CINEPHILIA AND ARCHIVE: THE CASE OF KARAGARGA

A Master's Thesis

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I certify that I have read this thesis and in my opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies.

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ABSTRACT

CINEPHLIA AND ARCHIVE:
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KaraGarga as an online cinephilic community and an archive offers an experience of a film library. This study aims at gaining an understanding of recent cinephilia, archive debates in the digital age by looking at KaraGarga as a case study.

Keywords: cinephilia, archive, KaraGarga, digital, online communities.

ÖZET

SİNEFİLLİK VE ARŞİV:
KARAGARGA ÖRNEĞİ

Celal Yağcı

Yüksek Lisans, İletişim ve Tasarım Bölümü
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Bir online sinefil topluluğu ve arşiv olan KaraGarga bir film kütüphanesi deneyimi sunmaktadır. Bu çalışma KaraGarga'ya bakarak dijital çağdaki sinefillik ve arşiv tartışmaları üzerine bir kavrayış kazanmayı hedeflemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: sinefillik, arşiv, KaraGarga, dijital, online topluluklar

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Online file-sharing communities came to existence over the last decade with the emergence of the bittorrent and other file-sharing soft-wares. Film distribution and consuming film has changed with new technologies and the Internet and the digital age have opened new opportunities for understanding of cinema and gathering people in the realm of the cyberspace. KaraGarga is one of the most prominent of these file sharing communities as it is qualified in non-mainstream cinema. It was founded in 2005 and up to this day developing its archive for its users but also stands for many possibilities for cinema as it keeps the memory of non-mainstream cinema. Cinephilia creates a common ground but KaraGarga redefines the archive with the democratization of file-sharing soft-wares but also sophistication for the understanding of the archive. KaraGarga is not solely an archive but a place for cinephiles to share knowledge and artistic

productions by using file-sharing or on the forums. As we are in the age of new cinephilia, KaraGarga is one of the few communities that extend to the idea of creating a library for cinephiles or archivists but overruns the idea of memory as it is the most significant differences between classical and new cinephilia.

The aim of this thesis is an attempt to explore the questions of cinephilia and the archive in terms of how they come to importance in the light of KaraGarga and in the age of digital reproduction. To be more specific, this study concentrates on how cinephilia and archive is the foundation of KaraGarga and particularly how they reflect on each other. There are many theoretical frameworks on both cinephilia and archive and beyond that the arguments which are revolved around the impact of the Internet and the digital age are in focus.

To answer the question, why study KaraGarga, there is a need to conceptualize and understand cinephilia and archive together. Because these two terms are the foundations for this particular example, it also raises the attention to conjuncture or dis-conjuncture of the integration of such a system. Also, KaraGarga can be considered as a melting pot for both concepts. Moreover, the website welcomes all who are willing to share knowledge and new films as well as any other kind of contribution as participation is one of the most important rules for the community.

On the other hand, this study aims to understand this particular online community in terms of its integral features as it is a complex system which requires a participatory culture in an economic sense. Along with being a community for cinephiles and archivists, KaraGarga requires an attention for its users as people need to follow certain rules to be habited. Also, users can contribute in more productive ways like creating subtitles for films that are not possible to watch if a user does not speak those languages.

In the first chapter, titles "Classical Cinephilia and New Cinephilia", the theoretical and historical framework of cinephilia is sketched out according to the ideas based on the difference between the classical and new cinephilia. As new cinephilia suggests new ways of looking to the question of new cinephilia, there is also the emergence of online participation and a kind of online cinephilia after the decay of cinema and therefore cinephilia as Susan Sontag suggests. These new breed of online communities or online "cinematheques" as suggested, offers a break out from the classical love for cinema and creates a notion of memory through the participation and collaboration. Also, the correlation between cinephilia and the new media is analyzed according the concepts of network societies and media convergence.

In the second chapter, "Archive and Digital", the concept of the archive is analyzed with the theoretical frameworks of Michel Foucault and Jacques

Derrida on the matter. For Foucault and Derrida, the archive is a philosophical concept that produces meaning and a core to institutionalization in the modern age. However, their ideas are fruitful to understand the archivization in the digital age and to look at KaraGarga as an archive. Digital archive on the other hand is an issue that struggle scholars in terms of how to handle the question. As there are both practical and theoretical sides to the question, digital archiving also serves for the memory for societies. KaraGarga offers a practical examination of the archive as it serves as a film library but in a participatory culture it becomes an important institution as there are fewer archives and people do not look at this problem in terms of practice.

The third chapter explores the question on what is KaraGarga and tries to illuminate the economics of KaraGarga with the theory of Marcel Mauss' gift economy as it has resemblance to his ideas. Although gift economy is based on archaic societies, many of the features correspond to online communities as it is based on the ratio system and it requires a certain participation and collaboration. Moreover, as many other file-sharing communities use, the economy of KaraGarga is examined.

Also, in the third chapter, special attention is paid to subtitling and how it is helpful to the contribution for users of KaraGarga as they help to experience rare films for those who do not speak the languages. Also the KaraGarga

manifesto comes out as the set of rules for the website and how it functions is discussed with the light of interviews with 'stefflbw' and 'damascus' from KaraGarga. Furthermore, the relation between KaraGarga and digital reproduction is examined in terms of how KaraGarga can state itself in the digital age and how it fills the gap between physical and the digital.

The fourth and the final chapter of the thesis, titled "Features of KaraGarga", looks at the particular implements, which are some of the characteristics of the website. As there are not very specific details on users about their profiles, we cannot obtain certain statistics but it is not very important as people would prefer to remain anonymous. On the other hand, Master of the Month is one of the most characteristic features of KaraGarga as it offers an experience of a film festival every month. Also, the case of 'fitz' is a very important example on the characteristics of the users as well as how to look at cinephilia in the light of KaraGarga.

CHAPTER 2

CLASSICAL CINEPHILIA AND NEW CINEPHILIA

> "…when you don't love life, or when life doesn't give you satisfaction, you go to the movies."
>
> -François Truffaut

Love for cinema is defined by the term cinephilia. This love can be attributed to many people, but cinephiles' passion extends beyond entertainment and they look for more. The extension beyond passion is mostly determined by aesthetic taste, consuming film related material and looking for more like reading about cinema and what is underestimated about cinema like film criticism, film extras or any related material. This approach did not change with the coming of digital era, but new forms give a fresh look on the concept.

2.1. Classical Cinephilia

"What was cinephilia? It was a particular way of loving movies: eclectic, voracious, attuned to the importance of film as a force in everyday life, impassioned, if a little sentimental, undiscriminating in its pursuit of a new movie high—a form of addiction that hoped never to be sated" (Morrison, 2012, p. 11). Cinephilia as a term has been portrayed as a grand passion for cinema and an overwhelming activity. Morrison's explanation attempts to posit cinephilia is a radical passion for cinema. It is not a casual entertainment or an academic pursue, but rather offers a profound interest with film related material. Many argue that cinephilia is a form of religious and spiritual act. Thomas Elsaesser in his book chapter titled "Cinephilia: Or the Uses of Disenchantment" describes cinephilia in the 1960's:

> Cinephilia meant being sensitive to one's surroundings when watching a movie, carefully picking the place where to sit, fully alert to the quasi-sacral feeling of nervous anticipation that could descend upon a public space, however squalid, smelly or slipshod, as the velvet curtain rose and the studio logo with its fanfares filled the space (p. 64).

The idea behind cinephilia as a marking for a ritual act derived from cinema and its cult hiatus. Cinephilia emerged as a passion but identified itself through many differences. What Elsaesser tries to define by disenchantment

is debated from the beginnings of cinephilia. These debates also paved the way to discuss film as an art form through how film is held with film criticism and theory after the Second World War. This perspective with the emergence of cinephilia and film related debates such as film theory, classical French cinephilia in the 1950s "continued this discussion not only on a highly specialized, but on a broader, film critical basis and applied its arguments to very different kinds of films" (Arenas, 2012, p. 22).

However, the emergence of cinephilia dates back before 1945. The avant-garde movement and intellectual circles in Europe during 1920's, by seeing cinema as a potential creative form and as the most modern of art forms, started to establish cine-clubs, film journals and rite about film theory. This emergence of first wave of cinephilia was stopped around 1930, and reemerged after the Second World War, the second-wave then reached its peak in the 1950s with the increase of film publications, the idea of authorship (auteur theory) and most importantly the film journal Cahiers du Cinéma (Keathley, 2006, 5).

The period between late 1940s and 1960s is a period that cinephilia was heavily discussed. When outlining history of cinephilia, Christian Keathley (2006) argues Henri Langlois as a figure very important for French cinephilia, helped to acknowledge cinema as a political source as well as an aesthetic one (p. 26). Langlois was a key figure as he organized to establish French

Cinémathèque and was very influential on the magazine Cahiers du cinema. Right after he was dismissed from the Cinémathèque, there were many protests from filmmakers around the world. This event occurred right before the protests of May 1968 and although Langlois was back in charge, cinephiles became politicized. Keathley (2006) states:

> In the years immediately following 1968, film scholarship in many important quarters (including *Cahiers du Cinéma*) committed itself to a decidedly anticinephilic position. Focusing on ideology rather than aesthetics, film scholars of the period worked to show the ways in which film grammar and even the cinematic apparatus are determined by dominant class and gender interests, and that the pleasure that results in the cinematic experience is itself a product of those oppressive forces (p. 27).

Politics and filmmaking became a kind of rationalization for cinephilia according to many film scholars. Especially the French New Wave (Nouvelle Vague) became influential for political cinema and cinephiles such as Jean-Luc Godard and François Truffaut started to "make films politically" influenced by May 68 protests, Vietnam and Algerian War and many other political events (Hagener, 2014, p. 74). Nouvelle Vague, as Hagener argues, still influences film culture and our understanding of categorization of the film and its creators is a conception "a conception heavily indebted to the *politique des auteurs* developed and popularized within the pages of *Cahiers du cinéma*" (p. 74)

This decay from pure passion for cinema evolved into elaborating ideas through everyday life and political ideas. Jim Hillier (1986) notes: "Manifestly, however, as the call in Cahiers for anew, politicized, anti-illusionist, materialist cinema becomes more strident and more urgent, Bazin's aesthetic of realism becomes an aesthetic less to elaborate and extend than, ever productive, an aesthetic to challenge and reject" (p. 32). Although many filmmakers from Hollywood acquired more attention, there were many arguments on cinephilia and making films politically so that conservative perspectives on aesthetics and art changed into a more political attitude towards cinema.

Film theory is still shaped around these ideas that are brought by critical theory, sociology, psychoanalysis and other theories as well. Video technologies (VCRs, DVDs, etc.) clearly helped cinephiles to acquire expand their love for cinema. These opportunities helped to screen classical films or foreign films that were not possible to find or obtain. Moreover, cinephiles could make time for themselves and cinephilia could be taken to another level for Jenna Ng (2010) as there were more opportunities for cinephiles and escape the reality of everyday life and cinephiles could "escape to the university's fortuitously well-stocked video library; time to find an undisturbed two-hour slot in the middle of the night at the end of a fourteen-

hour corporate job; time to pause, to fast-forward, to rewind; time to replay, and replay yet again" (p. 150).

2.2 New Cinephilia

New cinephilia was born in terms of a transformation of film experience as film theaters moved to private rooms and private space became the symbol of this kind of experience. Susan Sontag (1996) famously declared the extinction of cinema and cinephilia in her essay "The Decay of Cinema" and noted that: "For cinephiles, the movies encapsulated everything. Cinema was both the book of art and the book of life" (p. 60). For Sontag the resurrection of cinema is only based on "the birth of a new kind of cine-love" (p. 65). However, cinema was dead for over a decade before Sontag wrote her famous essay. Peter Greenaway in his lecture on the re-invention of cinema declares that cinema died on 31st September 1983 when the remote controller was introduced to the world. According to many scholars, cinephilia was referred to in terms of filmic experiences in theatres and filmic experiences in private space decayed the 'aura' of true cinema.

For Sontag the decay of cinema and cinephilia was based on the industrialization of the films and as cinema was seen the most vaunted art form in the 20th century. However she states: "Cinephilia has no role in the

era of hyperindustrial films. For cinephilia cannot help, by the very range and eclecticism of its passions, from sponsoring the idea of the film as, first of all, a poetic object; and cannot help from inciting those outside the movie industry, like painters and writers, to want to make films, too. It is precisely this notion that has been defeated" (p. 65). This notion of Sontag seems particularly critical based on the fact that cinema as become highly industrialized and for Sontag cinephilia is only seen as a mere joy of old cinema even there are new masterpieces occasionally.

Although Sontag's ideas were "framed by nostalgia", cinephiles were ready to surrender new possibilities and technologies and insisted the "fleeting nature of a film's experience" (Elsaesser, 2012, p. 63). As Thomas Elsaesser takes us on excursion on the history of cinephilia, he discusses various elements of how classical cinephilia and new cinephilia differs in the guide of technology and circulation. Elsaesser (2012) states:

> The new cinephilia of the download, the file swap, the sampling, re-editing and re-mounting of story line, characters, and genre gives a new twist to that anxious love of loss and plenitude, if we can permit ourselves to consider it for a moment outside the parameters of copyright and fair use. Technology now allows the cinephile to re-create in and through the textual manipulations, but also through the choice of media and storage formats that sense of the unique, that sense of place, occasion, and moment so essential to all forms of cinephilia, even as it is caught in the compulsion to repeat, and its place is cyberspace (p. 72).

While Elsaesser discusses the perplexity and ambiguity of how new technologies may affect cinephilia in a sense that preservation and re-presentation is vital for the fragmentation, our understanding of cinema is defined by technology itself. He goes on by discussion that cinephilia in a classical sense is now "competes with the love that never dies, where cinephilia feeds on nostalgia and repetition, is revived by fandom and cult classics, and demands the video copy and now the DVD or the download" (p. 72). Elsaesser's arguments are very clear in a sense that the new cinephilia is described by the technology itself, so that the archive on the Internet both causes a sense of freedom and bliss but also may cause rapture if it is broken. Moreover, our understanding of cinema is related to the technologies that help cinephiles to acquire more in terms of filmic experience and as an intellectual appreciation.

Theodor Adorno's (2001) standpoint comes from Walter Benjamin and the ideas of Frankfurt School but his discussion becomes a critique of control on the mass media in a sense that reproduction derives from a sense of domination. He notes that: "The consumers are made to remain what they are: consumers. That is why the culture industry is not the art of the consumer but rather the projection of the will of those in control onto their victims" (p. 185). This statement clearly shows that there is a sense of control over the cultural reproduction. However when we connect this idea to KaraGarga, here this online community expresses itself on the idea of

creating an archive on the basis of self-reproduction (private collections) and as a form of expression into the very idea of domination and control over cultural productions.

Although new cinephilia allows us to reflect on cultural reproductions excessively, cinephilia stands alone to be an activity produced in a way that transcends filmic experience. Adrian Martin (2009) brings out a critique for the definition and characteristics of cinephilia that can be read as an understanding of how modern cinephilia emerges from the Internet and differs from the classical cinephilia. He states that: "I do not believe, for instance, that cinephilia is essentially a solitary activity, a melancholic activity, a Christian activity, or a surrealist activity. I don't believe that it necessarily equates with either left or right politics, or a total lack of politics either. I don't believe cinephilia proceeds in tidy generational waves" (p. 222). Although he looks at the issue in a more personal way, dimensions of practicing cinephilia became more and more based on the Internet and it is affected by perplexing amount of information and reproductions online. However if we look at Deleuze (1989) and put his ideas in the context of cinephilia, it becomes a practice rather than dealing with theories and cinephilia should be constructed on these "practices of images and signs as cinema itself should be" (p. 280).

On the other hand, looking at contemporary cinephilia allows our perception to comprehend the issues in a more varied ways. Marijke de Valck and MalteHagener's introductory chapter looks at how cinephilia is perceived in film studies and more generally through discourses. Valck and Hagener (2005) state that: "Arguably the most eye-catching characteristic of contemporary cinephilia is its cultural-aesthetic fusions of time and space, its radically different way of employing the historical signifier" (p. 15). They argue that cinephilia does not only engage with the filmic experiences exclusively but also in popular reproductions and others, opposite of what Adrian Martin argues explicitly. When we look at contemporary cinephilia and its discourses, it is very clear that people who consider themselves as cinephiles does not merely concentrate on cinematic experiences but as Hagener and Valck states: "Today's film lover embraces and uses new technology while also nostalgically remembering and caring for outdated media formats" (p. 22). However, this sense of classical cinephilia seems to go thorough changes in a way that a new form of cinephilia emerged in the last decade.

Jonathan Rosenbaum (2010), in his book Goodbye Cinema, Hello Cinephilia elaborates on these issues comprehensively. Rather than asking the question of what cinema is, Rosenbaum states: "one first has to determine "Whose cinema?" And maybe also "Where?"—at least if we dare to suggest that

cinema is that indeterminate space and activity where we find our cinephilia stimulated, gratified, and even expanded" (p. 9). Placing cinema and cinematic experience in terms of cinephilia is important to look, and how practices are constructed also determining what is at stake. For Rosenbaum, filmic experiences are crucial for cinephilia, however there would be no loss in terms of what Sontag argues as the decay of cinema and he explains: "In spite of everything we might lose, and would hate to lose, we still have no way yet of determining all we might gain" (p. 9).

Also, Rosenbaum (2010) states that: "We're stuck with vocabularies and patterns of thinking that are still tied to the ways we were watching movies half a century ago" (p. 280). His critique is a way to approach cinema and its future in order to understand the ambiguous possibilities and how cinephilia is shaped by this understanding. Of course, comprehending world cinema is a tough job in order to look at cinema as a whole but by putting KaraGarga in this context, there is a possibility to look at world cinema in terms of comparison and critical analysis. Having said that Rosenbaum argues anything is possible when we have access to the films online. He states: "I realized that the shifting paradigms of today might also transform what we normally regard as a minority taste. Once the paradigm of a single geographical base changes, all sorts of things can be transformed" (p. 284). Taste for Rosenbaum is an important issue for cinematic experience because

as a cinephile himself, Rosenbaum looks at how taste (cineaste we might also say) can become a convention for the new cinephilia.

There is also a blur between the material (DVD) and the digital (torrent). Although the transformation happens so rapidly, the Internet offers users more possibility than the material itself. Rosenbaum (2010) states: "Perhaps only with the current global interconnections of the Internet and email are we beginning to return to comparable kinds of complicity in relation to movies—the renewed notion of a tribal community, reconfigured this time not in terms of viewing movies but in terms of discussing them and related subjects" (p. 56). This can be applied to both material and digital of course. DVD's with extras are one of the features that attract cinephiles around the world. So that these can create a stir for cinephiles that film related subjects might be considered as a discourse around the filmic experience that cinephiles are looking for.

Cinephilia in digital age (or digital cinephilia) is of course a matter of collecting and archiving in a contemporary sense. With every technology emerging, there have been changes in terms of cinematic experience. Evolution from VHS to DVD and to torrent also brought their own controversies around them[1].Furthermore, as features of cinephilia changes,

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[1]Piracy of course is both a legal and moral issue but in terms of intellectual property, maybe there has to be an understanding of why and how accessing to films and other materials can affect people's perceptions and understandings of looking to new cinephilia and its

the concepts of cinephilic indentures also evolve. Sontag with her essay caught attention from film scholars and also cinephiles in the sense of alteration and expansion. Technological developments indicate that with the decline of classical cinephilia, critiques towards Sontag tried to intend the death of cinema and what involved cinephilia (de Valck, 2010, p. 133). De Valck opens up the discussion as follows:

> The position that cinema is not dead, then, and in fact is far from dying, is not only backed up by numerous examples of a flourishing art form, but also with the observation that film lovers still invest considerable time and effort in watching and discussing great films—maybe less in art houses, but then all the more by going to film festivals, watching DVDs at home, and participating in film communities on the Internet (p. 134).

With coming of digital media, and possibilities that came with the Internet, film scholars reclaimed a fresh procession of cinephilia. These ideas were separated from transient indications and experiences that were common to cinephiles and through a saturation of new possibilities of technology people could engage with the new features of cinema, join new cinephilic communities and start new discourses that were not possible in the context of classical cinephilia.

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discontents. However, there are no arguments on piracy or intellectual property in this thesis because it is a topic of a different debate and realm. Literature on these issues can be found on David Berry's (2008)*Copy, Rip, Burn: The Politics of Copyleft and Open Source*, and *Access to Knowledge in the Age of Intellectual Property* edited by Gaëlle Krikorian and Amy Kapczynski (2010).

2.3 Online Cinephilia or Online "Cinematheques"

Unlike Sontag and her argument on the decay of cinema, cinephilia debates have come to the point that through new reflections the importance of film theaters, film clubs and theories that were discussed through 1960s and 1970s, and these debates have swelled into the digital dimension in which old debates became ineffective. In light of this argument, however, cinephilia and what it forms in terms of knowledge production still advances.

Apparently, cinephilia is not common in terms of popular culture and appeals to a limited and yet special group of people. On the other hand, cinephilia is within the evolution of cinema debates, creating new discussions and new realms of criticism, and more importantly playing a role on knowledge production and its extension on several media. From the classical cinephilia and theories that came within, video culture that came later, and the status of world cinema in modern film culture are all connected to activities of cinephilic engagements. Arenas (2012) argues that these changes on practices "have been augmented and radicalized with the emergence of an active Web 2.0 cinephile community that provides a challenge of the original thematic homogeneity, breaks up the geographical concentration and disperses the discourses of traditional cinephilian forms" (p. 30).

Since cinephilia helped to bring out highly praised reflections throughout cinema from the beginnings of classical cinephilia, digitalization of media in the past twenty years has profoundly converted its nature of productivity to already observed eventualities for all kinds of media usage. For over twenty years now, film scholars have created several theoretical frameworks to assess the characteristics of new media and new interactions over the Internet. Behlil (2005) argued that in a non-striking way "the new breed of cinephilia feeds itself intellectually through the technology of the internet" (p. 113). Scholars argue that communal activities and collaborations over the Internet is a necessity for economic and social reasons as these reasons were in past times. Online communities bring cinephiles into a cultural sphere and with the light of the Internet geographical borders are removed for this reason. For this reason only, the technology that brings cinephiles and many others provides a forum for productivity.

The diegetic of cinephilia in the age of new media is explanatory of various critiques and ideas, enabling a transformation from a specific cultural dissolution to exchanging ideas and creating communities and this enabled cinephilia towards a more conductive knowledge production. With the usage of the Internet, cinephiles also shared knowledge via blogs. Pigeon (2012) illustrates this notion of blogging and cinephilia as follows:

> There is no unity in voice, except to say that there is a
> multiplicity of disperate voices collectively functioning to find

> the gaps in film theory. The proliferation of strong writing on cinema in digital space has stuttered the language of these common critical mainstays, blurring the line between them, perhaps offering a glimpse into a Deleuzian time-image not of cinema, but criticism. This 'digital criticism' emerges out of the multifarious lines of thought and critique through which cinephilia manifests (p. 165).

In the past, there was a more distilled process for knowledge production as it took place in cities and cinephiles from other parts could not participate in filmic experiences. Through the possibilities of new media and the Internet, participation in cinephilic knowledge production increased and online communities are appearing to be public spaces and help this kind of participation. Also, this progress shows us those online communities of cinephilia brings an understanding of world cinema, so that the perception over world cinema becomes stronger.

Another subject that is correlated with online communities of cinephilia is of course file sharing (bittorrent) and practice of sharing helps cinephiles to organize new systems for the practice of sharing. Although file sharing has legal issues in terms of its discourse, cinephilia is assessed through an illumination for communal conditions of file sharing networks such as KaraGarga. With private communities such as KaraGarga, file sharing through peer-to-peer connections helps cinephiles to circulate examples of world cinema. Sharing rare films and the experience of cinephilic practices also enables cinephilia to become more open in terms of new ideas around

association to global trends such as new media. Film criticism also changed as these new opportunities emerged as it extended beyond the reaches of small, closed groups. Cinephilia today, for Mark Betz (2010), rapidly changes with informational technologies and states: "Along with film festivals and DVD, the Internet emerged in the late 1990s to effect several polarities which distinguish contemporary cinephilia as much more complex than its forebears" (p. 131).

The idea and importance of cinephilia integrated to the digital age and online communities follows some of the key aspects of new media and models of online participation in cinephilic activities. The interaction between these new models and new media technologies has significance in terms of how cinephilia allows itself in online and active participation but also plays an undervalued role of sharing knowledge and new materials for developing production of new ideas around how film is experienced and acknowledged. Online cinephilic activities has been simplified by mass participation and sharing from all around the world (especially non-Western parts of the world) in which the standardized media consumption became more interactive and emancipated in terms of knowledge production.

2.4 Cinephilia and New Media

New Media and digital technologies have contributed cinephilia fundamentally as there were means of activities and participatory cultures. There were cinematheques or film festivals for cinephilic communities before these new contributions to the new media emerged but new media changed these activities radically. The Internet and especially Web 2.0 shaped cinephilic activities in terms of experience, film viewing and sharing knowledge.

Interactivity in new media is one of the most significant concepts because before the emergence of digital media, the audience was passive and only consumed what is brought on. Information that is passed on through the Internet and the opportunities that digital media brought allows users to participate and "as if technology itself is simply opening up increased levels of audience participation, creative involvement and democracy" (Creeber, p. 20). As users are active producers of the content, new media also allows cinephiles to engage new areas of participatory film consumption and sharing. Henry Jenkins (2006) describes these new ideas as media convergence that defines interactivity in mass media organs and industries. He also states: "Rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other according to a new set of rules that none of us fully

understands" (p. 3). For Jenkins, consumers may have a lesser role in this interaction between the industry and users but individual creation and knowledge production mostly comes within the groups of consumers.

Cinephilia, for Sontag, is a definitive love for cinema which goes beyond the content of the film or the space in which it is experienced. With new media, the circulation of films is not dependent on one aspect of distribution but digital technology allows cinephiles to share specific contents on films or extra materials (DVD Extras, booklets, etc.) that cinephiles are mostly interested in as these extras became one of the most important aspects of cinephilic knowledge production. Online participation and collaboration enables cinephilia to gain freedom to create new means of knowledge production, but also circulation of films and information about films can be passed around in various digital forms such as KaraGarga. Media convergence and interactivities in the digital age helps consumers to adopt digital media for their own use. Also, knowledge production and consumption of films increases accordingly.

Henry Jenkins' idea of media convergence revolves around the cultures of collaboration and participation, and users are active in terms of benefiting from the interactivities and various discourses. Online communities such as KaraGarga are significant to cultures of collaboration, in which users share their knowledge and create collective intelligence. He states:

> Collective intelligence can be seen as an alternative source of media power. We are learning how to use that power through our day-to-day interactions within convergence culture. Right now, we are mostly using this collective power through our recreational life, but soon we will be deploying those skills for more "serious" purposes (p. 4)

Cinephilia responses to these "serious" purposes. Online communities and online cinephilia incorporate cinephilic knowledge and spreads this knowledge to cinephiles which helps different projects to evolve in terms of how discourses are created within. Access to films and critical film theory is increased due to these correlations and this created a bypass for the industrial systems of distribution and cultural critique. Cinephiles have always strived to access to films and this struggle is significant for these participatory cultures because distribution and copyright laws have taken in as Jenkins explained and cinephilia has involved in these arguments.

Lucas Hilderbrand (2009) explains this radical change in experience of film-viewing as follows:

> In the past three decades, home video has radically altered cinephilia by making movie love even more diffused. The politics of video have, from the beginning, been a politics of access. Home video technologies facilitated a new relationship to movies, and a collector culture exploded in ways different from the preexisting memorabilia or small-gauge film markets (p. 214).

This rupture of film viewing experience was not an issue for cinephilia or distribution arguments for film companies. However, when new technologies became important for this kind of experience, film releases of both mainstream and rarities became a major capital industry and changed the film viewing experience fundamentally. As access to film was easier, there were many formats that films were released which included DVDs and online viewing through network channels and so on.

This change in the experience of film viewing changed cinephilia as audiences of film theatres also changed with the coming of home video technologies. James Quandt (2009) questions this issue as follows: "Is the "new cinephilia," this Netflix, YouTube grande bouffe of images in which Costa, Straub, and Baillie can be seen in Nunavut or Cappadocia and immediately discussed online with philes from afar, a miracle of "open museum" cultural democracy or a spurious celebration of the omnivorous and inauthentic?" (p. 206). He argues that love for cinema is still possible but this discourse has to be inferior and obscure but also becomes a phantom of the original.

Film archiving is also an issue because archivists are also a part of the arguments as they are also a part of these online communities. Marijke de Valck (2010) argues that this is a case for film critics as well as film archivists as they:

recourse to cinephilia is symptomatic of an attempt to reclaim power for their professional expertise and cultural perspective on the archival profession and practice. Like journalists, archivists are increasingly challenged by forces of commercialization and popularization now that media industries and governments have realized that archives contain treasures that can be mined indefi nitely for television broadcast, DVD editions, on-demand Web viewing, and other future access technologies (p. 136).

As there are disadvantages of this new media film experiences, cinephilia has expanded access to films with file sharing and such communities like KaraGarga. Cinephiles take roles in file sharing in terms of film archiving, knowledge production or film viewing but knowing that there are legal issues involving file sharing. Peer-to-peer sharing culture has many sides but one of the most important aspects is the collaboration and participation in these online communities.

YonchaiBenkler (2006) like Manuel Castells argues that network societies are important in terms of collective productions, but Benkler specifically looks at peer-to-peer networks and peer production which are basically free sharing systems. He states: "The broader point to take from looking at peer-topeer file-sharing networks, however, is the sheer effectiveness of large-scale collaboration among individuals once they possess, under their individual control, the physical capital necessary to make their cooperation effective" (p. 85). In our case, this argument is also connected to online communities and cinephilic file sharing systems as KaraGarga because it employs the system to share films for cinephiles and helps knowledge production.

Online communities such as KaraGarga helps cinephiles to experience rare films which can be extremely difficult to find, and the file sharing through torrent enables users to share these films to a large audience. In our case, KaraGarga offers a kind of experience in which archive serves as a purpose of a film festival or a film theatre as it is edited carefully in order to help its users to experience file sharing and knowledge production. As these communities are not organized from a certain place, users participate in uploading such films for the archive and access to these films or any other material is open to all its users and these users have to follow some rules in order to maintain their membership.

Also communities like KaraGarga works as a grand archive for its users to download or participate within the collection and also make these platforms a kind of cinematheque as many users take part in discussions or knowledge sharing. Of course, these communities are not legal in terms of film distribution rights but the evolution of bootlegging continues with file sharing systems and cinephiles are using these systems to share and acquire rarity or art-house films which are difficult to find in markets. The legal issues are about copyright laws and intellectual property but these communities became the unprecedented equivalents of cinematheques in the digital age which discorporate physical and geographical boundaries. Despite the ethical arguments involving free file sharing and peer-to-peer

systems, KaraGarga and other online communities helps a great deal to cinephilia and also these collections and archives are essential to cinephiles in order to expand knowledge production and find new ways for film criticism and new theories.

CHAPTER 3

ARCHIVE AND DIGITAL

The question of archive has been inquired by many thinkers, theorists and scholars. What consists of an archive or rather what is it specifically, is a matter of perspective as many dwelled on the subject. The term archive may have many folded explanations. Mike Featherstone (2007) describes as follows: "The archive is the place for the storage of documents and records. With the emergence of the modern state, it became the storehouse for the material from which national memories were constructed" (p. 591). What constitutes an archive is a question of specialties in such documents or whatever the material. An archive is not merely a museum or a library. However, these institutions or large collections can be contained in libraries or museums, or be independent from them.

There is more than one answer to the question of the archive. Jacques Derrida (1996) emphasizes that "nothing is less clear today than the word 'archive'" (p. 90). Archive and what it means in contemporary world has

been extended in multidisciplinary discourse on the matter. Pierre Nora (1989) dwells into the subject of memory and its relation to archives as follows: "The imperative of our epoch is not only to keep everything, to preserve every indicator of memory – even when we are not sure which memory is being indicated – but also to produce archives" (p. 14). However, archiving is also a matter of desire. Andreas Huyssen (2000) connects this idea to the localization of memory in Western societies and states: "Memory discourses of a new kind first emerged in the West after the 1960s in the wake of decolonization and the new social movements and their search for alternative and revisionist histories" (p. 22). Private or institutional archives are significant for memory and its studies but also cultures of memory, Huyssen suggests, are important for recodification of the past. However public or private archives do not answer the question of how to look at archives in the digital contemporary age.

Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook (2002) argue: "Both scholars and archivists have thus had a vested interest in perceiving (and promoting) the archive as a value-free site of document collection and historical inquiry, rather than a site for the contestation of power, memory, and identity" (p. 6). In contemporary age, archive serves as a place for research and work but also a kind of philosophical subject.

The establishment of archives dates back to centuries ago. However the figure of the archivist is also significant to look at. Especially film archiving is essential to examine as KaraGarga serves as a film archive and its users can be considered as archivists. Henri Langlois as mentioned above is one of the most known figures as he created the French cinematheque. He was a figure that played a great importance on establishing a film archive that helped cinephiles and film-goers to dwell into and archival experience. However, the development of film archives was not sole for the French cinematheque. There are many film archives (both analog and digital) that serve as a purpose of film preservation and so on. This kind of preservation role for film archives is important to look at the film history and more importantly the role of the archivists become urgent.

Digital archives are also important in the discussion of archives in general. Especially digital film archiving has been discussed in many ways. There are two ways in terms of how archives are seen: first is the physical space of the archives and second is the expansion of the archives as it becomes digital in contemporary era. The conceptualization of the archive is discussed by thinkers and scholars but what the archive forms in the digital age and in the context of film archiving and KaraGarga is the subject of collective memory. The need of the archive and how it produces meaning is the subject of the discussion. The role of the private archive and its understatement through

the digital age is the main focus as it helps to understand archives like KaraGarga.

3.1 Foucault and the Archive

Michel Foucault and his theory of the archive pioneered the archival understanding and put the theory of archive into a in a new dimension. His understanding of the archive is about the production of knowledge and what archives produces as meaning. Marlene Manoff (2004) explains as follows:

> The archive, for Foucault, is what he calls "the system of discursivity" that establishes the possibility of what can be said. Foucault conceives of academic disciplines, for example, as discursive formations or systematic conceptual frameworks that define their own truth criteria. This notion, as well as his writing about the relation between knowledge and power, has had a tremendous impact on many writers concerned with the nature of the archive (p. 18).

For Foucault (2010), the understanding of the archive is one of the bases for his theories as he wanted to read institutes and classification in modernity in his body of work. His work on the archive, The Archaeology of Knowledge, deals with these ideas on how archives produce meaning. His definition of the archive is ambiguous. For him, after the understandings of language and the corpus (words that are spoken), archive defines a particular level:

that of a practice that causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge as so many regular events, as so many things to be dealt with and manipulated. It does not have the weight of tradition; and it does not constitute the library of all libraries, outside time and place; nor is it the welcoming oblivion that opens up to all new speech the operational field of its freedom; between tradition and oblivion, it reveals the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is *the general system of the formation and transformation ofstatements* (p. 146).

His emphasis on the system of formation and transformation of statements as a definition of the archive is based on his main subject of his body of work 'system of discursivity' as Manoff mentions. This brings out the idea that the archive is actually produces meaning but not reproduces.

Foucault's theory of the archive is based on the principles of credibility, as it is not a physical state, which is "epistemological and ethical" (Osborne, 1999, p. 53). In Discipline and Punish, Foucault (1991) explores the development of the modern disciplinary society, and stresses on the archive as a producer of meaning and its relation to power:

It is no longer a monument for future memory, but a document for possible use. And this new describability is all the more marked in that the disciplinary framework is a strict one: the child, the patient, the madman, the prisoner, were to become, with increasing ease from the eighteenth century and according to a curve which is that of the mechanisms of discipline, the object of individual descriptions and biographical accounts. This turning of real lives into writing is no longer a procedure of heroization; it functions as a procedure of objectification and subjection (p. 191-192).

This shows that the archive can become the apparatus of power and a tool of subjugation. Foucault theorizes the archive as an abstract concept which is beyond the physical space of the archival process; it is important to undermine its impact on the thinking of the archive and guides those who work on the subject to another level. As archive is the one thing that produces meaning and a tool for 'discursive formation', it is also a place, organization and producer of knowledge which is also at the center of political and historical discourse.

3.2 Burning for Archive: Derrida and Archive Fever

Michel Foucault's theoretical archive was removed from the physical space and based on the production of meaning, but Jacques Derrida's archive is explained in psychoanalytic concepts. Derrida (1996) in his book based on series of lectures, Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression, reads the archive in Freudian terms of death drive and pleasure principle. The archive for Derrida is mediating between two forces in which death drive represents the "archive destroying" and the archive fever (conservation) which is based on the pleasure principle (p. 11). We are "in need of archives" and archive fever (*mal d'archive* in French) for Derrida is to:

burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement (p. 91).

It is not about the needs but burning with a passion for archives and this desire directs not only the events or the archival materials but also a sense of production like in Foucault's theory.

Derrida's take on the archive is not only about the psychoanalytic understanding of the archive but he also deals with the archive on the physical side. He states: "The archivization produces as much as it records the event" (p. 17). Benjamin Hutchens (2007) analyzes Derrida's understanding of the archive as a physical place and as a guardian of the law and "it is a place of privilege, where law and singularity intersect" (p. 47). This understanding of the archive helps to approach the concept as a constructed way and how archive becomes the core of representation and meaning. As Manoff (2004) opens up this understanding, she gives the example of Derrida's interpretation of history of psychoanalysis as he thinks it would be a different history and field if contemporary technologies were available in those times. Also, digital technologies that help the archivization process create such events. For Manoff, "library and archival technology

determine what can be archived and therefore what can be studied" (p. 12). As both Foucault and Derrida dealt with the archivization process and its production of meaning and information, the archive as a concept is not conservative in terms of its meaning but it is a mechanism that helps the history to be read and also forms political reality.

3.3 Digital and the Archive

As Jorge Luis Borges in his short story titled 'The Library of Babel' describes a library that contains millions of volumes in hexagonal order (or disorder), digital archive may be the possible ground for Borges' description. Mike Featherstone (2007) in his introductory essay on the archive describes the digital archive as follows:

> With the digital archive we see a move away from the concept of the archive as a physical place to store records, so that culture depends upon storages (libraries, museums, etc.), to that of the archive as a virtual site facilitating immediate transfer. The notion of immediate data access and feedback replaces the former data separation (the file in the box on the shelf) which created the differences out of which an archive order was constructed and reconstructed. The digital archive then should not be seen as just a part of the contemporary 'record and storage mania' facilitated by digital technologies, but as providing a fluid, processual, dynamic archive, in which the topology of documents can be reconfigured again and again (p. 595-596).

The digital archive now deals with new set of conceptual problems such as the identity, and what sets up the databases and the documents in contemporary age. These conceptual problems give away the digital archive in terms of classification and currents which are the fundementals of archiving and production of knowledge and information.

One of the most important arguments on the digital archive is based on power and memory as Foucault and Derrida brought these concepts into light with their discussion of the archive. Patricia Pisters (2012) in her book looks at the archival memories in the digital age and states: "Clearly, new media technologies are important tools for opening up the past of archival memory into the needs of the present and the future" (p. 222). Digital archiving is then about the future but also brings out the past and the memory and it creates a sense of openness as Pisters calls it the 'living archive'.

Dealing with cinematic time, Mary Ann Doane (2002) demonstrates that the film and the archive always deal with the present time that has become "then". Following Derrida, she states that the archive is "always a wager about the future: a future screening, a future interpretation" (p. 223). Doane's definition of the archival function becomes clearer in the digital age and in digital archiving. As archival image can be uploaded to the Internet and therefore archival process can live on indefinitely. "The archive is a

protection against time and its inevitable entropy and corruption, but with the introduction of film as an archival process, the task becomes that of preserving time, of preserving an experience of temporality" (Doane, 2002, p. 223). This interpretation of the archive that captures the past in preserves it into the future is one of the arguments that can be discussed in light of the digital archiving. Both analog and digital archiving has the role of preservation but with new technologies emerges; the discussion of how film preservation can be dealt is one of the main discussions.

On the problems of digital archiving, John Hartley (2012) discusses the archives in the digital age and classifies archives and networks that build up these archives in different categories. On the archival process, Hartley argues that there are two types of archives in the contemporary age which are 'essence' and 'probability' archives. The 'essence' archive for Hartley is the classical understanding of the archive. However, the 'probability' archive is the information and databases on the Internet and he argues this type of archive may fail to preserve the productivity as there are many participants both positively and negatively. In 'probability' archives: "you don't know what you will find or who put it there. The status or even existence of individual objects is uncertain. They may be real or unreal, true or false, fact or fiction, original or copy" (Hartley, 2012, p. 160).

On the practical side, there are ups and downs for digital archiving. Louise Craven (2012) explores the difficulties on creating digital archives and archival practices in contemporary age. Craven states:

> Of all the challenges which the archival profession is experiencing today, that from electronic records is perhaps the most enduring. The fundamental distinction to be drawn between paper records and electronic records is this: with paper records, the *paper* (or parchment or vellum) must be preserved, for this is the authentic record; with electronic records, it is the *information* which must be preserved, for that is the authentic record (p. 21).

The analogy that Craven proposes on the analog (the paper) and the digital plays a large part on the distinction of the archives. However, the digital archives and its process are more complicated than establishing a classical archive. This is because digital preservation of the material and information need more diverse work on how the digital archive is processed.

While discussing Walter Benjamin and his Arcades Project, Margaret Cohen (2006) takes the archive in the contemporary age and argues in line with Benjamin's ideas, and states: "At the turn of the millennium, it is the notion of the archive itself that is in transition with the transformation of mechanical into virtual technologies of reproduction" (p. 219). As mechanical reproduction evolved into a virtual realm, digital archiving became more plural in terms of archives established digitally with collaborations and people partake in these archives with new technologies and the Internet

offers this kind of reproduction as it transforms to virtual realm and data becomes available to ever-changing societies.

3.4 KaraGarga and the Archive

KaraGarga is a comprehensive archive and a film library as well as an online cinephilic community. There are many contributors to the website and even though it is a voluntary act, KaraGarga offers a vast archive for cinephiles and film enthusiasts who collects films and involved in many other activities. However, the roots of KaraGarga date back to physical archives. The figure of an archivist can be traced back to Henri Langlois and his Indian equivalent P.K. Nair. The documentary film Celluloid Man, tells the story of P.K. Nair and how he established the Indian Film Archive. In one anecdote, the director MrinalSen tells a story of how Henri Langlois wants a copy of his film, and someone warns him as they think Langlois and archivists were pirates. A challenge to film distribution and archiving with such methods did not begin with KaraGarga but digitalization also brings new perspectives to the issue. The archive of KaraGarga is not solely based on films, but it offers books, music and other materials that are related to cinema mostly. Collecting film or other material is a nostalgic phenomenon as Couze Venn (2007) explores the concept of collection; he argues that the collector figure

(which is related to archivists) tries to rescue a loss. He describes this figure
as follows:

> They are driven by impulses and yearnings that have
> conditioned the assembling of most of the collections that
> today establish a monument to past efforts to gather together
> knowledge of the world and its treasury of objects and deeds.
> We are drawn to them today to learn and to be amazed. But
> they each have a tale to tell that reveals much more about
> modern culture and subjectivities than meets the eye (p. 36).

What Venn brings out is that collecting as a mere occupation, like archives

collections are to be preserved for the future. Collections as well as archives

preserves the past for the future and present, and the knowledge production

and its inclinations continues to be the reflection of reality and as a way of

life for the collected material. This reflexivity of the archive and collections

would help to the memory and knowledge in light of the cultural heritage

and cultural space.

Film archiving, on the other hand, deals with the preservation of films which

consists of many different formats (35mm, nitrate, and so on) and it is

important to work on such materials in order to preserve the past for the

future. Luca Guiliani and Sabrina Negri (2011) address the problem:

> On the archival side, as obvious as it may sound, film and film-
> related artifacts must be conserved for as long as their physical
> conditions will allow. Unfortunately, we are getting closer and
> closer to the day when all nitrate and acetate films will have
> decomposed, leaving behind only later-generation analog or

digital duplicates. Before this happens, it is crucial that film archivists and restorers thoroughly document their work, in order to record the technological and physical specificity of the films they have been working on (p. 83).

As there are no definitive solutions to the archival problem for film archiving, the role of the archivist takes a significant part for the solution. Many scholars have stumbled upon the argument that there are less people working in the archives and participation in digital archiving may help the complications as there are more collaborative elements in the digital media.

The Internet and the possibility of creating and archive on it has liberated many thoughts on the archivization problem. KuhuTanvir (2013) describes the possibilities on the Internet as follows:

> Powered by simplified and easily available digital technologies, the Internet houses a bursting archive of cinema created by the combined, often default, actions of fans, cinephiles, stars, programers, production houses, and a host of other unidentified forces. The digital explosion has created a space that is conducive to easy exchange and transfer of the film object across a complex network, creating new avenues of accessing cinema (p. 116).

Digital archiving on the Internet, especially in the case of KaraGarga brought the possibilities with various other examples. This sharing culture has brought the possibilities on digital preservation and challenges film experience on a new level. This collaborative approach towards the digital archive and its process has certain aspects but elaborating on the concept of

archive may become difficult. An initiative called "pad.ma" also reflects upon the idea of collaboration. They published "10 Theses on the Archive" on the website and manifested ten points on the concept in which archiving becomes a model based on collaboration and digital archiving becomes the liberation model and they elaborated on the future of the archive and suggested to work on the archives as the future of archives is based upon the question of the archive.

In light of these arguments, KaraGarga offers an experience of an archive and this is built by a sense of collaboration. Building up such a library is very difficult to achieve. By never deleting torrent files and upgrading the films in terms of quality is one of the most significant features of KaraGarga. In the age of digital reproduction and in the light of Walter Benjamin's ideas, KaraGarga is one of the places that create such an experience for its users and contributors. The idea of collaboration in the age of online communities also creates a sense of aura for the material for the users of KaraGarga. It is not only about filling the archive with much material as one can find, but elaborating on the materials by achieving a sense of quality rather than quantity.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT IS KARAGARGA?

We need to ask the question: what is KaraGarga, and what KaraGarga helps us to understand about cinephilia and archive? One of the most basic answers is on the KaraGarga manifesto: KaraGarga is "a private bittorrent community specializing in art-house, alternative, cult and classic movies". It is basically a private online community and a tracker that connects users from all over the world to share films, books and music (the principality is on films) and create cinephilic activities through a massive archive. There might be many ways to approach KaraGarga, but the website is not run from one center and people share rare films in the tracker. Along with its huge library and a common ground for cinephiles, KaraGarga also offers an economic system that has been popular with the peer-to-peer connections.

Jonas Andersson (2009), in his essay on the peer-to-peer connections and their role on piracy with the case of The Pirate Bay, believes that economic systems such as this is not brought out just because it is free. He states:

> The fact that p2p makes massive data exchange possible without a monetary valuation of the 'content' exchanged does not, however, remove it from the economic realm. It is still an economic activity, having economic repercussions, generating externalities, and it still requires outposts of institutionalization and safeguarding. Despite being labeled 'anti-commercial' it still helps spread the mainstream products that the corporate establishment want us to consume (p. 92).

This line of thinking also applies for KaraGarga as its own economic structure lies on sharing the content as it may well be considered as 'anti-commercial'. What KaraGarga offers is therefore a cultural exchange. Andersson continues in line with Marx's ideas on distribution and its gaining and says: "File-sharing, as a means of cultural exchange, can therefore never be equated simply with 'resistance' since it thrives on the same capitalist system of cultural exchange that it forms part of" (p. 92).

4.1 Marcel Mauss and KaraGarga

Marcel Mauss (1990) in his book titled The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies, have researched the gift economy within archaic societies. His approach on the gift economy can be applied to peer-to-peer societies and KaraGarga for that matter. He looks at cultural exchanges in archaic societies but claims gift economy is not simple and is based on cultural exchange as well as an economic structure. In the digital age, we can observe the similarities of gift economy. Mauss observes that gifts are reciprocated and the principle of:

> *the exchange-gift must have been that of societies that have gone beyond the phase of 'total services'* (from clan toclan, and from family to family) *but have not yet reached that of purely individual contract,* of the market where money circulates, of saleproper, and above all *of the notion of price reckoned in coinage weighed and stamped with its value* (p. 59).

However, Mauss' ideas are based on the complexity of the gift-exchange as the system is vast and services are Mauss observes "rendered and reciprocated" (p. 34). In gift economies, gifts are not free and they offer certain aspects in return so that the exchange can be complete. The idea behind gift not being free comes from a citation that Mauss takes from Andaman Islanders: "Everyone, men and women, tries to outdo one another in generosity. A kind of rivalry existed to see who could give the greatest

number of objects of the greatest value" (p. 25) So that, people who are given

gifts must reciprocate, but also these returns has to be greater value.

In modern age, it may sound strange to propose such an economic structure,

but gift economy is against the personal wealth as it is in favor of

communities therefore "a system of law and economics in which

considerable wealthis constantly being expended and transferred. If one so

wishes,one may term these transfers acts of exchange or even of trade and

sale"(p. 48). As modern economic structures put the monetary and private

system an importance, gift economies are dealing with communal life and

participatory cultures.

In the societies that Mauss looks at gifts are not free and people have to

participate and return the favors. However, if there are people that are not

participating in gift economies, the result would be punishment. These

punishments may not be physical but psychological ones such as ridicule

and exclusion. If one fails to reciprocate, there might be physical conflicts

also. In terms of modern monetary economies, the crises mostly come from

the problem of supply-and-demand. On the other hand, Mauss argues that

gift economies may also have crises based on reciprocity. He states:

> Everything is based upon the principles of antagonism and
> rivalry. The political status of individuals in the brotherhoods
> and clans, and ranks of all kinds, are gained in a 'war of
> property', just as they are in real war, or through chance,

> inheritance, alliance, and marriage. Yet everything is conceived
> of as if it were a 'struggle of wealth' (p. 47).

This obligation to participate is an ethical problem also, as it regulates the social status and unlike the modern economic system, it brings different problems. Gift's value is also important in these cultures as it determines the social status and reciprocity assess the wealth of communities as in social wealth of modern societies.

In light of Mauss' arguments, peer-to-peer systems and online community practices such as KaraGarga can be seen as gift economies. This is precisely because of communities such as KaraGarga and others have become the rivals of the mainstream distribution systems in digital media. In the digital realm, file sharing has become the model of gift economy and KaraGarga presents this system according to its own rules. This distribution model in KaraGarga is performed with the 'ratio' system. All the users need to maintain a ratio so that they can download files without getting prohibited. Although ratio system mostly resembles with the monetary system in a sense, reciprocation is the most significant term to identify the system. As one user uploads a film or participates in any way like creating a subtitle for a film, or keep seeding a file, user always gets his/her gift.

4.2 Economy of KaraGarga

Thomas Elsaesser (2009) argues that the DVD technology, despite its economic impacts, is only a clone of the video technology of 1970s and 1980s but as new technologies emerges "encourages a form of cinephilia and collector's mania that everyone thought was passé in the 1970s" (p.230). However, KaraGarga is probably at the center of the new form of cinephilia as Elsaesser argues, because KaraGarga specializes in certain aspects of cinema and its archive offers to become an important model as a distribution model. For an online community, such rules and systems may not apply but KaraGarga offers a complex model and a sense of convergence as Henry Jenkins describes.

Of course, KaraGarga is not solely based on gift economy, but also the website offers a sense of labor and a sharing culture with equality in which the community becomes an economic and social model for people. Users in KaraGarga show great interest about the products that are uploaded and in return, they participate to the sharing activities, such as uploading new films or creating subtitles for films. This collaboration in KaraGarga as a community shows that through different participation models, KaraGarga can be seen as an utopic cyber-space for cinephiles. However, the power structure still appears as there are administrators and technical staff who edit

uploaded files or help users. This kind of exclusion seems necessary as the common interest in KaraGarga is achieving quality.

KaraGarga also resembles with the socialist system in light of Marx, because in a sense the economic system of KaraGarga challenges the monetary system as it is a self-sufficient website. As Jonas Andersson noted, that mainstream products are consumed despite being 'anti-commercial', Theodor Adorno (2001) theorizes this phenomenon as follows:

> The more participation in mass culture exhausts itself in the informed access to cultural facts, the more the culture business comes to resemble contests, those aptitude tests which check suitability and performance, and finally sport. While the consumers are tirelessly encouraged to compete, whether by virtue of the way in which goods are offered to them or through the techniques of advertising, the products themselves right down to the details of technical procedure begin to exhibit sport-like characteristics (p. 86).

While these arguments are more accurate for mainstream cultural products, KaraGarga is also a part of this argument. To participate in KaraGarga starts with a sense of research about what to download, and then participate by subtitling as it is not obligatory or upgrading a film if you acquired a better version. KaraGarga is of course standing in the pirate discourse as uploading and downloading copyrighted material is illegal. But it does not promote that KaraGarga is against the capitalist system or any revolutionary act, but it has a purpose of housing an archive for cinephiles to participate in a digital

realm. KaraGarga resembles to a more subversive act -as most of the material can be found commercially- because with the work being produced by capital has its roots in the hopes of gaining attention to rare films that are not popular in the mainstream culture through participating in subtitling and downloading.

4.3 Subtitling

Downloading and subtitling are second-order modes that come after the primary process of production, because any of the products or modifications made on KaraGarga comes from another institution. KaraGarga is also based on the idea of cultural exchange as well as a cinephilic community and an archive. However, second-order modes take place in the website as it is based on an economic and social structure. In most of private file sharing communities, the currency is ratio system as in KaraGarga. The ratio system is based on 1:1 rule which means for every bite you download, you need to upload or contribute equally. A new member has the ratio at 0 and needs to maintain a good ratio in order to keep up and not prohibited. If the ratio drops below 0, they risk to be banned from the community. However, there are featured (free) torrents for newcomers, so that they can increase their ratio level and start downloading what they wanted in the first place. This way KaraGarga and other file sharing communities resemble that of gift

economies or even socialism. When becoming a new member, there are some restrictions to download new material extensively, but if the member continues a gradual success rate in terms of his/her ratio, they can participate more effectively as the amount of upload allows users to download more. In this way it is basically a gift economy in the digital age.

However, what KaraGarga stands for in its economic structure, the "pot" system. The "pot" system is basically a bonus system for users who make subtitles for films. When someone opens a "pot" whoever fulfills the work to be done, gets an amount of bonus and in result the ratio of a user increases. This participatory feature contributes both the archive and users as they make subtitles for foreign films mostly. Making subtitles does not mean to create a subtitle from scratch necessarily, as it can be a correction or transcription also. If the contributor creates a high quality job controlled by who created the pot for that specific film, bonuses will be given. This also shows that the bonus system as a part of gift economy works better than what Marcel Mauss inscribes in his work.

4.4 KaraGarga and Digital Reproduction

When criticizing the media industry in terms of its relationships with the consumers, Jenkins (2006) looks at the consumer culture and how consumers use technology. He argues that consumers are empowered through technology and their strategies evolved. As global corporations have grown even larger since the advancement of capitalism but its control over the consumers has decreases as interactivity has also increased with the products of digital media. However, fan's labor like in KaraGarga is more significant than ever before as commercial media industry tries to control consumers more. He states:

> The system depends on covert relationships between producers and consumers. The fans' labor in enhancing the value of an intellectual property can never be publicly recognized if the studio is going to maintain that the studio alone is the source of all value in that property. The Internet, though, has blown their cover, since those fan sites are now visible to anyone who knows how to Google (p. 138).

As Jenkins looks at the conventional media industry and how fan labor becomes more visible in the convergence culture, it is interesting to look at KaraGarga in light of his arguments as he is after the idea behind fan labor becoming more effective in the participation culture in the digital age. As he makes examples from Star Wars and its relation to fan labor, in KaraGarga users are not behind in gaining any economic power. If one user makes time

for him/her, and knows the wanted language, then he/she is solely after helping others and contributing to the community in a way. The users see themselves as doing a humanitarian work by creating subtitles or even when they upload a film that is hard to find. Like Jenkins' fan labor, users of KaraGarga deal with cinephilic activities solely because they love to do so and it becomes an act of enjoyment.

Like Thomas Elsaesser, Laura Mulvey (2006) also argues that new digital technologies alter the film viewing experience in contemporary age. KaraGarga offers a base for this altering experience with its archive and what it offers for its users. Mulvey states that: "New ways of consuming old movies on electronic and digital technologies should bring about a 'reinvention' of textual analysis and a new wave of cinephilia. But the cinema is deeply affected by the passing of time itself" (p. 160). In order to reinvent the textual analysis and bring new ways to look at cinema and cinephilia, KaraGarga is a perfect example because it's cultural and economic system. But KaraGarga also operates in classical realm. Although it is founded in the digital realm, users who find themselves in the community are parts of the actual capitalist system and they operate within this system. Users need to pass certain economic requirements to get involved in KaraGarga. As there are many examples and debates in the community, purchasing a film in order to upload is necessary. It may be a pirated copy but the quality of the copy is essential.

Dale Hudson and Patricia Zimmermann (2009) argue that in the age of new cinephilia, there are collaborative remix zones in which people participate to make new content within the digital realm. They state that collaborative remix zones:

> move away from immobilized and apolitical fetishistic image worship into the construction of collaborative communities where new knowledges and new connections can be actualized within a radical historiographic practice. Collaborative remix zones propose a radical rethinking of cinephilia infused with political urgency as the industry of cinema converts fully into an intellectual property industry. We therefore propose the following shifts in cinephilia: from a fixation on the past, including the past as it is reactivated through memory, to a recognition of the present moment; from psychical nostalgia to material artefacts – including digital code – that are suspended between history, the real and the future (p. 145).

This rethinking of cinephilia requires a certain aspect of participation and with new possibilities and convergence culture, there is a need to achieve a new way of understanding of cinephilia. It may be seen as a labor activity, subtitling in KaraGarga offers such aspect on participation and collaboration. However, with the ratio system, users in KaraGarga there may be no representation of true collaborator, but those who help to make subtitles does not do it for only bonus system as it becomes the property of the public. Higher ratios may seem a bit of a privilege for those who attain more time and labor to the community. On the other hand, subtitling becomes a job in the digital world that has no value in reality. There are also user-classes in

KaraGarga that new members begin as being 'user' but if the user uploads more than he/she downloads, it is possible to become 'power-user'. It may not be solely on the ratio levels, as there are different classes, but when a user achieves a certain level of work, the class of that particular user increases.

D.N Rodowick (2007) argues that there has been a new type of cinephile called *le rat de cinémathèque* and this type of cinephilia became: "a pursuer of imaginary experiences, has become the video collector and hoarder or home archivist. As the luminous electronic screen replaces the black box of the movie theater, and the DVD replaces the film print, the disappearance of cinema makes it precious to us" (p. 29). This virtual perspective then evolves into something different when collaboration and participation becomes visible in communities such as KaraGarga. From the pot system to the forums where users discuss films, books and get involved in intellectual conversations, KaraGarga breaks the rules of classical sense of cinephilia and offers its users a digital experience where they may never reach in the physical world.

KaraGarga and the community want to remain separate and usable with its own structure because creating such a library and a place for cinephiles is both hard work and a necessity. The archive of KaraGarga is huge and keeping it this way is a very difficult job. KaraGarga is filling in for an

imaginary global film archive that commercial industry interests and

copyright laws try to control and prevent.

CHAPTER 5

FEATURES OF KARAGARGA

5.1 KaraGarga in the Age of New Cinephilia

MelisBehlil (2005), film studies professor from Turkey, looks at changing paradigms of new cinephilia. Her argument may seem a bit out-dated but Behlil makes her arguments on the basis of how cinephilia entered into discourses of cinema. Behlil states: "The new cinephilia is closely related to technology, in the way that it relies on the gadgets that make home theaters possible: first the VCR, then the hi-fi surround sound systems, and lastly the DVD. The new cinephiles may be called videophiles instead, but it is the same love for an art form" (p. 112). Cinephilia becoming a videophilia is an issue that corresponds to the problems of having and accessing excessive amount of materials. Of course, in the case of KaraGarga, the idea of being a community creates an understanding of how cinephiles should approach the question of cinema. When Behlil mentions a particular community while

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arguing of how these form new understandings, her points can be easily

applied to KaraGarga because Internet cinephilia differs from real life

cinematheques or film clubs and accessible for all people. Behlil states:

> One of the strongest cornerstones of this community remains
> the fact that it brings together people not only with a similar
> love for cinema, but also people who, until the Forums, had
> been unable to engage in intense discussions on the object of
> their love, simply because of their geographical location. For
> the members of the Forums from outside large cities (who
> amount to at least half of the posters), cyberspace is the only
> option to exchange opinions. What used to be a minority taste
> in their local surroundings is no longer minority in the global
> context, reached via the internet (p. 116).

This statement clearly shows that reaching for a material is no longer a

problem for people. Also the sense of being in a community (KaraGarga in

our case) can change perceptions of people so that cinematic experiences can

be comprehended by cinephiles all around the world. Geographical distances

are blurred thanks to the Internet in this case because sharing an opinion or a

discussion on a filmic experience in such communities can be held through

the cyberspaces.

Before elaborating on KaraGarga and its features, D.N. Rodowick's ideas

seem to have much importance on how we perceive films in a virtual level.

In his book, Rodowick (2007) elaborates on the idea that cinema has been

caught on the actual and the virtual. He states that: "The long view and the

larger historical context of media archaeology suggest that the history of

cinema has been only a long digression in the more culturally significant

merging of the history of electronic screens with the history of computational

processes" (p. 96). This idea of process deeply affects cinema as well as

cinephilia. Also, Rodowick claims that there is a need for comprehending

how photographical ontology is displaced by digital ontology in Stanley

Cavell's terms (p. 96). Digital image and representation is confused in terms

of how this disappearing sense of history in terms of classical sense.

Rodowick's claims also give us an insight of how cinema should be

comprehended in the age of new media. The idea that how new media can be

understood, lies in the transition between the material and the virtual.

Rodowick's argument on filmic experiences surely creates an understanding

of how film-viewing cannot be achieved through digital representations. He

states:

> As "film" disappears in the successive substitutions of the
> digital for the analog, what persists is cinema as a narrative
> form and a psychological experience—a certain modality of
> articulating visuality, signification, and desire through space,
> movement, and time. Indeed, while computer-generated
> imagery longs to be "photographic," many forms of interactive
> media long to be "cinematic." Nonetheless, watching a movie
> on broadcast television or video, much less the Internet is
> arguably not a cinematic experience. At the same time,
> although there have been mutations in the forms of
> spectatorship, the fundamental narrative architecture of film
> persists, and, despite competition from video and the Internet,
> theatrical film viewing shows no signs of disappearing soon (p.
> 96).

Rodowick's statement shows us that spectatorship is evolved in terms of film-viewing has changed but fundamentally classical spectatorship will not go away probably because of the anxiety that there are still traces of old notions of cinephilia. However, as forms have changed radically, digital representations offer people a kind of different experience than seeing a film in a theater because of what digital imagery offers (multiple screen, instant access, etc.). KaraGarga here represents both the anxiety of classical cinephilia and new cinephilia because images are downloaded and seen individually but users can share their opinions and have an experience of a film club or entering a film archive of material documents.

In the light of all arguments, KaraGarga basically stands on the verge of a true cinephilic community that works within the principles of digital reproductions. One of the most important features of KaraGarga is the manifesto that new users have to read and act accordingly (See Appendix C for details). The KaraGarga manifesto has a very specific purpose because the archive is constructed for an aim. The first rule and entry of the manifesto is: "Do not allow Hollywood/Bollywood mainstream". This rule is a clear statement of what is the purpose of KaraGarga alone. Through this, building such archive makes KaraGarga a place for a true cinephile comprehending the possibilities of what this experience can be. This first rule is explained by stating:

From its inception, KaraGarga was designed as a source for non-mainstream and off-beat movies. We try to distance ourselves from the pervasive and easily available Hollywood (and Bollywood) mainstream and show people that a huge and exciting world of cinema exists beyond that. Therefore we do not allow any mainstream movies on the tracker.

The definition of "mainstream" is very elusive and almost impossible to state precisely. It is within the discretion of the tracker moderators to decide on each   specific   case.   As   a general rule, we limit our definition of mainstream to Hollywood and Bollywood movies made after the 70s. Classic Hollywood movies are allowed and welcome - even though some of them may enjoy mainstream popularity, we have high respect for their artistic quality and importance in cinema history… We are well aware that the enforcement of this rule makes a subjective judgment on the artistic quality of a movie that some people are bound to disagree with. However,   this rule is the very foundation which has made KaraGarga such a distinguished source for high-class world cinema."[2]

This statement clearly shows KaraGarga's and its founders' intentions of what is this archive is created and it is manifested by clearly showing that KaraGarga only serves for gathering films around the world for only cinephilic purposes and to build an archive accordingly.

Other headlines of KaraGarga manifesto guide its users on how to approach KaraGarga to share and appreciate this antagonistic community. Some of these headlines are: "Build a library by never deleting movie torrents and making reseeds as easy as possible", "Provide extensive information on each movie torrent", "Promote broadening cinematic knowledge through Master of the Month (MoM) program and movie collections". As these headlines

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[2] This manifesto can only be read when signing up for the website.

shows that KaraGarga is not only a place for people taking what they need but a place for sharing knowledge however a user is capable of.

5.2 The KaraGarga Manifesto or Politics of KaraGarga

As a community, KaraGarga has many different users in terms of how they approach to the website and how they use it. There are figures of archivists, cinephiles or mere enthusiasts who appraise KaraGarga as a meeting point and collaborate accordingly. However, there are also set of rules that maintain a certain contract which requires users to use the website for their own good. As mentioned above the ratio system which is similar to Mauss' theory on the gift economy is one of the features that regulate how users should keep up with the system. These regulations are written down through certain segments like 'Rules', or 'Guide for New Users' and also 'the KaraGarga Manifesto'.

The manifesto that sets out the general rules for KaraGarga is not a manifesto in the classical sense. However, its points on how to survive the website is critical because of its argument on what is mainstream and what is allowed or not according to this general rule in KaraGarga. To be more specific, moderators control and check what is uploaded by users and decide that certain film or material is mainstream or fit for the website. The manifesto

states: "The definition of "mainstream" is very elusive and almost impossible to state precisely" (See Appendix C). As it seems a complex and somewhat fixed argument on why mainstream is now allowed on KaraGarga, this statement is what differs KaraGarga from most other online sharing communities.

As it is not a political kind of manifesto, it simply states the possibilities for users to create out of the archive. The word archive does not come up as a definitive concept in the manifesto, but it states that one of the main ideas about the community is building a library. Also there is no definitive definition of what is mainstream or not. On the other hand, KaraGarga offers its users a vast library to use and impact on their sense of cinema or other interests.

On the interview with the user and one of the moderators of KaraGarga nicknamed "stefflbw", he states that "I suppose what distinguishes KaraGarga from an 'archive' is that in the KaraGarga community the 'archivists' are congruent with the 'cinephiles' (but also other enthusiasts, seekers, etc.)" (See Appendix B). Moreover, he mentions that KaraGarga is not wholly about keeping the film memory alive but creating new forms which also Derrida and Foucault argues.

On the other interview with 'damascus' from KaraGarga, he mentions that the website helps users to find films easily which they cannot do by

themselves. This idea that KaraGarga brings out a library that a user can search for what they need and want is one of the most important features of KaraGarga but also many other online sharing communities. Contrary to 'stefflbw' he considers himself a cinephile presumably, and this shows that there are different opinions on cinephilia on the website whether the term is outdated or still influential to define love of cinema. He states that: "KaraGarga makes available to all its users films that they could have never discovered on their own. It also brings together people from all around the world who can share their knowledge and unique insights into film" (See Appendix A).

This merge of cinephiles, archivists and enthusiasts create a sense of collaboration which makes KaraGarga a bit different from other file sharing communities. Encyclopedic knowledge and building a library is the core of the politics of KaraGarga. What comes out of it (subtitling, users' art, etc.) is the return of building such a community. The figures of its users are vast but it is also fitting to the age that we live in and what makes KaraGarga different.

5.3 The Case of 'fitz'

KaraGarga should be approached as being a community for its purposes. Whatever it may be, KaraGarga is a place of a film archive and serves as a true cinematheque. The idea that KaraGarga being a community, comes from its approach for being a place for sharing. In the light of these, there are two great examples. First example is a user from KaraGarga goes by the nickname 'fitz'. He used KaraGarga for uploading many experimental films and as it turned out that he was from Portugal and he worked in a bakery. There is still a mystery about how he could found those copies of films that are extremely rare to find. After he died in 2012, there has been a great amount of commend on 'fitz' so that users of KaraGarga could express their feelings about him in the forum. This shows us that in a community such as KaraGarga, there is a feeling that people around the world can use this website not only for downloading films, but sharing an experience and communicate through a medium that can be seen as a material place. One of the users nicknamed 'dbdbdbdb' commented on his tragic death:

> "Fitz was one of the world's foremost experts in experimental cinema. He was also the village baker in a small Portuguese village.
> It's such a beautiful and unlikely story someone should make a novel out of it. By day, he was an incredibly hard-working man doing tough and taxing manual labor but happy to do it as he was really proud of his bread. By night, he explored films with an open mind and an open heart that go far beyond anything most people have ever seen. He was and always will remain an

> Internet legend and I feel it is the duty of those of us who knew him a bit to make sure his story passes on in Internet folklore. Fitz was the shining example of an amazing, highly intelligent autodidact, something so unfairly dismissed by a society bound to a hierarchy of grades and degrees. His vast knowledge of cinema developed out of pure passion and curiosity. He wrote directly to and in this way befriended many experimental filmmakers, who in turn sent him copies of their films. He traded by mail with people from all over the world and he shared with us in various Internet communities. He introduced many of us, including me, to experimental films. His message was simple: Just watch and feel. Don't intellectualize, rationalize or judge. Just watch and feel. Recently he got into collecting vinyl and appreciating all kinds of wonderful almost-forgotten music. I had dabbled in that area before but literally within months he already had explored it deeper than I ever had and was recommending me things. That's fitz - whatever he touched or put his mind to, he mastered it to perfection.[3]

An example for fitz's cinephilia can be found on the documentary film called Z Channel: A Magnificent Obsession. This documentary follows the life of a true cinephile, Jerry Harvey who could have done so much for sharing. His challenge during the 70's came from his love of films. Harvey became the head of Z Channel and could broadcast all kinds of films through television in those times. His elaboration resembles on what KaraGarga tries to achieve in a sense that sharing becomes the first important role of accessing such possibilities. Example of Harvey's depiction in the documentary is also gives us a clear approach of what cinephilia (classical) evolved into new cinephilia. Creating a community on cable television resembles of having a community online as participants become more involved in cinephilic activities.

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[3] https://forum.karagarga.net/index.php?showtopic=25518&hl=cinephilia&page=3

Another interesting feature of KaraGarga is the obsession to achieve quality. Users should pay attention when uploading torrent files for KaraGarga. This idea of quality seems unique for KaraGarga because when creating an archive, attention to have the best possible copy of the image and reproduction. The idea of quality in KaraGarga not only comes from the perfect image but also creating a torrent for users and the archive that supplied through the information and knowledge that are brought together for a particular film. This notion makes KaraGarga unique because supplying external knowledge makes filmic experiences different than a bare film-viewing. There is a good example for this in a fiction film titled Cut. This film takes place in Japan, and follows a cinephile that has an argument on what mainstream cinema caused. He also tries to look for quality in cinema. The main character in the film argues radically that mainstream cinema killed art-house films and classical films and this is mediated through the director's ideas on cinema. His arguments resembles with KaraGarga's trial for achieving quality because the sense of creating an interest on art-house and classical films can be achieved by ignoring mainstream cinema and searching for quality.

5.4 Master of the Month and Other Features

One of the most important features of KaraGarga is the segment called "Master of the Month" (MoM). This feature creates an aura within KaraGarga and serves as film festival for a particular genre each month. This is explained on the page as: "Every month, in movie and music categories, two masters are chosen by our members in coordination with the staff. We use the term master not only for directors or artists, but the MoM can be a genre or an era too, for instance." For cinephiles on KaraGarga, this feature serves as an education tool for learning about a particular theme in the history of cinema. Some of the MoMs are:

> Action cinema from South East Asia – Jesus Franco – European debt crisis – Singing cowboys – queer cinema – film as subversive art – Nordic noir – Mumblecore – Kaiju-eiga (Godzilla flicks) – polish animation – Spanish cinema under Franco – Italian cinema under Mussolini – Andersen tales – British cinema of WWII – Sam Peckinpah – Jean-Luc Godard – Woody Allen – Weimar cinema – 21st Century Video Art – Czech Silent and Early Sound Cinema – Philosophy on Screen – Chinese cinema under Mao…

and many more. These segments also creates an idea that KaraGarga serves as a place of a film theater in terms of creating these particular attentions to a specific theme or a director so that users can experience a more cinematic experience that Rodowick and others talk about.

To give a general idea that what KaraGarga consists of in terms of an archive, there are currently around 80,200 films (including documentaries and short films) on the website as of May 2014 and this numbers increase day by day. There are almost 20.000 music albums and 8.750 literature torrents (including magazines and comic books). The question of how should we approach these numbers is ambiguous because the possibilities seem endless. By uploading only art-house and non-mainstream films, KaraGarga remains loyal to its manifesto and exclusively dedicates itself with a certain aim in mind. We should mention that not all of its users are active and there are not many statistics on the users. There is a Top 10 statistics for users and while most users are from USA and Canada, Turkey is ranked 6th with 682 users. KaraGarga has around 27.000 users and there are around 6.000 active users on the website, meaning that these people download films and other materials actively.

KaraGarga is a community and there are many possibilities that can be done with its archive. Following Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno to D.N. Rodowick, their arguments on the experiences of cinema and how culture and discourse can be approached may differ. Film studies can be illuminative to some extent to look at how cinephilia can enter the domains of academia or even public culture. This may seem an argument that cinephilia is a culture that cannot be accessed its situation but especially new cinephilia that

has been discussed in the light of KaraGarga is not placed properly because of issues like intellectual property and piracy.

Digital reproduction is an issue on KaraGarga that there are excessive amount of knowledge in terms of numbers but the perplexity is always an issue of approaching this kind of an archive. Jonathan Rosenbaum's (2010) criticism of how we can approach to new cinephilia seems to be the one that can be understood as there are no limits for this new kind of phenomena. Rosenbaum's ideas are gathered around from the standpoint of a classical cinephile but through his insights on this new idea of cinephilia, approaching such event is more possible with a comprehension of the future of cinema. KaraGarga definitely creates a perplexity in terms of what it can be done with such an archive. Also the purpose of KaraGarga's makes it more clear that building such an archive for quality purposes rather than approaching it with a sense of quantity creates an aura for itself. As far as KaraGarga is approached as a community for cinephilia and as a cinematheque, it can be the mark of how this notion can be achieved with its picks.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this thesis was to explore the online file-sharing community called KaraGarga in light of the concepts like cinephilia and archive and its features. Specifically, this thesis has been an attempt to study these concepts with a case study in focus, which is considered as a meeting point for a new understanding of cinephilia and archive in the age of digital reproduction and remediation.

Users in KaraGarga may not define themselves as cinephiles or archivists in general, but there is a special attribution for the love of cinema in the digital age. As file-sharing becomes one of the most eminent role model for film distribution, KaraGarga stands at the verge of this matter. As for Walter Benjamin (1969) "Quantity has been transmuted into quality" (p. 239). One of the main arguments of KaraGarga is about quality in the reproduced work of art that is uploaded to the archive. This does not mean there is a sense of

standardization, but experiencing a film with such copies is only possible by a high quality copy. As stefflbw argues in the interview, many of the films can be found outside of KaraGarga. However, what KaraGarga stands out for is this main reason to present best possible quality for its users.

Following Walter Benjamin's arguments of the work of art in the age of mechanical reproductions, the concept of aura for Benjamin is one of the main issues. For him aura is a: "unique phenomenon of a distance, however close it may be" (p. 222). With this stand point we can argue that, aura has become a concept of a digital reproduction without altered. It is unique because the work of art has different connotations for every individual. Also downloading brought back the aura as a concept of the digital age.

Film archives and cinematheques rather offer a physical space for film-going experiences or rather serves as a purpose of being the memory of cinema. Figures like Henri Langlois, P.K Nair worked on their archives to preserve the cinematic memory in physical realms. As archives and cinematheques offer these experiences, we could argue that KaraGarga has the same purpose and mission to keep the memory of cinema and preserve cinema in the digital realm.

Thomas Elsaesser (2012) in his take on the new cinephilia argues that there are new forms of cinephilia in the digital age. As cinephiles re-creates in and manipulate texts, its place is cyberspace and this work of:

Preservation and re-presentation – like all work involving memory and the archive – is marked by the fragment and its fetish-invocations. Yet fragment is also understood here in a special sense. Each film is not only a fragment of that totality of moving images which always already exceed our grasp, our knowledge and even our love, but it is also a fragment, in the sense of representing, in whatever form we view or experience it, only one part, one aspect, one aggregate state of the many, potentially unlimited aggregate states by which the images of our filmic heritage now circulate in culture. Out there, *the love that never lies* (cinephilia as the love of the original, of authenticity, of the indexicality of time, where each film performance is a unique event), now competes with *the love that never dies*, where cinephilia feeds on nostalgia and repetition, is revived by fandom and cult classics, and demands the video copy and now the DVD or the download. While such a love fetishises the technological performativity of digitally remastered images and sounds, it also confers a new nobility on what once might have been mere junk. The new cinephilia is turning the unlimited archive of our media memory, including the unloved bits and pieces, the long forgotten films or programs into potentially desirable and much valued clips, extras and bonuses, which proves that cinephilia is not only an anxious love, but can always turn itself into a happy perversion (p. 72).

Perhaps, it is this happy perversion that makes KaraGarga what it is in terms of its mission and purpose. It may not be true to attend such importance on this particular website, but like most of the "serious" file-sharing communities, KaraGarga works as an online cinematheque. The work of preservation and re-presentation is attributed as a fetishistic phenomenon, but its users and contributors are doing a voluntary work in terms of keeping the website alive and valued. As it is not profit-based organization, its only mission is to keep a memory of cinema in the digital realm.

Moreover, as there are not many statistics that can open any critical discussion over the status of the website, its users mostly prefer to stay anonymous because this gives a certain freedom for user experience but also it does not put forward anything private. However, we can argue that KaraGarga is not a Eurocentric medium, but of course there were other communities serving as film archives such as P.K Nair's Indian Film Archive and cinematheques all around the world. On the forums, there are many discussions on films, directions for use (how to make subtitles, or achieve quality in uploading films), or any intellectual matter. As in the case of 'fitz', many of the users have certain taste before signing up to the website. In the interview damascus mentioned that KaraGarga helped to acquire more taste for his understanding of cinema.

Collecting and archiving is a modern phenomenon. As John Fowles in his novel *The Collector* puts forward the idea of collection becomes a signature for modern age as the female character in the novel Miranda, is an advocate of modernity, and tries to educate the collector Frederick. It gives the idea that the figure of the collector is stuck in the past and that does violence the modern life. As Elsaesser describes this as "happy perversion", the role of the collector and contributor becomes important for our argument on KaraGarga, as the collector of the digital age becomes the collaborator for the distribution of films and creates out of the idea of participation.

As a dedicated group of people, users of KaraGarga are presenting and uploading rare films to the archive, creating subtitles for the community (many of these later appear on other file-sharing communities), and this reflects the idea of Henry Jenkins' media convergence and collective intelligence of media fans, in which participants are using these new technologies such as bittorrent to archive, appreciate and circulate in the Internet.

Of course, this is not a utopian understanding of an online file-sharing community. KaraGarga distributes pirated copies of films as a form of resistance to global media industry along with other communities. As it offers non-mainstream films and others, it is providing access to rare material for cinephiles across the world. However, the content creators cannot partake in any financial profit because of this model. This creates certain problems regarding official distribution for licensing and restoring films to release.

KaraGarga like other online file-sharing communities represents what digital archives should be like. Its only purpose is to share non-mainstream films and bestow an digital archive for preservation purposes. There are other communities like KaraGarga specialized on collecting, organizing and classifying and sharing such archives other than cinema. It is a private

community, but it welcomes cinephiles all around the world. This kind of new media distribution is highly popular for the last decade, although there were many legal obstructions. For one reason, KaraGarga is one of the most contentful and efficient distribution models. As there are similar file-sharing communities specializing on video games, books and graphic novels, digitalization and downloading is now offers a culture that is based on participation, collaboration and celebrates opening new channels and courses for any type of media that can be distributed in a digital format.

Torrenting becomes the new form of cinephilia and it is significant because it generates new opportunities for contents that are meaningful and it opens up new possibilities for people who are using the Internet efficiently and explores for content in terms of producing accordingly. It also gives the possibilities for culturally rich content to be distributed among people without any effort. These communities and especially KaraGarga is not only important for archiving massive contents, as they can change the ways people percieve art and cinema, which at the end become new forms social participation.

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APPENDIX A

Interview with damascus

1- What is your user experience regarding KaraGarga?

I knew very little about film when I came to KG. I knew that much better

films existed than the current mainstream from Hollywood, but I had

seen only a few of what we consider classics. I have since learned a great

deal about world cinema, although many people on KaraGarga clearly

know much more than me. In addition I learned to encode films if order

to be able to contribute to KaraGarga, and have discovered that I very

much enjoy this technical activity. Overall KaraGarga has contributed

greatly to my knowledge of the world and its cultures, and provided me

much mental stimulation.

**2- How do you explain the relation between cinephilia and archive
from your own perspective in KaraGarga?**

I wish to view films that show me the ways that all the peoples of the

world are different, yet also the ways that we are all the same. I want to broaden my horizons culturally by viewing films considered "great" or "important" by other cinephiles. I also enjoy discovering those "hidden gems" that I could have never found without KaraGarga. And of course, I wish to ensure that these films reach the widest possible audience, so I archive most of what I download.

3- What are some of the contributions and effects of KaraGarga to the digital reproduction?

KG encourages people to learn how to encode movies to high standards, and these movies are not only archived, but they spread beyond the KaraGarga community. In addition, KaraGarga has thriving subtitling activities ongoing with many 100's of films already translated, and some of those subtitles even finding their way to official DVD releases.

4- Do you consider yourself as an archivist and/or a cinephile? If so, in what ways KaraGarga helped you to correspond to these notions?

Primarily a cinephile. I have a great desire to watch really good films instead of mindless mainstream, and I wish to help make these worthwhile films available in the best possible quality.

5- In what ways do you think KaraGarga allows users to achieve "taste"? Also, how KaraGarga changed the understanding of cinephilia?

KG makes available to all its users films that they could have never discovered on their own. It also brings together people from all around the world who can share their knowledge and unique insights into film. On a personal level, I truly had no idea that film could take me so far beyond mere entertainment, and expand my world so much.

APPENDIX B:

Interview with stefflbw

1- What is your user experience regarding KaraGarga?

I was a "user" for two years. That was 2004-06. In those years I only had a

very slow internet connection, and severe download restrictions (in terms of

data per month).I'd used other private (music) trackers for some years.

I quickly became an IRC #karagarga regular.

Most of my interest in the internet from around 2004 became related to

media and film. Even as recently as 2004, it should be pointed out, access to

"rare" material was scarce. We have a cinematheque in this city. The

university also had a VHS tape library, and had begun to stock new DVDs.

Nevertheless, the KaraGarga collection had already outstripped any local

physical media collection I had access to. And a dedicated user base meant

that members communicated frequently and in depth about their own user

experience at KaraGarga – and about film.

In 2006 I became part of the KaraGarga staff. Since then my 'user' experience has changed significantly. Staff spends a significant amount of time and labor on technical and social aspects of KaraGarga.

2- How do you explain the relation between cinephilia and archive from your own perspective in KaraGarga?

I am not sure I strictly subscribe to either concept as the basis for KaraGarga – although the term 'archive' is, of course, part of the KaraGarga concept. I am certainly sceptical of the notion of 'cinephilia' – because, I would argue, that it belongs into an era of film worship that is already past (by the mid 70s, perhaps). At least I personally know some 'cinephiles' who took up KaraGarga with great enthusiasm, accepting the technical limitations of formats and reproduction (e.g. 35mm "authenticity" vs. 1-CD rips). KaraGarga is neither only "supplementary" in relation to "actual cinema", nor is it a gap-filler for rare material. I suppose what distinguishes KaraGarga from an 'archive' is that in the KaraGarga community the 'archivists' are congruent with the 'cinephiles' (but also other enthusiasts, seekers, etc.). I might also refer a discussion about 'archives' to Derrida's Archive Fever – what a fitting title for KaraGarga! But with the major caveat that, archives tend to enshrine law/authority/death, and produce little. KaraGarga, arguably, is not only about keeping "film memory" alive. The

KaraGarga community produces new works: subtitles, films (KaraGarga artists), music.

3- What are some of the contributions and effects of KaraGarga to the digital reproduction?

I can answer in some anecdotes:

a. Much material that emerged on KaraGarga is now "commercially" available, e.g. ebay

b. many subtitles made by KaraGarga members circulate widely online, and even broadcasting stations, production companies

c. 'obscure' and 'rare' doesn't have to mean 'marginal' anymore

d. KaraGarga isn't the only tracker / site operating in this field

4- Do you consider yourself as an archivist and/or a cinephile? If so, in what ways KaraGarga helped you to correspond to these notions?

My answer to this question is similar to Question 2. Neither.

I am more of a communitarian, than a curator or hyperselective enthusiast.

5- In what ways do you think KaraGarga allow users to achieve "taste"? Also, how KaraGarga changed the understanding of cinephilia?

The second part of the question is perhaps too widely framed. I do not have

an answer.

The first part: on a technical level the site has multiple functions by which selection and suggestion can influence 'taste'.

on a social, cultural level I would argue (without having any evidence) that KG probably influences 'taste' less than might be assumed in the context of its wide selection.

Basically, I follow a type of Bourdieu-line in terms of 'taste': most members arrive at KG with a set of tastes already formed – and they mine KG for that set which is otherwise not especially open to modification.

Then again, subjectivities are open to change. What is needed is life, experience, age, etc. – those processes will shift 'taste' more deeply than an incidental website where a wealth of material is available.

I've observed that my tastes have changed (quite a lot, by my thinking) – and KaraGarga has played a part there, because it can feed and also produce curiosity. I've no clear way of 'quantifying' its impact.

APPENDIX C

The KaraGarga Manifesto

KaraGarga strives to be more than just a regular BitTorrent tracker for movies. We are an exclusive private filesharing community focused on creating a comprehensive library of Arthouse, Cult, Classic, Experimental and rare movies from all over the world.

Here is how we aim to achieve that goal:

- **Do not allow Hollywood/Bollywood mainstream.**

From its inception, KaraGarga was designed as a source for non-mainstream and off-beat movies. We try to distance ourselves from the pervasive and easily available Hollywood (and Bollywood) mainstream and show people that a huge and exciting world of cinema exists beyond that. Therefore we do not allow any mainstream movies on the tracker.

The definition of "mainstream" is very elusive and almost impossible to state precisely. It is within the discretion of the tracker moderators to decide on each specific case. As a general rule, we limit our definition of mainstream to Hollywood and Bollywood movies made after the 70s. Classic Hollywood movies are allowed and welcome - even though some of them may enjoy mainstream popularity, we have high respect for their artistic quality and importance in cinema history. We draw the line with the advent of the big-buget Hollywood blockbuster (with movies like Jaws and Star Wars) which brought on a rapid deterioration in the quality of movies. Modern independent productions are allowed and we might make special exceptions for new Hollywood movies from special directors. Also allowed are most "mainstream" movies from other countries - what might be a common

mainstream movie in Hungary might be totally unknown elsewhere. For further information, see this collective forum thread for the discussion of the "mainstreamness" of specific movies.

We are well aware that the enforcement of this rule makes a subjective judgment on the artistic quality of a movie that some people are bound to disagree with. However, this rule is the very foundation which has made KaraGarga such a distinguished source for high-class world cinema.

- **Build a library by never deleting movie torrents and making reseeds as easy as possible.**

We want the KaraGarga tracker ideally to be like a library, so that anytime you wish to see a particular movie you can just look it up and download it. Unfortunately one of the big disadvantages of the BitTorrent p2p system is that most torrent swarms die off relatively quickly, mostly because people do not have any incentive to keep torrents seeded.

Other trackers would just delete those dead torrents. We on the other hand have set out to change that. In general, we do not delete any movie torrents and we do not consider old torrents to be "dead". They are just unseeded at the moment. If a torrent has been unseeded for two days with no activity, a big red button on the top of the torrent details page allows you to request a reseed for the torrent. All reseed requests are recorded on this page while the tracker homepage lists all reseed requests that you can personally help out with (i.e. torrents which you have downloaded). If you reseed a torrent for which a reseed has been requested you are automatically awarded a ratio bonus (details here). In addition, keeping any torrent seeded in your BT client gives you an extra seeding bonus once someone starts downloading it.

The combination of reseed requests and the various bonuses have created an extremely effective mechanism that allows even long-dead torrents to be resurrected swiftly. You can put in a reseed request and usually find the torrent seeded the next day. This is aided by KaraGarga being a private tracker - users have to maintain a ratio and thus have a strong incentive to keep torrents seeded and help out with reseeds in order to collect ratio bonuses. Also, all users who have downloaded a particular torrent

("snatchers") are recorded, allowing the reseed request system to identify who can help out reseed which torrent. Even if your reseed request goes unanswered for a while, the friendly and helpful culture at KaraGarga allows you to just send a message to some of the recent snatchers of a torrent and get it reseeded that way as well.

In order to make reseeds even more powerful, KaraGarga has implemented a unique feature called torrent bumping. If one user reseeds a torrent for another user, usually noone else will notice. The resulting exchange then resembles traditional ineffective one-on-one filesharing. Therefore, if a torrent which has been unseeded for a long time is reseeded, we "bump" it to the top of the torrent list (MoM torrents are bumped if they had been unseeded for over 30 days; torrents with reseed-requests are bumped instantly no matter how long they've been unseeded; if there was no reseed request the bump time is 90 days). All users will see the bumped torrent appear on the top of the browse page as if it were newly uploaded. To distinguish it from new torrents, it is marked [BUMPED]. That way the reseeding of a torrent will be noticed by many more users and create a larger swarm.

- **Provide extensive information on each movie torrent.**

Since every new movie torrent enters the KaraGarga library and will remain there for a long time, we would like each one to have as detailed a description as possible. Thus we make it mandatory for each torrent to include complete rip specifications of the movie file (allowing users to judge if that file will be playable on their playback device) and at least three screenshots directly from the file (allowing users to judge the quality of the encoding). There is a guide on providing rip specs here and a guide on providing screenshots here. We also strongly encourage users to include plot descriptions, review(s), a movie poster and additional outside links which offer more information for each upload.

- **Emphasize rip quality and completeness of extra material.**

At KaraGarga we strive for all movie torrents to be encoded in the best quality possible while allowing for the highest level of playback compatibility. While we do not allow any duplicate uploads of the same movie, we will allow a low-quality rip to be replaced by a higher-quality rip. Torrents with a full DVD-R of a movie are allowed to exist alongside an encode since they both service users with different needs.

Other criteria that make for a higher-quality torrent and a welcome replacement include: If the torrent is sourced from a higher-quality source than the existing one (e.g. a DVD with better picture quality than the other DVD release), if it is in the correct aspect ratio (e.g. a widescreen version to replace a cropped fullscreen one), if it offers removable subtitles instead of hardcoded ones, if it offers the original audio track instead of a dubbed one or if it includes additional extras like an audio commentary, a making-of etc.

If you have a rip that fulfills one or several of the criteria above and want to replace an existing torrent, simply message one of the tracker moderators.

In order to prevent generally poor quality uploads, if a movie is available on DVD, rips from a lower-quality source (e.g. from a VHS) are not allowed. We also do not allow any rips of a new movie until a DVD is actually commercially available in stores since most of those rips come from poor quality sources (anything from CAMs recorded off the screen in a movie theatre to poor quality R5 DVDs thrown onto the market prematurely which is where many pre-retail scene DVDrips come from).

- **Promote broadening cinematic knowledge through Master Of The Month (MoM) program and movie collections.**

KaraGarga offers you many opportunities to extend your horizons and learn more about the cinema of other countries and cultures. One of it is the Master Of The Month (MoM) program. Each month, a specific topic (e.g. a director, an actor, a country, a theme) is chosen as a MoM for both movies and for music. Torrent uploads fitting that MoM are encouraged during that month and participation in any MoM torrent gives you a ratio bonus (details here). You can take a look at the present and past MoMs on this page. For past MoMs we have managed to establish very comprehensive collections of

torrents on that topic in just a month. MoM topics are generally chosen by the KaraGarga staff but suggestions for future MoMs are always welcome and can be posted in the MoM forums. Keep in mind that MoMs are made to focus on often neglected and underappreciated areas of cinema rather than well-known ones.

Another way to expand your knowledge is through the KaraGarga Collections forum. A collection is a full list of all the movies belonging to a specific director, film movement or other theme. It contains detailed information on the subject and links to torrents. We have collections on many major directors like Godard, Wilder, Lang, Renoir and Herzog. We have collections on topics ranging from Film Noir to the Czech New Wave and German Expressionism. And then there are the really curious off-beat collections like "films about food" or "Kafka on film". Contributing a collection on your own and thus sharing your knowledge and insight with the KaraGarga community is also rewarded with a generous ratio bonus.

- **Allow users to request specific movies they have been looking for.**

A requests section on the tracker allows members who have PowerUser status to request movies they are looking for and that are not on KaraGarga. The request costs 750mb of your ratio (in order to prevent people from posting too many requests). If a user fills a request by uploading the requested movie and then entering the torrent URL in the request details the user receives a very large ratio bonus. To give a request more weight, all users can vote on requests. The more votes a request has, the larger the bonus will be for the person filling the request. If you vote on a request, the request is bumped to the top of the request list and you are put on a list to be automatically notified once the request is filled.

- **Encourage the custom creation and translation of subtitles for rare movies.**

There are countless of rare foreign movies out there for which English subtitles do not exist. We have a small but dedicated community of people working on creating custom subtitles for movies. This usually involves translating or transcribing, creating subtitle timings etc. We have a forum on creating custom subtitles here. If you want to start a subtitling project on your own or feel you can help others with their projects please feel free to post in that forum. Since custom subtitle creation is an enormous amount of work we offer large ratio bonuses for completed subtitling projects.

All of these factors contribute to the unique KaraGarga experience and should give you a better insight into how our community functions. Thank you for reading.