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AN EXISTENTIAL ANALYSIS OF BONG JOON-HO'S MOVIE PARASITE

Shaukat Ali¹, Mohammad Muazzam Sharif², Kashif Ahmad³, Iqra Nisa⁴, Sobia Sharif⁵

¹Demonstrator in English, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan,
Pakistan

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Pakistan

³Lecturer, Department of English, Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan, Pakistan

⁴MPhil Scholar, Department of English, Northern University, Nowshera, Pakistan

⁵Visiting Lecturer in English, International Islamic University, Islamabad

E.mail: [1shaukat.ali@awkum.edu.pk](mailto:shaukat.ali@awkum.edu.pk), [2sharifmuazzam@gmail.com](mailto:sharifmuazzam@gmail.com)

[3kashif@awkum.edu.pk](mailto:kashif@awkum.edu.pk), [4iqrakhan6ktk@gmail.com](mailto:iqrakhan6ktk@gmail.com)

[5sobia.sharif00@yahoo.com](mailto:sobia.sharif00@yahoo.com)

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores existential themes in the story and characterization of Bong Joon-ho's Oscar Award winning, Korean movie, *Parasite* which is a brutal satire about the disparity of wealth in modern societies. Being a philosophical movie, *Parasite* is full of such instances which reveal the inner crises of the alienated lower class people in contradiction to the prevailing social, and economic circumstances. The characters of the movie suffer from existential angst due to their unbearable economic circumstances, where on one side, there is abject poverty and extreme affluence on the other side. The researcher has examined the symbols, dialogues, and actions of the protagonists and the ultimate suffering, in consequences of those actions through the perspective of existentialism.

INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, most of the thinkers, philosophers, and theologians have argued for 'determinism', the concept that the life we live is predestined; which means the script of our lives is already written and designed by a

Supreme Being and other external values and norms which shape and dictate our lives. The ancient Greek play *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles is a perfect example of determinism as how the life one lives is controlled from outside by different natural forces, coincidences, and by deities. Oedipus tries his utmost to escape from the shackles of destiny but on every occasion, the designers of his destiny win and he loses, despite all his struggle against these forces. In the end, he becomes a symbol of shame, misery, grief, and destitute because of his actions and decision he made unknowingly. The striking point in the play; is that beside, all his unlawful, unethical, and brutal actions, Oedipus can also be seen as innocent standing amidst the trap woven by destiny for him.

The reappearance of Existentialism in 20th century, when Europe was suffering from the calamities of WWII, is a complete reversal of determinism. The basic notion of existentialism is that man is free in all his/her actions, decisions, and choices, and therefore, he himself is responsible for the outcomes of his actions and decisions. This reversal started with Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead and no one else but we have killed him with our own hands" now we have to act in a godly manner accepting the responsibility for our actions (Nietzsche, 1883). The notion of existentialism is applicable to all walks of our personal life, making any decision and choice about our life and career, and so on and so forth. The idea is that one's choices are not influenced by any external or predetermined factors. Soren Kierkegaard, Fredrik Nietzsche, Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir are famous contributors to Existentialism, each having his distinct stance. The researcher has to explore the understudy movie *Parasite* drawing of the theories of the mentioned torch bearers of Existentialism.

Parasite Movie

Parasite movie is the story of a family, the Kims, living in abject poverty. They very cunningly and unlawfully employ themselves with a highly rich family, the Parks, who have unknowingly harbored a stranger inside their house basement with a mysterious door. The person in the basement was regularly and secretly attended by the Parks' maidservant. Both, the Kims' family and the basement dwellers can be easily seen as parasitic as both these families survive on Parks' income.

The story of the movie tells how lower working class people are forced in fighting one another for small things of simple livelihood while on the other side rich people like Parks enjoy a luxurious life having big businesses fueled by many other working individuals.

Apparently, the Parks have not been depicted as exploiters and villains but looking deeper into the story the parasitic nature of Parks can be made visible. On one side Parks are busy in the arrangements for an extravagant birthday party for their son while on the other side Kims' house is flooded with a rainstorm and they are up to their necks in water. This shows the two extremes of their polarized society and system.

The Kims had a rich friend and he recommended Ki-jeong as a tutor of art to the Parks but she had no formal education and documents though she was naturally a genius artist. To secure her hiring at Parks her brother helped her in forging documents for her and it worked. Later on, she started helping her brother, mother, and father to infiltrate into the same rich family through utter deception, securing different family service positions.

In the end, we see that the underground stranger somehow manages to come out of the basement. He hits Kim-woo in his head with the same big stone his father has given to him for killing the stranger in the basement but the opposite happens and Kim-woo gets severely injured. The stranger then picks a knife from the kitchen and goes out to the lawn where Parks were having their son's birthday party. The stranger enters the party and stabs Kim-jeong with his knife when she was taking the birthday cake to the table.

Seeing the stranger, the little Parks fell senseless as he was already traumatic, and then Kim-jeong's mother tries to control the stranger, her father comes to her putting his hand on her wound which spelling an enormous amount of blood. Kim-jeong's mother was still fighting with the ghost stranger, meanwhile, the elder Park was yelling at Kim-woo's father to come fast and take his senseless son to the hospital as he was their family diver. Seeing the selfishness of the elder Park, Kim-woo's father goes into a fit and he leaves her dying daughter, picks up the same knife, and stabs the elder Park in his heart.

After a few seconds, he comes out of his fit and finds himself in a senseless situation, as what did he do and what had happened to everyone, and goes underground to the basement. In the hospital, when Kim-woo comes to his senses he cannot help his laugh as he continuously laughs and laughs. The doctors say that it is because of the severe damage to his brain but the audience can see that he was laughing at the absurdity of the world. The poor Kims were trying in an unorthodox way to find a purpose and meaning in the absurd system and world, in which they somehow succeed but in the end, the severe loss again leads them to absurdity and they find themselves in existential crises.

The movie also tells us that the world is full of such people who do not deserve the roles they have occupied but their wealth or family wealth has enabled them to stay in their powerful positions, despite the fact that they lack the real genius in them. On the other hand, poor people, despite their intelligence and genius lack formal qualification which is required for any position and they cannot change this system of injustice and inequality. In this sense, the movie tells us about the absurdity of education and the economic system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Existentialism is generally used in association with Nihilism, Deism, Atheism, and Absurdism as these terms are, in a certain way linked with the concept of Existentialism. Existentialism is therefore a multifaceted term. Existentialism enables us to think out of the box and question every form of authority, to step

into all previously forbidden lands of human thought. Consequently, such inquisitions may lead to a certain level of existential crisis and Nihilism is one of those consequences.

According to Walter Kaufmann, existentialism in very precise words; means that we human beings are alone in this universe and there is no one guarding us from above or someone who is patiently waiting for our come back, after which the great judgment will take place under the authority of the supreme being. Hence, when we are alone in this universe, only we are responsible for our actions and their reactions, though we might be in a very low state but still we can make our way towards heavens (Kaufmann, 1956).

When belief in God is taken from man he/she becomes restless and feels suspended in this infinite universe, without any direction to follow or go, as the belief in God is an inevitable element in making life worth living. With this one enters into a state of existential crises and the same happens with protagonists in *Parasite*, when they stop bothering about any authority in their actions to change their plight situation of extreme poverty in a highly capitalist society.

Apparently, the protagonists in *Parasite* look calm and cool and to certain degree very funny and jolly but deep down in them, are oceans full of great disturbance and turmoil due to the feelings of their indirect collision with system and being victims of the system. The movie, *Parasite* has raised the most important question of human alienation in the modern world. Where all of us are seemingly free making our own choices but internally we suffer from the dilemma of existential angst as modern man tries to challenge the authority of all authorities that deceive him in making him to believe that he is enjoying the utmost freedom of life and choices but in reality its only an illusion of freedom. In fact, the systems are unconsciously dominating us in all walks of our life. It becomes evident when we try to go against the stream.

Whether one believes in God or any other deity or not, the dilemma and perplexity of meaning or an inherent purpose of life still haunts us whenever we try to go deeper into a discussion of belief. Some people may not agree with this or some may believe that the ultimate purpose is to find God within but for others, God might be the answer to their questions. As one of the prominent existentialist philosophers, Jean-Paul Sartre argues about the concept of Existentialism and its relation to God:

Rather, it declares that even if God did exist, that would change nothing. There you have got our point of view. Not that we believe that God exists, but we think that the problem of His existence is not the issue. In this sense existentialism is optimistic, a doctrine of action (Sartre, 2007).

In order to find how the major character in *Parasite* deal with this dilemma of inner crises, the researcher has to explore their state of mind, their actions, and the ultimate consequences of their actions leading them to such grave consequences which were never expected from them and faced them with

irreparable losses. This shows that the hegemony of the system wins in any case even if the life of individuals is risked or taken.

The protagonists of Boon-Joon-hono doubt go through the worst things of their lives but the most unfortunate thing with them is that they could not come out of it successfully, rather they go to the very middle of their crises and are taken to the untimely end of their lives by their very existence. To find the true meaning and purpose of life is totally different from living the true meaning and it is because of escaping this ever-haunting finding, we find an excuse of reaching it and living the true purpose of life. Nietzsche, in his own terms, has put this phenomenon as: "You have your way, I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist" (Myrant, 2009, p. 31).

According to Nietzsche and Heidegger, 'art' and 'artist' are intrinsically familiar and accessible forms of life (Pattison, 2000, p. 69). Heidegger; puts his approach to art in five very pregnant statements: firstly, art is clearly the simplest configuration of "will to power", art must be understood and grasped only in terms of the artists, and similarly, art is the existence of all beings, lastly but more importantly, art exceeds truth (Heidegger, Nietzsche, 1991, p. 75). Artist and art being an accessible and familiar form of life implies that artist has the capacity of experiencing the existence of things around him in the best possible way and life is the closest thing we experience by 'Being' and being an artist is the most perspicuous mode of life an artist lives. Drawing on Heidegger's stance that, art assumes the form of the vanguard of "will to power" as the quintessential element of 'Being' is will to power (Pattison, 2000).

Heidegger, further goes to explain that artist always lies closer at the central point of creativity and therefore occupies a central position and it is from his position that all other aspects and facets of will-to-power are to be considered and observed. As the artist cannot be isolated from the process of his creation by being inseparable from what he/she is bringing-forth and which gives birth to the brought-forth means a piece of art, one can safely locate him in the image of the new creator which Heidegger terms as the artistic philosopher. This creator, being a philosopher has self-awareness and is fully awakened (Heidegger, Nietzsche, 1991, p. 73).

According to Hubben, man earnestly guards and takes care of his sense of security in reassuring to live a superficial life and when anything threatens it, is thrown to the subconscious mind. Ultimately they lose their connection with soul. The soul then remains only a thin boundary line between their superficial existence and the deep world of dangerous learning, as he puts it in the following word:

Obsessed by the material world he wishes to master, concerned only with the practical problems, he no longer sees the totality of his soul and interprets himself in the light of categories he has created to make his environment subserve his needs (Hubben, 1952, p. 145).

Thus, in the materialistic world the existence of individuals is reduced to mere things and objects just like commodities and because of the consistent reorientation and reorganization of their conscious self, a phase comes in life when they no longer afford to identify their own true being as they become totally impersonal of their original person. Same is the story of Boon-jo-ho's protagonists in *Parasite*. Their material circumstance have let them to their total alienation and they no longer can recognize their true self as they do not know who they are.

Jean Paul Sartre was the first philosopher giving the concept of Atheistic Existentialism but was not alone in this new dimension, his other contemporary writers like Albert Camus, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Simone de Beauvoir also focus on it as the central theme of their works. Existentialist philosophers surmise that presence goes before quintessence, in other words it means that "Existence Precedes Essence". Crowell puts this in his own words as follows:

The tension between the individual and the public; an emphasis on the worldly or 'situated' character of human thought and reason; a fascination with liminal experiences of anxiety, death, the 'nothing' and nihilism; the rejection of science and above all causal explanation as an adequate framework for understanding human being; and the introduction of 'authenticity' as the notion of self-identity, tied to the project of self-definition through freedom, choice, and commitment (Crowell, 2012).

Jean-Paul Sartre further argues on what he means by saying that existence precedes essence, that man first comes into existence, encounters himself, surges up in the world, and afterwards defines himself. If a man as the existentialists sees him, is not definable, it is because in the beginning he is nothing or he begins with nothing. He will not be anything until later, and then he will be what he makes of himself. Thus there is no human nature, because there is no God to have a conception of it. Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism, for we mean to say that man primarily exists- that man is, before all else, something which propels itself towards a future and is aware that is doing so (Sartre, 2007).

Existentialism is the experience of a living being in two ways dealing with the situations in which he finds himself and the unchanging desire of the being to go beyond that situation. According to Maurice Natanson, an American philosopher,

Existentialism emerges as a deeply felt concern with and for the concrete reality of the individual; it is his existence that is vital, and it is he who must define himself. It is no longer possible to lose oneself in the system or hope to reveal existence by analytic procedures used in the investigation of "life" or the "cosmos". The individual as such, in his unique subjectivity, in his personal existence, is at stake; and existentialism holds that the essence of a person may not be revealed by references to a theory of man or any religious interpretation that speaks of man prior to and apart from his actual existence. (Natanson, 1951)

The importance of subjectivity cannot be denied as things do not happen to an individual without a reason, the subject needs to understand them, react and plan his next movements according to the occurrence and results of those things. That's how his life will satisfy his needs and answers. The same issue of human prior existence has been laid lucid by another prominent name in the realm of existentialism, namely Soren Kierkegaard, in his own term he says as follows:

if a plan is coming into being, is changed, it is not this plan that comes into being but if it comes into being unchanged, what is the nature of the change by which it comes into being? This change is clearly not a change in essence, but in being. But this non-being which the subject of becoming leaves behind must itself have some sort of being (Leddy, 1957).

Jean-Paul Sartre in another place says about existentialism, "it puts every man in possession of himself as he is and places the entire responsibility for his existence squarely upon his own shoulders". (Sartre, 2007) This is where existentialism gives a degree of freedom as one has the right to decide things for his life therefore, he also holds the responsibility for all the consequences and hence sole person accountable for things that happens to him.

Albert Camus a French philosopher linked life to absurdity, as Camus defined the absurd as the futility of tiresome search for any meaning and purpose in an infinitely incomprehensible universe, devoid of God, or meaning. In his famous piece about the philosophy of the absurd, *The Myth of Sisyphus* Camus says:

I leave Sisyphus at the foot of the mountain! One always finds one's burden again. But Sisyphus teaches the higher fidelity that negates the gods and raises rocks. He too concludes that all is well. This universe henceforth without a master seems to him neither sterile nor futile. Each atom of that stone, each mineral flake of that night-filled mountain, forms a world. The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy" (Camus, 1942).

Camus says that there is an absence of harmony between what we want from this world and what this world has to offer. This conflict also refers to a disturbance between the inner self and outer world as there is no connection of meaning between the two thus instead of becoming something fruitful it becomes a medium of chaos. Camus also proposed three stages to deal with the 'absurd' the first one is "physical suicide" the symbol of death and ending this absurd life. The second one is "philosophical suicide" which means following or believing in an ideology or religion that could make you stay away from the philosophical inquiry of your existence, and the third one is "accepting the absurdity of this world and going for the things the world has to offer." But this third option shall also be a revolt against all the determined existing rules and making a way out of it for yourself. The first two options were of no inner satisfaction to Camus because of their absurd nature and therefore he preferred the third option.

Friedrich Nietzsche; puts this ever-haunting problem of the modern man in relation to the material world around him in his beautiful and poetic way. He argues that man has broken all his unseen chains of religion, theology, and morality as he has reached such an extent of his intellect that any system of thought and belief is unable to give him his meaning and purpose of life. It means that he has taken himself out of the fictional world of religion and henceforth, he has to decide all his matters himself without consulting any authority. He puts it in the following poetic words of him:

God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him. How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to appear worthy of it? (Nietzsche, 1882).

Existentialists may seem to be atheists but some of them are theistic existentialists, and they deny that God made this universe with any particular purpose in mind, so for them, God may exist but his involvement in giving our life meaning or guide us is not part of his powers. With God being removed from the picture, morality and virtues also lose their foot, and therefore, no such qualities are appreciated or inculcated in people as a result life becomes wild and hostile as Albert Camus said, "The literal meaning of life is whatever you are doing that prevents you from killing yourself" (Sharma, 2015).

In light of the above review, the researcher has tried to examine the Korean movie *Parasite*, its themes, and characters through the perspective of existentialism. The protagonists in *Parasite* also suffer from the same dilemma of existence as are unable to truly adjust themselves to the system and structure of the modern materialist society and there comes a time when keeping all such things as religion and morality aside and try their best to create their own world as they all were quite capable but in the end the face the same absurdity and meaninglessness of life like feeling suspended in this dark universe. The basic questions of the study remain as, to explore the traits of existentialism in the protagonists of the movie and how do the protagonists of Bong Joon-ho become victims of their existential crisis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The research methodology of the paper is qualitative in nature. Qualitative methods like description, interpretation, and definitions are used in the analysis of the script and movie, in answering the research questions, and in concluding the argument. Each primary source has been thoroughly read and analyzed and the related instances have been noted down. Secondary resources like books, research articles, and other relevant material on the internet have been assessed.

In conducting a literary criticism, a text, script, or any piece of literature is reproduced by the reader or analyst while approaching the thing from a different or new perspective. This involvement between the text and the

analyst remains reflexive and contemplative. According to Ronald Barthes; the relation between the signified and the signifier is not only denotative rather in its connotative relations it also refers to associations that are socio-cultural, emotional and figurative. Therefore, deciphering of meaning is also an interpretation of the text under study (Barthes, 1967).

Furthermore, this work lies in the academic category of textual analysis as the researcher has focused on understanding the causes of existential crises of Bong Joon-ho's protagonists in the *Parasite* movie, using different tools of textual analysis. The phenomenon of existentialism in the movie has been explored from the perspective of existentialist philosophers like Soren Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Albert Camus, and Jean-Paul Sartre.

In simple words, existentialism could be defined as the independence of man in almost every aspect of life. Existentialists basically deny any meaning of life given or taken from any outside sources and systems. Therefore, they are of the opinion that it is the task of individuals to give meaning to their lives; and make their own choices and decisions with the responsibility solely on their own shoulders about all the outcomes. This existentialist point of view has many sides as it is linked with absurdism, nihilism, and other movements that talk about human independence and breaking the shackles of destiny in one way or another.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The South Korean movie *Parasite* made directed by Bong Joon-Ho, highlights the existential crises of a very poor family, the Kims. Members of the family hardly manage to make both ends meet. The Kim family consists of five members, Kim Ki-taek who is the father and head of the family followed by Kim Chun-sook who is the mother, Ki-woo their son, and Ki-jung their daughter. They lived in the basement of a house that is in devastating condition, at the very same time they were in a continuous struggle to change their financial situation by making pizza boxes in which they couldn't make much revenue.

However, the opportunity soon knocked at their door when a friend of Ki-woo came to him and offered him a stone which he quotes is a philosopher's stone, "given to him by his grandfather and is famous for bringing good fortune to the person who kept it." Alongside this stone, his friend also offered him to tutor one of his previous students of a highly rich family, which he could not continue himself because of going abroad for his studies.

After faking himself to be a university student and forging documents for himself, he got a tutoring job at Mr. Park's family as Kevin. The Park family consists of four members, Nathan Park the father, his wife, Da-song their younger son, and Park Da-hye their daughter. Once Ki-woo gained the trust of the Park family, soon he alongside his family replaced all employees of the Park family by blackmailing and deceiving. Firstly he introduced his sister Ki-jung as Jessica, an art teacher for Da-song. Then induced his father as a driver for the Park family after removing the previous one by Parks, and Chung-sook his mother as a housekeeper and helper in the Park family.

This shows that they have reached such a level of poverty and scarcity that they have unconsciously forgotten everything like morality, norms, and human values. They did not bother about any such thing while relieving every employee of the Park's family through faking, blackmailing, and selfishness. They have been totally alienated by their financial circumstances and have left their true selves far away behind them. Now, every one of them was in utter existential crisis struggling hard to make their survival possible. For which they did not care about any rules regulations and authority.

Soon they started living a short termed luxurious life as they all were paid well which fulfilled their dream. Once the Park family was out for a picnic trip and the Kim family was in complete charge of the home, that night they drank a lot and shared their suppressed feelings and thoughts with each other as a matter-of-fact Ki-woo shared his personal story with his family that how Park Da-Hye was in love with him and that soon he would have her. However, soon their time of enjoyment came to an end when the old ex-housekeeper Moon-gwang knocked at the door, insisting that she had left something behind while she was leaving and had returned to take a hold of that thing. She was allowed an entry and she went to the basement. Chung-sook followed her and to her utmost surprise she found out that there in the basement lived Moon-gwang's husband Guen-sae. The old housekeeper asked for Chung-sook's mercy to keep her secret and to let her husband live in the basement which Chung-sook denied. However, after sometime, the Kims themselves were exposed to Moon-gwang, when she saw the scattered food and empty bottles of wine on the floor. Moon-gwang threatened to expose everything to the Park's family if they do not allow her to come and feed her ill husband in the basement.

During this scene, the Park family's was trip cut short because of a storm and they intended to come back. Things got worse as a fight erupted between the two groups present at home. Moon-gwang and her husband were once again locked in the basement and during the fight a concussion caused Moon-gwang lost her life. The park family reaches home still the Kims were able to take hold of the situation. This shows that during their existential crises the Kims are making all wrong and dangerous choices and decisions which face them with devastating consequences, multiplying their troubles but as they are not in their true senses they do not understand as if they are unable to face the absurd.

Kims, the downtrodden family were living in an ugly underground floor, at night due to heavy rains, the whole water flooded into their basement and they found themselves swimming in the water at night. They shifted to a nearby park to spend their night there and took the same stone which was gifted to them by a family friend. Jim ki was lying beside his Ki-woo under the open sky and Ki-woo had that mysterious rock-shaped stone with him. His father came closer to him and secretly engaged him in a conversation, convincing Ki-woo for the grave action of killing Guen-sae with the same stone and that would be the perfect use of this stone according to his father. Here, again we see that they have stopped bothering about anything and that so-called old token of gift, which according to their friend attracts good luck, turns to be their bad luck as they seem free but they are in fact, totally out of their control.

It is evident that they all have sensed the absurdity of the system and authority which had never favored them, though all these poor family members were highly skilled and committed people. In the core of their hearts, they had felt it that their days are not going to change and the shackles of the system are unbreakable and this took them to their instinctual level.

The next day, when Parks had arranged a luxurious birthday party for their son, the most gruesome actions took place. The junior Kim, Ki-woo had that gifted stone in a bag and that evil suggestion of his father in his mind to kill Guen-sae (the basement dweller) with it. But Guen-sae, (the basement dweller), was already revengeful and cautious, as Kims had killed his wife, (the ex-housekeeper). As Ki-woo was very nervous because killing someone was not as easy as forging documents, although they all had buried down the so-called morality and fear of authority and consequences, then too, it was very challenging for him and in this state of ambivalence, the stone slipped down from his hands and Guen-sae took the opportunity, left the stone and ran after Ki-woo. Right in front of the basement door, he catches Ki-woo and hits his head with a heavy blow of the stone which leaves him bleeding, however, he ultimately survives. Here, if we think, their existential crises have reached to such an extent that they do not understand as what exactly makes them kill each other. It is to snatch a job of giving services to the wealthy Parks from one another and there can be nothing small for such highly skilled and genius people than giving services to wealthy people. In terms of Jean-Paul Sartre, they are trying to embrace the absurdity of life and system but at the expense of their own life because of the highly complicated and unbreakable nature of the system in which on one side a person possesses everything he dreams, rather hundred times more than he needs and on the other, another person cannot afford a shelter and a daily meal. In this regard, Parasite is a hard punch in the face of the absurdity and irrationality of the modern economical system and the configuration of modern day's social structure, in which disparity of the haves and have not has reached an alarming point.

Guen-sae then, takes a bottle of precious wine from a cupboard full of dozens of bottles and drinks it in his indecent manner, then takes a sharp knife from the kitchen, goes out to the party scene, having a ghost-like appearance, seeing him, the young boy Da-song falls unconsciousness. He then directly goes after Ki-Jung when she was taking the birthday cake to the table and stabs her in the heart, and she starts bleeding and ultimately dies. Chung-sook, seeing her daughter taking her last breaths takes a long Bar BQ metal skewer and spears Guen-sae with it. Mr. Park in the midst of this whole chaos seems to look for the keys of his car to take his son to the hospital but his lack of emotions towards other people at the scene made Ki-taek furious and in reaction to his very selfish attitude Ki-taek gets up and kills Nathan Park with the same knife, Ki-Jung has been killed with.

This scene shows that however, the difference in wealth between poor and rich may be, they still depend on one another for their life and better survival. But neither the rich nor the poor can understand this reality because of the blind and absurd nature of the system. When the ghost of hunger, depravity and suppressed consciousness breaks out of its prison, it can endanger and

sabotage everything. So, while having a surface view of the movie we see Kims as parasites because they infiltrate a rich family in a highly cunning and illegal way but by having a deeper look at the inner structure, one can come to know that the real parasites are Parks and the like, who have accumulated an unreasonable amount of wealth and resources by exploiting the lower class in numerous ways just to live a super luxurious life and possess everything they can dream of, ignoring the plight situation of lower class people.

Similarly, when Ki-woo is taken to hospital, he undergoes brain surgery and when he comes back to his senses, he starts continuously laughing without any pause. Doctors believe that his nonstop laugh is because of his brain damage but actually, he was laughing at the absurdity of life and the system. He was thinking about that event of bloodshed and so many other stupid and foolish things he and his family had done just what for, they are still the wretched poor. Everything was looking meaningless and purposeless to him even the very life because their actions were all suicidal. The question is why they reached such an extreme level of affairs when highly committed family members who are otherwise very innocent but they snatch the jobs of another poor family and then start murdering them and it ends after three people from the lower and one head of the upper-class family die. What does all this mean? Does it make any sense? The only answer is absurdity and meaninglessness.

When the crime scene ends, and everything is settled the authorities start looking for Jim Ki-taek but he is found nowhere. Ki-woo recovers after brain surgery. He and his mother are both convicted of fraud and put on probation. They move back to their old underground apartment and start living there, however, Ki-woo keeps on spying on the Park's family home, which is now purchased by a German family who didn't know about its history. Through the Morse code, he gets to know that his father is alive and is living in the very same basement of Park's house. Ki-woo writes a letter to his father that he aims to earn enough money in the future so that he could buy that house and set his father free and reunite with him. Ki-woo, a talented child but deprived of education and basic needs can just make such aspirations that can never be fulfilled.

In the very beginning, the Kim family is eagerly looking for the lost signals of Wi-Fi which belongs to their neighbor, they use it without their permission which shows the influence of modern technology on human beings. In fact, technology facilitates life but the basic thing is affordability. It makes us believe that despite not having anything else in life we have a strong dependency on Wi-Fi. We always want to get connected with the virtual world forgetting everything else. As Ki-taek says in the very first scene, "So we're all gathered here today to celebrate the reconnection of our phones, and this bounteous Wi-Fi". (Parasite, 2019) The importance of Wi-Fi is far greater than all the other necessities of food and water or even shelter at times.

When Jim Ki-taek was motivating his son for the gruesome act of killing the basement dweller in the Park's house, just to bury the hatchet, he tells his son, "You know what kind of plan never fails? No plan. No plan at all. You know why? Because life cannot be planned. Look around you. Did you think these

people made a plan to sleep in the sports hall with you? But here we are now, sleeping together on the floor. So, there's no need for a plan. You can't go wrong with no plans. We don't need to make a plan for anything. It doesn't matter what will happen next. Even if the country gets destroyed or sold out, nobody cares. Got it?" (Parasite, 2019).

This basically indicates the absurdness of life in every particular way, as Camus says "there is a significant difference between what we want from this universe and what this universe has to offer" (Camus, 1946). This is the meaninglessness of life that the existentialists talk about that there is no collective meaning to anything rather we have to give meaning to everything that we do. This absurdity can also be seen in the cycle of the Kim family's short interval of life as an elite class. Once they all are inducted into the Park's family as servants, they gain complete control of that house but soon after they are snapped back to their previous position and it feels as if nothing changed after going through such horrible situations, in which four people got killed and one family totally perished but the system remains as such as it was before.

CONCLUSION

The Kim's family, which already lives in abject poverty and very hardly manages their meals by doing a boring unattractive job of preparing pizza boxes, which does not match the skills and genius of any family member but they are forced to do it for their staying alive. Living in an ugly basement, all jobless intellectuals, deprived of very basic needs, it becomes clear to them that they are no more needed in this society, with this they realize that their reason for existence is no more there and that is why when they get a chance of a job in a wealthy family, Ki-woo is still unable to get it the socially, morally and legally right way as he has no formal education, although he is quite competent for the job. That is why he throws away every such barrier, becoming free of all such things, in a sense embracing the absurdity, forges his documents, and gets the job. Then, when once they discarded every norm of society, they are ready for going that way further and further, becoming parasitical to the wealthy. They have become socially alienated and self-estranged with no purpose of their existence because a healthy and sound existence necessitates the full expression of ego, dreams, and desires, and the suppression of either of them leads to un-being.

Despite, the strenuous struggle and good working capacities of Kims they in the end face failure and become the same deserted family, showing the useless and continuous struggle undertaken by the modern common man to find the reason for his existence, meaning, and truth in the world around him and in fact there is none. The significant question of freedom, which Bong-Joon-ho indirectly tackles. Looking from one side, man is condemned to be free and on the side, he is denied absolute freedom as there are many restrictions and barriers to his freedom, like the social, political, religious institutions, the laws of nature, and most importantly God's control as dictated by these institutions. The existentialist philosophers argue that existentialism strives to break free human will from all these chains. But man is again condemned to undergo a never-ending struggle of going against the authority of these institutions and

ideologies to liberate himself. This strenuous and incessant struggle takes him to nihilism and encounters nothingness as a result of social alienation and estrangement. The characters of the movie, are, therefore, torn apart by the unavoidable and inescapable duties in this world of contradictions, where they inwardly realize that life as a whole along with its meaning and purpose is besieged and encircled by nothingness, though a common man by several means tries or is forced to try to forget about this dragon of nothingness otherwise it eats him up. The protagonists of *Parasite*, the lower class character realize the fact of their existence that the punishment of life itself is longer and greater than death, then why fear death or killing someone else.

To sum up, existentialists believe that life itself is meaningless, and therefore, a man must find meaning in the absurd universe by coming into terms with the absurd. The same is the case with the characters of *Parasite* as things started on a negative note and ended abruptly without any defining moment or proper farewell. The lack of meaning existed throughout most of the scenes which leave the audience in such a state of mind where they themselves have to make their own conclusions and ending to the movie.

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