



Representation of Symbolic Violence and Social Inequality in High Society Film

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Abstract

This journal article examines the theory of Pierre Bourdieu, a French sociologist, in the breakdown of mechanisms of symbolic violence or social injustice in inter-social class life. Bourdieu's ideas on the theory of habitus, capital, arena, violence, and symbolic power will be used as a perspective in exposing injustice in the film *High Society*. The occurrence of working relations between the upper class or conglomerates and the lower middle class cannot be separated from various forms of symbolic violence which form the basis for the formation of various other types of violence, such as physical, psychological, economic, sexual violence, and so on. Symbolic violence is a form of violence that is not easy to recognize. This symbolic violence often operates by utilizing the discourse of symbols that affect the leadership, domination, power, and so on of one group by another group. The root of this problem occurs through the habitus of poverty and powerlessness that is experienced both economically, culturally, socially, and other symbolic capital. The symbolic violence that works in this film does not make the victims understand and understand that they are becoming objects and will not put up a fight.

Keywords: *Symbolic Violence; Social Inequality; Identity; Social Class; High Society Film*

Introduction

The increased usage of intelligent systems in media has resulted in a rise in life digitalization (Güven, 2020; Kagermann, 2014). Everything is readily accomplished and swiftly disseminated thanks to technology, and the speed of technology makes it simple for its consumers. Cinematic developments are following the openness and sophistication of technology (Monaco, 2009; Ramadhanti et al., 2021). The ease of use of technology has also aided the expansion of the film business, which can now be enjoyed not only inside one country but across borders thanks to the gadgets and software available (Storper, 1992).

World cinema contains a wide range of themes, many of which are wonderfully presented in the film (Turner, 2006; Dennison and Lim, 2006). Domestic film cannot be directly compared to global film advancements, but it can be seen that domestic film has improved and adapted to popular subjects. Korea, for example, has succeeded in hypnotizing its people through publicly exporting its culture through K-pop and Korean dramas (Choi, 2015; Kim and Wagner, 2017). Many themes in Korean films are related to power connections between persons of a given socio economic rank (Shim, 2006; Ryo, 2009; Castells,

2007). To be in the midst of society, one's social rank becomes a form of determinant of one's identity (Smedley, 1998; Tajfel, 1974). Identity and social status are indicators of how people are perceived and treated in their social surroundings (Laub, 2017; Himawan et al, 2018).

Power connections between people of higher social standing have been deemed acceptable since ancient times (Zhang, 2014; Zheng and Breslin, 2016; Al Qutuby, et.al, 2020; Firdaus. Et.al, 2023). "As I wish" behavior is synonymous with the use of money to smooth over the challenges faced by those with high social standing (Luntz, 2007). Symbolic violence-related problems that cannot be avoided.

The concept of "all me and facilitation payments" is represented in different works of art in the media. *High Society* is a Korean film with a symbolic violence theme. The film is a South Korean film about life, competition, and issues, as well as the dominance of the upper class. Park Hae Il and Soo Ae feature in the film. Jang Tae Joon and Oh Soo Yeon are a married pair in the film. They come from middle to upper-class households that are always preoccupied with career interests to the point of neglecting their personal happiness in the home. Jang Tae Joon, a professor at Seoul State University, is a decent husband and man. The emphasis on improving the lower Korean society's finances have made it an extraordinary occasion.

He watches an old man burning himself on fire while watching a landowner's demonstration elsewhere. Jang Tae Joon met the Party chief there, who offered him a job as a councilor. Oh Soo Yeon, on the other hand, is a driven woman. She was always curious about her husband's professional advancement. Oh Soo Yeon is a well-known art gallery's deputy director and curator. His great ambition drives him to take various actions in order to secure the post of manager. These situations cause the husband and wife to engage in metaphorical violence.

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With the title *Symbolic Violence in the Guts* by Putu Wijaya: Literature, Politics, and Reflection, Setijowati (2018) conducted research on symbolic violence found in Putu Wijaya's novel *Nyali*. Setijowati discovered that in the mechanism of symbolic violence it can be concluded that the families of soldiers who were victims from a corporal family, Setijowati attempted to dismantle the military's symbolic violence against Novel *Nyali*. Patriarchal domination takes the shape of symbolic violence against women in soap operas, according to Novaris (2019), and Nova concentrates on symbolic violence in the soap opera *Notes of a Wife's Heart*. Nova stressed male dominance over women by stifling women's voices, transforming women into sexual objects, and ultimately inspiring women to rebel and speak out against women's oppression. This study differs from the previous two in that it focuses on films and seeks to dismantle the mechanisms of symbolic violence through identification, social class, power, and social class.

Research Method

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. A descriptive approach is a method for analyzing data that involves describing the data that has been obtained. This study uses the descriptive approach to identify habitus, arena, capital, language, and symbolic power in the film *High Society*. The qualitative research approach is used to investigate the condition of natural objects, with the researcher serving as the primary instrument (Sugiyono, 2005).

Data in qualitative research is basically in the form of substantive category information that is difficult to nominate. Broadly speaking, data in qualitative research can be grouped into three types, namely: data obtained from observations, interview data and data in the form of documents, texts or narrated works of art (Pawito 2007: 96). The works of art meant in this case are pictures, films, sculptures, music and others (Sugiyono 2011: 240). Based on the classification of the qualitative data types, the data in this study is a text or work of art that is narrated in the form of a film.

The key thing that determines the quality of data in relation to data gathering efforts is the data collection technique and its tools. The primary instrument in qualitative research is the researcher himself. The following data gathering procedures were utilized in this study because the data is in the form of text or works of art recounted in film media:

1. While watching the movie *Firsthand experience with high society*.
2. Listening to and observing every scene and bodily movement in the film, paying attention to how habitus, arena, capital, and symbolic power are depicted.
3. As a data source, recording, categorizing, and presenting facts that are deemed relevant and fascinating (habitus, arena, capital, and symbolic power).
4. The grouped portions are studied utilizing the hermeneutics of Pierre Bourdieu's theory.
5. In the final stage, the researcher draws conclusions based on the findings of the analysis.

Result

Social Class and Community Identification

Marx once battled for social class in society (Marx, 1973; Marx, 2019; Ismail and Ramli, 2012). In the film *High Society*, the social class divide, particularly between the upper (bourgeois) and lower social classes, is referred to as the proletariat. Interactions in the workplace, particularly interactions between superiors and subordinates, illustrate social class life. Despite the fact that the theme of social class in the film appears to be regarded implicitly as a division between social classes. Bourdieu (2022) demonstrates through habitus that the fundamental principles of people's social lives are carried out every day, along with the regularity that accompanies it. Habitus can be defined as a system of acquired and persistent dispositions or patterns of perception, ideas, and behaviors. Habitus is also a lifestyle, values, character, and expectations of specific social groupings that are the primary product of the internalization of the social world's structure.

The first portion may be seen in the scene where Oh Soo Yeon condescends to the project workers' understanding when installing the projector equipment. He uttered remarks that implied reservations about the workman's performance from his arrogant arms crossed posture. The quotation below demonstrates this.

"Isn't it too thin?"

"Do you know how much a projector weighs? Projector 20,000 lumens weighs 47 kilograms. With the rack, it weighs 52 kilograms. This morning, it was my weight. Should I ride it?"

The sentence above plainly shows that Oh Soo Yeon seriously underestimates the craftsman's understanding of tools that are not usually encountered. In fact, he claimed that his weight was equal to that of the projector while it was on the shelf. Oh Soo Yeon checked with his gesture, blaming the handyman for the failure of the work he was conducting. Oh Soo Yeon climbed the stairs while mocking the construction workers.



Image 1: Oh Soo Yeon while observing the performance of her workers.

In the following scene, Oh Soo Yeon, the deputy director, is seen entering Lee Hwa Ran's (the chief director's) chamber. Lee Hwa Ran was speaking with his lawyer, Lawyer Park, at the time. At the time, Lee Hwa Ran refused to communicate with Oh Soo Yeon by postures or hand signals without looking at her. Because Lee Hwa Ran has control over Oh Soo Yeon, his behavior as expressed through body movements demonstrates how power influences the process of symbolic violence. According to Bourdieu, economic capital is capital that may be converted into other capitals. Lee Hwa Ran and Oh Soo Yeon show the working capital mechanism, social capital through positions and positions at work, and cultural capital through the interaction mechanism of subordinates and superiors. Then, through economic capital, symbolic violence becomes a means of strengthening Hwa Ran and Soo Yeon's authority and social class behavior.



Image 2: Lee Hwa Ran showing her power

Aside from that, Lee Hwa Ran looked down on his subordinates' energy, thought, and procedures in the same scene. This is due to Lee Hwa Ran's arbitrary changing of prospective artists for the exhibition. The artist's name change, of course, required Oh Soo Yeon and his subordinates to rewrite the method, which was made more difficult because they had to retract the news from the media and submit it. Lee Hwa Ran's feeling of arbitrariness can only be found in superiors' treatment of their subordinates. Lee Hwa Ran, as a boss, does not care how difficult the procedure is being carried out by his subordinates. Hwa Ran's only option is to demand that his subordinates meet his goals and expectations.

“Really? Then make a new article!”

“Then why does the deputy director object, even though it doesn't matter to me?”

“Surely you think you can become a director after I become chairman, but not everyone can become a director.”

Hwa Ran's arrogance as a superior extends not just to Soo Yeon but also to Lawyer Park. Hwa Ran revealed her identity as Director in order to deceive and exploit Lawyer Park. Not only that, but after the talk, Lee Hwa Ran was exhausted. Hwa Ran requested that Lawyer Park massage his feet while wearing Lawyer Park's jacket as footwear. The disparity in attitude was also evident when Soo Yeon met Hwa Ran, who was not invited to sit and instead spoke while standing. This is proportional to Hwa Ran sitting while being massaged. In Korea, equality in work relations is one of the factors that color the plot; those in positions of power are free to abuse their subordinates. Not only through senior and junior relationships, but also through specific positions in films.



Image 3: Lee Hwa Ran showing her power

Social class in Korea, often known as a gold spoon, is distinct from regular social class; numerous methods are done to advance in class, one of which is through connections between Jang Tae Joon, Oh Soo Yeon's spouse, to achieve legitimacy regarding social class. Apart from being a businessman, becoming a politician in Korea is an important job with a high social class because it is tied to the government. The scene with Oh Soo Yeon and her husband Jang Tae Joon then displays the capital invested by Jang Tae Joon to gain a position as a respected class. He approaches senior lecturers in the hopes of becoming a politician.

"Aren't you just helping Professor Lee again?"

"It is not like that. No one has helped me as much as he has."

"I heard he quit to get into politics."

"That's why I have to be near him."

"You also want politics?"

"Why not? If the time comes and there is an opportunity."

This instance demonstrates that, according to Bourdieu's thought (2022), there is a component of capital known as social capital. Owned social networks, which also play a role in defining social standing, are examples of social capital. The more acquaintances someone has, the more likely they will have the same point of view. Jang Tae Joon aims to secure a job as someone from the same class by developing a close relationship with the senior professor who frequently seeks his assistance. Jang Tae Joon's social capital enables him to form ties that benefit his social life.

Power and Social Label in High Society

Power is characterized by high and low social class, class division and position in the social sphere shows how one person can be in power to hegemonize others. Social class provides a kind of

recognition to individuals to increase their self-confidence as well as carry out acts of oppression on the class below them. In the next scene, when Oh Soo Yeon confronts her work rival, Min Hyun Ah. Min Hyun Ah is Oh Soo Yeon's subordinate, but they are equally strong in their behavior. Even though Min Hyun Ah is a subordinate, she has the power as a member of a conglomerate family. It was explained there that Min Hyun Ah had no intelligence and could not be in this position without the support of wealth. But in fact Min Hyun Ah has even greater power than the director who is his boss. According to the remark below, Min Hyun Ah no longer has the ability to modify her body shape and survive via the power of money. In Bourdieu's thinking (2022), this becomes economic capital, where economic capital is wealth owned by that person. A person's place and standing in social life are determined by the amount of assets he owns. Until one day, Oh Soo Yeon had to kneel in front of Min Hyun Ah to apologize and request that the footage of Oh Soo Yeon's affair not be spread, which would result in the downfall of her career.

“You don't seem to be terrified of anything.”

“Why? Do you believe that only the wealthy are fearless? You should also consider other options. In addition to increasing breast size.”

“Why are you constantly battling conglomerates? I know you enviously look at the wealthy. Listen So, Yeon, only the wealthy are fearless. You should stand out, and you should be terrified. You should be terrified of both me and Hwa Ran.”



Image 4: Oh Soo Yeon knelt in front of Min Hyun Ah

Jason, the second son of Main Director Lee Hwa Ran, suffered from an identical ailment as Min Hyun Ah. Jason is the son of Han Yong Suk, the Mirei group's leader who lives in America. Then he returned to Korea with an order from his father to take over his mother's post as director. But, in reality, he knew nothing about art. In the art world, the Mirei Group is a thriving multinational group. This company has complete control over the auction of paintings all the way to Europe. That is why Han Yong Suk does not want to lose by appointing him as director despite his lack of artistic knowledge. The quotation below demonstrates this. Jason stated in this quote that he only viewed and knew art through Instagram.

“Do you know what art is?”

“I saw art on instagram.”

Despite having extensive experience of the art world, Oh Soo Yeon was not given the opportunity to become director. That's because Oh Soo Yeon does not come from a wealthy family and lacks the authority to change things. This is demonstrated in the quotation below, in which Oh Soo Yeon requests to be appointed as a director. Han Yong Suk, on the other hand, inquired as to the merits of appointing Oh

Soo Yeon as director. According to the remark below, Oh Soo Yeon is a family that works hard to make ends meet and pay off their debts.

“Let me be the director.”

“You want the director's chair? What's in it for me?”

“A partner you can trust. I'm a good partner. Trust me.”

...

“What can I do? I have to earn money and pay my debts.”

In Oh Soo Yeon and Han Yong Suk's dialogue, there is Han Yong Suk's maid who poured them a drink.

But when it was done, there was no thanks other than Han Yong Suk's hand motion to the server to go quickly. This is a type of metaphorical violence that occurs frequently in everyday life. Power allows upper-class people to do whatever they want. Negligence in treating someone as an equal human being is an example of a loss of civility in treating individuals.



image 6: Han Yong Suk showed his power

Furthermore, in the following scene, Han Yong Suk instructed his personal maid to write an essay on him. Han Yong Suk's waiter sat on the floor, while Han Yong Suk sat in luxury. This is demonstrated in the image below, which shows Han Yong Suk's personal butler typing on a laptop and sitting on the couch, surrounded by Han Yong Suk's magnificent sofas, and Han Yong Suk sitting proudly in his chair.



Image 7: Curator Oh Soo Yeon offers paintings to socialite mothers

Identity is a component of human self-concept that stems from knowledge about membership in a social group, as well as the value and emotional significance of that membership (Tajfel, H., and Turner, J. C., 1986). At the same time, identification can be interpreted as a person's identity. Identity can also be used to market or project a specific image to others (Firdaus & Afdholy, 2023).

The film's identity is also visible in one of the scenes, which depicts a gathering of socialite women in a restaurant. In the debate, one mother admits to having a strong artistic soul, and her daughter has a strong artistic spirit as well. As a result, he intends to purchase a painting for 800 million Won from curator Oh. However, it was discovered that the mother had little knowledge of the art world and was unable to tell one artist's paintings from another. This suggests that these mothers are attempting to adopt the same identity as their social environment. These mothers do not want to be looked down on or shunned simply because they lack a creative soul. Even one of the other mothers is willing to pay one billion dollars for the identical painting in order to avoid losing to their pal.

According to the High Society movie quotation above, social identity is extremely important in life. Humans will do anything with their might to be recognized by their group. The identity depicted in the phrases and scenes above is more than just a kind of self-identification that must be acknowledged. However, it is also linked to the endeavor to obtain a social label.

Representation of Symbolic Violence in Film High Society

According to Pierre Bourdieu, the concept of symbolic violence derives from the idea that there is a class structure in social formations, which is a set of networks that are structurally tied to each other and determine the distribution of culture, habits, and economic models. (Bourdieu, 2022 ; Jenkins, 2014)

Furthermore, numerous sequences in the film High Society express respect by bowing. Bowing is a respectful salutation in Korea to someone who is believed to be in a higher position. This is also depicted in the film. Even with respect, he rarely receives a response and is frequently disregarded. This is depicted in the graphic below. When the professor drives his car, Jeong Hoon pays his respects to the academics who have filled the television program. Despite the fact that Jeong Hoon's regard received no reaction and was ignored, Jeong Hoon still appreciated 90 degrees. Not unlike Jang Tae Joon, who paid his respects to Representative Jung. But, like Jeong Hoon, respect is shown by bowing 90 degrees.

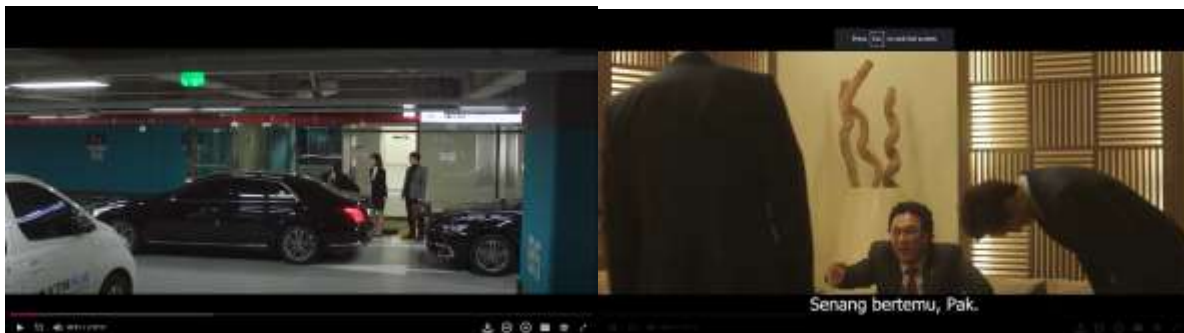


Image 8: Jeong Hoon and Jang Tae Joon while saluting their superiors

Then there are situations that depict different types of symbolic violence. In the restroom, Lee Hwa Ran met Oh Soo Yeon by chance. Oh Soo Yeon feels compelled to help her boss. That's what prompted Oh Soo Yeon to go get a tissue for Lee Hwa Ran to wipe her moist hands.

However, after receiving tissues and assistance from Oh Soo Yeon, Lee Hwa Ran did not express gratitude and instead told Oh Soo Yeon that she should not expect much from the position of director. Because, despite Oh Soo Yeon's excellent performance, Jason will retain his post because Han Yong Suk

himself invited Jason to attend. Furthermore, Lee Hwa Ran returned the tissue he had used to Oh Soo Yeon with a disgusted hand gesture when it came into contact with Oh Soo Yeon. The image below shows how Lee Hwa Ran's hand moves when he places soiled tissue in the hands of his subordinates. This is a type of symbolic violence that is accepted.



Image 9: Lee Hwa Ran when asking Oh Soo Yeon to throw away used tissues

Bourdieu (2022) uses three terms interchangeably to refer to comparable and the same things: symbolic violence, symbolic power, and symbolic domination. Bourdieu defines the three as the power to arbitrarily pick tools of knowledge and expression of social reality, but that power is not realized. Based on this, symbolic violence can be defined as the ability to change and create reality, namely the ability to modify and create reality as correctly recognized and recognized. Then, in this film, there is a scene in which Jeong Hoon, a Republican Party staffer, opens the door for professors. This is a case of symbolic violence. Because those from the lower or lower middle classes are more likely to be assigned the responsibility of opening the door. People of the highest socioeconomic class, on the other hand, will feel humiliated if they do not open their doors and are nicely serviced.

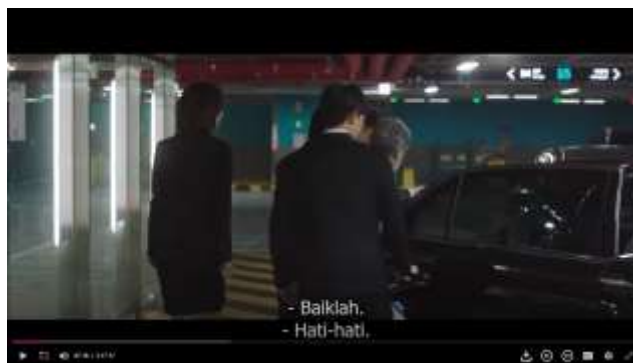


Image 10: Jeong Hoon while opening the car door for his boss

Some of the symbolic violence depicted in the High Society film, if examined deeper, will reveal details that the viewer would have previously overlooked. According to the title, this film depicts the life of the upper class, or what is generally referred to as a conglomerate. In terms of how they operate, they want to be served, appreciated, and so on. The events depicted in this film are all too frequent nowadays. Despite the fact that this is a type of symbolic violence, some of them overlook it in order to attain worth in life.

Discussion

Based on the conclusions and discussion regarding symbolic violence in the film *High Society*, there are several suggestions that can be given by researchers. First, this research is expected to provide new and fresh ideas for other researchers who wish to use Pierre Bourdieu's hermeneutic literary approach to examine both literary works, social phenomena, and other cultures that contain symbolic violence. Other researchers are expected to use different research objects and problems so that the research concept and approach of Pierre Bourdieu's hermeneutic symbolic violence will further develop.

Conclusion

High Society is a South Korean film that illustrates the life of the upper class in terms of enrichment. In this film, the influence of relationships is enormous, and hereditary wealth is tightly controlled. This is what research based on Pierre Bourdieu's ideas on symbolic violence is based on. Pierre Bourdieu's philosophy stresses the perception and thought of dominated social agents, who then see the social order as right. Symbolic violence is significantly more powerful than physical violence in that it is interwoven in every type of activity and structure of individual cognition, and it imposes a shadow of legitimacy on the social order. According to Bourdieu, "ease" or "natural ability". Bourdieu's opinions on symbolic violence about the portrayal of inequalities that are intimately tied to social class are shown in the film *High Society*. Thus, according to Pierre Bourdieu's theory, this study examines how the representation of forms of social interaction across classes in the film *High Society* is dependent on the conflict or story plot connected with forms of symbolic violence.

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