Deconstructive Analysis of Netflix Series: *Hollywood*

Emir Orhan Kılıç, Ezgi Çakır

ABSTRACT

Deconstruction, put forward by Jacques Derrida, is a theory that combines literature and philosophy to reveal the structural hegemonies, hierarchies in the language, and to find alterations and instabilities in the language called "logos". The Netflix miniseries Hollywood (2020) is created and produced by Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan. It is suitable for deconstructive analysis, as it tells about a permanent displacement, inconsistencies, changes and plays in meaning, gender confusions and the establishment of new hierarchies instead of the fallen ones. Deconstruction technique has been conducted on film criticism in various ways. Case study of this research; the Hollywood series, which has claimed itself to have been a production against sexist and racist discrimination in the 1940s Hollywood, will be shown to have unconsciously constructed new hierarchies and hegemonies while fighting the existing taboos. The aim of this study is to contribute former practices of the use of deconstruction in film criticism. As a result of this study, it has been revealed that Netflix series Hollywood feeds the hegemonies it criticizes and serves those structures.

Keywords: Deconstruction, Hollywood, Hegemony, Race, Gender

EMİR ORHAN KILIÇ
Res. Ass.
Beykent University
orhankilic@beykent.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9671-1995

EZGİ ÇAKIR
Res. Ass.
Beykent University
ezgicakir@beykent.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6910-3417

Netflix Dizisi Hollywood'un Yapısökümcü Analizi

Emir Orhan Kılıç, Ezgi Çakır

ÖZ

Jacques Derrida tarafından öne sürülen "yapısöküm", yapısal hegemonileri, dildeki hiyerarşileri ortaya çıkarmak ve logos adı verilen dilin anlamındaki değişiklikleri ve istikrarsızlıkları bulmak için edebiyat ve felsefeyi birleştiren bir teoridir. Netflix mini dizisi Hollywood (2020) Ryan Murphy ve Ian Brennan tarafından yazılmış ve yönetilmiştir. Dizi, siyah ve beyaz ırklar arasındaki tahakküm uygulayıcı rolünün kişilerce el değiştirişini, anlamdaki tutarsızlıkları ve değişiklikleri, oyunları, cinsel kimlik karmaşalarını, ikili hegemonya çatışmasında önceden baskı altında olanlar yerine yeni hiyerarşilerin kurulmasını anlattığı için yapısöküm analizi için uygundur. Yapısöküm tekniği film eleştirisinde farklı şekillerde uygulanmıştır. Bu araştırmanın vaka çalışması; 1940'larda Hollywood'daki cinsiyetçi ve ırkçı ayrımcılığı işleyen bir yapım olan Hollywood dizisinin, mevcut tabularla savaşırken bilinçsizce yeni hiyerarşiler ve hegemonyalar inşa ettiğini gösterecektir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, film eleştirisinde daha önce yapılmış yapısöküm tekniklerine katkı sağlamaktır. Bu çalışmanın sonucu olarak, Hollywood dizisinin eleştirdiği tahakkümleri beslediği ve bu yapılara hizmet ettiği ortaya çıkmıştır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Yapısöküm, Hollywood, Hegemonya, Irk, Cinsiyet

EMİR ORHAN KILIÇ
Arş. Gör.
Beykent Üniversitesi
orhankilic@beykent.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-9671-1995

EZGİ ÇAKIR
Arş. Gör.
Beykent Üniversitesi
ezgicakir@beykent.edu.tr
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6910-3417

INTRODUCTION

Defined as the metaphysics of presence, Derrida has argued that logocentrism is brought to the fore as the Western thought reading reality. According to the metaphysics of existence, there are centers such as God, idea, mind and matter. The existence of pure existence and truth can be discovered based on this. Logocentrism is based on various dualisms such as existence-absence, matter-spirit, nature-culture, feminine-masculine. Culture against nature, and masculine over the feminine have gained privileged status in time. Othered nature, feminine, absence, madness et al. is trivialized. Derrida claims that racism, colonialism, and poverty in the world are a product of othering in logocentrism which means metaphysics of existence (Derrida, 2002, pp. 351-68).

The method of deconstruction is put forward against the metaphysics of existence. The contrasts here are tried to be distorted by deconstruction. In other words, deconstruction is an effort that seeks the truth in the center and distorts all the narratives that come into existence through marginalization. It can be asserted that deconstruction involves a methodical attitude that distorts the grand narratives of truth, tries to analyze them by dismantling the truth discourses produced by central ideas. Based on the idea that every truth discourse is a fiction, it is tried to understand what the meaning of knowledge is by distorting these fictions.

Reality is not dealt with by breaking away from the purpose of daily life. Because of the relation of knowledge to interpretation, the truth has an ambiguous existence, so Derrida used the expressions; truth is a trace, something odorless. The truth mentioned here is a state of constant formation, movement and change, and it passes from one context to another. Therefore, language can be more slippery and ambiguous than structuralists think. Although meaning is not identified with language, signs can always pass through other meanings. Thus, language constantly comes into existence with the meaning game that moves from one context to another. Derrida's statement that "there is nothing but text" supports this. We see that Derrida's thoughts on the existence of truth distort the narratives of modern theory (Derrida, 1998, pp. 6-18).

The structure mentioned here describes the constructed texts and their parts. Decoding a concept, a sentence, a film text gives meaning to what has been constructed. The deconstruction reading done here provides to see any text as complex historical and cultural. By explaining the internal hierarchy

and pre-assumptions of the text under consideration, the concealment is tried to be illuminated. It examines what is suppressed, what is hidden and what is not said. It does not completely remove the hidden behind text, but it redefines the texts. Even if it does not resolve inconsistencies, it reveals hierarchies that involve the purification of information. These texts build our interpretation of the world as Derrida points out. In this study, it is aimed to reveal hidden dominations by using the deconstruction technique of images, characters, objects, themes and even representations that are not seen on the stage as if they were applied to a text. The scientific importance of this study is that it follows former studies and practices on the applicability of deconstruction technique in cinema and contributes the field. While using deconstruction as the theory of this research, case study is the method. Netflix original series *Hollywood* (2020) is going to be deconstructed. In the first part, theoretical background of deconstruction is given as the beginning. Secondly, academic studies on film and deconstruction will be discussed. Case study is going to cover Netflix original series *Hollywood*. Three conflicts upon hegemonical dualities will be deconstructed to find out hidden, unintentional or intenitonal dominations and meanings caused by language.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE: DECONSTRUCTION

Derrida's opposition to Ferdinand De Saussure begins with the belief that speech is the source of presence. Structuralists and semioticians assert a stable relationship between sign, signifier and signified. In poststructuralism, arbitrary and non-referential sides of the sign are emphasized. This notion is indeed a more comprehensive understanding of language and subjectivity which takes their nature as conventional and arbitrary. Like structuralists' disapproval of phenomenology and humanism, poststructuralist objected the theoretical grounds of structualists that mind had an inherent structure which lets us resolve the problematic and conflicts betwixt nature and culture. They gave importance to speech over text. Unlike them, poststructuralists made a historical reading on signification (Best & Kellner, 1991, p. 20). They differed from structuralism concisely with their decentering the center of hierarchy. Thereby, concentrating on any primacy or central is rejected. Marginality or repressed or other ones are highlighted (Sandler, 1997, p. 337). Among prominent critiques of structuralism, Derrida, Jean-François Lyotard, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault and Julia Kristeva produced theories interpreting different areas regarding poststructuralist thought. Structuralists believed there were definite

structures around the play field of language and humans are confined to this domain of language and speech. Their actions could not cross the borders of this closed structures. Poststructuralists opposed this idea and emphasized the constant and dynamic change in the signification process. It means the unstability in the meaning and language. When somebody says tree, it could mean as many meanings as the ones who hears that word. Thereby signifier is given importance over the signified in this conception. In other words, signification is an infinite process thereby semiotic production of meaning could not be consistent. Intertextual play between signifiers in speech is never ending (Best & Kellner, 1991, pp. 20-21). Derrida says that the meaning is an infitine implication which means indistinctive transferring from signifier to signified. Derrida calls it as dissemination (Derrida, 1973, p. 58). He argues that self is a construct of language. There is nothing but text. As it is pointed out in tree example, there is not a consistent match between a peculiar signifier and what it signifies. There may be numberless implicatons of any signifier which therefore makes language as an infinite representment of signifiers. Problem at this stage is that these signifiers could not reach an ultimate truth. In other words, meaning is put off (Sandler, 1997, p. 337). Basic idea behind structuralism is the presence of a sign system. Therefore, unveiling this structure is prerequisite for a researcher or critic. Structuralist considered language as a stable system. Poststructuralists saw is incoherent and unsteady. While structuralists regarded it as a natural and inevitable action for human, poststructuralists conceived language as inauthentic, conditional and ever-shiftin (Roy , 1989).

According to Derrida, Western Culture or metaphysics as he puts it, takes metaphors like self, God, human, conscience, etc. into the center which are metaphysical presumptions placed upon presence of the being. This center is the source of hierarchies and binary oppositions. Ideal thinking is wrong at this point since looking for this ultimate metaphysical meaning and truth only leads to nullity. Instability of language renders a coherent meaning transition between human beings not possible (Derrida, 2002). He not only critiques Saussure's but also Martin Heidegger's metaphysics and deconstructs them. As he names sign as a structural differentiation and elaborates through asserting one half of sign is never there while the other half is not always there. Since signifiers and signified constantly replace, they continuously disconnect or come together (Derrida, 1994, pp. 32-36). This idea is the basic mindset and premise for Derrida's claim that true and ultimate meaning is hard to be reached. He calls this numberless circulation of signifieds and signifiers as intertextuality. Accordig to that, no one

can grasp a final meaning because this intertextuality endlessly proceeds. He rejects presence and total certainty. Moreover, on the basis of his denial of presence, he also rejects now and present presence. While disagreeing this presence, he differs from the belief of philosophers as Saussure, Claude Levi-Strauss that final truth can be reached. Those philosophers according to him, believed that language may give us enough power to perceive that truth. On the contrary, language is far from that power of stability and coherence. According to Derrida, it is not possible to go beyond language when one wants to go beyond the culture and local tradition in which he or she is born and raised. It is not possible to discover the essence of truth or knowledge with language. At this point, fundamental differences of opinion among Derrida and the ones of structuralist philosophy stem from the hegemony conflict between writing and speech. This clash is the main reason behind his naming metaphysics of presence as logocentrism, which he calls as the dominant literary and philosophical source of Western Culture (Derrida, 2002, pp. 351-368).

The main contradiction of the structuralists is the fact that they still adhere to the metaphysical assumptions they claim to avoid. Here, the most distinctive feature of this metaphysics is logocentrism. For Derrida, the semiotics of Levi-Strauss is also logocentric. The reason for the understanding of the superiority of speech over text is that domination by speech can be established more easily during signification (Derrida, 1998, pp. 6-30). This logocentrism, which stands at the basis of Western thought, is the result of a metaphysics of a search for certainty. This is the metaphysics of presence that Derrida criticizes. It brought the speech to the fore over writing and brought it to a more valuable point. Derrida deconstructs, reverses the western tradition of the superiority of this speech over writing. Writing is not like speech. The writer cannot establish a hegemony by making the reader heard. The reader is only facing the text. and there is no dictating imposition. If speech is a despotic act, writing and reading are free (Derrida, 1998, pp. 165-216). At this point, today it should be emphasized that Derrida's critique not only covers literary tradition but other disciplines as well. Cinema should be taken as one of these ares because of its strong relationship with discourse, ideology and language (Ryan & Kellner, 2016, p. 17). Calling it as a method is insufficient for defining deconstruction. As Richard Beardsworth asserts, deconstruction can not be demonstrated or formulized. It is about what is incalculabe or unpredictable, unforeseeable. Questioning the definition of deconstruction owns the answer confidentially: it actually means questioning what is "is" (Royle, 2000, pp. 6-7). Bennington says the briefest epitomisation is

deconstruction is not what you consider (Bennington, 1989, p. 84). Derrida explains that deconstruction is not a method belonging to anybody, it is rather uncontrollable. It comprises overturning hierarchy and becoming the opposition (Royle, 2000, p. 5).

Destabilization is important in deconstruction since it is a must for the progress. State of being on the move is at the center. In fact, destabilization is stabilization. Key themes of deconstruction are applicable to many poststructural issues (Royle, 2000, pp. 5-6). Deconstruction not only implies disassembling the constructing process but unveiling the grounded, remnant thought as well. His claims that there is nothing outside the text (Spivak, 1976, p. 163). That actually means there is no sharp distinction between the world and language as we take them as subject and object (Bennington, 1989, p. 84). Question on what is subject and object or do the become each other in the process leads us to the concept of metaphysics of presence, which is another element of deconstruction. Derrida's famous idea which claims that deconstruction differs from deconstruction means there is not single deconstruction (Vandenberg, 1995, s. 122).

A text is never finished according to Derrida. Its meaning constantly changes abided by real life, historical context, culture, reader's prejudices, specificities of language or speech which are all its oppositions (Derrida, 1979, p. 84). Unlike structuralists, Derrida saw language as not constraining its subjects like what structuralists thought of it. Namely; he deemphasized linguistic approach and redefined it as writing. Derrida applied deconstruction on also social institutions and he again found that its function is not restraining. Structuralists believed people are restricted by the borders of language which has an orderly and stabile system. Derrida opposed this idea completely and asserted that language is inconsistent its system works disorganizedly. Words gain different meanings and functions according to context of the sentence and perception of reader. Therefore, it is impossible for language to restrain its subjects as structuralist think it does. At this point, Derrida levaes aside former research technics and offers his method to search language system which grounded the basic conceptualization of Postmodernism and Poststructuralism: deconstruction (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017, p. 771). Deconstruction may also be considered as dismantling of logocentrism. In other words; liberating writing from things constraining it. According to him, logocentrism dominated western thought and harmed social sciences. In order to unveil hidden meanings, hierarchies, differances, hegemonies and inconsistencies; integrity and units in the text should be disintegrated. Derrida questions the function of

representationalism. If something represents something, does it really represent it? Derrida correlates traditional theatre stage with logocentrism and says stage is enslaved by author and text. What happens on it always refers to something in real life independent of what author aims at implying. Writer and text have the control over stage and their representatives are actors and actresses or objects. Derrida calls it as theological stage, and "theatre of cruelty". Relationship of this semiotics with spectators are also similar with reader's contact with text. Viewer is left passive but it can not change the inconsistencies of the represented meanings. Derrida offers an alternative stage in which text or actors are not the dominators. He wants audience to be free as he wants theatre liberated from traditional theatre. Like spectators and actors of traditional stage, film audience is suppressed by dominant discourses in the society. At his point one of the most crucial ideas of deconstructuralism is reached: decentering. Denying a fixed and permanent center is the starting point for Derrida. Those who want to find future should not search for it in the past or future; rather it is constantly in the making. Without a center, play and differance keep on becoming. Moreover, unless there are play and differance on the stage, theatre is static and dead. These plays should be kept on but center has to be denied (Ritzer & Stepnisky, 2017, p. 772).

DECONSTRUCTION AND CINEMA

As it is pointed out in the theoretical perspective chapter, cinema and discourse are intertwined. However, as Derrida explains, deconstruction is not a mere philosophy. Its borders are not drawn. He says it actually means what is happening today (Derrida, 1990, p. 85). Therefore, deconstruction has to deal with the current flaws, reinscriptions, displacements and changing hands in the meaning. Peter Brunette claims that similarity between cinema and text is film is a text itself. Moreover, cinematography is also a mode of writing consisting of dialogue, music, clothes, signs and symbols. Camera angles are also elements of text because of their limitations. Director may use a close up whenever he wants to manipulate out feelings and sympathies to feel like characters. It is a similar type of imposing idea or ideologies as text does. Cinema also represents what is not present at the same time. Camera angles again show us only a limited area in the scene or the world of film so the audience is dominated by the director or scriptwriter like text author. At this point, signification should be taken into consideration. Like other signs, also film shows what is not represented there (Brunette, 1986, s. 61-

62). Derrida himself calls cinema as "an art of ghosts", a spectral act (Rajyavardhan & Sharma, 2017, p. 26). In his interview with Cahiers Du Cinema, he explains this and says cinematic image has a spectral structure. When a person watches a movie, he experiences a sort of unconscious state in this communication like what Freud defines as "haunting, uncanny". At this point, he founds a link between psychoanalysis and cinema. Practice of film spectator includes psychoanalytic perceptions. Psychoanalytical practices like hypnosis or identification may occur while seeing a scene, switching to another frame or perceiving a detail in the frame. Even a trivial detail or image in a scene may trigger a specter in the mind of spectator. Derrida thinks this process as primordial and thus says when one goes to the movies, he or she lets ghosts appear and speak and haunt them on the screen (De Baecque , Jousse, & Kam, 2015, pp. 26-27). Films are representations of the event that are not present in one area and are present in another. The theory of deconstruction in film work is slowly creeping up in a calm and respectable way. Although, it was an indirect leak into the cinema cracks, but it leaked anyway. Since structure challenges the interpretation fibers of deconstruction by showing the contextual and institutional barriers that accompany film in general, the whole concept of film genre can be approached from a deconstructionist perspective (Rajyavardhan & Sharma, 2017, pp. 26-27). For Derrida, cinema is in an intermediate place among arts. Film is really a particular situation. It is something recorded (not living) but dependent on discourse as well. It has also silent versions. Silent film has lip playback and move. Does it still serve for hegemonical discourse, this question is still unanswered. Sound film and silent film, both are consisting of time intervals and manipulations. Relationship between the word and cinema is a divertive field of discussion as for cinematic medium. Rather, it is still a fertile work of filed supposed to be put on the academic agenda of film studies (Smith, 2000, p. 135).

As explained before, there is not an obvious work of Derrida about the application of deconstruction on film. The first way to fuse film with deconstruction is applying the text reading technique of deconstruction to film reading. Common issues and predispositions may be determined as point of departure; namely race, identity, gender, postcolonial and postmodern issues. There are certain features like mise an abyme (Story inside story, frame within a frame), metafiction, pastiche, highbrow-lowbrow, coexisting of binary oppositions and plurality inside the field of postmodern art. These are common fields of deconstruction. Phallogocentrism (which is one of Derrida's theories) which claims the domination of the masculine in the construction of meaning process grounded upcoming "Male Gaze"

approach of feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey. Even though male gaze refers to all visual arts, its most dominant functions are observed in the field of cinema. On mise an abyme, meanings change and perception of reality differs from themselves in the pool of different codes, signs, and signifiers which thereby making it similar with unstable and constant meaning shifts of deconstructive text reading (McErlean, 2018, p. 173). Roland Barthes defines photograph as message without a code and this message is continuous (Barthes, 1978, p. 17). This means image and text somehow may connote similar or same things. Like analysing a text, defining a photopraphic image or film scene is very complicated and relative. Same shot or image can receive a lot of interpretations from different viewers. While watching a film, audience constructs his own interpretations after reading the text dictated by director or editor. So, this meaning creation is indiviudal, not collective (McErlean, 2018, p. 175). Susan Hayward calls the narration technics of deconstructive cinema as counter-cinema to this traditional narrative thereby being different than narrative film (Hayward, 2006, p. 98). Deconstructive film breaks the text into pieces and leaves those to viewers' interpretations. It does not impose ideologies or meanings. Likewise, time and space manipulation in montage aims to deconstruct author's domination and impose on viewer and leave him free in the process of attributing a meaning to the scene and decoding (Harvey, 1990, p. 51). Deconstructive reading breaks up borders of narrative in any traditional art (Jameson, 1991, p. 157). It is not a final, deconstruction does not finalize an argument since it inevitably leads us another deconstructive reading (Norris, 2006, s. 83). Jumpcut technique of Jean Luc Godard may be considered as a deconstructive objection against traditional narrative (McErlean, 2018, p. 175).

In fact, a film can also be seen as a continuous state of being, just like a text. Douglas Booth says as for a deconstructionist film analysis, one needs to look for the undercover. While analayzing a scene, the reasons behind actor's choice or effects of that actions on other characters and viewers are primary focuses. According to Booth, it is not believing in the reliability of characters that functions as deconstructionist film analyist rather digging deep into hidden premises or urges; namely beyond-reading the behaviours. In order to understand background messages or unconscious, unintentional meanings in change of pseudo true codes of the scene in the foreground, scene or the themes in the scene may be deconstructed. Deconstruction mostly comprises themes: binary oppositions, authority, hegemony, sex, race, gender, semiology, psychoanalysis, language or structuralism. There are premise questions that should be asked. Why any social issue is chosen and how is it portrayed in the scene?

Which characters are present and how they represent the role, language and words is the other question deconstructive film analyist should have (Booth, 2005, p. 465). Deconstruction undercovers these disguised motives laying beneath appearing message of text or frame. In this research, three themes are chosen for deconstructive film analysis; black-white, hetero-queer and male-female conflicts and dualities. Reason behind selection of these motives is linked to fields of interests of poststructuralism and deconstruction.

CASE STUDY: DECONSTRUCTIVE ANALYSIS OF NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES: *HOLLYWOOD*

Hollywood (Ryan Murphy, 2020) includes race, gender and identity issues. The reason why *Hollywood* is subjected to a deconstructive reading is that the black/white, hetero/queer and male/female dichotomies in the series are constantly in change. In the series, the meaning is delayed, the indicators constantly gain meaning thanks to each other, the concepts of femininity/masculinity and hetero/queer remain ambiguous. The fact that the meaning is so volatile and that what / who is in power hangs rather than a hierarchical structure required the series to be handled by a deconstructive analysis. In this framework, the race issues in Hollywood, the hegemonical discourse, the struggle for masculinity and the indecisive structure of power, the social identities and sexes, gender confusions and identification problems in Hollywood were determined as specifications, and the series was deconstructed. Here, it is aimed to reveal the ambivalent and hand-changing meanings and their displacement in the series. Rather than carrying out a frame by frame, second by second analysis or handling the written text of screenplay, deconstructing and finding new, grounded hierarchies in language of the series while trying to blot out former hegemonies is preferred. Concepts, themes are focused. However, first two techniques may be well used for a deconstructive film analysis. As for Hollywood, hierarchial structures will be examined which is found proper specifically for this series. Dealing with the words of script, improvisations, frame by frame analysis of video and sound editing are also applicable for broader studies on deconstruction and film.

Method

Case study is a method widely used in social sciences such as situation analysis of a problem in psychology, medicine, and case reports in political sciences. Case study research involves the investigation of a situation within the current context or environment of real life. Here, a methodology

or a comprehensive research strategy emerges with a case limited by time and space within a restricted system. Case study is a type of pattern within qualitative research that can be both the product and the object of the research. The researcher collects information about real life, a current limited system or multiple restricted systems within a certain period of time through multiple sources of information. It is a qualitative approach that reveals the themes or descriptions of the situation with the help of observation, interview, audio-visual materials, documents and reports. Here, the unit of analysis can be provided as more than one case (multi-location study) or as a single case (single-space study). Case study which is used in many different disciplines is determined as the method of our study "Deconstructive Analysis of Netflix Series: *Hollywood*". Because, as an alternative, the case study offers an instrumental purpose to the researcher. It is used to analyze selected situations in order to best understand any topic, problem or issue. In addition, the fact that it contains a description of the case makes it also important in understanding the analysis. The researcher examines each case both by identifying themes, topics or specific situations and revealing a description of a situation. Finally, the case study ends with the inferences, models or explanations that the researcher creates within the general meanings of the case (Creswell, 2007, pp. 73-75).

Plot

Written and created by Ryan Murphy and Ian Brennan who were also the producers of the series at the same time along with Darren Criss and David Corenswet, *Hollywood* is a Netflix original drama miniseries which was first released on May 1, 2020 (Pedersen, 2020). Its ensemble cast (starring and principal actors, actresses have equal screen time) includes Daxvid Corenswet, Darren Criss, Laura Harrier Joe Mantello, Dylan McDermott and Jake Picking, Jeremy Pope and Holland Taylor. The series had four nominations at Emmy Awards and also seven nominations in Primetime Emmy Creative Arts and won two of them. It received complex reviews. While half of them acclaimed acting and production, the other criticized the script (D'Addario, 2020). It consists of seven episodes; setting is the Hollywood Golden Age. It tells the story of actors, actresses, screen writers, directors, producers in America who fight their way through success during the period of post-World War II. However, there are direct references to real characters and some are already factual ones (Rock Hudson, Hattie McDaniel, Anna May Wong) which thereby makes the setting metafictional. There is an othered (discriminated) group at

the center of the story. A queer black screenwriter, a half Asian director, a black actress, a queer actor, and another uneducated actor who has just returned from the war. First, it convinces that none of them have any chance in Hollywood, the series shows through a series of events (a short section from the real life of Hollywood's first Asian star, Anna May Wong, for example), and then how far each of them approaches their dreams. After several scenes that emphasize that sex (for money) is the greatest power (that is, after money), some stones start to fall into place, even if they are crooked, and thanks to a miraculous studio manager (Dick Samuels), a green light is given to a movie that will not happen and the dream factory called Hollywood is our heroes.

The script written by the black queer screenwriter Archie in the series, which is based on the structure of the movie within a movie (mise en abyme), tells a real event; Peg Enstwistle's suicide by jumping from the letter "H" of that famous giant Hollywood article. The young director candidate Raymond Ainsley reads and likes Archie's script, and then begins the search for actors by persuading Dick Samuels, the director of Ace Studios. As soon as all the young actors in Hollywood decide to change the story of the movie they are lining up for the trial shoot, the flow of the whole series starts to take a different path, and at the beginning, the alternative historiography comes into play. According to the new scenario, Peg is replaced by Meg (he is a black player now) and the suicide issue is re-debated. The series ends with a happy final where a grandiose and incredible Oscar ceremony takes place in which all our othered ones notch up victories.

Black/White Hierarchy

Considering the situation in the Golden age of Hollywood in reality, that period was a time in which racial discrimination was at the peak of its ascendance. Black actors and actresses were not given preliminary roles, only could play as figurants. Besides, lives of blacks were not told in scenarios. It was only possible with advent of late sixties and early seventies when first radical and protest black lives films began to be made such as *The Learning Tree* (directed by Gordon Parks in 1969) and *The Great White Hope* (directed by Martin Ritt in 1970). Following these films, ironical comedy, crime fiction and western films have been made to react to systematic racism in American society. Thanks to black ghetto films, poor living conditions of blacks and the extent of black exploitation in America have become obvious (Ryan & Kellner, 2016, pp. 81-179). This black/white conflict poses the main argument in the series. It

goes in two ways; interracial love affairs and power struggles between races. Not only black and white but also Asians are included. From the first episodes where the character Archie Coleman is in the center, and then with the introduction of actress Camille, we witness how much discrimination and prejudice the black people have faced in Hollywood. Moreover, Archie is a queer, having sex for his livelihood. This situation caused further marginalization. In addition, when another white homosexual actor falls in love with him (Rock Hudson), a social conflict, which the viewer needs to empathize more, appears on the screen. On the other hand, Camille is in love with a White-Asian director, Raymond Ainsley. Therefore, racial conflicts proceed in this axis at the beginning. The unhappy actress Peg, who jumped from the Hollywood "H" letter in Archie's first script, is a white woman and Archie says that he sees himself in Peg, that is, his desire to be a white inside, depicts the basis for the hegemony that the series criticizes even though it seems at first thinking because of Peg's also staying out of Hollywood system. First of all, when Asian actress Wong was offered the lead role, she stated that Asians were not allowed to play the lead roles, stating that they were only deemed worthy of the roles of "seductive exotic Asian woman" and she refused the offer and nurtured the domination and orientalist ideology rather than overthrow it. She said: "This city does not give an opportunity to someone who cannot hide his race." Ironically, she found the Asian director Ainsley's proposal unrealistic. However, it she is cast for another role in the following sections. Similarly, the lead role of the woman in the script is white and then the role is given to a black woman. The name of the main character was Peg, a white woman in the original script, and later became a black woman and her name was changed to Meg. It has been observed that the aim in the series is not to destroy the existing hegemony, but to replace the meaning and the operator, subject and object. In the later parts of the series, blacks and Asians somehow begin to gain power. We witness that the black/white hierarchy has been reversed and a new hegemony has been established until the final of the series, in the process where the meaning shifts, language games and dialectical displacements are rapidly experienced. Those who are suppressed with racial prejudices develop annoying hate speech as they gain strength. Daughter of owner of Ace Studios who is a white girl sees unfair reactions and treatments during casting for leading role which creates a counter symphaty for whites. In Academy Awards (Oscar) Ceremony, upon getting prizes blacks show that they have dispositions as whites do on the matter to construct a hegemony over the other. At this point, it has been made the mistake of seeing black characters' victory enough. So, on the one hand, there is an

approach that turns whites into savior-heroes. In addition, the studio's willingness to make this movie against all threats also heroizes the whites. Moreover, she was Eleanor Roosevelt who was behind the idea of giving a black the leading role of a film. Conflicts on the basis of social identities come out of the search for rights and establish new hierarchies; which goes against the message of this series.

Gender Confusion (Hetero/Queer Inbetweenness)

Queerness is seen as a very dominant theme in the series. It may be asserted that a very bold and imaginary environment is depicted for the 1940s America. During that period, homosexuality was seen as a shameful act. Until eighties, Hollywood scripts were written with prejudice against queer life (Ryan & Kellner, 2016, p. 240). In *Hollywood*, characters in the movie that we can qualify as good-tempered/natured and which we sympathize with are mostly queer. As the episodes progress, some producers and actors who feature the hetero image come to the fore, see queer trends and gender confusion begins. These identities begin to change and destabilization is clearly visible. At the same time, relation of sexual identity with the social definitions of gender and the fact that sexuality is a constructed ideological phenomenon is seen through the scene in which the first person to accept gay lovemaking for money in the gas station scene, was Archie, who was not white but black. That scene can be given as an example of oppressed people feeding hegemony. It is clear how homosexuality was at that time, especially in Hollywood, and how much it could have led to public disclosure. Real Rock Hudson, for example, suffered from it in real life and had to hide it for years. In this regard, the movie's in-your-face queer lovemaking scenes seem to be intentionally shot. Sometimes it may be helpful to face them directly to break down the prejudices. However, towards the last episodes of the series, the fact that queer sexuality has been removed from an identity and become a tool for power and exploitation by queer cause a shift in meaning. The series represents gender confusions that most of the characters experience. However, the forms of representation and the words and language used by the characters during sexual identity exchange games cause them to create brand new prejudices while fighting them with prejudices. Therefore, hetero/queer conflict also becomes problematic in terms of the values the series defends when a deconstructive analysis is made.

Male/Female Conflict

Considering those years when film industry of Hollywood was run by men, it can be said that it coincides with a time when women seriously question their dependence on men and feminist currents began to sprout. In reality, Hollywood showed drastic opposition against feminism which is mostly because of the fact that men, who could act very liberally in the event of war or any other social situation, could not accept a situation that affects their sphere of power and prevents them from oppressing women (Ryan & Kellner, 2016, p. 55). Therefore, the first reaction of male-dominated Hollywood to feminism had been to ignore or deny it. Despite the fact that women screenwriters were always active, it would only be possible in the seventies for feminism to be accepted culturally and processed seriously in cinema. Until that period, instead of feminist roles or female roles questioning their gender identity, women in need of men were seen in female roles and film camera continued to be a hetero man gaze (Ryan & Kellner, 2016, pp. 199-203). Like reality of that time, in *Hollywood*, all major film studios are run by men. There are three women at the center of the story. Camille Washington is the wife of the owner of the Ace Studios, the daughter who wants to be an actress and the black actress. All three of them somehow want to get rid of the hegemony of men but they have to deal with great prejudices. The series causes serious changes in the meaning of women's identities. Defining this as an existential process is insufficient. In transformation and change, we watch moments when women's identities are also questioned. For example, Avis uses the financial power of Amberg to be with young men and tries to stay strong against her husband Dick. It is possible for her to fight with him only when her husband is in a coma. As she struggles to achieve her own strength, she does not seem willing to do anything for her daughter's (Claire) ideals in life. However, towards the end of the movie, women are cooperating to be in power. In the last episodes of the series, Avis has taken over almost the entire management of the company, just before the death of her husband, and has become a femme-fatale. Camille and Claire do not engage in a conflict of power with men. Even if it seems that they are not fighting a man directly, even trying to exist in the supreme Hollywood can be considered as a conflict of men. It happened for the happy end women, which I criticized in the previous parts, and all the women win at the end of the movie. In general, they are all portrayed as powerful characters, and their human weaknesses are not enough to destroy them. It is very sharp for them to gain power within the hierarchy. Obviously, the meaning shifts we see in the other two dichotomies and the pass-through in the signs are not seen in

this conflict. Fictional male-dominated Hollywood in the series passes to the reign of women with a very quick handover at the end of the movie. When we look using deconstructive analysis, the language used by female characters also serves hegemony and excesses sexist utterances. When analyzed as feminist consciousness, we see that the characters are not very deep in this respect and this is reflected in the words they use. As a result, women's absolute victory over men and changing their social positions can be considered more moderate than the previous two conflicts in terms of establishing a new hierarchy.

CONCLUSION

The Hollywood series has many features in common with the productions on Netflix such as *Handmaid's Tale* (directed by Bruce Miller in 2017), *Unbelievable* (created by Michael Chabon in 2019), *Orange Is The New Black* (created by Jenji Kohan in 2013), *Becoming* (directed by Nadia Hallgren in 2020), *Glow* (created by Liz Flahive and Carly Mensch in 2017), *Cable Girls* (Ramon Campos and Gema Neira in 2017) and *Audrie & Daisy* (directed by Bonni Cohen and Jon Shenk in 2016). In such productions that it generally accepts on its platform, we see that taboo issues such as queer rights and other issues concerning basic human rights are mentioned. Hollywood is a series that seems to have given concrete and serious messages. In the first episodes, we witness the great discrimination experienced in the film industry and daily life in the 1940s in the USA. Blacks and homosexuals live and fear by hiding in the community. There are no room for blacks, women and homosexuals in the movie sets dominated by racism and white supremacy, there are always heterosexual, well-groomed men in the foreground. There is also reference to real characters like Rock Hudson. All these oppressed characters achieve victory at the end of their struggle to rise in Hollywood and achieve what they want. However, while reaching that point, they also signed new dominations. This time they make various marginalization against those who oppress them, and they create new hierarchies. This time it may be asserted that they become masters of Friedrich Hegel's master-slave dialectic theory. Naturally, they do not do as bad things as their suppressers do, but if you are breaking the old hierarchy and installing a new one, as the deconstruction claims, the benefit of doing this is decreasing in the battle against othering. The gender confusion in the series is very intense. In the series, the emergence of heterosexual anxieties of the queer ones, or the emergence of hidden queerness of those who try to survive with heterosexual and strong male structures, creates an endless cycle in the series. The definition of sexual identity of many

characters is in motion. This indicates that the series was written in accordance with deconstruction technique. One of the most powerful studios in Hollywood, despite temporarily, is run by a woman (Avis) during coma of her husband. She decides to give the leading role to a black woman under excessive advices by a supervisor of Ice Studios who is also having a gender confusion (Richard Samuels). Against the threats of sinking and racist attacks, Avis' standing behind her decision can be seen as a struggle for existence. But when her husband, who is unaware of all this in the coma at the hospital, wakes up and hears all the things, accepting everything and letting his wife run the company is a new domination rather than a solution based on equality. Likewise, the way women win their struggles to play a role in Meg is somehow accomplished in the fairy tale flavor, again, in the axis of women supporting each other, that is, it damages the real sense of struggle against domination and thereby credibility decreases. Likewise, black screenwriter Archie Coleman's white queer lover, Rock Hudson, is a torpedo to play in his own Meg movie. In the relationship between Rock and Archie, Rock is the party that falls in love more and he keeps the relationship alive. The fact that white director Raymond Ainsley and black actress lover Camille Washington had a very rare love for that period and did not hesitate without stepping back against any threat is another part that needs to be deconstructed. Does it mean that queers and blacks in the series get rid of the loser, cynical lives, win an Oscar, and break down all taboos at the Oscar awards ceremony, and cry everything in front of the press? These reactions, far from the reality described in the series, fast victories, the concessions and experiences of the oppressed in the paths leading to these victories, create new different hegemonies and serve directly to existing domination. In summary, the purpose and message of the series can be considered as a positive effort for the hope. However, when subjected to a deconstructive analysis, identity changes, games, displacements, and the pink painting lives that contradict reality are brought to the agenda of discrimination. This move to the agenda raises hatred, and again draws boundaries or sharpens existing boundaries. It serves existing discourse by portraying queer ones like people who has weak characters, also are open to sexual harassment and abuse, as seen in the case of producer Henry Wilson who uses his sexuality to make his actor famous. Although the purpose of the series is the opposite (defending the rights of queers, blacks and women), when the language of the series is destabilized, deconstructed and the embedded changes and meaning games are examined, it is seen that the language mistakes serve the opposite. This situation is similar to the fact that widespread use of god today as "he" has been the result of making its

usage habit ordinary in minds. As Derrida says, language is a very dangerous area and it is very difficult for a person to describe himself while he is constantly changing. If you set out to give such serious social messages, you need to be very careful. What discourse actually serves with this fairy tale, where everyone who is discriminated against feels the win at the end of the movie? Hollywood does not offer us a new alternative language instead of "logos". It should also be noted that the relationship of the series with the historical-social context and the cultural climate of America should not be missed out. For example, it was protested that blacks were not nominated at the 2016 Oscars. Some black actors, directors did not go to the ceremony. (In the series, black actor Hattie once mentions that blacks were not allowed in the awards ceremony.) Also, Obama's presidency was an important break in American political history. Such developments also affect the production of cultural contents, and it is important to consider context in deconstructive analysis. Consequently, *Hollywood* miniseries differs from *Hollywood* itself that supposed to be grasped by the audience.

GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

Jacques Derrida'nın "yapısöküm" kavramı yapısal hegemonileri, dildeki hiyerarşileri ortaya çıkarmak ve dilin anlam değişikliklerini ve istikrarsızlıklarını bulmak için edebiyat ve felsefe alanlarını birleştiren bir teori olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Derrida, dünya üzerindeki ırkçılığın, sömürgeciliğin ve yoksulluğun mevcudiyet metafiziğinden gelen söz merkezcilikteki ötekileştirmenin bir ürünü olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Mevcudiyet metafiziğine karşın yapısökümü yöntemini ileriye sürmüştür. İkili yapılar üstünden kurulmuş varolan karşıtlıklar ise yapı sökümü ile bozulmaya, sökülmeye çalışılmaktadır. Yapı bozumu, hakikati merkezde arayarak, ötekileştirmeler birlikte varlık kazanan tüm anlatıları bozmayı çabalayan bir girişim olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Burada sözü edilen yapı, inşa edilmiş olan metinleri, bu metinlerin parçalarını anlatmaktadır. İnşa edilmiş olan bir kavrama, bir cümleye ya da bir film metnine anlam vermektedir. Böylece herhangi bir metin üzerinde yapılan yapısökümü okumasıyla birlikte bir metnin karmaşık tarihsel ve kültürel arka planının görülmesine yardımcı olacaktır. Öte yandan incelenen metnin içsel hiyerarşisinin ortaya çıkarılmasında ve varsayımlarının açıklanmasında gizlenmişliği ortadan kaldıracaktır. Çevirimiçi film ve dizi izleme platformlarından Netflix'te yayınlanan *Hollywood* (2020) dizisi; siyah ve beyaz ırklar arasındaki tahakküm uygulayıcı rolünün kişilerce el değiştirişini, anlamdaki tutarsızlıkları ve değişiklikleri, oyunları, cinsel kimlik karmaşalarını, toplumsal cinsiyet kimlikleri ve ırk

kimlikleri arasındaki ikili hegemonya çatışmasında önceden baskı altında olanlar yerine yeni hiyerarşilerin kurulmasını anlattığı için yapısöküm analizi için uygun görülmüştür. *Hollywood*'un yapısökümcü bir okumaya tabi tutulmasının nedeni, filmdeki siyah/beyaz, hetero/queer ve eril/dişil ikilemlerinin sürekli değişmesidir. Filmde anlam ertelenmekte, göstergeler birbirleri sayesinde sürekli anlam kazanmakta ve eril/dişil, hetero/queer karşıtlıkları belirsiz bir şekilde karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Anlamın çok uçucu olması ve kimin iktidarda olduğunun hiyerarşik bir yapıdan ziyade asılı halde kalması filmin yapısökümcü bir analizle ele alınmasını mümkün kılmaktadır. Bu çerçevede *Hollywood*'daki ırk meseleleri, hegemonik söylem, erkeklik mücadelesi ve iktidarın istikrarsızca el değiştiren yapısı, toplumsal kimlikler ve cinsiyetler, cinsel kimlik karmaşaları ve benlik sorunları temalar olarak belirlenmiş ve film yapısöküme uğratılmıştır. Burada dizi boyunca tutarsız ve yer değiştiren anlamların ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmaktadır. Kare kare ya da saniye saniye bir analiz yapmak veya senaryodaki yazılı metni ele almak yerine, eski hegemonyaları bitirmeye çalışırken dizide yeniden kurulan yeni hiyerarşik dilin bulunması tercih edilmiştir. Kavramlara ve temalara odaklanılmıştır. Bununla birlikte, ilk iki teknik de yapısökümcü film analizi için kullanılabilir. Senaryo, doğaçlamalar, videonun kare kare analizi veya sözcükleriyle uğraşmak, yapısöküm ve film üzerine daha geniş araştırmalar için de geçerli olacaktır. Yapısöküm, odak noktası olarak dili ve yazılı metinleri ele almaktadır. Bu yüzden ilk bakışta bir filmi yapısökümcü bir analizle eleştirmek veya bu teknik ile bir film yazmak zor görünebilir. Bununla birlikte, bu bağlantının nasıl kurulabileceğine dair fikirsel ve pratik çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Sinemanın bir bütün olarak metin veya temsili bir dil olarak kabul edilebileceği ve filmin temas ettiği bazı temalar üzerinden yapısöküme uğratılabileceği önceden yapılmış çalışmalarda gösterilmiştir. Öte yandan filmdeki bir sahnenin ayrı ayrı karakterler, objeler gibi parçalara ayrılabileceği gibi sahnede görülmeyen temsillerin bile yapısökümcü bir analiz ile ele alınabileceği iddia edilmiştir. Her iki fikrin de temel amacı, ortaya çıkan görüntünün metinlerin uygulanışı sırasında elde edilmek istenen sonuçtan tamamen farklı bir şeyi temsil edebileceğini göstermektir. Dil, Derrida'nın mevcudiyetin metafiziği olarak adlandırdığı merkezlere hizmet etmektedir. Bu merkezler ise tahakkümün kurulmasına yol açmaktadır. Dolayısıyla şu anda varoluşun imkânsızlığını ortaya çıkarmak, anlamdaki değişiklikleri ve gizli tahakkümleri ortaya çıkarmak diğer yandan sürekli bir dönüşüm halinde olmayı göstermek diğer amaçları oluşturmaktadır. Dilin kendisi istikrarsızlaşmakta ve bu istikrarsızlık aynı zamanda bir istikrarlı olma hali olarak görülebilmektedir. Diğer bir ifadeyle bir nesne her zaman başka bir şey olma halindedir. Tutarsızlıklar ve anlamdaki değişimler de

şimdiki zamanın aslında geçmiş olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Bir objeyi, nesneyi veya kavramı tanımlamak zordur, çünkü hareket ve dönüşüm Heraklitos'un nehir metaforundaki gibi sürekli bir gerçekleşme halindedir. Önemli olan tamamlanma değil devinim olarak görülmektedir. Aslında tahakküm, "ben ve sen" denildiği yerde başlamaktadır. Bu araştırmanın vaka çalışması; 1940'larda Hollywood'daki cinsiyetçi ve ırkçı ayrımcılığı işleyen *Hollywood* dizisinin, mevcut tabularla savaşırken bilinçsizce yeni hiyerarşiler ve hegemonyalar inşa ettiğini göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, dizi üç ayrı tema üzerinde yapısöküme uğratılmıştır ve gizli hâkimiyetlerin aydınlatılması amaçlanmıştır. Film eleştirisinde yapılmış yapısöküm örneklerini takip etmek ve bu alanı geliştirip katkı sağlamak amaçlanmıştır. Araştırmanın sonucunda, *Hollywood*'un aslında kendi eleştirdiği tahakkümleri beslediği ve bu yapılara hizmet ettiği ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bu noktada temel olan senaristin, yönetmenin veya yapımcının neyi amaçladığı değil, izleyiciye ulaşan nihai kodların yapısökümüdür. Dizi, izleyicilerin düşünmelerinin istendiği şey olmaktan çıkmış ve farklılaşmış; sonunda eleştirdiği şeye dönüşmüştür. Çalışma boyunca hedeflenen amaçlar doğrultusunda elde edilen sonuçlar, araştırmayı doğrular. *Hollywood* dizisi, zihnimizde yaratılmak istenen *Hollywood* dizisinden farklıdır.

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