MAD MAX: NARRATIVE MASCULINITY

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ABSTRACT: The *Mad Max* series enshrines the cinegoers' memory for many years and it has been considered as a cult classic. Along with the new sequel of *Mad Max*, Max's got a new face. Despite the fact that, it's not the only thing which has been changed with the last film. *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) came in for criticism about the new Max and his manliness, and it draws a considerable amount of media attention to the gender representations. As long as the representations of men and masculinity is analysed within the context of gender studies and any other interdisciplinary approaches of the media outputs will raise the awareness of public about gender representations on the media.

Keywords: Mad Max, masculinity, violence, hegemonic masculinity, representations of men.

Introduction

Action cinema contains a wide range of adaptations from comics to science fiction films. Mostly, it's considered as a "male genre." The action genre films are, occasionally, followed by the sequels based

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on their commercial success. The intention of making action film sequels is to address the male audience. George Miller's *Mad Max* is one of the action films which is followed by its sequels. *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015) is the fourth sequel of George Miller's *Mad Max* films (1979, 1981, 1985). The fourth film sequel of the *Mad Max* series brings up its protagonist for discussion as how the male protagonsit Max Rockatansky has been changed and overshadowed by its female protagonist Furiosa. Even though the film gets credit by the majority of people and feminist audience, it's also criticised that "This is the Trojan Horse feminists and Hollywood leftists will use to (vainly) insist on the trope women are equal to men in all things, including physique, strength, and logic" (Clarey, 2015) and it has recently become a subject of a boycott campaign by some men's rights activists[2]: "Why You Should Not Go See "Mad Max: Feminist Road"[3]

The story of the first *Mad Max* takes place in an almost post-apocalyptic world where everything is about to change: "A few years from now" the story centers in Max's life (played by Mel Gibson) as police officer who fights against criminals. When Max's wife and son are haplessly murdered by a biker gang, he looks for revenge. The second film, *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior*, follows in a wasteland where there's anarchy and chaos. After Max takes his revenge upon the gang, he hits the road as a lone wolf with his car and dog. Soon enough he encounters with a group of survivors where they live/being trapped by reason of the oil refinery they've occupied. The group had surrounded and threaten by a biker gang led by a masked man, Lord Humungus. Max helps them escape from where they stucked and were under siege. The *Mad Max* series worldwide popularisation and

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[2] However Clarey and the crew who's supporting him are refusing to be called as "men right's activists."

[3] *http://www.returnofkings.com/63036/why-you-should-not-go-see-mad-max-feminist-road*

its cult status ensue of the second film's success. The third film, *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* occurs in a post-apocalyptic place in the aftermath of a nuclear disaster. Max drops by a city where it looks like a civilized middle age town and find himself into a power struggle. Not long after, he becomes a knight in shining armour to a tribe of lost children.

The last sequel of the series, *Mad Max: Fury Road* was released in 2015 after thirty years with starring caracter Tom Hardy as Max, on the contrary to the first three films of the series. The story takes place in a post-apocalyptic world where there's lack of water in an almost uncivilized wasteland town called "Citadel" ruled by a tyrant, Immortan Joe. Imperator Furiosa, the right hand of Joe, goes out of his commands and helps "the Wives" to escape from Citadel and to set them free from being not Joe's sex slaves and breeder bodies anymore. Max, who's captured by "the War Boys" of Joe, escapes War Boys' clutches and shortly after Max happens to encounter with Furiosa and he devotes his life to their cause. The story of the last film shows a slice of Max's life.

Believing that getting down to a research like this, by using content analysis method may provide some information about Max Rockatansky's masculinity through his actions and inactions within the context of narrative and spectacle during the entire series of *Mad Max*. Moreover, to discuss what's been really changed in Max's character along with the series (based on Clarey's severe argument and its followers). The last film becomes an object at issue due to fact that not only because of the aforementioned name's arguments, but also some of the mainstream media outlets such as *CNN*[4],

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[4] Lorena O'Neil: "Men's rights activists call for boycott of 'Mad Max: Fury Road,' citing feminist agenda." *http://edition.cnn.com/2015/05/15/entertainment/mad-max-fury-road-boycott-mens-rights-thr-feat/*

Guardian[5], Daily Mail[6] initiated a discussion as making it an item for the news agenda of Clarey's boycott call.

Theoretical Framework: Masculinity Studies and Violence of Men

Masculinity Studies

Traditionally, the sex of a person has been defined by biological duality. From this point of view, to what defines a person as female or male is the genitalia which the person borns with. The gender roles are based on the biological dycotomy of sex. Masculinity has been a research object of biology, anatomy and partially psychology, but once after the feminist theory has attained its place in the social science, the concept is accepted as well as something which takes shape in the social context. In the sense of social sciences now, the term masculinity has become more difficult to define:

> When speaking of masculinity, it's indefinite whether it has been referenced to behaviors of men, or to the masculinity which's established as identity, masculinity which's represented as attitudinally, masculinity which's presented as images, masculinity set up as a discourse or masculinity as directly experienced, observed and practically performed (Sancar, 2011: 20).

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[5] Ben Child: "Mad Max: Fury Road's strong women won't surprise true genre fans." *http://www.theguardian.com/film/filmblog/2015/may/15/mad-max-fury-roads-strong-women-wont-surprise-true-genre-fans* and Jason Wilson: "The 'man-o-sphere' is outraged about Mad Max? Hand me my popcorn!": *http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/may/15/the-man-o-sphere-is-outraged-about-mad-max-hand-me-my-popcorn*

[6] Charlene Adams: "Why 'men should boycott' new Mad Max movie because it is a 'feminist piece of propaganda posing as a guy flick'" *http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3083606/Blogger-calls-boycott-Mad-Max-Fury-Road-feminist-piece-propaganda-posing-guy-flick.html#ixzz48r1PL1u4*

It's a fluid, dynamic and changeable concept. Masculinity references to deemed appropriate social roles, behaviors and understandings for men in a society or during a time. The concept of masculinity is determined through our everyday life relationships with all its conflicts and conciliations by the social institutions. In other word, women and men's value and visibility is determined by the culture, society, class and so forth.

Even if, it's easy to categorise men by using *de facto*, norms, generic speculations about manliness; such as standardizing and stereotyping them. Likewise, classifying men as Latin Masculinity, Black Masculinity, Middle Eastern Masculinity etc. (Sancar, 2011). Making all such kind of categorisations may cause to avoid and/or make insignificant and ignore the problematic of masculinity. In the first analysis, however, saying that the masculinity takes its shape through the terrain, culture; social, political and class structures which is in may seem to be a good starting point to interrogate the problematic, but that might cause to the problematic be seen as one-sided.

Earlier gender studies dwelled on only femininity (the dominance of patriarchy over women, imprisonment of women in private sphere, exploitation of domestic labour). Along with the second wave feminist movement, men's studies started taking a place in gender studies. During that period, the concept of different masculinities came forward such as "hegemonic masculinity." The concept of hegemonic masculinity by R.W. Connell (1987), which based on Gramsci's concept of hegemony caused a new debate in gender studies.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity severs itself from the concept of dominant masculinity. The dominant masculinity may refer to the traits of masculinity as well as to a popular authority. Hegemonic masculinity corresponds to "[...] white, middle class,

heterosexual, middle-aged, full-time employer[…]" male characteristics (Sancar, 2011: 27). It can be said that, hegemonic masculinity is a synthesis of various manliness. In some ways, it's an articulation of different masculinities assembled in one hierarchical synthesis. There is sort of a matter of benefit among men. All men one way or another take a share of hegemonic masculinity. On the other hand, hegemonic masculinity pays a share in order to reduce the other to keep silent. In this way, it convinces the other types of men to its masculinity order. Connell clarifies the application of hegemonic masculinity concept saying that the thing gathers varied of masculinities into the common ground is that not only the dominance over women (suppression and subjection of women), but also the dominance over men. That's why the rulership of hegemonic masculinity effects not only women, but also people who stands in a subordinated social position such as disabled, handicapped, insane individuals; elders, children, and LGBTIQ etc. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, in the wider sence, is the image of masculinity who have hold the power (Sancar, 2011: 30).

Another name who made a contribution of the concept is Jeff Hearn (1996, 2004; with Collinson, 1994). Hearn argues that *hegemonic masculinity* and *hegemony of men* should be kept separate in the field of men's studies. He defines the concept hegemonic masculinity as "white, middle-class, middle-aged, heterosexual, homophobic, Anglo-Saxon, Christian and Western man who's physically active" (Sancar, 2011: 36). He emphasizes that the hegemony of men concept has such values as "not sparing of risk taking, physical strength and endurance; being persistent and stubborn, not hesitating to be aggressive and daring; homophobic heterosexuality, non-sentimental rationality, enduring the pain and bearing it and self-centeredness etc." (Sancar, 2011: 37). He adds on that there might be different kind of men who represent these values.

While the discussions on masculinity(ies) continue, a new concept of masculinity comes forward: *Crisis of men*.

> This is not to suggest that there is something inherently wrong with people who identify as being men, but rather that men as a social group are experiencing problems at a rate disproportionate to their numbers and with a uniqueness that seems to be a part of the lived world of men (Kahn, 2009: 165; Jefferson, 2002; McInnes, 2001).

During the post-industrial ages and modern times manliness frequently interacts both globally and locally with different masculinities. "Butler's suggestion that gender norms are 'phantasmatic,' that is, unreal or illusory, complements Tania Modleski's assertion that masculinity is always in a state of crisis because what defines it is constantly fluid and malleable; the boundaries of masculinity are then repeatedly tested and challenged" (Peberdy, 2011: 28).

Even though, the issues of men and masculinities are being ignored over the years in gender and feminist studies in academia (and also in practice) eventually, it got the attention that its deserves in the eyes of social scientists. From the very beginning of men's studies to the present, the notion has been studied in different aspects such as hegemonic masculinity, hegemony of men, male's crisis, masculinity and violence, machismo, queer masculinities, hyper-masculinity so on and so forth.

The discussions on masculinity in social sciences inevitably spreaded to film studies. Laura Mulvey's "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" first published in *Screen* in 1975 is a pioneer essay in the film and media studies field. Mulvey's article, says Neale (1983 [2005]), "was highly influential in its linking together of psychoanalytic perspectives on the cinema with a feminist perspective on the ways in which images of women figure within mainstream film."

Masculinity and Violence

The debates on violence tend to be gendered natural. The most of the violent acts done by men. Violence appears within the society and on media representations as largely considered to be gendered specific. Among the academics on masculinity and violence Connell is one of the most productive writers herein the field of gender, masculinity and violence. Connell (2000: 22) declares that "There is often an appeal to biology, with testosterone in particular, the so-called 'male hormone', as a catch-all explanation for men's aggression." As in the *Mad Max* series the automobiles have an important role in action genre such as chasing scenes. As Connell points out that, reckless driving is with each passing day increasingly recognized as a form of violence which in the most of cases where men are involved in. "Young men die on the roads at a rate four times that of young women, and kill on the roads at an even higher ratio" (Connell, 2000: 22). Also the commercial mass media outlets promote the violence mainly done by men. From sports to violent video games, and TV series to Hollywood action movies. "The messages in these media relentlessly insist, on the bodily superiority of men and their mastery of technology and violence" (Connell, 2000: 27).

As it is mentioned that the great majority of violent acts around the world, in anytime, are committed by men. Another productive academic who's been studying on masculinity and violence is Tim Edwards. In his book "Cultures of Masculinity" says that "From pub brawls, to building bombs, and from forced prison buggery to battered wives, the problem seems the be men: men swearing, men punching, men kicking, men smashig, men bashing, men destroying things, other men, women, themselves, even the world" (2006: 39). However sometimes, what we may count as a violent act and vice versa might not be easy to define. Gazing, joking, or just looking may

constitute psychological violence (Edwards, 2006: 40). Besides that, some kind of violent acts are done quietly through institutions. The family institution, as one of the strongest and oldest 'flagsman' of all, contains some sort of violence within itself (based upon its heteronormative and traditionality). The kind of violence may appear if and when someone revolts against the dominance (as hegemonic, masculine or patriarchal).

The differentiation of violence may be described as in there categories (including sub-categories): Physical, verbal and psychological. Direct physical violence emerges as hitting, kicking, punching, pushing, pulling, grabbing, tearing, smashing, stamping, slamming and similar activities (Edwards, 2006: 40). Whether it is against to a person or property. The violence may occur day or night, inside or outside. Although, the inside (private sphere) ensures the security through the family institution and patriarchy. However, the outside (public sphere) contains insecurity and dangerous particularly more for subaltern individuals and the act of violence might be justified as occasions requires. The private sphere protected by men and public sphere by the state's heteronormative, masculine and legalise "violent" organs[7].

As in the *Mad Max* series, act of violence mostly appears in the public sphere. We may say that the diegetic world of *Mad Max* is almost uncivilized, post-apocalyptic, a state of chaos (which's embodied in as a tyrant) etc. In the world of Max there's no way of controlling violence therefore the societies of three *Mad Max* films were lack of social values. It appears that there's only savage and blooded 'barbarism' and 'primitivity' (Except the third film of *Mad*

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[7] "The private sphere is the stereotypically feminine world of household, family, and unpaid domestic labor while the public sphere is the stereotypically masculine world of politics and paid employment. The private and public spheres are two gendered spheres that is has become common practice to think of the social world divided into" (Crossman, 06 January 2016).

Max. There's a city presented as a middle age town). As Tim Edwards declares that, "The rise of modern sports is, in particular, seen as a prime example of a civilising process, or growth of civility and control of violence(…)" (2006: 47). So, there's nearly nothing to prevent act of violence such as modern sports. Thus, the absence of such preventing social mechanisms the act of violence cannot be prevented most of the time when Max encounters of his opponents. The violence has an important part generating of the male protagonist's masculinity in cinema. As Edwards (2006: 110) cites from Kirkham and Thumin that "the violence in such films is often conceived as a form of endurance within the wider formation of a successful masculine identity."

The violence is somehow comes with the power and it's not only towards women but also to the entire planet. "To say that violence is predicated on *maleness*, therefore, cannot explain this, though to say that violence is predicated on *masculinity*, as a quality that women may also possess, may still hold" (Edwards, 2006: 53). So, as it can be seen in *Mad Max: Fury Road* that the violence as a practice can be adopted also by women. Messerschmidt say that the violence can be a functional practice for identity or men and masculinity (Edwards, 2006: 53). And also, committing violence is perceived "masculine," exposing to violence intends to be "feminine."

Literature Review

The recent study on the *Mad Max* film series is made by Baydar (2015: 104-134) "Potential of Feminist Action Film: On Mad Max Fury Road" discusses the new sequel of *Mad Max*'s potential of resistance within the mainstream action cinema from a critical feminist perspective. The essay focuses on action films' genre and its narrative, and it utilizes in the feminist approach of how the film portrays femininity, body, leadership, collectivism.

Another researcher who's been working on *Mad Max* is Rebecca Johinke. Her recent article "Not quite Mad Max: Brian Trenchard-Smith's Dead End Drive-In" (2009) make a reference to an *Ozploitation* film Dead End Drive-In (1986) that the film is not well recognised among Australasian film scholars and she claims that the film itself has various sides to discuss such as Australian masculinity, car culture, white paranoia, crisis of Australian men, immigration, borders and so on. She builds her argument using previous researches on the aforementioned topics. Johinke's previous essay on Mad Max is called "Manifestation of masculinities: Mad Max and the Lure of the Forbidden Zone" refers to masculinity, heterosexism, homosexuality, patriarchy, representation of the men in the *Mad Max* series, withing the action genre cinema. Johinke explains how Max's masculinity is supported by the narrative: As he stands as a heterosexual man against homosexual biker gangs in the first and second film (2001: 118-125).

Falconer, in her article "'We Don't Need to Know the Way Home' The Disappearance of the road in the Mad Max Trilogy" (1997) examines the spatial history of Australia. She discusses the films in two modes of analysis as a postmodern cultural production and post-colonialist text. Firstly, she describes the development of Australian film industry around the world and how that made effects on the story of *Mad Max* in years. Then the archetypes in *Mad Max* relating to the Australian lifestyles and its nationalist discourses. She criticizes the *Mad Max* sequel in a political economy approach.

Kieran Tranter's essay "Mad Max: The Car and Australian Governance" (2003) holds a discussion about the importance of cars and its impact on the daily life of Australians, the governance and youth culture. In the article three roles are identified: The cars as identity, cars as myths and cars as power. Tranter examines these three roles of cars combining them with the first and second *Mad Max* films and by doing that she explaines how the power of cars can be violent, how the cars can have symbolic meanings of the society or imagination of it.

Another discussion is made about the *Mad Max* films by Straton in his article "What Made Mad Mac Popular? The Mythology of a Conservative Fantasy" (1983). He confronts with the problem of reality and unrealistic sides of the society in *Mad Max* and *Mad Max 2*. By doing that, the author examines the narrative of the films withing the American film conventions and codes. Also, he uses semiotics to reveal the connotational meanings of the two *Mad Max* films.

The *Mad Max* films have been examined in different aspects and approaches up until today. The main focust of the essays are cars, governance, masculinity, road, society and so on. According to the debates, only the forth sequel of *Mad Max* brings up feminisim to a discussion –as a feminist propaganda– with its strong female protagonist. The reason of that is arguable. In the third film, there's also a strong female character, but the portrayal of female characters (as a protagonist, hero[ine], anti-hero[ine]) in different genres and narratives may lead and/or mislead (and so, reproduce) the meanings of female's potrayal and spectacle.

Research Design

Research Questions

In this research our aim is to analyze spectacle of Max as a man in the series of *Mad Max*. (1) Is there a conversion of Max's actions and behaviors in *Mad Max: Fury Road* as against in the previous ones (on the portrayal and spectacle)? If there is, what kind of changes have been portrayed in his character? (2) Does Max engage in violence, cars and weapons lesser in the forth *Mad Max* film?

Method

The most suitable method for this kind of research can be a content analysis, qualitative analysis, semiotic analysis, ideological (gender ideology) and narrative analysis. We are going to use the content analysis method within the frame of qualitative research techniques. On the other hand within the content analysis approach can be done both quantitative and qualitative. Usually, there's a perception that these two methods of analysis cannot be collocate. On the contrary, the results are both obtained through qualitative and quantitative analysis can be used to support the research questions and hypotheses as and when it's required.

The results of quantitative analysis are presented as pozitivist facts. The cogency of quantitative is apparent. Numbers are not *subjective*. In order to attain the objective findings, the qualitative data were obtained via visual analysis can be also supported by quantitative methods. As we are not going to use the quantitative approach in the research, the research questions and problematics will be supported by the theoretical framework and literature review.

The content analysis provides consistent, objective and quantitative information were obtained from an uncoded content hence, it provides reliable information. The fact remains that, the analysis is debatable. Well, the significant and open content can disclosed by using content analysis, but the hidden meanings and between the lines of a text cannot be noticed. Thus, through the instruments of semiotic analysis the underlines of a text can be examined.

There are two data sources in this research. The first data is taken from *Mad Max* (1979: 93 minutes), *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* (1981: 96 minutes), *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome* (1985: 107 minutes)

and *Mad Max: Fury Road* (2015: 120 minutes). The visual data will be analysed in order to seek out the related issues: masculinity, spectacle and violence. The second data were obtained via books, articles and columns will support the research questions.

Analysis

New Max: No Need To Support His Masculinity!

As it is mentioned in the introduction that there is a discussion ongoing about the new sequel of *Mad Max*. It's criticized by the men's rights activists that Max is no the protagonist of the film, but he stands as a supporting character. How did they get to that conclusion? Even so the action sequences of *Mad Max: Fury Road* have got quite credits, Max's manliness, apparently, has got a lot of stick.

Who's Max? Firstly, Max is a white, heterosexual man. "The men see themselves in terms of being 'white' (clean, pure, superior), 'ordinary' (thus creating a hegemony of normality) and 'descent' (Christian, law-abiding, moral)" (Johinke, 2009: 317). Max is introduced and portrayed as a straight white man who spends an ordinary life with his family as a *law abiding* policeman. What does he do? He is/was a(n ex-)police patrol officer who fights against criminals. Those two facts give him a power which comes naturally: first as being of a heterosexual man, second as being of an officer of the state apparatus (represents the "phallic law"). Naturally, those innate features of Max need to supported by the mainstream conventions of narrative (cinematic, literal and social). In the first and second films, the villains of Max are gay motorcyclists (Johinke, 2001: 118-125). Max and his straight patrol, in the first film, fight against Toecutter's gang and in the second film, Max and the survivors (good guys in white) fight

against Lord Humungus and his tribe (bad guys in black). These two villain groups are portrayed as homosexuals and S&M. By doing that, the classical narrative supports its protagonist's masculinity against the marginal and queer character portrayed as dangerous and demonized. Against them, Max stands as a dominant male character, as the one and only man. In the third one, Max disguises in a messiah role, or to put it in a different way, he gets up this position through his gendered role as a father for children whom waiting to be rescued. During the first two films of *Mad Max*, Max's masculinity is such supported, empowered and developed by the villains' *deficiencies* that in the third film, his character reaches in a position of which no longer needed to be support.

Max, as we all know that, is a man. No matter how he is distant to any kind of sexual intercourse or intimacy, Max *still* is a heterosexual hero. In *Fury Road*, Max's manliness is not empowered by the narrative. The story is not about Max's heroism against demonized villains, but against hegemonic men and masculinity. However, Max does not appear or portrayed as the real man among other men and then again, he does not necessarily to gain other's admiration or trust as in the previous films of *Mad Max*. The admiration plays an important part of reinforcing the masculinity. In first three films, admiration provides a significant role on Max's manliness. In the first film, Max is admired by his colleagues and chief: "Fred 'Fifi' Macaffee: *They say people don't believe in heroes anymore. Well, damn them! You and me, Max, we're gonna give them back their heroes.*" In the second, he is admired by Gyro Captain[8], Pappagallo[9] and the other survivors[10]. In *Beyond*

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[8] Gyro Captain: *"They've got you wrong. You're not a coward. STUPID, maybe. But not a coward."*

[9] Pappagallo: *"He fulfilled his contract. He's an honorable man."*

[10] Curmudgeon: *"It's been a long time since I've seen driving like that, man."*

Thunderdome, survived children[11], Aunty Entity[12] admire him and basically whomsoever. In *Fury Road*, Max's courage and fighting skills are not established to gain the others' admiration and acceptance but to survive[13]. On the other hand, he shows with his behaviours that he doesn't care about admiration as well as not willing to take almost any of responsibilities and be the saviour of all[14].

The first three films of *Mad Max* are kind of reinvention of the western (other than action genre). The environments of western genre (as well as action) is homosocial and heteronormative. Kieran Tranter (2003, 67-81) points out the western conventions of *Mad Max 2: The Road Warrior* as:

> Max the troubled cowboy hero; the Gyro-Captain (Bruce Spence), the goofy side-kick; the inhabitants of the community, the settlers and honest town folk of the Wild West; the leader of the community, Pappagallo (Mike Preston), the town mayor; the Interceptor, the super horse that all good cowboys are blessed with; and Humungus' horde, the murderous Indians.

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[11] Savannah Nix: "(…)*But most of all we 'members the man who finded us, him that came a-salvage.*"

[12] Aunty Entity: "*Congratulations! You're the first to survive the audition!*", "*Well, ain't we a pair, raggedy man. / Goodbye, soldier.*"

[13] Max Rockatansky: "*I am the one that runs from both the living and the dead. Hunted by scavengers, haunted by those I could not protect. So I exist in this wasteland, reduced to one instinct: survive.*"

[14] *[Max proposes turning back and claiming the Citadel]*
Keeper of the Seeds: "*I like this plan… we could start again, just like the old days!*"
Max Rockatansky: *Look, it'll be a hard day.*
[points to the horizon]
Max Rockatansky: "*But I guarantee you that a hundred and sixty days ride that way… there's nothing but salt.*"
[points back]
Max Rockatansky: "*At least that way we might be able to… **together**… come across some kind of redemption.*"
*[He holds out his hand. After a pa*use, Furiosa takes it and clasps tight]
www.imdb.com/title/tt1392190/quotes

Max is the one who involves to the story most of the time, even if he is the protagonist. As is in the western genre, the hero (anti-hero) ends up in a village where there's a disorder about to happen. In the second and the third film contain kind of western conventions in itself. As in the most mainstream western narrative cinema *Mad Max 2* and *Mad Max 3* follow the same codes. So, the only heroic model of protagonist is, mostly a combination of white-heterosexual-man.

The most important part of Max' characteristic is being a great driver as well as his skilfulness in different actions and situations. A must of the all *Mad Max* films is that the cars and fast driving. Classic western and gladiator films take place in an environment where there are no social rules, values and sanctions which prevent the act of violence but open a road for it. "A landscape without a definable 'center' may offer no 'moral center' or set of values on which heroism maybe based" (Falconer, 1997: 258). The road, as the metaphorical arenas, contains and provides an opportunity for the protagonist in order to prove himself and his masculinity (i.e. to earn appreciation and respect of those who around him). The roads of *Mad Max* are the arenas of performance of masculinity (Johinke, 2001: 118). Fast driving is related to the protagonist masculinity and capability of survive from the enemies. "[…]the road appears as a specific and violently contested site" (Falconer, 1997: 249). Just as gladiators fight in the arenas, Max fights on the road in order to survive by using his survival skills. This how, he proves his manliness as well. The nature of all the four films are the fact that is the cars, chases and battles on the road. "He has proven himself superior to all around him and has out-driven every scoot-jockey on the road" (Johinke, 2001: 125). His superiority has to be proven in the first three *Mad Max*, but in *Fury Road* Max is not the superior character because there's a collective fight against tyranny, patriarchy, hegemonic masculinity. Max also refuses to be a part of the

hegemonic masculinity. He does not bargain with hegemony and hegemonic masculinity.

In the first three films of *Mad Max*, Max is the tough guy and it doesn't appear differently in the forth sequel. Of course, the appearance of Max's body has been changed with the last film because of the actor's substitution however, the physical appearance of Max has always been very active, lifgtfooted and dynamic. In the meantime, he still possesses some accessories like his leather jacket and weapon which are playing a fundemental role to reinforce Max's masculinity. In the whole *Mad Max* films, Max survives from some kind of a wasteland by attesting to his abilities. He uses his shotgun with one hand (despite in the last sequel, he is not a go-getter as he is in the previous films), he drives vehicles better, faster and smoother than anybody else. Nevertheless, he survives even if he had captured by his opponents. The opponents sometimes are homosexual biker bandits, a despot, tyrant or even sometimes people who's escaping from the bad guys.

Because the *Mad Max* films take place on the road so as to escape from the bad guys that the physical violence always make it presence felt and threatens the protagonists. Which is why Max involves all sorts act of violence and battles, and thereafter he defeats all of his enemies with the back up or not. He resorts to violence for different kind of reasons such as to take revenge, to satisfy a need, to escape, to help… One of the contra arguments against the fourth film is that, Max helps people. He loses his sense of helping people after he lost his wife and son even so, in the second and third films he has the sense of helping people no matter for what purposes it is. In the fourth sequel of Mad Max, Max helps women who escape from a despot and its *domination masculine*. It so happens that, Max's path crosses with Furiosa's, and the Wifes' cause. The cause can be considered as a feminist resistance. But that doesn't show Max's masculinity runs short. He's the main superpower

of all *Mad Max* films. His ability to survive from his opponents, good driving skills and outfighting hasn't changed.

It's possible that the only weakness appears in his character is the post-traumatic stress disorder. In the first and last films, *PTSD* becomes more visible. His apathy to things he encountered occurs in the most of *Mad Max* episodes due to the disorder. After the trauma, he becomes a lone road warrior and in all *Mad Max* films, he rarely speaks. In fact, Max does not speak that much in all *Mad Max* films. However, this is also a part of the spectacle of Max's masculinity: as being silent, calm, stabil, confident etc. His calm, deliberate and strong-willed manners apart him from others. "Max's traits of cool aggression, control, authority, power, potency and technological mastery are pertinent, indeed laudable, characteristics" (Johinke, 2001: 118). These characteristics fit with both hegemonic and dominant masculine ideals. In *Fury Road,* despite the previous *Mad Max* films, Max is not portrayed as a man who wants those ideals. Some of those characteristics appear in Furiosa's character portrayal in just the same way as in Max's. The ideals of masculinity can be possessed and/or be obtained by the male protagonists as well as the female protagonists. However, it can be said that Furiosa gains strength thereby *masculinizing*, but instead she strengthens in a female-specific way in the narrative. She does not collaborate with "Hegemonic Masculinity" by possessing some masculine behaviours.

Max uses various types of tools to gain the victory, beside his physical power: knives, guns, car parts such as doors, gas tanks et cetera. Likewise, the female characters of *Mad Max* use all sorts of tools to turn to violence. What matters most is that against what and how the narrative rewards, justifies or punishes the female protagonists and characters. In the first two films, women are punished by the narrator because of they were revolting and committing violence against men and their hegemony. In *Mad Max 1*, the wife dies because

she stands against the male violence as well as in *Mad Max 2*, one of the women survivors fights against the yoke of men and she dies. In *Fury Road*, some of "the Wives" and "the Vuvalini of Many Mothers" die yet the narrative doesn't punish them, but they die because of a cause that they believe. Likewise, the death of a hero in classical narrative cinema. David Gilmore explains his concept of nurturing aspects of men as (MacKinnon, 2003: 10):

> Men nurture their society by shedding their blood, their sweat, and their semen, by bringing home food for both child and mother, by producing children, and by dying if necessary in faraway places to provide a safe haven for their people. This, too, is nurturing in the sense of endowing or increasing.

As Gilmore declares that the male protagonists and characters are nurturing the hegemony of men and masculinity, and their patriarchal society by shedding blood, killing others and even dying for the sake of defending and keeping *their* women, their motherland safe from the other men.

As in the classic action and western narratives, the crisis is resolved by the power of male protagonist. The narrative comes to an end (resolution) when the man, as a *natural right* of his performance, defeats his opponents by force of his physical power. And the act of violence is justified as an impartial violence of man. On the other hand, the classical canon offers, provides and makes space for its hero to kill his archenemy by himself, without having help (As traditionally, the *male* antagonist comes the heroes way vice versa and so that to create the binary opposition). It's the hero's duty to defeat the enemy. In *Fury Road*, the one who kills Immortan Joe (the enemy) is Furiosa, not Max. Male protagonist does not resist on his heroic position. The narrative of *Fury Road* suggests that it's a collective action rather than one lone-hero who saves the woman, future and the world.

Conclusion

It is possible that, one of the biggest feature of *Mad Max: Fury Road,* which distinguishes it from the other *Mad Max* films, is that the narrative weigh heavier than the spectacle of male. In the previous films, spectacle goes ahead of the narrative. The narrative builds upon the spectacle of male protagonist. Thus, in the previous *Mad Max* films, the importance of hero's appearance, spectacle of his masculinity and the body, and "his" fights and achievements get ahead of the narrative. "At which point the look begins to oscillate between voyeurism and fetishism as the narrative starts to freeze and spectacle takes over" (Neale, 1993: 17). *Fury Road* doesn't give any priorities just to one protagonist, but gives two of them. Max's appearance in the forth sequel is not short than its previous ones. The last sequel's duration is about a half an hour long than the first and the second one. Even the action scenes and violence take way longer than the previous ones, but the story' focus point is not the protagonist and *his* spectacle, but the narrative itself. And in the narrative, the tyranny and patriarchy are defeated by the people against it. Collectivism between male and female characters weigh heavier than the spectacle of one hero canon in the classical narrative. Thereby, those who have found the new *Max* less man or masculine (in a very traditional heteronormative and gendered role ways, like "how to be a man?") as they expected, *Mad Max: Fury Road* may not fulfil their concerns about *man*kind's future. As it is seen in the analysis that the biggest difference and shift in the new Max is that his masculinity doesn't support by the narrative. George Miller and his film crew didn't present Max's masculinity as a spectacle even so it's a spectacular film. The fact remains that, Max engages in violence, perhaps, more than ever.

In addition to this, in order to analyze the spectacle of men and masculinity in *Mad Max* films should be examined by means of *pleasure in looking*. If there's a conflict and problematic of identification between the *audience* and *protagonist*s can be found by the help of Mulvey's critical essay on visual pleasure and gaze (1975) and other essays on male gaze and pleasure in looking. As she declares that, "In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female" (Mulvey, 1975: 11). Thus, an analysis about the spectacle of male, identification of audience with the protagonist and the male gaze can give a clearer perspective and more reliable results. The research we have done has limitations because the lack of quantitative analysis, an in-depth narrative analysis, and also an ideological and feminist film analysis as well as it needs a reception studies (as an audience research). In my opinion, the research findings should be support by other approaches and methods as above-mentioned for the future studies.

In sum, as Tim Edwards points out that any sort of analysis of media outputs are, *in essence*, analysis of representations.

> Thus, movies, advertisements and television programmes are, most fundamentally, cultural texts and this then opens up the question of the connection of text and context or the wider relationship of representation and reality. There is much contemporary and significance to be found in the analysis of masculinity as it is represented in cinema (2006: 107).

As long as the representations of men and masculinity is analysed within the context of gender studies and any other interdisciplinary approaches of the media outputs will raise the awareness of public about gender representations on the media.

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