

 **bianet**
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

It's Not an Accident
52 Men 52 Weeks
Write About Male Violence

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Authors: **52 Men**

Coordinator-Editor: **Şenay Aydemir**

Images: **Kemal Gökhan Gürses**

Book Design and Implementation: **Ali Seçkin Karayol**

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IPS Communication Foundation

Faik Paşa Yokuşu No: 37/7-8

Kat:3 34430 Beyoğlu, İstanbul

Phone: +90 212 2511503

Fax: +90 212 2511609

E-mail: bia@bianet.org

Web Sitesi: www.bianet.org

Social Media Accounts

<https://www.facebook.com/bagimsiziletisimagi/>

https://twitter.com/bianet_org

<https://www.instagram.com/bianetorg/>

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IPS İLETİŞİM VAKFI



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'MANHOOD' AS A PROBLEM!

ŞENAY AYDEMİR

Murat Çelikkan, Mehmet Erođlu, Tuđrul Eryılmaz, Ümit Ünal, Hakan Bıçakçı, Yekta Kopan, Tayfun Pirselimođlu, Murat Yetkin, Atilla Taş, Şener Özmen, Korkut Akın, Gökhan Durmuş, Ahmet Ümit, Volkan Ađır, Alper Hasanođlu, Pakrat Estukyan, Sami Evren, Ali Kemal, İrfan Deđirmenci, Mehmet Açar, Menderes Samancılar, Barış Ünlü, Bađış Erten, Turgut Yüksel, Fırat Yücel, Fatih Polat, Tanıl Bora, Tan Morgül, Haşmet Topalođlu, Rauf Kösemen, Süreyya Evren, Olkan Özyurt, Tunca Öđreten, Zafer Yılmaz, Cem Erciyes, Özcan Sapan, Mahir Ünsal, Ulaş Bayraktar, Veysi Altay, Murat Utku, Burak Kuru, Burak Göral, Mehmet Bozok, Yenal Bilgici, Kıvanç Sezer, Ömer Madra, Müfit Can, Can Tonbil, Derya Bengi, Ramin Matin, Emre Senan and Yıldırım Türker.

"It is Not an Accident/ 52 Men Write About Male Violence in 52 Weeks" article series started on January 10, 2018 and ended on January 2, 2019. The expression "It is Not an Accident" is the briefest and the most to the point sentence that expresses our trouble. The 52 people that I have listed above have cracked the door open for such a discussion, which is a first of its kind; we are thankful to them.

I am going back to the beginning. When bianet contacted me in the first week of December 2017 and offered me to coordinate a series/file consisting of "articles written by men on male violence" planned to continue for a year, I got excited and anxious at the same time. It could be an exciting experience, because such discussions were very few in number, except for a handful of examples in the academia. As for the source of my anxiety, I was anxious because of the trouble that would be caused by the fact that a great majority of men do not perceive 'shows of masculinity' as a problem, except for physical/ emotional violence that has become visible.

However, it would be highly interesting to listen it from the men themselves how states of 'manhood', which become visible and draw reaction only when they are 'violent', are reproduced in daily life. Thus, we decided to request articles from different men in terms of both their fields and characters. We tried to talk to them face to face as far as possible and asked them to look at their own lives and recount how processes of manhood were constructed. For instance, a sports columnist would share his experience of how football rituals contribute to the reconstruction and socialization of manhood at football fields, in bleachers and in daily language. We would also find the opportunity to understand how a man who studied as a boarder in a college "with a long-established and strong tradition" now sees the domination of men, which different socio-economic strata build on top of each other.

The 52 Men have consisted of the ones who are a part of the large "pool" of Independent Communication Network/ bianet workers and accepted to write for the series. We wanted to create a cultural and political spectrum which is as broad as possible. Apart from positive reactions, the articles have also drawn criticisms, especially from women. Most importantly, the articles have been criticized with reference to the columnists who have spoken about manhood and male violence only after they have withdrawn to a safe area, which is a highly fair criticism.

When we leave aside the political, social and cultural construction of manhood and the articles revealing the reproduction of this construction in daily language,

it needs to be noted that these articles manifest a state about us men as well. Most of us tend to take it 'normally' how manhood is constructed in areas like family, school, army and men's communities (bleachers etc.). We tend to normalize the pampering language of our families towards us, the superior-subordinate relationship at the boarding school, 'the period of enlistment' in military service and sexist slogans invented in the bleachers. Because the 'normality' of these areas gives us a power that we can have in social, cultural and economic relations without making any efforts. Therefore, we start to question the manhood in general and our manhood in particular only when the most visible cases such as sexual, physical and emotional violence, which go against this normality, come up.

In this respect, I am of the opinion that these articles are full of significant data about not only what we men can comprehend and express about manhood, but also about what we cannot comprehend about it in any way. I ultimately think that these articles penned by people who have achieved a certain competence in their own fields and whose works we have been closely following are an important source in terms of what they contain as well as what they leave out.

I would like to underline that the following articles published on bianet from January 22 to 26, 2019 as part of the "About 52 Men" are highly valuable in this context: "The Necessity of Imagining Egalitarian Manhood" by Nurseli Yeşim Sünbülüoğlu; "Turning to Oneself, Transforming Manhood" by Maral Erol; "Supra-Political"

by Selin Akyüz; “When Manhoods Get Themselves Talked About” by Cenk Özbay; “Can You Tell Me a Real Story?” by Sevilay Çelenk; and “The Awareness That Gives Strength to Feminist Politics” by Nebahat Akkoç. I would like to thank them.

Years ago, a woman friend of mine likened ‘manhood’ to being an alcoholic, referring to the meetings of ‘unanimous alcoholics’ that we usually see in Hollywood movies. In these meetings, people speak by taking turns and start to talk by saying “My name is..., I am an alcoholic and it is a problem...” My friend joked, “You have to wake up every morning saying ‘I am a man and it is a problem.’” Then, she added, “Ultimately, when you stop drinking alcohol, the whole struggle lasts until you take the first sip. The moment when you take that first sip, everything goes back to the square one. Even if you try to leave social roles of manhood, everything can go back to the square one with a single move.” We can also add the following: Alcoholics do not think that there are any problems with alcohol. Just as we, the majority of men, think that there are no problems with the roles of manhood...

It can perhaps be a starting point that we question the normality of manhood over and over again, even if not every morning. Just as this article series published as a book needs to be a starting point in its own right... With their own good, bad, missing and wrong aspects, every article in this series is full of clues suggesting how manhood is comprehended by men. I hope that in the upcoming periods, there will also be works where we can follow up each one of these cues to the end and reveal the sources of the problem.

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**#01 MURAT
ÇELİKKAN**



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BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

I MUST HAVE GONE CRAZY

It has taken me a long time to learn to control myself, to understand that I have been sort of gender-trained to view certain things as my right, and to start questioning these.

I cannot say that I have worked it all out either.

I must have gone crazy for accepting to not only write about such a subject but also to be the man to write the first piece, but no I have not gone crazy! The reason I took this risk is because I believe it is high time for men to also speak up in the public sphere about manhood, masculinity and male violence. Of course, there is also the unbearable difficulty of rejecting [bianet](#) and Nadire [Mater].

Fortunately, we have come a long way from the meaningless stance of “I am against all sorts of violence” or the displays of manliness against the definition of “male violence”, and have now reached a point where men also discuss and write about male violence. This was not a long process, spanning at most 5-10 years, however, considering that men killed almost 2,000 women in Turkey since 2010 according to the [bianet male violence monitoring report](#), you can understand how heavy a price the women paid for it. Fear of women and misogyny cause both individual men and institutions to engage in inhumane practices against women. It always has and still does.

Of course, I do not claim that men engaging in the discipline of gender studies or discussing male violence will solve the problem for good. But I will take this opportunity to try to present my humble contribution and make my confessions.

As I owe my faults, which I acquired as male privilege, to testosterone and learned masculinity, I owe the fact that

I have reached the stage of questioning myself on this subject almost entirely to women. I owe it to the women who took the risk of marrying me or being my girlfriend, or friend, or colleagues whom I spend so much time with; I owe it to the fact that they educated me with patience, tolerated my masculinities, and of course to their struggle for identity vis-a-vis a man. I must also mention the LGBTI+ contribution that helped me question and deal with manhood, and understand that it is an issue that goes beyond sexual orientation and heterosexism.

Reproducing time and again the very authority that we stand against, in the form of hegemonic masculinity must be the curse of us, the dissident men. Our dissident character mostly forgets to question the hegemony of patriarchy and heterosexism, but we think we question it nevertheless since we are dissidents.

I grew up in a political environment since my younger days, and in the socialist struggle since I was 17. Neither the question of woman, nor the institutional or social authority on who may fall in love or make love with whom had been on my agenda. Except for a couple of women who were serious about their work in the women’s associations founded rather offhandedly and under ideological and organizational hegemony. But then again, the women who refused to stand behind the placard of this women’s organization and instead marched with us in various demonstrations were more acceptable.

I truly met both of these groups at the Human Rights Association thanks to the rising gay and lesbian movement and the women's movement in the wake of the 1980 military coup. Even then, I was slightly piqued at the women who held separate demonstrations in the big wave of protests against the hunger strikes in prisons in 1990. Evidently, I had thoroughly imbibed one of the most orthodox interpretations of democratic centralism in Turkey!

Being thus interested in the issue of authority yet ignoring patriarchy must be rooted in my maleness. Obviously, I am not going to lecture anyone on this subject, there are women who can do this much better than me. But I must say that it is again to women that I owe my more comprehensive understanding of the issue of authority as well.

But male violence should not be solely a women's issue. While women, as the ones subjected to it, struggle against violence and its subjects that is us, grappling with the masculinities defined by various cultures across the world must be a concern, a struggle of the men as well.

Be it a man or a woman, there is no living being who is not startled by the sight of five men approaching on a deserted street in the middle of the night.

Men have the privilege of getting angry and resorting to violence when they cannot control or dominate something. When they do not have enough power, they are in the habit of supporting a handful of powerful men and committing violence for the continuity of those

men's power. It must be kept in mind that systematic rape is an instrument of war.

Now let us come to the challenging part... The self-questioning.

Because if this account does not involve self-questioning and confessions, then it will run the risk of portraying yet another self-righteous attitude of men attempting to define and explain the violence that women experience. After all, this is a habit from time immemorial. For this reason, I think it is very important for men to speak not at women but among themselves and discuss their masculinities.

As far as I can remember, I have not inflicted physical or sexual violence against my colleagues, wives or girlfriends or children. I am saying "as far as I can remember" because some things that I took for granted as my natural right could have easily led my psychological violence tactics to result in physical violence. I hope I recall correctly, and that it has not led to that because men of course inflict this violence most readily against the ones who are closest to them. Especially if this closeness is established within the family, which is rendered untouchable and which protects the power of men with all its institutional and social infrastructure.

I have tried not to discriminate or dominate in my relationship and at my workplaces and have tried to look after the rights of workers. However, there is domination and control at the very root of male privileges which we perceive as our natural rights.

It has taken me a long time to control

myself, to understand that I have been sort of gender-trained to view certain things as my right, and to start questioning these. I cannot say that I have worked it all out either. Even if not physical, I definitely exercised the privilege of violence.

I would like to take a look at some habits and privileges which I see as my natural right and thus am still trying to overcome...

Let us begin with a lighter one, "the right to interrupt"...

Men's right to interrupt: Even though I swiftly retreat, I have always been a vigorous debater. In the heat of discussion, speaking my mind, voicing what I know or believe to be true, regardless of whether someone else is talking at that moment, was a necessity bestowed upon me "by the power of the truths of manhood". There is something castrating about interrupting people when I am already speaking from a position of authority accorded by my age and rank. Doing this to someone who has reservations about taking the floor may have a censoring effect. This is the most frequently used tactic against women, practiced for years in order to dominate them, to destroy their self-confidence, and I do it too.

Solution: Do not participate in discussions if you do not have the tolerance. Do not interrupt the women when they are speaking, do not interrupt the women, do not interrupt, do not interrupt.

Men's right to self-righteousness: When one reaches a certain age, their

experience and knowledge relatively increase as well. Before I know it, I have an opinion about almost everything. These opinions gradually turn into fixed ideas and judgements. I always have plenty of ideas in the meetings and discussions. I want to voice them. No, I think I must voice and share them. It sometimes comes out in the tone of "this is the truth, this is the right way to do it". However, theoretically I know that each time I take the floor, I make life more difficult for the younger people and for the women who have a harder time speaking up. Furthermore, I can start by accepting that I do not know everything and that other people may know certain subjects better than me.

Solution: Keeping some of the things I know to myself; trying to speak less, and in the time thus saved taking care to ensure that women and LGBTI+ individuals take the floor more often and have more say.

Men's right to joke around: I have always preferred comfortable work environments where people joke around with one another and have always tried to facilitate that. However, there is an unnamed hierarchy in every workplace and people do not feel equal, which is something I do not always take into consideration. I often forget not to joke about women's appearances, age or skills, which may make them feel bad. This too is a tactic used since time immemorial in order to dominate the other by making them feel weak and deficient.

Solution: Read and think more about everyday racism and sexism. Do not

cross the line between joking around and mocking. Do not say things like “how tired you look today, couldn’t you sleep well last night...look how much weight you’ve gained” especially not to women!

Men’s right to shout: Trying to silence others by shouting at them is also a characteristic of man. The worst part is that I do this without realizing it. I only do it when arguing something but still I do it. I use a rather manly voice also reflecting my social class. I use it as a means of domination and even intimidation.

Solution: Do not raise your voice among your equals or less equals under any circumstances!

Men’s right to not like and criticize: Especially in everyday life at home, men can easily position themselves as critics. Me too! “This rice isn’t as delicious as you usually make it”.

Solution: The right to not like and readily assume the position of a critic is a form of psychological violence for it makes the other person feel deficient and inadequate. It also means that you are fortifying your advantageous position by not taking a proactive stance or using your time and energy to find a solution. It is the reproduction of patriarchy over and over again.

Right to assert command over the domestic labor: This means that a man, including myself, thinks that the household chores should always be done by the women. Even if it is my chores. “The child is crying”, “where is my blue shirt?”, “why is the house messy?”

Solution: The solution is to remember that all these are actually things that I have to do but am not doing. I am trying to remind myself, before I say anything, that if the food is not delicious enough, or if the child is crying and needs tending to, or if I cannot find my stuff, it is my job to take care of these. On the bright side, if I do forget, there is someone at home to remind me.

Men’s right to get angry: Another male privilege is to get angry when someone or something drives me crazy and insists on driving me crazy. Using anger to intimidate others. Swearing... I do that as well.

Solution: The solution is to keep reminding yourself that these are all displays of manliness and swearing is not only hurtful but also sexist.

Men’s right to be offended or to punish: This is a right exercised after or along with the right to get angry. It is one of the best ways of punishing the other person and making them feel lonely and insecure.

Establishing a dominion of silence when they say something or taking offence and pretending like they do not exist. The next step is to punish them and to make them feel it. I have done that, not a few times. It is a bad habit, an ugly form of masculinity.

Solution: Never try to establish hegemony over your close ones, lovers, colleagues through silence. It is very insulting. Taking offence and treating them like they do not exist is even more hurtful. Furthermore, it is a form of power that men often impose on everyone other than themselves.

I have mostly worked with women managers. As I said, I have learned a lot from them. Even when they did not do anything, they held a mirror up to me. But for the past six years, I have been working in a place staffed predominantly by women. I am learning a lot from them all but especially from my three women friends who are my co-managers. The primary lesson I have learned is to listen. I am learning, and they are still working with me. What else could I ask for!



ABOUT

He is a founding member and co-director of Truth Justice Memory Center (Hakikat Adalet Hafıza Merkezi) since 2011. Throughout his 25 years long journalism career he has worked as a reporter, editor, columnist and editor-in-chief. He has been active in the human rights movement in Turkey and was among the founders and executive board members of Human Rights Association, Amnesty International Turkey, Helsinki Citizens' Assembly and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey. He has worked on projects related to the Kurdish issue and media ethics. He was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment on "terrorist propaganda" charges for participating in the "Editor-in-Chief on Watch" campaign of solidarity with Özgür Gündem newspaper and acting as its symbolic co-editor for one day. He entered the Kırklareli Prison on August 14, 2017 and was released on probation 68 days later on October 21, 2017. He presently reports to the police station four days a week until the end of his 18 months sentence.

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**#02 MEHMET
EROĞLU**



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BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

WOMAN

What should be done?

Even though the first step toward solving the women's problems is to raise awareness, at the end of the day this is a matter of being in power.

Anatolia!

(*"Anadolu" in Turkish, "ana" means mother*).

We are living in a country which is beautiful but bears no feminine characteristic other than its name.

Everything on these lands—perhaps like in many other countries—is masculine. This is a masculinity marketed with a sauce of provincial and tribal culture and presented to us with the label of conservatism. This is a masculinity that values woman only in appearance, only in words: The woman is valuable only when she gives birth, becomes a mother.

Furthermore, from time to time we also hear certain people say that one birth is not enough, the number must increase. However, we know that a woman can be everyone's mother without giving birth as well. Actually even this argument is wrong: If you want to be valuable for the provincial, macho, patriarchal masculinity, you need something beyond giving birth, beyond being a mother: Belonging!

If the women who became mothers are not our mothers, they are not that valuable and supreme beings. Do not think that I am exaggerating. Rather than it being a proof of their generosity, all those virtues, noble epithets granted to women by a masculinity such as the one I tried to roughly frame, are nothing more than a privilege that these countrymen bestow only on the women in their own tribes, a privilege denied to the marginalized others...

At the mention of woman, the first thing that comes to mind, or is rather nailed in our heads, burned into eyes—more inflammable than its substance—is a concept that we come across, one which is used almost exclusively when looking at females. The name of this magical concept is morality, or rather women's morality.

If we take a closer look at this morality, whose social and conscience aspect is neglected and which serves to bridle women, we see that half of this concept is comprised of religious rules and customs and the other half of prohibitions.

Indeed, most of the bans—named as honor—are against women and this hypocritical concept actually forms a so-called moral basis for the provincial, masculine perspective that aims to own and subdue women.

Remember: murder is bad, but honor killings can be excused—let alone socially tolerated—even in the eyes of law. This thing we call honor is by and large a system of prohibitions imposed on women. Such that, the actions deemed "unvirtuous" for women are somehow seen as "virtues" in men.

Let us admit: There are things to be done by women as well to solve problems such as violence against women, honor killings, and economic inequality in our country: Yes, women breastfeed and love us but they do not touch our minds. Shaping our minds is a task that has always been left to our fathers. This must change.

Is it not one of the most dramatic, or even tragicomic, problems of women, namely that all behavioral norms and moral judgements about them are being established by men?

Since the beginning of monotheistic religions, both God and Allah and the Prophets are always fathers. Even if we accept that the conditioning against women has such a strong history that goes back thousands of years, it is obvious that women have to try to break this circle.

Yes, the left wall of the cell where the woman is being kept imprisoned is built by men, the right wall is built by religion, and the rear wall is built by morality, but we should keep in mind that the front wall is placed there by the woman's own consciousness.

Women should stop looking at themselves through the eyes and lenses of men.

While women are beings who breastfeed men, in the final analysis every man is a misogynist. I have observed this closely. This hostility does not always surface in the form of murder or violence. I am talking about men's prejudices against and disdain for women in every section of the society.

The societies that have failed to solve women's problems of freedom, equality and unfortunately survival cannot be expected to be democratic. If a country does not have freedom of expression, if that country is famous not for its achievements in fields of culture, science and sports, but for having the highest number of imprisoned journalists and politicians, then the women in that country are not free; their life is under constant threat.

What should be done? Even though the first step toward solving the women's problems is to raise awareness, at the end of the day this is a matter of being in power.

Everyone speaks about freedom but the number of those who internalize freedom rather than mime it is very few. Freedom is like water, it cannot be divided and it is won again every day.

In this regard, women have a much more difficult task. In addition to everyday challenges, they also have to struggle against men. Winning victory on two fronts! What a difficult but also noble fight this is.


ABOUT

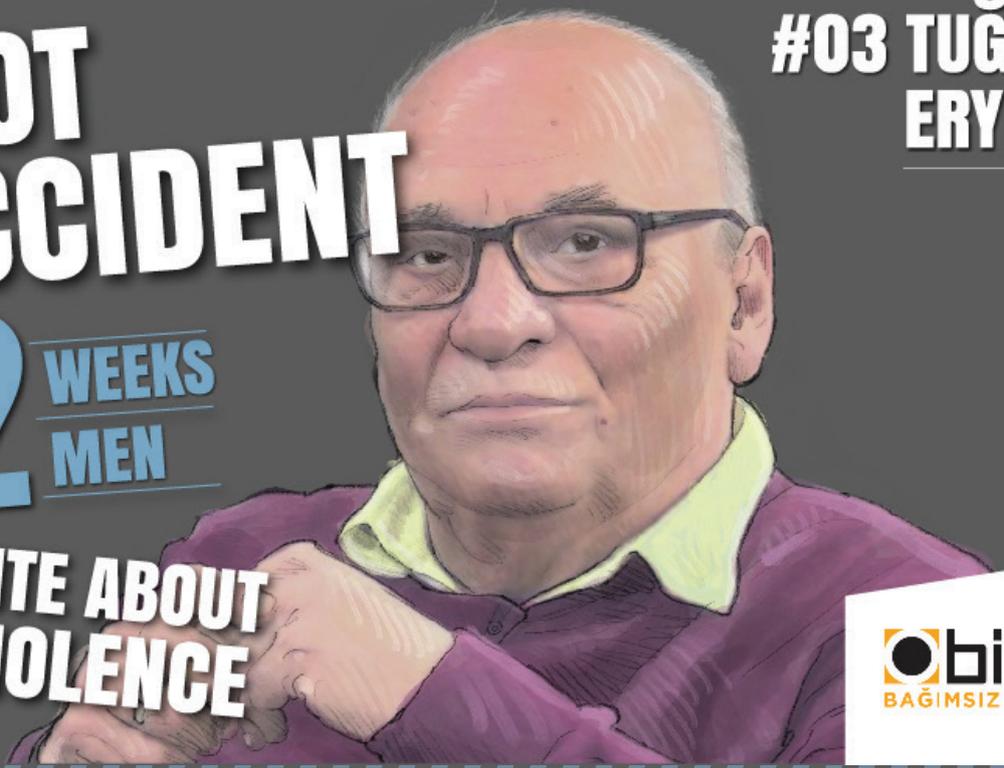
Novelist, scenarist. His first novel *Issızlığın Ortasında* (In the Midst of Isolation) won the Milliyet Novel Award 1979, however, it could not be published until 1984 due to the September 12, 1980 coup environment on the grounds that it had leftist and antimilitarist elements. His published works are *Geç Kalmış Ölü* (The Delayed Dead, 1984), *Yarım Kalan Yürüyüş* (The March Interrupted, 1986), *Adını Unutan Adam* (The Man Who Forgot His Name, 1989), *Yürek Sürgünü* (Exile of Heart, 1994), *Yüz: 1981* (2000), *Zamanın Manzarası* (View of Time, 2002), *Kusma Kulübü* (Vomit Club, 2004), *Düş Kırğınları* (Dream Weary, 2005), *Belleğin Kış Uykusu* (Winter Sleep of Memory, 2006), *Fay Kırığı Üçlemesi* (Fault Line Trio): *Mehmet* (2009), *Emine* (2011), *Rojin* (2013), *9,75 Santimetrekare* (9.75 cm, 2014), *Mermer Köşk* (Marble House, 2017), *Kıydan Uzakta* (Far from the Coast, 2018). A collection of passages from his books selected by his students *Edebi Aforizmalar* (Literary Aphorisms) was published in 2016. He holds the Milliyet Novel, Madaralı Novel and Orhan Kemal Novel awards. He wrote the screenplays for the TV series *Sızı* (Ache), *Issızlığın Ortası* and *Tutku* (Passion). He is the scenarist of the following award-winning movies: *80. Adım* (The 80th Step; 1996), 1996 International İstanbul Film Festival Best Turkish Film of the Year, and the International Federation of Film Critics FIPRESCI Prize; *Solgun Bir Sarı Gül* (A Pale Yellow Rose; 1997), International Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival Special Jury Award, and International Adana Golden Boll Film Festival 3rd Prize. He was born in 1948 in İzmir. He graduated from Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) in 1971. He was sentenced to six years imprisonment by the Martial Law Court of March 12 Coup. He was released following the 1974 General Amnesty, and began to write novels.

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**#03 TUĞRUL
ERYILMAZ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

SUR-KARŞIYAKA- CEBECİ-BABIALI*

The number of my women colleagues who took part in decision-making mechanisms is extremely low.

Can there be a greater violence than this?

Let me call on all men, join this campaign of “questioning”.

** The old center of the printed press in İstanbul.*

It was the early 1950s...

My father was a distillery expert at Diyarbakır Wine Factory. I was attending Süleyman Nazif Primary School in Sur, Diyarbakır. Time long past but I think there was a boy with glasses and two chubby girls in our class. From day one of school, these three kids were bullied and tormented mostly by the boys. Our more gentle choice of words were cow, fat potato and four-eyes. My heart still sinks when I remember the tears of these three friends of ours.

A few years later...

My father was at İzmir TEKEL Factory this time. I was attending Karşıyaka Fevzi Paşa Primary School. There is an increase in the number of boys with glasses and chubby girls. We carry on with our bullying or bear witness to the kids being tormented in İzmir now. Here, we add “Zeki Müren” supposedly as yet another insult in our repertoire next to the “four-eyes”. It may sound funny to think that male violence begins like that, but believe me, it truly begins like that.

This state of affairs, which we can describe as harassment, of course continued at Karşıyaka High School and Karşıyaka Erdem College where I attended later. It did not change but the level of harassment increased significantly. There are cliché names given to boys who calmly walk around or don't play soccer: “Girl Ahmet, Niminy-Piminy Mustafa...”

Let me add right away: even though I had no interest in soccer, I managed to become a goalkeeper—or at least I thought I did—for fear of the nicknames they would give me.

The situation is a bit more dire for girls. We think all the girls are ready and willing to do everything and go everywhere with us. Because we are the “sons”, the “man-children” of our fathers and even of some mothers!

I am trying to explain the following: I guess this male violence, sexual harassment, physical violence, mobbing, however you name it, begins in primary school. We all had teachers who said, “Don't cry like a girl” or “Don't jump around like boys”. Teachers resumed the education, picked it up from where the families left off.

The biggest fights I witnessed in a modern city like İzmir were between the male students of Karşıyaka and Air Force high schools.

You guessed the reason right. When a boy from Air Force High School was seen with a girl from Karşıyaka High School, the boy would immediately be beaten up and the girl would be sent her home with all sorts of insults.

The following week, Air Force High School students would terrorize Karşıyaka with groups of 10 -20 students, shouting "You beat up our friend". Hell would break loose. The grown-ups of course figured out what it was all about right away. "Guys, is it worth fighting over a girl?"

The next sentence, which we would be hearing a lot in the future, was: "Why did you pick on the boy, the girl must have given him the glad eye!". And scores of similar lines...

Of course, it is possible to slur over these and blame puberty and whatnot but unfortunately, it continued.

The same years...

One day, in the kitchen I accidentally witnessed my father, who never laid a finger on us, slap my mother. It was a very hard slap and my mother nearly fell on the floor. I must have been around 14-15 years old.

Even though I was scared, I remember trying to charge at my father. I also sadly remember that despite the state she was in my mother came between us and told me "Son, your father is very distressed, you go out" and sent me to the garden.

This was not the end of it. One day, when we came home, our mother with a bag in her hand, took the hands of my brothers Turhan, Turgut, my sister Türkan who was in primary school and Taner who was even younger, and said,

"Come on, we are leaving".

"Where are we going mom?", I asked. She said, "We are going to your aunt in Bursa and we will never come back to this house". My mother left us at the door of the post office and went inside. Two hours later, she came out with a very pale face.

Young people would not remember, but back in the day you would go to the post office, get in line, give the number you want to call, and if you are lucky, your number would be dialed in one or two hours so you could speak on the phone.

Next thing we know we were going back to our home in the Nergiz neighborhood of Karşıyaka. Since I was the eldest my dear mom unburdened herself to me, she said, "Son, your aunt and her husband said, a couple of slaps is no big deal, don't break up your family, don't leave your home, don't come here".

So we went back, crestfallen...

The mid 60s...

Liberating footsteps of the 70s have begun to be heard... Many young men and women aged between 18-25, including myself, are at the Faculty of Political Science in Ankara University. Half of us are staying at the Siyasal dorm on Cebeci Campus.

Three fourths of the 400-people dormitory are men, one fourth are

girls (of course staying in a separate section). Every one of us is alone with life for the very first time. Everyone is very happy.

Now, one might say, “Things have changed a lot, right, Tuğrul?”

I am afraid not.

Even the most progressive ones among us were regarding the women, especially the beautiful ones who had boyfriends, as “wanton and floozy”. I want to mention someone who is not with us anymore. Carmen Nursun did not only graduate from Ankara University but also studied at the Faculty of Medicine and became a doctor. Let me say hello to her.

She is the most beautiful girl in the school. Only dates the handsome ones. We don’t talk about it in public of course but when we are chatting among us boys, usually with some vodka and beer, we shamelessly gossip about women, about who is a virgin and who is not.

Indeed, the only beautiful woman was not Nursun, other beauties also had their share of the gossips: Zerrin, Berrin, Fatoş, Hülya, Samiye, Sema, Ferda, Semra, Ülkü, Sevtap, İpek, Selma, Canset, Vekaa, Işık, Necmiye, Nimet, Hale, Gaye, Ferhan, Sezi...

When the years of 1968-69 come calling, it hits us in the head that these women and especially Nursun are not only beautiful but also the toughest and

most reliable people in our lives.

That was when I questioned myself for the first time. “Why do you care who is flirting with whom, mind your own business!”. But I was already 22 when I reached that stage.

And we had a young friend, whose name I cannot remember right now, but he would sit at the canteen and knit which we thought was very odd at the time. I still feel troubled about the passive-aggressive treatment we gave him.

I hope he reads this article. I wish he would ask me “Why did you join the others?” so I can say “I’m sorry!”. Unfortunately, this friend also dropped out of school before long.

These are but a couple of instances of what men do against women and men who are not like them... Can we hide behind the excuse of “I was a child, I was young...”?

During the long years I spent in TRT and Babıali I personally witnessed that the situation did not change in business life either. We have seen directors well up in years who were harassing the interns.

I had tens of colleagues who were—to put it mildly—looking down on their coworkers just because they were women.

I will not go into all that but I hope that perhaps when they read this

article series, they too will want to say something like “Oh, what have we done!”.

Let me say one final thing: Throughout my four decades long journalism career, I remember only one woman, Nurcan Akad, who served as editor-in-chief in the mainstream media. The number of my women colleagues who took part in decision-making mechanisms is extremely low. Can there be a greater violence than this?

I apologize to all the young women and men reporters whom I might have, knowingly or not, subjected to mobbing.

Let me call on all men, join this campaign of “questioning”. Each one of us can surely be of some use in our respective stations in life.



ABOUT

Journalist. Co-founder and steering committee member of IPS Communication Foundation. Served as editor-in-chief in the journals Haftalık, Nokta, Yeni Gündem, Sokak and Milliyet Sanat and the Sunday supplement Radikal 2. He also worked in Tempo magazine and Yeni Asır and Cumhuriyet newspapers. He gave lectures on journalism in the faculties of communication at Ankara, Bahçeşehir, Bilgi, İzmir Economy and Kadir Has universities. He completed his undergraduate and graduate studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences of Ankara University and gave his first lectures on journalism at the School of Press and Broadcasting of Ankara University. He lived in England for a while. He began journalism in Turkey's national public broadcaster TRT News. He taught communications at the School of Press and Broadcasting of Ankara University. After the 1980 military coup he resigned from the university and moved to İstanbul. He hosted various TV programs on cinema. He works as a consultant for movies and TV series. He is a Rolling Stones and Marianne Faithfull fan. He is from İzmir.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#04 ÜMİT
ÜNAL**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MIDDLE EAST

“Mom, why do you behave like this mom?”, shouts her grown-up boy as if he is worried about the neighbors running to their windows or the passersby. “Who is beating you mom? Why are you doing this to me mom?” Then he packs a punch.

Burnt nylon. Smearred tar. Rusty nails on punks. Corpse of a dog tangled in the seaweed in the middle of the waves. Half of its face is only bone and teeth. A male voice, ringing out from afar, saying a prayer you don't understand.

Slogans, profanities on a wrecked, piss-smelling wall. A bloody handprint. On its right, another bloody print. Is it the same hand? Don't ask questions! You are a child. Go into the shade! You'll get a nosebleed under the sun. You are a dark boy on the beach. You are in the east of the Mediterranean. You are in the middle of the east. You are in the Middle East.

Days of northeast wind are dull. You cannot go swimming because of the waves, and the sea is not its usual transparent blue-green but a turbid, blurry yellow.

What are you doing by the sea, didn't your father send you to the butcher?

"I would like to buy a kilo of minced meat. Lean - please", I tell the village butcher. This is the son of the butcher. The real butcher is his father, he is a more cheerful, easygoing man. His son is a loafer. He always looks like he just woke up. He seems to be hating everyone. His hands are dirty.

I barely added that "please" because I'm worried he will think I am a "tanju". I had seen this guy and his friends make fun of a long-haired, slender tourist, who was walking as if gliding, they had called after

him in a feminine way saying "tanjuuu". Other than being a male name, I don't know exactly what tanju is yet, but I can sense it. It must be a dangerous thing since it gives these hyena-like men the right to snicker and mock people.

"Please" is too much for these men. I wish I could be the sort of person who speaks like "Hey, just get me a kilo of mince. Make sure it's lean!". Then, I could be one of them, but words always come out of my mouth like an apology, I can't help it. The guy with his shirt buttons undone down to his belly and who couldn't care less about "please"s throws fatty pieces of meat into the grinder.

His chest is hairless. Oddly bulging out like a chameleon. My father will get angry. When he sent me to the butcher, he cautioned me saying, "Tell him you are the son of sergeant major Emin, give him my regards, tell him that I want lean mince". The man is blatantly stuffing the fat into the grinder.

My problem is this: I want to buy LEAN mince not because I am the son of my father but because I am me and in my hand I am clutching the money for exactly a kilo of lean mince.

I didn't give my father's regards. Why can't anything be bought without someone's regards? Isn't having the money enough? I remain silent. The mince is being packed.

I pass him the money. “Have a nice day”, I mumble like a whisper and walk away.

As I walk, I am trying to puff up and walk like a tough man, so that he won't take me for a “tanju”.

We have guests coming over tonight and my father will make çığ köfte [steak tartare]. My father is from Urfa. He found two people from his hometown in this coastal village on the Aegean, so they and their families often visit us or we visit them. He grimaces when he opens the package of meat. “This crabby guy, it is fatty again. Didn't you tell him you are the son of sergeant major Emin?”

“I did”.

He knows I didn't.

“But you can't make çikifte with this.”

My father has been living in İzmir since he was 20, so he has dropped his Urfa accent, speaks like a native of İzmir. Still, there are a few words he can't help but pronounce like they do in Urfa, “çığ köfte” is one of them, he calls it “çikifte”.

“Take this back”, he bristles, “take it back, tell him my father didn't like this, said it's too fatty, tell him to give you lean mince. Are we beggars, we are paying for this”.

Who knows what sort of a look I am giving him but he understands that I won't be able to accomplish this new mission. He looks over the kitchen counter at my mother who is cleaning scallions and parsley enough to feed an army.

Realizing that our children will never become the humans that we want them to be is the harshest truth to be accepted in the world.

Truth is not favored in the Middle East. It is very hard to voice the truth in the middle of the East. It is always hidden with mud, blood, dust and fear. It has been like this since the beginning of time.

“Walk”, my father says with the package in his hand and I set out after him. “Buy one more lettuce”, my mother calls out to us. We are walking towards the bazaar. My father is walking in front of me, he is not speaking to me. Now he will teach me how not to get stiffed. He will lecture me on how to fix a mistake, how to exert your authority, how to live without being trampled on in this country, how to be a man. As for me, I just wanted to curl up and die, and forever forget about the mince and the butcher and anything and everything related to this horrible afternoon.

Then it happens, the incident that ingrains that afternoon in my memory forever. We hear a woman's screams first. When we turn the corner, we see a man beating up a very old villager woman in the middle of the street. The old woman who barely got herself outside is screaming like a wounded animal, “Save me, he is going to kill me”. “Don't hit, son, don't hit”, she is begging.

Her mouth and nose are covered in blood. “Mom, why do you behave like this mom?”, shouts her hooligan-looking grown-up boy as if he is worried about the neighbors running to their windows or the passersby.

“Who is beating you mom? Why are you doing this to me mom?” Then he packs a punch. As the old woman collapses on the ground and falls silent, my father who was dumbfounded until that moment leaves me and runs toward them. A couple of neighbors also rush out of their gardens and charge against the bully with sticks in their hands. The man runs away swearing. The woman’s white-hennaed hair seen from under her fallen headscarf. Her bloody face coated with dust. She is groaning on the ground with a thin voice like a child’s. My father helps carry the woman inside and sends word to the community clinic, the rest is in the hands of the neighbors.

Meanwhile, the package has dropped and the mince is scattered all over the ground, but no one cares about that now. A couple of cats jump on the raw mince, unable to believe their eyes. Soon, my father will swear and pick up the soiled mince and put it in a corner: An expensive feast for street dogs and cats.

While buying mince from the butcher

again, the story of the beaten woman will be the main topic. “Her son is a good-for-nothing, heartless junkie after all”, the father butcher will say. His own son has cleared out, the father is alone in the shop now. “He drinks and drinks, and steals his poor mother’s money, he is involved in gambling too, may god chasten him...”

“And, this is my son, recognize him well so that next time he asks for lean mince, give him lean mince”, my father will throw in by way of conversation. The butcher will shake his head sorrowfully: “I wasn’t in the shop sergeant, pardon me, my son doesn’t know, he must have ground the mince. Believe me, this shop will be abandoned if I leave, all the scolding I gave him nor the beating worked, we couldn’t make a man of him, I don’t know whom he takes after...”

I will always listen and watch like a stranger, like I am not there. I will never learn to speak like them. I am a child. I am in the east of the Mediterranean. I am in the middle of the East I am in the Middle East.

ABOUT

Director, scenarist, writer. Eight of his screenplays were made into feature films, among them are Teyzem (My Aunt, 1986), Hayallerim, Aşkım ve Sen (My Dreams, My Love and You, 1987). The first feature film that he wrote and directed 9 (2002) won many awards and was Turkey’s nominee for the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film in 2003. He wrote and directed films such as Anlat İstanbul (Istanbul Tales, 2004), Ara (2007) Gölgesizler (The Shadowless, 2008), Ses (The Voice, 2010), Nar (The Pomegranate, 2011), Sofra Sırları (Serial Cook, 2018). He has four published books: Amerikan Güzeli (American Beauty, 1993, Stories, Oğlak Publications), Aşkın Alfabetesi (The Alphabet of Love, 1996, Novel, İyi Şeyler Publications), Kuyruk (The Tail, 2001, Novel, Oğlak Publications), Işık Gölge Oyunları (Light and Shadow Play, 2012, Autobiography, Yapı Kredi Publications).

He was born in 1965.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#05 HAKAN
BIÇAKÇI**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

YES IT HURTS, ROCKY

Finally smacking down his opponent in full throttle, Rocky addresses the crowd in his victory speech:

“During this fight, I’ve seen a lot of changing, in the way you felt about me, and the way I felt about you. (...) if I can change, and you can change, everybody can change.”

A latent form of male violence is the tendency to side with power. To divide people into two categories as “winners” and “losers”, and to try to get in with the winners. To go blind by losing one’s conscience through unquestioning identification with the winner. And to lose the ability to commiserate as the power increases. Save for a few exceptions, this is the typical male attitude. Although I was just a child when I watched Rocky IV (1985, Sylvester Stallone), there was a part in the finale of the movie that I clearly recall finding strange without knowing why.

In the movie, Rocky goes to Moscow to fight the Russian boxer Ivan Drago. He is on an away game. The entire audience supports the Russian boxer. In the beginning of the match, Ivan Drago has the upper hand. Rocky takes punch after punch from the evidently unfeeling and beastly Ivan Drago as the Russian crowd cheers wildly.

He is at the end of his rope. But after much beating, he quickly collects himself and soon has the upper hand. A different game has begun.

When Rocky starts to rain down punches, the Russian boxer’s ardent fans slowly change their cheer, the hall that just echoed “Drago, Drago, Drago” now goes, “Rocky, Rocky, Rocky”.

Finally smacking down his opponent in full throttle, Rocky addresses the crowd his victory speech: “During this fight, I’ve

seen a lot of changing, in the way you felt about me, and the way I felt about you. (...) if I can change, and you can change, everybody can change.”

This speech, which is made in a setting with portraits of Marx, Engels and Lenin on the walls and a huge red star right above, surely registers as a most banal Cold War propaganda.

However, there is another, darker issue at hand here, which is the will to side with the powerful. This vapid scene that struck me as ridiculous and tacky as a child is much more disturbing to me today.

The deft story of Sivas (Kaan Müjdeci, 2014), which I watched a couple of years ago, had also served as a solemn reminder to me of this bizarre social phenomenon.

At the start of the film, an elementary-school-age boy named Aslan adopts a Kangal [Anatolian shepherd dog] he finds left to die after a dog fight. He takes care of it and nurses it back to health.

Aslan becomes friends with the healed animal and calls him Sivas. However, this is no Lassie story. Sivas is a fighter dog. He must take part in fights instead of just sitting around in the garden. This advice, given by all the men around Aslan as though in unison, turns into a kind of societal pressure.

Fearing something bad will happen to the newly healed dog, Aslan is wary of this advice. "I won't put my dog into fights," he says. But the male world that surrounds him gradually makes him change his mind.

Aslan, though still hesitant, starts putting Sivas into fights. As the dog keeps winning, he starts enjoying it. Initially on the side of the underdog, Aslan, as he grows up, becomes drawn to the male world that wants to side with the winner.

He is torn between a growing sense of pity for Sivas and the wish to keep him around as proof of his masculinity. The terror of his dog getting hurt and the desire to gain influence on the way to becoming a man surge side by side in his little body.

If the tendency to side with the powerful is a form of latent male violence, certainly there are also cliché notions that cover up, legitimize male violence, making it seem almost endearing.

These belong to a rhetoric constantly pushed through mainstream narratives, popular culture and folk sayings. I will try to summarize them by listing the first ones that come to mind:

- Men are like children. There is no telling what they will do when or where.
- There is only so much a red-blooded man can take.
- Sometimes you need to resort to violence for a "higher moral principle".
- The task of personally ensuring justice

sometimes falls on the men. In such situations, extralegal protection of order must come into play, and the individual must seek his own justice.

- If the men have somehow agreed, if they have made an alliance, all is well. Otherwise, there is trouble.
- You won't find peace until you get your revenge.
- In some cases, you need to trust your emotions, not your mind.
- When in love, there's nothing one won't do!

 ABOUT

Writer. His first novel *Romantik Korku* (Romantic Fear) was published in 2002 by Oğlak Publications. His articles on literature, cinema and popular culture and his stories have been published in various magazines and newspapers. His novels *Apartman Boşluğu* (The Apartment Shaft), *Karanlık Oda* (Dark Room), and *Boş Zaman* (Spare Time) have been translated into foreign languages. His books *Rüya Günlüğü* (Dream Diary), *Boş Zaman*, *Apartman Boşluğu*, *Karanlık Oda*, *Ben Tek Siz Hepiniz* (Me Against All of You), *Doğa Tarihi* (Natural History - of a woman), *Hikâyede Büyük Boşluklar Var* (There are Huge Gaps in the Story), *Otel Paranoia* (Hotel Paranoia), *Uyku Sersemi* (Sleepy) have been published by İletişim Publishing. He lives in İstanbul where he was born in 1978. He went to Ankara for his university studies in 1996. He graduated from the Department of Economics at Bilkent University in 2001 and returned to İstanbul.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#06 YEKTA
KOPAN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

I AM AFRAID OF CONFRONTATION!

You need to understand it to be able to tell it,
and to understand it you need to confront it.
Now let's take out our elementary school notebooks
and write over and over again for pages and pages:
"I'm afraid of confrontation!"

When I agreed to write such a piece for *bianet*, there was something important I had not taken into consideration. Attempting to write on “male violence” means confronting the dark, strange and buried moments of your own personal history as well. Saying, “It’ll be a piece of cake, I’ll talk about displays of masculinity and be done,” does not cut it.

I even considered delegating the piece to a student, whose punishment would be to write “I’m afraid of confrontation” a hundred times in his notebook. I am afraid of confrontation, and I cover up my fear with my anger. I am afraid of women, and the more I am afraid, the more I am filled with hate. I am afraid of masculinity, and the more I am afraid, the more I turn to violence.

I tried writing “I’m afraid of confrontation” to fill up a whole page but could not. I think I got afraid of that too.

In the end, I dared postpone the “deadline” for submitting the piece and jumped into the well of confrontation.

It is 1975.

I am seven years old.

One Sunday, my dad decides to take me to a soccer match.

Thermal underwear, woolen undershirt, warm sweater... I am dressed to withstand the winter of Ankara. We make one transfer to get to the May 19 Stadium. The

crowd outside gives me a thrill. I salivate staring at the meatball sandwich stands even though I was fed to the brim at home.

The moment we enter the stadium I am fascinated. It is just so big... I have this hope that I’ll see Fenerbahçe. “It’s a second league match,” says my father. That is a bit disappointing. But whatever. I am still enjoying myself, after all we are “doing something” with my father.

We take a seat in the bleachers. It is not easy watching a game in the stadium. I try to figure out where to look and what to get excited about. About ten rows behind us is a rowdy group with flags. My father, who is watching the game with a calm expression, jumps up at one point yelling at the players, “How could you miss that?”. I immediately mimic him. I jump to my feet and emit a deep sigh, “Ahh!”. Watching a game calls for this, I guess.

Our disappointment at the missed goal annoys the rowdy group. That means they support the rival team. One of them says something to my father. He does not turn to look at them. But it is easy for me to see that there is something wrong. Five minutes later when we rejoice over a goal, the storm breaks. Two people charge at us, one says, “You’re lucky you have that kid with you” and the other spits at us.

My dad turns red. He is holding me with one hand and making sentences that contain words like “gentlemen, please, that’s rude”. I do not remember if there was a scuffle or what curses were hurled. All I remember is that we left the stadium before the match was over.

My story of “doing something” with my father gets drowned that day in the spit of those angry men.

Many years later I wanted to talk to my father about that day. I was curious about what he had felt at that moment. He did not remember it. He recalled us going to the match, but not why and how we left the stadium. Apparently, a man’s mind deletes those moments when he is “defeated” by other men.

My story of “confronting something” with my father was deleted that day by the doctrine of power of an angry male community.

Another incident from those years stands out in my trip down memory lane.

We are playing tag on the street. One of the boys—I think his name was Abidin—who is four or five years older than me suggests we play Dr. Kimble to make our game more film-like. It is a reference to a very popular television series of the time. Someone is to be the fugitive Dr. Kimble, and the other, the man sworn to catch him, will be Police Lieutenant Gerard.

I proudly accept the role of Dr. Kimble. I manage to run for a while. But in the end I get caught. Abidin, as Lieutenant

Gerard, does not stop at catching me. He says I must also be given a punishment.

They tie my hands at the wrists with clothesline, which I do not even know how they found. Then they hang me by my hands from a drainpipe jutting out of the apartment building wall. They leave me hanging there and just take off. I remember quite clearly how much they enjoyed hanging me, how they laughed. Oh memory, how cruel you are!

I know the rest from what I was told. My sister, seven years my senior, saw me like that on her way back from school. Hanging from a pipe, face wet with tears, blood settled in the wrists, half-stunned, and having pissed a little in his pants. She immediately got me down and took me home. Then she took off her school uniform, “put on her pants” and went back out. She thrashed Abidin and a bunch of other kids, beating them black and blue in the middle of the street.

To protect me from male cruelty, she had rushed in like a man. She put on pants, swore, used her fists, and responded to violence with violence.

In all frankness, my sister’s “one-man army” story has always been told with pride among the family. For years I walked the path of life with the comfort of this feeling of power. After all, I had a sister powerful enough to beat up all the Abidins I would encounter.

My father, on the other hand, did not remember the incident at the May 19 Stadium. He left this world before we could have that confrontation talk.

I kept thinking about these two incidents for days as I was working on this piece. On the one hand, a story that strives “to talk and explain”, and on the other, a story that “responds to violence with violence”.

Well then, which story’s narrator am I today?

I know that you have to explain and tell, in order not to reproduce that language of “hegemonic masculinity”. First to yourself, then to everyone else. You need to understand it to be able to tell it, and to understand it you need to confront it.

Now let’s take out our elementary school notebooks and write over and over again for pages and pages: “I’m afraid of confrontation!”

Only then will we begin to overcome our fears, to confront ourselves, to understand, and to narrate that which we have understood.

Right away. Right now.

ABOUT

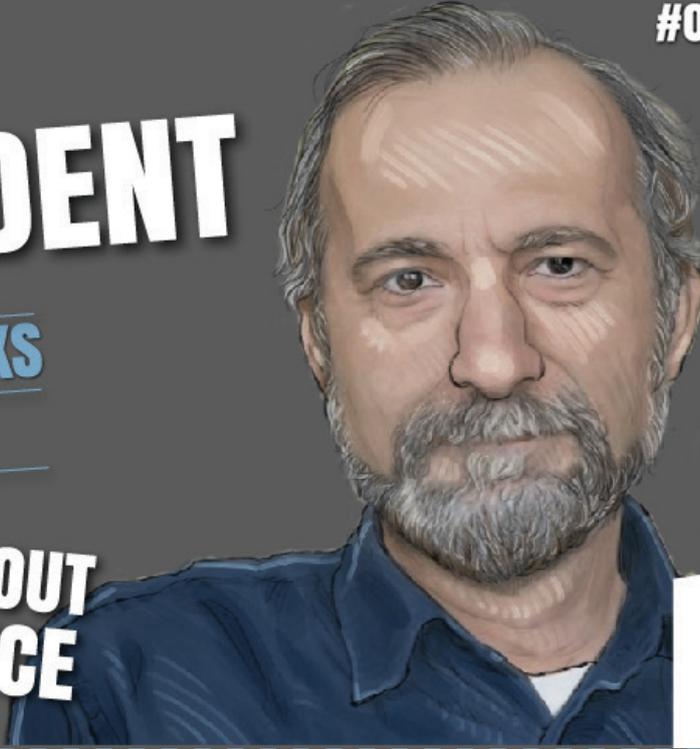
Writer, presenter and producer. He has been the producer and presenter of Noktalı Virgöl (Semicolon) culture and arts program aired on YouTube. His book Aşk Mutfağından Yalnızlık Tarifleri (Loneliness Recipes from Love Kitchen) was granted Sait Faik Story Award in 2002, his book Karbon Kopya (Carbon Copy) was selected as the Dünya Kitap Best Book of the Year in 2007, his book Bir de Baktım Yoksun (The Loss of You) was granted the 2010 Yunus Nadi Short Story Award and 2010 Haldun Taner Short Story Award. His child book Burun (Nose) was published in 2009. Some of his books translated into various languages are as follows: İçimde Kim Var (Who is Inside of Me), Kediler Güzel Uyanır (Cats Wake up Jolly), Aile Çay Bahçesi (A Family’s Tea Garden), İki Şiirin Arasında (Between Two Poems). He edited Silk Handkerchief, a dictionary study on the history of the short story in Turkey. As of early 2000s, he was the presenter of a culture and arts program in NTV news channel. In the meanwhile, he was also writing for the daily Radikal. He conceptualized the project of Can Almanak year book on culture and arts, whose first volume was published in 2015. Kopan is still a member of the editorial board of this project. His last book Sakın Oraya Gitme (Don’t Ever Go There) came out in 2016. Born in 1968, Kopan majored in Business at Hacettepe University in Ankara.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#07 TAYFUN
PİRSELİMOĞLU**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

AN EVENING IN THE COUNTRY

Actually, what thrilled me so was my sudden privilege of coming by a horrific and bloody story. I had laid claim to be the witness of an awful murder; he might not have been dead, but that did not matter so much at that moment.

I must have been in my first year of junior high; I remember I had my black school bag in my hand. It was winter. Dusk was about to fall. The streets were filled with students and government officials all done for the day. It was not raining, but that sticky, humid air which never left the city had become even more dense.

I was on Trabzon's most crowded avenue, in the middle of Uzun Street—somewhere between Mehmet's Bookshop and Saray Cinema—when a man walking in front of me suddenly leapt into motion, taking out a stick—or maybe it was an iron bar, I could not tell—from under his thick coat and slammed it on the back and then the head of a young man in parka a few steps ahead of him.

As the poor bloodied man collapsed in a heap, the other ran away. A buzzing crowd gathered with startling speed around the young man whose head was already laying in a pool of blood. Having so closely witnessed such a horrific event, I was overcome with palpable terror and excitement.

People started trying to lift the motionless body while I continued to stare, curious. As I was pushed back by the erratic crowd that flooded the "crime scene", I lost sight of the young man whose head was split open and I ran away from there.

What thrilled me so, I have to admit, was my sudden privilege of coming by a horrific and bloody story. I had laid claim to be the witness of an awful murder (he

might not have been dead, but that did not matter so much at that moment).

I sprinted down the rest of Uzun Street and darted into my father's cigarette-smoke-filled shop on the Square completely out of breath (My father had a shop where he sold spare car parts, which was located on the Square across from the municipality building, and frequented by his garrulous hunting buddies).

The seven or eight regulars inside turned their heads to take a glance at me and then resumed their interrupted conversation.

Frankly, I was pleased with their indifference, unwilling to betray my fear from the first—my knees were still shaking slightly—but I also felt this unstoppable urge to tell them about the incident of the split head that I had just witnessed.

That being said, the horde was uninclined to pay any attention to me as they listened to the story my father was telling probably for the hundredth time and always with the same verve. The topic was a large bear my hunter father had shot around Van a few months ago.

Shooting the bear that he had been following for a long while, reaching the high, steep rock where he got stuck in his crawl, skinning it there, and taking out some of its inner fat prized for its medicinal qualities, had been such a tall order and taken him so long that it had gotten dark by the end.

It had been very dangerous getting back from that steep cliff and the scree in that darkness, with his Mauser rifle in hand and the bear's hide weighing on his back, but he did not have another choice. In the end, after averting quite a few dangers, as well as falling over twice and spraining his ankle, he had made it to his car (My father had a green Skoda then).

This adventure led to others, to different hunting stories amidst heated cries, and I lost my appetite to tell the story of the split head. I kept on listening to that rowdy conversation from a corner.

After a while the door opened and a lottery seller came in. I can vividly picture that moment and my own astonishment in it. The lottery seller was a skinny woman looking all the more feeble in a thin beige overcoat that was too big for her.

With the white cap that said National Lottery on the red band on its visor, which she wore over her tightly wound headscarf, she was standing at the door, lottery tickets in her hand, staring at that strange assembly of men.

Their excitement brought to a sudden halt, the men looked at the woman for a short while and then turned their heads away to pick up where they left off in their

impassioned hunting stories.

I, on the other hand, could not tear my gaze away from the white nylon cap sitting so pitifully atop the woman's head, and felt ashamed.

I felt truly ashamed by the woman's so suddenly materializing presence that disappeared as suddenly under the gaze of that horde, and by that white cap. I felt ashamed in a way I could never explain to myself. I felt so ashamed I could die.

The woman just stood there for a while without saying anything, and then she silently turned and left.

Some time after she left, the crowd dispersed amid laughter. On the way home I told my father my bloody murder story that I had witnessed.

He did not react as strongly as I thought he would.

We picked up bread from Rüştü's bakery. The rain had started by the time we got home.



ABOUT

Film director, writer, painter. He shot his first feature film *Hiçbir yerde* (Innowhereland) in 2002. Following the trilogy *Rıza* (2007), *Pus* (Haze, 2009) *Saç* (Hair, 2010), he directed *Ben O Değilim* (I am not Him) in 2013. *Yol Kenarı* (Sideway, 2017) is his latest film. He wrote six novels *Çöl Masalları* (Tales from the Desert), *Kayıp Şahıslar Albümü* (Album of the Mission Persons), *Malihulya* (Melancholia), *Şehrin Kuleleri* (Towers of the City), *Kerr, Berber* (Barber) and two collections of stories *Otel Odaları* (Rooms of the Hotels), *Harry Lime'in En Yeni Hayatları ya da Üçüncü Adam'a Övgü* (The Newest Lives of Harry Lime or Praise to the Third Man). He was born in Trabzon. He graduated from Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ). He studied painting at Hochschule für Angewandte Kunst (Academy of Applied Arts) in Vienna. He held various exhibitions in Turkey and abroad.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#08 MURAT
YETKİN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

THREE STATES OF MALE VIOLENCE

The most important task here falls on the progressive, egalitarian men of conscience. Progressive, egalitarian men of conscience need to stand with women for gender equality.

You are already familiar with the first state of male violence. The other writers in the “52 Weeks, 52 Men” series have already talked about it, but if you are someone reading this piece then you know it too.

That state is not only sexual violence, but mostly it is that. Back in the day, a retired high judge was talking about the case files he had seen in his career. In all the cases he had tried, the only thing he did not come across was a son raping his father; save for that he had heard “anything and everything you could or couldn’t imagine”. (He was not sure if this never happened either, for the injured party might have, he was guessing, refrained from bringing this shameful incident to the police station and the court, or just been afraid.)

This state dictates that the use of brute force brings entitlement to everything and that this self-proclaimed right deriving from “animal instincts” can be limited not by conscience or law but only by a superior force.

I do not want to go into examples and put you off further. The Iron Chancellor and unifier of Germany Otto von Bismarck’s tenet of “might makes right” denotes this state which is illustrated by various phenomena ranging from the deranged man who attacked a schoolgirl for wearing shorts on a bus because he was “aroused”, to the neighborhood inhabitants torturing a kitten to death on the street, from the little bully who pushes and shoves the short child with glasses in

the class, to the murderer who finds his divorced wife in a women’s shelter and kills her.

According to bianet’s “male violence monitoring report”, in 2017, at least 290 women were killed by their husbands or ex-husbands, fathers, brothers, male relatives, or other men close to them. Likewise, 22 children and 34 men, who were with the women during the incident or tried to prevent the murder were also killed. 101 women were raped. 247 women were harassed, 376 girl children were sexually abused, 417 women were injured. Unfortunately, the numbers increase every year, and these are only the ones that make it to court; that is how we find out, but as the retired judge said, there are also ones that go unreported.

As for the courts. There was a case I was particularly interested in: 26 people including government employees and shopkeepers who had raped a 13-year-old girl in Mardin in 2011 had been sentenced to the minimum five years each because the Chief Public Prosecutor had not objected.

For those who automatically think “Those parts of the country are always like that” let me give another example from a western province, Isparta: It is 2012, and 26 year old Nevin Yıldırım kills Nurettin Gider with a hunting rifle, cuts his head off, and throws it in front of the coffeehouse in the village square, for raping her at gunpoint, getting her pregnant, and continuing to rape her with the threat of circulating her photos.

Not to approve what she did of course, but the time off for good conduct which is readily granted to rapists and thieves, who simply put on ties and clean up for their court hearings, is denied to Yıldırım, she gets life imprisonment.

Ayşe Arman aptly coined the phrase “Mustachioed Justice” for this situation. Now we move on to the second state of violence, that is the state of gender inequality. The best example of this is the organization of the State.

We have mentioned the courts already, let us start at the top.

In Turkey, where half the population is made up of women, all 17 members of the Constitutional Court, which has had women members and even a woman president in the past, are men. In addition to the Supreme Court of Appeals’ president and vice-presidents, the heads of 18 out of 20 penal chambers and 18 of 19 civil chambers are men.

The State Council President is a woman, but there is not a single woman in lower management positions. There are around

16 thousand judges and prosecutors. 66 percent of all judges and 91 percent of all prosecutors are men. The bridge between the judiciary and the legislature is the Supreme Electoral Council (YSK); among its 11 members made up of high judges, there is only one woman. In the Council, there are no women among the representatives of the four political parties represented in Parliament either.

Of the 550 members of parliament (MPs) who entered the Parliament with the November 1, 2015 elections, 82 were women, which is one of the highest numbers of women in parliament to date. There are no women MPs in 43 out of 81 provinces. With a representation rate of 15 percent, our parliament ranks 91st in the world.

Only one of the 18 commissions in Parliament is headed by a woman, and that is the “Committee on Equality of Opportunity for Women and Men”, which gives the impression of being established just for show.

Of the 25 Ministers in Cabinet, two are women. There are no women among the 25 Deputy Ministers. Of the 81 governors three are women, and this is the highest number to date. Of the 973 district governors 16 are women.

The best example of women being in decision-making positions within the state structure is in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; 43 out of 239 ambassadors, and four out of 20 general managers are women, but even here, the rate of women in management positions is 18 percent. In

past years there have been women among deputy undersecretaries, but currently there are none.

We say that education is a must, right? There is an even more interesting situation at the Ministry of National Education. The number of female teachers in primary education (151 thousand) surpasses that of male teachers (115 thousand). But the minister, undersecretary, and seven deputy undersecretaries are all men; only one general manager and two of the 81 provincial directors of education are women in the ranks of the Ministry of Education.

89 percent of administrators in decision-making mechanisms of the state are men, and 11 percent are women.

The picture is brighter in the private sector, but only slightly: with women administrators at 13 percent, we rank 41st among 43 OECD member states. Turkey is followed by Japan and South Korea.

The problem is not only about equality of opportunity.

Women who have been oppressed and deprived of education can sometimes become staunch supporters of the imposed order, more so than the imposers themselves, and want their daughters to follow in their footsteps. There was a case on social media the other day. A mother stopped her boy from getting water for his older sister from the kitchen, saying, "Otherwise he'll serve his wife some day", so her daughter got up to get the water herself. This is the lightest of examples;

it goes all the way to overlooking and approving a father's rape and torture of his daughters, his sons.

One of my colleagues told me this other story. She is about to go into her house in Yeşilköy, Istanbul when a young couple by the seaside catches her eye. As a woman, she takes offense at the young man's yelling at and shoving the girl. She intervenes from a distance, saying: "What are you doing?" And yes, you guessed correctly, the girl snaps at our friend, saying, "What do you care? Mind your own business". For young girls and boys who have been inured to the mistreatment suffered by their mothers, aunts, sisters, and brothers, that becomes the "norm"; they adopt and perpetuate it.

Gender inequality is internalized. It is the most serious social problem, and not at all easy to deal with.

It has other aspects too.

Women get more tired, working women get more tired, and working women who are married with children get the most tired. Men, even urban-dwelling, educated, self-proclaimed egalitarian men do not lift nearly enough of the burden laid on women. But there is a widespread impression that boys whose mothers work are generally more inclined to share in the household chores and childcare, and girls with working mothers are more confident and less likely to be submissive.

Moreover, we need to not only reform our behavior but also our language. All this time we have been saying "businessman",

but now use “businessperson” when referring to women. Why is it so hard to say “businesswoman”? Why was it easy to say, “man of science” but is difficult to say, “woman of science”?

And thus we arrive at the third state of male violence: the state of saying nothing.

The most important task here falls on the progressive, egalitarian men of conscience.

Progressive, egalitarian men of conscience need to stand with women for gender equality.

Just like Nazım Hikmet’s lines, “From the mothers’ lullabies, to the newscaster’s words”... Just like that, in each and every aspect of life...

 ABOUT

He was the editor-in-chief of Hürriyet Daily News from 2011 to 2018. He has been a journalist since 1981 to date. After working in several international news organizations including BCC World Service, Deutsche Welle and AFP he joined the Turkish Daily News. He was among the founders of Turkey's first news channel NTV, he established its Ankara office. He served as the Ankara correspondent of Sabah and Radikal newspapers. He graduated from the Department of Mechanical Engineering at Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ). Born in 1959, he is married and has one daughter. He is the author of five books on the politics and international relations of Turkey: Ateş Hattında Aktif Politika – Ortadoğu, Balkanlar, Kafkaslar Üçgeninde Türkiye (Active Policy in the Ring of Fire: Turkey in the Triangle of the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East, 1992), Avrupa Birliği Bekleme Odasında Türkiye (Turkey in the Waiting Room of the European Union, 2002), Tezkere-Irak Krizinin Gerçek Öyküsü (The Military Mandate: The True Story of the Iraq Crisis, 2004), Kürt Kapanı – Şam'dan İmralı'ya Öcalan (The Kurdish Trap: Öcalan from Damascus to İmralı, 2004), Meraklısı için Entrikalar Kitabı (Book of Conspiracies for the Aficionado, 2017).

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#09 ATILLA
TAŞ**



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BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

WE MEN ARE VERY INSINCERE ABOUT THE ISSUE OF WOMEN

It is easy to put the whole blame on our upbringing or the people around us. Even though I have made the utmost effort to shape myself, like carving a stone or a piece of wood, there is still that uncarved wood very much alive somewhere inside me.

I grew up in an environment where violence against women was almost internalized and considered normal. My grandmother who raised me had also come from such an environment. For instance, when we cried about something as a child, she would tell us “Don’t cry like a woman!”. Crying is a female weakness, according to that environment.

Man knew best. Man was strong, he was smarter and the leader of the family. What we heard most often were the words, phrases insulting women. “Much roaming chicken drags in much shit.” Women were lacking in intelligence. She was “long on hair, short on brains”. Even the songs we listened to were hostile towards women. “You will either be mine or six feet under”, “I may go mad and shoot you”. “Wish you belonged to me and not others.”

If I were to give a recent example, there are sexist songs that people sing along at the top of their lungs, like “I will harass you if I can’t have you”.

Woman was like our shadow, our commodity as it were. I witnessed this type of violence within the family as well. Beating your daughter, wife, sister was normal, ordinary. So was fussing over “honor”.

For example, I have even witnessed the following statement being told many times: “The girl goes to her husband’s home alive and can leave only when she is dead!”

This of course affected my relationships very badly too. I made many mistakes in my first marriage and in other social relationships.

It is easy to put the whole blame on our upbringing or the people around us. Even though I have made the utmost effort to shape myself, like carving a stone or a piece of wood, there’s still that uncarved wood very much alive somewhere inside me.

Why did I make this introduction? Because if we cannot be sincere enough about this issue, this problem will never end it seems! As you know, the abuses of children and women which have come to the fore recently have reached an intolerable point.

All segments of the society began to denounce it. I do not think there have been many periods in history when social hypocrisy made such a peak. While the people strongly condemn these abuses on social media, one cannot help but wonder, “Well, then how come such incidents continue to increase amidst such a strong reaction?”

I am talking about a society, which sees the woman as an auxiliary being, as the man’s assistant, his shadow, and about a limitless insincerity.

Oh my god! Everyone is so sensitive about women being subjected to violence, children being molested. Well, then for god's sake, who are the perpetrators of these abuses? Are they from another planet or society? No, of course they are these sensitive people themselves. One might almost think we are not a patriarchal society!

So, is it education that we need? Believe me, educational or social status has nothing to do with violence against women in this country. It is so very widespread! Lower class, upper class, intellectual, uneducated, it just does not matter, this problem is experienced in every segment! Call it customs, tradition, religion, socioeconomic conditions, whatever the reason, its roots go very deep, the fundamentalist notion of women is ingrained in our being, or to put it in scientific terms, in our genes.

An incident that a friend of mine told me the other day constitutes a tiny example of how this has been imprinted on the genes of not only men but also women; though the multitude of these examples should not come as a surprise. When a man quarreling with his girlfriend in a restaurant started hitting her, the people sitting at the next table felt the need to intervene.

Hurling a lewd curse at the interveners, the woman who was subjected to the violence shouted "It's none of your business, this is my husband. He can love me or beat me as he likes!" and left everyone gaping. The incident ended at the police station of course. Now, you may argue that it is not right to generalize

from a single example but this case is the best known cliché in this country and I am sure you have heard plenty of similar incidents as well.

I remember talking about this issue with a friend of mine who is a police officer. He says, "The husband beats his wife and we take him to the police station upon the complaints of their neighbors. 90 percent of the women do not file a complaint against their husbands, which ties our hands." Because women do not have neither a place to take shelter in nor economic freedom; and if they have children they must or feel that they must take everything lying down so as to not lose their children.

At the very beginning of everything, all the freedoms of women were taken from their hands. They have been humiliated with sayings such as "long on hair short on brains, petticoat, ball and chain, woman's mind..." The most ironic part of it all is that it is again the women who raise the boy children.

The effects of thousands of years old patriarchy do not, of course, change at one stroke. Especially we the men are very insincere about the issue of woman! In our eyes, the woman is still something to be owned, a commodity.

This is the case all around the world! Where and with whom will we start to change this mentality in which even the large corporations that want to sell their products through advertisements, TV series and movies use the female body as a commodity? I think it is primarily and most importantly a problem of sincerity.

Who knows how many women are being subjected to violence or murdered while I am writing these lines, and we supposedly do our part by logging in and posting a most sensitive, sweetest tweet, isn't that right?

If I send a tweet now and say, "Friends, let's take to the streets tomorrow to condemn violence against women!", how many people, do you think, will join the demonstration?

It is free to try!

If 10 people show up, just bless your lucky stars! Unless we open a vast space for women in society, where they can express themselves, present their skills and be

treated with the true respect they deserve, our words will continue falling on deaf ears.

Just take a look at the National Assembly, look at the council of ministers, the firms, factories, offices; look at the lines of work where women can find a job and integrate into society, then you will understand what I mean.

This is what you get with the idea of woman that has been deeply entrenched in our brains and turned into a taboo.

Unless we start by changing ourselves first, nothing will ever change with limited and insincere measures; it will go on as is, as it always has.

ABOUT

Singer, columnist. His first album Kırmızılıım was released in 1998. He became famous with the song "Ham Çökelek" in this album. In 2000 he studied cinema and television at the New York Film Academy. In April 2015 he began writing columns for Dünya newspaper. On August 31, 2016 he was arrested in İstanbul on charges of "knowingly and willingly aiding an armed terrorist organization as a non-member" as part of the investigation into the "media organization of Fethullah Terrorist Organization". On October 25, 2017 he was released from Silivri Prison where he was being held. He was born on February 4, 1975 in Ceyhan, Adana. He studied primary and middle school in Ceyhan and high school in Davutpaşa, İstanbul.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#10 ŞENER
ÖZMEN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MAGNIFICENT MANHOOD

In fact, these words were sometimes composed into novels, sometimes into poems and sometimes into independent art works or even initiatives.

Let's drink to Daisy...

For trampling on the magnificent manhood...

There will not be a confession at the end of this piece, and there should not be one! I am saying that confessing what you have done long after you have retreated into a relatively safe space is not becoming of intellectual minds.

I have tried to live perhaps not an enviable but rightful life without making it unbearable for neither my loved ones nor the ones whom I have never seen but was told to hate. I have never harassed anyone, never used sentences like “intentionally or unintentionally”.

There are women who I need to apologize to, foremost Zelal, the woman I love, whose life I entered through poetic and magical Kurdish.

For raising my voice that rears up with my father’s genes...

For my brags like a typical Middle Eastern man...

For asking her “Where is my dinner?” during the first years of our relationship like as though she was not the one who worked 10 hours more than I did...

Obstinacy, power, roles and other weaknesses...

Weaknesses, yes, because only a deficiency, an incompleteness, a wound that has been carried from one place to the next makes someone say these. I am addressing all my Kurdish women audience through Ursula, who

accompanies my dominant “male” character who lost his way in a rainforest in my book titled Xeyb, which has not been translated into Turkish yet. Ursula tells Kendal from Diyarbakır that she will get up from where she has crouched only on one condition: no matter how bad the situation is, he must be able to control his tone of voice and must never get angry with her. Besides, Ursula is neither a flower nor a butterfly, she belongs to no one, not to him or anyone else.

My early youth was difficult... especially when frazzled between the world of novels and the terrifying truth only a few steps from home.

My friends during this challenging journey were not my mother, father, family members or teachers, I will not blame them.

I loved my older brother to death who tried to save a kitten stuck between stacked rebars in the middle of the site of conflict, I was afraid of even the shadow of my mother, I missed my father’s smell of sweat and face that was half Paul Newman half Steve McQueen, I was witnessing the fierce fights between my mother and father when he returned from Basibrîn (Mardin’s village of Haberli) to Hezex (Idyl), with my brother and sister we were watching what was happening and crying for my father not to beat my mother and then curling up in a corner with eyes swollen from crying, and sleeping under the light of the gas lamp.

Then the lamp too would be puffed out, and we would feel like we are inside not a dark but a pitch-black liquid, like we are filled with that liquid inside and out, and even our heartbeats would stop, and we would bunch together so as to not go mad with fear. Mom cries, mom grumbles, mom gets beaten, mom cries, mom grumbles, dad beats her...

When September 12 [coup] stroke, one of the most frequent words I heard in Hezex was “Hikûmet” [government]: “Hikûmetê girtiye, hikûmetê kuştiye, hikûmetê avêtiye, hikûmetê...” [Government (in fact the army) captured, government murdered, government jailed, government...] I had no idea what, or especially who the government was but the things I heard in bits and pieces (mostly women were talking) suggested that it could be a woman.

It did not take me long to figure out that something was not right and that there were certain abnormalities around me be it among the neighbors or at the coffee shop, the mosque or the school. I went through times when the Muslim Kurdish children would torment the Assyrian children once school let out, I have forgotten many things but not this circle of violence. That is why I feel enraged, siding with the oppressed.

Without taking refuge in the language of neither poetry, which I wrote in Turkish for a long time and cut off with a single stroke that is the final book entitled *Sözüm Haritadan Dışarı*, nor the stories and novels that I began to write in Kurdish, this is as far as I could go in understanding whether what I have to confront is “manhood” or “man’s view of

woman”, all the while feeling the pangs of not being able to voice these to the children and girls of a nation—which has been deemed deserving of all sorts of violence that I refrain from voicing or writing as it harbors a shame in its hues—because I remain on this side of the violence—though I wanted to remain on this side of the water!

In the catalogue of my solo exhibition titled *Unfiltered* curated by Süreyya Evren at Arter, writer and editor H. G. Masters described the “Letter”, which was exhibited as an artwork, saying, “The letter was illuminated on the gallery wall, like an ancient tablet carrying a timeless message, a gesture that elevated the autobiographical to the realm of the representative”. Towards the end of this “Letter” I had talked about the obligation, introduced by our teachers in high school, to see the “remains of a separatist”.

What I saw was nothing like the stories told about the body of my dead grandmother, they were on the ground, they were dressed differently, burned, battered, abused, torn, broken...

I could have understood, but I was not ready for the dead body of a woman, no! I was feeling a causeless anger against Yesenin, also against Mayakovsky who hit his head on the pavements of the Nevsky. That my mind did not, would not accept it, that this was the reason I staggered as a man...

How strange, is it not? After some time, we united (almost) as a whole family against the political opinions of my sister,

which we found “extreme”, and as if she was solely responsible for everything that had happened, as if it was she who brought the curse on Hezex, we wished to see her as a dismembered body under the makeshift pergola of the Municipality too, a wish that I realized far too late was nurtured by my mother herself.

My mother did not love my sister, not in the least... What about me and my big brother? I really do not like this word, big brother! How was it possible that we, who read Hugo von Hofmannsthal, wanted to punish her for polishing her nails? Alas, mother, I wish you had loved us a bit more instead of protecting us!

We should have loved her very, very, very much...

Unfortunately, I cannot say that the change-transformation started with the early political readings; they were dreary books and deadly subjects. Although the left had created an awareness in me, it had later tried to destroy it, and in its present state it looked terrible. The Maoist fathers I knew were boor men who inflicted violence on their women and daughters and used the Red Crag as a weapon. Magnificent manhood, overt or covert, was nurtured by fascism and fascism was programmed to destroy life. To destroy...

At this juncture, for the fate of this piece I will borrow from a book that I read a long time ago and which rarely let me down when I recalled it, even though the days when I had the time and energy to jot down passages that I found impressive are long gone.

In his preface to Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault wrote, “How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? How do we ferret out the fascism that is ingrained in our behavior?” What I am talking about is how certain passages surface to your consciousness at certain moments and check up or take effect on you even if you do not remember them verbatim.

You surely have such quotes, too!

This too is just such a passage; but this quote from Foucault has a more encompassing side to it, more so than the preface to the booklet *On Literature and Art* by Marx and Engels, which I have not forgotten since high school (that I attended in İdil, then a district of Mardin) and which has remained in my memory as a beautiful prologue that read, “The mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general”.

Yet another book was *The Future Lasts Forever* by Louis Althusser, which I read with a sinking heart, it tore to shreds my reflections about the future, which were already quite bleak. I felt that I could not really comprehend the structuralist Althusser, did he really kill his wife Hélène? The impact of the book was naturally not a fleeting one—they never know where to stop! It was a critical threshold; I knew that, as an existentialist young reader, I was not in a position to judge Althusser and this fluid thought was opening an intellectual space of terror filled with serious perspectives that were, oddly enough, defending him against the victim.

There was not a single drop of fascism inside me but this ephemeral world did not guarantee that fascism would never find its way there. Ever since the day we began killing women and freedom through a masculine language that is filled with innumerable mentions of women, love and freedom, I know that no poetry can be written—and that which is written will not be poetry—in my rugged geography, poetry is over!

Poetry was over after the white scream of Yazidi women, because there are no more women!

We killed all the women, our hands are all green.

We are waiting for a time when God will give them back to us as more obedient people. The fascism that is ingrained in our behavior...

These words keep coming back to me and hit home...

I was not at an age when I could ferret out the fascism at home—our acts point at childhood as the source of all fears—or the fascism that was ingrained in my Western teachers (most of whom are not alive today). Why were they beating us?! Was there no other way to make us better (!) people? Was it genetic to shrink in the face of oppression, did this malady pass down to us from our mothers and fathers?

In time, you forget all this, or you think you did until one day you witness the fascism inside you spill all over the place in a consistency that takes even you by

surprise. Saying “It was a great movie!” after breathlessly watching the arbitrary violence directed against the fugitive—or let’s say insane—Daisy Domergue in the Tarantino film *The Hateful Eight* (2015)... did that not portend what else we would come to affirm, approve?

I was actually tracing that which was ingrained in words, images. In fact, these words were sometimes composed into novels, sometimes into poems and sometimes into independent art works or even initiatives.

Let’s drink to Daisy... For trampling on the magnificent manhood...

ABOUT

Poet, story writer, translator, contemporary artist. For some time now, he has been living in New Jersey, USA. Even though he became acquainted with poetry and comics at a very early age, he gave up on both to pursue contemporary art and Kurdish literature. His poems and stories were published in arts and literature magazine of the time. His first experimental story in Kurdish titled *Mirin û Dîyalektîk* (Death and Dialectic) was published in *War* (1999) magazine with the penname *Sîyabend Z*. His translations from the *Tîrêj* generation's great poets *Arjen Arî* (*Destana Kawa û Azhî Dehaq – The Epic of Kawa and Azhî Dehaq*, 2011) and *Berken Bereh* (*Kalbim Bir Yastıktır Aşka – My Heart is a Pillow for Love*, 2012) were published by Evrensel Publishing. His Kurdish literature readings and translations in the magazine *Sıcak Nal* (2010-2012), which was edited by Süreyya Evren, were published as a book titled *Uykusu Bölünenler* (The Ones Whose Sleep Was Disrupted) by Lîs Publishing House in 2013. Özmen began writing on art in the first contemporary art magazine of Turkey art-ist *Güncel Sanat Dergisi* edited by Halil Altındere and went on to write on arts, literature, exhibitions and artists in the magazines and newspapers of *Sanat Dünyamız*, *Siyahî*, *Sıcak Nal*, *Birgün* and *Radikal Kitap*. In 2005, he was awarded with *Prix Meuly* prize of *Kunstmuseum Thun* (Switzerland). He participated in the *TRANSFER 07* artist exchange program (Munster, Germany) organized by the Cultural Secretariat of North Rhein-Westphalia (NRW) and the *Turkey-Germany City Writers Project* (Munich) organized by *Goethe-Institut İstanbul*. He was born in 1971 in *İdil*, *Şırnak*. He graduated from *Çukurova University Faculty of Education Department of Art Teaching*. He is married with *Zelal* and has a 10-year-old son named *Robîn*.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#11 KORKUT
AKIN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MY SON SHOULD KNOW HIS FATHER

I had hit my girlfriend many times for tearing up and throwing away my ex-girlfriend's pictures.

Shame on me.

I apologize after all these passing years.

Does she remember?

Is it something that can be forgotten, surely she did not forget but pretends not to remember.

When I was a student, one of my favorite descriptions of myself was: “I am a ‘man’ because that is what it says on my ID”.

I did not hesitate to say this publicly, loud and clear, and the listeners were not surprised either. Years passed, after the September 12 coup a lot of water went under the bridge and the same sentence came to cause strange looks, subtle scorn and smiles.

I did not forget it but I guess over time I found other ways to identify myself.

When you take part in life as such there is no room for violence. But is that really so? No, surely... and definitely...

No room for violence!

I never held a grudge, took offence at or physically fought with anyone. In fact, even when my friends were punching the fascist we had caught training a gun and shooting at us, I did not even raise my hand.

And once, we were the ones on the offensive. I recall I was expected to do something, I lifted my foot but could not kick and the fascists ran away. But violence does not merely mean hitting or beating! Frowning is a form of violence too, and shouting, which I do a lot.

I found the solution; I am saying “desperate person swears”.
And then I feel sorry.

It occurred to me as I was writing... I had hit my girlfriend many times for tearing up and throwing away my ex-girlfriend’s pictures. Shame on me. I apologize after all these passing years.

Does she remember? Is it something that can be forgotten, surely she did not forget but pretends not to remember. Maybe—I wish—she was angry at herself for getting jealous... Then we continued our friendship, that incident did not drive a wedge between us or consume our relationship... Obviously, we are both still sorry. This is nothing but incompetence...

If you cannot articulate your concerns or if it is not the right time and if the other person’s mind is on something else entirely, if they are preoccupied with a thousand other unrelated things, you raise your voice, frown and the words start to change.

If that person is a bit small, especially if it is a woman and you think you can overpower them, you raise your hand to slap or punch. If the blow does not land, that is you do not physically hit the person, does that mean that you did not inflict violence?

War is violence too

Children who were “killed in the class on Government” says Ece Ayhan in the language of poetry. Isn't that a form of violence too? Blockading the human rights monument in the heart of Ankara is a form of violence too.

But you know what is worse still? It is the words of a male TV host [Beyazıt Öztürk] who initially acknowledged the words of the teacher who called in live to his show and said “May the children not die”, but then when coerced by the state defended himself and in doing so fell from grace in my eyes.

A form of violence is taking place, a teacher is expressing her sorrow, the state interferes, penalizes that teacher, and the host multiplies the violence.

Over the last three centuries only 11 years were lived in peace. Feeling justified, the states (accompanied by others depending on how powerful they are) have invaded, occupied people's lands and killed people year after year.

In course of our foreign policy from which we expected “zero problems”, sacks were put over our soldiers' heads, our diplomats, even an MP (but he was in jail), were kidnapped, our bureaucrats were taken hostage, and many others lost their lives. Don't these count as the male violence of the male administrators of the male state?

What should I do? Should I chuck this piece and write a new one? Should I opt for a more emotional narrative filled with poems, stories?

No, let me take shelter in despair and swear a mouthful. Let us shout all together, in unison: No to violence! Peace right now!

Right when I thought I had completed this piece...

I do not know if you will call it coincidence or a part of life's rich tapestry, but it is true.

My first girlfriend called me; though we do not see each other very often, we still love and inquire after one another:

“I will ask you something. Are you available?”

Always available for you...

“Did condoms exist when we were together?”

...I paused for a moment, I was surprised, where did that come from now? Yes, of course, they existed; they were maybe hard to find and perhaps a bit expensive...

“Then, why didn't we use them? I had so many abortions...”

...it had only one answer. We were ignorant. Yes, we were university graduates and we were literate (she had award-winning stories, I had my movies), we were keeping in step with life but we were uninformed. (I realize that I should be ashamed even though this was 33 years ago.) It was the first time I had seen a naked woman, we were unaware.

“Well, have you ever used any?”

Later on... yes, I used them later on.

She started to cry. My knees buckled under the justified sorrow of not being able to rest her head on my shoulder, hug and let her cry, I wanted to say, “Don’t cry”, the words stuck in my throat.

That was another violence. Wasn’t the trauma she experienced—the ignorance and lack of awareness that confronted me years later—violence?

... almost everyday, one woman is being murdered by her close relatives, be it her partner, her husband or her father.

... the murderer who raped a three-year-old child to death was murdered by the other inmates in prison.

... the state detains and convicts anyone and everyone who dissents from the state.

... the state shuts its eyes and ears while children are being abused and raped at—mostly illegal—courses and places of religious education.

The last word...

I had my wife read this piece so that we could discuss it... so that we could correct any possible mistakes (misspellings, ambiguities, or statements that failed to get their point across or exceeded their intent).

When talking about the piece in general, she said, “I told you to put her letters away but you didn’t. That too was a violence, and pure male violence at that”. As for tearing up and throwing away those letters, she says, “I regret it, wish my hand broke and I couldn’t do it”, but it is still not enough...

There is still some time until my son reads it, for reasons of age... He should definitely read it too. He should know his father... He will thus get to know the society as well.

ABOUT

He makes short films and television programs. Since 1983 he has been making new year’s cards that are not sent by mail but always delivered by hand. He graduated from Eskişehir University Faculty of Communication Sciences Department of Cinema and TV, received his master’s degree in journalism from İstanbul University, and completed his postgraduate degree in Business Administration at the School of Business Institute of the same university. He worked as assistant director and screenwriter in Yeşilçam (Turkish cinema), made culture and arts programs for TV channels. He gave lectures on cinema at Müjdat Gezen Art Center and İstanbul Aydın University. He won the Grand Prize at IFSAK 5th National Short Film Competition with his film named Voli; the REPAŞ 10th Year Activities Short Film Award (1986) with Gelincik (Poppy); the İzmir Karşıyaka Municipality Human Rights Short Film Competition Honorable Mention Award (1990) with Hişt Hişt! (Shh Shh!); the M. Arıburnu First Prize (1991) with Hayat Ne Tatlı (How Sweet Life Is); and the Contemporary Journalists Association TV Program of the Year Award (1993) with İstanbul Sayfaları (İstanbul Pages).

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**MEN WRITE ABOUT
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**#12 GÖKHAN
DURMUŞ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

SITUATION OF WOMENREPORTERS IS NOT ANY DIFFERENT THAN THE NEWS THEY REPORT

According to the survey TGS carried out with women reporters, six out of every 10 women journalists in Turkey say that they have been subjected to gender discrimination, psychological violence and mobbing by their administrators and colleagues.

We are reading and seeing new reports about murder, rape, abuse, harassment and violence against women on TVs, newspapers and various media outlets every day. While reading those articles, have you ever wondered who reported those news? Wonder about the world of those who cover these news... do women journalists encounter such incidents, what do they feel when writing these news stories?

While I was drafting this piece, I read a news about the lawsuit brought by a journalist woman, who worked at a local radio station in Bursa, after she was raped. The court of appeals sentenced the defendants, who were released by the local court, to 23 years of imprisonment each. Now the case is at the Supreme Court of Appeals.

Women constitute 38.6 percent of the journalists working in the sector. About one-third of the members of Journalists' Union of Turkey (TGS) are women. The percentage of women in the sector and their rate of unionization is not very high. This rate does not change much when we look at individual workplaces either. There is no woman editor-in-chief in any of the nationwide media outlets in Turkey. The number of women in decision-making mechanisms is also very little.

Journalists' Union of Turkey has taken, albeit insufficient, steps on this issue. At its General Assembly held in 2013, it amended its bylaw by adding the following articles: "It is the core principle of TGS,

to ensure that the grassroots have a say in all union activities, and to enable and safeguard all sorts of equality, foremost gender equality, as well as democracy and democratic rule of law in every field. It struggles against all forms of violence (harassment, rape, beating, mobbing, etc.) and discrimination against women and generates policies to this end. In cases of dispute during the implementation of these policies, the decisive vote is that of the women.

Effort is made for the highest possible representation of women in every organ of the union, in all decision-making mechanisms, at the general assembly, working groups and commissions, and the election of delegates. (...) [The union] puts in effort to resolve the issues of LGBTI workers, adopts and puts into practice measures of positive discrimination to resolve the issues of these workers who are subjected to discrimination, and forms commissions for this purpose".

Even though some of our men and women administrators put their foot down during the discussion of these articles, it was achieved to a large extent. The most frequently voiced objections were, "Why do we discriminate? If women don't want to be executives, these quotas will be obstacles before us. Are we going to waste our time on this while journalists have more pressing issues?" When we refused to back down, these amendments were made to the bylaw.

Thus, women journalists constituted 50 percent of the Headquarters, Ankara and İzmir branch administrations, and 40 percent of the İstanbul branch. The number of workplace representatives was brought in line with the 50 percent quota. TGS established a Women and LGBTI Commission. TGS strives to address and resolve the women journalists' issues separately by means of this commission. Even though it is not yet operating at an adequate level, it has been a huge step for TGS.

Among the unions operating under the Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions, TGS is the only union in which a woman serves as chair. Surely, this is not enough. Having only one woman chair throughout its 65-year history is neither acceptable nor explainable for TGS. Over the last few years, TGS has been exerting extra effort for women journalists to take part in the administration of the union; it should continue these efforts also for women to serve as chair as well.

As a male chair, I must candidly say that during the last general assembly I made an extraordinary effort for a woman to become the chair of TGS. That is when I realized that this would not be possible until the problems encountered by women journalists in their private and professional lives are solved. Our friend, whom we offered the position of chair, has children and an intense work schedule which was the biggest obstacle. It is difficult for parents and especially the mothers to take firm steps in life as long as the state does not provide any protection for the children. I have seen

and experienced this as the father of a 15-month-old girl. Our months long search for a babysitter was only recently concluded when my sister saw on TV the incidents of violence against children committed by the babysitters!

As we often experience during our organizing efforts as well, it is usually the women journalists who say, "The child is waiting at home", or "I need to pick up the child". Throughout my nearly five years in office, I have yet to hear a male journalist say, "I need to go home to look after my child". It is not very different in my case either. I have the responsibility of looking after the child only on the weekends. These are some of the steps that have been taken and need to be taken by TGS.

When we turn to the sector, we see that the professional discrimination faced by women journalists just because they are "women" has no limits. They are subjected to violence and discrimination mostly by their colleagues and superiors. Do not ever think that such things do not happen in the lives of learned, educated people. These things do indeed happen.

The biggest problem of women journalists is that the sector is becoming increasingly masculinized. Have you ever seen a camerawoman or how many times have you seen one? Or do you think that the women reporters and presenters who appear before the cameras are happy with the obligation of putting on makeup every single day so as to bind their audience to the screen? These are some of the things expressed by the women journalists we have spoken with

one-on-one. And there is also their fear of being fired from their jobs. Even though there is no dramatic difference between the wages of women and men journalists who do the same job, women journalists are discarded more easily. Why you ask?

1- Marriage: Managers do not view the marriage of women and men in the same light. When it is a woman who gets married, the manager asserts that “she will give birth anyway”. And there is also the issue of flexible working hours and trips to other cities. Managers assume that women cannot survive in the sector. But is that the case with men? No matter when a news might be breaking, men can go and report it but women cannot. Men can go out of town, but women cannot. Most of the time, women journalists do not get married so as not to leave their professions.

2- Children: Another important topic is children. Considering the maternity leave, illnesses and nursing breaks, the manager has already put that woman at the top of the list of people to be let go. Let’s say the woman began working after her maternity leave. Will she be able to withstand the flexible working hours we mentioned earlier? The answer is no. The woman journalist has already been pushed out of the sector. She has raised her child with difficulty and now it is time to find a kindergarten. We know how much money the journalists in the sector make. The woman is compelled to say, “Instead of giving all this money to a kindergarten or a babysitter, I will raise my child myself”. Kindergarten is already a problem in the private sector; it

is of even greater importance for women journalists. For women journalists, having a child = becoming unemployed.

Lastly, I would like to address the situation of women interns. There is exploitation in every sector, everybody is subjected to exploitation in one way or another, but the situation of women interns in the media sector is different. As they graduate from the faculties of communication they are told, “In this sector, you will not only serve tea-coffee, but you will be a slave to your boss and your editor.”

An intern who takes in this statement says “OK” to whatever she is told and does whatever she is asked, she has to. The rates of unemployment in the media sector are already high. Should her career be over before she even gets a job? It should not of course, but it is not clear how long this period will last. Women journalists experience harassment the most during their internship periods. They are subjected to the harassment of almost all their male colleagues, ranging from the reporters, to the chiefs and managers.

A couple of weeks ago, TGS Women and LGBTI Commission conducted a survey on women journalists. The results of the survey have shown that;

* 6 out of every 10 women journalists in Turkey say, “I face/d discrimination in my professional life because of my gender”.

* 55 percent of women journalists state that they do not receive equal pay for

equal work with men.

* 87 percent think that having a child has / might have adverse effects on their professional lives.

* 60 percent say that they are subjected to psychological violence and mobbing. The ones who inflict the most violence on women journalists are their managers and colleagues, respectively.

As we leave behind yet another 8th of March, the statements of the women journalists who participated in this survey present an occasion for all readers to question themselves one more time...

 ABOUT

President of the Journalists Union of Turkey since 2016 to date. In 2013 he became the İstanbul Chair of the Journalists Union of Turkey. He began journalism in 2002 as a reporter in Evrensel newspaper. He served as a reporter for 11 years and editor for two years. He was born in 1983 in Tokat where he completed primary and middle school, he came to İstanbul for his high school education. He is married and has one daughter.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#13 AHMET
ÜMİT**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MY NAME IS HATUN

The wind outside calls her; like a sweet whisper, like a compassionate touch. Hatun walks to the wind calling her. She comes across her mother at the door of the house. The poor woman utters a scream and falls to the ground.

She doesn't remember how long she's been here. Time is erased from her memory. From a honey-colored mid-afternoon to eternal darkness... There is a humming in her head, her body is exhausted but that invisible fist that sticks in her throat isn't there. An emptiness, just a huge emptiness is growing in her soul.

She hears the door being unlocked; two consecutive metal clinks, like a couple of words uttered timidly. Her eyes are opening softly. The morning light creeping in through the stable's opening door is snuggling by her bare feet like a helping hand. But it doesn't last long, two dark shadows are covering the light. She doesn't even look at the people who are casting the shadows. She knows it is her father and 15-year-old brother. She quietly moves in the corner where she's curled up. It hurts when she moves. All her flesh, bones, muscles are smarting with pain. The places where her father and brother hit her yesterday... There's something above her upper-lip; something like a scab. She touches it, blood: her own dried blood.

Her brother's voice saying "Father, look, look" is breaking the silence in the barn. "Look, she's moving, Hatun is awake".

"Don't call her Hatun", her father says. "Hatun is the name of your grandmother. Your grandmother was a virtuous woman. This one could not be worthy of that blessed woman's name".

"She couldn't", echoes her brother. "Not worthy... This one is spoiled goods".

His voice is emulating his father but in vain, however much he might try he cannot be as full of hatred. His father doesn't want to draw it out, perhaps because he sensed it too. What if this ninny relents and changes his mind...

"Spoiled goods ...", he says with a grudge. "Let's get this over with."

These words don't scare the girl at all. She knows what will happen to her. She waits without moving. She hears the footsteps of her brother shuffling indecisively on the dirt floor. She doesn't care. A memory falls into her mind. A fancy, wooden cradle. A blonde boy in the cradle, he is just three months old. A boy who is scrawny, always sick, always crying. She is five years old, rocking the cradle of the blonde boy to calm him down. But the child keeps crying. Her mother enters.

"What have you done to the boy? Why did you wake him up?", her mother shouts.

"I haven't done anything mom. He just woke up by himself, and started wailing."

Her mother doesn't believe her, she pinches her arm. She screams and moves away, hiding in darkness. She silently cries in the darkness.

Her brother saying “Hand me the knife and let’s get this over it” scatters the memory. She is looking at her father’s hand through her eyelashes. It remains in the shadow but even if she cannot see it, she knows very well about that blade, the one that will claim her life now. It is the knife they use in eid al-adha (feast of the sacrifice), it is broad and sharp. It is whetted a day before the feast so as to not torture the sacrificial animal because that would be a sin. “You have to take the animal’s life with a single cut”. Did they sharpen the knife last night too? If they did, what did her mother say? She always got worried ahead of the feast. Is it now ahead of the feast?

“Hold the haft tight”, her father says as he hands the knife to her brother. “Otherwise, you will cut yourself.”

A small lamb appears before her eyes. A ball of wool like snow, there is a black spot only on its forehead and rear foot. Its eyes are fawn, color of rock. The lamb’s name is Muslu. His blonde brother has now grown, Hatun is now raising Muslu like her doll, her own child. Until one day when her brother and father cut it on eid al-adha. She had locked herself in a room not to see it, she recalls what her father told her brother who was holding Muslu.

“Hold the lamb’s head tight or you will cut yourself.”

A bitter tear is surging to her dried eyes as she recalls Muslu. She remembers a redness, forming a puddle in the middle of the dirt yard. Muslu’s brown eyes are looking surprised as if asking why, why

have you murdered me. Her father’s bloody fingerprints on its white fur. Her tears are silently running down her cheek.

“Why did you stop?”, her father asks her brother. “Are you afraid or what?”

She half-opens her eyes and looks at the frail body of her brother; the knife in the child’s hand looks like an organ that doesn’t belong to him. Her father is one step behind him.

“You will restore our family’s honor”, he encourages him. “And it’s a good deed in the eyes of Allah too. She committed a sin, disgraced our family before the entire village. We cannot look anyone in the eye no more. As her brother, dealing with this is your responsibility. Come on, don’t stand like that. Wipe off this black stain that has sullied our name”.

“I will”, says her brother. “I will.”

He comes closer, raises the knife. Their eyes meet at that moment. His determination breaks when he sees his elder sister’s hazel eyes on her swollen face looking at him without fear. He cannot lower the knife that he raised. The murder weapon remains like that, suspended in the air.

He gets angrier for not being able to deal the blow, kicks his elder sister.

“Turn around girl...”, he shouts. “I tell you to turn around, turn your back...”

He thinks that if he doesn’t see her face, if their eyes don’t meet, he will kill more easily.

The girl tries to make things easier for her brother. Hasn't it always been like that throughout her life? Wasn't it the reason for her existence to serve this boy?

"This way I too will be saved from this suffering", she muses. This torture will be over. But her father's venomous words stop her.

"Do not call her 'girl'" yells the man, his voice swimming in rage, "Her name is bitch..."

This word hurts her more than the kick of her brother. More than the punches, slaps and kicks that she has been dealt since yesterday...

"Bitch," repeats her brother, "You bitch, I am telling you, turn around..."

The girl does not turn around, summoning all her remaining strength she stands up. Just like that, at a most unforeseen, most unexpected moment. All of a sudden she stands tall against them. She feels neither pain, nor fear anymore.

"My name is Hatun", she says courageously. "My name is not bitch."

Two men step back bewildered. Her brother continues grumbling in a hesitant voice.

"You, you are a bitch, a bitch is what you are..."

She walks up to her brother.

"I am not a bitch, my name is Hatun."

Her brother shrinks before her, he crumbles. Her father tries to pull him together.

"Just stick the knife into her, stab, do not let this bitch speak."

"Do not call me bitch", yells Hatun. Surprised at what she is doing herself, she reaches out and snatches the knife from her brother's hand. "Do not call me bitch."

"Bitch..." her brother opens his mouth to speak. "Bit..."

Their eyes meet, Hatun is so close to stabbing him. She remembers that fair-haired boy. A child who is always feeble, always sick, always crying. She feels mercy, she does not stab him. Her brother is already trembling with fear in front of her.

But her father is about to boil with rage.

"I thought you were a man," he scolds her brother. He charges at his daughter himself. "Give me that knife. Give it to me, you dirty bitch."

The girl looks at her father. She does not remember the last time he said a sweet word to her, when he last touched her with love.

"Give me that knife, bitch," roars the man. "Give that to me now."

"Take it!" says the girl. "Take!"

With all her strength, with all her rage, she stabs her father in the chest. The man's mouth falls open, more with surprise than

with pain. He looks with bewilderment as if he cannot comprehend how his daughter could do such a thing. But the rage of the girl does not subside, she keeps stabbing her father until he falls to the ground, until she can make the hate in his eyes disappear.

“Take it, take, take, take...”

When she finally stands up over her father, she feels a great relief. She throws the knife from her hand. Without bothering about her brother, who is aghast watching what has been happening from the dark corner where he is hiding, she looks at the daylight that can no longer be stained by the two shadows.

The wind outside calls her; like a sweet whisper, like a compassionate touch. Hatun walks to the wind calling her. She comes across her mother at the door of the house. The poor woman utters a scream and falls to the ground. The village wakes up with her scream. Doors, windows open one by one. She goes to the village square paying no mind to the curious glances of the people leaning out of the opening doors and windows. She stops when she reaches the mosque.

“My name is not bitch”, she screams. “My name is Hatun! My name is Hatun!”

Whispers turn to voices, voices turn to outcries, but it does not make any difference anymore. Hatun. She walks, she walks towards the source of the wind, towards a new possibility, she walks until the point where the village ends and the cliff begins.

The wind rises where the cliff begins. It brings the scent of dried herbs and wildflowers from the mountains. Then comes such a moment that Hatun wants to become a wind herself. She wants to blend in with the flowers and dried herbs whose scents she smells and with the insects and mountains. She now wants to be a part of this endless wilderness, not a part of humans. She steps off the cliff with her hands spread. She doesn't even remember hitting the hard ground, because while she is falling, she thinks that compassionate wind is embracing her and taking her to another world, to a peaceful place.



ABOUT

Writer. He penned poems, stories, novels and graphic novels. His last book *Kırlangıç Sokağı* (Swallow Street) was published in 2018 and his first book (poetry) *Sokağın Zulası* (Stash of the Street) came out in 1989. His first novel *Sis ve Gece* (Mist and Night, 1996) is considered to be a masterpiece in detective fiction. Some books by Ahmet Ümit are as follows: *Kar Kokusu* (Smell of Snow), *Patasana*, *Kukla* (Puppet), *Ninatta'nın Bileziği* (Bracelet of Ninatta), *İnsan Ruhunun Haritası* (Map of Human Soul), *Aşk Köpekliktir* (Love is Fawning), *Beyoğlu Rapsodisi* (Rhapsody of Beyoğlu), *Kavim* (Clan), *Bab-ı Esrar* (Sublime Mystery), *İstanbul Hatırası* (Memory of İstanbul), *Başkomser Nevzat - Çiçekçinin Ölümü* (Chief Inspector Nevzat - Death of Flower-Seller), *Başkomser Nevzat - Tapınak Fahişeleri* (Chief Inspector Nevzat - Whores of the Temple), *Sultan'ı Öldürmek* (Killing the Sultan), *Beyoğlu'nun En Güzel Abisi* (The Loveliest Brother of Beyoğlu) and *Elveda Güzel Vatanım* (Farewell My Beautiful Homeland). Ümit was born in Antep in 1960. He completed his primary and secondary education in Ergani, Diyarbakır due to political pressures and exile. He majored in Public Administration at Marmara University in İstanbul. He studied politics at Social Sciences Academy in Moscow in 1985-1986.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#14 VOLKAN
AĞIR**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

'WE' WEREN'T THERE BUT 'WE' WERE MORE

We all concur that the words which best describe the pleasure felt when a goal is scored belong to Sócrates: "No, no! That was not a goal! That was an unending orgasm! Unforgettable."

At half-time, I wrote different words for that cheer about swearing at mothers and started grumbling to my friend: "Mate, we all get angry even when we make good-humored, non-vulgar jokes about our mothers' names or clothes and whatnot. So why do we try to irritate our rivals by making our mothers, whom we evidently value a great deal, the subject of a much more offensive sentence or act? Isn't it obvious that we both would be pissed off if it was done to us? Dude, I feel ashamed of saying those cheers about f***ing the mothers of Fenerbahçe fans. My mother is a Fenerbahçe fan, so it's my grandmother who gets burned. Why? They are not even an element of the game. Can't we say something else, something to do with the incompetence of the players for example? Like, 'I'll break your leg, Fenerbahçeeeee...'"

The response was clear: "Don't be ridiculous mate. Your mother and grandmother don't count... And what sort of a cheer is that! While you're at it you might as well chant 'I'll bite your arm' or something, geez..."

It didn't make sense even to my friend with whom we often watched the games together and we couldn't continue a discussion about it. Well, we had just turned 18, finally done with the university entrance exams, these were over our head...

Still, how could I affect a change on the bleachers in general, when it was not possible to discuss it even with him?

Much later and with much curiosity I watched a game in which the bleachers

were filled with thousands of women because the teams were punished for crowd trouble and no male fans were allowed in the stadium. Even though this penalty was nonsense, I was hoping that things would take a different turn now that the women were in the bleachers.

Nothing had changed. Thousands of women had started to shout the same profanities in unison. The result was horrible. It was not the women's fault because they were doing what the men they replaced had been doing all along.

The women had not been able to avoid the cheers filled with words that project the sexual violence in which the culture of male fans in the bleachers is imprisoned, a culture that does not allow anyone to imagine another possibility in that environment. "We" weren't there but "we" were more in there at that moment!

We, the ones with more testosterone, draw a direct correlation between the serotonin released in the body after winning a football game and the serotonin released in the body when shouting out that we will have a sexual relationship with the loved ones of our rivals.

That is why, we concur that the words which best describe the pleasure felt when a goal is scored belong to Sócrates: "No, no! That was not a goal! That was an unending orgasm! Unforgettable." In the book [Doctor Socrates](#) written by Andrew Downie, that is how Sócrates, the legendary footballer of Brazil National Team, described his goal, which brought the score to 1-1 against the Union

of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) National Team in the 1982 World Cup. We are born, raised and become adults with a suppressed masculinity, whatever that masculinity is. Even though I cannot yet understand why it is suppressed and what exactly is suppressed, the expression of whatever that is suppressed spreads across the universe in the form of verbal violence against the opposite sex even though they are not even in the vicinity.

When I say suppressed masculinity, do not think that it is something peculiar to the football stadiums or culture of Turkey.

On December 31, 2015, Cologne experienced one of the darkest new year's eves in its history. 497 women became victim of a mass sexual assault at the Main Railway Station. In an attempt to tease their opponent, the supporters of Hertha Berlin opened a placard on October 25, 2017, which read, "Your sisters dance alone even on New Year's Eve".

This masculinity is so savage that it can turn a situation, which was a social trauma for not only Cologne but the entire Germany, into an object of "ridicule".

On June 6, 2015, when the Champions League final match was played between Juventus and Barcelona, I was in Santiago, Chile. I was staying with four male friends of mine who lived in the same house. The game was at 3:45 pm local time in Chile. Apart from us being five men in the house, the goalkeeper of Barcelona was Claudio Bravo from

Chile and Arturo Vidal was one of the midfielders of Juventus.

As for the referees of the match, they were from Turkey. The center referee was Cüneyt Çakır, his assistant referees were Bahattin Duran and Tarık Ongun; the line referees were Hüseyin Göçek and Barış Şimsek and the additional assistant reserve referee was Mustafa Emre Eyisoy.

Before the game started, my housemate called out to me and said, "The referee is from Turkey, I will swear in Turkish when I get angry. What do you usually say to the referees?" Here was the long-sought meeting and sharing between cultures.

After all, I had grown up with the film where Şevket Altuğ teaches his English teacher how to say "Fuck Pimp Osman" in Turkish. I had to give the film its due!

But if I had said everything that came to my mind, the few girl friends watching the game with us would have left the house. I said, "Do not make me say sexist things", but he wouldn't have it, so at last, I said, "OK, you say it at home, but do not ever say it to somebody from Turkey, they say 'Fagot Referee' the most...". It was one of those moments when I reproduced sexual violence, I felt slightly ashamed and embarrassed. The first syllable of the swear word was difficult for Chileans to pronounce. He wanted me to teach him something else. I taught him how to say "Fuck off" in Turkish.

He found it easy to say. Throughout the entire game, he said it whenever the referee Cüneyt Çakır blew his whistle and sometimes just for the sake of saying it.

It was one of those moments when I truly felt bad. I especially did not like being the reproducer of the very thing that I had hoped could change.

Now, most probably, my friend remembers neither this memory, nor these words. It does not even have a value. What outweighed even more was the desperation that I felt in the face of my own subculture which did not and could not offer me something else.

P.S.: I apologize to the most esteemed referees Cüneyt Çakır, Bahattin Duran, Tarık Ongun, Hüseyin Göçek, Barış Şimşek and Mustafa Emre Eyisoy.



ABOUT

He has been writing blogs since 2006. He started working as a reporter at the Sports Service of daily Cumhuriyet in 2008. Since then, he is mostly working as a reporter. He followed the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and the 2015 Copa America in Chile as a freelance journalist. Since 2011, he has been presenting the sports program Efektifpas on Açık Radyo (Open Radio) every Monday at 7.30 p.m. He also writes sports articles for GazeteDuvar news website every week and on Özgürüz website at regular intervals. His articles and news on social issues are also occasionally published on various platforms.

He has been living in Cologne, Germany since October 2016.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#15 ALPER
HASANOĞLU**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

THE CURSE OF BEING A MAN

In fact, violence does nothing other than strengthening the feeling of impotence and the negative self-image.

As a result, the fragility of manhood increases, its artificiality becomes all the more manifest and the feeling of insecurity becomes stronger and stronger.

“... for Aristotle said, that the winds men most fear are those that lay them open.”

Trying to write on male violence by considering my own life and experiences is like being subjected to that fearful wind. Having been born and raised in a patriarchal society and claiming that you have never inflicted any violence on women, children, and the physically weak, is conceited, to say the least.

But I can, in clear conscience, say that ever since I reached a certain age and awareness I haven't committed violence, at least not deliberately or intentionally. Digging into my past and revealing experiences that might be categorized as violence wouldn't help anyone.

These are private things that will remain between me and my therapist and therefore my conscience. I think that what I should do is to apologize for the “misdemeanors” in my past and explain my professional opinion about male violence.

A woman is raped every 17 seconds in South Africa only. I don't know if there is need to say more. One becomes speechless with the shame of the violence committed by my fellow men.

I want to start my article with the following determination and build on it: “The violence of the man who holds power by committing violence against women, gays, weaker men, children and animals, is also the violence of the social order, which has

turned into a subject itself independent of the people who have created it”.

This is the violence of a hierarchical, authoritarian, sexist, classist, militarist, racist, sick and malicious society that does not value the individual. The society perpetrates this violence on women by instrumentalizing men – for purposes of this article women will be symbolically representing all the aforementioned persons and groups who are subjected to violence.

Violence on women is men denying their social impotence, which they feel deep down in their soul, through aggression.

Herbert Marcuse defines male violence as the repression of the already suppressed sexual and emotional needs, but one should keep in mind that the patriarchal, heterosexist, authoritarian and class-based society prepares the ground for this male violence. The form of functionality in almost all fields of social, economic and political life constitutes the relational context of male violence.

One of the most underscored subjects is whether violence has biological, genetic or hormonal roots, and if it has, whether it is only about men. Feminist theory has been putting emphasis on the distinction between the biological sex and the social gender since the very beginning.

The construction of gender is a highly complicated process that is not possible to grasp at first glance – not biological sex but gender is a Frankenstein created by the monster called civilization is yet another claim which I will not discuss at further length here as it is the subject of another article.

So I am just making note and moving on. Since the relation between gender and biological sex is very problematic, one needs to be very careful while talking about biological, hormonal and genetic roots of violence.

Because such reductionism impedes any discussion on how to prevent male violence. Since we cannot annihilate the male sex, which would be another form of violence, I believe we have to pursue another explanation model that will better serve us.

Of course we cannot deny the existence of stereotypical gender roles but aren't we all also the passive victims of a system applied monolithically?

While there is no scientific data suggesting that people (men in particular) are not prone to violence, neurobiological studies have shown that people are prone to cooperation and solidarity. It might indeed be claimed that men are more aggressive due to their hormones and are more prone to violence compared with women.

But there is also a very simple truth that we cannot change. The men we have studied are the men who are wrapped up in their gender roles within this

social structure. What would be their behavior patterns if they weren't inside this social structure? Because we know from anthropological studies that male violence against women, or even violence in general, was almost nonexistent in the hunter-gatherer times.

While evaluating the human, which is an animal species, and his or her biological, hormonal and genetic characteristics, we shouldn't overlook the following trait that is specific to the human: unlike other animal species that live collectively, the human being is a member of a constantly changing social system in which he or she must change as well.

Yes, human is an animal species and, in this regard, he or she depends on the requirements of his or her genes, cells, organs and hormones. However, our knowledge concerning how this entire physical structure defines our behaviors is not yet complete.

There is still time for neuroscience to enlighten us in this regard. Even if we could know it, we must think in a broader context in order to identify the factors that play an important role in determining our behavioral repertoire, needs and motivations.

Because the human needs to live in continuously developing/changing social structures; it is an animal species that has become different from all other animal species in every sense and is not that "natural" anymore.

While talking about male violence and man's entitlement to make weapons and

kill anything and everything he perceives as the enemy, we shouldn't miss the main question that begs for an answer: How does the social structure shape, limit or reinforce this disposition?

How is it that in course of human social development, violence stopped being an isolated phenomenon and became normal, a functional tool widely accepted in everyday life?

After being used in the training of children for centuries, how come beating a member of the clergy or a mayor was classified as an abnormal behavior that needs to be punished?

At the end of the day, the determinant question is what sort of a relationship do societies establish with violence and how do they try to deal with it. Which forms of violence are approved and tolerated?

Some feminist writers (i.e., Susan Brownmüller) who embrace the sociobiological perspective claim that male violence is an inborn psychological feature due to men's anatomic structure. Let's assume that this is correct. I insistently emphasize that what matters is not whether men are prone to violence but what the society does with this violence.

Why does male violence play such a determinant and steering role in most societies? Why is violence tolerated so much and even promoted?

Every seemingly personal act of violence has a social context. This doesn't mean there are no psychopathological cases, but they constitute a really small

percentage among those who commit violence.

The form of violence that concerns us are the acts of violence that instead of being punished have begun to be seen as "normal", such as fights, war, rape, bodily harm and psychological violence.

Violence has long been almost institutionalized as a solution method between people and groups which renders the dominant social order's approval of male violence an intelligible phenomenon.

On the other hand, it is a fact that the states' employment of violence as an instrument, through wars and police violence, etc., threatens our lives and future.

The civilization of "civilized" societies is founded on the massacres, exploitation and subjugation that they exercise on other societies. Civilization is shaped by means of destroying, colonizing and enslaving the indigenous peoples.

Is it only the indigenous peoples? The decimation of nature under the guise of human interest and in the name of dominating nature causes irreversible destruction of the ecological balance that was hundreds of thousands of years in the making. Once violence is normalized, it walks all over everything that comes its way.

Daily business life in industrialized class-based societies is also based on violence. Violence reveals itself as an economic reality. Industrialized business life is like a torture center where workers are

depersonalized and broken up into pieces.

Employed or not, everyone is exposed to chemicals, radioactive substances, food with GMO and pollution because of industrialization. Advancement of technology does not reduce the burden on people's shoulders but increases the workload and accelerates the pace of life to an unbearable level.

Psychological disorders not connected directly to the person but caused by this increased burden of life are actually a form of social violence, but the capitalist order manages to monetize it by marketing these as psychological disorders.

The majority being doomed to work themselves to exhaustion for 40-50 years until they are completely burned out and then being thrown into the society's retirement trash is absolute violence. Racism, sexism, heterosexism have almost become the rule and turned into acts of violence that are institutionalized in all societies.

Urbanization not only destroys nature and everything that is humane, but has also brought people's relationship with nature to a point of complete rupture.

Urban planner and architect Frank Lloyd Wright says, "To look at the plan of a great City is to look at something like the cross-section of a fibrous tumor".

Cities, social structure, professional life, the human's relationship with nature, and history have turned into the domination sites of violence. In fact, they are now

violence itself. Institutionalized violence has infiltrated all social structures and sociocultural relationships.

Let's not forget that one learns how to commit violence through observation and experience. A man beats his son and his son, in turn, beats his dog. Studies have shown that a majority of those who use violence against women were themselves subjected to violence when they were children. And not only by their fathers, but by their mothers as well.

However, as indicated earlier, the more decisive factor is that our personality and sexuality, our needs and fears, our strong and weak points—our self—are not solely shaped by learning, on the contrary, they are produced and imposed on the individual by the social reality which is experienced on a daily basis.

Macro level social and economic conditions—such as poverty, unemployment, lack of housing as well as the acceptance and glorification of violence—lead to increased crime rates and tolerance for violence, which also increases domestic male violence.

While the social order paves the way for violence, violence, in turn, strengthens its own social and economic structure. Development of civilization shows parallelism with the constant increase in male violence against women. Patriarchy is a form of power which enables the reality imposed by men to destroy the historical and natural reality.

Simone de Beauvoir argues that men reflect their ambivalent feelings about

nature on women and view them as a materialized form of nature.

According to Beauvoir, in the eyes of men, women are just like nature, which gives us everything we need and can, all of a sudden, turn into a catastrophe taking our lives away.

“Both ally and enemy, it appears as the dark chaos from which life springs forth, as this very life, and as the beyond it reaches for...”

The violence inflicted to dominate nature and the violence inflicted on women usually complement and substitute each other.

“In spite of the inferior role which men assign to them, women are the privileged objects of their aggression”, says Beauvoir. In the everyday life of an adult, male violence directly turns towards women. There are not many women who have not been subjected to some form of male violence, which ranges from sexual harassment and rape to sexual abuse and watching porn.

This aggression of men towards women stems from the fragile nature of masculinity, and violence should be understood as a futile effort to protect this fragile manhood, this unreal male superiority. Man feels obliged to constantly exercise agency to protect his potency and maintain his social, economic and political power.

Because passivity symbolizes womanhood, which, in turn, symbolizes weakness. Violence against women

is, in fact, nothing but an aggressive representation of this agency. Moreover, woman is punished by man also because through her mere existence she reminds him of his actual state, his fragility, weakness and helplessness.

Rape is the form of action in which this fragile manhood manifests itself most clearly. In the statements made by rapists to forensic psychiatrists, we witness that the men who rape women almost always mention feelings of inferiority, fears of impotency in every sense of the term, and a rage that they cannot make sense of.

Whom would a man feel superior to, if there were no women? Rape is not only a crime committed by men against women, it is also the desperate and angry struggle of men in the biological and social gender relationship.

In the late 1970s, researchers conducted a study analyzing the statements made by rapist men.

Let us look at some of these statements now: “When I compare myself with other people, I always feel inferior to them. (...) I find myself disgusting. When I rape someone who I think is weaker than me, I am freed from this feeling.”

Another statement is as follows: “I feel so corrupted, vile and disgusting.”

Yet another statement: “I believe that the reason behind rape is less about sexual desire than the way a person wants to see himself. My fear of having a relationship with people turns into a demand for sex. Because sex is the securest area where I

can release my anger and feelings.”

Woman means an other that the manhood, which can fall into pieces any time, thinks it can bring into existence by protecting itself in a phallogocentric order. With its weak muscles, it is the soft, humane creature that man actually wants to be. It is a threat which, in his unaggressive state, he emulates and thus causes his fear of falling into pieces to escalate and therefore increases his anger all the more.

This anger of man and his fear, which he does not even notice, can also take on a class characteristic.

Let us look again at a statement made by a rapist man: “When it comes to having a relationship with a woman, I cannot feel myself special at all. I believe that I am not good enough to impress women. That is why, I find a woman from the lower classes and try to lower her more than she actually is, do you understand it? Because what I really want is a woman from the upper class. But I do not believe that I am good enough for these women to find me attractive.”

Rape, harassment, psychological violence and abuse, which are the plainest manifestations of male violence, find themselves a place most readily in the family. Family provides the enraged man, who cannot deal with his fragility, with an environment where he can express his feelings and needs with an ease that would not be allowed anywhere else. Family is the only place where the man feels himself sufficiently secure and expresses his every feeling with ease.

Family is also the place where the man compensates for the violence inflicted on him at the workplace. Man is so impotent at the workplace that he tries to feel that he can control his life in the period of time that belongs to him, within the family. Its result is pure male violence.

Yes, it is “male” violence, but violence can gain functionality only in the dualisms of active - passive, manhood - womanhood. Without one, the other cannot exist. Of course, I am not putting the blame on women for getting beaten up. I am also not presenting the men who inflict violence as the innocent victims of society.

I am just trying to emphasize that male violence against women functions as a dynamic affirmation of manhood, which can exist only by being different from womanhood. It should not be forgotten that manhood needs to be constantly fed and approved so as to maintain its existence.

In fact, this approval may take very different forms that are not related to violence. A vast majority of men do not tend to commit violence, rape or harassment. That being said, again a great majority of us have used our superior physical strength or a form of physical violence or the threat of violence at least once during our youth or adulthood.

When those with a weak sense of self or a seriously negative self-image cannot deal with the feelings of impotence in their daily lives, they do not hesitate to use violence against women in order to

protect or reconstruct their individual power in our heterosexist social system.

In fact, violence does nothing other than strengthening the feeling of impotence and the negative self-image. As a result, the fragility of manhood increases, its artificiality becomes all the more manifest and the feeling of insecurity becomes stronger and stronger.

In one of the unforgettable novels of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *The Autumn of the Patriarch*, as the non-aging dictator wanders through the infinitely long corridors of his palace, scuffing his fat feet, one feels a constant stench of decay.

He can no longer find a way out of the world of terror, sorrow and exhaustion that he himself has created. The tragedy that he is condemned to is the burden of living forever by breathing in this lifeless air which suffocates him.

Aren't we men living under a similar curse?

But, still, is there no way out of this hell of "male violence" that we ourselves have created, a hell that does great damage to women, homosexuals, children and, of course, to us and which condemns life to destruction; is there really no way out of all these artificialities about manhood?

ABOUT

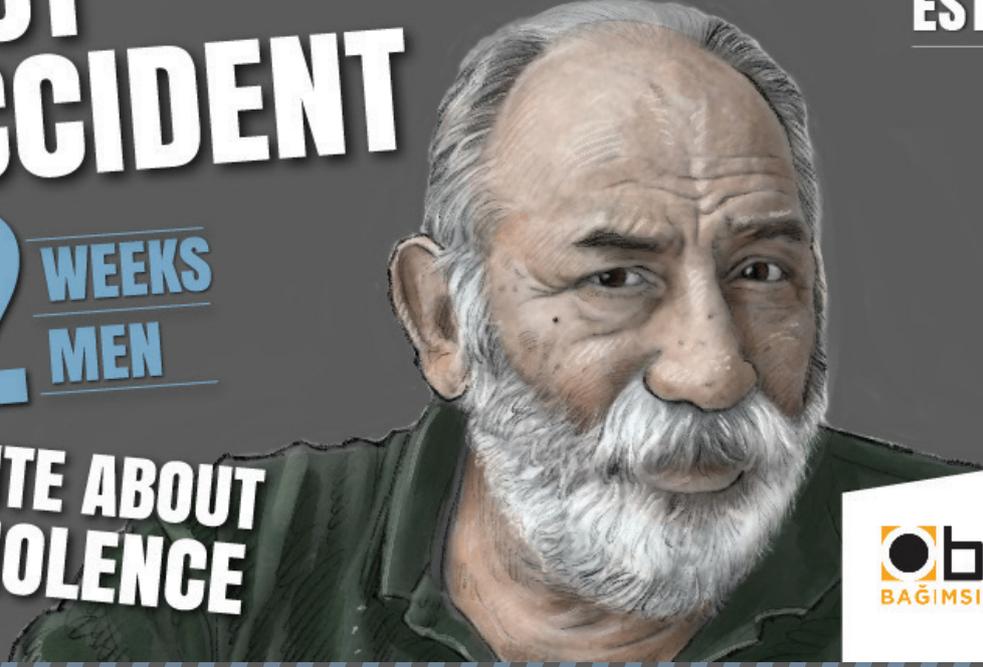
Physician, therapist, writer. He continues his clinical studies together with his team at the center that he founded in 2010. He served on the teaching staff of the Psychiatric Clinic of the University of Basel and worked in the Çorlu State Hospital as practicing physician for two years. He completed his physiology residency in Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine and his psychiatry residency in Switzerland. During his postgraduate study in physiology he worked on stress physiology and epilepsy. His books titled *Bir Terapistin Arka Bahçesi* (The Backyard of a Therapist, 2009), *Aşkın Halleri* (The States of Love, 2010), *İlişkilerin Günlük Hayatı* (The Daily Life of Relationships, 2013) were published by Remzi Publishing House. He was born in 1967 in İstanbul, he is a graduate of İstanbul Erkek Lisesi (İstanbul High School) and Cerrahpaşa Faculty of Medicine.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#16 PAKRAT
ESTUKYAN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

THE MIND OF THE STATE IS SET AGAINST WOMEN

According to the narrative of all three holy books,
“women, who are prone to sin, are to blame
for the miserable lives that we lead”.

Even this narrative in itself can give an idea about the
role played by religion in violence against women.

The recent public service ad prepared by the Ministry of Family and Social Policies ends with the sentence, "There is no violence against women in our culture". At the start of the ad, late to middle-aged couples from various parts of the country appear before the camera in their best moods.

People from the Black Sea, Aegean and Eastern Anatolia regions are forming a panorama of the country with their traditional clothes and accents. Men speak with words glorifying women

In short, the public service ad prepared by the ministry presents a discourse that reverses the truth as the truth itself. It is marketing not what is but what should be as if it already is.

We could perhaps be fine with such a white lie if we could see even an ounce of good-intention in it, but this is a discourse of denial rather than a white lie.

The Ministry of Family is just adding on to its systematic discourse of denial, the baseless and groundless examples of which we hear often as in "Muslims don't commit genocide" or "Turkish soldier doesn't rape".

In our region, violence against women is a phenomenon that is sometimes internalized by women themselves, imprinted in our culture and fortified with religious references.

Essentially, this is a phenomenon which

should not be evaluated separately from the world of perception that sanctifies violence.

Extolling masculinity constitutes the starting point of the twisted mindset that leads to violence against women. And sometimes we see that the man has a privileged status in the family by means of a hierarchy of values shaped by the mother.

Through family training, the girl children mix the mortar of the culture of violence against women by accepting their secondary position in society, by being forced into it, and finally by settling for it.

The role of religions in violence against women

The more interesting thing is that men who are raised in these conditions are markedly weaker than women, both mentally and in terms of physical abilities...

The fields where the man, which is a very much incompetent gender compared to woman, can establish himself are highly limited. For instance, the man who falls behind woman in everyday life, in the natural course of life, has found the opportunity to actualize his vision of a womanless world in the field of military where muscle strength is determining.

By the same token, woman has suffered a significant loss of position in monotheistic religions in which the belief in gods and goddesses of mythology transitioned to an abstract notion of god/Allah. In addition to the names of Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, the lack of a feminine prophet figure is very conspicuous.

Likewise, we do not come across the name of a woman among the associates such as Solomon, Abraham, Pavlus, Petrus, Yohanna, Omar Ali, Abu-Bakr, Hassan or Hussain either.

Here, the figure of Virgin Mary cannot be considered a woman in the real sense either, since, as is known, she has the surreal ability to become pregnant by smelling a flower.

At the present time, just as the woman is not allowed to go up to the altar of a church, she is also prohibited from lining up for prayer in the mosque.

Moreover, according to the narrative of creation, which is recounted in Torah and has also been embraced by Christianity and Islam, our mother Eve was created from the rib of the Prophet Adam. She yielded to the temptation of the Devil and allured Adam, causing the human race to be banished from heaven.

In short, according to the narrative of all three holy books, “women, who are prone to sin, are to blame for the miserable lives that we lead”. Even this narrative in itself can give an idea about the role played by religion in violence against women.

The ones who were blamed for witchcraft

and sorcery and burnt alive in the darkness of the Middle Ages were women. As for Islam, it also targets women with the punishment of stoning to death. While the retaliation principle of Sharia law cuts the hand of the thief and the head of the murderer with a sword, when it comes to women, it has embraced torture and a way of killing that involves the participation of the community.

When Muslims fulfil the holy obligation of Hajj, they stone the Devil; in secular life, they only stone women.

In practices that are generally intertwined with religious references and shape the social lives of people with the definition of “custom” as well, the place of women is belittled while manhood is glorified as much as possible.

This glorification, naturally, results in an unhealthy self-confidence, which, in turn, reproduces misogyny as a paradoxical spiral and, hence, violence against women. Violence of this type, which takes its source from education within the family, cannot be overcome through academic education.

Feminism is the medicine for us all

Since the system of values which produces violence against women is shaped with a social presupposition, counter values have to be oriented towards forming a new presupposition. It requires, above all, a struggle with denialism, lies and deception.

In this sense, feminist women are continuing their relentless climb to raise the purple flag in their hands ever higher.

It seems that the aim of this climb is not to re-idolize the deities and goddesses of polytheistic beliefs such as Hera, Aphrodite or Anahit against the bigoted understanding of religion, but to elevate humanity through the emancipation of women.

That is why, the feminist movement should be seen not solely as a women's movement, but as a movement of humanity in its entirety.



ABOUT

Journalist, radio programmer, writer, biochemistry technician. Columnist and Armenian language editor of Agos newspaper. He produces weekly radio programs on Ayp FM in Paris and Açık Radyo in İstanbul and writes for Özgürlükçü Demokrasi newspaper. Together with Mihail Vasilyadis he produces the weekly actuality program Haftanın Hay'ı Huy'u (Hustle and Bustle of the Week) for Artı television. His collection of stories titled Hay Hikayeler (Hay Stories, 2011) on the extraordinary lives of ordinary people and its Armenian language original titled Bantukht Yerker (Homesick Ballads, 2012) were published by Everest Publications and Aras Publishing respectively. He was born in 1953 in Rumelihisarı, İstanbul as the second generation of a family who survived the 1915 massacre and migrated to İstanbul. After studying in the Armenian schools of the city he worked as a biochemistry technician for many years.

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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
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**#17 SAMİ
EVREN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

IT'S REALLY NOT A COINCIDENCE, MEN KILL WOMEN

What is my responsibility in a social network where all sorts of violence and incidents of harassment against women are considered normal? How significant is it that I am not a direct subject of this issue?

I would like to emphasize why it is very important for men to start talking about past experiences by questioning “manhood and the violence generated by men” and how this scares me.

Yes, the fact that my thoughts on this subject as a man are accompanied by a number of fears indicates that this article series is even more important than I thought.

In fact, even writing a piece about this subject necessitates me to say and do things beyond talking about and condemning femicides, and to seek what I’ve actually been running from.

I think, trying to talk about masculinity in all its layers requires the courage to deal with the fear of getting naked. It is going to be a bit like many of us saying “At the end of the day, I too am a man living in this society”, but it is a start after all.

What is my responsibility in a social network in which all sorts of systematic violence and harassment committed against women in every private and public space is considered normal? How significant is it that I am not a direct subject of this issue?

Venomous looks of the imam

I started primary school in the village of Sinci, Karaman in 1965. I was seven years old when I found myself in the training and seating order of one class, one teacher,

first graders in the front row, fifth graders in the back, and the rest in between.

We would all stand in front of the flagpole as students in white collars, black aprons, wool socks, rubber shoes and girls with white ribbons, and we would not move a muscle once İrfan teacher gave the attention command.

When the weekend holiday began on Saturday afternoon, we would run to our self-made toys that we hid in a nook behind the barn of Sarıların Halil.

We were going to the hodja on Sundays. The children who knew how to read the whole Koran were highly praised in the village.

One day, the imam of the village appeared behind the barn where we were playing. He directly headed towards Asiye and lifted her holding her arm, goggled his eyes and hurled her forward. “You will never again play with men or leave the house”, he shouted.

The only thing left behind was the broken wheel that Asiye was trying to make with the head of a sunflower.

Girls and boys...

Asiye never joined our game again. I was very scared and felt myself guilty. Ahmet looked very pleased with how his father treated his sister. "I'd told her", he said.

Thanks to the most respected, wisest hodja of the village, I'd learned that girls cannot play with boys. I never forgot the venomous looks of the imam.

Years passed by quickly and we moved to the city. Now I was a student of Gazi Mustafa Kemal Primary School again with one class, one teacher. I could see my friends from the village only during harvest season in summer.

I was missing them; especially Ayşegül, whom I kept teasing and fighting with. My main way of communication with her was hit-and-run. Of course, I never told this to anybody.

In the following years, I heard that Zeliha and Hüseyin got married. Hüseyin was a scrawny, silent boy. You know how they say, if you snatched away his bread he still wouldn't say a word, he was that kind of a boy. I don't remember Zeliha's youth days.

Headlines: Honor Killing

The horrible news of murder spread fast in the village: Hüseyin had murdered his wife. The next day my dad had brought home all the newspapers that covered the incident. The headlines read, "Honor Killing".

This incident that curdled our blood was

spoken about for days. People said that Zeliha's family didn't want her body. I was there when people gathered in front of the courthouse for the first hearing.

Hüseyin was brought to court in handcuffs by the gendarmerie. The gendarmes were scanning around them with stern looks, their shoulders straight, chests pushed out, probably because they were accompanying an important figure.

The scrawny, feeble Hüseyin was invigorated, his walk had changed, it was like he was not the one who committed the murder, killed a person. It was like he had become a "man" for the second time, the first time being the circumcision.

Our people are very sensitive, the crowds gathered and sent him to the courtroom amidst applause.

The hero who restored his honor received a very small sentence due to unjust provocation and he was released.

With the killing of my childhood friend, and surrounded by grey painted cold walls, I now had a better grasp of the concept of honor. Gendarmerie, court, judge, people, state, justice, this murder had it all.

Result: Hüseyin is a "victim of fate", Zeliha a "whore", and millions of Hüseyins are now "guardians of honor".

I used to believe that we could solve it with socialism

In high school years, I had already started

to prove myself as a typical leftist man who was shaped by both the influence of the political climate and the social fabric I lived in.

I had dived into subjects like communal society, primitive society, feudalism, capitalism... Eager to learn what socialism was, I never missed the seminars at the People's Houses. I had now met with Marxist ideas and come quite a ways in becoming a socialist and revolutionist.

I never refrained from being on the front lines of the fight when the anti-fascist struggle was on the rise. Because it was a time when our ears were filled with slogans like "Revolution martyrs are immortal".

March 8

I had believed in the revolution so much... It was in that period that we read the history of March 8 International Working Women's Day together with our "sisters". Even though at home we continued to enjoy my mother and my sister Sema's infinite services with my father and brother, I had understood that men and women should be equal.

Even though I wasn't seeing what their husbands and brothers did to them, I'd learned about the injustices done to laborer women by their bosses.

I was believing that we would solve all these problems with socialism after the revolution, but then the September 12 coup happened. And after that, the Soviet Union collapsed.

Trying not to say "Like a man"...

After being released from prison, I started to work as a teacher again in 1984 in İstanbul. It must be due to the effect of the 1989 Spring Demonstrations that I found myself in the struggle.

I began to actively partake in the activities of, first, the Association of Working Educators (Eğit-Der) and then the Union of Educators (Eğit-Sen).

Thanks to the awareness created by the feminist activists in the union, I understood that the females should be called women, that the women who are not workers also have their problems, and that the March 8 International Women's Day has a central importance for the women's struggle.

Even today, (though it still escapes my lips involuntarily) I pay attention to my language and do my best not to say "like a man". [In Turkish, doing something "like a man" means doing it properly.]

Even though I try to summarize the situation in this way, the reality of life is, of course, not exactly like that.

When engaging in small talk with my male friends, I continue uttering all types of swear words and having sexually explicit conversations. I pay attention to my language only in the company of women; and all the while I myself know what is lurking inside me.

Conservatism

It is the success of the struggle waged by women that not only positive discrimination and quota practices, but also new institutional arrangements such as co-chairpersonship and co-spokespersonship have been introduced so that women can be elected to administrative positions in democratic mass organizations and civil organizations.

Although I view it as a positive development that there is a will to achieve gender equality, albeit relatively, I think I have learned that the point in question is not that simple.

I have frequently experienced in my personal life that the issue of conservatism does not solely concern those groups with a traditional culture, but also the ones who maintain that they are egalitarian, libertarian human rights defenders who are against discrimination.

I have started to think that doing politics by intellectually depreciating the subjects of gender, gender difference, oppression, violence, domination, etc. and excluding them from the sphere of politics reproduces the system over and over again.

Patriarchy and capitalism

For this reason, I have reached the conclusion that the struggle against capitalism and the cultural fascism it produces is a problem of also the men who do not engage or intervene in

incidents that seem to be exceptions.

It would be easier for us men if gender inequality and oppression were not addressed as singular or exceptional cases but as phenomena arising in interpersonal relations.

However, on the contrary, what has been happening is on such a scale that it affects the whole society and cannot be explained by remaining on the personal level. It is reproduced in the essence of the system. If I start to perceive the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism, then, even in this chaos, I can wipe clean the slate of my consciousness as a man.

I think that the women's struggle is the most qualified movement among the organizations of public laborers. This is what I think despite several adversities.

Harassment, mobbing

In social struggles, the unions and organizations fighting for democracy, which defend the rights of labor, nature, humans, LGBTI individuals and oppose war and militarism, are struggling against the problems created by the system.

However, when it comes to what the women in their own organizations experience or the incidents they face, the inconsistencies of the men inside the same organization stick out like a sore thumb.

They invent a number of excuses to cover up the mobbing practices and harassment

cases within their organizations, to deal with these incidents among themselves, and most of the time, to whitewash harassment on the grounds that their organization will be exposed.

Intra-organizational law

In fact, the point is very simple. If a woman employee claims that she has been subjected to harassment, what needs to be done is to enforce the intra-organizational law based on the statement of the woman. And to take precautions to ensure that the woman is not affected in the workplace; these are the things that have to be done in a democratic organization at the first stage.

However, this is not what happens, the intra-organizational power mobilizes, hinders the investigation and the high politics reveals its hidden male face in a number of ways including threats, blackmails and the reorganization of intra-organizational politics. Witnessing how such an organization turns into a

small “state apparatus” in the face of such incidents as harassment / mobbing that are experienced by people among its own ranks and seeing the frightening dimension of the subject has been an important experience for me...

In the face of this experience I resigned from my post, which some interpreted as taking an “honorable” stand, yet others thought was “about a woman”. But the truly important question is this: What happened to the woman who was subjected to harassment / mobbing?

Conclusion

In a study she conducted on convicted rapists, Diana Scully has reached the conclusion that sexual violence is a widespread problem rooted in the patriarchal culture.

In short, we need to change ourselves so that sexual violence can come to an end. Yes, it is really “not a coincidence” that women do not kill men. Men kill women.

ABOUT

Teacher, union organizer. He writes for Özgürlükçü Sol news website and bianet. He served as the 2nd and 4th term president of the Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK). In November 2010 he resigned from KESK presidency when the internal law of the organization was not put into practice in a harassment case against a woman employee. He was among the founders of Eğitimciler Derneği (Association of Educators - Eğitim-Der) and Eğitim Emekçileri Sendikası (Union of Education Workers - EĞİT-SEN). He participated in the unionization efforts as part of the Devrimci Öğretmen (Revolutionary Teachers) group. He partook in the struggle to lift the ban on organizing the International Workers' Day march in Taksim. His book titled Eğitim Emekçileri Tarihi: Encümen-i Muallimin'den Eğitim-Sen'e (History of Education Workers: From the [Ottoman] Council of Teachers to the Education and Science Workers' Union, Eğitim-Sen) was published in 1995.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#18 ALİ KEMAL
ÇINAR**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MEN ARE 'ETC.'

For some reason it was always a woman who was desired. Then again groups of men would beat each other up in front of schools.

Because someone looked at his "cause", and the other talked with his "cause", etc.

Men would walk around in groups.

A man to comb his hair or wear perfume was considered ridiculous because being well-groomed was a feminine trait. A man who was like a woman was an object of derision. A man had to be "like a man". A man had to constantly prove himself, refresh his maleness. There were also some who walked around without proving their maleness for weeks.

Even though the official bath day was Sunday, he would wash every couple of days. That's why he would wake up early in the morning and pour water over himself in the toilet so no one would understand. Everyone would wait in front of the school, without letting on that they were waiting.

A man who loved someone without letting her notice was the man. Everyone had a "cause".

Cause is the person who is loved, desired.

For some reason it was always a woman who was desired. Then again groups of men would beat each other up in front of schools. Because someone looked at his "cause", and the other talked with his "cause", etc.

Men are etc.

Women wouldn't engage in these fights because none of them had a cause. And the woman who had a cause wouldn't be thought much of.

He was again engaged in a fight to prove his maleness. His mouth and nose were black and blue, he cleaned up without anyone noticing.

When he peed himself at night, he would get up and clean the sheets and the mattress so no one would know, or he wouldn't get out of bed until it was completely dry. This was not the only time he felt embarrassed either. It is known as morning erection in literature. He would run to the toilet so that his mother wouldn't see his erection mixed with pee.

His situation was very weird. The more he struggled to be powerful, the more he found himself in miserable and pathetic situations. He had found himself a new, strong group. They used to march all the way to school chanting: five more kicks to this guy, ten more kicks to that...

They would go to the cafes where women and men sat together. Everyone would stare at the same girl sitting at the table across and day dream. At the end of the story, there would be kids and everything. One house, separate rooms, houses where women knew how to behave properly.

Almost each and every home had a father. He had one too. He had a father indeed but who was fathering him? Father was the superior man, the one that comes after the state. And father was alone, like everyone one who is a father. Alone while he was eating, watching TV, giving pocket-money...

It is the father who walks around with a tape measure in his hand. It is again the father who keeps a certain distance and does not get too close with anyone in the family. If the grandfather saw the father love his child or get close to him or her, he would reprimand him.

The grandfather was somewhere between the state and the father.

The grandfather would reprimand every adolescent and/or newly grown man. Reaching him with a tape measure was impossible. The father would only approach mother. When she heard noises she would pretend to snore not to let on that she was awake. Then the father would go to the bathroom stepping on them.

So, that was what manhood was about?

It was about stepping over women.

By jumping over everyone, if need be... The father had taught him the biggest lesson, with or without knowing it. Now, he had to prove what a good student he was.

He would make practical jokes on the girls in class. He would stand behind a girl and want one of his friends to push the girl. If that did not work, then he would pull

their hair. These were all a preliminary preparation for the violence that he would inflict in years to come.

Being the son of the father, fulfilling the expectation, was now his sole objective. The objective was sometimes to buy a pair of the newest shoes on the market. Sometimes, it was to finish a single cigarette with his male friends in the school restroom. It was to swing prayer beads, to cross his legs, to go to the Friday prayer, for example.

Ah, it was also to never give the eye to the sister of his friend. That was the most difficult of all. While he had almost no communication with the girls in his class, he had communication with the sister.

"Hi, is Ahmet home? You tell him I'm here."

The sister sometimes said, "Okay". They were getting along better with each passing day. "Okay, I will call him." He sometimes could not hold himself back and said, "Okay, I am waiting". He was really close to being friends with a woman. If he had not fallen out with her big brother. If the brother had not sensed that he was getting on better with his sister day by day.

After that, the case is closed and he revolts. He revolts against the mother, the father and, if need be, against the state.

That is how he makes his first serious acquaintance with the state.

In the middle of the night, he drinks whatever he can find. He wanders the streets like a mad man. Then he comes

across the police, and before he knows it, he finds himself in a holding cell. All through the night, his mind is injected with all possible states of manhood existing in literature.

The winner is again manhood.

He has learnt manhood everywhere. He considers himself very lucky.

Nowadays, he keeps talking about himself to the boys in the neighborhood.

He hangs out with people who are like him, he swears at this and that. They always act in unison, because men walk around together, and women always alone.

ABOUT

Scenarist, director. He still lives and shoots movies in his hometown Diyarbakır. He shot his first short film in 2004. He wrote the screenplays for and directed a total of ten short films. Influenced by his short film experiences, he shot his first feature film titled Short Film in 2013. His second feature film *Veşartî/Gizli* (Hidden, 2015) received the 15th İstanbul Independent Film Festival Best Movie and SİYAD Best Movie awards as well as the 28th Hamburg International Queer Film Festival Jury Award. His third feature film *Gênco* (2017) received the 28th Ankara International Film Festival Best Movie Award.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#19 İRFAN
DEĞİRMENÇİ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

FIND ATTACHED MY DEFENSE!

Michelle became the first transwoman TV reporter in Turkey. Most television viewers probably met her for the first time that day when she was subjected to bodyguard violence as she attempted to ask a question to Sümeyye Erdoğan, the daughter of the then-prime minister Erdoğan.

I apologize. If you are a man who said “yes” to the question “52 men will write about male violence against women for 52 weeks, would you be one of them?”, then I guess the first sentence you write should be “I apologize”.

I apologize. An apology without “but”s, “yet”s, “however”s. An apology said in a low voice, with your tail between your legs. A sincere apology followed with the statement: “It will not happen again”.

A male writer is simply a “writer” but a female writer is usually addressed as a “woman writer”. No one says male journalist but if it is a female journalist, then the emphasis is always on gender.

People say, “Sit down and write your piece like a man” but I usually write like a woman. I try to put myself in the shoes of everybody I write about, of all the characters in my stories. Now, for instance let me put myself in dear Michelle’s shoes.

Michelle came to İstanbul in 1999 at the age of 24. Before then, he was a very handsome journalist. People used to point him out in the newspapers where he worked in İzmir. Michelle still regrets not keeping the dismissal letter from the last newspaper she worked in İzmir.

The letter said that on the way to cover a news story Michelle had allegedly harassed the newspaper’s driver! So she packed up and came to İstanbul in 1999. In an interview with Çiçek Tahaoğlu

from bianet in 2013, she says that that handsome boy, whose name she doesn’t want to mention, died that year and she was born with a brand-new name and surname, Michelle Demishevich.

The new surname she picked for herself was the original surname of her Macedonian family before they migrated to and became citizens of Turkey. Hold on, hold on.

Now that I’ve put myself in Michelle’s shoes I am not sure if I’d like that old handsome boy to be mentioned again in a piece written about me years later. If in the interview she says “dead” for that boy, then he must be dead. It’s best if I go on.

Michelle became the first transwoman TV reporter in Turkey. She was last working at İMC TV. Even the average, inattentive television viewer must have met her that day when she was subjected to bodyguard violence on İstiklal Street as she attempted to ask a question to Sümeyye Erdoğan, daughter of the then-prime minister Tayyip Erdoğan.

Those images of Michelle had also caught my attention, they were covering her mouth and dragging her away from the scene as she was struggling to make herself heard, “Ms. Sümeyye, they are not letting me ask a question, they are pulling my hair Ms. Sümeyye”...

That was the first day we ever talked with Michelle and then I started to follow her news reports. Michelle had told me that in her first days at work she was returning home in tears even from a media organization like IMC TV, which had managed to become the voice of the “marginalized” and was unfortunately closed down after a while.

She had told me how at first people were nudging each other and pointing at her as she was eating or smoking with the other staff in the common areas of the work center where the TV channel is located, how women were giggling when they passed by her and how the private security officers were stopping her each time and giving her a hard time even though they knew her and where she worked.

She had also told me how her questions were ignored during press conferences and that even her journalist colleagues avoided greeting her. I can almost hear you asking me, “so what did you do?”. This is what I did: As soon as I heard that this successful television journalist is looking for a job after having parted ways with IMC TV, I thought about working with her at Kanal D Morning News, right at the heart of mainstream media.

We needed a reporter like her who chases news day and night and asks brave questions. Now, I have to apologize at this point. I am sorry Michelle, I acted a bit rashly with the excitement of this idea and called you immediately.

Forgive me, I gave you hope that day even before I talked and straightened things

out with the employer. And you got very excited. I had understood it from the tone of your voice. I know you waited for days. But I didn't. I acted at once because I knew that hiring a transwoman reporter into the mainstream media could be difficult and that we could face all sorts of prejudices.

I couldn't decide whom to talk to first about this matter, then I considered contacting the people at the highest level. I thought the man who was the friend and right hand of the boss, a columnist writing pieces about manhood after the age of 60, was ideally suited for this. And that is what I did. I asked for his help to have you hired.

After all, this gentleman was enthusiastic about writing articles that break taboos, he was charging at taboos with his pink trousers! The response I received from the gentleman was a huge disappointment for me as well as Michelle.

The gentleman got shocked as if struck by an evil spirit when I mentioned your sexual identity. He warned me over and over again saying, “Oh please, what you are talking about is what the boss hates the most. He cannot stand it even when he sees it, he gets angry. Forget about it and do not share it with anyone else.” I could not have them hire you, Michelle. First, I gave you hope, then, I made you sad. I am sorry.

As a matter of fact, in this country, even on the news of violence against them trans individuals were not mentioned. If it was a sex worker who was murdered, then anyways it was automatically his or her

fault. Everyone had children and whatnot, and it was a crime for a trans individual to walk on the street even in broad daylight, right?

This society was so hypocritical that the person who pounds your door down to lynch you in the morning, would return at night to ask for sex. Our last encounter with Michelle was in the neighborhood of Denizköşkler in Avcılar.

After the earthquake in 1999, the severely damaged buildings in this neighborhood were polished and the trans individuals, who were not allowed to live in any part of İstanbul, took refuge in those buildings that no one wanted to live in.

Some of them became property owners in time. Other were still tenants. One day, provoked also by a television news broadcasted by a male journalist, the people living in the neighborhood pounded on their doors. They were carrying torches in their hands. They were saying, "You either get out or we will burn you alive". The harassments and threats had reached an unbearable level.

Among the ones threatening to burn the trans individuals were also women clasping the hands of their children. In an interview, one of those women revealed a secret which no man had confessed: "Now, there is this thing called urban transformation. Our houses will increase in value, but when people see them here they will not buy these houses. Isn't it an injustice to us? Because of these transvestites, the price of the neighborhood falls. We do not want them here."

It was in this neighborhood that I met Michelle for the last time. And what is more, it was the night of July 15. Michelle was not angry or cross with me because I could not make them hire her. I understood it that night. Our morning news were on summer break on July 15, 2016. That Friday night, we were at the wedding of a very dear friend of ours from our team.

The wedding was at a garden in Avcılar. At first, there were tweets about a bizarre situation on the Bosphorus Bridge, then, everyone warned each other saying, "A coup is being staged". The guests started to take off one by one and the bride and groom were left standing there.

We took to the roads as a group of 10 women and men who were all dolled-up for the wedding. We started to walk along the E-5 Highway. We could not understand what was happening. First, we decided to take turns checking the Twitter so that our cell phone batteries would not die. Then, we gave piggyback rides to the friends who were having difficulty walking in high heels.

There was a group of angry people walking towards us. Some of them shouted at a girlfriend of ours, who was elaborately dressed for the wedding and was wearing a mini skirt, "Because of you, there is no suffering we have not endured for the last 90 years. Your end has come", they said. Then, in the middle of this pitch-dark night, I heard a familiar voice as we were passing through the Denizköşkler Neighborhood.

It was no other than Michelle, she was

leaning out of the balcony and shouting at me, "It is very chaotic out there, come upstairs if you like, our girls have a couple of guests, if you don't mind you can rest here for a while". This offer was like an olive branch extended in the middle of a cataclysm. In that moment we were like the characters of a Dali painting. Our last encounter with Michelle was one of those coincidences that happens once in a lifetime.

Now, Michelle is able to continue her profession in Germany. I apologize to everyone. I don't think you expected me or this short article to give advice on how to solve the most important problem of this country, the problem of violence against women!

Besides, I have learnt better from Gülsüm Kav, the General Representative of the "We Will Stop Femicide Platform". Gülsüm Kav told this to me after a performance of mine, whose proceeds were donated to this effective non-governmental organization. That day, in the backstage, Kav thanked me for not being one of those men who advise women on how to combat violence against women.

I made my decision that day. I will keep my opinions to myself and continue supporting women by standing tall beside or behind them whenever they ask. And I will start doing this by apologizing to them...



ABOUT

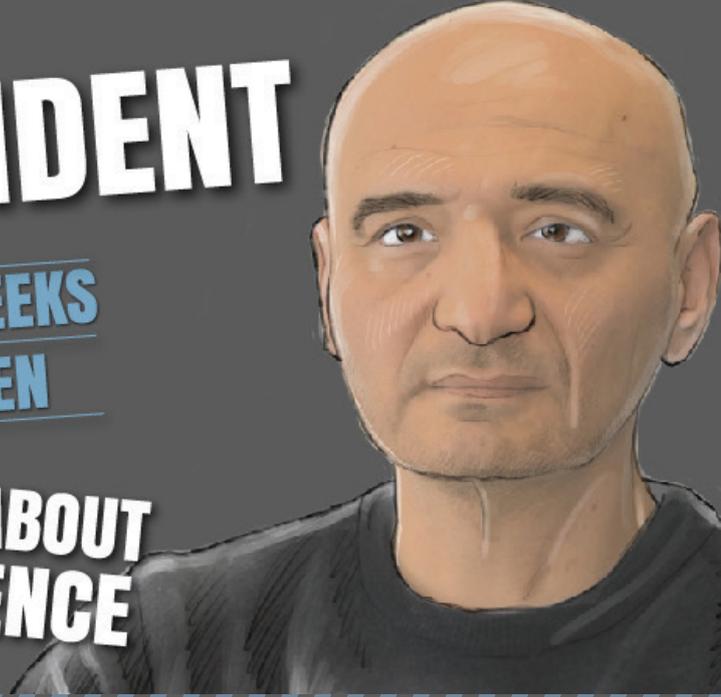
Television programmer, writer, actor. He began working in television when he was a student at Ankara University Faculty of Communication Department of Journalism. For 10 years he worked in the Ankara offices of TV channels Atv, Star, CNNTürk and Kanal D, reporting on actual life stories. Between 2006 and 2017, he wrote and presented the morning news on Fox and Kanal D. In 2017 he tweeted that he would vote “No” in the upcoming referendum which was used as grounds for his dismissal without compensation by Doğan Holding. He is the author of two published novels titled Bir Uyuyup Uyanalım (Let’s Sleep and Wake Up) and Herlanda. He shares his life story with those who come to watch his one-man show titled Anne Ben Artist Oldum (Mom, I became an actor). He was born in 1977 in Ankara.

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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#20 MEHMET
AÇAR**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE

It would do all men some good to watch documentaries about primates that become violent due to testosterone. Perhaps, we can then think that being a human should have a difference and say, "Evolution is a must!"

Have I heard it in a movie or a sitcom? I am not exactly sure. The only thing I remember is that the person who said it was a social scientist and a woman... The sentence was: "I suggest you watch documentaries about primates if you truly want to understand men".

First I laughed hard, then I started watching that kind of documentaries whenever I came upon one. I saw that it was not a very wrong observation... Especially the relation between testosterone and violence in primates was illuminating.

In my childhood, beating was considered a part of childhood education at home and school. Childhood and youth were periods when you were living with the language of violence even if you were not personally subjected to physical violence... And this was the case in every single field of life...

In face of bullies, the good ones were also supposed to know how to beat people up when necessary. In neighborhoods and schools, the balances among men were established through violence or the language of violence. It was a mandate to know how to fight and protect yourself. I don't think the situation is any different nowadays either.

If it all comes down to "taught, learned masculinity", then could it all be about family? I don't think so. For instance, in the all-boys boarding high school I went to, it was a tradition for the boys in upper grades to punish the younger ones by beating them.

Teachers couldn't even lay a finger on the students but the violence of older grades was one of the indispensable elements of school life.

I don't have a bad memory about violence from my high school years except for the slap of an "elder brother" who had set his eyes on my spending money. I don't even count the routine beatings which we accepted as an ordinary part of daily life. They were part of the tradition. Anyways, most of the "elder brothers" who gave us beatings during the study hours were loved. They were just the elder brothers who had to continue the tradition of beating.

Joking aside, frankly there wasn't any major bullying at our school. If you ask why, the bullies were afraid of being tattled on to another elder brother. Telling the school management on the elder brothers for beating us, that is, snitching was the biggest crime one could imagine.

Most of the time the elder brothers wouldn't beat the students in lower grades but in any case the school had unwritten rules and these rules would be enforced through violence.

Let me give you an example. In our first year at school in prep class we were studying together with girls. There were only the elder sisters at school, the elder brothers were at a different building.

In order to maintain order in school and establish their control over us, the elder sisters would say, "If you don't follow the rules we'll give your names to your elder brothers, and next year you'll get your beating". Indeed, we would listen to whatever they said... As a result, that first year at school the elder sisters were calling the shots.

As of 1978, the leftist political organizations had brought an end to the violence of upper grades at school, but they too had fought among themselves, beaten the boycott breakers and snitches black and blue; they couldn't stay away from violence or the language of violence either. Needless to say, the tradition of elder brother beatings was reinstated right after the September 12, 1980 coup.

I really had fun at that school, I had beautiful days there, but it certainly did not change the fact that a system based on brute force was a part of my life.

When I finished the all-boys high school and went to university, I immediately noticed the difference. Because there were girls there, and a civilized, civilian era had started in my education life, albeit late.

I know a lot of men who like to fight or quarrel physically. Most of them are good people. They do not bully anybody, they protect the weak. Some even watch for

an opportunity to protect them. There must be many of you who have witnessed cases where men molesting a woman on the bus are beaten by other men. Many more examples of "acceptable violence" can be listed.

What I am trying to lead up to is this: The language of male violence and brute force dominates all areas of life even though it sometimes sides with the good and sometimes with the bad. This is a kind of spiral of violence.

That spiral is like an energy. The real problem is that all these men who beat and kill people, be it men or women, are fed by the same energy as well. Unless the energy producing that violence is eliminated, the problem will never end.

In fact, it is not too difficult for a man to get out of this spiral of violence, which has seeped into all areas of society, and to keep the testosterone in his body under control.

Most men manage to do it. However, the stronger the bond between violence and the manhood that was "taught" him, the more difficult it becomes for him to actually get out of that spiral. A man who equates anti-violence with weakness, cowardice and spinelessness lives in that spiral all through his life. He has to live there.

Therefore, the idea that male violence and brute force are necessary is like an invisible net spreading over the entire society. The real problem at the heart of the matter is that most people consider it natural and think that it is not all that harmful.

It would do all men some good to watch documentaries about primates that become violent due to testosterone. Perhaps, we can then think that being a human should have a difference and say, "Evolution is a must!".

Or we can rebuild the entire education system based on the elimination of male violence and brute force... But, in a world where power has come to mean everything in every sphere of life, it is undoubtedly not very easy to achieve.



ABOUT

Film critic, journalist, novelist and story writer. Habertürk newspaper film critic. He has been writing film criticism since 1989. He worked as editor-in-chief in the magazines Sinema Dergisi and Digitürk Dergi. He was engaged in amateur theater during his high school and university years; staged works by Shakespeare, Brecht, Beckett, Ionesco, Haldun Taner and Max Frisch, and wrote a theatrical adaptation of a work by Kafka. After the university he worked as assistant director for the VTR production company. He is the author of the books Anarşik Rehavet (Anarchic Lethargy, 1998), Siyah Hatıralar Denizi (Black Sea of Memories, 2000), Hayatın Anlamı ya da Akhisarlı Hasan Tütün'ün Maceraları (Meaning of Life or the Adventures of Hasan Tütün from Akhisar, 2005) and Kayıp Hasta (Lost Patient, 2017). He was born in 1963 in Konya. He went to primary school in İzmir and İstanbul. He graduated from Galatasaray High School and Boğaziçi University Department of English Literature.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#21 MENDERES
SAMANCIAR**



FALSE PARADISE

Every month, either a woman working at a honkytonk was killed or some woman jumped off the iron bridge. The small talk that the men made among themselves was always the same: “They threw the woman off the iron bridge, but my dear brother, she did wrong by those fellows at the next table.”

I think I was around five or six years old when I first started to learn that it was always women and girls who were beaten up at the end of family fights. I didn't really know and wasn't much curious about the reason of those fights.

As the years went by and I began grow up, I gradually began to learn also the reason and the meaninglessness of those beatings. The foremost reason was freedom of thought, sure, paradise was laying at their feet but on the condition that they answered to men about every step they took and every thought they had.

The changes I saw on our women neighbors and the wives of our relatives, who frequented our home, were pretty much the same. Some were coming with a black eye, some with a fractured head or a broken arm. For those who heard or saw these, it was only natural.

"Nothing's the matter, her husband beat her".

I used to hear this sentence most often from women, and especially the eldest, wisest ones.

"My daughter, he is your husband, he will both beat you and love you. Hold your tongue, make a leg, sit still."

Either there were no femicides then or we weren't hearing about it. Since there were no mass communication tools like now, we would hear about a femicide

that happened two blocks from us either months later or we wouldn't hear about it at all.

What we heard most often about the deaths of women and girls was suicide. The easiest way of suicide was to hang one's self and kick away the bucket.

We would hear, for instance, that the new bride Maya over in the other neighborhood hanged herself.

All the neighborhood would go to see the hanging woman and everyone, both those who had seen the dead and those who had not, would together sing long and sorrowful laments that were hard to understand.

Loves in the hearts of young girls required an even greater struggle. If a young girl was in love with someone, she had to keep it a secret. If her elder brothers or father or even a distant relative heard about it, 80 percent of the time it would end in murder.

Last story I witnessed before moving abroad was the story of the eighteen-year-old Suna.

Not allowed to marry her lover, Suna had jumped off the Stone Bridge into the Seyhan river and her body was found three days later in Karataş in the foamy waters of the Mediterranean. People had written epic songs and lamented for her. Then, like any death, Suna's death was forgotten too.

As the smell of death permeated the entire Çukurova [a lowland plain in southeast Turkey], the dark destiny of the woman would blossom anew. In the field, in the struggle, right in the heart of sorrows, blood spills on the face of white-spiked cottons, the bridal veils cry, Çukurova burns, burns and burns...

Most of the women who were killed were working at the honkytonks.

Everyone knows the situation in Adana, this city most definitely had the highest number of honkytonks, coffee houses and open-air cinemas in Turkey. Many of the honkytonks, which could be found in almost every corner of the city, were located along the banks of the river.

The iron bridge built by the French and situated right by the honkytonks was used only by pedestrians and eastbound trains. These voyages and passages continue to this day. Our neighborhood was almost right across the bridge.

Since there were many people from the neighborhood going to the honkytonks as clients, we would hear the honkytonk news before anyone else at the coffee houses and elsewhere.

Every month, either a woman working at a honkytonk was killed or some woman jumped off the iron bridge. The ones who named the women, who were forced by men to work at honkytonks, as "Honkytonk Women" were again the men themselves.

The small talk that the men made among themselves was always the same: "They

threw the woman off the iron bridge, but my dear brother, she did wrong by those fellows at the next table."

These and similar small talks used to drag on and on. All in all, the woman has deserved to die, whatever the man does, he is right, it is a matter of pride, he has even begged the woman: "Please, don't do that, don't go, don't make me kill you..." The stories would begin like that and end after a short while under the sad lights of the honkytonks...

One night, I was walking along the backstreets of Beyoğlu when I heard a woman's scream shattering the world around, it tore one's heart out. The weather was cold as ice, her thin clothes were in tatters, her hands and face were drenched in blood.

The woman was screaming at the top of her lungs: "Yes, you jerk, yes we are prostitutes, but we are prostitutes because you created prostitution by becoming pimps. Is this how we were born from our mothers? You men reduced us to this, you pricks."

When I heard this outcry of the woman, the honkytonks in Adana and the helpless women swam before my eyes, my heart...

 ABOUT

Actor; writes screenplays, poems, song lyrics and stories. He entered cinema with the film İnce Memed Vuruldu (İnce Memed's Been Shot) directed by Yılmaz Duru. He became famous with his roles in the films Kara Çarşafılı Gelin (The Bride in Black Chador), Sis (Fog), Zıkkımın Kökü (Bullshit), Dönersen İslık Çal (Whistle If You Come Back), Soğuk Geceler (Cold Nights), and Bereketli Topraklar Üzerinde (On Fertile Lands). He was selected best male actor three times (Zıkkımın Kökü - 1993 International Adana Golden Boll Film Festival, Babamın Kanatları (My Father's Wings) - 2016 Cinema Writers Association, SİYAD), and best supporting male actor twice (Sis -1989 International Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival, Gözetleme Kulesi (The Watch Tower) - 2012 Golden Boll). He was casted in many international productions. He was born in 1954 in Adana as the last child of a family with eight children.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#22 BARIŞ
ÜNLÜ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

THE WORLD OF THOUGHT AND MASCULINITY

As women become stronger, freer, more autonomous and self-confident, as they enter the labor market more, and compete with men more, and as they change a vast number of men and make “new men” out of them...

For a long time now, I have been living in a world, which we may call the world of thought, that consists of academics and intellectuals. What I mean by the world of thought is that in this world the thought is a value and even a goal in and of itself.

A person who enters this world is expected to live a life of thought, placing the activity of thinking in the center of their life, and believe in the explanatory and transformative power of thought. It means that this person should deepen and expand their thought, try to overcome the obstacles before the thought and if necessary, brave certain risks for the sake of defending their thought because they take the thought seriously.

As an objection, it might be said that such a world is not in the true World, no one leads such a naive life of thought, the activity of thought always comes after other activities and concerns, and the people who take risks to develop their thoughts are always a very small minority everywhere.

Furthermore, it might be thought that the activity of thinking itself takes place within inner walls that are most of the time invisible, so the thought of the person who thinks is inadvertently confined by emotional, class-based, religious, sexual and ethnic boundaries.

But as an ideal, the world of thought takes such criticisms seriously as well, examines them and waits for the subject, whose life of thought continues, to

objectify their world along with the other worlds and even their own self.

This ideal has been continuing its strong and respected existence at least since Socrates and especially for the last two centuries during which the world of thought has gained some autonomy against the society and the state.

We can deduce the unique power of the aforementioned esteem and prestige also by looking at it from the reverse, for instance, by the fact that the people and political movements that attack this ideal are viewed as vulgar and go down in history as such.

I personally entered this special world at the end of 1999 when I became a research assistant at the Faculty of Political Sciences (SBF) in Ankara University. In those times, the faculty was quite different from the SBF of the 1960s and 1970s which Tuğrul Eryılmaz mentioned in his piece also featured in this series. The number of women students and faculty members had increased drastically, making up fifty percent of the student and faculty body.

But more important than the numerical increase was the fact that a significant part of the women academics were feminists. My first encounter with feminism happened in such an environment, a few months after I became a research assistant.

We were having our coffee and cigarettes after lunch and chatting, I don't remember anything about what I was saying save for one word. I remember that word because a feminist friend of mine, who was also a research assistant, had scolded me "You will not say lady, you will say woman!".

The other thing that remained in my memory from that moment and was impossible to forget was the shame I felt. I'd turned red to my ears. But aside from the shame of those days, that scolding did me good.

Thanks to this scolding which I took as an accelerated course, I started to realize that the choice of words is not a simple choice, there is a gigantic history and hierarchy of power behind it; therefore, by the mere act of choosing to use another word for that one, a decision is taken to stop being part of that history and become part of a new world.

I'm using first-person singular here but my experience is not a singular experience. Like everybody else I've also constantly observed how the feminists educated and changed the male academics over the years.

I think the most important factor behind the change was the necessity for change.

Male academics had to change because feminism emerged at SBF (and at other faculties in Cebeci and innumerable universities across the world) with a great and legitimate power that belonged to itself.

In such an environment, the entire manner

of existence and modus operandi of male academics ranging from their thoughts and statements, to the panels they organize and books they edit man to man, from the way they walk and use their hands and arms, to their approach towards women students and their various aggressions including those in their romantic relationships came to be questioned and criticized.

Thus, men started to behave under the scrutiny and by seeking the approval of an imaginary feminist in their minds before they presented themselves to the real-life feminists' critical and seeing eyes.

In his book on the possibility of men changing by refuting patriarchy, bell hooks says that men in fact want to change but they fear the change, and for this reason feminism needs to help men and introduce some maps of change to them. [1]

However, as I mentioned earlier, in certain fields like the world of thought, fear (of falling into contempt, being despised, being left behind) itself can be an instrument for change.

But the reason for change is not only negative, that is to say, change doesn't merely stem from fear or necessity. As men began to lose the power brought by manhood and their male privileges and thus began to establish a more equal relationship with the women around them, they started to get rid of the burdens of masculinity that also crush and rigidify them and simultaneously afflict and banalize them.

On the one hand, this enabled them to see the invisible obstacles surrounding their thoughts, which led them to think more clearly. On the other hand, the romantic and friendly relationships formed with feminist women let them learn a form of intimacy that they were not previously acquainted or familiar with since it entailed a certain equality.

Thanks to this form of intimacy, men could relate to their own feelings, that is, they could start contemplating on what they feel and why they feel like that, which in turn was enabling them to empathize with other people's feelings.

Especially since seeing and knowing yourself better lets one get rid of the banalizing effect of history and society, the men who experienced this felt that they were liberated.

Consequently, in the leftist world of thought which I am a part of, socialist men always wanted to be friends and girlfriends with feminist women. A man, who was together with a woman who is not feminist, was actually taking a decision to keep treading water and this is how it was perceived by his own circle as well.

But there are not many such men in the world that I am a part of. Therefore, the effect of feminism on socialism is not only political and intellectual but also personal. It is no longer possible to think of socialism and feminism separately, even though they are not the same thing.

I am not trying to say that men from the world of leftist thought are completely

ridden of their manhood, crudity, aggression, male bonding, misogyny and do not inflict physical, psychological or sexual violence against women.

These and much more exist in the world of thought as in any field. But in this article—rather than focusing on the existence of the masculinities in the world of thought that are prevalent and dominant in other worlds—I want to address a specific masculinity that is unique to the world of thought and is prevalent and respected in this world: The authority of the male intellectual.

The air/aura of authority that surrounds the personalities of male academicians /thinkers/ intellectuals is created by the command or the claim to have command of knowledge and theory; the domineeringness and self-assuredness that is reflected on their mannerism; the self-entitlement to write on a myriad of subjects always with the same assertiveness; the manner of addressing grand subjects with strong/rigid thoughts or making extremely comprehensive analyses of minor subjects.

Be it the scientific authority created through books and articles, or the opinion leadership created through opinion columns and Tweets, this state of being the seeing/knowing/understanding subject becomes confirmed and completed to the extent that it is followed with admiration and approved by the younger men.

In other words, these performances of masculinity specific to the field of thought, turn into an authority by means

of the admiring looks cast by the male audience. Even though this spell has been partially broken by the objections of women, men manage to sustain their intellectual authorities by containing these objections as well.

For instance, according to J.M. Coetzee, the “rational and secular intellectual” does not get hurt easily, they know that being hurt stems from a weak intellectual position and think that the winner of the free intellectual debate is determined by the rules of the mind. If this intellectual gets hurt and angry by a statement or a criticism, they also deliberate about why they got hurt, namely about their own feelings, and analyze their own feelings, thereby objectifying themselves.

According to the principle of “know yourself” which has retained its prestige since the time of Socrates, the intellectual can face the criticisms about themselves with a smile and encourage them, even the ones that can be regarded as insulting. [2]

Even though Coetzee is a new/soft man/writer in every aspect and undercuts his own authority by constantly relativizing himself, I am of the opinion that this definition of the intellectual can only be made by a man: A type of person who does not get hurt, disregards this feeling even if they get hurt, and appreciates and benefits from the criticisms directed against their own opinions.

However, this is not just a definition. The male intellectuals of this stripe, at least the ones who want to be like that, are really abound and this type of

intellectuality is perhaps the biggest personal ideal for them.

When the discipline of sociology is considered in the same context, I think Pierre Bourdieu, who is perhaps the most important authority of the last fifty years, emerges as an interesting example. As somebody who also studied the ways in which authority is constructed, Bourdieu has himself created his own authority, which is constantly reproduced by his admirers/followers.

He created his own authority through his self-confident and imperious tone, the rich conceptual set that he developed, his field research, his effort of reflexivity and engagement in almost every subject. He went so far as to write on male domination, perhaps with the belief that he could do it better than women in a sense, and by risking from the onset the criticisms that could come from women. [3]

Again, in this context, it may also be interesting to look at the example of Immanuel Wallerstein, who is one of the biggest and most influential figures of historical sociology. With the “world-systems analysis”, conceptual tools and academic theories that he constructed, Wallerstein did not only analyze the history of the world(s), but also made constant projections for the future of the world.

I think that this claim and desire to know, see and foresee everything, which is peculiar to male intellectuals, is accompanied by the feeling that they have the right to do so. Therefore, I have

difficulty imagining a woman historical sociologist, for instance, who could have the desire to assert opinions about such extensive times and spaces, and not contenting herself with the past, would also talk about the future.

Numerous other examples could be found instead of these male intellectuals; however, I have deliberately chosen these names, Coetzee, Bourdieu and Wallerstein, whom I like the most and whose entire corpus I have tried to read. In other words, I have no prejudices or antipathy against these figures. On the contrary, I admire their tones, concepts, their ways of looking and seeing as well as their authority.

However, I still cannot be sure whether this writing and thinking style has something to do with a certain type of manhood and whether my admiration also has something to do with manhood. Is writing and thinking in that way what is supposed to be, I mean, are women also supposed to be able to write and think like that, or, is that really a reflection of the male domination and male ego/narcissism peculiar to the world of thought?

Hannah Arendt, who was one of the rare women thinkers who could compete with the breadth of male intellectuals' areas of interests and their authority-exuding tones in the 20th century, was asked, "Do you want to achieve extensive influence with these works?", her answer to this male journalist—and to the questions in my mind—was as follows: "If I may wax ironical, that is a masculine question. Men always want to be terribly influential..." [4]

However, this observation sometimes causes a strong anxiety inside me. Do I have to give up on what I have written and what I want to write? Can't I write on the subject that I want in the way that I want? Will I lessen myself with my own hands? If I give up on that, too, what will be left behind from Me?

I instantly remind myself that these are not "rational thoughts", but "unstable feelings" and that, as a man changed by feminism, I should not take my Self—at least in its conscious state—very seriously; however, from time to time, I cannot help but feel a wave of anxiety which materializes in this type of questions.

Moreover, I am aware that such anxieties are not peculiar to me, I know that in different contexts and at different moments most of the men around me feel "Now, that's too much, aren't we allowed to do that, either?". Still, in any case, the men in the world of thought have the cultural capital to overcome the crisis of manhood—in other words the fact that their manhood which takes on various forms is seen, questioned and scrutinized—by changing and rising above it.

Since they are expected to have this cultural capital, the men who are petrified in the face of this crisis are not well received in the world of thought and are belittled, which makes their crisis of manhood all the more deep.

However, the crisis of manhood is not limited to the men who have the cultural, social and economic capital to overcome

this crisis by elevating. The majority of men do not have a course of change, or a road map to acquire material or immaterial profit/satisfaction from change.

As women become stronger, freer and more autonomous, as their self-confidence which spreads from the way they carry their bodies to the way they verbally express themselves increases, as they enter the labor market more, and compete with men more, and as they change a vast number of men and make “new men” out of them; men become weaker, they lose some of their privileges, they get scared and furious, they try to cling to their power over women, which is the only power left to them. Moreover, when it concurs with the crisis of the nation-states and increasing economic inequalities/uncertainties, the crisis of manhood intensifies. The hate felt for feminism, which is thought to feminize men and nations, as well as the enmity and violence directed against women and LGBTI individuals increase.

Leaders such as Erdoğan, Trump, Putin, Modi and Orbán, who represent masculinity, power, assertiveness, aggressiveness and fearlessness, emerge as masculine and nationalist heroes who can offset the crisis of men and nation-states, and [they win](#). They try to fortify manhood with nationalism, and the nation-state and their own power with manhood. For instance, Trump winning the Presidential election was probably about the crisis of manhood as much as the crisis of Whiteness (White and “old man” Trump against Black and “new man” Obama).

Even the [“unstoppable rise of veganism”](#) can be perceived as an attack on the power of manhood and nation-state. Even though it can be alleged that the rise of veganism is not directly linked to the rise of feminism (which it probably is), patriarchy’s fear of veganism can be better understood considering that the vast majority of vegans, especially in the West, are women and youngsters.

Feminism and veganism probably represent the strongest tendencies against aggressiveness and violence today.

Several observers, the vast majority of whom are men, and especially Wallerstein say that the World is in a multi-dimensional crisis—including the structural crisis of capitalism—which will continue for decades and its final outcome will be determined by the struggle between the global left and the global right.

Indeed, everyone sees that we are going through an extraordinary period, the center and mainstream have collapsed and the extreme right and radical left have become stronger. Considering the emerging camps of this struggle that will continue for a long time, I think we can make the following generalization even though the real picture is a lot more complicated and irreducible: On the one side, there are states, rightists, nationalists, anti-feminists and “old men”; on the other side, there are grassroots movements, leftists, internationalists, feminists and “new men”.

Then, in such a struggle, do the ones like

Jeremy Corbyn, who is a typical “new man” and has been a vegetarian for more than fifty years, have a chance of winning against those like Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who once said, “No one has the right to turn Turkey into a country of lions condemned to a vegetarian diet”?

Is it possible to fight against the powers that support inequality and employ all kinds of war weapons and physical aggression, by using the anti-violence and ethical methods of those who support equality?

Can feminists win this struggle together with their “male comrades”, whom they have softened and molded into a new type of man? Or, in more general terms, can a power which gradually softens defeat a power which gradually hardens? Even though I tend to answer such questions in the affirmative, they are not rhetorical questions. In other words, I

am not entirely sure about the answers of these questions. But, I am not sure about the rationality of these questions, either, because I cannot help but think that only a man asks this type of terribly big questions.

[1] bell hooks, *Değişme İsteği: Erkekler, Erkeklik ve Sevgi*, çev. Zeynep Kutluata (İstanbul, bgst Yayınları, 2018).

[2] J.M. Coetzee, “Taking Offense”, *Giving Offense: Essays on Censorship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), s. 3-5.

[3] Pierre Bourdieu, *Eril Tahakküm*, çev. Bediz Yılmaz (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2015).

[4] Hannah Arendt, *Formasyon, Sürgün, Totalitarizm: Anlama Denemeleri (1930-1954)*, çev. İbrahim Yıldız (Ankara: Dipnot Yayınları, 2014), s. 40-41

ABOUT

Academician, writer, independent researcher. With the State of Emergency Statutory Decree number 686 issued on February 7, 2017, he was discharged from his post in Ankara University Faculty of Political Science (SBF) where he had been working since 1999. He completed his undergraduate degree in economics and graduate degree in political science at SBF and his PhD in sociology at SUNY-Binghamton University. He has authored the books *Bir Siyasal Düşünür Olarak Mehmet Ali Aybar* (Mehmet Ali Aybar as a Political Thinker, İletişim Publishing, 2002); *Mehmet Ali Aybar'ın Müdafaaaları ve Mektupları 1946-1961* (ed.) (Defenses and Letters of Mehmet Ali Aybar 1946-1961, İletişim Publishing, 2003); *İsmail Beşikçi* (co-edited with Ozan Değer, İletişim Publishing, 2011); *Osmanlı: Bir Dünya-İmparatorluğunun Soykütüğü* (The Ottoman Empire: The Genealogy of a World Empire, Dipnot Publishing House, 2011); *Türklük Sözleşmesi: Oluşumu, İşleyişi ve Krizi* (Turkishness Contract: Its Emergence, Operation and Crisis, Dipnot Publishing House, 2018). He was born in 1975 in Konya.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#23 BAĞIŞ
ERTEN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

GROWING UP AS A BOARDER BLEACHER BOY FROM ÇUKUROVA

Just think about that “mob” that fills the bleachers today, always tending towards violence, in a mood to lynch someone when they come together, and unable to speak without using foul language. They are the very part of this culture of becoming man.

I studied as a boarder. For five years! And like all boarders, I have been proud of it. It felt like an institution for personal growth, maturation. I rid myself of being a “mama’s boy” thanks to that place. I became a “man”. I was 11 years old in my first year. I used to leave home in tears, my mom would wave from the balcony at the corner. And I would go to school dejected. Then I got used to it. I too became a part of that “jungle”. A Lord of the Flies sort of promotion!

There were all kinds of male violence there, always intent on crushing the weak... The kids who didn’t know about masturbation for instance would be mocked. If those who claimed to know it were under “suspicion”, they would be forced to masturbate. The ones who kept to themselves would be given a hard time until they revolted. It wasn’t anything like Dead Poets Society. It was a private school, but there was no poetry as such ...

The last weeks of school would be free-for-all days of torturing the lower grades. Binding those who sleep at night to their bunk beds, breaking the lock and the locker of those who hid the food that was sent from their hometown... There were also the supposedly stealthy “harassments” of the boarder girls. Adolescent games with lots of pushing and shoving. I sweat as I recall them!

The ones who were persecuted the most were “German-Turks”. There were plenty of them at school, they would listen to arabesque music, the girls were extra

self-confident and compared to “us” the normal ones, they were “lowbrows” and “killjoys”. Their accent, music, clothing, everything about them was considered old-fashioned and they would be subjected to many forms of physical and nonphysical violence.

Then we the boys discovered sports. Before and after the study hour, between lunch and dinner... Every free moment was an excuse to run after the ball. Matches between classes, matches between day students and boarders, etc.

Those who couldn’t play were considered losers. If you are so bad that you can’t play basketball or soccer, then you are nothing! That’s why even the most untalented would give it a go. They would at least be rough, give a kick, or shoulder. It was ok if they couldn’t dribble but they couldn’t afford to be soft!

I am a small guy. But I was lucky during that period of puberty for I had an early growth spurt and started getting taller before everyone else. That’s why I wasn’t one of the shortest ones. The shortest, the thinnest, the fattest, the tallest... They suffered the most. They were all subjects of mockery and psychological violence.

I should do right by this column and be honest here. I committed violence too. I remember there was a boy I always treated really bad because he had no talent and was pulling the team down in the dormitory tournament.

Once I even charged at him with the crudeness of growing up in Çukurova. I thought he was a mummy's boy, an apartment kid. I feel embarrassed now as I remember the details.

Then, the construction of our summer house ended, and we started to go to Mersin every year. The boarding school ended as well and the period of "being from Adana" started. A group of boys. We are playing soccer, going to the soccer games, fighting and ogling at the girls. The filthiest period of puberty and of becoming a man. Ugly years under the invasion of pimples and the stench of masturbation. An unnecessary state of red-blooded young maleness and swagger which I could not get over until my university years...

The stories that I am telling here are memories from a theoretically more "decent" boarding school and adolescence. After all I had graduated from a college in İstanbul. But even that was in no way an exception. The prevailing culture of boyhood when we were growing up was more or less like that.

Just think about the "mob" that fills the bleachers today, always tending towards violence, in a mood to lynch someone when they come together, and unable to speak without using foul language.

They are the very part of this culture of becoming man. A mass which does not get in contact with women, socializes only through sports, hangs out only with those who resemble themselves, and hates everything that is different. Those who cannot speak by themselves, but think that bullying with cheers is a show of "character"...

And add to them the adolescents who have and have not grown-up, those who simply cannot leave childhood behind, who attribute a meaning to that adolescent inside them, who think that soccer is their "private" thing and define the bleachers as their legitimate sphere of machismo.

Add to that the constantly recurring talk of the proverbial "manhood".

The gravity of the situation expands even further. Class or identity is of no relevance anymore. All these grown-up people, these educated men ranging from artists to teachers reproduce this machismo over and over again. This is the dark face of the "circle of friends" which is glorified as the bleacher culture!

When I look back, yes, I am still proud of having been a boarding student. I think this is the puberty and manhood syndrome which I cannot figure out either.

There is a very thin line between defining my boarding school as a place of reaching maturity and viewing it as a center of testosterone. I hope that I can now clearly tell on which side I stand.

I hope that I did not tyrannize many people back then. Because it was not a time of “everyone was like that but, I was different”. Everyone was the same thing!

In fact, that is exactly what we need to change. We must destroy that shell, that identity. It is difficult to get anywhere without questioning these displays of manhood inherited from yesterday and without criticizing puberty and soccer as the centers of constant reproduction of sexism, over and over again.

If not then, isn't it high time to do this now?

ABOUT

Editor-in-Chief of Eurosport Turkey, Kadir Has University Sports Media Certification Program director. He writes for Cumhuriyet newspaper. His first article was published in 1994. Since then he has been writing in various media. He worked as editor in İletişim Publishing. He completed his graduate degree in Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, he is a graduate of İstanbul University Faculty of Law. He was born in 1973 in Ankara.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#24 TURGUT
YÜKSEL**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

TRAM OF LUST

That blank look in his eyes gave way to the look that I had seen two years ago; in his eyes, there was no shame or any feeling resembling an acceptance of having been caught red handed.

It was two years ago, I had left work early, back then I was working as a designer at a firm on my off days from school; it was around 5 o'clock if I'm not mistaken. I got on the tram at Merter Tekstil Kent stop, the tram and the stop were quiet as the rush hour hadn't yet begun. I sat on the aisle seat of the section separated with a glass partition at the entrance of the left door.

After staring vacantly around me for a few minutes, I took out of my bag the book I was nearly finished with and started reading. With the crowd getting on at Zeytinburnu stop, first the empty seats and then as per usual the area by the entrance of the door were filled with people.

I involuntarily raised my head hearing the question, "How can we go to Üsküdar?". Two hefty youth in their early 20s were asking an old man for directions. While the old man was telling the shorter one how to get there, I noticed the knives in both youngsters' back pockets, they had their back to me and the handles of the knives were sticking out of their pockets.

The image had struck me, but then I said never mind and went back to my reading. After a while, I raised my head again as someone rather loudly said "Don't block my view!". The youngster who had asked for the way had said this sentence while explaining to the other one what he had learned from the old man.

He was saying this while looking at three young girls whom I had not noticed in the crowd, they must have gotten on at the Zeytinburnu stop. Now, the other guy turned his gaze on the girls too and they started staring at the girls like cats locked on to a bird alight on the street. The girls had become uneasy due to that sentence and their constant stare.

I dropped my book and started to watch the two men, they were slowly moving towards the girls and closing the gap. The three girls drew closer to each other and were now stuck inside the triangle area of the glass partition separating the opposite door from the seats.

I put the book in my bag, rearranged the notebook upright beside the book so they covered more surface area inside the bag. I hung the bag not on my back but across my chest and stood between the girls and the men who were beginning to press against the girls, and I started to stare at their faces. (I always hang my bag across my chest when I get on the tram but this time my intention was to protect my body with the book and the notebook in case they drew out the knives. Suddenly I had fallen from Cortázar's magical realism to the City of God.)

I've seen many threatening looks in my life but I'd never encountered one like this before. They were looking at me like I was a creature that caused their prey to slip through their fingers, and if we were in a deserted alley or if the tram was less crowded those knives would immediately come out. I wasn't imagining things, they were revealing their intentions very clearly with the way they looked at me.

The nervous journey was continuing, along with the uninterrupted stares, it felt like the ride was taking forever. The girls got off the tram at Topkapı together with the crowd. Even though it was no longer crowded where we stood, we did not move and kept the same distance without losing eye contact. When we reached Fındıkzade I got off sliding between the two who were barricading me.

That day and the following couple of days, I thought about that weird trip. Throughout my life, I'd come across many incidents of vulgarism, vandalism, harassment, fighting, which have come to be acceptable parts of daily life, so why was this incident bugging my mind?

Two youngsters had come to a city they didn't know, but they had not come here as guests, for touristic or business purposes, they were not here to keep to themselves. They were seeing this new place as a space where they could readily harass the women they liked and readily stab anyone who stood in their way or whom they bickered with for any other reason.

Like those who consider themselves

entitled to every place their bodies may happen to be... I had started seeing this new species for the last two or three years. When I was trying to understand why this is happening, I think I found the answer. I had to check the metalanguage again...

It was a year ago; this time the destination was Tophane. Over the years I had figured out which coach of the tram would be full at which station, so I got on the first coach. It was not very crowded and I headed towards the corridor behind the cab of the tram driver, which is usually the most quiet part of the tram. (Additional information: This is the coolest part of the tram. It is good in summer, but not recommended in winter.)

At Aksaray station, along with a few other people an Arab woman got on the tram, pushing a baby carriage. She positioned the carriage near the opposite door in a way that would not block anyone's entry or exit and stood next to it. She was a bit on the heavy side. All of a sudden, someone who was sitting on the seat in front of her, and whose face I could not see because his back was to me, began grumbling loudly: "They keep eating and screwing! They turned into pigs from all that screwing. They invaded everywhere and they are still reproducing."

I don't know if the woman sensed that the man was addressing her, but she looked at him. I also don't know if the man was disturbed or encouraged by her look, but he continued his grumbings full of swear words in a voice that was getting louder and louder: "You should fuck them so hard

that they cannot come here again...”

Nobody said anything to the man, who was experiencing a surge of self-confidence and great sexual pleasure at the same time. They were listening in silence to the insults not directed at them as if they were listening to the sermon of an imam. Or they were keeping silent in order to stay out of trouble. I interrupted his lustful speech by saying, “Keep your opinions to yourself, stop broadcasting them live here!”

He turned around and looked at me with sparkles coming out of his eyes. I knew this look from the previous year. This time, I was not like a creature that made his prey run, but like a creature that did not let him play with the prey he had caught...

Then, a woman who was sitting at the other end of the corridor intervened by saying, “Yes, stop behaving rudely”. With a number of other critical voices raised, the man stopped speaking. When getting off in Beyazıt, he again looked at me with the same feeling and I did the same...

It was a month ago; I got on the tram at Haseki station to go to school, it was very crowded. Seeing that I could not go any further than the middle part of the coach, I stood there. Two women who were speaking in Russian and had boarded the tram with me found themselves a place on my left; my face was turned towards them. A man, who had also boarded the tram with us, stood beside them.

His face was turned towards me. Though everyone was close to each other, it

was not such a tight squeeze, that is, if somebody were touching another they would be suspected of bad intentions rather than absent-mindedness. All of a sudden, the woman, who was standing right next to the man and talking to the other woman, turned her head to the right, and looked down and then at the man who was standing next to her. He was looking at the screen in the tram with a blank face.

Then, I looked at the hand of the man. He was holding a half liter plastic bottle of water. I started to watch the movements of his hand. The moment he thought the tram oscillated in his favor, he was rubbing the leg of the woman with the upper part of his free hand, which he camouflaged with the bottle of water. The woman looked at him one more time, she either thought that he touched her by mistake because of the bottle of water in his hand or she could not say anything because she could not speak Turkish.

Seeing that the man was going to make the same move again, I looked at him in the eye and said, “Don’t do that!” He answered, “What am I doing?” and looked blankly at me, with a touch of defiance at the same time.

“I know what you are doing, don’t you ever do that again!”

That blank look in his eyes gave way to the look that I had seen two years ago; in his eyes, there was no shame or any feeling resembling an acceptance of having been caught red handed. He was again looking at me like I was a creature that caused his prey to slip through his fingers. And again,

if we were in a deserted alley...

I got off at Cevizlibağ station. This time, I did not ponder over it too much.

Because, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way..."



ABOUT

Writer-illustrator-faculty member. He worked in numerous newspapers and magazines as writer and illustrator. He authored 11 books and co-authored two books and four collective volumes. He contributed to several books as editor and designer. He had five solo exhibitions and participated in 11 group exhibitions. He curated the Oğuz Aral retrospective exhibition. He gave seminars and trainings on design and communication.

He continues to work, teach, and also produce programs for Açık Radyo.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#25 FIRAT
YÜCEL**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

CONFESSION AND CONFRONTATION MAY ALSO BE A MASCULINE SHOW OF FORCE

For instance, if you talk about the meaninglessness of statements such as “He is not that kind of man”, the first thing you see will be an extremely puzzled expression on their faces...

I have an unfinished dissertation on the issue of confession and its renditions in cinema.

When I was working on this dissertation, I had realized that masculinity, as a gender, constructs itself with a retrospective look as much as daily life performances: with confession, confrontation, delayed regrets, reparation of hurt pride, a never-ending desire for forgiveness...

Laid before me I had a corpus of confessions stretching from Saint Augustine to Rousseau and of course countless individual bourgeois narratives (novel, memoir, self-help, etc.) of our present day.

And of course, there were the writings of theorists who probed the relationship between the performance of confession and the power, authority. Especially Michel Foucault, Kojin Karatani, Mark Nişanyan.

Those who emphasize that when attributing a positive role to confessions, apologies, regrets and compromises we should be mindful of their "timing"; that the confessions made at the opportune time become an instrument of vindication and of acquiring a role in the new power blocks...

On one hand I was grappling with these infinite intellectual materials, and on the other I was pondering what sort of a language this obsession with confession creates in cinema. Images and sounds

were wandering in my mind, images and sounds which are mostly created by and pointing at men...

Bergman, Antonioni, Tarkovsky, Nuri Bilge Ceylan, Zeki Demirkubuz, Semih Kaplanoğlu...

The male figure, who after many years confronts his wrongdoings, mistakes, the things he did and could not do, and after lording it over (finally) sheds a tear...

The male characters who get melancholic while looking out the window...

Countless movies that focus on men's world of emotion... The men who look back and pour out their confessions on paper or film stock with the tools of the modern world...

I gradually started to ask the following questions: Why is it that in all these movies, critical reviews automatically attribute virtue to the reticent male figures who look into the distance, sigh and think, and only at the end of the movie unburden their hearts or don't unburden at all (as if it is only they who have comprehended the deep absurdity of life)?

Is it possible that in the background of men reigning over this artistic language that exposes the "human soul", there is not only instrumental domination and modern concerns such as being someone and going down in history, but also a sort of fear of being judged?

Is it possible that the reason why men are so prone to confession and inner-confrontation is because they are afraid of letting others evaluate their own lives?

How much does this have to do with wishes such as, making sense of your life on your own, returning to the field of language by yourself, determining your boundaries yourself, and preventing others from entering that personal sphere of meaning?

I cannot say that I was able to pursue these questions for long, but I can say that the most frequent form of behavior I have observed both in myself and in a broader sense among the men in my circle is the state of not being able to cope with guilt.

The inclination towards this style of confession/self-confrontation oriented narrative should be somehow related to this.

Being judged and accounting for one's actions...

When it is about themselves, men want to undertake these themselves. Maybe this is why any criticism, warning or judgement coming from outside lead to major crises for most men. (When men are criticized, expressions such as "accusation", "lynching", "defamation" spread rapidly and the dosage or tone of the criticism doesn't usually make a difference.)

There is the following defense motive behind this: It is I who knows me best, I will be my own judge and pass my own sentence on myself. We shouldn't forget that self-criticism, language of confession,

claims of honesty and candor, and even confrontation (supported by rhetoric like "I confronted the darkneses of my soul") has such a dimension—of considerable gravity no less—and can become a part of the masculine show of force.

Men very much enjoy talking about their feelings of guilt and past mistakes both in daily life and in their artistic productions.

However, when it comes to taking responsibility for a behavior, an attitude or a sexist statement in its simplest sense, they view the criticism/objection in question as an insult to their personalities and try to evade it quickly. They build high walls of defense around them in a highly organized and rapid manner...

"He is not that kind of man", "he would never do such a thing", "I know him very well", etc.

All of a sudden, you start hearing such statements from many people around you.

If you dare say something against the alliance of "He is not that kind of man", you feel that a great wall is wholeheartedly being built against you.

It becomes ever more difficult to explain even an extremely simple thing, namely that such a sponsorship cannot whitewash anyone, and it cannot be assumed of anyone that they will behave in the same manner throughout their lives.

The organized manner of men manifests and reproduces itself not only in the public sphere, on social media or in discussion platforms, but in the private sphere as well.

When men are socializing with each other, they tend to assume that they are all on the same front.

It is as if it is not possible for a man to think differently than another man. I have witnessed several times that men view this possibility virtually as ignoring a previously signed pact.

For instance, if you talk about the meaninglessness of statements such as “He is not that kind of man”, the first thing you see will be an extremely puzzled expression on their faces...

Next thing you know, that puzzled expression has fallen to pieces, and the man is continuing his own talk as if nothing has happened. Being unable to deal with a thought or an argument that would speak ill of his personality and passing over it, not listening and not wanting to understand it...

The organized manner of men manifests itself not only in the domination over the word, but also in the dominance over deciding what is worth listening to and what is not.

Moreover, with the recent wave of “anti-political correctness”, the state of not listening and the habit of viewing all opposing comments as a threat to their sphere/freedom of expression have gained further ground.

Frankly speaking, in culture-art-cinema circles I have witnessed that it is the statements that go against the grain, rather than the production of political statements, that are labelled as politically correct and suppressed; and I have also witnessed

that this is done mostly by the men who are somehow blamed or who are afraid of being blamed.

The monopoly of masculine word is mostly protected in this way: By characterizing the criticisms as politically correct interventions and trivializing them.

Probably the scene that I have most frequently witnessed is this: When a statement is not liked, it is brushed aside by statements such as “You are looking at it politically”, “You are being partial”, etc. Protection of the political status quo with such evasions...

It is often said that there is no culture of self-criticism in Turkey and it is true; but there is a problem even more vital than that: The discrediting and marginalization of criticism through the above-mentioned mechanisms.

We can probably think of self-criticism as monologue and criticism as dialogue; the elimination of dialogue always plays into the hands of those who have the monopoly over words.

He is not that kind of man... It is a petrification brought about by the luxury of not being held accountable and by the shows of “I am only accountable to myself”. The thinking man wants to be like his sculpture and be deemed unchangeable.

His view of criticisms as insults to his personality is not only about his avoidance of responsibility, but also about his own self-image being based on a fantasy of unchangeability.

“Live your life, you will evaluate it yourself when you gather enough experience” is the life formula which helps the thinking man escape the responsibilities of present time and the critical gazes.

For this reason, if you ask me, we should not look in the mirror any more. On the contrary, we should start by learning to listen to what others say, especially to the ones who have organized against patriarchy. We should start right now, not when the opportune time comes.



ABOUT

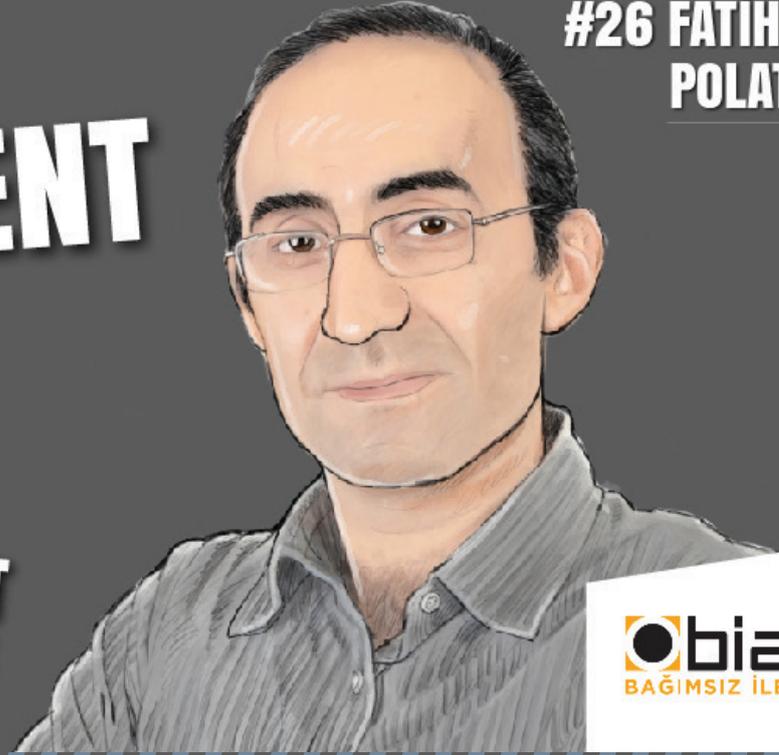
Editor-in-Chief of Altyazı monthly cinema magazine which he began to publish with his friends from university when he was editing the program booklet of Mithat Alam Film Center that was opened in Boğaziçi University in 2000. His articles and interviews were published in various magazines such as Asklepios, VS..., Konak Beykoz, İstanbul, Geniş Açı, Katharsis, Bant, Rolling Stone, Aralık, Picus and newspapers including Akşam, Radikal and Birgün. He worked in short film music and edited İf İstanbul Independent Film Festival catalog. He studied sociology first at Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) then at Boğaziçi University.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#26 FATİH
POLAT**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

STATE OF MANHOOD: A COMFORT THAT WILL VOID CONFRONTATION WHEN YOU LET YOURSELF GO

The things that you think you have accumulated thus far can also become void very quickly. In other words, there is no such thing as “I have overcome it”. It is a reality that needs to be confronted everyday over and over again.

“Hi Fatih. Maybe it has come to your attention. In 2018, *bianet* began a year-round series of articles called ‘52 Men Are Writing on Masculinity and Male Violence for 52 Weeks’. The articles have been published since the new year. I am the coordinator of this series.

“The purpose of this article series is to record the ideas, opinions and in fact the experiences of men, who are prominent in their respective fields, about masculinity and male violence. I’d very much like it if you would write an article for this series as well.”

This email from my dear friend Şenay Aydemir whom I worked with for long years gave me pause. I was reading that series. And I thought it was important because it was an invitation to a confrontation that is seldom done by men.

However, from my point of view, the sincerity and authenticity of everything that I put my name under was of vital importance. If I was going to write such a piece, I was either going to lay myself completely open or not write at all. Playing safe with vague sentences that don’t let on whether one is criticizing or praising themselves did not sit well with me.

I feel that I am a person who has overcome the nervousness of confronting myself in public space as well, but I was worried for a few reasons, primarily the social contexts that I am in and how the people in my life would be affected by the story I was to tell about myself.

As I pondered this subject, asking myself “Should I write?”, I thought that I first need to consult my ex-wife who has a profound meaning in my life, we lived together for seven years and broke up eight years ago.

By the way, I did not remarry again but I say “ex-wife” because I can’t find a technically more correct expression. She encouraged me to write this article and thus I have her permission to talk about the period that concerns her as well.

In fact, the childhood period is also a striking part of this story. However, it doesn’t seem possible to me to obtain the approval of my siblings and mother on this matter, therefore I decided to write those parts by taking this fact into consideration.

Here I go.

Like many of us, I was born into a family in which patriarchal relations are determining. My mother and father had immigrated to İstanbul from Erzurum 52-53 years ago. Even though I was born and raised in Turkey’s biggest city, the introversion caused by the phenomenon of immigration has had an influence in shaping me since my childhood.

My father was a supporter of the Justice Party and he determined the family’s political and psychological map until we three siblings grew up. Then he lost this authority.

Due to the aforementioned reasons, I cannot go into the saddening, hurtful aspects of the relationship between my parents caused by my father's attitude towards my mother.

But still when I look back, the attitude of my father, whom I remember with respect for his other traits, against my mother is the childhood wound of my life which has affected me and made me think "my relationships should be different".

My childhood passed in Eyüp where I was born and raised. During my childhood years, what kept me away from joining a gang was my passion for sports and reading. In those years, I was mostly reading *Il Grande Blek*, *Captain Miki*, *Red Mask*, *Zagor*, *Bonanza*, *Mister No*. I was constantly buying these books with the pocket money my father gave me and devouring them in no time.

I was going through them so fast that I ran out of money. Finally, I found the *Il Grande Blek*, *Captain Miki* barter stands set up in front of the—long gone—Zengin Movie Theatre in Gaziosmapaşa which wasn't very far from our home.

When I looked back after years, I realized that all those heroes that I read with admiration were all men and that this was actually reproducing the relationship formed between masculinity and heroism over and over again.

Perhaps the biggest contribution of those books to my later life is the never-ending passion for reading. Reading was like a door of meaningful transformation for me who was born in a slum.

I've always thought that Émile Zola's *Germinal*, which was recommended by my teacher in the English course I attended during my high-school years, was a leap for me. Before that, I had started reading Yaşar Kemal, Aziz Nesin, Rifat Ilgaz but Zola had an effect on me which was like a further expansion of the horizon that they had opened up.

Later on, two teachers who contributed most to my intellectual evolution during my university years were women. Eser Köker and Meral Özbek. And like many young people who leaned towards socialism step-by-step, I was considering the state of constant self-confrontation as the first step of development.

In those years when I was reading the socialist writings, I also read a lot about women's struggle for freedom, and "confronting patriarchal relationships" was one of the main subjects of our talks as friends inside the youth struggle.

Surely it was no easy feat to overcome neither that inherited comfort passed on to us men from our fathers and grandfathers nor the relationship and tension between that comfort and the newly acquired "must"s and "should"s.

In the family environment, where I spent my childhood, there was no such thing as division of domestic labor. In this sense things were run in a patriarchal order and it was over time that I and my brother began to participate in domestic work.

I had realized the effects of this in my home environments during my university years as well.

My flatmate Baki gave me a photograph as a gift; it was a picture of me cleaning the house back in those years and on its back he wrote, "This snapshot is a sign that revolution can also come true one day."

I have had male friends who are more skillful and involved in housework than me. The attitude towards housework is surely only one of many criteria in terms of male-dominated relationships and a person's self-assessment cannot remain limited to it. Anyways I am mentioning this part merely as a confession of one of my flaws.

I can say that, in the following years, the transformative part of my process of confronting "the dominant state of manhood" was predominantly during the time of my marriage. I have always called the impact of my wife on me as an "exercise in carving".

When I wrote her to get her permission before drafting this piece, she told me, "Let's not call it carving. But, of the men who are with feminist women, the ones who have a tendency to transform undergo a transformation. Actually, I was just trying to explain myself to you".

Though my wife, as a graceful and understanding woman, describes the situation in this way, I still think that this process was an exercise in carving, or in the sense they taught us in my vocational high-school, a sort of "filing and grading".

My wife is one of the architects of my current graded state. I feel that her being a sociologist has also had a positive

impact on this transformation process.

Seven years after we got divorced, at a dinner we had together drinking raki and talking about our married years, one of the things that we recalled was my first experience of wearing sandals in the city, in daily life when I was not on holiday.

I think that among the leftist men involved in political organizing, the ones who have gone through a similar history like me tend to prefer clothes in dark and dull tones. At least in my generation this is the case. I don't know if it is one of those "serious man" attitudes, but it is like that. It was during those seven years when I was married with my wife that I plucked up the courage to wear clothes with more vivid colors.

Let's return to the sandals. We had chosen the first sandals that I wore in the city together and she had encouraged me to buy a pair with a more modern style falling outside the established patterns of manhood.

But even these sandals' color was somewhere between gray and black. I was going to buy a pair of sandals with more vivid colors in the years to come. So be it, this too was a step. And years later my wife told me at that dinner:

Evidently, one night when I got back home from the newspaper, I turned to her and said in a nervous (!) manner, "The grocer looked at my sandals". I cannot tell you how much we laughed at this years later.

It was in fact a way of bemoaning that "the grocer treated me as if I was

effeminate”, and when looking at it from the other way around, it was also a donnée for reconsidering the fact that the women in this country experience more serious and traumatic things every day.

I will move on to an example that has remained as a wound inside me, one that I have to express.

At a moment when we were quarreling and our voices were raised, I remember having said to my ex-wife, “Stop nagging”. It was actually an abusive and sexist manner of discourse targeting women which we have acquired, learned and maintained throughout generations within our world. I am also associating it with the fact that both of the two women who shared my life have told me, “You are not listening to me”.

I was claiming that I was listening to them; but, this fact which was expressed to me twice shows that I am not a good listener to the women I live with and that when I’m cornered I try to escape with the help of sexist statements such as “stop nagging”.

And, the women whom I have worked with also have an important place among the ones who have contributed to whatever transformation I have managed to undergo thus far.

Working with intellectually and professionally competent and strong women for long years keeps a person awake in this respect as well. I should also give credit to my women friends in my continuing life in organized labor, as well as the life experience that we have accumulated together.

In the meanwhile, no matter how much I think that I prioritize a democratic functioning in my workplaces as the basis, as a man who has long worked as an executive, I am sure that the mark my women friends would give me in that respect would reflect the reality better.

Because, since the state of manhood, together with everything that it comprises, is like an official ideology, I think that it can be seen more nakedly when looked at from the opposite side.

In the last analysis, that a man confronts the male-dominated relationships is something that needs to be reconstructed every day. Because it provides men with such a comfort, which at times we probably do not even notice, that the moment you let yourselves go, you return to that comfortable state of manhood.

The things that you think you have transformed and accumulated thus far can also become void very quickly. In other words, there is no such thing as “I have overcome it”. It is a reality that needs to be confronted everyday over and over again. In terms of the history of a socialist man there is also the ritual of the “serious man” which I should make note of. This ritual, which is sometimes personal and sometimes nurtured by the social environments we live in, actually sticks the male-dominated values on us quite easily. Lightening up a little would not give anyone a bad name.

 ABOUT

Journalist, editor-in-chief of Evrensel newspaper. Member of Türkiye Gazeteciler Cemiyeti (Journalists Association of Turkey) and Türkiye Gazeteciler Sendikası (Journalists Union of Turkey), works in Ben Gazeteciyim İniyisatifi (I am a Journalist Initiative). He began journalism in 1991 at the weekly news magazine Nokta. He worked as a reporter and Ankara correspondent of weekly Gerçek magazine. He served in various posts at Evrensel newspaper since its foundation in 1995. He graduated from Ankara University Faculty of Communication Department of Journalism. He authored articles on journalism in various volumes. He was born in 1969 in İstanbul.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
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**MEN WRITE ABOUT
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**#27 TANIL
BORA**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MAN-TO-MAN

The impoliteness savored in a state of relief when hanging out man-to-man multiplies the artificiality of the politeness shown to women - it becomes the fuel of the violence and roughness that will explode when the necessity of politeness disappears.

Let me start by introducing a ragged, gloomy scene:

“I was in my pajamas. I was in need of getting dressed. At the very least I had to gather my medicine to take with me. I got up, started to get ready but the lieutenant colonel wasn't leaving the room. I told him that he had to leave. 'Why? We both are men', he said. I answered him: I reminded him that there is a maxim of politeness among men. Then he left me alone.”

These lines are from Celal Bayar's prison diary kept in Kayseri jail (October 5, 1963).

Women as well may have the aptitude for cancelling privacy when they are among themselves, I don't know. I don't think it extends as far as it does among men.

“Aren't we all men” is a great tool to ward off privacy. Because being man-to-man is thought to open the door to sincerity, transparency and honesty. Candor of “having nothing to hide”. Vast and “genuine” sincerity that is believed to be possible only among men.

However, the right to privacy is a measure of civilization. It is not an opportunity “to be able to hide” something because what privacy protects is a person's right to be on one's own, to have their own space, their autonomy. That man-marking of being man-to-man is an obstacle even to the autonomy of “the man”...

“Let's have a man-to-man talk”. It's an invitation of a father to his son, an uncle

to his nephew, and sometimes a friend to his friend, an invitation that is at times mixed with a challenge. Speaking man-to-man does away with privacy, moreover it provides an opportunity for the uncanny, the obscene to uncloak. Door of secrets is passed through and salvation is reached. Speaking man-to-man whets the feeling of honesty and sincerity, it equips one with a noble feeling of being chosen against the dishonest and insincere world (which includes the “ignoble” ones as well as the women).

According to evolutionary psychologists, historical anthropologists and whatnot, the aptitude towards violence and aggression increases in all mammalian communities that consist of males. During the colonization of western America, for instance, homicides decreased with the arrival of women, as the women population grew.

Being man-to-man may act as an incitement to let oneself go, be impulsive, run rampant. Customarily, man-to-man conversations among teenagers tend to turn into a feast of recklessness. With an appetite to appease the hunger of the times spent in the company of women and girls, as it were...

The warning of “There are ladies here”... The efforts to increase the number of women in the bleachers at soccer matches... The shipshape festivities that brought the boarding school boys together with the girls studying at military schools, which went on until the 1970s I think... These are all arrangements aimed at disciplining the havoc caused by being man-to-man...

I do not know if they had it in our school as well. But when I was studying as a boarding student in the 70s, perhaps because there were also girls in the class as day students, it was not deemed necessary to organize such bonding-civilizing events. But then we were not quite civilized. By and large, we remained aloof from even the ranks of being human by day and boor by night; we were boors during the day as well.

Being man-to-man at night was so principal, so binding and it was so self-sufficient and created such an authority of surveillance that there was only one way to look at girls, even a “friendly” relationship was an object of ridicule. Later, when we finally wrapped our heads around it, we—at least, some of us—tried to fix it. Today, when we are among friends (man-to-man!), we boo ourselves.

I become uneasy when the way a man conducts himself among men is too different from the way he conducts himself in the company of women. With some of them, playing “cool”, being polite and acting “cautious” around women is anyways a telltale sign that all this politeness (including that “politeness among men” which Celal Bayar

mentioned) will disappear when he is hanging out man-to-man.

In fact, for them, the man-to-man talks are free fields where they are relieved of the burden of politeness. Politeness is something like an after-shave that you put on your face when you appear before women. It is not an immanent value. It is an instrument, a resource to be used in creating an impression. A limited resource. A resource that will be consumed only when it is necessary, a resource that will be used sparingly.

Needless to say; affixed to politeness, which in the assembly of men is suspended on the hanger of all things superfluous, is also a femininity and “what’s more” a suspicion of homosexuality as well. Politeness is regarded as coquetry and is the “border gate of cilvegözü” (the eye of coquetry)! When women and “especially” homosexuals do not restrain themselves, when they speak “explicitly” and even use slang, the most manly gatherings hide behind the cloak of politeness in any case. The false politeness of limited liability is also the warden of homophobia.

There is a fuse extending from that liberty, which is attributed to the man-to-man relationship, to the false politeness “offered” to women. The impoliteness savored in a state of relief when hanging out man-to-man multiplies the artificiality of the politeness shown to women - it becomes the fuel of the violence and roughness that will explode when the necessity of politeness disappears.



ABOUT

Editor in İletişim Publishing and Birikim journal. Predominantly works on political ideas and ideologies in Turkey. He authored books and made translations on this subject. He graduated from İstanbul Erkek Lisesi (İstanbul High School) and Ankara University Faculty of Political Science. He was born in 1963 in Ankara.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#28 TAN
MORGÜL**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU LOOKING AT!

It is like a formula that a species has developed to rehabilitate and destroy itself, a sort of food poisoning:

Manhood and violence as its "truest" son.

Everything will start anew by learning how to vomit!

There are many things to say, I am frightfully confused, so the mode of this piece will be cacophonous. That's why, please "listen" to this article as a sigh!

It is obvious that there is an affliction concerning a "species", an individual of the "species" and, as per our subject, the geography. For we don't know of any other creature that—save for natural occasions of feeding and reproduction—breeds aggression towards just about everything.

Nevertheless, let us put aside the forms of collective male violence that for centuries have caused a bloodbath the world over and have gone on a rampage in the last century. For the human condition that fosters all this malice and starts seething on the street, at home, in school, in the workplace, in traffic and in childhood and adolescence, which is the incubation period of the affair, is quite ugly...

It's customary, when asked to write on such big issues we quickly double back and look at our childhood. For what's happening is a curse-of-the-species reasoning on the lines of "dude, this is how it was in childhood too", as the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined.

Ok, it will a bit over the top but if there was the means and possibility, how many children on our street, in our neighborhood (needless to say all are boys) would not be eager to take role in William Golding's *Lord of the Flies*.

Anyhow, some of them grew up and

brewed their own rampage in the classes on Government and as per its means took role in those "movie"s, and continue to do so.

If there is a trick plotted by grown up men, surely it has an adaptation for children as well. Even more, given the proper paraphernalia, this would be an adaptation with a significant scale of violence; please, before you object, let us take a quick ride to childhood and back.

If that proves difficult no need to stray too far; let us take a look at the massacres carried out by little boys in American high schools starting with Columbine. However, in this case, the child (or childhood) can be categorized as victim rather than culprit. On account of being a social being, molded with learned experiences, etc. But in any case, it is obvious that a position is taken on the existential road with respect to the structure of power-authority.

That is, all roads lead to Rome!

This is a horrible circle; male violence can turn even its victim into a zombie. Surely you didn't think that the most naïve, physically "fragile", cowardly and overweight boys with glasses, who are always the first ones to be chucked away in youth films, would quietly sit back and watch all the goings-on.

Of course, they too would have a revenge plan, I mean life would be unbearable otherwise...

Especially if those plans grant the right to be included in the collective manhood performances that are under the inspection

and auspices of the authority in power. Being naïve, meek, fragile and cowardly is a childhood “trouble”.

In fact, everything has started beautifully, it doesn't cross his mind to hurt anyone, this is a quiet, pleasant life in the arms of motherly love.

Then that other life begins on the street, in the school with the “bad” boys. He is mocked, punched, either excluded from the games or constantly scolded, his glasses are thrown on the floor, often “threatened” with being sent to play with the “girls”.

Each street game, each playtime is hell.

I remember in my high school years we had such a friend who would not leave the classroom during the break times, he would sometimes bury his head on the table and not raise it until the next class. And from time to time, in order to keep people at bay (because no one approached him out of the kindness of their heart or for a friendly chat), he would clench his teeth, knit his eyebrows, squint his eyes and stand at a corner.

But, the worst of all was that time when in order to revolt against yet another session of evil, he started to bang his head against the table. That thin, naive boy, whom we tried to stop by holding his shoulders, had acquired the strength of a grown man while hitting his head against the table. It was a moment to make even a person with the least conscience detest everything about life.

But, the worst of all is the inability to deal the final blow to that collective

“lynching” which will bring everything that is happening to an end... Coalescing with the fear of being excluded from the “pack of men”, which is one of the most bizarre forms of violence... The day when the last school bell rang must have been the happiest day in the life of our friend.

There are certainly a vast number of children who spent their childhood subjected to all these bellows and abuses of bullies. A life brewing in the fears, rages and sorrows of all these subordinated children... Now, the country as a whole is the victim of the bellows, abuses and beatings of that manhood.

It is enough to even take a “look” at what has been happening; but, the answer as well as the verbal and physical composition resulting from that answer is ready: “What the hell are you looking at?”

Manhood, which acts with a virtually perpetual and insatiable instinct of “reproducing-hunting”, has descended upon us like an incubus. It is such a performance that the whole street looks as if it sprang out of a phony physical education class; chests are bulging, puffed out, shoulders upright, heads cocked out ready to butt, legs wide apart like a crab, lower lips nailed under the upper teeth, neck veins bulging, hands open, arms at shoulder-length, vocal cords like buttermilk, and stashed away are jimmies, stones, sticks, knives, and worst of all, guns.

And, in the face of all this malice, a wounded society, which somehow makes it home safe and sound and dreams of a “Messiah” that will just appear in the middle of the movie and take them out

of this collective beating and abuse. But, the most bizarre of all is that when the Messiah comes that subordinated boy who “hit his head against the table” does not seem willing to leave the things to be done in the hands of that holy person.

Sometimes, such a blind, strong and limitless show of manhood tends to make the people subjected to it childish; the tendency to make people escape into that unrestrained, disconcerting and careless states of childhood...

As the dream would have it, when the Messiah comes, he is not expected to talk to the people and persuade them to be decent. Since it is he who dreams, then, whatever that subordinated “child” wants to happen will happen. First, he will be made happy, because he has had enough and is sick and tired of what he has suffered.

The one who has made him suffer will

pay dearly for all the wrongs done to him, he will be beaten good and proper, “the living daylight will be knocked out of him”, his every living moment will be made miserable, his house will be destroyed, his world will collapse around him, he will be driven from pillar to post, and...

Easy!

It is truly an awful virus; a virus that obscures the line between the victim and the villain, a virus that can always find a body to lay its eggs on; an ancient virus whose roots lie hidden in the depths of time. It is like a formula that a species has developed to rehabilitate and destroy itself, a sort of food poisoning: Manhood and violence as its “truest” son. It will take time to heal!

And everything will start anew by learning how to vomit!

ABOUT

Journalist-writer-traveler. He was born in 1973 in İstanbul. His articles, interviews and research on subjects such as social and urban movements, right to freedom of movement, soccer culture, environment, travel and food culture have been published in various books, magazines, newspapers and on the internet. He was the editor-in-chief of the magazine İstanbul Dergisi during its final two and a half years. Together with Nedim Şener and İrfan Bozan he partook in the research coordinated by Binnaz Toprak titled “Türkiye’de Farklı Olmak: Din ve Muhafazakarlık Ekseninde Ötekileştirilenler” (Being Different in Turkey: Religion, Conservatism and Otherization). For two and a half years he wrote on fish culture for Radikal newspaper. He wrote articles for Rakı Ansiklopedisi (Rakı Encyclopedia) and Açık Radyo Ansiklopedisi (Açık Radyo Encyclopedia). With Ulus Atayurt he co-authored the book Meyhanes and Fish Restaurants of İstanbul. He is the author of 2014 Gourmand Award winner Rakı and Fish: A Mediterranean Seafood Odyssey. He is the screenwriter and producer of the documentary İstanbul Meyhaneleri: Vuslatın Başka Alem (Meyhanes of İstanbul). He is the publishing coordinator of İthaki Publishing series called Futbol Kültürü Kitapları (Books on Soccer Culture). He lives in London.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#29 HAŞMET
TOPALOĞLU**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

IT HANGS IN THE AIR

Or can we be stronger and free from violence now that we have expressed them? We are slowly raising our heads and looking at the sky. With the footnote that they have been lived, heard, seen and imagined..

Hanging in the air, intense and silent. I don't need to lift my head and look; I know it's there. It's always been there anyways. For as long as I can remember violence hovers over us blatantly.

It's sure of itself because it knows that it's rooted in us.

When the dinner is late my father heads to the kitchen with harsh movements, he hastily takes some cheese and tomato from the fridge and sits at the table. That was the limit of his tolerance.

He eats quickly. He frowns and knits his eyebrows. The dinner is ready now but he does not touch the plate, does not look at my mother, does not talk.

Violence has turned to silence, and now it's spread to the whole living room and even to the corridor and the rest of the house. I am aware that I won't be able to breathe even if I go to the back room.

I don't have a name. None. None at all? No, none at all.

I cannot understand how it happened. My name wasn't mentioned even as class president let alone when they were reading the names of cluster heads.

The feeble girl with her hair in plaits is smiling, actually outright laughing. She is now the president of three joined rows of eight people. Her looks say, "Now it's my turn". It seems she will take revenge for last year.

Why would I be jealous of her; she cannot even point the location of Yugoslavia on the map. It feels like the class is closing in on me. The bell rings, I jump from my seat. As I pass by her, my elbow hits her back, a bit harsh. She starts crying right away.

It wasn't that bad, what's the big deal!

Our neighbor woman comes back from the market. She unloads virtually the entire market at the doorsteps of the building. She is exhausted, rings the doorbell of her own apartment. The only reaction from the household with five men is to buzz her in.

No one is coming down, looking down the window or calling out to ask whether she needs help. They don't care, they don't mind.

Anyway, all we've heard to date from the other side of the wall are overbearing screams, demands in the imperative, curt replies. Ahead of the woman, an unripe violence climbs up the stairs like a subtle breeze and seeps in through the half-open door.

One part of the closet which I've been working on for hours doesn't fit the other. When I affix one side, the other side is coming off. Again and again, over and over. Finally, I run out of patience, I force it. That part breaks, the rest falls apart.

My disappointment is completed now.

That which has been hovering over me now gushes in through my nose, my ears, my mouth, my eyes. It is not possible to bear this steam, I burst out. I release my rage onto the still standing pieces, the doors and walls.

The person I love looks at me with genuine concern.

We are looking out of the windows. I, two men working at the office across and the manager of the apartment building on the corner. In front of the grocery, a woman is standing on one side of the cab and the taxi driver on the other. They are fighting, shouting at each other. No swearing but strong language, nevertheless.

Two meters down the road, the grocery boy is leaning against the ice cream counter, with a cigarette in his hand, watching them.

The taxi driver keeps saying the same things and waving his hands as if to say "get out of here". And his face has turned red. It seems the words are hurting his pride. Perhaps also the eyes looking out the windows. It is clouding up, soon it will pour down.

I get tenser and tenser and suddenly move away from the window.

I am gripping the handset a bit tighter in my palm. The woman on the phone insistently asks me to enlarge the ad sample and fax it again. I'm trying to tell her that there is no point in doing that until the draft is approved, my voice is starting to shake.

We keep telling the same things to each other for maybe 15 minutes. She is the new representative of the client and I am the last on the agency's chain of command. Her tone of voice is always the same and mine keeps rising.

I do have a complex of some kind.

She talks down from above, I scream out from below. She reminds me of my duty, and I remind her of her inexperience with a constant emphasis on the word "lady" and I bring the subject back to the approval of the gentleman who is her manager. She says her final word and hangs up on mine.

The cloud of violence hovers on this side of the phone. Everyone in the department is already looking at me nervously. They intend to calm me down, but my intention is bad. I am saying anything and everything that crosses my mind ranging from the woman's lack of experience to her foolishness; and as I speak incessantly, I am inserting and emphasizing the word "woman" after each adjective. It is only when my rage starts to subside that I remember five of the six people in the room are women.

My friend says, let's get a coffee from the shop at the corner and sit in the park. It is the first time that I sit in the park right outside my house, it is odd. The conversation is deep, the coffee is good. On the bench nearby sits a man from the neighborhood who has been without a job for years. He greets us a bit meek, a bit shy.

There is always hopelessness and the

look of a defeated person in his eyes. I return his greeting. He swiftly lights up a cigarette, sometimes looking at us, sometimes at the children playing. A boy and a girl are jumping around and chasing each other. When the boy gets caught, he hits the girl and escapes again. The man shakes his leg without even realizing it. He is looking around, shaking his leg, looking around and shaking his leg. He takes a deep breath.

All of a sudden he jumps to his feet and runs towards the children. He first slaps the one, then the other in the face. First, he holds the girl by her arm and tosses her aside, then, holds the boy by his ear and drags him towards the other.

We sit up and protest. The man waves his hand at us as if saying, "OK, sorry" and goes out of the park, sweeping the children, his children, before him. As they are moving away along the wall, he looks at us with a cigarette in his mouth and slaps the children in the face one more time.

What is left to us is to curse after him.

The screen does not show whose turn it is, it is broken. When the door opens and someone comes out of the room, a sour and exhausted voice calls the next person. We are sitting in the hard yellow connected chairs, slightly bending forward, watching out for both the door and the people around us. We are nervous. We do not have the least bit of intention to give our six-minute appointment to anyone.

A man behind me is talking incessantly

on the phone. More like he is trying to speak. The person on the other side is obviously crushing, firing away, accusing him. The man is taking it lying down. The curiosity gets the better of me and I look at him over my shoulder. He is a young man, stroking his forehead as he speaks; his quiet wife and quiet children are sitting side by side.

The conversation ends, after a short silence the man starts firing away. He is firing away at the broken screen, at his turn that does not come, at the doctors, the healthcare system, the ones administering the system...

The resentment that he harbors evaporates into the air, it changes form and spreads all over the waiting room.

The language of the man is becoming uglier and uglier, his every word is accompanied by a curse. The woman is looking at the floor, the child is looking at the floor. In their eyes, there is the fear which stems from having experienced the language of violence many times before.

When we are about to open our mouths to say something, I think it was only I and the old woman next to me who were about to say something at some point, the security guard comes.

The man's resentment instantly fades away, but the violence that has fallen upon us has no intention of leaving.

We are sitting around a big table and looking at each other, a bit sad, a bit embarrassed. It has been a long time

since we came together and spoke so freely. We slowly get up from our chairs and go out. Everyone making for their homes.

We have shared our regrets to our hearts' content and our bad experiences, the lessons that we have learned, our comments and suggestions.

It is the first time that we have talked about our weaknesses, mistakes and their reasons so openly.

But, for some reason, we are still not relieved.

Is it really over now, will it not happen again?

Do our weaknesses such as intolerance, jealousy, resentment and disappointment that cause us to become somebody else justify what we have done?

Or can we be stronger and free from violence now that we have expressed them?

We are slowly raising our heads and looking at the sky.

 ABOUT

Reporter, director, producer, presenter, consultant. He worked for the TV channels ATV, NTV, TRT and the TV program 32.Gün, and written film criticisms. Since 2002 to date he has been making films and documentaries as producer/director. Among his films are, 34 Taksi (34 Taxi), Beő Yayı Ustası (Five Construction Masters, a behind the scenes documentary of the film Anlat İstanbul / İstanbul Tales), and Bu Ne Güzel Demokrasi (What a Beautiful Democracy, on women MP candidates). He also produced and contributed to the screenplay of Őimdiki Zaman (Present Tense) which has won seven awards.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#30 RAUF
KÖSEMEN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MALE MEMORY IS CRIPPLED WITH DENIAL!

But the truth of the matter is this: I have a sort of amnesia which is common among people who have come into the world as men and believe that they have completely come to terms with it over time.

All incidents of violence that I remember from my childhood are either innocent like my mother throwing her slippers at me, or heroic like saving my sibling, or consoling like “everyone got a beating from that teacher anyways”.

But I remember what came after very well, I mean my high school years under the attack of testosterone on one hand and worried about the university entrance exam on the other.

The state of being a high school boy sways back and forth between “I got in a punch too” and “I’d break his bones if they didn’t hold me!”, and at the same time it generates an inner voice screaming “look, a woman!”.

I got lucky and the moral pressure of my puritan teacher family balanced the situation by mixing with my worries about entering the university, and I was saved from my inner voice which could have turned me into a full-fledged thug.

In fact, I was never oppressed during my high school years. I was never beaten on the streets. I was not scared into pretending that I didn’t hear the yells of strange men shouting, “what the hell are you looking at!”.

I didn’t fear djinnis or fairies or memorize prayers not to be jinxed by them. I never ran from the attack of a bigger or more insolent person.

I never acted haughty towards people

younger or weaker than me. I didn’t insult people by believing that I was smarter or superior than them. I didn’t have relatives who mocked me as the “girl of the house” when I helped out with simple domestic chores.

I didn’t like cars, I didn’t hope to become stronger by putting a machine in place of my weak body. I didn’t come across bullies that much, and when I did I either beat them black and blue or watched them run away with fear.

Therefore, I never harassed anyone of the opposite sex. I didn’t look at the thighs of girls whose skirts were lifted by the wind. I didn’t hide behind the curtain and whistle at the women walking down the street.

I didn’t round up people to intimidate someone just because he looked at the girl I was dating. I didn’t believe that the neighbor’s daughter was very curious about my penis, or that she could hardly contain herself from barging into our home when my folks were out and asking me to screw her. I didn’t envy my rascal friends who would talk on and on about how they masturbated by thinking of my teacher’s low-cut dress.

I did not join those who flipped out wanting to beat the newly appointed civil servant’s son because the beautiful girl of the neighborhood was giving him the eye. I never believed that widowed women were hysterical or virgin girls were horny.

I didn't try to find a way to watch encrypted adult TV channels after midnight when everyone was safely tucked away in bed.

There was not a single moment when I believed women to be weak and in need of men.

I never swore or envy those who did. I didn't say "faggot" and talk behind the back of my coevals just because they were a bit more fragile and delicately built than us.

I didn't listen excitedly to the brothel stories of the elder boys. I didn't listen excitedly when uncle so-and-so told us how he screwed the neighbor's wife either, so of course I wasn't convinced that yet another uncle so-and-so, who was caught with some other neighbor's wife, had deserved to get stabbed in his leg.

I did not listen to the stories of my rural classmates about how they got intimate with a donkey or a dog. I did not find it normal to accuse the referees of being faggots, the women with a harsh character of being lesbians, or the men with long hair of being like women. I did not develop an interest in guns, I did not regard it as my right to shoot traitors or the people I do not like.

I am not familiar with the memories of big brothers, who made it through their military service without a single beating, about how they screwed the daughters of military officers in the lodgings while pretending to be on night duty. Years later during my 28-day military service, I was also not among the ones who were woken

up each morning with shouts and head-counted seven times a day.

Even in my short military service, I was not denigrated and I certainly did not witness how the long-term private soldiers were denigrated, sworn at and beaten up. That curse word which was used as a comma throughout my military service did not ever come out of my mouth.

I was not among those five thousand men who burst into screams of joy just because they saw a civilian after being woken up at the break of dawn for the oath-taking ceremony, which was halfway through my short military service experience.

I was never afraid of those people whose self-confidence boosted when they started wearing a uniform and carrying a bayonet in their waistbands. Our training military officers also disdained neither us nor women by saying, "We have not given you guns, but even if a war breaks out, we will recruit nurses before we recruit you".

I did some of the things that I just said I did not. Some of them I witnessed. Some of them are my own unmediated experiences. And some of them I have compiled from the shared memory of manhood.

I am not sure whether there exists a man who has done none of them. Frankly, I do not think that doing none of them would make a big difference either. All in all, they all come together as a shared male mentality and fill our minds. That is why, we carry in our minds, as a sort of memory prosthesis, even those states of

manhood that we have not experienced.

When it comes to memory, there always exists an angle between the reality and the story. The real stories and the states deemed worth telling are oftentimes not the same. Personal narratives are certainly not exempt from this, either. I live as a man and look at the reality through the window of manhood. If I am compiling my records from my male memory, then I am telling the male version of the story.

If you ask my official opinion, I have figured out this issue of manhood. I am already an educated man. I do not discriminate against people due to their genders. My mind is open when it comes to the issue of gender. I devote a sincere effort to avoid the masculine language. I check and balance my states of manhood. But the truth of the matter is this: I have a

sort of amnesia which is common among people who have come into the world as men and believe that they have completely come to terms with it over time.

In this way, I can create a sort of prosthetic consciousness which obscures the distance between the man I have come to be today and the man I am and convince myself that I have completely come to terms with manhood.

In his article featured in this series, Yekta Kopan wrote, “Apparently, a man’s mind deletes those moments when he is ‘defeated by’ other men”. Drawing on from that sentence, I can say that apparently the mind of a man who thinks that he has completely come to terms with manhood deletes those moments when he is defeated by the states of manhood.

ABOUT

Designer, manager, Açık Radyo programmer of Diğerkâm (Altruism), Common Ground Social Good Communication Conference founder, Kültür Ofisi Derneği (Culture Office Association) executive board member. He works as a member of GMK, İTMK and RYD, founder-manager of Ben Bugün Bi’şey Öğrendim (I Learned Something Today), designer of various NGOs, and uncle of an 11-year-old nephew. In the past he has been an executive board member of History Foundation, lecturer of İstanbul Kültür University, writer of several magazines, and traveler of many routes.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#31 SÜREYYA
EVREN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

7/52 FOR LATER

Neither confessions or narratives of heroism, nor big demonstrations of conscience or admitted disgraces are opening a way. There is a need to know that there are genuine truths, free of clamor and declarations.

I'm penning this article for a bianet project. 52 men will take the floor to address the issue of male violence and these articles will be published once a week for 52 weeks one after another. I'm trying to understand the background. When we want 52 men to take the floor and write about male violence, what do we want from these 52 men? The number 52 is a sort of symbolism, cycle to complete a year. It could easily have been one week, and seven articles with one article per day. 52 or seven, it would serve the same purpose. So it is eternal, not a definite number but something that is continuing, that can continue, a reference to continuity, with one end open (for later).

Then, the question is this: What do we want when we want a certain number of men to talk about male violence on behalf of that which is beyond numbers?

I am trying to imagine this by comparing it to a publication that consists of interviews with 52 people selected from the citizens of country X about the invasion, looting and colonialism they carried out in country Y, or the massacre they did against the Q people. Or I'm trying to compare it with a situation where 52 white people whose roots go back to slave owner families are asked to speak about racism against black people. Other political examples also spring to my mind but each of them comes with the burden and distraction of their own context so I'm trying to keep it limited. Do we want the resident of libertarian country A or the libertarian white person to take the floor on such a

subject and prove their libertarianism? Like asking them to produce their pass at the door, to show that they are a "bona fide holder" as it were. I don't think so, the purpose should be more than eliminating some among the "bad ones" or attributing privilege to some. It should be about something more than seeing that some can be "less evil" and thus being relieved and easing our fears...

Let's say a white person is talking about the racism they witnessed in a critical incident. We think that this narrative is different than a black person's narrative of the same incident. Is it because it will be like a more "objective", more "impartial" criticism?

An anti-rape movie had become popular when we were in high school. The Accused (1988). A couple of us guys had gone and watched it. The next day, one of the guys who had seen it with us was telling the girls in the classroom about the movie, and he said: "I've thought about it and decided not to rape women ever". I remember that no one liked this comment (pledge), to put it mildly.

Would the black people like to hear a white person deciding not to be racist ever? I don't think so. I think the main reason of this reluctance is the "possibility" and "desire" of doing it that is kept alive in the expression of "decided not to do it". Maybe there is a need to terminate this possibility.

Another memory. An artist friend, this time it is the 90s and not the 80s I think, had told me that he was walking late at night on Istiklal Street and on the narrow alley next to the French Consulate he noticed that a man was beating a woman, and for a long time he stood there, doing nothing, watching the man beat the woman, knocking her down, punching and kicking her on the ground. And when the beating stopped, when the guy stopped, he also stopped standing, turned around and walked away. With various explanations and questionings of course.

If this friend had said, “after the incident on Istiklal Street I decided to be braver in such situations, to take a risk and intervene” would this pledge make us feel better? Would we like to read that for 52 weeks? Why don’t we?

It is as if we want there to be not a decision, but a naturalness. A spontaneity... And we want to be given a sign that there might be a spontaneity. If 52 weeks gave such 52 signs, you would read it for 52 weeks. Every black person would read it.

Then, we want a statement that will renew our opinion as to the nature of the white/man. Why? Do we need to think that the bad is not entirely bad? If there is such a need, why?

As far as I can see, basically, the reason is to sustain the possibility of living together, for the next generation. It is not for revenge, but for a revival, for the credibility of a revival.

An ethical proposition that one of the

“fathers” of classical anarchism Pyotr Kropotkin loved is hidden in his following riddle: What is the truly moral answer to the question, “why would you rescue a drowning child?” After some deliberation, the answer appears as follows: The most ethical position of all would be “leaping into the water, not through reflection but by instinct”, acting “from natural impulse” and jumping into the water with the sole aim of rescuing the child.

That is why, confessions and narratives of repression do not reassure us. Just as we would only be startled by a voice that said, “Actually, I also used to burst with the desire to oppress them when I saw a black person; when a woman started talking about separation, I was often very close to beating her but then I held myself back; thoughts of rape crossed my mind so many times before, but I stopped them all, you did not notice it whatsoever, etc.”

Do not talk about your desires and the ensuing complicated ethical positions. We are not there. Give me hope that there is a possibility of living together. Show me something that is in your nature. Tell me about something that will come back, that can be fostered, flourished, revived, that can have a future and play a part in our future one way or another because it is in your nature... tell me about something that is unquestionably about you because it is in your nature.

We want there to be heroisms, but without declarations - we do not want stories of heroism. Schindler’s list should not be kept by Schindler, so to say.

Neither confessions or narratives of

heroism, nor big demonstrations of conscience or admitted disgraces are opening a way.

There is a need to know that there are genuine truths, free of clamor and without declarations.

It is one of the beauties of the 7/52 speaking format, throughout the 52 weeks even if a single man cannot manage to give what he has been asked for, the cycle will still continue. They can be in the wrong to their hearts' content. The format itself is immune to these from the beginning.

If we think that it is an unbelievably humane attempt towards building a future, would we be deemed too human-centered? Then, let us replace the word humane with "life-affirming".

Good anecdotes can also be shared instead of malicious ones, they can also be used as examples. It is also possible to write texts that collect life-affirming

moments, attitudes and the moments when people jump into the water without thinking about it. But we do not want to be persuaded into it with good examples. It should be spontaneous and convincing. We should believe that someone jumped into the water without a second thought and saved us from drowning so that we too can believe in our attitude of jumping into the water without a second thought to rescue someone. So that we can thus love ourselves and believe that we also love the other, and gradually also believe that we are loved and can be loved as well...

If the last words are heroes, then I think that is exactly why such articles and article series do not need a last word, they do not need an aphorism, they do not need any big declarations.

I am writing this article for a project of bianet. 52 men will write about male violence and these articles will be published once a week for 52 weeks one after another.

ABOUT

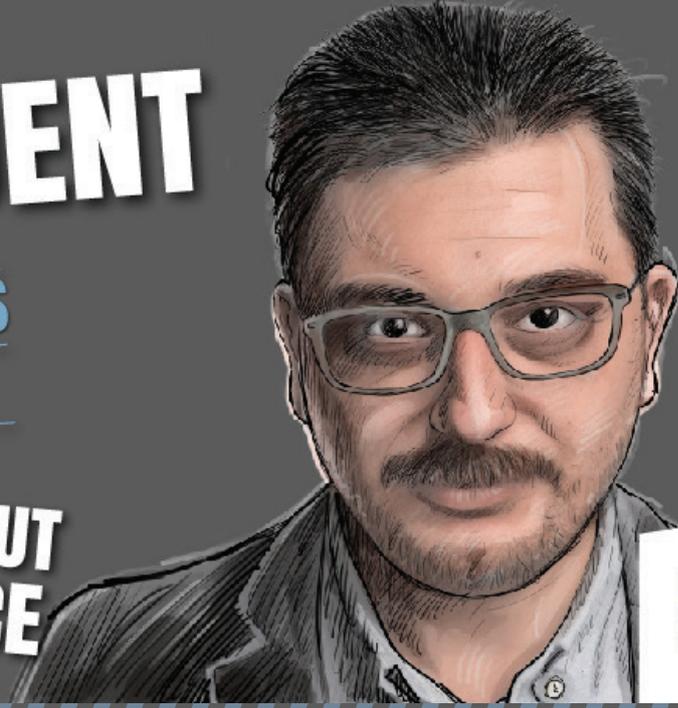
Editor at Arter. His works have been published since 1991. His latest book is a collection of essays titled Buluntu Kitap: Edebiyat ve Gündelik Hayat Üzerine Denemeler (Foundling Book: Essays on Literature and Everyday Life, 2017) and his latest novel is Yakınafrika (Nearafrika, 2018). He continues to write exhibition texts for Sanat Dünyamız arts magazine.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#32 OLCAN
ÖZYURT**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

FATHERHOOD: SHARP AS NEEDLE IN THEORY, LACKING IN PRACTICE

His diaper needed to be changed so we headed to the baby changing room. But what do you know, fathers are not allowed inside because it is also used as the lactation room. There you have the reflections of the role cut out for ordinary fatherhood.

Every man who hears the news that he will become a father for the first time, has definitely dreamed of being the perfect father and thought that he should not be like his own father.

However, at the end of the day, this dream gets damaged somewhere in the natural course of life without you even noticing, and you drift from perfect fatherhood to ordinary fatherhood.

But why?

I think I can answer this question as the father of a four-year-old...

When my wife came and told me that I would be a father, I entered the tunnel of a sweet and exciting uncertainty like everybody else. Through the reactions I got from the people around me during my preliminary period, I came to understand that fatherhood is culturally the apex of the masculinity myth, but we have to fulfill some conditions in order to proceed to this stage.

The congratulations of “you are now becoming a father” were in fact warnings that evoke these conditions. These congratulatory warnings with subtexts such as “review the life you know, file your immoderations if you have any, get ready to give up your passionate habits” are a series of messages targeting your subconscious and preparing you for ordinary fatherhood while you’re dreaming of “being the perfect father”...

My fellow men who voiced their subtended congratulations were actually fulfilling their duty without realizing it. But there was a caginess especially in sharing their experiences (except for some of my friends).

The weird thing is, men who like to give advice on all sorts of things about life were saying things like “Nights without sleep await you” and badmouthing the fatherhood period. This was actually pointing at one specific thing: Paternity was a duty.

You make a child and take their responsibility, meet their needs, spend time together, make sacrifices for them, make sure they’re not wanting for anything... Then the child grows up. And you have fulfilled your duty.

And then I remembered those cliché dialogues in the father-son confrontation scenes of Yeşilçam [Turkish cinema] movies that we saw:

Son: What have you done for me father?

Father: I made sure you wanted for nothing, I raised you, sent you to school.

Son: Yes perhaps I had money, but you didn’t show me your love.

This discovery of mine concerning fatherhood made me understand why fathers on this land cannot establish a true relationship with their children even though they love them.

Actually, fatherhood is not a duty but the name of the bond you form with your kid... I was lucky to have noticed it sooner. I benefited a lot from the natural birth preparation course that I attended with my wife. No need to lie, I had belittled the course a bit before I went but I abandoned that approach after seeing the insistence of a friend.

There I learned that most of our information about the birth process was wrong. I realized in that course that fatherhood is not a duty but the name of the relationship.

When Ali Güney was born, I started to form an equality-based fatherhood relationship with him aided with this awareness. And there was something my mother said in this process which I adopted as my maxim: "A child is a child after all... Sometimes they don't listen to you, they act up, misbehave, get spoiled, it's all normal. But whatever happens, you always be compassionate with your child".

Everything was going fine. Our relationship with Ali Güney was very good. A baby evolving into a child was a challenging process but also joyous at the same time. Since we weren't child-centered parents and managed to involve him in our own lifestyle, we were happy as a family.

Of course, when you don't want to be an

ordinary father, you might find yourself in unlikely situations as well. For instance, an incident we had at a shopping center when Ali Güney was one-year-old still makes me laugh.

One day, somewhat out of necessity, father and son we ended up in a mall. His diaper needed to be changed so we headed to the baby changing room. But what do you know, fathers are not allowed inside this room... I was nonplussed by a mother's warning. It turns out the baby changing room is also used as the lactation room... So, trying to find a solution I spoke to the shopping mall officials.

But they too were surprised as they didn't think that a father would come to a mall alone with his child and take care of his child's needs. They designed the baby changing rooms with consideration for the mother's privacy.

There you have the role cut out for ordinary fatherhood and its reflections in architecture and design. We went to the men's restroom accompanied by the mall official. There was an exaggerated reaction to his plea of "Gentlemen, this friend here is going to change his son's diaper, so if you could be a bit helpful".

Everyone wanted to help, but at the end of the day this is an operation that can easily be done by one person in one, at most, two minutes. But those fellows were very determined to help out... So, we changed the diaper, also giving them a part in this operation, and left the restroom jubilant!

I would be lying if I said I did not

enjoy seeing—through this and similar incidents—that I was quite far from being an ordinary father. I was telling myself, “Fatherhood is not that difficult after all”. I wish I had not flattered myself so soon!

Things started to change as the days, years passed. When Ali Güney turned three, he began to act “spoiled” and whine from time to time in the way three-year-olds do... Moreover, he was no longer as in need of his mother and father as he was as a baby. We had entered the phase of verbal communication.

I had established an equality-based relationship with him since he was a baby. As is known, in such relationships, where the phenomenon of authority is omitted, things can get a bit challenging after a certain point.

Because, the parties have the potential to transform one another. Are you ready for that transformation? I thought I was but apparently I needed to undergo a greater transformation than I had expected. I saw that I had to develop with him rather than undergo a transformation. I came to terms with this situation.

However, little did I know that the myth of manhood hardwired into the core of life was about to sneak up on me around the corner. I could not notice it. As the child grows, the power of verbal communication comes into play. His word against your word... Conflicts and tensions naturally increase.

I think that at that point, the course of our relationship with Ali Güney changed. The phenomenon of authority entered

the equality-based relationship that I had established. I realized that I began to be the party that sets the rules and draws, albeit not sharp, boundaries for him.

The process was steering me towards becoming an authoritarian father. Do not misunderstand me when I say an authoritarian father, best if I explain it with an example: For instance, he will go to school in the morning, so I have to wake up early to get him ready.

However, he is a child and he does not start the day with the motivation to go to school. He just sits there to play with his toys. As for me, I expect him to move quickly while I am preparing him. (In fact, the rhythm of time of adults is not the same as that of children, as I was to understand later on.) It creates a tension and this very tension causes you to be a rule-setter. It is how the thin lines are gradually overstepped...

I came to my senses thanks to the warnings of my wife. I had cracked open the door which would lead me to become a type of father that I did not want to be. If I enter through that door, there is no coming back. At first, I did not want to accept that I had cracked such a door open.

But, I came to terms with it.

I have to say that coming to terms with it was difficult. Because each argument that you would put forward by yourself has a counterpart in life. Am I a bad father? No. Am I not making sacrifices for him? Yes, I am. Aren't we having good time together?

We are. But, weren't these the arguments of the conventional ordinary fatherhood, which is fulfilled with a sense of duty?

In other words, I was back to square one again.

That is why I said that the myth of manhood was waiting to sneak up on me around the corner. Not only does this myth constantly reproduce itself, but it can also seep into you through the tiniest crack. It also causes you to enter a vicious cycle. It is difficult to break that cycle, which explains why men sway from perfect fatherhood to ordinary fatherhood.

While I was going through such an ambivalence, I also saw that I was actually standing right next to the source of all sorts of problems regarding fatherhood and manhood.

You bring the child into the world saying, "we will raise him together", nevertheless, when you are a father, you can stealthily leave the emotional care of the child to the mother.

You can mar the child when he expresses himself with all his normality. With the presumption that a male child sees his father as the role model, you can enable the reproduction of a problematic personality, which you act as if you can work out, but actually cannot.

All these can be the source of all sorts of future problems that I mentioned.

For instance, your attitude towards your child can impact his relationship with people and every type of decision that he

will make when assuming his social roles. At this point, I understood that fatherhood was also a serious examination. It is like a litmus-paper; you are being tested on all the values and principles that you have gained, accumulated and internalized in life thus far.

You might be as sharp as a needle in theory, but what about in practice?

In your relationship with your child, you are looking for the answer to this question. To tell you the truth, I have got my answer. In practice, I had to sit for the make-up examination. The day Ali Güney told me, "Stay away from me when you are angry with me, you can come near me when you calm down" (he was four years old when he said it), was year zero for me. After that, we are again in an equality-based relationship.

Everything is getting better.

Now, I am preparing to become the father of a daughter.

Let's see what kind of a process is waiting for me.

I will live and learn...

 ABOUT

Journalist and cinema writer. Editor of Sabah newspaper's weekend supplements. He entered journalism in 2000 in Radikal daily's culture and arts section and joined Sabah culture and arts section in 2008. He wrote film reviews and criticisms in magazines such as Milliyet Sanat, Popüler Tarih, Sinema, Empire Türkiye, Aktüel, Arka Pencere. He focused primarily on Turkish cinema. He is a member of SİYAD. He was born in 1977 in Yozgat. He studied in İstanbul University Faculty of Economics Department of Finance and in Marmara University Faculty of Communication Department of Radio, Television and Cinema. He has one child and is awaiting his second child as of August 15, 2018.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**



**#33 TUNCA
ÖĞRETEN**

bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

CONFRONTATION / INSOLENT!

Did I make you uncomfortable? As I have said, we have to confront not only the things that we have done, but also the sins that have filled our imagination. We have to confront the acts of every creature who destroyed women and children with his manhood.

I don't know how to start this article. No, of course I have things to tell but I am hesitating on "which confession I should make to earn your hatred", "which one of my wrongdoings I shall confront".

I was 20 years old. Same as every night, we were laying low on a street corner, talking with other "true young men" like me on how we swaggered and brazened it out like the other day when we beat a husky man senseless just because he looked askance at us.

I saw Ahu during one of those storytelling sessions... Ahu, a university student who left her parents' home a week ago and settled in a different city.

I saw her all the time after that night... Who knows, maybe I kept my eyes peeled to see her. She was beautiful. She was aware that I was looking at her. I think she was also into me but the skank was playing hard to get.

One night, she appeared with her short dress again around the corner. I started to follow her... I don't remember whether I followed her or her tantalizing hips that appeared under her dress. We passed a couple of streets like this...

Then, in front of our benzo addict scamps' haunt, the house that was dilapidated after the passing of its mistress Greek Rena, whom my father said had lost her husband at an early age and was rumored to "serve" all the men in the neighborhood, I grabbed her arm.

I heard the sound of a breath. No, she wasn't startled... She knew it was me grabbing her arm. She wanted it too and I recognized this hysterical voice from the porn movies I watched!

Without letting her say a word I pushed her in through the broken door of Rena's abandoned house. Her eyes were cold as ice, like blind. I kissed her lips, she remained silent. I slid her skirt and felt up her thighs, she didn't move. I got hard!

Then, suddenly her lips moved: "Don't".

Muted, like the scream of an insect. "Don't!" I was surprised...

She put her palms on my chest and pushed weakly.

I was frustrated. "What do you mean 'don't' you bitch! You've made me follow you all the way here, now you play the moral girl?", I shouted. She trembled with my every syllable. Don't get me wrong, she liked it!

I wanted to lay Ahu on the stones covered with cigarette butts... She resisted. I punched her in the mouth. It was dark. I could not discern whether it was the blood seeping through her now split fleshy lips or the tears running down her eyes that wetted my hand.

She was on the ground now... I slid her underwear off, I entered her. It lasted short, I came straight away. I felt ashamed. First, I heard a faint sobbing, then screams as shrill as the sirens that wailed in Hiroshima when the atomic bomb was dropped on the city. I got scared. Was it because she did not enjoy it? Or was she making fun of me? I threw another punch. She did not keep quiet. Then, I threw one more punch, then another and another... Her voice died away, but my fury was alive. No one could humiliate me like that. First, she made pass at me with a short skirt for days, then, made love to me and then made fun of me, eh?

I put my hands around her throat and squeezed. I squeezed and squeezed. The faint light of the street lamp reached inside the dark room and fell on her honey-colored eyes. Her eyes were open. But she was not looking. I bended over her and put my ear near her lips, she was not breathing.

It was how it was... What came easy went easy! They who lived by the sword died by the sword. The whore had it coming!

Do you feel uncomfortable? Don't!

If I can sit at the computer one night and write such a story; if these things have filled the tunnels of my brain, if this is what the soil I live on promises me... Is it not essential that I sit and confront them as well?

Aren't we required to confront not only the things that we brought into action, but also the "cases" of our geography that

"inspire" our stories?

At the end of the day, don't our weenies, which as kids we are told to proudly show our uncles, start to turn us into masculinity addicts at a very small age? Doesn't the password "My son, watch out or your father will get angry" crack open the door of "Stop talking, you bitch" after many years?

As I have said, we have to confront not only the things that we have done, but also the sins that have filled our imagination.

And I have to confront not only the acts of Tunca, but also the acts of the one who murdered the 4-year-old Leyla and dumped her naked body by a stream, the one who raped and burned Özgecan, the one who strangled and slayed the musician Değer Deniz, and the one who abused children in the dormitory of a religious order... I have to confront the acts of every creature in this country who destroyed women and children with his manhood.



ABOUT

Journalist. He produced news, articles and interviews for Taraf, Diken, Journo, Taz, Deutsche Welle, Vocativ and Al-Monitor. He is a member of Journalists Union of Turkey (TGS) and International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). He studied in İstanbul Bilgi University Faculty of Communication.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#34 ZAFER
YILMAZ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

I HAVE AN OBJECTION!

Our objection, if we have any, remains muted. There is no doubt that the weakness of our objections provides the necessary conditions for this hegemonic form of masculinity to reproduce itself.

It is almost impossible to imagine a life outside the experiences of oppressive masculinities in Turkey. There is not a single moment we are not subjected to it, or we don't encounter it, or we don't manifest it with violence, because we bring this style everywhere we go and reproduce it in every relationship we enter.

We can easily recognize it in every environment we are present; on the bus, at the bus stop, on the street, when we think, work, learn or teach, we can see it in the looks of our fellow men, in their manners, in the way they throw down the gauntlet.

Negative experiences that emerge from our encounters with this style of masculinity don't refrain us from reproducing it. Our objections, if we have any, are usually muted, and occupy a very insignificant space in the face of the violent manifestations of masculinities in this country.

There is no doubt that the weakness of our objections provides the necessary conditions for this hegemonic form of masculinity to reproduce itself.

As a person who grew up in one of the rowdy and tough neighborhoods of İstanbul and spent a lot of time on the streets during the 90s, I believe that over time I acquired a better grasp of what this masculinity is not rather than what it is; this masculinity that we had to internalize and have internalized without giving it much thought.

At least, one learns over time that contrary to what the majority claims manhood is not about being "strong, chivalrous, enduring, brave" but is based on a pretension, on "seeming" to be all those things which is managed and handled by the society and mostly by men.

Moreover, this fact one of the fundamental rules of being a true man, and it is inculcated into him not on his own but within a group of men. This group of men, which is shaped under the administration of the one who has the most of whatever that group is founded on i.e. the most money, physical power, information, power, etc., does not merely serve as an approving authority of manhood but also as an exam bureau.

Back in those days, just like today, learning to be a man meant being prepared for the test at all times. I also saw that it is not easy to escape from these tests, which were usually held in groups, neither in childhood, nor in youth or even in adulthood.

Furthermore, I personally witnessed that in tough neighborhoods, where the rules are more transparent, the tests are based on proving qualities such as "being ready for a fight", "being intrepid", "landing killer punches"; meanwhile in the university, academia and the world of the middle class these tests are replicated in a much more refined manner, the essential difference being the proof of masculinity with more complex tools; here, the rough masculinity performances of "tough" neighborhoods turn into more charming masculinity performances that win general approval in the eyes of public.

Indeed the most important difference is that the powerful men of academia possess more tools of gilding their displays of manhood and making them acceptable as compared to the lads of “tough” neighborhoods; they are also able to render their performances of manhood more palatable and attractive in their classes, juries and presentations.

Generalizations are of course problematic, but based on my own experiences as a student and a teacher I can very easily say that compared to the male academics, who aim to create a body of student worshippers and are obsessed with maximizing their sphere of influence in administration and are prone to imposing their thoughts on others, the women academics are always more open to supporting and intellectually empowering their students.

Gender is one of the most important factors in Turkey determining whether or not the processes of teaching and learning are established around egalitarian relationships. Another important factor is the will to power and the rationale of passing the test which is internalized among men.

In Turkey there is a masculinity that is constantly being put to test, and a despotic and hegemonic masculinity that turns every test into an issue of violence in order to prove its power.

These tests manifest sometimes as in “be a man”, sometimes “you call yourself a man?” and sometimes “what kind of a man are you?”. Sometimes the tests are more concealed, more implicit, more indirect.

All these tests have a tone and style which is usually daring and lays the burden of proof on the person, and as someone who grows up in Turkey you cannot easily ignore their call. However, the aforementioned tests and crises do not attest to the weakness of manhood but are rather tools of its very own reconstruction.

Oppressive hegemonic masculinity being in crisis today in Turkey is wrongly interpreted as an indication of its impossibility and weakness. To the contrary, hegemonic masculinity in Turkey continually advances through tests, eliminates those who fail, selects the ones who prove themselves, and imposes itself on those subjected to it, and thus finds new ways of adapting itself to the conditions again and again.

These tests take place with a glance on the bus; while taking or giving orders in the barracks; in bed; in the evaluation of the reactions given in the face of difficulties.

Our willingness as men to enter these tests, and the fact that acting otherwise is viewed as a weakness, docility and compromise on manhood is key to the success and continuation of these tests.

This dominant style of manhood has an aspect that is shaped through its aggressive encounters with the other men whom it has positioned on the margins of or outside manhood; the more aggressive it is the more impossible it becomes to stay indifferent to it.

The tests are evaluated by the

implementers of the relationships that constitute the masculinity in question and mostly by those who have previously come through these processes “with flying colors”.

Of course there is no actual test center as such and these tests don't demand authenticity in reality. Fundamentally these tests encourage the collective performance of a sort of fakeness pertaining to the male world with images of the “tough men” and “protective men”, but we know that the performance of this fakeness doesn't decrease the extent of its violence but on the contrary further increases it.

This structure based on displays of manhood, shows of violence and tests actually proceeds by opening wounds of self-respect and provoking a will to power and demand for revenge among the men who are part of it or are subjected to it.

As a man who has taken many a test in military, at school, on the street, in traffic, in fights, politics and academia, it's impossible not to carry with you the destruction that it has caused. Compared to the injustice and suffering that women are subjected to, these wounds and destructions are surely nothing; but I am of the opinion that understanding this aspect of the matter is important in terms of grasping how this masculinity reproduces itself in the men's world.

Our objections are against the atrocity of the hegemonic masculinity which essentially targets women, but at the same time we should also be objecting to the way things get done in the men's

world, to the manners of cooperation, complicity and reconciliation that it engenders and the violence it imposes.

For this very reason, the counter-attitude of men who intend and aim to oppose this style of manhood is very important in terms of both the reproduction and the suspension of this dominant despotic manhood.

Much as we have objections to it, this is an infectious, oppressive and suffocating masculinity that we internalize and reproduce sometimes in our objections and sometimes in our struggle with it.

We have to put a distance between ourselves and this masculinity which we are not and cannot be outside of by saying I'm outside of it, this masculinity which we don't really know any different from and which is anchored in desires and reinforced with reactive feelings such as rage, grudge and contempt.

The infectiousness that accompanies this form of masculinity is not particular to encounters on the street or the spheres of everyday life, business life or domestic life. It has a dimension anchored deeper in the very foundation of masculinity itself. We as its bearers have to think hard on how it acquired this dimension and the variable sources of despotic masculinity in this country.

I don't think the prevalence of this masculinity can be explained only by state, militarism, nationalism, gender inequality and will to power. As men who concern themselves about clashing with, objecting to, and distancing themselves from this

form of masculinity, it is our obligation to oppose it and show—through our own life experiences—that other masculinities are also possible, but it is surely not enough.

The issue has an aspect much beyond our moral responsibilities because when moral confrontations stem merely from feelings of guilt they can easily turn into ordinary confessions and plain moral consistency questionings, and as such can readily reproduce the power relationships that they refute.

Instead of opening these experiences of manhood to the “other” and subjecting them to the displacement it causes and simply exposing the authority in our own behaviors, we need an approach and objection that seeks the ways of a transformation within the relationship, ways of becoming equal and empowered together.

In this regard, without entirely excluding the aforementioned ethical aspect, and in addition to highlighting and advocating a dimension that rests on the rights-based and egalitarian reorganization of the relationships between sexes, which fundamentally includes the institutionalization of and legal support for women and LGBTIQ rights, the men who object must also engage in an organized struggle and investigate the possibilities of such a struggle in every field they enter.

The increasing power of women and the women’s movement is promising and instructive for us as well, but I think what will be determining in the emancipation of the objecting men will be how they

produce the relationships, emotional-intellectual proclivities and structures that will perpetuate their own objections.

To achieve this, first of all we need to develop a more in depth understanding of the problematic sides of this sort of masculinity.

There are many studies and discussions that address this masculinity, which constructs itself on grudge and power, as an issue of authority. But I am of the opinion that we should discuss this type of masculinity not only as an issue of authority but also and fundamentally as an issue of slavery.

What is missed—or intentionally overlooked on account of its blessings—by the agents of this hegemonic masculinity is a form of slavery imposed upon the agents by the very “success” and “authority” that they achieve by passing the tests.

This is a type of manhood whose desires are easily shaped by the state, nation or militaristic longings to the extent that it establishes itself on a despotic experience of violence and masculinity, and becomes subordinated right when it aspires to power and has delusions of being in power, and is readily enslaved by and under the delusion of being in power.

This protective, attentive, providing, boundary setting, law enforcing, powerful and preserving male figure is latently accompanied by yet another image of manhood which is actually driven by blind desires, and is therefore extremely easily managed.

While these men as the capable children of sufferings who “successfully came through” the tests desire their “loved ones” in the way they learned in course of these tests, that is, bereft of love, unable to produce the emotions to build “a path from one heart to the other”; they exhibit a despotic power that is far from creating love and emits unhappiness throughout their lives.

There is no doubt that this type of hegemonic masculinity is one of the most important cruxes of a deeper and more comprehensive problem of freedom in this country. Whether this style of manhood will continue its dominance on these lands depends on our objections as well as what we are going to do with the objections directed at us.

In order to introduce experiences that will interrupt this dominant style of manhood, we must discover other intensities, other affections in the relationships which shape our identities, and lend an ear to the objection that has started to be raised strongly by the women, and find more organized ways of silently abandoning and combatting this masculinity.

For this, everywhere we come across it and primarily in our lives and all our living spaces that it has gradually turned into deserts, we have to bravely say “we object”, and sincerely open ourselves to the objections raised against us; as the objectors, it is time for us to struggle against its domination and violence together.

ABOUT

Academician. With the State of Emergency Statutory Decree number 686 issued on February 7, 2017, he was discharged from his post at Ankara University, where he had been working since 2002, for signing the peace petition titled “We will not be a party to this crime!”. He completed his graduate and ungraduated studies at Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) Department of Political Science and Public Administration and his postgraduate degree at Ankara University Faculty of Political Science Department of Political Science and Public Administration. He was a visiting scholar and researcher at the department of sociology in Freie Universität, Berlin and the department of politics and history in Brunel University London during his postgraduate studies, and at the department of sociology in University of California Berkeley after completing his postgraduate studies. He is the author of various articles published in magazines such as Toplum ve Bilim, Praksis, Mülkiye Dergisi, Turkish Studies, Ayrıntı and Birikim and a book titled Yoksulları Ne Yapmalı? (What to Do with the Poor?) published by Dipnot Publishing House

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#35 CEM
ERCIYES**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MIGHT MAKES RIGHT!

Because we know that in the spiral of violence “might makes right”. In those male herds, the weak one turns into a “painted bird”. Maybe one of them remembers that it can’t go on like that.

In his novel *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding recounts how the children who are stranded on a coral island turn into a wild community. Without elders in charge and social norms to rein them in, before long, power, authority and violence emerge among the boys.

Golding's skill in turning a simple subject into one of the greatest pieces of world literature aside, the main reason why this piece is liked and internalized so much is especially the men's extreme familiarity with it.

You don't need to spend your puberty in a boarding school full of boys. That power struggle and open or covert violence manifests itself immediately among your playmates in the neighborhood, in the team, in the small group of boys at school, everywhere.

This is somewhat instinctive and perhaps rather learned. The weak ones are determined in course of the competition for leadership and "natural" violence starts to flow towards that direction.

Being strong, which is the fundamental code of being a man, and imposing it on the weaker one, turns into an entertaining practice among the ruleless adolescent groups.

Don't tell me about human nature, we know very well that all that story is nothing more than the reckless practice of some learned behaviors. The essence of the social culture is one and the same

everywhere, be it all-out wars, local lynching campaigns, street fights or domestic violence, it commends savagery the moment there are no rules, which might make us more human.

Yes, let us admit that all these can be collected inside that thing we call "masculinity". Man's violence against man is often the most incessant and brutal one. However, the victim's potential to become the tyrant makes us consider it normal, because we know that in the spiral of violence, "might makes right".

In those male herds, the weak one turns into a "painted bird". At the end of the day, everyone imposes violence on him. Maybe one of them remembers that it can't go on like that. And only then the teenagers swaying between adulthood and childhood may decide in favor of childhood and that very rare and valuable innocence takes the place of tyranny.

The undisciplined instinct, which is taught to be kept alive and forever primed for provocation, is always ready to flow towards the weaker one. This is the reason why the woman, who is morally and materially subjugated to that man at home, can never find her peace which is also left to the mercy of that man. Someone who might be physically weaker and more fragile than us always turns into the natural subject of that violence. Our lovers, wives, mothers and women colleagues at the workplace are often the permanent targets of that rage and quest for power surging inside us.

Isn't it actually the biggest curse of manhood that rudeness, toughness and all kinds of ignorance are defined as "manly"? The violence of men against men as well as the violence of women against women and the violence of women against men are a result of those behaviors and displays of power that have been learned in the very beginning.

We all know very well that this display of power is not limited to physical violence. There are a thousand ways of crushing and hurting a person. Even though social rules promise some degree of peace and tranquility to people, a way of inflicting cruelty is always found. It manifests itself in every single place where there is a quest for power.

Woman also becomes "mannish", and is then appreciated. She becomes a "tomboy", she becomes a "manly woman". We know that when that is the case, competitive women can sometimes be worse than aggressive men...

In most every place where the human species lives in communities, the name of the power is manhood. Let's just call a spade a spade, we have created, nurtured and sustained this all together.

Mothers, who are the biggest victims of this state of manhood, raise those boys. Girls try to stand on their feet by imitating their older brothers. Driving, drinking, surviving in professional life, on the street, among people not "like a girl" but "like a man" is the easiest way out.

If they decide to be like a woman and insist on remaining like that, then they

find themselves as the natural targets of men. They cannot help but be viewed and treated not as productive individuals and equal members of the society, but as its reproductive and passive objects.

What is difficult is to be able to stand outside all these roles. Women have struggled hard to both look and behave like women and at the same time be able to demand and achieve everything by putting their heart and soul into life. Some progress has been made in all this time. Millions of women who have said "no" to this also became the antidote of our manhood. What can we say, we are fortunate that they exist...

 ABOUT

Journalist. Publications Director of Doğan Kitap since 2016 to date. He began journalism in Dünya newspaper. He worked in Radikal newspaper from 1997 until it closed down in 2016; he served as Culture and Arts Editor, Book Supplement Publishing Coordinator, Supplements Publishing Director, Internet Edition Editor. He was born in Patnos. He went to primary school in Çanakkale and high school in İzmir. He graduated from Marmara University Department of International Relations (IR), received his master's degree in IR from İstanbul University.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#36 ÖZCAN
SAPAN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

LOOK IN THE MIRROR!

... and so on and so forth...

Some may know, that's how things were back then.

When the girl insisted, I pushed her, the friends
accompanying me took them away.

And that love had ended then and there.

Are you really aware of the question you are asking? How many men can say “yes I committed violence against women”? Even if there were any, we are a society with a lot of “but”s.

Especially considering the caliber of this sentence you make: “to record the ideas, opinions and in fact the experiences of men, who are prominent in their respective fields, about masculinity and male violence”, let us underline the word “experiences”.

Most will content themselves with what they see. We as a society have been inured to contenting ourselves with what we see. The violence itself, the morality and respect itself have taught us to make do with how they seem, how they are presented to us.

There is more than one way to express yourself. Some express themselves better with beautiful words, others do that by writing.

Some consider it a virtue to beat by slapping and some by making innuendos. Some beat with love, some hit with respect. Violence is not merely physical beating.

Is a person’s understanding based on age, experience or work? How far can we go by pushing aside cultural differences, traditional morality and family ties...

Everyone leaps up when it is a woman who is battered but what would you do if

it were a man? Once, I had witnessed a man being beaten by his wife in a tavern. Everyone remained silent, including me; then, is my motive based on the notion that women are in need of protection?

What about my past examples, human rights, women’s rights, left, politics, my mother, my grandmother...

Can I be objective?

It was the middle of the 80s... We used to meet with friends and go to a coffee shop in Beyoğlu to hang out. They didn’t charge for tea because it was a place where you could play games for money. It was a comfortable place, and not very popular. I think it had a signboard reading something like bird lovers’ association.

But no one talked about birds there, though sometimes people chatted about cars. Something like “this person has x car, that person has y car...”. I remember clearly, once, someone had asked “how’s it going” and people had laughed when they heard the response: “the engine seized up, it’s laying...”, I never understood what they were laughing at.

The engine had seized up and it was laying.

What’s the problem!

One day, at one of the tables they were waiting for the fourth person to start a new game.

They asked me to join them until their friend came. I accepted it with pleasure since it was a game I knew. And I left the table when their friend came.

A friend of mine seeing this scene got very angry with me. "How dare you play with them", he scolded me. I didn't get it... I asked why, he first remained silent, then looked into my face and said, "don't you know that one owns a taxi and the other owns a public bus".

I was totally lost, I didn't understand anything, so what, I thought, what difference would it make if I knew.

I told him what I was thinking: "So what!". He said something like "don't be ridiculous", so I shut up. There was no meaning in discussing it any further. Later, much later, I learned why I was being "ridiculous".

Hear this out, evidently "owning a public bus" meant "he has a lover who works in a brothel in Karaköy", and taxi meant having a "lover who is a call girl".

Much later, years later, when I recalled this incident, I remembered the dominant language and the male-dominant discourse again. Isn't even talking about it a sort of violence and inequality?

When I thought back, first my childhood, then my youth, and my political memories kept coming to my mind. I thought of my mother, when I was in elementary school, I

had witnessed her get beaten by my father many times.

I also remember the sound of my mother's crying coming through the doorways. I don't remember seeing other people since I was listening through the doorways, maybe there was no one else, but when she got very distressed my mother would talk aloud and tell her troubles even if there was no one around.

I never forget the line that followed such talks: "I would not stay not for a second if it weren't for my kids...". I grew up with such a burden. I was crushed under that burden, and my dear mom suffered. When I stood up against this violence, it was almost too late.

I was 17. I was running amok inside the house roaring like a bull: "If you hit my mother again, I'll beat your mom!"... I was making myself promises accompanied with swears. I don't remember who heard it, and it didn't matter... My father didn't need to hear it either. My voice ringing out in my own ears was enough for me.

One day, I again found my mother crying. She didn't want me to know or hear about it but I had already understood from the lack of telling. My mother was beaten again, furthermore, the reason was me.

And I fulfilled my promise: I walked up to my grandmother, the mother of my father, and I threw a couple of punches. First or second might have hit the mark. What I saw days later was a bruise where I had hit her. That bruise haunted me for years.

I was embarrassed, sad, devastated. I

cried in secret a lot.

My decision was final, I left home. I started to stay with my friends. The end of my mother's sufferings became the start of mine because my father never again even attempted such a thing.

Because one day when I realized that hitting my grandmother was not a solution, I had come home and shouted through the door: "If you hit my mother again, I'll shoot you!". This threat wouldn't scare my father, maybe he didn't even hear it, but this statement was important for me. It rang out throughout the house...

Private life; is it just a space preserved by walls, doors, windows and curtains? Is family a shield? Can't their problems concern anyone? Does it gain the right to harbor all sorts of negativities when it is clad in this shield of immunity?

One fact that I understand is this: It is always women who are subjected to violence in the privacy of private life. It's always they who suffer.

Name of a book came to my mind whilst I was writing these lines: *Das Schicksal der Begabten Frau* (The Destiny of the Gifted Woman).

This magnificent book penned by Inge Stephan includes real-life examples from the world. The expression "the pillar of the house", which is constantly used in the male-dominant culture, points at the woman. If a family is broken up, it is definitely broken up by the woman.

It is not for nothing that they have that

saying: "Men make houses, women make homes".

Have you ever thought why? It means the woman provides for the management, livelihood of the house and ensures that the family lives happily. "Happiness" despite everything... If happiness is gone, then it's her fault. A woman who accepts to remain in the man's shadow also agrees to take shelter in the sovereignty of that man. This narrative contains a violence even if not physical violence...

The one in power is always the sovereign/ Being in power is always the dominant drive. When masculinity is added to this power of always having one's way and calling the shots, then tragedy begins... How? It's exactly as Oscar Wilde says: "In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting it. The last is much the worst; the last is a real tragedy!"

It is the one thing that doesn't change at home, in school, in the military or life. There is a steadfast language that everyone is using; when listing examples of people who represent power, fearlessness and the manly stance, they cite Erdoğan, Putin, Trump or the present day favorite Macron.

But are these so strong because they are men or because they are in power? For instance, what do we say for Angela Merkel or where do we put Tansu Çiller or Margaret Thatcher, though they are older examples? Saying that the ruling power is male suffices. But it's everywhere. The latter state that Wilde talks about is both man and power.

Life itself is also politics. Like the never-changing truths, woman is also non-changing in every sense and sphere.

“And the women, our women” says Nazim Hikmet, “... who get fed at our tables after the oxen...”. Let’s ignore why he said it or to whom he said it... But this destiny is the same within the left as well.

Once upon a time, in 1976, during my high school years, I was in a responsible position at school. Politically, of course... One day, I was informed that one of our friends fell in love with a girlfriend of ours and they were together. I immediately put everything aside and took them to the school’s sports hall for a talk.

I said, “Let me have it, what is happening?”. I still clearly remember how the girl looked me in the eye and apologetically said, “We love each other”. Then, the boy plead their case but to no avail... My decision was final and clear... “You can never live something like this” and so on and so forth... Some may know, that’s how things were back then. When the girl insisted, I pushed her, the friends accompanying me took them away. And that love had ended then and there...

After some time, it became such a big lesson for me that I felt ashamed of the girl wherever I saw her... I was someone who is open to developments, I would read and research. I soon fixed myself up; I convinced myself that I had quickly reached the level of a flexible, democratic and modern person who is in a responsible position.

Exactly a year later, I experienced

something similar in a different way. One of our girlfriends came to me and said that she wanted to talk to me about something important. I gladly accepted. We went off to a corner and started talking.

After a short introduction, she said that somebody would come to ask her family for her hand in marriage once the school was over. Having learnt a lesson from the previous incident, I asked her, “Do you want it?”. Without making eye contact, I said, “You can get married if you want”.

Because if someone came to me and said, “Somebody wants to marry me”, it meant they were asking for permission. Thinking that she was asking for my permission and in order to hide my past vulgar behavior and to behave in a modern way, I said, “Do you want it?”. After a period of silence, she continued speaking with her head down: “You don’t understand, do you? You will never understand, will you?”.

And she flung the summary of the day at me, she said, “I love you”. Believe me, without thinking, I said, “what, I don’t understand, what are you saying, you what...” and explained to her that “such a thing can never happen”.

The meeting and the short talk and the love of the girl all ended then and there. As for me, I couldn’t stop talking about how I had done the right thing. I used this example to embellish my narrative about the rightness of my behavior towards my friend a year back. I explained it with this example, I was proud of myself. What was it about that level I had reached, the ways in which I had improved myself, evidently more effort was needed, reading was not enough, it was a question of mentality and

culture. I understood that much later.

When somebody hits you, you hit back.
When somebody swears at you, you swear back. When somebody inflicts violence on you, you respond with violence. What do you do when somebody says, "I love you"?

I was tongue-tied; I tied it to the burden upon me.

Since time out of mind, when someone says criticism, we choose the easy way and say self-criticism. When they say violence, we talk about peace and quiet. In fact, we have not yet comprehended how great a violence it is for a father to tell his child, "You, stop talking, you wouldn't understand". Moreover, we do not consider statements like "Don't meddle in this with your woman's mind" or "You are a woman, you should know when to keep silent" as violence.

If we were to test the left, which is very sensitive, knowledgeable, advising and highly cultured especially on the subject of woman, it would flunk three years in a row. In general terms, Marxist left's view of women is problematic, and the problem has been relegated to socialism.

But, until socialism arrives, with which approach are we to address this problem? Of course, everyone will point at what they have learnt from their families. That is why in the history of the left, if there is a high-ranking woman friend, there is always her comrade, her husband above her.

The history of our left starts with the international aunt-in-law Krupskaya and, albeit wrongly informed, continues with

Tanya and goes on with the local and national ones. Unfortunately, we are right in the middle of the circle as well. We are right in the center of the spiral.

And it is such a fertile geography that while the Muslims' view of women adheres strongly to the story of being "created from the rib of man" and it is not enough for women to perform the five daily prayers, give alms and even fast, it is still said that "When a woman observes the five times of prayer, fasts during Ramadan, preserves her chastity and obeys her husband, she may enter by any of the gates of Paradise she wishes". One of her religious devotions is to "preserve her chastity and obey her husband".

That being the case, it should not have been so difficult to go beyond the traditional morality in a society that grows up with the idiom, "Buy the field on flat land, take the woman who is a virgin."

Otherwise, that is, if we also sigh saying "our women... who get fed at our tables after the oxen", and shout at the top of our lungs in a chorus trying to sing the song whose words we could never say looking into her eyes: "My room is painted with lime, my face is full of smile, take off your clothes and come to bed with me, my skin is medicine", then wouldn't our difference from the others be in name only?

Growing up in a geography, where folk songs, songs, idioms are so sinful, living on with a repressed sexuality... it doesn't make any difference whether you are politically or professionally competent.

Woman is sinful in all religions, all books,

all political terminologies. She breaks up families. She makes sheep's eyes. That you and I are different does not suffice to change it.

Because in all male-dominated societies past and present, men have played the leading role in arts and literature just as in all other occupational groups.

Woman has been merely a sort of instrument nourishing all these fields. As Bilge Karasu says in his work titled Ode to the Pomegranate and the Fig, she often becomes a useful instrument of reaching sexual pleasure.

"The official legend of the fig associated with the female and its secret literature associated with manhood has spread to all parts of the Mediterranean and turned the fig into an almost shameful word. When I asked him about the price of the fig, even the fruit seller from Erzurum insistently said 'the fruit'..."

Woman is often imprisoned inside an innocence surrounded with the walls erected by the male sovereign.

When Eve ate the forbidden fruit and seduced Adam to do the same, innocence became tainted. What has been happening in the world ever since is the aftermath of this contamination. In a world polluted by the woman, it should naturally be the male sovereign who protects innocence and honor.

Ever since the blood of two brothers were spilled, honor is restored with blood; the male sovereign supposedly protects the woman.

Didn't Helen of Troy leaving Menelaus of Sparta turn into a matter of honor and lead to one of the bloodiest wars of the Archaic Age?

Woman is beaten for honor, she is killed for honor.

Look in the mirror... Did you miss your father...

Look in the mirror... This is what is taught, but it is in your hands to change it. Start with your tongue. Your conscience that you have accumulated is what directs both your hand and your tongue...

It is your morals.

 ABOUT

Editor-in-chief of Chiviyazıları Publishing House. Founder of Akademi Kitabevi Café. He wrote news, articles and columns for various newspapers and weekly and monthly magazines. He participated in the founding process of the Human Rights Association (IHD) in 1986. He served in the management of IHD İstanbul Branch for three terms and IHD Headquarters for one term. He participated in the unification process of the left and was among the founders of the political party Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi (Freedom and Solidarity Party - ÖDP). He started working in publishing in 1988 and served as editor and publications director in various publishing houses. He authored the books Beyaz Ölümün Güncesi (Diary of White Death, 1992), Ve Geçip Gitmediler (And Go By They Did Not, 2000), Şeylerin Tarihi (History of Things, 2004). He was the founder and editorial board member of the magazines Humanite Dergisi, Kafkasya Yazıları and Mjora. He won the 1992 Musa Anter Journalism Awards First Prize in the Category of Interviews with Beyaz Ölümün Güncesi and received the Freedom of Thought and Expression Award (2003) of the Turkish Publishers Association for his books and the court cases brought against him. He was born in 1960 in İstanbul.

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52 WEEKS
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**#37 MAHİR
ÜNSAL ERİŞ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MY MOTHER, MY DEAR MOTHER, MY MANLY MOTHER!

In that case, fatherhood means making room for oneself by pushing women to motherhood. And this room, where the notion of power reigns freely, is an unbridled sphere which does not exclude violence.

Showing your weenie to the uncles, being circumcised, “hanging out” with girls, doing the military service, coming back and getting married, then becoming a father, so on and so forth... And, of course, throughout all these phases, fulfilling the various requirements written in the book of manhood... I don’t know, for instance, following soccer, gathering with a whole bunch of men and doing all sorts of boorishness, talking about “girls”, watching porn and so on.

Within the cycle of manhood that I have talked about, not doing the military service has probably been the only point where I broke this circle.

Fortunately, I have managed not to wear the uniform of any army in the world. However, I have always wanted to be a father. Since the greenest, freshest times of my childhood, I have always dreamed of becoming a father, even if only at the level of “If I have a son, I will name him such and such”.

And, this year, in March, I had a baby boy. We named him Ethem. We gave him the name of my friend Ethem Sarısülük, who was intentionally massacred by the police officer Ahmet Şahbaz during Gezi. May he live with the honor of his name.

To put it in the most cliché-ridden terms, my life has changed completely after becoming a father. Of course, I do not solely mean the sleepless nights, patting him on the back into the wee hours trying

to relieve his gas, or his cries at the top of his lungs. My relationship with everything including the world, Ethem, fatherhood, manhood, the future, the political climate of the country, my occupations as a writer and translator has been reshaped from scratch. In fact, I think I can say that these relationships are being reshaped over and over again with every passing day.

Let me explain it this way: I am the child of a father whose emphasis on manhood is extremely dominant. My father has always expected me and my brother to be solid men through and through, to avoid doing things that might be considered “gay”, to be the kind of man who shakes the ground he steps on and draws blood when he hits.

At least that was the case until we reached a certain age. Then, he was convinced that we would and could never be such men.

During our school years, he used to give us money for every child we beat. Frankly speaking, I did not and would not beat anyone. Every day, I made up a story about a new fight and how I beat everyone in class one by one and tried to have the buck or two that he would give me.

In this way, I have become a story-teller even if I could not become a predatory man.

My father and mother came to our house about a week before the birth of our child. I forcibly took my father for a walk. My intention was, of course, to get a few tips about fatherhood, to ask for the advice of a man who has been a father himself for almost forty years.

At some point during our walk, I said, "Dad, I am very excited. How will it all work out?". My father seemed to pay almost no attention, he could not even fully understand my question. "What do you mean how?", he asked and added, "It's a child, he will be born and grow up on his own. Time flies for the one who is alive".

Even if for a moment, I wanted to believe that he was saying these things in good faith, to relieve me so that I would not be overwhelmed with the growing uncertainty of "fatherhood" which was turning into an enormous mountain before me.

But, no, it was not the case. My father really thought that children are born and grow up by themselves. I mean, apparently that's what he always thought, I realized it only after Ethem was born.

Then, Ethem came into the world. Her mother could not move for days for he was delivered by caesarean section. Therefore, I had to take over all duties of motherhood except for breast-feeding.

Of course, even behind the expression of "had to" lies hidden an arrogance of manhood. It means: "Her mother was not available, I had to look after him. It

is actually the duty of the mother to look after a baby. Because, after all, babies grow up by themselves. Mothers provide them with the things they need, and they grow up without needing the intervention of their fathers."

I am a socialist. The ideological framework of socialism has offered me a profoundly conscientious and reliable ground to build my own worldview. I am not a stranger to feminism or the women's struggle, either. I am not from space, of course. However, it was only after I became a father, and let me confess, it was after I became a mother that I realized that the thing called motherhood is a duty defined by men.

Throughout the adventures of Ethem's life, who is almost six months old now, I participated in every task one can think of, ranging from changing his diapers to washing him, from feeding him with baby food to relieving his gas, from cutting his fingernails to changing his clothes, from putting him to sleep to waking him up.

And it really took me months to do these things without thinking, "I am helping his mother".

At this point, where I have reached in time, I realized that I have redefined this state.

Aside from the physical-organic acts such as breast-feeding, motherhood is definitely not something peculiar to or dependent on women.

Motherhood is the sum of all duties

fulfilled to care for the baby and to meet its needs in different stages of its development. Of course, there is a special bond between the woman and the child for hormonal, emotional or birth-related reasons (such as pregnancy, amniotic fluid, placenta, umbilical cord, etc.).

However, this bond is not an excuse to pile an entirety of duties on the women and to test and grade them on their performance in the end. Probably the most sensible is to differentiate between the concepts of motherhood and childcare. Otherwise, it turns into a horrible imposition of manhood.

I have become the mother of my son. When it is expressed in words, it seems to be a funny or an overly idealistic expression aiming to attract attention. But that's the truth. If "taking care of the baby" or "being vigilant 24/7 to meet its needs" means motherhood, then, I am the mother of my son.

Except for breast-feeding, I can give him everything that his mother offers or provides him, and I can do this without being offended or lazy about it. Of course, this being the case, the "my father" aspect of the issue has also come up.

Looking at it from his manly side, my father finds it "sympathetic" that I change my son's diaper. Because he thinks that behind this behavior of mine lies the cuteness of a modern father who shows magnanimity by helping his wife. He says to himself, "He is a considerate lad, how

generously he helps his wife".

We, men, love telling women what to do, what not to do, and how they are supposed to do what they will do, we love assigning duties to them.

Therefore, I think we have to acknowledge that under the heading of male violence stands not only the infliction of physical or psychological violence but also the casting of various roles for women.

I can say without hesitation that the job description put forward as motherhood is, in fact, a crosscheck of the attempt to form a power domain called fatherhood.

In other words, woman should be the mother so that man can comfortably be the father.

Considered in the light of the reality that fatherhood is a pure authority and loveless power figure, a man changing the soiled diaper of his child cannot be said to have much of a force in the ranks of "fatherhood".

In that case, fatherhood means making room for oneself by pushing women to motherhood.

And this room, where the notion of power reigns freely, is an unbridled sphere which does not exclude violence. There are numerous types of male violence. Speaking for myself, it is sad that I waited until I became a "father" to become aware of the existence of the type of male violence that I have talked about here.

Of course, I do not spend my energy on being embarrassed about it. But I cannot say that I do not regret the time I spent until I got rid of the hubris of “I am helping the mother of my baby with her duty” and could finally be convinced that motherhood or the duty of care/upbringing is a collective work.

Although my father still looks at it from the viewpoint of “My modern son is supporting his wife”, I have comprehended the gravity of the situation.

I would really like to elaborate on what exactly I have understood, but Ethem has woken up and I need to heat up his food.

 ABOUT

Writer, translator. He continues to translate books, articles and stories from various languages. His books titled Bangır Bangır Ferdi Çalıyor Evde (At Home Ferdi was Playing in Full Blast, 2012), Dünya Bu Kadar (This is All There is to the World, 2015), Benim Adım Feridun (My Name is Feridun, 2016) were published by İletişim Publishing. With his book Olduğu Kadar Güzeldik (We were as Beautiful as Could Be, 2013) he won the 60th Sait Faik Abasıyanık Story Prize. He was born in 1980 in Çanakkale. He grew up in Bandırma.

He studied archeology. He is a fan of Gençlerbirliği sports team.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#38 ULAŞ
BAYRAKTAR**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

**“WOMAN IS WOMAN,
MY WISH IS HER
NON-MASCULINIZATION”**

On the other hand, male dominance and male violence are not absent; they are even on the rise; yes. Because men are nervous. There are women everywhere, who demand to have a say in decision making, know to say no and do not refrain from saying it.

I am Ulaş Bayraktar, a 43-year-old, supposedly educated, presently middle class, married father, and I have never claimed to be a feminist.

Why?

To begin with, I am the eldest son of a woman who was widowed at the age of 33. With the privilege of being the child of a woman who raised her two sons all by herself despite her young age, first in the little town where she was born then in a big city where she had no relatives, by struggling against all kinds of bureaucratic, social and economic hardships, I have witnessed firsthand what women are capable of achieving.

Therefore, my first contact with womanhood was a mother figure who never shied away from saying and doing what she had set her mind on.

Moreover, since I grew up in a house without a father, I did not experience any husband violence or male dominance, which might have caused me to remain relatively ignorant of domestic violence. The worst incident I remember is when my mother had a row with my grandfather and we spent a few days downstairs without seeing them.

I cannot deny that my adolescence, which I went through in a foreign private school, was full of male frivolities and excesses. Looking back on those days, I only now realize that our girl friends were watching us with disdain and even pity.

Immediately a solemnity would come over our friend who had a girlfriend; while holding hands and sitting in a close embracing with his girlfriend, he would put on that cynical look and stay away from the adolescent scenes for some time.

With a seriousness and solemnity, he would show off as if saying, "May Allah save you, as well".

What opportunities we were missing in the throes of this male adolescent nonsense.

In classes, we had to read *Of Mice and Men* and so we imitated Lennie; after we watched the 1984, the only thing we remembered about the movie was Julia's breasts which were seen in one scene; in the *Death of a Salesman*, we never sensed the fate of Willy which was awaiting us; we got carried away with the boys in the *Lord of the Flies*.

We never gave it a thought why our teacher from the US volunteered to go to Erzincan after the earthquake and we never appreciated the exercises we did in creative writing courses, which were in fact as valuable as diamonds.

As for the girls, they were enjoying these oases created within the curriculum of Turkey.

When I went to university, I met women from the southern provinces of Anatolia, who had made the best of these oases back in the day and surprised me with their intellectual interests and knowledge.

To be able to spend time with them, I was trying to understand structuralism, reflecting on the concept of natural law in the context of international law and was discovering the meanings of the lines in *Three Sisters*, which we had merely memorized and staged in high school.

Our only oasis was the mountaineering club. Since we could carry heavy backpacks, go on long hikes and climb high mountains, it was only there that we could enjoy our physical superiority to women. When it came to the flexibility required for rock climbing, we were again crestfallen, but we gave up on that passion before long anyway.

When I started to work as a hiking guide in summer thanks to these mountaineering activities, I could not have known that I would come across the bearing of my life.

While she was taking the first steps in her academic career, I changed my course to a profession which I had never thought of practicing before. All of my values were filtered through her sieve now, they were reshaping and reemerging.

First, we discovered together the secrets and beauties of the Taurus Mountains and the Mediterranean, which witnessed and harbored the birth of our love. Then, the streets, cinemas and historical sites of İstanbul took on meaning one by one. I met Paris through her eyes. We made it our home; and, then, Ada. Mersin, where we had been living since fifth grade, was now an entirely different city. In a short time, it also became a city with Umut (Hope).

A person could find his lover, his friend, his life partner, his colleague, his mind-mate and his companion in a single person, which I have also learnt from a woman.

Naturally, the women I know are not limited to my relatives, my classmates and their lovers. I have known women who suffered greatly, who were subjected to tyranny, mobbing, harassment and rape. But, only some of them had turned these experiences of violence into self-pity.

Neither were they grieving for their sorrows, nor were they escaping from life. They have derived strength and belief from these sorrows and continue to act and match wits with life in a stronger and more determined manner.

They make the best of what lies in their hands and hearts without asking for help or owing anyone; they undauntedly struggle to do their best, be that in science, arts, commerce or journalism.

Do not look for them only and solely within the organized feminist struggle. You saw them during Gezi and you continue to see them among the Academics for Peace, at the Galatasaray Square and in the highlands of Black Sea.

On the other hand, male dominance and male violence are not absent, they are even on the rise; yes. Because men are nervous. There are women everywhere, who demand to have a say in decision making, do not leave politics to men, do science, arts, journalism and management more skillfully than men, know to say no and do not refrain from saying it.

There are women who do not want to become lovers or get married, who do not live sexuality as per the men's demands, women who want to divorce, work and leave, all of which make us men nervous; we feel that the ground is slipping under our feet.

That order, which is ruled by the men who have the physical strength and opportunity of education, is now changing rapidly.

The new economic order does not really require you to be muscular or strong, but it requires that you develop creative, original ideas and projects and pursue them with patience and diligence.

It is not because they are women's professions, but because women have the creativity, patience and meticulousness required by these professions that they have better chances of being successful in this new order. Therefore, the more established this system becomes, the stronger the position of women in the new order will get.

In her study titled "The End of Men: And the Rise of Women", which [appeared](#) in The Atlantic magazine in 2010 and was published as a [book](#) in 2012, the US journalist-writer Hanna Rosin puts forward the changing balances in the gender struggle.

Rosin argues that as economy is now based on reflection and communication, rather than physical strength and endurance as was previously the case, the advantage enjoyed by men for centuries is coming to an end and women, who have social intelligence and ability

to concentrate, are becoming more successful in professional life.

As a matter of fact, Rosin observes that better-educated women already make up the majority in 13 "of the 15 job categories projected to grow the most" in the near future.

I have no doubt that as this change gains ground, women will come to a more decisive position not only in economy, but in politics, as well.

Though I very much value the efforts made to speed up this change, I cannot help expressing my reservations about it at every opportunity. Because I am worried that the growing nominal presence of women in politics may not be able to effect a change in the logic of politics.

In my opinion, that the Iron Ladies, zeibeks in high-heels, Merkels, Çillers and Rices do politics does not bring about much change in the masculinity of politics.

The masculinity of the order can tend to maintain itself over "crypto" women. I frequently encounter female looking masculine politicians not only in politics, but also in civil society and even within the feminist struggle.

I cannot help but observe that a struggle waged only against men and an effort to gain rights by trying to retaliate them also masculinize women in the end.

In fact, women can wage a real struggle by making the best of what lies in their hands and hearts, in their own styles,

with their own choices of action and perseverance. To me, pondering about constructing a new political habitus and making efforts to that end seems to be more meaningful than the disappearance of the word “bayan” [a derogatory equivalent of “lady/ma’am”, used as a supposedly “polite” form of address as opposed to “woman” which is considered “vulgar” in some and particularly conservative circles].

Of course, I know a lot of women who view the feminist struggle from this perspective, but I think the prevailing understanding of struggle is about changing men, persuading them and demanding rights from them.

However, it seems to me that the prospective empowerment of women, which has already started, needs to be more independent of men.

Because though the success of the power struggle waged against men will change the existing injustices in favor of the female gender, it might still result in nothing but the immanent reproduction of the gender asymmetry.

In fact, a movement that would be created by further embracing women’s own natural styles of thinking and acting might be the only way to establish a more egalitarian society.

Lucky me for my path has crossed with so many women who have been walking on that road.



ABOUT

As a founding partner and employee of Kültürhane, he is trying to do his job in a different way. He is a political scientist and an Academic for Peace. He was an assistant professor in Mersin University Department of Public Administration. On April 29, 2017 he was discharged with a Statutory Decree. He is a graduate of Galatasaray University Department of Public Administration. He completed his master's and PhD studies at the Paris Institute of Political Studies.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#39 VEYSİ
ALTAY**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MEN AND COLONIALISTS

It is not easy to be done with coming to terms with manhood. Since the things that we think we have accumulated can disappear very fast, it is impossible to say, "I have overcome it". It is a reality that needs to be confronted continually, over and over again.

I am writing as a man who feels responsible for stopping male violence and aims to eradicate it starting with the violence in his own life, rather than a man who attempts to give advice to women on how to struggle against male violence.

Even though I don't believe that men participating in discussions about gender and male violence will make an extra contribution to what women already say on the solution of this problem, I will try to write about my efforts on this path and my deficiencies.

Starting from their childhood, men and colonialists are taught and trained to think that they are privileged, and they want to use this throughout their lives. Knowingly or not, I also used this privilege.

It took me a long time to comprehend the concept of gender that points at the roles and responsibilities that the society ascribes on men and women, apart from their biological sexes.

Because I grew up with the idea that violence is considered normal and even necessary when required. It took me a long time to realize that a woman who is successful or objects to something is called "a manly woman", which praises not her but masculinity, or that when a strong woman is referred to as "a stately woman", it underlines the "greatness of the state".

Especially in the course of many studies I conducted later, I clearly saw that women

are actually in the front lines and none of them are like "the state" or "man".

In the documentary I made about the women in Cizre, I learned by being ashamed of my manhood and myself—as Marx says, shame is a virtue—that no woman is like "the state" or "man" in the face of state and male violence, that they are completely and precisely "woman" and are strong and tenacious as women.

I questioned my masculinity a lot while bearing witness to three or four years of Mother Berfo's struggle of searching for her forcibly disappeared son, a search that lasted 33 years until she passed away at the age of 105 unable to find her son's remains.

In the same manner, I closely witnessed how Asiye Doğan and Hediye Coşkun, both of whose 13-year-old sons were detained and forcibly disappeared in 1995 (Coşkun's husband was also killed by the state in front of her eyes in 1993), struggled "for men" against the power of the state as "women".

Of course, my most important confrontation happened thanks to the Kurdish Women's Movement. The struggle of the Kurdish Women's Movement against the male mindset within the "Movement", their quest for identity as women and their self-sacrifice, which I only understood much later, trained me and trained us with patience.

Of course this patience and questioning yourself in this training process or not being able to do justice to the time and energy spent on training you leaves many deficiencies in a person.

Just like the relationship between the colonialist and the colony. Colonialists do not question themselves, they do not judge themselves, they do not want to find faults with themselves.

It predicates itself on assimilating the other to oneself instead of changing itself with the self-confidence arising from its dominant status. When there are protests, it tries to find different arguments to justify itself instead of changing. As is the case in the relationship between Turks and Kurds and men and women.

If I turn to myself, I would like to emphasize an incident, which brought about my biggest transformation and caused me to hate myself as a man.

This incident is the “exhibition” of the naked body of Kader Kevser Eltürk (Ekin Van) in the middle of Varto, Muş on August 10, 2015 by the male law enforcement officers of the state, most of whom with blood on their hands and proud of this blood, with the aim of humiliating her in their own way. In fact, if we look back, what happened in Varto was a concrete indicator of what they meant when they said “a stately woman”, “a manly woman”.

Because, in their minds, woman is the “honor” of the man and of the society, and with this act they aimed to defile the “honor” of the Kurdish people.

However, there was something they did not know: That naked body would become the honor and pride of the women who were struggling for years and of us men, who have partly managed to change themselves.

Moreover, working together and being friends with the women who have a feminist consciousness and protect their rights till the bitter end was informative and led me to question myself in that period.

Because, there was a big difference between understanding an issue in theory and implementing it in practical life. In other words, understanding that the things I view as my rights actually originate from my gender training did not automatically lead me to give up on those rights.

Because, giving up on the rights that patriarchy bestows upon men is not that easy. Being constantly questioned and corrected by feminist women has increased my efforts to this end.

Today, I am paying scrupulous attention to refrain from using a masculine language or behaving in ways that can be perceived as psychological, economic, verbal or physical violence; but, it would still be presumptuous to say that I am able to look at the male violence around me from the right perspective.

At times, I still turn to “but”s. For instance, when a relative or friend of mine verbally abuses his woman partner, I sometimes catch myself thinking, “but, at least, there is no physical violence.”

It is not easy to be done with coming to terms with manhood. Since the things that we think we have accumulated can disappear very fast, it is impossible to say, "I have overcome it". It is a reality that needs to be confronted continually, over and over again.

In order to prevent the violence that we claim to take a stand against, we men must first confront our own violence. The process of questioning "manhood" starts precisely at this point.

With the awareness that we cannot remain outside it merely by saying "I am outside it", we need to sincerely open ourselves to the objections raised by women and learn to listen to the discourses of feminists.

We have no choice but to find the ways of distancing ourselves from and struggling against manhood.

ABOUT

He has been engaged in photography and cinema for 20 years. He served as an administrator at the Human Rights Association (IHD) and Amnesty International for many years. He is a founding member of Vicdani Ret Derneği (Conscientious Objection Association, 2013). He was a war correspondent in Serêkaniyê (2013) and Kobanê. He does written and simultaneous translation from and to Kurdish and Turkish. He produced the photography albums titled Kaybolan Biz (We the Disappeared) comprised of the stories of the forcibly disappeared (100 photos, 100 stories). He directed the documentaries Failî Dewlet (Perpetrator State), Sessiz Hayatlar (Silent Lives), 33 Yıllık Direniş - Berfo Ana (33 Years Long Resistance: Mother Berfo), Nû Jîn (New Life) and Bîr (The Well). He was born in 1976.

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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#40 MURAT
UTKU**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

THE NAVY YEARS, CIVILIAN LIFE AND STATES OF MANHOOD

As if society, politics and, of course, state mentality do not otherize women enough, a meaningless anger against women is also being injected into men at home, at school, in the military and at every level of society.

There was a steep hill just at the end of the street. We started climbing together with my father in the summer heat.

My father was grumbling, “How on earth can the entrance to a hospital be like this?”. He was right. The ascent was indeed steep and long. When we reached the hospital entrance, the duty officer said “Hello” and asked, “Are you here for the medical examinations?”. I was about to turn 14. My moustache was newly sprouting. We went inside, submitted our documents, registered and went out into the garden of the hospital guided by a marine.

At least 50 young children my age were waiting in the garden. They had just hit puberty and their families had become anxious about their future.

The examinations lasted about 10 days. They examined each and every single part of our bodies, from the strand of our hair to our toenails. It was also during those days that I encountered homophobia for the first time in my life.

Because sure enough, they had also checked whether we were homosexual or not and this examination was done while we were all together. There is, of course, no need to describe the feeling of humiliation this caused.

“Marine” or “Martin”?

Thus began my life as a military student with the level of testosterone always running quite high.

From then on, the mechanism, which would drum into our heads the merits of being a “marine” and the cruces of living like a man/soldier, had started to operate with all its solemnity and cruelty.

In this method—at least in those years—there was no place for women. In our preparatory year, we did not encounter a single woman, except for a first lieutenant, who was an English teacher.

As for the other male officers, they just looked the female officer in the eye and talked on and on about the superiority of men over women. In fact, one day, one of them had even said, “Sea is like a woman, it is treacherous, you need to be careful. That is why, they call the sea ‘marine’ (bahriye); otherwise, they would have called it ‘martin’ (bahri)”. I remember we had laughed a lot at this adolescent boy joke, at least that day.

Can there be women on board?

In that period, being a soldier was a highly important profession. Three successive coup d'états staged every ten years (not counting the attempts) were behind us. Under the administration of soldiers, Turkey was going through a dark period created by the fascism of the September 12 coup.

Just as in every other field in the country, in the military as well, the issue of woman was one of those many subjects which was not deemed worth thinking about; woman was placed at the center of bad jokes, where scornfulness and machoism were intertwined, as in the example of “marine-martin”.

Lest we forget, for centuries, sailors have been trying to persuade everyone that a woman on board brings bad luck. In other words, with the help of rumors men try to cover the fact that they are incapable of controlling themselves.

White uniform

As you know, marines wear white clothes in summer. It was rumored that women love those summer clothes of marines the most and marines were secretly proud of it.

As for the army and air force officers who wear uniforms in other colors, they used to make fun of the marines because of these white clothes by calling them “aunts-in-law”. Marines used to get very angry about it.

On the one hand, tons of humiliating jokes were made about women; on the other hand, it was recommended that if a young woman is about to sit on a bench on the ferry, a white napkin that the marines carried in their pockets should be put on the bench so that her clothes would not get dirty. However, no doubt, chivalry was not that, which I would understand later on.

Adaptation to civilian life

The military school adventure that lasted about five years ended when I left the Military Academy. The process of adaptation to civilian life was not very hard for me.

Since I had spent most of my education

life in an all-male boarding military school, coeducation gave me the opportunity to know and understand both myself and women.

One year after I left the school, women were also allowed to study not in the military high school but in the military academy. I am not a witness to that period. But I can surmise the hardships that the handful young women must have gone through among so many male military students.

Struggle against the imposed doctrine of machoism

It was yet another mistake inherited from the military school years to spend the period of adolescence and young adulthood with summer loves, and to think that I had figured out the woman-man relationships, and to approach life with these barren experiences.

We had all accumulated little love stories resembling hunting stories that make a mountain out of a molehill, just to be able to say something to our friends on the issue of women and relationships.

And, of course, none of these stories gave much of an idea about the mixed life “out there”. That is why, it was not very easy to shake off those states of manhood that the military considered beyond reproach.

The doctrine of machoism was standardized by the founding ideology back in the 1920s and has unfortunately survived to this day almost completely

intact through the principle of continuity; as someone who was subjected to this doctrine of machoism at a very young age and from the very top, would it ever be possible for me to look at the woman from a different perspective?

I tried to proceed by feeling my way and stumbling through it by trial and error.

Half-hearted libertarianism

Afterwards, there were times when I shouted at and quarreled with a woman colleague or my girlfriend in the middle of the street, or offended other women with various discourtesies.

At times, I also patronized women as if I was their teacher or something— that attitude called mansplaining—and crossed the line by intervening in her decisions regarding her body.

There are some behavior patterns that the male lineage cannot fix even after getting to know and understanding the struggle for women's rights. For instance, I remember I supported the libertarian attitudes regarding the veil issue only half-heartedly at the beginning, but afterwards felt sorry for my behavior.

Against sexism and homophobia...

At the end of all this process, I have been striving to see life from a different perspective by being against sexism and homophobia and siding with the struggle of feminism, I am still trying.

Because, as far as I can see in both myself and those around me, that macho inside the man does not leave him easily.

As if society, politics and, of course, state mentality do not otherize women enough, a meaningless anger against women is also being injected into men at home, at school, in the military and at every level of society.

And especially the men's inferiority complex caused by strong women is, unfortunately, not something that can be overcome easily. It requires a self-struggle.

If we turn to me: I still have some way to go in terms of treating the house I live in and my partner in a more attentive manner.

ABOUT

He dropped out of the Naval Academy. He graduated from İstanbul University Faculty of Political Science Department of Economics. He worked as reporter in Radikal newspaper, Nokta and Aktüel magazines and as TV reporter in CNN Türk, Doğan News Agency and Al Jazeera Türk. He followed the crises, earthquakes, elections, conflicts and wars in various parts of the world and predominantly the Middle East, he followed from beginning to end the war that started with Israel's attack on Lebanon in 2016.

He occasionally writes in bianet.

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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
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**#41 BURAK
KURU**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

CHOIR OF VOICES FROM THE HOMELAND: TURKEY LOVES THIS LANGUAGE

Why can't this horrible environment get its act together? Why can't the sports press turn into a field where women journalists can have a place? Why is the number of women, who work in the press tribunals or in the sports fields as photojournalists, on the decline?

Even though it spends all of its energy on soccer, the sports in Turkey achieves a great majority of its notable achievements in branches other than soccer, and most of these achievements come via sportswomen.

Nevertheless, the “reflection” of these achievements in the field, in other words, the response these achievements receive from the sports press is not “reputable”. Just like other women who do not engage in sports but appear on those pages, sportswomen are also subjected to inappropriate behaviors or male violence, which is the subject of this article series.

Let us go to the very beginning, to the period when soccer had just begun to thrive, and start with a caricature from the sports press, which at the time was discussing whether women should play soccer or not. On May 28, 1929, on Akşam daily newspaper, there was a caricature of a male and a female soccer player, who engaged in the following dialogue:

Man: “If you will excuse me, missy, I would like to present you with a pass.”

Woman: “Hold on a second! Let me put on my make-up, then I will shoot the ball.” [1]

Now, let me come to the 50s and quote from Tuğrul Eryılmaz’s article in this series on “male violence”: [2]

“This state of affairs, which we can describe as harassment, of course continued at Karşıyaka High School and

Karşıyaka Erdem College where I attended later. It did not change but the level of harassment increased significantly. There are cliché names given to boys who calmly walk around or don’t play soccer: ‘Girl Ahmet, Niminy-Piminy Mustafa...’ Let me add right away: even though I had no interest in soccer, I managed to become a goalkeeper—or at least I thought I did—for fear of the nicknames they would give me.”

Now, I am relaying a testimony from the 90s:

One day, while preparing the sports pages of an important newspaper of the time, people in the newsroom start talking about a photograph of Eczacıbaşı Women’s Volleyball Team players having fun on the beach.

As the person working on the page is thinking aloud, “How shall I caption this photograph?”, the jokes begin. After a while, it gets out of hand, “What shall I write, ‘The b*****s are sunbathing?’”, he asks and does not leave it merely as a question but reflects it on the page.

The photograph, which manages to pass all processes of examination, goes into print with the caption, “B*****s are sunbathing”. They realize the mistake when the newspapers are being printed; however, some thousands of copies have already been printed and distributed like that.

The examples are unending. A news article from the year 1993. The introduction reads as follows: "The English are trying to cover up the success achieved by Galatasaray in the soccer field with tricks played on the table. The executives of Manchester United, which was eliminated in the Champions League, are claiming "the Turkish police beat our football players" and applying to the UEFA with the demand for a rematch."

OK, nice.

But, why is the headline of this news "Sons of B*****s!"?

In those years, the sports fans were again messing with the wives of soccer players. It was getting steadily worse with posters of players' wives opened in the bleachers, the fans cheering in a profane, abusive language, and chanting slogans about the wives or daughters of the soccer coaches.

We are now coming to the 2000s. In the field of athletics, where the achievements of Turkey are quite limited, Elvan Abeylegesse achieves a success that makes everyone happy.

While the athlete, who just broke the 5000 meters world record at the Golden League meeting in Bergen, is making a victory lap with the Turkish flag in her hand, an editor who is working in a so-called sports newspaper—actually a soccer newspaper—passes this news on to the editorial department suggesting that it can make the headlines.

The editorial department at first

welcomes this idea, but then does not deem the photograph of this athlete, whom they have only now heard about, "attractive" enough to increase the paper's circulation and decide to give little coverage to this news.

This is the situation in Turkey but of course it is not very promising across the world, either.

A single example is an important indicator of how women are viewed in the sports field. Andy Sidaris is an American television director who introduced the phrase "Honey Shot" into the literature due to the angles that he chose while directing the broadcasts of sports competitions. [3]

It means the following: In the broadcasts directed by Sidaris, the attractive women in the bleachers and cheerleaders are shot close-up and presented to the television audience. This attitude "introduced" to sports broadcasting in the 1970s is, of course, still very much in practice today.

Coming back to present day, sexist comments continue to be made but thanks to the good aspect of social media, these comments can be countered by the reaction of the public.

However, it is difficult to say that it is on the decline.

The sports press, which is regarded as one of the least reputable branches of the press when it comes to certain issues, acts devoid of empathy and on the basis that the vast majority of its audience is men, and fills its pages with masculine, sexist expressions which reflect the society at large...

And we are face to face with these questions: Why can't such a horrible environment get its act together? Why can't the sports press, which is one of the most unbalanced branches of the press in terms of the gender ratio of workers at newspapers, turn into a field where women workers can have a place? Why is the number of women, who work in the preparation of newspapers, in the press tribunes or in the sports fields as photojournalists, on the decline?

Let us refer to two articles featured in this "male violence" article series. If we read a part of Tanil Bora's article together with that of Bağış Erten, things will fall into place.

Tanil Bora: "According to evolutionary psychologists, historical anthropologists and whatnot, the aptitude towards violence and aggression increases in all mammalian communities that consist of males. During the colonization of western America, for instance, homicides decreased with the arrival of women, as the women population grew. Being man-to-man may act as an incitement to let oneself go, be impulsive, run rampant. Customarily, man-to-man conversations among teenagers tend to turn into a feast of recklessness. With an appetite to appease the hunger of the times spent in the company of women and girls, as it were..." [4]

Bağış Erten: "Just think about the 'mob' that fills the bleachers today, always tending towards violence, in a mood to lynch someone when they come together, and unable to speak without using foul language. They are the very part of this

culture of becoming man. A mass which does not get in contact with women, socializes only through sports, hangs out only with those who resemble themselves, and hates everything that is different. Those who cannot speak by themselves, but think that bullying with cheers is a show of 'character'... And add to them the adolescents who have and have not grown-up, those who simply cannot leave childhood behind, who attribute a meaning to that adolescent inside them, who think that soccer is their 'private' thing and define the bleachers as their legitimate sphere of machismo. Add to that the constantly recurring talk of the proverbial 'manhood.'" [5]

Lastly, let me tell you about an argument which started on the sports page of Radikal newspaper on June 9, 2012 and ended in court on May 28, 2013.

Uğur Vardan, who was the Chief Editor of the Sports Department of Radikal newspaper at the time, wrote an article of criticism about a sports newspaper called AMK that would begin to be published that very day and asked in its title, "Did you search a lot to find this name?" [6]

"Good luck with your new newspaper; today, a fresh step is being taken in the name of sports press and a brand-new newspaper is meeting its readers. However, its name is an utter catastrophe: AMK. [English equivalent of "F*** You", literally means "f*** your vagina"] Its expansion is 'Open, Brave, Fearless'. It is, of course, a camouflage on paper, the real expansion is known by all, it is the 'Twitter' version of a swear word that is

considered ‘one of our national reflexes’. Turkey suffered and is still suffering a lot from the language of violence, the language of war and the expression of male-dominated perspective surrounding every aspect of life.

“Football, which is our favorite sport and is regarded as the direct reflection of life in some places, suffers from the same ailment. The bleachers, the actors of the play, executives and the press have usually been using one or, sometimes, all of these ‘problematic languages’. This attitude, which is oftentimes jointed with nationalism, which in turn is interwoven with fascism, finds its reflection in social life through the expression of the perspective that views woman only as a sex object. The things that I have mentioned thus far are common knowledge; as for the AMK, it is the expression of a ploy that reproduces and almost normalizes, internalizes this ideology.”

Due to this article, the owners of AMK newspaper want to file a lawsuit for damages of 20 thousand Turkish Liras; however, the court rejects the case. [7] In other words, the court finds this criticism justified.

And, when we finally come to 2018, the latest situation is as follows: Radikal newspaper, where Uğur Vardan was the Chief Editor of the Sports Department and I was one of his employees between the years 2009 and 2014, and where we were open to criticism and did our very best to avoid male violence—but still made mistakes from time to time—does not exist anymore.

As for the AMK newspaper, not to overlook the valuable efforts of its employees, it is carrying on with the name it started its journey with.

We will, of course, continue our struggle, but the conclusion that I have reached for now is the following: Evidently, Turkey loves this language.

[1] *Murat Toklucu: Futbol Kadını Bozar Mı? Socrates, Mart 2016*

[2] *Tuğrul Eryılmaz: Sur-Karşıyaka-Cebeci-Sublime Porte, [Bianet](#)*

[3] *Andy Sidaris: [The Man Who Invented Sports Television’s Honey Shot](#)*

[4] *Tanıl Bora: Man to Man, [Bianet](#)*

[5] *Bağış Erten: Growing Up As Boarder, Tribune Boy, [Bianet](#)*

[6] *Uğur Vardan: Bu İsmi Çok Mu Aradınız? [Radikal](#)*

[7] *AMK’nın Uğur Vardan’a Açtığı Dava Düştü, [Medyatava](#)*

 ABOUT

Journalist. He produces news and interviews for the book and arts supplements Hürriyet Kitap Sanat, Posta Kitap and the Hürriyet weekend supplements. He worked as reporter-editor in Radikal and Hürriyet newspapers and msn.com of Microsoft, and as book/magazine editor at Çınar and Kırmızı Kedi publishing houses. He authored local travel pieces for Cuma6tesi supplement of Cumhuriyet newspaper. His interviews and articles were published in magazines such as GQ, Istanbul Art News, and L'Officiel Hommes.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#42 BURAK
GÖRAL**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

SAVING CHILDREN AND WOMEN FIRST!

In our eyes, women were valuable creatures who needed to be saved by the good men from the hands of bad men. We used to play the game of “saving the Princess”. Gökçen, the beautiful daughter of my uncle would either be the princess or “the daughter of the Chancellor” kidnapped for a substantial ransom...

I am thinking about who the male heroes of my childhood were. I had a comic book culture, though not very deep. I used to read Zagor the most.

And there was also Mister No. But, in Mister No, our adventurous hero used to get into trouble mostly because of women. Mister No, who had a weakness for women, was easily deceived by the skillfully drawn “femme fatales”.

As for Zagor, it was a comic book that sailed in more secure waters when it came to the issue of women. The struggle of Zagor was to secure a just order in the Darkwood forest where he lived. His relationship with women was very much in the background.

Then, one day, I watched Star Wars in the cinema and my life changed a lot. My number one hero was Han Solo now. An adventurous smuggler who stands out from the pack and lives for his own pleasure and future!

He joined the rebels, first for his own interest, then, because she liked Princess Leia and as the story unfolded, he learnt to put his life in danger for more noble causes.

In fact, Princess Leia was not a typical princesses waiting to be rescued; on the contrary, she was a headstrong woman who always gave as good as she got and became a warrior if need be. I mean, such women were more attractive to me. Evidently, my interest in women with

strong character started back then...

After Star Wars, whenever we came together with the children of our relatives in the evenings, we used to play the game of “saving the princess”. In our eyes, women were valuable creatures who needed to be saved by the good men from the hands of bad men.

The only girl in the family who was the right age to play with us was the beautiful daughter of my uncle, Gökçen; she used to be either the princess or “the daughter of the Chancellor” kidnapped for a substantial ransom...

I was responsible for the scenarios and design of the characters! I used to fill our games with all the clichés that we watched in cinema and on television. But, I would warn Gökçen all the time telling her, “Say some harsh words now and then, don’t just stand there like a doll!”

Of course, as children we were also affected by the image of “the sexy woman as the prize of the heroic man” which was presented to us via advertisements, TV series and movies like James Bond. It was as if not valuing women was one of the indispensable conditions for men to look “cool”.

As you know, the interest of high school girls in “bad boys” is quite famous. In my high school years, my attempts at becoming a “bad boy” always ended in failure. I could not act as if women were not valuable. That is why, I always became the best friends, but not the boyfriends, of the girls that I liked in high school!

The movies and TV series, where men amply exploited women, have, of course, always existed in cinema and television. Especially in the movies of traditional Turkish cinema (Yeşilçam) destined to be blockbusters...

But a balance struck by the public broadcaster TRT needs to be highlighted. For instance, the TV series *Perihan Abla* (Big Sister *Perihan*), whose main character was a skilled woman with a high social capability who was loved and respected by everyone, was an entertaining and positive production that valued the neighborhood culture and narrated the importance of cooperation and solidarity. In fact, it might be because it pushed its matriarchal structure a bit too far that it made the main male character of the series run away from it years later.

With the private TV channels becoming more widespread, the exploitative and intentionally/unintentionally discriminatory mentality found itself an ample room for maneuver in TV dramas. We have arrived at our present state with Kadirisms [cult of machismo inspired by the characters played by Kadir İnanır], the ones who wrote “the book of manhood” from scratch, and Polat Alemdars [another macho character in *Valley of the Wolves*, a movie/TV series on the deep state and

the mafia relations in Turkey]...

Now, in most of our TV series and comedy movies, it seems almost “imperative” that women are passive and very much dependent on the existence of a man, while men are rude and, definitely, macho so as to be charismatic.

According to a study conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute entitled “The Use of Information Technologies by Children and Media”, 92.5 percent of children between the ages of 6 and 15 watch television every day. The same study also shows that the rate of watching cartoons among children considerably decreases after the age of 10 and cartoons are gradually replaced by domestic television series and movies.

While the rate of watching domestic TV series among children between the ages of 6 and 10 is 44 percent, this rate hits 77 percent among children between the ages of 11 and 15.

It means that the rate of children among the audience of the domestic series produced by the television channels of Turkey is considerably high. But, is there anything in these television series that could contribute something to children or that could add something positive to their lives? It is, of course, not right to expect all television series to assume such a responsibility.

But, seeing as under the name of televising they have done away with time-belts for specific programs and/or audiences and chosen to air a single four- five hours long TV series right after

the main news bulletin, then, it is expected that some degree of responsibility will be taken! For instance, almost none of our television series encourages people to work or to be good people.

It is unknown even how those rich male characters reached such high positions in society. Most of them are rich thanks to their families, they are almost never depicted while working. Their educational background is not known, either. On top of that, most of these men are rude and aggressive.

As for women, they are completely reduced to being dependent on the mere shadow of men; there are almost no strong women characters that can be presented as role models for girls. But, in our day and age, these TV series occupy a very important place in the list of shows watched by children.

In the previous months, we had strongly criticized, especially on social media, a television series for depicting its heroine, who had escaped from male violence, in the most horrible of circumstances.

The defense of the creators of the series was “to raise awareness”. But, in a society where grace and refinement have been gradually disappearing, that is no way to raise awareness. Especially when there is an audience which also includes children...

How is the situation in cinema, then?

Five or six years ago, while hanging out with my son in the playground, we started talking with another father. When this

father heard what I did for a living, he got very interested and called out to his five or six-year-old son to join us.

He said to his son, “Look, this uncle is a filmmaker, imitate Recep İvedik* for him”. At once the child puffed his belly out and started making sounds like “hohahaha”, and all of a sudden a new window opened in my professional life. [*a popular Turkish comedy movie starring a fat, filthy, stupid and aggressive anti-hero named Recep İvedik]

Then, I started to take a closer look at the social media accounts of some parents, and also observed the parents of my son’s friends. All of the domestic comedy movies were perceived by the families as films that can be watched in the company of children. After this point, I focused some part of my work entirely on this subject.

Do you know which scenes the parents around the world have been trying to protect their children from the most? According to the results of several studies, we fear nothing as much as we fear nudity! We are scared to death that children will see people making love on the cinema screen... And, the content which people are least concerned about in Turkey actually points at a different danger: toilet humor.

Toilet humor refers to an exaggerated humor which deals with defecation, urination or farting, vomiting and other bodily functions, and gradually crosses the line.

In some Hollywood comedies as well

as most of our domestic comedy films, humor is produced through a masculine language supported by a sexist perspective, frequent use of slang words, discrimination through sexism, roughness and, from time to time, anti-heroism.

Humor of this type has a very wide target audience. However, people in other countries can exclude the children in their own societies from this target audience as best as they can with a reliable auto-control mechanism. For instance, they have an age classification system that they apply quite strictly.

Because, children, especially the ones who watch such movies prematurely, are very likely to see the protagonists of these movies as role models, look up to and misunderstand them.

However, in our country, movies are not evaluated from this point of view. In these movies, domestic filmmakers exert a special effort to get rated suitable for ages 7+ and most of the time they manage to get it. The rudest ones are rated 13+ at most. In fact, the majority of these movies should be rated 15+.

Although a thousand other examples can be given, it is easier to refer to the most obvious one. In the fourth movie of the Recep İvedik film series, İvedik, who takes part in the competition on the Survivor island, humiliates an overweight woman, who is one of his opponents, in an extremely harsh language and, on top of that, also inflicts physical violence on her in one of the scenes.

This movie comes out rated 7+ and

unfortunately some children start to act like İvedik, whom they view as an amusing and sweet hero...

I hope that the child, whom I met five or six years ago when he was imitating the laugh of Recep İvedik, is not still taking İvedik as an example and teasing some of his girl friends at school now!

The most terrible of all is that some parents, who are so afraid that their children will see a couple of breasts, see no harm in wheedling tickets at the box offices for their children under the age of 7 so that they can watch the comedy films in which antiheroes smash and destroy everyone around them, and especially the women.

 ABOUT

Film critic, writer, scenarist, educator. He graduated from Marmara University Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences. As of 1994 he regularly wrote film critics and cinema reviews for newspapers and magazines such as Sinema Dergisi, Milliyet, Esquire, Yeni Yüzyıl – Café Pazar, Cumhuriyet, Posta, Arka Pencere and Sözcü. He has published three books on cinema and wrote the screenplay of three feature films.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#43 MEHMET
BOZOK**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

MASCULINITY STUDIES AS A CRITICISM OF MEN AND MASCULINITIES (?)

For instance, what good is it if a man, who commits violence or despises homosexuals, makes a criticism of masculinity? Or, the big question:
“Why would men, who take the biggest share in patriarchy, criticize masculinity?”

**and so castles made of sand,
fall in the sea, eventually***
- Jimi Hendrix

The beginning of gender studies in general terms coincides with the beginning of the twentieth century. This beginning can be attributed, on the one hand, to the advent and rise of feminism as a social movement in the west and, on the other hand, to the emergence of discussion and research on sexes in social sciences and particularly in early anthropological and psychoanalytic studies.

As of the 1960s and 1970s, these discussions took on a critical dimension with the world shattering effect of second-wave feminism—and that of LGBTQIA+ studies in the years to come—and have developed as gender studies.

Feminist criticism, especially with its emphasis on “personal is political”, became so influential that the subjects, which used to be ignored and refrained from being addressed in the academia and social movements, started to be discussed both in academic studies and also within the political struggles that were forcing the daily life to change.

Such that, men had to give answers. As a reflection of this, especially as of the late 1970s, studies on men and masculinities began to emerge as a new field of gender studies in the academia.

When we look at gender studies in general, I think that we see two—

complementary—paths: The first one is the analysis of gender with a focus on differences. These differences are not solely limited to differences of gender identity and sexual orientation or cultural differences between (heterosexual) men/women and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

For instance, as it has been emphasized by Raewyn Connell, one of the founders of critical studies on men and masculinities, masculinity is not universal, essential, divine and/or unchangeable.

The existing state of masculinity does not stem from biological reasons. This state varies on the basis of historical, cultural and social differences as well as sexual orientation, ethnicity, class and physical characteristics. Moreover, it can change and can be changed.

In the second path, gender is addressed with a focus on power relations. Gender is an area of relations shaped by patriarchy and (hetero)sexism. This second approach focuses on the criticism of male domination and discrimination based on sex and sexual orientation.

For instance, LGBTQIA studies have underlined that homophobia/transphobia is not a fate. As for feminists, they have opened male domination, gender inequality, misogyny, violence against women and derogatory discourses against women as well as patriarchy itself to discussion and emphasized that these can be changed.

(However, apart from these two basic lines, it should be noted in parentheses that there are also the ones who embrace and/or advocate the status quo despite discussing gender. Additionally, there are those who talk about gender in a way that could eliminate the critical potentials of the concept.)

As I have mentioned above, studies on men and masculinities have emerged as a response to feminism, and LGBTQIA+ studies.

These studies were not critical for they opened men and masculinities to discussion solely within gender studies. These studies that opened masculinities to discussion did not have to be critical for they only discussed gender.

From the very beginning, there has been a line in the field, with supporters especially in the US, claiming that masculinity has been lost (!), arguing that men have suffered losses (!) and crises of masculinity due to feminism (which they always criticized), and stating that masculinity should go back to its essence which is essentially good (!).

On the other hand, there has also been a line that has kept a clear distance from feminists since the very beginning and made the criticism that masculinity has harmed men the most (!) and has caused the biggest damage and destruction to men (!).

However, there has developed a third line that has become a more powerful and richer vein over the last forty years, namely “masculinity studies” which

approaches men and masculinities from a “(pro)feminist” and “anti-sexist” perspective and has now come to the fore rather with its critical aspect. Following in the footsteps of Jeff Hearn and with the aim of underlining the emphasis on criticism, I prefer calling it “critical studies on men and masculinities”.

The concepts of “hegemonic masculinity” and “masculinities”, which were put forward by Raewyn Connell and are frequently misused, have now become a hallmark of the field.

The concept of “hegemonic masculinity” emphasizes that under certain socio-historical conditions, certain specific constructions of masculinities become more effective than others in establishing and taking a share in male domination.

As for the concept of “masculinities”, it has been underlining the fact that masculinity is not universal, but plural and diverse. Thereby it makes a parallel political emphasis with feminism by suggesting that it is possible for masculinities to (be) change(d).

Today the field of “critical studies on men and masculinities” is gradually making more room for itself in social sciences, becoming known by a larger number of people every day, and is constantly developing and thriving with new studies conducted in the world, including Turkey.

The research and studies of (pro)feminist and anti-sexist social scientists and activists on men and masculinities have always been met with skepticism by feminists and LGBTQIA+ studies both in

Turkey and the world. Since patriarchal and (hetero)sexist relations are already being discussed by these fields of study, is there really a need for masculinity studies? In fact, the *raison d'être* of “masculinity studies” and “critical studies on men and masculinities” and what they do and/or can(not) do lies precisely in the answers that are given to this question.

Connell and her (Connell’s chosen gender pronoun is she) friends, who were men originating from the same tradition with feminists and feeling uncomfortable with the impact of patriarchy on women and LGBTQIA+ individuals, initiated this field of study in the 1970s with extremely political motivations and not for the sole reason of scientific interests or because they found the subject matter interesting, unexplored or with the potential of becoming popular.

This motivation at its inception was to examine how men turn into patriarchal and (hetero)sexist actors and to reveal the conditions of their change. Due to the differences and priorities in their own agendas, feminism and LGBTQIA+ studies were criticizing patriarchy and (hetero)sexist relations by focusing on women and/or LGBTQIA+ individuals. Their focus was not directly on the criticism of men, who are in a dominant position in these relations, or of the ways in which these masculinities are constructed.

“Critical studies on men and masculinities” set out to have a say in this very field that was not explored in the criticism of gender relations but was, in fact, extremely necessary.

The field of “critical studies on men and

masculinities” criticizes masculinities from the inside. In this context, it can be characterized as an extension, part and continuation of critical studies in social sciences. This field aims to engage in a critical analysis of men and masculinities by standing against oppressions, exploitation, discriminations as well as subordination of women and LGBTQIA+ individuals.

That the concepts of “hegemonic masculinity” and “masculinities” of Connell have been widely accepted does not stem from the fact that this field or subject has become popular.

The significance of Connell stems from a political reason. This reason is the following: She has put forward a critical theory, which discusses the construction of masculinities by explaining the possibilities of change in masculinities themselves.

In the last forty-year period since the late 1970s, when the first studies were conducted, to date; the field of “critical studies on men and masculinities” has enabled the critical discussion of a series of subjects that never came to the fore before such as patriarchal “masculinity” codes, climacteric of men, young men, fatherhood and becoming a father, work-masculinity relations, daily lives of men, impact of patriarchal discourses on men’s bodies, masculinities and sexuality, masculinities in nationalist discourses, sports-masculinity relations, representations of masculinities in literature, cinema and media, and constructions of masculinities in different local contexts.

Male researchers, who tended to engage in a harsh criticism of masculinities by following feminist discussions and self-criticizing their own lives, might have initiated the field of critical studies on men and masculinities.

However, today there are as many women researchers working in this field as men. Here, I would like to underline the importance of being critical on any account while doing research and writing on gender and leading our own lives.

Because (patriarchal and (hetero)sexist) men and masculinities are the perpetrators of oppression, violence, harassment, rape and discrimination, which women, LGBTQIA+ individuals and other men behaving differently than the dominant masculine identity have been subjected to; they are the ones who have been benefiting from the unequal and hierarchical gender relations; they are the ones who have been causing women to feel uneasy while going out; they are the ones who have been occupying the spheres of daily life as they wish ranging from economics to law, from interpersonal discussions to the adjacent seats on the subway; they are the actors who have been dominating the patriarchal relations...

In short, they are the ones who have been making public and private spaces unbearable for those who do not play “the game” according to the patriarchal and (hetero)sexist “rules”. For that reason, the subject of “men” and “masculinities” is not just any “subject” that one can write about without pondering on and making a criticism of male-dominated power relations.

For instance, you cannot analyze men and masculinities as if you were analyzing a water glass, which could be attributed a neutral value (though I think a glass is also part of the network of political, economic and/or ecological relations) or you cannot approach men and masculinities as if it were any subject among (popular) subjects.

If you analyze them—like some do—as a popular subject independent of the network of relations among capitalism, patriarchy and (hetero)sexism, it would lose a considerable part of its significance and transformative power.

Or, while discussing men, if you write on the subject by overlooking the structural elements and social and historical conditions in its socio-cultural background and use an accusatory language towards the individual actors; or, while discussing masculinities, if you see masculinity as an indivisible whole and do not underline the possibilities of its change, the field would lose a considerable part of its critical potential.

It should also be noted that essentialist statements, which only contribute to the continuation of the existing state, are to be avoided while discussing men and masculinities and it should not be forgotten that masculinity is also a social construct.

What I would like to say is that in the field of critical studies on men and masculinities, qualified and exciting works are being done. To discuss men and masculinities, it is not necessary to have—though I wish there were—

extensive, wide-scale theories or research where thousands or millions of people are represented. Men and masculinities are just beside us, they are realities that we come into contact with or are subjected to by us or the ones around us.

That is why, it is very meaningful that critical studies on men and masculinities attach a central importance to feminist self-criticism, which criticizes itself in the first place.

When this is not done, the field becomes meaningless.

(For instance, what good is it if a man, who commits violence or despises homosexuals, makes a criticism of masculinity? Or, the big question: “Why would men, who take the biggest share in

patriarchy, criticize masculinity?”)

It is of considerable importance to analyze men and masculinities from a critical perspective because male domination and (hetero)sexism have been turning the lives of everyone—including those of men—into hell. Maintaining this is not an attitude that life deserves. Masculinity studies is an opportunity for change emerging from the academia. But it is only when they are critical that these opportunities can be actualized.

Men should change so that patriarchy and (hetero)sexism can disappear. It is possible to change!

** A quotation from the song of Jimi Hendrix “Castles Made of Snow”*

ABOUT

Academician. For over 15 years he has been writing and conducting research on men and masculinities in Turkey. He graduated from Hacettepe University Department of Philosophy. He received his graduate degree from Hacettepe University Department of Anthropology with his thesis on the male initiation rites in Ankara shantytowns; and his postgraduate degree from Middle East Technical University (ODTÜ) Department of Sociology in 2013 with his thesis on the construction of masculinities in Trabzon. In 2011 he authored *Soru ve Cevaplarla Erkeklikler (Masculinities in Questions and Answers)* to be used in the training of male university students conducted by Social Development and Gender Equality Policies Center (SOGEP). Between 2016 and 2017, as the Head Researcher for Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) he conducted the “Research on Fatherhood in Turkey” which is still the most comprehensive research on fatherhood and masculinities in Turkey. Among his areas of interest is forced migration studies. He is a faculty member at Maltepe University Faculty of Human and Social Sciences.

**IT'S NOT
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52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#44 YENAL
BİLGİCİ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

SHUT UP, MEN; COULD YOU?

To this day, in the newspapers, TV channels, universities where we work or anywhere really, we have not voiced, questioned, or worried about the inequality between men and women.

First of all, to be honest, I should start by saying that I don't believe in the idea of men's "confrontation". I don't think that "confrontation" can amend the insincerity and egoism of men who cause all the fuss, who think they have the right to make policies concerning women, who exclude women even from the panel discussions on the subject of "woman" and instead talk among themselves.

Isn't it unfair that the aggressor himself overwhelms the faint voice of the aggrieved with his loud cries of "me too, me too"?

Not everyone may agree with this opinion of course but I suggest that instead of talking all the time men should shut up. I suggest that they stop and think, and give support...

I will try to explain my reasons from the viewpoint of journalism, which is my profession. Because I think the journalism professed in this country reproduces, alongside many other problems, gender inequality in its own decision making mechanisms and thus prevents the exposure of "male" violence.

I would like you to read this piece with that perspective.

Let me begin with a fresh information: I have recently watched the first episode of the TV series Bodyguard, one of the most popular series this year. As I sat before the screen, I already knew that it was a story about a "female" interior minister and her "male" bodyguard. It was indeed...

The story flew by. In every scene exposing yet another surprise outside its main storyline... Here I would like to talk about those surprises. Don't worry, there will be no "spoilers".

The series opens with the scene of a suicide bomber on a train en route to London... Our "male" police officer realizes what's happening and intervenes.

Firstly: the suicide bomber on the train is a woman. A woman who has been forced into it by her husband...

Our police officer finds and tells the train conductor about the situation. The conductor is a woman...

Special forces carry out an operation on the train. The special forces team is headed by a woman.

A sniper is set to shoot the suicide bomber. The finger hooked on the trigger belongs to a woman.

The bomb disposal squad arrives. The officer who disposes the bomb sweating blood is again a woman.

The heroic police officer in the leading role gets a promotion for his success. His chief who promotes him is again a woman.

Our police officer's new task is to be the bodyguard of the Interior Minister. As I have mentioned at the beginning the minister is a woman.

The Interior Minister is not the only high-ranking woman either. The counter-terrorism chief who chases terrorists round the clock and carries out operations is also a woman...

Woman or man, does it matter? A job is a job; plus, everyone does these jobs, so what, right? Well, it's not like that at all.

Personally this is the first time I saw a woman sniper or a woman special forces chief... If I really looked and searched for it I could find many, singular examples of women cast in such roles, some of them in the name of "political correctness", but I think seeing so many women in operational and "active" roles at once is a first not only for me but for everyone.

After watching the series, I wondered if people talked about this and evidently in Britain there was much discussion about it.

In fact, some viewers (mostly men) whined about it. They thought casting women in these positions was unconvincing.

A mere contrast to the fact that both their own country and the number one economy of Europe, which they are currently trying to exit, are governed by women... (By the way, let's not forget that BBC, the broadcaster of the series, was recently shaken by a gender pay gap scandal, revealing the discrimination against its women employees who have been doing the same job with their male counterparts.)

And now let's come to the point where

the rubber meets the road: Throughout the series, if it was men who were cast in all these roles that I mentioned, if it was men who held those positions, would I be surprised in the slightest? No.

But why?

Why am I not surprised when jobs that can be done by women and men alike (that is almost all jobs) are always done by a man?

I am writing in the first person but I know that I am not at all alone in this "lack of surprise". We deem it normal.

Then I will switch to the first-person plural: Why aren't we surprised by this "normal"? We, the educated, cultured intellectuals who have attained a certain standing? Why doesn't it surprise us?

Since they want a "confrontation", I will skip the statesmen, the police, TV series, etc. and talk about what I really know about, that is, the newspapers.

Here is a simple, straightforward question for you: why are there no women in the press of this country, in the top management of the newspapers, in the decision-making mechanisms?

I have worked in many newspapers of the mainstream media. And, more or less, I also know about the ones I haven't worked for. I had friends even in the newspapers that I never stepped foot in. (Not anymore; many of my friends are now unemployed.)

This is what I have seen, heard and known in all of them: There are hardly any

women journalists in the decision-making mechanisms and in the newsrooms of the newspapers. Maybe one woman to ten men. Or maybe two. In some of them, you cannot even reach that ratio. If there is no woman in a newsroom, then the ratio of men goes to infinity.

There have been one or two women editors-in-chief; they are depicted like legends of antiquity, as if they were mythological heroines. And if you search hard enough, you may come across traces of women department chiefs in a few newspapers.

That's it.

But why?

There are top-notch women reporters.

There are women interviewers whom newspapers bank on for high circulation.

There are woman editors who do incredible works with their speed, accuracy, foresight and point of view.

In a word, there are at least as many women as men who are good at these jobs. Anyways, this is not a male or female profession. Journalism is certainly and completely genderless.

Then, where are these women, do they evaporate into thin air at some point, or are they lost in the abysses of the plazas? Why cannot they rise to higher ranks?

Does the office of a newspaper director rank higher than the presidency or the interior ministry of a country? Is it a more

challenging job than that of the bomb disposal specialist or the police chief? Why are we, the men, not surprised that women do not get promoted in the newspapers? Why don't we find this odd?

Why is it that men decide about the selection and the presentation of the news that concern the entire society men and women alike (and sometimes primarily the women), why is it that men decide how and by whom these news will be drafted and how much coverage they will be given with which tone and language, in short, why is it that men decide about the entire range of operations in the pressroom?

Or are we, the men, already the reason behind this?

Now let's have a look at what this has led to.

It has many effects, yet I will cite the most striking one. Who decides on the scale of coverage to be given to news on male violence and the number of days these news will be pursued is of crucial import. The preferences of the newspapers published by "men" and that of the newspapers with a better women-men balance will be different.

However sincere they might be, I don't think that the male newspaper directors are as concerned about or mindful of this subject as the women journalists.

This is evinced by the fact that, barring the widely discussed cases that shock the society, male violence merely makes third-page news.

I am certain that with women decision makers this ratio would be very different.

And there is more.

The lack of women in decision-making and executive positions further augments the gender inequality on the national level. And the absence of a woman executive in a newspaper, as you may agree, destroys the balance in that newspaper.

Both inequalities muzzle the women's voice. Presently what we need most is voices. Their own voices. And not only in the mainstream media of course.

I already said that I worked in and am familiar with the mainstream media. Then let me ask about the places that I don't know about to the people who are familiar with them.

Are the left-wing newspapers any different?

Are the right-wing newspapers any different?

Are the intellectual newspapers any different?

Are the tabloids any different?

Are the online newspapers, publishing platforms any different?

Are the trade unions, professional organizations any different?

Where are the women executives of newspapers?

Why are they nowhere to be found?

Now, I am coming back to the point I raised at the beginning. That is, why I don't believe in this confrontation thing... We the men, who occupy all these positions, who cause and ignore all this injustice, who don't move not even a finger to discontinue this order of things, must shut up. As the men who are surprised at women being in all the key positions in a TV series, let's shut up.

Why should we shut up, you ask? Because we have not said a word to this day. Were all these men in the decision-making levels completely unaware of these problems until this day? I say this day, but nothing has changed today either.

We, myself included, have read mountains of books, watched years worth of movies, witnessed and heard innumerable grievances on these issues.

Yet, to this day, in the newspapers, TV channels, universities where we work or anywhere really we have not voiced, questioned, or worried about the inequality between men and women. For some reason we have deemed it normal. Moreover, this state of affairs has suited our book. We have not left our shells, our safe heavens not even as much as a BBC TV series diverged from the norm, the routine. A woman sniper, a woman news desk chief, a woman newspaper executive, come on, is it possible?

We were not surprised for god's sake, supposedly it is our job to be curious, but we were not even surprised.

Flabbergasted, we reported on women train conductors, women taxi drivers, but we were not taken aback by our own situation.

Let's not sit around and make confessions and whatnot. Let's just let the women speak.

Let's give a leg up when necessary, let's try not to overwhelm their voices, let's support their struggle without stepping on their feet.

But, let's step back and let the women speak.

Let's turn down our noises.

Let their voices grow.

I think the biggest support is to shut up now!



ABOUT

Journalist. He has worked in the newspapers and magazines Nokta, Aktüel, Newsweek, GQ Türkiye, Habertürk and Hürriyet. He currently writes for various newspapers and magazines. He most likes to write on his own blog (eskisul.blogspot.com).

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#45 KIVANÇ
SEZER**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

THE LAZY STATE OF MANHOOD

Even though it has been generations since the balances were overturned with the entry of women into the work force, we have tried to maintain the established order since all its habits and advantages are for the benefit of men.

I do not know where to start. It is such a current, burning and flammable issue...

This state of manhood, which breaks out any moment and anywhere ranging from the violence against Sila to the cocktail of harassment, violence and mobbing inflicted on Elit İşcan and the harassment of the costume assistant Özge Ş., is just the tip of the iceberg in the cinema industry. Of course, not only in the cinema industry either.

This is what I know: the 21st century will be the century of women and it has to be so.

In every part of the world, women are coming together for equal pay for equal work, for the right to abortion and sexuality, and to defend their sexual orientation and resist and mobilize against violence and harassment. And these are just their footsteps heard from afar.

The fact that the government does not intervene in the feminists' magnificent night march held on the İstiklal Avenue in İstanbul on every March 8 despite the existing environment of oppression prevalent in our country is an indication of the legitimacy of this struggle.

For that reason, it is incumbent upon us men to genuinely confront ourselves and our own states of manhood and get rid of all our judgements and actions which prevent us from seeing women as equal, free and independent individuals in every sphere of life.

That is exactly why our own life is the very place we have to look at first.

It is one of the few things that I boast about myself. Throughout my life I have never inflicted violence on any women, and except for a few petty incidents in secondary school, on any men either. And I have never forced any women to be with me involuntarily, or by violating their bodily integrity or through actions that can be considered harassment.

It is not because I am the epitome of integrity. It is essentially because I grew up not in a family where violence was normalized, but in an environment where love was felt more intensely.

Perhaps, we did not have very special moments with my family, but I definitely had a childhood that can be deemed normal. Overall, I have good memories about my childhood. Except for a few incidents, I did not experience any violence and I recount those incidents with laughter today.

Even though the least developed aspect of the state of manhood is those displays of violence that erupt from within men, there is also another, an unseen aspect: The male laziness.

The laziness that men see as their right. A highly important fact, albeit quite ordinary, banal and familiar. This type of laziness, which also harbors some type of hubris, manifests itself the most in responsibilities pertaining to housework and parenthood, which require intellectual and manual labor.

The figures shared by the OECD have shown that the average daily time women in Turkey spend for housework is 261 minutes while that of men is only 21 minutes. Only 21 minutes!

We rank third in this inequality after India and Mexico. But inequality is encountered in every part of the world, the state of things is against women even in Scandinavian countries where the highest level of equality has been reached.

In religious holidays, weddings, funerals and the crowded family gatherings on special days, it was always the women of the family who cooked. We left the dinner table and sprawled on the couch.

Once, when I attempted to take my plate to the kitchen, the five-year-old daughter of my cousin had laughed at me. Not only have we left the fate of our laundries and dirty dishes to women, at times we have delegated our self-care to women as well. Even if they work the same hours as we do.

When we did the shopping, they gave us the list and we left it to their organizing skills and minds. To make matters worse, we have always considered these tasks as petty, unimportant chores. Even if we did not say it aloud, that is what we thought.

The facts of life and economic relations have been changing at a rate that we, humans, cannot adapt into our personal lives. The feudal relations of history do not conform with the modern world of our present day.

While men were chasing after conquests on horseback, the house was entirely left to women. For centuries no less. And no one found this odd. However, today, as the popular saying goes, the cat is out of the bag.

Once women started participating in the work force and social life as individuals the balance was overturned.

Even though it has been generations since the balances were overturned with the entry of women into the work force, we tried to maintain the established order since all its habits and advantages were for the benefit of men.

We continued with our laziness not because we were unaware but because it served our purposes. That being the case, it became harder for unemployed women to be a part of the paid work force and for the employed women to have hobbies and interests.

As I turn 35, I, for my part, owe an apology to my mother, my aunt and my aunts-in-law, for whom I have been a burden during my childhood and adolescence.

I owe an apology to my wife for my laziness which I used to indulge in more frequently during the first years of our marriage than I do nowadays. I owe an apology to all these people because I

failed to adopt in my own daily life the leftist values, equality and fairness which I have advocated in this world and because this advantageous position served my purposes.

Equality, justice and freedom, of course, do not come with apologies. But, realizing that we are constantly going through a change is as important as emphasizing that women are not only mothers, partners, sisters, but also independent individuals who are the heroines of their own stories in every sphere of life, and being side by side with them in all of these spheres no matter how big or small the tasks involved in these spheres may be.

It is equally important to make our own individual life a part of the world where we would like to live.

Since I will try to touch upon this issue in my next movie, I am having an internal discussing about it more than ever before.

And let this text be a binding expression of these discussions. Let us start our self-criticism by seeing that the little things are not that little after all. Let us start carrying a new, beautiful and equal world to the tomorrows in this way.

Laziness is a right.

But, it does not belong solely to men.

ABOUT

Director, film editor. His first feature film Babamın Kanatları (My Father's Wings) won six awards at the 53th Antalya International Film Festival including the Best Debut Film award, and seven awards at the 23rd Adana International Film Festival including the Yılmaz Güney Best Film award. The world premiere of the film was held in 51st Karlovy Vary International Film Festival Main Competition. He studied engineering at Ege University and film editing in Italy. He was born in 1982 in Ankara. He is working on his new project Küçük Şeyler (Little Things).

**IT'S NOT
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**#46 ÖMER
MADRA**



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BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

CLIMATE CHANGE MALE VIOLENCE IT'S NOT A COINCIDENCE

Greta – Chomsky – Atwood...

Climate Change – Everything Change – Fate Change...

Turkey's Child Brides and Pregnant Child Refugees...

Let's Look At It From The Other Side:

We Can Still Change Fate...

Introduction:

The Ballad of The Bear

They say, “The bear has forty ballads to sing, all on wild pears”. Same goes for us. We must now talk about everything that has happened and will happen (and yes, the situation of women too!) in relation to the threat of global climate meltdown. An exaggerated proposal? Not really.

The general panorama:

Greta – Chomsky – Atwood

That’s what the 15 year old Swedish activist girl “Striker Greta” says: Greta Thunberg went on a school strike and sat in front of the Swedish parliament building every single day for three weeks until the general elections, and handed out leaflets that asked: “How am I supposed to feel safe when I know that we are facing the most acute crisis in the history of mankind? When I know that if we don’t act now, everything will soon be too late?”. Greta was only 8 years old when she became aware of the risk of catastrophe; she says when she first heard about global warming she thought: This can’t be true. It can’t be something so serious as to threaten our very existence!

Why did she think that? “Because (...) if it was really happening, we wouldn’t be talking about anything else.”

Striker Greta continued her activities after

the elections; speaking before a crowd of 10 thousand people at the largest climate action ever held in Finland, she called for civil disobedience to fight the climate meltdown. Furthermore, she has become a source of inspiration for Australia’s secondary school students who are planning to stage the most striking mass demonstration in the country’s history at the end of this month.

Let’s also add that it is mostly the girls who are heading the planned climate actions in Australia.

[“Greta on Strike” - Lesson 2: Lessons on Civil Disobedience by Ditching Classes Climate Riot Spreads Across The World!](#)

This 15-year-old girl is not alone: 90-year-old celebrated thinker and activist Noam Chomsky too is exactly of the same opinion. In a striking interview he recently gave to Democracy Now! radio/tv the professor said:

“We can’t overemphasize the fact that we’re in a unique moment of human history. In fact, we have been, ever since 1945. (...) It was not known in 1945 that we were not only entering the nuclear age, but entering a new geological epoch, what geologists call the Anthropocene (...) We also entered into what’s now called the sixth extinction, a rapid extinction of species, which is comparable to the fifth extinction 65 million years ago when an asteroid, huge asteroid, hit the Earth, we know.

“[That is] a sharp escalation and destruction of the environment, not only global warming, carbon dioxide, other greenhouse gases, but also such things as plastics in the ocean, which are predicted to be greater than the weight of fish in the ocean not far in the future.

“So we’re destroying the environment for organized human life. (...) Anybody who’s looked at the record, which is shocking, would have to conclude that it’s a miracle that we’ve survived this long.

Humans beings, right now, this generation, for the first time in history, have to ask, ‘Will human life survive?’ And not in the far future will organized societies—those are the issues we should be concerned with. These are—everything else pales in significance in comparison with this.”

Yes. Everything else pales in significance in comparison with this!

The first warning was thus issued by the secondary school student activist girl Greta.

The second warning came from the author of more than 100 books, emeritus professor and activist Noam Chomsky. And now it’s the turn for the heartbreaking warning by the poet-writer-inventor and activist Margaret Atwood.

78-year-old Canadian author Margaret Atwood in her famous novel *The Handmaid’s Tale* which has been adapted into an acclaimed TV series, depicted the reality of climate change in a dystopian future where women are deprived of all rights and turned into breeding machines

“manufactured” for men. For years now, she has been openly saying that the story of her post-apocalyptic dystopia will eventualize in a much worse reality. In a two-day event organized in early June this year at the British Library, she had the opportunity to articulate in detail and thoroughly discuss her warnings of crucial import once again. According to Atwood the situation is very clear. Contrary to the general belief this isn’t merely climate change – it is “everything change”!

And the women? “Women will be directly and adversely affected by climate change.” Atwood explains this catastrophic “scenario” in the “cold”, sharp and clear language of the scientist rather than the poetic language of the litterateur:

“More extreme weather events such as droughts and floods, rising sea levels that will destroy arable land, and disruption of marine life will all result in less food. Less food will mean that women and children get less, as the remaining food supplies will be unevenly distributed, even more than they are.”

Atwood, further stating in stark words that climate change “will also mean social unrest, which can lead to wars and civil wars and then brutal repressions and totalitarianisms”, concludes with the following basic observation: “women do badly in wars – worse than in peacetime”.

[Under Her Eye: Women and Climate Change](#)

[Margaret Atwood: women will bear brunt of dystopian climate future](#)

Climate change – Everything change – Fate change

“Everything change” outright means “fate change” for hundreds of millions of young girls across the world! In an amazing reportage he published in The Guardian last year on child brides in poor African countries, investigative journalist Gethin Chamberlain slapped the issue on our faces already in the title of his article: [“Why climate change is creating a new generation of child brides?”](#)

“Everyone has their own idea of what climate change looks like” says Chamberlain. “For some, it’s the walrus struggling to find space on melting ice floes on Blue Planet II. For others, it’s an apocalyptic vision of cities disappearing beneath the waves. But for more and more girls across Africa, the most palpable manifestation of climate change is the baby in their arms as they sit watching their friends walk to school.” And this is the reality for an ever-increasing number of girls.

“Many experts are warning [that this] is a real and growing crisis: the emergence of a ‘generation of child brides’ as a direct result of a changing climate.

“The Brides of the Sun reporting project, funded by the European Journalism Centre, set out to try to assess the scale of the crisis. (...) And time and again, (...) the child brides and their parents told an increasingly familiar story. In recent years they had noticed the temperatures rising, the rains becoming less predictable and coming later and sometimes flooding

where there had not been flooding before. Families that would once have been able to afford to feed and educate several children reported that they now faced an impossible situation.” And the families whose incomes have plummeted cannot find any other solution but to marry off their daughters once they turn 13.

“In 2015 the United Nations Population Fund estimated that 13.5 million children would marry under the age of 18 in that year alone—37,000 child marriages every day—including 4.4 million married before they were 15.” 37 thousand “child brides” per day! It is estimated that in one country alone (Malawi) “30% to 40% of child marriages (...) are due to the floods and drought caused by climate change”.

According to the World Bank and Save the Children organizations, one in every three girls in developing (i.e. poor) countries are married before the age of 18! A daunting number, but there is worse: According to the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), if the present trend continues the number of “child brides” in Africa only will at least double and reach 310 million by 2050!

[More than 20,000 underage girls marry illegally each day, claims study](#)

UNICEF’s 2018 report reveals that the figures are going from bad to worse: for instance the number of child marriages per day is now 39,000. According to the report, there are 700 million women across the world who were married before the age of 18. These women were not only deprived of their childhood, but they are also socially isolated and deprived

of familial and friendly relations as well as material and immaterial resources. Education and employment possibilities are almost nonexistent. Furthermore, the situation of present and future generations looks even worse: It is calculated that in the coming 12 years the present number of 700 million child brides will increase to 950 million, nearly 1 billion. 1 billion child brides!

Child Marriages: 39,000 Every Day

The current state of affairs looks bleak. An example: South Sudan, where the ever increasing climate change crisis led to drought and famine which in turn left the country in the throes of civil war, is now ravaged by what is dubbed as “battle for cattle”.

Girls are forced to leave school and become child brides who are exchanged for cattle. More than half of the girl children are forced to get married before they reach 18 and nearly 10 percent are married off by the age of 15. Activists who have spoken to Chamberlain in another interview on the same issue warn the world that these percentages are on a rapid rise.

The number of cattle given in exchange for one child bride is not stated but one of the girls gives an approximate figure: 90. Give 90 cattle and get the bride. “[She] was married at 15 to a man aged 29. Her father, a soldier, had been killed by a gunman and the family needed the 90 cows from her marriage in order to survive. ‘The main reason was hunger. I am seeing a lot of my friends being married now because of the hunger,’ she says.”

This child bride is now 21, a young mother. “There is nothing she will be able to do to stop her husband [from] selling their daughter for cows when the time comes.” And then with great wisdom she summarizes in a few sentences the social, cultural and ecological framework that determines the male female relations and male violence:

“‘It is my husband’s choice’, she says. ‘In my husband’s house everything is by force – there is no request. If I refuse there will be a problem. My husband will beat me.’”

South Sudan’s battle for cattle is forcing schoolgirls to become teenage brides

Let’s return to the “climate change and a new generation of child brides” reportage for the last time. In one of the striking, touching and distressful pictures “embellishing” the article, the girl dressed in colorful garments sits in front of her poor, adobe home shyly smiling at her daughter on her lap who looks at her with a big smile. The caption reads: “Majuma Julio, now 17, married at 15 and has a daughter nearly two: **‘I don’t blame anyone. The weather just changed.’**”

Turkey’s Child Brides and Pregnant Child Refugees

The statistics related to the child brides in Turkey in the UNICEF 2018 report reflect yet another bleak situation. In Turkey 15 percent of the girl children are married before the age of 18. According to these figures on child marriages, Turkey ranks 115th among 197 countries in the world,

that is, it lags behind 114 countries. (Better than South Sudan, but worse than Myanmar for instance.)

[Child Marriages: 39,000 Every Day](#)

Except for the specific but determining issue of “child brides” and climate change, this article has not touched upon more general and vital issues such as gender equality, empowerment of women and girls, equal opportunities for women and girls, and elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence. If I may touch upon one single point:

According to the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018, there has been a decrease in some forms of discrimination against women and girls, and a 40 percent decrease in child marriage in Southeast Asia between 2000 and 2017. Nevertheless, structural changes remain largely insufficient. Another more important and even fatal shortcoming is that the Sustainable Development Goals Report completely excludes the dramatic deterioration in the social, cultural and economic situation of women and girls due to climate change. This shortcoming seems a serious negligence indeed, particularly considering the 2018 report by the UN’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change which issued a “climate alarm” warning that we have only 12 years to limit the climate change catastrophe.

[The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2018](#)

Finally, it could be helpful to make a brief note of a dramatic news report dated

May 2018 on the situation of pregnant children—the vast majority of whom are Syrian refugees—in Turkey: According to the report by Barış Terkoğlu of ODA TV, it was revealed upon a complaint that in the year 2017 there were 392 cases of child pregnancies in a research hospital in Istanbul which were not reported to the law enforcement authorities; the relevant office of the chief prosecutor launched an investigation into the case only after the scandal broke out.

[“392 pregnant children—most of them Syrian—were brought to a hospital in Istanbul; prosecutor’s office launched an investigation into the conduct of 59 doctors”](#)

Yet this was not the first but the second scandal! Earlier, 115 pregnant children were brought to another hospital in Istanbul in the course of five months which were again not reported to the law enforcement authorities. According to the daily Birgün newspaper, the social worker who unearthed the scandal had said, “This is only the tip of the iceberg; the situation is the same everywhere across the country”.

[Social worker who unearthed the scandal: This is only the tip of the iceberg](#)

And is this also related to the climate crisis? Unfortunately, we have to answer “Yes, very much so!”. One of the main reasons behind that horrible civil -and regional- war that displaced more than half of the Syrian population was the drought arising out of climate change and the internal migration caused by the drought. The disappointment and

revolt of the youth who were compelled to migrate due to the endless drought later transformed into a wildfire of war spreading across the entire region.

[A Talk with Professor Harvey Weiss on Climate and Civilization](#)

Let's Look at it from the Other Side: We Can Still Change Fate

In spite of the developments whose extremely destructive consequences have become manifest, we should not overlook the important and encouraging changes. Academician, writer and activist Andrew Simms, who campaigns for The Rapid Transition Alliance against climate change and the resulting destruction, thinks that changing this bitter fate is possible.

In his article published in The Guardian early last month, Simms analyses the winds of change across the world. In these days when it is believed that many societies are dominated by anomie the opposite may also be observed he says and asserts that new and profound social norms are emerging rapidly and that this transformation might be life saving.

“The latest science tells us that nothing short of rapid, transformative change in our infrastructure and behaviour can prevent the loss of the climate we depend on,” the author says. He hopes and asks “after smoking and drink-driving, could climate change provide the next big behaviour-change challenge” to engage in a tough struggle to defeat climate change

which appears before us as a much bigger danger than smoking or drink-driving.

Simms observes that we are in an age of realizing rapid cultural changes in social attitudes and behaviors. One of his most interesting examples of that change is the women's #MeToo movement which rapidly expanded and soon blocked that arrogant hegemony of the rich & powerful men. (The other example is the unstoppable rise of the vegan diet in many countries.)

[“The speed of #MeToo gives me hope,” says Simms, “We can still stop climate change”.](#)

[Writer Margaret Atwood is right: this is not Climate Change, this is Everything Change.](#)

[Alright then – Let's change everything!](#)

 ABOUT

Editor-in-chief, programmer, founder of Açık Radyo (94.9), environmental activist. He worked in newspapers and magazines as editorial director, writer, editor. He wrote his PhD thesis on “European Convention on Human Rights and Right to Individual Petition” at Ankara University Faculty of Political Science (1977), he was a lecturer in the same faculty for 13 years. He taught international relations and international law at Bilgi University. Among his published books are Migrant Workers and International Law (Ankara, 1985), Romanımla Sana Bir Ses... (Calling out to you with my novel..., Remzi Publishing House, 1991), Rüzgâra Karşı-1 (Against the Wind-1, 1996), Rüzgâra Karşı-2 (Against the Wind-2, 2001), Küresel Isınma ve İklim Krizi: Ömer Şahin sordu, Madra yanıtladı (Global Warming and Climate Crisis: Ömer Şahin asked, Madra answered, 2007).

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**#47 MÜFİT CAN
SAÇINTI**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

ARTIFICIAL STUPIDITY

Can we imagine a male employee, who works in the same workplace with [the famous businesswomen] Güler Sabancı or Leyla Alaton, subjecting them to mobbing, harassment or violence? No, we cannot.

Calling a man an animal is a compliment to the man and an insult to the animal.

Because, in nature, there is no animal that inflicts violence on its female.

They say that artificial intelligence will dominate everything. Artificial intelligence might do everything but it cannot inflict violence on women.

Because violence against women has nothing to do with intelligence.

Artificial stupidity has to be invented for violence against women.

Throughout human history, there is only one period when humans did not inflict violence on one another, that is, when men did not commit violence against women. Some call it the hunter-gatherer society, others name it primitive communal society...

This period was characterized by the absence of a concept of ownership. We can draw the following conclusion from this:

“Property is the basis of violence against women.”

Our ancestors were matriarchal when they were on horseback. Woman was the power and man was a supplement to it... We were nomads, we did not own any property.

There was no money, but barter...

It was when our ancestors dismounted from the horse... It was when they came to own property and issued money... Then, they pushed women into the background...

In other words, pushing women into the background when we come into money and own property is for us an ancestral sport, so to say.

Let’s spread the news to those who ask, “Why do men, who come into money, first change their cars and then their wives?”.

And, now, let’s turn to gender-based discrimination... Let’s first look at which animals we have named differently... The male of chicken is rooster... The male of sheep is ram... The male of cow is ox... The female of human is woman-girl...

However, we were not really interested in the sex of a sparrow, we just called it sparrow... And the lion, come on, the mighty lion... In Turkish both the female and the male is called a lion...

Why is that the case? Because capitalism attaches neither a special importance nor a special name to the gender that it cannot use or exploit... Capitalism is a male system.

In capitalism, violence against women is not about education, but about position. A man who sits in his chair at the coffeehouse on Sundays cannot inflict harassment or violence on a woman who sits in the chair of a director general in his workplace... Can we imagine a male employee, who works in the same workplace with [the famous businesswomen] Güler Sabancı or Leyla Alaton, subjecting them to mobbing, harassment or violence? No, we cannot.

Because, in capitalism, the limits of thought on this subject are determined by the seat, the position that one occupies. The ones who subject women to mobbing or harassment draw their strength from the seats they occupy as much as masculinity. The magnitude of violence is directly proportional to the grandness of the title and wealth. The opposite is the exception.

We called capitalism every name in the book but were the previous eras any better?

There are two absolute things that are passed down from father to son: One is monarchy... And the other is dick. That is why monarchy is something like a dick...

Let's conclude with the lyrics of a song by the master folk singer Neşet Ertaş:

"Kadınlar insandır, biz erkekler ise insanoğlu": Woman is human, and we men are the sons of humans. *

*[*In Turkish human is insan and humankind/mankind is insanoğlu which means "son of human".]*



ABOUT

Director, actor, scenarist. He became known as the director and lead actor of the film series Mandıra Filozofu (Dairy Philosopher). As a student he worked in magazines such as Yarın, Genç İnsan, Otomobil, Boom Müzik. He was an actor in Kartal Sanat İşliğı Theatre. During his senior year at İstanbul University Faculty of Communication School of Press and Broadcasting he dropped out and began working in TRT. He wrote the screenplay for the television program Olacak O Kadar (It Happens) and for the suspense TV show Geldiler (They Arrived). He made a comedy show named Aranan Adam (Wanted Man) aired on Kanal 6 and Kanaltürk. He acted in Ersin Pertan’s film Kuşatma Altında Aşk (Love Under Siege). Between 2012 and 2014 he directed the TV series Seksenler (Eighties). His screenplay titled “Kahrolsun Şey” (Down with Pu**y) won the Honorable Mention Award at the 2016 Indie Gathering International Film Festival organized in the USA. He was born in 1968 in Çorum.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#48 CAN
TONBİL**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

IF YOU COULD EXCUSE ME I AM MANSPLAINING

I might also be mansplaining by saying these things. But, this time, I am leaning on not the unjustly acquired rights but this sterile space opened by bianet so that men can write about male violence.

I am one of those lucky children who were able to turn their childhood games into a profession when they grew up a little. My name is Can. I have been a radio programmer for over seven years.

My journey started in my primary school years, when we recorded our voices on cassette tapes in a specific format in the only cassette-player in our house with my cousin Emel, who was a few years older than me and was also our next-door neighbor.

First greetings, then reading the news, then joining the program as on-air guests by changing our voices, then faxes coming out of the backgammon, songs played on a different cassette-player, and then recording new programs on the same cassette tape without listening to what we previously recorded...

I cannot remember if I said, "I will turn this game into a job" in those days. Anyways, I had to suspend my early radio career after Emel moved to another neighborhood.

Then the focus shifted as I met the "hammer and sickle" through the computer game Red Alert 2 in secondary school; followed by a few small-scale protest demonstrations with last minute escapes from the police bludgeon during high school; then studying sociology in university; and working, first, as a bookseller, then, as a civil society worker after graduation...

As a result of a series of coincidences and supports, I found myself playing the game of my childhood with a real microphone and a person who has been doing this job every day for 18 years.

I am continuing to "professionally" play the game, which I started playing with Emel in our childhood, with three men now; one of them is at the technical table, one provides editorial support from home and the third one sits right next to me, tidying up the broadcast.

I am on the microphone every morning on weekdays reporting news on a series of subjects, primarily on global climate change as well as environment, human rights, social movements, domestic and international politics, economy and sports; I make connections between these news and try to comment on them. Not to mention the connections made with the incidents that took place in the past...

But I know that something is missing. In a country, where men comprise 50.2 percent of the population and women 49.4 percent, there is something amiss in four men trying to describe a world where women comprise 49.6 percent of the population.

And this lack, unavoidably, poses the risk of mansplaining which is the most everyday inequality of our time.

What is mansplaining?

Mansplaining is a state of manhood which has been in existence for many years but was only recently diagnosed.

In [Wikipedia](#), which has been banned in Turkey for 584 days as of the writing of this piece, mansplaining is defined as follows:

“Mansplaining (a blend of the word man and the informal form splaining of the verb explaining) is a pejorative term meaning ‘(of a man) to comment on or explain something to a woman in a condescending, overconfident, and often inaccurate or oversimplified manner’. Author Rebecca Solnit ascribes the phenomenon to a combination of ‘overconfidence and cluelessness’. Lily Rothman of The Atlantic defines it as ‘explaining without regard to the fact that the explainee knows more than the explainer, often done by a man to a woman’.”

Mansplaining has been translated to Turkish as “açıklama” or “erkekleme”. [In Turkish “explaining” is “açıklama”, to get “mansplaining” the second syllable “çık” is replaced with “çük” which means “dick”.]

In every area of life we can encounter this situation which we can summarize as the action of a man who makes an explanation to a woman on every subject regardless of whether he is specialized in that field or not. At home, in school, on the street, at work, in symposiums, on television and radio...

In many fields, we, men, are mansplaining.

We are mansplaining sometimes with the confidence that we can use the power (status, money, title, age, etc.) in our hands, sometimes because it is what we have learnt from our families, but always because we are men...

The grounds are suitable for mansplaining. Let me remind you once more:

In 2017, the female population of Turkey [was](#) 40 million 275 thousand 390 people while the male population was 40 million 535 thousand 135.

If we restate it in percentages, while women comprise 49.8 percent of the population in Turkey, men account for 50.2 percent.

In Turkey, whose population is 80 million, the number of men is only 250 thousand people higher than that of women.

Even though there is only a 0.4 percent difference between the population of men and women, there is an enormous [difference](#) when the working life is considered:

According to the calculations of the International Labor Organization (ILO), in 2017, Turkey ranks 163rd among 188 countries with a 51.5 percent labor force participation rate.

While Turkey ranks 165th in terms of women’s labor force participation rate which is around 32 percent, the average labor force participation rate of women in the OECD countries is 51 percent. As

for the participation of men in labor force, Turkey ranks 104th among 188 countries with a percentage above the OECD average of 68.5 percent (World Bank 2017).

Mansplaining Media

In the radio program that is prepared with the cooperation of four men, we base our news on scientific reports, local and international articles and news, and our target audience is not a men's club. In the program, the story presented to the audience in the form of a conversation between two men is a media product which is offered to women, men and LGBTI+ individuals.

The situation in other media outlets is not very different. A news [report](#) made in 2014 by Çiçek Tahaoğlu from bianet summarizes the situation as follows:

Women account for 19 percent of the names on newspapers' mastheads while men account for 81 percent.

Women account for 36.5 percent of the newspapers' digital mastheads while men account for 63.5 percent.

As for the mastheads of online news websites, while women account for 40.9 percent, the rate of men is 59.1 percent.

Considering these figures, we can see that even though we are a slight demographic majority (49 to 51 percent), we, men, can find jobs, speak and write. And, as a result of these advantages, we lean on our majority in the public sphere and mansplain a lot.

I am mansplaining about mansplaining

I might also be mansplaining by saying these things. But, this time, I am leaning on not the unjustly acquired rights but this sterile space, which has been opened by bianet so that men can write about male violence.

And, there is also the case of mansplaining with the awareness that you are mansplaining, which opens this subject to discussion and inserts the beautiful notion of self-criticism into your consciousness.

Thus, as you are writing, speaking, watching or reading, a part of your brain asks questions such as "Am I mansplaining now?", "Have I just mansplained or what?", "Why are all these panelists men?"

What is the connection between mansplaining and male violence? I am still thinking about it. But as long as we mansplain by saying "actually, this is how it is supposed to be done", we push women outside the social sphere and ignite the fuse of several mechanisms of violence and oppression including physical violence. Moreover, we sometimes do this by intellectual means...

It might be confusing since it is a relatively new term and concrete examples might be necessary to better mansplain what mansplaining is. If you would excuse me, I will try to mansplain mansplaining through the previous article "[Artificial Stupidity](#)" published in this series.

Mansplaining? Really, here?

“They say that artificial intelligence will dominate everything. Artificial intelligence might do everything but it cannot inflict violence on women.”

First, bad news: Artificial intelligence, which Müfit Can Saçınıt argues will dominate everything in the future, is not as innocent as presumed.

Last October, the US-based e-commerce giant Amazon cancelled the artificial intelligence program that it had developed to use in its recruitment process. The reason for the cancellation was that the artificial intelligence created to automate recruitments discriminated against women candidates!

The company, which created 500 computer models to comb through the resumes of present employees and past applicants and recognize 50,000 key terms on the candidates’ resumes, discovered that the system was ignoring the women candidates.

The system, which was caught discriminating against women, was [cancelled](#) despite being fixed. As reported by [Ayşe Özbek Karasu](#) from Habertürk newspaper, the sexism of artificial intelligence is not limited to the biggest e-commerce giant of the world.

Iranian-American Alex Shams, who is a PhD student of anthropology at the University of Chicago, realized that when translating from Turkish to English, “Google Translate” attributes both the positive characteristics and the jobs held

in higher esteem to men. In other words, when “Google Translate” translates an adjective or a profession with the gender-neutral third-person singular pronoun “O” in Turkish to English, the result is discriminatory to the core.

For example, if one wants to translate the sentence “O çalışkan” to English, the suggestion of “Google Translate” is “He is hardworking”. However, when the source sentence is “O tembel”, the suggested translation suddenly becomes “She is lazy”. Women are beautiful, men are ugly; women are faint-hearted, men are brave and ambitious; women are sad, men are happy... The list goes on and on...

Even the search engine of LinkedIn leaves aside the names of women and chooses men.

A similar incident has been reported also by [Artı Gerçek](#) news website. In a research conducted at Princeton University, artificial intelligences were assigned to match words using the popular GloVe algorithm. The artificial intelligences that were left to their own used online texts to better understand the human language.

GloVe was designed by using the database known as Common Crawl which comprises a mixed list of 840 billion words compiled from different websites. When this database was closely observed, it was seen that while the words “female” and “woman” are grouped in the same cluster with the words about domestic work, the words “man” and “male” are grouped in the same cluster with the words about mathematical intelligence and engineering.

But, why is artificial intelligence (AI) doing this?

As Artı Gerçek cites from The Guardian, computer scientist Joanna Bryson from the University of Bath has answered this question as follows:

“A lot of people are saying this is showing that AI is prejudiced. No. This is showing we’re prejudiced and that AI is learning it.”

According to the figures announced in 2018, 69.1 percent of the employees of Google, one of the above-mentioned companies, are men and 30.9 percent are women.

A vast number of Google employees, especially women, who have been working at this company—a dream of many young people—and have constituted these numbers that reveal a blatant inequality, went on a [worldwide strike](#) last month and stopped working in protest against the sexual harassment and inequalities faced by the women workers of the company.

The protests were staged after a New York Times article documented that the senior executives of Google, who were dismissed from their jobs upon accusations of sexual harassment, were paid millions of dollars in compensation though the company did not have any obligation to do so.

As for Amazon, whose founder and CEO is Jeff Bezos, the richest man of the world, the figures are as follows: 73 percent of its professional workers and 78 percent of its senior executives and directors are

men. Of the 10 employees who directly report to Jeff Bezos, all except for the human resources director Beth Galetti, are white and men!

According to a report titled [“Amazon’s Unfair Deal of the Day”](#), the only category where the number of women employees is close to that of men is the category of “laborers and helpers”, who do the hardest manual labor. In this category, women account for 45 percent, and men for 65 percent.

The situation is not any different in other companies operating in the information sector. The rate of women working in senior positions at Apple is 19 percent and at CISCO and Facebook 30 percent.

As for the companies operating in Turkey, this inequality is all the more marked. According to the results of the household labor force survey conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), as of 2016, the rate of women working in senior or middle management positions in companies is [16.7 percent](#).

As for the CEOs in Turkey, only 12 percent are women. The rate of women who study in the top 10 computer engineering departments of universities in Turkey, whose graduates will shape artificial intelligence, is [19.3 percent](#).

In summary, it may not be a correct assessment to regard artificial intelligence, which is designed by male programmers working for male directors employed by male bosses, as the architect of a future free from sexism.

And, then what?

Suppose that a socialist revolution breaks out tomorrow or we suddenly transition into a nomadic society, can we return women their rights, which have been usurped from them through ownership that was further consolidated via capitalism? I do not know.

But, contrary to what Saçınıt has argued in his piece, the current situation does not necessarily mean that women can prevent the physical and emotional violence or the sexual harassment once they attain higher positions.

The research report on the impact of domestic violence on workers and workplaces titled "[Domestic Violence Against White-Collar Working Women in Turkey](#)" has shown that 75 percent of white-collar women workers, most of whom are university graduates, have been subjected to a form of violence at least once in their lives.

40 percent of working women have been subjected to psychological-emotional violence, 35 percent to social violence, 17 percent to economic violence and 8 percent to physical violence.

Moreover, around one third of the women have stated that if the woman employee informs her manager about the violence that she is subjected to, it will have a negative consequence.

Almost half of the women have indicated that they would be embarrassed to share the situation with their manager.

And, what about the ones at the very top?

In his article entitled "Artificial Stupidity", Saçınıt asks the following question to his readers:

"Can we imagine a male employee, who works in the same workplace with [the famous businesswomen] Güler Sabancı or Leyla Alaton, subjecting them to mobbing, harassment or violence?"

And he immediately answers his own question: "No, we cannot."

Let us remember how Rothman has defined mansplaining: "Explaining without regard to the fact that the explainee knows more than the explainer, often done by a man to a woman."

Now it is Leyla Alaton's turn to speak:

P.S.: My cousin Emel developed a passion for photography after moving to another neighborhood. She is now one of the famous photographers of Turkey. She is still listening to our program in the mornings.

 ABOUT

Journalist, radio programmer and climate activist. He graduated from İstanbul Bilgi University Department of Sociology in 2010. He is doing his master's degree in Media and Communication Systems at the same university. Since 2012 he is continuing his adventures in the news program Açık Gazete (Open Newspaper) at Açık Radyo. He produces two more radio programs on climate change and world music.

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**#49 DERYA
BENİ**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

PATA PATA!

If being a “tootsie” is a crude dream and an impossible fantasy... What about the love of Müslüm Gürses - Muhterem Nur still being defined as an exemplary love? And when “Pata Pata” of Miriam Makeba is understood as “pata küte” in Turkish, an onomatopoeia for beating...

A well-known scene from the popular cinema of the 80s:

A soap opera is being shot in a hospital. The hospital administrator Emily Kimberly visits the room of a woman beaten by her husband. While the woman in bed, whose face is filled with bruises and swelling, is complaining, "I can't move out, Miss Kimberly. I have nowhere to go. I don't know what to do", Ms. Kimberly goes off the script and asks in astonishment, "Why should you move out? It is your house too". She then continues, still off the script: "You know what I'd do, if somebody did that to me (...) I'd pick up the biggest thing I could find, and bash their brains in".

Everyone in the set of the soap opera is surprised by this interference. When the injured woman follows the script and answers, "But, I can't afford therapy", Ms. Kimberly gets angry and says: "Who said anything about therapy? (...) to tell somebody with two children, a broken arm, a punched-in face and no money to move out of her own house and into a welfare shelter in order to get therapy is a lot of horseshit!"

The script written with a man's mind falls to pieces and the scene is shot and broadcast on TV in this exact way. Ms. Kimberly, who has, all of a sudden, acquired the identity of a women's rights defender, starts receiving fan letters from around the US every day. Actress Dorothy Michaels, who plays Ms. Kimberly, becomes a country-wide idol of women.

As you know, the name of the movie is Tootsie and the person who played the characters of Emily Kimberly (and Dorothy Michaels) is Dustin Hoffman. The main character of the movie, an unemployed actor, poses as a woman and successfully auditions for the role of a woman hospital administrator, and the moment he gets the part, he lets "the woman inside him" come out. Dress, appearance, make-up, gestures and mimics do not suffice, "sensitivity" too is worthless; what makes him a woman is, in a sense, the "ideology" of womanhood.

Even though the accusations recently made in the film community have shown that Hoffman did not get his share from this ideology in real life, the main thesis that the movie treats in jest has always been valid.

The men who stand on the side of women and attempt to have a say on the issue of male violence against women in a social life disabled with inequalities have to internalize this way of thinking and set their inner "Tootsie" in motion; and just like in the movie, they should start by getting rid of this "tootsie" literature (honey, my dear, flower, bug).

If being a "tootsie" is a crude dream and an impossible fantasy, is it also as impossible to rein in the monster of force and violence springing up from manhood?

In previous weeks, the movie Müslüm, albeit perfunctorily, managed to adapt certain parts of the musician Müslüm Gürses' life into cinema. It also, very slightly, touched upon the crime of beating, which most of us have forgotten, pretended ignorance of or did not know about.

It must be the weakness of not the movie, but our damned life that the love of Müslüm Gürses and Muhterem Nur is still seen as an exemplary love in spite of this violence and the subsequent spiral of regret which are presented as further evidence attesting to the strength of love.

There is a reality which the movie Müslüm has reminded us all: Muhterem Nur represents the mass of meanings called arabesque, which is mostly created with a male language, more so and much better and much earlier than Müslüm Gürses himself.

It would indeed be a valuable endeavor if someone interested in researching, writing or making a movie on the history of sorrow, pain and grief in the 20th century Turkey, first follows the life story of Muhterem Nur step by step, focuses on the way she existed and survived in Yeşilçam (the traditional cinema of Turkey), and then connects this to her relationship with Müslüm and to the arabesque of Müslüm Gürses.

Muhterem Nur was a woman "who cried all her life". In 1967, at a time when she was about to pull the plug on her cinema career and was performing as a belly dancer and singer in second-rate nightclubs, she recorded the song "[Ömrümce Ağladım](#)" (I Have Cried All My

Life) on extended-play. (The biography of Muhterem Nur written by Gülsen İşeri was also published under the same title in 2017.)

Poet Ümit Yaşar Oğuzcan who had written the lyrics of the song made the following note on the back cover of her album:

"Following her sorrowful life story from a distance, I have always admired the struggle of Muhterem Nur to stand tall. Therefore, when she asked me for the lyrics of the first record she would make, I fulfilled her wish with pleasure. With the voice of Muhterem Nur, these verses, which have become all the more valuable thanks to the art of esteemed composer Şekip Ayhan Özışık, will be the song of all those who love and suffer."

It was something stressed by everyone that there was an overlap between the life of Muhterem Nur and the roles she played in films. What had been written about her since the 1950s, what she did and did not tell about herself were the stations of this "sorrowful" story, as Ümit Yaşar put it. Migrating from the Balkans, being left an orphan, being driven to poverty, being raped on the street, being harassed by her uncle-in-law, working in a factory, getting married to a young neighbor, becoming a mother at a young age, getting walk-on roles in films, then, becoming the leading actress...

Muhterem Nur was one of the first stars who made Yeşilçam what it was. While playing the part of the good (or acceptable) woman in cinema as written by the novelists Kemalettin Tuğcu, Kerime Nadir and Muazzez Tahsin Berkand, she

obeyed the orders assigned to her role to the letter.

According to writer Agah Özgüç, she was “the prototype of a constantly suffering, crying and unhappy woman character”. Journalist and filmmaker Burçak Evren was of the opinion that Nur was “the meek, innocent maiden of the neighborhood free from any femininity”.

The stars coming after her found themselves a place in cinema depending on what they added to the typecast of Muhterem Nur. Actress Belgin Doruk added a pinch of caprice while Türkan Şoray added a little lust to it.

It would be enough to take a quick look at the promotional texts published in the newspapers for Muhterem Nur movies: “An unprecedented family tragedy based on a real story” (Son Şarkı, Last Song). “A film to make all women sob, drive men to the greatest thrill and teach an exemplary lesson to the young” (Annemin Gözyaşları, Teardrops of My Mother). “A masterpiece to be watched by every sinful woman, every negligent man and every art-lover with admiration” (Ben Kahpe Değilim, I am Not a Whore). “The film of women who believe in the bliss of family life, mothers who struggle for the future of their children, and young girls who have just come to know what love is” (Kadın Asla Unutmaz, Woman Never Forgets).

Talking about the filmography of Muhterem Nur, we must underline two exceptional roles that she played in the 1970s, a time when she was rarely doing movies: A female director, Bilge Olgaç, imagined her as a hard-bitten sex worker

in Karagün (Dark Day) and as a brothel madam who is caring and protective of her girls in Bacım (My Sister).

In an interview she gave to Hayat magazine in 1961, when she was no longer in the prime of her career, she was bewailing her bad fate and the hardships she had been through and telling her first 10 years in the film industry modestly and with a matured humor:

“Directors raced against each other to write my destiny in the films as bad as they could. They made me blind twice, tubercular several times, killed me 50 times, and then to make it up to me they made me bride many times.”

From Tracy Chapman’s “[Behind the Wall](#)” to Suzanne Vega’s “[Luka](#)”, from Billy Bragg’s “[Levi Stubbs’ Tears](#)” to Eminem’s “[Stan](#)”, we have long listened, loved and cherished many songs which talk about various aspects of violence and abuse. But to date no one has told of violence to the audiophile kids in such a stinging, hurting way as Berrand Cantat did. Moreover, not with a song, but in real life.

Of course, artworks, movies, songs have a nature, life and individuality independent from their creators, but, after Cantat beat his girlfriend Marie Trintignant to death, and it was revealed through various testimonies that this fatal tragedy was not the only manifestation of his tendency to violence, is there anyone who can listen a [Noir Desir](#) song without a pang of sorrow? In an interview, Kurt Cobain quite naively expressed his discomfort of his massive fame along the following lines: I don’t know the crowd who buys our albums.

I don't know who they are, whom they vote for, what they look like. Some of them perhaps beat their wives, or throw their dogs on the street when they move. Do we have a single thing in common with these people?

Who would have thought that, one day, Cantat would also fit Cobain's description? Actually, there is no need to go as far as Cantat. Life has taught us good and proper that no one can vouch for anyone on this subject. Those who fit this description (they know themselves), aren't they perhaps right next to us, and sometimes our closest ones?

The most impressive, (literally and figuratively speaking) most stunning song about domestic violence was probably written in Turkey. Justifying violence, brute force and maltreatment, even making them sound cute, in such an explicit way that it doesn't leave any room for the possibility of black humor or figure of speech is the song with the dual title "Pata-Pata ([Dayak Cennetten Çıkma](#))" (Pata-Pata, Beating Comes from Heaven). It is the Turkish cover of South African Miriam Makeba's famous song "[Pata Pata](#)". To cap it all, it doubles the blind violence by exploiting the original song with a vengeance.

As of the 1960s, Miriam Makeba, nicknamed Mama Afrika, was one of the symbols of the South African blacks' antiapartheid cry for freedom and the African women's meeting with feminism.

Her life was full of struggle. In her first marriage to a policeman, when she wasn't of full age, she was subjected to

beating and humiliation. After migrating to America in the 1960s, she first married trumpeter Hugh Masekela, one of the pioneers of the antiapartheid movement in arts just like herself, then taking the risk of deportation from America she married Stokely Carmichael, one of the leaders of the Black Panther movement.

The song "Pata Pata" became a worldwide hit in 1967. It was a wonderful dance song that catches the listener with its fresh melodies and lyrics written in the native Xhosa language. The recitative parts in English were about how people from Johannesburg have fun with this dance at weekends.

The political implications of the song lay in both equating dance with resistance against the white racist regime, and the very figures used in the dance. The basic figures of the "Pata Pata" dance were the movements of the police body-frisking the blacks, which was a constant and tiresome practice on the streets of Johannesburg at the time. The meaning of "Pata Pata" was "touch touch". "Pata pata" must have evoked "pata küte" or "pataklamak", an onomatopoeia for beating in Turkish, and driven by some inexplicable appetite, the songwriter Ülkü Aker and singer Rana Alagöz, in the record released in 1968, thought that this beautiful song deserved the following words:

["Don't ever make him angry
He will beat you pata pata
Don't say I didn't tell you so
He is so bad tempered pata pata
Look, beating comes from heaven
He will beat you pata pata"](#)

Don't you ever cry
 Don't hit pata pata
 There is no one in the world
 who didn't get beaten
 We all know that
 First our mothers, then our teachers
 Then who beats whom?
 Guess who
 Don't piss him off
 He will beat you pata pata
 Does your lover beat you too?
 Don't worry, these things happen
 When was the last time he slapped you?
 Come on, tell it
 Everybody gets beaten."



ABOUT

Freelance journalist, writer, editor, curator. He was the editor-in-chief of Roll magazine from 1996 to 2009. He wrote on music and popular culture in newspapers and magazines such as Express, Bir+Bir, Esquire, FHM, Aktüel, Radikal. He was the music editor of Rakı Ansiklopedisi (Rakı Encyclopedia, 2010). He was the curator of the exhibitions A kind of electricity appeared in outer space: Musical Turkey in the 1960s (Depo, 2012) and İşte Benim Zeki Müren (Here I am, Zeki Müren, Yapı Kredi Culture Center - YKY, 2014). With the subheading "Sazlı Cazlı Sözlük" (Dictionary with Jazz and Saz) he published two books titled 50'li Yıllarda Türkiye - Şimdiki zaman beledir (Turkey in the 50s: Such is Present Time, YKY, 2017) and 60'lı Yıllarda Türkiye - Dünya durmadan dönüyor (Turkey in the 60s: The World Keeps Turning, YKY, 2018). He was born in 1966 in Ankara.

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**#50 RAMİN
MATİN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

STABILITY

These two seemingly unrelated incidents involving people from different social environments and different generations, have stuck in my mind because it was not possible for me to make sense of either one of them.

While I was doing my military service, there was a group of four friends in our company. They used to spend all their free time together and did not talk to anyone else. They would get together as far away from the other soldiers as possible and when a stranger came near them, they would keep silent and wait, not answering the questions of anyone except for their commanders.

Their way of communication was very much based on punches, kicks and swearwords that I had never heard anywhere else. They always seemed to be having so much fun; but, during all this fun, one of them would punch the other on the shoulder, another would kick the other in the ass and afterwards they would just burst into louder laughters.

And they swore in an extremely foul language with sexually explicit themes, usually referring to mothers and sisters. Those swears were resembling mini-scenarios, which were very detailed and employed a series of instruments, foremost their rifles.

It was difficult to grasp the dynamics among them from a distance; however, one of them seemed to be coming to the fore as the "alpha" of the group. He was the one who decided what would be done when, and he was talking with an air as if he had an old head on young shoulders.

One day, when I was the sergeant on guard duty, they were again sitting afar in the lawn, snatching a newspaper from

each others' hands and laughing at one another. At one point, one of them turned to the "alpha" and shouted, "Yo sonny, hand it over dude". Everyone suddenly fell silent. The other two walked away from them a bit, their faces struck with fear.

When the alpha slowly stood up, his friend rose to his feet in greater panic. I could not grasp the situation, I could not figure out what could have caused this sudden tension. All of a sudden, the alpha punched his friend on the face and, right after that, kicked him on the hips.

Though the boy stumbled, he was not surprised, neither were the other two. "Who are you calling sonny'?", shouted the alpha. "Who is the son of whom!" The boy was aware that he had made a mistake, but as far as I could tell he was supposed to protect his own honor in some way; otherwise, he would disgrace himself.

He immediately threw a punch, which landed on the alpha's ear; the alpha put his hand over his ear in pain, he seemed to have lost his balance. His friend, who did not miss the opportunity, knocked him down with a kick. "I say 'sonny' to anyone I please, you bastard" shouted the boy and sat on the alpha and threw another punch.

I was just standing there and watching the scene in utter bewilderment. I was supposed to intervene, but, I had long understood that as a “short-term” soldier, I should not mess with the “long-terms”, who did not take us “short-terms” seriously.

I looked around, but since everyone was away from us, nobody had noticed the incident. The alpha shook off his friend somehow, rose to his feet and started kicking him on the head. He was shouting, “You cannot call me ‘sonny’.”

I had to intervene now; I ran towards them saying, “Stop it, what are you doing?”. I don’t know why, but, when they saw me approaching, the other two, who were standing at a distance, broke up the fight saying, “Come on, stop it.”

In the meanwhile, others also noticed the incident and rushed toward us. The alpha quickly walked away; the face of his friend was drenched in blood, he was not in a state to get up.

They helped him to his feet and took him to the infirmary. When I asked them why they had a fight, they did not give an answer. The alpha was sent to the disciplinary ward for a month, which means that the duration of his military service was also extended for another month. When the commander interrogated them, he said that his friend had cursed at him.

I had a friend who had told me that his parents were fighting every night at the top of their voices, he was dreaming of

the day they would get divorced. He was the son of a well-off, established family; in the vogue words of the time, they were a family “who had seen Europe”. Then, one winter, it turned out that his father, who was supposedly on a business trip, had in fact taken his lover to “see Europe”.

A friend of his mother coincidentally saw them in a luxury restaurant in one of the capital cities of Europe. When the father came back, there naturally erupted a big fight and they got separated.

They had a huge detached house, the father refused to leave it and settled in one of its rooms. It was not possible for him to cover the expenses of two houses under the current economic conditions. He would go to work every morning and come back to his room in the evening.

My friend started bringing his dinner to his room in a tray, he took on the role of a servant, so to speak. The father would sometimes attempt to persuade the mother, but all those attempts would end with shouts and the slamming of doors.

One night, when he came home from school, he again heard shouting. As this was a routine thing, he quietly went to his room without being seen by anyone. When the shouting suddenly stopped, he had a weird feeling.

When he went to the living room, he found his father choking his mother. His mother’s face was crimson red, her mouth was frozen in a muted scream.

He immediately pulled his father away and

kicked him out of the house. They did not talk for a while, then one day his father called him, apologized, and invited him to his new place to talk.

From that moment on, my friend somewhat distanced himself from us. He would not join us when we went to the movies or dinners or on school trips, not even to cut class and walk around İstiklal Avenue, which was one of his favorite things to do. We were thinking it was because of sadness, that he would get better after some time.

I learned later that when his father left home, he stopped giving money to them because “it was not possible to support two homes”. The home that he supported for himself was a luxurious hotel room with a view of the Bosphorus. My friend would visit him there once or twice a week, at times getting significant pocket money.

Every time they met, his father would say things like, “This is nonsense. Convince your mother so I can return home. All I did was a little philandering, no need to make a big deal out of it”.

Once he even told him how meticulously and cleverly he had planned that holiday, had her mother’s friend not been there, his plan would have worked perfectly, like a movie scenario.

His mother first borrowed money from her friends to support their home, then sold everything she had. His father was still grumbling “No way, she cannot kick me out of the house”. At one point, he

even began trying to scare his son, saying “Your mother cannot take care of you. She cannot handle this, she will lose all the money.”

These two seemingly unrelated incidents involving people from different backgrounds and different generations have stuck in my mind because it was not possible for me to make sense of either one of them.

I could not understand why the soldier laughed at all those insults but felt humiliated and overreacted when he was called “sonny”, and similarly I could not understand how a father could be so stubborn as to put his beloved son’s life and even future into danger to save a relationship that had already ended.

Many years later, when I was pondering and making research for a project on the states of manhood in Turkey, these two stories became more meaningful for me. I saw that the states of “being a man” and a set of behaviors pertaining to manhood, which are imbued in us since childhood, leave deep marks on every man from all walks of life and all ages.

A life that begins with supposedly endearing sayings like “I’ll eat your weenie” that you hear as a child, and continues with sentences like “If you are man enough you won’t put up with that “...

Transforming into a wretched herd of people who constantly feel in their subconscious that they have to prove how much of a man they are at any time, at any place...

Men who are actually losers and thus feel threatened all the time and turn every moment of their lives into a show of force... The person who thinks that he holds and must hold the reins of stability, and views this as proof of his manhood, resorts to violence like a cornered animal when he loses that stability.

This violence can be physical, emotional or economic, but its essence is the same. The violence of the soldier who took offense at being called "sonny" and the violence of the father who was caught red handed and kicked out of the house come from the same place. The loss of stability and the feeling that their manhood is under threat.



ABOUT

Director. His first and second films were *Canavarlar Sofrası* (The Monsters' Dinner, 2011) and *Kusursuzlar* (The Impeccables, 2013). His third feature film *Son Çıkış* (Siren's Call, 2018) is now showing in theatres. He began his studies in France and graduated from Loyola Marymount University Film, TV and Media Studies in the USA in 1999. He received his master's degree in film and television from İstanbul Bilgi University. He was born in 1977 in Ankara.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#51 EMRE
SENAN**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

A 'MANLY MAN' GIVES UP

You can easily guess the generalizations that I have nonchalantly made. With my mind at peace, I have come to the following conclusion:
If history had chosen a matriarchal path, we would be living in a completely different world now.

Can generalizations be made by pondering some questions even if their answers are approached with skepticism? Sometimes yes; in fact, they should be made.

At least I do.

The questions can be listed as follows:

- What does man (erkek in Turkish) mean? Power (erk in Turkish) with an appendix (ek in Turkish)? Is it possible that this gender named itself?

- Is not man the source of almost all true/false information which has been spread about men and women?

- Did not men write the history of civilization, especially that of art, in a manly manner by putting on the glasses that are, again, produced by men?

- Is not Manese or Manish the only language which is more widely spoken than Chinese, English and Spanish?

- Historically speaking, why is power always violent? Is it a structural weakness?

- Is a patriarchal past the fate of a patriarchal future?

- Even if it is, is historical continuity necessary?

- Is there a violence which is non-male?

- Getting rid of man to get rid of violence, how would it be as a start?

You can easily guess the answers I gave to these questions and the generalizations I nonchalantly made.

With my mind at peace, I have come to the following conclusion:

If history had chosen a matriarchal path, we would be living in a totally different world.

But it did not. Well, can it happen henceforth? Maybe.

It depends largely on what the global women's movement will do.

There are things that conscientious men can do as well.

For my part, I cannot resign from being a man but can give up and resign from manhood.



ABOUT

Artist. He became the founder, partner and creative director of the advertisement agencies Yorum, Markom, Reklamcılık Klan and Euro RSCG. Since 1980 to date he has been actively working in design, animated cinema and contemporary arts. He served as board member and president at Grafikerler Meslek Kuruluşu (Turkish Society of Graphic Designers) and Çizgi Filmciler Derneği (Association of Animation Filmmakers). He lectured at Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University Faculty of Fine Arts Department of Graphic Design as project advisor, he retired in 2017. He co-founded the Emre Senan Design Foundation (ESTV, 2005) with Professor Ayşegül İzer, launched the not-for-profit Yahşibey Design Workshops, and created the website www.yahsiworkshops.com. In 2018 he organized the 10th Anniversary Exhibition of Yahşibey Design Workshops. In 2007 he opened his own design and consultancy office. He produced book covers and illustrations. He regularly drew cartoons for the press, and made pro bono designs for non-governmental organizations. His book named Karikatür (Caricature) was published by Metis Publishing. He won numerous awards at graphic design, caricature and animated film competitions in Turkey and abroad. His works have been exhibited and featured in museums in Canada, Switzerland, Germany, Iran, Australia, Czech Republic, France and Korea. He is actively engaged in contemporary arts, he opened 14 solo exhibitions and participated in group exhibitions in Turkey and abroad and served on the jury of various national and international competitions. He was born in 1954 in Konya. He speaks English and is the father of two. He graduated from İzmir College, studied engineering at Boğaziçi University for one year. He is a graduate of İstanbul State Academy of Fine Arts School of Applied Industrial Arts Department of Graphic Design. After graduation he worked as teaching assistant at the same school. He quit upon the adoption of the Council of Higher Education (YÖK) law.

**IT'S NOT
AN ACCIDENT**

52 WEEKS
MEN

**MEN WRITE ABOUT
MALE VIOLENCE**

**#52 YILDIRIM
TÜRKER**



bianet
BAĞIMSIZ İLETİŞİM AĞI

BEING CAPTIVE TO POWER

As the man is squeezed between the gears of the power machine, he cuts, destroys, crashes, kills.

So, where does the emancipation of man begin?
By questioning the power of every stripe of course...

If I believed in the curative power of confession as I did before, I would ask the readers regardless of their gender, come on, tell me, I would say: Which one of you did not hurt a woman just because she was a woman? There is more. Is there anyone among us who did not do it on purpose, with deliberation and premeditation?

It has been a long time since I stopped believing in the curative power of confession. I have graduated from a stage of credulity with further darkness. From the simple voluntarism, which gets hold of us all in some period of our lives not only because we take the easy way out, but also because of our impatience and conceit of hopefulness.

Confession oftentimes becomes a refuge that savage bullies hide behind. Therefore, what good would it do if I exclaimed, "Don't oppress the women"? Transformation does not begin in the ears.

Woman is a swearword. We all know that.

She is a trap, a swamp, she cannot be trusted, she is cowardly. She is a threat. A terror...

The state apparatus, the institution of family and all power organizations have been established to protect the man from the woman.

But, how long can this manhood, which has been taken under protection with such violence, continue fulfilling its duty of

shouldering power with this fragility?

By shaping and defining the women according to its own power and by crushing, trampling and, if needs be, killing them...

Man kills out of fear.

Those who did their sacred duty of military service know it well. When men are cornered together and become the servant of an unquestionable higher power, they experience a bizarre relief. During this period, which they know is temporary and are ready to endure all kinds of denigration without any objection, they kind of suspend what they know as manhood. I remember very well that the sergeant used to address the ward as "Girls". Those who do their military service assume an almost flirtatious attitude in the face of all the name calling which could make a man resort to knives in a back street.

This tells us something which we should definitely solve.

The fragility of manhood protects itself with anger. The problem of anger management is prevalent among men. Anger is part of the glory of manhood. It is deemed handsome. Men are frequently blinded by anger.

One of the primary duties of a woman is to calm the man down and, if needs be, to serve as his mental hospital attendant. Of course, with endearments and meek compassion...

When they are cranky, being humored and gently placated is a feeling that men love very much. Woman stands between the man and his anger. It is, in fact, the summary of a woman's life. She is a being who lives between the man and his anger. As we know, it is a life-threatening duty.

A man who was "upset", who "blew his top", or was "blinded by anger" meets with people's understanding, his crime is rewarded with sentence reductions due to provocation. A woman who kills her husband, who beat and attempted to murder her repeatedly causing injuries which have been reported, can only dream of those sentence reductions. In short, anger and the ability of being provoked are privileges granted to men.

Privileges are countless.

The spirit of mobilization created in the societies and the domestic and national climate strengthen these privileges, cement their legitimacy.

An old newspaper article I wrote about the soldiers who repeatedly raped a Kurdish woman had caused indignation primarily in the "flagship media". I do not forget how Özkök (Ertuğrul, former Editor-in-Chief of daily Hürriyet) had reported me to his state, drooling with rage and insulting me. Because a Turkish soldier cannot be a rapist.

Talking about girls who were subjected to gang rape in small towns was also very hurtful for the gatekeepers of power. It is forbidden to call men a herd of rapists. Like the Armenian Massacre. It is not called by its name. It is seen as an isolated incident.

As the man is squeezed between the gears of the power machine, he cuts, destroys, crashes, kills.

So, where does the emancipation of man begin? By questioning every kind of power of course.

Certainly, it is very hard to wriggle oneself out of being a warrior, whom the power pokes and reminds itself every moment. Moreover, the language of power and power worshiping are not unique to men. For man, it requires a tough struggle to resist what is expected, demanded, desired of him. If you just let yourself go, everything is easy. Being a man has a legitimacy that no one questions.

If he is to be a human, man must face his fears.

Learning to live without measuring one's love, hate, or honor with death, without testing one's power on the weak should be the maxim of a human being. We must leave the climate of manhood which makes life miserable for us all by taking hurtful rudeness for outspokenness, impertinence for courage, jealousy for love, and murder for honor.

It is high time for the entire world to discover and liberate the woman within.


ABOUT

Writer, poet, dramatist, translator. He wrote for *Expres* and *Öküz* magazines, he was a columnist at the daily *Radikal* and *Radikal 2*. After his article dated August 12, 2012 was not published, he resigned from the newspaper. He worked as a dramatist at İstanbul City Theaters. He was a member of the jury of National Competition at the 26th International İstanbul Film Festival. He wrote the books *Gözaltında Kayıp Onu Unutma!* (S/he Disappeared in Custody, Don't Forget Him/Her, 1995) and *Türkiye Sizinle Gurur Duyuyor* (Turkey is Proud of You, 1998). He was granted the Cemal Süreya Poetry Award for the book *Cihangir Kedileri* (Cats of Cihangir, 1993). He also wrote the theater play *Gölge Ustası* (Shadow Master, 1993). Some of his screenplays are as follows: *Delibal* (2015), *Gece, Melek ve Bizim Çocuklar* (Night, Angel and Our Children, 1993), *Düş Gezginleri* (Dream Travellers, 1992), *Berdel* (Bride Exchange, 1990). Some of his translations: *Sıkı Gözetim* (Deathwatch, Jean Genet), *İnce Sızı* (A Slight Ache, Harold Pinter), *İyi Geceler Anne* (Good Night Mother, Marsha Norman), *Yaz ve Duman* (Summer and Smoke, Tennessee Williams). He graduated from Robert College and majored in City and Regional Planning at Middle East Technical University (METU) in Ankara, where He was also born.

