
BEING THE SHAME OF SOCIETY: THE CONSTRUCTION OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY IN THE FILM ŞÖHRETİN SONU (THE END OF FAME)

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Abstract

Cinema is an important medium for the construction of the representations of masculinity. The pressure on those that do not comply with the constructed image of masculinity will result in punishment and a dimension of exclusion that includes marginalization and exclusion. In order to examine the construction of masculinity and how marginalization occurs, the film Şöhretin Sonu (The End of Fame, Orhan Aksoy, 1981) was studied. Bülent Ersoy, the lead actor of the movie, is a Turkish classical music artist, who played roles of both men and women in films between the years 1976-1989, and underwent sexual reassignment surgery to become a woman. This paper utilizes the case study method to examine how hegemonic masculinity is constructed in the society with regard to hegemonic masculinity variable. The film is not simply about the dominance of men. It also shows how women submit to the established construction of masculine hegemony in marginalization, exclusion, and conflict areas, beginning from family to government institutions and societal establishments. The film emphasizes a negative reproduction of sexuality and transsexuality.

Keywords: Hegemonic Masculinity, Bülent Ersoy, Turkish Cinema

TOPLUMUN YÜZ KARASI OLMAK: ŞÖHRETİN SONU FİLMİNDE HEGEMONİK ERKEKLİĞİN İNŞASI

Öz

Sinema, erkeklik temsillerinin inşasında önemli bir araçtır. Erkekliğin inşasında erkeklik imajına uymayanlara uygulanan baskı, cezalandırma ve dışlamanın bir boyutunun da mekânsal ayırım ve dışlama olduğu görülür. Erkekliğin nasıl inşa edildiği ve mekânsal dışlamanın nasıl yapıldığını incelemek için Şöhretin Sonu/Yüz Karası (Orhan Aksoy, 1981) adlı film seçilmiştir. Filmin başrol oyuncusu Bülent Ersoy, 1976-1989 yılları arasındaki filmlerin bazılarında kadın bazılarında erkek olan, cinsiyet değiştirme ameliyatı geçiren kadın olan klasik Türk müziği sanatçısıdır. Bu çalışmada nitel araştırmada kullanılan yöntemlerden biri olan örnek olay yöntemi kullanılmış, seçilen film hegemonik erkeklik değişkeni açısından irdelenmiştir. Film, sadece erkeklerin baskısıyla değil kadınların onaylamasıyla kurulan hegemonik erkekliğin inşası sırasında mekânın nasıl ayırttığını, dışladığını ve bir çatışma alanı olduğunu, aileden başlayarak devlet kurumları ve toplum tarafından kurulduğunu göstermiştir. Filmde eşcinsellik ve transseksüellik vurgusu olumsuz biçimde yeniden üretilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hegemonik Erkeklik, Bülent Ersoy, Türk Sineması

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INTRODUCTION

As with many other subjects, cinema has become an important tool for the presentation, construction, societal dissemination, and internalization of representations of masculinity. Gender studies, feminist approaches, queer theory, and masculinity studies have opened the way for increased number of studies about masculinity. These studies and efforts resulted in a changeable perception of gender based on historic conditions, and the mentality against heterosexual logic, which has become ingrained in the fabric of society. The efforts in the area of cinema have directed new approaches to homosexuality and gender identity. For example, because of queer film, films made in various periods from the perspective of representations of mainstreamed gender have begun to be studied. Parallel to this, studies on masculinity, both within the film itself and research on the films, it has become possible to trace the definitions of masculinity, masculine imagery, hegemonic masculinity and similar subjects.

The conceptualization of mainstream gender must be within the framework of the concept of masculinity. This concept aids in uncovering the environments in which men and women live and exist, the relationship between them, and their conflicts and tensions with institutions of authority. Instead of biological characteristics, feminist theorists have begun to refer to the concept of gender as a “societal concept of gender” and the debate on this issue has significant implications. “The concept of mainstream gender refutes simply a biological understanding of gender, but draws attention to the inequality among the genders within a societal context and definition” (Sancar, 2011: 176).

Raweyn Connell’s (1998) book sets the framework for understanding the existing inequalities related to mainstream gender. Connell states that the societal gender inequalities are not about just one side of gender, being women and femininity; it reveals that one must look further at the much more privileged elements, those being masculinity and manhood. Outside of the biological definitions of man and woman, there is also a socio-cultural meaning and in the process of socialization, it explains how to be man and woman within the influence of culture. The process of acquiring and reinforcing societal gender roles is influenced by social institutions. This is presented at times, unknowingly, through behavior that is within societal norms, and at times through behavior outside the societal norms. As stated by Connell (1998: 191), mainstream gender is not something that simply exists; it is a phenomenon that is constantly being learned and produced, indicating that it is “a process rather than an object.” To discuss the concept of gender from a holistic perspective, masculinity must be addressed from various directions including dominant masculinity and manhood and various male lifestyles, in order to view the perceived differences and to accept that there is not a single perspective of masculinity. Joane Nagel (Nagel qtd. in Gilmore, 2009: 70-71) states that there is no such thing as a universal male. However, everywhere, being a man means getting a woman pregnant, protecting those who rely on him from danger, and based on supporting his next of kin and relatives. In short, a man is defined as one who fertilizes, protects and supports. This can be seen in the research in the subject in which men are defined by what they are not: “The actual question is not whether ‘men’ are differentiated from

children, there should be a differentiation between ‘men’ and ‘women’” (Segal, 1992). If it is necessary to make a generalization without abandoning the mainstream gender perspective (Atay, 2004: 14): “masculinity as the biological gender of men, is an aggregate of the practices that determine how he thinks, listens, and behaves, and includes the expected roles and behaviors simply because he is a man.”

Connell (1993: 597, 598) explains in the article that there is no doubt that there are clues to discovering the fact that masculinity is a cultural and intellectual problem. The first is the women’s liberation movement in the late 1960s and the gender roles and the development of feminist research on gender. The second is the increasing criticism of the homosexual movement and gay and lesbian heterosexuality. As Robert Hanke points out (1998), there is a shift in focus on the treatment of masculinity in media studies. For the first time in the 1970s, the relationship between masculinity and the media became evident and at the end of the 1980s there was a significant increase in the interest in the relationship between masculinity, and the analysis within and about the media continued to be theorized. Fejes (1992) completed empirical research on mass media, in which the “masculine reality” is defined as “masculinity as a fact”, and demonstrated a serious shift in focus. Serpil Sancar (2011: 17) states that it should be mentioned that there are various masculine experiences that are plural and contain conflicts that inharmonious or irrelevant to each other. In a society dominated by masculinity, the concept the hierarchy and clashes of power among different masculinities references political power relations. Sancar (2011: 19) indicates that, assuming masculinity is a meta that can be owned or lost, it is necessary to differentiate between men who are men, and men who cannot be men. Masculinity should have a strategy for the construction of power, in which masculinity has borders, can disappear at any time, is changeable, transitory, and always on the agenda. The natural masculine behavioral characteristics are accepted as being strong, successful, solving problems through violence, behaving rationally as opposed to emotionally, bringing competition and hierarchical relationships to the fore, placing importance on independence, and knowing how to manage others (2011: 28).

In addition to the concept of masculinity, the fact that Connell’s book (2005: 829) titled *Gender and Power* puts forward the concept of hegemonic masculinity is important. As highlighted in Connell’s book, the concepts of hegemonic masculinity that was formulated 20 years prior, men, gender, and societal hierarchy have substantially influenced recent thoughts. This includes a gender system, the mechanism that makes that system function, the institutions that create hegemonic masculinity, by the small group that holds the power, those that accept this power and are fed by that power, and thus, encompasses a large and silent group (Connell, 1998). The desire to develop an explanation for the connection between hegemonic masculinity and male dominance is herein, born. According to Donaldson (Donaldson, 1993: 644),

Heterosexuality and homophobia are the bedrock of hegemonic masculinity and any understanding of its nature and meaning is predicated on the feminist insight that in general the relationship of men to women is oppressive. Indeed, the term ‘hegemonic masculinity’ was invented and is used primarily to maintain this central focus in the critique of masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity is generally established to contrast the relationships between masculinity and other classes, races, and genders. Whether it is respected or whether it is cursed, hegemonic masculinity is a standard to which other masculinities are compared or define themselves (Nagel, 2009: 73). Sancar (2011: 30) outlines hegemonic masculinity as follows “Young, urban, white, heterosexual, employed full-time, reasonably religious, successful in at least one sport at a level of active physical performance as a man, is representative of masculinity.”

Hegemonic masculinity is the strength that is held by certain male groups and is useful for understanding the concept of wealth, “and presents the social processes of power, through vehicles of religion and media (such as cinema), to society” There is a masculine image that is presented by men that is called the ideal masculinity. This includes being well educated, being employed in a high-paying job, being a good father, being athletic with a muscular build, and of course, being heterosexual (Türk, 2008: 122).

AIM AND METHODOLOGY

This study, from the perspective of the masculine and feminine societal constructions, aims to show how masculinity is constructed through film, and demonstrate how spatial exclusion occurs through analysis of the selected film, *Şöhretin Sonu*¹ (Orhan Aksoy, 1981). Films, newspapers, magazines, and concert clips, are supported by references to the actual life of Bülent Ersoy², who plays in the lead role. This paper utilizes the case study method to examine how hegemonic masculinity is constructed in the society with regard to hegemonic masculinity variable. The significance of this film in Turkish cinema, that takes place as a case study, has its source from the similarity between the plot of the film and the real life of Bülent Ersoy as a popular figure both in the society and in the film.

FINDINGS

Space as Conflict Field and Filmic Space

Masculinity studies have come to the point that masculinity is not a biological division, but a construction of society. The pressure on those who fail to comply with the constructed image of masculinity results in punishment and exclusion through expressions of marginalization and spatial exclusion. In the area of cinema, there is a wide and layered meaning of this concept. It is an area that has been both created and classified by society (Lefebvre, 1984). An element of a film is not simply the environment that supports the film’s dramatic structure. At the same time, it can create its own language. When considering the space as a field of conflict (Foucault, 1995: 55), it takes on a created and classified meaning by society. In this context, an analysis of the films in that area also provides sociological insights on the subject. Relations in society and gender relations are established through such spaces. In this respect, to analyze how masculini-

ty is constructed in films, the space used in the film must be reviewed to understand the realization of this pressure.

The socially determined habits, judgments, and beliefs, which may have even changed over time, are shaped and produced in the institutional structures surrounding the community. "Homosocial bars, cafes, and associations that are closed to women, transvestites and transsexuals, and are 'for men only' proves the reconstruction of masculinity" (Polat, 2008: 155). This created masculinity can be seen in such spaces. The spaces that are not possible to be frequented also increase tension. These spaces divide, classify, and exclude. The word space is a concept that makes it possible to address social relations, daily life, the environment in which we do or do not live, the streets on which we meet others, the boundaries that separate us from them, the people we come face to face with, those to whom we turn away, the animals and plants with whom we breathe, and the other creatures that we have not given permission to breathe. From this point, it is not difficult to see that spaces are organized and dominated by the powers held by institutional structures, and are converted to spaces of conflict because of the exclusion of certain individuals. In her work on the relationship between body and space, Asli Zengin (2009: 265) gives examples of these two concepts, which are not static, not fixed, constantly changing, which emphasizes the dynamic characteristic transforming each other. The role of space itself in constructing specific bodies leaves deep scars on one's corporealities. Zengin (265) also underlines the role of space that strengthens the power structure, or the role of space as a vehicle of power to construct types of power by reorganization, or simply a vehicle that strengthens the existing power structure. The result of the map that was reorganized by an endeavor of the state authorities, some specific populations, who are different or behave oddly are excluded, caused them to search for new living spaces where they can express themselves, or to move new places where they have a meaningful existence, feel comfortable, and have a place where they can express themselves. This displacement is realized by the pressures on the individuals who internalize social regulations, which are both legal and nested in the legislation. Moreover, the exclusion, oppression, and isolation of the sexual preferences of the LGBT community, which are not accepted by society, are not always visible or oriented towards the masses. As Oz (2009: 301) states "Exclusion primarily begins within the family, followed by the streets, and the inability to access basic rights such as education, employment, health, and housing manifests in a process that still continues in every area, every day"

Thus, space as "one of the most important indicators of gender discourse" (Süalp, 2004: 100-102) becomes a place where such oppression is applied, and the mark of oppression is spread. The traces of this oppression, and its pain and misery leave a mark on the space. Those who frequent a location or those who are forced to go, attempt to cover such traces. Those that they have pushed to the fringes of life are condemned to live there. The relationships of the remaining will be reconstructed according to dominant values, and this construction will be fictionalized on misery. As explained by Z. Tül Akbal Süalp (2004: 105), "Common experiences are sealed over time, the marks of the space are traceable." Spaces are constructed by masculinity. As a result of this construc-

tion, the people-place relationship and the resulting experience of this relationship are determined to be included in the political and economic background. As Ayten Alkan (2009: 12-13) expressed, within the time and space changes of gender definitions, it is necessary to see the close connection between the definition and the “location” of the relationship. During the period in which the gender roles for the masculine and feminine roles are redefined, spatial differentiations and spatial relationships are critically important. When the socio-spatial foundation changes, the nature of gender relations are both reflected and affected. The spaces in which a man becomes a man are also the places that refresh the images of masculinity. From the value judgments that are placed on spaces, in spite of this or through pressure, by internalizing the dominant institutional structures, these spaces become places for acceptable displays of masculinity. Those who are unable to choose the spaces that they will frequent, believing that they will be excluded from the places where they can exist, are driven to the spaces that they have been pushed to and driven out of.

Cinema is another important area of research in the process of constructing hegemonic masculinity to observe the implementation of oppression through exclusion. Cinema, like other art forms, has its own unique characteristics. Filmic reality by being created in filmic time and space, independent of real life, which is not only an inevitable principle of cinema, but also a distinctive feature from other arts. Real life, in which there is an uninterrupted time and space that progresses, cannot be reversed or paused, can be adjusted in film by the director. Using the narrative possibilities of cinema, the director creates a different time and space from real life. As Yalçın Demir (1989: 122) mentions in his article *Filmic Time and Space*, the director “divides the wide-angle view of the world”, retreats, and later combines these parts in accordance with the logic of the filmic universe. Narration that are told require a space where the story takes place, and also the necessity of a space in the plot indicates the essential relationship of cinema-space. Cinematic space “includes the space’s perception, time, and movement” (Adiloğlu, 2005: 16). From a cinematic perspective, space not one of the principal elements in defining cinema. Words such as ‘location’ and ‘setting’ are encountered when mentioning cinematic space. In English, the word that expresses the where the scenes take place is ‘location’, and the word ‘setting’ refers to the constructed environment of the film (2005: 71). In describing the relationship of the filmic world to the world, he uses the word ‘narrative space’, based on the consideration of the space’s location and the events collectively (Healt, 1986). The real space, as part of the filmic world, when transformed into a filmic space, results in a transformation into a narrative space. The important effect and contribution of space in the opening narrative of a film is evident, whether as a language or a background. The space gives shape to emotions with its identity. Cinema will forever use this spell as an owner of space.

One of the important concepts in defining cinema, and an inevitably reorganized space, and also considered as an ‘field of conflict’, as Foucault (1995: 55) said and was created by society, presented some developments in cinematic research. With this concept, the relationships of the characters in the film, their conflicts, and experiences are repro-

duced. In this case, word selection is meaningful because it has a history of meaning in everyday life. "It has been considered as the production of space, the production of social relations in all aspects, and also the production of human relations on the face of the planet" (Süalp, 2004: 89). Addressing the human-space relationship in films allows one to see how gender identities are constructed. The film *Şöhretin Sonu* is an important example of a film demonstrating society's exclusion of those who do not obey the masculine identity, and the role that space plays in this exclusion.

The Role of Spatial Exclusion in the Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity in the Film *The End of Fame*

Film provides an important example from which to analyze Turkey in the 1980s, as well as a means to understand the perspective of gender identity in the 1980s. Film uses stock footage. It shows the role of the character Bülent as Bülent Ersoy through newspaper clippings and movie posters. This is an important film to draw attention to the story of Bülent Ersoy's life during the period of this interesting film, as an example of the experiences of the victims of the LGBT community, as well as how masculinity is constructed. The film begins by making an analysis of the cultural characteristics of the 1980s, followed by how masculinity is constructed. This construction addresses the acceptance of the influence of the institutions and spaces in the exclusion of those who do not fit into the image of masculinity.

About the 1980s: Provoked and Besieged Gender

In Turkey, after the military coup of 1980, a new cultural environment is formed as a result of the economic policies. On one hand, this new cultural environment brought oppression, violence, and prohibitions; on the other hand, this was combined with real innovations and freedoms in many areas. In Gürbilek's "stage of two different culture strategies" analysis, the 80s were (2007: 8-9):

on one hand an era of oppression and prohibitions, and on the other hand, it was transformative rather than prohibitive, inclusive rather than destructive, provocative rather than oppressive, in order to be more modern, more established, more embracing, through a cultural strategy that attempted to exist.

The frame of the 80s, the plot of the movie *Şöhretin Sonu* discussed in this study, is meaningful and revealing, in the sense of clarifying the experiences of an artist who is one of the victims of the era. The oppression, prohibitions, exiles, and torturers that were unspeakable in Turkey, were replaced by other subjects that began to be discussed. Among these subjects were sexuality, masculinity, femininity, and different sexual identities. Yasemin Öz (2009: 289) claims that the least spoken of victims of the 1980 coup were the members of the LBGT community, those that were exiled from Istanbul by cutting their hair, and their experiences. *Şöhretin Sonu*, one of the films in which Bülent Ersoy acts, the film addresses the life of Bülent Ersoy through representations, and is important in demonstrating how masculinity was constructed in the cultural environment of the 1980s, the image of masculinity, the manner in which sexuality was discussed, and provoked interest by using the media to show one's private life. In the story of the film's

main character, Bülent, with the purpose of explaining through representations what happened to Bülent Ersoy from the beginning over time, looks at the unspoken victimization in the 1980s. The 1980s were a time when people discussed their private pleasures and sexual identity, but the discussions were rather provocative, destroying the rules in particular. When establishing Turkey's modern identity, which was suppressed, a lack of opportunity for cultural expression was treated normally until then. However, another element of that concept, which returned, is sexual the explosion that Gürbilek (2007: 11) calls "the return of the suppressed." The repressed did not return as if they were never repressed, and in place of that return came the shaping of their needs, constant reconstruction under other forms, to the extent of becoming new fictions, the political maneuvers and provocations openly returned. After the 1980 coup, and following a memorandum illegalizing men to take the stage in women's clothing, Ersoy underwent surgery to become a woman, but in spite of this, his identity card still read that he was a male, which took seven years of legal struggle. This is just one example of the prohibitions of that era. Yet on the other hand, the cultural environment of the '80s was a period of oppression and prohibitions, and resurgence occurred due to a combination of different aspects of the events in the same period "they discovered skin and desire, but the area known as sexuality became, for the first time, something that was discussed so frequently, so provocatively, so closely encircled" (15).

The prohibition for Bülent Ersoy to take the stage and the media's prohibition of homosexuality and transsexuality, and the prohibitions in the cultural field and discussing these prohibitions that were put into circulation by creating a mass culture, all uniquely belong to that era. The 1980s were at the same time, a period when sexuality persistently flowed into words, was discussed, picked apart, parsed, classified, and individual's private lives were called on for discussion. As Gürbilek (22) points out, the specialists, through the medium of weekly magazines, began to define what was normal and what was perverse. In the film, Bülent cannot make a decision about his sexual identity, and because he was in limbo, the doctor that he visited said what all 1980s doctors were referring to. They attempted to direct him to be normal: Bülent should return to Aslı.

Furthermore, the film is an important example of the effect of the enacted prohibitions, in addition the reflections on the manner in which sexuality was discussed. There are two points that refer to Bülent Ersoy's real life, and two separate explanations that can be mentioned. One of these is the insertion of documentary images in the fiction film. Scenes from the concerts, nightclub programs, posters from the films in which he played, and his records were shown. The costumes and shots were arranged in a manner that was consistent with the real footage (When entering the stage, the dress that we see in the actual concert footage is given to Bülent by her assistant in the next scene. It was preferred to use the general, distant and height measurements and close scales of the actual scenes, and edit them in together). The second is the subject of Bülent Ersoy's life made visible in newspapers, magazines, and film. The film gives an idea about real life and relations with the exes and from an understanding of the 1980s cultural climate,

these two information resources have an important function. In order to understand the manner in which a subject that has recently begun being discussed, different sexual identities and media relations have a place in this film. At this point it is beneficial to return to Gürbilek. Gürbilek (22) explains the cultural dimensions that have never been seen before become subject to the market. In a short period of time advertisers put unlimited images into circulation, a new public opinion with the widely sold news magazines entry in to publication and a new news language is established. The newly created news language became an important part of the weekly magazines and is said to play an important role in the formation of the policy of the 1980s. They took the lead in the classification of sexuality. The weekly magazine cover stories, the titles of the stories or news images preceded the stories. Often times, the headlines would not even include a verb (47). In this period, media and the news were severely restricted, but it was also a time when there was a great increase in newspapers and magazines. A new section was devoted to personal life. The newspapers and magazines seized this, because they created expectations regarding this, and to the extent that they could interfere, they created a new news source (54).

The film visually shows the actual news articles and the language of the media, as well as providing information about the media reports of the ugly gossip about Bülent that was at the tip of everyone's tongue. The most important feature of the 1980s was the unveiling of private life, and in the film, how this turned into pressure for Bülent. The private life that was publicized in the media was turned into pressure in real life. She was warned by her best friend Murat, "Your name is everywhere, and everyone is talking about the ugly gossip about you." Her manager Nihat warned to refrain from "creating the ugly rumors that are going around about your name." Her embarrassed father said, like a slap to the face, "The disgusting photos that are in the newspapers and the ugly gossip about you have disgraced us." These dialogues, that unveiled one's private life, were provocative, were divisive, and classified individuals by different identities, and were openly layed out. The new sections that were created by various magazines and newspapers for the news they saw fit are presented in a way that they can be clearly read in the film. In the magazines *Hey*, *Hafta Sonu*, *Ses*, one could find titles such as, "The Final Insanity," "Now He Makes the Dancers Jealous," "I'm Not a Homosexual, I'm a Woman," "They Hit the Driver Instead of Bülent Ersoy," and "Disgrace." Even her agent, Nihat, underlined the point in his speech while he was criticizing Bülent, which was another important designation of the 1980s. Bülent watched life, but became renowned for having a life that was watched. The nightclubs were not packed with people because Bülent was such a success in her profession. It was because people were curious about the costumes and outfits, the behavior, and the interest that her private life had created. This period had curiosity provoking characteristics. This film is an example of a film that has voiced this curiosity, both as a product of the 1980s, as well as how characteristics related to homosexuality were suppressed.

One of the subjects that began to be discussed in the 1980s was sexuality, which on one hand was besieged, on the other, quite provocative. Different sexual identities were

persistently discussed, classified, picked apart, and parsed. At the end of the 1980s, due to the changing conditions, masculinity, too, became one of the subjects that was newly addressed and debated.

On the Construction of Masculinity: “Mom, Is Bülent Ersoy a Man or a Woman?”

Gender studies accept the idea that gender is not only biologic but also social. Furthermore, male or female identities are determined by cultural, economic, and ideological backgrounds. The expected male identity patterns are strength, success, power, wealth, and identity as the head of the household. If cinema is one of the tools for the spread and acceptance of masculinity, one can see the changes in Turkish cinema these days according to the changing conditions of male representations (Özkan, 2009: 136):

For instance, in societies where the division of labor is determined by borders based on gender, an important determinant of the definition hegemonic masculinity is working outside. On the other hand, nowadays, unemployment has created a fragile economic environment, and with this unemployment problem a fragile masculinity was created. Moreover, the definition of masculinity, after 1980s, this fragile masculinity became reflected in movies such as *Duruşma* (Yalçın Yelence, 1999), *Dar Alanda Kısa Paslaşmalar* (Serdar Akar, 2000) and *Neredesin Firuze* (Ezel Akay, 2003).

After the 1980s, Turkish cinema began to lose its masculinity, male power was shaken, the ridiculous role of the male was reduced, and this can be observed in many examples of films. In the second half of the 1990s, the male problems and male friendships increasingly became the subjects of television series. From the 1980s onward, both in daily life and in the cinema, men became forced to share with women, being forced to share their dominance even more with women (Oktan, 2008: 158). In this sense, film explained to the men watching Bülent how a man should be, and this film is an example of the idea of the construction of hegemonic masculinity and how Bülent felt under this constant pressure.

Women and homosexuals are categorized as the other. Within this framework, those who were exposed through male power as an object were marginalized as well. On the other hand, ironically, those who were exposed to the violence of male identity were possibly men. Among those who carry a male identity, the meaning of masculinity is constructed in the social sphere arises from tension. Masculine identity gains its meaning, which is imposed, internalized, and owned from birth, after a series of approval periods, being continuously inspected and observed. This process creates tension. Bülent’s conflict is like two different people’ conflict. One of Bülent feels a woman but at the same time has to live a man. This situation remind us David Greven’s term (2009: 22): ‘double protagonist’. He uses this term to emphasize a new genre. In double-protagonist film, the central conflict is a complex negotiation for power between two protagonists, each played by a star, both of whom lay legitimate claim to narrative dominance. A real example of how masculine discourse is put into circulation is that Bülent was found strange and externalized by his environment and people around him, stated that he is a disgrace to society, and his outfits were not appropriate for a decent man. In spite of the fact that Bülent

asked, “Do I know what I am?” her behaviors, and costumes and clothing’s femininity was criticized. His acquaintances who determined the borders of manhood, includes the audience themselves, into the construction of masculine hegemonic discourse by mocking, insulting his way of talking, looking down upon him, and also creating exclusionary discourse. Bülent sees in Aslı someone who protects and provides for herself, but one of the essential elements Nagel pointed out in the definition of universal male is the “male that fertilizes the female”, which creates pressure. The naturally accepted behavioral characteristics of masculinity, listed as being strong, successful, able to solve problems through violence, behaving rationally as opposed to emotionally, bringing competition and hierarchical relationships to the fore, placing importance on independent behavior, understanding how to manage others, and similar behaviors, were not characteristics that Bülent possessed. She was successful in her career, but depression and emotional behaviors even kept her off the stage at times. The fact that she prevented her assistants from making fun of artists that took the stage at other nightclubs, and keeping her distance from placing value on competition and hierarchical relationships, is an example of this. Only in the end of the film is there a reference to the verbally provoked violence, suffered when she was drunk.

We learned of the basis of the pressure from Bülent’s closest relatives through the press. The process of oppression does not work alone. “The presence of hegemonic masculinity’s ‘prerequisite’ of institutions is important; because of institutions such as the state, the laws, business corporations, labor unions, heterosexual families, the national army, through kneading the values of homophobic-heterosexual masculinity, the economic and social activities are legitimized and desired, declared and rewarded” (Sancar, 2011: 32).

The judge in the film, just as the doctor that Bülent went to had said, recommended that Bülent “should be an example to society and the youth who watch her and wish to be like her” and invited Bülent to become “normal.” The stress that Bülent experiences in the film, and being under the surveillance and supervision of the other men in society, constantly going through a process of approval. All of these became a series of rituals to overcome these difficulties. The reason for this feeling of entrapment was the need to become Mr. Bülent. For this reason, as the psychologist she went to mentioned, she did not possess any masculine feelings towards Aslı, and the reason for the tension was caused by Murat, her manager, the criticisms of Doğan, the insults of her father, and the looks of those who made fun of her at the nightclubs. Before these frustrations, her closest friend Murat told Bülent’s fiancée, Aslı. Aslı gave up hope. Bülent would never love a woman and make her happy. Doğan is engaged, and he believes Bülent’s affection towards him could be misinterpreted by society. He tries to work with Bülent, and as the film progresses, he refuses Bülent’s friendship on the same grounds. Murat, when speaking with Aslı as well as Bülent, refers to Bülent as a pervert and a maniac. Bülent is not a normal man. Society labeled Bülent as a shame, and someone that could not be accepted as a man. In saying, “Either be a man or a woman,” her manager Nihat reminded her that it is not acceptable to be in limbo. He should straighten up his clothing and costumes, and put his life in order. Filling the nightclubs in which he worked was simply not

enough. It would bring in money, but he would have to behave like a man. He must be honorable. He should stop disgracing himself. His father, when judging him as a shame to humanity, gave examples of the news that was published through the media, which also illustratively criticized his costumes and clothing. Other than Bülent's mother's embrace and support, the constant criticisms from the men surrounding Bülent drove him into a depression and loneliness, and subjected him to exclusion. As strange as the men in the film found him, the women found him equally as strange. Bülent's fiancée Aslı always protected him and was by his side through the most difficult times; however, the style of dress and behavior was outside the norms. Aslı would not reject Bülent, but would not accept him, either. When granted permission to enter the most sacred space for Bülent, his private room, Aslı had a strange encounter. Perfumes and women's clothing were not normal. The beginning of the event in which Bülent was arrested, Doğan's fiancée said, "I do not care about the words of those perverts" Bülent is insulted and becomes a part of the construction of male dominance.

The situation that Bülent found himself in and the fact that he was cast as a shame to society was perceived as fate. When explaining his history to the doctor, including the fact that he was not even allowed to go out in the streets as a child and was raised playing with baby dolls, the condition was caused by the family structure, and the dominant emotional situation was shaped within the framework of fate. One of the most significant indicators of the research that Sancar accomplished is that men believe that different gender/sexual behaviors are the result of constant sexual instincts of human beings. From the creation of the simplest human traits, it is widely assumed that men and women are different. These thoughts are not just for the religious, conservative, or rural individuals; they form the basis for the urban, middle class mentality (184-185). Just as the name of the song that is sung in the film, the film was given the name *Yüz Karası* (*Shame*). The melody of this song, to bring to light the thoughts and unhappiness of Bülent, when criticized and abandoned by those close to him, is accompanied by sad facial expressions. There is a scene where this song is sung after an argument with Murat. It reinforces the perception of fate, using the song as a symbol of Bülent's feelings³. In the film, it is obviously seen that the most important element while constructing the hegemonic masculinity is heterosexuality itself, both in the exclusion by his family and his close contacts, as well as homophobia as an element that constructs hegemonic masculinity. It plays an important role on the construction of spatial exclusion.

On Being Exiled from a Space: To Be a Man, or Not Be a Man, That Is the Question

The claim can be made that the film, *Şöhretin Sonu*, as a film that takes place in an urban setting, is an important example of cinema-space relations, in the general sense of the film, but in a special sense for space. Kracauer believes cinema is an instrument that has the ability to catch the big city, to display the common and anonymous, to tell the idiosyncratic temporality, and to catch its silent, hidden and unconscious incidents (Perivolaropoulou, 2008: 33). Before the birth of cinema in the city, to capture, save, recreate the moving image, in pursuit of the scientific inventions of mankind, it can be said that the

cinema-city relationship is quite old, and has a history that goes back as far as the beginning of the optical toy shows. Inside the city of Istanbul, it is impossible to come together and when changing it into a 'mosaic of destruction and construction', it owned that body as it became a part of that tension. In place of this 'body's' wholeness are pieces that are centerless, a position that cannot be preferred over the other, an indescribable 'yesterday', as well as the irresistible 'future' that everyone wants at once (Avcı & Koçak, 2008: 379). There is no emphasis on the fact that the story happened in Istanbul, or any special signs that signify Istanbul as the city, including the license plates in the film, the names of the nightclubs and the concert locations. However, the film takes place in a city. In the article Yektanurşi Duyan (2011: 38) addresses the films, *Dönersen Islık Çal, Gece, Melek ve Bizim Çocuklar, Güneşi Gördüm* and discusses the fact that these films show Istanbul physically, and liberalized with images.

Place is a shelter for our bodies. The body is both a door to conceal oneself, as well as a door to reveal oneself. In the words of Gaston Bachelard (1996: 121, 122), it is a dress that both hides our self, as well as draws attention to us. If we are able to choose the shelters in which we live, the dress will fit perfectly. If we are unable to choose, the dress will not fit properly. There is a rich body of literature about the relationships between body and society, and body and sexual gender identity. The body's gender (Butler, 1990; Zita, 1998) and gender identity (Weeks, 1985, 1986) are considered to be the key areas for organization and creation. Men attempt to express themselves in the form of wandering around in women's clothing, whether transvestites or transsexuals, homosexual bodies or body preferences, and they are isolated from spaces through punishment, starting from home through school, to health services, to the right to education and to a social life, and every place becomes an example of punishment. The homes in which we live, take shelter, are protected from the outside, and in which dream of our future, are required to have a part as much as other places where one has the ability to express oneself. "Both sexual identity and those who appear differently, have been imprisoned to the dark and damp streets by a society that does not accept transsexuals or transvestites" (Duyan, 2011: 35).

Those who have been excluded from both public and private spaces and are penalized by exclusion, come together to live in solidarity in common areas, but when questioning the reason why, it is because they have been confined here. Streets do not provide freedom—they are prisons. For someone who has been excluded, a home brings much more meaning. Aksu Bora (2009: 64), who has noted that the word 'home' in the Turkish language has become one of the most loaded words, considering the burden of meaning, emotion, and history, 'home' gives reference to many areas. He adds, to have 'inside' which makes a human being a human, causes to him to feel like an 'insider' rather than an 'outsider', as well as making individuals consider running away from home and becoming homeless. Home is given shape by its depth, its embracing of us, and the shelter it provides to us. Home is the 'heart'. From the different classes, different definitions of excluding others, different 'emotions', and different houses: they will extend from our bodies to the reaches of our country (72).

In the film, on the one hand, the city is filled with lighted signs, packed concerts, entertainment at the nightclubs and Bülent Ersoy at the peak of his fame. On the other hand, the city is a place where Bülent could not taste even one drop of happiness, and where he would walk the streets to try to get rid of these problems and release him from the grips of depression. In this sense, the city is a place where one can become famous and achieve fame, or take a walk when you get bored, yearning for the past. Bülent could never be happy in any aspect of the city, not even in his own house. Even at home, the debate in his mind concerning the recurring thoughts about being a woman or a man, the attitudes of his friends, the criticisms of his behavior and dress, kept Bülent in a constant state of movement.

When Bülent went to see a psychologist asking the question, “Am I a woman or a man?” he began to explain his history, detailing the pressures experienced from home as a child, and a place where he never felt free. In spite of the fact that Bülent would settle in his own home, relax there, and sleep there, he was consistently unhappy because his mind was always at his ‘mother’s house’. When Bülent attempted to resolve these issues troubling him inside, the memories began with the first memories that he could remember from early childhood. Bülent explained when he went to the psychologist that the most important effect on his depression was family, which is the most important institution that shapes personal identity and hegemonic masculinity. Home became a place where the ties were cut, due to the fact that his mother would never let him go outside, he was forced to spend time in the only place he could—inside with other adults and his father who abandoned him with a slap. When Asli and Murat were married, the backbone of Bülent’s orchestra, Doğan, the first violinist and composer for Bülent, quit his job and had no desire to see Bülent again. Even Bülent’s manager, Nihat gave up on working with him, and that night Bülent barely found the courage to return to his home. His mother calls out to him ‘my son’ and embraces him. Yet his father would ask, “Which face did you come home with this time?” inferring his unacceptance. Home was not a place of refuge with mother and father. Bülent’s father kicks him out of the house by saying, ‘Get the hell out of my house’. The shape in which Bülent recalled his home, as a place where he played with dolls as a child, dressed up in women’s clothing, put on make-up, and was happy, no longer had a place for Bülent’s body or spirit. It was no longer a place where he was on the outside dreaming to get inside this ‘inner’ place, rather it was the place from which he was expelled. He was not exactly homeless, he had his own home. Because he felt the pressure, he wanted to leave, but one cannot find shelter in a place that they are longing to leave. There was no place for comments directed at Bülent such as, “these costumes, this behavior, the rumors that are being spread about you” When watching the children play in the park, because he was never allowed to do such things, there was a relationship between the feeling of longing and childhood memories.

One of the dominant elements of the film is the pressure from his father, and the relationship between the progression of events. Sancar (2011: 120), who claims that being a father is different from being a mother, because of some necessary social and political events, this can create fragile, unsuccessful, or problematic situations most of the time. Sancar (126) draws attention to the emotional conflict between father and son in Turkey,

as in many other places in the world. Not for the sake of the father understanding the son, but rather to teach them their problem areas and ensure their acceptance by society, and to cause them to adopt masculine behaviors, they establish an oppressive-authoritative relationship. Judith Franco (2008: 29) underlines father-son relationships, too. "In contemporary cinema, the exploration of masculinity is often associated with fatherhood". As contemporary cinema Turkish cinema traces masculinity through father-son relationships. This film is the one of them.

An important example of telling the end of the relationship that could not have been inherited from father to son, was the event when he created his own path, by the result of the pressure he encountered, and broke off relations with his father in the aftermath of being slapped by his father, and the tension created by choosing the life that was not approved, and eventually he was kicked out of the house in which his family lived. The argument with his father about the success in his career, it is understood that the things that would make his father proud had no real meaning. In claiming,

"To hell with money and fame. If only you could have been a poor man, but with honor. If I would have known I would be your father, I would have died. ...You're not a person, you're a shame to society. ...Damn the fact that I have a son like you," his father screams in his face the reason why he never had a place in that house.

In the film, the other place besides home where he was excluded was the disco. The concert halls and nightclubs were places where he was accepted. His closest friend Murat and fiancée Aslı did not find anything strange during the first dance act. In the second act however, they came across a dancer in women's clothing and everyone around was mocking. For this reason, he was excluded from this place. The places such as his own home, the streets, playgrounds, basketball courts, and the night club at which he first took the stage, are the kind of places where he takes shelter, and has thoughts about himself. They are the places where he feels comfortable and confident by removing himself from the people, and saving himself being observed. However, the continuous exposure to criticism, the judgement of friends prevented him from finding peace in this space as well. The question of a child to his mom on the street "Mom, Bülent Ersoy is a man or woman?", Murat's insulting words about himself, while he was trying to be happy with Aslı at home, remembering his own past while taking walk on the streets of the city makes him a prisoner to the city and every corner of the city become tighter. In the film, Bülent becomes drunk and the provocation event between Doğan and his fiancée unravels, which becomes a vital point in explaining his inner eruptions. This vital point also has separate importance, in that it was the same place where he first took was respected as he took the stage. Not a single place remained that Bülent had not been excluded from. In Aslı and Bülent's home in the movie, it was strange to see the women's clothing and costumes, the perfume, and the jewelry; the fact that Nihat suggested, before anything else, the need to straighten up his clothing and costumes; his father's comment "just look at those costumes" in an effort to shame him, and those at the disco that mocked the bun in her hair and her costumes created great pressure on Bülent; her friends found her strange, abandoned her and she was excluded from the places. Her

body held her as a shelter from being under criticism, and the places she went, the instability added to the criticism, and with the criticism, she became unhappy and excluded.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The film presents the means in which hegemonic masculinity is constructed right in front of our eyes, as the specific things that distinguish and shape men and women, social order pushes them to exhibit appropriate behavior, the values of dominant masculinity, the behavioral modeling and informs that the above must be complied with. The film explains what the masculine image should look like within the context of the specific characteristics of that era. This image indicates the role of the space in terms of the exclusion of those that fail to comply with this image. When reminded about her behaviors, body, constantly criticized clothing, her private live that was pried into, and the need to prove herself, because of the sexual preferences and means of expression of the character Bülent, this only drew attention to the tension and created pressure. The film was important observation of the 1980s sexual perspective, the problems that Bülent experienced, and while experiencing these problems the feeling of needing to be accountable to society as an artist, in front of everyone's eyes and the pressure brought on by such supervision, as well as the behaviors of those close to her, the criticisms of the clothings and costumes, and accepting her body and soul for what it is, from the perspective of understanding the 1980s, this was an important film that was made. The film addresses the deciphering of private life, its discussion, putting these into circulation in the media, the classification of individual's different sexual identities and the classification of these identities into normal and abnormal categories, and the role in which experts have played in this classification. The phenomenon of private life in the 1980s and the constant surveillance of that private life, and the deciphering of it through the media is touched upon.

Film demonstrates how space is parsed in the construction of hegemonic masculinity, how it excludes, and how it becomes an field of conflict. The city in the film (exterior) is selected as the place where the character lives. The home (interior), both her personal home and her mother's home she abandoned as well as the one that was conceptualized in her head, were two separate places. The places of employment, the concert spaces (exterior), nightclubs (interior), studio (interior) are shown. Outside of working ours, the spaces of entertainment (disco, the first place where she took the stage) are selected. The streets, parks (exterior) outside of working hours, in fact, the places where she spent time when she did not go to work, become places to think about the past, and long for the things that she could not do. The stage was always accepting. She left her mother's house, years later only to be kicked out by her father, and because of not properly behaving in the other cases, her father cuts off all relations. Because of her behaviors, her clothing, and the criticisms by people she did not even know, she was forced to leave. She was always acknowledged with respect by the staff of the place where she first took the stage, but when faced with an insult from someone from outside, she was

arrested and taken away. She became retained from everywhere, and could not be happy anywhere. The effect of the pressure that was created on her resulted in her being taken to prison. When released from prison, it was suggested that she take a normal path, and promised to become a beneficial artist to society. By admitting regret for the door that she opened herself, she apologized for her past, and left out the general conflict, she exited peacefully with a smile.

Gürbilek (2007: 113), in attempting to define and understand the 1980s, explains that one of the most important features is the expression of uncertainty of the differentiation between news and stories, fact and fiction, journalism and literature, and objectivity and subjectivity. The film, *Şöhretin Sonu*, which was shot at the beginning of the 1980s, proved itself as a film that tells a story about a real life, with the audio clips from real concerts, news clippings, and Bülent Ersoy as the main character. With the entry in to prison at the end of the film, the confusion of basic gender of living life as man or a woman is forgotten, and he decides to devote himself to his art. He promised to uphold the words of the judge who gave his acquittal: "he is not harmful to the public, he will be beneficial, he will be an example to the youth that follow him, and he will be cautious about his private life." The film has a characteristic of blurred lines between fiction and reality. Bülent Ersoy, who struggled with the legal system in real life to prove that he was a woman, and had chosen that path, announces in the film that he will dedicate himself to his art. The showing of the movie is an apology to the Turkish public. The film starts out in real life, yet differs from real life in the shape of approval of the conflict by society in its conclusion. Without resolving Bülent's main conflict, his imprisonment, due to the normalization of key institutions that play a role in the construction of hegemonic masculinity, it ends with him as a model artist, devoted to his art. The film is inspired by real life and by using real life images, a narrative fiction is created. The film, which chose an attitude of reconciliation, has a purpose of presenting an explanation of the pressures on the characters as a construction of hegemonic masculinity. However, the attitude of Bülent, because of the verbal attack on the characterization of his clothing and costumes as perverse, ultimately landed him in jail, and in the critical point of the film, where he decides to devote himself to his art, and the conflict of regret is hidden and the problems are covered. In the accepted form of societal conflict and resolution of the expectations in an appropriate manner-with the classic film's principle narrative of a happy ending. The happiness at the end of the film is based on an unhappy Bülent, deciding whether he is a man or woman.

This film demonstrates how the image of masculinity evolved in society and the pressures on those who do not conform. With reference to Bülent Ersoy's life, the film attempts to explain the state's and society's prohibitive discourse in Turkey in the 1980s through the influence of media. It gained importance through the analysis of how masculinity was established in the 1980s in Turkey, which was an era marked by political, economic, military, social, and cultural issues. As stated by Nurdan Gürbilek, the film includes specific prohibitions in the 1980s in the area of culture, and brought them into mass societal circulation, by word of mouth, discussions, deconstruction, dissolution, and classification, calling for a discussion of individuals' personal lives (Gürbilek, 2007:

22). The film was shot during a period of different perspectives on sexual identity, about the real life story of an artist in the 1980s, and the rarely discussed LGBT victims. In the film *Şöhretin Sonu*, hegemonic masculinity, that starts with the family, state institutions, and society, not with masculine oppression but with women's acceptance of the establishment, gives a negative emphasis on homosexuality and transsexuality, and once again created in a negative way.

ENDNOTES

1. Bülent Ersoy, played roles of both men and women in films between the years 1976-1989, and underwent sexual reassignment surgery to become a woman. Besides *Şöhretin Sonu*, *Beddua* (Osman Seden, 1980) is also addressed construction of hegemonic masculinity. As it is *Şöhretin Sonu*, in the film *Beddua* hegemonic masculinity, that starts with the family, state institutions, and society. And this film gives a negative emphasis on homosexuality and transsexuality, and once again created in a negative way. Film demonstrates how space is parsed in the construction of hegemonic masculinity, how it excludes, and how it becomes an field of conflict. As for *Şöhretin Sonu*, reproduces the negative meaning of homosexuality in a more striking manner than any of the other films that Bülent Ersoy has played in. The opening scenes of *Şöhretin Sonu* include clips from the various concerts of Bülent Ersoy and compilations of the nightclub programs. All scenes, from the costumes to the behaviors and attitudes, Bülent Ersoy is a woman. At the end of the concert, the fictional scenes begin, directly from Bülent's dressing room. Everyone in the film addresses Bülent by first name. His fiancée Aslı loves him and is planning to get married. However, Bülent encounters questions such as, "Am I a woman or a man?" and while attempting to resolve the question, becomes frustrated. His closest co-workers, his manager, and even his fiancée are critical of his costumes and clothing. He becomes increasingly anxious, and sees a psychologist when he starts to question his own life. Bülent had experienced such pressure for years prior to these troubling days, and because of this, he abandoned his home, and was kicked out again because of being bizarre, perverse, a maniac, and a disgrace to society. He leaves his fiancée. He was ostracized by his friends. His manager gives up on working with him because he was consistently late for work. He surrenders himself to alcohol, and announces that he will leave the stage. One night when he was intoxicated, at the first place where he took the stage again, he was provoked by an insult from the head violinist Doğan's fiancée and was arrested. He was acquitted of the crime due to being provoked. The film concludes as he was released, he apologizes to the public, and states that he will listen to the advice of the judge and devote himself to his art.

2. Bülent Ersoy, whose given name was Bülent Erkoç, is a classical Turkish music artist, who underwent sexual reassignment surgery to become a woman. A memorandum was issued on March 19, 1981, during the 1980 coup, that prohibited men from wearing women's clothing on stage "including a prohibition on employing men wearing women's clothing in bars, nightclubs, or other places that serve alcohol". Two months after the prohibition, Bülent Ersoy went to London for sexual reassignment surgery, he had to wait for the withdraw of the coup leaders in order to obtain a pink identity card (signifying the female gender). On April 14, 1981, in spite of his gender change, he remained categorized as a male on his national identity card, thus placing him under the status of a "male wearing women's clothing". On June 13, 1981, the Istanbul Governor implemented the stage prohibition. Because Ersoy underwent surgery, legal proceedings began. Ersoy's legal struggle lasted 7 years. The then President Turgut Özal and his wife stepped in to obtain the woman's report from Haydarpaşa Numune Hospital. On January 7, 1988, an official female identity card was

issued. The prohibition on Bülent Ersoy became the reason for the lifting of the EU harmonization package. In spite of being both spatially excluded and being so loved, this example epitomizes the initial inability to obtain something, then as a member of the upper class being granted access (Öz, 2009: 289). Between the years 1976-1989, Bülent Ersoy can be seen playing the lead role in films as either a man or a woman.

3. The name of the song is *Yüz Karası* (Lyric Mehmet Yüzüak, 1981). The words of the song are striking: "This wound in me is a final judgement/They say my destiny is a disgrace/Who would suffer this bereavement/They say my destiny is a disgrace."

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