



People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Mohamed Khider University of Biskra
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English Language and Literature

MASTER THESIS

Letters and Foreign Languages

English Studies

Literature and Civilization

A Racial and Psychological study of DuVernay's Mini Film Series

When They See Us

Submitted and Defended by:

Sellami Oumaima

Supervisor:

Mr. SEDRATI Yasser

Board of Examiners

Mrs. Haddad Mimouna	MAA	University of Biskra	Examiner
Mr. Sedrati Yasser	MAA	University of Biskra	Supervisor
Mrs. Djaalal Meriem	MAA	University of Biskra	Chairperson

Academic Year: 2022-2023

Dedications

With great honor I dedicate this thesis to:

The central park five: Kevin Richardson, Raymond Santana, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, and Korey Wise

Million thanks to the film director Ava DuVernay, Your mini film series has deeply inspired me. Without your series When They See Us, this thesis would not be able to see lights.

To my family

I would thank my father Sellami Alwardi and my mother Adila Nadia for their support, help and patience. Without your sacrifices, I will never be where I am now. May every blood, sweat and tears that falls in bringing me up become a river for you in Jannah.

Thanks to my siblings Sellami Roufaida and Sellami Mouatez for cheering me up when I was in my lowest and be in my side no matter what.

Special thanks to my uncle Adila Houssam, without you this work will never be professionally done

To my friends: Brahimi Zineb, Hadjyoucef Bilal, and Saker Chaima.

Words will never be enough to express how grateful I am for having you by my side

To my cats, Boukech and Mistiew, who were no help at all.

Last but not least, I am proud of my own work, qualities, and the way I supported myself,

I will thank me for believing in me, for doing all this hard work and for never quitting.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I am extremely grateful for Allah for giving me strength and encouragement throughout all the challenging moments of completing this dissertation. I am truly grateful for His unconditional and endless love, blessings, mercy, and grace.

Secondly, I would like to thank my supervisor, Sedrati Yesser, for his assistance and guidance along this year.

I am grateful for the board of examiners Mrs. Haddad Mimouna, Mr. Sedrati Yasser and Mrs. Djaalal Meriem for examining this study.

I would deeply thank all the teachers of the Department of the English Language and Literature at the University of Biskra and all the teachers who have taught me since the beginning of my academic career for their substantial contributions

Special dedications to Mrs. Bencharef Sakina, Mr. Lebiar Khaled Mrs. Bougofo Zeyneb, Mr. Harhoura Kamel, Mr. Kerboua Salim, and Mr. Boulegroune Adel for the knowledge you have enlightened me with, I am deeply thankful to every one of you.

May Allah reward and bless you.

Declaration

I, undersigned, do hereby declare that this dissertation has been carried out by me as a partial fulfillment for the Master's degree in English literature and civilization under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Sedrati Yasser, Faculty of Letters and Languages, English Language and Literature Department, Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria. I further declare that the interpretations put forth in this thesis are based on my own readings, understanding and examination of the original texts and materials. The reported findings that I have made use of are duly acknowledged at the respective place. Also, I declare that this work is not published anywhere in any form.

Sellami Oumaima

Date: 19/06/2023

Abstract

The Netflix mini film series, *When They See Us* that was directed by Ava DuVernay was a real story that happened in 1989 at New York's Central Park where a female white jogger, Trisha Meili, was found brutally assaulted and left to death in the woods. Kevin Richardson, Korey Wise, Raymond Santana, Yusef Salam, and Antron McCray were the main suspects. The five African Americans and Latino boys were fourteen to sixteen years old who were left between the hands of the American justice system to live the most horrifying experience in their lives for a crime they never did. The aim of this thesis is to explore Ava DuVernay's movie, *When They See Us* and the bias nature of the criminal justice system in America against people of color and how it impacted their lives and their psychology. The applied methodological theories are: critical race theory, Race Based Traumatic Stress theory, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Post Incarceration Syndrome and Freud's defense mechanisms. The study analyzes the experiences of the Central Park Five as it relates to racism and justice inequality, and how racism, microaggression and implicit bias lead discrimination and brutalization of people of color by the American justice system. As it sought to understand the relationship and the connection between trauma and racism, and how the experience of the five boys ruined their lives, their relationships and left them traumatized.

Key words: Central park five, people of color, racial trauma, racism, trauma.

List of Acronyms

CRT	Critical Race Theory
CLS	Critical Legal Studies
PTSD	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
PICS	Post Incarceration Syndrome
DSM	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual
ICD	International Classification of Diseases
IPT	Institutionalized Personality Treats
ASPT	Antisocial Personality Treats
SUDS	Substance Use Disorder
RBTS	Race Based Traumatic Stress

Table of contents

Dedications	i
Acknowledgements.....	ii
Declaration	iii
Abstract.....	iv
List of Acronyms	v
Table of contents.....	vi
General introduction	ix
 Chapter One: Contextual and Theoretical Background of When They See Us 	
Introduction.....	8
1.1. Central Park Five Case.....	8
1.2. The Context of When They See Us	11
1.3. Critical Race Theory	17
1.4. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder	19
1.5. Post Incarceration Syndrome	21
1.6. Race Based-Traumatic Stress Theory	22
1.7. Psychoanalysis: Freud Defense Mechanisms	23
Conclusion	25

Chapter Two: *When They See Us* Analysis through the Lens of Critical Race Theory

Introduction..... 27

2.1. Ordinariness: Implicit Bias, Microaggression, Systematic Racism and Inequality 27

2.2. Differential Racialization..... 32

2.3. Interest Convergence: Injustice, White Hegemony and Power. 33

2.4. Social Construction..... 36

2.5. Intersectionality..... 38

2.6. Unique Voice of Color..... 40

Conclusion 44

Chapter three: *When They See Us* through the Lens of Psychoanalysis

Introduction..... 47

3.1. The Untold Truth about Racism: the Opening Door of Trauma..... 47

3.2. Revealing the Central Park Five Trauma..... 51

3.2.1. Korey Wise 52

3.2.2. Kevin Richardson..... 56

3.2.3. Antron McCray 57

3.3. How Did the Boys Cope with Trauma?..... 59

3.3.1. Sublimation..... 59

3.3.2. Denial..... 61

3.3.3. Repression..... 62

3.3.4. Rationalization 63

3.3.5. Intellectualization.....	64
3.3.6. Displacement.....	65
Conclusion	66
General Conclusion.....	67
Works Cited.....	71
الملخص.....	85

General introduction

The film series, *When They See Us*, has been the most popular four parts miniseries on Netflix since its release in 2019. It was produced and directed by Ava DuVernay and it touches upon true events that happened in 1989 at Manhattan's Central Park. It depicts the real story of five black and brown boys and their brutal experiences between the hands of the American justice system. DuVernay crafts scenes that are horrifying, yet those scenes points directly to the lived experiences of people of color in America. *When They See Us* by Ava DuVernay draws essence from its rawness and realness. The mini film series explores several aspects of US judiciary system and police brutality.

A bunch of African Americans and Hispanics teenagers were playing on April 19th, 1989's evening in Manhattan's central park, New York. At the same night in the other side of the park, an attack happened where Trisha Meli, A white female jogger, was assaulted sexually and injured. The New York Police Department (NYPD) received many reports from people in the park. As a result the police started to arrest tens of African Americans and Hispanics boys who were at that park. Korey Wise, Raymond Santana, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salam, and Antron McCray were all fourteen to sixteen years old when they were accused of raping and brutalizing Trisha Meili. The teenagers were interrogated coercively with the pressure of the police to make them lie in order to set them free.

Antron, Korey, Raymond, and Keven made written and videotaped confessions in which they forcibly confessed the crime and how they were involved. However, Salaam did not give any videotaped or written statements. The central park five were tried in December and August 1990. Korey Wise was charged in adult facility from five to fifteen years because he was found guilty of attempted murder, rape, and assault. Keven was guilty of attempted murder and rape. Yusef along with Antron and Raymond were found guilty of rape, assault, riot, and robbery. The four teens

were charged up to five to ten years in a detention facility. The five boys were trialed and imprisoned without any valid reason, DNA evidence or matched and linked events in the crime scene. They were trialed based on the confessions they made under pressure. In 2002, Matias Reyes, the actual rapist confessed all his crimes, the one concerning Mille and other cases. After that he was proven to be guilty and his DNA matched the one found in the sock, the Central Park Five were exonerated by the Supreme Court.

This thesis will dig deep in depicting the institutional racism and the racial discrimination that were encountered by the exonerated five and how it impacted them psychologically. As it will reveal how institutional racism and racial discrimination is directed towards people of color. Despite the fact that the Netflix film mini-series *When They See Us* is new and was published in May 2019 only, different analysis are found concerning this film.

Uwode Ejiro Favour thesis entitled *AN ANALYSIS OF DUVERNAY'S "WHEN THEY SEE US" THROUGH THE LENS OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY*, he explores by using both critical race theory and standpoint theory to sheds lights on the experiences of men of color in the movie as it relates to racism and judicial inequality, and how this directly reflects the experiences of people of color within the American society. Through the analysis of the film, the study found that stereotypes and implicit bias lead to people of color being discriminated and brutalized by the American justice system at a disproportionate rate. The study also touches on the importance of the unique voice of color and how important education is to people of color in fighting the racism and stereotypes against them in society.

Stephen McCloskey in his *Policy & Practice: A Development Education Review*, he uses *When They See Us* to criticize Donald Trump restoration of the death penalty and he questions the police officers racism as he coined as a miscarriage of justice. As he also portrays Prison and

exoneration using the movie to make readers understand the interior life inside prison. He stresses also the importance of education to those people. He also digs through the arrest, trials, incarceration and, ultimate, exoneration of the five has been recreated in a gripping four-part television drama, *When They See Us*.

Floyd W. Hayes III reviews the film *When They See Us* to demonstrate how that corrupt and violent system dominates, dehumanizes, and traumatizes Black and Latino boys and men. Megan Milo in her analysis of the Netflix series, *When They See Us*, by Ava DuVernay talked about the racial biases in police activities, the reevaluation needed in interrogation processes, and the racist involvement from the American former president, Donald Trump, in the Central Park Five case.

From this short review, we can see that this film is open to a great range of different and new ideas. It could be analyzed from multiple viewpoint and concepts. However, this analysis is lacking the institutional and the psychological interpretation of its new concepts, themes and ideas.

Since the film series is recently published, there are only few researches that were done on it. The few works done on *When They See Us* focused on racism in United States that is practiced on people of color. It is obvious that none of them focused on the relationship between the US judicial system racism and the psychological complexities and trauma that the boys experienced during and after the imprisonment.

Moreover, according to the extensive research that was done concerning this film series, further research has not been clarified enough on the psychological analysis of the boys. This gap will be tackled in this research to discover the direct consequences of US racism and the judicial system inequality on the boys' trauma. Therefore, this study will shed lights on the US judicial

system racism, as well as analyzing the boys psychologically. This thesis attempts to investigate how racism is practiced in the mini film series and how it paved the way to their trauma.

In the light of the above-mentioned research contextualization, the research will probe the following primary research question:

- How did Ava DuVernay in her film series, *When They See Us*, highlighted racism in the American Justice System? And In which way does institutional racism affect the character's psychology?

This primary question shall be investigated through the following sub-questions:

- What is the contextual background of the Central Park Jogger Case?
- How is the institutional racism manifested in the mini film series?
- How Does *When They See Us* portray the American Criminal Justice System towards people of color?
- How the experience of the boys is related to racism in the American society?
- How does the acting in *When They See Us* reflect the characters psychological trauma after experiencing institutional racism?
- What are the defense mechanisms that were used by the characters to repress their trauma?
- How trauma is manifested in the actions of the characters?

This thesis will be accomplished under a qualitative interpretive research framework. It aims at exploring the institutional racism, microaggression, racial discrimination and inequality which is directed towards the central park five. It analyzes the boys psychologically and examines also the traumatic experience that they had encountered and which defense mechanisms they used

to repress their trauma. This study will explore how microaggressions, inequality, implicit bias and racism are linked to police brutality against people of color in the United States. It analyzes the lived experiences of the Central Park Five in the series as it is related to racism and inequality, and how it plays a role in highlighting the experiences of people of color within the American society.

The purpose of this study is to explore Ava DuVernay's mini film series, *When They See Us*, and how it portrays the biased nature of the criminal justice system in America against people of color. It will also explore the direct link between microaggression and racism to the police brutality against people of color in America. *When They See Us* provides the audience with strong scripts and scenes that mimic the struggles of people of color. Critical race theory is used to explore some of these struggles, as it will provide the readers with a lens which will allow them to depict racism especially as it relates to police brutality, microaggression, and inequality. This study will add another facade to the field of research that was conducted in the police brutality and racism in America, as it will provide more insight into to police brutal discrimination in the United States. It will also dig deep to the boys' trauma and how people of color struggle psychologically because of this inequality.

The analysis of this study will rely on interpretive research methodology by using different research theories. The first one is Critical Race Theory which is the adopted theory to examine the institutional racism and the racial inequality in the film series. It is also used to analyze how the film maker, Ava DuVernay, creates a lens that allows the viewer to peek into the lived experiences of people of color and their struggles, especially as it relates to the American system injustices. Combined with Psychoanalysis, Post-Traumatic stress disorder and post incarceration syndrome, Race-Based Traumatic stress theory and the suitable Freud's defence mechanisms that will be

applied to reveal the trauma of the boys and how they were affected from the racism and the injustice of the United States.

The study is divided into three chapters. The first chapter provides a contextual background that contextualizes the Central Park Five case and their experience. The first chapter gives an overview about the Central Park Jogger incident and how that tragic event triggered an oppressive institutional racial prejudice towards a group of African American and Hispanic teenagers. As it tackles the lenses of the used theories which will pave the way for the critical analysis in the second and the third chapters. The second chapter undertakes an analysis of *When They See Us* through the lens of Critical Race Theory. This chapter tackles the institutional racism and the brutal police treatment as it was experienced by the five boys and how it reflects the experience of people of color. The third and the last chapter is directed to *When They See Us* psychoanalysis. This chapter will reveal the trauma that the boys encountered during and after their incarceration period, as it touches upon the psychological consequences of racism and the harsh police treatment. However, before digging deep in DuVernay's *When They See Us*, a contextualization of the boys' bitter experience in the Central Park Jogger Case is needed, and that is carried out in Chapter One along with a theoretical background.

Chapter One:

Contextual and Theoretical Background of

When They See Us

Introduction

This chapter is directed to contextual and theoretical background. It shows the story of the Central Park Jogger Case of 1989 and how it was shifted from been known as the Central Park jogger Case to the Central Park five, and then to the Exonerated Five. Through this chapter, the plot of *When They See Us* will be introduced. This chapter highlights the institutional racial discrimination in the US law enforcement and the judicial system. It tackles also an overview of the theories that will be used in the analysis which are: Critical Race Theory, Race Based-Traumatic stress theory, Psychoanalysis defense mechanisms, Post Stress Traumatic Disorder and Post Incarceration Syndrome.

1.1. Central Park Five Case

The Central Park Jogger Case was a turning point in the American society. It was and still a famous case since it tackles the racial maltreatment of people of color. The story took place on April 19th 1989 at 9:00 pm where a series of violent practices occurred in New York' Central Park, and a group of more than 30 teenagers were involved in the attacks of the "wilding group" where a couple, Latino drunk man, a biker, a taxi man, a jogger and a homeless man were attacked (Burns 28-29; E. Ryan 03). Very early in the morning, an unconscious female jogger was found by two men who were walking in Central Park (E.Ryan 04). Her identity was not revealed, no one recognized her. The woman was found thrown into the woods to face death and she was wearing a jogging bra only and the only information available about her is that she was white. She was brutally assaulted and raped, and some of her belongings were missing (Morgenthau 4). She was extremely hypothermic due to mud and water all over her body and head. She had been badly beaten about the head, and suffered numerous bruises, scratches, and abrasions elsewhere on her body (E.Ryan 04). Meili in her book, *I Am the Central Park Jogger*, said that she stayed in the

coma for twelve days because she suffered from contusions on lower extremities and torso and other deep injuries, bruises and abrasions, memory and sensory loss and edema in the left eye, and even her brother could not identify her. Her identity was revealed only when one of her colleagues, Pat Garrett, saw the news and noticed that she did not come to work and she usually ran at that park and she is not traveling, so he contacted one of the detectives who succeeded to identify her from the details provided by her colleague who told them about her small golden ring in the shape of a bow (Burns 41-42).

Linda Fairstein, the chief of the sex crime prosecution, knew about the crime and ordered the police to start to round up the suspects who were at the park last night and among them were Raymond Santana, and Kevin Richardson. Korey Wise, Yusef Salaam, and Antron McCray (Morgenthau 5; Burns 42). Raymond Santana and Kevin Richardson were apprehended at approximately 10:15 p.m. after the police officers respond to the reports concerning the incidents spotted them in the park in the western outskirts. Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, and Korey Wise were brought in for questioning on April 20, 1989, after they had been identified by other youths as having been present in the park (E.Ryan 04).

Under the pressure of the detectives, each one from the defendants was questioned by detectives and made one or more statements. All five of the defendants implicated themselves in a number of the crimes which had occurred in the park. None of them admitted that they raped the jogger, but each one of them gave an account of events in which he made himself an accomplice to the crime (E.Ryan 05). Korey Wise was 16 years old at the time; Yusef Salaam and Antron McCray were 15; and Kevin Richardson and Raymond Santana were 14.

The detectives started to question them about the assaults and about the jogger's rape. Kevin and Raymond admitted that they were in the park that night just to hang out with their

friends and to have fun. However, they did not take any part in the assaults of that night nor saw any female jogger (qtd in Saker 7). The teens were all under the legal age to be interrogated alone, so their parents were informed and invited to the Central Park's precinct. Some of the boys' parents came while others arrived late like Santana's father and grandmother. All of them waited in for long hours without any food, drink, bathroom breaks or sleep (Burns et al. 00:16:10, 00:30:00).

None of these teenagers knew each other, all of them came only to have fun, except for Corey and Yusef who were friends. It worth to mention that the detectives put pressure on the arrested teens and forced them to say what they need them to say. The police told them some of the teens' names claiming that those boys did the crime at that night. The poor teens believed that and started to lie. They had to include the names of these guys even though they did not know each other, they did it only to make the detectives set them free to go home. Helplessly, the boys out of fear did what the detectives asked them to do and started to confess the crime they never did (Burns et al 00:30:22, 00:31:10).

In his study guide, *The Central Park Five: Study Guide*, Remer wrote that the boys were seen as animals and criminals and they arrested them all waiting for the trails. In the first trial took place in August 1990, Yusef Salaam, Antron McCray, and Raymond Santana were found guilty for rape, assault, riot, and robbery and they were charged from 5 to 10 years in a youth correctional facility. In a separate trial that took place in December 1990, Kevin Richardson was found guilty for attempted murder and rape and charged form 5 to 10 years. In the same trial Corey Wise was convicted of riot, sexual abuse, and assault; he was charged from 5 to 15 years in adult facility because he was sixteen (5). During the trial period, there was a public call by Trump for the death penalty to these teens. No one ever questioned whether these teens might not have been guilty for that crime (qtd in Saker 8). The boys started to tell the truth about the crime and started to confess

that the police forced them to lie, yet everyone turned against them (Burns et al. 00:58:58, 1:01:40). The five boys paid the price of another one's deeds without any strong evidence or a DNA matches.

In the early 2002, a serial rapist, Matias Reyes, confessed that he raped Trisha. He was sentenced for different rapes, robberies, and a murder. The DNA taken from the victim's sock matched with Reyes's (B. Johnson 6; Prentice 1). This confession had shaken veteran law enforcement authorities' confidence in the original convictions (qtd in Saker 9). On 19 December 2002, The Supreme Court of New York exonerated the Central Park five in a motion by Justice Charles J. Tejada on December 19, 2002 ("Conviction and Exoneration"). The exonerated five submitted lawsuits against New York City for 250 million dollar, for they had been wrongfully accused. Korey Wise said in a Ken Burns documentary, the Central Park Five, that no money could ever bring back the time or the live that they had lost (Burns et al. 1:54:05). In the US history, their restitution of 40 million dollar was the largest payment for a wrongful conviction (Stratton 286).

1.2.The Context of When They See Us

When They See Us is a drama miniseries that was released on Netflix in May 2019. It explores the assault and rape of a white female jogger in the Central Park in 1989, and the five young men who were falsely charged with the crime (Atkin). *When They See Us*, Ava DuVernay's dramatization of the wrongful imprisonment of five African American and Hispanic boys in New York City after the rape of a Central Park jogger, has been the most-viewed series on Netflix since its release (Spangler). The Netflix four-episode miniseries touches upon actual experiences of five black and brown boys from 1989 who were accused of a crime they never did and jailed from 1990 to 2002 when they were exonerated.

The series was created, directed, and co-written by Academy Award nominee and Emmy winner, Ava DuVernay and produced by Oprah Winfrey, Jeff Skoll, Jonathan King, Jane

Rosenthal, Berry Welsh, and Ava DuVernay (Spangler). It was nominated for sixteen awards at the 2019 Primetime Emmy Awards, spread across acting, directing, writing and Outstanding Limited Series (K.Neetha). Jharrel Jerome was nominated for the category of Lead Actor for his heartbreaking performance as Korey Wise and won the award (Abhishek). In the category of Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Limited Series or Movie, three actors from the show were nominated: Asante Blackk, John Leguizamo and Michael K. Williams (K.Neetha). The series was also nominated for multiple Creative Emmy awards as well including casting, cinematography, music composition, sound editing and sound mixing (Giliberti).

The show was originally named *The Central Park Five* in the 2017 announcement. However, in March of 2019, two months before the show was set to premiere, Ava Duvernay announced the name change to *When They See Us* (Atkin). “I wanted to rename it *When They See Us* to re-prioritize the men, and to prioritize their humanity, and not this political moniker that was given to them or this press phrase that has been thrown out,” DuVernay said recently at a conference at Harvard (qtd in Ransome’s article). DuVernay shows us that Yusef, Raymond, Antron, Korey, and Kevin were not animals or merely fodder for a tabloid crime story, but rather human beings with the merit to be seen as physically and emotionally separate from the crime they were accused of committing (Ransome).

When They See Us represents injustice practiced in the US among people of color. It tells the story of Korey Wise, Raymond Santana, Yusef Salaam, Kevin Richardson and Antron McCray, the five boys who were wrongfully convicted of the brutal rape of a woman known simply as the Central Park Jogger (Sorayamcdonald). Reframing the systematic and racialized indignities inflicted by America’s prison system is one of the most important theme in DuVernay’s work. She spots her lens on those who are dismissed, disregarded and thrown away because they’ve been

labeled as criminals. Furthermore, she also sheds lights on how mass incarceration affects not only those serving time but also the people they care about (Sorayamcdonald). Through the film series, Ava DuVernay spotted the issue of racism and microaggressions and the typical stereotype that people of color have been facing for a very long time (Giliberti). It also portrays a racist justice system and an equally cruel penal system, as well as the media that enlarged the lies that put the five boys in prison (Nussbaum).

When They See Us is a show that shines a light on the corrupted American justice system and life inside the jail can cause an individual a psychological damage. The series promotes the idea that racism is still alive and kicking which plays as a warning to the audience (Giliberti). The four episodes are neatly preformed. The first one covers the forced confessions under the pressure of the police. The second covers what happened in the trial. The third covers the imprisonment and the release of the four boys, along with their complicated attempts to rejoin society. The final episode is a portrait of the life of the most tragic character, Korey Wise (Nussbaum). Over the course of the series, DuVernay makes no attempt to reinvestigate the case, but rather depicts the lives of five individuals whose identities take a serious hit and leaves them scarred for life (Abhishek). *When They See Us* captures the pain, the confusion, the naiveness and the helplessness of the five boys brilliantly (Abhishek).

When They See Us is a real events series that covers the Central Park jogger case in the night of April 1989. It sheds lights on the lives of five teenagers who were victims of police brutality and were wrongfully arrested for sexually assaulting twenty-eight-year old Trisha Meili. The movie started with the events that happened on 19 April 1989, when an investment banker, Trisha Meili, was brutally raped and left injured in the north woods of Central Park and ended in

2002 with the sentences of the five men being exonerated after Matias Reyes confessed to the crime (Fernandes).

Episode one opens with the boys practicing their normal daily lives. It starts up with different scenes of how these boys, Korey, Yusef, Antron, Raymond and Kevin, lived a normal life with their families as young boys in the projects of Harlem. The first to be shown is Antron who is talking with his father excitedly about football while having breakfast. After that Kevin is shown walking down the streets of Harlem with his sister to catch the bus to school. Korey is first shown at school talking to his girlfriend about getting food later on in the day. Next, Raymond is shown walking down the street with his friends as they talked about how exciting the party at Central Park is going to be after that they joined a group of people who were wilding out. Lastly to be shown is Yusuf who was talking to his friend while another one invited them to join the group. After that Yusef met Korey and his girlfriend at a restaurant he asked him to join them. Later at night the events took a sharp turn as many young boys at the Central Park were rounded up by the police (DuVernay, Episode1, 00:00:20- 00:05:50).

The episode progresses with the discovery of the white female jogger body and when Linda Fairstein, a crime novelist who runs the Sex Crimes unit of the NYC District Attorney's office, angrily screaming out that the boys were guilty. She says: "They are not witnesses, they are suspects," before any evidence or a single question has been asked (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:16:47). Fairstein had already constructed a possible plan of how the crime was committed in her mind, and the possible set of people that were responsible for this crime (Rorke). When the body of the jogger has been discovered in the northern section of Central Park on the same night, a group of teenagers from Harlem went running down the East Drive to "wild out", assaulting people at the park, and this drove Linda Fairstein to connect the two events (Rorke). Nothing was

seem to be connected ,so she ordered the police to drive into the park and arrest whomever they could “every young black male who was in the park last night is a suspect in the rape” (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:20:08).

As a result, and under Fairstein’s command, every black and brown boy who were present at the park on the night where the crime broke down were rounded up and brought in for questioning by the police (Fernandes). “You go into those projects, and you stop every little thug you see,” commands Fairstein (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:20:24). That was how the police found Yusef Salaam and Corey Wise. It worth to mention that Wise volunteered to accompany Salaam to support him and to be by his side even though his name was not on any official NYPD suspect list, but the cops insisted to bring him with his friend “you wanna go downtown with your buddy? You’ll be right back” and then the police man said “you are good friend sticking with your buddy” (Duvernay, Episode 1, 00:21:45- 00:22:12). Reymond Santanna Jr and Kevin Richardson was the first to be arrested during that night. He was punched in the head with a helmet by a police man who shouted out “I said stop you little animal!” as Kevin faints telling him that he did not do anything (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:07:20). When Fairstein sets eyes on Kevin in the police station, she asks, “What happened to that one?” The police and Fairstein came up quickly with a lie that would fit what they planned. Antron McCray was arrested when his friend told Fairstein that he was with him. Fairstein command the detectives to use pressure with the boys.

DuVernay meticulously and mercilessly shows how NYPD detectives played one boy against the other, promising them that they could go home to their parents if they say what they want them to say. The frightened boys were all routinely, over an extended period of time, questioned for eighteen hours without the presence of their parents or an adult, and without any food or water (Fernandes). It was only with Antron that his parents were with him and the others

come nearly after the investigation started. The most touching event of the day was when Antron McCray's father told him to lie and to confess to a crime he did not commit because he feared the police would kill his son if he did not respond to them. "Don't you understand boy? They are going to kill you, tell them what they need to hear" (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:33:44).

The four suspects except Salaam confessed on videotape in the presence of a parent or guardian who had not been present during the interrogations. Together they claimed that they had been intimidated, lied to, and coerced by police into making false confessions blaming others and not themselves. While the confessions were videotaped, the hours of interrogation that preceded the confessions were not where they denied their involvement. The episode ends with the boys been arrested without any physical evidence, or any witness and even the statements that they made did not match together with the crime. The boys were gathered in a room all together when they found out that the police had played each one against the other.

While Episode One focuses on the night of the arrest and the investigation with the boys, episode two gives the audience a ringside seat at the courtroom six months later when Elizabeth Lederer (prosecutor), handpicked by Fairstein, presented her shoddy case against the young boys (Rorke). The boys have individual lawyers with experience levels that range from amateur to professional, but even these men do a more convincing job of detailing the state's lack of physical evidence (Rorke). Lederer seeing how pathetic the case was against the Central Park Five, punches holes in Fairstein's strategy and even went ahead to tell her that she was "delusional" (DuVernay, Episode2, 00:30:44) because there were no clear evidence that these boys are guilty, yet and rather than pulling herself out from the case, Lederer insists on pandering to the jury even when it is revealed that the DNA found on a sock does not match any of the boys. "Just because there is DNA evidence that someone else was present at the crime scene doesn't mean that these defendants are

innocent,” she said (DuVernay, Episode2, 1:05:01). “They can still all be guilty of rape under the law. If they did nothing to stop her agony, then they are all guilty” (DuVernay, Episode2, 1:05:03). This Episode ends with the boys been guilty for a crime they never did. Despite the fact that there were no eye witnesses and no DNA matches that link them to the crime, yet the five were convicted in two trials in 1990. Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam and Reymond Santana were found guilty of rape, assault, robbery and riot. Kevin Richardson was found guilty of attempted murder, rape, assault and robbery. Korey wise was found guilty of sexual abuse, riot and assault. They spent between six and 13 years behind walls.

Episode Three of When They See Us, focuses on the brutal experiences of the four minors, Yusef, Reymond, Richardson and McCray, as they went through juvenile detention and also brings the viewers to their release from the prison and how they struggle to rejoin the society. Episode four covers Korey Wise’s horrific and near-death experiences as he does time in an adult jail at Rikers (Fernandes). The fourth episode end with the scene of the boys been exonerated after the actual rapist confessed the crime.

1.3.Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) investigates how race and racism is presented in the dominant cultures. It examines society and culture as they relate to race, law, and power (Delgado & Stefancic 2). CRT is a theory that is directed towards critiquing and changing society and not towards understanding it or explaining it as traditional theories do (Delgado & Stefancic 3). CRT covers a broad social scientific approach to the study of race, racism, and society (BonillaSilva). CRT academics use this theory to understand how cultural perceptions of race impact victims of racism and how they would resist it. The theory was found during the late 1960’s and the early 1970’s. It examines the maltreatments and inequality that each person of color encountered

because of race (Klupchak 7, 8). Even though CRT began as a movement in the law, it has rapidly spread beyond that discipline (Delgado & Stefancic 3).

It existed as a response to Critical Legal Studies (CLS) which is a white legal academic movement that seeks to reveal the ideological origins of American law. In the other hand, CRT scholars believe that CLS failed to present the realities of racism by intentionally and reductively presenting it as merely close to class-based prejudice (qtd in Saker 24). CRT researchers often focus on studying the evidence and the roots of racism. CRT believe that race is socially constructed concept which functions to maintain the interest of the whites that created it and constructed it. It also intends to uproot it from its basis (Curry 166-167).

Derrick Bell, Richard Delgado, Alan Freeman are the pioneers of CRT. While Kimberlé Crenshaw, Angela Harris, Cheryl Harris and others are recent figures (Rollock and Gillborn 2; Delgado and Stefancic 19). The American civil rights movement which was represented by Martin Luther King Jr. and W.E.B. Du Bois, boosted CRT. Nationalists and philosophers like as Malcolm X, Frantz Fanon, and the Black Panthers had a significant impact on the movement (Curry 167; Delgado and Stefancic 4).the theory addresses the problems of people impacted by racism (“Critical Race Theory”). Curry stated that racial inequality is the consequence of the legal, social, and economic distinctions that whites establish between races. In addition, he declared that the federal and judicial laws and policies in the United States are biased against people of color (166). CRT questioned how race and racism was treated in the past and how to bring back the heritage of African Americans and people of color which was disregarded (Crenshaw, et al xiv). CRT researchers call for a full reconsideration to the civil rights law in the light of its inefficiency in tackling racial inequality (Parker and Lynn 4).

The function of this theory in education is to build its analysis on legal theory, ethnic studies, feminism, sociology, history, philosophy, economics, and other subjects (Stovall 9). In literature CRT introduces characters who experienced racism and highlights the importance of comprehending the sociocultural factors which affect how racism is received by everyone. CRT state that race is necessary to understand of inequality and its analysis which are incomplete without a systematic discussion of race and its systematic nature (Meghji). There are several tenets to critical race theory such as: Ordinariness, interest convergence, intersectionality, social construction, differential racialization, micro aggression, macro aggression and unique voice of color (Hiraldo 54, 56).

In short, this study aims at investigating the racism experienced by the five boys in *When They See Us*. Through the lenses of CRT, this research is going to shed lights on the criminal justice system racism encountered by the boys. The movie *When They See Us* carefully fleshed out the huge disparity between the whites and blacks of society, and the legal power play that one race have over the other (Rorke). The movie sheds lights on systemic racism as it takes the viewer through the lives of the boys and how the incarceration impact the lives of these men, and even that of their generations to come (Fernandes). This study examines police brutality and racism from the perspective of Ava DuVernay, and how she presents the horrific lived experiences of people of color in a prejudiced society.

1.4. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that developed when an individual is triggered by a terrifying event either experiencing it or witnessing it. This condition has different symptoms. First, intrusive memories which include: Recurrent, unwanted memories of the traumatic event, reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again as flashbacks,

having upsetting dreams or nightmares about the event, severe emotional distress or physical reactions to something that traumatize them. Second, avoidance. Symptoms of avoidance include: Trying to avoid thinking or talking about the traumatic event, avoiding places, activities or people that remind you of it. Third, negative changes in thinking and mood which includes: negative thoughts about yourself, other people or the world, hopelessness about the future, difficulty maintaining close relationships, feeling detached from family and friends. Finally, changes in physical and emotional reactions (also called arousal symptoms) which may include: Self-destructive behavior, angry outbursts or aggressive behavior and overwhelming guilt or shame (Mayo clinic). Due to PTSD's alterations to the brain structure, the brain becomes hypersensitive, which is indicated by common symptoms as mentioned above (Cumbreland). This constant and repeated activation of cortical activity results in "broader disruption of neurobiological systems," thus making the body more sensitive to health consequences (McFarlane 8).

Historically, PTSD was seen as a psychological disorder associated with military battles and it was named accordingly as "shell shock" or "battle fatigue" (McFarlane; Friedman; Monson et al. 707-714). The condition was known under various terms during the world wars including 'shell shock', 'war nerves', neurasthenia and 'combat neurosis'(Waters, Herman 9). The term "post-traumatic stress disorder" came to light in the 1970s due to the diagnoses of U.S. military veterans of the Vietnam War (Klykylo, Jerald). It was officially recognized in 1980 in the third edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) by the American Psychiatric Association (Friedman). In the other hand, in the last twenty years, researchers demonstrated that PTSD covers also the non-combat experiences as well (Kubzansky et al. 44-51; Friedman). In addition to psychological effects, PTSD causes physical changes to the brain structure that have extensive impacts on overall health (Kubzansky et al. 44-51; Bremner et al. 924-932, Rosen &

Fields 179). In the light of the mentioned above and the boys' behaviour during and after incarceration will be diagnosed and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder will be used to analyze the traumatic experience that they encountered.

1.5. Post Incarceration Syndrome

Post-incarceration syndrome (PICS) is a psychiatric disorder that affects people who have been incarcerated and then released to society back. It is characterized by a range of psychological, emotional, and social difficulties that can be a consequence of being imprisoned. However, PICS is still not recognized psychiatric disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) or the International Classification of Diseases (ICD). However, the term is used by some researchers to describe the real psychological challenges that incarcerated people may face upon reentry (The Definitive Guide on PTCS).

PICS is a mixture of different mental disorder with five clusters of maladies which are Institutionalized Personality Traits (IPT), Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Antisocial Personality Traits (ASPT), Substance Use Disorders (SUDS), and Social Sensory Deprivation Syndrome (SSDS) (Akili). Post incarceration syndrome manifests itself in numerous ways. First, People can experience feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and a lack of interest in things that they previously enjoyed. Second, Individuals may experience feelings of worry, nervousness, and fear that are not accepted. Third, experiencing symptoms of PTSD such as flashbacks, nightmares, and avoidance of triggers related to their incarceration. Finally, finding it difficult to adjust their lives and self-isolation. Reentry can be difficult and persons with PICS may struggle to adapt the life outside the prison including finding a job, establishing relationships which can lead to social isolation (The Definitive Guide on PTCS). The central park five suffered from wrong imprisonment. Their experience was not forgettable to them and the life after their release was

extremely challenging to them. PICS will diagnose their trauma and how their lives changed after incarceration.

1.6. Race Based-Traumatic Stress Theory

As human beings, people naturally evaluate everything they come in contact with. They especially try to gain insight and direction from their evaluations of other people. Stereotypes are "cognitive structures that contain the perceiver's knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about human groups" (Peffley et al. p. 31). Stereotypes of African Americans are misleading beliefs about the people of African origins, these stereotypes are largely connected to the racism and racial discrimination which African Americans are subjected to. These beliefs date back to the slavery of black people during the colonial era and they have spread within American society. People of color are seen as savages, criminals and uncivilized because they are persecuted and humiliated by the daily stereotypes, the courts, and the police (Curry 167). African Americans are more subjected to be psychologically traumatized because of the maltreatment they have experienced.

The American Psychological Association defines trauma as an emotional reaction to a horrible experience (Abubakar 119). Race-based traumatic stress (RBTS) is a psychological damage stimulated by hatred or fear of a person or group of people because of their skin color or race. Schoolers report that people of color have higher rates of traumatic events (qtd in Bryant-Davis 135; qtd in Carter et al 2-4). Black, Indigenous, and People of Color that experience psychological and emotional discomfort because of racism and prejudice are referred to as race-based traumatic stress (RBTS). RBTS has three ranges and levels which are macro, miso, and micro levels.

African Americans are overrepresented in the criminal justice system, police violence. Racism, sexism, heterosexism, and nationalism are micro-aggressions which pertain to direct

encounters and experiences between individuals. The impacts of various kinds of trauma and hardship do not differ much from race-based trauma. As a result, these encounters have a cumulative effect (“Race-Based Traumatic Stress”). Hurtful race-based confrontations could indeed lead to tremendous stress levels and traumatic effects. (Carter et al. 3). So as to categorize a confrontation as traumatic symptoms, avoidance and intrusion would occur emotionally, physically, cognitively, or behaviorally. It includes as well reactions of rage, anxiety, melancholy, and guilt (Carter and Forsyth 36).

Discrimination, racism, and other forms of micro-aggression can trigger the anxiety and result in long-term damage for the individual who faced it. The cumulative consequences of racism on a person's emotional and mental health are referred to as racial trauma. Forms of racial discrimination such as personal, institutional, and even internal racism can lead to racial trauma. In the light of the Central Park Five, Race-based traumatic stress theory would be used to highlight the effects of the encountered trauma that the boys suffered from.

1.7. Psychoanalysis: Freud Defense Mechanisms

One of the most Freud's contributions was his representation of the human mind which splits it into three sections: the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. He theorized a detailed model of the mind that consists of the ID, the ego, and the superego which are the mental components of the human mind. The ID is the first process of thought and the source of the human physical desires. While the ego is the second process of thought and makes sense of anything. Both the ID and the ego are strongly interrelated. In the other hand, the superego contains the individual's moral and social values. It drives the individuals to act according to the norms of society (Sibi 75, 77; Boulegroune 1; Zhang 229). The unconscious mind is the source of one's own personality.

Psychoanalysis is an essential method for investigating and comprehending art and literature. Freud exploited these three aspects of psychoanalysis to advance our understanding of human mental functioning. Freud strongly agrees on the notion that humans are motivated by inappropriate and suppressed violent and sexual urges (Sibi 75; Kenny 1- 2; Borch-Jacobsen and Shamdasani 16). Defense Mechanisms are one of the foreground concepts in psychoanalysis. Since each of the id, the ego, and the superego has a definite object to achieve; accordingly, a conflict is caused. A person's ego constantly must react in one or more defense mechanisms so as to protect the individual.

There are different types of defense mechanisms which are repression, denial, projection, regression, rationalization, displacement, and sublimation. Repression is when the ego drives the unwanted and threatening thoughts to the unconscious mind to forget about it. Denial works when a person definitely denies what occurs in one's life (Boulegroune 2; Zhang 229, 230). Projection is the act of blaming others for one's own deeds in order to ease someone's discomfort. Regression is when a person separates from reality that leads him/her to perform actions out of his/her character. Rationalization includes defending a threatening idea logically and convincing one's self that there is a valid interpretation for it. For displacement, it is the redirection of anger and discomfort from the person who caused it to someone else. Sublimation is the transformation of the ID urges into something which is socially approved like art or science (Boulegroune 2; "Defence Mechanism" 42, 44, 48; Ahmad Sajid 13).

Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism makes use of the psychoanalytical methods to analyze works of literature according the hidden urges of the characters. Psychoanalysis is a treatment that focuses on the mind's interplay between conscious and unconscious parts in order to treat psychological illness. It's common practice for therapists to persuade their patients to open up in

order to uncover the suppressed anxieties and conflicts that are creating the patient's difficulties, rather than keeping them hidden in the subconscious (P. Barry). The central park five shows different defense mechanisms to cope with their situation. Psychoanalysis will be used to highlight how these teenagers encounter their traumatic experience from the day they were arrested to the day they were exonerated.

Conclusion

The Central Park Case and its development were introduced in this chapter. The police caused Salaam, Kevin, Wise, McCray, and Santana to be imprisoned for years for a crime they never did. It revealed the institutional racism in the US Criminal Justice System. Because race and racism was core themes in this case, Critical Race Theory was great in analyzing the series. Thus, it was inevitable that the racism experienced by the boys would cause a psychological trauma. As a result, Race-Based Traumatic Stress Theory, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Post Incarceration Syndrome traced the resulted trauma and its consequences. Through Psychoanalysis defense mechanisms, the study revealed the way the boys encounter their experience. The next chapter is devoted to the analysis of When They See Us through Critical Race Theory.

Chapter Two:

***When They See Us Analysis* through the Lens of Critical Race Theory**

Introduction

This chapter will analyze the mini film series *When They See Us* according to Critical Race Theory (CRT). This study focuses on the six TENTS of CRT: ordinariness, interest convergence, social construction, differential racialization, intersectionality, and unique voice of color. These tenets would reveal microaggression, implicit bias, inequality, racism, and police brutality against people of color from the experiences of the Central Park Five as well as shedding lights on the white hegemony over them. This chapter will discuss the institutional or the systematic racism based on the central park jogger case which was depicted in this series.

2.1. Ordinariness: Implicit Bias, Microaggression, Systematic Racism and Inequality

One of the CRT tents is Ordinariness. The former simply means that racism is ordinary and difficult to address or to eradicate. To explain the concept of Ordinariness Delgado and Stefancic stated that the most discrimination forms are a result of having color-blind conceptions that insist on equal or same treatment which leaves these forms uninterrupted (8). These continues forms are microaggression and implicit bias and inequality which are dangerous forms of racism within society. In her mini film series, *When They See Us*, DuVernay makes scenes that depicts how ordinariness and systemic racism are. These scenes points on how is it difficult to address racism because of how it has been set up against people of color systematically over the time.

Throughout the film series, Linda Fairstein, constantly refers to the Central Park Five as “animals” (DuVernay, Episode 01, 00:19:12). Her implicit bias towards people of color made her have already set up conclusions as she insist on pushing to solve the case targeting her anger towards them because all of them are guilty whether there was evidence or not just because they have a darker skin. Linda instructed the detectives to “Go into those projects and round up every black male you see. I need every single one of them. They are all animals!” (DuVernay, Episode

1, 00:20:24) because only these black and brown boys can commit such crimes, a typical stereotype against people of color who are seen as criminals, problematic and uncivilized (Donaldson).

Moreover, Linda developed microaggression towards the five boys thinking that each person with darker skin is capable to commit any crime. To solve the crime, she consults Elizabeth Lederer who worries that the case is weak as there were no valid evidences. She hesitates the case saying, “What is your case Linda?” Linda replied “Our case is that they are all guilty. Each of these boys raped this woman!” The other one replied saying, “The biggest issue is that their statements don’t match. Nothing these boys say matches the central facts of the crime.” Linda replied “all we need is one of these little shits to tie this whole thing together. I mean look at where they come from, these boys are animals!” (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:48:52- 00:49:26). This scene presents how class, sex, and race contribute to the dehumanization of people of color. And how they are seen based on their skin color

Many of the boys that the NYPD rounded up were poor boys of color from Harlem. They came from the lower class and their parents work all the time to provide them with the necessities to live. This made Fairstein conclude that these boys did commit the crime because they do not have parental guidance. When the group were arrested, one of the boys mentioned that they did nothing other than just “wilding” in the park. The word “wilding” has several meanings in the African American community. It could mean having fun, acting crazy, going mad...etc. and having fun is what the boy meant; but Linda took it as evidence that they confessed the crime and she defended her stance saying “Well the boys said it themselves that they were wilding in the park on that night” (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:20:07).

DuVernay crafted a scene to explain what “wilding” truly implies, the scene presents the five black boys who were arrested in a holding cell devastated because they were “wilding”. Then

the scene shifted to a black man walking down a street as he was listening to his radio and as the reporter talks about the Central Park Jogger case. A group of white boys came running, laughing, listening to music, having fun and “wilding.” They nudged the black man out of their way as the reporter’s voice continued to say “Now the boys did mention that they did nothing wrong as they were just out in the park wilding” (DuVernay, 2019, Episode 2, 00:01:35). The scene sheds lights on the idea that these two groups both have one thing in common which is both groups are young boys who were “wilding” yet the group of white boys were laughing and running free while the group of boys of color were in a holding cell frightened .

DuVernay highlighted how the intersectionality of race, class, and sex develop implicit bias and microaggression towards people of color, and how it leads to some sort of brutality which is police brutality in the case of the central park. She presents the audience to a scene where the boys met in a holding cell for the first time after the detectives force them to tell lies against each other. This scene is important as it points to the question “are all boys created equal?” and as it touches on how microaggression, racism, and implicit bias could damage the targeted group.

The five boys confessed that they lied against each other and started to apologize after they met. Salaam said “They made us lie” (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:58:50). Then Kevin asked “but why are they doing us like this?” “What other way they ever do us?” Raymond replied with another question. His question points on how people of color have been treated in the American society as racism is at its core and imposable to be addressed. His statement was directed to the boys to make them realize their reality as people of color as always been found guilty even if they do nothing. People of color are the ones constantly bearing the brunt of this issue of racism (Lopez).

A reporter made a commentary covering the Central Park Five case in episode two which highlighted the stereotypes, microaggression, implicit bias, and racism towards the five boys and how it led them to be brutalized by the American justice system. The reporter said:

Details didn't matter because there was no script. They were coming downtown from a world of crack, welfare, guns, knives, Indifference, and ignorance. They were coming from a land of no fathers. They were coming from the wild province of the poor, and driven by a collective fury brimming with the rippling energies of youth, their minds teeming with the violent images of the streets in the movies. They had only one goal: to smash, hurt, rob, stomp, rape. The enemies were rich, the enemies were white. (DuVernay, Episode 2, 00:00:41)

Ava DuVernay's *When They See Us* sheds lights on the American judicial system, police brutality, racism and typical stereotypes against people of color. DuVernay makes the audience notice how the media has an arm in promoting these stereotypes. In Satchel's book, *What Movies Teach Us about Race: Exceptionalism, Erasure, and Entitlement*; she speaks about how media plays a role in promoting these stereotypes where the Whites are on top and Blacks are beneath. As a consequence, these stereotypes make the people link all what is negative to blackness and what is positive to whiteness. This ideology of white being privileged in the society promotes implicit bias, racism, inequality and microaggression against people of color (Satchel). Consequently, these ideologies and stereotypes make it difficult to address racism because of how it is rooted within the American society.

To dig deep in the issue of racism a, DuVernay makes scenes to present how systemic racism and inequality are. In Episode 2, Elomba and Nomsa Brath, one of the prominent activists and community leaders in Harlem, claimed that there is no space of equality if the society suffers

from implicit bias and microaggression. They also blame the media as it contributes to promoting false stereotypes. They addressed the press under the slogan “protect the Black youth!” and crowd chants. Elomba said: “We are here to assert to the position for the families and many in our community that there is injustice happening here. Injustice occurred in that precinct when young boys, underage boys, were questioned without their parents, and were coerced by police and prosecutors to make false confessions, leading to where we are today” (DuVernay, Episode 2, 00:20:38). Elomba points the media as it creates stereotypes that people of color are intrinsically bad and criminals. In the same time, she counters the implicit bias and the negative narrative that Linda and the NYPD built. Her husband, Nomsa, addressed directly the white press as it failed to guarantee equality to people of color and to provide facts not stereotypes saying: “We are here to point the finger at the White press who have failed. You have failed to properly investigate this. You have failed to ask the right questions. You’ve been spoon-fed a story and you’ve eaten it up. But we are not here for stories, we’re here for the facts. For the truth and the facts are these boys are not a wolf pack. They are not animals. They’re not thugs. (Duvernay, Episode 2, 00:21:00).

This scene ,where the boys were in the court and as the verdicts were being read and as the words “guilty!” followed each count, strengthen the overall concept behind the movie which is: *When They See Us*, people of color, they see criminals, troublemakers, and lawless people who are automatically guilty of all crimes. This scene depicts the experiences of the boys and the reality of the lived experiences of people of color within society. In his article, US justice is built to humiliate and oppress black men. And it starts with the chokehold, Butler said that when people see any person of color, the word “guilty!” come across their mind as black people are intrinsically considered dangerous before anyone else and this is presented in the way people of color are being treated, and the way they are being perceived.

Raymond made a statement in his soliloquy after he was released from prison when he could not find a job because of his label as formerly incarcerated in which he said: “They say boys will be boys, when they say “boys” they not talking about us. They talking about other boys from other places. When did we ever get to be boys? I can’t be something I’m not. I ain’t a citizen. They don’t even want me to be. I’m somewhere I don’t know. Half in, half out” (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:08:05). His statement highlighted the effects of microaggression and addressed that racism is ordinary and the fact that it is presented in the implicit bias and microaggression leads to brutality, inequality, injustices and discrimination against people of color.

2.2. Differential Racialization

This tenet addresses that if one minority group gains privilege in the society, another minority group is likely to lose it (Delgado & Stefancic 10). Hunter claims that minorities with light skin are on the top of the ladder and they do not suffer from being discriminated as black people and they enjoy substantial privileges that are unattainable to darker-skinned people (237). The film series, *When They See Us*, presents to the audience how brutal African Americans are treated and how the police believe that only black boys are capable to do these crimes. This explain why Linda Fairstein said “Go into those projects and round up every black male you see. They are all animals!” (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:20:24). The park at that night was full of people from different ethnicities especially whites, yet she commanded the detectives to arrest those who are black only which explains that people started to link all what is negative to Blackness that eventually lead people of color to be discriminated and lose their privileges in society.

The dialogue between Nancy Ryan, a top deputy in the Manhattan DA’s office and the lead in the reinvestigation of the Central Park jogger case, and the detective who was in charge of the case highlighted the issue of differential Racialization in society as it relates to people of color.

She stated: “The real perp was walking through the park with her Walkman on, and drenched in blood. No cop looking for the other kids brings him in” (DuVernay, Episode 4, 1:05:33). This scene supported Hunter’s arguments that the real criminal, who have light skin, walked around the same park freely where in the same time innocent black boys were being rounded up and treated in a brutal way for a crime they never did, they were guilty just from being black.

2.3. Interest Convergence: Injustice, White Hegemony and Power.

Delgado and Stefancic states that Interest Convergence is when racism advances the interests of White elite and working class people. As a result, large segments of the population have few incentives to eradicate it as interests converge to advance the needs of white elites (Delgado & Stefancic 09). In addition, the interest of black Americans will be promoted only when the interest of white people are not threatened (Hogan). To explain more, Derrick Bell in his book, *Race, Racism and American Law*, holds that Whites would do anything to maintain their interests in society. To highlight this issue, Duvernay crafts scenes to make audience notice how people of power would do anything to maintain their interest even if it coasts ripping others freedom.

It all starts when the body of Trisha Meili was discovered in the Central Park. Linda Fairstein want to solve the crime at all cost. To solve the crime of the white jogger and get justice for her, she and the NYPD went after young black and brown boys as their primary suspects and pinned the crime to them without proper investigation. The question to be asked is, if the jogger was black or brown women, will they exert the same efforts and energy to solve the crime?

When *They See Us* presents Interest Convergence in the brutality of the NYPD. In Episode 1 the audience could see how the five boys were verbally and physically abused, leaving them without food, bathroom breaks or a legal guardian. Santana’s father was devastated when he saw how mislabel his son was. He asked one of the detectives: “you know my son ain’t eaten since

yesterday. It's been eighteen hours since you brought him in here can I go get him some food now?" The detective looked dead at him as he replied "I would go get him a lawyer instead if I were you." (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:46:39).

For McCray the police forced his father, Bobby, to choose whether he makes his son confess the crime or they will blackmail him with the fact that he was incarcerated to get him kicked out from his job and prevent him from getting one in the future. The NYPD preyed on these elements to protect their interest. Eventually, Bobby McCray, left alone with his son, asked him to confess the crime he never did. He said "I need you to do what the police want you to do, you gotta say what they want you to say." "But they want me to lie" replied his son. "Don't think it like that, just say what they want you to say." When his son did not want to confess, Bobby yelled as he broke down in tears "you are not listening to me, when the police want what they want, they will do anything, anything! They will lie on us, they will lock us up, they will kill us. I ain't gonna let them kill my son. But you will do what they say, you will go along do you understand me? Do you understand me?!" "Yes sir!" crying Antron replied (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:33:44).

DuVernay crafted this scene to make the audience notice the power and the Absolut hegemony of White people and the American justice system over people of color and how they control them to protect their interest. Bobby McCray knew what the Whites will do to maintain their interests that is why he convinced his son to confess. He knew what it is like to be a threat just because you are black in America. He knew what it was like to challenge those with power, so he forced his son to lie .This hegemony over other people leads to racism and brutality (Hogan).

Yusef's mother, Sharonne Salam, did not want to let her kid, Yusef, confess a crime he never did without a fight. She faced Linda and said "Are you already interrogating my son back

there without me? He is a minor.” Linda replied “You can’t stop us from interrogating a suspect. Who do you think you are?!” “I am his mother and I am stopping this right now, right now I wanna see my son! You left a child without a guardian or a lawyer with these men in this room for hours, shame on you!” (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:44:06). Yusef was the only one who did not confess to the crime; however, he was still found guilty without any evidence, just because he is a black boy in America.

In Episode 2, a TV reporter points to this issue as he said: “there was no solid evidence linking the defendants to the crime, no finger-prints, no blood matches... Defense lawyers argued the teenagers were pressured into confessing, that they were victims of a biased legal system anxious to solve a crime against a White woman.” (DuVernay, 2019, Episode 2, 00:55:08). This scene sheds lights on the fact that no matter how privileged you are as a black, the intersectionality of sex, class, and race plays a role in one being discriminated, dehumanized and brutalized just to protect the interests of whites.

Linda Fairstein used her power to make sure that the boys got a guilty verdict because to her, “These boys are animals, how could they not have done it?!” (DuVernay, Episode 2, 00:31:34). After Mattais Reyes confessed the crimes, Nancy Ryan had a meeting with Linda to tell her that these boys are innocent. Yet Linda still holds that these boys are guilty and the one who confessed is the sixth criminal, “You have simply identified a sixth rapist.” Ryan replied “You simply said that to cover because you knew you coerced those boys into saying what they did.” Linda said “it doesn’t really matter what you think. There is a police commission report coming out in a matter of days that maintains that the five did it, and that Reyes is simply the one that got away.” (DuVernay, Episode 4, 1:10:31). This scene presents that the whites would go as far as they could to maintain their hegemony.

When Ryan told Linda, “While you were writing crime novels, Kevin, Antron, Korey, Raymond, and Yusef were serving time for crimes they didn’t commit.” Linda replied harshly, “We got justice for a woman who was used and thrown away like garbage. Those boys did that. We helped make sure they got what they deserved and I’ll be damned if I lose a wink of sleep over it” (DuVernay, Episode 4, 1:12:10). This shows that people of color are always guilty even when evidences prove their innocence. They are still seen as guilty just for having a darker skin.

When They See Us opens people’s eyes on racism, microaggressions, implicit bias and police brutality and how racism helped only the interests of the Whites. Many people after watching the film series commented through different social media platforms that the white people are capable to do anything to serves their interest and people of color are going to be discriminated, and brutalized within society due to implicit bias and racism which helps to maintain White hegemony (Strand).

2.4. Social Construction

Social construction is defined by Delgado & Stefancic as race and races are the outcome of social thoughts and relations. Thus, racism is not objective, inherent, or fixed, they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather, races are categories that society gives birth to it and manipulates when convenient (9).

In *When They See Us*, different images and stereotypes against people of color were presented in the story of the five boys. DuVernay depicted how these stereotypes made people of color suffer from discrimination, unjust treatments, and brutality within the American society. Having this prior thoughts and stereotypes about people of color, makes each person fear any one with darker skin and perceives them as a threat to the society. As a result, fingers are always pointed to them whenever and wherever they go. The audience saw how the Central Park Five

were not presented as teenagers, instead, they were presented as animals and a wolf pack which hunts other people. Linda Fairstein kept insisting on calling them with such dehumanized expressions because according to her, these young boys were “animals,” “hoodlums,” “little piece of shit,” and they deserved to die (DuVernay, *When They See Us*).

The American Justice System did not let the teenage boys just to be boys and be treated as being boys, they directly treat them as suspects to a non-properly investigated crime that they did not commit. Linda strongly believe that the boys commit the crime because they do not have any parental guidance who can raise them accordingly and all what they did to pass time is to engage in criminal activities, so there is no way that these boys are not “animals,” and “criminals”. Butler, in his article *US Justice Is Built to Humiliate and Oppress Black Men*, mentioned that there are sad labels and characteristics that people of color have been linked to and whenever people see them, all they see are those negative labels, stereotypes and attributes.

Lederer, the prosecutor of the case, in episode 2 brought an eyewitness, Dean, and started to ask her about the incident. Dean answered “I don’t remember much but I do remember a group of boys and they were making these animal sounds, like grunting. My fiancé and I were riding our bike and these group of boys were heckling us. We were completely terrified” (DuVernay, *Episode 2*, 00:28:47). This scene draw an attention to the allusion that the boys are seen as animals and as immediate threats by Dean and her fiancé just because they were riding by a group of black boys at night which meant that they are in real danger.

The American justice system treated Korey Wise in the harshest way because he was 16 years old, which means that he is an adult. He faced all sorts of physical, verbal, and mental abuse while he was at Riker’s island prison. From that harsh treatment, he was shocked when Robert, a white officers, started treating him well. He asked him once: “Why are you so nice to me?” as

Robert replied: “I got a little boy at home, If what happened to you had happened to him, at least I want to know that someone is treating him like a human being” (DuVernay, Episode 4, 00:37:40). This scene shows how people of color find it strange if a person treats them right, give them their rights as human beings and most simply sees them as human rather than a threat. For Korey this moment was unforgettable because someone for the first time treated him as a human and not as an animal or a ravaging criminal as the society conceive him.

In another scene from episode 4, Nancy Ryan in charge of reinvestigating the case, met one of the detectives that was in charge of the case in 1989. She said: “There were four rape cases in Harlem in the first half of 1989 and Mattais admitted to committing three out of those four. Why didn’t you guys make the connection of the jogger case to Mattais but instead blamed five children and coerced confessions from them?” The detective replied: “Don’t let these animals fool you. Justice was fucking served” (DuVernay, Episode 4, 1:08:03). Even after Mattais confessed to the crimes and the five boys were exonerated, yet Linda Fairstein and the NYPD continued to believe that the boys are animals and dangerous criminals.

2.5. Intersectionality

Intersectionality is defined in Oxford dictionary as the interconnected nature of social categorizations like race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage. Delgado & Stefancic go further to say that intersectionality indicates the layered and multiplicity of minoritized person’s identities and experiences, and that a particular social groups are defined by a narrow set of common experiences and characteristics shared by all members of the group.

In the mini film series, intersectionality of race, class and sex is represented in the lived experiences of the Central Park Five as well as their fathers. Their experience shows how men of

color struggle to earn wealth, how they need to work extra hard and how eyes are always on them. Eventually, those with power manipulate them by promising them wealth and freedom that is not readily available to them. This later is depicted in the first episode where the boys are arrested. The audience were left on the scene where all the fathers could not be with their sons because they cannot skip their shifts at work, which is their only means of survival, even if it means leaving them alone in trouble.

Intersectionality is depicted also when the NYPD threatened Bobby to make his son confess or to make him face unemployment. Bobby had a conversation with one of the detectives that show how people with power manipulate men of color by hunting on the things they are in need of. The detective said: "How long have you been at Imperial?" Bobby replied skeptically "about five years." The detective replied hesitating "That's a good job. Your supervisor knows you did time right?" Out of fear Bobby replied: "It don't really matter cos that's behind me now. I ain't been no trouble." The detective threatened him saying "Why don't you talk some sense into your kid!" (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:31:17). This scene portrayed how people of color suffer from the upper class constant brutality, manipulation, degradation, oppressions, and racism because they cannot fight back against them.

Because they have no parental guidance, as their parents worked all the time, people of color are always seen as dangerous criminals, drug dealers, and trouble makers which is the only thing they are capable to do. This stereotype leads to the implicit bias that makes them always under society's gaze. This simply means that intersectionality of race, class, and sex shape the lived experiences of people of color in America.

2.6. Unique Voice of Color

Delgado & Stefancic explain the sixth tenet of Critical Race Theory, unique voice of color, by saying that a minority status grants a presumed competence to speak about one's experiences of race and racism that he encountered (11). The boys, now men, after they got released from prison, they found it hard to rejoin the society and blend in with their family and even get a job because of how popular their case was, especially as it was related to raping the white woman.

When They See Us' third episode sheds light on how the boys struggle to reenter society and maintain their old relationships. Being labeled as sex offenders didn't hinder them from telling the actual truth and to fight to change the flow of their lives. One of the scenes that depicts this issue is when Yusef and Richardson went to a CR meeting and the woman said: "Today we have Yusef Salam and Kevin Richardson, two of New York's most notorious sex offenders. The Wilding Boys of Central Park" Yusef said, "This again!" as he rolled his eyes. The woman continued, "To be eligible for release, the offender must acknowledge having committed his sex offense. Okay Richardson stand up let's start with you." Yusef interjected "We don't talk about our case", and the woman replied "I didn't ask you Salam," Kevin now said "If you don't mind ma'am I won't say anything." The woman stared at him saying: "Well, in my class that's not an option." Kevin replied: "I don't admit to the crime cos I like to stick to the truth!" the woman spat out "you are a convicted class three sexual predator!" Yusef stand up saying "See that's the law, not the truth. Let me illuminate you. When the state of New York put us on trial, did we accept the plea they offered us? No. and why is that?" Kevin continued "Cause we didn't do the crime and we don't want to lie." Yusef followed, "So when we never lied before, why would we start lying now for you?" The woman, exasperated at this point said, "Salam this is what the fifth group

you've been asked to leave?" Yusef replied with a grin "you do what you gotta do" as himself and Kevin walked out of the room (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:02:39).

Another scene that portrays how hard it was for the boys to maintain their relationships is when Raymond tried his best to find a job to be financially stable and help his family, but he could not find one because of his case. He was staying at home with his stepmother who disrespected him calling him a sex offender. Raymond was suffering for a crime he never commit, so he started shouting at her as his dad came in. Angry Santana Senior shouted at his son saying: "If you gotta live here you have to respect my wife!" Raymond replied sobbing: "Where was her respect?! I gotta live here men, I ain't got nowhere else to go. I got nothing, I got nothing!" his father replied as he hugged him "I am telling you son it is going to get easier" (DuVernay, Episode 3, 00:43:28).

Out of any solution, Raymond started dealing with drugs. He saw that his father did not support him and he was uncomfortable seeing his son doing drugs as he told him once: "Get that out of my house!" Raymond said, "When everything was going on, I couldn't really follow what was happening. I didn't get it. Inside I started reading the articles, how they wrote them against us from the first days, all the transcripts, the straight up lies they told. I watched my tape. I don't even know who that fucking kid is. I don't even recognize myself." All what Raymond's father want is to get his son out of this trouble, so he said to him: "I know Ray, I know but what those people stole from you, you can't buy back. Can't buy back, not with money, not with hustling not with none of that shit. Cause its gone, its done. But you don't gotta be what they said you were" (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:06:22).

Raymond believed that selling drugs is the only solution to survive in a society that didn't afford him any job. He believed that this is what society wants from them, leaving them without a job to keep them inferior. He felt defeated by society and the justice system when he was arrested

again, so he soliloquized “We was just out, we was just hanging out. They said boys will be boys. When they say boys they are not talking about us. They are talking about other boys from other places. When did we ever get to be boys? I can’t be something I am not. I ain’t a citizen. They don’t want me to be. I don’t even want to be. I am somewhere I don’t know. Half in, half out. No matter where I go” (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:07:49). This scene shows how people of color are being disproportionately incarcerated while also being treated as animals in the American society.

Antron in the other hand had a fight with his girlfriend, Adelle, because he did not spoil her. He told her that he had to save for school and get the life back and if she is not happy then it is better to breakup. Then Adelle immediately called him a sex offender and a felon as she left him alone “I know what you did to that woman. You fucking felon!” and Antron whispered “I didn’t do it!” (DuVernay, Episode 3, 00:53:39). This shows that whatever they do to change the negative claims against them, yet society treat them brutally.

In episode 3 Yusef went to a barber shop. When the barber saw him, he told him “Man, I think you’ll find most folks up in the neighborhood, they know the real story on you boys. But south of 110th, I can’t say. Down there, they is ignorant. And we is never innocent. But if I was you I’d stay clear of the park.” And another customer addressed Yusef saying, “I think you should go everywhere. You know live like a free man, don’t box yourself in” (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:05:03). This conversation shows that the dream of these men is to live free from the crime they did not commit and to get rid from people’s harsh treatments.

Korey Wise fought against the institutionalized racism that he had encountered between the hands of the American justice society. He faced the Parole board members during his 15 years in jail which force him to confess and accept all the crimes he had been found guilty for, yet Korey refused each time to agree to these lies, and the fact that he did not accept to confess led him to

spend more time in jail. This shows how people of color are always seen as guilty and no one would believe them.

After the boys were exonerated, Elombe addressed the issue of microaggression and the American justice system that brutalized the boys for the crime they never did.

Betrayed by this city, these men were just boys when they were wrongfully accused and wrongfully convicted. They were finally freed not because justice was pursued, but because somebody came forward to tell the truth. If the police had done their job at any point in these last 12 years, if the prosecutors, if the press had done their job not only would five young lives not have been destroyed, but many women would not have been subjected to the violence by the actual rapist. The real criminal was free to rape, and even kill, while the police and prosecutors and puppets like Donald Trump patted themselves on their fat backs. But we didn't give up on these men. We are so proud to welcome these men as they are finally awarded the proper settlement for their damages. As their records are cleared and they're fully exonerated for the lies told about them. As they step in fully forward into the light of their lives despite what this city and this country has done to them and millions like them for generations (DuVernay, Episode 4, 1:14:27).

The exonerated Five were more concerned to talk about their brutal experiences with the racist justice system because according to Delgado & Stefancic minority status confers a presumed competence to speak about one's own experiences of race and racism (11). Accordingly, at Oprah Winfrey's show in 2019, the Central Park Five talked about their experiences between the hands of the American justice system. They spoke about racism, implicit bias, and police brutality against people of color in America and how the later boost white hegemony. These men now are active going to shows, conferences, and universities to talk about their experiences and open people's

eyes to act to fight against racism and police brutality by making their voice heard in order to change the narrative that society had and still have about people of color.

Conclusion

Within this chapter, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was used to spot the important aspects of the mini film series *When They See Us* that was related to racism and police brutality against people of color in America. This chapter also explained the connection of racism and microaggression to the police maltreatment and brutality and how it led to injustice, oppression and discrimination against people of color as well as presenting their everyday struggles in America by using the six tenets of CRT while extracting scenes from *When They See Us*. The Central Park Five case highlighted how people of color were being and still treated between the hands of the American justice system, and how society with its stereotypes stood against them.

Chapter three:

***When They See Us* through the Lens of**

Psychoanalysis

Introduction

This chapter is directed to reveal the trauma that the boys have encountered during and after the incarceration period in the mini film series *When They See Us*. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Post Incarceration syndrome, Race Based Traumatic syndrome and psychoanalysis defense mechanisms will be used to shed lights on how the boys suffers from the traumatic experience in the jail for a crime they never did and how they were affected from the brutal police treatment and the American systematic racism and injustice. This chapter will dig deep into the boys' trauma and how people of color struggle psychologically because of this inequality.

3.1. The Untold Truth about Racism: the Opening Door of Trauma

Race-Based Trauma Stress, or Racial Trauma, is one of the direct consequences of racism which affects a person's mental and physical health (Carter, and Forsyth). These effects have been observed in numerous black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities and it surround people of all ages, including children, teenagers and adults (Jernigan, and Henderson Daniel; Kirkinis 123–141.) Racial trauma can be experienced vicariously or directly. People who are experiencing racial trauma, or had already encountered it, will probably suffer from a wide variety of physiological symptoms which includes headaches and sleep disturbances, and psychological symptoms which include intrusive thoughts, social withdrawal, hypervigilance, low self-worth, worry, and depression.

When an individual experiences racism, they can develop racial trauma (Comas-Díaz, Lillian, et al.) which can be caused by racial discrimination or racial harassment experienced by BIPOC communities. Racial discrimination presents different attitudes, actions, or policies that function all together to keep physical distance between racially privileged groups, higher class, and racially underprivileged groups, lower class, such us African Americans. DuVernay crafted a

scene that presented the latter in episode two where an eyewitness, Dean, started to talk about the night of the crime as she said: “I don’t remember much but I do remember a group of boys and they were making these animal sounds, like grunting. My fiancé and I were riding our bike and these group of boys were heckling us. We were completely terrified” (DuVernay, Episode 2, 00:28:47). This scene draws an attention to the allusion that the boys are seen as animals and as immediate threats by Dean and her fiancé. As a result, they saw that there is an urge to keep a distance between them just because they were black who might be a direct danger to them. Racial discrimination sheds lights on the fact that people with minoritized racial identities are always seen less privileged and they will remain on the margins of society, this is manifested in the way Linda treated the five boys and how she made them look as animals and criminals because they are black who come from a poor background, lower class.

On the other hand, racial harassment, practiced among people of color, is a term used to describe all the attitudes, actions, or policies that function together to forcibly marginalize and subjugate people with minoritized racial identities to positions of inferiority (Carter 447-451). Racial harassment, with its two different types either explicitly or implicitly, communicates antagonism and violence against people with marginalized racial identities which DuVernay sheds lights on in her mini film series, *When They See Us*, and especially in the way the police in NYPD forced the Central Park Five to confess the crime and how they treated them brutally during the investigations, keeping them for more than eighteen hours without parental support, food, drinks, and toilet breaks.

Racial trauma can be the consequence of a direct and acute experience of racism or by numerous other subtle forms of racism that accumulate and developed over time (Nadal, Kevin L., et al). For example the racial microaggressions that the boys had encountered from Linda Fairstein,

the detectives and the media highlighted how the intersectionality of race, class, and sex develop implicit bias and microaggression towards people of color that eventually lead them to struggle from trauma, as mentioned in the second chapter. Racial trauma can also be the consequence of both overt racism and covert racism experiences. Overt racism is a term used to describe instances of racism that occur on a person-to-person basis; it is the form of racism that happens between people who mostly referred, or labeled as “racist”. Throughout the mini film series, *When They See Us*, the audience see how Linda Fairstein constantly refers to the Central Park Five as “animals” (DuVernay, Episode 01, 00:19:12) and how in another scene she instructed the detectives to “Go into those projects and round up every black male you see. I need every single one of them. They are all animals!” (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:20:24). And how she also said that “These boys are animals, how could they not have done it?!” (DuVernay, Episode 2, 00:31:34).

The audience saw how the Central Park Five were not presented as teenagers, instead, they were presented as animals and a wolf pack which hunts other people. Linda Fairstein kept insisting on calling them with such racist and dehumanized expressions because according to her, these young boys were “animals,” “hoodlums,” “little piece of shit,” and they deserved to die (DuVernay, *When They See Us*). However, Covert racism occurs on a policy, institution, as it occurs at the society level as well; and it is often more difficult for people to identify it as it happens at a wider level (Coates). In her mini film series, *When They See Us*, DuVernay makes scenes that depicts how covert racism is. These scenes points on how is it difficult to address racism because of how it has been set up against people of color systematically over the time, which is best explained in chapter two under Ordinarity.

Racial trauma can also be evoked by vicarious racism which occurs when a person from a marginalized group witnesses other people of their race experience racism or become negatively

impacted by it (Heard-Garris, N.J., et al) which is presented in the series where Antron witnesses the police men hitting Kevin with his hamlet calling him an animal. Racial trauma can also be caused by intergenerational trauma which passed from one generation to another. Intergenerational trauma is the result of racism that is passed from one generation of the family to the next generation. For example, the trauma a parent experiences from racism will negatively impacts the parent's quality of parenting and how he treated his kids. One of the strongest scenes that explained the latter is shown where McCray's father, Bobby, have a conversation with one of the detectives that evokes his trauma and the fact that he was previously incarcerated and was forced to make his son confess to the crime or the police will kick him out from his job and prevent him from getting one in the future. He was still traumatized by his past and how the police treated him. He knew how they will mess up his son's life as they messed up his life earlier because of that Bobby yelled at his son "you are not listening to me, when the police want what they want, they will do anything, anything! They will lie on us, they will lock us up, they will kill us. I ain't gonna let them kill my son. But you will do what they say, you will go along do you understand me? Do you understand me?!" (DuVernay, Episode 1, 00:33:44).

The wrongful conviction and imprisonment of the central Park Five were the result of racism and prejudice of the criminal justice system of America. They were wrongly accused of a crime they never did just because they were targeted and stereotyped based on their race. This experience had a significant impact on their mental health and wellbeing, causing ongoing trauma and stress. The Netflix series "When They See Us" portrays the trauma experienced by the Central Park Five and highlights the ongoing impact of racism and discrimination on their lives and communities. The series shows how the trauma they experienced is not only individual but also collective, affecting their families, relationships, and sense of identity.

3.2. Revealing the Central Park Five Trauma

Studies have shown that people who spent time in jail and have been incarcerated are more likely to develop PTSD and other mental health conditions and they are at a higher risk to suffer from Post Incarceration Syndrome as a result of their experiences. In a study published in the *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, researchers found that individuals who had been incarcerated were more likely to experience symptoms of PTSD compared to the general population or normal people (Wilson et al.) Additionally, wrongful convictions and imprisonment can have long lasting psychological effects on incarcerated people, including symptoms consistent with PTSD. In a study published in the *Journal of Forensic Psychology Research and Practice*, researchers found that individuals who had been exonerated after being wrongfully convicted reported high rates of PTSD symptoms, including flashbacks, nightmares, and hypervigilance (Kim, Horselenberg, and Merckelbach).

In DuVernay's *When They See Us*, Raymond Santana, Kevin Richardson, Antron McCray, Yusef Salaam, and Korey Wise were all African Americans and Hispanic teenagers from fourteen to sixteen years old. They were full of energy as teenagers, they were just kids. The five boys were brutally interrogated by the police and were forced and coerced to provide them with false statements to set them free to go "home". The mini film series *When They See Us* captures the psychological impact that this incident, the media coverage, their incarceration, and their release had on the five men and their families also. The boys, now men, were later exonerated after the actual criminal confessed to the crime, yet they never forget nor heal from their traumatic experience and how the American justice system do them wrong.

When They See Us reflects the weaknesses of the American justice system as it sheds lights on the traumatic experiences of people of color that they have encountered and gone through. The

four parts episodes present the experiences of the boys from the day before their accusation, to getting arrested and interrogated by the police, to them forcibly and falsely confessing to the crimes the police asked them to cope with, to their struggles during their imprisonment period, and to their release from prison and their lives after prison (DuVernay, *When They See Us*). This series opens the eyes of the audience to see how these five men's lives were affected from the case and the time they were wrongly accused, which continue to haunt them to this day.

The series portrays the trauma that the Central Park Five and their families experienced throughout the entire ordeal. The trauma which is depicted in the series is multi-faceted that includes emotional and psychological trauma. The boys were subjected to a brutal interrogation process, coerced into giving false statements, and were then put on trial and sentenced to prison for a crime they never commit. They were just kids that were stripped away from their families, their education, and their futures. *When They See US* highlights the impact of systemic racism within the justice system and society as a whole. The boys were unfairly criminalized simply because of their race, ethnicity, and background. The trauma depicted in "When They See Us" is not only limited to the five boys and their families, but also reflects the trauma experienced by countless others who have been wrongly accused and unfairly treated by the justice system.

3.2.1. Korey Wise

Despite the lack of any DNA matches, any witnesses or any solid evidence, all the five Central Park boys were found guilty of various charges of murder, rape and assault in the Central Park Jogger case. However, unlike the other four teens, who were tried as minors and sentenced to five to ten years in a youth correctional facility, Korey ,who was sixteen at that time, was sentenced to five to fifteen years, all of which were to be spent in an adult prison, Rikers Island (DuVernay, *When They See Us*).

In the fourth and final episode of *When They See Us*, the incarceration period was a very rough time for a sixteen years old boy who was left alone between the hands of adult criminals. Korey suffered from brutal violence and abuse during his time there and in other federal prisons. He also spent several years of his imprisonment locked away in solitary confinement which he asked for. In an outcome so outrageous that would never work in fiction, Kory had a fight and later on a conversation with the man who had actually raped Meili, and who confessed to the crime which led to the boys' exoneration (DuVernay, episode 4). That final episode is smartly built to capture Korey's trauma by using hypervigilance moments, flashback spiked with elements of strangeness, Wise's daydream of a date at Coney Island, and a knock on his cell door that echoes the fatal knock on the window of a fast-food restaurant which drew him into the park. Korey was only able to daydream about Lisa, his girlfriend, when he was in prison for more than a decade. The fourth episode highlights how trapped Wise is and how he was deeply traumatized by the events he gone through. *When They See Us*' director Ava Duvernay told Town & Country that "One of the things that really struck me was when Korey said to me, "There is no Central Park Five. It was four plus one. And no one has told that story...I think it's important for people to understand the depths of what it means to be incarcerated in adult prisons in this country."

Korey served more than twelve years in the prison as an innocent man, the longest of the five boys, and he affirmed that those are years that the settlement won't give him back: "You can forgive, but you won't forget," he says in Sarah and Ken Burns' 2012 documentary, *The Central Park Five*. "You won't forget what you lost. No money could bring that time back. No money could bring the life that was missing or the time that was taken away." Yusef Salaam talked about Korey's experience in an interview with *The New York Times* "We had all gone through hell. But when I saw this series, I immediately realized that we were in paradise compared to the hell that

Korey was in... I went to jail and I was able to get a college degree. He never got an opportunity to breathe." Korey also said at the same interview: "This series is talking to my pain. I'm enjoying it; at the same time, it hurts. But I guess when it comes down to it" (Harris)

In the final episode Kory Wise's character is shown experiencing intense flashbacks from the incident and traumatic memories related to his experiences in prison as well as his personal life. The flashbacks Korey had are depicted in a fragmented and nonlinear way which reflects the disorienting and traumatic nature of Kory Wise's experiences. He kept remembering the violence he faced from the NYPD detectives and the abuse he suffered from between the hands of other inmates and prison guards, as well as the hopelessness and despair he felt during his time in prison. In one most powerful scene in *When They See Us*, Kory Wise is shown sitting alone in his cell, surrounded by the voices and memories of the people who have impacted his life, including his girlfriend, his Trans sister, his mother and the victim of the Central Park attack, Meili (DuVernay, Episode 4). These flashbacks serve to highlight the deep psychological scars left by his experiences, and the ongoing impact that trauma can have on individuals even after they are released from prison. The portrayal of Kory Wise's flashbacks in "*When They See Us*" is a powerful reminder of the long-term effects of trauma. It also highlights the importance of addressing the systemic injustices that can lead to such trauma in the first place.

His wrongful conviction, incarceration, and the physical and emotional abuse that he experienced during his period at prison have a powerful impact on his mental health. Korey struggles from depression and anxiety, and has difficulty to adjust to his new life outside the prison. The portrayal of Kory Wise's symptoms in "*When They See Us*" raises awareness about the prevalence of PTSD among individuals who have experienced incarceration or other forms of systemic injustice. He also exhibits avoidance behaviors, such as isolating himself from others and

refusing to talk about his experiences. To isolate himself and to avoid others he started asking for Solitary confinement in which he spent several years there. The hard part was finding the rhythm of the solitary confinement after giving the prison setup enough room to breathe, that included locating the right place for the flashbacks of his childhood to land.

DuVernay wanted Wise's ordeal to be a spiritual journey of survival and redemption that was uniquely subjective, based on his real-life experience of living inside his mind and having imaginary conversations with his mother, and trans sister and confronting his childhood demons. The imaginary interludes begin quite poetically, with him hearing Yusef Salaam calling him to join the "wilding" group and then the police officer who asked him to accompany his "buddy". This memory was followed by another one where he recalled again what happened during that night and how he was brutally interrogated. The memories and flashbacks continued with Wise tracing the outline of his Trans sister in the cracks of the wall and then summoning her spirit to comfort him. He also had a flashback where Wise gets warned about skipping school by his older sibling and advised him about being more disciplined to succeed in life. After that Korey was compelled to remember a more painful memory of his mother angrily disapproving of his sibling's gender identity (DuVernay, Episode 4). "Although it's a terrible scene, it's a real strong family dynamic that we're dealing with and a lot of subtext," Spencer Averick, the editor of part two and four of the mini film series, said. "We started off through the eyes of Korey, feeling his discomfort. As we got into the scene, we couldn't cut away from Niecy. She was so good. So we stayed on her a lot, and having her drive the scene pays off later when her character arc comes around."(Kang et al).

Despite all the violence, physical and emotional abuse that Korey has been through, the man keeps a surprisingly positive spirit and attitude which the actor who plays Korey's character

in *When They See Us*, Jharrel Jerome, noticed the moment he met him. He Jharrel told Newsweek in a May interview "I was terrified to meet him just because this is the man I'm going to portray, and I don't know how to speak to somebody who's lived a life like that because I've never met anyone like that,". "The second I met him, he took his chain off and put it around my neck, and he said, 'You're Korey Wise now.' That put everything into perspective for me about the kind of man he is. It's all strength, it's all power. He's all bright."(Williams Janice).

3.2.2. Kevin Richardson

Since the series did not include much about the other four boys lives during and after their incarceration, unlike Korey who has a whole episode dedicated only for his experience, no great analysis has been found for their mental health, however, according to the third episode, which is directed to Richardson, McCray, Salaam and Raymond's lives during and after imprisonment, few symptoms were detected from different scenes.

Keven was only fourteen when he was arrested and he was released seven years later, he found it difficult to adjust his life after prison. He was physically doing well, but he was struggling mentally. He said in an interview with Harris in New York Times

This whole thing was a therapeutic process. PTSD is real and I go through that. People might think on the outside looking in that I'm doing well because we got the settlement. That doesn't erase the time that I did. We always say we have invisible scars nobody sees. And no matter how you cover it, the scab will keep coming off. The settlement didn't really mean anything. Just to tell people we told you so from the beginning that's all we wanted. It's a struggle that I deal with every day. But I didn't want to be an older, bitter man, even though I am angry, yes. But we did want to channel that energy and turn this to something positive so we could build for our future generation. Reliving these events brings back the

pain; it brings back the memories. But it's necessary. I was ready and I was willing to relive, to go through that pain again, and to cry because it's necessary. It's a sacrifice. You want to change the culture, you've got to be engaged. This is how we got engaged.

This interview shows how deeply the case affected him and how he was struggling to be a good person and a citizen even when the society plays it hard on him and rejected him. Kevin was just a kid who was forced to grow up at prison. Although he did not talk much about his psychological struggles, yet his way of talking reveal how hard he is fighting to be normal again.

3.2.3. Antron McCray

During his imprisonment, McCray suffers from intrusive, recurrent, unwanted memories of the night of 19th April 1989, reliving the traumatic event as if it were happening again and again as flashbacks, he was also having upsetting nightmares about the crime and kept hearing sounds like footsteps. When his mother visited him she asked him about himself. He answered: "Well, I been...I been having these dreams". She asked: "A bad one?" he said as he exhales deeply: "Yeah, yeah...I'm in my bunk...and I keep hearing these...these footsteps... And they keep coming closer and closer...I don't know if I'm dreaming or...or if it's real. I... Every night, they just keep coming...closer and closer (DuVernay, Episode3, 00.05.45). He suffers from symptoms of avoidance, as he kept avoiding his father who remind him of the reason he was convicted. He start having negative thoughts about other people or the world, he believed that everyone in the world hates him as he said: "I feel like everybody in the world hate me, Ma." (DuVernay, Episode3, 00.07.15). Antron found it difficult to maintain close relationships and start new ones, he struggle to cope with the new lifestyle that he faced after his release. His relationship with his father was effected badly since he could not forget nor forgive him. One of the most heartbreaking scenes is when Antron and his mother enter their house after his release and they found Bobby, his father,

there. She told him about his bad condition and why she bring him back home. He was angry because he left them alone, yet his mother accepted him back. I'll take care of you. He said to his mom: "I want to. But...I ain't taking care of him. If I had my way, you wouldn't have took him back... When he needed something, Ma...Everybody made their decision. I made the wrong one to listen to him at the precinct. He made the wrong one to leave us. You making the wrong one right now ...But, Ma, him walking out on us that ain't love." (DuVernay, Episode3, 00:12:08-00:13:34). Antron once said in an interview with Harris in New York Times:

Watching the series was hard to get through. It took me right back, because my father was my best friend, my hero at the time. And it was real painful. I cried on my wife's shoulders. I don't know when the last time I cried was. I struggle with my feelings toward my father. Sometimes I love him. Most of the time, I hate him. I lost a lot, you know, for something I didn't do. He just flipped on me, and I just can't get past that. It's real hard. I did seven and a half years including time spent detained during the trial for something I didn't do, and I just can't get over it. I'm damaged, you know? I know I need help. But I feel like I'm too old to get help now. I'm 45 years old, so I'm just focused on my kids. I'm not saying it's the right thing to do. I just stay busy. I stay in the gym. I ride my motorcycle. But it eats me up every day. Eats me alive. My wife is trying to get me help but I keep refusing. That's just where I'm at right now. I don't know what to do.

Antron is a grown up men now, yet the events happened during the night of April 1989 still haunts him and he is still struggling emotionally and psychologically because of a crime he never did. He is still traumatized, damaged and cannot accept what happened to him or get over it.

3.3. How Did the Boys Cope with Trauma?

The effects of trauma was mostly present when the five boys were finally released from prison. The Central Park Five Case hunted them and affected their relationships. *When They See Us* draw attention to how these five boys struggled to rejoin society and how each one of them went on his life. While watching the mini film series, Freud defense mechanisms could be depicted.

3.3.1. Sublimation

Sublimation is the mature type of defense mechanism where different socially unacceptable behaviors, impulses or idealizations are transformed into more socially acceptable actions or behaviors. Freud considered sublimation a sign of maturity that allows people to behave in more civilized and acceptable ways. This defense mechanism allow and pave the way for people to pursue activities that are better for their health, and engage in behaviors that are socially positive, productive, and creative. Sublimation is a healthy coping mechanism that transform pain or anger into productive, achievable projects which can benefit society, relationships, and even the person's physical health (psychology today stuff).

Sublimation starts when the Id of a person has a strong attraction to satisfy its impulses and wants, but Superego prevents from it. This contradiction occurs when that Superego is fully grown in person otherwise the impulses of the Id will be easily reached. In fact these struggles between the Id and the Superego will result anxiety and one of the actions that the Ego do for decreasing anxiety is using sublimation defense mechanism which will reinforce effect in decreasing anxiety that is as a result of catharsis and its certification on behalf of society (S.D. Ghazvinia, et all).

When Raymond Santana was released from prison, he found it difficult to find a job and to rejoin the society as a normal citizen. He was angry of the fact that society could not accept him back. He said in his soliloquy after he was released from prison: "They say boys will be boys,

when they say “boys” they not talking about us. They talking about other boys from other places. When did we ever get to be boys? I can’t be something I’m not. I ain’t a citizen. They don’t even want me to be. I’m somewhere I don’t know. Half in, half out” (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:08:05). His statement shows how deep Raymond was struggling to control his anger, yet he was engaged at first in drug dealing and he was arrested again for that activity. However, after he was exonerated, his anger was manifested in building a new company. He started his own clothing company called Park Madison NYC in 2018. Among his brand clothing, he still could not forget how the case ruined his life and how he struggle as a Hispanic fourteen years old kid. Accordingly the company offers a T-shirt that lists the names of all the Central Park Five to make people aware of their struggles and the pain that they have gone through. And interestingly, it was actually a tweet from Raymond that inspired director Ava Duvernay to start working on *When They See Us*. "I was ready and I was willing to relive, to go through that pain again, to cry," he told The New York Times of working with Ava on the miniseries. "It's a sacrifice. You want to change the culture, you've got to be engaged. This is how we got engaged."(Harris). Freud sublimation is presented in how Raymond transformed his inner feelings into something that is socially accepted, having a company that is still engaged in making people aware of their case.

When Korey Wise received \$12.2 million, the largest portion of the lawsuit’s settlement, he knows that NO money will never ever give him back the time and the youth he lost while wrongfully incarcerated and cannot make him forget what he faced from abuse, injustice and the brutal experience during his incarceration period. "You can forgive, but you won't forget," he says in Sarah and Ken Burns' documentary, *The Central Park Five*. "You won't forget what you lost ... No money could bring the life that was missing or the time that was taken away."(Ken Burns, 01.55.53-01:56:06). Since his release from prison and exoneration, Korey has continued to live in

New York City, where he works as a public speaker and criminal justice reform advocate. In 2015, he donated \$190,000 to the University of Colorado's chapter of the Innocence Project, which then changed its name to the Korey Wise Innocence Project at Colorado Law in his honor (Innocence Project).

There is limited information available about Yusef Salaam's use of sublimation specifically, but his advocacy work and public speaking engagements since his release from prison suggest that he has found productive and socially acceptable ways to channel the trauma and anger resulting from his wrongful conviction and incarceration. In recent years, Yusef Salaam has become an activist and advocate for criminal justice reform and social justice. He has spoken out about his experiences and the injustices of the criminal justice system, and has worked to raise awareness about the impacts of systemic racism and injustice on communities of color. By channeling his experiences and emotions into advocacy work and social justice activism, Yusef Salaam is using sublimation as a positive coping mechanism. This allows him to channel his negative impulses and emotions into productive, socially acceptable activities as publishing books including *Punching the Air*, *Better, Not Bitter: Living on Purpose in the Pursuit of Racial Justice*, *Words of a Man My Right to Be*, *The Devil and Elijah Muhammad*. All these activities are productive and creative which will benefit both himself and others

3.3.2. Denial

Denial is one of the defense mechanisms which occurs when someone ignores or refuses to accept reality. The denial defense mechanism can be an attempt to avoid uncomfortable realities, anxiety, or truths. It is one of the different means which is used unconsciously to cope with distressing and painful situations, unpleasant feelings, or traumatic events. Denial gives time to adjust to sudden life changes, and it can also prevent from acknowledging and addressing issues

in life (Minkyung Chung). Denial typically involves: Blaming, Rationalizing, Avoidance, Minimizing, and Self-deception.

Yusef Salaam, Antron McCray, Raymond Santana, Korey Wise and Kevin Richardson denies any involvement in the crime and maintains their innocence throughout the trial and their time in prison. They were innocents who were forced to engage in a crime they never did, all the five boys were afraid when they made their false statements. However, when they were trailed they knew how difficult their situation is; as a result, they start denying the statements they had already made. Putting the blame on the criminal justice system, the Central Park Five reject to accept that they were guilty and all what they said earlier was under the police pressure. The fact that the teenagers were innocent and they were forced to confess to the crimes, made them sit on a position where they were traumatized of the consequence of their statement, there when they started to deny the statements they had made to get themselves out of that trouble.

3.3.3. Repression

Repression is another defense mechanism which means the unconscious blocking of unpleasant emotions, impulses, memories, and thoughts from your conscious mind. First described by Sigmund Freud, the purpose of this defense mechanism is to try to minimize feelings of guilt and anxiety (Cherry).

All the Central Park Five appear to repress their emotions and memories of the brutal experience they went through, avoiding talking about them or thinking about them directly. It is shown in episode three that the boys always avoid talking about themselves each time their families came to visit them, they repress how they actually feel. Raymond talks about other stuff whenever his father called, but he never talked about how he truly struggle there and even after his release

when he could not adjust to the changed world he had faced, he did not talk to his father on how much desperate he was at that time, rather than that, he was engaged in drug dealing (DuVernay, Episode 03). McCray repressed his emotions he was hopeless, and he changed even his surname to “Brown” just to escape from his identity, his life and his emotions which he could not get over until now (DuVernay, Episode 03). He said in New York Times “I just can’t get past that. It’s real hard. I did seven...for something I didn’t do, and I just can’t get over it. I’m damaged, you know? I know I need help. But I feel like I’m too old to get help now. But it eats me up every day. Eats me alive...That’s just where I’m at right now. I don’t know what to do.”(Harris).

3.3.4. Rationalization

Rationalization is a disavowal defense mechanism which permits an individual to deal with emotional conflicts, or internal and external stressors, by devising reassuring or self-serving but incorrect explanations for his or her own or others’ thoughts, actions, or feelings, which cover up other motives (Perry).

Yusef attempts to make sense of his experiences by rationalizing them. For example, he tells his mother that he has to go to prison to "man up" to grow up and to be the man who can take responsibility for his actions, despite his innocence. Antron in the other hand attempts to make sense of his experiences by giving it a value and by reasoning it. For example, he tells his mother in one of the scenes that he had to lie, he had to follow what his father asked him to do, he had to confess to a crime he didn't commit just in order to protect his family from being further implicated in the crime, or from messing their lives up, as they threatened them. Raymond rationalized his experiences by trying to make sense of the situation that he was forced to be in. In episode three, he told his girlfriend that he was in the wrong place at the wrong time and that he has to stay strong for his family (DuVernay, Episode 03).

3.3.5. Intellectualization

Intellectualization is a defense mechanism in which people reason about a problem to avoid uncomfortable or distressing emotions. Reasoning is used to block confrontation with an unconscious conflict and its associated emotional stress where thinking is used to avoid feelings. It involves emotionally removing one's self from a stressful event (Glen and Gabbard 35)

Yusef uses his intellect and education to understand and make sense of his experiences and to start reasoning why it happened to them exactly as group of black and brown boys. His intellect paved the way for him to advocate his own release and the release of his co-defendants. Yusef Salaam is a well-known advocate for criminal justice reform and social justice. He has spoken extensively about the importance of critical thinking and education in addressing systemic issues of racism and injustice in the United States. In a 2019 interview with *The New Yorker*, Salaam emphasized the importance of critical thinking, saying, "We need to start looking at the deeper root causes of these issues and critically analyzing them." He argued that too often, people accept the narratives presented to them by the media without questioning them, and that this can perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to systemic oppression.

In a 2019 speech at Cornell University, he said, "Education is the key to liberation. It is the key to opening up doors and windows that you never even knew existed." He has argued that education can help people understand the history of oppression and the ways in which it continues to impact communities of color today, and can provide tools for challenging and dismantling these systems of oppression.

3.3.6. Displacement

Displacement is a psychological defense mechanism in which a person redirects a negative emotion from its original source to a less threatening recipient, or an individual transferring negative feelings from one person or thing to another (Cherry).

Yusef's displacement is presented when he directs his anger and frustration towards the criminal justice system and the individuals in NWPD who were responsible for his wrongful conviction after and during his incarceration, rather than towards himself or his loved ones. Salaam said in an interview with Harris in New York Times:

"I knew how big this series would be. And I knew how small our story had become. I say that because when we were found innocent, there was no tsunami of media that followed in the way that tsunami came out within the first few weeks when they thought we were guilty. The criminal justice system says that you're innocent until proven guilty. But if you're black or brown, you are guilty and have to prove yourself innocent. And I think that is the difference, that two Americas that is often talked about. There are so many components that let you down."

Antron directs his anger and frustration towards his father, who he feels that he abandoned him during his trial and imprisonment. Antron felt betrayed by his father, as he told CBS News. "I just kept telling the truth at first," he recalled of that night. "The police asked to speak to my father. My father left the room with them. Came back in the room, he just changed. Cursing, yelling at me. And he said, 'Tell these people what they wanna hear so you go home.' I'm like, 'Dad, but I didn't do anything.' The police is yelling at me. My father yelling at me. And I just like, 'All right. I did it.'" He continue to blame and directed his anger to his father: "And I looked up to my father.

He is my hero. But he gave up on me. You know, I was telling the truth and he just told me to lie,"(Joyner).

Raymond directs his anger and frustration towards the society, police and the justice system, who he feels wrongly accused and convicted, and he blame society form not accepting him as a citizen. "They say boys will be boys, when they say "boys" they not talking about us. They talking about other boys from other places. When did we ever get to be boys? I can't be something I'm not. I ain't a citizen. They don't even want me to be. I'm somewhere I don't know. Half in, half out" (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:08:05). His statement shows how deep Raymond was struggling to control his anger towards the society as it did not accept him to rejoin it again. Another scene that depicts his frustration towards how the criminal justice system treated him. He said to his father: "When everything was going on, I couldn't really follow what was happening. I didn't get it. Inside I started reading the articles, how they wrote them against us from the first days, all the transcripts, the straight up lies they told. I watched my tape. I don't even know who that fucking kid is. I don't even recognize myself." (DuVernay, Episode 3, 1:06:22).

Conclusion

The Central Park five Case had a great impact on the exonerated five psychology. Through Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Post Incarcerated Syndrome, Race-Based Traumatic Theory and Freud' defense mechanisms; the boys' mental health during and after their wrongful conviction was analyzed to see how the boys coped with their trauma and how bad it affected them and their relationships. By revealing the trauma that the boys had encountered in the mini film series, one could see how they suffered from a crime they never did and from the imprisonment period at the jail as innocent men. The exonerated five were hardly affected psychologically because of the brutal police treatment, the American systemic racism and the criminal injustice and inequality.

General Conclusion

The Central Park Five's traumatizing experience with the US Criminal Justice System has been well-displayed through the mini film series *When They See Us*. The analysis of DuVernay's mini film series used Critical Race Theory, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Post Incarceration Syndrome, Race Based Traumatic Stress Theory, and Psychoanalysis, defense mechanisms to highlight the important aspects of the film which are connected to justice racism and police brutality against people of color in America and how racism plays a huge role in effecting them mentally and left them traumatized. The findings of the analysis within this thesis sought to dig deep and explain the connection of racism and microaggression to police brutality against people of color in America and how they struggle every day. The analysis of the series presented that microaggression is influenced by different factors such as implicit bias, racism, and stereotypes which accordingly paves the way to the injustices, brutal treatments and oppressions of people of color within the American society.

The Central Park Five lived experience before, during and after their imprisonment sheds light on the ideology that intersectionality has a direct role when it comes to the individual of color being brutalized by the justice system of America especially if this person of color came from the lower class of society and did not have enough economic power to fight the inequality and the injustices that he or she was faced with. The findings of this thesis shows that racism is rooted in society, and it is an element that cannot be easily detected and eradicated. The analysis also shows the impact of racism on people of color on their mental health as it dig deep into the Central Park Five' trauma and how people of color struggle psychologically because of this inequality. It also presented that when an individual experiences racism, they can develop racial trauma which can be caused by racial discrimination or racial harassment experienced by people of color.

Moreover, the findings shows that the experiences of racial oppression or racial inequality will cause a psychological trauma for the people who encountered it. The five boys have been through painful moments and hard days to be wrongly convicted for a crime they did not commit which stripped their lives from them and caused them to lose their youth. Their experience shows that racial trauma is the direct consequence of racism or by numerous other subtle forms of racism such as inequality, implicit bias and microaggression that accumulate all together and developed over time which eventually leads for a person who experienced it to suffer mentally and psychologically and makes him also develop some sort of trauma or symptoms of PTSD. The psychological analysis of the five boys shows that the biased treatment to a certain race over the other has an immense psychological impact on the deprived minorities. And those who are traumatized by a brutal experience, their traumatic encounters will be resulted in different outlets or defense mechanisms, negative or positive, which may be in a form of anger, depression, and disappointment. Conversely, each one of the five boys, now men, choose to express their inner thoughts and unspoken intentions through different ways which are presented in chapter three.

After their exoneration, The Central Park Five are active in participating in different conferences and forums to educate people about how racism and police brutality are connected as well as the impact of implicit bias on people of color's lives and psychology. Today the Exonerated Five encourage people to act, to make their voice heard, and not to be silent in the face of racism, inequality, injustices, and police brutality, to not be a victim as they were before. They are fighting to call on a police reform where all the police actors would be properly educated on the dangers of implicit bias and microaggression and how these elements lead to racism and police brutality against people of color whom will suffer physically and psychologically form it. The Central Park

Five believe that their case is the way to liberate and open the eyes of people of color about their struggle and invite everyone who has a role in society to act all together to achieve a better society.

Works Cited

Abhishek, Aharon. "When They See Us' Absolutely Deserves All Those 16 Emmy Nominations."

MEAWW, 16 July 2019, <https://meaww.com/when-they-see-us-netflix-emmy-awards-2019-outstanding-limited-series>. Accessed 07 March. 2023.

Abubakar, Sadiya. "Art as Narrative: Recounting Trauma through Literature." *IRAI International Journal of Management & Social Sciences*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.21013/jmss.v8.n1.p13>.

Akili. "The Effects of Post-Incarceration Syndrome [PICS]." *Breaking Chains Mending Minds*, 1 Feb. 2022, <https://breakingchainsmendingminds.org/2021/02/09/the-effects-of-post-incarceration-part-1/>. Accessed 16 March. 2023.

Atkin, Jessie. "10 Interesting Facts about 'When They See Us' You Need to Know." *ScreenRant*, 26 May 2020, <https://screenrant.com/when-they-see-us-interesting-facts-trivia/#missing-details>. Accessed 07 march. 2023.

Bell, Derrick A. *Race, Racism and American Law*. Little, Brown, 1984.

Bremner, J. D., Vythilingam, M., Vermetten, E., Southwick, S. M., McGlashan, T., Nazeer, A., & Ng, C. K. "MRI and PET study of deficits in hippocampal structure and function in women with childhood sexual abuse and posttraumatic stress disorder". *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 2003, 160(5), 924-932. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.160.5.924>.

Bryant-Davis, Thema. "Healing Requires Recognition". *The Counseling Psychologist*, vol 35, no. 1, 2007. *SAGE Publications*, doi:10.1177/0011000006295152. Accessed 18 March. 2023.

Borch-Jacobsen, Mikkel, and Sonu Shamdasani. *The Freud Files: An Inquiry into the History of Psychoanalysis*. UK, Cambridge University Press, 2012

Boulegroune, Adel. "Author-Oriented Literary Criticism: Psychological Approach: Sigmund Freud". Lecture. Mohamed Khider University of Biskra, Algeria, 2021.

Burns, Sarah et al. *The Central Park Five*. Florentine Films, WETA, 2012.

Burns, Sarah. *The Central Park Five: A Chronicle of A City Wilding*. 1st ed., Alfred A. Knopf, 2011, pp. 14-15, 28, 32, 33, 42, 45, 50, 69, 73, 95.

Butler, Paul. "US Justice Is Built to Humiliate and Oppress Black Men. And It Starts with the Chokehold." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 11 Aug. 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/11/chokehold-police-black-men-paul-butler-race-america>. Accessed 26 March. 2023.

Carter, Robert T. "Racial Discrimination and Race-Based Traumatic Stress." *Handbook of Racial-Cultural Psychology and Counseling. Theory and Practice*, vol. 2, John Wiley, Hoboken, NJ, 2005, pp. 447–451.

Carter, Robert T. et al. "Relationships Between Trauma Symptoms And Race-Based Traumatic Stress.". *Traumatology*, vol 26, no. 1, 2019. *American Psychological Association (APA)*, doi:10.1037/trm0000217. Accessed 18 March 2023.

Carter, Robert T., and Jessica M. Forsyth. "A Guide to the Forensic Assessment of Race-Based Traumatic Stress Reactions." *The Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 2009, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19297630.

Carter, Robert T., and Jessica M. Forsyth. "A Guide to the Forensic Assessment of Race-Based Traumatic Stress Reactions." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law*, 1 Mar. 2009, jaapl.org/content/37/1/28.

Cherry, Kendra. "How Does Repression Work in Our Unconscious Mind?" *Verywell Mind*, 16 Mar. 2023, <https://www.verywellmind.com/repression-as-a-defense-mechanism-4586642>. Accessed 18 April. 2023.

Coates, Rodney D. "Covert Racism in the U.S. and Globally." *Covert Racism*, 2011, pp. 239–265, <https://doi.org/10.1163/ej.9789004203655.i-461.89>.

Comas-Díaz, Lillian, et al. "Racial Trauma: Theory, Research, and Healing: Introduction to the Special Issue." *American Psychologist*, vol. 74, no. 1, 2019, pp. 1–5, <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000442>.

Cornell University, Yusef Salaam of the Exonerated Five Shares His Story, 2019, <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2019/10/yusef-salaam-exonerated-five-shares-his-story>. Accessed 3 May. 2023.

Crenshaw, Kimberly et al., ed. by. *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed The Movement*. The New York Press, 1995.

"Critical Race Theory and Class." *StudyMoose*, 7 July 2022, <https://studymoose.com/critical-race-theory-and-class-essay>. Accessed 6 Feb. 2023.

“Critical Race Theory.” *Purdue Writing Lab*, owl.purdue.edu/owl/subject_specific_writing/writing_in_literature/literary_theory_and_schools_of_criticism/critical_race_theory.html. Accessed 03 march. 2023.

Cumberland. “What Are the 17 Symptoms of PTSD?” *Cumberland Heights*, 22 Sept. 2022, <https://www.cumberlandheights.org/blogs/17-symptoms-of-ptsd/>. Accessed 16 March. 2023.

Curry, Tommy. *Critical Race Theory*. 2009, pp. 166, 167.

Dabbagh Ghazvinia Sayid, Milad Khajehpoura, Mohammad Rahmania, Elham Memaria, “sublimation, as a technique for treatment” *Department of Psychology, Tehran’s Rudehen Azad University*, 1773854661, 13 March 2010.

“Defence Mechanism.” Scribd, www.scribd.com/document/326149091/Defence-Mechanism. Accessed 13 May. 2023.

Delgado, Richard, and Jean Stefancic. “Basic Tentes of Critical Race Theory.” *Critical Race Theory an Introduction*, New York University Press, New York, 2023, pp. 8–11.

Donaldson, Leigh. “When the Media Misrepresents Black Men, the Effects Are Felt in the Real World.” *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 12 Aug. 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/aug/12/media-misrepresents-black-men-effects-felt-real-world>. Accessed 24 March. 2023.

DuVernay, Ava. *When They See Us*. Netflix, 2019.

E. Ryan, Nancy. *Affirmation in Response to Motion to Vacate Judgment of Conviction*. *Supreme Court Of The State Of New York*, New York, pp. 3, 4, 5.

Fernandes, Marriska. “When They See Us a Powerful, Harrowing Series – Tv Review.” *Tribute.ca*, 6 Mar. 2019, <https://www.tribute.ca/news/when-they-see-us-a-powerful-harrowing-series-tv-review/2019/06/03/>. Accessed 09 March. 2023.

Finn, Heather. “Korey Wise's Story in 'When They See Us' Hit Viewers Especially Hard.” *Good Housekeeping*, 20 Sept. 2019, <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/entertainment/a27757516/korey-wise-central-park-five/>. Accessed 1 May. 2023.

Friedman, M.J. “PTSD History and Overview”. U.S. *Department of Veterans Affairs*. 2016, <https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/ptsd-overview/ptsd-overview.asp>. Accessed 15 March. 2023.

Friedman M.J. "Finalizing PTSD in DSM-5: getting here from there and where to go next". *Journal of Traumatic Stress*. October 2013, volume 26, 548–56. doi:10.1002/jts.21840. PMID 24151001.

Glen O ands Gabbard, *Long-Term Psychodynamic Psychotherapy*, London, 2010, p. 35.

Giliberti, Luca. “‘When They See Us' Is a Good BET to NAB Netflix's Inaugural Series Win at the Emmys.” *GoldDerby*, 30 May 2019, <https://www.goldderby.com/article/2019/when-they-see-us-emmy-predictions-limited-series-netflix-ava-duvernay/>. Accessed 07 March. 2023.

Harris, Aisha. “The Central Park Five: ‘We Were Just Baby Boys.’” *The New York Times*, 30 May 2019, www.nytimes.com/2019/05/30/arts/television/when-they-see-us.html. Accessed 2 May. 2023.

Heard-Garris, N.J., et al. “Transmitting Trauma: A Systematic Review of Vicarious Racism and Child Health.” *Social Science & Medicine*, vol. 199, 2018, pp. 230–240, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.04.018>.

Herman J. “Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror”. *Basic Books*. 2015, p. 9. ISBN 9780465098736, via Google Books.

Hirald, Payne. “The Role of Critical Race Theory in Higher Education”. *The Vermont Connection*, 2010, volume31, p 54-56.

Hogan, B. Derrick Bell’s dilemma: the interest convergence principle and racial realism. *Journal of African American Law and Policy*, 2019, <https://racism.org/index.php/en/articles/law-and-justice/citizenship-rights/116-slavery-to-reparations/racial-reentrenchment/2507-derrick-bell-s-dilemma-the>

Hunter, Margaret. “The Persistent Problem of Colorism: Skin Tone, Status, and Inequality.” *Sociology Compass*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2007, pp. 237–254., <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2007.00006.x>.

Innocence project, “Korey Wise.” *Innocence Project*, 12 May 2023, innocence project. <https://innocenceproject.org/cases/korey-wise/> Accessed 11 May. 2023.

- Jernigan, Maryam M., and Jessica Henderson Daniel. "Racial Trauma in the Lives of Black Children and Adolescents: Challenges and Clinical Implications." *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, vol. 4, no. 2, 2011, pp. 123–141, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19361521.2011.574678>.
- Johnson, Matthew B. "The Central Park Jogger Case-Police Coercion and Secrecy in Interrogation." *Journal of Ethnicity in Criminal Justice*, 2005, p. 6, doi:10.1300/J222v03n01_07.
- Joyner, Alfred. "How Central Park Five Victim Antron McCray Was Betrayed by His Father." *Newsweek*, 7 June 2019, www.newsweek.com/who-antron-mccray-central-park-five-victim-betrayed-father-when-they-see-us-1442746. Accessed 12 May. 2023.
- Kang, Mun; Douglas, Edward; Skweres, Mary Ann. "Gripping Editing in When They See Us." *Below the Line*, 21 June 2019, www.btlnews.com/crafts/gripping-editing-see-us/. Accessed 12 May. 2023.
- Kenny, Dianna T. A Brief History of Psychoanalysis: From Freud to Fantasy to Folly. *The University Of Sydney Australia*, 2016, Accessed 17 March. 2023.
- Kirkinis, Katherine, et al. "Racism, Racial Discrimination, and Trauma: A Systematic Review of the Social Science Literature." *Ethnicity & Health*, vol. 26, no. 3, 2018, pp. 392–412, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13557858.2018.1514453>.

- K, Neetha. “Emmys 2019: 'When They See Us' Poised to Win Big at This Year's Primetime Emmy Awards.” *MEAWW*, 9 Sept. 2019, <https://meaww.com/emmy-awards-2019-when-they-see-us-ava-duvernay-jharrel-jerome-outstanding-limited-series>. Accessed 07 March. 2023.
- Klupchak, Susan A. "Critical Race Theory : A Lens For Viewing Racism In American Education Policy And School Funding". *Smith College*, 2014.
- Klykylo W.M, Jerald Kay. “Clinical child psychiatry” (3 ed.). *Chichester, West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons*. 2012, chapter 15, ISBN 9781119967705, via Google Books.
- Kubzansky, L.D., Bordelois, P., Jun, H. J., Roberts, A. L., Cerda, M., Bluestone N., Koenen, K. C. “The Weight of Traumatic Stress: A Prospective Study of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Symptoms and Weight Status in Women”. *JAMA Psychiatry*, 2014, 44-51. doi:10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2013.2798.
- Lopez, German. “There Are Huge Racial Disparities in How US Police Use Force.” *Vox*, 13 Aug. 2016, <https://www.vox.com/identities/2016/8/13/17938186/police-shootings-killings-racism-racial-disparities>. Accessed 25 March. 2023.
- Mayo Clinic. “Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).” *Mayo Clinic*, Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 13 Dec. 2022, [https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967#:~:text=Post%2Dtraumatic%20stress%20disorder%20\(PTSD\)%20is%20a%20mental%20health,uncontrollable%20thoughts%20about%20the%20event](https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/post-traumatic-stress-disorder/symptoms-causes/syc-20355967#:~:text=Post%2Dtraumatic%20stress%20disorder%20(PTSD)%20is%20a%20mental%20health,uncontrollable%20thoughts%20about%20the%20event). Accessed 15 March. 2023.

- McFarlane A.C. “The long-term costs of traumatic stress: intertwined physical and psychological consequences”. *World Psychiatry*, volume 9 issue 1, 2010, 3-10. doi: 10.1002/j.2051-5545.2010.tb00254.x.
- Meili, Trisha. *I Am Central Park Jogger*. New York, Scribner, 2003.
- Meghji, Ali. “Critical Race Theory.” *GLOBAL SOCIAL THEORY*, 29 Oct. 2017, <https://globalsocialtheory.org/topics/critical-race-theory/>. Accessed 14 March. 2023.
- Minkyung Chung, MS. “Denial as a Defense Mechanism.” *Talkspace*, 19 Jan. 2023, <https://www.talkspace.com/blog/denial-coping-what-is/>. Accessed 13 May. 2023.
- Morgenthau, Robert. *Affirmation in Response to Motion to Vacate Judgment of Conviction. Supreme Court Of The State Of New York*, New York, pp. 3, 4, 5.
- Monson, C. M., Taft, C. T., & Fredman, S. J. “Military-related PTSD and intimate relationships: From description to theory-driven research and intervention development”. *Clinical psychology review*, 2009, 707-714. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2009.09.002>.
- Nadal, Kevin L., et al. “Challenging Definitions of Psychological Trauma: Connecting Racial Microaggressions and Traumatic Stress.” *Journal for Social Action in Counseling & Psychology*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2019, pp. 2–16, <https://doi.org/10.33043/jsacp.11.2.2-16>.
- Nussbaum, Emily. “How ‘When They See Us’ and ‘Chernobyl’ Make Us Look.” *The New Yorker*, 17 June 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/06/24/how-when-they-see-us-and-chernobyl-make-us->

[look#:~:text=The%20show%20portrays%20a%20racist,one%2C%20meant%20as%20a%20corrective.](#) Accessed 07 March. 2023.

Parker, Laurence, and Marvin Lynn. "What's Race Got to Do With It? Critical Race Theory's Conflicts With and Connections to Qualitative Research Methodology and Epistemology." *Sage Publications*, vol. 8, 2002. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/107780040200800102>. Accessed 14 March. 2023.

Peffley, M., Hurwitz, J., & Sniderman, P. "Racial stereotypes and whites' political views of blacks in the context of welfare and crime". *American Journal of Political Science*.1997, p30.

Perry, J. C. *Defense mechanism rating scales: Manual* (5th ed.). Boston: Cambridge University. 1990.

Prentice, Robert. Case Study – The Central Park Five. The University Of Texas At Austin, *Mccombs School Of Business*, 2022, Accessed 10 March 2023.

"Race-Based Traumatic Stress." ABCT - *Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies*, 14 July 2021, www.abct.org/fact-sheets/race-based-traumatic-stress. Accessed 18 March. 2023.

Ransome, Noal. "Don't Call Them the 'Central Park Five'." *VICE*, 4 June 2019, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/qv7ek7/netflixs-when-they-see-us-emphasizes-the-humanity-of-the-central-park-five>. Accessed 07 March. 2023.

Remer, Abby. *The Central Park Five: Study Guide*. Brooklyn Academy Of Music, 2014, pp. 5, 7.

Rollock, Nicola, and David Gillborn. Critical Race Theory (CRT). *British Educational Research Association Online Resource*, 2011, p. 2, Accessed 14 March. 2023.

Rorke, Robert. "When They See Us' Does Justice to Central Park Five's Brutal Story." New York Post, New York Post, 3 June 2019, <https://nypost.com/2019/05/31/when-they-see-us-does-justice-to-central-park-fives-brutal-story/>. Accessed on 07 march 2023.

Rosen, J., & Fields, R. "The Long-Term Effects of Extraordinary Trauma: A Look Beyond PTSD". *Journal of Anxiety Disorders*. 1988, 179. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0887-6185\(88\)90024-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0887-6185(88)90024-2).

Sajid, Imran Ahmad. Assignment On History Of Psychoanalysis. Submitted To Dr. Rahat Sajjad *Department Of Psychology*, 2009.

Saker, Chaima. *Unveiling Institutional Racism, Trauma, and Hope in Ibi Zoboi and Yusef Salaam's Punching the Air*. Mohamed Khider University of Biskra.

Satchel, Roslyn M. *What Movies Teach about Race: Exceptionalism, Erasure, and Entitlement*. Lexington Books, 2017.

Sibi, K J. Sigmund Freud and Psychoanalytic Theory. Shivprasad Sadanand Jaiswal College, 2020.

Sorayamcdonald, Nadia. "In 'When They See Us,' Ava DuVernay Shows the Horrors That Swallowed the Central Park Five." *Andscape*, *Andscape*, 31 May 2019, <https://andscape.com/features/when-they-see-us-ava-duvernay-netflix-central-park-five/>. Accessed 07 March. 2023.

Spangler, Todd. "Netflix Says 'When They See Us' Has Been Most-Watched Show in U.S. since Premiere." *Variety*, *Variety*, 14 June 2019, <https://variety.com/2019/digital/news/netflix-when-they-see-us-most-watched-show-premiere-1203241480/>. Accessed 07 March. 2023.

Strand, C.C. "Linda Fairstein, Central Park 5 Prosecutor: Where Is She Now?" *Heavy.com*, *Heavy*, 1 June 2019, <https://heavy.com/news/2019/05/linda-fairstein-where-now-today/>. Accessed 5 April. 2023.

Stratton, Greg. "Transforming the Central Park Jogger into the Central Park Five: Shifting Narratives of Innocence and Changing Media Discourse in the Attack on the Central Park Jogger, 1989–2014." *Sage Publications*, vol. 11, 2015, Sage, doi:10.1177/1741659015592794.

Stovall, David Omotoso. *Born Out Of Struggle*. State University of New York Press, Albany, 2016.

"Sublimation." *Psychology Today*, Sussex Publishers, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/sublimation>. Accessed 14 May. 2023.

"The Definitive Guide on Post Incarceration Syndrome (PICS)." *National Incarceration Association*, 11 Jan. 2023, [https://joinnia.com/post-incarceration-syndrome/#:~:text=Post%2Dincarceration%20syndrome%20\(PICS\),a%20result%20of%20being%20imprisoned](https://joinnia.com/post-incarceration-syndrome/#:~:text=Post%2Dincarceration%20syndrome%20(PICS),a%20result%20of%20being%20imprisoned). Accessed 16 March. 2023.

The New Yorker, Yusef Salaam on Life After Being Exonerated from the Central Park Jogger Case, 2019, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/yusef-salaam-on-life-after-being-exonerated-from-the-central-park-jogger-case>. Accessed 6 May. 2023.

Waters, John. “After War: A Conversation with Author Nancy Sherman.” *RealClear Defense*, 4 June 2015, https://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2015/06/05/after_war_an_interview_with_auth_or_nancy_sherman_108023.html#. Accessed in 16 March. 2023.

Williams, Janice. “Jharell Jerome Talks Playing Korey Wise for ‘when They See Us’ on Netflix.” *Newsweek*, 29 May 2019, www.newsweek.com/when-they-see-us-netflix-jharrel-jerome-interview-1437473. Accessed 5 May. 2023.

Zhang, Songyang. *Atlantis Press SARL*, vol 433, 2020. *Advances In Social Science, Education And Humanities Research*, Accessed 17 March. 2023.

المخلص

تعتبر سلسلة أفلام نتفليكس المصغرة التي أخرجت من طرف آفا دوفيرناي "عندما يروننا" قصة حقيقة حدثت في 1989 في منتزه نيويورك المركزي. حيث وجدت العداة تريشا مايلي ملقاة على الأرض تصارع الموت بعد تعرضها لهجوم وحشي. كان كيفن ريتشاردسون، كوري وايز، رايموند سانتانا جونيور، أنترون ماكراي ويوسف سلام من المشتبهين فيهم الرسميين. المراقبين الخمسة ينحدرون من جنسيات أفريقية أمريكية ولاتينية حيث كانت تتراوح أعمارهم بين الرابعة عشر إلى السادسة عشر عاماً أين تركوا بين أيدي العدالة الأمريكية ليعيشوا التجربة الأكثر رعباً في حياتهم جراء جريمة لم يرتكبونها قط. الهدف من هذه الأطروحة هو استكشاف فيلم آفا دوفيرناي *When They See Us* والتحيز العرقي لنظام العدالة في أمريكا ضد الأشخاص الملونين وكيف أثر هذا الانحياز على حياتهم الشخصية والنفسية. المنهجية التطبيقية تعتمد على نظرية العرق النقدي، نظرية الإجهاد الرديج القائم على العرق، اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة، متلازمة ما بعد السجن، وآليات الدفاع الخاصة بفرويد. تعتمد هذه الأطروحة على تحليل تجارب سنترال بارك فايف من حيث صلتها بالعنصرية وعدم المساواة في العدالة، وكيف تؤدي العنصرية والعدوان الدقيق والتحيز العرقي إلى المعاملة الوحشية المتحيزة ضد الأشخاص الملونين من قبل نظام العدالة الأمريكي. تسعى كذلك هذه الدراسة إلى فهم العلاقة والرابط بين الصدمة والعنصرية وكيف خربت تجربة المراهقون الخمس حياتهم وعلاقاتهم وتركتهم تحت تأثير الصدمة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأشخاص الملونين، سنترال بارك فايف، العنصرية، الصدمة، الصدمة العرقية.