



## A Comparative Criticism of Hegemonic Masculinities in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *Ağır Roman*

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**Abstract:** This paper examines two existing examples of hegemonic masculinity in texts that are productions of different contexts: Colombian and Turkish. Although the two countries seem to be separate and contrasting, the *machismo* culture in Márquez and Kaçan's portrayal of *kabadayı* images have a practice of hegemonic masculinity in common. In both texts, the notion of hegemonic masculinity strictly demands male characters to present their masculinities to dominate both women and other men. In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Márquez, the reader comes across a culture that attains men a certain role, requiring them to have control over women and men around them to uphold their honorable status. The obsession with the notion of "honor" only strengthens the hypocrisy between the sexual freedom of men and women. In *Ağır Roman* by Metin Kaçan, men embrace this role in the *varoş* culture. *Kabadayı* figures shows this masculinity performance. This masculinity emerges as strictly heterosexual and it is fragile construction, requiring constant demonstrations. When a man displays weakness, others challenge his masculinity. Characters gain their status with dominance over others to create their reputation and honor, and their hegemonic masculinity. Since the masculinity is heavily significant for those men's lives, it damages both men and women. Through this analysis, this paper criticizes the struggle hegemonic masculinity forces on men and women.

**Keywords:** Hegemonic masculinity, machismo, kabadayı, honor, comparative literature

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Masculinities are possible to observe and analyze in different ways in accordance with the cultural context in which they are constructed. As parts of the very fabric of society, such gender performances shape people's behaviors as they create the patterns by which people lead their lives. In that sense, Metin Kaçan in *Ağır Roman* and Gabriel Garcia Márquez in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* present the performance of hegemonic masculinity along with plain descriptions of Turkish and Columbian cultures respectively. It is possible to observe the performance of *kabadayı*, which is roughneck in Kaçan's novel, and that of *machismo* in Márquez's novella. Both of the authors present this hegemonic masculinity through acts of honor. These masculinities have similarities with the concept of hegemonic masculinity. This paper, then, analyzes the concept of hegemonic masculinity and how it oppresses men and women both as its victims and participants in the works of the two authors. While the concept of masculinities and its studies have recently been extended to non-Western identities and cultures, as it can be seen in the studies by scholars such as R. Connell, Harry Broad, and Michael Kaufman, it would not be unfair to state that hegemonic masculinity has mainly been studied through the Western perspective. Therefore, drawing on feminist methodology and critical masculinity studies, this study aims to examine how the hegemonic masculinity presents itself in different cultural and social atmospheres, yet how it similarly oppresses people's lives. In *Ağır Roman*, the hegemonic masculinity practice forces Gili Gili Salih, the protagonist, into a constant struggle to prove his masculinity and honor through dominance, which leads to his death in the end. Similarly, in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, the characters of Bayardo San Roman and the Vicario brothers are built through the understanding of a similar hegemonic masculinity that constantly forces men to prove their "manhood" and therefore worthiness. In both texts, demonstration of hegemonic masculinity and its performance, despite operating through different cultural contexts, are through the creation of terms such as reputation and "honor."

...Gender is in no way a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts proceed; rather it is an identity

tenuously constituted in time – an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts. Further, gender is instituted through the stylization of the body and, hence, must be understood as the mundane way, in which bodily gestures, movements, and enactments of various kinds constitute an illusion of an abiding gendered self. (Butler, 1988, p. 519)

This is how Judith Butler defines gender; not as a rigid, permanently constructed identity, but more of a fluid one that is shaped through the performance or practice of the individual. In other words, gender is learned through practice and imitation. Consequently, gender and gender performances are defined as social constructions that require people to behave in certain mannerisms and ways. Moreover, those behaviors and mannerisms are not ahistorical and stable. Instead, they are structured within the dynamics of social norms, and people do learn to acquire and perform these requirements of gender as a social construction. Masculinity, as a set of gender behaviors and mannerisms, is consequently no different in terms of imitation and performativity. In fact, considering the effect of social dynamics on gender performances, masculinity is multiplied as masculinities, since social dynamics are affected by such issues as class, race, and ethnicity and so on. Therefore, each social and cultural context creates its own masculinity type, which means there is not singular and universal masculinity but masculinities. In their introduction to *Theorizing Masculinities*, Harry Brod and Michael Kaufman also underlines the varied number of masculinities: "...We wish to emphasize the plurality and diversity of men's experiences, attitudes, beliefs, situations, practices, and institutions, along lines of race, class, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, region, physical appearance, able-bodiedness, mental ability, and various other categories with which we describe our lives and experiences" (Brod and Kaufman, 1994, pp. 4-5). Accordingly, men and masculinities could be observed in different forms as a man's experiences within his social atmosphere forge and shape his construction of his own masculinity. From a man's age to his educational background, his social and economic class to religious and

cultural values, a variety of outsider social factors have a great deal of influence on a man's experience and the way he performs his masculinity. Consequently, there is not a singular type of masculinity to cover all men, but there are various masculinities, which could be used to address men's differing experiences. This is also acknowledged by Uğur Uçkiran in his thesis on masculinities in Turkish Literature: "...It can be said that masculinity is a phenomenon that takes shape with the influence of many changes and manifests itself in various ways in various conditions that cannot be fit into a universal pattern. It changes with the effect of time, place, social status and many similar factors in manhood, and it is understood and lived differently under all these different conditions" (Uçkiran, 2019, p. 21).<sup>1</sup> Similar to the statement by Brod and Kaufman, Uçkiran acknowledges the plurality of masculinities. Becoming an umbrella term, masculinity refers to different types of experiences and behaviors that might demonstrate differences under various conditions. However, differences between masculinities and the patterns of their demonstration does not necessarily indicate that they cannot be studied and analyzed through a collective perspective. The differences in patterns might cause similar results for men due to their (or possibly lack of) masculinities. In that sense, as suggested by Atila Barutçu, an intersectional feminist approach to analysis of masculinities is a functional method to critically examine masculinities in different cultures and contexts. Indicating that men are positioned in a hierarchy not only as opposed to women, but also within themselves, he says that "the critical masculinity studies... points out the intersectionality with the analysis it conducts on different masculinity positions" (Barutçu, 2020, p.157).<sup>2</sup> Such an intersectional function becomes valuable and

<sup>1</sup> Translated by the authors. The original text is as follows: "Özetle denilebilir ki erkeklik birçok değişkenin tesiriyle şekil alan, evrensel bir kalıba sığdırılmayacak türlü koşullarda kendisini türlü şekillerde dışavuran bir olgudur. Erkeklik içerisinde bulunan zamanın, mekanın, sosyal statünün ve benzeri bir çok unsurun etkisiyle değişmekte, tüm bu değişik koşullar altında farklı şekilde anlaşılmakta ve yaşanmaktadır".

<sup>2</sup> Translated by the authors. Original text as it follows: "...Erkeklik çalışmaları... farklı erkeklik konuları üzerinden yaptığı analizlerle kesişimselliği vurgular".

useful to study masculinities from different contexts together. It is because with this approach, each type of masculinity could be critically examined on its own, while it could also be compared to other types of masculinities to challenge and criticize dominant patriarchal norms and how they operate oppression on women, men and all participants of such systems. Therefore, it allows to examine how the concept of hegemonic masculinity is at work in Turkish and Latin American cultures and how it puts oppression on men and women, especially through the problematic idea of "honor." For the characters of both texts, honor is closely related to the demonstration of their masculinities, as well as its validation. After all, honor is an inseparable part of the residents of Sucre, the Colombian village where *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* takes place, and those of suburban Istanbul, the setting of *Ağır Roman*. Yet, it is not only specific to these places, or even to Colombia or Turkey. The idea of honor was and is considered to be integrated into the Latin American and Middle Eastern cultures: "Honour is at the apex of the pyramid of temporal social values and it conditions their hierarchical order. Cutting across all other social classifications it divides social beings into two fundamental categories, those endowed with honour and those deprived of it" (Peristiany, 1966, p. 10). The one deprived of their honor, although they might be so physically, can no longer be a part of the society in a mental sense. Thus, the integration of terms such as honor becomes the moving force for the men in the society. This can be clearly observed in Marquez's novella, where two brothers, Pedro and Pablo Vicario, decide to murder a man called Santiago Nasar to "uphold" their reputation and to prove their worth, because they believe him to be the taker of their sister's virginity and therefore "purity." For them, the only way to clear their family's name and avenge their sister is through murder, which only proves further the strong hold of the idea of honor within the society. Similarly, in *Ağır Roman*, Salih's journey, as the protagonist of the novel, from a young and innocent guy to a tough roughneck, narrates his attempts to gain and protect his honor by engaging in different power relations to prove his toughness and maleness, such as Salih's attempt to regain his honor by punishing Tina

and his acts of bravery against other roughneck images in his area to maintain his honor.

Marquez's 1981 novella *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* could be said to offer an imperfectly perfect portrayal of this society of male hegemony. The plot revolves around the turmoil that arises after a young woman called Angela Vicario who, newly married, is brought back to her parents' house after her husband discovers that she is not a virgin. Her brothers, guided by the pressure of the male hegemony in the Columbian society to "save" their family's honor, go after Santiago Nasar, whom they believe to be the taker of their sister's virginity, in order to kill him and "clean" their names.

The implication of gender roles and the discrimination it creates in the society, therefore, becomes apparent: while women are seen to defame one's family, men are seen the only ones capable of cleaning it. Moreover, the fact that the roles of men and women are predestined does not help: "The brothers were brought up to be men. The girls had been reared to get married." (Marquez, 200, p. 30). Thus, in a society that degrades women to be seen solely as marriage material—to be a good wife and a good mother—it comes as no surprise that male hegemony is revered and performed to a great extent, even so that women in the society believe it is in their best interest to follow this system that disparages women. It is perhaps best seen in the words of Angela Vicario's own mother when she is talking about her daughters: "[S]he thought there were no better-reared daughters. 'They're perfect,' she was frequently heard to say. 'Any man will be happy with them because they've been raised to suffer.'" (Marquez, 2007, p. 31). As it is observed, male hegemony not only creates a society that makes the women suffer, but it also makes women regard this as "normal" and acceptable as if it bears a positive connotation. Here, hegemony becomes not a tangible force, as in domestic violence, but more of an abstract notion that elevates men above women, conclusively rendering them superior. As Connell states, "Hegemony did not mean violence, although it could be supported by force; it meant ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion." (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 837).

Instances of hegemonic masculinity in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* are more abstract than concrete. This is demonstrated through a murder committed at the end of the novella, a murder that is fostered by this hegemony and ultimately leads to the demise of Santiago Nasar. In the end, this superiority over women is won through the accustomed, intangible rules of Colombian culture and the society these women live in, which shaped most women in the sense that they are content in the situation they were in. While women like Angela, her sisters, and her mother are seen as the carriers of "purity" and "honor," her brothers Pablo and Pedro, like other men, were raised in this culture of *machismo* to act like a man, that the moment they learn their sister was not a virgin, they do not hesitate even for a moment to go after Santiago to kill him.: "'We killed him openly,' Pedro Vicario said, 'but we're innocent.' 'Perhaps before God,' said Father Amador. 'Before God and before men,' Pablo Vicario said. 'It was a matter of honor.'" (Marquez, 2007, p. 49). This pressure to prove one's manliness is not only pushed by men, but also women. Pablo's fiancée, Prudencia, herself openly mentions that she would not have married him if he did not kill Santiago to gain their family's honor back: "While they were drinking their coffee, Prudencia Cotes came into the kitchen in all her adolescent bloom, carrying a roll of old newspapers to revive the fire in the stove. 'I knew what they were up to,' she told me, "and I didn't only agree, I never would have married him if he hadn't done what a man should do.'" (Marquez, 2007, p. 63). Just like that "what a man should do" becomes almost a concrete rule, accepted by all members of the society, and while the burden falls on the shoulders of men, it affects all in the long run. It might also be helpful to look further into the idea of *machismo* to be able to comprehend the oppression behind masculinity within the novella:

Two principal characteristics appear in the study of machismo. The first is aggressiveness. Each macho must show that he is masculine, strong, and physically powerful. Differences, verbal or physical abuse, or challenges must be met with fists or other weapons. The true macho shouldn't be afraid of anything, and he should be capable of drinking

great quantities of liquor without necessarily getting drunk.

(Ingoldsby, 1991, p. 57)

Analyzing the definition of a *macho* above, it can be inferred that the majority of Marquez's male characters in the novella do, in fact, suffer from machismo. Most clearly there are Pedro and Pablo Vicario, the brothers who constantly try to justify their masculinity and male power by "avenging" their sister. Their biggest challenge in the book, the "dishonoring" of their sister is met by more than fists. The "other weapons" brought into the challenge are knives with which they eventually murder Santiago Nasar. The constant need to prove that they are fearless, not even afraid of going to jail as a result of what they plan to do, certainly drives their intention of murder so as to follow what they believe to be a must. There is a constant mention of how often they drink and how well they can hold their liquor, another characteristic of a macho: "Although they [the Vicario brothers] hadn't stopped drinking since the eve of the wedding, they weren't drunk at the end of three days [...]" (Marquez, 2007, p. 14). Although there are other characters in the novel carrying the characteristics of machismo, the Vicario brothers can be said to be the epitomes of the term.

Another indication of such male hegemony and seemingly commonly accepted masculinity can be observed in the case of Bayardo San Roman, Angela's fiancé, and later husband. He is described as a wealthy man who does not abstain from demonstrating his physical and material power, and is admired by almost all the women except Angela. Upon his arrival to the town to marry a woman, he sees Angela and decides to marry her, without questioning once whether she would want to marry him or not. Of course, as a result of male hegemony, Angela is more or less "given" to him, even though she makes it apparent that she is unwilling to marry him. This burden of honor that remains hanging on men's shoulder does not miss him, at their wedding night, he takes Angela back to her parents' house, and intentionally refrains from coming with a car so that his tarnished "honor" is witnessed by fewer people: "Bayardo San Roman had taken her to her parents' house on foot so that the noise of the motor wouldn't betray his misfortune in advance,



and he was back there alone and with the lights out in the widower Xius's happy farmhouse." (Marquez, 2007, pp. 67-68). Bayardo San Roman actually fits impeccably into the typical Latin American male character: "Looking, [...], at the caudillo, or dictator, novels produced in Latin America since the nineteenth century, we see a preponderance of textual constructions of gender that stress the role of male virility, stylized corporal aesthetics, and an epistemological focus on logic and science as parts that construct a masculine whole." (Venkatesh, 2015, p. 6). Roman, considered to be extremely good-looking and masculine by especially the women in the book, is the embodiment of male virility. Apart from his physical strength, he also gives the impression of possessing a strong sex drive. Ironically, the story itself, as well as Roman's life, seem to revolve around sex. He returns Angela to her parents' house as she is no longer "pure" for having sex before him, rendering their marriage "unfortunate" (Marquez, 2007, p. 27) and becoming caught in the illusion that his life is ruined. In fact, Bayardo San Roman is considered to be such an epitome of masculinity and virility that Angela does not really want to marry him at the beginning, stating her reason as Roman's being "too much of a man.": "It was Angela Vicario who didn't want to marry him. 'He seemed too much of a man for me,' she told me." (Marquez, 2007, p. 33-34). Like other men of his culture, what happens to Bayardo is probably seen as the worst thing that could happen to a man of his society. Brought up with the notion of his dominance over women, it can be seen that he is disillusioned with the fact that her choice of a bride is the cause of his greatest misery that breaks down the life he had been building so far: "Bayardo San Roman, for his part, must have got married with the illusion of buying happiness with the huge weight of his power and fortune, for the more the plans for the festival grew, the more delirious ideas occurred to him to make it even larger." (Marquez, 2007, p. 38). While the duty to kill Santiago falls on Angela's brothers, Bayardo, as well, takes his own share of the destructive consequences of male hegemony as he is unable to free himself from the consequences of his disrupted marriage, and his illusion of an honorable family and a "pure" wife is destroyed for good. Perhaps

it could be even said that while the Vicario brothers had an objective, a duty to save their names, the fact that this culture offered none for Bayardo—no matter how disruptive it is—makes him the most damaged as a result of this hegemonic culture. "He was aware of the prudish disposition of his world, and he must have understood that the twins' simple nature was incapable of resisting an insult. No one knew Bayardo San Roman very well, but Santiago Nasar knew him well enough to know that underneath his worldly airs he was as subject as anyone else to his native prejudices." (Marquez, 2007, p. 102). So, while society and culture revere male hegemony, the pressure of masculinity it forces onto the individuals affects and disrupts the lives of men the most. In the end, none of the characters can be set aside or stay outside of these "native prejudices" that remain whether one fulfills their duty or not. Moreover, it is not only a question of society itself, but of a more specific one with its own culture and set of rules. Márquez's depiction of the realities of the Colombian society is almost impeccable, yet it can also be said that this hegemony of maleness and masculinity spans borders and is more or less the case in most countries in Latin America. Being a writer of the Latin American Boom, a literary period in which Latin American authors began to gain acclamation around Europe and other parts of the world, one could perhaps say *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* was only one of the many realist works of Márquez through which the rest of the world become acquainted with the specific patriarchy widespread in Latin America at the same, which continue to be prevalent today:

The period in which Gabriel Garcia Marquez began to write was an important one for Hispanic American literature. Up to 1950, literature of the continent was characterized by three specific features: the realist-modernist duality, super-regionalism and the striving towards universalization. The realist-modernist trend continued up to 1910—the year of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in Mexico. This event reverberated in the consciousness of Latin American writers. Their ability to perceive and depict the reality, which the modernists tried to black out, made the need for

realist writing imperative. However, literary realism in the Latin American context meant portrayal of peculiar problems and conflicts of the region, which accounts for the incorporation of the qualifying term “regionalism”. The writers groped for an understanding of the American situation, searching for the causes of economic backwardness and the misery of their people. This led to over-emphasizing the antagonism between civilization and barbarism in their works. Nature versus civilization became the focal point in fiction writing. Social problems continued to find an echo but nature was depicted as an all-powerful (Doria Barbara) force in their writings. (Maurya, 1983, p. 53)

This “antagonism between civilization and barbarism” could be exemplified with the established idea of “honor” within the society. Not much says “barbarism” as two brothers killing a man because they believe him to be the taker of their sister’s virginity, as well as seeing this as their duty beyond doubt. Clashing with the idea of “civilization,” Márquez’s novella follows the path of his contemporaries, setting “the American situation” forth. If one is talking about a clash between “nature” and “civilization,” then nature and barbarism has to be synonyms here, implying that it is within the human beings’ nature to be violent and barbaric. This leads to another question, as until now we have been discussing the idea of honor as a product of culture, rather than natural. Perhaps it can be said that even though human nature might possess a tendency to violence and barbarism, cultural constructions as honor and “cleaning” one’s name only add up to this barbarism, and justifying it at the same time.

As for *Ağır Roman* by Metin Kaçan, the setting is predominantly a *varoş* culture. Noting the illegality and poverty in it, Cenk Özbay states that “varoş, was constructed as space where fundamental Islamism, Kurdish separatism, illegality, criminality, and violence met... Accordingly, the ‘dangerous’ varoş, quarters of the city housed beggars, terrorists, gangsters, smugglers, and other components of the informal

economy..." (Özbay, 2010, p. 649). And the Cholera Street in the novel perfectly fits in this definition as it bears characters like Gaftici Fethi, whose nickname "gaftici" means burglar and pickpocket. And we also observe "*bitirims*" who are murderers, hashish addicts, men who kidnap children and cut their fingers to make them beggars and "psychos" (Kaçan, 2017, p. 65). Therefore the Cholera Street could be defined as *varoş*. For, it is a neighborhood that is in low conditions and poverty and is full of criminality and illegality at the same time. This is also suggested by the writing style of the author, who uses lots of slang throughout the narration, which could be interpreted as the sign of *varoş*. The significance of the setting for the narration is acknowledged by Leyla Burcu Dünder, as well. She states about Kaçan that "He brought the experience of a life lived fully in the streets of Istanbul, with all its insolence, bitterness, and sensuality, into his first novel, *Agir Roman*" (Dünder, 2014, p. 130). In his novel, therefore, Kaçan portrays a lifestyle which is experienced in extreme ways, and this type of setting allows for the presence of hegemonic masculinity. For hegemonic masculinity is supported through acts of bitterness and insolence among men towards both women and themselves. We get to observe men who are willing to push the limits of mercy and violence to prove their manhood. Additionally, "*bitirim*" is a type of masculinity that exists in *varoş* culture, which means cunning or clever in Turkish slang. Furthermore, *bitirim* is the hegemonic masculinity of the *varoş* culture in the novel. R. W. Connell defines hegemonic masculinity as "a social ascendancy achieved in a play of social forces that extends beyond contests of brute power into the organization of private life and cultural processes" (qtd. in Hinrichsen, 2012, p. 57). Making use of Connell's concept, Hinrichsen further states that "thus, hegemonic masculinity is a relative theory that defines manhood by the male's relationship with women and other subordinate males. According to Connell's theory, the most masculine men exert unyielding dominance over females and other weaker males" (Hinrichsen, 2012, p. 57). Consequently, the problem with masculinity is that the ideal masculinity's requirement includes more than just acquiring the demanded aspects of the masculinity codes. The moment a

man manages to acquire masculine image, the second part unfolds, which requires him to compete with other fellow masculine men. Thus, men have rivalry among themselves in order to achieve the most masculine statues, which will provide them with the utmost supremacy over both males and females. Therefore, the hegemonic masculinity is exclusively heterosexual, which makes it a competition between heterosexual men who try to dominate each other as well as women.

Similar to Connell's conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity, Atilla Barutçu provides a parallel pattern for hegemonic masculinity performance in Turkey. Underlying that hegemonic masculinity does possess a superiority and dominance over people in Turkey, Barutçu explains that men that "are from middle or upper-middle class, generally accepted sect and Muslim, heterosexual, have a full-time job, as well as, physical strength, are able to protect the honor of women around them and their homeland along with marriage and fatherhood, gain superiority over those who do not possess these characteristics, by which they construct themselves" (Barutçu, 2013, 14).<sup>3</sup> Even though the requirements of marriage and fatherhood are highlighted by Barutçu to achieve the status of hegemony in Turkish masculinities, they are not always observable in every case of masculinity performance. Instead, they are instrumental to underline another significant characteristic of this hegemonic masculinity: the compulsory heterosexuality. Marriage and becoming a father are legal proofs that a man is eligible to sexually dominate a woman and could sustain his masculinity. Thus, such aspects of masculinity performance are functions for a man to demonstrate his heterosexuality along with dominance and power. Accordingly, then, hegemonic masculinity could present itself with different tools to demonstrate the dominant male figure in different contexts, where equivalences of marriage and fatherhood for heterosexuality enable men

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<sup>3</sup> Translated by the authors. Original text is as follows: "Orta veya üst orta sınıf, Müslüman, genel kabule uygun mezhepten, heteroseksüel, tam zamanlı bir işe sahip, fiziksel, ruhsal ve cinsel gücü yerinde, vataninin ve çevresindeki kadınların namusunu koruyabilen, evli ve baba olmuş her erkek, bu özellikleri tasımayan grup üzerinden üstünlüklerini sağlamakta ve kendilerini bu şekilde var etmektedirler".

to perform their manhood. In his another study on masculinities, Atilla Barutçu again explains that “[w]hile masculinity refers to an endless construction that is shaped by cultural, social, historical political effects, it is undeniably mistake to assume that men will develop almost identical masculinities in this process of construction” (Barutçu, 2020, 171).<sup>4</sup> To clarify, masculinities do present themselves in different ways in accordance with the social and cultural atmosphere in which they are created. Barutçu’s method of understanding masculinities helps understanding the emergence of hegemonic masculinity, as well. If masculinities differ from one culture to another, so does the hegemonic masculinity. While the hegemonic masculinity definitely requires power, dominance and heterosexuality, the way men gain these treats might differ. However, these different patterns of acquiring masculinity could still suggest that men have to compete among one another in addition to their constant obligation to prove their dominance over women. Barutçu’s definition of hegemonic masculinity and his explanation on how masculinities are varied are functional to analyze the hegemonic masculinity process and its effects on Salih in *Ağır Roman*. It is because this is what Salih experiences in the narration even after he has entered the spectrum of hegemonic masculinity. Salih, who is outside of this hegemonic masculinity at the beginning of the narration, goes through an enormous change both in his appearance and behavior. While he used to be oppressed by his father constantly, he starts hanging out with murderers and kidnappers. In other words, he aims to become the oppressor as the narrator declares that “he was aiming for the biggest cruelty” (2017, p. 64). However, to have a place among them and to demonstrate his hegemony, he has to prove it regularly: “Gili Gili Salih was posing doggishly for the “*bitirim*” in Orso’s coffeehouse to prove that he has been forged in this world for years...Gili Gili Salih, with his kind kidnapper friends, began to go to work to prove himself and to commit

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<sup>4</sup>Translated by the authors. Original text is as follows: “Erkeklik; kültürel, toplumsal, tarihsel, politik vs. etkilerle şekillenen ve sonu gelmeyen bir inşaaya işaret ederken, erkeklerin bu inşa sürecinde birbirinin aynısı erkekliklere sahip olabileceğini düşünmek şüphesiz ki bir yanılgıdır”.

every kind of crime with them" (Kaçan, 2017, p. 64). His criminal behavior, a result of his need to demonstrate a satisfactory level of machismo in front of others, is functional to create an image of hegemonic masculinity that would not submit to the hegemony of his peers. It is when he gains himself a status as a *bitirim* as he becomes the roughneck, he gains honor and every interaction with others sustains his image and honor. The other way for him to prove and protect his hegemony is bravery. Now that he has this honor as the hegemonic man, he is constantly challenged by other figures that challenge Salih's status as roughneck. And this honor is predominantly provided by an act of bravery. Two incidents suggest how bravery helps the construction of the honorable image of a *bitirim*. One is the scene where Salih is attacked by drunk men in the street. Salih's reaction is most significant here through taking of switchblade handed down by Arap Sado, who a former hegemonic masculine figure, proclaiming "I will write down my name on the heart of the one who makes any tiny movement" (Kaçan, 2017, p. 65). The word "heart" is important here because it symbolizes bravery. Thus, when those men threaten his hegemony as they dare attacking him, he threatens their bravery, which sustains both his honor and hegemony. The second incident, meanwhile, reinforces this hegemonic status he has recently gained. When there is an explosion at Fil Hamit's workplace, Tilki Orhan and Gaftici Fethi are trapped inside as fire engulfs the building. With no one able to enter the building, Salih valiantly ran through the flames to rescue the men trapped inside. And this act of bravery is favored by the other hegemonic men in Cholera Street, who announce in Turkish slang that "well done, he is a real man" (Kaçan, 2017, p. 68). Thus, with these heroic actions, Gili Gili Salih manages to protect his status as the *bitirim*.

The final way for him to sustain his hegemonic and honorable image is the dominance over a female figure, a prostitute named Tina. While his acts of both crime and bravery show his dominance over other men, his dominance over Tina also contributes to this image. After the incident at Fil Hamit's workplace, he develops a romantic and erotic attachment to Tina. After that, Tina becomes the female figure for him to

protect and also dominate, which will verify his hegemony. When he rejoins the fellow *bitirims* after leaving Tina's house, where she took care of him after he had saved the two men from burning, Salih demonstrates his dominance over her right away: "when one of the *bitirims* said 'I am sure you ate the whore out', Salih brought the rascal, speaking nonsense, down on the ground with a single blow". Here he clearly states that whoever talks about Tina like this, he will make him pay for it (Kaçan, 2017, p. 69). First of all, the *bitirim* that is talking about Tina is called "rascal" here, which suggests he does something wrong to Salih. In other words, Tina is now under Salih's dominance, and such talk challenges this dominance. Salih's punch and response afterwards are meant to sustain his honor as he simply punished the guy talking badly about "his woman" as well as demonstrating his dominance. When he forbids Tina from working, it strengthens his dominance over her as now it is only Salih that can have sex with Tina.

Even though Salih successfully manage to dominate both men and women around him, the problem with hegemonic masculinity is that it requires constant reinforcement and gets challenged occasionally due to the fragile grounds on which it is built. The challenge he faces could be observed in two ways: his killing of the Cholera Monster and Tina's betrayal. After a series of murders on Cholera Street, Salih loses much of the trust he has gained from others and therefore he designs a plan to kill this monster in order to regain his honor as the narrator says "Just like all smart *bitirims*, he lived only for his name" (Kaçan, 2017, p. 101). When he manages to capture and kill the monster, he also overcomes this challenge. But, a second challenge emerges when Tina cheats on him with someone else, which is revealed to him by a fellow *bitirim*. Salih takes his revenge by catching them during sex and making them run into the street naked. I argue that he does this to protect his honor or his "name". Tina's affair with another man had destroyed the dominance Salih had over her. Thus, he took his revenge on them to preserve his honor before other people, which appears to work as the narrator states after the incident that "Gili walks through the gazes full of the love of street people and neighbors to the *bitirim* place" (Kaçan, 2017, p. 120).



The way other people react to his act of revenge indicates he still maintains his respectable image among them after this challenge to his masculinity. However, the seemingly never-ending challenges to his manhood and acts of bravery and honor obviously exhaust Salih towards the end of the novel as he also loses the respect and honor he has gained from others. While he is walking on the streets after taking so many drugs, those who see him say "I would not live for another minute, if I were him" (Kaçan, 2017, p. 124), which shows he has lost his honorable image. Consequently, he commits suicide after facing the fact that his days of glory have long faded away. In other words, the strict codes of hegemonic masculinity have torn him apart until his death as he tries so hard to satisfy them until he is worn out and becomes a failure. Consequently, Salih contributes to this masculinity system on purpose. And when all is said and done, this masculinity, which he created, becomes the cause of his death. Recognizing Salih's own participation in this situation, Dündar again explains that "[i]n the course of time, Salih's manly demeanor impresses everyone, including Tina...Salih accepts his role as the guardian of law and order of Kolera, but his sovereignty is temporary. In truth, his end has already been prepared from the beginning as his world, starting with his family, crumbles around him" (Dündar, 2014, p. 130). Dündar briefly traces down how Salih rises to the power and underlines that this is the beginning of the end for him. When he attempts to claim the status of roughneck, he also gives way to his own doom. The moment he accepts this role, this world begins to shatter, and continues to break down until there is nothing left of him. Consequently, he becomes a failure of the hegemonic masculinity, who has exhausted himself to satisfy its requirements up until a point where he is unable to do so, which invalidates him and his life and he commits suicide to save himself from its unbearable burden.

Upon the analysis of both novels, it becomes rather apparent that the notion of hegemonic masculinity works similarly in these two different contexts. In both contexts, women are placed in the subordinate position as opposed to men, and they are the tools whereby men can achieve the status of masculinity. In the portrayals by both Marquez and

Kaçan, they are presented as such. Just as how Angela merely functions for her brothers and her husband to save their honor and re-gain their masculinity, Tina is instrumental for Salih in the same way. In Marquez's novel, how women, especially the Vicario daughters, are depicted in the narration illustrates this subordinate position for women in Latin American Columbian culture, whereas depictions of women in *Ağır Roman* and how men are narrated by Kaçan to dominate women, such as the dominance of Salih's father over his mother and that of Salih on Tina, indicate such dynamics of gender within the varoş Turkish culture. When Angela's brothers find out that Angela is not a virgin, it is not her dignity but their honor at stake. So much so that, this almost-unbearable-burden for Bayardo becomes a matter of death for them, which requires the blood of a man to compensate for such a loss of honour. Correspondingly, when Tina is having an affair with another man, Salih "punishes" them so that he can save his challenged honor, he does not necessarily attempt to do this for his "unstoppable" love for Tina.

Along with Tina's function in Kaçan's narration, Salih's mother as well as a few other female figures, along with the Vicario women of Marquez's novel simultaneously exemplify how women are the ultimate subordinate in the notion of hegemonic masculinity. Yet, men, alike, have their own shares in the burden of this masculinity concept. Not only does this concept force them to dominate women, but it also requires them to face constant challenges to maintain this status, which is built such fragile foundations that it could easily fall. As mentioned previously, although his financial power and physical appearances secure him a hegemonic masculine status to a point he cannot be refused while choosing his bride. The burden of marrying a non-virgin rips Bayardo out of this status despite all his qualifications that meet the criteria. On other hand, Angela's brothers are apparently forced to become murderers. Although they seem to enjoy this process of so-called saving their honor, they perform this action in the name of duty. Meanwhile, Kaçan's Salih finds himself in a similar position to defend his masculinity on a constant level. As aforementioned, the only thing that matters to him becomes his fame. From his catching the Cholera Monster to his

revenge on Tina, all his actions are to prove his violence, so that he could hold on to being the hegemonic man. This constant war for his name and honor gradually becomes such a burden for him that it leads him to his doom. In other words, for the sake of his hegemony, Salih ends up taking his life.

The comparative analysis between Salih of Kaçan and Vicario Brothers of Marquez indicates what a fragile and self-destructive system hegemonic masculinity is. Noting that only a small number of men are eligible to reach the status of hegemonic masculinity, Connell states that “[t]he public face of hegemonic masculinity is not necessarily what powerful men are, but what sustains their power and what large numbers of men are motivated to support. The notion of ‘hegemony’ generally implies a large measure of consent. Few men are Bogarts or Stallones, many collaborate in sustaining those images” (Connell, 1987, p. 185). The analogy of Bogart and Stallone by Connell here shows us what kind a figure is promoted by hegemonic masculinity: a powerful and dominant male over everyone around him. Although Connell’s examples are the Western examples, the way she conceptualizes hegemonic masculinity could be applied to masculinities from other cultures. While a few men could become this idealized masculine image, what is also underlined by her is that many other men willingly take part in it. This is what is problematic about this type of masculinity. A lot of men are in a race for it, however; a very few of them survive out of this race. The others are mere participants that contribute to this masculinity system. Moreover, while it is beneficial for the sustainability of this image, it is not sustainable for the participants. It is because, apparently, the men constantly fight for this status, yet most of them cannot win this endless war, for which they willingly fight. Thus, this fight, so to say, destroys men. Atila Barutçu explains in his thesis that “[a] man, proves his masculinity by demonstrating the attitude and behaviors expected of him in a society. A man that cannot enact the performance demanded from him has to be punished for not conforming to the social norms of

gender” (Barutçu, 2013, p. 6).<sup>5</sup> Barutçu’s claim on masculinity performance clarifies the constant struggle of hegemonic masculinity. Men do fight for proving their masculinity with their full consent, and those who fail to do so receive no mercy from people around them. That is exactly what happens to men we analyze in the two novels. Salih has fought for a very long time to show that he is the tough guy that deserves respect and recognition. After going through this endless and fruitless battle, he has reached a point where he can no longer satisfy the requirements, lost the respect and ended his life. Similarly, the same self-destructive mechanism of hegemonic masculinity works against the men of Marquez. Pablo and Pedro try so hard to save their honor at the expense of becoming murderers, while Santiago has to die and Bayardo loses all he has ‘achieved’. They all are parts of this hegemonic masculinity, and in one way or another, this image destroys them. Their masculinities are built upon such a fragile surface – just like that of Salih – the moment their dominance over Angela (inevitably their honor and masculinity) is lost, their masculinity is threatened, which alters their lives indefinitely.

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In conclusion, it can be said that while the context, culture, and language of *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* and *Ağır Roman* differ widely, the results of the prevailing male hegemony and the accustomed manners of masculinity bear similarities. These are that hegemonic masculinity forces men to follow certain rules to prove their "manhood". While *machismo* is a term that arose and is more widely used within Latin American culture, the word itself being Spanish, one can see that being a *macho* (or *maço* in Turkish) draws no borders. Male characters in both novels whose worth are defined by their physical power, virility, and reputation, and who would do anything to uphold this reputation can easily be defined as macho, rendering machismo as just another part

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<sup>5</sup> Translated by the authors. Original text is as follows: Bir erkek, toplumda kendisinden beklenen tutum ve davranışları gerçekleştirerek erkekliğini kanıtlamaktadır. Ondan beklenen performansı gerçekleştiremeyen erkek, toplumsal cinsiyet normlarına uyamamaktan dolayı cezalandırılmaya muhtaçtır”.

of this toxic hegemonic masculinity as it can be observed within the Vicario brothers, Bayardo San Roman, or Salih. This hegemonic masculinity also draws a line of superiority between men and women and men and men alike: while women are positioned as inferior, men have to prove their superiority to one another, as well. At some point, the women in these books not only accept but also support this hierarchy within the society, serving as pawns and the protectors of male “honor” and name. All things considered, this constant need and competition to prove one’s masculinity and superiority is seen to leave lasting damages on both men and women alike, in the end, consequently rendering this hegemonic masculinity as destructive. The Vicario brothers are sent to jail, Bayardo San Roman leads an unhappy life for years considering himself a ruined man through societal standards, and Salih suffers from the most tragic consequence: death.

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Hegemonik Erkekliğin *Kırmızı Pazartesi* ve *Ağır Roman* Metinlerindeki Karşılaştırmalı Analizi

**Öz:** Bu makale, Kolombiya ve Türkiye bağlamlarının ürünü olan iki metindeki hegemonik erkekliği incelemektedir. Bu iki ülke birbirinden uzak ve zıt gibi görünseler de, Gabriel Garcia Marquez'in eserindeki *machismo* kültürüyle, Metin Kaçan'ın kabadayılarının hegemonik erkeklik icrasının ortak olduğu görülmektedir. *Kırmızı Pazartesi*'de, okuyucu, erkeklere kadınlar ve etraflarındaki diğer ast

erkekler üzerinde kontrol sađlatma yoluyla rol atayan bir kltre rastlar. Metinde, onur kavramına duyulan abartılı takıntı, erkekler ve kadınların cinsel zgrlklerine dair olan ikiyzllđ yalnızca gçlendirmektedir: Kitaptaki en hegemonik macho olması muhtemel Bayardo San Roman'ın, Angela Vicario'yu bakire olmadığı için baba evine geri gtrmesi zerine, abileri namuslarını "kurtarmak" zorunda kalırlar. Zira tersi olursa erkeklikleri zarar grecek ve bu onları daha az erkek yapacaktır. Benzer bir Őekilde, *Ađır Roman*'da da erkek karakterler, varoŐ kltrnde benzer bir rol stlenmektedir. Bu erkekliđin icrası Salih'te (ve olay rgs boyunca geirdiđi deđiŐimde), Arap Sado'da, Ali'de ve onların diđer karŐıt kabadayı figrleri ve kadınlarla iliŐkilerinde gzlemlenmektedir. Bu erkeklik metinde katı bir Őekilde heteroseksel olarak aıđa çıkmakta ve olduka kırılgan temeller zerine inŐa edilmektedir. Bu yzden srekli bir tehdit altındadır ve daim bir Őekilde sergilenmesi gerekmektedir. Karakterler bu staty, duruŐları ve diđer erkekler ve kadınlar zerindeki hkimiyetleri ile kazanmaktadır. Bu sayede hegemonik erkeklik gstergesi olan "nam" ve namuslarını inŐa edip korumaktadırlar. Sonu olarak, bu makale, karŐılaŐtırmalı analiz yoluyla hegemonik erkekliđi ve hem erkekler hem de kadınlar için yarattıđı sorunları eleŐtirmeyi amalamaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Hegemonik erkeklik, maoluk, kabadayı, namus, karŐılaŐtırmalı edebiyat