

From Hegemonic Masculinity to Masculinity Crisis: The Exploration of the Failure of Idealized Masculinity on the White Screen

Neşe Şenel *

Ardahan University

Abstract:

Drawing the framework of the hierarchies among masculinities and elaborating on the theory of hegemonic masculinity, this study attempts to analyze the journey and the transformation from hegemonic masculinity into masculinity crisis of the protagonists of two crucial films of two distinct cultures, *The Game* (1997) and *Mustafa Hakkında Her Şey (Everything About Mustafa)* (2004). Within this study through a close exploration of the troublesome and curious stories of both Nicholas and Mustafa, their failure of the idealized masculinity models, that is, the modes of the hegemonic masculinity and their specific masculinity crisis will be attempted to be analyzed.

Keywords: hegemonic masculinity, masculinity crisis, film studies, *The Game*, *Everything About Mustafa*.

* Res. Asst. Department of English Language and Literature
nesesenel@gmail.com

Hegemonik Erkeklikten Erkeklik Krizine: Beyaz Perdede İdealleştirilmiş Erkekliğin Başarısızlığı Üzerine Bir Keşif

Neşe Şenel*

Ardahan Üniversitesi

Özet:

Bu çalışma, erkeklikler arasında var olan hiyerarşilerin genel bir çerçevesini çizerek ve hegemonik erkeklik kuramını detaylandırarak, iki farklı kültüre ait *The Game (Oyun)* (1997) ve *Mustafa Hakkında Her Şey* (2004) filmlerinin ana karakterlerinin hegemonik erkeklikten erkeklik krizine yolculuklarını ve dönüşümlerini incelemeye girişmektedir. Bu çalışmada, hem Nicholas'ın hem de Mustafa'nın zorlu ve ilginç hikayeleri yakından keşfedilerek, her iki karakterin de idealize edilmiş erkeklik modellerindeki yani hegemonik erkekliklerdeki başarısızlıkları ve kendilerine özgü erkeklik krizleri analiz edilmeye çalışılacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: hegemonik erkeklik, erkeklik krizi, film çalışmaları, *The Game*, *Mustafa Hakkında Her Şey*.

* Arş. Gör. İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bölümü
nesesenel@gmail.com

Within the context of masculinity studies, the theory of hegemonic masculinity has taken the discipline into a new direction since the 1980s. Through the works of such seminal theoreticians and scholars of masculinity studies as Tim Carrigan, R.W. Connell, John Lee, Michael Kimmel, James Messerschmidt and many others, the discipline of masculinity studies was sophisticated. The acknowledgement of the existence of hierarchies among masculinities and the divulgence of the hegemonic, discursive and self-legitimizing formation within the hierarchic structure shape the backbone of the most theories of these scholars. Although it received several criticisms from feminist and queer grounds, the theory of hegemonic masculinity has been popular since its coinage because it has also found a mirror-effect within its social practice. The dominant masculinity model within most Western societies is 'expected' to be strong, powerful, heterosexual, wealthy, capable, self-dependent, self-confident, physically able-bodied, sufficient, respected and honored. This category of hegemonic masculinity appeals to only a narrow scope of men, yet it still dominates, controls and rules over all other forms of masculinities and women through power, authority and prestige, wherein it serves to the ends of patriarchal power structures. Any 'ideal' male who cannot, or do not, meet even a single expectation required by hegemonic masculinity, or in other words, who falls from 'hardness' into 'softness' due to any so-called deficit in his manhood, goes through a version of masculinity failure, or more precisely, masculinity crisis. By elaborating on the theory of hegemonic masculinity, this study attempts to manifest the journey or transformation from hegemonic masculinity into masculinity crisis of the protagonists of two crucial films of two distinct cultures. The first case study is about an American Hollywood movie, *The Game* (1997) directed by David Fincher. The second is about a Turkish movie entitled *Everything About Mustafa* (*Mustafa Hakkında Her Şey*) (2004) directed by Çağan Irmak.

Carrigan et. al. originally initiated the sophistication of the concept of hegemonic masculinity in their article when they posed hegemonic masculinity as a key in understanding the social, political and

cultural construction of masculinities (1985, p. 551-604). Yet, essentially Raewyn Connell produced theories of masculinities in the last two decades of the 20th century. In this sense, it was she who exclusively coined the term 'hegemonic masculinity' (Feasey, 2008, p. 2). Connell's theorization and development of hegemonic masculinity is actually influenced by Antonio Gramsci's concept 'hegemony', which was developed during his sophistication of Italian inter-class relationships. To this end, Connell starts to integrate some of the basics of Gramsci's model of hegemony with his own understanding of masculinities theory. Accordingly, Connell follows Gramsci in questioning masculine hegemony especially regarding such issues as "the situations where a kind of permanent alliance existed; where a general solidarity between oppressors and oppressed had developed, with cultural processes reinforcing the political and economic domination of the ruling group" (Connell, 1995, p. 206).

In her *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics* (1987), Connell discusses the existence of the "ordering versions of femininity and masculinity at the level of whole society", caused by ethnic differences, generational gaps and several class patterns (p. 183). She further centers the interrelation between masculinity and femininity on "a single structural fact, the global dominance of men over women" (p. 183). For her, such a structural element also signals to the hierarchal relationships among men and this actually acknowledges the existence of "a hegemonic form of masculinity in the society as a whole" (p. 183). Within the context of hierarchy among masculinities, Connell suggests four basic categories of masculinities (hegemonic, complicit, subordinate and marginalized), which exist in hierarchal relation to one another, each making the existence of other groups legitimized. Yet, it should be noted that the boundaries between these groups are highly slippery and unfixed, as also any representation of masculinity may vary according to the region, location and culture it appeals to. In her *Masculinities*, Connell provides a simple definition of her hegemonic masculinity: "Hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed character type, always and everywhere the

same. It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations” (1995, p. 74).

Connell’s concept of hegemonic masculinity is relational in the sense that hegemonic masculinity is constructed both in relation to subordinated masculinities and women (1987, p. 183). And, these interaction and relationships between such varying forms masculinity only work to serve to patriarchal social order (p. 183). Referring “the dominant form of masculinity” as hegemonic among men, Connell then, elaborates on her integration of Gramscian hegemony and masculinity:

In the concept of hegemonic masculinity, ‘hegemony’ means (as in Gramsci’s analyses of class relations in Italy from which the term is borrowed) 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. Ascendancy of one group of men over another achieved at the point of a gun, or by the threat of unemployment, is not hegemony. Ascendancy which is embedded in religious doctrine and practice, mass media content, wage structures, the design of housing, welfare/taxation policies and so forth, is. (Connell, 1987, p. 184)

Herein, Connell stresses the dominance of the hegemonic masculinity over other masculinities as an “ascendancy achieved through culture, institutions, and persuasion” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 832). In a sense, as Connell suggests in his *Masculinities*, within the context of hegemony practice, the institutionalized masculinity is “culturally exalted” over other forms of masculinities (1995, p. 77). This group of institutionalized dominant masculinity that casts superiority over other complicit or subordinated masculinities, however, is not to be confused with what she would call a version of idealized “male sex role” (Connell, 1987, p. 184). With her concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell attempts to reveal and order the slippery and changeable hierarchies

among varied masculinities specifically in terms of “power and subordination” (Seidler, 2006, p. 15).

This group of hegemonic masculinity is even so narrow and limited that it includes fantasy figures or publicized real models that embody the qualifications of an unreachable ideal (Connell, 1987, p. 184). For MacKinnon, in spite of the fact that hegemonic masculinity’s scope is narrow, appealing only to a limited number of men of idealized heroes or some kind of fantastic unattainable figures, still it does not diminish “its credibility as a standard of masculinity to which men are supposed to aspire” (2003, p. 115). Thus, Connell signals to several crucial features of her conception of hegemonic masculinity. Firstly, as mentioned above, it is relational since “hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to women and to subordinated masculinities” and hegemonic masculinity must negate subordinated masculinities and all femininities (1987, p. 186). In their critical text, “Hegemonic Masculinity, Rethinking the Concept”, Connell and Messerschmidt manifest how the normative and relational aspect of hegemonic masculinity paves way for its legitimization:

Hegemonic masculinity was distinguished from other masculinities, especially subordinated masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact it. But it was certainly normative. It embodied the currently most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men. (2005, p. 832)

Apart from its being relational, secondly, as put forward by Connell, hegemonic masculinity is “very public” and the public aspect of this concept does not always signal to powerful men; all the same, it actually signals to how they attain this power and how other men are driven to back this supremacy with a common consent, which results its being normative (1987, p. 185). The main argument running behind Connell’s

theory is the question how actually certain groups of men “inhabit positions of power and wealth and how they legitimate and reproduce the social relationships that generate their dominance” (Carrigan et al., 1985, p. 92). Thirdly, another important facet of current hegemonic masculinity is heterosexuality and the institution of marriage (Connell, 1987, p. 186). In this sense, in addition to being heterosexual, hegemonic masculinity requires man to persistently attest that he is heterosexual (Anderson, 2005, p. 22). According to Connell, the hegemonic masculinity is also supposed to attain the crucial features of “power, authority, aggression and technology” (1987, p. 187). Thus, Connell’s hegemonic male is to be “white, heterosexual, competitive, individualist and aggressive men in the paid labour force who dominate the moral, cultural and financial landscape” (Connell qtd. in Feasey, 2008, p. 3).

These few idealized men within hegemonic masculinity are supposed to be strong, powerful, effective, wealthy, proficient, imposing, self-sufficient, self-confident and they are to be renowned in their profession and well-recognized by the society. Dominating all other genders with power and subordination, hegemonic masculinity sheds such ideals as “whiteness, location in the middle class, heterosexuality, independence, rationality and educated, a competitive spirit, the desire and the ability to achieve, controlled and directed aggression, as well as mental and physical toughness” to be desired, respected and protected (Howson, 2006, p. 60). Kimmel describes this type of dominant masculinity as “a man in power, a man with power and a man of power” (2004, p. 184). Quoting from Erving Goffman’s famous lines, Kimmel highlights the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in the US and the tension it arouses:

In an important sense there is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, of college education, fully employed, of good complex-ion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. . . . Any male who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself—during moments at least—as unworthy,

incomplete, and inferior. (Goffman qtd in. Kimmel, 1996, p. 5)

According to Kimmel, hegemonic masculinity is a mode in relation to which subordinate men are positioned, described, classified and placed within a given society because this idealized mode of masculinity has become such a normative or natural construction that it is perceived as a “standard in psychological evaluations, sociological research self-help and advice literature for teaching young men to become real men” (2004, 184). This causes subordinate masculinities, particularly the complicit masculinity, to “live in a state of some tension with hegemonic masculinity” as within the society they try to attach a place, relational to the dominant ideal masculinity in which they cannot be included (Connell, 1998, p. 5). Subordinate masculinities such as the men at the margins due to their ethnicity, class, generation and gender have lesser political power, status and wealth than the hegemonic men. Subordinate masculinities are plural and this pluralism is created by such “social factors as class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, able bodies, religion, age” (MacKinnon, 2003, p. 11). Although, “the idea of a hierarchy of masculinities grew directly out of homosexual men’s experience with violence and prejudice from straight men” (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 831), still these huge numbers of subordinate men become “complicit in sustaining this hierarchic model” (Feasey, 2008, p. 3). Moreover, as a result of the “symbolic interaction” between these masculinities and the ‘natural’ dominance achieved and prevailed by forms of hegemonic masculinity, the outcome is simply patriarchy “where some men systematically subordinate other classes of citizens” and where again some women also enjoy certain privilege and domination over others through their close engagement with hegemonic men (Lemelle, 2010, p. 256). Hegemonic masculinity is constructed, legitimized and perceived to be natural and normative; therefore, its practises and structures become invisible, which paves the way for reinforcing its hegemonic power further since “all other gender relationships and dynamics must ‘fit in’ around this dominant norm” (Campbell et al., 2006, p.11). In this way, systemically, within the

institutionalized hierarchal power structures, “hegemonic masculinity helps reify and reproduce patriarchy” (Anderson, 2009, p. 38).

At the end of the day, even the forms of subordinate masculinities also enjoy the institutionalisation of male domination over women as a result of hegemonic authority (Carrigan et al. 2006, p. 592). Kimmel believes that anti-femininity has always been at the center of all formations of manhood so he suggests that no matter what kind of masculinity a man adheres, being a man is actually “not being like a woman” (2004, p. 185). Therefore, at the core of the main argument, as put forward by Connell and Messerschmidt, hegemonic masculinity is perceived as “the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men’s dominance over women to continue” (2005, p. 832). Connell and Messerschmidt reflect how in relation to complicit masculinities and the submission among heterosexual women that hegemony becomes the most powerful agent (p. 832). Connell believes that the only way of promoting gender justice can be achieved through resistance to and struggle against this agent, hegemonic masculinity (Levy, 2007, p. 258).

The process of masculinity crisis, or failure of masculinity, as Connell put it in *The Men and the Boys* (2000), starts when an ideal male cannot accomplish the expectations or requirements of the hegemonic masculinity and becomes ‘failed’ or ‘incomplete’ (p. 46). According to David Gilmore, as he develops in his *Manhood in the Making, Cultural Concepts of Masculinity*, men who do not or cannot achieve the ideal models of masculinity are made to believe that they have ‘failed’ and this ultimately destabilizes their social appreciation and value. The requirements of manhood, for Gilmore, cause men to experience the highest pressure and burden to perform more manly and to behold more power, control and strength (1990, p. 17-18). These expectations of the ideal manhood, or hegemonic masculinity, include power, authority, supremacy, strength and specifically hardness (Stepien, 1997, p. 17). Evenly, what causes men go through masculinity crisis is the process when men are perceived to fall out of hardness into a kind of previously negated softness, associated with femininity. As referred by Stepien,

regarding the experience of masculinity crisis, in their seminal work, *Posting the Male*, Lea and Schoene manifest two conditions:

The 'crisis' of contemporary masculinity could be said to derive from men's exposure to two antagonistic sets of imperatives and ideals – one patriarchal, the other feminist or post-patriarchal – resulting in a behavioural and self-constitutive quandary that is experienced as stressful because it appears so utterly irresolvable. (Lea and Schoene, 2003, p. 12)

The existence of power structures of the hegemonic masculinity, with all of its requirements or pre-set cultural 'manly' ideals and its requirement to negate with all other facets of subordinated masculinities and femininity, leads men to go through a version of tension, or crisis with a simple wink at 'failure'.

The hierarchal construction of the masculinities and the relational and normative hegemonic composition within the masculine power structures ultimately culminates in the transformation of the male individual from hegemonic masculinity into masculinity crisis, which could well be traced within the protagonists of *The Game* and *Everything About Mustafa*, in which both Nicholas and Mustafa goes through masculinity crisis when their hegemonic power is threatened and shaken by other forms of masculinities and 'domineering' agents.

An Investigation of Masculinity Crisis within *The Game* and *Everything About Mustafa*

Produced in 1997 and directed by David Fincher *The Game*, starring Michael Douglas, focuses on the story of Nicholas Van Orton, a lonely and wealthy investment banker. He starts as a rich man living in a luxurious mansion, almost fully isolated from his ex-wife and his brother, Conrad. Nicholas demonstrates that he is a representative of hegemonic masculinity. He is a wealthy banker living in a luxurious mansion, "the largest house in the street" as he says to the

policeman on the phone, and owns a latest model of BMW. The scenes when Nicholas is at his workplace reveal that he is also an unreachable, respected and successful banker boss who wins the competition within capitalist power structures and is therefore surrounded by those willing and courteous assistants and employees. In whatever public sphere he enters, he is always respected and held in high regard by the waiters, employees and the people around. Furthermore, his dominant masculinity could well be observed when as the utmost owner and superintendent, Nicholas fires Anson Baer, who is one of his old bank managers. Baer essentially represents the complicit masculinity, which due to his ailing older age has lost his previous energetic office performance and thus unintentionally causes the firm to earn lesser profits. Specifically, the scene when Nicholas fires Baer, reveals the relational facet of hegemonic masculinity because it is only through the 'deficits' and insufficiency of this complicit masculinity that Nicholas could well describe himself as prestigious, powerful, young and self-sufficient rule maker. Moreover, this scene also implies the symbolic violence exerted by Nicholas on Baer. Within the context of American society, Nicholas could well be classified by being among those, described by Connell in his *Masculinities* as "white, heterosexual, competitive, individualist and aggressive men in the paid labour force who dominate the moral, cultural and financial landscape" (1995, p. 77). Nicholas also shows up as a self-controlled man, emotionally retreating from other people due to his childhood traumas. Besides, as his father dies, he feels that he "had no other choice than playing the father" and takes over the roles of his father.

Similarly, *Everything About Mustafa*, originally entitled as "*Mustafa Hakkında Her Şey*", produced in 2004, directed by Çağan Irmak, starring Fikret Kuşkan, focuses on the traumatic story of Mustafa after the death of his wife at a traffic accident. Mustafa starts the film, just like Nicholas, proving that he is the member of the hegemonic masculinity, dominating both the subordinated masculinities and women. As a highly acclaimed manager and the owner of the advertising agency, he shows up as a powerful, prestigious, self-confident, wealthy, strong,

heterosexual father of a happy nuclear family. Yet, all along with these, he exhibits that he has obsessive thoughts about the authority and dominance he attains and he directly reacts to any threat or challenge to this own authority. He can easily and decisively fire an employee without any hesitation, which may signal that he shapes his own behaviours basing mostly on power and authority. He often dominates and looks down on those people with limited economic power by calling the officers or employees as “inferior and disgusting”. Even, at the opening scene, one of his respected and wise employees states that “sometimes gods need to have a victim so that they can become gods”, which signifies that he has authority and power over his employees. By usually commanding on his employees, Mustafa forms a version of tyranny in his workplace. Besides, his meticulous work ethic reveals his obsession with perfection. His fixation with excellence could easily be seen in the office scenes when he assertively interferes with the way his workers carry out their profession.

Interestingly, as the inquisitive turn of both films, the hegemonic masculinity of Nicholas and Mustafa and the facets of their dominating masculinity are all challenged and contested when Nicholas finds himself within ‘the game’ meticulously planned by CRS and when Mustafa is challenged by the low-brow lover of his dead wife.

In *The Game*, through the results of scrupulous physical and psychological tests of Nicholas, the company detects the deficits or weaknesses within his corporality and personality. Then, the company incessantly attacks on and challenges his ‘manhood’. Because of the tasks required by the game, he is often physically challenged: he is drowned within a taxicab driven into the sea, locked within a lift, always made to escape from the CRS agents or troops, drugged, confined within a tomb and tempted to jump off the roof of a skyscraper. Yet, rather than physical challenges, Nicholas is psychologically and socially tested, which poses a higher threat for his hegemonic masculinity. During the game, he loses the power, prestige, fortune and sufficiency he previously strongly attained. Metaphorically, Nicholas is reborn as a form of subordinate masculinity after the moment when he revives his consciousness in a

deserted old cemetery in Mexico. In the following scenes, he wears white dirty worn-off clothes; his body is full of scars, signalling at his regained heroic masculinity (Baker, 2006, p. 69) and bodily deformation. Now, totally penniless, in order to return home, he sells his only valuable possession, a gold watch and asks the plea of the previously invisible people for hitchhiking to San Francisco. It is only when he takes the gun from his foreclosed mansion that he seems to partially revive his manhood. At this point, the gun could be perceived as a symbol of phallic power helping Nicholas regain his manhood. Hence, in the succeeding scenes, through the masculine 'power' of possessing the gun, he has the curious intention to take revenge and resolve the mystery behind CRS.

The whole conspiracy of the game and the whole physical and psychological challenges to his manhood cause Nicholas to show the masculinity 'failure' and experience a version of masculinity crisis. Nicholas shows up as a "solid businessman drawn into a matrix of femme fatales, obscure forces and people attempting to kill him" (Baker, 2006, p. 69). Yet, all these challenges essentially help him come to terms with his own masculinity and resolve his childhood traumas, especially the trauma of seeing his father commit suicide. At the end, he reconciles with his ex-wife and asks to have a date out with Cristine, which signals that he has overcome his masculine anxieties.

In parallels with the masculinity crisis that Nicholas experiences, similarly, Mustafa also goes through fierce and even more violent crisis. At the hospital scene, rather than reacting to his wife's death by mourning, Mustafa dedicates himself resolving the mystery behind the accident. He insistently focuses on learning more about the man who was with Ceren during the accident. Through this insistence, Mustafa represses his own reaction to his wife's death by directing his reaction to 'the man'. The knowledge of this mysterious man implies that he has lost the control and power he thought he had within his marriage, the realization of which evenly transforms his emotional reactions. Upon learning that the taxi driver, Fikret, was the lover of his wife, Mustafa projects the sorrow he feels for his loss through altering the sadness into rage and aggression, which could be detected from the first scene the

two come across. In a sense, Mustafa directs his mourning, which would actually be an indicator of weakness and fall from hardness and manliness into aggression, revenge and violence. Therein, he devises plans, hires people in order to reach Fikret who has challenged his own authority and power. When Mustafa takes him as a hostage, he forces Fikret to drive the car, with an intention to make him realize that he is much superior and more powerful than him. The scenes that depict Fikret's imprisonment in a countryside mansion, Mustafa's violent and aggressive behaviours towards Fikret again may indicate his obsession with attaining absolute power-over. These bloody and violent scenes further reveal that Mustafa has totally directed his 'soft' emotions of the mourning process into aggression and violence against the taxi driver. During much of the film, Mustafa calmly reminds Fikret that he will kill him at the end of the day after he fulfils one single requirement. In this way, he is to learn about how the two involved in this unconsummated love story and thereby he will learn how he has lost his control and authority over his wife and lost it to an 'inferior', subordinated masculinity. Obviously, Mustafa does not simply intends to compensate for his emotional loss, rather, he intends to compensate for his manly 'failure' he experiences through his loss of the possession of a woman to an 'inferior' man.

Violence, on the other hand, compromises much of the behaviours of Mustafa against Fikret, which helps him reproduce and maintain power and domination over Fikret and, thus, sustain his hegemonic power-over. Similarly, in discussing the relationship between masculinities, power and violence, Jeff Hearn proposes that enforcement of all sorts of violence by men are inevitably linked to the reproduction of masculine supremacy and control:

Men are members of a powerful social group and a social category that is invested with power. This has the consequence that membership of that group or category brings power, if only by association. As with other powerful groups, dominance is maintained and reproduced in a wide variety of ways, including persuasion, influence, force,

violence, and so on... All these forms of violence reinforce each other and form the contexts of each other. The doing of violence is dominance, is the result of dominance, and creates the conditions for the reproduction of dominance. Violence is a means of enforcing power and control, but it is also power and control in itself. (Hearn, 1998, p. 35-36)

Apart from being a transformation of sorrow for the loss of his wife into aggression, violence connotes Mustafa's compensation for a failure or loss of power and authority over his wife, for simply 'losing' her to a secondary masculinity, to a taxi driver. On the same line with Hearn, it is through violence that Mustafa aims at reviving his failed or deformed masculinity. As the perpetrator of violence, Mustafa regains power and domination he thought he once had. Yet, facing with the realities of the relationship between Ceren and Fikret and, most importantly, confronting with his 'failure' make Mustafa also antagonise and come to terms with his childhood trauma. The flashbacks of his trauma reveal that Mustafa kills his handicapped brother by choking him since his father abandons home due to the shame he feels for the elder brother's incapability. Moreover, since childhood, Mustafa emotionally distances himself from his mother because he believes that his mother always put him off with the lies and hopes of making him believe that the father would be coming soon. This childhood trauma shapes and constructs the whole masculinity and characteristic of Mustafa. Unable to have power and authority during his earlier ages, Mustafa, in his adulthood, neurotically gets obsessed with the ideal of attaining and sustaining absolute power in order to compensate for his childhood sin. In a sense, he becomes, in Kimmel's words, "a man in power, a man with power and a man of power" (2004, p. 184). However, at the end of the movie, upon confronting with his 'failure' and trauma, he feels that he does not have the power to commit a second murder in his life and therefore, sets Fikret free.

At the final scene, Mustafa reveals that he has now fell from 'hardness' into 'softness', from hegemonic masculinity into masculinity crisis by showing a 'deficit' or 'weakness' in his once-unshakable

masculinity. The film ends as he confronts with his mother about the realities behind the murder of his brother. The scene ends when Mustafa bursts into tears in his mother's arms, which discloses that Mustafa confronts his traumas, weaknesses, self-realities and most importantly his own masculinity.

As a conclusion, by tracing the 'fall' of Nicholas and Mustafa from the dominant form of masculinity, which is hegemonic in this sense, into a kind of masculinity failure, it has been attempted to show in these movies that both characters go through similar masculinity crisis despite their distinct cultural backgrounds. Both Nicholas and Mustafa have constructed their masculinity in a hierarchal power structure where they attribute their value, power and self-esteem in relation to other masculinities. On the same line with Connell's definition of hegemonic masculinity, the ascendancy of both characters over other men is achieved culturally; therefore, they cast parallels in their hegemonic tendencies. Yet, a course of troublesome incidents and challenges to their 'manhood' reveals several underlying childhood traumas that cause them to be obsessed with sustaining power. Mustafa's childhood trauma shows up in his adulthood as a neurotic mania, while that of Nicholas appears to be an emotional detachment. Still, all these challenges eventually make both characters to come to terms with their 'weaknesses', 'insufficiencies' and even 'failures' within their own manhood. More importantly, the fall from the ideals and requirements of the hegemonic masculinity and the final masculinity crisis make both Nicholas and Mustafa revive a new tension-free masculinity which they never had before.

References:

- Anderson, E. (2005). *In the game: Gay athletes and the cult of masculinity*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Anderson, E. (2009). *Inclusive masculinity: The changing nature of masculinities*. New York: Routledge.
- Baker, B. (2006). *Masculinity in fiction and film: Representing men in popular genres, 1945-2000*. London: Continuum.

- Campbell, H. & et al.. (2006). *Country boys: Masculinity and rural life*. University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Carrigan, T. & et al.. (1985). Hard and heavy: Towards a new sociology of masculinity. *Theory and society*. p. 551–604. vol. 14, no. 5.
- Connell, R. (1977). *Ruling class ruling culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Connell, R. (1987). *Gender and power: Society, the person, and sexual politics*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Connell, R. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. (1998). Masculinities and globalization. *Men and masculinities*. p. 3–23. vol. 1, no. 1, July.
doi:10.1177/1097184x98001001001
- Connell, R. (2000). *The men and the boys*. St. Leonards, NSW: Allen & Amp.
- Connell, R. & James W. M. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society*. p. 829–859. vol. 19, no. 6.
doi:10.1177/0891243205278639.
- Feasey, R. (2008). *Masculinity and popular television*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP.
- Fincher, D. (1997). *The Game*. USA: Polygram Filmed Entertainment.
- Gilmore, D. D. (1990). *Manhood in the making: Cultural concepts of masculinity*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Hearn, J. (1998). *The violences of men*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Howson, R. (2006). *Challenging hegemonic masculinity*. London: Routledge.
- Irmak, Ç. (Director). (2004). *Mustafa Hakkında Her Şey*. Turkey: ANS Productions
- Kimmel, M. (1996). *Manhood in America: A cultural history*. New York: Free Press.
- Kimmel, M. (2004). Masculinity as homophobia: Fear, shame, and silence in the construction of gender identity. *Feminism and masculinities*. p. 182–199. Oxford: Oxford UP.
- Lea, D. & Berthold S. H. (2003). *Posting the male: Masculinities in post-war and contemporary British literature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.

- Lemelle, A. J. (2010). *Black masculinity and sexual politics*. New York: Routledge.
- Levy, D. P. (2007). Hegemonic masculinity. *International encyclopaedia of men and masculinities*. p. 258–259. Routledge: New York.
- MacKinnon, K. (2003). *Representing men: Maleness and masculinity in the media*. London: Arnold.
- Seidler, V. J. (2006). *Transforming masculinities: Men, cultures, bodies, power, sex and love*. London: Routledge.
- Stepien, A. (2014). Understanding male shame. *Masculinities journal*. p. 7–27. no. 1, Feb. masculinitiesjournal.org/tr/tr/makele/understanding-male-shame/63/pdf.