

Jack and Rose as Symbols of Resistance Against Social Stratification in Titanic

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This study analyzes the representation of social stratification and resistance in James Cameron's *Titanic* (1997). Beyond its image as a romantic tragedy, the film serves as a social commentary that exposes the inequality of early twentieth-century capitalist society. Through the contrasting lives of Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater, *Titanic* illustrates how class distinctions influence human experience in terms of economy, culture, space, and gender. Using a qualitative descriptive method, the research analyzes selected scenes and dialogues as primary data. The study draws on the theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Pierre Bourdieu to build a multidimensional understanding of class hierarchy and social resistance. The findings reveal that the film portrays social division through four interrelated aspects: economic disparity that limits access to comfort and survival, cultural boundaries marked by taste and manners, spatial segregation seen in the ship's structure, and gender oppression as a means of maintaining hierarchy. Yet, Jack and Rose's relationship symbolizes resistance to these barriers. Their emotional bond and moral courage show that love and humanity can transcend social limits, turning *Titanic* into a lasting reflection on justice, freedom, and human dignity.

Keywords: Titanic, Social Stratification, Class Conflict, Cultural Capital, Resistance

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1. Introduction

The 1997 film *Titanic*, directed by James Cameron, stands as one of the most influential cinematic achievements of the twentieth century. While the film is often remembered for its emotional portrayal of a tragic romance, it is, in essence, a powerful critique of the social structures that governed early modern society. Beneath its love story lies a profound examination of inequality, privilege, and human resistance to oppression. The film presents the doomed voyage of the RMS *Titanic* not merely as a historical event but as a metaphor for the collapse of an unjust social order. Through the lives of Jack Dawson, a penniless artist, and Rose DeWitt Bukater, an upper-class woman trapped by convention, Cameron crafts a narrative that exposes the boundaries of class and the courage it takes to transcend them. At the turn of the twentieth century, social life in the Western world was heavily stratified. Economic advancement and industrial capitalism had widened the gap between the wealthy elite and the working class. This system of hierarchy, grounded in ownership and privilege, dictated not only access to material resources but also the moral value ascribed to individuals. In *Titanic*, this reality is visually embedded within the ship's design: its upper decks symbolize wealth and stability, while the lower decks reflect labor, migration, and struggle. As Hasna and Candraningrum (2025) note, the film's depiction of the ship as a vertically divided space effectively represents a capitalist social order that separates people by class, status, and opportunity. The tragedy of the *Titanic* thus becomes a symbolic collapse of human arrogance a literal and moral sinking of the belief that wealth guarantees superiority or safety.

Beyond its romantic appeal, *Titanic* functions as a visual discourse on inequality. The rigid separation between first-class and third-class passengers illustrates the deep moral and structural barriers that existed in society. Avci and Özer (2015) argue that the film reflects the contradictions of capitalist ideology: while it glorifies luxury through spectacle, it simultaneously critiques the cruelty of class privilege. The first-class passengers, living amidst extravagance, embody the illusion of stability, while the lower-class passengers poor immigrants and workers represent vitality, authenticity, and resilience. In this sense, the love between Jack and Rose transcends personal attraction; it becomes a form of rebellion against the oppressive norms that seek to divide humanity. Their relationship demonstrates that emotional truth can dismantle the symbolic walls of social hierarchy. Cameron's storytelling transforms every detail costume, space, dialogue, and behavior into a signifier of social meaning. The scenes of boarding, dining, and dancing are not random but serve as social metaphors: wealth dictates space, silence marks discipline, and joy becomes a privilege of the poor. As Hasna and Candraningrum (2025) observe, *Titanic* portrays social division not only through wealth but through the control of movement. First-class passengers have the freedom to navigate the ship's open areas, while third-class passengers are physically restricted to their decks. These spatial boundaries symbolize the psychological and moral walls that maintain inequality. When disaster strikes, these barriers become deadly locking the poor below deck while the rich secure the lifeboats. In that climactic moment, the film reveals its central thesis: that social systems built on inequality are ultimately fragile and self-destructive.

The *Titanic* can therefore be read as a cinematic representation of the sociological theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Pierre Bourdieu, which together form the grand theoretical framework of this research. Marx's analysis of class conflict provides the foundation for understanding the economic disparities at the heart of the story. Weber's multidimensional theory of social stratification expands this view by considering how power, status, and prestige shape social relationships beyond economics. Meanwhile, Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and social reproduction reveals how the elite preserve their status through education, taste, and cultural exclusivity (Bourdieu, 1984). Together, these theories explain why class distinctions persist and how individuals like Jack and Rose navigate and at times, defy those constraints.

Social stratification in *Titanic* can be analyzed through the class theories of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Pierre Bourdieu, each offering a distinct yet interconnected perspective on inequality. Karl Marx defines social class based on one's relation to the means of production, where the bourgeoisie control wealth and resources while the proletariat must sell their labor to survive. This conflict results in exploitation and alienation, vividly reflected in the contrasting lives of Jack and Rose. Jack embodies the creative but powerless working class, while Rose represents the privileged bourgeoisie, trapped by social expectations. The ship's hierarchical structure mirrors a capitalist system at sea, where class determines not only comfort but even survival itself (Hasna & Candraningrum, 2025). Expanding Marx's view, Max Weber argues that class involves not just economic power but also social status and prestige. In *Titanic*, this appears through differences in behavior, language, and lifestyle, as first-class passengers strictly follow social etiquette while Jack's informal charm marks him as an outsider (Zahara, 2021). Yet, as the story unfolds, moral strength shifts toward the lower class, suggesting that dignity and humanity can transcend social rank. Pierre Bourdieu further deepens the discussion through his concepts of cultural capital and social reproduction the ways knowledge, manners, and taste maintain class boundaries (Bourdieu, 1984). This is seen in the contrast between the upper-class dinner and the lively third-class dance, where elite decorum symbolizes control while the lower class celebrates authenticity. Rose's choice to reject aristocratic norms and embrace Jack's world signifies her resistance to inherited privilege, valuing freedom and sincerity over status and social conformity.

Previous studies have analyzed Titanic from multiple perspectives historical, ideological, and feminist. Hasna and Candraningrum (2025) interpreted the film through a Marxist lens, focusing on the survival disparity between first- and third-class passengers. Avci and Özer (2015) examined the ideological construction of class within film narratives, arguing that Titanic both critiques and romanticizes capitalism. Maharani (2021) discussed gender oppression, highlighting Rose's limited agency within patriarchal upper-class culture. Meanwhile, Levine (2017) and Weiss (2023) emphasized Rose's personal transformation as a feminist act of defiance.

In other studies of literary and cultural texts, for instance Liu's (2020) analysis of *Parasite*, the discussion highlights how modern capitalist societies are structured in ways that make class mobility appear almost impossible. Liu emphasizes that the social and economic systems portrayed in the narrative reinforce rigid class boundaries, suggesting that individuals are trapped within their socioeconomic positions regardless of effort or ambition. This perspective underlines the persistent nature of inequality and illustrates how capitalism continually reproduces class divisions rather than enabling genuine upward movement. While Sihombing and Sinaga (2021) focus on how *Parasite* represents social class through various symbolic codes such as living spaces, bodily markers like smell, and material possessions their analysis primarily remains at a descriptive level in outlining social inequality. Their study concentrates on identifying and explaining these symbols without further exploring the structural mechanisms that sustain class division. In contrast, Iswari's (2021) sociological reading of *Parasite* frames class inequality as an unavoidable condition embedded within the social system itself, interpreting it as a systemic and enduring source of conflict rather than a temporary or incidental phenomenon.

Winantu's (2022) analysis of *The White Tiger* conceptualizes social stratification as a rigid and deeply entrenched structural system shaped by caste hierarchies and environmental disparities, thereby reinforcing the notion that inequality is largely inevitable. The study underscores how individuals are constrained by systemic forces that limit social mobility and perpetuate class divisions. In contrast, the present study of Titanic shifts the focus from inevitability to resistance by demonstrating how cinematic narrative can function as a symbolic space for challenging stratification. Through the relationship between Jack and Rose, the film embodies acts of defiance against economic, cultural, spatial, and gender-based hierarchies, suggesting the possibility of agency within oppressive structures. Similarly, Fathurrahman et al.'s (2025) examination of *Sāq Al-Bāmbū* highlights forms of intersectional oppression operating across race, gender, and ethnicity. However, despite its critical engagement with multiple axes of inequality, the study does not extensively address how narrative structures themselves may symbolize resistance to social stratification. Meanwhile, Setiawati and Thoyibi's (2025) Marxist interpretation of Howard Pyle's *The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood* positions the outlaw figure as a symbol of social justice, portraying Robin Hood as a character who actively redistributes wealth to challenge and resist feudal systems of oppression.

Lindberg's (2014) reading of *The Great Gatsby* frames the American Dream as a critical commentary on material excess and moral deterioration within modern society. Rather than presenting wealth as a marker of success, the analysis reveals how the pursuit of affluence ultimately exposes ethical decay and disillusionment. Similarly, Marsela (2019) and Hisa et al. (2021) underscore the rigidity of social class distinctions in the novel, emphasizing how attempts at upward mobility often lead to destructive personal and social consequences rather than genuine liberation. Along comparable lines, Fernando et al. (2022) and Hira (2017) employ Marxist criticism in their analyses of Disney's *Cinderella*, demonstrating how the film encodes class struggle through narrative and visual elements. Their studies reveal how ideological mechanisms such as false consciousness and romantic idealism serve to normalize social inequality while simultaneously reinforcing aristocratic privilege. More recent scholarship on Bong Joon-ho's *Snowpiercer* (Gading, 2024; Danesh Nari & Fakhredavoudi, 2024; Koiri & Gading, 2024; Yılmaz & Özen, 2023; Jurana &

Abdullah, 2023) similarly highlights the rigidity of class stratification, the systemic exploitation of the proletariat, and the ultimate failure of revolutionary movements. Collectively, these analyses portray class hierarchy as a deeply entrenched system that resists meaningful transformation, even in narratives that initially gesture toward resistance.

However, despite these significant contributions, most analyses focus on class as an abstract system rather than as a lived, relational experience. Few have explored how the dynamic between Jack and Rose themselves becomes a site of social critique. Their love story is not only emotional but symbolic: Jack's humility and creativity challenge Rose's inherited

privilege, and together they enact a form of rebellion that transcends class boundaries. This study addresses that gap by examining the forms of social difference economic, cultural, spatial, and gender-based that structure their relationship and the ways these differences are overcome through personal choice and moral awakening.

The primary purpose of this research is to analyze how Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater symbolize resistance against social stratification in *Titanic* by examining the specific forms of class difference presented throughout the film. These forms include: Economic inequality (represented through access to comfort, opportunity, and survival); Cultural and behavioral distinction (shown in the contrast between refinement and authenticity); Spatial division (visualized through the physical structure of the ship and the barriers that separate classes); and Gendered oppression (revealed through Rose's struggle against patriarchal expectations). By integrating Marx's theory of class conflict, Weber's concept of status and power, and Bourdieu's ideas of cultural capital, this study seeks to demonstrate that Cameron's *Titanic* is not merely a romance but a cinematic critique of social order. The film reveals how human dignity, love, and courage can transcend inherited systems of inequality. Through its visual and narrative symbolism, *Titanic* becomes a timeless reflection on humanity's search for equality and freedom within a stratified world.

2. Research Method

This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the representation of social stratification in *Titanic* (1997). The qualitative method is appropriate because it focuses on the interpretation of meaning and social context within visual and verbal narratives (Creswell, 2018). The study aims to explore how social differences economic, cultural, spatial, and gender-based are portrayed and how Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater symbolize resistance against those class boundaries. The data in this study consist of selected scenes, dialogues, and visual elements that depict class inequality within the film. Five central scenes were chosen as primary data: the boarding scene, the dinner and dance scenes, the spatial division of the ship, the drawing scene, and Rose's new identity scene. These scenes represent key moments that reflect both social hierarchy and acts of defiance. The data were collected through observation and documentation of the film, followed by close reading to identify recurring symbols and social contrasts.

The analysis process follows Miles and Huberman's (2015) interactive model, consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the first stage, relevant scenes were selected based on their relation to class representation. The second stage organized findings into thematic categories corresponding to economic, cultural, spatial, and gender differences. In the final stage, the results were interpreted using the theoretical frameworks of Karl Marx, Max Weber, and Pierre Bourdieu as analytical lenses. To strengthen credibility, this study applies theoretical triangulation (Flick, 2018). Marx's class conflict theory guided the analysis of economic disparity; Weber's concept of power and prestige explained behavioral and social order; and Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital illuminated symbolic class

reproduction. These combined perspectives allow the analysis to capture both visible and subtle dimensions of inequality. Through this method, the research maintains coherence with its purpose: to reveal how Cameron's *Titanic* visualizes class division and portrays human resistance against a stratified social order through narrative, character, and cinematic symbolism.

3. Result and Discussion

Research Finding (tentative)

Economic Inequality



Economic inequality functions as the foundation of social hierarchy in *Titanic*. The film immediately introduces Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater as representatives of two contrasting worlds. Jack's life embodies the uncertainty of the working class he survives through chance, freedom, and art while Rose's existence reflects the privilege and restriction of the wealthy elite. Through their opposition, James Cameron portrays the rigid economic order of the early twentieth century, where money dictates morality, mobility, and survival. This contrast reveals that wealth in *Titanic* is not merely a material possession but a moral currency that determines human worth.

The boarding scene serves as a visual microcosm of that inequality. Rose arrives with grace and comfort, escorted by servants and surrounded by expensive belongings. Her entrance through the first-class gangway, filmed from a low angle, projects dominance and control. In stark contrast, Jack and his friend Fabrizio appear breathless and jubilant as they enter through the crowded steerage deck, filled with noise, laughter, and immigrants. The camera's motion between these two worlds the calm elegance of the upper deck and the chaos of the lower emphasizes the enormous gap between classes. Cameron uses spatial composition to show how economic inequality creates separation both physically and symbolically. The first-class passengers enjoy spacious cabins and fine dining, while the lower class occupies narrow corridors and common spaces. Even leisure activities differ sharply: while the wealthy dine to live, the poor dance to survive. This visual language reinforces Marx's view that the bourgeoisie monopolize resources and comfort, while the proletariat experience the world through struggle and resilience.

Moreover, the boarding sequence highlights how economic privilege translates into social entitlement. When Tommy jokes that "first-class passengers even have their dogs with them," it underscores the moral absurdity of a world where animals receive better treatment than humans of lower status. Through humor and irony, Cameron critiques the capitalist system's dehumanizing effect reducing life to a hierarchy of property. Thus, Jack and Rose's meeting later in the film becomes more than romantic coincidence it represents the crossing of economic boundaries. Jack's poverty contrasts with Rose's emotional emptiness, suggesting that true richness lies not in wealth but in authenticity. The economic disparity between them, therefore, sets the foundation for *Titanic*'s larger theme: love as resistance to a world divided by privilege.

Cultural and Behavioral Difference



Cultural distinction is another powerful indicator of social stratification in *Titanic*. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital the habits, tastes, and manners that signify class position is vividly portrayed through the film's social interactions. Jack, with his spontaneous charm and humble background, embodies authenticity, while Rose's upper-class circle is defined by strict etiquette and superficiality. This cultural gap becomes a barrier that separates them as strongly as money does.

The first-class dinner scene demonstrates how culture functions as a tool of exclusion. The atmosphere is controlled and formal, filled with polite conversation, rigid posture, and subtle judgment. Jack's humor and casual tone reveal his lack of familiarity with elite codes of behavior, and his simplicity quickly draws both admiration and mockery. Cal's comment likening Rose to a "prize horse" exemplifies how the upper class objectifies women as symbols of status. This dinner table becomes a theater of performance, where civility hides condescension and etiquette disguises domination. Jack's polite but honest responses contrast sharply with Cal's arrogance and Ruth's cold politeness, exposing the emptiness of upper-class decorum. Although he is economically inferior, Jack represents emotional intelligence and sincerity, qualities that unsettle the pretentious harmony of the elite world. In this sense, Jack's presence disrupts the hierarchy of taste revealing that culture, far from being a neutral expression, is a weapon of class reproduction.

The cultural difference reaches its turning point in the third-class party scene, where Rose abandons her elite environment to join Jack and the steerage passengers. The lower deck is loud, crowded, and full of laughter a stark contrast to the sterile elegance of the upper deck. Through music, dance, and communal energy, Cameron portrays the working class as vibrant and alive. Rose's participation signifies her awakening to a more authentic human experience, one that values joy and equality over status. This moment transforms the meaning of class from a static category into an emotional condition. The upper class, though rich, is spiritually bankrupt; the lower class, though poor, is emotionally fulfilled. By choosing to dance with Jack, Rose symbolically crosses cultural boundaries and rejects the behavior that once defined her. Love thus becomes an act of cultural rebellion, a refusal to accept the emotional coldness that privilege demands.

Gender and Class Oppression



The corset scene between Rose and her mother, Ruth, encapsulates the intersection of class and gender oppression. Ruth's insistence that Rose marry Cal to maintain their family's social position reveals how women in the upper class are both controlled and complicit in preserving patriarchal capitalism. Marriage, for Ruth, is not a romantic union but a transaction a means to sustain wealth and respectability. This reflects Bourdieu's notion of social reproduction, where class is maintained through cultural control, particularly over women's choices and bodies. The act of tightening the corset functions as a powerful metaphor. Ruth's hands pulling the laces symbolize the weight of social expectation and control over female identity. The gesture is both intimate and violent, showing how love and authority blend in oppressive systems. Rose's visible discomfort her silence, tense posture, and downcast eyes reflects the suffocating expectations imposed on her. Her mother's dominance, though motivated by fear of poverty, mirrors the patriarchal authority she seeks to uphold.

This scene shifts the narrative from romance to rebellion. Rose's growing defiance against her mother represents her rejection of the ideology that women must trade freedom for security. The corset becomes a symbol of both luxury and imprisonment beautiful yet suffocating, desirable yet deadly. By loosening her obedience, Rose begins to loosen the symbolic corset that binds her identity. Cameron uses this domestic tension to expose how the elite system sustains itself through female conformity. Ruth's fear of "losing their name" mirrors the class anxiety of a society obsessed with image. Yet her attempt to control Rose only accelerates her daughter's awakening. The scene thus marks a turning point in Rose's transformation from passive obedience to active rebellion. Through this depiction, *Titanic* critiques not only class inequality but also gender hierarchy as its sustaining mechanism. Rose's resistance becomes a double liberation: freedom from patriarchal control and freedom from the social order that enforces it.

Rebellion Through Intimacy and Class Equality



The drawing scene between Jack and Rose is one of the most symbolically charged moments in *Titanic*, representing both personal liberation and social rebellion. On the surface, it appears as a romantic act between two lovers, but beneath that intimacy lies a deeper resistance against the rigid boundaries of class and gender. Rose's decision to ask Jack a poor artist from the lower class to draw her nude signifies a powerful reversal of power dynamics. In the world she comes from, women of wealth are treated as objects of beauty to be displayed by men of their own class, yet here Rose willingly offers her image to someone society considers beneath her. This gesture transforms her from a passive symbol of upper-class refinement into an active agent of self-expression. Visually, the setting reinforces this contrast. The luxurious décor of Rose's first-class suite, with its ornate furniture and polished surfaces, serves as a backdrop to a moment of vulnerability and equality. As she removes her jewelry and corset symbols of social confinement she symbolically strips away the trappings of class identity. The act of disrobing, filmed with tenderness rather

than eroticism, becomes a metaphor for reclaiming her autonomy. Jack, meanwhile, approaches the act with humility and respect, emphasizing his role not as a man exercising dominance, but as an artist honoring authenticity. This reversal of perspective allows Rose to see herself outside the definitions imposed by wealth and patriarchy.

From a sociological standpoint, the drawing session embodies Pierre Bourdieu's critique of how class dictates taste, decorum, and even morality. Within the elite sphere, such an act would be scandalous, violating the unspoken rules of propriety. Yet for Jack and Rose, the drawing becomes a moment of truth where human connection transcends social labels. Their relationship, in that instant, is stripped of hierarchy: a woman of privilege and a man of poverty meet as equals. This equality, however, exists only in the privacy of art; outside that space, the class order still dominates their reality. Cameron uses this intimate rebellion to illustrate that resistance to class does not always manifest in public defiance it can also emerge quietly, in the courage to choose honesty over conformity. Ultimately, this scene transforms the concept of love into an act of social and moral defiance. Rose's choice to be drawn by Jack is not just an act of trust but a declaration that authenticity is more valuable than reputation. The drawing itself becomes a permanent record of her liberation a version of herself free from control, judgment, and hierarchy. Through this symbolic encounter, Titanic portrays that love and art together can dismantle the walls of class, even if only momentarily.

Rebirth Beyond Social Hierarchy



The film's closing sequence, in which Rose identifies herself as "Rose Dawson," represents the culmination of her transformation and defiance against the rigid class system. Throughout the film, the name "Rose DeWitt Bukater" has symbolized everything that confines her status, family expectation, and economic dependence. Her adoption of the name "Dawson," in honor of Jack, marks her rejection of that inherited identity and the oppressive world it represents. This moment of self-naming serves as both a personal and political act. In renouncing her aristocratic surname, Rose symbolically abandons the upper-class values that prioritize wealth and reputation over individuality and love.

This scene also holds deep sociological significance. According to Marxist thought, class identity is sustained through ownership and inheritance family names and lineage serve to maintain social reproduction. By rejecting her family name, Rose breaks free from this system, declaring herself a self-made individual rather than a product of privilege. Standing alone among survivors, she embodies both survival and resistance: the destruction of the Titanic becomes the destruction of her old world. The sinking ship, which once represented luxury and dominance, turns into a grave for the elite social order that sought to define her. Through tragedy, she is reborn into freedom. Visually, Cameron reinforces this rebirth through the imagery of light and space. As Rose stands at the rescue ship's railing, the sunlight breaks across her face a visual metaphor for new beginnings. The contrast between her previous confinement in grand but suffocating interiors and her presence now in the open air emphasizes liberation. The absence of Cal and Ruth, figures of control and conformity, allows Rose to exist as herself for the first time. Her quiet use of Jack's surname carries immense symbolic weight: "Dawson" represents not possession, but equality and humanity.

In broader cultural terms, Rose's transformation also challenges the patriarchal idea that a woman's identity must be tied to male authority or class heritage. By taking Jack's name, she is not submitting to him but aligning herself with the values he represented freedom, authenticity, and compassion. Her identity becomes a living continuation of Jack's rebellion, proving that his influence transcends death and social position. Ultimately, Rose's new identity encapsulates the film's central message: that true freedom arises when one breaks away from inherited systems of power. By choosing to live as Rose Dawson, she carries forward the spirit of equality and resilience that defined her love for Jack. The act of naming thus becomes the final victory over class and convention an affirmation that humanity, not hierarchy, defines a person's worth.

Discussion

The analysis of *Titanic* (1997) demonstrates that the film serves not only as a tragic romance but also as a complex social critique of stratification, privilege, and human resistance. Through the relationship between Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater, James Cameron visualizes the sociological principles of Karl Marx and Max Weber, who view class as a determinant of power, mobility, and access to resources (Zahara, 2021). Each major scene from the boarding sequence to Rose's assumption of a new identity reveals the layered ways social hierarchy governs personal freedom. As Hasna and Candraningrum (2025) explain, the *Titanic* becomes a microcosm of early capitalist society, where class determines not only comfort but also survival. The boarding scene represents the material foundation of inequality: wealth defines worth, and social class dictates dignity. Jack's working-class background limits his access to privilege, while Rose's wealth conceals emotional emptiness. This aligns with Avci and Özer's (2015) observation that cinematic depictions of class often expose capitalism's moral contradictions privilege appears elegant but hollow, while poverty reveals authenticity and resilience. Similarly, the dinner and party scenes embody Pierre Bourdieu's (1984) notion of cultural capital: the elite maintain dominance through refined behavior, language, and taste. The upper class performs civility to sustain power, while the lower class expresses sincerity and vitality as acts of quiet resistance.

The spatial hierarchy of the *Titanic* further visualizes these divisions. Avci and Özer (2015) argue that physical space in film often mirrors social structure, and Cameron achieves this through the ship's vertical design: the first-class decks symbolize order and exclusivity, while the lower decks represent struggle and solidarity. When the ship sinks, the collapse of its architecture becomes a metaphor for the destruction of human systems built on inequality. The restricted access of third-class passengers to lifeboats, as noted by Hasna and Candraningrum (2025), reinforces how privilege controls not only comfort but also the right to live. This spatial collapse reveals what Marx described as the inevitable downfall of social hierarchies when

confronted with crisis. Gender oppression deepens this social critique. In the corset scene, Ruth's attempt to secure her family's survival through Rose's marriage to Cal exemplifies Bourdieu's (1984) concept of social reproduction the way elites preserve their class through control over women's choices. Ruth embodies the patriarchal capitalist ideology that equates a woman's worth with her capacity to sustain family honor. Rose's rebellion against her mother's authority becomes a double act of resistance: liberation from gender subordination and rejection of upper-class conformity. Levine (2017) and Weiss (2023) both highlight how Rose evolves from passive obedience to active defiance, turning personal rebellion into a critique of the system that commodifies her existence. The drawing scene between Jack and Rose transforms intimacy into equality. Rose's decision to be drawn by a man beneath her social class reverses conventional power dynamics. Through this act, she sheds her corset literally and metaphorically casting off the restraints of wealth and propriety. As Bourdieu (1984) argues, cultural practices reflect power relations; by stepping outside her class's moral code, Rose rejects its dominance. The scene visualizes Avci and Özer's (2015) view that cinema can expose the contradictions of social hierarchy by portraying moments when class boundaries are momentarily dissolved. In this private act, love and art become instruments of moral resistance against social oppression.

Finally, Rose's new identity as "Rose Dawson" concludes the film's exploration of resistance. By renouncing "DeWitt Bukater," she breaks from her inherited class and embraces Jack's egalitarian worldview. Her survival signifies the triumph of human dignity over inherited privilege. This act echoes Marx's idea that consciousness arises when individuals reject the ideologies imposed by their social position (Zahara, 2021). Rose's transformation also aligns with Sari and Thoyibi's (2020) argument that film narratives often function as ideological spaces where characters negotiate freedom and power. By choosing a name rooted in love and equality rather than lineage, Rose declares independence from the systems that once confined her. In essence, *Titanic* operates as both a romantic narrative and a socio-political allegory. Each interaction between Jack and Rose deconstructs the illusions of superiority that sustain class systems. The collapse of the ship parallels the collapse of hierarchy, while Rose's survival represents the rebirth of a new social consciousness one that values empathy, authenticity, and equality above status. As Avci and Özer (2015) emphasize, film becomes a mirror for capitalist contradictions, and Cameron's *Titanic* reflects this perfectly: a story where love transcends wealth, freedom triumphs over conformity, and humanity endures beyond division.

4. Conclusion

The analysis of *Titanic* (1997) reveals that the film transcends its romantic narrative to function as a profound reflection on social stratification, human dignity, and moral resistance. Through the contrasting lives of Jack Dawson and Rose DeWitt Bukater, James Cameron constructs a cinematic critique of the hierarchical structures that shaped early twentieth-century society. The study shows that class difference in the film is not limited to material wealth but extends to culture, space, and gender each forming a layer of social inequality that governs how individuals live, love, and survive. The first form of inequality is economic, where wealth determines access to comfort, opportunity, and even life itself. Jack's poverty confines him to the lower decks, while Rose's affluence grants her luxury but emotional imprisonment. This contrast aligns with Marx's notion of class conflict, where material control dictates power and value. The second dimension, cultural and behavioral, follows Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital, seen in how manners, language, and lifestyle define social boundaries. The formal etiquette of the upper-class contrasts sharply with the sincerity and vitality of the lower class, suggesting that authenticity is often found among those free from social pretense.

The spatial separation aboard the Titanic visualizes inequality at its most visible level: the ship itself becomes a microcosm of social hierarchy. The first-class decks represent privilege and control, while the lower decks embody struggle and humanity. In moments of crisis, this division turns lethal revealing that privilege extends even to survival. Finally, gender oppression functions as an additional instrument of social control, where Rose's life is dictated by patriarchal and class-based expectations. Her defiance culminating in her decision to live as "Rose Dawson" represents liberation not only from familial authority but from the entire system of inherited privilege. The film's ending unites these dimensions into a single moral resolution: equality, freedom, and compassion endure beyond status. The collapse of the ship symbolizes the downfall of a social order built on inequality, while Rose's rebirth embodies the emergence of a new consciousness grounded in humanity rather than hierarchy. Through this lens, Cameron's Titanic becomes more than a historical drama it becomes a timeless allegory of resistance. By integrating Marx's, Weber's, and Bourdieu's theories, this study concludes that Jack and Rose's love story is an act of rebellion against the stratified world they inhabit, affirming that dignity and moral truth transcend wealth, class, and convention.

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