

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

**ISLAMIC MOTIFS IN TURKISH HORROR FILMS**

**Master Thesis**

**TUĞBA GÖRGÜLÜ**

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**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY  
BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY**

**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
FILM AND TELEVISION**

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**Thesis Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kaya ÖZKARACALAR**

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## ABSTRACT

### ISLAMIC MOTIFS IN TURKISH HORROR FILMS

Tuğba Görgülü

Film and Television  
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kaya Özkaracalar

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In this thesis, Turkish horror films, which are made after 2000, and that which consist Islamic motifs are studied. The monsters or any elements oriented with the threat, characters and other motifs are analyzed through their relation with Islam and their representations are studied first within the films respectively and then across the films in a holistic approach. The Islamic motif is first studied through Turkish history and sociology and given in its literature study in order to find the representational relations of the motifs. The films project a conflict of Islam and modernity, as a reflection of the synthesis of the East and the West that builds the basis of modern Turkish identity, and the Islamic motifs in the films stand for political functions to rebalance the conflict within the modern and Islamic elements in order to achieve a synthesis of the East and the West.

**Key Words:** Turkish Cinema – Horror Films – Islam – Political Identity

## ÖZET

### TÜRK KORKU FİLMLERİNDE İSLAMİ MOTİFLER

Tuğba Görgülü

Sinema ve Televizyon  
Doç. Dr. Kaya Özkaraçalar

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Bu tezde, 2000’li yıllardan sonra çekilmiş olan Türk Korku Filmlerinin, İslami motiflere ağırlık verenleri incelenmiştir. Bu filmlerin içerisindeki canavarların ya da tehdit oluşturan unsurların, karakterlerin ve benzeri diğer motiflerin İslamiyet’le olan ilişkisi incelenmiş ve bu motiflerin, tek tek filmlerin kendi içlerinde ve sonra bütüncül bir yaklaşımla filmlerin genelinde politik temsiliyetleri incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın yapılabilmesi için, İslami unsurların, genel olarak Türk tarih ve sosyolojisindeki yeri incelenmiş ve bir literatür taraması şeklinde verilmiştir. Modern Türk kimliğinin temelini oluşturan Doğu-Batı sentezinin, bu filmlere İslamiyet ve modernite çatışması olarak yansıdığı görülmüş ve filmlerin içerisindeki İslami motiflerin, bu sentezi oluşturmak için politik birer etken olarak kullanıldığı tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türk Sineması – Korku Sineması - İslam – Politik Kimlik

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to make a case study of the horror films with Islamic motifs made since the year 2004 in the cinema in Turkey. The study is conducted on the content and the operations of this cinema, in regard to social and political events in the cycle of the years between 2004 and 2014, in order to detect the otherization and identification processes under the dominant ideology of the synthesis of the East and the West.

In Turkey up until 2000s, there had been made only a few horror films; Mehmet Muhtar's *Drakula İstanbul'da* (1953), Aydın Arakon's *Çılgılık* (1949), Yavuz Kılınc's *Ölüler Konuşmaz ki* (1970), Metin Erksan's *Şeytan* (1974) and Kutluğ Ataman's *Karanlık Sular* (1993). Then after 2004 there has been a boom of horror films, and every year the number increases. This emergence of a horror genre brought the debate over why this genre was absent in the cinema in Turkey. Some explain it with the economic difficulties of film making in Turkey, some think the reason lies in the filmmakers themselves, their being unconfident or incapable of making special effects films, some think the answer is ideological, being a problem politically and representationally, and some others relate it to the coming of the new technologies introduced with the new liberal economies, such as the internet, and for some apocalyptic traumas like the 1999 earthquake triggered such a revival of cinematic horror genre in Turkey. The revival of horror genre after the year 2000 may depend on any or all of the above. However it is not a concern of this study to answer this question.

The aim of this study is to analyze the Islamic content that occurs in a big number of the horror films since 2004 in terms of the social and political change in Turkey. In order to do that, in the second chapter, I introduce a literature review over the theoretical approaches to the cinematic horror genre in the world, which revolve around Freudian-Marxist modifications. I discuss how the horror films in the world have been interpreted as political projections of their nations. Focusing on Robin Wood's conceptualization of the *otherness* in horror cinema, I introduce his famous

theory of *the return of the repressed*, together with its strengths and weaknesses. Finally, I present my method to apply Wood's theory to my study.

Then in the third chapter I present my analysis about the horror films with Islamic motifs. I interpret the Islamic motifs in terms of the otherization processes within the film normality, as a projection of the synthesis of secularism and Islam in Turkey as an extension of the synthesis of the East and the West.

Turkey is a bridge between the East and the West, not only geographically but also in its cultural symbolic imaginary, that situates the Turkish self in-between. Turkish modern experience that started as an adoption of the stance of modernization-from-above by the political actors in the nineteenth century, with their westernization efforts, efforts together with the adjustment of culture, creating the problematic theme of the *synthesis of the West and the East*. The majority of Turkish people are in-between characters who create hybrid forms to integrate their daily practice of religion, their traditional conservatism, and their aspirations to modernity (Göle 1999) synthesizing the modern and the tradition in the same self.

As a country in the great divide of the East and the West, Turkish national identity is constructed as in-between, the projections of the East and the West, the Occident and the Orient, created gaps and mismatches in the interconnected projections of the Occident and the Orient. However both accept hybridization in terms of identity processes that creates complicated self/other identifications.

The East and the West being at the two polar ends of the bridge, as being both "other"s creates an ambivalent situation both for the self and the other. The East is otherized by its connotation of backwardness, the West is otherized as a threat, and both being parts of the self, the "self" splits and falls into a crisis by a process of self-otherization, leading to a crisis of identity, which has remained "as a source of frustration and threat, as a source of internalized inferiority" (Ahiska 2003).

While the East represents "backwardness", the West is coded both as a "model" to be followed and as a "threat" to the indigenous national values. As a result a persistent



anxiety over the possibility of finally “catching the train” of modern civilization emerges in the non-Western national psyche that internalizes their present time as “backward” as a stigmata of Western modernity, because the present time pointed out gives the non-Westerners a feeling of “being late” which in turn leads to a “chronic anxiety” in “the universe of symbolic crises” (Ahıska 2003).

While West is the “fantasy” in the national hegemonic imaginary, “past” is coded as the burden and as a burdening element to the present that manifests a “symbolic crises” of Turkish national identity. The figure of the West opens a *fantasy* space in the “temporal/spatial imagining” of modern Turkish identity, which situates Europe both as an object of desire to be reached and a source of frustration in its long and strained history. “The constitutive lack was there, right at the centre of the national identity” states Ahıska; the Orient is marked as the “backward” in relation to “the West”, in terms of “backward” influences of Islam and Arab world. “The Occidentalist fantasy evoked a “lack” in “the people” upon which it organized the “desire” to fill. This was in close connection to the lack projected onto the Turkish by the Orientalist fantasy. They function in the same economy of identity and desire” In the colonial or postcolonial discourses of nationalism the model/copy self/other dichotomous oppositions becomes problematic. In Orientalism, as Ahıska argues, the West by subjectifying itself as the desire and the outsider it basically dislocates itself, presents something inside as being outside, as a response of the Orient in Occidentalism the West stands for a “positive other”. This separation situates the object – which is still in Oriental character – as “other” to the Occident, which created a problematic relation in its self/other dichotomous oppositions. The model of modernity in Turkey is a colonialistic one which “reproduces itself through insufficient copies” that complicated the identification processes that “the imagined Western gaze is an integral part of this identity. It attends to how “centre” and “periphery”, or “model” and “copy” are already inscribed in the conception of modernity”. In the spatial imaginary of the Turkish identity, where the self identifies itself with its symbolic other, the identification processes is complicated in an overlapping manner, which Ahıska calls “double reflection” (Ahıska 2003) which is “a kind of schizoid disorder at the heart of collective identity” (cited in Mills 2005).

The issue of the synthesis of the East and the West has always been at the heart of film studies in Turkey. Nezih Erdoğan and Deniz Göktürk discussed that in a country like Turkey, which is in the great divide of the East and the West, cinema as a Western form of entertainment, always signified the sphere of modernization and represents “the ambivalent attitudes of the national/cultural identity under construction” (Erdoğan, Göktürk 2001, p. 533). Since the beginning years, cinema has become a place to produce a national discourse, projecting efforts of building a national identity and consisting a heavy influence of the West. Hybridity has always been a major issue first in terms of form, as a transition from two-dimensional miniatures to the cinema, the visual depth of the in the films were lacking at the beginning.

Savaş Arslan also elaborated on the in-betweenness in Yeşilçam cinema, its being neither Western nor Eastern. Yeşilçam always adopted or imitated Hollywood cinema, and those stories were not proper for the traditions of Turks. Arslan states that Yeşilçam is characterized by *özenti*; a demand and desire to imitate; a word that doesn't have a direct translation in English. Thus Arslan explains, it is a self-reflexive word, that denotes towards the self itself, at the same time copying an action of another self. The root of the word “öz” means, the self, the essence, and in a larger meaning the word is about the Turkish nation's relation the West together which determines the cinema in Turkey and its relation with the West as well. Then in the national imaginary, in the economy of the desire between the self and the other, *özenmek*, the noun form, involves a circular movement, from the self, to the other and back to the self, and within this effort the “essential, pure and original” self is lost, so that Turkish cinema has lost its essence, purity and originality in this process of *özenti*. Yeşilçam's *özenti* creates ambivalent and contradictory responses to both West and East. While it imitates the desired other, West and dreams of being in its place, it ends up with hybrid forms through Turkification; through domestication and internalization (Arslan, 2011).

Dubbing and re-editing also led to a hybrid identity, whenever there was an inconsistency with the visual language and the story, Arslan explains, filmmakers would overcome this obstacle by dubbing on the lines of the actors. Also Hollywood and Western cinema was consumed by the colonized masses, through a certain mode

of Turkification, because of dubbing and re-editing, which add up to the hybrid formations of the culture. *Özenti* leads to in-betweenness, and because of that in Yeşilçam promotes the coexistence of the West and the East, so that Yeşilçam has a paranoiac and neurotic nature, leading to the ambivalent nature of *I am you and I am not you*, because it is always sourced externally, so that the original essence it looks for cannot be realized. In its circular movement from the self and then back to self, but in the return the true self will be lost, will become an impossibility (Arslan 2011)

Yeşilçam, despite a sparseness of horror films, produced many other genres and depicted the themes of poor and rich, rural and urban, lower class and bourgeois, the Eastern and the Western, especially in melodramas. The synthesis of the East and the West, produced its opposition and dichotomy of east and west, modern and tradition, old and new, low and high, uneducated and educated, rural and urban, elite and villager, past and future, backwards and progress so the otherization is always on top of each other, asks for a balance of the two, and on the determining code of the center otherizing the periphery.

The end of the Yeşilçam came during 1980s when the new liberal economies enabled bigger productions and *auteur* directors like Metin Erksan started to make films about the concerns of the women. At the same time with the liberal economies, the major studios entered the country dominating the market, and many young people started to go to the cinemas, to watch Hollywood blockbusters. Then towards 1990s New Cinema was on the rise, which was based making art films like Europeans do, rather than taking Hollywood cinema like Yeşilçam did. This cinema continued to interpret national and personal identity this time in a modern world. The main concerns of these films were as Gönül Dönmez-Colin explained (2008 p.180):

*... unemployment, survival in the urban jungle, search for an identity in the in a changing society, the threat to physical and/or mental space/territory and the general atmosphere of fear and not belonging when faced with the question of identity: national, social, religious, political and sexual.*

Asumer Suner, cited in Colin, related this to the growing anxiety after 1980 military coup. Colin furthers that; the questions of identity and belonging were depicted in the

films from art house to box office films, as it gained popularity in the nationalist discourses. The collective memory in the films, somehow face with the past and interpret their present, using different metaphors, such as “an end to history” which are projections disguising the economic and cultural crisis linked to the national identity problematic. In the films there is a search for identity, making political utterances for their places in the new modern world. Analyzing Nuri Bilge Ceylan’s film *Uzak/Distant* (2002), she explains the distance is the metaphor between the cultural gaps of the urban and provincial Turkey. The urban leaves the provincial out, in an anxiety to “protect his own territory and the identity...The ‘other’ must be left outside. But by locking the other out, one also locks oneself in (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 21).

1980s opened up a new pluralist chapter in Turkey’s political dynamics under the influence of globalism at one hand and the emergence of local identities on the other, a process that is accelerated by the exposure of the Turkish public to global television channels such as CNN and BBC. While Activists of women, environmentalists, homosexuals, and university students were out at the streets protesting for their rights, Islamic practices were gaining visibility, as well, in the public arena, *cemaats*, religious organizations established around a charismatic leader, master, şeyh or hoca (like *Sufi orders* or *tarikats*), were growing in Turkey. Although these were banned during the Turkish revolution, *cemaats* and *sufi* orders remained popular and influential. Islam was becoming visible, in the eyes of the Kemalists, in the shape of covered women, because university students with *tesettür*<sup>1</sup> was at schools and even protesting on the streets for their rights for education and this led tensions in the public sphere and led to clashes between Kemalists and Islamists. Thus, in the 1990s Turkey became the stage of the cleavage of the two polarized political groups of Kemalist-secularists and Islamists.

As a result, the issues about religion started to be discussed in Turkey, which were reflected in films too. For example *Takva / A Man’s Fear of God* (2006), for Colin, reflect the two sides of Turkey of modernity/Westernization that lives together with the

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<sup>1</sup> It is the name of the veiling that Islamists use in Turkey.

tradition/ Eastern. (Dönmez-Colin 2008, p. 30) There is a a synthesis of secularism and Islam in Turkey as an extension of the synthesis of the East and the West.

Then, by the beginning of the 2000s, cinematic horror emerged in the cinema of Turkey. Savaş Arslan stressed that these films with the White Turks as protagonists, consist “a metaphorical horror, that of the Islamization of Turkey” and also these films bring “a more sophisticated Turkification than their Yeşilçam antecedents” (Arslan 2011, p. 259).

This thesis is concerned to analyze the discourse of the synthesis of the East and the West and its applications in the horror films with Islamic motifs that emerged after the year 2004. I both locate these films in the discourse of the synthesis of the East and the West in the cinema of Turkey, and also I discuss the effects of the synthesis of the East and the West and its ambivalent responses in the national identity as a projection in the ambivalent representation of Islamic monsters in these films.

## 2. HORROR FILM AND THE REPRESENTATION OF THE MONSTER

When one studies the history and evolution of the popular cinematic horror genre and its supernatural monsters, one comes across in different anthologies with the same recurring referential points of that history. The first of these references is related to the roots of horror genre, which is accepted to be in the nineteenth century gothic tradition of literature and the two examples mostly cited are from American literature Edgar Allan Poe's works, and from British literature Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). The second referential point happens to be the classical period of Hollywood, the Universal films made in 1930s such as *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931) and *The Mummy* (1932), which were apparently the adaptations of that gothic literature, that rejuvenate the monsters of Dracula, vampires, Frankenstein and alike on the silver screen. The third referential point is German cinema and expressionism due to two main reasons; the first one is that before the First World War, when American Hollywood cinema hadn't been the dominant film industry in the world, German cinema produced some influential films which have expressionistic style such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1908), *Nosferatu* (1920), *The Golem* (1915-1920) and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919). Secondly, after the war most of the artists of German expressionism moved to Los Angeles and with the influence of German expressionism the visual style of Hollywood changed and blended with the popular narrative form, which in turn brought commercial success with the films such as *The Bride of the Frankenstein* (1933), *Dracula's Daughter* (1936), *Son of Frankenstein* (1939), *The Wolfman* (1941) and *Frankenstein meets the Wolfman* (1943). The last referential point is revival of horror genre by Hammer productions during 1950s when science-fiction films dominated the American silver screen. Hammer productions revived Dracula, vampires, werewolves and Frankenstein in their films like *The Curse of the Frankenstein* (1957), *Dracula* (1958), *The Mummy* (1959), *House of Usher* (1960) and *The Tomb of Ligeia* (1965).

Among scholars of film study, there are different approaches to this history. Some scholars discuss this history mainly through the production and consumption of the films and see these points as the cycles of the genre, which influence and build onto each other, since horror genre is especially is more reliant on *generic realism* and it is

crucial to study its evolution through these certain constitutive *cycles* (Strinati, 2000). It is an undeniable fact that cinema can never be considered without the economy of its production and consumption since, as an example, it became possible for Universal pictures to make films with the establishment of the studio system and the arrival of the sound, which were important for the development of horror genre because strange sound effects and the original dialogues became possible to be introduced. Or Hammer productions owe their success to various historical elements: with the introduction of TV for the American audiences, cinema attendance declined. In order to attract audience Hollywood had to make productions different from the TV productions, which brought competitiveness to the industry. While Hollywood major studios released special effects<sup>2</sup> in order to attract audiences, another market for the film producers, B movies emerged, these were cheaply financed and produced and meant for teenagers who constituted a big portion of the cinemagoers at the time, which led the audience to be defined as a certain set of consumers rather than a homogenous mass in history. Hammer was a B movie making company and had to move to Britain when it became very expensive to make films in Hollywood. In 1951 due to the relaxation in censorship that came with the introduction of the X certificate, Hammer could make colorful horror films adapting gothic novels. Thus both the production and the consumption of films have a crucial role in the evolution of horror films.

On the other hand there is this other approach to the history of horror genre that studies the content of the films through the sociopolitical events of a given nation and time. This approach has its roots in 1960s when a huge interest was raised for film study that was influenced by both psychoanalysis and Marxism and this tendency reached its peak during 1970s mainly in France. French scholars like Christian Metz and Jean-Louis Baudry studied cinematic conventions as ideological mechanisms that inherently

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<sup>2</sup> During 1950s although Hollywood turned to science fiction films, there were horror films made as well. *It Came from Outer Space* (1953) and *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954) are two examples of science-fiction films of the time, while *The Maze* (1953) and *Phantom of the Rue Morgue* (1954) are horror films with special effects used. Even in science fictions films there were monsters, even if the monsters were not some supernatural ones like vampires, and they were meant to be horrific monsters. Also most of the B films at the time were actually a blend of science fiction and horror films like *I was a Teenage Werewolf* (1957)—which tendency of blending horror and sci-fi still exist and constitute the industry in a large scale. However this debate is a question of definitions of horror genre and it is not a concern of this study. For example, B movies; at the time both producers and audiences treated these films as examples of comedy rather than horror. The point here is that Hammer production made it possible to revive the supernatural monsters of horror genre and carried the vein of classical horror today when Hollywood was dominated with science fiction.

represent the dominant ideology of a given nation through the apparatus of the cinematic device, which they resembled to the unconscious processes of the individual. This approach influenced scholars across the world and they started to interpret films as projections of the dominant ideology of a given nation and the elements of films were seen as representations of certain components of that ideology. In terms of horror films, the representation of the monster and its relevance to the dominant ideology gained importance. Without disqualifying the importance of the effects of the production and consumption of films, which I believe is more of a matter of form, a student of film can study and see the evolution of the content of the cinematic horror genre that is deeply related to the ideology of a given society. The idea is that films generate the dominant ideology of the society through some representational codes, so that if one studies the legitimate dominant institutions and traditional values of that given society, one can detect how these conventional codes in the films are constituted and varied from one culture to another across different times of history. It is generally accepted that horror films make use of supernatural elements and demonic monsters as threats to the social norms and existing system and its institutions. In the book "Camera Politica", Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner explain that "such use increases during periods of internal social disorder or when external threats to the society are especially feared" (Ryan and Kellner 1988, p. 170).

When looked within this perspective, German expressionistic horror films appeared during the Weimar Republic period and the classical Hollywood monster films first appeared during the Great Depression period when American nation had one of its biggest and first economic crises after the First World War. Likewise the revival of horror genre in 1950s coincides with the post-World war period in which there existed the socio-political traumas of Cold War throughout the Western world. The monsters in these films are accepted to represent the threats to the society; the established order. During 1930s, after the Great Depression, the failure of Western patriarchal capitalism was deeply felt in the American society. The economic structure of the communities were changing, disturbing the balances within the communities and families. Therefore in the classical horror films of 1930s the monster is generally situated as an external threat to the community, when a vampire comes to horrify a town with its people, in



which the monster may represent the morals of, so to speak, European aristocracy as a threat to the Puritan character of American public.

After the Second World War, the interest towards the monster of 1930s and 1940s gave it away to the search of the *other* in science fiction films of American silver screen which positioned terror in space from where the aliens come to take over the world. In one hand there was the threat of internal communism, when Soviet Union was seen as a threat to the national unity of America, on the other hand, 1950s was the era of space travels and there was strong emphasis on environmental catastrophe, accompanied with the memory of Hiroshima. There was this common recognition that human race is under the threat of technology, which in turn brought the alien invaders to the science fiction films of 50s such as, *The Thing* (1951), *Them* (1954), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *The Blob* (1958), *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957), and *Invasion of Body Snatchers* (1955).

This alien invasion of 1950s films was generally interpreted as the projection of the anxiety of American society about invasion and annihilation of Soviet Union. Jancovich, as quoted in Strinati, went further and stated that these films may project fears about foreign invasion or global devastation, but these films actually reflect how American society transferred scientific rationality to administrative areas that regulate the social, political, economic and cultural life which is Fordist rationality of American society at the face of the Cold War (Strinati 2000, p. 93). For Strinati, Jancovich's *idea of rationalization* is problematic since it is a vague theoretical term whose values and effects and even presence are debatable. He debates that "this type of textual interpretation... is not necessarily in tune with that of audiences, or even producers" (Strinati 2000, p. 103) and that there is a "discrepancy between textual interpretation and actual viewer reception" (Strinati 2000, p. 104). He asserts that a film analysis needs to lie more on empirical sources rather than theoretical ones because an analysis should consider how a film is produced and consumed (Strinati 2000, pp. 94-95).

The production and consumption of films certainly have crucial importance in the development of the genre, as I have explained at the beginning of the chapter.

However a mere empirical research, despite providing a great deal of data to play with, may still fall short enlightening certain elements in a work of art, which is not only a product of the economic and receptional processes but also the specific historical circumstances and those circumstances constitute their own ideological structures, which may as well influence the production and consumption processes.

Although Strinati promoted production over theoretical approach, he admitted elsewhere that if the ideological content of films are going to be studied, the production and consumption of films should also be taken into account, since these two may carry the influence of any ideology the films are thought to have carried (Strinati 2000, pp. 97-98).

The discussion over the “invasion narrative” of 1950s sci-fi films may be relative and it is not a concern of this study to elaborate on the ideological interpretations of these films. The aliens may or may not stand for the fear of communism, or the fear of a scientific catastrophe, or the films as texts may reflect the nationalistic ideals of the society in the new world order or it can be refuted by some counter textual interpretations. Although all these interpretations are relative, and open to debate, only a theoretical approach that studies the representations in the text can explain the undeniable concrete paranoia in these films, which was deeply related to the cultural unease in the psyche of the post war world. The world was changing and this was represented as a projection of struggle in the narrative of the films.

I do not deny that the empirical study is a must; in the case of Hammer, it is a fact that the existence of TV, the teen audience or being able to hire good directors and making a good cast has a huge role in Hammer’s making quality films, so that the horror revived, but in terms of the content of their films, which was filled with family problems such as female discomfort in bourgeois family or male anxiety over the change of female roles, was a result of the social transformation during the post war period in which there was a rise of consumerism, the middle class collapsed and the roles of women changed.

The production and consumption of films are important to the point that they help a film reflect the very ideology it comes from within. However, the area of ideology is an abstract one that needs to be studied through theory because theoretical approach is a premise of associating an abstract world of ideology to the symbolic representations of the films, which are seen as the objectifications of those abstractions. This ideology in question can be analyzed through representational codes that require a textual interpretation.

Interpreting what lies beneath the surface of the film texts, can give us a specific ideology of a nation within that given time. Through this perspective then, the usage of national and military force in these films, as a representational code can be decoded as the mindset of post war world, which promoted international cooperation and economic progress, like it happened after the First World War as well. Or in the case of the change of the representation of science through the films of 1930s to 1950s, from positive to negative, we can only explain the reason of its representational change with the change of the attitude of the nation that changes over time. For example, the element of science in the classical horror films and even in the books of Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker was used against the monster but in 50s science became the monster itself. There came out some dangerous mad scientists in the films, who could change the good balance of the world with the science weapon he is using, which may well be interpreted as the objectification of Hitler. Or as another example, in the classical horror genre experts of the given community in the films use their knowledge to overcome the threat, whereas in the occult films after late 1950s, such as *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *Night of the Demon* (1958), *The Witches* (1966), or *Race of the Devil* (1975) the threat is manifested within the same knowledge that the experts need to discover in order to allow the good powers to triumph<sup>3</sup>. The reason of this change lies in the shift of the social attitude towards scientific inquiry and class ideals, which was seen as something promising and progressive for the civilization at the beginning of

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<sup>3</sup> Another example of representational change can be the change of Dracula as a figure over the time. In 1960s films, the level of the religious belief of the protagonist was an influence on the efficiency of the weapons used, such as stake in the heart, crucifix against the vampire, whereas in the films before that time the presence of these weapons would be enough. In 1970s, religion is accompanied with love to fight against the devil, which is represented as a businessman, which reflects the mindset of flower children against capitalism. The representation of the devil in *Devil's Advocate* (1997) will be a criticism of the corruption of the system of justice, which is internalized by the people.

the century, whereas after 1960s the common sense shifted to a conspiratorial world, projecting the paranoid tendencies of the modern genre<sup>4</sup>.

The first of these films is *Psycho* (1960), which is generally accepted to be the milestone of modern horror films due to its application of the *uncanny*. It is after 1960s horror genre became more concerned with the contemporary world, even Hammer productions began to rejuvenate the Dracula character in today's world. The tendency of situating horror to modern day of everyday life, led to the theme that it is the society that is monstrous as seen in Romero's outstanding zombie films *Night of the Living Dead* (1968), and *Dawn of the Dead* (1978). These films are apocalyptic films in whose atmosphere there is an unstoppable power or threat, leaving no space for escape, causing a total disaster and social disintegration.

Apocalyptic horror, which marks the peak time of American horror genre, first brought the devil forces to the films. Some of these films were praised attracting the attention of respected filmmakers and so blockbuster horror films began to be released, mostly horror-science fictions like American ones *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *The Exorcist* (1973) and *The Omen* (1976) and European ones such as Godard's *Alphaville* (1965), Truffaut's *Fahrenheit* (1966) and Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). While most of these films got critical and artistic approval, the next cycle, the slasher film did not get the same approval but it got a lot of attention. In these films, there is a psycho-killer committing a series of murders killing a group of young people, with plenty of hard-core bloody scenes. John Carpenter's *Halloween* (1978) became a huge success and influenced the industry for making low-budget and big profit sex and violence slasher films. Then came *Friday Thirteenth* (1980) along with other slasher films like *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (1979), *Driller Killer* (1979), *Prom Night* (1980), *The Slumber Party Massacre* (1982), *Evil Dead* (1983), and *Nightmare on Elm Street*

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<sup>4</sup> Towards 1970s Hammer production experiences a financial decline because of cinematographic superiority of American films at the time, especially, Dominic Strinati states, because of two films; *The Exorcist* (1973) and *Star Wars* (1977), Hammer productions looked "increasingly pale and outdated" (Strinati 2000, p. 101), so that they turned to self-parody films with explicit displays of sexuality before they fade out: *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1969), *The Vampire Lovers* (1970), *Dracula A.D.* (1972) and *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (1973).

(1984)<sup>5</sup>. With these slasher films in 1970s, the horror genre gave its most gruesome, disgusting, violent and sexually explicit examples.

For Robin Wood, this is an ideological shift in the American silver screen that ended the Hollywood classicism; *contra to* many other theoreticians who think *Psycho* started the modern genre. These apocalyptic films with their gruesome content were reflecting the “crisis in ideological confidence” in the American nation of 1970s, in which the society appeared in a state of advanced disintegration” which was a result of the “impingement of Vietnam on the national conscious and the unconscious”, and that “the obvious monstrosity of the war definitely undermined the credibility of ‘the system’”, which also, according to Wood, accelerated the political movements and protests of 1960s by making them believe “the rightness of their causes” (Wood 2003, p. 44).

The projection of the social traumas of the 1960s that is caused by the radical movements and the Vietnam War were best reflected in the ‘disaster movies’ in which there is “a threat of total destruction”, that is “faced by a microcosm of bourgeois-capitalist society” (ibid. p.24). This was actually felt in the films of the 1960s was

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<sup>5</sup> The thing is “Hollywood has always turned to the sex and violence formula when it has seemed profitable” and also, quoting from Cook, “the exploitation of blood and violence has existed at the margins of the industry since early 1960s” (Strinati 2000, p. 105). These kinds of slasher films took the huge part of the industry during 70s and 80s, influencing many first rate or science fiction horror films such as *Poltergeist* (1982), *The Hunger* (1983), *The Serpent and the Rainbow* (1987), *Alien* (1979), and *Aliens* (1986). These films made a big portion of videocassette or cable TV markets at the time. The blend of science fiction and horror films created a big opportunity to make blockbusters, with state-of-art special effects such as *Star Wars* series, *Star Trek* series, or *E.T. The Extraterrestrial* (1982), *Ghostbusters* (1984), *Gremlins* (1984), *Back to the Future* trilogy, *Alien* (1979), *The Terminator* (1984), *Predator* (1987), *Jurassic Park* (1993). These films enabled the producers gain huge profits from both the film and other areas of market such as product toys, computer games, books or CDs. The postmodernism affected films in terms of self-reflexivity, which make films, know and reflect about the conventions of the genre. This can best be observed in *Scream* series, in which the characters openly discuss about the convention of horror films as they become enmeshed by the horror, which erupts around them. However Strinati asserts that this tendency is not necessarily postmodern since it is not new because it was tried in some examples and that “It seems to be another instance of the cyclical regulatory with which the genre parodies itself and may be a feature of genres whose standardization is heavily dependent on generic realism” (p. 109) which can be seen before in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1976), *An American Werewolf in London* (1981), *Gremlins* (1984), *Gremlins 2* (1990), and *Love at First Bite* (1979). This cyclical regulation can also be found the cycling of the “teenpic horror” of the 1950s reworked with modern techniques,” like *Back to the Future* trilogy or in a similar economy “High profile horror films set in the contemporary world, but drawing on established films traditions and building on the success of the horror/science fiction formula, have become prominent in the modern cinema” (p. 109) such as *Alien Resurrection* (1997), *Devil’s Advocate* (1998), *The Fifth Element* (1997), *Godzilla* (1998), *Independence Day* (1996), *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* (1997), *Men in Black* (1997), *Scream*, *Scream 2*, *Species* (1995), *Species II* (1998), *12 Monkeys* (1996), and *The X Files* (1998).

well, in the form of a hidden form of incoherence in the film text underlined by “richness, confusion and ultimate nihilism” (ibid. p. 44). The themes of these films are mostly determined by the ‘status quo ideology’ because they are under the control of the studio production system of Hollywood where there is minimal individual creativity of directors. If there is a survival at the end of these films, and mostly there is, this is again about the status quo being “concerned to demonstrate capitalist society’s ability to come through.” Wood figured out that this “insistence on survival” is symbolic since towards the 1970s different genres, reaching their ‘apocalyptic phase’, stated to reveal rottenness in the diegetic communities of the films. Thus there was this “sensation of imminent or actual breakdown, of rottenness at the ideological core of the capitalist society, presented by irrefutable pervasiveness of the popular cinema” such as *The Exorcist*, *Rosemary’s Baby*, *The Wild Bunch* or *It’s Alive* was “explored more consciously and intellectually in the work of the directors like Penn, Schatzberg and Altman” (Wood 2003, p. 24-25) and he added (ibid p. 44):

*The questioning of authority spread logically to a questioning of the entire social structure that validated it, and ultimately to patriarchy itself: social institutions, the family, the symbolic figure of the Father in all its manifestations, the father interiorized as superego. The possibility suddenly opened up that the whole world might have to be recreated.*

Since the early 60s, according to Wood, *the central theme* of American cinema had been about *disintegration and breakdown*. Whereas the tone of “uncertainty” in the narratives of the films of 50s and 60s represented “a loss of authority and confidence” (Wood p. 43), the “ideological crisis” deepened through 70s leading to a “state of advanced disintegration” (ibid. p. 25) that led to an “astonishing evolution of the Horror film” and for him this 1970s horror genre is the Golden Age of American horror cinema. This breakdown in 1970s was actually a progress, a development for the Hollywood cinema signifying a legitimacy crisis of the dominant ideology-the capitalist system and its institutions (Ryan and Kellner, 1988, Wood, 1986). However after 1970s, the incoherence was never hidden and “the films seem to crack open before our eyes” (Wood 2003, p. 45), and he added (ibid p. 85):

*The 70s crisis in ideological confidence temporarily released our culture’s monsters from the shackles of repression. The horror films of the period, without a single exception, are characterized by recognition not only that the monster is the*

*product of the normality, but that it is no longer possible to view normality itself as other than monstrous.*

Wood asserted “to study the evolution of a genre is to study the evolution of a national (un)consciousness” (Wood 2003, p. 118), and added that this kind of an approach would enable “a comprehensive survey of horror film monsters from German Expressionism on” (ibid. p. 68).

Expressionism may seem as a limited aesthetic movement determining a decade of film experimentation, but in that limited time, still, it was the artistic form for the expression of dominant psychological states of German society at the time. Siegfried Kracauer studied the evolution of the German films in 1947 in his book *From Caligari to Hitler: A psychological history of the German film* in which he argued that the technique, the content and the evolution of the films of a nation are deeply related to the dominant psychological states of that nation and they need to be studied accordingly, since films are the projections of inner lives of that given nation because the production and reception of films are done collectively, which makes the films serve to the collective desires of the masses.

Both Kracauer and Wood have similar approaches to the cinema. Both believe that although other types of media can reflect the collective psychological states of a nation, films are the best artistic media because films are the projections of the collective desires of masses of audience due to the collective character of production and reception (Wood 2003, p.71, Kracauer 1974, pp. 5-7). Wood asserted films can project the collective national unconscious of a nation since they are reflections of not only the filmmaker’s conscious but also unconscious, because, for Kracauer, , “the films reflect...those deep layers of collective mentality...below the dimension of the consciousness”. The cinematic devices, enables the “dynamization of space”, which changes the physical stability of the audience into a moveable one in terms of psychological experience, and also by taking their material from “the unobtrusive, the

normally neglected”, films become the manifestation of the inner life/mentality of a nation<sup>6</sup> (Kracauer 1974, p.5-7).

Kracauer asserted that everywhere in the world, “collective dispositions gain momentum in cases of extreme political change,” which “results in the decomposition of the psychological systems.” He detected “such collective dispositions or tendencies as prevail within a nation”, in the motifs of the films, which are the ““outward projections of inner urges”. Kracauer claimed that the visible factors of history fails to explain such a result, and that the psychological state of the masses—here the German working class—should be studied in order to understand the sociological trends (ibid. pp.8-10).

His main argument was that the rise of Hitlerism—which has roots in the failure of the German revolution that caused the suffrage of the middle classes and empowerment of the despotic authorities, which would in turn create the Nazi spirit to flourish in time—could be detected even in films made before Hitler (Kracauer 1974, p.11):

*Thus, behind the overt history of economic shifts, social exigencies and political machinations runs a secret history involving the inner dispositions of the German people. The disclosure of these dispositions through the medium of the German screen may help in the understanding of Hitler’s ascent and ascendancy.*

The silent film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (*Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari*, 1920) directed by Robert Wiene is a very good example of how films reflect the national unconscious (also interesting to note that it is the first cinematographic representation of altered mental states<sup>7</sup>) in that sense. Kracauer noted that it was an adaptation of a horror tale, written by Hans Harowitz and Carl Mayer soon after the World War 1, which first became an out spoken revolutionary story as it emphasized the emerging

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<sup>6</sup> “Inner life manifests itself in various elements and conglomerations of external life, especially in those almost imperceptible surface data, which form an essential part of screen treatment. In recording the visible world—whether current reality or an imaginary universe—films therefore provide clues to hidden mental processes [...] Films are particularly inclusive because their “visible hieroglyphs” supplement the testimony of their stories proper. And permeating both the stories and the visuals, the “unseen dynamics of human relations” are more or less characteristic of the inner life of the nation from which the films emerge” (Kracauer P.7).

<sup>7</sup> Wikipedia: The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari



pacifism among the German nation. In the story, the antagonist character doctor Caligari was an evil person who used his hypnotic powers on Cesare to commit murders in town. Caligari stood for the unlimited authority of German war government that violates human rights and values. Caligari had hypnotic powers to force his will, so did Hitler, he manipulated the souls on a gigantic scale. The somnambulist character Cesare, under the hypnosis of Caligari, represented the common man under the military service to kill and to be killed. The portrayal of an insane authority that stood for the omnipotence of the German state authority was a result of the post-war frustration of the writers who wanted to condemn the militarism and the unlimited authority and their bourgeois values. However the film was shut with changes in the script<sup>8</sup>, because the producers wanted a less macabre ending in which everything turns out to be the protagonist Francis's delusion. While in the story Caligari and Cesare's murders were real, in the film Francis finds out that he is a patient in an insane asylum and Caligari is one of the doctors, and the whole story was Francis's fantasy.

Kracauer argued that the film was made into a conformist one where the authority was glorified in order to adapt it to the desires of the masses, not the sentiments of the intelligentsia. The film was in harmony with the mindset of the less educated working classes. Turning the revolutionary story to a mad man's fantasy, madness becomes the antagonist, and madness represents the ones who come against the authority. The film then promotes obedience to authority, since glorification of the authority represents the dominant ideology then in Germany.

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<sup>8</sup> One can observe the effect of national ideology and production in this adaptation process as well: Bram Stoker's novel, *Dracula* was first made into a film by a German director but it was a pirated adaptation of the novel. F.W. Murnau made *Nosferatu* in 1922, in which Dracula was transformed into a plague-carrying monster just to emphasize the horrific elements of the novel. When compared to Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula*, in which Dracula was an aristocratic monster with romantic inflections in the films, one can deduce how the ideology of a nation together with the economic infrastructure influences a film's conventional elements. 1931 *Dracula* was a traditional Hollywood studio production. Universal studios bought the rights to the novel made a more a loyal adaptation rather than making major changes in the story like German company did before. Apart from these, the character development and romance in the film is specific to American classical cinema likewise otherization of the foreign in the treatment of the menace of the European *other* together with its defeat by Western patriarchy reflected the American mindset of the time. The decay of Dracula's castle shows how an American recalls the failure of European aristocracy after the war. The theme of science and civilization versus the ancient beliefs, order and progress defeating decadence and reason as a weapon against violence and seduction reflects the dominant ideology of American nation at the time, together with their unnamed fears, in a post-traumatic society after the Great Depression, which they project as foreign influences in their good patriarchal Christian society. Also, while Hollywood takes a realistic way of the film, *Nosferatu* reflected a post war expressionistic<sup>8</sup> world, that projects the horror that lies beneath the surface of the usual, giving the possibility of a nightmare or dream.

Kracauer interprets an additional level in this twist; the fantasy level in the film stands for the masses' wish to escape from the harsh realities of the post-war era. Still the defeat of the authority becomes a matter of psychological experience that the film reflected the psychological revolution of German people in the deep layers of their collective soul. In addition the expressionistic set of the film still represented the denial of bourgeois tradition and that men are free to create their own world, albeit the symbols of the shape of the settings convey "tyranny" as a main theme. Thus the configuration of the symbols of the film reflects the national unconscious of revolutionary spirit mingling with the need to escape to a fantasy space, which represents such a "double aspect of German life by coupling reality in which Caligari's authority triumphs with a hallucination in which the same authority is overthrown" (Kracauer 1974, p. 61-76)<sup>9</sup>.

The way Kracauer and Wood, years later after Kracauer, used a specific approach to cinema, in which the evolution of films is studied through the evolution of national unconsciousness. Films are interpreted as the projections of the psychological states of the collective identity of a nation. In order to detect that collective identity that the films reflect, one needs to study the cinematic conventions that are in fact ideological mechanisms, which inherently represent the dominant ideology.

This thesis will take Robin Wood's approach to popular horror cinema; a utilization of Marxism with Freudian psychoanalysis to interpret the otherization processes in the films, and use his conceptions as a method to analyze the cinematic horror genre in Turkey as a projection of the national consciousness. Robin Wood analyzed the operations in the American horror films between the years of 1970 and 1984 through the socio-political realities of American nation in his book, *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan and Beyond* (1986, 2003). He analyzed American horror films in which he

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<sup>9</sup> Ryan and Kellner made a similar comment in their book *Camera Politica* that between the years 1967 and 1980 both American sociopolitical atmosphere and Hollywood films rotated from leftist tendencies to right wing, in the conflict of liberal versus conservative, and opening the way to neoconservative America. Although Ryan and Kellner were fascinated by their first impulse of criticizing this rightist turn in the society, as they pursue their research in film they came up with the conviction that "the very conservative reaction to be indicative of the power of the forces which threaten conservative values and institutions" which is to say although there is a rightward turn "American social consciousness was liberalized," and that this is a progressive reaction that may enable a radical change in the society (Ryan and Kellner p. xi-xii).

made a “political” criticism about the films that he evaluated with their political references within their time. He believed that it was a must to “approach films seriously and responsibly, and his theory to approach horror genre – the very genre that “responds in the most clear cut and direct way” to this approach – in whose center there is the “actual dramatization of the dual concept of the repressed/the Other, in the figure of the monster”, enables a means to this end (Wood 2003, p. 68).

The narrative of popular horror film conform typical Hollywood film, in terms of order, disorder, restoration principles as a pattern: there is a monster who is usually, but not always nonhuman or inhuman comes and disrupts the social order and threatens the community. The community fights with the monster and kill it. The concern of the literature is how to interpret this narrative order together with the interpretation of the representation of the monster that vary. Wood’s approach to horror genre and how to interpret this narrative has both been followed by many theoreticians and has also largely been criticized in terms of his problematic usage of return of the repressed and approach to the issue of ambivalence, which I introduce respectively.

## **2.1 ROBIN WOOD’S APPROACH TO HORROR CINEMA**

Robin Wood blended Freudian psychoanalytic theoretical notions with Marxism in order to analyze the American Horror films in terms of the ultimate question of representation: ‘What does the monster stand for?’ He argued that “the true subject of the horror genre is the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses or oppresses, its re-emergence dramatized, as in our nightmares, as an object of horror, a matter for terror, and the happy ending (when it exists) typically signifying the restoration of repression”. Wood noted that any of the genres can be analyzed with the same approach—as an example melodrama is a sister genre to horror genre in terms of its hysterical nature (Williams 1996, p. 17)—but horror film “responds in the most clear-cut and direct way, because central to it is the actual dramatization” of the repressed as an Other, “in the figure of the Monster” (Wood 2003, p.68).

I will first introduce Wood's approach to horror cinema in respective parts as: (1) The modification of Freudian repression he adopted, (2) his conception of otherization in the figure of the monsters which is related to the model of repression he modified, (3) his conception of the psychoanalytical notion 'the return of the repressed' and its application in horror films, (4) his formula to interpret horror films in terms of detecting monstrosity and repression and (5) his understanding of the ambivalence in horror films and monsters, which he grounds to the presentation of the monster that helps him to categorize films politically as 'reactionary' or 'progressive' films.

After giving a thorough description of Wood's approach to horror genre, I will introduce the problematic parts of his approach, by the discussions of Matt Hills and Steven Jay Schneider. Lastly, in the section that I introduce my method to approach to the films of this study, I will offer Michael Ryan and Douglas Kellner's approach to horror genre, which is synched with Wood's approach and also responds correctively to the problematic parts that Wood used.

### **2.1.1 Repression**

Wood cited from the book *Repression* by Gad Horowitz who took psychoanalytic approach to a Marxian level of reading after Marcuse. Accordingly, there are two kinds of repression: basic and surplus repression. Basic repression is the universal one which turn us "from an uncoordinated animal...into a human being," giving us the capability "of directing our lives and co-existing with other," whereas the surplus repression is the one that "is specific to a particular culture" in which "people are conditioned from earliest infancy to take on predetermined roles within that culture." Wood concentrated his work on the surplus repression since it is related to the predetermined roles given in a society and helps one recognize repression occurring in accordance with socially determined roles specific to particular cultures. (Wood 2003, p. 63-64)

If surplus repression is specific to culture, as Robin Wood noted, in the American context "surplus repression makes us into monogamous heterosexual bourgeois patriarchal capitalists". Being aware of this definition's simplicity, he stated that he

used “bourgeois” as a totalizing understanding in terms of “ideological norms rather than material status”, “even if you are born into the proletariat” which means people are dominated by the hegemonic ideology of the given culture; and he added that “all known existing societies are to some degree surplus-repressive” (Wood 2003, p. 64). He also noted that all this repression is there to create “the “ideal” habitant of the culture who becomes monogamous heterosexual bourgeois patriarchal capitalist “if it works”. He followed that “if it doesn’t the result is either a neurotic or a revolutionary (or both)” and neurotics are larger in number. The “burden of repression” reached to an “insupportable” amount—as Wood cited from Freud via Horowitz who related the repression theory to “Marx’s theory of alienated labor” and that “the logical product of patriarchal capitalism” is the immediate feelings of “frustration, dissatisfaction, anxiety, greed, possessiveness, jealousy, neuroticism” which in time lead to “the system’s imminent disintegration” as the contradiction to “the ideal” is a case of “logical impossibility”(Wood 2003, p. 64-65).

Then Wood asked, what is repressed “in the interests of alienated labor and patriarchal family” as a result of the repressive culture? Given that “the ‘ideal’ habitant of our culture is the individual whose sexuality is sufficiently fulfilled by monogamous heterosexual union necessary for the reproduction of future ideal inhabitants,” then the repressed is “the sexual energy itself” with “a successful sublimation into non-sexual creativity”(Wood 2003, p.64). Sexuality in general being number one in Wood’s list occupies the next three, which are bisexuality, female sexuality and sexuality of children. Bisexuality as being “the most obvious threat to the norm of sexuality as reproductive and restricted by the ideal family”, it confronts the “clear-cut sexual differentiation that bourgeois-capitalist ideology erects on the flimsy and dubious foundations of biological difference: the social norms of masculinity and femininity”. Thus there is a “systematic repression” of bisexuality” in order to create the oppressive male/female myths and the “romantic myth of “one right person”” of predetermined social roles. Accordingly “the severe repression of female sexuality” (Wood 2003, p. 65) comes as it is:

*...the attribution to the female passivity, and her preparation for her subordinate, dependent role in our culture. Clearly, a crucial aspect of the repression of*

*bisexuality is the denial to women of drives culturally associated with masculinity: activeness, aggression, self-assertion, and organizational power, creativity itself.*

And the repression of sexuality of children is basically “the denial of infant’s nature as sexual being to the veto on the expression of sexuality before marriage” (Wood 2003, p. 65). Wood also differentiated between ‘repression’ and ‘oppression’ and the “continuity between them” (2003, p.64):

*In psychoanalytic terms what is repressed is not accessible to the conscious mind (except through analysis, if one can penetrate their disguises, in dreams). We may also not be conscious of the ways in which we are oppressed, but it is much easier to become so: we are oppressed by something “out there.” One might perhaps define repression as fully internalized oppression (while reminding ourselves that all the groundwork of repression is laid in infancy)... What escapes repression has to be dealt with oppression.*

### **2.1.2 The Conceptualization of Otherness and the Monster**

Wood noted that the concept of “the other” is “truly inseparable from” the concept of repression, since “the true subject of horror genre is the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses and oppresses,” and “its re-emergence dramatized”, (Wood 2003, p. 17) and at the center of this dramatization is the repressed as an Other, “in the figure of the monster” (Wood 2003, p. 68).

Wood’s conceptualization of the *other*, parallels with Frederic Jameson’s approach to Otherness. Jameson asserted that the good and evil positioning in terms of Otherness is related to the archetypal figures of it “not so much that he is feared because he is evil; rather he is evil because he is Other, alien, different, strange, unclean, and unfamiliar” (Jameson p.115). In Wood’s definition “Otherness represents that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept but must deal with.”(Wood 2003, p. 65) There are two ways to do that: “either by rejecting and if possible annihilating, or by rendering it safe and assimilating it, converting it as far as possible into a replica of itself” (Wood 2003, p. 66).

Next Wood put another dimension onto the concept of Otherness. First is, its being “not simply as something external to the culture or to the self, but also as what is repressed (though never destroyed) in the self and projected outward in order to be hated or disowned.” Like in the case of Puritans in the early days of America that can be observed in many Westerns. Puritans perceived Indians as savages, who have neither a culture nor a civilization, to their point of view and saw them as the projections of the Devil. In the Puritan consciousness Devil and sexuality were linked, so they perceived the Indians “as sexually promiscuous, creatures of unbridled libido.” It is in fact Puritans projection of Indians, in which the “full recognition and acceptance of the Other’s autonomy and right to exist” becomes impossible. What happens is “the classic case of the projection on to the *Other* of what is repressed within the self in order that it can be discredited, disowned, and if possible annihilated” (Wood 2003, p. 66).

Wood offered a list of versions of “the figure of the Horror” with their correspondences in Horror genre in general. These are, (1) “Quite simply, other people”, (2) woman, (3) the proletariat, (4) other cultures, (5) ethnic groups within the culture, (6) alternative ideologies or political systems, (7) deviations from ideological sexual norms—notably bisexuality and homosexuality, (8) children (Wood 2003, pp.66-67).

Then he explained his notion of the *Other* by attributing to the figure of the monsters of some films. The number one of his list “other people” doesn’t stand for a specific film, but only gives a general understanding of the concept of Otherness. Wood asserted that it is the human relations created by capitalism in terms of power and possessiveness, that the autonomy of a partner, basically his/her independence is perceived as a threat. In a similar fashion women become the significant *Others* of the male-dominated society (2003, p. 66):

*In a male dominated culture, where power, money and law and social institutions are controlled by past, present and future patriarchs, woman as the Other assumes particular significance. The dominant images of women in our culture are entirely male created and male controlled. Woman’s autonomy and independence are denied; on to women men project their own innate, repressed femininity in order to disown it as inferior.*

Female sexuality can be otherized like in the examples of “the panther woman of *Island of Souls* and the heroine of *Cat People*”, or in feminist terms like De Palma’s *Sisters* in which “the oppression of women under patriarchal culture” (Wood 2003, p. 68) is depicted. The otherization of the proletariat can be read in the costume of the monster in Whale’s *Frankenstein* who was dressed in “laborer’s clothes” or in a more recent film *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* in which the monstrous family are actually slaughterhouse workers. In 1930s horror films the monsters were almost always foreign otherizing other cultures, while in the 50s the science fiction films in the motive of invasion in fact otherized communism as an alternative ideology. While *Nosferatu* had bisexual tones, *The Exorcist* falls for the category of otherizing children (Wood 2003, p. 69).

Hence, up to what has been discussed so far, I will follow; (1) the repression mechanism of culture in a holistic sense, rather than dividing it into *basic* or *surplus* like Wood did. However my focus will be on the *surplus repression* that “is specific to a particular culture”, and in my case my question will be “What is repressed in the interests of the synthesis of the East and the West?” the dominating ideology in Turkey.

Following Wood, supposing that the ‘ideal inhabitant’ of the dominant ideology in Turkey is a ‘*monogamous heterosexual bourgeois patriarchal capitalist*’ who manages to balance the modernity with the traditions, two contradictory elements, creating a paradoxical mindset, that reaches to a hybrid in between character, which is neither the East nor the West, which is ‘illogical’ to an extent so that leads to feelings of anxiety and frustration, and (2) Otherness in the figure of the monster as a representation of, from Wood’s *totalizing understanding* of “bourgeois” ideology, which otherizes anything that it *cannot recognize or accept but must deal with*. From his list, what can be applied to my study is only the *otherization of woman* and her sexuality and (without focus and interrelated to female sexuality). Then I will offer another form of otherization, which is specific to horror cinema in Turkey, the *otherization of the rural*, playing an even central role in Turkish horror films. Actually I think *the otherization of the rural* as a concept is consistent with Wood’s model of otherization, although he



didn't mention it, the bourgeois ideology otherizes the rural, or in other words, the periphery. I will take otherization of the rural and the rural people at the focus of my study, and otherization of women as a microcosm representation of the synthesis of the East and the West. However, most importantly I discuss *the otherization of Islam*, in the figure of the monster, since in the films in this study the monster is Islamic. Wood expressed that “the true subject of horror genre is the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses and oppresses,” and it is “dramatized”, (Wood 2003, p. 17) “in the figure of the monster” (Wood 2003, p. 68), meaning the monster as the *other* represents what is repressed in the culture. The representation of Islamic monsters in Turkish horror films seems to exceed this simple definition of the monster, opening the discussion if the Islam is repressed or repressive in these films, and this is the major discussion in this study. Actually, Wood's approach is itself ambiguous and has been criticized along the line of this ambiguity. In the next part I introduce his famous conceptions of *the return of the repressed* and *ambivalence*, and then I move onto the literature of criticism over Wood's conceptions.

### **2.1.3 Return of the Repressed**

The monster is also, as Wood elaborated on, “protean, changing from period to period as society's basic fears clothe themselves in fashionable or immediately accessible garments—rather as dreams use material from recent memory to express conflicts or desires that may go back to early childhood” (Wood 2003, p. 71). And that the repressive elements of the civilization that is to create ‘the ideal’ inhabitants for alienated labor in such a way that the “burden of repression” reached to an “insupportable” amount due to its “logical impossibility” (Wood 2003, p. 64-65) so that “in a society built in monogamy and family there will be an enormous surplus of repressed sexual energy, and that what is repressed must always strive to return” (Wood 2003, p. 72).

First of all, Wood's conceptualization of the *return of the repressed*, as a component of ‘repression mechanism’, is a Freudian psychoanalytical notion, used as a tool to analyze the states of unconscious and this unconscious is best observed in

psychoanalysis through dreams of the patients. In film studies it goes down to the spectator's film-viewing experience and its relevance to the state of sleep. This tendency of relating the experience of watching films to the unconscious processes of mind mainly goes back 1970s French film thought, to the apparatus theory, which blended film study with psychoanalysis, semiotics and Marxism, in order to explain how films carry the dominant ideology through its mechanism and the spectator's cognitive processes.

Jean-Louis Baudry, who for the first time drew the analogy between film watching experience and the state of dream in his paper *Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus*, asserted that cinema is ideological because its mode of working and mechanics inherently carries the perspective of the dominant ideology. The apparatus of the camera, editing, shooting, montage or scenario create ideological results because they process the raw material of objective reality, so the image on the screen is no longer the objective reality itself but a processed reality, a finished product which carries a meaning from a specific ideology. Besides, through their invisibility, the apparatus gives the unconscious sensation as if working in us; we forget it, so that different images constitute a meaning and consciousness; a process completed with the position of the audience who sit in closed darkened room, and the film is projected from behind, so that the reflection on the screen becomes an *impression of reality*<sup>10</sup> (Baudry 1975, pp.39-44). Likewise Christian Metz discussed that during the film viewing the audience identifies with the camera and during this identification with the

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<sup>10</sup> The mechanical apparatus in fact selects the difference and represses it in projection in order to produce their specific ideological effects determined by the dominant ideology; through *mutation of the signifying material* meaning is constituted. Thus cinema carries the dominant ideology of the culture within the spectator, which becomes an institutional model of spectatorship. Baudry argues that the apparatus of cinema, works as a language, "the language of unconscious". It reconstitutes and shapes the mechanical system "of a system of writing constituted by a material base and a counter-system (ideology, idealism) which uses this system, while also concealing it". He refers to Freud in order to show the similar work principles between the cinematic apparatus and the unconscious. Freud mentioned an "optical model", in "The Interpretation of Dreams", that "serves in psychic productions as a sort of complicated microscope or camera", the very term, which Freud later changed to "mystic writing pad" (Baudry, p.39-42). Cinema appears as a kind of "psychic apparatus of substitution, corresponding to the model defined by the dominant ideology". Since repression can only work without its deviations or "reveling of mechanism", like the way that the unconscious cannot be recognized until a slip occurs. The work mode of cinema, in terms of apparatus depends on this mode of unconscious. At the cinema the reflection on the screen is like an extension of the spectator, as if he cannot and his defective organs are substituted such "instruments and ideological formations capable of filling his function as subject. In fact, this substitution is only possible on the condition that the instrumentation itself be hidden or repressed. Thus disturbing elements—similar, precisely, to those elements indicating the return of the repressed..." (Baudry, p. 46).

camera because of the supported *vanishing point*, the apparatus that enables perception is the ‘projector’, which is “behind” the spectator and literally “at the back of his head”, “where fantasy locates the ‘focus’ of all vision” offering the function of the eyes which in turn gives an “all-seeing” experience to the subject of a transcendental type. The subject identifies with the camera and its movements, perceiving the light from the projector like a big eyeball and being conscious of what he perceives by internalizing the apparatus in an introjective mode (Metz 1975, pp.413- 414). Likewise Wood noted (2003, p. 69-70):

*The analogy frequently invoked between films and dreams is usually concerned with the experience of the audience. The spectator sits in darkness and the sort of involvement the entertainment film invites necessitates a certain switching off of consciousness, a losing of oneself in fantasy experience.*

This nature of film watching that enables one to dive into a fantasy space is meaningful in terms of its disguising the ideological material that is carried. Wood noted since dreams are “the embodiment of repressed desires, tensions, fears that our conscious mind rejects”, when we sleep “the censor that guards our subconscious relaxes”, but “even... the desires can only emerge in disguise, as fantasies that are innocent or apparently meaningless”. When it comes to watching a film, the entertainment factor causes one to stop taking the activity seriously, which puts one to “a kind of partial sleep of consciousness”. For the audience as well as the filmmakers “full awareness stops at the level of the plot, action and character, in which the most dangerous and subversive implications can disguise themselves and escape detection” (Wood 2003, p.70)

Franco Moretti directly quotes from Freud that the tension in “*the psyche of the person suffering from the fear*”, forces one to repress the emotional state driven from the conflict of a given situation and the repressed emotion is transformed into anxiety when repressed “and the fear breaks out when – for whatever reason – this repressed impulse returns and thrusts itself upon the mind: Fear, in other words, coincides with the return of the repressed”. For Moretti, “the repressed returns, then, but disguised as a monster,” and the “the main fact is precisely this metamorphosis”, which is *the*

*formal model capable of filtering it*”, which is, for Moretti, “the monster metaphor” (Moretti 1983, p.156).

Similar to Wood’s explanation of the disguise of the repressed materials due to our conscious mind’s rejection of their full embodiment, Moretti’s approach of the metaphor is in a similar fashion of conscious and unconscious censors. The monster, as *the return of the repressed*, is disguised as a metaphor of our repressed fears. The metaphoric nature of the monster, Moretti stated, has its function of hiding ‘unacceptable’ unconscious material from the conscious mind of the audiences (1983, p. 157):

*It filters, makes bearable to the conscious mind those desires and fears which the latter had judged to be unacceptable and had thus been forced to repress, and whose existence it consequently cannot recognize. The ...formalization...therefore had a double function: it expresses the unconscious content and at the same time hides it.... The metamorphosis, in other words, serves to protect the conscious mind, or more precisely to keep it in a state of greater unawareness.... yet at the same time and precisely for this reason, the repressed content, which has remained unconscious, produces an irresistible fear.*

Moretti furthers his argument of metaphoric characters that the metaphor is more of a literary term because “in literature, metaphors are constructed (by the author) and perceived (by the reader) precisely as metaphors”. However when it comes to horror genre the metaphor takes up “an element of reality” since “they can be expressed only if they are hidden (or at least transformed by his black cloak). Only in this way can the social consciousness admit its own fears without laying itself open to stigma” (Moretti 1983, p. 158).

For Moretti, the supernatural world created in a work of horror constitutes a metaphorical world holistically, in which the metaphor of the monster becomes disguised as if it is a natural and usual element belonging to that same world, which disguises its metaphorical character. For Wood, it is mainly because of the entertainment factor in film viewing, for the same reason “genre movies can be far more radical and fundamentality undermining than works of conscious social criticism” because escapisms doesn’t necessarily refer to a negative “escape from, but escape logically must also be escape to,” because (Wood 2003, p. 70):

*Dreams are also escapes from the unresolved tensions of our lives into fantasies. Yet fantasies are not meaningless, they can represent attempts to resolve those tensions in more radical ways than our consciousness can countenance.*

The horror genre doubles this effect since, Wood noted, despite its disreputability<sup>11</sup> among the majority of the critics, it continues to be the one of the most popular genre. As the popularity wins over, the entertainment factor increases – in such a way that even some people watch horror films in order to laugh - the “disreputability” loses its value through the dream state in which “the censor (in both the common and the Freudian sense) is lulled into sleep and relaxes vigilance”. The important thing is that popularity puts a film in a radical position in terms of appealing to the masses of audiences, which means that popular films are “the personal dreams of their makers and the collective dreams of their audiences” so they mirror “the shared structure of a common ideology” (Wood 2003, p. 70):

*It becomes easy, if this is granted, to offer a simple definition of horror films: they are our collective nightmares. The conditions under which a dream becomes a nightmare are that the repressed wish is, from the point of view of consciousness, so terrible that it must be repudiated as loathsome, and that is so strong and powerful as to constitute a serious threat.*

In short films are ideological because their mechanism carry the dominant ideology intrinsically, and the horror films serve to this end in an increased level because of the metaphorical character that disguises the ideological material behind it. The return of the repressed is used to detect the repressed ideological material behind the metaphorical representations.

#### **2.1.4 The Formula**

If films are our *collective nightmares*, then Wood states that the repression needs to be detected. In order to do this he offers a model to read the horror films, which is “Normality is threatened by the Monster”. He explained that ‘normality’ is

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<sup>11</sup> Wood argues that despite its popularity, the horror genre is the most disreputable one as it has been totally ignored by the majority of the critics as a kind of distaste which changed by *Psycho* (1960) which brought some kind of a dignity to horror film, but still many horror films do not get any attention by the critics, however the popularity continued for the audiences, as most horror films make money, and “the ones that don’t are those with overt intellectual...difficult works like...*Exorcist II*.” (Wood 2003, p. 69).

“conformity to the dominant social norms”, by reminding that he uses ‘normality’ in a “strictly non-evaluative sense” that is to mean “conformity to the dominant social norms”. The normality is always “boringly” constructed in the films, which is “the heterosexual monogamous couple, the family and the social institutions (police, church, armed forces) that support and defend them” (Wood 2003, p. 71).

As Wood states, this formula of ‘normality is threatened by the monster’ “covers the entire range of horror films” with different figures of monsters varying from Vampires to Devils—which in my case covers different forms of Islamic demonic beings like the *genie*—it can also be applied to the other genres where any threat to the dominant ideology can substitute the Monster such as, Wood exemplifies, the “Indians” in the classical westerns (Wood 2003, p. 71).

Besides, the formula consists one more component; ‘The Relationship’, which is a determinant effectual connection between the Normality and the Monster. The reading of this relationship is very important, because it makes us understand “the essential subject of the film”. This third component, Wood stated, ‘the Relationship’ “changes and develops” which is itself “the form of a long process of clarification and revelation” that needs to be studied in order to interpret the symbolic meanings that stands for the tensions of the society (Wood 2003, pp. 71-72).

To give a specific example ‘the double’ is “one privileged form” of the relationship between the normality and the monster, in which “where the normality and Monster are two aspects of the same person”. The first example that comes to mind, like in Wood’s book, is Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, in which the monster is the same person, but his darker side, becoming his “alter ego” or, “the doppelgänger”. Wood gives many examples from various films because this “figure recurred constantly in Western culture”, and its identity of doubleness varies in forms and narratives such as in *Nosferatu* the presentation of the mirror images of the protagonist and the vampire, or in *Moby Dick* the dichotomic presentation of Ahab and the white whale. Wood furthers his argument with a different form of the double in which “the motif is partially disguised”; in *Frankenstein* films the relationship between the

Monster and the creator is so intense that although Frankenstein is the name of the creator, almost everyone believes it is the Monster's name, as it becomes a symbiotic relationship where "the doppelgänger motif reveals the Monster as normality's shadow". (Wood 2003, p. 71-72)

According to what I have explained so far, I will take Wood's formula at the basic of my film reading, 'normality is threatened by the monster', and will concentrate on the 'relationship component' like Wood defined. I will look for the very changes and the developments, and shifts of the monster in order to find 'the symbolic meanings' that the monster creates in terms of its relationship with the norms the films manifest by attributing my analysis to the collective; to the 'shared structure of a common ideology' of Turkish society.

### **2.1.5 Ambivalence**

The monster, besides its being "protean, changing from period to period" (Wood 2003, p. 71), is also Wood figured out, ambivalent in its nature. He stated that this ambivalence, basically, arises in horror films when the monster is not "totally unsympathetic" which means the Monster has human qualities and sometimes becomes "the emotional center" like in the *Frankenstein* films. Wood must have been aware of the simplicity of this explanation, so that he added, this ambivalence "goes far beyond the Monster being sympathetic" and it is in fact about "our attitude towards normality"; Horror films fascinate us because they are the "fulfillment of our nightmare wish to smash the norms that oppress us and which our moral conditioning teaches us to revere" (Wood 2003, p.72).

Then following Wood from here on, he stated that horror genre is the dramatization of the repressed as the *other* embodied by the monster that represents our repressed feelings return in disguise. In horror films this dramatization takes place in a simple narrative: 'Normality is threatened by the monster', in which the 'relationship' of the two is the most significant since it is exactly what needs to be studied in order to figure out "the essential subject of the film" (Wood 2003, p. 71), which is, again in his

definition, “the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses or oppresses, its re-emergence dramatized, as in our nightmares, as an object of horror, a matter for terror, and the happy ending (when it exists) typically signifying the restoration of repression” (Wood 2003, p. 68).

That is to say, if ‘our moral conditioning’ mediates as the repressive apparatus of the culture in order to make people conform to the norms given, and if the individual, deep down, negates with this oppression, this moral conditioning in an unconscious way give the audience the chance to lift the burden of repression temporarily and hence have some kind of a pleasure through this figure of the monster. Then Wood offers this equation, the monster represents *all that our civilization represses or oppresses*, and by its emergence on the screen the repression is lifted, and that by the end, when the monster is removed, if it is, the repression is restored again. But the question is: Are all the monsters *the return of the repressed* or how can we know if they are *the return of the repression*?

Wood was also aware of the ambiguity of his approach so that he asserted there is a certain ambiguity in the figure of the monster, and in order to overcome that ambiguity he made a certain division between the figures of the: “the monster as the return of the repressed and the monster as punishment for sexual promiscuity”, elaborating on the ‘teeny-pic’ horror films, such as *Jaws*, *Halloween*, or *Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>*, in which young people or female sexuality is punished, that he relates this to the puritanical tradition that otherizes sexuality (Wood 2003, p. 171). To him this is “a very common generic pattern plays on the ambiguity” of the representation of the monster. In 50s and 60s “in the tradition of all beach party-monster movies”, the monster becomes “simply the instrument of puritan vengeance and repression rather than the embodiment of what puritanism repressed” (Wood 2003, p. 172).

In the traditional horror film the monster was, Wood explained, “a creature from the id, not merely a product of repression but a protest against it” whereas in the contemporary horror films “the monster, while still produced by repression, has essentially become a superego figure, avenging itself on liberated female sexuality or



the sexual freedom of the young”. Hence “the traditional horror film invited, however ambiguously, identification with the return of the repressed, the contemporary horror film invites an identification (either sadistically or masochistically or both simultaneously) with punishment” (Wood 2003, p. 173).

Wood’s ‘the return of the repressed’ machinery enables ambiguous answers to the question: ‘What does the monster stand for?’ What comes out is an undeniable ambivalent character of the monster, as Wood’s language gives in, from the starting point of that the ambivalence related to “our attitude towards normality”, that we are both fascinated and scared by the horror films, in the economy of the fear and desire that work together in the unconscious. However Wood tries to decode the ambivalent nature and bring some clear-cut categorizations, so he uses the psychoanalytical theory, with its notions of repression and the ‘return of the repressed’ offers “a means of political categorization of horror movies” and so he attributed a social significance to the genre (Wood 2003, p.170) and he added (p. 69):

*...these notions of repression and the Other afford us not merely a means of access but a rudimentary categorization of horror films in social/political terms, distinguishing the progressive from the reactionary, the criterion being the way in which the monster is presented and defined.*

Not only the monsters, but also the films did Wood categorize. He attributed his *progressive* category to 1970s horror films, with their theme of *openly stated crisis of ideology*; for him 1970s horror is “the Golden Age of American horror film” with their “gruesome, more violent, more disgusting and...confused...more disturbed and more disturbing” nature which is a progressive development of the genre to a state of “quandary of civilization”, reflecting incoherence and dilemma within the system which is the reflection of the “rotteness at the ideological core of capitalist society” (Wood 2003, p.25).

To him this oppositional tendency in 1970s decreased in 1980s and the films degenerated due to their conservative motifs, which is a “decline...the hideous perversion” (Wood 2003, p. 63). He appraises 1970s violent horror films because for him, horror genre, in general, is “essentially conservative” in its nature “since it merely

reproduces the same patterns, the same trajectories, the same ‘happy endings’”. He also criticizes Pre-1970 Hollywood in that sense since “so little can be read as oppositional to the dominant forces” (Wood 2003, Prologue).

Elsewhere, Wood asserted “such a categorization” of horror films “can never be rigid or clear cut”. He admitted to have mentioned the “genre’s progressive and radical elements, its potential for the subversion of bourgeois capitalism” (actually which he attributed to the character of the 70s horror films), he also accepted that this progressive potential “is never free from ambiguity”. He attributed this to the very nature of the genre which “carries within itself the capability of reactionary inflection”, and that “perhaps, no horror film is entirely immune from its operations”, which to him is associated to the existing “powerful reactionary tradition” in such a way that “it may under certain conditions become the dominant one” (Wood 2003, p. 170).

Özkaracalar argues, the problem with Wood is that he seems “unaware of the true implications of the ‘ambivalence’ issue”. Although he offers a good playground for the discussion of the ambivalence, since he mentions the sympathetic nature of the monster and relates it to the spectator’s ambivalent frame of mind to the normality being threatened “but harks back to an either/or duality” and that such a distinction of a film being ‘progressive’ or ‘reactionary’ regarding the presentation of the monster is reductionist in a certain way so that “such clear-cut distinctions do not really work,” and that “ambivalence is a far more central problematic which goes deeper than Wood allows.” Özkaracalar reminds that his study is not a total “disavowal of the utilization of the discourses” when adopting the approach of the ‘What does the Monster stand for?’, “but stressing the tendential and non-dualistic, non-dichotomic, thus ‘ambivalent’ nature of the answers” and that there are certain shifts in the nature of the ambivalence takes place in horror genre (Özkaracalar 2004).

In terms of the Islamic monsters in the Turkish horror films, the monster seems more like a “punishment for” certain expects of the society, while sexuality is a part of it, it is generally about the over westernization in the character of the Turkish national identity. So in this case, the monster is, in Wood’s words, “the instrument *Islamic*

vengeance and repression rather than what *Islam* repressed”. However it is not that simple, since in the Turkish context, the attitude towards Islam is itself ambivalent, and the monster may itself consist the Islam as the return of the repressed. As Schneider (2004) reminded that Wood’s theory is debatable in certain contexts, and especially in terms of non-Western countries, its application may vary. On the other hand, despite its problems, Wood offers a good ground for play, and despite its non-dualistic nature, the classifications of Wood can be elaborated and remodified.

He Wood’s argument in terms of “some of the characteristics that have contributed to the genre’s reactionary wing”. (1) “The designation of the monster as simply evil... what is repressed must always return as a threat, perceived by the consciousness as ugly, terrible, obscene”. He differentiated the progressive with its refusal “to be satisfied with this simple designation” and that “whether explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously” the progressive films “modify, question, challenge, and seek to invert” this definition of evil monster. (2) “The presence of Christianity”: that such a presence of orthodox religion in American horror cinema represents the conservative tendencies in a film. In *The Exorcist* the validity of the devil correlates to “its failure convincingly to impose its theology”. (3) “The presentation of the Monster as totally nonhuman” since “the progressiveness” is related to the monster’s “arousing sympathy”. (4) “The confusion, in terms of what the film wishes to regard as monstrous, of *repressed* sexuality with sexuality itself” reminding again that the “distinction is not always clear-cut” (Wood 2003, p. 171).

His first category is a good start, since in Turkey we tend to categorize films as fundamentalist/religious/conservative films, and most of these horror films are conservative films, there may be some progressive inflections in the films, and in order for us to decide on this, Wood’s clarification that progressiveness is a refusal “to be satisfied with this simple designation” and that “whether explicitly or implicitly, consciously or unconsciously” the progressive films “modify, question, challenge, and seek to invert” this definition of evil monster. However this doesn’t change that there is still ambivalence in the film in terms of the conservative inflections as well. In his second category, reducing the conservative films to the ones that consist the religious,

since as I have mentioned, all the films in this study have Islamic motifs and they still are ambivalent. His third category is reductionist as well whereas his fourth category gives a wider ground to play on. He says the reactionary film can be understood regarding its “confusion, in terms of what the film wishes to regard as monstrous, of *repressed* sexuality with sexuality itself”. When we call a film conservative we generally differentiate “what the film wishes to regard as monstrous”, and sexuality can be an example, if the monster, for example, punishes the sexuality of women, or if the women’s sexuality is depicted as monstrous, otherized. This is along the same line with “the criterion being the way in which the monster is presented and defined” (Wood 2003, p. 69), so in fact all the interpretation of a film lies in its politics of representation, and I will follow this in my study.

Wood must have been aware of the same ambiguity in his language that he made a further argument about the monster’s ‘destructive’ nature that is only conservative related to its degree of evilness but still, he fell short of making a clearer argument on the specific values of the changing evilness (2003, p.170):

*All monsters are by definition destructive, but their destructiveness is capable of being variously explained, excused and justified. To identify what is repressed with evil incarnate (a metaphysical, rather than a social, definition) is automatically to suggest that the only recourse is to strive to keep it repressed. Films in which the monster is identified as the devil clearly occupy a privileged place in this group, though even the devil can be presented with the varying degrees of deliberate or inadvertent sympathy and fascination...*

He tried to make a clear differentiation between two categories “the reactionary horror film and the apocalyptic horror film”, the latter being more progressive with its innate “negativity”: “the apocalypse, even when presented in metaphysical terms (at the end of the world), is generally reinterpretable in social/political ones (the end of the highly specific world of capitalism)”. He added that most of the 1970s films could be counted in this category of apocalyptic films (Wood 2003, p. 170):

*They are progressive in so far as their negativity is not recuperable into the dominant ideology, but constitutes, on the contrary, the recognition of that ideology’s disintegration and its untenability, as all it has repressed explodes and blows it apart.*

## 2.2 CRITICISM OVER WOOD'S APPROACH TO HORROR

### 2.2.1 Criticism over Wood's conception of ambivalence by Matt Hills

Matt Hills asserts that, psychoanalytic approach to horror genre is problematic in its being “more interested in defusing ambivalence” behind the effort of categorizing “horror texts into (bad) reactionary and (good) progressive” like Wood does. Hills criticizes this tendency which “discursively police and categorize the horror texts” rather than focus on the “potential ambivalence” in the horror films, in terms of viewer response that the pleasure combines with anxiety” (Hills 2005, p. 46). Hills points out that Wood found a way of reading horror films by attributing a role to the audiences (2005, p.50):

*On Wood's account, such pleasures can be deemed progressive where the audience revels in the monster's threat to dominant social/cultural norms (norms that are themselves ideological), and reactionary where the audiences take pleasure in the monster's narrative destruction, and hence restoration of social cultural order. For Wood, this signals the 'restoration of repression', and so is not really a 'happy ending' at all.*

Hills deduces that, what Wood defines is “a doubled restoration: progressive restoration, via monster, of all ‘that our civilization represses or oppresses’ followed by the reactionary restoration of repression/suppression” in which the pleasures become ambivalent by both “opposing and reinforcing repression/oppresion.” Hills main argument is that instead of emphasizing “this apparent ambivalence” in which “pleasure and repression/oppresion are interwoven”, Wood prefers a categorization of horror texts into ‘progressive’ or ‘reactionary’ horror, which means “some of horror’s pleasures become more globally suspect (reinforcing repression/oppresion), while others can be readily applauded by the Marxian-Freudian critic for challenging the dominant ideological social/cultural order. He asserts that “Wood is not concerned with actual audiences...His audiences are...’ideal readers’...Thus horror’s pleasures are theoretically imagined or projected by Wood...to validate and legitimate horror as a deadly serious business” (Hills 2005, p.51).

Hills also criticizes that that “Psychoanalytically derived, scholarly readings of horror that celebrate its progressiveness or condemn its ‘reactionary wing’ seem bent on elevating horror as a priori culturally ‘important’ within politically struggle. He quotes from Wood, on his defense of ‘the return of repressed’ that in his thesis the “determinant...was...political commitment—leftist, radical...in Marxist ideology...especially the confluence of Marx and Freud in 70’s thought.” For Wood, “psychoanalysis ...was a radical weapon that could be used politically.” The foundation of his arguments was “radical political commitment”, which “was vastly more important...than any desire to tell ‘the whole truth nothing but the truth’ about the horror film” (Hills 2005, p.53).

Hills explains that he doesn’t aim to attack to Wood’s thesis but he finds it as an “inaccurate or problematic use of Freud-via-Marcuse” as “Freudian psychoanalysis is put in the service of a specific cultural politics,” by substituting “a quasi-legalistic demand for horror’s ‘truth’ for a different, Marxist cultural political demand. In other words, Hills points out that rather than being interested in the film as a text in order to put his theory in the service of the horror discourse, Wood preferred to position his theory in the cultural discourse. For Hills, Wood used his theory as a political weapon (2005, pp.53-54).

Moreover he argues, that the psychoanalytic approach to genre is constructed discursively to a level that even the critics in their counter arguments contributed to Wood’s theses. One of the critiques of Wood, cited in Hills, is Dana Polan who asserted that “any nomination of horror film as progressive...would be wrong [because] domination may itself derive from... other equally dominating aspects”, which “is itself seemingly ‘repressed’ or ‘silenced’ in Wood’s categorizing ‘reactionary/progressive’ account”. Hills interprets Dolan: “cultural power acts through so many different channels and forces that there can be no definitive restoration of repressed material without this allegedly pleasurable restoration *simultaneously* implying other dimensions of repression/oppression.” For example, Romero’s zombies in the *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) may be the critique of consumer society while approving militarism (Hills 2005, pp. 52-53):

*I would suggest that whether 'the return of the repressed' and repression itself can be clearly separated, either by narrative phase, or across discrete texts, is the question raised by Wood's approach. His own Freudian-indebted theoretical machinery implies that such separations or splittings are clearly possible, and indeed Wood's critics have contributed to this tendency by counter-reading horror as being about 'repressive' monsters, rather than viewing monsters as 'returns of the repressed'. Yet an alternative theoretical path, put forward by Andrew Britton, lies in the argument that 'the return of the repressed isn't clearly distinguished from the return of repression.*

Most importantly Hills argues that Wood's account of repression "calls for historization" despite the socio-historical references of surplus repression compared with "the timeless processes of repression essential to civilization" (ibid. p. 51). Hills supports this argument by a quotation of Anthony Elliot who stated that "the Freudian inspired social theory developed by ... Marcuse [appealed to] the political demands of the sexual radicals' and students' movements" in the 60's and 70s (ibid. p. 52). The argument is that Marcuse's debates are outdated as they focused on the sexual repression in the Freudian paradigm, and time has changed by a transition to the Foucauldian paradigms in which the debate is not the sexual repression but the "saturation of sexuality" that creates a "cultural hyperconsciousness" which interprets the "sexual terror" more of an "anxiety" about issues "gender, identity, morality, power and loss of control" of today's context. In other words, "Wood's work on horror in the 1970s and 1980s was very much formed by and within its own (sub) cultural context drawing on Marxian-Freudian syntheses that were influenced at the time radical, academic politics" (Hills 2005, p.52):

*In other words, Wood's project appears to perform a vast semiotic fixing of horror's meanings. Repression is used conceptually to elevate the horror genre as a timeless re-enactment of psychological processes, while surplus repression is used to elevate horror to the timely status of a grand cultural-political struggle.*

### **2.2.2 Wood's Defense**

Wood's book *Hollywood from Vietnam to Reagan...and Beyond* was originally published in 1983 and it was extended in 2003. In this revisited version of the book published in 2003, Wood added a prologue part after going through the book and wrote:

*Looking through it somewhat cursorily, I find that I stand by most of its judgments. The weakest chapter seems to me, ironically, the one that has been most frequently reprinted (one gets the impression that one can't open an anthology without coming upon at least an excerpt): the chapter on the horror film (Prologue xxxviii).*

Having followed the arguments in the discourse and being aware of the counter arguments, he agreed with the mentioned weaknesses about his approach. One of them is that he applied his thesis “to only one branch of the genre”, since he concentrated mostly on the slasher films. He admitted that his thesis failed “to discriminate sufficiently in terms of value, lumping together major works and relatively the trivial simply because they reveal the same generic patterns”. He counted the latter weakness as “a common failing of ‘theoretical’ criticism” in modesty. However, as a whole he still could “stand by” his approach and especially stood by his political approach because he even stated that this “one branch of genre”, mentioned in the former weakness was still seemed to him the most important branch of genre (Prologue xxxviii).

Wood took a Marxist position (although he hesitates to label himself a Marxist p. 4) against oppression of different groups such as women or homosexuals, and a Freudian psychoanalytic approach in order to detect that oppression and repression in the films. Then he offered an approach of a synthesis of Marxism and psychoanalytic which to him is “the most hopeful, positive and vital development in contemporary thinking about culture” (2003, pp. 5-6):

*It should be understood here that the term “Marx”, like the term “Freud” refers to a body of theory that is in no way final or sacrosanct (dogma) but, on the contrary, is in need of constant modification, development, and reinterpretation in the light of cultural/historical experience. “Marx” offers no adequate account of sexuality, of the construction of the subject in ideology, or of the oppression of women. Every Marxist revolution so far has had to function within circumstances (economic, ideological) that have encouraged reaction and compromise in areas it has been ill equipped to deal with...*

He admitted that his way of look may have certain defects and may need to be modified as time passes, but he believed in the rightness of his political stance since “The struggle for liberation is not utopian, but a practical necessity” (Wood 2003, p. 64). However he rationalized his Marx-Freud synthesis (p. 7):



*If the present book emphasizes the Freudian side of that synthesis above the Marxist, that is partly because I feel more comfortable with it and partly because the Hollywood cinema has always been more accessible to analysis—more candidly profuse in its proliferation of material—on the level of sexual politics than of that class politics. The explanation of this phenomenon is obvious: on the level of sexual politics, there has been no defined alternative to the status quo that can be presented as a bogeyman; consequently on the taboo on deviant or subversive thought, while still very potent, has not been institutionalized and is much easier to evade.*

He insisted that a film analysis should be political (Wood 2003, p. 3) and it should be done “seriously and responsibly” (ibid. p.68) since films are “works in the context of their culture, as living ideological entities”. That is to say films, as it is generally accepted, reflect the political and sociological context of their culture but to Wood there is more than this ‘merely sociological’ approach that mostly leans on the ‘reflection theory’ that reduces “films to so many examples of this and that tendency”. For Wood, cinema is not a monolithic construction that reflects and submits to the ideological norms, rather, he differentiated between the films that manifest oppositional tendencies against the oppressive ideological norms. He attributed a greater importance to the films that he read as ‘oppositional’ than the films that ‘merely reflect’ the dominant ideology, thus he chose his political stance by approaching the films politically in his book (Wood 2003, p. 2-3) and he declared that “If we see the evolution of the horror film in terms of an inexorable return of the repressed, we will not be surprised by this final emergence of the genre’s real significance (Wood 2003, p. 76).

### **2.2.3 A Correction to Wood’s Return of the Repressed**

While psychoanalysis occupies the largest area of study in film, in the same extent it receives a great deal of criticism. The main criticism is on how psychoanalytical approaches to the horror genre treat films as if they are dream works rather than as texts and how they use the foundational assumptions of applied psychoanalysis such as *repression, abject, unconscious, Oedipus complex*, etc. that is mainly grounded on Freud’s discourse (rather than Jung or Lacan) and the primary source is Freud’s essay *The Uncanny* (1919) backing up Wood’s famous “return of the repressed” theory, which became so influential among the critics.

Although *return of the repressed* is from Freud's *The Uncanny*, Wood departed from this original source and based his argument to the Freud-Marx utilization of repression mechanism by Marcuse via Horowitz, which creates a discrepancy between the two understandings of the *uncanny*. Matt Hills points out this difference and he reads from Freud that the uncanny is 'one class [of frightening things] in which the frightening element can be shown to be something repressed which *recurs*' (Hills, pp.46-47). According to Freud the effect of *uncanny* comes from two different instances; (1) *the repressed material of the infantile complexes* like *Oedipus complex, castration complex and womb fantasy* or (2) *surmounted primitive beliefs* such as *omnipotence of thoughts, wish fulfillment, secret powers, or the return of the dead* (Freud, p.?). In this case the notion of the uncanny is in fact two folded: "an uncanny experience occurs either when repressed complexes" return and "when the primitive beliefs...seem once more to be confirmed" (Freud 1919, p.17).

Wood's approach, *the return of the repressed* belongs to Freud's former category of the uncanny, *the return of the repressed of the infantile complexes*, whereas it lacks the other form of the uncanny; *the surmounted*, in which Freud explained, the animistic beliefs are not repressed but they are surmounted. The problem is that, Hills notes, this latter one "has been less frequently discussed in academic work on horror" (Hills, p.49). Steven Jay Schneider took the latter form of uncanny in his work which is "a corrective return to Robin Wood's work" (Hills p. 49) as Schneider pointed out that "identifying repressed infantile complexes as the sole source of uncanniness/horror in psychoanalytic theory...[is the] mistake" (Schneider 1999) with which I totally agree since to consider the repressed infantile complexes, which constitute an individual's family and social identity through repression of sexuality, as *the sole source of uncanniness/horror* when studying a text, can only provide the researcher an incomplete or one dimensional perspective, if not a mistake, depending on the scope of the study, and that the uncanny, is certainly, a larger concept, which cannot be reduced to sexual complexes.

Albeit Freud was a psychoanalyst, in his 1919 paper *The Uncanny* he mainly elaborated on the uncanny effects of fiction, supporting it with his psychological

experiences of research, and tried to define different implications of the feeling of the uncanny both real and fiction. He attempted to describe the sources of the feeling of the uncanny, not only in the individual's feelings related to their daily life experiences, but also in different narratives, in literature. After a long inquiry he came up with these two main sources of it, the *repressed infantile complexes* and the *surmounted old beliefs*. Then *return of the repressed* is just one class of the uncanny, whereas the uncanny effect can also be experienced when an old, *surmounted belief* of ours, such as the return of the dead, the omnipotence of thoughts or the existence of the doubles is suddenly confirmed by something. Wood describes this "old, animistic concept of the universe" in which it is believed spirits existed and magical practices were possible. For Freud, this is a developmental stage for every individual "corresponding to that animistic stage in primitive men that none of us has traversed without preserving certain traces of it which can be re-activated". Thus this "animistic mental activity" in our psyche causes us to experience feelings of uncanny because our thoughts and feelings do not change a lot since early times, and even if they are outdated, they continue to be "preserved under a thin disguise, as that of our relation to death", since the uncanniest feelings goes for the death and the dead bodies, or haunted houses<sup>12</sup>. The fear of dead is a primitive fear but it still exists among us and it comes to the surface whenever it finds a chance (Freud 1919, pp.13-14):

*All so called educated people have ceased to believe, officially at any rate, that the dead can become visible as spirits,...their emotional attitude towards their dead, moreover, once a highly dubious and ambivalent one, has been toned down in the higher strata of the mind into a simple feeling of reverence.*

Moreover, although Freud takes the issue of uncanny within these two folds, he spares a big amount of his paper to the idea of the latter one and he also asserted (1919, p. 18):

*...these two classes of uncanny experience are not always sharply distinguishable. When we consider that primitive beliefs are most intimately connected with infantile complexes, and are, in fact, based upon them, we shall not be greatly astonished to find the distinction often rather a hazy one.*

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<sup>12</sup> Freud also noted the belief of the evil eye and the uncanny effect of epilepsy and madness has the same origin (p.14).

These two are intimately related because in psychoanalytical terms unwanted impulses are repressed by being converted into fears, and the frightening aspect turns out to be something that has been repressed. Thus any feelings that are processed through repression turn into feelings of anxiety, and if that repressed feeling happened to return in any case, the anxiety reminds itself. Even if what returns to the consciousness happens to be an ideational content, it returns with all the latent anxiety.

Schneider points out that, when we put Freud's hazy qualification aside, it can still be deduced from Freud's language that, despite the intimate connection, a distinction between the *surmounted beliefs* and *infantile complexes* can still be made and that "contra to Robin Wood, the true subject of horror cinema may be less "the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses and oppresses" than the struggle for validation of all that our civilization disavows or denies" (Schneider, 1999).

My point is, in terms of horror genre, the uncanny effect of the *surmounted beliefs* seems more relevant, since in most horror films there are supernatural things coming into life, such as occult practices, sorcerers or witches summoning spirits and dead bodies. Freud himself proposed that "many people experience the [uncanny] feeling in the highest degree in relation to...the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts" (Freud, p.17) so I believe the uncanny effect, especially in the horror films that take supernatural motifs or monsters, may lie more on the *surmounted beliefs*. Schneider made a more clear starting point that, "what makes horror film monsters at least potentially horrifying is the fact that they metaphorically embody surmounted beliefs" such as the return of the dead, but in fact horror films monsters vary, so that the uncanny effect they call for vary as well. While there can be monsters that create the uncanny effect of infantile complexes like Headless Horseman or Beast With Five Fingers, and some other ones, like mummies, zombies, Frankenstein monster which are good examples of the *surmounted belief model*. Schneider adds that there may be monsters that do not correspond to any of the two or there are many that blend the two, and most mix a variety of different *surmounted beliefs* (Schneider, 1999). From this point of view, a categorization of different horror film monsters is needed, and Schneider offered one in his paper. I will not introduce his typology of monsters in

detail, since this study is not related in definitions of different monsters, but it is important to note that, Schneider categorized all the monsters under the headings and subheading of the *surmounted beliefs* that vary, keeping with Freud's conceptions of *return of the dead*, *omnipotence of thought*, or the *existence of the double* etc., offering verifications of the uncanny. He supports his point from Freud again (Schneider, 1999):

*Near the end of his paper, Freud himself cautions that "we must be prepared to admit that there are other elements besides those which we have so far laid down as determining the production of the uncanny feelings". And if Freud can admit of "other elements," we certainly can too.*

### **2.3 A REMODIFICATION OF WOOD'S APPROACH VISITING MORETTI SCHNEIDER, RYAN AND KELLNER**

Under the light of what has been discussed up until here a remodification of Wood's approach to the horror cinema becomes a necessity to introduce, both because of the problematic parts of his argument and in order to offer a framework to analyze the horror films with Islamic motifs in Turkey.

Wood believed 1970s was the golden age of cinematic horror genre in America, since the violence and disturbance in the slasher films reflected the ideological crisis in the national identity of Americans at the time, and he categorized these films as progressive films because they negate the authority. However, although he is right in his interpretation of these horror films, his usage of this utilization of Marxist psychoanalysis is universalizing, since in a different context, the psychological decompositions in the horror films as such, may not be sharply categorized as progressive, on the contrary they may point to more conservative tendencies.

Especially in the context of Turkey, where national ideology is constructed on an ambivalence of the synthesis of the East and the West, interpreting the films always consist of ambivalent interpretation of representations with their relationship to the conservative traditions and the desired other West, progress and liberation. Wood, as Hills noted, based his argument to the Freud-Marx utilization of repression mechanism of Marcuse, that, *basic* and *surplus* repression, so that Hills comments (2005, p.49):

*If horror deals with 'something repressed which recurs' then, for Wood, this is not merely 'universal' basic repression involving the Oedipal complex, etc. It is also, and more importantly, surplus repression, so that what recurs is necessarily politicized and constitutes a challenge to the dominant order of society.*

Schneider (1999) also visits this point and offers that his typology of monster may be a response to both to Freud's ambiguous explanations over the uncanny and Wood's universalizing problem. At this level, he stresses, Wood's return of the repressed becomes meaningful, since Wood's basic is universal, and surplus is culture specific and contingent and that it varies according to societies, what Wood means by the return of the repressed, is the surplus repression, and "the repressed always returns in a society built on enormous surplus of repressed sexual energy":

*What Wood talks about horror film monsters in terms of return of the repressed, what he really has in mind is a return of the surplus repressed: in a society built on monogamy and family there will be an enormous surplus of repressed sexual energy, and...what is repressed must always strive to return".*

If for Wood "the monster is, of course, much more Protean, changing from period to period as society's basic fears clothe themselves in fashionable or immediate accessible garments". Schneider explains that in order to characterize the basic fears Wood talking about, his surmounted beliefs model works, for the level of "fashionable or immediate garments", Wood's surplus repression works.

For Schneider, the problem with Wood is, by departing from Freud he fails to explain, why horror film monsters happen to be horrific. Especially if his theory can be extended to other genres, how does he explain the representation of monstrosity? Therefore, the uncanny effect of the *surmounted beliefs* should also be considered when studying horror as a text, but as Schneider noted the monsters "metaphorically embody surmounted beliefs, but not all of them manage to reconfirm those beliefs" because not every monsters succeeds to be horrifying enough.

Uncanny is something frightening that creates feelings of fear and dread, however not every feeling of fear is related to the uncanny experience, as Freud put it. Uncanny is driven from the German word, *unheimlich*, which means *unhomely*. It is frightening because "it leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" but now "it

is not known and familiar” (Freud 1919, p.2). In other words it is something familiar (homey, homely), belonging to the “home” to the “self” and to the “past”, but it was long forgotten, repressed and now it comes back and reminds itself (unhomely). It is something that was intended to remain “hidden and secret, yet comes to light” (Freud 1919, p.3). Freud asserted that the prefix “un” in unheimlich is the token of repression, (ibid. p. 15) So that the uncanny, is not something “new or foreign, but something familiar and old” set and kept in mind as a result of the process of repression: the uncanny is “something which ought to have been kept concealed but which has nevertheless come to light” (ibid. p.13). Thus the uncanny effect is related to this something that was familiar to the psyche long ago, but it was repressed. Now that it returns, it reminds it self, coming from the past, it becomes terrifying since it was meant to be silenced. “It may be true that the uncanny is nothing else than a hidden, familiar thing that has undergone repression and then emerged from it, and that everything that is uncanny fulfills this condition. (ibid. p.15). However not every horror film in creating uncanny effects, but still the monster may carry an ideological representation.

When Freud made a distinction between the experienced uncanny and “the uncanny as we merely picture it or read about it”, roughly he was saying that, the uncanny in real life experiences is more about “something familiar that has been repressed” and that the uncanny effect of the *omnipotence of thought* is a matter of ‘testing reality’, “a question of the material reality phenomena” and the “actual occurrences of the uncanny” belongs to this latter group and that “there are many means of creating uncanny effects in fiction than there are in real life” (Freud 1919, pp. 16-18). Freud explained that the story-teller choses “his world of representation” and the more his world resembles to the real world the uncanny effect is guaranteed for the anomalies he creates in this world, and that the writer makes use of the uncanny of “our supposedly superstitiousness” and that “fiction presents more opportunities for the creating uncanny sensations than are possible in real life” and that “all these complications relate only to that class of the uncanny which proceeds from forms of thought that have been surmounted” (Freud 1919, pp.18-19).

Moretti who adopted the notion of *the return of the repressed* directly from Freud mentioned the two sources of the uncanny (Moretti 1983, p.156). Actually, Moretti's approach to horror monsters as metaphoric expression of our repressed unconscious feelings, and the way that they preserve their metaphoric nature by being expressed in a hidden way parallels with Freud's conception of the uncanny as well. Moretti's argument was that "in literature, metaphors are constructed (by the author) and perceived (by the reader) precisely as metaphors". However when it comes to horror genre the metaphor takes up "an element of reality" since "they can be expressed only if they are hidden" (Moretti 1983, p. 158).

Moretti has a framework of study in which he embeds Marxism with Freudian psychoanalysis and his Marxist approach is not as reductionist as Wood's conception of otherness which he defined via bourgeois ideology, which is "debatable if not outright objectionable, but it must be born in mind that he is in effect talking about Otherness in a 'bourgeois' society, rather than Otherness in general even if his language betrays a contrary tendency as well" (Özkaracalar 2004). However Moretti, as Özkaracalar puts "acknowledges a space different from those which can and should be explained in purely and directly economic and historical terms" (Özkaracalar 2004). Moreover Moretti states how the different analyses of Marxist and psychoanalytic can be brought together with their "different signifieds" (1983, p. 157):

*Marxist analysis and psychoanalytic analysis have permitted us to isolate two prominent groups of signifieds which come together [...] They are, clearly, different signifieds, and it is hard to unite them harmoniously. I do not propose here to construct the many missing links that might connect socio-economic structures and sexual-psychological structures in a single conceptual chain. Nor can I say whether this undertaking [...] is possible.*

Kaya Özkaracalar stated that Moretti emphasizes the dubious character of using "different levels of analysis... in a single conceptual chain", hence, he comes up with a "utilization of different analytical tools" that are Marxism and psychoanalysis. Moretti confesses how to integrate the two levels of analyses is "a highly complicated scientific problem" but it is not a concern of his study, whereas the specific case in his study seemed appropriate to use them together (Moretti 1983, p. 158) like Özkaracalar



argued “the indeterminacy of how these different levels can be linked together does not exclude underlining why different levels co-exist together” (Özkaracalar, 2004).

Moretti reminds that since there are different levels existing, it is possible to use different tools to analyze them and that “metaphors, rhetorical figures built on the analogy between *different semantic fields*. Wishing to incarnate Fear as such, they must of necessity combine fears that have *different causes*: economic, ideological, physical, sexual (and others should be added, beginning with religious fear).” Therefore it is “possible, if not obligatory, to use different tools in order to reconstruct the multiform roots of terrorizing metaphor” (Moretti p. 158). Moretti’s approach of using different levels of analysis is commendable for my study as well.

Ryan and Kellner uses a good version of the utilization of Marxism and psychoanalysis in their study, too, and their approach is very close to Wood’s, with a new modification built over Wood’s approach with responding to the ambiguous parts.

They use psychoanalytic notions and repression mechanism and they blend it with film grammar and then they look for the historical changes as well. Their main argument is that films generate the dominant ideology of the society through the representational conventions. In order to detect what these representational codes are, one needs to study first the legitimate dominant institutions and the traditional values of a given society, and that in American context they are individualism, capitalism, patriarchy and racism, and their representational conventions and codes—like valuing competition to represent capitalism.

What they mean by representational conventions parallels with Baudry’s approach to cinema’s ideological mode of working. Representational conventions are a blend of the form and the content. The form is constituted of “narrative closure, image continuity, nonreflexive camera character identification, voyeuristic identification, sequential editing, causal logic, dramatic motivation, shot centering, frame balance, realist integrity, etc.” and these help cinema (Ryan and Kellner 1988, p. 1):

*...instill ideology by creating an illusion that what happens on the screen is a neutral recording of objective events, rather than a construct operating from a certain point of view. Films make a rhetorical argument through the selection and combination of representational elements that project rather than reflect a world*

The rhetorical argument that a film makes is its ideology, which is a result of a combination of representational elements that the film selects and projects. While Ryan and Kellner assert that Hollywood cinema is ideological in this very sense, they also remind that the element of history also plays a great role since there is naturally distinction between the films of different eras and social contexts. Referring to the concept of “the subject”—that the structuralist film theorists like Baudry use—which wipes out the possible different ideologies a film may produce, Ryan and Kellner argue their approach to film is more pragmatic since it takes the audience as signifiers of meaning into consideration.

Thus their observation of films on the axis of history begins in the predominantly conservative period of post-war period of 1940s, and continues to find echoes of this time in the liberational movements of 1960s such as feminism, black people’s protests, minorities, environmentalist awareness of nuclear power and pollution, radical intellectual culture, drug use and new music styles. Spotting 1967 as a “revolutionary year” in film history in which this liberal soul started to be voiced in the films, enhanced by the change in the studio system to give filmmakers more autonomy on the films. 60s were also the decade when new schools to train people for film studies, art film theaters came out, “text” as a concept started to be discussed, British social realists and French New Wave appeared before a background where baby boomers emerge and political, social and especially economic (a severe one in 1970) crises occur. An important vein to cause crises was the rage of people, after the Vietnam War, against the power of ruling business class that is empowered by the liberal voice that is actually shaped a decade before in the fifties, a decade of Beat Generation, anti-slavery acts, and new philosophers of New Left like Herbert Marcuse (1988, p. 6-8)

Ryan and Kellner argue that all these dimensions and elements of history effects the sociopolitical atmosphere and creates a national self-image which is again generated in films that refer to the conflicts and the changes in the society (1988, p. 7):

*In many ways, to study films of this era is to study a culture in decline, trying to come to terms with severe economic, political and social crises and to adjust to a world in which the United States had much less power, both economically and politically. Films portray the extremes of anxiety, tension, hope, and fear undergone in this process of social change.... An understanding of the ideology of contemporary Hollywood film is therefore inseparable from the social history of the era.*

Ryan and Kellner also admit that Marxism gains extra significance in terms of studying ideology in film, since oppression functions through the system of representations in a culture in order to wipe out any diversity or threat to a “social system of inequality”, which resembles to the function of mental representations that “orient thought and behavior in a manner that maintains order and establishes boundaries on proper action”. However ideology, for Ryan and Kellner, is not a “simple exercise on domination” but it is a “response to forces”, in other words a response to a threatening change in the social system. Nevertheless this brings a further element, a negative inversion that helps the critic to decode (1988, p. 14):

*...the very necessity of ideology testifies to something amiss within society, since a society that was not threatened would not need ideological defenses. By attempting to pacify, channel and neutralize the forces that would invert the social system of inequality were they not controlled, ideology testifies to the power of those forces, of the very thing it seeks to deny. Even conservative films, therefore, can yield socially critical insights, for what they designate in a sort of inverse negative is the presence of forces that make conservative reactions necessary. By reacting against the structural tensions and potentially disruptive forces of an egalitarian society in a way that attempts to render them invisible, film ideology must also simultaneously put them on display... It is for this reason that we see ideology itself as being a testament to the presence of forces in American society, which have the potential for becoming sources of progressive change.*

As a result Ryan and Kellner make a deconstructive analysis in order to make “a diagnostic critique” of American films, not only to detect the operations ideological cultural forms in film text, but also the possibilities of ideology “toward the reconstruction of society along progressive lines, not on the basis of a utopian aspiration for another world, but on the basis of immanent possibilities within this world” (1988, p. 16).

Ryan and Kellner reminds there are two possible results of such crisis in a society. It is either a “regressive reaction, whereby more familiar and secure traditional social models and cultural representations are revived,” or it is “a progressive attempt to construct new representational codes and social attitudes”, and in the course of the

crisis films (and horror films one can guess) where the social and political fears of a nation is projected, the first option comes to being, since in the seventies crisis films “a more conservative turn in the popular imaginary” took place, along with offering glimpses of the shaping political structure of the coming decade. (ibid. p.49) One remembers Kracauer’s theory that films involve the psychological tendencies of a nation that builds the future political formations, like it was portrayed in the Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, that the masses tend to be influenced by political leaders which is proven later by the reign of Hitler (ibid. p. 51):

*The metaphor of catastrophe in such films permits anxieties to be avoided in their real form, but metaphor is itself a kind of aesthetic/psychological defense against threats to social ideals, a therapeutic turning away. It is through deciphering of the metaphors by asking what they turn away from, therefore, that those symptomatically absent sources of anxiety can be deduced.*

Ryan and Keller also read a symptomatic relationship in terms of “industrial changes and film ideology.” Mass desire shaped the market and led to this specific genre that address the “popular fantasies and fears” in a “classical realist narrative and representational codes” which were highly appealing to the bourgeois young audience who showed great interest to special effects and narrative tension. These films were mainly blockbusters, since the audience was more fascinated to the realistic films that have family themes with easy resolutions that heal the crisis, and disqualifying the place of experimental films in the market (ibid. pp. 51-52).

In this study, together with the conception of otherization that Wood offered, I will use the “rhetoric argument” of the political camera that Ryan and Kellner offered, that can be observed in the film grammar in which the ideology is coded as a “negative inversion”, by taking into consideration that the ideological crises are projected in two ways: It is either a “regressive reaction, whereby more familiar and secure traditional social models and cultural representations are revived,” or it is “a progressive attempt to construct new representational codes and social attitudes”.

### 3. FILM ANALYSES

#### 3.1 AN OVERVIEW

One cannot talk about different eras of cinematic horror genre revival in Turkey, as it is in the cinemas of the West as I have discussed at the beginning of the previous chapter. Rather in Turkey, there is a boom of cinematic horror after 2004 and before that there are only a few films, and the names of these films and their number vary in different sources, and the number never even come close to ten, since some of these films weren't even shown in the theatres and some are dubious to be called as examples of horror. The first film recorded is Aydın Arakon's *Çığlık* (1949), then Mehmet Muhtar's *Drakula İstanbul'da* (1953), comes. Then respectively, Yavuz Kılınc's *Ölüler Konuşmaz ki* (1970), Metin Erksan's *Şeytan* (1974) and Kutluğ Ataman's *Karanlık Sular* (1993). Kaya Özkaracalar (2006) added three more films to this list; one of them is Kadir Akgün's *Lanetli Kadınlar* (1990) and Mehmet Alemdar's two films in 1996, *Şüphenin Bedeli* and *Kader Diyelim* but none of these films were shown in theatres.

Savaş Arslan noted (2001) that there had been made approximately 6000 films in Turkey up until then. This number has sharply increased due to the changes in the industry. The audience profile has changed and there has been a remarkable change in the language that the filmmakers use in their films. The technological level used in the films has reached to international standards because film graduate directors have been making films. Both the revenues of Turkish films and the number of their audiences have reached to millions. A website in 2013 declared that Turkish film industry has exceeded the scale of two billion dollars<sup>13</sup>. In 2004 the law to review, categorize and support cinema films was legislated and this enabled Turkish cinema move forward through the establishment of the international review and categorizing system in Turkey<sup>14</sup>. The increase in the film and the audience number attracted the attention of all the producers nationwide, which enabled a variety in production, which most

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.dunya.com/ekonomi/ekonomi-diger/turkiye-film-endustrisi-2-milyar-dolari-gecti-198551h.htm> [25.9.2015]

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.sinema.gov.tr/ana/sayfa.asp?id=117> [25.9.2015]

probably enabled the horror genre as well. However, still, the number of horror films above, 7 out of 6000, cannot be explained only within the scope of the economic structure of the industry. Since in Yeşilçam period, films had been made almost in every other genre; even cowboy films were made. It has been debated why there had been a lack of horror films in Turkey. The answer doesn't lie in a possible deficient in means, because there is evidence proving the opposite.

Mehmet Muhtar directed *Drakula İstanbul'da* in 1953 as a direct adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and it is the first adaptation of the novel out of USA and Europe and it is an original adaptation rather than a copy of Tod Browning's 1931 *Dracula*. Although the film was made on a small budget, it was shot skillfully and it took a standing ovation in a recent film festival in the United States. As Kaya Özkaracalar reported, the film was based on a summary translation of the original novel, *Kazıklı Voyvoda* (The Impaling Voivode) by Ali Rıza Seyfî. Although there were differences with the original novel, the film consisted some bold details from the original book, such as the kissing female vampire scene, or Dracula's crawling on the wall scene, which did not exist in the other Dracula films before this film. This film is the first film revealing Dracula's fangs and again the first film mentioning the name of the historical character Vlad III. After the peasants warn the protagonist not to go to the Dracula's chateau, he asks its reason to Dracula and Dracula says that the ignorant peasants think that he is from the Impaling Voivode's lineage, the way it is written in the original novel. The director of photography was Özen Sermet who later moved to America and pursued his career there in big productions. The biggest flaw of the film, for Özkaracalar, is its music. The music of the film was stock music that is used for the films whose budget is not enough to make a soundtrack, so that in this film, *Superman* series music was used, which is a sign, as Özkaracalar noted, that Turkish filmmakers couldn't internalize horror genre precisely (2006, p. 295).

Despite this successful adaptation of a vampire film during 1950s, next horror film could only come twenty years later. First Yavuz Kılınç's *Ölüler Konuşmaz ki*, which this time couldn't create the horror effect efficiently and then in 1974 Metin Erksan directed *Şeytan* which was a copy/remake of William Friedkin's *The Exorcist* (1973)

with cheap and so that less convincing special effects. Another twenty years later, Kutluğ Ataman directed *Karanlık Sular*, which got appraisal in local and international festivals but didn't get much attention from the cinema audience in Turkey. Özkaracalar (2006, p. 296), noted it is a successful murder story, with different historical and cultural references.

It is not a concern of this study to find an answer to the question why there had been very few horror films in Turkish cinema before 2000s; this question can be answered in another study. Actually my point is, instead of focusing on the sparsity of cinematic horror genre in Turkey, and look for the answer elsewhere, like the economy of production and reception processes, the films that had been made should be analyzed situated within the flow of the other films of their times, in which they may have been perceived by both the filmmakers and the audiences, as ultimate products of variety in a stream of a body of other productions, rather than rare signifiers of a genre, fillers of a void as we comprehend them today. I do not deny that, this approach does not offer an answer why cinematic horror genre fell short of production in Turkey before; still this approach may help to understand the content of the films made after 2000. For example, *Şeytan* came as Arslan noted, during the golden age of Yeşilçam period, when lots of other Hollywood remakes were directed. *The Exorcist* could be shown in Turkey, 8 years later than it was shown in America, and it was censored; but Metin Erksan directed the remake one year later, and Arslan noted that he was after the box-office success *The Exorcist* gained in the United States (2001, p. 41). It is also important to note that the film is disregarded, as Özkaracalar noted, in most of Erksan's biographies (2006, p. 296).

What I see is there had been a general tendency to disregard horror as a genre by both the filmmakers and the audiences, and also a strong tendency to imitate Hollywood productions. This tendency to imitate Western cinemas through remakes is what defines Yeşilçam cinema, and it is still very common in Turkey, which to a certain extent decreased gradually after 1990s, due to the new modern films made in Turkey, however, its effects can still be observed on different levels analysis.

This imitation or remakes have a certain quality, which Arslan named *Turkification*, which is taking the narrative, the story line and copy everything in a Hollywood film and change the cultural references of the West with that of the Turkish ones, like replacing Christian symbols with Islamic symbols. For example in *Drakula İstanbul'da*, Azmi, the protagonist shows his prayer beads, when the peasants warn him against the Dracula, and he adds that he believes in *his Allah*, and that the evil spirits cannot harm a true believer. The weapons against the vampire, the stake and the garlic remain in the film but the crucifix is taken out, since it is a Christian symbol. Or in *Şeytan*, god became Allah, the bible was changed with Koran, the holy water was changed with Zamzam. However, the result is a hybrid text, because the change of only the symbols does not bring a conversion of the cultural codes as well, so that the Christian representational codes remain in the narrative filled with Islamic symbols, which leads to an incoherent text, in-between Christianity and Islam, a weird, as Arslan noted (2001) Turkish-Islam-West synthesis. First of all, the concept of *exorcism* does not exist in Islamic eschatology, or there is no symbol in Islam to replace the crucifix, so it is just taken out like that, creating a gap in the text. At the end of *Şeytan*, the mother and the daughter go to the mosque and they pray and the girl kisses an old religious man's hand, which scene Özkaracalar noted (2006), was cut in the video cassette released at the time. He also noted that, the neglected films, might offer different interpretation opportunities as much as the appraised films do, and *Şeytan* may have signification in our society's modernization period, as an attempt to hold onto our moral values (2006, p. 296).

Modernization in Turkey, as a country between the divide of the East and the West, is marked with an identity construction process, which turns its face to West, taking the West as a model, but at the same time, clings onto its indigenous cultural traits, searching for a synthesis of the two, creating an ambivalent national identity in-between, neither Western, nor Eastern. This in-betweenness is also processed in the films. Arslan points out how this in-betweenness is produced in *Şeytan*, not only there is no concept of exorcism in Islam, but also, the depiction of the Satan in the film is in tune with Christian eschatology. Moreover, Tuğrul, the character in the place of Father Karras, is portrayed as a non-believer, whereas Karras didn't believe only to the



practice of exorcism. Although he does not believe, he goes to a Hodja in one scene to get information about exorcism. In the end of *The Exorcist*, Karras is made to believe in the exorcism, whereas, Tuğrul becomes a Muslim. Arslan quoted from Nezi̇h Erdođan that, in Yeşilçam's fantasy world, the characters could easily move between opposite characters, a rich person suddenly becomes poor; an uneducated and uncultivated person quickly becomes a member of the high society. Tuğrul became a psychologist, writer and religious scholar, while he could become a famous rich doctor, he preferred to become an unknown penniless atheist writer and in the end he manages to become a Christian Satan exorcist Muslim. Likewise the mother Ayten and the daughter Gül become Muslim in the end, through a non-Islamic Satan (Arslan 2001, p. 55-56).

As I have explained in the introduction part Turkish national identity is constructed in-between as a result of the synthesis of the East and the West. Thus the projections of the East and the West, the Occident and the Orient, creates gaps and mismatches in their interconnected projections creating a hybridization in terms of identity processes that creates complicated self/other identifications, and which leads to a crisis of identity.

This tendency of creating in-between and ambivalent texts in the films continues in the films after 2000 as well. All the narrative, the characters, and the themes are constructed in dichotomy, as a representation of the synthesis of the East and the West, sometimes emphasizing the gap between, sometimes, stressing the paradox, and sometimes defining a balance between.

While there is a continuity of this in-betweenness as an imitative cinema inherited from Yeşilçam in the films analyzed in this study, there is also the tendency exploitation, which is again the result of the same imitative economy. Savaş Arslan noted (2011, p.126) Yeşilçam was never after mirroring the society, or “a *true* or *good way* of making films”, rather the main aim was to produce profitable and they repeated the money making formulas of certain genres and producing cycles within the same genre. Similarly, the films studied here, have the same recurring themes and patterns

that sit on the same formulaic narrative, which is apparently profitable for the producers.

In 1990s, when Yeşilçam period totally ended, it was a time when the Hollywood films invaded the silver screen. Producers started doing big budget productions and films of almost every genre started to be made. While on the one hand auteur directors started to make films in European level, still the big budget mainstream films were trying to resemble Hollywood thrillers. There was a common sense in the society that the more a film resembles American films, the better they are. Eventually, the first horror films imitated their American counterparts. Not only the horror films, but also all the other genres imitated American films. There is still a tendency to make American style romantic comedies.

In terms of horror genre, it is not only *The Exorcist*, but also others like, *Paranormal Activity Series* (2007-2011), *Blair Witch Project* (1999) are copied; and also different kinds of sub-genres or techniques are directly copied as well, such as haunted house, young people going on a trip, found footage, handheld camera etc. However, these remakes are more cleverly copied; most of the story stays the same, and the replacement of cultural references is more credible.

*Dabbe* came out in 2004, directed by Hasan Karacadağ, who actually made six of the Islamic horror films and he made a lot of contribution for the shaping of the horror as a genre and Islamic horror as a subgenre in Turkey. This film is the second most watched film in the movie theater, seen by 539.381 people and the first one is also Karacadağ's last film in 2014, *Dabbe: Zehr-i Cin*, seen by 833.349 people. Within that 10 years again the most watched films Karacadağ's films, whereas on the third rank *Musallat 2* takes place, another director whose cinematography is really successful. Karacadağ, having made the first and most watched films, made the great amount of money which enables him to make more films on the same formula of Islamic motifs. It is generally accepted that the Islamic motif has created an exploitation cinema, although the rating of mainstream Turkish cinema find about seven million audience at most, *Recep İvedik 4* finding audience despite the small number in the small economy

of an under industrialized Turkish cinema, creates the fixed ground for the horror film makers to exploit this Islamic motif.

Karacadağ has taken filmmaking education in Japan, so that instead of imitating cinema of the West, outsource came from the Far East, this time. *Dabbe* is a remake of Kiyoshi Kurosawa's film *Kairo* (2001), and actually an American remake was also released in 2006; *Pulse*. In the Japanese film, the ghosts invade the world via Internet and kill everyone. All the characters have close relationship with the world of Internet, they either work for a software company, or a student of programming, and the monster is about the problematizing of the relationship between man and technology; say the degeneration and solitude of people influenced by technology, and such a film is metaphorically meaningful in a country like Japan which is nested in technology. While the fear of a monster coming from technology gains significance in the Japan society where there is a boom of technology and there are concepts like *hikikomori*, the phenomenon that young adults confine themselves at home and remain in isolated from society more than six months.

However the ghost is replaced with an Islamic entity, Dabbe in Karacadağ's film, a move that is very close to Metin Erksan's *Şeytan*. Karacadağ Turkified the film, by filling the narrative with Turkish and Islam motifs, which ruptures the relationship between the normality and the monster, that is established coherently in the original film. Apart from the first character that dies at the beginning of the film, no other character has any relationship with the Internet or the computer. Dabbe as a harbinger of doomsday, coming from the Internet, do not correspond to any collective fears, as it is the case in Japan. The Internet, losing its direct cultural connotations, becomes an ambivalent code, a means of the monster who not only kills who gets over occupied with the internet but also kills the ones who stay away from it; leading to an incoherent and ambiguous construction of the technology through the synthesis of the East and the West is based on the concept that one needs to take the technology of the West and synthesize it with the values of the East.

*Semum* (2008) is the second film of Hasan Karacadağ. Actually, it is a Turkified version *The Exorcist* (1973), but different from the Turkification model of Metin Erksan's *Şeytan* (1974), because in Metin Erksan's film almost all the story was copied, the characters as well, Turkifying them, like having an upper class divorced mother Ayten, which is "not a common theme in Yeşilçam", or the practice of exorcism which does not exist in Islam, is done with Koran and Arabic and Zamzam, that is replaced with Bible, Hebrew and the holy water. Thus in this film not only the Christian codes are translated into Turkish and Islamic ones, but also, as Savaş Arslan figured out, since there were few films at the time of Yeşilçam, the remakes of Hollywood horror films, would emphasize "what Yeşilçam is not and cannot be" because the horror films "attempt to domesticate themes often nonexistent in Turkish culture" so that the "pure original self is lost in the process of other's Turkification", losing its true essence while copying the desired other. (Arslan 2011, pp. 162-167).

However, in *Semum*, the story is, accept for the exorcism of an evil thing from a woman, totally different, from *The Exorcist*. Now the horror films can make use of some existent themes in Turkish culture. However this doesn't mean that dynamics of Turkification is not at work. The model of Turkification in the contemporary horror films, if we accept that almost all of them are some imitations of Western cinematic horror genre, their success in using more authentic themes in the films, brings the mechanism of Turkification, adopting the term from Arslan, to still work but more in a latent form.

Therefore the question is, how does this imitative mode that is more apparent in the first cycle of the films such as *Dabbe*, *Semum*, *Araf*, *Cehennem*, later on evolves to more horrific films? Do the films become more original as the generic conventions evolve, or does the Turkification process become more complicated? Does the usage Islamic symbols or the recurring theme of the exorcism of jinn become more authentic, if so how does this happen? How do the recent films manage to become more horrific compared to the ones at the beginning?

I will trace the synthesis of the East and the West through the representation of the monster, the normality and its relationship with the monstrous, analyzing the otherization and identification processes in the films in order to answer the questions above. These films have Islamic monsters and other Islamic motifs and I will call these films “Islamic horror films”, which have dictating tones with similar narratives, starting or ending with suras, an Islamic threat comes and threatens the system and the system is restored (if it exists) by the help of an Islamic savior, giving an Islamic lesson.

### 3.2 THE ISLAM MONSTER

At the end of the year 2004 *Büyü* came to the film theatres; something novel for the Turkish society; it was a Turkish horror film. Not only because a Turkish horror film was a new thing for Turkish society, but also this Turkish horror film was taking something *cultural* in its narrative, it was building its horror onto authentic motifs from its own culture, its own figures of horror. The film was seen by more than 500.000 audiences and gained revenue of over three million Turkish liras at the time<sup>15</sup>. After more than ten years, the film is still remembered by most of the people in Turkey by two things, the first is its notorious scene in which one of the female characters gets raped by the invisible entity, and the second is the fire that started at the cinema right at the end of its premiere night, which was most probably designed as an efficient example of PR.

Before *Büyü*, there was another Turkish horror film at the beginning of the same year, *Okul*, but it was a horror comedy, which was more of an imitation of American teenage parody horror films. However *Büyü* was a novelty in every sense, bringing horror genre to the Turkish silver screen and putting Islamic motifs in it, which would trigger a coming cycle of horror films that are filled with Islamic motifs, and most of these films’ monsters are *jinn*—one of the most frightening entities in Islam religion—if it is not *jinn*, it is another entity believed in Islam. While cinematic horror genre, especially

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<sup>15</sup> <http://boxofficeturkiye.com/film/buyu-2004193?filmop=hafta> [29.9.2015]

in the West, makes use of ghosts, spirits, witches, zombies or vampires as supernatural monsters, these Turkish horror films turned to the folkloric sources of the fears of their own *territory*—as it was and still been discussed in public—and that while Western people, or Americans are afraid of ghosts, Turkish people are afraid of jinn, because, as the discussion goes, this is a Muslim country and people believe in jinn, or at least are afraid from such kinds of things, so that directors make use of this kind of Islam related monsters.

Actually, the first film to depict the jinn as a monster precisely is *Musallat*. Before that *Dabbe* made use of jinn but the central monster was *Dabbe* itself using the jinn, whose depiction were not close to what is generally believed in Islam mythology. Likewise, there was an invisible evil power, activated by a black magic that took possession of the characters and make them kill each other. Although the film does not announce as Islamic jinn or depict it in the way it is believed to be, this kind of a depiction influenced the following films and the monster in the film was perceived as jinn by the masses, led to videos of the notorious scene to revolve on the Internet under names like “the scene that Jinn rapes the woman”.

Although these films used Islamic monsters, most films were still imitations of American or Western horror films, in terms of narrative, character development and even in terms of depiction of horrific scenes and the monster itself. These films are still imitated the ghost or evil spirit horror films of Hollywood, the difference was that the people are Turkish and the monster is something Islamic, an example of *Turkification* as Savaş Arslan (2011) named it.

The public discussion I mentioned above could, still be reasonable in many ways, that the figure of the jinn as it is believed and told by people is really frightening for most people living in Turkey. There is a story telling tradition and these jinn stories have been orally told from one generation to another, not necessarily only in strong communities of Islam, but also in more modern and educated families who come from an Islamic background. Most children are raised with these horror stories and it is very common when college students come together and they like to frighten each other with

such kinds of stories. Even the people, who do not announce themselves as Muslims or believers of any kind, may enjoy or get disturbed by the horrific effect of these stories that have recurring themes. Apart from the existence of the non-Muslim populations in Turkey, still they may have heard and been influenced by these horrific jinn stories, or they may believe in other things, with the modernization project of the republicans, the society and all its institutions are secularized, and many Western educated positivist, materialist people were raised in this society, so that these metaphysical beliefs of traditional Islam lost its grip in the society and became a matter of the past. But, as Freud stated, there continues to exist an “animistic mental activity” that is related to our primitive beliefs, such as “dead can become visible as spirits” and we can never totally overcome this feeling since it continues to be “preserved under a thin disguise,” and even though “All so called educated people have ceased to believe, officially at any rate” to such things,” these beliefs exist “toned down in the higher strata of the mind” in preserving its “highly dubious and ambivalent” form (Freud pp.13-14).

The depiction of the monster *jinn* (or the other ones with different names) reminds the traditional stories that people tell each other, and the components of these stories and what a jinn is, given by an out of diegesis character, a real persona, most probably an Islam thinker, at the end of the film directed by Arkin Artaç, *Üç Harfliler: Marid* (2010), which also starts by a conjuration scene of two little girls calling Marid, a dangerous jinn the film announces, that comes and kills the two little girls and possesses the female protagonist, whose story is told by the recorded footages of a woman who is supposed to be the real person who experienced this *true story*. At the end of the film, this real Hodja comes and acknowledges the audience for about three and a half minutes long about the dangers of the jinn and how to get protected from them. I will here give the speech of the hodja here in Toto:

In terms of the creation of jinn it is mentioned in Koran “We created them out of smokeless fire”. We cannot see them, but their existence is a known fact. Jinn exist in every place we reside. Do they exist in our houses? Yes, of course they absolutely are. When we were kids, we used to hear elder people say, “Beware of sitting at the door slim” or “If you are alone at night, on your own at home, do not have a bath or do not look in the mirror for a long time at night.” They may appear in different shapes or in the shapes of different entities. As human beings we have feelings of revenge, when a loved one is hurt, likewise they have the same. In order to take possession of a person first they wait this person to feel low. If they feel low, they may use another person to approach this person. As a result, a person

who you know closely, may end up not recognizing you, may disconnect with the outer world, may stare at one spot as if hypnotized, may sometimes not remember their children or spouse, may act unexpectedly, and may speak to themselves. You may think this person is crazy but they are not, they are just synchronized with that dimension and are able to communicate with them. If they do not harm you directly, they may harm your loved ones who are in a sensitive position. That's why you should never use insulting words about them, even if you don't believe you should not mention them. In the last statement of Ayetel Kursi ... (*he utters the Arabic statement*), so that's it, this is the word that even confounds the devil and keeps him further away. Look, Felak and Nas suras were sent from Allah because of these kinds of incidents. They were sent in order to protect from jealousy, evil eye, and wickedness of the devil, wickedness of jinn, wickedness of evil spirited people. There are some people who say that they do not believe, they should also avoid making fun of them or insulting them, even if they do not believe, in case. So, do they live among us? They do. The first rule is not to be afraid of.

What this hodja tells to the audience of about has importance since he gives a brief summary of the jinn stories in oral tradition and the materials the films used before and after *Marid*. The ingredients of the speech in detail give a whole picture of the portrayal of the Islamic monsters, and especially the jinn, as in the example uttered in his first sentence. This portrayal most of the time is given *as it is mentioned in Koran* and mostly based on what people have heard since they *were kids*, such as not *sitting on the door slim*, or not having *bath alone at night* or *looking at the mirror for a long time*. These jinn or demons appear in the films in different shapes, deceive the characters, and seems to have emotions and lives like human beings do, some fall in love with humans, have sex and have children. Therefore the films, firstly, make use of this depiction of Jinn, on the silver screen. The rape scene in *Büyü* projected the stories that are told about jinn and their abilities of having intercourse with people. *Musallat* (2007) was about a jinn falling in love with a girl in the village. When the protagonist goes abroad to earn the money for the marriage, the jinn takes the shape of the protagonist and gets married to the girl, the scene ends with a graphic intercourse scene in the bridal chamber. Then a horrific baby comes out, half human half jinn, and killed by the midwives, which unrepressed the jinn revengeful and we see the monster unrepressed with anger under the image of the protagonist. In *Siccin*, when the jinn takes possession of the old sick bedridden grandmother and after it kills her by making her commit suicide, the daughter in law see her in the bathroom, grating dry bread in the toilet. Traditionally it is believed that it is a sin to take bread or any kind of food to the bathroom with you, and the bathroom is the place that you can come across with



them, so that the films play on all these orally produced traditional horror stories that are in a way surmounted in the modern life.

There are three distinctive qualities that the hodja above listed in his summary, which are represented as conceptional structures in all the films, either formed in the figure of the monster or attributed to some stereotypical characters or themes. He states, (1) “You may think this person is crazy but they are not, they are just synchronized with that dimension and are able to communicate with them”, which promotes a recurring theme of craziness in the films. While the other characters think the given person is crazy in the film, the audience know that he or she is not, because they are either possessed or in interaction with the jinn. In *Dabbe* (2006) there is a crazy character that in fact knows the background of the calamity. In *Araf* the protagonist is confined to an asylum in the end. In *Musallat* (2007) the possessed girl collapses and has an epileptic seizure like a black out when the jinni visits her. In *Dabbe Cin Vakası* (2012) the woman is a somnambulist with a doctor’s report, however all her sleeping problems are because she is possessed by jinn. Actually, all these psychological disorders are used, as a metaphor of the identity crisis of the paradoxical dominant ideology of the East and the West, and it is also a dimension to support two extensions that are the recurring psychologist character and the non-believer character. Then comes the hodjas second point (2) “you should never use insulting words about them, even if you don’t believe”. This non-believer character can sometimes be represented in the same person of the psychologist, another imagery that is dichotomous with the hodja character. (3) “They may appear in different shapes or in the shapes of different entities,” and “they live among us” is the primary structure in the depiction of the monster jinn, which is in fact an example of the “doubles- doppelgänger” as Wood posited primary as well. These three are closely related to each other and they are found evenly or in blended forms in the films of some recurring themes, motifs and even characters and these also evolve across films creating conventions and building up a cinematic horror genre. If there are two basic characters; hodja and psychologist, these get separated into folds, like different kinds of Hodjas, or getting blended, either within the same kind of character like different Hodja types are mingled in one character or between different characters, that traits of psychologist and the hodja are

mingled in the same person. Thus the traits of the characters become important, these traits are deconstructed, in to be reconstructed, which process is the very search of the synthesis of the East and the West. Since the dominant ideology is the synthesis of the East and the West, different characters in the films represent these two polar. If the psychologist is the west, the science, the reason, the modern, then hodja is the East, Islam, and the tradition. And naturally these two are in conflict. However the dominant ideology is a paradoxical thing, it is the synthesis, a search for balance, so that these two characters somehow meet in the middle, and mostly, it is the side of the hodja since most of these films are conservative films dictating a certain definition of Islam and lifestyle.

However, this Islam proposed do not deny the modern, it seeks a balance, so the hodja character comes to persuade the psychologist into belief, or at least make him respect back the religion. Eventually believing scientists come out, or Western educated modern hodjas, which is the ultimate desire of the synthesis, a synthesis from the filter of the Islam. Moreover the idea of this super modern hodjas is itself a reflection of the modernization project of the elites, and it is the common structure of the ideology of masses, in today's Turkey; a modernized Islam; a new Turkey with Islam. Thus the films make a definition of modernity from the perspective of new Islam. However, this mission is paradoxical, and the struggle of it, is dramatized in these films, in the figure of the monster, that victimizes people who are in-between; in-between of believing or not believing, the modern and the tradition, and the monster is there to challenge their mindset of in-betweenness. It tortures them because of this in-betweenness, by proposing the rightness of Islam and its saviorship, if there is, if not, it is the end of everything, there is no escape. For the question, if these films are progressive or reactionary, I can say that there cannot be made such a clear-cut categorizations. However, we can say that most films are conservative films, by making religious propaganda, even when there is no savior; it is the non-believers perished by the monster of Islam.

Remembering Schneider offering the typology of monsters according to *surmounted beliefs*, which he thought could be a response to Freud's ambiguous explanations over

the uncanny, and the problem with Wood's *return of the repressed* theory; he pointed out that when Wood differentiated between a universal *basic* and a cultural specific *surplus repression*, his focuses on *the return of the surplus repression*, that has a cultural and political specificity, and for Wood "the monster is, of course, much more Protean, changing from period to period as society's basic fears clothe themselves in fashionable or immediate accessible garments" (Wood 2003, p. 71), his *return of the surplus repression* explains, Schneider asserts, the level of "fashionable or immediate garments", whereas Schneider's *confirmation of the surmounted beliefs* model works in order to characterize the "basic fears" that Wood was talking about.

I find Schneider's attempt to elaborate on the horror genre monster also as the depiction of the *confirmation of the surmounted beliefs*, useful, besides *the return of the repressed*. However in his attempt respond to the problem of universalizing of psychoanalytical theory, he still falls into the similar level of universalizing, this time universalizing *the basic fears* of all the societies, which doesn't seem much different from Wood's approach. Actually in terms of Freud, the return of the repressed, is about the return of the repressed infantile complexes, which is universal, and the confirmation of the surmounted of beliefs, while at one point depends on the universal fear of the dead people, may also be culture specific, since he gives more of a brief explanation that the uncanny feeling may rise from *the return of the dead, and to spirits and ghosts*, and if in Schneider's train of thoughts, these can be modified to different supernatural monsters of the horror genre, the vampires, werewolves, zombies, which are themselves culture specific. Schneider takes these monsters and detect the same surmounted beliefs under them, like the zombie is the confirmation of the surmounted belief of the return of the dead bodies, whereas, the fear of the doubles is related to the surmounted belief of the doubles, still universalizing the fears into basic categories. Then the jinn in Islamic horror films, in Schneider's category may fall into the latter one, however, jinn as a figure is culture specific, and it may well create an uncanny feeling with relevance to its own cultural elements, besides a universal fear. Since Freud mentioned, especially fiction enables many ways to create uncanny effects which mostly rely on the surmounted, and that as Schneider quoted from him "we must be prepared to admit that there are other elements besides those which we

have so far laid down as determining the production of the uncanny feelings”, which means following Schneider “if Freud can admit of “other elements,” we certainly can too” (Schneider 1999).

It is not that Turkish people are only afraid of the jinn stories that created such a cycle of Islamic horror films with Islamic monsters, but apparently, people were attracted to the cinema to see this monster’s depiction, or the depiction of their own authentic fears. Thus in terms of the discussion that, the horror monsters are not only the return of the repressed but also the representation of the confirmation of the surmounted primitive beliefs, these films, may well attract audiences since they depict this belief of Jinn in the society.

While most of the films, take the jinn as the monster, there are many that take the Satan, or the things that serve the Satan—but the names may change, *Şeytan*, *İblis*, or *Ifrit* is generally used, since it sounds more Islamic—or the films make use of other Islam originated entities, like *Dabbe*, *Semum*, or *Deccal* which are not commonly known in public. Apparently, the directors, go through Koran or other Islamic sources to find different names of things that they can name their horrific monster. So that every film there is a different name for its monster and tries to be original in terms of creating some devilish supernatural creatures from the Koran, that the audience are attracted to learn what this new monster is, and what kind of a threat it gives and what kind of catastrophes and malice will it bring.

However, on the total, despite their names’ difference, all the monsters constitute the same threat, with names changing, but on the same recurring narrative: an Islamic monster comes and haunts an everyday life of secular Turkish life. Thus the question is, the Islamic monster in these film, represent the fear of Islam? Is Islam situated as a monster, to represent the monstrosity of Islam in the psyche of the people, and if so, is it a matter of Islamophobia. In order to answer this question, films need to be analyzed in terms of their normality, their attribution of monstrosity and the relation between the two, in terms of the dominant ideology of the synthesis of the East and the West.

In *Dabbe* (2006), after Tarık, a friend of the protagonist, kills himself in his house by stabbing a knife in his throat, the police starts an investigation to enlighten the background of his suicide trying to find if there are any associations between his suicide and some radical religious orders that may brainwash people online, since Tarık was earning money from some kind of online business and he isolated himself from his friends to work on something online and started behaving strangely a while ago before his death. Despite their searches, the police cannot find anything enlightening about neither his suicide nor its possible links to any kind of religious orders. Even when they search the database of Tarık's computer they can only come up with some recurring code like numbers that does not give in any evidence. Simultaneously, the suicide rates in Istanbul rise, resembling, TV news announce in the film, to the groundless mass suicide events in the States that started first at the ghettos and spread widely to the big cities. As the inexplicable events are in their climax when the characters in the film fall behind the knowledge of the audience that the weird things they experience are because of the jinn progressing their invasion to the world from the internet, one day in the police station, the chief police officer and his assistant watch a psychiatrist that appear on TV talking about these inexplicable suicide events around the world. When the TV reporter asks if the suicides in Turkey are relevant with the ones in America, psychiatrist says that no medical or forensic results have been found yet and that the only link between is the Internet where there are no borders of language, religion, race or passport. Then he announces that he would like to bring his own perspective to this issue:

P: Look! When we think of science today, America comes to mind, right? However even that country is having a big nightmare and all the scientists are, in a word, helpless about this event. Briefly, to me world has entered a new period. I believe, now, this situation that humanity has encountered, is at a serious extent even beyond science.

R: Can you explain it?

P: After all, I am a scientist as well. The comment that I will make to the humanity about this issue is sharp and clear. *(He takes his glasses off and turns his head from the reporter to the camera and looks directly in it talking to the audience)* Some metaphysical elements, that we didn't know and believe would exist until now, have awakened. In other words, some events that we denied as *madde-ötesi* reached to an undeniable extent. So that these incidents, suicides, murders on the Internet cannot be explained scientifically. It is as if the reality and the dream changing place. It is difficult to accept but if we disregard all this, it is not difficult to say that a big danger is waiting for us. Let alone, the assumption that things like this won't affect us since we are a Muslim country seems to me as the biggest ignorance and irresponsibility.

The first part of his speech using the imagery of an helpless America, as the center of science, “having a bad nightmare” being helpless against this threat of Islam coming from the Internet, despite its biggest scientific and technological state, has an open reference to the 9/11 attacks, since the film came out just five years after the Twin Towers were attacked by, so called, Islamist terrorists. Again, the idea of “Islamic orders on the internet” killing people, has some subconscious association with both the global rise of Islamophobia, and the rise of political Islam in Turkey since 1990s, when internet and private TV channels; former with its all kinds of sources exceeding the borders of any ideology or value system from all over the world, and the latter with a saturation of hidden camera clips, news about Hezbollah tariqah killing people around the country and recorded police swoops to knock off sheikhs (Müslüm Gündüz and Fadime Şahin incident), were installed to the everyday life of Turkish society. Then he talks about some “metaphysical elements”, the jinn in the film, are “awakened” and “reached to an undeniable extent” and that “a big danger is waiting for us” may well recall AKP coming to power in 2002, creating a hysteria in the secular state and citizens.

However all these historical facts that influence the depiction of the threat in this film, constitutes the surface associations of the unconscious fears of Turkish society. As Wood defined the monster “protean, changing from period to period as society’s basic fears clothe themselves in fashionable or immediately accessible garments—rather as dreams use material from recent memory to express conflicts or desires that may go back to early childhood” (Wood 2003, p. 71), the recalling of 9/11 attacks, the connotations of Internet and tariqahs deceiving people into something and killing them, is the “fashionable or immediately accessible garments” that the societies “fears clothes themselves in”, which can even be furthered with Freud’s dream mechanism (1899), that the repressed feelings are processed through condensation and displacement, and then they are projected in dreams, disguised in the pictures of recent memories.

If all these historical connotations of the monster is its “fashionable or immediately accessible garments” that clothes the “basic fears” of the society, the question is, like

Schneider stressed in his corrective return to Wood's *return of the repressed*, what is the basic fear of Turkish society, that somehow connotes itself to such a depiction of the monster?

This answer lies in the way that the depiction is disguised. It is the things that the psychiatrist character does not say but build his language on its lack. The lack is the things that he hides when speaking and build a defense negating the complexes behind his language.

When he says that even America with its science is helpless, he nullifies the positive value of science, which connoted to the idea of progress and the West in the Turkish psyche. From the positivist Western oriented attitude, the East, together with its connotations of tradition, belief and religion, is otherized and stigmatized as backward. When he talks about, "Some metaphysical elements, that we didn't know and believe would exist until now", and that "we denied" are "awakened" and "reached to an undeniable extent", actually, he affirms the existence of the religious, the jinn, the god, everything about Islam that has been rejected, and he dictates their rightness.

Ironically, in his last sentence, he proposes that being Muslim would not save us from this Islamic threat either, and hiding behind Islam, is "the biggest ignorance and irresponsibility", so that he also negates certain traits about Islam attributing ignorance to it, using the language of nationalist Kemalists use against Muslim people. Then, the psychiatrist in the film not only negates the positivist science of the West, but also negates the ignorance of the East.

The paradox, towards the *desired other*, West in the dominant ideology, is clear here that, its superiority is accepted leading to such a fantasy that, even its ultimate symbol of progress, America, cannot benefit from its quality of superiority, which in fact disguises the deep inferiority complex of the society of Turkey against the Western civilizations which dates back to the first modernization efforts of the state in order to awaken the ignorant masses to enlightenment. The process of modernization in Turkey since then is marked with its pursue of Western science and technology in order to elevate itself to the level of contemporary civilizations, and leading to an unending

effort to overcome the developmental lag, situating the West in the imagery of Turkish psyche as a positive other. That is why, he negates the East with ignorance, still attributing a positive value to progress, synched with the westernization project of the republicans, a synthesis between the East and the West, the synthesis of West's science and technology and East's spirituality roughly.

Thus the ambivalence in his language, is about the paradox that is created by the dominant ideology of the synthesis of the East and the West, and the monstrous in this film, is ambivalent, that it comes from Islam, it can neither be defeated by the most developed technologies in the world, nor it can be defeated by a sole belief of Islam. There are some "metaphysical" things "awakened" that cannot be, let alone defeated, even explained by scientists, and that "if we disregard all this, it is not difficult to say that a big danger is waiting for us", so that the protection against the danger is an awareness of the existence of metaphysical things, which means believing in them, believing in Islam. This belief of Islam is not an ignorant one, it is open to certain elements of modernity. It is an understanding of a modern Islam, synthesized with the modern.

Thus back to Wood's theory, if *the basic fears* of the society, are dramatized in horror films *in the figure of the monster*, here then in the film is the Islamic monster, that is *awakened*, in Psychiatrist's words, which we *denied* became *undeniable*, "as if the reality and the dream changing place", situating the monstrous in an unconscious process, an Islam, that is denied, and now undeniable because it is awakened. With the coming of AKP, both triggered of the fear of Islam in the common structure of in the ideology of the masses, that are exposed to the modernization project of the elites that is synched with their inferiority complex deep down due to their awareness of their backwardness, which created this Islamic monster punishing the modernity and reminding their true beliefs, and creating an ambivalent monster. The reality and dream changing place has a double meaning, one is the Islam comes to fulfill its all horrid as its coded deep in the unconscious, like a *return of the repressed* and in terms of a *wish fulfillment*, that voices the uneasy feeling of the masses in the unending process of modernization, a dream, and something that can happen in fantasy level,



comes true. It is horrific and it voices the struggle itself, so that it is ambivalent, since the dominant ideology is ambivalent.

Moreover the synthesis offers a model in the character of the psychiatrist, a modern educated person who believes in god. He is the end of the struggle; he balances both in his character. He is the body of the new definition of the modernity that is synthesized by the East. He not only uses the English word *metaphysical*, but uses its Turkish *madde-ötesi* in his next sentence, like Savaş Arslan noted, in *Şeytan* (1974), the Turkish remake of *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973), “as a Turkified text, not only translates a full set of Catholic codes into Turkish and Islamic ones but also presents a mixture of filmic language and styles”, the mother character Ayten, calls her daughter’s governess as *Suzan* at first and *Suzin* in a second time, and the latter is the pronunciation of the English name *Susan* which is an example of how the desired other West is copied while the real self is lost, in the process of creating a self that is “in-between, neither one nor the other, but both” (Arslan 2011, pp.163-167). Thus the ambivalence is a matter the very nature of the dominant ideology in Turkey, that sits on a paradoxical character, reaches, in a hybrid in-between place, in the struggle of balancing the East with the West, otherizing both ends, while defining an ultimate balance that lies in an endless struggle in copying the West with on its own indigenous culture, like negating the Western technology, but also negating an understanding of Islam without it. Thus negating the lack of Islam in the modern, and negating Islam that lacks the modern, defining a new self, a new definition of the modern, a new definition of Islam, a definition that is influenced by the dominant ideology of the synthesis of the East and the West and these films projecting how this ideology is evolved in the minds of the masses of Turkey in years of 2000.

When the psychologist appears on TV and announces that some metaphysical forces are released that no scientific inquiry can explain them, so that we have a believing authority, which dictates us that our reason does not work. This is a synthesis itself, since the film makes a scientist talk about an Islamic thing, so that audience trust this person, and he knows that the suicides are not a simple tariqah thing on internet, it is more than that, so it is interesting that the director needs that authority to make us

believe, rather than a religious authority, which shows that there is actually no going back, the traits of modernization is internalized, but we need that modernity to recognize what we are inside, because otherwise it is painful, just to be left for the cruel gaze of the westerners. The psychologist says that, from the TV, even Americans couldn't do anything, and if we believe that we are a Muslim country so that nothing will happen, it is a mistake, so that the national image still looks down on the its Muslimness, its ignorance, it knows that mentality and does not trust that mentality, and also, it seeks that Muslimness also to elevate itself to the level of reason. So there is this synthesis, and the TV gives into the monster, even the technology cannot endure, for such a threat, which is Islam itself. Interestingly, Islam is the biggest threat for all the world and as if the protection from it, is the synthesis, deep down, the modernization project is internalized as the only way out just like the founding fathers set it up. The difference today is, the pendulum of the synthesis is more on the Islam, it is the common structure of ideology.

While the West and the reason are represented by the rhetoric of the psychiatrist on TV, the sole East is represented by a *meczup*. When another friend of the protagonist, Cem found dead, in an abandoned house in the town, it attracts nationwide attention, reporters come to the place from TV channels, and first we see black and white medium shot of the TV reporter with a group of people watching behind in referring to the TV camera. She reports that how the suicides make people anxious throughout the country. Then it cuts to a high angle medium shot of the front door of the house, and a person from the group jumps in front of the group accessing the police safety tape. He has a Koran in one of his hands, raising it in the air, he cries out "When those words come to them, we bring a Dabbe out from the ground to them, and this Dabbe tell them they do not believe in the truth."<sup>16</sup> While it crosscuts to and from the TV's camera, police try to seize Ziya as he continues to speak out loud "Neml sura. Ayat 82. Here is the Koran. Here is the Ayat. Your eyes are blind, your ears are deaf, your hearts are stoned. What kills these people is Dabbe. *Dabbet-ül Arz*. It is awakened. It spreads like

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<sup>16</sup> O sözler başlarına geldiği zaman onlara yerden bir dabbe çıkarırız, ve bu dabbe onlara gerçeklere inanmadıklarını söyler (27:82).

a spider web.”, and as the police tried to put him down he continued to yell continuously “Dabbe uses the jinn. Dabbe uses the jinn...”

The scene carries the reminiscent of 1990s Turkey, when most of the news was about Islamist tariqahs and radical Islamists protesting and shouting “*Allahuekber*” out at the streets, some may carry Koran in hands. For the secular state and the mainstream media of the time, this image of a Muslim was totally negative, and it is coded negative in the collective conscious of Turkish people. This image is the depiction of the Islam as the *other* as being totally antithetic to the modern image of the secular nation.

The way it is presented in the film consists otherization of the event, with all the crosscuts, and tension created while Ziya, the character’s name, jumps to the front and acts like a crazy fanatic radical Islamist and the police suppress him. However, he utters the truth, the only truth that nobody, neither the police of Turkey nor the biggest power America could find out. Despite his negative presentation in the film, he is the carrier of the truth, from the ultimate source of Koran. People are killed because they deliberately have closed their eyes, ears and hearts to the truth, so that Dabbe comes out from the ground to remind this to them, to punish them because they stopped believing to Islam. Now the police silence the one person who knows the truth, so that the institutions of the state suppresses these voices in the society, using its ideological machinery the police and the media.

However, one person gets the message, Hande the protagonist, while the police treats Ziya as a “meczup”, a word that is usually used for the crazy people who used to live on their own in village communities. In the film, he is depicted like a crazy person of a small village, that is very close to the image of the meczup in the collective conscious of Turkish people, however, he is also attributed as the holder of the knowledge, the truth in the films, as if in the unconscious the meczup is connoted with the long forgotten truth that belongs to the village, to Islam, that is surmounted by the modernization process of Turkey, that what seems as crazy to us today is in fact what we have turned from, but on the other hand the film associates craziness to one who

gets too involved with this knowledge, that is coded out of the dominant ideology. Again here the ambivalence is related to the struggle of the synthesis of the East and the West, where the East is otherized by clinging onto its indigenous traits, which is paradoxical, and the West is the desired other, the model to be taken in order to synthesize to the indigenous traits coming from the East, so that too much Eastern and too much Western are the taboo borders. However the otherization of both polar do not work in the same economy. While monstrosity is easily attributed to the one that is connoted to the East, like the monsters jinn and Dabbe, or the craziness of Ziya, the ambivalence emerges when something from in that monstrosity is promoted like Ziya's knowledge, or the depiction of a monstrous Islam that both comes to devastate and to restore. The ambivalence continues with the depiction of the West, here in the character of the psychiatrist, who is not otherized, although he is the other holder of the truth. Apparently, he is not otherized since his knowledge is not as deep as Ziya's. Ziya is situated in the far end of the East of the psyche, whereas, psychiatrist is not in the far end of the West, he managed to find somewhere in between, that makes him balanced, that makes him synthesized. He is a scientist, who knows that certain things cannot be explained only through science, and that he opens an equal place to the metaphysical things in his psyche. However, Ziya is still "backwards", stuck to the old, repressed Islam, that eats him away, he is the *other* of the modernization project.

After Hande finds out that what comes from the Internet to kill people is Dabbe, like Ziya told, she and police chief officer Hüseyin, goes to Ziya's house, a poor village house in a deserted part of the town. His house and the furniture inside is creepy. Items in the house are divergent, a gramophone turning silently, a folklore costume on the wall, a statue head covered with scarf in an altar like place, and even a computer monitor sitting on the floor by itself, so that the modern and traditional things are together in a cacophony, not blending in a harmony with each other. His place is the projection of the symbolic universe of the great divide of the East and the West, and Ziya sits in the window bay shutters closed, lost in his own world detached from this world, mumbling some nonsense language, presumably speaking to some jinn in his corner. When Hüseyin calls his name he doesn't respond or come from his world to this one, only when Hande says "Dabbe" he turns around and repeats trembling "I

shouldn't have told. I shouldn't have told". He is scared because the jinn will kill him and his jinn wife, because he carried the information from his wife to people that "Dabbe is killing people using the jinn".

Z: From now on jinn will appear to people. They will be everywhere. Not much time left (*He goes crazy again and a close up to the covered statue head*). There is somebody else here, she says she is your wife (*to Hüseyin*), but your wife died right? Jinn can imitate both the alive and the dead.

H: Why can't we see them?

Z: They see us from where we can't see them. But we will be able to see them. They found a way to appear us. Because... (*He cannot continue to speak because of a toll in his ear and he collapses trembling on the floor. Hande and Hüseyin watch*).

Dabbe is an entity mentioned in Koran that is believed to come to the world on the doomsday. In the film the Internet spreads the Dabbe, through some emails and videos, and as people receive these, Dabbe comes out and kills people through the jinn, depicted as dark figures hiding in corners. They make people crazy and kill themselves. Then in the film, the Internet, the computer as a modern invention, becomes the instrument that brings the devastation, however, what comes from the Internet, is not something belonging to the sphere of the West, the monster has an Islamic source. Something about the West, here it's the internet, being in everybody's house, open to everyone, an eye that watches and opens to every different kinds of lives, this very feature enables the monster to spread its catastrophe. What the film implies is that something about the West, the internet as a premise of divergence and globalism is situated as a threat, a place of too much Westernization, paradoxically, monsterizes something about the East, awakens its monsters, and returns its repressed monsters from their shackles. This imagery reminds how Islam is politicized a result of strong secular interventions of the state during 1980s, and although *Dabbe* is a conservative film, promoting a modern Islam, the ambivalence in the monster is also related to the deconstruction of the state in the subconscious of the masses. The Islamists, who were not visible in the public arena up until 1980, became more and more visible, and that now they are in power ruling the country and a generation of them grew with the internet, exposed to the same global world like everybody else, which in turn made them a part and even actors of the contemporary modern Turkey.

The police chief officer Hüseyin is depicted as someone who doesn't believe in these religious metaphysical explanations. "Rather than associating things to jinn, I'd rather associate it with an underground group who calls themselves Dabbe" he explains; "All of us see hallucinations and weird dreams sometimes. Even I am continuously struggling with such kinds of things." His dead wife who committed suicide after he cheated on her continuously haunts him.

Hüseyin as a police represents the secular state with his godless rationalism. Although the film promotes an idea of modern Islam and the confirmation of Islam religion marks Hüseyin wrong in his rational associations, by situating Hüseyin as the second leading character and giving him a certain authority in the story, defines him as the center of the dominant ideology. He represents the normality that is threatened, that the Dabbe comes to remind him that he doesn't *believe in the truth*. He represents the reality of the world out of the film, he represents what has become of people in Turkey under the project of modernization, or at least he is the mental image of the modernization project. He speaks the audiences' minds that "All of us see hallucinations and weird dreams sometimes", and all these things create an uncanny feeling in us, making us feel dubious if jinn or things like that are real or not, the ultimate projection of the hardcore material reality of the modern life. Hüseyin is the Turkish subject, struggling between the East and the West, having a concrete Western oriented life on the outset, struggling deep down in his psyche with an uneasiness that comes from the past that uneasiness is dramatized as the figure of the jinn in this film. The normality as depicted in the film, is a non-believing, super secular world of Turkey, since nobody talks about Islam, nobody prays to god, nobody thinks that these things may be jinn, which will change in the films that come later. Normality in this film is situated remote from the monster, and Islam is coded to the margins, and everybody in the film is perished, taken by the jinn; the triumph of the monster. Islam will be at the center in the films that follow, which can also be associated to the empowerment of AKP and rising conservatism in the society as the time passes.

In *Araf* (2006), there is no appearance of a hodja, but there is an appearance of a psychologist and there is a sequence of the therapy he gives to the protagonist, who is

haunted by the ghost of her terminated baby. The psychiatrist asks if she experienced anything traumatic, she cannot answer, but suddenly falls into a nightmare, in which she is in a school corridor, walking in the dark, and arrives in one class where there is a room full of the replicas of the ghost, tapping on the desks. Then it cuts to another day at the shrink's office. She tells the psychiatrist that she is with it for *a long time. Night and day, in her dreams, everywhere*, and that she cannot differentiate if it is a dream or reality. As she speaks she relaxes. One day the shrink takes off his glasses and tells her that places have an important role in our lives and that "Every new place is a new life. It either keeps us away from our past, or represses it to deeper. Of course only to return in the future." The important point here is not his dramatized way of explaining the return of the repressed, but how the protagonist's traumatic abortion that makes her feel guilty, is depicted by her falling into a nightmare about school. The abortion story at the surface, that makes the female protagonist suffer, seems to have been deliberately chosen by the director and marks this film conservative in terms of women's sexuality, however the director, in an unconscious level related her suffering to some repressed feelings about childhood education, in a natural train of thought, which in a very hidden metaphorical structure, associates her struggle as a woman with the traditions, to the official education where the dominant ideology is imposed to the masses.

In *Musallat* (2007), the first hodja character is introduced. He is an old white bearded man, who conducts a very uncanny ritual in order to detect the problem of the protagonist. In a traditionally furnished room of a slum house, he accepts the protagonist, and practices a series of rituals in several days. He writes Arabic prayers on papers, he puts these in a large pan filled with water and makes a little boy, half naked, get into that bowl puts some ink on his hands and this boy tells what he sees in the water. This kind of rituals is used in the later films as well; every time finding a new prop, from blood to animal parts. Hodja refuses to get any money for his help, a theme will be used in the later films as well.

The first scene of the hodja opens with a mosque scene with prayers, which cuts to his house when he performs ablution, with a close up of him washing his feet in the

washbasin. His Islamic character that positively fits into an extreme long shot of a mosque in a bright day also connotes to the grotesque iconography of foot washing in the basin, which is very familiar to everyone raised in Turkey. The director chooses the pictures in the sequences, according to what first comes to mind in an ideological schema in its free associations, so that in the schema of Islam, in a Turkish psyche, a mosque comes first, and then a hodja, picturing this hodja, in the lavatory washing his feet, is the art of the horror, choosing a disturbing image from its real life, something so familiar but disturbing. Putting the idea of hodja in the syntax of the mosque, ablution and feet, with a vivid sound of the water from the tap at the back, continues with its free associations in the psyche of the audience, enlarges from the sequence of the film and to be completed in their unconscious, where the ambivalent attitude towards Islam is touched, such an ambivalence, in which there is both a hope to find a way out from all the calamity and a feeling of eeriness that comes with associating that person to a slum house lavatory washing feet.

The dichotomies are very strong in this film that the hodja reminds that, there has been testament between the jinn and the humans that all the creatures would not access to the others' universe. Later, he says that, "Knowledge and belief can go hand in hand to a certain extent. At some point their paths are separated. Then, one chooses the path in which the cure to the problem lies". The dichotomy of jinn and people, knowledge and belief are the extensions of the main dichotomy of modern and tradition, of the East and the West.

*Semum* (2008) takes the above dichotomy and the characters of hodja and psychologist and clashes them in one of the scenes; actually this dichotomy of psychologist and hodja, in the same film, is Karacadağ's invention reminding Arslan's note that, while *The Exorcist* contrasted modernity with pre-modern idea of religion as a subtext, *Şeytan*, makes it a primary issue "which continuously emphasizes a theme of science, secularism, or modernity versus religion" (Arslan 2011, p. 164). This theme still being the main theme, is now stressed more, and becomes the ultimate themes of all the horror films in Turkey today.



When Canan, the protagonist gets out of control, first her husband Volkan calls the psychiatrist, who can only offer to take her to the hospital. When Volkan rejects to treat his wife as if she is a crazy person, the doctor reminds him that the medical science still discovered little about the functions of the brain, and that he should prepare himself for the worst that Canan might never be cured as well. The doctor leaves to complete certain procedures and return to take Canan to the hospital. Feeling desperate, Volkan calls his friend Ali from work for company. When Ali asks what could have really happened to Canan, Volkan tells that she is badly influenced by the rumors about their neighbor who is believed to kill his wife and bury in the garden.

*V: Canan thinks that some evil powers- whatever it means (he laughs anxiously)- are trying to possess her. Like these ridiculous ghost stories in American films. I think something like that. Do you believe in things like ghosts or spirits Ali?*

*A: (Seems full of thoughts for a moment). I do not believe in ghosts. I believe other things.*

*V: Other things?*

*A: Yes.*

*V: What other things? Things like UFOs?*

*A: No.*

*V: What then? (The smile on his face fades out)*

*A: Semum.*

*V: Semum? (Puzzled)*

The contrast of the West and the East is emphasized in the story that while Western people have ghosts as monsters, we have Semum. However, this very tendency, to differentiate the self from the desired other, in order to reach to a true self, still is determined under the shadow of the desired other, it is still defining the self, on the axis of the West, the axis of the possession of a woman with some evil powers, but the evil power is *translated into Turkish and Islamic codes*, that in the end still creates a synthesis of the West and the East. Moreover, while Volkan is the representative of modernity as a non-believer, Ali is the representative of the desired balance of the synthesis, who persuades Volkan into calling the hodja who will save Canan. The funny thing is, the throwing of the word Semum, as if it is something widely known, like the jinn or the Satan.

It will be difficult for Ali to persuade Volkan at first, until Canan gets totally out of control and Ali begs Volkan to give it a try. The two men get on the car and journey by the ancient Istanbul city walls, as a reference to Islam, the Ottoman, and the past. They

find and bring this hodja in a white religious dress who can feel any living things around visible and invisible, a hodja whose third eye is open. The hodja, enters Canan's room and calls Semum by its name starts to talk in Arabic with it. After he threatens to kill the Semum if it does not live the body of Canan, he starts his prayers reading his small Koran in his hand. At that time the doctor arrives with the ambulance, he runs upstairs finding Canan with hodja in the room. He asks Volkan angrily who the man is, and Volkan and Ali hems and haws feeling embarrassed.

D: I can't believe. Did you throw your desperate wife in front of a charlatan?  
(Hodja gives an angry look).

C: (With her woman sound) Doctor I am so scared. Please do not give me to the hands of this man.

D: Don't you hear your wife Volkan? Won't you still send this charlatan away?

H: It is not Canan who is speaking now.

D: Look at me you ignorant bigot. Leave this house now. If anything happens to this girl I will make you pay for this.

H: Medicine cannot help her at the moment.

D: Leave now.

H: Science is never a god to worship.

D: And religion is not a source of money for a crook.

H: Look doctor, science is certainly a necessity. But do not forget. A person cannot live without believing something. Religion is as necessary as science. Why are you discriminating?

D: Let my arm go.

H: I will prove you that it is not Canan. But I need a minute. Then if you want I can go.

Hodja utters Arabic words to Canan, which makes the Semum in her unrepressed. Then asks the doctor to touch her. When the doctor touches for a second, it goes dark and he can see the Semum in her. Doctor loses himself, trembles and shouts, "I will lose my mind". Hodja says the last word "Sometimes you need more than two eyes to see doctor". Here Hodja not only proves himself and shows the invalidity of science in such a situation, but also defines the synthesis, by reporting that science is also necessary as well as religion. The attitude and the language the doctor uses is in fact an otherization of the modernization project, while the religious is coded as oppressed. The pendulum of the synthesis swings to Islam.

The theme of nonbelieving as a representation of the modernization project or the elites comes to its climax in the film *Dabbe 2* (2009), in which there is no hodja or religious intervention of any kind. It is just the religious devastation, the continuation

of the doomsday of *Dabbe* 1 and the white Turk characters, are left with their parish when beasts of snake like smokes come from the sky and kill everybody. When things begin, all the characters in the house try to bring a logical rational explanation to the devastation and their explanations, it may be a war, a nuclear attack, someone from the state will surely make an explanation, start to sound ridiculous for the audience, since the supernatural events are so obviously supernatural so that their non-believing is otherized. His daughter tells the father “Dad you remember telling me something when mom died. You told me that people turn to god in their most difficult times even if they do not believe. I prayed now but nothing happens”. What she says defines the notion of modern Islam in Turkey that the monster comes to punish these false believers, whose last minute prayers will not help them. At the end, when her daughter is dying in his arms, the father, first prays for help and when she dies, he gets angry and yells to the sky “Come on you damn things. I am not afraid of you. Oh god, what is this pain? Why do you make us suffer? Why don’t you help us? I do not believe you. Why did you leave us?” All the smoke monsters attack and the film finished. This ending of Hasan Karacadağ, recalls the end of his previous film *Semum*. When the hodja goes to the other world and kills the *Semum*, the *Semum* calls out to the devil “Are we defeated again devil? Why did you leave me?”. Both endings are confirmation of god, and the ones that deny it are punished. More importantly, the anger of the father is totally human in such a situation, because the angry god punishes them for nothing. It is an ego projection of a believer in one hand, punishing the nonbelievers, but also, it is the dramatization of the unconscious of the Turkish psyche that is split in the modern and the tradition divide. The process of modernization in its pursue of Westernization, repressed the religious deep down, which reminds itself in the conscience.

From *Üç Harfliler: Marid* (2010) on there is a transition in the depiction of the themes. The first of them is the hodja character. The depiction of the hodja in *Marid* will create a new categorization of the character: good hodja and bad hodja. Good hodja is the one who can act efficiently and do his work honestly, whereas bad hodja is the one who cannot bring a salvation and may trade his knowledge. In *Marid*, there are two hodjas, the one in the past that saved the protagonist from the strong jinn *Marid* by writing a

strong charm to her and advising her keep onto her true belief. Then after years pass, she loses her charm and the jinn haunts her back. Desperately they call another hodja who can save neither anybody nor himself, dies in the house and becomes a jinni. It is important that his taking money for his job is stressed by a close up. Then this money taking hodja will be used by Hasan Karacadağ, in *Dabbe: Bir Cin Vakası* (2012), the hodja comes to house to help, is not necessarily bad, but his taking money is given in a close up and in the end everybody dies including himself. Another transition in this film is that there is a more realistic depiction of people and attitude to religion. Apart from *Musallat* it is the first film that builds a more realistic understanding of Islam in the film. People know Islam, and believe in Islam and still have secular lives in today's Istanbul. A working middle class couple that can represent majority of the people in Istanbul.

Whereas films like *Cehennem* (2010), *Musallat 2: Lanet* (2011), *Dabbe Zehr-i Cin* (2014) offers female sorcerers, whom I will introduce later; we can still think them as an extension of the male hodjas.

In *Dabbe Cin Çarpması* (2013), this depiction of a modern hodja reaches to a climax. This hodja is not only good, but he is also modern, he knows modern sciences and explains things in terms of physics. This psychologist challenges him, this time a female, university student. From the beginning to the end she denies believing and tries to explain everything in reason. Her efforts continue even in the most desperate moments, which become negative in the eyes of the audience, a meaningless effort not to believe. The depiction of the hodja here is a projection of a modern Islam, a synthesis of the West and the East from the filter of Islam.

In *Azazil* (2014), the hodja character projects a similar depiction of the modern Islam but instead of the clash between the psychologist and the hodja in *Dabbe Cin Çarpması*, this hodja is in tune with psychology. The films open with this panel session that we see a discussion of hodja with a psychologist, talking about how they work hand in hand to help people in need. The hodja this time he is called a metaphysics expert, he respects science and science respects him back. When the

leading male character goes to him to ask for help to her possessed girlfriend, at his office he witnesses that the expert sends a mother with her daughter away, despite the mother's insistence. He asks about some diagnosis, and he decides that the little girl needs to see a doctor, not a hodja. This expert hodja depiction is the ultimate positive hopeful projection of the synthesis of the modern and Islam in the Turkish psyche, but this positiveness is actually an assertion of the Islam.

So that it can be a reactionary, backwards attitude; it can, however, the paranoia in the later films, since they are negating the Islamic more, at least the points of saviors of Islam they negate, then they can be progressive in that sense. However still it is not so easy to make such a clear-cut categorization, because both tendencies still carry conservative inflections, and they establish power relations of such a kind.

This good and bad hodja concept is also common attitude in the society, a reflection of the clash of the two versions of Islam existing in modern Turkey. Modernization as a process always consisted Islam and tradition in itself. Kadıoğlu reminds that, although these two discourses are in war with in each other, “the Westernist and Islamic discourses are interwoven in the Turkish context”. This can best be observed in the model of secularism Turkey adopted. Although Turkey is a secular country, Turkish secularism models French *laïcité* rather than the American-style secularism. Secularism in the United States of America is a separation of church and state, whereas in Turkey *laicism* (laiklik)—though it is generally accepted to be similar with this latter model among Turkish people—is established by bringing religion under the control of the state. Directorate of Religious Affairs was found in 1924, when the statement of laicism was not amended yet in the constitution, and rather it was stated that the religion of the state was Islam. After the republic was established, the purpose was to disable Islamic cleric elite (Ulema) who used the religion as a governmental apparatus and weapon during the Ottoman period. The aim was to take the religion from the hands of this powerful and independent class who has the potential to rival the new governmental power, so that religion can be taken under the control of the non-religious state, where it will not pose a potential threat to the new secular system. Although secularist system seems a means to offer freedom of religion, it was always a

means to control religion in Turkey; in other words, state would impose a “proper” Islam that is in harmony with nationalism and modernity, so that children would be protected against the “false” influences of Islam, which may come from their families or other sources.

In this new affairs of the religion, Directorate would not be as binding as the Ulema, its role would only be guidance, so that the religious feelings of the people will only be a matter of an individual inner world concern, a matter of their private spiritual world, a matter between the self and the god, rather than a concern of the political space or state affairs in which it becomes a political weapon empowered by the abuse and misuse of people’s religious feelings. Instead of a binding Islamic hegemony, it was aimed to stage the public life where people’s religious feelings were a matter of individual freedom.

Besides the fact of inactivating the power of Ulema within the state, a component of the reason of bringing religion under the control of the state was to deactivate the strong opposition of the political Islam, the clerical class that was the status quo in Anatolia at the time. In the villages, then, the extension of Ulema, there was a class of hodjas who had a strong political power over the peasants in the existing feudal system. This class of hodjas in the villages, now in modern Turkey called *hacı-hoca takımı*, a slang used to scorn, then pursued their political Islamic power, then, in the religious orders, tariqahs and dervish lodges (*tekke, tarikat ve zaviyeler*), which were banned after the establishment of the republic, so that the heritage of Ottoman political and Islamic perception would altogether be eliminated.

There emerged an attitude among self-identified Kemalists that there is a true Islam, compatible with modernity and enlightenment, and that all other practices are *backward* and *ignorant*, so that alternative interpretations and practices of Islam are seen as political and in violation of the secular status quo. This “official Islam” proposes that belief and practice of it is primarily individual, but the practices opposing this definition can be discarded without any harm to neither the practitioner or to Islam itself. There is this Republican epistemology, in which religion is a matter

of individual conscience that does not mix with or interfere in public life. These two different interpretations of Islam rises because in Turkish secular system, the state does not altogether reject religion, but the state sees itself as the chief maintainer of a particular form of Islam that is in accord with laicism in order to eliminate the divergent forms of Islam that create a potential threat to the Turkish polity. Then these divergent forms of Islam are related to the Ottoman past, old Islam that is related to a pre-modern period, the cleric elite like hodjas.

Interestingly enough, the next films, gives such a depiction of Hodja that blends and blurs the categorizations of hodjas in it. There is this authoritarian, and scary *Bakırcı Mehmet*, who at the end, turns out to be the *Satan* himself. The negative hodja character on one hand is related to the State Islam and folk Islam division in Turkey. Since the protagonists' grandfather warns him not to go to any hodja and just trust god. The character as a strong powerful religious figure, also reminds Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and the characters paying full submission to him is like the masses submission to authority, recalling Kracauer's analysis for *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*.

Towards the recent films this theme of being deceived, learning that everything is much different from how it seemed, dominates the narratives. In *El Cin*, the youngsters are deceived by a jinni that comes in the shape of the *Nusaybin* warrior and takes them to the dimension of jinn for the end of their lives where they will suffer forever. In *Dabbe Zehr-i Cin*, at the very end, the protagonists learn that they are tricked into a game since from the beginning, which brings their end. There is this deep paranoia in the later films, which replaced the comforting existence of savior hodjas.

In the films there lies a deep distrust like Deniz Baykal told giving an interview on TV after he met with the president of the republic closed to press: "There is a deep distrust that there lies something else behind everything happens or said". This is actually what is going on in the films. Always there is a twist, there is something else, and the friends turn to be enemies and are no longer trustable. In *Şeytan-ı Racim* (2013) his best friend puts him into trouble, towards the end we learn that it is the Satan who deceived them all, disguised in the shape of the protagonist. It starts in the city but in a student house

shared by two rural background students Emrah and Salih. Salih is dealing with evil occult practices with jinn, and in time Emrah will be involved by his own will. Actually at first Salih shows a great resistance not to accept him, and although the things that he sees are not pleasurable, his unstoppable curiosity forces him to get involved. And once he gets involved, he cannot get out of it.

Underneath his meaningless motivation to get involved lies a concealed reason that the film doesn't stress openly. Emrah studies and works in a part-time job serving tables at a café. His economic struggle is given through the selection of specific activities from his workplace: in the first scene he is at the back of the counter with an apron occupies, in the second he takes the bill box to the customers with a over kind face and the third shows him leaving work at such a late time, when another worker is pulling down the shutters. The boredom and hardships of his life, in contrast to a wealthy urban dweller, creates an initial reason for him to get in trouble. When the first nightmares start, he gets scared and moves back to his family house, which is in a rural area. When the nightmares continue, his father takes him to a hodja in a village, who later turns out to be the Satan himself, constructed everything from the very beginning. We learn that, he first took the shape of Emrah and raped and impregnated her girlfriend. Emrah breaks up with the girl, giving her money for the abortion, so that Salih gets mad at him. At the same time he meets a new friend who is performing occult practices and introduces him to her uncle who is a master in such things. Through Salih the Satan reached Emrah back, and deceives him into his way. In the Satan manages to kill Salih but leaves Emrah, and his father could only find him with the help of gendarme, since the village that the Satan resided has been an abandoned place for thirty years. His father finds him with the dead body of Salih beside in the ruins of a house.

In *El-Cin* the parents were becoming monsters and scaring the young people. Moreover most of the films around the year 2013 starts with some voice recordings, police, doctors, journalists or different figures of authorities interrogate each other trying to enlighten some secret facts that are hidden from the public. In *El-Cin* there is this cassette scenes, reminding the tapes of the government crisis.



The important thing is, the paranoia started to come with the decreasing of Islamic motive and reinjection of more modernity in the films, which may refer to many things, to the deep fear of losing Islam, or a deep need of rebalancing the two. When Islam it is hopeful, when modern there is paranoia. Interestingly, film start to exploit the Middle Eastern symbols besides the Islamic ones, and even the Islamic ones are negated like in *Zehr-i Cin*, the female sorcerer says that as the doomsday comes closer, the ones with the Koran in their hands will increase. When all these transition comes together one can see that the element of Islam starts to get smaller, as it gets smaller the elements of the modern starts to dominate, which is the very nature of the synthesizing, which continuously balances and rebalances.

However, in another level, I believe this paranoia, is related to the crisis of ideology in terms of the synthesis of the modern and the Islam. *Ammar* is a good example of that, a group of friends are on holiday, at a house, at night at the dinner table they talk about the existence of the jinn, which is a realistic, very common kind of conversation in Turkey. We learn that they are all jinn, deceiving the protagonist, as if they are her friends, and in the conversation, one says “*diplomana sıçayım*” a degrading expression meaning “shit in your diploma”, the other tries to explain from the dimension energy theories. The narrative may well point to the political problems of the country, they are not who they seem they are, they are them, the monsters, I believe is actually third dimension of the monster, first was externalized, then it possessed us, and now they are it, or we are them, they are in us, they look like us, and they are not, kind of paranoia, is the third stage of externalizing and projecting the monster, every time, one step further. First it was such remote, such denied, so externalized, even not very frightening, and then, it was internalized, a part of the self, but more of a parasite feeding on the self, but the third stage invites a monster, who is as abstract as I am, who exists, who is out there with me, one of me. I do not know if this tendency will continue to a further stage and what that stage could be, however, I believe this stage is a further stage of recognizing the otherized in the self, but more closely so that more horrific. It is the recognition of the other, it is the recognition of the struggle of the synthesis of the east and the west, the victim is the self that is stuck between the east and the west, not moving anywhere, like in the house imagery, nor she can go back to

her life before, neither can she move forwards. She just watches the world from the window in anxiety, with the other watching her right beside.

I believe, especially in the first examples of these Islamic Horror films, *Büyü*, *Dabbe*, *Araf*, *Semum* and *Dabbe 2*, we can talk about a certain effect of Islamophobia, when compared to the ones made after 2010, when the conventions started to be seen within films and a certain format of a more Islam propaganda films were made.

*Dabbe* came out 2006, with its monster *Dabbet-ül Arz*, an Islamic doomsday apocalyptic film. *Dabbe*, we learn in the film, is an entity that is believed to come at the apocalypse according to Islamic eschatology and in the film it haunts the world, from the Internet and using many other electronic devices, like the TV or the telephone and it uses jinn around the world to haunt and kill people. Hasan Karacadağ presents a verse at the beginning of the film, “They can see you from where you can’t see them”.<sup>17</sup> We see black distorted human-smoke like figures, coming out from the ground, appearing secretly in the corners, looking behind the doors, at first invisible to the characters but gradually becoming more and more visible, killing everyone and occupying the world. Especially the shapes of the jinn are dark, resembling a distorted silhouette of a chador-wearing woman. They are always hiding themselves to corners and watching people from corners, and at first people have the feeling of being watched, until a jinn attacks them. Towards the end, jinn become visible to everyone and they appear everywhere. When Hande, the protagonist, gets attacked and escapes from her uncles store, to find the whereabouts of the police chief Hüseyin, on the way, she realizes from every corner in the empty streets of the night there comes a jinn, dark smokes, moving like beasts. At one point her telephone rings in the middle of the road before she hangs, a black smoke comes from underground, from the manhole. She escapes as it reaches. The film depicted the monster as something invisible to the eye, but something existing. All this associates with the expression of the fear of *creeping Islam* at that time, and the term *creeping Islam* was widely used in the Islamophobia discourses.

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<sup>17</sup> “Onlar sizi sizin onları göremeyeceğiniz yerden görürler.” (Araf suresi 27 ayet).

In *Araf*, the spirit of her terminated child haunting the female protagonist, punishing her because of her sin of killing a child, and in *Semum*, the creature that possesses the woman, in *Dabbe 2* the flying-smoke monsters coming from the sky bringing the end of the world, the Koran version of the doomsday, we can see the monsters with their full bodies.

This full specter of the monster dissolves gradually to a nonvisible monster as the Turkish cinematic horror evolves, which has the inflictions in *Musallat*, in which there is again a full specter of the monster, the jinn but disguised in the shape of the characters, only to be unrepressed in a few scenes. Then in *Marid*, the jinn acts like the one in *Musallat* and it can be more than one person at the same time in the same room killing people and taking their shape. Only when the monster is referred directly, the handheld camera represents its gaze and we see the victim through its eyes. Still, in the film there is this little girl, representing the body of the jinn and we learn that it is the protagonist's childhood, and in the end, when everybody dies and the protagonist has to give in to the jinn after a long night of struggle, the camera searches the female protagonist in the house and finds her collapsed by the door slim, knocked out. When the camera zooms in her face, she opens her eyes and throws an uncanny look.

Thus, as the genre evolved, the full body external monster gets closer to the self, gets into it, possesses it, and becomes more and more visible. There may be a couple of reasons behind it. The first reason can be that, the directors get more experienced and trained in making horror films and learned that the uncanny effect works more effectively when the monster is not shown openly. Also in the Western cinema, this kind of non-visible monsters attracted a lot of attention, like *Paranormal Activity*, but this kind of creating uncanny atmosphere without showing the monster is now new, it easily dates back to 1960s American horror films. Another reason is the conventional cycle. Although they showed full specter of their monsters, this monster-protagonist, the *Doppelgänger*, the double motif existed since from the first films. In *Büyü* the jinn or the entity like jinn possessed the archeologist's daughter and she murdered everyone. In *Dabbe*, when Tarık died, he fell into a dimension in where he came across with himself. In the screen two Tarık's were scene, one entering the scene the other

lying on the floor, and it is not clear which is the real Tarik, and which is the jinn, a double figure.

*Musallat*, although it is before *Semum*, and although it has concrete visible, external monster, is a transition film, since the monster is also in the shape of the people in the film, has the inflections of the genre that will be carried to the next cycle, in which the monster, the jinn or *Ifrit* whatever it is, will become invisible, because it will be inside the people, like in the film *Marid*, and most of these victims will be women.

I believe, the first films reflected more of Islamophobia, and the way the society tried to deal with it. Since it was the beginning years of AKP and the academic discourses and the intelligentsia revolved around the discourse of Islamophobia. However, the discourse has changed, and Islamophobia is no longer a trending topic anymore, not that it is resolved or finished, but the previous fears or paranoia of the secular society, both evolved into more of a fear of authoritarianism and also, the oppression was also internalized by the people. They felt that the threat is from within, so close from the self, the culture itself.

If we can talk about otherization of Islam, at least more apparently in the first films, up until 2010, later, Islam was no longer otherized the way White Turks do, since films started to become more and more propaganda of Islam itself.

I do not say that Islam is not otherized in these films, I say, it is otherized not as an external threat, but as an internal one, within the self, that projects the conflict of the synthesis of the East and the West, the paradoxical character of Turkish culture. The films project the struggle of this paradox, mainly. Islam is surely coded as the past, the repressed, the backwards and evil thing, and when it comes from within, it needs to be repressed back again. But it cannot be. Within time, the Islamic motif, related to the monstrous, the black magic, Arabic words, things like that, are always otherized in the films, and towards the end they start to mingle with other symbols of Turkish culture, like pagan symbols, but they continue to be in the sphere of the monstrous.

I believe the representation of Islamic symbols and their exact place in the psyche gradually becomes more and clearer as it gets smaller and more abstract, it reduces into a crystalized its sole monstrousness, losing its secondary connotations and work in a symbolic realm. Islamic symbol turns out to be the direct signifier of the fear in the psyche dominated by the synthesis of the West and the East.

Islam first of all signifies, death, because in Turkish state the religious affairs become more apparent in funeral rituals. When someone dies people exceed into the premise of Islam where secularity dissolves into religion, a controlled but still a religious experience for a controlled limit of time. And Islam within that same circle come to signify Koran and Arabic, something people do not read, do not understand, but accept its significance. *Cehennem* is very different from the rest of the films, which make use of a saturation of Islamic symbols. Islam comes in rare occasions. The most important one when the protagonist's wife cheats on him by kissing someone else, on the wall they lean onto Arabic letters appear. We never learn what is written on the wall, they were just there to mark the whereabouts of the adultery, stood there as a stigma of the unchaste woman. The Arabic becomes the language of the monstrous that is used to communicate an anomaly. In *Karadedeler*, Arabic words come at the end, written by blood on a door. This time we learn the meaning; it is the name of the protagonist written in Arabic. It is again used as a warning, a stigma, and a code on its own, scary because it signifies itself.

In *Şeytan-ı Racim*, the protagonist does those rituals, write and say the things in Arabic that he doesn't know, reminding the experience of the religious education classes every Turkish person experienced at primary school, or the way people know prayers but do not know its meaning. The modernization process alienates the individuals from the prayers from Islam, now only a symbol of Koran and Arabic and jinn and Allah, is there, all repressed, all we are too educated to believe, even the masses do not live with it in modern day practices, but what if it comes out, confirms our surmounted beliefs in a sense.

That remoteness of the Islam in the first films, in the shape of an externalized monster, and then evolved to an internalized monster especially after *Marid*, Islam becomes a matter of the self, and then *Musallat 2*, *Dabbe Cin Vakası*, and so on it is always in the characters. In *Dabbe Cin Çarpması*, there is a barn scene. We cannot see the jinn but hodja tells us it is at the corner, or it jumps in the horse, so that the camera follows what the hodja says, pointing an empty corner which the audience fill with their imaginations. The invisibility of the jinn is depicted so uncannily in *Karadedeler* as well, in which there is a similar barn scene nothing happens, when Erdinç goes to Mehmet Emmi's barn in search of him. He watches the dim barn, as the wind blows, things move because of the wind. Nothing happens but the film implies as if something is happening in that nothingness; the Islam is so silenced in the brains of modern Turkey. It becomes more crystalized in films as the time passes, and comes to represent its true place. In films, any Islamic motif becomes the signifier of that repressed symbol in the psyche, now that it signifies as it is, and it fantasizes, what if it is real, what if it is more.

### **3.3 THE OTHERIZATION OF THE RURAL**

The first film, which uses the village as a place for the horror, is *Büyü* (2004), made by Orhan Oğuz. A group of archeologists go to an old Anatolian village to find an ancient book but the village happens to be cursed by some black magic practiced long ago, and the archeologists' visit activates this curse and this curse haunts them. The film takes its name from this "black magic" which means *büyü* in Turkish. The scenes are full of witchcraft and objects related, and as a matter of fact most of these symbols belong more to paganism rather than the Islamic practices, but still there are Islamic symbols, like pages with Arabic letters and Koran verses, and this situates the film in the same economy of otherization of Islam. In the film, the archeological excavation seems metaphoric, as a journey to the repressed past and the village becomes the place for the return of the repressed. Modern people from the city travel to the village and awaken something that was silent for a long time. In the narrative, the curse is activated because one of the group member's sister, goes to a sorcerer back in Istanbul to put a black magic spell on her because of jealousy and the black magic in the city that is

practiced on one of the group members, makes the old black magic to awaken. At first, the archeologists are on the way to find an ancient book, but they end up all lost in the thrill of the village and most of them get killed. The search for a book is like a wane search in the long forgotten repressed past of Turkey, now modern and secular, and these modern educated elites get in trouble by exceeding in the deeper zone, of the taboo sphere. In a fantasy level, the village symbolizes the past and the curse that awakens reminds the Islamic heritage of the past, and interestingly this Islamic past returns because one of the group members, not surprisingly a woman, carries a part of it back from the city, implying that the repressed Islam, still lives between us, but more silenced in the modern city life.

The apparent contrast between the village background and the modern people in it actually turns out to be one of the fundamental themes across the whole series of Islamic horror films. This contrast is a mark of the Turkish national character, which goes back to the establishment of the republic and the removal of the Ulema. In order to break the power of the strong feudal system existing in the villages then, Ulema with all its extensions of the clerical class that was the status quo in Anatolia at the time, was removed to inactivate the power of political Islam and its opposition. In the villages, then, as the extensions of Ulema, there was a class of hodjas who had a strong political power over the peasants in the existing feudal system. When their activities were banned, the heritage of Ottoman political and Islamic perception would altogether be eliminated. The republican ethos otherizes Islamic practices of the sphere that belongs to pre-republican period with all its connotations, since Kemalist secularization urged a clean break from the Ottoman Islam and one of the connotations is the village itself, which is the representative of a pre-progress backward Islamic model. Then in these films the repressed Islam returns with the village as a place of the horrific. The repressed Islam, when returns, is attributed to the village, the peasant, to the provincial, in other words to the rural. What is punished is the one or the thing that exceeds the borders of the East and West divide.

The binary oppositions of the traditional and modern in Turkish identity, the urban and the rural is an extension, so the ultimate *other* for this republican culture is the rural

Turkey, so in terms of the modern Turkish city, the *other* is the rural Turkey. In Turkey cities were the places where modernizing elites reside during the early republican era. Since these elites assumed the role of transforming the society into a modern and Western one, they considered the city to be a place which acculturates its inhabitants to modern ways and values of life. As a result, a dichotomy between the rural and the urban is intrinsic to the modernization project of the elites.

However, up until the film *Musallat 2: Lanet* (2011), almost no horror film, the ones that do not have Islamic motifs are included as well, put its stage in a village after *Büyü*. Within the six years period of time between 2004 and 2011, the only film that makes use of village as the place of the horrific is again from Alper Mestçi; his first film *Musallat* (2007), in which he didn't only make use of the village as an uncanny place, but also the characters in the film were villagers or rural people.

The films *Araf* (2006), *Üç Harfliler: Marid* (2010) and *Cehennem* (2010), take place in the city with urban characters in them, while *Dabbe* (2006), *Semum* (2008), and *Dabbe 2* (2009) Hasan Karacadağ's first three films take place in a suburban dwelling with urban bourgeois characters in them. If the horror goes around urban people threatened by an Islamic monster, then we can say that these films project the White Turk fears, as I have discussed in the previous section, as the fear projection of the visibility of the creeping Islam, at least on a surface level.

Then when *Musallat 2* came out in 2011, it made something new in its narrative, which influenced the conventions of the cinematic horror genre in Turkey to the point of turning it into a formulated exploitation cinema using the same recurring themes in similar stories and the number of the horror films made every year dramatically increased leading to a boom of Islamic horror films, which may allow us to talk about a subgenre of cinematic horror that can be easily named Islamic horror films. While every year two or three horror films had been made, after the year 2011 the number gradually rose, reaching a total number of seven in the year of 2014 per se, and exceeding that number in 2015 when only the number of the Islamic horror films are seven.



What Alper Mestçi did in *Musallat 2: Lanet* was, he took an educated bourgeois girl as the protagonist, who is haunted by her past that is related to a village that she has never known. When she learns that she has a connection with that village, she goes there to uncover her forgotten and repressed past. A journey film, from the city to the village, from the present to the past, from the modern to the tradition and the backward, led to a cycle of films, in which the village or the rural became a recurring theme and a strong signifier. The film right after *Musallat 2* was *Karadedeler Olayı* made in the same year, which is a thoroughly village film with authentic villagers in the cast. Apart from this latter film, which is distinctive among all the other films in terms of its depiction of the village, what the rest of the films recycled is not only the village or the rural itself; it was the signification of the rural in contrast to the urban. Since the novelty that Alper Mestçi brought to the genre, which will turn into a cliché, was not solely using the village, but the way he depicted it in contrast to the bourgeois, to emphasize the great divide between the rural and the urban, and the way he clashed and mingled them back together, as a cinematic projection of the synthesis of the East and the West.

Actually, in the films before *Musallat 2*, there existed the otherization of the rural, but in a lower level consciousness, that can best be felt in Karacadağ's films. *Dabbe* takes place in a provincial town, far away from the cosmopolitan city. In *Semum*, the married couple moves into a new villa out in the suburbs. Likewise *Dabbe 2* takes place in a bourgeois villa that is situated far away from an urban dwelling. Although universally cinematic horror genre makes use of abandoned places as the place of the horrific, and these films are mostly the imitations of the horror films of other nations especially the American horror films, it will be a futile effort if I insist on that the abandoned places in these places reflect the ideology of the East and the West, compared to the extent of their projection of the same ideology just because they imitate Hollywood horror films. My point is these films used the universal idea of abandoned places, and in the Turkification process, being exposed and contrasted to the other cultural conceptions—such as the abandoned place becomes horrific because of the White Turk characters that live in—these abandoned places are gradually translated into the otherization of

the rural as a projection of the Turkish psyche, which became more obvious after *Musallat 2*.

From this film on, the dichotomy of the rural and the urban, the villager and the bourgeois has become more apparent in the films, as an extension of the East and the West. This dichotomy varies and enlarges as the genre evolves through cinematic conventions. If one attempts to categorize the variety of the dichotomy, the films can be read in a rough three folds which are of course transgressive; the first is the rural versus urban, in which bourgeois characters are threatened by something about the rural, mostly the village, the second takes mostly the rural people like the squatter settlements in the city, the *varoş*<sup>18</sup> people in *gecekondus*<sup>19</sup> with less or indirect references to the urban and also offering the village in a multi-dimensional universe, and the third is the imaginary village, as a place for ultimate monstrosity. This last one, more than a categorization is a certain depiction of the village in or across the films, which may be sometimes or always constituted in a more abstract form in the films.

The first category of the dichotomy of the rural and the urban, is also the determiner code within the films as texts since it is an extension of the synthesis the East and the West, that is dramatized more explicitly in the films that take the bourgeois protagonists, like in the films *Dabbe: Cin Vakası* (2012), *Azem Cin Karası* (2014), *Dabbe: Zehr-i Cin* (2014), and *Dabbe: Cin Çarpması* (2013), and locate the characters in contrast to the village, the rural.

In *Azem Cin Karası* (2014), there is a couple that rides their car from the city to a village, because the man has inherited a house from his father in the village. The woman wants to sell the house to buy a summerhouse in a popular resort area, but the man wants to give a change to the house on the village hoping that it can give them the peace they always seek in the chaos of the city. When they arrive they will get trouble into with some evil dark forces in the old house.

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<sup>18</sup> poor suburban settlements

<sup>19</sup> squatter's houses

In *Semum* and *Dabbe 2*, the films before 2011, Hasan Karacadağ situated the characters in the houses at the suburbs; he used the same narrative in *Dabbe: Bir Cin Vakası* (2012), a house out of the city with a modern bourgeois family in it. However he adds another level to this house on the suburbs that it is nearby an abandoned haunted village, and all the malignity that takes place in the house is related to this village nearby that is infamous with its jinn.

Sinan and Ceyda and their daughter live in this beautiful house with a swimming pool. A jinni haunts the family and Ceyda gets up every night and wanders around the house weirdly like a somnambulist, and they first consider it a psychological problem. They invite their friends over for barbeque. Two couples with their children, gather around the swimming pool. Sinan and the other man sits by the pool and have their dinner drinking wine and when his friend tells Sinan the story of the infamous village close to their place. He tells that a few years ago at night one villager woke up suddenly and attacked his wife, beating her to death by smashing her head with a wooden stick. This villager told the police that there is a jinn living in his eye and it ordered him to kill his wife. Moreover in the same village, the imam stopped the Salah and yelled at the community calling them ‘the seedlings of the Satan’ and tore an old man’s ear. İmam told the police that the villagers give their wives to the jinn, so that the children are not human because they are jinn offspring. While he is telling the story, the domestic servant of the house, a villager woman, prepares their dinner plates at the other corner of the pool and brings them their food. When she comes to the table, the man stops talking for a second, and continues after she leaves. When he finishes his story, Sinan looks not touched by the story, and asks him not to mention about this story to Ceyda since she is already having a hard time with her psychological problems. His friend promises not to by reminding him that their region is an ill-omened place.

The portrayal of the scene is a good projection of the contrast of the urban and the rural. Two men, in a bourgeois atmosphere of the pool and the wine, are having a nice evening, telling a rumor about an old, abandoned, horrific village. In the rumor, there is every kind of perversion and violence attributed to the village and its people, which are caused by their ill relationships with jinn. The selection of the actors in the rumor

is significant as well, first it is a man by her wife at night, and the other is the imam, the religious leader with the community in the middle of the Salah. The perversion and violence is reflected to areas of marriage and religion, two units of the society, which are reformed and reconstructed by the modernization project of the republic, bringing the civil law and secularization. The village, in the psyche of the modern Turkey, is a backward place where there is an ill form of such pre-modern institutions, whose illness is attributed to an evil form of Islam connoted to a feudal pre-republican period that is antithetic to the state Islam. The name of the village is “Derunce” that sounds like the word ‘derin’ in Turkish, which means ‘deep’ in English, connoted to the repressed, the forgotten, the past. Village becomes the ultimate horrific place of this repressed Islam/past, and its imaginary projection is represented as an uttered rumor between two bourgeois men within their modernized/Westernized surroundings.

Towards the end of the film, his friend’s warning will be meaningful, since it turns out that, behind all the malignity, there is this villager servant, who got possessed by the jinn and she performed a black magic to set the malice on the family. Thus, a villager carries the evil, the Islamic monster, in the bourgeois house. The film does not acknowledge why the villager woman set such a curse on the family. She is not even a three dimensional character. She just appears a few times, cleaning the house and serving the men. The silent, almost invisible, unimportant character who comes from a lower class, brings the end of the all the cakes and ale of a modern family. The underlying socio-economic references present the story as a revenge of the peasant from the bourgeois family.

The revenge story becomes more obvious in *Dabbe Cin Çarpması* and *Dabbe Zehr-i Cin*. In the former, super modern hodja Faruk and the psychology student Ebru hit the road to see if Faruk hodja can heal Ebru’s childhood friend Kübra who has been having psychological problems, confined to bed. Kübra lives in a village, which has a horrible and maledictory past, related to a rumor treasure-hunting incident. At her wedding, Kübra, got possessed by jinn, kills her husband. Faruk and Ebru travel far too long and got lost a few times before they could reach the village at last. Kübra’s mother, sister and aunt welcomes Ebru sincerely and Faruk and Ebru spend a few days

there as Faruk tries to solve the mystery and find the buried witchcraft objects. In the end, they find out that they are trapped by Kübra's mother and sister, because in the past Ebru's and Kübra's fathers made an agreement with jinn to find a buried treasure, but then they didn't keep their promise and buried the jinn, Sare, in the ground and Ebru's father escaped abroad taking his family with him, while the jinn haunted to Kübra and his family. Kübra's mother and sister throws Faruk hodja into a well and smashed his head with rocks and they bury Ebru alive, in order to give her body to the jinn Sare and save Kübra. The last scene opens to the dark sky of night from the point of view of Ebru, lying at the bottom of the hole dug to bury her, awakened by Kübra's mother Refika calling "Ebru, Ebru, open your eyes". On top of her there is Refika, and sister Rezzan watching at the back, with evil revengeful smiles on their faces. Ebru, tiredly and scared, whispers, "Why?" Refika makes a closing speech to Ebru, while Rezzan listens and nods her head with agreement playing tautly with some grass in her hand.

Refika: True. You didn't do anything Ebru. The one to blame is your father; your father Remzi. He ran after treasure for years. He always ran after money and assets. It is your father who set the jinn on my daughter. He gathered money, richness and everything. He took you and his family and saved you. So it was my daughter who suffered. He suffered for years. Enough. It is your turn. I will take my daughter and leave. From now on Sare will eat up your soul. She will take you captive. You will suffer now. My daughter is saved, you understand? Enough.

Rezzan: You lived your life. But now it is our turn. My sister and I will live our lives from now on (she spits on her).

The revenge in the villager is directed to an educated urban girl and it is carried along the line of inequality of opportunity. These opportunities, while related to economic successions, is in fact more related to the differences of life styles between the rural and the urban people. The opportunities provided by a modern Westernized city life is something to be desired compared to the boring, backward, routine village life. The lack in the village is a result of Islam that takes its people, and especially women captive, makes them confined to the patriarchal traditions. The villagers' vocabulary, reproduce the identification processes of the modernization, seeing the West as a desire, a model to copy, and the East as something to leave behind. The audiences watch the two villain villagers, from the eyes of the westernized, from the position of the desired who is exposed to the revenge of the rural, the other, possessed by an

Islamic monster, projecting the idea that Islam is the reason for the rural to fall behind, it is the obstacle in front of the progress. The scene is a projection of the ambivalent nature of the national character between the East and the West, so that the desired other is both a love and hate object and it is victimized in the person of Ebru, and the East is otherized, taking its revenge from its desire object.

The revenge of the rural continues in *Dabbe: Zehr-i Cin*, in which there is a modern bourgeois couple haunted by some dark forces that is related to the woman's past in a village. By a friend's advice, Dilek decides to take help from a master hodja, Belkıs wearing a black chador, but her husband, Ömer seems unwilling the whole process. When the disenchantment pursued by Belkıs takes a long time and becomes a torturing process, even causing the husband to twist ankle, the husband starts to complain angrily that he doesn't want to pursue this non-sense, and his wife's psychology deteriorates more and more and they should first see a shrink and they can do whatever later on. Belkıs stops him and asks:

B: Wait! Ömer, my son, you think that I am an ignorant quack exorcist by judging me with my dressing and accent?

Ö: I didn't say that.

B: (After giving a sermon on how she directs some of the sick people that come to her to see a doctor because not every incident is an incident of jinn). Look Ömer. At this very moment, the most revengeful, the most vicious jinn are wandering in Dilek's blood. Don't fall for their calmness. They will attack like hell at the first opportunity.

Belkıs finds out that, the curse on Dilek is related to a village, whose name Dilek learnt when she went through her wardrobe one night after she woke up with strange sounds coming from the room. She found an old photograph in which there is a whole bunch of villagers posing in black chadors. Belkıs persuades her to go to the village to uncover the secret. After Dilek arrives in the village and in an underground tunnel finds the tomb of the baby killed for her life and takes the coffin out, Belkıs reveals her real self. It turns out to be it is Belkıs who set the curse on Dilek, because they killed Belkıs's baby in order to make Dilek live. When Dilek caught a deadly illness when she was a child and her parents find a cure in a village in which the villagers were practicing a black magic. They could pass the sickness of children to their newborn babies for money. In the last scene, Dilek is tied to a chair in a dungeon like room in

the village. Belkıs comes, her chador removed head open and she, now speaks without accent.

D: Why?

B: Why? Because, your life is given to you by perverts.

D: What?

B: They killed my baby to make you live. I lived with this pain for thirty years.

D: I didn't do anything.

B: Yes, true, you are innocent. That damn villagers and your parents did this. And the Satan among your people, Dilek, are selfish, arrogant and rich. And you are their corrupted offspring.

D: It is not my fault.

B: You know? Dead are linked to this world by their offspring. They feel every drop of pain that you experience. You look at me as if I am a devil. However, I didn't want anything else than a normal life with my husband and child. They killed my husband first when I was pregnant. Then they took my child the day it was born. What for, Dilek? Who is responsible for what happened to us? If you want you can call it revenge. Blood for blood, life for life Dilek! Whatever I have learned about the jinn and magic was for this day Dilek.

The emphasis on Belkıs's accent and clothes is a reflection of the elitism in the modernization process. The republican elites' role to modernize the ignorant masses of the society, pursued in the early republican era, can be seen as a motor of social transformation towards a progress of society in terms of secularism and democracy, it is also criticized as a problem of elitism in Turkey, since it also led to an exclusive manner later in the society, despite the mobility in the social strata due to economic improvement and other social structural changes, and their domination becomes legitimate.

The rural people first migrated to the cities in 1940s and the gap between the city dwellers and the rural migrants deepened towards 1970s. Tahire Erman (1998, pp. 547-548) studied the social structure of these people and reported that they see the elites as modern people who grew up in the city, well-educated and with refined manners with speaking in a refined way, and that they live in luxurious apartments and neighborhoods, they drive expensive cars, they dress good clothes so that they have power and are wealthy so that they "are ahead of other people". Both Belkıs's and Refika's revenge is a projection of this inferiority that the rural people feel because of

the gap between the urban people and the rural peasants. Belkıs shouts it out loud to Ömer's face, whose only response is denial as an escape.

The emphasis on the economic differences or class division is both related to the elitist national character and the historical processes that led to the otherization of the rural. In 1940s due to work opportunities in the city, migration started from the rural parts of Turkey. These migrants started to live in *gecekondus*: squatter's houses and towards 1950s, with the rapid modernization in the cities, masses of rural migrants in *gecekondus* were surrounding the cities, so this was disturbing the city dwellers. During the end of the 1970s, there was an economic depression and deep political crisis in the country, when cultural tensions and social contradictions came to the fore resulting from the process of rural migration in the cities. When rural migrants arrived, they were expected to assimilate into urban ways of living, so that they can become "true urbanities". This can only be achieved through discarding traditional rural values and adopting the ways of modernizing elites. Since most migrants were failing to do so, they remained rural, even in the city. Thus they become the urban *others*. Despite the Turkish ethos that perceives the peasant as the authentic foundation of the republic; *köylü milletin efendisidir*, (which means the peasant is the master of the public) these rural migrants are uncultured and live in the fringes of the urban centers and make up the laborer class in the society, as a third world shade of modernization.

The basis of it can be seen in the village institutes, which was a project to modernize the rural peasant, they ultimately failed and as a result the rural wasn't modernized but in time urban bourgeoisie holiday villages, new villas were made in the countryside. The bourgeois villas with the haunted by the villages nearby are a projection of this ethos.

After the rural migrants arrived in the cities, they started to live in *gecekondus*: squatter's house, which is a spatial condition located at the intersection between the city and the village (Özbek 1997, p.227):

*In the place of the old shanty gecekondus there have arisen shanty multistoried apartment complexes as subcities with virtually no urban amenities on their*



*outskirts. In recent years, the cleavage has markedly increased between peripheral neighborhoods and the sub-urban villa towns of the upper-middle class, and in the urban core, the commercial and financial centers, shopping malls, and five-star hotels. The new urban spaces constructed for presumably educated and high-income customers are promoted for their convenient and sterile lifestyles protected from the physical and "cultural" contamination of the city. The differentiation of living, working and consumption spaces for different classes and groups in greater Istanbul signifies a social fracture that is splitting Turkey into at least two unequal societies, if not into more.*

These rural migrants created an urban culture of peasant generation; a popular identity embedded between the rural and the urban. They live in the urban squatter settlements with unbroken ties to their rural native villages. When most migrants failed to become true urbanities, they ended up developing a synthesis of the rural and the urban features in their self, since they were exposed to the modern ways of life in the city but not were fully successful into adopting them in the desired way. Most of them continue to identify themselves with the village they come from. Even the ones, who are better off economically and have the chance to integrate into the urban middle class, admit not to have broken their ties with their kin and village. While they adopt some urban values, they also preserve rural ones (Erman 1998, pp. 545-546).

Erman states that, these people continue their identification with their rural ties since it provides them a "material and psychological support in the new environment, as well as a mechanism of social control, especially in the case of women". Erman believes that this perception of the urban elites in the eyes of the rural migrants is two of the reasons why they seek identification with their village. The first reason is that urban elites have higher qualities in terms of culture, knowledge and education and the second reason is that they have an easier access to material resources and power. Therefore they believe it is not possible for them to enter their communities and socialize with urbanities, and that they can only be with a community at their own levels. Rural migrants are aware that they are conservative, rural, a lower strata in the gaze of the urbanities and they know that elites look down on them. Therefore they hold a low esteem. One participant declared they are exposed to exclusion and that elites pretend as if rural migrants do not exist and reject them (Erman 1998, pp. 547-548).

Because of this negative image of the rural migrants among the urban upper classes, some upwardly moving rural migrants reject their relation with their rural connections; they hide their past so that they can become true urbanities. This rejection is strongly felt among the women rural migrants and they generally respond by isolating themselves from their rural community, especially because they lack the needed economic resources to distance themselves from the *gecekondu* settlement so that they can only distance themselves psychologically through isolation, preserving the hope of becoming a true urbanity one day. Some of the rural migrants move up without rejection, accepting their rural origin without feelings of inferiority, they act like villager when they are at the village and they try to act modern when they are with the modern (Erman 1998, pp. 550-553).

There is an imaginary collective culture of the migrant culture. It is strongly associated with the masculine ethos, but which is also ambiguous, since there is this inferiority feelings; a sense of being devalued under the gaze of a dominant other. Therefore there are emotional dispositions, subordinated self-positions. The inhabitants of the *Varoş*, the proverbial immigrant neighborhood-suburb, is actually an urban dwelling where there is poverty, rural migrants, and Muslim lifestyle and respectively there is veiling and patriarchy ruling in this area. In contrast to the values of Turkish modernization in which middle-class, urbanity, secular way of living, the *varoş* is a place of backwardness in the eyes of Kemalists, like a cultural pollution. Since Islamic Justice and Development Party came to power in 2002, *varoş* has gained some upward socio-economic mobility, and that the Islamic identity and lifestyle attained some degree of social capital. 1980s was the time when new political rulers generated right wing populist policies and saw these rural migrants as potential voters and played cards on them. Then in 1990s Welfare Party grew by winning support from *gecekondu* places, and the party's mottos revolve around the lifestyles.

The rural vs. urban contrast depicted in the films above, dissolved into a more emphasize on the rural people alone by situating the narrative in the rural protagonists this time. The films *Siccin* (2014) and *Azazil* (2014), take some lumpen lower income people living in the poor rural parts of the city as protagonists. These films portray the

perverted relationships between these rural city dwellers. *Siccin* takes place in a *gecekondu* setting. Öznur has an affair with and gets pregnant from her married cousin Kudret, who is a rude violence prone man treating both Öznur and his wife badly. While Kudret tries to get rid of Öznur, she acts “bitchy” and goes to a village and finds a *büyücü*<sup>20</sup> and puts a spell to set jinn on Kudret’s wife Nisa, in order to have Kudret to herself. Nisa is a religious and sacrificing woman, looking after her sick bedridden mother-in-law and blind daughter. Every character in the film is depicted defective, a defect attributed to the rural, in contrast to the ideals of the modernization. Öznur and Kudret are having an incest relationship, which is more common in the village and in the rural communities in the city. Kudret is a lumpen man who is at one hand committed to the traditions like going to the mosque on Fridays with his community, but on the other shows no respect for his wife who is a real devotee of Islam; she is portrayed as a real good Muslim praying five times a day and having good intentions for everyone. While Öznur is otherized with her evil intentions in contrast to Nisa, Nisa is depicted as an innocent victim. However her innocence as a caretaker is depicted as a flaw as well because she is too submissive, and her submissiveness is equally stressed with her religious beliefs, those religious beliefs that cannot save her from the infliction of the jinn. The motif of Islam becomes ambivalent, since the hodja in the village can use it efficiently to bring up a monster out of it, but Nisa’s belief seems useless except from making her a submissive woman in contrast to Öznur who is way more assertive than her. Both of these woman, one good, religious and submissive, and the other, bad, and assertive (and she is religious as she goes to a hodja, at least she believes in the power of Islam) are otherized in the film, in terms of their level of submissiveness and assertiveness, since they both act under the same cruel patriarchy. While the defect is objectified in the blindness of the little daughter, whose warped eyes disturbs the audience with an uncanny feeling, the grandmother is paralyzed in bed, lifeless. Towards the middle of the films, the grandmother possessed by the jinn, gets out of the bed and kills herself by boiling water, and at the end, the little girl turns out to be the one jinn possessed since from the beginning, the one who carries the evil.

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<sup>20</sup> An Islam sorcerer who practices black magic

*Azazel* takes place in a *varoş* setting as well. Sinem is a university student living with her aunt and uncle in a rural part of Istanbul. Her aunt puts a spell on her, to get rid of her so that she can have Sinem's boyfriend Tarık. The film has lots of perverted sexual references given with the jinn encounter scenes. Her uncle peeps Sinem through the key hole when she is having a bath, at the same time when she is exposed to the effects of possession for the first time, a dark smoke enters her from the back of her neck. Then when she first encounters two jinn in the house in the shape of her aunt and uncle, the uncle one says "We decided to *have a child* with your aunt" (In Turkish the uncle says "Yengenle çocuk yapmaya karar verdik"; *çocuk yapmak* although serves to the same meaning with "to have a child", can best be translated as "to make a child" which also refers to the sexual activity as a means behind the intention). Then, when Sinem faints and is hospitalized after this incident, at the hospital the jinn in her uncle's shape rapes and deflowers her. When Sinem is totally possessed, not to forget that the film is also a Turkified version of *The Exorcist*, she shows sexual flirtation towards her uncle, which makes him astonished. The jinni returns the repressed sexuality within the family members living in the same house. Turkish audience is familiar with real stories about incestuous relationships common among rural families broadcasted in daytime reality programs on TV. The film plays on that cultural knowledge but attributes this perversion to the projection of jinn. In the end it is not the uncle himself but his projection in the body of the jinn who deflowers the girl. We never see the uncle and the aunt having sex, rather she rejects him in bed. Although the aunt desires Sinem's boyfriend she can never succeed in having him, but the uncle jinn at the hospital tells Sinem that her boyfriend is sleeping with her aunt and that he always desired Sinem himself. In a fantasy level the uncle desires his beautiful young niece and interestingly in terms of the uncle, it is not clear, in the film, if he really peeped his niece or not, since all the incidents happen synchronically with jinn encounters. The Islamic monster embodies the unrepressed libido of these rural people who are stuck in their boring and frustrating life. The aunt and the uncle tie Sinem to the bed after she attacked them, and they go to the living room and talk:

U: This girl has literally been possessed by jinn. My mother used to tell me such things when I was a kid, I wouldn't take it seriously.

A: Who cares your mother? Tell me what we're going to do now?

U: How the hell should I know? Doctors reject her. If we go to the police, what are we going to tell them? We are left alone with your spinster niece.  
 A: You are a piece of shit. Even that young boy Akın took care of us better.  
 U: (*Stands up with anger*) You consider that child equal to your husband?  
 A: That child is more man than you are.  
 U: (*strangles her*) Are you blaming my manliness? I will kill you. When did you do your wifely duties to blame me?  
 A: Get out of my house!  
 U: Your house! You call it your house now?  
 A: Yes, my house. If we didn't inherit this house from my father, we would suffer on your chickenfeed.  
 U: God damn you! (*He spits on her face and leaves and jinn kill him outside*).

This conversation is at the turning point of the film and serves as the transition to the resolution, at one point fulfilling the dream of the aunt, because her husband leaves the house, dies and Akın comes, and on another level it brings the epiphany of Akın so that he can help Sinem. On the total, all the film narrative worked to come to this point to realize this scene as a wish fulfillment of the aunt in one level, and prove her wrong, and process the collective desire in which the girl is saved and the aunt is punished.

Not only the order of the conversation within the narrative, but also, the order within the conversation is significant as it offers a reduced form of the plot, a summary, which projects the narrative crystalized in an unconscious level. First they talk about the girl's situation, which reminds the man, his childhood family education first and then the difficulty of taking the responsibility of the girl who he calls a "spinster". His irresponsibility gives the aunt the opportunity to praise Akın and criticize her husband and his sexual performance. This provokes her husband to use violence in accord with her aims so that she could kick him out. There comes in the very end, the underlying problem, the reason for all this drama, the economic difficulties they are having. The man leaves. In an unconscious level, the Islamic monster occurs as a threat to the order within the family; the order which is built on economic and sexual repression. As the jinn destroys the order, the underneath layers come up one by one. The film poses the Islamic monster to decode the innate levels that go like: (1) childhood traditional and religious education in the family, (2) family responsibility and sexuality and (3) economic depression.

Akın is depicted as a higher income person compared to the uncle and the aunt and a more modern man compared to the uncle. The aunt sees Akın, as an escape from the

confinement of her marriage and lifestyle, since after this scene she calls Akin and opens up to him, begging with a sexual flirtation to build a life together. At the end the jinn kill the aunt and uncle, while her boyfriend saves Sinem. Akin represents the modern element, while Sinem is depicted semi-modern since she is also a university student. The modern elements are saved when the monster is wiped off, while the rural as the *other* collapses.

Compared to the earlier films, that take bourgeois places and characters, the latter films are more horrific. The failure of the two films, *Araf* and *Cehennem* can be linked with this, since they take place in the city with urban people, though they have inflictions of recalling the signs of periphery, like the abandoned wax factory in the latter. On one hand it is related to the directors' getting more and more experienced in terms of creating the uncanny effect in the films, but also this uncanny effect, in general, can best be created in the rural settings with rural characters. Consequently, the usage of the village and the *varoş* occupies more and more place in the films wiping the visibility of the urban in different extents.

*Şeytan-ı Racim* (2013) is another significant film, in terms of the depiction of the rural. It starts in the city in the student house of Emrah and Salih, two rural background students. Then Emrah moves to his parents' house in a rural part, because of the things that happened him in the city. Then his father takes him to a hodja in a village, whom we learn at the end to be the Satan himself. In the end Satan manages to kill Salih but leaves Emrah, and his father could only find him with the help of gendarme, since the village that the Satan resided has been an abandoned place for thirty years. His father finds him with the dead body of Salih beside in the ruins of a house.

This is an extended version of the theme of abandoned villages of the previous films. Those villages were portrayed horrific with supernatural things happening, jinn wandering around and both the characters and the audience knew that it was the place of the horrific. However, in this one, both the characters and the audience learn it in the end. The village turns out to be a non-existent imaginary one, a projection of the Satan, the monster. The story began in the city, moved to the provincial and ended in the

village but the village was not there. As the self, with its nightmare, has a journey back, to the past, to the repressed, to the source of its nightmare, it actually has a journey to the self, which is no longer there. The modernization process, in its urge to move upwards and westwards, carries its anxiety within the subject, the anxiety, which is locked in the subject, is a result of the very process of the continuous movement of catching the train of the West, getting haunted by the repressed past, which is only existent as imaginary.

Then the village becomes symbolic other, as a place of the repressed Islam, which is non-existent; it is the horrific projection of the return of the repressed. This negative imaginary village, is represented as the opposite of the urban, the modern, so that the films are actually a fantasy projection of this divide, and this projection actually becomes more and more abstract in some films in the rural is represented in a latent form.

The films always present the apparent divide by differentiating, either, urban people and rural peasants, or urban spaces and rural areas, or rural people in urban areas, or urban people in rural areas, as I discussed at the beginning and there are films that create a fantasy space, another dimension that belongs to the monster in which it sucks its victims and this dimension has rural characteristic explicitly or implicitly.

*Marid* takes place in the city. The protagonist Ayla now married to Serkan, and they live in a middle class urban house. She was possessed by an evil jinni in the past and now that the jinni returns. By flashbacks the film shows us Ayla's childhood, and we see Ayla from a subjective camera, assuming the gaze of the jinni, a blurry and blue governing gaze, signifying its being unhuman. As the camera approaches her, she pushes back and covers herself with her arms squeezed in a corner of the house. When the jinni attacks, although her body stays in the same room, her self falls into another dimension, again blue governing, a place in the woods, where she runs around until the jinni finds and attacks her. Similarly, in the present time, when the jinni returns and starts to attack and kill the people in the house, the same pattern goes; when it attacks them first, until it manages to kill them, people fall into another dimension in their

minds, a forest in which they run helplessly, whereas their body is still in present time struggling. First the jinn attacks them in the woods that they fall, then we see their dead body in present time lying on the floor of the house. Although it is a very easy and cheap trick, deprived of a creative imagination, the method that the director chose, because of its simplicity, like it is the first thing that comes to mind, gives in a simple ideology. The simplicity of the otherization is so clear that the film cracks open in front of us, the jinni, and the fear of Islam is something within the normality, but in a fantasy dimension, it exists, in an imaginary extended dimension both linked to this dimension and broken from this dimension of secular modern life in Turkey. The presence of the jinn, its attack, its imposing itself, its destruction comes from its taking the people from the everyday normal reality of secular Turkey, and in this film, it becomes an external dimension, related and associated to this dimension, but can only be entered through the monster. It is an extension in the psyche; it is the dimension of the end of all the life of the secular person. The existence of the Jinn makes it like an imaginary feeling, which is a different representation of the village, of the pre-modern, the nature. And in that dimension they get stuck and die.

This kind of abstract dimensions can actually be found in the other films that we disregarded like *Cehennem*, the abandoned wax factory and its relevance to past, and the imaginary Arabic things written, or in *Araf*, which means *the purgatory* in Turkish, the film starts with two characters sitting on a roof top of a high building. One asks, “How do you feel?” the other answers, “Nothing, in limbo”. What they are talking with the background of the high rising buildings in the suburbs recalls the experience of the people living in the divide of the east and the west actually, but the divide was not given in terms of the locations of rural and the urban, but it became more of matter of psychological ends of the tradition and the modern, and the way people experience it being stuck in between.

Similarly, in *El Cin*, there is this dimension given at the end of the film, a powerful scene, in which the characters are stuck forever and cannot come back. *Ammar* and *Ümmü Sibyan* are also good examples of the divide of the psyche in terms of dimensions. This interpretation of films, in terms of the imaginary representations of



the East and the West, is possible for all the films both studied in this thesis and made in Turkey, Even *Dabbe* (1) gives that dimensional thing in a latent form, by attributing a yellow gloom and plastic atmosphere to the normality with Atatürk pictures here and there.

*Musallat* and *Musallat 2: Lanet* are very successful in creating this divide both in abstract and concrete forms. *Musallat* reflects the psyche of a man, and how it is divided into two, the East and the West, and how he relates himself with these two margins by otherization and identification processes. In the west the east is otherized, and in the east he is the most evil, and always a part of him lacks. Suat, the protagonist is a villager and he is in love with Nurcan planning to marry her. As the time approaches, he goes to Germany to make some money in order to marry her. As he spends time working in Germany, a jinni that is actually in love with Nurcan since her childhood, comes to the village in the shape of Suat and marries her. As nobody understands that it is not Suat, Suat in Germany starts to see horrible things in his room and he cannot contact with his family whatever he does. He thinks that he has psychological problems but the audiences know that it is the same jinni that haunts him trying to make him crazy and keeps him captive there preventing him from going back to his village so that it can spare Nurcan to itself. The jinni is the double of Suat in the village, in the East while the real self of Suat is in Germany, in the West. Suat is an outsider in the West, an Easterner and more importantly a peasant from Anatolia stuck in the cradle of civilization, projecting the inferiority of backwardness grounded in the national psyche. Suat, in the West is haunted by horrific images of his lover Nurcan, who freaks him out in one scene in the bathroom and in the other scene on top of him, during an intercourse he tries to have with a prostitute. The otherization of woman's sexuality is given by sexual activation of a monstrous woman, depicted in normality as a villager girl who is obedient in the village to such an extent that she doesn't question the new weird Suat. Back in the village Nurcan, is silent and submissive, and a painful sexual intercourse scene, of their first marriage night, emphasizes this. It is not a scene of two lovers making love to each other, but a dominant man penetrating a woman who instead of enjoying it, suffers in pain without any resistance. Suat, as the jinni, is discreet and remote at home; he doesn't talk, disappears sometimes and comes out of

nowhere and he never sleeps. He wanders at home at night uncannily and watches out from the window, staring in the dark emptiness out in the village. The audiences know that he travels between spaces and reaches the real Suat in the West and haunts him there not to come back. The contrast between two 'Suat's, one monstrous in the dark empty village, the other victimized in the middle of the urban. The monstrous villager Suat is larger than his present time, he fantasizes a Suat in the city, but that Suat sinks under that West. The self and the otherization processes are complicated and ambivalent.

*Karadedeler Olayı* has a significant place in this argument. It is the sole village horror film. The film, all of it signifies the repressed, and the camera there projects the village in our minds. That village is a place of the unknown, the inexplicable. We cannot see any monsters there, because the village itself is the monster, it is the uncanny place. *Karadedeler Olayı* is an imitation of *Blair Witch Project*, but despite that, a good attempt of horror, and it takes place directly in the village and the film does not use Islamic motifs directly, it is just the village itself that is the horrific. This village is always in us, reminding itself, as we want to be more modern, we remember the village deep inside, and that struggle is projected in the films.

In all these films, the village, the rural, represents the East, the tradition, the repressed Islam, the past. The Islam is horrific because it is related to the pre-republic, pre-modern Islam projected as a signifier, like it is in culture, to the backward village and its representation the rural and the *varoş* in the city. The *varoş*, the rural is the representation of the East, and the antithesis of the modernization project, it is something to be kept away from in order to progress to the level of contemporary civilizations. The otherization mechanism works in such a way that, the rural people, with their deeds are otherized in the films reminding the lyrics of the anonymous Turkish children song.

There is a village out there far away,  
That village is our village  
Even if we don't go

Even if we don't see  
That village is our village<sup>21</sup>

### 3.4 WOMAN AS THE MICROCOSM

The representation of woman is always the same in the entire world and the cinemas. Woman is always otherized like Wood's list, the monster either victimizes the woman, and threat of the monster is always related to the feminine, to her subordinate sexuality. And it is always related to the patriarchal system and its methods to control women's sexuality, power or seeing it as a threat.

Thus the same story is true for Turkish horror genre. Just with extensions to what it is universally. Woman, in Turkey are more repressed in terms of traditions and sexuality. And the emancipation of woman after the Ottoman, the crisis of women's identity is way more than men. There are still strong traditions in this country and more repression on woman and her assertion in public and private life. The big distance that is taken in terms of women's emancipation within the last 100 years is so huge that, the crisis is also so huge. There are a lot of educated modern alone woman in public life today and there are societal pressures on the women by judging their sexuality or submissive roles that most of them deny, and even if they submit to the roles that the traditional patriarchal society expect from them, there is a big struggle again in private lives of woman.

I am trying to say that, either free or submissive woman are struggling in this country more than the females in the west, because the modernity that raised woman today also clashes with the traditions in such a way that there is a big crisis.

And if the emancipation of the woman is the symbol of the modernization of woman, if woman is the carries of the representation and iconography of the modernization project in Turkey, then, her experience is in a way a microcosms of the national

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<sup>21</sup> Orada bir köy var çok uzakta / o köy bizim köyümüzdür / gitmesek de görmesek de / o köy bizim köyümüzdür.

struggles of the crisis of identity in terms of the transition from the tradition to the modern and the struggle of keeping the balance between the East and the West.

There is an ambivalent role of women between the modern and the traditional has a lot to do with the Westernization project. The recurring theme of finding a balance between the modernity of the West and the tradition of the East is a paradoxical burden of Turkish identity

*Perhaps, one can argue that the women's world is like a microcosm of this paradox ingrained within the Turkish psyche... women have been burdened with the task of being tight-rope walkers between tradition and modernity...They are expected to be modern in appearance while retaining some traditional virtues such as modesty which would keep them away from stepping into men's realm. Those women who are unable to achieve such a delicate balance by either being too modern as to warrant promiscuity or by being too traditional for not keeping up with novel fashions are usually pushed to the margins of society. The former are usually portrayed as too ambitious, and promiscuous 'loose women' while the latter as old-fashioned and outmoded types. The tension between modernity and tradition depicted in the behavior and dress codes of women exists albeit in a less apparent way in other domains of the Turkish social life as well (Kadioğlu).*

In these films it's both the projection of woman struggle as a microcosms and also the fear of male patriarchy towards the change of woman's roles.

A big number of films that have Islamic motifs, these Islamic horror films, is the imitation of Exorcist. Apparently, the exorcism and the possession of the women work good on the silver screen, and there are many films that take this theme as a subject. However it is a matter of direct imitation and Turkification of the exorcist film directly. The first is *Semum* and the next one is *Azazil*, the two films have great similarities with the Exorcist. Actually what is copied is the possession of the body by an evil entity. However, there are great differences because this time it is Turkification that Savaş Arslan talks about. While in the cinema of West, the empowerment of the women through her sexuality and through her differentiation from the patriarchy, is seen as something dangerous for the patriarchy, so that it is otherized and the evil is attributed to such a situation, which is a conservative attitude. However the same attitude shows that there is a space in the society for such a freedom and the films have reactionary inflictions towards these and punish such kinds of woman in the fantasy realm of the film.

However, in Turkish films, there is this conservatism of Islam tradition, the Islam in Turkey, do not show woman like that. Maybe *Ammar* and *Muska* is very different in that sense and maybe *Musallat 1* and *2* but in most of the films, women are victimized to a very passive role, and still in that role they are victimized, like a double repression, which shows that women in Turkey are not really free and still even in this situation they are found dangerous. While in the west woman are dangerous since they are coded to the symbolic universe of the woman, rather than the universe of the father, so it is a more fear of the feminine, the nature of the feminine, like Carol said. However in Turkey, woman's danger is reduced to her virginity and the same woman feels sorry for that. *Azazil* jinn rape scene is important in that sense. And in *Semum* the woman is actually stuck in the patriarch and the film is with the patriarch, her conversation in the kitchen with Husband and the dinner scene and the effect of Banu.

I say the woman is the victim in almost all films in Turkey and the monster or the system always punishes her. And she is the monstrous, even in every film poster there is this transformed possessed woman.

I believe it is deeply related with the post 1980 and 1990 period when there is more woman asserting their freedom, they are educated and strong, And there is high number of divorces and unmarried woman against such a traditional society, which continues the feelings of frustration for both the woman and the man, and deep down everybody feels it is the woman's roles changing, and woman are to be blamed.

On the other hand most male characters are portrayed as very good partners, which is the opposite of most females in Turkey and especially when we think of the murders and rapes in Turkey, how they are abused vs. the picture is the how the things are the opposite in a negative reading, an inversion.

When Canan, the protagonist in *Semum*, starts to act weirdly, her husband takes her first to a psychologist. During the session Canan says that the doctor would not believe her and think that she is seeing hallucination, the doctor says:

No, no. I can assure you that I will not approach that simply. Miss Canan, think about human as a mirror. A mirror that reflects everything and everybody that comes in front of it. One day if that mirror breaks by any reason, it continued to reflect but the reflection will be distorted.

In *Musallat 2*, there is a female sorcerer who is nothing like hodja but, a dark female character who works for jinn and büyü, actually, there are male *büyücüs* (sorcerers) like this, in the coming films as well. And there is this fortuneteller, who can speak like a psychologist, she has wisdom to see and this makes her uncanny. And films starts with the girl speaking to her friend how their emotional life is and their conversation ends with the büyü story. So I guess the element of psychology is deconstructed in the film, whereas there is no hodja, factor as well.

Next two films *Dabbe: Bir Cin Vakası* and *Dabbe Cin Çarpması*. Again there is a family, the woman is haunted and the hodja comes and finds a büyü related in the house and makes rituals to get rid of büyü. The woman has psychological report implying her being stuck in her family roles.

Their conversations are important, but the more important things is that this latent sexual repression in the film, that we always think that there is this flirtation between two characters which motivates them to challenge each other, which we feel more when the female leaves the hodja at one point, and hodja pursues what she was doing.

The synthesis of the east and the west is represented in the two different genders. Islam is the male, patriarch; modern is the woman, the modernization project. The films sees the potential beauty in the mixture of the two, again the synthesis but modern comes from the female, as it is the iconography of the modernization project and Islam the tradition comes from the male, the patriarch, which is meaningful in two level. At one level it is almost what is experienced in Turkey, most females have been evolved socially more thanks to the modernization project of the republic compared to males who didn't feel the need to. The thing is, the social evolution of woman in Turkey in the last 100 years is more than man because women were emancipated from the Ottoman. But men pursue their traditional self, at a certain level, while it is a biggest rupture for women.

The film offers such a synthesis of the west, and this is the second level, that in the collective unconscious it seems modernization is coded as female, as feminine whereas the tradition and past male, since Islam and traditions are more related to a stronger mode of patriarchy, however, modernization with its iconography of women's clothes and emancipation, is coded to the sphere of women, in which women are able to defend and express themselves assertively, but this assertiveness is also coded as something negative as well, and this also created ambivalence. A generation of women, who are liberated from traditions but seeks for and are seen in need of male supervision, a rebalancing of women's (sexual) freedom with the protectiveness of a male which is a traditional mode. Then this is the synthesis in terms of nuclear affairs in modern city life, and this is the projection of its struggle.

*Marid* starts with conjuration scene, and we learn that our protagonist was attacked and possessed by a jinn in her childhood and she was rescued by a very good hodja and this hodja gave her charm and she has a normal life since then, She now has a husband, wears modern clothes and has a regular life like everyone else. But suddenly she starts to see things, and we learn that she lost her charm, the talisman, and now her past haunts her, the repressed is returned. Her life style, when presented like this, becomes to emphasize her normality against the threat after her, her normal modern way starts to alert us, seems like stresses symbol, like the very experience of modernization in general, but also especially for woman, who still feel uncomfortable in their clothes. It is a projection of the unconscious of the sexual discomfort of women in Turkey in term of their bodily expression.

*Musallat 2*, takes place between the city and the village. The girl goes to the village, called by her past and finds the house she was born into. When the girl gets in the house and her mother calls her in the dark, the film moves to the past, the very otherized past. This past is normal at the beginning. The depiction of the past village is something familiar to us, from our normal villages, and the film gives us the reason why it went wrong. Mostly it was the tradition, and ignorance of the villagers that called the evil. In the end the passive villagers, killing themselves is a portrayal of how these villagers lost themselves without rationality. And now that past is so repressed

in the dark, the girl finds and returns it and actually because she is a part of that past. Although she is an elite white Turk, she in blood belong to the village, she comes from the deep bottom. And all her years this past called her, reminded itself, and she went to doctors and everything, thus it was a struggle of the Turkish psyche, going against its real essence, its history, it's past. Her struggle finished when she gives in to her reality, which is not a reality for us. Her significance is that she is how we feel ourselves in our modernity, our past always call us. The protagonist is a white Turk, and she visits the village, however she is related to that village by her past, by her very self, and she turns out to be the seed of the *Ifrit* at the end. In *Musallat 2*, this division is given through the microcosms of a girl, who belongs to the village but lived in the city a long time, and now she returns back, as a return of the repressed.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

This thesis intends to make a textual analysis of the representation of the monster through a utilization of Marxism and psychoanalysis to interpret different applications of otherization in Turkish horror films that use Islamic motifs. Taking Robin Wood's conception of *otherness* and the *return of the repressed* in focus, the thesis discusses 'What does the monster stand for?'

Robin Wood asserted that "to study the evolution of a genre is to study the evolution of national (un)conscious" (2003, p. 118), since films are the projections of the national unconscious and the conscious and horror films are the best to project social traumas of a nation. In a similar vein Kracauer discussed films are the projections of inner lives of a nation. Moreover he discussed that, the technique, the content, and the evolution of the films of a nation are deeply related to the dominant psychological states of a nation since films are watched and done collectively so the collective desires of the masses. Similarly Kracauer asserted, films are the "outward projections of inner urges" and if films are made and watched collectively, they project the psychological states of the masses, so that the working class needs to be studied.

Then as Ryan and Kellner discussed, the cinematic conventions as ideological mechanisms that inherently carry the dominant ideology, and that films are the projections of the dominant ideology and the apparatus of the cinema and the language of the films and that the applications in the films work like the unconscious. If one studies the dominant institutions and traditional values of a given society, one can figure out the representational codes and this helps one to decode the conventional codes of the films. In term of horror films, the supernatural elements and demonic monsters in the horror films represent threats to social norms and existing systems, and such kind of use increases during extreme social transformation years.

Within the last 10 years in Turkey, there have been made more than 40 horror films, more than a third of them have Islamic motifs. In these Islamic horror films, there are Islamic motifs, such as an Islam related monster, suras and verses at the beginning or at the end of the films, Hodjas, Koran and Arabic letters. The horror films that make

use of Islamic motifs, build their normality in an everyday of secular Turkey, and an Islamic monster comes and disturbs this system.

The important question is whether Islam is situated as a threat to social normality and the existing institutional order or whether it is used as a motif to punish other threats to the social normality. And if there are other threats, what are they and how do they relate to Islam that manifests a function before them?

In order to answer these questions, one needs to look at the presentation of the monster, the depiction of the normality and the function of the Islamic motif between their relationship; the formula that was suggested by Robin Wood. In the range of the question of representation; ‘What does the monster stand for?’ then; what does the Islamic monster stand for in these films? Is it the return of the repressed Islam, borrowing the term from Robin Wood, or is it the return of the repressive Islam, as the punisher?

If the monster or the things otherized are related to Islam, a straightforward approach will tell Islam is otherized in these films. However, when the narrative is taken into consideration together with the way the norm is set, the way the monster relates to the normality and the different aspects of the relationship between the two, such as, what is punished, what is otherized, how is the threat warded off, one can see it is not simply Islamophobia that is at work.

The films, in a broad sense, build their normality in a modern everyday of Turkey. There is either a group of friends or a married couple who gradually start to experience some inexplicable supernatural events. At first these people try to find some rational explanations for the happenings until their explanations come short and they understand that the entire catastrophe has its source from a demonic being—generally the jinn—an Islam related monster. However, later we learn that, this monster is resurrected by either an evil character or by some suspicious events to harm certain innocent people who, in the end, are saved by a hodja, a Muslim practitioner and

schoolmaster, and the evil character pays for their dues and is killed by the monster as a punishment.

It is difficult to say that these films situate Islam itself as a threat to normality, at least not in a direct way, when an Islam master, hodja comes and reestablishes the order and wards off the threat even if the threat comes from within the Islam. The narrative of the films imply that something within the normality, that is invisible and belonging to the normality (the uncanny?) creates the potential threat to normality itself, which in turn either awakens the monstrous aspects of the Islamic or monsterizes Islam itself or both. There is this apparent ambivalence in the nature of the monster and the motif of Islam, since both the monster and the savior come from the same source; Islam, which is also an ambivalent motif being both the source of the horrific and the very cure itself.

There is this ambivalence, which is in fact linked to the ambivalent mode of Turkish psyche and its attitude towards modernity and religion. Having been found less than a hundred years ago after the decline of Ottoman Empire, Turkish republic is grounded both in the secularist ideals of the Western civilization and the Islamic cultural traditions of the empire. For the founding cadre the target was to carry the new country to the civilizational stance of the Western countries through Westernization by balancing it with traditional values in order not to lose indigenous culture and they manufactured the new Turkish nationality accordingly. Every Turkish citizen, in Turkish formal education, is taught to find a balance between the ideals of the West and the values of East. Considering the geographical position of Turkey as a bridge between the Western world and the Eastern world literally, both the country's political sphere and the socio-psychological structure of the cultural sphere was shaped by the concept of "the synthesis of the West and the East" which is also the definition of the dominant ideology of Turkey. In the imaginary consciousness of Turkish nation, they exist on 'the bridge', having turned their faces to the West in order to progress and adopt modernity and leave the backward past behind, the very past that is connoted with Ottoman, Islam and the East. However, progress needs to be balanced with the cultural values and these cultural values are related to the past, the traditions and eventually Islam. Trying to find a balance between the modernity of the West and the

cultural values of Islam lead to an ideological crisis in the collective consciousness of Turkish people, since ideologically Islam is otherized as being coded backwards and too much Westernization was coded as a threat to cultural indigenesness. Then otherization of Islam, together with all of its connotations, is embedded with the otherization of the too modern ways of life in the synthesis of the West and the East, manufacturing such an identity, which struggles to find a balance between, through the effort of defining the correct way to modernism, which is a synthesis of the opposite poles. The definition is right in the balance which continuously defines its otherization borders in order to keep its balance that on the one side is too much Westernization, a kind of Westernization that excludes the traditional values, that is an extent of modern way of living against conservative values, and on the other side is the total un-westernized Islam, that is so backward to the extent of being deprived of the progressive elements of the modernity such as technology, a civilized and secular life. Then the self, in the cultural identity, looking from the West otherizes something from itself, through otherization of Islam, but Islam still exists in both the traditional ways and respectively influences the unconscious and otherizes the “too modern” ways, which creates an schizophrenic/split identity.

The Islamic motif has a certain function; the Islamic monster marks the exceeding the borders of the dominant ideology; one end of the borders is too much westernization such as sexually active single woman, abortion or any sexual affair out of wedlock. The other end is any deed that is related to the pre-modern Islam such as practicing *büyü*, (and in many films this two polar ends are mingled in one character) which in the end awakens the Islamic monster and it comes and punishes. Therefore these films project the search of balance between the modern and the tradition in one level.

However, this search is pursued from Islamic lenses since the punisher monster comes from Islam and the *hodja* who restores the system comes from Islam as well. Even in the apocalyptic versions, when the system is not restored at the end due to a total catastrophe, the Koran verses at the beginning or at the end of the films suggest that the salvation lies in Islam, and that all this catastrophe takes place because in modern life, Islam and its ways are forgotten, denied or ignored, and now that it returns to

remind itself. If the monster is warded off and the system is restored, it is again modernity, but now it owes its salvation to Islam, a modernity that is synthesized with Islam; a modern Islam or an Islamic modernity.

The films project a search for the synthesis of the modern and Islam in a fantasy level, through a narrative in which a “monstrous Islam” comes and threatens the system, and then a “savior Islam” (if it exists) comes and reestablishes the system through some spiritual practices that include Islamic symbols. In one way, Islam threatens the modern elements, it claims its place in the modernity, and so it redefines modernity by restoring it at the end (if there is restoration in the end). Also Islam in this narrative not only defines a new the modernity but also defines a new Islam in the modernity, which means, the restoration is again a secular modernity in the films, but a new modernity, that is offered to be better than the previous one. Moreover the ambivalence furthers with the other motifs as well; although the films define a modernity through an Islamic filter, by reorganizing the Westernized ways of the people in the films, the protagonists are generally modern characters, rather than religious ones. They do not comply with an Islamic order, but they recognize the threat and the influence of Islam; modernity continues with recognition of Islam. Thirdly, the films depict at least two forms of Islam, that are counter, contradictory, dichotomous and also constituent of one another, which is the ambivalence that construct the monster and govern the films. Lastly, despite the ambivalence, the films always depict Islam monstrous in one way or another.

The variety of Islam forms, in the films, is understandable because within the republican ethos, there has been promoted a form of Islam that is synched with the morals of the state, which sees the political Islam of Ottoman Empire as a threat, so it otherized Ulema, hodjas and many other Islamic symbols, so that these were seen backwards and coded taboo for the republican state. The spheres of different Islam understandings and definitions remained branching out new definitions through the political history of modernization in Turkey.

An Islamist party, AKP came to power and laid its hegemony for more than a decade, for sure, influenced films to take “creeping Islam” as a subject, at least as a direct influence and as a response to a fundamental political change in a secularist system. Naturally the rising Islam brought its fearful reactions in the secularists, and a jargon generated around the fearful scenarios that the nation will go backwards and lose the republic and the secular way of life and become like Iran. All women will be covered like they are in Islam countries, and they will be banned from work life and submit to their husbands. Islamophobia became a trending topic in both academic discourses and in public life then, assuming the fears of these secularists as paranoid projections. Whether theirs was a paranoia or not, or whether Turkey may become like Iran is not a concern of this study, but in terms of the study of these films, building their horror around a horrific Islamic motif, these fear projections, without regarding them being assumptions or foreseeing, the Islamic fear projection is meaningful, since people were literally afraid. As a matter of fact, the fear of secularists was not totally irrational, since radical Islamist groups were at work. One of the events is the Sivas Katliamı (Sivas Massacre) in 1994, when more than 30 intellectuals were killed in a hotel because of a fire set by a furious Islamist group. In 1995 Abdullah Gül, former president of republic, was then a member of Refah party, gave an interview to a journalist in *The Guardian* and his words were interpreted in public as his party intends to bring an end to the republican period; he said “if 60 per cent of Ankara’s population is living in shacks, then the secular system has failed and we definitely want to change it.” Secularists feared that Islamists politicians aimed to bring the end of the secularism. Thus the narrative of an Islamic monster coming to the scene as a threat to the system can be interpreted through AKP’s coming to power and the social reactions it created.

However it is somehow difficult to say whether Islamophobia is at work, at least not in a direct economy of the term the way it is comprehended in the Western Christian world. In the films, an Islamic master wards off this threat and a new Islam-modernity synthesis is reached, showing different versions of Islam in clash and more importantly underlines the conservative attitude in the films. As a matter of fact AKP is not the first Islamist party in the history of Turkey, which came to power. The right wing

conservative parties have been in power since 1950s, and they became more influential in 1980s period and kind of more assertive through 1990s at the time of Erbakan's period as the Islamist rhetoric became more and more apparent. During this time Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became the municipality minister, which will be followed by his founding AKP and coming into power in 2002. It seems more accurate to say that there has always been conservative Islamist tendencies in the political system and this tendency gained more and more power, which may also transformed the cultural space, and reinstates a more conservative ideological mode. Therefore the ambivalence in the monster exists, since it both represents the fear of an Islamist order coming and it also represents a conservative shift in the system.

Back to the question if the monster is the return of the repressed or the repression and if these two can be differentiated; Wood made a differentiation that the monster is either the return of the repressed; it represents something that is repressed by the dominant ideology so that it returns and give the audience an identification with the repressed by lifting the burden of repression through the image of the monster. Then he defined the monster as the opposite, the monster as a punishment, as an instrument of dominant ideology's repression, which offers the audience identification, sadistically or masochistically (or both at the same time) with the punishment. Thus, he reaches a political categorization of horror films, the former *progressive*, and the latter *reactionary*. His clear-cut categorization has been widely criticized and Wood himself also admitted that such kind of clear-cut differentiations cannot be made in horror films, since the genre is inherently conservative, and so that there are always reactionary inflictions embedded with progressive elements that creates an ambiguity. Despite his latter explanation, his language suggests a categorization of a dichotomous of reactionary and progressive elements, in films, which are embedded but can be distinguished (Wood 2003).

Looking at the Islamic horror films analyzed in this thesis, one can easily say that Islam coming and punishing people can only represent the repressive forces of the system. However on the other hand, Islam, although being repressive like most religions are, in Turkish modernization, is otherized to a certain extent, at least some

forms of it is silenced and suppressed in order to define a new version in comply with the State. Therefore there is certain ambivalence that the monster is both the repressed and the repressive, it cannot be differentiated. The very debate that the monsters in horror films can be differentiated as the representations of the return of the repressed or the repression, so that the films can be categorized as progressive and reactionary, seems to find a negative answer in the analysis of these films. These films are conservative films, however the monster is ambivalent; the repressed and the repression are embedded to build up an amorphous character. As Kaya Özkaracalar offered, the issue of ambivalence is a lot deeper than Wood's attribution because the ambivalence in the representation of the monster is the tendential and non-dualistic, non-dichotomic and it exists through certain shifts in horror genre (Özkaracalar 2004).

Özkaracalar's argument becomes even more meaningful when the Islamic monsters in Islamic horror films are taken into consideration. First of all, Turkish national identity is ambivalent; Islam can be considered repressed in a way but also in the system it persists in variations, so the films, show Islam as both a threat, and a cure, and they make propaganda of Islam. The monster is a punisher of the supposedly "perversion" in the modern element; the perversion from its balance with the tradition, leads to the return of an Islamic element, but this Islam is the repressed Islam in the past, the repressed one before the republic, which connotes with the past, the Ottoman, the pre-modern in the subconscious of the people, that even connotes with the *village* and the *rural* due to its conception of *backwardness*. When the monster punishes the perverted modern element, in order to discipline it and rebalance it by retreating it back to its balance with the tradition, it gives a didactic tone to the films, a conservative tone, by offering a rehabilitation to the *perversion* of modernity, by bringing a new definition of synthesis of the contemporary modern living and a contemporary conception of Islam that is suited to the new dominant ideology.

Wood attributed progressiveness to the American horror films (mostly slasher ones) of 1970s because they openly stated the crisis of ideology by violence and gruesomeness, which, to him, was a sign of the disintegration of the psyche that is easily decoded in the films. He might be right in his analyses of those particular films of that particular



time, however, taking this explanation *de facto* for all the horror films would reproduce the problem of universalization, for which Wood was also criticized and he admitted the same thing in somewhere else. The Islamic horror films in this thesis, project the identity crisis of Turkish nation, however this doesn't necessarily make these films progressive.

Then Wood offers some points that can help one to differentiate the genre's reactionary wing. I would like to start with the second one, since it says the presence of religion (in his example it is Christianity) makes a film reactionary, since it suggests a validation of theology. This may well be counted for the Islamic horror films, because they are thoroughly about Islam. The first one is the depiction of the monster as simply evil, that the repressed returns as a sole threat. The third one is the totally non-human monster that leaves no space for sympathy. Wood asserted that, in progressive genre, the evilness of the monster, rather than a simple depiction, is inverted, questioned, challenged and modified and in the progressive again, there is a sympathy-arousing monster (Wood 2003). These may be counted as well, for most of the films in this study, which are conservative films and they make use of totally evil and totally non-human monsters. However these explanations do not hinder the apparent ambivalence in the figure of the monsters still. Since although it is difficult to say that any of the monsters in the films in this study arouse sympathy, the evilness of the monsters are questionable, since this evilness has its different justifications in the films, by attributing the evilness to the system or other characters or modernity, that makes the audience question the sources of this evilness, blurs the line between the progressive or the reactionary, still projects the ambivalence. Wood also noted that, all monsters are destructive, but this destructiveness has its verifications and justifications. The progressivity lies in the films' negation with the dominant ideology, their recognition of the ideology's disintegration, so that all the repression explodes and blows the system apart, which to me, as an approach reflects the political stance of the intellectual world of 1960s. My point is Wood's categorizations gives a good ground to play with, and that although I can call the films in this study conservative, these categorizations fall short to explain why. In a non-Western context, the ambivalence even goes more complicated, than Wood allowed.

The answer may lie in the criticism of Wood's approach; most of the critics defended that the horror film monsters are repressive monsters, rather than the return of the repressed, and Andrew Britton (cited in Mills) defended that *the return of the repressed* is not distinguishable from *the return of repression*. I agree with Britton and also I believe that all monsters are destructive and also they are the symbolic coding of *the return of the repressed* (which again points to the ambivalence). Dana Poland (cited in Hills) pointed that categorizing any horror film as progressive will be wrong since power acts have different sources; *the restoration of the repressed* may call for other dominations of repression. Then it all rolls down on the same representational question; "What does the monster stand for?" that can only be answered through the interpretation of the presentation of the monster by taking into consideration of all the repressive and repressed elements that are portrayed in the films.

Ryan and Kellner, in their book *Camera Politica*, discussed that, studying ideology in film requires knowing the representational codes of that given culture, since films make a rhetorical argument by selecting these codes and projecting a certain ideology. Films generate the dominant ideology through a combination of representational codes and conventions that are constituted by the legitimate dominant institutions and traditional values of a nation, which also creates a national self-image through history. For them, Marxism is important in studying ideology in film, since through the selection of representational codes films oppress and wipes out the diversity like the mechanism of the mental processes. Ideology exists, where there is threat to the established system, so that ideology is not only an application of domination but also a reaction to change, which in the end enables the critic to decode what it turns from in a negative inversion. Therefore, even in conservative films, the conservative reaction, in a negative inversion, puts into display what it reacts to; which means conservative reaction has the potential to display the sources to progressivity. The metaphor of catastrophe is actually a therapeutic way of dealing with the real life anxieties, decoding these give us the absent sources of real societal anxiety.

These Islamic horror films are conservative films and they reflect the social anxiety over the political change in 2000s. The year 2000 arrived with the rhetoric of grand

change, a big break from the old corrupted system, which is actually grounded in the global change in the 1980s to liberal neo-conservative paradigm that also transformed Turkey socially and economically. While on the one hand societal opposition and freedom suppressed through 1980 coup, the new right wing ideology brought a cultural change with a new code that lays in Turkish-Islamic synthesis against leftist tendencies. Together with the postmodern influence on identity politics, political Islam gain power consolidated by liberal market mechanisms, which ended up with AKP governments in 2000s. AKP was seen as the representation of moderate Islam, they were seen as conservative democrats to change the system by bringing democracy to the nation and build a new Turkey. Through 1980s and 1990s the rhetoric of centre-periphery debates were in focus, which enlarged to the cleavage of seculars-Islamists through 2000s, bringing different political and social groups politically active and visible, like the covered girls who attended universities and became politicized and started to protest out at the streets their right to university education.

These films reflect this political change, a new conservative modernity at one hand, and also they reflect the split of national identity, a nation of a split psyche in which secularist and Islamist tendencies clash and mingle. The secularist projection of the fear of the creeping Islam is mingled with the new code, a new “good” Islam; any diversion from it, either to the past or to the West, becomes the very threat itself that needs to be doomed by the “pre-modern” Islam, which expresses a deep and contradictory paranoia.

In one way the films project the anxiety of identity crisis and also they project a new synthesis of the Islam and the modern as a conservative ideology in order to deal with the anxiety. Coming of an Islamic monster, returning to the Islamic order in a fantasy level, is solved through means of Islam again; Islam is used as a buffer zone to keep the modernity continue, as a remedy for the worse, that is going backwards to an Islamic order.

These films are the fear projections of the unconscious anxieties of less educated masses of Turkish people who are suffering from the conflict between a secular way of

modern city life and an inner mental life of a traditional Islam belief. This rebalancing of the West and the East as projection of the common structure of ideology that lies in the subconscious of the less educated masses in Turkey, and the films are the metaphoric representations of their unconscious fear projections and a way to cope with the changes in the system.

The conscious or unconscious fear in the society because of an Islamist party coming to power, creating threat to change the established secular system is embodied in the body of the monster in one hand, in a fantasy level representing the extreme nightmare caused by an Islamist order, and the dictated “savior/good” Islam that wards off the threat functions as a guaranty that this nightmare will never come, normality will continue. In an unconscious level, Islam is coded as something frightening in the collective psyche of Turkish people, and now an Islamist party in power calls for this code, and at the same time, Islam, in the psyche of a nation in which most people are Muslims, is something good, it is not something *that bad*, it is not *something to be afraid of*. As the conservative democrat understanding of AKP is absorbed more and more to the common structure of ideology, the definition of the Islam tends to support the latter idea more concretely, since it offers a new definition of the modern by attributing a larger understanding of the synthesis of Islam and the modern.

The motif of Islam is ambivalent, both in the figure of the monster and in other motifs, because the attitude towards Islam is ambivalent in Turkey, and in this motif the return of the repressed and the return of repression cannot be distinguished. However, in these Islamic horror films there is an apparent otherization and it fits in the conception of *the return of the repressed* Wood explained: *the otherization of the rural*. Within the modernization period, the Westernization efforts led the nation to turn their faces to the West and break from the Islamic political existence of the Ottoman Empire that is coded in the Turkish psyche backwards compared to Western civilization. This code of backwardness is represented as the “horrific village” in the films. Village turns out to be the ultimate representation of backwardness, of the East, of the old traditions, of old Islam. In the films the repressed old, dark, pre-modern, horrific, fearful village returns. It becomes the place of the horrific, the ultimate evil, the source of the monster, the

monster itself. Interestingly, the films that take village as the subject are more successful creating the effect of uncanny, since the repressive forces of the dominant ideology that otherizes backwardness and desires progress otherizes the village in the Turkish psyche. The otherization of the rural is actually relevant to Wood's conception of the otherness as well; he stated, "Otherness represents that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept but must deal with" (2003, p. 65). The modernization project intended to create Turkish bourgeois class, which otherized the peasants coding them backwards. In the films, the presentation of the village is generally contrasted to rural people or places, and the monster from the village, an extension of the village; the village itself comes and threatens these rural people. The films project the split of the Turkish psyche in the East-West divide and the representations of the East and the West respectively, and how these two clash, conflict one another and the restoration offers a balance; the therapeutic synthesis for the masses.

Like the village that is backward and pre-modern, too much Westernization is also otherized, coded perversion; this perverted modernity opens the gap in the collective unconscious, calls for its opposite, the backward East; the Islam monster, comes and horrifies the very thing that awakened it. A hodja, the "good" Islam, comes and rebuilds the normality, by balancing the synthesis of Islam and the modern, and both wards off the threat of the monster, and restates its rightness by setting up the norm by disciplining the "perverts" and defining the modernity with Islamic density.

Too much Westernization is generally represented by different depictions of women and their sexuality in the films. Women are otherized because of her active sexuality; sex out of wedlock and the monster victimizes them. In some films, women become the source of the monster, or they become the monster itself. The otherization of women is related to the changing of the roles of women in a strongly patriarchal society. The modernization in Turkey emancipated women from their traditional roles, however, the persistence of Islamic traditions in the society created an identity crisis in women. This crisis deepened especially after 1980 as within the new public sphere women's roles were changing with more and more working and educated women, so

these women's family roles started to change and created a conflict with the existing traditional roles. A new image of women occurred. These women were educated, secular, had jobs and many of them postponed marriage. Their sexuality got more and more independent from the traditional marriage models, and this also created a big conflict both in the unconscious of the women, who still carried the traditional codes in their (un)consciousness, and since the traditional mode of ideology still existent, the society stigmatized these women for being loose or promiscuous, which created a big dilemma in the private lives of men and women. In the new middle class practices, women's social, sexual and family roles started to change, the new roles created a great conflict in the roles of the men that is oriented with Islamic codes. The patriarchal conservative sphere in the imaginary collective consciousness, especially otherized this sexuality of new urban women, and besides her sexuality, women's way of clothing was targeted to define how loose or how chaste she is, which is actually similar with reflex of republican ideology, but inversely, which prioritized the iconography of women by throwing of the chador and make women wear like European women. In a negative inversion, now, the "too modernized", "too open" women are otherized by repression of their sexuality.

The identity crisis of women in these films turns out to be microcosm of the modernization experience and its unconscious projection in the Turkish psyche. Most films take woman protagonists as the leading characters, and in almost every film poster there is a woman portrayed, possessed and metamorphosed, horrific, as the monster. In the modernization project the Westernized image of the women is the iconography, the ultimate representation of the desired modernization. The conservative reaction against women in these films, the possessed women as a metaphor, in a negative inversion displays the liberation of women in Turkish society from traditional roles.

In the films the recurring subjects of religion and science, the recurring characters of hodja and psychologists, the believers and non-believers, is the projection of the crisis in the synthesis of the East and the West. The protagonists are in-between modernized people, who do not talk about religion, but the religious one comes and asserts itself.

The acknowledgement of the character to religion, through the monster, first conceived as a sign of psychological disorder until they eventually understand that it is not craziness, but the silenced religion in the modern lives that is approaching. The films state that there is a crisis of ideology in the society, however they also disguise this crisis under the metaphor of an Islamic monster, to suit the film into the needs of the masses, to give them an emotional satisfaction in a fantasy level; a way to deal with their crisis, by offering a fantasy realization of Islam, a confirmation of Islamic belief at least in a fantasy level which is absent in the secular world of everyday Turkey, as in the case of Freud's *confirmation of surmounted of beliefs*, the primitive belief returns as a projection on the silver screen, to give a relaxation to its anxious audiences. The films project, the question of believing or not believing in Islam as the ultimate issue in the constructed identity of Turkish nation, building a fantasy narrative taking this question unconsciously in the core, just like it lies as an unconscious dilemma in the Turkish psyche. The synthesis of the East and the West not only lies in the conscious selection of representational codes in the films, but also they can be found, even in more profound form, in the unconscious constitution of the representational codes in these Islamic horror films.

## FILM INDEX

### **BÜYÜ** (2004)

Director: Orhan Oğuz

Script: Şafak Güçlü and Servet Aksoy

Director of Photography: Adnan Güler

Producer: Faruk Aksoy – UFP

Cast: İpek Tuzcuoğlu, Özgü Namal, Okan Yalabık, Ece Uslu, and Nihat İleri

### **D@BBE** (2004)

Director/ Script: Hasan Karacadağ

Director of Photography: Seyhan Bilir

Art Director: Kyoko K. Uomi

Producer: J Plan – Hasan Karacadağ

Cast: Ümit Acar, Kaan Girgin, Serdar Özer and Ebru Aykaç

### **ARAF** (2006)

Director/ Producer: Biray Dalkıran

Script: Biray Dalkıran and Hakan Bilir

Director of Photography: Aşkın Sağıroğlu

Cast: Akasya Aslıtürkmen, Murat Yıldırım and Kubiley Tuncer

### **MUSALLAT** (2007)

Director: Alper Mestçi

Script: Alper Mestçi and Güray Ölgü

Director of Photography: Feza Çaldıran

Producer: Banu Akdeniz – Dada Film

Cast: Burak Özçivit, Kurtuluş Şakırağaoğlu, Biğkem Karavuş and Selma Kutluğ



**SEMUM (2008)**

Director/ Script: Hasan Karacadağ

Director of Photography: Seyhan Bilir

Producer: J Plan

Distributor: Warner Bros.

Cast: Ayça İnci, Burak Hakkı, Sefa Zengin, Cem Kurtuđlu and Hakan Meriçliler

**D@BBE 2 (2009)**

Director/ Script / Producer : Hasan Karacadağ

Director of Photography: Seyhan Bilir

Cast: Sefa Zengin and İncinur Daşdemir

**ÜÇ HARFLİLER: MARİD (2010)**

Director: Arkin Artaç

Script: Murat Toktamışođlu

Director of Photography: Muharrem Dokur

Producer: Murat toktamışođlu, Serkan Balbal and Alper Mestçi – Dada Film and Örümcek Yapım.

Cast: Özgür Özberk, Taner Ertürkler and Gülseven Yılmaz

**CEHENNEM (2010)**

Director: Biray Dalkıran

Script: Biray Dalkıran and Cem Şancı

Director of Photography: Dođan Sarıgüzel

Producer: Coşkun Tözen and Burak Saraçođlu, Fono Film and Hayalet Yapım

Cast: Ogün Kaptanođlu and Tuđba Melis Türk

**MUSALLAT 2: LANET (2011)**

Director/ Script: Alper Mestçi

Director of Photography: Türksöy Gölebeyi

Producer: Banu Akdeniz – Mia Film

Cast: Türkü Turan, Tülay Bursa and Selim Gürata

**KARADEDELER OLAYI (2011)**

Director: Erdoğan Bağbakan and Erkan Bağbakan

Producer: Pra Films

\* According to the official announcement of the producers, the film is an edited documentary of the found footage in four different videocassettes. Therefore there are no credits neither for the cast, since they are claimed to be real people, nor for the director of photography since the footage is claimed to be real.

**DABBE: BİR CİN VAKASI (2012)**

Director/ Script/ Producer: Hasan Karacadağ

Director of Photography: Murat Kılıç

Cast: Nihan Aypolat, Koray Kadiroğlu and Pervin Bağdat

**DABBE: CİN ÇARPMASI (2013)**

Director/ Script: Hasan Karacadağ

Director of Photography: Halil İbrahim Çekiç

Producer: Toma Studios and J Plan

Cast: Irman Örnek, Murat Özgen, and Cansu Kurgun

**EL-CİN (2013)**

Director/ Script/ Producer: Hasan Karacadağ

Director of Photography: Bahadır Eren

Cast: Fulya Zenginer, Serdal Genç and Oğuzhan Yıldız

**ŞEYTAN-I RACİM (2013)**

Director: Arkin Artaç

Script: Murat Toktamışoğlu

Director of Photography: Ferit Çetinkaya

Producer: Dada Film

Cast: Altan Gördüm, Uğur Güneş, Ertunç Uygun and Ayşe Tunaboyoğlu

**D@BBE 5: ZEHİRİ CİN (2014)**

Director/ Script: Hasan Karacadağ

Director of Photography: Serdar Özdemir

Producer: J Plan and Taff Pictures

Distributor: Warner Bros

Cast: Nil Gural Coşkunoğlu, Ümit Bülent Dinçer and Sultan Köroğlu Kılıç

**SICCİN (2014)**

Director: Alper Mestçi

Script: Ersan Özen

Director of Photography: Mustafa Kuşçu

Producer: Muhteşem Tözün

Cast: Pınar Çağlar Gençtürk, Koray Şahinbaş, Ebru Kaymakçı and Merve Ateş.

**AZAZİL: DÜĞÜM (2014)**

Director: Özgür Bakar

Script: Özgür Bakar and Alper Kıvılcım

Director of Photography: Uğur Kaplan

Producer: Burak Film Yapım

Cast: Murat Ercanlı, Tolga Akman, Cansu Diktaş and Duygu Paracıkoğlu.

**AMMAR: CİN TARİKATI (2014)**

Director: Özgür Bakar

Script: Alper Kıvılcım and Özgür Bakar

Director of Photography: Uğur Kaplan and Mustafa Presheva

Producer: Sami Dünder Film and Doğa Yapım

Cast: Duygu Paracıkoğlu, Eylül Susapan, Dilşah Demir, Ozan Akbaba, Burak Sarımola and Halil Sezai Paracıkoğlu.

**MUSKA (2014)**

Director: Özkan Çelik

Script: Özkan Çelik and Serhan Nasırlı

Director of Photography: Önder Şengül

Producer: Minus Green and Film Bahçesi

Cast: Sezgin Erdemir, Tanju Tuncel and Aslı Şahin.

Awards and Nominations: Bridge Film Festival (Kosovo-2014), 30 Dies Fantastic Film Festival (Andorra-2014), Macabre Faire Film Festival (New York-2015).

**AZEM: CİN KARASI (2014)**

Director: Volkan Akbaş

Script: Özgür Akbaş

Director of Photography:

Producer: Retro Prodüksiyon

Cast: Zeki Şen, Eylül Öztürk and Veysi Alışkan

**ÜMMÜ SIBYAN: ZİFİR (2014)**

Director: Efe Hızır

Script: Muharrem Dokur and Serhat Hasanoğlu

Director of Photography: Muharrem Dokur

Producer: Caner Özyurtlu, Alper Özyurtlu, Şenol Ulaş, Kaan Yıldırım and Şebnem Bozoklu

Cast: Rabia Kaya, Mustafa Kırantepe, Tolga Özaltındere and Koray Elibol

**MÜNAFIK (2015)**

Director/ Script/ Producer: Özkan Aksular

Director of Photography: Varol Şahin

Producer: Mantis Film

Cast: Levent Sülün, Zeynep Okan, Karina Malsagova and Hakan Salınmış

**MİHREZ: CİN PADİŞAHI (2015)**

Director/ Script: Doğa Can Anafarta

Director of Photography: Yusuf Aslanyürek

Producer: Siyah Martı – Mentin Anter, Nedim Anter, Nurullah Yenihan and Kerem Tülün

Cast: Tarık Özcan Ündüz, Melis Toros, Doğa Karakoğlu and Haldun Boysal

**EZAN (2015)**

Director/ Script: Fuat Yılmaz

Director of Photography: Samim Baydar

Producer: MC Film and BYFY Prodüksiyon

Cast: Osman Keser, Yeliz Yeşil and Şahin Özden.

**AZEM 2: CİN GAREZİ (2015)**

Director: Erdinç Kazımoğlu

Script: Özgür Akbaş and Volkan Akbaş

Director of Photography: Hürcan Emre Yılmaz

Producer: Retro Productions

Cast: Murat Bülent Atacan, Ceren Gündoğdu, and İzzet Lüleci

**HELAK: KAYIP KÖY (2015)**

Director/ Script: Özgür Bakar

Director of Photography: Uğur Kaplan

Producer: Bilal Kalyoncu

Cast: Soydan Soydaş, Tuğçe Aksum, Ömer Güney and Fırat Tanış

**ŞEYTAN-I RACİM 2: İFRİT (2015)**

Director/ Script: Murat Toktamışoğlu

Director of Photography:

Producer: Uğur Filmcilik

Cast: Derya Deniz Değirmenci and Emre Kılıç

**HANNAS: KARANLIKTA SAKLANAN (2015)**

Director: Kamil Aydın

Script: Burcu Çetin

Director of Photography: Vedat Dikmetaş

Producer: Metin Demir and Serdar Çelik

Cast: Hazal Şenel, Furkan Kızılay and Fatma Karanfil

**ALKARISI: CİNNET (2015)**

Director: Muzaffer Gülçek

Script: Alper Kıvılcım

Director of Photography: Kadir Yalvaç

Producer: Bilal Kalyoncu

Cast: Sanem İşler and Tuncay Tarhan

**SICCIN 2 (2015)**

Director: Alper Mestçi

Script: Alper Mestçi and Ersan Özer

Director of Photography: Feza Çaldıran

Producer: Muhteşem Film – Muhteşem Tözüm

Cast: Şeyda Terzioğlu and Bulut Akkale

**DECCAL (2015)**

Director: Özgür Bakar

Script: Özgür Bakar and Alper Kıvılcım

Director of Photography and Producer: Uğur Kaplan

Cast: Öznur Serçeler and Sait Genay

**ÜÇ HARFLİLER 2: HABLİS (2015)**

Director and Script: Murat Toktamışođlu

Director of Photography: Ulař Zeybek

Producer: Kemal Kaplanođlu and Alper Kıvılcım

Cast: Kısmet Ekin Tekinbař and Ezgi Fidancı

**DABBE 6 (2015)**

Director and script: Hasan Karacadađ

Producer: TAFF Pictures

Cast: Murat Seviř and Sema Őimřek



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