Powerless Signs: Hybridity and the Logic of Excess of Turkish Trash

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INTRODUCTION

Trash films are no longer marginal products consumed and advocated by relatively small fan groups. In the past decade, the institution of the cinema has steadily cultivated an interest in the paracinematic experience and has tried a number of ways to appropriate it into the mainstream. Although a financial failure, Tim Burton’s film, Ed Wood (1994), succeeded in drawing attention to the work of the “worst director of film history.” Recently, a well-known publishing company marketed Wood’s biography with a V.H.S. copy of Plan 9 from Outer Space, and more surprisingly, in 1999, Istanbul International Film Festival—which is reputed to be more or less elitist in its taste in

1By “trash,” I am referring to a category of films which refuse to comply with the standards of mainstream “good taste.”
cinema—arranged a screening of Wood's films. It should also be noted that scholarly publications are now seeking to explore the potentialities of trash films, suggesting ways of (re)reading them in the light of an emerging politics of aesthetic. In this context, Jeffrey Sconce's (1995) article, "Trashcan the academy," stands out as one of the most original and inspiring works, particularly in the way he links his discussion of trash with Bourdieu’s "taste" and Brecht's Verfremdungseffekt (alienation effect). In his concluding remarks, Sconce asserts that:

... Parachnema has the potential, at long last, to answer Brecht's famous call for an anti-illusionist aesthetic by presenting a cinema so historicist, anachronistic and excessive that it compels even the most casual viewer to engage it ironically, producing a relatively detached textual space in which to consider, if only superficially, the cultural, historical and aesthetic politics that shape cinematic representation. (p. 393)

However, a consideration of the politics that shape cinematic representation is not made possible by the filmic text alone, but also by the appropriate conceptual tools provided by the critic/theorist. Critical activity, while attempting to produce an analysis of signification processes, inevitably interferes in and eventually changes the process itself. In this connection, I am hoping to offer a perspective which enables an understanding of a specific mode of representation and which relatedly opens up space for pleasures that were not available before. Excess may really be a common characteristic of trash regardless of the specific culture from which it emanates, but as I will try to demonstrate in the following pages, it may have variations which reveal significant clues about the construction of national and cultural identities. Turkish trash can be best characterised with its investment in fantasy, as a mode which cuts across several genres, such as science fiction, horror and adventure. Here lies its dilemma: although all these genres require the forces of a super-production, what trash can afford is nothing more than ill-designed costumes, poor props, and lousy special effects. Besides, its sources have been popular Western films, T.V. series, and comics (e.g., Superman, Batman, Bewitched, The Pink Panther, Killing, Tarzan, and The Phantom). My premise is that, in comparison to the mainstream cinema, which also displays instances of mimicry, trash films help us trace the operation of a specific emotional structure in the audience. Being a lesser cinema by definition, it entails in its failure an aesthetic value, namely excess, which is associated with a sense of victimisation and feeds into the cultural/national identity, endowing it with points of resistance. Towards the end of the chapter, I will discuss the nature of this resistance in relation to hybridity, arguing that this relation is one of negotiation which survives domination.

By Turkish trash, I refer to a group of films that were produced in the 1970s and early 1980s although the category was "invented"
It should also be noted that the critical discourse of the period, with its totalising attitude, labelled every film coming from the industry as "bad" and did not attempt to set criteria in order to decide how to approach them. Indeed, unlike its American counterpart, Turkish trash does not stand in sharp contrast to mainstream cinema. Many trash films were produced by well-known film-makers and producers, who were seeking alternative ways to make money. Addressing a younger generation, these films were actually adaptations and appropriations of American popular science fiction and fantasy films (e.g., Star Wars, T.V. series (Star Trek), and even comics (Superman, Batman)). A Turkish trash film could feature stars and even superstars who were willing to try their hands at something other than melodrama and historical action.

Perhaps, Turkish trash can be seen as a graphic variation of the popular cinema of the 1970s—or popular cinema taken to its extremes. Yet, that is the tragic moment of trash; one can distinguish it from popular cinema with its hopeless struggle against Hollywood and the television industry, which were beginning to dominate the scene of entertainment, a struggle destined to failure right from the start.

Unlike American trash, Turkish trash films cannot be studied outside the national concerns that they raise. Ed Wood's idol was Orson Welles, but Wood thought that they were in the same league, whereas a Turkish film-maker cannot see things in the same way. To Ed Wood, Welles was a film-maker, to any non-American film-maker, Welles was an American film-maker. Hollywood has been serving as the "Big Other" for national and international cinemas for almost a century. The Latin-American film maker Glauber Rocha once remarked that "any discussion about cinema made outside Hollywood must begin with Hollywood" (cited in Rai, 1994, p. 52). I think this statement perfectly exemplifies the way in which Hollywood is perceived as a point of reference. Steve Neale (1983) explains how European Art Cinema developed as a resistance to the increasing domination of American films in the 1960s:

... In competing with Hollywood for a share in the market, or seeking a space of its own within it, the films produced by a specific national film industry will have in any case to differentiate themselves from those produced by Hollywood. One way of doing so is to turn to high art and to the cultural traditions specific to the country involved. (pp. 14-15)

Here, we observe that the European Art Cinema was the outcome of a strategy which strove to differentiate European films from those of Hollywood and to gain a separate identity, and thus a separate share in both domestic and international markets. Of course, European Art Cinema gained an identity in reference to Hollywood. To put it simply, it did what Hollywood did not and avoided what Hollywood did. Hence emerged "auteur policy" (in opposition to the Hollywood "star" system),
with sophisticated stylistic devices, nudity, themes that Hollywood did not touch upon, and so on.

Turkish cinema did not follow European Art Cinema. It did not attempt to gain a specific identity; it did not invent an Art Cinema; it did not look for specific themes, nor did it develop an "auteur" policy. We have the impression that this cinema desperately tried to become its own Other in order to survive. When we look at the films produced back in the mid 1960s and 1970s, what we witness is mimicry beyond innocent inspiration. We know that it was harshly criticised for plagiarism. The criticisms levelled against Yeniçam (trash cinema) are that: (1) a cinema of mimicry cannot have an "authentic" identity; and (2) employment of noncinematic devices (borrowed from shadowplay, traditional performance arts, and so forth) is a crime committed against the art of cinema (Özön, 1995, p. 75). I think this betrays a modernist approach that an artwork should be "itself" and "original" in the first place. Then the question remains, can we really expect Yeniçam to fit into the framework defined by such an approach? I must stress that it shared some very important aspects of mimicry with some Eastern cinemas, such as Egyptian, Iranian, and Indian. For example, Indian cinema is an "eclectic, assimilative, imitative, plagiaristic creature that is constantly rebelling against influences ... everything it borrows from the Euro-American film scene it distorts and caricatures" (Pfleiderer & Lutze, 1985, p. 22). The same applies to Turkish cinema. Paradoxically, when Turkish cinema mimics American films, it gets closer not to Hollywood but rather to Indian cinema. Nevertheless, one must remember that Indian cinema's relation to Hollywood should be considered in relation to its opposition to British cinema: Hollywood may have represented to the colonised subject what was not colonial.

That Indian cinema distorts and caricatures everything that it borrows from the Euro-American film scene invites further consideration of mimicry. Ravi Vasudevan (1989) asserts that "this view fails to see that such borrowings are subject to drastic revision in line with specific conceptions of narrative construction and performance" (pp. 59-60). What does it mean to mimic others? What is its relation to a concept of national/cultural identity? And more importantly, how did Yeniçam reconcile its acts of mimicry with its resistance to Hollywood? Here, I am going to use hybridity as a concept, which I believe will give an idea about the nature of the problems I have attempted to define. By hybridity, I understand the implication of any kind of identity (here, a national/cultural identity) by a signifying practice (here, cinema) which is composed of contradictory—even conflicting—terms taken from contradictory—even conflicting—cultures. Due to the employment of such terms, hybridity comes along with a set of tensions. I will mainly focus on "excess" as an outcome of tension. I depart from the assumption that Yeniçam has constructed a hybrid identity whose features might be illustrated as:

(1) a blend of hybrid and indigenous between the two acting; and (2) miniature art, among others, which shows that the film is touched upon the hybridity. I mean representation of the nature of mimicry between the two cinema of the Turkish cinema.
(1) a blend of Egyptian and Indian melodramas (which are themselves hybrid) and Hollywood narrative; (2) star performances vacillating between the traditions of Turkish drama (e.g., Ortacuoğlu) and method acting; and (3) the concurrent employment of the stylistic devices of miniature art. Western cinematography, and so forth. A detailed study of these elements falls beyond the scope of this chapter. I will, however, touch upon them to the extent that they are related to my discussion of hybridity. I maintain that Yesilcam adopted a certain hybrid mode of representation which is perfectly compatible with the ambivalent nature of mimicry. I will elaborate on this by demonstrating the tension between the Hollywood style of “realism” and the self-reflective tendency of the Turkish visual and narrative traditions. In relation to that, I now want to turn to a film which raises these issues.

Dünyayi Kurtaran Adam (The Man who Saved the World) (dir. Çetin Imanç, D.K.A. hereafter) is a science fiction film which was produced in 1982. One may find the film anarchistic because Yesilcam had already begun to show evidence of a radical transformation by then. Towards the end of the 1970s, a great majority of stars disappeared from the screen, partly due to the initial impact of the beginning of nationwide television broadcasting and partly due to the invasion of soft-porn films into movie theatres, and Yesilcam, which was keen to regain the audience that it had lost to television, was seeking new production modes and themes. I do not want to go into the details of this transformation, but what I would like to stress is that D.K.A. seems to have retained the style of Yesilcam which was itself changing at that time. For instance, it stayed with the typical romance of the early 1970s, whereas film makers now opted for sensational love. I would argue that the film is “the last stand” of the old Yesilcam, hopelessly struggling to beat not only Hollywood but also the newly emerging trends in popular cinema. That is the reason why I think it adheres to and overemphasises the dying conventions, thus revealing the dynamics (involving hybridity and excess) that would otherwise remain beneath the surface.

Rumour has it that in Italy the film was voted as one of the 10 most absurd films of the world. After the 1980s, it became a cult film among university students. There are a few fanzines devoted to the film and to its main star, Cüneyt Arkin, who also wrote the screenplay. Its posters are a collector’s item; there is a band which experimented with the sound track of the film, and an installation artist recently used the film in his work. This may remind one of the fetishisation of “bad”

Tunc Ali Çan used school desks and film posters in his work “Spectral Autoportrait.” Then he ran the film D.K.A. in the location. He explains: “To me, it turned out a tragic comedy film. The films of Cüneyt Arkin are a mirror to their time just as my installations mirror their own time. The Man who Saved the World expresses the economic worries of Turkish cinema before American cinema. It strives to represent to the people what is already consumed, in such a way that it cannot present anything, cannot comment anything” (Erçetin, 1997, p. 11).
films—of trash—a movement which seeks a way out of the hegemony of the prevailing taste. Indeed, the film exhibits a series of absurdities and incompetencies which rival Ed Wood’s worst films. Here are only a few legendary goofs: in the beginning, we see Ali, one of the protagonists, in medium close up, fighting with the enemy in space. He sends a message to his fellow: “I am diving!” and he bends his body forward to give the impression that his spacecraft is diving, for there is nothing to dive with. Murat, the hero, finds a brain [painted green] and keeps it in his costume for the fear that the enemy may seize it. At the end of the film, the bad guy of the film is divided in two by a magic sword. The film is able to show this in two stages. In the first shot, we see a half of his face, the other half being masked, and in the second shot, we see the other half, this time the first half being masked (and totally black). D.K.A. provokes discussion about how it became a trash film a decade after it first hit the screen. I will not consider that here, but I would like to stress that the pseudoscientific rhetoric of the voice-over narration in the opening scene, the logical fallacies, the discontinuities, the shaggy clothes that the monsters wear, the wooden swords, the unending fights, and the other bodily attractions facilitate a narcissistic laughter. This is, however, an uneasy laughter which also contains pity for the failed challenge of Yestilçam against Hollywood.

D.K.A. opens with images of space, spaceships, rockets being launched, and people with costumes typical of science fiction films. A voice-over narration is heard, explaining the background story. Human beings are on the verge of destroying the earth when a very powerful, mysterious enemy attacks them. They band together and, by concentrating their “brain molecules,” they form a shield to protect themselves from lethal laser beams. The enemy needs a human brain in order to break down the shield. Meanwhile, two Turkish warriors decide to search for the enemy and begin to navigate in space. The narration ends and we see Murat (Çüneyt Arkin) and his comrade Ali (Aytken Akkaya) attacking enemy ships. They lose control over their spacecraft due to the magnetic powers of the enemy and fall to a planet. It is implied that the planet has housed a collage of civilizations (through images of Egyptian pyramids and iconic figures of early Christianity) and is now ruled by the Wizard, who wants to steal their brains. Murat and Ali meet the natives of the planet, who have formed a small, tribal community. Their leader is a wise man who helps them out occasionally. However, the community is powerless before the Wizard. The Wizard manages to capture the warriors in his headquarters and begins to examine them. They manage to escape, but the Wizard takes revenge by killing the wise man and Ali. Murat survives the attack and returns to kill the Wizard. He has become

"I am, however, hoping to lay some clues as to how the problem of taste ought to be considered. In this context, I am inspired to a large extent by Jeffrey Incota’s (1993) essay, "Trash the academy."
invincible, thanks to a magic sword and heavy training. Having slashed hundreds of soldiers and monsters, he reaches the Wizard and cuts him into two halves. Now that the natives are free and the earth is safe, he can return home.

We see Murat and Ali for the first time in a dogfight with the enemy forces. The scene is actually composed of excerpts of the protagonists wearing motorcycle helmets, and of excerpts as well as the musical score from the famous Star Wars (dir. George Lucas, 1977). Çetin Irmak, director of the film, explains it away:

A strong wind swept away the spacecrafts we had erected for the film. We couldn’t afford to re-build them. We had to make changes in the script. The guys can re-construct space and everything in their studios. Since our budget fell short, we had to use footage from foreign films. (cited in Kara, 1996, p. 7)

Obviously, the “guys” are Hollywood people—the first thing that comes to the mind of a Yesilcam director when he needs something to compose his films with. When his spacecrafts disintegrate, he doesn’t hesitate to use “their” Star Wars. Properly speaking, this is plagiarism. However, we know very well who the thief is and where the stolen object resides. The theft is so obvious and transparent that it deserves a different angle. Yesilcam arbitrarily recontextualises what it steals from others. Those spacecrafts of Star Wars begin to signify something else; in other words, they are loaded with different meanings when used in a different context. Once again, we are witnessing the ambivalent nature of mimicry. As Homi Bhabha (1984) puts it:

... The discourse of mimicry is constructed around an ambivalence; in order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage. Its excess, its difference... mimicry emerges as the representation of a difference that is itself a process of disavowal. Mimicry is thus, the sign of double articulation; a complex strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which “appropriates” the Other as it visualises power. (p. 126)

Star Wars immediately became a blockbuster when it was first released in Turkey in the late 1970s. So, it was not difficult for the Turkish audience to recognise the rip-off in this scene. In Star Wars, the statement this scene makes is “Here is a spacecraft chasing the enemy,” but in D.K.A., it states something radically different than the original: “I am a scene taken from a Hollywood science fiction film which shows a dogfight scene”—hence the double-articulation described by Homi Bhabha. Here, the narrative takes on a self-referential (but not necessarily self-conscious) character, which brings to mind parody. But is it a parody? Mehmet Acar (1995), in his essay on the film defines it as “an unconsciously produced magnificent parody” (p. 32). Cüneyt Arkin, the star and writer of the film, offers a similar
explanation, but he admits that, due to lack of technical facilities, "we were not able to make fun of science fiction films as much as we wished to" (cited in Kara 1999, p. 143). That is, D.K.A. is a parody that failed. Parody is a form of imitation which is characterised by ironic inversion. As Linda Hutcheon (1985) puts it, a parodic text makes use of some aspects of the original so as to mock it, or some other text, or even a concept. It is also an intentional, self-conscious practice.

When we speak of parody, we do not just mean two texts that interrelate in a certain way. We also imply an intention to parody another work (or set of conventions) and both a recognition of that intent and an ability to find and interpret the backgrounded text in its relation to the parody. (Hutcheon, 1985, p. 22)

We know that Star Wars itself parodies The Wizard of Oz, (dir. Victor Fleming and King Vidor, 1939) in some respects and there are numerous references to the Western genre. But, one cannot be quite sure if D.K.A. works in the same way. There are some Turkish films, such as Turist Ömer Uzay Yolda Ömer, The Tourist on Star Trek (dir. Hulki Saner, 1973), which intentionally parody science fiction films or T.V. series. These are mostly comedy films, and they can even try with the logic of science-fiction from the outside. The problem with D.K.A. is that at times it takes itself too seriously, exactly, for instance, where Murat says "If we are facing an atomic threat today, that is because everyone is being too serious." When compared to the original, parody situates the parodic text at a superior level in comparison to the parodied text, at least temporarily: It is capable of inverting the original, making it an object or agent of irony. On the contrary, D.K.A. ridicules itself and puts Star Wars on the pedestal. This discussion as to whether D.K.A. is a parody or not might help us understand the overlapping of mimicry and parody. However, I suggest we adopt another approach and look elsewhere: the mode of representation which Yesilcam appropriated.

Yesilcam revived a tradition, a heritage of miniatures and shadow plays and other performance arts, which falls into a category quite apart from the "classic realist" texts of Hollywood. Hollywood aims at an "impression of reality," and in order to achieve it, pretends to be transparent by effacing its means of expression. The characters do not look at the camera so as not to remind the audience of it, editing is "invisible," and so forth. Yesilcam takes a position which can best be described as "hybrid." It seems to pick up the conventions of Hollywood.

\[\text{In an interview with Pete Tombs, Cetin Inanc claims that the story was inspired by power struggles going on at the time between the Turkish Mafia and the shopkeepers of Beyoglu in the heart of Istanbul's business district. The use of footage from Star Wars was an extension of the metaphor. Just as the best American goods are displayed in the shops of Istiklal Caddesi, he explains, so his film incorporates highlights from the best of American cinema. (Tombs & Scognamiglio, 1997, p. 115)\]
facilities, "we as we wished; but that failed. Hence the inversion. Use of some text, or even a
interlocutory work (or an ability to the parody.

"(dir. Victor he there are not be quite Turkish films, in Star Trek) Science fiction can have even problem with for instance, that is the original, comparison to inverting the library, D.K.A. Discussion as understand the presentation first by referring to its fictionality. Traditional Turkish folktales, for instance, begin with this formula: "It was, and it wasn't," an expression which is very close to "now you see it, now you don't." Tahsin Yücel (1982) points to the fact that this opening sentence immediately negates what it has just enunciated, neutralising the differential values of true and fall in language and thus referring to the nature of its relation to reality" (p. 21). To put it very briefly, the universe is a toy operated by a Grand Master, and we must see the toy as something referring to the Master (And, 1977, pp. 22-25). In a similar vein, the work of art must continually express the fact that it is fictitious and that we must go beyond it. The Turkish shadowplay, Karagöz, defines its screen, as the "screen of imagination" (zülük hayal, which also means the screen of shapes), and at the end of each play, it is torn apart by Karagöz himself, the leading character.

We can now understand why the leg of an animal (a dead ass) in Karagöz may begin to serve as binoculars at a particular moment (Kadri, 1968, p. 36). It can do so because it was never actually the object it referred to. What is important is not the leg as an object but as a representation of it. Anything may represent an animal leg in Karagöz, and if something can represent a leg, then it can also represent binoculars. When the Wizard ties up All to study his brain, he uses an instrument which simply consists of a cable and two electric bulbs. Now, in such a case, Hollywood would design a very sophisticated and "convincing" instrument and illustrate it in a way so as to suggest that it is an instrument by which one can scan brainwaves. On the contrary, Yeşilçam would simply use a box to suggest that it represents a highly sophisticated instrument which does not necessarily have to be convincing. A few lines of verse from the Chinese shadowplay, operating on almost the same principles as Karagöz, exemplifies this economy of expression:
A few men have the strength of an army of a thousand men
A few steps are equal to crossing hundreds of hills and rivers (Feng, 1963, cited in Amin, 1977, p. 81) [my translation]

However, when incorporated by Yesilcam into its hybrid form, this economy poses a difference within itself. Chinese shadowplay is content with a few steps when it needs to represent crossing hundreds of hills and rivers, whereas Yesilcam cannot be satisfied until it has taken thousands of steps to that effect. Evidently, Yesilcam's economy of expression produces "excess" on another level, that of style. Here, I appeal to a formalist approach to excess deriving from Kristin Thompson's (1977) conception, which, I would argue, does not exclude psychoanalytic implications. Thompson departs from the narrative theory of the Russian and from that of Stephen Heath (1975), and Roland Barthes (1977), who sought to elucidate excess as an element in film and photography. Narrative is conceived as comprising two inseparable aspects: "fabula," the plane of the story as constructed in the mind of the viewer, and "syuzhet" or discourse, the plane of exposing the story. For Thompson (1977), excess is counter-narrative and counter-narrativity because it does not contribute to the unifying effect of narrative motivation, which is:

... the primary tool by which the work makes its own devices seem reasonable. At that point where motivation fails, excess begins. To see it, we need to stop assuming that artistic motivation creates complete unity (or that its failure to do so somehow constitutes a fault). (p. 58)

Thompson moves on to describe the four ways in which excess is made manifest. They can be very roughly put: (1) an individual element which serves the motivation adequately, although its specific form does not (i.e., a limousine rented for a funeral might well serve the function; however, its pink colour can be regarded as an element of excess); (2) a cinematic device which stays on the screen too long; (3) redundancy which expands the narrative "vertically"; and (4) repetition of elements which are not integral to the action at hand (Thompson, 1977, pp. 58-59).

Now, we can see how excess is produced in D.K.E. When Murat and Ali take a walk around to explore the planet, the sudden appearance of masked people hiding behind rocks are meant to suggest uneasiness, but their masks do not serve that purpose. Towards the finale, Murat challenges the Wizard's army as the only remaining warrior. One can easily observe how he, not only as the hero of the film but also as the hero of Yesilcam, overacts: exaggerated facial expressions and exclamations, the use of the look and so on. To mention but a few bodily attractions among many others, the film presents an excess of a character jumping up and coming up again in well as shots of uninterwoven with the musical score annoyingly. On the referring here to the attractions suggests embodied in the performance props used in

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When there are no "go the expressions on the when there is not even to substitute. Similar does not simply imply investment made in th to repeat, exc films, is capable of of possibility for a Brecht just as in many other costumes (the film wa combine to produce themselves. That takes that "ministry must e difference" (p. 126). It causes a tension in its happy with this; it ki designed its costumes, radically different way, disagreement of difference, will crash at what Yesilcam can never but of D.K.E. Difference make this lack "good," Y logic of violent images, T consolation for the lack, T

5Thompson uses "story" and "plot" for "fabula" and "syuzhet."
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presents an excess of gestures and actions in the fight scenes, such as a character jumping over a horse, going down under it, and then coming up again only to punch on the nose of an enemy soldier; as well as shots of unending leaping onto troops of the Wizard's army, interwoven with repeated kicks and blows. On the soundtrack, we hear musical score of Star Wars and sound effects mixed and repeated annoyingly. On the whole, they make up a violence of images. I am not referring here to the violence of the fight scenes, explosions, and other attractions suggested from within the image, but rather to the violence embodied in the presence of the images. When asked about the low quality props used in the film, Cüneyt Arkin replied:

"You are implying the wooden swords, only what is important is not the wooden swords but the feelings in your heart, the expression of your face and the excitement in your eyes when you are using that wooden sword. I admit that they betray our technical incompetency, but under those circumstances we laid our hearts. There were times when we were not even able to find a wooden sword and we laid our fists. (cited in Can, 1996, p. 9)"

When there are no "good" swords around, the feelings in the heart and the expressions on the face are there to compensate for the lack, and when there is not even a wooden sword, the violence of the fist is hoped to substitute. Similar to laying bets, the expression "we laid our fists" does not simply imply a struggle to overcome difficulties, but also the investment made in the excess of emotions.

To repeat, excess, which is a very common feature of trash films, is capable of obscuring the viewer's identification and offers a possibility for a Brechtian alienation effect (Sconce, 1995). In D.K.A., just as in many other Yesliçam films, acting, action, dialogue, and costumes (the film was defined as a "costume film" by its director) combine to produce excess, thus referring to something beyond themselves. That takes us back to Homi Bhabha (1994), who stresses that "mimicry must continually produce its slippage, excess and difference" (p. 126). In the case of Yesliçam, we observe that hybridity causes a tension in its economy of expression. Yesliçam is not too happy with this; it knows very well that Hollywood has already designed its costumes, sets, make-up, props, and special effects in a radically different way. The Big Other plays on difference and the disavowal of difference; mimicry, departing from the denial of difference, will crash at the barrier of difference anyway. Hollywood is what Yesliçam can never be. And, this is the lesson, not of Star Wars but of D.K.A. Difference signifies lack in this context. So, in order to make this lack "good," Yesliçam hopelessly produces excess, hence the logic of violent images. There is a paradox here; excess is not only a consolation for the lack, but it also justifies mimicry retrospectively.
The struggle of Murat in *D.K.A.* is a struggle against Hollywood. The figure of the Wizard is significant: he can operate the most sophisticated instruments, create impressions of reality to deceive his victims, and he is after the brains of Turks. Mehmet Aşar (1995) points out the tragic side of this struggle:

> Irony and entertainment lie in film makers' tragic struggle to overcome their bad luck before Hollywood... The relationship between Yeşilçam and its audience may be best defined as pride and embarrassment. In the case of Dünçay Kurtaran Adam, the horrible abyss between pride and embarrassment vanishes. (p. 32)

Excess contributes to the aesthetic of camp and trash. The pain of impossibility is what enables the audience to traverse the horrible abyss.

To conclude, then, the ambivalent nature of mimicry is made evident in the binary oppositions mentioned so far: desire and aggression, identification and distillation, and perhaps one should add pride and embarrassment. This is what fuels hybrid cultures. And, hybridity issues a resistance in the name of identity. The resistance of *D.K.A.* is explicitly nationalist: only two Turks dare to face the enemy; it is implied that the noble—but powerless—natives are of Turkish origin, and there are numerous references made to the superiority of the Turkish/Islamic culture. However, as Amit Rai (1994) argues, "Hybridity is not a resistance that overcomes-negates-domination; it is a resistance that survives-negotiates it" (Rai, 1994, p. 67). As long as the dominating subject is positioned as the point of reference, hybridity will continue to survive it. Nonetheless, we must not underestimate the resistance of *D.K.A.*; more than 15 years after its first release, it is now beginning to raise discussions, enabling a space where domination can be deconstructed. It seems that the impact of *D.K.A.*'s struggle invites further efforts in understanding it both as a popular film of the 1980s, and as a trash/cult/bad film of the 1990s. In the opening of this chapter, I referred to this struggle as something destined to fail from the start. This is partly due to the fact that *D.K.A.* was voiceless before that which it struggled against—hence my title: "powerless signs." But isn't this very defeat also the moment of voice?

**FILMOGRAPHY**

*Ed Wood* (dir. Tim Burton, 1994)
*Plan 9 From Outer Space aka Grave Robbers From Outer Space* (dir. Ed Wood, Jr., 1959)
*Dünçay Kurtaran Adam [The man who saved the world]* (dir. Çetin İnanç, 1982)
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