

21. A Deconstructive Analysis of Orientalist Representations in the Film United 93¹

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Abstract

Orientalism, a discipline that focuses on the cultures, languages, histories and religions of Eastern societies, is employed by the Western world to establish its own identity through differentiation from the East. At the same time, Orientalism is used as one of the practices of othering in the media; it can be executed through films, news and various written-visual tools. Following the September 11 attacks, the language used in Western films adopted an Orientalist attitude. The attacks have created great unjust treatment for both the “West” and the “East”; thousands of civilians lost their lives in the USA, and subsequently Muslims and Arabs were marginalised in various ways. A prevailing situation has emerged in which Islamophobia is reproduced in media messages and the Western perspective towards Islam has become globally negative. The film United 93, released five years after the attacks, is considered an example full of various meanings in terms of analysing Orientalist elements. The aim of the study is to deconstruct the film in line with the orientalist discourse, in the context of economic-political, literal meaning and subtexts. Deconstructive analysis/reading, one of the processes of addressing practices of othering in the media, can reveal what has been said and what has not been said by going from the whole to the parts and making sense of each part in its own context. Thus, in the study, it is discussed why and how the Orientalist elements in the film are reflected. As a result, emphasizing the religious and violent aspects of the Eastern characters in the film United 93 becomes a successful example of how Orientalism has been served in the media. The “civilising” mission developed against the “other” of the Orientalist discourse also manifests itself in the film United 93; Muslims are portrayed as aggressive and uncivilised. The film particularly incorporates the inhumane aspects of its characters and these are revealed through deconstruction. Within this context, the significance of deconstructive reading becomes evident as it serves to dismantle the prevailing stereotypes surrounding cinema and media.

Keywords: Orientalism, Islamophobia, September 11 attacks, Deconstructive analysis, United 93

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Uçuş 93 Filmindeki Oryantalist Temsillerin Yapısökümcü Bir Analizi³

Öz

Doğu insanların kültürlerini, dillerini, tarihlerini ve dinlerini inceleyen ve Doğu bilimi anlamına gelen oryantalizm, Batı'nın kendi kimliğini Doğu'dan soyutlayarak tanımlaması ile icra edilmektedir. Aynı zamanda medyada ötekileştirme pratiklerinden biri olarak kullanılan oryantalizm; filmlerle, haberlerle ve çeşitli yazılı-görsel araçlarla işlenebilmektedir. Özellikle 11 Eylül saldırılarından sonra filmlerdeki Batılı dil oryantalist bir tutuma gitmiştir. Saldırıları hem "Batı" hem de "Doğu" açısından pek çok mağduriyet yaratmıştır; ABD'de binlerce sivil hayatını kaybetmiş, akabinde ise Müslümanlar ve Araplar çeşitli yollarla ötekileştirilmiştir. Medya iletilerinde İslamofobinin yeniden üretimini yapıldığı ve Batı'nın İslam'a yönelik olumsuz bakış açısının genelleştirildiği bir ortam meydana gelmiştir. Saldırlardan beş yıl sonra gösterime girmiş Uçuş 93 (United 93) filmi, oryantalist unsurları analiz etmek açısından çeşitli anlamlarla dolu bir örnek olarak ele alınmaktadır. Çalışmanın amacı, oryantalist söylem doğrultusunda filmin dekonstrüksiyonunu ekonomi-politik, düz anlam ve alt metinler bağlamında gerçekleştirmektir. Medyada ötekileştirme pratiklerini ele alma usullerinden biri olan dekonstrüktif analiz/okuma, bütünden parçalara giderek ve her bir parçayı kendi bağlamında anlamlandırarak, söylenmiş ve söylenmemiş olanı ortaya koyabilmektedir. Böylece çalışmada, filmde yer alan oryantalist unsurların neden ve ne şekilde yansıtıldığı ele alınmıştır. Sonuç olarak, Uçuş 93 filmindeki Doğulu karakterlerin dindar ve şiddet eğilimli yönlerinin vurgulanması oryantalizmin ne şekilde medyada işlendiği noktasında başarılı birer örnek olmuştur. Oryantalist söylemin sahip olduğu "öteki"ne karşı geliştirilen "uygarlaştırıcı" misyon, Uçuş 93 filminde de kendini göstermiştir; Müslümanlar saldırgan ve geri kalmış olarak tasvir edilmiştir. Filmdeki karakterlerin insancıl olmayan yönlerine özellikle yer verilmiştir ve bunlar dekonstrüksiyon ile açığa çıkarılmıştır. Bu bağlamda sinema ve medya üzerinde bu kalıplaşmış yargıları kırmak için dekonstrüktif okumanın önem taşıdığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar kelimeler: Oryantalizm, İslamofobi, 11 Eylül saldırıları, Dekonstrüktif analiz, Uçuş 93

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Introduction

Orientalism, an ideological concept that accepts the West as the central reference point, examines the culture and history of Eastern peoples, and in this respect, it is considered a branch of science. This science is carried out by the West defining its own identity by abstracting it from the East. The concept of Orientalism encompasses the expression of views that portray the East as underdeveloped and corrupt, while simultaneously working to legitimize Western culture as more civilised and deserving of being hegemonic power.

Orientalism, which is one of the practices of othering in the media, can be achieved through films, news, and written-visual tools. Especially following the September 11 attacks, Western films have adopted an Orientalist attitude. In the international atmosphere after the attacks, the texts or subtexts of the aforementioned films, misrepresented Easterners/Muslims with false and exaggerated stereotypes.

The September 11 attacks were a series of four simultaneous terrorist attacks targeting civilians carried out by the radical Islamist militant organization al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, in the United States of America (USA). These attacks targeted the three fundamental pillars of USA power: economic, military and political. Following the four attacks, which led to the deaths of 2,996 people, including al-Qaeda hijackers, the US government, headed by George W. Bush, launched a comprehensive counterterrorism effort on a global scale.

In the aftermath of these attacks, which targeted thousands of civilians, people of Eastern origin and Muslims living in the USA experienced a serious process of marginalisation. With the rise Islamophobia after the attacks, there has been an increase in the number of hate crimes against Muslims in the USA and other Western countries. Al-Qaeda's claim of responsibility for the attacks caused the whole world to feel fear and hatred against Islam and Muslims.

Mass media, such as television, newspapers and magazines have been actively involved in the promotion of Islamophobia, which portrays Islam and Muslims as objects of fear. Through cinema, barbaric, reactionary and violent Eastern/Muslim characters have been presented and an environment has been constructed in which the negative attitude of the West towards Islam has become widespread (Temel, 2019: 94). By employing visual and auditory techniques, the films that have reproduced Islamophobia after the September 11 attacks convey the idea that all Muslims have the potential to be terrorists or that there is a limited presence of virtuous Muslims (Türkmen & Özçınar, 2020: 1323).

The 2006 film *United 93*, released five years after the September 11 attacks in the USA, is taken as an example full of various meanings in terms of analysing Orientalist elements. *United 93* is a documentary-drama film about the incidents inside United Airlines Flight 93, one of the four hijacked planes in the United States on September 11, 2001. Alongside the incidents that occurred within the aircraft, the challenges encountered by the air traffic controllers during the attacks are also incorporated. In the film, the hijacked plane crashes in Pennsylvania before reaching the US Congress building with the intervention of the passengers. However, while carrying out this scenario, an Orientalist marginalisation is made through the Muslim identity of the hijackers. In this regard, although the film tries to portray the hijacking as accurately as possible, there is also information that imagination was used. Accordingly, the incidents immediately preceding the flight are included and the episode from the start of the flight to its fall is analysed.

The film is analysed around the deconstruction questions put into practice by the "New Mexico Media Literacy Project". This analysis, as Kaya Erdem has specified in (2019: 161-166), is examined around the questions of "Whose message is this? Who created or financed this media message? Why?", "Who is the target audience? Which text, image or sound indicates this?", "What is the text (literal meaning) of this message? (What do we actually hear and see from the written and read words, photographs, drawings, music and sounds?)", "What is the subtext of this message? What do you think about hidden or unstated meanings?" and "Who are the winners or losers of these messages? How does this serve the interests of media owners?".

The aim of the study is to deconstruct the film within the framework of the above questions and in line with the Orientalist discourse, both in the political economy context and in the context of literal meaning and subtexts. Thus, it will be discussed why and how the orientalist elements in the film are reflected. In this respect, the background information on Orientalism, Islamophobia and the September 11 attacks will be presented through document analysis, and handling of the film in terms of Orientalism will be presented through deconstruction. Deconstructive analysis/reading has important foundations in terms of addressing the practices of othering in the media; this reading, which goes from the whole to the parts and makes sense of each part separately in its own context and criticizes binary oppositions, can reveal what has been said and what has not been said (Derrida, 1997: 24). Deconstruction makes it possible to reveal the way in which Orientalist elements are used in the film United 93 by going from the whole to the parts and by revealing the contradictions within binary oppositions.

1. Orientalism

Orientalism is a term that denotes the study of the East/the Orient, while also encompassing an ideological framework that positions the West as the central reference point. In this respect, Said states in his work "Orientalism" that Orientalism has a way of thinking that includes an ontological and epistemological distinction. This distinction between "East" and "West" has been recognized by many, from philosophers to political leaders (Said, 1994: 2). In fact, this distinction comes from Western metaphysical thought; in the Western way of thinking, there are sharp expressions such as "yes" - "no", "there is" - "there is not", "self" and "the other". On the other hand, in the Eastern tradition of metaphysical thought, the expressions "both" and "also" can be used, and a thing can be both black and white. In this sense, there is a dualist approach in the Western tradition of thought, which has led to the construction of "the West as me" and "the East as other". Moreover, in addition to the aforementioned distinction, this tradition has also kept the East in the object position as the "other" through "the practices of othering" (Kaya Erdem: 2019: 32-49). Terms such as Middle East, Far East and Near East, which center on the West, i.e. continental Europe, have also emerged as concepts that support this idea in its most concrete form.

Orientalism, a discipline developed in the nineteenth century, is the study of the culture, language, history and religion of the peoples of the East. However, the practice of this discipline is at the same time enabled by the West defining and expressing its own identity separately by isolating it from the East. Therefore, the distinction between the Western subject and the Eastern subject is legitimized. However, it should be noted that the "Western subject" does not characterize a single Western subject. If it were to correspond to a single adjective, the class, national and various ethnic differentiations within the West itself would be ignored (Uluç, 2009: 142-144). Frankly, however, this does not eliminate the effort of Western identity to dominate Eastern identity. Because while the examiner is the subject, the examined is treated as an object and transformed into another being in an objectified state (Uluç, 2009: 155).

Within this particular context, it is known that the West has undertaken a "civilising" mission towards the "other" since the end of the 18th century, employing the concept of Orientalism. On this basis, Orientalism has become a concept that aims to reinforce the superiority of the West and to spread it all over the world (Boztemur, 2002: 140). In consequence, these aims strengthen the hegemonic and colonialist perspective of Orientalism. The idea that Eastern civilizations, which are seen as uncivilised, need to be civilised has been imposed.

Within the framework of the science of Orientalism, a Western-centric view is not always dominant. It is essential to note that there exist Orientalists who analyse the East in an impartial way. For example, the famous German Orientalist Hellmut Ritter stated that the works and inventions of Muslim scientists made significant contributions to the development of many sciences such as astrology, geography, medicine and mathematics (Sezgin, 2011: 90). For that reason, it is necessary to accept that many Eastern and Western civilizations have contributed to the development of sciences and to interpret this historical process in an impartial manner.

The most well-known of the views within the framework of Orientalism is "Oriental despotism". According to the Western understanding defending the idea of Oriental despotism, despotism prevails in Eastern governments; these governments have been unable to provide peace and security to their citizens. Despotism is referenced based on the absence of private property and the inadequate institutional framework governing state-citizen interactions (Mardin, 2002: 117-119). In the context of these evaluations of power, the West was convinced of the "underdevelopment of the East" and the "corruption of the East" (Kahraman, 2002: 166). According to Said, in order to establish these convictions and to reinforce the idea of Orientalism, generations of labour and various actions have been carried out (Said, 1979: 6; cited in Kahraman, 2002: 163). As a result, this understanding, which has lasted for many centuries, assumes that the East has oppressive and traditional systems of governance and that the West is more civilised and justifies colonial intervention.

The origin of the concept "Oriental despotism" lies in the fact that the Easterner is a primitive human being according to the Western subject. In contrast to the East, which is considered primitive and underdeveloped, the West is civilised, industrious and educated. All of these adjectives are based on the existential explanation of the West and correspond to a dualist opposition (Uluç, 2009: 164). The Western understanding states that Easterners are highly fatalistic and have less logical and rational thinking compared to Westerners. According to them, geometrical and logical thinking is the most distinctive characteristic of the West (Türer, 2002: 170). Therefore, Orientalism is a dialectical process that contains an opposition. Because as much as the East is objectified, that is to say reified, the West is also reified and imprisoned in certain adjectives. On this basis, within every aspect, there exists the concept of "self" and "the other" (Uluç, 2009: 174). To such an extent that the Eastern world has also cultivated a scholarly discipline to comprehend the Western world, which has subsequently taken part in literature under the term "Occidentalism".

"Orient" (East) and "Occident" (West), of Latin origin, symbolize two separate worlds. Hence, from a Western perspective, the world consists of "two unequal halves"; a distinction is made for both geographies in sociological, historical, economic and scientific terms (Said, 1994: 12). However, there is also the fact that the wealth and enlightenment of the West was made possible by what it took from the East. With the advent of the Renaissance, the Western world embarked on a path of modernization, while simultaneously prompting the development of its unique identity as "other than itself" (Kaya Erdem: 2019: 128-129). Viewed in this way, the East is inferior to the West, and it is equipped with

decorations of barbarism, lust fantasies and wealth. Western representations of the East have a convincing fictional space. It is worth mentioning that Edith Hull, the author of the 1919 novel "The Sheikh", considered one of the greatest examples of the "desert romance" genre, had never been to a desert in her life. But despite such a reality, readers of such Western fictional novels even dream of travelling to the Eastern places mentioned in the works (Kömeçoğlu, 2002: 47).

The situation that leads to the conceptualization of Orientalism as a dominant discourse stems from the creation of the East through texts. Said regards the East as a textual entity, and the West has constructed an Orientalist discourse through its textual practices (Çırakman, 2002: 193). Through Orientalism, which is a cultural and political phenomenon, what is thought, said, and done about the East is revealed. Through the imposition of a superstructural pressure, the Orientalist elements have been artfully incorporated into a range of works and ideas, characterized by detailed composition and textuality (Said, 1994: 13). Said states that the concept of Orientalism is strengthened by the West through imagination and representation. In this sense, a theatricality is realized in the East, which is the "stage", and the East is exhibited and disseminated in countless spaces through Orientalism. This means that Orientalism is an activity of representation and does not possess any reality (Kahraman, 2002: 166-167). Continuous representations on the Eastern stage only lead to stereotyping.

Windschuttle stated three main arguments in Said's "Orientalism". The first of these is that Orientalism serves a political purpose that legitimizes colonialism. The second is that Orientalism was an important tool for Europe to create its own "other" and to reinforce its own Western identity. The third is the misidentification of Arab and Islamic culture with certain negative characteristics through Orientalism (Windschuttle, 1999; cited in Türkbağ, 2002: 214). Drawing upon these assumptions, it is concluded that Orientalism has marginalised the East through textual representation, perpetuating Islamophobia by misrepresenting Arab-Islamic culture.

Orientalism, which is one of the practices of othering in the media, can be executed through films, news and various written-visual tools; especially after the September 11 attacks, the language used in Western films has taken an Orientalist attitude. Some of these films include "United 93" (2006), "World Trade Center" (2006), "The Kingdom" (2007), "Syriana" (2005) and "Rendition" (2007) (Uluç, 2009: 396). In addition to these, "Scott" (2001), "Bigelow" (2008) and "Berg" (2013) are examples of films in which Islamophobia is reproduced after the September 11 attacks. In these films, the ideas that all Muslims can be terrorists or that there are hardly any good Muslims are conveyed to the audience through visual and auditory codes (Türkmen & Özçınar, 2020: 1323). In this regard, in the international atmosphere after the September 11 attacks, the texts or subtexts of the aforementioned films have mediated the representation of the Easterner/Muslim with false, exaggerated and stereotypical representations both in terms of plot and characters.

2. September 11 Attacks and Islamophobia

The September 11 attacks were a sequence of four simultaneous terrorist attacks targeting civilians perpetrated by the radical Islamist militant organization al-Qaeda on September 11, 2001, in the USA. Nineteen hijackers, members of the organization, hijacked four passenger planes, the first two targeting the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, the third the Pentagon and the unsuccessful fourth a federal building in the capital Washington DC. In the aftermath of the four attacks, resulting in a total of 2,996 fatalities, including al-Qaeda hijackers, the US government, led by George W. Bush, launched a comprehensive counterterrorism effort known as Global War on Terrorism (GWOT).

In the September 11 attacks, the World Trade Center represents both a symbolic and a real destruction. The architectural, humanitarian and economic meanings symbolized by the center are emblematic of the modern West. The attacks specifically aimed to undermine these significances and symbols (Kömeçoğlu, 2002: 37). Frankly, in this respect, the September 11 attacks were also intended as a rebellion against what the United States, the superpower of the post-Cold War 1990s, stood for. Özer interprets the possible messages contained in the incident as follows; by targeting the Twin Towers, it is an attack on economic elites and globalization; by targeting the Pentagon, an attack on military elites and global fear; by targeting the federal building, an attack on political elites and the brain of the administration. Therefore, an attack on the three pillars of power was targeted (Özer, 2009: 199-201). On this basis, these attacks which target thousands of civilians, carry a symbolic meaning; the target was the symbolic representation of the superpower USA in terms of its economic, political and military influence.

After the September 11 attacks, the US government once again divided the world into "us" and "them". Accordingly, "we" are friends and "they" are enemies. Apart from the potential of this distinction in foreign policy to create a new war, it had domestic consequences to the detriment of foreigners living in the USA. Measures implemented against internal adversaries have led to human rights violations. Thousands of people were detained for months for overstaying visas and treated as potential terrorists (Arslan, 2002: 83). In the immediate aftermath of the incidents, more than 1,200 foreigners were arrested under the anti-terrorist law, which stipulates that anyone suspected of involvement can be arrested and were denied the right to be defended by their lawyers. It was subsequently announced by the administration that approximately 5,000 men of Middle Eastern origin between the ages of 16 and 45 with tourist visas would be questioned (Ramonet, 2003; cited in Akner, 2004: 135). In fact, in the documentary "Turning Point: 9/11 and the War on Terror" (2021), it is stated that in the post-September 11 period, black Muslims in the USA were once again pushed into the background, and that they were already treated as second-class citizens because they are black, and after the attacks they started to be treated as third-class citizens because they are Muslims. Accordingly, people of Eastern origin and Muslims living in the USA have experienced a serious period of marginalisation.

The September 11 attacks led the US government to implement practices within the framework of political and legal paranoia over terrorism and war. The state of fear and anxiety caused by the incident has become the basis for legitimizing all kinds of repressive practices. The ideology of freedom symbolized by the West has been defeated by counter-terrorism policies. Libertarian concepts such as globalization and liberalism have been reshaped in a negative way and have resulted in adverse outcomes both domestically in the United States, characterized by its multicultural society, and globally in the establishment of justice (Arslan, 2002: 86-88). In relation to this, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, initiated by the US government and lasting for years, have also had a devastating impact on world politics. The United States, which represents "democratic" values, has co-operated with leaders in Pakistan and Uzbekistan who are considered dictators (Akner, 2004: 134). For that reason, when it comes to terrorism, the USA has left behind the "democratic Western" values it represents.

Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis also constitutes an argument for this attack in the context of the clash between Islam and the West. In contrast to Fukuyama's "End of History" thesis, Huntington argues that the new world order will not continue peacefully after the end of the Cold War between the US and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), civilizations will continue to clash and a significant part of the conflicts in the new order will take place by transforming from the existing dualism of the West and the East in Orientalism into a more specific dualism of the West and Islam. The attacks

of September 11 were, at this point, a concrete manifestation of the "Clash of Civilizations" thesis; the attacks divided the world into the Christian West and the Muslim West (Özer, 2009). However, it should not be forgotten that the post-attack world was fragmented not solely due to religion, but also as a consequence of numerous cultural, political, historical, and economic reasons, which correspond to the characteristics that define civilizations, because civilizations are not only entities that come together under the umbrella of religion.

After the September 11 attacks, Islam has become the new enemy of the West, which in the past fought communism. There has been an increase in the number of hate crimes against Muslims in the USA and other Western countries (Erdin, 2014: 13). Following the attacks, there was a rise in Islamophobia, leading to a systematic marginalisation and exclusion of Muslims. Al-Qaeda's claim of responsibility for the attacks has fueled the whole world to feel fear and hatred towards Islam and Muslims (Pınarbaşı, 2022: 179). In consequence, these attacks have affected the image of Islam and Muslims on a global scale and caused prejudice and discrimination against Muslims.

Mass media such as television, newspapers and magazines have played an active role in promoting Islamophobia, which portrays Islam and Muslims as objects of fear. Through cinema, barbaric, reactionary and violent Eastern/Muslim characters have been portrayed and a prevailing situation has been emerged in which the negative opinion of the Western world towards Islam has become widespread (Temel, 2019: 94). According to a study, in Hollywood, which has been operating for more than 100 years, only 5% of more than 900 films have featured a normal Arab character who is not evil. In the other large percentage, Arabs have been represented under negative adjectives, mainly ruthless and savage (Shaheen, 2003; cited in Balcı & Çifçi, 2021: 239). Based on this, representations that reinforce stereotypes have been used in the media for many years.

Islamophobia, which was constructed and continuously reproduced by the media especially after the September 11 attacks, has played a leading role that marginalises and excludes Muslims by the West. This Western understanding is able to instill fears about Islam in the masses through social messages using the media. With the concept of Islamophobia, Muslims have been included in the category of "other", "foreign" and "non-normal" population and this perception has been reinforced by the media (Tekin, 2017: 98). After the attacks, Western media has started to use the word "terrorist" to describe Muslims (Erdin, 2014: 13). Deconstructive reading helps uncover the practices of othering in media messages, particularly in the context of Orientalism and Islamophobia.

3. A Brief Overview of Deconstructive Analysis

Derrida's ideas played a leading role in the emergence of the deconstructive tradition against the Western metaphysical structure of thought. Deconstruction, conceptualized by Derrida, is a practice of "reading" texts rather than a philosophical initiative. Derrida deconstructs the "structure" with the tradition of deconstruction, which is skeptical of absolute knowledge and the attainment of truth and reveals the contradictions within the structure. One of these contradictions, the distinction between self and other in Western metaphysics, is also revealed through deconstruction. Consequently, the "self" needs the concept of the "other" to manifest itself; through the other, a negation and the superiority of the "self" is realized. This negation is realized through the development of a brand-new understanding of language that includes violence against the "other" (Kaya Erdem, 2019: 92-94). In this sense, a deeper understanding of this language of violence, utilized to marginalise and to discriminate, requires the implementation of deconstruction. Through this, the various contexts can be explored.

Deconstruction is a kind of critical reading that helps to make sense of the differences and contradictions in texts rather than destroying and dismantling the structure. Because deconstruction does not dismantle structures by reading them from the outside, it positions itself within the structures and targets them from the inside. Hereby, the contradictions and oppositions within the structures can only be understood by living in the structure and the structures can be deconstructed by an internal reading in this way (Derrida, 1997: 24). Deconstruction is not a practice that damages the text; however, it is a practice that carves the text in a two-stage process. In this practice, which consists of reversal and neutralization stages, firstly, in the reversal stage, the power relationship in the hierarchical binary structure is destroyed. In the neutralization phase, the concept in question, which is prioritized and privileged, is removed from the hierarchical balance of power relations. In this manner, a new situation is obtained in which the concept is freed from stereotyped meanings and the meaning is unstable and postponed (Hottois, 1998: 306; cited in Aydınalp, 2017: 156). So much so that this situation in which meaning is postponed and unstable allows for the expansion of meaning and the search for new meanings. By breaking down the text into smaller parts through phrases and words, it becomes possible to construct new meanings within each structure by focusing on different contexts.

Derrida's concept of "différance", which means "differentiation" and "postponement", challenged the binary oppositions that exclude the "other" in the Western tradition of thought. This is because Derrida's view that meaning is not final and unique, does not consider any identity superior to another, and rejects the notion of a "central" position. Therefore, there is no central, primary and superior identity. Viewed in this way, while each subject is dependent on the other in the dualistic Western metaphysical understanding, in the concept of "différance", each subject ignores its dependence on the other subject (Kaya Erdem, 2019: 154). Frankly, within the framework of this idea, Derrida questioned ethnocentrism and criticized hierarchical and exclusionary discourses. Thus, ethnic identities in the center and "other" identities outside the center are rejected in the Derridean understanding; it is aimed to reveal the duality and hierarchy in question through deconstruction.

In the Derridean understanding, there is no white opposite black, woman opposite man, text opposite speech, unlike the duality in the Western thought. Because, according to him, there is no criterion that would highlight such a centrality and cause duality. Each element outside the center is the result of discrimination and this discrimination is characterized as a kind of violence against the ignored elements. Derrida called this dualism in Western metaphysics the "metaphysics of presence", according to this traditional understanding, the existing entity defines itself as the "center" and describes anything other than itself as "other". Hence, the state of presence in question has a dualist and hierarchical structure. It is precisely at this point that Derrida criticized the metaphysics of presence and argued that it must be deconstructed (Rutli, 2016: 58, 54). Otherwise, the master-slave dialectic would be legitimized in the distinction between self and other in many areas. In relation to this, Rousseau dealt with the male-female struggle within the framework of the master-slave dialectic and emphasized that the perception that if a man marries a woman from a higher class than himself, the man will be humiliated, and if he marries a woman from a lower class, they will live together in harmony exists in society; consequently, it is underlined that in the traditional metaphysical understanding, hierarchies and dualisms have become established in the perception of society (Derrida, 1997: 176). In this respect, it is crucial to deconstruct the metaphysics of presence in order to reveal hierarchies and dualism.

Through deconstructive readings, Derrida identified the contradictions in the structure of the text and tried to reveal these contradictions by deconstructing the Western metaphysical understanding. According to him, meaning does not correspond to a fixed content; it also includes ambiguities and

contradictions. In fact, the Western tradition of thought accepts meaning as "single" and "fixed". Accordingly, Derridean understanding argues that no text has a single and definite meaning (Kaya Erdem, 2019: 150). However, it should be noted that Derrida does not see deconstruction as a method, because deconstruction takes a variable form in each individual case. In fact, deconstruction, by its very nature, cannot have a regular and systematic functioning (Aker, 2022: 343-344). In this context, deconstructive reading helps to extract meanings beyond the text and contributes to the production of a rich pool of meaning.

Derrida argues that speech precedes writing. Because speech has stresses and tones, whereas writing is atonal. Viewed in this way, the place of the subject in writing is taken and hidden by someone else. When writing, all words are used with their traditional meanings, whereas when speaking, people can change the meaning with their tone of voice and emphasis, and create meanings that are different from those in writing. Therefore, when a word is written down, its power also disappears (Derrida, 1997: 315). Hereby, in deconstruction, it is important to consider the original form of the structures; if each object is deconstructed according to the form of its first existence, a successful pool of meaning is achieved.

According to Derrida, the meaning of a text is mobile and contradictory, ready to be deconstructed. In this manner, through deconstruction, a reading is carried out to reveal the hidden and implicit points within the texts. Metaphorical meanings in the text, unspoken, hidden and left unfinished by implication are revealed through deconstructive reading. From this point of view, according to Derrida, everything can be read and deconstructed as a text by looking at it with a critical eye (Kaya Erdem, 2019: 156). Derrida stated that everything can be deconstructed with the phrase "there is nothing outside the text" (Derrida, 1997: 163). Accordingly, a film, an object, a structure and even a discourse can be deconstructed.

Said read ethnocentric discourse through Derrida's deconstructive reading and challenged binary oppositions and dominant discourse in various parts of his work (Kaya Erdem, 2019: 158). Accordingly, a fixed ethnicity at the center is not accepted and the expressions of superiority and dominance in the text are revealed; the deconstruction of Orientalist thought is achieved. However, Said still thought that the analysis of the Western ethnocentric approach should start with the method formulated by Foucault. According to Foucault, a given discourse makes the text intelligible through limitations (Utku: 2002: 219).

Foucault functioned as a bridge between Said and Derrida. Derrida argued that a text is liberated if multiple meanings can be derived from it, whereas Foucault claimed that a successful interpretation can only be achieved by finding and revealing the single and true meaning of the text. According to Foucault, the discursive formulations of the analysed text should be explored with their cultural and historical background. Related to this, Said believed that all texts are political (Bulut, 2012: 31-32); so much so that, he stated that unless Orientalism is analysed as a discourse, it is not possible to understand the systematic discipline that enabled the post-Enlightenment European culture to establish and produce political, sociological, ideological, etc. authority over the East in many aspects (Turanlı, 2017: 104). Thus, Said, Foucault and Derrida argued that power and knowledge should be analysed critically.

According to Derrida, who argues that the text has multiple meanings, it is possible to reveal implicit meanings by establishing connections between texts. In cinema, which is one of the media where connections can be established between texts, deconstructing a film and analysing it with a critical eye make it easier to understand and explain that film. A multidimensional analysis is required to grasp what, why and how the film narrates. Hence, through deconstructive reading within the framework of

the examination of the film, the practices of othering are thoroughly scrutinized, encompassing both their literal meaning and subtexts, as well as their implications within the realm of political economy. Throughout the process, within the framework of "multiplicity" and "polysemy", many fields such as ethnic, intellectual, cultural, etc. are focused on and new texts and new meanings are extracted from the existing text by contextualization (Aker, 2022: 334-344). Western cinema, notably Hollywood, constantly reminds society who the other is through cinema with its strategy of constructing identity by depicting the other. While Nazi Germany and the USSR were marginalised in the past, Islam is marginalised today. The continuous production of Islamophobia stems from the negative portrayal and depiction of Islam in society. Muslims are associated with terrorism and violence in these films, and in specific scenes, images of Muslims praying with their weapons and the sounds of the call to prayer and explosions are integrated (Türkmen & Özçınar, 2020: 1323). On this basis, it is crucial to analyse the explicit and implicit mechanisms employed in the films to comprehend their narrative purpose and technique.

4. Summary and Deconstructive Analysis of Film *United 93*

United 93 is a documentary-drama film about the incidents inside United Airlines Flight 93, one of the four hijacked planes in the United States on September 11, 2001. In addition to the incidents inside the plane, the film also includes the situations faced by the air traffic controllers during the attacks. In the film, the hijacked plane crashes in Pennsylvania before reaching the US Congress building with the intervention of the passengers.

Although the hijacking was tried to be depicted as accurately as possible in the film, there is also information that imagination was used. Accordingly, the incidents immediately preceding the flight were included in the film and the episode from the start of the flight to its crash was the subject of the film. It is worth noting that the production team worked closely with the families of numerous passengers who tragically passed away on Flight 93 (Timmons, June 1, 2006).

While most of the actors are professionals, most of the air traffic controllers, pilots and crew members are not professional actors but have performed their real-life professions (Time News, April 9, 2006). In addition, the actors playing the passengers and crew were placed in different hotels from the hijackers and ate their meals separately. Consequently, it was aimed to create enmity and marginalisation between the two groups behind the set and to reflect it in the film. It is reported that the set was built to resemble the real flight setting, and it is even mentioned that a number of actors were actually injured during the filming process (CNN News, April 28, 2006).

The film *United 93* received many awards and nominations and was highly rated by film critics. Nominated for the 79th Academy Awards for Best Director and deemed worthy of the David Lean Award at the BAFTA Awards can be given as examples of these. It also scored considerably better than any other film of 2006 on Metacritic, making 39 critics' top 10 lists. It was also the best film of 2006 with a score of 917.5 on Movie City News.

The film in question, which deals with the September 11 attacks with an Orientalist approach and received awards and nominations in the USA and the UK, will be analysed around the deconstruction questions put into practice by the "New Mexico Media Literacy Project". These questions, as Kaya Erdem (2019: 161-166) states, are listed as follows:

- 1- Whose message is this? Who created or financed this media message? Why?

- 2- Who is the target audience? What words, images and sounds suggest this?
- 3- What is the text (literal meaning) of this message? (What do we actually hear and see from the written and read words, photographs, drawings, music and sounds?)
- 4- What is the subtext of this message? What do you think about hidden or unstated meanings?
- 5- Who are the winners or losers of these messages? How does this serve the interests of media owners?

In consideration of the aforementioned inquiries, the analysis of the film will be examined within the realms of its economic and political backdrop, as well as its literal meaning and underlying messages. Consequently, the purpose and manner in which Orientalist elements were incorporated into the film will be revealed.

1- Whose message is this? Who created or financed this media message? Why?

United 93 is a 2006 film directed by Paul Greengrass. The film had its premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival in New York City, which is an initiative aimed at the long-term development of Lower Manhattan (Hernandez, April 26, 2006). The film received critical acclaim in North America, and it was promised that 10% of the gross proceeds from the initial three-day opening of the film would be donated to the establishment of a memorial to the victims of United Airlines Flight 93 (Smith, April 9, 2006). In addition, it is known that the film has grossed \$31.4 million in the US and \$76.3 million worldwide (Box Office Mojo, July 7, 2006).

2- Who is the target group? What words, images and sounds suggest this?

It is worth noting that the film primarily caters to American citizens who experienced the attack. Additionally, given its nature as a documentary-drama and the British origin of its director, it also appeals to the Western group within the Western-Eastern binary dichotomy and its supporters. The reason for this support, especially from the American government and citizens, is that in the first screenings, the film ended with the closing credits "America's war on terrorism had begun", but this was later replaced with "Dedicated to the memory of those who lost their lives on September 11, 2001" (Lim, April 11, 2006). In this regard, satisfying American citizens and providing moral support has been a priority.

3- What is the text (literal meaning) of this message? (What do we actually hear and see from the written and read words, photographs, drawings, music and sounds?)

Four main roles are prominent in the film: the crew, the air traffic controllers, the passengers and the Muslim hijackers. The names of these hijackers, who are pro-al-Qaeda, are Ziyad Jarrah, Said al-Ghamdi, Ahmed al-Haznawi and Ahmed al-Nami. Their aim is to hijack the plane and crash it into the Congress building in Washington D.C.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, the day they are to hijack the plane, the hijackers read the Qur'an, pray, and do their personal hygiene because of their Muslim identity. At daybreak, they enter the airport separately and take with them a bomb that has been dismantled in order to prepare it by hand. Before boarding the aircraft, the hijacker Ziyad makes a farewell phone call to his girlfriend. These hijackers sit in different but close places in the aircraft and start their actions and attacks 46 minutes after the aircraft takes off.

Flight 93 is piloted by captain Jason Dahl and co-pilot LeRoy Homer, who receive information during the flight that American Airlines Flight 11 and United Airlines 175 have crashed into the World Trade Center.

It is observed that Ziyad hesitates to start the attack on the aircraft in question and for that reason the action is delayed. After al-Nami calls Ziyad to start the attack and take control of the aircraft, he is impatient and goes to the toilet of the aircraft and prepares the bomb device. After al-Nami returns and starts the action by shouting that he has a bomb, Said points a knife at the neck of a female crew member and wounds her. Al-Haznawi also fatally wounds one of the passengers and the other passengers in the business class section flee in panic to the rear of the aircraft. Said kills the captain and co-pilot, then Ziyad enters the pilot's cabin, takes over the flight and tries to fly it off course towards their target area. Meanwhile, through messages from the air traffic controllers, the hijackers learn that the attack on the World Trade Center has been successfully completed. The passengers are also informed of the attacks through telephone contact with their families.

Among the passengers, one says he has a license to operate single-engine aircraft and one is a former air traffic controller. Hereby, it is observed that there is co-operation among passengers to remove hijackers from the cockpit and experienced passengers make plans to fly the aircraft. Since the passengers meet on the plane and therefore do not know each other's names, their names remain anonymous as they do not address each other mutually. At this point, a plan of mutiny against the hijackers is devised to get the aircraft back.

Al-Haznawi and al-Nami are agitated by the organization of the passengers and inform Said and Ziyad about it. Seeing that they are twenty minutes away from their destination, Ziyad and Said realize that the passengers could foil their plans. In the meantime, the passengers' emotional phone calls with their family members are replayed and the passengers pray at the same time. The armament attempt is initiated when the stewardesses show forks, knives and similar equipment to the passengers, who aim to resist the hijackers.

Organized passengers act and intervene against the hijackers. One of the passengers, a man skilled in close combat techniques, attacks al-Nami, who carries a bomb, grabs it and discovers that it is fake. At the same time, al-Haznawi is attacked and beaten by passengers, one of whom even crushes his head with a fire extinguisher, causing his death. Ziyad continues to fly the aircraft, shaking it violently to destabilize the passengers as they try to enter the cockpit. Outside the cockpit, al-Nami tries to keep the passengers away from the cockpit by using a service trolley and a fire extinguisher, he is killed when one of the passengers attacks him and the other passengers knock the service trolley against the cockpit door.

Ziyad and Said are frightened and realize that they will fail in their actions, Said resists by holding the door and tries to use an axe to scare the passengers, but the passengers succeed in opening the door. The passengers attack the cockpit, fight with Ziyad and Said, and the passenger who has a license to fly the plane tries to take over the flight, but the plane turns upside down and the plane crashes into the land in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, ending the film, thus killing everyone on the aircraft.

4- What is the subtext of this message? What do you think about hidden or unstated meanings?

The film begins with the hijackers reading the Surah al-Fatih from the Holy Qur'an, the holy book of

Muslims, on the morning of the day they will carry out the action. This surah deals with the success, conquest and victory of the Muslims in the near future, and for centuries Muslims have been reciting this surah to ask the Creator for strength and power to be successful when starting an action. Al-Qaeda hijackers also believe that they are about to embark on an important mission and see their attack as a conquest and a success against the Christian American world. The first seven verses of the Surah are recited, which mention the conquest, the beautiful heavens, the armies of the heavens and the earth belonging to Allah, the role of the Prophet Muhammad as a bearer of glad tidings and warning to Muslims and Allah's divine help in times of distress for Muslims. While these verses are being recited by Ziyad, other hijackers are also praying. In this respect, it is seen that they are both trying to achieve spiritual purification through their prayers and asking the Creator for success.

In addition to spiritual purification, hijackers also endeavour to ensure physical cleanliness. This is supported by the fact that one of the hijackers washed and shaved his body while washing. It is likely that this washing is not an ordinary washing, but the ghusl ablution that Muslims perform to purify themselves mentally and physically. In this manner, they turn to the Creator with a material and spiritual purity in accordance with their beliefs about the attack they will make. It is clear from the content of the verses they recite that they are defending their attack in the cause of Allah and that they will attain the rank of martyrs. When Ziyad recites a surah, one of them calls out to him, saying, "It's time" (Greengrass, 2006: 00:01:02). Although "time" here literally means the time to leave home to catch the plane, this time means the time of conquest and success. In addition, Islamic elements are brought to the forefront in the film with the verses as well as the dhikrs they recite. From this point of view, it is observed that the film tries to give its messages with the aim of marginalising religion from the very beginning.

During the flight, the four al-Qaeda hijackers frequently offer prayers and takbirs, demonstrating a state of constant refuge in the Creator. At this point, the image of hijackers blinded by religion is tried to be given. To the extent that no humanitarian aspect is reflected, but prayers are constantly on their tongues and the command expressions they use against each other regarding the action they will perform are brought to the fore. Even in the panic inside the plane and when the plane is deliberately turned left and right by Ziyad, there is only one scene in which the other passengers pray, and it is very short.

The communication of the passengers in the aircraft with their families via telephone is reflected as a highly emotional bond. The sentences "I love you very much mom" (Greengrass, 2006: 01:32:20) in tearful and helpless tones and "please tell my wife that I love her very much, promise me to let my boys know how much I love them" (Greengrass, 2006: 01:32:40) of someone talking to his acquaintance, referring to his wife and sons, draw attention to the intensity of emotions. Among the Muslim hijackers, only Ziyad's phone call with his girlfriend before boarding the plane is briefly mentioned (Greengrass, 2006: 00:10:41). It is also emphasized that the other crew or passengers who will board planes have daily conversations before boarding the plane and that they are innocent human beings. "It will be a nice flight", "I will call you when I land", "I bought a magazine to spend time on the plane", "I bought the perfumes you wanted", "she fell in love with the technician" can be given as examples (Greengrass, 2006: 00:04:40-00:07:00). The conversation between a stewardess who misses her babies and therefore takes fewer flights and the other stewardess who brings magazines to stay awake but never finds the opportunity to read them, also highlights the hardships faced in daily life conditions (Greengrass, 2006: 00:28:22). The hijackers do not utter a word. Accordingly, a feeling of pity towards Westerners is tried to be aroused and it is desired to have love and compassion towards them. In this way, the victim roles of passengers and crew are reinforced by conveying that al-Qaeda supporters should be seen as the

enemy. Towards the last scenes of the film, one of the stewardesses, while talking to a member of her family, crying and saying "baby, I promise you, if I get out of this, I'm quitting tomorrow, I promise you, baby, I will quit tomorrow" (Greengrass, 2006: 01:33:25) puts the dimensions of helpless representation over the top.

Examples of fear and hatred-inducing representations can be given as the hijackers' constant attacks on passengers and their relentless assaults on the people they have their eyes on with the cutting and piercing tools in their hands. So much so that it is seen that even without a counter move or even a slang and non-insulting word of someone, they get angry and make sudden attacks and the surroundings turn into a bloodbath.

It is noteworthy that there are few Asian, African and Latino representations in the film. In addition to dozens of white American representations, it is seen that the other representations consist of 3-4 people; in this respect, it must be said that ethnocentric orientations are effective in the selection of these representations. It is inferred that groups other than the white Westerners are largely ignored, and it is observed that it is aimed to reinforce the binary distinction between Muslim hijackers by foregrounding the Western image. At this point, African American or Asian-American representations of more than 3-4 people, or the presence of these representations in the leading roles, would not be able to emphasize the two main actors of this conflict between the West and Islam and would not make the message successful.

5- Who are the winners or losers of these messages? How does this serve the interests of media owners?

It is inferred that the United States government and its citizens are the winners of the messages, both because the film is a Western film and for that reason the victims are American passengers, and because the hijackers do not show their ordinary human side with their constant refuge in religion. To the extent that the marginalisation of Eastern representations and reflecting only the portrayal of "Muslim hijacker" with its exceptions, along with the depiction of the passengers as children and parents with the ties they establish with their families rather than being a passenger show that the message given is in favour of the United States and its citizens.

Conclusion

The emphasis on the religious and violent aspects of the Eastern characters in the film *United 93* is a successful example of how Orientalism is portrayed in the media. The "civilising" mission developed against the "other" in the Orientalist discourse is also manifested in the film *United 93*. The characters' inhumanity in the film and their lack of compassion are particularly emphasized. Hence, the "good and conscientious Westerner" identity in the Orientalist discourse was reinforced and the "barbaric Easterner" image was brought to the fore. In addition, the Easterners' fatalism and inability to think logically, adopted by the Western tradition of thought are clearly portrayed through the hijackers in the film. Accordingly, the Easterner, who cannot think logically, defends radical ideas and takes radical actions for the sake of his beliefs. The organization advocating radical Islam targeted the West and Western values and carried out real attacks. The World Trade Center, which was targeted in the movie as well as in reality, symbolizes the humanitarian and economic values represented by the West. Based on this, it is observed that concrete conflicts are conducted over abstract values.

Although the film deals with real-life incidents, there is information that the scenario is based on imagination, in this manner it is observed that the Western production and broadcasting team particularly focused on highlighting the negative aspects of Eastern Muslim characters and undertook a campaign against their representations. In this respect, the utilization of Orientalism as a means of representation played a role in the marginalisation of Eastern characters.

It is seen that the written and visual outputs developed within the framework of Orientalist thinking have victimized the East, but in the works dealing with Orientalism, the West has been in the victim position. In this sense, there is a reverse perceptual functioning. As seen in the film *United 93*, Western characters are portrayed as victims, while Eastern figures are represented as wild and uncivilised. However, when the reflection in real life is examined, it is seen that it is the Easterners who have been in a victimized situation for decades because the works in question have caused the Eastern people to be viewed as wild and uncivilised and thus marginalised. Therefore, it is seen that deconstructive reading is important to break these stereotypes in texts.

In the film *United 93*, a deconstruction of the Orientalist point of view is provided with subtexts such as emphasizing the religious worship and aggressive aspects of the hijackers in the same frames and reinforcing the victim roles of the passengers with various dialogues. Likewise, the fact that the festival in which the film was premiered was part of an initiative for the development of Lower Manhattan, and that a certain amount of the proceeds of the film was planned to be used to build a memorial in memory of the passengers who lost their lives on the plane, facilitated a deconstructive reading of the film in terms of political economy. In fact, it was understood that the film served American values, government and citizens in many ways.

The September 11 attacks created noticeable unjust treatment for both the "West" and the "East". While it was considered a tragic incident for the people who lost their acquaintances in the USA, it also resulted in adverse outcomes for the Eastern Muslim peoples by marginalising Muslims and Arabs in various ways. While the attacks resulted in thousands of civilian casualties and had devastating effects throughout the United States, efforts should be made to punish only the real perpetrators. Targeting all Eastern and Muslim people and developing practices of "othering" and "stereotyping" through the media is detrimental to international peace. In this regard, the conscious viewer's ability to decipher the practices of othering and to deconstruct the texts will at least prevent the misperception desired to be constructed.

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