

# **FROM OZANS TO GOD-MODES: CHEATING IN INTERACTIVE ENTERTAINMENT FROM DIFFERENT CULTURES**

**Tonguc Ibrahim Sezen**

**Istanbul University Faculty of Communications, Istanbul, Turkey**  
**tongucs@hotmail.com**

**Digdem Isikoglu**

**Istanbul University Faculty of Communications, Istanbul, Turkey**  
**digdem\_i@yahoo.com**

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## **Abstract**

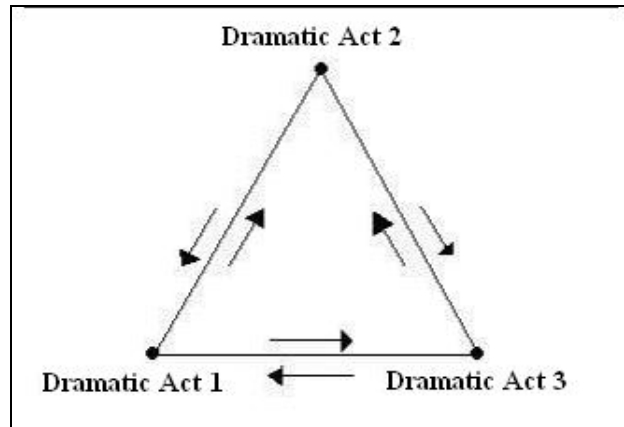
*This paper compares methods and objectives of cheating in low-tech and high-tech interactive entertainment, oral storytelling tradition and computer gaming. Oral story traditions are one of the oldest forms of interactive entertainment. The interaction between the audience and the story-teller is a limited form of interpersonal communication and is regulated by traditions or an interaction system called "open form". Historical records and recent anthropological research data shows that in the Middle East it's not uncommon for the audience and the storytellers (i.e. naqqals or ozans) to try to influence the interactive storytelling process (i.e. changing the fate of a story character) by external dynamics, such as gifts and money. As one of the newest interactive entertainment systems, computer games are based on an interaction between the player and game system regulated by rules. These rules can be broken by several types of computer-game cheating. It is interesting however to see the similarities of methods and objectives in these interactive systems from different centuries. Audiences and players are seeking the same kind control over the system which can lead to new experiences or destroy the system.*

## **1. "Open Form" - Audience Participation in Oral Tradition**

According to Walter Ong (2003, p: 58), in oral culture originality of a text bases on the interaction between the storyteller and his/her audience. In oral tradition the storyteller has to make the audience to participate to the narration to get an excited and emotional response. Therefore each new story session has to be different. The form of interaction and its effects on the re-shaping of the story can be various.

Umberto Eco's "open" and "mobile" artwork definitions are some of the earliest conceptualizations of "interactive" art. According to Eco an artwork after Einstein physics can no more be stable and solid as an artist's creation; in other words be closed. He suggests that artworks will be open to audience participation and influence, and therefore in the next phase become mobile. Mobile artworks consist of unfinished artistic pieces that the artist exposed to the audience and take their shape with interference of the receiver. In this process, it is aimed that the receiver participated to the text as interpreter. (Eco, 2001, p: 151) He gives examples of contemporary mobile artworks made by painters and sculptors like Munari and Calder and claims that the mobility can (or will) be occurred in the field of narration and gives the example of Mallarme's experimental (and unfinished) 19th century project "Grand Oeuvre" (The Grand Masterpiece) or "Le Livre" (The Book). In "Le Livre", the pages are not

supposed to be in any order; groups are formed with a permutation system. Separate fascicles should be ordered randomly; and each order supposes to be meaningful. Mobile and shifting sheets in fascicles enable every possible permutation.<sup>1</sup> (Eco, 2001, p: 22)



**Figure 1:** In this basic mobile model, organizing the sheets containing dramatic acts in any order should give a proper meaning.

In his “Geschlossene und offene Form im Drama”, Volker Klotz describes also an “open play” in which dramatic events are not bound with causality, and occur in a circular reasoning in multiple times and locations. (Ünlü, 2006, p: 40)

Based on the theories of Eco and Klotz, Metin And uses the term “open form” or “flexible form” to explain the interactive relation of the audience to the narrative text in Turkish theatre and storytelling traditions. There are several genres of oral storytelling and traditional theatre in Anatolia and generally in Middle East: Shadow plays or shadow puppetry, traditional street theatres, various forms of tale singers and storytellers and also dramatic village performances. All have both similar and different features, but most of them can be explained with “open form” structure in which the audience does not interact with the text directly but interacts with it through storytellers, actors or puppeteers.

Traditional Turkish theatre plays, shadow puppet and puppet theatres are structured basically in 4 acts: The prologue (öndeyiş), the converse (söyleşme), the chapter (fasıl) and the final (bitiş). These acts follow the same order in each play but their content and length can be changed. Some of these changes are planned by the actors/puppeteers before the play according to both their audience profile (funnier themes for children, erotic themes for male adults etc.) and to the time (i.e. during a religious festival) as well as place of the play (i.e. a big city or a little village).

The audience can also interact with the narrative text during the play. Here occurs an interpersonal interaction in emotional level which affects both the audience and the actors and also the narrative text. Emotional responses to the play (and the actor) such as applause or laughter of the audience are the key elements for interactive narration process. Metin And assumes that, ‘when supported by the audience with emotion waves, the actor or the puppeteer regains good humor, extends the conversation, adds

<sup>1</sup> A later experimental narrative project with a similar mobile model is the movie “Lan Yue” (1997) by director Ko Yi-Cheng.

support characters to the play and prepares a revel show with dancers and acrobats.’ (And, 1985, p: 422)

According to Özdemir Nutku, emotional interaction can also be seen in tale singers (Ozans) and storytellers (Meddahs): ‘[A tale singer or a storyteller] establishes a very close relationship with audience; he creates a new dimension in each performance through improvisation based on momentary reactions of the spectators.’ (Nutku, 1999, p: 64)

Ozans’ traditional story performance start with a musical section called “fasıl” followed by a playful formula called “döşeme”. Both these sections can be changed by Ozans according to wishes and responses of the audience. Traditional stories Ozans tell are combinations of verse and prose parts. Ozans are allowed to add side stories called “karavelli” to the main prose story arc without breaking the main dramatic structure. Yet in the Turkish tradition Ozans are not allowed to change the verse parts. According to Boratav (2002, p: 33) if the audience notices an Ozan changing the verse parts of the story; they protest and criticize him.

Based on the Shamanistic beliefs of death and resurrection circles, dramatic village performances are communal theatrical ceremonies in which some times a whole village can participate as both performers and audience.<sup>2</sup> (Özhan, 1999, p: 97) The order of the key events in the performance, like the death of the hero, is designated by traditions, but the text itself is not written and performance takes its shape through the interaction between the key-performers and the community. (Ünlü, 2006, p: 72)

Although it is a new narrative experience; the new narrative structure created through the “open form” interaction is actually not a new dramatic structure. It is an extended version of the original dramatic structure of the play or the tale. While the original story remains, additional side-stories are integrated into it. (And, 1985, p: 423)

“Open form” interaction can also be found in other Middle Eastern oral traditions. In “Naqqali” (dramatic story-telling) tradition in Iran; storytellers called “Naqqal”<sup>3</sup> use dramatic expressions such as acting, dialogue, singing and dramatic gestures to perform stories based on epic, historical or religious texts. One of the basic texts used by Naqqals is the Persian epic Shahname by Ferdowsi. ‘Each naqqali has a prompt book, a *tumar*, a compressed synopsis of the Shahname to help them remember the story. These are prose summaries of the story and tellers use them to weave their own variations, poems, songs and side stories into the plot.’ (Clayton, 2005) Although very similar to the Turkish “open form”, Naqqali tradition based on written texts may not always be interactive. Bolukbâsh (Cultural Tradition in Iran (n.d.)) divides the Naqqals in two groups, according to the manner of storytelling:

1) The Naqqals who read the stories from the books and then interpreted and expound them while sitting before the audience;

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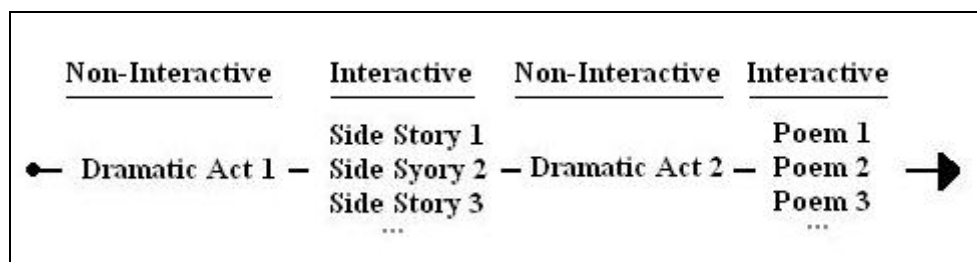
<sup>2</sup> Thus the dramatic village performances are not presented for an audience and the whole community participates to the “fictional play”, there are some similarities with role playing games and even with MMORPGs.

<sup>3</sup> “Naqqal” can be directly translated in English as “transmitter”, the one who transmits the tale. (Clayton, 2005)

2) Those who recount the stories by heart and their storytelling are dramatic, because it is performed together with this or that element of dramatic expression.

Yet even so, according to Clayton (2005) the written text is even today a product of performance:

‘In Persian culture there is a fluid relationship between written and oral modes of communication. Storytellers draw on written versions of Shahanname then recreate the text in performance, composing and improvising new poetic sections, which then get added back into the written text. So the text is in progress, constantly being remade by each teller, the storyteller preserving, transmitting, recomposing, and inventing the text in performance.’



**Figure 2:** “Open form” is a combination of interactive and non interactive story-telling.

In “Open form”, main dramatic structure of story-telling is always preserved by the story-teller. Additional songs, poetry, jokes or side stories are created by the emotional interaction during the process. We can say that “open form” is a combination of storyteller and audience interaction and non-interactive storytelling.

## 2. Cheating in Oral Tradition

As well as internal dynamics of the “open form”, external dynamics are parts of the oral storytelling tradition. These dynamics occur between the storyteller and the audience outside the dramatic-emotional interaction level and create a new level of interaction. Some of them are natural results of the storytelling process. But even so, these external dynamics are not part of the “official tradition” and can be seen as cheating.

In “The Book of One Thousand and One Nights”, in the main frame story, Scheherazade tells stories every night to her husband King Shahryar, stopping at dawn with a cliff hanger, thus the king postpones her execution in order to hear the rest of the tale. (Uysal, 2006, p: 29) Scheherazade slows down the story-experience for her own purpose. Binyazar (2003, p: 202) gives similar examples of female storytellers in Anatolia in 1940s: Some left the audience at cliff hanger points of their stories to go “to pee”; or some ask riddles at such points and wait until the right answer is given. The purpose here is to slow down the story-experience and create a secondary suspense besides the dramatic effect. Similar methods or traditions can have some unexpected results or can be used for some un-ethical purposes:

Naqqals tell their epic stories in 90 minute length sections, often one episode each day, the tales are left on a cliff hanger each time; normally it would take them 6

months to complete the Shahname. Sometimes the audience begs the naqqal to continue and offer gifts or money to him. (Clayton, 2005)

In Turkish tradition Ozans also tell their stories mostly in more than one night; and even in one night there are two or more sessions. The session after a break starts with a musical performance. During the performance the Ozan asks the audience where he has left the story. Traditionally the Ozan himself has to answer the question. If someone else gives the answer the Ozan stops playing and the one who gave the answer has to pay him to continue. It is also not uncommon for the Ozans to prolong the musical performance and force rich members of the audience to answer his question and pay for that. (Boratav, 2002, p: 33 - 34)

In the first example we see how the audience uses an external matter/dynamic to force the storyteller to continue the emotional – interaction and the dramatic experience.<sup>4</sup> It is a way for the audience to speed up the story-experience. In the second example the storyteller uses this will to gain money and breaks the interaction between himself and the audience. From the interactive-story structure perspective in the second example the storyteller does not respond to the audience's emotional-will to continue the story, until he receives an external factor from the audience. Although a part of the tradition these examples create a disturbance on the “open form” of the story.

Another and much powerful type of external dynamic affecting the oral storytelling tradition results not only changing the interactive parts of the “open form” but also creating a new dramatic structure and chain of events and also a new ending for the story.

As we have seen above, traditional storytellers make arrangements in their stories before their performances in respect of their audience profile, time and place. Yet sometimes regulating side stories may not be enough to please the audience, especially in tragic and sadly ending stories. Offering Naqqals gifts such as animals or money to keep a dying hero alive is a widespread behavior. (And, 1985, 223)

In Turkish tradition both offering gifts or money to the storyteller but also threaten his life to keep a hero alive is heard of. (And 1985, 1999, Boratav 2002, Ünlü 2006) One of the most notable examples for such actions is the general agreement of storytellers in Kars area in 1800s. According to Boratav (2002, p: 69) because of the tense relations with the audience, the storytellers in Kars decided with this agreement not to tell the sadly-endings of stories and instead create new happy-endings to avoid threats of the audience. Since then the stories in Kars area has happy-endings with the exception of “Kerem and Aslı” story, a sacred text for the storyteller tradition; which is told very seldom in the area.

A very interesting record in “Güldeste-i Riyaz-i İrfan” from 1616 shows how an external dynamic can destroy the whole storytelling process. According to this record

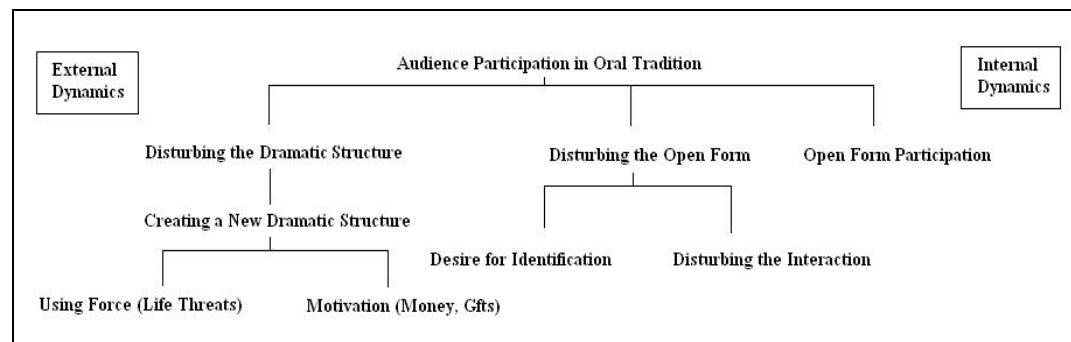
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<sup>4</sup> This kind of mental connection to the narrative text is a result of mental identification. This is also similar to the “immersion” process in computer games. An immersive computer game creates an environment for the player where she/he feels her/himself surrounded by it or in other worlds as a part of it. An immersive and interactive environment might create a deeper level of mental identification. Immersing in a game environment indicates to be engaged, not just physically, but also mentally and emotionally. It requires active participation of the player.

quoted by Boratav (2002, p: 68), during a story meeting in Bursa a group in the audience supports a hero while another groups supports the other one. The situation becomes so tense that the meeting ends with a fight. Metin And (1999, p: 36) quotes the same event with much more detail:

‘...when a Turkish Meddah by the name Hayri Ahmed Çelebi in 1616 in Bursa recounted the battle between the two sons of Hamza, Kasım and Badi’, from the cycle of the Hamzaname, the audience also divided into two rival factions, sometimes fighting among themselves. The storyteller Hayri Ahmed Çelebi himself taking the side of Kasım so offended another storyteller by name Saçakçı-zade who favored Badi’, that Saçakçı-zade stabbed Hayri Ahmed Çelebi to death.’

According to And (1999, p: 37) these extreme examples are results of the performance methods of the storytellers: Switching from conventional speech to chanting, moving arms and heads in sweeping gestures, whispering, shouting and screaming etc. But according to Ünlü (2006, p: 92) the main reason in such cases is not the illusion created during the performance, but the illusion of suspense in the story text itself, which creates identification with the story characters. In the first explanation, the performer is the main reason for the creation of the new dramatic structure, but in the second one the dramatic structure itself is the main reason for the will of a new and alternate conclusion for the text where forcing the limits of oral tradition can provide this conclusion.



**Figure 3:** Audience Participation types in Oral Tradition.

A non-interactive narrative text is closed to the participation of the audience. In the oral storytelling tradition the “open form” provides a limited interaction in the emotional-level; which is an internal dynamic of the process. External dynamics in the oral tradition can be separated into two groups; the ones which disturb the “open form” and the ones which disturb the dramatic structure and create a new one. In these cases either storyteller or audience has the will to force or break the rules of the oral tradition.

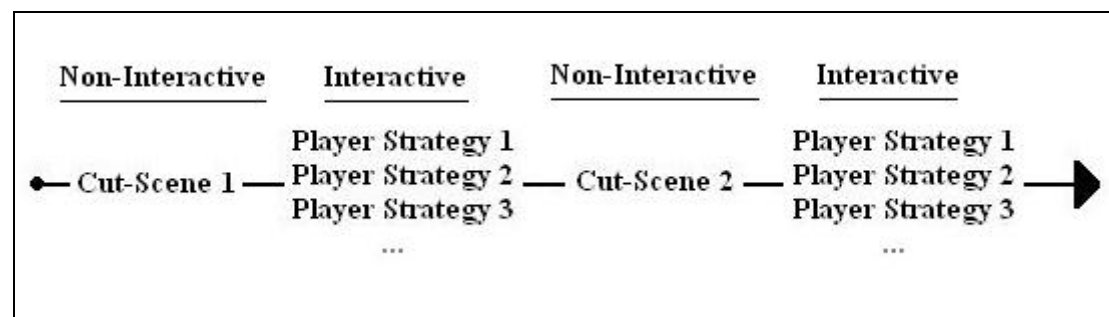
### 3. Rules and Fiction in Computer Games

Computer games as designed interactive worlds have a relation similar to the one between the storyteller and the audience in oral tradition, to the game player from the perspective of internal and external dynamics. Game mechanics and interactive interfaces create internal dynamics for game player to interact with. In addition to this

the concept of gaming is important for understanding the definition of internal and external dynamics in computer games.

Jesper Juul (2005, p: 12) describes computer games as both rules and fiction; a definition which can be similar to the oral storytelling: “open form” traditions and fiction. Besides the enormous technical differences, the key difference is the balance of tradition/rule and fiction in these interactive entertainment forms.

Rouse (2001, p: 216) divides the story structure of a computer game into two segments; “designers’ story” and the “players’ story”. Designers’ story defines a linear story around the playable parts of a computer game; mostly told in cut-scenes. Designers’ story is very similar to the unchangeable dramatic structure in “open form”. “Players’ story” on the other hand means the interactive action sequences in a game. In these sections the player interacts with the game-world using different tactics; items etc. and resultantly experiences each time a different series of event.



**Figure 4:** “Designers’ - players’ story” model is very similar to the “open form” model.

As the “players’ story” the dramatic interaction sections in oral storytelling traditions are parts of the interactive process. We use the term “interactive” from the perspective of communication studies here. Interaction refers to two equal and mutually active sides of the communication. Namely, in oral storytelling the audience and the storyteller are equal sides; therefore their dramatic affection from each other and the change in the story-world is a natural and internal outcome of the process.

Caillois’ (1961, p: 6 - 7) definition of playing can help to understand the interaction in oral storytelling and the concept of internal dynamics better. ‘The activity of playing takes place usually within the boundaries between specific time and place: playing starts with a signal and ends with one. In an ideal situation, events outside the playing field do not affect the playing.’ Like the activity of playing, oral storytelling takes place within the boundaries between specific time and place; and normally only the emotional interaction during the process affects both sides and the story.

In “Homo Ludens” Huizinga (1995, p: 48) describes game as a voluntary action which is dependent on both temporal and spatial limitations as well as willingly accepted rules (game mechanics). In Juul’s “rules and fiction” dual structure ‘Rules describe what players can and cannot do, and what should happen in response to player actions.’ (Juul, 2005, p: 56)

Rules are the internal dynamics of a game and create order in a game world and disturbing the rules is often described as destructive. ‘There is a peculiar and absolute

order in the game world. Game creates a system; it is a system by itself. It creates a temporary and limited perfection within the complexity of real world. It requires an absolute system. Even a small-scale violation of this system ruins the game, destructs its whole quality.’ (Huizinga, 1995, p: 27) Huizinga (1995, p: 28-29) quotes from Paul Valéry; ‘...no scepticism is possible where the rules of a game are concerned... indeed, as soon as the rules are transgressed, the whole play-world collapses.’

#### **4. Cheating in Computer Games**

Although game world is a closed structure where the game mechanics define the interaction processes, it is not uncommon for the players to break these rules or “cheat”. Computer game cheating is defined by Yan and Choi (2002) as; ‘Any behavior that a player may use to get an unfair advantage, or achieve a target that he is not suppose to is cheating.’ Kuecklich (2004, p: 2) emphasizes the connection between rules and cheats and says that most cheats ‘...give the player an advantage that the rules of the game do not allow for.’ There are various definitions and perceptions of cheating in digital games. But we can still distinguish what cheating is, using Consalvo’s (Bedigian, n.a.) easy but effective definition: ‘Cheating is like porn – hard to define but we know when we see it.’

Technically there are three main types of cheating. The first group; “cheat codes” are actually semi-official codes created by the designers and hidden in the game-code. It gives extra skills to the player which are actually not part of the official game-mechanics itself. The second group is the strategy guides and walkthroughs. These are written by players, game critics or by the design company itself to suggest easy paths to the players. Strategy guides and walkthroughs can be found on the Internet or are published and sold as books. The third type of cheating is hacking the game software. This can be done either by changing the game code itself or writing additional software. A forth type can be using the holes in the game mechanics or interfaces to cheat.

There are different levels of cheating for computer game players. While some players see the cheating techniques listed above acceptable and even positive, for some they are firmly unacceptable and negative. Consalvo (2005, p: 2 - 3) presents three different perspectives on the perception of cheating by gamers:

- “Purist” Perspective: Purists see anything else than a solo effort is cheating. ‘This group sees strategy guides, walkthroughs, cheat codes and hacking as all being cheating.’
- “Code is Law” Perspective: ‘This second group doesn’t see the use of items like walkthroughs and guides as cheating, but they draw the line at cheat codes and hacking codes. Here also people accept the possibility of cheating in single-player games, where the manipulation of code for its own sake can be enough to draw the line.’
- “You can only cheat another player” Perspective: ‘The third group defines cheating as only existing in relation to another player. For this group, code is also the key to cheating, but it is not the mere use of code, but its use for the purpose of deceiving others.’



For the “Purists” perspective every external influence towards the game is cheating. “Code is Law” perspective on the other hand is rather a technical criterion as “You can only cheat another player” perspective is a social one.

Julian Kuecklich (2004, p: 2 - 3) classifies cheats in digital games in three different categories. These are platform, game mode and genre. Platform refers to the hardware such as PC, console and arcade games. For example, PC games allow access to the game files (which allows hacking); on the other hand console and arcade games do not offer this kind of an access. Second term, game mode indicates the differences between single-player games, “closed” multiplayer games and “open” multiplayer games. The major difference between game modes is that while cheating in single-player games affects only the person playing the game, in multiplayer games it causes a huge conflict. Kuecklich’s third category is genre. Computer game genres can be explained as a triangular matrix, according to their levels of narrativity, interactivity and openness. In this model, interactivity refers to the frequency of the players’ physical interaction with the game. Openness indicates the range of actions the players can choose from. According to this triangular matrix Kuecklich presents three genre-specific cheats; these are cheats that speed up narrative progression, cheats that increase the player’s frequency of interaction and cheats that enhance the possibilities of the player’s options.

The first two of Kuecklich’s classifications are like Consalvos’ perspectives have technical and social bases. The third classification where the “genre” refers much more on the game play dynamics.

The effects of cheating on gameplay can be listed as “invulnerability” which makes the player character invulnerable to damage, invisibility which makes the enemies not to see the player character, “flying” which makes the player character pass through walls or objects, “infinite resources” which gives the player an infinite amount of some resources, “unlocking items and characters” which unlocks hidden items or unused content in the game, there are some cheats give the player addition to weapons or inventory items. As a common way of cheating walkthroughs are according to Neitzel (2005, p: 234) like ‘...a recipe for creating the ideal story, in other words, an instruction for actions.’

Various perceptions of cheating differentiate the approaches on it. There are varied interpretations which present the cheats as both a contribution to game experience and a sabotage for fun acquired through game play. In other words both positive and negative aspects of cheating can be found.

When the player gets stuck in a game, cheats allow him to continue the game. In this situation, the players make an instrumental move to keep game play. For instance, with the help of walkthroughs the player can pass the phase which causes him to quit and after that he/she can continue to play. This move may not cover the whole, but the level which the player cannot figure out how to pass. (Consalvo, 2005, p: 4) Therefore, it is relatively acceptable.

Cheating is a way to slip out from limitations of the game world and creates a new experience. Kuecklich (2004, p: 2) claims that cheats seem to have only one thing in

common: they change the way players experience the game. Cheating is not destructive all the time. It builds new experience opportunities. Consalvo (2005, p: 7) sees cheating not as a subversive concept; it's a way for players to keep playing through boredom and infertile scenarios.

Cheats increase re-playability of a game. (Bedigian, n.d.) Cheat codes allow people to play in multiple ways. Different cheat codes draw new ways to follow. Each path provides a new experience. Trying different opportunities brings re-playability of the game product. According to Juul (2005, p: 199), '...the proliferation of semi-official cheat codes has made it possible for players to bend the rules of video games to accommodate their own wishes.'

Cheats allow the player to just walk around and observe the game universe. Some people, -especially fans- don't want to beat the game, but they just want to walk around (Bedigian, n.d.) and watch the design elements such as ship models, costumes of game characters, weapon types or experiencing the atmosphere of the game.

Cheats play a significant role on creation of a network through web-forums, game magazines and online walkthroughs etc. Cheats are a part of game genres. A game includes a set of generic cheats which give an idea about the genre of the game. Sharing the information on games brings people together and creates a network.

These aspects on cheating are focused much more on player – game interaction; where cheating as an external force creates an addition to the internal game mechanics and therefore expands the game experience. In contrary to these, there is a set of negative aspects on cheating in computer games.

Aporia-epiphany conceptions are important issues in game play. Aporia means being stuck in a phase of an adventure game or a hypertext narrative, not able to advance any further and epiphany is the feeling of glory when someone finds the way to proceed in an adventure game or labyrinth-like hypertext. (Aarseth, 1997, p: 33) Using cheats to overcome an obstacle in a game makes the player feel himself/herself less successful and make his/her winning moment worthless.

Playing in special modes-such as God mode- prevents the pleasure derived from game play. One of the basic components of game concept is risk, i.e. the possibility of losing. However in God mode for example, there is no way to lose. Consequently, fun does not advance through win or lose options; this destructs the wining desire as a definitive concept of game play.

To discover hidden moves out of the game concept stops the continuity of the game and encourages the player to leave the game flow. In some genres, hidden moves are traditional. On the other hand, designers need to develop ways to keep players to discover the hidden moves within the context of the game. Although it is a possibility for designers to supply the information about secret moves on web sites, in other publications, it is still not the best method, due to breaking the continuity of the game and makes the player to leave the game flow. However, designers' primary concern is to keep players in the game as long as possible. Also, it is possible that they can't find the information they searched, causing a blockage to game play. (Ray, 2004, p: 12)

Especially in MMORPGs, if someone cheats, it affects the others: Many academicians and gamers think that cheating in single player games is not a big deal, because you play against computer, not against other humans. Because in MMORPG universe all the goods have a value both in game world and in real world and creating a character take a great deal of time. Items, superior characters are sold even in eBay. Due to both its economical background and time that is spent, cheating in MMORPGs cannot be tolerated. This situation is also closely related to the game industry. If cheats in a game becomes a problem for its gamers, it becomes a problem for its developers and publishers too: The growth in the number of cheaters in a game, people may choose to quit and leave the game. They don't pay their subscription fees, they don't buy additional products. Consequently, the brand loses value and the company loses money. (Zetterström, 2005, p: 11)

Negative aspects on cheating can be considered as a disturbance of internal mechanics and resultantly the game experience. Either used by players or encouraged by designer an overuse of cheats ends with an unpleasant game-experience. Using cheat codes in a multi-player game is a reflection of real life cheating and therefore is unacceptable for both players and designers.

<b>Positive Aspects</b>	<b>Negative Aspects</b>
Cheating is a way to slip out from limitations of the game world and creates a new experience.	Playing in special modes-such as God mode- prevents the pleasure derived from game play.
When the player get stuck in a game, cheats allows her continue the game.	Cheats make you lose your epiphany.
Cheats increase re-playability of the game.	To discover hidden moves out of the game concept breaks the continuity of the game and encourages the player to continually leave the game flow.
Cheats are parts of the important motivations for creation of a game-network through web-forums.	Especially in MMORPGs, if someone cheats, it affects the others.
Cheats allow the player to just walk around and observe the game universe.	If cheats in a game becomes a problem for its gamers, it becomes a problem for its developers and publishers.

**Table 1:** Positive and negative aspects of computer game cheating.

Although in MMORPGs and other multi player virtual worlds cheating is considered unacceptable, using one other external dynamic is accepted by some players and designers: Money.

Virtual worlds are simulations of an environment created by a computer or a network of computers. Users connect them through the Internet and the entities in this virtual world act under the control of individuals. The most popular virtual worlds are settings of massively multiplayer online role playing games and thousands of people can participate into the environment simultaneously. This virtual environment continues to exist and develop internally even the users log off. This makes them persistent.

In these persistent MMORPG worlds, in addition to the game developers and game world operators who fulfil players' needs offering them variety and new interests, there is a secondary market which allows players to acquire advantages through "virtual assets".

Vili Lehdonvirta (2005) divides "virtual assets" into four categories as currency, personal property, realty and avatar attributes. Most of virtual worlds have their own internal currency such as "gold pieces" in Ultima Online, "platinum pieces in EverQuest" or "Linden dollars" in Secondlife. Virtual currency has the same functions as in real world. Another asset personal property or virtual items includes weapons, armors, costumes, furniture and other transferable properties that an avatar can possess. These items can ease the player to achieve the objectives of the game. The third virtual asset category is realty. In some of the games the player can have a building or a land which also has a value like in real world. The last virtual asset is avatar attributes. Skills for an avatar are acquired through beating foes, overcoming conflicts etc. Therefore the players cannot exchange the assets partially. They should transfer the whole account including all the avatar skills and its possessions.

An experienced player can sell these "virtual assets" she/he has earned in the game on real-money markets such as e-Bay. So called "Gold Farming" is mostly considered as a form of cheating. But some companies like Linden Labs (Second Life) allows through their own transaction system trading of virtual items for real money, or sell higher avatars for starters. In these cases a "real life rich" player can easily have an experienced avatar. This new economy is a totally external dynamic to the game play which assembles real economics and social classes into the virtual world!

## **5. Comparison and Conclusion**

Both oral story tradition and computer games provide an interactive system. In oral tradition the "open form" creates an interaction between the storyteller and the audience. In computer games the player interacts with the game through rule systems or game mechanic and interfaces. In multi player games there is also an interaction between the players themselves. The interaction process operates through internal dynamics. In oral tradition the storytellers' preparations and the emotional interaction form the story. In computer games the internal dynamics are determined by rules; rules determine what the player can do and how the game will respond.

External dynamics are attempts influencing the interactive systems from beyond the limits of their interaction models. Gifts and threats or different kinds of cheating for various reasons are such attempts.

Losing the epiphany and coming back into the game through cheating are opposite approaches towards the same aspect of cheating; speeding up the narrative. This aspect is similar to giving a Naqqal gifts to continue his story. But although the affect on is similar, using a cheat code or walkthrough is manipulating the internal dynamics of the game, however giving gifts intends to speed up the narrative without manipulating the open-form.

The opposite of Naqqals situation, Ozans slowing down the narrative to get gifts is on the other hand similar to the conception of breaking the continuity of the game. Like the designer encouraging the use of cheat codes here the Ozan indirectly forces the audience to give him gifts or money. In fact in this situation the Ozan is the one who cheats.

Manipulating the story-teller by gifts or threats is both a positive and negative way of approaching an interactive system. It creates a new narrative experience beyond the limits of the “open-form”, where the interaction is limited to the level of side stories, and gives the audience the unique opportunity to be a part of creating a new dramatic arc. Yet, especially using threats is a compelling action towards the story-teller and destroys the interaction by forcing one side. Also it destroys the dramatic effects of the original story. A similar duality can be found in using cheats; they can create a new experience or prevents the pleasure derived from game play.

A clear act of cheating both in oral tradition and computer games is cheating against other individuals or groups. Both, fighting groups supporting different heroes, and cheaters in multi-player games have destructive effects on the interactive system. Like the real world, a cheat against an individual or group is not accepted in virtual societies. This can be the reason for having no records of cheat like behaviors in dramatic village performances; which are very similar as communal theatrical experiences to MMORPGs.

There are two issues which might create confusion. The first one is the sale of “virtual assets”. This is similar to cheating against individuals or groups but is accepted by some communities. It assembles real economics and social classes in to the virtual world. If it is reflected to the oral tradition; this is the difference between rich and poor storytellers or individuals in the audience. The other one is the use of cheats for observing the game universe. This stops the game play and turns the game world into a design object. A player using cheats for this purpose has the same motivations with the above mentioned researchers of oral tradition who studies the structure of oral storytelling and also the designs of the equipment the storytellers use. The player is no more a participant of the game but stays in the virtual game universe to observe it.

<b>Oral Tradition</b>	<b>Computer Games</b>
In oral tradition the “open form” creates an interaction between storyteller and audience.	In computer games player interacts with the game through rule systems or game mechanic and interfaces.
Gifts and threats.	Different kinds of cheating.
Speed up the narrative.	Speed up the gameplay and the narrative.
A unique opportunity to be a part of creating a new dramatic arc.	Using cheats can create a new experience.
Destroys the dramatic effects of the original story.	Using cheats can prevent the pleasure derived from gameplay.
Fighting groups supporting different heroes have destructive effects on storytelling.	Cheaters in multi-player games have destructive effects on the gameplay.

**Table 2:** Cheating in oral tradition and computer games.

To sum up, while the oral story telling traditions are one of the oldest and computer games one of the newest examples of interactive entertainment, both cases show similar external manipulation attempts towards their systems. Although the ways of manipulation are entirely different, the desired results are very similar. Such similarities might help comparing and remixing historical forms of cultural expression with contemporary media practices and using the traditional media as a source for future media concepts.

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