



## Class clashes in “*The Hunger Games*”: A Marxist study

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### Abstract

The main aim of this exploratory study is to trace Marxist elements in *The Hunger Games* and investigate its effect on the plot structure and living situation of different character. *The Hunger Games* is a series of three dystopian novels, *The Hunger Games*, *Catching Fire* and *Mockingjay*, written by Suzanne Collins in 2008. Marxism basically deals with the struggles of poor and working class against rich people of society and socio-economic effects of their struggles on society. Findings indicate vast varieties of Marxist elements scattered through the whole text. In *The Hunger Games* supreme power of capitol over all districts is the prominent fact of Marxism. Male dominance is also obvious in these novels when we see that how Katniss Everdeen was ignored until she made the mark during training and in the games.

**Keywords:** superstructure, ideology and class difference, president snow, Marxism

### 1. Introduction

Literary work can be explained as the combination of words used to form an image and create perception of the reader towards certain subject and issue. Literature which includes drama, poetry, novel or prose, broadens the circle of thought, feelings, behavior and viewpoint. Literary work is a form of display of events and characteristics of the society at their specific eras. Rosenblatt (1978) [31] is of the view that every word in each form of literature hides behind it a much deeper perspective and in a way words are the representative of different emotions and situations. A literary person have artistic qualities much stronger than his aesthetic sense as literature is the most highlighted form of art which absorbs the social and circumstantial enigma as discussed by McFadden (1978) [25].

Novel is the form of literature which explains inner turmoil of writer in the form of story about something appealing and drastic. It always depicts some signs regarding social, economical and psychological aspects of current era. These signs have deep meanings which cannot be interpreted easily. Novel is the form of literature that explains the certain ways of society and difference in behavior of people in some common conditions and situations as per Smiley (2006) [32]. Any writing in prose of more than fifty thousand words can be considered as novel said by Forster (1927) [15]. There is no doubt that only the one with highest level of creativity can write lengthy literature like novels Covey (2006) [10] is of the same viewpoint. The main component of novel is the structure of its plot which explains the story, time and nature of events, types of characters as told by Tobias (1993) [33]. Plot can be written in a number of ways with infinite variety of styles, which makes it more appealing in every era.

*The Hunger Games* trilogy by Suzanne Collins is the series of three novels which were later filmised in four movies. In *Hunger Games* novels and movies Katniss Everdeen, heroin of the novel rebels against the rules of capitol. President Snow wants to rule Panem in totalitarian style so that he can control poor citizens of districts and gain all the advantage by employing poor people to achieve essential resources like

food and fuel in the form of collecting revenue as explained by Henthorne (2012). Every district provides some useful resources to Capitol by working hard day and night. As if that's not enough to corruptly control people President Snow organize a tournament named as *The Hunger Games* upon which the title of series is, in these games two individual were taken from every district one male and one female over the age of 12 and then these Twenty four individuals were taken to capitol for the preparation of games. These 24 tributes were taken to game arena on the day of games and there they have to fight till death until a lone survival remains. That is the cruelest way of entertainment but in order to show power over all districts these games were held annually. Even the people of capitol are so stone hearted that they enjoy killing of human being by another. Citizen of capitol treated people of all districts inferior than pets of capitol as written by Borsellino (2010) [3]. Katniss Everdeen, heroin of the series, rebel against these heartless games by eating berries at the end of 74<sup>th</sup> *Hunger Games*. She thought that if she and Peeta both ate berries either there will be no victor or both of them could be declared as victors. She does not want to follow the rules made by cruel people who only wants there resources form the people of twelve districts and then also play with thier lives in the name of so called entertainment. The act of eating berries is one among the initial steps for revolution by the districts.

Besides the exciting plots, interesting characters, colourful depictions etc., the dystopian novels try to transfer a message to their audiences. Readers should be aware that dystopian fiction is more than source of entertainment. Katniss Everdeen is what a dystopian protagonist should be that is highly intelligent and resourceful, and often full of moxie. As Katniss did in the novel, protagonists come to recognize the truth about the societies they live in, they often feel alone, separated from family and friends who do not share the same realizations. As a result, one of the conflicts they face is deciding whom they can trust with their understandings of their society's flaws and with their plans to take corrective actions.

### 1.1 Statement of the problem

Novels and movies represent the background traits and norms present in society without referring them directly. They highlight all these aspects like hidden meanings, stereotypes, motives and symbols by using semiotics as a model. The aim of this work is to show how those in power manipulate and use the media in the young adult literature. It especially focuses on the utilization of the reality show and how it controls the masses, so that the authorities keep the power. Furthermore, how the reality show affects the viewers and the reality show contestants. The practical part is devoted to the analysis of the picture of the reality show *The Hunger Games* in the dystopian series. This study focus mainly on the audience, its manipulation and media literacy, the contestants of the reality show and their reactions and coping with the situation of becoming a tribute as in *The Hunger Games*.

### 1.2 Research Questions

Cooper (1984) <sup>[9]</sup> explains that researcher work closely depends on the questions of the research study as they are the indicators of what, how and why this research happens. This research deals with highly exciting study to portray intriguing and long lasting elements of the dystopia in *The Hunger Games*. In order to achieve that purpose, following questions were addressed:

1. What are the textual and contextual graveness of uprising in *The Hunger Games*?
2. What important features of dystopia are portrayed in *The Hunger Games* books and movies?
3. What kind of thematic and instinctive ideologies are found in *The Hunger Games*?

## 2. Literature Review

Novels are of so many types including historical, picaresque, bildungsroman, gothic, utopian, science fiction, romance and dystopia. The study gives a detailed view of dystopian novels. Dystopia means destruction and disturbance in society. In dystopian novel writer present an imaginary society going through destructive phase. It highlights totalitarianism, loss of individualism and rebellions. Dystopian literature also brings awareness to readers about the disturbing features of society, how powerful people are controlling the people with less or no resources. Booker (1994) <sup>[1]</sup> is of the point view that all these dystopian traits are already present in our society and they are the reason our world is facing the demoralization of humans which is regarded by Claeys (2013) <sup>[4]</sup> as "loss of control".

History of dystopia goes back to century. It is the depiction of society filled with doom and gloom. In 1868 John Stuart Mill first uses the word dystopia which means bad place. Some of the main characteristics of dystopia include totalitarianism, which is the complete control of the government over state and people of the state. It is much like dictatorship as government controls domestic and formal lifestyle of people. This type of governess is the main cause behind the fall of society in dystopia all the negativity in society starts from the cruelty of government. In this control government decide education, occupation and incomes of the individuals. Everyone has to follow state policy in any case. Another important factor behind the fall of society in dystopia is the class systems prevailing in society. Class systems are caused by racial, financial and social backgrounds. In 19<sup>th</sup> century Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels presented theory of Marxism which stated that those who are powerful in society

are the chief class which governs the people of fewer resources. The powerful class is termed as bourgeoisie and the class upon which they rule is defined as proletariat by Marx. This class differentiation depicts the capitalist society. Martha (2001) <sup>[24]</sup> stated that true cause behind the imbalance of society is the control of capitalist class over the worker class.

As the dystopian society is ruled by a strict and corrupt class the people of that society are forced to follow the rules, imposed by the corrupt and capitalist leading class. Individualism lost its meaning due to fixed set of line to live and earn from imposed regulations by someone powerful. Under these regulations ones individual properties become blur. Everyone react, treat, think and give similar response in order to follow rules and customs, so that he will be consider as unit of that system. Similar response results in minimizing individual style of thinking and reacting to different occurrences and situation. So a time comes when there formed a forced kind of uniformity in society. Individualism is highly responsible for the alertness and awareness in society. It basically helps someone to understand the concept of good and evil or right and wrong, which helps in developing a new perspective without any biased interdependency. Due to these reasons 1980 was called decade of individualism-collectivism in society of different cultures but in 1990s more research was conducted in this scenario as explained by Kagitcibasi (1994) <sup>[20]</sup>.

Putnam (2000) <sup>[29]</sup> elaborates that individualism elevated the acceptance of minorities but somehow incapacitate communal activities. Similarly Flanagan & Lee (2003) <sup>[14]</sup> relates individualism as emancipation of supremacy. Individualism supports the right to have your own opinion regarding any event, situation and incident. It highly condemns to be bound by rigid and orthodox rules set by powerful and influential people.

Loss of individualism basically refers to following of rigid and biased rules only made to support the ruling class without being agree to such commands as they are only beneficial to so called providers in the society, neglecting or in some cases violating basic rights of the people affected by these imposed rules. It is the main factor that allows some people with powerful resources to govern over minorities or working class because if they do not follow such irrational rules and regulations they would be cut off from necessities of life. It is very important to have your own opinion so that a person can understand that either he is doing right or wrong and probably understand the circumstances faced by others from his act.

The conception of Marx of personality represents an important drift point of the abstract and atomized person of liberal theory. On the contrary, Marx, based on its understanding of humans as a concrete "social individual", expected the results of nature and social science to form its theoretical basis for how humans should live. Marx, of the first time people shown in evolutionary scenes, described them primarily socially and socially, rather than creating communities as competing individuals, rather than describing them as "herd" animals, "in the words of Marx, and as "tribal beings. "For people, to personalize themselves, to devote time and resources to the needs of those species that does not have the strict biological needs of mammals. Homosapiens to develop capacity beyond the limited capacity to meet biological needs and only through the work process, social production has begun to achieve a degree of complexity and

complexity in human history, such as Support for such personalization. Of course, this situation is undoubtedly beginning to happen very early in the history of humanity. However, the fact that human personality does not have the eternal truth about human nature, but the historical burgeoning phenomenon, is primarily produced by the social people through the labor process.

Literature of twenty first century depicts psychological issue which somehow includes the role of ideology in this ultra modern world. In order to know what is happening in the society literature use ideologies of different types so that readers easily grasp the true motif behind work. Literature in every form either poetry, novel, essay or prose pick up normal individuals and their suffering and the way they cope up in this era of modern civilization, which up to most extent also show the drastic side of present world.

Ideology is the core reason of improvement or destruction in the society. It is all up to ideological beliefs that how people progress. If ideology support the innovations welcome outsiders and show the way of earning than the followers of such ideology face progress but if the ideology has some rigidity towards others and not allow easy conditions of earning than there are chances of destruction or downfall in the society. Basically it all depends upon the way someone reacts in particular scenarios. However lenient or orthodox it must be obvious in an ideology that what are the major pros and cons for the followers, as they must be clear in every aspect of life. It is also necessary that the beliefs and disbeliefs, rights and wrongs, rules to follow are very much apparent in ideology. Any ambiguity puts question to the strength of related ideology and in passage of time become cause of the disappearance of ideology which is not clear about its beliefs. Stability in any society depends upon positivity of its ideology. As much broader the beliefs of ideology will show more progress and development in the society. In case that there are not particular teachings about some issue in ideology then it is necessary to select the right and fruitful option rather than supporting some dead end, which could be miserable for the believers of that ideology noted by Federico and Sidanius (2002) <sup>[13]</sup>.

Ideology shows the way to live and progress in this world of difficult situations. It is necessary to understand any ideology completely and also know the factors behind its beliefs before criticizing or judging the norms of believers. After understanding the factors it is possible to understand the objectionable belief. Capitalist ideology is the system in which people are making profits by conducting different forms of businesses. The ideology involve in this case is basically deals with the rule to earn profits by using resources which could be human resources as well in some cases. It involves rights and regulations of conducting business and the way to earn maximum profit rightfully. The way to enact and conduct business is the capitalist ideology. The main target of this ideology is to earn profit and income by using limited resources. In political ideology, reaction and actions are controlled politically that is to give some preferences to the political benefits and drawbacks in conducting any matter. Political stance in every work is given highlighted inclination in this ideology. As focus of the matter is political outlook during any social, economical and financial aspect explained Duckitt (2001) <sup>[12]</sup>. Political ideology determines all the factors according to the diplomatic and civil understanding. Rulings and action may fluctuate according to economical or international preferences as change is evident

in this developing era pointed Converse (2006) <sup>[8]</sup>. Heywood (2007) <sup>[19]</sup> stated that political developments are great source to change opinions in the higher level most probably in great think tanks of our world.

Most prominently marxist ideology entails the control and power related aspects. The more powerful and strong ones are in control of whole societies. The people with limited resources work for strong people serve them and earn their living by providing labor and also by helping powerful people economically. It is theory presented by Karl Marx, against the class system. It stated that there are two prominent classes Bourgeoisie (ruler class) and Proletariats (worker class). Marxism is against this distribution of classes, this ideology has a view that all are equal and receive benefits according to their struggle rather than their position in social system.

Three issues that concern each other. It is: what is civil ideology? What is proletarian ideology? And what is the relationship between them? To put it simply, civic ideology is the perception of nature and society at the Civic class position. Its specific views on the desirability of existing economic relations, the variability or lack of human personality and personality characteristics and the best interpretation of changes and developments in nature, to name a few of the Possible problems for mankind are formed and determined in different ways by the bourgeois concept in themselves and by civil society as the highest possible form of human social development. This is not to say that it is impossible to see from the non socialist point of view that there is likely to be much room for improvement in the existing conditions. But the bourgeois ideology and the definition of class position, which produces bourgeois ideology, is a belief. Any further development of mankind can only be realized on the economic basis of capitalist exchange through the management of citizenship and its system.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

The design of the study grants durability and strength to the research so that it will be helpful and beneficial in its respective field as per Rames (1983) <sup>[30]</sup>. Design of the study entails the arrangement of the components of study according to the type of research explained Boradkar (2011) <sup>[2]</sup>. A good research design includes related items of the research there is no need to make it lengthy with the irrelevant information and steps as by that it may look more complicated and hard to understand and one of the basic rule of design is to easily understandable declared Maher *et al.* (2010) <sup>[23]</sup> and gave the three step system of communication, Motivation and Representation as a conceptual framework, Merrick *et al.* (2011) <sup>[26]</sup> also find this module effective. Basically research design is the layout of research said Mouton (2001) <sup>[27]</sup>. It is not wrong to say that design is prototype of the research suggests Kothari (2004) <sup>[22]</sup>.

This study is exploratory in nature and helps to investigate the Marxist analysis in order to case study *The Hunger Games* novels. It guides reader to understand the crux of this story written by Suzanne Collins which provides aid to present the real image of problems faced by society. Mixed purposeful sampling technique is used to take sample for this research, which is very common and takes only related data (to the origin of specific research) as sample from the population.

### 3.2 Population of Study

Suzanne Collins novels *The Hunger Games* (2008), *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010) published by Scholastic Press has been taken as the population of the study.

### 3.3 Sample of Study

Sample is the subset of population required for the research procedure. Sample is the selected part of population, which is more related to the topic and medium of related search as explained by Neuman (2000) [28]. This research takes selected lines with great consideration from *The Hunger Games* trilogy novels and some selected scenes from *The Hunger Games* trilogy movies as sample size.

### 3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data collection tools help in the development of research study. Research depends on the accuracy and efficiency of the tools used to collect data. Tuckett (2004) [34] and Guest *et al.* (2006) [16] strongly agrees that the quality of research is directly related to the quality of data either it is authentic and related to the origin of the research and once researcher become satisfied that data collected will be enough for solving research problem collection of data should be finished. Main source of data collection in qualitative research is the researcher himself/herself, as researcher gathers the data from which related or specific data is chosen related to the nature and type of research said Creswell (2005) [11].

This research used observation, critical thinking, inductive reasoning and codification as the tool to select data for analysis. Materials used to acquire information for research study are known as data collection sources stated Kawulich (2005) [21]. Data collection is directly linked to the research process as the nature of analysis depends upon the quality of data collected. These data sources can be books, articles, figures, dialogues and scenes.

Primary source used for research analysis in this study are Suzanne Collins' novels *The Hunger Games*, *Catching fire* and *Mockingjay*, whereas magazines, journals, newspaper, libraries and the internet are used as secondary sources to analyze data. Data for this research is collected by considerable reading of books and after careful viewing of the movies. Selected lines are taken for textual and contextual analysis. Karl Marx's Marxist theory is used in *The Hunger Games* series for finding this study's objectives.

## 4. Findings

Dystopia is the form of society in which everything is going towards its worst and depressing traits. Class struggle due to biasness in society is one of the important traits of dystopia with the capital governess. Evaluation of people in different classes raises many problems which are related to economical and societal behavior. Karl Marx presented the theory of Marxism which states that the status and rank of any individual in society depends upon his or her part and efforts in the social, economic, financial and developing forms of society. The theory highlights the issues related to class struggles under the capitalist influence. Marxism helps in highlighting different aspects of dystopian features. Some of the main elements of the dystopia are as follows:

Power is the most vital element of any society. It shows the source of controlling societal factors in any environment. In *The Hunger Games* series it is evident from the beginning that all power is held by the President Snow in the form of

Capitol. Only he decides about everything and every matter in the Panem. Citizens of districts are not even allowing to made decisions about their own future. "Taking the kids from our districts, forcing them to kill one another while we watch – this is the Capitol's way of reminding us how totally we are at their mercy" says Collins (2008) [5]. These are the views of Katniss about the mistreatment with people of Panem and the dictatorship of President Snow that how for their own fun Capitol select children of districts as tribute, so that they don't have any choice to kill other innocent children for their own survival.

*The Hunger Games* itself is the root of power shown by capitol as this tournament was started when Capitol wins the war against rebels of district 13. President Snow decided to start a competition among the citizens of twelve districts they have to fight till only one survivor remain, all this chaos just to show that real power holder is Capitol. Katniss explain this philosophy of Capitol in these words

Whatever words they use, the real message is clear. "Look how we take your children and sacrifice them and there's nothing you can do. If you lift a finger, we will destroy every last one of you. Just as we did in District Thirteen." (Collins, 2008)

These are the most true and real feelings of the people of districts for the cruel actions of Capitol only to show its power. In *Catching Fire* power of capitol shown increased up to a notch as Katniss was forced to pretend that she is in love with Peeta, this is because of her brave stunt with berries at the end of *Hunger Games*. Capitol find that stunt as the act to rebel the rules but Haymitch advised Katniss to say that she and Peeta wants to eat berries for their love for each other. Although after *Hunger Games* Katniss become close to Peeta but she is not in love with him. Now for safety of her and Peeta as well as their loved ones lives she had to fake this romantic association of her with Peeta. Katniss reveal this helplessness in these lines "He means there's only one future, if I want to keep those I love alive and stay alive myself. I'll have to marry Peeta." Collins (2009) [6]. President Snow thinks that if people took Katniss act of eating berries was only to defy the rules of Capitol than there will be chances of strong rebellion from all districts as people will be encouraged to oppose the rules as well.

In the last book of the series the power of President Coin is visible as she manipulates Katniss so that she can be the ruler of Capitol herself. Another form of power is shown in *Mockingjay* by the way Katniss put forward her terms for the acceptance of mockingjay role.

A new sensation begins to germinate inside me. But it takes until I am standing on a table, waving my final good-byes to the hoarse chanting of my name, to define it. Power. I have a kind of power I never knew I possessed. Snow knew it, as soon as I held out those berries. Plutarch knew when he rescued me from the arena. And Coin knows now. So much so that she must publicly remind her people that I am not in control. (Collins, 2010) [7].

In these lines Katniss explain her realization of the power she held over the people of Panem by becoming face of the rebellion. She understands that Coin is using her by retaining the power to guide Katniss in her own hands. Katniss now realize her strength that she don't have to be worried about Coin as she need to fight her own battle against the corrupt and powerful people who suppress the needy to rule over them. "Another force to contend with. Another power player who has decided to use me as a piece in her games, although

things never seem to go according to plan.” Collins (2010) <sup>[7]</sup>. These lines explain that Katniss realizes that Coin is just like Snow and wants to control Panem for herself rather than for the welfare of people.

In *The Hunger Games* series another element of dystopia is evident that total control of the country is within the hands of government. The government has absolute control over the resources by dictating its own rule which were only for the benefit of rulers by keeping constant surveillance of people. Even people were not allowed to take the minute decisions of their life in this form of rule. As shown in lines “...about the people who rule our country, Panem, from the far-off city called the Capitol.” Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>

Political system of Panem is like dictatorship and President Snow was not less than any dictator ruling above the Panem. Everyone is afraid to say anything that violates the rules and considers as the rebellion. The media of country is also under tight control of government as “...when they’re airing the Games or some important government message on television that it’s mandatory to watch” (Collins 2008) <sup>[5]</sup>.

The distribution of resources according to the will of government is seen in this line that tells about the incentives given to the winner of Hunger Games “will be showered with prizes, largely consisting of food. All year, the Capitol will show the winning district gifts of grain and oil and even delicacies like sugar while the rest of us battle starvation” Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>.

President Snow was the main source of control in Panem. He showed his control over the districts in the form of Hunger Games tournament which was organized only to show power and control of government over the people of Panem as explained as:

The rules of *The Hunger Games* are simple. In punishment for the uprising, each of the twelve districts must provide one girl and one boy, called tributes to participate. The twenty-four tributes will be imprisoned in a vast outdoor arena that could hold anything from a burning desert to a frozen wasteland. Over a period of several weeks, the competitors must fight to the death. The last tribute standing wins. Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>

Peacekeepers are the force used to ensure that everything is in control of President Snow. They have most advanced type of weapons and the power even to kill a person if he was involved in any kind of rebellion. “All forms of stealing are forbidden in District 12. Punishable by death” Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>. Citizens of Capitol and District 2 only had the privilege to be selected as peacekeepers. District 2 was given this incentive for their loyalty during the rebellion which occurs seventy four years ago. Every district is surrounded by electric fence so that people would not leave the district as it is prohibited. Threatening of President Snow to Katniss was one of the main events to keep the control under districts. It shows that even the personal life of citizens is also in control of government. People were not allowed to express their feelings if it were against the rules of Capitol or raise any kind of sympathy for them as these lines showed “Whose idea was the hand holding?” asks Haymitch. “Cinna’s,” says Portia. “Just the perfect touch of rebellion,” says Haymitch.” Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>

The death of Seneca Crane was also the cruel way to show control as Seneca defied the rules without permission of President Snow and let Katniss and Peeta both be the winners of Hunger Games, for that Snow ordered to lock Seneca in a room with only a bowl of berries. In *Catching*

Fire during the victory tour peacekeeper killed a man who just raised his hands for three finger salute because it could be the sign of rebellion or showing the will of people.

*The Hunger Games* series show the tight control of government in each and every field of life spent by the people. “And even though the rules were set up by the Capitol, not the districts” Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>. Capitol controls all the districts by maintaining the food resources of every district. Capitol provides them with the limited food supply so that they obey all the rules of Capitol and also work for their designated jobs so that Capitol will have every desired thing. In Capitol everything is in abundance that were shocking for the tributes as they have to work hard only to get their bread and butter but Capitol seems like another world to them. Tributes even don’t understand the waste of resources for the sake of appearance in Capitol. The lavish life style of the Capitol and the prevailing poverty in districts is the prominent factor of unjust government of Panem which only works for its own benefit and to rule over the people of districts.

The totalitarian government in *The Hunger Games* series restricts citizens to think out of the box and live their life according to the strict rules of government. Capitol tightly controls the lives of people even occupations are distributed among the districts and all the people of district have to be of the same profession. Capitol divided professions only to receive the required resources and for that they forced people to work hard at minimum wage rate.

The people of Capitol have followed the same fashion including medical treatments like Botox, plastic surgery etc, colored wigs, and extensive use of makeup in order to copy one another and to look alike which results in loss of individuality and abundance of uniformity. These traits were also used to hide the depressing situations in the districts from the strict rules of Capitol. While on the other side people of districts were doing hard work only to get money for their food and other necessities.

Another major difference among the classes is for the sake of appearance. People of districts don’t have enough resources to spend on their clothes, face and costumes but in Capitol the exaggerated expanse on the clothes and appearance is evident. Districts were struggling to earn but in Capitol there is abundance of every comfort and luxury sometimes which is even not necessarily required. Katniss in her own district hunt to feed her family but after winning Hunger games they lived in Victor’s Village where they had enough to live a comfortable life. Moreover preparation of Katniss victory tour also shows the difference between classes.

There will be others waiting, too. A staff to cater to my every need on the long train trip. A prep team to beautify me for public appearances. My stylist and friend, Cinna, who designed the gorgeous outfits that first made the audience take notice of me in *The Hunger Games*. Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>

The change in Katniss status after becoming a victor shows strong traits of differences in classes. For example now Katniss spent more on her costume than she spent on her food in previous lifestyle. “She’s got a photo shoot next week modeling wedding dresses. What am I supposed to tell her stylist?” Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>. Haymitch said these words to peacekeeper when they hit Katniss. It is necessary for a victor to look good in photo shoot but life of an ordinary citizen does not mean anything to Capitol. They only want their work done by them and show them that they cannot do anything without the permission of Capitol.

One of the main features of dystopia is the identity crisis. In *The Hunger Games* series Katniss search for her real identity throughout the series. She was a simple girl who hunts to feed her family after the death of her father. Her mother suffered severe depression after the death of Katniss' father in the mine incident. Katniss was now sole provider for her family. At the reaping day due to Tesseract they have more entries and Prim, Katniss' sister, was selected as the female tribute from district 12. Katniss rapidly raise her hand and volunteer for her little sister. "With one sweep of my arm, I push her behind me. "I volunteer!" I gasp. "I volunteer as tribute!" Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>

At the training session Katniss regained her confidence which she had only in woods. During the final evaluation of training she shot an arrow at apple just to show game makers that they were there for watching training of tributes not for the feast. Suddenly I am furious, that with my life on the line, they don't even have the decency to pay attention to me. ... The arrow skewers the apple in the pig's mouth and pins it to the wall behind it. Everyone stares at me in disbelief. Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>

In the games she confidently saved herself from the career tributes by throwing hives of the tracker jackers on them. She tried to save Rue's life and killed the tribute that shot Rue. Later she saved Peeta's life by bringing his ointment and taking care of him in the caves. At the end of 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games Katniss decision of eating berries with Peeta was the bravest stance against the Capitol.

I spread out my fingers, and the dark berries glisten in the sun. I give Peeta's hand one last squeeze as a signal, as a good-bye, and we begin counting. "One." Maybe I'm wrong. "Two." Maybe they don't care if we both die. "Three!" It's too late to change my mind. I lift my hand to my mouth, taking one last look at the world. The berries have just passed my lips when the trumpets begin to blare. Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>

In *Catching Fire*, Katniss identity develops more strong, vigilant and vigorous. She bargained her and Peeta's safety with their families as well for the pretense of love and marriage with Peeta. Snow wants this because in that way people of Panem would not be encouraged to rebel against Capitol. "He means there's only one future, if I want to keep those I love alive and stay alive myself. I'll have to marry Peeta." Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>. After the announcement of Quarter Quell Katniss forced Haymitch to promise her that he will save Peeta "Okay, I figured out what I'm asking," I say. "If it is Peeta and me in the Games, this time we try to keep him alive." Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>, but Haymitch also promised Peeta that he will take care of Katniss.

"I don't know what kind of deal you think you've made with Haymitch, but you should know he made me promises as well." Of course, I know this too. He told Peeta they could keep me alive so that he wouldn't be suspicious. "So I think we can assume he was lying to one of us." Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>

Katniss protected Peeta throughout the game even when he was electrocuted Katniss refuse to leave Peeta and because of that Finnick had to carry Peeta on his back. "Now I'm so thankful I didn't kill Finnick, because how would I have gotten Peeta out of here alive?" Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>. And even she feel that she owes Finnick for saving Peeta's lives in these words

All I wanted was to keep Peeta alive, and I couldn't and Finnick could, and I should be nothing but grateful. And I am. But I am also furious because it means that I will never stop owing Finnick Odair. Ever. So how can I kill him in his

sleep? Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>

Katniss at every turn entertains the reader by doing something brave and couraging once asked she replied "I don't know. To show them that I'm more than just a piece in their Games?" Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>. At the end of *Catching Fire*, Katniss feels more strong and can take her own decisions against the consequences just according to the circumstances. "At some point, you have to stop running and turn around and face whoever wants you dead. The hard thing is finding the courage to do it." Collins (2009) <sup>[5]</sup>. She feel the change in herself and said "No wonder I won the Games. No decent person ever does." Collins (2009) <sup>[5]</sup>. Katniss bravely shot at force field in order to save tributes from the arena as stated in these lines

I rise, turning to the force field, fully revealing myself but no longer caring. Only caring about where I should direct my tip, where Beetee would have driven the knife if he'd been able to choose. My bow tilts up at the wavering square, the flaw, the ... what did he call it that day? The chink in the armor. I let the arrow fly, see it hit its mark and vanish, pulling the thread of gold behind it. Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>

In *Mockingjay* Katniss knows her importance. She knows that Coin needs her as the face of rebellion and for the motivational spirit to the people of Panem. So she put her conditions to be the mockingjay. "What they want is for me to truly take on the role they designed for me. The symbol of the revolution. The Mockingjay." Collins (2010) <sup>[7]</sup>. Coin needed Katniss and that's why she accepted her terms and Katniss want to be the part of rebellion so she fought for going to the Capitol as she herself wants to kill Snow. "Having no work, grief buries me. All that keeps me going is Coin's promise. That I can kill Snow. And when that's done, nothing will be left." Collins (2010) <sup>[7]</sup>.

In *The Hunger Games* Panem is the epitome of capitalist state as Capitol control all the districts whereas people of Capitol lives lavish and carefree life on the other hand people of districts work hard to earn their bread and butter which was given to them as desired by Capitol. People of Capitol are bourgeoisie while people of all twelve districts are proletariats. "look how we take your children and sacrifice them and there's nothing you can do. If you lift a finger, we will destroy every last one of you. Just as we did in District Thirteen." Collins (2008) <sup>[7]</sup>

*The Hunger Games* itself shows the control of Capitol over the districts. "Taking the kids from our districts, forcing them to kill one another while we watch – this is the Capitol's way of reminding us how totally we are at their mercy." Collins (2008) Those defy the rules of Capitol will suffer great consequences as the formation of avox in *The Hunger Games*. "What's an Avox?" I ask stupidly. "Someone who committed a crime. They cut her tongue so she can't speak," says Haymitch. "She's probably a traitor of some sort. Not likely you'd know her." Collins (2008) <sup>[7]</sup>.

Peacekeepers are the controlling agents of Capitol which look after that in every district people follows the rule of Capitol and no one dares to disobey these rules. They were ordered to kill anyone who violates the rules or causes some sort of rebel act. The peacekeepers sometime uses their power for their own benefits as it was prohibited to hunt in the woods but some peacekeepers buy Katniss' kill and gave her more than the people. "Most of the Peacekeepers turn a blind eye to the few of us who hunt because they're as hungry as we are for fresh meat as anyone. In fact, they're among our best customers." Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>

Some of the inventions of Capitols are also treated as the enemy of Capitol because they have developed their own mind set rather than what Capitol programmed them to do. "Jabberjays: "They're funny birds and something of a slap in the face to the Capitol." Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>. Same was the case with the mockingjay birds

"A mockingbird is just a songbird. A mockingjay is a creature the capitol never intended to exist. They hadn't counted on the highly controlled jabberjay having the brains to adapt to the wild, to thrive in a new form. They hadn't anticipated its will to live." Collins (2009) <sup>[5]</sup>

These birds were treated as the symbol of rebellion. In *Catching Fire* the dictatorship of President Snow is evident as the ruler of capitalist state when he warn Katniss about the safety of her loved ones. "And if a girl from District Twelve 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?" Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>. The decision to send victors again to arena was just to show the power and control of Capitol as Snow said "On the seventy-fifth anniversary, as a reminder to the rebels that even the strongest among them cannot overcome the power of the Capitol, the male and female tributes will be reaped from their existing pool of victors." Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>

## 5. Discussions

### 5.1 Textual and Contextual significance of symbols

The events uprising in *The Hunger Games* had some textual as well as contextual meanings. The contextual meaning of these events is explained in detail as below:

One of the most evident symbols is Mockingjay pin. Mockingjay pin was a emblem of district 12. The bird shown in the pin is mockingjay. Capitol at the time of first rebellion invented small birds called jabberjays. They record the conversation and later speak out all the conversation. Soon rebel understand the technique of the jabberjays and they planted the false information to the jabberjays. Capitol understands that now rebels are feeding them false information so they set free all the jabberjays in wild. These small birds soon died but a new breed came from their mating with female mockingjay birds and a new breed came to existence. Mockingjay cannot store the data but they have the ability to mimic a voice. They are even able to mimic melodies as well. So the mockingjays are reminder of Capitol's mistakes.

Katniss and Rue transfer messages through these birds and try to misguide other tributes. Mockingjays also remind Katniss about his father. Whereas three finger salutes is used as common gesture of district 12 to show respect and honor as said in these words "It is an old and rarely used gesture of our district, occasionally seen at funerals. It means thanks, it means admiration, it means goodbye to someone you love." Collins (2008).

In *The Hunger Games* at the time of Rue's death Katniss gave her three finger salute and from there it become the sign of support and strength in the rebellion. Another important symbol is the title of Girl on fire, which is given to Katniss by her stylist Cinna because of her bold and strong personality. "I want the audience to recognize you when you're in the arena," says Cinna dreamily. "Katniss, the girl who was on fire" Collins (2008) <sup>[6]</sup>. Later in *Catching Fire* Katniss strong personality develops and Cinna dressed her in another gown with fire. "Katniss, the girl on fire, has left behind her flickering flames and bejeweled gowns and soft

candlelight frocks. She is as deadly as fire itself." Collins (2009) <sup>[6]</sup>.

In *Mockingjay* katniss was often called girl on fire in order to give her the importance of leading figure of rebellion. In *Hunger Games* series the white rose was the sign of pretense by Capitol. President Snow dictator of the Panem wears white rose on the lapel of his coat and in *Catching Fire* Katniss recognizes that President Snow is watching her by the presence of white rose. Another important symbol used for the support of rebels is Katniss' braid. It is the simple grooming hairstyle of the district 12 and often Katniss mother braided her hair. So in this context her braid is the indication of her association towards her family. One of the event turning things is night lock berries, these are also a symbol used in *The Hunger Games* Series. Katniss was informed about the deadliest poison nightlock held by her father. "Not these, Katniss. Never these. They're nightlock. You'll be dead before they reach your stomach." Collins (2008) <sup>[5]</sup>. Katniss in 74<sup>th</sup> Hunger Games find a dead tribute with these berries in her hand and Katniss pick some berries for the rival tributes and at the end used these berries to end her and Peeta's life as they both cannot harm the other and game makers announced that there should be a single victor of games.

### 5.2 Dystopian Features

Dystopia is the imaginative world where everything comes to drastic end and destruction is present in every scenario. *The Hunger Games* series has some major features of dystopia, which are explained in detail. Power is one of the prominent features of dystopia. The source of power in *The Hunger Games* series is held by Capitol and President Snow. He controls the lifestyle, resources, funds and incomes of the citizen. The people of districts are not allowed to leave the district. *The Hunger Games* itself is the prominent proof of Capitol's power as the tributes from every district were left to kill each other just for the entertainment and to show the control of President Snow over the people. Another important aspect of dystopia is totalitarianism. It is the form of government which controls every aspect of people and often dictates them the ways to live life. Panem is controlled by the totalitarian government in *The Hunger Games* series. As Capitol control the occupations, resources and lifestyles of people. Anything that is against the rules of Capitol is considered as the treason. As Rue explains that they were not allowed to eat crops and if anyone eat than they were whipped in the public by peacekeepers. Moreover the lavish lifestyle of people of Panem indicates the unjust division of resources to the districts. The people of Capitol spend much more on their fashion than people of districts spend on their bread and butter. However the difference between the working and ruling class is another feature of dystopia known as class struggle. In *The Hunger Games* series Capitol is the bourgeoisie and districts are proletariats. Capitol own power and resources of the country where as all these resources came from the hard work of poor people lived in districts. These poor people were not allowed to leave their districts and for that a fence is placed outside every district with electricity in it. The class difference among the districts is also evident in the series as district 1, 2 and 4 have given more importance and resources. District 2 was responsible to train peacekeepers so these peacekeepers always had soft corner for the district.

The major and controlling power in dystopia is its capitalist state who works only for the benefits of rich people ignoring

the sufferings of poor people. *The Hunger Games* series also show Panem as the capitalist state under the dictatorship of President Snow. He only wants to protect elite class without providing necessary resources to the poor and working class of the Panem. Insufficient food resources in districts inspite of the hard work people of this district do, shows the capitalist nature of government in the Panem. Districts are considered only as workers but not as the part of the country. All the resources are held by Capitol, it decides the amount of resources given to districts, which is obviously always limited. All the forms of control show the capitalist nature of Panem's government.

### 5.3 Thematic and instinctive ideologies

Ideology is the thought cycle of any particular era or part of the world. It shows the lifestyle and attitudes of the individuals living in it. *The Hunger Games* portray the political ideology of control throughout the series. In beginning *The Hunger Games* explain the political and financial conditions of the Panem. As the story progresses it becomes evident that most of the decisions were made for the purpose to control the power of the country. The culture of Panem indicates that districts obeyed the rules of Capitol and serve President Snow because of the tight government control. Districts were not allowed to take their own decisions and anything said or initiated against the rules of Capitol is considered as the treason.

Class difference of the Panem shows the divide and rule policy as the rulers unjustly provide resources to the districts which establishes the class difference among them. District 1, 2 and 4 are the most powerful districts; due to this reason they do not face strict restrictions from the Capitol. However, other districts had to follow strong restrictions imposed by government and provided very limited resources. District 13 was destroyed as the punishment for initiating rebellion in the country. After destroying district 13 Capitol started Hunger Games to show district the result of rebellion against the Capitol as a form of punishment. Every year Hunger Games remind citizens that Capitol is the true ruler of the country and if they want to live peacefully they had to obey the rules and restrictions of the Capitol. The assassination of Coin also shows that the evil resides inside every corrupt and partial ruler. It was not President Snow only that wants to control the Panem but district 13 silently watch all other district suffer by the hands of Capitol also show evil and self centered approach of them. The ideology of power and control over the social and economical factors of the country is depicted beautifully and innovatively with unique and interest developing events in a pictorial way are presented by Suzanne Collins in *The Hunger Games* series which reflected the artificial and materialistic traits of the present world.

### 6. Conclusion

The study gave the detailed view of the ideological and dystopic aspects of *The Hunger Games* series. It proves by presenting different factor of dystopia portrayed in *The Hunger Games*. The country of Panem depicts the dystopian traits in its control and distribution of resources which results in the rebellion from Capitol. This study explores all types of signs in *The Hunger Games* series as well as different forms of signifiers and signified are also explained in this research. After all the detailed work in semiotics *The Hunger Games'* hidden and intended purpose is highlighted, so that the message of author is easily understand

by readers and viewers. Contextual part of the research is done by taking Marxism as the required theory. Marxism helps in picking all the dystopian elements presents in *The Hunger Games* by analyzing the text with the Marxist lens. The destructive political, economical and structural elements of the Panem help in proving that *The Hunger Games* is a dystopian series, which shows the corporeal attitude of the ruler of Panem. The development of major characters is also explored in the study to show the effects of social, economical and financial developments on the lives of common people. The naïve characters at the start of the series become strong willed as they undergo drastic sufferings which were results of injustice by the controlling powers. The ideology explored in *The Hunger Games* is typically political, class differential and power controlling type. The protagonist of the series fights bravely against the strict and unjust rules of the dictator controlling the country. Other characters and events help her to achieve the desired freedom from the so called peaceful capitalist state. The end of the series prove that it is not the particular individuals that demolish the progress of society but the faulty, corrupt and maltreated mindset is the true evil of the culture.

### 7. Recommendations

It is recommended to conduct research by using Psychoanalytical theory in *The Hunger Games* as all the developments and advancements in the story somehow relate to our materialistic world and explore the effects of dystopia. The Psychoanalysis will result in providing complete and accurate perspective behind the actions of main characters and helps in understanding the ideology behind this work in detail. It will also highlight the controlling nature of dictating rulers who only work for maintaining their position in the society.

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