



# On the Art Aesthetics of the Parasite in Movies

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**Abstract:** In 2019, the famous Korean film *Parasite*, with its realistic scenes of low-level families living in the semi-basement of Seoul, the actors' distortion of human nature in thinking and behaviour caused by class contradictions and being limited by the social structure. Deeply portrayed by itself, coupled with an excellent script that cleverly blends dark humour and suspenseful thriller, it became one of the year's biggest hits, and it's a big hit at the 2020 Oscars. The film *Parasite* combines diversified artistic techniques with commercial film models, showing profound themes and whole picture language, and satirizes and criticizes the current social issues such as the gap between the rich and the poor in South Korea. The film uses dark humorous satire and a thrilling storyline to present the gap between the rich and the poor in Korean society and the cruel reality that the underclass is insurmountable. The space planning, colour application and poster design style of the film are unique. It uses various representational elements and layouts in the image to interpret the film's content. It highlights the deep social meaning revealed by the film and the theme expressed by the film, which not only gives the audience a solid visual shock, And arouses people's strong interest in the content of the film so that the audience can understand the profound connotation of the film more comprehensively.

**Keywords:** Parasite, Space, Colours

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## 1. Introduction

The movie *Parasite* is a 2019 Korean black humour thriller drama [1]. *Parasite* tells a vagrant family how to do everything possible to share the living resources of the upper class, and then the situation is gradually out of control due to unlimited desires. In the movie, to get rid of the poor living environment of the lower class, Kim's family used various means to sneak into the scene of the Park's family, which shocked our imagination of the over-beautification of South Korea. Director Bong Joon-ho emphasized: "No one wants to be a parasite. I want to put the pain we suffer in the capitalist world into the movie." [2]. Therefore, through this movie, the director deeply explores the sorrow and frustration at the bottom of society. At the same time, let the interaction of the two classes criticize the disparity between the rich and the poor in today Korean society phenomenon.

## 2. Film Space Planning

*Parasite* explores the disparity between the rich and the

poor and the social reality of the lower class being unable to reach the upper class. The film strongly reflects the use of film space. Three distinct living spaces are presented in the movie. They are the mansion of a detached house where Park Dong-ik lives, the secret room where the housekeeper for the Park family of the mansion basement hides her husband, and the semi-basement of a family of four living by Kim Ki-taek. The three different living spaces reflect the living environment of different classes and symbolize the mobility of classes.

The semi-basement where the Kim Ki-taek family lives portray the living environment at the grassroots level in South Korea. In the eyes of Koreans, the Gangnam and Yongsan districts of Seoul have always been the residences of the wealthy. In many Korean dramas and movies, most poor people live in semi-basement like *Parasites* or simple huts in the middle of the mountain [3]. It was different from the Hong Kong people's location concept. Mid-levels are mostly not noble in Seoul because of the inconvenient geographical location of mid-levels. The old public facilities are also regarded as a hidden danger to general security. The semi-basement is a unique landscape in the Korean

residential market, and its curiosity is no different from the nano-buildings currently popular in Hong Kong. In the film, half of the semi-basement where the Kim Ki-taek family lives is still half above the ground, and sunlight can still be seen, and it may not be completely dark and claustrophobic. The location of the semi-basement is between the ground, and the underground is a metaphor for the sandwich base in it. On the one hand, the occupants are fortunate that they can still see the sun, but at the same time, they are worried that it will continue to flow downwards and can only live in the basement. Therefore, the semi-basement also becomes a transitional space where hope and fear are mixed.

As for the magnificent mansion where Park's family lives, the layout and furnishings are very realistic, and it is difficult for the audience to find out that it was built by the set. The movie launched a black version earlier. The black and white version allows the audience to focus on the actor's expression and eyes more than the colour version. The light and shade of the screen also strengthen the difference between the mansion of Park's family and the semi-basement of Kim Ki-taek in the film. The sunlight reflected on the floor-to-ceiling glass windows in the mansion forms a stronger contrast with the semi-basement of Kim's family and the darkness of the secret basement of the mansion without the sky.

The Kim family assaulted Park's family apartment as an intruder. The upper-class life and gorgeous homes seemed a utopia, but the supreme ideal life and living space seemed more like Michel Foucault said heterotopia. One of the characteristics of heterogeneous space is that it can oppose the subject [4]. The members of Kim's family moved into the mansions one after another. Their initial desire only sought a stable job and fixed income when greed spread, leading to an irreversible tragic ending. Kim Ki-taek's jealousy of Park and his hidden desire to possess Park's wife are evident. The scene of Kim Ki-taek stabbing Park's wife to death happened at the birthday party of Park's son. The theme of the birthday party simulates the American Indian human resources against the invasion of white colonists. Kim Ki-taek is asked to play the role of an exploited and suppressed Indian, but in reality, he is an intruder of Park's family. The history of the Indians is reproduced in the form of games in the space of the mansion garden, triggering the resentment and hostility that Kim Ki-taek has buried for a long time. The birthday party with historical characters dressed up as the theme presents historical time and space in fragments, conforming to Foucault's definition of heterogeneous space and becoming a very provocative scene in the film.

In addition, The parasite uses a metaphorical picture space to gradually form the overall hypothetical structure of the film, presenting a thought-provoking fable of social class contradictions. Confined spaces are metaphors for social conditions. Because of investment failure and debt, Kim Ki-taek has to live in a semi-basement with a harsh environment. In addition to the two large spaces of the semi-basement and the mansion in the movie, the basement where the former housekeeper hides her husband also plays a critical dramatic effect. The husband of the former housekeeper became a

victim of the wave of layoffs in South Korean companies. The middle-aged job difficulties caused him to live in the mansion of Park's family apartment. Having been confined in a confined space for a long time, he has been confused and mentally distorted. The mansion and its confined space are a familiar setting for creating an atmosphere in Korean movies. It can be seen that, in addition to creating a weird atmosphere, the gloomy mansions in Korean movies are primarily symbols of social collapse and filth. What an individual's dwelling place reflects is the collective space of society. The private living space has become a symbol and metaphor for society.

### 3. The Use of Colours in Movies

Film colour, as one of the critical visual languages since the birth of colour film, has no direct transmission of lens language, but it profoundly affects the narrative, expression and sublimation of cinema [5]. As a kind of implicit language in movies, colour can largely infect the audience in various ways, such as emotional influence and perception penetration [6]. The use of colours in Parasite is very sophisticated. It not only combines colour and light in a highly rational and cautious manner to form a film picture, but also uses colour as a mighty pen for the film to reflect class, creates emotions, and supplement the content of the picture, thereby promoting colour. Become an essential factor in the promotion of the plot and the expression of the theme.

In the film Parasite, three physical spaces are presented: the villa space of Park's house, the semi-basement space of the protagonist Kim Ki-taek's house, and the basement space of Wenguang's house. In the villa space of Park's house, the colour of the movie screen is mainly black, white and grey, matching the large area of green lawn and blue sky in the villa courtyard. In the semi-basement space of Kim Jizawa's house, the main display is pure colours with high saturation such as red, green and blue attached to the various stacked objects in the crowded room. And the basement space under the villa has three different spatial environments to form three utterly different colour tones, thus metaphors three different classes: with an immense sky and sunshine, an inch of green lawn, and emphasizing the sense of modern home design and The unity of colour forms an orderly, rational and regular above-ground villas for the upper-class rich; only one side of the home is connected to the ground. There are bright windows on the ground. The chaotic and sensual semi-basement made up of highly saturated colours is a metaphor for the lower-level class. The dark basement with dark green and cool tones under low illumination is the bottommost marginal class. At the same time, the colour brightness of the three different space pictures gradually decreases from the ground to the underground, and the natural light gradually disappears as the space continues to sink.

The colour difference of the three spaces presented in the movie Parasite is not only a simple representation of the colour changes in the real physical space environment but more importantly, through the clever use of the unique code

of colour language, To metaphor the difference between the classes of the characters in the film. The film alludes to the complicated initially and ambiguous relationship between the three classes in the spatial colour to achieve a thought-provoking and intriguing meaning and artistic conception.

Whether in movies or real life, the colours that people perceive will have a certain degree of influence on people's mental state and mood. Psychological colour emotion is derived from a kind of innate cognitive colour of nature. Once people see the same psychological colour as nature's colour-related cognition, they will naturally associate directly with nature's mental colour-related emotions experience [7]. For example, blood-like red often brings people emotional experiences such as stimulation, enthusiasm, and strength [8]. At the same time, grassland-like green often gives people emotional experiences such as freshness, refreshing, and vitality.

In the movie *Parasite*, the excessive use of colours continuously strengthens visual emotions and promotes the generation and change of perceptual emotions [9]. As a tutor, Kim Ki-woo counselled her employer's daughter Park Da-hye in her homework. Due to the two people's feelings continuing to rise, when Kim Ki-woo held a pen and grabbed Park Da-hye's wrist, people needed to establish a love relationship formally. At this time, the pink pencil in Kim Ki-woo's hand, Park Da-hye's pale red lips and the pink skin of the two people in the picture together create a sweet and romantic colour tone. Pink and red are filled with the sweet emotions between the two people created by the screen, which echoes the surging excitement that Da-hye hides in her heart for Kim Ki-woo's affection that is positively responded to by the other party. In the latter part of the film, the daughter of the Kim family was assassinated. Before the assassination, Kim Ki-zeek, from covering his daughter's injured chest to the knife that stabbed her daughter fell on the lawn of President Park's house. The whole segment mainly uses pure red blood and turquoise grass as the primary colours of the largest screen area. When pure red and turquoise are combined to form a highly attractive, it includes the most specific and prominent visual stimulus, guiding the audience to turn their emotions to fire, spicy, angry and shocking. It paved the way for the feelings caused by the vision to assassinate Park Dong-ik by Kim Ki-taek. Through the study of colour psychology, the film fully grasps the influence of colour on the audience's emotions and emotions. Regarding colour as an essential factor in the expression of audiovisual film language, it is also used to create an atmosphere to render the atmosphere and guide the emotional and emotional changes of the film characters. While enriching the meaning of the film lens language, it can also form an excellent emotional expression with the audience and Interaction.

#### 4. Metaphorical Rhetoric of Movie Posters

The movie parasite uses images to stack up the class divide.

The upper-class and lower-class families are not only a parasitic dependence but also an antagonistic conflict. The movie poster uses the contrast of mirror images, the warm and cold colours, the association of hue, the brightness of light and shadow, the clarity of the picture, the mosaic technique of news. These hidden metaphors portray the difference between the rich and the poor and the tragedy caused by the inevitable greed of human nature.

The background of the Korean version of the poster is the courtyard of the Park's family. Kim's family in the lower class also appeared in it, indicating that the main axis of the story took place in this upper-class family. The glass windows reflect the favourite Indian tent of the Park's youngest son, Da-song. This conflicting and unusual thing has its special meaning. Based on the various frictions caused by differences and misunderstandings between races, whites mostly think Indians are bloodthirsty barbarians bent on murder, scalping and plunder [10]. After the defeat of the Indians, the concept of "whiskey Indians" emerged. Whites think of Indians as the survivors of destruction and poverty and regard them as a weak and insulting nation [10]. In the future, movies, TV, and serial comics gave them a deep-rooted and stereotyped impression [10]. As a result, there are many misunderstandings of Indians around the world. Therefore, Indians symbolize the slaughtered, plundered and oppressed. This absurd appearance and contrast imply that Da-song 's dissatisfaction with the original family and his desire to return to freedom and unrestrainedness is indicated.

On the other hand, it also reveals that the plot will be surrounded by plundering and the oppositional relationship between high and low status. In addition, the Park's family sees Indian culture as a children's game, which means that perhaps the upper class does not take predation and oppression as a matter at all, but only as a kind of fun entertainment. In addition, the viewing stone held by Kim's son Ki-Woo is a symbol that runs through the drama. It is not only a metaphor for "pressure from the upper class" but also "a ticket to enter the upper class" [11]. It is also a transfer of power. Holding it on represents Ki-Woo love for the upper-class family and power.

In terms of colour, the Park couple holding a red wine glass and white legs at the bottom left, using the bloodless legs to contrast with red wine-like blood, revealing that death will occur in the drama. Another contrasting use of colours is clothing and blindfolded rectangular colour blocks. The horizontal bars in the eyes of the two families are distinguished by colour: the bottom family is black, and the wealthy family is white. The upper class seems more precious and sound, and the bottom society is darker and despicable—this naked symbol of the difference in style. The way to cover the eyes is to imitate the media's usual tactics, that is, the mosaics made by news reports to protect the victims [12]. The blinded eyes hide their secrets like ulterior motives and are also a metaphor for the upper-class families being deceived and infiltrated. Are they victims? However, the poverty of lower-level families is caused by the tilted social structure. Are they also victims? It seems complicated

to tell which is right and wrong, which is upper and lower. The slogan on the poster is "Happiness, shouldn't it be the more you share, the more?" It directly exposes the greed of human nature. In the play, after the Kim family tasted the sweetness of being the upper class, their desires were so high that they were out of control. And selfishly only want others to share happiness, but don't want to share the joy with people outside their own home. The slogan fits the main plot and can add the finishing touch to the entire poster and point to the people's hearts.

The poster of the international version is overall design adopts Chinese ink painting style, ethereal and elegant, full of artistic conception. Movie posters centred on rockery as the "viewing stone". The crumbs of the peach skin are the allergen of the Moon-gwang housekeeper in the play. The Kim family used the peaches to create an illusion to make Mrs Park misunderstand and drive away from the housekeeper. The beauties are also metaphorically referred to as "forbidden fruit" in the film [13]. Dreamy sexual symbolism, the daughter of the Park family, Da-hye, said that eating peaches should not be forbidden at home until she liked Kim Ki-woo and wanted to taste the forbidden fruit. This became the source of fantasy for the Kim family to enjoy unscrupulously in the host's mansion.

In addition, the water under the stone bears the image of families living in the semi-basement on the ground floor, which will be flooded every time it rains. The "Illusive Reflection" version uses the rhetorical technique of contrast, which can be seen in the upper half of the stone. Ministry, standing on the stone mountain, is the poor Kim family. Standing on the boat is the wealthy Park family. Still, the reflection in the water is that the two families exchange positions, the picture of flowers in a mirror and the moon's reflection in water looks exquisite. Maybe it's just a perfect phantom. It implies that the identity of the Kim family is a bubble that will be disguised and will eventually burst. It seems to insinuate the two worlds on the ground and underground. There is an interdependent relationship between the rich and the poor classes, and it is difficult to distinguish the natural parasite. The "Uncontainable Desire" version is known as the dark version of the poster. The poster slogan "uncontainable desire" matches the viewing stone with red lava spewing out. The symbolic peach, which strongly presents the desire of greed, behind the rock The wall is like the hidden and gloomy basement of the Park family, exuding a mysterious atmosphere [14]. The international version of the poster uses a symbolic design and uses black and grey to abstractly associate death, terror, crime, sorrow and powerlessness [1]. It faithfully presents a situation where desire controls the human heart and feels sad and powerless towards class differences. It creates an atmosphere of horror and weirdness.

As a media symbol for conveying information, the visual design of movie posters is not limited to what is seen on the surface. The creators use poster slogans, colours and other methods to hide meaning. Both in the plot and the posters of the movie Parasite images are used to stack up the class

divide. The upper class and the lower-class families are parasitic dependence and opposite conflict relations, describe the difference between the rich and the poor, and the tragedy caused by the overwhelming greed in human nature.

## 5. Conclusion

In conclusion, this article analyzes various artistic expression methods of space, colour and posters, and presents the diversity, hierarchy, the symbolic and aesthetic value of the film's breadth and depth. The movie Parasite uses a diversified artistic approach to show diversified themes to satirize Korean social reality and ideological issues. The film also sparked discussions in the international community about the liberal ideological ruling policy of high housing prices, low wages, and low welfare in a competitive society in Asia. It sparked many discussions about the possibility of class mobility from the perspective of industrial economic ecology and social resource allocation policies.

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