Original Research Article

Analysis of Cultural Capital and Identity Formation in the Animated Movies «The Incredibles», «WALL-E», and «Ratatouille», Based on Pierre Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital

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Abstract

Introduction: This study examines and analyzes the representation of cultural capital and identity formation in the animations «The Incredibles» (2004), «WALL-E» (2008), and «Ratatouille» (2007). This research uses Pierre Bourdieu's «Cultural Capital» theory as its theoretical framework to explore these animations' thematic similarities and unique approaches regarding cultural capital and identity. This research aims to identify the role of cultural capital in shaping the identity of characters in the selected animations and to elucidate cultural taste and consumption within the context of identity formation.

Research Method: The study employs qualitative analysis to investigate the dynamics of cultural capital and its impact on identity formation in the selected animations. The data collection process involves using a six-component model of cultural capital through detailed observation, in-depth reading of the animations, and extensive note-taking. Data interpretation includes synthesizing and aligning these observations to identify patterns and contradictions.

Findings: Analysis of the selected animations reveals eight common themes related to cultural capital and identity formation: formation of cultural identity and social networks, social stratification and mobility, symbolic power dynamics and recognition, educational background and professional identity, cultural consumption and taste, cultural narratives, and media representation, embodied cultural capital and social interaction, and resistance and negotiation of cultural norms. In comparison, «Ratatouille» stands out in its representation of the transformative power of creativity and culinary art, challenging social prejudices and promoting inclusivity in the culinary world. This animation's representation of cultural capital is more pronounced, offering an interpretation of identity formation beyond conventional norms.

Conclusion: Exploring cultural capital and identity formation among animated films is closely linked to human experiences and social dynamics. Each of «The Incredibles», «WALL-E», and «Ratatouille» portrays characters undergoing identity changes within social contexts. Through their compelling narratives and characters, these animations highlight the significance of embracing diversity, challenging norms, and fostering inclusivity.

Keywords

Cultural Capital, Identity Formation, Bourdieu, Animation, Qualitative Analysis

Introduction and Problem Definition

In contemporary society, the intersection of culture, identity, and art has become a focal point in various disciplines. Understanding how cultural capital shapes individuals' identities and social interactions is essential for comprehending modern life. The primary issue of this research is to examine how cultural capital influences the identity formation of characters in selected animations and to understand how these animations represent cultural values and norms. This study seeks to address the existing gap in examining the impact of Pierre Bourdieu's cultural capital on identity formation processes in popular and successful animations. Although each animation can be explored from a cultural perspective, there is a lack of comprehensive research specifically analyzing cultural capital and its influence on identity formation in animations. As defined by Bourdieu, cultural capital encompasses a range of resources, including embodied status, material goods, and formal qualifications that individuals acquire through socialization and education within specific cultural contexts. Animations serve as rich storytelling networks that reflect social values, norms, and aspirations. Through their vivid narratives and engaging characters, these films offer valuable insights into the complexities of human experiences, such as cultural identity formation and negotiation of social structures. The reason for selecting the animations The Incredibles (2004), WALL-E (2008), and Ratatouille (2007) as prominent examples is that each provides unique perspectives on cultural phenomena and individual agency. In addition to their commercial success and positive reviews, these animations have significantly penetrated popular culture and serve as suitable examples for analyzing cultural capital and identity. Although primarily created for children and adolescents, due to their multilayered content and profound cultural messages, they also appeal to adult audiences. Thus, this research aims to identify the role of cultural capital in shaping the identity of characters in the selected animations, explain cultural taste and consumption in the context of identity formation, and explore the methods characters employ when confronting cultural and social norms. This analysis primarily focuses on the animations' narrative elements and character portrayals without extensively exploring the production contexts or audience reception. The importance of this topic for Iranian audiences lies in the fact that analyzing foreign animations from the perspective of cultural capital can enhance the understanding of domestic animations and aid in the production of indigenous cultural content. This research can provide Iranian animation producers with strategies for representing identity and cultural capital that align with Iranian culture and values. Understanding the depiction of cultural capital and its consequences on identity formation in animation is, in itself, culturally and socially significant. This study seeks to answer the following questions: How do these animations, through their stories and characters, represent and explain cultural concepts such as social networks, social stratification, symbolic power, taste, and cultural consumption? How do these concepts influence the identity formation of characters? What similarities and differences exist in representing cultural capital and identity formation processes in these three animations? Therefore, in line with the abovementioned objectives, this research will present a theoretical framework after reviewing previous studies and explaining the methodology, elucidating Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital and its application in analyzing animated films. Then, each selected film—Ratatouille, The Incredibles, and WALL-E—will be examined within this context. Finally, the conclusion section will highlight the key findings and discuss the implications of the research for understanding the complex interaction between culture, identity, and animation.

Research Method

This study uses a qualitative analysis approach to examine and analyze the dynamics of cultural capital and its impact on identity formation in the three animated films: Ratatouille, The Incredibles, and Wall-E. These films were deliberately chosen for their rich narrative perspectives, diverse character portrayals, and thematic relevance to the research topic. Ratatouille provides a clear depiction of the culinary world, allowing for an exploration of professional aspirations and cultural capital within food. The Incredibles portrays family dynamics and societal expectations, examining themes of superheroism and social roles. Wall-E offers a poignant reflection on the environment and human connection, presenting

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a unique perspective on cultural capital in a post-apocalyptic setting. The data collection process includes multiple viewings of each film, accompanied by note-taking to record essential points and details, revealing the complexities of cultural capital and identity formation in the narratives. Supplementary materials like critical reviews are also used for deeper analysis. The analysis begins with thoroughly examining the collected data to understand the various aspects depicted in the animations. This process involves analyzing each film's characters, backgrounds, interactions, and socio-cultural environments. The goal is to extract the underlying elements of cultural capital and how they influence identity formation. Data interpretation involves synthesizing observations to identify patterns and narratives in the animations. This phase focuses on understanding how cultural capital influences the characters' identities within the socio-cultural contexts of each film. Data interpretation follows the recognition of recurring elements and situates them within the broader narrative structure. Finally, the findings from the data interpretation are synthesized to draw meaningful conclusions about the role of cultural capital in identity formation, identifying and comparing key common themes related to cultural capital and identity formation in the three selected animations.

Research Background

There is a lack of studies that directly analyze the topic of «cultural capital» in specific animations and relate it to «identity formation». However, several key studies explore the intersection of cultural capital, identity formation, and artistic-media consumption, providing valuable insights into these phenomena. In «Popular Cultural Capital and Cultural Identity: Young Korean Women's Cultural Appropriation of Japanese TV Dramas», «Lee» (2008) demonstrates how transnational consumption spaces are created and negotiated within the framework of globalization. This study emphasizes cultural boundaries' fluidity and identity construction through media consumption. However, further research on power dynamics and cultural hegemony in media consumption practices is necessary. Similarly, «Zukin» (1990), in «Socio-Spatial Prototypes of a New Organization of Consumption: The Role of Real Cultural Capital», illuminates the evolving organization of consumption in contemporary service economies and emphasizes the role of real cultural capital in shaping consumer behaviors and experiences. This research addresses the spatial embedding of consumption practices and the changing demands of affluent consumers, providing a framework for understanding the dynamics of cultural capital in market-based contexts. However, a more critical examination is needed to explore the implications of this organizational shift for social inequality and cultural homogenization. «Cultural Identity and Subcultural Forums: The Post-network Politics of Adult Swim» by «Elkins» (2014) examines the identity politics of brand culture within the context of American television while discussing the discourses of subcultural taste and mainstream cultural identities. This study provides insights into the complexities of cultural representation and cultural meanings in media contexts. Although it clarifies the discursive structure of fan communities, further examination of the commodification of counter-hegemonic identities and the potential for resistance to inclusion in corporate interests is necessary. «Lam» (2010), in «Global corporate cultural capital' as a drag on glocalization: Disneyland's promotion of the Halloween Festival» highlights the tensions between global branding strategies and local cultural contexts, emphasizing the challenges of glocalization in the contemporary consumer market. However, critical analysis of power dynamics and cultural imperialism is essential for fully understanding the implications of these strategies for cultural diversity and authenticity. Finally, in «Bringing It All Back Home: Capital

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Utilization of Irish Repatriates in the Irish SME Animation Industry», «Smith-Auchmuty and O'Connor» (2023) provide insights into the intersection of cultural capital, career motivations, and reintegration into domestic labor markets adopting a Bourdieusian perspective on capital. In this regard, a significant gap in these studies is the analysis of animations within the framework of Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. Animations are powerful cultural artifacts that shape social norms, values, and identities. However, limited attention has been given to the ways animations engage with and reproduce cultural capital, particularly in the context of identity formation. The present study, focusing on The Incredibles, Wall-E, and Ratatouille animations, seeks to examine and analyze how cultural capital operates within animated narratives. The innovation of this study lies in applying Bourdieu's theory to analyze animated films, elucidating the role of cultural capital in shaping individual and collective identities within popular culture.

Theoretical Framework

Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the role of cultural resources in shaping individuals' opportunities and achievements in society. «Sablan and Tierney» (2014) propose a six-component model of cultural capital. According to them, at the core of Bourdieu's theory are six key determinants illuminating cultural capital's multifaceted nature. These determinants include objectified state, embodied state, institutionalized state, field, habitus, and social and cultural reproduction. The objectified state of cultural capital comprises tangible cultural goods such as books, artworks, and musical instruments. These cultural objects hold symbolic value and act as resources individuals can access and utilize to navigate social spaces and interactions (Bourdieu, 2001). For example, possessing certain cultural goods, such as classic literature or artworks, instead of material wealth signifies an individual's cultural capital. The objectified state is crucial for understanding how individuals acquire and use cultural resources to create social positions and cultural legitimacy (Roscigno & Ainsworth-Darnell, 1999). Contrary to the objectified state, the embodied state refers to internalized dispositions, preferences, and tastes that individuals develop over time through socialization and cultural experiences (Bourdieu, 2001). These enduring dispositions shape individuals' perceptions, behaviors, and interactions within social contexts and reflect their cultural capital. The embodied state emphasizes the importance of personal inclinations in shaping cultural actions and behaviors. The institutionalized state of cultural capital pertains to recognizing and valuing cultural resources within formal institutions, particularly educational systems (Bourdieu, 1986). By institutionalizing cultural capital, educational institutions reproduce existing power dynamics and class hierarchies and privilege specific cultural resources over others (Bourdieu, 1986). The field refers to social spaces where cultural resources are produced, exchanged, and valued. Objective relations between positions characterize these social spaces and operate based on specific rules and norms (Musoba & Baez, 2009). Examples include artistic, religious, and economic fields, where cultural capital is accumulated and exchanged. Understanding the field dynamics is essential for analyzing how cultural capital operates in various social contexts and institutions. Habitus encompasses internalized dispositions and perceptions shaped by individuals' social experiences and upbringing (Bourdieu, 1990). These enduring dispositions influence individuals' behaviors, beliefs, and preferences and reflect their cultural capital. Habitus emphasizes the role of personal inclinations in shaping cultural actions and behaviors within social contexts. Social and cultural reproduction refers to the process through which cultural capital is transmitted and maintained, perpetuating existing

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social hierarchies and class distinctions (Bourdieu, 1998). Families and educational institutions play a key role in reproducing cultural capital through socialization and educational practices. However, cultural capital does not exist in isolation. It intersects with social and economic capital and influences individuals' social mobility and opportunities. Social capital, characterized by networks and connections, can be used to gain economic advantages. Economic capital, such as wealth and qualifications acquired through education, can enhance social networks and opportunities, illustrating the transformative relationship between these forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1993). The interaction between habitus and cultural capital is a symbiotic relationship in which habitus acts as a mediator in acquiring and applying cultural capital. As individuals navigate social contexts, habitus guides their interpretations and actions, shaping their engagement with cultural resources and practices (Bourdieu, 1977, 95). Cultural capital, in turn, reinforces and reflects habitus, influencing individuals' positions in social hierarchies and their perceptions of themselves and others (Webb, Schirato, & Danaher, 2002). Identity formation is a complex process influenced by habitus and cultural capital interaction. Habitus shapes individuals' inclinations and behaviors, guiding their engagement with cultural resources and practices. Cultural capital signifies distinction and reflects embodied inclinations and competencies (Bourdieu, 2001). The complete model of cultural capital integrates these components and concepts (Fig 1).
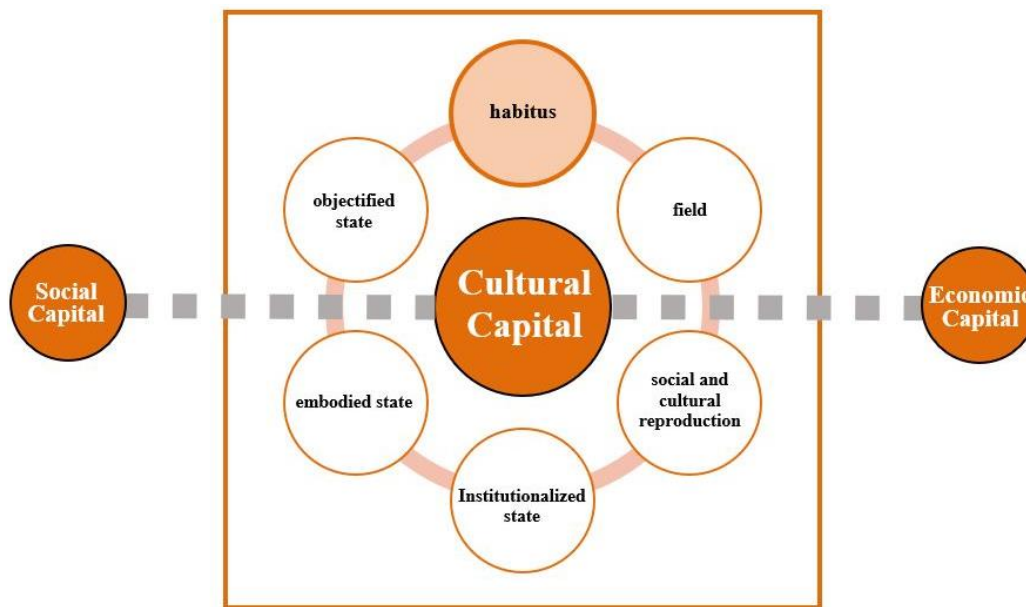

Fig 1. The Six-Component Model of Cultural Capital, with an Emphasis on the Component of «Habitus», and Its Relationship with Economic Capital and Social Capital. Source: Authors, based on Sablan & Tierney, 2014.

However, Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital has significant analytical limitations. The most important limitation is its static conceptualization, which fails to explain the evolving nature of cultural capital over time and the dynamic changes in social norms and artifacts (DiMaggio & Mukhtar, 2004). Bourdieu's emphasis on structural determinism overlooks individual agency, trapping them in predetermined social fields and perpetuating the culture of poverty narrative (Jenkins, 1982; Savage & Bennett, 2005). To address these limitations, an alternative dynamic model centered on the concept of cultural integration is proposed (Tierney, 2002). This model can integrate individuals' cultural backgrounds as valuable assets rather than deficiencies, incorporating perspectives such as knowledge capital to identify the richness of marginalized communities and emphasizing the role of struggle and praxis in empowering individuals to challenge oppressive structures and enact social change (Freire, 2018, 172).

Analysis of «The Incredibles» (2004)

In The Incredibles (Fig 2), Bob Parr, also known as Mr. Incredible, embodies the dual roles of a superhero and a family man. His character displays a complex interplay of cultural capital and identity formation. Bob's interactions with his family members reveal how cultural capital is transferred and exchanged within familial contexts. Bob's relationship with his wife, Helen (also known as Elastigirl), and their children, Violet, Dash, and Jack-Jack, represents the transmission of values, norms, and intergenerational actions. Through daily interactions, shared experiences, and negotiation of roles and responsibilities, the Parr family engages in socialization and cultural reproduction. Bob's efforts to balance his superhero duties with his family obligations highlight the complexities of managing social capital within intimate relationships as he seeks to maintain his heroic identity and role as a husband and father. As Bob's wife and partner, Helen embodies the challenges of motherhood and superheroism. Her role as a protective mother illustrates the intersection of gender, family dynamics, and cultural capital. «Bourdieu and Passeron» (1977) emphasize the influence of habitus within families on individuals' reception and absorption of educational messages, highlighting the role of social class in shaping individuals' readiness to engage with educational content. The narrative's emphasis on Helen's empowerment and agency reflects a negotiation of cultural identity within patriarchal structures. Violet and Dash represent the complexities of identity formation during childhood and adolescence. Violet's sense of shyness and insecurity (00:16:07) is juxtaposed with her emerging confidence and assertiveness, as well as her superpowers and romantic relationships. Dash's impulsive and reckless nature and desire for freedom (00:15:35) present a significant challenge in reconciling superhuman abilities with social norms and constraints. The government-imposed relocation program (00:10:09) exemplifies the superheroes' resistance to prevailing cultural norms and institutional control. With their extraordinary abilities and nonconformist identities, superheroes challenge the status quo and establish power structures. The government's decision to implement this program reflects widespread societal dissatisfaction with «difference» and «deviation», where superheroes are perceived as too disruptive or threatening to social order. Despite their heroic deeds and contributions to public safety, superheroes are marginalized and accused by society. Institutional authorities and public opinion undermine and devalue their cultural capital, rooted in exceptional abilities and moral integrity. Bob's yearning to return to his superhero days drives the animation's storyline. After the relocation program is enacted, Bob's career is reduced to a mundane job at an insurance company (00:12:19), which fails to fulfill his

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ambitions and goals. When Bob is invited by the character Mirage to embark on a secret superhero mission to defeat Omnidroid (00:34:45), he accepts. His decision represents the reclamation of his professional identity as a superhero as he seeks validation, agency, and value in the realm of heroism. Bob's involvement in this mission affirms his status as a hero and bearer of cultural capital. By embracing this opportunity, Bob reasserts his loyalty to the ethics and values of superheroism. However, Syndrome's transformation from a fan to a supervillain exemplifies the impact of media representations and cultural narratives on individual identity formation. Initially, Syndrome appears as a young fan of superheroes, internalizing social narratives and images aligned with heroism, courage, and power. His inability to become a superhero leads to feelings of inadequacy and resentment (00:50:58). Thus, his transformation into a supervillain can be seen as a response to certain societal narratives that valorize heroism while marginalizing those who do not align with conventional ideals of power and bravery. His attempt to eliminate the old superheroes suggests a broader societal struggle for symbolic capital and cultural authority. This redefinition extends beyond conventional notions of morality and virtue, challenging traditional concepts based on «natural rights» and «noble privileges».

Fig 2. The animation «The Incredibles» (2004), produced by Pixar Animation Studios, USA, directed by Brad Bird, 115 minutes. From top right, counterclockwise: a. The mundane life of Bob Parr illustrates the loss of identity and cultural capital of superheroes (Time: 00:12:19); b. The family's reunion, highlighting their acceptance of identity and collective purpose against cultural norms (Time: 01:27:57); c. Syndrome's defeat, symbolizing the triumph of cultural authenticity over manipulation and misrepresentation of power (Time: 01:44:19); and d. Underminer's emergence sets the stage for the family's ongoing struggle against social and cultural expectations (Time: 01:46:36). Source: Bird, 2004.

The revelation of Bob's secret mission impacts the dynamics of the Parr family. Helen becomes aware of Bob's clandestine activities, leading to tension within the family. The disclosure of Bob's dual identity as a superhero and a husband/father disrupts the established expectations of him, challenging the cohesion and stability of the family. Helen and the children face moral questions and personal beliefs about heroism, responsibility, and the greater good. This issue reveals the family's cultural inclinations and preferences, shaped by their upbringing, experiences, and socialization. Bourdieu describes embodied cultural capital as «long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body» acquired through socialization, becoming integral aspects of an individual's habitus (Bourdieu, 1986). Each family member's varied reactions to Bob's secret mission illuminate their perspectives and attitudes toward heroism and social norms. Here, it is important to mention a significant character in the story who is closely linked to cultural capital. Edna Mode, the superhero costume designer, facilitates the Parr family's transformation and empowerment. Her expertise in creating superhero costumes serves as symbolic capital for expressing identity. She empowers the Parr family to express their superhero identities (00:54:44). Her presence brings to life cultural capital's capacity to shape individuals' identities and aspirations. The Parr family confronts Syndrome on his island (01:28:35), revealing the social hierarchy within the superhero community. They become engaged in a struggle for power and recognition within a hierarchical structure. With his technological prowess, Syndrome represents a form of cultural capital granting him authority and influence. In contrast, the Parr family, despite their superior powers and morality, has experienced marginalization and discrimination for a time. Besides their struggle against the Syndrome, the Parr family is engaged in a broader battle against institutionalized forms of cultural capital that seek to regulate and control their identities and actions. In the final showdown between the Parr family and Syndrome's Omnidroid in Metroville (01:34:44), consumption patterns and status symbols play a significant role. The Parr family dons their superhero costumes and gear in public, openly displaying their identities as superheroes. Their attire and gadgets hold symbolic importance. By possessing and showcasing these material assets, the family reasserts their belonging to the superhero community and establishes their legitimacy as heroes. During the final battle with Syndrome, Jack-Jack's (the Incredible family's baby) emerging powers are revealed (01:43:37). His numerous and diverse abilities indicate the inheritance and transmission of cultural capital within family contexts. These powers are not just innate abilities but forms of cultural capital that shape his identity and capabilities. Thus, cultural inclinations persist across generations, emphasizing the role of familial socialization in shaping individual identities and worldviews. The ending of The Incredibles portrays the Parr family's triumph over Syndrome and their subsequent unification as a superhero family. Their victory leads to widespread societal recognition as heroes. The citizens of Metroville acknowledge their heroic actions in protecting the city, thereby enhancing the cultural capital associated with these virtues. Despite legal constraints and public skepticism, they decide to engage in future heroic activities to protect the city (01:46:52). The actions of this family transform cultural narratives surrounding superheroes, and their victory signifies the formation of cultural inclinations and preferences towards heroism and justice. Throughout the story, Mr. Incredible's family cultivates a shared set of values and beliefs prioritizing «defending what is right».'

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Analysis of «WALL-E» (2008)

In the opening scenes of WALL-E (Fig 3), the depiction of Earth as a barren, deserted place covered with garbage offers a powerful commentary on the impact of environmental factors on cultural capital. The environmental devastation we see on Earth signifies a profound disregard for the natural world. We see a society where short-term achievements and consumerist tendencies have affected long-term sustainability and environmental balance. In the film's narrative, the remnants of human civilization scattered among the heaps of garbage are poignant cultural artifacts left behind by human society. A society that once thrived is now represented by its waste. The film's narrative presents the interconnectedness of environmental stewardship and cultural identity, emphasizing collective responsibility in shaping a sustainable future.
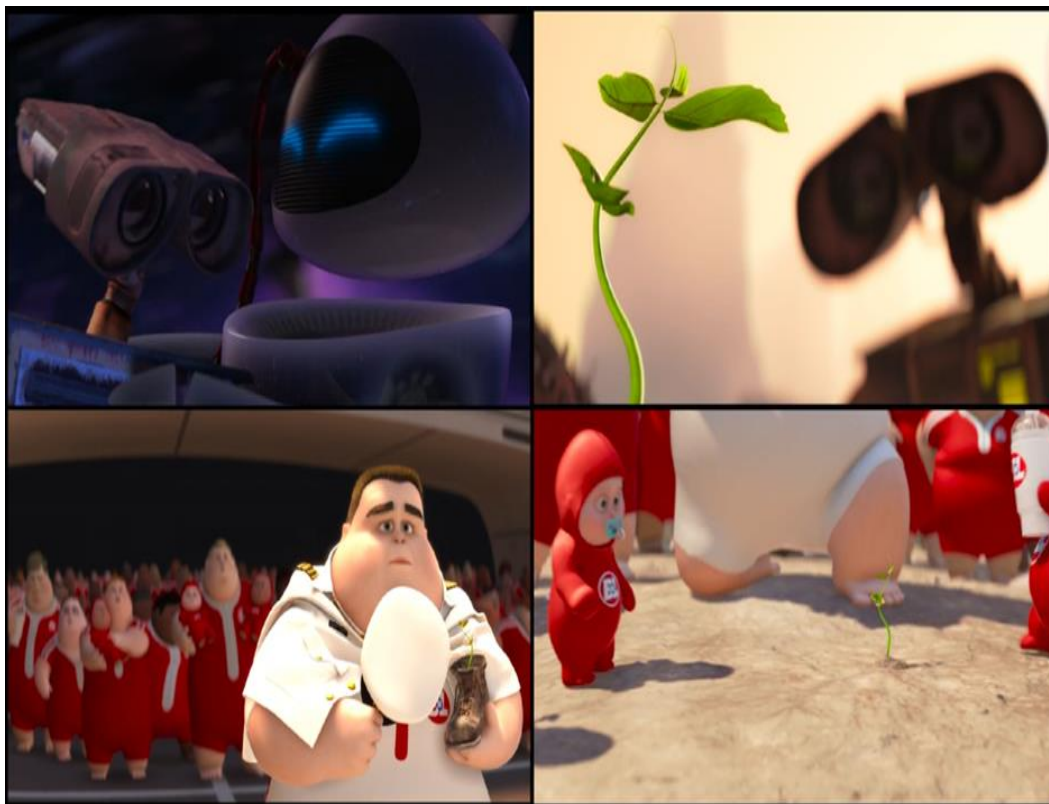

Fig 3. The animation «WALL-E» (2008), produced by Pixar Animation Studios, USA, directed by Andrew Stanton, 97 minutes. From top right, counterclockwise: a. WALL-E's discovery of the plant, facilitating the exploration of identity and cultural capital (Time: 00:11:27); b. The alliance of WALL-E and Eve in space, depicting a moment of cultural connection and exchange that embodies cultural capital (Time: 00:59:23); c. The return to Earth, exemplifying negotiation over identity formation in a transformed environment (Time: 01:25:16); and d. Planting the seed in the soil represents the embodiment of cultural capital and the resilience of the human spirit (Time: 01:29:09). Source: Stanton, 2008.

WALL-E, the last active robot on Earth, is a waste compactor demonstrating valuable knowledge and skill. His ability to collect, sort, and compact trash (00:02:49) shows a level—albeit low—of expertise and resourcefulness essential for survival in a post-

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apocalyptic world marked by environmental decline and resource scarcity. WALL-E's solitary presence sharply portrays the different social classes within the film. Despite his hard work and ingenuity, he occupies a marginalized position in the social hierarchy. Cultural capital theory, despite its relative emphasis on institutional factors, shows how the cultural background of marginalized individuals is «deficit» (Yosso, 2005). He is an outcast amidst the trash, relegated to the fringes of society. The stark contrast between this status and the privileged lifestyle seen on the Axiom highlights the pervasive socio-economic inequalities in the film's dystopian world. The introduction of EVE (00:15:08), a sleek and polished probe robot, and her subsequent interaction with WALL-E signal a significant shift in the narrative, linked to her sophisticated design and advanced communication capabilities. EVE, representing high culture, employs linguistic and technological complexity that contrasts with WALL-E's basic communication skills and mechanical simplicity. The interaction between the two (00:18:57) is a microcosm of the broader social dynamics in the film's society, showcasing the juxtaposition of high and low cultures. EVE's communication style, characterized by beeps, rotations, and blinking lights, is rooted in precision and technical efficiency. In contrast, WALL-E's communication is more rudimentary, involving simple gestures, short sounds, and limited vocabulary. In a pivotal moment, WALL-E shows EVE a living plant he discovered (00:28:10). This moment has significant implications for understanding cultural capital and identity formation in the film. The discovery of this plant represents the symbolic and powerful meanings attributed to objects and possessions, encompassing themes of hope, renewal, and environmental restoration. Before this discovery, humans have resigned to their fate. Earth is deemed beyond salvation, and their presence on the Axiom spaceship is the only option for survival. The plant's appearance alters these preconceived notions, prompting characters to reevaluate their cultural identity and relationship with the environment. Possession of the plant becomes a symbol of power and influence, with characters vying for control over humanity's destiny and future. This shift represents the fluidity of cultural capital. EVE returns to the Axiom with the plant (00:32:45), where humanity exists in a state of morbid obesity and is heavily reliant on robots. The physical appearance and lifestyle of the spaceship's inhabitants indicate a society entrenched in greed and excess. Although robots like EVE and WALL-E are not immune to the effects of Axiom's abundance and luxury, they maintain a sense of agency, albeit within the limits of their designated roles. Access to resources and opportunities further reinforces the socio-economic divide within the Axiom community. Despite playing crucial roles in maintaining Axiom's infrastructure, robots like WALL-E and EVE are relegated to secondary roles and deprived of the independence and agency granted to humans. The consumption pattern of WALL-E and EVE is dictated by their role as custodians of Axiom's ecosystem, highlighting the film's society's diverse cultural values and priorities. The interaction among characters based on cultural capital is critical to understanding the dynamics between WALL-E, EVE, and other Axiom inhabitants. WALL-E's decision to secretly follow EVE (00:33:41) reveals his deep emotional attachment. While WALL-E lacks the status of humans, he possesses abundant cultural capital derived from his experiences on Earth, including resourcefulness, resilience, and empathy. EVE also represents a form of cultural capital rooted in technological complexity and efficiency. The disruption in their reunion caused by the missing plant (00:49:32) again underscores the complexity of cultural capital. The missing plant forces characters to confront their beliefs and values when faced with adversity. This plant disrupts Axiom's technology-based reality, challenging the characters' understanding of progress, sustainability, and the human condition. Institutional structures play a pivotal role in

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shaping the behaviors and motivations of the characters. As the Axiom's autonomous control system, AUTO is a powerful organizational force exerting significant authority and influence over the spaceship's inhabitants. This character is programmed to prioritize human preservation over returning to Earth. He is the guardian of the status quo, enforcing a rigid set of rules and regulations. WALL-E and EVE must contend with institutional barriers and control systems that seek to maintain the existing social order. Fundamentally, resistance to prevailing cultural norms and practices is an underlying theme of the film. WALL-E and EVE's discovery of AUTO's conspiracy to prevent humanity's return to Earth (00:57:06) incites resistance among the spaceship's inhabitants. As the narrative progresses, a gradual shift towards an environmentally conscious mindset and a reevaluation of technology's role takes shape. Technology facilitates characters' access to the knowledge, skills, and resources needed to confront institutional obstacles."(1986) considers (cultural) capital as «accumulated labor», which, when appropriated by agents, allows them to harness energy and social resources. The characters use the power of media and technology to accumulate cultural capital and emphasize their agency in shaping humanity's future, like WALL-E's interaction with discarded objects and EVE's advanced technological capabilities. As the Axiom's captain, McCrea holds a position and privilege in the spaceship's hierarchy, representing the ruling elite class that governs humanity's fate. He rejects AUTO's directive (01:09:41) to take moral responsibility for humanity's plight. In contrast, AUTO embodies the role of a subservient bureaucrat programmed to uphold institutional norms and prioritize maintaining the status quo without considering its consequences for the broader human population. Here, the impact of cultural capital on McCrea's aspirations and his prioritization of preserving Earth's ecosystem is evident. In the end, WALL-E sacrifices himself to save humanity (01:21:07) but is revived by EVE (01:28:02). This event reunites the two, and Earth becomes ready to become habitable for humans again. WALL-E's decision to sacrifice himself for the greater good demonstrates his commitment to preserving humanity's legacy and the survival of future generations. His revival by EVE introduces themes of hope, renewal, and redemption into the story. Transforming Earth into a lush paradise with biodiversity offers a vision for a future shaped by cultural narratives. WALL-E and EVE, using media and technology to accumulate cultural capital, empower others to envision a brighter future.

Analysis of «Ratatouille» (2007)

In Ratatouille (Fig 4), we meet Remy, a young rat whose intrinsic passion for cooking transcends social norms and expectations. Remy's character is deeply intertwined with culinary knowledge and expertise. Despite being a rat, he has an extraordinary understanding of flavors, aromas, and cooking techniques. His culinary skill goes beyond mere instinct. This aspect of Remy's character highlights Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital as acquired skills and competencies that produce social advantage. Remy's passion for cooking is embedded in his identity. His embodiment of culinary skills and his interest in gourmet food symbolizes a rare manifestation of cultural capital within the context of the rat colony. In his colony, food is merely something for subsistence, nothing more. Remy's culinary aspirations deviate from the expected path of rat society. From a young age, he is exposed to the world of cooking by idolizing Auguste Gusteau, a renowned chef.

Fig 4. The animation «Ratatouille» (2007), produced by Pixar Animation Studios, USA, directed by Brad Bird, 111 minutes. From top right, counterclockwise: a. Remy's discovery of Gusteau's restaurant, symbolizing his desire to break social norms and pursue his dream of becoming a chef (Time: 00:17:19); b. Remy's culinary creativity demonstrates his cultural capital in challenging traditional cooking norms (Time: 00:50:55); c. Anton Ego's transformation shows the recognition and symbolic dynamics in the culinary world (Time: 01:35:22); and d. The opening of the new restaurant by Remy, Linguini, and Colette represents the establishment of their culinary identity and social network (Time: 01:41:26). Source: Bird, 2007.

Gusteau's character is defined by his unparalleled culinary knowledge and expertise, which form the cornerstone of his cultural capital. Gusteau's skills and innovative approach to cooking elevate him to the status of an iconic culinary figure. His symbolic power in the culinary industry is undeniable. His name is synonymous with culinary «excellence», and his restaurant is an institution of prestige and success. His restaurant caters to the needs of select clients, upholding high standards and reinforcing the associated concepts. However, Gusteau's motto, «Anyone can cook» (00:00:56), challenges these traditional boundaries and suggests the democratization of culinary knowledge and the removal of elitist notions of taste and class. To realize his culinary dreams, Remy initiates an unexpected collaboration with Linguini, who is in charge of cleaning (00:37:48). Linguini's employment at Gusteau's restaurant provides him with valuable access to the knowledge, ingredients, and cooking equipment that serve as essential cultural resources in cooking. Bourdieu's analysis (1986) focused on how individuals with different cultural capital achieve different task outcomes, emphasizing the role of resources rather than luck or choice. Thus, Linguini's culinary credentials become significant, and his collaboration with Remy continues. Cultural capital here acts as a facilitator of partnerships and creative endeavors in the culinary domain. Despite Linguini's humble beginnings, his association with Gusteau's prestigious institution grants him a degree of institutional credibility and legitimacy in the culinary community. Their collaboration does not align with the traditional hierarchies and perceptions in the culinary industry, introducing a concept that can be called «shared cultural capital». Linguini's connection with Remy allows him to move beyond his role as a mere janitor and elevate his identity to that of a chef-in-training. Meanwhile, Remy

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also pursues his goal through this collaboration. However, Linguini also has a formal mentor in the restaurant: Colette Tatou (00:40:26), Who is the only female chef at Gusteau's restaurant. Colette's culinary skills, discipline, and focus contribute to her success in the male-dominated environment. Initially skeptical of Linguini's abilities, Colette eventually becomes Linguini's main collaborator, illustrating the fluidity of cultural identities and meritocracy in the culinary community. Unlike Linguini, Colette does not have a familial connection to Gusteau, yet she occupies a significant position in the restaurant by relying on her identity and cultural capital. At a crucial moment in the narrative, Linguini discovers that he is Gusteau's (illegitimate) son and the legal heir to the restaurant (01:14:20). Linguini's new status as Gusteau's heir is tied to institutional recognition in the culinary world. Skinner attempts to prevent Linguini from claiming his inheritance in order to take Gusteau's position for himself. Skinner's background as Gusteau's former chef places him in a prominent institutional position within the culinary industry. His ambitions extend to acquiring cultural capital materialized through ownership and control over the restaurant. His animosity towards Linguini and Remy stems from the threat he perceives to his cultural capital and status in the culinary world. Linguini not only inherits Gusteau's restaurant but also claims his cultural capital. With Remy's culinary skills and Linguini's new status, Gusteau's restaurant flourishes. Remy's culinary knowledge and expertise serve as the driving force behind the restaurant's new success. His innate understanding of flavors and cooking techniques, combined with his innovation and creativity, enhances the dishes' quality and attracts more customers. The restaurant's success also reflects the social classes within the culinary industry. Despite Linguini's humble background, he creates an exclusive and high-level space in the restaurant. This transformation demonstrates that social class boundaries are fluid in the culinary world, and upward mobility can be achieved through acquiring and accumulating cultural capital. However, when Linguini claims Remy's culinary credit as his own, a conflict arises (01:18:22), leading to a struggle and confrontation between the two. On the one hand, Remy's culinary skill and expertise represent a form of embodied cultural capital, combining natural talent and personal dedication. In contrast, Linguini's attempt to appropriate the prestige of Remy's cooking complicates the notions of authenticity and integrity in the culinary field. This issue arises from the lack of embodied cultural capital and authenticity, as Linguini seeks to prove his identity through borrowed achievements instead of personal merit. Subsequently, Remy's colony of rats invades the restaurant, causing chaos (01:19:37). Their intrusion into the restaurant's clean environment represents the contrast between the elite fine dining culture and the everyday realities of popular culture. The rats disrupt the restaurant's status quo, challenging the hierarchies of power and privilege. The marginalized status of the rats exacerbates the discrimination they face, as they are inherently considered inferior and worthless in the culinary community. Despite these challenges, Remy and Linguini reunite (01:29:11), and Remy's talent is finally discovered by the renowned food critic Anton Ego (01:37:43). Thus, Remy's cultural capital—his innate understanding of flavors, techniques, and culinary creativity—is affirmed. Without revealing Remy's true identity, Ego presents him as a respected and influential figure in the culinary world (01:39:38). Ego's endorsement leads to a change in the attitudes and relationships of Remy's peers towards him. Now, they respect his culinary expertise. In other words, Remy's cultural capital influences social interactions, reinforcing connections and collaborations based on shared values, expertise, and aspirations. Ego's review makes Remy famous in France, albeit anonymously and without revealing his identity. This can be considered a form of institutional recognition that elevates Remy's position and credibility in the professional

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community. However, Gusteau's restaurant closes due to health code violations (01:39:59), but Remy, Linguini, and Colette open their own small restaurant (01:41:26). The closure of the restaurant points to the consequences of inadequate training, knowledge, and adherence to industry standards. Their small restaurant provides a space for negotiating and expressing their cultural identities. However, they also have a somewhat unexpected supporter. Ego's decision to become an investor in the new restaurant questions traditional notions of class boundaries—and even his own former identity—blurring the lines between the elite culinary institution and the broader community. The presence of Remy's rat colony in the restaurant's attic symbolizes the transmission of cultural capital within families and communities, representing the resilience and adaptability of cultural capital that overcomes social barriers and makes the culinary experience enjoyable for all involved. This is the social and cultural reproduction that Bourdieu discusses as the transmission of cultural capital in society. Despite their non-human status, the rats achieve unprecedented societal acceptance and belonging. The rats, through their participation in the success of the eatery, establish their cultural identity and agency, altering the prevailing understanding. The analysis of the three selected animations can be summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of Common Themes Identified Related to Cultural Capital and Identity Formation in the Three Animated Films Reviewed. Source: Authors.

Row	Name of the Identified Theme	The Incredibles	WALL-E	Ratatouille
1	Formation of Cultural Identity and Social Networks	Characters grapple with their dual identity as superheroes and ordinary citizens.	Humanity's connection to Earth is severed through reliance on technology.	As a rat, Remy challenges norms with his dream of becoming a chef.
2	Social Stratification and Mobility	Superheroes are marginalized, and society is stratified.	The elite class (humans) flee to space, leaving Earth to decay.	The revelation of Gusteau and Linguini's father-son relationship challenges culinary hierarchies.
3	Symbolic Power Dynamics and Recognition	Struggle for recognition and influence.	Autonomy vs. authority; power dynamics.	Talent and passion transcend social norms.
4	Educational Background and Professional Identity	Characters pursue professional fulfillment.	Dependence on technology vs. human connection.	Culinary training vs. innate talent.
5	Cultural Consumption and Taste	Examining social attitudes toward superheroes.	Critique of consumerism and environmental destruction.	Introducing new flavors and cooking techniques.
6	Cultural Narratives and Media Representation	Critique of social narratives surrounding superheroism.	Reflection on social narratives of technological advancement and development.	Transformation of public perception through the concept of culinary «excellence».
7	Embodied Cultural Capital and Social Interaction	Superheroes' powers influence social dynamics and relationships.	Embodied cultural capital influences interactions.	Exceptional culinary talent shapes social dynamics.
8	Resistance And Negotiation of Cultural Norms	Resistance against social norms and oppression.	Challenging social norms through environmental awareness.	Redefining culinary excellence; challenging traditional norms.

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Conclusion

Comparing «Ratatouille», «WALL-E», and «The Incredibles» in terms of cultural capital and identity formation provides insights into how each film portrays these concepts with varying degrees of success. While all three films explore similar themes, they differ in their approaches to depicting the impact of cultural capital and identity formation. From the analysis of these three animations, eight themes related to cultural capital and identity formation are extracted: formation of cultural identity and social networks, social stratification and mobility, symbolic power dynamics and recognition, educational background and professional identity, cultural consumption, and taste, cultural narratives and media representation, embodied cultural capital and social interaction, and resistance and negotiation of cultural norms. Ratatouille stands out in exploring cultural identity and social networks. The film illustrates how Remy, with his motivation, passion, and talent, engages with social norms to pursue his dream of becoming a chef. This narrative emphasizes the transformative power of cultural identity formation. While WALL-E depicts a dystopian future's yearning for connection, its focus on human-robot interactions limits its engagement with social networks and cultural identity. The narrative of The Incredibles is primarily centered around family dynamics and offers less depth in portraying cultural identity beyond the confines of the superhero world. Ratatouille continues to excel in depicting the challenges of class divides. The film shows how Remy and Linguini strive for recognition and success in a profession steeped in tradition and elitism. WALL-E presents a society with severe social stratification, but its exploration of mobility is primarily physical and lacks a deep analysis of the social and cultural dimensions of mobility. The Incredibles also raises social expectations but focuses more on the family's struggle to reclaim their superhero identity, operating within limited mobility and social classification dynamics. Ratatouille again proves more successful than the other two animations in terms of taste and cultural consumption. Remy's quest to achieve culinary excellence is a form of cultural celebration that highlights the power of this profession in shaping cultural experiences and identities. In contrast, while critiquing consumerism, WALL-E emphasizes cultural consumption with minimal focus on cultural significance. The Incredibles shares a similar situation; it focuses on superheroism and family dynamics but offers minimal representation of cultural consumption beyond occasional references to popular culture. Regarding media representation and cultural narratives, Ratatouille presents a more compelling interpretation. The film addresses the issue of inherent power in shaping cultural narratives and highlights individuals' roles in opposing and redefining cultural stereotypes. WALL-E addresses media representation with minimal emphasis on how media shapes cultural identities. The Incredibles primarily focuses on superhero culture but has limited representation of media or cultural narratives within the superhero world. In this comparison, Ratatouille holds a higher position than the other two films in terms of cultural capital and identity formation. However, WALL-E and The Incredibles also contain elements of social critique and exploration of identity but lack the depth and complexity in Ratatouille. This article explored and analyzed identity formation and social interaction depicted in these animations through the lens of Bourdieu's cultural capital. Exploring key themes such as cultural consumption, social mobility, and symbolic power dynamics illuminates how individuals negotiate cultural norms and engage with social hierarchies in their respective contexts .Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital is highly effective in understanding the complexities of identity formation in films and provides valuable insights into the intersection of culture, power, and social interaction. However, it is essential to recognize the limitations of this analysis, including the scope of the films examined and the

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specific focus on Bourdieu's theory, as well as identifying other potential areas for further research.

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