



Deconstruction Analysis in The Context of Critical Race Theory: 'THEM' TV Series Film

Eleştirel Irk Kuramı Bağlamında Yapısöküm İncelemesi: "Ötekiler (THEM)" Dizi Filmi

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ABSTRACT: This study is based on the TV series 'Them', written by Little Marvin and directed by Nelson Craig, which was released on the Amazon Prime Video digital platform in 2021 being analyzed using the deconstruction method. The series, which takes back in the 1950s' United States when the black-white conflict was at its peak, is based on the traumatic events experienced by a black family over the course of 10 days after buying a house in a white neighborhood. Although the apparent message of the series includes the dichotomy of good vs. bad and oppressor vs. oppressed, the subtext brings mind Critical Race Theory in terms of the disregard for law in the face of racist ideology in the United States of that period. While the theory aims to reveal the historical forms of racism that lie behind the laws from a critical perspective, theorists argue that racism is normal in American society. The aim of the study is to analyze the 5 episodes of the first season of the series to reveal the invisible messages in the context of Critical Race Theory. In this study, the deconstruction method was used to try to make sense of the narrative that was established in the series through both linguistic and visual texts. At this juncture, the others and othering expressions in the series were examined thematically. It was explained how these phenomena were reflected in the text and signs of the series in the context of Critical Race Theory. Thus, the study will reveal the unlawful determining power of racist ideology over the 'other'.

Key Words: *Critical Race Theory, Deconstruction, Marginalization, 'Them'*

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Atf/Citation: Kaya Erdem, B., Balaban, İ. ve Sungar, A.İ. (2024). Deconstruction Analysis in The Context of Critical Race Theory: 'THEM' TV Series Film. Intermedia International e-Journal, 11(21) 199-217. doi: 10.56133/intermedia.1554906.



Öz: Çalışma; Amazon Prime Video dijital platformunda 2021 senesinde gösterime girmiş olan senaryosunu Little Marvin'in yazdığı, Nelson Cragg'nin yönetmenliğini yapmış olduğu 'Ötekiler (Them)' dizi filminin dekonstrüksiyon yöntemiyle incelemesine dayanmaktadır. Siyah-beyaz çatışmasının zirve yaptığı 1950'lerin ABD'sini tema olarak alan dizi filmin konusu, beyazların mahallesinde bir ev satın alan bir 'siyahi' ailenin 10 günde yaşamış oldukları travmatik olayları temel almaktadır. Dizinin görünen mesajında iyi – kötü ve ezen – ezilen ikilemi mevcut olsa da alt metin, dönem ABD'sinde hukukun ırkçı ideoloji karşısında hiçe sayılması noktasında 'Eleştirel Irk Kuramı' nı akıllara getirmektedir. Kuram, eleştirel perspektifle yasaların ardında yatan tarihsel ırkçılık biçimlerini ortaya koymayı amaçlamakta, kuramcılar ırkçılığın Amerikan toplumunda normal olduğunu öne sürmektedirler. Çalışmanın amacı; dizi filmin ilk sezonunun 5 bölümünde Eleştirel Irk Kuramı bağlamında görünür olan mesajlardansa görünmeyen mesajları ortaya çıkarmaktır. Çalışmada dekonstrüksiyon yöntemi kullanılarak, dizi filmin içerisinde yer alan hem dilsel hem de görüntüsel metinler üzerinden dizide nasıl bir anlatı kurulduğu anlamlandırılmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu noktada tematik olarak ise dizideki ötekiler, ötekileştirici ifadeler, incelenmiş ve bu olguların filmin metninde ve göstergelerinde, Eleştirel Irk Kuramı bağlamında nasıl yansıtıldığı açıklanmıştır. Böylelikle çalışmada, ırkçı ideolojinin hukuk tanımaz biçimde ötekini belirleyici gücü ortaya konacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Eleştirel Irk Kuramı, Ötekileştirme, 'Ötekiler', Yapısöküm

INTRODUCTION

Throughout history in the USA, people with black skin have been marginalized and various expressions referring to their black skin have been used in naming these people. Although the main purpose of naming these people is to protect their honor and self-respect, throughout history, whites have not taken this into consideration and have mostly insulted them as 'nigger' and 'negro'. Besides these, 'colored', 'black', 'Afro-American' and 'black' are other terms used. In Turkish, the word 'nigger' is mostly used for black-skinned people. However, since the word 'negro' connotes slavery, the word 'black' will be used in this study (Öztin, 2021, p. 44).

In the USA, where black people have been in slave status for centuries, the abolition of slavery could not be realized suddenly. The struggle for the abolition of slavery in the USA, led by John Brown in the state of Virginia in 1859, turned into a bloody civil war between 1861 and 1865, and slavery was legally abolished after the end of this civil war. The civil war period was characterized by terrible violence. In the much later period, from the 1950s to the present day, it is known that racism in the USA is still recognized not as an individual problem but as a social reality and this issue continues to be controversial.

Critical Race Theory is also an academic field based on the problem of racism and the relations between social political laws and the media and aims to create alternative understandings of social reality that oppose the dominant orthodox perspective by producing 'counter knowledge' (Crenshaw, 1989, p. 141). While the theory aims to explain the ways in which the relationship between race and power is dealt with in a sterile framework in the functioning of law, it also endeavors to reveal the ways in which this racial power is implemented through law and ideology and to change the faulty functioning and relations that have been created (Mirza, 1999, s. 30). Critical Race Theory is based on both critical legal studies and radical feminism (Delgado, 2017, pp. 1-2).

Jaques Derrida's concept of deconstruction, on the other hand, is a reading technique that aims not to destroy but to reconstruct while trying to understand the structuring of the text and aims to reveal the processes by which the author, text and reader construct meaning (Küçükcalp, 2015, pp. 600-601).

Since conceptual oppositions are always capable of emerging in brand new formations, the premises of deconstruction may be insufficient to show that all conceptual oppositions can be refuted. For this reason, the analyses conducted with the method predominantly deal with conceptual oppositions in legal texts and their reflections. Because the ways in which conceptual contradictions are concealed, legitimized and suppressed in legal arguments are extremely favorable for deconstructive analysis in terms of revealing the ideologies within them. The deconstruction technique serves the interests of studies such as pragmatism, feminism or Critical Race Theory, and has become frequently used especially in legal academies due to the increase in the number of studies belonging to these approaches (Balkin, 1989) (Balkin, 1993) (Schlag, 1990) (Cornell, 1992, pp. 345-349).

Many media texts have been analyzed through deconstructive reading. Firstly, Babak Bahador, the author of 'The Media and Deconstruction of the Enemy Image', revealed how the dehumanized enemy image is constructed through the media (Bahador, 2015, p. 122).

As another example, in his study titled 'Postmodernism and Punk Subculture of Authenticity and Deconstruction', Ryan Moore deconstructed the effect of the media in the creation of punk identity image. In the study, the image of punk is given through humiliating and embarrassing events in media representations (Moore, 2004, p. 312).

Cinema, which conveys all aspects and representations of life to the masses through the silver screen, has an important function in the production and positioning of racial relations. The Hollywood film industry is like a laboratory in terms of reflections of racism and representations of race and ethnicity. In the study titled "Examining the Discussions on Sexism, Racial Discrimination and Violence through the Film 'Hidden Figures'", the discrimination suffered by three successful black women in the 1950s, when racism discussions began in the United States, and their struggles in this regard are revealed and analyzed (Işık, 2023). "Representations of Racism in Hollywood Cinema: Semiotic Analysis of *Django Unchained*", it was concluded that racism indicators in Hollywood cinema create feelings of fear and brutality in the audience, and that there are historical and cultural backgrounds in racism representations (Durmuş & Nizam, 2022). "An Example of Hollywood's Othering Practices: The Concept of the 'Magic Negro'" analyzes the role of the othering practices in Hollywood films in terms of reducing the role of black people to serving the self-realization of white men and making them realize their potential (Küngerü& Uluç, 2018).

The series of films titled 'Them', which was released on the Amazon Prime Video platform in 2021, presents the events experienced by a black family who bought a house in a white neighborhood in the 1950s in the USA, in the first 10 days they moved to the neighborhood, using a combination of horror, suspense and drama genres. The series depicts the exclusion of black people due to racism and how the American public sees them. Subsequently, it reflects the psychological traumas of black people and their traumas leading to the loss of their minds.

The story begins with a violent scene depicting the racial violence experienced by the Emory family living in North Carolina, resulting in the death of their little baby. This scene sets the triple rhythm of the drama - suspense - horror - drama - on track and the movie stays on this line until the end. The Emory family of two daughters, the father an engineer and the mother a teacher, move to a middle-class neighborhood in Los Angeles with the dream of leaving behind their traumatic experience of racism in North Carolina and starting a new life. From the very first moment they step into their new neighborhood, they are confronted with the looks of amazement and fear from their predominantly white neighbors, who live a sterile middle-class life, making them feel burdened by the difference in their skin color. The Emory family becomes the problem of the neighborhood, and the residents try to expel them from the neighborhood by developing various strategies by convincing themselves that they are 'trying to protect what their ancestors built'. However, the Emory family shows no signs of moving out of their new home, which they bought at a heavy debt.

The subtext of the series film, which reveals the black-white and good-evil dichotomy in the super text, refers to the field of study of Critical Race Theory in the context of the fact that the non-recognition of the rights acquired by law can take place in the normal routine of life. In the end, the director and the screenwriter have proved that self-respect and dignity will be damaged because of not being accepted by others, and they have signed striking scenes and dialogues representing that the wounding of the subject in the dilemma of not being recognized - not counted will leave the field to social conflicts and irreversible wounds will be opened in the soul.

The subject of the study is the analysis of the first 5 episodes of the 1st season of the series film 'Them', which was released in 2021 on the Amazon Prime Video platform on the Amazon Prime Video platform, where horror, thriller and drama genres are used together, in the context of Critical Race Theory, using Jaques Derrida's deconstruction method. The reason why deconstructive reading is preferred is that this method can be used to analyze all texts, whether critical or not.

In the study, it is aimed to reveal the unseen meanings in the series and to evaluate these meanings in terms of Critical Race Theory because of the analysis of the series 'Them' with the deconstruction method in the context of Critical Race Theory.

In our study, in which critical TV series films about racism were determined as the research universe, the first 5 episodes of the 1st season of the series 'Them', written by Little Marvin and directed by Nelson Cragg, were taken as a sample. The 5 episodes of the first season of the TV series will be analyzed in line with the principles determined by the New Mexico Media Literacy Project for this critical position mediated by Derrida's critical deconstruction method. Accordingly, deconstructing a media text requires a media literacy that develops a critical and active stance towards the messages received, includes all forms of media, has an ideal of a democratic society and sees the media as an institution of socialization. Factors such as who creates the text and why, what is aimed with the text, who is the financier, who ultimately benefits from the text and what the text means for the receiver should be questioned. At the same time, the presence of hidden values in the text, the techniques used, and the timing are also among the issues that need to be questioned (Nkana, 2010, pp. 173-174). To make this analysis in a healthy way, answering the questions determined by the New Mexico Media Literacy Project is an appropriate method for the reconstruction of media texts.

Cinema can easily transfer the ideological codes it wants to psychologically adopt to its audience through the representations it contains (Yeğin, 2021, p. 1496). The use of prejudices and stereotypes arising from racial differences on the silver screen is important in terms of representation (Ünal, 2018, p. 3292). Seeing one's own race as more valuable than other races supports the creation of 'us' (Devrani, 2017, p. 929). Since they are positioned as 'other' and seen as inferior to those positioned as 'us', their subjectivity is also ignored (Vichiensing, 2017, p. 126). While conducting the analysis in our study, the following practices regarding the representation and marginalization of different identities in the media, especially in the context of racial prejudices, were taken into consideration:

- Ignoring and excluding from the public agenda
- Labelling the dominant culture and ideology as superior and other cultures as inferior and underdeveloped
- Marginalizing the other by affirming the normal
- Dehumanization
- The use of three cognitive processes of conceptualization in language: Euphemism, Dysphemism and Cacophemism.
- The use of phobic and criminalized forms of representation that evoke fear and hatred.
- Pity-inducing pathetic representation
- 'Descriptive pseudo-objective representation' claiming objectivity (Erdem, 2020, p. 124)

The fact that the series 'Them', which we analyzed as a sample, which was released on the Amazon Prime Video platform in 2021, which includes scenes of psychological and physical violence, which has been widely discussed in the public, has not been included in any other academic study before and is being analyzed for the first time with deconstruction interpretation in the context of Critical Race Theory, makes the study important.

1. Critical Race Theory

Derrick Bell is recognized as the first initiator of the movement. In 1981, Bell fought with the dean's office at Harvard Law School over the exclusion of black students from the content of legal education. The main problem in his subsequent academic studies was to identify the role of the law in the systematic disempowerment of black people (Crenshaw K. W., 2002, pp. 1345-1349). Other shapers of the movement include Marie Matsuda, Kimberle Crenshaw and Richard Delgado, mostly Afro-American, Asian-American, and Latino faculty members who adopted a progressive political stance against the racial backlash politics of the period (Valdes, McCristal Culp, & Harris, 2002, pp. 1-6).

The theory argues that racism is 'normal' in American society and therefore its solution is difficult, he argues. Accordingly, a 'color-blind' understanding of the law is only effective against overt discrimination and since

racism is aligned with the interests of white elites and the working class, many sections of society are reluctant to fight racism. Blacks' gains in racial equality are realized only when they coincide with white interests (Bell Jr, 1980, pp. 520-523). Critical Race Theory states that race is a product of social thought and relations, not a natural biological phenomenon.

Critical Race Theory argues that race is a product of social thought and relations; therefore, race is considered as a social construction, not a biological phenomenon (Chang, 2002, pp. 90-91). The theory exhibits a deconstructive approach through individual stories.

For the reasons explained above, the series 'Them', which we have taken as the sample of the study, will be analyzed with a deconstructive approach.

2. The Concept of Deconstruction

The French philosopher Derrida, who first worked in detail on the concept of deconstruction, which means the background of thought systems developed by Descartes, describes the world as a fiction and thinks that it is in a crisis and deconstructs the truths accepted in the Western tradition. He deconstructed the truths accepted in the Western tradition by pioneering the questioning of the fact that many things produced, first literature, are fictional and in crisis. Deconstruction, one of the concepts put forward by Derrida, emerged for this reason.

Deconstruction is a concept that is practiced in various fields of study such as philosophy, sociology of communication, literature, architecture, critical thought, and aesthetics (Yanık, 2016, pp. 91-92). The concept of deconstruction introduced by Derrida at the end of the 1960s was associated with American pragmatism by American literary and philosophical theorists in the 1970s. The theory of deconstruction, which is the act of making room for the 'other' in Western philosophy and language, enables social structures and texts to be criticized (Sağlam, 2012, p. 277-278). Criticism within the framework of the concept is not destructive but problematizes many concepts, norms, values and realities. The famous philosopher also stated that the concept is not used in a negative sense. Because for him, deconstruction is more about trying to understand how a unity can be reconstructed rather than destroying it. Post-modernist Derrida states that there is no absolute and definitive truth, and that the concept of deconstruction is a concept that opposes the acceptance of something as usual/true and rejects authority (Yanık, 2016, p. 94).

When we look at Derrida's criticisms of logocentrism, it is seen that he deals with dichotomies such as inside/outside, male/female, remembering/forgetting based on Western thought (Yüksel, 2013). As in Eastern philosophy, 'everything exists with its opposite', the first concept gains meaning with the second concept. For example, the concept of 'honest' only makes sense if there is 'dishonest'.

In Derrida's 1985 Letter To A Japanese Friend, he emphasized that the most important feature of the concept is that it is not reduced to a certain style, despite the danger that deconstructive analyses, if expressed within sharp boundaries, would lead to missing the main point (Küçükalkan, 2017, p. 58).

Therefore, every concept is always in relation with its opposite. Différance, one of the most important concepts of deconstruction, is translated into our language as 'distinction' and with this concept Derrida opposes the fixity of meaning and defends its multiplicity. With this concept, Derrida shook the dualist epistemology of Western metaphysical thought in the construction of identity, which caused the logos to become privileged by excluding the 'other' (Erdem, 2020, p. 154).

3. Deconstructive Interpretation of the TV Series 'Them' in the Context of Othering of Black People

In this part of the study, 5 episodes of the first season of the series film 'Them' deconstructed. To deconstruct media texts, it is necessary to be in a critical position. The New Mexico Media Literacy Project has defined certain principles for this critical position. Accordingly, to deconstruct a media text, there is a need for a media literacy that develops a critical and active stance towards the messages received, includes all forms of media, has a democratic society ideal, and sees the media as an institution of socialization. Accordingly, in order to deconstruct a media text, there is a need for a media literacy that develops a critical and active stance against the messages

received, includes all forms of media, has a democratic society ideal, and sees the media as an institution of socialization. Factors such as who created the text and why, who targets the text, who is the financier, who benefits from the text and what the text means to the receiver should be questioned. At the same time, the existence of hidden values in the text, the techniques used, and the timing are also among the issues that should be questioned. To carry out a healthy analysis, answering the following questions identified by the New Mexico Media Literacy Project is a suitable method for deconstructing media texts (Nkana, 2010, pp. 173-174):

- (A) Whose message is this? Who created or financed this media message? Why?
- (B) Who is the target audience? Which text, image or sound indicates this?
- (C) What is the text (Denotative Meaning) of this message?
- (D) What is the subtext (Connotative Meaning) of this message? What do you think about hidden or unspoken meanings?
- (E) Who are the winners or losers of these messages? How does this message serve the interests of media owners?

A. Whose Message is This? Who Created or Financed This Media Message and Why?

In this study, in which the marginalization of black people is discussed, a series of films has been determined as a sample. Therefore, it is the director, screenwriter, producer and financier of the film that creates the message. The director of the series film 'Ötekiler' is Nelson Cragg, the screenwriter is Little Marvin, and the producer is Lena Waithe (IMDB, 2016). At this point, to find out why Nelson Cragg, Little Marvin and Lena Waithe created this media message, it is necessary to make a political economy reading through the director, screenwriter and producer.

Nelson Craig, born on 7 April 1978 in Virginia, the state where the struggle for the abolition of slavery in the USA first began, is of Korean descent; screenwriter Little Marvin, black (Wikipedia, tarih yok). In other words, the director and screenwriter of the series are also 'others' in the context of the East-West dichotomy. In the series 'Them', they give a critical message to those who still make this othering by showing the difficulties faced by an intelligent and successful black family in 1950s America in terms of racism at that time. In the tradition of Western metaphysical thought, the white Western male, the logos, is placed at the center, while those outside the center are seen as 'the other' (Erdem, 2020, p. 110). Producer Lena Waithe is a woman from Chicago, whose great-grandfathers worked as slaves in sugar plantations, and whose childhood was spent in black schools and neighborhoods, with a background in acting. The series is financed by Disney's Amazon Prime Video platform and the series is available on these platforms. Jeff Bezos, the founder of Amazon and one of the world's richest entrepreneurial businessmen, was born in Albuquerque, New Mexico in 1964. After his parents' divorce, his mother married a Cuban immigrant and was adopted by his stepfather, changing his last name to Bezos. Bezos is known to have spent his childhood working on his grandfather's farm in the southern US cities of Texas and Houston, and it would be wrong to say that Bezos did not bear the scars of both growing up witnessing the traces of racism in the region where he was born and raised and his stepfather being an immigrant. At the same time, it can be said that the Amazon Prime Video company, which follows the trends and has been smart in terms of publishing marketing by bringing this series to its platforms due to the racial debates that have flared up in today's USA, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The platform can also be considered to have used the series in terms of providing a basis for democratization in the media by going beyond traditional audience patterns.

B. Who is the target audience? Which text, image or voice points to this?

'Them' portrays the social acceptance problems faced by black people in the US at the beginning of the Cold War in the context of racism, with scenes of violence and suspense that push the boundaries of Hollywood, and with a narrative of marginalization. In many scenes of the series, which is based on a true story, white Americans refer to black people as 'niggers', a term accepted as an insult for the black race all over the world. Throughout the series, the Emorys, a normal middle-class American family, struggle to maintain their self-confidence despite the physical and psychological violence they experience socially because of their race. In the series, social and economic landscapes from that period of the USA were tried to be drawn, and through the Emory family, oppression, cruelty, indifference, hopelessness and helplessness were depicted. Through the Emory family, an appeal is made to the intellectuals, bureaucrats and country administrators of the whole world, especially in the USA. For

this reason, the inability of the father character in the series to defend himself, his wife and his children, even for social codes and economic reasons, and his silence; similarly, the fact that other members of the family maintain their silence against the violence they personally experience points to this call. The message of the series to black US citizens is that they should no longer remain silent against all forms of violence against them.

The advocates of the 'I wish I was black' movement, which emerged in protest the marginalization of black people in the USA, also constitute the target audience of this series (Quora, 2022).

It is thought that these people support this movement due to feelings of guilt, the deep culture of black people or the lack of self-love in the USA in general. This group constitutes a large proportion in the USA. Especially after 2000, black people started to be glorified in the USA. The series also undertakes the mission of showing the marginalization of black people and black women in the historical context. The women of 'Them' face both racism and sexism at every opportunity. Throughout the series, it is shown how they constantly try to overcome these obstacles, but the pessimistic picture created with scenes of horror, drama and violence indicates that these efforts are not fruitful. In this series, especially those who marginalize people because of their race constitute the target audience of the film. For this reason, the target audience of the film is almost all white and non-white young women and men, especially within the borders of the USA.

C. What is the text (Denotative Meaning) of this message?

The third question to be answered in deconstructive reading is the plain Denotative Meaning of the text. In this context, spaces, colors and discourses are included in this reading. In general, the Denotative Meaning of the series is the narrative of violence that black people, who gained their civil rights in the USA in the 1950s, faced in the white-dominated US society until that day. In the series film characters, the black-white dichotomy is portrayed through both female and male characters. While white characters are portrayed as dominant and ruthless, black characters are shown as oppressed, submissive and helpless. In this study, the Denotative Meaning and subtext reading were done together under the next question heading to be comparative.

D. What is the subtext (Connotative Meaning) of this message? What do you think about hidden or unspoken meanings?

In the TV series film 'Them', a black middle-class family lives in the USA of the period. The criticism of discrimination and marginalization comes to the fore. The film underlines many problems that are still struggling to be solved today:

- Class discrimination and marginalization based on race, skin color, etc.
- Physical and psychological violence in the neighborhood
- Psychological violence at work
- Psychological violence at school
- People's skin color, not their abilities and qualifications, being in the foreground

The Emory family's move to a white state and neighborhood, the father's application for a job as an engineer and his acceptance to a workplace where all the employees in his position are white, and the children's acceptance to a school attended by white people show that it is the white and especially male characters who are in the decision-making position that bring about change. On the other hand, white US citizens do not see any harm in organizing against blacks even though it is against the law, because they experience anger, anxiety and panic about the place that blacks, who are equal to them before the law, will take in society. At this point, the viewer is presented with scenes that prove that the arguments of Critical Race Theory are historically rooted in those times.

In the series, in areas dominated by the middle class, it is always black people who are marginalized in environments such as neighborhood, school, street and workplace. Family members also experience exclusion because each of them is black. The racist experiences of the family, whose reason for moving to another state was the loss of their baby due to the violence of their white neighbors in their previous place of residence, leave a traumatic legacy for each of them. In their new neighborhood, racist humiliations continue by the administrator,

peers, teachers, neighbors, police or any white person they encounter on the street and constitute the elements of othering.

In the series 'Them', marginalization practices are also narrated through space, and black phobia is also represented through spaces. While the houses where the Emory family is together are represented as closed and claustrophobic by using red, the houses of their white neighbors are represented as light blue and spacious. In the series, the schizophrenic behavior of the whole Emory family because of the physical and psychological violence they have experienced results in each of them having imaginary characters accompanying them. The whole family becomes mentally ill because of being rejected and excluded from the society just because of their different skin color.

In the series, in areas dominated by the middle class; in the neighborhood, school, street and workplace, the color accepted as normal is 'white'. The father at work, the children at school, the mother in the neighborhood, each of them experiences exclusion and humiliation because they are black. Their dog is killed. On the porch of the house hang many dolls with their faces painted black. 'Negro paradise' is written in large black letters on their lawn. The neighbors' children urinate on the clean laundry hanging in the garden. Except for the main characters, the engineer and teacher Emory and his parents, all black people in the series work in jobs that serve white people (waiters, cleaners, musicians, etc.). It is revealed that the fact that the family is middle class does not alleviate the racism against them, that being black is a class problem, but before that, it is a problem of approval related to the racial problem.

The table below constitutes the part of this text in which the unspoken or hidden meanings are explained:

Table 1: Types of othering in the scenes of 'Them' TV series, denotative meanings, connotative meanings and subtext readings.

Scene	Type Of Otherization	Denotative Meaning (text)	Connotative Meaning (subtext)
The name of the series: "Them"	Marking as the dominant culture and ideology superior and the other culture down and undeveloped	The series is called: 'Them/ which means 'others', person of unknown sex and used for groups is a word of generalization. In the series as marginalized others meaningful black family	And throughout the series. white racial authority is present on stage. Black people, whether men or women, are marginalized by being labelled as a group of objects whose opinions and feelings are not considered, and white people make decisions on their behalf.
Episode 1: The Emory family settles in Campton, their new neighborhood, and encounters other residents.	Minimizing humiliates (Quantitative or Qualitative aspect)	The white inhabitants of the neighborhood prejudged the family and thought that the value of their property would decrease if black immigration continued.	The family is despised by the whites. They do not believe that they can live in their neighborhood. Because whites classify themselves as 'us' and their new neighbors as 'them' because of their skin color. The importance of this scene is that it shows the existing discrimination and racial prejudice in society, even though slavery was abolished by law.

<p>Episode 1: Mrs. Vera's book on etiquette and grammar, which Gracie, the younger daughter of the family, is constantly reading.</p>	<p>The labelling of the dominant culture and ideology as superior and the other culture as inferior and underdeveloped.</p>	<p>The little girl prepares herself to obey social rules and speak properly in the pre-school period.</p>	<p>As a kind of prejudice, 'Black people do not know the rules of etiquette and cannot speak properly. They can only learn them by working hard from a very young age'.</p>
<p>Parts 1 and 5: 'Old Black Joe' song</p>	<p>Labelling the dominant culture and ideology as superior and the other culture as inferior and underdeveloped.</p>	<p>In the Emory family's North Carolina home, before the mother, their baby boy and their dog were attacked by their racist white neighbors, a white female neighbor sang this song outside the house, emphasizing the word 'black'</p>	<p>Although this song is about death, it is an iconic song that romanticizes slavery. Black people should recognize that they have been slaves since childhood. The fact that they are equal before the law means nothing in real life.</p>
<p>Episode 1: The killing of the Emory family's white dogs</p>	<p>Phobic and criminalized forms of representation that arouse fear and hatred</p>	<p>Whites can do whatever they want to black people and everything they own, material and spiritual. Although the dog was clearly killed by violence, the white police officer who investigated the killing closed the matter by saying that the dog was poisoned.</p>	<p>Even if the dog owned by a black family is white, it does not have the right to live freely. The beings who stand on the side of black people will receive their share of racism. Laws will not protect black people. In fact, black people have no right to own anything.</p>
<p>Episode 1: Property sales contract for the Emory family's new home.</p>	<p>Labelling the dominant culture and ideology as superior and other cultures as inferior and underdeveloped</p>	<p>The real estate agent, upon the family's discovery of the phrase 'not to be sold to non-whites; no one of colored blood may live in this house' in the property sales contract, telling the family that this phrase was not valid in practice due to the new laws, even though it was in writing.</p>	<p>Even though the laws have changed, the difference and otherness of black people will be faced everywhere. This is an undeniable and unavoidable reality that black people must accept. The subject matter of this scene also falls within the field of study of the Chicago School and points to the prejudice of the liberal system regarding race.</p>

<p>Episode 1: Neighborhood pressure on the Emory family by their neighbors (neighborhood watch)</p>	<p>Phobic and criminalized forms of representation that arouse fear and hatred</p>	<p>The white inhabitants of the neighborhood, as a form of oppression, take their chairs, sit and smoke cigarettes all day and watch the Emory family's house. In this way they disturb their black neighbors.</p>	<p>'Neighborhood watch', as it is still practiced in the USA, is considered a civil society practice dedicated to preventing vandalism and/or criminal incidents in the neighborhood. In this way, they think that they ensure the safety of the neighborhood. The reason why white residents watch the Emorys' house is that they see them as potential criminals. Just because of their skin color, this family, which has no criminal record, is seen as criminal.</p>
<p>Episode 1 and 2: Henry Emory's first day at work and first meeting with his supervisor</p>	<p>To humiliate by demeaning quantitatively or qualitatively)</p>	<p>Because Emory is the only black engineer in his family's father's workplace, his supervisor's discriminatory behavior and statements such as 'I respect all kinds of creatures created by God...'</p>	<p>Emory could not say anything against this and remained silent. Just having a black skin color is enough to be called incompetent and inadequate in the job. Black people are not seen as human beings by whites. Black people have nothing to do but to accept this situation.</p>
<p>Episode 2: Ruby's first day at school</p>	<p>To humiliate by demeaning (quantitatively or qualitatively)</p>	<p>In Ruby's class, where she is the only black student, after answering the question asked by the literature teacher, the white children make fun of her by pretending to be a chimpanzee, sabotage the lesson, and the teacher sees Ruby as the reason for this, punishes her and expels her from the class.</p>	<p>Even if blacks behave in accordance with social norms and are successful individuals, they deserve psychological violence and are held responsible for every negative situation in their environment, without even questioning it, just because of their skin color.</p>
<p>Episode 2 and 3: Police visits to Emory's house</p>	<p>Marginalizing the other by affirming the normal</p>	<p>The police officer's unwarranted visit to the Emory family home to frighten the family because of the white influence in the neighborhood</p>	<p>Although they are recognized as equal before the law, in fact the law does not work for black people. If they are in a white environment, they will not be treated equally by state officials and there will be no harm in harassing them.</p>

Episode 3: The burning of the lawn in the garden of the Emory family home with the words 'negro paradise'	Phobic and criminalized forms of representation that arouse fear and hatred	Blacks should not cross over to the white side	With the scene where the boundary between blacks and whites is drawn by fire... Fire means destruction and war, blood and tears. You cannot cross the border when there is fire in between. The message is given that there will always be a black-white division and racism will continue.
Episode 3: Soiling of laundry	To humiliate by demeaning (quantitatively or qualitatively)	The neighborhood children urinating on the white laundry hung in the garden by the Emory family	No matter how clean the blacks try to be, no matter how clean their white sheets are, in essence they will never be clean enough.
Episode 3: Henry goes shopping for a TV with the kids	To humiliate by demeaning (quantitatively or qualitatively)	The TV salesman says 'you have the right to watch what I watch. Now you have a hundred cousins coming to your house for sleepovers to watch TV', Henry sees the ghost of a tap dancer with a black face painted on the TV screens in the shop.	Whites do not accept the freedom of the colored race, even for profit. The family life of the colored race is regarded by whites as irregular and primitive. Black people become psychologically ill every time they realize the marginalization inflicted on them.
Episode 3: The scene of Henry attaching the aerial of the TV he bought to the roof of the house	Phobic and criminalized forms of representation that arouse fear and hatred	The white men of the neighborhood threatening to lynch Henry and saying, 'You are strong like a gorilla... you don't have a side anyway!'	Since they are not accepted as human beings, all kinds of negativity and insults can be done to black people in social life, even if unprovoked, by organizing if necessary.
Episode 3: Neighborhood meeting	Marginalizing the other by affirming the normal	The character Betty, one of the representatives of racist ideology, makes a provocative speech to the male characters of the neighborhood against the violence against the Emory family	Whites are the race that wrote the history of the United States. Black people were slaves while the whites were busy with this work, so they cannot have the right to live freely in this land and must be expelled immediately, with violence if necessary. The fact that violence is illegal and criminalized is irrelevant in this legitimate white war.

<p>Episode 3: Neighborhood meeting</p>	<p>Marginalizing the other by affirming the normal</p>	<p>The character Betty, one of the representatives of racist ideology, makes a provocative speech to the male characters of the neighborhood against the violence against the Emory family.</p>	<p>Whites are the race that wrote the history of the United States. Black people were slaves while the whites were busy with this work, so they cannot have the right to live freely in this land and must be expelled immediately, with violence if necessary. The fact that violence is illegal and criminalized is irrelevant in this legitimate white war.</p>
<p>Episode 4: The throwing and hanging of dolls with black painted faces on the porch and in the garden of the Emory family home</p>	<p>Phobic and criminalized forms of representation that arouse fear and hatred</p>	<p>A frightening action by whites to show that they do not want a black family to live in their neighborhood</p>	<p>Jim Crow (Thomas D. Rice) is the best-known character of this movement, which is called 'black face' and identified with racism. Even the laws enacted against blacks were named after him. Babies with their faces painted black represent this movement and represent that black people will not be accepted as normal citizens in society because of their race.</p>
<p>Episode 4: Ruby makes a white imaginary girlfriend at school</p>	<p>Dehumanization</p>	<p>Ruby's inability to make friends at school because she is black and because she is lonely, she makes an imaginary friendship with a version of herself whose face is painted white.</p>	<p>Being white is enough to make friends, be successful and be loved. But black people do not have this advantage.</p>
<p>Episode 4: Estate agent calls police after mother questions property contract</p>	<p>Labelling the dominant culture and ideology as superior and the other culture as inferior and underdeveloped</p>	<p>All members of the white race, in the film series, call the police in the slightest incident, but do not / cannot call the police in any incident that happened to the Emory family</p>	<p>The fact that black people have accepted that law enforcement and law enforcement officials are also biased against them and do not believe that they will help them. Trying to solve negative events with their own methods</p>
<p>Episode 4: Visit to black neighbors who moved to Compton before the Emory family</p>	<p>Dehumanization</p>	<p>The black neighboring mother talking about her obsession with cleanliness, both of their bodies and of the house, and the sound of a religious sermon on the radio throughout the visit.</p>	<p>Black people, in the eyes of whites, are not clean. Their skin color can be shown as evidence for this. No matter how clean they are, they are convinced that they are black and dirty.</p>

<p>Episode 5: Bankers' meetings on property loans</p>	<p>To belittle and humiliate (quantitatively and qualitatively)</p>	<p>According to the law, properties that can be sold to blacks in Los Angeles are restricted to certain neighborhoods. However, blacks are told that even if the property contract states that the property 'can be sold to blacks', this is not valid, and they are made to sign loan contracts with harsher conditions than whites, and they are forced to take on debts they cannot pay. Blacks fleeing racist violence in the south of the USA, desperately believing this lie, sign the contracts and their houses can be seized by the bank due to a huge debt that they cannot pay in the future.</p>	<p>The law is always on the side of the whites and there is no problem for whites to commit fraud against blacks. Even if the lawlessness is discovered, it will go unpunished because the lawmakers are white. Therefore, there is no harm in lying to blacks and making them sign contracts that have been tampered with in a way that is not in accordance with the law. Blacks should be punished for having dreams of coming to white settlements and living on equal terms with them, and they should suffer the consequences. This scene falls within the field of study of the Chicago School. Whites see no harm in resorting to illegitimate means in order not to live in the same environment with people of different races.</p>
<p>Episode 5: The murder of the Emory family's baby and the rape of the mother in their old house.</p>	<p>Criminalized forms of representation that arouse fear and hatred.</p>	<p>When the mother and baby were alone in their home, white neighbors came to the house, put the baby in a sack, beat the baby to death and raped the mother.</p>	<p>Black people can be subjected to unlimited and unrestrained violence by whites. There will be no sanctions in the eyes of the law. This is no longer a problem of racism but a problem of humanity. Black people are not seen as human beings. They must give their babies to the whites when they want them, or they can be put in a sack like a kitten and beaten to death.</p>
<p>Series In the first 5 episodes of the film. Miss Vera, the little girl's dream</p>	<p>Dehumanization</p>	<p>The little girl tells her mother about a woman called Mrs. Vera and both shies away from her and does what she tells her to do without questioning.</p>	<p>Since black parents cannot protect their children, they can be guided by a (white) higher intelligence.</p>

<p>In the first five episodes of the serial film,</p> <p>The black-faced tap dancer who emerged as Father Henry Emory's nightmare every time he encountered racism</p>	<p>Dehumanization</p>	<p>Father Emory's schizophrenic tendencies because of the violent and intense marginalization he experienced in the past, and the continuation of these incidents in his new neighborhood and his lack of acceptance in society.</p>	<p>He was referring to dancers who were actually white and imitated blacks and were portrayed to make fun of blacks. The most well-known character of this movement, called 'blackface' and identified with racism, is Jim Crow (Thomas D. Rice). Even the laws against blacks were named after him.</p>
<p>All Episodes</p> <p>Colors of the Black and White Living Environment</p>	<p>Phobic and criminalized forms of representation that evoke fear.</p>	<p>The environments inhabited by blacks are presented in dark red, dark green and dark blue tones; the environments of whites are presented in light blue, light pink and yellow tones.</p>	<p>No matter how hard black people try, they will not come out of the darkness and will not be able to live freely. They will spend their lives as subjects of fear and objects of fear.</p>

E. Who are the winners and losers of these messages?

'Them' tells the story of the Emory family's struggle to exist and gain the respect they deserve in a white-dominated world. The efforts of a middle-class American family to survive and accept themselves against the physical and psychological obstacles they face because they are black are depicted in the context of their daily life routines. In the whole text, it is seen that a dualism is established between the dominant white race and the black people marginalized by prejudices. Today, the arguments of Critical Race Theory are also related to the continuation of this dualist logic. From this point of view, traces of these arguments can be found independently of the director, screenwriter and producer of the series. The film series is clearly understood to be a criticism of racist ideology, and the extremes to which this can lead are pointed out. The Hollywood film industry plays an important role in the production and positioning of race relations.

Although there is an intense field of criticism against discrimination and racism in the USA, the narrative structure of Hollywood films is predominantly constructed in favor of masculine white characters, while others are marginalized. Showing black people in negative representations such as slaves, gangsters or positioning them as supporting characters in the completion of the white hero's mission serves to strengthen the hegemonic position of the white hero. And films with such plots reach high viewership numbers. This series, on the other hand, reveals the persecution of marginalization experienced by black people in the USA by using horror, thriller and drama styles all together; each scene contains different visual messages and discourses.

When these denotative meanings, connotative meanings and subtext are analyzed, the series' constructed narrative and modes of representation involve practices of marginalization. It can be said that the screenwriter Little Marvin and producer Lena Waithe, who, like many black creators in the industry, are inclined towards the status quo, have used the suffering of black people, which has been repeatedly covered in previous productions, by making it interesting with high tension scenes for the purpose of profit, since they include scenes of high levels of violence in the series. Especially the scriptwriters and producers of the series, which have created a black story using a combination of different genres, are the winners of the series both economically and in terms of its messages.

In the whole series, how 'Them' characters fight against the social obstacles that come in front of them, which smell of racism, and how they cannot be the winners of the war, as well as the psychological traumas of each of them separately, their acceptance of being the other, and the results are revealed. The white characters of the series, representing the Western white race, push the upper limits of what human beings can socially reach in othering. Therefore, another loser of the message of this media message is the whites with racist ideology who show violence in a ruthless and organized manner, and all others, i.e. those who defend the Western dualist epistemology.

CONCLUSION

Since the existence of mankind, there has always been a need for the other as a form of self-definition, and individuals have decided what is acceptable and unacceptable in the context of the eyes of others while defining themselves. The ambivalent structure in the Western metaphysical thought has been evident since time immemorial. Individuals in the Centre have called me/us, while those outside the Centre and pushed to the periphery are called others. Black people are among the marginalized and socially marginalized groups. Especially in the United States, black people have been traumatically subjected to racist marginalization until recently.

The 'Them' series film, which is being screened on the Amazon Prime platform, is examined within the scope of the study to analyze marginalization in the context of Critical Race Theory. As a result of the deconstructive reading, it is seen that the marginalization practices that black people were subjected to in 1950 USA were processed in the series film with representations, dialogues and a plot based on real history.

Within the framework of this study, the perception and practice of the other, which is handled with an essentialist approach, is divided into sections with a deconstructive reading as an example of the historical connection of the arguments of Critical Race Theory. Jaques Derrida's deconstruction method aims to reveal the invisible aspects of texts. Starting from duality, which is at the Centre of deconstructive analysis, and using the techniques of this method, points of overlap with Critical Race Theory were identified to investigate the rationalization of discrimination. In the series, the director, who critically takes a photograph of the USA of the period, dramatically reveals the struggle of black people, who have succeeded in regaining their freedom, which is a universal human right, before the law, to accept themselves in the social functioning in the period after they have gained their rights. The white characters of the series, which is transferred to the white screen as a representation of the Western race, push the upper limits that human beings can reach socially in othering. In the series, the struggle of black people, who try to impose themselves on the society by fighting economic deprivation and the citizenship rights they have acquired, is dramatically portrayed.

It is a historical fact that until the period of their transition from the status of slavery to that of citizenship, blacks had no say in any matter, no right to vote, and no experience of social life. It was also made clear that the period of incorporation of blacks into social life would not be facilitated by whites, who had been predominantly involved in this life until then, and that it would even be a period prone to chaos and pitfalls. The disproportionate start and continuation of the struggle of the blacks, who have had no means at their disposal, against the whites, who have had power over the administration, economy, schools, courts, newspapers and everything else for generations, since they gained their civil rights, is seen as the main cause of the problem. The fact that the solution of this painful process has progressed extremely slowly until today and that the race problem has never reached a healthy solution is still one of the most important issues in the United States of America today.

In the series, it is seen that the Emory family, as members of a race that cannot put reason at the center of life, who have been excluded from history for social and economic reasons, and as new members of the country who have made a class transition from slavery to citizenship, pay a heavy price for this. While the black protagonists of the series strive to continue their lives as normal citizens, they have lost their mental health and succumbed to going beyond the boundaries that restrict their existence. While trying to escape from the racist violence they had experienced, the family, who found themselves in a plot wrapped in the 'racism issue' of the period, which was extremely difficult to overcome, was left alone with their doubts and fears. It is possible to evaluate the connection of the series with marginalization from a sociological and ideological point of view. In the series film, after the psychological and physiological violence the family has seen, as a result of their deteriorating

mental state, each of them is haunted by ghosts separately. The use of supernatural phenomena to cover or examine deeper issues, in the context of the scenario, serves the purpose of conveying to the audience the level of psychological pain that cannot be explained by normal indicators.

In this study, in which we have found that the producer, director and screenwriter, who of course also aimed to make a profit in the release of the series, are the “other”, it would be unfair to them to interpret that they have transferred these scenes with the concern of being watched, at the point of transferring the violent images of the discrimination experienced by their own races to the white screen. The production, whose target audience is especially black and white US citizens, sends messages to the whole world, which is still struggling against racism globally. In the literal sense, it depicts the shocking struggle of a race for social acceptance. Sub-textual readings, on the other hand, reveal the so-called neutrality of the public power in the representation of white US citizens who have been in power for generations and the exposure of black people to systematic racist practices. These supposed neutrality and systematic acts of racism are presented to the viewers in the series as historical evidence of the claims of Critical Race Theorists.

As a result, in the TV series 'Them', which we analyzed with a deconstructive reading, it was concluded that the arguments of Critical Race Theorists based on history overlap with the arguments that racism in the USA is not perceived as an extraordinary concept but as normal and has continued to exist in all processes of social life.

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- **Etik kurul onayı:** Etik kurul onayına ihtiyaç bulunmamaktadır.
- **Yazar katkı oranları:** “Eleştirel Irk Kuramı Bağlamında Yapısöküm İncelemesi: ‘Ötekiler (THEM)’ Dizi Filmi” başlıklı bu çalışmada Burcu Kaya Erdem (birinci yazar) %34, İrem Balaban (ikinci yazar) %33, Ayşe İrem Sungar (üçüncü yazar) %33 oranında katkı sağlamıştır.
- **Çıkar çatışması:** Çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.
- **Finansal destek:** Yazar bu çalışma için finansal destek almadığını beyan etmiştir.

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- **Ethics committee approval:** There is no need for ethics committee approval.
 - **Author contribution rate:** In this study titled “Deconstruction Analysis in The Context of Critical Race Theory: ‘THEM’ TV Series”, Burcu Kaya Erdem (first author) contributed 34%, İrem Balaban (second author) 33%, and Ayşe İrem Sungar (third author) 33%.
 - **Conflict of interest:** There is no conflict of interest.
 - **Grant support:** The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

Bu çalışma araştırma ve yayın etiğine uygun olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir.
This study was carried out in accordance with research and publication ethics.