


The Interplay of Cinematic Techniques and Narrative Elements in Constructing Irony in Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2017)

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A B S T R A C T

This study aims to analyze how irony is constructed in the film *Get Out* (2017) through the interplay between narrative elements and cinematic techniques. This study employs a qualitative method with a textual analysis approach to six scenes selected purposively based on the types of irony represented, such as situational irony, dramatic irony, and verbal irony. Data were collected through documentary analysis by repeatedly watching in the film, identifying scenes containing irony, and noting relevant dialogue and visual aspects. The results indicate that irony in the film emerges not only through the plot and dialogue but is also reinforced by cinematic techniques such as lighting, camera angles, and framing. These elements play a role in shaping the audience's perception of the difference between the surface meaning and the hidden meaning. Thus, the interaction between narrative and cinematic elements produces a strong ironic effect while conveying social criticism of covert racist practices.

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INTRODUCTION

Get Out (2017), directed by Jordan Peele, is not merely a psychological horror film, but a cinematic text that highlights the paradoxes in racial relations within contemporary American Society. The film tells the story of Chris Washington, a black man who visits the family of his white girlfriend, Rose Armitage. At first, the family appears liberal, open-minded, and supportive of racial equality. However, behind this progressive facade lies a practice of exploiting black bodies and consciousness. This contradiction between the image of tolerance on display and the hidden manipulative intent becomes the film's primary tension.

The uniqueness of *Get Out* (2017) lies in the fact that this paradox is not presented directly, but is built through the use of subtle and gradual irony. Statements that sound like expressions of appreciation for black identity actually contain problematic objectification. Similarly, scenes presented with warm lighting and neat visual composition ultimately lead to threatening situations. Thus, the irony in this film does not only emerge at the narrative level but is also constructed through visual language that shapes the audience's perception of ambiguous situations.

Building on this phenomenon, this research selected *Get Out* (2017) as its subject of analysis because the film not only addresses racial issues but also creates irony through complex visual constructions. The story of Chris Washington, portrayed by Daniel Kaluuya, depicts the experience of a black man who enters a social environment that appears welcoming but harbors hidden threats. The tension he experiences stems not merely from narrative conflict, but from the clash between the liberal image presented and the exploitative practices that are gradually revealed. More than merely depicting cultural differences, the film demonstrates how cinematic language through lighting, camera angles, and framing actively shapes the audience's perception while reinforcing the contradiction between appearance and

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reality. Thus, irony in this film functions not only as a narrative device but also as a visual strategy that reinforces the social critique of subtle and concealed forms of racism.

Films do not rely solely on narrative elements to convey meaning, but also on cinematic elements that shape how audiences understand a scene. Visual techniques in film are not merely supplementary; rather, they play a crucial role in constructing deeper meaning. As (Sudarisman, 2016) states, "the techniques employed by filmmakers carry specific intentions or messages that allow for interpretation." This indicates that the use of cinematic elements such as lighting, camera angle, and framing is not merely aesthetic but also plays a role in shaping the audience's interpretation of the depicted situation. Thus, in the film *Get Out* (2017), irony emerges not only through the plot or dialogue but is also reinforced through visual construction that guides the audience's interpretation.

In a film, there are two main elements, namely the narrative element and the cinematic element, which can be understood as intrinsic components, much like in literary works. Filmmakers utilize these two elements through various techniques to convey meaning while simultaneously evoking an emotional response from the audience (Kashaka, 2025). This is because films do not merely convey a story through plot or narration, but also through their presentation, such as lighting, camera angles, music, and color. The combination of narrative and cinematic elements allows the meaning presented to be more profound and not always conveyed directly. A scene, for example, can feel tense not only because of the events taking place but also due to the support of visual and audio elements. Thus, without cinematic elements, the narrative can feel flat, while without a strong narrative, cinematic techniques become less meaningful.

Irony in film is not limited to dialogue or plot, but can also be conveyed through visual composition. As explained by (Jason, 2024), dialogue isn't the only place where irony occurs, indicating that irony can be created through cinematic techniques that influence how viewers interpret the scenes being shown. Therefore, elements such as lighting, camera angle, and framing play a crucial role in reinforcing the meaning of irony in film.

This phenomenon demonstrates that irony in film operates not only through the plot but also through visual construction that shapes how viewers interpret the situations depicted. According to Petrie and Boggs in *The Art of Watching Film*, irony is a literary, dramatic, and cinematic technique involving the juxtaposition or linking of opposites (Boggs and Petrie, 2018, p. 67). In this context, irony emerges through the contrast between what is apparent and the actual reality, which ultimately influences how viewers interpret a scene. This understanding aligns with James MacDowell's view, who states that irony is a form of expression or communication strategy to convey an attitude or judgment indirectly, often through the difference between the perspective, knowledge, or meaning apparent on the surface and the meaning actually intended (MacDowell, 2016, p. 3).

Irony can be understood as the contrast between the apparent surface meaning and the deeper or implied meaning, so that a statement or event can have a meaning different from what is literally apparent. According to (Boggs & Petrie, 2018) irony in film appears in various forms, but this study focuses on three types most relevant to the analysis of the subject matter: dramatic irony, which occurs when the audience knows something the characters are unaware of; situational irony, which arises when events unfold unexpectedly, surprising both the characters and the audience; and verbal irony, when a character says something that carries a meaning different from their actual intent. On the other hand, (MacDowell, 2016a) emphasizes how irony arises from the difference between surface meaning and implied meaning, and distinguishes forms of irony such as verbal (communicative) irony, dramatic irony, and structural irony, which are often key to film narrative analysis.

In the first of making research, the researcher searches and reads several previous studies related to this research. The first previous study is the article by (Gillota, 2021) entitled "'Man, I Told You Not to Go in That House': The Humor and Horror of Jordan Peele's *Get Out*". This article explores how elements of humor and horror are combined in the film *Get Out* (2017) to critique racial relations, particularly within the context of American society that claims to be "post-racial." The results indicate that the film utilizes satire and horror

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conventions to indirectly convey criticism of racial tensions. However, this study focuses more on genre and narrative aspects and has not yet deeply examined the role of cinematic techniques in constructing meaning.

The second previous study is an article written by (Nugraha et al., 2025) entitled "Irony in Mark Webb's 500 Days of Summer (2009)." This study analyzes various types of irony, such as dramatic irony, situational irony, verbal irony, and cosmic irony in the film. The results indicate that irony functions as a narrative device to depict the protagonist's emotional development and the tension between expectations and reality. Nevertheless, this study emphasizes narrative and emotional aspects and has not examined how visual or cinematic techniques contribute to the construction of irony.

The third previous study was conducted by (Nurrahmat, 2019) entitled "Cinematic Language in The Dark Knight Movie (2008)". This research examines how irony is represented through cinematic techniques, such as framing and camera movement. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, this study demonstrates that the use of unconventional cinematic techniques can enhance the conveyance of meaning and help audiences understand the hidden messages in the film. Although this study has linked irony to cinematic techniques, its subject of study is not the film *Get Out*, so the context of its analysis differs from this study.

Another relevant study was conducted by (Emerald Surya JR, 2021), titled "Representations of Racism in Film: A Semiotic Study of the Film *Get Out*." This study aims to analyze representations of racism in the film *Get Out* using Roland Barthes's semiotic approach, which encompasses denotation, connotation, and myth. The results of the study indicate that there are three forms of racism: prejudice, discrimination, and the shifting nature of racism in modern society. This study also demonstrates that racism persists and continues to evolve within social and cultural contexts. However, the study focuses primarily on a semiotic analysis of meaning and does not yet address how irony is constructed through cinematic techniques.

A further relevant study is an article titled "The Representation of Racial Microaggression in the Film *Get Out* (Suseno et al., 2025)." This study aims to analyze how racism is represented through the concept of microaggression in the film *Get Out*. The results of the study indicate that racism in the film often appears in the form of interactions that seem polite but carry discriminatory meanings. However, this study does not address the role of irony as a primary analytical tool nor the relationship between these meanings and cinematic techniques. Therefore, this study seeks to address the gaps by examining irony and the role of cinematic techniques in constructing meaning within the film.

There have been numerous studies examining the film *Get Out* (2017) and the concept of irony in film, previous research has generally analyzed these aspects separately. Studies on *Get Out* tend to focus on racial issues and genre conventions, while studies on irony emphasize narrative elements without delving deeply into visual construction. On the other hand, research on cinematic techniques usually does not specifically link them to irony as the primary focus of analysis.

Previous studies on irony in film generally tend to focus on narrative aspects such as themes, dialogue, and the social issues addressed in the story. Furthermore, most studies on irony in film rely primarily on linguistic approaches or textual analysis, thereby paying less attention to cinematography as a means of meaning-making. Meanwhile, studies that specifically link irony to visual elements of film, such as camera angles, lighting, and framing, remain very limited. In fact, cinematographic elements play a crucial role in constructing implicit meaning, including creating visual ironic effects between what is seen and the implied meaning. Therefore, there is a research gap regarding the scarcity of studies that comprehensively link irony theory with the analysis of cinematic elements.

Thus, there remains a research gap in understanding how irony in *Get Out* (2017) is constructed through the interaction between narrative elements and cinematic techniques. Therefore, this study aims to examine the forms of irony in the film *Get Out* (2017) and analyze how cinematic techniques such as lighting, camera angles, and framing work together with narrative elements to reinforce the meaning of irony and social criticism in the film.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a textual analysis approach to examine how irony is constructed in the film *Get Out* (2017) through the interplay between narrative elements and cinematic techniques. This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to conduct an in-depth interpretation of both visual and narrative aspects of the film. In qualitative research, data are analyzed inductively with an emphasis on understanding meaning rather than generalization (Abdussamad & Sik, 2021). In addition, the components of the research method include the approach, data sources, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques (Djati, 2020).

The data of this study consists of six selected scenes from the film *Get Out* (2017). The scene selection was conducted purposively based on their ability to represent forms of irony, namely situational irony, dramatic irony, and verbal irony as well as to showcase the use of cinematic techniques such as lighting, camera angle, and framing. The analyzed scenes include the dinner scene at the Armitage family's house, the hypnosis scene, the garden party scene, the scene in which Georgina talks about the Armitage family, and the final scene involving the police lights. These scenes were chosen because they clearly demonstrate how irony is constructed through the interplay between narrative and cinematic elements.

The data were collected through documentary analysis as the primary method. Documentary analysis refers to the process of obtaining and interpreting data from written or audiovisual sources (Moleong in Hikmat, 2011). In this study, the film serves as the primary document. The data collection process was conducted in several stages: (1) watching the film repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of its narrative structure and visual composition; (2) identifying scenes that contain elements of irony; and (3) noting important dialogues and visual details related to the cinematic techniques employed.

This study is grounded in irony theory and film studies. The theory of irony draws on Boggs and Petrie (2018), who classify irony into situational, dramatic, and verbal irony, and is supported by (MacDowell, 2016) concept of irony, which emphasizes the distinction between surface meaning and implicit meaning. Meanwhile, film studies are used to analyze how cinematic techniques such as lighting, camera angles, and framing play a role in shaping meaning and directing audience perception. This theoretical framework is used to understand that irony does not only appear at the narrative level but is also constructed visually through cinematic elements.

The data analysis was conducted systematically through several steps. First, the researcher watched the film to understand the overall narrative and visual context. Second, selected scenes containing ironic elements were identified and classified based on the types of irony, namely situational irony, dramatic irony, and verbal irony. Third, the cinematic techniques used in each scene, such as lighting, camera angles, and framing, were analyzed to determine how they contribute to meaning construction. Finally, the researcher interpreted how narrative elements and cinematic techniques work together to reinforce ironic meaning and convey social criticism in the film.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Situational Irony



Figure 1. Dinner at the Armitage Family's House (0:21:54)

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The dinner scene at the Armitage family's house presents a visually warm and harmonious atmosphere. Chris is positioned within a social environment that appears friendly and accepting, creating an initial impression that he is in a safe and comfortable situation. This scene is dominated by warm golden-yellow lighting from lamps and candles, which in cinematography is conventionally associated with intimacy and security. In addition, the symmetrical visual composition at the dining table and the arrangement of the characters create an impression of order and stability in the family's interactions.

This scene visually presents a harmonious atmosphere, there is a discrepancy between the initial expectations and the narrative reality that is later revealed. This discrepancy indicates the presence of situational irony, a condition where the expected meaning of a situation does not align with the reality that unfolds (Boggs & Petrie, 2018). In this context, the audience is led to believe that Chris is in a safe environment, yet the narrative gradually reveals a hidden threat lurking behind the Armitage family's friendly demeanor.

This ironic effect is reinforced through the use of cinematic elements such as lighting and framing. Warm colors and a balanced visual composition not only set the mood but also guide the audience's perception to view the scene as a normal and pleasant family interaction. However, according to (MacDowell, 2016), irony in film operates through the gap between the surface meaning and the implicit meaning. In this scene, the visual comfort actually contrasts with the narrative reality, which reveals manipulation and control over Chris.

Furthermore, the balanced framing in this scene creates the illusion of social stability, even though tension is beginning to emerge narratively, particularly regarding Chris's position, as he is implicitly treated as an object in the conversation. Thus, irony is constructed not only through the plot but also visually through cinematic elements. This demonstrates that the film *Get Out* employs visual strategies to convey social criticism of racism, where the apparent acceptance on the surface actually conceals a deeper form of domination.

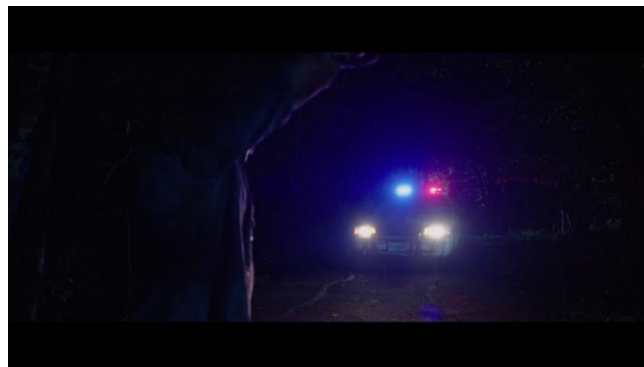


Figure 2. The Ending Scene "Police Light." (1:38:15)

In the ending scene, featuring the appearance of police car lights, the scene builds tension while simultaneously creating certain expectations among the audience. Visually, the presence of the police is generally associated with safety and assistance. However, in a broader social context, particularly regarding racial relations the presence of law enforcement in this film can actually be interpreted as a threat to black individuals. This contradiction between general expectations and possible reality forms situational irony, when the outcome does not align with the expectations that have been built beforehand (Boggs & Petrie, 2018).

The ironic effect is amplified through cinematic techniques, particularly lighting and the use of color. The scene employs low-key lighting, characterized by a predominance of dark lighting and high contrast, thereby creating a tense, stark contrast to the flashes of red and blue lights from the approaching car. This color combination not only heightens the tension but also visually directs the audience toward the worst-case scenario. In this situation, it builds the expectation that Chris, as a black man at the scene of a conflict after resisting the Armitage family, could potentially be blamed when law enforcement arrives. However, that expectation is shattered when the figure emerging from the vehicle is not a police officer, but Rod, who has come to save Chris. This is where the main contradiction emerges: a symbol previously

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associated with danger actually brings safety. This mismatch between visual expectations and narrative reality underscores the presence of situational irony, while also demonstrating how the film builds and then subverts the audience's perception.

Furthermore, this scene not only serves as the story's conclusion but also reflects the racial issues raised throughout the film. Fear of the police is not something that arises randomly, but is rooted in a broader social reality. In line with the concept of irony as the tension between surface meaning and implied meaning (MacDowell, 2016), this scene demonstrates how seemingly "logical" expectations are actually used to reveal deeper social criticism. By utilizing cinematic elements to build expectations and then subverting the outcome, the film successfully creates a powerful ironic effect while simultaneously conveying a critique of systemic racism.

Dramatic Irony



Figure 3. The Hypnosis "Sunken Place" (0:35:20)

The hypnosis scene in which Missy Armitage hypnotizes Chris initially presents a calm and controlled situation. The interaction begins with a relaxed conversation, marked by a soft tone of voice and a seemingly caring attitude, creating the impression that the act is intended to help Chris overcome his smoking habit. However, beneath this seemingly comforting interaction lies a contradiction that produces dramatic irony, in which the audience gradually becomes aware of an underlying threat, while Chris himself is not fully conscious of the danger he is facing (Boggs & Petrie, 2018).

This ironic effect is reinforced through the use of cinematic techniques, particularly lighting, close-ups, and sound. The lighting in this scene tends to be dim with a faint warm glow, creating an intimate yet not entirely comfortable atmosphere. In addition, the use of close-up shots on Chris's face serves to highlight their expressions and intensify the psychological tension. This increasingly narrow visual focus makes the audience feel as though they are trapped alongside Chris in the situation. On the other hand, the sound of a spoon clinking against a teacup serves as a recurring and dominant auditory element, which gradually builds a sense of unease and guides the audience toward a shift in the situation from calm to threatening. In film studies, such a combination of visual and auditory elements plays a role in shaping the audience's emotional experience and guiding their interpretation of the scene's meaning.

However, the apparent meaning of this interaction contradicts the narrative reality that unfolds. An action that initially appears as an act of care actually becomes a tool to exert complete control over Chris, to the point where he loses control over his own body. In this context, irony arises not only from the discrepancy between initial perception and reality, but also from the gap between the apparent meaning and the actual hidden meaning, as explained by MacDowell (MacDowell, 2016a). Chris, who visually appears calm and silent, is actually in a state of psychological entrapment.

Furthermore, this scene reaches its climax when Chris enters a state known as the Sunken Place, which is visually depicted as an endless dark space where he loses control of

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his body. According to Now You See It (2022), Interview with Jordan Peele, the Sunken Place is a metaphor for marginalization and the condition in which individuals lose their voice and control over themselves within an oppressive system. Thus, Chris's state not only demonstrates a physical loss of control but also represents a broader form of oppression. This visual representation reinforces the meaning of loss of control and alienation, while also highlighting how irony is constructed through the interplay of narrative and cinematic elements. Thus, this hypnosis scene not only displays dramatic irony but also reflects a social critique of unseen domination and control, where power operates subtly yet decisively.



Figure 4. Logan's Sudden Outburst after the Camera Flash (0:55:49)

The scene where Chris accidentally takes a photo of Logan using a camera flash presents a sudden behavioral shift that becomes a key moment in constructing dramatic irony in the film. Initially, Logan is portrayed as calm and controlled, but after being hit by the flash, he suddenly displays a panicked expression and shouts, "Get Out!" this sudden change creates both tension and confusion, for both Chris and the audience.

Cinematically, this scene is amplified through the use of a medium close-up that highlights Logan's face. This framing allows the audience to clearly observe the detailed shift in his expression from a stiff, controlled face to one that is tense, emotional, and almost aggressive. In addition, the flash of light serves as a visual stimulus that interrupts the hypnotic state, thereby bringing about a momentary awareness in Logan. In other words, the flash functions not only as a technical element but also as a narrative trigger that reveals an internal conflict within the character.

The line "Get Out!" is delivered with a high pitch and a sense of urgency, indicating an unusual sense of urgency. This delivery suggests that Logan is not merely reacting spontaneously, but is seemingly trying to convey an important warning to Chris. However, the meaning of this warning is not fully understood in the context of the moment, creating ambiguity in the interpretation of the scene.

This is where dramatic irony works effectively. The audience begins to recognize that there is something off about Logan primarily through the combination of his altered expression, the disruptive flash, and the intensity of his speech, while Chris, as the main character, remains in a position of limited understanding. This gap in knowledge between the audience and the character constitutes the core of dramatic irony (Boggs & Petrie, 2018).

Verbal Irony



Figure 5. The Garden Party (0:43:48)

The garden party scene depicts social interactions that, on the surface, appear relaxed and full of appreciation for Chris. However, narratively, these interactions contain contradictions that generate verbal irony while simultaneously reinforcing situational irony. The white guests in this scene make various comments that appear positive, such as compliments on Chris's physical appearance and identity, but implicitly point toward a form of veiled objectification.

One example can be seen in the statement "Black is fashion," which literally sounds like a compliment, yet within the context of the interaction, reduces Chris's identity to merely a trend or an object of consumption. This statement reflects verbal irony, as the intended meaning contradicts the positive impression on the surface. In this case, irony functions not only as a discrepancy between what is said and what is meant, but also as a subtle strategy that masks the practice of objectification through seemingly appreciative language.

This phenomenon can be understood through the concept of irony as a discrepancy between surface meaning and implicit meaning (MacDowell, 2016a). What is literally expressed as a form of appreciation actually conceals a derogatory meaning, thereby creating a gap between what is said and what is actually intended. In line with this, (Herbert, 2015) explains that verbal irony often involves a difference between literal meaning and intended meaning, which is used to convey an attitude or judgment implicitly. Thus, Chris is not positioned as an individual, but rather as a representation of a body and race that can be socially "consumed."

Furthermore, the use of verbal irony in this scene demonstrates how language can convey meaning indirectly, where the true intent is not explicitly stated but rather disguised as praise. As a result, the audience not only picks up on this discrepancy in meaning but also becomes aware of the hidden meaning behind the social interaction taking place. This underscores that verbal irony in this film is not merely a stylistic device but serves as a means to convey criticism of latent and covert racist practices.



Figure 6. The Garden Party (0:54:42)

Cinematically, this scene is enhanced through the use of medium shots and wide framing that place Chris in the center of the crowd, making him the visual focal point. This positioning not only underscores his status as a "guest" but also as an object being observed and judged by those around him. In addition, the bright natural lighting creates an atmosphere

that appears normal and comfortable, which stands in stark contrast to the tension Chris feels in the situation.

The interactions in this scene also create a sense of discomfort that is subtly conveyed through the tone of the conversation. Although the guests' comments sound polite and appreciative, the repeated focus on Chris's physical attributes and racial identity actually creates an unnatural conversational dynamic. This indicates that the dialogue is not driven by genuine interest, but rather by a curiosity that treats Chris as an object of interest, rather than as an equal in social interaction.

The contradiction between the seemingly appreciative language and the objectifying implicit meaning constitutes verbal irony. At the same time, situational irony emerges from the discrepancy between the expectation of normal social interaction and the reality that Chris is, in fact, in an environment that treats him as an object of observation. The audience, along with Chris, begins to realize that the displayed hospitality is not a form of genuine acceptance, but rather part of a larger mechanism.

Thus, this scene demonstrates that irony emerges not only through dialogue but also through the visual construction of the characters' positions within the social space. The interplay between narrative and cinematic elements reinforces the critique of covert racism, in which the acceptance of black identity actually operates within a framework of objectification and consumption. The use of verbal irony through language that appears positive yet conveys a contradictory meaning is not limited to social interactions at the garden party, it is also evident in other, more intimate scenes, such as when Georgina, a domestic worker in the Armitages' treat them like family.

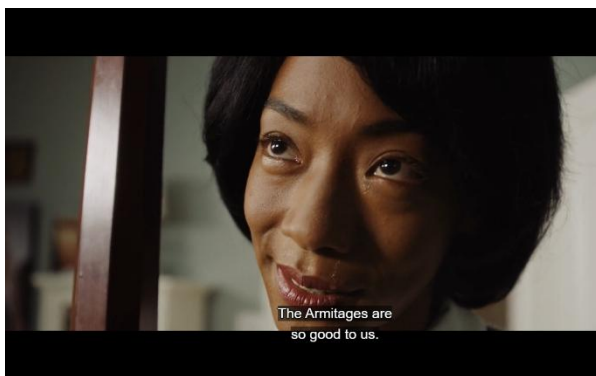


Figure 7. Georgina States about the Armitage Family (0:53:45)



Figure 8. Georgina States about the Armitage Family (0:53:45)

In this scene, Georgina states, "The Armitages are so good to us, the Armitage family treats us like family," which literally represents a warm and accepting relationship. However, within the film's narrative context, this statement actually carries the opposite meaning, as the characters in that environment are, in fact, under the control and exploitation of the Armitage family.

This contradiction between surface meaning and hidden reality demonstrates verbal irony, where what is said does not align with the actual conditions (Boggs & Petrie, 2018). The statement can also be understood as a form of antiphrasis, a type of verbal irony where someone says the opposite of what they truly mean (Kreuz, 2020).

In this case, the utterance that appears as a compliment actually serves to mask the conditions of oppression experienced by the character. Furthermore, the irony in this scene does not only emerge through dialogue but is also reinforced by cinematic techniques, particularly through facial expressions and the use of close-ups. Visually, Georgina displays expressions that are not entirely in sync with her words, such as a stiff smile and teary eyes. The use of close-ups highlights these details, thereby clarifying the presence of hidden emotional tension behind the seemingly positive statements. This mismatch between verbal utterances and visual expressions reinforces the ironic effect by creating a gap between what is said and what is actually felt. This aligns with the concept of irony as the difference between literal and implied meaning (MacDowell, 2016), where language is used to mask the true

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reality. Thus, this scene demonstrates that irony is constructed through the interaction between narrative and cinematic elements, not merely through dialogue alone.

Ultimately, this scene also reflects a social critique of subtle racism, in which seemingly harmonious relationships actually mask structures of domination and control. The irony that emerges serves not only as a rhetorical device but also as a means of revealing the tensions and injustices hidden behind seemingly normal social interactions.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the result of the analysis, it can be concluded that the irony in the film *Get Out* (2017) is constructed through a close integration of narrative elements and cinematic techniques. The three types of irony, such as situational irony, dramatic irony, and verbal irony, emerge not only through the plot and dialogue but are also reinforced by the use of lighting, camera angles, and framing, which visually shape meaning. Cinematic techniques play a crucial role in creating a gap between the apparent meaning and the hidden meaning, thereby intensifying the ironic effect experienced by the audience. Furthermore, the use of irony in this film serves not only as an artistic device but also as a means to convey social criticism of the latent racism within modern society. Thus, this study demonstrates that the interpretation of irony in film cannot be separated from the role of visual elements that actively shape the audience's interpretation. Therefore, it is recommended that future research examine different film subjects using a more diverse range of approaches to enrich the discourse in film studies.

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