anymore. From the 1990s on, Pekkan started her transformation with plastic surgery. As if the mission would be to achieve a state like frozen in time, many of today’s aging adults are trying to appear youthful. However, it is especially remarkable that Ajda Pekkan, who can be considered old for her age, appears especially young due to operations and photoshop. Interestingly, she looked in earlier years – when she was really young – older than today as we see in pictures from her in the 1960s and 1970s as shown in Figure 5.65. The left images and the one in the middle are unphotoshopped and, thus, the true representations of Ajda Pekkan. However, these pictures of the singer look strange, unfamiliar, or even wrong. Even though we know that the right pictures are airbrushed and altered images, it is certainly

more identifiable with the image we have from Ajda Pekkan. The enhanced presentation, which is characteristic for postmodern conditions, is what the public recognizes and accepts as the iconic, young appearing Ajda Pekkan: it is the “real” her, in other words, the simulation overtakes the physical reality and makes the unreal more real, as Baudrillard would say.

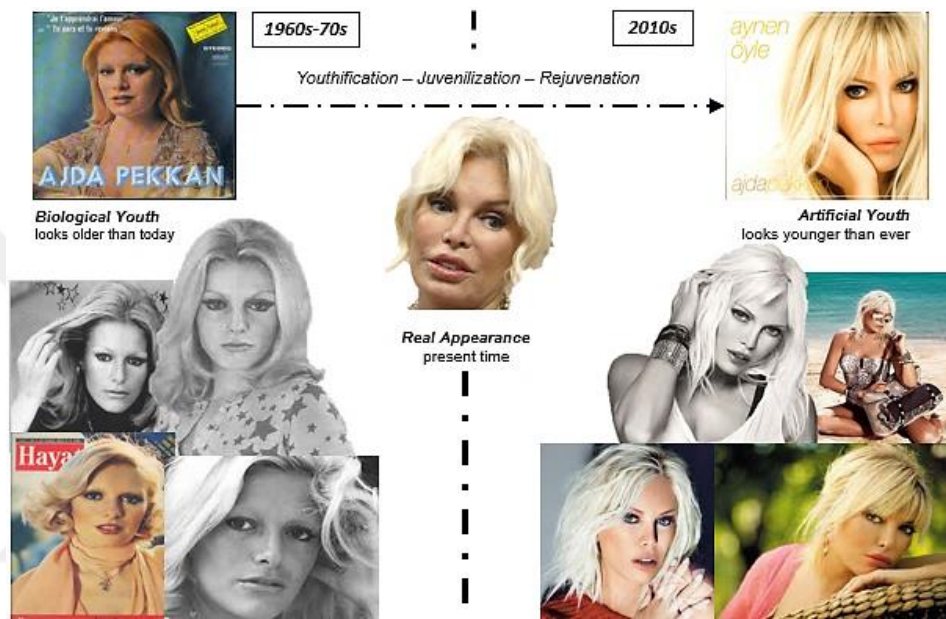


Figure 5.65 Superstar Ajda Pekkan: Before and After

Adulthood, and especially elderhood, is increasingly reconstructed as a marketable lifestyle that connects the commodified values of youth with bodycare techniques for masking the appearance of age (Katz, 2005: 67-68). This is strongly promoted by culture industries that further distribute pleasure and leisure across an unrestricted range of objects, identities, styles and expectations. Moreover, they “recast the life-span in fantastical ways, in particular, the masking of age and the fantasy of timelessness” (ibid.). With this regard, Ajda Pekkan is perceived to be a young woman, even a teenager, appearing younger than ever today, dresses like a young girl and also behaves like a young girl. Moreover, Pekkan is a typical *rejuvenile* – someone “who

cultivate[s] tastes and mindsets traditionally associated with those younger than themselves” (Noxon, 2006). It is her saying: “Serseri, içi kıpır kıpır genç bir kız gibiyim!” (“I’m an energetic, young punk girl full of piss and vinegar”) (Yılmaz, 2012).

Relating to her optical appearance, Polisan exactly highlights this very strongly in its campaign by giving Ajda Pekkan an additional special touch in creating a further strong analogy to *Sailor Moon*, one of the most popular and influential manga characters ever children were obsessed with since the early 1990s. In Polisan’s commercial, Ajda Pekkan’s hit song “Bambaşka Biri” (“Someone else”) is used as the jingle in the background and, apparently she really is someone else. Ajda Pekkan goes on stage and the audience carefully looks at her waiting for the performance. However, she does not sing as might be expected. Instead, she has a power stick in her hand and begins to use it with the effect that in a magical way red color comes out of it, which she spreads around the atmosphere in special lines. Finally, we see that she has drawn a smiling face under which it written “Gülen Boya”. As shown in Figure 5.66, the whole imagery strongly recalls the opening scenes of *Sailor Moon*.



Figure 5.66 Ajda Pekkan as Manga Girl Sailor Moon

Today, *Sailor Moon* is considered as a classic anime that meanwhile has unbelievable cult status. In this context, Ajda Pekkan features Usagi Tsukino, better known as Sailor Moon, who is a blond and long haired superheroine, and the main and titular character of *Sailor Moon*. Most Western audiences were introduced to Usagi appearing in the *Sailor Moon* anime, which is an adaptation of the original manga series. The anime is about junior high school girls who transform to superheroines in sailor suits when they have to save the world. They are interplanetary figures, so-called “guardians” with alter egos, who are destined to protect the solar system from evil. Similar to Sailor Moon, Ajda Pekkan is blond haired and has a red power stick which is a magical transformation item in the original plot, but now serves as a powerful Polisan color stick. At the end, Ajda Pekkan makes hand gestures like a sorcerer, taking all the power and pushing it to the air which like a firework explodes in all colors – what similarly happens in Sailor Moon.

As a result, the connotation is made: As the name “Ajda Pekkan” is synonymous with youthfulness and, in general, means transformation for the average Turk, the whole advertisement leans on the idea that Polisan can *really* transform one’s home to something else. Therefore, it is a clever decision of Polisan to connote the youthful and transformational attributes of its products “to stay young for years” with Ajda Pekkan, who is the best signifier for juvenilization, thus transformation *par excellence*. In a deeper mythical meaning, Ajda Pekkan becomes Sailor Moon, the manga girl, who transforms to a superheroine in form of the guardian protecting the walls of our homes from aging – with the Polisan color power stick. Striving for a kind of eternal youth, Ajda Pekkan is the postmodern archetype of the Turkish woman-child, and apparently this image will never change.

In 2011, then, the brand reinvented its childlike mascot “Fırça Adam” that now developed to a more charismatic, handsome and attractive brush man named as “Poliman”. Besides, Polisan Boya recycled its slogan to “Yıllarca genç ve çok çekici” (“Stays young for years and very attractive”) and also declared in the commercial that it would have an “anti-aging effect”. Ideologically, it is implied that “the more young (for years), the more attractiv (for years)”.

It becomes clear that the construction of a youthful brand personality must go through “the process of combining ideas and symbols to achieve congruous meaning” (Firat & Dholokia, 2006: 129). But apart from this, we recognize that not only the product is promoted in the commercials, but moreover postmodern age constructions are implied through the figures and messages in advertisements. In this sense, Figure 5.68 shows the brand’s evolution from the 1980s to 2011, a period of time where Polisan pursued a clear infantilization strategy which was very successful. But since 2011, it has tried to move in other and new directions.

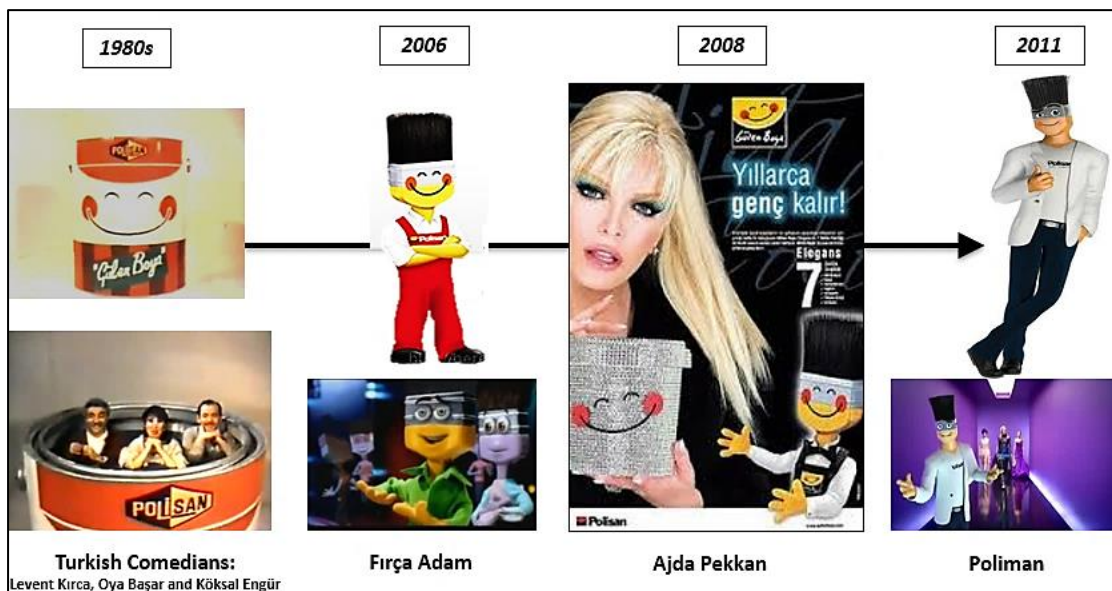


Figure 5.67 Infantalization in Polisan Boya's Brand Image

5.2.4.5. *Infantile Robotic Brand Character: Garanti's Ugi*

Living in a technological-saturated world, consumer's daily use of and contact with technology is decidedly unavoidable. As technology rapidly advances, the automated and digitalized world of our future becomes an inevitable reality, reaching into nearly every realm of our daily lives, also forcing brands to readjust their products and services accordingly. After a long-lasting marketing campaign of five years with the figures of the *Bremen Town Musicians* as discussed earlier, Garanti Bank switched to a new campaign format in 2016 by launching a technological character as its new brand face in order to reflect the Bank's vision of being innovative and up-to-date in technological terms. With the slogan "Yalnız değilsiniz, merak etmeyiniz" ("You are not alone, don't worry"), an infantile, little and cute robot named "Ugi" was introduced. As shown in the first commercial, Ugi can only say "ugi", but this seems to be sufficient to communicate further in a telepathic manner with the Turkish actor Mehmet Aslantuğ who has financial worries. As having encountered an infantile type of a robotic form of an E.T., an Extra-Terrestrial, Aslantuğ is relieved and has new hope about the future.

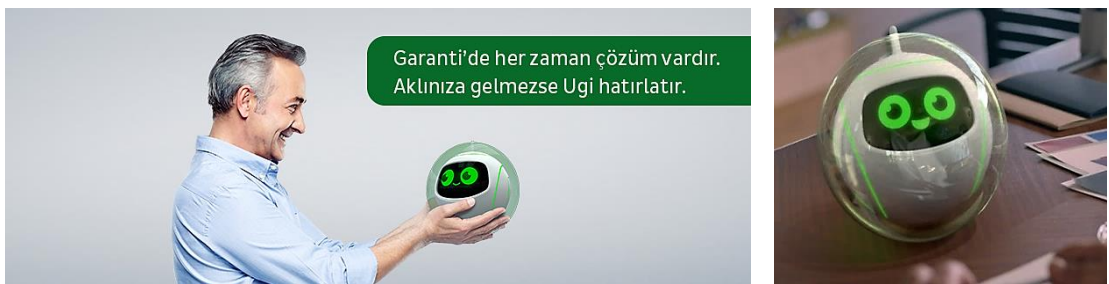


Figure 5.68 Garanti's New Brand Face "Ugi"

Most remarkably is that Garanti Bank informs the consumer that the computer system of the bank has turned into an artificial intelligence in form of a robot which is embodied by Ugi. We further hear the voice-over in an extended version of the commercial stating:

Gün gelecek akıllı robotla siz daha para ile ilgili bir konuyu düşünürken bile size çözümü hatırlatacak desek? Hatta bu robotlar aramızda dolaşacak, aklımızın takıldığı konuyu anlayacak ve yolladıkları ses dalgalarıyla bize çözümü bulduracak desek? Reklamlarımızın yeni kahramanı Ugi işte bu geleceğin habercisi. Bu robot şimdilik sadece reklamlarda, internette, sosyal medyada gözükecek.

With the flair of a science fiction story, Garanti Bank reveals its futuristic vision that the day will come when a smart robot will remind humans of the solution for a financial worry even when they only think about it; moreover, that these robots will be also amongst us figuring out about what humans worry, and help them by sending sound waves that humans will enable to find a solution to their problems. According to Garanti Bank, Ugi is a telling sign of the future that is, for now, only visible in advertisements, internet, and social media. Since Ugi's launch, the childlike robot appeared in various commercials, digital platforms, and social media in order to inform adult consumers about recent news and campaigns of the bank. But soon after in 2017, the secret behind Ugi was uncovered. In the commercial with Turkish actor Necip Memili, we were told that Ugi was just an actor who "performed" in the advertisements – as the same happened in Royal Halı's commercials with its protagonist the Bacterium. This confusing and paradox situation indicates a postmodern condition in which things do not happen as told and expected. Weren't we told that Ugi is the artificial intelligence, the future brain of Garanti Bank that will one day even know what we are thinking about and what financial worries we have? Thus, a state of disarray dominates where things are difficult to believe in as there might be always an alternative truth how it really could be. This resembles the situation when parents are lying to their children to make them believe something which sooner or later comes out. Because more recently in April 2018, Garanti started a new campaign with a series of commercials with

Turkish actor Engin Günaydın and model Dilan Çicek Deniz where we again are confronted to the fact that Ugi yet might be the artificial intelligence of the bank. This time, the robot even speaks with a deep male voice having conversations with the people around it. It seems that the robot slowly begins to evolve.

Nevertheless, the underlying message of the Ugi concept might be that consumers should follow the advices of the robot as such a perfect and intelligent robotic system cannot fail, but humans can. Within the context of modernism, the robot was presented as a figure of technological creation which attempted to replicate the human and called into question the boundaries between human and machine. With the shift to postmodernism since the mid-20th century and into the 21st century, robots now – among many other technological features – are supposed to threaten with their artificial intelligence to reproduce and dominate the thinking subject, the human. From the perspective of companies providing technological services and other devices, *stupidity* – in this sense not understanding the technology – is the desirable state the adult should be; it has turned from a deficiency to an advantage in view of the fact that digital technology in general is something highly complex and can only be understood by nerds (Bunz, 2015: 198). Thus, technological applications need to look easy and fun, addressing everyone on the level of simple minds, and by appearing innocently they even look suitable for children. Ugi, in this sense, fits perfectly in this scheme. Ugi appears innocent, friendly, and childlike but apparently carrying a huge data base and knowledge in it which even Engin Günaydın cannot believe by considering Ugi – before it has begun to speak – as a simple kitchenware. “*Ne anlasın bu küçük ev aleti [...] Bu mu teknoloji. Uyduruk bir şey bu. Ugi, ugi deyip duruyor, başka birşey demiyor.*” Here, infantilization excels at masking stupidity; it lures the adult making use of a highly complex digital technology by masking the fact that stupidity has taken on a central

role within late capitalism (ibid.). We cannot foresee how Garanti Bank's campaign will evolve, but clear is that Ugi not just denotes a little cute robot. In a connotative meaning, it stands for future technology already now available, and which is just in its beginning phase. Ugi is a helper who is always with us because the sphere Ugi navigates through is our smartphone.

5.2.4.6. *From Pepee-Oriented Characters to Stick Figures: Brand's Preschool Approaches to Serious and Sensitive Issues*

In recent times, it can be observed that brands create advertising figures that resemble Pepee as shown in Figure 5.69. Pepee is Turkey's first animated cartoon series with an educational component, which has been broadcasted since 2008. Pepee is designed especially for preschool age groups between 3-6 years with the aim of entertaining and educating them. It seems, however, that brands can adopt and develop the Pepee concept concerning both in visual and educational terms for the adult audience. In 2011, Türkiye İş Bankası as Turkey's largest bank created a series of commercials to promote its personal finance credits ("ihtiyaç kredisi") by showing different situations in lives of families when more money is needed as, for example, for a holiday trip, a wedding or when a baby is born. In 2013, ING Hayat Emeklilik (ING Bank's Life Insurance) promoted its new service "İyi Yaşa Hayat Sigortası" ("Live Well Life Insurance") by showing a family, and explained the importance of life insurances as life is full of unexpected surprises. In 2014, TeknoSa as Turkey's leading technology retailer created the campaign "81 İl" to promote actually nothing – it only informs us that TeknoSa now is to be found everywhere in Turkey, meaning in each of its 81 provinces. What all three campaigns have in common is their Pepee-like visuality

that gives the impression as if we would watch the popular Turkish children’s cartoon, and not a bank’s, insurance company’s or technology retailer’s campaign.



Figure 5.69 Pepee-Oriented Figures in Advertisements

This continues with brand’s interest in using childlike drawings and stick figures in campaigns. In 2014, for instance, Odeabank created the concept of “Bank’Olular” to communicate its Bank’O credit card with characters illustrated as infantile drawings. However, Bank’Olular are not any sort of creatures coming from another planet as might be expected after having watched the commercial. On the contrary, we – the consumers on this earth – *are* the Bank’Olular, represented as infantile creatures and categorized in three groups as “Trendy”, “Sosyal” (Social), and “Gezgin” (Traveler). At the end of the commercial, the voice-over tells us that if we really want, we could become one of the Bank’Olular. However, humans are cartoonized and objectified, and the earth is considered a play ball. Within this frame, adults are asked to strive for this.

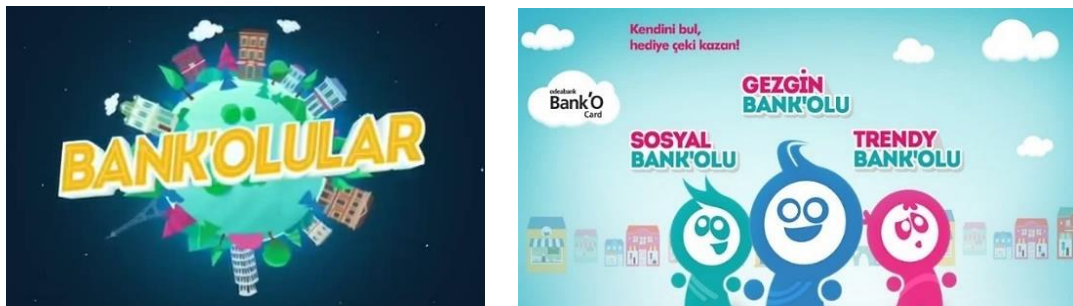


Figure 5.70 Bank’Olular Commercial

The situation becomes even more complicated when it comes to themes as passion, prevention and in general sexual issues. An easy way to handle this can be realized through infantilizing representations that can help to illustrate complex situations which are serious and sensitive and, in particular, are difficult to show in real advertising environments. With infantilist design techniques, complex issues can be simplified and even better communicated as if it would be presented in real terms.

In 2014, Axe's campaign "Gold & Dark Temptation" illustrates the playful competition of an animated cupcake and a snake, but it is especially the childlike cupcake which is appealing. At the beginning of the commercial, a man is shown with the cute, infantile chocolate cupcake, but soon after we see a snake as its rival. The voice-over says: "*Hey çikolata. Artık tek değilsin. Axe'dan baştan çıkararı iki koku. Axe Dark ve şimdi Axe Gold. Rekabete hazırmısın?*" ("Hey Chocolate. You are not alone anymore. Two irresistible fragrances: Axe Dark and new Axe Gold. Are you ready for the competition?"). On a connotative level, we now understand that the chocolate cupcake stands for the fragrance of Dark Temptation which further symbolizes attraction and passion. This is enhanced by the chocolate factor: Women have a very special relationship with chocolate which shows itself particularly in form of a weakness for it. Thus, many women simply cannot resist a sweet temptation – as the same which is connoted with Axe's chocolate cupcake as "dark temptation".

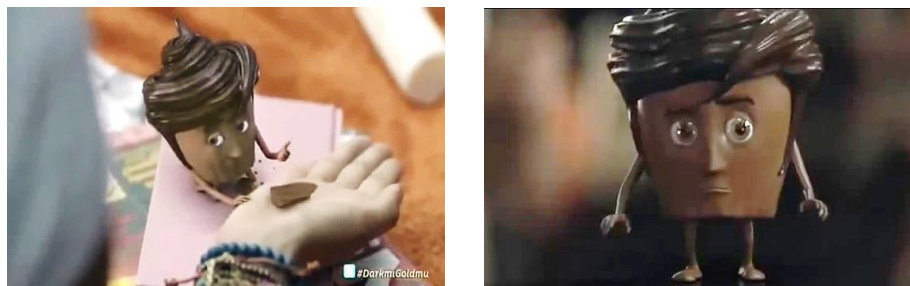


Figure 5.71 Axe's Chocolate Cupcake

However, in Turkey one main taboo subject remains: sexuality and sex education. In this sense, especially for condom brands it becomes very difficult to find an appropriate way to market their product. Apart from the existence of cultural sensitivities, the circumstance of trying to sell condoms in general is a tough business. While being a sex item, a condom is also a safety tool. Condom as a product needs to seem sexy, but cannot be too sexy. With the infantilizing strategy, there is a way to openly talk about sex and prevention at the same time in a metaphorical sense as Okey has shown (see Figure 5.72). Being Turkey's leading and popular condom brand, Okey (also O.K.) made use of infantilization and created for its 22nd anniversary in 2013 a remarkable campaign in which the history of its brand evolution was illustrated in a funny and ironic way but, most notably, in a childish style. Okey thoughtfully surpassed cultural sensitivities about condom communication by using a harmless visual presentation of the sexual experience by infantilizing it. Instead of directly filming real sex scenes which would be impossible to show on television, the commercial focused on the brand's condom packages that expressively were brought to life, acting as little cute and colorful figures, visualized in an animated style and embodying all those scenes which could not be illustrated real. Instead, the sexual experience was compared in various scenes, for example, with a soccer game or a fire blight. In short, the condom packages have mocked as a representation of sex. The creative idea directly spoke to the viewers in a pleasant analogy without alienating or intimidating them.

A further strategy of Okey was to make use of stick figures by adopting the social media meme⁴⁴ "Be like Bill" to its own brand concept. Being a recent Internet trend, the "Be like Bill" ("Ali gibi ol" as the Turkish version) meme began around late

⁴⁴ A meme is an activity, concept, catchphrase or piece of media which spreads, often as mimicry, from person to person via the Internet.

2015, with its popularity greatly increasing in early 2016. Nevertheless, the whole concept of the meme is a pure form of infantilization; it typically features an image of a simple and childlike drawing of a cartoon stick figure with a simple text, narrating a short story, that could stem from a child.



Figure 5.72 Okey's Brand Communication

The idea behind Bill is simple: Bill can be anyone who is smart, has common sense, does not do annoying things and does not take himself to seriously. Thus, it is the simplicity which is responsible for the meme's success. The meme has been going viral across the internet with people adapting it for all kinds of situations. But soon after, the meme came also to be deployed by brands to promote their products. So did Okey on its Facebook Page on 25.1.2016 with the following text: "These are Berke and Aslı. Berke and Aslı do not like to go outside during the cold weather. They also know how to entertain themselves at home. Berke and Aslı are smart. Be like Berke and Aslı". In denotative terms, we see this simple text and the related stick figures, where the indicated form of entertainment could be of any kind. However, when we see the logo of Okey on the image, in a connotative meaning we understand now that the entertainment form that is implied must be sex, and the smartness signifies Okey, because those who use Okey will prevent pregnancy and sexual transmitted infections.

With the meme, Okey again succeeds to promote its product without going into any intimate details. Though it contains a sexual message, it is best hidden by only indicating it with a simple text in a very refined way and putting aside two innocent appearing stick figures, a girl and a boy, supporting the message also in its infantile design.

Another sensitive issue is pregnancy, a period of approximately 9 months in which a woman carries an embryo or fetus inside of her uterus. Women often experience a range of emotions during their pregnancy bringing a new meaning to their life, being a period of immense joy coupled with excitement. The feeling of carrying a little soul within a woman is for the mother-to-be magnificent and overwhelming. Exactly this was Sarelle's campaign theme. Sarelle is among the strongest chocolate brands in Turkey for over 40 years now, and especially popular for its chocolate and hazelnut spread, comparable with Nutella. An outstanding campaign with a series of commercials started in 2013, where the main protagonist was Turkish actress Begüm Kütük Yaşaroğlu, a real mother-to be at that time who was shown during her journey of pregnancy. The whole campaign told the virtual story of two animated twin babies living in their mother's womb. At the beginning, only "Baby Erdil", called Erdo, was seen but later his sister "Bego" was added as shown in Figure 5.73. In the commercials, the funny life of the twins were simulated and shown in episodes by simultaneously showing the life of their real-life mother each time eating Sarelle. The campaign was considered to be especially intended for children. But if we take a closer look, we realize that mothers and particularly pregnant women with a passion for quality were addressed in a childlike way. The message is clear: "Siz ne yerseniz, çocuğunuz da onu yer" ("Your child eats what you eat"). In denotative terms, Sarelle might be a breakfast

spread that in particular children love. At a connotative level, however, Sarelle signifies a natural and healthy baby food free of trans-fatty acids that pregnant women should eat with the effect that their baby will be healthy as well. The positive results of the advertisements could be seen as the campaign which included numerous commercials was one of the most successful TV campaigns in Sarelle's brand history.



Figure 5.73 Screenshots of Sarelle's Commercials

5.2.5. Childlike Video Games and Virtual Reality

5.2.5.1. Retro Video Games in Axe and Duracell

For decades now, children have played the latest video games that even ruled their childhood. Later, with the rise of the internet, the notion of reality becoming virtual has entered our vocabulary, our lives and the markets. This cyberspace maybe has allowed us to live in a parallel, second reality where we felt more free, anonymous, and powerful, but also overwhelmed. Under the above described circumstances, it becomes especially interesting to recognize that in a time where technology advances and becomes more complex, it apparently seems that older and more simple games of earlier times that were popular in many adults' childhood years, gain importance again as they are unique and unforgettable, and meanwhile even nostalgic. Some of them have even

become iconic as they have influenced and contributed to popular culture. Thus, brands also attempt to make use of them for advertising purposes.

Remarkably, Axe makes use of maybe two of the most iconic video games ever in two of its Facebook posts – *Pacman* (1980) and *Super Mario* (1985) – which trigger some kind of *video game nostalgia*. Instead of integrating recent and sophisticated hi-tech illustration of scenes in video games, Axe prefers to make use of a childish ones that reminds adult men – the target group of Axe – surely of their childhood as they have certainly played the above mentioned games as many children did. The Facebook posts show in an ironic way how Axe employs the childlike design formats of the nostalgic games for its brand purposes as shown in Figure 5.74.

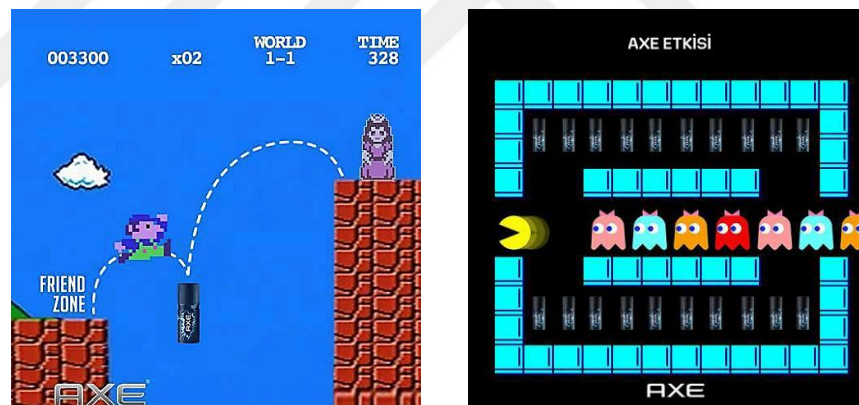


Figure 5.74 Nostalgic Video Games in Axe Advertisements

On 22.11.2013, Axe shared an image on which we can see a typical scene of *Super Mario* – we recognize it as such because we see several characteristic features in form of indexical signs we can relate to the game. *Super Mario*, in this sense, not only introduced a whole generation of children to video games, but ushered in arguably the most widely recognized video game character ever. With this regard, in Axe's campaign we see the scene where Super Mario is jumping up in order to save the

princess, and in general, we can categorize the whole setting as the famous Nintendo game having a blue background, the brown walls, and above the information bar. The intertextual reference is made by Axe in employing the *Super Mario* setting as a template to build on it its own advertising campaign by visually integrating its product – an Axe deodorant – in the image in form of a step on which Super Mario has to jump on. The message is that only with the help of the Axe product, signifying a step, Super Mario is able to jump up to the princess. Axe writes in the subtext of the Facebook post: “Gerektiğinde Super Mario’ya bile yardım ederiz” (“If necessary we even help Super Mario”). On 20.1.2014, in another Facebook post, Axe has illustrated the screenshot of *Pacman*’s play area which is the only one that exists in the game. In the original game, the goal is to navigate Pacman through a maze of dots in order to accumulate points by eating all these dots. There are also four multi-colored ghosts that are the enemies of Pacman by following him closely as possible to reach and kill him. However, Axe rewrites the situation in the game. We see Pacman who is hurrying because all ghosts are female which we can recognize from the bow on their head, and that are following him with the difference that not only four but much more is entering the screen one by one. Axe writes in the subtext of the image: “Pacman Axe etkisi ile tanışınca” (“When Pacman meets the Axe effect”).

As a result, we see that fragments of *Super Mario* and *Pacman* which today have a nostalgic value are used to appeal to the boyish side of Axe’s target audience. The image of *Pacman* is now a signifier for irresistibility; it implies that the smell of Axe is so strong and such attracting that even in a video game the Axe effect can be felt. As Pacman has apparently used the Axe product, he now has to bear the consequence that all female ghosts have smelled the irresistible Axe fragrance and thus have found a way to enter the screen in order to catch him. Further, the image of

Super Mario means, in denotative terms, that Axe serves indeed as a step to make Super Mario jump to the princess, but in a connotative meaning, *Axe* is the first step to come near to the princess because now, after he has used the product, Super Mario is able to leave the “friend zone” – as written in the image from where he jumps – which makes him achieve the princess not to save her anymore, but to conquer her heart due to the Axe effect as she is already awaiting him, probably having smelt Axe.

Duracell is another brand that referred to a nostalgic video game in its Facebook post but in a different way than Axe. On 11.8.2014, Duracell shared the following post: “90'lar nesli! Başından hiç kalkmadığınız video oyunu hangisiydi?” (“Generation of the 1990s, what was the video game you played continuously?”). As it would have attempted to give a hint, Duracell shares months later another post on 27.2.2015 by sharing an image, as shown in Figure 5.75, and asking this time: “Biz de bugün nostalji yapmaya karar verdik! Hala tetris oynayan kaç kişiyiz?” (“Today, we have decided to make nostalgia, too. How many of us are still playing Tetris?”)

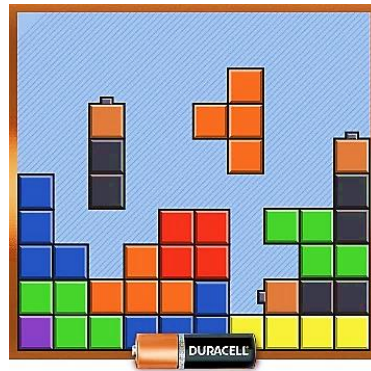


Figure 5.75 Duracell Battery in Tetris

Invented in 1984, *Tetris* is indeed one of the most successful and recognizable video games of many adults’ childhood. *Tetris* is a tile-matching puzzle game; it allows players to rotate falling colorful blocks strategically to clear levels. The goal is to score

as many points as possible by clearing the horizontal lines of the blocks. This game embraces our universal desire to create order out of chaos, and Duracell connects this with its product. In the image we can recognize that among the blocks there are also three Duracell batteries in form of blocks (consisting of a brown and two black components). The Duracell battery is a signifier for completeness; in denotative terms, it may fill the gaps in order to clear the lines, but in connotative terms it means that the battery is an important key factor to accomplish things as it supplies the necessary energy we need to make something “electronically“ function. Duracell in its Facebook post points out to the fact that many people – including brands – are in a nostalgic fever that Duracell now wants to join in as well.

5.2.5.2. *When Life Becomes a Video Game: Street Fighter Legend in Anadolu Sigorta*

In the 1980s, television continued to be a dominant source of entertainment in children’s lives when computer and video games were launched as newcomers to the media scene and started to become mainstream. Many children in industrialized countries played video games roughly for hours per week. One of the most popular video games over the last couple of decades has been *Street Fighter*, a fighting video game which was first released in 1987. Since its debut, *Street Fighter* has taken and maintained its place as one of the most iconic video game franchises in history. Many adults may remember the popularity of the game from their own childhood and eventually even have played it. That life could become a video game by inserting a fictional video game character into real life in an advertising setting was best demonstrated in Anadolu Sigorta’s “Street Fighter” commercial in 2014 that was considered as “probably the greatest advertisement for car insurance ever” (Isaac,

2014). Rather than continuing the understanding of standard monotonous old-fashioned insurance advertisements, Anadolu Sigorta went beyond by creating an eye-catching commercial that received two Crystal Apple Awards. What we see in the beginning of the commercial is quite ordinary. An uninsured man is interviewed by a reporter asking him a question regarding car insurance, which the man casually ignores. When the reporter points out that his car could be under risk because he has not a car insurance, the man answers in a confident way: “Risk? I mean a flower pot could fall on your head from there and crush your skull. This is also a risk. Nothing would happen to my car, don’t worry. I mean what could happen to my car?”. After this remark, suddenly things get really dramatic in the commercial. Actually out of nowhere, *Street Fighter*’s legendary character Ryu jumps into the screen and across the screen, most notably around its enemy which he targets as the man’s car and thus, after a few seconds, destroys the car completely as shown in Figure 5.76.



Figure 5.76 Street Fighter Legend Ryu in Anadolu Sigorta’s Commercial

At the roots of *Street Fighter*’s longstanding success is a cast of playable characters with notable characteristics and magnetic charm, among them the fighter

Ryu. Anyone who has ever played the game will immediately catch the intertextual reference to the bonus stage area of the game, where the video game player would have to destroy a car within a certain time frame. Anadolu Sigorta's *Street Fighter* imagery reconstructs all of the nostalgic sights and sounds of the game. With this, the commercial attempts to demonstrate that having the car insured is very important by fading in the typical "Game Over" image with an additional message: "Anadolu Sigorta'dan Kaskonuzu yaptırın, böyle olaylar canınızı sıkmasın!" ("Make your car insurance with Anadolu Sigorta, then irritating things like this will not happen!").

Video games are electronic games that many of us have started to play when we were children. These games are composed of manipulated images which are produced by a computer program on a screen and often emphasizing fast action. Video games were maybe the very first hyperreality we were confronted to in our lives. But we have early and quickly learned how to react in a video game because maybe a hundreds or thousands of times we encountered obstacles that we had to overcome in each level in order to reach the next one. The consideration that life is structured as a video game is not far-fetched as many textures are resembling one another. With this regard, the ideological meaning of the campaign is that real life *is* actually a video game of strategy where the key to win is simply managing one's resources – to what Anadolu points to. In an entertaining and absurd way, we are invited to make a car insurance because we now are enforced to realize the urgent necessity of it as figures like Ryu might enter our world; they now signify not a video game character anymore we can control, but the potential enemy for us, even if hyperreal. Therefore, Anadolu Sigorta illustrates our reality by clashing it with that of the video game world by further implying that there is a very real chance that we are, right this moment, and unaware of the fact, living

inside of a video game. It seems if the Anadolu Sigorta's Street Fighter commercial seems to simulate this perfectly with a flair, which even evokes nostalgic feelings as we see the exact copy of Ryu again. And as we are always searching for security, even a video game scenario like this may appeal to our unconscious mind and then, indeed, make us go to the next Anadolu Sigorta's branch.

5.2.5.3. *Avea's Teletubbied Virtual Reality*

The *Teletubbies* is a British children's television series targeted at preschool viewers between 2 and 5 years old, produced from 1997 to 2002. The TV program rapidly became an iconic children show with global commercial success in over 60 countries, among them also Turkey. Teletubbies, which have the body proportions, behaviour, and language of toddlers, are featured by four colourful main characters: Tinky Winky, Dipsy, Laa-Laa, and Po, who live in a futuristic dome – the “Tubbytronic Superdome” – set in a landscape of rolling green hills. Different elements make the whole environment unique in which the Teletubbies live: talkative flowers, periscope-like voice trumpets, vacuum-functioned noo noo the insect, a group of rabbits, and a laughing baby sun. The mixture of bright colours, unusual designs, repetitive non-verbal dialogue, and the ritualistic format made the program striking. This was maybe the reason, although the program was aimed at preschool children, it had a huge cult following with older generations, mainly university and college students. Actually, Teletubby Land was nothing less than a simulated dreamland whose infantile structures former mobile operator Avea⁴⁵, without doubt, made use of.

⁴⁵ Avea was founded in 2004 through the merger of two former cellphone operators, Türk Telekom's Aycell and Aria. Since then, Avea was one the most dynamic and innovative GSM company in Turkey. By the third quarter of 2015, Avea had 17 million subscribers. In 2016, Türk Telekom has merged into one entity by merging with Avea and TTNET, becoming the biggest telecommunications company in Turkey.

In 2011, Avea promoted its new product “Jet Mobil Modem”, which enabled Avea’s users to surf in the internet from wherever they want, with an eye-catching video game-like commercial. The protagonists named as Fasulye and Optik, two young men, entered the virtual world in the full sense of the word. Represented with big heads but shrunk bodies after having logged in the digital sphere, both men were *really* surfing on small “Avea jets”, that allowed them to cruise around in the artificial environment. The effect as being in a video game was enforced through soundtrack in the background that typically accompany older video games. In this hyperreal world, humans no longer use their real names but nicknames as it was illustrated when Fasulye, alias “Serseriaşık123”, recognizes a beautiful girl nicknamed as “Crazygirl_89”. In terms of visuality, it is obvious that the whole campaign was designed in a Teletubby style, moreover, a teletubbed virtual reality was created as shown in Figure 5.77. Both environments are dominated by the colors of green (lawn) and blue (sky), and with trees and rainbows. At a connotative level, Crazygirl_89 is the baby sun, and the Teletubbies – even if not in the same resemblance – can be found in some kind of dotted symbols in bright colors on the lawn. Through this, we perceive a perfect, happy childlike world.

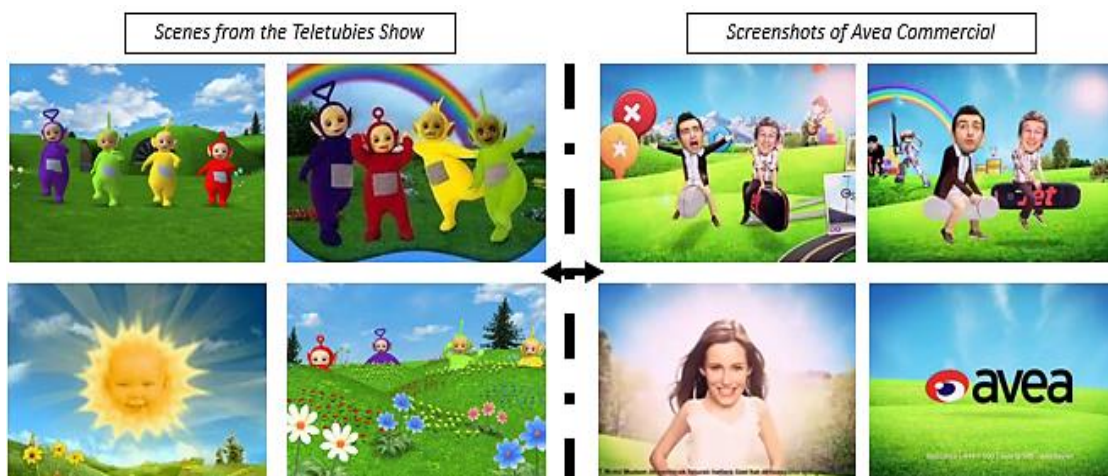


Figure 5.77 Scenes of Teletubbies Program and Avea’s Commercial

As already anticipated in the years around 2010 when this campaign was created and actually even before, internet has rapidly become the major medium through which people communicate, make decisions, and even construct their social identities. Virtual reality, also known as cyberspace (“sanal alem” in Turkish), seems to be the domain especially ruled by postmodern features. In the virtual world, there are no longer the rational and stable selves in individuals, but the playful, fragmented, and disembodied cyber spirits in postmodern times where the classical rules of time, space, logic, and identity are suspended. The virtual world of Avea embodies the sudden, hyperreal dynamics of a dream as we see in Avea’s Teletubbied virtual reality which promotes a childlike dream – its latent meaning is that everything seems attainable, effortless, limitless and, in some kind, possible with a mouse click. The virtual world provides a fantasy sphere where the physical real is digitized and the digital becomes the real. Today in 2018, we realize that in the early 2010s it was only just the beginning and that the virtual world today is much more enhanced and unavoidable through the emergence of smart phone technology which certainly will be further developed.

5.2.5.4. Opeto as the Turkish Mega Man

Being the second biggest fuel-oil distribution company in Turkey, Opet was founded in 1992, and is part of the Koç Group Holding since 2002. Today, Opet is the most reputable Turkish fuel brand and was selected three times as Turkey’s Superbrand in the last years to which Opet’s outstanding advertising campaigns have certainly contributed to a great extent. One of its long-enduring and successful campaign, in this sense, was between 2005-2006 with Turkish comedian Cem Yılmaz. Later towards the end of 2012, on the occasion of its 20th anniversary, Opet introduced its new brand mascot named as “Opeto”, an animated human-like robotic character based on the

brand features of Opet. In the first two commercials, Opedo and Turkish singer Ajda Pekkan promoted both together for Opet’s Ultra Force product as shown in Figure 5.78. Ajda Pekkan, as the same in Polisan we have analyzed earlier, epitomizes the perfect eternal girl, who is known for her perfectionism concerning both her work and appearance. This is in accordance with Opet’s slogan “Journey to Perfection” (“Kusursuza Yolculuk”), through which Opet’s customers will be accompanied from now on by Opedo. In the first commercial, Opedo informs about Opet’s fuel oil providing “ultra force” for a higher driving performance. In the second commercial, we are told about the advantages of Opet Worldcard where we can also see the Vadaa characters. Especially the second commercial consists of fragmented sequences which give the impression being a dream where strange things happen – we see Ajda Pekkan continually singing one of her hits to herself by adjusting the words suitable for the campaign, while Opedo is trying to quickly explain Opet’s and Worldcard’s features, Vadaa figures appear at dinner, then a piano fades in that Opedo begins to play. However, this could also be simulation, moreover a video game in which the goal would be to manage things in such a way to receive the next better level.



Figure 5.78 Opet’s Launch Campaigns with Opedo and Ajda Pekkan

In fact, if we take a closer look to Opedo, we will recognize that there is a strong intertextual reference to *Mega Man*, a video game franchise created by Capcom for the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) in 1987. *Mega Man* is a robot character, representing a blue bomber who is actually a preteen robot boy fighting in the high-tech

Silicon Valley. *Mega Man*, today a classic, is one of the video game industry's most recognizable icons having a wide gaming audience continuing to evolve with the ever-changing demands of contemporary gaming systems. The video game focuses on a robotic lab assistant named Rock that is created by Dr. Light, who in general develops robots for industrial purposes to assist mankind. However, one day these robots go out of control and start attacking the population. Dr. Light's helper Rock, having a strong sense of justice, upgrades himself into a fighting mode by becoming Mega Man with a blue armour and helmet, in order to save mankind. With this regard, Opedo seems to be an adapted Turkish version of Mega Man as shown in Figure 5.79.



Figure 5.79 Opedo and Mega Man

The color scheme of the outfit and helmet is nearly the same (blue and yellow), and Opedo's unicycle "Motopet" resembles Mega Man's vehicle. Being a friendly and sincere character, Opedo – similar to Mega Man – lives an adventurous life, being the robotic assistant of Opet in order to lead mankind by promoting the brand's products and services. Thus, Opedo not only denotes just an ordinary childlike robot character, but it connotes the attributes of the video game world of *Mega Man* standing for help, rescue and solutions to make people feel good and powerful through Ultra Force.

5.3. RENAISSANCE OF TOY STORIES, TASTES, PLACES & CO.: BRANDED ADULT VERSIONS OF CHILDHOOD SYMBOLS AND MOTIFS

Some of the words and symbols and images from childhood will continually be part and parcel of my personality.

– Dennis Potter,
English Media Personality

5.3.1. Brand New Toy Stories

Toys of any sort – including dolls, cars, or teddy bears – are essential in childhood play, but they are also a way to transport adults back to childhood. Toys are objects that have the power to evoke adults’ earliest memories. Even though adults may not play with children’s toys anymore, they all have memories of their favorites. Playing with toys is a “childhood labour whose essence is a mental transformation – the distancing from daily experience and the re-creation of self in an imaginary world” (Kline, 1998: 107). Furthermore, the toy is an “effective symbol of a simpler form of gratification steeped in pleasure alone and not in the rational adjudication of a product’s attributes, benefits and construction” (ibid.: 107). Thus, with toys we connote pleasure, leisure, and fantasy. However, it can be observed that brands make use of toys in order to relate to their products and with this, they create their own “toy stories” to appeal to adults. Originally, *Toy Story* is a computer-animated Pixar-movie released by Walt Disney Pictures in 1995. As the title indicates, the movie shows the world of anthropomorphic toys, which pretend to be lifeless whenever humans are present. *Toy Story* is full of lovable characters having various adventures – a movie which was continued in a series and mostly loved by adults. In the following, we will analyze selected “*brand* toy stories” in Turkish advertising which will show that meaning of toy images may change but the desire for them does not.

5.3.1.1. Consuming Barbie Worlds with Maximum Card and Axe

Barbie doll is, without doubt, a global icon of childhood play. Many women who were once children played with Barbie and her boyfriend Ken. Barbie culture, especially characterized by its unique pink colour scheme, supports a girlish image influencing not only young girls but also women all around the world which may lead to an obsession with pink and, most notably, pink consumerism. How a Barbie-like environment for the purpose of brand communication could be created is best demonstrated by Maximum Card. In 2013, Turkish actor Mert Firat performed in the brand's advertisements together with actress Müge Boz featuring in the story of "Kerem and Melek", which we will interpret in the following as "Ken and Barbie". One outstanding commercial of the ad series is the "Maximum BP" campaign that is designed as a comic strip showing Kerem and Melek in a car drive to the BP gas station as we can see in Figure 5.80. Instead of perceiving the main content of the campaign, its visuality is the most dominating feature. In these cartoonized and animated frames, we can recognize a dreamy, artificial world where skies and cars are pink.



Figure 5.80 Screenshots of Maximum BP Campaign

Like every commercial nowadays, the Maximum BP campaign was complemented with several Facebook Posts, one of them is shown in Figure 5.81. Through this, at the latest, it is clearly evident that the whole advertisement imagery has a strong intertextual reference to Barbie. The images simulate in general a Barbie-

oriented world, containing various Barbie-related elements known from other contexts. Apparently, different sources are mixed and recycled that can be easily traced back through the eye-catching similarities in the campaign. The car and the environment in the commercial, for example, seem to be the same as that of “Barbie Car Cleaning”, an online game for girls. In relation to certain scenes of *Toy Story 3*, we can further discover analogies. Especially Kerem’s and Melek’s poses can be strongly compared to the doll-like posing style of the famous couple of Barbie and Ken. In fact, Kerem is the signifier for Ken, and Melek for Barbie; both together makes us associate a whole Barbie world which, at a mythical level, stands for glamour, richness, happiness, and adventure. As we all know, even if its imagery, Barbie has a “dream life”: she has the house, the wardrobe, and the cars of our fantasies, most notably that of girls’ but also women’s. As a result, it seems that the viewer is confronted to a simulated Barbie world full of kitsch in the Maximum campaign, which invites the adult to a childlike consumer environment we mostly know from children’s media.



Figure 5.81 Barbie-Related Intertextual Features in Maximum Campaign

In general, Maximum’s logo concerning its letters and Maximum’s iconic colour scheme, which it uses for every brand occasion, seem to be *Barbie-fied* (see

Figure 5.82). Hot pinks connote energy, youthfulness, playfulness, fun and excitement, and are mostly used for less expensive or trendy products especially for women or girls. It also stands for attributes like nice, romantic, cute and sweet, and is mostly seen in logos and campaigns for little girls or sweet foods like bubble gum, ice cream and donuts. But Maximum Card is a financial product – a product for adults. Besides, Maximum Card certainly not only targets women but any adult who can afford a credit card. Obviously, Maximum Card attempts to convey the message that it is a young, fresh, lively and fun brand evoking a sense of playfulness we know from Barbie.



Figure 5.82 Maximum Card's and Barbie' Logo

But there is more behind the pinkness. Consumers' unconscious beliefs and wishes cause them seeing the world through certain colored glasses without even realizing that they are wearing them. When we see the world through rose-colored glasses, however, we only notice the good things and our view can be unrealistic – like Pollyanna, the famous tale character, who is a blindly optimistic girl. In fact, this is especially in childhood the case, when we perceive the world in particular as rosy. In this sense, Maximum card attempts to put the *rose-colored* glasses every single time with its *rose-colored* campaigns on consumers. It portays the world to them more than as pink by appealing to their unconscious mind in visual terms, which is particularly effective in order to make consumers understand that barriers once seemed as impenetrable can be transformed now into exciting opportunities – but only with Maximum card. Thus, the best way to implement this, seems to be without doubt, the

use of Barbie-related imagery which is the best signifier for a rose-colored world. Until today, Maximum card has continued with this strategy to make consumers unconsciously feel attached to a toy story and imagery, hence, to the brand. But sometimes secondary conditions must be modified to achieve this. Since 2017, it added Turkish comedian Cem Yılmaz to its campaign slipping in the role of the genie, and Mert Fırat becoming a contemporary Aladdin – characters from the famous Arabian night tale “Aladdin and the Wonder Lamp”, which is another story that always ignited the imagination of children. With the slogan “Ne Dilersen Dile Maximum Mobil’de” (“Wish for whatever you want, Maximum Mobil makes it come true”), Maximum goes further than it can go by promising now to make every dream come true. And as shown in Figure 5.83, the pinky world continues.



Figure 5.83 Screenshots from “Ne Dilersen Dile Maximum Mobil’de” Campaign

If we now go over to another subtopic, which is also crucial to analyze briefly, we can say that the images of Barbie that are formed in our childhood become a part of many people’s identity, but further become images of what we believe is to be “the ideal”. In the late 1990s, the catchy pop song “Barbie Girl” touted “*I’m a Barbie girl, in a Barbie world*” and represented, and still represents, the hyperreal imagination of many young girls and women dreaming about a Barbie life – not only in metaphorical sense. For many women and also men, the promoted Barbie doll lifestyle, the doll body image and the cartoonish femininity and masculinity it suggests, is a dedicated way of

life. As the tendency to imitate others begins already in baby years, humans are capable of identifying with and imitating a very wide circle of individuals – from family and friends, to complete strangers from very different cultures only ever to be seen in magazines, on TV or in movies. In this sense, there exist adults who have chosen to imitate dolls, and it is interesting to see how deep-rooted these images can be in the heads of adults that want to change one big part of their identity because of it. Extreme but influential cases are, for example, Valeria Lukyanova and Justin Jedlica (see Figure 5.84), both looking like Barbie and Ken after numerous plastic surgeries. These real human dolls appear so convincing but also such severe that one may wonder if they are actually real. Being human simulacra, as Baudrillard would say, they represent the copy of the copy. But more important, these human dolls have left their own real identities behind by more than fragmenting and infantilizing themselves to the level of a children’s doll – they not just become, but *are* the *real* Barbie and Ken now.



Figure 5.84 Human Dolls Ken and Barbie

In a Facebook Post on 8.11.2012, Axe shared an image of a woman who looks like Barbie. The sub-text was: “Oyuncak bebekler kızlar için mi demiştiniz? Bu

oyuncak bebekle oynamak istemeyenimiz yoktur herhalde, ne dersiniz?“ (“Did you think that dolls are for girls? There is probably no one from us that would not play with this doll, what do you think?). Further on 11.11.2013, Axe shared an image of a Ken toy on Facebook with the text: ”Bu noktalara dikkat Axe Erkeği” (“Be careful at this body parts, Axe man”). As shown in Figure 5.85, we realize that especially on social media platforms brands may communicate messages based on the Barbie ideal, also heaving a sexual undertone – adults, then, are presented as if they have to go through a toyification process to become pretty or handsome in order to be accepted in society.



Figure 5.85 Barbie-Related Facebook Posts of Axe

5.3.1.2. Toyota Auris' Car Story

A “Car Story”, as it could stem from the *Toy Story* movie series mentioned earlier above, was illustrated in Toyota Turkey’s outstanding and creative campaign for its product Toyota Auris in 2013, which also won a Bronze Effie Award. The commercial shows the audience how differently contemporary car advertising can be, designed with and around toys who come alive as they are apparently alive. In the campaign, an animated bride doll is the main protagonist. But it is not any bride doll. Most notably in earlier times, Turkish wedding car decorations especially included bride dolls which were positioned on the front side of the bridal car. Nowadays this is

considered as kitsch, but simultaneously as nostalgic. However, this tradition is continued still today but not longer to the extent it was the case in former times. In line with this, Toyota Auris continues this tradition as well; by taking up this theme in its commercial, it simulates the situation that a Turkish bride doll is positioned on a wedding car giving the whole campaign a Turkish touch as shown in Figure 5.86.

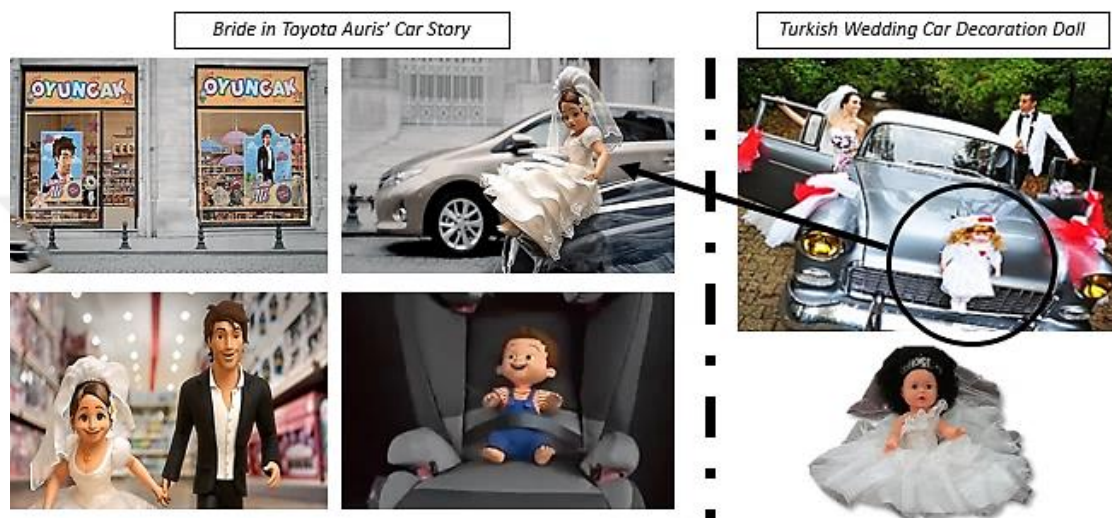


Figure 5.86 Toyota Auris Commercial and Turkish Wedding Car Decoration

The commercial begins with the scene where we see the promoted product in a real environment – a brand new Toyota Auris parking next to the wedding car. Suddenly, the bride doll reacts. In this moment we realize that she is not just any doll, but is alive and designed as an animated character – a situation we are familiar with from the *Toy Story* movies where the toys also pretend to be inanimate until they feel that no human observes them anymore. Jumping of the car on which she was positioned, the bride doll goes over to the Toyota Auris, standing in front of it for a moment as she seems to be excited, and than gets into the car. Soon later, she begins to drive the car herself. Cruising in the city, she notices at some point a toy shop which promotes in its shop window “Damat Ali”, the Turkish version of a Ken-like doll. The bride doll, however, is not like a typical Barbie doll – moreover, we seem to have here a

representation of a common type of the Anatolian Turkish woman, who is normally not blond and smaller in height than the idealized body shape in Western standards. But all this does not matter. When she enters the toy shop, she sees Damat Ali (“Groom Ali”) and for both it is love at first sight. Ready in their wedding outfits, they run hand in hand through the toy store to a doll house, spent their first night together, and the next morning, they come out together with their baby doll – this is all happening within some seconds. In the final scene, we see that they all together leave the store, and get into the Toyota Auris for the next cruise.

The commercial is accompanied by a childlike song, several times we hear a woman chanting “dat dat dat” indicating to the childish expression of a car horn’s sound. Besides, the song includes the slogan of the campaign “Bekle hayat geliyoruz biz” (“Life, wait, we are coming”). Considering the whole campaign concerning its visuality, sound, but also content, it seems without doubt that the commercial is intended for little children. There is no convincing sign which could indicate that it is an advertising for an adult – besides the fact that we can see the “real” Toyota Auris promoted in the commercial. The only thing we can associate, then, is that Toyota Auris is the signifier for a childlike experience – the car will provide us adventures like in a toy story. Nevertheless, if it is intended also to attract adults with such an advertising scenery – as the main target group remain adults who will drive the car – then we have to assume that adults are addressed in a quite infantile way. Adults are now motivated and attempted to be convinced happily to purchase the Toyota Auris car which actually seems to be marketed to consumers more than half their age.

Further, there are many ways of nostalgic connections that can be made by using the car motif – integrating a bride doll on a car is one possible element. There are brands not from the automobile sector but related to the automobile product as, for example,

the insurance brand Anadolu Sigorta, which communicates its car insurance services in its Facebook post from 21.10.2014 by asking its followers: “Çocukken ne renk bir araba hayal ederdiniz?” (“What was your imagination about your future car’s color when you were a child?”) by adding a picture with colorful toy cars. Adults are asked to remember the times when they were playing with cars. However, this seems to be the most classical way, but as we have seen in the Toyota Auris campaign there are newer approaches by simulating a child world around the promoted car in which we shall dive as adventures there seem to be more entertaining and funny in contrast to the classical car experience. In fact, modern car advertisements are telling us for decades each time the same – when a new car is promoted we are normally informed how technologically better, faster, and nicer it is. But the postmodern car advertising is different – it confronts us with symbolic meanings we could never have imagined before. And without doubt, the campaign of Toyota Auris is maybe the best example for this.

5.3.1.3. Commercial Teddy Bears

A teddy bear is a soft toy in the form of a bear and officially dates back to 1902.⁴⁶ Today, the teddy bear is an iconic children’s toy worldwide. Moreover, in the mass marketing of toys the teddy bear has turned out to be the “godfather” of a cuddly character toy as it established itself as a generic children’s plaything, but further as a ultimate fluffy, soft, and lovable animal companion. Teddy bears made “toy animal companions the iconography of emotional innocence” (Kline, 1995: 150). It is a

⁴⁶ Being one of the world’s most beloved toys, the teddy bear was named in honor of President Theodore “Teddy” Roosevelt, after he refused to shoot a bear during a Mississippi hunting trip in 1902. The incident was immortalized in the Washington Post with a cartoon by Clifford Berryman. Inspired by the cartoon, candy shop owners Morris and Rose Michtom from New York had the idea to create a plush toy bear. They called it “Teddy’s Bear” and dedicate it to the president who refused to shoot the bear. Michtom mass produced the toy bears which were so popular that he founded the Ideal Toy Corporation which became the first company to produce teddy bears.

powerful symbol of childhood affection embodied in toy form to which children respond with a depth of attachment they give to few other objects (ibid.). However, teddy bears remain a major force not only in children's lives but also in adults'. Teddy bears are among the most popular gifts not only for children but also for adults to signify love, congratulations, or sympathy. Besides, we can observe that teddy bears also appear in advertisements of brands from different product categories to promote their products, and sometimes even make them their brand mascot. Obviously, the vision of universal childhood attachment to a lovable toy such that of a teddy bear seems to be used gladly by brands to unconsciously open a gateway to childhood for adults. As a matter of fact, some brands reinvent personable teddy bears whose different uses in advertisements could not be more different as shown in Figure 5.87 and as will be briefly illustrated in the following.



Figure 5.87 Turkish Commercial Teddy Bears

Since its foundation in the early 1940s, Duracell (from “durable cells”) as a battery business company has become an iconic power brand, trusted for compact and longer-lasting batteries. Today, Duracell is the world's leading manufacturer of high performance alkaline batteries, specialty cells and rechargeables. Computer animated in recent times, the pink bunny serves as Duracell's icon since 1973 around the world

except for in Turkey, where a teddy bear is used! The animated Duracell teddy is presented as a sporty bear, and is therefore not a typical teddy bear. It wants to explain that he has (more) power by using Duracell batteries, meaning that Duracell last longer and has more power than other and cheaper batteries. Many advertisements of Duracell are child-oriented, as batteries are especially important for children's toys that only function through them. However, on its Facebook posts we can observe that adults are especially addressed.

With this regard, Duracell communicates to its customers also childhood themes. In the Facebook post on 12.8.2014, Duracell states "Bazıları hiç büyüzmez, sadece oyuncakları deęiřir!" ("Some people never grow up, only their toys change"). In another post on 14.8.2014, Duracell asks its followers: "Çocukken gökkuřaęının sonunda altın bulacaęınızı düşünüp peřinden kořar mıydınız?" ("Did you run at the end of the rainbow to find a pot of gold when you were a child?"). With posts like the above described, Duracell attempts to maintain a relationship with its followers with the link to childhood memories by using the appearance of the teddy bear, which is anyway a childhood symbol, but also by intensifying this with Facebook posts. Besides, other Facebook posts such as, "Gücün yeter, yeter ki iste" ("Your power is sufficient, you just need to really want it"), or "Hayalini kurduęunuz her řeyi başarabilirsiniz! Tek ihtiyacınız olan, içinizdeki güce güvenmek!" ("You can achieve everything you dream! All you need is to trust your inner energy!") which have a deeper meaning. On a denotative level, Duracell batteries signify a source of energy that makes technological devices function. This is symbolized by the teddy bear as he embodies and uses this power. In a connotative level, however, we recognize that Duracell also refers to another energy – the life energy in us of which we are often not aware of. In psychoanalytic terms, this would be the libido. Thus, Duracell connotes its energy that

it provides with the powerful energy of adults carrying in them by, simultaneously, utilizing the image of the teddy bear.

Another prominent example is Yumoş Bear that was introduced to the Turkish audience in 1986. The soft teddy bear is the mascot for Unilever detergents and fabric-softeners and named as “Snuggle” in Europe. Yumoş, similar as Duracell, addresses the adult consumer by trying to evoke childhood memories. Yumoş bear, as an integrated part of the brand family, is often presented as the companion of women and housewives, and is in its appearance a classical teddy bear in contrast to Duracell’s sporty bear. On Facebook, Yumoş communicates especially with its female followers. To give one outstanding example, most remarkably is a post from 27.9.2015, where we see an image that is splitted into two parts, which is showing a woman on the right side, and a picture of her when she was a child on the left side (see Figure 5.88).



Figure 5.88 Facebook Post of Yumoş

In a vintage setting which we perceive through the dark moderate red color, the little girl on the picture is holding a stuffed Yumoş bear in her arms. Today, this child is now the woman on the right side having Yumoş bottles in front of her. However, the woman is posing and looking in a childlike way which nearly appears exaggerated in

contrast to her childhood pose which even looks more adultlike in comparison. In the related Facebook text, it is stated: “Büyük aşklar yıllar geçse de bir şekilde hayatınızda hep yer alır... Tıpkı benim senelerdir sizinle olduğum gibi!” (“A great love stays always in your life even time goes by... as I am with you for years.”). We recognize now that Yumoş speaks directly to us; it makes us clear that it was always present in our lives from childhood on, first as a teddy bear we embraced, and later in form of detergent bottles, signifying in some way, that a Yumoş detergent bottle *is* the woman’s teddy bear in adulthood which gives her security and the softness she actually psychologically needs.

A quite different and even strange usage of the teddy bear can be observed in advertisements of Domino’s Pizza, a pizza restaurant chain. Domino’s Pizza was founded in 1960 in Michigan, USA, and has meanwhile over 10.000 restaurants in 70 countries. Domino’s Pizza opened its first restaurant in Istanbul in 1996 and has today 380 restaurants in Turkey. Domino’s Pizza is the most widespread pizza delivery franchise in Turkey and the largest pizza delivery chain in the world. In 2015, Domino’s launched a new advertising series with the slogan “Daha hızlı ne mutlu edebilir ki?” (“What can make you happier faster?”). But most notably an animated teddy bear called “Ayu” stucked extremely out. In visual terms, Domino’s new mascot has a strong analogy to the bear character in the movie *Ted* (2012), which is a kidult movie (see Figure 5.89. In the movie, the protagonist John Bennett received a teddy bear as a Christmas gift when he was a little boy and named it Ted. That night, John told the inanimate Teddy he wishes that Ted could really talk so they can be best friends forever and ever. This childhood wish of bringing his teddy bear to life came true, but later he had to decide between keeping the relationship with the bear or his girlfriend Lori.

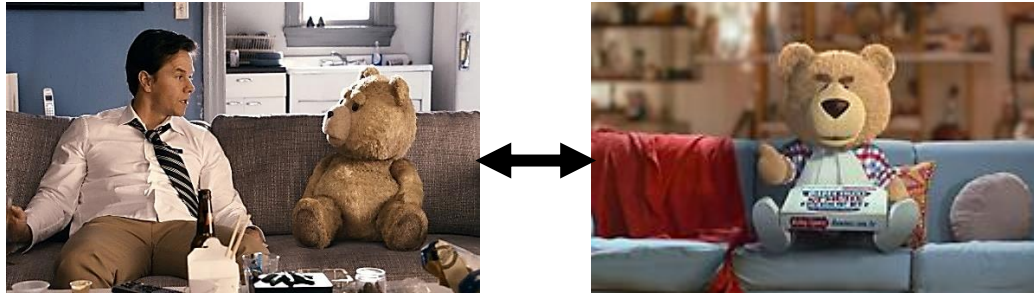


Figure 5.89 Teddy Bear in Movie Scene from “Ted” and Domino’s Teddy Bear in Commercial

It seems if Domino’s Pizza has made use of the same visual effects to bring to life a cuddly, furry teddy bear as its mascot. But in behavioral terms, Domino’s teddy bear is naughty with a deep, rough male voice and speaks in the typical style of Turkish small retailers best known as “esnaf ağzı” in Turkish. Against this backdrop, the image of the bear and his remarks in general were sharply criticized by many Turkish customers, most notably on social media platforms, because the message was understood figuratively negative as “Ayı gibi yiyorsunuz” which literally means “You eat like a bear”, a Turkish idiom expressing to eat large amount of food and a synonym for the English idiom “to eat like a horse”. But Domino’s teddy bear also evoked other Turkish idioms containing the word bear such as, “ayılık etmek” (literally: “behave like a bear” meaning “behave loutishly”). In general, the mascot was perceived as not suitable for a fast food chain even not for younger people as a whole.

This ad campaign shows that teddy bears are no longer what they have used to be. Moreover, it seems as if the appearance of the teddy bear tricks the idyllic symbol of childhood we have in our minds concerning it, serving as an alibi for something that only in representational terms is present in the commercial. With this, Domino’s Pizza robs the imagery and meaning of a teddy bear, and fills it with something else which is the complete opposite. Domino’s Pizza damages the image of the childhood symbol *per se*: The teddy bear, in denotative terms, is still infantile in its cute and innocent appearance as a fuzzy and cuddly children’s toy, but now it interacts with humans in a

strange way as might not be expected especially from a teddy bear when it really would be alive. In strong contrast to Yumoş bear, for example, the perfect image of the teddy bear in Domino's advertisements seems to be destroyed which may be another reason why the opinion of the Turkish audience is divided.

Domino's Pizza targets consumers who are looking for inexpensive pizza quickly, and it seems if the company would not have a specific target group. Even if its first commercials give the impression that the younger audience like students are addressed, in later commercials it becomes obvious that Domino's Pizza also attempts to set its sights on another target group – older men and women as well as housewives. Thus, we can see Turkish celebrities like Kadir Çöpdemir or Seda Sayan in Domino's commercials having conversations with the bear as shown in Figure 5.90.



Figure 5.90 Domino's Brand Mascot with Seda Sayan and Kadir Çöpdemir

Especially interesting is the campaign with Seda Sayan who is a popular Turkish singer, actress, and TV show hostess. She acted in a series of commercials produced due to Domino's Pizza's 20th anniversary in 2016. In one of the commercials, Seda Sayan is doing sports outside with the Domino's bear. During that she has a conversation with him who remembers her that guests will come for dinner. Seda Sayan, who is not willing to cook at home even if guests are invited, declares that Domino's Pizza will be served at dinner. In other two commercials, where Seda Sayan acts together with her son, it is the same message: At every opportunity, Domino's

Pizza is the main meal. This gesture is a quite unusual one in terms of Turkish hospitality and in general in Turkish families – just to serve fast food to the guests and family members. The Turkish women in postmodern times is now encouraged to avoid time-consuming and stressful meal preparations which is deeply rooted in Turkish culture. The commercials make clear that this is not necessary anymore. The ideological meaning is that instead of the hard work in the kitchen, Domino’s Pizza should be preferred which is a simple solution and fast at the same time – features comprising the infanilist ethos. Pizza which was once a popular junk food among the young, becomes an important meal alternative also for adults now.

5.3.1.4. *The Lego Life of Aras Kargo*

Founded in 1979, Aras Kargo has played a pioneering role in Turkey’s courier express parcel (CEP) industry. While running operations carrying 5.4 million parcels and 3.1 million files every month, Aras Kargo serves 12 million individuals, institutions and organizations with 13 regional directorates, 29 transfer centers, 825 branch offices, a 4000 more than vehicle fleet and 12 thousand employees, while shipping over 450 thousand deliveries from one point of Turkey to another every day. Aiming to develop Aras Kargo into a 100-year-old global brand, the company has posted a growth rate of 13% in business at the end of 2015 with a turnover of close to 900 million Turkish Lira. With this regard, Aras Kargo’s new brand image has certainly contributed to this.

At the end of 2013, Aras Kargo launched an advertising campaign that has provided a new perspective to the cargo business. With the campaign, it has simultaneously introduced its new brand mascots. Using the box man concept, Aras Kargo’s parcels were now embodied and represented by the animated talking red box characters named as “Araslar”. In the commercials, the Araslar are represented as Aras

Kargo's employees, and are shown during their conversations at work. In an entertaining and funny way, the different box figures are talking about their exciting lives as parcel men and provide an unusual insight into the company life of Aras Kargo. Soon after in the following commercials, it is illustrated that they also communicate with humans when delivering the parcels. The figures of Araslar have a strong analogy to the iconic and popular Lego toy, which is famous for its plastic bricks, gears and minifigures in a variety of colors. Especially the face design and mimicry of the Araslar are directly copied from the faces of the Lego figures, and the bodies are reshaped in brick form which stands for Aras' parcel box as shown in Figure 5.91.

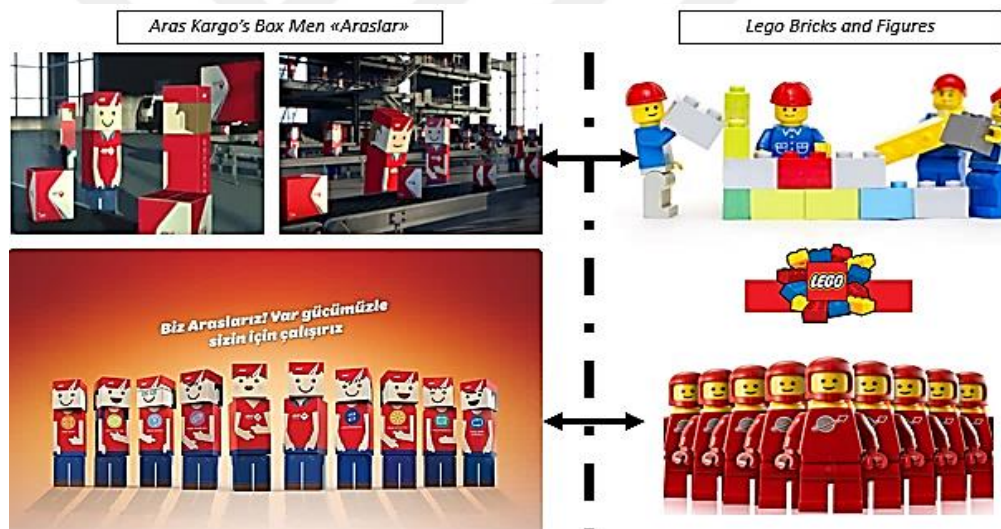


Figure 5.91 Araslar and Lego Figures

Lego is a toy consisting of interlocking plastic building blocks. It was first manufactured in 1949 and has since then come to symbolize childhood creativity. There is now a global subculture with movies, games, and amusement parks. A recent example of its hold on childhood culture and its entrance into nostalgic pop culture is *The Lego Movie* (2014). In this context, we can say that the figures of Araslar give the impression of an animated Lego ensemble that could directly stem from the movie. But

Araslar have not taken over the commercials only. They have become the brand's new image appearing everywhere connected with Aras Kargo. The company's homepage is full of elements showing the Araslar addressing the user with various contents (see Figure 5.92). Always with an emoticon-like smiling face, the Aras figure with its cute appearance communicates that Aras Kargo is a young, fresh and dynamic brand.



Figure 5.92 Elements of Aras Kargo's Company Homepage on 15.5.2017

That the Araslar could have also another and human-like romantic side was demonstrated in an outstanding commercial created due to Valentine's Day in 2014. The commercial was full of kitsch and parody in an infantile manner, showing the cinematic representation of romantic love with the most iconic movie scene from *Titanic* (1997), a Hollywood production about one of the greatest love stories ever aboard as shown in Figure 5.93. In the commercial, the same iconic scene is readjusted but this time with two Aras figures, an Aras box man and an Aras box woman, posing on the ship. The commercial ends with the statement: "Film gibi bir sevgililer günü geçirmenizi dileriz" ("We wish you a movie-like Valentine's Day"). In general, it becomes obvious that with the help of infantilist design techniques, Aras Kargo has

created an infantile brand mythology inspired by Lego bricks. Moreover, Aras Kargo connotes attributes of Lego figures with the Araslar – it stands for fun, playfulness, and creativity in the company. By doing this, Aras Kargo has clearly and positively differentiated itself in the cargo market. By “thinking out of the box”, it has highlighted its very own box concept of the most original way it could have done, and has left the ordinary boring style of advertising and moved over to an infantile one which, however, resembles more a children’s animation than a serious cargo business. But adults seem to embrace this – they are confronted to the story of Lego-like Aras figures that are friendly and enthusiastic about their work which has an appealing effect.

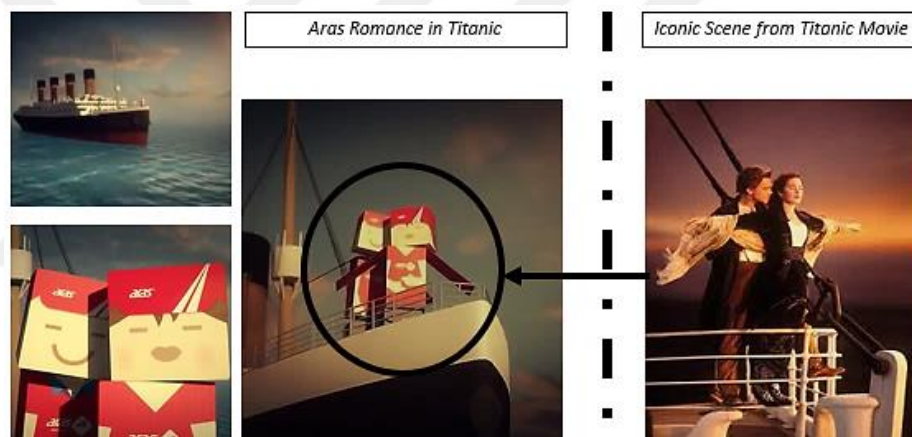


Figure 5.93 Aras Kargo’s Valentine’s Day Commercial and Titanic’s Iconic Movie Scene

5.3.2. From Children’s Day to Dirt: Childhood Habits as Reminders

5.3.2.1. Promoting Children’s Day as Adult’s Inner Child Day

Every year on April 23, Turkey celebrates its National Sovereignty and Children’s Day. This national day connects two important pieces of history: when the Grand National Assembly of Turkey convened for the first time in 1920 and when Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, dedicated the new Republic to the children in order to remind every Turkish citizen that children are the

future of the Turkish Republic. Since then, this day is celebrated especially like a children's festival. However, when children are the adults of tomorrow, then adults are the children of the past! And exactly this has been recently noticed and considered as useful for brand purposes. Many brands take the opportunity to address especially adult consumers via commercials and social media platforms due to Children's Day. Thus, we will look in the following at four different examples to see how this is done.

In 2012, Omo created two commercials in which a little boy is shown in different scenes during various activities children normally do, including building sandcastles at the beach or playing with the kite. But then, a big surprise happens. The boy looks into the camera and says in an adult male voice: "*Merhaba ben Bora, 32 yaşımdayım*" ("Hello, I'm Bora, I'm 32 years old"). Soon after, a text appears: "23 Nisan'da sen kaç yaşındasın?" ("How old are you on April 23?"). This first commercial was broadcasted on April 21. The second commercial, then, was broadcasted on April 23 which started the same way as the first one did, but ended differently and again surprising. After we see again the child with the kite in his hand by saying that he is Bora and 32 years old, soon after the "real" Bora is shown – a grown man playing with the kite who says: "*İçindeki çocuğu keşfet, o hala orada*" ("Discover your inner child. It is still there, somewhere in you"). The commercial ends with a male voice-over saying: "*Bugün 23 Nisan, çocukluğunu yaşa, çocuklarına yaşat!*" ("Today, it's April 23. Live your childhood, let it live your children!"). The denoted child in the commercial we have seen from the very beginning was never a real child; at a mythical level, it was the adult's man "inner child". With this, adults who watch the commercials are invited to discover their own inner children and to live them. But the most interesting point is that Omo wants to know from adults how old their inner child is on

April 23. We realize that Omo is extending the understanding of Children’s Day to a new dimension by involving adults. The ideological message is that adults are now confronted to the situation to explore their very inner being in order to find out how old their inner child might be. This also implies that adults have, from now on, apparently, a second birthday – that of their inner child which is to be celebrated on April 23.

Due to Children’s Day in 2015, Turkcell started a social media campaign with the hashtag “#ÇocukOldum” (“I was a a child”). In the related commercial, a voice-over spoke the following sentences: “*Gelin bir hareket başlatalım. Bu 23 Nisan’da ve her 23 Nisan’da sosyal medyadaki profil fotoğraflarımızı çocukluk fotoğraflarımızla değiştirelim*” (“Let us start a new movement. On occasion to April 23 and each April 23 from now, let us change our actual profil pictures on social media accounts with a childhood photo”). The most crucial part of the message was the last sentence which declares: “*Çünkü daha güzel yarınlar için hayal kurmak ve bazen de çocuk olmak lazım*” (“For better tomorrows one has to dream and sometimes one has to become a child.”). The commercial showed many celebrities who participated to the campaign as shown in Figure 5.94. With the campaign, Turkcell has demonstrated a new approach to Children’s Day. But the main request was that adults should always have in mind how important it is “to become child” again from time to time.



Figure 5.94 Turkcell’s “#Çocuk Oldum” Campaign

Enpara.com had a more different approach. After its “Herkes Zengin Faizi” campaign as earlier analyzed, it started in 2014 a new one by using “Kıllanan Adam”⁴⁷, originally a caricature invented in the late 1990s. Kıllanan Adam embodies a stereotypical middle aged and middle class Turkish man with balding hair, wearing blue striped pyjamas and a singlet, and drinking Turkish tea all the time. He criticizes every situation and is convinced that things will never be right in Turkey by labeling every circumstance related to the cliché of what we can understand under “Turkishness” in an ironical and sarcastic way. However, on Children’s Day in 2016, Enpara.com posted on Facebook an image with the sub-text: “İçimdeki çocuk bugün beni çok kıllandırıyor” (“My inner child is disturbing me much today”). We see on the image as shown in Figure 5.95 that Kıllanan Adam – as illustrated in a speech bubble – is pondering if he should play hide-and-seek with the children, but how he could hide his belly. We recognize that even a difficult character like Kıllanan Adam is motivated to let his inner child out. Another example comes from L’Era Fresca. In 2015, the brand posted on Facebook with the hashtag #içimdekiçocuk: “L’Era Fresca 23 Nisan’ı İçinizdeki Çocuk ile Kutluyor!” (“L’Era Fresca congratulates your Inner Child on April 23!”).



Figure 5.95 Enpara.com and L’Era Fresca’s Children’s Day Facebook Posts

⁴⁷ “Kıllanan” is the adjective form of the verb “kıllanmak”, which is a slang term meaning both “disturbed” and “suspicious”. “Kıllanan Adam”, hence, might roughly be translated as “Disturbed Man”.

These four examples show that there is an attempt to make adults return back to their childhood, mostly by emphasizing the ideological idea that we have an inner child in us that has to be gratulated. As a result, we can say that Children's Day denotes a day for children, but in a connotative meaning it signifies also a day for adults' "inner" children that has to be celebrated by adults.

5.3.2.2. *Products as Symbolic Mothers: How Vitra and Selpak Cares*

The mother is the most important person in a child's life. In this sense, brands can make use of this in an emotional sense by integrating a mother appeal to their products, which is based on the mother archetype. A very interesting case for this is the advertising campaign of Vitra, which we have to analyze closer. Established in 1942, Vitra is one of Turkey's leading companies in the area of ceramic sanitaryware, bathroom furniture and accessories, acrylic bathtubs, among other products. Being one of Turkey's Superbrands, Vitra with its pioneer brand image operates in both the domestic market and international markets by creating bathroom and surface solutions with unique ideas and sustainable designs. In general, Vitra creates advertising campaigns to highlight its products in the best way it can by showing them from different perspectives in an ambiance of showrooms. In 2015, Vitra created a commercial in order to promote its new product "V-care Akıllı Klozet" ("V-care Smart Toilet Seat"). This advertising campaign has to be distinguished from the preceding ones as it has a quite different way to give its message.

In the commercial, the features of the smart toilet seat is presented in a completely white and bright environment where nothing else can be seen – except a little girl in a pink dress with bare feet and a rag doll in her hand who comes along and recognizes the toilet seat as it suddenly opens by itself. In a very joyful way, the girl is

experimenting, trying out the smart toilet seat in every single way, even plays and has fun with it, because the toilet seat provides many functions that seem to be amusing. Many perspectives are shown in the commercial to illustrate how multifunctional the smart toilet seat is. At the end, as shown in Figure 5.96, a male voice-over reads the following text which is also displayed on screen: “*Sizi en son anneniz bu kadar şımartmıştı*” (“It was your mother who has pampered you that much the last time”).

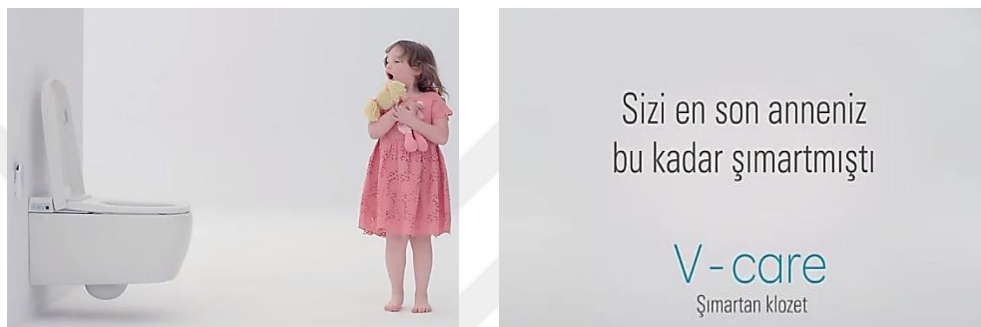


Figure 5.96 Vitra V-care Smart Toilet Seat Commercial

After the text appears, the advertisement gains a very new dimension; it now signifies something completely different before we heard and read the text. Before the text, the images denoted that a little girl explores and, thus, present the many functions of the new product. But now, it becomes clear that adult consumers are seduced to regress to their childhood years who will now maybe try to remember the last time when their mother has pampered them *such this way* actually, strangely enough to say. The attempt of infantilization seems to be perfect as we begin to dig around in our own past just because of this sentence. And the reason why we think back of childhood is because of the little girl we see. When we take a closer look to the girl we might have the impression that she is not a child from contemporary times. She has in general a vintage appeal concerning her dress, most notably her rag doll evokes feelings of nostalgia as it is originally a traditional toy which the majority of little girls had played

with already decades ago. The little girl implies that an earlier time must be referred to, which makes us associate a whole period of childhood years where our mothers had pampered us by probably not remembering when the very last time was!

Psychoanalytically, we can recognize two important meanings at the connotative level. The scenes make an allusion to the stage of anal fixation – the toilet is standing there entirely in a white ambiance symbolizing purity, and awaiting for the children of yesterday by inviting them again for a “toilet training” but this time at the highest standard by providing the Vitra experience. The viewer is reduced to the status of a child which can be identified, in Freudian terms, as temporal regression to one of the primary libidinal stages, the anal phase. Remarkably, the smart toilet seat further is the signifier for motherhood having a strong unconscious appeal. The playful functions of the smart toilet seat are directly compared to a mother’s care and love – having a surprising effect in the very moment when we realize this message which we might not have expected at the beginning of the commercial. Certainly it is not an accident that the product is named as “V-care”. In fact, under the above described circumstances, Vitra becomes a symbol of caring – the same form of care a mother would show its own child. Brands, in this sense, may condense powerful ideas in their advertisements by relating unconsciously to the mother archetype that help consumers achieve deep satisfying levels of sense making. Through this, brands may use their products to stand for caring objects, such as the mother. By means of psychic displacement, we have here the symbolic replacement of the mother by Vitra’s toilet seat which resolves, in psychoanalytic view, the tensions arising from the mother’s absence.

The same we can observe in Selpak’s campaigns. Being Turkey’s first tissue paper brand since 1969, Selpak was selected as a Superbrand both in 2016 and 2017 in

the personal care and cleaning products category. With its slogan “Hayatın her anında Selpak yanında” (“Selpak is always by your side at every moment of your life”), Selpak has created many creative advertisements so far. In 2017, Selpak has shared three Facebook posts with the hashtag #annemgibi (“like my mother”). As shown in Figure 5.97, the images seem to operate on a metaphorical level by making a comparison: the tissue paper smells like a mother (“mis kokulu”), protects like a mother (“koruyucu”), and is soft like a mother (“yumuşacık”). However, these are attributes attached to the tissue paper connoting motherly care. Adults are unconsciously influenced as the message is laden and activated through the mother archetype which actually becomes more influential and therefore important the more people age and who, then, begin to yearn for earlier times when their mother was “always by their side” caring for them.



Figure 5.97 Selpak – Always By Your Side Like a Mother

5.3.2.3. *Dirt is Good: Omo for Inner Child Development*

Omo, a detergent brand of Unilever, was launched to the Turkish market in 1963. By pioneering lots of activities and campaigns, the company was able to maintain close emotional ties with consumers at all times. Through its innovative approach concerning product development and marketing propositions, Omo’s name even became one of Turkey’s generic brands synonymous with laundry detergent. In Turkey, as in many countries, detergent brands base their communication strategy normally on

basic functional benefits such as “makes whiter and cleaner” or “removes tough stains”, which have become the common strategy of the market for all brands with the consequence that brands were presenting themselves identical. However, as of 2004, Omo has distinguished itself in the market from other detergent companies with its new revolutionary slogan “Kirlenmek güzeldir” (“Dirt is good”). Promoting the idea that dirt is something “good” as a laundry brand, is remarkably a quite different even strange approach, and sounds more like a catchphrase. However, since then, Omo was chosen several times as Turkey’s Superbrand and Lovemark, and in the following we will understand why .

As we all know, every child becomes dirty when it plays outside, whether it be during playing in the sand box or in a football match. Omo began to communicate to its consumers about the psychological and sociological benefits of getting dirty and its contribution to personal development by highlighting that children discover life especially while they are playing and taking part in sport. With this regard, in 2004 Omo launched the “Dirt is good” campaign in Turkey with the effective commercial “Yapamazsın” (“Can’t do”) that explained the benefits of freedom to get dirty with the message “Kirlenmeden öğrenemezsin” (“You can’t learn without getting dirty”), showing that in order to gain certain experiences, we have to go through certain steps.

Even it can be argued that Omo, since then, has turned to a child-centered brand that seems to target children and their healthy development, it can be figured out that adults are involved again and again in this marketing process. In 2005, Omo continued its campaign through the sports platform and presented the “Dirt is good” concept in an unusual way by inviting adults to think and act like children. The commercial showed men and women beginning to play football together with children, and the concluding message was: “İçinizdeki çocuğu özgür bırakın. Oyuna katılısın. Beyazlarla bile!” (“Let

your inner child free. Let it join the game. Even in white clothes!”). The launch of the campaign significantly improved the brand’s market share and image. As a result, by the end of the first half of 2005, Omo became the market leader in the total detergent market, receiving sizable appreciation and winning several awards.

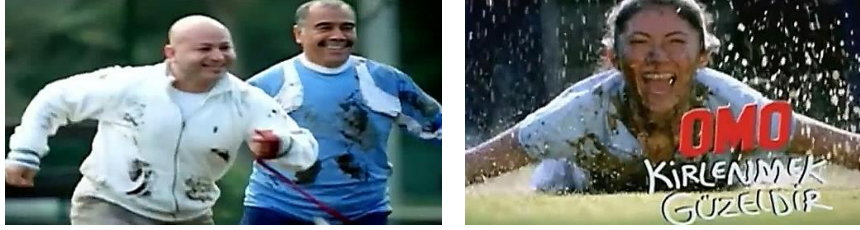


Figure 5.98 Screenshots of Omo’s TV Commercial

With the rise of social media, Omo has intensified its brand communication especially on Facebook. It can be observed that Omo communicates with its adult consumers the “Dirt is good” theme by strongly reconnecting them to their own childhood. On 7.9.2011, Omo asks: “Kendi çocukluğunuz mu daha keyifliydi, yoksa çocuğunuzunki mi?” (“Was your childhood better, or that of your child?”). Two days later, on 9.9.2011, Omo posts: “Çocuk olmak varmış!” Hepimiz zaman zaman bu cümleyi kurarken yakalıyoruz kendimizi, öyle değil mi? (“How great it would be to become child again! We always catch ourselves by saying this sentence, aren’t we?”). Further on 11.1.2012, Omo shares the information that it would start a new game, moreover a competition, by writing: “Büyük olup kendini her zaman çocuk hissedenerler! İçindeki çocuğu her zaman oyuna hazır tutanlar! Beklediğiniz an geldi! Omo Çocuk Aklı başlıyor!” (“For all those who are grown-up but always feel like a child, and for those whose inner child is always ready to play a game! The moment has come: Omo Child Mind starts!”). On 31.10.2014, Omo asks its followers which game they would prefer to play if they could become a child again. On 2.12.2015, Omo further asks its followers to share their childhood picture under the hashtag #KirlenerekBüyüdüm (“I

grew up by getting dirty”), which Omo, in turn, will share on its official brand account. In line with this, Omo states on its international website: “Remember when you were a child? How you were free to explore, returning home covered in dirt and other stains that you wore like the badges of an intrepid discoverer?” (Unilever, 2017).

In the 2017 campaign “Anı biriktir” (“Start saving your memories”), Omo invited adults to create wonderful moments with their child that would be later unforgettable memories of their child. At the beginning of 2018, then, the most recent campaign was launched in accordance with the preceding one, and titled as “Çocukla çocuk ol” (“Become a child through a child”). Adults were now invited to resemble their children, in other words, to act and behave like them in order to save wonderful memories. It is obvious that through campaigns and posts on social media platforms, Omo attempts to send various messages which make adult consumers continuously remember and regress to their childhood years. But more than this, Omo attempts to let adult consumers’ inner child out.

The “Dirt is good” strategy has proved to be a big success in Turkey and marks a milestone for Omo in its brand history, also being one of the most successful campaigns ever in the laundry category. In fact, this concept turned the usual values of the detergent category upside down and positioned dirt as something positive like no one else in the category which is a quite postmodern condition. According to Lyotard (1984), the postmodern view is characterized by a spreading cynicism about metanarratives or general belief systems including science and reason. Accordingly, dirt is something negative and can be found as an underlying belief about health and disease throughout history (Curtis, 2007: 660). Today, such belief systems have partly been discredited because, in an era of global media, it is less possible to regard one

belief system as the true one, as we have much more access to nearly every kind of information that can be interpreted differently leading to different “trues”.

Before the Omo campaign, the majority of people thought of dirt as an “enemy”, but the new approach made people think about dirt in a very different way. While the idea was relatively simple, it was quite provocative by asking people, especially mothers, to stop fearing dirt and start embracing it. This was the reason why the campaign had positive resonance because it addressed the inherent tension between mothers’ controlling instincts and their desire for their children to be free to grow and develop through play. As a matter of fact, Omo has constructed its own interpretation of dirt by leaving the preceding belief system, “Dirt is bad”, and based this on scientific research, which gave a whole new dimension to the debate. Thus, the postmodern message “Dirt is good” becomes an alternative possible truth in relation to our criteria for the great narrative “Dirt is bad”. Omo introduced a new perspective by redefining dirt as a tool for developing and discovering life by experience which is an important part of the child’s development as well as that of the adult in terms of “inner child” development. Dirt signifies today learning, discovering, having fun, and getting to know life. With these positive propositions, Omo set out to create an emotional bond with its customers. Interesting is that “Dirt is good” implies actually something more, which is not discussed. If people allow themselves to get more dirty, then more laundry will be produced. And the more laundry is produced, the more Omo products will be sold. This means that while confronting consumers with a new attitude to dirt, this new attitude will help the company to make more profit. We recognize that Omo maybe is not that interested in the philosophical aspect of the campaign, but its positive side effect which shows itself in huge profit it makes.

5.3.3. Kindergartened and Schoolish Symbols

5.3.3.1. *Like a Kindergarten Celebration: The Hopi App*

In 21st century, mobile is increasingly becoming a vital channel of choice for the retail industry. Global mobile retail revenues are expected to hit \$ 626 billion by 2018, up from \$ 204 billion in 2014, according to Goldman Sachs (Glagowski, 2015). Consequently, progressive retailers are ambitious to prioritize the mobile channel in order to leverage the unique personalization potential that mobile technology affords to build apps and create programs that resonate with customers. One such company is Hopi, a mobile application of shopping, created by Turkey's Boyner Group which owns more than 500 physical retail stores and fashion brands in the region. In 2015, Boyner has launched Hopi as a new brand that aimed to revolutionize the retail industry.

Being the first-ever shopping app not only in Turkey but also in the world, Hopi is designed to be a crucial shopping companion or even consumer's personal shopping assistant. With this regard, Hopi matches consumers with customized product and campaign offers from participating merchants according to their preferences, shopping habits, and expectations. As the merchant base expands, Hopi is able to offer a holistic, 360-degree shopping experience for its customers and create a new retail ecosystem. In April 2015, a spectacular launching campaign started which declared "Herkesin bir Hopi'si var" ("Everyone has a Hopi"). In the commercials, Turkish comedian Tolga Çevik portrayed 30 different typical characters to be found in Turkish society from housewomen to white-collar worker. Çevik performed in a funny way by singing and dancing to the "Hopi song" with great enthusiasm, implying that the shopping experience will be, from now on, entertaining and profitable more than ever.

Nevertheless, on closer inspection we will notice that infantilizing structures dominate the whole campaign.

Infantile colors and shapes can serve as a means of reflecting infantilization; it can have an infantilizing effect in branding. As individuals perceive certain colors as childlike, like “baby blue” for boys and pink for girls, this cultural response to color taught to us by our family, through society and reinforced in the marketplace, reveals the deep social conditioning regarding color preference that people undergo daily. Besides, also primary colors can serve for a childlike fun look. Infants and young children, if given their choice would select bright simple saturated primary hues, with red topping the list for both sexes (Bleicher, 2011: 41-42). Most notably, Hopi makes use of colors and shapes typically associated as childlike – simple circles with powerful bright colors. These can be generally find in objects, play activities or products intended for children as, for example, a ball pit (a padded box or pool filled with small colorful hollow plastic balls), an abacus (the nostalgic calculating-table), or lamps (e.g. an children’s lighting for ages 8-12) as shown in Figure 5.99.

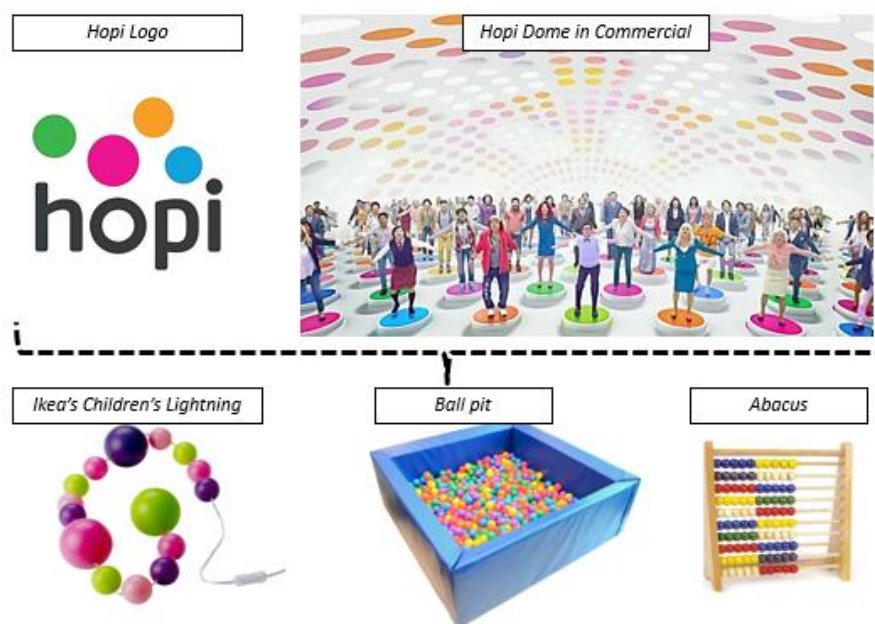


Figure 5.99 Childlike Colors and Shapes in Hopi's Brand Communication

The elements of the logo were expanded to Hopi's brand universe that was designed and simulated for the commercial: on the ceiling of an artificial dome as well as on the floor the circles in various colors were positioned. From a psychoanalytic perspective, the Hopi dome symbolizes an archetypal womb, though not recognized as such at first sight. However, here we have even an infantile allusion to the famous scene as depicted in Aldous Huxley's monumental dystopian novel *Brave New World* (1932), where people are bio-engineered, routinely raised and later born into the world from artificial wombs. But Hopi has created its very own Turkish marketing version of it. The Hopi dome is an artificial womb where consumers' clones in form of simulacra – as every consumer has a Hopi meaning a copy – are awaiting to be *born out* of from the colorful circles they are standing on – symbolizing the vaginas below the womb. Moreover, the Hopis are nearly shot out into the exact point where consumers wait while shopping, which is enabled with just one click on the smartphone as shown in Figure 5.100.



Figure 5.100 Hopi Simulacra Born Out of the Hopi Womb

The whole audiovisuality of the campaign conveys the impression that a childlike, carnivalesque brand celebration takes place which can be further associated with a big Kindergarden party in a ball pit ambiance, where the circles on the floor and on the ceiling stand for the colorful balls. Like in every kindergarden party, there are many children which is represented by the various Hopi characters, who are singing all

together the Hopi song. Especially the part, when in particular a women's voice is heard that is saying "hoppii" in a melodic way, strongly remembers a childlike situation that probably everyone knows. The word "hoppa", a Turkish exclamation which actually has not a special meaning but expresses a feeling, is used in most cases when parents play with their child by throwing it in the air by saying "hoppa". The kind of way how "hopi" sounds is quite similar to that. The women's voice can be connoted to a motherly voice appealing to our unconscious.

Kindergarden⁴⁸, the anglicized version of the German word Kindergarten which literally means "children's garden", is a preschool educational institution where young children are introduced to the world of elementary school. Playing, singing, practical activities, and social interaction are essential aspects of developing skills and knowledge that are taught in Kindergarten. Besides, in Kindergardens children are guided and, furthermore, they are rewarded when they behave well and are obedient to their teachers. It seems that Hopi uses the same strategy by rewarding its customers, too, when they behave well. Hopi introduced a *rewards point system* called "Paracık". "Para" means "money" in Turkish, but notably the diminutive suffix *-cık*⁴⁹ has especially an infantilizing effect on the word money which best fits in the childish concept. Accordingly, every 1 Paracık credit is worth 1 TL which provides a new earning potential: Hopi customers earn Paracıks for all purchases at any merchant with targeted campaigns that are offered to boost customers Paracıks and to encourage them to redeem at their stores.

⁴⁸ The term was coined in 1837 by Friedrich Fröbel for the play and activity institute that he created in Bad Blankenburg as a social experience for children for their transition from home to school. His goal was that children should be taken care of and nourished in "children's gardens" like plants in a garden.

⁴⁹ In Turkish language, the diminutive suffixes are widely used. For example, "kedi" meaning "cat" becomes "kedicik" meaning then "pussycat" or "köpek" meaning "dog" becomes "köpekcik" meaning "puppy". It is obvious that through language itself an infantilization may occur.

Like in kindergardens where children are appreciated for their right choices, the same happens through Hopi: consumers are awarded when they use Hopi by making right choices. Promoted under the slogan “Hopi’nizle tanışın, kazanmaya alışın!” (“Meet your Hopi and get used to gain”), Hopi knows its customers not just like friends would. Hopi knows more than everyone else about the person – maybe even more than the person itself. Hopi understands its customers’ choices, expectations, and their lifestyle; offers them personalized options and campaigns. Consumers just have to follow the matches made for them and are then awarded with Paracıks. Thus, Hopi becomes the signifier for a perfect parent. When we were children, our parents made decisions for us. They always knew everything better, and we had to follow their instructions if we wanted or not. Hopi, in contrast, gives us always what we want. Hopi’s “matches”, which signify the parental decisions, are in the form we positively accept for which we even develop desire as we are also rewarded for it.

As the Hopi brand understands its huge success through its unique service which is based on simplicity concerning its use, it becomes clear that its marketing campaign was also based on simplicity but concerning infantility. Childish colors, shapes, songs, and words characterized the whole advertisement which was indeed effective. Hopi has become one of the apps in the world that reached one million downloads in the first two weeks. By the end of 2015, Hopi, was uniting a coalition of more than 40 brands, reached 2.8 million users. Meanwhile, it has 115 participating brands and over 5.2 million users as of December 2017. In 2017, it was even chosen as one of Turkey’s lovemarks.

5.3.3.2. *Brand's School Time for Adults*

There are some special symbols which will remind adults of their old school days especially in a time when chalks, chalkboards and dusters were used to be common. Chalkboards have been a standard teaching tool for pupils in schools since the 19th century in Western industrialized societies. Meanwhile, they are old-fashioned as they were substituted by white boards in schools and universities in the last decades. However, today there is something about the chalkboards that hold a nostalgic charm – also ideally for advertising purposes. A recent example comes from Halkbank, which is one of the oldest banks of Turkey since the 1930s, and today the seventh-largest bank in terms of assets. In a Facebook post on 23.2.2017, Halkbank shared an advertisement that promoted credit options for new starting entrepreneurs (“Girişimciliğe yani başlayanlar Halkbank’a!”). Remarkably, the advertisement was created in an old-school chalkboard design in dark green. However, most striking was what was illustrated on the board. Several decades, Turkish children were taught to read and write through a deductive method: First learning to read sentences and then breaking them up into syllables and letters. Some of the most widely used sentences are, for example, “Ali topu at” (“Ali throw the ball”) or “Ayşe topu tut” (“Ayşe catch the ball”). In a similar way, Halkbank rewrote the sentences for its advertisement: “Ali yeni fikir bul” (“Ali find a new idea”), “Oya kendi işini kur” (“Oya start your own business”) and “Kaya girişimci ol” (“Kaya become an entrepreneur”) as shown in Figure 5.101. We recognize that Halkbank addresses new entrepreneurs like pupils in an elementary school who are just learning to read and to write. New starting entrepreneurs have no knowledge and experience that must be learned from zero; this is connoted with the symbolic sentences on the chalkboard that are normally attempted for first graders to introduce them to something new they yet not know.



Figure 5.101 Halkbank's School-Themed Advertisement

Another example of the usage of chalkboards in advertising can be seen in DeFacto's Valentine's Day Commercial in 2014. Founded in 2003, DeFacto has taken its place among the leading brands in clothing and fashion industry in Turkey. With 319 domestic stores today, Defacto stands on as a the second largest company in the industry operating in Turkey and is frequently promoting its products with different campaigns. An outstanding one was created for a Valentine's Day commercial, in which Defacto used a black chalkboard as its advertisement background, on which playfully love messages were written with chinks in different colors (see Figure 5.102).



Figure 5.102 DeFacto's Valentine's Day Commercial

With this, an old-fashioned school-like atmosphere was created, giving a warm and nostalgic touch by using the meanwhile vintage chalkboard. Most notably, the sentences written on the chalkboard are worth mentioning. As one might expect, the sentences are love messages but formulated in an unusual way as the declaration of love

is expressed through clothes: “Bırak söyleyemediklerini Tişörtün söylesin” (“Let your T-shirt tell what you can’t say”) or “Kazağındaki kalpler kadar çok sev onu” (“Love him/her as much as the hearts that are on your sweaters”). In postmodernism, there is no stable self-identity and no permanent soul or mind, “no singular and unique ‘I’” (Ruccio & Amariglio, 2003: 167). In this sense, postmodernists refer to human beings not as persons, but as subjects, bodies, or units having no human nature. There is only an ever evolving, highly sexual, social animal with multiple subjective interests crying out for recognition and acceptance (ibid.: 134). It seems as if DeFacto’s commercial best illustrates this. It is to be questioned, for example, what it really could mean to love someone as much as “the hearts on a sweater”. It is not important anymore that the subject makes every effort in order to express its feelings in the best way. Today, it is sufficient to wear a DeFacto T-Shirt which does all the hard work for the owner in an easy way. Obviously, objects have taken over and object-like feelings are expressed – a new way of formulating love sentences.

Another important symbol are school uniforms which have a long history in Turkey. In 2015, CardFinans, which is the credit card servive of QNB Finansbank, created a series of commercials to promote its “credit card with no interest rate” (“CardFinans alana faiz yok!”). In the campaign, Turkish actress Müjde Uzman wears a blue school uniform with white collars which typically pupils in elementary school used in Turkey until 2012. Müjde’s facial expressions and behavior is similar to a young girl who has done her homework and is well-prepared to answer questions of the teacher (see Figure 5.103). It seems if exactly this situation is simulated in the commercial when a man asks her questions about the credit card and she begins to explain with enthusiasm what she knows. Even a bell rings in the background as if her exam would begin.

Remarkably, the audience learns from a a pupil-like woman the recent campaign advantages of the brand. The man, happy about the answer, is released as he is a new CardFinans user who was uninformed until the girl explained him that it was a right decision. Obviously, she simplified and explained it easier to the man than bank employees would do who even often confuse people. In denotative terms, the girl is an elementary school pupil who explains everything as far as she knows, but at a connotative level, this means a “low level” as a little girl is not able to understand and explain sophisticated information. However, this lower level makes the man understand the card’s meaning as he is, paradoxically, taught by a pupil.



Figure 5.103 Screenshots of CardFinans Commercial

5.3.3.3. *Adultified Babies and Babified Men in Bruno’s Kindergarden*

With the help of technology, in today’s advertisements we can frequently observe the creation of adultified babies. Displaying adultlike characteristics, many babies in advertisements, then, are able to speak and share their thoughts we could otherwise never hear. This is also the case in the advertising campaign of Bruno. Owned by Abdi İbrahim, Bruno as a brand is a culmination of the company’s deep-rooted experience and expertise in healthcare products. Bruno is a health product against nasal

congestion in children, another term for a stuffy nose. Exactly this is the theme of Bruno's commercial in 2012, which presents its product in a quite different way. We see babies, which are sitting on the floor in a typical setting of a kindergarden. However, these are technologically manipulated babies concerning their moves and behavior to give the impression as if they were adultlike. We further see that the babies are talking about their problems; they are annoyed about the situation that their noses get not stuffy anymore since they have to use Bruno's product. For this reason, they sleep well and their mothers do not have to come several times in the night to look at them. The babies are frustrated that, in their eyes, their mothers do not care for them much enough as they were accustomed to – all because of Bruno. As one baby says: "*O anne gecede 5 kere yanima gelecek!*" ("That mother has to come 5 times to me every night!"). With the baby's statement "*O burun tikanacak arkadaş*" ("That nose will get stuffy, buddy"), the brand's slogan is formulated at the same time. We see here rebellious babies who want to fight for their right. This commercial has won a Silver Effie Award in 2013.

But now the interesting part starts. In 2013, a new commercial was created to promote the product which was now for adults. Remarkably, the old commercial format remained but instead the babies, this time the fathers are sitting on the floor. Having a quite similar talk as the babies, the fathers were also annoyed about their current situation that their wives do not care for them anymore since they use Bruno. One of the speaking fathers even holds a terry bear in his hands. Like babies, they want the same rights – the attention of the mother-wife – and for this they are willing to do everything possible to trick her – like children would do in order to achieve what it wants. Most remarkably is that at a point where we think the commercial has ended we see a very last time the scene where the fathers sit on the floor but suddenly there is also a baby from the previous commercial. The father with the red shirt feels desperate,

holding the teddy in his hand like a little child, and asks the baby what they shall do (“Napıcaz ya?”), and the baby responds that it has no idea (“Vallahi bilmiyorum”) as shown in Figure 5.104.

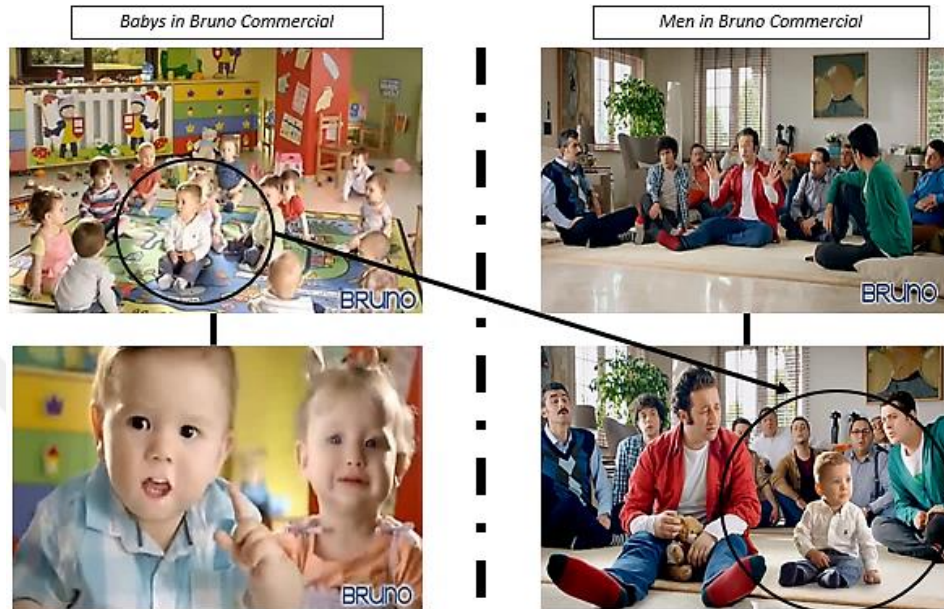


Figure 5.104 Bruno's Commercials for Baby and Adult Products

This second commercial is quite ironic, however, it makes only sense in relation to the first one. With the preceding adultification of the babies, we witness now the counterpart – the infantilization of the fathers. The kindergarten setting seems to be transferred to the living room where the fathers, in this sense, are imitating the babies from the first commercial. The adult men think and act like the babies, and become the “adult-babies” of their home. On a connotative level, this implies the real situation that many Turkish housewives not only have to care for their children, but also have to care for their husbands as they are also like children concerning many things. In general, many Turkish men are often passive in the household and ignorant in many other areas of life for which the Turkish woman seems to be responsible for; often she is the surrogate of the man's mother. Thus, we can recognize infantilizing tendencies that

already exist within Turkish family structures. Metaphorically, we have the situation that the babies in the commercials act and behave like adults because they are overdeveloped in respect to their age, but which is just a simulated advertising fantasy. The fathers, in contrast, are in real conditions not much different than we see in the commercial. Even if exaggerated we realize that, if given the possibility, the adult men would really ask babies what to do in certain situations as we witness in the commercial.

5.3.3.4. *From Nursery Rhymes to Bubble Play: Traditional Children's Games for Adults*

In every real man a child
is hidden that wants to play.

– Friedrich Nietzsche, German philosopher

Market demand is rooted in broader social attitudes and cultural practices. The industrial values of hard work and seriousness, in this sense, had significantly undermined the legitimacy of many traditional forms of play, games and sport as community rituals. During the 19th century, “play became an activity more narrowly associated with the protected realm of childhood and therefore with the innocence, freedom and psychological immaturity associated with children” (Kline 1995: 150). However, we can observe today that advertising makes use of typical traditional children's games; further, we see fragments of them which are integrated in brand communication. With this regard, nursery rhymes are an important part of children's games. Nursery rhymes are short poems or songs that are often made up of trivial musical verses that entertain children. They can be easily memorized due to the rhymes involved; further, they support the sense of rhythm in children and enhance the imagination and conceptual world of them. Nursery rhymes are a part of children's

game life that is used before starting a game, during the game and after the game. It seems if this childlike playtime is continued from time to time in advertisements.

Maybe the most outstanding campaign concerning this was Turkcell's "Genç Turkcell" Launch Campaign in 2005 (see Figure 5.105), where the Turkish children's song "Papucu yarım" was now sung by a whole crowd of people – not children, but adults. Rewritten as "*Selo, papucu yarım, çık dışarıya oynayalım*", Turkcell attempted to connote the youthfulness and freshness of its new brand, that was especially targeting young adults, not with associations that really would underline the young adult generation's interests and values (such as adventure, freedom, rebellion etc.) but with simple playculture of the very youngest best symbolized through a children's song – a song that definitely is intended for little children.



Figure 5.105 Screenshots of Genç Turkcell Ad Campaign

There also other examples. For instance, Axe makes use of the game imagery of "Tic Tac Toe" in 2014, also known as noughts and crosses or Xs and Os, which is a paper-and-pencil game for two players, X and O, who take turns marking the spaces in a 3x3 grid – a game many pupils have especially played during classes when they were bored. Another important game is bubble play which we can discover in Rinso's brand communication. In 2012, Rinso has created the Bubble Man as its brand mascot we have earlier analyzed in the "Heidi" case. From this time on, Rinso used the Bubble Man also in Facebook posts attempting to make adult consumers remember and share

their childhood memories. On 10.10.2013, Rinso posted an image with the Bubble Man with following text: “Bizimle, çocukluğunuzu anımsattıran favori kokunuzu paylaşın!” (“Share with us the smell which reminds you of your childhood!”). On 1.11.2013, in another post it asks: “Kokusunu duyduğunuzda size çocukluğunuzu hatırlatan bir yemek var mı?” (“Is there any meal which reminds you of your childhood?”).

Indeed, laundry is about good smell, but it is also about bubbles. Thus, it was clever to create the Bubble Man as we can associate it with even much more than what it denotes, bubbles and foam. Because at the connotative level, bubbles can signify childhood memories as well. If there was one thing we all universally enjoyed doing throughout our childhood, it was blowing and playing with bubbles. Children of all ages love to play with bubbles as it is fascinating, entertaining and a great fun activity. Exactly on this – the infantile bubble theme – Rinso seems to build on its main basis for its marketing concept and brand image. In various Facebook posts, we can observe that these bubbles are connected to today’s adults childhood days. On 9.9.2013, we see a woman on the image blowing a bubble. The text says: “Şimdi bu güzel havayı değerlendirmek için dışarı çıkın ve baloncuklarla eğlenmenin tadını çıkarın!” (“To make the best of this nice weather go out and enjoy the bubbles”). Due to Women’s Day on 8.3.2014, an image was posted on which women were congratulated as shown in Figure 5.106. However, we see Bubble Man blowing bubbles out of himself in the direction of an adult woman who, apparently like a child, seems to enjoy the field of flowers on which she stands embracing the bubbles. On 10.3.2014, we can see a little girl on the image in a vintage format with the text: “Çocukken baloncuklar peşinde koşmak en eğlenceli oyunlardan bir tanesiydi. Hatırladınız mı?” (“As a child, running after bubbles was one of the most enjoyable games. Do you remember?”). Far from merely evoking childhood nostalgia, these pictures and accompanying texts make yearn

for a time before the digital age, when the majority of children played with the most rudimentary of toys, or playthings from household objects and their imaginations, and not with technological devices as smart phones and tablets as it is the case in contemporary time. Rinso's bubbles recall childhood signifying that sometimes the simplest joys are the most profound and enduring.



Figure 5.106 Bubble Play in Rinso

5.3.4. Milk, Ice-Cream & Candy: Childhood Tastes as a Ticket Back to Childhood

5.3.4.1. *Pınar, Torku, and İçim: Milk as Reconnector to Childhood*

Milk is the first and primary source of nutrition for an infant. In general, human and animal milk are an essential and natural source of food produced during and after pregnancy to nurture the young life. It is because of this why milk is a symbol of purity and life, that is associated with the innocence of a childhood and cleanness. Many adults will remember from their childhood years the slogans about milk: It is good for the body, it is a natural thing to drink and it builds strong bones because it is a good source of protein and calcium. Further, many children who heard these slogans while growing up were urged to drink at least one glass of milk a day because of its health benefits. Accordingly, many advertisements of milk products address children in order to make them drink milk. Remarkably to observe is the fact that adults are also involved in some

way in the advertisements. Even as many scientists still suggest that adults are also supposed to drink milk to get enough calcium and to keep their bones healthy which is especially important as they age, this message is not integrated in the milk advertisements which will be analyzed in the following. The analyzed commercials show something else: a nostalgia-driven infantilization by using the milk factor which should bring the adult consumer back to the state of childhood.

Drinking milk can be associated, first and foremost, with childhood, and even with later development. Pınar Süt, in this sense, is a milk brand that was drunk by many adults when they were children. Pınar, founded in 1973 as Turkey's first modern industrial company in the dairy sector, has led the sector for more than 45 years and employs more than 5.000 people. Being a market leader in nearly every sector in which it operates, Pınar has successfully become a brand that consumers identify with quality and trustworthiness. Since its establishment, Pınar has led in the food sector with a wide range of dairy, meat and water products that meet a variety of Turkish consumers needs being a vital part of their nutrition. This can be seen through numerous rankings in which Pınar is always among the companies that show it is the most admired, most respected brand with the highest rise in reputation and chosen several times as Turkey's Superbrand and Lovemark.

In 2012, Pınar launched the new advertising campaign "Büyüdüm, Büyüdüm, Pınar'la Büyüdüm" ("I Grew Up with Pınar") which won a Bronze Effie Award. The overall message that Pınar communicated was that many generations have grown up healthy with Pınar Milk and that now it would be the turn of the new ones – to grow up healthy with Pınar. Most remarkably is the idea of the commercial to illustrate the whole life of a woman until present – from little girlhood to motherhood – in one sequence as

an evolutionary process (see Figure 5.107). At the beginning of the commercial, a little girl is shown in the kitchen with her mother in a vintage setting. Soon after, the girl is presented as an older child, later as a teenager, then as a student and after being a business woman, she herself becomes a mother. In the commercial, seven different stages of the woman's life are represented by seven different persons, each of them holding a Pınar Süt package in their hand and drinking from it. The commercial underlines that with every step the woman took Pınar Süt was always right by her side. We recognize that the woman's whole life is reeled off before her like a film – she regresses to every step of her past beginning from her childhood. A sentimental moment is achieved at the point when the woman's mother looks to her, now a grown-up woman having her own child, by perceiving her again as if she were a child. In fact, the woman is still this little girl in her eyes.



Figure 5.107 Screenshots of Pınar Süt Commercial

Besides, Pınar is very active in communicating its brand to adults on social media. Pınar shares many posts on Facebook where it tries to call adult consumers' attention in order to make them reconnect to their childhood (see Figure 5.108). Brands

like Pinar use the emotional appeal of nostalgic products that are still in use, like Pinar Süt itself, so people are able to go easier back to the good old days, remembering their childhood and become sentimental with the help of advertising. For this, Pinar does not use any computer animation to tap into childhood fantasy; it uses its own product integrated in realistic representations, photographs, and sometimes nostalgic cartoons to give general messages concerning childhood. As a matter of fact, retro products still being in the market push nostalgia both to aging adults who want to recapture their youth, and to young people and teenagers who think adopting the styles of earlier generations is a really “cool” way to be young as it allows “being young to grow old and still stay young” (Barber, 2007: 21).

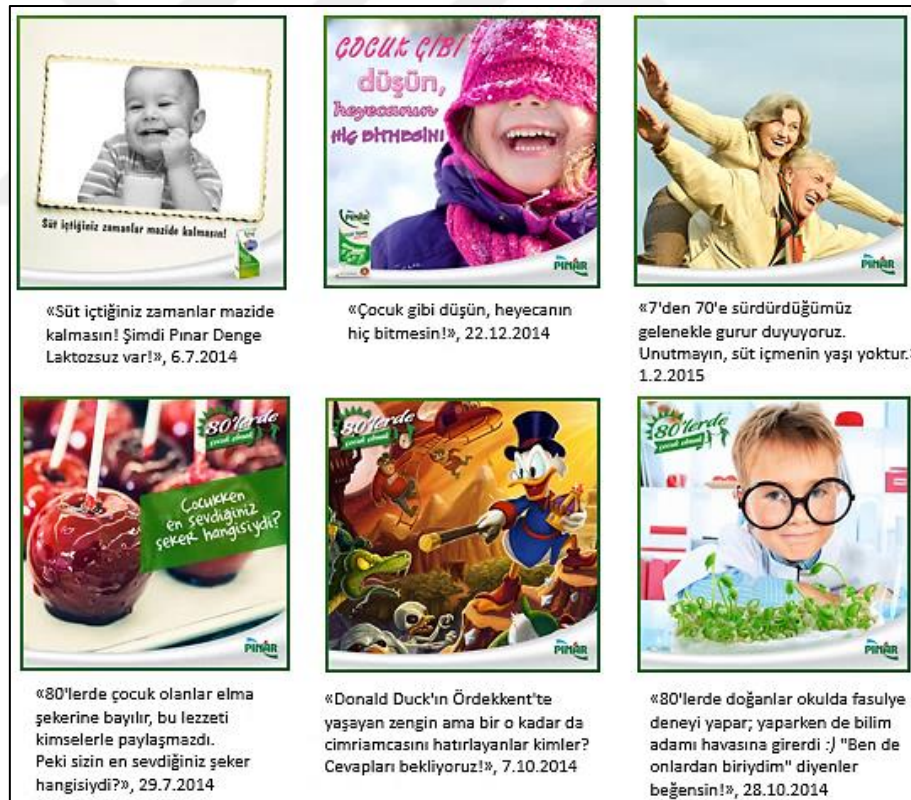


Figure 5.108 Pinar's Facebook Posts

Pinar is not the only milk brand trying to bring the adult consumer back to old days. Torku's launch campaign in 2013 is much in line with Pinar's advertising style

using the same regression format with some differences. The Torku brand offers a broad range of products to consumers through the Konya Şeker assurance. Torku made its debut with chocolate products in 2007 and soon built a wide spectrum of products ranging from bakery products to candies, from frozen foods to dairy products under the Torku brand. In 2013, it began with milk production and soon after the first commercial was broadcasted as shown in Figure 5.109. The scenes in the commercial are accompanied by the instrumental version of a well-known Turkish classical song, “Duydum ki unutmuşsun” (“I heard that you forgot”), and shows the memories of a woman when she drinks Torku milk.



Figure 5.109 Screenshots of Torku Süt Commercial

In the commercial, the voice-over gives the following message: “*O nefis lezzet hatıralarınızda ki gibi sizi bekliyor. Torku tüm Türkiye’yi özüne geri götürüyor. Çünkü bazen hatıralar akılda değil, damakta kalır*” (“All delicacies which left in your memories are waiting for you. Torku is bringing the whole country back to its roots. Because sometimes memories do stay in your palates, not in your mind.”). The commercial engenders infantilizing mechanisms through taste by making adult

consumers regress to their childhood. As stated in the commercial, the milk product is intended for those who are missing their childhood's tastes (“Çocukluğunun Lezzetlerini Özleyenlere”):

Those who miss the delicacies of milk and milk products of their childhood will find what they are looking for at Torku. Raw material supply system and intelligent manufacturing system with each step under the control of Torku, creates Torku safe food chain which offers you the delicacies that you have missed. (Sitifoods.com, 2017)

We recognize from the images that a glass of Torku milk is the signifier for a gateway to the past. It can lead to nostalgia for ideas of the past. History, time, and space as important aspects of culture, become commodities as the interest in experiencing what in the imagination once was or could have been has strongly arised. However, this is a partly disinterested and superficial nostalgia, not a wish to be indeed transported totally into such a time or existence, but only voyeuristically to experience it for the moment that it excites the senses. Furthermore, this interest is not only for what could have been in the past but also in the future. Torku milk has begun its milk production in 2013 and is, in comparison to Pınar Süt, a very new product. In this case, what we see in the commercial is the representation of an imagined and never happened past in present times, and the present is the period on to which postmodernism turns its gaze. Premodern culture focused on the past, the modern culture on the future. The focus in postmodernism is *right here, right now* with references to other times if needed. The postmodern consumer wants to experience the diversity of many themes, past and future, not get fixed in any single one (Firat & Shultz II, 1997: 189).

A quite different type of milk advertisement has demonstrated İçim's "Günlük Süt" commercials by giving the message that its milk has the feature of "Küçükleri büyüten, büyükleri küçülten süt", meaning that the milk makes children grow whereas adults become children. In İçim's "Çilekli Günlük Süt" commercial, a mother and her daughter are sitting around a table together. The daughter begins to drink milk when her mother asks her to close her eyes in order to trick her: "*Kapa gözlerini. Sana bir numara yapacağım!*". The little girl covers her eyes with her hands – a common gesture when children play hide and seek – while her mother "steals" her daughter's milk very carefully that she would not notice it. Similar in the commercial in which a scene of a father and son is illustrated, the father says to his milk drinking child that his mother would call him: "*Can, oğlum, annen çağırıyor.*" Being sure that his son has left the room, he begins to drink the milk with big pleasure. But soon after, his son returns and recognizes that his father has tricked him, a little bit frustrated about the situation which has obviously repeated, by saying: "*Baba yine mi ya*" ("You've did it again, Dad"). The subject of the commercials emphasize how adults imitate children and behave like them as shown in Figure 5.110.

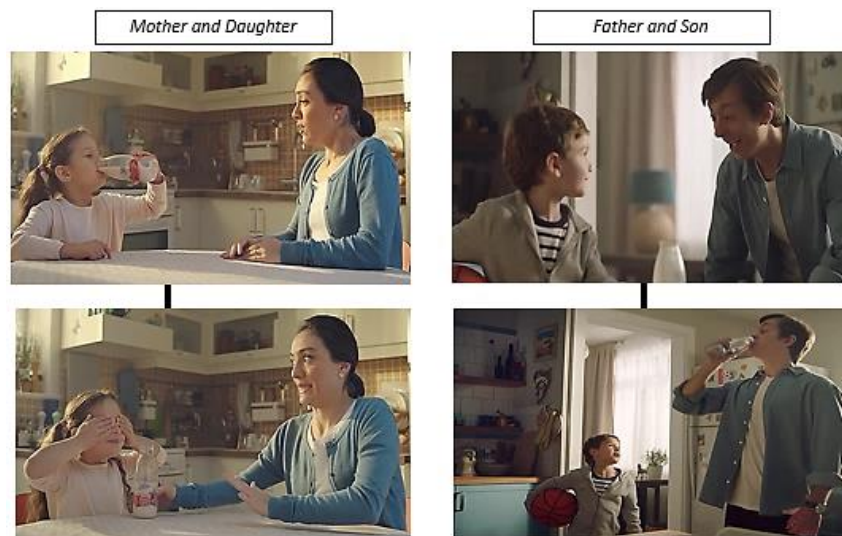


Figure 5.110 Screenshots of İçim's Commercials

The parent adults are after the milk in order to have a sip of it; both the mother and the father are acting in an infantilized way, the mimic and gestures are the signifiers for it. They are tricking even their own children, not just for a joke but seriously because they *desire* the milk and they would do anything to get it. We see here a situation that we best know from children when they want something absolutely and immediately. In the commercial, however, we see this behavior in parents; the children, instead, act quite adultlike. On a connotative level, we understand that İçim milk is so delicious that even adults regress to a childlike state in order to get it.

5.3.4.2. *Returning Back to Childhood with Panda Ice-Cream*

Ice-cream is another important taste experience of every child that might zoom backward in time – especially when we consider two commercials of Panda. Since its foundation in 1984, Panda has established itself in the ice-cream market in Turkey. Being a Turkish private company, Panda is the principal competitor to Unilever’s Algida. Panda was the first to introduce factory-produced ice-cream in Turkey and had the market much smaller then to itself until Unilever’s entry in 1990. Panda attempted to fight back against Algida, building new production facilities and investing in advertising campaigns in order to build a strong brand identity.

In 2011, Panda celebrated its 27th anniversary. On this occasion, it created a series of commercials with popular singers. Two outstanding ones were those with Hande Yener and Müslüm Gürses as shown in Figure 5.111. In the commercials, the singers are always placed in a concert hall being on stage, and each time they first eat Panda ice-cream and then perform the brand’s jingle: *”Hem küçüklere, hem büyüklere, işte nefis dondurma, Panda Panda Panda, Panda nefes dondurma”* (“Both for children and adults, that’s delicious ice-cream, Panda Panda Panda, Panda is a delicious ice-

cream.”). After popular Turkish pop singer Hande Yener’s performance, she turns to the animated little Panda bear, the mascot of the brand, that suddenly stands at her side on the stage. Yener asks Panda if he would remember that this was the very first song she sang when she was a child. Panda ascertains that he of course would remember it by confirming her she would had have star appeal at that time already. The situation in the commercial with Müslim Gürses, a popular Turkish arabesk singer, is quite different. After eating the ice-cream, Gürses begins to speak like a little child which becomes evident through his pronunciation: He is no longer able to speak out the right consonants of Turkish words by saying, for example, “donduyma” instead of “dondurma” (“ice-cream”), meaning that he can only pronounce “y” and not “r” – a typical sign of making him sound like a child. This is also the same way how Panda, having a male adult voice, speaks during the whole commercial series. As Müslüm Gürses admits that he has returned to his childhood, it becomes clear that Panda ice-cream is able, moreover, has the magical power to transform even a character like Gürses into a child-like state – a serious-minded man acting slowly and widely known as “Müslüm Baba” (literally: “Papa Müslüm”) among his huge fanbase and famous for his melancholic, arabesque songs. In the end of both commercials, it is stated as a voice over: “İçinizdeki çocuğu 27 yıldır besleyen Panda bu yazda yeni çeşitleriyle yanınızda!” (“Panda is nurturing your inner child for 27 years now! Again this summer, Panda will be at your side with new product sorts”).



Figure 5.111 Hande Yener and Müslüm Gürses in Panda Ice-Cream Commercials

Even if Panda's jingle states that the ice-cream is both for children and adults, especially in this advertising campaign it becomes more than obvious that – particularly after it is emphasized that Panda is nurturing the inner child for almost three decades – the target group must be adult consumers who knew Panda from their younger years. It seems that if a certain taste is associated with a special product which was consumed in childhood years, as in the case of Hande Yener, this may bring an adult to earlier years, and evoke positive memories. Even a regressive behavior may occur as it is demonstrated by the case of Müslüm Gürses. Such scenes, in which adults return to a more than childlike state within a body of an adult, are part of postmodern marketing that attempts to make fun of the target audience, in this case, ridiculing adults in general. Panda attempted with the campaign to draw this infantilizing image by making the connotation that Panda ice-cream is synonymous with childhood that further can be recalled or even relived when consuming the ice-cream.

5.3.4.3. Candies Make Children Happy – But Adults Even More!: Haribo and The Gummy Bear Cult in 118 80

In 21st century, when the candy industry has reached a new level where children have endless options to choose from, in earlier times as during the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, this market was dominated by certain candies children of that time loved like anything. These were candies the adults of today grew up eating and it shall always be part of their sweet old childhood memories. Thus, eating sweets is an activity generally associated with childhood. As candies are an inevitable part of childhood, most notably gummies are a beloved sort, especially Haribo – today an iconic candy brand and most notably famous for its gummy bears. Founded in 1920 by Hans Riegel, Haribo (the abbreviation of “Ha”ns, “Ri”egel, and “Bo”nn) is a German candy company, headquartered in Bonn, and being one of the biggest manufacturers of

gummy and jelly sweets in the world. Although they are not a very old species, Haribo's gummy bears have left their mark on many generations but besides, "Jelibon" as a similar version of it, was among the most popular gummies in Turkey. It is a matter of fact that the gelatinous, rainbow-colored candies most adults first came to know and love simply as gummy bears in their childhood are today one of the world's most popular confections.

Haribo's advertising slogan was first created as "Haribo mach Kinder froh" ("Haribo makes children happy") in the mid-1930s. Later in the mid-1960s, the slogan was extended to "Haribo macht Kinder froh – und Erwachsene ebenso" ("Haribo makes children happy – and adults as well"). The English version of the slogan today is "Kids and grown-ups love it so, the happy world of Haribo". Further, Haribo entered the Turkish candy market in 1993 with the Turkish slogan "Çocuk ya da büyük ol, Haribo'yla mutlu ol". Famous is also Haribo's mascot, the Haribo Gold Bear, that was created in the 1960s. The mascot's appearance changed 1978, later in 1989 it was cartoonized, became more infantile and is still in the same style – the body in yellow color with a red bow. With this, also the logo's letters changed over time turning to a more child-friendly design. As the slogan already indicates, Haribo is a product for children – but also for adults. Thus, it has to serve two completely different target groups with the consequence that it has developed its self-image as a trendy, joyful, fresh and fun brand by highlighting its childlike features.

In 2012, Haribo started a global campaign about "Hariboland" – an imaginary candyland from which the gummy bears stems and lives in. In Turkey, the commercial was entitled as "Haribo'nun mutlu dünyası" ("The happy world of Haribo") and was first released on Facebook in 17.4.2012. The commercial begins in a quite ordinary way in a kitchen where the children wait for their mother coming home from shopping. After

her arrival with the Haribo package, the son opens it immediately and eats the first Haribo. Suddenly, the kitchen environment disappears and Hariboland magically appears. The consumers – adults and children – are invited to this happy world of Haribo in which gummy bears lead a playful and colorful life. As one might expect, at first sight it seems to be like an advertisement for children. But a closer inspection of the mother figure shows that she is returning to a childlike state, excited like a little child who cannot wait to enter Hariboland. It is the mother who discovers first the Haribo Gold Bear mascot standing behind them by pointing to him in a very excited way. All together, they enter Hariboland and run to the bear as shown in Figure 5.112.



Figure 5.112 Haribo Turkey's Commercial "Haribo Land"

We recognize that adults can get even more excited than their children do. At the end of the commercial, they are again in the kitchen when the mother asks their children if she can not get any Haribo: "*Anne'ye Haribo yok mu?*". The mother acts like a little child who also wants from the candies of its peers, but at the same time she clearly states her identity as a mother when posing the question, which further implies that mothers are invited to feel free to desire Haribo gummies and thus to embrace childlikeness. As a result, her son answers that they would never forget their mother by

giving her a gummy bear. Adults embrace candies in a sense of pleasure, a taste that they also enjoy like children do; but in contrast to children, they also embrace candies in a nostalgic sense which reminds childhood. The infantilizing approach mirrors an attempt to let especially adult's inner child out as Haribo's target market is *clearly* defined as "the child inside of all of us, whatever age we may be" (Nudd 2014).

Today, gummy bears have one of the most devoted cult followings of any candy in history. Further, the gummy bear has impacted popular culture. For example, it has inspired a hit animated TV series in the 1980s as Disney's *The Adventures of the Gummi Bears*. In 2007, however, a song about the gummy bear was produced with the title "The Gummy Bear Song", also known as "I'm A Gummy Bear" in reference to the Gummibär, the famous bear-shaped candy of Haribo. The song received international and internet meme success especially due to its corresponding 30-second Hungarian video clip "Itt van a Gumimaci". Since then, the song has been released in at least twenty five languages and has virally spread worldwide with more than 1 billion plays of the corresponding videos on YouTube. The protagonist in the song videos is a lime green, blue-eyed animated figure of a rubbery candy gummy bear in orange underwear that is bouncing around, breakdancing, and singing the song in a voice we mostly are familiar with from cartoon characters. In 2011, the concept of the Gummy Bear Song was directly copied for a Turkish commercial of 118 80 – a Turkish brand that offers the service for identifying unknown phone numbers. A Turkish text was adopted, that was sung by exactly the same Gummy Bear explaining that 118 80 knows all phone numbers that are searched for. This was a different way to launch and grow a new brand at that time, but which led to a market generic and the memorability of the number. It was promoted on the principle that first to mind would be first in market. The campaign created mass awareness of 118 80 and captured the public imagination. Moreover, it

drove usage ahead among other competitors with similar numbers. The strategy was simple and infantile: copying the childish Gummy Bear concept for advertising purposes for a number primarily, if not only, adults would make use of and not children.



Figure 5.113 Gummy Bear in 118 80's Commercial and in The Gummy Bear Song

5.3.5. Baby Alarm: Striving for Infanthood

5.3.5.1. The Baby Within the Adult: “Live Young” with Evian

Maybe the most obvious infantilization strategy used by a company is French water brand Evian. Evian, owned by Danone, has been producing water since 1870. Today, Evian water is marketed to adults as a premium brand, making the connection of Evian water with a healthy lifestyle that stands for its pureness and naturalness. Evian has always been known as a quality water brand, but after launching its very new brand image, supported by a multitude of successful campaigns with the slogan “Live Young”, it was breaking all records (see Figure 5.114). In 2009, Evian started the campaign which has set a milestone in advertising until now. “Roller-Skating Babies”, in this sense, was the first viral ad in the Evian “Live Young” series. The commercial, which denotes animated babies who are doing break dance on roller skates, was an

immediate online hit and also a Guinness World record for the most viewed TV advert online. The “Evian babies” serve as a reminder to make every day an adventure and to live young in all what people do. But on a connotative level, the babies signify adult consumers themselves after they have drunk from Evian water which is declared at the beginning of the commercial : “Let’s observe the effect of Evian on your body”.

The campaign developed in 2011 to a new route by creating “Wake the Baby Inside You”, a more digital campaign, utilising social media and stunts to greater effect. Evian reasserted its vision of youth as a positive, universal value that everyone shares. In the commercial, people were portrayed wearing Evian’s meanwhile popular “Baby Inside” T-shirts, edited together into a flipbook-style that brought the babies to life with their best moves. Later in 2013, the “Baby & Me” campaign was launched which became the most watched TV advertising campaign of 2013 on YouTube. With this, Evian launched an app that enabled consumers creating a very real picture of a “baby inside them” showing their very inner baby. In 2015, Evian continued its use of adult-like infants. In different print ads, one-half of the inner child of an adult was “revealed” by splitting the bodies each into two, the first half featuring the legs of an adult, the second the torso and head of a baby. The visual result was eye-catching, having an image of a baby-adult hybrid, or as Evian puts it: “Little Big Baby”.

As a result, Evian sales have grown significantly as the campaigns were very successful due to a number of simple but effective factors as its universal appeal of babies, lack of language barrier or the clever use of humour. Besides, Evian differentiated itself immense from its competitors and increased its brand awareness. Evian attempted to emphasize with the campaign that youth is not just about the age, even that “youth has no age” as famous painter Pablo Picasso once said. It is a mindset,

a lifestyle, moreover an attitude. In denotative terms, Evian promotes its water through the use of babies; in a connotative meaning, however, Evian water symbolizes a fountain of eternal youth in form of babyhood – a water that has a rejuvenating quality that keeps adults young and healthy at the level of a baby who has just started its life. Through the campaigns, Evian repositioned itself as a brand from a luxury and serious brand, which was earlier considered not accessible to all people, to a young and stylish brand focusing on adults who want to have fun in life, “live young” and enjoy life with a healthy, pure, and natural mineral water. This shows that infantilization, if applied appropriate and right, can definitely lead to huge brand success. Such kind of infantilization is embraced with great sympathy as it evokes positive feelings. But moreover, it is an outstanding experience provided by a brand which encourages adults to discover a side of them, even they themselves did not know or were not aware of.

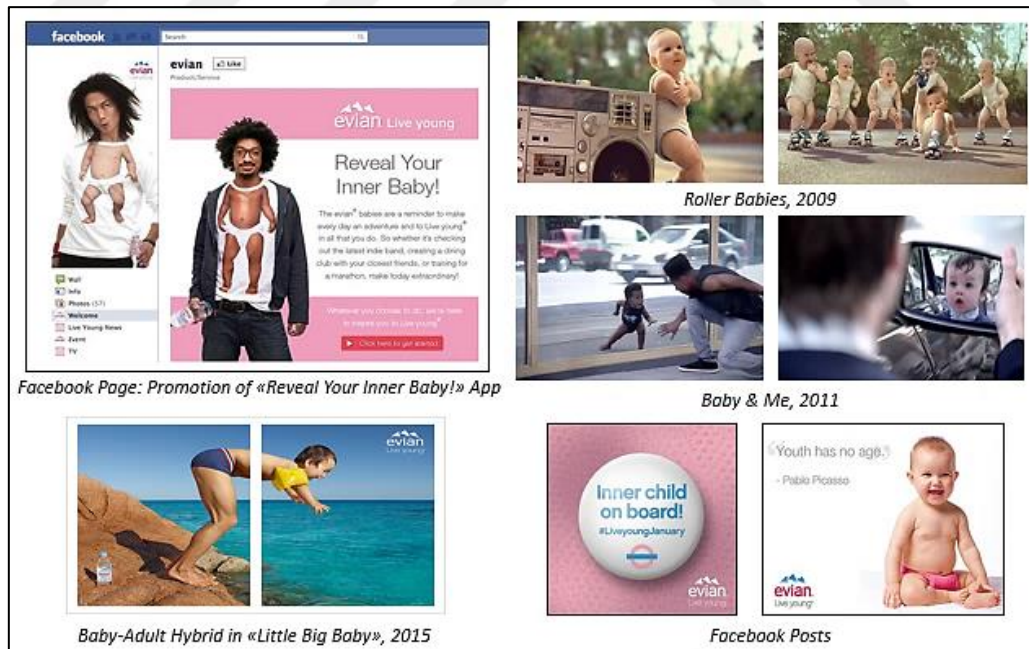


Figure 5.114 Evian Live Young Campaign 2009-2015

5.3.5.2. *Striving for Infantile Appearances with L'Oréal*

Established in 130 countries across five continents, L'Oréal Paris is the largest cosmetics and beauty company in the world today. Since 1909, it has developed to one of the most powerful and valuable global brands. Along with international deployment and adaption to local cultures, L'Oréal has managed to maintain a unique stance regarding its image as the expert French beauty brand. For decades, L'Oréal is well-known for its effective marketing campaigns influencing women of all ages. In 2016, L'Oréal Turkey applied a clear infantilizing strategy by using the baby metaphor. It promoted “a skin like a baby” with famous Turkish actress Fahriye Evcen. In the commercial, Evcen stated: “*Bebek gibi bir cilde sahip olmak için zamanı geriye almaya gerek yok. Küçük bir mucize yeter. Hepimizin hayali bu değil mi? Bebek gibi bir cilt şimdi mümkün. Çünkü biz buna değeriz*” (“It’s not necessary to turn the clock back in order to have a skin like a baby. A little miracle is enough. Isn’t this the dream of each of us? Skin like a baby is now possible. Because we’re worth it”). This miraculous possibility was promised to be ensured by L'Oréal’s magical product “Mucizevi Yüz Bakım Yağı” (“Nutri Golde Extraordinary Face Oil”).

By showing simultaneously images of a baby and then images of Fahriye Evcen, the infantilizing effect is enforced: L'Oréal’s product is at a mythical level the elixir of youth, but moreover, it is a signifier for the beauty of babyness. The postmodern woman is not supposed to age old, she has to age young – ideally aging to the appearance of a baby. In earlier times, advertising techniques for promoting feminine hygiene and cosmetic products were emphasizing the need to be healthy, distinguishing this from *merely* appearing healthy. But the new, infantilizing strategy highlights appearance over reality; looking good means now feeling good. Thus, looking good signifies in L'Oréal’s commercial to have a skin like a baby as shown in Figure 5.115.



Figure 5.115 L'Oréal Commercial with Fahriye Evcen

Important to add at this point is the dilemma that especially younger members of Generation Y (persons between 24-41) are increasingly involved in the obsessive process of “stay forever young”. Another impressive commercial of L'Oréal, in this sense, was “Gençlik Şifresi” (“Youth Code”) in 2010, in which an anti-aging creme intended for women around 30 was promoted as shown in Figure 5.115.



Figure 5.115 L'Oréal “Youth Code” Commercial

The commercial shows in the beginning an old appearing woman who then transforms into a young one after having used L'Oréal's creme. It is promised that with the application of the cream the results can be seen immediately. As it is written on the product description, it is attempted “to re-establish the skin's natural youthfulness”. Moreover, it is suggested that the product is a “rejuvenating anti-wrinkle concentrate”. It is, in some point, difficult to understand *which* youthfulness is aimed to be *re-established*. Moreover, it is to be questioned if “30” really means old today, and if a

woman should be sceptical towards the appearance of her actual age around 30. Besides, it is further to be questioned if the long-term effects of the cream could and, actually, should really result in such a static and infantile doll-like artificial face as that of the young appearing model as shown in the illustration above.

As a result, we recognize that a metonymical part-to-whole relationship is established between the aging body, and the psychological and social identity of a woman. A single part of the woman – in this case her face with wrinkled skin – is substituted for the whole. However, the first commercial glorifies baby skin, but actually, babies' skin is also wrinkled on other parts of the baby's body, but the cosmetic industry always highlights its smoothness and freshness, rather than its rippled texture. Babies' skin is positioned as pleasurable, admirable, and desirable; thus, it is further connoted with youthfulness and purity as we see in the second commercial. Therefore, we can say that infantilization is supported by a metonymic relationship whereby certain physical features of the face are taken as defining criteria for the whole person; the metaphorical assertions of their childlike qualities, then, are made literal through infantilizing practices in advertising.

6. CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

6.1. GENERAL EVALUATION OF MULTIPLE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

The main objective of this research was to provide a deeper understanding of infantilization in the context of advertising. The research has demonstrated that the ethos of infantilization has reached Turkey by showing itself in Turkish advertising. The literature review and conceptual framework were sufficient to identify the main points and features of infantilization, and consequently to show the reasons why infantilization is perfectly suited for advertising. Within three major case studies, it was clearly illustrated that infantilization in advertisements is omnipresent and popular in use by a large number of brands in Turkey. We have seen that the majority of infantilizing practices occur through the reconstruction of the most obvious features we are familiar from childhood which in general are components of children's culture, that not only attract today's children, but are especially instrumentalized for adult consumer purposes. We have further revealed the symbolic advertising messages that brands try to send adult consumers through the mask of childhood.

Advertisements, in this sense, have presented themselves as colorful and friendly, and gave the impression that they are playful and easy to understand: a friend one can interact with, a *playfellow*. Advertising as a playfellow presents itself at eye level and avoids appearing as something superior. Such childlike advertising implements a very specific relationship between the adult consumer and a brand's product. Despite infantilization looking colorful and friendly, however, it might follow other interests, and, at a time in which advertisements are becoming ubiquitous, we need to be aware of this. In a Barthesian understanding, the advertising system with its ideological nature comes across as innocent and natural, where even serious and

sensitive themes in brand communication are delivered to us in a playful and entertaining manner. Being addressed as children, then, we do not need to think about our actions and the consequences of them as everything looks easy and fun. Through this, consumers are manipulated into becoming well-entertained postmodern subjects, who are carefully prevented from getting bored and turning somewhere else. As a result, we have seen that in most of the cases a realistic adult environment was chosen for the advertisement in which animated elements, themes, or symbols of children's world were embedded cleverly, carrying the necessary psychological load that was needed to attract and influence adults. In the following, we will evaluate the three case studies briefly and conclude with a general evaluation.

- **Case Study 1:**

The first case study has demonstrated that advertisements were inspired by traditional children's stories, most notably by *reinventing* them. Especially fragments of plots or motifs from widely known fairy tales in adapted versions creating big fairytale moments were used. Turkish celebrities were presented as childlike fairy tale characters (such as Hülya Avşar as *Alice in Wonderland*, Gülben Ergen as *Heidi*, Cem Yılmaz as *Peter Pan*), lovely talking animals became our helping and informing friends (such *The Bremen Town Musicians* and the goose character from *Nils Holgersson*), housewives transformed into princesses, kitchens and toilets converted into enchanted brand environments, and infantile monster-like creatures turned out to be our enemies in brand's imaginary microworlds that must be defeated.

Postmodern advertising becomes a kaleidoscope of features of old children's stories in combination with contemporary brand imaginations as they play, in various ways, on adults' latent emotions and needs with content they are familiar with. Fairy

tales, an important type of storytelling, are then especially suitable to create a perfect infantilizing world of desire and wish fulfillment in the mind of adult consumers immediately reminding them of the happy ending of the underlying fairy tale, leading more or less unconsciously to the conclusion that the product must be equally wonderful. The universal message always seems to be that perfection and satisfaction are attainable, and fairy-tale formulas and allusions together with explanatory if not manipulative advertisement texts and exquisite images create an enchanted world of irresistible consumerism. Many consumers have little choice but to accept such advertisements as convincing signs of the wish fulfillment that also underlies the basic idea of traditional fairy tales. Exactly this, the promise of making wishes come true, makes such advertisements so appealing to adults' wish for a happy and contented life and, thus, the used fairy-tale motifs become powerful tools in their original or adapted versions to promote consumerism in societies pushed by the drive toward instantaneous gratification and pleasure being main characteristics of the infantalist ethos.

- **Case Study 2:**

The second case study has illustrated that many Turkish advertisements consist of features best known from children's retro and popular entertainment media. These advertisements were full of scenes that could directly stem from children's cartoons, animated movies, TV programs, and video games. We have seen that there is a huge comeback of the above mentioned characteristic elements of children's entertainment media in all its forms as a *revival*, *remake*, and *reconnection to childhood* via advertising. Especially children's iconic and retro cartoon series (such as *Snoopy*, *Duck Tales*, *Garfield*, *Betty Boop*, *Casper*, *Flintstones*, *Sailor Moon*, *Pokémon*, and *Snorks*), TV shows (such as *Sesame Street*, *The Muppets*, and *Teletubbies*), and video games (such

as *Super Mario*, *Pacman*, or *Street Fighter*) that were especially popular in the 1970s and 1980s, return to screens for new remakes. However, it seems that particularly adults are involved in something they loved as children. These elder series and formats used in contemporary advertising carry adults into some kind of nostalgia as they quickly can identify with them and even feel happy to see them again.

Especially recent digital technologies have changed the quality of cartoons and animated movies with their numerous lovable characters, which are often the types of imagery still associated with what little children watch. But in the last years a dramatic increase can be observed concerning animated advertising campaigns that are creatively showcasing how playful childlike designs are being incorporated into more mainstream advertising techniques with adult references. Moreover, various brand mascots and all kind of creatures are put in nearly every sort of mature and adult-like circumstances, even often absurd, but making them more identifiable with an older audience. Thus, we can witness housewives speaking to their imaginary friends, ice creams making propaganda like in a political election campaign, or bank's infantile robots that are always by our side. The analysis has demonstrated how essential characteristics of retro and contemporary children's entertainment media are used in order to add a youthful touch to brands' products and services in contrast to otherwise realistic designed and serious appearing, thus, even boring and uninteresting campaigns. With this, brands are simultaneously anchoring in the adult's psyche a positive experience via childlike entertainment forms.

- **Case Study 3:**

The third case study has shown how certain symbols and motifs which are associated with childhood, and which represent essential components of children's

daily life including toys (such as Barbie doll, teddy bears, Lego, and cars), tastes (such as milk, ice cream, and candy), places (such as kindergarden and elementary school) and other childhood-related habits and motifs (such as Children's Day, playing games, getting dirty, the baby figure, etc.), were integrated in advertisements. Through this, we have seen their *renaissance* as branded adult versions.

Manifesting the brand's advertising message with unique and compelling childhood symbols and motifs may, initially, simply touch a special sentimental nerve and evoke the idea of childhood. But it might also serve as nostalgia-based properties that engender certain infantilizing mechanisms in advertisements to make adults remember their childhood memories and the desire to renew the emotions that went with it in order to link this to the promoted product about. Thus, we can see in advertisements adults magically return back to their own childhood when eating ice cream or drinking milk; we can watch whole toy stories with cars and Barbie's world we are invited to; we can celebrate now Children's Day as Adult's "Inner Children's Day"; products can become our symbolic mothers; or we might strive for infantile appearances by yearning for baby skin.

In general, the three case studies have shown important common features. We recognize that it is because of the naivety, the natural simplicity of expression and the familiarity of these advertisements which allow adults to feel unconsciously as if they were a child while watching the commercial or see a Facebook post. But there remains a critical distance which makes the childlike pleasure of fairy tales, entertainment media, and symbols and motifs of childhood accessible and acceptable to the adult consumer. However, the childlike pleasure is transcended by and converted into adult pleasure that, ultimately, cannot be differentiated from children's pleasure. The

juxtaposition of opposites is given by the *ambiguity*: infantilization indicates the *difference* as well as the *similarity* of adulthood and childhood. This ambiguity is crucial and valuable in which an advertiser, unable to capture the attention of its audience otherwise, easily resorts to material from children's world with great impact.

This explains why we see in all three case studies images of endlessly festive situations in invented worlds, in which subjects of unrelated stories coexist in one cosmology, showing us anthropomorphic products living in their own spheres, lovable animals giving valuable advice, and theatrical performances with dancing, singing and joke-telling youthful characters and Turkish celebrities or comedians teaching us what to do. This is similar to what we earlier saw in Disney, Pixar, or DreamWorks movies, conveying the ultimate image that consumer culture can offer the good life as an endless kindergarden party. Advertising, in this sense, which is about the transformation of the consumer by promising prestige, self-esteem, pleasure and a work-free existence, appeals to the same desires for freedom, fun, and play that Disney & Co. appeals to, turning the yearning for a better life into a tool of *childlike manipulation*.

That advertising makes use of well-known fairy tales, retro and popular entertainment media, or symbols and motifs of childhood – or even just makes an allusion to them – is not new, and of course in general invented worlds are not new in human history, as much of it contrived by conscious and unconscious design to support the claims of those in power. But what is new is that these characteristic features of children's world are now *instrumentalized* at the highest level for adult consumer purposes with *child-oriented marketing techniques* in advertisements to manipulate adults to make them become more childish, impulsive, and undisciplined. Never before has consumer culture been invented this way, using rational tools – from marketing and media combined with digital computer technology – to sell products and a way of life by

extracting the essence of our own irrationality – our fantasies, imbued with fears, wishes, and desires – and give them back to us in the form of invented childlike worlds. Many consumers know that it is all an illusion and manipulation. But many still respond by buying the product, as if they have been taken in by the message. This can be explained with the fact that advertisements are structured like fragmented dreams which can have a therapeutic dimension, giving us a clearer view of ourselves and even showing us some attitude or pattern of behaviour that has been with us since childhood that can do us good. In effect, infantilization in advertising *offers an escape from everyday routine* that allows consumers to *relax and re-enjoy childlike culture*, which *exhibits a feel-good factor* and to which adults still can relate to as it is simple, colorful, fun and yet meaningful.

6.2. KEY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: INFANTILIZATION IN 21ST CENTURY ADVERTISING

With the development of technology and the advancing process of globalization in 21st century, infantilization has widened its appearance into a domain that is powerful and huge concerning its impact: advertising. Thus, even if processes of infantilization had been happening for centuries, the difference in the first half of the 21st century is that we are right in the middle of a *commercial-driven* infantilization pushed by media and marketing, which has never existed in this form in human history before. In postmodern times, advertisements function as Barthesian myths of the contemporary consumer world. Postmodern advertising draws from *playful allusions* and *create childlike illusions* to sew new patterns and combinations into culture. Advertising functions as a complex semiotic system where signifier transfers from first order signifiers of meaning to second order ones. Rooting itself in the existing belief systems,

advertisements implant into the collective unconsciousness of the society newer ideas and interests. The analysis, in this sense, has illustrated that postmodern advertising shows infantilizing structures that are apparently inherent in its very nature. Postmodern advertising is *like* a child: it is playful, imaginative, creative, lighthearted and free, simple, thinks magical, shows up in the whimsical lyrics it sings and sounds, has an innate ability to make something out of anything, does not fret over what anyone else will think, imitates and copies, reflects its style by experimenting, has artistic spontaneity, breaks down rules and complexity. But apart from being like a child, postmodern advertising seems to *nourish and develop itself from childhood features* that further helps to *engender infantilizing mechanisms*. As evaluated in the previous section, we have clearly seen that infantilization in advertising *reveals itself in all possible forms of signs* that we can relate to children's traditional stories, children's entertainment media, and in general childhood symbols and motifs.

There are, actually, many reasons why this is happening exactly this way. Despite adults' long years of expertise as children in an adult-dominated world, adults often seem to forget childhood's meaning and feeling. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, author of *The Little Prince*, perfectly puts this in words: "All grown-ups were once children... but only few of them remember it." And exactly this provides the powerful starting point for advertisers: to *make adults remember again* and even to *let them continue to live from that point where they have left off*. What adults experience in childhood might permanently influence their behaviour and personality and remain for a lifetime. Thus, main features of childhood are quite memorable; a heritage that can be always *activated* and *accessed* at any time, and can be made present again in the eyes of the adult consumer. In this sense, brands can make use of this by relying on adults' nostalgia by reconnecting to especially positive childhood memories.

With this regard, the postmodern version of nostalgia is more profoundly than earlier forms and involves even “memories of something that never was, creating an idealized past that never actually existed, much in the manner that the postmodern simulacrum of Baudrillard involves reproductions of a nonexistent original” (Booker, 2007: 51). As the nostalgia that is satisfied by an image is not “real” nostalgia, but a simulacrum of it, we seem to be left – in the case of the present research – with a simulacrum of nostalgia which characterizes a properly postmodern *homesickness for childhood*. Within this framework, it is not just about a nostalgic past and only about to make adults remember of childhood – it is in order to *construct the present time*, the “here and now”. Against this backdrop, advertisers are not constructing their brand worlds anew from zero, but only reconstruct it from preexisting elements for which the use of childhood features seems to be perfect. Even if this could give the impression that such an approach is retrospective, it is in fact more *prospective*. The fantasies originating from the past, determined by the desires of the present, have a direct impact on the realities of the future.

As a result, advertisements are full of visual and auditory components that enrich and expand upon the present by incorporating elements of the past by mixing them with newer things. Especially intertextual references remind us of what we have earlier seen, heard, and experienced. The analysis has in general shown that many brands strongly focus on the musical component in their commercials – consumers are often informed through short songs what the commercial is about. Besides, we can hear songs usually described as childlike such as nursery and playground rhymes, simple melodies, but also songs that were popular in childhood years capturing nostalgia. Above all, it is the power of visuality that appeals to the eye due to *stylish look* in form of images which provides a collection of signs, and each of these signs have different

levels of meanings and interactions between meanings. The visuality of infantilization, in this sense, consists of childlike cartoons, animations, and formats better known from children's show; further we can see colorful design and simple forms and shapes breaking down complexity, big typography, and animated animals or things with friendly faces. In particular, campaigns with animated features are merging childhood designs with more *adult references*. All together this can engender infantilizing mechanisms by making figures and objects *appearing cute* and *neotenous*, and thus, attracting adults like children to the funny and entertaining appearing product. The recent rise in animation production is being driven by those seeking to capitalize on the medium's expressive nature to communicate a brand's spirit, and most importantly, deliver content in a format that can surpass reality that creates animated characters, landscapes, and scenes which is a lot *less expensive* than creating a live production with expensive actors.

The postmodern imagery as a perfect illusion is created to simulate – among many others but most notably in increase in the last years – *a childlike world for adults* which is, most notably, based on *child-centric aesthetics* where consumerism appears as a playful tool due to magical and imaginary scenery. Infantile hyperrealities are constructed in which childhood visions are screened especially in form of childhood utopias to portray idealized environments; playgrounds where everyone seems to be interested in us and our well-being; and places full of fun, love, and harmony in which the limits imposed by the “real existing” physical world no longer seems to be in effect. Visual elements related to childhood, then, assume a new meaning as signifiers. What we have associated with childhood so far, no longer has to be associated with only a life stage that is completely over for the adult and, thus, is only to be enjoyed by the child itself. Childhood now can signify a better and, in some ways, ideal state of soul

and mindset to be reached with the desire to reexperience this idyllic life stage somehow in an adult setting. This is therefore possible as the arbitrariness – to which Saussure vehemently points to – is in postmodern times made extremely use of by attaching, creatively and with the use of many techniques, any meaning to signifiers.

Thus, we can say that the use of the infantilization strategy occurs mostly through *infantilist marketing techniques* in *visual* and *auditory* terms: adults are attempted to be persuaded rhetorically *as if* they were children in order to give hidden messages, mostly with a deeper psychological impact, to promote the postmodern worldview which is typically *masked*. For instance, at the first glance it is difficult to perceive *Heidi* in the persona of Gülben Ergen in the 2014 Rinso campaign. But if we psycho-semiotically analyze the campaign, we will recognize that not only a detergent brand is promoted, but much more, which we can reveal if we realize the cleverly embedded childlike *Heidi* scenery implying two important messages: the trend to go back to idyllic nature (which can be ensured when moving to one of the emerging housing projects in Turkish metropol cities that mostly promise a better and more natural life atmosphere as we see in the commercial) and, with this, to reach childlike purity (as Rinso will help us not only to clean up our laundry but unconsciously ourselves from the imaginary dirt inside us and the dirty world we live in from which we are trying to escape).

Thus, the analysis has shown that infantilization is *reflected through enormous textures of childhood* that can be seen as repetitive patterns in Turkish advertisements, speaking in all of its richness which *provides a huge spectrum of input* important to advertising creatives to bring unconsciously emotions in adults as they are familiar to these stories or characters from their childhood. Mostly, advertisers adjust and adapt these well-known plots and characters stemming from the West to the cultural taste of

the Turkish audience. With this regard, infantilist marketing techniques can help a company operating in a tough market to *differentiate itself easily from the competition*. Infantilization helps to call attention of consumers with marketing campaigns designed with childlike patterns that appear entertaining and funny, and unconsciously, amaze consumers with their flavour of childhood. Which makes infantilist marketing techniques especially interesting is the fact that it *can be applied and related to nearly everything*, and provide therefore *useful tools*. It can help to be even *more persuasive and convincing* than serious and adult-appropriate advertising as it offers more entertaining options by presenting childlike hyperreal fantasy worlds and make things *more understandable in an abstract way* than realistic representations which offers not these options. It further can offer solutions to *simplify complex issues* and make them more attainable that could be not represented non-infantile. But it can also downplay and present bigger abstract ideas in a primitive manner. Infantilization leads in such cases to *reductionism and trivialization*.

Through child-oriented advertising, brands attempt to *bring out the (inner) child* in adult consumers who obviously need reassurance by being told that all is well and there is no cause for fear or anger – as long as they buy the promoted product or service. Brands care about adults as much, seem to “invest” in them the same level of time, importance and emotion like parents would do – not for the sake of real love they feel for adult consumers, but for the love they feel for adults’ money. In other situations, brands can take the position of an elementary teacher as a guide in exercising authority by simultaneously caring, guiding and teaching adults what to dream, what to think, and what to buy, and “correct” them in their knowledge about the world as if they would be a young pupil at school – not for the sake of real education concerning important things

in life but the *taming* of adults to make them function properly in the capitalist system. In other words: adults are *tricked* on the level of a child. Such processes which we have named as *parentification* of brands or *pupilization* of the consumer in this thesis are examples of the ways infantilization can be implemented.

With this, it was shown that many advertisements seem to promote a kind of *collective consumer regression* through features of childhood that enhance the infantilizing effect. Consumer regression is a means allowing adults' *trip back to childhood* which increasingly becomes important, especially in marketing terms, as it can *stimulate childlike thought processes in adult consumers decision-making*. Consumers, then, increasingly rely more on intuitive, impulsive, playful and fun-generating methods of making choices between brands. This explains the main reason why infantilization is implemented: it is so *much easier to manipulate and control child-like adults* – adults with a childish mindset and behavior – than “normal” adults who think and act adultlike on a basis of mature deliberateness and careful judgement.

Because of this, companies increasingly segment and target consumers with the *uniage strategy* which enables that both children and adults can be simultaneously addressed and invited to embrace the promoted products. With respect to infantilization, this occurs at the level of a child. According to a purely economic logic, children – both real and metaphorically – represent the most profitable target since they allow the sale of identical products in necessarily different realities. However, even if children are an important target in order to maintain and grow sales, an appeal had to be made especially to adults, not least because of demographic reasons, as adults are dominant in populations and have the economic power. It is in particular the *child-like* adult as an incredibly lucrative wellspring of consumerist potential in which the market is interested, and who therefore presents the type of *the most ideal consumer* that

generally does not exist by nature, but has to be created by constantly radiating features of childhood on the adult. The purpose, then, is not only to make products more appealing to children, but to foster a behavioral regression in adult consumers in order to make them more compatible with a capitalist logic based on surplus production to facilitate the promotion of mostly ephemeral goods. Suddenly, here is an entire adult generation offered an evolved version of the things they were consuming as children who are now truly encouraged to be serviced in all facets of childhood. The mission is to encourage adults to hold onto the tastes and habits of children. This is highly demanded by market forces as consumerism is based on a prolonged lifetime of buying for which a childlike state in adults is necessary. Infantilization, in this sense, becomes an *economic imperative* – a necessary tactic for capitalism's success even survival. As a result, the uniage strategy enables this by *extending the target group* which is *extremely profitable*. Companies do not have to target adults and childrens separately anymore – they can design their advertisements child-centric and make them offer to both child and adult. This is both *cost- and time-effective*.

Further, infantilization is *not gender-specific* – both men and women can be targeted, and both are represented in the advertisements as well. For women, this can be represented as the pursuit of their girlhood dreams and fantasies, and for men, the continuation of certain boyish sides. However, we can observe that generally women seem to be more affected. Many advertisements in the category of cleaning products or food, for example, clearly target housewives. But besides, we can see that in these advertisements especially women are mostly represented. Further, we can also observe that advertisements from the credit card sector, for example, can make use of a more feminine advertising style such as Maximum card with its pink color scheme and underlying Barbie ideology that targets both sexes however.

Infantilization is especially implemented when the goal is to *add a childlike flair* and, through this, *a new and fresh touch to brands' products*. This can be observed when a new product is launched, the image of a product is refreshed or a new brand image is introduced, for example, due to brand's anniversary. Brands are renewing their brand identities by *rejuvenilizing over time*. Some brands use infantilization for one campaign, others build on it a whole brand image. Infantilizing advertising is catchy and appealing, and it seems as if brands unconsciously want to open a new chapter, want to be *reborn* into new brand images via campaigns which is best symbolized with infantilizing, childlike marketing scenery.

One of the most important results of the analysis is the fact that infantilization *emerges in times of economic crises* when consumerism becomes especially important – infantilization, then, ensures to make adults buy products they actually not need, but which helps to revive and sustain the economy. Indeed, the first half of the 21st century has proven to be as economically and politically tumultuous – particularly in Turkey. Turkey experienced a severe banking crisis during 2000-2001 and the global financial crisis took place during 2008-2012 that was considered as one of the biggest crises since the Great Depression in the 1930s. Further, a general political turmoil continued which peaked with the military coup on 15 July 2016 affecting the whole Turkish folk until today. Because of this, we can assume that the infantilist ethos has particularly emerged since the 2000s probably due to financial crises and political turmoil – and so did infantilization in Turkish advertising. Since then, brands in Turkey have begun to create outstanding campaigns with childhood-related features appealing to adults. But another important point is that this is also the time period when infantilization has emerged concurrently with the coming to power of the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice & Development Party/ AKP) since 2002 until today in 2018. However, the infantilist

ethos, which is a global one, is affecting mostly Western-oriented countries – thus, we can clearly say that it is not a Turkish phenomenon and by far not the product of the AKP era. But we have to highlight that AKP’s economic model is especially built on intense consumption enabled with huge consumer credits provided by banks and credit cards. Consequently, the *extreme stimulus* for this is infantilization via advertising – a phenomenon which we can especially observe in Turkey at maybe the highest level on global scale. Consequently, it would be not wrong to argue that the policies of AKP since 2002 have highly served as a catalyst in supporting the emergence of the infantilist ethos in Turkey.

Banks and credit card companies play, in this context, a crucial role. Especially *banking and credit card advertisements* are outstanding that in earlier times were probably considered to be the antithesis of the entertainment industry, but not so today. Banks and credit card businesses are increasingly appearing like entertainment companies for children which give the impression of the look and feel of a cross between cartoons, animated movies, and infantilist comedy show. Consumers are consistently satisfied at the highest level with promises ensuring instant gratification which is further enabled through a “buy now, pay later” mentality. In earlier times, however, most brands had much more conservative campaigns, were much more centred around real life, and “real” adults making “grown-up” decisions. Today, these advertisements in general are celebrity and comedy focused by displaying puerile behavior and frequently musical performances. Actually, it has to be questioned if the increase use of infantilist marketing techniques is appropriate while the promotion of trust and seriousness as important attributes concerning a banking or credit card brand would be more suitable. Nevertheless, we can explain this development with the fact that bank and credit card businesses are the main *engine* of infantilization – they provide

the new and necessary facilities for consumers in order to ensure financial advantages and installments. Without this, consumerism in Turkey would not be possible to the extent it is nowadays the case. For this reason, especially advertisements of banks and credit card companies are the most childlike and infantilizing ones through which irresistible offers are made to create endless desires in adults by further showing how to fulfil them financially.

In general, infantilization can be found *in all product categories*. For the research, brands from different product categories were considered. Meanwhile, advertising campaigns of adult-targeted product categories especially such as finance (insurance, bank accounts, credit cards), house-related products (e.g. combi-boilers and painting), and automobiles and aftermarket (e.g. petrol station) all routinely use every kind of childlike imagery and youthful elements. In fact, few things in life are more boring than cleaning products, banks, insurance and other “serious” issues which become apparently more interesting when attached with childhood-related imagery. As a result, we can suggest that both infantilization and advertising are, when merging together, the most vital and powerful instruments to achieve this. With this regard, *commercials* are the perfect place to screen children’s worlds, which is continued on companies’ websites and social media platforms. Brand’s *Facebook posts* are particularly used to reach adult consumer’s so-called inner child. In general, the social media platforms today have become avenues to flaunt childhood nostalgia to which brands especially join.

In Weberian language, the origins of modern Western culture was characterized in a fundamental *Triebverzicht* (oppression of desire), which today in postmodern times is replaced by what we can describe as *Luststeigerung* (liberation of desire),

concurrently with the emergence of the new consumerist worldview which is realized by and, thus, can be explained through the infantilist ethos. Like in many developed and emerging societies, Turkish people are exposed to thousands of images and ideas from numerous sources such as television, websites, movies, radio, magazines, e-mails, sms, or billboards – all sending a multitude of postmodern messages that are repetitive and that try to capture the Turk's attention. In the *infantilized* culture we live in today, images and ideas of childlikeness and youthfulness – in a Barthesian understanding – are *naturally accepted* as the new norm is ideologically mediated and established through culture industries because of their ceaseless bombardment to individuals and society. The result is the proliferation, even standardization, of the young lifestyle in Western societies, no matter if the population is young or aging, and to which Turkey joins as well.

In this sense, Turkish advertising plays a vital role in the promotion of adult consumer infantilization as it has the potential to attract and manipulate adults with powerful childhood signs in the deepest sense – unconsciously and ideologically. However, infantilization functions differently in Turkey but even more powerfully in contrast to aging populations due to socio-cultural reasons. In older populations, infantilization is necessary as youthful and surplus products must be sold somehow. The goal, then, is to make older people think and act younger. In younger populations like Turkey, on the contrary, it can be assumed that the increase of child-oriented advertisements lies in the fact of the great amount of children – however, adults are exposed to these advertisements as well with the effect that infantilization occurs as they are confronted to something below their adult level frequently. But further, Turkish consumers' characteristics are significantly different from those of other Western countries: Turkey has a young population, predominantly is collectivist and partially

individualistic, and caught between Eastern values and Western ideals. Most important, the family is in the foreground enforcing a high “We”-orientation. Due to this factors, natural forms of infantilizing mechanisms already exist in Turkish families and in society in general. We can argue that features of the infantilist ethos – privileging the easy, simple, and fast – matches strongly with Turks’ attitude to life. Thus, it is not surprising that infantilization in advertising context in a country like Turkey, which even can be considered as a “childish society” (Başar, 2012; Tekelioğlu, 2012; İnci, 2014), is embraced and functions very well.

It cannot be excluded that in near future the figure of the postmodern adult-child (*woman-child* and *man-child*), frequently enough to pique the interest of the cultural critic, might establish itself in wider circles of Western societies due to motivations of generational border crossings, appealing through their exploitation of the nostalgic longing for youth in general, and thus making adults feel nearly born into childhood again. The key question is whether these circumstances will hazard or just change the free spirit of child’s world to which we try to penetrate and the complex world of adults seriousness we frequently try to escape, in a positive or negative way – something which we cannot foresee yet.

In the last decades, it was promoted that people continually have to change, fragmenting their selves, letting out other selves of them. But mostly, it was promoted that adults’ real selves are represented by a child inside them that is suppressed. In this sense, the child is often presented as the idol and symbol of one’s true self, supposed to be the adult’s core of which the adult should be capable of unfolding. Infantilization, then, ceases to be a metaphor – it does not treat the adult consumer just like a child, but *hides* the fact that the adult *is* the child. However, maybe there will also come a time in

the next decades when people will realize that the search for the inner child was for nothing. And then, they will try to reestablish their inner adults which in most of the cases will only come out when absolutely necessary.

As a result, there are many forms of infantilization that may be observed and could be analyzed. In this thesis, we have focused on childhood signs, which was the most obvious way in order to read these signs and to recognize how through these signs infantilization reveals itself. It would be now interesting to explore the effect of this on Turkish adult consumer behavior, values, and attitudes which was not possible in this thesis as it would have gone beyond the scope. Further, it would be interesting to observe how infantilization via signs of childhood will evolve in advertisements and marketing in the next years. Will we see a continuation of infantilization with greater impact or will we maybe witness after a short time that childhood patterns slowly disappear and it is even all over? For the moment, we can say that this marketing scenery continues and certainly will continue. Even if childhood as an advertising motif will be exploited maybe some day, infantilization will continue in other forms we can not foresee now. Because infantilization will always exist in circumstances where uneven power relationships are given; and advertising, in this sense, is in the position of the superior in contrast to consumers who are dependent on it.

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APPENDIX A: SOURCES OF ADVERTISEMENTS

With time, commercials and Facebook posts, are deleted when companies refresh or renew their homepages, Facebook pages and YouTube channels. For this reason, in such cases links were taken from other general sources in order to make the advertisement available here.

Brands	Online Advertising Sources
	Homepage: https://www.alarko-carrier.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/alarkocarrier/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/alarkocarriersanayi
	Homepage: http://www.algida.com.tr/videolar Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/algidaturkiye Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/AlgidaTurkiye/videos
	Homepage: http://www.anadolusigorta.com.tr/tr/medyada-biz/reklam-filmleri Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluSigorta/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/AnadoluSigortaOnline/videos
	Homepage: https://www.araskargo.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/araskargo Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/araskargoontemasir
	Homepage: https://www.unilever.com.tr/brands/our-brands/axe.html Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AxeTurkiye/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/AxeEtkisi
	Homepage: http://www.banvit.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/banvitburada?fref=ts YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/banvitas
	Homepage: https://www.bernardo.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/bernardoturkiye YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU4el1geGiZ0J5YuiSVidKg
	Homepage: http://binbircicek.com.tr/medya.aspx?pageID=120 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/BinbircicekBallari YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/BinbircicekBal/playlists
	Homepage: http://www.abdiibrahim.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/abdiibrahimilac YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/TikaliburunaBruno
	Homepage: http://www.cardfinans.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CardFinans/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/finansbank
	Homepage: https://www.facebook.com/CifTurkiye/videos Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CifTurkiye/?fref=ts Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/DeFactoSocial
	Homepage: http://www.defacto.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DeFacto/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/DeFactoSocial
	Homepage: http://www.domestos.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pg/DomestosTR/videos/?ref=page_internal Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/domestoshijyenuzmani/videos
	Homepage: https://www.dominos.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DominosTurkiye/?fref=ts YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/DominosTR
	Homepage: https://www.duracell.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DuracellTurkiye/?brand_redir=182342489752 YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/duracellturkiye

	Homepage: http://www.dufa.com.tr/tr/kurumsal/reklam-filmleri Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DufaBoya/videos YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/dufaboya
	Homepage: http://www.dyo.com.tr/dyo/reklam-filmleri Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/dyo/videos YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/dyoboyalari/videos
	Homepage: http://www.evian.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/evian YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/EvianBabies
	Homepage: http://www.finansbank.enpara.com/hakkimizda/reklamlarımız.aspx Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/enparacom/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/Enparacom
	Homepage: http://www.garanti.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Garanti YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/garanti
	Homepage: http://www.halkbank.com.tr/forms/advertisements/advertisements.asp Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/halkbank/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCTK_5dzoauKl6MSMauSJyQ
	Homepage: https://www.haribo.com/trTR/firma/haribo-tuerkiye.html Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/hariboturkiye/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCefMfcsnTRdeue4yNTjcNOQ/videos
	Homepage: http://www.hopi.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/HopiApp YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCw9tGB4QaX6lI8JNyDZvvqQ
	Homepage: http://www.icim.com.tr/kurumsal/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/icim/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/ulkericim
	Homepage: https://www.ikea.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/IKEATurkiye YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/IKEATurkiye
	Homepage: http://www.ingbank.com.tr/tr/ingbank/basin-odasi/reklam-filmleri Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ingbankturkiye YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/ingbankturkiye
	Homepage: http://www.lerafresca.com.tr/reklam-filmleri/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/lerafresca?fref=ts Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/lerafresca/feed
	Homepage: http://www.loreal.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/LorealTurkey/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgmzv6qxtga4W6n1mfmmOZw
	Homepage: http://www.maximum.com.tr/TR/maximumu-taniyin/maximum-yasam/maximum-tv-reklamlari/Sayfalar/maximum-tv-reklamlari.aspx Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/maximum/videos YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/maximumkart/videos
	Homepage: https://www.metlife.com.tr/tr/bireysel/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Metlifetr/ Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/user/metlifetr
	Homepage: http://www.moneyclubkart.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/MoneyClubKart YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCqCqOFUC9aroUcaz6k_gtmIlg
	Homepage: http://www.nestle.com.tr/brands/kahve/coffee-mate Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/CoffeemateUSA/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/coffeematetr
	Homepage: http://www.odeabank.com.tr/tr-TR/Odeabank-Hakkinda/Sayfalar/odeabank-reklamlari.aspx Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/OdeaBank/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/odeabank/videos
	Homepage: https://www.ok.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/clubokey YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/ClubOkey

	Homepage: https://www.omo.com/tr/home.html Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/kirlenmekguzeldir/videos YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/OmoTurkiye
	Homepage: http://www.opet.com.tr/tr/icerik.aspx?cat=41%id=44 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/opet YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/opettr/videos
	Homepage: https://www.qnbfinansbank.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/qnbfinansbank YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/c/qnbfinansbank
	Homepage: http://www.panda.com.tr/videos.html Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/DondurmayiSeviyorum (638.277 followers) YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/PandaDondurma/playlists
	Homepage: http://www.papia.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PapiaTurkiye/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/PapiaTR
	Homepage: http://www.pinar.com.tr/medya_merkezi/anasayfa/Medya-Merkezi/4/0/0 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/PinarSutum (226.522 followers) YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/PinarSut/videos
	Homepage: http://www.polisan.com.tr/tr/Reklamlar Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/polisanhomecosmetics/videos YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/PolisanOfficial/playlists
	Homepage: http://www.rinso.com.tr/reklamlar/rinso-bubbleman Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Rinso (100.630 followers) YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/RinsoTR
	Homepage: http://www.royalhali.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pg/royalhali/videos/?ref=page_internal YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/royalhaliweb/videos https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZwYg1CHMT7FZdg2HVRZlhw/videos?shelf_id=0&view=0&sort=dd
	Homepage: http://www.sanabirtarifimvar.com/reklam-filmleri Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/sanaturkiye (275.574 followers) YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/sanabirtarifimvar1/videos
	Homepage: http://www.sarelle.com.tr/reklamfilmleri.html Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/sarellesagra?fref=ts YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/sarellesagra
	Homepage: http://solutions.3m.com.tr/wps/portal/3M/tr_TR/EU-Scotchbrite/Home/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/3MTurkiye/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/3MTurkiye
	Homepage: http://www.selpak.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Selpak/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaJOKTayiCyTkYBZtvsWFOQ
	Homepage: https://www.unilever.com.tr/brands/our-brands/sunlight.html Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Sunlight.Turkiye YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/sunlightturkiye
	Homepage: http://www.tat.com.tr/tr/basinda-tat/reklamlar Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TatAilesi YouTube: not exist
	Homepage: https://www.teknosa.com/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/teknosa/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL-Lj2lznGQ9mxCU6A60tA
	Homepage: http://www.torku.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/torku YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCs9HUJ8a1BApLcTVME4527w/videos
	Homepage: https://www.toyota.com.tr Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/toyotaturkiye/videos YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/vwturkiye/playlists
	Homepage: http://www.turkcell.com.tr/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Turkcell/

	YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/turkcell
	Homepage: http://www.turkishairlines.com Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/turkishairlinesTR/?brand_redir=90430042759 YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/TURKISHAIRLINES
	Homepage: http://www.isbank.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/isbankasi YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/turkiyeisbankasi?feature=watch
	Homepage: https://www.turktelekom.com.tr/Sayfalar/Ana-Sayfa.aspx Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TurkTelekom YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/TurkTelekomTurkiye
	Homepage: http://www.yumos.com/yumosun-sihirli-dunyasi Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/YumosTurkiye/videos YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/YumosTurkiye
	Homepage: http://vitra.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/VitrATurkiye YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/VitrAglobal
	Homepage: http://www.worldcard.com.tr Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/YapiKrediWorld/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/YapiKrediTV
	Homepage: http://11880.com.tr/yeni/?page_id=697 Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/11880-518812861489836/ YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/user/bntelekom

APPENDIX B: ANALYZED ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS

BRAND	YEAR	CAMPAIGN
Alarko Carrier	14.9.2007	Garfield Ciğerci (17 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EoCsEzSyws
	14.9.2007	Garfield Dans (16 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pf7qaqKidCQ
	7.9.2016	Türkiye'nin İlk ve Tek Çift Yoğuşma Teknolojili Kombisi (23 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PM0FD4hr-_o
	13.8.2017	Alarko Seradens Süper Plus Çift Yoğuşmalı Kombi (23 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51yp3hdAQ74
Algida	2015	Türkiye seçimini yapıyor, Algida efsanesi geri dönüyor! All Episodes: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-x-cnSZ4Mz6PiTxL3TgowPsG0g-fh1O-
	14.5.2015	Türkiye seçimini yapıyor, Algida efsanesi geri dönüyor! (26 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r7kmSq3twWQ
	21.5.2015	Algida Efsane Seçim Çok Yakında (57 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7NawF8II3II
	23.5.2015	Korcan Karar'la Efsane Seçime Doğru (3:04 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PEdaYMDWzFA
	27.5.2015	İşte efsane seçim sonuçları! Efsane Winner geri döndü! (2:52 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4k-XQNxLTC4
Anadolu Sigorta	21.10.2014	Facebook Post: "Çocukken ne renk bir araba hayal ederdiniz?"
	20.2.2014	Street Fighter (50 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TC-5RT3TGzQ
	3.6.2016	Nazar ve Kısmet'in maceraları başlıyor! Bakalım neler olacak? (36 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluSigorta/videos/vl.289294811417746/10154169402532416/?type=1
	16.6.2016	"Avizeye nazar mı değer..." demeyin (33 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluSigorta/videos/vl.289294811417746/10154202090267416/?type=1
	14.7.2016	Ne kadar da güzel bir araba, kaskosu var mı acaba? (38 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluSigorta/videos/vl.289294811417746/10154275665497416/?type=1
	4.8.2016	"Kismetimde varsa soyulmak, neye yarar üzölmek?" demeyin.... (29 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluSigorta/videos/vl.289294811417746/10154336233252416/?type=1
	24.8.2016	Nazarın nereden çıkacağı belli olmaz https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluSigorta/videos/10154485067062416/
	23.9.2016	Dikkat! Ütöden nazar çıkabilir! (33 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/AnadoluSigorta/videos/10154485067062416/
Aras Kargo	13.12.2013	Aras Kargo Yeni Reklam Filmi – Araslar (25 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=53TvrGtwsIY
	16.12.2013	Aras Kargo Yeni Reklam Filmi 2 – Araslar (27 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K0crnIvRnNk
	18.12.2013	Aras Kargo Yeni Reklam Filmi 3 – Araslar (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GQkQpsyBegQ
	6.1.2014	Araslar hizmet ailesiyle tanışın! (39 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aAyY2KZuXIQ
	14.2.2014	Film gibi bir sevgililer günü geçirmenizi dileriz. (21 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j4NVtnuaFVE
	3.4.2014	Aras Kargo - Aras Tahsilatlı Reklam Filmi (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CjZMC5wK5IQ
Axe	8.11.2012	Facebook Post (Woman considered as a Barbie doll)
	11.11.2013	Facebook Post: "Bu noktalara dikkat Axe Erkeği"
	22.11.2013	Facebook Post: "Gerektiğinde Super Mario'ya bile yardım ederiz"
	20.1.2014	Facebook Post: "Pacman Axe etkisi ile tanışınca"
	22.1.2014	Facebook Post: "Axe sıkıp gece bara gittiğimde hissettiğim"
19.3.2014	Axe Dark vs. Axe Gold... Rekabete hazır mısınız? (37 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-O-KZgXrl4	
Banvit	7.1.2011	Banvit 40. Yıl Animasyon Reklam Filmi (19 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xacl7JdYskw

	7.1.2011	Banvit Kırmızı Kral Reklam Filmi (50 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF2xpWc-6_s
	20.12.2013	Lezzetçibaşı: Mutfaktaki Lezzet Yardımcınız (38 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaT6RiwMbW0
	30.12.2013	Banvit Lezzetçibaşı (46 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y1UH2OuCM8s
	5.7.2014	Banvit Lezzetçibaşı kim? (45 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3j7ZOvy5jQ
	22.2.2017	Banvit Yerim (32 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6dc_p-IHls
Bernardo	25.7.2015	Facebook Post (Betty Boop)
Binbirçiçek	20.2.2014	Her Kadın Bir Çiçek, Tercihi Binbirçiçek (37 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzyWO2R2iBw
Bruno	24.9.2012	Bruno Reklam Filmi (Babys) (39 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xy_Pu5QfRzU
	20.2.2013	Yetişkinler için Her Bir Buruna Bruno (Adults) (45 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CvUMn7OfQ74
CardFinans	20.3.2015	CardFinans'tan 0 Faiz Fırsatı! (40 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-bKZo9SOeoo
Cif	3.8.2012	Cif Power Naturals Reklam (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qtE2FR1F_Nk
	8.10.2012	Cif Ultra Hijyen (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hnxCDRAwIng
	27.12.2012	Facebook Post: "Hepimiz masallarla büyüdük, peki sizin küçükken en sevdiğiniz masal hangisiydi?"
	27.2.2015	Facebook Post: "Kraliçe gibi hissetme; çünkü "gibisi" fazla... Cif'le evin kraliçesi zaten sensin!"
	17.8.2015	Cif Tüm Yüzeyler (32 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pHenl7krxY8
	6.1.2017	Cif Ultra Hız Sindirella'yı baloya nasıl yetiştirmiş? (20 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-2_BaXl_IO
	24.1.2018	Cif Power&Shine Banyo Sprey %100 Güç, Kusursuz Sonuç! (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hX8trtXQO4E
DeFacto	3.2.2014	En özel anlarda da DeFacto yanınızda! (1:05 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9NJ9vr4gr4
Domestos	31.8.2013	Domestos Extra Güçlü Hijyen (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B1qGVjUWnJg
	8.5.2015	Augmented Reality Advert: Hygiene Bus Shelter "Dev Mikropları Görenler Şaşkına Döndü!" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6gEw03eKJA
	11.5.2015	Yeni Domestos Kalkanı ile Uzun Süreli Koruma (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mo7Gl68gv5k
	3.1.2017	Uzun Süreli Koruma, Maksimum Hijyenik Beyazlık! (20 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdlInWKHyOUE
Domino's Pizza	21.1.2015	Daha Hızlı Ne Mutlu Edebilir Ki? (37 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3mh3vCx-3g
	16.3.2015	Domino's Pizza'dan Mis Gibi Kampanya (24 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Csr7JU4g2_c
	28.1.2016	Dominos Pizza Seda Sayan ve Oğlu Oğulcan Engin (45 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRqz4yFt8wc
	1.6.2016	Her dilimde dev sucuk keyfi yeni Mangal Sucuklu Pizza'da! w/ Kadir Çöpdemir (26 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/DominosTurkiye/videos/1264973103533088/
	12.7.2016	Domino's Pizza Seda Sayan ve Oğlu Oğulcan Engin (18 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SlDViHQUuH8
	12.7.2016	Domino's Pizza Seda Sayan ve Ayı Sporda Misafir https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZXyefLmfWU
	16.11.2016	13 + 13 w/ Kadir Çöpdemir (15 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/DominosTurkiye/videos/1336113383085726/
	7.2.2017	İşi başından aşkın olanlara tek tıkla sipariş Domino's'ta! (31 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x_9Zfm77Q
	17.1.2018	Domino's'tan Yeni Lezzet: Ekmek Arası (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=liVH93DxA-Q
Duracell	20.7.2010	Duracell 10 kata Kadar Daha Uzun (30 sec.)

	12.7.2013	https://www.izlesene.com/liste/duracell Duracell Uzun Önürlü ve Güvenli. (26 sec.)
	27.11.2013	https://www.facebook.com/DuracellTurkiye/videos/398967130220994/ Duralock (22 sec.)
	11.8.2014	https://www.facebook.com/DuracellTurkiye/videos/468336799950693/ Facebook Post: "90'lar nesli! Başından hiç kalkmadığınız video oyunu hangisiydi?"
	12.8.2014	Facebook Post: "Bazıları hiç büyüzmez, sadece oyuncakları deęişir"
	14.8.2014	Facebook Post: "Çocukken gökkuşuğının sonunda altın bulacağınızı düşünüp peşinden koşar mıydınız?"
	18.8.2014	Facebook Post: "Hayalini kurduğunuz her şeyi başarabilirsiniz! Tek ihtiyacınız olan, içinizdeki güce güvenmek!"
	27.2.2015	Facebook Post: "Biz de bugün nostalji yapmaya karar verdik! Hala tetris oynayan kaç kişiyiz?"
	26.6.2015	Facebook Post: "Gücün yeter, yeter ki iste."
Düfa	1.11.2013	Düfa Mantara,Küfe Dayanıklı Boya (24 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BRDbcxxtMsg
	5.11.2013	Dufa Suya,Yağmura Dayanıklı Boya (24 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nr1JfXbU_OU
	11.11.2013	Yaramazlıklara Dayanıklı Boya (23 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UisltNJUKpl
Dyo	12.5.2013	Dyo'nun Sırrı (34 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MtZHpVZf1Yk
Evian	2009	Roller Skating Babies (1:01 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=38Bw8MSumh8
	2011	Wake the baby inside you (1:37 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cnhzut3VNao
	2013	Baby & Me (1:16 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ePqEq4429Pw
	17.2.2014	Facebook Post (Live Young Adult/Child)
Enpara.com	2.10.2012	Enpara.com Teaser (45 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z-bM7z_FhHM
	30.11.2012	Enpara.com – Yüksek Faiz (38 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_C1ssw80Sp0
	19.12.2012	Enpara.com – 10 liraya bile yüksek faiz var (38 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C6y_Sf_IEnw
	20.12.2012	Enpara.com – 10 liraya bile yüksek faiz var / with Sergen Yalçın (37 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-yJGEvVo7KU
	10.4.2014	Kıllanan Adam Geri Dönüyor (13sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fuzCEYLfKdA
	20.11.2014	Yeni yılın ihtiyaçlarına internetten, masrafsız, düşük faizli kredi Enpara.com'dan! (19sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtpmvJRG5dg
	23.4.2016	Facebook-Post: "İçimdeki çocuk bugün beni çok kıllandırıyor..."
Garanti Bank	7.11.2011	Garantisiz Kimse Kalmasın Bizce – Launch Campaign (36 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1i0Vf6TI3E&t=7s
	9.2.2012	Paracard'la kuruşları ödeme! (40 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ms4dKP7Nd3I
	21.3.2012	Garanti'den Tam Destek! (36 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAqH6tvuEy8
	28.5.2012	Esnafın Geleceği Garanti Altında! (45 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGIBVSqocss
	2.5.2013	Biriktiremeyene Bile Birikim Yaptıran NET Hesap'la Pat Diye 500 TL! (44 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FMAVbZ4QmbQ
	20.9.2013	Garanti'den Kredi Almanın Tam Vakti! (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpJPhaFJ86E
	26.3.2014	Evim Garantide Sigortası ile Eviniz Güvence Altında (37 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWT32Sbl04I
	26.3.2014	Emeklilere Çok Avantajlı Faiz Oranları Garanti'de! (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srR8xhyBJwU
	26.3.2014	Birikimlerin Garanti'de Değerleniyor (36 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4S16IQxLsY
	5.6.2014	Garanti Dostları Ekibi Büyütüyor. (28 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qAg8_gjoNBC
	10.6.2014	İşte Yeni Dostumuz Tosbağa! (28 sec.)

	17.6.2015	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0suaL0yRTaQ Garanti'den Bayram Kredisi! (36 sec.)
	26.4.2016	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3V0Y8LTYbA Hoş Geldin Ugi (1:28 min.)
	26.4.2016	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ru5UwWaBSQ&spfreload=10 Ugi Nedir – Infomercial (3:41 min.)
	26.4.2016	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wGueMPQ3F4w Facebook Post (Mehmet Aslantuğ + Ugi)
	26.3.2017	Necip Memili ve Ugi (54 sec.)
	19.4.2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_IFjoEVIK28 Hepimize Teknolojiyi Sevdiren Banka: Macera Başlıyor! (1:46 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f9W1y3q55CO
Halkbank	23.2.2017	Facebook Post (School Theme)
Haribo	10.3.2015	Hariboland (33 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ot7-o0RkSoc
Hopi	8.5.2015	Alışverişin App'i Hopi'yle #GelsinGelsinParacıklar – Launch (44 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBcL368bkYQ
	14.5.2015	Alışverişin App'i Hopi'yle #GelsinGelsinParacıklar (1:02 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1V1bVNxBrtk
	14.5.2015	Alışverişin App'i Hopi'yle Turkcell'de #GelsinGelsinParacıklar (1:05 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K11GwYuo_da
	3.8.2015	Herkesin Bir Hopi'si Var. E Tabii Fedon'un da! (51 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5XdpU3PlwY
	23.11.2015	Migros şimdi Hopi'de, Paracıklar cepte! (53 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3Vpfo-UUjXs
	4.10.2016	Hopi Lansman İletişimi – Infomercial (2:24 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qhr-088yJNk
İçim	1.12.2016	İçim Çilekli Günlük Süt (16 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xwNGfvYp7Hw
	1.12.2016	İçim Çikolatalı Günlük Süt (16 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qznfzNwDL-g
Ikea	12.4.2015	Ikea Bahar Kampanyası (44 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?idv=dU0By5dNnEk
ING Bank	25.5.2012	ING Bank - Paran Burada Değerli! (27 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gllLjuRrGfo
	31.5.2012	ING Bank - ING Günlük Paket ile Tanışın (57 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4BEHNZp1OkME
	1.6.2012	ING Bank - Aklımı Kullandım Dedirten Kredi (28 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bk0OEP2IFI
	7.3.2013	ING Bank-Turuncu Hesap. w/ Acun Ilıcalı (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2R0JxWeKm70
	28.10.2013	İyi Yaşa Hayat Sigortası (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KA_ackAx0ew
	13.11.2014	1 milyon kişi para biriktirmeyi nasıl başardı? (45 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPA0UgG0IDM
	26.12.2014	finansaltuketici.gov.tr çok yakında açılıyor! (50 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_kFCv0nOa8
	6.3.2017	Facebook Post (Princess)
L'Era Fresca	20.4.2015	Facebook Post: "L'era Fresca 23 Nisan'ı İçinizdeki Çocuk ile Kutluyor!"
	9.7.2015	Pazarlama https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v07Gj3DOups
	22.7.2015	Kız İsteme https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVJX2g28drU
	29.7.2015	Cadde https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cuf1mYesj10
L'Oréal	16.6.2011	L'Oréal Paris Gençlik Şifresi! (Youth Code) (33 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K94qupHm_g
	6.5.2016	Mucizevi Yüz Bakım Yağı (Nutri Golde Extraordinary Face Oil) (41 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LyBRYq41qiQ
Maximum	23.3.2012	Yılın Düeti: Herkes Maximum'da! w/ Mert Firat (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgBwGiae4VI
	7.3.2012	Petrol Ofisi Kampanyası (38 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ZSHXxdMPgU

	29.3.2012	Maximum Komik Kamera Arkası - "Yılın Düeti" ve "Petrol Ofisi" Kampanyası (2:03 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TRSCSQIsZE0
	25.7.2012	Maximum Ramazan Kampanyası (40 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fltKIE9feT0
	23.4.2012	Maximum Tasarruf Harekatı – Kumbara Fonu (50 sec.) https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xq7l0v
	23.4.2012	Maximum Opet Kampanyası (32 sec.) https://www.izlesene.com/video/opet-maximum-kart-reklami-nisan-2012/9753313
	21.6.2012	Herkes Maximum'da w/ Şebnem Bozoklu (31 sec.) https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xro1zr
	1.8.2013	Maximum BP Kampanyası (31 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WA2IKz1qryo
	25.8.2014	Facebook Post: Maximum Kart'ınıza OPET'te 25 TL MaxiPuan fırsatı! (Barbie Theme)
	24.4.2017	Petrol Ofisi'nde Öde-Geç Reklam Filmi - Maximum Mobil (54 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceNH3V43jxY
	12.7.2017	Ne Dilersen Dile Maximum Mobil'de - Öde-Geç (36 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mmun90Lfq-0
MetLife	19.11.2013	MetLife'ta %25 + %5 Fırsatı (Denizbank, MetLife Launch) (16 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=su3cgNly2ZY
	4.11.2014	Bireysel emeklilikte tüm cevaplar MetLife'ta (40 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wDBWJC_RJ_U
	4.11.2014	Ailenizin Geleceğini MetLife ile Planlayın, Emekliliğinizi Güvence Altına Alalım (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2UhsOlaHbE
Money Club	15.8.2013	Money Club - Onlar Moneygiller, çok kazandırmaya geldiler! (28 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ybqJ5OHGFul
	21.11.2013	Moneygiller yol tarif ederse... (27 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tltGFqPDOrl
	30.6.2014	Moneygiller - Ramazan geldi koş, money'lerle haydi koş (31 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_p_c0vwfcU4
	23.10.2014	Moneygil – PO ve Moneygil'den kazandıran işbirliği (42 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=od1Wpmifz0l
Nestlé Coffee-Mate	18.9.2014	Kahvenin Aşkı Nestlé Coffee-Mate (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XJeqvSqTml
Odeabank		All commercials available under: https://www.odeabank.com.tr/tr-tr/hakkimizda/sayfalar/odeabank-reklamlari.aspx
	15.1.2013	Hülya Avşar: "Acaba Odeabank reklamında oynuyor muyum?" (13 sec.)
	15.1.2013	Hülya Avşar Odeabank Reklamında Oynamıyor (16 sec.)
	15.1.2013	Hülya Avşar Odeabank'ta Görüntülendi! (55 sec.)
	15.1.2013	Hülya Avşar Yeni Bir Reklamda Mı Oynuyor? (28 sec.)
	5.11.2013	Ne İstersen Bank'O Sende – Launch (1:05 min.)
	4.2.2014	Bank'Olular (1:03 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoN0hRW3gBE
	5.2.2014	Facebook Post: "Sen Hangi Bank'Olusun? Testi çöz, hediye çeki kazanma şansı yakala!"
	7.2.2014	Facebook Post: "Acaba sen Trendy misin? Yoksa Sosyal misin? Bence sen Gezgin'sin! Hakikaten sen hangisisin?"
Okey	24.12.2013	Okey ile #ZevkinSonsuzOlsun (1:11 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8jKaGPINU4
	25.1.2016	Facebook Post ("Be like Bill" Meme)
Omo	2004	Yapamazsın (1:05 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNiNWTYKUSs
	2005	Omo Maça Katıl (43 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUBsDPICOnQ
	7.9.2011	Facebook Post: Kendi çocukluğunuz mu daha keyifliydi, yoksa çocuğunuzunki mi?
	9.9.2011	Facebook Post: "Çocuk olmak varmış!"
	11.1.2012	Facebook Post: "Büyük olup kendini her zaman çocuk hissedenler! Omo Çocuk Akli başlıyor!"
	25.1.2012	Facebook Post: "Çocuk olmayı özleyen tüm büyükler, Çocuk Akli'ndaki 4 sevimli çocuğumuz sizleri bekliyor!"
	21.4.2012	23 Nisanda Sen kaç Yaşındasın? (31 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/kirlenmekguzeldir/videos/10150826480754245/
	23.4.2012	İçindeki çocuk kaç yaşında? (41 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/kirlenmekguzeldir/videos/10150830513734245/

	25.4.2012 17.9.2012 23.9.2014 31.10.2014 2.12.2015 2.3.2017 17.1.2018 8.2.2018	Facebook Post: "İçinizdeki çocuk kaç yaşında? Bu sorunun cevabı testimizde saklı!" Facebook Post: "Çocuklarımızın okul heyecanı bugün başlıyor! Peki siz okula başladığınız günü hatırlıyor musunuz?" Facebook Post: "Çocuğun seni şaşırtırsa" Facebook Post: "Siz tekrar çocuk olsaydınız hangisini oynamayı tercih ederdiniz?" Facebook Post: "Kirlenerek Büyüdüm" Anı Biriktir / Kaçırma O Tatlı Anları #anıbiriktir (1:09 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3gKC3j_MDAs Çocukla Çocuk Ol (1:00 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_AC-6tbVG0 Çocukla Çocuk Ol #anıbiriktir (Social Experiment) (1:35 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBjO25HkYcc&t=14s
Opet	14.12.2012 1.1.2013 10.8.2017 7.9.2017	Opet Ultraforce – Launch w/ Ajda Pekkan (1:15 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zVnKRabT06U Opet Ultraforce 2 w/ Ajda Pekkan (1:08 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zLELH_Jyk Opet ve Worldcard'dan Her Açıdan Mükemmel Bir Kampanya! (37 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VtKTuCWUwYA Yolunuzdan Döndüren Kampanya (31 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw-XBHG4X4k
Panda	25.5.2011 1.6.2011 24.5.2013	Panda ve Hande Yener (28 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/PandaDondurma/videos/105517196207071/ Panda ve Müslüm Gürses (34 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVCL968rQUo Gülben Ergen'le Panda Maraş Usulü (33 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/PandaDondurma/videos/491006597658127/
Papia	17.4.2012 8.1.2014	Papia'dan Yepyeni Reklam Filmi_Betty Boop'lu Dekor Havlu (24 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/PapiaTurkiye/videos/364214923616279/ Betty Boop Desenli Dekor Havlu (28 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/PapiaTurkiye/videos/531300383644491/
Pınar	2012 6.7.2014 22.12.2014 29.7.2014 7.10.2014 28.10.2014 1.2.2015	Büyüdüm Büyüdüm Pınar'la Büyüdüm (1:03 min.) http://www.pinar.com.tr/medya_merkezi/videos/2012/2718/3326/0 Facebook Post (Pınar Denge Laktozsuz) Facebook Post: "Çocuk gibi düşün, heyecanın hiç bitmesin" Facebook Post (80'lerde şeker) Facebook Post (Varyemez amca) Facebook Post (80'lerde okulda fasulye deneyi) Facebook Post (7'den 70'e)
Polisan	2006 2006 2008 2011	Polisan Reklam Filmi 1 (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3RxQnSUHO3A Polisan Reklam Filmi 2 (53 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYFs90xPa38 Gülen Boya – Yıllarca Genç kalır (31 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BYFtlypGcl8 Polisan Home Cosmetics (22 sec.) https://vimeo.com/46812207
QNB Finansbank	20.7.2014	Finansbank Ramazan Kredisi (31 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0z0YEMQJk
Rinso	15.10.2012 10.10.2013 1.11.2013 8.11.2013 8.3.2014 10.3.2014 4.6.2014 19.1.2016	Rinso Bubbleman (32 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MXIT3W1BO3o Facebook Post: "Bizimle, çocukluğunuzu anımsattırın favori kokunuzu paylaşın" Facebook Post: "Kokusunu duyduğunuzda size çocukluğunuzu hatırlatan bir yemek var mı?" Yeni Rinso Sıvı Deterjan Reklam Filmi (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NOXE3qTEJlo Facebook Post: "Hayatın tüm renklerini daha canlı hale getiren tüm kadınların 8 Mart Dünya Kadınlar Günü kutlu olsun!" Facebook Post: "Çocukken baloncuklar peşinde koşmak en eğlenceli oyunlardan bir tanesiydi. Hatırladınız mı?" Mükemmel Temizlik, Kalıcı Koku (37 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/Rinso/videos/562975563811429/ Rinso Sefam Olsun (31 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/Rinso/videos/vb.174672225975100/8343722

		06671762/?type=2&theater
Royal Halı	21.9.2012 7.11.2012 12.11.2012 30.11.2012 30.11.2012	Royal Halı / Bakti'nin Rüyası (35 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RV8WkDMTKqo Royal Halı – 1 (34 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpRzN4XR8uQ "Royal Halı – 2 (42 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSUiXEyGSJ4 Çekim Hataları (23 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YQ1uvx6yM04 Kapis (21 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KELO1FNsE70
Sana	8.6.2015	Yenilenen Lezzeti ile Sana (30 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qDkytoxbvCU
Sarelle	24.1.2013 25.1.2013 13.2.2014 14.2.2014 20.3.2015	Sarelle - Siz Ne Yerseniz, Çocuğunuz da Onu Yer /Markette (21 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeOYJo-vjBQ Sarelle - Siz Ne Yerseniz, Çocuğunuz da Onu Yer /Kadın Doktorunda (18 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SW2Yi1YOoM Sarelle Reklam Filmi - Erdo ve Bego karşınızda! (29 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbgTKMhSCOI Sarelle Reklam Filmi - Erdo ve Bego Aşretme! (36 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NvJAR-X9evA Doğum (41 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=na1hFNKMpOc
Scotch Brite	30.9.2014	Scotch Brite Kir Tutmaz (20 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVYUCairzMU
Selpak	15.3.2017 27.3.2017 28.4.2017 13.9.2017	Facebook Post: "Ultra yumuşaklığı ile Selpak, tıpkı saçımı okşayan annemin eli gibi" Facebook Post: "Losyonlu Selpak Mendil, benim için her zaman iyisini düşünen annem gibi koruyucu" Facebook Post: "Çiçek kokusu ile Selpak, tıpkı annemin mis kokusu gibi." Selpak Kağıt Havlu (27 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Qo8dDULdrE
Sunlight Cif	9.2.2014 10.2.2014 18.6.2014 3.11.2015 15.5.2017	Sunlight Cif zorlu yağları 2 kat daha hızlı çıkarır! (32 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K2du5ghmgIM Sunlight Cif 3 Hafta Daha Fazla Dayanır https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2BwHbNjdgQ4 (30 sec.) Facebook Post (Survivor) Facebook Post (Magician) Facebook Cover Page
Tat	2015-2017	10 Episodes of "Tatlı Domatesler" https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqF1a16jRbDipNJWl-dm5peQn8_-cGT9
TeknoSa	16.9.2014	81 il (55 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSiVHYPZchk
Torku	2013	Torku Süt (52 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R_NEnUPguCg
Toyota	13.9.2011 15.2.2013	Toyota Joyride (52 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Imc9sVEsOmk Yeni Toyota Auris - Bekle Hayat Geliyoruz Biz (50 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRtTL65G-YY
Turkcell	2005 23.4.2015 18.11.2016 30.11.2016 6.3.2017 7.3.2017 20.9.2017 7.12.2017	Genç Turkcell Campaign – Launch (1:32 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnzTg_dc9Xo 23 Nisan #ÇocukOldum (1:05) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yb8I4oD30iA&t=1s Emocanlar Aramızda (1:04 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hpG-s80g1p4 Salla Kazan (1:02 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uo-KBhVeKz8 Karşınızda Fikriye Emocan ve Süpper BiP Paket https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXIOCZup8tE Facebook Post (Emocanlar) Superonline Fiber İlk 3 Ay Ücretsiz (24 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-A3CdrTHSA Emocanlar'a Kulak Verin #NoteAlın (45 sec.)

	20.2.2018 7.6.2018	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj3dn9orKlw İlk 3 Taksit Bizden (55 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESAjXeThHrs Turkcell'li yolcuların dikkatine! (38 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twGyvidkVLc
Turkish Airlines	31.7.2012 31.7.2012 31.7.2012 5.6.2014	Türk Hava Yolları'nın Yeni Maskotu Wingo İle Tanıştınız Mı ? (45 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHyIEP6bte8 Wingo - Infomercial https://vimeo.com/46685773 Mascot Wingo – Introduction Film https://vimeo.com/46690484 Wingo 2014 Ramazan Kampanyası (15 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AtwZw5tjK_A
Türkiye İş Bankası	26.4.2011 12.3.2011 14.3.2011 15.6.2011	Dört Dörtlük Kredi (33 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1geh9L7htt4 Masrafsız Kredi (35 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w27vvdBpZr4 İhtiyaç Kredisi (37 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=setBFntAYZ4 Tatil yerine balkona çıkan adam (36 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPHdHPTyICA
Türk Telekom	15.7.2013 7.3.2010 26.4.2011 9.5.2013 28.6.2013 3.3.2014 18.6.2014 14.8.2014 30.1.2015	Former AVEA Commercial: "Avea Jet" (1:02 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGifKRbBUg Ev Gibisi Yok (1:00 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrvzoObhXnY Türk Telekom - Ev Alarm Reklamı (1:02 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PnKCGjXesEk Türk Telekom Bulut GÖZ'le iş yeriniz 7/24 güvende! (58 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tRSKOEJRhA4 Türk Telekom Bulut Ölçüm Reklamı (57 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5HXCg6MZ0D0 Türk Telekom - Mutluluk Evinizde, Tekno Tekir Sizlerle (1:03 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B2LPVEbq_T4 Kazandıran Kumbara, Tekno Kumbara! (1:03 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHOnhQvDyO8 Türk Telekom'dan Ev Telefonu Olanlara Hafta Sonu Konuşmak Bedava! (36 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BOv3bFdbp9M Tekno Kumbara'da herkese göre hediye var! (29 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3t4zFSNrhFY
Yumoş	16.4.2010 26.1.2012 17.1.2013 10.2.2014 27.9.2015 17.3.2017	Yumoş'un tren Yolculuğu (37 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/YumosTurkiye/videos/ Yumoş Extra Creations (22 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/YumosTurkiye/videos/vb.119110831437170/10150620632234245/?type=2&theater Yumoş Extra (15 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=58-O66PNpH4 Yumoş Deluxe - Muhteşem Kokular Serisi (33 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/YumosTurkiye/videos/788519567829623/ Facebook Post (Teddy Bear) Dostlarımla Yumoş Extra ferahlığını her yere dağıtmaya geldik. (16 sec.) https://www.facebook.com/YumosTurkiye/videos/1586150048066567/
VitrA	6.7.2015	V-care Şımartan Klozet (1:05 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dEAtmjFsxrw
Worldcard	13.8.2010 2010 2010 25.11.2011 25.11.2011	World - Ramazan Puan Kampanyası w/ Nilgün Belgün (32 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-4am2yAtQU Bonkör paket kampanyası w/ Kadir Çöpdemir (50 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zRarfhaQizU Milli Piyango w/ Zeki Alasya (39 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfCqKMYTi60 World - 20. yıl Puan Kampanyası w/ Eda Taşdemir (18 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFpr_S391V0 World - 20. yıl Kolaj Filmi (1:23 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iPSjM8hgoRQ&t=6s

	5.1.2013	Opet Worldcard w/ Ajda Pekkan (1:08) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zLELH_Jyk
	23.9.2013	World 22. Yıl İmaj Filmi – Şantiye (39 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4GLhqh5zoeA
	4.6.2014	Worldcard'ın yaz coşkusu! (33 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2aB8gmaF0Kg
	4.12.2015	Vadaa yılbaşında da bonkörlüğe devam ediyor!" (Mor Sakallı Vadaa) (1:01 min.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9VC3BIRZRQ
118 80	2011	118 80 Bilmiş 80 (24 sec.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCfavrkCCn8



APPENDIX C: IDENTIFICATION OF INFANTILIZING DESIGN PATTERNS AND TECHNIQUES IN ADVERTISEMENTS

Categories	Description – Explanations and Questions
<p>SIGNS, SYMBOLS & SEMIOTIC MECHANISMS</p>	<p>CORE QUESTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the key signifiers in the advertisement and what do they signify? 2. What are the denotative and connotative levels of meaning? 3. What are the communicating to the audience and why? <p>Which general features in advertisements suggest ideas of childhood by connotation or association? Which typical signs and symbols are used that are associated with childhood? What do they represent in the advertisements? Are there any hypertexts, mythical subtexts, tropes, parallels related to children’s culture? Does intertextuality exist? Are there any references to well-known features of children’s culture? How do brands make use of the associative power of features from children’s culture (e.g. cartoons, animated movies, video games, TV shows, etc.)? How can they be used to suggest things or ideas connected to childhood? What other postmodern conditions can be seen related to childhood in general and children’s culture (e.g. simulation, simulacra, pastiche, parody, etc.)? What are the qualities associated with the allusion (e.g. happiness, childlikeness, etc.)? How do these associations suit the purpose of the ad? What does the allusion, analogy, associations make the intended audience want to do?</p>
<p>PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS</p>	<p>Is the adult consumer directly/indirectly treated as a child? Are traits of childhood promoted (e.g. instant gratification and pleasure, playful images over sophisticated ideas)? Are there any appeals for regressive tendencies? Do the advertisement attempt to reach the inner child of adult consumers? How are features of childhood glorified and integrated in advertisements? Is there an attempt to make adults becoming-child again? How are nostalgia-based features embedded in advertisements, and how are nostalgic feelings engendered? Is there any process in the advertisement which is parentifying or pupilizing the adult? Are there neotenous features?</p>
<p>BRAND FEATURES</p>	<p><i>Features including product, packaging, logo, mascot, colors, slogan, design of online pages (homepage, social media presence, other digital activities).</i></p> <p><i>Product Category:</i> Is the product adult-oriented or child-oriented? <i>Product and Packaging:</i> Are products and their packaging emblazoned with child-like drawings for a youthful appeal? Are brands using a more infantile form of branding to draw in curious consumers with vibrant labels and intentionally immature graphics? <i>Logo and Slogan:</i> Are the logo and slogan designed childlike (e.g. rounded typeface, playful coloured letters?) <i>Mascots:</i> How is the mascot designed? (animal, creature, one-dimensional, animated, cartoonized, etc.) <i>Color:</i> Can the used colors serve as a means of expressing infantilization? May it have an infantilizing effect in branding? What is the relationship of color, psyche, and emotion that enables infantilization?</p>
<p>TARGET AUDIENCE</p>	<p><i>The target audience is the main group of people that advertisements are trying to reach and convince. A target audience can be people of a certain age group, gender, etc. The message of the advertisement is the central idea that the creators of an advertisement want the target audience to believe.</i></p> <p>Who is the intended audience? Who are the kinds of people to which the advertisement appeals (young, old, males, females, etc.)? Is a dual audience (children and adults at the same time) targeted? Or has the advertising message a dual impact? What is the purpose of the advertisement? What do companies want the audience to do?</p>

NARRATIVE STRUCTURE	<p><i>Narrative structure is about two things: the content of a story (the plot) and the form used to tell the story (storytelling).</i></p> <p>What themes can be found? What do the messages promise (happiness, success, etc.)? What happens in the advertisement (commercial, Facebook post, etc.)? What significance do the various actions and events have? How might the actions and events affect adult viewers and what meaning do they have for people? How is the storyline structured and what is its symbolic significance? Are there any infantile narratives?</p>
LANGUAGE & DIALOGUE	<p><i>Linguistic devices that are used to persuade viewers/readers to purchase the product or service. Everything what is said and can be read in the advertisement.</i></p> <p>Verbal: spoken word, written word, song lyrics What do the characters say to one another? What are they saying to adult consumers? What devices do they use to gain adults' attention or affection and to persuade them? What rhetorical techniques, such as metaphor or metonymy are used? What kind of language is used? Can the words used have an infantilizing effect?</p>
ACTORS, BRAND FACES & MASCOTS	<p><i>Characters acting in the advertisement in order to sell the product. These can be real people, such as celebrities or ordinary persons, and unreal persons or other animated figures such as fictional cartoon characters, talking animals and inanimate objects mostly being anthropomorphic (attribution of human traits, emotions, and intentions to non-human beings).</i></p> <p>What kind of symbolic figures are used as characters in the commercial? Might the adult consumer feel attracted to the featuring characters and empathize with them? What use do the performers make of facial expression, gestures, body language and their voices? Are these having an infantilizing effect? What about the clothes they wear? How old are they, and what significance do their ages have? What's interesting about the setting in which they are found? What do the actors do to sell the product? What are the actors like? Are they beautiful women, handsome men, ordinary citizen? Why were they chosen to sell the product? Are mascots used? How are they designed (neotenous, anthropomorphic, infantile, etc.)? Is there any celebrity endorsement or other testimonials (regular persons) talking about the good qualities of the promoted product?</p>
VISUALITY	<p><i>What the viewer sees (e.g., pictures, graphics, drawings, color, animation) in the advertisement that helps to promote the message and sell the product.</i></p> <p>What do images represent and how? What ideas and values do the people, places and things represented in images stand for? What are the "hidden meanings" of the images? What are the forms of visuality? Are there any infantile representations or childlike imagery? How are the shapes, sizes, forms, proportions, and colors? Do they have infantilizing features? How lighting, cutting and shot selection impact upon viewers? Does the commercial have many quick cuts in it? If so, what impact does this have? How are things lighted and what kind of use is made of color? How are cartoons, animations, childlike drawings and collages, special effects used?</p>
MUSIC & SOUND	<p><i>Features including music, jingle, sound effects, voices, chorus.</i></p> <p>Is there music used? If so, what kind and for what purposes? What kind of music takes a prominent role? Is the jingle, background music, etc. childlike? Are there any songs played we know from earlier times, from childhood years? What use is made of sound effects? How may it affect the adult consumer?</p>

CURRICULUM VITAE

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