Parallels between Suzanne Collins’s *Hunger Games Trilogy* and Marxist Theories about Socioeconomic Class and Ideology.

Paralleller mellan Suzanne Collins Hunger Spelen och Marxistiska teorier om socioekonomisk klass och ideologi.

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Abstract

This essay aims to examines Suzanne Collins’s *The Hunger Games Trilogy* is a series of dystopian novel that resolves around social class and economic and politic oppression. The main focus of this essay is to examine class and ideology in *The Hunger Games Trilogy*. In order to examine class and ideology Marxist theories have been applied on *The Hunger Games Trilogy* to see how ideology and class structures unfolds in the novels. Although, *The Hunger Games Trilogy* is not Marxist in itself it is possible to find traces of Marxist theories on class and ideology.
Introduction

The Hunger Games Trilogy, by Suzanne Collins revolves around themes of social, economic and political oppression, and the fomenting revolution that is the effect of this social structure which exists in the series. This essay uses Marxist views on socioeconomic class and ideology on the Hunger Games Trilogy. The Hunger Games Trilogy is a series of dystopian novels written by Suzanne Collins. The first novel was published in 2008 and is called Hunger Games. The second book is called Catching Fire and was published in 2009. The last book, Mockingjay, was published in 2010 and all three novels soon became bestsellers with over 56 million sold copies in U.S alone. The novels were later made into four movies which became big successes. The essay begins with a brief background description of the novels and then moves on to apply Marxist theory to Suzanne Collins’s Hunger Games Trilogy. Although the Hunger Games Trilogy is not Marxist in itself, there are some aspects that could be traced back to Marxist theory. Marxist theory is based on the principles that “the history of all preciously existing society is the history of class struggles” (McKay 721). Marx writes that there is a class struggle between the bourgeoisie, the middle class that are well educated and prosperous, and the proletariat, the laborers. Furthermore, Marx writes that while the bourgeoisie has grown in riches and own the means of production the proletariat will continue to grow in class consciousness. Marx argues that eventually the proletariat will conquer the bourgeoisie in a violent revolution (McKay 721). In the Hunger Games Trilogy, it is clearly visible that there is a class struggle between the two groups, the capital representing the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy and the proletariat representing the Districts. Marx writes that the bourgeoisie has simplified class antagonism and therefore society is more and more split into two great hostile camps namely the bourgeoisie and the proletarians (Marx-Engels archives 2).

The purpose of this essay is to apply Marxist theory about class and ideology to Suzanne Collins’s Hunger Games Trilogy to see how the power structures in the novels are affected by class and ideology.
Background to the *Hunger Games Trilogy*

The *Hunger Games Trilogy* take place in the alternate universe of Panem. Panem is divided into twelve districts which are led by the Capitol. The Capitol is an advanced utopian city where the wealthy and powerful live (Jin 281). The further you come from Panem, the poorer the district. There are now 12 remaining districts since the 13th District was destroyed during an uprising against the Capitol. The Hunger Games is a game designed to punish the 12 remaining districts and to remind them of the Dark Days when District 13 was put down for its uprising against the Capitol. During the Hunger Games, 24 children between the ages of 12-18 are sent to an arena where they are forced to fight each other to death in order to win. During the Games, one boy and one girl from each district are forced to participate. The heroine in the series is sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen from Districts 12. In the first novel, *The Hunger Games*, the readers follow Katniss in her life in District 12 and then as a participant in the Hunger Games. In the second novel *Catching fire*, Katniss tries to adjust to life in District 12 after winning the Game and when she is forced to participate in the Quarter Quells a special form of the Hunger Games. In the last novel *Mockingjay*, Katniss help District 13 form a revolution against the Capitol. The 13th District were destroyed during the Dark Days and the survivors have been in hiding but when they see that the remaining 12 districts start to rebel against the Capitol, they become the leading force in defeating the Capitol.
According to Marxism one class has always had the upper hand and exploited the others. This can be related to the *Hunger Games Trilogy* as the Capitol, and especially the President, has all of the control. After the first Hunger Games when Katniss wins, President Snow uses fear and intimidation to make sure that she does what he wants, by threatening to hurt her family and friends. It is obvious that there is only a small part of the population that has all the control. Another way the Capitol use control is through the Hunger Games themselves since everyone is afraid of being drawn in the reaping (the reaping is the lottery where one boy and one girl are elected to participate in the Games) and of losing a family member. But, as stated above, the Games are meant to function as a forceful reminder of what the consequences are when you try to defy the Capitol. The Capitol also uses the reaping “to keep tabs of the population” (*The Hunger Games* 19) since every twelve to eighteen-year-old is forced to participate. The reaping is thus a means for the Capitol to know how many people there are in the different districts and this information helps the Capitol to maintain its control of Panem. Another way to control the Districts is by using Peacekeepers. In all the Districts there are Peacekeepers who are supposed to make sure that the Districts follow the rules and do not try to start another rebellion. Around all of the Districts there are barbed fences that are electrified, their function is to both keep dangerous animals out and to keep the people of the Districts from leaving but also to keep the Districts separated. The barbed fences also make the people of the Districts feel like prisoners. Another way the Capitol maintains its control over the inhabitants of Panem is by making punishment public and constant. The Capitol put a few people on display to keep the rest of the population in line, in this case through the Hunger Games, to create fear among the people and to quell any form of rebellion (Wilson 3).

According to Marxist theory, what creates human societies is the structure of economic power, which entails that there can be no human culture or human society without economic power. The motivation behind every social and political activity is to maintain economic power, which includes education, philosophy, religion, the government, the arts, science, technology and the media (Tyson 53). In *the Hunger Games Trilogy*, it is evident that the Capitol hold the economic power, since it controls the production, the resources, what should be produced, the population and the educational system.

In School, they tell us the Capitol was built in a place once called the Rockies. District 12 was in a region known as Appalachia. Even hundreds of years ago, they mined coal here. Which is why our miners have to dig so deep. Somehow it all comes back to coal at school. Besides basic reading and maths, most of our instruction is coal-related. Except for the weekly lectures on the history of Panem. It’s mostly a lot of blather about what we owe the Capitol. I know there must be more than they’re telling us, an actual account of what happened during the rebellion (*The Hunger Games* 50).
The Capitol makes sure that the Districts only receive the necessary education for the specific district and its product. The Capitol controls the Districts by controlling the educational system, but also by making sure that the district knows what they owe the Capitol.

The Capitol is able to maintain its economic power by controlling the resources of Panem, and by making sure that the Hunger Games continues. The Capitol uses economic advantages to make sure that the tributes are trying to win since they then receive money from the Capitol if they win. (Tributes are the children that participate in the Hunger Games). As you can read in the second novel Catching Fire, the tribute that wins the Hunger Games, moves to the Victor’s Village. The Victor’s Village is a nicer part of the Districts where the winners and their families live after the games. But there are also other privileges from winning the games, not just for the tributes but for the entire district.

A holiday for the whole district with free food and entertainers from the Capitol. Parcel Day, the first of twelve, in which food were [sic] delivered to every person in the district. That was my favorite. /…/ To know that once a month for a year they would all receive another parcel. That was one the few times I actually felt good about winning the Games. (Catching Fire 29-30)

The Capitol makes sure that the districts have part of the economic power for a year and therefore in a way makes the Games important for the districts.

However, the Capitol maintains its economic power by controlling the means of production which in this case are the Districts and the Hunger Games. The Hunger Games function as an intimidating strategy in order to instill fear and thus maintain and control the means of production. To be able to control the means of production the Capitol needs to make sure that the production is moving forward, since “The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and therefore the relations of production, and with them the whole relations of society” (Munck 41). The bourgeoisie therefore specialize the means of production which can be seen in the Hunger Games since every district is centralized around one form of production. But the bourgeoisie do not only revolutionize and centralize the means of production they also use centralized politics which means that there are “one nation, one government, one code of laws, one national-class interest, one frontier and one customs-tariff” (Marx-Engels archives 5). In the Hunger Games the Capitol is revolutionizing the production in a way by having different forms of Hunger Games, the Quarter Quell for example is one way to revolutionize the production. By revolutionizing the Hunger Games into Quarter Quells the Capitol show that it has the ownership of the productive property but also that it owns the primary form of production and that the Districts, the proletariat, need to be a part of the production. It also shows that the Capitol holds the control of the Districts and that it can do whatever it wants to do. Another way to accomplish this is by sending out more peacekeeper to the Districts and by making the work hours longer. The Capitol thus uses the Quarter Quell and the peacekeepers to maintain their
power and control over the population and of the production, to make sure that the proletariat performs their labor. When the Capitol does this it expands the production and therefore changes the structure of society.

The Capitol also use media as a form to control the Districts both by sending out messages to the Districts and by airing the Hunger Games. The reaping, were the tributes are chosen to participate in the Hunger Games, is aired live, mainly so the Capitol can watch. The Capitol therefor makes the Hunger Games mandatory to watch so the message of the game reaches everyone.

“At one o´clock, we head for the square. Attendance is mandatory unless you are on death´s door. This evening, officials will come around and check to see if this is the case. If not, you´ll be imprisoned” (The Hunger Games, 19).

Since the Capitol uses the Hunger Games as a way to control the Districts, they need to make sure that the people of the Districts are watching and therefore makes sure that everyone in the Districts can watch it by making sure that the electricity works.

The Capitol twinkles like a vast field of fireflies. Electricity in District 12 comes and goes; usually we only have it a few hours a day. Often the evenings are spent in candlelight. The only time you can count on it is when they´re airing the Hunger Games or some important government message on television that it´s mandatory to watch. (The Hunger Games, 98)

The Capitol make sure that everyone can watch, since it is a way to control the citizens of Panem and to spread their propaganda. Therefore, the media becomes an important part in controlling the masses. The Capitol also use media to control the Hunger Games since people of the Capital can vote for their favorite tribute and send supplies to them. The Capitol make sure that the tributes and the Districts know that they are being watched, which is an effective way to maintain power and control.

Marxist theory also talk about how economic power is connected to socioeconomic class. Humans need to be able to do certain things to live, like eating, drinking, and having a habitation, clothing and many other things. Humans then started to band together to obtain these needs, which started to lead to a division of labor which later led to the development of a class society (Brooker 72). Marxist socioeconomic class can be divided into the “haves” and the “have-nots,” better known as the bourgeoisie (“those who control the world´s natural, economical, and human resources”) and the proletariat, the part of the population who lives in substandard conditions and performs the manual labor like “mining, the factory work, the ditch digging, the railroad building” (Tyson 54). Furthermore, the proletarians that work in the factories are organized like soldiers under a hierarchy of officers. They are not only “slaves” of the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie state but also to the machine, the overlooks and the bourgeoisies itself (Marx-Engels archives 7). In the Hunger Games Trilogy, the Districts are looked after by peacekeepers who control the Districts for the Capital, which makes them the officers of
production, they make sure that production is maintained. The bourgeoisie are able to maintain its power because of political advantages and therefore has the upper hand. The proletariat is basically the Districts, where each district produces one or more resources or items for the Capitol. “District 11, agriculture. District 4, fishing. District 3, factories. This means that coming from District 12, Peeta and I will be in some kind of coal miner’s get-up” (The Hunger Games, 80). Marx points out that when humans started to divide labor society developed into a class society. In the districts, this division of labor exists since all the districts supplies different forms of labor. This division of labor can be seen as a divide and conquer strategy, where the Capitol divides workers into factions in order to avoid a feeling of a common goal which could lead to rebellion. Marx writes that the bourgeoisie keeps the proletariat in warring factions to make sure that the proletariat accomplishes little or no social change (Tyson 54). Although as Marx points out the proletariat has its own divisions which can also be seen in the Hunger Games.

Furthermore, Marx writes that the proletariat usually uses other differences to separate from each other like religion, race, ethnicity or gender. In the Hunger Games Trilogy, the structure of the socioeconomic class is quite clear. Marx writes that socioeconomic class is part of the superstructure where it is an element in the complex structure of social perception. In this situation one social class have more power over the other and this is either seen by most members of society as “normal” or not seen at all. (Eagleton) The Capitol and its inhabitants are the bourgeoisie since they control both the economy and the resources.

The reaping system is unfair, with the poor getting the worst of it. You become eligible for the reaping the day you turn twelve. That year, your name is entered once. At thirteen, twice. And so on and so on until you turn eighteen, the final year of eligibility, when your name goes into the pool seven times. That’s true for every citizen in all twelve districts in the entire country of Panem. But here’s the catch. Say you are poor and starving, as we are. You can opt to add your name more times in exchange for tesserae. Each tessera is worth a meager year’s supply of grain and oil for one person. You may also do this for each of your family members as well. So, at the age of twelve, I had my name entered four times. (The Hunger Games, 15)

Marx write that it is mostly religion, race, ethnicity or gender that separates the proletariat but in the Hunger Games the separation is among the poor and the rich in the Districts even though both groups perform some type of labor. Another separation that divides the population of Panem is the separation between the people that works for the Capitol like the soldiers, Gamemakers, camera teams and the mayors in the Districts. The separation of the population is used as a strategy by the Capitol to make sure that there is no trust between the different groups, but the primary separation in Panem is created by the Hunger Games and the reaping. “A way to plant hatred between the starving workers of the Seam and those who can generally count on supper; and thereby ensure we will never trust one another. It’s
the Capitol’s advantage to have us divided among ourselves, ‘he might say if there were no ears to hear but mine” (The Hunger Games, 16). The Capitol does not only make sure that the different districts do not get along but also that the people in the Districts are separated from one another. The separation in the Districts is between the poor and the rich, there are some people in the Districts who can buy food while others are starving. Park and Yamashiro writes in their article that “food divides, rich and poor, empowered and oppressed, pure and putrid (Parks & Yamashiro 3). In the Hunger Games Trilogy this quote from Parks and Yamashiro can be seen since the participants from district one, two and four are better fed than the other tributes which creates unfairness in the other districts.

In the Hunger Games Trilogy, it is easy to find the differences between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. These differences are mainly there to separate the two groups from one another and to show that the two live different lives. There is also a difference between the proletarians in the novels, there is a difference between people within a district but also between the different districts depending on where you live and in which district. In the book people from the different districts do not know that much about each other which helps to create discord between the Districts.

Almost all of the boys and at least half of the girls are bigger than I am, even though many of the tributes have never been fed properly. You can see it in their bones, their skin, the hollow look in their eyes. /.../. The exception are the kids from the wealthier districts, the volunteers, the once [sic] who have been fed and trained throughout their lives for this moment. The tributes from district 1, 2, and 4 traditionally have this look about them. (The Hunger Games, 115)

Because of the differences between the Districts created by the Capitol, there is no trust between the tributes since they become opponents and therefore do not work as a group. Since the Districts do not know that much about one another except for what the Capitol tell them, it makes them suspicious about each other and therefore people from different districts do not approach one another. The Capitol keeps the Districts separated and the only time people from different districts meet is in the Hunger Games, where they are forced to kill each other and during the victor’s tour after the Game. The Hunger Games are used in a strategic way to keep the district from trusting each other and to make sure that they are apart from one another.

When talking about Marxist theory, ideology has a big role. The main function of ideology is to maintain those in power (Tyson 59). The ideology of Panem is in fact symbolically represented by the Hunger Games. During the game, each district sends two tributes, one boy and one girl, who are selected by lottery. After the lottery the children are transported to the Capitol where they receive minimal training before heading out to the arena. In the arena the tributes fight to the death against one another since there can only be one winner. The ideology in the Hunger Games can be seen by the way the Capitol uses the games to force a particular set of beliefs and values on people (Henthorne 96).
The result was Panem, a shining Capital ringed by thirteen districts, which brought peace and prosperity to its citizens. Then came the Dark Days, the uprising of the districts against the Capital. Twelve were defeated, the thirteenth obligated. The Treaty of Treason gave us the new laws to guarantee peace and, as our yearly reminder that the Dark Days must never be repeated, it gave us the Hunger Games. *(The Hunger Games, 21)*

This phrase is read at every Hunger Games, which they have every year, and since the Hunger Games is mandatory to watch the message reaches everyone in Panem. It also functions as a reminder to the people that the Games exist as a demonstration of the Capital’s power (Henthorne 99). The Hunger Games are controlled by the Gamemakers, who represent the Capitol. The Gamemakers have absolute control of what is going on in the arena, everything from food, water, setting and climate. Since the Gamemakers are able to control every occurrence in the Game it is obvious that they have absolute control and since the Gamemakers represent the Capitol they show the Districts that they have all of the control. The way the Gamemakers control the resources in the Games is a way to show that the Capital has control and absolute dominance over the resources from all of the Districts (Henthorne 98). This also shows that the Capitol has control over people’s lives in the Districts and that another rebellion will only lead to further suffering instead of change. The Gamemakers need to make sure that the Games put on a good show for the inhabitants of the Capitol but at the same time demonstrate their power over the citizens in the Districts (Wilson 3). With the Hunger Games the Capitol exerts its will on the social order in society. In the Games the tribute can be sponsored by the people of the Capitol. In order to survive and win the Game sponsors are essential. The tributes must earn sponsors by showing of skills before and during the Games (Jin 282). When a tribute gets sponsored they receive food, water, medicine and clothes. By using sponsors, the Capitol has another way to demonstrate power and control (Parks & Yamashiro 140-141). Since the Capitol uses the Hunger Games as a way to show the Districts its dominant power, it cannot let anyone know that it has been defeated in its own game, and therefore uses the opportunity when Katniss and Peeta both win to show that it also can be humble. “But the Hunger Games are their weapon and you are not supposed to be able to defeat it, so now the Capital will act as if they’ve been in control the whole time” *(The Hunger Games, 435)*. This is a quote from the book after Katniss defies the Capitol when she fakes to commit suicide together with Peeta so that both of them can win. Instead of letting the rest of Panem know that the Capital has been played they use it to their advantage to show the rest of Panem how humble they are. But if the Games are to have the desired effect the Capitol must have absolute power since the Capitol cannot tolerate any form of resistance. The Games also serve as a distraction for the people of the Capitol, which make them pay less attention to the fact that their president is in fact a dictator who attained power by murdering those who are against him (Henthorne 105).
In the second novel, *Catching Fire*, the Hunger Games change, which it does every 25 years. Those Games are a special version of the Hunger Games called the Quarter Quell. In the first Quarter Quell the Districts needed to elect the tributes in order to remind people of what happen when they choose to rebel. In the second Quarter Quell there were twice as many tributes from each district to remind people that twice as many rebels died. In the Quarter Quell in *Catching Fire*, the previous tributes are chosen to participate to remind people that even the strongest cannot resist the Capitol’s power (Henthorne 162). The Capitol makes sure that the people of Panem do not forget what happened during the Dark Days and that the Districts need to be punished for it. They arrange the Hunger Games every year and have a special Hunger Games every 25 year and between all of this is the Victory Tour where the victor of the yearly games travels around to the different districts and to the Capitol.

If it were up to me I would try to forget the Hunger Games entirely. Never speak of them. Pretend they were nothing but a bad dream. But the Victory Tour makes that impossible. Strategically placed almost midway between the annual Games, it is the Capitol’s way of keeping the horror fresh and immediate. Not only are we in the districts forced to remember the iron grip of the Capitol’s power each year, we are forced to celebrate it (*Catching Fire, 4*).

This is the dominant ideology represented in the Hunger Games and as Marxist theory points out there are many forms of ideology. One of them is classism which is a form of ideology where human beings’ value equals the social class they belong to. If they belong to a higher class the better the person becomes, because superiority is in their blood and is therefore inborn. The people in the higher class are naturally more superior then the people below them. The former is also seen as more intelligent, more responsible, more trustworthy, and more ethical and so on, while people at the bottom are conversely seen as naturally shiftless, lazy and irresponsible (Tyson 59). In the *Hunger Games Trilogy*, it is easy to see the differences between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie. “They do surgery in the Capitol, to make people appear younger and thinner. In District 12, looking old is something of an achievement since so many people die early” (*The Hunger Games*, 150). This quote shows how different people in the Capital live compared to people in the Districts. In the Capitol people live like royalty and enjoy artificial luxury while in the districts people struggle for survival to get hold of the bare necessities. In the *Hunger Games* the Games help to reinforce the idea that the people of the Capitol are more deserving than the people living in the districts, and that the privileges of the former group are justified since they were on the Capitol’s side in the Dark Days (Henthorne 106). “It’s funny, because even though they’re rattling about the Games, it’s all about where they were or what they were doing or how they felt when a specific event occurred. ‘I was still in bed!’ I had just had my eyebrows dyed! ‘I swear I nearly fainted! Everything is about them, not the dying boys and girls in the arena’ (*The Hunger Games*, 430). The Hunger Games do not affect people in the Capitol the same way it effects the districts their view of the
Games is different. To them it is all about the entertainment that follows and if their favorite is going to win.

Furthermore, Marxism predicts that eventually the bourgeois society will collapse (Tyson 54). The society that the bourgeoisie has built is unfair since the bourgeoisie, has gained their wealth through the exploitation of the proletariat. Marx argues that the unfairness of the system therefore “contains its own seed of destruction” and that the system will eventually collapse (Booker 72). Marx writes in his *Communist Manifesto*: “what the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave-diggers. Its fall and the victory of the proletariat are equally inevitable” (Munck 61). Similarly, since the Capitol uses an exploitative system, it will undercut itself since it is causing instability in the base. the Capitol has drained the resources and the laborers in the Districts and in that way, has rendered itself helpless to sustain itself and its way of life (Parks & Yamashiro, 2015 139). Other ways the bourgeoisie produces its own grave is when the Capitol allows Katniss and Peeta to win the Hunger Games and when the they allow the former winners to compete in the Quarter Quells. The later incident sparks the rest of the districts into believing that you can win against the Capitol. The citizens of the Capitol become upset when the winners are to compete again, which creates a difficult situation for the president. President Snow presents this problem to Katniss and stresses the importance of the spark, not spreading.

“And if a girl from District 12 of all places can defy the Capitol and walk away unharmed, what is to stop them from doing the same?” he says. “What is to prevent, say an uprising?” /…/And uprisings have been known to lead to revolutions”. /…/ Whatever problems anyone may have with the Capital, believe me when I say that if it releases its iron grip on the districts for even a short time, the entire system would collapse (*Catching Fire*, 25).

Marx also mentions *dialectical history*, where a system eventually collapses as part of the natural historical process. Marx implies that history is a process where a series of conflicts on opposing sides reaches a critical mass and will eventually lead to the development of a new historical stage (Brooker 72). The dialectical opposition that drives history forward is usually connected to the conflicting needs of different social classes. Marx also argues that the proletariat will one day develop the class consciousness it needs to rise up and create a revolt against their oppressors and create a classless society (Tyson 54). Marx writes that “the proletariat alone is a revolutionary class. The other classes decay and finally disappear in the face of modern industry; the proletariat is its own special and essential product” (Munck 61).

Marxist theory thus proposes that if the proletariat were to act together as a group the current power structure would be altered (Tyson 54). In the first *Hunger Games* novel there are some signs that the proletarians are starting to band together and show resistance against the Capitol. Keeping
the Districts separated is a way for the Capitol to prevent a rebellion. The Capitol therefore keeps the Districts apart and pitted against each other so that they are unlikely to trust each other and therefore cannot start a revolution. The primary symbolic function of the Hunger Games itself is to keep people pitted against each other. In the first novel, the inhabitants of District 12 salute Katniss for taking her sister’s place in the Hunger Games, everyone in the crowd “touches the three middle fingers of their left hand to their lips and holds it out to me” (The Hunger Games, 29). This gesture is used in all novels to show the Capitol that they do not agree and are united. The gesture is used in District 12 and it means “thanks, it means admiration, it means goodbye to someone you love” (The Hunger Games, 29). The three finger gesture changes form over the course of the novels and become a symbol for the rebellion. Another symbol represented in the novels which later becomes a symbol for the revolution is the mockingjay. In the novels, Katniss wears a mockingjay pin which she receives from Madge, the mayor’s daughter in district 12, when she volunteers as a tribute in the Hunger Games. The mockingjay pin represents home and functions as a protective icon for Katniss (Parks and Yamashiro 144). Katniss therefore wears the pin during the Hunger Games. The mockingjay is also represented through Rue. During the Game Katniss and Rue become allies and Rue tell Katniss that in her district they use mockingjays’ to communicate with each other, which Rue and Katniss also do in the game. Mockingjay’s are a hybrid bird that comes from the mating of jabberjays and mockingbirds. Jabberjays are a creation made by the Capitol and where used during the Dark Days to repeat the rebels’ conversations to the Capitol. The rebels understood that their conversations were being overheard and used it to their advantage, the jabberjays then became useless and a failure for the Capitol. When Katniss wears the mockingjay pin it angers the Capitol since it reminds them of past mistakes. The mockingjay becomes a symbol for the rebellion and stands for defiance against the Capitol. Both the three-finger gesture and the mockingjay are part of the revolution: “Then, from somewhere in the crowd, someone whistles Rue’s four-note mockingjay tune. /…/ Every person in the crowd presses the three middle fingers of their left hand against their lips and extends them to me” (Catching Fire, 75). The mockingjay represents Katniss and that she was the first one that stood against the Capitol, she is the face of the revolution, which is something she becomes gradually aware of, “What I mean to the rebels. I have thousands upon thousands of people from the Districts at my side. I was their Mockingjay long before I accepted the role” (Mockingjay, 107). The gesture and the mockingjay become something the proletarians do together, something that unites them as a group.

During the second and the third novel it is more evident that the Districts are starting to show their dislike for the system and that they are starting to unite: “Up and down the row, the victors begin to join hands. /…/. By the time the anthem plays its final strains, all twenty-four of us stand in one unbroken line in what must be the first public show of unity among the Districts since the Dark Days” (Catching Fire, 311). Before this the Districts have not shown any form of unity or any indication that they are part of the same group, so this is a starting point where some people band together to show that
they are one. Marx argues that if a revolution is to take place the proletariat need to create unification and for that unification to spread in order to start a spark. When the tributes hold hands, and stand together they start the unification of the Districts. The unification becomes more spread when District 13 sends its videos to all of the Districts, because it then becomes easier for the proletarians to centralize themselves and come into contact with one another (Marx-Engels archives 9). In the *Communist Manifesto* Marx writes: “Workers of the world, unite. You have nothing to lose but your chains” (Marx-Engels archives). Marx also claims that a rebellion has outbreaks of riots before the final rebellion comes into action. In *Catching Fire* there are small outbreaks in some of the Districts. These outbreaks eventually escalate in size and become bigger. “Below them, there’s a mob scene. The square’s packed with screaming people, their faces hidden with rags and home-made masks, throwing bricks. Buildings burn. Peacekeepers shoot into the crowd, killing at random. /.../ This is what President Snow calls an uprising” (*Catching Fire*, 108).

Marx writes that “the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles”. He also argues that every class struggle is a political struggle, which can clearly be seen in *Mockingjay* when Coin takes over and become a new source of power. Coin is the president of District 13, when the Districts defeats President Snow she takes over power. Katniss realize that she is not that different from President Snow and therefore kills her. Katniss inspires people to take action and stand up to injustice and brutality to create a better world and human race (Simmons 1). Katniss understands that Coin does not want to achieve this and therefore put an end to her. The political struggle seen in the *Hunger Games Trilogy* is a result of the unfairness of the system the Capital has created and especially of the Hunger Games.
Conclusion

As is evident from the preceding analysis in this essay there are many apparent similarities between Marxist theories and the *Hunger Games Trilogy*. The core component in Marxist theory is the constant struggle between classes. In the *Hunger Games Trilogy* there has already been a war over class struggles, which the Capital won. In the novels, this war referred to as the Dark Days, this does not mean that the class struggle is done with, it only means that for a while there is a strong hegemonic social organization where those in power are strong enough to maintain social stability. But as Marx holds that since there still exists a struggle between the two classes the proletariat will eventually rise. Marx predicts that the proletariat will eventually rise against the bourgeoisie. In the *Hunger Games Trilogy*, the proletariat start a revolution and defeats the bourgeoisie. But Marx predicted that when the proletariat takes over they will create a classless society. In the *Hunger Games Trilogy* this do not happen, what happens is that society changes drastically, it does not become classless, instead a new person tries to take over the power right after the rebellion. The connection between Marx’s two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, is quite clear in the *Hunger Games*. The bourgeoisie represents the Capitol since it owns the means of production and has an overflow of food and more advanced technology compared to the Districts where there is close to no technology and people are starving. The Districts also work for the Capitol by producing various types of products which they are not allowed to keep or use. This shows that there is an inequality between the two classes. In the novels, the Capitol has ultimate control over the population by controlling the economic power and the means of production. Marx argues that there can be no human culture or human society without economic power. One way to control the economic power is through ideology. He also writes that the motivation behind every social and political activity is to maintain economic power. Marx comments that the main focus of ideology is to maintain those in power. In the *Hunger Games Trilogy*, the Capitol uses this form of ideology. But the dominant ideology in the *Hunger Games Trilogy*, is represented by the Hunger Games themselves. The Capitol uses the Hunger Games to maintain their power and control over the Districts. In the *Hunger Games Trilogy*, it is quite clear that the Capitol holds the control and makes all of its decisions by controlling the economic power and structure in society. Marx points out that the separation between the proletariat is mostly created by religion, race, ethnicity or gender. In the *Hunger Games Trilogy*, the separation between the people in the Districts is foremostly between the rich and the poor and between the different Districts. Another separation in the *Hunger Games* is the separation created by the Capitol and the Hunger Games. Marx writes that the bourgeoisie keeps the proletariat in warring factions so that no social change can take place. In the *Hunger Games*, this is seen in that there is no trust between the Districts. It is only when the Districts start to work together that things start to change, just as Marx argues it is only when the proletariat starts acting like a group, regardless of their differences that the current power structure can be challenged.
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