

Revolution in the Film *US* Directed by Jordan Peele

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Abstract. This research analyzes the theme of revolution in Jordan Peele's film *Us* (2019). The film presents two opposing groups: people who live freely in the upper world and those who are trapped below in restricted and harsh conditions. This contrast becomes a metaphor for class struggle in capitalist societies. The writer uses Karl Marx's theory of revolution and class struggle to examine how inequality and oppression can lead to rebellion. The study applies a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on content analysis of selected scenes, dialogues, and character actions. The findings show that the film portrays systemic inequality through mirrored behavior, spatial separation, and exploitation. Alienation is experienced collectively by the Tethered, who are stripped of voice, identity, and freedom. Their shared suffering and lack of agency eventually lead to class awareness and rebellion. Thus, *Us* reframes revolution as a rational and collective response to enduring structural violence. The study implies that popular films can serve as powerful cultural texts for understanding and critically examining social inequality, class conflict, and systemic oppression through a Marxist perspective. Future research is recommended to compare *Us* with other contemporary films that address class struggle or to apply different critical approaches, such as postcolonialism or intersectionality, to broaden the interpretation of social resistance in cinema.

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INTRODUCTION

Governance failure occurs when structural barriers prevent governments from guiding social and economic development (Filgueiras et al., 2023). Such barriers often make it difficult for policies to reach those who need them most, leaving social programs ineffective and populations frustrated. Veto players such as legislatures or interest groups frequently cause stagnation and policy failure (Mueller, 2020). These structural impediments often result in policies that disproportionately benefit elites while marginalizing vulnerable

populations (Joseph et al., 2021). The inability of political systems to equitably distribute justice and resources reflects a global phenomenon, rather than a problem limited to a particular nation or government type.

In Indonesia, for instance, social support programs like *Bantuan Langsung Tunai* (BLT) are often undermined by corruption and inaccurate demographic data, restricting aid from reaching those who genuinely need it. Meanwhile, in the United States, inequality manifests in different forms. African Americans, for example, are incarcerated at rates disproportionately higher than white Americans, reflecting entrenched systemic bias (Øversveen & Kelly, 2023). These cases demonstrate that inequality, exclusion, and injustice occur in diverse political contexts, both in developing and industrialized nations. Mueller (2020) notes that this tendency is exacerbated when policymakers act primarily to secure their own interests rather than prioritizing the welfare of the oppressed. As a result, inequality deepens, policies become suppressive, and discontent intensifies.

Chiot (2020) argues that revolutions arise when oppressed groups, exhausted by prolonged systemic neglect, no longer believe that change can be achieved through established institutions (Daniel, 2022). At the breaking point of frustration, the oppressed mobilize to dismantle unjust structures and reclaim justice. Historically, revolutions have reshaped political, cultural, and social landscapes, altering the trajectory of nations and societies. Revolutions may take violent or peaceful forms, depending on whether dominant classes willingly relinquish power (Pradella, 2022). Regardless of form, revolutions demonstrate that systemic neglect and suppression cannot endure indefinitely. When social inequality becomes intolerable, oppressed groups inevitably create alternative forms of resistance.

Literature provides a medium through which these dynamics of inequality and resistance are symbolically explored. As (Yastanti et al., 2021) explain, literature is an imaginative work created by the author, with an essence that goes beyond telling sacred stories, encompassing myths from human culture, while also offering entertainment that engages and delights the audience. Literature thus not only preserves cultural traditions but also reflects social tensions and human struggles, allowing audiences to engage with the very issues that can lead to revolution.

Jordan Peele's film *Us* (2019) dramatizes this dynamic through allegory. The film portrays the *Tethered*, a marginalized underclass forced to live underground, as they rise against the surface dwellers who live in comfort. Their rebellion reflects how systemic oppression and neglect breed dissatisfaction that eventually culminates in revolution. The story suggests that resistance does not emerge suddenly but develops gradually, beginning with frustration and awareness before escalating into collective action. Through horror aesthetics, Peele captures the inevitability of rebellion when marginalized groups are denied recognition and justice.

Marxist theory provides the conceptual framework to understand these dynamics. Marx (2015) argues that capitalism inherently produces inequality by dividing society into the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and the proletariat, who sell their labor power to survive (Marx, 2015). Exploitation occurs when workers receive less value than what they produce, allowing capitalists to extract surplus value for their own gain (Li, 2022). This unequal exchange creates systemic barriers that reinforce social hierarchies and limit

opportunities for the working class. Capitalism thus perpetuates inequality not only in material terms but also in cultural and ideological dimensions, normalizing exploitation as a natural social order.

Beyond exploitation, capitalism produces alienation. Marx (2020) identifies four dimensions of alienation: estrangement from the products of labor, estrangement from labor as a meaningful activity, estrangement from one's human essence, and estrangement from others. Alienation strips individuals of creativity, purpose, and authentic connection. People are reduced to mechanical repetition rather than conscious activity, unable to express their essence as human beings. Social relationships are distorted by capitalist exchange, and workers find themselves isolated even while performing collective labor.

This alienation is further sustained by false consciousness. Marx and Engels (2020) explain that the ruling class maintains dominance not only through material control but also through ideology. Workers internalize bourgeois values, perceiving inequality as natural or divinely ordained. False consciousness obscures systemic exploitation, leading the oppressed to accept their suffering as fate rather than recognizing it as a product of capitalist structures. In this condition, resistance is stifled, as the working class is unable to perceive its shared exploitation (Marx & Engels, 2020).

As shared experiences of exploitation intensify, however, the oppressed may develop class consciousness. Marx (2015) describes class consciousness as the transformation of the working class from a "class in itself" to a "class for itself." This shift occurs when workers begin to recognize that their struggles are collective, rooted in systemic inequality, rather than individual misfortunes. Crossley (2022) emphasizes that class consciousness is a precondition for organized resistance, as it enables the oppressed to see beyond personal suffering toward structural critique. Once class consciousness develops, collective action becomes possible, and revolutionary potential emerges (Nick, 2022).

Revolution, in Marxist thought, represents the culmination of class struggle. According to (Marx & Engels, 2024), revolution is not simply the replacement of leaders but the complete restructuring of economic, political, and cultural systems to eliminate exploitation. Revolution dismantles the class hierarchy itself, redistributing power and resources on equal terms. Pradella (2022) notes that revolutions can take violent or peaceful forms, depending on whether dominant classes are willing to relinquish their privileges. Regardless of form, Marx considered revolution inevitable, given the contradictions of capitalism that continuously reproduce inequality, exploitation, and alienation (Pradella, 2022).

These concepts of exploitation, alienation, false consciousness, class consciousness, and revolution provide the theoretical basis for analyzing Peele's *Us*. The film visualizes capitalist inequality through spatial metaphors: the privileged surface dwellers symbolize the bourgeoisie, while the Tethered symbolize the proletariat. The mirroring of actions between the two groups illustrates alienation, as the Tethered are forced to mimic surface lives without agency or voice. Red, the leader of the Tethered, embodies the emergence of class consciousness, having experienced both privilege and oppression. Her orchestration of rebellion demonstrates the Marxist argument that revolution is a rational and collective response to systemic injustice.

Previous studies have explored related themes but have not fully examined the revolutionary dimensions of *Us*. (Ali et al., 2023) analyzed Juan Solanas' *Upside Down* using Marxist perspectives, highlighting social stratification and systemic discrimination. (Panjaitan et al., 2024) examined Emerald Fennell's *Saltburn* (2023) through the lens of Max Weber's social class theory and Theodorson's discrimination theory, focusing on how social class stratification intersects with verbal discrimination. Meanwhile, Holdzkom (2024) examined cinematic portrayals of the American Revolution across film and television, but without reference to Marxist frameworks. While these works contribute valuable insights, they either analyze inequality without addressing rebellion, or focus on historical revolutions without connecting them to contemporary allegories (Marianne, 2024).

This study contributes novelty by applying Marx's theory of class struggle to the revolutionary aspects of *Us*. Unlike prior research, which often stops at analyzing inequality, this article emphasizes rebellion as an inevitable outcome of sustained oppression. By tracing the stages from exploitation and alienation to false consciousness, class consciousness, and ultimately revolution, this study demonstrates how the film visualizes systemic oppression and the conditions that produce resistance. The significance of this contribution lies in showing how popular culture reflects and critiques inequality, situating *Us* within broader discourses in literature and cultural studies.

This study addresses these gaps by applying Karl Marx's theory of class struggle to Jordan Peele's *Us* (2019). Unlike previous studies, which either emphasize social inequality without examining revolutionary transformation or discuss revolution outside a Marxist framework, this research analyzes revolution as a sequential process emerging from structural oppression. Specifically, it traces how exploitation generates alienation, how alienation develops into class consciousness, and how this consciousness ultimately leads to collective rebellion. By integrating these interconnected Marxist concepts into a single analytical framework, this study offers a more comprehensive explanation of revolution as represented in contemporary horror cinema. Consequently, the study contributes to film and literary criticism by demonstrating how *Us* functions not only as a representation of class inequality but also as a political allegory of revolutionary transformation under capitalism. Based on these gaps, this study is guided by the following three research questions: 1) How is class inequality represented in Jordan Peele's *Us* (2019)?; 2) What systemic conditions trigger the emergence of revolution among the Tethered?; and 3) How does the revolution depicted in *Us* reflect Karl Marx's theory of class struggle?. By answering these questions, this study aims to deepen understanding of the narrative structure of *Us* while demonstrating how contemporary horror cinema can function as a critical reflection on systemic inequality and revolutionary resistance. Ultimately, the research argues that film serves not only as entertainment but also as a cultural text capable of exposing structural oppression and envisioning possibilities for social transformation .

METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative method. According to Creswell as cited in (Debaro & McGill, 2019), qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems, while

descriptive research emphasizes detailed explanation without manipulation of variables. This method was chosen because the study focuses on the representation of inequality and revolution in Jordan Peele's *Us* (2019), interpreted through Marxist theory rather than measured statistically.

The primary data of this study are taken from Jordan Peele's film *Us* (2019). The film provides the main source for analysis because it directly illustrates themes of social inequality, alienation, class consciousness, and revolution. Elements such as character dialogue, actions, and selected scenes are used as evidence in the analysis.

Secondary data consist of books, journal articles, and previous studies related to Marxist theory and film analysis. These include works by Karl Marx, along with scholarly discussions on inequality and revolution. These texts provide the theoretical framework necessary to interpret the primary data.

The data collection technique used in this study was documentation. The researcher repeatedly watched *Us* (2019) to identify and record relevant scenes, dialogues, and visual symbols depicting inequality and revolution. Transcriptions of dialogues and screenshots of significant scenes were compiled as primary evidence, while books, journal articles, and previous studies were systematically reviewed to support the theoretical interpretation. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, the researcher employed prolonged engagement with the film through repeated viewing, maintained a clear documentation trail of all selected scenes and dialogues, and applied theoretical triangulation by interpreting the data consistently through Karl Marx's concepts of exploitation, alienation, false consciousness, class consciousness, and revolution. The analysis was also continuously compared with relevant scholarly literature to ensure that interpretations remained theoretically grounded, coherent, and supported by existing research.

FINDINGS

1. Representation of Social Inequality

A. Proletariat

Gabe: "Take whatever you want. Hell, you can take the boat, for all I care."

Gabe: "What are you people?"

Red: "What are we...?...We're Americans."

This confrontation reveals the fundamental contradiction between bourgeois material solutions and proletarian demands for recognition. Gabe's desperate offer "Take whatever you want" demonstrates what Marx (2015) identifies as the bourgeois tendency to reduce all social relations to commodity exchange. His willingness to sacrifice even his prized boat reveals the bourgeois assumption that material offerings can resolve conflicts rooted in systematic oppression, illustrating of how the bourgeoisie conceptualizes social problems through property relations, unable to comprehend demands that transcend economic transactions.

Red's response "We're Americans" functions as what Marx would recognize as a revolutionary claim to citizenship and human dignity that the existing system has systematically denied. The emphasis in her repetition of Gabe's question "What are we...?"

suggests a profound interrogation of identity that moves beyond individual grievance toward collective political assertion. Marx (2015) argues that revolutionary consciousness emerges when the oppressed recognize their exclusion from the rights and protections that supposedly define national belonging, challenging the fundamental legitimacy of a system that creates parallel populations denied basic recognition while being forced to sustain those above them.

Red: "Once upon a time, there was a girl, and the girl had a shadow. The two were connected; tethered together. So, whatever happened to the girl happened to the shadow... When the girl ate, her food was given to her, warm and tasty, but when the shadow was hungry, she had to eat rabbits, raw and bloody. On Christmas, the girl received wonderful toys, soft and cushy, but the shadow's toys were so sharp and cold they'd slice through her fingers when she played with them."

Red's monologue provides the film's most explicit articulation of systematic oppression through this fairy tale framework. The contrast between warm meals and raw rabbits, soft toys and sharp implements illustrates the structural nature of inequality where one person's comfort necessitates another's pain. According to Marx (2015), proletarian suffering is not accidental but systematically produced through relations that ensure bourgeois prosperity depends on working-class deprivation. The parallel experiences reveal how the Tethered exist in perpetual limitation, their voices silenced and choices denied, reflecting what Marx describes as the condition of a class forced to exist only to serve others' interests without recognition or agency.

B. Bourgeoisie

Zora: "Did you know there's fluoride in the water that the government uses to control our minds?"

(No one responds)

Zora: "I forgot. Nobody cares about the world."

This scene provides a crucial illustration of what Marx describes as the bourgeoisie's ideological insulation from systematic critique. Zora's comment about government mind control, while potentially dismissed as conspiracy theory, functions within the film's broader framework as legitimate concern about state manipulation that directly parallels the government's creation of the Tethered for population control. Her family's complete silence reveals their inability to engage with critiques of the systems that privilege them, demonstrating what Marx (2015) identifies as the bourgeoisie's structural capacity to dismiss critical perspectives without intellectual engagement.

The phrase "Nobody cares about the world" articulates what Marx (2015) describes as a fundamental characteristic of bourgeois consciousness: the luxury of indifference toward systematic problems that don't directly threaten immediate comfort. According to Marx (2015), this detachment is not accidental but structurally necessary for maintaining capitalist relations, as genuine engagement with systematic critique would require acknowledging complicity in others' oppression. Zora's frustrated observation reveals her recognition of this dynamic, yet her own position within the bourgeois family structure limits

her ability to move beyond abstract complaint toward concrete solidarity with those her comfort oppresses.

Josh: "No shit. You got the boat?"

Gabe: "Yep, I got the boat"

Josh: "Good for you dude!"

Josh: "Do you have a flare gun?"

Gabe: (silent)

Josh: "I know you'd fucking forget the flare gun."

This exchange provides a concentrated illustration of how bourgeois social relations operate through what Marx (2015) identifies as commodity fetishism, where objects acquire social significance that obscures the human labor and social relations underlying their production and consumption. Josh's enthusiastic response "Good for you dude!" reveals how bourgeois friendship becomes mediated through competitive material acquisition rather than genuine human connection, with the boat functioning as a symbolic marker of class position that validates Gabe's membership within bourgeois social circles. In Marxist this dynamic conceals the exploitative relations necessary for bourgeois consumption, where the boat represents accumulated capital extracted from others' labor yet appears as simply an object that Gabe has earned through individual effort.

Josh's mocking question about the flare gun with "I know you'd fucking forget the flare gun" reveals the competitive dynamics that Marx identifies as characteristic of bourgeois social relations, where friendship involves constant evaluation and comparison of material possessions and organizational competence. According to Marx (2015), capitalist competition extends beyond economic relations into personal interactions, creating social environments where individuals must continuously prove their worth through material accumulation and performance. The casual profanity indicates informal intimacy that bourgeois friendship can afford, yet this intimacy operates through shared assumptions about material entitlement that exclude those without access to similar resources, demonstrating how bourgeois social life reproduces class relations through everyday interactions that appear innocent but reinforce systematic inequality.

2. The Reason Revolution Arises in *Us*



Figure 1. Red tells The Tethered plan to Adelaide (Performance at 1:39:43-1:41:42)

In this pivotal scene, Red outlines their revolutionary strategy to Adelaide, marking all of the tethered transformation from individual victim to revolutionary collective. This scene demonstrates the process through which personal suffering becomes politicized into collective action. Marx's revolutionary theory posits that social transformation occurs when oppressed classes recognize their exploitation as systematic rather than individual, organizing collective resistance to overthrow existing power structures. Red's articulation of their plan suggests that revolutionary consciousness requires a fundamental shift in understanding one's position within larger systematic structures, moving beyond personal grievance toward structural critique of the entire social order.



Figure 2. The Childhood switch between Red and Adelaide
(Performanceç at 1:39:43-1:41:42)

This scene reveals the childhood identity switch that provides the catalyst for revolutionary consciousness by creating a leader who understands both worlds. The revelation that Adelaide and Red switched places as children explains Red's capacity (the real Adelaide) for articulate speech and strategic thinking. This narrative device illustrates how revolutionary leadership often emerges from those who have experienced multiple class positions, providing them with insights into the contradictions and injustices of existing social arrangements. Marx contends that revolutionary consciousness develops most effectively among those who can perceive the arbitrary nature of class divisions through direct experience of different social positions.

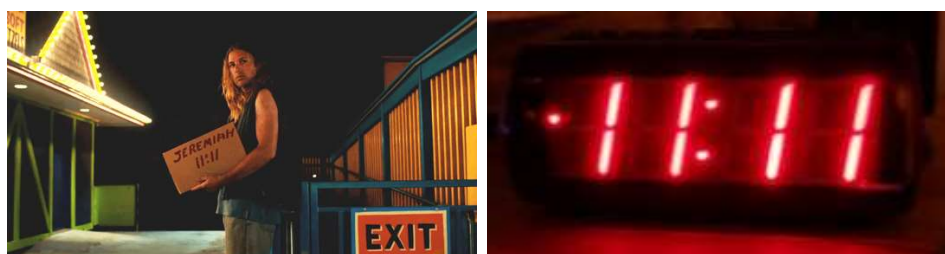


Figure 3. The Symbol of 11:11

The recurring appearance of 11:11 throughout the film creates a symbolic framework that positions the revolution as inevitable consequence rather than random occurrence. This temporal marker appears multiple times, building toward the Tethered uprising and creating a sense of prophetic inevitability. The biblical reference to Jeremiah 11:11 and its prophecy of inescapable disaster for oppressors frames the uprising as historical justice. Marx's asserts that social change occurs through the resolution of internal contradictions within existing systems, suggesting that the Tethered's revolution represents not arbitrary

violence but the working out of contradictions inherent to the capitalist structure that created them. This symbolic system suggests that revolution emerges from accumulated injustice reaching a breaking point where change becomes structurally necessary rather than contingent on individual choice.

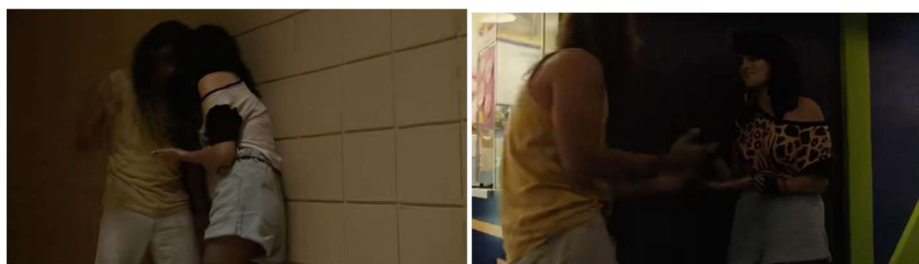
3. Representation of Class Struggle in *Us*

A. Exploitation

Red: "They created the Tethered so they could use them to control the ones above. Like puppets. But they failed, and they abandoned the Tethered. For generations the Tethered continued without direction."

Red's revelation exposes the systematic nature of exploitation through the original purpose of the Tethered's creation. This dialogue demonstrates how ruling classes construct oppressed populations specifically to serve their control mechanisms over society. According to Marx (2015) exploitation emphasizes that capitalist relations involve the appropriation of surplus value from workers' labor, but in this film, the concept extends to the creation and abandonment of entire populations for control purposes. The phrase "like puppets" reveals how the Tethered were designed as instruments of social control, then discarded when they failed to serve their intended function. This demonstrates what Marx describes as the structural violence inherent in treating human beings as disposable tools for maintaining class domination, where entire populations can be created, used, and abandoned based solely on their utility to ruling class interests.

B. Alienation



(The doppelganger of Glen & Nancy)

(Glen & Nancy)

Figure 4. Glen and Nancy play Rock Paper Scissors
(Performance at 1:39:10-1:39:13)

This scene contrasts Glen and Nancy's playful, spontaneous interaction with their doppelgangers' emotionless, mechanical repetition of the same game. The surface dwellers engage in meaningful play while the Tethered can only mimic the actions without understanding their social significance or experiencing genuine joy. This visual demonstrates Marx (2020) concept of alienation from the act of production, where human activity becomes divorced from conscious intention and creative expression. Marx's theory of alienation emphasizes that capitalist relations systematically separate workers from their

essential human capacities for meaningful activity and social connection. The Tethered's mimicry reduces complex human interactions to empty gestures, demonstrating how alienation strips away the creative and social dimensions essential to human flourishing.

C. Class Consciousness

Red: "The Tethered saw that I was different, that I would deliver them from this misery."

Red's statement reveals both her revolutionary leadership and the Tethered's collective awareness of their oppression. The phrase "saw that I was different" indicates the Tethered's capacity to recognize potential for change, while "deliver them from this misery" demonstrates their shared understanding that their suffering is not natural or inevitable but something from which they can be liberated. This dialogue demonstrates what Marx identifies as the crucial transition from individual victimization to collective revolutionary agency. The fact that the Tethered recognized Red's difference and potential for leadership indicates their developing class consciousness. Marx (2015) argues that class consciousness occurs when the oppressed recognize their shared condition and develop solidarity based on common interests rather than competition for individual advancement. Red's emergence as a leader reflects the Tethered's collective decision to move beyond passive acceptance toward active resistance.

D. False Consciousness



Figure 5. Young Red (the original Red) managed to take Adelaide's life (the original Adelaide) (Performance at 1:48:54-1:49:10)

This scene reveals Adelaide's (the real Red) complete assimilation into bourgeois life despite her origins as the Tethered before. The visual of Adelaide (originally Red) eliminating her former identity demonstrates the operation of false consciousness at its most extreme. Marx (2024) suggests that false consciousness occurs when the oppressed classes can internalize dominant ideologies that justify their own subordination. Adelaide's unconscious perpetuation of the system that continues to oppress her former community demonstrates how she has absorbed bourgeois values so completely that she no longer recognizes her connection to the Tethered's suffering. This ideological capture illustrates what Marx describes as false consciousness functioning more effectively than physical

coercion in maintaining social control, as the oppressed become willing participants in their own exploitation.

E. Revolution



Figure 6. Kitty murdered by The Tethered
(Performance at 1:06:58-1:07:54)

In this scene, the Tethered systematically eliminates Kitty before she can call for police assistance, demonstrating revolutionary violence that serves analytical functions beyond shock value. This action engages with fundamental questions about the nature of social transformation and the role of violence in systemic change. When the Tethered prevent Kitty from accessing institutional protection, they demonstrate what Marx (2015) identifies as the necessary destruction of bourgeois state apparatus. Marx (2024) argues that revolutionary change requires dismantling the institutional mechanisms that maintain class domination, as reform within existing structures cannot address the fundamental contradictions of capitalist relations. The Tethered's systematic elimination of the bourgeoisie represents not random violence but what Marx describes as the structural requirement for replacing one social order with another, where the oppressed must destroy the institutional foundations of their oppression to create space for new social arrangements.

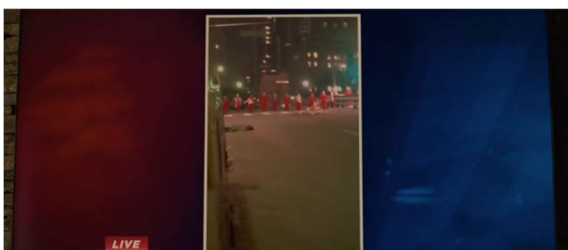


Figure 7. The Tethered in Town
(Performance at 1:18:09-1:19:19)

This scene depicts the coordinated nationwide uprising of the Tethered, culminating in their formation of human chains across the landscape. The systematic nature of their rebellion demonstrates the collective consciousness that Marx identifies as essential for successful proletarian revolution. The media's inability to comprehend the attackers' motives reflects the bourgeoisie's structural incapacity to recognize internal contradictions within their own system. Marx (2024) suggests that revolutionary transformation requires the oppressed to organize collectively across geographic and social boundaries, moving

beyond isolated resistance toward systematic challenge to existing power structures. The formation of human chains at the film's conclusion creates a visual representation of genuine proletarian solidarity, suggesting that revolutionary transformation involves constructing new forms of social organization based on authentic mutual recognition rather than the superficial gestures of bourgeois charity. This coordinated action demonstrates what Marx (2024) describes as the proletariat's potential to transcend their fragmented condition and achieve the unity necessary for fundamental social transformation.

DISCUSSION

This study demonstrates that *Us* constructs revolution as a systematic and dialectical process grounded in Marxist class struggle, rather than as spontaneous violence. By tracing the movement from exploitation and alienation to class consciousness and collective uprising, the findings directly address the research objectives outlined in the introduction. The problem of inequality is significant because it reflects broader structural contradictions within capitalist systems that extend beyond cinematic representation. In this sense, the film becomes a cultural site where class struggle is symbolically rehearsed and critically examined. The results confirm Marx's proposition that prolonged systemic injustice inevitably produces resistance when oppression becomes collectively recognized. Thus, the analysis positions *Us* not merely as horror entertainment but as a political narrative that interrogates the sustainability of unequal social structures.

The findings are consistent with Ali et al. (2023), who analyzed *Upside Down* through a Marxist lens and emphasized the persistence of social stratification and discrimination. However, while their study primarily highlights inequality, this research extends the discussion by arguing that inequality logically culminates in revolutionary action. This difference is significant because it shifts the analytical focus from static class division to dynamic class struggle. The present study confirms the broader Marxist proposition that structural oppression contains within it the seeds of resistance. By foregrounding rebellion as an inevitable outcome of sustained alienation, the findings reinforce and expand earlier scholarship on cinematic representations of social hierarchy. Consequently, this study contributes to the field by demonstrating how allegorical narratives can move beyond depicting inequality toward envisioning structural transformation.

Similarly, Panjaitan et al. (2024) examined *Saltburn* using Weberian social class theory and discrimination theory, highlighting how stratification intersects with symbolic and verbal exclusion. While their framework illuminates social hierarchy, it does not conceptualize revolution as a structural response. In contrast, this research employs Marx's theory to interpret class struggle as an escalating historical process. The comparison reveals that Weberian perspectives tend to emphasize status differentiation, whereas Marxist analysis foregrounds material exploitation and collective agency. This distinction confirms the importance of theoretical orientation in shaping interpretive outcomes. By situating *Us* within Marx's dialectical framework, the study affirms that class conflict is not merely descriptive but transformative, thereby extending the implications of prior analyses of social inequality in film.

In relation to Holdzkom (2024), who discusses cinematic representations of the American Revolution without a Marxist foundation, this study offers a different interpretive

lens. Holdzkom's work situates revolution within national memory and historical commemoration, whereas the present study interprets revolution as an outcome of material contradictions embedded in capitalist structures. This divergence highlights a key theoretical difference: revolution as patriotic narrative versus revolution as class-based restructuring. The findings here confirm Marx's assertion that genuine revolution entails dismantling systemic exploitation rather than merely replacing political leadership. By applying this framework to *Us*, the research broadens the discourse on revolutionary cinema, demonstrating that contemporary horror can function as an allegory for ongoing structural injustice rather than solely historical events.

Beyond its theoretical contribution, the findings also have important pedagogical implications. The analysis demonstrates that *Us* can be used as an effective teaching resource in literature, film studies, cultural studies, and social theory courses to introduce complex Marxist concepts such as exploitation, alienation, false consciousness, class consciousness, and revolution through an accessible visual narrative. Rather than approaching these concepts solely through philosophical texts, educators can use the film to encourage students to critically examine how cinematic narratives represent structural inequality and social resistance. The symbolic and allegorical nature of *Us* also provides opportunities for developing students' critical thinking, interpretive skills, and awareness of the relationship between culture, ideology, and power. Furthermore, the findings illustrate how interdisciplinary approaches that combine literary criticism, film analysis, and political theory can enhance students' understanding of contemporary social issues and foster critical engagement with representations of justice, inequality, and collective action in popular culture.

Overall, the study confirms that the film's portrayal of exploitation, alienation, false consciousness, and class consciousness aligns with established Marxist theory and complements existing film scholarship on inequality. At the same time, it challenges prior studies that stop at describing disparity without examining its revolutionary implications. The broader issue addressed is the inevitability of resistance in systems that perpetuate structural violence, a proposition strongly supported by Marx and reaffirmed through this analysis. The findings suggest that popular culture plays a critical role in mediating complex political theories for wider audiences, thereby shaping public understanding of systemic injustice. By integrating theoretical rigor with cultural analysis, this study strengthens the argument that cinematic texts can illuminate the conditions under which oppressed groups transition from passive suffering to organized collective resistance.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that *Us* systematically represents revolution as the culmination of class struggle rooted in exploitation, alienation, false consciousness, and the emergence of class consciousness, as theorized by Karl Marx. By analyzing the symbolic opposition between the Tethered and the surface dwellers, the research demonstrates that rebellion in the film is not arbitrary violence but a rational and collective response to enduring structural inequality. The most important proposition advanced in this paper is that popular horror cinema can meaningfully articulate complex Marxist concepts and visualize the dialectical process leading from oppression to revolutionary transformation. This work advances the

field by moving beyond analyses that merely identify social disparity in film, instead offering a comprehensive theoretical framework that traces the stages of revolutionary development within a contemporary cultural text. Practically, the findings highlight the pedagogical and critical value of film as a medium for engaging students and scholars with socio-political theory, particularly in discussions of inequality and systemic injustice. The study also opens possibilities for further research into other contemporary films that allegorize class conflict, comparative analyses across different socio-cultural contexts, and interdisciplinary explorations combining film studies, political theory, and cultural criticism. Through this contribution, the research strengthens the argument that cinematic narratives can serve not only as reflections of social conditions but also as critical interventions in broader discourses on justice and transformation.

The findings also carry important pedagogical implications for literature, film studies, and cultural studies classrooms. The representation of exploitation, alienation, class consciousness, and revolution in *Us* demonstrates that cinematic narratives can function as accessible pedagogical texts for teaching complex socio-political theories. Rather than learning Marxist concepts solely through philosophical writings, students can critically analyze characters, dialogue, visual symbolism, and narrative structure to understand how abstract theories operate within cultural texts. This approach promotes critical thinking, interpretive competence, and interdisciplinary learning by connecting literary criticism, film analysis, and political theory. Consequently, the findings support the incorporation of contemporary films into higher education curricula as effective tools for fostering discussions of structural inequality, ideology, and social justice.

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