

## Chapter 55

# Man, Masculinity, and Violence in Turkish Cinema After 2000: The Case of Kenan İmirzalıoğlu

**Gökhan Gültekin**

*Sivas Cumhuriyet University, Turkey*

### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study is to trace the relationship between male, masculinity, and violence in Turkish films after 2000. For this purpose, action, adventure, political, and drama films featuring Kenan İmirzalıoğlu, the pioneering anti-hero of male violence in popular Turkish films between 2000-2010 were focused. Thus, the sample of the study was composed of *Deli Yürek: Bumerang Cehennemi* (2001), *Yazı Tura* (2004), *Kabadayı* (2007), and *Ejder Kapanı* (2010) films. In all of these films Yusuf, Cevher, Devran, and Celal acted by İmirzalıoğlu use intense violence in the name of honor, power, and virility. Starting from such observation, the study has endeavored to make an interpretation on appearance of the relationship among man, masculinity, and violence based on the type, orientation, perspective and purpose of violence in the films, included the sample since the 2000s. In pursuit of such meaning first, it will be useful to mention the relationship among violence, man, and masculinity.*

### INTRODUCTION

Human beings have witnessed violence throughout history and have encountered numerous acts of violence such as murders, injuries, fights, looting, rape, and hunting. Violence has always been present since the murdering of Abel, the first child of Adam and Eve, by his brother Cain (Akıncı, 2013: 21). At the present time, violence has a more complex structure.

Today's science and technology age has instilled people a tremendous tendency to violence along with rationalism and materialism (Jung, 2011: 38). More precisely, 'civilization' has also served for the naturalization of violence (Eagleton, 2012: 202). Especially from the late 1950s, this naturalness has become thoroughly more apparent, violence and wildness have gradually increased (Demirbaş, 2012:

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272). The fact that violence is now rather a tool of political and ideological goals is one of the main reasons for this increase (Dönmezer, 1994: 211). Despite all these changes, what has remained constant since Cain is that violence is always male-dominated.

In patriarchal societies, men are equipped with power, violence, governing and honor codes. When the man thinks that his power or honor is damaged, he does not neglect to resort violence through his power. Therefore, the films coming out of the society cannot remain indifferent to this character of man in real life. The situation is not very different in Turkey. The male characters of Turkish films are generally designed with the intense power and violence for the continuation of their power and honor in accordance with the patriarchal structure. Even a man can sometimes resort to violence to prove his adequacy and virility. It is possible to see that such characters who use violence for their honor, virility and power are concentrated in Turkish films especially after 2000. Many male characters resort to physical, psychological, sexual, verbal or economic violence for the sake of power, governing, honor and masculinity. Depending on all of these, the purpose of this study is to trace the relationship between male, masculinity, and violence in Turkish films after 2000. For this purpose, action, adventure, political and drama films featuring Kenan İmirzalıoğlu, the pioneering anti-hero of male violence in popular Turkish films between 2000-2010 were focused. Thus, the sample of the study was composed of *Deli Yürek: Bumerang Cehennemi* (2001), *Yazı Tura* (2004), *Kabadayı* (2007) and *Ejder Kapanı* (2010) films. In all of these films Yusuf, Cevher, Devran and Celal acted by İmirzalıoğlu use intense violence in the name of honor, power, and virility. Starting from such observation, the study has endeavored to make an interpretation on appearance of the relationship among man, masculinity, and violence based on the type, orientation, perspective and purpose of violence in the films, included the sample since the 2000s. In pursuit of such meaning first, it will be useful to mention the relationship among violence, man, and masculinity.

## **VIOLENCE, MAN, AND MASCULINITY**

In the Classical Anglo-Saxon sense, violence is defined as ‘causing physical injury of somebody’ (Riches, 1989: 14; Rougier, 1989: 71). It can be said that the concept has passed from Arabic to Turkish in the meanings of ‘toughness’, ‘brute force’, and, ‘rude behavior’. Today, its lexical meaning is ‘using brute force, rude behavior, and, toughness towards those with opposite attitude or opinion’ (Ünsal, 1996: 29).

Violence should not only be associated with physical aggression or power. As stressed by Marvin (1989: 153), violence is present in bullfighting; but the matadors do not appear in an aggressive mood against bulls. Matador uses violence in a very comfortable manner for entertainment purposes. In other words, there is no need for pure aggression in the emergence of violence; aesthetic and cold-blooded behaviors may also include violence. Again, violence does not need to be physical; it can be emotional or verbal. Thus, it is more meaningful to define violence as follows: Violence is the observed activity of the organism from the outside and requires the physical, psychological or social damage of the target.

Violence is not evaluated in the same way in societies with different cultural codes. While violence is condemned as a goal in some cultures, violence can be regarded as legitimate as a tool (Corbin, 1989: 44). For example, while violence is a privileged behavior in Dobu culture, it can be punished in Pueblos culture (Foucault, 2013: 74). Similarly, in some cities, regions or tribes of the countries such as Columbia, Italy and Mexico, the use of violence is an acceptable situation (Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 2010: 275-281).

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