

## A semiotic landscape analysis of the film posters: Parasite, Mother and Whiplash

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to discuss the film posters of *Parasite*, *Mother* and *Whiplash* through semiotic landscape. The analyses have been based on Halliday's Functional Grammar (1985) and, Kress and van Leeuwen's Visual grammar (2020). The film *Parasite* has been analysed within the actional and classificational processes, whereas the film *Mother* has been examined within the reactional and analytical processes and the film *Whiplash* has been investigated through the speech and mental processes, and the symbolic processes. The film posters have been also discussed in terms of the descriptive and connotative meanings, as well as the significance of colours in conveying emotions and cultural meanings. Besides, the widespread use of disguised symbols has been identified in film posters. This study sheds light on the influence of visual discourse analysis on film posters, emphasizing the study of semiotics and visual communication in a media-dominated society.

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### Introduction

In this new era, people are able to access information about films using digital devices, such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, kiosk or smart interactive displays for the film posters, plot, casting, and setting. Prospective viewers use such devices to access film posters to decide on which film can be worth watching. Therefore, this study dwells on the film posters in the digital era through the eyes of semiotic landscape. Semiotic landscape includes discursive elements in communication, such as pictures and body language. In this context, semiotic landscape possesses a wider area compared to linguistic landscape. Semiotic landscape deals with the visual settings in daily life, including photos, symbols or drawings (Pesch, 2021). Kress and van Leeuwen (2010) define the semiotic landscape as follows:

The place of visual communication in a given society can only be understood in the context of, on the one hand, the range of forms or modes of public communication available in that society and, on the other hand, their uses and valuations. We refer to this as the semiotic landscape (p. 344).

Semiotics analyses how meaning is created and conveyed through signs. As in this century social media dominates the world, visual components are utilized rather than speech. Emojis are intriguing, since they convey hundreds of messages only with a single symbol. Images consist of various media channels in advertisements, TV series, film posters and photographs. Film posters incorporate numerous visual elements as well as disguised concepts and symbols.

### **Literature Review**

Communication through sources such as images, clothing, and food is linked to language, with images having multiple interpretations. However, visual representation lacks a clear definition due to its multiple signified concepts; language acts as a saviour in this challenge by clarifying the meaning. (Barthes, 1977). On the other hand, it is stated that Barthes' explanation overlooks the fact that the visual elements of a text are its independent nature and organized message, related to the verbal text but not dependent on it, which also applies to the verbal text concerning the visual perspective (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020). Considering that visual discourse is a field still following the stages of development, this research aims to adopt a holistic point of view. Since film posters convey a wide range of elements, such as colour, context, language, and composition, it is crucial to reflect on the film posters' distinctive features from different semiotic perspectives. Semiotic perspectives can be reached through different types of meaning.

There are eight types of meaning, such as descriptive, affective, social, connotative, reflected, collocative, thematic and representational. Descriptive meaning is the status of the affairs. For example, there is someone lecturing in this room. In this context, the statement above describes a situation directly. Affective meaning refers to the display of the speaker's mood, attitude, and feeling through interjections, intonation,

or choice of words. Social meaning conveys information about the social circumstances in language use through dialects, time, status, modality, province, or singularity. Dialects depend on the regions, time is associated with the language of the target century, status deals with whether the language is colloquial or formal, modality is the language of instant response, and singularity refers to a specific style of a writer. Connotative meaning is to evoke a typical characteristic of the referents. Reflected meaning deals with what is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression. Collocative meaning is the association a word acquires on account of the meanings of words that tend to occur in its setting. Thematic meaning refers to the communication by how the message is organized in terms of order, focus, and emphasis. Representational meaning is one of the semiotic components in visual communication. It is divided into narrative and conceptual representations. Labov's (1972) narrative model is closely related to narrative representations. These representations include one or more vectors that create different lines. For instance, a person waving to another demonstrates a vectoral structure. Conceptual representations do not involve vectors and convey the participants more generalized, stable, and timeless rather than narrative representations. Conceptual representations are classified into three kinds of structures: classificational process, analytical process, and symbolic process. These film posters are discussed in terms of classificational, analytical, and symbolic perspectives. Classificational processes are associated with hyponymy between the participants. Certain participants take part as subordinate or superordinate in the classificational process. Two structures of taxonomies are present in the process: overt taxonomy and covert taxonomy. Overt taxonomies consist of obvious superordinate, which are chained between each other. However, in covert taxonomies, subordinates possess a co-classified symmetrical organization, equal distance and size between one another.

The analytical process is another process of conceptual representations. This process includes meronymy in the images, which refers to a constituent part of a whole structure. The analytical process consists of two components: Carrier and possessive attributes. Carrier represents the whole, whereas possessive attributes portray the parts. Analytical structures do not involve any symmetrical structures or vectors. For instance, the map of Australia can be regarded as the carrier, whereas the aboriginal nations in the country become possessive attributes (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020).

Symbolic processes visually identify and classify participants based on their identity, role, or significance. As de Saussure introduces the terms sign, signified, and signifier, sign subsumes signified and signifier. Signified is defined as a concept, whereas signifier acts as a material. Signifier is identified with sensory abilities and senses. Signified is interpreted according to concepts peculiar to specific cultures or individuals. Symbolic process refers to the item reflecting on its meaning or existence. The symbolic process is divided into four structures: Attributive, suggestive, open, and disguised (Panofsky, 1970). One or more participants are present in the symbolic processes. Carrier and symbolic attributes are the participants. When the image includes the carrier and the symbolic attribute, it is named an attributive structure. When the image consists of only one carrier with the meaning the structure becomes suggestive. The symbolic attribute objectifies the meaning by transmitting it to the carrier, creating an attributive structure, whereas suggestive structures involve only one carrier as a participant. In other words, attributive structures ascribe the meaning or identity to the carrier through an object. However, suggestive structures convey the meaning by originating from the carrier itself. Suggestive symbolism has been used on social media through Instagram users' various filters.

Narrative representations are divided into three processes: action process, reactional process, speech and mental process. The action process consists of two components which are named the actor and the goal. The actor is the main element of the image, it depicts several characteristics, such as sharpness, size, composition, and colour. The goal is named as the less active component of the image by size and composition. The illustrations that depict actions with only a single participant involved, that person is referred to as an actor, whereas a goal does not exist in the composition, which is a non-transactional structure. (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020).

The other narrative representation is the reactional process. The reactional process is created by the vector formed by the direction of the gaze of one or more participants. Two participants are present in the reactional process: the reactor and the phenomenon (Halliday, 1985). Reactor is the person looking at the phenomenon. The reactor must be a human with a facial expression and eyes that can stare at the phenomenon in the frame. It is possible to have more than one phenomenon in the frame.

Besides, a transactional structure or the reactor is able to constitute the phenomenon or any other participant in the frame.

Speech process and mental process is the other narrative representation that will be elaborated in this study. The speech and mental processes involve two elements in the visuals: thought bubble and the speech bubble. The former is called the senser, while the latter is considered the speaker. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) specify that speech or thought bubbles are used to be displayed only in comic strips as a unique vector that connect illustrations of characters speaking or thinking. However, they further state that those bubbles are being used widely in kiosks of banks in the modern world.

Besides, the posters have been analysed in terms of colours. Colours have culturally defined connotations, and black signifies mourning in the West, while white is associated with mourning in Japan (Lagopoulos & Boklund-Lagopoulou, 2020). As stated earlier, suggestive symbolism conveys the disguised concepts in the visual structures through a single participant, which becomes both carrier and attribute. In this respect, suggestive symbolism has been widely used on social media. Users have been sharing numerous filters, particularly on Instagram. For example, the mayfair filter heats the photo, or the hudson filter cools the photo (Messieh, 2018).

Film posters are selected among those which emphasize human values conveying different social messages to the public, such as justice, perseverance, humanitarianism, exclusion, and responsibility. This study aims at discussing and interpreting the film posters of *Parasite*, *Mother* and *Whiplash* through semiotic landscape. Within this context, the following research questions were identified:

1. How do film posters reveal visual communication?
2. To what extent is the plot of the films reflected through film posters in terms of semiotic analysis?

### **Method**

The following films the plots of which are completely different from one another have been analysed according to the semiotic landscape. We have discussed the films according to the descriptive and connotative meanings.

## Participants

Parasite is a drama film released in 2019 in South Korea which illustrates the social class distinction between two families from different backgrounds. There are two families, the Kim and the Park, with four people each. Bong Joon-Ho is the director of Parasite. Bong Joon-Ho's Parasite, inspired by the rich house where he tutored in his youth to earn money, is the first Korean film to win the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 2019. The Kim family folds cardboard pizza boxes to make ends meet. A friend of the family's son Ki-woo, Min, brings them a large stone, and his grandfather believes that the families who own the stones will become rich. Ki-woo's friend gives private English lessons to Da-Hye, the young daughter of the wealthy Park family. However, since he is going to study abroad, he wants Ki-woo to tutor her in English and take care of her. Ki-woo's sister Ki-jung creates a fake university diploma for Ki-woo. Ki-woo, with his friend's reference and a good diploma, goes to the young girl's house for the job interview, meets the girl's mother and gets the job. Da-song, the son of the Park family, emulates the Indians and turns the house into a battlefield and he also paints. The boy's mother tells Ki-woo about her son's mischief. Ki-woo thinks of his sister, but he praises her as a friend of his cousin and tells the woman that she graduated from an art school in the US. Ki-jung, code-named Jessica, goes for the interview and gets the job. The Park family's driver takes Ki-jung home after class, during which Ki-jung gets an idea and takes off her underwear and leaves it on the back seat of the car. Afterward, the Park family fires the driver. Ki-Jung's father, who constantly changed jobs, worked as a valet for a while. Ki-jung praises her father to the Park family's lady, just like Ki-woo praised her, but she introduces her father as her uncle's former driver. The lady of the house agrees to meet the chauffeur because she says that the chain of recommendation is important. Ki-taek, the father of the Kim family, goes for the interview driving a car and gets the job. The Kim family conspires against the woman who has been the Park family's maid for years. Thanks to the Park family's daughter, they find out that the housekeeper is allergic to peaches, so they periodically sprinkle peach fuzz wherever she is. Their father, the driver of the Park family, follows the housekeeper and takes a picture of her as if she was in the background and asks the Park family's wife if this is your housekeeper. Driver tells the woman that he saw the maid in the hospital and that she was diagnosed with tuberculosis. Thus, deceiving the lady of the house, the driver

ensures that the maid, who has been working at home for a long time, is fired. One evening, Dong-ik, the father of the Park family, asks the driver if he knows a good place to eat ribs because their former maid used to cook them very well, but his wife fired her. The driver gives his boss a fictitious business card which is prepared by his children, then says that you can find a maid through this company. The Park family's wife calls the company and talks to the poor family's daughter (Ki-jung), not knowing that she is talking to her. The Kim family's wife gets a job as a maid in the Park family's house. One day, the Park family goes camping and the Kim family organize a party at home. At that time, the old maid of the house knocks on the door and says that she forgot something in the storage room and wants to get it. The new maid lets her in. The old maid goes down from the storage room to a secret shelter and there she is reunited with her husband. Her husband has been living in that shelter for four years because he escaped from loan sharks and the former owner of the house did not tell the Park family that there was a shelter there, but the former maid knows that there is a shelter there because she worked with the previous landlords. Before the Park family bought the house, she had secretly placed her husband in this shelter. The old maid goes down to the shelter, takes the new maid with her and asks her to sneak food to her husband once in a while, offering to pay for it, but the new maid refuses. Meanwhile, other members of the Kim family are eavesdropping on them and slip and fall down the stairs, and the old maid realizes that these family members know each other. The old maid then takes a video of the family members and threatens to send it to the landlords. The Kim family members take the phone from the old maid. Just then, they receive a call from the Park family and tell them that the camp is cancelled and they are about to come home. Before they arrive, the Kim family members forcibly take the former maid and her husband to the shelter. When the owners arrive home, the new maid kicks the old maid when she tries to go up the stairs to the kitchen and she falls down the stairs and is seriously injured. Meanwhile, the head of the Kim family ties up the old maid's husband in the shelter. Members of the Kim family leaves the house secretly. At the Park family's house, there is a birthday party for their son. A *mise-en-scene* is planned for Da-song and some people become Indians while others become his enemies. Ki-woo goes down to the shelter with the big stone seen at the beginning of the film and accidentally drops it down the stairs. Meanwhile, the former maid's husband tries to strangle Ki-woo but

fails. As Ki-woo enters the storage room from the shelter, the man throws the stone at Ki-woo's head, but Ki-woo does not die. Coming out of the shelter, the man stabs Ki-jung to death in the garden and tries to kill the new maid, Ki-jung mother, but the new maid kills him. The Park family's dad asks his driver for the car keys to take his fainting young son away, just as he smells the "poverty" mentioned throughout the film and grimaces. Seeing this, the driver goes and stabs his boss to death. He then goes and hides in the shelter of the house. After a while, Ki-woo recovers and one day, while climbing the mountain opposite the house, he realizes that one of the lights inside the house is blinking and that it is Morse code. He reads the letter his father wrote to him. Then he imagines that he has become very rich, that he has bought that house and that his father has survived and come to them.

The second film *Mother* is released in 2017 in the United States. Darren Aronofsky is the director of *Mother*. The film reveals mystical elements in a couple's house, leading the audience to reflect on the earth's existence. None of the characters in the film has a specific name and the subjects Him and Mother are used for the two leading characters. The film includes the Old Testament descriptions of God's creation of the universe, Adam and Eve, their expulsion from paradise, and the birth of Jesus Christ. Him (as Javier Bardem) is portrayed as a writer but represents God, the Mother (as Jennifer Lawrence) represents Mother Nature, and those who visit Him and Mother represent Adam and Eve, and they are called Man and Woman in the film (Zamanın Ötesi, 2017). At the very beginning of the film, we see a woman staring wide-eyed into the lens as she is about to be incinerated in a blazing fire. A large house has burnt down, and Him, a famous poet, is struggling to write because he cannot find inspiration. Him places a crystal object on a plinth in his study and the building becomes a house. This couple are renovating their house. While painting the house, Mother sometimes feels a beating heart in the walls and thinks she dreams of a baby. One day, a stranger named Man comes to the couple's house, but he thinks it is a hotel and says he is a doctor. Him says that the man can stay in their house, but Mother reluctantly agrees and tells Him that he is a stranger. When Man discovers the crystal seen at the beginning of the film in the house, he is very impressed. Him tells her that he lost everything in a fire when he was little and that he has created everything from the ashes again while holding the crystal in his hand. Later that night, Man feels sick. As Him helps him, Mother sees a

wound on the stranger's back. The next day, Man's wife Woman comes home. Mother is not happy about this, but Him wants the guests to stay. It is later revealed that Man is dying and his dying wish is to meet Him. Woman asks Mother about her private life and breaks into Him's room to see the crystal but Mother forces her out of the room. When Man and Woman enter Him's room and accidentally break the crystal, Him becomes angry and closes the room. Mother tells Man and Woman to leave, but before they can leave, Man and Woman's two sons arrive home and fight over Man's will. The older son, worried about the inheritance, seriously injures the younger. Him wounds the elder brother and leaves a cut on his head. Him, Man and Woman take the injured son to the hospital. As Mother cleans up, she finds strange things in the house, including a mosquito, a frog, and blood that keeps dripping. She follows the blood to a place hidden behind the basement walls. At that moment, the murderer son comes home and leaves immediately. When Him returns home, he tells Mother that the injured son is dead. To mourn the death of their son, Man and Woman come home with their friends. But then things get out of hand and many people come to every room of the house. The visitors' behaviour makes Mother angry, and when they break a sink and flood the house, she gets angry and orders everyone to leave. Later one day, Mother tells Him that she is pregnant. Soon after, Him is inspired and begins to write. Then he finishes his book and Mother reads it and tells Him that it is very good. The book is very well received and Mother wants to celebrate with Him, but the fan in front of the house does not allow it. Mother wants to kick them out, but Him doesn't do that and says he is grateful to the fans. The fans start to burn things down, steal things and damage the house. Military forces arrive at the house and begin to fight the people around Him. Mother is left alone, but eventually Him finds her and takes her to the study to give birth safely. Mother gives birth to a baby boy there. Him says that the crowd outside wants to see the baby, but Mother refuses and asks Him to send them away. But Him says he doesn't want them to go. Then Mother falls asleep and Him takes the baby to the crowd outside. The crowd passes the baby from hand to hand. Mother dives into the crowd and sees people eating the mutilated body of her son and attacks them with a piece of glass. The person who appears to be the leader of the crowd hits Mother on the head and the crowd beats her to death as she falls to the ground. Him then saves Mother and tells her that they must forgive those who killed their son. Mother goes to the oil tank she found earlier in the

basement of the house and sets it on fire. The house and the crowd there are destroyed by the explosion. Him is unharmed by the fire, but Mother is seriously injured. Mother asks Him, "What are you?" Him says, "I am me. You were the house" and says that they have gone back to the beginning. Him tells Mother that he is love and takes out her heart and takes the crystal inside. When he places the crystal on its pedestal, the burnt house becomes a home again. A new Mother appears on the bed and calls out to Him.

The third film, Whiplash is an American drama film released in 2014. Damien Chazelle is the director of the film. Andrew is a freshman at a conservatory in New York and a jazz drummer. While Andrew plays the drums, his music teacher, Terence, enters the hall and tells the young man to keep playing. Then, Andrew is seen in a movie theatre. Later, he is seen assisting the main drummer in an orchestra. Terence, who visits this orchestra, asks the musicians to play short pieces, takes Andrew with him, and leaves the hall. Terence makes Andrew the understudy drummer of the Studio Orchestra. At the first rehearsal that Andrew attends, Terence insults the students. In the second part of the same rehearsal, Andrew cannot keep up with the tempo while playing the drums. Terence gets very angry and throws a chair at Andrew, then slaps and swears at him. Andrew starts to work harder after this humiliation, so much so that his hands are covered in blood. When Andrew is not playing music, he spends time with Nicole, whom he met at the cinema. Meanwhile, the orchestra participates in a jazz competition. After the second part of the competition, Andrew loses the sheet music of the main drummer Tanner. Since Tanner cannot play without notes, Andrew plays the piece by heart instead and succeeds. Thanks to this, Terence makes Andrew the lead drummer. However, after a while, Terence temporarily gives Andrew's job to another drummer named Connolly. Andrew thinks that Nicole, whom he started dating, will be angry with him for not making time for her and break up with her to focus only on music. These events drive Andrew's ambition, and he starts to work harder. Before starting a rehearsal, Terence tells him that a former student named Sean died in a traffic accident. After a long rehearsal, Andrew returns his place from Connolly and Tanner. The next competition is outside the city. The bus Andrew was traveling on breaks down, and he rents a car and goes to rehearsal, but he is late. He also leaves his drumsticks at the car hire office. Andrew argues with Terence and says he will get his drumsticks and return. Terence says that he will dismiss Andrew as the head drummer if he is not there in 10

minutes. Andrew gets into a traffic accident while driving back with the drumsticks. Injured in the head, Andrew still does not give up and runs to the nearby hall and joins the competition as the lead drummer. However, he cannot perform well because he is injured, and the piece is cancelled. Terence expels Andrew from the orchestra and the conservatory. Andrew attacks Terence and swears at him. After a while, the lawyer of Sean Casey's family, whom Andrew meets with, tells him that Sean, the student Terence mentioned earlier, committed suicide by hanging himself, that he was depressed, and that this situation started after he became Terence's student. The lawyer then asks Andrew to testify anonymously against Terence. This gets Terence fired from his job at the Conservatoire. After a while, Andrew sees Terence playing the piano in a pub, and they converse. Terence argues that the teaching style should be strict to motivate his students to succeed. At that meeting, Terence invites Andrew to perform as a drummer at a jazz festival and says that his repertoire consists of pieces that Andrew knows. Andrew accepts this offer and calls Nicole to invite her to the show. However, he learns that Nicole has a new relationship. Just before Andrew's show starts, Terence says that he knows that he is the one who testified and starts the show with a song that Andrew does not know to get revenge on Andrew. Andrew is shocked and walks off the stage. However, he returns and starts playing "Caravan," a song he knows very well. Terence and the other orchestra members have to keep up with him. Andrew also gives a solo performance after the piece is over. After Andrew finishes the piece, Terence smiles and hints that he likes the performance, and the film ends.

### **Instruments**

This study utilizes the approaches proposed by Halliday, Barthes, and de Saussure. Besides, the posters have been analysed within the scope of semiotic landscape, descriptive, and connotative meanings.

### **Data collection and analysis**

Two posters of each film have been analysed to determine whether they reflect the plot appropriately through semiotic elements. This qualitative study is based on a visual communication type in order to display narrative and conceptual representations of the film posters. Additionally, the films have been discussed according to the types of meaning. Besides, those film posters have been analysed in terms of semiotic

representations, such as actional, analytical, classificational, reactional, speech, mental, and symbolic perspectives.

### Findings

The two posters of the film Parasite are examined in terms of the actional process and the classificational process (see Figure A1 & Figure A2 in Appendix). The film primarily portrays two families, one of which is excessively rich, and the other family is poor. The film details the vast socioeconomical distinction between those two classes through several elements, such as the smell and the food. First, Figure A1 is analysed in terms of the actional process. The building in the film's poster acts as an actor, since it is the main element in size and composition. On the other hand, the floors of the building act as a goal because they are less active and occupy less space. A five-story building appears on the poster. According to the classificational process, Figure A1 belongs to covert taxonomy, since it has a symmetrical structure. The primary colours of the first poster (see Figure A1) are dark green and brown. Figure A2 has been analysed in terms of the actional process. It is seen that there are two actors in the poster. One of these actors is the wealthy family, and the other is the poor family. The actors are separated from each other by a stair. In this case, the goal is in the direction of the two actors going up and down the stairs, which the audience cannot see. This situation is called the non-transactional process (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020, p. 59). Besides, Figure A2 is analysed within the classificational process. The poster has a symmetrical structure, and the bottom and top of the staircase are equally separated. Therefore, the poster possesses a covert taxonomy, as the other poster of Parasite (see Figure A1). Figure A2 is analysed in the context of descriptive and connotative meanings. The wealthy family is going up the stairs, and the low-income family is going down the stairs. According to the connotative point of view, it is seen that the wealthy family lives on high floors, and the low-income family lives on lower floors. In the film, the low-income family lives in a basement, and their house is flooded in heavy rain. The wall behind the staircase where the wealthy family goes upstairs is smooth and decorated with paintings. However, the wall in the poor family's house has stains and perhaps cracks. There are also pipes running over the wall and cables hanging down. The main colours of the Figure A2 are red and blue.

The two posters of the film *Mother* are examined in terms of the analytical and reactional processes (see Figures A3 & A4 in the Appendix). When a couple lives happily in their house, mysterious things happen. Figure A3 is analysed within the analytical structure, and the woman's face is the Carrier. It is also revealed that the actress's face is divided into tiny pieces. In other words, the actress's face is cracked like a porcelain doll (Curry, 2017). In addition, the large and small wounds on her face depict the details of the face. The small pieces on the face and the wounds refer to the possessive attribute. Second, the first poster (see Figure A3) is examined within the scope of the reactional process. The reactional process often consists of the reactor and the phenomenon. However, the phenomenon may not be visible in some visuals. As seen in the poster of the film *Mother* (see Figure A3), that is called non-transactional processes, and the woman is the reactor in the poster, the events that take place in the direction she is looking at are left to the viewers' imagination (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020, p. 62). Another poster of the film *Mother* (see Figure A4) is also analysed in terms of analytical and reactional processes.

The analytical process indicates that Figure A4 has two participants. While the main character of the film seen in the poster acts as Carrier, since she represents the whole, the parts that make up the whole of this woman (i.e., the plants hanging around her, the heart she holds in her hand, the white dress, etc.) act as Possessive Attribute. As specified for another poster of the film *Mother* (see Figure A3), Figure A4 involves only the reactor within the reactional process, since the audience is unable to see where the woman is looking (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020, p. 62).

The two posters of *Whiplash* have been analysed in terms of symbolic process, and speech and mental processes (see Figure A5 & A6 in Appendix). It is seen that there is a drum and drumstick in the Figure A5. The symbolic process reveals that the drum in the film poster becomes the carrier, whereas drumsticks are the symbolic attribute for everlasting struggles of Andrew against Terence. This first poster of the film involves an attributive structure, since the meaning is conveyed through the object (i.e., drum) to the carrier (i.e., young musician). On the other hand, Figure A5 is analysed in terms of the speech and mental processes. The statement suffering is the soul of greatness in the poster could be considered the film's main idea. In this context, this statement is

characterized as a thought bubble. In this case, that statement at the top of the poster becomes the senser. Halliday (1985) proposes that this process is called 'projection' and indicates that the 'mental clause' addresses a different clause called the 'idea clause' to reflect the thinking, asking, believing, and so on (p. 254). Figure A6 has been analysed in terms of the symbolic process. In the poster, the carrier is the music teacher Terence, while the symbolic attribute is the drumstick held by Andrew. Because Terence's head and the drumstick are facing the same direction in a vectoral way and it is as if the man is hitting the drum with his head. According to speech and mental process, the thought bubble in Figure A6 is the structure of the man's mouth because his mouth looks tightly closed. The wrinkles on the man's neck symbolize hard conversations between Terence and Andrew. Besides, the cymbals are tilted towards Andrew and seem to be looking at him, but Andrew is looking at the drums.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

Muhammad and Radithya Alfadjari (2021) analysed the poster of the Parasite (see Figure A2). They found out that climbing and descending stairs in the poster indicate the difference between prosperity and poverty, since the rich family is fulfilled and always goes upstairs to reach their house and remain rich, whereas the low-income family always goes downstairs to get to their home and remain poor. It is seen that there is a stone in the hands of the boy from the low-income family. Muhammad and Radithya Alfadjari (2021) further state that this stone is called the Philosopher's Stone and symbolizes financial aid, and the stone is shown as a solution to bring wealth to that low-income family.

The two posters of Parasite have been discussed in terms of semiotic landscape. First of all, the colours of Figure A1 have been analysed. Dark green represents depressed mood and fatigue in terms of negative qualities, whereas brown may depict inconsistency and insafety (Kırık, 2014). Besides, Kandinsky (1912) specifies that artworks that depict shades of green are inactive and tedious, and green represents the summer season when natural elements recuperate from harsh winter conditions. Kandinsky further emphasizes that the colour brown is motionless and insensitive. In this respect, the dark green colour wastewater in the poster shows that low-income family has financial and health problems. The colour brown may symbolize that the family does not have a bright future. Consequently, green and brown both depict

immobility. Thus, the still and turbid water in the film's poster refers to immobility and ambiguity. Figure A2 analysed in terms of colours and it has been found out that red symbolizes danger and a clear stop (Wylar, 1992, p. 139; Wierzbicka, 2006). In this context, the bright red may indicate dangerous events for the low-income family. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary defines blue as "the colour of a clear sky or the sea on a clear day." Hardin (1988) also indicates that water will look blue if it is a clear day (p. 4). Thus, blue may be regarded as a crystal-clear life of the wealthy family.

Posters of the film *Parasite* correspond to the film's plot. First of all, the parasite may give the impression that the poor feed on the rich or vice versa. Figure A1 has been analysed in terms of descriptive meaning and it is revealed that the wealthy family has a two-story and smooth house. On the other hand, the basement of the lower-class family's house is flooded with turbid water, while the other two floors are full of cracks and cables. The low-income family members try to climb the upper floors. From a connotative point of view, the fact that the wealthy family's house is on the upper floors depicts that they lead a safe life away from danger. However, the lower-class family's roof is damaged, the basement is flooded with wastewater. Therefore, they try to climb the house without taking any precautions, which depicts that they deal with a dangerous and disaster-prone life (Shobrina et al., 2022). Besides, Figure A1 illustrates the socio-economic difference between the two families with a building. The exterior of the top two floors of the building in the poster is smooth, and this representation is displayed in the film's plot, since the wealthy family has no financial problems and lives an almost perfect life. On the other hand, the poster reveals that the low-income family living on the lower floors owns a worn apartment with cables hanging from the walls and a flooded basement. Besides, the young members of the Kim family is trying to invade the other family in Figure A1. In this context, the poster's details overlap with the film's plot, since it is seen in the film that their house is dirty and floods when it rains. As seen in Figure A2, the Park family's son in American Indian costume in *mise-en-scène* with the war of enemies, signifying that there would be a conflict in the building as a semiotic landscape. Da-song, the son of the house, painted the picture shown on the poster, and this painting is similar to the style of Pablo Picasso because Picasso's paintings symbolise the western world, are expensive and indicate wealth. The daughter of the house, on the other hand, is engrossed in her smartphone and seems to be unaware of

what is going on. Besides, in Figure A2, the class differences in the film are inverted with the title of the film. The reason why the card with the name of the film's director is in the hand of Sun-Kyun, the father of the Park family, may be that the director associates his own life story with the father character in the film. Lastly, in Figure A2, it is seen that there are pipes running over the wall and cables hanging down, which may depict the challenge of life conditions of the low-income family. In addition, the two members of the low-income family at the top of the stairs look down in confusion and seem anxious about what awaits them.

The two posters of *Mother* have been analysed within the semiotic landscape. The word *mother* has an exclamation mark and may refer to two concepts. First, it may reflect mother nature's importance, significance, and supremacy. Second, it may indicate the rising tone of the utterance in terms of prosodic phonology. Firstly, the posters of *Mother* have been discussed in terms of colour symbols. Lagopoulos and Boklund-Lagopoulou (2020) state that red symbolizes various concepts, from passion to danger and blood. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) also argue that red refers to life, since it is the colour of blood. In Figure A3, wounds are seen on the actress's face, but there is no blood or mule, which may depict that mother nature can be reborn even if she is wounded. As seen in the shades of yellow colour in the poster, yellow may symbolize the love and wisdom, which may attract the audience's attention (Kırık, 2014). According to Goethe (1970), yellow represents peacefulness and thrill. In this context, the woman reflects her peace and wisdom with the brown, while the brown tones of her face may reveal the immobility. Figure A4 mainly involves the white, red, and green colours. Throughout history, bright colours have signified positive phenomena, while dark colours have expressed negative phenomena (Meier & Robinson, 2005). In the poster, the woman's dress is white, and the white represents purity. Popular media representations indicate the colours of the characters, portraying good people in white and bad people in black in films such as *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter* (Meier, 2015, p. 422). Besides, Meier, Robinson, and Clore (2004) revealed that participants tend to categorize a good meaning to a word if it is shown in a white font, whereas they classify the same word as bad, since it is shown in a black font. Therefore, the white dress may show the woman's good character. As mentioned earlier, red may symbolize blood and death across different contexts. In the poster, the woman's hands are covered in blood,

and her heart has been removed from her chest. In this case, it is conceivable that the colour red in this poster could be associated with death. Green is associated with the "growth in nature" and the success (Moller et al., 2009, p. 899). Green also represents calming, soothing, and comfortable conditions (Spielberger, 1983; Elliot & Maier, 2014). In this context, green may imply that the woman needs to be relaxed and stay in nature.

It has been revealed that the posters of *Mother* make references to the film's plot. Figure A3 has been examined in descriptive meaning and the analysis reveal that the woman is staring into space hopelessly. Connotative meaning reveals that a fire scene is reflected in her pupils, since she may be watching those who are hopelessly burnt to ashes. Furthermore, the redness of her eyes draws the audience's attention. Besides, mother has a fire in her pupils and some scars on her face. Besides, Figure A3 is relevant to the film's plot because in one scene Mother sees small cracks in the wall of the house and hears the sound of a heartbeat. In the film, the role of Mother burns the house they live in, that is, nature. In one dialogue from the film, a man who is not feeling well wants to sleep at Mother's house. However, the Mother says, "You cannot lie down here; I live here. This is my house". In response, the man says, "The poet says that it is everyone's house." In this context, the damage caused by human beings to nature can be seen on the face of the woman in the poster. According to descriptive and connotative meanings, the second poster for the film *Mother* portrays the main character holding her heart and ivy hanging around her. First, as in the other film poster (see Figure A3), the woman seems to be looking at others expectantly, as she has a vague glimmer of hope in her eyes. In addition, the fact that the woman is holding her own heart in her hand and that there are ivy vines around her suggests that she may be dead or on the verge of death. The inferences to be made for this film, in which metaphors and symbols are used extensively, may vary according to each spectator. In Figure A4, the woman is holding her own heart in her hand. Similarly, it can be inferred from this depiction that *Mother Nature* is harmed because, in the film, the character of Mother is physically attacked by many people and somehow sacrifices herself to the cruelty of people. Besides, Figure A4 corresponds to the film's plot, since Him takes out Mother's heart at the end of the film. This moment is also represented on the poster, but it is left open-ended as to who

removes the heart. Lastly, the flowers and buds on this poster symbolize nature, paradise, freshness and renewal in circulation.

The two posters of Whiplash have been analysed within the semiotic landscape. The word whiplash refers to a hit with a whip. According to the Collins English Dictionary, the whip is to force someone to get into an emotional state and lead them to maintain that state or give confidence. In this context, the film's name, whiplash, might connote the excessive psychological force of the music teacher toward the young man. The posters have been discussed in terms of the symbols of the colours. Kırık (2014) states that black is the colour of authority, strength, and violence, whereas white represents purity, innocence, and honesty. In this context, the white colour in Figure A5 and Figure A6 depict the purity of the young musician, while the black colour depicts the educator who constantly pushes him to be perfect. On the other hand, Kress and Van Leeuwen (2002) emphasize that the colour white symbolizes mourning in China and other regions of East Asia, while it represents purity and is traditionally worn by brides during weddings across most parts of Europe. They further state that black symbolizes mourning in Europe. Additionally, Kandinsky (1912) states that the white colour is characterized by a profound silence that creates an atmosphere of harmony and tranquility. He further emphasizes that white bears the promise of potential possibilities, whereas black connotes finality and death. In this context, the enormous inscriptions of the film and its reviews may be regarded as the hope of the young musician. The Figure A6 also features shades of brown. As mentioned earlier, brown depicts immobility and numbness. In Clarke and Costall's (2008) study, participants were asked about the emotions that brown evokes in them. A significant majority of the participants said that brown evokes a limited emotional feeling in them. Some participants commented that brown means "earth, mud and nature" for them or "it does not evoke any emotion and it is just brown." In this context, the brown colour in the poster may be associated with the music teacher who expects too much from the young musician and thinks that the young musician is not doing well enough.

The posters of Whiplash are associated with the film's plot. Figure A5 shows the drum that the character Andrew plays throughout the film. It is observed that Terence constantly criticizes Andrew in the film. According to descriptive meaning, it is evident that the drum has been hit so much with drumsticks that may be seen in Figure A5. As

a result, “Whiplash” inscription is almost erased, and blood stains are seen on the drumsticks. The blood stains and battered drum illustrate the young musician's determination and patience to succeed within the connotative perspective. Furthermore, the poster's inscription "suffering is the soul of greatness" also refers to the young musician's perseverance. In Figure A6, the young musician is playing the drums, and the music teacher is staring at him. It also means that Terence is demanding success from Andrew; Andrew looking at the drumsticks, demanding fast moments to win the contest. Besides, Andrew is focused and determined while playing the drums. Terence is looking at Andrew in a focused manner. This scene may be interpreted as the musician being determined to be successful, since he works hard to play the drums perfectly. In comparison, the music teacher focuses solely on the young boy and has expectations for him. In addition, since Andrew's drumstick moves very fast, it looks like an example of a long exposure photo in the poster. The fact that the drumstick is shown on the poster in this way, just like vocal cords, is in line with the film's plot. This is because in the film, Terence constantly demands Andrew to play the drums at a very fast tempo. These issues shed light on phenomena such as perseverance, expectation, and psychological pressure seen throughout the film.

In this study, digital six film posters are analysed concentrating on narrative and conceptual representations within the framework of semiotic landscape. This study method has been chosen in order to detect how the same film poster may be interpreted from different perspectives. Narrative representations concern the signs of social action, while conceptual representations centre around social constructs (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2020). The study examines these representations and film posters, identifying their relationship. The posters have been analysed in terms of descriptive and connotative meanings. The analyses reveal that the film posters often involve disguised meanings conveyed through analytical, symbolic, interactional, and typographic processes. Kress and Van Leeuwen (2020) emphasize that the Starbucks logo possesses a double-tailed mermaid symbolizing the company's worldwide growth, it is also a non-transactional action; however, the lines created by the mermaid's tails suggest customers coming from all directions to Starbucks, which refers to events.

The film Parasite reflects on the class divide and the concept of parasite. Mother focuses on mystery, supernatural elements, fractured identity and ambiguous gaze. While Whiplash details on the psychological dynamics between characters by highlighting the strength and suffering.

Parasite, Mother, and Whiplash film posters have been analysed by focusing on different processes. In the analysis of Parasite's first poster (see Figure A1), the actional process highlighted the building as the actor and the floors as goals, reflecting their relativity. Moreover, the classificational process exhibited the covert taxonomy between the subordinates in the posters by emphasizing symmetry. As a result, the film poster possess two participants in each representation. According to the classificational process, Figure A1 belongs to covert taxonomy, since it has a symmetrical structure. Figure A2 has been analyzed in the context of actional and classificational processes. Actional process revealed that Figure A2 includes two actors, and these actors are Kim and Park families. Figure A2 has been discussed in terms of the classificational process. The poster incorporates a covert taxonomy, since it has a symmetrical structure.

The film Mother's two posters have been discussed within analytical and reactional processes. In Figure A3, the analytical process illuminated the woman's face as the carrier, with small cracks on her face as a possessive attribute. Besides, the reactional process focused solely on the reactor, leaving the phenomenon implied and inviting viewers' imagination. Consequently, while the conceptual representation involved two participants, the narrative representation centred around only one participant. Figure A4 has been discussed within the scope of the analytical and reactional processes. It has been revealed that Figure A4 involves two participants. Mother is the carrier, whereas the plants, heart, and the white dress are possessive attribute. Besides, Figure A4 includes one reactor in terms of the reactional process.

The posters of Whiplash have been analysed within the symbolic process, and the speech and mental processes. In Figure A5, the drum acts as the carrier and drumsticks as the symbolic attribute. Figure A5 has revealed that the statement "suffering is the soul of greatness" is the thought bubble within the analysis of speech and mental processes. In Figure A6, it has been revealed that Terence is the carrier and the drumstick is the symbolic attribute. Besides, it has been found out that Terence's

mouth acts as the thought bubble in Figure A6, while the wrinkles on his neck are the speech bubbles.

All in all, the analyses of these film posters reveal a divergence between their narrative and conceptual representations. This study has been limited to a sample of six film posters. Since the media has a wide range of structures, concepts, and meanings used in hundreds of films, smaller sample is chosen to examine the underlying relationships in greater depth. Furthermore, it is challenging to address the various variables involved in a single study. Thus, three film posters are uncovered via open and disguised illustrations. The contemporary media landscape is characterized by using visuals to evoke emotion. Emojis and photo filters are frequently used in social media. This technology demonstrates the capacity of visuals to convey emotions without the need for verbal expressions. As a result, posters have become increasingly sophisticated, impactful, and imbued with meaning. Graphic designers and linguists use associative approaches to explore these hidden concepts as well as illustrate visuals with the intended messages. Therefore, identifying posters that embody the desired structures from a large pool of alternatives contributed positively to this research. This study may be extended by incorporating other theoretical perspectives as well as conducting a multi-theoretical analysis of each film. Film posters can be analysed further through denotative and connotative meanings (Barthes, 1977). Another examination may involve an analysis of film posters in terms of Iconology and Iconography, the former of which refers to the study of subject matter in the visual arts, and the latter incorporates the more comprehensive examination of the subject matter in terms of cultural context. (Panofsky, 1970). Finally, comparing the meanings derived from these analyses may provide a more nuanced understanding of the visual discourse of film posters. Bergeron (2020) is the designer of the Figure A1. Bannister (2019) is the graphic designer of the Figure A2. Jean (2017) is the graphic designer of the Figure A4. (Unfortunately, it was not possible to include references for the graphic designers of the film posters *Mother* (see Figure A3) and *Whiplash* (see Figure A5 & A6), since the information was unavailable.

### **Ethics committee permission information**

Ethical approval is not applicable, because this article does not contain any studies with human or animal subjects.

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## Appendix

*Film posters used in the article can be found in the following.*

### *Figure A.1.*

The first poster of the Parasite

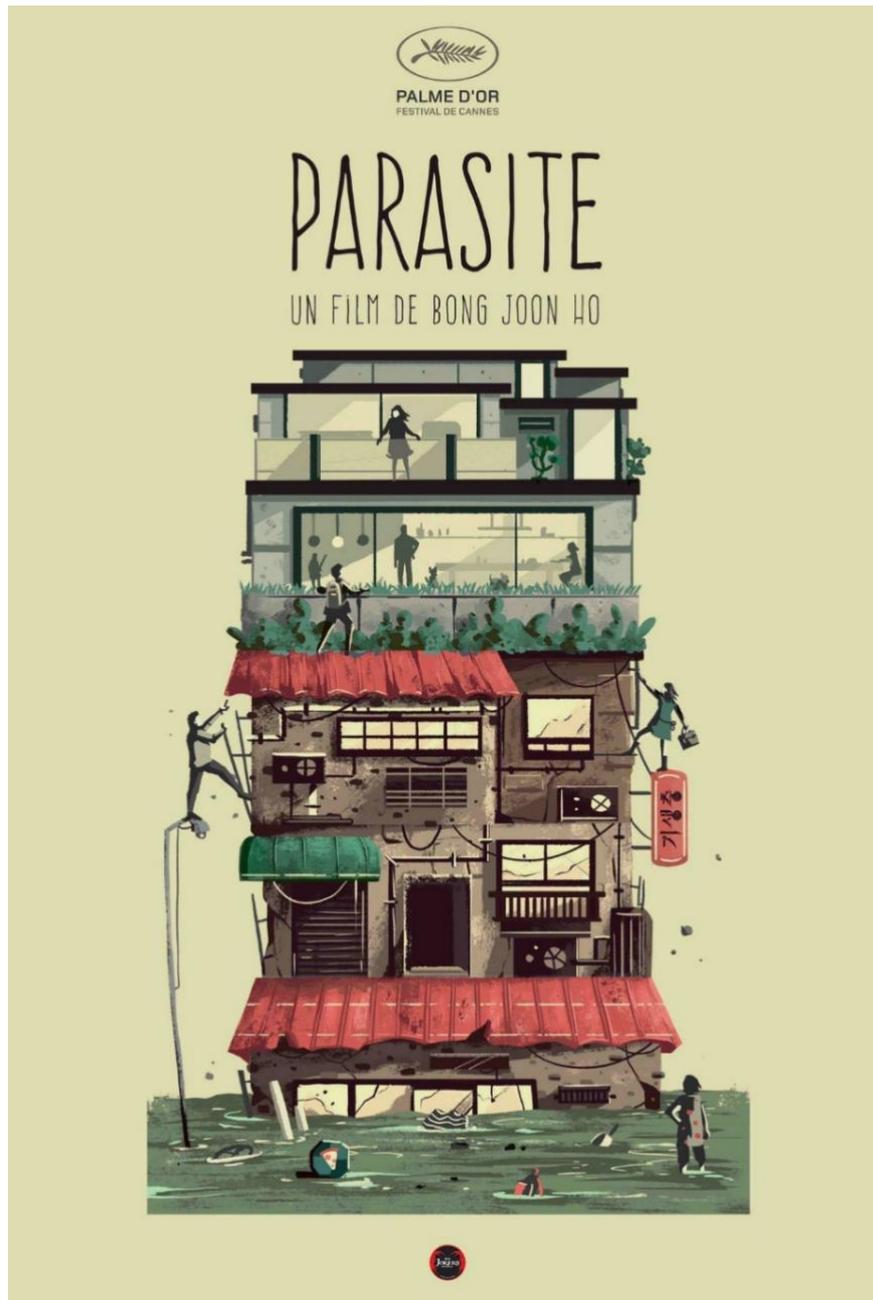


Figure A.2.

The second poster of the Parasite



*Figure A.3.*

The first poster of the Mother



*Figure A.4.*

The second poster of the Mother



*Figure A.5.*

The first poster of the Whiplash

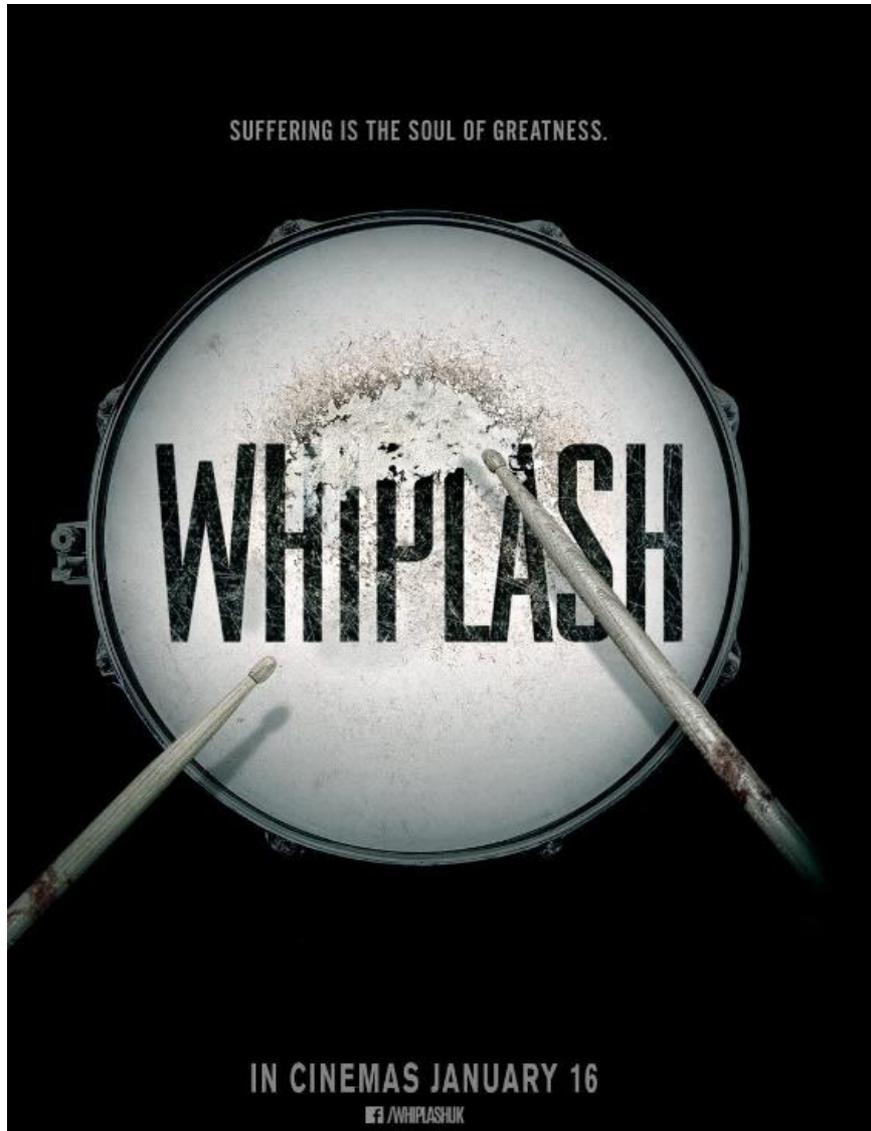


Figure A.6.

The second poster of the Whiplash

