Capitalism, Space, and the Politics of Escape in Castaway on the Moon

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Abstract

This study examines *Castaway on the Moon* through the lens of capitalism's spatial theory and the politics of escape in order to show in detail how late capitalist pressures, along with technology-driven forms of isolation, reshape individual subjectivity in complex ways. The purpose is to develop a careful, scene-based spatial reading that links the most ordinary everyday practices to reversible movements between utopia and dystopia, and to demonstrate how these shifts occur within the specific visual and narrative strategies of the film. The significance of this approach lies in connecting Korean cinema to wider international debates on the production of space while also proposing a transferable and adaptable model for spatial analysis in film studies that can be applied beyond this particular case. The research employs qualitative textual and spatial analysis of carefully selected scenes, with each scene treated as a coherent unit composed of both image and action. Findings indicate that the island functions as a counter-space that slows down the perception of time and enables practices of self-sufficiency, while the enclosed room concentrates speed, visibility, and consumption. These two poles do not remain fixed or static oppositions but rather flow into one another, showing a dynamic and unstable process of negotiation. The article contributes an integrated method that demonstrates how isolation gradually becomes a fragile politics of escape through small yet significant rearrangements of space, daily routine, and patterns of attention. Finally, the conclusion discusses the broader implications for studies of late capitalist everyday life, as well as for comparative analyses within Korean cinema, highlighting how spatial practices illuminate the tensions between confinement and freedom.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Korean Cinema, Capitalism, Dystopia, Utopia, Space

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Kapitalizm, Mekân ve Kaçışın Politikası: Castaway on the Moon Üzerine

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Öz

Bu çalışma, *Castaway on the Moon* filmini kapitalizm, mekân kuramı ve kaçış siyaseti bağlamında inceleyerek geç kapitalist baskılar ve teknoloji aracılığıyla şekillenen yalnızlığın öznel deneyimi nasıl dönüştürdüğünü ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Çalışmanın önemi, Kore sinemasını ütopya ve distopya tartışmalarıyla ilişkilendirmesi ve sahne temelli mekân çözümlemesini film çalışmalarına uyarlanabilir bir model olarak önermesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Araştırma, nitel metinsel ve mekânsal analiz yöntemiyle yürütülmüş, sahneler anlatıdaki dönüm noktaları, mekânsal düzenlemeler ve simgesel nesneler üzerinden incelenmiştir. Bulgular, adanın yavaş zaman ve ekolojik pratiklerle ütopyacı açılımlar üreten bir karşı-mekân işlevi gördüğünü, odanın ise hız, tüketim ve gözetim üzerinden distopik kısıtlamaları temsil ettiğini göstermektedir. Ayrıca ada ile oda arasındaki geçişler, ütopya ve distopyanın sabit karşıtlıklar değil birbirine dönüşebilir süreçler olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Çalışma, yalnızlığı gündelik pratikler aracılığıyla kaçış siyasetine dönüştüren bu mekânsal düzeneklerin, geç kapitalist gündelik hayatın incelenmesinde kullanılabilecek bütüncül bir yöntem sunduğunu ileri sürmektedir.

Keywords

Kore Sineması, Kapitalizm, Distopya, Ütopya, Mekân

Citation

Introduction

Castaway on the Moon (*Kimssi Pyoryugi*) is a 2009 South Korean film directed by Hae jun-Lee. The movie opens when the hero named Kim wants to commit suicide by jumping from a bridge in Seoul into the river due to his debts with increasing interest. When Kim wakes up after a failed suicide, found himself washed ashore on Bam İsle, a small isle in the river. A young woman named Jung-yeon accidentally notices Kim, who starts living alone on the isle and begins to watch her from her window. As a result of these, extraordinary communication begins between the two. The director concentrates eyes on unique characters who have (been) deliberately isolated themselves from civilization. The movie, which allows different readings through neoliberal capitalism, representation, utopia, and Dystopia, is among the noteworthy films produced by South Korean cinema in recent years (Mazierska & Kristensen, 2017; Lee, 2019; Lee, Jin, & Cho, 2024).

The social crises that have developed around capitalism have a significant impact on life and shape the dreams of individuals for the future (Azmanova, 2020). However, in today's conditions, the idea of social order is besieged by authoritarian systems that lead to the dead end of modernity, while on the other hand, it is appropriated by the capitalist system, which overlaps with technological pressure. Therefore, the period, which is called the inclusion of future thoughts, the last period of capitalist colonialism, and the idea of utopianism into the system, reveals the need to think within the possibilities of the idea of utopia, which manifests itself as the struggle of opposing hegemonies. The idea of utopia to overcome social and economic crises allows a depiction of the future free from all kinds of historical obligations from the past to the present and the transformative power of this depiction.

Kimssi pyoryugi has a narrative structure that moves towards a depiction of a future free from all kinds of "obligations" stemming from modern frames. The movie begins with a prologue scene that captivates the audience. The suicide scene, which we think is the last minute of the hero, forms the starting sequence of the movie. Kim is speaking with a bank teller on the phone. The teller tells Kim in a routine and mechanical tone that his loan, which is 75 thousand dollars, has increased to 210,380 dollars with the unpaid installments and interest. After that, the voice on the phone, "Do you understand? Anything else, sir? " He asks. Thereupon, Kim says, "No. You made me all the more sure now." and hangs up the phone. Then, the camera switches from close-up to general. Kim is seen on the edge of the railings of a bridge. He hangs up, puts his glasses in his pocket, and jumps down on the spur of the moment. Then the credits of the movie are seen. The following scenes focus on the isle life that will form an important part of Kim's life. In cinematographic language, prologues, i.e., prologue, introduction, and scenes, are evaluated independently of the rest of the film. The images about the prehistory intended to be given by the director form a preface. In general, the primary focus of the film is not the prologue. In the movie, Kim's

suicide attempt and bank debts depict the factors that push the hero to the limit; in other words, it constitutes prehistory.

After the credits, Kim finds himself lying on the river's shore. Kim spends his first day on the isle desperately trying to figure out where he is. His first attempt to rescue is by waving to a ship crossing the river, but this anchor is fruitless. The hero looks for a solution in technology and calls his phone and the emergency number, but he cannot convince the official he is talking to here. After that, he communicates with his ex/estranged girlfriend but fails. Finally, the telecommunication company tries to explain its problem to the sale officer, but here, too, it encounters a communication problem. Who first sought rescue from the state's emergency line, which belongs to the public domain. Secondly, he wanted to communicate with his girlfriend, who was included in the private sphere. Finally, he sought help from the communication company, which was an element of the capitalist system, although he did not want to. In all three attempts, the effort to communicate with the outside world fails.

Kim's last way of salvation is to escape from the isle by swimming, but he does not know how to swim. He tries to swim away from the isle, but his efforts are in vain. Every time he takes his head out of the water to avoid drowning, he sees images that prevent him from breathing all his life; "Everyone can do it, why can't you" his father said, "Aren't you old for this job? Your score is very low", their boss said, "I know I am a bad person, but I was going to be like this or nothing, which is worse?" said his lover. Finally, in the company of an advertisement image, he gives up struggling and immerses himself in the water. Kim's life changes when he stops struggling and accepts his situation. Only in this way, he can establish a new life; he can only get rid of his personal history and make a fresh start.

Throughout the movie, the representation of the father is given only once, in the scene where Kim drowns. His father charges Kim for being unable to swim and compares her to the other children. The audiences see Kim's mother trying to feed him once in his childhood. Parent figures are given as childhood memories. For Jung-yeon, the situation is the opposite. Her mother and father are married, but the representation of the father is almost never given to the audience; only once a small note about what time his father arrives home is noticed. The representation of the mother is more prominent for Jung-yeon, the heroine of the second isle that is voluntarily created herself. There is a devoted mother representation who does not judge her daughter's absence from her room for three years. So much so that mother, who brings her daughter's food to her room, meets all her needs by shopping.

Kim writes the word "help", which means help in English, in capital letters on the isle's beach. This primal scream for help would later take the form of essential communication. These texts are signs. Signs and words are general terms that have to mean that we use for sounds and images, and these terms are explored in all forms of advanced and primitive communication. We need a common conceptual map and language to represent or

exchange meanings and concepts. The common conceptual map emerges when each individual interprets the world in their own way but generally makes sense of it similarly. As individuals interpret the world (both in terms of culture and existence) in roughly similar ways, we can build a common civilization and social life. In this construction process, the exchange of ideas takes place using a common language. In comprehensive meaning-gather, language is the second representational system. Our common conceptual maps require being represented by a common language.

Thus, the concepts and ideas associated with common written words, pronounced sounds, or visual images (Hall, 2017:27). These representations are made in English as lingua franca, evoking some connotations about South and North Korea. These connotations coincide with the fact that although the two countries speak the same language, they need the mediation of international forces to communicate. Kim explains this situation to the scarecrow, his only friend on the isle, as follows; "It's kind of like pen pals. You are chatting with someone you do not know. You wonder how it looks. This is an international pen pal because we correspond in English." The fact that two people in the same country communicate in a different language and describe it as an "international" friendship and call each other a foreigner they "do not know" sums up the situation in South and North Korea.

The alienation of South Korea and North Korea began in 1945, after the end of the second world war when the USSR occupied North Korea and the USA occupied South Korea. The declaration of independence by North Korea as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in 1950 started the Korean War[1] with South Korea.

The war transformed an entire nation into two separate states ruled by different regimes. Although the two countries governed by different systems share the same ancestry and geography, they have different characteristics. The differences between these two states are roughly summarized in terms of the two countries in table 1.

Considering the isle that Kim is in, he has a representative relationship with North Korea in terms of leading a natural lifestyle, being away from the capitalist system and,

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[1] After North Korea invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950, the United States and later the UN alliance (Turkey, USA, England, New Zealand, Belgium, Philippines, Canada, Luxembourg, Greece, Abyssinia, South African Union, Netherlands, A three-year Korean war broke out between South Korea, which was supported by the USSR (Colombia), and North Korea, which was supported by the USSR and later China. The division of Korea into two separate states ruled by two separate governments and regimes and the enmity that continues to this day is the product of the bitter war between the USSR and the USA. After years of attacks and moves did not yield any results and the superiority was not achieved, the parties started to negotiate peace. The negotiations, which started in April 1951 with the signing of the Panmunjom Treaty in July 1953, yielded results. Technically, the war was not over and lasted for many years, as the Treaty of Panmunjom was not a peace treaty but a ceasefire. Meeting in the Korean Neutral Zone in April 2018, the leaders of North Korea and South Korea signed a peace treaty that officially ended the Korean War. For detailed information, see Document (2001) , Bulut (2018), Geçmen (2000)

therefore, consumer culture, being isolated from his environment, and making products based on the workforce. However, Jung-yeon has various similar characteristics in terms of being in a direct relationship with the capitalist system, being at the forefront of consumer culture, replacing human power with technology, and being in direct communication with the rest of the world in terms of representing South Korea.

In the movie, the concept of loneliness is handled as an important form of representation. Despite living a natural life on the isle, Kim is alone. In this respect, the representation of loneliness overlaps with North Korea, which exhibits a form of government isolated from the rest of the world. North Korea, where everything, including internet communication, is under state control, has been subjected to embargo practices by many countries and has been isolated. Jung-yeon's loneliness, on the other hand, shows similar characteristics with the structure of the capitalist system that individualizes and makes people lonely. Jung-yeon communicates with everyone, including her family, with whom she lives in the same house, through technology tools. He does not to Eating and shopping take place online. He does not even go out to do sports and work because he handles all his work through technological products. The common representation in both is loneliness.lk to anyone and only communicates with people through the virtual environment.

The reason why Jung-yeon takes pictures of the Moon can be attributed to loneliness. The reason why he took pictures of the Moon was "there is no one there, and when there is no one, you do not feel lonely." explains with sentences. During civil defense exercises, he takes photographs of the city he lives in, only twice a year. He expresses this situation with the idea that "the world becomes empty like the same moon" during the twenty minutes the exercise continues. Jung-yeon describes Kim as an alien living on the Moon because she is not like the people of this world. Kim is "shy, adventurous, a total nutcase who loves dirt." She wants to communicate with him, to live in his world; "I wonder if I'm invited to this lonely alien's world too, should I land on Earth, can I do it without NASA's help?" He says and leaves his room to send the first message. It is noteworthy that two people of the same ancestry see each other as aliens and try to communicate without NASA's help.

The hero uses his suit as a scarecrow for the later scenes of the movie. To the scarecrow he made, He says, "I understand how you feel, man; this suit will turn you into a scarecrow." Because the suit, which symbolizes white-collar men, has turned Kim into a numb, inactive, system-protecting guard for years. The wild face of the capitalist system is given with the metaphor of the scarecrow. On the one hand, this scarecrow is Kim's only friend. On the other hand, this situation has similar characteristics in that Kim's only friend, who creates a representation relationship with North Korea in his mind, represents South Korea, which is governed by the capitalist system.

It is clear that the hero has a direct problem with the capitalist system. The clearest indication of this situation is that he attempted suicide many times by rejecting the impositions of the capitalist system. He discards the social security card in his wallet, credit cards, and finally, his wallet as unnecessary. With credit cards, the pigeon cleans up the mess and cuts off its connection with credit cards, which is one of the main veins of the capitalist system, by saying "it scrapes very well with these, this card finally worked for me". He stands across the city and pulls his pants down and shouts; He expresses, "See me? Look, is this unnecessary too? It's not superfluous at all. I can live without those cards." This shout is a challenge from Kim. A relationship of power and power is created through the representation of masculinity by pulling down his trousers and shouting.

However, there is a criticism of the system even in relation to the rubber-ducky-looking pedalo he found on the isle. This criticism is based on housing credit, which is one of the main veins of the capitalist system, in other words, "mortgage". Saying, "After seven years of saving money, I finally have a house," he turns the duck into his own home and makes a bed of straw in it. He is a failed, talentless ugly duckling who takes shelter under the wing of a mother duck, is excluded from society, and does not conform to norms. Also, the ugly duckling metaphor is given through Jung-yeon. Jung-yeon also has a burn mark on her face. He uses other faces in the virtual environment he has established. He tries to hide his "ugly duckling" state, which is out of the public's appreciation, with more beautiful, more interesting, scarless and missing faces.

The hero's stance against the capitalist system can also be interpreted as another example through the noodles he dreamed of for months. Jung-yeon is not interested in the instant noodles she sends to the isle by ordering from a catering company and sending the food back. In this context, noodles can be interpreted as meanings of labor and hope for him. Unable to swim, buy a house, protect her job, maintain a relationship or even die in the capitalist world she lives in, Kim manages to make noodles from the vegetables she grows. On the day Kim manages to cook noodles and eats them, Jung-yeon can't sleep in her bed made from bags used to protect consumer goods, and she gets out of bed and sleeps on an actual pillow. Hope makes the conditions in which people live bearably. Utopias are born of hope, and dystopias end in chasing a little hope (Moylan, 2020). This insight underscores how the film translates abstract debates on utopia and dystopia into the texture of everyday practices, where even a simple meal becomes a symbolic act of resistance and renewal.

This article investigates how late-capitalist pressures and technologically mediated isolation shape subjectivity in Castaway on the Moon by advancing a scene-based spatial analysis that demonstrates reversible passages between utopia and dystopia and contributes a transferable model for film studies.

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Theoretical Background

Utopia and dystopia are treated here not as fixed destinations but as movable lenses that organize everyday life through spatial arrangements. In the film studies literature, debates on the production of space emphasize how practices, representations and lived experience co produce subjectivity and environment. Drawing on Lefebvre's account of produced space and Harvey's spaces of hope, utopia appears when rhythms slow down and alternative uses of objects and settings become thinkable within ordinary sites, while dystopia intensifies when debt speed visibility and consumer routines restrict agency. Soja's spatial critique clarifies how late capitalist urban forms and infrastructures structure perception and mobility, and Hall's view of representation explains how signs and images mediate these spatial norms. Recent work on Korean cinema and neoliberal ideology shows how contemporary narratives register these pressures at the level of everyday routines rather than through grand allegory (Choi, 2010; Kim, 2004). This study positions *Castaway on the Moon* within that line of inquiry and links the island and the room to reversible processes that stage hope and blockage across scenes.

The study builds on a spatial understanding of society where space is produced through practices representations and lived experience. In this view urban infrastructures and domestic interiors are not passive backdrops but active forces that organize time labor and affect. The analysis draws on a critical tradition that studies how capitalist relations commodify everyday life and how subjects respond through tactical uses of space silence and slowed time (de Certeau, 1984). Readings of utopia and dystopia are treated as complementary lenses. Utopia signals openings where alternative practices become thinkable within ordinary settings. Dystopia signals blockages where routines technologies and debt intensify isolation. The island is approached as a counter site that exposes the limits of urban normality. The room is approached as a capsule that concentrates consumer desire surveillance and risk management. Together they stage a contemporary diagram of escape that is partial reversible and situated (Choi, 2025; Massey, 2005).

Within this diagram, the island emerges as a counter-space where bodily rhythms are resynchronized and where the cycle of labor and consumption is suspended, creating "slow time" and experimental practices of self-sufficiency. The room, by contrast, is a capsule of accelerated time, structured through digital interfaces, circulating images, and layers of domestic surveillance (Crary, 2013; Rosa, 2013). It disciplines the subject through regimes of safety, hygiene, and efficiency, encouraging forms of self-management aligned with consumer logic (Zuboff, 2019). The interaction between these two spaces generates micro-fissures in everyday life, through which utopia and dystopia flow into one another in reversible ways. Utopia is not imagined as a total rupture but as a set of potential openings that emerge through small rearrangements of space, shifts in rhythm, and strategic uses of

silence. Dystopia, conversely, takes shape when the same arrangements deepen the subject's loss of autonomy through speed, debt, and visibility. In this sense, the island and the room can be read not as opposites of escape and confinement but as poles within a spectrum that shows escape to be less about a romantic outside than about the reconfiguration of structures within.

This theoretical framing also directs the analysis of the film's scenes. It highlights how framing, lines of sight, and thresholds (doors, windows, bridge supports) are arranged; how objects (phones, cameras, costumes, oars) are opened to or closed from use; and how sound and silence produce spatial effects of isolation, exposure, or connection. On the island, the gradual learning of affordances such as food, shelter, and pathways creates utopian openings that reorganize body and time. In the room, however, the triangulation of screen, bed, and online consumption generates dystopian blockages through acceleration and enforced visibility. The argument of the framework is that these shifts are neither purely internal psychology nor merely external setting. Instead, they demonstrate the simultaneity of the production of space and the production of subjectivity.

The analysis will therefore examine how camera scale and mise-en-scène details materialize circulating norms such as debt, speed, hygiene, and solitude through different spatial arrangements in the island and the room. In sum, the study shows how late capitalist pressures and technologically mediated isolation shape subjectivity and contributes a scene-based method for analyzing reversible passages between utopia and dystopia in film studies.

Methodology

The analysis uses qualitative textual and spatial methods. The unit of analysis is the scene. Coding records setting time key objects dominant actions and spatial effects such as confinement exposure or connection. Validity is ensured by tying claims to observable cues and by checking cross scene consistency of motifs such as consumption, hunger, noise and silence. The unit of analysis is the scene understood as a coherent block of action and image. Scene selection follows three criteria. First turning points that reconfigure the relation between the island and the room. Second moments where props clothing or built elements carry clear spatial functions such as enclosure passage threshold or vantage. Third instances where sound rhythm or silence alter the perception of space (Chion, 1994). The analytic procedure advances in four steps. Step one close reading of image composition shot scale camera position light and color with special attention to boundaries openings and surfaces (Bordwell & Thompson, 2020; Bordwell, 1985). Step two inventory of spatial affordances such as shelter tools food paths and screens and how characters learn or refuse them. Step three mapping of narrative functions survival routine play communication and their shifts across the film. Step four synthesis that links these patterns to the critical vocabulary of utopia and dystopia and to a critique of capitalist everyday life.

Reliability is supported by transparent scene logs and a coding table that records setting time key objects dominant actions and spatial effects such as confinement exposure or connection. Validity is pursued by grounding each interpretive claim in observable formal cues and by checking cross scene consistency of motifs like debt hunger noise and silence.

Utopia and Dystopia Transforming Into Each Other

The utopian and dystopian life of both Kim and Jung-yeon transforming into each other offers rich content in terms of making sense of the concepts of utopia and Dystopia. Both heroes present a form of representation in which utopia turns into Dystopia and Dystopia turns into utopia.

Kim's utopia begins on the isle. This utopia transforms from consumption to production. It makes its own rules on the isle and leads an ecological life ranging from agriculture to animal husbandry. In Jung-yeon, a world is built through Dystopia. The utopia of the woman, who can't even go out of her own room, starts with the day she takes the first step out.

Thoughts containing utopian concepts derive their existence from the desire to eliminate all kinds of dangers against the social structure. Constructing a different social structure with confidence carries the hope of getting rid of the current social dilemmas. Moreover, utopian imaginations require both a critical and distant attitude against the social order that has become normal due to habit. Utopia visions reveal the power to take action for the construction of a society where people can be free. With the desire to destroy the dangers that appear against society, Kim establishes a new and safe life on the isle. By starting his agricultural activities, he almost returned to a period when civilization started again. Jung-yeon has created her own Dystopia by never leaving her home. It is a dystopia where everything is possible and virtual life reigns. With the hope he got from Kim, he gets out of his safe environment, takes important action, and starts to get involved in life.

The Greek word 'dus' means 'difficult'. The word 'topos' means 'place'. When these two words come together, the meaning of 'dystopia', that is, 'difficult place', is formed. Dystopias are an indicator of works that reveal the dangers that society may face in the event that historical and sociological problems increase, with pessimistic social appearances in the future (Vieira, 2017: 22). Dystopias, which have different characteristics from utopias, take the task of warning about where the social structure is heading and aim to take the necessary measures to prevent all kinds of problems and possible problems that may arise in the imagination of the future. As a result, as concerns are felt that modern facilities, which are the symbols of change and transformation in human history, will place new structures instead of eliminating the existence of people, it is desired to do the necessary by emphasizing the strong social criticism feature of utopian possibilities by eliminating these concerns. In this respect, Dystopia is not the destruction of the utopian mentality but drawing attention to the deadlocks of history. The dystopian situation of both

Kim and Jung-yeon can also be considered a warning when viewed from this perspective. Creating her own utopia, Kim's Dystopia includes the anxiety of being excluded and living a life isolated from the environment. Although he leads a self-sufficient life, he needs a friend. The most significant indicator of this need is to make friends with the scarecrow he made. Man is a social creature and needs to communicate with his environment; Kim communicates with Jung- yeon precisely because of the need. Jung-yeon's Dystopia, which leads a much more comfortable and comfortable life than Kim, manifests itself in the form of being trapped in the conformism she is in. Jung-yeon is trapped in the consumer culture and virtual world created by the capitalist order. So much so that he cannot step out of his room. The hero cannot even take his trash out of his room. He cannot be stuck in virtual reality and live his real life. The person who is trapped in individuality is alienated from all kinds of creative acts, collective understanding, and the ability to regenerate himself. One needs an accessible environment for self-realization, where the brutal face of the capitalist system is dangerous with all kinds of sanctions. It can be said that the film draws attention to the dystopian features and deadlocks of the anti-social order and the capitalist system, which is closed to itself through Kim and Jung-yeon.

He emphasizes that Karl Marx's suicide is a utopian imagination unlikely to happen in capitalist relations. Suicide can be interpreted as an escape from the dark reality of the capitalist system to the world of utopia (Marx, 2006). There are three suicide scenes in the movie. In the first, Kim drops herself from the bridge into the waters of the river and hits the shore of the isle. An attempt to kill himself promises him a new life. He then attempts suicide twice at the beginning of his life on the isle. In the first suicide attempt, the siren of the civil defense exercise comes from the city. He says, "It would be better if I committed suicide when it's over". It comes from a habit. When the sirens sound, people in the city stop what they are doing, vehicles are parked, and life stops. Even death is delayed.

Who uses the tie around his neck for the purpose of suicide. The tie, which gave him a dignified, formal, serious, and gentlemanly image, represented the working life and was tied to one end of his neck and the other to the capitalist system, turned into the rope he used to commit suicide. He also fails in his second suicide attempt and suddenly notices the sage flowers in front of him. Their taste is so good that they start to cry, and this is the moment when they give up suicide and start looking for a way to live on the isle.

The capitalist system puts forward many arguments for the future of producing aesthetics. However, it prevents us from seeing the destructive side of the world's destruction when necessary. The worst-case scenarios put forward in the historical period of the 20th century, on the one hand, aimed to warn society; on the other hand, they developed under the grip of capitalism's dreams about the future. The late capitalist phase, called the post-modern, uses the idea of the future and utopian only as a means of pleasure and consumption. Capitalism spreads these tools so that it compels society to its interests and wishes. Consumption and pleasure become a way of life.

Kim's self-expressed thoughts are striking; "I'm so bored, there's nothing better than that, an imagined feeling of boredom." Kim has nothing to do but survive. This situation where he doesn't keep running or trying to catch up with something is the feeling he forgets and misses. Okiophobia is a term used to describe the fear of leisure. Today's people are obsessed with work and activity, do not know what to do in their spare time, panic, and fail to enjoy their free time. Today, although there are more efficient production resources, computer-aided production, and faster machines, people still work to feed the system with long working hours. In the utopian world founded by Thomas More, "In a society where everyone works, working hours will be less so that people will have time to develop their minds" (Urgan, 2000: 52). On the other hand, current capitalist conditions regulate even our leisure time and leave no time to "develop our minds".

Who is on the beach "who are you, and why?" After they write, the world they both built will be turned upside down. The picture the woman uses in the virtual world is deciphered and abandoned by her followers. The rubber duck that Kim uses as a bed is lost in the river due to the storm. The storm has scattered the life objects of both; photos were thrown around, garbage was scattered around, and the vegetables they grew were damaged.

When the military officers who came to Kim's isle try to force Kim out of the isle, Kim says, "Let me stay here; I am waiting for an answer," counters. They get Kim to put her jacket back on and return to the city. Whoever is forced to wear himself on his social role is forcibly removed from the life he has established by military personnel. As Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer stated, the Enlightenment has totalitarian features in its current structure. Although the Enlightenment drove mythology out of the human mind, its characteristics show a mythical regression (Adorno and Horkheimer, 2014: 25). Totalitarian regimes, by their very nature, desire lasting power. In order to realize this desire, it challenges all kinds of creative production activities that human beings can put forward through pressure. Watching Kim's experiences, Jung-yeon leaves her room with her nightgown, indoor slippers, and messy hair, hiding from the public and voluntarily, and starts running to reach Kim. Ironically, Kim's being cut off from her free space opens up a space of freedom for Jung-yeon.

All regimes, whether capitalism or communism, have totalitarian characteristics within themselves. Totalitarian regimes are reflected as dystopian forms of representation, with fears, anxieties, and uncertainties about the future. Fears of becoming uniform make it a necessity to portray a future that leads to the destruction and distress into which existing social structures are dragged. For this reason, efforts to eliminate the dead ends of the imaginations about the future enable a perspective of criticism within the framework of utopia possibilities.

Two Separate Areas; Isle and Room

After the 1960s, a new social understanding was sought. As a result, the concept of space, which has begun to be examined in social science applications, has started to be discussed in many areas as an important element of social existence, from the source of its existence to its economic and political consequences (Soja, 2017: 57). He states that the space, which gives different meanings to the course of utopian visions, can offer freedom rather than regulate the flow of capital. For this reason, the importance of space has been expressed in the creation of various imaginations. Therefore, it is possible to reveal the possibilities of utopia from a spatial perspective.

When the relationship between utopia and space is examined, different forms of utopia and space appear. First of all, Henri Lefebvre explains the thesis that social organizations independent of space and future thinking are not possible in the context of space conceptualizations. Then, the utopian possibilities of space are explained with references to David Harvey's concept of spaces of hope. In addition, the spatial practices that Michel Foucault deals with from the perspective of heterotopia are open to criticism and expansion through digital/postproduction spatialities (Chung, 2018). In this sense, the idea of heterotopia reveals that the criticisms of the utopia vision are seen concretely in the space since there are areas where tension is experienced with normative structures in the mobility of social life.

The concept of production of space is based on three fundamentals: space perception, space design, and life in space. The reason why Lefebvre put forward a theory of space is the necessity of an analysis that emphasizes the importance of space by removing the political deadlocks created by capitalist thought in Marxist theory. Skyscrapers, bridges, highways, plastic, metal, and concrete pollution in cities are artificial, inanimate environments that dull human intuition. He is used to producing everything ready-made in the city he lives in and is designed to have all kinds of materials he can use for a fee, so he cannot survive and chooses suicide. With Kim's transition from city life to isle life, her way of perceiving the world through space gradually transforms. It is necessary to underline the importance of changing the space to change the world from a Marxist perspective (Lefebvre's 2014: 190). Henri Lefervre, in his book "The Production of Space", written in 1974, mentions that social space belongs to society and that every person must live in a place by changing or staying the same. Space is the embodiment of vital production for human beings.

Spatial applications that benefit from the accumulation of utopian thought have been a shelter for those who escaped from normative structures in the post-modern city. On an isle where technological production is inaccessible, the one who gains the ability to produce, to feed himself, and not only to "die" with his intuition but to survive in nature for thousands of years. Because man belongs to nature and is a part of it. Those on the isle are inspired by birds, trees, and fish. Because when you look up, the media is not bombarded

with advertisements and information. His mind can focus on his own life problems. It is not harassed by information that is repressed from the outside, suggesting constant consumption. Jung-yeon's room looks just the opposite. It is located in one of many indistinguishable buildings and reflects the features of an anonymous environment rather than a lived place. If we could remove the concrete from the walls of Jung-yeon's room, we would be able to see more clearly that she lives in a technological cage of water pipes, electrical wires, and internet cables, a condition that resonates with Marc Augé's notion of non-places as spaces defined by circulation, anonymity, and a lack of genuine social interaction (Augé, 2009). To feel safe and sleep in a room with an endless flow of information and access to all kinds of productions, she needs a bed made of bubble bags used to wrap items that might get damaged.

According to Lefervre, changing life and society will only be possible with the existence of space Lefervre (2014: 87). The idea of utopia encourages this change in space. The day Kim manages to cook noodles and eats it, Jung-yeon can't sleep in her bed made of bags used to protect consumer goods, and she gets out of bed and sleeps on a real pillow. Her life slowly begins to change when Jung-yeon changes where her pillow is.

It is necessary to know the concept of space and how the capitalist structure works. As Lefebvre stated, if this is not known, utopian thoughts will be out of place and insufficient, so a space policy should be developed that includes the criticisms of all kinds of views (Lefebvre'e 2014:91). When whoever looks at the city from the isle and tries to understand from where it is being watched, we see a gray, gloomy, noisy concrete pile in the city lined up side by side. Land is the most valuable area in cities and therefore the economic rent system encourages people to meet their housing needs vertically. Vertical living spaces mean spaces where people come into contact with each other less, come together less, and thus become alienated from each other. Streets have been replaced by car-filled streets and squares by highways that wrap around the city like a spider web. Who, despite standing at the foot of a highway, cannot make contact with passers-by. While the tree gives it the opportunity to climb, the concrete leg of the highway is designed far from offering such an opportunity.

Kim's island is located between the National Assembly and Building 63 (skyscraper). The National Assembly represents authority as a place, and Building 63 represents capitalism. The place where Kim's island is located is in a position isolated from the authority and the system. He does not want to return to the current system when he is forcibly removed from the island by the officials, because he could not live with the rules of the current order. After leaving the island, he intends to commit suicide by going to Building 63. There is a relationship between the fact that he cannot exist in the capitalist system and that he wants to die in a place where the capitalist system creates itself, through the reproduction of the space. He perceives Building 63 as the center of the capitalist system, and designs it as a place of suicide, and life in space replaces death in space. For Jung-yeon, the situation is the opposite. He comes out of the room of his own free will and in the most natural state. He

overcomes his fear of public space to find Kim because for Jung-yeon, Kim is the representation of hope. This hope is the possibility that he can transform the system he is in and exist as himself.

North Korea	South Korea
Influenced by the East	Influenced by the West
dynasty	Democracy
Communism	Capitalism
Economic Insufficiency	Economic Welfare
Compulsory and long military service	volunteer military service
closed culture	The culture that the world follows
Communication, internet and transportation are scarce and forbidden.	All kinds of communication, transportation and internet are free
State Controlled and narrow living space	Individual, free and free life
Economy supported by Russia and China	US and European supported economy
Nutritional and food inadequacy and underproduction	Adequate nutrition and production
Poor and state-centered education conditions	Good and modern educational conditions
provincial culture	city culture
undestroyed wildlife	Concretization and urbanization
Censored art and literature under state monopoly	Free and creative art and literature
traditional values	Universal values

Table 1. The differences between these two states are roughly summarized in terms of the two countries.

Conclusion

The analysis shows that the island functions as a counter space that slows bodily rhythms and suspends cycles of labor and consumption while the room operates as a capsule that accelerates time through screens logistics and domestic surveillance. These two distinct yet connected forms of isolation reflect how space communication and power shape human experience. Kim is physically cut off on an uninhabited island and gradually builds a self sufficient life that resists the demands of capitalism while Jung yeon hides in a consumer driven and technology dependent room shaped by digital isolation. Their quiet and unexpected bond shows that these spaces do not form a fixed opposition but leak into one another and make visible how isolation can be reorganized into a fragile politics of escape through small adjustments of space routine and attention. The study clarifies how spatial arrangements materialize norms of speed consumption hygiene and solitude and how scene level cues allow a rigorous reading of these processes.

Framed as a single question, this study asks how late-capitalist pressures and technologically mediated isolation shape subjectivity through the island–room relation in Castaway on the Moon. The analysis answers that question by showing the island as a counter-space that slows time and enables self-provision, and the room as an accelerated capsule that compresses attention through screens, logistics, and surveillance; crucially, the film stages reversible passages between the two.

This transformation develops through contrast and internal conflict. Moments of hope emerge in the middle of despair. The film draws on Marxist theories of space and utopia, suggesting that physical environments reflect and reinforce broader social and economic structures. It also reveals how institutional systems, such as banking and communication, can fail individuals when they are most in need. These failures are not just practical but emotional, highlighting the human cost of systems designed to serve efficiency over empathy.

The visual setting of the story adds further meaning. Kim is placed between two important landmarks in Seoul: the National Assembly, representing political authority, and Building 63, symbolizing economic power. His refusal to return to the city reflects a deeper resistance to the structures that once shaped his life. At the same time, Jung-yeon takes a step out of her controlled and artificial space, searching for a more genuine connection. Their transformation is not built on romance but on the human need to be seen, understood, and accepted. In a world that often reduces people to their roles and functions, this act of recognition becomes a quiet form of rebellion. It represents a break from systems that isolate and standardize human experience.

Castaway on the Moon does not present a complete escape from reality. Instead, it creates a fragile but meaningful space where renewal becomes possible. In this story, utopia is not a fixed destination but a process of reimagining life. The film invites viewers to question how space, technology, and solitude influence the way people live and relate to each other. It also suggests that even within the harsh conditions of late capitalism, small choices and personal shifts can open the door to new possibilities. These moments, although brief and imperfect, can help redefine what it means to live with awareness, connection, and hope.

This study set out to clarify how capitalist pressures and technologically mediated isolation shape subjectivity in *Castaway on the Moon* through the spatial opposition of island and room. By combining textual and spatial analysis it showed that the film turns isolation into a fragile politics of escape and that small rearrangements of space routine and attention open limited yet real utopian possibilities. The contribution of the article is an integrated model that connects scene based spatial cues to debates on utopia and dystopia in Korean cinema and offers a clear procedure that other film analyses can adapt when studying the everyday textures of late capitalism.

Beyond the case itself, the article's contribution is threefold. Substantively it specifies how norms of speed, debt, hygiene, visibility and consumption are materialized at scene level across the island and the room. Methodologically it proposes a reusable scene based textual and spatial protocol with clear units of analysis, selection criteria and coding of affordances and thresholds for tracing utopia and dystopia as ongoing processes rather than fixed endpoints. For the field of Korean cinema studies it links close analysis to debates on the production of space and shifts attention from large allegories to the textures of everyday routines. This account also has limits. It is based on a single film close reading and

does not include reception data, production design archives or industrial context. Future research could test the model across other recent Korean films and different national cinemas, bring in audience studies to examine how viewers experience these spatial regimes, and consult production documents to trace how slow and accelerated spatialities are constructed.

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