

**The Representation of  
Class Difference Issues  
among the Oppressed  
Class in Suzanne Collins'  
the Hunger Games Novel  
(2008) from Marxist  
Perspective**

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**Abstract**

This research aimed at investigating the class difference issues occurred among the oppressed class in Susanne Collins' The Hunger Games (2008) using Marxist literary criticism. Using Interactive Model Analisis, this qualitative research revealed two major class difference issues: exploitation and discrimination. The exploitation issue was identified in the form of children exploitation; meanwhile, the discrimination issue was identified in the form of socio-economic discrimination. Those issues appeared due to the three identified factors: poverty, false consciousness, and welfare struggle. Therefore, this research suggested the future research to dig and reveal the social class issue presented in the other novel of The Hunger Games Trilogy.

**Keywords:** *Class Difference, Marxism, The Hunger Games*

**Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyelidiki masalah perbedaan kelas yang terjadi di antara kelas tertindas dalam The Hunger Games karya Susanne Collins (2008) dengan menggunakan kritik sastra Marxis. Dengan menggunakan Analisis Model Interaktif, penelitian kualitatif ini mengungkapkan dua masalah utama perbedaan kelas: eksploitasi dan diskriminasi. Isu eksploitasi teridentifikasi dalam bentuk eksploitasi anak; Sementara itu, isu diskriminasi teridentifikasi dalam bentuk diskriminasi sosial ekonomi. Isu-isu tersebut muncul karena tiga faktor yang teridentifikasi: kemiskinan, kesadaran palsu, dan perjuangan kesejahteraan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini menyarankan penelitian selanjutnya untuk menggali dan mengungkap persoalan kelas sosial yang dihadirkan dalam novel trilogi The Hunger Games lainnya.

**Kata Kunci:** *Perbedaan Kelas, Marxisme, The Hunger Games*

## 1. Introduction

Teaching media grasps a crucial role in contributing a successful language teaching and learning instruction. One of them is by using literary criticism. Literary criticism provides the students with opportunities to master the target language due to its characteristic that contains fun story and artistic value. This helps the students be more engaged in language learning rather than the use of printed books and enhances the students' reading comprehension (Febrika, 2013 & Soomro et al., 2019). Besides, according to Curleette (2018), using literary criticism as teaching media facilitates them to change their thinking from the stage of literal language thinking to the metaphorical stage. It means that literary criticism is able to stimulate and foster the students' critical thinking (Khatib & Alizadeh, 2012 & Keshavarzi, 2012). Moreover, literary criticism also contributes an enormous role in fostering the students' moral and social value, in which UUD 1945 and UNESCO already proclaimed these values to be inserted in Indonesian Curriculum 2013. The implementation of social and moral value in Curriculum 2013 aimed at developing more than just the students' cognitive but the students value as social people, enhancing their morality, attitude, and becoming a democratic human source to survive the future with inequality issues. This is in line with UNESCO, the world organization, which emphasizes the embedding of social value to increase the quality of world education as stated in four pillars of education, in which one of them is *learning to live together*.

However, the Indonesian government and international organization already implemented the value of social and moral in the Indonesian educational system. The problem of moral degradation and inequality issues still manifest as a social problem and require to be concerned (Hermayawati, 2014). Setiawan (2017) revealed the problem occurred in Indonesian educational system is the lack of fairness value inserted in students' narrative text because is dominated by the kindness value. It means that there is an imbalance learning material that caused moral degradation and inequality issues. This phenomenon encourages a learning media that can provide

the students with social and moral value to prevent related problems and establish a valuable future society. Considering this problem, literature is an appropriate source to provide students with exposure to social value because literature indirectly represents and promotes social value through practical moral and human behavior (Trior, 2010). Besides, as an eye-opening experiences, literature educates society with various worldwide perspectives and society, which can shape the people to be more open-minded and less discriminative.

Novel can be used as learning media that facilitate the students to achieve some exposure to social value and fairness value using Marxist approach. Hunger games novel (2008) is a novel that represents a thick means of production authorization gap between the upper class represented by the Capitol (Bourgeoisie) and the labor class represented by the Labor District. This gap gave birth to various class difference issues suffered by the labor district (Proletariat). Marxism is a criticism introduced by Karl Mark (1881), emphasizing the general perspective of the social movement highly affected by socio- economic power in a certain society. As literary criticism, Herman & Eagleton (1976) mentions that Marxist literary criticism can reveal the problem regarding the class difference that results in social class issues. He also emphasizes that a literary work like novel cannot recognize itself, so the invention of Marxism is able to facilitate the revelation of economic authorization, which significantly influences the social phenomenon represented in a certain novel. Marxist literary approach helps students acknowledge the various societies with various social issues and inequality that affects their respect towards the older adults, parents, authority, and labor class (Tyson, 2006 & Shawal, 2015). Therefore, this theory can equalize educational opportunity and create a harmonious and open-minded society through respectful students (Showkat Ahmad, 2015 & Kellner, 2000).

Several previous related researches using Marxism view already conducted toward various novels. Rimun (2013) focused on social class and exploitation in Hunger Games Novel performed by the upper class towards the oppressed class. The same idea by also investigated by Tahir (2017); Kurnia & D

(2017); Lodhi et al. (2019), who revealed the power showed by the Capitol as the upper class in *The Hunger Games Novel* to control the society. Besides, Namira & Utami (2015) was also conducted a research focused on the discrimination issues committed by the Capitol towards the labor class. Considering several related studies above, the entire previous study majorly investigated the issues that happened between the two contrast class, the capitol and the Labor class or the district, while in the other side, this novel also represents the oppression that happened among the oppressed class. This current study focused on investigating the issues of class differences that occurred among oppressed class, the district. By analyzing this phenomenon, the result of this research facilitates the students to be more aware of the inequality issues in order to create respectful human sources.

## Method

This current study was designed as qualitative research, which involved *The Hunger Games Novel (2008)* as the subject of the study. The object of this current research was class difference issues that occurred among the oppressed class. To obtain the object as the data of this research, several instruments were used: the researcher as the main instrument and three tables as the supporting instruments, namely table of sequences, table of tabulation, and classification table of the identified issues. The collected data was then analyzed by using Interactive Model Analysis proposed by Miles & A. Huberman (2014). This technique of data analysis was started from data collection where

the data collected through intensive reading, note-taking, and classifying, then data condensation where the researcher selected the relevant data related to the topic identified, then data display where the data were displayed, and conclusion drawing where the researcher drew the final conclusion.

## Findings and Discussions

Through the repeated data analysis process, this current research revealed two major class difference issues among the districts as the oppressed class as the result of different means of production. Those issues were exploitation and discrimination. The further discussion is presented in the following section below.

### Exploitation

Exploitation is the use of someone for the sake of personal benefits by the use of violence, harmful job, and long hours working. There is an imbalance of profit between the exploiter and the target of exploitation (Ghosh, 2017; Zimmerman & Kiss, 2017; Balci, 1987). In Suzanne Collin's *The Hunger Games Novel*, the Capitalization system was vividly shown not only inter-class but also intra-class or among the oppressed class. The exploitation issues emerged because of the suffering of poverty and lack of educational exposure (UNHCR, 2017). This poverty suffered by District 12 as the poorest district in Panem encourages the children to be treated exploitatively. The exploitation issues represented in *The Hunger Games Novel* are presented in the following table of sequence.

Table 1 List of Exploitation Issues

The Sequences' Number	Frequency
2a, 2b, 2d, 2c, 2f, 2j, 3i, 5j, 13j, 13k	10

Table 1 presented above shows the number of sequences that contained the issues of children exploitation among the oppressed class, which appeared 10 times. According to UNHCR (2017), when a family only depends on their traditional wage, so there will be one of the family members who are responsible for the family accommodation and finances. This case was vividly represented in District 12 as the

most improper district in Panem. Katniss Everdeen as the poor little girl was the target of children's exploitation occurred in the novel. It started when her father died in the enormous mine explosion because the major work owned by District 12 was as cool miner as seen in the sub-sequence 2b. By the inactivation of her dad in affording their daily life, this took Katniss Everdeen to substitute her father's role in the

family. In fact, children are required to be exposed with unlimited education and affection, not with the responsibility as a breadwinner, which was the opposite of the children's right as stated by UNCHR (2017). The children's exploitation can be seen from her courage to illegally hunt and sneak into the wood, in which execution was the final punishment as seen in the sub-sequence 2a. This sub-sequence revealed her struggle to hunt with her best friend, Gale. Both of them tried to sneak some fruit, animal, and the other edible thing as seen in the sub-sequence 2d and 2c. This act of exploitation can be seen in the following section below.

*"...because how would they live without us? Who would fill those mouths that are always asking for more? With both of us hunting daily, there are still nights when game has to be swapped for lard or shoelaces or wool, still nights when we go to bed with our stomachs growling" (Collins, 2008: 9).*

The sub-sequences and the quotation above indicated the children exploitation that was indirectly done Katniss' mother and Gale's family. Both of the families did not directly exploit their children to work and feed the growling stomach, but the realization came from both targets where they were placed into two tough choices, die or work. According to Wisman (2018), realization is the force of the exploitation to occur. Besides, after her father's death, her mother was filled by depression and did not want to work, so it encouraged Katniss' awareness to work for her family. This can be identified that Katniss' mother unconsciously mistreated her child for her economic benefit. This contrast with the regulation declared by the CRC or Convention on the Right of Child, which stated that the children should be protected with all of the costs that potentially harmed their physical and mental health. Then, in the Marxist approach, the act done by Katniss was caused by her belief as the first child or known as false consciousness (Eyerma, 1981 & Ghosh, 2017). Therefore, these sub-sequences were classified as the employment of children exploitation because are in line with the theory of UNCHR (2017) and Zimmerman & Kiss (2017) and the previous research done by

Wulandari (2017) regarding the substitution of an inactive family member and resulted in children exploitation.

Katniss' struggle was not merely shown by illegally hunting in the wood, but it was also shown by illegally visiting the Seam's black market to trade some kinds of stuff as seen in the sub-sequence 2f. Sub-sequence 3i revealed Katniss dying condition while she checked the waste trash to check some leftover food because there was nobody who wanted to buy her sister's old clothes. Besides, she also had to sacrifice her life in order to feed her family by taking *tesserae* as seen in sub-sequence 2j. *Tesserae* was a system created by the Capitol as a way to increase the children's tendency to be elected in the Hunger Games' reaping day by giving them some food. Every *tesserae* taken should be traded by their names as seen by the following quote.

*"Once, because I had to, and three times for tesserae for grain and oil for myself, Prim, and my mother. In fact, every year I have needed to do this. And the entries are cumulative. So now, at the age of sixteen, my name will be in the reaping twenty times" (Collins, 2008: 13)*

It can be observed from the sub-sequences mentioned and the quotation above, the children's exploitation was identified. This identification was proven by the struggle done by the target that potentially harmed and took their life away in order to prosper the other family member. This is in line with theories presented by Zimmerman & Kiss, (2017) & UNCHR (2017) and the investigation identified by Wulandari (2017) and Ghosh (2017).

#### *Discrimination Issues*

The second class difference issue identified in The Hunger Games Novel (2008) was the discrimination issue. According to Watson (1994) and Baron & Byrne, (1997), discrimination is defined as equal treatment received by a certain individual by targeting their protected attribute. This prejudicial action is done by excluding and restricting someone's desired access, such as the access of job employment, health, and social services that result unpleasant feelings for the victims (Bowling, 2002). Besides, discrimination is

also in the form of harassment and physical attack (Khasnawati, 2015). In the current analysis, the employment of discrimination issues was identified in the hold of The Hunger Games in the war arena, which involved the

Carrier as the discriminator and Peeta Melark from District 12 as the victim. The list of subsequences revealing the discrimination issues are presented in the following table.

Table 2 List of Discrimination Issues

The Sequences' Number	Frequency
6h, 8e, 8f, 8g, 10i	5

Table 2 above reveals 7 sub-sequences that represent the issue of discrimination done by the Carrier tributes to Peeta Melark and Katniss Everdeen as the tributes from District 12. According to Kuncoro (2008), the major factor of the prejudice action employment is competition in order to obtain commodities and precious opportunities. This competition was vividly shown by The Carrier Tributes in the beginning of The Hunger Games as seen in sub-sequence 6c. This sub-sequence revealed the Carrier's jealousy towards the amazing performance performed by Katniss Everdeen in opening ceremony. This resulted in the awareness of the Carrier tributes towards Katniss Everdeen as a threat, who might demolish their power in Panem. This threat increased the tendency to hold their position as the victor district by prejudicially treating District 12 tributes as seen in sub-sequence 6h and this quotation.

*"As I glance around, I notice a lot of the other tributes are shooting us dirty looks, which confirms what I've suspected, we've literally outshone them all"*

The quotation in sub-sequence 6h above reveals an act of discrimination in the form of harassment, which is can be seen from how the Carrier gave Katniss dirty looks. By the way the Carrier performed this prejudiced action, it was identified that the Carrier tried to express their jealousy because Katniss had outshone their performances. Besides, the act of harassment was also shown in the war arena as seen in sub-sequence 13k. This sequence revealed how Cato harassed Katnis through his verbal abuse by wanting to puke every time he saw Katniss Everdeen. In Marxist approach, these acts of prejudice were highly influenced

by the Carrier's false consciousness as the powerful tributes to act superiorly in order to maintain their protect their power and fame as the most loved tributes in Panem. According to Gordon (1998), the primary cause of discrimination is the struggle to hold and protect the belonging power. These current findings were supported by the finding revealed by Khasawati (2015) regarding the act of harassment and Maurilia (2015) regarding verbal abuse. Moreover, this investigation is in line with the theory proposed by Theodorson (1979).

As the superior and wealthy tributes who come from district 1, 2, and 4, the Carrier tributes tried to dominate the training session to show their power and maintain their status as the victor district as seen in sub-sequence 8e, 8f, and 8g. This act of domination is in the form of struggle in maintaining their power or it is known as the struggle of welfare (Bobo, 1983). It can be identified from sub-sequence 8e where the Carrier humiliated Katniss and Peeta Melark, who came from the furthest district, District 12 as seen in this following quotation.

*"The other tributes were jealous of us, but not because we were amazing, because our stylists were. Now I see nothing but contempt in the glances of the Career Tributes. Each must have fifty to a hundred pounds on me. They project arrogance and brutality."*  
*(Collins, 2008: 93)*

The quotation in sub-sequence 8e above revealed the discrimination issues from the act of humiliation, which is seen from the giving of contempt of glance towards Katniss

and Peeta's appearances. This contempt of glance given by the Carrier tribute was identified as their struggle of welfare to frighten Katniss and Peeta, in which a skinny little girl who came from the poorest district was not appropriate to be in the war arena to face the brutal and giant Carrier tributes who had dedicated their life to win the Hunger Games. A similar act of humiliation was also revealed in the sub-sequence 8g. This sub-sequence explained how Carrier tributes humiliated Katniss Everdeen by gathering rowdily while murmuring their underestimation towards the weak tributes and seeing them beneath notice. These humiliation actions were vividly recognizable as the act of discrimination because was in line with the theory stated by Bowling (2002) and showed a relevant finding towards the investigation conducted by relevant researchers, namely Ridha et al. (2013) and Idris (2017).

Various struggles were shown by the Carrier Tributes in order to maintain their power. Not only by humiliating the weak tributes, but they also discriminated against the other weak tributes by restricting the other to be exposed to the same opportunities as seen in the sub-sequence 8e. These sub-sequences expressed the brutality of the Carrier tributes in the training center. The Capitol created a system of *The Hunger Games* in such an interesting way so that every tribute was facilitated by training session in order to practice some survival strategy and adjust to deadly weapons. The restriction can be seen in this following quote.

*"When Atala releases us, they head straight for the deadliest looking weapons in the gym and handle them with ease." (Collins, 2008: 94)*

The quotation in sub-sequence 8e above was identified as the act of discrimination by restricting the poorer tributes. It can be seen from the way if Carrier showed their mastery in handling some deadly weapons easily. This act was shown by the Carrier was identified as a strategy to demolish the weak tributes' confidence. Besides, the poorer tributes were restricted to have the same

opportunities to practice in weapon station, because the Carrier already dominated the station. It means that the Carrier Tributes did not give the other tributes access to their desired activity. Theoretically, this is in line with the theory of discrimination stated by Allport (1979), who said that discrimination can be in form of restriction and exclusion. Therefore, this is in line with the finding identified by Idris (2017).

The product of this current research implies the students to be more exposed by condition around them so that they can be aware of the social issues in society. By acknowledging this issues, students can prevent themselves to exploit and commit a prejudice action towards the other friends who have a different background, race, skin colour, social status, etc. Therefore, by reading this literary criticism, it helps the students enhancing their moral and social value so that they can build and create a valuable and open-minded society.

## Conclusions

Based on the result of the study, it can be concluded that 1) The students are able to understand vocabulary from simple sentence, able to make simple reference by using true false and able to identify main idea from short and simple text. 2) The teacher and student encounter a problem during the implementation of skimming-scanning technique in SMPN 6 Singaraja in which the low ability students have difficulties in understanding the text provided by the teacher and the teacher have to deal with the classroom management in the class

Teachers are suggested to be familiar with skimming- scanning material to help optimizing their teaching. Besides, Teachers are suggested to prepare the students before having skimming-scanning technique in reading activities by having vocabulary enrichment and activities related to skimming-scanning technique to help students understanding about the reading text

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