



HWA CHONG INSTITUTION (HIGH SCHOOL SECTION)

HUMANITIES RESEARCH PAPER 2021

Topic: “La Resistance”: A Marxist Reading of Netflix’s *Money Heist*

Slant: Literature

Total Word Count (excluding appendixes, footnotes & references): 5482

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Declaration

I declare that this assignment is my own work and does not involve plagiarism or collusion. The sources of other people’s work have been appropriately referenced, failing which I am willing to accept the necessary disciplinary action(s) to be taken against me.

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Date of Submission: 16 August 2021

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background:

We live in a world of political upheaval, one of violent challenges to the status quo. According to Erica Chinoweth (2020), 2019 saw possibly the largest wave of mass anti-government movements in recorded history, from Sudanese tyrant Omar al-Bashir's fall from power in April 2019 to Algeria's president Abdelaziz Bouteflika being toppled by an uprising only weeks later.

Although these mass protests differ in methods and goals, they tend to begin for similar reasons, the most prominent of which being inequality, particularly with regards to wealth. Many protestors feel shut out of the wealth of the country (BBC, 2019), taking to the streets in an attempt to challenge what they perceive to be an unfair system. Interestingly, this growingly common pattern is not far from the long-standing theory of Marxism, theorising an uncannily similar process to modern day revolutions. Although its founder Karl Marx would be over two centuries old today, his theories on class struggle and how the economy functions have truly stood the test of time, as they still continue to be applicable even in today's day and age.

1.2 Rationale:

One reason for analysing the Netflix series *Money Heist* (2017) in particular is the currency of the issues tackled by the show. *Money Heist* features a rebellion in the form of a Bank Heist,

sparked by the bank robbers. They collectively resent the unfair state of the government and economy, forming the “Resistance” as a result. Since Marxism is a rather timeless school of thought which still has relevance today, it would be used as a lens to analyse *Money Heist*, a show that focuses on the same concept of forming an anti-capitalist resistance against the government.

Money Heist is also suitable due to its popularity, with an astonishing 65 million households streaming Season 4 of the show in its first month of release (Puentes, 2021), as well as the myriad of accolades the show has received to back it up. Its international impact and influence on the television landscape thus makes it more worthwhile to analyse. To substantiate this, *Money Heist*'s iconography has inspired real-life protests - its theme song “Bella Ciao”, along with their iconic attire of Dali masks and red jumpsuits, have appeared in protests in Lebanon, Iraq, France and Chile (Cobb, 2020), proving its remarkable cultural influence.

1.3 Research Questions:

1. How does the portrayal of class conflict (Marx, 1848) between the different social classes in *Money Heist* evolve throughout the series? How does this showcase the cyclical nature of oppression and rebellion?
2. How are the different manifestations of Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1970) employed by these key characters within *Money Heist*?

1.4 Thesis Statement

Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1970) are employed by both social classes in the authorities and the Resistance, with the oppressed latter eventually devolving into the very oppressive force they tried to revolt against, blurring the line between the social classes. *Money Heist* subverts the traditionally static class conflict to exemplify the cyclical and restrictive nature of the capitalist system, where one power rises upon another's fall.

1.5 Scope of Research / Delimitation(s)

There are 2 major story arcs within *Money Heist*. The original heist occurs in Seasons 1 and 2, while in Seasons 3 and 4, the crew have successfully escaped the bank and are enjoying their lives with the spoils of the first heist. When one of the original robbers is taken away, they are forced to regroup to prepare for a second heist on the Bank of Spain. Since the lengthiness of the show would make analysing all 4 Seasons a tall order, this analysis will focus on Seasons **1 to 2** of *Money Heist*, which span 22 episodes each lasting 40-50 minutes long.

I will be making use of Marxist theory, particularly Marx and Engel's theories on capitalism, and extensions of them such as Louis Althusser's theory of State Apparatuses. These would be used in order to analyse topics in the show through a Marxist Lens to reach a deeper understanding of the topic. Specific scenes will be selected to achieve this, which will be covered in the Methodology section.

1.6 Significance of Research / Usefulness

This project is also worth studying as there has not been many works on *Money Heist*, not to mention a discussion on its association with the literary lens of Marxism. Currently, there has been only one academic analysis of *Money Heist*, titled “An Anarchist insight on Alex Pina’s *Money Heist*” by Anandita Pagnis (2020). Although similar, Marxism and Anarchism are “completely opposed and mutually exclusive ideologies” (Woods, 2017), due to a difference in their class base. Hence, this research applies Marxist theory on a modern series which has been critically acclaimed, yet has little analysis. It hopes to prove useful by broadening the perspectives on the capitalist system, shedding light on the power dynamics in society.

1.7 Limitations

As alluded to earlier, although a fifth and final season of *Money Heist* was confirmed by Netflix on 31 July 2020, with production starting on 3 August that year, it has yet to be released on Netflix. Pina (2020) himself said that the latest season has the power to “infuse some oxygen into this disturbing climate”, hinting towards its significance. The lack of a conclusive ending to the plot could potentially influence the insight drawn from the film, and affect the consistency of analysis and interpretation in this research. Although this has no workaround, the analysis will attempt to reach a conclusion based on the content that is presented. By focusing on the first two seasons, which has its own conclusion, this issue will also be less prominent.

Additionally, this paper will not cover all significant aspects of the series, such as not focusing on the anti-hero within *Money Heist*, another theme worthy of discussion. Ideas in the show which arise from other themes may thus not be touched upon. However, the crux of the show is clearly class-related. Thus utilising a Marxist lens, which too focuses on class conflict, would provide a richer analysis of the show, and can thus be seen as more important than focusing on other secondary themes which may not be as essential to the show.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1: Introduction

As Marxism has been repeatedly redefined and reworked over the years, this literature review gives an overview on the development of Marxism by focusing on four schools of thought encompassing Classical Marxism, Leninism, Maoism and modern day Marxism.

While theories from Leninism and Maoism will not be utilised in the analysis, the two schools of thought will still be briefly discussed in order to develop a fuller understanding of how the Marxist lens has evolved.

2.2: Classical/Orthodox Marxism

Marxist Theory is generally based on the doctrine of the Communist Manifesto (1848), developed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the mid-19th century. The two were the founders of Marxism, a school of thought that is used to analyse historical development and the relationship between economic classes in society.

Marx and Engels argue that we are all controlled by society, and that society is characterised by disagreement and conflict between social groups. Marxism also says that it is class struggle that drives history “finally causing a social revolution such as has never been dreamt of in the philosophy of the economists” (Engels, 1843 p. 434). The Communist Manifesto is considered to contain Marx’s ideas and aims, as well as what created the idea that “The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.” (Marx & Engels, 1848).

2.2.1 Class struggle

According to Marx, the “modes of production”, which is the organisation of economic production in a society, are defined by a combination of two things: the means of production and relations of production. The means of production in modern capitalism include things such as factories and oil, while the relations of production refer to how people organise themselves around labour. That is, the relationship between the two main social classes, and the disparity between these classes is what causes class conflict (Marx, 1848). Marx argues that the poor working class, known as the Proletariats, are being exploited and oppressed by the Bourgeoisie, or the rich ruling class, also known as the capitalists. In our capitalist society, where the minority Bourgeoisie own power, the majority of people work for the rich, remaining subservient to them. The wealthy ruling class makes profit, while exploited workers remain poor. As Marx put it, “[t]he growing incompatibility between the productive development of society and its hitherto existing relations of production expressed itself in bitter contradiction, crises, spasms.” (Marx, 1857, p. 749).

Thus, the difference between the classes was that the proletariat did not control the means of production, even though they were using it to work; these were controlled by the bourgeoisie.

Marxists argue that this capitalist system is unfair, due to its exploitative nature. Marx envisioned an overthrow of the capitalist system, by the working class, and a resulting communist system, a stateless, classless society. Between the capitalist and communist society, Marxism posits that there would lie a period known as socialism in which the state can be nothing but the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat (with “dictatorship” referring to power being in the hands of the masses).

2.3 Leninism and Maoism

Leninism was first expounded by the Russian revolutionary Vladimir Lenin during the course of the Russian revolution. The political ideology defends and develops theories from Marxism, adapting them for practical application to the socio-political conditions of early 20th century Russia. Maoism is a variety of Marxism-Leninism, referring primarily to the ideology of Mao Zedong, a Chinese communist revolutionary. According to Womack (2001), Mao considered himself to be “creatively” applying Marxism-Leninism to Chinese conditions, much like Lenin himself did with Classical Marxism. The two are closely related as they have similar definitions which both differ from Classical Marxist convention.

One area where Lenin and Mao differed from Marx was in their definition of the proletariat. While the former thought this struggle was between the capitalist bourgeoisie and the working proletariat, the latter believed this struggle was between the capitalist and both the workers and peasants.

2.3.1 Revolutionary Vanguard

While Marx thought class consciousness would spontaneously develop within the working class due to the proletariat's numbers becoming so great and their condition so poor, Lenin considered that a disciplined communist party was needed to arouse political consciousness amongst the workers and lead Russia to revolution (Political Science, 2014). He felt that strong leadership was needed in a revolution and conceptualised a revolutionary party for this purpose (Sociology Group, 2019). This idea of the vanguard party, is a Leninist democratic practice whereby militants come together into a single organisation in order to centralise and coordinate their efforts against the system (D'amato, 2012). This vanguard party would lead the proletariat in revolution against imperialist capitalism, replacing a bourgeois state with a socialist one.

2.5 Present Day Marxism - Louis Althusser

Much of recent literary developments on Marxism have been influenced by the French Marxist theoretician Louis Althusser (1918-1990), considered to be the most sophisticated of postwar Marxist. Althusser reworked thinly-sketched Marxist concepts by drawing upon the works of theorists such as Jacques Lacan, Antonio Gramsci and Sigmund Freud to understand the way ideology functions in society, moving away from the earlier Marxist understanding of ideology (Felluga, 2011). His concept of *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, first published in 1970, has been particularly influential (Steph, 2018) as it marked an important shaft in the way Marxists think about ideology as ideas.

Althusser presented two theses on ideology with the first concerning the object which is 'represented' in the imaginary form of ideology and the second concerning the materiality of ideology. These were that "Ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence" and "Ideology has a material existence" (Althusser, 1970).

2.5.1 Repressive State Apparatuses (RSA) and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA)

Althusser makes a useful distinction between what we might call state power and state control (Barry, 1995), which are the RSA and ISA respectively. Before Althusser revolutionised the concept of State Apparatus, it was known as the following:

The State is a ‘machine’ of repression, which enables the ruling classes (in the nineteenth century the bourgeois class and the ‘class’ of big landowners) to ensure their domination over the working class, thus enabling the former to subject the latter to the process of surplus-value extortion (i.e. to capitalist exploitation).

This contained things such as the Government, the Police and the Prisons, which operate by external force.

However, Althusser asserted that in order to advance the theory of the State, we must consider “another reality which is clearly on the side of the (repressive) state apparatus, but must not be confused with it” (Althusser, 1970) which he called the Ideological State Apparatus, in which the power of the state is also maintained more subtly by securing the internal consent of its citizens (Barry, 1995). This included schools, the media and art, fostering an ideology which is sympathetic to the aims of the state and the political status quo (closely related to Marx’s idea of the superstructure). Thus, each of us feels that we are freely choosing what is in fact being imposed upon us.

He argued that the RSA functioned by violence, while the ISA functioned by ideology. More specifically, the RSA functioned massively and predominantly by repression, while functioning secondarily by ideology (Althusser, 1970). For example, the Police which are considered to be

part of the RSA also function by ideology, such as the interrogation process. In *Money Heist*, both the government and the Resistance employ both RSAs and ISAs.

This theory is closely related to Marx’s idea of the superstructure, whereby this arrangement of economy is known as the base, and this base determines the shape of society’s superstructure. According to Marx, the superstructure refers to ideologies that influence a society, such as the media, law and education. Marx sees this ideology as reflective of the dominant class. It is used by them to suppress any rebellion against them, such that “the Unions (workers) remain powerless against all great forces which influence the relation.” (Engels, 1845, p. 505)

Table of Summary:

	Classical/Orthodox Marxism	Leninism	Maoism	Present Day Marxism (Louis Althusser)
Where class conflict occurs	Between the capitalist bourgeoisie and the urban, working class proletariat (Marx, 1848)	Between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat + the peasants (Womack, 2001)		Similar to Classical Marxism

<p>How Class consciousness would develop</p>	<p>Class consciousness would spontaneously develop within the working class (Marx, 1848)</p>	<p>A disciplined party was needed to arouse political consciousness amongst the workers (Political Science, 2014)</p> <p>Skeptical of spontaneous class consciousness (Young, 1980)</p>	<p>Both repressive and ideological state apparatuses are used to ensure the proletariat is in a state of false class consciousness</p>
<p>How control is maintained by the state</p>	<p>The State is simply known as the State Apparatus, explicitly conceived as a Repressive Apparatus (Barry, 1995)</p>		<p>The State has both RSA and ISAs (Althusser, 1970)</p>

3. Methodology

In order to analyse the evolution of class conflict within *Money Heist*, this paper will adopt a Marxist Lens, utilising Classical Marxist theories (Marx, 1848) as well the idea of Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses (Althusser, 1970). This would be applied to three main types of scenes - scenes reflective of a character's class, scenes related to oppression, or scenes related to rebellion. Additional scenes not falling within the three categories will also be used to further the analysis if suitable, as the categories merely provide a flexible framework for the analysis. Along with the Marxist Lens, film analysis aspects such as mise-en-scène, Cinematography and Editing (Yale Film Studies, 2002) will also be applied to analyse these scenes and draw greater insights.

The first key area of discussion focuses on the class conflict between the State and the Resistance, comprising the initial portrayal of both parties as well as the significance of RSAs and ISAs. The second key area of discussion delves into the insight that oppression and rebellion is cyclical, focusing on how the oppressed becomes the oppressor, signalling its inevitability.

4.1 State-Resistance Class Conflict

4.1.1 Presentation of State Oppression

In *Money Heist*, the bourgeoisie is initially represented by the State, or Intelligence. The ideology of the State is most clearly represented by Alfonso Prieto, the colonel in charge of the military during the robbery of the Royal Mint. As Prieto himself put it, “Intelligence can drop all charges. And I’m Intelligence”. This line signifies how he is not only a direct embodiment of the State, but also how dangerously powerful they are, since the diction of “all charges” brings along the idea of unlimited power. Viewers are also led to question their moral uprightness, as their surprising willingness to drop any criminal charge is jarring, given that it violates the very law they seek to uphold. Beyond Prieto’s actions, his portrayal is also shaped by the air of affluence around him, reflecting his privilege - his appearance is what we would expect from the word “bourgeoisie”, since his posh attire consists of a well-trimmed beard and suit.

In *Money Heist*, this oppression does not manifest as outright exploitation, such as slavery, instead made more subtle. One facet of this oppression is their abuse of the economy. As viewers, we are invited to perceive them as to blame for the unfair economic system within Spain. This actually serves as the Professor’s basis for the entire heist. As he reasons in Episode 8 of Part 2, “The European Central Bank made 171 billion euros out of nowhere”, with the

money going “directly into the pockets of the rich”. This is aligned with Marx’s idea of bourgeois exploitation for personal gain. In this case, they are abusing governmental powers to achieve selfish goals, at the cost of the rest of society.

Instances of corruption are also displayed in the show, furthering this characterisation. While one would expect them to have a strong sense of justice, the State appears to have no qualms about employing underhand means to fulfill their selfish goals, all of which are hidden from the public. In one scene, the State schemes to defame Berlin, a member of the Resistance, through slander, in order to gain an edge over them. Prieto is the one who proposes this, initially appearing good-intentioned by mentioning that “I don’t think we’ll win over the public by [accusing him of mental instability]”. He appears ethical and even empathetic when slowly and thoughtfully approaching his colleagues, yet he overturns this by proposing even more severe slander, such as proposing “sex trafficking” or “something [unconscionable]”. This subverts the audience’s typical expectations of the government.. This causes bourgeois figures like Prieto to become the antagonist of the show. Furthermore, this scene in itself is also a manifestation of their oppression. By defaming Berlin, here representing the proletariat, this directly shows how the State uses their power to keep others down just to lift themselves up, such that they can remain seated on their high horse. Even though this means robbing Berlin of his dignity, the State still proceeds with this plan, uncaring for the moral consequences of their actions.



Fig 1. Prieto when immorally suggesting to defame Berlin

Prieto is also presented as cold-hearted and indifferent even to those deserving of care. There is a scene which encapsulates this notion, taking place when Prieto requires information from Inspector Angel, his subordinate who had barely awakened from a coma. Prieto begins the conversation with almost a mocking tone, questioning him in a seemingly lighthearted yet subtly aggressive tone. When not getting his answer, Prieto proceeds to threaten to send Angel to a “cell”, reminding him of the authority the State possesses. The scene is shot in a way which alternates between Prieto and Angel, yet they are shot at different angles, disrupting a sense of balance which would be present in a regular conversation scene. Prieto is shot with the camera angled upwards, while he is looking downwards, creating a sense of authority. Contrastingly, the recline of his hospital bed leaves Angel in a more unnatural position, appearing to look upwards in Prieto’s direction. Given that he is “trapped” by his bandages in this position, a sense of

vulnerability is created. This detail causes Prieto to appear more imposing, and produces some form of intimidation. The cinematography further empowers Prieto, and this combined with the manner in which he treats Angel is almost oppression in itself. It also contributes to the image of the bourgeoisie as cold-hearted and rather materialistic.



Fig 2a. Angel's helpless position, made physically visible by the restriction of his bandages and hospital bed



Fig 2b. Prieto when threatening Angel, appearing to be looking down at him

Throughout *Money Heist*, scenes involving Colonel Prieto are often shot in cool tones such as blue and cyan, which have the ability to detach the audience from the scene. This helps to emphasise the cold, clinical nature of the bourgeoisie, and serves to separate the audience from them, creating a sense of distance. On the other hand, the Resistance are shot in warmer tones under softer light, creating a sense of intimacy and connection. The audience is thus invited to view the State more negatively, with the reverse being true for the State.

4.1.2 The Resistance

The Resistance are a gang of 8 robbers, led by “The Professor”, the mastermind of the heist, and they are initially presented as the proletariat in the class conflict. They are named as such due to their actions resisting the State physically and ideologically, and might be seen as the “vanguard party” in Leninist terms.

The Resistance bears resemblance to the proletariat in terms of socio-economic status, which adds to their characterisation as the underdog. As one might expect, they come from the lower class, having to resort to various forms of crime just to scrape by. This is in stark contrast to Prieto, and their poverty is representative of traditional class conflict. We as viewers are introduced to their sympathetic backstories. One of these examples are the father-son duo of Moscow and Denver. Their very situation reveals their state of poverty - being lower in the social hierarchy, they find themselves stuck in a vicious cycle of working odd jobs, resorting to crime and going in and out of jail. This is not only the case for one member of their family: it is a pattern across the family of three, as the mother herself was a struggling drug addict, leaving Moscow with no choice but to abandon his wife. The sympathetic backstories of the Resistance also serve to portray them as the underdog, and as the audience we are more inclined to support them in their attempt to liberate themselves from this poverty cycle.

While money is what draws the group together, a greater cause for the heist is to make a statement against the capitalist system, “[caring] more about the message than money”. The Resistance’s clothing also lends insight to their ideology, with their costume consisting of the Dalí mask and red jumpsuit. The famed Salvador Dalí’s artwork conveys the rejection of

capitalist society, and according to the Google Arts and Culture Center, the colour red was used to symbolise new liberties and freedoms (Fernandez, 2020). These reinforce the Resistance's anti-capitalist ideology, solidifying them as an icon against their oppressors. The heist is thus not only a means to free themselves from this class struggle, but also the start of a revolution.

4.1.3 Significance of Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses

Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses adds to the complexity of the class conflict, allowing us to see that this struggle exists on multiple levels - a physical and an ideological one.

With regards to the former, both the State and the Resistance utilise Repressive State Apparatuses. Both parties possess means of dismantling their opponent with brute force, such as heavy firepower, plastic explosives and the like. For example, the Resistance uses guns to rule over the hostages with an iron fist, sending a message that they are the ones in power. These are in line with Althusser's assertions in which RSAs are utilised to explicitly repress others in order to ensure domination. This physical conflict serves as the most direct form of such inter-class conflict, and the violence undergone is one dimension of the tension present between the State and the Resistance.

In the context of *Money Heist*, when following Althusser's definition that power is "maintained more subtly by ensuring internal consent", Ideological State Apparatuses are less present. This is likely due to the class consciousness developed by the Resistance, to the extent where they would not fall for typical forms of ISAs. Although there are non-violent means of asserting

dominance, such as negotiations and using leverage, these are much more direct and do not suit the definition Althusser sets. Perhaps then, the prevalence of Repressive State Apparatuses points towards the necessity of traditional violence and repression over Ideological State Apparatuses. Having said that, there exists an ideological warfare between the two parties that is a non-physical conflict. In other words, there exists a battle of wits alongside a military one. Both parties have directly opposing goals, yet are equally matched. This is observed in a scene where the State-representing police force tries to obtain information on the Resistance. They appear to edge out the Resistance when they successfully locate incriminating evidence on them. Yet, it is revealed that this had been anticipated by the Professor, and the evidence was merely a bunch of red herrings. This back and forth goes on for a substantial length of the series, alongside the plot which unfolds in the Royal Mint itself. While the police and the Professor are filmed separately, the camera movement is almost identical, panning slowly upward while they lift up a cigarette, a piece of evidence. Compounded by their comparably thoughtful gaze, the likeness between the Resistance and the police might signal that they are not so different after all - it could be a segue into the Resistance becoming the oppressor, discussed in the next chapter. Nonetheless, while there exists more traditional forms of conflict such as when the State's assault unit confronts the Resistance to prevent their escape, *Money Heist* also presents an intellectual arms race alongside a physical one.

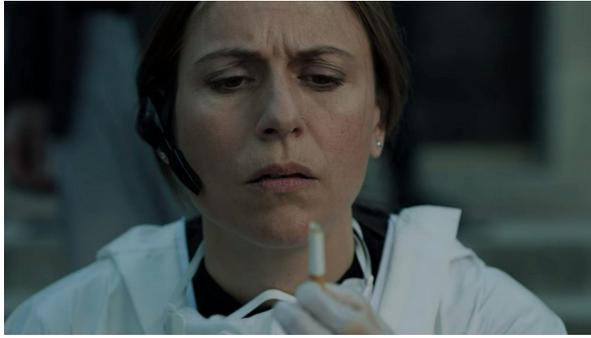


Fig 3a. Raquel, a member of the Police force, discovering the red herring planted by the Professor



Fig 3b. The Professor when planting this false evidence, sharing similar movement and a similar gaze as Raquel

4.2 Cyclical Rebellion

Besides the previously-established relationship between the State and the Resistance, there exists another class conflict between the Resistance and the hostages. The hostages, made up of the Mint workers and private school students, serve as a crucial part of the Professor's plan for the heist. While they initially appear insignificant to the main conflict present between the Resistance and the State, they evolve to become a class of their own.

The hostages flesh out the notion of how the Resistance becomes the oppressive force they seek to rebel against, proving that the relationships within class conflict are not static. Within the Royal Mint, the power dynamics shift as the Resistance rises to become the bourgeoisie, literally

printing money from within the Mint, while the class hostages who initially belonged to the middle/upper class are completely oppressed, made to do labour-intensive tasks which embody the traditional proletariat, such as packing money and digging a fake escape tunnel. This new relationship is divergent from Classical Marxist Theory: At this point, the Resistance can be said to have risen up against the bourgeoisie, or the State, completing the phase of “revolution”. Yet, despite Marx’s predicted establishment of a socialist society, which might have led to the hostages joining the Resistance, we still see a society driven by capitalistic intentions, and certainly one lacking socialist features.

This idea is well-encapsulated by a remark by Jacinto, one of the hostages, that “[the Resistance] has [the hostages] tied up like dogs”. On a literal level, they are indeed tied up and forbidden from doing anything except what the Resistance dictates, heavily oppressed and controlled in order to help in the making of money; they are now the ones being exploited in order to help the “rich” get richer. Figuratively, they are tied up as well, being heavily restricted from discussion or even basic communication with fellow hostages. The scene highlights this, as contextually, Jacinto has literally no choice but to crouch down in a toilet cubicle, forced to remain in his position. By likening the hostages to an animal in that of a “dog”, Jacinto is being completely dehumanised, both figuratively and literally. This reinforces how under the bourgeois rule, they are reduced to nothing more than pawns in a money-making system, lacking the dignity of a human being. This is not only conveyed through words, but through Jacinto’s crouching position which resembles a dog; his limited movement due to the confined space within the cubicle also attaches a sense of being trapped and restricted, serving as a physical manifestation of the feeling of oppression. When we consider this new image of the Resistance, which is that of a

bourgeoisie, in contrast to our earlier perception of them as the proletariat, we can see their evolution from the oppressed to the oppressor.



Fig 4. Jacinto crouched in a cubicle when hiding, resembling a four-legged animal

Marx's prediction of class consciousness triggering a rebellion among the proletariat is also clearly reflected among the hostages. As the Professor noted near the end of Part 1, "[The hostages'] survival instinct will lead them to revolt". This hints towards the cyclical nature of class conflict: once the proletariat rises amidst the revolution, toppling the oppressive force in the bourgeoisie, they then rise to become that very same power which others eventually seek to destroy. It can also be inferred from the use of "survival instinct" that this inclination is part of human nature, and is something that cannot be broken free of. Arturo Roman, a hostage and director of the Royal Mint, represents the tendency to revolt; he is the one who initially harbours

thoughts of striking back, and influences fellow hostages to carry out his plan to escape the wrath of the Resistance. Much like the traditional proletariat, Arturo is resentful of the Resistance as he is made to do the dirty work of having to dig the tunnel for them. It can be said that class consciousness develops within Arturo, and this consciousness prompts him to start his own revolution. After devising a plan for some of the hostages to escape, he then schemes for the rest of them to do so. While Arturo is cowardly and selfish, often making others do the difficult tasks, his desperation to free himself from such oppression reveals the cyclical nature of class struggle, in which there will always be an oppressed party seeking to revolt against their oppressors.

The hostage's revolution also leads to a critical realisation among the Resistance: they come to realise the bitter truth of their situation. In a scene featuring Berlin, he starts off by mentioning that "the utopia of collaboration has failed". This "utopia" refers to the Resistance offering the hostages a reward of 1 million dollars each if they were to assist in the heist. This serves as yet another metaphor for socialism, or the removal of class distinctions by blurring the line between hostages and robbers. Yet Berlin acknowledges that this utopia simply does not exist, and that the only way to function is for the Resistance, the upper class, to "torture [the hostages]", likening it to "concentration camps". Concentration camps are known to mistreat and torment those in them, and are synonymous with torture. The camera also shows Berlin walking down a long corridor, lifting the hostages' blindfolds off one by one. This serves as a physical representation of how the Resistance's eyes have been opened to the fact that repression is unpreventable, and that a dominant class often has to exist.



Fig 5. Berlin lifting the blindfold of a fearful hostage

Conclusion

The Marxist theory of class conflict is indeed present, and is further developed in *Money Heist*. While Marx posited a simple relationship between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, complexity is displayed through the multiple relationships between the State, the Resistance, and the hostages. These groups evolve throughout the show to display various insights - for example, through the evolution of the Resistance from the oppressed to the oppressor, the show brings out the human nature to revolt and oppress, and how this is a cyclical process rather than a static one. Our innate desire to climb the social ladder is also displayed through the repeated desperation to do so, by both the Resistance members and the State. Repressive and Ideological State Apparatuses are also employed by the State and the Resistance (upon their rise). While they may depart from Althusser's original definition of them, such apparatuses are certainly present. More

importantly, they display various layers of the conflict present, on both a physical and an ideological level. Ultimately, the Resistance does break out of the poverty cycle by escaping with the 2 billion dollars. Yet given the events of the heist, it does seem as if this happy ending is just an over-idealistic way to close the story.

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