The Disability Metaphor and Construction of the Norm in Yeşilçam Melodramas (1960-1980)

by

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A Thesis Submitted to

Graduate School of Social Sciences

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements For

The Degree of Master of Arts

In

Comparative Studies in History and Society

Koç University

December 2016

To my grandfather,

who spent hours watching Yeşilçam melodramas with me

instead of his favorite Westerns.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Every academic study is collaborative; each is a product of solidarity. This study, too, is not an individual effort. I believe every step we take paves a way further for all of us. I would like to thank those who paved the way for this study together with me, even though I am afraid a page would not suffice.

I am grateful for having parents and grandparents that have always encouraged me to prioritize knowledge instead of financial gain, in the pursuit of happiness. I would not be able to continue my studies if it were not for their support. Their endless journey to fulfill intellectual needs have now become mine. I am also grateful for having such a creative, quirky, supportive and caring brother as Mehmetcan Serinkaya. The years of watching B-movies with his commentary have been a major inspiration for this study. I have, once more, followed his footsteps when I chose to conduct a study on films.

Without a loving circle of friends this study would not have come to fruition. I would like to thank Elif İnal and Ceyda Kiymir for their endless moral support; Natali Arslan and Cem Sina Çetin for always being there; Gökçe Öcal for never withholding her advices; Tolga Özuygur for encouraging me to believe in myself; Kaitlin Hizny for holding my hand when I got lost and Gianpietro Sette for giving me the final push to finish my thesis. My cohort of 2013-2015 at the CSHS program has unknowingly been a great source of joy and relief, and I am also thankful for sharing two difficult but hopeful years with them.

The invaluable help and guidance provided by my professors and instructors have been crucial for this study. I am grateful for all the help that our beloved program coordinator Alexis Rappas has given me and my cohort; he has been the source of our enthusiasm. With the inspiration, the perspective and the motivation I have gotten from my dear advisors, Dikmen Bezmez and İpek Azime Çelik Rappas, I was able to finish this often challenging yet innovative study. I am truly blessed to have their sincere and selfless support. I am also thankful for having deeply insightful thesis jury members such as Başak Can, Sibel Yardımcı and Umut Tümay Arslan, whose comments opened new paths for my future research.

Last but not least, I would like to thank those who perhaps have the biggest share in making this study possible: the anonymous laborers of Yeşilçam cinema, who dedicated their lives to creating these valuable cultural products that we all cherish. Their stories remain mostly unknown, unlike those of the stars and directors, but we owe these moving narratives to their hard, underpaid and undervalued labor.

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to problematize the recurring images of disability in Yeşilçam melodramas produced between the years 1960-1980, a period known as the "golden age" of Yeşilçam film-making. After determining the number of films with disabled protagonists and main plotlines which make use of stereotypical representations of the disabled characters, the study sets out to relate the frequency of these images to the socio-historical context of production and to the genre itself. The study first situates the sensational effect disabled imagery musters in the narrative structure and genre conventions. In order to analyze how such sensation is evoked and how the disability is rendered a metaphor, the study then situates the meanings attached to disability within the eugenicist discourse of Kemalist modernization project. The film analyses presented in this study suggest that it is the fusion of the Yeşilçam melodramas narrative framework and the meanings assigned to gender roles and to body that render the melodramatic disability legible, relatable and sensational. The study asserts that aside from the versatile functionality that figurative disability provides within the narrative structure and aesthetics of melodrama genre, images of disability in intricate relationship with images of sexuality in Yeşilçam melodramas both delineate and transgress the norms set forth by nationalist modernization project, by standing for absolute and immutable difference.

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, 1960-1980 yılları arasında çekilmiş Yeşilçam melodramlarında tekrar eden sakatlık imgelerini sorunsallaştırmaktadır. Çalışma, baş karakterleri sakat olan filmlerin sayısını ve stereotipik sakatlık temsillerini kullanan temel olay örgüsünü belirledikten sonra, bu imgelerin sıklığını öncelikle toplumsal ve tarihsel bağlamla, daha sonra da melodrama türünün kendi çerçevesiyle ilişkilendirir. Çalışma, sakatlık imgesinin çağırdığı sansasyonel etkiyi melodrama türünün anlatı yapısı ve tür özellikleri çerçevesinde ele alır. Sakatlık imgesinin hangi duyguları nasıl çağrıştırdığını ve nasıl metaforlaştığını çözümlemek içinse bu imgeleri Kemalist modernleşme projesinin öjenist söyleminde sakatlığın edindiği anlamlar bağlamına yerleştirir. Bu çalışmadaki film analizleri Yeşilçam melodramlarının anlatı yapısı ve toplumsal cinsiyet roller ile bedene yüklenen anlamların, melodramatik sakatlığı okunur, bilinir, ilişkilenilebilir ve sansasyonel kıldığını önermektedir. Mecazi sakatlık, melodrama türünün anlatı yapısında ve estetik olarak bir çok işlev görmektedir. Bunun yanısıra, Yeşilçam melodramlarındaki cinsellik imgeleri ile sakatlık imgeleri, mutlak ve uzlaştırılamaz farkın gösterenleri olarak, girift bir ilişki içerisinde, ulusal modernleşme projesinin ortaya koyduğu normları hem belirgin hale getirmekte, hem de ihlal etmektedir.

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INTRODUCTION

In a social environment defined by structural inequality and inaccessibility of public spaces, in which the disabled people have very limited presence, cultural representations become a significant source of information about the experience of disability for the able-bodied audiences. Images of disability are sporadically used not only in film melodrama but also literary work, charity ads, social responsibility projects, election campaigns, soap operas and virtually all realms of daily life. These representations, defined by association of amputation with lack, of impairment with dependence, financial burden and lesser worth of life, corporeal diversity with abnormality, bundle a variety of bodily differences under the category of the disability. They provide the basis on which impressions, decisions and ultimately knowledge is built. But what do the images of disability tell us about disability? Do they say much about disability?

The paradox of the absence of the disabled people in the public space and the pervasiveness of the disabled figure, can be explained by the fact that when the material, lived bodies of the disabled people stand for certain notions (dependence, infirmity, lack and pain), when these bodies are perceived as symbols, the disabled identity becomes a stigma and the disabled bodies are physically pushed outside the public space due to prejudice and fear. The cultural production becomes as enabling or disabling as the built environment and legal system. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is, to sort out the various meanings attached to the bodily differences through the disability metaphor in Turkish melodramas, in an effort to explain the repetitive featuring of disabled figures in these narratives. By looking at the versatility of the

disabled figure, the study aims to dissect the pervasive and taken-for-granted disability metaphors in melodramas, while situating the elusive normal body in a historical context.

The study follows the main argument of the cultural disability studies literature, which states that the modernist discourse endorses a gaze at disability that relates the images of disability with an ideal of normalcy, through rendering them markers of absolute difference, of abnormalcy. While the association of disability with excess (a condition external to normal embodiment and experience) allows for a putative consensus of what the normal is, its association with lack allows for adding value to the normal. Such approach to embodiment, while producing stigmatizing, patronizing or marginalizing images, also increases the distance between the able-bodied and disabled people; especially when the disabled subjects themselves are denied from the rights to self-representation. Yet counterintuitively, this lack of self-representation of the disabled community goes hand in hand with an abundance of cultural representations of disability. In the absence of disabled subjects in the public sphere, the presence of othering imagery grows. This paradox has been the main motivation of this study, which aims to contribute to the agenda of the cultural disability studies, in its quest to "attend to the meanings of disability's omnipresent utility", (Mitchell and Snyder 2) by delving into this relation between the invisibility of the experience of disability and its widespread representations through an analysis of the theme of disability in the Turkish melodramas in their golden age. Furthermore, the study aims to contextualize these representations with respect to two discursive frameworks; that of the Turkish modernization project and that of the melodrama genre, in order to grasp cultural specificities and to focus on the signifying process instead of assuming a static relationship between the meaning and the symbol.

Guided by the discussion on how the ontological anxieties surrounding the disabled body are molded into identity, the study seeks to situate the representations of disability and gender within two discursive frameworks that render the filmic metaphors recognizable: The Turkish eugenicism and the genre conventions of melodrama. I suggest that while the former entwines the national identity around the concept of normalcy, the latter builds its narrative structure and musters its sensational effect around the precarity of the said normalcy. Put differently, while the eugenicist discourses on body present a certain imagery of the proper self, the melodramatic narrative plays with the fear of the loss of that proper self, dissolving in threatening moments of disablement and of sexual transgression.

The first quest of this study has been determining the frequency of disability as a source of characterization and story-telling in Yeşilçam melodramas. The study demonstrates that around ten percent of all melodramas produced in the golden age of Yeşilçam feature disabled protagonists and rely on disablement as a major turning point in the plot. Disability in Yeşilçam melodramas can be divided into categories of impairment, in an order of frequency: Mobility impairment, blindness, muteness/ loss of voice and disfigurement. It should be noted that virtually none of these impairments are congenital, which comes up as a point of discussion in the analyses. Each of the impairments signifies different social situations and relations based on the gender of the protagonist. The diverse metaphorical uses of these impairments are analyzed through ten films, with the concept of "narrative prosthesis". Narrative prosthesis is a term coined by Mitchell and Snyder which defines the figurative use of disability that helps create sentimental impact, a climax in story-telling and various characters. The main motive in this analysis is to bring an explanation to the frequency and the gendered nature of the disablement in the scripts.

Towards this goal, the study conducts an analysis of how Yeşilçam's melodramatic discourse positions bodily differences and how the metaphor of disability interweaves historically specific social anxieties to the ontological insecurities evoked by the disabled imagery. In doing so, the study plans to introduce the question of the representation of disability to the area of film studies in Turkey, which has been overlooked, based on the lack of studies on the matter. I hope this preliminary study will provide an index of melodramas with disabled protagonists, and will be first of the many other studies to come in the field. The study only focuses on the samples of melodrama genre where one protagonist is inflicted with impairment and the plot develops through his/her disablement. Surely, as many authors reviewed in this study assert, disability is a staple trope across the genres, therefore in Yeşilçam too, it is possible to come across images of disability in epic films, dramas, comedies and historical films. In prospect, it would be most fruitful to compare the use of the disabled figures in different genres; based on the different meanings it is attached.

Another objective is to start a dialogue between the newly emerging disability studies in Turkey with the film studies discipline, and to initiate an exercise in multidisciplinary research in the domain of representation, which in itself has many layers which can only be analyzed through interdisciplinary efforts.

The study is divided into five chapters, each focusing on a different dimension of the issue of the cultural representation of disability. First chapter presents a review of the disability studies literature on representation of disability on film and TV. By analyzing the studies conducted in two different models (social and cultural model), the review introduces the fundamental issues and questions raised by the disability scholars in problematizing the

relationship between the cultural representations of the disabled people and their impact on the disabled identity as a minority. The review, as such, is necessary for explaining the significance of representation for the power relationships and their sustenance.

The next three chapters situates the representations of disability, of gender and of sexuality within the context of production and the discursive frameworks that structure the meanings assigned to the images of disability. The second chapter starts off by historicizing the concept of normalcy and how the "normal" came to substitute the notion of the ideal. The chapter then proceeds to introduce the construction of the bodily norms through eugenicism in the early years of the republic. The eugenicist discourse was dominant in cultural, political and scientific realms during the formative years of the republic and was instrumental in the construction of the national identity. The chapter is vital for understanding the assumptions and cultural bias that allow the disabled imagery to be recognizable by the film audience. As Garland-Thomson stresses, "(…) representation also relies upon cultural assumptions to fill in the missing details." ("Extraordinary Bodies" 11) The definition of the normate in the writings of the eugenicist literature will help the reader identify the discursive sources of recurring themes like self-sacrifice and of common associations of disability as excess and lack in Yeşilçam melodramas. Thus, another discussion that this study brings forth is the role of ableism in the construction of the national identity through not only the political discourses, but the discourses of popular culture, such as Yeşilçam melodramas.

The third chapter focuses on the second discursive framework that structures the circulation of meanings assigned to disability: The genre conventions of melodrama. Genre conventions are crucial in understanding the recurrence of the figurative disability in

melodramas, as disability assumes different functions under the characteristics of melodramatic narratives. By introducing several key features of the melodrama such as excess, sensationalism, moral dichotomy and pathos, the chapter analyzes the role of disability as a theme, characterization device and source of identification.

Fourth chapter focuses on the local context of production, namely Yeşilçam, in order to elaborate on certain particularities which characterize the Yeşilçam melodrama. The chapter relates the recurring themes and narrative structure of typical Yeşilçam melodramas with the social and cultural context of the era of their production. Together with the previous chapter, this chapter allows us to define the basic patterns in Yeşilçam melodramas which render fear, awe and anxiety associated with disability familiar through the disability metaphor.

Fifth chapter introduces the findings of the film analyses conducted for the study and aims to demonstrate the versatility of the disability trope. Instead of examining each of the 10 films individually, the chapter presents the main findings of the analyses in three subsections: "Ways of Narrating", "Ways of Meaning-Making" and "Ways of Looking". "Ways of Narrating" takes the case of "Sonbahar Rüzgarları" (Autumn Winds, dir. Mehmet Dinler) in closely examining the role of figurative disability as a narrative prosthesis in a typical Yeşilçam narrative. "Ways of Meaning-Making" compares and contrasts the different associations disabled imagery takes with respect to the gender of the protagonists and to the specific impairment. The section introduces the use of mobility impairment, blindness, muteness and being an amputee as gendered metaphors in the melodramatic narratives of Yeşilçam. The last section of the chapter, "Ways of Looking" focuses on the cinematic elements that produce the sensational effect of the disabled imagery and render the images of sexuality and of impairment a spectacle.

The conclusion is comprised of an overview of the main findings of the study and engages in a discussion of further questions for enhancing the study and introduces ideas for further research in the field.

NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

Due to the absence of a source that gives an accurate number of melodramas produced between the years 1960-1979, I have first set out to estimate this number. I have referred to two sources in doing so, an online database (www.tsa.org.tr), recently opened to use as a part of the centenary of Turkish cinema in 2014. The database is a result of the joint efforts of Istanbul Şehir University, İstanbul Kalkınma Ajansı (Istanbul Development Agency) and BİSAV (Science and Arts Research Foundation), aiming to provide an academic resource for cinema research. In the time of research, the database was in beta version and was still being improved based on feedback from users and lacked input in some entries. The main information included in the entries were the name of the film, date of production, plot keywords, sources and plot summaries in some entries. The entries included genre information, yet due to multiple genres assigned to one entry complicated the research. For instance, an entry was attributed both the genre melodrama and erotic at the same time. Although melodramatic modality might allow for such flexibility, I have preferred to narrow down the research input to films that were characteristically melodramas, which comply with the Yeşilçam standard, which is discussed in greater detail in the fourth chapter.

The second source I have used is also utilized by the database extensively; "Encyclopedic Turkish Films Dictionary" compiled by cinema historian Agah Özgüç. This colossal volume on the hundred years of Turkish film production includes name, cast, production date and a brief plot summary for each film, as well as select photos and posters. This source lacked genre information yet included some of the films missing in the database.

A major challenge was that while some of the films were tagged as dramas in the database, they were what could be considered melodramas due to the elements such as loose narrative structure, extensive use of music, forced endings etc. Therefore, I was not able to reach a total number of melodramas from the advanced search option on the database. In cases when the genre could not be clearly established and if I was not familiar with the film from previous watchings, I followed a detailed examination process. In order to reach said number, I have examined each film produced between the years 1960-1979, based on their plot summaries, cast members (since typecasting is a staple element in Yeşilçam), names (to distinguish whether they are erotic films) and in certain cases the promotion material. In cases when both sources were inadequate in establishing the genre category, I have used my third source, both to establish genre categories and the use of disability themes. In cases when both sources were insufficient I have resorted to the help of *www.sinematurk.com*, a film database that includes a significant number of user input, such as keywords, corrections, censored or cut versions of the film and what they exclude in the plot. Thanks to the valuable comments below the film records, left by the dedicated members of the community, I was able to ascertain whether the films included disabled characters in the plot or not.

The final number of films which can be categorized as melodramas based on sector standards was 1516. The number provided by the Türk Sineması Araştırmaları (Turkish Cinema Researches) database for the time interval was 1069. However, this number included a number of erotic films while excluding some productions that could be considered melodramas, tagged as dramas by the database. Within this sum, 118 films, almost ten percent of the total number, included either a) disablement of a protagonist as the center of the plot or b) a disabled protagonist, whose impairment caused further happenings to unravel in the narrative. Table 1

shows the breakdown of the number of melodramas produced in each year (column B) and the number of films with disabled characters and disability theme central to their plots (column C). There are four types of impairment that these narratives are built on: a) mobility impairment, b) blindness, c) deafness, d) muteness or loss of voice, considering its place in the narrative as a disabling factor e) disfigurement. [1]

TYPES OF IMPAIRMENT AND THEIR ASSOCIATIONS

The category "mobility impairment" includes cases of paraplegia, lameness, and amputated leg/arm. It is the most frequently used narrative prosthesis along with blindness, in the Turkish melodramas of the era. The main reasons for the impairment are car accidents, illnesses such as polio or "bone illness", battle injuries or rarely psychological traumas and congenital conditions. Lameness is almost exclusively a male impairment in these films and lame male characters are depicted as either stern, bitter people who compensate for their impairment with pride or introverted men who isolate themselves from society. In either case, they are distant from women, portrayed as problematic for the love relationship.

In melodramas, in the case of married couples, mobility impairment derives its dramatic effect mostly by association with asexuality or sexual dysfunction. It shows up as a main reason for the downfall of marriages or the start of new affairs with third parties. Wheelchair users are often depicted as failing from performing their gender roles, as a husband that satisfies his wife or as a wife that can be procreated with. ("Ablam"/ "MySister", "Yaban Gülü"/ "Wild Rose",

[1] Veteranship is less frequent in melodramas than the other genres such as action, crime and war. In these cases, impairment becomes the symbol for sacrifice for motherland or castration by the enemies which necessitates revenge, unraveling the further conflicts in the narratives.

“Kader Kapıyı Çaldı”/ “Fate Knocked on the Door”, “Merhamet”/ “Mercy”, “Gel Desen Gelemem Ki”/ “I Couldn’t Come Even If You Asked Me Too”, “İhanet” / “Betrayal” are among the examples.) In some films, the wheelchair using men or women find partners for hire, who are willing to marry them for money or protection. In the cases of disablement before marriage or during courtship, the disability of the wheelchair using men or women are not posed as an hindrance to a love affair, rather, it is the characters’ assumptions and bias towards how their partners will react to their impairment. At the resolution of these narratives, we are reminded that love can surpass all things material, including corporeal challenges.

Year of Production	No of Melodramas	No of Melodramas w/ Disability
1979	23	2
1978	31	1
1977	37	1
1976	30	3
1975	36	0
1974	63	4
1973	75	14
1972	85	7
1971	80	12
1970	139	8
1969	128	16
1968	93	5
1967	102	9
1966	112	7
1965	111	5
1964	88	4
1963	52	0
1962	80	8
1961	84	9
1960	67	3
SUM	**1516**	**118**

Table 1 Total Number of Melodramas Produced and Number of Disability by Year of Production

Type of Impairment	Frequency	Male	Female
Blindness	54	22	32
Mobility Impairment	55	30	25
Deafness	2	-	2
Disfigurement	4	3	1
Loss of Voice// Muteness	3	1	2
TOTAL	117		

Table 2 Types of Impairment and Breakdown according to Gender

It should be reminded that the impairment does not necessarily get cured at the end of these films, some characters remain disabled ("Akşam Güneşi"/ "The Evening Sun") while some miraculously get cured ("Öksüzler"/ "The Orphans"). The impact of the mobility impairment does not show a great diversity along the lines of gender, in contrast to blindness. The general connotation of mobility impairment is as I have mentioned the unfulfillment of gender roles, and the incapacity to act upon the world (unemployment, isolation and embitterment). Although the narrative poses the main misfortune as the individual attitude the characters show with regards to their impairment, more than the social conditions that they find themselves in, the sensation and audience identification depends on the use of wheelchairs and crutches as visual cues to evoke a sense of pity and of frustration. Put differently, the melodramas say one thing about the disablement and show another thing. Without the bias and assumptions on disability, which are socially structured, the figurative disability in Turkish melodramas cannot make sense on its own. Images of disability function as economic and compact visual signifiers that condense assumptions into sensations. I will be elaborating on this point in fifth chapter, focusing on the ways of looking at disability in the melodramas.

As I have mentioned above, blindness as a trope in Turkish melodramas have diverse connotations based on the gender of the disabled figure. The number of female blind figures is significantly higher than the male blind figures. (See Table 2) While the main problem the narratives deal with in the cases of female blindness is the vulnerability of the blind women against the male sexual aggression. In these narratives, male characters either take the women under their protection and/or demonstrate great sacrifices in order to raise the money for their surgery. One such narrative, "Üç Arkadaş"/ "Three Friends" has been so popular that it has three remakes in thirteen years, following the success of the original film produced in 1958. ("Ağlama

Değmez Hayat"/ "Life's Not Worth Crying" in 1967, "Kimsesizim"/ "I Have Nobody" in 1969 and eponymous "Üç Arkadaş" in 1971) Such stories interlace the association of impairment as misfortune with the class difference, the miracle surgeries that will erase the impairment is always expensive and out of reach. Once more, love is depicted as a power that not only transcends the corporeality (seeing beyond the impairment) but also the materiality (wealth or lack of wealth).

The melodramas that build their narrative on blindness pose the female blind characters as naive, fragile and unaware of the male advances. The beauty and the naivete of these figures make a dangerous combination and necessitate a male protector. Patrimonialism is an omnipresent element of the love stories of Yeşilçam with men (either husbands, lovers or fathers) protecting women, within the safe zone of the private sphere and of family, yet with blind women protection against the sexual threat is ever more present. This is not so visible with the female figures with mobility impairment, because they are associated with asexuality whereas blind women are still objects of the male gaze. Another trend within this category is that the juxtaposition of singing abilities of the blind figures with their lack of sight. This juxtaposition is ripe with narrative possibilities, as it plays with the popular bias towards blind people having increased sense of hearing.

The remaining types of impairment are rarely used by the screen writers. Disfigurement of the face and deformity are again almost exclusively a case with the male figures, standing in the way of their happy marriage. ("Yuvasız Kuşlar" / "Birds Without a Nest, "Hayatımın Erkeği"/ "The Man of My Life", "Gül Ağacı"/ "Rose Tree") One exception to this is a film called "Kambur" / "The Hunchback", which in itself is a unique narrative. The film has two

disabled protagonists (a blind man and a woman with kyphosis) and is distinguished from other melodramas of the era with its creative use of technical elements. Another rare occurence is deaf figures; there are only two films with deaf figures both of which are female. The last type of impairment is the loss of voice. This does not only translate to muteness but also to figures losing their "singing" voice. Loss of voice is a unique type of impairment, which perhaps would not be registered as impairment at all in daily life. In these films, the protagonists are singers and their loss of voice causes their downfall, creating the same impact on them as other impairments do in other films.

In this index, I have not included films with side characters that are disabled. However, in accordance with Mitchell and Snyder's suggestion, there are many cases where the range of bodily diversity is used for characterization, from mafia members who carry their impairments as stigmas through their nicknames, to members of the family who are disabled and are sacrificed for ("İki Yetime" / "Two Orphans", "Zalimler de Sever" / "The Ruthless Loves Too" or "Ateş Parçası" / "The Fiery One" are such cases). This method of character diversification is not limited to the melodrama genre and it is even more evident in crime thrillers, action movies and war epics where the disablement of the protagonist is either an act of maiming, or a result of a heroic act. Disabled figures even show up in erotic films, yet this is a rare case. Disabled figures passing as able-bodied individuals, or able-bodied figures in disguise of disabled individuals are common elements across the genres, but in certain cases, the function of the disability as a prosthesis is not so clear and is even puzzling: For instance, in a crime film called "Erikler Çiçek Açtı"/ "Plums Have Blossomed", the villainess hides heroin in the crutches and acts like a disabled woman to smuggle heroin easily. In another crime thriller called "Katil Kim?"/ "'Who's the Murderer?", the brothel matron Madame Katina is a wheelchair user, yet

this does not add to the plot in producing more happenings. Such cases of disabled figures (or the disguise of disability) remain on the level of adding variety to the story.

A last reminder about the films examined is that none of the actors or actresses that play the disabled figures is disabled in real life. Although this might seem obvious, it is one of the problems raised by the disability scholars, since the able-bodied actors representing disabled figures add depth to the institutionalized inequality in cultural industries.[2] Next chapter focuses on the myriad issues disability scholars examine with regards to the representation of the disabled people in media.

[2] For the detailed analysis of the inequalities disabled people experience as employees in the cultural industries see "Framed: Interrogation of Disability in Media" edited by Ann Pointon.

1. CULTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF DISABILITY

This chapter will introduce studies on the representations of disability under two major approaches to disability studies, namely the "social model" and the "cultural model". Both models regard disability as a social condition bound by structural constraints against the essentialist approaches to disability which claim that the negative attributes of infirmity and lack are inherent to having impairment. The two models of disability, however, diverge into different paths based on their epistemological framework and their agenda. The chapter seeks not to be an exhaustive literature review, but instead to draw on the important findings of the previous studies and present a map of said trajectories of the analyses hitherto conducted.

To start such endeavor, it is useful to clarify what "representation" is, as deliberate as it may seem. Following the definition introduced by Stuart Hall's work on the subject, which guides the multidisciplinary approach of cultural studies discipline, it can be suggested that representation denotes any expression of a concept by the use of symbols, codes or terms. A representation, be it through an image or a word, brings together things, concepts and signs together to convey a meaning. It is through these representations that we share meanings which make up our cultures, to the extent which we are able to communicate through our languages and other signifying systems. (16)

As the following chapter will demonstrate, the images of disability in films and visual media almost always convey meanings by the use of metaphors; the signs they use point to a concept of disability, yet this concept does not necessarily correspond to the actual, flesh and blood experience of disability, but to a complex of ideas and sensations, shared by the able-

bodied and disabled populations alike. The studies in this chapter question such logic of representation, precisely because the cultural question of representation is also a political question. Just as the Longman Dictionary lists as its primary meaning, representation also connotes a political relationship, it is "the state of having representatives to speak, vote, or make decisions for you". ("Representation", 1995) In this sense, the images and terms of disability "speak" on behalf of the disabled populations and enclose them as a minority. The production and reception of meanings conveyed through cultural representations not only allow for the differences to be recognized in order to communicate, but also to elevate said differences to the level of power differentials while anchoring them in identities:

"Meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity, of who we are and with whom we 'belong' - so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups". (Hall 3)

As the further pages in this chapter will demonstrate, there are several images of the disabled people as either victims, villains or as supercrips, dominating the popular culture and the mass media. These images provide the audience with "information" and "insight" into the lives of the disabled people and create a reality of their own. They matter, because they contribute to the vicious cycle of power differentials within a circuit of the ableist culture[3]: Since the disabled populations are minority groups in the political realm, they have less power over the

3 Here I am referring to DuGay's concept of "circuit of culture", which is the process whereby the meanings are assigned to cultural goods, through a circulation between representation, identity, production and consumption of cultural goods and regulation.(quoted in Hall,1) The disabled imagery can only be given meaning within such circulation, through the production of a certain image of the disabled people to the consumption/interpretation of that image; the communication of which is regulated by a certain cultural and social context, which in turn results in the molding of a certain symbolic correspondence between the image and the concept of disability. Such images, in turn, shape the identities of the disabled and the able-bodied population alike.

information produced about their lives and well-being. And as they have less opportunity to control the symbols, images and names used to represent their lives, identities and experiences, they have less access to the production of knowledge which in turn is used in decision-making processes. Therefore, the study of these representations are essential in understanding the institutionalization of ableism, as well as the workings of the cultural practices that interweave the bodies, identities and languages together.

1.1 Social Model Based Studies

The social model was the result of an epistemological battle against the dominant medical or "deficit" model of disability, which dictated that being "deficit" was intrinsic to being a disabled person. Simply put, the life chances and conditions of the disabled individuals were seen as a mere reflection of their impairment, their "lack" -which could only be rid of with rehabilitation and medical interventions. Instead, the social model strictly distinguishes disability from impairment; defining former as a result of power relationships and the latter as a biological condition. Pfeifer summarizes the gist of the social model's epistemological grounds:

> Disability does not refer to a deficit in a person. Disability refers to a value judgment that something is not being done in a certain, acceptable way. Just as race is not a viable biological term and has no "scientific" definition, disability has no "scientific" or even a commonly agreed upon definition. Disability is not based on functioning or normality or a health condition, but on value judgements concerning functioning,

normality, and health. In other words, the term disability is based on ideology and social class. (3)

As such, the social model endorses this distinction against the medical and the deficit model to counter the assumption that the impairments are the reason for the social and economic marginalization of the disabled individuals. Instead, this model asserts that the culprit is the structural barriers (inaccessible built environment, unequal treatment in healthcare, discriminatory legal frameworks) and the attitudinal barriers (prejudices, othering).[4]

The social model has its epistemological roots in Marxist approach to political power which assumes a deterministic relationship between an economic structure (class system and stratification) and the culture as the realm which maintains this structure, meaning that cultural bias such as stereotypical representations help maintain the structural inequalities.[5] Here, political power is imagined as a negative force, stripping the subjects from their agency.[6] In such context, the cultural representations of disability are important in guiding opinions and perceptions of what disability is and how it impacts one's life. Therefore, studies based on the social model open the "shared meanings" of disability to question by presenting a pattern of

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[4] See "The Social and Individual Models of Disability" by Oliver and "Attitudes and Disability" by Finkelstein for examples of this approach.

[5] For a discussion on the epistemological basis of the social model see Oliver "The Social Model of Disability"

[6] It is important to note that this definition of the social model is ideal-typical. As Ravi and Malhotra stresses, there are many variations and diverse approaches which could be defined as the social model, with varying degrees of materialist outlook. Nevertheless, this type of schematic conceptualization was necessary in order to show the differences between the cultural and the social model in their approach to the cultural domain. See Malhotra and Rowe 1-31 for a social model based approach which takes cultural studies approach into account.

signifying practices which has been making use of the disabled figure as a vessel for representing the social ills. [7]

For the purposes of this study, and putting the categorization introduced in Mitchell and Snyder's analysis ("Representation and its Discontents" 197) under two main models (social model based and cultural model based analyses) , I will review the social model based analyses in two categories: The studies of the negative images of disability which focus on categorizing the disability stereotypes based on the disabled characterizations and the studies of the unrealistic portrayals of disability which measure these negative images against the criteria of factuality.

The common trait in these analyses is that they introduce patterns in bias with regards to the way disability is represented and that they assume a singular point of bearing against which the meanings conveyed in the representations can be valued. The stereotypical or negative representations of disability in these analyses are evaluated in relation to an ableist ideology which "distorts" the actuality of lives of the disabled population into images that justify a discriminating system. As such, it concentrates its efforts in revealing patterns of prejudice against the disabled people, which are then institutionalized. Although the model has been instrumental for the disability movement to force policy changes and institutional transformations, it is wanting an explanation of multiple ways disabled imagery might be received and of the multiple meanings it can assume in the wider web of culture, especially with regards to how these resonate with the able-bodied subjectivity as well as the disabled subjectivity.

[7] For a wider discussion of this subject see "The Commonality of Disability" by Finkelstein

NEGATIVE AND STEREOTYPICAL REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITY

There have been a number of studies which suggest that the visual media and more specifically the film industry is an important source which perpetuates and reproduces the attitudinal barriers, consolidating the discrimination against the disabled. They suggest that the widespread depictions of disability are unequivocally lacking, humiliating and reductionist constructs. One notices that most of these studies focus on categorizing and listing the common stereotypes, based on the character of the disabled figure (as a victim or as a villain etc.) and on the function it assumes in the story (an ugly villain who seeks revenge is a common figure in horror films). In this sense, they are indexical studies and they focus on the quantity of the production of said imagery instead of in-depth analyses. Their analyses center around the story and the role disabled figure assumes in that story and are often formulaic. These studies in the film and literary representations of disability have been instrumental in presenting the recurrence of certain stereotypes as the industry standard in Hollywood and some of the daytime TV shows.

One of the earliest studies conducted in this perspective is Byrd and Pipes' "Feature Films and Disability", published in 1981.The authors set out to find the percentage of the films which depict disability, released between 1977-1979 and to see whether they have received good reviews based on the fact that they thematized disability. The study shows that within this sample group, 11.5 % depicted disability (including mental illness and substance abuse) and that there was a significant diversity among the disabilities portrayed. (48) Their findings suggested that the film critics do not evaluate these films based on their depiction of disability. Their further studies helped revealing a pattern among the portrayals of disability, with psychiatric disabilities having more cinematic representations, a 42% of all disabilities portrayed within the sample

group. (49) Safran's study added another element to this pattern, suggesting that 16% of the Academy Award winning films included disability as a main element in the narrative and within this group, psychiatric disabilities were most often portrayed. His study underlined that this percentage rose steadily from 1930's to 1990's, which implies an entertainment value in the disability portrayal. (473) Such data was influential in the establishment of the film representations of disability as a field of study; well worthy of further research, leading way to the examinations of the certain stereotypes which stood out.

In his article "Broken Images", Jack Nelson introduced seven major stereotypes which dominated the American media and film industry. The first one is perhaps the most familiar one, portraying the disabled person as "pitiable and pathetic". This stereotype is frequently resorted to in the context of charity work, telethons and ads. In such contexts, the disabled individuals are portrayed as needy of help, dependent on others to live and address the sentiments of pity to raise funds. This type of depiction distracts the audience from structural problems of accessibility and legal discrimination. The second stereotypical representation is the disabled individual as "supercrip", which brings the larger-than-life stories of personal achievement and vigour to the fore. The stories of heroic disabled individuals who have succeeded in their personal lives against all odds may seem to be positive portrayals demonstrating abilities, yet Nelson emphasizes that they are ultimately detrimental as they increase expectations of the audience from the disabled individual. Such depictions also run the risk of reducing social restrictions to individual self-inhibitions, as it gives the message of personal will overcoming all difficulties. Another stereotype portrays the disabled person as "sinister, evil and criminal", which is mostly utilized in horror films and crime dramas. In such cases, disability is used as a visual marker for being evil, one famous example being the amputee murderer in the film and the series "The

Fugitive". These representations blend physical impairment and psychiatric disabilities together in forming the stigma. In a similar manner, the disabled figures are often depicted as embittered individuals drowning in self-pity as "his own worst enemy", as "unable to live a successful life" increasing the impact of the drama. The disabled people are also depicted as "burden"s to others or as lost cases who are "better-off dead", which alleviate the responsibility of equal treatment and of interdependence. Such depictions are lethal, as the perceptions they enforce have important consequences in the matters of social welfare and end of life decisions regarding the disabled patients and receivers of social help.

The most comprehensive study on the disability stereotypes on silver screen is Martin Norden's colossal historical survey; "Cinema of Isolation" Norden's work demonstrates that there has been a variety of meanings attributed to different impairments through the disability metaphor over the last hundred years of cinema. One important aspect of Norden's work is that it analyzes how these representations have changed in tone and depth over time. Depending on the era of their production, these films have played with different meanings attributed to different impairments: While the years of silent cinema continued Victorian sensibilities through the depiction of blind women as "poor innocents" (33) or of disfigured male characters as immoral deviants and "obsessed avengers" (74), the studios made use of the legacy of freak shows in low-budget horror films by depicting disabilities as visible markers of evil (114), in the years following the Great Depression. The two terms of World Wars have changed the meaning of male disablement to patriotic sacrifice, due to increase in the number of the impaired, producing the stereotype of the "noble warrior" and of the "civilian superheroes" opening way for more complex representations and more positive appropriations of disability. (145)

Norden's work has been influential as it attempted to situate the stereotypical representations within the historical context and within the restrictions of the studio system and the conventions of different genres. Another important aspect of Norden's survey was that it established that the isolation of the disabled figures in films run parallel to the way mainstream society treats the disabled individuals: "By encouraging audience members to perceive the world depicted in the movies, and by implication the world in general, from this perspective and thus associate themselves with able-bodied characters, this strategy has a twofold effect: it enhances the disabled characters' isolation and 'Otherness' by reducing them to objectifications of pity,fear, scorn (...) and it contributes to a sense of isolation and self-loathing among audience members with disabilities." (1)

Longmore's study titled "Screening Stereotypes" follows a similar line of inquiry. Observing the amplitude of the disabled figures on screen, Longmore asks "Why are there so many disabled characters and why do we overlook them so much of the time?" (132) He suggests that we are able to "screen (these representations) out", because they individualize a social problem. He concurs with Norden in his assertion that they are "isolating" images, as the narratives detach the disabled figures' experiences from the wider social context. This narrative logic confines disability to an individual misfortune or a test of character, and puts the burden of social disadvantage on the shoulders of the disabled figure. Longmore comes up with three stereotypical depictions of disability; disability as punishment for evil, embittered disabled people or resentful and avenging disabled figures. He underlines that these are often instrumental in horror films and crime drama, adding monstrous elements to physical impairment to prove an essential and absolute difference. These evil characters are either overly sexualized or depicted as asexual; rendering them less or more than an average human. Such depiction is not specific to

these genres but to most of the narratives that are based on disability. Overall, Longmore asserts that it is through our ableist bias that we are able to neglect the sheer frequency of the disabled figures, and miss the link between such frequency and our neglect.

Following these studies, in a more recent article, Black and Pretes provided a multilayered analysis of what constitutes a negative stereotype in a given number of popular films with disabled characters, such as “Breaking the Waves”, “My Left Foot”, “Coming Home” and “Born on Fourth of July”. They rated 18 films based on whether they use the stereotypes introduced by Nelson and whether they employ three criteria for character development set by Byrd. (69) These criteria are used to evaluate whether the disabled characters go beyond one-dimensional stereotypes: whether they have distinct personalities or not, whether they are integrated within their community or not and whether they have close and intimate relationships with others. For instance, the authors have found the real life adaptation films to be better in depicting community integration, whereas fictitious characters remained isolated, without a circle of supporting social relationships. (75) The authors gave better ratings to the films where the disabled characters are using initiative to develop romantic relationships or worse ratings to those in which a disabled character tried to commit suicide, suggesting that this consolidated the “disabled as better-off-dead” stereotype. Grounding their analysis on these criteria, they concluded that the stereotypical representations still invade the silver screen, even though these representations have been ameliorated as they incorporate the daily life experiences of the disabled people.

UNREALISTIC PORTRAYALS OF DISABILITY

Another line of studies influenced by the social model measure the representations of disability against the life experiences of the disabled people under the criteria of "realism". According to these studies, narratives which include aspects of the disability experience, other than dependency, loss and infirmity have better potential in communicating disability to the able-bodied audiences. In the cultural realm, representations produced by able-bodied writers, executives, directors remain partial, if not necessarily "distorted". Therefore the physical experience of impairment and social experience of disability can be best translated to imagery and knowledge through the participation of the disabled individuals in these narratives. Only then could these representations which build the foundations of our perceptions can be geared towards better understanding and acknowledgement.

This approach has developed the debate of what constitutes the reality of the disabled people and what should be projected as such, yet the problem with this debate was how to (or whether it was possible to) define what is the reality of the disabled people, and whether the putative correspondence to this reality presented negative or a positive imagery. One suggestion came from Hevey who argued that the positive images did not mean demonstrating good qualities of the disabled people but revealing the interaction between the social restrictions and individual impairments. ("Controlling Interests") The resolution that came with this school of analysis was that representations can only be improved if the disabled individuals themselves take control over the means of cultural production and produce a new cultural imagery. The political agenda of social realist school urged the disability movement to devise new representational strategies as a part of their struggle.

A report which followed the guidelines of social realist school came out on 1992, written by Colin Barnes and published by The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, much influenced by Hevey's work. The report was based on the notion of negative imagery as the basis of a disabling culture and aimed to introduce a comprehensive study of recurring stereotypes in British mass media (TV, film, advertising and print media).

Barnes categorized the disability representations into 11 stereotypes[8] and suggested that the most recent stereotype (the disabled individual as a normal human being, as "one of us") seems to be in the "right direction" but runs the risk of obscuring the disadvantageous and marginalized position of the majority of the disabled people. (18) The emphasis on the abilities of the disabled persons (with the subtext of being just like one of us) ignores the centrality of the impairment to the identity and life experience of the disabled minorities. Barnes's resolution for media organizations include recruitment of disabled people as employees in the media sector, disability equality training, media content to be accessible for the people for those with deafness and blindness, use of right terminology and employment of disabled actors.

An edited volume named "Framed: Interrogating Disability in Media" was an extensive look at the institutional and cultural barriers set by the media industry. The most significant part of this edited volume is that it provides insights of the disabled employees of the media industry and disabled artists who have built their own paths with rigor to introduce biographical representations and images of disability. The accounts of the disabled actors, producers, poets and artists such as Mary Duffy, Nabil Shaban, Millee Hill and Jenny Corbett serve as a guideline

[8]Barnes lists these stereotypes as : "Pitiable and Pathetic", "Object of Violence", "Sinister and Evil", "Atmosphere or Curio", "Super-Cripple", "Object of Ridicule", "Their Own Worst and Only Enemy"," Burden", "Sexually Abnormal", "Incapable of Participating Fully in Community Life", "Normal"

for the disabled individuals who will pursue a career in media and cultural industries, and for the able-bodied media employees who need this input for their professional work. These accounts also show that the physical inaccessibility of the settings of education and production as well as the institutionalized prejudices barr the disabled individuals from participation in the domain of cultural production, in college and job applications.

The biographical accounts are also important as they expose how the absence of the images of the disabled individuals and the diverse disabilities, causes a great lack of information for the young disabled people and their parents who need to envision the possibilities and the trajectories for the future. Ann Pointon writes:

> As an eager parent, I combed the Mothercare catalogue, pretty pictures all of them, but none of the model little children was disabled. The message to my daughter was clear- they are not very important people and even, do they really exist? The message of the omission is loud and clear. As an ex-teacher and media resources officer, no one need to have tried to convince me of the importance of images in our lives, particularly during those formative years when opinions and ideas are shaped. (58)

In a similar vein, the disabled performer Nabil Shaban reflects on his career dreams as a child and remembers that he was thinking of endless career possibilities until one day his teacher reminded him that he is not physically capable to do so:

> I just assumed that this disability was just something that you had for a period of time and that when you were sixteen it would be taken away from you and you could carry on like everybody else, because the fact of the matter was that you didn't see

> disabled people on television, or apparently in films, therefore where were they? They must disappear. (119)

Such memories demonstrate that the absence of the disabled characters and performers on films and TV not only feed into the marginalization of the disabled population but also cement the able-bodied as the role models to be identified with.

In an extract titled “Crippling Images”, Anne Karpf categorizes the main approaches to the disabled people in media into two: Medical approach prevails in daytime TV as well as films and other cultural mediums, and mainly regards the disabled individuals as problems to be fixed and relies on rhetoric of pity to attend to this putative problem. The news pieces are generally a product of the medical approach, presenting either miraculous cases of heroic disabled individual or calling for prevention of potential impairments. The target audience of such programs is the able-bodied and they perpetuate the reductionist notions of the lives of the disabled people:

> Programmes using the medical approach are usually presented and produced by able-bodied people, for the medical approach speaks to the able-bodied (and shows disability as seen by them): the disabled are its objects. (79)

Karpf introduces a second approach, the” consumer approach” which targets the disabled people (and their caregivers) as consumers. Karpf underlines the air time given to these programmes which are aired not on prime time but on ” ghetto” weekend morning slots reserved for minorities and education programmes” (80) Even as consumers, the disabled people are left on the outskirts of the mainstream cultural industry.

In media, the most widely disseminated images of disability are that of those who are cured or who are courageous, which reassure the able-bodied audience (and the disabled audience alike) that the homogeneity will be achieved, that there is a happy ending. To this end, the telethons were the champions of the perpetuation of the stereotypical imagery. Telethons were charity shows that aimed to raise money for those in need and were significant sources of dissemination of certain stereotypical representations associated with disability, and their popularity faded towards the 1990s. Karpf compares the BBC telethons with their American counterparts and finds that although the stereotypes are much more subtle and the images are more positive on BBC, the overall contribution of these is dubious and detrimental. The contribution is still to the stereotypes (the disabled people as dependent, weak, needy and disabled life as less than able bodied life) and the financial gain does not surpass the cultural impact. The author also stresses that since the telethons are occasional features on TV, the visibility they provide remains as a part of tokenism. The most crucial part of the problem with the mode of representation that ensues in telethons is that it depicts the disabled individuals as an object of charity and not as a minority group: A structural problem that should be resolved through the means of the welfare state is reduced to a matter of charity that should be dealt by good will or the private sector. Ultimately, telethons are a pat on the able-bodied shoulder, rather than a feat of solidarity.

Tom Shakespeare focuses on another TV show which is influential in the creation of cultural imagery and established a place in the social memory. In his article "Soaps: The Story So Far", Shakespeare inquires the place of disability in the soap operas. Following Cumberbatch and Negrine's study, Shakespeare agrees with the premises that there are not enough disabled characters in the soap operas. The authors suggested "There do need to be series written and

produced in which people with disabilities are among the leading characters. Should this occur, then the public would be regularly confronted with the experience of disability in a perfectly ordinary context." (Cumberbatch and Negrine 141). Since the soap operas are characteristically prosaic, their narrative follows daily life events, and therefore the representation of disability in soap operas could be a step forward with regards to improvement of the cultural image of the disabled people. Shakespeare suggests that the British soap operas are famous for handling socially controversial issues in a sensitive manner and could do so when it comes to the issues faced by the disabled individuals. His analysis set in the late 1990's shows that disabled characters are either given minor roles, their traits verging on stereotypical or when given proper roles they appear shortly and then are written out. Shakespeare also noticed that there are better examples, such as popular soaps like "Brookside" and "Eastenders" where characters with deafness, with a child with Down's syndrome and with paraplegia and AIDS are given prime roles in the story line. (74) The challenges these characters face and the social bonds they have developed with other characters are narrated effectively.

Ultimately, Shakespeare as other authors in the volume comes to the conclusion that there are three major measures to be taken: Disabled actors should play the disabled roles, disabled characters should not be in the background and more significantly, when there are disabled characters in the storyline, the plot should cover their growth and development instead of writing them off after they fulfill their functions as side stories. (75) Shakespeare underlines the fact that the soap operas use real-life scenarios and they should involve the real life issues that the disabled people face: unemployment, discrimination, physical violence and problems of access to basic services. If sought from this angle, disability as a life experience provides the

soap opera script-writers with plenty of dramatic situations. Therefore, one way of improving the storylines is to employ disabled advisors for script writing.

Leslie Harris approaches the question of the disabled reality from the aspect of sexuality and takes a closer look at four different ways disabled female sexuality is represented in four different films in "Disabled Sex and the Movies". By employing a semiotic analysis of the films, Harris evaluates the portrayals of the disabled protagonists as negative or positive, based on how the narrative situates disabled sexuality using the cinematic elements, such as camera angles, close-ups and mise-en-scene. (145) Once again, the criteria in this analysis is the stress put on sameness (disabled person as normal, as one of us) versus on difference (negatively as less than a normal being, positively more than expected from a disabled person). Comparing the films "Passion Fish", "Romeo is Bleeding", Carol Davis's devotee adult films and Ellen Stohl's Playboy shoot, Harris examines whether the sexual activities are omitted or normalized. Although he introduces a rigorous and detailed semiotic analysis, his verdicts about these portrayals remain questionable. For instance, in the film "Romeo is Bleeding", he notices that the camera does not avoid close-ups on the missing digits on the hand and the artificial limb and later on the stump during sex, and that the disabled female character assumes active physical participation in sex. (151) All of these, he suggests, are positive features, yet ultimately the film is a negative portrayal. The author claims that it is because the disabled figure is a femme fatale and the sexual activity is sado-masochistic, the disabled sexuality is depicted as alien. In contrast, he finds the "devotee adult films" featuring amputee star Carol Davis has a more positive disabled imagery. (161) He suggests that the films include documentary scenes from the life of its amputee star, her doing mundane things like house chores and such "normal" activities make the film better. Another reason he presents is that the sight of the stump is brought to the

foreground as an aesthetic element. While the author finds the S&M relation problematic for its putative association of disability with violence, he does not problematize the voyeurism involved in the audience interaction with the adult films, be it Playboy or "special" adult films. The problem is that the film could well be fetishizing according to the analysis the author provides and the scenes of such casual activities consolidate the fetish of amputation.

As the author himself acknowledges, these films are shot for there are customers who are aroused by the signs of amputation itself. Therefore the films are not focused on disabled subjectivity or disabled sexuality, but the sight of the actions of the amputee and of the stump itself. While celebrating the pleasure derived from the disabled body and the erotic value assigned to the anomalous embodiment, the author leaves aside the asymmetry of power that comes with the gaze. Ultimately, it sidesteps the question of power differentials in the process of the production and consumption of the images of disability by ignoring the position of the audience versus the disabled figure as an object of spectacle. Harris's article is a good example of the challenges and the cul-de-sacs of analyses seeking realistic representations against the negative imagery. While it is a valid argument that stereotypes work their way through marking out differences and rendering them irreconcilable, the criteria of representing the disabled character as "ordinary" begets the question of what normal is and whether the normalcy is at all desirable. In the next section, I will focus on the shortcomings of this approach with critiques from within the disability studies.

THE LIMITS OF THE SOCIAL BASED APPROACH

Although it has mobilized scholarly efforts to index disability representations and stereotypes across genres and mediums, the social model based approach remained confined to

the vague and dichotomous notion of positive-negative images. The analysis of stereotypes often handles the cultural images and representations with very restricted criteria and leaves aside the questions of audience interpretation and diversity. In her analyses of the popular cultural representations, Katie Ellis touches upon this restriction and suggests:

> Instead of dividing the representation of disability into a positive and negative binary opposition, it is important that we see people with disability along the full spectrum of human experience and popular culture characterization - as good, bad, right, wrong, strong and weak. (8)

The definition and the scope of negativity and of realism remained arguable, at times anachronistic and superficial: How are we to warrant for the audience reception of these images? What about cultural differences and the impact of the historical setting in the reception of these representations? Could there be other layers of meaning attributed to these stereotypes?

Several disability authors have problematized this approach on the grounds of lacking a refined perspective on the specificities of the medium. To that end, Hoeksama and Smit calls for a deeper look into film representations of disability. The authors assert that suggesting that the mainstream cinema mostly reproduces stereotypes is reductionist and inaccurate. Storylines, characters and other narrative devices that rely on the images of disability which often seem predictable, habitual and fetishizing can have subtler and more subversive workings than meets the eye. Focusing solely on the plot and the disabled figure runs the risk of missing the functions of the cinematic elements which provide their unique manner of audience identification. Therefore, the authors suggest that "What a film says is not as important as what a film makes the viewer think about." (39) As an example, the authors present the case of the film "Mask"

(dir.Peter Bogdanovich, 1985). The film could be received as another example that evokes pity through its sentimental approach to the disabled protagonist. However, the authors point out that the film belongs to the melodrama genre and as such it relies on the sentimentality to create emotional response for audience identification. The emotional response may well lead to better understanding of the disabled experience. The resolution proposed by the authors is that the portrayals of disability can only be accurately evaluated if the film studies perspective and methodology is incorporated in the disability studies perspective.

In a similar manner to Hoeksama and Smit, Sutherland approaches the disabled imagery from the purpose it serves within the specific language of the film as a medium; to better understand its stronghold. He suggests that it is the immediacy of the image that renders the use of disabled figures as a signifier (of a personality defect or deviousness) a highly functional tool for the screenwriters, and as such, these images are used over and over again in the cinema. Sutherland reminds the reader that "to make things visual and to attach meaning to visual appearance" is an intrinsic quality of the cinematic language. (17) It is not only the archetypal notion that the physical difference (abnormality) equals to absolute defect but also the visual symbolism of the bodily difference as a cinematic convention that perpetuates the disability stereotype.

Another problematic aspect of these studies on disability representation is that the spectatorship is assumed to be passive receptacles, interpreting the imagery homogeneously. However, meaning is dialogical, that is, the meaning is constructed within a constant dialogue with the text or in this case the film. The studies which measure representations against the criteria of whether they include stereotypes, such as Black and Pretes's study assume an absolute

correspondence between their framing of the representation and the appropriation of said representation and do not take into account the fact that the interpretation changes within time and from spectator to spectator. Darke suggests that the audience should not be thought of as a homogenous group. He claims the negative disabled imagery is so pervasive and omnipresent that it is more valid to call these representations as "archetypal" than "stereotypical. (13) Due to their omnipresence, such portrayals of the disabled people are not only taken-for-granted by the able-bodied society but disabled individuals themselves. Therefore, it is highly problematic to assume that the reception of these images by the disabled individuals is homogeneous. To define what is a bad or a good image and to assume that it holds true for everyone is simply invalid. Furthermore, these representations have entertainment value and they could be entertaining to the disabled individuals who find them problematic as well. This is the main reason for their popularity, a value that the social realist imagery might not necessarily have.

Nelson's account concurs with this suggestion. He asks:

> Why don't movies and television programs present these [43 million disabled Americans] in a more realistic way, perhaps even focusing on the real problems that confront them, such as access and job discrimination? (4)

Nelson then finds the answer in the entertaining quality of the media industry. He suggests that movies do not seek to mirror reality but often drift us away from the land of the mundane; therefore the expectation of realist portrayals might be unfruitful and even irrelevant when it comes to explaining the images of disability. It is imperative that we also delve into the sensations that disabled imagery evoke, so that we can understand why stereotypical formulations are still so entertaining.

Taking the equation of "normal is positive" for granted, the search for "realism" and for a right type of representation in a cultural product is an elusive quest. Such analyses assume a "right" way of representation and that the meaning is stable, certain signs corresponding to certain interpretations. Nevertheless, they provide us with the preliminary facts about the disability imagery: First, the majority of the disability portrayals are utilized as sentimental objects, metaphors or serve a function other than reflecting on disability as an experience. Secondly, these images provide an idea about the values and norms, they make the appropriate visible by pointing at the inappropriate. Ultimately, they act as cautionary tales advising that abnormal is bad and normal is good. What exactly is normalcy? How and why has the disabled figure become the bearer of the symbolic weight of abnormalcy? These are some of the questions that the cultural model based analyses try to explain.

1.2 Cultural Model Based Analyses

Rather than applying a criterion of positive versus negative imagery and imposing a current agenda on the past cultural products, studies influenced by the cultural model focus on the interaction between the historical, cultural and social context of production and the imagery presented within the cultural product. This means approaching the narratives as explanatory texts tackling with disability, with their unique ways of understanding and making sense of disability, or the abnormalcy it came to stand for, and the conflicting or ambiguous ways the texts are received. The main purpose of these analyses is to shift the question from how disability is represented in a negative manner to how these representations relate to cultural norms and play a role in their formation. As such, the focus changes from the frequency and the negativity of the images to contextualizing these images within a certain discourse and discovering how different

meanings assigned to disability produce subjects, normal and abnormal alike. The cultural model, more significantly, tackles the question of how disability has come to be the ultimate marginality, "the other that helps make the otherness imaginable". (Siebers 48)

The cultural model is influenced first and foremost by the cultural turn in social sciences, and has strong roots in post-structuralist thought, especially in the Foucauldian framework. [9] With the advent of post-structuralist debate on the significance of cultural representation, there flourished an interest towards the impact of the cultural imagery in the minoritization of the disabled populations, from within the disability studies. Such reconsideration of the cultural representations went hand in hand with the calls for an interdisciplinary approach towards body, for a collaboration between feminist, gender and disability studies, not only because these subjectivities were built on similar experiences of marginalization and oppression, but because the marginalization relied on the same discursive mechanisms.[10] This interdisciplinary analysis has several dimensions: It suggests that bodily differences are culturally marked and valued through a binary system which is hierarchical and which upholds the mind over the body.[11] The cultural identities are in turn, forged from these boundaries, defining and discerning the "self" with respect to the "other". Based on these premises, the interdisciplinary gender and disability studies analyze how minority identities are imbricated and interimplicated through being defined by these binary oppositions. [12] Yet such binaries cannot contain the lived experience and

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[9] See "Extraordinary Bodies" Garland-Thomson

[10] See Wendell 104-24, Rohrer 34-63, Gerschick, 1263-68 for a detailed debate of the subject.

[11] See Paterson and Hughes's article, 567-610 for a discussion of the nature/culture divide and its impact on the conceptualization of disability.

[12] See Samuels 58-67 for a discussion of the crossroads between Butler's approach to cultural dichotomies and the cultural position of the disabled.

fluctuations of the body, and since the cultural others are reduced to their bodily specificities, they become stigmatized and are projected the anxiety of the unsustainable boundaries. This is why, the cultural model argues, the representations of the cultural others do not only demonstrate the norms but also the impossibilities of maintaining these norms, making the disabled figures, as well as the other minority figures, transgressive signifiers. Next section will briefly introduce the main issues tackled by the cultural model with respect to the cultural representation of disability and of bodily diversity.

MARKING THE BODY: DISABILITY, STIGMA AND ABNORMALCY

In the introduction to "The Body and Physical Difference", an edited volume on the place of disability in cultural imagery, the editors of the volume David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder elaborate on the pervasiveness of the isolating approach to disability, which allows for its modalities to be used as a cautionary tale about marginalization. The fact that disability is never imagined as an experience or a condition in its own right is one of the major reasons for the ease of using disability as a signifier rather than a proper subject of study. The authors suggest that the malleability of the lived bodies through discourse is discussed and the representations of the bodies are being dissected by the post-structuralist/post-modern literature, yet the experience of disability is still left aside as if the disabled body is essentially different and exists pre-discursively: In this sense, the authors suggest that there is a ubiquitous logic that establishes the disabled body as the absolute difference, both within the scholarly work and the mass culture. By assuming margins embodied by the disabled body, from the safe distance of being the owners of a difference that can be celebrated, we all ultimately reach out to embrace the norm. ("Double Bind of Representation" 5)

Instead of assuming an absolute truth or a material essence that can be revealed once the curtains of ideology are lifted, this agenda embarks on dismantling a semantic logic that employs bodily differences (gender, ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, deformity, disability) in signifying an ideal of norm by investigating what representations of disability stand for. In line with this inquiry into the discursive challenge the body poses, Mitchell and Snyder provide us with a refined analysis of the uses of disability and of disabled figures in literary work, with the concept of "narrative prosthesis". ("Narrative Prosthesis" 6) According to the authors, the theme of disability and disabled figures in the literary narratives serve multiple purposes (47): Due to various forms it takes disability functions both as a stock of stories and of characters. The sheer range of anomalous embodiment provides the narrative with problems, issues and conflicts that will unravel the story of its characters. Aside from providing the narratives with themes and characters, disability is ripe with associations that can sensationalize the story-telling. The use of disability as a metaphor is persistent not only in our vernacular but also in literature and film.

As discussed by the authors, the portraits of the disabled figures are described through their impairment - or with the cultural assumptions and images of said impairment. Aside from the meanings that the disability imagery mobilizes, narrative prosthesis also connotes the prosthetic relationship between language and corporeality, between the representation and reality. Following Willis's work on the matter, Mitchell and Snyder argue that the language always falls short of representing the physical reality/corporeality. (53) Words, concepts and symbols cannot fully represent the material and are mediations at best. The ideal of the signifying systems to reflect reality resemble the ideal of prosthesis to give the illusion of wholeness. They both work towards tucking the physical matter into a representation of that matter. All bodies are prosthetic according to Willis, since the ideal body has no foot in

materiality; it cannot be reached and is beyond time and space. While maintaining the illusion of approximating the achievement of that ideal, prosthesis relies on hiding its own artificiality. Thus, Mitchell and Snyder suggest, not only do we idealize the lived bodies and the experience of the world inevitably through language, but also much like a prosthesis, disability in the narratives serving as a theme or a trope, can work to attain a smoother relationship of the lived to the ideal functioning as a prosthesis - but always with the transgressive potential of revealing its own illusion: “We engage our bodies in efforts to make their stubborn materiality "fit" ideals. Likewise, words give us the illusion of a fix upon the material world that they cannot deliver. (7)

In a similar vein to Mitchell and Snyder’s approach to the prosthetic relationship between lived bodies and language, Punter stresses that metaphorical thinking is intrinsic to discourse:

> A metaphor then, we might reasonably surmise, is not necessarily a matter of simple one-to-one equivalents (‘this stands in for that’), but neither is it a process of ornamentation of something that could have been more clearly said in another, simpler way; rather, in this case at least (...), it is the very substance of the discourse. A common error about metaphor is to suppose that it can be in some sense ‘unpacked’. When that unpacking takes place, what is left is rarely of value; it seems a paltry and colourless thing when compared with the metaphor itself. (17)

The best way to understand how a metaphor functions, then, is not to look under the rug of the vehicle for the tenor, but to discover the two realms between which the metaphor mediates meaning. After all, the reason we resort to the use of metaphor as a way of thinking and expressing is not only to make sense of the world through the words which remain limited in capacity to express, but also to render an unfamiliar, new or extraordinary situation familiar,

intelligible and imaginable. To use Punter's words, it is "mediation between self and non-self" (26). While mediating the self and the other, and by fusing the represented and the representation, the metaphorical thinking carries the problem of taken-for-grantedness. By taking the metaphorical representation as a given, as truth, instead of a figurative instrument, we can assume a metaphor to be literal. This is the case with the bodily metaphors. The ideal body, though unattainable, exists very lively through the way we engage in the world with the way we represent and we understand our bodies through language, mainly through our bodies as metaphors.

When lived bodies stand for certain concepts or ideals, the relationship between the conveyor and the conveyed is inverted: Material entities stand for symbolic constructs. The range of bodily differences, imagined in such metaphorical terms, translate into deviations from the norm, a symbolic construct. Thus, in order to analyze the use of disability as a metaphor in Turkish melodramas, the first quest in hand is to articulate the meanings that are linked to each other through the metaphor. What kind of feelings, ideas, and states of being does the disabled figure embody in these narratives? What other images are needed for the association of the disabled figure with such notions? Where do the assumptions and preconceptions that help the transference of these meanings come from? Most importantly, what are the implications of these unfamiliar, extraordinary disabled figures for the construction of our identities?

Margrit Shildrick's illuminating study titled "Dangerous Discourses" engages in a critical reading of post-structuralist and phenomenological approaches to analyze the psycho-social dynamics of the construction of identities. Drawing on Merleau-Ponty and psychoanalytical approach, Shildrick claims that our knowledge of our corporeality and others' corporealities are

what constitutes our identities. (26) As embodied selves, our perceptions and actions depend on the awareness of others' physical interactions with us. We build our identities both by distinction from and identification with others. Therefore, even though we would like to think of our embodied selves as complete, unattached, wholesome; we are always aware of the fact that our bodies need to be maintained and that our corporealities are very fragile. Both daily encounters with the anomalous embodiment (the disabled individual, the "deformed" individual, anyone of any bodily difference) and experiences of sexuality remind us that our bodies are vulnerable, cannot be contained, their boundaries are blurry and can be surrendered to other bodies:

> They [the issues of subjectivity and sexuality] are productive of anxiety precisely because they displace normative and shared assumptions about the correspondence between bodily markers and the status of the self. And insofar as they generate demands, not so much for reform, as for a transformation in the meaning of selfhood for every one of us, they threaten the very basis of a comfortably taken-for-granted personal and social existence. (6)

Thus the tension between the self and the other, sameness and difference creates an ontological anxiety. What gives this ontological a particular shape is the modernist discourse and this is where Shildrick refers to Foucault. (40) Following the Foucauldian notion of power as a positive force that produces its own subjects, Shildrick historicizes the meanings attached to the bodily difference and sexuality. By constructing an image of the self as independent, self-sufficient and clearly distinct from others, Western modernity endorses the idea that agency is possible to the extent that the subject is autonomous, in control and invulnerable. The social order is imagined as a corporeal order (body politic) which makes any bodily transgression

threatening not only against the subject individually but against the society as well. Anomalous embodiment as well as sexuality brings the anxiety of corporeal transgression to surface by falling outside the taken-for-granted relation of self to other:

> There remains, then, a powerful desire for and expectation of, clearly delineated bodily limits and boundaries. In seeking to maintain the self-possession and control that the modernist ideal of embodiment demands, we must continually make the distinctions- between self and other, and between categories of others - that enact both psychic and cultural assessments of safety and danger. (22)

Another important study that has influenced this study significantly is Rosemarie Garland-Thomson's study of the disabled figure in American culture, titled "Extraordinary Bodies". Thomson tackles with the issue of how the taxonomy of bodily differences (of not only disability but also of ethnicity, race, and gender) in literature and in freak shows is utilized in the construction of the cultural identity.

Building on Erving Goffmann's conceptualization of stigma, Garland-Thomson analyzes the intricate relationship between representation and the construction of disabled as well as the able-bodied subject. She defines disability as "(…) the attribution of corporeal deviance- not so much a property of bodies as a product of cultural rules about what bodies should be or do." ("Extraordinary Bodies" 6) The stigma of disability translates this attribution into a taken-for-granted and naturalized position of inferiority. In doing so, such discursive process assumes a putatively neutral subject by marking corporeal diversity as what this subject is not, constantly refining and reordering bodily norms. Garland-Thomson names this neutral subject as "the normate":

> Normate, then, is the constructed identity of those who, by way of the bodily configurations and cultural capital they assume, can step into a position of authority and wield the power it grants them. (8)

Concurring with Goffmann's assertion that when the attributes of the normate are defined, there is only a minority that can occupy this position, Garland-Thomson suggests that it is nevertheless this subject position that we are supposed to identify with, through a range of literary works. Therefore, disabled figure musters its impact from the social relationships between the "normate" and the "other". The cultural representations can maintain their mimetic quality to the extent that they echo the existing hierarchy of embodiment and devaluation of difference:

> The more the literary proposal conforms to the social stereotype, the more economical and intense is the effect; representation thus exaggerates an already highlighted physical difference. (11)

Garland-Thomson's analysis of the freak show demonstrates how such highlighting can take the form of a spectacle, consolidating seemingly clear boundaries between the self and other through maintaining a physical and symbolic distance between the two. By approaching the freak shows as cultural rituals which encourages the spectators to actively engage in the construction of identity, Garland-Thomson shows how the marking of the other relieves the putatively normal audience, especially in a historical context defined by assimilating class and cultural difference into a nation:

> The more heterogeneous the bodily traits of the enfranchised became, the less clearly marked power was in the egalitarian social order. Those whose social rank was

most tenuous- immigrants, the urban working class, and less prosperous rural people- frequented the shows, which were always on the fringe of respectability and often were vehemently condemned by such icons of the status quo as Henry Ward Beecher in his *Lectures to Young Men*. The extravagant and indisputable otherness of the freak's physiognomy reassured those whose bodies and costuming did not match the fully enfranchised and indubitably American ideal. (65)

Such framing of the connections between the spectacle, spectator and the socio-historical context has been influential for this study in two aspects. Firstly, there are parallelisms between the freakshow and Yeşilçam melodramas with respect to the use of the use of the image of the cultural other for the self-affirmation of an audience, which itself is on the brink of being marginalized and as forms of entertainment standing in between low brow and high-brow cultural domains. The second implication of the analysis is the necessity of incorporating the question of how the normate is depicted into the analysis of representation of disability. Both issues are discussed in detail in the fifth chapter where the findings of the film analyses are introduced.

All in all, unlike the social model which assumes a material essence which is distorted by the ideology, the cultural model is centered on the Foucauldian notion of discourse. Discourse allows us to utter the words and to know the world as we do; it is the medium through which we are able to think and to articulate our experiences. Discourse provides a way of categorizing and classifying things and unlike the concept of ideology; it does not assume true and false statements. Cultural model is inspired by the deconstruction method, in the sense that it opens to question whether there is any fixed materiality onto which different meanings are attached.

Instead of rethinking the object, the cultural model asks for rethinking how it was rendered an epistemic object in the first place. Instead of assuming a dichotomy of disability as a social construct and impairment as a biological/material condition, the cultural model suggests that the two are inseparable and are irreducible. [13]Instead they call for an understanding of the body as both a product of discourse, but also as a tangible matter, which bases our experience and perception. Gatens best explains this principle as follows: "The human body is always a signified body and as such cannot be understood as a 'neutral object' upon which science may construct 'true' discourses. The *human* body and its history presuppose each other." (231)

Both the feminist scholars and disability scholars within this approach claim that such reductionism (body as either social construct or biological matter) has its roots in the Western philosophical tradition which should be questioned in order to explain the devaluation of the body and of the cultural other.

CULTURAL DEVALUATION OF BODY AND REPRESENTATIONS OF THE "OTHER"

Both the disability scholars and feminist studies emphasize that the women, the disabled people, the racial other and the LGBTI are marginalized to the extent that the corporeal, the body is excluded from being a subject and having an agency. [14]

Tom Shakespeare's article, "Dustbins of Disavowal" can be regarded as the preliminary guide for the exploration of the thought patterns which derive cultural others from bodily

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[13] See Tremain 1-25 for a brief discussion on the subject.

[14] (Shakespeare, 1994) (Grosz,1994), (Mitchell & Snyder, 1997), (McNay, 1993)

specificities. Shakespeare argues that the cultural representations of the disabled people, in a similar vein to those of the black people and of women, deny particularity and agency. These representations, most notorious one being the freak shows and charity rhetoric, fetishize the disability to affirm and to reassure the able-bodied; akin to that of the visual discourse of pornography. Building on Beauvoir's insights in "Second Sex", he proceeds to suggest that this objectification is possible through identification with body and nature: The cultural other is objectified by the way of association with nature and by the reduction to their bodies, both of which inferiorize and generalize the women and the disabled people. Shakespeare, therefore, calls for an analysis of the representation of the disabled people which inquire into the cultural boundaries which try to maintain, isolate and reject the anomaly in order to create the semblance of an order. It is the liminality of the disabled figure which makes it a strong, resonating and recurring metaphor: "In order to explain prejudice against disabled people, I argue that disabled people are other because people with impairment can represent the victory of body over mind; of nature over culture, of death over life." (296)

Grosz's call for a rearticulation of the female body also points at the taken-for-granted philosophical premises as the reason for the devaluation of difference. She suggests that Western philosophy as a discipline ejects the body and centers on the operation of the mind, prioritizing the thought over bodily experience. She traces this inclination back to Greek philosophy which regards the body as a hindrance against the operations of the soul. In a similar vein, Spelman conducts a closer reading of Plato's works and links his views on the body with his views on women: Body stands for an indulgence which distances a person from virtue and stands in the way of transcendence. For Plato, femininity is defined by being bound by one's body and the lives of women, children and slaves are wasted as their souls are adulterated by their bodies. As

such, Spelman introduces an epistemological link between misogyny and somatophobia. Grosz asserts that this somatophobia continues under the Christian theology and Cartesian mind-body dualism, which lays in the foundations of the gendered binaries of irrational-rational, object-subject, mortal-immortal, natural-cultural. Such relational economy leaves the corporeality and those defined by their bodies outside the act of knowing and excludes them from agency. The framing of the body as a passive object or an instrument to be operated with underlies both the victimizing approach to women and the reactionary feminist stances which attribute positive values to a feminine essence (female body as Mother Nature, women as inherently compassionate and more just). Another fallacy is to regard the body as a vessel, a signifying vehicle. The articulation of the body as a communicator between the subject's interiority and the external world reproduces the same "bifurcation of being". (Grosz 3) Instead, Grosz argues that the body is both constitutive of and constituted by the signifying systems, and in fact there are bod*ies*, historically specific and always liminal: "The body is a cultural interweaving and production of nature". (18)

Based on this reflexivity and knowledge, Garland-Thomson presents a multi-layered definition of disability as a meaning-making mechanism:

> Disability has four aspects: first, it is a system for interpreting bodily variations; second, it is a relation between bodies and their environments; third, it is a set of practices that produce both the able- bodied and the disabled; fourth, it is a way of describing the inherent instability of the embodied self. ("Politics of Staring" 74)

As such, Thomson defines disability as a discursive practice which allows us to categorize and give meaning to bodily difference, demarcating the able-bodied and the disabled

identity. Although there is great discursive investment in keeping the binary categories of normal-abnormal, self-other intact and separate, the cultural representations always leave the door open to show the "inherent instability of the embodied self". (74) This means that neither the normal nor the abnormal can be clearly delineated; the bodily diversities always transcend the boundaries of familiar and strange. Although ultimately and irrevocably a marginal position is assigned to disability, it is also a signifier which reveals the impossibility of guarding these margins. Thus, disability is a transgressive signifier, going back and forth between the realms of normal and abnormal.

DISABILITY AS A TRANSGRESSIVE SIGNIFIER

Leslie Fielder's article "Pity and Fear: Images of the Disabled in Literature and the Popular Arts" sheds light on why and how one can find reflexive potential in transgressive nature of the disabled imagery in literature. Reflecting on the name debate and criticizing euphemisms such as "challenged" or apologetic labels such as "handicapped", Fiedler argues that change in labels is futile. Instead, he asserts that changing the imagery rather than words will have lasting impacts on the matter of prejudice. The address for such change according to Fiedler is literary work. Fiedler reminds us that literature does not have to be a moral compass or to be realistic, but it does function to "alter our ordinary modes of consciousness". (59) Literature familiarizes us with the unknown, but instead of dictating such knowledge it leaves the door ajar for us to see "the endemic gap between that to which we aspire and that which we can achieve". Thus, by raising the repressed anxieties to surface, literary work reveals the ambivalence of taken-for-granted dichotomies of "normal" and "abnormal". Therefore, Fiedler finds transgressive potential in the literary representation of disability generates within the psyche of the reader. On

the other hand, Fiedler argues that is these very same representations which form the basis of the disability archetype. One key point in this text is that Fiedler endorses the term "archetype" instead of stereotype, in a similar manner to Darke. Such formulaic representations are so deeply engraved in our psyche that the mere sight of a disabled figure always corresponds to these attributes. The shared and repeated representations of the disabled people as objects of pity trigger a chain reaction in the individual psyche; the fear of becoming impaired leads to the fear of the disabled people by the way of displacement. The unease that comes with fear turns into hate, which stigmatizes disability. Horror films, for instance, make great use of the signifying power of a missing arm or a cane. In this particular age, Fiedler argues, our repertoire of disability imagery comes from Victorian literature. The diagnostic gaze of the medical discourse combined with the Victorian mores assigns virtue to norm and abhors the abnormal, ultimately getting rid of either the impairment of the figure or the disabled figure him/herself. His resolution is to generate new imagery, which does not associate the "Other" with fear and which is able to regard disability as just another form in the wide range of embodiment.

Building on these insights on the transgressive side of disabled imagery and Foucauldian framework, Hayes and Black's study on several Hollywood films on disability is a useful example. In their article titled "Troubling Signs: Disability, Hollywood Movies and the Construction of a Discourse of Pity", the authors analyze popular Hollywood films such as "Girl, Interrupted", "My Left Foot", "Benny and Joon", "Elephant Man" and "Scent of a Woman". They argue that the films make sense of disability within a discourse of pity, perpetuating the patrimonialism of the medical institutions. According to their analyses, the Hollywood narratives of disability are structured into four parts: The narrative starts from a problem of "confinement", the conditions of which victimize the disabled figure. At the center of this problematic is not the

disabled individual but a wider social issue is laid on the table, sidestepping the disabled subjectivity in the pursuit of social criticism. Then within the plot there emerges "a hope for rehabilitation", since the disabled figure is victimized in his/her dependency on others, full independence is presented as the ultimate goal of the rehabilitation. For full participation in society as an individual, the disabled figure has to go through a quest for autonomy. The moment of truth comes when the audience awakens to the impossibility of rehabilitation and instead, the narrative resolves in the "reconciliation of the terms of confinement." (118) The narratives justify the confinement as a solution by depicting the disabled figures as not capable of living on their own or harmful to others outside the special institutions.

There are several issues raised by the authors regarding this structure: Firstly, to the extent that the empathy for the disabled figure is wrapped with the sentiment of sorrow, these representations come together in a discourse of pity. When the audience realizes there is no hope of "overcoming the affliction", the emotional discharge takes place. (124) Pity builds an asymmetric power relationship between the subject and object, through which the disabled figure is almost infantilized. This type of audience engagement consolidates the patrimonialist approach to disability as a medical case that should be handed over to the experts, rather than a matter of identity. Secondly, such narrative structure assumes the absolute independence of the individual as a social value, whereas for many disabled and able-bodied individuals alike, interdependence is generally a fact of life and fosters social bonds. The authors argue that although it is an important part of the social struggle of the disabled people, the quest for autonomy should not be the only story told in these films. Furthermore, the authors underline the fact that certain disabilities make independence impossible, but these experiences never find place on the screen. Instead of these featurings, the authors call for narratives that investigate how to represent "the

complexity of human relations that include people with disability without succumbing to the confines of pity" as need for assistance is common to all human experience and that question the notion of an autonomous, in-control self, through the representation of disability. (129) Such approach demands to analyse the taken-for-granted basis of the value given to indepence and to open to question the terms with which we, as well as the social model based analyses, define ability and disability

It is in its capacity to make evident the incompatibility between the need for confinement and the ideal of individual autonomy that disability becomes a transgressive symbol in these films. Hayes and Black assert that disability in Hollywood narratives is divorced from its material context, becoming a signifier which can be transferred from one context to another, standing for different issues. It is a transgressive symbol as it points at the very boundaries that it is supposed to delineate: Where on one hand the narratives are idealizing a norm (individual autonomy), the disability symbol brings the futility of the boundaries of the norm to the surface. One is always fragile and is under constant risk of becoming marginalized, as the chance happenings that lead to disability remind the spectator. Thus, the discourse of pity is eventually "weak", precisely because it utilizes the disability symbol. Although the able-bodied spectator can reassert his/her position in the power relations through pity, the fragility of said position and the all-encompassing potential for marginalization arises through its use of disability as a signifier.

Another study of disability as a transgressive signifier was written by Russell Meeuf on John Wayne's "supercrip" image in "The Wings of an Eagle". In this article titled "John Wayne as 'Supercrip': Disabled Bodies and the Construction of 'Hard' Masculinity in 'The Wings of

Eagles' ", Meeuf analyzes the image of masculinity, in relation to Wayne's star persona and with respect to the social conditions of the era. In the film, John Wayne plays the role of a wheelchair user named Spig, who becomes a WWII hero and his disability renders him more masculine in a counterintuitive manner, which makes sense within the context of post-WWII USA. Due to demobilization of the army, many men needed to be reintegrated to the society and the economy, where women had started to participate incrementally. With the shifts in the gender order, the new model of masculinity had shaped around marriage, fatherhood, a white-collar job and a suburban lifestyle, where men increasingly asserted their masculinity through consumption, a domain formerly reserved for women. Looking at the magazine articles praising Wayne's star persona in this era, Meeuf notices that Wayne's body is fetishized, as well as his image in the films as cynical, misogynist, bitter man who only relies on himself and other men. Wayne's raw masculine image becomes a spectacle, while his agile and massive figure resonates as an embodiment of the imperial quests of USA, it also reveals the yearning for a "hard-masculinity" which is also a threat that should be repressed for the sake of reconstruction of the nuclear family. (107) Although the masculinity performance relies heavily on the able-bodiedness and it is his colossal and active able-body that gives him the star persona, Wayne/Spig's disability allows him to remain a tough guy, precisely because he remains outside the feminizing impact of the private sphere. Spig rejects being rehabilitated within the institution of family, and pursues a cure in male comradery. As such, this imagery goes against the grain of not only hegemonic masculinity but also ableist notions of the bodily performance, making it possible to spectacularize Wayne/Spig's disabled body. Yet at the same time, through the close-ups and long shots of Spig's treatment and prosthesis, medical technology is praised. Body is presented as a machine that can be fixed by medicine, an institution that is the flagship of American modernity

in the Cold War Era. The image of Wayne/Spig's body is consumed as a marvelous male war machine, an image of American imperialism further consolidated by the fact that Spig works as a military bureaucrat after his disablement. Such depiction of a disabled figure opens a space of acceptance for the disabled people, yet Meeuf reminds the reader that this space is limited to white veterans only. Nevertheless, the hegemonic political discourse of the era cannot contain the contesting meanings of disability.

All in all, these studies of disability as a transgressive signifier tackle with the complex and conflicting meanings bodily diversity takes with respect to a certain historical context: The representation of disability emerges as a nexus of ontological insecurities (vulnerability) and of epistemological investments (marking cultural norms through corporeal differences) on the body. As Garland-Thomson stresses, disability is "a multivalent trope" (9) which does not necessarily imprison the disabled subject to a position of inferiority. Disability metaphor can assume transgressive qualities and reveal the precarity of the cultural dichotomies, rapidly traversing the distance between the self and the other. Before delving into the multiple meanings disability metaphor evokes and whether the figurative disability has its transgressive moments in Turkish melodramas, next chapter will situate these melodramatic representations within the Turkish modernization project and its body discourse, in order to reflect on the binaries that construct both the disability as abnormality and the normate subject.

2. CONSTRUCTION OF THE MELODRAMATIC BODY: DEFINING NORMALCY IN TURKISH CONTEXT

The work reviewed in the previous chapter suggests that the disabled imagery is frequently utilized in films, to the point of becoming a staple element in Hollywood film industry, across the genres. These analyses highlight the figurative use of disability as a metaphor for certain states of being instead of centering on the disabled subjectivity. In order to grasp and to explain the frequency of the disability trope, it is crucial to understand how and why these metaphors resonate with the audience, and the web of meanings which mark the disabled figure as ultimately "abnormal", dabbling in an undesirable existential state.

To better analyze the particular meanings assigned to the body and to disability in Turkish context, this chapter will focus on how the bodily norms were influential in the construction of the Turkish national identity. The chapter will first elaborate on the relationship between the modernity, the concept of normalcy and its function throughout the modernization process, and then will focus on how the eugenicist discourses of Kemalist modernization project have produced cultural images of the body as flesh and blood metaphors of what it means to be a "Turk". Such historically specific inscriptions of meaning will be most instrumental for understanding how the relationship between the disability metaphor in Yeşilçam melodramas with the construction of Turkish identity.

2.1 CONSTRUCTION OF THE "NORM"

The studies examined in the previous chapter point to the necessity to tackling with the problem of understanding the how the portrayal of bodily differences are references to a

fleeting concept of normalcy. Before situating bodily norms that are delineated by the images of disability in the historical context of the construction of Turkish national identity, I will be briefly introducing a conceptual discussion of disability as signifier of abnormality and of normalcy.

In her article "Disability Images and the Art of Theorizing Normalcy", Titchkosky suggests that images that signify disability (such as the universal access sign, a wheelchair or a cane) tell us more about normalcy than the embodied experience of disability. She defines disability as "an imagined form of embodiment, usually devalued, but always inhabited by culture". (78) Our knowledge and experience of disability (in fact, of our bodies) is mediated by cultural representations. Through representations, assumptions and norms, disability appears to us as images, we act upon the world through the cultural imagination. Once we question whether or not the appropriation of these images are objective or perceived uniformly; we can shed our habitual regard of disability. Rather than telling what disability is, these images point to what is expected, what is ordinary, what is supposed to be - strengthening the putative value of normalcy as it continues to be taken for granted:

"One job the appearance of disability does is that it is expected to serve a scene where people can imagine that normal is good and even precious, without ever having to think about what is good and precious about being normal." (79)

As going unnoticed is intrinsic to normalcy, it can be tricky trying to push ourselves to imagine disability differently, and Titchkosky calls this diversified thinking "art of theorizing normality". (75) The first step to creating new approaches to disability, she argues, is grasping the bond between the images of disability and reproduction of normalcy.

Michalko, practicing this art in his article “Excessive Appearance of Disability”, agrees on the function of the representation of disability as what-normal-is-not. Since the normal is a state of omnipresence; disability, when reduced to a conveyer of the sense of normalcy, is omnipresent too: “(...) disability is here, there and everywhere, even when we ‘see’ it nowhere – It’s present even in its absence.” (68)

This quality of presence-in-absence expresses the implicit referral to the abnormal/disability in all areas of life, in all spatial designs, physical activities, behaviors, daily rituals that is accepted as given. But, he suggests when disability is present it is socially interpreted as a trouble, an affliction, “as a sign of something ‘gone wrong’”. (66) Yet it is not having a trouble that distinguishes the disabled people from the able-bodied people, as trouble is a routine part of our lives. It is *being* the trouble that renders the disabled “other”. Put another way, it is not the impairment that marks the disabled body, but how that impairment is perceived and made sense of. Through the stigma of disability, the existence and even the mere appearance of the disabled individual emerge as a troubling thing, a disruptive force that exerts itself onto the orderliness.

This perception of disability as an outsider that intrudes into our lives and onto our selves, a trouble that is permanent and definitive, leads to an understanding of the disabled experience as external to life. Michalko gives the example of the label “persons with disabilities”. (70) The term emphasizes and prioritizes personhood (i.e. being a subject) as if disability is not intrinsic to this personhood. This is why in this study too, the term “disabled people / individual” is preferred, as I agree with the suggestion that the term “disabled” connotes embracing disability as a part of the identity and underlining the collectivity of the disabled

individuals, and certainly not seeking to homogenize the bodily variety of those who are members of the minority.[15] Another term, "differently abled" implies a difference that can be overlooked, a difference in ability that is epiphenomenal to normal functioning, hence minimalizing the difference. Neither can escape referring to normal when grasping the difference, or solves the problem in our approach to difference as deviance. Michalko writes in detail how rehabilitation and special education relies on this rhetoric and fails to come to terms with disabled embodiment. He concludes that disability is always both an excess and a lack at the same time, always external yet always inadequate, "too much, too real, too corporeal - that's disability". (72)

All in all, normalcy is taken-for-granted to the point of invisibility yet disability is a stigma, a highly visible, embodied mark. To have perspective on the stereotypical imagery, one has to engage in the analysis of the normal in order to render it visible: When and how did the normalcy become the bearing point of our subjectivity and our experiences of the world? How was it possible that the normal has become the ideal and the valuable state of being?

In his seminal work "Enforcing Normalcy", Lennard Davis introduces a genealogy of the concept of the "normal", suggesting that the definition of disability as we know it today has emerged with respect to the modernist idealization of this concept. Davis reminds the reader that the concept of "normal" has entered the dictionary with its current meaning, in 1840. The idea of a norm, only became hegemonic in a "certain kind of society", namely, the modern capitalist society which relies on the rationalization and quantification of the human body to increase

[15] For detailed discussions on the matter see Malthotra and Rowe, Dajani , Johnson , Fiedler, Titchkosky for insights on the name debate.

efficiency. (24) Prior to modernity, David asserts, the concept of the ideal reigned over the social imagery, which equalized all humans under their incapacity to reach the ideal body, the divine existence, whereas with the measure of the norm, the value of the human population has come to be weighed with respect to standard deviation. Indeed, it was through the field of statistics that the concept of norm gained hegemonic status. (26)

Statistics was instrumental in 19th century for the exercise of biopower, as a scientific "truth" that sought to categorize and to measure the very biological matter of the population through policies of population control and public health. While the bell curve as a mathematical construct envisioned an average which organized difference into deviances from the norm as "a position devoutly to be wished", it was introduced as a scientific fact, a representation of the social reality. (27) Thus, the normal was paradoxically both the ideal and the ordinary. The French statistician Quetelet's concept of "the average man" (l'homme moyenne) epitomizes this paradoxical reasoning. This abstract human represented the mean of all human qualities in a given country, which meant that his moral and physical qualities were defined as standard in a state of correspondence. According to Davis, this conflation of morality and corporeal features extended to the lifestyle, that of the middle class. Davis suggests that Quetelet's concept justified the bourgeois hegemony, praising moderation and the middle way of life. While defining the norm, Quetelet not only referred to the ordinary but also the ideal social model. (28) Within such discursive framework, attributes which symbolize excess and lack (excessive sexuality, lack of limb function etc.) are undesirable and threatening whereas a putative moderacy is the key to social well-being.

With the assertion of an abstract, average body representing certain qualities and a certain population, we find the insemination of a body image that is defined by essentialism. The "average" defines the "norm", both of which are discursive constructs, yet they act as a concrete, material existence which our bodies are pointing at. It is not that there is ever a standard body, yet it is the direction of all attempts to mold and to shape our bodies. The reign of the norm begets an inversion of the signifying relationship between a symbolic construct (the norm) and the materiality it signifies (the corporeality); thereby making the bodies and bodily experiences signifiers of an ideal (the moral essence, the national characteristics etc.) (29) Hence, the eugenicist thrust to forge a population which embodies the national superiority. The political vision that is defined by such inversion is the eugenicist ideal as Davis stresses, "the idea that a population can be normed". (30) [16] The crucial eugenicist moment in the statistical discourse on body comes with the idea that certain deviances from the average are desirable, whereas the others are not. In this respect, Galton's use of quartiles serves to rationalize the values given to corporeal differences. In a bell curve, both ends of the normal distribution were equally marginal with respect to the mean, which would average the qualities of a population; whereas Galton's use of median as the reference point and of quartiles ranks qualities so as to emphasize superiority versus inferiority. [17] Thus high intelligence, for example, is preferable to low intelligence, or higher height preferable to shorter height. Such reasoning first establishes a

[16] It is important to note that Davis suggests that statistics as a movement in science was defined by the need to justify a eugenicist vision of the society, not vice versa. He asserts that the early prominent staticians such as Galton, Pearson and Fisher were indeed eugenicists at the same time. (Davis 30)

[17] This is the use of "ogive"s, a curve with both descending and ascending ends, incorporating an ideal destination for the distribution. (Davis 34)

norm, the center around which deviances are organized, then categorizes the deviances according to a value, towards what the body should be.

As such, Davis asserts that statistics and eugenics are scientific discourses which legitimize the regulation of the human population, elimination of difference and disciplining of the body so as to endorse homogeneity, predictability and perfectibility, cultural values necessary for industrial production and for the subsistence of the nation-state ideals. Put differently, as scientific "truth"s, they have provided the vocabulary for the modern governmentality and to institutionalize the marginalization of difference. Furthermore, they lay the foundations for an identity which is anchored to bodily traits, a human essence that is visible by the corporeal features, which are inherited through genes. As Davis asserts, eugenics should not be regarded as a fringe ideology. (35) It presents a certain system of differentials as the basis of a "truth" that conflates the social and the biological, the genetic and the cultural, the moral and the corporeal.

As we will see in the next section, with the individual body representing the national body, the gender and body norms become ever decisive in the organization of the social life and of culture. Normalcy, in its historically specific forms, mobilizes ethnicity, gender and bodily differences in order to delineate the limits of action and the boundaries of the proper self. As such, it is "a location of biopower" (128), a subject position through which the person comes to know him/herself and the "other"s. To the extent which the individual body and the body of the nation are imagined as one through the nationalist rhetoric, the definition and the control over the deviations become a national issue, elevating the ontological anxieties surrounding bodily differences to a matter of national survival.

2.2 THE TURKISH MODERNIZATION AND EUGENICISM: A DESIGN FOR LIFE

Eugenicism in 19th century Europe was born out of an amalgam of social Darwinism, scienticism and nationalism. The eugenicism imagined the body to be a vessel for the moral essence and the national characteristics, and worked to legitimize the domination of the state in the private sphere, in an effort to maintain and to perfect the raw material of the nation. (Öztan, 2006) As a "scientific" discourse, it interweaved the economic, political and cultural vocabularies together, in a racialized vision of the world.[18] The eugenics proliferated as the hegemonic discourse especially during the interim period, as a solution to the decrease in population and for economic reconstruction. (Öztan 274) It was considered to be a science in its own right, and provided the rational grounds for the articulation of politics as a matter of racial survival, allowing for the states to discipline every aspect of the human life and for the ableist vocabulary to infuse the cultural sphere. (268) The two principal eugenicist ideas that the fit must reproduce and/or the unfit must be reduced found support in diverse political contexts, due to the ambiguity of the concept of fitness -which was shaped around the different paths of nationalist modernization in different countries. (Çağlı 64)

In the Turkish context, eugenicism was adopted as part of the modernization efforts, from Young Turks to the Republican elite. As dedicated followers of positivism, political and intellectual actors of the Republican era were devoted to the principle that the authority of science should rule over social reality, and eugenicism served as the "scientific truth" based on which the efforts to reconstruct the national economy and identity could be mobilized. (Alemdaroğlu 69) As with their European counterparts, Turkish eugenicists set out to

[18] See Atabay 20-36 for further detail.

institutionalize their efforts for population control and health in the aftermath of the war, with the basic argument that bodies were the biological raw material of the nation, "the principal and most profitable capital of a nation-state". (Akalın, Tokgöz and Gökay, quoted in Alemdaroğlu 70) In order to maintain national economic development and "fitness" to ascertain independence via military, the prime objective of the regime was to provide the necessary infrastructure for the "racial hygiene".

The eugenicist discourse on body and gender has been instrumental for the Turkish modernization project.[19] It is the continuing grip that this discourse has in the cultural sphere that enables the disability in melodramas to be easily legible. I suggest that there are three main discursive schemas were inherited by the Turkish melodramas from the eugenicist discourse with regards to the bodily differences: a) The proper self has a set of inheritable characteristics, a moral essence which finds its expression in physical features, b) this self is defined through the exclusion of the marginality within a binary mode of thinking and c) homogeneity is celebrated at the expense of diversity. This normative pattern in formulating the bodily differences regulate, articulate and gives coherence to the meanings attached to gender and disability in the Turkish melodrama films.

A GIFT TO THE TURKISH EXISTENCE: BODY AS THE SIGNIFIER OF THE NATION

In her article "Eugenic Discourse in Turkey", Alemdaroğlu focuses on how eugenics interweaved the efforts of creating the "ideal citizen" and the foundation of modern institutions

[19] Aside from the impact of the deeply embedded cultural meanings of ability and disability on the disabled identity,as Bezmez & Yardımcı's (2010) study shows, the authoritarian state tradition in Turkey has been influential in the relative weakness of a rights-based disability movement. Another factor in the inhibition of the emergence of disability as a political identity is the influence of Islam and the persistence of a charity-based discourse with respect to social policy. See Bezmez & Yardımcı (2010) on the matter.

that will guard the "racial hygiene" and population increase. To guide their efforts, two approaches of eugenics laid before the Turkish eugenicists: The French eugenicism claimed that it was the acquired characteristics that were inherited through the generations, therefore focused on positive measures such as the promotion of population growth, and of living conditions conducive to good hereditary traits. On the other hand, German eugenicism argued that part of the human cell is carried through generations regardless of environmental conditions, with a reference to racial essence, and as such, defended negative measures such as abortion, sterilization, pre-marital inspections, legitimizing the authoritarian intervention of the state into daily life. (71) Turkish eugenicists, although employing a pragmatist combination of the two approaches, inclined towards the French eugenicism. Turkish eugenicist policies followed the authoritarian German model in organizing the daily life, and abided by the French eugenicist quest to enlighten the masses, inculcating the new identity through educating the masses on hygiene, procreation and child-care. Thus, the task of the eugenicists was not only to define and distinguish what constitutes a Turkish essence and how it is to be protected, but also to design a new lifestyle that culminates the eugenic conditions for the procreation of the ideal citizens and the elimination of the cacogenic agents. The new Turk was to have an able-body, free from "degenerative" impacts of immorality, disease, disability and poverty.

To that end, new laws were implemented to discipline the body (Body Discipline Law, 1938) through sports and through medical inspections before marriage (Public Hygiene Law, 1930), while new institutions such as Children's Protection Society, People's Houses and medical institutions were designed to oversee the provision of the infrastructure necessary for the population increase, well-being and for indoctrination of the masses on the significance of health, ability and family for the nation. (65) Such efforts approached the body as a source of

both economic and symbolic value, centering the body not only in the midst of efforts of development and efficiency but also in the middle of fight for progress and civilization, rendering the individual bodies signifiers of a new nation.

The positive eugenicist measures were mobilized under the notion of body discipline ("beden terbiyesi") aiming not only to induce homogeneity and docility among the population but also to indoctrinate the individuals with a corporeal reflexivity through certain practices of hygiene, sports and aesthetics. Body discipline was embedded in education and cultural life, bringing new secular rituals and injecting new cultural values to social life such as the sports, participation in national ceremonies and state-sanctioned leisure time activities.

The celebrations for two national days devoted to youth and children, May 19 and April 23 can be given as examples of how the regime utilized body discipline for its symbolic value. 19th of May, which is celebrated as Youth and Sports Day marks the day War of Independence had started. The celebrations involved the demonstration of the agility, strength and discipline of the youth of the nation. The precursor to this holiday is Training Holiday (İdman Bayramı) which was invented as a part of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) program to instil military discipline to the students. A notion of militaristic nationalism was apparent in the curricula in CUP era, and physical education course introduced military games including learning to aim and shoot. (Alkan 32) After 1938 the celebrations were named as Sports Holiday and were associated with the youthfulness of the newly founded nation. Together with 23rd April Children's (and National Sovereignty) Day, 19th of May celebrations mark the phases in War of Liberation as well as phases in a Turkish citizen's life. In this sense, as Öztürkmen suggests, they are both rites of passage for the society and the individual. (60) The celebrations mobilized

students who were the active members of the ceremonies and their public appearances were important in conveying the idea of a healthy and literate generation. Yılmaz underlines the fact that 23rd of April first started as celebrations led by Children Protection Society to create awareness in child-rearing, hygiene and health matters, which was of massive importance in post-war conditions. (Yılmaz 193) Within this context 23rd of April and in continuity with nationalist concerns for creating a loyal, disciplined and healthy generation which will later bear arms to protect the country, 19th of May were both posing children and teenagers as objects of social policy as well as markers of national posterity. Furthermore, they gained significance in creating a collective chronology both for the individual and the society in invoking a shared temporal plane. Thus, the physical bodies stood for the symbolic bodies, through the juxtaposition of the metaphor of sturdy Turkish sons (Gürbüz Türk evlatları) against the metaphor of Ottoman Empire as a "sick man", engraving the national narrative onto the bodies and consciences of the population.

Body Discipline Law of 1938 elevated the matter of sports activities to a legal duty, a "sports obligation" ("spor mükellefiyeti"), assigning the district administrators to oversee the fulfillment of this obligation. (İnanç 61) The literature on the body discipline and hygiene as national duty was circulated in textbooks, radio broadcasts emphasized the mutual necessity of moral, physical and spiritual discipline for being a healthy Turk, for being included in the nation. (Çağlı 65) Such literature weaved together notions of Turkish racial essence, the sacred duty to protect that essence by taking care of one's own body and by procreation, in order to arrive at the destination of civilization that is deserved. (Alemdaroğlu 73)

Within this framework, the relationship of the subject to his/her body is structured as a national duty, the integrity and functionality of the body as a cultural norm and the national identity was enveloped by an ideal of "sturdy" body. The citizens were demanded to constantly monitor their bodies, gestures, clothing and well-being as they represent the essence of the new nation, and men and women were expected to tend to their bodies in different ways as the new gender regime assigned them different functions: The lives of men and women were meaningful to the extent that their bodies were "fit" to be a soldier and a mother of a future soldier, respectively. (Öztan 274) As Altınay stresses, the establishment of military-nation as a foundational myth naturalized the gendered citizenship and assigned the gender roles: "When it is only men who become soldiers, military service inevitably defines male citizenship and masculinity in an opposition to female citizenship and femininity". (Altınay 33) This gendered citizenship was irrevocably ableist citizenship as well, since being married and being a soldier were both subject to corporeal standards and to the laws that monitor these standards.[20] For instance, the literature on sports recommended girls to work on their body parts necessary for procreation, and regarded the body discipline to be a "softer and more fun" version of military service for boys. (Çağlı 66) The literature on sports and body discipline considered women to be a vessel for transferring her good biological qualities and moral essence to next generation and suggested that the capacity for reproduction making up for her lack (of not being a soldier). (67) Thus, the eugenicists suggested, the "principal duty" of the Turkish women was motherhood, some even went further to state that it was a "female citizen's debt to the state". (Atabay 64) As such, the ideal Turkish woman was a well-educated, morally sound, physically fit mother.

[20] The Public Hygiene Law of 1930 banned citizens with syphilis, gonorrhea, leprosy, mental illnesses and tuberculosis from getting married. The pre-marital examinations are still a prerequisite today.

Not only were the gender performances defined by ability and national duty, but also the bond of matrimony was service to the nation. Men and women were urged to approach marriage not as a fulfillment of romantic desires, but as a rational choice in the service of national prosperity. The eugenicists suggested that marriage was not an individual but a social and national matter, that the prospective partners should acquire correct and full information on each other's mental and physical health. (Öztan 274) As a disabled child was considered a burden to whole nation, any element that disrupted a correct marriage (i.e. reproduction) was to be fought against as a part of the patriotic duty. Another important aspect of this approach to marriage is that within this context of nationalism, a normal family is defined by "healthy heterosexual partners". (Alemdaroğlu 73) Thus, ableism and heteronormativity are mutually constitutive in the construction of the national identity. Such mutual constitution has been discussed in detail in Robert McRuer's article titled "Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence". Following Rich's concept of "compulsory heterosexuality", which is the enframing of heterosexuality as a center to which the queer existence is a margin, McRuer introduces the concept of "compulsory able-bodiedness". Just as the homosexuality is subordinated under heterosexuality, which is institutionalized as the norm, able-bodiedness is the measure for the desirability of the body. (303) Heterosexism and ableism are parts of a discursive system which governs the bodies through the measure of the norm. Thus, as is the case with the Turkish eugenicist discourse, the reduction of women to wombs and men to inseminators and of sexuality to procreation implicates a compulsory able-bodiedness, as such definition of sexual relations excludes both the diverse corporealities of sexual orientation and of disability.

In sum, the eugenicist discourse, in helping the construction of the national identity, not only physically shaped bodies but also defined the relationship of the individuals to their bodies,

with the dominant idea that they are only meaningful and valuable to the extent that they serve the nation well. Worth of life was defined in an ableist manner, through the ability to serve for the army, to join the economic production, and to reproduce: Within the eugenicist discourse, ability corresponded to ability to perform gender roles and to represent the national ideals within and through one's own body. As such, bodies were rendered signifiers of an ideal, and an essentialist and ableist approach to corporealities dominated all realms of daily life.

EUGENICS AND DEVALUATION OF DIFFERENCE

Although an important part of the intellectual toolkit, it was not until the 1930's that the eugenicism had begun to be used systematically. Öztan suggests that the unifying political discourse with Islamist undertones during the years of mobilization and of the establishment of the Republican institutions, left its place to an ethnicized political discourse which sought to build a new ideology. (Öztan 268) In the aftermath of the struggle against the colonial powers, the modernization project followed a path towards a nationalist Westernization, for which the eugenicist discourse provided both the legitimacy as "a sign of modernity" (Ergin 291) and the premises of a narrative that defined the Turkish national essence. The radical cultural transformations to westernize the institutions and the lifestyle went alongside with the construction of a common cultural origin and ethnic identity, which resulted in a precarious synthesis. The use of eugenics in historical and anthropological studies was mainly to reassert the non-Western, "other" position of the new found Turkish essence, through the legitimacy of a Western and scientific discourse.

One important example of such use is the Turkish History Thesis, a scienticist effort in establishing a myth of origin for the new Turkish identity. This thesis, undertaken by Turkish Historical Society with the personal supervision of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, laid the ideological groundwork for Turkish textbooks and population policies alike.[21] The study suggested that Turks were not members of the "yellow race" but instead belonged to the brachycephalic "white race", they were the the creators of neolithic civilization which they spread through migration and hence were inherently forebearers of civilization. The pre-Islamic Turkish past was reappropriated as the pivotal point for the national identity and was imagined as not only compliant with but also a predecessor of the Western values adopted during the foundation of the republic. As Arat stresses, a part of this re-imagination was the notion of gender equality in Central Asian ancestry. (109) The visibility of women in social life was attributed to Turkish tradition, which meant that the values of equality and secularism was not attached to the national identity by imitation but rediscovered. As the image of modern Turkish woman was on display as an embodiment of the break from Ottoman Empire, cultural discourses of Kemalist modernization, such as the case with the History Thesis, often reiterated the participation of women in social life, but always keeping the gender order intact by basing the gender hierarchy on the service to military as fundamental national duty.

Such narrative of a timeless Turkish essence as the basis of value and worth also reflected on the cultural approach to diversity. Maksudyan and Ergin's studies on the influence of eugenicism in the scientific institutions of early Republican Turkey sheds light on the scope and depth of the conflation of the social and biological traits in the scientific, political and cultural

[21] For detailed discussion of the political uses of the Turkish History Thesis, see Altınay 13-31 and Arat "From Emancipation to Liberation", 125-31.

discourses. Both sources show that, although the definition of what the Turkish race is was left ambiguous and despite the fact that neither eugenicism nor racism were institutionalized, they were nevertheless significantly influential in the articulation of the nationhood in racialized and corporeal terms, rationalizing the devaluation of difference**.** Both studies on the use of eugenicist discourse for the construction of new identity in the early years of the Republic suggests that the racial taxonomy has been an important part of the political and academic discourse, in contrast to the widespread understanding of the racist nationalism being a marginal ideology. They demonstrate that during these formative years, the political, medical and academic elite worked in unison as members of the power/knowledge complex, to rationalize and to organize a social order based on exclusionary practices along the linguistic, ethnic and gender lines, in contradiction with the citizenship-based nationalism epitomized in the motto "How happy he who calls himself Turk". (Maksudyan 313) (Ergin 283).

The anthropological perspective of "Turkish Anthropological Review" is a clear example of how a notion of Turkish race was constructed as a measuring stick for normal/ideal. Its discourse maintained the religion-based millet system within the new and scientifically legitimate category of race. Such ideology had been far from coherent and the attitudes towards race varied, and often continued in perplexing conceptualizations; nevertheless the common and the constant principle employed in the discourse of TRA were the superiority of the homogeneity and the inferiority of diversity. This resulted from the notion of "pure race", a strain of eugenicist thought which regarded unchanged characteristics to be more valuable and superior to hybridity. As such, the goal of Turkish anthropology was not only to find the unchanging Turkish essence that would become the basis of Turkish identity, but also to prove its precedency. The Turks were to be master race, insofar as it was established that they were settled in Anatolia first and

secondly to the extent that they carried unchanging qualities. Thus, said Turkish corporeality was to be the norm against which all diversity is to be measured. For instance, in a comparative study on the "races" living in Istanbul, published on *Turkish Review of Anthropology*, the authors first state the "otherness" as observable fact, in congruence to their quest for essential differences between groups. (Maksudyan 304) Then the authors continued their analyses on each different "race", suggesting that Jews, Levantines and Greek Rums are "inferior" due to their mixed bloods, that it was difficult to distinguish their origins. The heterogeneity of the physical characteristics of the ethnicities was measured in a scale of inferiority, whereas the supposed homogeneity of the Turkish race proved its position as pure and mastering group. (307) Setting aside the conflict between the first statement and the second, such analysis was not merely a tautological fallacy, but a significant part of the ideological approach to corporeal diversity. What makes this argument significant for the purposes of this study is that in a discourse that renders the individual body a metonymy of the nation, all corporeal differences indicate not only abnormalcy but also inferiority in cultural representation. Within such cultural representation, all marginalities are bundled together in a lump that work to distinguish the normal, the better and the superior - be it under the title of cacogenics ("epileptics, mutes, deaf, blind, perverts, alcoholics, vagabonds, immoral"), or of ethnic minorities.

Although eugenicism allowed for a level coherence among the reforms that took place in the early years of the Republic, the ambivalence towards the modernity and the anxieties around the social change defined the often contradictory accounts of the Turkish eugenicists. The question of how to keep the patriarchal gender regime and traditional order intact while instilling the modern habitus often surfaced in the writings of the Turkish eugenicists: To what extent could the women participate in public sphere? How much visible or independent can the new

Turkish women be? What are the dangers of modernization with respect to the Turkish mores? How can the bachelor life and individualism be avoided in urban context? Atabay's thesis suggests that to a certain extent, the rationalization of the morality, the rearticulation of moral values through scientific terms worked on subduing said ambivalences. (57)

Within such rationalization is a torrent of binaries that seek to capture the norm in between two extreme poles. Especially with respect to their principal concern of procreation, the eugenicists referred to the margins in a balancing act to find center. Consider the discussion of which population represents the Turkish essence, for instance. The classification of the population into "valuable" and "valueless" groups is the main discursive instrument in defining which traits are good and which are bad. According to Prof. Tokgöz's categorization, there are three groups, superior, mediocre and cacogenics, which echo the bell curve of the early eugenicist-staticians. The latter group consists of "lunatics, epileptics, the mute, the blind, the deaf, criminals, vagabonds, alcohol addicts, the immoral and the insane" (Alemdaroğlu 70). In a similar vein, physiologist Sadi Irmak suggested that there are "valuable" classes and "valueless" classes, latter corresponding to cacogenics. In Irmak's formulation, valuable classes was the culture-producing classes, the well-educated people who carried the essential qualities for the nation. Yet, Irmak asserted, they reproduced far less than the valueless classes, who reproduced "like mice". (quoted in Atabay 60) Irmak as well as Gökay and others, blamed the urban life which pushed this population to alcoholism, venereal diseases and worst of all, to a bachelor life. (58) Yet it was this urban environment that was the breeding ground for progress. Neither the conditions of luxury nor that of poverty was prone to eugenics, yet within this undesirable two, eugenicists preferred the poor, as they considered indulgence in pleasures corrupted the person. (69) Such articulation of a norm not only contradicted with the ideal of a classless and

homogenous nation but also with the ideal of progress and modernization. In this aspect, the eugenicists battled with the question of the extent of Westernization and modernization, fearing that the purity of essence would be lost, associating urbanization, individualism, autonomy, popular entertainment and even a good education with degenerative impacts, since these led to the citizens straying from forming families and working for the nation. (91)

A similar problem existed with respect to "degenerating" impact of alcohol, as the alcohol consumption was promoted by the state, to the extent that alcohol production was in the hands of the government. As alcohol consumption was a sign of Western life-style and its wholesale ban would be regressive, the eugenicists had to compromise their views with state policies. As Atabay stresses, the definition of degeneration was left ambivalent, whether it was hereditary or from milieu often blurred. In some examples, the eugenicists completely conflated immorality with health conditions ("genetic degeneracy"), suggesting that infant mortality resulted only in the case of children out of wedlock, and was not a loss, since these were immoral children. (62) Yet the value given to moderacy and to selflessness (vs. self-indulgence) dominated the literature. The valuable citizen was portrayed as a subject in control of his/her sexuality and material desires, vaguely in a middle-class family setting with moral integrity. The tensions that existed within the attempts to modernize and the anxieties around individualism and autonomy, was regulated with a moralist rhetoric, embedding the moral codes within sexual behaviour and control over the female body.

The most visible portrayals of binaries were perhaps the ones pertaining to the definition of "ideal woman". The duty of the Turkish women within the Turkish modernization project was twofold, to be the living symbol of the new modern Turkey, with her visibility in public sphere

as a moderately Westernized mother and wife, and yet reproducing the cultural ("racial") essence. The ideal Turkish woman was to dress in the plainest manner, to be fit and sportive, to be well-educated but to be present in the public sphere as envisioned by the political ideals, and not to be competitive, a quality reserved for men. As such, the "other" women were the flamboyant woman with dyed hair and make-up, spending time in parlors and cinemas, "the chubby doll lying on a sofa" as defined in a pamphlet on sports. (Çağlı 67, translation mine) She was to be hard-working like the rural women, but not to the extent that she is "masculinized". (68)

To summarize and conclude, the eugenicist discourse regulated the domains of daily life, education, family, and political institutions by consolidating the idea that individual can be sacrificed for the survival of the nation and rendered these individual bodies a signifier of the body politic. The literature on and the practices of racial hygiene inverts the relations of representation in language: An individual's body is not regarded as a concrete entity, but instead becomes a metaphor that materializes an immaterial ideal. Race, gender roles and as Atabay's examples show, even the class categories are used in the depiction of the norm, allowing this metaphor to be embodied.

This politically practical discursive conversion excludes and marginalizes all corporeal diversity pertaining to disability and sexuality, as well as ethnicity and race, to the extent that it does not leave any room for the vulnerability and the fragility of corporeality. This function of the role of the eugenicist discourse in the service of nationalism is crucial for our understanding of the bodily reactions disability metaphor induces on the melodrama spectator and must be taken into account. It is our experiences of our bodies as a certain metaphor that allows us to

experience the disability metaphor with such sensation it evokes. Aside from these cultural inscriptions, genre conventions of melodrama structure the meanings assigned to the disabled imagery, which will be the focus of the next chapter.

3. MELODRAMA: A PARTICULAR MODE OF REPRESENTATION

In this section, I will introduce the conventions and narrative structure of melodrama films in explaining the reliance on the figurative disability. Drawing on Mercer and Shingler's work on the concept of melodrama, I will frame the use of disability as a visual metaphor within three aspects of how the term is come to be understood in the film studies discipline: As a genre, as a style and as a sensibility - a way of representing the world. The section will proceed to engage in the context of the production of melodrama films in Turkey during 1960's and 1970's to explain the particularities of audience identification and recurring themes.

In the second chapter, I emphasized the importance of situating a narrative within its medium and its genre, to better comprehend the meaning and function assigned to the figurative disability. Genre, in its most basic sense, is a way of classifying films, with respect to how they construct a certain audience expectation: It is a "system of codes, conventions, and visual styles which enables an audience to determine rapidly and with some complexity the kind of narrative they are viewing". (Turner 97) As is the case with all signifying systems, with the genres too, the principle of relationality applies: The audience expectation is guided in comparison to other films defined in relation to each other, through being bundled under the same genre. In this sense, genre gives a context for interpretation, making a film "comprehensible and more or less familiar". (97)

The persistent audience demand for a certain style, plot, star cast and setting results in the production of a cycle of films, which in turn generates (and in time, transforms) a genre. Yet, as Mercer and Shingler stresses, the retrospective studies on the genres can have an impact on their definition, such is the case of melodramas. (6) While the industry use of the term "melodrama"

referred to the origins of the term, a combination of music (melos) and drama, with the sudden twists in the plot, sensational effects, high tension storylines packed with action and thrills, serving as an umbrella term for films that can be considered action, thriller or adventure films today, after the 1970's film studies' account of Hollywood production of melodramas, especially that of feminist approach, centered around the melodramas focusing on women and family.

In its most general sense, melodrama can be defined on the basis of its reliance on expressive use of mise-en-scene, music and gestures, a roller-coaster of emotions that keep the audience on edge and a victim/hero(ine) that suffer many predicaments in a Manichean universe. The concentration of the film studies on the melodrama as a subject of study in its own right, directed its attention on the canonical work of two film directors of 1950's Hollywood, Sirk and Minnelli, following two main texts by Schatz and Elsaesser.

In the context of post-WWII suburban American life, the melodramatic narratives focused on intergenerational conflicts of middle-class families, and the internal dilemmas of the protagonist stuck between individualism and social conventions, as s/he faces a conservative culture. Such social reality made its way into Sirkian melodrama as an excessive use of mise-en-scene, color and music to signify and give meaning to emotional events. The impact of family and home as restrictive elements, for instance, were represented in a claustrophobic setting. (Elsaesser 76) The repression of individual desire in melodramatic narratives has found outlet in representative power of objects, colors and emotional weight of music. Another golden rule of the melodramas (Sirkian or otherwise) is that they center around a victim/hero or heroine whose pursuit is always hindered, whose capacity for action and for solving problems is always

diminished by exterior factors: They are constantly broken, misunderstood, betrayed and disillusioned. The audience identification is provided, through pity and privileged audience knowledge on the turn of events. (Neale 12) It is the pathos that gives melodrama its sensationality within the relationship it builds with its social context.

While Schatz concentrated on Sirk's melodramatic canon both as the rule and the exception, for setting a certain aesthetic standard and carrying melodramatic elements to an hyperbolic level to reveal contradiction, Elsaesser underlined the same aspect to make a point about the coherence between the melodramatic expression and social context, between the style and the meaning, endorsed most eloquently by Sirk's films. As Mercer and Schingler stresses, it is the particular sensibility melodramatic narrative mobilizes through the use of cinematic elements, sensationalism, a unique moral order and emotional intensity that allows it to transcend the genre and the historical context. (Mercer and Schingler 95) In order to understand the lasting impact of the melodrama genre in diverse historical contexts, one must grasp how it relates to its context of production. Before dwelling in this relationship, in the next section I will analyse the melodramatic features (excess and lack/pathos) and how they make sense of disability as a figurative trope. After a brief introduction of how melodrama relates to modernity and sudden social change, I will focus on the particular context of production of melodramas in Turkey.

3.1 Disability as Lack and Excess in Melodramatic Discourse

In the previous chapters I have underlined the meanings assigned to disability both as "excess" (as an external and alien condition inflicted on the body and the self) and as "lack" (of agency, of potency and lack in the sense of being "less than human"). These two seemingly

paradoxical positions ascribed to disability are important in understanding its double functioning in melodramatic narratives, precisely because these narratives are built on an excessive mode of expression and interweave the possibilities for action and the setting of the story through a sense of lack, on the part of the protagonist. These establish the very particularity of melodrama as a modality that goes beyond the scope of the genre and these traits have the potential to explain the exhaustion of disability as a trope.

The melodramatic narrative centers on a victim hero/ine who is innocent, facing unjust treatment and seeking to pursue his/her desire against a torrent of blockages. The protagonist is disempowered, incapacitated and unable to intervene with the course of events (or more appropriately, his/her destiny): The protagonist is defined by his/her lack. The melodrama, therefore, makes use of an "emotional hyperbole" in the absence of action, a hyperbole most notably drawn through music, giving the genre its name. (Neale 12) In order to express such intensity in emotions, the melodrama resorts to an excessive use of gestures, meaning-laden mise-en-scene and dominantly metaphorical use of visual substance aside from the music, allowing the meaning to navigate without words.

Such representational framework allows the audience to relate to the victim-hero/ine through emotions and results in tears. In his article "Melodrama and Tears", Steve Neale asks what makes crying pleasurable. While elaborating on the pleasure of crying for the melodrama audience, Neale reflects on the significance of the discrepancy of knowledge between the audience and the protagonist. (Neale 7) He asserts that the fundamental blockage in the melodramatic narrative is the lack of knowledge or miscommunication. It is these two that ultimately restrict the potential for action. Therefore the audience identification with the

protagonist stems not only from pathos, but from the privileged position of the audience against the unaware or misunderstood hero/ine: “Lack [of spectatorial power] is all the more acute because the characters are even more powerless, even more unaware, and because we, as spectators, are aware of that.” (11) The spectator, in spite of (or precisely because of) his/her privileged position endures the same pain because he/she is not able to intervene or to change the trajectory of the victim/hero. Miscommunication, lack of knowledge or foresight often finds its expression in the metaphor of blindness, other times through the use of elements of mise-en-scene or discrepancy in point of view (lack of reciprocal point of view or eyeline match, use of windows, blinders, doors or other spatial elements that inhibit sight).

Linda Williams locates crying as the basis of the audience demand for melodramas as well. She names melodrama, along with porn and horror genres, as a “body genre” based on not only the way it turns the bodies into spectacles but also the sensational grasp over the spectator’s body, watching the bodies on screen suffer, cry and shiver. Her article suggests that bodily reactions to these genres build affective relation as well as intellectual relation, a specific mode of perception. Thus the identification is provided through the bodies themselves, projecting the feelings and sensations through the bodies of the characters onto the bodies of the spectators. In this respect, disabled imagery reminds us the vulnerability of our bodies and of our existence, as well as the fragility our functioning in the society. The primal fear of losing bodily integrity and the social norms that propagate the ableist meanings over disability render the disabled imagery affective. Its stereotypical reiterations riveting the negative associations with lack and loss are so internalized that this imagery grips the audience viscerally, triggering bodily sensations. Thus, the association of disability with lack and victimization is intricately related to the extreme sensations it evokes, the excessiveness it has come to be perceived as.

The repression that grows from the constant inhibition of the protagonist in pursuit of his/her desire against the current of social norms results in the peculiar mode of expression melodrama endorses, that of excess. The pervasive lack of agency that dominates the melodramatic narrative manifests itself as the narrative's dependence on the intensive use of signifiers rather than articulation of emotion, mise-en-scene, music, gestures, setting and colors play the lead role in the construction of meaning. As Brooks repeatedly stresses in his comprehensive work on theatrical melodrama, "Melodramatic Imagination: Balzac, Henry James, Melodrama and The Mode of Excess", melodrama conveys its message and meaning much more immediately through gestures than words, playing on the affectional plane rather than on the intellectual plane. This is not to suggest that two are in stark contrast. Rather, as Brooks' suggestion follows, there is a sense of primacy to the innate gestures we use to convey our emotions. Thus, melodrama is a "text of muteness"[22], using "sign for a sign (...) resembling metaphor, the transference of meaning". (72) It is important to note here that we once again run into the metaphor of disability, used rather sparingly in Brooks' terminology. Here the muteness does not refer to the actual social or corporeal experience of being mute, but to the diversity in communication that signifies the particularity of muteness. The success of the use of excess as a mode of expression in conveying emotion is that it transcends the written language and delivers much more directly, without necessarily an exact definition it is "a moment of victory of pure expression over articulation." (72)

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[22] As stressed in the introduction of the chapter, the range of diversity in senses that disability comes to stand for, is utilized by scholars of humanities and social sciences without questioning its impact on the discrimination against the disabled people. I have referred to term nevertheless, not to reproduce such effect but to highlight the fact that the domination of metaphors in the language at the expense of diversity and our experience of our bodies as metaphors are so intricately overlapping that it seems very difficult to think and to articulate ourselves without resorting to the signifying might of disability metaphor.

Along with the use of props, setting and gestures (or exaggeration in acting), the disability serves as excess. It is an extraneous state of being that is inflicted upon the victim/hero, accentuated with the use of imagery and props associated with disability: canes, eye-patches, wheel-chairs and hospital beds. It should be reminded here that impairment in Turkish melodramatic narratives is rarely congenital. References to disability on screen throughout the findings of the thesis are all results of accidents, injuries or illnesses**.** Disability, often caused by an accident leads to other misfortunes and tests the virtues of the protagonist. Aside from giving us clues about the morality of the protagonist, the representation of disability as an individual misfortune or predicament allows the film to deliver the sense of chance and fate to the audience while maintaining its sensationalism and excess at the same time, creating an economic narrative impact.

Melodramas heavily rely on signifiers of intense emotions, which can be recognized and emphatized by the audience. The disability stigma allows for a consensus for such recognition: disability is misfortune, it is a lack, it is an obstacle, it is being less than others, it is being confined, isolated and undesirable. The consensus on these meanings allow for the glimpses of disability and disabled imagery (all props relate to disability as well) to trigger quick responses, as the stereotypical imagery already fed the audience with efficient cues about how the story will proceed or how the spectator her/himself is supposed to feel about this situation. This is not to say that disabled imagery is absolutely uniformly perceived. I suggest that it is the long enduring inversion of corporeality into signifiers and symbols allows for the cinematic efficiency of the disabled image, functioning as a "concentrated visual metaphors and dramatic acceleration" which Elsaesser suggests to be the values of cinema, providing compact narratives within a certain time limit. (76) Therefore, regardless of the intention of the director or his/her position on

the disabled subjectivity, disabled imagery and figurative disability serves a function other than signifying off-screen disabled lives - which is precisely why it is a narrative prosthesis.

Where does the representation of disability stand within this easily legible moral framework of the melodramatic narrative? As argued in the beginning of the section, in the melodramatic order of things, victim/heroes are inherently virtuous vis-a-vis an unjust setting dominated by conniving and evil villains and by the material conditions that restrain the victim/hero from pursuing his/her happy ending. Not only is the figurative disability is the ultimate embodiment of victimhood and loss of control over actions through its cultural associations but also it is the part of the normative logic that assumes the exterior to be the signifier of the interior, the body as the container of a moral essence. Within such framework, disability as a visual metaphor gives clues about the moral essence of the victim/hero. As the studies reviewed in the second chapter show, disabled imagery have connotations of both virtue and vice, within different genres and depending on the type of impairment. Corporeal differences such as deformity, lameness, paraplegia, dwarfism, blindness, kyphosis may mark moral lack as well as innocence. In Turkish melodramas, one encounters disabled villains as well as disabled victim/heroes. One factor that distinguishes the two characterizations is the origin of the impairment. While the villains tend to have congenital impairments or impairments caused by their own actions, victim/heroes tend to acquire impairments which are dominantly temporary. Another factor is that the disability experience is represented as a test of virtue, which the victim/heroes pass and villains fail. The moral superiority of the victim/heroes is rewarded with the termination of the disability whereas the villains either remain disabled or expire.

The position of the metaphor of disability within the melodramatic morality has another dimension as well. Through its powerful associations with vulnerability and with loss, it embodies and delivers certain cultural anxieties and desires from the position of victimhood. As both Neale and Singer emphasize, the melodramatic narrative resonates with the audience as it articulates both the audience anxiety and its wish. (Neale 21) (Singer 46) Therefore the dual responses that are given to both melodramatic narratives and the images of the disabled are mutually supportive for the audience identification. Thus, important task of the next section is to situate the Turkish melodrama, the need for its moral legibility and sense of justice within a social and cultural context, in order to comprehend the role of figurative disability within the melodramatic narrative.

3.2 MELODRAMA AS SENSIBILITY: SEEKING ORDER AMIDST CHAOTIC MODERNITY

In order to situate the representations of disability within the melodramatic narrative structure, it is imperative to understand the particularity of the picture of the world it presents, the perspective it assumes vis-a-vis the social reality. The position melodramatic rhetoric takes against the social life is much diverse from realism, in the sense that it both recognizes and exposes the limits of its social context. In this aspect, its position regarding the social reality is neither escapist nor altogether subversive. It is, as Mercer and Shingler argues, a certain sensibility that melodramatic narrative endorses that renders melodrama a distinct mode of representation. (96) The moral world melodrama presents to the audience should be evaluated within this sensibility, with its basis of a protagonist that gains his/her virtue from his/her victimhood amidst a disruptive social environment that s/he drifts in. Therefore, melodramatic

representation makes sense within its context of production, a time of massive social change, be it 19th century stage melodrama or 1960's Istanbul of rapid urbanization.

In his comprehensive work on the relationship of melodrama with modernity, "Melodrama and Modernity", Singer discusses in great detail how melodrama makes sense in and of modernity, within the historical context of massive social transformation and uprooting. Put simply, he suggests that "melodrama was, in quite literal sense, a product of modernity." (11) If we take the concept of "sensibility" with both of its denotations, as a way of responding to the stimuli and as emotional sensitivity, there are two implications of melodrama as a sensibility: It is a certain way of perceiving and responding to physical stimuli, known as its "sensationalism", it is also a certain way of engaging with the world through moral values and emotions. It is these two aspects of the melodrama that Singer contextualizes within modernity; it is the social and physical experience of modernity that shaped the melodrama's distinct mode of expression. (8)

Singer relates the sensationalism of melodramatic narratives to the "sensory overload" that comes about in the context of rapid urbanization and modernization. (90) He argues that the physical experience of modernity gave form to the film melodrama with its use of technological advances as well as making the power of machines over the human life a subject matter of the narratives themselves, with the leading role of trains, automobiles, industrial settings in the mise-en-scene. The narratives have also conveyed the physical experience of the "sensory violence" of the new urban settings to a new form of sensationalist entertainment. (62) This sensationalism of the early melodrama, Singer asserts was an extension of the experience of modernity as "a series of sensory shocks and bodily perils" (8).

Drawing on his extensive study on the social context of the late 19th and early 20th century, the era of stage melodrama and early film melodrama, Singer suggests that the intensity of the torrent of stimuli within the rapid urbanization produced cultural representations with a set of motifs. (60) From daily cartoons to academic journals, from billboard ads to news pieces, highly graphic representations of work and traffic accidents, of the unhealthy, threatening and deadly impacts of the city life on the individuals infiltrated the cultural realm. (66) A sense of physical vulnerability in a chaotic and random daily life was translated to a social critique enveloped in "commercial sensationalism", through a "fascination with the horrific, the grotesque and the extreme". (89)

From such perspective on the formal sensationalism of the melodramatic narrative, it can be suggested that the figurative disability is a fitting and condensed motif , transferring the anxiety of constant potential of physical damage and stress onto the screen. As emphasized in previous chapters, the impairments in Turkish melodramas are rarely congenital and are inflicted upon the protagonist during the narratives unraveling. When we look at the causes of impairment, the most frequent ones are traffic accidents, work accidents, complications of alcohol consumption, exhaustion, diseases which are not treated due to poverty and lack of healthcare, or psychological depression. These conditions are portrayed as a part or a result of the modern lifestyle of the rich or the life of the urban poor. In Turkish melodramas, whether the impairment originates from the "degenerate" lifestyle of the rich or from the deprivation of the urban working class, disability is a malady inflicted on the body by the modern urban life and are represented through a highly stimulating visual language, reenacting the very sensations Singer asserts to be a part of the rapid urbanization and modernization. Thus, disability, both by the

sensationalism it evokes and by the portrayal of its origins, plays the leading role in the relationship between the narrative and its context of modernization.

The other face of Singer's argument is that the social uprooting of the masses during the process of modernization emerges in the moral framework of the narratives. Singer argues that the class difference, end of cultural homogeneity, competitive individualism, disruption of traditional order, an overall disenchantment and desacralization of the world which fed into the alienation of the new urban masses, took shape as the dichotomous characterization and a sense of working moral order within a chaotic world in the melodramatic narratives. Within the narrative structure of the melodrama, the binary oppositions allow the spectator to easily navigate through the story, granting "an ethical simplicity and legibility that made the world more secure, if not socially or economically then at least psychologically." (137) In such context, the melodrama presents a reaction to the outcomes of modernity with a dual response: It portrays both the impotence within the new chaotic order, and at the same time it serves to reassure the audience by endorsing the idea of an ultimate moral order that will reestablish justice.

By introducing the context of production of the melodramas in Turkey in their golden age, namely Yeşilçam, the next section will discuss the specific manner with which Yeşilçam built its own melodramatic narratives within the genre conventions and the interaction between these narratives with the particular social transformations that came about with rapid modernization and urbanization in Turkey.

4. YEŞILÇAM: CONTEXT OF PRODUCTION AND PARTICULARITY OF TURKISH MELODRAMA

As stressed in the previous section, melodramas are built on the interplay of fear and desire, in engaging the audience and producing its emotional impact, within a context of rapid social transformation. In order to make sense of the meanings disabled imagery assume in relation to the representations of gender, it is necessary to articulate the specific anxieties they communicate. As Mutlu stresses, Yeşilçam cinema, just as the genre of melodrama is, was "an attempt to manage and eradicate feelings of social anxiety and despair in a particular period". (Mutlu 418) Therefore, this section will situate the representations of disability and of gender within the context of production, namely "Yeşilçam"[23], and the social anxieties it addressed.

In his comprehensive study, "Cinema in Turkey", Savaş Arslan examines Yeşilçam in three main periods, Pre-Yeşilçam (from 19th century to 1940s), Yeşilçam (1950s to 1980s) and Post-Yeşilçam (1990s onwards). (11) This periodization is based on the rise and fall of the demand for films, following the socio-political developments through the 20th century Turkish history. In contrast to the pre-Yeşilçam period, when the film production remained highly small scale due to the tax regulations, increasingly after 1950's, Yeşilçam had become both a sector and a cultural domain in its own right. The period of "High Yeşilçam", which is the focus of this thesis (1960s and 1970s), was marked by an increasing demand for these local cultural products through the formation of a new urban audience (rural migrants) as well as the increasing access

[23] Here, I am using the term Yeşilçam as explained by Savaş Arslan, not only as the common name given to the local film production companies, but as "both a hub of cinema having a specific set of distinctive characteristics in terms of production, distribution, and exhibition network, and a specific filmic discourse and language developed by bringing together different films under one umbrella". (REF)

to the films by the opening of new movie theatres in Anatolia. Yeşilçam productions increased in number through the 1960's and 1970's, with 266 films per year in 1971 yet not in quality, due to the economic influence of the distributors, lack of facilities and equipment due to the import regulations as well as the commercialism of the film market. [24] (Abisel 102) Increasing demand and the financial difficulties led the minor companies to produce cheaper films much faster, eventually giving way to the creation of the exploitation cinema of the 1970s, when erotic films started dominating the medium. (Abisel 106) With the military coup of 1980, all independent cultural production came to a halt, together with the growth of TV ownership, led to the fading out of the influence of Yeşilçam in popular culture.

The period was also defined by the social and political issues that influenced the audience reception. The years between 1960-1980 were not only marked by increasing social conflict, which resulted in three military coups but also by the deepening class and cultural divide which ran against the promise of a classless, united and harmonious society, the ultimate destination as imagined by the Kemalist modernization project. Such social conditions are keys to understanding the popularity of melodrama as a genre that addresses the alienated and marginalized audience. As Arslan suggests, the golden age of Yeşilçam was contingent with the "increased visibility" and presence of masses which were othered by the republican regime in urban social life. (Savaş Arslan 66) The negative criticism towards Yeşilçam both from the contemporary cultural critique and from the Kemalist modernization discourse coincide with the

[24] The influence of economic priorities in film production in Yeşilçam consolidated the formulaic nature of Yeşilçam melodramas. It is important to note the lack of artistic license when evaluating these melodramas, since from the choice of the stars to be featured to that of plot lines were directed by the theatre owners and film distributors. Thus, the question of what makes these repeatedly recycled themes, protagonists and plots were popular becomes ever more significant, which is among the focal points of this study.

gaze that renders the people as a mass to be tamed, disciplined and constantly guided. Such gaze is reverted back through the ridicule of the rich/modern characters and even their "enfreakment"[25] - yet always with the desire to occupy the same position.

Several authors have traced the connection between Yeşilçam's position to the cultural policies of the state and the position of the audience vis-a-vis Westernization and modernization. Instead of approaching the Western modernity as an ultimate destination to which neither Yeşilçam nor the Turkish society had been able to reach, Arslan suggests that a transitional state is inherent to this cultural domain: "Yeşilçam maintained a double existence, not being one nor being the other, but in continual movement between the two". (Savaş Arslan 60) This in-betweenness of the Yeşilçam melodrama is the reason for its popularity among the new urban lower classes of the 1960's and 1970's. In this era defined by urban migration and blatant class differentiation that negates the image of a homogenous society endorsed by the founding political discourse; the common social experience of the rural migrants was that of a conflict between the traditional and the new modern lifestyle and the threat of remaining in the margins within the new urban setting, as well as that of the individual pursuits and tradition.

By playing in the void left by the repressive cultural policies of the state[26] and by translating the new cultural forms for local demands, film production in Yeşilçam allowed for an

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[25] Here I am referring to David Hevey's concept of "enfreakment", which denotes a certain way of enframing bodily differences, epitomized in freak shows. It is the conflation of all corporeal diverstiy tagged as "freak"s, into an ambigious category of deviance, through the stylized spectacles of difference. In the case of Yeşilçam, much like the freak shows, the rich and Westernized figures are icons of moral deviance and self-indulgence, against which the lower class spectators can reaffirm their virtuous position. For a detailed discussion of the concept see Hevey "The Creatures that Time Forgot" 53 and Garland-Thomson *Extraordinary Bodies* 17.

[26] For the scope of the measures taken by the state regarding the dissemination of Turkish folk music, classical music on the radio and the Egyptian films which ran as an alternative to Hollywood films dubbed in Turkish, and the impact of these measures see Tekelioğlu 194-215 and Stokes 197-203.

alternative synthesis of the old and the new, the Western and the Eastern, that are nevertheless not exempt from the discourse of the modernization project. Here, Arslan underlines that Yeşilçam emerged as "a field of popular culture that does not comply with forced synthesis of the East-West", and that it presented a mode of "spontaneous East-West synthesis". (38) This spontaneous synthesis presented its own ambivalent approach to modernity and social change and the antagonistic states of modernity was reflected in the melodramas vividly.

In a similar vein and in contrast to the perspective that associate Yeşilçam cinema with imitation, artificality and lack, Umut Tümay Arslan suggests that we need to "regard it as a fundamental form of popular culture guided by the collective desires that flow into it" and invites us to "reconsider the specific role of [Yeşilçam cinema] within the modernization of Turkey." (Tümay Arslan "Bu Kabuslar Neden Cemil?" 28, translation mine) Since nations are imagined communities, what they imagine themselves to be can be traced back in the cultural products, and as Arslan suggests, Yeşilçam melodramas present us representations which narrate how we define "us", how we imagine to be, how we construct our identity. ("Mazi Kabrinin Hortlakları" 15) As such, she relates the sentiments of melancholy and nostalgia, founding elements of melodrama, with the national identity's quest for a "self", the relation to past through shame and pride, and with the desire to be potent and complete. (16) The images of victimhood, of being "oppressed" that create the pathos, change with the social transformation through the golden age of melodramas. Arslan stresses that the protagonists of the melodramas in the 1960's are saved from their victimization by integrating themselves in the social order, "voluntarily subjecting" themselves to the modernization project whereas in the 1970's they are more and more inclined to seek revenge and to seize control more violently, portraying different models of masculinity accordingly. (48-52)

Another important conclusion Arslan draws is that not only do the Yeşilçam melodramas construct the notion of "us", a proper self, but also exposes the cracks in this image of a whole. ("Mazi Kabrinin Hortlakları" 27) Building on her insights, I suggest that the images of disability and sexuality emerge as signifiers of absolute difference which interrupts this fantasy of being a whole and blurs the image of "us" in Yeşilçam melodrama.

The articulation of such difference was through a fetishizing gaze towards sexuality (most particularly female sexuality) and disability. Within Yeşilçam melodramas, the heterosexual desire is always represented as normal and ideal to the extent that it is within a setting of family. Melodramas are strictly heteronormative and yield no possibility for homosexual coupling. Furthermore a woman without a man is coded as lacking, it is also coded as threatening, and the autonomy of women was unwanted. In his study of 10 Yeşilçam melodramas, Akbulut suggests that the object of women in melodramas is happiness which is equated with marriage. (348) Lacking a man "is a punishment to women". (349) Those who pursue happiness through social mobility, do so only to reach a "rise up" to the social status level of their men. (350) In sum, Yeşilçam melodramas have an important function in the identification of the gender norms by defining what it is to be a woman, which takes on political meanings, rendering the female protagonist a metonymy of the motherland. (354)

Female characters, in these narratives, are in constant danger and often fall into traps when they have to work outside home or venture into social life, into public life without company. As Dönmez-Collin asserts, Yeşilçam melodramas reflect a spatial segregation that assigns women to home, although night life and chaotic urban life was depicted as a danger for men as well:

> The deceived and deserted village maidens, the vamp and the femme fatale who paid for their 'sins' with their lives, were common motifs in Turkey, a Muslim society in which patriarchal control was sustained through the (idealised) family, the identity of woman split into aile kadını (the family woman), the organiser of the inner/private space, and hayat kadını (literally life woman, a euphemism for the prostitute), who disrupts the order by crossing over into public space, the domain of men. (91)

Nevertheless, Yeşilçam filmic discourse, in contrast to the discourse of Kemalist modernization, condoned the sexual desires and its filmic expressions as a source of sexual desire. This space for sexual desire and pleasure allows for contestation of the existing gender norms, even if it remains bounded by moral codes, as these narratives always uphold self-sacrifice for the family (hence for the nation):

> Yeşilçam relies on a coexistence of the traditional and the modern, on a carnivalesque ground where different members of the filmgoing community share a communal sense of transgression. (90)

The articulation of such tension between the individual desire and the social norms, or between the difference, marginality and consensus was mostly through the female characters and the way their sexuality was enframed. As the next chapter's analyses will demonstrate the recurring themes in Turkish melodramas (being morally pure vs. being degenerated, untamed sexuality vs. forming a family, self-indulgence vs. self- sacrifice) parallels that of the eugenicist discourse in drawing the boundaries of modernization attempts by the control over female sexuality and body. As Mutlu aptly suggests, "Yeşilçam melodramas articulated the desire for modernity and its possible dangers especially through the female characters." (420).

The recurring images of villainesses with "immodest" clothing, consuming alcohol, chain smoking, dancing with men and having illicit sex were an opportunity to expose female body but delivering a moral lesson as well, about going down the wrong path. (Donmez-Collin 92) (Mutlu 420) Thus, the female body is both the threat of transgression, the embodiment of immutable difference that spoils the consensus, and an object of desire at once:

> The signifier of the desire to be someone else, which disrupts cultural homogeneity and closure, of the desire to imitate and to be in someone else's guise, is the female body. Yet the same body is the body whereby the heterogeneity of the nation is repressed, and the energy of the provinces that flow to the cities is tamed. (*Translation mine,* Tümay Arslan "Mazi Kabrinin Hortlakları" 109)

At the point when desire becomes dangerous, female body will be punished, or even disposed of, through the narratives. In the films analyzed in this study, the relationship between the impairment of the female body and the repression of the female desire so as not to disrupt cultural consensus, will be set in this framework. The constant emergence of the total institutions founded by the eugenicist discourse in early republican era, such as the children's protection society, mental asylums, hospitals and venereal diseases hospitals in the melodramas is not coincidental. It is through the authority of these institutions, and the moral classification, repairment and regulation of the bodies that the truth about the moral essence of the characters is established.

Erdoğan suggests that film production in Yeşilçam, always stood between "mimicry and resistance", which caused the narratives they produced to depict "split identities": The poor, rural girl that blossoms into a polite, westernized woman or becomes a famous star yet saves her

essence have always been convincing and appealing for the audience. (265) The West, with its all dangers and all glamour, was symbolized by the rich and urban characters in the melodramas. It is always desired for the rich-poor gap between the lovers is overcome by sudden wealth and upward mobility is presented as a destination to be pursued, yet wealthy lifestyle stands for sexual assault, moral degeneration and loss of virginity at the same time:

> Yeşilçam depicts the West pejoratively, however it surpresses the fact that the social class which represents the West is represented in fantasmatic scenes where everything can be vindicated and thus desired unashamedly. (270)

A similar tension existed between the images of the stars and their real lives, which did not necessarily hinder the audience identification with their popular stars. The fan letters to star magazines, analysed in Mutlu's article, demonstrates that such tension between the stars' real lives, often Western and in conflict with traditional norms, were assimilated in the fantasies of their fans through either assumption of a fictive kinship and moral control over the lives of the stars, or through a synthesis of the benefits of a wealthy, Western life with the fundamentals of tradition. Mutlu goes further to assert that same dynamics exist in the melodramatic narratives in Yeşilçam, where the neighborhood reigns over the mansion:

> Overall Yeşilçam melodramas constructed modernity as a desirable state, as a process that should be experienced, but one that required the remedial intervention of rural lower classes and their traditional 'virtues' and 'spirituality' in order to avoid social degeneration. (420)

Erdoğan arrives at a similar conclusion, suggesting that identification in Yeşilçam melodramas is only possible when the "audience's wish to be desired for, and wish to be desired

by, the upper class" justified by the message that upper class can only survive if the lower class assists. (266)

In this chapter, I suggested that the two discursive frameworks delineate an identity defined by the normalcy; a normal body, normal gender behavior, a normal life. Yeşilçam narratives built on the basic dichotomy of rich-poor/ good-evil as well as the binaries of Western/modern- traditional, moral/immoral and resonated with the audience through a constant oscillation between the desire to be modern and the fear of losing one's self/essence. Therefore, representations of disability and of gender as signifiers of difference have an important role for the constructions of norms and of moral legibility of the Yeşilçam melodramas. I suggest that we need to approach these images as not only a signifier of undeniability of difference, but also as an important element in the narratives where the difference is sought to be assimilated into an alternative synthesis (and an happy ending), within the context of a social transformation where the promise of a homogenous society has failed.

The ideal and normal position is ambivalent and has to be constructed by the audience itself, through assimilating the Western/modern/urban/rich to Eastern/traditional/rural/poor. It is the position of the normate figure that the audience identifies with, or better yet, it is the wish to occupy this subject position which allows for the belated audience pleasure when all threats of marginalization and of differentiation are eliminated at the end of the film. Yet the journey to this destination of harmony, of union and of normalcy leaves its traces behind, by threatening the corporeal and moral integrity. Moral framework is not only personified in heroines and villainesses but also spatialized in the mise-en-scenes. As the protagonist weaves the story together by traversing between the day and the night, between the street and home, the notion of

normalcy becomes concrete.[27] After our hero is tested against the misfortunes that may marginalize him/her, the story almost always ends in (or at least approximates to) a normate and balanced state: A middle-class home, if not, a moderately poor household, with an honorable housewife and husband,the truth reestablished or the dignity of the protagonist was saved, the impairment cured or compensated for. (Yumul 49) Yet transgressive moments reside in the narratives as the precarity of the social order and the vulnerability of the self are revealed through the representations of gender and of disability, with the constant obstruction of the fantasy of union as the stories unravel.

[27] See the appendix for a list of binaries that help develop Yeşilçam narratives in establishing their moral clues and the sense of normalcy.

5. DISABILITY IN TURKISH MELODRAMA: SENSE, SENTIMENT AND MEANING

In this chapter I will be presenting the main findings of my film analyses in three sections. Instead of measuring these representations of disability against the criteria of positive/negative depictions, I will be analyzing the associations, sensations and meanings that the disablement of the characters evoke in the specific narrative. I suggest that this gives us a more comprehensive picture of assumptions and stigmas built around disability, and allow us to understand why disability finds artistic expression frequently although it remains invisible in the public sphere. The main criticism directed at these films is how and why they evaporate the tangible, social experience of disability into a trope, thereby increasing the distance between the disabled and able-bodied subjects. Since disability is not depicted as a life experience but is used as a narrative device, the films in this study do not necessarily seek a realist approach to disability. Indeed, they are melodramas, and the conventions of the genre are centered on excess as a method of expression, be it excessive stylistic choices like colorful mise-en-scene or overloaded plots. Thus the first section, "Ways of Narrating" deals with the main function of disability within the genre conventions of melodrama. In the discursive structure of the genre, disability is a component of the "pathos", the crucial element of the story. The disablement of the protagonist delivers its impact on the audience to the extent which it triggers sentimentality, horror and pity. Using disablement as a blockage in the story, practically each film presents a different semantic field built around the impairment of its protagonist. Associated with downward mobility, identity crisis, vulnerability towards sexual transgression, marginalization,

self-inhibition, masculinity crisis, stigmatization, and self-sacrifice, disability in each narrative presents a different battle of the individual with social constraints.

The second section, "Ways of Making Sense", will focus on the particularities of each film in how the narrative makes sense of disability. Drawing on Mitchell & Snyder's concept of "narrative prosthesis", I suggest that in each melodrama disability stands for something else, and is therefore used as a metaphor. Not only do the different types of impairment (mobility impairment, blindness, disfigurement, loss of voice/muteness) result in different trajectories for the narrative, but they also pave these trajectories with diverse meanings through the figurative use of said impairment. One important reason for this diversity is that the disability metaphor is a gendered metaphor. An analysis of this symbolic weight of disability allows us to deepen our understanding of the frequency of its use in cultural products, as each iteration of the metaphor cements the meaning(s) attached to disability. Yet this analysis will also be a productive endeavor for employing the two categories of both gender and disability in cultural analysis, in explaining the discursive investments in lived bodies.

The final section, "Ways of Looking", focuses on the cinematic expression of anxieties that sexuality and disability evoke. The film as a visual medium depends on certain principles which guide our perception, and an analysis remains truncated if limited to a critical reading of the script. Therefore, while engaging in an analysis of the story-telling and meaning-making, I will also be problematizing the visual methods that fetishize the disabled figures, male and female: How are elements such as lighting, mise-en-scene, non-diegetic music, make-up, prosthetics and acting mobilized to sensationalize disability? How are the bodies sensualized

through close-ups and sound effects to depict sexual transgression? How are our senses managed visually and aurally to convey to us certain ideas about bodily differences? In the conclusion of this section, I will be problematizing these stylistic choices in order to grasp how ways of looking at the bodily difference (gawking, staring, gazing) inspire the ways of making sense of said difference.

5.1 Ways of Narrating

As explained in the third chapter, the main role of disability in a narrative is that it presents the problem, the conflict, or the extraordinary situation that disrupts the order of things. As such, it allows the story to take a turn, rather than remaining monotonous. While allowing for the story to gain momentum, structure and direction, this extraordinary state of disability also sensationalizes the narrative. As melodramas rely on the element of "pathos", that is, the audience identification with the hero through his/her victimization and the feeling of pity, disablement serves as the breaking point in an otherwise ordinary chain of events. In posing disablement as such, the melodramas follow the medical and political discourse to a certain extent in constructing normalcy through the "abnormal".

In order to establish the experience of disablement as the victimization of the hero, the melodramas make use of deep-seated assumptions, which themselves show correlation with the eugenicist premises and gender regime of the Kemalist modernization project, discussed in detail in the second chapter of this study. I suggest that these assumptions strengthen the dramatic impact of disablement, as well as allow for the plot to be easily recognizable.

In this section, I will focus on the associations of disability through which the narrative becomes effective. I claim that disability in Turkish melodramas derives its emotional appeal by directly referring to marginalization, isolation and pain, three outcomes that are intricately related to each other within the love story. The experience of disability within the narrative, built on these three associations, becomes the corporeal expression of what lies "off the map of 'recognizable' human experience." (Mitchell and Snyder "Narrative Prosthesis"5) As such, what the disabled figures go through draws the boundaries of what is acceptable, valuable and normal. What the disabled figures go through is defined by their gender roles. As my analyses will show the meanings attached to male and female experience of disability take on different paths, although plot lines remain relatively similar. Thus, representations of gender and disability work together in demarcating the realm of normalcy.

One could ask whether this representation of the disabled figures as marginalized and isolated is "realist" or reflexive, since the disabled populations in real life experience such conditions due to structural constraints. It is important to note that it is the symbolic weight of disability that is the center of the narrative, and not the social experience of being disabled in an ableist society. The disability functions as pathos, not because in real life the disabled people are a minority, but because it represents being defeated, inadequate, or cast out in the setting of melodramatic universe. A similar relation applies to the class difference, which is the most frequently utilized theme in the melodramas. The poverty and the disempowerment of the protagonist within the narrative do not necessarily point to a wider social problematic, but allow the scriptwriter to build a story that the audience can identify with, based on their own experience of being poor and disempowered. To refer once more to Longmore and Norden, these representations isolate the disability as an individual story, abstracting it from its structural

context and turning it into a figurative instrument. Moreover, the fact that most of the cases of disability in these narratives are temporary impairments makes it easier to suspend it as an isolated case rather than an identity. As such, each case of disability in the melodramas are narrated as individual misfortunes, rather than a social condition, which allows the audience to screen out the myriad cultural representations of disability invading the popular culture. Put differently, disability as pathos depends on the social convictions of what disability is, yet at the same time transposes the experience of disablement to a purely symbolic level by limiting it to an individual psychological state.

RECURRING PLOTS, HEIGHTENED FEELINGS: AN OVERVIEW

The narrative function of disability is twofold: First, as a specific event in the protagonist's life, disablement serves as the main blockage (or one of the many to follow) that triggers other events. This blockage takes the form of self-inhibition due to bias about the life of a disabled person, pushing the protagonist to isolate him/herself. Secondly, as was discussed above, it is the prime tear-jerking material of the story as it is a visceral expression of pain and misfortune. As an isolated individual, the disabled protagonist often lets himself / herself drift away to the margins of society or is left vulnerable due to conditions such as poverty, orphanage and stigmatization. Below, I will summarize how these functions appear in recurring plots which revolve around disability.

In the cases of the plots where the protagonist is already in a love relationship and then becomes disabled, disablement serves as the source of miscommunication, and ultimately the reason for separation. Once disabled, the protagonist isolates him/herself from his/her lover, in an effort to spare him/her the anguish of having to live with a "lesser" love. Embittered by their

fate, these disabled figures choose to sacrifice their love to spare themselves the mercy. At this point, the intensity of the pity audience feels for the protagonist depends on the mutually shared assumptions on the life with disability. Mostly, it is the capacity of the disability to evoke a sense of pain and of its association with the incapacity to take control of the events that renders it a staple element of pathos. In other cases, where we are introduced to an already disabled protagonist, disability unites the characters in resolving a problem.

The following analysis will demonstrate how disablement works as the main element of pathos through building a symbolic realm of abnormality through its three basic associations - marginalization, isolation and pain. I have chosen "Sonbahar Rüzgarları" (dir. by Mehmet Dinler) as the narrative is the epitome of melodramatic excess and as such, is a representative of its genre: The saturated mise-en-scene, the overwrought plot with endless misfortunes, and the sharp turns of its emotional rollercoaster warrant a distressing watching experience. Aside from this quality, the film provides us with the chance to analyse multiple narratives in one film as the plot line exhausts a variety of meanings attached to disability, and utilizes other experiences such as mental breakdown, substance abuse and downward mobility in amplifying the impact of the victimization of its protagonist.

AUTUMN WINDS OR HOW NALAN WAS LOST AND FOUND

"Autumn Winds" is an interesting collage: The first half of the film is an adaptation of "An Affair To Remember" (1957) directed by Leo McCarrey. The film begins with coincidences that lead to Nalan and Kemal's love and progresses with Nalan drifting away from her lover, herself and society after her disablement. The original film proceeds in a similar manner, as the two lovers meet on a cruise, fall in love and promised to meet after a few months after they break

up with their fiancees. Terry (Deborah Kerr) becomes paraplegic after a car accident. She does not let her lover Nickie know and the lovers drift apart. As distinct from the original film, in which the protagonist Terry (Deborah Kerr) pursues a modest life helping the church choir after becoming disabled, Nalan endures a series of misfortunes, which unravel in the second half of the film. To a certain extent this half introduces plot elements from the novel "Jane Eyre" written by Charlotte Bronte.The disablement is just one of many in a torrent of blockages in the narrative, which derives its sensationality from dizzying array of incidents and visual effects.

Nalan meets Kemal in a hotel by chance and they spend a couple of days together. Their intimacy grows over the letters Nalan sends to Kemal during his military service. They agree to meet after he is discharged. Rushing to see Kemal, Nalan gets hit by a car. Although her impairment is not permanent, she decides to keep it a secret, as she is worried that Kemal's compassion towards her disabled self will overshadow his love for her. Faruk, his boss and best friend, steps up to take her under his wings. Nalan and Faruk's dialogue at the hospital exemplifies a typical set of assumptions about the life with disability:

N:I wish I were dead, it's better than being a cripple.

F: Don't say that. I thought you were a brave girl.

N: Can bravery give life to my feet that can't walk and save me from loneliness?

F: Why should you be alone? You will get married soon.

N: Am I to get married in this state? (in a sarcastic tone)

F: Why not?

N: I can't use our love as an excuse to steal his mercy. I can't show up with my crippled legs in front of the man I love.

F: (Comes close) You are not thinking straight.

N: I have to think this way. He should not know about the accident. Please help me so that he can not find me.

F: Why are you running from him Nalan? The injury in your spine can be fixed.

N: I can't burden him with my misfortune for the remote possibility of recovery. I would rather be forgotten as an unfaithful woman than to be a crawling lover.

F: Then stay with my mom. You'll keep each other company.

Associating disability with crawling, inferiority, pity and a life not worth living, Nalan is convinced that she is not good enough for Kemal and decides to keep it a secret. Isolating herself, Nalan avoids Kemal but eventually runs into him at a nightclub where Faruk has taken her. Seeing them together, Kemal thinks she is simply with another man. Later on, he confronts her at her house and supposes that she does not stand up out of indifference. To convince Kemal that she doesn't love him anymore and to erase any remaining suspicion in his mind, Nalan makes Faruk tell him that they are engaged. This, she notes in her diary, is a greater trauma than her injury:

"The pain I have felt since Kemal came home and I played the unfaithful woman is much greater than that of the accident. Perhaps Kemal will forget the dread of this horrific moment, but I will never forget. Oh God, either erase this love from my heart or give strength to my legs so that I can face my lover"

Here, we encounter multiple ways in which disablement helps the story-telling: Nalan's great performance in passing as an able-bodied yet self-centered woman causes the original miscommunication in the story. The irony surrounding her disability and later on her psychological impairment (her seeming self-centeredness and actual agony, her recovering right at the time Kemal is married and Kemal sacrificing his life for his wife out of mercy and obligation, precisely something Nalan has avoided) reinforces the pathos and increases the sentimentality. Another function the disablement serves is that as physical immobility, it becomes the visual signifier of Nalan's incapability to take action towards the growing gap between her and Kemal and of her straying from the realm of normalcy. Interweaving different temporal and spatial settings, the underscore (eponymous with the title) strengthens this sense of drifting away. Finally, in relation to these functions, disablement can be read as the projection of pain onto the body to express viscerally the sheer immensity of Nalan's love. As love is typically formulated as a force greater than anything material, the pain it generates cannot be contained corporeally either. As such, Nalan endures all sorts of corporeal fragility and agony, immersing herself in this transcendental suffering, a whirlpool of masochistic self-pity:

"*When I was burried in my infinite sorrow, I found comfort in drinking. I was drinking, non-stop drinking and I was falling as I drank. I took pleasure in falling, it was as if I was taking revenge from destiny as from myself."*

After Kemal gets married, Nalan leaves Faruk's family house and becomes an alcoholic, working at night clubs. When by coincidence Kemal comes to the nightclub, he confronts her. Her sheer presence at the nightclub as a performer and her alcoholism are sufficient evidence for Kemal that Nalan is not worthy of him.

Although she can walk again, the pain and hopelessness cause Nalan to drift away from the social order to the margins of the society. Alcoholism soon turns into drug addiction as she "cannot dull her pain with alcohol" and she "falls" to "third grade night clubs". As such she enters the urban underworld: The places she spends time in get darker and more dilapidated in each scene. Her marginalization is visually stressed by the disquieting mise-en-scene: High contrast color scheme, chiaroscuro lighting, sound effects and exaggerated make-up. With the scenes purposefully evoking fear and amazement we witness Nalan's unending fall. Furthermore, she is aware of these changes and her self-loathing is reflected in her nightmares. Her dreams of a white wedding dress unveiled by Kemal become nightmares in which she turns out to be a monster when the veil is lifted. This particular nightmare causes her to frantically rage and she ends up in the asylum during what seems to be a withdrawal crisis. Her crisis in the jail cell continues in the asylum cell, as the only thing that visually separates these two total institutions is the yellow straightjacket put on her by two male nurses. Nalan's exile from herself and society ends in her incarceration for seven years, which is missing from Nalan's narration. The rehabilitation is finalized by the doctor finding Nalan a house and a job: Nalan literally is cleaned by the doctor finding her a proper place to be--a domestic environment suited for her gender role.

Figure 1 Loss of Self: Nalan's use of a wide range of drugs (marijuana, cocaine, morphine and eventually heroine as seen in this sequence) to numb herself is depicted in a highly alarming manner. Not only is Nalan herself erratic in her behaviour, but also the camera movements: Zooming out from the syringe, the camera follows the impact of heroine on Nalan, revolving around her in a high angle. With the walls in same color and camera turning constantly, we lose our sense of direction. Our sense of space and time, just like Nalan's senses under the influence of the drug, withers away. Growing smaller and distant, Nalan vanishes with addiction. Except for the untidy bed and Nalan half-stripped with shoes on either side, the mise-en-scene is an abstraction, accentuating the feeling of being lost.

Figure 2 Terrorized Nalan: The film borrows stylistic elements from the thriller genre when depicting Nalan's withdrawal crisis and the mental breakdown that ensues. With her gothic make-up, eyes popping out, incessant screams and hollow stares, Nalan in her terrorized state strikes fear onto the audience. After her crisis at the jail, we see her diminish in her dark cell, tied in a straitjacket

The idyllic life at her new house with her new student Fatma comes to a halt when her father, who happens to be Kemal, comes back home. Now a bitter and vain man, Kemal insults Nalan yet again but changes his decision to fire her when Fatma begs him. Although his attitudes towards Nalan change with time, the mystery of the house in the backyard stands between Nalan and Kemal. In addition to this secretive homely organization, Kemal's sister-in-law suggests that Nalan should not compete with her for Kemal's love. As the plot evolves, Kemal's wife and her sister are coded as villainesses: Kemal's sister-in-law is a cold-hearted woman who is only

looking after her crazy sister to win Kemal's heart and his ex-wife, as he later tells his daughter, is everything a woman should not be:

"I figured out that she was sick and an alcoholic from the first night. She ran from home after you were born. She betrayed me. I found her in an asylum years later and brought her back here. Your mom was bad. She deprived you of her milk and ran away. And God has not forgiven her. I preferred to tell you that she was dead instead of telling you she was crazy."

It is striking that Kemal's wife bears no name. We never hear her name and characters refer to her through their relation. ("my sister" or "my wife") It seems as if the only function she serves in the film is as an hindrance to Aliye and Kemal individually and as an uncorrectable transgression. Her insanity is associated with her indulgence in sexual pleasure, which is counterposed to her motherhood. She is a violent creature, excessively sexual, violent, addicted to alcohol and completely uncontrollable - so much that she has to be incarcerated. She does not express herself articulately, cackles, and screams instead of forming sentences. Her bodily movements--shaking her arms up in the air, running in circles and prancing around--resemble a strange ritual of witchcraft. Her actions refuting the gender roles, her mental condition and pyromania are all jumbled in a normative effort to paint the picture of abnormality in feminine gender. The fact that Kemal took her under his wing even though she is evil and they are divorced to save her from marginalization not only proves his grace, but also functions as a bitter irony amplifying the sentimental effect: What Nalan tried to avoid by lying to Kemal, he did himself and devoted himself to a woman out of mercy. Yet as the narrative bluntly suggests that this woman is not worth it, and she is such an abject existence that she has to burn alive with her conniving sister for Nalan and Kemal to reach a happy ending!

To embody a lack of control over one's fate, which is the quintessential subject of Yeşilçam melodramas, this particular narrative utilizes certain bodily states that are associated with loss of will power and of the self, all of which are ultimately triggered by the experience of disability. Nalan's disablement, alcoholism, substance abuse and psychological disorder are the markers of a gradual loss of control and of self. As Nalan loses her grip, she grows more distant from the realm of normalcy. Such fear and identification with it resonates with the modernist notion of the individual as an independent atom. Here, the narrative owes such discursive inclination to its intertextual structure: It brings together bits of eugenics and of Victorian morality in its juxtaposition of Kemal's wife and Nalan, and in associating impairment/disorder with moral deviance/female sexuality: Nalan tries to abide by the moral codes even while living in the underbelly of the society, whereas Kemal's wife dissolves herself in sexual pleasure and self-indulgence out of her own volition. Nalan is rehabilitated because she is essentially good, whereas Kemal's wife's unnamed condition worsens due to her wicked nature. Nalan's insanity stems from her experience of pain and is a relatable misfortune, whereas Kemal's wife's insanity derives from her excessive indulgence. The eugenicist notion of extreme poverty and extreme wealth resulting in immorality/addiction is also evident in the plot: Nalan's brief insanity is somewhat related to her being an orphan with no one to shelter her, whereas Kemal's wife's wealth is a possible reason for her demented lust. She cannot be cured or rehabilitated, hence her abjection (burning alive) in the background of a happy ending. Aliye and Kemal's wife not only serve to depict the normate woman and to demarcate moral female behaviour but also their disposal reassures the audience by suggesting that what lies outside the norm cannot exist.

5.2 WAYS OF MEANING-MAKING

This section focuses on the figurative use of disability representations in select Turkish melodramas. As previously stressed in this study, in Turkish melodramas, disability emerges as a metaphor which points to an experience that cannot be represented without recourse to the symbolic weight of disability (that is, corporeal abnormality). My research suggests that these representations make sense of disability by attaching to it diverse meanings based on the type of impairment and gender of the protagonist.

The following analyses will focus on the specific renderings of the experience of disability, each handling a different impairment: mobility impairment (paraplegia, lameness and unnamed conditions which necessitate the use of a wheelchair), blindness, amputation, disfigurement and muteness. Although these narratives differ based on their approaches to gender, plots and themes; they share a pattern to the extent that they maintain symbolic connections between disability and gender based on shared associations regarding the bodily difference. Thus, in these analyses, I will go one step further from the associations in the first section, and focus on the figurative connections which cross over different narratives.

MOBILITY IMPAIRMENT: FAILED GENDER PERFORMANCE AND OVERFLOWING DESIRES

Within a story that revolves around a married couple, the first and foremost implication of mobility impairment is sexual dysfunction. The concept of sex is handled within rhetoric of moral obligation: Participation in the physical reproduction of society is the ultimate goal of marriage, and a marker of proper gender performance for both men and women. Therefore, sexuality is necessary and legitimate only within love relationships approved by the seal of

marriage, or at least, with the intention of marriage. Sexual relations for the sake of self-indulgence are coded as immorality and such individualism as detrimental for community. Thus, the sexual intercourse can only be a "marital duty", meaning a heterosexual intercourse with the purpose of procreation. The disabled figures (as well as any potential LGBTI+ figures) are excluded from this framework. Measured against the criteria of gender roles, disabled male and female figures are defined as half-persons. A disabled man cannot satisfy his wife, and a disabled woman cannot have children, which amplifies their association with "lack".

Social functions are ascribed to the body through gender, and this gendered division of labour assigns the protagonists to proper places. Male figures whose subjecthood depends on being physically active and present in public space become objects when disabled: Disabled male figures "lose" their masculinity to the extent that they are confined to private spaces. On the other hand, disabled figures who cannot be mothers cease to be "sexual objects and are left with being mere object"s". For women, disability is a double disadvantage as they are deprived of the rewards of being put on a pedestal.[28] For men too, this is the case as they are measured against the able-bodied standards of strength and bodily performance. While men are already being pressured under the heavy weight of impossible ideals, disabled men experience double difficulty, like a "Sisyphus in a wheelchair." (Gerschick 189) Thus, through the implications of a heteronormative order, loss of physical mobility comes to stand for loss of social function, as the disabled figures fail to perform their gender roles

[28] For a detailed discussion of the gender role expectations for the disabled women, see Fine and Asch 1-38.

Both films are directed by Ülkü Erakalın; “Kader Kapıyı Çaldı” (“Fate Knocked At The Door”, is an adaptation of “Lady Chatterley’s Lover” by D.H.Lawrence, and “Ablam” (“My Sister”) , produced later on, has certain similarities with this film. “Kader Kapıyı Çaldı” tells the story of a paraplegic husband, Necmi (Muzaffer Tema) who has “taken” Leyla (Türkan Şoray) as a wife when she was only a child. They live in a ranch, filled with male servants who pass their time gossiping about how Leyla must be in need of a “real man”. One of them, Hasan (Hüseyin Baradan), goes further and tries to “have” Leyla to no avail. When a new stableman arrives at the ranch, things change as Necmi pushes Leyla towards Murat, fearing that if he acts jealous he would be taken for an emasculated man. Murat says he is a murderer on the loose, yet this is taken for a joke. Leyla, who is stuck between the appetite of other men and her own feelings for Murat, awakens to her true desire. When Leyla falls in love with Murat and insists on breaking free from Necmi, Necmi commits suicide. Leyla leaves the inheritance behind, marries Murat who is taken to prison the very same day as his wedding.

“Ablam” is also set on a ranch with a murderer on the loose, but said murderer is unaware that she killed her boss when she hit him on the head while trying to avoid rape. This time the criminal is Selma who leaves the big city behind and arrives at the ranch of her sister, that she has not seen for a while. Selma finds out that her elder sister was paralyzed after an accident on the day she ran away from home. Her brother-in-law Hasan hates her presence yet the two get closer as the elder sister urges Hasan to be more tolerant. Meanwhile, the elder sister who was once a successful lawyer spends her time consumed in self-pity when she is alone. One day, while taking shelter from a storm, Selma and Hasan have sex, and the elder sister senses their intimacy yet prefers to remain quiet. Osman, the stableman who is in love with the elder sister is suspicious of Selma and finally finds out she is wanted. He convinces Selma of her immorality,

after which she surrenders to the police. The elder sister refuses her sister to be the scapegoat of her misguidance and finally defends her in court and forgives her husband.

In both films, the disability of the protagonists is a victimizing factor, since the moral grounds of marriage cannot contain and subjugate desire without consummation. Sexual desire once again shows up as a disruptive force against the order. The lack of sexuality on one hand results in an excess of sexuality on the other, with the partners of the disabled figures find themselves in overflowing desires, fantasies and a torrent of inner conflicts. The transgression is further accentuated as the partners of the disabled figures have affairs with outlaws. Although the two narratives have different approaches to the gender relations and disability as an experience, they both make use of the symbolic use of disability: The experience of disability comes to stand for dysfunction. As the disabled figures confront their putative insufficiency, they adopt different methods to deal with this challenge, which in turn defines how moral these figures are.

At the center of the sexual transgression in both narratives are the young female characters who do not know how to handle and make sense of their sexual desire. Selma and Leyla are depicted as girls who do not know better, who need guidance and who are confused about what love is: Selma has left the family house and her elder sister failed in disciplining her sister -not to mention the lack of a father figure- and Leyla's marriage to Necmi when she was a teenager allowed Necmi to "mold her into whatever shape (he) desired". This causes Leyla to confuse daughterly compassion, admiration and romantic love and eventually allows for her to be steered towards following her sexual desire. The double threat (the intrusion into the institution of family and young girls being dirtied by lust) does not go unnoticed by either protagonist. They sense the imminent danger of an affair, as both protagonists watch the new

affairs unfold in front of their very eyes. Necmi watches Leyla ride her prized horse with the stableman Murat and the elder sister watches the changes in Selma and Hasan's relationship. Necmi sits in front of a window most of the time looking out to the green fields, whereas the elder sister actually goes out for a stroll on her wheels Both of the disabled figures are constantly reminded by their close friends of how they are admired, loved and respected by their partners, and of their strong will and capabilities as individuals. Yet at the same time there is a silent consensus on their failure as husbands and wives. The insulting remarks of the foes and the reassuring remarks of the family members are juxtaposed; in a manner which shows that the love and compassion of the latter group is far from being convincing. Ultimately the compassion felt towards the disabled family members is a manifestation of the pity surrounding their disability. The two stories develop into different paths based on how the figures choose to reassert their position against the association with pity and in transcending their putative corporeal constraints. Their choice defines their moral standing.

The elder sister is portrayed in a manner akin to the "saintly sage" model proposed by Norden in his index of disabled figures in Hollywood productions. Norden defines this portrayal as follows:

> (...) a pious older person with a disability who serves as a voice of reason and conscience in a chaotic world. Almost exclusively a supporting character, the saintly sage is sensible, charitable and above all wise. Without the slightest trace of bitterness, the Cassandra-like Sage freely dispenses his/her wisdom to the surrounding able-bodied protagonists, who ignore it at their peril. (Norden 131)

Her role as an elder sister and her profession as a lawyer accentuates her wisdom and her sense of justice. Her moral superiority, her "greatness", her willingness to forgive and to see beyond the "sin" committed by Selma and Hasan solves the moral conflict. Her plea for her sister on court, on the grounds of self-defense against rape is conflated with her forgiveness regarding the sexual affair. The moral acquittal of the younger sister gives a message of the transcendence of love (both between Hasan and the elder sister, as well as that of the two sisters) over the flesh. It is significant that the elder sister takes action not only through the gender roles assigned to her (as a wife and as a sister) but also more importantly, through the role she has chosen (her career as a lawyer) not to be defined by constraint but by her capabilities.

Necmi, on the other hand, is an absolute villain. Building his marital relation on power and dominance, Necmi only relies on his mind to compensate for the limitations of his body: "I will show everyone that the thing called brain is much more useful than legs that walk". In contrast to the elder sister, his is not wisdom, but a devious mind devoid of moral virtue. He prefers to incite Leyla's sexual desire, which is deemed already destructive and hard to control, in an odd feat of power. Already in a delicate state, surrounded by desiring men and without a guardian of her honour, Leyla finds herself on thin ice. What could otherwise lead to stigmatization is cleansed by a new bond of marriage between Murat and Leyla. By presenting the heterosexual love as a relationship between a passive, recipient female and a domineering, strong and sexually satisfying male, "Kader Kapıyı Çaldı" gives a clear message regarding the bodily norms: Gender norms can only be sustained if the male body is fully functional, able to "caress a woman with the male warmness", in Necmi's words.

Both films develop a sense of victimization through the association of disability with asexuality. When unable to fulfill their "marital" duties and to perform their gender roles, the disabled figures lose their social functions. As their personhood is reduced to their sexuality (to "lack" of their sexuality), the marriage cannot contain sexual desire and an excess of sexuality appears on the other hand. Once more, unfulfilled gender roles cause the disruption of the social order.

BLINDNESS: ANGELIC WOMEN, ASCETIC MEN

In this section, I will elaborate on the symbolic weight of blindness in two films: "Aşk Mabudesi" (Goddess of Love, dir. Nejat Saydam, 1969) and "Ağlayan Melek" (Crying Angel, dir. Safa Önal, 1970). Based on the gender of the disabled figure, the films present us with two different manifestations of the same metaphor, which associates gaze with sexual desire and power. In the cases of blind women, blindness can be a positive attribute of the figure as it holds the women exempt from the dirt of desire. As they are not cognizant of the desiring gaze of men, they are far from awakening to their own desire, which is destructive in the moral universe of the melodrama. Yet this brings about precarity, because it renders these "naive" women vulnerable to sexual transgression. In contrast to the figures with mobility impairment, they are still sexual objects, however; their naivete elevates them to a morally superior ground in spite of their desirability. In the cases of blind men, their loss of sight renders them ascetic beings. Their blindness, unlike that of their female counterparts, is a negative attribute as they can no longer perform their masculinity as they lose the power of their gaze.[29] Once blind, the male figures

[29] For a detailed analysis of "Aşk Mabudesi" and how it presents the woman as an object of spectacle to a female audience, see Abisel "Popüler Filmlerde Kadının Kadına Sunuluşu" 125-181.

grow distant from earthly pleasures and their wealth, devoting themselves to the memory of their loved one. Through the male blind figures, these narratives once again contrast love with sexuality and transcendence with materiality.

"Crying Angel" centers on the experiences of Sabahat, a blind girl who has lived in the protected environment of a small island and who is unaware of the danger awaiting her at every corner. Her impairment in the film functions to stress and to make sense of her naiveté: Sabahat had become blind after a disease during childhood, which left her innocent, naive and infantile. Not being able to see herself, it is as if she has not developed a sense of herself: Devoted to her father, her adopted brother and everyone else on the island, with a smile that never fades, she fulfills all the duties assigned to women. She is often present in male spaces; the pub, the pier, the streets- which would otherwise be considered a breach. It is significant that in the film, we do not see any other female character on the island, other than Tasula and Sabahat. Instead, there is always a crowd of men: fishermen, men drinking at the pub, male shopkeepers on the street, men at home. However, Sabahat's presence among men is not associated with any sexual transgression, precisely because she is an "angel", a gender neutral being.

Yet there is a double sense to her naivité, she is defenseless and vulnerable because she is angelic and innocent. Her blindness is a Janus-faced metaphor: Sabahat is primarily blind to her body, her beauty and all of her features that render her a sexual object. This is why she cannot be tempted and manages to remain morally intact. As a result, she is unaware of the romantic love and desire her adopted brother Şevket feels for her, and she is caught off-guard to the fisherman that attempts to rape her. Once Şevket finds out about this assault, our angelic heroine Sabahat decides to keep the name of the rapist a secret, sacrificing herself for the sake of the community.

There is another halo of tension around Sabahat: that of sexual maturity. Now an adolescent, she is not only feared to be an object of sexuality but also a subject of sexuality. She is bound to have desire awakening in her just like she evokes desire in others. The men of the village talk about how things will go, now that she is old enough to be a bride and her father watches her put on her friend Tasula's earrings in fear, violently reacting to her childish attempts at looking beautiful.

Female desire, in this case accentuated with the metaphor of blindness, is considered to be something that women cannot channel well; it should be subject to male control. (Hence the male characters crowding most of the scenes in the film.) Therefore, these arising desires are a potential threat to social order, just like it was in the case of Tasula's affair.[30]

Tasula has a bad reputation in the island, for having slept with a man (referred to as an "accident in the film). Ostracized by the community, she prefers to settle in the city and live as a mistress. Tasula introduces her to Vedat, who decides to pay for Sabahat's surgery, which is not tolerated by Sabahat's family. It is significant that the boundaries of moral rigidity and of male control are drawn by the desire for a normal body: The only time we see Sabahat rebel, is against sacrificing the sole chance in able-bodiedness for the sake of an ideal of purity. She is willing to remain sequestered in the confines of her home and her family, but she will not remain in "darkness".

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[30] It is significant that Sabahat and Tasula are each others' only friends. The friendship of a disabled female protagonist with a non-Muslim and ostracized female protagonist also shows up in *Kambur*. This companionship among the two cultural "other"s deserve a study in their own right. For an insightful analysis of non-Muslim characters in Yeşilçam films in their golden age, see Balcı 119-209.

Sabahat undergoes the surgery, and Vedat introduces her to high society and to a glamorous life-style. They fall in love and decide to get married, however, Vedat's ex-girlfriend deceives Sabahat, after which she runs away from home. Wandering around the city all alone and with no place to go, Sabahat is tricked by a pimp who tries to sell her to a man. Right before she is assaulted, a police raid takes place and she is saved - only to be mistaken for a prostitute. The great fear is realized: As soon as Sabahat gains sight, she steps outside the boundaries and becomes the subject of sexual transgression (or considered to be so). Returning home Sabahat is fiercely ousted by the community and severely beaten up by her father. Her exposure to life outside the island is seen as such a precarity that the men do not even ask for an explanation: "Sabahat is gone bad" as her father says, even though Sabahat "is stainless" as she will later tell Vedat. Falling in a trap after another, the victim of the story is Sabahat. Yet for the men of the community, she is the perpetrator. The stigmatization of Sabahat (as a "slut" / "kahpe") not only functions to mark her as the transgressor but also to transfer the strain of the fragility of the gender order and the impotency of the male in establishing the said order onto the female body through violence.

When Sabahat is assaulted, she remains silent and does not tell on her perpetrator. As such, she sacrifices herself in the name of social harmony. Yet she is forced to silence when she is mistaken for a prostitute and hastily expelled from the community.The position that the narrative takes against this injustice is ambivalent. How come Sabahat is the object/victım of sexual assault in the first case but a subject/aggressor in the second? The difference is that in the former case she was blind and in the latter her eyes were opened. Her able-body is a curse; she now has to carry the burden of "dirt". Transition to an able-body suggests that the independence

of women has two sides: liberation and pursuit of desire on the one hand and the risk of stigmatization and marginalization on the other.

Sabahat is not the only victim in the story, her brother and to a certain extent her father are victimized as well: Not being able to prevent his wife's death and his daughter's impairment, the father has fallen into the hands of alcoholism, stopped working and became a bitter man. Sabahat and Şevket are the ones taking care of him. Şevket on the other hand is stuck between his role as a family member and his desire to marry Sabahat. His own desire conflicts with his duty to protect Sabahat from the male desire. Both characters are incapacitated by their poverty and their ignorance as opposed to Vedat. His aloofness, generosity and assuredness is juxtaposed to Şevket's hot-tempered, impulsive and sentimental attitude. Although presented as more approachable and sincere, it is not the latter model of masculinity but the former who wins the fight.

All in all, "Crying Angel" thematizes fragility of the order through corporeal representations, not only by making use of the metaphor of "blindness" to problematize female independence but also by intertwining the crisis of masculinity and of the tradition both of which are embodied in the character of Şevket. Within this framework, blindness stands for innocence; and the story is built on the tension between the desire for an able body and an impairment that keeps the female figure in place.

"Aşk Mabudesi" is a narrative built on a completely different setting. Although the disablement is not the founding element in the narrative, it nevertheless provides us with insights on the male side of this gendered metaphor of blindness.

Leyla works in a music hall, selling peanuts and cigarettes to the clients. Ekrem is an author looking for inspiration in lowly music halls, tired of the pretensions of the luxurious lifestyle. Their paths cross one day, she becomes Ekrem's muse, they fall in love but Ekrem's brother's suicide sets them apart. As Leyla climbs the ladder of fame, Ekrem grows distant from life. When he becomes blind in a car accident, and after Leyla's wedding is announced, he gives up on everything until their paths cross once more again.

In contrast to Sabahat, Leyla is already in a morally precarious position: She is an orphan, she works in a lower music hall and lives alone. She describes herself as a "street girl", despite the fact that she does not live on the street and has a job. What possibly makes her a "street girl" is that she does not live in the setting of a family. Even under these conditions, she guards her "honour", fends off those who hit on her, does not flirt with men and does not get intimate with Ekrem. The way she protects her honour exalts her in the eyes of Ekrem and in the eyes of the audience, as the narrative keeps stressing her dedication to remaining "clean". Her cleanliness is constantly contrasted with Jale's seductiveness and her fixation with luxury. Ekrem is forced to engage with Jale by her brother, as a means to pay for his own debt. Their relationship is built on material interests which are contrasted to Leyla's spiritual virtues. Leyla is so humble that she can be the servant of her lover, whereas Jale only sees Ekrem as a prestige booster. Frustrated with the pretensions of the rich, Ekrem wants to leave aside his life of debauchery and be with Leyla. As he says, Leyla brings "pure white dreams to me, [a man] dirtied by games of lust". Honesty, honour and modesty are set as true values assigned to the lower class, whereas the upper class is ascribed decadency and insincerity. Ekrem idealizes Leyla for having such values and makes a novel character out of her. Their love grows until the day Jale convinces Leyla that she is the reason why Ekrem's brother committed suicide. To abide by Ekrem's brother's last

wish and break up with him, Leyla convinces Ekrem that she is only after fame and money. This shatters the idolization of Leyla. Their dialogue shows that once more, independence of the female figure bears a problem:

E: Idiot! I have created a love goddess from that street woman.

(...)

E: You were supposed to be the queen of your home.

L: Home was so small, so dark. It's so colorful around here.

(...)

L: I'm not Leyla in "Goddess of Love", I'm the living Leyla.

Regarding Leyla a creation of his own, Ekrem is disillusioned when Leyla does not act the way he idealizes her to be, she is the living Leyla. Instead of being a home-maker, Leyla (seemingly) chooses to pursue her own interests, a self-indulgence which erases her virtues in the eyes of Ekrem. Once again, defiance against the gender roles, pursuit of material wealth, female independence and female sexuality merges into a dangerous combination. Although Ekrem finds out that this was all an act, when he becomes blind he refuses to reunite with Leyla, whose fame grows each day. This time, the problem becomes the growing inequality between Ekrem and Leyla. Ekrem keeps falling and Leyla keeps rising. He donates the income of his novel to the orphans, even though this means his bankruptcy. Once more, male defeat results in ascetism. Instead of a moral question surrounding Leyla's character, the problem now becomes power differentials. As it was the case in "Crying Angel" with Sabahat's loss of sight, gaze both

functions as a means of control, and of deriving pleasure and desire through which the female protagonists are fetishized.

Leyla is an object of fetish both for Ekrem and for the audience (film audience as well as Leyla's own audience within the narrative). Ekrem bases his novel on Leyla and "creates a love goddess" from her. With her rise to stardom and his loss of sight, Leyla slips from Ekrem's hands. She is no longer his: As the film score goes, she is without him and he is without her. Film derives its sentimental affect from this irony, that Leyla was had nobody and belonged to Ekrem, but now she belongs to everyone yet she is not Ekrem's. Novelist Ekrem can no longer control his creation. On the other hand, from the sequence where she was selected the beauty queen to the end of the film, the audience gaze is held constant on Leyla's body. Just like her audience at the music hall, we the film audience derive pleasure in watching her sing and dance, yet knowing Ekrem's desperation as a man who cannot "own" his lover, we are also alarmed at this breach. To the extent that the gazing is a power relation based on sexual pleasure (dominance over female body whereby it is objectified), Ekrem's loss of sight disempowers him. Sabahat's dilemma in "Crying Angel" is not being able to defend herself against the male gaze directed at her, whereas Ekrem stands on the other side of the same relation, his problem being all male gaze but his is directed at Leyla. Ekrem's words best explain what his blindness stands for: "If the only *thing* I want to see belongs to *others*, I do not need my eyes anymore." [Emphasis mine]

In conclusion, both narratives center the sense of sight in a matrix of sexual relations, which sets moral boundaries. In the moral framework of Yeşilçam melodrama where women are coded as passive and man as active subjects and where the female sexuality is a magnet of moral

transgression, gaze becomes the means of exerting control and power over female figures, who should belong to one man only and who should be able to be wary of male advances. Male blind figures, in return, retreat to ascetism, away from active engagement in pleasure, as the gaze constitutes an important part of their gender performance. The gender order is reestablished by each disabled figure getting an eye surgery, after which the happy ending is reached.

MUTENESS AS LOSS OF IDENTITY: A FEMALE METAPHOR

Muteness is seldom thematized in Turkish melodramas yet it is significant that it is almost exclusively a female metaphor when utilized in the narrative.The women who lose their voice always regain their voice at the end of the film, but through a great transformation of their identity. Among these films are "Kınalı Yapıncak" and "Serseri Aşık", both starring Hülya Koçyiğit as the lead female actress. Both films reiterate the question facing Turkish modernization project: To what extent should the women be independent and what moral grounds can warrant this independence? Muteness, i.e not having a voice, is a fitting metaphor, in forging a female identity which can be approved both socially (by the audience) and politically (by the cultural policies of the state).

"Kınalı Yapıncak" leaves her village to live with her aunt in the city, after losing her parents and becoming deaf-mute in a fire. To her dismay, her aunt treats her like a slave and in her vulnerable state she gets raped by her cousin, who she is in love with. When she becomes pregnant, her aunt denounces her, after which she starts living with the good-hearted gardener of the mansion. In a moment of despair she tries to commit suicide and the shock brings back her hearing and her voice. She starts working as a care-taker of a rich man, who leaves all his wealth to her in his will. She spends the money to buy the properties of her aunt, whose husband lost all

in gambling. Kınalı Yapıncak is born again as a modern, powerful woman and takes a new name. She avenges herself and disciplines her cousin with her material power. At the end of the film, she rids herself off the moral burden of the illegitimate affair by marrying her cousin, who has become a responsible and decent man. The narrative creates an empowered young woman who can stand on her own feet, but who also chooses to be a wife and a mother, as long as her husband is a responsible, working family man who stays away from alcoholism, gambling and lust.

"Serseri Aşık" tells a similar story of a vulnerable young woman from reverse: Hülya is a popular singer, who is indepent yet fearful of the transience of her social status. Through its character Hülya, the narrative takes a self-reflexive turn when it problematizes the conflict between the moral codes regarding female body and sexuality on the one hand, desire and admiration such spectacle on the other. The world of entertainment; nightlife, bars, music halls, and cinemas are liminal spaces as we see in many other Yeşilçam movies. They are associated with moral decay, sexual transgression and loss of essence as much as with social mobility, joy of life and glamour. Yeşilçam, with its star system, is not exempt from this moral ambivalence and it is significant that both on-screen Hülya and actress Hülya Koçyiğit is subject to the same moral scrutiny. As objects of fantasy, female performers (singers, actresses etc.) often evoke both a sense of social mobility and a threat of transgression. As later revealed, Hülya is right to be afraid: Her boyfriend's father, who think she is not worthy of the family name, poisons her and she loses her "singing voice". Without her singing career, she is nobody.[31] Thus, she tries to

[31] *Serseri Aşık* has many similarities to *Kırık Plak* starring Zeki Müren, in its plot and the position of its protagonist vis-a-vis their audience, the people (halk), the major difference being the urban setting in Serseri Aşık in contrast to provincial setting in Kırık Plak. Umut Tümay Arslan's analysis of the film concludes that the loss of voice "(...) is an allegory of the loss of self." Both protagonists are on the brink of marginalization

commit suicide, much like Kınalı Yapıncak, and she is saved by Doktor. With his help, she starts building her identity from scratch, in a poor neighborhood much like the one she grew up in. She is deemed immoral as she is a single woman who sings in music halls and she is ostracized. She gains the neighborhood approval by assuming both the traditional gender roles and the pioneering role envisioned by the modernization project: She takes care of the sick, helps the elderly, cooks and cleans; she also educates the residents on modern childcare, hygiene issues and epidemic, organizes a mass circumcision ceremony with the help of state institution, helps the illiterate etc. Doktor steals from Erol's father to pay for Hülya's surgery, and gives her first concert in a theatre (and not a music hall), free of charge. In the last scene, we see the residents of the neighborhood taking the instruments from tuxedo-clad musicians and playing cheerful songs, instead of pompous and boring classical songs. As such, the film reaches a populist synthesis of modernity and tradition, embodied by Hülya. With its recurring references to popular culture and people as the owners of cultural essence, the film is self-confirming; both of its own place in the mass entertainment by upholding the "people", and by posing the audience as the moral and cultural compass.

AMPUTATION AS MASCULINITY CRISIS: A MALE METAPHOR

In a similar manner to the figurative use of muteness, amputation is exclusively a male metaphor in the melodramatic narratives of 1960s and 1970s. The cases of amputee figures are few in melodramas, although there are more in the adventure and action genres.

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and of ridicule, of which the sensations translate to the vulnerability of losing one's voice. For this illuminating analysis see Tümay Arslan "Mazi Kabrinin Hortlakları" 19-73.

Amputation in the two films analyzed for this study, brings the fragility of the masculine ideal to surface by truncating the bodily performance of masculinity. The disempowerment and vulnerability that the male amputee figures find themselves in are tended to by female sacrifice. In “Zulüm”, this sacrifice is viscerally portrayed in a scene where Ayla chops her hand off, to convince Tarık of her love, when Tarık feels defeated in keeping up the masculine image.The film ends in an uncanny manner, where the two lovers hug with missing arms. In “Yaban”, Alev sacrifices her lavish lifestyle and changes her identity from femme fatale to a homemaker, in an effort to rehabilitate Ali’s attempts at self-isolation.

“Yaban” tells the story of Ali, who lives in isolation in an island off the coast of Aeagean sea. His roads cross with rich and spoiled Alev, who enters a bet with her friends that she can make him fall in love with her. Seemingly opening up to Ali, Alev finally convinces him and brings him to “her feet”. She reveals her plot by leaving a sign that reads “What’s up, oaf?”Infuriated by Alev’s ridicule, Yaban reconfirms his masculinity by exerting physical violence against the symbolic violence. He pursues and kidnaps Alev, brings her back to the island. As the tables have turned, it is now Alev who is treated as an animal (not figuratively but literally this time); she is chained and bound. By caricaturizing Alev’s despair as a comical and due discipline, the film discursively approves the patriarchal control over the female body. Alev is forced to live the life Yaban does, the life she once said she would love to live. Stripped off of her lavish lifestyle, Alev is domesticated through her struggle with nature, eventually she finds her “true” self.

It is not only Alev who needs to be domesticated. Just like Alev, Yaban is not willing to accept his emotions towards Alev. Both self-centered beings socialize and learn to get along

ultimately through Yaban's impairment. Yaban's self-sufficiency comes to a halt after he is bit by a shark. His self-contained existence and control over life has its limits and he has to face his past eventually: The audience finds out that Yaban has been running away from his past, scarred by his step-mother's plot and his father's abandonment. His emotional vulnerability towards love and physical vulnerability is conflated in the sick-bed sequence: Swaddled like a baby and unable to move his body, Yaban faces his need for a better half and he starts recounting his trauma. This is a turning point in the film as until this part Yaban never articulates himself and this is the ultimate barrier that separates him from the civilization. He is also now referred to as Ali, as Alev starts calling him by his real name. Using the disablement as a corporeal metaphor of dependence and taking a heteronormative turn, the narrative reminds the spectator that every man needs a woman. While Alev adopts her gender roles as a woman (tending to Yaban, building a nest, cleaning and gathering food), Yaban faces the choice of becoming his old self (a well-read, modern middle class man) or remaining as he is. After the amputation of his leg, he finds that his masculinity is a performance after all; his emotional and physical dependence breaks his image as an omnipotent male figure. Although Alev tells him that he is the strongest man on Earth and that she is proud of him, Yaban's embitterment prevents him from recognizing Alev's love. Alev returns to the city and Yaban remains on the island, enframed in long shots we witness their isolation, at home but alone. Finally Alev runs from her own wedding and joins Yaban back on the island.

The narrative is particular in its formulation of disablement; ultimately it does not set the lovers apart but brings them together. Alev's excessive sexuality and Yaban's timid inexpressiveness are both deviances from the gender norms, and the narrative proceeds in the direction of normalizing the two extremes. Ali's amputation allows Alev and Ali to come

towards a middle ground, that is, to become one in a normate being: As Alev grows distant from an exceedingly sexualized femininity, Ali grows out of his wild, isolated masculinity, both approaching a normate relationship that resembles a family. Although the film revives the fears encircling the bodily integrity in certain sequences in the most sensual way, its ultimate approach to disability is not necessarily negative. The amputation/crouch used figuratively to connote interdependence and reiterates the notion of transcendental love (beyond materiality and corporeality) while remaining within the conventions of Yeşilçam melodrama.

Zulüm (Atrocity) tells the story of Ayla and Tarık, two lovers that meet by coincidence, fall in love and get engaged in a day. Tarık is a composer, Ayla a new conservatory graduate. Tarık offers Ayla a ride, to her graduation concert; she doesn't know that he is the great composer she admires so much. They meet again when Tarık is to leave for Spain; instead of taking the flight he follows Ayla. They spend the day together, become mischievous like kids and taken to police station for being too loud. They spend a night there, buy engagement rings in the morning and drop by Ayla's mom to ask for her permission to get married when Tarık is back from Spain. Without a clue of their real names, they give each other new names: Zaliha and Bülent. On their way to Ayla's house, they see a man being taken to hospital. The blood and gore causes Ayla to have a hysterical reaction. Tarık wants to take her to a hospital but Ayla says she can't stand hospital and tells the story of how her father became "handicapped" in a work accident:

"It was the days of my childhood, when I thought the world was a game. When my father's arm was cut so were our days of happiness. All changed. My father couldn't stomach the accident. He became ill-tempered, he became a drunk. With the accident, misery knocked our

door. I couldn't live my childhood or my teenagehood. This is why I loathed handicap, it disgusts me. That missing arm has sunken on my life like a dark cloud. Work like a slave against in dire poverty, go to school and put your brother through school."

This is a key point in the plot, as Tarık has an accident while in Spain for a business trip, he loses a hand and Ayla's previous strong reaction forces him to keep it a secret. Ayla's words reiterate the approach to disability that merges unemployment, alcoholism, poverty and disability into a cluster of marginality. The physical impairment is not a bodily state but a failure in social function. Ayla's father fails as a man when he fails to provide for his family, which puts Ayla in a precarious situation as a working girl. She despises handicap (i.e. the sight of infirmity) because it is the fall of the masculine ideal for Ayla. This is why Tarık goes on to sacrifice his future with Ayla for the sake of saving his image as a man.

While Tarık hides from Ayla, she rises to stardom with the help of Tarık's brother, with the nickname Tarık has given her. Her identity as Zaliha, the most desired star of the music clubs is juxtaposed against Tarık and his shrinking existence. Her becoming rich, empowered and independent is an alarming development in the plot and goes beyond the accepted boundaries of the norm of femininity. Yet she is desired by another man, Tarık's brother, and as he is a good character as well, the tension is sought to be relieved by his intentions to marry her. His only deficiency as a man, being promiscuous, would be remedied if he is to dedicate himself to Ayla, and her deficiency as being a single woman, and being an object of desire for other men would be remedied for her too.

The movie presents two models of masculinity, a moderate model (Tarık) and an intense model. Both of these models are somewhat threathening, Tarık is on the edge of masculinity

being a sentimental composer; he makes up for his politeness and sentimentality by occassional fighting and bravery. His brother's masculinity, on the other hand, is too intense and castrating: taking pleasure from making his rivals "dance like a köçek", he makes up for his cruel inclinations by remaining good-hearted and protective of women. For the audience neither of the models is perfect, they complete each other yet it is the older brother's masculinity that is more preferable in the end. While the impairment castrates Tarık, makes him timid and silent; his brother does not accept any defeat and refuses to be beaten by his destiny. When Ayla asks where he has gone after she refused to marry him, his mother tells her: "He couldn't accept his defeat. He can't take his revenge either as he doesn't know his rival."

While his brother retreats to find a solution, Tarık submits to the loss, whereas he should have been fighting "like a man". This distinction between two brothers is resolved in the end when Ayla and Tarık equalize in their physical impairment. Yet this is only possible through Tarık's brother's brute force as he grabs Ayla by force and brings her to the retreat. Tarık briefly shows himself through the door, yet when Ayla screams as she looks at his missing arm, Tarık goes back in, leaving the door ajar. Tarık's brother tells Ayla: "He is my dear brother. He runs from you because he loves you. He runs from you because he wants your love, not your mercy. He needs you." Ayla finally comprehends what is standing in their way, the fact that she is healthy and wholesome. She was once again confronting the irrevocable deficiency, the missing arm that was hovering above her like a black cloud: "I swear it's not mercy. You don't believe me; I love you so much I would die for you. You don't believe I love you. You run from me because I am healthy (sağlam)." Her solution: Chopping her hand off with an axe to prove him wrong. Instead of cries of horror, we see both Ayla and Tarık smiling and hugging. The movie ends with Ayla and Tarık in a car driven by Tarık's brother, going towards the sunrise.

Both films, in their intense imagery and violent chain of events are significant for they expose how excruciating the idea of male vulnerability is. In the case of symbolizing the fragile male, amputation serves as the most violent bodily metaphor.

5.3 Ways of Looking

So far, I have argued that disability is meaningful as a metaphor in the story-telling of the melodrama films. Yet, these films do not only consist of their scripts; their audiences relate to them through the visual elements used, after all, they are films. Camera angles, mise-en-scenes, acting, sound effects; all of them are vital in guiding the audience perception and meaning-making. This section will focus on the ways of looking at disability in the Turkish melodramas: How do we look at the filmed bodies? How does the disability become a spectacle? How are certain bodies fetishized? How is this a part of the spectacle of the other? How and why the state of being "neither self-nor other" sensationalized?

A more general answer to these questions lies in the concept of body genres. Williams' canonical text "Film Bodies: Gender, Genre and Excess" is among the main inspirations of this section. In this article, Williams argues that audience identification in certain genres rely on stimulating bodily sensations in the audience. The power of the "body genres" lies in the visceral impact they have on the audience: Pornography relies on arousal, melodramas rely on tear-jerking, horror films rely on terror in engaging their audience in the narrative. As we watch the suffering, climaxing, bleeding body, we too suffer, climax and bleed. Therefore the film experience in these genres renders the body a spectacle. The excessive recurrence of these sensations, Williams argues, indicates that the body genre in fact point at ontological issues that sexuality, desire and vulnerability set forth. In bringing these persistent troubles to surface in

their historically specific forms, the body genres reveal persistent social conundrums of their era of production. The Turkish melodrama genre, lays bare many of the dilemmas set forth by the Turkish modernization project, mainly in the gender order and social life. In the previous section, I have sought to explain how bodily differences were metaphorized in exposing social tensions around gender norms and performance. In this section, following Mitchell and Snyder's reading of Williams' text, I will focus on how disability is sensationalized and fetishized together with the female body.

In relating Williams' framework with their concept of "narrative prosthesis", these authors argue that the body genres turn the abnormal-disabled bodies into a spectacle as much as the able and normal bodies. Just as the gender categories are employed to structure the pleasure derived from watching the body genres, so too disabled figures are utilized for they incite a sensation of pain and of terror. It is the fundamental association of disability with vulnerability that hooks the audience bodies. Thus, "(..) disabled bodies have been constructed cinematically and socially to function as delivery vehicles in the transfer of extreme sensation to audiences". ("Body Genres and Disability Sensations" 162) The authors point out that the disabled figures are ever-present in body genres to such an extent that they are a staple element, a formula that gives the coherence of the genre. Their study suggests that comedy, melodrama and horror genre rely on the disabled body to trigger the senses, which becomes a reflex as the audience is exposed to its repeated featurings. The same could be argued for the Turkish melodramas, as the recurrence of the disabled figures in two decades is significant (~ 10% of all films produced), as demonstrated in the "Notes on Methodology" section. Moreover, as argued in a previous chapter in this study, the qualities which define the Turkish melodrama as a genre lean towards a cross-genre structure. The films analyzed for this study borrow elements from other genres such as

horror films, action films, musicals and increasingly towards late 1970's, erotic films. Therefore, they are all the more fitting into the concept of body genres, as the filmed bodies in these films take on multiple functions.

Following section, then, will focus on the cinematic elements and methods employed to produce "extreme sensation" from images of disability and sexuality. Building on the multidisciplinary approach I have reviewed in the first chapter, I suggest that just as the use of disability as a metaphor in the narratives depend on the shared cultural assumptions about disability, the audience identification with the filmed body (the gendered and disabled filmed bodies) is only possible as it plays with the deep-seated anxieties surrounding the bodily vulnerability.

DISABILITY AS EXCESS: EMPATHETIC REPRESENTATION OF DISABILITY

One of the manners in which the film melodrama is able to inflict an excessive sensational impact is through rendering its objects excessive and extraordinary. That is, the filmic discourse of the Turkish melodramas itself produces the bodily differences as absolute and immutable differences. As such, its subject matter becomes explicit and the film is able to cause tribulations within the audience. This is most evident in the way these films fetishize the female and/or disabled figures. Several authors have pointed out the parallels between the fetishism surrounding the female body and the disabled body, Thompson adding to this, the body of the racial other. As I have explained in the first chapter, the reduction of the female subjectivity to her body and reproductive organs and the reduction of the disabled subjectivity to the impairment and to the impaired body part are the manifestation of the modernist discourse which equates reason with transcendence and assigns it to an abstract, normate male being.

In accordance with this discursive framework, Turkish melodramas analysed for this study are rife with visual methods that fetishize the female body as well as the disabled body. To the extent which both the images of female sexuality and of disabled body are deemed offensive and explicit, their depictions on the film are inviting and sensational. It is their capacity to evoke awe and fascination at once that this imagery can take the audience to the extreme titillation, within the safe distance and license to stare the film theater allows the audience. Thompson articulates this attraction as a tension between "to-be-looked-atness and not-to-be-looked-atness", in a manner that resonates Mulvey's conceptualization of gaze as a source of sexual pleasure and of control. In her ground breaking and much debated article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", Mulvey introduced the issue of "an active/passive heterosexual division of labour" (10) which dominates the narrative structure in cinema, and suggested that the gaze of the spectator on the spectacle reproduces power relations between genders. In a similar vein, Garland-Thomson suggests that "staring" consolidates the objectification of the cultural other: "Staring thus creates disability as a state of absolute difference rather than simply one more variation in human form." ("The Politics of Staring" 57) She gives the example of different rhetorics in disabled photography and explains how photography can assume objectivity and relieve its spectator by building a safe distance between the spectator and the spectacle. Furthermore, the spectator is allowed to stare, unlike in real life where it is discomforting to do so. A similar effect is at work in melodrama films: As the audience is given the license to stare at images of disability and sexuality which is otherwise explicit and to be avoided, these films cement the distance between a putatively "normal" audiences with "abnormal" figures, which stand for lived disabled bodies.

I have chosen three cinematic elements employed in fetishistic representations of disability: Props, acting and the use of gore. The symbolic visual discourse produced by exaggerated acting, excessive props and sensational imagery reduce a complex experience of disability into a trope. By addressing bodily reflexes through signifiers of pain and vulnerability (such as blood, surgery, gasps, moanings, bandages and prostheses), these representations cement the associations of disability with infirmity, as audience identification in body genres rely on sensation.

The exaggerated props used as prosthesis or bandages are not merely poor judgement in art direction, but a purposeful technique in signifying disability. The wheelchair, the staff, the huge eye patches, a wooden hand polished bright, a blanket on paraplegic legs, these are the staple props that are quickly recognized as a part of the Yeşilçam melodrama. These prostheses are often used in the scenes following a disabling accident and are ominous symbols of the lives awaiting the disabled figures. Often emphasized by zoom-ins and sudden change of the soundtrack to a dramatic tune, the audience is swiftly introduced to the new character: Ekrem is no longer the author Ekrem, but a blind man. Tarık is not a famous composer anymore, but an amputee. The prostheses, accompanied by acting and camera effects, functions as markers of difference between the disabled and the able-bodied self.

Tarık's wooden hand is a case in point. (Fig.3) After an accident in Spain, Tarık opens his eyes at the hospital and the audience is shown a wooden prosthesis screwed into his arm. Through the entire film, Tarık's hand stays hidden in his pocket, so is the truth about his love affair and his secrecy. Towards the end, same prosthesis falls off; revealing his secret and the spotlight hits the prosthesis. The hard, polished surface of the prosthetic hand, as well as Ayla's

words (her father's handicap as "a dark cloud") gives an ominous, eerie air to Tarık's impairment. "Aşk Mabudesi" make use of the same prosthesis for Ekrem, after he became blind and after his surgery. Although there are no visible scars on his eyes after the accident, Ekrem's eyes are covered with big patches of gauze. (Fig.4) Except for the uncanny image it produces, these patches are redundant. Same patches reappear in film's final, as the surgery is only shown with their removal. The sequence proceeds with a zoom-in to Ekrem's winking eyes, and an out-of-focus image of Leyla. As the blur dissolves, the truth is revealed to both lovers, all goes back to normal and the film completes its cycle of misfortunes through the imagery of disability.

Some of these props are not only used as symbols but also as frames which guide the audience gaze. One example is the use of mirror for the blindness theme (Fig. 5) In "Ağlayan Melek", Sabahat "looks" at herself in the mirror. The scene is not merely an exercise in absurdity, but an economic way to convey a certain idea. In an ironic manner, Sabahat is looking for her beauty: Is she beautiful? Will she look good with the earrings on? The mirror, even if not practically useful, is a way to express Sabahat's yearning to be like her peers, grow into a woman and to get married. In the second shot, Sabahat watching herself, while her father is watching her. Throughout the film, we witness the male gaze that Sabahat is unaware off. We are constantly reminded of the gender hierarchy, in which she is doubly disadvantaged as a blind woman. As spectators we are exposed to the suspense of the scrutiny and alternatively the desiring gaze of the men encircling Sabahat: Şevket, her father, the men of the island, the assailant, Vedat and the men who try to sell her. She is thrown into a world of lewd hypocrisy which she will only come to know once her "eyes are opened".

Figure 3 Zoom-in on Tarık's prosthesis: a stiff wooden hand.

Figure 4 Marking Blindness Gauze patches with crossed band helps visualize the absence of sight and of male might at once.

Figure 5 Sabahat and the mirror First shot: Sabahat's unrequited gaze meets the audience gaze. Second shot: The audience gaze at Sabahat is requited by her father's surveillance, after which Sabahat is scolded by her father.

Another example is the use of wheelchair as a frame sequestering the image of the characters and blocking our gaze. (Fig.6) Akin to the use of prison bars, wheelchair wheels act as a frame-within-frame and enmesh the image of the actors. Below shots are taken from "Ablam". The first shot is from the flashback sequence showing Hasan and elder sister's honeymoon. "The strangest honeymoon in the world"- This is how Ahsen defines Hasan's and elder sister's honey moon. We watch them roam the prairie in joy, Hasan pushing the wheelchair or carrying his wife in his arms. Nothing stands out as unfamiliar in this sequence, so one finds herself wondering

what exactly is strange about the honeymoon- the sole possible answer is that the marriage is not consummated. This particular shot creates a distance between the audience and the couple, now seen in a blur. The wheel in close-up dominates the fuzzy image of the newlyweds. As the watches them through the frame of the wheels, they are alerted to the implications of her disability surrounding their matrimony. The second shot shows Hasan dreaming. As the elder sister approaches him, the wheels stroll over Hasan's face and intensifies the sense of stress he finds himself as he tries to choose between love and desire. His commitment to his wife imprisons him to a life of self-sacrifice, and in this case the wheel frame acts as prison bars.

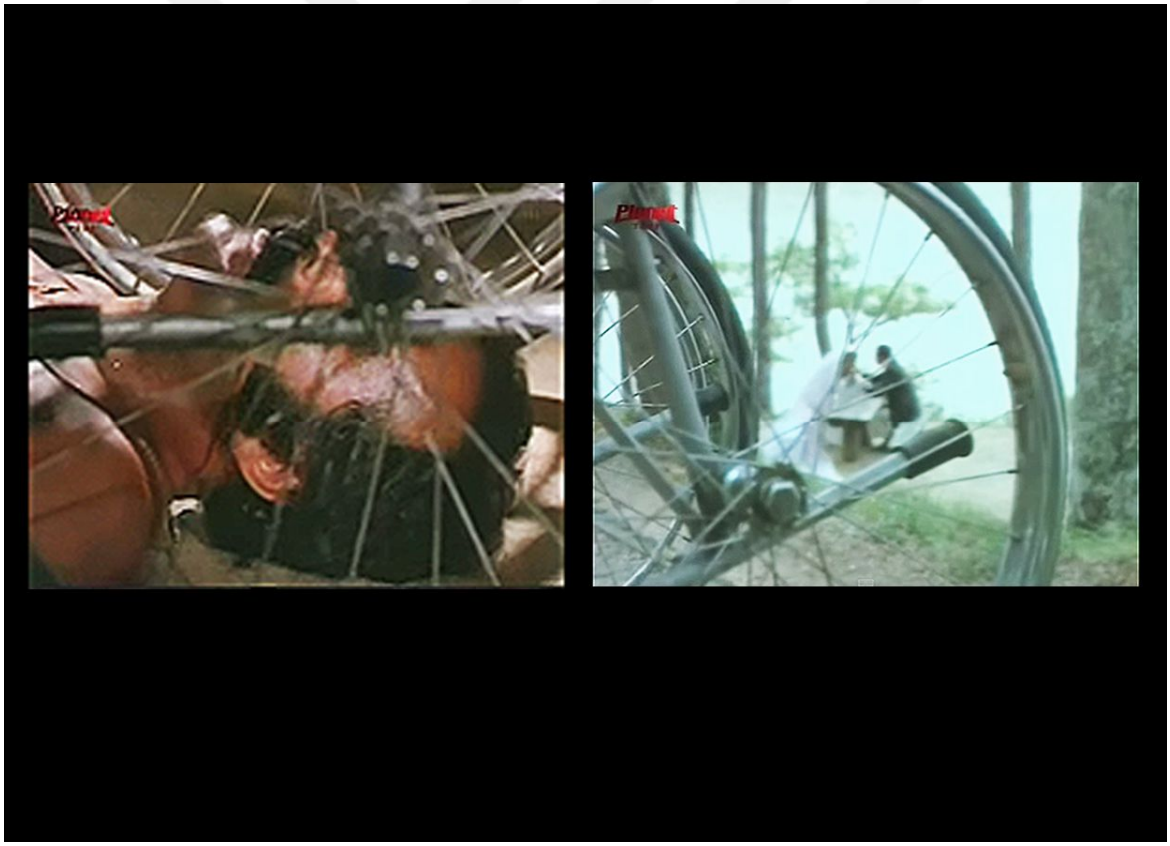

Figure 6 Wheelchair as a Frame Wheelchair serves a multiple purpose in "Ablam" and "Kader Kapıyı Çaldı". The use of wheelchair as a frame heightens the feeling of being constrained, echoing the state Hasan and Leyla are in. Married to disabled figures and unable to satisfy their desires, these figures are depicted as desperate and conflicted.

As muteness is difficult to represent using visual elements, it is represented through sound effects. Both in Kınalı Yapıncak and Serseri Aşık, muteness is indicated through zoom-ins to the faces and the voices of the mute figures. As Hülya is able to talk but not sing, in Serseri Aşık we hear her talk extensively. The crucial points are when she tries to sing, as a cracking whisper comes out of her mouth in her each attempt. In Kınalı Yapıncak, we hear the protagonist's voice, inarticulate and indistinct sounds coming out her mouth are always followed by her aunt's insults. As she is treated like an animal, due to her her incapacity to express herself, which is signified by her muteness, these sounds evoke a sense of pity and frustration.

An online post by TSA (Turkish Cinema Research Database) suggests that Hülya Koçyiğit had to cry so much during the shooting, she had to take a leave of absence due to a nervous breakdown.[32] The star bodies, in the cases of acting the disabled parts, become vessels for the transfer of excessive sensation. This amplifies the sentimentality in two ways. The star bodies are ideal bodies, they function as the criteria against which beauty, youthfulness, sex appeal and normalcy are measured. The possibility that these bodies could be "deformed", is even more shocking and awe-inspiring. Just as the shivering lips, watery eyes and sobbings are followed by tears of the audiences, the unseeing blue eyes, the perfect bodies missing a limb and paraplegic legs that could dance are followed by bitten lips and gawking eyes of the audience.

Another aspect comes in the performance of the stars. Able-bodied actors acting disabled roles have often been admired for their skills. From a disability studies angle, this alone results in

[32] Türk Sineması Araştırmaları, 9 October 2015, 10:57, [Facebook status], retrieved from https://www.facebook.com/TSAorgtr/posts/758379010933561.

a problematic representations, as disabled actors are not represented in the industry. Such ableism causes double standards, as the disabled actors are not asked to perform able-bodied roles, yet the reverse is a trend. On the other hand, this affects the acting, since the actors need to compensate for their abilities: The able-bodies of the stars resort to grand gestures and exaggerated movements, not only as part of the grand excess of the melodramatic narrative but also as a result of the actors having only visual, and not experiential knowledge of the bodily experience of disability. One method in acting which is frequently used is to demonstrate a change in posture before and after the protagonist is disabled. (Fig. 7 and 8) As a hunched back, tight shoulders and a bent neck all signify defeat, despair and misery; these are frequent signifiers of impairment.

Figure 7 Posture marks agency In “Ablam”/ “My Elder Sister”, the scenes showing the elder sister as a lawyer depict her as a strong and capable social actor. In the first figure she is still able-bodied, in the second one she is sitting on a wheelchair. Notice the posture of the elder sister in the second figure, as she looks like she is standing up. The difference in physical ability is erased visually when she assumes agency through her profession.

Figure 8 Disabled male figures in defeat The male disempowerment after disability is best reflected in the postures of the actors. First shot shows Ekrem playing the piano and murmuring his love song to himself,with his head between his shoulders. Restricted movement and body closing in on itself are contrasted to the normate male movement, which is uninhibited and expansive. The second shot shows the tiny image of Tarık against the backdrop of an all-encompassing image of Ayla. Her rise to stardom and Tarık's shrinking being are juxtaposed skillfully in this shot. Both shots work to code disablement as emasculation.

One last use of gore in Yeşilçam melodramas should be underlined for the purposes of this study. Within a moral universe which exhalts a notion of self-sacrificial loves and abhors self-indulgent sexual affairs, the scenes of bodily danger replace the sexual union with union in pain. As stressed in third chapter, the fantasy that defines the melodrama is the fantasy of union, a state of bliss where miscommunication and threatening difference between self and other is transcended. Neale underlines that the union between the heterosexual couple in melodrama does not take place as sexual union as "sexuality involves an irreducible otherness- an other body- and this must be repressed in order for the union through love to sustain itself" (15). In the examples below, the repressed sexuality surfaces in the shape of an erotic framing of pain, in a discourse which frames pain as a desirable sacrifice for love. Therefore, in certain cases like below, the scenes of bodily pain can be allegories of union, which reveal the fear of vulnerability at the heart of the fetishism that overlap sexuality and disability. The three examples below, demonstrate the use of gore in an erotic manner, enmeshing images of disability and of sexuality in arousing and alarming the audience.

Figure 9 Adam, Eve and Poisonous Snake Erotic allusions interveawing pain and pleasure.

The snakebite sequence in which Yaban sucks out the poison and Alev moans, contracts her body, sweats and looks at us with drowsy eyes is a hint at sexual intercourse. (Fig. 9) Competing with erotic movies rampant at the time of production, many melodramas included sensual scenes, which could be one of the motives behind the sequence. Yet it also runs corollary to the paradise/state of nature theme and disciplining of Alev as we witness once more Yaban's potency as a man, both in his command over nature and his possession of Alev. This masculine appropriation interweaves different layers of meaning through corporeality; not only by the figurative use of the body but also by arousing our tactile senses (grabbing of the dry grass, pulling and pushing, perspiration etc.) and aural attention (panting, moaning, breathing).

Figure 10 Yaban's flesh and blood exposed Yaban opening himself up to Alev not only emotionally but physically.

By entrusting Alev his open wound, Yaban surrenders completely to Alev: "Even the pain you give me is something else." In a rather violent merging of self and the other, the union of Alev and Yaban takes place in agony. With Alev's long pauses, shots of bloody pus and Yaban's screams the suspense rises, only to be relieved by the amputation of Yaban's leg. (Fig.10)

"Atrocity" (Zulüm) ends with a similar sequence. The final sequence of the film shows Ayla chopping her arm off with an axe, in an effort to convince Tarık of her love. The "happy ending" of the film, the resolution of an unfortunate love story, comes with an embrace of lovers,

both missing a hand. (Fig.11) The much delayed union of the couple, who were yet to marry, comes in the form of a gore scene, with Ayla walking towards Tarık in her blood-stained, white night gown. It is only through Ayla's sacrifice that Tarık regain his confidence, thus, the terrifying sequence results in an instant happy ending, in spite of what feels to be an unimaginable pain. Her experience of amputation, though projected on screen with a sudden and shocking scene of dismemberment, is not defined by pain; but by a relief. The last scene shows dreamy faces of Ayla and Tarık in silent repose, with a romantic tune in the back ground, with no signs of blood loss in sight.

Figure 11 An embrace too late Lovers finally reunite, but only through their bodily sacrifices.

In all three cases, the miscommunication that led to the original separation of the couple is eliminated through visceral pain. Another common trait is that these experiences of pain pave the way to the reunion of the couple and to the happy ending, as they arrive at a mutual

understanding. In conveying this release through pain, not only do the scenes make us "gawk" at the amputation or infliction, but also strengthens the visual stimulation through tactile and aural senses.

In this chapter, I sought to analyze the function of disability in Turkish melodramatic narratives to explain its repeated featuring. Within the genre conventions of melodrama, the narrative builds its discursive framework on the victimization of the protagonist, namely the "pathos". The pathos musters its impact through bodily sensations it inflicts on the audience and thus the narrative resorts to vivid and excessive expressions of pain and vulnerability. Therefore, disability becomes an embodied metaphor, a metaphor that is legible only through gender norms. To the extent that disability is associated with marginalization and isolation, it demarcates the boundaries of normalcy, through the imagery of the "abnormal" embodiment. While bringing together issues of social marginalization, of gender roles, of social mobility and of crises of identity through the various meanings associated with bodily vulnerability, Yeşilçam melodramas not only make use of genre conventions but also of visual methods that render the body a spectacle. Such spectacle, in turn, fetishizes images of sexuality and disability, and intensifies the impact of melodramatic sensationalism, a feature which makes the melodrama a "body genre". In the following conclusion, I will reiterate the melodramatic associations of disability in relation to their historical context of production, in order to introduce a multi-dimensional approach to film representations of disability.

CONCLUSION

The seeds of this study were sown during a discussion on Paul K. Longmore's article "Screening Stereotypes". As someone who has spent her childhood watching one Yeşilçam melodrama after another, I noticed that I have taken the recurrence of disability for granted, and that the most of my assumptions on disabled subjectivity came from these films. As an important part of the popular cultural imagery, they continue to be a depository of themes, stories and tropes. Furthermore, they are praised for their "sincerity" by TV audiences who watch the reruns in warm nostalgic sentiments and take their representation of the world for granted. As such, I believe that they include countless insights on how able-bodied audiences imagine disability to be and how ableism constructs images of disability. Thus, I decided to undertake a study which focuses on the persistence of disabled characters in Yeşilçam's "golden age" and centers on the disability as a category of analysis on its own right.

As the first comprehensive study on disabled imagery in Yeşilçam melodramas from the perspective of disability studies, the study first sets out to ascertain the number of films which featured a disabled protagonist. To that end, first I have prepared a list of all melodramas produced between the years 1960-1980 and then refined that list by selecting the melodramas with disabled protagonists, categorizing these films according to gender and impairment of the protagonist. I believe this index on its own will be a useful instrument for the future studies in the field. The research demonstrated that not only the frequency of disability representations were significant enough to be studied, but also there were important differences between how male and female protagonists were depicted when "inflicted" with different impairments. Thus, the next objective of the study was to have a deeper look at the meanings disabled imagery

assumed with respect to gender, with the wider question of how both sexuality and disability were portrayed as sources of absolute and disruptive difference in Yeşilçam.

The portrayal of the disability in Yeşilçam melodramas at first glance are congruent to the stereotypes presented by the social model based studies presented in this study. The disabled protagonists in Yeşilçam melodramas are bitter figures drowning in self-pity, unable to form social relationships and choose isolation. However, the cultural prejudices which consolidate these stereotypes are not sufficient for our understanding. Once situated in the discursive framework of the genre conventions of melodrama, the versatility of disability as a figurative device comes to the fore, as a significant reason for its frequent featuring. Representations of disability as narrative prostheses are staple elements in Yeşilçam melodramas as they are instrumental in forming the "pathos", sensationalism and the excessive style. Furthermore, the disabled imagery provides visual economy in evoking fear and anxiety as well as in triggering the senses of the spectator, allowing for identification through senses.

Yet such identification does not occur in a vacuum. Beyond their functionality in the narratives, the emotional impact of the disabled imagery on the audience and its sensationalism can be grasped through their associations within the specific social context. These representations circulate and interweave different meanings in every iteration of diverse impairments: Mobility impairment, blindness, muteness and amputation assume these meanings with regards to the gender performances of the characters. By intertwining the threat of sexual transgression, the anxiety of losing one's essence, and the fear of losing control and autonomy, the images of disability and of sexuality produce gendered metaphors of disability which distinguish the margins of the normalcy and of the ideal normate life. Such metaphors gain depth and endorse identification to the extent that they resonate with the gender and bodily norms

articulated both by the moral framework of the genre and by the founding political discourse of modernization in Turkey. The appendix extracts the binaries utilized both by the eugenicist discourse and by Yeşilçam melodramas' narrative structure. Disabled protagonists, cursed with "having a trouble" and "being a trouble" through their non-congenital impairments, traverse between the two ends of these binaries. Ultimately, the narratives reach a synthesis to "cure" the liminality problem by the disablement, revealing at the same time the difficulty of remaining at the right side of the binary.

In a context of tumultuous social transformation such as the 60's and 70's, when the social conflict could no longer be repressed under a notion of homogenous society, disabled imagery and images of sexuality expose the vulnerability of the identity, which begets the question of whether disability could be considered a transgressive signifier, revealing the impossibility and the desirability of a normative order at once. Answering this question transcends the theoretical might and scope of this master's thesis. However, putting the fantasy of union as the basis of pleasure in melodrama in relation with the fantasy of bodily integrity and the nationalist ideals of Kemalist modernization should be a good starting point for enhancing the study. Analyses of sources such as the promotion materials, film reviews and interviews with the directors and actors would be most helpful in the further advancements of the study as well.

Disability studies, especially the cultural disability studies which adopts a multidisciplinary approach, presents a myriad of possibilities for future research in the representation of disability and of corporeal difference in Yeşilçam. I believe the introduction of disability as a category of analysis to the Turkish film studies would be most fruitful in putting

the representations of ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation in a dialogue, based on how they are positioned in reference to normalcy.

To that end, a number of subjects need to be researched with respect to how normalcy is constructed in this popular cultural medium. Analyses of the representation of the medical institution in melodramas can provide us with great insight. Although they seem to remain in the background, the doctors and medical facilities have important implications for the plot as they determine the fate of the characters and even define who they are. Such authority figures articulate the moral situation of the characters for the audience and demarcate their social standing. The fixation with defining symptoms of a disease and getting rid of it has undeniable links to the approach to disability as an infliction to be scraped, rather than as a matter of subjectivity. The study of the representations of state institutions, especially that of medicine, and would be most influential in understanding the melodramatic approach to state patrimonialism, especially in an era defined by three military coups and political instability.

The interaction between the representations of ethnicity, gender and disability would be most illuminating with respect to the images of the cultural "other" in Yeşilçam melodrama, for future studies in the construction of cultural norms in popular culture. In a similar vein, enfreakment of both the rich characters and of peasants can help us better grasp the representation of class difference and of the acceptable limits of modernization. I hope that my study will be one of the many to come, as a part of multidisciplinary approach to Yeşilçam films, which are rich sources for analyses of cultural imagery.

APPENDIX 1

A list of binaries that structure the melodramatic narratives of Yeşilçam

Body	Soul / Mind
Sex/Desire	Love
Material / Corporeal	Spiritual / Transcendental
Wealth / Higher Class	Poverty / Lower Class
Outside/ City	Inside/ Home / "Mahalle"
Intoxication	Sobriety
Night	Day
Dirt	Purity
Chaos	Order
Modernity	Tradition
Imitation/ West	Authentic / Turkish
Lies	Truth
Pleasure / Self-Indulgence	Sacrifice
Immoral/ Amoral	Moral

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