

**A City for the Few: A Marxist Criticism Analysis of  
Class Struggles and Ideology in Zootopia (2016) Movie**

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*"In his arrogance the wicked man hunts down the weak,  
who are caught in the schemes he devises."*

**Psalm 10:2 (NIV)**

**ABSTRACT**

Through the lens of Marxist criticism, this study investigates class struggle and ideology as depicted in the 2016 animated feature Zootopia. It aims to reveal how constructed ideologies contribute to shaping class struggles and how false ideologies. The film, which portrays a society divided into predators and prey, was examined to understand how labor exploitation and ideological dominance reflect Karl Marx's and Engel's Marxist theory (1847 & 1867). Qualitative methodology was employed in this study, with data collection focusing on the examination of particular scenes, spoken dialogue, and various cinematic elements: camera positioning, lighting design, and musical accompaniment. As the results: **1) Class Divisions:** the film illustrates how societal ideologies, particularly the "*predator vs prey*" binary, are instilled from a young age, shaping perceptions and forming class divisions. This early indoctrination influences individuals' ideological perspectives and their views of different groups. **2) False Consciousness and Structural Power Abuse:** Zootopia demonstrates how false consciousness is formed when individuals accept socially constructed roles as natural, even when these roles are designed to maintain a hierarchy that favors dominant groups. The film shows how structural power and institutions, like the ZPD, are abused to reinforce the "*predator vs prey*" hierarchy, placing prey in subordinate roles despite their qualifications. **3) Emergence of Class Consciousness and Social Transformation:** The study highlights that the exposure of Bellwether's conspiracy results in an "*ideological awakening*," revealing that the predator-prey conflict is not natural but a constructed political tool. At its core, the paper argues that Zootopia successfully reveals the transformative power of exposing institutional inequalities to awaken collective consciousness and enable societal reform. This study is significant for social awareness of how constructed ideologies in popular media plays a crucial role in shaping how individuals perceive social struggles and inequality.

**Keywords:** *Marxism, Class Struggles, Class Consciousness, Power, Social Hierarchy*

**INTRODUCTION**

Literary analysis is defined as the process of examining a literary work, such as novels, poems, and more in detail, in order to understand how each piece is connected to the other. Literary analysis focuses on detailed parts such as the underlying issue, characters, themes, language, and

many more. By analyzing a text critically, not only can one understand what the story is about, but one can also find the hidden meanings or interpretations that the author has left behind, and the true purpose of why the author has written the work. Ultimately, it offers numerous valuable life lessons that readers may apply, as well as relating to current life issues.

*Zootopia* is an animated film produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios and released by Walt Disney Pictures on March 4, 2016. The film was directed by Byron Howard and Rich Moore, with co-director Jared Bush. In some regions, it is released with the title “*Zootropolis*” such as the United Kingdom and parts of Europe. The film produced over 1 billion worldwide, and received the *Academy Award for Best Animated Feature* in 2017. This animated film contains a multitude of issues that maintain relevance to this day and continue to have resonance with many audiences. Ultimately, it offers a reflective perspective that each individual possesses qualities that extend beyond the boundaries of societal stereotypes.

The film takes place in a place called *Zootopia*, a modern city where all animal species, both prey and predators, live in harmony. The film follows a young bunny named *Judy Hopps* who dreams of being a police officer, in spite of the dominance of large animals and predators. Yet despite the others underestimating her capabilities as the first bunny rookie officer, Judy proves herself to be worthy of being a police officer by taking a huge and difficult case; *the mysterious disappearance of several predators*. With the help of *Nick Wilde*, a sly fox who, despite his lack of law-abiding citizenship, subsequently becomes her most trusted partner. The film was created with the aim to teach the audience courage, perseverance, and hard work to overcome obstacles and achieve dreams despite doubt and judgments of stereotypes. Themes in this film include class struggle, stereotyping, discrimination, social inequality, hierarchy, identity, and power. Although it emphasizes the role of class struggle continues in shaping individual opportunities and societal perceptions, such as predetermined stereotypes.

The issues discussed in this analysis are analyzed using Marxist Criticism. Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) were the first people to provide the philosophical and economic framework for Marxist Criticism. And the first person to formally develop Marxist literary criticism was Georg Lukacs in 1885-1971. However, this analysis uses Karl Marx’s and Friedrich Engels’ framework with their conjoined work (1848). The book discusses the themes such as class struggles and social inequality, offering insights that resonate with themes explored in *Zootopia*, as the concept of “*the predator vs prey*” is regarded as a symbolic representation of class struggle. This analysis also uses Marx’s work titled “*Das Kapital*” in 1867 to further analyze the issues in *Zootopia*. Karl Marx is a German philosopher, and is the founder of Marxism; a method of analyzing

society, history, and power. Marx's ideas not only influenced literature but also sociology, politics, and economics.

According to Marx (1867/1976), the categorization of individuals into various classes is determined by an individual's relationship to the means of production. Marx believed that the methods by which individuals produce and distribute products have a significant impact on various aspects of society, including laws, politics, religion and culture. The four classes are as follows: **1)** Bourgeoisie (*Capitalist Class*), **2)** Proletariat (*Working Class*), **3)** Petty Bourgeoisie (*Small Owners*), and **4)** Lumpenproletariat. Marx also believed in materialism, the belief that material (*physical and economic*) conditions profoundly influence human life, an influence that exceeds that of religion, morals, or ideology. He believed: "*The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.*" (Marx & Engels, 1848, pg. 14). This statement argues that the main reason for historical change is not ideas, great leaders, or random events, but rather the conflict between different economic classes.

In a comparable research study, Dan Hassler-Forest's study, "*Life Isn't Some Cartoon Musical: Neoliberal Identity Politics in Zootopia and Orange Is The New Black*", Hassler-Forest provides a valuable evidence regarding the relationship between neoliberalism and identity politics in animated films. In his 2016 piece, Hassler-Forest discusses how Zootopia offers a perspective on progressive identity politics, despite it being clearly interlinked to cultural neoliberalism. Hassler-Forest argues that the "*progressive*" representations found in these texts are integrated into the logic of capitalist neoliberalism. This integration resulted in the disruptive potential within capitalist structures, thereby being restricted within the confines of the system. It has been argued that the film suggests a specific understanding of social justice as it is a matter for individuals to address, rather than a concern that requires significant systemic change. In contrast, this research shifts the analytical lens from identity and neoliberalism to class struggle, while continuing to utilize Marxist criticism as an analytical framework. It is evident that Hassler-Forest's analysis has not yet thoroughly examined class relations, labour, or how the film's narrative masks capitalist class conflict. This aspect will be meticulously examined in the present research study.

The objective of this analysis is to examine the factors that contribute to the lasting popularity and appeal of Zootopia, as well as to explore the ongoing relevance of its themes. The objective of this analysis is to explore the primary elements of the film, including the subjects of social inequality, and the impact of the stereotypes in Zootopia. By examining these issues, it will provide readers with a more profound understanding of the film's primary themes. The objective of this film is to delve into the influence of class struggle on societal structures, thoughts, and behaviours, as well as the

process through which these class struggles and stereotypes are established and imprinted in individuals' minds.

### Binary Opposition

<i>Predator</i>	<i>Prey</i>
<p>The Predators, though a minority, are regarded as highly dangerous. Society portrays them as <i>'feral'</i>, <i>'dangerous'</i>, and <i>'vicious'</i>, fostering an environment of fear among their friends and the general public. This led the public to believe that predators possess an instinct to pounce on and maim on their prey, instilling them with a sense of predator aggression. Society's perspective has led the public to perceive Nick Wilde as a hazardous individual due to his fox nature, being viewed as a <i>'sly fox'</i> which has led to a belief that he cannot be trusted.</p> <p><i>"Predators had an uncontrollable biological urge to maim, and maul and roars"</i> [01:00]</p>	<p>In contrast, the Prey, constituting the vast majority of the population, are perceived as harmless. These individuals are frequently perceived as <i>'vulnerable'</i>, <i>'frail'</i>, <i>'meek'</i>, and <i>'fragile'</i>, yet also <i>'fearful'</i> due to their significant impact on the community. Consequently, Judy is underestimated due to her species, rabbits, being perceived as weak and vulnerable. It is mentioned that the role of a police officer is better suited to formidable predators, rather than <i>'vulnerable'</i> and <i>'weak'</i> prey.</p> <p><i>"A world where prey were scared of predators."</i> [01:23]</p>

### METHOD

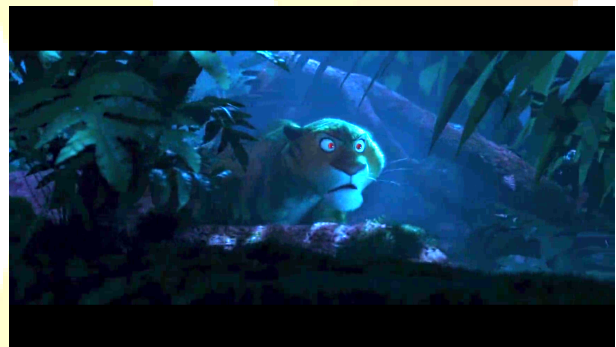
The present research applied a qualitative descriptive method and was executed through the theoretical framework of Marxist criticism, with the objective of further analyzing the constructed ideologies and struggles of classes in Zootopia. The collection of data was achieved through meticulous examination and observation of the scenes in order to identify the significant moments that served to illustrate the key issues. It is crucial to note that significant dialogues and visual elements were thoroughly annotated and documented to serve as concrete analytical evidence. This research also utilized cinematic techniques, including camera work, background music, and lighting as essential components that contribute to the analysis of this research. This analysis examined the profound impact of these socially constructed ideologies and the influence of class struggles on societal thought and behaviour. The theoretical framework applied in this study was Marx's and Engels's work (1848), which served as the primary source for the analysis of the ideologies and characters depicted in the film. In addition to the application of Marx's theories, the film utilises his work titled, *"Das Kapital"* (1867) to further support the theory and break down the characters's thoughts and behaviours, as well as to analyze the classes and their struggles in this film. The

methodology drew on numerous literacy works, which outlined specific approaches to ensure a clear and unbiased perspective for this analysis.

## DISCUSSION

### 1. The *'vicious predator and weak prey'* ideology instilled in young mammals from a very young age.

The film begins with the introduction of the protagonist, Judy, a young rabbit who is participating in a school play with her friends. The scene begins with Judy delivering a narration about the history of the world they currently live in. The present world is not as it was in the past; the former is characterized by fear, where predators consume prey and prey live in fear, as well as the lack of harmony. *"A world where prey were scared of predators. And predators had an uncontrollable urge to maim, maul, and roar."* [01:00]. The concept of harmony is not yet familiar. The scene depicts a young rabbit in the state of fear in the darkness, with a tiger in proximity to inflict harm to the young rabbit. The depiction of predators is that they are cruel, terrifying, and merciless. The prey were regarded as helpless, weak, and fragile. The scene is dark and cold, creating a tense and eerie mood. The dim light shows both danger and vulnerability. The camera angle gradually shifts, following the movements of the young rabbit, making the young rabbit the primary focus of the scene. While the young rabbit is wandering around the forest in search of something to consume, the camera suddenly captures a predator, a tiger, who is watching from a distance, hidden behind the bush, ready to pounce on its prey. The predator's red, sharp eyes create an impression of menace as it observes its prey with a deadly gaze. Meanwhile, the prey looks innocent and unaware, oblivious to the fact that it is being observed and may soon become the predator's meal. The background sound is gripping, reflecting the tense atmosphere of that moment. Judy adopts the role of the prey and subsequently falls to the floor, utilizing red ribbons and ketchup in a manner that symbolizes blood. Subsequently, two cardboard boxes are deployed to the stage,



each of them containing writings on it. *“The world was divided in two. Vicious predator; and meek prey.”* [01:44]. The world is not perceived as a united space, rather it was divided into two categories, vicious predators and meek prey.

In Marxism, social relations are defined by their ability to reproduce themselves across generations through ideologies and institutions.

*“The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.”* (Marx & Engels, 1848, pg. 14). The present line from the film illustrates this reproduction, in which young animals are taught to perceive the world through the predator-prey binary. This suggests that from an early age, the dynamic between predator and



prey has already been established, thereby influencing their ideological perspectives and the way in which they perceive both sides. This naturalization shapes how children grow up, how educational institutions employ this, and the manner in which the citizens of Zootopia respond to conflict. This social system perpetuates this division by maintaining it.

However, after some time, the world undergoes a transformation, evolving and uniting. *“But over time, we evolved. And moved beyond our primitive, savage ways. Now, predator and prey live in harmony. And every young mammal has multitudinous opportunities.”* [01:53] says Judy. Judy and her friend emerged from the cardboard box, attired in white fabric. The line demonstrates how animals have transitioned from a state of violence to one of civilization, where predators and prey coexist in a state of harmony, and all individuals have an equal opportunity. Judy claims that the world has ‘evolved’, yet this moment serves as a prime illustration of how ideology seeks to mask social contradictions. Despite the claims of evolution, the play she performs reproduces the predator-prey binary. Her line is a manifestation of the ruling class’s ideological perspective, which is presented as the truth, a perspective that aligns with Marx and Engels’ statement that *“The ruling ideas of each age have ever been the ideas of its ruling class.”* (Marx & Engels, 1848, pg. 47).

Judy and her friend soon emerge from the cardboard box, attire in white fabric. Subsequently, Judy and her friends proceed to address their future career aspirations to the audience. Upon reaching Judy’s turn, she declares with confidence that she aspires to pursue a career as a police officer. That statement surprises everyone, including her parents. Then Gideon, the fox, mocks and laughs at her, calling her statement the stupidest thing he has ever heard. To him, bunnies are weak and helpless, and it shows how much he underestimates her. Prey are regarded as fragile and weak due to the

occurrence of prejudice. Even though she is being underestimated, she stands her ground and remains confident. *“It may seem impossible to small minds... I’m looking at you, Gideon Gray.”* [02:23]. She says with courage. Then, the atmosphere changes from a rural setting to a colorful cardboard cityscape, with bright lights and upbeat music, introducing Zootopia, a city where all animals, predators and prey, can pursue their dreams.

## 2. Formed false consciousness and shaped social identity

Upon her arrival at the police academy, Judy dedicates a firm determination to her goal of becoming a police officer. However, her training demonstrates the challenges she will face in Zootopia. The tall ice wall, the sand-covered area, and the slippery obstacle course are all designed to match the bodies and abilities of predators more than prey. These scenes show how small Judy is



compared to the bigger cadets by using wide shots that make the training area look much larger for her. In the sand-covered area, the camera pulls back so the big animals fill most of the frame, while Judy almost disappears under the sand. In the ice wall scene, another wide shot shows how tall the obstacles are as the larger animals rush ahead, and Judy’s tiny figure moves across the

slippery ground. Due to her petite size, Judy’s physical characteristics resulted in challenges during the testing process. She slips, falls, and struggles to complete all the obstacles. These perceived failures lead her to conclude that being born a bunny is the source of her struggles, and that her ability to perform the duties of a police officer is somehow limited by her physical form. This scene presents Judy as a persevering yet unsuccessful individual, leading her to conclude that her struggles originated from her being a small prey animal. The concept of false consciousness emerges when an individual accepts the roles society has shaped them to fulfill, and believes that these roles are all ‘natural’. *“The social relations which correspond to a definite stage of production appear as natural and self-evident.”* (Marx, 1867, Preface).



According to Marx and Engels, certain roles and ideas appear to be ‘normal’, despite the fact that in reality they are shaped by society. The academy’s design reflects the ideas that predators are strong and prey are weak. Because this idea has existed for

so long, it appears natural, even though it is constructed by society. *“Just quit and go home, fuzzy bunny! There’s never been a bunny cop. Never. Just a stupid, carrot-farming dumb bunny.”* [06:42] In a marginal note, Marx identifies the *“illusion of the common interests”* as a key mechanism by which ruling ideas become dominant, shaping how individuals perceive their relationship to society (Marx & Engels, 1845–1846/1970, p. 53). False consciousness leads Judy to believe these hurtful words, and she begins to accept these ideas, thinking her failures come from being a bunny, when in reality, the system is built to favor the bodies and abilities of predators. Her struggles show how social identity is shaped by the structure around her, leading her to accept a role that is socially constructed, not biologically determined.

### **3. The abuse of structural power and institutionalization to reinforce the ‘predator vs prey’ hierarchy**

Following a period of meticulous training, Judy has demonstrated her abilities to perform the duties of a police officer. Judy is soon announced to be the world’s first official bunny police officer. Soon, the moment for her to finally perform her official police officer duties arrived. The shots follow Judy from a low angle at her height as she proceeds down the briefing room, making her appear towers over by the larger officers around her. Her figure appears tiny in comparison to the large, formidable police officers around her; bears, lions, tigers, and other similarly large animals. Yet, she stays centered in the frame, showing her determination even in an intimidating environment. Subsequently, Bogo, the Chief, who is a cape buffalo, distributed all the tasks, *“And finally, our first bunny... Officer Hopps. Parking duty.”* [15:59].

He assigns the other police officer a huge and difficult case; *the mysterious disappearance of several predators*, while he is assigning Judy to parking duty, meaning that on her very first day, she is placed in the low level role of a meter maid. It aligns with marxism on how power structures shape ideas and decisions in society, showing how



dominant groups maintain their power through systems and institutions. *“The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political, and intellectual life.”* (Marx, 1867, Preface). Marx and Engels explained that the ideas seen as *‘normal’*, or *‘right’* in a society are shaped and controlled by those who have the most power. In the ZPD, predators have held the strongest position for a long time. This power shapes the ideas that predators are better for real police work. Because of these ideas, a prey officer like Judy is still placed in a smaller and less important

role, even though she goes through the same tests and requirements as the other officers. This shows how the ZPD continues the old *'predator over prey'* hierarchy, reflecting Marx's idea about powerful groups shaping what is seen as normal.

#### 4. The assignment of the savage case and the exploitation of lower-class labor

Mrs. Otterton barged into Chief Bogo's office, begging for help to find her husband, Emmit Otterton, who has been missing for ten days. Chief Bogo tells her that they are doing everything they can and that all the detectives were very busy. Judy, who is also in the room observing the situation,



feels concerned and offers her assistance, *"I will find him."* [32:27]. Mrs. Otterton is relieved, but Chief Bogo immediately asks her to leave. *"You're fired."* [32:50] Once the door is closed, Chief Bogo fires Judy for disobeying orders. He instructs her to tell Mrs. Otterton that she is only a former meter maid, and she will not be taking the case. But, when Chief Bogo opens the door, Mrs.

Otterton is standing there with Assistant Mayor Bellwether. Bellwether has already heard that Judy planned to take the case, and informed Mayor Lionheart. *"I will give you 48 hours. That's two days to find Emmit Otterton."* [33:39]. Judy is given only two days to solve the disappearance of Emmit Otterton, which is a nearly impossible deadline, and is made so she will fail and stay in a low position. The scene uses a low-angle shot on Chief Bogo to make him look bigger, stronger, and more intimidating. He fills most of the frame while Judy appears much smaller at the bottom, showing the power difference between them. The clear lighting keeps focus on how the camera angle makes Bogo look dominant and Judy powerless. This entire scene shows how the ZPD works under a system that only looks fair from the outside. Judy is given the case not because the system recognizes her ability, but because Bellwether intervenes for her own political reasons, using Judy to make the department seem equal. The two day limit shows that the system expects her to fail while pretending to give her a real chance. *"The executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie."* (Marx & Engels, 1848, pg. 15). The system usually protects the interests of the more powerful group, not everyone. In Zootopia, predators have always held more power, and giving Judy the case is used to keep things looking fair, even though she is actually being used to maintain the old hierarchy.

#### 5. The installment of fear through exploitation of class conflict

After Judy and Nick discover the missing mammals and uncover that they have gone savage, Judy is immediately made the main representative of the police at the ZPD to explain the case to the public. This particular scene depicts Judy standing in front of a podium during a press conference held at the Zootopia Police Department. Camera lights illuminate her face continuously while



microphones from multiple news outlets are directed toward her, showing that the entire metropolis is awaiting her clarification and responses. Behind her are photographs of the missing predators, every single one of them. Despite Judy's endeavors to project an air of self-assurance, her facial expressions betrays a subtle indication of doubt, as she has not

comprehended the fundamental reasons behind the feral behavior exhibited by these predators. In her position as an official representative of the ZPD, she is duty-bound to respond. However, she is still trying to provide the public with answers to their many questions based on the information she possesses. *"Yes, what I mean is, thousands of years ago... uh, predators survived through their aggressive hunting instincts."* [01:11:23]. At the time, Judy does not intend to put the blame on the predators. However, when Judy is speaking, she is feeling nervous and unprepared, which leads her to resort to the most uncomplicated explanation she thinks of. *"For whatever reason, they seem to be reverting back to their primitive, savage ways."* [01:11:36]. Judy utters a sentence that will later ignite tension in the city, causing a misunderstanding to occur. Consequently, Nick took offence at Judy's statement. In the aftermath of the press conference, Nick expresses evident distress, having come to realize that Judy's comments have implicitly characterized him and other predators as biological threats who feel offended by Judy's statement.

Ideology often becomes more powerful than hard facts because it shapes how people understand events without examining the actual evidence. *"All science would be superfluous if the form of appearance and the essence of things directly coincided."* (Marx, 1867, pg. 825). Ideology replaces material truth. Judy's statements about predators, particularly the claim that their *'aggressive hunting instincts'* and even their *'biology'* or *'DNA'* may play a role, were born out of unsupported scientific evidence. The public had come to accept that as the new truth. This exemplifies ideology's operation; when concepts gain widespread acceptance not through correspondence with material reality but through reinforcement by influential institutions like media, government, and law enforcement.

Nick then leaves the press conference looking disappointed and mad. He perceives that Judy views him not as a companion but as a threatening predator capable of transforming into a savage creature. Judy attempts to follow him, but she is unable to reach him. Immediately, reporters engulf Judy, thrusting microphones toward her and blocking her pursuit. *“Officer Hopps! Were you just threatened by that predator?”* [01:13:28]. The

question immediately leads to a negative assumption, as if Nick has just endangered Judy. Camera flashes continue bombarding her face while the environment becomes increasingly turbulent. Judy immediately confirms that Nick is her friend. But instead of calming down, the reporters twist her statement again, and one of



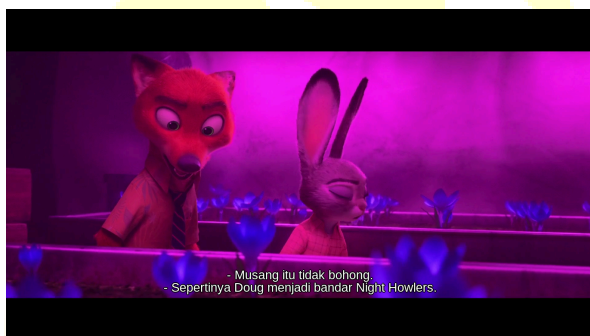
them sharply retorts, *“We can’t even trust our own friends?”* [01:13:32]. The question further fuels the narrative that predators are a threat, even when they seem friendly and close to us. Panic begins to spread and avoid all predators. Predators lose their jobs and are feared by the public. Many prey residents begin avoiding prey on the streets, on trains, and in public. They even keep their children away from them. Even Clawhauser, a cheetah who works as the front desk officer, is also reassigned to the records department downstairs because his presence in the front desk is perceived as ‘uncomfortable’.

This idea begins to spread throughout the city and predators begin to be stigmatized as dangerous creatures. This belief is not based on reality, but a political conspiracy targeting the predators. Ideologically, they are transformed into threats. This gap between truth and belief has various consequences. At that moment, fear becomes accepted reality, and ideology supersedes truth. This incident demonstrates how the idea that predators have an innate nature that makes them prone to dangerous behaviour can become a myth widely believed by many, despite the lack of concrete evidence. The city begins restructuring its lifestyle around this ideology, executing it through educational systems, law enforcement, and media. This corresponds with Marxist theory, explaining how concepts can extend far beyond the actual conditions they supposedly represent. The constructed ideology becomes more influential than reality.

## **6. Formation of class consciousness and social transformation through the unraveling of Bellwether’s conspiracy**

After Judy quits being a police officer due to the aftermath of her press conference, she goes back home to help her parents with their family farm. Where she discovers that Night Howlers are

not wolves, but toxic flowers that cause animals to go savage. Meaning that both predator and prey are able to go savage with the Night howler toxins. Subsequent to this discovery, Judy and Nick seek information from various sources, which reveals that a sheep named Doug had been the one to make the Night Howler toxins. However, the reason behind it is still unknown. Judy and Nick then proceed underground to uncover the rest of the truth. The scene is dark, and the camera follows Judy and Nick entering a small space filled with the Night Howler flowers and chemical objects. The scene shifts from dark to light, and that purple light fills up the small space inside. The camera follows Nick and Judy walking while looking at the toxic flowers. It zooms in on the flowers, showcasing its vivid colours while highlighting its deadly nature. Judy and Nick find out that after all this time,



someone has been targeting certain predators and have been making them go savage for their own personal gains. This leads Judy to piece together every clue she has discovered. This scene marks the beginning of their ideological awakening. While Doug is distracted, she kicks him out of the room and locks the door, insisting to a panicked Nick that they have to bring the evidence to the

ZPD. Nick gathers what he can, but Judy says it still will not be enough, so she attempts to start the abandoned train, planning to take it and all the evidence to the ZPD. However, things don't go as planned because Doug and several other animals begin to chase and attack them. The train, going at full speed, then crashes into a tunnel train station and explodes. Judy starts to lose hope and believe all the evidence is gone, but Nick reveals that he managed to save a suitcase full of evidence earlier. They run through the underground museum toward the ZPD, when Bellwether appears and tries to trick Judy into handing over the suitcase. Judy becomes suspicious and refuses, causing Bellwether to order her henchmen to capture them.

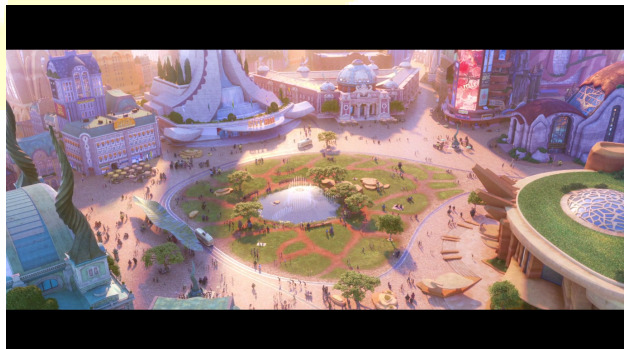
While running, Judy accidentally injures her leg. She tells Nick to leave her and continue without her, as Bellwether tries to convince them to surrender, "*Underestimated, underappreciated. Aren't you sick of it?*" [1:29:38]. Distracted, Judy and Nick manage to escape their hiding place. But, Bellwether's henchmen push them into a pit inside the museum, making Nick drop the suitcase. The discovery of the truth marks their 'awakening'. Judy realizes that all this time, predators are not going savage because of biology, but rather this is an illustrated plan by Bellwether to make it seem like predators are biologically predisposed to be savage. The whole fear-based system is constructed so that prey, or rather Bellwether, gains the upper hand. Judy recognizes that the predator-prey

conflict is not natural, but it is constructed for a political gain. This is what happens when the working class begins to see that their suffering is caused by the system, not because of individual failure.

Believing she has already won, Bellwether shoots Nick with the Night Howler toxin, and stages the situation as if Nick is attacking Judy, “*Yes, police! There’s a savage fox in the Natural History Museum.*” [1:30:49]. She uses Nick turning ‘savage’ to support her ideas that predators are naturally dangerous. “*Oh, but he can’t help it, can he? Since preds are just biologically predisposed to be savages.*” [1:30:59]. As Nick chases Judy, she confronts Bellwether, “*So that’s it? Prey fears predators and you stay in power?*” [1:31:25]. Bellwether openly admits her plan, “*Yeah, pretty much. Fear always works. And I’ll dart every predator in Zootopia to keep it that way.*” [1:31:30]. She reveals that maintaining fear is her strategy for maintaining political control. But just when Bellwether believes she has succeeded, Judy and Nick drop their act; the ‘savage’ Nick is only pretending, and they reveal that they switch the night howler serum with blueberries, exposing Bellwether’s entire plan. Subsequently, several police officers appear from behind her. Using their large physique to intimidate her small form after discovering her true plans. Where she then gets captured and sent to jail. “*What the bourgeoisie therefore produces, above all, are its own grave diggers.*” (Marx & Engels, 1848, pg. 52). Judy and Nick, the marginalized outsiders, become those ‘grave diggers’ by turning the evidence of the crime against the powerful few. Exposing the conspiracy is the key that unlocks social transformation for the entire city. The ‘big lie’ that they all believed is rooted in their biology collapses, and the material evidence; the toxin, the lab, and the audio confession, is revealed as the new material truth.

## **7. The limits of the metaphor and the forming of solidarity**

After the imprisonment of now former mayor Bellwether, the effectiveness of the Night Howler antidote is demonstrated, resulting in the return of the predators to their original state. Animals such as Emmer Otterton are able to be sane again and come back to his families. The Night Howler conspiracy demonstrates that certain predators do indeed go ‘savage’, but this is due to the poisoning, not because of biological material. Meanwhile, their position in society is based on social and economic. Following the exposure of Bellwether as the source behind the predator’s transformation, the false ideology crumbles and society reverts to its original state. The divisions that separate them are shown to be constructed



and not actual. The camera switches to wide shots and the city is brimming with light as the city is filled with bright colors, unlike before. The bright city symbolizes the healing process, representing the end of the historical dynamic of prey and predators. Society is rebuilding, with prey and predators forging alliances and cross-group solidarity emerging. Predators are no longer feared, prey are no longer underestimated. Zootopia has become a place where anyone can be whatever they want to be. The scene where Officer Clawhauser is back in the front desk while he shares donuts with other officers symbolizes the start of the healing process. Then comes the scene where Judy is giving a speech in front of the podium to her fellow co-workers. Judy stands at the podium as she says, "*But we have to try. No matter what type of animal you are, starting from the biggest elephant, to our first fox. I implore you to try. Try to make the world a better place.*" (01:34:02). The cross group unifying can be seen when Nick is accepted into being a police officer, as he is no longer judged for being born a fox. He is able to be made the first fox police officer due to the lack of presence of the false ideology, giving everyone a chance to be whatever they want to be. "*Workers of the world unite!*" (Marx & Engels, 1848, pg. 63). This represents Marx's belief that once people recognise the real causes of the oppression, they can begin to work together.

## **CONCLUSION**

To conclude this analysis, taking into consideration the intact research, Zootopia constructs a symbolic class struggle and false ideology, influencing how individuals think regarding certain ideas. Through the dynamics of predator and prey, the film shows how the division of classes and ideological power is unevenly distributed. And because of this, Judy is constantly underestimated as a police officer, considering that she is a prey and she is the world's first bunny officer. At one point, because of the ideology shaped in Zootopia, Judy started blaming herself for not being able to do certain things because of her prey self. Young minds have been shaped by society to believe that predators are more superior than prey. These ideas shape how they perceive and think about social classes when they grow up. Because predators have held the dominant group for so long, they manipulated the system into making society believe that all classes are treated equally, when in reality, they were not. The predator class tries to maintain the old '*predator vs prey*' hierarchy by keeping the lower classes in positions of limited power and opportunity, making the lower class to have false consciousness of who they really are.

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