

ONLINE STREAMING:
A SURVEY OF ONLINE SHARING AND PIRACY

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Thesis Abstract

Şebnem Baran, “Online Streaming: A Survey of Online Sharing and Piracy”

Communication technologies have always sparked big debates about their possible effects on human life and the society. The excitement and the fear caused by the invention of television is one among many other such examples to this vivid interest. Today, similar discussions revolve around the widespread use of the internet and how the internet changed the world as we knew it while digitalization provides vast set of opportunities for online sharing. As online interactions and communications increased the dissemination of content and information, the borders between the processes of production and consumption became blurred. The control of culture industry over the copying and the dissemination of cultural products weakened. The on-going transformation instigated debates about the possibilities of theoretical and methodological re-conceptualization. Via the case study of the online streaming site *WatchOnline.com*, this thesis aims to survey, how the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content affect the existing perceptions of property and exchange, which, in turn, might give clues about the reactions to the present economic model. This research concludes that: 1-) Online streaming in this case does not oppose the existence of the culture industry for it is dependent on the culture industry’s production of the content and rather reacts to the monopolistic nature of the system; 2-) The site appears to incorporate both the elements of commercialization and sharing; and 3-) The practices of sharing contribute to the formation of community, which depicts solidarity, around the site

Tez Özeti

Şebnem Baran, “Online Streaming: Online Paylaşım ve Korsanlık Araştırması”

İletişim teknolojileri hep insan hayatı ve toplum üzerindeki etkileriyle ilgili büyük tartışmalara yol açmıştır. Televizyonun icadının sebep olduğu heyecan ve korku söz konusu canlı ilginin örneklerindendir. Günümüzde internet kullanımının yaygınlaşması ve internetin dünyayı nasıl değiştirdiği ile ilgili benzer tartışmalar devam ederken dijitalizasyon, online paylaşım için geniş bir grup imkan sunmaktadır. Online etkileşim ve iletişim, içerik ve bilgi dağılımını arttırırken üretim ve tüketim süreçleri arasındaki sınırlar bulanıklaşmaktadır. Kültür endüstrisinin, kültürel ürünlerin çoğaltılması ve dağıtılması üzerindeki kontrolü zayıflamaktadır. Devam eden bu değişim, teorik ve metodolojik yeniden kavramlaştırma olasılıkları ile ilgili tartışmaları başlatmıştır. Online streaming sitesi *WatchOnline.com*’un vaka analizi ile bu tez ile, telif haklarıyla korunan içeriğin izinsiz tedavülünün, var olan ekonomik modele karşı tepkilerle ilgili ipuçları verebilecek olan mevcut mülk ve değişim algılarına etkisinin araştırılması amaçlanmaktadır. İlgili araştırma şu sonuçları vermiştir: 1-) Bu vakada online streaming kültür endüstrisinin içerik üretimine bağımlı olduğu için kültür endüstrisinin varlığına karşı çıkılmamaktadır ve daha ziyade sistemin tekelleşmiş yapısına tepki gösterilmektedir; 2-) Site hem ticarileşme hem de paylaşım unsurları içermektedir; ve de 3-) Paylaşım pratikleri sitenin etrafında dayanışma gösteren bir topluluk oluşmasına katkıda bulunmaktadır.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Communication technologies have always sparked big debates about their possible effects on human life and the society. The excitement and the fear caused by the invention of television is one among many other such examples to this vivid interest. Today, similar discussions revolve around the widespread use of the internet and how the internet changed the world as we knew it. The motivation for writing this thesis stemmed from the same curiosity about the effects of the digital technologies, which provided vast set of opportunities for online sharing. As online interactions and communications increased the dissemination of content and information, the borders between the processes of production and consumption became blurred. The control of culture industry over the copying and the dissemination of cultural products weakened. The on-going transformation instigated debates about the possibilities of theoretical and methodological re-conceptualization. Via the case study of the online streaming site *WatchOnline.com*, this thesis aims to survey, how the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content affect the existing perceptions of property and exchange, which, in turn, might give clues about the reactions to the present economic model. This research concludes that: 1-) Online streaming in this case does not oppose the existence of the culture industry for it is dependent on the culture industry's production of the content and rather reacts to the monopolistic nature of the system; 2-) The site appears to incorporate both the elements of commercialization and sharing; and 3-) The practices of sharing contribute to the formation of community, which depicts solidarity, around the site.

Digitalization is necessary to understand how the aforementioned change is brought about. The moment audio and visual materials became files that can be stored in digital form, it became possible to view them via different media. It also became easier to copy and to share them. What made this form of copying and sharing unique was the fact that the copy and the original no longer differed in quality. The same digitalization lies at the heart of media convergence, too. First the computers, then the smart phones brought television, music player and telephone together while the internet made it possible to access many media at once. Furthermore, the global communication network created by the internet enabled the formation of various communities, which did not hesitate to share what they had with each other. After all, sharing did not damage their own copies.

Today, some part of this sharing is deemed to be illegal. Consequently, intellectual property rights regime is criticized by some activists, while governments and culture industries stand against what they call piracy. Laws and regulations try to catch up with the new online sharing technologies. Peer-to-peer file sharing, one-click-hosting and online streaming are among possible platforms for this sharing. The recent activities in the US Senate to criminalize online streaming of pirated videos are an example of the on-going tension.

In the world of *YouTube*, the definition of what a pirated video is quite complicated. Fans take cultural products, such as songs, TV series' episodes and movies to create their own works. Fan videos are shared not only by the fans, but also by the industrial actors like TV networks or production companies in order to create publicity. Producers and consumers or users are no longer distinguished from each other. Besides, the product itself is not the same once it is shared on another

platform. Watching a TV series' episode, which is produced for a certain number of commercial breaks with a certain rhythm, is not the same as watching it with subtitles on the internet with no commercial breaks at all. In other words, product evolves just like production and consumption processes further complicating the existing challenges to notions of property and exchange in relation to online sharing and piracy.

The industrial actors struggle to retain their control over the copying and the dissemination of the cultural products in the aforementioned context. Although it is not possible to talk about a monotonous and monolithic culture industry, there is a commonly shared anxiety about the practices of online sharing and piracy. The prevalence of the negative reactions enables the positioning of the culture industry as the sum of these industrial actors for the discussions incorporated in the study. As an important component of the discussions surrounding the maintenance of the capitalistic system, the challenges to the power of the culture industry provide a starting point to understand how the present economic model is undergoing a transformation. Regarding the transformation, this case study focuses on online sharing practices rather than pursuing a stand-alone alternative. In the case of *WatchOnline.com*, the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content provides a chance to look at the effects of online streaming on the perceptions of property and exchange. At this point, it is also necessary to mention that the capitalistic system cannot be reduced to the property regime or to the commodity-exchange. Still, both the notions of property and exchange are important elements of the current capitalistic market economy, so the survey of their transformation is appropriate for the study of the on-going change.

WatchOnline.com is situated at the midst of this controversial issue of online sharing. The site, which airs TV series online without the consent of the copyright owners, interacts with different technologies of sharing and integrates some of them within. The interactions of the site are not limited to the non-human technological nodes for it is in connection with several human actors. These set of online and offline relationships and interactions point out to the multidimensionality of the site, which reflects the multidimensionality inherent in the networks of online sharing and piracy.

Although peer-to-peer file sharing, music piracy and physical piracy of digital products via DVDs and CDs have been studied in the literature, online streaming of pirated content remains yet to be explored. The fact that the website streams videos and appears as a central node in a way reminiscent of TV channels makes it even more interesting. The website provides a chance to survey how the founders, the admins and the users perceive the debates surrounding property and exchange in the digital era. In other words, it offers a snapshot of how the actors in these networks locate themselves in relation to online sharing and how they articulate their positions vis-à-vis the unauthorized circulation of copyrighted content. The structure and the agents are intertwined in this network of piracy and as an important node, *WatchOnline.com* makes it possible to look at both aspects at the same time.

Online streaming is not the only mode of online sharing. Peer-to-peer file sharing and one-click-hosting sites appear as the other alternatives. Furthermore, *WatchOnline.com* is an ambivalent example, it is both integrated within but at the same time challenging the existing system. In contrast, there are purer forms of sharing nodes. For example, there are closed communities, which exchange content

privately and there are sites, which explicitly state that they are pro-piracy. In other words, *WatchOnline.com* is not the only or the most radical example. Nevertheless, within the fast period of changes, the life span of the site mirrors the on-going transformation cultural sphere is taking, and the site brings different technologies and actors together for the analysis; therefore, providing a case for study.

In light of these, this thesis examines how digitalization challenges the previous definitions of production and consumption as well as the meanings of property and exchange within the framework of culture industries. The locus of the study will be an online streaming website, *WatchOnline.com*. The next sections of this thesis are as follows: Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework that aims at providing an understanding of the industrialization of the cultural production as well as depicting how digitalization challenges the power of the culture industry, the existing system of intellectual property and functioning of networks. Chapter 3 describes the case for study, *WatchOnline.com*, and presents details of the design for the case study. Chapter 4 presents results and discussion. Chapter 5 consists of the review of the main arguments and findings. This chapter also includes the discussions of the limitations as well as the recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, literature is reviewed in order to provide the theoretical framework for the examination of online sharing and piracy and to provide the conceptual tools for operationalization of the study. Culture industry appears as a key term to unravel the transformation of production and consumption of the cultural products.

Therefore, the first section of the literature review focuses on the culture industry and how digitalization influenced the industry, which reacts to the online sharing and piracy. The industry's reaction revolved around intellectual property rights discussions. How digitalization challenges this existing system of intellectual property rights corresponds to another important component of the study. For that reason, the second section of this chapter is devoted to the review of this on-going change. As the effects of digitalization on the cultural production and consumption become visible, new discussions about the ways to study this change and its results emerged. The final section of this chapter surveys network multidimensionality as a possible lead for answering questions about the study of online sharing and piracy.

Culture Industry and Digitalization

In this section, industrialization of the cultural production is reviewed along with the different theoretical approaches towards this industrialization. Culture industry is defined and the discussions about the possible ways to study the industry are summarized. Finally, how digitalization affected the culture industry is surveyed as “culture industry,” a term coined by Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, acquires new importance under the prevalence of digitalization.

The members of the Frankfurt School were the first ones to realize the mass production of the cultural products. The standardization and the mechanization, which took the cultural production from the workshops of the artists to the factories, were problematic for those scholars since industrialization resulted in the creation of the formulaic products that targeted the masses. The effects of this change were troubling for Adorno and Horkheimer because they blamed the formulaic products for bringing the end of dialectics. The industrialized cultural production did not leave any space for alternative cultural production possibilities or thinking processes that could lead to the critiques of capitalism. That, in turn, contributed to the maintenance of the capitalistic system since entertainment provided distraction as well as an illusion of freedom. Therefore, emancipation was prevented by the reproduction of false consciousness.

The industrialization of culture also indicated the death of art for Adorno and Horkheimer. They argued that even the productive forces no longer call themselves as the creators of art: “Movies and radio need no longer pretend to be art. The truth that they are just business is made into an ideology in order to justify the rubbish they deliberately produce. They call themselves industries [...]” (Adorno and Horkheimer, 1944, p. 121). At this point, it becomes clear that the writers did not perceive the products of culture industry as art pieces, yet still they belong to the cultural realm. There was also an inherent dislike of popular culture in Adorno and Horkheimer’s critique. This dislike becomes more visible in Adorno’s piece “Culture Industry Reconsidered.” In this same piece, Adorno further elaborated on his and Horkheimer’s use of the notion of culture industry in their analysis:

In our drafts we spoke of “mass culture.” We replaced that expression with “culture industry” in order to exclude from the outset the interpretation

agreeable to its advocates: that it is a matter of something like a culture that arises spontaneously from the masses themselves, the contemporary form of popular art. From the latter the culture industry must be distinguished in the extreme [...]. (Adorno, 1975, p.131)

By differentiating the mass culture and the culture industry, the cultural production is attributed to the culture industry. In other words, it is impossible to talk about a “mass culture” since nothing about culture is created by the masses. The very same culture industry prevented the development of individuals, who could think for themselves (Adorno, 1975, p. 137). Popular art, whether in the form of movies or in the form of a jazz song, was a tool of this prevention according to Adorno. In that context, what made the culture industry strong was its ability to conceal its influence. People believe to be spending their free time as they want, yet even during that time, they are exposed to the control of the capitalistic system.

Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory of culture industry recognizes this sphere of influence and how this influence infiltrates into everyday lives and practices. In other words, their work depicts how culture is present in every realm rather than simply defining it as superstructure. This encompassing nature attributed to the culture industry is enhanced by the mass production made possible by mechanization and standardization. In this context, the culture industry destroys any space for its alternatives to blossom.

While Adorno and Horkheimer were strongly critical of the culture industry, another member of the Frankfurt School, Benjamin was more optimistic. He shared Adorno and Horkheimer’s dislike of mechanization of cultural production and argued the mechanical reproduction robbed the aura off the works of art (Benjamin, 1969, p. 51). Nevertheless, Benjamin (1969) also believed this mechanization would contribute to an increase in exposure to the cultural products (p. 59). This exposure,

then, would grant people with enough affinity to think and talk more about these cultural products (Benjamin, 1969, p. 59). At the end, Benjamin hoped for an awareness of the dynamics of the capitalistic system that might lead to emancipation. Emancipation is also linked with awareness in Adorno's works. Nevertheless, the dialectical thinking that would make emancipation possible cannot be stirred by the products of the culture industry since standardization makes the piece easier to recognize while making it less capable of being thought-provoking.

Cultural studies offered an alternative approach to cultural production and consumption. Gramsci's work on cultural hegemony laid the foundations of this approach. Gramsci (1971) argued that the dominant classes controlled the society via the creation of consent, which took place in the cultural realm as the values of the dominant classes' were reproduced. With an interest in hegemony, culture and consent, the question of agency came into the picture. Although the overreaching power of the culture industry was acknowledged, cultural studies recognized the audience as active rather than passive receivers and attributed them with agency. According to this reasoning, alternative meanings and understandings could flourish and contribute to the alternative cultures that might in return ignite resistance of some kind. In that way, the focus shifted towards the audience reception rather than the industry itself. Hoggart and Hall's Birmingham School led this interest in the audience's reception (Durham and Kellner, 2001, p. 15).

The Marxist response to cultural studies was the political economy approach, which argued for the importance of the economic structure for the evaluation of the cultural production. With that, the structural configuration of the culture industry was prioritized rather than the audience reception. Calabrese (2004) argues that the

renewed interest in the political economy also introduced communication as an element of analysis along with culture when Nicholas Garnham, one of the most prominent proponents of the political economy approach, underlined the communication's role in culture making by his use of "political economy of culture and communication" as a conceptual term (Calabrese, 2004, p. 2). Supporters of the political economy approach strongly criticized the cultural studies tradition for failing to look at the material connotations of the media. They argued that the cultural studies led to the veiling the effects of the political economy on the cultural realm. This also created an illusion of capability on the part of the audience. In other words, depicting audience as active rather than passive contributed to the false consciousness, itself. McChesney (2004) explains the difference of the political economy from the cultural studies with its two dimensions:

First, it addresses the nature of the relationship between media and communication systems on the one hand and the broader social structure of society on the other. It examines how media and communication systems and content reinforce, challenge, or influence existing class and social relations [...] Second, the political economy of communication looks specifically at how ownership, support mechanisms (e.g., advertising), and government policies establish media systems and communication technologies and (directly and indirectly) influence media behavior and content. (p. 43)

Once again, media's—and the culture industry's—role in the maintenance of the existing socio-economic order becomes important. It is not only about the content, but also about the system itself in general. Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model (1988) is an example of this prioritization, which focuses on the ownership patterns and economic relationships and how these contribute to the news structuring, which produces consent for the government policies. Furthermore, the labeling of the current era as post-industrialistic is criticized by the political economy scholars (Garnham 1986; Mieke, 2004) for they argue the system is as industrialistic

as ever while some argue (Schiller, 2001) that the system is not yet post-imperialistic either. For this approach identifies the economic structure as the determining factor, other approaches highlighting the importance of technologies (e.g. McLuhan, 1964; Postman, 1985) are dismissed.

It is important to realize that, while focusing on the reception—or the consumption—end, the cultural studies tradition does not deny the existence of the culture industry. In that way, this tradition contradicts neither the Frankfurt School nor the supporters of the political economy approach for production, circulation and consumption are accepted as the stages of culture making. Therefore, it is not surprising to see how the current works in the literature commonly utilize the word “industry” despite the differences in theory. While different scholars talk about culture industries (Garnham, 1986; Mieke, 2004), global culture industry (Lash and Lury, 2007), media industry (Deuze, 2007; Deuze, 2009) and creative industries (Hartley, 2005), they all acknowledge the existence of the industry. Nevertheless, there is not a joint resolution about the definition of this “industry” or on how this industry should be studied. The common part of these most recent approaches is that all of them call for re-thinking and revising the culture industry theory of Adorno and Horkheimer. For example, in relation to the use of the “cultural industries,” the pluralization indicates both the departure from Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory and the formation of a more descriptive category for the study (Negus, 2006, p. 199). Lash and Lury (2007) also calls for a reconsideration about the same notion and come up with the notion of global culture industry, which they argue to be about mediation of things rather than their representation (p. 7). Hartley (2005) simply defines creative industries as the combination of creative arts and the culture industries and add: “This change is important for it brings the arts (i.e. culture) into

direct contact with large-scale industries such as media entertainment (i.e. the market)” (p. 5-6). Kellner’s (2004) definition of critical media industries studies is hybrid since he underlines the need to look at the political economy, textual analysis and audience reception at the same time (p. 29).

Havens, Lotz and Tinic further argue that critical political economy approach falls short of providing a thorough explanation of the complexities of media industries. They state that:

The limitation we find with critical political economy approaches to the media industries results from their consistent focus on the larger level operations of media institutions, general in attention to entertainment programming, and incomplete explanation of the role of human agents (other than those at the pinnacle of conglomerate hierarchies) in interpreting, focusing, and redirecting economic forces that provide for complexity and contradiction within media industries. (Havens, Lotz and Tinic, 2009, p. 236)

It is not surprising to see that the most recent approaches towards the culture industry underline a more comprehensive research including both the production and the consumption aspects since digitalization and media convergence as its consequence make it difficult to differentiate production and consumption processes. Deuze points to this dichotomy apparent in the study of media production and consumption. He argues: “Media consumption is predominantly investigated by focusing on the way audiences receive and give meaning to media content. On the other hand, media production tends to be analyzed in terms of the political economy or sociology of the industry” (Deuze, 2007, p. 244). Nevertheless, this separation is no longer—even if it ever was—functional since digitalization and convergence blurred the lines between producers and consumers. Active participants are the main tenets of media convergence (Deuze, 2009; Jenkins, 2006; Sundet and Ytreberg 2009).

With digitalization, compression and storage capacities increased. In addition, different media were brought together with the help of digitalization, which led to media convergence. One can call others, listen to music, watch TV and play games via the same medium. Internet, which is another product of digitalization, provided a wide-spread network to exchange this shared content, further contributing to the media convergence.

It is important to realize digitalization not only increased access too different cultural products at a lower cost, but also granted the user with the capability of tempering with the product. Once a video or a song enters the digital world, it is not immune to any attempts of cut-copy-paste. The users not only work on the existing cultural products, but with all digital technologies—such as digital cameras, editing programs, or any other type of software—can also produce their own products and disseminate that product online. Every day, millions of bloggers share their stories, aspiring musicians sing their songs and hopeful filmmakers upload their videos online. This is what Castells (2009) call mass-self communication, which refers to the capability of sharing content without the interference of the mass media (p. 55). Therefore, the effects of digitalization are complicated in terms of production and consumption dichotomy. While the previous discussions in the literature regarding the culture industry were about the extent of the industry's control over reception, the current situation carried the discussion to another level. In the past, studies focused on the users' reception of the content communicated by the media. The digital era changed this paradigm since the users now produce their own content. Furthermore, they reflect upon their experiences of production and consumption on the internet. The result is a reflexive user, who produces as well as consuming.

The industrial forces do not hesitate to make use of this user activity. Every potentially profitable idea has its buyers and many talented amateurs find themselves “discovered” as media companies do their best to find new “talents.” Banks and Deuze (2009) also survey this increasingly co-creative nature of labor. They point out to the increasing participation of the consumers in making and circulating media content (p. 419). This participation contributes to the spread of user created content and user-led innovation (Banks and Deuze, 2009, p. 419). For example, the fan-made videos of the TV shows circulate in the internet beyond the fan forums. *YouTube* hosts many videos of that kind. Even if the official web sites of the shows abstain from providing links, the producers, the writers and the actors feel free to give the links via their *Twitter* accounts. What is important here is to unravel the functioning of this co-creative labor. Of course, the publicity is important for the producers and keeping the fans engaged contributes to maintaining fan loyalty. Still, there is a lot more to survey. Banks and Deuze (2009) also question the nature of this phenomenon: “Is it outsourcing? Is it exploiting activities that more properly belong to a non-market and non-commercial gift economy?” (p. 422).

The question of exploitation is further studied by Fuchs, who surveys the issues of labor in informational capitalism and on the internet. Giving the example of *YouTube*, Fuchs (2010) points out to the increasing importance of the user-generated content (p. 191). He argues, the need to expand class analysis to the new media roots from the exploitation going on via the new media (Fuchs, 2010, p. 191). Fuchs (2010) quotes Axel Bruns, who has applied Alvin Toffler’s “prosumer” to the new media via his introduction of “produsage” in order to depict, how the consumers’ participation in production is a form of exploitation (p. 190). Axel Bruns (2008) explains this amalgam of production and consumption by coming up with a new

term. He calls the producer-consumer/user hybrid as “produser” (p. 2). Bruns (2008) explains the change as follows:

To overcome the technological dilemma which forces us as we attempt examine process of user-led content creation, we must introduce new terms into the debate. The concept of *produsage* is such a term; it highlights that within the communities which engage in the collaborative creation and extension of information and knowledge [...], the role of ‘consumer’ and even that of ‘end user’ have long disappeared, and the distinctions between produces and users of content have faded into comparative insignificance. (p 2)

While some scholars accuse the industrial forces for exploiting the labor of the users, these industrial forces blame users with copyright violations. As mentioned above, the use of cultural products by the users is acceptable as long as it generates publicity and as long as the user makes no money out of the recycling of the content as it can be seen in the case of fan videos. Piracy, on the other hand, is fought strongly by the media companies. It is important to mention, piracy was there even before digitalization took over and VHS tapes were sold long before the CDs were sold on streets. However, the digital era witnessed the non-profit seeking sharing of cultural products. Users upload what they have so that other people can download and use the same content. In that case, one-click-hosting web sites and peer-to-peer file sharing pages become important nodes of sharing. Online streaming appears as another type of sharing nodes. With the spread of online sharing, a new discussion about the possible economic alternatives flourished. For example, Moore and Karatzogianni (2009) describe peer-to-peer sharing as a possible alternative to the capitalistic system. The writers mention the concept of “passionate production” in relation to this P2P model (Moore and Karatzogianni, 2009, p. 7). In a similar way, Arvidsson (2009) argues this new regime of online sharing indicates the rise of a new value logic (p. 13). This new value system, which is not based on labor time, thrives upon

connectivity and contributes to what Arvidsson (2009) calls as “ethical economy” (p. 13). Dafermos and Söderberg (2009) go a step further and compare the hacker movement to the labor struggle (p. 53). In other words, online sharing is depicted as a form of resistance to capitalism and this resistance keeps the potential of creating an alternative to capitalism from within.

As mentioned before, digitalization blurs the line between production and consumption and online sharing lies on that blurred line. With all the changes mentioned above, the culture industry is transformed along with the users. In that context, while existence of culture industry remains undisputed, deciding how to approach it appears as a new challenge.

Intellectual Property and Piracy

The discussions surrounding piracy revolve around the notion of intellectual property. In these discussions, the very existence of property rights is questioned as well as the tension between the right to property and the right to freedom. Similarly, the tradeoff between the private and the public interests are also mentioned. In each instances, the notion of intellectual property is present. Therefore, a survey of the intellectual property rights is necessary to understand piracy and how it can be studied.

The notion of intellectual property dates (Bettig, 1996; May and Sell, 2006) back to Middle Ages. Although there are instances of commodification and authorship related to the cultural products, until then there was not developed system of intellectual property rights. The invention of mechanical printing is the turning point in the rise of the intellectual property rights (May and Sell, 2006, p. 55).

Copyrights came into being as a way of preventing other publishers from printing the same book after publishing became an important industry (May and Sell, 2006, p. 56). A prototypical example of patents, which are other forms of intellectual property right protection, is the Venetian statute of 1474 that protects Brunelleschi's design of a vessel to move loads in the river (May and Sell, 2006, p. 54). The exclusive privilege to print for five years granted to John of Speyer, who brought printing press to Venice in 1469, serves as another example (Bettig, 1996, p.16). A similar printing privilege was granted to the Stationers Company in England in 1557 for one-hundred and fifty years (Bettig, 1996, p.17). In terms of copyright protection, Milton's *Paradise Lost* became the first book that generated copy money for the author in 1667 (Bettig, 1996, p.18). It is important to realize copyrights grew hand in hand with the importance of authorship and it slowly became an alternative to patronage. In the eighteenth century, further legal regulations came into existence. 1710's Copyright Act or Statute of Queen Ann provided legal protection which was endangered after the expiration of Licensing Act in England in 1694 (Bettig, 1996, p. 22-23). This was followed by the first federal copyright law in the United States, the Act of May 31, 1790 (Bettig, 1996, p. 27). While these marked the early modern foundations for the intellectual property system, the twentieth-century foresaw the further legal arrangements as well as the internationalization of the system mentioned above.

The Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs) is the most important document of this system. TRIPs Agreement sets the intellectual property rights standards for the members of the World Trade Organization. Treaties and agreements prepared by the United Nations' World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) are brought together under a single roof

with this agreement (May and Sell, 2006, p.162). European Union's Berne Convention serves a similar purpose. It protects the moral rights of the author further with Article 6:

Independently of the author's economic rights, and even after the transfer of said rights, the author shall have the right to claim authorship of the work and to object to any distortion, mutilation or other modification of, or other derogatory action in relation to, the said work, which shall be prejudicial to his honor or reputation. (Bettig, 1996, p. 241)

The protection of the creator's moral rights is unique to the Berne Convention and is not stated in the TRIPs clearly; therefore, raising questions about the claims of protecting the artists' rights via international intellectual property regimes. Besides, lacking a clear stance on the moral rights, TRIPs has been criticized (Burch, 1995; Manion, 2005; Smiers, 2000) for favoring the developed countries and for contributing to their oligopoly by preventing the less developed countries from catching up with the production levels of the developed countries by limiting the use of knowledge protected by the intellectual property regimes. Humanitarian concerns are also present especially in the cases regarding the medicinal drug patents for epidemics like HIV/AIDS since the patents limit the access to these drugs due to increased production costs, which also reflect on the prices of the drugs. The critics argue that the protection of the intellectual property rights provided by the TRIPs Agreement reproduces the existing asymmetry of power in the world.

Intellectual property rights regimes mentioned above also include some limitations and exceptions to the intellectual property rights, which help define the illegality of the use or the copying of the copyrighted content. Berne Three Step Test or the United States Federal Courts' fair use standards are examples of limitations and exceptions. In the latter case, the judges rely on four standards: "the purpose and

character of your use, the nature of the copyrighted work, the amount and substantiality of the portion taken, and the effect of the use upon the potential market” (“Measuring Fair Use: The Four Factors,” 2010). Fair use is strongly related to the four privileges given to the copyright owners with copyrights. Buchanan and Campbell (2004) list these privileges as: “to reproduce the work; to distribute the work; to prepare derivative works; and to display and/or perform the work publicly” (p. 230). Granting those privileges mentioned above to the creators is associated with the two recurring justifications for the intellectual property rights. The first one relies on a utilitarian reasoning. The supporters of the intellectual property rights argue that these privileges reward the creators and this encourages further inventions and creations, which would benefit the public in general. The second justification, which is also called as the Lockean justification, is based on the notion of property and it indicates that the creator has the right to own and to control his or her own creation, which is his or her own property.

While most of the supporters (Moore, 1997; Nozick, 1974; Rosenberg, 2004) of the intellectual property rights rather underline one’s right to his or her own idea as well as the utility generated by the innovation incentive, there are some other justifications. For example, Breakey (2009) justifies the execution of the IPRs based on the individual’s right to use his/her ideas and his/her right to contract (p. 329). Breakey’s example remains in the liberal paradigm.

In terms of limitations to copyrights, it is important to mention the notions of “fair use” and “first sale.” These limitations of the intellectual property rights become more meaningful when the privileges given with copyrights are considered.

Buchanan and Campbell (2004) further elaborate on the relationship between these four privileges and the notions of “fair use” and “first sale” as follows:

Against these rights, the law grants some limitations on the exclusive rights of copyright holders that are usually referred to as “fair use.” Fair use does not infringe on copyright. Acceptable fair uses include, for example, quoting small sections of a work in a review or critical discussion, making an individual copy of sections of a work for research or educational use, and so on. There is also one other extremely important aspect of the legal use of copyrighted materials; i.e., a copyright owner may not control the use of a copy of his or her work once that copy has been sold to another. This is known as the “first sale” doctrine [...] and it is what makes libraries, video rental stores, and even personal lending or gift-giving possible. (p. 230)

These standards are challenged by the spread of the digital technologies and the internet use. Digitalization not only makes physical copying easier, but also introduces the notion of digitally stored content. In the latter case, electronic or digital copies lack rivalrousness of the physical copies. Buchanan and Campbell (2004) illustrate this transformation brought about by digitalization as follows:

If one person has a physical copy of a book and lends it to another, the first person no longer has use of the book. If one person has an electronic copy of the same book and sends it to another, they both have use of it. “Rivalrous goods” become “non-rivalrous goods” in the digital domain, and the economic world is turned upside down. Or so copyright owners claim. (p. 230)

Rivalrousness and non-rivalrousness recurrently appear in the discussions on the intellectual property rights. As Buchanan and Campbell also wrote, copyright owners try to preserve the rivalrousness of the intellectual property. The critics of the intellectual property rights argue against the way this rivalrousness is taken for granted. They argue that it was created by the industrial forces as a means of price control. In other words, without the copyrights, the intellectual property would still remain non-rivalrous.

According to this stance, these rights were developed to create scarcity needed for the market to function. Since cultural products like books can be copied, the publishers wanted to limit the number of copies present in the market so that the price could be controlled to some extent. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that the rise of the intellectual property rights coincides with the development of mass publication possibilities. Back when books were handwritten, the amount of work and time needed made it impossible to create enough copies to alter the scarcity. Non-rivalrous nature of intellectual property sets it apart from physical forms of property. May (2010) explains this difference by comparing a hammer and the idea of cabinet making:

Take the example of a hammer (as material property); if I own a hammer and we would both like to use it, our utility is compromised by sharing use. I cannot use the hammer while you use it. Thus, for you also to use my hammer, either you have to accept a compromised utility (relying on my goodwill to allow you to use it when I am not) or you must also buy a hammer. The hammer is scarce. However the idea of building something with hammer and nails is not scarce. If I instruct you in the art of simple construction, once that knowledge has been imparted your use of that information has no effect on my ability to use the knowledge at the same time, there is no compromise to my utility. (p. 3)

Non-rivalrousness initiates the need to fabricate scarcity. Once the idea of building something with hammer is protected by intellectual property rights, not only this idea becomes commodified and commercialized, but it also becomes non-transferrable without the consent of the original producer or seller.

Non-rivalrousness becomes a bit complicated when you consider other examples. In a way reminiscent of hammer example of May, sharing a book requires “compromised utility.” After all, two people cannot read it at the same time. The situation is similar for music CDs. However, photocopying the book or copying the CD and getting a second copy does not reduce the value of the original copy. In other

words, the content is still non-rivalrous. Intellectual property rights remedy this non-rivalrousness and provide the right owner some financial advantage. The situation is same for both types of intellectual property rights: patents, which protect industrial intellectual property, and copyrights, which protect the artistic of literary intellectual property (May, 2010, p. 3). This stance accepts the fact the intellectual property rights provide financial advantage to the owner of the right.

It is important to remember that the right owner may not always be the original creator or the artist. Most of the time, production companies and publishing houses hold the copyrights to the artistic and literary products. This point is strongly criticized by those who oppose the intellectual property rights. For example, May (2006) points out that the companies pressure for the intellectual property rights rather than the creators of the intellectual property (p. 48). He also adds that by protecting the property, the intellectual property rights protect the capitalistic system (May, 2006, p. 34). This protection also contributes to the monopolization of cultural products (Bettig, 1996; Boldrin and Levine, 2008) according to the critics of the intellectual property rights. Like May, Burch (1995) argues that the intellectual property rights support the global liberalism. He depicts liberalism as a culture and explains how the WTO, the GATT and the TRIPS help reproducing that global culture (p. 217). This way, they make it easier for global liberalism to function via the vocabulary of rights and property (Burch, 1995, p. 217). The definition of property as “the exclusive right to possess, use, dispose, sell, or exchange a thing or idea” is the most important part of this vocabulary (Burch, 1995, p. 224).

Some other critics point out to the Western-centric approach towards intellectual property. Garmon (2002) lists how different cultures have different

approaches towards using and copying (p. 1150). Quoting Bettig, she also points out to the link between capitalism and the intellectual property rights and explains how the intellectual property rights became more relevant as printing enabled quicker copying options (Garmon, 2002, p. 1150). Furthermore, she surveys the notion of piracy in less developed countries and argues that the US tries to fight the piracy in other countries since the intellectual property rights protect the economic gain of the US (Garmon, 2002, p. 1153-1154). Similarly, Smiers (2000), who also underlines the Western-centric nature of these rights, criticizes the commodification of culture and hopes that the artists will gain more (p. 379). Smiers argues all artistic materials belong to the common good (2000, p. 380). He also points out to the danger of oligopolistic domination of the cultural market rooting from the oligopolistic owners' advantaged position in terms of the protection of copyrights (Smiers, 2000, p. 384). In that context, the WTO/GATT/TRIPS become agents of what Smiers (2000) calls as the "expansionist logic of capital" (p. 385). Smiers (2000) mentions how the industrial forces can end up making use of indigenous knowledge via filing for copyrights (p. 393). Therefore, Smiers argues that: "[...] the private appropriation of culture and science takes place under neo-liberal, capitalist and oligopolistic conditions" (Smiers, 2000, p. 398).

Patents function in a similar way according to critics. For example, Manion (2005) looks at the pharmaceutical industry and depicts how the intellectual property rights create difficulties for the less developed countries while they make it easier for the industrial forces to make profit out of the indigenous knowledge without paying anything to the society, which generated that knowledge (p. 82). In this way, intellectual property rights favor the developed countries (Manion, 2005, p. 79).

Apart from the critiques on the asymmetry produced and reproduced by the intellectual property rights, these rights also appear to be in tension with the notions of freedom of expression and freedom of information. Thierer and Crews (2002) argue that this tension is further highlighted by the rise of the internet and has caused a great concern to whom they refer as “market liberals:”

From a utilitarian perspective, libertarians value the importance of legal incentives that encourage artistic or scientific creation [...] But market liberals also advocate the free and unfettered expression and exchange of ideas in the marketplace and throughout civil society. (p. xvii)

Here, the legal incentives correspond to copyrights and patents, which reward invention and creation by providing privileges of reproduction and dissemination to the copyright owner. Nevertheless, the precautions to maintain that protection can clash with the freedom of expression. Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which is in action and the proposed Stop Online Piracy Act have encountered criticisms based on this clash. Netanel (2008) gives the example of notice-and-take-down provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act to depict how these precautions can compromise freedom of expression as well as the freedom of information:

Those provisions, which Congress enacted in 1998, codify a compromise in which copyright industries and telecommunication companies agreed, in effect, to deputize Internet service providers (ISPs) to enforce copyright against ISP subscribers. The provisions immunize an Internet service provider from liability for infringing material that a subscriber places on an ISP server so long as the ISP removes that material upon receiving a “take-down” notice from the copyright owner. (p. 114)

Netanel argues that ISPs, which lack time and resources to evaluate the accuracy of the notice, remove the content to avoid risks (Netanel, 2008, p. 115). Freedom of expression is curtailed in this way.

Built-in control mechanisms (Gillespie, 2006; Patry, 2009) which aim to fight piracy by technically disabling the content sharing instigate a similar concern.

Gillespie (2006) argues that these built-in control mechanisms prevent the consumers from repairing their own tools and hinder the start-up manufacturers by limiting their access to the workings of the tool (p. 658). By encryption, in the name of the copyrights, the producers aim to prevent piracy. Still, it is also important to remember some of these built-in control mechanisms are decoded by the users and become ineffective in terms of fighting piracy.

In relation to the functioning of the intellectual property rights, there is also a tension between the private and the public interests (Bettig, 1996; May, 2010), yet this tension has two different sides to consider. The generation of new ideas and knowledge, which is encouraged by the copyright privileges to the copyright owner, contributes to public good by expanding the realm of knowledge for the humankind. Nevertheless, the control of the reproduction and the dissemination of this knowledge by the copyrights also mean that the access to that knowledge is limited by the control of copyright owners. This, in a way, juxtaposes the private interests of the copyright owners and the public interest for accessing knowledge. May (2006) argues the temporal restriction for copyrights aims to balance these private and public interests:

The argument that there are social benefits gained from the development and dissemination of 'new' knowledge and information underpins the legal construction of IPRs. To this end, all IPRs encompass a balance between private rights for reward and public need for the (unconstrained) availability of important knowledge and information. This balance between private reward and public interest has been traditionally expressed through duration limits on IPRs: unlike material property. (p. 5)

This temporality marks the difference between intellectual property and material property along with the non-rivalrousness.

Like Smiers, Bettig (1996) points out that the culture belongs to humanity (p. 240). He argues that intellectual property, like material property, serves the ruling classes and states: “Copyright ownership has become a means of establishing and maintaining the monopolization of the production, distribution, and communication of cultural expression” (Bettig, 1996, p. 240). This critique is in line with the culture industry thesis of Adorno and Horkheimer (1944) as well as the political economy of culture and communication approaches since the hegemony of the ruling classes is reproduced via monopolization of the cultural expression realm. It is not surprising that peer-to-peer file sharing is applauded as a new form of economy battling against this hegemony by some critics (Arvidsson, 2009; Dafermos and Söderberg, 2009; Moore and Karatzogianni, 2009).

Critics also suggest alternatives to replace intellectual property rights. For example, Smiers (2006) suggests an alternative for remedying the situation and calls for the replacement of the copyright system with a general tax that will benefit the society and the artists rather than making the intermediaries richer (p. 400). This system is reminiscent of Canada’s taxing of MP3 players upon purchase. Nill and Geipel (2009) call for a less strict system of copyright for the music industry to overcome the hegemony of the intermediaries and superstars while providing more chance to the new artists trying to disseminate their music (p. 33). They underline the need for a balanced mix of societal, jurisprudential and ethical perspectives and strongly emphasize that the copyrights are the product of a political bargaining process (Nill and Geipel, 2009, p. 34). They argue that from the public policy

perspective, the artists' moral rights should be protected, while the right to sell copies and prevent others' use is not as defensible as the moral rights (Nill and Geipel, 2009, p. 46). When the topic is approached from an ethical perspective, a shift of power from the intermediaries and the stars to the new artists and the consumers is approved (Nill and Geipel, 2009, p. 46). The power of the industry is an important aspect of the existing system and any radical change poses a threat towards this hegemony.

Lessig's call for protecting the artists' right without destroying the public's creativity is in line with these mid-way approaches mentioned above as his take on intellectual property rights offers a third alternative to devout supporters' and staunch critics' takes. He does not condemn the existence of intellectual property rights, but opposes a tighter grip that might hinder intellectual production in general. Lessig's project, Creative Commons, thrives on this understanding. With a Creative Commons license, the writer can decide which freedoms the users have (Lessig, 2006, p. 110). In that way, one writer can make the content read-only while the other one can make it copy-able. Copyleft is a similar license, which enables the authors to define the terms of use and terms of reproduction like Creative Commons licenses do.

In that context, Lessig (2004) strongly opposes piracy, yet calls for understanding what piracy really means (p. 62). It soon becomes clear that Lessig (2004) rather opposes commercial piracy and distinguishes some forms of online sharing from conventional piracy (p. 66). Here, the problem, Lessig argues, is the extent to which copyrights limit intellectual production. Besides, intellectual property rights end up protecting certain industries (Lessig, 2004, p. 19). This system also

constrains non-commercial creativity (Lessig, 2004, p. 19). In other words, there is a trade-off between the protection of the intellectual rights and the non-commercial creativity. This trade-off mirrors the tension between the private and the public interests that was presented before. In a way, public's rights to create and to enjoy the products of creativity are curtailed.

Besides, Lessig (2004) argues that the history of content production is full of recycling, re-using and re-imagining, which can all be accepted as forms of piracy in some cases: "Every important sector of 'big media' today—film, records, radio, and cable TV—was born of a kind of piracy so defined" (p. 53). Lessig (2004) distinguishes peer-to-peer sharing from piracy by drawing comparisons to other sectors of content:

For (1) like the original Hollywood, p2p sharing escapes an overly controlling industry; and (2) like the original recording industry, it simply exploits a new way to distribute content; but (3) unlike cable TV, no one is selling the content that is shared on p2p services. These differences distinguish p2p sharing from true piracy. They should push us to find a way to protect artists while enabling this sharing to survive. (p. 66)

In other words, distribution of content via peer-to-peer technologies is similar to the listed modes of distribution. Therefore, this type of sharing deserves a chance to fulfill its destiny, yet this should be balanced with the need to protect the rights of the artists (Lessig, 2004, p. 73). Once again, the artists' rights are prioritized vis-a-vis the culture industries' interests.

Nevertheless, the industry is adamant about the protection of the intellectual property rights online and offline. Peer-to-peer filing sites like *Torrent* and one-click-hosting pages like *Rapidshare*, which enable the exchange of many types of intellectual property, are criticized for enabling piracy. *Napster* and *Kazaa* are the

most famous—or notorious—examples of peer-to-peer file sharing sites for music. Both sites were shut down while some individual users like Joel Tenenbaum and Jammie Thomas were sued with copyright infringement charges. Kim Dotcom—formerly known as Kim Schmitz—who owns the file hosting website *Megaupload* was also arrested for copyright infringement charges. More recently, on June 16, 2011, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee approved the bill against illegal streaming of videos¹. Stop Online Piracy Act is a similar attempt to prevent copyright infringements.

The definitions of the piracy vary, yet the legal and the economic uses revolve around the intellectual property laws and protection. Yar (2005) offers a general definition for the act of piracy as “unauthorized copying and distribution” (p. 678). In that context, the attempt to criminalize piracy is not surprising (Yar, 2005, p. 686). Here, it is important to distinguish the difference between downloading and streaming. Those, who obtain files movies, songs or TV series’ episode via the one-click-hosting pages or the peer-to-peer file sharing sites, need to download the material themselves. Distribution requires copying while obtaining access via streaming does not require the copying of the file or the download. The bill mentioned above aims to make streaming illegal as downloading. Either way, digitalization contributes to the scope of sharing by providing a global network for the users to share cultural products online.

Piracy literature mainly focuses on the survey of the illegal file sharing and the physical trade of the pirate material (Marshall, 2004; Athique, 2008; Lobato 2010). In the related copyright discussions, the change brought about by

¹ Tan, Francis. “U.S. Senate Proposes to Make Illegal Streaming a Felony.” *The Next Web*. 17 June 2011. Web. 17 June 2011.
<http://thenextweb.com/us/2011/06/17/u-s-senate-proposes-to-make-illegal-streaming-a-felony/>

digitalization is mentioned frequently. With digitalization and media convergence, it became easier and cheaper to share intellectual products online. Therefore, the notion of digitalization is necessary to understand how the aforementioned change is brought about. The global communication network created by the internet enabled the formation of various communities, which did not hesitate to share what they had with each other. After all, sharing did not damage their own copies.

Today, some part of this sharing is deemed to be illegal and called as “piracy,” while some scholars (Mylonas, 2012; Poor, 2012) argue that the use of “piracy” is an attempt to delegitimize online sharing. Intellectual property rights are criticized by some activists, while governments and culture industries stand against what they call piracy. Laws and regulations try to catch up with technological possibilities. Peer-to-peer file sharing, one-click-hosting and online streaming are among possible platforms for this sharing. The recent activities in the US Senate to criminalize online streaming of pirated videos as well as Stop Online Piracy (SOPA) and Protect IP Act (PIPA) provide evidence of the on-going tension. Therefore, it is fair to say digitalization did alter the previous framework of piracy, which had mostly commercial motivation and functioned via the physical exchange of the copied material. In a UNESCO report, Panethiere (2005) distinguishes online piracy from what he calls as the traditional commercial piracy as follows:

- online piracy is frequently not committed for profit or other commercial gain, but the losses it causes can be catastrophic;
- online piracy is, at least from a technical perspective, more easy to detect and its perpetrators more easily discoverable;
- online piracy cannot be wholly committed by a criminal enterprise, as traditional piracy always is, but instead requires for its successful completion the active participation, usually for profit, of legitimate commercial

enterprises, either as facilitators of the piracy or as processors of illicit payments. (p. 7)

Here, Panethiere recognizes the voluntary work done by many different users to share intellectual property online. Also, unlike commercial piracy, online piracy—or sharing—does not always seek profit. Copying is illegal according the requirements of the intellectual property rights, yet sharing content online rather than selling it makes the situation different than burning a CD and selling it on the streets since people access the content without paying for it. Besides, the access happens on a global scale since many users can reach different content regardless of their geographical location. In these ways, it is different from the traditional forms of piracy. Panethiere still underlines the possible losses that can step from online piracy and does not depict it as an innocent form of sharing.

What one camp calls “piracy” becomes “sharing” for the other camp. Therefore, it becomes important to include the survey of what piracy or sharing means for the parties as well studying how it functions. In that light, Mattelart offers an alternative take via his analysis of audio-visual piracy. After explaining how the digital reproduction increased the piracy, Mattelart (2009) argues that the generally accepted definition of piracy is “illicit downloading” (p. 308). Nevertheless, this increased access to the variety of global cultural products might also mean something else:

The informal economy, by enabling easier access to international or local cultural products, in fact does more than entertain people more cheaply, it also helps to distract them from the more or less serious difficulties of their daily lives. From this perspective, it may be seen as playing a significant socio-political role (Mattelart, 2009, p. 323).

This alternative reading hints at the need to study the piracy more thoroughly, beyond the legal perspective. Although, there are some studies looking at the socio-

economics of Bollywood and Nollywood like alternative centers for cultural production (Athique, 2008; Lobato 2010), looking merely at the profit seeking professional piracy industry is not enough for the study. It is essential to add the online and the offline networks into the paradigm since piracy is no longer confined to the physical production of the copies by the piracy industry. Wang and Zhu's (2003) work on the Chinese film piracy is an example that goes beyond this physical production of the pirate products by the profit-seeking parties and incorporates the network theories. Wang and Zhu (2003) employ the framework of the actor-network theory in order to study multiple networks of the film piracy in China with an emphasis on the copying and the distribution via the optical discs—VCDs and DVDs (p. 101). The writers not only map the ways in which pirated copying and distribution take place, but also interview the consumers of these pirate copies (Wang and Zhu, 2003, p. 112). The interviews shed some light on why these people choose to consume the pirate products. Wang and Zhu's interviewees pay to get the pirate copies of the films. As mentioned above, the digital context of piracy is more complicated since it involves non-profit seeking actors, too.

The extent of collaboration and cooperation involved in the digital exchange of the cultural products is remarkable. A significant number of people involved do not make money out of piracy. This characteristic points out to an interesting direction in the study of piracy. Hughes and Lang (2003) pursue this lead in their survey of the digital community networks that enable the music sharing. They first argue that the community activity becomes visible via the repeated patterns of exchange (Hughes and Lang, 2003, p. 184). This also indicates a change in cultural values regarding the exchange of information and cultural property for the community members do not perceive the act of sharing as stealing (Hughes and

Lang, 2003, p. 187). The result hints at a power shift to because the music industry faces reduced sales and is forced to respond to the digital sharing:

One striking effect of the transformation of music from an analog to a digital entity has been a shift in power from the large and established music industry institutions to digital community networks. These new virtual communities of individual technology users, both as artists and as consumers, have evolved as dynamic and self-organizing entities based on patterns of electronic information interchange. The effects of this redistribution of power are manifesting themselves as shifts in cultural values: in behavioral changes, attitudinal changes, and even fundamental shifts in ethical judgments. (Hughes and Lang, 2003, p. 180)

These transformations as well as the power struggles might have political, economic and socio-cultural repercussions.

The internet contributes further to these type of property centered analyses and critiques. Some critics draw parallelism between the development of enclosures of the commons and the development of the intellectual property rights. For example, Coleman and Dyer-Witheford (2007) refers to pirates and mutineers who fought against the enclosures before surveying online sharing possibilities presented by the internet (p. 934). Very interestingly, they point out to the difference between political and criminal resistance to enclosures (Coleman and Dyer-Witheford, 2007, p. 934). This difference is mirrored by the difference between those who create free game commons and those who make a black market for computer games (Coleman and Dyer-Witheford, 2007, p. 941). Here, the distinction factor between the two groups is the fact that the latter one makes profit out of sharing. The game industry opposes both groups with concerns about financial losses caused by online sharing (Coleman and Dyer-Witheford, 2007, p. 941). Nevertheless, Coleman and Dyer-Witheford (2007) states: “They also, however, disseminate game culture, and sometimes save old games and spur new innovations” (p. 941). In other words, despite some financial

losses, online sharing contributes to publicity and brand awareness as well as fan commitment and loyalty.

This duality gives rise to an important question about where the difference between a fan and a pirate lies. Denison (2011) addresses this question in her work on anime fandom. She argues that there is a split in the fandom in terms of legitimacy of subtitles prepared by the fans while the industry totally opposes it (Denison, 2011, p. 459). Nevertheless, it is hard not to acknowledge the role of the fan subtitlers (fansubbers) in increasing the access to anime beyond Japan (Denison, 2011, p. 464). Once again, the industry enjoys the benefits of online fan sharing and fan labor despite censuring activity as piracy. Meng's (2012) study of Chinese online translation community *Zimuzu* also reveals how these unauthorized sharing contributes to increasing the exposure to the content (p. 477). In Chinese context, the formation of mass audience for American TV shows can be observed only with the help of these voluntary communities of translation (Meng, 2012, p. 477). Still, it is impossible to talk about a monolithic community of fans or online sharers. There are many different communities. Even within the same community, there are different opinions towards copyrights. In a way reminiscent of Denison's study of fansubbers, Poor's (2012) study of cultural borrowing in game spaces depicts that there is no consensus towards copying among the gamers (p. 702).

As briefly mentioned before, fan labor is debated topic not just for fan studies, but also for discussions about piracy and prosumption. Digitalization and media convergence did blur the lines between production and consumption. Internet is a perfect field to observe the visualization of this blurring. Fan labor is an example of this change as fans start websites, create videos, add new features to games, and

write fanfiction stories for their favorite TV shows, movies, games or books. Some scholars (Banks and Deuze, 2009; Fuchs, 2010; Postigo 2007; Sotamaa 2010) suspect fan labor is the way the industry's abuses the fans' loyalty and commitment. The industrial forces indulge fan labor to the extent that benefits them. For example, producers can end up sharing fan-made videos for TV series on their Twitter, yet criticize overseas fans for downloading the episodes to watch. After all, these videos are usually prepared by using illegally downloaded episodes.

Milner (2009) provides a summary of the industry's response to fan labor as well as the literatures take on the subject as follows: "Producer response to fan labor is often somewhere between suppression and supervision, and no matter how these organizations relate to fans, their end goal is always the same: higher profits and a stronger brand" (p. 494). As long as higher profits and a stronger brand are involved, producers focus on supervision rather than suppression. There are times the industry gets more aggressive in terms of unauthorized content dissemination. For example, in cases of peer-to-peer file sharing protocols, the industrial forces do not hesitate to play dirty. Fleming (2012) mentions how companies knowingly upload corrupt files to file sharing systems to dissuade people from downloading and how they add bogus indexes to index sites for the same reason (p. 683-684). Lobato and Thomas (2012) describe similar attacks, which they call as "spoiling" and "spoofing" (p. 612). There are third party IT firms, which aid the industrial forces in their fight against online sharing and piracy along with the law firms, which handle the law suits based on copyright infringements (Lobato and Thomas, 2012, p. 608). Lobato and Thomas (2012) show how anti-piracy efforts become a source of revenue in itself as it generates profits (p. 607). Despite the on-going efforts, the evidence

shows that the systems of sharing find ways to restructure themselves (Fleming, 2012, p. 677).

Milner (2009) also mentions there are exploitation connotations attached to fan labor despite the fans' willingness to invest their labor in production and argues that still, the extra-monetary nature of this involvement complicates the analysis (p. 494). In other words, since the fans are willing to put their labor in production, it is not easy to label this as a form of industrial abuse right away. It is true that the fans are willing to spend their labor time. This labor can be compared to labor spent for uploading cultural products to peer-to-peer or one-click-hosting websites and online streaming. It takes time and effort to share content online. However, while it is quite convenient for those who download or those who watch the streamed content, the other side of the transaction is more complicated. Why people take time to share with the other corresponds to an important element to understand in terms of the global piracy culture. Some explanations revolve around the notion of reciprocity for answering this question.

Reciprocity is an attribute of the gift economy. In that way, online sharing can be depicted as a part of this system at first glance. Barbrook (2003) similarly points out that the internet hosts a gift economy and those who give always know that the internet will give them back more (p. 91). According to this perspective, it is easy to explain the global piracy culture as a product of a gift economy. Rheingold (1993) also compares the information sharing process in the virtual communities to the gift economy:

Reciprocity is a key element of any market-based culture, but the arrangement I'm describing feels to me more like a kind of gift economy in which people do things for one another out of a spirit of building something

between them, rather than a spreadsheet-calculated quid pro quo. When that spirit exists, everybody gets a little extra something, a little sparkle, from their more practical transactions; different kinds of things become possible when this mind-set pervades. Conversely, people who have valuable things to add to the mix tend to keep their heads down and their ideas to themselves when a mercenary or hostile zeitgeist dominates an online community [...] I give useful information freely, and I believe my requests for information are met more swiftly, in greater detail, than they would have been otherwise. A sociologist might say that my perceived helpfulness increased my pool of social capital. I can increase your knowledge capital and my social capital at the same time by telling you something that you need to know, and I could diminish the amount of my capital in the estimation of others by transgressing the group's social norms. The person I help might never be in a position to help me, but someone else might be. (Gift Economies and Social Contracts in Cyberspace section, para. 12)

Both Barbrook and Rheingold elaborate on how the reciprocity in the online realm can be different in a sense that the individual users do not expect reciprocity from the other individuals. The expectation is more focused on the group as a whole. This inclination also stems from the great number of people involved in sharing. As long as someone contributes with content or information, who that person is does not really matter. Nevertheless, it is important to make a distinction between the smaller specialized communities such as the fan communities where the fans know each other by their nick names and the larger community of online sharers. The latter group, which is more crowded, operates on different platforms and those who provide content usually remain anonymous. For example, links do not reveal the original uploaders in *Rapidshare* type of sites. With anonymity, recognition, which is also associated with the gift giving, is also out of question. In his renowned book on the gift economy, *The Gift*, Mauss (1950) explains how the gift giving enables the recognition of the power structures as well as the power holders (p. 52). Cheal also (1988) defines gift economy as: “[...] a system of redundant transactions within a moral economy, which makes possible the extended reproduction of social relations” (p. 19). According to him, gift-giving entails a redistribution of the resources that

helps maintaining a balance within a collectivity (Cheal, 1988, p. 15). In this way, he points out to the utility of the gifts by alluding to the gifts' function in a collectivity. The surveys (Carrier, 1995; Hyde, 1983; Parry, 1986) on the gift-giving seek explanations for the acts of gift-giving as well as studying how the systems of gift-giving function via symbols and rituals. Reciprocity and recognition are suggested as possible explanations or functions in that context.

It is important to note that reciprocity and recognition can also translate to reputation. Gift-giving contributes to the reputation (Bergquist and Ljunberg, 2001; Kollock, 1999) of the giver. However, as mentioned above, this is only possible when the giver can be identified. As mentioned above, for example, with *Rapidshare* links, the uploader cannot be identified. Then, there is no reputation attached to it. Therefore, in terms of reciprocity and to some extent in term of recognition, there might be some similarities between online and material gift-giving, yet online realm has its peculiar characteristics that make it different than the previous contexts of material gift-giving. For example, with reference to *The Gift* by Mauss (1950), Cammaerts (2011a) explains how those who give online also expect to receive something in return and how this expectation helps maintaining the power relationships (p. 492). However, the possibilities and the conditions of sharing offered by digitalization and the internet distinguishes online sharing from giving in material world as Cammaerts (2011a) argues: "Whether we share with a few or with thousands, millions even, does not really matter that much in terms of transaction costs" (p. 492). Considering the fact that the transaction costs remain the same no matter how many receivers access the shared content, giving online is different than giving in material world. This difference is important in terms of understanding digital piracy and looking at the relationship between those who give and those who

receive provides a lead in that direction. Similarly, Kollock (1999) points out to the danger of collective disaster in terms of online sharing. If everybody decides to free-ride and download or access without uploading any type of content, then the shared information and content would eventually diminish (Kollock, 1999). Nevertheless, Kollock (1999) also argues that online version is more generous and riskier than material gift-giving practices (p. 222). As he more specifically looks at file sharing practices, Andersson (2012) deviates from the gift economy model all together by resorting to Titmuss' model for blood donation (p. 585). He defines file-sharing as: "[...] a utility-a vast, aggregated, continually changing, globalized "pool" of content, penetrable by either searching or browsing—rather than as a system primarily based on friend-to-friend exchange made accessible through local personal connections or communities [...] (Andersson, 2012, p. 586).

With a closer look, the practices of gift-giving mentioned above can be related to the notion of public good. In terms of the cultural products' online circulation, it is possible to talk about the creation of online public good. When someone uploads content on the internet, most of the time that content becomes accessible to the others. In the most simplistic way, public goods can be defined as non-rivalrous and non-excludable (Kollock, 1999, p. 221). Online circulation of the cultural products coincides with that definition. If the way intellectual property rights create a scarcity and make intellectual property rivalrous by this scarcity is considered, it is possible to say that online sharing recreates the non-rivalrous nature of these products. It is not surprising that the culture industry tries to enforce rivalrousness and excludable-ness via revising intellectual property rights for the online realm. The power struggle becomes visible via the attempts of the industry and the users' response to these attempts.

As mentioned above, it is not possible to talk about a homogeneous group in relation to online sharing. There are some activists, who are openly anti-copyrights or pro-piracy and there are some users who enjoy the possibilities of sharing provided on the internet. Some see online sharing as stealing, yet still commit to it. Some others do not accept online sharing as a criminal act. Many others do not even think much about it, yet access the shared content as free-riders. Still, these acts of sharing create a strong industrial response. This brings the ultimate question to the mind: Does online sharing offer an alternative to neoliberal capitalism by changing the existing notions of property and exchange?

In a way reminiscent of the heterogeneity of the group, which shares cultural products online, the practices and the platforms of sharing also differ. In terms of content sharing, it is possible to talk about three different types of providing tools: 1-) Peer-to-peer file sharing protocols; 2-) File hosting services and 3-) Online streaming. Peer-to-peer protocols connect individual users and enable file sharing between them. File hosting services stores files on its server for the users and they enable other users to retrieve those files. Online streaming, as the name suggests, enable streaming or playing the content.

While some scholars see this type of online sharing as a consciously anti-capitalist act (Arvidsson 2009; Dafermos and Söderberg 2009; Moore and Karatzogianni 2009; Strangelove 2005; Thomas 2002), some others argue that today's pirates are similar to their historic counterparts in a sense that they do not counteract the capitalist system but rather deepen it. According to this stance, stealing and free-riding do not offer an alternative to capitalism. Coleman and Dyer-Witherford's distinction between the political and the criminal resistance to

enclosures quickly comes into mind at this point. Online sharing—or piracy— might fall into the realm criminal resistance rather than the political one in that case. In terms of this distinction, the analyses of piracy provide a point of comparison for the piracy of cultural products. For example, Land (2007), who similarly distinguishes the “pirates of the golden age and the Caribbean buccaneers” from the 17th Century European groups like the Diggers, argues that unlike the European counterparts, these pirates did not oppose the system:

The pirates did little to overthrow the power of the European, colonial states or the global flows of capitalist accumulation. Indeed, both sea-robbers and contemporary copyright pirates are, in part, parasitic upon these flows. From this perspective the pirates, and their post-industrial contemporaries, are not even genuinely revolutionary as they do not offer a real alternative to the dominant forms of the social organization of production and reproduction. (p.189-190)

If this comparison is accepted, it can be said that the digital pirates might simply be enjoying the products of the existing system of culture instead of offering a new alternative. Studies surveying the consumption of pirated content follow this lead. For example, Rutter and Bryce (2008) argue that the consumption of counterfeit goods resemble the consumption of legal products (p. 1152). In other words, piracy does not offer a promising potential to overthrow the capitalistic system for everyone.

Cammaerts (2011b) also looks at digital sharing and its potential to challenge neoliberalism. Instead of the three types of sharing suggested above, he presents two types: Peer-to-peer file sharing and commercial file-sharing (Cammaerts, 2011b, p. 57). Cammaerts (2011b) surveys code sharing, content sharing and access sharing (p. 47). He concludes: “[...] sharing in digital environments does not rule out reciprocity, and altruism is by no means the only motive for sharing. Finally, all forms of sharing

attract the imposition of various co-option and appropriation strategies, by capitalist agendas” (Cammerts, 2011b, p. 57). In his analysis, Cammerts (2011b) argues that the simple rejection of the commodity exchange model via sharing does not mean that there is an ideological negation of the capitalistic system (p. 58). Although sharing can be disruptive for the capitalistic system, the disruption is not immune to commercialization. These practices end up contributing to the capitalistic forces or becoming capitalistic nodes themselves. Cammaerts (2011b) explains this capitalistic effect as follows:

As a result, some forms of sharing cease to be disruptive; in other cases the practices of rejection themselves become sources of commercial exploitation by indirectly providing revenue. So, a traditional form of capitalism clings on to the hegemony of the copyright/property regime, but more radical capitalist strategies appropriate the sharing culture in different ways. (p. 58)

From this perspective, digital sharing is intertwined with capitalism rather than offering an alternative. That does not necessarily make digital sharing unimportant. Cammerts (2011b) still underlines the significance of sharing:

The cultural exchange model and the participatory culture in which it is situated induces important societal benefits—externalities—which are difficult to measure in economic or quantitative terms, but are very real at the everyday level, for many citizens, in terms of the software they use, the culture they can enjoy and/or their access to the Internet. Despite these gains, government and parts of the entertainment industry are gearing up to confront this participatory culture head on by attempting to legally coerce it firmly back into the commodity exchange model. (p. 58)

In a way, regardless of the capitalistic connotations attached to sharing, there is a power struggle between two opposing camps: the industry and those who share. Here, Cammaerts’ distinction between the commodity exchange model and the cultural exchange model mirrors the tension mentioned above. Belk (2007) offers a similarly thorough categorization. Nevertheless, Belk (2007) differentiates sharing from gift-giving and identifies it as an alternative to marketplace exchange and gift-

giving (p. 127). His work is important in terms of pointing out to the difference between gift-giving and sharing, which might contribute to conceptualization of the circulation of the copyrighted content online. For now, this phenomenon is widely called as online sharing.

Online sharing, which is accepted as a form of piracy by some of the parties involved, and the legal exchange of the cultural products exist side by side. Lessig (2008) surveys this co-existence as he looks at the current practices and identifies two different types of economies. “Commercial” and “sharing” economies, which can exist parallel to each other and even become hybridized in some other cases: “The hybrid is either a commercial entity that aims to leverage value from a sharing economy, or it is a sharing economy that builds a commercial entity to better support its sharing aims” (p. 177). Lessig (2008) gives the example of Warner Bros profiting from the fan activity of *Harry Potter* fans (p. 210). *Craigslist* is an example of the latter type since the site directs the little profits it gets to the maintenance (Lessig, 2008, p. 189). Lessig’s use of “sharing economy” is an important contribution to the literature since it can provide an explanation for online sharing, which differs from the material gift exchange as mentioned above.

There are people enthusiastic about this global culture of sharing. There are others, who quickly call this as piracy. There are some others, who state that there is much to be discovered about this phenomenon. The discussion depicts three points clearly: 1) Online sharing is different than the previous forms of commercial piracy of the material products; 2) Online sharing is a global phenomenon that transcends national borders; 3) Although there is not homogenous community of “pirates,” who consciously fight against the system, there is a new culture that maintains illegal

online sharing of cultural products. There is no way to deny that there is an on-going transformation, which consists of a power struggle between the involved parties. In the midst of digitalization and media convergence, production and consumption of cultural products are changing as the boundaries between producers and consumers are being blurred. The notions of property and exchange take their place in the discussion as piracy and online sharing claim more importance in our daily lives. Therefore, there is a new global culture emerging while the understanding of the intellectual property as we knew it is challenged by the constant acts of piracy despite the companies' and the governments' attempts to counter it.

Network Multidimensionality and Online Sharing

As discussed in the previous literature, there are different explanations suggested for the acts of piracy. This study is specifically interested in locating the notions of property and exchange in the realm of online sharing. It is important to realize this online sharing takes place in a context, where the boundaries between production and consumption have been blurred.

The increasing use of the internet—the network of networks—instigated an intense interest in the network theory for the study of media. Internet, in a way, helped visualizing the system of networks as layers of the networks seemed to be crystallized. With the rise of online platforms of communications, the interactions between the users (or consumers of the cultural products) as well as their interactions with the industrial forces became; 1-) More observable, and 2-) More frequent, compared to the pre-internet era. The fact that these interactions take place in the online realm and become recorded contributed to the visibility of the interactions. While an informal talk about the last episode of a popular TV show between friends

remain known only to them, an online discussion on a fan forum remains there for the others to see. In this way, the interactions mentioned above became more observable.

In addition, the unauthorized circulation as well as the fan production paves way to the reactions and the responses of the industrial forces. Especially, the unauthorized circulation of the content disturbs the culture industry, which had claimed a monopoly over the dissemination of the cultural products via intellectual property rights. A new power struggle emerges between the users and the industrial forces. Along with the increasing tendency of the industrial forces to connect with the users to engage them, this power struggle contributes to an increase in the interactions between the parties mentioned above.

This new media context also requires a re-conceptualization of the interactions between the consumers and the producers. Network multidimensionality offers a lead in that direction. Castells, Monge and Contractor (2011) call for the study of the multiple sets of objects and multiple sets of nodes in relation to the multidimensionality of the networks (Castells, Monge and Contractor, 2011, p. 788). This approach requires the consideration of the relationships among the same types of nodes as well as the relationships between the different ones, as network multidimensionality is defined as:

[...] a fully multidimensional network is one that includes multiple types of relations both among the same types of nodes and between different types of nodes. Thus, a fully multidimensional network has multiple types of connections among all possible types of entities. (Castells, Monge and Contractor, 2011, p. 789)

Here, writers draw attention to the importance of the network multidimensionality since they believe the multidimensional networks capture and depict the complex set

of links and relationship between different objects (Castells, Monge and Contractor, 2011, p. 789). *WatchOnline.com*² provides a chance to observe this complexity. The variety and the multiplicity of nodes involved in the process leading to streaming (such as ripping, uploading, downloading and fansubbing)—as well as the vivid intersection of the online and offline actor-network relationships—make the website a rich source for the study. This study focuses on a specific set of nodes within this complex web: The founders' and the users' perception of the unauthorized circulation of the content, and in turn, how this informs the way this group relates to the notions of property and exchange.

² I will use *WatchOnline.com* instead of the real name of the site upon the request of the founders' of the site.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

This chapter describes the website chosen for the study and the method chosen for studying the site. The complexity of *WatchOnline.com* makes it a good starting point for the survey of online sharing and piracy networks. This complexity can be observed via the extent of the actors and networks involved. The site, which interacts with different nodes of online sharing, provides a rich source for studying the repercussions of the online sharing practices. Since the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content takes place via the streaming on the site, the users' and the founders' perceptions of online sharing reveal clues about their takes on the notions of property and exchange. Therefore, the site provides a case for the study.

WatchOnline.com

WatchOnline.com is an online streaming site that functions as a center for unauthorized circulation of TV series. The site streams these series for free so that the users can watch them without downloading the episodes. The site is run by its founders along with a group of administrators known as admins³. This group finds the episode videos as well as the Turkish subtitles online. After adding the subtitles to the videos, they stream the episodes. A closer look at the site provides a thorough understanding of this complexity via two dimensions. These dimensions can be listed as: 1-) Multiplicity of the networks of sharing involved in the functioning of the site; and 2-) Multiplicity of human actors that the site interacts with.

³ "Admin" is the shortened version of "Administrator." The word is usually used to address the forum or the website administrators in the Turkish context. *WatchOnline.com* users use the word the same way. I chose to refer to the website's administrators the same way in my thesis.

As a node in the online sharing networks, *WatchOnline.com* is in connection with other sharing technologies and the other networks of sharing while it integrates some of these technologies in its design such as the video hosting service utilized for online streaming. The one-click-hosting web pages and the peer-to-peer file sharing sites are the most important ones since the admins obtain the episodes of the TV series from these sources. Both types of sources are nodes on their own and function within networks. Peer to peer file sharing networks function via peer-to-peer file sharing protocols like *BitTorrent* as well as the index sites, such as the famous *The Pirate Bay*, that enable peers to access the shared content. Now defunct *Napster* and *Kazaa* are the most famous examples along with still functioning *BitTorrent*. These sites provide a network that enables individual users transfer content to each other. In terms of peer-to-peer sharing, in some cases like *BitTorrent*, downloading also means uploading because the peers can access content downloaded by the other peers. One-click-hosting sites also enable users to upload and store content on the host's server. The link to the stored content helps online sharing since others can use links to download the same content. In a way, the content becomes a common for public. These sites are very important nodes for online sharing. Very recently, a famous one-click hosting website, *Rapidshare*, slowed down the free services to diminish the sharing of the copyrighted content via the website. The site also offers paid membership.

In a way reminiscent of peer-to-peer file sharing index sites, these links to the content on one click hosting sites appear on online forums via which the users change links and information. While peer-to-peer file sharing protocols and one-click-hosting sites are similar to the online streaming websites in terms of the illegal sharing due to copyright infringements, they differ since the visitors of the online

streaming websites do not have to download the videos to watch. Streaming is easier, cheaper and less risky since the users do not need to use peer to peer file sharing technologies or register and pay to use one-click-hosting sites. It is also necessary to mention that, for the fans of the foreign TV series, the episodes are only available online since some of the series are not aired by the Turkish TV channels. Even if they are, they are usually far behind the American broadcast.

Besides these connections with the other networks of sharing, *WatchOnline.com* integrates other digital media within the functioning of the site. The streaming is made possible by the use of the video-hosting web site of their choice. Although the website's legal woes used to stem from the streaming of the Turkish TV series since the production companies and the TV channels file complaint against the website's, the problems with the foreign TV series stem mostly from this video-hosting services used. The video-hosting sites review the uploaded content from time to time and they remove the material when they observe any type of copyright infringement. The removal is problematic since the admins have to re-upload the episodes. Nevertheless, this removal is temporary for the videos are soon replaced and remain available until the next round of removal. Social media is also integrated into the functioning of the website contributing to the linkage with the other social networks. The website has a *Facebook* page and a *Twitter* account. The site provides links to the both accounts. The uploaded new episodes are announced via these pages. The users also post comments to the *Facebook* page.

Along with the different technological nodes mentioned above, *WatchOnline.com* is connected to human actors that can be located around the networks of sharing:

- **Rippers:** They “rip” content and copy it to hard disk. This way, sharing becomes easier. The sources of the content can vary. It can come from a CD or a DVD. Digital video recorders like *TiVos* can also be utilized for ripping. The ripped content is usually disseminated via the internet. One-click-hosting websites and peer-to-peer file sharing sites enable dissemination when the content is uploaded to them.
- **Uploaders/Sharers:** Rippers are most of the time de-facto uploaders. This group consists of people who upload content to the one-click-hosting websites and/or peer-to-peer file sharing sites. As briefly mentioned before, some of the peer-to-peer file sharing services make downloaders de facto uploaders as it can be seen in the case of *BitTorrent*. In the case of recording and uploading, these people spend time and effort to share the content with people they do not even personally know.
- **Founders:** The elite group that founded the website. They control the functioning of the website. They take care of technical maintenance. They manage advertising arrangements and address legal problems that are caused by copyright infringements. They interact with the legal authorities and the industrial forces about copyright conflicts. They also work as admins to oversee the content uploading as well as the comment posting. They spend their labor for the functioning of the website.
- **Administrators a.k.a Admins:** There are also admins employed by the founders, who are responsible for uploading the episodes of the series. They add subtitles to the content. These admins also follow the comment section below the videos to check whether there is a problem with the streaming. They review the comments to hide the spoilers, too. Back when the website

hosted a forum, there were admins also managed the discussions in the forum. These people invest their time and labor to secure streaming.

- Fansubbers: They translate and prepare subtitles for foreign series. Most of them are not directly linked to the website since admins take translated subtitles from other platforms through which the fansubbers share their work. In the past, some fansubbers directly sent the subtitles to the site.
- Registered users: This group becomes members through free-registration. This membership gives users a chance to avoid some of the advertising. They can also post comments below the videos.
- Non-registered users (Visitors): Anybody can access the website without membership. They can view the streamed content, yet cannot post comments on the site. They can skip only some of the commercials.

Some of these human actors can be included in the fan communities of the series that they follow. Nevertheless, compared to the respective fan communities of the each series on other platforms, *WatchOnline.com* is unique since it hosts a wide range of series. Still, the fans of each series dedicate more time streaming, viewing and commenting specifically on their favorite series. The fan communities expand to the social media networks such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, which also include the website's own accounts. In other words, *WatchOnline.com* is in connection with different types of nodes. Besides the other online sharing websites and the social media sites, *WatchOnline.com* interacts with the actors of media business such as TV channels and production companies.

Since the website remains pretty much on the same piracy context with the one-click-hosting web pages, the peer-to-peer file sharing sites, the video hosting

websites and the different fan communities, this node's relationship with the industry is conflictual and the interactions appear mostly in the form of legal struggles. The conflict is not a merely business problem. Since the copyright infringement laws are involved, the banning of the website is the result of a legal process, which is strongly related to debates surrounding internet governance. The states take serious measures to control the internet. The business circles are more than eager to support the governments when the internet provides the means of sharing copyright material. SOPA and PIPA are proofs of how the legal regulations are catching up. For now, *WatchOnline.com* is subject to the removal of the videos by the video-hosting server they use. Non-Turkish copyright owners also send take-down-notices upon the detection of the copyrighted content on the website. The most insistent set of legal actions against the website come from the Turkish TV channels and production companies. The district attorney did shut down the site in 2009. For this shut down, a simple change in the link enabled the access again. Later, the site put a copyrighted content disclaimer and invited copyright owners to contact with them in case of copyright infringement. They now remove the copyrighted content upon the notice of copyright owners protected by the Turkish law. Recently, the website cannot be accessed from certain foreign countries due to copyright issues. Under these circumstances, the website still functions, but the spread of legal regulations against streaming or new internet control laws might change that. Nevertheless, the TV channels counter *WatchOnline.com* type of websites by airing the episodes online on the official websites. Providing the episodes right after the shows are aired on TV and enabling free access is a rising trend in the Turkish case. The access to foreign TV series does not parallel this story since the online access to the most foreign TV series is limited by the geographical location. For example, a popular official video

provider for the American TV series, *Hulu*, is unavailable from Turkey. In a way, there is a difference in the context of streaming for the Turkish and the non-Turkish TV series. The relationship between the geographical location and access as well as the way global online sharing networks try to circumvent the problem of access are important for understanding digital piracy and online sharing. Since the website no longer streams Turkish TV series due to copyright infringement problems with the TV channels and production companies and removed the comment threads for these series, it was not possible to compare the users' perceptions of the notions of property and exchange based on the difference between the circulation of the Turkish TV series and the foreign ones.

As the boundaries between production and consumption are blurred, the users and the industrial forces struggle for power over the circulation of the cultural products. The survey of the multiple types of nodes and the multiple types of relationships contributes to the survey of the power within networks, too. In that context, Castells (2011) explains how power is exercised through networks and adds that the power is, itself, multidimensional (p. 773-774). Therefore, to understand the power relations, the study of the networks is essential and the multidimensionality aspect deserves further attention. Also the role of the media networks in the configuration of the power relations doubles up the importance of looking at the networks. Castells (2011) argues that networking power, network power, networked power and network-making power are key elements of this configuration (p. 773). However, the network-making power that functions via the programmers and the switchers lie at the core of understanding the makings of power and counter-power (Castells, 2011, p. 774). According to Castells (2011), the power to program networks and the power to switch networks contribute to the pursuit of the interests

both by the dominant groups and those who challenge them (p. 774). The study of networks include examples (Nahon, 2011; Tongia and Wilson 2011) focusing on the inclusion and the exclusion aspects that coincide with what Castells calls as the networking power and the network power.

What makes the network-making power unique is its enabling of the resistance from within the network. Programming the network and the switching between the networks become empowering for both parties. For example, when a TV channel resorts to legal means to end the online streaming, the website might simply respond by carrying the site to another domain. The specific node of a piracy network is tried to be switched off, yet the plan fails. It is clear that the commerce and the governance go hand in hand in this fight over the internet control. The business does its best to protect the profit and seek legal support for this aim. The censorship and banning attempts are not totally independent of the business interests. Benkler (2011) is right to argue that the internet is “censorship-resistant” (p. 721). Nevertheless, it is impossible to say the internet is censorship-proof. At the same time, because of these on-going attempts to control and to censor, new ways of escaping control appears. In other words, the control nurtures the resistance as we see via the acts of piracy.

There is an on-going contestation that manifests itself in the form of unauthorized circulation of the content online. Studying multiple types of nodes and multiple types of relations helps visualizing the power struggle between the two sides of the piracy wars. The inclusion of multiple actors and the depiction of their interactions for the study also help surveying the motivations for piracy as well as its possible repercussions. These practices of online sharing is deemed as piracy by the

strong supporters of the intellectual property rights, yet the users go on sharing despite the technical built-in mechanisms and the increasing legal measures employed to prevent piracy. The question here is whether this on-going online sharing challenges the existing understandings of property and exchange. In the case of *WatchOnline.com*, the users' and the founders' attitudes towards the unauthorized content circulation provide a chance to survey this.

Design for Case Study

With this study, I aim to survey the effects of the online sharing on the existing notions of property and exchange. In order to do that, I will be studying *WatchOnline.com*, an online streaming website that streams TV series. The site provides an example that reflects the complexity of online sharing since it interacts with an extended group of online and offline actors, which can be human or non-human. With the multiple relationships between both the similar and the different types of the nodes involved, *WatchOnline.com* also depicts network multidimensionality, which mirrors the multidimensionality of the online sharing networks. In this study, I will be focusing on the dimensions that I will present below.

In order to survey whether the notions of property and exchange have been altered by online sharing via the case study of *WatchOnline.com*, the circulation becomes very important. By providing unauthorized free access to the copyrighted content, more specifically TV series, the website challenges the monopoly of the industrial forces over the dissemination of the cultural products. The site becomes a central node within the networks of unauthorized circulation. This circulation also commonizes the copyrighted content via re-appropriation. Therefore, the attitudes

towards this circulation provide data about both the founders' and the users' perceptions of property and exchange. These can be surveyed via the design of the site, the official mission statement and the comments below it, the founders' statements about the site made during a personal interview and the comment threads present below the videos on the site:

- The design of the website: The design of the website and the included elements reveal details about how the site functions. These also provide information to understand the effects on the notions of property and exchange. For example, the inclusion of the advertisements indicates monetary gain, which might be linked to commodity exchange system in a capitalistic context.
- The official mission statements ("Who are we?" Section) of the website. This part depicts where the founders want to situate themselves within the larger context of online sharing. Back when the section was present on the site, the users were able to post comments below this statement. These comments, in a way similar to the comments posted below the videos, provide information about the users' perceptions of the circulation of the copyrighted content. There have been changes in the official statement page of *WatchOnline.com* over time and this transformation offers a chance to observe the transformation of the website, too. The survey of the comments in this section shares the limitations with the survey of the videos posted below the contents, which will be discussed in detail later.

- Founders' statements about the website during the interview⁴: The statements of the founders, who were interviewed, provide background information about the site's origins as well as details about the behind the scenes processes. Further insights on the functioning of the site offers a chance to evaluate the site's status within the spectrum of commodity exchange, gift-giving and sharing models.
- The comments sections below the videos: The site allows users to post comments below the videos. These posts reveal registered users' interactions with each other as well as their interactions with the admins. The posts depict how the users' situate themselves in the larger framework of online sharing. While interacting with the users, the admins also reveal details about the repercussions of the industry's and the legal authorities' reactions towards the site. The problems about the functioning of the website become visible in the comments section since the users' report the problems they encounter and make inquiries. The comments section is public, while only the registered users can post comments. I chose to look at this section instead of conducting interviews or surveys with the users since comment posting is a part of the site's functioning rather unlike the responses instigated by the researcher via interviews or questionnaires. By doing that, I tried to observe the original context of communication between the founders, the admins and the users. Surveying the already posted comments provided a chance to see how the community located around the site expressed their perceptions without being prompted to do so by the interview questions. In this way, exchanges and expressions unique to the site were also observed.

⁴ The founders were really hard to reach. They talked to me on the grounds that their or the site's name will not be disclosed in my study. They also refused the use of a tape recorder during the interview.

I picked the TV series that I will be surveying for the comments based on the top ten most commented videos of April 30, 2012. The list of the most commented videos for that date can be seen on Table 1:

The Ten Most Commented Videos List as of April 30, 2012		
1	The Walking Dead	Season 2 Episode 13
2	Spartacus: Vengeance	Season 1 Episode 9
3	Fringe	Season 4 Episode 15
4	Supernatural	Season 7 Episode 17
5	The Vampire Diaries	Season 3 Episode 17
6	Game of Thrones Season	Season 2 Episode -8 ⁵
7	Wild Romance	Season 1 Episode 1 ⁶
8	How I Met Your Mother	Season 7 Episode 19
9	Person of Interest	Season 1 Episode 19
10	The Secret Circle	Season 1 Episode 17

Table 1: The Ten Most Commented Videos

There were no Turkish TV series on the list, which is a result of the website's recent decision about not uploading the current episodes of the Turkish TV series to avoid copyright infringement problems. One of the TV series is Korean production *Wild Romance* and another one is *Spartacus: Vengeance*, which is a New Zealand production. The rest of the TV series on the list are American productions.

After picking up the series based on the list, I looked at all videos posted under the names of the series mentioned above. For example, for *Supernatural*, I looked at all episode videos for the past six seasons as well as the ones up to the seventeenth episode of the seventh season. Only exception to this was *Wild Romance*. The very first episode of the series appeared on the most commented video

⁵ “-8” means this is the eighth sneak peak video rather than then an episode video.

⁶ I later chose to include the entire season of *Wild Romance* since it was the only Korean series on the list.

list, so there were no previous videos found. However, the other episodes for the season were very quickly added. Since it was the only Korean series on the list, I chose to look at the new episodes afterwards. The founders' statements about the Korean series rising popularity as well as my own observations about the phenomenon were effective on this decision. The videos surveyed for the comments are mostly episode videos, yet there are some sneak previews posted under the heading of "in-between season" or with the title of "episode 0."

The number of videos surveyed for the comments can be seen on Table 2:

	Number of Episode Videos	Number of Sneak Peak Videos
The Walking Dead	19	7
Spartacus: Vengeance ⁷	9	
Fringe	80	
Supernatural	143	
The Vampire Diaries	61	1
Game of Thrones Season	10	8
Wild Romance	16	
How I Met Your Mother	155	
Person of Interest	19	
The Secret Circle	17	
TOTAL NUMBER OF VIDEOS SURVEYED FOR COMMENT THREADS: 545		

Table 2: Number of Videos Surveyed per Series

⁷ The site treats each season of *Spartacus* as a new one since these season have different names. I complied with their preference and treated *Spartacus: Vengeance* as a single standing season.

In order to study the founders' and the users' perceptions of property and exchange via their attitudes towards the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content, indicators were utilized to compare the functioning of the site with the commodity exchange model. The initial indicators used for the four categories mentioned above can be listed as follows:

- References about culture industry: The references made to the TV channels and production companies. These references not only provide a chance to observe the founders' and the users' perceptions about the culture industry in general, but also offer a lead for surveying their attitudes towards unauthorized circulation. Since the TV channels and the production companies try to halt the site's streaming via legal means, references about these actors also help visualizing the power struggle between the industrial forces and the fans of online streaming.
- References about copyrights: The acceptance or the defiance of the copyrights provides clues about the founders' and the users' self-positioning in relation to the intellectual property rights regimes associated with capitalism. These references can also help marking the difference between the activists openly opposing the existing system and the ones who simply benefit online streaming, whether due to the free access it provides or the revenues it generates.
- References about advertising: Both the inclusion of the advertising and the references about advertising function as indicators of the founders' and the users' stances towards the capitalistic system of commodity exchange.
- References about financial profit: This is an important indicator for understanding for locating the site on the spectrum between the models of

commodity exchange and sharing. These references are not only important to understand whether the site is a profit-seeking endeavor or not. They are also essential to survey how the users' perceive the site compared to the TV channels or the production companies that hold the TV series' copyrights.

- References about labor: These references are to reveal how the founders and the users reflect upon the labor spent on online streaming. The recognition of this labor would indicate an awareness about the blurring of the boundaries between production and consumption since the role of fan labor in fan production and in unauthorized circulation would be acknowledged this way.
- References about reciprocation: The users' attempts to give back and the founders' call for certain contributions are important indicators for locating the site with reference to models of commodity exchange, gift-giving and sharing.

Apart from these indicators, due to the inductive nature of the textual analysis, another indicator was later added through the course of the study.

- References about loyalty: The users' and the founders' references about loyalty and devotion are indicators of the community aspect of the site.

These indicators were utilized for the textual analysis. Textual analysis, here, does not only refer to the texts found on the site such as the comments or the mission statement. The site is treated as a text in itself. Therefore, the elements of design were also surveyed for indicators. A similar approach was chosen for the analysis of the interview with the founders.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Design

As mentioned in previous sections, the site is dedicated to streaming TV series. When it was founded in 2007, it started to stream Turkish TV series. Later, foreign TV series were added as well. This year, the site gave up streaming Turkish TV series. This is not the only change that the site went through. In 2010, there was a change in design. The most important transformation were the termination of “Who are we?” section and the inclusion of copyright disclaimers on the “Terms of Use” section. Although the content of “Who are we?” section will be analyzed further in the following part of the analysis, it is important to mention the section’s termination is an important indicator of the site’s positioning of itself in terms of the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content. This section included a manifesto like statement about the site’s anti-corporate stance. The findings and the analysis are shared below:

Copyrights

While “Who are we?” section no longer appears on *WatchOnline.com*, “Terms of Use” section underlines the importance of copyrights and acknowledges that videos will be removed upon the request of copyright holders. This change is another important indicator of the site’s transformation through the years. More equipped with the legal knowledge, the site’s founders try to protect themselves against legal problems via disclaimers about the copyrights. The “Terms of Use⁸” section includes

⁸ This section, which appears in Turkish on the website, is translated by me. See Appendix A for the original text.

the following disclaimers:

Please read the terms of use prior to using the website. By visiting and using the website, you accept the terms of use and the articles of the contract.

1. All videos on *WatchOnline.com* are prepared for the online viewing. Downloading and copying are not advised.

2. *WatchOnline.com* cannot sell or rent any content or demand financial compensation for access.

3. The videos on *WatchOnline.com* are added upon the request of the users

4. *WatchOnline.com* only includes viewing codes. None of the videos are kept in our own server. All videos are linked from famous video sharing sites like *YouTube*, *Google Video* and *Facebook*.

5. When copyrighted videos are removed from the video sharing websites, they are removed from our website automatically.

6. As *WatchOnline.com*, we take copyright infringements very seriously and we will be protecting the rights of the copyright owners vigorously. If you own the copyright for the content seen on *WatchOnline.com* and have not authorized the use, please use webmaster@watchonline.com to send a written notice for us to detect the infringed content and take action.

7. Your written notice should include the following: The identification for the copyrighted content that is subject to your infringement claims. If you are claiming infringement from multiple contents with a single notice, you need to present a list representing each and every content subject to copyright infringement [...] You need to have the URL or the URLs of the website with the content subject to your copyright infringement claims. Contact information including name, surname, phone number, e-mail address and enough information for us to contact the complainant. In cases when the claims argue that the content lacks authorization of the copyrights owner, representative or law, a statement that the complainant has good faith. A statement confirming that the information in the notice is true and the complainant has been authorized for the sake of the copyright owner.

8. Our advertisement can add cookies on the web scanner and read these or can use web marks to collect information.

9. *WatchOnline.com* bears no responsibility for direct or indirect harm caused by the access to the website, by the use of the website, the use of the information on the website, or the use of other data, or by any other causes. *WatchOnline* bears no responsibility about the disruption of processing, error, neglect or interruptions that might be caused by the breach of contract, wrongful act, neglect or any other reasons. *WatchOnline.com* is accepted to be exempt of any responsibility, including court expenses and other expenses,

which might be caused by the access to this site or the access to any other sites that are linked or the use of the site and the use/visit of *WatchOnline.com*.

10. All underground and aboveground content aim, in direction with our site's vision, to provide direct access to everything you can find on the internet and to watch immediately. Therefore, all responsibility about the use of this information belongs to you. The content and the purpose of our site is information.

11. *WatchOnline.com* holds the right to change all services, products, terms of use and information present on this website and its extension without prior notice, to re-organize the site and to suspend the site. The changes are in effect with the moment of publication on the website. With the use or the visit of the website, these changes are accepted. These terms are in effect for the other websites that are linked.

12. *WatchOnline* accepts no responsibility for the disruption of the processing, error, neglect, interruption, deleting, loss, the delay of the process or the communication, computer viruses, communication error, theft, extermination of the unauthorized access, change or use of the records that might be caused by the breach of contract, wrongful act, neglect or any other reasons. ("Terms of Use," *WatchOnline.com*)

These disclaimers also provide an email address to get in to touch with the site's founders for copyright infringement complaints. Via this, copyright owners can send notices-of-take down and the site complies with those notices. The inclusion of the disclaimers might be a pragmatic choice to prevent legal responsibility, but it also shows that the site does try to comply with legal regulations instead of directly opposing them. The practice of online sharing is problematic in a legal sense and the founders do not hesitate to provide access to the TV series. However, the disclaimers about the copyrights and their compliance with the notices-of-take downs distinguish the site's runners from activists, who call for the abolishment of the copyrights all together. More recently, the site disabled access from countries like United States and United Kingdom to prevent copyright problems stemming from the unauthorized online streaming of the copyrighted content. With the first article of the "Terms of Use," the users are advised against downloading and copying. Here, the site's

founders underline the categorical difference between online streaming and copying. As mentioned in the literature review, the earlier regulations against digital piracy attacked uploading and downloading, while the attempts to regulate online streaming came later. In this case, the founders of the site try to protect themselves by indicating that they do not encourage downloading and copying. However, it is important to realize that they are making use of the copyrighted content uploaded online. Despite not producing copies or distributing copies, the founders provide access to the copyrighted content. It is necessary to mention that they actually download unauthorized episode videos so that they can be streamed.

At first glance, this depicts that the site shifted closer to the existing norms of intellectual property, which is true to some extent. Due to legal pressures, copyrights are acknowledged. This also supports the findings of Cammaerts (2011b) on how online sharing does not always translate to ideological negation of the existing system. The existing system is the copyrights regime, which is an extension of the capitalistic market necessities. The site's runners do not politically oppose the system. Instead they simply try to avoid responsibility.

Loyalty

Although there are no direct references to the loyalty indicator in the analysis of the design unlike the survey of the users' comments and the founders' statements, the design incorporates a very important element of sharing, which contributes a lot to the formation of loyalty and a sense of community. The design of the site enables commenting. This is a very important feature for the site because the users get to interact with each other as well as interacting with the admins. Their comments contribute to the formation of a public sphere located around the site. They also

humanize the practice of streaming. The website becomes something more than a simple source for accessing the TV series. It claims the role of a gathering place, which evokes its own community. As mentioned before, the users get to ask admins questions via these comments. However, the same communication would have been possible via the use of the email addresses present on the site. In this way, comments publicize the communication as well as the interaction. This is an important aspect to consider further since it becomes possible to observe the founders', the admins' and the users' perceptions of the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content. It can be said that these comments create a community of sharing out of an online streaming website.

Therefore, via comments, online streaming or online sharing becomes a communal activity. This coincides with Hughes and Lang's (2003) study of an online music sharing community. Hughes and Lang (2003) argue that the repeated patterns of exchange made the community activity visible in online communities (p. 184). They also argue this alternative form of exchanging information and cultural property might change the community members' values regarding unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content (Hughes and Lang, 2003, p. 187). The comments section provides a space for that exchange, which goes beyond the free content access provided by the site to the users.

Advertising

Another important feature of the design is the inclusion of the advertising on the site. The site hosts banners and streams commercial videos, too. The commercial videos sometimes appear before the episode videos are streamed, but they can be skipped. The banners remain there. However, the registered members get to see less

advertising on the site as mentioned during the survey of the difference between the registered members and the others. While the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content challenges the intellectual property rights regime, which can be situated as an element of the capitalistic market system, the advertisements appear as another element of capitalism. This unique combination points to the eclectic nature of the site. By accepting advertising, the site not only acquires revenues, but also contributes to the consumerism. The site's inclusion of advertising shows that *WatchOnline.com* does engage in capitalistic relationships. However, this relationship is not between the site and the users since they have free access to the content. It is not possible to talk about a commodity exchange model between these users and the site's runners. Nevertheless, the site receives money from advertisers. At this point, it is also necessary to mention that the site also has maintenance costs so they also pay money to continue functioning.

The eighth article of the "Terms of Use" disclaimers also supports the acknowledgment and the acceptance of the capitalistic system of advertising. The article states: "Our advertisements can add cookies on the web scanner and read these or can use web marks to collect information" ("Terms of Use," *WatchOnline.com*). This is an important point to mention since the collection of information via cookies contributes to marketing purposes. This information can also be sold to companies or to other sites. It is also necessary that by attributing the planting cookies to the advertisers and mentioning this possibility among the disclaimers, the founders protect themselves from legal responsibility. During the interview with the founders, they clearly stated that they do not collect information themselves. Once again, a complicated attitude towards advertising can be observed.

Financial Profits

The non-profit seeking nature of the site is underlined in different parts of the site. One of these incidents can be observed via “Bize Bagis Yapin/Donate Us” section. This section provides the users a chance to donate if they want to contribute to the maintenance costs. The names of the donors are posted on the site. In that section⁹, it is stated that: “*WatchOnline* is a project that provides service without asking anything in return. Our users, who want to support the project via donations, can support [the project] financially for the provision server expenses, domain name and other needs” (“Donate Us,” *WatchOnline.com*). Here, the runners of the site state that any material gain is directed to the maintenance of the site. In a way, they hint that the website is not a profit-seeking endeavor.

The second article of “Terms of Use” section also indicates that the site “[...] cannot sell or rent any content or demand financial compensation for access” (“Terms of Use,” *WatchOnline.com*). Once again the direct compensation for the access to content is denied. This does not change the fact that the site acquires advertising revenues, regardless of whether these revenues simply cover the maintenance costs or create profit for the founders.

“Who are We?” Section

This section is an important part of the site’s design; therefore, it was briefly mentioned in the previous section. However, due to some specific characteristics, this section requires further attention. Functioning as the official mission statement before 2010, this section reveals details about the way the founders locate themselves

⁹ The text of “Donate Us” section, which appears in Turkish, is translated by me. See Appendix B for the original text.

in relation to online sharing and piracy. In addition to the statement, the section used to include a comment thread, via which the users and the founders interacted with each other about this statement and the site in general. Therefore, this section also provided a closer inspection of how the users reacted to the founders' stance about the site. Furthermore, the section no longer appears since the design change that took place in 2010. However, the fact that it no longer appears on the site is an indicator of the transformation of the site through time.

Industry

This mission statement is a very important resource to observe, how the founders of the site locate themselves in relation to the culture industry and what the industry's take on the copyrights is. A clear anti-corporate attitude became visible in "Biz Kimiz?" section¹⁰, which no longer appears:

Who are we? Before answering the question "Who are we?," let us answer "Who are we not?" or "What are we not?" We are not a TV channel that airs 20 minutes of movies/programs/TV series and 15 minutes of commercials. We are not rating slaves working under the orders of a media tycoon. We are not a newspaper, a magazine or a book that you can buy with money. We are definitely not a movie/TV series CD that you can buy from the market. Then, who are we? Although we are not the first, as one of the firsts of the "online TV series sector," we are an extensive TV series sites, which started out as a hobby. We are not people who are after the three pennies that will get into their pockets, we are people who are working to provide better service to people. In short, We are not after slyness [like a jackal], we are a giant TV series site pursuing the quality [sic]. ("Who are we?," *WatchOnline.com*)

Here, the emphasis is on the website's difference from the TV channels, which air commercials. The founders differentiate themselves from the members of the corporate media business and they call the people in the media business as: "[...] rating slaves working under the orders of a media tycoon" ("Who are we?,"

¹⁰ "Who are we?" section appears in Turkish on the website. The main text and the comments posted below are translated by me. See Appendix C for the original texts.

WatchOnline.com). The reactionary nature of the discourse is evident in the wording of the section. They announce that they are not doing this for money. They explain that they had started the website as a hobby. Their main aim is to serve people. Their priority, as they write, is quality. They indirectly address the similar websites critically by this sentence: “In short, We are not after slyness [like a jackal], we are a giant TV series site pursuing the quality” (“Who are we?,” *WatchOnline.com*). With this sentence, they emphasize that they are not seeking their own interest in a cunning way. The metaphor they resort to compares the others to a “jackal,” which embodies the connotation of “slyness.” There is a clear attempt to differentiate the site from the industrial forces.

One of the users, ZY¹¹, seems to agree with that differentiation as she says: “I have been closely following the activities on your site. Let the high profile media bosses fight, but [don’t] let us get trampled. WHEN THE ELEPHANTS FIGHT, IT IS THE GRASS THAT GETS TRAMPLED, don’t let it happen this time. I wish you continued success” (“Who are we?,” *WatchOnline.com*).

Interestingly, there is also a hint of professionalization as the team behind the site claims to be the best of its kind. Calling their line of activity as “sector,” the founders reveal how serious they are about the site. This remark also indicates that the site might be something different than a mere hobby or a volunteer project since the site is not only compared to the industrial forces like TV channels, but also compared with the similar online streaming sites.

It is also necessary to remember, although the founders and the admins remain anonymous, the site is not. Therefore, the site’s reputation is an important

¹¹ Since some of the users use their own names as user names, I gave them all nicknames derived from their user names to protect their anonymities.

part of the discussion. As one of the early comers to the online streaming scene, the site's big size and professionalized functioning have put it among the most popular Turkish online streaming sites. It has been frequently compared to the other online streaming sites by the users, while the founders themselves claim superiority to the alternative sites. More references to the site's reputation can be found during the analysis of the comment threads found below the videos. Reputation can encourage further online sharing. This encouragement can be linked to the enjoyment created by an increase in the social capital of the sharer according to Rheingold's (1993) analysis of the online communities (Gift Economies and Social Contracts in Cyberspace section, para. 12). Although Rheingold (1993) distinguishes this from the reciprocity, which he attributes to the market-based cultures, it is hard to isolate reciprocity from alternative models of exchange (Gift Economies and Social Contracts in Cyberspace section, para. 12). A better reputation and a recognition that follow can be quite functional. While Rheingold (1993) argues that gift-giving comes out of what he calls "a spirit of building something between them" (Gift Economies and Social Contracts in Cyberspace section, para. 12). However, that does not necessarily mean there is no reciprocation. The reciprocation comes in the form of the giver's social status.

Financial Profits

In addition to the comparisons to the industrial forces, free access feature of the site is also underlined as the site tries to distinguish itself from the traditional media or the content: "We are not a newspaper, a magazine or a book that you can buy with money. We are definitely not a movie/TV series CD that you can buy from the market [...] We are not people who are after the three pennies that will get into their

pockets, we are people who are working to provide better service to people [...]" ("Terms of Use," *WatchOnline*). The site does not sell anything and the team running the site state that they are not interested in money making. In this way, the site also distinguishes itself from the forms of physical piracy. At the same time, the desire to serve people is mentioned. This coincides with the findings from the interview with the founders, who referred to the free access provided by the site as a "service" answering the existing "need."

Advertising

References made to advertising are usually accompanied with references to labor or the lack of financial profits for the site. When one of the users asks, why there are advertisements on the site, one of the administrators responds by mentioning the maintenance costs of the site. The responses of the other members are a lot harsher than that. One of the visitors, SN, writes: "[...] if the site had been prepared just to make money, [it] wouldn't let you watch the TV series without making you click on millions of advertisements, nobody could watch a TV series without membership" ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*). In other words, she acknowledges the necessity of including advertisements on the site while appreciating the free circulation of the copyrighted content. This is a recurring connection made for the legitimization of advertising observed throughout the analysis.

Reciprocation

The users do recognize the labor of the site's runners and they try to reciprocate their effort in different ways. The comment thread under the "Who are we?" section gives the visitors the chance to comment about the statement as well as the site in general.

They use this opportunity to thank the “admins.” Interestingly, these users acknowledge the labor of the admins, who spend time to provide access to the TV series online. One of the members, JY, mentions clicking on the advertisements to support the site, yet an administrator responds by the comments on the series mean a lot more to them (“Who are we?,” *WatchOnline.com*). This points out to another interesting phenomenon about site. The user wants to reciprocate the site’s provision of the TV series for free by increasing the advertising revenues through an increase of the traffic from the website to the advertisers’ sites. However, the admin expresses that the comments are more motivating for them. Although the site makes money by hosting advertisements, the comments are preferred. Commenting as a form of reciprocation is encouraged. Since the comments provide a chance for the founders, the admins and the users interact with each other, by encouraging commenting, the founders contribute to the communal activity aspect of the site. This stance coincides with the decision to allow commenting on the site in general. In other words, the inclusion of the comment threads in the design of the site is supported by the admins’ prioritization of the comments as a way of reciprocating the free service provided by the site.

Founders’ Statements

While the design of the site, “Who are we?” section and the interactions with the fans via comments provides data in order to survey the site, I also chose to interview the founders of the site to understand better how the site functioned. The findings resulting from the interview complement the survey of the design and the mission statement since all three provide a closer look at the founders’ take on the circulation of the copyrighted content. Since the labor they spent on online streaming makes

them different from those who simply enjoy online streaming as users, I believe the interview was important for unraveling the founders' motivations for starting and continuing the site.

The interview revealed that the founders were not TV series fans themselves at the beginning. In that way, the site distinguished itself from the fan sites founded by the fans. After experimenting with other online sites, these founders realized that their video site was bombarded with requests to include TV series' episodes. This video site was founded following the *YouTube* ban in Turkey. These requests gave the founders the idea of starting a website dedicated to streaming TV series. At this point, it is necessary that we are talking about internet savvy people, who were already familiar with the technological possibilities presented by the internet. The site started with the Turkish TV series before adding foreign series upon request later. Even the beginnings of the site depict a hybrid character, which Lessig (2008) describe as a mixture of commercial and sharing economies (p.177). Although it looks like a group of young people trying new things online, there is still a hint of venturing since the founders had experience of starting up websites. One of these websites had almost led to a professional business contract in the past. Therefore, it is possible to observe trend of professionalization. This trend also manifests itself in the transformation of the site.

Advertising

The hybrid characteristic of the site also manifests itself in the vocabulary used by the founders. When asked about the option of skipping advertising on the site, one of the founders said that the skipping option stemmed from the rules of advertising. The alternative would have been aggressive advertising, which the founder quickly

deemed as unpromising. Once again, professionalization becomes visible since the founder's take on advertising reveals his familiarity with the ways and rules of advertising.

Copyrights

When asked directly about the copyright infringements resulting from the site, the founders' answers reveal how much they know about the copyright laws. As mentioned before, the site gave up streaming Turkish TV series and disabled access to the site from some other countries to prevent copyright infringement disputes. While talking to the founders, it becomes evident that they are moving in a small uncontested space since the copyright laws for online circulation of the cultural products have not been totally crystallized. According to one of the founders, the aim of disabling access from other countries was to escape their jurisdiction. If, he said, the site streams in Turkey, they only have to deal with the Turkish laws. The streaming of the foreign TV series is not against the law, he argued, since the Turkish TV channels that air the shows rarely have the online streaming rights for the content. When no one transfers the copyright of the content to a Turkish entity or a person, there is no one to contest online streaming by the site. However, some TV channels airing those foreign TV series do challenge the site. The founder said they do not fight them not because what they are doing is illegal, but because they do not want to attract attention.

A similar remark was made while discussing the shut-down in 2009. Explaining that the district attorney shut down the site based on a media company's complaint, the founder added that they could have fought it off legally since there was no legal ground for that shut-down at the time. Nevertheless, they did not choose

to appeal the shut-down order not to attract more attention. While thinking about changing the domain name, they realized the site could have been reached with another link. In a way, they circumvented the decision technologically rather than pursuing a legal course. Once again, there is not an open opposition of the intellectual property rights. When asked specifically about the copyrights, one of the founders said that online streaming was different in terms of copyright disputes since the copyright owners did not always provide access. This indicates that without the existence of an official access channel, the circulation of the unauthorized content is not seen as a copyright infringement before the eyes of the founders. Here, the provision of the access is seen as the responsibility of the content owner. When they fail to do so, this need is answered by some other service.

Industry

This reference to “service,” which also appeared in “Who are we?” section, can be observed in relation to the references to the industrial forces. As mentioned above, one of the founders stated that they would not stream TV series if TV channels or the production companies had provided this “service.” He argued that they should not interfere with those who provide this service if they cannot provide it. According to this stance, the industry fails to fulfill their responsibility. These remarks also remind the statement about the requests for streaming TV series back when the founders were running a video site. In both instances, the same founder referred to the existence of a need that was provided by the site’s service. This use is reminiscent of the supply-demand analogy in a sense that the site answers a need, which is not addressed by the industrial forces such as representatives of the production companies or the TV channels. The termination of the Turkish TV series can be

discussed in relation to that stance considering the fact that the Turkish TV channels improved their online streaming tremendously in the last few years and addressed the needs about watching TV series online. However, while discussing the termination of the Turkish TV series, the founders referred to the copyright problems rather than the TV channels' improvement of their online streaming services. One of the founders referred to the big online streaming department of one of the TV channels to point out to the channel's inefficiency in managing the online streaming of a small number of TV series with a massive number of workers. Once again, the site is compared to the official channels of dissemination. While the comparison belittles the TV channel's efficiency, it also reminds the professionalization tendency inherent in the course of the site.

Financial Profits

The issue of commercialization goes hand in hand with this tendency of professionalization. However, the extent of financial gain indicates the failure in the fulfillment of the commercialization stage. When asked about the termination of the manifesto like "Who are we?" section, one of the founders stated that they did not remove the section, but yet, did not use it during the design change. As I probed further about this choice, a very interesting answer came. The founder said that the website started out as a hobby and ended up being a job with commercial expectations, so it was no longer appropriate to post the original mission statement, which underlined the non-profit nature of the site. The commercial expectations referred here allude to the founders' hope to turn the website into a *Hulu.com* like site, which streams different TV series of different channels. The project fell through mainly because of the existence of multiple copyright owners according to the

founders. Since the channels, the production companies and the writers share the copyrights, the founders decided that it was impossible to convince everyone. Considering these, the site appears as a step towards a commercial enterprise for the founders. When the plans fail, the site retains its hybrid nature instead of transitioning to the commodity exchange model of Belk (2007) or commercial economy model of Lessig (2008). However, some elements towards professionalization remain intact. For example, the admins of the site are no longer volunteers but paid employees.

Despite an understanding reminiscent of the classic supply and demand model along with the familiarity with advertising norms, the founders' statements are not completely profit oriented. While discussing the beginnings of the site, one of the founders also mention that they considered treating the site as an open-source project and share the advertising revenues with the visitors of the site. The increasing number of users discouraged them from doing so. In terms of the current advertising revenues, they state that the money just covers the maintenance costs. It was also stated that the donations made via the "Donate Us" section corresponds to a very small amount.

Reciprocation

The hybrid nature of the site is mirrored by the founders' mixed feelings regarding the work they do for the site. While discussing the video removals by the video hosts that take place from time to time, I ask their motivation for re-uploading hundreds of videos again. One of the founders pauses and simply says: "Comments" (Personal communication, April 11th, 2012). With that he refers to the users' request for re-uploading. He first says that reading a comment about user that has been following

the site for five years and waiting to watch the TV series motivates him. Then, the founder pauses again and adds: “Actually it is our job. We don’t need motivation” (Personal communication, April 11th, 2012). This is an exact embodiment of the hybrid nature of the site. The site is partially professionalized, so are the founders. Nevertheless, still, the motivation comes from the comments. This quickly reminds the admin’s prioritization of the comments rather than clicks on the advertisements in the comment thread on “Who are we?” section. The human interaction between the founders and the users appears as an important part of the site’s functioning. Both the community located around the site and the users’ loyalty to the site still remain important for continuing streaming especially when it gets really hard to continue due to the technical or legal problems.

Comments below the Videos

The comments¹² posted below the episode videos depict the interactions between the site’s running team as well as the interactions among the users. Besides asking the admins questions about the streaming date or about the technical problems, the users communicate with each other. Sometimes they respond to each other’s questions while some other times they share information without the question of a fellow user. There are four different contexts of user interactions: 1-) They give technical tips to solve problems; 2-) They give suggestions about other TV series to each other; 3-) They identify the songs played during the episodes; 4-) They share information about the production of the series and as well as information about the cast; 5-) As expectedly, they also talk about the plot of the TV series.

¹² The comments, which are posted below the videos appear in Turkish on the site, are translated by me. See Appendix D for the original quotes.

The communal aspect of online streaming becomes more visible via these comments. The content exchange and the information exchange transforms into the emotional exchange in certain cases. The analysis of the comment threads below the videos not only provide a rich source for the survey of the admins' and the users' attitudes about unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content, but also offers a chance to observe the communal aspect of online streaming in the case of *WatchOnline.com*.

Labor

While addressing the admins, especially when thanking, the users prefer to mention the site's runners as "*WatchOnline.com* Family" or "*WatchOnline.com* Team." These uses are important indicatives of the users' perception of the website. The use of "team" indicates that the users are aware that website is run by a group rather than an individual. The use of "family" is more interesting, since the group work aspect of the website is carried to a more intimate and closer level by the comparison of the website's team to a family. While thanking, the users frequently refer to the notion of "emek," which means "labor" in Turkish. In this way, the users or the viewers acknowledge the work put into the streaming the TV series they love. Uploading, downloading, preparing subtitles and streaming require effort. However, the website's functioning is more about bringing everything together in the site since they download the episodes from the internet and find the subtitles from the internet as well. They put both together and stream. According to these, it is possible to observe the website's effect in circulation of the content. The most important function of the website is providing access.

It is necessary to mention that the fansubbers' work and labor is also acknowledged by the users although these fansubbers are not organically linked to the running team of the website. One user states: "The translations are great. Thanks a lot to the friend called EB" ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*). Another one talks about the show and continues by thanking both the *WatchOnline.com* and the fansubber: "[...] thanks a lot to the WatchOnline.com. I liked EB since *Chuck*, I also thank him" ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*). With this the user refers to another TV series translated by EB¹³.

Although the fansubbers prepare the subtitles and share them on forums dedicated to fansubbing, the users share words of praise in their comments on the website. While the admins simply take the subtitles and add them to the episode videos, *WatchOnline.com* also gets credit for them. It is important to note that the fansubbing scene in Turkey has its own stars. Some of these fansubbers are known by their full names rather than their nicknames. Users complain when the website uses another fansubbers' subtitles instead of the one they prefer. There are a few different reasons for these preferences. Firstly, a regular fansubber is accustomed to the context, so makes more suitable translations. In TV series like *Lost* and *Fringe*, which have complicated plotlines and a unique vocabulary of their own, continuity as well as familiarity with the content is very important. Secondly, some fansubbers add their own commentary to the subtitles, which the other viewers enjoy reading. Thirdly, fansubber's overall efficiency in English is another important element in terms of fansubbers' popularity. The names of the fansubbers' appear with the subtitles. This system of crediting contributes to the reputation of the fansubber. In the past, some of the fansubbers used to share their email addresses, too. The site no

¹³ EB is a very well known fansubber in Turkey. He uses his own name instead of a nickname, so people refer to him with his name, yet I chose to give him a nickname like the users.

longer streams these email addresses. At the earlier stages of online sharing and piracy in the Turkish context, some of the fansubbers stated that they started fansubbing to improve their English skills. Today, expertise is important and established fansubbers are preferred by the users. Once they become known, they are even mentioned in *Wiki* sites. With the expansion of social media sites, these fansubbers started to be reached via *Facebook* and *Twitter*, too. Unlike the fansubbers, the admins usually remain known as admins¹⁴.

Loyalty

In some cases, loyalty makes itself visible via the complaints. Whenever a problem occurs—for example, when the video host removes videos due to copyright infringements making episodes unavailable, or when the website fails to provide the new episodes right after the original airing, the same users express their complaints. Interestingly, some of them express their regrets and discomfort about using an alternative online streaming website in certain cases. One of the users complains about the site's failure to fix the removed videos and states:

SI: Unfortunately, *WatchOnline.com* is not like it used to be. Although I used to say “What would I do without *WatchOnline.com*?” I no longer visit the site since the TV series are not fixed while the site is full of Turkish TV series that we can watch on TV, too. When I enter the site very rarely, I don't even write “thanks” because none of the episodes have been fixed for months. At least remove them all together, so people won't [be tricked and] feel happy seeing them on because that's not nice. I personally turned to other websites and I watch via them although I loved this site and I am very sorry about it... (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*)

This also depicts that these users are loyal to the website despite the complaints. This loyalty competes with their desire to access their favorite TV shows. Another user

¹⁴ Very rarely, *admins* comment with their own user names. Most of the time, they sign their comments as “admin.” Although some of the registered users know these *admins* personally, all users address them as “admin.”

posts a similar comment and asks the website's runners to fix the problems with the site so that the user can watch via *WatchOnline.com* instead of another site:

BZ: I am not writing this as a comment. It is just a message to the site's runners, I hope it won't be published... I started to watch TV series with this site, and I have been watching from here for a long time, but the image quality is not how I want. I am sorry. There is [better] image quality on another site. I also have to refresh the episode many times. I mean even if the problem stems from my PC or from refreshing, why don't I have the same trouble with the other site? ☹ I have to watch on another site and I really don't like it. WatchOnline.com was like our home. Please take care of this so we can make return home for sure... Thanks ☺ ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*)

Another reason for posting comments is the appreciation of the TV series that the users watch, which shows that the users of the site are also fans of the certain TV shows. A long-time user, who happens to be a recently registered member, feels the urge to comment after watching the episode:

WE: This might sound funny to you, but I just became a member despite watching TV series here for three years. And I must admit I watched almost all foreign TV series. John is handsome, Dean is charismatic, attractive, Jason was my favorite etc. etc. But those mimics of Sam... Enough reason for falling in love while watching [...] ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*)

In these cases, it is possible to say an increased level of engagement with the content makes the users more likely to post comments on the website. Here, the difference between commenting for the website and commenting for the TV series mirror the dual loyalties of the users directed towards the website and the TV shows. The same loyalty for the TV series makes the users more demanding. One of the users state: "I became a [registered] member for this TV series. My first comment is let's get the new episode nowwwwwwwwwww [sic]." The desire to view the new episode makes the user register and become a member so that he can post a comment. Even in the presence of this duality of loyalties, it is possible to talk about the existence of a community formed via *WatchOnline.com*.

Besides thanking and commenting, the users express their gratitude by making suggestions to improve the sites' services. One user suggests a change of server while another suggests the use of "spoiler" alert in the posts. This suggestion is an important point since spoilers cause many discussions in the posts. Sharing future information about the storyline is not appreciated by all users. Later, the admins start to make spoilers readable with an extra click so none of the users accidentally see them among the posts. A few users offer to help with the fansubbing. There are other technical and functional suggestions present among the comments. These users want to contribute to the improvement of the viewing experience as well as to the website's popularity.

Advertising and Financial Profits

Advertising is seen as necessary for the survival of the website. The users and the admins mostly appear to be on the same side with respect to advertising. Discussions regarding advertising are mixed with references to the non-profit seeking nature of the site. Therefore, it is hard to isolate the indicators about advertising from the ones about financial profits.

At two different instances, users specifically ask for the removal of a certain advertisement from the site by saying they are bored with seeing the same advertising, which is a weight-loss product promoted by a Turkish TV presenter: "Admin, put some other commercials in between. I am in such a state that I can strangle Mesut Yar if I see him on the street. Get rid of Hadise, too. Change is good every once in a while, bro :-))" [sic] ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*). The admin replies by saying that they are working on it: ":-)))) I am looking into it" ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*). Another user complains similarly: "Please get rid

of this Mesut Yar advertising, put another advertisement... *WatchOnline.com* is our only address” (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*). This user, like the other is not against the advertising on the site. Both of the users simply ask it to be replaced. The latter user does also indicate the loyalty to the site right after the complaint.

When a user complains about a 12 seconds long advertising video before the episode, both the admin and the other users reply his comment with serious discontent. The user writes:

MH: Shame on you. We have to play 12 seconds long commercial to start the video. You really love getting your loved ones swears behind your back? There are advertising all over the page, at least don't push it in front of [our] eyes? A brave admin should publish this message and make an explanation? For your information, I list swear words that shouldn't be addressed to any human being during those 12 seconds. (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*)

It is important to remember that all commercial videos can be skipped by registered and non-registered users while the registered ones see less advertising on the banners. Either skipping option was held off for a short period of time or the user is complaining despite the option of skipping. The reason for the user for daring the admin to publish the message stems from the system of commenting on the website. As mentioned before, posted comments need the approval of the admins to appear to other users. The system aims at eliminating spams and profane discussions. The *admin* indeed approves the message and posts a response: “Admin’s note: Yes, shame on us. You are talking about 12 seconds while we are suffering to make you watch these TV series without asking anything back!” (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*). The responses of the other users are quite harsh, too:

EA: Idiot [...], have you seen a better website than *WatchOnline.com* in your life and yet [you are] still talking? Even admin’s respectful answer is too much for you.

FW: How can this website be financed without advertising? Are you giving money to those who labor for this site? What you call advertising is moderate compared to the other sites. I also thank *WatchOnline.com* team.

BB: How appropriate is to get angry with the admins for advertising? Don't you watch commercials before the movies in cinemas you pay to go to? Besides, they put a button to skip the advertising below it. If they give you the pleasure of extending your legs at home and sipping your coffee [and watching] whenever you want to watch without missing the day [of airing], you should thank them instead of swearing!!! ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*)

Thank you *WatchOnline.com* team.

The reactions depict that the most users are accepting of the advertising as a means for the survival of the site. Since the website does not make the users pay for the service, they do not relate to the site as a host of commodity exchange model. Therefore, the existence of advertising on the site is justified.

Reciprocation

Ways of reciprocation detected during the analysis can be listed as clicking the advertising and commenting. The second form of reciprocation requires further attention since the users express their gratitude by thanking via comments, but the act of commenting itself is also seen as a form of reciprocation. These latter findings become more understandable if loyalty to the site and the desire to interact with the other members of the community located around the site are also considered.

Some users say that they have registered just to post comments while some others mention being registered users who have not commented yet. They state that they comment because of the urge to express gratitude. After commenting about the TV series, one of the users states:

NE: Thank you very much, *WatchOnline.com* team. By the way, many people at my work visit for Korean series. I thank you for them, too. We almost

finished all of your series... I feel ashamed of not commenting despite watching that much... (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*)

Then, reciprocation comes in the form of interacting with the others and becoming an active member of the community.

In a way reminiscent of the dialogues in the terminated “Who are we?” section, comments below the videos also include the idea of clicking on the advertising to make the website look more attractive before the eyes of the advertisers. One of the users comments about the plot first and then continues: “Ahh poor little Gordon, you will get what you deserve ☺ Thanks admins. P.S. I clicked on the ads, how about you?? ☺” (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*). Clicking on the advertisements appear as a way of “giving back” to the site and thanking to the site’s running team since the advertising revenues are accepted as necessary for the survival of the site.

The same users become more demanding when they fail to access. Nevertheless, other users do not hesitate to pitch in and protect the website by underlining the fact that it provides free access. Regarding the post criticizing the advertising above, another user writes: “Take time to think how appropriate it is to complain while just watching the series without clicking on the advertisements. People are trying and working, creating a perfect portal, you can’t leave *armut pis agzima dus model*” (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*). While referring to the need to click on advertising to create traffic for the survival of the site, the user criticizes the other user for waiting to access the TV series without doing anything as the founders or the admins of the website do all work. There is a self-assessed need to reciprocate and this user decides clicking on the advertisements is a way of doing so. Another

user uses a sarcastic language to point out to the meaninglessness of the complaints as follows:

PN: Respectable Admins... From what I understand from the exchanges, you have a contract with the other members. It is such that: no matter what happens—sickness, work, etc.—, [the admins] will access the translations in 1 or 2 days... If we can't, [the users] can blame us in whatever form or language you want... Since there isn't a contract with me, I just have to wait for the translations silently... Your immediate attention to this matter is appreciated 😊

I still thank you for providing access to these TV series, which would be really hard for us to watch in normal circumstances... *Emeginize saglik...* Besides, this is a great TV series, for information of those who want to start, regards... ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*)

Here, the user emphasizes that the founders or the admins are not required to provide such a service. Since they are doing it willingly, they deserve respect as well as praise rather than complaints. In another post, both the labor of the fansubbers and the others who take part in the chain on providing streaming are acknowledged:

BR: I don't understand why people are acting as if this is these men's job... Almost all the translators at [...] are doing this for free without asking anything in return! You have to ask for rather than giving orders!! Thank you very much to everybody who spent labor on this. The TV series is really good... ("Comments," *WatchOnline.com*)

It is important to realize that the user does not perceive the work of the online streamers as a professional job since they are not paid. Although here the main emphasis is not the fansubbers, similar defenses appear among the comments when the website's service is criticized.

Industry

The users also talk about the TV channels that air their favorite TV series despite following these series via *WatchOnline.com*. These users do watch the shows on TV as well as watching the streamed version. The sharing of information about the

official channels of the content dissemination is an important aspect to mention. One of the users asks about the slot of the TV series on TV: “Admin, will it be aired on CNBC-e? Please tell me will it be aired on which day at what time?” (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*). Another one states the slot of another TV series without even being asked: “Every Tuesday, at 19:45, on TNT” (“Comments,” *WatchOnline.com*). These incidents of sharing support the arguments in the literature about online sharing and piracy benefiting the industry in the end. Considering the fact that some of these users find out about some of these TV series from the *WatchOnline.com* and start to watch them both online and on TV is an evidence supporting these arguments. This type of nuances further complicates the positioning of the *WatchOnline.com* with regards to the culture industry.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to find out whether online sharing challenged existing norms of property and exchange that can be traced back to the capitalist system. In order to do that, perceptions and attitudes towards the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content were surveyed via the case study of *WatchOnline.com*. As a busy node of the multidimensional online sharing or piracy networks, the site provided a rich source of study with its connections to the human and non-human actors, which could be online and offline. The analysis of the site's design, the terminated "Who are we?" section, the interview with the founders and the comment threads below the episode videos offered an opportunity to evaluate the site's functioning in relation to the models of exchange as well as providing a look at the founders' and the users' positioning of themselves with reference to the existing norms of property and exchange. In order to survey this research question, references made to the "culture industry," "copyrights," "labor," "financial profits," "advertising," "reciprocation" and "loyalty" were analyzed.

The findings regarding comments on the culture industry or industrial actors such as TV channels and production companies depict that the site is compared to the industrial actors. These comparisons, which mark the site's difference from the TV channels and the production companies, help legitimizing the unauthorized circulation of the copyrighted content. It is necessary to realize, neither the users nor the founders are against the productions of the culture industry. They are rather troubled about the access problems. While the founders picture the workings of the online streaming site as a service, which the TV channels and the production

companies fail to offer, the users appreciate free access to the copyrighted content, which is not interrupted by the commercial breaks. For the foreign TV series, the synchronous access to the content becomes an important concern for the users, who also happen to be members of a global audience. What makes the site different is not the content, for the content is the same as what appears on TVs or on DVDs. The main difference of the site is the fact that it does not charge the users for the access. Both the official statements on the site and the personal statements of the founders during the interview as well as the users' comments underline this difference. At the same time, the founders and the users portray an anti-corporate stance. However, rather than the capitalistic system or the capitalistic system of cultural production, both the users and the founders stand against the monopoly or the oligopoly of the industrial forces over the circulation of the products. Even when the founders tone down the anti-corporate statements on the site, the users seem to retain their stance.

Unlike the anti-corporate tendencies, the attitudes towards copyrights are less antagonistic. The site's inclusion of the copyrights disclaimers provides protection against the legal problems. The interview with the founders reveals that the site makes use of the lack of laws for online circulation of the content in Turkey. They also make use of the jurisdictional borders, which limit the international copyright infringement disputes. Despite providing unauthorized access to the copyrighted content, the founders do not oppose the intellectual property rights. They rather explain their role in online sharing as providing what the industrial forces fail to provide. The users simply enjoy the free access, yet their stance about copyrights is limited to their displeasure about the lack of access due to the shut-downs by the courts or video removals by the video hosts.

The references to the labor spent for providing free access have been recurrently mentioned by the founders, while the users seem to acknowledge the amount of work going to online streaming. With the work of the founders and the admins, the efforts of the fansubbers are also acknowledged. This acknowledgement of labor is also an important basis for the users' desire to reciprocate by commenting or by clicking on the advertising. The perceived lack of financial profits in return of this labor also contributes to the legitimization of advertising for the maintenance purposes. It also seems to ignite the loyalty of the users, who keep referring to the word "emek," which means "labor" in Turkish.

The references made to the lack of financial profits for the founders contributes a lot to the differentiation of the site from the TV channels and the production companies both by the founders and the users. It is important to realize that the site generates advertising revenues. However, recurring references to the existing maintenance costs by the founders on the site seem to contribute to non-profit seeking image of the site. Even when a user protests the existence of advertising, many others retort by saying they are acceptable both because of the maintenance costs and the labor spent on providing access. Donations are another source of financial gains. This option provides the users a chance to contribute to the continuation of the site. Therefore, it is not surprising that the advertising is legitimized by the users.

The existence of advertising on the site contributes to the site's complicated status in relation to the capitalistic system of exchange. Like the TV channels, the site hosts advertising and commercials. However, the users seem less disturbed by those than their TV counterparts. While a commercial break on TV is unnerving for

the users, the advertising on the site seems less hostile. The option of skipping commercial videos contributes to this perception. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the advertising on the site places it on a capitalistic system of exchange at the same time. However, the maintenance costs and the fact that the site does not charge for access, as briefly mentioned above, also contribute to the benevolent image of the advertising for the users.

The references to reciprocity are intertwined with the references to labor, to the lack of financial profits and the advertising. The users, who appreciate the free access and acknowledge the site runners' efforts, express their gratitude in the form of thank you comments or by clicking on the advertising. The comments thanking the team running the site contribute to reputation of the site and the recognition of the site's runners within the context of online sharing, despite they remain anonymous. The idea of clicking on the advertising stems from the idea of increasing the advertising revenues by making the site more lucrative for the advertisers. The users hope that these revenues will guarantee the survival of the site by covering the maintenance fees. Although reciprocity in the form of clicking on the advertising appears as a part of gift-giving system of exchange, the monetary gains associated with the advertising make this type of reciprocity reminiscent of the commodity exchange model. Besides the thank you posts and clicking on the advertising, the act of commenting appears as a form of reciprocity. This pattern is similar to Hughes and Lang's (2003) understanding of the exchange of information and cultural products as examples of community activity. Contributing to the community activity appears as way of reciprocity in that context.

The references about loyalty to the site depict that the users appreciate what

the site provides them. Considering the existence of similar type of sites, the service provided by the site is not enough to explain the loyalty references. These references become more meaningful when the community formed around the site is considered. As the comment humanizes the acts of sharing, interactions between the founders, the admins and the users contribute to the creation of a community. Loyalty to this community also feeds the users' desire to reciprocate what the site gives to them.

When all these considered there are three important conclusions about the online streaming site, *WatchOnline.com*:

1-) Since the circulation of the copyrighted content and any user production are dependent on the original production by the industrial forces, it becomes apparent that neither the users nor the founders of the site can oppose the existence of the culture industry. There are different technologies of sharing such as online streaming, one-click hosting pages and peer-to-peer protocols, but the content circulation is dependent on the original production of the TV series. In other words, without TV series being produced by the industry, there would be no online sharing in the first place. The high costs of TV production make it different from music production since the capabilities of the powerful TV networks and production companies do matter. It is true that the fans produce cultural products. Fans can make fan videos, they can write fanfictions and they can prepare their own subtitles, yet all these products are inspired by the original content. In case of the TV series, it can be said that the fans cannot produce TV series on their own. It is important to take a moment to mention web series or low-budget mini-series production by the amateurs in this context. Although these alternatives do exist, it is not possible to compare the reach or the popularity of a major TV series with those. As much as the shows need fans to

continue their existence, the fans or online sharers need the content to share. In that context, the commonization of the content to the extent that the industrial forces would quit production due to the lack of profit, would halt the unauthorized circulation, too.

2-) *WatchOnline.com*'s properties coincide with Lessig's (2008) definition of a hybrid economy, which is a mixture of commercial and sharing economies (p. 177). The site incorporates sharing aims while being in connection with commercial entities mostly via advertising. The founders' previous aspirations about creating a business venture informs the professionalization of the site, which fails to transform into further commercialization. Despite not paying money for the access, suggested by the commodity exchange model, the users reciprocate the site's service via comments and advertising. While these elements of reciprocation parallel the gift-giving model, the online context differs from the traditional context of gift-giving since the recognition does not reproduce the existing system via legitimizing the status quo. In other words, unlike the gift of a new chief providing for a banquet for the other villagers to recognize his leadership, the online receivers of the gifts are not forced to live together. Their community is a community of choice. With regards to these findings, Belk's (2007) differentiation of sharing from the commodity exchange model and gift-giving based on the existence of reciprocity becomes helpful (p.128). According to his classification, depicting a non-monetary system of reciprocation, *WatchOnline.com* appears as an example of gift-giving model. This identification also parallels Lessig's definition of the hybrid economy. Both the hybrid economy and the gift-giving model are situated in between the commercial/commodity exchange model and the sharing economy/model.

3-) Despite appearing as a form of reciprocation, commenting contributes to community building around the site. As the users as well as the users reflect upon the circulation of the copyrighted content and the content itself, online streaming transforms into what Hughes and Lang (2003) call as community activity, which in return might alter the values of members of this community (p.180, 184). The success of this community building becomes visible via the users' loyalty to the site. The communal aspect of online streaming extends beyond the explanations based on reciprocity and hints at a shift towards an economy or a model of sharing.

Limitations

While the analysis mentioned above reveals the users' perceptions about the site and online sharing in general, there are important limitations to these findings: 1-) The survey of comments limits the user sample to the registered members, who post comments; 2-) Only the comments posted below foreign TV series were surveyed, 3-) Focusing on the founders, the admins and the users of the online streaming site leaves out the other online sharing actors, such as rippers/uploaders and fansubbers and 4-) The industrial attempts to halt online sharing can only be observed to the extent, where there is a direct effect on the site.

Membership is required to post comments. The users of the site can become members via free registration. Analyzing comments in order to survey the perceptions of the users regarding the notions of property and exchange limits the sample to the comment-posting registered members. This group is very small compared to the number of people, who watch TV series via the site. Furthermore, registration and commenting indicate a higher level of commitment and engagement. In this way, the sample might be representative of a smaller homogenous group of

users; therefore, making it harder to generalize the findings to the population. However, the excluded group of non-registered users is the least investing users. By not registering, they remain outside the *WatchOnline.com* community, yet they still get to watch the videos. In a way, these users do not commit to the community because they do not claim their membership via registration. Their relationship to the site reminds the free riding allusions that appear in the literature in relation to online sharing and piracy. They simply enjoy the free content out there without leaving traces of use. Of course, each visit appears in the traffic counts, yet without the information given during registration, it is very hard to single out the non-registered users. By not giving information, these users protect their privacy and reduce any risks related to their inclusion in online sharing. The exclusion of this group locates the study around the perceptions of the users who accept and embrace online sharing rather than simply enjoying the free content available online. However, the online community, which is formed by the registered users who can communicate among themselves via posts and messages in the case of *WatchOnline.com*, can depict a homogeneity that might result in a bias for the study.

Another limitation is the composition of the videos surveyed for comments. Since the site removed the Turkish TV series due to pressures of the production companies and the TV channels, the threads analyzed in the comments section were the ones posted below the episode videos of the foreign series. Considering the differences in the availability of the Turkish and the foreign TV series, the attitudes towards the unauthorized circulation of these two types of content might also vary. The lack of Turkish TV series on the site prevents the pursuing of this possible variation. Moreover, the design fails to survey, why some viewers prefer online streaming over TV by watching Turkish TV series via online streaming sites instead

of watching them on TV. Excluding Turkish TV series from the archive is an increasing trend among the online streaming sites in Turkey since these sites encounter legal problems due to copyrights. While some of the sites include the Turkish TV series, they do not allow comment posting. The brief survey of *SerialWatch.com*¹⁵, which streams Turkish TV series and allows commenting, provided some clues about the possible differences between the streaming of the Turkish TV series and the foreign ones. The survey of the comments depicted that the discussions mainly revolved around the plot line. There were less thank you messages. The running team of the site was less addressed. However, it is also necessary to mention the site is less popular than *WatchOnline.com*, so the lesser number of comments can be stemming from this difference. Interestingly, users from Turkic countries like Azerbaijan also posted comments pointing out to the influence of the Turkish TV series beyond Turkey.

By focusing on the actors of online sharing located on the site, this study fails to capture the perceptions of the other online sharing actors. Fansubbers put a lot of time and effort in preparing subtitles, which are essential to the online streaming experience. Although their names or nicknames come up in comment threads, their motivations for providing subtitles remain unexplored. Similarly, the original rippers/uploaders are very important to the unauthorized circulation of the content. Their efforts make online sharing possible. This design does not survey their perceptions of property and exchange either. Nevertheless, these actors are not permanent and organic members of the *WatchOnline.com* community. The original rippers/uploaders usually remain unknown and the fansubbers change from time to time. Except for a few cases, these fansubbers are not in direct contact with the

¹⁵ This is not the real name of the site.

website. Therefore, their association with the site appears weaker compared to the users and the founders.

The industrial response against online sharing is an important part of the study of online sharing and piracy. Since there is an on-going power contestation between the two sides of the struggle, the industrial practices and activities against online sharing offer a deeper understanding of this battle. The design of the study allows the survey of legal actions against the site and direct interactions of the founders with the industrial representatives such as the incidents of shut-down as well as the founders' reports and the admins' posts. However, production companies and TV channels also make certain management decisions regarding the prevention of online sharing. There are also lobbying activities for firmer copyright laws. The Turkish broadcasters interact with the foreign production companies about the copyrights of the series that are broadcasted on the Turkish TV channels. Their interactions are important in terms of understanding the globalization of the copyrights protection. These aspects remain unexplored as well.

Directions for Future Studies

In light of the conclusions and the limitations mentioned above, it can be said that there is a vast set of possibilities for future studies. A survey of the industrial actors' responses and attitudes towards online streaming in Turkey is one of these possible directions. This would provide a perspective for the other side of the power struggle regarding the control of circulation of the copyrighted content. A study about the course of laws and regulations regarding the internet control and the online protection of the copyright appears as another option to pursue. This direction not only would provide a closer look at the different actors' roles in lawmaking, but also

would offer a chance to observe if there is a trend towards the internationalization of these laws. Another direction would aim for unraveling the demographic make-up of the online streaming communities to evaluate the level of homogeneity of the community. Comparing different online streaming sites would also give a chance to understand if *WatchOnline.com* is a unique case or the site represents a typical example of online streaming sites in Turkey or in other countries. Communities located around different technologies of sharing such as the online streaming sites, the peer-to-peer protocols and the once-click-hosting sites can also be compared in order to study how online sharing differs in itself. Considering the *WatchOnline.com* is a hybrid, whose professionalization and commercialization were halted at some point, the site can also be compared with other examples that managed to transform into commercial enterprises, if there are any. Since TV series are high cost productions, which cannot be produced by fans alone, studying different types of copyrighted content that can be produced by the fans would provide another point of comparison. Finally, surveying whether the online sharing practices translate into a change in offline sharing practices would provide another direction for the future studies.

APPENDIX A: “Terms of Use” Section Original Text

Kullanım Şartları

- 1-WatchOnline.com bünyesindeki tüm videolar yalnızca online seyretme niteliğinde hazırlanmıştır. İndirilmesi yada kopyalanması önerilmemektedir.
- 2-WatchOnline.com hiçbir içeriği satmaz, kiralamaz ya da ulaşılması için maddi talepte bulunmaz.
- 3- WatchOnline.com sitesi içerisindeki videolar kullanıcılar tarafından talep edilmesi halinde eklenmektedir.
- 4- WatchOnline.com içerisinde yalnızca video izleme kodları (embed) bulunmaktadır. Hiçbir video kendi sunucularımızda barındırılmamaktadır. Tüm videolar youtube, google video, facebook gibi dünyaca ünlü video paylaşım sitelerinden alıntılanmaktadır.
- 5- Telif hakkı içeren videolar videonun barındırıldığı video paylaşım sitesinden silindiğinde sitemizden otomatik olarak silinmiş olur.
- 6- WatchOnline.com olarak telif ihlalini çok ciddiye alıyoruz ve yasal telif hakkı sahiplerinin haklarını gayretle koruyacağız. Eğer siz WatchOnline.com web sitesinde görülen içeriğin bir telif hakkı sahibi iseniz ve içeriğin kullanımını yetkilendirmediyse, ihlal içeriğini belirlememiz ve harekete geçmemiz için bize yazılı olarak bildirimde bulunmak için webmaster@WatchOnline.com adresini kullanın.
- 7- Yazılı bildiriminiz aşağıdakileri içermelidir: İhlal edildiğini iddia ettiğiniz telifli işin belirleme kimliği. Tek bir bildiri ile birden fazla telifli işin ihlal edildiğini iddia ediyorsanız, ihlal edildiğini iddia ettiğiniz her bir işi belirten bir temsili liste sunmalısınız. İhlal edildiği ya da malzemeyi yerleştirmek için izin verilen yeterli ayrıntılı bilgiyi içeren ihlal aktivitesi ile ilgili malzemenin konumu ve tanımının belirli açıklaması. İhlal edildiğini iddia ettiğiniz malzemenin bulunduğu web sayfalarının belirli URL'sini ya da URL'lerine sahip olmalısınız. Şikâyet edilen taraf ile iletişim kurmamızı sağlayacak, şikâyet edilen tarafa ulaşılacak isim, adres, telefon numarası, elektronik posta adresi ve hakkında yeterli bilgi. Telif hakkı sahibi, temsilcisi ya da yasa tarafından yetkilendirilmemiş olmasından şikâyet edilen durumda malzemenin kullanımı konusunda şikâyet eden tarafın iyi niyetli inanca sahip olduğuna dair bir ifade. Bildirimdeki bilgilerin doğru olduğuna ve yemin cezası altında şikâyet eden tarafın ihlal edildiği iddia edilen açık hakkın sahibinin yararına yetkilendirildiğine dair bir ifade.
- 8- Reklamlarımız web tarayıcısı üzerine cookie yerleştirebilir ve bunları okuyabilir veya bilgi toplamak amacı ile web işaretleri kullanabilir.
- 9- WatchOnline, bu siteye girilmesi, sitenin ya da sitedeki bilgilerin ve diğer verilerin vs. kullanılması sebebiyle, sözleşmenin ihlali, haksız fiil, ya da başkaca sebeplere binaen, doğabilecek doğrudan ya da dolaylı hiçbir zarardan sorumlu değildir. WatchOnline, sözleşmenin ihlali, haksız fiil, ihmal veya diğer sebepler

neticesinde; işlemin kesintiye uğraması, hata, ihmal, kesinti hususunda herhangi bir sorumluluk kabul etmez. Bu siteye ya da link verilen sitelere girilmesi ya da sitenin kullanılması ile WatchOnline'un kullanım/ziyaret sonucunda, doğabilecek her tür sorumluluktan, mahkeme ve diğer masraflar da dahil olmak üzere her tür zarar ve talep hakkından beri kılındığı kabul edilmektedir.

10- Yer altı ve yer üstü içerikleri sitemizin vizyonu gereği internette bulabileceğiniz her şeyi size direk olarak ulaştırma, anında izleme amaçlıdır. Bu nedenle buradaki bilgilerin kullanımıyla ilgili tüm sorumluluklar size aittir. Sitemizin içeriği ve amacı sadece bilgidir.

11- WatchOnline işbu site ve site uzantısında mevcut her tür hizmet, ürün, siteyi kullanma koşulları ile sitede sunulan bilgileri önceden bir ihtara gerek olmaksızın değiştirme, siteyi yeniden organize etme, yayını durdurma hakkını saklı tutar. Değişiklikler sitede yayım anında yürürlüğe girer. Sitenin kullanımı ya da siteye giriş ile bu değişiklikler de kabul edilmiş sayılır. Bu koşullar link verilen diğer web sayfaları için de geçerlidir.

12- WatchOnline, sözleşmenin ihlali, haksız fiil, ihmal veya diğer sebepler neticesinde; işlemin kesintiye uğraması, hata , ihmal, kesinti, silinme, kayıp, işlemin veya iletişimin gecikmesi, bilgisayar virüsü, iletişim hatası, hırsızlık, imha veya izinsiz olarak kayıtlara girilmesi, değiştirilmesi veya kullanılması hususunda herhangi bir sorumluluk kabul etmez.

APPENDIX B: “Donate Us?” Section Original Text

Bize Bağış Yapın

WatchOnline Projesine Destek Olun!

WatchOnline tamamen karşılıksız hizmet sunan bir projedir. Bu projeye destek olmak isteyen kullanıcılarımız bize bağış yaparak; sunucu masrafı, alan adı ve diğer ihtiyaçlarımız için gerekli ödeneğin sağlanmasına maddi açıdan destek olabilirler. WatchOnline şuan yalnızca PayPal aracılığı ile bağış kabul etmektedir. Menüden yapmak istediğiniz bağış miktarını seçtikten sonra, PayPal resmine tıklayarak işleme devam edebilirsiniz. Bu sistem ile bağış yapabilmek için PayPal hesabınız ve hesabınızda bağış kadar para veya geçerli bir kredi kartınız olmalıdır.

APPENDIX C: “Who are we?” Section Original Text

Biz Kimiz?

Biz kimiz? "Biz kimiz" sorusunu yanıtlamadan önce "Biz kim değiliz" veya "Biz ne değiliz" sorusunu yanıtlayalım. Biz 20 dakika film/program/dizi, 15 dakika reklam yayınlayan bir TV kanalı değiliz. Biz bir medya patronunun emrinde çalışan reyting köleleri değiliz. Biz para verip alabileceğiniz bir gazete, bir dergi veya bir kitap değiliz. Biz marketten aldığınız bir film/dizi CD'si hiç mi hiç değiliz. Peki biz kimiz? Biz bir hobi olarak başladığımız "online dizi" sektörünün ilk'i olmasak da ilklerinden olan oldukça kapsamlı bir dizi sitesiyiz. Biz cebine girecek 3 kuruşun peşinde olan değil, insanlara daha iyi hizmet vermek için uğraşan kişileriz. Kısaca Biz, işin çakallığında olan değil, kalitesinin peşinde olan dev gibi bir dizi sitesiyiz.

APPENDIX D: “Comments” Section Original Text

Yorumlar

ZY: “[...] sitenizde yaptıklarınızı çok yakından takip ediyorum. üst düzey medya patronları tepişsinler ama bizler ezilmeyelim. sizler bizi ezdirmeyin. FİLLER TEPIŞİR ÇİMENLER EZİLİR bu sefer olmasın. Başarılarınızın devamını dilerim.”

SN: “[...] WatchOnline eğer sırf para kazanmak adına yapılmış bir site olsa size milyon tane reklam tıklatmadan dizi izletmezdi, üyelik bile istemeden kimse dizi izleyemezdi.”

MI: “Çeviriler harika yapılmış. Emre Bekman isimli arkadaşta teşekkürler.”

WN: “Herkesi iyi seyirler ve WatchOnline.com ekibine sonsuz teşekkürler. Emre Bekman’a da chuck’tan beri sempatiyle yaklaşıyorum ona da ayrıca teşekkürler.”

SI: malesef WatchOnline.com artık eskisi gibi diil, WatchOnline.com olmadan napaım diyen ben, diziler düzeltilmediği ve onun yerine zaten tv.de de izlediğimiz türk dizileriyle dolduğu için artık WatchOnline.a girmiyorum çok az girdiğimde de teşekkür bile yazmıyorum çünkü aylar sonra baktığım dizilerin hiçbirinin bölümleri düzeltilmemiş bari tamamen kaldırın dizileri ki, insanlar aaa bu dizi varmış diye sevinmesinler hiç hoş olmuyo çünkü... şahsen başka sitelere yönlendim oradan izliyorum halbuki bu siteyi çok seviodum ve çok üzıldüm..

BZ: “bunu yorum olsun die yazmıyorum ..sadece sitenin ilgililerine ufak bi msj yayınlanmayacağını umuyorum..dizi izlemeye bu sitede başladım ne zamandır burdan izliyorum ama görüntü istediğim gib deil üzgünüm ama başka bi sitede daha net ve kaliteli bi görüntü var...hmm buarada defalarca yeniliyorum izleyeceğim dizi bölümünü yani sorun benim pc de olsa yada yenilemede olsa neden dier sitede bu sorunu yaşamıyorum ordan izlemek zorunda kalıyorum aslında bu hoşuma gitmio WatchOnline evimiz gibiydi lütfen ilgilenin eve kesin dönüş yapalım..teşekkürler ”

WE: “Size komik gelebilir ama üç yıldır buradan dizi izleme rağmen yeni üyesi olmuş bulunmaktayım. Ve bir şey itiraf etmem gerek neredeyse yabancı bütün dizileri izledim. John yakışıklı, dean karizmatik çekici favorimdi jason du vs vs.. ya o sam’in mimikleri yok mu aşık olmak için bile sebep yani Supernaturel’i izlerken(Bkz. Allahım sana geliyorummm) ”

AD: “bu dizi için üye oldum ilk yorumum yeni bölüm gelsin artıkkkkkkkkk”

MU: adminnn aralara baska reklam filan sıkıştırırsan be mesut yar'ı sokakta görsem boğazlıycak duruma geldim hadiseyi de at arada değişiklik iyidir be kanka =))

Admin Notu : =)))) ilgileniyorum

TE: “su mesut yar reklamını ne olur kaldırın baska bir reklam yayınlayın....WatchOnline.com tek adresimiz” Admin Notu : Bu konuyla çalışmalarımız devam ediyor

ME: “yazıklar olsun sana WO. videoyu başlatmak için 12 saniye zoraki reklam açıyorsunuz ya helal olsun. çok seviyorsunuz değilmi en değer verdiklerinize arkanızdan küfür yedirmek? sayfanın her yeri reklam bari gözümüze sokmayın! cesareti olan admin bu mesajı yayınlayıp açıklama yapsın? o 12 saniye boyunca bir insan evladına söylenmiyecek küfürler sayıyorum bilgilerinize arz ederim!”

Admin Notu : Evet yazıklar olsun bize hiç bir karşılık beklemeden size bunca diziyi izlemek için çektiğimiz onca şeyin yanında 12 saniyenin lafını yapıyorsunuz!

EA: “gerizekalı [...] ömründe WatchOnline dan iyi bi sitemi gördünde konuşuyorsun adminin sana saygılı şekilde msj atması bile sna çok”

FR: “Reklamsız bu site nasıl finanse edilebilir senmi para veriyon bu sitede emeği geçenlere.. reklam dediğinde oteki sitelere gore daha sade yani bende WatchOnline ekibine tesekkür ediyorum...”

BS: “Reklamlar için adminlere kızmak ne kadar doğru?para verip gittiğiniz sinemada bile film başlamadan onlarca reklam izlemiyor musunuz? ve ayrıca reklam altına reklamı geç diye buton eklemişler..evinizde ayağınızı uzatıp kahvenizi yudumlayıp istediğiniz saatte gününü kaçırmadan ve karşılık beklemeden size bu keyfi yaşatabiliyorlarsa küfür değil teşekkür etmek lazım!!”

Teşekkürler WatchOnline Ekibi..

NE: Çok teşekkürler WatchOnline ekibi.. Bu arada benim işyerimde çok sayıda kişi Kore dizileri için size takılıyor.Onlar adınada ben teşekkür edeyim.Nerdeyse tüm dizilerinizi bitirdik...O kadar izleyip yorum yazmayınca utandım...”

Admin Notu: Bizi tercih ettiğiniz için biz teşekkür ederiz.

AB: “Ahh poor little Gordon, payına düşeni alacaksın Teşekkürler adminler.

Ps. Ben reklamlara tıkladım, ya siz??”

BI: “Sadece dizi seyredip reklamlara tıklamamazlık edip ardından da söylenmeniz ne kadar doğru ilk önce onu bir düşünün, adamlar uğraşıyor didiniyor mükemmel bir portal yapıyorlar, siz armut pi ağzıma düş modelini terk etmiyorsunuz bir türlü.”

PN: “sayın adminler... yazışmalardan anladığım kadarıyla diğer üyelerle bir anlaşmanız var. söyle ki; her ne olursa olsun -hastalık, iş-güş... vs- tercümeleeri 1 veya 2 gün içinde size ulaştıracağız... olur da ulaştıramassak bizi istediğiniz şekil ve dilde suçlayabilirsiniz... ancak benimle böyle bir sözleşme yapılmadadığı için sakince tecümeleeri beklemek zorunda kalıyorum... gereğinin yapılmasını rica ederim... ben yine de; normal şartlarda seyretmemiz gerçekten zor olacak bu dizileri bize ulaştırdığınız için teşekkür ederim... emeğinize sağlık... ayrıca harika bir dizi, başlamak isteyenlere duyuruldu saygılar...”

BA: “yahu neden adamların işi buymuş gibi davranılıyor anlamıyorum.. divxplanet teki

çevirmenlerin neredeyse tamamı ücretsiz olarak bir karşılık beklemeden yapıyor bu işi!! Rica etmemiz gerek emir vermek yerine!! Teşekkürler emeği geçen herkese. Dizi çok iyi..”

DA: “admin cnbc-e de mi yayınlanacak dizi bir söyleyin hangi gün ve saat kaçta yayınlanacak lütfennn”

Admin Notu: Bizi tercih ettiğiniz için biz teşekkür ederiz.

AB: “Ahh poor little Gordon, payına düşeni alacaksın Teşekkürler adminler.

Ps. Ben reklamlara tıkladım, ya siz??”

BI: “Sadece dizi seyredip reklamlara tıklamamazlık edip ardından da söylenmeniz ne kadar doğru ilk önce onu bir düşünün, adamlar uğraşüyor didiniyor mükemmel bir portal yapıyorlar, siz armut pi ağzıma düş modelini terk etmiyorsunuz bir türlü.”

PN: “sayın adminler... yazışmalardan anladığım kadarıyla diğer üyelerle bir anlaşmanız var. söyle ki; her ne olursa olsun -hastalık, iş-güş... vs- tercümeleleri 1 veya 2 gün içinde size ulaştıracağız... olur da ulaştıramassak bizi istediğiniz şekil ve dilde suçlayabilirsiniz... ancak benimle böyle bir sözleşme yapılmadığı için sakince tecümeleleri beklemek zorunda kalıyorum... gereğinin yapılmasını rica ederim... ben yine de; normal şartlarda seyretmemiz gerçekten zor olacak bu dizileri bize ulaştırdığınız için teşekkür ederim... emeğinize sağlık... ayrıca harika bir dizi, başlamak isteyenlere duyuruldu saygılar...”

BA: “yahu neden adamların işi buymuş gibi davranılıyor anlamıyorum.. divxplanet teki çevirmenlerin neredeyse tamamı ücretsiz olarak bir karşılık beklemeden yapıyor bu işi!! Rica etmemiz gerek emir vermek yerine!! Teşekkürler emeği geçen herkese. Dizi çok iyi..”

DA: “admin cnbc-e de mi yayınlanacak dizi bir söyleyin hangi gün ve saat kaçta yayınlanacak lütfennn”

YE: “Her Salı 19:45 te tnt de”

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