

Art and Literature

“At Least They’re Keeping Them Separate from Us”: A Psychoanalytic Reading of District 9Başak GÜNDOĞAN^{1*} ¹ Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, Psikoloji Bölümü, Ankara, Türkiye**Makale Bilgisi****Keywords:***xenophobia,
racism,
migration,
foreign,
psychoanalysis***Anahtar
Kelimeler:***zenofobi,
ırkçılık,
göç,
yabancı,
psikanaliz***Abstract**

This article offers a psychoanalytic reading of how foreignness is constructed in Neill Blomkamp’s District 9 (2009). It brings Freud’s uncanny, Lacan’s mirror stage and jouissance, and Klein’s paranoid-schizoid position into dialogue with the film’s mock-documentary style. The analysis conceptualizes foreignness as a relational position produced through social discourse and the division between “us” and “them.” The film’s interviews, news reports, and bureaucratic procedures transform the aliens into a racialized source of contamination and threat. These representations allow the human community to project its own aggression onto the aliens and experience it as an external threat. Meanwhile, the wish to expel the aliens coexists with the desire to appropriate the power presumed to reside within their bodies, positioning the alien as both abjected and desired. Wikus’s bodily transformation to an alien returns this excluded form to the human body and destabilizes the separation between self and other. The article concludes that segregation functions simultaneously as a political practice and a psychic defense. Its clinical relevance lies in showing that discourses of belonging and exclusion shape subjects’ ways of understanding themselves and others.

Öz

Bu makale, Neill Blomkamp’ın District 9 (2009) filminde yabancılığın nasıl inşa edildiğine ilişkin psikanalitik bir okuma sunmaktadır. Freud’un tekinsiz kavramını, Lacan’ın ayna evresi ve jouissance kavramlarını ve Klein’in paranoid-sizoid konumunu filmin sahte-belgesel biçimiyle birlikte ele almaktadır. Yabancılığı toplumsal söylem ve “biz” ile “onlar” ayrımı aracılığıyla üretilen ilişkisel bir konum olarak kavramsallaştırmaktadır. Filmdeki röportajlar, haberler ve bürokratik süreçler uzaylıları ırksallaştırılmış bir bulaşma ve tehdit kaynağına dönüştürmektedir. Bu temsiller, insan topluluğunun kendi saldırganlığını uzaylılara yansıtmasına ve bu saldırganlığı dışarıdan gelen bir tehdit olarak deneyimlemesine dayanmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, uzaylıları dışarı atma arzusu ile onların bedenlerinde bulunduğu varsayılan gücü ele geçirme arzusu bir arada bulunmakta ve uzaylıyı hem dışlanan hem de arzulanan olarak konumlandırmaktadır. Wikus’un uzaylıya dönüşümü, dışlanan bu yabancılığı insan bedenine geri getirerek kendilik ile başka arasındaki ayrımı istikrarsızlaştırmaktadır. Makale, ayrıştırmanın aynı anda hem politik bir uygulama hem de psişik bir savunma işlevi gördüğü sonucuna ulaşmaktadır. Çalışmanın klinik önemi, aidiyet ve dışlanma söylemlerinin öznelerin kendilerini ve başkalarını anlama biçimlerini şekillendirdiğini göstermesidir.

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DOI: 10.31682/ayna.2032535

Submission Date: 03.09.2026; Acceptance Date: 26.09.2026

ISSN: 2148-4376

Introduction

In 1967, Lacan (1990) anticipated that the formation of European common markets would be accompanied by increasingly severe forms of segregation. The increasing instability of the subject's own mode of excessive enjoyment or *jouissance* makes the difference between “us” and “them” difficult to tolerate (Lacan, 1990, as cited in Hook, 2018). Taken together, these arguments identify a central tension within contemporary globalization. Lacan argues that globalization processes can coexist with and even contribute to more rigid attempts to separate populations and their presumed modes of enjoyment. Hook (2018) explains this logic through the presumed “theft of enjoyment.” Racist and xenophobic fantasies represent the other as enjoying excessively, improperly, or at the community's expense. The other may be imagined as taking jobs, resources, security, or other forms of enjoyment to which the community believes itself entitled. In this way, dissatisfaction that precedes the other is given an identifiable external cause. The community experiences its own lack as evidence that the other has taken the *jouissance* from which it has been deprived. Segregation then promises to remove the supposed source of this dissatisfaction. Demir's (2026) account of contemporary subjectivity helps situate this fantasy within its cultural conditions. Her analysis suggests that capitalist discourse weakens symbolic limits while orienting the subject towards the pursuit of *jouissance*. As complete enjoyment is presented as attainable, the persistence of lack becomes increasingly difficult to acknowledge. The other can be made to embody the completeness that contemporary culture promises but cannot provide. Psychoanalysis contributes to the study of xenophobia by tracing how such social conditions are translated into fantasy and modes of enjoyment. Psychoanalytic concepts can illuminate the unconscious dimensions of otherness in public life through social discourse (Koritar, 2017).

The film provides a particularly important medium as a representational field in which culturally and historically situated unconscious fantasies can acquire visual and narrative form (Ay et al., 2021). Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009) is particularly suitable for analysis of xenophobia and racism. The current article first develops a psychoanalytic account of migration, xenophobia, and racism by drawing on Freud's (1919/1996) concept of the uncanny, Lacan's (2006) mirror stage and *jouissance*, and Klein's (1946) paranoid-schizoid position. It then analyses how the film's mock-documentary discourse produces the alien as a source of threat. The analysis considers how the human community projects its own displaced aggression onto the aliens, only for that aggression to return to the community as a perceived external threat. Attempts to expel the alien coexisted with appropriating the power presumed to reside within its body. From this perspective, the alien is not merely feared and degraded but also envied and desired as the imagined possessor of what the human community lacks. The article argues that separation in *District 9* functions simultaneously as a political practice and a psychic. By locating alienness outside themselves, the human community sustains the

fantasy of a coherent and uncontaminated identity. However, through Wikus's transformation into an alien, this excluded otherness returns to the human body, blurring the boundary between the alien outside and the alien within.

A Psychoanalytic Lens to Migration, Xenophobia and Racism

The term xenophobia derives from the Greek words *xenos*, meaning stranger, and *phobos*, meaning fear (Bordeau, 2010). Taken literally, it denotes fear of the stranger. Yet xenophobia is neither a clinical phobia nor simply an emotional reaction to people who objectively come from elsewhere. It encompasses rejection and hostility toward those perceived as foreign to a community and can be expressed through discriminatory or violent practices (Harris, 2002). The perception of the stranger is not whether someone is legally a foreign national but whether they are positioned as an outsider. Even citizens and long-established residents may be treated as “presumed aliens” when their belonging is repeatedly questioned (Kim & Sundstrom, 2014). This emphasis on attributed foreignness makes migration particularly relevant to xenophobia, since migration brings questions of belonging and recognition to the foreground. Entering a new country also entails entering a new field of language, law, social expectations, and identifications. In Lacanian terms, migration repositions the subject in relation to the Other, understood here as the field of language and social authority through which the subject is named and recognized. Previous identifications may no longer secure the same recognition, while the subject encounters new signifiers such as “migrant,” “foreigner,” “dangerous migrant,” or “ideal migrant” (Uçurum, 2026). However, migration does not make the subject intrinsically foreign. Instead, it places the subject in a context where foreignness may be attributed to, or read from, language, accent, name, appearance, and social position (Matsinhe, 2011). Once foreignness is read through such signs, the boundary between xenophobia and racism becomes blurred. Although the two frequently intersect, they do not operate through identical logics. Xenophobia is principally concerned with disputed belonging. It raises the question of whether someone is recognized as a part of a community. Racism, by contrast, operates through racialization, whereby bodily, ethnic, cultural, or religious differences are represented as stable characteristics and made the basis of unequal value and social position (Bonilla-Silva, 1997). The two become closely intertwined when foreignness is attached to the body or culture and treated as a permanent condition. Under such circumstances, formal citizenship or long-term residence may still fail to secure recognition as belonging, because difference has already been transformed into a supposedly permanent sign of non-membership (Kim & Sundstrom, 2014).

The convergence of two terms is particularly visible in post-apartheid South Africa, where hostility has not been directed equally toward all foreign nationals. White foreigners have more readily been regarded as tourists, investors, or professionals, whereas the category

of the “foreigner” has predominantly been attached to Black African migrants. The derogatory label *Makwerekwere*, applied especially to Black African migrants and others perceived as African foreigners, identifies foreignness not only through legal status but also through skin tone, accent, language, clothing, hairstyle, and other bodily or cultural markers (Matsinhe, 2011). These same markers have been used by state authorities to identify presumed undocumented migrants, demonstrating how foreignness becomes readable on the body (Langa & Kiguwa, 2016). Consequently, Black South African citizens may also be attacked or detained when they are perceived as “too dark” or insufficiently South African. Xenophobic exclusion in this context is inseparable from the history of racism through which African Blackness has been devalued. The hostility is xenophobic because it casts its targets as foreigners who do not belong yet at the same time, it is racialized because that foreignness is attached to supposedly stable bodily and cultural characteristics. Accordingly, violence described as xenophobic in South Africa has also been conceptualized as *Afrophobia* and as a form of cultural or new racism (Tafira, 2011). The South African context clarifies the social processes through which particular bodies are made to signify foreignness. However, it does not fully explain why the figure of the foreigner can acquire such intense and persecutory meanings. A psychoanalytic perspective shifts the question from what the foreigner objectively is to how the foreigner is constituted as an object of anxiety. From a Lacanian perspective, anxiety is structured through the subject’s relation to the Other, particularly when the subject cannot determine what the Other wants from them or how the Other perceives them (Hekimoğlu & Bilik, 2020). Hence, xenophobia does not originate solely in an external object of fear. The foreigner is a figure through whom the subject encounters something disturbing in their own relation to difference and otherness. Lacan’s account of the mirror stage offers an initial explanation of why the relation to otherness can carry such tension. Before acquiring a coordinated sense of bodily mastery, the infant is marked by motor incapacity and dependence. By contrast, the mirror image presents a coherent and bounded form. Identification with this image contributes to the formation of the ego and provides an anticipated sense of unity, yet the image in which this unity is found remains external to the subject. The ego is consequently founded through misrecognition. The subject recognizes itself in an image through the gaze of the Other (Lacan, 2006). The external basis of the ego’s foundation gives imaginary identification both an alienating and a potentially conflictual quality. The imaginary counterpart provides the image through which the subject attains a sense of unity yet may simultaneously appear as a rival who possesses the mastery that the subject lacks. Lacan consequently describes a “paranoiac structure” of the ego and associates it with rivalry and aggression. This does not mean that every subject is clinically paranoid or that xenophobia should be regarded as a psychotic symptom. Rather, it indicates that the ego’s ordinary sense

of unity already depends upon an external other and is vulnerable to experiences of rivalry and threat (Lepoutre et al., 2017).

Klein's concept of the paranoid-schizoid position provides a related account of how such experiences of threat may be organized. The paranoid-schizoid position is not merely a developmental stage that disappears after infancy but a mode of psychic functioning that recurs throughout life. Within this position, persecutory anxiety is managed through the defense mechanism of splitting in which the self and its objects are divided into idealized good and bad aspects. Loving and gratifying experiences are associated with the good object, while destructive impulses and intolerable experiences are disowned and projected onto a bad object, which is then experienced as the source of danger (Klein, 1946). From this perspective, representations of migrants may be organized through the combined operations of splitting and projection. A community can preserve an idealized image of itself by locating unwanted qualities in the foreigner, who then appears to confirm the danger projected onto them. However, historical and social discourses determine which groups are made available to occupy this position. Splitting and projection help explain how threat is displaced outward, but the concept of the *unheimlich* or uncanny further clarifies why the stranger may appear at once alien and disturbingly familiar. The ego itself originates in an external image, while the unconscious continually confronts the subject with thoughts, desires, and impulses that cannot be fully recognized as their own. Therefore, foreignness is not confined to the someone or something that arrives from elsewhere; it is also internal to the subject. The uncanny is disturbing because something that appears unfamiliar simultaneously reveals an intimate familiarity, something that should have remained hidden but has returned to consciousness (Freud, 1919/1996). In a psychoanalytic perspective, xenophobia can be understood as an attempt to externalize and expel a foreignness that cannot be eliminated within the subject (Taştan, 2003). Lacanian accounts of racism add the dimension of *jouissance* to these dynamics. *Jouissance* refers to a form of excessive satisfaction that goes beyond ordinary pleasure and bound up with pain. Since complete enjoyment remains impossible to the subject, the perceived complete enjoyment of the other can become particularly disturbing. Racist fantasies frequently portray migrants as possessing an excessive or illegitimate mode of enjoyment. They are imagined as taking jobs, exploiting welfare, reproducing without restraint, enjoying sexuality improperly, or benefiting from resources to which they are not entitled. The other is represented either as possessing something unavailable to the subject or as having stolen what would otherwise allow the community to complete enjoyment (Hook, 2018). Such fantasies transform subjective lack into an accusation directed against the foreigner.

Together, the concepts developed by Lacan, Klein, and Freud provide an account of xenophobia and racism. Lacan's mirror stage explains how the ego's imagined unity depends

upon identification with the other, while the other is also a potential rival and a threat to that unity. Klein's paranoid-schizoid position clarifies how to deal with the threat through defense mechanisms: splitting and projection. Freud's concept of the uncanny, in turn, explains why the threat may nevertheless feel disturbingly familiar. Each concept linked, they demonstrate how threat emerges and how attempts are made to eliminate it, although such attempts cannot succeed because threat is inherent in the subject. The following analysis turns to *District 9* to examine how these dynamics are staged through the figure of the alien as both a migrant stranger and a racialized outsider.

The Foreigner in *District 9*

Neill Blomkamp's *District 9* (2009) imagines migration on an interplanetary scale. In 1982, a spacecraft comes to a stop over Johannesburg, and human teams discover approximately one million malnourished extraterrestrials inside. Rather than arriving as invaders, the aliens enter human society as a displaced population in need of assistance. They are brought down from the ship and placed in what is intended to be a temporary settlement. However, almost three decades later, their population has increased, and the settlement has developed into the densely populated and heavily policed District 9. By this point, the aliens are no longer recent arrivals since they have lived on Earth for almost thirty years, and some were born there. Nevertheless, residence and birth do not permit them to belong. Their alienness is continually maintained through how they are named, represented, and separated from humans (Chatterjee, 2025). Under growing public pressure, the South African government commissions Multi-National United (MNU), a private corporation and weapons manufacturer, to relocate them to District 10, a new camp farther from Johannesburg. The operation is led by Wikus van de Merwe, a mid-level MNU employee whose accidental exposure to an alien substance sets his bodily transformation in motion later in the film. Although its narrative is science fiction, the film recalls South Africa's history of racial segregation and forced removal. Its title recalls Cape Town's District Six, which was declared a whites-only area by the apartheid government in 1966. Approximately 60,000 Black and "colored" residents were subsequently displaced to the Cape Flats. Most of the district's buildings were demolished under the language of slum clearance and urban renewal. The film also recalls the destruction of Sophiatown and the relocation of its residents to Meadowlands (Nel, 2012). *District 9* transfers apartheid's spatial logic of segregation to an extraterrestrial population. The camp, the proposed relocation, and the insistence on keeping aliens away from human neighborhoods reproduce a historical scene.

The film's mock-documentary form reveals how segregation is constructed through discourse. A Lacanian approach to discourse attends not only to what is explicitly stated but also to contradictions, absences, and the position from which the subject speaks in relation to

the Other (Baltacı & Gençöz, 2019). Its opening sequence brings together fictional interviews, news reports, archival footage, and surveillance recordings, through which human speakers introduce the aliens almost entirely. Officials, experts, journalists, and residents describe who the aliens are, whereas the aliens themselves are given little to no opportunity to account for their displacement or living conditions. A news montage reports riots of aliens and announces that “Non-Humans Violently Evicted from Township.” This footage is followed by residents’ interviews regarding their thoughts on aliens. Interviewees have several statements from “At least they’re keeping them separate from us”, “They must just go” to “A virus. A selective virus. Release it near the aliens”. Edited together, these statements form a collective discourse that includes separation, removal and even extinction. The documentary style lends these voices the appearance of spontaneous public testimony while simultaneously revealing how repetition turns individual statements into an apparently shared truth (Örsler, 2020). The same sequence introduces the derogatory term “prawn.” In ordinary English, *prawn* refers to a large shrimp, but within the South African context it also evokes the *Parktown prawn*, a large cricket commonly regarded as an invasive household pets. The prawn is also a bottom-feeding scavenger that survives on leftovers. Therefore, the label does more than describe the aliens’ physical appearance. It places aliens within a network of meanings involving infestation and uncontrolled consumption. Once the aliens are named as pests, their removal can be imagined as the elimination of something contaminating the human environment. The term also removes differences among individual aliens, reducing an entire population to a single image. Their impoverished living conditions can then be interpreted as evidence of their inherent nature rather than as consequences of displacement, neglect, and segregation.

The reassurance that the aliens are at least being kept separate becomes especially significant when read through Klein’s (1946) paranoid-schizoid position. Through splitting, persecutory anxiety is organized by separating good and bad objects within and locating them in distinct objects from the subject. *District 9* gives this psychic division a physical form. Human-only signs, barbed-wire fences, military checkpoints, and aerial surveillance divide the apparently lawful human community from the supposedly filthy and dangerous alien settlement. District 9 becomes the place where aggression, criminality, and disorder can be concentrated, allowing the human community to preserve an idealized image of itself. The fence serves as a psychic defense which reassures the human subject that what is threatening remains outside. The residents’ statements reveal the instability of this defense. Their demand is not that particular dangers should be addressed but that the aliens themselves should go, even when no destination can be imagined. The proposal of a selective virus expresses the paranoid fantasy that security can be achieved only through the complete elimination of the bad object. Yet because the anxiety has not originated solely in the external object, increasing the distance between humans and aliens cannot eliminate its psychic source. District 10

consequently repeats the logic of District 9 rather than resolving it. The threatening object is moved farther away, but the splitting and projection through which it acquired its persecutory meaning remain intact. In this sense, xenophobic hostility must be traced not only to the perceived characteristics of the alien but also to the subjective field within which the alien is constituted as dangerous (Taştan, 2003). The news reports show human residents violently removing aliens from a township, yet public discourse continues to position the aliens as the primary source of violence. Elsewhere, the headline “alien crime rises” accompanies footage of two compliant aliens raising their hands while one is treated aggressively by the police (Örsler, 2020). The human community’s own aggression is presented as protection or a justified response, whereas an individual alien’s violence is treated as evidence of the violent nature of the entire population. This does not require assuming that every alien is harmless. Rather, the psychoanalytic question concerns why alien violence is generalized while human violence is exempted from the same interpretation. The projected aggression returns from the outside as a persecutory threat, appearing to confirm that the aliens were dangerous all along. Their presence provides a concrete explanation for conflicts that the human community cannot recognize as originating within its own social order. MNU gives this projective fantasy an institutional authority. Wikus, the employee appointed to supervise the relocation, moves from shack to shack, presenting residents with eviction notices. MNU’s public claim that the aliens are being relocated for humanitarian reasons conceals its primary interest in their weapons and biotechnology. Since alien weapons respond only to alien DNA, MNU cannot use them without gaining access to the biological capacities of the aliens. The corporation consequently seeks not merely to remove the alien population but to extract the valuable power believed to reside within its bodies. This intent is echoed by the criminal gang operating in District 9. Its leader, Obesandjo, believes that consuming alien body parts will let him gain their strength and operate their weapons. Despite their different methods, both imagine that the alien possesses something that can be extracted, consumed, and made one’s own. Hence, the alien body is both rejected and desired. It is treated as repulsive when it marks the alien as non-human yet becomes intensely valuable when it appears to contain a power inaccessible to humans. In Lacanian terms, the Other is imagined to possess a complete *jouissance* that the subject lacks and wishes to capture (Hook, 2018). The wish to keep the alien at a distance coexists with the desire to penetrate its body and obtain its power.

Jouissance also appears in the exercise of authority upon the aliens. During the relocation, Wikus discovers a shack containing alien eggs and orders their destruction as an act of population control. As the shack burns, he excitedly compares the sounds of the eggs bursting to popcorn. The scene presents violence as something carried out through that duty. Wikus’s official position permits him to kill while continuing to regard himself as lawful and humane. Punishment becomes a source of enjoyment because it is experienced as the

legitimate protection of social order. However, Wikus's transformation into an alien turns this boundary inward. During the eviction operation, an alien fluid sprays into his face and begins altering his DNA. His fingernails and teeth fall out, black liquid emerges from his body, and one arm changes into an alien limb. The body through which Wikus previously recognized himself as unquestionably human becomes fragmented and increasingly unfamiliar. His transformation can be read in relation to Lacan's (2006) mirror stage. The coherent bodily image supporting the ego is disrupted by a part of the body that can no longer be recognized as belonging to the self. The alien arm appears simultaneously inside his body and outside his identity. His attempt to cut it off repeats on an individual level the broader social wish to remove the alien presence. In both cases, what is experienced as foreign must be expelled so that an imagined unity can be restored. The transformation also gives material form to the uncanny. Alienness can no longer be contained behind the fences of District 9 because it has emerged within a familiar human body. What Wikus previously encountered as an external and degraded object returns as part of himself. MNU and the media rapidly reposition him as foreign once his body ceases to guarantee his human identity. News reports falsely attribute his condition to sexual contact with aliens and present him as a contagious danger from whom the public must maintain physical distance. The same gaze Wikus used to classify the aliens now turns on him. MNU restrains and tests him, forcing him to operate alien weapons and reducing his body to a valuable biological resource. He consequently becomes both the abjected alien and the coveted object through which alien power might be possessed. Wikus's transformation reveals that the alien was never threatening solely because it existed outside the human community. It became threatening through the meanings, projections, and desires attached to it. His changing body exposes what the fences, labels, and relocation plans attempt to conceal that is the boundary between self and other.

Taken together, District 9 shows that the separation or elimination function as both a spatial practice and a psychic defense. The human community disavows what it cannot acknowledge within itself and projects it onto the aliens, who are made to bear what the community excludes from its own self-image. Hence, their bodies are imagined as containing both a power humans desire and something to be rid of. Wikus's transformation brings the expelled foreignness inside the human body, exposing the fragility of the division between "us" and "them." In this sense, the film gives narrative form to the conclusion that "the source of hatred should be traced back not to the object, but to the subject" (Taştan, 2003, p. 134).

Conclusion

The current article conceptualizes foreignness as a relational position produced through social discourse and the division between "us" and "them." Migration brings the question of belonging into view, while racialization inscribes non-belonging onto the body and

presents it as an enduring characteristic of the foreigner. Psychoanalytic theory extends this account by showing how a community may project its own aggression onto an external group and subsequently experience that aggression as a threat originating from outside. Within the fantasy sustaining this projection, the foreigner appears to enjoy without lack, while the community imagines itself deprived of the complete *jouissance* supposedly available to the other. District 9 displays these processes through its mock-documentary interviews, news reports, and representations of bureaucratic procedures. The camps, fences, and relocation program give form to psychic splitting through the distinction between humans and the aliens. Yet the desire to expel the aliens coexists with the desire to gain the power presumed to reside within their bodies. MNU seeks to extract this power through scientific experimentation, whereas Obesandjo attempts to incorporate it by consuming alien body parts. Thus, the alien is constituted simultaneously as a contaminating presence and as the supposed bearer of the complete *jouissance* that humans imagine themselves to lack. Wikus's transformation disrupts the distance on which this fantasy of "us" and "them" depends. As alienness emerges within his body, the boundary separating the human self from the foreigner can no longer be sustained. Since subjectivity is also historically and culturally produced (Demir, 2026), the clinical relevance of this analysis lies in recognizing that foreignness does not remain external to psychic life. Clinical formulations may consider individual histories alongside the social context which subjects come to understand themselves and others. Ultimately, the wish to eliminate the alien outside can be understood as a defense against recognizing that otherness already inhabits the subject. Hence, no form of segregation can produce the uncontaminated identity or idealized image it promises.

Compliance with Ethical Standards: This study did not involve human participants or personal data.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author's Note: During the preparation of this manuscript, the author used ChatGPT (OpenAI) for language editing.

Informed Consent: This study did not involve human participants or personal data.

Financial Disclosure: The author received no financial support.

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“En Azından Onları Bizden Ayır Tutuyorlar”: District 9’un Psikanalitik Bir Yorumlaması

Özet

Bu makale, psikanalitik bir perspektiften Neill Blomkamp’ın District 9 (2009) filmi yorumlar ve yabancı kavramını “biz” ile “onlar” ayrımı kuran ve toplumsal söylemler içinde üretilen ilişkisel bir konum olarak nitelendirir. Çalışmanın çıkış noktası, küreselleşmeyle birlikte insanların, sermayenin ve malların sınırlar arasındaki dolaşımı artarken aidiyet sınırlarının bulanıklaşmaması, aksine daha sert ayrıştırma biçimlerinin ortaya çıkabilmesi oluşturmaktadır. Lacan’ın ırkçı ve ayrımcı yaklaşımların artacağı öngörüsü ve bu durumu Başka’nın farklı jouissance’ına tahammül etme güçlüğüyle ilişkilendirmesi bu çalışmanın psikanalitik zeminini oluşturur. Hook’un (2018) bu ifadeler üzerine “hazzın çalınması” olarak kavramsallaştırdığı ırkçı ve zenofobik fantezi, topluluğun yabancının gelişinden önce de var olan tatminsizliğini, yabancının aşırı, uygunsuz ya da topluluğun zararına yaşadığı varsayılan hazza bağlamasını açıklar. Demir’in (2026) çağdaş öznelliğe ilişkin tartışması ise tam tatmini mümkünmüş gibi sunan kapitalist söylemin eksikliği kabullenmeyi zorlaştırdığını göstermektedir.

Makale, zenofobi ile ırkçılığı birbirine indirgemedi aralarındaki kesişimi ele almaktadır. Zenofobi, kimin topluluğa ait sayıldığına ilişkili işlerken ırksallaştırma ait olmama hâlini bedensel ve kültürel göstergelerle kalıcılaştırır. İki kavram arasındaki kesişim, “yabancı”nın özellikle Siyah Afrikalı göçmenlerle özdeşleştirildiği apartheid sonrası Güney Afrika bağlamında belirginleşmektedir. Psikanalitik çerçeve, toplumsal olarak üretilen bu ayrımın nasıl psişik yatırım kazandığını açıklamak üzere Freud’un tekinsiz kavramını (1996), Lacan’ın (2006) ayna evresi ve jouissance kavramlarını, Klein’in (1946) paranoid-şizoid konum üzerine çalışmalarını birlikte kullanmaktadır. Bu kavramlar, topluluğun kendi saldırganlığını yabancıya yansıtarak bu saldırganlığı dışarıdan gelen bir tehdit olarak deneyimlemesini ve içsel yabancılığı dışsallaştırarak uzaklaştırmaya çalışmasını özetler.

Psikanalitik film çözümlemesi, bu süreçlerin yalnızca karakterlerin davranışlarında değil, filmin seyirciyi belirli özdeşleşme ve bakış konumlarına yerleştirdiğini öne sürer. Filmin sahte-belgesel biçimi, yabancılığın medya aracılığıyla da üretildiğini görünür kılar. Röportajlar, haber görüntüleri ve bürokratik işleyişler uzaylıların kendi deneyimlerini aktarmalarını sınırlandırırken insanlara onları adlandırma ve tanımlama yetkisi verir. “Prawn” etiketi uzaylıları istila, kirlilik ve kontrolsüz tüketimle ilişkilendirir. Kamplar, çitler, kontrol noktaları ve zorunlu yer değiştirme ise yalnızca mekansal düzenlemeye değil psişik ayrıştırmayı da görünür kılar. İnsan topluluğunun saldırganlığı güvenlik ve düzenin korunması olarak sunulurken uzaylıların eylemleri bütün nüfusun tehlikeli doğasının kanıtı haline getirilir. Böylece yansıtılan saldırganlık, dışarıdan geliyormuş gibi algılanan zulmedici bir tehdit olarak topluluğa geri döner.

Filmdeki anlatılar uzaylıyı dışlama arzusunun onun bedeninde bulunduğu varsayılan gücü ele geçirme arzusuyla birlikte işlediğini de göstermektedir. MNU şirketi bu gücü bilimsel deneyler yoluyla ele geçirmeye çalışırken bölgedeki suç örgütünün lideri Obesandjo, uzaylıların beden parçalarını tüketerek aynı gücü kendi bedenine katmayı amaçlar. Uzaylı böylece hem bulaştırıcı ve bertaraf edilmesi gereken bir varlık hem de insanların kendilerinde eksik olduğunu düşündükleri jouissance ve kudretin taşıyıcısı olarak kurulur. Uzaylıların Bölge 9'dan şehirden daha uzak bir alan olan Bölge 10'a yer değiştirme operasyonunu yöneten Wikus'un uzaylıya dönüşümü bu ayrımın dayanağını bozar. Yabancılık insan bedeninin içinde belirdiğinde dışarıdaki yabancı ile içerideki yabancı arasındaki sınır sürdürülemez hale gelir. Bu bağlamda film, “nefretin kaynağının nesneye değil, özneye doğru izlenmesi gerektiği” (Taştan, 2003, s. 134) sonucunu ortaya çıkarır. Makale sonuç olarak ayrıştırmanın hem politik bir uygulama hem de psişik bir savunma olduğunu öne sürer. Dışarıdaki yabancıyı ortadan kaldırma arzusunun, öznenin kendi içindeki yabancılığı tanımasına karşı bir savunma işlevi gördüğünü savunur. Bu okumanın klinik önemi, yabancılık ve aidiyete ilişkin söylemlerin ruhsal yaşamın dışında kalmadığını, öznenin kendini ve başkalarını kavrayışını biçimlendiren tarihsel ve kültürel koşullar olarak klinik formülasyonda dikkate alınması gerektiğini göstermesidir.