



VI. Colour in Art and Media | Methodological Paper

ColourReflections: A study of colour in cinema using the example of Bong Joon-ho's PARASITE

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Abstract

In this text I seek to connect the perception (*aisthesis*) of colour as a phenomenon of our mind with the design (*aesthetics*) of colour in cinema. In a methodological excursus, I relate the complexity of the formal-aesthetic device 'colour' to a taxonomy of film research developed by myself, which I call the *KinematoGramm*. The model of the *KinematoGramm* constitutes the starting point of an extensive publication project and is presented here for discussion for the first time in English in combination with an analysis of the lighting and colour dramaturgy as well as the visual aesthetics of *PARASITE*.

PARASITE is a 2019 film by South Korean director Bong Joon-ho which was not only internationally acclaimed but also won four Academy Awards in 2020 (Best Film, Best International Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay). Based on the carefully created, nuanced green-primed colour palette of Joon-ho's socio-critical parable, the intermingling of two incompatible milieus unfolds as a differential quality of colours, textures, and materials. The consequences of this transgression of social and economic boundaries are fatal.

Keywords: film studies, kinematogramm, colour and light, cultural context, production studies, technical analyses, Parasite



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Colour in the Mind

As a scenographic and formal-aesthetic tool of cinematography, colours direct the audience's attention, form the essence of film projection as components of light, play with the surface of the screen, shape

meta- and/or subtextual levels of meaning, create or deconstruct visual stereotypes, and connect with diverse contexts and time-spaces. It should not be forgotten that the use of colour in audio-visual moving-image productions never occurs on its own, but always in a relationship with the many elements of film language (lighting, image composition, camera, acting, mise-en-scène, costume, sound, etc.). As a stylistic element of cinema, colour can be used in a clear, ambiguous, or inconstant way. It can be dazzling as well as abysmal. Each close reading or close viewing of a new example opens new insights into the possibilities of cinematic colour composition—including in relation to its analogue or digital production methods—and always raises new questions.

From a cognitive science perspective, the perceptual difference between observing reality and observing art holds a unique fascination. For example, when considering the mechanism of *colour constancy*, a kind of visual correction tool in our brain which ensures the stability of the perception of coloured objects under different lighting conditions.¹ However, when lighting is used in film productions, it is done deliberately to create new impressions and, thus, new colour values of an object. Object distortions due to lighting are meant to be noticed. One effect of the extensive colour analysis of films is that untrained viewers do not recognize individual colour motifs until they have been discussed in detail. This suggests that the translation of colour stimuli into language can lead to a sensitization of perception, perhaps even with the consequence that linguistic assessment subverts the preconscious mechanism of colour constancy in some instances. The colour composition of films results from a complex creative process in which the perception of reality, the intent of artistic design, the quality of subjective colour sensations, cultural colour preferences, and—not to be forgotten—technological parameters all factor in. Artistic impact

¹ See Anya Hurlbert, "Colour Constancy," *Current Biology* 17, no. 21 (2007): 906–907.

intentions aim for an audience that can process this mixture—whether consciously or unconsciously.

The immersive effect of virtuously staged colour films results from the superimposition of different modes of perception. One of the inevitable experiences in the study of film colour is the singularity of each individual film into which aesthetic differences between historical or contemporary film technologies have been inscribed. In the history and contemporary times of film, there are many different analogue, digital or hybrid forms of production and distribution of the moving image. Globally distributed films encounter heterogeneous groups of viewers with individual understanding of the world, whose colour perceptions are additionally shaped by personal memories.²

Within the multimodal perception of humans and animals, colours taste and smell good or bad and they suggest nutritious or reveal harmful substances. They have been and still are important tools of survival. In my chosen film example *PARASITE*, the poor are shrouded in a stench that emanates from their basement-like living conditions and follows them into the world of the rich. An olfactory stimulus in an audio-visual art form like film must be conveyed by means other than the sense of smell. Here, colour, in combination with the materiality of decayed objects and visible particles of dirt in the air, appears as a multi-sensory tool and trigger of synesthetic perception and memory.³ Such different material qualities of colours can be experienced by viewers but are often only perceived unconsciously.

The KinematoGramm and Colour in Cinema

The development of the *KinematoGramm* (Fig. 1) has been informed by the history of film studies, which is described here in a few condensed sentences. While in the 1980s film interpretations oriented towards film-artistic hallmarks of certain filmmakers and above all towards the auteur film dominated the discourse, conferences and publications also repeatedly pointed out urgent demands for work in

² On this particular aspect, see Michel Pastoureau, *The Colours of Our Memories* (Cambridge, UK: The Polity Press, 2020).

³ On the topics of psychological color research, see Andrew J. Elliot, Mark D. Fairchild, and Anna Franklin, eds., *Handbook of Color Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

the fields of dramaturgical and formal-aesthetic film analysis. Through the second of these two fields of research, film studies separated itself from literary studies and embraced art studies—a necessary step on the way to the study of film colour. Following the growing importance of animation and special effects, formal-aesthetic film analysis had to open itself to questions of production and the materiality of analogue and digital film, which gave rise, among other things, to the crucial, if methodologically still blurry, impulse of Production Studies. In the years following the turn of the century, the paradigm shift brought about by neuroscience, the technological change caused by digitization, and globalization through the worldwide distribution of films on streaming platforms led to a broad opening of the subject to new disciplines and methods, but also to irritations regarding the status of the motion picture in the digital data stream. The subject's path led from the study of the work, the dramaturgy, and the formal-aesthetic elements (*meso level*) to the psycho-physical subtleties of film reception (*micro level*), for example, through the orientation towards cognitive science. At the same time, however, it also leads beyond the boundaries of the film artwork (*macro level*) to a societal and social context as well as to investigations into the industrial conditions of the creation of films. The diversity and change of cinematic forms of narration as well as their formal-aesthetic analysis (*meso level*) remain a constant challenge for film scholars. One of the major achievements of the development of the discipline, which is only outlined here in its broad strokes, is emotion research with a focus on the psychological effects cinematic productions have on their viewers.

I got impulses for the structure and the naming of the *KinematoGramm* from the method of the chromatogram, in which the results of a chemical analysis are arranged in a column diagram. In a heuristic perspective, I combine six research perspectives into a dynamically conceived scheme of order. The dividing lines between the columns are to be imagined as dynamic and permeable. The model is rooted in the theory of interpretation and the historical hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer⁴ as well as in the art-scientific iconology of Erwin

⁴ See Hans Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013).

K I N E M A T O G R A M M

Prof. Dr. Susanne Marschall: Taxonomy of Film Studies

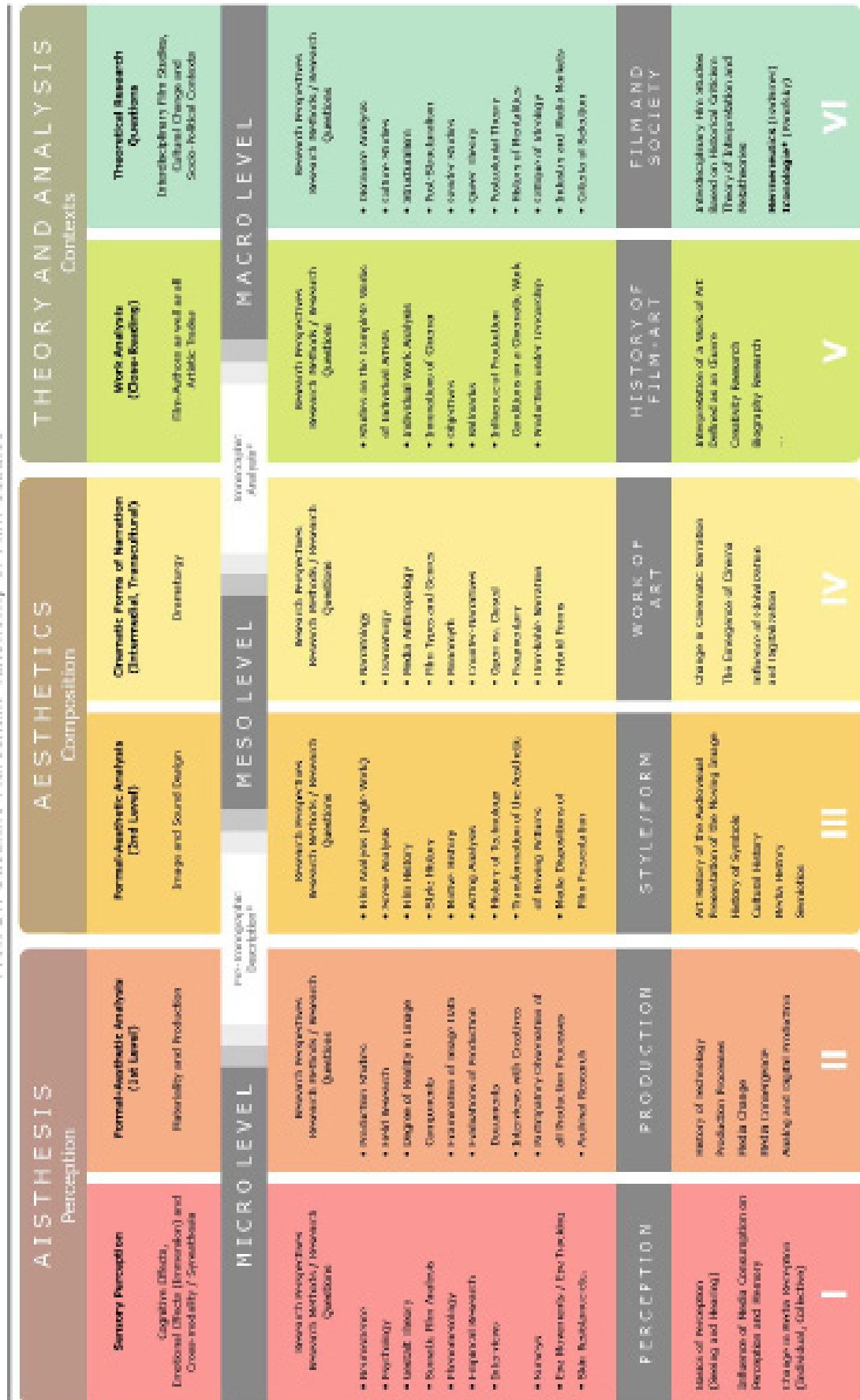


Figure 1: KinematoGramm

Panofsky⁵. Both theories deal with the basics of understanding texts and images, while simultaneously offering structured approaches and thus viable paths for scientific procedure. However, both approaches are also designed as an open, processual engagement with art and can be further developed organically. Interpreters approach an object that they are captivated by and get to the bottom of this cognitive or emotional relationship through an approach that reflects their own perspective and biases. With this relationship in mind, I developed the *KinematoGramm* to illustrate the potential multifaceted nature of multimodal moving image productions under the conditions of contemporary production, distribution, and reception practices. It serves as a meta-model and can also be applied to individual phenomena—such as colour in the context of this text. At the same time, the *KinematoGramm* serves, in a pragmatic sense, to conceptualize research hypotheses and research questions. These approaches to text and image interpretation (hermeneutics and iconology) ground the present model, but do not limit it. The *KinematoGramm* should be understood as a flexible figure of thought that helps to assign meta- and subtextual structures, contexts, and discourses in a differentiated way, which are inscribed in the surface of the film image—and here especially in the colour design. It must and should be developed further. With regard to the colour of film, the *KinematoGramm* reflects its multidimensionality, the fundamentals of colour perception (colour vision, multimodality, individual preferences, cognitive and emotional functions), the production and material aesthetics of the analogue or digital moving image (camera technology, optics, light, production processes, material, textures, colour grading, etc.), the diversity of forms of cinematic image and sound design, cinematic dramaturgy, work analysis, and finally critical contextual analysis and meta-theoretical discussion. Each of these levels can be considered synchronously and/or diachronically and establishes connections to other research fields, for example, cognitive science or art history.

The *KinematoGramm* is intended to be applicable to all film genres and every aspect of film production but was conceived in the search for a system of close reading and close viewing of film colours.

⁵ See Erwin Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983).

In relation to the film-aesthetic medium of colour, its dimensions can be derived from the systematics of the *KinematoGramm* and branch out further and further into the analysis of the concrete film example. The six research perspectives are arranged according to various criteria in the three areas of perception (*aisthesis*), design (*aesthetics*), and theory and analysis. These are combined in two pillars to form the micro-, meso- and macro-levels. The formal-aesthetic means of the film (pillars 2 and 3) connect the micro- with the meso-level, because some cinematic means cannot be grasped by a close viewing of the film alone but must be opened up by the research methods of production studies. Each of the six research perspectives is rooted in a research field: reception, production, stylistic analysis as well as work analysis, film as a work of art or as a discursive form of societal debate. None of these focal points can or should be considered without the others.

Exemplary Analysis: Bong Joon-ho's Social Grotesque PARASITE

Conceived in the dimensions of the *KinematoGramm*, the colours of *PARASITE* come together to form the holistic aesthetic of a two-world model, which is designed according to all the rules of dramaturgical art in the first act, deconstructed at the climax, and corrected, rearranged, sublimated, and exposed as fake at the finale in the protagonist's waking dream. From the first to the last minute; from the design of the two main sets to seemingly incidental details, the colour palette of *PARASITE* is dominated by shades of green and yellow in the form of object and light colours, whereby the hues of the two social spaces are often close to each other. The compositions of the frames are characterized by various forms of softening—by the reduction of contrasts. Differences arise, among other things, through textures, the condition of the objects, or even through a condensation of suspended matter in the air, which points to the unhealthy living conditions in the slums. Virtuously composed colour films such as *PARASITE* provide a culturally heterogeneous audience with immediate sensory access to the essence of the cinematic narrative on the one hand, while offering many additional levels of meaning and readings on the other.

PARASITE is a film with a grey-green undercoat in which, in addition to the contrasting and accent colours used as leitmotifs—first and

foremost blood red—the various manifestations of the green tones become significant as substance and material.⁶ Generally speaking, each of the four primary colours—blue, red, green, and yellow—is inscribed with a polarity of the emotional, the sensorial, and the experience of nature that is associated across cultures. The space of meaning of green includes, above all, cyclically recurring images of nature which are connected to emergence and disappearance, to renewal and decay. This tension also runs interculturally through film history, thus extending to the essential meaning of green. In Bong Joon-ho's social study, the stages of growing and decaying greenery, inseparable in the process of the natural cycle, are detached from each other and divided between the contrasting habitats of the Kims and the Parks. One of the film's strikingly unreal aspects is that there seems to be no social in-between between the two separate living spaces, but there is a connection through an oversized bridge and staircase arrangement.

Like the parasites in their basement apartment, the Kims infiltrate the luxury estate of the rich Park family, who live an equally parasitic life. Because the richer the families like the Parks become as a result of the unleashed capitalism of the globalized world, the deeper the destitute classes sink into poverty. The dirt, rot and—as is emphasized again and again in the film—the foul-smell of the social abyss competes as a grey-green antagonist against the fresh green of the rich and beautiful, arranged into a virtuous and artful garden, to which seemingly nothing and no one can do any harm. Additionally, even though the Kims have perfectly mastered the art of disguise and performance, their musty smell gives them away. Especially the Kims' father, who smells like a damp basement room and works as a chauffeur for the Parks, feels deeply humiliated when the Parks turn up their noses at him. His scent wafts across the social and psychological thresholds that, as a chauffeur, he is never allowed to cross by order of his boss. The white-grey-green designed, perfectly stylized surface of the Parks' estate gradually becomes so interwoven with the mouldy

⁶ For a deeper look at the multiplicity of meanings of green, see Michel Pastoureau, *Green: The History of a Color* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2014); Alexander Theroux, "Green," in: *The Secondary Colors: Three Essays*, by Alexander Theroux (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1996); Kassia St. Clair, *The Secret Lives of Color* (New York: Penguin, 2016), 208 ff.

green of the rot that their luxurious and disinfected world spoils. Through a ploy, the Kims discredit the Parks' housekeeper. They bring particles of a velvety peach skin, to which the housekeeper is allergic, into the Parks house, and leave traces of ketchup—apparently bloodstains—on a handkerchief in the trash can. Along with deliberate allusions to a contagious lung disease in the violently coughing woman, the intrigue leads to her dismissal and paves the way for a successor, the Kim' mother. Through such schemes, one by one, all the Kims conquer the house of the Parks. The intruders come from outside, but also from inside the family mansion itself. The vast, unknown cellar vault on which the Parks house is built, and of which the family in their naiveté has no awareness, represents a parasitic parallel world. A dark green-grey, seemingly endless staircase leads down into the abyss beneath the beautifully designed surface, winding under the house like invisible intestines in which everything is fermenting and rotting. The rich family knows nothing about the history of the house and its underworld. They perceive the hidden inhabitant only as a ghostly apparition—a mental defect—of the youngest child.

In terms of the lighting aesthetic and the colour language of the set and costumes, Bong Joon-ho went to great lengths to create his social farce. Yet, he released a second, black and white version, incidentally without having specifically shot his film for the play of light of the shades of grey. Retroactively, he reduces the subtly composed surface of his sharp-tongued critique of capitalism and removes contrasts, hues, and shades of the parasitically interrelated counter-worlds of rich and poor which form their own narrative level in the colour version. Through these competing versions of his film *PARASITE*, I argue Joon-ho makes the narrative, aesthetic, and symbolic power of colour all the more apparent. Among the greatest errors in our approach to colour is the view, held for centuries and even in art theory, that it is merely a beautiful surface phenomenon—decorative and, for that very reason, dispensable. Repeated argumentative opposition to this attitude also means questioning gender stereotypes, criticizing, and deconstructing a prevailing racist worldview⁷, and unmasking forms of social distinction. Diffuse forms of translating colour perceptions

⁷ On stigmatisation through colour, see Andreas Schwarz and André Karliczek, "Mit Haut und Haar: Vom Merkmal zum Stigma – Farbbestimmungsmethoden

into fixed patterns of interpretation have an impact on each of these conflict-rich zones of societal meaning. This also applies to cinematic productions in which stereotypes are frequently reproduced—intentionally or unintentionally, unreflectively or exposingly. Such visual constructions and practices of social separation are unmasked through irony in *PARASITE*.

PARASITE was shot on an Arri Alexa 65mm digital camera in 4K resolution using Hasselblad Prime-DNA lenses which lend themselves to creating a soft, atmospheric vintage look. According to cinematographer Hong Kyung-pyo, considerable attention was paid to the camera's ability to create soft, differentiated textures even at sunset and in the night scenes, and to make the actors' and actresses' eyes and skin tones look expressive yet realistic in the close-ups.⁸ The DNA lenses used can be compared with anamorphic lenses in terms of their depth effect and their representation of spatiality. The confinement of the basement apartment of the Kims, often captured in a wide-angle shot by the cinematographer Hong Kyung-pyo, thus always showing the family of four as an interacting community, becomes visually tangible in this way. But even when the Kims are alone in the sprawling mansion of the rich Parks, celebrating this moment together, all four are often seen simultaneously in one shot. The rich Parks on the other hand are surrounded by open spaces and an aesthetically thought-out emptiness not only in their home but also in the shots of the film. This also applies to the visibly clear air they are allowed to breathe. Often, the open spaces around the figures become the backdrop for light and colour reflections, either in fresh-looking greens or in elegant yellows (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

The colour language of the Parks stands for purposefully arranged, balanced harmony, while the Kims live in a colour cacophony—a mixture of the colours of decay, garbage, or the cheap pizza boxes they must fold to make a living—composed by happenstance and poverty. Wholly destitute but intelligent, multi-talented and resistant

am Menschen," in *Farre: Farbstandards in den frühen Wissenschaften*, ed. Andreas Schwarz and André Karliczek (Jena: Salana, 2016), 15 ff.

⁸ The five-minute interview can be found on YouTube: "The Cinematography of Parasite," ARRI Rental, YouTube, accessed March 14, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fF-rJe8AFU>.



Figure 2 and 3. The dialogue scene in *PARASITE*, composed as a shot-reverse shot montage, keeps the clean, luminous green of the Parks' luxury estate present from every perspective.

to everything and everyone in their anarchistic sense of humour, the poor Kims dwell in their musty basement apartment, which is openly inhabited by the titular parasites and eventually drowns in a toxic mixture of various liquids during the storm. Again and again, the colour design triggers synesthetic effects because one thinks one can smell the different shades of green. These olfactory effects of colours provoked in *PARASITE* are part of a micro-level of perception, the explanation of which is one of the research tasks of cognitive science. While the Parks' villa is surrounded by an artfully landscaped garden whose fresh greenery plays into the immaculate interior of the house through the large windows, so that the threshold between inside and outside is aesthetically overcome without the residents having to leave the protective zone of the house, the Kims are as much at the mercy of drunks urinating in their basement apartment as they



Figure 4 and 5. In *PARASITE*, the greens and yellows inside and around the Parks' mansion are contrasted with the dull greens in the Kims' dirty basement apartment.

are of the city sanitation department's disinfection vehicle. In this environment, permeability is not an aesthetic game, but the sore point of the living quarters, which provides only insufficient shelter. The stained and damp green of the basement apartment is not the result of any intentional architectural design, but of the organic processes of pollution that determine life in the lower class. To escape these conditions, the Kim family is willing to use any means of intrigue. The green tint of the shots is due to a deliberate colour grading that groups space and figures in a zone of poverty, where the skin tones of the actors are as greenish as the walls and the rotting objects (Fig. 4).

As if this was not enough pollution, in the exposition of the film, the Kims' apartment is attacked by a disinfectant-spraying street cleaner, leaving the family sitting in the middle of a toxic cloud to which humans and animals (cockroaches) alike are at mercy (Fig. 5).



Figure 6. On the South Korean colour palette, shades of gold and yellow indicate zones of fortune and a promising future that is taking shape for the Kims' son.

For the Kims' son, the call of adventure comes when a wealthy friend offers him the task of tutoring the Parks' daughter. The colour of the scene is designed down to the detail of the cell phone photo, which shows the future student in the greenery of the villa's garden. This small green accent is of a completely different quality compared to the other green tones—clear and fresh (Fig. 6). Between the two figures shines warm, golden-yellow light, which in the South Korean colour language refers to happiness and wealth. This key scene is centred towards the middle of the image, but the chaotic-looking arrangement of the objects of the poor quarter remains very much present in the dark areas of the frame. Everything is positioned somewhat crooked and randomly around the two figures. The highly symbolic yellow light also appears in later key scenes and accompanies the Kims' futile efforts to achieve lasting social advancement.

Shortly before the showdown at the birthday party for the son of the rich Park family, the poor Kims' son looks through a window into the garden of the luxury villa and asks the daughter of the house and, above all, himself if he could ever fit into this world (Fig. 7). For this defining moment in the film, director Bong Joon-ho and cinematographer Hong Kyung-pyo devised a shot in which the basic conflict of the intriguing 'game within a game' is projected onto two soft fields of colour within the composition of the frame. Through the reflection of the glass, the audience sees two lateral close-ups of the protagonist, with the windowpane running between them as a fine but



Figure 7 and 8. In a pivotal scene of *PARASITE*, the mismatched couple observe the activities of the rich in the garden, who are celebrating the youngest son's birthday.

distinct dividing line. In this way, a strange form of mirror is created for the viewer, but not from the perspective of the main character, who only appears to be looking at his own face (Fig. 8). Golden yellow sunlight streams over the profile on the right side of the frame, which in Bong Joon-ho's film refers to the world of the rich. The warm light gives the left side a soft blur and forms a clear contrast to the dull green tones of the right half of the frame. This window/mirror view forms the final accent of a tracking shot that first runs along the window front, so that the shot is dominated by the bright-fresh green of the garden outside, and then moves inside past the gray-green curtain that gives the socially unequal couple Kim Ki-woo (Choi Woo-shik) and Park Da-hye (Jeong Ji-so) protection from the gaze of the outside world, ending with a brief dialogue and the window view. The fact that Ki-woo, the son of the poor Kims, has succeeded in entering a love affair with the

Parks' daughter does not mean that the gifted and ambitious schemer can also overcome those social boundaries that, as a musty-smelling basement dweller, separate him in principle from the cultivated upper class. The Kim family's smell knows no bounds and eventually brings about the bloody finale of the farce, which was staged by the Kims for the naive Parks.

If, as film theorist Béla Balázs noted in his 1930 work *The Spirit of Film*, "every camera set-up points to an inner human attitude"⁹, the colour design of this moment takes us right into the drama of futile efforts at social advancement, which in the case of the Kims leads to a chain of gruesome crimes. While yellow, as the highest colour, occupies the centre of the traditional Korean colour order *Obangsaek* (오방색) and is surrounded by white, black, red, and blue, the colour green does not appear and has also received a name in the Korean language later than the traditional primary colours. The traditional South Korean colour order *Obangsaek* is a cosmological model for visualizing a worldview encompassing the elements of nature, animals and mythical creatures, gender, and religion, and is still present in fashion and everyday life in South Korea today.¹⁰ The colour yellow represents the perfect harmony of yin and yang, which is called *Eumyangohaeng* (음양오행) in Korean. The composite interrelates light and darkness, sun and moon, and the five elements of fire, water, wood, metal and earth. Only in the second-degree colour order, called *Ogansaek* (오간색), green is obtained as a mixture of the colours yellow and blue. Due to influences of the West, the colour green gained the status of a sign of modernity, prosperity, and happiness in South Korea. As such, it adorns the lucky stone that Ki-woo is given by an old school friend at the beginning of the film and whose supposed magical power he is obsessed with until his struggle for social advancement fails. The colour green, in its symbolic ambivalence, dominates the growing and decaying in nature and thus, in many different appearances and

⁹ Béla Balázs. *Early Film Theory: Visible Man and The Spirit of Film* (Oxford and New York: Berghahn Books, 2010), 113.

¹⁰ See Meong Jin Shin et al., "Colour preferences for traditional Korean colours," *Journal of the International Colour Association* 9, (2012): 48 ff.; "The Colors in Korean Life and Culture," National Folk Museum of Korea, Google Arts & Culture, accessed March 14, 2022, <https://artsandculture.google.com/story/vgXBoDKJVZn0LA>.

shades, the film *PARASITE*—from the grotesque-comic beginning to the bitter end. In synesthetic immersion, it suggests the mouldy smell of the Kims as well as the fresh garden air of the Parks. This sensory quality of *PARASITE*'s colour design is not dependent on culture; it works even if you are not familiar with the Korean colour order. The colour design here functions on a first level independently of cultural contextual knowledge, but gains socio-critical poignancy through an engagement with the visual culture and symbolic colour language of South Korea.

The subtle variety of green tones in Bong Joon-ho's social tragedy gets under one's skin precisely because it is subtle; because it is not as cruel to the eye as the bright red of the blood spilled excessively towards the evil end. The director unleashes an abysmal drama between up above and down below, between outside and inside, between growth and decay, between rich and poor, from the extremely finely balanced colour dramaturgy of various shades of green. The West is present in *PARASITE* mainly in the form of consumer and lifestyle products as well as children's toys which reference the founding history of the USA. Of particular importance is the indestructible 'Indian' tent, which stands immaculate in the garden of the parks even after a devastating storm, in whose floods of water the poor quarter of the city literally drowns (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10). During the storm, the youngest of the Parks spent the night unharmed in this tent, in the stability of which his mother believes because it comes from America. The upper class is spared from all adversities for the time being, even the plants of this protected world seem to be exempt from the cycle of nature. Nothing can be permanently tarnished. No one—and the film emphasizes this in the ironic scene when, after their little family party in the Parks' living room, the Kims remove all traces of it in one swift stroke—can permanently damage the system of money. However, the rich people end up being vulnerable and replaceable.

PARASITE ranks alongside films such as *MOONLIGHT* (Dir: Barry Jenkins, USA 2016) and *JOKER* (Dir: Todd Philipps, USA 2019) as one of the most visually remarkable dramas in filmmaking within the decade of its release. Incidentally, it would be easy to find other examples that deserve a formal-aesthetic close reading/viewing with a focus on colour and thus lighting design. One of the fundamental challenges of such



Figure 9 and 10. The irony with which the director and cinematographer stage the play teepee on the green stage of the garden is unmistakable. At the same time and by the same storm, the neighbourhood of the poor is submerged in murky green water.

close viewing is the methodology on which even an essayistic text on the colour language of a film must be based in order to take into account the various different aspects of the subject matter. This exemplary analysis of *PARASITE*'s colour language incorporates considerations of colour perception in the context of the *KinematoGramm* (I), especially in relation to the elaborate green palette and its object context. In addition, references are made to the digital production technique (II), the formal-aesthetic level of the reduced colour palette and light colours (III), and the parable-like two-world dramaturgy (VI), which is also characterized visually by the colour aesthetic. The next step would be to look for the hallmarks of the director (V) and his team through a systematic comparison of other films by Bong Joon-ho, a project for another text. The focus here is on the work analysis of *PARASITE* and

the colour-dramaturgical staging of the film's capitalism critique (VI). The social circumstances penetrate the psyche and physique of the characters, and they are made visible and even 'smellable' through the colour design of the film. In this way, colour creates a connection between the world of unrestrained consumption and the immense waste that the rich produce which then ends up in the poor quarters of the city. The sophisticated green palette of *PARASITE* projects these social entanglements into the light colours of the film and deconstructs them on the carefully designed surface of the coloured image.

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