



# Gender Inequality in Türkiye: A Relational Sociological Study on Violence against Women

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## Abstract

Contrary to the classical view that violence will decrease in societies in parallel with modernization worldwide, violence has become an important area of study in sociology due to the increasing aggression, particularly between individuals, but also in the family, school, and workplace. In recent years, violence against women, children, and animals has become more visible in Türkiye. In fact, it can be argued that the increase in violent acts in the context of gender inequality, as well as the increased reaction from women's movements, plays a role in this visibility. The problem with this research is that some segments of society in Türkiye view violent acts as a normal part of life and even attempt to cover them up. The research questions are: "What is the historical and cultural background of the normalization of gender inequality and violence in Türkiye?" and "What are the factors that play a role in the reproduction of this spiral of violence?" This relational sociological study hermeneutically examined the gendered discourse in Kutadgu Bilik, a masterpiece of Turkish traditional culture written by Yusuf Has Hacı in the 11th century, and in the anonymous Dede Korkut stories. This study avoided establishing one-way causal relationships and instead sought to interpret relational sociological narratives based on process, liminal situations, and ambiguities. Analyses were conducted in a non-essentialist and non-dualistic manner. On the other hand, standard hermeneutic analyses revealed the frequent occurrence of discourse that could lead to the reproduction of violence against women and girls. It was understood that while patriarchy was reproduced in the books, women and girls were unfairly marginalized, devalued, and despised. Several solutions were also proposed to prevent this ambiguous and complex network of social and cultural relations from being internalized and perpetuated through women.

## Subject Areas

Gender Studies, Cultural Sociology

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## Keywords

Culture, Gender Inequality, Women, Violence, Relational Sociology, Hermeneutics, Türkiye

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## 1. Introduction

Gender equality is defined by the UNDP (2019) as women and men having equal rights, opportunities, and facilities [1]. Here, individuals are considered equal in terms of human dignity and rights. The absence of these conditions not only signifies inequality but can also lead to negative consequences such as violence. The concept of violence has remained a current concern for social scientists throughout history. Violence, which has been defined and classified in various ways, can be observed both physically and symbolically, and has been frequently studied, particularly in the fields of work, education, and healthcare [2]. The definition of violence is regarded as a complex phenomenon that can vary according to the social position, time, process, and personal history of individuals. Moreover, because violence affects people from all social classes, cultures, and ages, and exists at different levels, providing a clear and concise definition becomes challenging. In society, violence is generally understood primarily in its physical dimension, and its existence is accepted when there is a concrete, visible act that causes bodily harm. However, violence is not limited to physical forms; it also encompasses psychological violence (primarily targeting emotions), verbal violence (the most common type), sexual violence, behavioral violence (demeaning attitudes and behaviors), and symbolic violence. Furthermore, violence often emerges at moments when communication breaks down and, from a reversed perspective, can function as a means of communication [3]. Numerous studies on violence against women can also be cited in Türkiye [4]-[13].

On the other hand, there are several theories for understanding and interpreting violence. Violence is a frequently observed phenomenon in human and animal societies, and it often leaves behind wounds that are difficult to heal. While carnivorous animals eating herbivores is not considered violence because it is seen as functional for survival, it is not significantly different from the stronger attacking, injuring, or killing the weak. It can even be viewed as violence based on the non-essentialist and non-dualistic approach preferred when trying to understand the lives of human and animal societies from a relational sociological perspective.

While violence is a phenomenon with a long history, it has become increasingly complex and challenging to deal with. Any behavior that harms another physically, socially, psychologically, economically, or symbolically constitutes violence. Undoubtedly, violence can be individual or collective. It can arise from numerous social, psychological, and socio-psychological factors. Furthermore, we can see violence almost everywhere: in schools, families, workplaces, hospitals, prisons, and parliaments.

Violence is the most unacceptable of all social phenomena. Thoroughly understanding all the conditions that create violence is a prerequisite for developing more realistic solutions. It is not easy to understand the aggressive behavior of a group or individual, and social scientists have developed a wide variety of theories based on differing assumptions. Understanding these theories can undoubtedly provide some advantages, although their contribution to this study is limited because they are not gender specific. The most prominent of these are, Frustration Theory [14], and Social Learning Theory [15], Conflict Theory [16], Concensus or Functionalist Theory [17].

Today, it is more widely accepted that aggressive behavior stems from emotional problems, internal conflicts, insecurity, and various fears. Furthermore, there are also different forms of violence, such as self-directed and other [18] [19].

There are also some important relational studies on violence and aggression [20]. In the book "Risk Assessment," the authors argue that violence is not a pathological event or crime in and of itself. According to them, aggression stems from the instinct of self-defense. In this case, when things go wrong, this protective behavior can transform into a pathological version of violence and must be managed as a risk. In this study, the authors list six types of violence: a) Reactive, b) Self-preservative, c) Instrumental, d) Sadomasochistic, e) Male dominance, f) Gang violence. Although this study has the word relational in its name, it does not generally agree with the basic principles of relational sociology, but it can be said that it adds a special value by including male-dominant violence, that is, being gender-specific.

Reactive violence often occurs when there is an external threat. In Self-preservative violence, the threat can be both external and internal. For example, a person's shame can be the primary driver of violence. Proactive violence can be instrumental. Sometimes it occurs in a cold-blooded and organized manner. Sometimes, resorting to violence produces satisfaction and pleasure. This can then escalate into sadism, which can inflict emotional pain on the victim as well as physical violence. Violence can also be used to demonstrate male dominance. While it is not possible to do it alone, violence can also occur in a group, which is often called gang violence (20).

## 2. Research Design

In recent years, violence against women, children, and animals has become more visible in Türkiye. In fact, it can be argued that the increased disapproval and reaction from the women's movement, as well as the increase in violent incidents, plays a role in this visibility. The problem with this research is that some traditional segments of society in Türkiye remain disinterested in violent incidents, treating them as a normal part of life and even attempting to cover them up. In other words, this article focuses primarily on the problem of violence being perceived as a normal occurrence without much reaction, parallel to its general prevalence. While violence is widespread in all areas in Türkiye, violence against

women and children is more frequent, linked to gender inequality. There is also a significant increase in honor killings targeting women, which are reported daily in newspapers and on social media.

The problem addressed in this article primarily emerged as a product of nationwide reactions to the murder of an eight-year-old girl by her own family in 21 August 2024. A study based on Grounded Theory on the same problem revealed that this murder is similarly related to gender inequality in the family, neighborhood, and Türkiye axes (see **Table 1**) because the core concept at all three levels is gender inequality [21] [22].

**Table 1.** The relationship between violence against women and gender inequality [21] [22].

FAMILY	VILLAGE/NEIGHBORHOOD	TÜRKİYE
TRADITIONAL, EXTENSIVE WITH MANY CHILDREN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS WITH ALL RELATIVES (INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE MIGRATED). FAMILY SOLIDARITY IS HIGH WOMEN ARE VALUED AS MOTHERS HUSBAND AND WIFE TRUST EACH OTHER CHILDREN PROTECT THEM. A DISABLED DAUGHTER LOSES HER LIFE IN A FALL. THE OTHER IS KILLED. EVERYONE HAS CONTRADICTIONARY TALKS ABOUT THEIR LAST DAUGHTER. THEY TRY TO BLAME A STRANGER. <b>BOYS ARE VALUABLE AND PROTECTED IN THE FAMILY / THERE IS GENDER INEQUALITY</b>	THE VILLAGE IS 12 KILOMETERS FROM THE CITY OF DIYABAKIR. THE KURDISH VILLAGE HAS 90 HOUSEHOLDS. THE POPULATION IS 445. THERE ARE VAST TRACTS OF LAND USED FOR AGRICULTURE. THERE IS AN AUTHORITARIAN/FEARED HEADMAN. HOUSES IN THE VILLAGE ARE WITHIN SIGHT OF EACH OTHER, AND EVERYONE IS AWARE OF THE EVENTS. THEY DO NOT HESITATE TO MISLEAD LAW ENFORCEMENT. THEY OFFER BRIBES TO FOREIGN WORKERS TO TAKE THE BLAME. ILLEGAL WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION CAN BE FOUND IN THE HOMES. (THERE ARE FORMER HIZBULLAH MEMBERS AND VILLAGE GUARDS) THEY ARE ORGANIZED IN KEEPING SECRETS AND WRITING NEW STORIES. <b>BOYS ARE VALUABLE AND PROTECTED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD/THERE IS GENDER INEQUALITY.</b>	<b>JUSTICE AND INTERIOR MINISTERS TOOK CONTROL OF THE EVENTS OFFICIAL INVESTIGATIONS LAUNCHED ALL CITIZENS CONDEMNED THE VIOLENCE HOWEVER, VIOLENT INCIDENTS CONTINUED BAR ASSOCIATIONS AND NGOS TRIED TO PROMOTE ORGANIZED RESPONSES MAINSTREAM AND SOCIAL MEDIA DISTORTED THE EVENTS FOR RATINGS TÜRKİYE QUICKLY SHIFTED ITS FOCUS TO OTHER AGENDA ITEMS PRESIDING JUDGES, JUDGES, PROSECUTORS, AND LAWYERS FOCUSED ON STRONG SUSPICION IT WAS ARGUED THAT THE CRIME WAS COMMITTED IN AN ORGANIZED MANNER. IN TÜRKİYE, BOYS ARE VALUABLE THERE IS GENDER INEQUALITY.</b>

### Objectives

In this context, this article attempts to answer two questions:

- What is the historical and cultural background of violence and gender inequality in Türkiye as a process?
- What are the factors that play a role in the reproduction of this spiral of violence?

### Significance and Limitations:

This research is limited to a hermeneutic examination of the Kutadgu Bilig and

Dede Korkut stories, two fundamental works that are crucial for understanding the foundations of dominant culture in Türkiye. Furthermore, the issue problematized through the case analysis of the murder of a young girl in 2024 is extremely important and current. Examining gender inequality, which has been treated descriptively in previous field studies, from a process perspective, and reconstructing cultural sources that describe it in a simpler form to understand its complexities, through a hermeneutic approach, is a neglected yet highly valuable endeavor in the sociological tradition.

### **Methodology**

The method of this study is essentially standard hermeneutics. It is stated that the science of “hermeneutics” emerged from the struggle between different ideas regarding the interpretation of vitally important works and the need to establish the rules of the art of interpretation [23].

In fact, hermeneutic methodology is divided into two categories: existential hermeneutics and standard hermeneutics. Representatives of standard hermeneutics are Dilthey, Schleiermacher, and Weber, while the representative of existential hermeneutics is Hans Georg Gadamer. The New Idealist Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911) argued that because there is a difference in subject matter and field between the natural sciences and the spiritual sciences, there is also a methodological difference. He was one of the leading figures in this field, being the first to use the concept of understanding after Homer and influencing the sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920).

According to Dilthey, hermeneutics is the art of interpreting written works. In short, ‘hermeneutics’, in the sense that Dilthey attributed to it, is a main branch of knowledge that covers the problems related to understanding all cultural products of humanity throughout history [23] [24].

Dilthey, on the other hand, argues that hermeneutics is a method for deriving general historical laws from individual literary works. According to him, language plays a crucial role in interpretation because it is a carrier of meaning. Schleiermacher, another representative of standard hermeneutics, discusses the idea of a “hermeneutic circle.” He argues that the whole can be understood by starting with the part, and the “part” by starting with the whole, and by establishing a “harmony” between them. He argues that one of the fundamental rules of hermeneutics is the achievement of “harmony,” and that without this harmony, true understanding cannot be [23]. In other words, he states that the “hermeneutic circle” formed by the part and the whole contains both an objective and a subjective dimension. Weber, another representative of this view, calls his approach “interpretive” sociology. He does not make a fundamental distinction between the concepts of interpretation and understanding. Weber emphasized that the goal of interpretive sociology was to understand and explain social action. He argued that relying solely on understanding was dangerous; to overcome this, it was necessary to supervise it with causal explanations.

The primary reason for choosing a standard hermeneutic approach over an ex-

istentialist one in this study is that completing the hermeneutic circle advocated by F. Schleiermacher, that is, interpreting works by considering the period in which they were written, allows for more satisfactory results. However, it should be noted that the requirement for examining all the authors' works for the hermeneutic circle in this study was not met. This is because the author of Kutadgu Bilik has no other works, while Dede Korkut is an anonymous work whose author is unknown.

In this hermeneutic study, a grid consisting of key concepts was developed. The key concepts included women, violence, hatred, and inequality. The researcher first marked the paragraphs in the texts where these themes appeared. Then, she attempted to interpret these sections. While subjectivity was inevitably present in the interpretations, an effort was made to be as objective as possible. Previous literature, in particular, served as the most compelling evidence for reliability. The primary reason for limiting ourselves to two texts in this study was that these works are arguably the most prominent works of Turkish Folk Literature [25].

### 3. Hermeneutic Analysis

This section presents a hermeneutic analysis of the Kutadgu Bilik, followed by the 12-story work Dede Korkut. As the first step in completing the hermeneutic cycle, the period in which the works were written is presented, followed by information about the author (Dede Korkut is anonymous, so it has no author).

#### 3.1. Kutadgu Bilig

**a) Period of Writing:** The work was written during the Karakhanid period. The Karakhanid State was the first Turkic state. Its founder was Alper Tonga. Many sources report that the term "Turkish Khaganate" is used instead of "Karakhanid State" and that this region was a continuation of the Gokturks and Turgid Turks [25]. The Karakhanid State was founded in 766 and steadily grew in power. During the reign of Buğra Khan, who ascended to the throne in 921, the Turks embraced Islam and opened up to a new world of faith. It should also be noted that Satuk Bughra Khan (869-955), the first of the Karakhanids to embrace Islam, occupied Kashgar at the age of 25 and assumed the title Bughra Khan [25]. After Bughra Khan, the state underwent numerous ruler changes, resulting in a period of division into Eastern and Western Karakhanids. Furthermore, the demographics and religious structure of East Turkestan became a battleground for adherents of other religions, particularly Buddhism, in addition to Islam [26].

**b) Author:** Yusuf Khas Hajib, author of the Kutadgu Bilik, is known to have been born in present-day Kyrgyzstan (Balasagun-Kuzordu). Yusuf Khas Hajib began writing his work in Balasagun and left his hometown in 1068. He traveled to Kashgar, the capital of the Eastern Karakhanid State, completed his work in 1069-1070, and presented it to the Eastern Karakhanid ruler, Bughra Kara Khan. It is reported that Bughra Khan, who admired the work so much, gave Yusuf the title "Great Hajib" (Greater), meaning "Ulugh Hajib" (Greater) in appreciation.

Yusuf Khas Hajib, who is said to have been of noble birth and is estimated to have been born between 1015 and 1017. As a devout Muslim, he was a poet who adhered strictly to the commandments of his religion and was loved by society. He was also highly innovative in terms of his book organization and the themes he addressed in his works. He is also cited as the first poet to offer advice. Similarly, the verse letter genre originates with him in Turkish literature. Yusuf is an artist who addresses the nation from which he emerged, its past and present, and guides [26]. His broad cultural and life perspective, combined with his descriptive abilities, as well as his deep understanding of Turkish history, the Turkish language, Turkish society, and Turkish literature, make him invaluable. Because the author has no other works other than Kutadgu Bilik, only this work has been analyzed hermeneutically.

Kutadgu Bilig, a combination of the words “Kutadgu” (happiness-giving) and “Bilig” (knowledge), is one of the first Turkish literary works written by Yusuf Has Hacib in the 11th century. The work consists of 6645 couplets. It is written in the mesnevi style, using syllabic rhyme and aruz meter. The language of the work is Karakhanid Turkish, considered old Turkish. At that time, the Turks’ conversion to Islam was very recent, and Yusuf used very few Arabic and Persian words. He wrote his work in a language understandable to everyone, translating religious terms into Turkish [26]. The work begins with praise to God, thanks to the Prophet and the Four Caliphs, and consists of a conversation between four main/symbolic characters. He uses question-and-answer lines, as if they were in a debate between the four main characters. It is stated that it was written in this style so that the reader would be pleased and remember the author of the book with good prayers.

**c) Book:** Kutadgu Bilik is structured around four main symbolic characters and, therefore, the subject (see **Table 2**).

The first is justice, the second is the state, the third is reason, and the fourth is opinion.

Again, the author has given each a Turkish name.

**Table 2.** Subjects/issues and characters.

Four fundamental issues	Character in charge
Law and justice	Sultan/Ruler (Kün-Toğdi)
State	Vizier (Ay-Toldi)
Reason and intelligence	Vizier’s Son (Akla Öğdülmiş)
Conviction/attitude and fate	Vizier’s Brother (Odgurmuş)

The work generally explores the concept of religion, expressing God’s greatness, uniqueness, and creatorship, as well as the importance of turning to religion in fostering a person’s consciousness. It also emphasizes the benefits of knowledge and wisdom, and the awareness they foster. The work frequently lists the benefits

of goodness and virtue. The benefits and harms of language are also significant. The work primarily addresses the nature of the state, the qualities of justice, the qualities of a ruler, the importance of governance and the requirements of the army, and the concepts of military service and war.

The work also addresses how to raise sons and daughters, how to treat employees, the proper manner of serving lords, how to get along with servants, and how to relate to the common people. How to establish relationships with Alevi, the descendants of Ali, scholars, physicians, herbalists, magicians, dream interpreters, astronomers, astrologers, poets, farmers, salesmen, animal breeders, craftsmen and the poor, and the qualifications of the chief doorkeeper, ambassadors, treasurer, chief cook, chief drinker and servants are stated.

The imperfections of the world; nature and the seasons; emotions; the zodiac signs; women; attaining the afterlife; how to marry; the procedure for inviting people to a feast; the method of improving one's homeland; truthfulness versus righteousness, humanity versus humanity; the pity of youth invoking old age; the corruption of time and the hardship of friends are all discussed, and moral advice is offered for rulers and the people.

Furthermore, it is possible to say that discourses highlighting gender inequality towards women, various stigmatizations, and expressions highlighting violence. Women are portrayed as requiring control over their every behavior, viewed as unworthy, and presented as mere "objects" rather than as human beings.

In Kutadgu Bilig, men are told, "The world has three tastes: one is food and drink; the second is woman, who consoles men; and the third is health" [27]. It is seen that the woman is defined as a tool to distract the man, entertain him, relieve his pain and make him happy by saying nice words when necessary.

Another piece of advice given to men is the statement, "Men should be fed, given water, and clothed, and given horses, many slaves, and girls" [27]. Indeed, the use of the words "slave" and "giving a girl" in the same sentence is striking. A woman is likened to a slave, bought and given away, used to fulfill men's desires and please them. From a relational sociological perspective, it is possible to say that women are being portrayed as a slave metaphor. Women are portrayed as beings who are necessary to bear children to ensure the continuation of the generation, but who lose their qualities after giving birth.

A woman's role ceases after giving birth, as raising children is largely considered the father's responsibility. In fact, the man of the house is seen not only as the guardian of the children but also as the guardian of the woman, and women's responsibilities are also placed on the man.

Women are portrayed as incomplete individuals who cannot take responsibility for their own actions and who, if left alone, can make mistakes. In addition, the fact that only men have the right to speak on marriage can be considered as a reflection of the sexist, one-sided and hegemonic patriarchal perspective.

Women are portrayed as poisoning men, requiring protection and education. These reflections are as follows: "Take a virgin girl for your son, give her to a man,

live carefree, oh blessed man”, “Don’t keep your daughter without a husband, you will regret it for a long time at home and die without getting sick”, “O comrade, brother, let me tell you something, it is definitely better for these girls not to be born, if they are born, it is better for them to live”, “If they are born, it is better for them to be underground or for their house to be next to the camp of the dead”, “Do not add females to males while eating and drinking, it will be bad if you do”, “Females should not be allowed out of the house, if they leave, they will lose the path of righteousness”, “The origin of females is meat, one must take care of meat, if you do not take care of meat, it will spoil, there is no other way”, “They are poisonous fruits of trees grown with hardship, do not be hungry for them”, “Many a thousand strong men have had their roots dried up because of females”, “Many red-cheeked, shining-faced men were buried alive because of the females” [27].

From a relational sociological perspective, women are described with metaphors like meat, a tree bearing poisonous fruit, and a poison that eradicates the roots of men. At the same time, girls are seen as people who should not be born, and if they are born, they should not live. The work emphasizes that families who do not marry their daughters in time will regret it, and warns that women left without a husband will resort to extramarital affairs: “Don’t keep your daughter without a husband; you will regret it for a long time and then die immediately.” [27].

In Kutadgu Bilig, women-to-be are depicted as adorning themselves, dressing themselves up, wearing beautiful clothes, and becoming more beautiful. It is stated that the woman who will marry will be illuminated like the sunlit world and will attain a peaceful and happy life [27].

The presence of couplets recommending marriage with women who have received family training and who abstain from haram and sin, along with statements describing women as untrustworthy, renegeing on their promises, and deceitful, is a sign of dualism in relational sociology.

The sentences “The bride’s joy is the wedding night, the Alpine man’s pride is the days of war” [27] address both gender inequalities and the encouragement of women to marry. Indeed, the work suggests that women are encouraged to marry for the sake of the continuation of the human race. While women who marry and start a family are praised and spoken of with kind words, women are not given a say in choosing their husbands.

While the concept of women’s honor is highly emphasized in the work, it is striking that the concept of men’s honor is completely ignored. This can be seen in the following sentence: “Do not take a woman; if you do take one for yourself, take one who is righteous.” [27]. Therefore, the concept of honor, constructed by patriarchal norms, results in the instrumentalization and devaluation of the female body. This result is reflected quite prominently in Kutadgu Bilig.

The fact that previously unmarried women are more ideal than divorced women when choosing a spouse for men is conveyed in the following words: “Unmarried, untouched, never seen the face of a man other than you.” [27]. The au-

thor, who recommends that the woman to be married be a woman of good moral character and innocent, actually portrays an image of a woman who is compliant with gender roles, accepts the power of hegemonic masculinity, is docile, and obedient. He writes that women who do not fit this image should be ignored. At the same time, the fact that men will be unhappy as a result of not meeting the aforementioned criteria can be considered, from a relational sociological perspective, as a linear, evolutionary, non-dialectical situation.

The phrase, “The raven croaks with its spear-like beak, its voice resembling that of a young girl” [27], also suggests that a woman’s voice is as evil as a raven’s. In fact, a further metaphor is created by comparing a woman’s voice to a crow’s. Furthermore, while the phrase “This old world is fickle, its behavior is like that of a girl, its age is long” [27], is used to convey the message that women are unfaithful, untrustworthy, and deceptive. This worldly life, just like women, is deceptive and deceitful.

While these approaches offer negative criticisms of women’s attitudes, it is also striking that the author, who uses marginalizing and exclusionary language toward women, does not make any negative comparisons or criticisms of men. This can be seen in the sentence, “The manners of this world are like those of a girl; do not let them deceive you, O you of decent and honorable demeanor” ([27], p. 472).

In couplets addressing women from a sexist perspective, it is conveyed that a person who does not keep their word can only be a woman. Men are honest and trustworthy individuals whose words are respected. Since the “properly behaved” mentioned in the previous couplet cannot be women, the intended meaning is men [27]. Furthermore, the work conveys the message that asking questions and thinking requires courage, and that this attitude is specific to men; that women are not courageous or knowledgeable enough to think.

In the work, violence is reflected not only in the context of women but also through the concepts of war, military service, struggle, and conflict. A soldier must be brave, fearless, and bold against the enemy; for a soldier to be fearless, a commander must first be brave. Furthermore, according to Hacip, a sword is needed to conquer a country, and a pen is needed to hold it.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of justice, knowledge, virtue, and prudence, violence is prominent as a tool of government in the descriptions of the oppression and cruelty imposed by rulers on the people in state administration. Violence is a necessary condition for justice to be achieved.

At the same time, violence is addressed through emotions, associated with anger and revenge. The following sentences can be cited as examples of discourses directed at violence: “Look, these gentlemen are like lions; if they get angry, they will cut off your head, oh brilliant scholar” [27]. “One should ask for your sword and take all one desires, give it away and increase one’s fame”, “A commander must be honorable; he will resist the enemy for his honor and will not give up revenge” [27]. “Look, in war, one must have the heart of a lion; in fighting, his wrists must be like a tiger’s claws”, “A warrior always carries a weapon, strikes the

enemy and achieves victory” [27].

“Two weapons must be used to strike the enemy, and the enemy must be killed with these two weapons.” “When soldiers engage in battle with the enemy, everyone should shout while fighting the enemy.” “First, strike with arrows from afar, and when you approach, strike with bayonets.” “When swords and axes collide, grab each other by the collar and cling to them with your teeth and nails.” “Resist, never turn your back on the enemy. Strike the enemy or die fighting there.” [27].

It is also possible to say that the turning points for Kutadgu Bilig are cultural and civilizational change. Cultural change is a permanent factor in human civilization [28] and is the transformation of a society’s existing order of material and spiritual civilization from one type to another [29]. As the Turks embraced Islam in large numbers from the 9th century onward, they experienced their first major cultural transformation by becoming part of the Arab-Persian civilization. The second major transformation began with the Tanzimat Edict (1839) and accelerated after the founding of the Republic, with the transition from Eastern to Western civilization. In this respect, it can be said that Kutadgu Bilig serves as a pioneering and guiding book in the cultural transformation that followed entry into the Arab-Persian civilization.

Furthermore, the work does not provide clear information about social structure and social relations. The fact that the relationship between happiness and morality is solely linked to goodwill reveals the ambiguity of values and behavior patterns within society.

At the same time, the juxtaposition of real and supernatural events within Kutadgu Bilig manifests as hybridity and liminality. The work explores topics such as how a society and a person should be, while also addressing supernatural elements, including mentions of supernatural beings such as dragons, jinn, and fairies.

### 3.2. Dede Korkut Stories

**a) Period of Writing:** Originally titled “Kitab-ı Dede Korkut Ala Lisan-ı Taife-i Oğuzan,” the book, consisting of twelve epic stories and a preface, was written in the 15th and 16th centuries. The work recounts the traditional lifestyle, struggles, language, religion, family structure, ethnography, and mythological worldview of the Oghuz Turks in eastern Anatolia during the 12th-14th centuries [30] [31] and bears traces of the pre-Islamic period. The stories generally cover themes such as love, heroism, and bravery, as well as the internal struggles of the Oghuz Turks and their wars with neighboring tribes. This work, composed in Azeri Turkish and blending verse and prose, presents the “Dede Korkut” as an unknown folk poet.

The Dede Korkut stories are told through the eyes of this wise man known as Dede Korkut or Korkut Ata. It is said that Dede Korkut lived before the Turks converted to Islam and led religious ceremonies (living as a kam or baksı). With the conversion to Islam, he is said to have gained the new title of saint.

According to the introduction to the Book of Dede Korkut stories, the following sentence is cited as supporting this thesis: “He was the first person of the Oghuz, their absolute diviner. Whatever he said came true. He would tell all sorts of news from the unseen. God Almighty inspired his heart.” [32].

It is also said that Dede Korkut taught the shamans how to play the kopuz during the period when the Turks believed in Shamanism, and that he also accepted Islam and guided the people during the period when the Turks converted to Islam. Dede Korkut, a descendant of the Kayı tribe of the Oghuz, is said to be descended from the Prophet Isaac. Records indicate that Dede Korkut’s descendants include Osman Gazi, the founder of the Ottoman Empire. Dede Korkut is considered a wise man by the Turks. Possessing a vast knowledge of almost every subject, from social life to nature, Dede Korkut was also well-versed in the finest details of traditions and customs [21].

**b) Author:** The Dede Korkut Stories, one of the most important products of the transition from the epic period to folk storytelling, began to take shape in Central Asia. It is an anonymous work that underwent some changes based on religious and environmental motifs after the Turks converted to Islam (751) and arrived in Anatolia (1071).

**c) Analysis of the Work:** The first of the Dede Korkut stories tells the story of a great lord (Dirse Khan) and his son (Boğaç Khan). Boğaç Khan was envied by his father’s other warriors, and as a result, he complained to his father, Dirse Khan. Finally, sent on a hunt by his father, Boğaç Khan was attacked by an evil spirit. However, at the end of the story, he became the hero who defeated the evil spirit and saved his people.

The second story tells the story of the looting of the house of a great lord (Salur Kazan) by thieves. It recounts the events that followed the lord’s drunken defiance of all warnings after he went hunting at a feast. In short, it tells the story of how Salur Kazan, whose wife, child, and mother were captured while he was hunting, defeated his enemy along with other Turkish/Oghuz lords.

The third story tells how the son (Bamsi Beyrek), born after a long period of childlessness, of a bey (Kam Büre Bey) saved those who brought him gifts from their enemies and married the woman he loved (Banu Çicek).

The fourth story is a Dede Korkut tale, which tells the story of a bey’s young, inexperienced son (Uruz, son of Kazan Bey) being captured, and the bey’s wife (Burla Hatun) rescuing them with 40 brave women. This story is significant because, for the first time, the heroism of women is depicted.

The fifth story tells the story of a young man’s wife (Deli Dumrul) willing to sacrifice her life to Azrael to save Dumrul, instead of her parents. In Turkish mythology, the motif of self-sacrifice (Aylanu) is most prominently depicted in this episode, which depicts Deli Dumrul’s power struggle with Azrael, the angel of death. At the end of the story, Deli Dumrul and his wife survive, while his parents die. This story also features female heroism.

The sixth story tells the heroism of a lord (Kanturalı) and his wife (Selcen

Hatun), describing how they defeated the infidels they were attacking. This story also highlights female heroism.

The seventh story tells the heroism of a lord (Kazilik Koca)'s son (Yiğenek) in rescuing his captured father.

The eighth story tells of a lord (Aruz Koca) whose son (Basat) is raised by lions. The story tells of Basat's killing of the giant Tepegöz, a threat to the Oghuz lands.

The ninth story tells of a lord (Begil) who was wounded after settling on the Georgian border and the heroic struggle of his son (Emre) against the enemies who attacked him.

The tenth story tells of two brothers (Eğrek and Seğrek) who were captured in a trap set by infidels. The brothers later realize they have been deceived and are saved.

In the eleventh story, a lord (Salur Koca) is captured while his child is still young. His son (Yiğenek) grows up and rescues his father from enemies 16 years later.

The twelfth and final story tells of the Oghuz splitting into two factions, Internal and External, and their hostile warfare. In fact, Turkish lords are historically known for their brotherly strife, which Dede Korkut constantly criticizes.

Generally speaking, Dede Korkut appears in the stories as a lofty figure who, as the voice of the Oghuz Turks, expresses goodness, truth, and the unity of God. Presenting images of goodness as a means for the Oghuz tribe's self-actualization, Dede Korkut guides the acquisition of various values such as good, beauty, and righteousness through the work of lords such as Boğaç Khan, Uruz, Bamsı Beyrek, Kantunali, and Yiğenek. At the end of the story, Dede Korkut prays to the Oghuz khans by composing an Oghuzname, contributing significantly to the acquisition of values such as God's voice on earth and good deeds [33].

The values present in Dede Korkut's stories can be listed as family unity, love, respect, honesty, courage, responsibility, struggle, compassion, generosity, honor, solidarity, patriotism, and aesthetics [34]. In addition, weaknesses and negative values such as violence, neglect, jealousy, resentment, and heedlessness are also displayed through a chain of events within the harmony of human nature.

Among the negative values, violence is the most striking. Violence largely manifests itself in the socio-cultural context, reflecting the gendered roles assumed by women and men. The Introduction section of the Book of Dede Korkut directly defines the roles of "girl" and "boy." The fulfillment of these roles within the stories is explained within a specific plot structure, and at this point, the son is assigned important duties for the continuity of the family and society.

Women are also seen as akin to the "Alpine Type," the ideal male type; they appear as ideal mothers and wives, ideal lovers, and ideal helpers. For example, Dirse Khan's wife is portrayed as the self-sacrificing mother. After Boğaç Khan is injured by his father and is not told, he does not believe it and goes to Kazılık Mountain to search for his son. Burla Hatun, on the other hand, stands out for her loyalty and self-sacrifice, demonstrating the ideal wife and motherhood, in

line with the message of the Book of Dede Korkut. In many instances, women are distinguished by their loyalty and honor.

One of the most prominent roles assigned to women in the Book of Dede Korkut within the context of gender is the ideal wife, an example of which can be seen in Deli Dumrul's wife. In the story, Deli Dumrul, in conflict with the Grim Reaper, is told that he must bring a life to be saved. The message here is that the mother who refused to give her life for her son should be killed, while the wife should be rewarded. What is rewarded and highlighted is the sense of sacrifice. In this way, the role of self-sacrificing women is passed down from a gender perspective. In the Book of Dede Korkut, ideal women are presented as complementary to men as wives and mothers.

For example, Selcen Hatun rides a horse and fights alongside her husband against the enemy. Here, Selcen Hatun's heroism is portrayed as fitting the ideal wife type. The lifestyle depicted in the Book of Dede Korkut gives women an active role and, in parallel, creates "alp women" who can be the equivalent of the brave "alp man."

The lovers of the heroes, such as Bamsı Beyrek or Kan Turalı, are also women of superior qualities. Banu Çiçek and Selcen Hatun are portrayed as the ideal lovers of ideal heroes. Horseback riding, using weapons, fighting bravely against infidels and enemies, being selfless and warrior-like, and hosting guests when no man is present are among the positive qualities of women highlighted in the stories. The portrayal of the ideal woman is based on these qualities. Within the narrative created around strong characters fighting for the current state and future of society, the lovers in The Book of Dede Korkut are idealized to complement the hero's greatness. The most important role of a woman is to cultivate and behave in accordance with this typology.

However, women are also portrayed as negative characters in the Dede Korkut stories. The fourth type is described as a positive type of woman to marry and trustworthy (see **Table 3**).

**Table 3.** Negative characterizations of Oghuz women in the Dede Korkut stories.

1) Withering identity (Solduran sop)	A woman who despises her husband, doesn't appreciate what she has, is always outwardly focused, doesn't understand anything, makes her husband sad, has a pessimistic outlook on everything, is ill-mannered, and complains.
2) Gap filler identity (Dolduran sop)	A woman who is lazy, gossipy, manipulative, irresponsible, and accusatory, too lazy to feed her guests, inhospitable, disrespectful, doesn't take advice, is rude and stubborn, and embarrasses and disregards her husband.
3) Complementary identity (Yardımcı sop)	A woman who is an assistant or helper is often characterized as a servant, a slave, or a caretaker.

On the other hand, in Dede Korkut's stories, defeating enemies and infidels can also be considered violence. Violence is also used in Dede Korkut's stories to acquire goods, property, and wealth [16] [17].

Besides the most common physical form of violence, there are also emotional, psychological, and economic forms. While physical violence prioritizes power, emotional/psychological violence prioritizes language, and economic violence prioritizes material possessions and property. In economic violence, the crucial point is to deprive the other party of their possessions, threatening their very existence by taking away their material resources. By taking material possessions, the other party suffers, and by losing what they already possess, they become weaker and more vulnerable.

From Dede Korkut's perspective, we can see that in his narratives, property, money, and livestock are among the elements of importance to the lords. Powerful Oghuz lords also gained status within society through their economic power. For example, upon Boğaç's display of bravery, Dede Korkut demands a throne, horses, camels, sheep, a house, and clothing for him. These demands are complementary elements of bravery. In other words, besides heroism, property is also necessary for lordship.

Having an abundance of wealth meant becoming the Great Oghuz Bey. In many stories, particularly those featuring the characters Deli Dumrul, Basat, and Tepegöz, violence is seen not only in physical and psychological violence but also in economic terms, such as plunder, confiscation, and hunting [16] [17].

From a relational sociological perspective, the stories portray various female types, portraying both positive and negative characteristics of women, embodying numerous 'dualities'. The idea that men can only have a happy marriage if they possess the ideal female type reflects a 'linearity'.

The 'turning point' for the work is that it was written during the transition from the epic period to folk storytelling. However, we lack sufficient information about the social structure and social relations of that time. While the stories primarily address topics such as family, gender roles, and power relations, their failure to provide sufficient information about the historical context and the true structure of society creates 'ambiguities'.

For example, in the stories, whether men and women share the same space or occupy different spaces also alters the relationship between them. Sociologically, space is a significant factor influencing a society's social structure and gender roles. However, how these themes are portrayed in the Dede Korkut stories and how closely they align with the real structure of society remain 'ambiguous'.

At the same time, the juxtaposition of real and supernatural events reveals a 'hybridity'. While themes such as the nomadic life of the Turks, wars, love, and family are realistic, supernatural beings, magical objects, extraordinary events, the supernatural powers of the heroes, magical horses, and legendary creatures reflect the supernatural events depicted in the works.

## 4. Discussion

This section attempts to discuss the discourse on gender inequality, drawing not only on sociological but also historical and cultural sources, including current violence against women.

In fact, there is a significant literature in Türkiye on the subject of masculine domination and the marginalization of women. For example, in her book “Manhood: Impossible Power,” [11], a socialist feminist writer, questions different experiences of masculinity in the family/home, on the street, and in the workplace, and their commonalities. In an attempt to understand how masculine domination is constructed, she makes comparisons between private and public spheres.

According to Sancar, while modern thought focuses more on women in the context of gender inequality, the core issue is masculinity. While biology is important to a certain extent, the primary focus, for example, is on biology’s sociology. However, it’s more appropriate to say that they are effective together. Because we reject the binary, we can say that liminality exists. In short, the problem isn’t with men, but with masculinity. Manhood essentially means masculine gender roles. On the other hand, masculinity is identified with the penis. The penis is a symbol of male power. Masculinity consists of both socially defined and biologically created factors. Indeed, this is also the case with Apollo and Heracles in Greek mythology [35].

Therefore, the key point to emphasize is that gender-focused issues existed before monotheistic religions. However, since the Torah recorded most of the pre-written legends, the direction of the arrows is directed there [36]. Therefore, to fully understand the processes of private property and power relations during the Neolithic period and beyond, we need to turn to the anthropology of women.

For example, the Legend of Lilith, thought to have existed since Creation, is seen as a significant figure in understanding societies’ views of women throughout history. In the sacred books of the three Abrahamic religions, Adam and Eve are featured as the first humans created. However, some stories and myths mention Lilith as the first woman created before Eve [37].

The earliest traces of Lilith appear in the Sumerian Epic of Gilgamesh [38], and later in the Ben Sira Alphabet, based on Jewish culture. In the Ben Sira Alphabet, Lilith claimed to be created equal to Adam and, in the name of independence, refused to lie beneath him during intercourse, thus leaving Paradise. She subsequently transformed into a female demon who haunted humans.

Over time, Lilith became a symbol or sign of evil, bringing death and chaos and associated with disobedience. The portrayal of Lilith, thought to be the first woman born, with such negative qualities is, in fact, a manifestation of the negative perception of women that has persisted from the past to the present. Indeed, by the time of monotheistic religions, the connection between women and evil began to become evident in sacred texts, especially in the Jewish scriptures. Symbols of the snake-devil-woman (Lilith) began to appear in Jewish scriptures. Today, feminists are questioning these perceptions of women. Unlike their precedes-

sors, they now see Lilith as the first brave and courageous woman to challenge male-dominated authority [37].

As is well known, negative narratives about women abound in Greek mythology [35]. For example, when Prometheus stole fire from Olympus and gave it to humans, Zeus was enraged. Prometheus was chained to the Caucasus Mountains and punished by having his liver eaten by an eagle every day. Prometheus endured this punishment for many years. In fact, Zeus did not want to let the person to whom fire was given go unpunished. He also had sinister plans for the future of humans. First, Zeus decided to create woman. He began this process, in which many gods would participate, with his son, Zeus, creating a statue of a woman from clay. The statue's beauty resembled that of Aphrodite, the goddess of love. Zeus dressed the statue in the most beautiful clothes. Everyone admired the adorned woman. They then decided to give her a name. They named her Pandora, meaning "gift of the gods." Thus, the gods created the first mortal woman. Later, Zeus gifted Pandora a box. She also warns him not to open this box, which contains evil and unhappiness. Pandora is then sent to Earth.

Epimetheus is captivated by the sight of Pandora, and they marry. However, during all this, Epimetheus forgot his brother Prometheus's advice. Prometheus had warned him not to accept anything from Zeus. Later, according to mythology, when Pandora unknowingly opened the box, lies, jealousy, disease, gossip, and greed spread throughout the world. Realizing her mistake, Pandora quickly closed the box, but it was too late. However, when she closed the box, only hope remained. Thus, Pandora is accused of unintentionally imprisoning humanity's hope in the box. Thus, as a woman, Pandora is held responsible for spreading all the evil that has disrupted everyone's lives upon opening the box [35].

Because attributing women's marginalization to any ethnic group (Turkish, Arab, Persian, etc.) or religion (Jewish, Christian, or Islamic) would be incomplete and inaccurate (ambiguous), we need to examine the relevant current literature. For example, British feminist sociologist Sylvia Walby also engages in theoretical discussions on male domination. She analyzes how issues of work and labor, family, sexuality, the state, and culture are addressed in different feminist approaches [39]. While evaluating the feminist struggle, she also critiques it. By conducting a process analysis, she attempts to demonstrate how patriarchy is reproduced in different ways.

Rayna Reiter, in her book "The Anthropology of Women" [40], explains why women are subordinated. She discusses equality and inequalities between genders. These studies, which form the basis of the women's movement and are based on process analysis, are extremely valuable.

According to Türkeş-Günay [29], as a folklorist and literary scholar, just as genetic codes play an important role in the formation of an individual, "cultural codes" also play a significant role in the formation of a nation. To understand these codes, primary sources must be examined. According to her, our cultural codes in Türkiye are mostly found in our folk literature products, proverbs, and

idioms. In our opinion, these analyses can be conducted relationally and sociologically: 1) By rejecting dichotomies 2) By rejecting essentialism 3) By focusing on uncertainties 4) By looking at the process 5) By selecting turning points 6) It can be even more productive when done by identifying liminality states and proposing new concepts [41].

While there is much debate about whether relational sociology is a new paradigm, the lack of consensus on this issue is consistent with its perspective. Its preference for ambiguities or uncertainties and liminal situations also makes it impossible to provide a precise definition. Therefore, in this study, it seems appropriate to list its basic principles in order to make a precise definition of relational sociology.

In the words of Türkeş-Günay [29], “In Turkish literature, which began with epics, the works studied under the title of Folk Literature and Music are not only artistic, but also, and sometimes even more so, a memory that carries the codes and ciphers of individual, historical, and social events, emotions, acceptances, experiences, and the totality of cultural meanings, values, and rules. Furthermore, within these codes, there are both positive and negative aspects, and these should be examined and sorted out, thus paving the way for society” (Liminality) [41].

A key point emphasized in Türkeş-Günay’s work is the Turks’ shift in civilization. She argues that the Turks underwent significant changes not only as they entered Western civilization but also as they entered Islamic civilization. (Turning Point) [41].

Among other sources, Türkeş-Günay devotes special attention to Kutadgu Bilig. Kutadgu Bilig is considered the first significant literary, cultural, and political work following the Turks’ entry into Islamic civilization. Its most significant feature is the combination of elements adopted from Islam, a new civilization for the Turks, and the cultural codes of the old equestrian-nomadic civilization. Moreover, these elements contain both positive and negative aspects (liminality) [41].

The issue of women and their perception in Turkish culture is a key topic that Türkeş-Günay consistently focuses on. Indeed, from the very beginning of her book, she makes some valuable observations on the subject of women. According to her, “All comments that belittle and exclude women by reference to religion stem from men’s subconscious fear and curiosity of the opposite sex, which they do not recognize or identify with, and which they know to be different from themselves” (the rejection of the duality of men and women).

According to her, historical cultural artifacts may also play a role in the reproduction of certain views that subordinate women in Türkiye today.

For example, in Kutadgu Bilik, Yusuf Has Hacı, who offers advice to men choosing a spouse, distinguishes between girls and women when choosing a spouse, while also highlighting the taboo of virginity. While virginity is considered a symbol of purity and innocence for a woman, sexual intercourse before marriage is considered shameful, sinful, and dishonorable. As emphasized by King and

Kalav (as cited in Demir) [42], this approach is, in fact, the concept of honor, a commitment to social norms, affiliations, moral codes, traditions, and customs. As noted by Kalav (as cited in Demir [42]), it is also a phenomenon generated by a patriarchal lifestyle, gaining significance through gender norms.

Unfortunately, the book contains numerous negative value judgments about women, some of which are reproduced below. Because these ideas have the power to legitimize the killing of women and girls, they have been addressed in this study and shared with the public.

- “Don’t keep your single daughter at home for long. You’ll die of regret before you even get sick.”
- “Oh brother, let me tell you something. It’s better for these girls not to be born, and if they are, not to live.”
- “If they are born, it’s better for them to be underground. Or to have their house next to a cemetery.”
- “Females should always be watched at home. The inside of a female cannot be like the outside.”
- “Do not let anyone who sees and admires your woman into your home. “Don’t let your woman go near a man.”

Unfortunately, such attitudes and behaviors are widespread in Türkiye. Women are both untrustworthy and always seen as guilty. Traditionally, women are often killed by the youngest man, based on a decision made by the family council. The reason for the murder of a young man is that he receives lesser sentences under the law.

When sentencing, judges must investigate whether the crime was individual or organized, such as a family council, and if so, grant the perpetrator mitigating circumstances. Because organized crimes often lead to more severe penalties. It is also a source of shame that, despite the murder of an eight-year-old girl in Türkiye in 2024, many lawyers defended the case by claiming that the murder was not a family council decision, despite the fact that the murder was committed by the uncle, mother, and brother (see **Table 1**).

In fact, the defense of some family members and other brothers, claiming that if the family council had made a decision, no one would have intervened, and the case would not have been made public, demonstrates that the events are not only complex but also the product of an extremely conservative and unacceptable mindset. In fact, the conservative government’s attempt to suppress criticism in the name of protecting family unity is another social problem in Türkiye.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

There has been a significant increase in academic studies on violence against women in Türkiye since 2019. This demonstrates a rise in both social and academic awareness of violence. However, it is also noteworthy that studies targeting women are predominantly conducted by women, and that male researchers lack interest in this field. Furthermore, the fact that most studies are qualitative and that mixed-design studies are scarce diminishes contributions to the field. Simi-

larly, despite the interdisciplinary nature of the subject, it is often studied solely by social scientists, a shortcoming that stands out [8].

In fact, violence is not a natural phenomenon, but rather a social phenomenon that emerges within the context of human beings' historical and social existence. It is also a universal phenomenon, being a phenomenon seen in all societies. Furthermore, violence is a highly complex phenomenon that cannot be explained by a single cause, due to the fact that humans are unique and unique psychosocial and biopsychological beings, as well as their historical and social structure (religion, language, tradition, culture, etc.).

Therefore, it is a subject of diverse scientific fields and should be addressed as interdisciplinary. In other words, it requires the collective and cumulative knowledge and research of disciplines such as law, politics, social anthropology, psychology, and sociology. Similarly, it is possible to say something about what violence is, what its origins are, and how it can be tolerated, and to offer suggestions for politically motivated action plans.

For example, instead of educating a single type of individual, national education policies should prioritize exploring global and national problems, equipping students according to their interests, skills, and talents, and preventing them from navigating a mountain of unnecessary information.

Furthermore, girls must be educated; they must be provided with a self-sufficient income and career; the distinction between girls and boys within the family must be eliminated, and efforts must be made to foster a democratic family structure. Democracy that is not experienced within the family cannot be experienced in the streets, schools, parties, unions, or workplaces. Unfair practices and corruption in the public sector, driven by favoritism, civic affiliation, regionalism, and ideological and religious unity, must be prevented, and meritocracy must be prioritized. It must not be forgotten that the implementation of a state governed by the rule of law, not merely a state with a constitution, is a characteristic of modern societies.

Violence, wherever it occurs and regardless of its origin, must be condemned and prevented with deterrent sanctions. The state's duty is not to prevent violence through violence, but to apprehend and convict perpetrators. Complaints of domestic violence (violence against women and children, abuse, and incest) must be taken seriously by the relevant authorities and must be prosecuted.

In particular, the Ministry of Youth's reprinting of Kutadgu Bilik and its nationwide internet access has led to its reckless re-consumption. Public institutions, while striving to combat violence, cannot contribute to its reproduction. However, since this work is considered the most important work written after the Turks embraced Islam, removing its violent elements seems unlikely in the short term. What truly matters is the lack of a name and value for women in traditional culture, and the helpless silence of these women.

What we can find solace in is that the Dede Korkut stories examined in this article, which are among the most important works of the Turkish cultural world

and have served as a source for many fields, from literature and language to tradition and proverbs, from history to geography [43], are relatively supportive of gender equality. In fact, as the eminent historian Fuat Köprülü in Türkiye put it, “If you put all of Turkish literature on one side of the scale and Dede Korkut on the other, Dede Korkut would still weigh more.” [34]) and this could be considered a better chance than nothing for gender equality in Türkiye.

Finally, all movements advocating for women’s, environmental, human, and animal rights should collaborate to increase interdisciplinary studies that are relational, sociological, process-based, reject essentialism and dualisms, focus on the uncertain, and reveal liminal situations.

It cannot be denied that violence against women, especially the violence defended in historical and cultural works, is indirectly, if not directly, related to the statistics on the murder of many women observed in today’s Türkiye and published in official state organs [44].

### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

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