

A Portrayed of Social Class In Korean Movie "Parasite" Directed By Bong Joon-ho

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Abstract

Literature is a work created in the form of imaginative fiction which is the existence can be useful for other things. This study explore how the film Parasite, directed by Using qualitative analysis, the research examines key scenes about disparities in areas like living conditions, food, clothing, and even smell, revealing the effects of economic inequality on everyday life and relationships. Bong Joon-ho, portrays social class differences through the lives of two families—the wealthy Parks and the struggling Kims. Through these scenes, Parasite shows the complexities of class structures and how they shape people's perceptions and interactions. The study offers insights into how films like Parasite can help viewers understand social issues, contributing to educational discussions on class and society. This analysis, in turn, supports English education by using film as a way to explore and discuss themes of inequality, making it a valuable resource for understanding social dynamics in both academic and cultural situation.

Keywords: Discourse Analysis, Film; Parasite; Social class; Socioeconomic Inequality.

1.Introduction)

People in society are various groups with a range of personalities. It's common for the differences to be related to income and education as well as religion, gender, race, and age. These distinctions can cause obstacles for those who wish to participate in social activities. Socialization is a system of customs and practices, authority and cooperation, various social groups and divisions of human conduct, and individual liberty (Putney, N. M., & Bengtson, V. L., 2002). This intricate, dynamic system we refer to as society. It is the network of interpersonal connections. While some of these distinctions will surface in day-to-day social interactions, socioeconomic class remains the primary social divide.

Social class as a group of people in a society who have the same socioeconomic status. Social classes are groups of people with comparable social status who see each other as social equals (Kurer, T., 2020). Different from the other classes, each class has its own set of values, attitudes, beliefs, and behavioral norms. Social standing is typically classified into social class groups according to a hierarchy that goes from low to high (Cheng, J. T., 2020). As a result, people in particular social classes would believe that people in other social classes are either more or less socially significant than they are.

Social class is one of the most interesting and important issues that exist in society. There are many problems related to it- crime, poverty, ill health, mental disorder, and political unrest. The topic of social class has a great intrinsic and even entertainment value (Shahid, S., & Paul, J., 2021), as is shown by the numerous TV programmes, movies, novels, and jokes on this theme (Argyle M, 1994). However, the problems that occur in life is sometimes the readers find it difficult to understand the plot or the main point of the movie (Hestiana, M., & Anita, A., 2022). Because the plot usually has a complex meaning of utterances. They also use certain scenes and cinematography within it and what conventionally appears is not always same as intended to express.

Studying literature is one way to get around the aforementioned issue in the sphere of education. A work of creative fiction that has the potential to be beneficial for other purposes is called literature. Literature comes in numerous forms, including books, poetry, songs, and films (Wolf, W., 2020). A producer controls and creates the sequence of scenes that make up a film. The film industry has evolved from black and white to using computer-generated imagery (CGI) a long time ago. Filmmakers create movies for a variety of reasons, including entertainment, education, documentaries, biographies, and even just telling a story—whether it be a true or fictional one. A lot of individuals use movies as a way to escape from reality.

Film can determine people's opinions about some topic that discussed in the film. It can change not only opinion, but also people's perspectives toward something (Kubrak, T., 2020). Because the film aims to influence a message of something and it depends on how the audience responds either negatively or positively. Film is universal and it make sense why every people who watched it has a different point of view, what people watched and thought about the film is not necessarily the same as other people. Sometimes the details that other people would notice might be different or not. The film makes to encourage and build more awareness of some aspects such as education issues, social picture, criminal activities, public issues, and many more according to the topic or genre.

Horror, comedy, romance, action, drama, dark comedy, documentaries, science fiction, music, and fantasy are just a few of the different types of films. The film *Parasite* is classified as a dark comedy. In an attempt to depict the actual emotions, interpersonal interactions, and social circumstances of life, films in this genre usually avoid too dramatic, fictional, or highly artistic elements (Noviana, D. A., & Simanjuntak, M. B. 2022). The genre of this film is crucial to its exploration of societal issues, cultural reflection, and human nature.

The ideal condition of this study is social class are found in TV or film, in fact Social Class also happened in humans real-life. In reality, people in everyday life always intersect with social caste or social class. The Experience of Economic Inequality in Everyday Life, they quoted from Michael Hout that there are four categories of social classes which are; lower class, working class, middle class and upper class (Kraus, 2017). The example of film about social class is *Parasite* Film.

Parasite (2019), a South Korean black comedy thriller directed by Bong Joon-ho and co-written with Han Jin-won, follows a poor family infiltrating the lives of a wealthy household. Inspired by the 1960 Korean film *The Housemaid* and a real-life 1930s incident, Bong developed the idea from a play he wrote in 2013 into a multi-draft screenplay. With its premiere at the 2019 Cannes Film Festival, *Parasite* became the first Korean film to win the Palme d'Or. Acclaimed for its direction, screenplay, editing, and performances, the film grossed \$262 million globally on an \$11.4 million budget. It achieved unprecedented success at the 92nd Academy Awards, winning Best Picture—making it the first non-English-language film to do so—along with awards for Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, and Best International Feature Film. This film will be researcher analyze.

There are some studies which have done by previous researchers. First, entitled Gea Mutiara (2022) "Class Conflict in *Parasite* Film using Marxist Criticism" Both discuss the film *Parasite*, but this article discusses the conflict in the story. The second review related to this study is Aribam Bishwajit Sharma (2022) Representation Of Social Issues In *Parasite*: A Critical Discourse Analysis. The third review that related to this study is Diva Anjani, Fajar Junaedi (2021) in The Social Class Representation in the Heidi Film: Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis. The fourth review is Tita Nur Fitria (2021) Representation of Symbols in "Parasite" movie. The fifth review related to this study is Thias Apriliani (2022) The Social Class Differences Reflected On People's Lives In The *Snowpiercer* Movie By Bong Joon Ho (Marxist Theory Analysis).

The similarities between these journals are the same as researching social issues, the first journal entitled Gea Mutiara (2022) "Class Conflict in *Parasite* Film using Marxist Critism" are discuss the class conflict in *Parasite* Film. The second journal is Aribam Bishwajit Sharma (2022) Representation of Social Issues in *Parasite*: A Critical Discourse Analysis are discussed about the social issues of *Parasite* movie. The third journal is Diva Anjani, Fajar Junaedi (2021) in The Social Class Representation in the Heidi Film: Roland Barthes Semiotic Analysis, which discusses Social Class Representation. The fourth journal is Tita Nur Fitria (2021)

Representation of Symbols in "Parasite" movie, which discusses the same title of movie "Parasite". The fifth journal is Thias Apriliani (2022) The Social Class Differences Reflected on People's Lives In The *Snowpiercer* Movie By Bong Joon Ho (Marxist Theory Analysis), which also discusses social class representation. From the previous research, this journal research examines social class in the *Parasite* Film not only about the social inequality, this journal research also uses content analysis.

The differences between these journals are the analysis theory and the title of the movie that uses. The first research is discussed about the class conflict in *Parasite* Film but uses "Marxist Critism" analysis theory, The second research is Representation of Social Issues in *Parasite*, but uses A Critical Discourse Analysis, meanwhile despite that previous research the author uses the content analysis theory. The third research is discussed about the social class Representation from Heidi Film, the difference with the author's research is the title of the movie that uses. The fourth research is Representation of Symbols in *Parasite* movie, the difference from the author's research is the title of the research, this fourth research discuss about the symbols that exist in *Parasite* movie, meanwhile the author of this study discusses about the social class that portrayed in *Parasite* movie. The fifth research is the social class differences reflected on People's Lives in The *Snowpiercer* Movie By Bong Joon Ho, the difference is the title of the research and the title of the movie. The fifth previous research is discussing the social class from The *Snowpiercer* Movie, meanwhile the author is discussing the social class that portrayed in *Parasite* Movie.

The aims of this study are to find out the literary review of the Korean movie *Parasite*, specifically The Portrayed of Social Class of the literary review. The study is expected to give a contribution in the academic field, especially in English Education field. on social class discourse analysis in movie, since movies are learned for general at each level, from junior to high schools, and college

Therefore, different from those previous studies, this current study would be focusing on social class analysis in Korean Movie “Parasite” by Bong Joon-ho very interesting and has a good plot-twist in the story, which makes the writer more interested in this movie and write the study “A Portrayed of Social Class in Korean Movie “Parasite” Directed by Bong Joon-ho”.

2. Method

The study employed a qualitative methodology, with data sources that are not numerical but rather verbal and visual. Interviews, field notes, photographs, video recordings, personal records, memos, and other documents were used to gather these data (Moleong, 2017). The researcher applied several steps to collect the data. Firstly, the researcher watched the Korean Film “Parasite” Directed by Bong Joon Ho around six times to find out the social class portrayed in the movie. The researcher used Viu to watched the movie. Secondly, the researcher finds several scenes to understand the topic. In this step, the researcher used discourse analysis to analyze the movie. Thirdly, the researcher watched the movie while discuss the social class issues that appears in the movie. This step was undertaken to ensure the scenes synchronized with the movie. Fourthly, the researcher observed the scenes and classified them into the correct “social class” representation. Lastly, the researcher analyzes the film.

3. Findings and Discussion

Finding

Parasite movie is a South Korean movie that admitted as Oscar Global Winner in 2019. The movie is about social class representation of two different families. This movie showed the different social status between The Rich and The Poor, which is Park’s Family (The Rich) and Kim’s family (The Poor). Park Dong Ik is determined as a rich business man who lives happily with his own family. He has a beautiful wife named Choi Yeon-Gyeo and two children, the first daughter named Da Hye and a lovely son named Da Song. Choi Yeon-Gyeo always looks stunning with her luxury dress, clothes, and her gorgeous make up. She always looks elegant and classy. The Park Family have luxury cars. Not only cars, they have a big 21st luxury house with a huge backyard. They also have a housemaid named Gook Moon-gwang and a private driver named Park Keun-rok who always accompany whenever Mr. or Mrs. Park goes. Thus, from this explanation the writers can determined that this family is from upper class. Since their family represents a high and good quality of life.

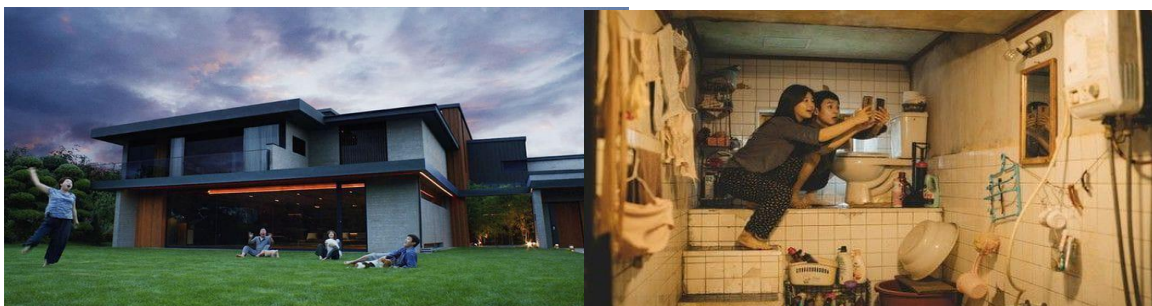
The second family is Kim family. Kim Ki Taek lives with his wife named Choe Yeon Gyeo and two children named Ki Woo or Kevin and Ki Jung or Jessica. They live in a halfway underground home named ‘Bajinha’. They don’t have any luxury things like cars, clothes, jobs, and house. The writers can state that this family is from a poor family or lower class. Since their house always flooded. Ms. Kim folded a box of pizza to earn money for their own family. It seems like they don't like to work hard. They always want to get something free.

Discussion

Parasite depicts the story of the rich and the poor in a way that is distinct from many other movies in the same genre. The cliches of the rich and the poor appear in many movies. The poor, who are kind and hopeful, are oppressed by the rich. However, there aren't any characters in the movie who are only nice or bad. The rich Park family and the poor Kim family, who depend on the park family for work, are the two families at the heart of the stories. The next parts will look at how Parasite's story emphasizes the wealth gap between the rich and the poor.

The House

The first example of the social gap that represents in Parasite is from the house differences between two families. A window in the Kim family's semi basement appears in the first scene of the film. This image depicts a filthy and messy semi-basement and conveys a sense of decadence and decay through the worn iron railings outside the window, stains on the window, and socks in the foreground. In the impoverished region, a cleaner applies insecticide during the day. An inebriated man urinates and vomits in front of this window at night. Kim Ki-taek calmly peers outside the basement window like a prisoner stuck in a jail when the proprietor of the pizza store wants to reduce their rewards since the Kim family has folded a large number of unqualified pizza boxes.

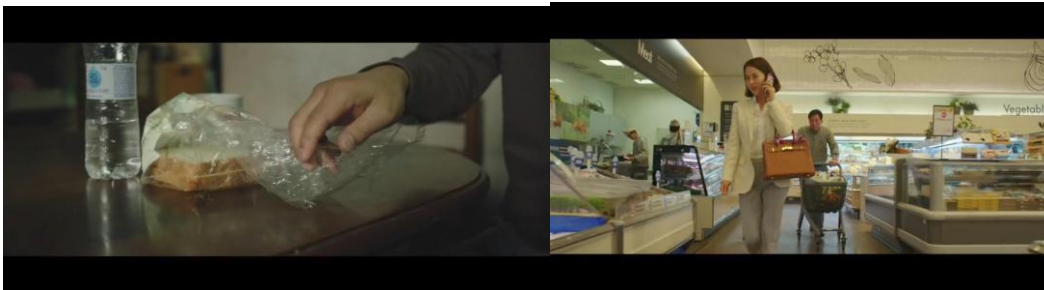


Picture 1: The house differences portrayed between Park family house and Kim Family house

Park family, on the other hand, has a bright, roomy single-family residence with an own courtyard. The house's first owner and constructor, renowned designer Nangong Hyunza, sells it to the Park family. Ki-woo feels as though he is in heaven when he first walks into the Parks' home to tutor their daughter in English. Since Mr. Park is a businessman, it should be obvious that this family has a large income given their fancy clothes, cars, and house. They even employ individuals to take care of the house and drive the family members about.

The Food

The second example of social gap between these families are the foods that they eat. The eating scene is used frequently in the film to illustrate the disparity in food as a means of illustrating the wealth divide between the rich and the poor. In the movie's opening scene, Kim Ki-taek, the father of the Kim family, is seen cautiously pulling out a bag containing just two slices of bread, illustrating the difficult life the family leads. The Kim family then folds the pizza boxes to obtain a modest recompense. The Kim family's four members gather around the table to enjoy snacks and beer. The Kim family visits the driver's cafeteria for a banquet after landing a job with the Park family. They visit the pizzeria to get pizza as well. The Kim family's better quality of living is evident in the cuisine.

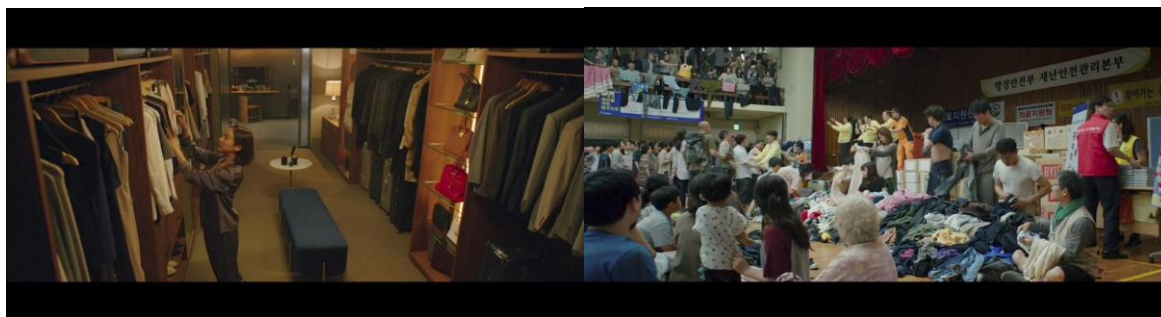


Picture 2: The Kim family's better quality of living is evident in the cuisine

Meanwhile, compared to Park family, it shows that this family usually shops for groceries at fancy supermarkets. Even, Park's three pet dogs each receive distinct premium dog chow, and Mrs. Park exclusively purchases food from an upscale organic grocer. This paradoxically demonstrates that the food consumed by the underprivileged is inferior to that of the rich people's pets.

The Clothes / The Wardrobe

The third example that portrayed social class in this movie is the clothes or the wardrobe between these two families. The scene in 1:42:30 shows that Park family has a private wardrobe or walk-in closet in their house. Most rich families have a private wardrobe or walk-in closet in their house. Also, in 1:42:34 give a scene when Mrs. Park picks one of her luxury clothes to wear from the wardrobe. It shows that the wardrobe has a lot of expensive and branded clothes that are neatly arranged in it.

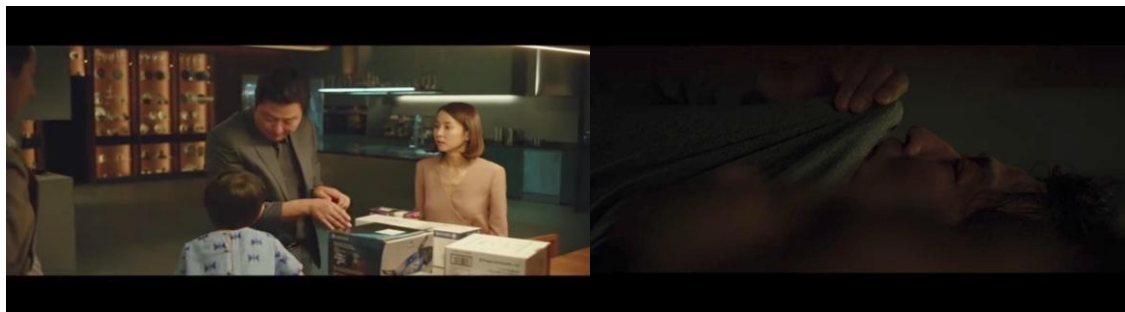


Picture 3: the wardrobe has a lot of expensive and branded clothes that are neatly arranged in it

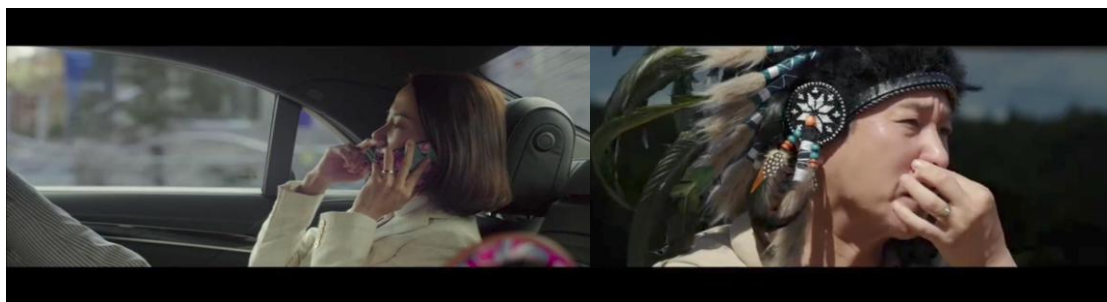
Otherwise, from the scene 1:42:40, shows when Ki-Jung or Jessica is in a temporary community shelter after their house was flooded. The scene shows Ki-jung picking the right clothes to wear from the many piles of used clothes. Aside from the fact that the flooding made them lose all their clothes and belongings, it shows that even the poor don't even have the money to buy decent clothes or even a wardrobe.

The Smell

The fourth example that appears in the movie is the smell. The smell is one of the important elements that shows in *Parasite*, which also expresses the gap between the rich and the poor. If you watch the movie properly, it appears four times. The first time the smell initially surfaces is when Da-song, the youngest son of the Park family, initially notices the stench when he discovers it on the clothing of Kim Ki-taek and Chung-su, the Kim family's mother and father. Since they cannot afford to wash their clothes in different loads, the Kim family assumes that the smell is caused by using the same laundry powder. The second instance is when Mr. and Mrs. Park are relaxing on the sofa and notice that Kim Ki-taek's clothes smell identical. At the same moment, Kim Ki-taek, Ki-woo, and Ki-jung are all hiding beneath the table next to the sofa.



Picture 4: The first and second times when the smell appears



Picture 5: The third and fourth times when the smell appears

Mr. Park claims that sometimes, he notices this kind of smell when riding a subway. The third times is when Kim-Ki Taek takes Mrs. Park back to her house, that's when the fragrance first arrives. Kim Ki-taek, Ki-woo, and Ki-jung fled from Park's residence on a stormy night the previous night. They must relocate to a government-arranged refuge after their semi-basement floods. Consequently, Mrs. Park opens the car window out of habit due to Kim Kitaek's foul-smelling garments, which causes Kim Ki-taek to feel ashamed. The scent was last detected at Da-song's birthday celebration. After "the ghost" Geun-sae, who resides in Mr. Park's basement, stabs Ki-jung to death with a knife, Mr. Park merely asks Kim Ki-taek for his vehicle key and pinches his nose to pick it up from the ground. Kim Ki-taek's heart is immediately broken by Mr. Park's deeds as he sees his daughter Ki-jung pass away in front of him. With a knife, Kim Ki-taek stabs Mr. Park in the heart.

4. Conclusion

This study explores the portrayal of social class differences in the 2019 South Korean film *Parasite*, directed by Bong Joon-ho. By examining the narrative and visual elements of the film, the research identifies how socioeconomic disparities are depicted through contrasting symbols such as housing, food, clothing, and other markers of wealth and poverty between the wealthy park family and the impoverished Kim family. Using discourse analysis, the study underscores how these depictions reflect broader societal issues of inequality and social stratification. It also highlights how the film utilizes subtle yet powerful cinematic elements, like spatial arrangement and sensory details, to accentuate the socioeconomic divide. The research contributes to understanding how films serve as a mirror to real-world class dynamics and influence viewers' perspectives on social class. For future research, it is suggested that similar analyses be conducted on films from different cultural contexts to further examine how media across the globe portrays and interprets social class dynamics.

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